Note. The transcript of the afternoon session begins on page 54.

1 (11.50 am)Synnott

2 MAJOR GENERAL ANDREW STEWART, SIR HILARY SYNNOTT and

3 LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR GRAEME LAMB

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning.

5 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: Good morning.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: We took just a little longer on the first

7 half of the morning, so I hope we can accelerate

8 through. I note that this is a divided session that

9 resumes after the lunch break.

10 Earlier this morning we heard the British military

11 perspective from those based in Baghdad the year

12 following the invasion, and the focus of this session,

13 which will run to lunch and then for about an hour and

14 a half after that, is on the situation in Basra and the

15 south where the majority of the British presence was

16 located.

17 And in this session we will be hearing both the

18 civilian and military perspectives. Our witnesses are

19 Sir Hilary Synnott, who was head of the Coalition

20 Provisional Authority South, and Lieutenant General

21 Sir Graeme Lamb, Major General Andrew Stewart, both of

22 you were general officers commanding in the Multi

23 National Division South East, or MND(SE). I've come to

24 learn the acronym.

25 Sir Hilary, you served from July 2003, I think,

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1 until January 2004?
2 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Yes.
3 THE CHAIRMAN: General Lamb, from July 2003 to December that
4 year?
5 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: Correct.
6 THE CHAIRMAN: And General Stewart, from December following
7 General Lamb until late April 2004.
8 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: Until July 2004.
9 THE CHAIRMAN: July 2004. This is repetition, but the
10 Inquiry recognises that the death of Baha Mousa in
11 British custody and the battle for Danny Boy took place
12 during the period we are discussing today.
13 Both of these are now, or will be, the subject of
14 separate inquiries. To avoid prejudicing the work of
15 these inquiries, the Committee does not expect to deal
16 with these matters in substance during these sessions.
17 I recall that the Inquiry has access to a great mass
18 of government papers, including the most highly
19 classified for the period. We are developing the
20 picture of the policy debates and the decision-making
21 process and the very events. These evidence sessions
22 are important for us in informing our thinking and
23 complementing the documentary evidence which we have and
24 are continuing to get.
25 And it is important to us that our witnesses are

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1 open and frank in their evidence while respecting
2 national security. And we recognise that you will be
3 giving evidence based on recollection. We are, of
4 course, cross-checking what we hear against papers from
5 the time to which we have got access and which is still
6 coming in at some point.
7 I remind all witnesses that they will later be asked
8 to sign a transcript of the evidence to the effect that
9 the evidence they have given is truthful, fair and
10 accurate.
11 And I think with that, I will turn the questioning
12 over to you, Lawrence.
13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you very much.
14 General Lamb and Sir Hilary, if I can start with
15 you, you were both posted to Basra in different roles in
16 July 2003, in your case, General Lamb, the role of
17 General Officer Commanding Multi National Division
18 South-East, one subsequently occupied by a number of
19 military commanders, including General Stewart.
20 Sir Hilary your role was head of the Coalition
21 Provisional Authority in the south was somewhat more
22 unique.
23 Certainly it appears from the outside that these
24 roles had quite complex reporting structures, and since
25 it is the first session in which we will hear about

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1 these structure, I just wonder if you could each begin
2 by describing your role and how it related to other
3 British and coalition structures in Iraq and back in the
4 UK. Perhaps you could start, Sir Hilary?
5 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Fine. My role was invented late in the
6 day because I had a predecessor there as regional
7 coordinator there for southern Iraq, who was a Danish
8 ambassador, and some issues arose between him and
9 Baghdad and he left suddenly, and I arrived suddenly.
10 Before that time, there was, therefore, no clear
11 British structure, and before accepting the task at
12 rather short notice, I asked for some terms of
13 reference.
14 This does respond to your question about reporting
15 lines because in essence there were several terms of
16 reference. One was that my formal terms of reference
17 which were agreed by my boss in Baghdad,
18 Ambassador Bremer, which ran to half a side of foolscap
19 or A4, which had me reporting normally through the
20 Operations Director, to be accountable directly to
21 Ambassador Bremer, liaising closely with
22 Ambassador Greenstock on matters of common concern.
23 Supplementing this formal and agreed terms of reference
24 was a rather longer piece of paper which was the
25 British Government's idea of what my responsibilities

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1 should be, which were not shown to Ambassador Bremer for
2 obvious reasons and which related to keeping London
3 informed.
4 The third aspect was some objectives set to me by
5 the Prime Minister personally on the day I left for
6 Basra, which included a very useful statement by the
7 Prime Minister that if I had any difficulties at all,
8 I should let him know personally.
9 If I could just add, it is not directly related to
10 reporting, but there was a fourth angle as well and this
11 was a telegram sent from the Foreign Office to Whitehall
12 and the Ministry of Defence, which related to the
13 relative responsibilities of the military, MND South
14 East, and the CPA, and reading -- this was dated 24 June.
15 In retrospect, it suggests that the CPA should take on
16 all sorts of tasks, which, in a sense, were obvious, and
17 that the military might have to hold the line for
18 a temporary period.
19 But what to me, having refreshed my memory of it,
20 was interesting was that the tasks which were envisaged
21 for the CPA were completely beyond its competence at
22 that time and for a considerable period afterwards.
23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You have given me a couple of issues
24 that I'm sure we want to come back to in a second, but
25 first I would like to hear from General Lamb.

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1 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: I had just taken over the third
2 division, literally, in Iraq on my arrival, and it was
3 in the transition of them taking on MND South East. As
4 I recall, we had at that time Basra and Maysan, and we
5 took Dhi Qar and Muthanna shortly afterwards in July
6 or August. So we went from holding two provinces to
7 holding four, and that change from third division to MND
8 South East was a theme that ran throughout my period of
9 time out there. I had two chiefs of staffs, I had two
10 deputies, I changed two brigades, I changed entire
11 headquarters during that period of time. So change was
12 an underpinning factor of the command that I had.
13 My role and responsibilities was that I had a direct
14 link obviously to Sanchez -- Rick Sanchez,
15 General Sanchez in Baghdad. And the guidance from him
16 I went up to him, sat down and at that point in time
17 Baghdad was beginning to have difficulties. We had gone
18 from a war to civil disorder, looting, and you might say
19 now in hindsight you could see then the say emergence of
20 the insurgency coming through. His guidance to me was,
21 "Graeme, keep the south quiet". It was pretty clear,
22 and I could take that and understand it quite clearly.
23 Looking backwards, obviously General John Reith
24 I knew well, and as CJO that's who I reported to. He in
25 turn went back and talked to London. I can't remember

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1 in my time having direct conversations with MoD. I saw
2 obviously a multiplicity of visitors that came out and
3 saw me -- CGS, et cetera -- but it wasn't a live
4 communication for me. And obviously, that was in many
5 ways handed through Freddie who was up in Baghdad, and
6 then Andrew took over from him.
7 So I was reasonably clear with who I was talking to
8 for what I needed. I spoke to John Reith probably once
9 every three weeks. We sent a report every day on what
10 we were having and what we were looking at, but in many
11 ways we were in fact trying to understand the problem
12 that was unfolding on the ground in front of us.
13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How often were you talking with
14 General Viggers?
15 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: I probably talked to Freddie --
16 don't forget communications were quite difficult. We
17 were not well prepared to handle the link up to Baghdad.
18 I would do that. I had an American team that came down
19 and provided a satellite link. So, therefore, on
20 a handset one talked to General Sanchez when I was in
21 Basra every night. We had a sort of gathering session.
22 And I talked to probably Freddie, I suppose, about
23 two or three times a week, more often if there was
24 a more pressing need.
25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So by and large your main point of

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1 contact was with General Sanchez in terms of --
2 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: I would say that at that point in
3 time General Sanchez was fairly well consumed by the
4 situation in Baghdad. Our headquarters talked all the time.
5 I needed to talk to him to get further guidance -- the
6 guidance was very clear. The support I could get from
7 London was -- and PJHQ was limited. They were even more
8 in the dark than I was. And Freddie was a friendly
9 voice to talk to as one tried to take stock of what was
10 a pretty unhealthy situation which just got unhealthier.
11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you. Now, we are just getting
12 to how that became unhealthier. Sir Hilary, you said
13 that you saw from the start that the ambition of the
14 Foreign Office at least for the CPA exceeded its likely
15 capacity. Was this even more evident when you arrived
16 in Basra?
17 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Yes. I did not really make the judgment
18 until I arrived and then it became very evident. I did
19 have forewarning in the sense that as soon as I had been
20 asked to consider taking on this task by the Permanent
21 Undersecretary at the Foreign Office, I immediately rang
22 the head of the Iraq Policy Unit and asked him what was
23 up, and I was told, "It is a bloody mess." So I was
24 forewarned.
25 That description was borne out by quite a number of

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1 telephone communications I had with Basra with
2 a Foreign Office officer who was in Basra, who painted
3 a very bleak picture. Once I got out there, this was
4 very much confirmed: A pretty dysfunctional team of
5 eight to ten different nationalities, very, very few
6 British, three Foreign Office officials, one permanent
7 DFID official and a lack of focus and a lack of
8 capability.
9 In a way, to me on the first night the taste of it
10 was confirmed to me when I said, well, I have been asked
11 by the Foreign Office to send at least a report a day.
12 So I said, well, how do I report back? And there was
13 nothing available. The phones didn't work, there were
14 no mobile phones at that time and nobody had thought to
15 provide me with any form of computer.
16 So the Americans very kindly provided one and linked
17 me through their computer network through Washington,
18 and the only way I was able to communicate with the
19 Foreign Office was by setting up my own free computer
20 link on Yahoo. And that became the main, and, indeed,
21 only, form of communication to London for some time.
22 Fortunately -- I mean, what we agreed was that those
23 reports should be taken off Yahoo and then circulated as
24 Foreign Office telegrams, as coming from me.
25 So that to me was a sort of indication of the sort

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1 of problems we had to face.
2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Not exactly a secure line?
3 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: No. Actually, funnily enough when
4 I called on the Prime Minister the day I left, at the
5 Prime Minister's request, I had already heard there was
6 no secure communication and I pointed this out, and the
7 head of the JIC was present at that meeting and was not
8 aware, he said, that there was no secure communications.
9 But then, you know, up to that point it hadn't been
10 a British-run arrangement.
11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: We have heard a bit about the Danish
12 head. Without going into awkward details, what had been
13 the problems, do you think, prior to your arrival?
14 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Well, without going into awkward
15 details, I think there was a feeling that Basra was on
16 the shelf, that it was inadequately equipped with
17 security and financial resources and hardware.
18 And Ambassador Olsen was pretty annoyed about this
19 and said so. And I think there were two aspects: One
20 was Baghdad told me afterwards they found it very
21 difficult to sort of cut through this anger, to get to,
22 well, what shall we do about it; but the proximate cause
23 was a press interview when this came out in public and
24 Ambassador Bremer was not of the mind to take this sort
25 of megaphone diplomacy.

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1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: This had quite an important
2 consequence, because one of the themes that is emerging,
3 if you like, is that having had no plan to have
4 a particularly British area of responsibility prior to
5 the war, we gradually seemed to acquire one as a result
6 of where we had done the fighting and how our forces had
7 ended up. And then there had been this attempt to at
8 least give a multinational face to this area, but now it
9 has a British face.
10 So I'm interested in your view as to whether this
11 meant that we tended to think -- to use a phrase that we
12 heard yesterday -- that this was our box, this was our
13 bit and quite separate from the rest of Iraq?
14 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: It certainly developed into that. It
15 surprised me that the British didn't anticipate having
16 a high degree of civilian authority in the south because
17 of the fact that, under the relevant United Nations
18 Security Council resolution, it was the United States
19 and the United Kingdom who were described as occupying
20 powers.
21 Once it was accepted that there should be a British
22 regional coordinator, I think there was one major
23 benefit out of this and that was that the general
24 officer commanding and the regional coordinator were
25 both British, which I think, not least due to the fact

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1 that we worked from my second day in Basra formally very
2 closely together, we increased our clout with Baghdad
3 and we increased it with London, which I think was
4 useful in gaining resources.
5 There was a downside, and that was, although it was
6 made clear to me that the Prime Minister wished to see
7 the south as an example -- well, why not, we would all
8 like to set good examples -- but there was a tendency
9 from time to time on the part of some Cabinet
10 ministers -- emphatically not all -- to say this in
11 public without perhaps realising the dependency we had
12 on American resources, financial resources.
13 For instance, when, eventually -- I'm sure we will
14 come to this -- but when we moved locations, the new
15 location cost $35 million, which was all American.
16 Without that expenditure we would not have been able to
17 operate at all.
18 So I know that the Americans in Baghdad were pretty
19 upset with this British, if you like, boasting. As
20 I was, because I was worried that this would freeze up
21 the flow of resources.
22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So your concern was that we were
23 presenting ourselves as being particularly good, but
24 actually what we were doing depended on (a) the fact
25 that the south was already relatively quiet compared

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1 with Baghdad, and it was more homogenous and ought to
2 have been easier, and secondly, anyway it depended upon
3 American resources?
4 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Yes. In making comparisons like that,
5 insufficient account was taken of the extreme difference
6 between the south and the Sunni triangle and, indeed,
7 the Kurdish area. These three main areas were very
8 different each from each other.
9 The American resources, the need for that, was not
10 apparently appreciated sufficiently in London. The
11 third aspect was that there was certainly a mood in
12 Baghdad, which I very quickly picked up, and that was: if
13 you Brits think that this is your feudal empire, maybe
14 you should be left to run it yourselves. And we all
15 knew that that was quite, quite impossible.
16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How did you report this danger back
17 to London?
18 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Very trenchantly. I certainly reported
19 daily, not only through formal communications in the
20 sense of these "Yahoograms" being turned into formal
21 telegrams, but also by email at more working level. But
22 it also became clear to me that -- I also had a duty
23 to make it exemplary, and I was determined to try and do
24 that -- that meant I needed a lot more resources than
25 were available. And, indeed, in August, I was there first

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1 of all for a week's recce and then came back for
2 a while,
3 while I was back, I got a report from the British
4 representative in Iraq that the British military -- to
5 my mind, entirely justifiably -- had essentially written
6 off CPA South as being ineffective. I felt my task when
7 I returned towards the end of August was to turn that
8 around.
9 So we needed resources. I put in a very big bid to
10 London, but also I was very friendly to every
11 representative of any foreign government who would come
12 to visit us and impress on them how much more pleasant
13 it would be if their staff worked in the south rather
14 than in the dangerous Sunni triangle.
15 We ended up, by the time I left, including support
16 staff and guards, with 22 different nationalities
17 working in Basra.
18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to conclude, before going to
19 General Lamb, you mentioned earlier that the
20 Prime Minister had told you if you had difficulties,
21 that you should let him know directly. Did you avail
22 yourself of this opportunity?
23 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Not directly, in the sense that I never
24 picked up the phone to him personally, which is what he
25 had suggested: pick up the phone. But all my telegrams

