

Secretary of State: seen and agreed by Carolyn 16

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Reference

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FROM:

Ext:

DATE: 17 March 2003

cc:

PS/PUSS
PS/Suma Chakrabarti
Special Advisers
Nicola Brewer
Mark Lowcock
Carolyn Miller
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Tony
This summarises what
needs to be done to improve
humanitarian preparedness.
Perhaps we could really focus
on this is next week
Cure
n/3

To: Private Secretary/Secretary
of State

IRAQ: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

1. The Secretary of State requested a note on what is lacking in preparing for an effective humanitarian response, following conflict in Iraq, and what would be needed to address the situation.
2. The main problems are that humanitarian agencies preparedness measures are underfunded, most are not yet ready operationally to mount an effective response and there is limited experience of working in the centre/south of Iraq. In any case, in the immediate weeks following conflict most humanitarian agencies will be unable to operate until a permissive security environment is achieved. The responsibility for humanitarian action will rest with the coalition forces, which may be faced with a massive humanitarian need whilst pursuing military objectives. The situation is exacerbated by the existing humanitarian need in Iraq and the significant threat that the Oil For Food programme may quickly break down during hostilities.
3. I attach a note setting out the range of problems, potential solutions and some specific actions that DFID might take. A lot covers what is already known to the Secretary of State but might also be useful for the Prime Minister and Cabinet colleagues.

Humanitarian Programmes Manager
Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department

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IRAQ: What is lacking in terms of being prepared for an effective humanitarian response and what it would take to address that?

The problems affecting the humanitarian response are:

- The **varying levels of preparedness** of the usual humanitarian responders, notably the UN, Red Cross Movement and international NGOs, and including the US

Problem: UN funding needs insufficiently met. Preparedness incomplete

The UN has appealed for \$123 million to cover its preparedness requirements. By 14 March, \$80 million has been pledged (65% of total requirements), leaving a funding gap of \$43 million. The main impact on preparedness is to the sectors of health, water and shelter, although current basic health supplies in country are thought to be sufficient if conflict were short. However, specialised medical items, for trauma and surgical treatments are lacking. WFP has prepared 900,000 tonnes of food aid, planned to last for around ten weeks on the basis that the OFF programme supplies 460,000 tonnes per month. The Government of Iraq has been providing increased food rations in recent weeks, so some Iraqis have a degree of stockpile, that may last a short while. In the event of conflict the UN will launch a Flash Appeal to the value of \$1 billion.

Solutions: Provide additional funding support to UN agencies to help meet funding requirements and announce substantial commitment in event of Flash appeal. Provide immediate additional funds to DFID.

Problem: Red Cross Movement preparing but requires substantial funding support

The ICRC is best prepared of the humanitarian agencies. ICRC has enhanced its operational set-up in Iraq and neighbouring countries and currently has response capacity to immediately provide medical supplies for up to 7,000 war wounded in Iraqi hospitals. It has pre-stocked supplies and equipment to keep the water and sewage evacuation systems for entire towns running and it has ensured a capacity for water supply to displaced persons. Emergency food stocks are in place for hospitals in Baghdad. Food and non-food stocks are ready to cater for 150,000 internally displaced. ICRC believe they can quickly increase capacity to meet the needs of up to 500,000 displaced. The ICRC has largely been drawing from its reserve to fund preparedness and will launch a Flash Appeal following conflict.

The IFRC has been supporting pre-positioning of stocks and national Society preparedness activities. The Iraqi Red Crescent has pre-positioned non-food items

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for 55,000 people. The Syrian and Jordanian Red Crescent Societies have pre-positioned non-food items for 5,000 persons each for a period of three months. The Turkish Red Crescent and Iranian Red Crescent for an estimated 80,000 and 100,000 respectively. Non-food items for 40,000 are stored in warehouses in Jordan and a reserve of 20,000 in Abu Dhabi. The IFRC's activities to date have cost around £2.9 million, of which £828,000 is funded. In the event of response, IFRC funding needs will be around £21 million.

Solutions: Provide funding to ICRC/IFRC for preparedness and commit to their response needs. Provide immediate additional funds to DFID.

Problem: NGOs beginning to establish presence but not fully prepared for response action

Apart from Northern Iraq where there has been a traditional NGO presence, few international NGOs operate in the Centre/South of Iraq. NGOs are beginning to establish an increased presence in the Region but need more time to be adequately prepared. Preparedness and response funding is needed. Total needs cannot be quantified as many NGOs are still undertaking planning and are yet to submit funding applications. However, some are in the process of pre-positioning relief supplies, using their own funds, and exploring response options. Some have concerns about neutrality and humanitarian space issues that may prevent them seeking US and UK funding support.

