

1 (3.25 pm)

2 LIEUTENANT GENERAL JONATHON RILEY and GENERAL SIR PETER WALL

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome, gentlemen. We are going, in the
4 interests of utilising as much time as we can, to boil
5 the next two one-hour sessions into a single one, and
6 I'm very grateful to our two witnesses for agreeing to
7 do that.

8 We will maybe shift questions between, but mainly
9 start with Lieutenant General Jonathan Riley, and this
10 is Basra, December 2004, when you took up your post of
11 GOC of the Multi-National Division South East,
12 I understand. And then we are going to go back in time
13 to a different period, I think, General Wall, when you
14 had the command of what was then 1 UK Division,
15 transmogrifying itself into, in part, MND South East
16 later on.

17 I'm grateful to both of you. I recall, as I need to
18 do for all sessions, that the Inquiry has witnesses who
19 are giving evidence based on their recollection of
20 events. We, of course, check what we hear against all
21 the papers to which we have access, some of which are
22 still coming in, and we are developing our picture of
23 the policy debates, of the decision-making processes and
24 what happened, not least in the light of these evidence
25 sessions.

1 They are an important element in forming a rounded
2 judgment and it is very important to us that our
3 witnesses are open and frank in their evidence while
4 respecting national security.

5 I remind all witnesses they will later be asked to
6 sign a transcript of the evidence to the effect that the
7 evidence they have given is truthful, fair and accurate.

8 And with that behind us, may we turn to the
9 questions and starting, I think, General Riley, with
10 you. Sir Martin?

11 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: General Riley, could you tell us
12 something of the notice you had and the preparations you
13 made for your posting in Iraq and your role when you
14 arrived?

15 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Certainly, Sir Martin. I had
16 previously been serving in Baghdad as a founder member
17 of the coalition military advisory and training team,
18 which became the security transition command, and I had
19 left there after Christmas in 2003.

20 I spent a short time at the Royal College of Defence
21 Studies and was then warned in the early summer that
22 I would be going back to Basra. So I had plenty of time
23 to prepare myself to revisit the theatre, to revisit
24 coalition capitals, to be briefed and, of course, having
25 served previously in Baghdad under US command, I knew

1 many of the senior people and many of the Iraqis as
2 well.

3 So although I did not know the finer detail of
4 things in the south, I had a very good understanding of
5 the general situation and of the strategic situation,
6 and I felt very well prepared to take it up.

7 I arrived in the aftermath of the Sadrist uprising
8 that had taken place in September, with the forthcoming
9 election looming, and in a slightly changed strategic
10 operational context in that the thrust of the coalition
11 operations was turning much more to providing security
12 assistance in order to buy time for the force generation
13 of Iraqi forces that would take up security duties on
14 behalf of their own government, which was about to be
15 democratically elected, and there was an obvious
16 connection there.

17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How did you decide the priorities
18 between, on the one hand, providing security and then,
19 as you say, the security sector reform and
20 reconstruction, which I take it was also a part of your
21 mandate?

22 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: I think with the election coming on,
23 in January, there was no doubt about it that the
24 framework for providing security was going to be my bit
25 of the coalition force, because the Iraqi forces were

1 too limited to be able to take this on their own. So
2 I would definitely have the lead in doing that and that
3 was the biggest concern of the moment. If the election
4 was not carried through, if it was not carried through,
5 then what came after would be flawed.

6 But I started at a very early stage to analyse what
7 I believed to be the Commanding General's intent in
8 theatre and what the wishes of the coalition governments
9 in my command were so that I could begin to map a way
10 forward for Iraqi forces to be, first of all, developed
11 and fielded and then take things on for themselves.

12 Balancing that against reconstruction,
13 reconstruction was not, strictly speaking, my task, it
14 lay first and foremost with the Iraqi Government. And
15 in terms of assistance, it lay with DFID and with the
16 other donor governments. We had some money for
17 civil/military projects and I had some money from the US
18 command as well for doing this, but I focused it
19 principally first and foremost on security architecture
20 and then strictly on some areas which would support the
21 local authorities in developing, if you like, consent of
22 the Iraqi population. And I focused that chiefly on the
23 health, water supply and electricity, as well as
24 security architecture, because those were the things
25 which would improve peoples' lives.

1

2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In terms of the security system during
3 your time, were the attacks changing, in effect, from
4 the multinational force to the Iraqi security forces,
5 and how were you able to deal with that?

6 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Attacks on us?

7 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Yes.

8 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Yes. There were very few attacks on
9 the Iraqi security forces. In fact I can't call any to
10 mind, other than criminality. And a lot of the strict
11 security in the south was to do with organised
12 criminality often focused on cross-border smuggling or
13 on tribal fighting, particularly in the province of
14 Maysan and northern Basra.

15 After the end of the Sadrist uprising there was
16 a long spell of quiet, when attacks were very sporadic
17 and for the most part ineffective. I saw an increase in
18 effective attacks from, I think, the end
19 of April/early May through to the end of my time, and
20 principally in the province of Maysan, with the
21 introduction of more sophisticated improvised explosive
22 devices, based on shaped charges with novel initiation
23 mechanisms, which were very hard for our counter
24 measures to defeat and which were capable of penetrating
25 pretty much any vehicle that had been out.

1 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: What was your response to that? How
2 were you able to respond?

3 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Perhaps half a step backwards first,
4 because it was borne in on me very strongly how much the
5 collective experience of the army of dealing with the
6 IED threat had wasted out during the long period of
7 ceasefire in Northern Ireland. We had forgotten
8 institutionally how to deal with this, not just as --
9 not just as a series of devices but as a system and how
10 to attack the device and attack the system behind it.

11 So as well as asking for upgrades in protection, we
12 also began to refocus the intelligence-gathering effort
13 on to people who were likely to be initiating and
14 running the networks to try and break the thing up
15 behind the point of impact.

16 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How successful were you in this?

17 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Well, on the basis of about three
18 more months in theatre, I don't think I could
19 effectively -- I could give you a sensible answer.
20 I did make a number of arrests, who were either interned
21 or handed over to the Iraqi forces. But the attacks
22 continued for a long time thereafter.

23 So -- and I can't tell you whether I was capable --
24 whether I was able to reduce it, whether it would have
25 been more had I not done what I had done.

1 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you. Sir John?

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Just briefly, while we are talking
3 about the explosively formed projectiles, there is
4 a technology there, there is a capability for design,
5 manufacture and dissemination. Was that part of your
6 concern or were you simply looking at the in-country
7 issue of the system and how to defeat it?

8 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: At the in-country and where they
9 were being designed and put together was outwith the
10 boundaries of my responsibility.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: But was within somebody's?

12 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Yes, it was in my intelligence area
13 of interest.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's not go further than that at the moment.
15 There were two events in particular which must have
16 affected your period in command. One was the Yacubi
17 arrest, which I think set a context of Sadrism
18 opposition. Just before you took over, were the ripples
19 of it still being felt when you arrived?

20 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Yes, the violent outwash had ended
21 with the series of political deals done with
22 Moqtadr Al-Sadr and so on, but there was also a degree
23 of wariness in particularly Basrawi and Nasiriyah and
24 Al Amarah political circles as a result of that, and we
25 maintained contact really through third parties.

1 I wasn't able to deal with them directly. Usually the
2 police chiefs were the third parties.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. With the complications that must have
4 accompanied that.

5 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Quite.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: There is just one other event which,
7 certainly for my part, I don't sufficiently understand,
8 but in March you had the withdrawal of Dutch troops from
9 Al-Muthanna province.

10 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Yes.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Was that a real disruption for the
12 multinational force?

