

PJHQ/DC

15 Jan 03

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BRIEFING TO PRIME MINISTER

INTRODUCTION

1. This is an unofficial account of the briefing by CDS and DCJO(Ops) to the PM earlier this evening. An official account will be published by COSSEC.
2. The briefing was attended by SofS, Min(AF), PUS, COS, DCDS(C), CDI and DG Op Pol from the home team. The PM was accompanied by Jonathan Powell (COS to PM), Sir David Manning (Foreign Policy Adviser), Alistair Campbell (Dir Coms & Strategy), Baroness Sally Morgan (Dir Govt Relations), John Scarlett (Chairman JIC) and Mathew Rycroft (No.10)

BRIEFING

3. CDS opened the briefing by providing an over view of UK commitments around the world, before outlining US and UK forces earmarked for possible operations against Iraq. CDS's brief is at Annex A. DCJO(Ops) then presented the Coalition's concept of operations and the UK's part within it (Annex B), emphasising the intent to employ overwhelming effect, rather than the Powell doctrine of overwhelming force employed in 1991.

DISCUSSION POINTS

4. The PM asked a number of questions and made several observations (grouped under specific headings and not in the order that they were necessarily made in):
 - Targeting. The PM was concerned over the accuracy of weapons being used in urban areas - he wanted re-assurance that they were and that the targets in urban areas (especially Baghdad) were necessary. He asked what the civilian casualty figures would be (details of which are not known). This issue came up 3 times during the course of the briefing.

SofS stated that the MOD needed to do more work on this issue with the Attorney General.

- Success. On being briefed about the plan the PM asked, quite simply, "will it work?" CDS stated that it would; he had gained increasing confidence in the plan since TU had become more engaged in discussions about allowing 2 US bdes to attack from the North. The PM thought that starting the Air and Ground campaign at the same time was a good thing. He stated that he had no doubts that overwhelming effect was the right strategy.
- Sustainability. CDS briefed on the loaded & cocked principle, which he believed the UK could maintain for 6 months (matching possible US endurance), before we had to uncock & unload. CDS stated that work is in hand to see how long it would be before the UK would be in a position to re-load and re-cock again, which he estimated could be as long as a year. On the need to sustain the force in place the PM stated that he hoped that it "won't come to this" and that this "will happen mid-February to early March". CDS pointed out that the UK needed to match US timelines, which would require a number of decisions to be made over the next few days.
- Definition of Success. The PM wanted to know what we meant by 'success' - the collapse of the Regime, or the fall of Baghdad. CDS explained the problem of 'catastrophic success' whereby the Regime collapsed at the very outset before we were ready for it. SofS felt that the media would view the fall of Baghdad as the culmination of operations. This led the PM to ask about the cohesion of the Regime and its chances of maintaining control.
- Worst Case. The PM wanted to know what the COS thought was the worst case scenario. After much discussion about destroying the oil infrastructure, use of WMD and hunkering down in Baghdad and fighting it out, it was felt that the worst case was inter-Nicene fighting between Sunni and Shia, as well as the Kurds/Turks/Iraqis
- Aftermath. This led onto a general discussion on aftermath, with the PM asking what the Iraqi view on it was. CDS stated that the thinking on this issue was "woolly" at this stage, with work only just beginning. The PM stated that the "Issue" was aftermath - the Coalition must prevent anarchy and inter-Nicene fighting breaking out.
- Info Ops. The need to get our message to the people of Iraq and to the heads of the Regime was mentioned briefly, along with the need to bring the UK public with us. The PM saw the need to influence Iraqi thinking in both a constructive (encourage support for the Coalition's objectives) and destructive (discourage inter-Nicene fighting or resistance to the Coalition) manner.

- Iraqi Reaction. The PM wanted to know what was going to stop Saddam from launching a pre-emptive WMD strike against the Coalition as it built up inside Kuwait. Furthermore what would he do if backed into a corner (i.e. trapped inside Baghdad?).

The PM thought that it would be different if he was backed into a corner. CDI assured the PM that we would see any attempt to launch a pre-emptive WMD attack as Saddam would have to move his weapons from their hiding places and assemble them.

