LOOSE MINUTE

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MOD USE OF THE INTERNET

1.   **Issue**.   To ensure that the rapid growth in MOD UK of the
INTERNET develops in ways which are consistent with wider business
objectives and policies.

2.   **Recommendation**.   DGMO should take the lead in developing a
policy framework for the use of the Internet, in association with
DGICS and the Press Secretary and the single Services.

3.   **Background**.   You have raised the question of how MOD could
make more of the opportunities offered by the Internet (2nd PUS/
10/5 of 8 May, notal or needed).   Much is already happening in
this area but it has been largely uncoordinated.   The DPISG have,
however, begun to address some of the issues arising and Head of
Media Planning attached a copy of a recent D/INFOD paper in
responding to your minute.

4.   The main players in the current activities (from the Head
Office perspective) are D Pol(ICS), DINFOD, the Library and DOMD.

    -    DGICS staff have drafted a very good technical statement
         for the use of the Internet planned to appear as a DCI
         and a guidance document.   But this does not address
         policy towards the use of the Internet content of
         information that sites would be putting on their 'home
         pages'.

    -    The DINFOD paper presented to the DPISG considers the
         need to control the content of MOD web sites and
         proposes an organizational means of ensuring a degree of
         coherence.   The paper does not, however, look at the
         wider implications of MOD's use of the Internet (and,
         indeed, the DPISG would not be the right forum to do
         so).

-       The Library has been active in developing the use of the
        Internet - both as a source of information and as a
        means of publishing information on MOD's web site. The
        DPISG paper sees greater use being made of the Library
        but this raises crucial resource and funding issues.

-       Finally, DOMD is developing an Information Strategy
        (linking the Business and IS strategies) and the
        developing use of the Internet needs to be considered
        within that context.   DOMD also has an interest in
        promoting the MOD's Open Government policy through more
        use of the Internet.

5.   The Internet is already a valuable business tool being used
by more and more national and international commercial, scientific
and governmental organisations.   For these users, it has three
main functions: as an readily accessible source of information, as
a means of publishing information, and more generally for
communicating to the public and outside organisations.   As usage
expands, the potential value of the Internet rises in all these
areas, encouraging more users to join.   Demand for access to the
Internet is beginning to rise rapidly within MOD (including in my
own CM area, for recruitment advertising and other purposes).
However, widespread access to Internet raises some serious
questions which need to be addressed:

        a.   will it be possible to be able to access the Internet on
        CHOTS terminals once CHOTS has migrated to CSV7? There are
        obviously security implications and the need to ensure
        effective 'firewalls' if this is to happen. But if the
        Internet has to be accessed by stand-alone PCs are we
        prepared to sanction a growth in such PCs in addition to
        CHOTS?   This has major implications for the project to
        redevelop Main Building;

        b.   how are the PCs to access the Internet to be funded and,
        more important (and difficult to quantify) how is the
        connection to Internet to be funded?   There is likely to be a
        good business case for some organizational units to have
        their own links but it might well be more cost-effective for
        other less heavy or regular users needs to be met through
        central access points.   The Library could provide more
        access points although there are limits to what its Enquiry
        Service would handle even if properly resourced and this
        would probably need to be implemented by focal points
        throughout the business areas;

        c.   this, in turn raises the question of resources.   There
        are two aspects. . First, staff involved in publishing
        information on the Internet and dealing with e-mail
        enquiries. Second, the access and delivery charges incurred
        by the department offering a service to MOD users.   The
        DPISG sees a role for the Library as the MOD's central
        publishing/external enquiry point and it is already facing

rapidly increasing demands from MOD staff seeking information. Not surprisingly, there is no special funding for any of this. Given the rate of expansion of demand (especially while it is free to MOD users), the Library will not be able to continue on this basis. We need to find some way of passing costs to individual users, whether by hard charging, direct selling, or through some LTC mechanism;

d. we also need to consider the security implications of how we search for information of the internet because it is generally possible to trace the location/identify of an enquirer. The identity of individual MOD users could be protected by conducting searches through an intermediary such as the Library, although the MOD would be identified as an institution

e. with little or no coordination of its use the Internet might lose its business potential. There is evidence from other organizations that unfettered use of the Internet is costly and time-wasting with little benefit without a degree of central coordination.

6. I certainly have few answers as yet to these questions posed but it seems to me the options conclude that DGMO, rather than the Press Secretary or DGICS, is best placed to take the lead in addressing them. We need to ensure that our approach to the Internet is firmly linked to our business needs - it thus fits well with the wider Information Strategy work which DGMO has in hand - and he now also controls the central information resource of the Library.

7. The DPISG Internet paper proposes a Steering Group. DGMO has offered to chair such a group and I understand that this was accepted at the DPISG meeting. This group should encompass not only the major areas mentioned in paragraph 5 but should also include single-Service and PE representation. The terms of reference of this group will obviously have to drafted.

(signed)

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DUS(CM)