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DFID Department for
International
Development

1 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HE

From the Private Secretary

Matthew Rycroft
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

7 March 2003

Dear Matthew

You asked today for an update on DFID's planning for Iraq. I attach a paper setting this out, which I hope meets your requirements. NC
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I am copying this letter to Kara Owen, Martin Williams, Mark Bowman and Jim Drummond.

Yours,

Private Secretary

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DFID PLANNING ON IRAQ**Summary**

Planning for UK contribution to humanitarian effort in hand, building on past experience and capability. Success of these contingency plans would depend on the capacity and readiness of agencies on the ground– the military, UN agencies and NGOs – to deliver. Some are not yet fully prepared. A little more time is needed. Planning for longer-term reconstruction assistance, drawing on recent lessons from elsewhere, also underway. Potential scale of needs huge. UN mandate for reconstruction phase essential for many actors, including the IFIs and ourselves.

Humanitarian planning

The crises in Afghanistan and Kosovo gave little time for advance planning. On potential humanitarian relief for Iraq, we have looked at the full range of possible scenarios. In consultation with the UK military, we have drawn up detailed plans on how our response would be structured, and a sizeable DFID capacity established to deal with the crisis. But the vulnerability of the Iraqi people is already great and the scale of needs huge: supporting a population of whom 60% are already totally dependent on aid under the UN OFF programme, will pose a severe challenge to the international humanitarian community. The principle underlying DFID's assistance to Iraq would be to provide rapid support to whoever is best placed to meet the immediate needs of the people.

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DFID has established initial staff presences in the US Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Affairs (ORHA) in Washington and in UK 1 Division in Kuwait. Further deployments will shortly be made to the region and to UN agencies in response to requests for secondments. We have earmarked £10m to support the contingency planning of UN agencies and key NGOs. Scoping visits have taken place to most key centres in the Middle East and to UN headquarters in Europe and America. DFID staff are trained and equipped for field deployment, including NBC training. We have supplies to provide immediate shelter for up to 25,000 people. We would respond to the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people through supporting the international humanitarian system, principally the UN, Red Cross / Crescent and key NGOs to save lives and alleviate suffering. We would be able to allocate up to £65 million from our contingency reserve.

In the event of conflict, as soon as the security environment permitted, DFID could start by making rapid assessments of the scale of humanitarian problems to identify which UN agencies and NGOs would be best placed to provide support. We would provide immediate funding for them to do so. But during any immediate period of conflict, responsibility for humanitarian assistance would fall to the military, as the occupying force under the Geneva Convention. We have established liaison with the UK military to advise them on how to fulfil their obligations and minimise humanitarian suffering. We are refining these plans with the Ministry of Defence.

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The success of any UK humanitarian operation will depend on the ability and preparedness of the UN agencies and NGOs to deliver relief (in addition to the UK military in the first instance). Some of these organisations are not yet fully prepared to do so, and need more time and resources. Uncertainty over the legitimacy of any military action and over the status of any occupying force has held them back from finalising their plans. UN authority for military action and an international presence post conflict would significantly improve the international humanitarian response to a crisis in Iraq.

Reconstruction planning

Plans for a reconstruction phase in Iraq less well advanced. The US have only just set up the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Affairs (ORHA). The emphasis of our work to date in collaboration with other Whitehall departments has been to ensure that the international community, especially the US, realises the enormous scale of the task and the necessity of a UN mandate to enable Iraq to access the assistance it will need. Without such a mandate, we and other agencies will be unable to provide any significant support for Iraq's reconstruction, beyond the UK's obligation to provide humanitarian assistance. Uncertainty over this issue continues to hold back planning within many of these agencies, particular the international organisations.

Notwithstanding these constraints, we have held initial discussions with a number of partners on their planning, including the World Bank whom we would expect to play a lead role in Iraq's reconstruction. The financial needs

of Iraq's reconstruction will be enormous, particularly in the event of damage to its oil facilities. We are working with the Treasury on the Chancellor's paper detailing the possible scale of the challenge. One of the first key tasks will be to set out Iraq's enormous financial debts and liabilities and put these on an agreed international footing. We would aim, with the Treasury, to play a lead role in the IFIs in gaining such agreement and ensuring Iraq is able to access the support it needs. This work is ongoing.

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