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1 were drafted for Number 10 to read and for ministers to
2 read.
3 My telegrams weren't really directed at middle
4 ranking official level, much to their annoyance
5 actually, I heard subsequently. They were directed at
6 the political level, because that's what I felt I was
7 asked to do. And what happened was that one of my key
8 requests was at the end of August when I asked for, I
9 think, 37 additional expert staff, not generalists but
10 experts, and 20 armoured vehicles.
11 I was sent the record of the ad hoc ministerial
12 committee, I think within a day of this, and it was
13 recorded there that Synnott should be provided with
14 everything he thought was necessary.
15 That, to my mind, clearly came from Number 10 and
16 that was the pattern throughout. The difficulty,
17 however, was turning that political imperative into
18 reality, which I'm sure we will address. So I felt that
19 I was getting political support in principle. The
20 difficulty was that that political support wasn't, to my
21 mind, followed up -- at political level actually, as well
22 as, if you like, at administrative level -- to turn it
23 into reality.
24 The other aspect, I would say, is that I made clear
25 to my own staff, civilians, that I came, if you like,

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1 with the personal support of the Prime Minister, the
2 British Prime Minister, in a sense to make them feel
3 that their work was being appreciated, and I think they
4 did appreciate that. I also mentioned this at one of
5 General Lamb's command meetings with a formidable array
6 of officers, and I said this. There, I think it was
7 greeted with somewhat less welcome; it was more there:
8 "Well, when are you going to produce the goods?"
9 Which point of view I entirely shared.
10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think we will, indeed, come to
11 a number of issues you have now raised, but
12 General Lamb, from your perspective how did you see this
13 general role now developing as keeping the south quiet
14 and this being -- becoming a particularly British area
15 of responsibility albeit with a number of other
16 nationalities around?
17 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: I think the first point would be
18 that, you know, Hilary's arrival was most welcome.
19 I think we got on pretty well actually, but it
20 is all in the delivery and I think in one of my reports
21 I likened the CPA to dancing with a broken doll.
22 It was a lot of effort, and in fact the department
23 wasn't giving much in return. In fact, they were making
24 you look rather stupid. And in that matching activity,
25 that's where the disappointment came in many ways. We

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1 were finding ourselves increasingly presented with
2 a number of problems which had not been anticipated,
3 which we were not structured or resourced for.
4 CPA were sort of sending people down to visit, in
5 the early days had, for instance, some CODELs come
6 down, for which we provided the security and all
7 the associated -- my division, I think, consisted of
8 about 13,500/14,000. General Petraeus's division up in
9 the north was about 22,000, a completely different order
10 and size, and mine consisted of, I think, 11 different
11 nations.
12 So actually our capacity to do things was now moving
13 from a position where we were pretty busy to being
14 extraordinarily busy, to now finding ourselves with the
15 volume of need -- I remember dealing with some -- an
16 agriculture issue quite early on where the farmer said
17 the tomatoes -- we need to get the tomatoes into the
18 ground. Actually, they grow very well in Basra, but you
19 do need to look after them in a certain way.
20 I said I'm sure I can help you in some way, and they
21 said we need plastic because otherwise the frost and/or
22 the rains will destroy the crop. So I said, right, you
23 know, what have you got -- and this was the transition
24 before Sir Hilary was arriving and Olsen was leaving.
25 And there was a sort of, well, we will look into this,

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1 and after about a week there was no sense that plastic
2 was coming. So I had to find 900 tonnes of plastic in
3 a country that was pretty broken in many ways.
4 So these sort of demands which then came upon the
5 military were unexpected. What it meant was our ability
6 to manoeuvre and try and understand what was happening
7 became increasingly more difficult, because we became
8 increasingly fixed on doing a range of things which then
9 just expanded without the troops in trying to understand
10 the problem we are facing.
11 I think the -- at the higher -- I probably fell out
12 with Bremer quite early on. I remember he -- one of the
13 CODELs came down with Senator McCain and I think we
14 made it clear they needed to make a 20 billion
15 investment and quickly because the situation was not
16 good. Ambassador Bremer took this badly. I think he
17 suggested a to Sanchez that I probably should be
18 removed. I think General Sanchez reminded him that in
19 fact I was a British General and, therefore, not quite
20 in a clean chain of authority. And he made it very
21 clear that no CODEL was to come down to south. It
22 never did again.
23 So there was some difficulties there too, and
24 a sense that, "Don't give us bad news. This is all
25 going to get better", whereas my view was based upon

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1 experience and reality. And what I was seeing of the
2 situation was things were getting decidedly worse, and
3 I can see them also getting decidedly worse up north.
4 And trying to understand the nature of the problem was
5 in many ways, I think, the challenge we faced at that
6 point in time. There's that hackneyed line which says,
7 you know, you look for situational awareness. By
8 sensing these savage wars of peace, you seek a
9 situational understanding and we were desperately trying
10 to get an understanding of what the problems were both
11 within the communities, within the nature of the threats
12 which were beginning to come upon us and, oh, by the
13 way, the weather was just getting hotter and hotter and
14 hotter. We were running at that point in time I think
15 at about 50 degrees and 100 per cent humidity and
16 everybody's sense of humour goes out of the window. We
17 had no air conditioning, and a range of other issues.
18 So all this extra burden of doing things which we,
19 the military, are not necessarily constructed, but
20 no one else was in a position to do -- and people talked
21 a great deal -- was not necessarily very helpful.
22 I think at the start I asked -- and this was really
23 quite quickly -- that I needed a load of -- in order to
24 do police training and the like, I needed about
25 90 policemen. I think when I left six months later

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1 I had two. So people talked a lot, they promised
2 a great deal, they discussed things -- actually, in fact
3 delivery was always the problem. So the delivery is the
4 problem, the problem didn't go away and somebody had to,
5 therefore, try and stand in and hold that ground.
6 So we found ourselves increasingly doing
7 a multiplicity of tasks.
8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You had ask for those policemen from
9 London?
10 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: Again, it was an interesting
11 reflection on some of the difficulties at that time,
12 because I knew a number of people within the various --
13 you know, chief constables and ACPO, and my sense was
14 there were no shortage of individuals who were prepared
15 to volunteer. But there was a sense that the
16 chief constables were reluctant because it would be on
17 their -- on the basis of their duty of care that they
18 felt inappropriate, if the situation was as reported --
19 difficult -- so, therefore, in fact they did not allow
20 them to then come forward.
21 And the roles and the way in which the military
22 conduct themselves, in which we would see a problem and
23 close to it, accept the danger and try and resolve it,
24 is not the same rules, not the same approach that all
25 the other partners in this comprehensive problem take

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1 on.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I want to come back to this question

3 of delivery and of people. Sorry --

4 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: If you want to explore the police angle

5 a bit more, because it was very important. We had, when

6 I arrived, I think, three officers from the

7 Metropolitan Police. General Lamb is absolutely

8 right, that from our perception there was tremendous

9 reluctance from ACPO to supply police officers. We

10 actually, indeed, were looking at about 91 police

11 officers to come here, to come out to Basra.

12 There was a terrible problem over duty of care, not

13 just with police but others, but particularly the

14 police. Eventually I had a personal meeting with the

15 head of ACPO and I visited him in Baghdad because he was

16 reluctant to visit Basra[1], and I drew his attention to

17 the fact that the Danes had a contingent of 12 on the

18 ground for well over six months who were doing

19 magnificent work. They had set up a small training

20 college. And I thought it was astonishing that the

21 British police force were not able to rise to a similar

22 challenge.

23 Shortly after that, it was agreed to send out

24 a team, and a couple of dozen actually started up in

25 police college just after General Lamb left, on

[1] Although this reflects what Sir Hilary Synnott said during the hearing he has since informed the Inquiry that he meant to say that he visited him at Basra Airport, because he was reluctant to visit us in Basra town.

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1 Christmas Eve. It was suggested that they should wait
2 until after the holiday and I was adamant that if we
3 lost them, we would lose them for a long time. So they
4 started admirably on Christmas eve.
5 I know that the Foreign Secretary was personally
6 pushing very hard for this and he and I had discussions
7 about frustrations which he had found in getting this to
8 work. Eventually it did, but well, well below the 91 we
9 asked for.
10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I just, before turning to
11 General Stewart, just ask General Lamb, during this
12 period when you were getting many more demands on your
13 time, you have a sense of a deteriorating security
14 situation, the number of troops under your command is
15 going down quite significantly. Were there any attempts
16 to reverse that trend? We heard before the break about
17 suggestions that maybe it was different types people
18 that were needed, different skill sets, but in the end
19 boots on the ground are important. Can I just get your
20 sense of this as a problem?
21 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: I think it would be -- sorry, the
22 point I started was I had a pretty steady state of
23 about -- I think it was about 14,000. I have difficulty
24 recalling back that time, but it was of that order in
25 the number of forces. By the time I left, I had an

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1 additional two battalions, two battle groups. So my
2 numbers actually increased, the British contingent
3 increased in this time even though we were looking for
4 the changes of sovereignty change and this view that
5 European standards weren't necessary, that we were
6 looking for something less than that.
7 But what I did not want to do in those very early
8 days was just ask for more forces, because somehow in
9 effect we would just throw them into a set of
10 circumstances which were, to me, at that point in time
11 one was struggling to understand as to how to combat
12 this escalation of violence and the sense of falling
13 into a situation which was becoming less and less
14 stable.
15 I also called upon the Americans -- and, again, you
16 know, my inclination is that it is easy to find fault
17 with the Americans. If you ask of them, it has been my
18 experience and it was my experience both in this time in
19 Basra and my later time, as it is in Afghanistan, that
20 they do not fail you.
21 In this case, I asked for the 13th New to come in
22 and assist us at a point in time where we began to
23 understand the nature of criminality and corruption and
24 these issues. I had had a chance to deal with some of
25 the issues, some of the problems, that underpinned that.

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1 The standing laws still existed which had been designed
2 to overcome this for exploiting the oil opportunity
3 during sanctions, and they provided these extra forces.
4 So I, in many ways, had additional forces come in.
5 What I needed to do was be absolutely clear of what I
6 wanted these forces for, rather than just saying "send
7 me more". It is very easy to ask for more, but actually
8 you have to know what you are going to do with these
9 young men and women who are coming in. That took
10 a little bit of time. My view was not to rush to
11 failure. I do know how to get there.
12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: General Stewart, I just want to get
13 a sense of your understanding of your role and how it
14 might have changed over time by the time that you
15 arrived in Basra.
16 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: Not a significantly huge change.
17 I had exactly the same experience as Graeme in that
18 I went up to see General Sanchez on about day 3 and had
19 an hour with him, and the message very firmly was: the
20 four provinces in the south, it is a Brit area, you are
21 the Brit commander, can you keep it under control for
22 me, I don't want to worry about it, because he had
23 plenty of problems where he was.
24 I think the real issue when I got there was that

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1 actually we were in a relatively calm period. Graeme
2 had had a pretty difficult summer with essential
3 services, rioting on the streets because of lack of
4 electricity and air conditioning and just the
5 conditions. And I arrived and it rained for the first
6 17 days I was there. I couldn't believe Iraq was like
7 this, and everything was relatively calm.
8 There was -- and that was the direction that I was
9 given from above, from General Sanchez and I had the
10 same responsibility. I was very much working to him in
11 military terms. I had a reporting chain, exactly as
12 Graeme did, back to the joint headquarters and we had
13 these daily briefs or conferences in the evening on the
14 radio with all the divisional commanders together, which
15 I have to say I didn't find particularly useful, but at
16 least one was able to put across a point or try and get
17 an answer if one was asking for it.
18 So I really -- the responsibility was the same and
19 no significant change in that period.
20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: By this time did you have a sense
21 that there was a UK strategy for Basra or Iraq as
22 a whole, had you been given any guidance of that sort?
23 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: In the work-up training
24 beforehand -- I had been based in the Permanent Joint
25 Headquarters, so I had a view for what the British line

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1 was in military terms.
2 I think that bearing in mind that we were -- it was
3 very much a more -- probably more multinational
4 division. It was more multinational by the time
5 I arrived than under Graeme's command, and much of my
6 time was going to be spent commanding and trying to get
7 battalions – the Italians, the Dutch, the Japanese were about to
8 deploy, their first ever deployment since the war. We had
9 Danes, a significant number, and that was very much
10 going to be my main effort in command terms.
11 I was really there -- the Italians had had a very
12 difficult time. They had just lost 19 Carabinieri in a
13 car bomb in Nasiriyah and there was clearly going to be
14 some political intervention there, and part of my
15 mission was to try and keep the Italians connected and
16 on line because otherwise we, the British, were probably
17 the only people who could reinforce and put extra troops
18 into Dhi Qar province.
19 So I saw the role there as very much keeping the
20 division together, being a multinational commander, we could not
21 really increase British troops in size, and I spent most
22 of my six months at roughly the same force levels.
23 Slightly it reduced at one stage, I then increased it
24 during the Mahdi uprising or I got an extra battalion at
25 that stage.

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1 I think the only thing I would say is that from
2 a very early stage, exactly as Sir Hilary said earlier
3 on, it was absolutely apparent in my view that back here
4 in London there was no understanding of how much
5 resource in terms of political commitment, finance and
6 other areas -- by that I mean DFID support, et cetera --
7 how much of that was required.
8 The Americans felt it was our area, you have heard
9 what Sanchez said to me, we never truly committed to it.
10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: On that can I go back to Sir Hilary?
11 We have seen the words "Phase 4" and
12 "reconstruction" and so on used as if they have very
13 clear and obvious meanings, but I wonder from your
14 perspective, as you have contemplated the task that you
15 have, how did you see this? Was it a question of
16 perhaps stopping deterioration rather than
17 reconstruction in the first instance?
18 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: I think there were two aspects. One
19 was I think we all felt we needed to earn Iraqi consent
20 to persuade them that it was in their interests to work
21 with us, to help improve their lives.
22 So I think in the south we felt there was
23 a desirability to have some projects which showed
24 a quick impact with tactical importance, which would
25 benefit the lives of ordinary people.

