

Tuesday, 8 December 2009

1

2 (10.00 am)

3

SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning.

5 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Good morning.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning, everyone. Having got ourselves
7 settled, can I just say what the objectives of this
8 morning's first session are?

9 Following from the sessions we have had last week
10 and this week's previous sessions with
11 Major General Tim Cross and Desmond Bowen, we are
12 developing an understanding of the United Kingdom's
13 planning for the possible aftermath, and then to compare
14 that with the experience of the first few months after
15 the invasion.

16 What we need to do is get a full spectrum of views
17 from the different perspectives of different
18 participants in that whole process, and today we are
19 going to hear from Sir Suma Chakrabarti, who was
20 Permanent Secretary in the Department for International
21 Development -- I think most people say DFID, but you may
22 want to avoid that -- in the period 2002 to 2007.

23 Like others, this session will take a broadly
24 chronological approach starting in mid 2002 and then we
25 will go through the invasion and the first few months up

1 to August 2003.

2 I recall, as I have done on previous occasions, that
3 we have access to literally many thousands of government
4 papers, including the most highly classified for the
5 period, and we are developing a picture of the policy
6 debates and the decision-making process.

7 These evidence sessions are important in informing
8 our thinking and complementing the documentary evidence.
9 It is putting the two together that creates the whole
10 picture. It is important, therefore, that witnesses are
11 and feel able to be open and frank in their evidence
12 while respecting national security.

13 We recognise that witnesses are giving evidence
14 based on their recollection of events and we of course
15 will check what we hear against the papers to which we
16 have access and which we are still receiving.

17 I remind each witness that they will later be asked
18 to sign a transcript of the evidence to the effect that
19 the evidence they have given is truthful, fair and
20 accurate.

21 And before we start, as I did yesterday, for the
22 benefit of those following the Inquiry, very often the
23 post-invasion phase is referred to as "Phase 4". So
24 that contraction may come into use during the course of
25 the day.

1 With that start, I will turn to Sir Roderic Lyne to
2 open the questions. Roderic?

3 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Sir Suma, could you begin by just giving
4 us a very quick outline of DFID's involvement in Iraq at
5 the beginning of this period, around 2001, and where it
6 stood in your then department's order of priorities?

7 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Okay. If I go back to the period
8 before summer 2002, DFID had spent about £100 million in
9 humanitarian assistance from the end of the first
10 Gulf War through to, I think, late 2002. It was all
11 humanitarian assistance through UN agencies, ICRC and
12 NGOs.

13 Clare Short approved a strategy for Iraq in January,
14 I think, 2002. This focused on the programme of spend
15 for 2002/2003, again very much focused on, I think, six
16 NGO projects in the north, Unicef and ICRC work in the
17 centre and the south, and I think also some money for an
18 NGO called AMAR, which was working on Iraqi refugees
19 from the Iranian conflict actually.

20 So that was very much the strategy. It was
21 a strategy which would be devised with some consultation
22 with the Foreign Office in particular during that
23 period. But as to whether DFID was plugged into the
24 Whitehall network, I think only in a very limited way up
25 to that point.

1 I think yesterday Desmond Bowen talked about the
2 ad hoc group for Iraq being set up. I think he said
3 that was April 2002. That was the first time DFID was
4 involved in some collective decisions and discussions
5 around Iraq. I know this because having looked at the
6 papers, before my time even there was a new policy
7 framework for Iraq which was put together by the
8 government in, I think, March 2001. DFID was not
9 involved in putting that together. In fact there was
10 a complaint from DFID, from the minister's office, about
11 that.

12 In terms of priorities, for DFID, Iraq would have
13 not been in the top 20 countries. I think just looking
14 at the statistics for international development at that
15 time, if you look at the figures for 2001 it was
16 roughly, in 2002/2003, spending £20 million. In the
17 Russian Federation we were spending £20 million, and
18 that was the 20th placed country in our list. So below
19 that level, but quite a lot of it in terms of
20 humanitarian assistance. And I have to say the
21 Secretary of State's own assistance was quite great in
22 Iraq, stemming from her own time in opposition to what
23 the government -- the Labour opposition's (inaudible) in
24 the first Gulf War. So she was quite interested.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You said that in 2001 your department

1 complained that it hadn't been involved in policy
2 review. Was that the sort of review that you would
3 normally have expected to be involved in as part of the
4 interministerial process in Whitehall?

5 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I think post 1997, yes.

6 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So it was surprising that you'd been
7 excluded from this?

8 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I think clearly the officials felt it
9 was quite surprising and sufficiently irritating for it
10 to be taken up in private offices at the time.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And do you have any explanation as to why
12 you were excluded from this?

13 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: As I say, it was before my time as
14 Permanent Secretary. I was still actually in the
15 Cabinet Office running the Economic Investment
16 Secretariat at the time, so I can't shed any personal
17 light on this.

18 I can only think partly it is maybe a view that
19 Clare Short might not have agreed with, whatever was in
20 that policy framework, which I have never read and never
21 seen, or that actually it was an oversight, essentially
22 this was some people still working in a pre-1997 mindset
23 and the DFID did not have to be involved in these
24 discussions because the Foreign Office would take care
25 of some of the issues.

1 SIR RODERIC LYNE: That's 2001. If we just move forward to
2 the spring of 2002, by then, after 9/11, after the Axis
3 of Evil speech, it was becoming obvious that the
4 thinking in the United States about Iraq had shifted
5 away from containment and towards a more robust
6 approach, and Whitehall was necessarily beginning to
7 react to this. And as we have heard from other
8 witnesses, in March 2002 an options paper was drawn up
9 which essentially was part of the background for the
10 Prime Minister's talks with President Bush at Crawford
11 in April 2002. Did DFID contribute to this options
12 paper? Did you see it?

13 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I never saw it, not to my knowledge
14 and, no, I don't think DFID did contribute to that paper
15 at all.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Were you even aware that it was
17 happening?

18 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: No. Until these hearings
19 I personally wasn't aware of some of the things that
20 have come out.

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So the Whitehall grapevine wasn't working
22 very effectively? Your former colleagues in the Cabinet
23 Office hadn't tipped you off that they were working on
24 this subject?

25 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I certainly don't recall them tipping

1 me off at all.

2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And carrying it forward to the Prime
3 Minister's meetings at Crawford, where Iraq, as we have
4 heard, was not actually the number 1 subject on the
5 list -- the Middle East process, the Arab/Israel
6 problem, was number 1, but Iraq was a very important
7 subject in this -- you will have noticed that -- you
8 will have seen it from the newspapers; your Secretary of
9 State will have done -- were you at that stage in touch
10 with Number 10 about what was going in Iraq, or was she?

11 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I certainly wasn't. I'm not sure
12 that she was either. I think the first engagement, if
13 you like, was really through the ad hoc group that was
14 set up by the Cabinet Office. I don't think there was
15 any formal communications with Number 10 after Crawford
16 saying we must be involved. We would have been
17 involved in the Middle East peace process joining up
18 some of the ideas around that and the discussions around
19 that, because already we were providing quite a lot of
20 aid to the Palestinian authority and would have been
21 involved in that, definitely.

22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I think the ad hoc group was set up on
23 20 September 2002, so quite a bit later. But in April
24 of 2002, the Ministry of Defence, as we have heard,
25 began their first contingency planning, very heavily

1 caveated. Were you aware in the sort of spring/summer
2 of 2002 that military contingency planning was taking
3 place?

4 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Yes, I think by the summer we became
5 aware of this and then the ad hoc group, as you say,
6 met. I know this because in early October -- by
7 early October we had ourselves drawn up a humanitarian
8 assistance strategy for a variety of conflict scenarios
9 which was actually a piece of work that went to the
10 ad hoc group on 11 October.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And the strategy, you say, complex
12 scenarios -- so it wasn't just the humanitarian aspects,
13 we were looking at other things -- were you looking at
14 the problems of reconstruction in the aftermath of
15 a conflict?

16 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: No, that came later, as I'm sure we
17 will have a chance to talk about.

18 During this period, if we take from January 2002
19 through to May 2003, there were four DFID strategies,
20 each building on new information and adapting as we
21 heard more. The first two -- I have already described
22 the January 2002 strategy and the one in October -- very
23 much focused on humanitarian assistance. The one
24 in October looked at a number of conflict scenarios and
25 the potential implications and worked through a number

1 of those scenarios.

2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And that October one was part of the work
3 of the ad hoc group that had started in September and of
4 which you were fully a part.

5 Now, what were the sort of assumptions on which you
6 were basing these strategies, these scenarios? Were you
7 having to assume a probability of military action? What
8 were you assuming about the role that would be played by
9 the United Nations, by the United States, and what were
10 you assuming about the situation that one would find in
11 Iraq in terms of their economy and infrastructure and
12 society?