- Further Work. The PM asked that the MOD look at 3 things:
 - We need to be clear on what we are offering the Iraqi people and the senior members of the Regime (those below the top 100 on the list) - removal of the senior hierarchy or minimising resistance or what?
 - Aftermath. We have to develop a feasible plan.
 - Look at the unexpected - think through the big 'what ifs'; oil, WMD, inter-Nicene fighting - and develop a strategy.
- Final Comment. The PM's final comment was that this was the "best chance we have got". He stated that it was his "strong view that we wouldn't be looking much past the end of February before seeing this take place".

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

5. The PM came across as someone with strong convictions that this should, and will, go ahead. He accepted the military advice being given to him, although he still sought re-assurance that all aspects had been looked at in detail and that plans are drawn up to deal with the unexpected or perceived worse cases. It is clear from the 3 areas that he asked further work to be done on that the Phase IV part of the plan is critical.

6. Alistair Campbell said nothing throughout the meeting. However his body language seemed to suggest that he was not as won over by the briefing as the PM was, indulging in several huddles with Baroness Morgan amid much frowning and turned down mouths.

7. Interestingly it was SofS who urged the PM to exercise a degree of restraint on POTUS, whom he described as 'going for it'. SofS expressed concern about some of the US ideas and wanted to ensure that no irreversible damage was done to Iraq.

8. Overall the briefing was a great success.

{Signed on CHOtS}

MA/DCJO (Ops)

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BRIEF TO PM – 1715 WED 15 JAN 03

CDS Welcome and introductions.

BACKGROUND ON DISPOSITION OF OUR ARMED FORCES TODAY.

Prime Minister, before we address Iraq, it may be useful if I set our possible contribution there against our current Armed forces activity and deployments **world-wide and home.**

On your chart these are shown in 5 groups: Theatres (yellow), Garrisons (red), Maritime Activity (blue), Defence Diplomacy (light blue), and Home Base (green). The size of the dot broadly represents the size of the team and the key deployments have the forces assigned flagged beside them.

- The total **trained strength** of the Armed Forces is 1822001 (Navy 36800, Army 96500, RAF 48900).
- There are approximately **40,000 troops² (22% of total)** currently deployed on existing operations around the world.
- In addition to this an estimated further **20,000 (10% of total) warned for existing operations** and approximately **20,000 (10% of total) in the process of recovering from operations.**

¹ As at 1 Apr 02 Defence Analysis Statistical Agency

² Op FRESO – 17897, Northern Ireland – 13,610 (in Province), 723 (out of Province), Cyprus – 420, Georgia – 7, Balkans – 2961, Falkland Islands – 1253, North Africa, Middle East and Gulf – 3089, Sub Saharan Africa – 32 (Total – 39992)

- While hard to break out as a firm figure, because many of the staff are double hatted, significant numbers of **personnel are in the UK providing support** for these forces.
- In the **worst case situation** requiring a full UK contribution to operations against IRAQ, we estimate that **up to 50% of the Armed Forces** could be on operations.
- There is a clear concern about the potential implications of this effort on our ability to generate Rapid Reaction Forces in the longer term, should the operational tempo continue at its current and forecast pace.

POTENTIAL OPERATIONS

- Sierra Leone
- Macedonia, Balkans [and Sudan] (EU Ops)

THEATRES (yellow dots)

In the Gulf, Op RESINATE: 18 combat aircraft, 9 combat support aircraft, SSN, 2

DD/FF, 5 MCM Gp, 2 Survey Vessels and 1 AO – Total 2200

Sierra Leone - IMATT - 101

Afghanistan – Op VERITAS / ISAF - 1716

Balkans: Bosnia 1400, Kosovo 1550, Macedonia 20, Total – approx 3000

GARRISONS (red dots)

Brunei (1,117), Ascension, Falklands (428), Cyprus (2033), and Gibraltar (60).

MARITIME (blue dots)

Maritime Patrols

South Atlantic and FI APT(S) - OPV

Standing NATO Forces Med and Atlantic enroute

Gulf as briefed

Counter Narcotics Patrol in Caribbean operations (APT(N) FF deploys 23rd plus RFA

Fishery Patrol – 4 Patrol Vessels

Nuclear Deterrent.

