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US policy



*by e-mail

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Private Secretary

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Date: 20 February 2003

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IRAQ: MEETING WITH GENERAL CROSS

The Secretary of State met General Cross on 19 February on his return from a brief visit to the States in preparation for his work in the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). Nicola Brewer and Carolyn Miller attended the meeting. I outline the main points below.

2. General Cross reported briefly on his US visit. The ORHA was very recently established, with people still joining and getting to know each other. While the people attached to it seemed good – and USAID and other Departments would also be seconding people to it – he was very concerned that it was as yet very new. Despite this there were expectations that ORHA would be ready for deployment to the region within six weeks. This appeared to him worryingly optimistic.

3. General Cross said that the issue of main concern, and least well planned or prepared for to date, was that of Phase IV – post conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. It was vital that strong plans were prepared. Given the size of the country, the number of troops which would be on the ground would be insufficient to undertake any substantive effort in this area. The Secretary of State agreed that more time was essential in order to allow for planning, and also to allow for a proper UN mandate to be agreed for any military action. Both these would allow for a stronger humanitarian response in due course. General Cross agreed on the need for a clear UN mandate. There would be a series of meetings over the following days in US around this, with the aim of persuading US decision makers of the necessity of UN authorisation and a clear role.

4. General Cross stressed the importance to the UK military of knowing that DFID would be working alongside them. The Secretary of State underlined that this would not be possible without a clear UN mandate for any military action, and for a post-

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conflict reconstruction phase. He should pass the clear message to his colleagues and superiors that this was the case.

5. General Cross had met Andrew Natsios of USAID, together with Wendy Chamberlain. He had been pressed on what financial resources DFID would put into the humanitarian effort. He had told them that he would pass this on, but doubted that without a UN mandate DFID would be putting in substantial amounts. (The Secretary of State confirmed this). General Cross had spoken to UN representatives, who had said that OCHA would operate in Iraq immediately after any conflict, but UNDP were unlikely to be there, given lack of finance and concerns over many of the same issues that DFID had raised.

6. The Secretary of State agreed with Nicola Brewer that a mission should be sent to New York as soon as possible to meet with Louise Frechette and others, and hold talks around the UN role. **Action: MENAD**

7. The Secretary of State agreed that a DFID representative should go to the States on a temporary basis to work with the ORHA. This person should not be formally based within the ORHA, but should work to influence and help with the planning of the Office. General Cross welcomed this. **Action: MENAD/CHAD**

Anna Bewes
Private Secretary

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