13 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: It was disruptive. It could have
14 been less so, I believe. The Dutch had flagged up well
15 in advance that their mandate was over and they were
16 going to withdraw. There was a great reluctance in
17 Foreign Office circles to admit that what the Dutch were
18 saying publicly was actually what would happen and
19 somehow we could persuade them to stay, whereas it would
20 have been much less disruptive to have recognised the
21 reality and either talked early to the Australians, who
22 had given indications that they would be willing to help
23 if asked, or got on and made a contingency plan using
24 British forces, which we were having to do with the help
25 of PJHQ and elements of the MoD covertly anyway.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: You are really pointing to the question
2 that's at the back of my mind, which is: with
3 a multinational force, who in the coalition, both in
4 terms of institutions and the balance between the
5 Americans and ourselves, is responsible for managing an
6 event like that? Is it in capitals? Is it in command
7 headquarters or on the ground, the divisional commander?

8 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Certainly there is no one person
9 that you could turn to and say, "That's your job".
10 There is a -- clearly there is a political dynamic,
11 which takes place between sovereign countries at
12 governmental level and within sovereign countries at
13 governmental level.

14 There is -- at the military level, there was
15 a regular get-together of the chiefs of defence staff or
16 their representatives of the countries involved with MND
17 South East where views were exchanged.

18 In Baghdad it was really in the basket of
19 responsibilities of General Kiszely or General Brims to
20 look after things, and down within the area of
21 responsibility clearly it was my responsibility to
22 manage it along with my Italian deputy commander. But
23 as far as management within the AOR was concerned,
24 I took it very much as a personal responsibility. But
25 it was one of the things that I talked most frequently

1 to General Kiszley or, indeed, the Permanent Joint
2 Headquarters back at home about.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Life doesn't go along steel rails
4 at an even speed, we understand that. For all of that,
5 it was a major concern and it must have been, mustn't
6 it, for the British Government and for British
7 commanders to ensure that the multinational force, of
8 which we were the largest component, was sufficiently
9 managed, planned ahead and whatever, and it wasn't
10 entirely perfect.

11 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: These things in my experience rarely
12 are.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I would like to return to
14 something that came up before the break, which is the
15 Iraqi-isation of the security function, in fact, more
16 broadly defined, trying to introduce the rule of law
17 into a country that, frankly, had rather little
18 experience of it.

19 Policing and military, did you, as the commander of
20 the Multi-National Division have much directly to do
21 with the reformation of an effective police service
22 within your area of responsibility?

23 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: I had more to do with the operations
24 of that police force on the ground, because the
25 responsibility for the reshaping and retraining of the

1 police as an institution had been given to the
2 Foreign Office, which is an interesting notion given
3 that the Home Office is responsible for policing in this
4 country and that Iraq does not have a legal or
5 a policing model which follows anything that looks like
6 that in this country.

7 But we were where we were and the consul general had
8 the lead on the institutional aspects. I had the
9 responsibility for coordinating day-to-day operations
10 with the coalition forces on the ground, and we did that
11 through a pretty close partnership between companies and
12 battalions on the ground and police divisions.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm not entirely clear. Was it in your
14 period in command when the Jameat police station
15 incident occurred?

16 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: It was just after. I wished that it
17 had been in mine, because a succession of brigade
18 commanders in Basra and I would have dearly loved to
19 have addressed that issue.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Just to ask, here was a case where, as I read
21 and understand it, the local Iraqi police arrested
22 British servicemen. It was a limited incident, but one
23 that could potentially have had very explosive political
24 and military implications.

25 Was it well understood when it happened? Was it

1 foreseen that something like that could happen?

2 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Well, the incident took place after
3 I had left.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: I understand that.

5 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: But I would not have expected it --
6 I would not have expected that. The Iraqi police in the
7 south were, of course, Shia to a man. They reflected
8 the local political climate and the tensions, and all
9 the tensions that were present in southern Iraqi society
10 played out in the police and there were factions within
11 the police.

12 So it was often difficult to guess who would do what
13 to whom, and a lot of this was often to do with
14 establishing position. I would not have expected that,
15 but there were a number of other things that could have
16 happened.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: When you say "establishing position", in part
18 political position as between different Shia factions?

19 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Yes.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: I think you quoted Lenin just now as to who
21 was doing what to whom. This is after the elections.

22 So that sort of positioning, it wasn't pre-election
23 positioning, it was afterwards?

24 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Indeed, and if you like, I think
25 that it showed up on the ground, the beginnings of

1 a more forward-leaning Iraqi consciousness, which was
2 the inevitable consequences and, indeed, one of the
3 things we had set out to achieve through handing over
4 political leadership to the Iraqis.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: What was the effect on the security training
6 and development programme itself? Did it slow things
7 down?

8 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Again, I'm sorry, it was after my
9 time in command.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Because you had asked for extra capacity,
11 hadn't you, to put into the training effort.

12 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Yes.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: I think it was going to come your way, but
14 not in your time?

15 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: In the policing?

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. I think we ought to come on to
17 electoral things, because clearly in your time, right
18 through it, the political envelope was of real
19 significance to what you could and needed to do in
20 a military sense.

21 Perhaps I could close this set of questions by
22 asking: could you define for a layman, myself, what the
23 role of a multinational military commander at divisional
24 level is in a situation like this? It is not
25 a straightforward military command responsibility, is

1 it? It is more -- or isn't it?

2 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Well, at that level there is very
3 little that is straightforward in that particular
4 interface. Of course, there were two interfaces -- one
5 was national and one was provincial -- since there was
6 no Iraqi regional structure. So I and my brigade
7 commanders had a relationship with the province
8 governors.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Of whom you had, what, four?

10 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Four. And two of the four changed
11 after the elections, and then, of course, the Iraqi
12 ministries, whose remit crossed over into my area,
13 particularly interior and defence. And I think
14 things -- and, again, things were different after --
15 after -- not after the election, but after the
16 government was seated from that which there had been
17 before.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Which doesn't happen until, what, May?

19 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Which was towards the back end of my
20 time, indeed. But one was aware that they would change
21 and that what we were able to do as a matter of course
22 before the elections would no longer be the case after,
23 because there would be an Iraqi requirement to approve
24 any security operation, there would be an Iraqi desire
25 to take charge of their own security, which, again, was

1 something that we were encouraging them to do, and that
2 our role was going to migrate from security assistance
3 to -- more towards overwatch as time went on.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: With the fundamental timetable driven by
5 political development, to which, as best one could, the
6 security timetable had to adapt?

7 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Both the security assistance
8 timetable and, indeed, the local security force
9 generation timetable.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, and is it unavoidable that it is that
11 way round?

12 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Well, if security had been
13 completely out of control all over the country, then
14 that might have driven changing in the political
15 architecture, it might have caused the elections to be
16 delayed. But there was enough security for the
17 elections to go ahead.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. One last thing simply on the -- as
19 I say, the predicament in which a divisional commander
20 finds himself, but did you have relations with the
21 informal power structures within your region, within
22 your four provinces? Tribal leadership, that kind of
23 thing, as well as the formal governorate and the central
24 government's regional arm?

25 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: I did, yes, in that I used to go and

1 meet them and visit them and hear their concerns and
2 hear what they could tell me. They were a very good way
3 of getting under the surface of what was going on.

4 The tribal structures in Iraq, when compared with
5 Africa or with Afghanistan, are much weaker. They are
6 only really strong in the far west, but they are there.
7 And going back to your earlier question, quite often
8 acts of violence would be the result of tribal disputes
9 which had been going on long before we got there and
10 would be there long after we had gone. And
11 understanding those and putting the lid on them was
12 quite a large measure in creating stability.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Last question, then I will hand it back to
14 Sir Martin.

15 The advice you had, political advice, in the context
16 that we have just been discussing, was that well
17 informed? Was it timely? Or to what extent did you
18 have to discover it for yourself?

19 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Do you mean from coalition capitals
20 or from Baghdad?

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, from your own staff, from your
22 colleagues in Basra, from Baghdad, whatever.

23 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: I had a good team of political
24 advisers with me and, of course, the role of political
25 adviser is not just confined to giving political advice

1 from his own government, it is also about discovering
2 what is going on in coalition capitals and locally.

