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20 Dec 02

SofS

### MILITARY PLANNING FOR IRAQ

You have a telephone call with CDS (and PW) at 9pm on Sunday (you will need your new key which is in the box)

Military planning, based on rumours from a CDS meeting on Friday afternoon, seems to be going into spasm as the timelines become taut, and the US plans are perceived to be advancing. Options being floated include increasing the land contribution to over 33,000 in Turkey, loading of RoRos with tanks before knowing where they can go, calling out reserves very early and others.

I think it would be worth reminding CDS to avoid kneejerk reactions – the plans seem to be changing very rapidly and incoherently, without real reference to the UN or political timetable.

Questions which may be worth asking:

What is the evidence for US timetables – surely they would tell us?

How do they link with known UN timetables (eg 27 Jan Blix report) – and how much flexibility do you think the UK can afford?

When do we need a Turkey decision?

Is it still really worth pursuing Turkey given the difficulty the  
?

Is there a worthwhile role for any heavy forces if Turkey is not available.

When do we bite the bullet and rule out the heavy land option? Or are we content to march them up to the top of the hill just for force on mind? How would we cope with the morale implications?

*[If you wish to be frank and suspicious]* Hope that the maximalist solutions being proposed for the North are not artificially being used to create a Fresco conflict/excuse.

Need to see properly considered and realistically argued submissions if early decisions are needed.

mw

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