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21

Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

London SW1A 2AH

5 February 2004

*Dear George,*

**Post Conflict Reconstruction: Paper for the DOP, 12 February**

I enclose a paper to be taken by the DOP on 12 February. It has been considered and agreed by the Foreign Secretary and the Secretaries of State for Defence and International Development.

I am copying this letter to Chris Baker (MoD) and Moazzam Malik (DFID)

*Kara Owen*  
*Kara Owen*

(Kara Owen)  
Private Secretary

George Fergusson Esq  
Cabinet Office

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INDEX	PA	Action Taken
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12

## POST CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION

### Background

1. The purpose of this paper is to present to DOP a proposition for better planning, implementation and management of the UK's contribution to post conflict reconstruction - the immediate period between the ending of conflict and the transition to longer term development programmes - primarily when UK forces are deployed. Past experience in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans has highlighted institutional weaknesses in governmental mechanisms for dealing with such crises. The failure to deliver a timely and effective post intervention strategy has ramifications both domestically and internationally:

- Provides opportunities for organised crime, drug and people trafficking to flourish
- Creates refugees and asylum seekers
- Provides a benign operating environment for terrorists
- Exacerbates differences in multilateral fora such as the EU, UN and NATO
- Prolongs the UK's (and others') involvement
- Results in additional overstretch of UK Armed Forces
- Poses a risk to achievement of UK Government strategic objectives in theatre, and risks provoking criticism from the media and humanitarian organisations
- Undermines the prospects for longer-term development and poverty reduction

### Policy Context

2. The particular planning and operational focus on post conflict reconstruction is being closely co-ordinated with the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit's project on the government's approach to weak/failing states. These work strands share similar goals and risks given the interrelated aims: one of the objectives of post conflict reconstruction is to prevent the emerging state from falling back into the conflict cycle. There is a further link into the work of the conflict prevention pools, which are presently undergoing evaluation. These three strands of work will be coordinated to ensure coherence in SR 2004 bids.

3. In addition, the project's aims generate linkages with work progressing in international fora such as the EU, UN and NATO, as well as regional organisations such as ECOWAS. Once agreed, it is further proposed that UK thinking is shared bilaterally with the US and other allies. The unit would seek to leverage opportunities for increased international effectiveness, ensure the adoption and spread of best practice and increase effective burden sharing.

### Principles

4. The military have a well-established mechanism for campaign planning. There is no

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effective Whitehall equivalent for dealing with the civilian component of the post conflict phase or for linking into military planning. There is therefore a need for:

- an institutional "home" (at present lacking) to co-ordinate the government's contribution to post conflict reconstruction, triggered by and answerable to Ministers
- the capacity to plan for, implement and manage the military/civilian transition period, and the civilian component of post conflict reconstruction, including potential for a unit's wider utility in supporting a civilian intervention in 'weak' or 'failing states'
- better linkages and integration with the efforts of the wider international community (through the UN, EU, OSCE, NATO or regional organisations) towards post conflict reconstruction to encourage burden sharing, capacity building and the spread of best practice.

### Proposals

5. The setting up of an interdepartmental unit with a double remit:

- Policy: developing government strategy for post conflict reconstruction linked into concomitant military and humanitarian planning, the wider international community (separate from the broader political process underlying the need for intervention) and best practice
- Executive: implementing and managing the UK's contribution to post conflict reconstruction, including the identification and training of civilian personnel and the maintenance of databases, with deployable capability

6. The unit's size and scope will have clear implications for its effectiveness, and options are being developed, including a potential surge capacity. Alternatives include:

- Option 1: a small non-permanent secretariat – coordinating function
- Option 2: a small permanent unit (15-18 people) - inform strategy formulation and devise operational plans
- Option 3: a medium-sized permanent unit (40-50 people) – to include a deployable element into theatres alongside armed forces.
- Option 4: a large permanent department (150-200 people) – of whom roughly half could be deployed, a fully institutionalised central department

7. The identification of training requirements and subsequent implementation prior to deployment will be crucial to ensure that risks to civilians in theatres are minimised.