Solutions: Commit funds to support NGO preparedness gaps and response needs. Provide immediate additional funds to DFID.

Problem: US preparedness for response lacks local experience and based on optimistic assumptions

The US Government's planning for humanitarian response has progressed for some months but they are limited in their knowledge and experience of the Region. They plan support through traditional, strengthened, USAID Disaster and Assessment Teams and use of commercially contracted support. They have optimistic assumptions about how quickly the UN and NGOs might be able to undertake post-conflict work. A few large US NGOs have made agreements with the US for directly funded projects. There is some concern about how the US will coordinate with the UN.

Solution: DFID has been liaising with USAID on their planning and offering advice and knowledge, including on the link between humanitarian and reconstruction activities. It is important this close liaison with them continues. Initially DFID seconded a Liaison Officer to the Office of Reconstruction and

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Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), in Washington. We are sending today a new secondee as ORHA sets itself up in Kuwait.

- The threat of the OFF programme collapsing following the start of conflict

Problem: How to maintain OFF Programme following conflict

The threat of collapse of OFF following military action is a key concern. 60% of Iraq's population of 24 million are fully dependent on OFF. With 46,000 food distribution centres operating across a range of sectors (not just providing food aid) and dependent on Government of Iraq controlled distribution networks, a breakdown of OFF would pose the greatest challenge to an effective humanitarian response. WFP's and other humanitarian agencies' preparedness measures, even were they fully funded, and despite Government of Iraq increased rations provision, would struggle against the magnitude of the requirement. The scale of the requirement is five times greater than the total monthly food requirements WFP provided in Afghanistan.

The collapse of OFF will immediately jeopardise existing contracts, including food pipeline contracts carried by vessels still at sea. New contracts could not be placed. Irrespective of the OFF contractual position, insurance cover will adversely affect both air and sea commercial transport whilst there is conflict in the Region. Also, in Southern Iraq, the 'OFF port' of Umm Qasr is unlikely to be open during the first weeks of conflict. WFP are making alternative arrangements to bring in food through the port in Kuwait City (planning 135,000 tonnes for the first month) and have identified warehousing, transport and additional food supplies should they be required. But contracts are not yet signed.

Solutions: Existing contracts need to be safeguarded through a new UN Security Council Resolution. WFP alternative arrangements to bring in food through alternative routes need immediate gearing up.

For OFF to work under existing Security Council resolutions and related arrangements the presence of a functioning Iraqi Government is required. In the case of military action leading to the absence of an effective Iraqi Government this would not exist. Alternative arrangements would need to be established for the OFF programme to operate. The UN fully recognises the problem and accepts the necessity of the UN taking over the role of the Government of Iraq in managing the OFF programme post-conflict. **The US and the UK have been working on the text of a draft resolution for the OFF programme.** This would authorise the Secretary-General of the UN and his designated representatives, in coordination with relevant authorities, to undertake the functions of the Government of Iraq and its subsidiary institutions, to administer and deliver humanitarian assistance under the Programme.

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It would be politically very difficult to table such a draft resolution to the Council ahead of potential conflict, so for OFF to continue **the draft resolution would need to be tabled immediately following the start of military action.**

We are pressing WFP to immediately conclude the signing of contracts for warehousing, transport and additional food supplies.

We are pursuing with the Office for the Iraq Programme (OIP) the status of vessels on route to Iraq.

- **Problems of humanitarian access during and immediately after hostilities**

Problem: How to support humanitarian agencies gain early access to Iraq following conflict

The existing security situation and threat to humanitarian workers posed by conflict and the possible use of WMD, and including the inability of humanitarian organisations and ordinary civilians to deal with the effects of chemical and biological warfare will prevent humanitarian agencies working in Iraq in the immediate aftermath of conflict. There are also issues of humanitarian agencies wanting to maintain their neutrality and operate with and through the UN and not under the control or direction of Coalition forces.

Solutions: Coalition forces will need to provide reliable and up to date information quickly to humanitarian agencies on threats and incidents, so that the humanitarian agencies can make their own assessment of risks on best available data. DFID can support the process through helping to facilitate information exchange where there are sensitivities.