3 And I had -- I believe I was very well served there.
4 What made things a lot easier with the overall context
5 was having -- it was having a consul general alongside
6 me in Basra and, indeed, having the senior British
7 military representative in Baghdad, because from not
8 only my own POLAD office, but from those two sources as
9 well there was a good flow of information and I don't
10 believe that I was ever surprised as a result.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Martin?

12 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Could you tell us a little about the
13 specific challenges that election security posed at the
14 time of the January 2005 election?

15 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: The Iraqis hadn't really had
16 an election for decades and nobody quite knew what this
17 animal was, so we were very much starting from ground
18 zero.

19 Some of the big drivers were policy considerations
20 from Baghdad: which political parties would be allowed
21 to stand; how many polling stations would there be; what
22 restrictions were going to be imposed. For example, the
23 borders were closed. There was a ban on vehicle
24 movement in built-up areas, there were curfews. So we
25 had to know all those sorts of things. I also had to

1 know what additional forces might be available to me
2 should I need them.

3 Then coming at it from the bottom, we had to do
4 a root and branch analysis of what the size and shape of
5 the problem was going to be, what was the capability of
6 the Iraqi forces, what contribution could they make,
7 particularly given that it was an Iraqi election and it
8 was going to be very important to have an Iraqi security
9 face on it. So as well as identifying the political
10 architecture of the electoral process, I had to be clear
11 about which bit of the security forces could and would
12 do what.

13 The other -- one of the other challenges is the
14 sheer size of the area. It would have been little use
15 in me maintaining a large reserve centrally to deal with
16 problems on the day because by the time I got them to
17 a place everything would be over. So as the process of
18 defining the problem went on, I decided that the
19 sensible thing to do would be to resource my local
20 commanders to as low a level as I possibly could to make
21 sure that they could deal with problems as they
22 occurred, leaving myself with only two or three key
23 decisions. And really the final one was to get some
24 relaxation from my coalition partners in the rules on
25 crossing boundaries, particularly for the provision of

1 logistic support and medical support and
2 intelligence-gathering assets at that time. And
3 coalition partners were extremely responsive to those
4 requests.

5 Those, I think, were the major drivers.

6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How satisfied were you that everything
7 worked according to your --

8 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Well, the planning process and the
9 war gaming, if I may use that term, process, and the
10 reconnaissance and rehearsals and preparations that were
11 carried out were by far the most complex that I had, to
12 that stage in my career, ever undertaken for any
13 operation.

14 As a result of those, we were able to put Iraqi
15 forces on point security and local area security. And
16 then we were able to use coalition forces who were more
17 mobile to provide greater area security and overwatch.
18 And this layered approach to security, plus the
19 restrictions that had been put in place, plus, I think,
20 the decision of those who could have made trouble not to
21 make trouble but to take part in the political process,
22 all of those three things, I think, came together and
23 the election as a process was, in the south, completely
24 successful.

25 Subsequently, one thing did surprise me and it was

1 nothing to do with the security -- the conduct of
2 security; it was what took place inside the polling
3 stations which, of course, wasn't my concern. And
4 I discovered that although people had been given the
5 national ballot paper, they had been only received the
6 local provincial ballot paper if they asked for it,
7 which of course skewed the result at regional level.

8 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you very much.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: I suspect one or two of my colleagues may
10 want to ask you a question or so, but I have got one,
11 which is that we heard just before the break from two of
12 your colleagues that a six-month tour in Iraq really is
13 pretty short. Would you yourself liked to have had
14 a full year?

15 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Yes, indeed. I was very glad that
16 I came to the job with the benefit of a previous term,
17 and I did do slightly more than six months anyway in
18 Basra. But I was firmly of the view -- and nothing that
19 has happened since has changed -- that if you are in any
20 way to understand local societies, if you are in any way
21 to gain trust and confidence with those with whom you
22 are working, you have to be there for an extended period
23 of duty. And I believe this has changed and is
24 changing. And my last tour of duty in Afghanistan was
25 14 months. Yes, I would have liked to have stayed there

1 for longer, it is the right thing to do.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. As I believe it anyway,
3 Lieutenant General Kiszely said just before the break
4 that from looking at things in his time in Baghdad, we
5 discovered we had quite a lot to learn and so did learn.
6 Is that true generally across the whole Iraq experience,
7 do you think, for the leadership of the British armed
8 forces, that there was a learning process for everybody?

9 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Can I take you back to my earlier
10 example of dealing with the IED threat? We had to, in
11 many cases, relearn what we had institutionally
12 forgotten. And I think a long period in the Balkans,
13 which was largely about peacekeeping and peace
14 enforcement, and then the experience of a conventional
15 campaign had meant that we had not perhaps expected to
16 be faced with an insurgency. We, therefore -- we did
17 have to go through a process at every level of
18 reawakening and relearning, and we did it on job.

19 Fortunately, there was frequent visits from the
20 training organisation to theatre and the lessons that
21 were identified in the theatre and the changes of modus
22 operandi were able to be translated very rapidly back
23 into the training regime of the army. And I certainly
24 felt, at the back end of my time, that units were
25 arriving much better prepared and with the right mindset

1 than they had been at the beginning.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I think this may be the cue to
3 turn the clock back to the time of the invasion and just
4 afterwards. Just before we turn the hands of the clock,
5 Baroness Prashar, Sir Roderic?

6 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Could I ask a couple of questions,
7 please?

8 Could I just go back to the question that Sir John
9 raised about the Iraqi-isation and was it a realistic
10 policy and was there a sort of timescale?

11 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Are you talking about in government
12 or in the military forces?

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I'm talking about the military
14 forces.

15 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: I must be careful to disentangle
16 what I know now from what I knew then and what I thought
17 when I was with the CMATT up in Baghdad. I am afraid
18 memory sometimes tends to confuse these things, but from
19 my experience in Baghdad I was in no doubt that Iraq was
20 possessed of a well educated population, that there were
21 plenty of experienced and capable military officers who
22 were out there, who had been disbarred initially by
23 Mr Bremer from taking up authority but who were
24 gradually being reintroduced.

25 What was -- and that there was a very -- that there

1 was a very active programme, US-led, of training and
2 equipping military forces. I think for a while -- and
3 it was addressed later -- for a while the bit that was
4 allowed to languish rather was the institutional growth
5 of the army. There was attention being given to the
6 high headquarters of the Ministry of Defence, but the
7 logistics systems, the staff college, the officer and
8 NCO training academies, the personnel management
9 systems, the things that we take for granted that have
10 taken 300 years to grow in our army -- and which did
11 exist in the Iraqi army certainly pre-Saddam -- those,
12 to my mind, were as important as anything else, because
13 they create the structure that will train and equip its
14 own people so that we don't have to.

15 And I was in no doubt that the Iraqis were very
16 competent and capable people and had a good record at
17 being able to do this, but it was going to take time to
18 set it up.

19 There was also a tension between the sort of
20 military -- the sort of Iraqi army force which was
21 available to me and that which was being generated
22 centrally. That which was being generated centrally was
23 a deliberately multiethnic force designed to be able to
24 go anywhere and do anything within Iraq and on its
25 borders. The bit that I had, its genesis was quite

1 different. Its genesis was of a national guard-type
2 formation, which had been generated by the coalition
3 forces on the ground in order to give them some extra
4 capacity early on, after the invasion.

5 These were people who were recruited locally, they
6 lived at home, they did not live in barracks unless they
7 were on duty. They were multiethnic and, of course,
8 they were subject to all the local interest that that
9 implies, and one had to be very much more careful in
10 assigning tasks to them than one could be with
11 a multiethnic manoeuvre force brought in from outside.

12 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: That leads to my next question,
13 because I was interested that you said you did have
14 informal contacts around the area. Can you give
15 a concrete example of how that helped you in your
16 operational activities?

17 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Conversations with the Marsh Arab
18 chiefs, for example, in Maysan province helped me
19 understand the dynamics of cross-border activity between
20 Iraq and Iran much more. The degree to which -- well,
21 what we would term illegal cross-border activity to them
22 part of life -- went on was a revelation, the smuggling
23 of everything you care to name, and that underneath this
24 cover all sorts of things could continue.

