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Desmond Bowen
Defence and Overseas Secretariat

70 Whitehall • London SW1A 2AS

TELEPHONE:

• FAX:

• E-MAIL:

TO 0019

William Ehrman CMG
Director, Defence & Intelligence

FCO

Dear William,

IRAQ: OPERATIONAL POLICY UNIT

Thank you for coming to a meeting with Carolyn Miller, Stephen Pollard, Brigadier Bill Rollo, Edward Chaplin, Jim Drummond, Tom Dodd and me on 4 February. We talked about planning and then running the aftermath of military operations in Iraq.

2. We agreed that there was a good deal of uncertainty about American intentions in administering Iraq in the event of (and after) hostilities to remove Saddam Hussein's regime. The meetings with the US in Washington this week should bring greater clarity, especially in relation to prospective UN involvement, but were unlikely to produce decisions. (We are aiming to brief David Manning on the main strategic issues after the team's return so that he can raise them with Condi Rice.) In the meantime General Garner's office of post-conflict planning in the Pentagon, created by Presidential decision, might be an inter-agency and international policy making-body in the making; but the reality was that detailed operational plans were now beginning to come out of CENTCOM and being fed through to the PJHQ. We will need to gauge how best to take forward the business with the US and where we can exert influence to best effect.

3. We recognised that, even if some of the big strategic issues remained unresolved, a lot of detailed management issues were likely to arise. Much was likely to emanate from CENTCOM, which had the prospectively imminent task of administering a country whose leadership had been removed. With this in mind we agreed that we should set up an Iraq Operational Policy Unit with contributions from the FCO, DFID and MOD. You volunteered that Dominick Chilcot had been appointed to lead on Iraq aftermath matters for the next two months and would be a suitable

cc
Matthew
Mark
Alan
Sally
5 February 2003
Stall
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Head of this Unit. My view was that we needed an integrated unit with high calibre representation to work through the sort of issues that would confront the coalition on the "day after". **Their initial remit would be to develop policy guidance to enable the administration of Iraq pending the appointment of a transitional civil administration, consistent as far as possible with the longer term vision for the future of Iraq.** They would need to work their way, with the US, through issues as diverse as humanitarian relief, policing, administration of justice, local government and provision of utilities, environmental recovery and priorities for the return to normality. The view we all reached was that this unit ought to be up and running from Monday 10 February, maybe as a task force in the first instance but rapidly becoming a co-located and integrated unit. It will need staff who think strategically and operationally and have some background in state reconstruction from other recent cases (in order to feed in the lessons of eg Kosovo and Afghanistan).

4. The focus of this Unit is very much to prepare for the aftermath in practical operational terms. The wider strategy will continue to be co-ordinated through the Cabinet Office's Ad-Hoc Group on Iraq and there will, inevitably, be a close connection between the strategic issues, which remain to be resolved and the practical aspects of administering Iraq. I understand you intend that this Unit should operate alongside the Consular and Emergency Rooms, all of which will need to work in close liaison – and with the DCMC and CHAD.

5. Our expectation is that General Franks of CENTCOM will be in overall charge of Iraq, with the military chain of command operating, which would involve General Brims being in charge of a sector of Iraq. Brims would need civilian support in theatre (beyond an MOD Polad), but it was too early to judge at what level; it was clear that there would need to be FCO and DFID input. The extent to which the US were planning on providing civil support to a British sector was as yet unclear.

6. We also had in mind other possible requirements we would need to address, as events unfold, such as a British office in the UK sector, a special envoy and an Ambassador. Setting up this Unit is only the first step: we will keep in close touch and make adjustments as work and life progresses.

7. I have entitled the letter "Iraq Operational Policy Unit" as my best shot at a title. I think there is general agreement that the word aftermath conveys the wrong impression, but the title of the Unit may still be up for discussion.



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8. I should be grateful if you, Carolyn, Stephen and Bill could now take action to set up this Unit. The thrust of this approach has the support of David Manning, to whom I am copying this letter. I am also sending copies to those who attended the meeting.



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