13 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Okay. There were a number of things
14 in that, so I will go through them.

15 First of all DFID had not been a direct deliverer of
16 assistance in Iraq during the year of sanctions. As
17 I said earlier, we had provided assistance through the
18 UN agencies and NGOs and the ICRC. So our knowledge,
19 like the rest of Her Majesty's Government was pretty
20 scanty of the country itself, unlike other country
21 assistance plans we might have had, so most of the work
22 that was done was very much desktop analysis based on
23 the UN knowledge of what was going on on the ground and
24 our own experience of post-conflict situations
25 elsewhere.

1 And, we in that paper -- it is quite an interesting
2 paper -- it looked at, I guess, where military action
3 might happen, which regions of Iraq, what that might
4 mean in terms of displaced people, in terms of food
5 shortages and so on, impacts on infrastructure were
6 mentioned as one of the issues that would have to be
7 addressed. And it looked at the state of readiness of
8 the United Nations agencies, and the assumption
9 throughout that paper and running all the way through to
10 spring was very much the UN leadership, both in the
11 humanitarian and the reconstruction area, because that's
12 what we had been used to and that's what we had assumed
13 we were all signed up to.

14 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Was there also an assumption that you
15 would be operating in a benign security environment
16 after a conflict or were you looking at the risks that
17 there would still be instability and a degree of
18 conflict within Iraq?

19 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Yes, we were assuming there would be
20 instability and strife, factional strife, within Iraq.
21 We were also assuming regional unrest, and the other
22 thing that we assumed -- and this became quite a big
23 part of the discussions within Whitehall in the autumn
24 and winter -- was that Saddam Hussein would use, or
25 could use, chemical and biological weapons against the

1 civilian population and that was part of the engagement
2 in the autumn. So those were all in there.

3 We looked also at humanitarian access, given the
4 difference in our conflict scenarios, whether NGOs, UN
5 agencies would have the humanitarian corridors that they
6 would need to provide relief. We looked at
7 coordination, we also looked at funding, issues of
8 funding and the overstretch of the international system
9 during that period which, again, is a backdrop to this,
10 and we looked at administrative capacity, as far as we
11 understood it, in terms of Iraqi administrative
12 capacity.

13 But one of the issues I think it is worth bringing
14 out is this wasn't like -- none of these strategies, all
15 four of them, weren't like strategies we would have
16 produced if we had greater knowledge inside the
17 organisation of Iraq and inside HM Government. You
18 know, there was no Foreign Office presence in Iraq for
19 many years. This was a highly unusual situation. So
20 a lot of it was this desktop stuff plus a lot of
21 experience based elsewhere.

22 We also weren't allowed at that point to talk --
23 in October to talk openly to either the NGOs or the UN
24 agencies about potential scenarios. That was allowed
25 later.

1 SIR RODERIC LYNE: We will come back to that last point in
2 a second, but this desktop information, where was it
3 coming from?

4 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: A lot of it was based on UN analysis
5 of the situation on the ground, because for the last
6 12 years in the sanctions era, the UN had been
7 delivering assistance, through Iraqi organisation quite
8 often, so they had quite good information on things from
9 mortality statistics, morbidity statistics, differences
10 between regions and so on. But it wasn't information we
11 could second guess in the way we would normally do so
12 because we didn't have any presence to the ground to
13 do so.

14 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Why couldn't you talk to other people?
15 Why couldn't you compare notes with people?

16 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: With the NGOs and the UN in
17 particular?

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Yes.

19 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: But at that point there was a ban
20 from Number 10 on contact with NGOs and the UN agencies
21 on these issues in case we revealed that there were
22 options, frankly, looking at invasion. That ban was
23 lifted, we were notified -- to a limited extent lifted
24 on 23 October. We received an email from the Cabinet
25 Office saying Number 10 were content for us to talk in

1 contingency terms to some NGOs in a very discreet,
2 low-key way, but to emphasise to the NGOs that the aim
3 was still disarmament, not war. That was only a small
4 opening, an aperture for us because we couldn't really
5 talk about --

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Could I just interject, when was the ban
7 actually imposed?

8 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: That I don't know. I know when it
9 was lifted.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: You'd been aware of it in the late
11 spring/summer?

12 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: It was in the October paper, the
13 11 October paper that went across. It was actually
14 mentioned as a constraint.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: To the ad hoc group was working initially
16 under this constraint?

17 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Yes.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Yet to anybody reading the newspapers at
19 that time, it was pretty obvious that there was
20 a contingency in which, if going for disarmament through
21 the United Nations didn't succeed, that the Americans
22 would use military force. So you wouldn't actually have
23 been revealing any great secrets at least in addressing
24 that contingency.

25 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Not in some general sense, but if you

1 want to do detailed humanitarian assistance planning,
2 you need to have a pretty good idea where the warfare is
3 going to be conducted and how it is going to be
4 conducted, in order to work out exactly how you are
5 going to deliver humanitarian assistance on the ground
6 and through which agencies and so on. So at a general
7 level, yes, that's right. But at a more detailed level,
8 which you want for a good strategy, I think that we
9 couldn't talk about. In fact, we ourselves weren't
10 aware of all the military options that were then in
11 play, that were being discussed at MoD.

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: What private discussions were you having
13 at this time with the United Nations?

14 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: We took the decision, because
15 although the Cabinet Office email said, "By all means
16 talk to NGOs in a low-key, contingency way," it didn't
17 mention the United Nations. Clare Short and I took a
18 decision that we just had to do so.

19 So this is early November. We sent -- well, there
20 were two missions, one to Geneva and one to New York.
21 The Geneva one to talk to the UN agencies, the ICRC in
22 Geneva, and the New York one to talk to UN agencies
23 there. And we found to our relief that the UN had been
24 very privately doing quite detailed planning for human
25 assistance and relief, for the relief phase and had some

1 very good plans already worked out, which was actually
2 quite reassuring.

3 So there was never a formal agreement that we should
4 talk to the UN, we just did it.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: What conversations were you having with
6 your counterparts in Washington?

7 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I was in touch with my counterpart,
8 Andrew Natsios at USAID, quite a lot during this period,
9 in fact throughout -- and the spring. He also saw
10 Clare Short during this period. There are two meetings
11 a year that the DFID Secretary of State and the
12 Permanent Secretary go to in Washington anyway. These
13 are the annual meetings of the IMF/World Bank, during
14 which -- there would have been a meeting in
15 late September.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry to interrupt, could you just slow down
17 a little?

18 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: All right.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

20 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: So we would have had regular meetings
21 anyway with our counterparts in USAID and the State. In
22 early November there was a Whitehall team that went out
23 to talk to the American Government to American
24 officials, and DFID was part of that team. It came back
25 with a very clear conclusion that the people with the

1 expertise on human assistance in the UN system, both the
2 policy and delivery of that assistance in the US State
3 Department, were still not being heard in the
4 intelligence discussions which were very much led by the
5 Department of Defence and the National Security Council.
6 And we had private discussions at that time between my
7 director in DFID and her counterpart in USAID, and USAID
8 and DFID were on the same page in terms of thinking
9 about what might need to be done and also about UN
10 leadership, actually, of the post-conflict phase. But,
11 as I say, their voices -- USAID and State's voices --
12 were weak in Washington.

13 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But the State Department at this stage
14 built up a pretty detailed plan, the Future of Iraq
15 Project it was called, and it had a lot of working
16 groups under it. Now, were you sharing information with
17 them and with USAID in particular about your work on the
18 humanitarian front?

19 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: We were certainly sharing with USAID
20 and we would have seen the FCO's relationship with the
21 State as being their province, so I don't know to what
22 extent the FCO was sharing some of the information with
23 the State Department. I presume they were. But we
24 weren't certainly doing so with senior officials at
25 USAID.

1 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You weren't instructed by your Secretary
2 of State not to share information?

3 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: At no stage.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You are sure of that?

5 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Absolutely sure.

6 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Okay. You said that you weren't being
7 informed about all the military options. At what stage
8 did your planning go into a higher gear? Did it become
9 more obvious what was likely to happen?

10 I mean, if we roll the story forward to about
11 early February of 2003, by then the Americans have set
12 up within with the Department of Defence the
13 organisation ORHA, about which we have heard from
14 a number of previous witnesses. The British had
15 seconded Major General Tim Cross to it. The Iraq
16 Planning Unit, the IPU, was set up within the
17 Foreign Office, but to coordinate planning across
18 Whitehall. So everything had gone into a higher gear at
19 that stage.

20 To what extent was DFID involved in this and was
21 your Secretary of State by then directly involved in
22 conversations with the Prime Minister and other
23 ministers about planning for the aftermath?

24 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Okay. Can I -- I mean, if you want
25 to go into the aftermath, are we going to come back

1 to December/January? Because that's part of explaining
2 what happens.