25 It also pointed up to me the paradoxes of

1 relationships that existed either side that of border.
2 On the one hand there was the Shi'ite religious
3 connections. Then there were the connections with
4 people who had opposed Saddam, had gone to Iran, had
5 fought Saddam from there. Set against the longstanding
6 antipathy between things Persian and things Arabic, that
7 border seemed to me to be rather like the Drina river.
8 It was one of the fault lines of civilisation. Although
9 it didn't exactly divide the Arab population, there is
10 a degree of never the twain shall meet on either side,
11 and to those who said that southern Iraq is about to
12 become an Iranian fiefdom, I could say as a result of
13 such conversations, actually not so.

14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: My final question was about the
15 policing. You said the FCO was leading on the police
16 side and you were dealing with military matters. Did
17 that cause any practical difficulties for you?

18 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: The chief difficulty -- it did cause
19 one particular difficulty, which was that because of the
20 constraints placed on civilians -- and policemen are
21 civilians operating in an operational theatre -- I could
22 not guarantee that the mentoring of policemen that was
23 supposed to be done could be done to the depth, to the
24 degree, to the duration that it had to be. And I had to
25 fill that gap using soldiers and military police so that

1 instead of concentrating on partnering my military
2 forces with Iraqi military forces only, which would have
3 been the ideal situation, I also had to partner them
4 closely in many cases with the Iraqi police to fill that
5 void.

6 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Did you discuss these difficulties
7 with your colleagues?

8 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Yes, and I went to print on several
9 occasions back to London, but given the nature of the
10 people who were being employed to do this job, who were
11 either civil policemen or contractors, those were the
12 rules under which they had been engaged. So it became
13 a given.

14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Sir Roderic?

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I would just like to go back one more
17 time to the IEDs. You said that we had to relearn how
18 to deal with them. By the end of your time you were
19 coming out better prepared. You also said you found
20 yourself confronting IEDs that were capable of
21 penetrating any of the vehicles that you had at the
22 time. You asked for an equipment upgrade.

23 Did the equipment come? Did it come quickly enough,
24 and when it arrived was it the right equipment, was it
25 effective?

1 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: The armour on the Warrior and
2 Challenger main battle tanks was upgraded very rapidly.
3 The Snatch Land Rover was also uparmoured and I began to
4 see the introduction of a new series of vehicles which
5 were more effective, but these devices were of such
6 power that there was virtually -- there is no
7 technological silver bullet in this. There is no --
8 particularly at that time, when the sort of vehicles
9 that we employ now in Afghanistan were just not in
10 production.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: The Americans didn't have them?

12 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: No, they didn't. They were relying
13 on the humvee at that time, largely. So we were doing
14 what we could within the constraints of the available
15 technology. There was nothing else around. We had not
16 procured anything, there was little on the market that
17 could have been deployed to assist me. The responses to
18 it were, therefore, not just about protection against
19 the device. They had to be about breaking the networks
20 before -- behind the device.

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you. You talked about the value of
22 having a British consul general in Basra and the
23 different departments that were taking responsibility
24 for the different bits of the operation.

25 Did you feel that by the time you were settling in

1 command in MND South East that the British had
2 a joined-up operation in that region between the
3 civilian, the military, the different branches of the
4 civilian operation?

5 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Very much so. I felt very much that
6 there was a triumvirate in the south on the British side,
7 which consisted of the consul general, me and the senior
8 DFID representative. We met regularly, we were good friends,
9 we seldom, if ever, did anything without telling each
10 other about the first. We did not need what became
11 known as a PRT, a provincial reconstruction team, there
12 because we had all the mechanisms. We exchanged staff
13 between us, so I had military officers in the consul
14 general's office in Basra, and DFID had people working
15 with me. And I believe that at that stage we were as
16 joined-up as we have ever been, and I was very satisfied
17 with the way that business was done, with the one caveat
18 that I did not believe that it was a fair thing to do to
19 have given the Foreign Office responsibility for
20 developing policing because it was outside their
21 experience and competence.

22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So the lesson you would learn from that
23 for the future would be what? Who should you give
24 it to?

25 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Well, if you have a country which

1 has got an appropriate policing and legal model, give it
2 to the Home Office or ACPO to deal with it because it is
3 theirs. If you do not have -- and, for example,
4 Sierra Leone is, I think, a successful example of where
5 a traditional British legal model and policing model was
6 reformed by a Commonwealth team -- if you do not, then
7 recognise that you do not. In this instance, Iraq had
8 a Roman law model and it had a paramilitary police
9 force, and I think it would probably have been better to
10 have asked the Italians, who were our major coalition
11 partner in the south who had exactly these structures,
12 to have taken the lead. We could have provided people
13 to an Italian-led structure, but I think the lesson
14 I would take is look at what is appropriate.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Did you also feel that the instructions
16 and the support that you were getting from Whitehall,
17 with the exception of this decision over policing, was
18 as joined-up as you were on the ground? Were you
19 getting what you needed from --

20 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: I got mine from the Permanent Joint
21 Headquarters and it was the poor old Chief of Joint
22 Operations who had to fight for clarity to pass on to
23 me. And I was very, very happy with what I got from the
24 PJHQ. If I asked a question, I received an answer and
25 I never had any doubt about what I should ask to the

1 PJHQ and what I should ask to my commander,
2 General Casey, on the ground who was after all
3 responsible for the conduct of operations. I never lost
4 any sleep over that.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: That's within the strictly military net.
6 In a broader sense, did the British Government at home
7 have realistic aspirations for what you and your
8 colleagues, civilian as well as military, on the ground
9 could deliver?

10 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Well, I was well aware of what the
11 required strategic end state was and I was well aware
12 that no timeframe for delivering it had at that stage
13 been put on it because, after all, we were just about to
14 have the first lot of elections.

15 I thought that it was my job along -- in partnership
16 with the PJHQ to propose what steps we should take to
17 turn that strategic concept into reality; in other
18 words, what could and should we do to stand up Iraqi
19 security forces to help enable particularly provincial
20 administrations and try to put some sort of timeline on
21 it, if only illustrative? So I think it would have been
22 rather unfair to ask those several thousand miles away
23 in Whitehall to drill down to that level of detail.

24 I think that probably it was for me and the Consul
25 General and PJHQ to work out what was -- what we thought

1 was practicable and practical and to make propositions,
2 and if that was politically untenable at home, then
3 I would be told about it soon enough.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But you weren't. So they were receptive
5 to your advice on it?

6 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: I believe so, yes.

7 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I want to come on to General Wall in
9 a second, but just one final question. This may be a
10 bit unfair because I want to ask you about your period
11 in 2003, but it does sort of provide a move in to
12 questions I want to put to General Wall.

13 From your background, I know you are probably one of
14 the most experienced British officers in Security Sector
15 Reform and, therefore, I guess it was quite appropriate
16 that you moved into the position you did, which was this
17 military advisory training team. Can you just say
18 a little bit about what that was in 2003, who was
19 involved?

20 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: When we started out there were seven
21 of us, the magnificent seven, and I was the only Brit in
22 the team. We walked into a situation where Iraq had no
23 army: It had been declared disbanded by Mr Bremer, who
24 had no choice by that stage but to do that. He is
25 criticised for doing it, but I believe that by the time

1 he made that decree, the army had disbanded itself and
2 what was left of its infrastructure had been largely
3 torn apart by the population, which had lost all respect
4 for its own army. A very bad situation to be in.

5 So we started up with a plan which had been put
6 together in Washington, which was to use security
7 contractors, much of the same people who had done the
8 work in Croatia, to form up a three-division army over
9 the next three years, which would be lightly equipped.
10 The focus was not on causing concern to Iraq's
11 neighbours given its recent history.

12 That got very rapidly overtaken by events when it
13 became clear that there was a building internal security
14 problems. So we had to go back to the drawing board and
15 redesign a process and a programme in which we would
16 build barracks, we would buy equipment, we would begin
17 to build the institutions, we would recruit soldiers, we
18 would dress them, that we would run officer and NCO
19 training, or rather the Jordanians would run it for us,
20 and then we would marry up officers, soldiers, equipment
21 in their barracks and stand up the institutions and do
22 this on a much more industrial scale than had originally
23 been envisaged.

