

## Witness Statement by Tom Dodd

1. I am providing this witness statement in answer to questions raised in the letter of 1 February 2013 from the Secretary to the Inquiry. I apologise for the delay in responding.

### Role

2. Between autumn 2001 and early 2004 I was a desk officer in the Overseas and Defence Secretariat of the Cabinet Office. I then went on loan to the FCO as Deputy Consul General, Basra. My day-to-day responsibilities involved policy co-ordination across a range of subjects in the field of foreign affairs, defence and international development. The work included acting as secretary to formal and ad hoc Ministerial and officials' committees, horizon scanning, revising and drafting papers, ensuring parity across departments and the follow up of decisions. Initially my role focused on point co-ordination of Afghanistan and South Asia policy but my duties became increasingly preoccupied by Iraq as 2002 progressed.

3. You have asked me detailed questions about events that happened more than a decade ago and on which official records are incomplete. Much of my work in the period was conducted by email and I note that the email traffic is unavailable.

### Iraq Options Paper

4. To answer your questions, working to Jim Drummond, who was the Head of the Foreign Policy team, I was the principal drafter of the Iraq options paper. Although this formal commission would have come after the Downing Street meeting of 19th February, given signals from Washington, we had already started to think about the issue before then on a contingency basis.

5. Based on the available papers, in terms of process, a meeting was convened in the Cabinet Office under Jim Drummond's chairmanship on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2002. The agenda for the meeting provided the first skeleton of the options paper. I wrote a follow up minute of 21st February which sought contributions of text from FCO, SIS and MOD in their fields of expertise or responsibility. In the following week, I crafted a draft on which I worked closely with Jim Drummond before issue. Subsequent meetings were held on 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> March

2002 to review further drafts. At each stage, the draft would also have been cleared with Jim Drummond. As I recall, I also held bilateral meetings/calls with departments to discuss their contributions. This was and remains the normal pattern for producing Cabinet Office policy papers.

6. The main officials involved in production of the paper, besides myself and Jim Drummond, were Desmond Bowen and Simon Cholerton, MOD and William Patey and Amanda Tanfield, FCO. SIS officers and Assessments Staff, were also involved but in more ancillary capacity. An FCO legal adviser was also involved; there was some debate about how much legal advice commissioned in parallel should be lifted into the options paper. I recall that AVM Peter Walker also attended at least one meeting. Contributions were made both in writing and orally.

7. The judgements in the paper drew on the collective wisdom of the time, informed by JIC judgements of the state of the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. Sanctions were seen as becoming less and less effective and containment failing to curb Saddam's ambitions and threat to the region. Jim Drummond and I had been closely involved in co-ordinating UK intervention in Afghanistan only months earlier, and brought that expertise and experience to bear. The policy judgements were formulated in the first instance by us both but then were endorsed or mutated in group discussion. I remember spending sometime debating as a group the final wording of the statement "the use of overriding force in a ground campaign is the only option that we can be confident will remove Saddam and bring Iraq back into the international community".

8. I do recall that Sir David Manning did suggest manuscript changes to the options paper. I cannot recall whether this was before or after the meeting on 7th March, although my recollection was that they were not major. I did not attend the meeting in No.10 on 7<sup>th</sup> March. The draft of 6<sup>th</sup> March is missing from the Cabinet Office record. Suggestions of changes to the draft would have most likely come from Sir David personally or from other attendees at that meeting.

9. I would be happy to provide evidence on other questions relating to Iraq policy and the role of the Cabinet Office in the 2001-2004 period if that were useful.

3 April 2013