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1 The other aspect was it was quite clear that we --
2 we might have been called occupying authorities,
3 occupying powers -- we could not rebuild Iraq. So
4 what I saw as the main task of the civilian aspect in
5 CPA South was to help rebuild Iraqi capacity to manage
6 themselves.
7 Now, that's not as patronising as it sounds because
8 after de-Ba'athification of course they lost their four
9 top layers of management, and the layer of management
10 below that were not used to taking decisions or
11 planning. But actually we found when we started talking
12 to them expert to expert, engineer to engineer, there
13 was a tremendous thirst for Western knowledge and
14 expertise. And although there were language
15 difficulties which could be resolved through
16 interpreters, we found quite quickly we were developing
17 extremely constructive relationships. After the first few
18 months of saying, "You must give us all this now", we
19 sort of persuaded them to prioritise and worked on those
20 priorities.
21 This was particularly important because
22 Ambassador Bremer had told me in my first meeting with
23 him that, as far as he was concerned, the focus of his
24 attention would be Baghdad. Baghdad was the key to
25 Iraq, he said. I couldn't -- when I first arrived

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1 I wasn't in a position to second guess him, but very
2 quickly it became apparent to me that a very large
3 proportion of Iraq's infrastructure was in the south,
4 one of the two oil fields and a lot of its generating --
5 electricity generating capacity and manufacturing
6 capacity.
7 So I felt that the south could not be neglected,
8 which is why I called for these experts.
9 The military took an initiative which was, I think,
10 one of the most valuable initiatives in my time there --
11 and that was actually without consulting me, but
12 nonetheless the ends justify the means -- they set up
13 a consultancy to explore what would be the best sort of
14 projects to focus on and at what cost. When I learned
15 about this, I thought it was a very good idea, but
16 tactically, if this was presented by the military to
17 Baghdad or to London without coordination and approval
18 from the civilian side, it might not get the resources.
19 So literally overnight we worked together with our
20 team to produce a common plan, which was called the
21 Emergency Infrastructure Plan, costed at $127 million.
22 That proved to be the mainstay of reconstruction in the
23 south.
24 One final point: when I went round Baghdad in the
25 early days asking about reconstruction, the view I got

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1 from USAID and others was that this place is broken, it
2 needs to be mended from the beginning, the electricity
3 system doesn't work, the water distribution doesn't
4 work, we have let out contracts to big American firms to
5 put it all right. My heart sank at that point because
6 I'd got quite a lot of experience in developing
7 countries and I knew how long big projects took to get
8 going, and I was also increasingly aware of the
9 unpermissive security environment. That reinforced me
10 in my view that we should be going for more of an
11 emergency plan rather than big contracts, and I think,
12 indeed, history shows that virtually none of the big
13 contracts ever came to fruition.
14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you make this point to
15 Paul Bremer?
16 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Yes, I did. And, interestingly,
17 reading his memoirs -- we started this in September -- that
18 emergency infrastructure project was agreed overnight in
19 Whitehall. In Ambassador Bremer's memoirs he said, "In
20 December, I realised we should be going for quick impact
21 projects". I like to think, but this may be too
22 arrogant, that this was an example of British shared
23 experience.
24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: General Lamb, from your
25 perspective -- and my understanding of Phase 4 is this

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1 is the phase after Phase 3, when the military is still
2 in charge but before they hand over to civilian
3 authority. But in this case Phase 4 just more or less
4 goes on and on. Did you have a sense of how this would
5 come to a conclusion?
6 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: I got less of a sense of Phase 3,
7 Phase 4. I just got a sense that the situation was
8 uncertain, complex, confused and people's -- you know,
9 anger, retribution, retaliation, revenge. All these
10 things played through it in the undercurrent of seeking
11 to rebalance something that had been a wrong for
12 40 years, for the Shias actually a consideration that
13 they had been out of power since 1436. I can't remember
14 the exact date, but it was of that order.
15 The striking thing was the amount of damage. Not
16 damage in the sense of what we had done -- and we had
17 done some damage in a military operation, but the damage
18 that had accrued over the time from the first Gulf War
19 and then the sanctions and what that had meant.
20 As we went into the campaign -- and I'm sure
21 Robin Brims will have gone through how the ISR and our
22 limited capabilities there. But of course the military
23 were rightly focusing on the enemy, because that was the
24 assumption that the Republican Guard was not to be
25 discredited. They represented a clear and present

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1 danger to our forces, and the like. What we didn't
2 do -- I don't think we could have because we didn't have
3 the assets, but it is an interesting reflective point --
4 is we had very little understanding of the amount of
5 damage that the first Gulf War and then the sanctions
6 had brought, plus the fact that the south were not
7 favourites of Saddam.
8 I remember going to Hartha power station and
9 being quite taken aback at what had been the -- from the
10 air, it would look like a -- just a dirty-looking sort
11 of station, but it was functioning. When you went
12 inside and looked at it, it was a health and safety
13 hazard of gigantic proportions because they had been
14 told to keep it running with nothing. And so,
15 therefore, you had work arounds on work arounds on work
16 arounds. Just an extraordinary piece of what I call --
17 sort of extemporising with what you had got. But we had
18 no idea how badly the distribution networks, the
19 electricity, the water -- none of the filters in -- from
20 the Shatt el-Arab had been changed at all. They were
21 just moving water out through and back what were
22 corrupted systems into in fact trying to provide water
23 for the population.
24 The UN were having to provide, I think,
25 2 million litres of water a day in the south in those

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1 early days. So we had no real idea about the amount of
2 damage that had been caused. Only when you began to
3 unpick -- let's get the network up, let's get power into
4 the grid. Even I, after a month or so, could recognise
5 the difference between a 140 and a 400 KVA line. I
6 could recognise things that meant nothing to me, I had
7 no bearing of.
8 But it was really important, and therefore that
9 linkage, as we went through this period, of us
10 identifying that we were losing the consent of people as
11 the temperatures went up, we weren't able to solve it,
12 their line was, you know, seeing us as part
13 of a wider coalition. And the line was, "If you can put
14 a man on the moon, how can't you solve my power problem?
15 Well, the distribution network had been trashed, the
16 lines were being pulled down, not necessarily from
17 sabotage -- there was some of that, but actually in fact
18 we had a whole series -- we found ingots -- where people
19 would smelt the sort of lines down to then flog
20 aluminium across. And this was just a case of feeding
21 your family, and I wasn't about to go out and start
22 killing people who were doing that. I had to try and
23 stop it.
24 But this was the undercurrent that went through. So
25 we had this conflict of interest between trying to stop

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1 that which was being broken, which was already well
2 damaged, and then repair it so that we were trying to
3 get some return on those essential services. And that
4 was the genesis of what the engineers put together, and
5 then overnight became the Synnott plan, which in fact
6 was absolutely right, because Sir Hilary managed to in
7 fact screw out of Baghdad a beltload of money that made
8 a significant difference to try and bring some stability
9 into that part of our responsibilities.
10 And it was important that the Iraqis saw that, that
11 clerics and their leadership down there could see that
12 we were trying. We weren't necessarily succeeding down
13 there, but we were trying.
14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you.
15 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Sir Graeme, in terms of these
16 tremendous problems, I was wondering how you established
17 your priorities and in particular in relation to the
18 continuing search for WMD, where that fitted in terms of
19 your priority needs.
20 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: It -- I had obviously followed the
21 WMD debate as we ran in. I'm just a simple soldier,
22 science was never one of my strong suits, neither was
23 English, to be quite honest.
24 But, you know, I read what Hans Blix had reported
25 on, I had watched it over time. The maths was quite

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1 simple. He had gone in there in 1991 and had spent
2 eight years looking, had identified the sum of
3 biological, chemical and other associated both machinery
4 and the wherewithal, scud missiles, you name it -- had
5 removed a great part of that. But there was a remaining
6 aspect which, in the four years when they went out
7 between 1998, I think it was, and 2002, you know, just
8 didn't disappear. And so, therefore, the maths told me
9 in simple terms that he had removed 60 per cent, there
10 was 40 per cent remaining somewhere, it hadn't gone.
11 So, therefore, we continued as and when we could,
12 and there was the occasional yellow cake or there was
13 a sort of report of the odd shells and these sort of
14 things that, we would go and follow up. There was
15 a group that came down from Baghdad who were continually
16 looking at this.
17 The bulk of, I think, the WMD interest was really
18 Baghdad and the north, but whenever it came across, we
19 continued to follow that up on the basis that, as
20 I said, the -- not withstanding that we hadn't found
21 a great deal, it didn't mean that it didn't exist.
22 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: It didn't impact on our capacity
23 elsewhere.
24 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: No, but it was another burden. The
25 problem is that you have a degree of manoeuvre space in

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order, with the forces you have got and how tired people are getting -- I remember watching Brigadier Bill Moore, now General Bill Moore, who commanded 19 Brigade, when we he left Iraq, we virtually wheeled him out on a chair to the aircraft. He was absolutely wasted.

These experiences are incredible wearing on both your mental state as well as your physical. Everybody gets a lot leaner. You only have to look at Afghanistan today to see exactly the same.

So the burden means that the little time that you have got now starts getting consumed with other stuff. You start having to deal with, for instance, let's say, paying stipends to the old Iraqi army. Well, you know, that's 26,000 people coming in to get their stipends, of which they riot if things aren't going well. So you have to have the force to go and do that.

If you suddenly find you are having to have to go and protect convoys because people are now throwing grenades or in effect RPGs or putting IEDs in the road, then you have to start increasing the force levels that then protect you, you need Warrior --

All these things increase the burden, and you only have so much space or so much capacity within your force to be able to take these on. You are changing you're having to transform the force, in my case from what was

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1 a divisional structure into in fact a multinational
2 structure, and of course multinationality, while it is
3 very attractive politically, militarily brings a burden
4 upon it because you have language problems. I remember
5 the Polish division north of me had a Ukrainian --
6 I think it was a Ukrainian battle group on the border
7 with Iran and the only way they could converse was four
8 officers between the two groupings, the division and the
9 battle group, had been to the Frunze Academy and
10 could therefore speak Russian, and that was the only way
11 they could do any business.
12 So these additional burdens that are brought upon
13 you do begin to then fix you as to how you can do
14 something else, and of course that fixing means you
15 begin to lose the initiative. Interestingly, you take
16 General McChrystal's recent campaign analysis and shift
17 change in Afghanistan, the first thing he says the main
18 two drivers is to regain the initiative.
19 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you very much.
20 Sir Hilary, I wonder if I could just ask you
21 a question about the emergency infrastructure plan and
22 in particular the question of how it was to be resolved,
23 how you were to get the human and the technical and also
24 the financial resources. How did you do this and was it
25 ever sufficient to fulfil the task that you had set

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1 yourself.
2 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: I think to my mind, having been a bit
3 of a Whitehall warrior before, it seemed to me that the most
4 important imperative in presenting the plan for
5 resourcing was to portray it as having everybody's
6 agreement on the ground. We were very fortunate, and it
7 was quite fortuitous, that a team of three engineers
8 from DFID were due to come out just as we were
9 finalising the plan, and also the Director of Operations
10 in Baghdad was due to come down.
11 And by the time it was ready, which was a couple of
12 days, I think, before a Cabinet committee meeting, we
13 were able to say that it had approval of the DFID
14 experts and no objection from the Baghdad director of
15 operations, apart from the fact, he said, Baghdad
16 wouldn't be able to supply any money, he thought. But
17 that was good enough; we could say it was a joint
18 civilian/military/DFID/Baghdad operations approved.
19 We sent it to London. Before the Cabinet committee
20 met, Number 10 had said, "This must be backed by the
21 British Government," which again was another example, if
22 you like, of the political backing.
23 DFID put up -- it costed $127 million -- DFID put up
24 $30 million, and we managed to agree together that we
25 should start even though we didn't have a missing

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1 97 million. It seemed to me that if we got started and
2 could show that something was working, we might be able
3 to leverage this money out of the Americans. Another
4 example of our dependency on the Americans, and that's
5 actually what happened.
6 Was it enough? Oh, well, no, of course not, and in
7 fact, quite honestly, like most estimates of
8 costing, it was pretty arbitrary, and the figure 127 was
9 sufficiently, apparently, accurate to add sort of
10 conviction to it.
11 But actually I have no idea what it ultimately cost.
12 The main thing was to get activity going. And sure
13 enough over a period of months one was able to go out --
14 I mean, one of the three injunctions from the
15 Prime Minister was media and communications. So I made
16 a point of sort of actually drinking the first glass of
17 a water purification plant in front of TV cameras --
18 I survived -- and opening schools and water pumping
19 stations, this sort of thing.
20 So it did get going and -- it is not quite your
21 question but, as regards the effectiveness of it,
22 General Lamb and we collectively made an objective that
23 the holy month of Ramadan should be a period when the
24 Basrawi people would regard themselves as having had the
25 best Ramadan since before Saddam. And it was at the end

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1 of October that the governor of Basra, who was a pretty
2 curmudgeonly retired judge, not a Ba'athist, said to me
3 that he felt the situation was improving in Basra, both
4 as regards security, after a very, very difficult
5 summer, riots in August, and as regards reconstruction.
6 So it did look as if things were going well. I
7 mean, that changed of course. Later insurgency gained
8 ground. But for a period, particularly that
9 October/November time, things looked as if they were
10 coming better.
11 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.
12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Perhaps just a couple of questions
13 before lunch. I was just wondering in terms of on the
14 security sector reform side, that was presumably
15 something that you, General Lamb, would take some sort
16 of responsibility for in terms of trying to help the
17 Iraqis develop some sort of capacity in the area.
18 I just wonder if you could say something about that.
19 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: Yes. We were -- I think we were
20 quite forward-leading on the ICDC, the community defence
21 force initiative. I remember briefing General Abizaid
22 saying that this was a necessary part of and a risk that
23 needed to be taken because in many ways it required the
24 community to police not against an insurgent attack but
25 police against the looting and bad behaviour, and so

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1 bring a sense -- I remember the first -- going out
2 on patrol with the first ICDC that we put out on the ground
3 and as we walked through -- and they were wearing -- you
4 know, the uniforms weren't great but they were in
5 uniform, and everywhere we went the people of Basra came
6 out and clapped. So they recognised that this was
7 something that was a sort of right approach.
8 Did it have dangers over time? Of course it did,
9 and that was the problem of intimidation and therefore
10 that this omni-presence of the Shia -- sort of the
11 militia bad behaviour that sat around there in order to
12 change people's attitudes, whether it be from internally
13 within Basra or from influence outside, from Iran, were
14 both parts to be played. But our view was very clear,
15 that we needed to get Iraqis with us and in a sense of
16 a partnership again, a recurring theme -- you can see in
17 Afghanistan today -- because that way then people would
18 see them embracing their own responsibilities and not
19 somehow relying upon us, and this issue of occupation
20 was always a sort of undercurrent. And so, therefore,
21 while I'm not inclined nowadays to hearts and mind --
22 and I am very clear about consent and tolerance as being
23 aspects of how we are seen -- and that was very
24 important.
25 So we pushed very hard on that. That required

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1 training. We did exactly the same with the police, and
2 I would underpin both what Freddie and Andrew were
3 saying this morning, you know, that the army basically
4 walked, they went home. The police that we brought back
5 in in short order which everybody said was a wonderful
6 effect, you know, brought with it people who the locals
7 knew only too well was guilty of heinous crime. The
8 point of corruption in this part of the world is with
9 the police and at the lowest level and yet we somehow
10 were looking to try and make them into state troopers.
11 We were never going to achieve that. It was an aspect
12 of us approaching in many ways the problem seen through
13 a Westminster or a Washington perspective rather than
14 one that was very much more locally focused and said,
15 "There are tribal structures here, there are
16 traditions."
17 The tribal structures had been badly damaged by
18 Saddam. It was the sort of -- that period where he had
19 replaced a number of the tribal leaders and the like and
20 some of the tribes had themselves been atomised because
21 they had challenged his authority. But recognising
22 that, recognising what the natural order of authority at
23 the lower level in effect was something I don't think we
24 were very good at. What we did was, we said, "Democracy
25 is good here, and so therefore what we will do is we

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1 will bring it in a way that we recognise it, as opposed
2 to the way they would recognise it."
3 So getting them involved in that partnering was very
4 important. But that required training, so training for
5 the police, setting up some specialist units so they
6 could be proud of what they saw and a sense of
7 ownership.
8 So we did that as much as we could, wherever we
9 could, and began to build that up as a programme. But
10 it was something that I put down as a -- it wasn't,
11 probably, my main effort but it was a principal effort
12 as we went through the latter part of the year, before
13 we then handed (inaudible) and disappeared in December.
14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I mean, that's obviously something I
15 would like to follow up with General Stewart but I'm
16 conscious of the time so perhaps we will pick this up
17 after lunch.
18 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Laurie. Usha, do you or Rod want
19 to raise anything at this point?
20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I just wanted to raise a question
21 for Sir Hilary.
22 At the outset you said that you had several terms of
23 reference and you had an agreed programme with Bremer
24 and your job was to keep London informed and a sort of
25 personal direction from the PM.