24 In parallel with that, the coalition forces on the
25 ground were building the national guard that I referred

1 to earlier on.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That sounds quite an undertaking, so
3 did the magnificent seven grow larger?

4 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: The magnificent seven had expanded
5 to about 700 by the time I left, but I look back on it
6 as one of the greatest rollercoaster rides of my
7 service.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But as a specialist in this area,
9 what did you think of the grasp of the issues connected
10 with security sector reform and the fact that you were
11 on this rollercoaster ride and having to make it up as
12 you went along?

13 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: I think -- again, if I can go back
14 to something I said earlier, I think that the initial
15 mindset was about training and equipping. That would
16 have been all right if we had not had the problem while
17 Mr Bremer was there of not being able to use any
18 military officer who had been a Ba'ath Party member.

19 Now, as we all know, there are more than one sort of
20 Ba'ath party member. There are the fellow travellers
21 and there are the committed, and once we had got beyond
22 the "you can't use any" and we could sort out the
23 uncommitted from the committed, then it was a much more
24 viable proposition to build a large army quickly and to
25 get away from the idea that this was just about training

1 and equipping, that it was about building a system that
2 would do that for itself.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think that provides us with
4 a useful backdrop for moving to General Wall. Thank you
5 for being patient.

6 Just to start with, what notice were you given that
7 you would be moving to this important command in the
8 middle of May 2003?

9 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Well, I had been identified as the
10 successor to General Brims in command of First Armoured
11 Division, then based in Germany well before the Iraq
12 operations were planned, in December 2001.

13 And in the latter part of 2002, I was the
14 Chief of Staff to Air Marshall Burridge in his capacity
15 as the UK National Contingent Commander. So we had been
16 tracking the evolution of this potential military action
17 for some time and training accordingly, to understand
18 the broad context of the operation and, of course, the
19 land forces role within it.

20 And I was the Chief of Staff in Qatar, alongside
21 General Franks's headquarters, all the way through the
22 initial military action from 19 March on through to the
23 middle of April. And I think it was in early April when
24 a call came through identifying what the sort of
25 postings plot was going to be, if you like, where

1 a number of us in a sort of postings chain were going to
2 change jobs over a period of some weeks in the period
3 between April and June 2003.

4 So I had plenty of notice actually, and I had plenty
5 of opportunity to understudy what was going on.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So your role was essentially First
7 Division, and First Division left in July. You left with
8 them?

9 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Correct.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Rather than your role being to give
11 whatever support you can to the CPA --

12 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: No, I was there because I was
13 commanding the First Division, and General Lamb turned
14 up because he was commanding the Third Division when
15 they took over from us in the middle of July. Having
16 said that, most of the activity was very closely
17 entwined with ORHA and the CPA from the moment we got
18 there.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In the planning that you had been
20 involved in before the actual war, how much had you been
21 personally concerned with this question of Phase 4 and
22 what would happen after the fighting stopped?

23 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: We all recognised that Phase 4 was
24 going to start pretty quickly after forces got into
25 southern Iraq on the assumption that we are going to be

1 part of the operation, and I know that others have
2 already given you some evidence about all of that. And
3 quite a lot of work was done under the guise of an
4 organisation called Combined Task Force 4 which sat
5 inside General McKiernan's headquarters. He was the
6 coalition land force component commander responsible for
7 the land operation and he had a planning team that was
8 looking at the aftermath issues, which had some British
9 officers working in it. And, of course, they were given
10 a very awkward task, they had to be pretty speculative
11 about what they might -- what they might encounter.

12 But nevertheless, they did some work on first of all
13 humanitarian aid and then I think some structures which
14 involved the whole ORHA debate. But it is fair to say,
15 I think, that as everybody got more and more focused on
16 crossing from Kuwait into Iraq in a major combat
17 operation that was thought to last perhaps 120 to
18 150 days depending on how it went, the closer we got to
19 that point, the less we worried about the aftermath and
20 the more we worried about the immediacy of those
21 challenges which was, of course, in our case shrouded in
22 quite a lot of uncertainty about whether we were going
23 to be part of it.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: As you discovered that you were part
25 of it and things moved rather quickly, presumably you

1 became aware that this was becoming more of an urgent
2 question?

3 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Yes, it was, undoubtedly. And it
4 became, inevitably, a come-as-you-are party. There was
5 actually some very good work done on alleviating the
6 potential humanitarian problem which, as it transpired,
7 wasn't really tested because the humanitarian problem
8 wasn't that acute. There were some minor problems in
9 Basra in the early days after liberation, but not as
10 significant as had been feared. And the change then
11 became one of a more generic problem of trying to put
12 some sort of administration into southern Iraq.

13 It was unrealistic to expect that to happen on the
14 hoof while there was still fighting going on further
15 north and before the Saddam regime had formally
16 capitulated. But very soon after that, that became the
17 immediate challenge. So from about the middle of April
18 that was the big issue.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just going back a bit, when did
20 planning actually start in General McKiernan's
21 headquarters? You said some had been going on. When
22 were British officers part of that plan?

23 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: For this aftermath activity?

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes.

25 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: I think maybe around the turn of

1 the year and maybe some of it was going on around
2 Exercise INTERNAL LOOK -I can't remember to be
3 precise -- which, as you know, was in November 2002?
4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Were our officers part of this from
5 the start?
6 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Yes, we had some people in there
7 right from the beginning, yes, including some quite
8 senior deputies to General McKiernan who were involved
9 in trying to anticipate the scale and scope of this sort
10 of challenge.
11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Prior to the war, the major concern
12 by many people, looking at the potential post-war
13 situation, was what has been put to us as boots on the
14 ground, where there just wouldn't be enough soldiers.
15 Was that a concern of yours prior to the war?
16 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: I can't recall having done any
17 calculus about the sort of force densities we were going
18 to need. I think it is fair to say that there was still
19 an expectation that we would be welcomed as liberators,
20 that there would be sufficient of some sort of
21 administrative capacity to at least keep things ticking
22 on in a minimal way, and there was going to be some sort
23 of convenient arrival of some sort of Iraqi middle class
24 that was going to pick up the baton with us and
25 accelerate us towards some sort of stable level of

1 administrative competence.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Admiral Boyce has told us that he
3 warned the Americans against the assumptions. Were
4 British officers urging the Americans to think about
5 more serious scenarios in which those things didn't
6 apply?

7 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Well, there were a number of
8 serious scenarios that were anticipated to do with our
9 failure to seize the oil infrastructure before it was
10 disrupted or destroyed, the sort of environmental
11 consequences that might flow from that and other sorts
12 of kind of wanton disruption. Those were thought
13 through and there was a consequence management task
14 force that was set up under the Americans in which we
15 didn't play a particularly significant role and, of
16 course, that also had a role to do with the possible
17 downstream effects of some chemical releases which might
18 have ensued from what we had anticipated could well
19 happen.

20 So those sorts of macro kind of events were being
21 thought about. I think the general malaise that we
22 inherited on arrival was not fully thought through.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And going back to the planning prior
24 to the war, again, from a British perspective, we had
25 moved from, as we discussed before, the northern

1 scenario in which we would come in through Turkey and
2 the Kurdish areas, to the southern quite quickly.

3 First, how do you think that influenced our overall
4 planning for the war itself and the aftermath, again,
5 particularly for the role the British themselves would
6 except to play in the aftermath?

7 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: First of all, I think the option
8 that saw us involved in the main advance from the south
9 was, from a UK perspective, a far more straightforward
10 option provided we could get there and get established
11 in Kuwait with the right equipment and the sort of
12 capability uplifts that -- provided we could get all
13 that done, it was going to be a cleaner more
14 straightforward option than coming in a separate axis
15 from the north, which was going to be extremely
16 demanding militarily and was going to see us, you know,
17 with a more independent role in that part of the
18 country.

