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DGE/F34 (190/02)
9 May 2002

PS/PUS

Copies to:
PSO/CDS
PS/VCDS
DCDS(EC)
DCDS(C)
Policy Director
DG Op/Pol
DG RP
ACDS RP
DEP
DCRS

Sir

1. *Weapon Stockpiles - latest update pending CDL's signature. I have signed.*

There is an issue here - CDL is not included as a copy addressee on this paper. I suggest he is passed copy of this note in order to colour his own covering note vis stockpiles (esp w.r.t. paras 7+8 otherwise key points could be missed - CDL clearly must not quote this as work but it would shape his output.

2. *ECI update by CLAP today.*

IRAQ - EQUIPMENT LEAD TIMES

References:

- A. MO 6/17/15C to PSO/CDS and PS/PUS, dated 8 April 02
B. MO 6/17/15K to Policy Director, dated 18 April 02

1. Issue. A tentative, initial assessment of equipment lead times for operations against Iraq. (Para 2c of Ref A noted that this work was underway.)

2. Recommendation. To note our provisional assessment that:

a. A minimum of 6 months' lead time would be necessary to fill essential equipment capability gaps before we could launch a Gulf War scale operation against Iraq;

b. A further 3 months' lead time would mitigate further operational risks, eg in relation to Challenger desertisation and biological protection;

c. Costs involved in filling essential gaps might be of the order of around £200M;

d. Within the lead time we would additionally want to make good a range of other equipment capability deficiencies which, whilst not absolute show-stoppers, should responsibly be tackled - more than doubling the costs at c.; and

e. We can see no obvious equipment show-stoppers to participating in a "Northern Alliance" model of operation at short notice, on the basis that we would presumably be able to tailor our contribution to the capability available -

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and to note the following caveats:

- f. This assessment has not been discussed with the front-line Commands or the DPA, still less with industry;
 - g. The six-month lead time is measured from the point at which an unambiguous authorisation to spend the necessary money is given;
 - h. This provisional assessment will need to be revised in the light of further work, and a clearer definition of what force packages might actually be involved; and
 - i. The assessment relates to ECC business – Equipment Capability. Assessment of equipment state of repair and logistic support, and of ammunition and dumb munition stocks, is being undertaken by DG RP and ACDS RP.
3. Timing. Priority: you asked for this initial assessment to coincide with PUS's return to office.
4. Background. The following paragraphs discuss the key, "show-stopping", equipment capability deficiencies, and the time lines for rectifying them.
5. Desertisation of Challenger. The key fixes are fitting dust skirts and better air filtration. In six months, two square Armoured Brigades could be fitted with dust skirts but not proper air filtration. Given that the Iraqi desert is more wasteland than sand dunes, this might at a pinch be acceptable operational risk. Doing air filtration as well would extend the lead time to 9 months.
6. NBC Protection. Necessary steps on chemical defence could probably be completed in six months. Biological (a lesser threat?) would take longer: nine months to build up full stocks of * up to twelve to achieve that for *
7. Smart Anti-Armour Munitions. Brimstone looks unlikely to be available in serious quantities until well into next year – we do not expect the first 120 missiles (enough for 10 sorties) to appear before March 2003 at best. We have 206 Maverick (integrated onto GR7); the lead time for another 250 (the estimated need) is put at nine to twelve months, but presumably might be accelerated on a burden-sharing basis by the US. LGB stocks seem adequate, and by June this year we should have enough TIALD pods to go round. There are also options for improving our ground-based smart anti-armour capabilities within 6 months (ATACMS missiles, artillery-delivered sensor fuzed munitions).
8. Smart Air-Launched Munitions for Fixed Targets. 20 Storm Shadow might be available by October, with initial-standard warheads. The earliest estimate for 20

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* [medical counter-measures]

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full-standard missiles is around the turn of the year. The subsequent possible build-up profile is currently obscure. We have reasonable stocks of Enhanced Paveway 2 (1000lb, with the GPS capability); 53 Enhanced Paveway 3 (2000lb) are due with us in November (scope for build-up thereafter currently obscure).

9. Aircraft Secure Comms. The following numbers of aircraft are currently fitted for secure comms (fewer fitted with – but it should be possible to upgrade “for” to “with” within 6 months):

GR4	22
GR7	22
VC10	6
Tristar	3
Canberra	2
C130	3
Chinook	3

It seems likely that we should be able to increase these numbers within a 6 month lead time – but no estimate of by how much is currently available. Integrating secure comms into other aircraft types (E3D, F3, Jaguar, SF Lynx) might take longer – but no estimate is currently available.

10. Air Platform Protection. Additional towed radar decoys for F3, to bring the total to 16, should be available from June this year. Flare stocks are low, but can be rapidly fixed. Improving other defensive aid suites would be a high priority (perhaps especially for Lynx) within available lead time, but is not assessed as a show-stopper.

11. Combat Service Support. Apart from limited numbers in the Balkans, our water and fuel bowsers cannot operate effectively off road. Within six months, we might be able to procure about half the requisite number of fully-mobile fuel tankers, and most of the water tanker requirement. For the balance we would have to rely on the current low-mobility vehicles. Otherwise, we might aim to borrow.

12. Special Forces. The bulk of SF needs could be taken care of in months. But fully equipping is estimated to take months.

13. Support Helicopters. A clear pinch point, but one primarily for DG RP/ACDS RP. We do not believe that the Chinook Mk3 can be operational in the SF role in less than some 2 years.

14. Naval Assets. Availability of naval assets is, again, primarily for DG RP/ACDS RP. But note that, though Albion's “ISD” has been advertised as March next year, it will be some weeks longer (assuming no further programme slippage) before she is ready to sail. Most of the obvious UOR needs in relation to ship protection, mine counter-measures and SSN comms should be achievable within 6 months.

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15. ECI. With stocks dispersed in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Oman, reserve stocks of improved tented accommodation left in UK are enough for only some 2,500 personnel. This, however, is presumably another deficiency area which should be regarded as a high priority for fixing within available lead time, rather than a determinant of when operations can start.

16. Next Steps. Work will continue in the ECC to try to improve this data (comment on lacunae, or indeed mistakes, from copy addressees would be welcome). In particular, we shall be trying to get a better feel for how rapidly minimum quantities of eg aircraft secure comms or air delivered missiles might be built up, if lead time were more generous. Further guidance on possible force structures involved would help us focus our work.

CHOTS signed

N K J WITNEY
DIRECTOR GENERAL EQUIPMENT

CHOTS: DGE-SPS-S

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