Subject: Potential ADF options to support international military operations in Libya

Purpose:
To outline broad potential ADF options which could be contributed, if pressed, as part of international military operations in Libya to be discussed at the NATO Defence Ministers meeting over 10-11 March 2011.

Key Points:
1. The conflict in Libya between forces loyal to the Gaddafi regime and opposition groups is likely to continue. The focus of the international community for the moment is on humanitarian relief efforts, but other military options, such as a no-fly zone are being discussed.
2. Meeting notes are provided at Attachment A for your meeting with NATO colleagues on 10 March 2011.

Recommendation:
That you:

Note the attached meeting notes on potential ADF options to support international military operations in Libya.

Noted / Please Discuss
3. Detailed operational planning has not been conducted. Cost, endurance, sustainment, and second and third order effects have not been identified. Chief Finance Officer advice has not been sought at this early stage.

Consultation
4. IPDIV (FASIP) and HMSC were consulted in the preparation of this submission. CIOPS provided the data for the ADF options.

Attachments:
A. Meeting Notes
B. [Redacted]

Section 7
ADF OPTIONS TO SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL MILITARY OPERATIONS IN LIBYA

Key Points

• Convey that Australia greatly values NATO consideration of the ongoing crisis in Libya.
• Reinforce that Australia is seeking practical ways in which to contribute to the humanitarian assistance effort in Libya.
• Our preferred option is to provide airlift support towards contingency planning in Libya.

• We greatly value NATO consideration of the important issue of a no-fly zone in Libya.

• The international community can be in no doubt that Qaddafi’s regime will continue to use its superior air capability to support its campaign against the rebels.

• Acknowledge the challenges of establishing a no-fly zone in Libya.
  - A no-fly zone will cover a huge area and potentially involve the suppression of Libyan anti-aircraft defences.
  - As US Secretary Clinton has said, a no-fly zone will require a UN Security Council Resolution and close cooperation with other international organisations.

• Australia has consistently urged international action to protect the Libyan people.
  - The Gulf Cooperation Council’s (GCC), in a joint statement with Australia on 8 March, has supported the UNSC imposition of a no-fly zone.
  - We support the GCC’s call on 7 March for the UNSC to take all necessary measures to protect the Libyan people, including a no-fly zone.
  - We also support the Organisation of the Islamic Conference’s decision on 8 March to support a no-fly zone and its call for the UNSC to meet its responsibility to protect civilians.

• Reinforce that Australia is seeking practical ways in which to contribute to the humanitarian assistance effort in Libya.
  - Note that the UK has accepted an Australian offer of a C-17 to assist the UK in their humanitarian assistance operations in Libya.
  - Note that Australia has provided $5 million through multilateral agencies responding to the crisis and $1 million to the Red Cross.

• Australia’s preferred option is to provide airlift support towards managing the crisis in Libya.
  - Like all countries, Australia will need to balance a contribution against its current operational commitments.
Background

NATO considerations

NATO Advisory Council (NAC) planning for Libya includes support for humanitarian efforts; support for the arms embargo; and the establishment of a no-fly zone.

UK views

UK Foreign Secretary Hague outlined that there needs to be three elements for a no-fly zone: clear regional support; a UNSC Resolution; and an appropriate legal basis.

ADF options

Option 1 – Air Lift. The ADF could contribute assets from JTF633 on an opportunity basis for short periods of time subject to impact on OP SLIPPER. The ADF currently has an additional C-17 in the UAE tasked to support UK humanitarian assistance efforts until 23 March 2011 if requested. Airlift support is the preferred ADF option to support potential international military operations in Libya.

Option 2 – Maritime Support. HMAS STUART is on patrol in the MEAO and could proceed to the Mediterranean within eight days to contribute to a maritime task force in the vicinity of Tunisia / Libya until approximately 15 May 2011. STUART could contribute to air/sea surveillance, sanction and embargo enforcement, and mission essential unit protection. Mission duration would be limited to approximately 60 days to meet the current OP SLIPPER rotation scheduled for 01 June 2011. The ADF Major Fleet Unit contribution to the Combined Maritime Forces would be gapped during any contribution to a Libya maritime task force.