DEFENCE DIPLOMACY (light blue dots)

Over the festive season and New Year, we have had STTT and BMATT deployed or deploying in: Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia (8), South, West and East Africa (28), and the Czech Republic (50).

We have personnel supporting UN missions: UNOMIG (Georgia – 7) UNIKOM (Kuwait – 11), UNFICYP (Cyprus - 415), UNAMSIL (Sierra Leone – 22), UNMEE (Ethiopia and Eritera - 4), MONUC (DR Congo – 6), Jt Mil Msn (Sudan - 1) – Total around 500

HOME BASE (green dots)

NI -14,338.

FRESCO - 17,956. (19,000 earmarked)

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TURNING NOW TO THE SPECIFIC BUSINESS OF IRAQ

- The aim of today's brief is to:
 - Explain the state of Iraq contingent military planning.
 - Outline the proposed UK contribution.
 - Apprise you of decision time scales, particularly with respect to the movement of armour.
- US, like UK, believes the best way of applying pressure to Saddam (**force on mind**) is convincing, coherent military build-up **leaving him in no doubt as to consequences of non-compliance** with UNSCR 1441.
- US military machine, represented by Gen Franks, declared to the President of the US that he is working to produce a **'loaded and cocked' winning capability from 15 Feb.**
- If required, US then able to commence air campaign and some ground offensive operations (poss inc UK) **from 3 March** and the main effort starting within 2 weeks on 19 Mar, but the US are looking to bring this forward.
- The plan aims to generate a thorough shock **from multiple directions, in every environment, as near simultaneous as possible**, as intelligence indicates that Saddam's regime is a **house of cards** which such a shock should collapse.

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- By 15 Feb the US will have troops in theatre, building to around by mid March. The total US deployment figure is expected to be around though this final figure continues to grow. At the start of operations, the US expect to have available:

Maritime: **Carrier Battle Groups** comprising **combat aircraft**, ships, with a load out of approximately **Tomahawk**, and personnel. The amphibious shipping includes assault ships, **marines**, and **specialist aircraft**.

Total: **people.**

Land: armoured brigades totalling tanks, infantry brigades, artillery brigades, and personnel in support.

Total: **people.**

Air: air wings comprising combat and combat support aircraft across Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

Total: **people.**

Special Forces Some personnel throughout the region.

This will be commanded by General FRANKS, Cdr US CENTCOM, at the US Contingent Forward Headquarters at Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar, with maritime, land and air component commanders at Bahrain, Camp Doha, and Prince Sultan Airbase, Saudi Arabia.

UK CONTRIBUTION

The UK will provide support to the US through our fixed bases abroad in Diego Garcia and Cyprus, in UK from Fairford, Mildenhall and Lakenheath. I will now outline the UK's potential force contribution, before going on to explain how we have arrived at this size and mix of units:

AIR: which you have agreed

68 Combat aircraft, 41 Support aircraft (Total 109) and personnel.

MARITIME: Which has been announced and some of which has deployed.

Amphibious Group of 5 ships, led by the carrier ARK ROYAL, carrying HQ 3 Cdo Bde, 40 + 42 Cdo and supporting elements.

Escorting and protecting task force: 6 DD/FF and 5 RFA (ARGUS as PCRS) capable SSN.

6 x Mine Counter-measures Vessels, world leaders in this field.

Total: 22 ships, 2 s/m, 2 RM Cdos, personnel.

LAND: Which is the current focus for discussion in MOD.

Commanded by HQ 1(UK) Armoured Division.

7 Armoured Bde:

16 Air Assault Brigade:

and, as already mentioned, the Cdo elements from the ATG.

For mobility, 16 AA and 3 Cdo will have III support helicopters

Total personnel.

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SF:

Overall Total : _____

SUPPORT:

To transport this force to theatre we have so far chartered **50 ships** and anticipate chartering **200 wide body passenger and freight aircraft**.

Reserves; In the first tranche, we have sent 1650 mobilisation orders in order to generate **1500 reservists**, and the final total is still evolving.

