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Sec(O)/2/37/13

6th March 2003

PS/Secretary of State

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IRAQ: AFTERMATH – MEDIUM TO LONG TERM UK MILITARY COMMITMENT

Issue

1. Lines for the Secretary of State to follow in discussion with OGD Ministers when discussing the UK's medium to long-term commitment to Iraq.

Recommendations

2. That the Secretary of State:
 - a. **Draw on** the lines to take attached at Annex A in discussion with OGD Ministers in the margins of Cabinet, this Thursday. The Chancellor of Chief Secretary is likely also to state his views.
 - b. **Note** that any UK involvement in the administration of post-conflict Iraq will necessarily require a significant civil administrative and specialist component; this component has not yet been identified or resourced by OGDs. **This is the key issue. The success of civil administration will be essential to Iraq's long term future. The UK military cannot do this on their own.**
 - c. **Note** that the current defence planning assumption is that UK forces can only sustain large scale operations for a period of six months without doing long term damage to capability. This implies that UK forces reduce to a Medium Scale (i.e. roughly one brigade) post-conflict TELIC commitment. **The Cabinet Office Paper for the meeting invites Ministers are to agree UK policy on the size or duration of a military commitment to post-conflict Iraq.**
 - d. **Note** that the US planning is currently tending to assume UK involvement in Phase IV at a level that is the maximum, if not higher than, that we can sustain. **If Ministers wish to set limits on the UK's phase IV contribution they should be set now so that US planning can be adjusted.** (Illustrative options for the scale of the military

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contribution are at Annex B. These are more explicit than the broad options set out in the Cabinet Office Paper.)

- e. **Note** that, as US planning stands, the UK will need substantial support from other nations. There are no arrangements yet in place formally to gather such support. Such support will be largely contingent on a *suitable* second/third UNSCR and a UN mandate for the occupation of Iraq. The FCO need to build on their recent "market survey" to identify candidates and persuade them to shorten the time it will take them to deploy.
- f. **Note** that possible involvement of HQ ARRC in Iraq is being given consideration in US planning. The UK could offer this for six months (depending on the size of other commitments to Iraq), but it would have to be conditional on the US providing communications equipment and personnel and not accompanied by the usual subsidiary forces. To ensure relief this would best be a NATO arranged rotation. We should explain these factors to the US.

Timing

- 3. **Priority.** The Secretary of State is due to discuss the UK's contribution to "Phase IV" (the post conflict phase) in Iraq with the Foreign Secretary and Secretary of State for International Development in the margins of Cabinet on Thursday. Currently there is no settled UK policy on the scale or duration of the UK's contribution to post conflict Iraq. In the absence of this direction, the scale and duration of the UK's contribution risks being determined by decisions being taken by CENTCOM now. The discussion will be guided by a Cabinet Office paper (attached).

Background

General

- 4. The attached Cabinet Office paper, that will serve as an annotated agenda for the Ministerial discussion sets out the general background to this issue, and the points where Ministerial guidance is required. In summary, however:
 - a. Post conflict, (Phase IVB - (Recovery)) the US military will divide Iraq into six sectors, plus Baghdad (Each with a 2* military lead). Current US plans see the UK military having responsibility for security in one of these sectors. The UK has not formally agreed to this but has not formally challenged the assumption either. Without coalition support this sector is too large for the UK to sustain a military presence throughout beyond August. (OGDs have not yet scoped what other UK contributions could be sustained). **The UK is thus currently at risk of taking on an unsustainable task if there is no further coalition contribution to the occupation of Iraq.**
 - b. Post conflict, the Civil Administration of Iraq will be guided by the US Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) (Led by a retired US General, multi-agency but reporting to Rumsfeld). ORHA's planning remains obscure. ORHA is planning to work as far as possible through existing Iraqi governmental structures, with very small teams in each governorate to mentor existing Iraqi personnel. This is unlikely to guarantee the pace and quality of the reconstruction, nor the assurance that foreign governmental aid is all reaching its intended targets.