19 I think that answers that.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So one of the consequences of coming
21 up through the south in the way that we did, with the
22 Americans then moving further up towards the north, was
23 that we were left with this area around Basra that
24 became our responsibility. Was -- when did it become
25 clear, do you think, in terms of our own planning and

1 preparations that we would actually be responsible for
2 what other witnesses have called our "box" in the south?

3 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: I think it was anticipated right
4 from the start that we would be doing a much shorter
5 advance than the bulk of the land force, but we would be
6 inheriting a significant city with key oil
7 infrastructure and a number of the critical issues that
8 were going to drive the Iraqi economy forward in the
9 ensuing period.

10 We were going to inherit that very early on before
11 the rest the country had been liberated, before the
12 regime had been toppled, and that was very much
13 expected, yes.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So what preparations had you made in
15 terms of civil and military relations, say, as the
16 forces moved into the south and became responsible for
17 this very large city?

18 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: I thought that the key part of it
19 was really in General Brims's plan, which was to relieve
20 pressure on the Basrawi people from Saddam's regime
21 with, you know, the minimum use of force. And, indeed,
22 the reason it took a few days to do that was because it
23 was done in a very nuanced and subtle way, and that aim
24 was achieved, which gave us a very good start point with
25 the Basrawi people. They did feel that they had been

1 liberated, they had seen some very effective but
2 surgical operations against the people who were
3 threatening them and their way of life and really
4 holding them all in a -- almost in a kidnap situation
5 inside the city.

6 And that oppression was lifted very cleverly, and we
7 then found ourselves inevitably trying to make contact
8 with the sorts of people who would help us understand
9 how Basra and Basra City and Basra province was going to
10 run, and to work out really what the existing structures
11 were and then how those could be developed and evolved
12 to something that the Iraqis could be expected to run
13 for themselves very early on. And this was the big
14 idea: to empower to them to do it for themselves.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So when you arrived in the middle
16 of May, how did this task appear to you and how did you
17 see your role in pursuing it?

18 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Well, there is no doubt that what
19 I inherited from General Brims was the earliest
20 manifestation of that work, but it was extremely
21 immature and it was -- I found it very difficult in the
22 ensuing months to mature it very much faster than they
23 had.

24 I had the same staff as General Brims had. He had,
25 I suppose, had another about two and a half or three

1 weeks in command after the fall of the regime and I took
2 it on from early to mid May. And I think it is fair to
3 say that there was a reasonable hope that we could pull
4 this off, but we were grappling quite hard to find the
5 key levers in Iraqi society, in Iraqi administration,
6 that we could rely upon for some help to get this
7 working.

8 And there were really four key groups that we dealt
9 with: There were the Iraqi tribes with their sheikhs,
10 who had reasonably powerful influences because their
11 power had been increased by Saddam in the closing years
12 of his regime; there were the technical experts,
13 particularly relevant to the oil industry, who were very
14 well educated and had stuck around to run oil power,
15 water and so on, and those are sort of -- those three
16 issues of related in terms of the way the Basra
17 infrastructure works. You know, the oil is needed to
18 generate electricity, which is required to pump the
19 water which gets the oil out of the ground. You break
20 any one of those links, the system tends to fall down.

21 We had a very, very high priority, which was
22 directed from the very top, to make sure that that
23 didn't happen, which was quite a challenge with some
24 infrastructure that was pretty tired and had not been
25 properly maintained and quite a lot of people whose

1 responsibility to do that had departed.

2 There were also, of course, the clerics as there are
3 in any society, who had a very significant influence
4 over the way that people were thinking, behaving and
5 particularly the way they thought about us. So there
6 was an opportunity there to increase our understanding
7 and also to try and get them to explain our posture, and
8 there was an emerging group of would-be politicians. In
9 fact, there was something like 40 or 50 political
10 parties that formed up very, very quickly in Basra in
11 the expectation of some early elections, who tended to
12 behave as if they had already been elected and had
13 legitimate influence over what should be done.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So that's quite a complex array of
15 people to get to know in quite a short space of time?

16
17 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Very.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What messages were you able to take
19 from all of that and how would you have reported this
20 back to the UK?

21 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: I think the first mention which
22 came very strongly from the clerics was, "You haven't
23 got much time". The Basrawi people are delighted that
24 we have been liberated. They are delighted that they
25 have been liberated at relatively low cost and pain in

1 terms of damage and fatalities and injuries to Basrawi
2 people, but you are not particularly welcome here.

3 Remember what happened when you were here last time --

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That refers to 1991 and --

5

6 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Actually, no, the 1920s.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It goes back a long time.

8

9 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Yes. And, of course, all of our
10 forebears learned a lot about this and it would be as
11 well if you would capitalise on that experience and get
12 this done quickly, which was a very powerful message,
13 but it wasn't backed up with any clarity as to how we
14 should implement it. And it was very difficult to find
15 people who would step up to the plate and be part of
16 this would-be improvised administration.

17 There were a lot of individuals who gave us quite
18 a lot of help, but they were very worried about assuming
19 too much profile.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Interestingly, on the 1920s, when we
21 you not seen as a pro-Shia force, in terms of your
22 preparation for all of this, was there any referencing
23 to Britain's long experience, not always particularly
24 happy, in Iraq in the 1920s?

25

1 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Yes, I think we had read a few
2 books about what had gone on this in that period. We
3 realised that we had some very careful lines to tread,
4 but I think the overarching expectation was going to be
5 more help from the Iraqis themselves.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Basically you were coming into
7 a situation where you hoped the Iraqis would take over
8 more, you were quite happy for them to do that, but the
9 institutions of the state more or less had been
10 shattered?

11 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Shattered, yes. They were absent,
12 and the middle class, such as it was, was inert or had
13 departed.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So are you still steadily
15 reformulating your task over this?

16 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Well, what you have is if you go
17 out on the street on a given day which, of course, it is
18 in our nature to do, and it was perfectly safe to go
19 driving around Basra in those days, the main threats at
20 that time were tribal score settling, which we weren't
21 involved in -- that worked around us -- looting,
22 criminality, and, you know, one or two other sort of
23 inconvenient nihilistic activities that weren't really
24 an overarching threat to security.

25 So there were some awkward issues and there were

1 some particularly frustrating ones, not least the
2 propensity for people to want to pull down the power
3 cables so they could smelt the cables into copper ingots
4 and sell them. Those sorts of things were extremely
5 counter productive, but generally there was the
6 opportunity to get out and about and interact with
7 people, and the people on the street would tell you that
8 if you could be part of a military force that could
9 bring about the end of this regime, then it was but
10 a few days' work to sort out the rest of the issues in
11 a place like Basra. Such was the relief.

12 But there were very high expectations of the rate at
13 which we could make change to things, like water supply,
14 sewage, the continued supply of oil, economic growth,
15 employment, all these sorts of things that were regarded
16 as the natural early consequence of the demise of the
17 regime. And, you know, some sort of stability,
18 reasonable stability in the security situation. And as
19 time wore on, almost week by week, so the frustration
20 that we weren't able to turn things round very
21 quickly -- and I say "we" advisedly because there was
22 nobody else out there going to do it -- grew and grew
23 and grew. And even though we were making progress, the
24 difference between the expectation and the progress we
25 were making was significant enough to generate a lot of

1 resentment.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In retrospect, with hindsight, what
3 would you have needed to have been able to do this job
4 properly, to begin to meet the expectations of the Iraqi
5 people in the time that you had?

6 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: You would have needed a set of
7 civic infrastructure that was in reasonable condition and you
8 would have needed an underground administration that was
9 ready to come out and activate it.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: They were never going to be.

11 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: They weren't.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What about from British resources?
13 Given the absence of those, was this going to be
14 a losing cause from the start?