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1 You obviously made it work on the ground, but did
2 that pose any particular difficulties for you in making
3 that work?
4 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: The terms of reference didn't pose any.
5 Although I said there were sort of four different
6 inputs, they were mutually consistent, and to me there
7 was no problem about having a term of reference with
8 Bremer, which was that he was my boss, while at the same
9 time reporting back to London. That was manageable.
10 As regards did I have any difficulty making things
11 work, well, ultimately they didn't work. So actually it
12 was a failure of a mission, but that wasn't a result of
13 the terms of reference.
14 There were difficulties in relation to Baghdad.
15 When I met Ambassador Bremer -- and I think I went up
16 to Baghdad on my third day in the country -- he didn't
17 give me any instructions, so I offered him three
18 priorities, which he agreed with. The first was
19 I needed to find out what Baghdad's priorities were,
20 which we didn't know in the south. The second was to
21 make sure that our priorities and in the south were
22 consistent were Baghdad's priorities, and the third was
23 to change the location of where we worked, which was in
24 every sense dangerous to health, and for that I got
25 tremendous support from Baghdad.

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1 Ultimately, we continued really to have no direction
2 from Baghdad, which was a pity in one sense but
3 a blessing in another, because unless I had an
4 instruction not to do something, I felt able to do
5 whatever we were able to do. That included getting some
6 of my staff to come down with, literally, suitcases full
7 of money from Baghdad. If they could be convinced that
8 what we were up to was worth doing, they would provide
9 us dollars in notes, which were carried back in a
10 Hercules by suitcase, and often the problem was not --
11 I'm sorry, this is a long answer, but the problem was
12 not availability of money, although that became the
13 perception, it was the difficulty of spending it and
14 contractual obligations. So there were tremendous
15 difficulties in the way, but not as a result of my terms
16 of reference.
17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You said that you asked for 37
18 experts and some armoured cars. How long did that take?
19 Did they arrive? What kind of experts were you looking
20 at?
21 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: There were real difficulties about
22 this. I put in this bid at the end of August. The task
23 was ultimately given to DFID. I understood that
24 in October they put out a trawl with a deadline of,
25 I think, the end of October for recruitment. By

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1 January, 18 out of 37 had arrived. But we also had a lot of other nationalities, and an enormous contingent of Italians turned up as soon as we changed our location and it became more safe. We got more Danes, we got a tremendous number.

But if I may say -- I mean, that was 1 January, 18, so quite a long gap. They started coming faster then. And the impact of these experts was beyond price, because -- I mean, you might say that western practice was not the same as Iraqi but, you know, if you had a telecommunications expert, rather than an all-purpose consultant, talking to telecoms people, it had a fantastic -- the real -- the really most important sector was agriculture. General Lamb has referred to tomatoes. That was one very graphic story, but another one was seed corn. We had no seed corn for planting the winter harvest, and if you didn't have a winter harvest, you had no employment in the sowing time, no employment at the harvest time and shortage of food. You could not just send somebody off to buy seed corn and distribute it. We had a very elderly Danish agricultural expert, who said, "This corn has got to be sanitised, it has got to pass certain tests. Otherwise it can create havoc. And you mustn't just give it away, that will completely distort the market. It should be sold at an

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1 appropriated price."
2 That sort of input was invaluable. So that's to
3 emphasise the importance of being able to get hold of
4 real experts on the ground quickly.
5 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: My final question is: you were there
6 for six months. Was there a particular reason? Because
7 it seems to me that, given the scale of the task, there
8 was some need for continuity. Why did you move after
9 six months?
10 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Well, I agreed in the first instance to
11 stay there for six months, which was the same term as
12 the commanding generals, but what hasn't been mentioned
13 so far -- and I'm sure it will come up, but very, very
14 important, that in the middle of November, much to our
15 surprise, and in many -- well, in some senses
16 disappointment, it was decided that the CPA should wind
17 up at the end of June, and I was due to leave -- the six
18 months would have been the end of January. It became
19 clear to me a couple of months before that that the
20 entire focus of Baghdad's attention had shifted from
21 trying to make something work into, "What are we going
22 to do to run down?" I was not the man for that job.
23 I had -- I like to get things done, not wind them up.
24 The other factor was, as General Lamb -- I'm glad it
25 came from an army general to say how debilitating all

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1 this was. I mean, I used to be a younger man. I was
2 pretty tired, and I think, had I stayed on -- Jack Straw
3 was very good about this. I mean, he was in a sense my
4 employer. He said, "I would like you to stay on but I'm
5 not going to request that you do," and I don't know what
6 I would have done if he had actually formally asked me.
7 But I think it was actually right because there could
8 have come a point where I could have been
9 counter-productive.
10 THE CHAIRMAN: Roderic, anything?
11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Sir Hilary, you have said that on
12 a number of occasions Number 10 weighed in to make sure
13 that some of things you were asking for actually
14 happened, for example to get money for the package that
15 you were putting up out of DFID. But in your book you
16 seem to take a slightly different line; you say that the
17 then Prime Minister was seemingly little interested in
18 the processes within government, by which this, meaning
19 making progress in Iraq at this time, might be brought
20 about:
21 "He proved unable to mobilise government departments
22 to produce the necessary results."
23 How do you square these two slightly conflicting
24 lines?
25 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: I think I alluded to it in response, in

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1 my earlier remark, where I said that I felt -- I had no
2 difficulty with the sort of political support for what
3 I was doing; the difficulty I had, which was at
4 political level, I think I said, as well as at senior
5 administrative level, was translating these desiderata
6 into action, and there I felt really it was, "This is
7 needed? Okay, make it happen." And indeed I was very
8 struck, when I called on the Prime Minister before
9 I went out, when he emphasised to me the importance of
10 reconstruction, he said, "Surely someone can build
11 a power station in six months."
12 As it happened, 30 years before, when I joined the
13 Foreign Office, I had been an electrical engineer, and I
14 didn't think it was possible in those circumstances, but
15 I didn't say anything, but nor did anybody else in the
16 room.
17 So there was this mismatch between the political
18 desirability, on which I had tremendous support, and the
19 feeling I had constantly, that there wasn't a mechanism
20 which I felt had to be directed, probably at Cabinet
21 level, to make sure that these decisions were
22 implemented and happened on the ground.
23 So I had a decision to have 37 experts. Under half
24 appeared between the end of August and 1 January. To
25 me, there was a distinct absence of machinery to make

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1 things happen, the translation from policy to practice.
2 Otherwise it became hope.
3 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So what lesson would you draw from that
4 in terms of the kind of machinery that the
5 British Government needs to do this sort of job
6 properly, if it arises again in the future?
7 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: I think theoretically such machinery,
8 certainly, used to exist. When I was a more junior
9 officer, I was involved in something which involved it
10 and which is essentially a Cabinet committee, where you
11 have a group -- a small number of Cabinet ministers will
12 look at an issue and it will be taken forward by
13 a single Cabinet minister, who could knock heads
14 together.
15 It was quite clear to me that Whitehall as a whole
16 was not mobilised. When I wrote to the
17 Permanent Secretary in the Department of Health,
18 praising a team of four who were just leaving and asking
19 for them to be replaced, I got no reply and no
20 replacement. So that suggested to me that Whitehall
21 wasn't mobilised.
22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Although there was an ad hoc committee of
23 ministers that was meeting in this period.
24 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: That is absolutely right and I attended
25 a couple of meetings and I was astonished that it was

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1 called "ad hoc".
2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: That's just a title. I mean, there was a
3 committee of Cabinet ministers --
4 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: It's a title but I felt the
5 Prime Minister gave me to believe that the country was
6 at war. So that ad hoc committee -- certainly the two
7 meetings -- I think I attended two -- was under
8 different chairmanship. I saw the papers that went
9 before it. Generally they said, "Ministers are invited
10 to take note of ..." It wasn't, "Ministers are invited
11 to make sure that the following things which have been
12 requested some time ago happen."
13 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Like, "Do this."
14 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Like, "Do this," or, more to the point,
15 "What has happened to this request? How do we stand?
16 How are we going to make it happen?" I think the
17 parallel that came to mind was in the First World War
18 when -- well, Sir Lawrence Freedman or Sir Martin will
19 know much better than me --
20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: He is quite old but not that old.
21 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: No, no, but when there was a munitions
22 problem and Lloyd George was put in charge of it and
23 solved the problem. I didn't see any Lloyd George
24 around.
25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Some previous witnesses have suggested --

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1 indeed, I think, including today -- that really one
2 should have a Cabinet-level minister dedicated to a task
3 like this, which we didn't have, and indeed, if you have
4 a minister, you really need a department whose task it
5 is, which again we didn't have. You had, within the
6 Foreign Office, with the pan-Whitehall brief, the
7 Iraq -- by now it was called -- "Policy Unit",
8 previously "Planning Unit", from whose head we heard
9 yesterday. DFID, I think, would argue that they are
10 there for development, that this is beyond their remit.
11 So it fell between the cracks and things had to be
12 made up in a sort of Heath Robinson way by the Iraq
13 Planning Unit, which one day was plan -- well, it was
14 a policy unit, the next day -- or a planning unit/policy
15 unit, completely changed its functions.
16 So would you argue that one does need some new
17 bureaucratic capacity, from Cabinet level downwards,
18 that really can take responsibility for something like
19 this? I'm not wanting to lead you into your conclusion
20 but I would like to know what it is.
21 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Well, what I felt in retrospect was
22 that the first imperative was to have a senior Cabinet
23 minister with lead responsibility to make things happen,
24 and it had to be at ministerial, political level.
25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And we didn't have that?

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1 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Not apparently. You referred to the
2 ad hoc committee. If it had that responsibility, it
3 didn't appear to fulfil that function.
4 Below that I felt that there should be some
5 mechanism to pull officials together, and that should
6 really be a Sir Humphrey figure, a permanent
7 undersecretary-level, senior official, working directly
8 to the minister to make things happen. The next stage
9 which you --
10 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Located where?
11 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: I don't know but close to Number 10 or
12 maybe in the office of the -- I mean, physical -- you
13 know, I suppose physical presence is power, I don't
14 know. But the idea you are almost putting into my mouth
15 of a new department, I never saw it like that.
16 I thought that if you have a minister and a very senior
17 official, the task then was to pull the Whitehall
18 departments together and give instruction. Creating a
19 new department? -- well, we created a new department in
20 the CPA. I mean, that was a new body and, you know, the
21 terrible teething problems. So I would have been
22 inclined to go for the simpler option of getting the
23 head and the policy right and banging heads together
24 among departments, and if one department didn't come up
25 to scratch, the Cabinet minister would have the

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1 authority of the Prime Minister to make sure it did.
2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you. It is obviously a question we
3 are going to have to think about quite a lot further as
4 we do our work. Thanks very much.
5 THE CHAIRMAN: I think this is a good moment to break for
6 lunch. Can we come back at 2 o'clock? Thank you very
7 much.
8 (1.09 pm)
9 (The short adjournment)
10 (2.00 pm)
11 THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome back, everyone, and I won't go
12 through the preliminaries again. We will go straight
13 back to the questioning, I think.
14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I would like to come back to the
15 question of the Iraqi security force and so on, but
16 I think possibly before we come back to that, we need to
17 understand why and how the security situation had
18 deteriorated. And perhaps, again, to General Lamb
19 first, what did you see as the cause of the
20 deterioration in the security situation, or causes?
21 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: The first was obviously that we
22 were not delivering what I think by way of an
23 expectation -- you might say it was a ridiculous
24 expectation, but an expectation in their eyes
25 nevertheless -- that we were failing to deliver. And

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1 that was principally on the essential services, so
2 water, power. I remember going to the Shia Flats in --
3 and being confronted by young family who had lost their
4 daughter, and she had died of heatstroke. They had
5 spent money on a fan. They had no power for the fan to
6 work. These were very real concerns and generated real
7 anger, and quite understandably so because we were not
8 delivering.
9 At the same time I also remember going to a meeting
10 where one of the sheikhs -- I think it was the
11 Basra Council -- said, "Why can't you provide water?
12 You know, in Saddam's day we had water everywhere." We
13 had maps of where the piping didn't go in Basra, and
14 they didn't go into an awful lot of places, which we
15 then provided. They looked at this with incredulous
16 views saying, "But we believed it" because that's what
17 they'd been told and no one would have questioned it,
18 otherwise it would have been a one-way trip to the
19 desert.
20 So there was a sense of this ridiculous expectation,
21 but one that was understandable. Again, you have to
22 experience 50 degrees or 55 degrees in 100 per cent
23 humidity. Most of our radios switch out at 40 degrees
24 by design because it is too hot to operate. So at those
25 sort of temperatures and that sort of humidity.

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1 I remember Field Marshall Slim referred to Basra in
2 certain terms a while back that it is an unpleasant
3 arrangement, it's a very unpleasant place to be and,
4 therefore, anger and all the rest comes through.
5 At the same time you had people in fact using the
6 opportunity to challenge our authority or to challenge
7 us and to change the dynamic, and that was from a range
8 of criminal -- and one should not underestimate that,
9 you know, in chaos the criminal and the corrupt
10 fraternity do rather well. You know, they leech on to
11 it and fester it because out of that comes opportunity
12 and out of opportunity comes wealth.
13 So you had a criminal fraternity that were very keen
14 on using whether it was oil smuggling, whether -- it was
15 a range of corruption of, therefore, putting those sort
16 of pressures on.
17 You had the difficulties between SCIRI and the likes
18 of the Sadrist trend, et cetera.
19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: These are two Shia parties?
20 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: Quite -- that were down there that,
21 again, were contesting authorities. These were not
22 comfortable partners. It was a power and authority
23 issue. You had then all the tribal underpinning that
24 went with that. You had this sort of quiet interference
25 from elements of Iran. So all these parts came into

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place, plus people who were genuinely disaffected and/or took our occupation as an occupation and, therefore, wished us out.

All those came from an early stage of an acceptance, the honeymoon period, one might say, then began to unravel with direct fire attacks, in grenade attacks and thrown IEDs, to then ground-based IEDs to RPG attacks, to multiple, to complex attacks, et cetera. It just continued to escalate.

At the same time, what I refused to do would be drawn to that -- somehow we will deal with that and then we will get back on to what we should be doing because the bulk of the people weren't affected by it. They were conscious of it. What I needed to do was try and do the very things myself and Hilary were looking at, which was bringing about those essential services. The object of a counterinsurgency is really to make a better life. So trying to provide some of the substance of that and let them see that through.

So in the riots that we had in August it was interesting to watch the role that was played by Said Ali, who was one of the clerics in the town, of which he was seeing the thing begin to just unravel in a way. And I remember going to talk to him and just saying, "Look, I get what we are not doing, I get what

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1 we are failing on. This is what we are trying to do and
2 you can either help me or you can just make it more
3 difficult" and I had established a working relationship
4 with him where I think there was a degree of trust
5 between the two.
6 What was interesting then, a number of then four by
7 fours went out, in effect, you know, and that was then
8 quelled off, and the message in the Friday prayers, a
9 powerful communication network, was one of saying, "They
10 are trying. Let's cut them some more slack just to see
11 whether they can deliver". The sum of the delivery
12 though was so great in way that, as I say, that power,
13 water, a better life for them, and then the underpinning
14 governance that went with that, that there was a sense
15 that this was a collapsing circuit.
16 We managed to get things better, I think, towards
17 the fall as the weather then improved, got a little
18 cooler. You went to Ramadan. As Hilary said, that is
19 a reflective -- it is a reflection on the previous year.
20 As they came out of that, we put $500 into every school
21 to get it painted. We had to get them energised.
22 An interesting aside from that was I was then
23 presented with a "who authorised this". I said, "Look,
24 you said you were going to do something and nothing was
25 happening. I have a whole series of schools here.