- c. On current plans ORHA will be very largely dependent on the US military for practical and logistic support. The ORHA presence will be so light (3 or so people in each of the 18 governorates) that on current plans much of the practical day-to-day problem solving will fall to the military – which will give the impression of a US military occupation in the medium to long term. That said, UK arguments on the need for UN involvement in administration appear to be making headway in Washington.
- d. If the UK does lead one of the military sectors there is a risk that de facto it will result in the UK military being intimately involved in the civil administration of that sector. This is not a role they would seek. **There is a pressing need to identify civil capacity to across the international civil admin effort, including support civil administration in a UK military sector.**
- e. US plans for *immediate* humanitarian assistance do not appear robust: they make what DfID regards as overly sanguine assumptions about the state of Iraqi infrastructure and the propensity of NGOs and IOs to move rapidly to fill the humanitarian breach once coalition forces have entered Iraq. There is currently no funding by DfID for UK humanitarian assistance in 1 Div's area. The MOD is currently making a case to HMT for £10M for civil-military project funding, to be spent for force protection reasons. This will not, however, approach covering the gross humanitarian assistance requirements, which, in any case, our forces are not configured to provide. (Early estimates indicate the costs of meeting this in the UK AO could be over £30M a month in initial stages.) **The UK is thus carrying some risk of early humanitarian assistance failures in the UK AO.**

UK military posture

- 5. **Scale of effort.** The Defence Planning Assumptions is that large scale (which deliberately disrupts training and harmony) can only be sustained for six months and requires several years of normal activity for reconstitution. Once fully deployed the level of our commitment to Op TELIC will be Large Scale across all three Services. Unless very significant risk is to be placed on the deployed force, and UK forces more widely, the force must be reduced to Medium Scale by September/October this year; this implies that the reduction must begin by July/August. Factors that drive this conclusion are:
 - a. A large scale commitment can only be sustained with the callout of certain trade groups of reserves, who have already been mobilised in toto.
 - b. There will be severe disruption of the Formation Readiness cycle, the Army's BOWMAN conversion and Operational Commitments Plot that will have adverse effects on training and wider capability in the medium to long term.
 - c. A longer deployment at Large Scale would imply a breach of Harmony guidelines for a very significant number of service personnel which may lead to a marked reduction in morale, retention and, eventually, recruitment and in consequence the long term quality of our Services.

6. Factors b. and c. are difficult to quantify – but, particularly when viewed against the continuing commitment to Op FRESCO, we run a risk of hollowing out capability, losing some key, small population capabilities and doing long term damage to the armed Services.
7. Once reduced to Medium Scale – all other things being equal and assuming the Services are stood down from Op FRESCO – it would be possible to maintain a Medium Scale commitment to Iraq and remain within DPAs although at risk to harmony and overstretch for some key capabilities. This would, of course, significantly constrain our ability to take on other new tasks – and would not itself provide enough forces to provide security and support to the military government (and to the UK civilians involved) in the sector currently allocated to the UK. Such a commitment will, however, be extremely expensive
8. **HQ ARRC.** US thinking on the internationalisation of the military occupation remains unformed still. However, they are actively considering a role for HQ ARRC being the second CJTF-I HQ, ie being the lead for security issues for all of Iraq – not merely a sector (and in some scenarios being considered by the US taking this role on early – soon after Iraqi defeat). The provision of HQ ARRC, with its UK commander, would, de facto, place the UK in the lead for Iraq Aftermath security issues. That said, its multinational composition would do much to enable international engagement. It would also provide a firm framework for further multi-nationalisation and, as such, could form an element of the UK's exit strategy. It could be deployed under UK auspices without full endorsement from NATO but discussions with individual contributor nations would be necessary to encourage their continued participation. The ARRC also represents a major bargaining chip with which to secure other UK policy objectives. Its value may well decrease, however, if it is not offered early enough to prevent the US developing alternative plans.
9. The deployment of HQ ARRC concurrently with a UK 2* Div HQ would be difficult. There is insufficient skilled manpower to support both headquarters in addition to the UK sector, as well as deliver remaining roulement and regeneration commitments (ie not only of personnel post Phase 4A, but also of critical future strategic capability including the JRRF). The position could be alleviated by making any HQ ARRC deployment contingent on major and timely commitments by the US in providing the required levels of commercial or military communications, manpower and associated CIS close support. If the UK is undertaking the Phase IV medium scale operation described above it could not offer forces to go with HQ ARRC and other nations would have to provide these; that is contrary to usual convention and may attract criticism. Again, the ARRC could only be sustained for a six month period. It would be vital to have in a decision in prospect on rotation, e.g. by using one of NATO's five other High Readiness HQs in rotation.
10. The US are keen to extract CFLCC from Iraq in a reasonable timeframe. PJHQ assess this to be about 5 months after hostilities start. Within this period the UK has some leverage (to request US support for communications etc) in offering HQ ARRC; beyond that leverage is lost. There is a risk, however, that by making an offer in principle we would come under irresistible pressure from the US to deploy without US funding or communications. It would thus be necessary formally to agree with the US criteria (communications provision etc) to be achieved prior to HQ ARRC assuming the role of CJTF-I. (Even if HQ ARRC did deploy, the US intent would be to "cap" it with a senior (4* ?) US military commander).

