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DJC/STRATEGY

18 Feb 05

APS/Secretary of State

See distribution

IRAQ – KEY FINDINGS OF THE IRAQ STOCKTAKE

ISSUE

1. Results of the Iraq campaign plan review.

TIMING

2. Priority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. That Secretary of State notes that the findings of the Department's review of the Iraq campaign and **agrees** that:

- a. we should develop and articulate publicly a clear plan for MNF-I drawdown, agreed with the Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG) and US and which includes milestones on the progressive handover to Iraqi control, once conditions permit. This approach has the potential to help draw the sting from those insurgents whose primary motivation is to oppose the presence of the MNF-I. In military terms this will require the MNF-I to shift focus from a counter-insurgency campaign to a 'security assistance' mission;
- b. we should take action to re-invigorate delivery of the plan across all Lines of Operation (LsOO) and to allow greater Iraqi ownership of campaign activity; and
- c. in MND(SE), we should seek to develop our own approach to campaign implementation. This will require a surge in UK cross-government effort, including with DFID and the Home Office. Militarily, this should include: accelerate Iraqiisation; deliver the UK version of Military Assessment Teams (MATs); and exploit MND(SE)'s training capability for the benefit of the ISF across Iraq.

BACKGROUND

4. Following discussions in January with the Secretary of State covering our analysis of why the Iraq campaign plan was not delivering the required results¹, a review of progress has been carried out. This work has generated an MOD agreed view on how the plan might better be implemented. This work chimes well with the Cabinet Office paper².

The baseline assumptions for the review were:

¹ DJC J3 Ops Iraq dated 11 Jan 05 (Iraq 2005 – A UK MOD Perspective (LIMDIS)).

² Iraq Strategy Paper 2005 taken at the ad hoc ministerial group on Iraq meeting 9th February 05.

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- The Sunni insurgency could intensify during 2005.
- The pace of ISF development is too slow for Iraq to manage the insurgency alone before 2006.
- MNF-I cohesion is fragile³.
- The governance LOO is under-performing. The Interim Iraqi Government's performance has been patchy. A drop in effective governance can be expected as the ITG assumes responsibility. In the short term, Iraqi politicians are likely to focus more on manoeuvring for position in the drafting of the constitution, rather than on governance.
- Evidence of economic regeneration has been insufficient to change the Iraqi people's ambivalent attitude to the MNF-I presence.
- The information campaign has not driven a 'wedge' between the insurgents and the population. The only 'wedge' to have been driven seems to have been between the MNF-I and ordinary Iraqis.

5. The review team concluded that campaign implementation, rather than campaign strategy, had been the critical weakness thus far. Analysis therefore concentrated on improving campaign implementation. The conclusions fall broadly into two categories: those measures required to enhance campaign implementation as a whole and those that could be delivered, or supported, by the UK within existing political constraints.

OVERALL CAMPAIGN ENHANCEMENT

Withdrawal Plan for MNF-I.

6. There are three key reasons why the MNF-I should publicly state its intent to disengage and possibly allude to the end of the UN mandate as representing a fundamental shift in the nature of our engagement in Iraq. First, an MNF-I withdrawal (and to some extent the prospect of one) would help draw the sting from a significant proportion of the insurgency: our assessment is that 70% of the insurgents are Sunni Arabs whose short term objective is MNF-I withdrawal, but who have no longer term goal. Secondly, it would allay troop contributing nations' domestic public/political fears that their military commitment in Iraq is open-ended. Thirdly, MNF-I withdrawal is already on the Iraqi political agenda and we can expect more unilateral pronouncements on MNF-I status not only by the ITG, but also by nascent political parties setting out early their manifesto for the full Iraqi elections in December 2005. The conditions that we set should, however, be realistically achievable. Care will be required to define them pragmatically. And we should be prepared to take gains as and when they occur, including by handing off control of individual areas as soon as they are ready, as steps towards regional control.

7. This issue also plays into the US' view of its long term presence in the region. While the US has yet to pronounce formally on this issue, some see the establishment of military bases in Iraq as a way of gaining some return on their investment. This is an ambition the UK does not share. Our view is that such a plan runs the risk of prolonging the insurgency.

Iraqisation (Transition to Self-Reliance)

8. To prepare, both presentationally and practically, for MNF-I withdrawal, we need to construct, and then deliver, an agenda that aims to transfer back to the Iraqis responsibility

³ Portuguese withdraw (apart from 2 personnel) this month and the Dutch in Mar 05. Ukrainians have announced a drawdown in spring 05 and the Polish are to downsize by 700.