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1 I have just put $500, I have identified five people --
2 two teachers, a member of the community and then two
3 parents, I think, were the sort that I recall -- those
4 that were responsible for how the 500 were spent. And
5 they painted and they cleared the thing out and got some
6 basic things in and all the rest of it.
7 The follow-up to that was someone said where are the
8 receipts for the money sent, and they said, you know,
9 you will find yourself in difficult water with this one.
10 We eventually produced some of the receipts, and then
11 the final nail in my coffin was they then said but these
12 are in Arabic. At which, I turned round and said, "I
13 have had enough of this rubbish. Put me in gaol.
14 I have better things to do because I haven't much time
15 in hand here." All of those were a combination of the
16 problem we are facing.
17 They also extended to two more provinces, so the
18 span of our command increased and then all these other
19 things that were coming in that were demanding of us,
20 whether it was trying to get seed corn -- when the UN
21 left following the attack in Baghdad, they went to
22 Kuwait. So I had to then -- I sent people down to
23 Kuwait to try and understand what was happening with the
24 seed corn, what was happening in fact in their support
25 programmes, to try and make some sense out of it. So

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1 all of these things were, therefore, a combination which
2 took us to a position where we were then finding
3 ourselves severely stretched, and trying to understand
4 at the same time why these attacks -- how we might be
5 able to put those off. But I had to hold those at arm's
6 length while I dealt with issues of corruption.
7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There's an awful lot there. What
8 were you sensing about the risks to your own troops, the
9 troops under your command? Just before you had arrived,
10 I think, there had been the appalling incident which had
11 with seen six Royal Military Policemen killed. Was that
12 seen as an intimation of things to come or just perhaps
13 a particularly unfortunate one-off incident?
14 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: I do not think it was. It just
15 related the somewhat violent nature. People tended --
16 I think rightly so, long may it continue -- to see these
17 circumstances through their own eyes. Where we find
18 ourselves is often in Hobbes's world: It is short, it
19 is brutish and it is extraordinarily violent.
20 The norms of what we accept and enjoy in this
21 country and elsewhere are just not self-evident, whether
22 it be Rwanda or parts of the Balkans or places like Iraq
23 and Afghanistan. But, you know, those are self-evident
24 to us who operate in that environment. They are not so
25 self-evident to others.

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1 So the Najaf innocent -- which we do not forget, we
2 continue to pursue and try -- and we've led a number of
3 operations up there to pursue those that were guilty of
4 that crime, as we continued to follow up on the --
5 I think it was two EOD engineers who had been killed in
6 one of the cities during the time of the run-up to
7 Baghdad. So we did not lose sight of those -- trying to
8 seek those who were responsible for those crimes. But
9 at the same time they were reflective of a violent
10 society who had enjoyed -- again, coming from somebody,
11 you know, who had said nothing for three years to his
12 own family because Uday's henchmen had come along, he
13 had been considered out of order and they had cut his
14 tongue out. They hadn't cut out quite all his tongue,
15 and he didn't want anyone to know because his sense was
16 they would come back and do the rest.
17 So it was a very harsh environment, the way these
18 judgments were taken. In that environment, therefore,
19 the threats we faced, recognising to be very real, and
20 the fact is you can buy insurgency, you can buy
21 violence, you can buy people, as we saw later on in the
22 campaign, quite easily to go out and lay IEDs not for
23 some sense of hatred against the coalition, but a sense
24 of it feeds your family and why would you worry about an
25 American or a British soldier? This is just part of

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1 life's rich pageant.
2 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: I just wonder if I could come in on
3 another angle to your question about the growth of
4 violence, and that's, if you like, the external
5 political factors.
6 As time progressed, it became clear that the
7 violence was not just former regime loyalists, but
8 actually there was a genuine insurgency developing.
9 The influence of Moqtadr al Sadr was very great and, of
10 course, it was primarily north of our region, but it
11 became clear to me in about November that an infection
12 was starting to spread south.
13 I called on the most prominent cleric in Nasiriyah,
14 one of the three main cities, and asked his views about
15 Moqtadr al Sadr and asked whether he would be willing to
16 speak out against some of the violence that Moqtadr was
17 causing. The answer came back -- I mean, Delphically --
18 basically he clearly did not approve of Moqtadr al Sadr or
19 his methods, but he was certainly not going to speak out
20 against him because he would lose the youth of his
21 congregation and he was not prepared to do that. And it
22 became clear that there was this infection spreading
23 through Nasiriyah into Basra.
24 The situation in Maysan province was different
25 again, because that was much more tribal and Maysan felt

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1 that they owed nothing to the British or the coalition
2 for liberating them. They had liberated themselves.
3 And there it was I think more naked search of power
4 between tribal groups which developed. The longer that
5 Saddam's security apparatus was not there to keep a lid
6 on things and the longer that we, quite rightly,
7 observed human rights, so these forces developed with
8 time.
9 I think that's -- it is also important to
10 acknowledge this, because there was still this tendency
11 among some to regard the south as the British fiefdom,
12 but actually, of course, it was not insulated from
13 external factors and these external factors were very
14 important in terms of the security and level of
15 violence.
16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Perhaps we can move on to you,
17 General Stewart, in terms of how things appeared as you
18 arrived.
19 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: When I arrived, in a funny sort of
20 way it seemed relatively calm. I mean, the coalition
21 forces weren't being significantly attacked, we were
22 getting the occasional IED against us, the occasional
23 shooting incident. When I say "occasional", maybe once
24 a week or so.
25 I think the biggest concern I had was the one that

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1 Graeme had had, which was the inability to meet the
2 expectation of the Iraqi people, because retaining the
3 consent of the Iraqi people there, we saw as my centre
4 of gravity. I had to work within their country, they
5 had to accept us and we just were never going to meet
6 expectations.
7 If I can give you a very quick example, walking
8 through the souk, I went to a white goods seller, "How
9 many washing machines do you sell a week," I asked,
10 because washing machines use electricity, they use water
11 and they produce sewage. Three areas -- three of the
12 four things we could not provide. He was selling
13 20 a day.
14 So our ability to help the Iraqis by producing white
15 goods for them at a cheap price was destroying our
16 ability to help, and we were never going to meet that
17 expectation. And I think it is -- that's something that
18 we never really came to terms with.
19 And if you think again about the Basrawi, he used to
20 have under Saddam 18 to 20 hours' electricity a day;
21 under us, because Baghdad was the centre of gravity and
22 CPA saw that and it was, "We must sort Baghdad", they
23 reduced from 18 to 20 hours a day to about 12 hours
24 a day because electricity was being moved up to Baghdad.
25 So life was getting worse for the Shia under us rather than

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1 getting better and that was a real issue.
2 Therefore -- all the commanders -- were focused on
3 trying to talk to the major players, whether it was the
4 clerics, whether it be the local heads of the SCIRI or
5 Badr, to try to keep them on side, to say, "Look, this
6 is how we are trying to help" because actually each day
7 it was getting worse for them and actually we started to
8 see that build up as time went by.
9 And I think the other thing was that where we had
10 a real problem was that they were thirsty -- and I know
11 this sounds silly, but they were thirsty for the
12 opportunity for democracy, they wanted to elect people.
13 In Muthanna, where it was very peaceful and there were
14 no significant economic issues, et cetera, the American
15 head of the CPA in that province arranged that the
16 elders would nominate two people from each village who
17 would go and stand for election, and they would then get
18 elected by people in those villages.
19 That was -- the CPA stopped that from happening
20 after a bit because Al-Sistani was asking for elections
21 because he knew that the Shia were going to win, and
22 there was a need to delay all that. But who did they
23 elect? They didn't elect clerics, they didn't elect
24 political parties; they elected engineers, teachers and
25 technocrats.

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1 So the thirst was there and you had this
2 competition, because the political parties -- and
3 I don't know why we call them political parties because
4 they were not political in any sense -- saw that they
5 were losing influence over the people and they then set
6 about -- and that was how in a way it stirred up the
7 militia and we started to see the intimidation at
8 a lower level. And we simply did not understand --
9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: When did you start to see this?
10 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: I would say about February/March
11 time, yes, February/March time because it started
12 moving -- we were trying to -- we started to see an
13 increase in violence in February/March, just started,
14 but it was not relevant to the Sadr insurgency at that
15 stage because that happened in April, but we certainly
16 were looking at Sadr as -- but bear in mind on the
17 provisional council in Basra was an individual who was
18 the head of the offices of the Martyr Sadr, who was
19 Moqtadr's group. They were officially on the council.
20 So we were dealing with them through that. We had
21 not really identified that they were a specific threat
22 at that stage.
23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So as you look at things in
24 February/March, you are sensing more violence around the
25 growing power of the militias?

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1 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: What we are sensing is that we are
2 unable to meet expectations, that we are becoming
3 a target to the disenchanted, we have always been to the
4 Sunni rejectionists. We have not seen anything in terms
5 of outside influence from Iran particularly, and what --
6 because we had made security sector reform, our main
7 effort in order to try and -- well, because it is our
8 ticket out of there eventually -- we have seen a fight
9 against what we are starting to achieve in terms of
10 security sector reform.
11 So there are people who are clearly unhappy at the
12 police becoming even relatively effective, because they
13 never became anything close to being effective. But
14 people are starting to see that and are starting also to
15 mention to us -- and the tribes are starting to wave
16 their hands and say, "You really ought to lean on us,
17 you ought to come and ask us for more advice".
18 So all the different areas are starting to see that
19 they may not get the power that they thought they were
20 going to.
21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How did things change in April? You
22 have got these simultaneous military operations going on
23 in Fallujah, in Najaf?
24 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: The whole -- I woke up on the
25 morning of 6 April and I moved from probably third gear

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1 to way over six. Just all of us -- this was
2 a completely different day and it was like a switch had
3 been flicked.
4 We woke up on the 6th there were 35 shooting
5 incidents and attacks in Basra before 7.30 in the
6 morning. Nasiriyah had been taken over by the Mahdi
7 army, they had taken all the bridges, they had control
8 of the city. In Al Amarah, there was running battles
9 going on with the security forces.
10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you have any indication that
11 this was being done?
12 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: None whatsoever. We had not had
13 any indication at all. What is interesting -- we can go
14 back to it, but we had had on 4 April the beginning of
15 Fallujah and I think it was probably two or three days
16 earlier than that Yakubi had been arrested and Al Hawza
17 had been closed down.
18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to explain, that was the
19 newspaper.
20 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: The newspaper was that of the
21 office of the Martyr Sadr in Baghdad, and it had been
22 railing against the CPA and against coalition forces
23 because Sadr's line was very much that of the
24 nationalist one of we have occupying forces here, we
25 Iraqis must have a greater say. And the editor, or the

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1 person writing, Yakubi, in charge of it had been
2 arrested by the American forces on CPA's authority, and
3 the paper had been closed down. This was following
4 various incidents in Najaf where the Sadrists had
5 attacked people in Najaf and had been countered, and
6 there had been a few running battles around there.
7 Anyway, Fallujah then happened. So we suddenly had
8 on the 6th this complete change down in the south. And
9 it moved from what I would term -- we had not had
10 a insurgency, we had Sunni rejectionists, we had the
11 disenchanted, into an insurgency overnight.
12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And how did you respond?
13 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: We -- it was different in different
14 areas, because if I could give Al Muthanna as a example,
15 which was our fourth and least populated province, the
16 governor there was very strong, he was Badrist and he
17 dealt with it himself using the tribes a little bit.
18 The Dutch who were the battlion there were only attacked
19 two or three times. It was not a significant issue in
20 Al Muthanna.
21 In Maysan province and Basra, which was effectively
22 the British area where I had 20 Brigade at the time and
23 four British battalions spread over the area, it was
24 different in the two. Basra was very much -- we had
25 a representative of the offices of the Martyr Sadr on

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1 the provincial council with whom the brigade commander
2 was talking by eight o'clock that morning.
3 The governorate building had been taken over by the
4 Sadrists and the options were we either stormed it to
5 defeat them in a military action, to get them out, or we
6 talked with them and tried to get an Iraqi solution
7 through the council. And that was the decision that we
8 took there because we believed that that was the right
9 way to do it. And we absolutely had to keep the consent
10 of the Basra people, because if we lost that we did not
11 have the force even to be able to remain in Basra, we
12 would have been unable to operate.
13 In Al Amarah, it was a different circumstance where
14 we were being taken on very regularly, and we absolutely
15 had to regain control of Al Amarah and over the next
16 three to four weeks we effectively fought a battle with
17 the Sadrists in Amarah.
18 Funnily enough, I had little other than giving
19 direction and going to see the 20 Brigade commander
20 because I was spending most of my time in Nasiriyah
21 where the Italians were in charge and I had no UK forces
22 to try and turn the corner there, Nasiriyah having
23 always been a very political centre in Iraq, and where
24 the Italians needed a certain amount of assistance from
25 me to try and resolve the issue.

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1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: At the same time, or just after we
2 were getting the revelations about Abu Ghraib, and also,
3 I think, this was the time when there were the pictures
4 in the British press that turned out to be fakes, but
5 presumably these had an effect?
6 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: It was a fairly difficult two-week
7 period. I think there was -- I think Fallujah in
8 a funny sort of way really helped us. I know -- the
9 extraordinary thing was that on the Friday prayers, when
10 Basra and Al Amarah were in uproar and Martyr Sadr was
11 attacking us -- or the Sadrists were attacking us, the
12 issue in Friday prayers was nothing to do with that.
13 The issue was we must raise money for our fellow Iraqis,
14 even though they were Sunnis in Fallujah, because they
15 saw what was happening in Fallujah as being way beyond
16 the pale in Iraqi terms.
17 That was hugely helpful for me because it meant that
18 when I was talking to leaders and to the Sadrists I was
19 able to say, "Look, I can turn Al Amarah into Fallujah
20 if you want me to, but I don't think that's what you
21 want". So it was helpful in terms of deterrence, but it
22 did mean that the coalition as a whole, of course, was
23 now fighting an insurgency on two fronts, which clearly
24 was going to dissipate force.
25 I think the only other thing I would say on the

1 south in terms of the pictures coming out of Abu Ghraib,
2 Abu Ghraib had a significant effect on us in terms of
3 people -- the public turning against us, but we had
4 spent, from when we had opened it -- the divisional
5 temporary detention facility, the DTDF -- where we had
6 got the Red Cross in early, we had actually shown
7 sheikhs and locality dignitaries what we were doing. We
8 had shown them the prison, we had shown them how we
9 interrogated people, we had shown them all of that, so
10 they understood that -- because I knew that Abu Ghraib
11 was likely to come out at some stage, I think we had
12 pre-empted that so that we had a certain amount of
13 credibility in that respect.
14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just going back to our previous
15 session, when did it become apparent in Baghdad that
16 these activities had taken place at Abu Ghraib? You had
17 had advance warning that this information was likely to
18 come out and some sort of pre-emptive work was done
19 to --
20 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: I had not been -- General Sanchez
21 hadn't told me personally, and I hadn't been briefed on
22 it and shown the pictures or anything like that, but I
23 had been to the January and the February divisional
24 commanders meetings up in Iraq where American generals
25 had been told to stay behind and everybody else to fall