SOME CONSTRAINTS AND ASSUMPTIONS that have brought us to this point:

- Our interest is to be ready to engage from the outset. Therefore, we have assumed a need to be ready when US are and therefore their timelines have driven ours.
- Need to ring fence **19,000 personnel contingent for fire-fighting** duties has limited our flexibility.
- While TU Pol and Mil recognise need to keep pressure on Saddam, TU people not yet convinced with result that **TU access for land, and possibly air forces, is too limited, too late**. Consequence has been, consequent on your approval, to switch the UK's Land Force contribution to South, and therefore to undertake a different part in the overall plan.

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- This has resulted in the need to take our land forces the extra 3000 miles from E Med to Gulf, and the need to flow this force through the limited ports in, to the restricted land mass of Kuwait.

DCJO(OPS) FOR TACTICAL LAY DOWN.

CDS

Wrap up with some points:

1. **Shock.** As Gen Fry has said, the US plans relies **on immediate effect instead of weight of effort** to achieve the desired impact. It is not the gentle start of 1991, it provides an **immediate shock**, and once committed it will not be possible to revert to an attrition campaign. This will raise **issues of targeting** which you may wish to return to in discussion.
2. **Oil.** Media are likely to focus on UK's AO in the south encompassing two thirds of Iraq's oilfields, particularly if there are no centres of WMD in the AO. Working hard on IO campaign to ensure oilfields not destroyed by Iraqi forces, and that the Coalition's use of them to provide support to the Iraqi people is understood.
2. **Aftermath.**
 - Aftermath operations might be short but are more likely to **endure for years**. Worst case e.g. Bosnia - 10 years since UK's 1st fces deployed. MoD **planning now in co-operation with DFID and other OGD** to ensure the most effect means are used to restore normalcy. Of course, **humanitarian operations** will commence as soon as the first ground is taken and we are preparing for that.

- Forces not remaining for Aftermath will take time to recuperate and regenerate ready for use

3. Sustainability.

For the UK, we can keep our contribution in place for a similar period. From then on, the military sword hanging over Saddam will begin to lose its edge. This is therefore a one shot coercion campaign.

4. Winning concept. Two essential points:

- 1st. Saddam must believe that force will be overwhelming and **he cannot survive in power**. In parallel, must give **genuine hope to Iraqi opposed to regime** that an end to it is possible.
- 2nd. Coalition action must be swift for a number of reasons:
 - A drawn out campaign risks becoming a **battle of attrition conducted against a backdrop of dwindling public support.**
 - To **prevent Saddam using spoiling tactics** such as use of WMD, or causing an ecological disaster by torching of oilfields as he did at the end of the Kuwait war.
 - To **minimise risk of unintended consequences**, such as
 - The regional states expect a quick resolution to the Iraq problem.

5. US Support US have seen UK participation as essential from outset. To this end they have accommodated our constraints at every turn to ensure we are part of their coalition and to

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guarantee a serious military task for our forces. In fact, the current plan for UK forces makes them a **lynch pin crucial to success of the overall plan**. It must be emphasised that the plan as outlined, with the UK's recent shift of focus from the north (EU) to the south, relies heavily on the promise of US enabling assets.

TIMELINES

If we are to match the US timetable to be ready in theatre, we will need your permission by Fri in order to be ready to start deploying Land Force equipment to the Gulf from 24 Jan. The first armoured units will start loading in GE on 30 Jan. The submission for this will be passed up tonight.

Visual aids:

Seating plan

Simplified map with all key point mentioned as used in brief, eg MSR, oil, Kurds etc

Measles map showing current dispositions of UK forces word wide.

Timelines and Flow chart (COS only).

KEY POINTS FOR DISCUSSION PERIOD

POL/MIL Issues

US C2, UK C2 and interactions at strategic, operational and tactical level.

Battle Rhythm - Whitehall

Information Campaign and Media (NB Alastair Campbell has lead).

Coalition Contribution

Targeting.

Enablers

UORs

Money: authorised, spent to date, potential total

Reserves

HNS, Overflight, Suez

Cyprus, Diego Garcia

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War-fighting and Risks

Conventional and WMD Threat

Casualty Assumptions

Medical measures: vaccines, field hospitals, repatriation issues

Blue-on-blue/CID

FLAM, PGM, collateral damage

War-fighting in Summer

War fighting in CBW environment

Other

Lessons learned from Previous operations (now learned / action in hand / un-resourced)

Security of UK Home Base.