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20 February 2003

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10/11

IRAQ: DAY AFTER

Issue

1. Guidance for officials attending the US Day After "Rock Drill" conference

Recommendation

2. SofS will wish to be aware of the attached checklist to be drawn on by officials. Further and more detailed coordinated advice will be submitted in the light of the outcome of the conference.

Timing

3. The UK team flew out today. The checklist is being submitted in parallel to the Foreign Secretary for information. The FCO do not plan to send anything to No 10 before the weekend.

Detail

4. The attached checklist of key issues has been prepared for the guidance of officials attending the US's Rock Drill conference this weekend in Washington. Dominick Chilcott, Head of the Iraq Policy Unit (IPU) in the FCO, will lead the team. Also attending will be Maj Gen Cross, the UK member of Gen Garner's team in the Pentagon. MOD secondees to the IPU, and a DfID representative. DCDS(C) has discussed the key issues with William Ehrman of the FCO and is content with the checklist.

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5. The conference will focus on the main issues likely to arise in the very early days after military action. In particular, the FCO wish to convince the US about the need to involve the UN from – and indeed before – the outset. The brief is therefore heavy on UN issues and rather light on military issues of concern to the UK, some of which were discussed at yesterday's COS meeting. But Maj Gen Cross and are up to speed on the latter, and can elaborate on the UK's position when appropriate.

6. In the light of the conference, a more detailed cross-Government paper will be drafted on the potential UK involvement in Iraq in the short, medium and long term. We will also prepare briefing as appropriate for Gen Franks' visit next week. Among the issues of particular concern to the MOD are:

- The importance of securing a UNSCR for the day after, not just for the reasons set out in the checklist but to facilitate coalition-building so as to reduce the potential burden on UK forces.
- The need to plan the scale and timing of the drawdown of UK forces – sea, land and air – to a level that enables us to discharge residual tasks in Iraq as well as meet other commitments worldwide. Unless significant risk is to be placed on the UK force, and the Armed Forces more widely, it ought to be reduced to a Medium Scale/Brigade size presence by October/November.
- The US's thinking is that an alternative HQ, such as HQ ARRC, should take over from CFLCC soon after Phase III. The implications of such a course of action need to be thought through very carefully, since there would be a substantial burden on the UK as framework nation.
- The need for proper planning and funding of humanitarian assistance, particularly in the early days (SofS/ID is unwilling to seek additional funding until there is a second UNSCR, and there is limited confidence in the robustness of US humanitarian assistance planning).
- The financial implications of any extended UK role.

7. Further advice will be submitted next week. We will ensure that SofS is informed of the outcome of the conference by diptel during his visit to the Gulf.

[Signed on CHOTS]

Stephen Pollard
Head, Overseas Secretariat
MT MB

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