



SECRETARY OF STATE

MSU 7/4/5/5K

11 August 2006

MA/VCDS

Copy to:

PS/Minister(AF)

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PS/DG Op Pol

MA/ACDS(Ops)

DJC

D Jt Cap

DEC ALM

SHORTFALLS IN HELICOPTER CAPABILITY

1. The Defence Secretary was very grateful to VCDS and ACDS(Ops) for their brief on the current status of the UK's helicopter force, the main challenges facing us in maintaining helicopter support to operations and some of the options that have been considered to enhance that support.

2. As he made clear in the meeting, he remains concerned that we do have a shortfall that needs to be addressed and he would be grateful for a formal assessment of how some of the options discussed may contribute (or are contributing) to increased capability that can be used to sustain or improve helicopter support to operations within the next twelve months. In particular this should cover detail on:

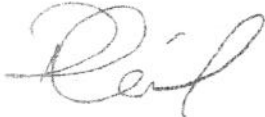
a. Options examined to backfill military helicopters with leased/contracted helicopters.

b. Wider employment of specialist role helicopters to free up those assets most suited to operational theatres.

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c. Other options to provide interim enhancements that might be possible, were additional funding to be available.

3. The Secretary of State would be grateful for a note on the above by 28 August.



RUFUS MCNEIL

Lt Col

APS/Secretary of State

MB

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