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1 out. And I found out from General Figgures why that
2 was. So I knew what was likely to come out and,
3 therefore, had had the opportunity in that respect to
4 prepare for it and so on.
5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just as well, in a sense, that if
6 you hadn't been given advance warning it would have been
7 even worse, presumably.
8 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: Absolutely, yes.
9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What difference to your job did
10 April and May -- how did it seem in May and June after
11 that? Did you have different priorities as a result?
12 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: I think very clearly yes, in that
13 we -- I was in slightly different position because
14 almost from when I arrived, I knew when I arrived at
15 Christmas that the end of June, it was the transfer of
16 sovereignty to the Iraqis. So maintaining the consent
17 of the Iraqi people was sort of my centre of gravity and
18 one of my main efforts and, therefore, transfer of
19 authority, which was a good signpost at the end of the
20 road to reach, it was a sort of chequered flag which one
21 could present to the commander of the ICDCs, to the
22 provision councils, to everyone with whom one spoke.
23 It became a different message as we are following
24 April to say, "Look, this is going to be your problem
25 next. It is not just going to be our problem, it is

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1 also going to be yours", and we were again hugely helped
2 by another incident which was actually on 21 April. We
3 had five simultaneous car bombs in Basra and Al Zubair,
4 which killed about 70 people and injured 250-odd, all
5 aimed at the Iraqi police because our SSR was working.
6 And this was people from outside, we are pretty sure it
7 was not integral to the south, and it was certainly not
8 Sadr militia. It was perhaps Iranian inspired, it was
9 perhaps inspired from Baghdad.
10 And that, again, after initial -- the first 12 hours
11 weren't fun because it was all blamed on us, but once we
12 had got the message out -- and, again, we used the
13 clerics for that -- people saw that as an attack upon
14 themselves and it solidified Basra in a way to support
15 what we were doing. And it was almost -- and it is an
16 awful thing to say, but it is one of the best things
17 that happened during my time there in being able to
18 bring the Iraqis and the Iraqi authorities and ourselves
19 closer together.
20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You suggested, though, that you
21 thought security sector reform was being successful by
22 this time. Can you elaborate a bit?
23 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: The ICDC, I believe, was a success.
24 General Petraeus came back in his three-star hat. He
25 was responsible for the security sector, came down, saw

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1 the ICDC in Basra in particular and went away pretty
2 impressed about it, and said I haven't seen anything
3 approaching this.
4 We had got an extra battalion in from Cyprus to do
5 nothing but SSR on the ICDC side. We allocated another
6 battalion to the Iraqi police, actually probably
7 untrainable and we should absolutely have got rid of the
8 police and kept the army rather than the other way
9 round. But they were becoming, as I say, reasonably --
10 more effective than they had been in the past.
11 So SSR was taking on -- and the Carabinieri from the
12 Italian side were just the right sort of troops to help
13 train and I would think 50 per cent of the force I had
14 was doing SSR. We had -- during the month of April that
15 was reduced to probably only 25 per cent, but we
16 continued to do SSR during those periods and actually
17 one or two of the bigger incidents we had was people
18 going to -- actually moving from location to location to
19 try and help the SSR.
20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And just finally, before I hand over
21 to Sir Martin, a question for both General Lamb and
22 General Stewart, going back to something you raised
23 before of this being our area but very affected by
24 developments outside.
25 You have given one quite important indication, that

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1 if Baghdad is seen as the priority, then the most
2 important resource -- that is power -- is diverted away
3 from Basra. So I'm interested in how well did you feel
4 able to make these sorts of concerns known to get over
5 the fact that while Basra maybe kept quiet for a while,
6 the more that it was seen that they were being
7 discriminated against or Iraq was deteriorating, the
8 harder it would be to keep it quiet?
9 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: Just on this, before Graeme
10 answers. Two things I would say about what I would call
11 the rebuilding. The first thing is we were at war or we
12 were in a conflict area, and twenty first century
13 propriety rules about tendering correctly and making
14 sure -- were in place. I mean, crazy.
15 The one thing I needed to do was demonstrate to the
16 Basra people a large project which they could all see.
17 We had destroyed the bridge across the Shatt that joined
18 together an element of Basra with the rest of the town.
19 We destroyed this in the 1991 war. We put up a pontoon
20 bridge over there which we had to keep on rebuilding.
21 I spent seven months trying to the get the money to mend
22 the bridge that was there and I couldn't because it was
23 in the 18.2 billion that was due to be done over the
24 next five years coming out of Congress, and it would be
25 seen as breaking Treasury rules if we spent money on

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1 this because the money was going to be spent in two to
2 three years.
3 I was unable to get the message across that this
4 was, in my view -- and I think in most of the Iraqis'
5 views -- showed a complete inability of being able to do
6 any rebuilding at all.
7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Was that a CPA problem or a UK --
8 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: It was a CPA problem. I knew I was
9 going nowhere there.
10 I then went back through UK and I was told it broke
11 Treasury rules. I pursued it as much as I could. Two
12 months after I left, we did manage to get it done, but
13 that's after I had been chivvying for six months.
14 I suspect that Graeme had probably been chivvying
15 for three months. We just needed something for people
16 to see. The only other thing I would say is there was
17 no shortage of money, we just couldn't spend it. I know
18 that seems strange, but we couldn't -- it was -- as
19 Sir Hilary was saying, how did you actually put that
20 into practice, and it was partly the fact that we didn't
21 have the right experts, that we didn't have the -- we
22 didn't -- the rules prevented us quite often from doing
23 things.
24 So there was never a shortage of money. It was
25 actually how did we then bring this into practice, and

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1 when we did, there was -- it never -- I shall never
2 forget 75 police cars turning up which only worked on
3 98 octane fuel. And, of course, there is nothing above
4 89 octane fuel in Iraq at the time, so they lasted for
5 about a week. And, again, you have made it worse for
6 people. You have raised their expectations, you have
7 met it for a week or two, and then it has just
8 disappeared.
9 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: What were these rules that prevented
10 the money from being used? What type of rules?
11 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: There was bureaucracy everywhere.
12 The CPA in the centre would say this money is allocated
13 for -- if one is to take, for example, the police
14 uniforms, we would be given a specific amount of money
15 to go and buy police uniforms, but we could probably
16 only buy them from American producers because the money
17 had to go back to American industry.
18 When we tendered for -- in Basra Airport where we
19 were building the headquarters, we had to go out to
20 tender to get the best value for money, so three people
21 had to be tendered to. The people who came up with the
22 best value for money came from Kuwait who had
23 Bangladeshi workers, so we were not giving work to the
24 local Iraqis.
25 It would have been so much better. There was one

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1 cleric in Al Zubair who said to me, "Just give me
2 $10,000 and I will produce water for the whole of
3 Azibah. And you have just spent £100,000 on getting it
4 to 30 houses over there", but I couldn't do that.
5 THE CHAIRMAN: Just before Sir Martin picks up the
6 questioning again, we have heard a couple of acronyms,
7 which I think we need for the record: SSR and ICDC.
8 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: SSR is security sector reform and
9 ICDC is Iraqi Civil Defence Corps.
10 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Martin?
11 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Before I ask Sir Hilary and Sir Graeme
12 to sum up and reflect on your time in Basra, I would
13 like to take up something which was mentioned briefly
14 before the break, and that is the question of a public
15 information campaign. And I would like to ask
16 a four-part question about.
17 First of all, what were our capabilities with regard
18 to such a campaign? Was it a priority? Where did it
19 stand in our priorities? What did it have to counteract
20 in terms of anti-propaganda? And finally, was it able
21 to achieve something over your term and, I suppose, also
22 to link up with the Abu Ghraib -- post-Abu Ghraib
23 period?
24 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Our capability, first of all, was
25 pretty limited. In CPA South I had a dedicated PR

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1 officer with a small team. The first one when I arrived
2 was a military officer, a major, because we had no
3 civilian, who, I think, got caught on a bad afternoon
4 and was somewhat critical of Baghdad and was summarily
5 sacked, not by me, but on the personal instructions of
6 Ambassador Bremer.
7 He was replaced temporarily by a DFID officer,
8 strangely, and then by quite a distinguished Danish
9 journalist, and they did pretty well, I think, in the
10 circumstances. They had very frequent press conferences
11 in the city until it became too dangerous, and then they
12 were held in our office in CPA South.
13 The priority was high, of course, as it was one of
14 the three objectives given to me by the Prime Minister.
15 What did we have to counteract? Well, nobody -- the
16 main PR effort, of course, CPA PR effort, was Baghdad's
17 responsibility, but they simply couldn't recruit anybody
18 to take it on and it was one of the great
19 disappointments, I think, both to President Bush and to
20 the Prime Minister that despite all the West's PR
21 capabilities, we didn't seem to be able to produce the
22 goods there.
23 So there wasn't any central CPA activity which
24 anybody in the region believed. There was Al Iraqiya TV
25 channel set up at some point, but nobody watched it. So

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1 the counteracting was, at one level Al Jazeera, which
2 was extremely effective, but I think probably the most
3 influential is the system which is prevalent in that
4 part of the world -- and I have lived in Jordan for
5 three years -- word of mouth. So stories got round,
6 including bad stories.
7 So we were trying to project good stories and at the
8 same time deal with lies.
9 What did we achieve? Well, I think Iraq, by the
10 time I left, had, I think, something like -- an odd
11 figure, something like 248 newspapers. So there was
12 a sort of free press was achieved. Of course, it was
13 inconceivable in Saddam's time and I know quite a lot of
14 effort was taken to train Iraqi journalists, and some of
15 them were very well meaning and they were competing with
16 each other.
17 So we did make use of them, but I think probably
18 the biggest achievements -- and the biggest
19 potential for achievement -- was effectiveness on the
20 ground: Opening things, showing that things worked, and
21 whenever there was a power station or pumping station,
22 which generally the Army Corps of Engineers had helped
23 fix, the army put me forward in my suit or short sleeved
24 shirt to preside over the opening and I made sure that
25 the person who cut the ribbon was the Iraqi engineer

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1 even if the work had been done essentially by the Corps
2 of Engineers.
3 So there was some achievement, but in the big
4 picture, of course, the narrative worked against us and
5 the narrative was a street narrative. You could go to
6 as many souks as you like and see the tremendous
7 progress in terms of the goods on sale and the fact that
8 the first time I travelled to Al Amarah took me two
9 hours, the last time took me three hours because of
10 traffic jams. There were so many cars.
11 But those stories, I guess they entered into the
12 consciousness but didn't really make the impact. So
13 ultimately it was a losing story and I think
14 particularly the failure to produce a nationwide PR
15 effort didn't help. So, you know, we dealt with our
16 little parish in the south. That seemed, from an
17 civilian perspective -- the generals may have a military
18 perspective.
19 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: It wasn't hugely dissimilar. We
20 had competing audiences. It was interesting, I remember
21 when Deputy SecDef Wolfowitz turned up in 2003
22 making the comment saying, you know -- he said,
23 "General, you know, we have got to get this message
24 into, you know, the beltway." I said, you know, "With
25 due respect, sir, that's your problem." I said, "The

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1 message I have got to get out is to some poor old
2 shepherd out in the hills, yes, he hasn't got a
3 television and he hasn't got a radio. He's the audience
4 I'm -- and Paul Wolfowitz said, "Yes, fair call."
5 So there was the competing audience of -- the
6 machinery we had was principally one which was IO and
7 so -- information operations and PR oriented. It tended
8 to be reactive, it was local boys' stories and these
9 issues. And then responding to events.
10 My sense is that -- and even now, I don't believe
11 that we had the sort of gearing that allows us to
12 aggressively move forward on the dissemination and
13 competing for the target audiences that we are
14 interested in in order to get the narrative of the
15 messages and to be able to -- if the competition is what
16 it is, and I sense that's what it is, the number 1
17 weapon of Al-Qaeda is propaganda and they use it very
18 effectively. They understand how to use it to good
19 effect.
20 So I sense even now we are well behind the
21 drag curve on the basis that we need to try and control
22 information. They don't. They just push information at
23 a very high tempo and they have no difficulties about
24 buying and/or disinformation and all the other rules and
25 responsibilities that we have. But I sense that we

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1 suffered from not being able to compete with -- as
2 Hilary says, the street narrative. Gossip and rumour is
3 part of that world and they will very quickly use it to
4 just spread disinformation on the basis that it is
5 a more interesting story.
6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Was there any feedback from London
7 about how this was working out in Iraq?
8 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: No, we continually asked for good
9 news stories in order to try and compete with what --
10 that seemed to be -- I think in Baghdad at one point in
11 time there was -- I think they brought in the FO who had
12 done rather well in New York, where he was banging out
13 a story either once a day or once a week, which was this
14 big theme, you know, things are moving on, and it was
15 just changing perceptions. The problem is that there
16 was probably more bad news stories coming out than we
17 could compete with good news, but there was an appetite
18 for give us good news stories.
19 My view is that in that part of the world quite
20 often -- and this is -- just the harsh reality is that
21 you are judged by your actions and so, therefore, our
22 actions were one of expectation failed, not being able
23 to deliver the essential services, a raft of things
24 which they had wrongly assumed we could do and we
25 couldn't deliver on, and so consequently, therefore, we

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1 were judged accordingly.
2 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: This is a slightly personal view,
3 and I think that strategic communications and getting
4 the same message out in today's globalised society,
5 where you've got a multinational operation with a single
6 lead nation and another 32 all talking to their electorate. I have
7 already mentioned 33 different audiences there, and all
8 of those at a strategic level, each of them with
9 a different message to sent.
10 So I think it is almost impossible to get a clean
11 message out, and each of those messages will almost
12 certainly be wholly contradictory to what the tactical
13 commander on the ground wants to put across to the local
14 people, who are only one of another dozen audiences he
15 has got.
16 I embedded Al Jazeera for a short period because
17 they reported what they saw. I refused to have the BBC
18 because they only reported what they wanted the people
19 here to hear, and those people did not affect me. I was
20 not bothered by what the British people wanted. I was,
21 in terms of in Barnsley, the Barnsley Chronicle talking
22 about Trooper Fred who was from Barnsley, but in
23 political terms that was not my issue.
24 So sending a single message and actually being able
25 to do PR strategic communications is hugely

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1 difficult.
2 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Sir Martin, can I come in again because
3 I realised I only really addressed one half of your
4 question, because there is still the London angle too
5 and the demands of London were different.
6 I think what I addressed was what we were doing in
7 the country and, of course, there were strong demands
8 from London for stories, and generally I would see any
9 journalist who came at all. But there was one incident
10 which I would like to draw to the attention of the
11 Committee because it seems to me to show a mismatch
12 between what London thought was important and what
13 I thought was important.
14 When the Prime Minister visited us in early
15 January 2004, he came with a full press team and I was
16 expecting him to spend quite a bit of time with the
17 civilian side as well as the military, and it was only
18 at the last moment I was able to persuade his staff that
19 he should spend some time with us and particularly that
20 he should meet the governor.
21 And he -- the press team were taking photographs of
22 the military, but the press officer accompanying the
23 Prime Minister said that they had to rush -- the press
24 had to rush back to the airport so that they were on the
25 plane when the Prime Minister boarded so that they could

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1 rush off. They, therefore, would not be available to
2 cover the Prime Minister's talk with the governor, and
3 during that talk, the governor was extremely flattering
4 about progress being made in the south. That was
5 completely missed.
6 Iraqi press were not allowed in for security
7 reasons, British press were not allowed in because they
8 had to be on the plane. I was very angry, and sent
9 a telegram which I hope is on record for you all to see.
10 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: This brings me to my concluding
11 questions for both of you.
12 Sir Hilary first: you left Basra after your
13 six-month tour and I wonder if you would tell us what
14 you feel during that time the CPA to have achieved both
15 in Basra and perhaps also in Iraq as a whole?
16 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Well, you will have access to -- and,
17 therefore, I won't go through it -- my fairly lengthy
18 valedictory report, which you may want to compare and
19 contrast with my first impressions report which I had
20 written six months earlier.
21 I think what I said in my valedictory report, most
22 of which I shared with my team -- I read out to my team
23 just before I left, except the bits that were critical
24 of Whitehall, there are a few bits, but I think I have
25 got most of those off my chest this morning and this

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1 afternoon.

