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OP COS PAPER

SUBJECT – OP TELIC PHASE 4 – THE JOINT COMMANDER'S DRAFT OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

1. The attached amended paper¹ by CJO is circulated for COS out of committee consideration under silence procedures. Addressees will note that this version reflects the comments made by COS at the Op COS Meeting on 31 Mar 03. COS are invited to note and agree the recommendations in the paper.
2. Responses to COSSEC/ASec(Aug) are requested by 10 Apr 03.

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3 Apr 03

OPERATION TELIC PHASE 4

THE JOINT COMMANDER'S DRAFT OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

(A paper by CJO)

SITUATION

1. Coalition forces are now committed to phase 3 warfighting operations. Formed resistance from the Iraqi Regular Army is minimal and likely to remain so, whilst that offered by the Republican Guard remains to be determined. However, regime die-hards and zealots are actively engaging coalition forces at a low level. This tactic has achieved some limited success in urban areas, offering the possibility of a more sustained asymmetric conflict, but has had little operational level impact thus far.
2. Phase 4 operations will begin in southern Iraq within days. Yet the strategic backdrop to their implementation is uncertain and changing. Difficult but important issues, principally of governance, UN engagement and military involvement, remain unresolved. And the baseline conditions from which they will commence are far from clear. More positively, significant resources have been made available for humanitarian assistance from both governmental and other agencies. Ministers have delegated appropriate levels of funding to the Jt Comd for that purpose.
3. An enduring, operational level, concept is required to provide clarity and direction in a situation which is presently ill defined and which could develop in a number of ways.

AIM

4. The aim of this paper is to define an operational concept for the employment of UK forces in Iraq throughout phase 4 of Operation TELIC

CONSTRAINTS

5. The following constraints have been assumed:
 - a. A UNSCR mandate for phase 4 operations is not guaranteed and in any event is unlikely to be in place for several weeks.
 - b. During the period when a UNSCR is not in place military operations will, in varying degree, be both directed and constrained by the Hague and Geneva Conventions.
 - c. The strategic level context is presently uncertain and will change over time.

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- d. The nature of warfighting operations in phase 3, notably in ferocity, collateral damage and duration, will set the conditions in which phase 4 will begin.
- e. The operational design should be broadly consistent with the US approach.
- f. Force levels should conform to endorsed scales of effort¹.

PRINCIPAL FACTORS

6. **Consent.** Success in phase 4 will require resolution by conciliation rather than termination by force. Consent is therefore the key determinant for the conduct of operations. It is this that will determine the size, shape, capabilities and posture for a military force. Levels of consent will vary across Iraq and within the AOR, and will certainly be influenced by the nature of phase 3 operations.
7. **Governance.** The US approach to establishing an Interim Iraqi Authority (IIA) lacks clarity and a number of bold assumptions have been made. There is also disagreement both within the US administration, and between the US and the international community, over the role of the UN. It is highly probable that considerable military co-ordination will be required, at least in the early stages. Whilst an early UNSCR enabling Oil for Food appears achievable, discussions to secure a further resolution authorising transitional arrangements in phase 4 are in their infancy. The latter resolution would underpin US and UK attempts to build a wider coalition.
8. **CFLCC Concept.** As warfighting operations end, CFLCC will transition his forces to establish a coalition presence throughout Iraq and establish a secure environment. This transition period will be uncertain and of indeterminate duration. With security established at an appropriate level, his intent is to encourage existing Iraqi government structures and provincial authorities to function as normal. Where they cannot, he recognises the need to provide a military lead at provincial level until normal functioning resumes or alternative structures are put in place. The provincial level provides the link between central and local government, and military boundaries should be co-terminus with provincial boundaries. Once the IIA is established, in whatever form, and governors appointed, the principal role of the military should reduce to the provision of security. However, strong links between coalition and Iraqi military and civil organisations at all levels will continue to be essential. The design for establishing a secure environment will initially be based on in-place forces conducting framework operations, but should change as quickly as possible to focus on the control of difficult areas supported by quick response forces within the designated AOR.
9. **Legal Basis.** The legal basis for Op TELIC has been clearly defined in CDS' operational directive², which remains extant. For phase 4 operations without a UNSCR, the Hague and Geneva Conventions have particular significance. The international legal and other obligations that these conventions place on an occupying force are extensive³, not least to protect the civilian population, and they apply to the whole of Iraq. Should the UN authorise the coalition operation it is likely, based on precedent, that the responsibilities

¹ Managing the Means; D/COSSEC/40/1/4 dated 23 Mar 03.

