

Tuesday, 8 December 2009

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

(10.00 am)

SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI

THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning.

SIR SUMA CHAKRABARTI: Good morning.

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

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

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

Like others, this session will take a broadly chronological approach starting in mid 2002 and then we 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 £27 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 interest was quite great in  
22 Iraq, stemming from her own time in opposition to what  
23 the government and the Labour opposition's line had been 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 and Domestic  
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 on 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 era 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 on 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 humanitarian  
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 humanitarian assistance in the US system, both the  
2 policy and delivery of that assistance in the US State  
3 Department and USAID, 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 see 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 were 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 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 that 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 said 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 on 12 February.  
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 still 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 in Cabinet or  
its margins,

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. 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 of 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 obtain 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 in various letters from Clare Short to 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 tease 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 they 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, approved 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. 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  
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 Lynda 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 ORHA 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 presciently, saw actually because they were  
24 working directly with the Americans day-to-day that  
25 actually our cross-Government 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 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 about 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 in the lead, not the UN, was that we then had  
25 to the 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 Then 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 from  
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 functioning 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 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, with  
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 of 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 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. We  
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, as 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 restricted 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 rank 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 reasons for 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 2002<sup>1</sup> and  
25 we heard from Desmond Bowen yesterday that all

---

<sup>1</sup> 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,  
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 caused 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)

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

FINAL