2 So it covered all those structural problems about

3 the mismatch between the political direction and the

4 delivery, the growth of insurgency, and it touched on the

5 politics. What did we achieve? Well, I ended up -- and

6 I re-read it the other day -- on a rather upbeat note.

7 I said despite all these difficulties and despite the

8 very obvious challenges, I thought that it still might

9 be possible to achieve a moderated set of objectives,

10 somewhat less ambitious than the ones we had set

11 ourselves at the beginning, particularly with regard to

12 the nature of democracy.

13 And I was wondering in retrospect why I was -- why

14 I allowed myself to be that upbeat apart from to encourage my

15 successors, as it were. But I think there were two

16 reasons, both of which came to grief. One was that

17 I very much hoped that the corpus of work which we had

18 started with great difficulty, because of all the

19 contractual difficulties and so on, by the end

20 of January was really starting to have a momentum and,

21 indeed, Americans were coming down to Basra to see how

22 we were doing it because the emergency infrastructure

23 plan was working. We had managed to let out contracts

24 and these contracts were just starting to take off. And

25 I was hoping, because I had so advised, that this corpus

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1 of work within the CPA South would continue after June
2 when CPA wrapped up.
3 It was decided that essentially it shouldn't and
4 that the Americans would start again and the British
5 would concentrate on the DFID programmes. But the other
6 CPA programmes, a lot of money, essentially terminated.
7 I say that because that's what I was told by my own
8 staff later.
9 So I rather assumed that they would continue and
10 so maintain that momentum. The other was, of course,
11 completely unexpected, which was that even if plans had been laid
12 for that programme to continue, it would have come to
13 grief, and that was what General Andrew was saying,
14 the effect of Fallujah. And I think that was a major
15 setback. But, again, that's after my time.
16 But in retrospect, I think that slightly optimistic
17 air at the end of my valedictory was squashed by those
18 two developments afterwards.
19 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.
20 Sir Graeme, what did you see as Britain's most
21 significant military achievements during your time?
22 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: My sense was that we held the line,
23 we contained what was unfolding chaos. It had been in
24 many ways a Herculean effort by the forces I was
25 responsible for, not only British, but obviously the

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1 international -- the 11 other nations that were with me.
2 My sense is that -- I think my final comment in my
3 drawdown report is whatever you do, retain this army,
4 that it had proved itself in the most difficult
5 circumstances both from a combat situation but also,
6 more importantly, from having to hold that at arm's
7 length, that they had, I think, demonstrated once again
8 duty, service, sacrifice.
9 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In terms of lessons learned?
10 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: Oh, a raft of lessons, few of them
11 learned in a sense.
12 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Finally, in my raft of questions,
13 General Stewart, you inherited the situation that your
14 colleagues vacated. What did you see as what you are
15 inheriting, the major legacy of what they had done when
16 you came in?
17 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: I think there was a system in
18 place. I think that what Sir Hilary said about having
19 to build up the CPA in the south from October through
20 to February, I think the great tragedy was that his
21 successor arrived and he had to take it away. So on the
22 civil side, in many ways actually I saw that worsening
23 of the situation from the time I arrived to the time
24 I left.
25 In military terms, I think my biggest issue there

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1 was that we kept the coalition together in the south
2 under very difficult circumstances, when there were very
3 competing political positions within each of the nations
4 concerned. And it sort of proved that it worked,
5 although it didn't make life particularly easy in
6 getting it out.
7 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.
8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I do not have too many more
9 questions. I'm interested first, Sir Hilary, why do you
10 think the things had changed? You had the
11 Prime Minister there in January, you had had an upbeat
12 message you have described from an Iraqi official, you
13 clearly had managed to get things in place. You gave us
14 some intimations before that part of the problem was
15 people now looking forward to handing everything over to
16 Iraqis the next summer, but there were six months to go
17 and what might have been achieved in that time. So have
18 you any idea where the decision came from to wind things
19 down?
20 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Yes, I do indeed. And that gives me an
21 excuse just to touch on a subject which was addressed
22 this morning, but not by us, which I think is absolutely
23 crucial to us, and that's the plan.
24 I won't go into the absence of planning and all
25 that, we know about that. But a plan was revealed to --

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1 General Graeme and I were present when it was revealed --
2 to a startled audience of regional coordinators such as
3 myself, and divisional commanders. And this plan caused an
4 explosion among American divisional commanders -- we
5 kept our own counsel, I think -- because they felt they
6 had not been consulted about this plan at all, although
7 they had extensive planning capabilities themselves.
8 And on the most cursory of examinations it was
9 deeply flawed. This was a long-term plan going up to
10 the ultimate -- the end of 2005, and this was
11 November 2003. There was a terrific argument about
12 this, and then it was revealed, again, to an even more
13 startled audience, an increasingly angry audience --
14 General Odierno when he is angry is a sight to behold --
15 that actually there was no point in us discussing it
16 because it had already been shown in Washington and was
17 immutable, though it could be changed at the edges.
18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Could you just explain where did
19 this plan come from?
20 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: It had come from the CPA Baghdad
21 Planning Unit and it turned out that it had actually
22 been shown to the commanders in chief in Tampa, I think,
23 and, indeed, to the British Government but it hadn't
24 come to me or to the divisional commanders.
25 So there was a sort of -- I guess it was held

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1 closely until it was ready, possibly until it had been
2 shown to the White House.
3 That was about 5 November. On 13 November, the
4 deputy -- I think it was the 13th -- the Deputy National
5 Security Adviser, Bob Blackwill of the United States,
6 who was a counterpart of mine, an American counterpart
7 when I was in Islamabad, visited and we had a very long
8 chat about this and that. And we were due to meet the
9 next morning for breakfast to continue and I discovered
10 the next morning when he wasn't there that he and
11 Ambassador Bremer had flown back suddenly overnight to
12 Washington, where there were intense consultations,
13 possibly partly as a result of sight of the plan. And
14 it was decided -- announced to us on 15 November that
15 the CPA would be wound up. This was a total surprise
16 and completely at odds with the plan, flawed as it was.
17 So instead of going on to the end of 2005, it was to
18 wind up on 30 June 2004.
19 The decision clearly came from the United States,
20 from Washington, it was made in Washington. The extent
21 to which the British Government might have been
22 informed, I have absolutely no idea.
23 The assumption at the time among us, and I think
24 among US journalists, was it was -- the decision was
25 greatly coloured by the imminence of the US mid-term

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1 elections in November 2004 and the CPA was not working.
2 And by that time it was pretty clear it wasn't. So best
3 to hand over all the responsibility to the Iraqis and to
4 cease to be responsible essentially for Iraq's
5 sovereignty, which is what the CPA was really.
6 So that's how it came to pass.
7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And you at no point, or
8 General Lamb, were consulted?
9 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: No.
10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: On either of these moves?
11 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: No. Before the decision came to wind
12 up, having seen the plan there was an opportunity to
13 feed in some comments, which certainly I did orally at
14 the time, as well as in follow-up.
15 There were some aspects of it which I thought, from
16 my experience in developing countries, were deeply
17 unwise, like monetising the food basket, essentially
18 doing very with the public food subsidies,
19 privatising the massive state-owned enterprises. This
20 was all part of the plan.
21 There were also issues of timing where price rises
22 would immediately follow laying off people from public
23 enterprises, which seemed to be unwise politically. So
24 this did come up in the very heated discussion. I think
25 we contributed to it, but actually we could leave most

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1 of the running to the American generals.
2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But when the Prime Minister came
3 over, were you able to share your misgivings with him?
4 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: I did not have much time with the
5 Prime Minister when he came over, but I did have more
6 time in February when I was asked to pay a farewell call
7 on the Prime Minister. And in detail I offered him my
8 thinking about the desirability of maintaining the
9 momentum of CPA South, even if there were total Iraqi
10 sovereignty.
11 It seemed to me, I ventured, that continuing
12 a multinational organisation in the south would be
13 novel, unusual, but would be better than a series of --
14 in fact, what ended up as just two bilateral programmes,
15 US and UK. I know that those views were reported from
16 Number 10 to other government departments. I also know
17 that the decision was taken against pursuing that.
18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Were you able to brief other
19 government departments when you returned?
20 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Yes, certainly. I did the rounds and
21 I was asked to come in. I mean, as you may have
22 gathered from the tone of this discussion and from the
23 papers, we weren't shy, and indeed I was encouraged to
24 make trenchant comments and criticisms.
25 And if I can just offer one illustration, one of the

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most productive and rewarding visits we had out to Basra was that by Hilary Benn, who was then, I think, Minister of State, before he became Secretary of State at DFID. We were able together to explain to him in detail some of causes of our frustrations which we had made clear.

Hilary Benn was able to cut through these, we were able to cut deals there and then about short circuiting traditional British procedures. At which point, if I may betray a confidence, I wrote in a telegram back -- so I take responsibility for having revealed it -- that General Lamb instructed his Chief of Staff that the pins should be taken out of the DFID doll.

To give you an illustration, I thought that was absolutely right, and it seemed to me the right thing for us to be saying. I did receive representations from senior officials afterwards saying such reports were unhelpful because they were bad for the morale of officials.

Now, I understood that. As an official myself, I understood the importance of maintaining morale, but the most important thing was to get results and that, to my mind, was a ministerial responsibility. So the short answer to your question is absolutely, I had no hesitation at all in making my concerns plain. They weren't always welcome.

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1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And in this case what always
2 followed? Why do you think the decision was to carry on
3 with the winding down?
4 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: I only discovered subsequently --
5 I don't know if it is the last word on the subject, but
6 there were two things which I learned of. One --
7 I think one of my aspects of this advice was continue
8 with this process and if you are going to do that, a lot
9 of groundwork will need to be done with Washington to
10 make sure that this happens. So this should happen now,
11 in January when the permanent undersecretary came out.
12 I discovered subsequently that there was an
13 expectation that if we were to continue the major
14 programme in the south, the Americans would expect the
15 British to pay for it. There was no question of that.
16 I was not expecting the British to pay for it, I was
17 expecting them to persuade the Americans to continue (a)
18 paying, and (b) using Iraqi funds. So continuing the
19 sort of CPA arrangements.
20 And the other thing I discovered later was a piece
21 of advice saying -- it is quite a lot later
22 after January -- it is too early to come to a view on
23 this. And, of course, if -- the principle of unripe
24 time, if you delay the decision then it doesn't take
25 place. So -- but, you know, my task was to give advice.

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1 I gave advice, I followed it through. Obviously I only
2 had part of the picture. So it was for others to take
3 the decision.
4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: General Lamb, when you went back --
5 and obviously you came back and forth to Iraq -- what
6 sort of messages were you giving back to your
7 debriefing?
8 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: Back to London?
9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Back in the UK, yes.
10 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: Back to London. As I said at the
11 start, you know, the amount of guidance I needed from
12 London -- I had been set a fairly clear task, I was
13 pretty comfortable, I have always worked well with
14 intent. I understood the problem was unfolding in front
15 of me, not behind me.
16 What was important was that London were informed
17 and, therefore, would help them shape the political and
18 the public debate back here. But seeking further
19 guidance was something that in many ways I was merely
20 telling them the course I was on and seeking their
21 advice and guidance and help as and when.
22 Most of the time it was they were comfortable with
23 where I was going, and I was concurring. When
24 Hilary Benn came out it was a hugely helpful event
25 because it was for a change somebody who actually said,

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1 "What can I do to help?" rather than, "Tell me what
2 you're doing," and that went through.
3 The situation in Iraq was -- you know, if you take
4 the case of the briefing that we had, you know, it was
5 interesting watching, because don't forget the people in
6 the room there, the other divisional commanders, were
7 one General David Petraeus, one General Ray Odierno, one
8 General Martin Dempsey, who have all continued and
9 remain firmly in the fight and are, you know,
10 individuals of great reputation and great character and
11 great strength.
12 All of us -- you know, I was about to make a comment
13 when luckily I think General Petraeus made the comment
14 "Who are you?" to the fellow who'd been briefing. "You
15 haven't come up to see me. I'm running microfinancing,
16 I'm doing oil deals across with the Turks. I'm doing
17 a whole range of things. I have no idea who you are or
18 what you have been doing."
19 And this individual had been working on this
20 planning since very early days. I think he actually
21 began to look at it about February time, I can't
22 remember the exact date. But it was a very early bit of
23 thinking held within a very tight team.
24 There was an arrogance. You know, the pressures on
25 (inaudible) and I, I have no difficulty, were extreme,

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1 but that is no excuse, in my view, for not including
2 what were people who were in the fight at point and had,
3 you know, all our cases, 30/35 years of hard earned
4 experience.
5 The briefing I listened to, the plan I saw that was
6 presented, in my view should have been issued on soft
7 paper because that was about the value of it.
8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just the sense that one is getting
9 from this is a problem of initially no plan but then
10 a lack of continuity on planning assumptions, that you
11 start with Jay Garner, then we move to Bremer, there is
12 one set of assumptions and then all of a sudden there is
13 a completely different set of assumptions.
14 Is that fair -- never were able to really give one
15 set of planning assumptions a chance to see if they
16 could be made to work before you were on the next one?
17 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: If I may, yes, I think that is fair.
18 But there is another very important aspect, I think,
19 which shouldn't be underestimated, and that is the fact
20 that this bureaucracy which had the responsibility for
21 drawing up plans was created out of nothing. It never
22 existed before. I think planning in any government
23 is difficult, but to do it with a whole group of people
24 who had been recruited to a very great extent from the
25 American political system, because the State Department

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1 had no wish to volunteer to work under Mr Rumsfeld, so
2 in the early days there were very, very few people with
3 any experiences of developing countries.
4 Mr Bremer himself came from the diplomatic line, but
5 had served as ambassador in, I think, the Netherlands.
6 His experience was counter-terrorism and in that sense
7 he had experience of developing countries but from
8 a very, very different angle from nation building. So
9 it wasn't just the sets of assumptions, it was
10 a question of trying to get a bureaucracy which was
11 constantly changing, to start with major contracts
12 with lots of people trying to make their name and to
13 make some sense out of this. Added to which the command
14 chain was such that Ambassador Bremer made sure that
15 every decision of any importance was taken by him
16 personally, which lead to this phenomenon of
17 stovepiping.
18 So I think the nature of the bureaucracy was such
19 that it was very difficult to focus on these very
20 important issues.
21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: General Stewart, do you have any
22 observations on this and how it appeared to you and how
23 it appeared to you by the end of your tour?
24 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: I think they were memorable
25 meetings these CPA leaders of regions and the generals,