3 Shall I talk about December/January first because
4 I think it is quite important to explain what happened
5 in February? In early December, Major Tim Cross, whom
6 you saw yesterday, of his own volition came across to
7 DFID and he asked for a meeting under Chatham House
8 rules and he wanted to private discussion. He had a lot
9 of experience in the Balkans of working with DFID.

10 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I think you should explain Chatham House
11 rules. This means that he was asking for a meeting in
12 which his own name would not be attached to the
13 information?

14 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: That's correct. You have these
15 papers. So it is part of the Inquiry.

16 And he was concerned that having been at PJHQ that
17 people there were not acknowledging the enormity of the
18 humanitarian assistance task and not integrating
19 planning with DFID. We were concerned on our side; we
20 had a similar concern that we had no access to the
21 operational planning that was going on on the military
22 side and, therefore, the two plans -- humanitarian
23 assistance and military planning -- were actually not
24 joined up enough.

25 So we had a similar interest and Tim Cross left the

1 meeting agreeing a number of ways to try and resolve
2 this. In fact, he even asked for Clare Short to write
3 to the Defence Secretary, which I thought was
4 interesting, to try and open up the military planning
5 side.

6 On 12 December, Clare decided instead, in the
7 margins of Cabinet, to talk to the Prime Minister about
8 this and the Prime Minister suggested that she have
9 a direct conversation with the Chief of Defence Staff,
10 Lord Boyce, as he now is. And she did so, and
11 Lord Boyce suggested that she or DFID officials talked
12 to some other people in his office about this. She
13 didn't seem to be making much progress. I took it up
14 with the Cabinet Secretary.

15 David Manning very kindly also rang the Chief of
16 Defence Staff about it, and on 18 December MoD officials
17 came across and we agreed a way forward whereby we could
18 link up better the humanitarian assistance and the
19 operational planning on the military side.

20 So until that point we didn't have much of an idea
21 of what military planning consisted of and how
22 humanitarian assistance should link into that. I think
23 that is one of the lessons learned that I should draw
24 out from this.

25 If I scroll forward, therefore, in January

1 and February there was much better linkage between the
2 military and DFID teams in planning, and it is quite
3 interesting to look back at the papers and look at
4 early February. There is a flurry of letters, firstly
5 from Clare Short to the Prime Minister, then from
6 Geoff Hoon to the Prime Minister, then from the Foreign
7 Secretary to the Prime Minister, all within a couple of
8 days of each other, commenting on how much better and
9 more joined up the work in Whitehall had become,
10 particularly between the military and DFID which was all
11 extremely good news. The Prime Minister was pleased
12 about this.

13 Clare Short I think then received a briefing. She
14 and I received a briefing from the MoD officials and the
15 military on some of the options. I think in fairly
16 broad terms still, but actually much more than we had
17 received before.

18 So there was a feeling of much greater linkage
19 between DFID and the rest of the system I think in those
20 first three or four months.

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Wasn't this far too late? By then you
22 were within four to six weeks of the military action
23 starting. Isn't that far too late to begin serious
24 planning for an integrated operation after a conflict?

25 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: With hindsight, absolutely. It is

1 too late.

2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: What did you feel at the time?

3 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Two things at the time. I felt if we

4 were definitely going to go to war still, which wasn't

5 completely clear to us in February, certainly not to our

6 Secretary of State, then there was still time. But part

7 of me quite clearly was -- thought, "I read the

8 newspapers like everyone else. That war looks very

9 certain and if that's the case, this is quite late in

10 the day", absolutely. And I think that is a lesson that

11 the system should learn.

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Where did the resistance come from that

13 you had to, as it were, penetrate in December in order

14 to get access to the military planning? Was it from

15 within the armed forces or was it from the political

16 leadership? Was it from Number 10 or the Ministry of

17 Defence? Who was stopping you?

18 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Quite clearly the Prime Minister

19 thought we should have access in December when

20 Clare Short raised it on 12 December. I think it was

21 from some in the military, not necessarily everyone.

22 Clearly Tim Cross thought we should have access and

23 I think it may have been from MoD ministers. I don't

24 know to this day, but --

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So the Prime Minister was unaware

1 until December that you were not being involved in the
2 planning for this?

3 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Well, I don't know if he was aware or
4 unaware, but certainly that was when it was raised with
5 him directly by Clare Short.

6 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And he then agreed?

7 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Yes.

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: How concerned by that stage was your
9 Secretary of State about the planning or lack of
10 planning, particularly after she had talked to
11 Major General Cross, for the aftermath?

12 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: She was very concerned on two fronts:
13 planning and that, leaving aside the second resolution
14 issue, the UN should have leadership of the
15 post-conflict effort.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Was it realistic to think that the UN
17 would have leadership of this given that the conflict
18 was going to be led by the United States, and it was
19 crystal clear to everybody that the Administration in
20 Washington was dead against having the UN run what
21 happened afterwards?

22 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I think -- again, with hindsight,
23 I think that's right. I think it should have been
24 clearer to all of us that actually the administration
25 was never going to be --

1 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But you talked to them. You must have
2 sensed their attitudes --

3 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Yes, we did and we complained -- we,
4 not just the DFID, the while British system brought this
5 out and Clare Short wrote a number of letters, other
6 ministers too, to the PM about this all the way to 1483
7 being passed.

8 However, it is quite extraordinary to me still the
9 extent to which we all believed that at some point all
10 our previous channels of influence would actually have
11 an influence on the US, not least because there were at
12 least State Department and USAID -- we were talking
13 about the UN leadership route. So we thought
14 rationality would break out at some point.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So we went on planning on that
16 assumption, that was our plan A, that the UN would take
17 over, despite the fact that other than from the
18 State Department, who had been largely cut out of the
19 picture because the Department of Defence were running
20 it by this stage, we were not being given any
21 encouragement by the people really in the driving seat
22 in Washington to think that they were going to bring the
23 UN in?

24 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I think that's fair. I think if you
25 look at even ministerial visits, Mike O'Brien, the

1 Junior Foreign Office Minister -- I think he visited in
2 mid-April -- he made the same points on UN leadership,
3 and at that point, you know, he was rebuffed. So it is
4 quite clear that, you know, at ministerial level and at
5 official level our objective was still UN leadership.

6 This is quite important point really, because it
7 influences a lot of other things. If you look back at
8 when Clare Short decided to stay in government -- this
9 is around 11, 12 March -- I wrote to the Cabinet
10 Secretary on 11 March with Clare Short's three concerns,
11 one of which was that we should be very clear with the
12 Americans on the need for UN leadership in the
13 post-conflict effort, the UN mandate and so on. And
14 Clare Short herself then wrote on the 12th, the
15 following day, that the Prime Minister was making the
16 same point.

17 On 13 March the Prime Minister assured Clare Short,
18 so she reported back to the DFID officials, that
19 President Bush had agreed that the UN would lead
20 actually the post-conflict effort.

21 So there we were thinking actually the Americans
22 were coming on side. We at an official level, within
23 four or five days later, I think 17 March, it was very
24 clear again from the official level actually that's not
25 what the American officials thought. They were still in

1 the same place.

2 We got David Manning to write to Condi Rice, I think
3 towards the end of March/early April. There was no
4 shift. The Prime Minister raised the issue of UN
5 mandate again with President Bush at a private dinner at
6 Hillsborough on 7 April. As far as I know, the
7 Prime Minister didn't get a clear reply on the issue.

8 So the system, the British Government, was still
9 pushing ahead thinking that that was our objective, and
10 that was our objective in the negotiation of 1483, as
11 far as all of us were concerned.

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Did we have no plan B at all?

13 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: There is actually --from a DFID
14 perspective there was three scenarios. This is the
15 third strategy of four in this period.

16 On 12 March Clare Short put out a third strategy --
17 I think I'll just get the title of it for you. It is
18 "Humanitarian Strategy and Immediate Assistance: A Plan
19 for Iraq". That did start talking about some of relief
20 to recovery to reconstruction elements, and it looked at
21 three scenarios, three potential scenarios on the UN
22 front. One which was: we didn't get the second
23 resolution and we didn't get the UN mandate, and
24 essentially we had a US viceroy in the field leading.
25 That was the first scenario.

1 The second scenario: that we didn't get a second
2 resolution, but we did get a UN Security Council
3 Resolution that did lead to the UN being in the lead on
4 of post-conflict effort. The third scenario: that we
5 got both, the second resolution and the Security Council
6 Resolution that we wanted.

7 As it turned out, we didn't get the second
8 resolution. We got a UN Security Council Resolution
9 that left the US very firmly in the lead. So we got
10 something closely approximating the first of those
11 scenarios.

12 So it wasn't as if we hadn't thought about these
13 scenarios and we hadn't thought about what we would do
14 against those scenarios. That was in the planning, in
15 the third strategy.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Can I just go back to this flurry of
17 correspondence and meetings in February at ministerial
18 level? Was it at that stage that the idea came up that
19 the United Kingdom could do an exemplary job both
20 militarily and in civil affairs in the southern region
21 of Iraq? Do you recall that coming up and how it
22 came up?