15 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: I don't think we were ever going to
16 get our progress ahead of Iraqi expectations. I don't
17 wish to -- I mean, I think I should emphasise at this
18 point that an awful lot of really good early work was
19 done. It was done in a number of areas: First of all,
20 the security and the restarting of the oil
21 infrastructure, which was actually key, you know.
22 Basrawis wanted petrol, they needed power generation and
23 we managed to sort of almost keep that running all the
24 way through the early part of the conflict and then
25 through to the period I'm describing. And that was

1 pretty well done against the backdrop of very fragile
2 infrastructures, and there was never any prospect of
3 increasing the output, but sustaining it was a prospect
4 and that was done.

5 There was work done to try and improve water
6 supplies and the distribution of electricity, and that
7 was, to be honest -- it was a tactical fix. It was
8 a short-term patch. And we were, all the time, torn
9 between what could be done as a sort of hasty indicator
10 of progress and a sort of prospect of what might be
11 delivered over time, versus stepping back and taking
12 a much more deliberate systemic approach to genuine
13 medium-term progress. And that tension plagued us all
14 the time.

15 There was a lot of work done on getting the police
16 back on the streets and turning around the police
17 culture, prisons were renovated and reopened, schools
18 were renovated and opened. Within a few weeks the
19 annual exam cycle was run in Basra schools, admittedly
20 using the syllabus that had been relevant to the Saddam
21 era because it was unreasonable to change it in that
22 short time. These were all pretty significant
23 achievements but, of course, they didn't add up to
24 enough to give us the momentum needed to get this city
25 back on its feet. And I think the fact that some years

1 down the line and having coped with the security
2 challenges of the last few years, it is only now we are
3 starting to see very significant progress in all of
4 these areas.

5 That's sort of witness to the challenge we were
6 facing at the time in the early days.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just a final couple of questions
8 before handing over to Sir Martin. Your period
9 coincided with the establishment of the Coalition
10 Provisional Authority, our position being clarified as
11 an occupying power through UN Resolution and so on, and
12 de-Ba'athification and the disbanding of the army.

13 General Riley has given us some indication of the
14 disbanding of the army, but this, in the south, probably
15 was more important than de-Ba'athification. I would
16 just be interested in your views about the impact of
17 these rather large macro changes when, prior to this,
18 the main focus had been on humanitarian assistance and
19 the role of ORHA?

20 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: I think that the CPA gave us
21 a framework to work with, and we shouldn't forget that
22 the UN and the ICRC were also in Basra as part of this
23 mix. There was no formal structure. It was a surprise
24 to me that, you know, the military command structure
25 wasn't afforded primacy in all of this to start with,

1 prior to a transition period. But that didn't stop us
2 working together quite effectively.

3 There were some very helpful UN officials and we, of
4 course, had the Danish consul, the Danish Ambassador in
5 the CPA in the south with whom we worked on Basra
6 issues. We had a small staff of experts, but they had
7 no organisational basis, they had no life support, they
8 had no sort of hygiene support or anything like that.
9 So they were very much reliant on our help, and in the
10 end I put the Commander Royal Artillery from the
11 Division with his staff in civilian clothes down into
12 Basra to reinforce the Ambassador and the substantial
13 team down in Basra within the CPA, which was quite
14 a useful step.

15 But this was still very much an embryonic
16 organisation without much clarity as to how to take
17 forward the sort of structural things that were needed.

18 I don't think that the demise of the army made much
19 difference to us. They had fragmented very early, as
20 you have heard. The de-Ba'athification did have quite
21 a bearing. There were some people who had been
22 associated with the Ba'ath Party, whom General Brims had
23 sought help from because they had the best grip over the
24 people and the best understanding of the civic
25 administration of Basra. And unfortunately, the day

1 I turned up to take over from General Brims they were
2 all laid off because of the de-Ba'athification, which
3 slightly compounded our problem.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Martin?

6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Could I turn to British boots on the
7 ground? In terms of interaction with the Iraqis, how
8 did the troops under your command switch from the
9 mindset of fighting a war to the mindset of peace
10 making? In particular, what contribution were they able
11 to make in those early days with regard to law and order
12 in the region?

13 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: I think this is one of the very
14 interesting questions and sort of successes, if you
15 like, of that period, because you are absolutely right,
16 I inherited a Division that had sat in Kuwait preparing
17 itself with some quite, you know, significant
18 last-minute adjustments, had anticipated that it would
19 have gone into some sort of potentially chemical
20 agent-type environment and it was not at all clear that
21 the resistance offered by the Iraqi army was going to be
22 as insignificant as it turned out to be.

23 So having gone through all of that psychological
24 guesswork, they then found themselves in and around
25 Basra, in fact Basra City, the rest of Basra province,

1 including the oil infrastructure and the coastline and
2 the critical port of Umm Qasr, and then, in the case of
3 16 Air Assault Brigade, up into Maysan province which
4 was not actually liberated by us, the people of Maysan
5 liberated it themselves, so we always had an interesting
6 relationship with them from the start. And I think that
7 in the key centres of population, our people turned
8 their hands very quickly and very effectively to a much
9 softer military profile and one that was consistent with
10 trying to develop the hope of the people of Basra and to
11 promote security.

12 Now, for various reasons of rules of engagement we
13 didn't get heavily involved in counter-looting
14 operations. That was left to Iraqi police who were not
15 hugely effective in that regard. So that cast a bit of
16 a shadow over the security situation. But in the round,
17 most people were able to start going about their
18 business in a wholly different way from that which they
19 had before, and our security presence was for the most
20 part about delivering confidence and, in the margins of
21 that, training the police to adopt a more positive and
22 useful role and, where possible, to start some of this
23 bottom-up improvement to infrastructure.

24 And I think that was extremely well done, but it was
25 never going to be enough to transform -- to what

1 I believe --

2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Troop levels were drawn down quite
3 rapidly following the invasion.

4 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Very.

5 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Could you explain the reasoning for
6 this, and were you yourself involved?

7 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Yes, I was, and I was not hugely
8 enthusiastic about watching my force diminish day by
9 day. But the reason for this was in order to sustain
10 the effort over time we had to recover some forces to UK
11 and to Germany who we knew would be, you know, back out
12 in Basra as part of a roulement cycle within
13 a year/20 months.

14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: And what happened once they had gone or
15 once they were going down in terms of the resources you
16 needed?

17 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: We came down to a steady state
18 force level, which I think was a stretch. This was an
19 economy of force operation, but I think at the time we felt
20 that with the exception of some areas, we felt it was
21 probably going to be enough if we could get the Iraqi
22 police force and others involved in what we were doing
23 and if we could detune the sensitivity of the populace
24 by making progress in these key areas of water,
25 electricity and with the economy and so on and so forth.

1 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Was it enough or did you in fact have
2 to start requesting extra resources?

3 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: We certainly had to request certain
4 specialists as we learnt more and more about the roles
5 that the military was going to have to perform, which we
6 had incorrectly assumed were going to have to be taken
7 on by others. But in terms of broad numbers, no, we
8 didn't increase our force levels very much.

9 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: And the specialists you requested came?

10 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Yes, we were looking for people who
11 had got expertise in agriculture -- they weren't
12 military, they were from other government departments or
13 elsewhere, or from the international organisations. We
14 did have our own experts on oil infrastructure, some of
15 the electric generation, water, roads and all that sort
16 of things.

17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: And the things like crowd control you
18 were --

19 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: We were -- I think we were well
20 provisioned for that, although there were not
21 significant public order incidents during my time.

22 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I just ask another question,
24 just for clarity, on the drawdown of forces?

25 Basically, as I understand what you were saying, it

1 is really that there was just no spare capacity left in
2 the army, that if you didn't draw down, you wouldn't
3 have anything for later --

4 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Yes, but there were also
5 international contributions. For example, a Danish
6 battle group arrived, the other provinces in the area
7 were taken on by the Dutch and the Italians. So that
8 was in a sense reducing our liability there.

9 But I think it is fair to say that we were probably
10 at the minimum force level that we needed to do this job
11 properly at the time.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you alert London to the fact
13 that this may cause problems or did you accept that
14 this, because of the stretch in the army, was probably
15 all that you could hope for?