11. The potential cost of maintaining the levels of military forces outlined above have been briefed to Treasury Officials as below. The figures given represent potential maxima: they assume no coalition military assistance, and exclude the costs of appropriate equipment Urgent Operational Requirements and a sum for civil-military projects.

<u>Force Configuration</u>	<u>Force Size x Months</u>	<u>Projection</u>
<u>Stabilisation Period</u>		
Deployed Force	25,000 for 6 months	£825M
<u>Recovery Period:</u>		
Div HQ, Bde, support, helicopters	15,000 for 6 months	£625M
<u>Recovery Period:</u>		
Bde (-), support, helicopters	9000 for 12 months	£750M
<u>Recovery Period:</u>		
Small Scale	1500 for 6 months	£50M
HQ ARRC	1000 for 6 months during the 30-month period	£40M
Total	For 30 months, including HQ ARRC for 6 months	£2.3Bn

It should be noted that these figures are being briefed to the Chancellor by Treasury Officials.

Options

12. Options for UK engagement can be considered in four dimensions: Duration, scale, geography and function.
13. **Duration.** As long as there is a coalition military presence in Iraq there will be great pressure for UK, as one of the invading powers, to maintain a presence to provide security. For planning purposes it makes sense to assume a military presence until at least 2005; therefore (assuming the planning assumptions set out above are correct) the UK will have a Brigade providing security in SE Iraq until 2005. On the basis of experience elsewhere, engagement in civil administration is likely to continue well beyond this time.
14. **Scale.** The factors constraining the UK military scale of effort are identified at paragraphs 5 – 7, above. They do not, however, address the scale or costs of civil effort.
15. **Geography.** The US is assuming UK responsibility for the provision of security within a military sector that will include the Kuwaiti border, Basra and the Iranian border from Basra north as far as SE Baghdad. This area contains some 17 – 20% of the Iraqi population. Unless Ministers give firm guidance to the contrary now, this will be the default option.
16. **Function.** As in Afghanistan, the reconstruction of Iraq may require someone (though not necessarily a nation) to take responsibility for various reconstruction 'pillars' (eg. Justice, the army etc – although US planning is

currently not thinking explicitly in terms of 'pillars'). It might be that the UK would wish, in addition to its military commitment, to take on the lead for a pillar. (The US has already asked us to lead on judiciary; we have declined because of a lack of capacity.)

17. **Courses of Action:** Given the constraints on military engagement already described it is thus possible to identify various broad courses of action. Choosing one of these COA would give planners a good indication of UK intent for Phase IVb and permit effective planning and more effective engagement with US interlocutors. They range between, at the upper end, the suggested SE (UK) Sector with a UK 2* lead (subsequently becoming a multinational HQ) and a UK Brigade, HQ ARRC taking on the CJTF(I) role early for 6 months and UK involvement (but not military) in a reconstruction pillar to a minimal involvement of a single UK Brigade in a non-UK led sector.
18. There are, of course, other variants (including complete withdrawal --an illustrative range is set out at Annex B) but those outlined above represent the upper and lower scales of what the (US) market might bear. Costs are outlined in paragraph 11, above.

Policy considerations

19. A number of policy considerations will shape decisions. Firstly, there is the degree to which the UK wishes to stand "shoulder to shoulder" with the United States. This is a fundamental political judgement that needs to be taken; where are the UK's red-lines regarding the depth of participation? One can posit four scenarios that relate to the transitional government stage. The UK needs to judge what its policy should be on engagement in each:
 - a. A UN mandate for occupation, the civil transitional administration demonstrably international with a UN-appointed High Representative for Iraq, with CJTF-Iraq providing the Security pillar and UN agencies providing humanitarian aid. This is our best case. Currently it looks unlikely.
 - b. A UN mandate for occupation, the civil transitional administration run by ORHA (General Garner), CJTF-Iraq providing the Security pillar but a UN appointed High Rep set over this structure and UN agencies providing humanitarian aid. The next best case. Also unlikely.
 - c. A UN mandate for occupation, the civil transitional administration run by ORHA (General Garner), CJTF-Iraq providing the Security pillar, under an "International [possibly US] person of Stature." UN agencies providing humanitarian aid. This is the current US plan. (The assumption that the UN agencies would provide aid directed by ORHA has yet to be tested).
 - d. No UN mandate for occupation, but the civil transitional administration run by ORHA (General Garner), CJTF-Iraq providing the Security pillar under a US Civilian 4*. UN agencies providing humanitarian aid.
20. For wider policy reasons (internationalisation of occupation, handling of regional actors) a UN mandate for occupation is essential for the UK, and a structure along the lines of para a., above, desirable. The US is keen to draw down its forces in Iraq, and as such is attracted by the prospect of HQ ARRC