### Resources

8. Work is underway to identify the level of resources required, encompassing standing capacity, training, equipment etc. A key principle will need to be an ability to respond quickly and effectively to crises. Initial cost estimates are attached at Annex A; in broad terms, the options range in cost as follows:

Option 1: status quo 'plus' – zero/minimum additional cost

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Option 2: small unit - £8m start up costs plus £1.25m/annum running costs

Option 3: medium-size unit - £12m start up costs plus £8m/annum running costs

Option 4: large-size department - £16m start up costs plus £24m/annum running costs.

9. Early and up-front costs have potential to generate future savings, and work is being undertaken to estimate potential longer-term financial benefits. This work will feed into the Spending Review. A successful bid would not produce resources before 2006, and interim capacity will therefore need careful consideration.

#### Next Steps

10. If Ministers agree with the outline proposals then the next steps will be:

- to work up the details, the remits, staffing, location and accountability of the unit;
- refine the costings;
- put the results to Permanent Secretaries of relevant departments for agreement at the meeting of the Civil Service Management Board International Affairs Sub-Committee in early March;
- bring the proposals to Ministers for discussion on substance and on the Spending Review implications in March/April.

11. It is **recommended** that a post-conflict reconstruction unit is established, along the lines of Option 3 (medium-sized permanent unit with deployable element), and the Next Steps are endorsed.

The Committee is invited to **note the paper and agree the recommendation.**

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Annex A

## POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION UNIT

### Options and cost estimates

Four options with increasing degrees of HMG capability have been examined. Each option assumes a similar overall UK civilian deployment but differs crucially on: whether deployment is all from surge capacity or some from the central facility; where functions are managed; and their speed and effectiveness. **Option 3 is recommended.**

The cost estimates refer to additional costs in providing the permanent, standing capacity. They do not cover costs of deployment in a specific country context or measures to improve the capacity of multilateral partners. They also do not take account of the potential savings to be gained from a more comprehensive, better organised approach to longer-term military and civilian engagement. Each costing requires further refinement.

#### **Option 1: Small co-ordination secretariat**

Coordination unit formed when triggered by decision to intervene. Relies on existing structures and contributions from relevant Departments. Staffed by pre-identified secondees, who co-ordinate. Departments plan operations and respond according to their competences, reallocating existing staff to support deployments. No permanent capacity, pre-deployment preparedness, technical advice, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), centralised lesson-learning and stockpiled equipment. Unlikely to deploy capability quickly or optimally.

**Additional running costs per year = £0m (no start-up costs)**

#### **Option 2: Small permanent unit**

Unit of 15 - 18 people. Standing capacity for generic preparedness only. Functions include: advice on strategy, links to generic military planning, contacts with multilateral organisations (eg. EU, UN, NATO for capacity-building, burden-sharing and best practice), assessing sources of suitable expertise for operations; managing databases; developing SOPs; identifying but not delivering training; minimal equipment stockpile; and centre for Departments' best practice. As with Option 1, relies on secondees from Departments, when an operation is triggered. Supports response and fills gaps, including secondment to multilaterals. Able to identify deployable personnel and maintain generic standards. Delays in training and deployment could occur if given only a short time to respond. Limited in-house technical advice but network of facilitators.

**Additional running costs per year = £1.25m (plus £8m start-up costs)**

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## Option 3: Medium-sized permanent unit

Unit of 40 - 50 people, some of whom could be quickly deployed. Standing capacity to do all generic tasks of Option 2. In addition, has in-house technical capacity to advise on strategy formulation, draw up operational plans, and identify and train deployable capacity of up to 400 people for response across a range of sectors. Has equipment stockpile. Close consultation on planning and response with Departments (e.g. PJHQ for the military and DFID for humanitarian assistance) and multilateral agencies. Whitehall lead for lessons-learned and promotion of best practice. Able to deploy quickly in all sectors, expanding rapidly with pre-identified and trained personnel and retaining operational experience to improve planning. Still relies on availability of call-down surge capacity.

**Additional running cost per year = £8m (plus £12m start-up costs)**

## Option 4: Large permanent department

Department of 150 - 200 people, of whom half could be deployed. Fully institutionalised central department responsible for developing HMG's post-conflict strategy, operational planning and deployment. Has significant on-call deployable capacity for a range of concurrent crises and integration of all stages of post-conflict work. Quick and assured deployment, plus early warning of potential crises and contingency plans. Costs are high and risk of problems in returning responsibility to Departments for longer-term programmes.

**Additional running costs per year = £24m (plus set-up costs of £16m)**

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