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1 with General Sanchez and Ambassador Bremer there
2 talking, but it was not joined up. I never felt -- and
3 this is not -- it sounds as though it is a critique of
4 the American system and the way it was working. I think
5 it came down to political requirement and I think it was
6 we need to, you know, be seen to be moving on. And what
7 I felt was that there was a lack of cross fertilisation
8 between the military and the civilian arm in Baghdad to
9 a certain extent, and it was very interesting down at
10 our level.
11 And I, of course, was at the tactical level very much --
12 I was in daily contact with Sir Hilary's equivalents in
13 all four province and they were my main weapon system,
14 because they were producing or trying to change life for
15 the better for the people on the ground.
16 I don't think that was the issue in Baghdad. The
17 issue in Baghdad was a far bigger picture of how we are
18 going to produce a Iraqi government that works, that is
19 going to allow us to get out. And in the meantime, we
20 had better destroy those people in Fallujah because, my
21 goodness, they are causing us a lot trouble.
22 So it was all slightly separated going down
23 different lines. Whereas we, because we didn't have
24 quite the same issues, we only had the Shia to worry
25 about, we only had the Sadrists in that sense as our

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1 enemy, it was much easier to work together.
2 So I think circumstances and personalities are
3 always hugely influential.
4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And the final question to
5 General Lamb and General Stewart.
6 General Lamb rightly made a tribute to the quality
7 of our soldiers. One of the things that has been said
8 is that it was difficult to sustain morale, given that
9 the hostility to what we were doing in Iraq, to the fact
10 of the war, the failure to find weapons of mass
11 destruction and so on, that they didn't necessarily feel
12 the nation was behind them in the way they had been in
13 previous wars.
14 I was just wondering, from your experience was this
15 a problem or were they happy to get on with what they
16 were doing?
17 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: I think Tommy Atkins and
18 Tara Palmer-Atkins are quite resolute. They tend to
19 draw from their own. And that it something, even as
20 a retired fellow, that one still looks toward.
21 I think they were disappointed that the home front
22 was not more engaged with them and understanding the
23 pressures, the difficulties, the complexities, the
24 struggle which they were having to deal with, well above
25 and beyond their call of duty and their expertise and

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1 competencies, but no one else was there to fill the gap
2 or walk where they trod.
3 But my sense was that morale didn't suffer. I think
4 the -- you know, the British army is made of sterner
5 stuff, and that's not a glib line. I sense that it can
6 go on for quite some time. Eventually it begins to
7 hurt, but in that early period when I was there, my
8 sense was that, you know, in this very confused,
9 uncertain and dangerous environment, they drew to
10 themselves and could see what they were achieving even
11 if it was in only small steps, or at least, in fact, you
12 know, just getting up and doing their duty.
13 So I didn't sense in my time that there was
14 a conflict of morale or some sense of the nation doesn't
15 love us. In a sense it is not really very British, is
16 it.
17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: General Stewart?
18 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: I'm going to compare it with today.
19 Although I'm now colonel of my regiment, I've been to
20 six funerals this year, six repatriations and I was at
21 the freedom of Barnsley a few days ago and tomorrow I'm
22 getting a welcome home parade in Newcastle.
23 The nation -- my faith in the British people -- and
24 I mean this -- has been restored over the last six
25 months. The way they have responded to the soldiers'

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1 return and to what the soldiers are doing in Afghanistan
2 is something that every single soldier today absolutely
3 values. And it is humbling to see what the British
4 people are doing in our support.
5 In Iraq, because the legitimacy was not -- and let
6 me say that I believe that was started possibly through
7 General Dannatt, but it was the media that started to
8 point out and support the solders, that was not the case
9 in Iraq. It made no difference on the ground because
10 1PWRR Private Beharry getting his VC -- and quite
11 rightly so -- the regimental system, the training, the
12 British army, looked after its own, stood together and
13 fought together and the morale was maintained. But on
14 the return, I think there was a slight feeling of, well,
15 what did we achieve in the eyes of our people. And the
16 people would have been equally as supportive, I think,
17 as they are now if they had felt that there was greater
18 legitimacy in what was happening.
19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you very much.
20 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
21 Final questions then, Sir Roderic?
22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Just a couple of rather specific points.
23 First of all, General, if I heard you rightly, your
24 parting advice to the CGS was retain this army, by which
25 you presumably meant retain at least the British

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1 contingent in this multinational force, as it was by
2 then.
3 Did you say that because you felt that there was
4 pressure to withdraw or to draw down prematurely and
5 that that needed to be resisted?
6 LT GEN SIR GRAEME LAMB: I didn't sense at that time, sir,
7 that there was -- I can see that how the force was --
8 was struggling, but in fact I decided to increase the
9 numbers. My sense was that the -- over by Christmas was
10 never a reality and the like. But I left at the end
11 of -- at that period of time before very many of the
12 sort of what I call harsh decisions came in.
13 No, it was more along the lines that what I was
14 looking at was an army that was finding itself not only
15 steered through the combat experience of -- and, again,
16 I think it was made clear this morning, what was the
17 plan to 125 days was delivered in 23, they had not only
18 gone through that and secured its objectives and the
19 like, but now was back in a deep learning experience in
20 what I considered to be in many ways reflective of
21 a troubled 21st century.
22 So the young private and lance corporal that I was
23 looking at who had found himself having to close and
24 control his own courage is exactly the young man or
25 young woman that would expect his regimental sergeant

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1 major's commission.
2 And so the importance, therefore, of us retaining
3 that experience from just a trade point of view is
4 priceless. You don't get that in training. You only
5 get it through the experience of carrying the real
6 responsibilities of combat, and I sense, therefore, that
7 continues through. But it was in a sense that I saw
8 a drawdown being therefore instrumental to a break in
9 morale and a sense of failure or a sense of failed
10 mission.
11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you.
12 Sir Hilary, going back to the point that you were
13 making about the duty of care which arose in relation to
14 ACPO and police officers, and that chimed a bit with
15 something that General Figgures said this morning, where
16 he reported that DFID found that the conditions at the
17 time he was talking about were just too dangerous for
18 them to operate in, did you find that the ability of the
19 staff drawn from different departments and different
20 countries under your command to operate was seriously
21 hampered by the duty of care, and did the same rules
22 apply to all civilians equally in CPA South or were
23 there different sets of rules?
24 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Thank you. I'm glad you asked me about
25 this, and there are two separate rather different

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1 questions, I think.

2 On the duty of care, I was most concerned that duty

3 of care, and the responsibility rests with the permanent

4 undersecretaries and ministers; in other words, the top

5 civilian manager of civil servants, the duty of care,

6 or the interpretation of that duty was proving to be

7 a major obstacle for the recruitment of the sort of

8 people I was asking for: not just experts but

9 administrators, anybody would do.

10 Sometimes I felt that this duty of care was

11 purposely being implemented by line managers so that

12 they didn't lose their staff. But I enquired into this

13 and I raised it with the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw,

14 and we both of us thought that it was a bit odd that our

15 men and women in the armed forces could be exposed to

16 risk. But, the country, I thought was at war, we could

17 not risk injury or death to civilians.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Even volunteers?

19 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: Even volunteers. I raised this with

20 the Permanent Undersecretary when I got back and I was

21 told that this had been discussed at some length among

22 the Permanent Undersecretaries' Committee, the gathering

23 of them all. And they were quite adamant about this:

24 it was an important duty and civilians were different

25 from the military, their terms of service were

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1 different, volunteers or not.
2 I think there was some concern about liability of
3 being sued in the event of injury or death.
4 Later on, I pursued that further and I was advised
5 by the relevant expert in the Foreign Office that there
6 was legislation which comes under Health and Safety
7 legislation. It had never actually been tested in
8 court, and what has happened since is that evidently it
9 has been interpreted more flexibly because in Helmand
10 now, after many years of hardly any civilians on the
11 ground, there is quite a sizeable number of civilians.
12 The duty, as far as I know, has not changed. What has
13 changed is the interpretation of it.
14 A side effect of this was that the interpretation
15 varied within ministries, and there was one occasion in
16 early September 2003 when I discovered that I was short
17 of DFID personnel. They had gone away for a break and
18 they had been stopped by their managers from going
19 beyond Kuwait on the grounds that conditions were too
20 dangerous in Basra.
21 Now, we were living and working why Basra, we were
22 not consulted. The general who is the expert on
23 security had not been consulted, but the managers of
24 DFID had decided that they should not come back.
25 I kicked up a bit of a stink and after quite some time

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1 they were allowed back.

2 There was another case which I found more important,

3 and that was that -- incidentally, when Hilary Benn came

4 he had been formally advised that he should not come by

5 something called the Ministerial Visits Committee,

6 Ministers and Royal -- Ministerial and Royal Visits

7 Committee. He had been told not to come, and he defied

8 that.

9 We were due for a visit by a very senior official

10 from Number 10 also, which was cancelled on the grounds

11 that it was unsafe. This was at a time when -- if it was

12 to do with seniority, well, Jeremy Greenstock was in

13 Baghdad, I was in Basra. We found this extraordinary,

14 not just -- perhaps there was intelligence, information

15 that we weren't aware of, but we had been expecting this

16 visit, we had prepared for it, our people had prepared

17 for it. And suddenly our people, who were exposed to

18 risk, were told that the situation was too risky for

19 a senior official to come.

20 So it was very demoralising, very bad leadership,

21 and both Sir Jeremy and I advised accordingly about the

22 effect of this.

23 So my conclusion was that the duty of care idea was

24 a bit of a mess. I hope it is less of a mess. One

25 thing that was true, and it was fortunate -- fortuitous

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1 in the time of CPA South's existence no civilian was
2 killed, no civilian working in CPA South was
3 killed. So the issue was never tested.
4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Did other countries interpret this in
5 a different way?
6 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: I'm sorry, to your second question.
7 Well, it depended. After the attack on the UN
8 building at the end of August, the Spanish and Japanese
9 governments ordered their civilians to leave. And on
10 30 August, of course, the UN ordered their expatriates
11 to leave also. Everybody else stayed.
12 I was told by London to draw up security regulations
13 and to take disciplinary action if they were not obeyed.
14 I replied that I had already drawn up security
15 instructions which we had been testing, and as for
16 taking disciplinary action, I reminded London that
17 I actually had no statutory authority, as far as I knew,
18 over the nationals of another country. Really the only
19 sanction was to get rid of them, which, since I was
20 asking for more people, I was very reluctant to do.
21 To my knowledge, there was only one incident whereby
22 one country, not Britain, did travel in an armoured
23 vehicle in an area which was a no go area, therefore
24 against the rules, taking a short cut. And there was
25 minor injury to the occupants of that vehicle, and the

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1 officer concerned was extremely penitent and promised
2 never, ever to do it again. This was from another
3 country.
4 But, actually, we did have a case when the Italian
5 contingent appeared and on their first day decided to go
6 shopping in town, but that was because they didn't know
7 what the rules were, and that didn't happen again
8 either. So we were lucky in a sense that it was never
9 actually necessary to impose discipline, because
10 people -- I mean, my weekly pep talk always finished
11 with, "Watch out for your own security" and people did.
12 They were very responsible.
13 And if the generals are paying tribute -- rightly,
14 in my view -- to the army, I have got to pay a tribute
15 to the multinational contingent who worked with me in
16 Basra.
17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can I go back to Abu Ghraib, please.
18 You said that when you were informed, you took some
19 action to make sure the sheikhs were shown how the
20 prisons were managed. But prior to that, had you taken
21 any action in terms of making people who were running
22 these prisons aware of the issues of human rights?
23 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: Absolutely. The day I arrived, my
24 lawyer sat me down and said, "This is going to be your
25 biggest burden, General", and I said, "I hope it isn't."

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1 And it was the DTDF and what -- we talked through it.
2 We were -- first of all, we had to interpret the Geneva
3 Conventions.
4 THE CHAIRMAN: Acronym?
5 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: Divisional temporary detention
6 facility.
7 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
8 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: That we had to -- I said, "Right,
9 we will interpret the Geneva Convention. What are we
10 and are we not allowed to do and what are we and are we
11 not required to do?" And we were not required, for
12 example, to call the ICRC to come in and have a look at
13 it and to tell us how to improve it and whether we
14 should -- and we did. We called them in and they said,
15 "You need to put an air conditioning unit and you need
16 to do this that and the other". We did. We decided we
17 would have a single officer put in charge who would do the
18 full six months, probably the most unwelcome command for
19 a major in Iraq, because he wasn't going to get anything
20 except looking at prisoners. But he was specifically
21 given that mission.
22 And what we did was we got the ICRC to look at it,
23 we took their advice. We, right from the outset, had --
24 we explained, even before we heard about Abu Ghraib, to
25 people, what would happen there. We did not demonstrate

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1 our interrogation procedures, and interrogation is
2 probably the wrong word. It was almost interviews,
3 because that was the way it was done. We cannot explain
4 that to people because we hoped that psychologically
5 anybody who was interned and came in there would perhaps
6 think that they were going to have a difficult time when
7 in fact they weren't, in physical terms.
8 So we had taken those precautions, we had not
9 actually shown anything to the sheikhs before Abu Ghraib
10 because I didn't really want to at that stage, but
11 I just felt it was the right thing to do once we had.
12 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Do you think what happened at Abu
13 Ghraib was a one-off or something systemic, wrong with
14 the system?
15 MAJ GEN ANDREW STEWART: I was listening to what
16 Andrew Figgures said this morning and I would entirely
17 go with somewhere, sometimes, someone does things very
18 wrong, and I think that was an occasion such as that.
19 And we had checks and balances there because we had very
20 regular inspections and we had regular people going to
21 look at it.
22 I think that we are talking on a completely
23 different scale with Abu Ghraib, and I'm talking about
24 something that was maybe four times the size of this
25 room. Abu Ghraib was an entirely different scale in

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1 numbers. We had never had more than 30 people detained
2 at any time. We are, again, talking about hundreds in
3 Abu Ghraib. So I think it is a different situation.
4 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.
5 THE CHAIRMAN: I think we have pretty much come to the end
6 of this session. I would normally offer an opportunity
7 for final comments, but I think you may feel you have
8 had that opportunity. If not, now would be the time.
9 SIR HILARY SYNNOTT: If I may, there is just one point. It
10 not really a final comment, but just on the role of the
11 UN because it has been addressed before.
12 First of all, I would endorse what others have said
13 in earlier testimony that the United States
14 representatives in Baghdad thought very little of the
15 UN. But in the south, on the second day that I arrived
16 there, General Lamb and I met together with the UN
17 representative in the south and decided that we should
18 meet together regularly, as an absolute unbreakable
19 formality.
20 On 30 August that representative was instructed to
21 leave. He didn't want to leave, but he had to, from all
22 that we know. But my observation is that, given the
23 importance which was attached to the role of the UN by
24 the British Government before this operation, I think it
25 is quite salutory to note that in practice they would

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1 have packed up on 30 August. And, for better or for
2 worse, the CPA -- 30 August 2003 -- for better or for
3 worse, the CPA managed to continue to exist until
4 30 June 2004.
5 So had we actually been dependant on the UN, there
6 would have been a bit of a gap.
7 THE CHAIRMAN: That's a significant comment, thank you.
8 I would like to thank all those present in the room,
9 and particularly our two witnesses, Sir Hilary Synnott
10 and General Stewart. That's the end of the testimony on
11 this occasion for both of you.
12 We will take a break now for ten minutes when
13 General Lamb, a tribute to your stamina, will take the
14 final session of the day reflecting your taking up
15 position in 2006 as Deputy Commander General for the
16 Multinational Force, as well as senior UK representative
17 if Baghdad, almost a reflex experience from that in
18 Basra and in the MND South East.
19 So with that, back in ten minutes, please. Thank
20 you.
21 (3.32 pm)
22 (Short break)
23
24
25

FINAL