² CDS /08/03 dated 18 Mar 03

³ Briefed to COS on 10 Mar 03

placed on the military will be equally stringent, particularly with reference to maintaining a safe and secure environment. That said, the conventions were drafted to mandate the minimum legal and other obligations of an occupying force. There is nothing contained within them that directly or indirectly prevents these minimum obligations from being exceeded. Thus issues of legality should not constrain early progress in line with coalition overall intent. Clearly, more fundamental reforms, such as changes to Iraqi law or institutions, could not be achieved without a UNSCR.

10. Force Laydown. During and on the conclusion of offensive operations, formation boundaries⁴ will *de facto* be linear in nature based on the avenues of approach adopted by the coalition. These will be further shaped by events on the battlefield. UK forces will almost certainly be at least partially mal-located for phase 4 and adjustments will be necessary, although they may take some time to accomplish.

11. Force Levels. There is a recognised need for additional forces in Iraq to secure ground already taken, show Iraq-wide coalition presence, and provide CFLCC with operational flexibility. 4(US) ID and 3ACR will achieve full capability around the end of April. This represents a significant uplift in combat power, but not for a month. Further US force deployments are planned. If approved by SECDEF, they could become available during June. To date there has been no firm commitment from other coalition partners to provide ground forces. Such offers as have been made are on an informal basis at up to battalion strength only.

12. Endstate. The UK has now issued its military campaign objectives. The end-state remains our intent to see Iraq become a stable, united and law abiding state, within its present borders, co-operating with the international community, no longer posing a threat to its neighbours or to international security, abiding by all its international obligations and providing effective representative government for its own people. The objectives also make it clear that UK forces should withdraw as soon as possible. That aspiration will require at least some success in achievement of the other objectives.

KEY DEDUCTIONS

13. The following key deductions can be drawn:

- a. The strategic context to the operation lacks certainty. Internationalisation is likely to be slow as nations take a view on the likelihood of overall success before committing themselves.
- b. The operational design must be sufficiently flexible to remain coherent within an ill-defined strategic context which is likely to change.

⁴ Boundaries define a geographical AO assigned to a commander and may change over time. This allocation of space is essential for the successful conduct of all military operations. Within the AO the commander has both responsibilities and freedoms in the conduct of operations. His ability to meet these is the key determinant to establishing force levels.

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- c. The posture and disposition of US and UK forces when combat operations are complete or when a surrender is concluded will be uncertain.
- d. On completion of combat, forces will be located in areas of operations for which they will have legal and military responsibilities which cannot be relinquished until handed over to a relieving force.
- e. CFLCC will adjust force dispositions on completion of phase 3 and establish an Iraq-wide coalition presence. The coalition will be thinly spread and the UK will be expected to take its share of the risk / burden in order to establish a safe and secure environment.
- f. On completion of phase 3, UK forces will be allocated an AOR within which the legal and other obligations of an occupying power must be met. The AOR may not necessarily be contiguous from the outset, but we should aim for this as soon as possible.
- g. If there is no effective governance⁵ in place, forces will have responsibilities for co-ordinating, and in some cases delivering, many aspects of life in Iraq.
- h. The military role in support of the civil sector could be prolonged.
- i. In Iraq the provincial level provides the link between central government and local administration. Military boundaries should be co-terminus with provincial boundaries, which will, in turn, define an AOR.
- j. There may be a need for more rather than less coalition forces in the short term, depending on the nature and outcome of phase 3 and the level of consent established as a result. The US will have no further formations available until late April.

DESIGN FOR OPERATIONS

14. In essence, the operational design should be predicated on the empowerment of Iraqi institutions and mechanisms of governance appropriately supported by international military and other organisations. Whilst the degree of support afforded will change in function and strength over time, the method by which it is applied must be consistent throughout. Underpinning this design is the maintenance of a secure environment, the establishment of an effective liaison structure and the achievement of consent.

THE JOINT COMMISSION STRUCTURE

15. The Joint Commission (JC) Concept. The JC is a proven and familiar model enabling effective civil-military crisis co-ordination. It allows the military to exercise authority and influence, yet promotes and fosters a sense of civilian ownership in the decision making process. Initially the military would lead on a JC pulling together local authorities, and other organisations including Iraqi military where feasible, into a single decision-making

⁵ Either in some transitional or final form.