23 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Yes, this is the famous word
24 "exemplary". This came up, to my knowledge, first in
25 a meeting the Prime Minister chaired on humanitarian

1 issues, on 13 February. The record of that is quite an
2 interesting record because it suggests that Clare Short
3 used the term first. I have known Clare very well,
4 obviously, over the years. It is not a word I associate
5 with her. However, it was used.

6 Interestingly, having looked at some other papers,
7 I see the same word being used in Number 10
8 correspondence on Iraq in other areas too. So I suspect
9 it was a word that was in definite coinage at the time.

10 Nevertheless, the word was used and the southern
11 sector was mentioned at that meeting. So if you look at
12 the 12 March strategy and the graduated approach, the
13 three UN scenarios, the third, the most benign scenario
14 had, actually in a box next to it, what an exemplary
15 humanitarian assistance approach would be by DFID in
16 that situation; of course under UN leadership and so on.

17 So the definition for certainly us in DFID was that
18 the exemplary approach was attributed to that third
19 scenario, one that didn't actually pertain in the end.

20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Did you feel that you had the resources
21 to achieve that objective?

22 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: We were very concerned about the
23 resource position. This was one of the biggest
24 constraints on planning because we didn't know what our
25 financial envelope would be in the end.

1 We first raised the resource issues with the
2 Treasury at official level in December 2002, and then it
3 was raised at various letters with Clare Short and the
4 Prime Minister. She actually asked just before that
5 13 February meeting -- she wrote to the Prime Minister
6 on 5 February to say please give us some guidance
7 whether you want us to go for a modest or a high
8 scenario in terms of humanitarian assistance delivery,
9 which is what led to the exemplary discussion on
10 13 February, really trying to ease out the financing
11 that might be available actually.

12 And there was concern in the NGO community at this
13 stage. I think the chief executives of both the Save
14 the Children Fund and Christian Aid went to see
15 Number 10 on 20 February and made clear actually they
16 were not at all unhappy with DFID's engagement with the
17 NGOs. In fact, we had just had two major meetings with
18 them. But what we were concerned about and were
19 threatening to go public on, quote, unquote, were DFID's
20 lack of resources to deal with this issue.

21 So this was a big issue for us and, you know,
22 this -- trying to juggle our figures to actually make
23 a significant contribution was a real problem.

24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: One of our witnesses last week,
25 Sir Kevin Tebbitt, suggested that DFID was reluctant to

1 provide the level of resourcing necessary because Iraq
2 wasn't a poor enough country. Was that a fair comment
3 to make?

4 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: My perspective is that that's
5 incorrect. If you look at -- we have already talked
6 about the funding that was there in 2002/2003:
7 £20 million was spent, and given Iraq's poverty
8 indicators that was a pretty good sum for the
9 pre-conflict situation.

10 We reprioritised Iraq heavily within the DFID in
11 terms of resourcing, and if you look at 2003/2004
12 figures, DFID provided £209 million to Iraq making it
13 the number 1 recipient of British aid. That's the very
14 year Kevin Tebbitt was talking about. I think the facts
15 belie it, actually.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And was that then enough money to make
17 sure that we were able do this very high quality job in
18 the southern region where we had taken on a leadership
19 role?

20 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I think so, so long as we had also
21 got the money that the Coalition Provisional Authority
22 was meant to allocate as well to the southern region.

23 That was more of the problem. In terms of the
24 bilateral resourcing from the UK Government, I think it
25 was significant and it was sufficient. It was,

1 however -- you know, we planned without knowing that it
2 was going to come on stream. After all, the Treasury
3 reserve claim that DFID had was only approved on 27,
4 I think, March. So one week after the invasion.

5 So until that point we were making allocations based
6 on our contingency. It is quite interesting because
7 this is April, the first month in the financial year.
8 DFID, like any other sensible department, has a good
9 contingency reserve, but we had basically pretty much
10 spent it by the end of April.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So you spent your contingency reserve.

12 You then went to the Treasury and asked for more money
13 from their reserve and they gave you what you asked for?

14 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: We were in discussions, as I said,
15 since December and we made progress finally, and
16 Paul Boateng, as Chief Secretary, raised I think
17 £120 million to DFID on 27 March.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So you weren't turned down by the
19 Treasury --

20 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: No, in the end we weren't turned
21 down, but it would have been better to know the
22 financial envelope while we were planning.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: I think I would like to go right back to the
24 beginning to make sure I have understood properly how
25 the DFID begins, how it sees its role in the general

1 picture, before we come back to Iraq and the time for
2 the invasion.

3 You have got the International Development Act.

4 I think we have picked up it is a very small department
5 in terms of its own staffing. It works through others.
6 Can you just say how it engages both with the internal
7 Whitehall world and then with the external worlds
8 through which it must act and, if you like, what its
9 significant cultural attributes are?

10 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Well, DFID, you know, was set up in
11 1997, as you know, separated off from the Foreign Office
12 but I think if I look back on that period, I can look
13 back on it both from having been outside DFID during
14 1997 to late 2001, when I went back, and then
15 afterwards. I think there was still a mindset both in
16 DFID but also certainly in Whitehall about the terms of
17 engagement. New kid on the block, sharp elbows in the
18 DFID sense, and Clare Short, Secretary of State, making
19 sure it was established. And I think personally that
20 was highly necessary to establish itself.

21 On the Whitehall side, occasionally finding DFID
22 quite difficult to deal with particularly on some
23 issues, but if you -- I actually remember saying to
24 Whitehall colleagues internally, if you actually look at
25 the vast majority of the areas where DFID was working in

1 Whitehall, 95 per cent of those were going very, very
2 well actually. But there were some which were more
3 troublesome.

4 DFID -- it is absolutely clear to me DFID could not
5 deliver its objectives without working well with others
6 in Whitehall, and this was clear to many staff as well.
7 So it wasn't some sort of cultural hang-up about working
8 with other parts of Whitehall. With the Foreign Office
9 we couldn't operate, as Sir Roderic will know, without
10 working well with Foreign Office colleagues on the
11 ground in countries, in the UN system, in the European
12 Union. With the MoD, there's a long history of
13 association with humanitarian assistance, in particular
14 with the RAF, in particular. But also the military --
15 before Iraq, we have just had the Balkans, we have
16 Sierra Leone, we have had Afghanistan, we have had
17 Nepal. This is not some sort of cultural resistance
18 between either department actually, I think, in this
19 general terms. And so with the Treasury and so with
20 Number 10, and actually also, interestingly, with the
21 SIS as well. For 20 years, under Linda Chalker and
22 Clare Short there was a very close association with the
23 SIS.

24 I should actually just bring that up because back in
25 September 2002, Clare Short did ask for a briefing by

1 SIS on the WMD situation, and that was denied initially
2 by Number 10, according to the SIS. David Manning
3 helpfully unlocked that as well.

4 So these are associations and linkages with
5 a variety of departments that go back quite a long way.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That's helpful. So can we get
7 back to the invasion itself? We are now into the period
8 March to August 2003. The military action starts, it is
9 over pretty quickly. The United States have set up
10 ORHA, called something else right at the beginning, the
11 Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance,
12 I think, under Jay Garner. Could you say a little about
13 how DFID itself relates to ORHA?

14 You send people to help them, you embed people
15 inside it, but it is a US operation by definition. Were
16 we, as it were, as the second coalition partner -- were
17 we trying to exert on a proportionate share of influence
18 not only over how ORHA is constructed and configured but
19 actually how it performs and how it sets its policies?

20 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Okay. I think I have to talk in
21 terms of two phases. The first phase would be running
22 up to 1483 and the preparation for 1483.

23 We did not think ORHA -- because we were still
24 heavily believing in UN leadership of this post-conflict
25 effort, we didn't think ORHA would be actually the lead

1 in terms of post-conflict work. We thought the UN would
2 take that role on. The UN was geared up to do so,
3 putting more staff into Iraq at the time. So that's
4 where we were.

5 And so, therefore, you know, if I look back, I think
6 we had one secondee only into ORHA at that stage
7 in March.

8 The penny dropped that this wasn't going to be --
9 this was going to be the only game in town when 1483 was
10 passed. It probably dropped actually with Clare Short's
11 resignation, and I think it is worth dwelling on that
12 because it was at that point we realised that perhaps
13 there wasn't a shared objective on UN leadership in the
14 British Government because the Prime Minister's
15 conversation with Clare Short made that clear.

16 From that point on, we had to try and make ORHA work
17 better whether we liked it or not.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Was there any pull factor from ORHA itself
19 and from Washington to engage the British, the DFID
20 indeed?

