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\*by e-mail

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Private Secretary

**Ext.:**

**Date:** 25 February 2003

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#### IRAQ CONTINGENCY PLANNING: UPDATE

The Secretary of State held her weekly update meeting on Iraq on 24 February. The meeting was attended by Nicola Brewer, Alistair Fernie, Michael Mosselmans, and you. Your submission of 21 February provided the agenda. I outline below the key points and conclusions of the meeting.

#### UN Resolution

2. There was an increased recognition across Whitehall of the likely scale of post-conflict activity, and the essential nature of UN involvement and authority if this was to be effectively addressed. It was not at this stage clear whether any second Resolution would address the UN issue, but Nicola Brewer would be writing round the following day to senior Whitehall colleagues on the UN role.
3. The Secretary of State noted that while discussion in Whitehall, and in the Security Council on the UN role would be helpful in raising the profile of the debate, what would count in the end would be words in the Resolution, and this was what we should be working towards. The UK had substantial leverage with the US, and we should be using this to best effect.
4. The Secretary of State made clear her view that any Resolution should be substantive, and clearly justify any action we took under it. It had to be more than a gesture. She asked that the Department keep closely abreast of the debate on the legality of occupation of Iraq without any UN mandate.

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Visit by Nicola Brewer to New York

5. The Secretary of State agreed the objectives of Nicola Brewer's visit to New York:

- a. to set out UK thinking on the need for a clear UN role post-conflict;
- b. to explain our humanitarian options and limitations;
- c. to explore the UN Secretariat's thoughts on a strategy for engagement in Iraq following any conflict; and on how they might co-ordinate with a US/coalition force;
- d. to discuss with the UN Secretariat what they believed would be necessary to allow for a UN role in post-conflict reconstruction, in terms of any second or third UN Security Council Resolution; and
- e. to join Tim Cross' meeting with Louise Frechette – and if possible see her separately – to discuss a second UNSCR and other key issues.

6. Nicola would also try to see Sir Jeremy Greenstock during her visit.

UK/US discussions

7. reported on the recent US/UK discussions which he had attended, and on the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA).

8. ORHA was looked on as the interim civilian administration-in-waiting, to take over from any military administration. But it was a fundamentally military set up, based in the Pentagon, and with a substantial contingent of ex-military staff within it. Its key weakness was the fact that it had only just been established, and the consequent lack of preparation and well thought through plans. ORHA had four pillars:

- a. **Humanitarian:** this was the most advanced in terms of planning. There were strong and experienced staff members, with the necessary skills. However, as yet they did not have sufficient funds, staff, or capacity to undertake what was expected of them. They were relying on a call down contract to provide them with additional capacity. They were very aware of the need for clear and substantial international and UN support post-conflict;
- b. **Reconstruction:** this was less well prepared. They were heavily dependent on call down contracts, and their plans were not nearly as well advanced as they should be at this point;
- c. **Civil Administration:** this was the least advanced in terms of planning. They had a substantial way to go, and would not be ready by the six week deadline they had been set;
- d. **Logistical support** to work once in Iraq: planning had only just begun. They had not even started on such vital areas as telecommunications.

9. The above situation and lack of preparedness was extremely worrying. Most of the key players seemed to recognise how vital it was that any conflict, and post-conflict action, should have a clear UN mandate and authority. Jay Garner was

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strong, and prepared to take this message up to the highest level in the US administration. But it was unclear how far the hawks in the US administration would be prepared to listen to or accept this.

10. US NGOs had mixed views on their involvement post-conflict. Some said they would be prepared to engage without an overall UN role or mandate, on humanitarian grounds. Others were less sure. DFID would meet UK NGOs on 26 February, after which we would be clearer on their position. But it seemed the US administration was currently fairly complacent about the willingness of both NGOs and the UN to come in on the humanitarian front following any military action.

11. It was agreed that the Secretary of State would write to the Prime Minister following Nicola Brewer's visit, setting out the current situation, and the dangers it posed to early action unauthorised by the UN and without wider international support. **Action: MENAD to draft**

#### Finance

12. Although MOD and FCO appeared to be more aware of the financial constraints, and the need for the widest possible burden sharing within the international community, we had as yet no clear response to the issue of the limitation of DFID's engagement imposed on it by our financial situation. The Secretary of State reported that the Chancellor had indicated to her, in a private conversation, that he 'would do what he could to help.'

#### Other

13. Alistair Fernie reported on the increasing level of concern within the Iraq Planning Unit on the huge risks posed by military action without UN backing or authorisation, especially given the lack of planning and preparedness within the US on post-conflict work. Officials in MOD and FCO were advising their Ministers in these terms. A paper might be produced along these lines by the Planning Unit.

14. The Secretary of State reported that Jim Wallace, Head of the US Methodist Church, was working with a broad spectrum of fellow Church leaders to work up a possible 'third way' out of this situation, without either military conflict or the status quo. This might include a call for the indictment (possibly 'indictment and arrest') of Saddam Hussein personally.

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