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body. At lower levels, liaison teams mirror the function of the JC providing province-wide 'ground-truth' and a focus for military advice and support to the civil authorities. The JC structure also provides the information to allow IO / NGO to feel secure and target need. At an appropriate time the JC lead would transition to the civil authorities, with the military adopting a supporting role. In Iraq there could be a need to both impart policy and ensure it is understood. In Iraq, UK forces should use the JC model.

16. A Coalition/Iraqi Agreement. A binding agreement between the coalition and an appropriate and representative Iraqi body⁶ within the UK AOR, following the Balkan and Afghanistan precedent, would have great value in establishing the framework through which the JC could conduct its business. It would also have 2 further, significant effects. First, in the absence of a UNSCR, it would provide a clear basis for potential coalition partners, reinforce the associated statement of requirement (SOR) and form the basis upon which an MOU could be developed. Second, and perhaps more importantly, it would provide the clearest possible statement of coalition purpose to the Iraqi people, reinforcing the primacy of their governance and institutions and providing firm evidence of our intention not to establish a permanent presence.

17. The Iraqi Armed Forces. Coalition plans for Security Sector Reform (SSR), including the future shape and size of the Iraqi armed forces are undetermined. When necessary the UK will also establish liaison with the appropriate military levels of command to provide oversight. Incorporating these security aspects into the wider JC structure will be key to building early confidence in the Iraqi's ability to maintain progress towards the desired UK end-state, enabling earlier drawdown of coalition forces. We should attempt to retain as much of the Iraqi regular army intact as possible, since it will be required to maintain the country's territorial integrity in future and will thus be a contributing factor in our exit strategy.

CONSENT

18. The extended UK 'box' for phase 3 extends north into Wasit province. We should anticipate that the US will ask the UK to assume responsibility for this province, as well as those to the south - Al Basrah, Dhi Qar, Maysan. All are predominately Shia and are generally not pro-Regime. However, varying internal and external influences determine the overall threat and level of consent.

19. Anti-Coalition sentiment is predicted as low in all provinces. However, in the immediate post-conflict period, UK forces could become involved in peace enforcement operations between opposing factions. Internal tensions are greatest in Wasit and probable in Maysan and Dhi-Qar. Al Basrah should be the easiest province to govern, and is the most important in terms of geography, population and economic potential.

⁶ For example, the mayor of Basrah and his council.

ASSESSMENT OF MILITARY TASKS

20. Tasks. Tasks for phase 4 include:

TASK	FORCES REQUIRED
Secure Territorial Integrity of Iraq.	Manoeuvre forces
Support SSE and Elimination of WMD	Manoeuvre forces in support of Joint Specialist Capability
Maintain a Safe and Secure Environment	Manoeuvre forces
Support Enforcement of Rule of Law	Manoeuvre forces
Support HA and Reconstruction	CIMIC supported by manoeuvre forces and Specialist Support. Utilities a priority.
Support the Interim Civil Administration	Joint Commission / Liaison structure
Assist in Restoration of Iraqi Communications Infrastructure.	Commercial civil telecommunications supported by military J6 Specialist Capability.
Support Transformation of Iraqi Armed Forces	Joint Commission / Liaison structure and dedicated Training Teams.
Carry out Emergency UXO Clearance.	RE Specialist Capability.
Support HOC (IO / NGO Activity).	CIMIC supported by manoeuvre forces.
Defeat Terrorism	J2 Specialist Capability supported by manoeuvre forces
Facilitate Remedial Environmental Action	Commercial Contractors supported by Specialist Capability.

21. Force Levels. The proposed SOR for MND-SE Iraq⁷ recommends a 2-star HQ based in Basrah, three manoeuvre brigades, including combat and combat support elements. It also recommended an aviation brigade as a reserve, generating a final SOR of four brigades. This was developed following an assessment of troop to tasks, examination of population size and assumed the presence of consent. However, the ratio of one formation to each province is coincidental. For example the SOR for MND-SW Iraq, an area of 5 provinces, requires a single formation only. A UK assessment, based on anticipated levels of consent, is at Annex A. This predicts all provinces becoming areas of high consent over a period of time.