21 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Not deeply. I think the pull factor
22 was driven by people like Tim Cross and others who,
23 maybe quite pressingly, saw actually because they were
24 working directly with the Americans day-to-day that
25 actually other cross-party objective on the UN

1 leadership was never going to happen. But we didn't
2 know that and we thought it was a shared government
3 objective until 1483 was passed.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: There is a legal impediment, isn't there, in
5 full cooperation, at least until 1483 gets passed?

6 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: That's right.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: In late May. Can you just say a little bit
8 about those very awkward few weeks between 20 March and
9 1483? How inhibiting was it in terms of our making any
10 kind of contribution on the humanitarian front?

11 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: There were, I think, two inhibiting
12 factors here. One is the legality point as to what
13 would 1483 allow us to do and under what umbrella we
14 would do that.

15 I think actually a bigger point for DFID in many
16 ways is the political legitimacy point that
17 Jeremy Greenstock also brought out, which is that unless
18 with we had a 1483 that other institutions and countries
19 could believe in that gave the UN sufficient leadership,
20 we were not going to be able to widen the pool of funding
21 or expertise. So the international financial
22 institutions, other financial donors, were simply not
23 going to get involved unless they could be convinced
24 that that umbrella was there.

25 That was very important to us for both, as I say,

1 funding reasons, but also for expertise reasons as well
2 actually.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's go straight to 1483. It gets passed,
4 remarkably some would say, in all the circumstances in
5 the immediate pre-history, but it is there. So the
6 situation changes in terms of how DFID could go about
7 securing skills, looking to funding for international
8 agencies and all the rest of it. So how did the few
9 weeks after 1483 work for DFID? You have gone into
10 a quite different mode, as I understand it?

11 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Yes, the penny dropped, as I said,
12 actually just before 1483 was passed and we published
13 our fourth strategy in 14 months. And this was
14 a strategy which was called the Humanitarian and
15 Rehabilitation Strategy. The title gives it away: We
16 were already thinking moving from relief to recovery to
17 reconstruction, and looking at a change of objectives,
18 much more into sort of more longer term development,
19 thinking about improving public services and so on, law
20 and order, infrastructure, et cetera.

21 And the additional thing that happened with 1483
22 being passed and the realisation, therefore, that the
23 US, and the coalition powers with the US, essentially
24 would be in the lead, not the UN, was that we then had
25 to invest in the capacity of the ORHA, which became

1 the CPA.

2 It is from that point on you see quite a few
3 secondments going into CPA Central and CPA South over
4 the next few months and trying to shore that up. So
5 that changed our strategy.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: But by definition given the sequence of
7 events up to that, it was not possible to have
8 contingency plans in place, to find skilled people, sign
9 them up on a contingency basis and push them into ORHA
10 and the CPA in a hurry?

11 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Not in a hurry, but we moved
12 extremely fast. I can give you a list of timings of all
13 the secondments, but from May onwards people were put in
14 very fast. And I think the key secondment in particular
15 was bringing Andy Bearpark out of retirement, and he had
16 worked in the Balkans with the military in both the US
17 and the UK, and we put him into CPA Central as director
18 of operations. It was a struggle for him in that
19 organisation, but he did help improve it to some extent.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: So here we are on the ground in Iraq. It is
21 late May onwards. We have had heard from Lord Boyce
22 sort of two rather almost contrary messages. One is
23 that he told us the other day that he found DFID
24 particularly uncooperative. On the other hand, he said
25 that DFID had excellent operators on the ground, but

1 they were told to sit in a tent and not do anything.

2 It would be useful to have a perspective from
3 yourself and DFID about those relationships and, indeed,
4 does that engage the personalities involved between, for
5 example, Clare Short and Lord Boyce?

6 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I am afraid I think it does go to the
7 heart of some personality tensions. But let's address
8 his two points first.

9 I think there was absolutely no instruction -- to
10 categorically state -- from either Secretary of
11 State Short or Secretary of State Amos, who overlapped
12 with the CDS very briefly, or from me or from any senior
13 official in DFID for anyone to sit in their tents and do
14 nothing.

15 I have also taken the liberty of actually checking
16 with those people who were in those tents from DFID,
17 they actually can't remember meeting Lord Boyce. But
18 more importantly, perhaps, they didn't say anything of
19 that of sort to anybody.

20 What they would say -- I think this is an important
21 lesson learned -- is that some of the deployments into
22 the UK military should have happened earlier, linked to
23 an early opening of the operational planning side of the
24 military, and there probably should have been more of
25 them, military advisers into the UK military at the

1 time. That I would agree with. But those two points he
2 made, from my perspective are incorrect.

3 But I think -- the point I think is there is
4 a personality issue here. I don't know Lord Boyce well
5 but he had a navy background, so he hadn't had
6 experience of working with DFID, unlike people in the
7 army like Tim Cross.

8 The relationship didn't get off to a great start
9 in December when Clare Short rang him up to ask for the
10 opening-up of the operational security barrier and
11 planning. It didn't get improved when they were in War
12 Cabinet together and she would give the ICRC view on
13 what was happening particularly in Baghdad -- actually
14 not in the UK sector, in the US sector -- about
15 humanitarian access to hospitals and so on. The ICRC
16 was finding it very difficult and Lord Boyce didn't
17 agree with that take given the information he was
18 receiving from the UK military.

19 The she actually wrote to him on 9 April making the
20 same points and asking him to take up those points with
21 General Franks. On the DFID files there is no reply,
22 but maybe there was. So I don't think the relationship
23 was great.

24 It is very interesting for us that both Clare Short
25 departed the scene, as you know, 12 May and the Chief of

1 Defence Staff changed at the end of May/early June and
2 the relationship became very much easier with the new
3 CDS.

4 Mike Walker came across and saw Valerie Amos, and
5 actually said -- and there is a quote in the papers,
6 a record of meeting -- that the best relationship the
7 military had around Whitehall was with DFID. No one --
8 I didn't ask him to say that. So I think this is quite
9 an interesting take on personalities.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Personalities do matter in the conduct
11 of events and affairs and it is absurd to pretend that
12 they don't.

13 I don't want to press this one, but just one further
14 point before Lord Boyce goes and, indeed, before
15 Clare Short resigns, I suppose. A lot of activity went
16 on on the ground -- we are talking late April/early May
17 now, I suppose -- it was done by members the UK division
18 without the support of DFID that it might actually have
19 hoped for. This was, of course, in a deteriorating
20 security situation.

21 I just wonder, with all that experience in the past
22 in the Balkans and Sierra Leone and elsewhere in often
23 quite difficult security situations, what kind of
24 support might have been expected from the military side
25 from DFID that it was not actually getting, but also, in

1 the reversion direction: was there sufficient protection
2 for civilian activities?

3 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I certainly think the protection of
4 the military was absolutely fine. There is no complaint
5 on my side about that at all, at the time or now.
6 I think the military were right to expect more DFID
7 support than they perhaps got in terms of civil military
8 advisers in the field. I don't think many more, but
9 more than we put in the field would have been helpful,
10 and I think that's another lesson learned.

11 If you open up the operational security barrier on
12 planning earlier, you engage more in joint planning
13 earlier, I think this would probably have happened as
14 well, the deployments would probably have happened
15 earlier.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. I would like to go back to ORHA and
17 then the CPA replacement of ORHA, relations with those.

18 We have had really differing accounts from other
19 witnesses about ORHA itself. Edward Chaplin and
20 Peter Ricketts I think used the word "shambles", by
21 contrast Tim Cross had a high regard for Jay Garner and
22 what they were trying to do with insufficient power,
23 authority and resources.

24 In a sense it is academic, they were pushed aside,
25 but in those few weeks when ORHA was in charge in

1 effect, how were relations between DFID and its
2 counterpart, if you can call it that? You only have one
3 person in there.

4 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Yes. There wasn't really much of
5 a relationship, to be honest. I think what we had
6 in April were two DFID missions within two weeks of each
7 other, looking at -- they were looking at lots of
8 things, but one thing they looked at was the function of
9 ORHA.

10 They both came back and concluded in brief that it
11 was a shambles and its performance was very, very poor
12 indeed. There was some discussion as to, frankly,
13 seconding a whole load of more British civil servants to
14 really improve matters, given the US lock on
15 decision-making within ORHA. This is still before 1483
16 was passed. So, you know, we were, you know, not
17 thinking that ORHA was going to be -- ever going to be
18 able to turn round really.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Did that mean that the displacement of Garner
20 at ORHA by Bremer and the CPA was in some sense almost
21 a relief?