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taking on the role of CJTF-I. A UK offer of HQ ARRC, conditional on the UN mandate that would both in any case be required for us to consider making such an offer, and which will serve our wider interests, may provide additional leverage with the US-though may also be unnecessary given progress with the US in making this case.

21. The UK's attitude to the future of Iraq should also guide the depth of our participation: Does the UK wish to become intimately involved in reconstruction and civil administration? This is not a military task, and will be guided by considerations such as possible long-term commercial advantage and the degree of influence the UK chooses to seek with US reconstruction efforts, but it will both affect and be affected by the level of military engagement. It will also have significant resource implications, across government.

Worst case risks

22. Much of the above is predicated on best-case assumptions for the progress of a conflict (swift, short and successful), the condition of Iraq post conflict (infrastructure not greatly damaged by fighting, limited internecine conflict) and the degree of international buy-in with civil and military resources, including cash (considerable and UN endorsed). The Secretary of State may wish to take the opportunity of this meeting to remind his colleagues that there is at least a credible possibility that none of these conditions will obtain.
23. Even if there is a second (and possibly third) UNSCR this is no guarantee of broad-based international buy-in into Phase IV. Our experiences in Afghanistan and the Balkans are salutary in this regard; these had broad based international support, yet converting words to deeds has been slow and required intense political and diplomatic effort. And we should recognise that other nations increasing commitment to Afghanistan and the Balkans will preclude their substantive involvement in this operation. This means that there is a real possibility of the UK (along with the US and a few forward leaning smaller military nations) being committed to Phase IV engagement without wider international burdensharing and without an immediate exit strategy. At its worst this could expose the UK to an enduring Large Scale military commitment (20 - 30,000 in theatre) - and the commensurate civil support required to contribute to the rebuilding of Iraq (Although, fundamentally, the latter would be the key to an eventual exit). The potential consequences are severe. Aside from the financial cost, there would be a severe impact on the long term capability of the Armed Services. We are not resourced in terms of people, stocks or equipment to sustain such a major commitment. There would, for example, be a major impact on the NHS. This is not the most likely risk, but it is one that increases the further the outcome post conflict is from a UN-mandated solution.

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Annex A
To D/Sec(O)/2/37/13
Dated 5 March 2003

IRAQ AFTERMATH - DISCUSSIONS WITH OGD MINISTERS

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LINES TO TAKE

General

- This deployment is at the limit of what we structure UK forces to be able to do for six months only. We must reduce our commitment rapidly from a Division in Iraq (30,000 soldiers) to a Brigade + (10,000) by September if we are not to do very severe and long term damage to them and prevent us meeting routine commitments in the coming year. *the longer the force in Iraq, the longer it will take us to recuperate/reconstitute.*
- There is a limit to what we can achieve with a sustainable commitment. This makes coalition burdensharing essential. In turn, this makes obtaining the right sort of legitimising second and third UNSCRs essential if we are not to be left with an unavoidable and unsustainable commitment.
- Tendency of discussion on this issue to concentrate on the Military contribution. The Cabinet Office paper makes this same error. A military presence will be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for success in Iraq. **A large, organised and properly funded humanitarian assistance plan (supported by DfID) is needed from the outset.**
- Success will depend on engagement in civil reconstruction and administration on potentially a large scale. The UK should identify now what civil contribution it will make to rebuilding Iraq and consider the cross-Government resource consequences.
- We must not shy away from the fact that there remains a very credible worst case scenario that we shall want to proceed without either a second UNSCR or without wider international practical support. The possible implications of this for the UK, across the board, are severe and we need to take a fully informed decision knowing the risks and costs.
- We should put in hand detailed work to consider these implications and ways of mitigating possible effects.

Specific.

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The Annotated Agenda invites Ministers to respond to a number of questions. The questions and suggested responses are set out in numerical order, below (Questions in bold type).