- **The limited capacity of coalition forces to undertake humanitarian response, particularly in the initial crucial period whilst combat operations are underway**

Problem: How Coalition forces can provide effective humanitarian response in the early weeks following hostilities

Whilst considerable planning has been done and preparation undertaken by many humanitarian agencies, much of it has been constrained by the political climate

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(agencies' concerns with 'planning and preparing for inevitability of war'), a lack of time and resources. The humanitarian agencies have been gearing up their readiness but many are not yet ready operationally and need more time. It has been appropriate for DFID to concentrate on working to minimise the humanitarian consequences of conflict whilst supporting humanitarian agencies preparedness measures with the limited financial resources available to us.

In the first weeks, following conflict, very few humanitarian agencies will be able to provide humanitarian relief until there is a permissive environment. Therefore, Coalition forces must be prepared to shoulder much of the initial burden of humanitarian response. In the case of the UK military, there is insufficient readiness for the potential enormity of this obligation. DFID's practical humanitarian response capacity is limited. We will continue to help the UK military with humanitarian advice but not with the provision of relief items. Compared to the scale of the military preparations and the resources available for war, DFID's humanitarian resources are very small. Our limited effort must focus where humanitarian need is greatest, mainly through supporting our traditional humanitarian partners.

Solutions: Funding to MOD should be given so that additional relief supplies can be procured, pre-positioned or made ready for delivery to the Region. Ensure that the humanitarian consequences of military action are minimised and that a permissive environment is rapidly secured by Coalition forces through:

- Preventing political instability in Northern Iraq
- Avoiding/preventing destruction of key lifelines, including health, power, fuel, water, sewage and logistical infrastructure and specific installations such as chlorine plants
- Minimising further displacement of population, particularly the urban dwellers that make up the bulk of the Iraqi population
- Achieving a permissive security environment for humanitarian and recovery operations as soon as possible by:
 - Stabilising the post-conflict security situation generally as quickly as possible and locally as soon as the fighting moves on
 - Declaring the country, or parts of it, safe from the effects of WMD as soon as possible
- Launching a comprehensive public information campaign to ensure that the Iraqi population is given a clear picture of the progress of the conflict, the humanitarian situation and measures in hand to deal with it. Encourage people to stay put and develop their own coping mechanisms until help arrives
- Encouraging and supporting the Iraqi people to take responsibility for as much of their own well-being as possible at the earliest
- Maintaining existing Iraqi civil structures essential to life support, public order and economic activity; particularly important for:
 - OFF contracting and distribution mechanisms

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- Transport
- Energy sector
- Water and sanitation
- Health sector

Specific Actions for DFID in supporting above solutions:

- Take a lead role in ensuring that all potential (and effective) humanitarian actors work together to ensure a focused, coherent, flexible and optimal response; this includes:
 - Provision of adequate funds to partner humanitarian agencies able to mount effective humanitarian response. Further contribute to meeting humanitarian agencies preparedness funding gaps (**will require commitment from HM Treasury for immediate funds**).
 - Joint planning between DFID and MOD (**already in progress**) to avoid damage to infrastructure, etc.
 - Continuing DFID humanitarian advice to the UK military (**already in progress and being strengthened**) to support planning for the UK military's humanitarian response obligations.
 - Joint planning with humanitarian agencies (**already in discussion with UN, Red Cross and NGOs but joint planning will be an issue with some agencies if UK seen as a belligerent in conflict**).
 - Announce commitment to substantial funding for humanitarian agencies towards response action (**prepared to commit around £65 million from DFID 2003/2004 Contingency Reserve. Will require commitment from HM Treasury for more substantial commitment to be announced now**), to support agencies first months of response and make immediate contributions to UN and Red Cross planned Flash Appeals.
 - Support UK diplomatic action to progress UNSCR to transfer management of OFF to UNSG (**drafting of resolution commenced. Immediate action required following hostilities**).
 - Pursue urgently with WFP and OIP problems with OFF contractual issues
 - Supporting liaison (during initial conflict phase) between Coalition forces and humanitarian agencies on issues of neutrality and humanitarian space, including helping facilitate advice on security environment to enable humanitarian agencies to undertake response action at the earliest opportunity.
 - Supporting public information campaigns (**during initial weeks and post-conflict - contacts already established with BBC World Service**)
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- Maximise use of DFID's humanitarian response resource by strengthening rapid situation and needs assessment capability in the field, including increased guidance to UK Forces for detailed humanitarian planning and response measures. Consulting with humanitarian agencies, CHAD-OT respond to critical deficiencies on the ground either by providing cash or expertise in key areas

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