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Notes

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DPA

Note to Mr. Prendergast

Supporting the Secretary-General in responding to
terrorist attacks and aftermath

      With reference to your note of 18 September 2001, regarding support for the Secretary-General in responding to terrorist attacks and the aftermath, the Secretary-General has approved option 2 and requests that you proceed accordingly.
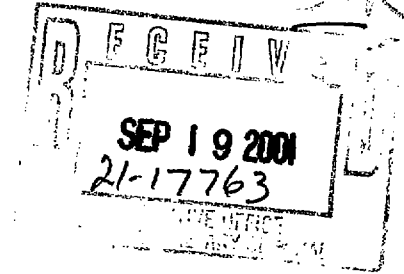
      Thank you.

S. Iqbal Riza
21 September 2001

(f)(c)(D)
CYA.
Would you wish to discuss? thanks
9/9

Note to Mr. Riza

SUPPORTING THE SECRETARY-GENERAL IN RESPONDING TO TERRORIST ATTACKS AND AFTERMATH

At the meeting chaired by the Secretary-General last Friday, there was agreement on the need to develop a broad strategic response to the consequences and implications of the 11 September terrorist attacks, and that the UN needed to look at its own procedures to see if the mechanisms we have are adequate. We will need to engage in a process of breaking down the issues into manageable component parts and determine what (if any) role the UN has for each.

I believe that we have adequate inter-departmental mechanisms (ECPS, ECHA, SMG). But, at the risk of sounding presumptuous, I also believe that for the present crisis we lack a well-structured communication mechanism with EOSG to ensure that we are providing the inputs that the SG requires.

The first question is whether EOSG would wish to pull the threads together itself or (at least for a defined set of issues) have this done elsewhere. Below, I offer some options for processes and mechanisms to develop advice for the Secretary-General, and to ensure that adequate information sharing is taking place. (For example, the humanitarians are now in full-scale planning mode, including identification of scenarios, and OLA is actively examining issues from the legal perspective. While both are absolutely necessary, we need to have some level where the work of the individual departments takes its lead from the SG, and contributes to his efforts. Otherwise, the risk of various parts of the UN system going separate ways will grow by the day.)

Options

1. SG could chair a weekly (or ad hoc) USG level "inner cabinet" meeting; EOSG could chair a senior working level process both to prepare and-follow-up. This would structure collection and analysis of input to SG through EOSG. ECPS and ECHA would follow-up for system-wide co-ordination. SMG could be used by the SG to discuss with/brief wider system at Heads of agency level.

2. SG chairs weekly (or ad hoc) "inner cabinet" meeting; ECPS meets weekly to review what is happening (information and analysis) and review the consultations, planning and preparations that are taking place or should be taking place, and formulate advice for SG. DPA, as convenor of ECPS, collects input from ECPS members (including OCHA in its capacity as convenor of ECHA) and synthesizes for submission weekly to EOSG. 2-3 page paper would cover political trends, key consultations, public attitudes/responses, media trends, internal preparations, and

follow-up on SG directives. To make this happen, ECPS would need to have its own senior-working level process to ensure follow-up and preparation. SMG could be used by SG to discuss with/brief wider system at Heads of agency level.
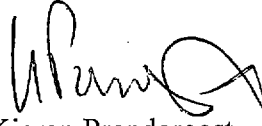
3. DSG chairs an inter-departmental/inter-agency high level Task Force weekly; SG meets with "inner cabinet" as necessary. ECPS (and ECHA?) follows up DSG led meetings as described in point 2. SMG is an arena for raising certain issues on which SG wishes to send messages/instructions for wider system.

The basic difference between them is the point of co-ordination, EOSG for option 1, ECPS for option 2, DSG for option 3.

On the broader issue of the UN's role, I perceive a trend around the house to argue in favour of focusing our efforts directly on the phenomenon of terrorism. Unfortunately, the UN system has limited direct knowledge of this subject, and is unlikely to have the capacity to address it thoroughly in the future, especially compared to the Member States and NATO.

We have our strengths in political, legal, and humanitarian analysis, policy development and setting norms and, of course, in the political role of the Secretary-General. While we should make every effort to improve our understanding of the political and security dimensions of terrorism, I believe that we (at least in DPA and the ECPS) should concentrate our efforts at this time on following developments around the world during this truly global crisis, in particular the responses of key state and non-state actors. (In so doing, we should take full advantage, on an ad hoc and informal basis, of the willingness of outside experts to provide their views and analysis.) Then, based on the SG's own guidance, determine the UN's comparative advantage both at the present time but equally in the medium and longer term.

An ECPS has today been scheduled for 24 September to consider the consequences of and responses to the attacks. I have requested input from members in developing elements for discussion. This will also give us a clearer idea of the direction various departments and agencies are taking at this stage. In addition to the SMG, this could be one arena for discussing some of the organisational and process issues.

Kieran Prendergast
18 September 2001

cc: Deputy Secretary-General