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INTERNET SUBMISSION TO 2nd PUS

As agreed at the last Internet Steering Group meeting I attach a draft of a submission to 2nd PUS reporting on progress and seeking his endorsement for some of the current activities underway. If I have not had comments by 23 December I will assume you are content for it to be forwarded to 2nd PUS.

{signed}

[REDACTED]
OMD/AD(Information)

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CHOTS: OMD/AD(Information)

DRAFT

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DGMO

INTERNET

Issue

1. The use of the Internet in MOD.

Recommendation

2. 2nd PUS is recommended to note activities to coordinate the use within MOD of the Internet.

Timing

3. An early acceptance of the recommendation will enable information to be disseminated on the use of the Internet and connection arrangements.

Background

4. In June 2nd PUS's predecessor agreed to a proposal to create a Steering Group to ensure that the rapid growth in MOD of the INTERNET develops in ways which are consistent with wider business objectives and policies. This Group was to assist DGMO to develop a policy framework for the use of the Internet, in association

with DGICS and the Press Secretary and the single Services. This approach was as a result of a question by the 2nd PUS on how MOD could make more of the opportunities offered by the Internet and coincided with a direction from SofS that there should be a coherent policy for the use of the Internet.

MOD's use of the Internet

5. There is already an MOD presence on the Internet; the Army and the Navy have established their own web sites with information on their Service, recruitment and so on; there is a MOD 'home page' with Ministers' biographical details, SofS speeches, a statement on open government and other, largely unfocused, information, as well as links to other MOD organizations with web pages. Unfortunately, it is not currently possible to establish how much use is made of the Internet. There is, we believe, a need to define a policy on the use of the Internet and it needs to be constructed around the benefits that will accrue to the department.

6. There are four main areas of benefit:

- a. as a medium of publication of information on MOD and the Armed Forces and the projection of their image;
- b. as an open source of information;
- c. as a means of electronic communication;
- d. as a means of electronic trading.

These uses are expanded in the Annex.

Current activities

7. The Internet Steering Group was formed to coordinate the MOD's use of the Internet. It is clear that there has to be a measure of central control whilst still allowing the maximum possible freedom to budget holders. Where the dividing line lies can vary according to the views of the proponents. However, it is

agreed that work should be put in hand, or to rapidly progress, the following activities:

a. Internet Policy Statement Underpinning most of the work underway is the need for a policy statement for the use of the Internet in MOD. The statement will cover the need to consider the justification for a connection as well as the issues managers should be alert to when their staff are connected. DOMD is currently drafting this statement for senior management endorsement in the Spring;

b. DGICS Catalogue To ensure that the MOD is getting value-for-money for connections to the Internet through service providers (ISPs), DGICS is currently running a competition for a number of ISPs for the DGICS Catalogue. The 'standard' ISPs will be expected to provide services which will include a firewall, the means for barring undesirable web-sites and to monitor the number of MOD users and the sites visited. The preferred ISPs will appear in the DGICS Catalogue in the Spring.

c. DCI on connecting to the Internet There is already a great deal of interest in the MOD in how to connect to the Internet and DGICS staff believe this DCI is required to codify who needs to be consulted and from whom authority is required when considering connection. It will also highlight the development of the availability of ISPs in the DGICS Catalogue. This DCI however cannot provide details of how to clear material for publication on the Internet (see e below) and other areas of policy. The DCI is currently in draft awaiting publication.

d. Defence Internet Service DGICS staff are also currently investigating the potential for the MOD to own and control one or more web-sites. This potentially allows greater control on the use of the Internet both for publication of material and for information gathering. The analysis will also include an investment appraisal.


e. Structure of the MOD 'home page' There is an

outstanding concern of how the MOD ensures that the material on its 'home page' presents a positive image. Although it has been agreed in principle that material appearing under MOD's name should be cleared before publication (the Navy and Army DPRs are doing this for their single-Service pages and DInfoD accept that they should clear material from the Centre Staff) there is the need to look at the MOD's 'home page' as a whole. DOMD is to report to the Internet Steering Group on what the coverage and structure of the MOD 'home page' might be, drawing upon existing material.

f. Maintaining the MOD 'home page' The organizational issues whether the Library is the right area to maintain the MOD 'home page' needs to be considered as well as, in the light of e above, the resource implications of maintaining the MOD 'home page'. This further work will also need to address the funding of the MOD 'home page': is the publication of material to be funded centrally and administered through whichever branch is responsible for the MOD 'home page' or should costs fall where they lie? Additionally, the coordinating cell will need to provide links from the MOD 'home page' to other MOD pages, and relevant NATO, Allies and OGD pages.

Further work

8. It is likely that there will be a continuing need to monitor how the Internet can be used for the benefit of MOD. There is still the balance between centralism and delegation which hopefully the Outline Policy Statement will help to clarify. The PE, for example, has set in place a system of control that might prove to be a model to be applied elsewhere. Until the policy has been published there is a concern that the DCI will encourage, rather than regulate, Internet connections with the difficulty of applying retrospectively a measure of control afforded by the policy.



DOMD

CHOTS : DOMD

INTERNET USE - BENEFIT TO MOD

1. As a medium of publication of information on MOD and the Armed Forces and the projection of their image. The content and presentation of information published on the Internet by any MOD organization will ultimately reflect on the image of the MOD. The department needs to ensure that the material being published is in line with departmental policy - DInfoD and the single-Service DPRs and Staff Duty branches have, and are having, roles to play in this process. This projection of the MOD image, however, has to consider legal and security aspects of the material being published, and to be alert to the possibility of tampering of MOD material on the Internet.
2. As an open source of information. The World Wide Web offers a wide range of information that can be up to the minute, or not available from other sources. Although searching on 'the web' is user friendly without experience in constructing search profiles and without knowledge of likely areas of information, 'surfing' can be time-consuming and can be abused (using it for personal reasons and accessing undesirable sites). Information from the Internet also needs to be viewed with some caution unless the source's validity is known. Not everyone needs access to the World Wide Web for their job, it comes as 'standard' though with any connection to the Internet and it is this availability that can cause a degree of alarm and is an area where other large organizations are increasingly reviewing their liberal approach to staffs' access to the Internet. Responsible managers and budget areas in the MOD have rightly introduced controls on, and monitoring of, the use of information gathering through an Internet connection as opposed to using Library facilities and other on-line information sources to which they have access. This practice needs to be the norm not the exception. As with publication there are legal and security considerations (including copyright, anonymity and virus risks).
3. As a means of electronic communication. The Internet allows relatively fast access to all parts of the world by e-mail. Within the MOD scientific and projects staff Internet e-mail provides a cost-effective means of communication. This medium is particularly effective for exchange of data files and for downloading publicly available software (providing care is taken to protect against viruses). The nature and frequency of the need to link to e-mail must be part of the business case for connecting to the Internet in the first place. There is a danger that the use of Internet e-mail will be used within the MOD at the expense of internal networks available through CHOTS.
4. As a means of electronic trading. Although this might be a sub-set of some of the above uses of the Internet, this category will grow in the future. The benefits of 'doing business' over the Internet are acknowledged if presently poorly presented. Examples of the ability to make contract details more readily available and to exchange invoices with customers are among the areas that it is expected MOD will take advantage of gradually.