22 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: It certainly meant we -- ever
23 optimistic, we thought this could mark a new beginning.
24 We didn't know Bremer, of course. I think one of the
25 things that certainly I personally thought might improve

1 things was that he wasn't a military figure, but
2 actually he came from a State Department background
3 originally, that he might be, therefore, better able to
4 link up some of the political processes with some of the
5 relief reconstruction side). But unfortunately we were
6 to be sorely disappointed by his performance too. And
7 one particular piece sticks in my mind over this, which
8 was de-Ba'athification because it pretty much removed
9 Iraqi administrative capacity. And his own take on that
10 when Valerie Amos raised it with him on 26 June was this
11 is the most popular things the CPA had done, as if
12 popularity was about delivery. It was unfortunately
13 really bad for delivery.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: We have heard some slightly different aspects
15 about de-Ba'athification and, indeed, the disbandment of
16 the Iraqi armed forces, whether these were decisions
17 taken in Washington that Jerry Bremer brought with him
18 or were they the result of his looking at the situation
19 and deciding for himself that these were the right
20 things to do, although afterwards few people agreed. Do
21 you have any sense which it was?

22 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I really don't know. I don't have
23 a sense of that. That was one decision. There were
24 a number of CPA decisions which were giving both us and,
25 I have to say, the Attorney General pause for thought

1 really and concern, because we were not being consulted.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Even after 1483?

3 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Yes. So, for example, the CPA
4 regulations for the development fund of Iraq, we were
5 not consulted on that at all and this raised some real
6 problems for us in terms of our obligations as a
7 coalition power.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: As an occupying power under international
9 law.

10 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Indeed.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Were there, I wonder, good sides to that
12 transition from ORHA to the CPA in the sense that behind
13 the CPA was this massive amount of congressional funding
14 that had been set aside for spending in Iraq. You had
15 been able to increase the DFID's spend by ten times the
16 pre-invasion amount, that was 200 million, but they had
17 X tens of billions theoretically available.

18 As it were, was that seen to be and was it found to
19 be a real advantage in having the CPA with that funding
20 behind the humanitarian and, later, relief and
21 reconstruction phase?

22 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Theoretically it should have been
23 quite clearly. Unfortunately, in reality what we found
24 quite often were the procedures that CPA were following,
25 very much US government procedures, slowed disbursement

1 down enormously. And both, if we go through the summer,
2 July and August, but maybe for another time after all
3 this, the disbursements through to the CPA South were
4 really being -- quite stuck.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: You took the question right out of my mouth
6 about the flow out of Baghdad down to Basra for funding
7 and more general support, for all I know.

8 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Yes, I think this is now beyond
9 today's hearing, but I think certainly when I went to
10 southern Iraq, both Baghdad and Basra in September with
11 Hilary Benn, one of the biggest issues we faced in
12 discussion with Hilary Synott and General Lamb was, you
13 know, funds were being stuck, basically, in Baghdad.
14 Andy Bearpark proved immensely helpful in trying to
15 dislodge that, but again, he didn't call the shots.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Just for the benefit of those listening to
17 this, we shall be having evidence from those two people
18 rather soon, that being the centre of the British
19 engagement in Basra, both military and political and
20 diplomatic.

21 Against what is happening April through to August,
22 we have got this very rapidly and unforeseen
23 deterioration of the security situation, and I just
24 wonder how that itself impacts on what DFID was able to
25 do and how you had to adjust that fourth strategy as

1 things started to fall apart?

2 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: To be in a the central region, that
3 really did impact on our ability to work with
4 ministries, to get out and about in Baghdad, it really
5 constrained all of us, I think, in the CPA.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: It is not a debating point. To pick up when
7 you say working with ministries, there was almost nobody
8 there?

9 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: That's right, and you heard from
10 Tim Cross the attempts to stand up these ministries, but
11 it was very difficult to do and the security situation
12 was bad anyway. You can't really engage very easily.

13 It was more benign in the south. So actually we
14 were able to engage much better in the south. The
15 situation was better there.

16 I think the other thing to bring out in this is the
17 decline in the security situation had a really major
18 impact in the centre on the UN and its own planning.
19 They had, I think, some 300 staff had been put in
20 immediately after the invasion. That was reduced to 200
21 I think in June/July, and this is before the August
22 bombing of their HQ. It was reduced further. But the
23 security situation really damaged the UN's own ability
24 to engage in reconstruction.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. It is mid/late August, isn't it, when

1 Vieira de Mello is killed in that --

2

3 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: That's right. Along with a lot of
4 other people.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Before we get to that point, thinking perhaps
6 as much about the south, where our occupying power
7 responsibility was being discharged, as much as the
8 centre in Baghdad and central Iraq, and thinking of the
9 natural way in which DFID would operate -- that is
10 through the NGOs, through the international agencies --
11 were you able to engage them in Iraq south?

12 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Yes, if you look at the pattern of
13 the disbursements of the money that we got, it went very
14 much to the UN agencies in particular and the ICRC in
15 particular.

16 NGOs were more difficult because I think partly
17 because it was risky and the security situation was very
18 poor, partly some concerns about separating the military
19 and civilian humanitarian assistance channels which the
20 NGOs were always very concerned about. But I think the
21 biggest issue for us was the security situation and not
22 putting British NGOs particularly into that area.

23 So the vast bulk of our bilateral funding went
24 really to UN agencies and the ICRC.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: I think we would like to know whether, in

1 your judgment and your assessment, Clare Short's
2 resignation in mid May changed the perception of
3 international agencies, NGOs, towards the UK as
4 expressed through DFID's efforts? Was it seen as
5 a change of stance? Was it more or less in our favour
6 after it happened?

7 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: This is very difficult to judge.

8 Certainly when Clare Short was considering resignation,
9 it was a big factor, and one of the reasons we were keen
10 for her to stay in the department and one of the reasons
11 I think she wanted to stay was the fact that she had
12 a lot of personal support from the international
13 community, including the head of the World Bank at the
14 time, and others, who thought it was very important for
15 her to stay on and help with the reconstruction.

16 It is now a long time ago. One shouldn't forget she
17 is probably the most well-known and well regarded
18 International Development Secretary of all time in any
19 OECD country, and she was a really big figure on the
20 scene. So this was quite important. And her departure,
21 I think the issues that this gave rise to I think really
22 can only put together with what happened in 1483. It is
23 not just her departure, but only, what, ten days later
24 1438 was passed and clearly no UN leadership.

25 What I got and my colleagues got in in DFID from the

1 international community from that point on, I think
2 until the donors' conference in Madrid in October, was
3 a declining security situation was a deep concern about
4 whether they really wanted to get involved in this in
5 terms of assistance. We pulled out all the stops, all
6 our personal contacts and everything, to arrange for an
7 informal donors' meeting in June but it was pretty much
8 under the radar, people didn't want to talk about it
9 publicly, didn't want to be associated with us.

10 By August, I remember various parts of the
11 international systems saying that given where 1483 had
12 landed us in terms of who held the cards, if you like,
13 they thought maybe another Security Council Resolution
14 was required, perhaps even setting up a timeline for an
15 Iraqi administration.

16 So Clare Short's resignation, 1483, lack of UN
17 leadership, all of this melded together for the
18 international community.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. On what may be purely a side
20 issue, I think after Clare Short resigned, Sally Keeble
21 mounted some sort of critique of the DFID looking
22 backwards. Is there anything you want to say about
23 that?

24 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: My rebuttal of Sally Keeble's letter
25 is also on record.

1 I think, again, there is a personality issue here.
2 Sally Keeble didn't raise any much those points with
3 either Clare Short or Valerie Amos during the time
4 there. It is true at that I think Sally Keeble wasn't
5 very well regarded by either Clare Short or the
6 department, and that's part of this issue.

7 She makes a number of points about that we didn't
8 plan. I have just said, within the constraints, that we
9 had with four strategies, I think, over 14 months that
10 showed that we did plan to the best of our ability.

11 She said that the financial side, you know, we
12 weren't putting enough money -- well, I think actually
13 by then, by the time I got the letter, we were actually
14 putting quite a lot of money in, but she probably
15 wouldn't know that. And she made some comments I think
16 about Clare Short stopping us from engaging with others.

17 Well, as you can see, you know, in some cases
18 Clare Short was actually telling us to engage when we
19 didn't have the authority from the centre to engage; the
20 UN, for example, back in the autumn of 2002.

21 So I think there is a lot of personality issues
22 here.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you. I think we are coming to
24 the end of the period that this session is designed to
25 cover with all this, and perhaps the key moment is the

1 bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad. I think
2 I would just like to hear something about objectives
3 looking forward, not going actually into the events
4 after August, though you may want to say a little bit, a
5 bit out of time, about the Madrid funding conference, if
6 you wish.

7 It is rather how objectives were reshaped at the
8 moment of bombing and immediately thereafter, in the
9 light of the experience you had had anyway.

10 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Sure. If I can draw on -- yes,
11 obviously my reflections, now we have gone over
12 everything, and also the lessons learned exercise that
13 Desmond Bowen talked about, which never saw the light of
14 day but was there in June.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: We do have a paper draft.