Ministers urgently need to take a view on this [US assumption that the UK will take responsibility for providing a secure environment in a sector of Iraq] before the military planning assumptions become a fait accompli.

- There are a broad range of options. We need to decide whether our intent is to do as much as possible, or the minimum. We could do a lot. But it would be extraordinarily difficult and expensive. Crucial that we don't see this question in purely military terms – and the paper makes this point.

Do Ministers agree that the UK does not have the resources to make an 'exemplary' effort in providing for basic humanitarian needs in the area controlled by the UK Division?

- Comes back to our overall intent. We must face up to the fact that we will be seen, de facto, as responsible for the portion of Iraq occupied by UK forces. If we don't provide resources for basic humanitarian needs *in the initial period* we have to either be confident that they will be provided from elsewhere (NGOs, UN, US) or accept the risk that we shall be blamed for humanitarian failures in whatever region of Iraq we take on
- Should appreciate that this is a temporal question; the provision of humanitarian needs *should* in due course fall to NGOs, UN agencies etc.

somehow
referred
was
phase
4 A

4 B

Which of these military options should the UK aim to pursue in the medium term?

- We can only sustain a medium scale commitment – that is, a brigade plus a 2* (Divisional) HQ. Thus we can realistically aim at the second option set out in the paper – but, this would require coalition burdensharing in the form of two Brigades. Agree absolutely with what the paper says about not underestimating the difficulty of securing that coalition support. *
- HQ ARRC is a separate issue. Its use is conceivable, but would be difficult for us to sustain. Taking it from NATO not straightforward. This needs more work. At most we should explain to the US why this would be difficult for us.

CDS has suggested using Mike Walker as a
senior emissary

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Do Ministers agree that the UK should follow the US plan for the administering Iraq as a whole and not seek general UK responsibility for the administration of any geographic area of Iraq in the medium term?

- Though we can influence it at the moment, on the day, we won't have much choice but to follow the US plan !
- We need to influence ORHA so that they develop a plan that delivers a civil structure that is most likely to facilitate early military disengagement.
- If we decide to take on a military sector we should face the fact that de facto US ORHA structure will be highly dependent on military logistical support and will need to work closely with the military.
- So we shall be intimately involved in (if not necessarily responsible for) administration in any case. Whatever the niceties of the eventual organisation for civil administration, if we take a 2* military sector, this will be perceived as a 'British sector'. We must not shy from resourcing this properly.

Do Ministers agree that any UK involvement over the medium term should be conditional on a UN mandate?

- If we are present on the ground any form of disengagement will be very difficult to achieve (especially if the US are the only other nation present).
- A UN mandate is however crucial -- our Medium Scale commitment will only be able to make a meaningful contribution to the sort of sector being considered by the US if it receives substantial coalition support (2 Brigades). We should not assume this will be forthcoming -- even if we get a UN mandate -- other nations are overstretched and any mandate will in any case be very controversial. But we almost certainly won't get the requisite coalition support without. We are thus carrying a significant risk.

Do Ministers agree with these objectives?

- Yes.

Do Ministers agree these principles? Are they content for us to approach potential contributors now?

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- Yes. Internationalisation crucial. Given that, even if we get a mandate, it is likely to be deeply controversial, we need to start making our arguments now.

(you can at Athens)
next week

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Annex B

To D/Sec(O)/2/37/13

Dated 5 March 2003

ILLUSTRATIVE POSSIBLE LEVELS OF UK COMMITMENT TO PHASE IV

- i. **Maximum payoff (and maximum cost):** Tackle a problem area (eg. Basra) with a UK 2* lead (subsequently becoming a multinational HQ). A UK Brigade in the SE sector. HQ ARRC taking on the CJTF(I) role early for 6 months. UK involvement (but not military) in a reconstruction pillar. This would be contingent on US burdensharing on HQ ARRC CIS.
- ii. **Regional (+):** The SE Sector with a UK 2* lead (subsequently becoming a multinational HQ). A UK Brigade in the SE sector. No HQ ARRC but UK involvement (including military) in a reconstruction pillar and a significant staff contribution to CJTF-I.
- iii. **Regional:** The SE Sector with a UK 2* lead (subsequently becoming a multinational HQ). A UK Brigade in the SE sector.
- iv. **Regional (-):** A UK Brigade in the SE sector – not UK led. UK involvement (including military) in a reconstruction pillar.
- v. **Regional (-):** A UK Brigade in the SE sector – not UK led.

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