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for the full spectrum of governance. The key military element to this is handing over security responsibilities and moving from a counter-insurgency-based mission to a security assistance mission. A number of practical measures are required:

- Establishing structures and procedures for Iraqis to conduct joint, intelligence-led, interagency counter-insurgency operations. Integration between MoD/MoI will be essential.
- Improving Iraqi structures to take the lead across the entire LsOO and synchronise campaign activity more effectively between them.
- Cede greater control of US and other reconstruction funds to the Iraqis. This would enhance Iraqi and regional ownership of economic regeneration.
- Create an effective Iraqi apparatus to deliver the information campaign and improve linkages for MNF-I to support it.
- Re-target the information campaign at an Iraqi, rather than coalition, audience.
- Portray an enhanced civilian, not military, face to the MNF-I's involvement.

9. To support this agenda, the initial focus should be on those areas essential to prosecuting a successful counter-insurgency campaign. The inevitable drop-off in government activity after the elections makes it important that we build the capacity quickly. Practical measures, including some of those recommended in Gen. Luck's review might include:

- Boosting civilian mentors/advisers in key Iraqi ministries (MoI, MoD and others, including intelligence personnel).
- Recognising that the Sunni have more expertise and experience in government, encourage the ITG to bring Sunni personnel back into the process of government, following vetting, even on an unelected basis.
- Improving links between Iraqi security ministries and MNF-I (including MNSTC-I and the NATO training mission).
- Develop Iraqi intelligence structures that will meet the insurgency and are appropriate to the Iraqi way of doing things. The ITG will need to build a pervasive, robust internal security apparatus under direct control of the MoI rather than the Iraqi Police Service.

UK INVOLVEMENT IN CAMPAIGN ENHANCEMENT

Iraq-Wide

10. The UK might contribute to the delivery of the following specific measures:

- Further provision of suitably qualified advisers to the key Iraqi ministries. This must involve a UK cross-government effort.
- Additional Home Office support to the MoI, including assistance in forming a coherent Iraqi strategy for its police forces.
- UK support for the creation of an effective Iraqi intelligence organisation, drawing on our experience in Northern Ireland.

MND(SE)

11. Existing UK political constraints mean that, at least in the short term, most of our activities are going to be confined to MND(SE). The US has accepted that the Security

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Sector Reform (SSR) models which the UK are developing in MND(SE) to train and mentor the ISF are likely to be different from those that they might use elsewhere in Iraq. Specific UK military initiatives might include:

- SSR activities focusing on the Iraq Army and the development of support capabilities such as C2 and logistics.
- Intelligence-led operations, usually led by ISF but with support by UK forces.
- Delivering MATs⁴
- Additional UK funding for ISF equipment and infrastructure (e.g. establishing an Iraqi-led Divisional Battle School) for the benefit of the ISF from elsewhere in Iraq, exploiting proven UK expertise in training indigenous forces.
- Increase tour lengths to 12 months for UK personnel (commanders and those in the MATs) to allow time to build relationships with their Iraqi counterparts.

12. The resource implications of these military initiatives, in particular MATs, will need to be assessed in detail. A team from PJHQ departs shortly to theatre to assess this and is due to report to CJO on 28th February and to Ministers in early March.

13. The results of this review have focused largely on the security LOO. This will need to be integrated in the closest possible way with the governance, economic development and communicating LsOO.

Presentation

14. Public and parliamentary interest in our overall strategy for Iraq will increase once the ITG assume control. In the session with the Liaison Committee on 8th February, the Prime Minister indicated that we might "set out for people exactly what we think is the way forward for the Iraqisation of security..." How we choose to present this and the question of drawdown towards eventual withdrawal will depend on the outcome of elections and ongoing discussions with the US over the next few weeks.

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⁴ The MATs concept will be implemented using the UK model, which is based on developing partnering arrangements between UK and Iraqi units, rather than embedding individuals in Iraqi units (the US approach). There is also no reason why the UK should take on all of this task; other nations (e.g. Italy, Denmark) contributing in MND(SE) should be encouraged to get involved. Because of Iraqi ministerial objections and force protection concerns, the Police Assessment Teams (PATs) concept, as originally conceived (including with MNF-I embedded in local police stations), is now all but dead.