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To: PS/Secretary of State

From: Stuart Jones, AH Op CROSSWAYS Pol

2 December 2016

MENE Crisis Ops/Op CROSSWAYS/Policy

**SAUDI ARABIA: PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE A TARGETING GUIDANCE WORKSHOP**

**Issue**

1. Proposal for a UK-led workshop to share UK best practice and help the Saudis develop their operational documentation.

**Recommendation**

2. The Defence Secretary is invited to note:
  - a. As part of ongoing efforts to improve the Saudi-led Coalition's compliance with International Humanitarian Law, we intend to offer a workshop to help develop their operational documentation;
  - b. The workshop would provide generic advice on improving Coalition processes and documentation, but would not provide direct advice on how to conduct the campaign in Yemen;
  - c. The proposed workshop would be held in Saudi Arabia and run by personnel already in-country, therefore would be at no additional cost to the UK;and to agree:
  - d. That DA Riyadh should approach the Saudi MOD to offer the workshop.

**Timing**

3. **Priority.** The ideal date for the workshop would be 12 December. A decision by 5 December would enable preparations to be put in place.

**Background**

4. The Defence Secretary is aware of our efforts to improve Saudi compliance with IHL in the context of arms exports. To assist the Coalition in delivering greater controls and resilience in their targeting processes, we intend to provide advice to help the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) develop their operational documentation, in particular their orders to aircrew, known as Special Instructions (SPINS), [REDACTED]
5. SPINS are written by Air commanders to collate the tactical procedures that govern the way an air campaign is managed. Aircrew adherence to SPINS is mandatory and a thorough understanding of SPINS is a pre-requisite for all aircrew. SPINS routinely come in 3 forms:
  - Baseline SPINS. These detail orders and procedures that do not routinely change over time, [REDACTED]
  - Weekly SPINS. These contain information which will change over time, [REDACTED] plus any changes to Baseline SPINS.
  - Daily SPINS. These contain any critical pieces of information that have not been incorporated into either Weekly or Baseline SPINS.

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6.

7. The UK has considerable experience of prosecuting air campaigns in the full view of the world's media. We propose using this experience to design and run a workshop to facilitate the sharing of ideas and experience between the two nations documentation.

8.

9. As well as helping to improve Coalition processes, running such a workshop would provide a valuable opportunity to develop a better understanding of how the air campaign is being conducted. This would assist with the ongoing assessment of IHL compliance and may provide additional evidence to support our defence of the Judicial Review.

10.

**Finance**

11.

**Legal Issues**

**Presentational and media issues**

13.

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