16 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I'm glad you do. And also reports
17 from my own staff at the time.

18 I think a number of things became clear by the end
19 of August. First of all, that we were going to have --
20 we, DFID in particular, were going to have to do much
21 more of the heavy lifting with regard to the
22 international system. We were not going to get the
23 UN leadership, we weren't going to get the World Bank,
24 IMF, taking a very big role upfront, we would have to
25 really push quite hard at the donors' conference to come

1 to get others to contribute and make the best case we
2 could. We were going to have to work very hard at the
3 CPA Central/CPA South relationship, quite clearly.
4 Shouldn't, in my mind, have hoped for Washington to help
5 us out with this, by then the penny really had dropped.
6 And then further, I think, that we should push even more
7 towards the rehabilitation, reconstruction elements.

8 A lot of good things had happened in Basra in
9 particular already because the security situation was
10 more benign there, but the push was much more towards
11 infrastructure, water and sanitisation, in the period
12 ahead. So there was a number of things going on.

13 I don't know if I may -- one other comment I would
14 like, just reflecting on the whole period back, and we
15 discussed today, is really with Whitehall machinery and
16 process. I say this partly having worked in the Cabinet
17 Office before I went back to DFID in 2001, but also
18 reflecting back looking at it from August of 2003. And
19 now, I'm struck actually by the lack of clear discussion
20 that at least that DFID was party to, we certainly
21 weren't, of all the options, including the option of not
22 accompanying the Americans on this enterprise. I am
23 struck by the fact that the Cabinet Committee for
24 External Affairs, DOP, I think, didn't meet, so far as
25 I know, during this period at all, that we had ad hoc

1 groups during this period.

2 I don't know why they were called ad hoc groups
3 because even the ministerial ad hoc group looked like
4 a Cabinet Committee to me, unless we didn't want to
5 publish on our website that we had what looked like
6 a Cabinet Committee. I do not know why. But I don't
7 think this was a very good process and I made that very
8 clear in my letter to Andrew Turnbull on 11 March as
9 something that I thought should have happened, and I
10 think it is lesson -- again, another lesson that I would
11 draw out of this.

12 I think Tim Cross makes a very pertinent point.
13 There were problems with the US system, but there were
14 problems out of here as well about how we made
15 decisions.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm not trying to over compress it, but there
17 is a limit to what a Cabinet Office can do in terms of
18 coordination if there is not central direction that
19 carries political authority with it. That's true, isn't
20 it?

21 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Absolutely, and what I think happened
22 in Cabinet Office -- and I feel for them because after
23 all I worked there before I went back to DFID -- was of
24 a piece with how decisions were made at that time within
25 government.

1 It is interesting we have gone back to more of a
2 Cabinet Committee system now, but that was the case at
3 the time. I also think there is an issue about double
4 hatting of the foreign policy adviser as well being head
5 of the Secretariat. I think it puts that person in an
6 impossible situation actually where he is both a player
7 and a referee. And I think the fact that we -- I was
8 not involved in any of the restrictive discussions that
9 David Manning had. So it was quite an exclusive set in
10 those discussions. I think the fact that he decided
11 that the lessons learned exercise from the
12 Cabinet Office could not be put out in the wider forum
13 shows the difficulties of those dual incentives for a
14 person. It's not about the person, because I have a lot
15 of regard for David, but I think that dual hatting is
16 a problem.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Can I just come in with a couple more
18 questions on this lessons learned area?

19 Did you get the sense in the critical weeks running
20 up to the outbreak of the conflict that at the very top
21 ministers were so focused on the huge effort to get
22 a second humanitarian Security Council Resolution that
23 they really rather took their eye off the ball in terms
24 of planning for the aftermath and other important
25 aspects?

1 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: It is certainly true in terms of
2 burden of time, their time, they were more focused on
3 the second resolution than planning for the day after.

4 But it wasn't as if it was neglected in terms of
5 discussions, we did have discussions about it. There
6 was a vision for Iraq that I think the Foreign Office
7 put together and so on. So there was thinking going on,
8 but, yes, second resolution was the main issue in their
9 minds, no doubt.

10 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Tim Cross repeatedly stressed that he
11 never felt, in the period running up to and indeed in
12 the ORHA period after the conflict broke out, that there
13 was a single focus in Whitehall, and at one point he
14 said that there wasn't a minister of Cabinet rank
15 reporting back and driving this day-to-day.

16 Do you think that there should have been a minister
17 visibly in charge of pulling it all together? Was that
18 one of the lessons that we should have learned from
19 this?

20 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I think undoubtedly both the MoD --
21 military in particular -- and I would say some of us
22 felt, as the events rolled on, that it would have been
23 better to have had the IPU earlier, firstly, and,
24 secondly, probably a minister, preferably of Cabinet
25 rang but, if not, a very senior minister of state, who

1 was, if you like, the overlord minister for this, either
2 in the Cabinet Office or in the Foreign Office, in my
3 view -- should have been there, because this was a top
4 priority for the British Government and various
5 trade-offs had to be made and someone had to make them
6 on a day-to-day basis for the Prime Minister.

7 All ministers had other responsibilities as well,
8 and I think -- the only other lesson learned, I think,
9 if we are going to do this again is to think that
10 through.

11 Interestingly, the MoD, Geoff Hoon, suggested at one
12 point -- I think this is in June or July 2003 -- that
13 Hilary Benn, who was minister of state by then, DFID,
14 take on this overlord role across Whitehall because he
15 had very good political instincts. A lot of the focus
16 in the months ahead would be reconstruction, so it made
17 some sense. I actually think that was -- I advised
18 Hilary against it because I thought that was the wrong
19 call. I thought the idea was sensible but actually it
20 should have been the Foreign Office rather than DFID
21 because there is also the political process altogether,
22 so you need an overarching umbrella. So it didn't
23 happen but it was suggested.

24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Finally, if I can come back to
25 Sally Keeble's criticism that under Clare Short DFID did

1 not engage sufficiently or early enough in this process,
2 was it not the case that, at least in the autumn of
3 2002, your Secretary of State was so concerned that DFID
4 should not be seen to be part of the planning for war
5 that she did actually inhibit engagement, that the ban
6 on talking to other people wasn't just coming from the
7 Cabinet Office and Number 10 but it was also because she
8 really didn't want DFID to be conceivably seen in that
9 light?

10 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Undoubtedly, a theme of Clare Short's
11 interventions in a number of meetings was that she
12 didn't want DFID officials to be in a discussion where
13 it might suggest the war was certain, but actually it
14 was schizophrenic because at the same time, that same
15 autumn, she was saying that we should talk to the UN
16 about the possibility of conflict. So it did depend on
17 different occasions, but from time to time, yes, that
18 was an issue.

19 I have to say -- I hope she will forgive me for
20 this, but we did actually not always follow those
21 instructions. We did talk to people behind the scenes,
22 including NGOs and the UN, and I think Valerie Amos made
23 that clear in her letter to the Prime Minister following
24 Sally Keeble's letter.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Usha?

1 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.

2 Suma, you made some very interesting comments about
3 the machinery of government and processes and you said
4 that you did write to the Cabinet Secretary about your
5 concerns. Was there ever a discussion among the
6 permanent secretaries with the Cabinet Secretary about
7 the processes? Were concerns raised at the time?

8 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I don't recall a formal discussion of
9 that point with the Cabinet Secretary amongst a group of
10 permanent secretaries. I'm sure it came up occasionally
11 in the Wednesday morning meetings, but again I don't
12 recall it very strongly. It was quite a lonely
13 experience being at the Wednesday morning meetings at
14 that point. I think there were two or three of us who
15 were quite worried about process and so on and made some
16 of those points; others were silent at the time because
17 they weren't involved. I mean, the number of ministries
18 involved in this was actually quite small.

19 So it wasn't discussed. I mean, my 11 March letter
20 to Andrew was largely on Clare's why she wanted to stay
21 in government, but there were some points there about
22 what I thought should happen.

23 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: My second question really is: I know
24 the ad hoc group was sort of set up in December 2002¹ and
25 we heard from Desmond Bowen yesterday that all

¹ Baroness Prahsar said December. The Committee was in fact established in September 2002 according to Cabinet Office papers submitted to the Inquiry.

1 government departments were involved, and you said
2 that's the time your engagement started.

3 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Yes.

4 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Were you clear about what the
5 objectives of the ad hoc group were, and what kind of
6 contribution did DFID make to that, and did you, through
7 that group, begin to get a better understanding even of
8 military options or what the options were, what these
9 priorities were?

10 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I never saw any terms of reference
11 for that group that I can recall, so I don't know if
12 they were ever written down. I thought very much it was
13 an information-gathering sort of group, some sharing of
14 views across ministries and so on. I don't think we had
15 any detailed military planning coming out of that group
16 because if you look at the 11 October paper that DFID
17 produced, the military scenarios are in quite general
18 terms, about regions of Iraq where warfare might happen,
19 thin on detail.

