

CONFIDENTIAL
DECLASSIFIED

From:

Date: 17 March 2003

PRIME MINISTER

cc: Jonathan Powell
David Manning
Alastair Campbell
Pat McFadden
Sally Morgan
Matthew Rycroft

IRAQ: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE: DFID VIEWS

Clare Short passed you the attached note with DFID's views on what is lacking for an effective humanitarian response in Iraq.

DFID identified the following main issues:

- Humanitarian agencies are under-funded. The UN has a \$43 million gap for preparedness work and will launch a \$1 billion appeal as soon as conflict starts.
- Agencies are not ready to respond effectively and lack experience outside northern Iraq. Some have concerns about neutrality which may prevent them seeking US and UK support. DFID is not convinced the US is fully prepared and is concerned about US co-ordination with the UN.
- Humanitarian assistance will need to be provided by coalition forces until a permissive security environment can be provided for NGOs. DFID argues that coalition forces have limited capacity to meet humanitarian needs, particularly while combat operations are underway.
- The risk that the Oil For Food (OFF) programme may break down. 60% of Iraq's 24 million people are entirely dependent on this, receiving food and other help through 46,000 food distribution centres.

DECLASSIFIED
CONFIDENTIAL

DFID's proposed solutions are:

- Increased funding for DFID to provide to humanitarian agencies. DFID are prepared to commit £65 million in 2003/04, but say they need substantial new funds if they are going to make a sufficient contribution to the funding gaps.
- Extra funding for MOD, with DFID advice to the military on humanitarian planning and response.
- DFID working with MOD to minimise humanitarian consequences of military action;
- Rapidly secure a permissive security environment and prevent instability including in northern Iraq, so that humanitarian agencies can move in.
- UN Security Council Resolution to transfer management of OFF to the UN Secretary General immediately any conflict begins.
- Coalition forces to provide reliable and up-to-date information quickly to humanitarian agencies on threats and incidents.

DFID's analysis is probably about right. MOD recognises its limited humanitarian expertise and has been pressing DFID to help for some weeks. So it is useful that DFID now recognise the need to help. DFID is seconding two people to work with the US humanitarian agency. Cabinet Office is working to broker a deal on additional funding with the Treasury. We understand this may be around £20 million extra up front and £2.5million a week, but it is not clear whether this will go to DFID or MOD. This should make a substantial inroad in the funding gaps and would be a good UK share of the UN's \$1 billion.

CONFIDENTIAL
DECLASSIFIED

- 3 -

DFID makes no analysis of what others are doing. A key point will be the need to ensure that other countries – starting with the US, EU and Japanese - contribute immediately to the UN appeal.

I suggest you tell Clare that you want a meeting this week with Gordon, Geoff and Jack to discuss humanitarian concerns.

CONFIDENTIAL
DECLASSIFIED