22. UK Capability. The accuracy of the threat assessment for phase 4 at Annex A will be determined by the nature of the conflict, adjusted by a continuous assessment of risk. However, assuming internal tensions are high, initial operations are likely to involve a continuous effort to preserve and sustain a consensual framework. This will potentially require a brigade level of command for each province. At the present scale of effort the UK has the capacity to do this, accepting some operational risk. However, commitment on this scale could prejudice our ability to reduce force levels in the short term. This would have wider impact on the UK's ability to generate and sustain forces for other tasks and should be avoided if possible. Therefore, any extension of UK responsibility beyond Basrah province should preferably be achieved through support from other coalition partners, operating under a UK 2-star divisional HQ. Liaison teams would be established providing Indicators and Warning (I&W) with mobile, quick reaction reserves held near main population centres.

23. Iraqi Reactions. As internal tensions subside, consent in Iraq will grow dependent on confidence in the US inspired IIA, engagement of local Iraqi governance and growth of HA / immediate reconstruction to improve quality of life. The Iraqi population must also be

⁷ This has not yet been approved by CFLCC, but has been developed by his staff

convinced that our presence is temporary. There is a direct link to our exit strategy here; as consent in Iraq increases, force levels decrease.

24. Expanding the Coalition. Even if a UNSCR is secured in good time, we will enter phase 4 with few, if any, additional coalition partners. Moreover, IO and NGO support is unlikely to be operating at full capability. This reinforces the critical importance of an authorising UNSCR, allowing the wider internationalisation of our presence in Iraq, and early bilateral engagement by the UK with potential force contributors. In the medium term the UK may have to be prepared to bridge the gap in force levels, maintaining a larger presence over a longer period of time than we would wish. We may also need to lower expectations when building a coalition. Contributions at battalion level, or even lower for specialist capabilities, would allow release of UK forces.

25. Engagement with US. The UK has no option but to use UK forces initially committed to phase 3 for phase 4. However, accepting our intention to draw down to below medium scale as rapidly as possible - which must be balanced against achieving our wider political objectives in Iraq - the issue of UK responsibilities in phase 4 needs to be concluded with the US. The UK would wish to concentrate in one area of Iraq, potentially Basrah, for ease of command and control and logistic support; this division of responsibility has yet to be agreed formally. This will require CJO engagement with CFC. Agreement to an AOR would allow planning for phase 4 to be taken forward in confidence. In the future the ORBAT for the later stages of phase 4 should be task-based. This would potentially see an increased multinational presence, possibly a move away from armour, but with the retention of armoured / mechanised infantry. In addition some specialist capabilities could be much in demand.

CONCLUSIONS

26. The operational concept for phase 4 should flow from the following principles:
- a. Military boundaries should be co-terminus with provincial boundaries and define an AOR. Within an AOR, forces should be deployed according to need on an intelligence-led rather than framework basis with emphasis on I&W and mobility.
 - b. The operational design should be predicated on the empowerment of Iraqi institutions and mechanisms of governance appropriately supported by international military and other organisations.
 - c. The Joint Commission structure balances the military imperative with the needs of the Iraqi people, and is a proven and familiar model enabling effective civil-military crisis co-ordination. UK forces should adopt it.
 - d. Success will require resolution by conciliation rather than force. Consent is therefore the key determinant. It is this that will determine the size, shape, capabilities and focus for a military force.
27. However, the true nature of phase 4 operations is as yet not clear. A continuous assessment of risk over time needs to be made, set against the following factors:

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- a. Initially operations are likely to experience strategic consent, but this may not be applied locally; thus the situation could prove unstable. This will potentially require a brigade level of command for each province in the area of UK focus.
- b. Consent will grow as the Iraqi population becomes convinced that our presence is temporary and as their lives improve.
- c. The issue of UK responsibility in terms of geographic responsibility for phase 4 must be concluded with the US. The Coalition will be thinly spread. CFLCC will expect the UK to take its share of the risk burden in order to establish a safe and secure environment across the Country.
- d. Even if an UNSCR is secured in good time, we will enter phase 4 with few, if any, additional coalition partners. Moreover, IO and NGO support is unlikely to be operating at full capability. Thus the UK needs to be prepared to bridge the gap in force levels providing a larger presence over a longer period of time than perhaps it would desire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

27. COS are invited to agree that:

- a. Our linkage with the Iraqis should reflect their system of governance and should thus be arranged on a provincial basis.
- b. UK forces should use the joint commission model.
- c. Forces should be deployed on an intelligence-led rather than framework basis with emphasis on I&W and mobility.
- d. Any extension of UK responsibility beyond Basrah province should preferably be achieved through support from coalition partners, who would deploy forces to operate under a UK 2-star divisional HQ.



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Annex:

- A. Threat Assessment and Force Levels.

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