20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So it was basically
21 information-gathering; it wasn't about coordination,
22 developing a strategy, or helping to advise?

23 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Not a pan-government strategy, no,
24 I don't think that came through at all from that. It
25 was about coordination and very much seeing that, you

1 know, in the case of DFID, we would lead on humanitarian
2 assistance, so what should we do in the conflict
3 situation on that piece. So tasking -- very much
4 different departments do different things.

5 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Okay, thank you.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Lawrence?

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I just go back to your
8 preparations and thoughts about what was likely to
9 happen in sort of February/March? We have already noted
10 that ORHA has this sort of dual notion of reconstruction
11 and humanitarian assistance. In your assessment of what
12 was likely to happen in a war, how much did the prospect
13 of real humanitarian distress arising from the war
14 itself figure, indeed override concerns about what was
15 likely to happen once you had moved to the
16 reconstruction phase?

17 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Well, at that point undoubtedly we
18 were really thinking pretty much worst case scenarios in
19 terms of humanitarian outcome following the war.
20 Obviously, it turned out far better than that. So we
21 were thinking of, you know, displaced people, food
22 shortages, the OFF.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can you put some numbers on this?

24 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I can't offhand. I don't think there
25 were numbers again because I go back to the fact that

1 this was desktop analysis and not, you know, detailed in
2 the way we would normally do our strategy. But these
3 were the themes that we were worried about: (inaudible)
4 breakdown, law and order and so on.

5 So that was all there, and did they override
6 thoughts about reconstruction and so on? Yes, to the
7 extent that that was a major thing we were focused on
8 because we assumed that the UN would come in and show
9 leadership on the post-conflict reconstruction and
10 recovery phase. But you saw in the 12 March document,
11 the third strategy, that there is already talk about the
12 reconstruction and recovery phase.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: When you are talking with the NGOs,
14 was this their focus as well? Were any of the NGOs
15 alerting you to the issues of post-conflict
16 reconstruction or were they too focused on humanitarian
17 distress?

18 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Very focused on the humanitarian side
19 actually and concerns about financing, access,
20 military/civilian division of labour, that sort of
21 thing, not really about reconstruction.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So, to some extent, one of the
23 problems that we may have here is sort of best case on
24 reconstruction but worst case on the war itself?

25 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Sorry, can you just unpack that for

1 me?

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Well, that you had a view of the war
3 itself as likely to result, understandably, in terrible
4 things, whereas there was optimism about what might
5 happen afterwards in terms of the UN being able to take
6 over --

7 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: That's right and this was based on
8 experience elsewhere, clearly East Timor particularly,
9 but also other places where the UN, yes, it takes some
10 time to get into gear but when it does, actually does
11 a pretty good job on reconstruction and pulling it
12 together and already there was talk about de Mello being
13 within the British Government, becoming the special
14 coordinator, and we had a lot of faith in him because we
15 have experience of working with him.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In East Timor.

17 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Exactly, and so there was optimism
18 about the UN being able to play that role and that it
19 would confer this political legitimacy across the
20 international system if they did -- misplaced, as it
21 turned out.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And just moving on to this period
23 after the war, or indeed as the war is drawing to
24 a close, (inaudible) questions about the role of ORHA?
25 One of the issues that there appears to be with ORHA is

1 a question of was it actually in charge of anything.
2 Tim Cross spoke about Jay Garner having to be sort of
3 viceroy, but he wasn't really being given the
4 opportunity to play this role. Were you aware of that
5 as the governance issue, if you like, as a problem?

6 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Yes, we were. I suppose, taking the
7 analogy a bit further, it is a bit like the India office
8 calling all the shots and the poor old viceroy in Delhi
9 not having very much power at all.

10 I think that was very much the case when Garner was
11 there. I think with Bremer, he was much more trusted by
12 Washington and probably had a bit more freedom of
13 manoeuvre, but undoubtedly any of the big actions,
14 I think -- you know, I don't know for sure, but my guess
15 on de-ba'athification -- you know, that would have been
16 discussed, probably, with Washington but I can't say for
17 sure.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I just clarify on whether or not
19 we had any influence over these questions of
20 de-Ba'athification and the running down or the
21 abandonment of the Iraqi army? There is -- though
22 Bremer didn't appear to come through London, one of his
23 key deputies, Walt Slocombe, did, I think just after
24 Clare Short had resigned, when Baroness Amos had,
25 presumably, not been long in the job -- but did have

1 a meeting with a number of key people in the UK,
2 including Baroness Amos. Do you have any recollection?
3 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Vaguely, yes. I have a vague
4 recollection of that.
5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Because his report from that meeting
6 suggested that the British didn't have any big
7 objections to what was being proposed on the army. Do
8 you have any recollection of that?
9 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I do not have a recollection of that
10 point, no. I don't recall -- I mean, the thing I was,
11 obviously, most concerned about in DFID was what would
12 happen to Iraqi administrative capacity. So the
13 de-Ba'athification was a big issue for us but we were
14 not consulted on that issue.
15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How did you make your concerns known
16 about de-Ba'athification?
17 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: First of all, de Mello raised it,
18 rightly with Valerie Amos on 26 June, when she was in
19 Baghdad, and that same day she was seeing Bremer and she
20 raised it, that she was very unhappy with this and very
21 concerned about what this would do. As I said earlier,
22 Bremer's response was, "This is a popular act," and
23 that's how it was left. You know, we weren't -- didn't
24 get anywhere on that front at all.
25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I just ask one more question on

1 the expertise that DFID could bring to the situation and
2 whether this was -- had any impact? I mean, one of the
3 innovations of DFID under Clare Short was the focus on
4 security sector reforms, being a key part of
5 development. There is a lot of expertise in that area.
6 Some big studies, I know, have been done.

7 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Yes.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: To what extent was this work done on
9 the role of security sector reform in reconstruction
10 brought to the attention of the CPA?

11 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I don't think the work was really
12 done in that phase; it was done later on security sector
13 reform, from my memory anyway. So I don't think this is
14 an issue about -- that we discussed with the CPA at that
15 point. We were discussing much more nuts and bolts,
16 from memory anyway, about humanitarian and recovery
17 phases. Security sector reform we would have probably
18 got into as the next phase. So this is not in that
19 period, from memory.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But there was a lot of, for the
21 reasons you have given, expertise drawn from the Balkans
22 and East Timor and Sierra Leone and so forth. I'm just
23 interested in how that expertise was deployed.

24 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Well, we certainly deployed it
25 internally and working up our thoughts and I'm sure

1 those advisers would have been -- played into all our
2 strategy work because it was a very open and inclusive
3 sort of department, and so they would have been played
4 into the various strategies that we devised. But
5 I don't think the interaction with the CPA was based
6 around that, unfortunately so perhaps.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Martin?

9 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Suma, very briefly, on the question of
10 de-Ba'athification, can you just explain to us some of
11 the practical ways in which de-Ba'athification adversely
12 affected DFID's work?

13 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: In any development situation,
14 reconstruction situation, one of the things that DFID or
15 any international development organisation would be most
16 concerned about is to try and build up the capacity,
17 local capacity, of institutions from ministries to
18 various agencies on the ground so that they can actually
19 take decisions and do delivery themselves directly,
20 rather than the international system, and this is all to
21 do with, partly, ownership of your own future as
22 nationals of that country and so on.

23 What de-ba'athification did was remove the very
24 people who had experience, knowledge, of Iraq and
25 delivery mechanisms, policy making and so on in

1 ministries and so on. So it left a real vacuum, you
2 know, all the way down, in ministries.

3 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: And these were the people through whom
4 you would have much preferred to work?

5 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: These are the people -- I mean, they
6 may have had the wrong party card, as far as Bremer was
7 concerned, but they did actually have the knowledge of
8 delivery, and this cause enormous problems, I think, in
9 terms of engaging with Iraq.

10 So the capacity-building work that DFID started with
11 the ministries post August onwards had to focus very
12 much on trying to build up basic processes in ministries
13 as well, because there were people who didn't understand
14 how to run things in a ministry. You heard some of that
15 from Edward Chaplin yesterday, I think, as well.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: I think that brings us pretty much to the end
17 of this session. Before I do, are there any further
18 points that haven't had the chance to make and would
19 like to offer now?

20 SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: I think I have said everything I need
21 to say.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: All right. In that case, thank you very much
23 for your evidence. Thank you to our audience for being
24 here this session.

25 After a short break, in about ten minutes or so, we

1 shall have as our next witness Dominick Chilcott, who
2 was the head of the Iraq Planning Unit for about
3 six months from February 2003, which will give us
4 another perspective on these events.

5 And with that, back in ten minutes or so.

6 Thank you.

7 (11.26 am)

8 (Short break)

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