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From: DCMC CRISIS 04-S
Sent: 19 March 2003 08:45
To: CDS/PSO-S
Cc: SOFS-APS2-S; PUS Outer Office-S; DCDS(C)/MA1-S; DG OpPol-S; DOMAAD(ME)-S
Subject: Joint Defence and Foreign Secretaries Minute to PM on 'Sectors'

Importance: High

I attach a copy of the draft joint minute for the Defence and Foreign Secretaries to send to the PM on 'Sectors' - although it is now more to do with the UK's Contribution in post-conflict Iraq. It was forewarned at CDS's meeting on Mon 17 March with CDS (Des).

It has been cleared by DCDS(C) and DG Op Pol in the MOD and is now with the Foreign Secretary:



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Could PSO to CDS now lead on its submission to the SofS's office once CDS is happy.

COL
Iraq Planning Unit

PUS

I wish to comment on this.
My views are as follows:

The JCS views are as follows:

= In terms of ^{military} capacity, with a view to the aftermath, it would clearly be preferable to confine ourselves to S.E. Iraq, and not bite off more than we can chew. I accept, however that we should be prepared, initially, for our forces to be fairly widely dispersed across Iraq, depend on how Phase 3 goes, to come without ~~at~~ the end of Phase 3, Phase 4 becomes harder, & not academic. The trick will be to be able to regroup in a smaller area of SE Iraq once hostilities are ended.

= I also agree that we should be clear about our medium / long term scale of military commitment. While we are putting all we can into the war effort we should plan ahead to stay broadly within

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What concerns me most is the process of
transitioning from a primarily military effort
to the civil-led longer term humanitarian and
reconstruction phase. Recent history does not
offer too much encouragement and we shall have
to work hard to avoid 'dependence culture' on the
armed forces to do things which should be for
civil departments - initially through aid, subsequently
through long term efforts. The politics of the issue
do, I believe, point in the same direction. It is
most the PM, but for us to play an exemplary
role, we shall need to remember that memories of the
UK in the region from the 1920s are not all positive,
and we should make clear our desire to hand over and
withdraw on the right basis as early as we can.

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Draft joint minute to PM from Foreign and Defence Secretaries

Iraq: UK Military Contribution to post-conflict Iraq

We need to be aware of the state of US military planning for post-conflict Iraq and decide what the scale of our contribution should be to it. Some of these issues could confront us as early as next week, particularly as our forces will be operating in the South of Iraq. We also invite colleagues to agree to the propositions below.

- (a) The maximum size of the area for which UK forces would contribute to the security in the early days should not exceed our overall military capability. A focus in the south east of Iraq would represent a reasonable task.
- (b) The UK contribution in such an area in advance of a Security Council resolution would be limited to the facilitation of humanitarian assistance and a secure environment.
- (c) We need to agree urgently with the US a realistic authorising Security Council resolution for post-conflict Iraq.
- (d) We should press the US immediately to help us find military partners to enable us to draw down and, in due course, design an exit strategy.

The early days: stabilising Iraq

Much will depend on how the campaign develops, but in the first few weeks we should expect Coalition forces to be spread widely across Iraq. The expectation is that UK forces will end up in southern Iraq, loosely centred on Basrah. However, we should be prepared for elements of our forces to be dispersed fairly widely across Iraq (perhaps with a brigade near Baghdad, having been deployed there in support of the overall campaign objective).

US military planning continues to be fluid. But it envisages Coalition forces re-deploying into a more tailored security framework as soon as the situation permits. This will concentrate forces on potential flash points. The military task will be to facilitate a secure environment (including law and order, deterring adventurism and a variety of military-technical tasks) to enable immediate humanitarian relief to be conducted. To help UK forces win hearts and minds, HMT have allocated them £30m for humanitarian purposes in the first month as well as £10m quick win projects. Clare has earmarked [£65m] from DfID's contingency reserve for humanitarian operations. But this is a drop in the ocean; Iraq could need as much as a billion dollars a month for humanitarian aid if the oil for food programme grinds to a halt.

The expectation is that UK forces would be responsible for an area focused on Basrah and key military objectives in the south east of Iraq, which could include around 20% of the Iraqi population. This area is proportionate to the size of the UK's contribution to overall Coalition land forces. The US military from within Iraq will exercise overall command.

In parallel, and under the overall military command, the US plan to bring in a transitional administration¹ to co-ordinate immediate civil relief and humanitarian assistance. The transitional administration is making plans for allocating its limited resources, including provision for public sector salaries, on a nation-wide, Coalition basis. There is no expectation that the UK would be asked to contribute any resources to anything other than security within the sector earmarked for UK armed forces. So there is no suggestion that the UK would be left to foot the bill for the civil administration or the costs of humanitarian relief and reconstruction in this area.

Beyond the early days

Once the initial period has passed and a major part of Iraq has been stabilised, US military planning remains sensibly flexible. It recognises that parts of Iraq will be more permissive than others and that security could well be provided through something other than sectors. And it would be premature now to take a view on the merits of sectors for this stage. We are well placed to influence US thinking with a number of military officers and officials embedded within their military headquarters and in ITCA. **It would be helpful for them, and for military planners generally, to agree what our scale of effort should be in our medium term contribution to Iraq.**

Scale of medium term UK military effort

It will be necessary to draw down our current commitment by around a third by no later than the autumn in order to avoid long term damage to the armed forces. Keeping more forces in Iraq would be outside our current defence planning assumptions. We would need decisions now, not least on what would have to give elsewhere, to plan for this. Scaling down by a third will limit our contribution thereafter to a maximum of around one brigade, a two star headquarters and some air, maritime and support enablers. Our view is that we should probably agree now to tell the US, for planning purposes, that this is the upper limit of our contribution beyond the autumn.

Setting the conditions for success

It is not enough to agree on the scale of our commitment in the medium term. We also need to be satisfied that the conditions in which our forces will operate are conducive to success. The key to this is a UN Security Council Resolution authorising international activity in the post-conflict period. We should also let the US know the key importance of internationalising the security arrangements from the autumn onwards so that we can reduce our commitment as set out above. And we would expect US support in building a wider coalition to operate alongside our forces, allow us to draw down and eventually to provide us with an exit strategy.

We should be absolutely realistic about the limited prospects of our finding any genuine military capability to help us take this task on. New competent coalition partners are thin on the ground and, if the post-conflict phase does not go well, there will not be many nations who will be prepared or able to take part.

¹ The Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) becomes the transitional administration once it is established inside Iraq.

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And finally, we shall need to return to this issue once we are clear how the campaign is developing and look at our wider contribution in the round.

We are copying this minute to the Chancellor, the Development Secretary and to Sir David Manning.

Jack Straw

Geoff Hoon

Iraq – Administrative Divisions



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