16 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: I think we probably accepted that
17 that's where we were.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I just ask a question about the
19 killing of the six royal military policemen in Majar
20 Al-Kabir. How did you view this as it happened? Did it
21 get you by surprise?

22 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Yes, we hadn't anticipated this.
23 It was a shock, and of course it was a tragedy. It came
24 about because those people, those six RMP soldiers, were
25 continuing a task that they had embarked on some weeks

1 beforehand, which was all to do with training the Iraqi
2 police across a number of police stations in southern
3 Maysan province. And they were making a routine call in
4 accordance with a plan, a planned patrol. And it is fair
5 to say we had some difficulty with communications, of
6 calling in reserves, general situational awareness, all
7 of which has been taken account of in inquiries since
8 the time, but they were subjected to a deliberate attack
9 from a group of people from a nearby town. It then
10 generated a riot in Majar Al-Kabir and we don't know the
11 precise catalyst for it. Some of it may be to do with
12 some tribal sensitivity about the way that we were
13 operating at the time.

14 And it was a surprise and it sort of changed the
15 tone very quickly, particularly in that province. The
16 impact was quite localised. It didn't spill over into
17 Basra and, indeed, the people of Basra were as shocked
18 as we were that this had happened.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So in terms of immediate tactical
20 lessons learned, what were they?

21 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: That I think we needed to operate
22 in larger groups with better force protection and we
23 needed to be a little bit more deliberate in terms of
24 the freedoms we afforded to junior commanders on those
25 sort of tasks. And whereas this was a perfectly

1 legitimate prospect -- "Go and do this work" -- you
2 know, these soldiers were left vulnerable to actions by
3 extremists. So we needed, therefore, to make sure we
4 had much better force protection and much faster
5 deployable reserves which, of course, had the effect of
6 significantly reducing our tempo of operations.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Was this seen as a sort of
8 intimation of things to come or a one-off event with
9 particular circumstances?

10 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Well, we certainly didn't regard it
11 as a one-off attempt because, you know, we were
12 certainly not inviting another shock like that. It
13 turned out to be consistent with the broad mood across
14 Maysan as it developed over time, and you will be aware
15 of the events in 2004 in Al Amarah which were really
16 linked to that sort of same resentment against our
17 presence.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to conclude -- this is perhaps
19 a question for General Riley as well -- in terms of
20 everything that we knew about operating in these sort of
21 conditions, were there things we wish we had done
22 differently? Because we are about lessons learned. The
23 question is continually asked about Iraq: were we
24 inheriting a situation that was so dire that there was
25 not a lot that we could do except be patient and, over

1 time, hope that it would get better, or were there
2 things that really we could have done differently that
3 would have made a serious difference?

4 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Could I round off by saying that
5 I think we could have -- you know, had we had more help
6 from the influential people in Basra in the early
7 stages, we probably could have made a better fist of it,
8 but there was always going to be the prospect that this
9 was too big an issue to deal with at the first pass and
10 we were going to go through a period of instability,
11 which we would have to then deal with and then only
12 after that would we be able to do the critical
13 infrastructure and the economic growth piece properly.

14 So there was probably a sort of inevitability that
15 we were going to end up in this situation.

16 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: I very much agree with that. When
17 we got to where we were, we were always going to have to
18 deal with this level of instability with a force level
19 that was inadequate.

20 Had our propaganda message during the invasion, or
21 rather the US-led coalition propaganda message to the
22 Iraqi army been a little more carefully crafted, we
23 might have preserved at least some of the units of the
24 old Iraqi army which could then have been partnered up,
25 purged, used, to thicken up our security force presence.

1 The other areas that would have made a big
2 difference, which General Peter has already mentioned,
3 were things like the electricity, oil and water, and
4 a major engagement by the private sector at an early
5 stage would have changed that dynamic. But I'm not
6 certain that the framework of governance was in place to
7 allow the private sector to engage in the way that it
8 probably wished that it could at an early stage.

9 I'm not sure that the instability would have
10 bothered some of the big private sector companies as
11 much as the inability to do business.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Do you think the government in
13 Britain understood quite the task that they were asking
14 you to take on, where it was going to lead?

15 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: If I'm frank, no.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you get a chance to say that to
17 ministers when they came through?

18 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Very firmly.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How did they respond?

20 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: Gradually the level of expertise
21 and the organisation of that expertise improved and, as
22 Jonathan has said, you know, by the time he was there,
23 there was a sort of coherent military/civil mix with the
24 right sort of resources and so on and so forth.

25 I think, you know, we need to recognise -- and this

1 is about lessons learned -- if you compare what we have
2 just described here, the very early days of Iraq, with
3 what is now going on in Afghanistan, in a different
4 situation but where the, you know, civ/mil development
5 challenges are not dissimilar, we are in a completely
6 different place.

7 It was very interesting that the Post-Conflict
8 Reconstruction Unit, which is now the Stabilisation Unit
9 that was formed up in 2004/2005 as an immediate
10 consequence of understanding that we had undercooked
11 this thing from a structural point of view. So I think
12 we need to recognise that, even though that doesn't
13 really ameliorate our frustrations at the time in 2003.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you very much.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: I have got just one particular question and
16 a rather general one before I finish.

17 The particular one, it goes back to your time,
18 General Wall. The planning before the invasion, looking
19 ahead to the tasks that were going to need to be done,
20 did the Saddamite arms dumps feature heavily in that
21 planning -- seizing, securing, guarding -- because we
22 have been hearing quite a lot of evidence that they had
23 simply been left and the population simply ran away with
24 the contents where it was portable? But was it
25 a planning element to secure arms depots and dumps?

1 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: I can't remember. I'm conscious
2 that an awful lot of effort went into trying to contain
3 that as soon as we got there and, of course, that was
4 one of the principal legal obligations of an occupying
5 power, to sort all that out. And there was a continual
6 stream of unexploded ordnance from both sides and very
7 large amounts of Iraqi stocks that we destroyed in the
8 first few months. But I can't pretend that some of it
9 won't have got into some unwelcome places.

10 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: I can comment, if it is helpful,
11 because it was something that was on the radar in
12 Baghdad at the time I was there. And, as you say, there
13 were enormous arms dumps in every province and it did
14 soak up a great deal of American manpower in the early
15 days to secure it.

16 It was one of the immediate sources of weapons and
17 equipment for the reformation of the Iraq army, although
18 for the most part the ammunition was so corroded or
19 decayed as to be fit for nothing but to be destroyed.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I don't know whether it is
21 associated directly or not, but you mentioned,
22 General Wall, in evidence about looting and I wasn't
23 entirely sure: was this a rules of engagement issue for
24 us, not using lethal force on mere criminality, or was
25 it numbers?

1 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: It was both, actually, I think it
2 is fair to say. We were not in a position to --
3 clearly, within our rules of engagement, to threaten
4 life, to protect property and so that was clear. But
5 actually, you know, if -- we just didn't have enough
6 people to cover the ground.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. A general question, then, for me
8 to finish: although it is a hindsight question it does
9 look forward to lessons learned if we have to do
10 anything of the same kind again: was their actually,
11 given the broken state of Iraqi infrastructure and the
12 almost non-existent state of civil society outside the
13 Ba'ath Party institutions that had gone, was there
14 a timeline in reality that we could have planned for and
15 followed, within realistic expectations about available
16 resources, to meet what was needed in the south-east
17 even, let alone the whole of the country, in order to
18 prevent instability as eventually came through with the
19 different insurgencies? Was it actually going to be
20 possible and did we know whether it was or not?

21 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: You would have needed a large force
22 and you would have needed a very convincing plan that
23 would have needed to have been dreamt up some time
24 beforehand just to get the sheer material and
25 organisation in place. So it was always going to be

1 a very big ask.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: But if CentCom -- and the Americans, after
3 all, are hugely the major player in this -- had not been
4 invasion light rules, or at least even if invasion
5 light, then occupy heavy, it could have been doable?

6 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: May I interject here, because I just
7 don't think that anybody could have understood the
8 degree to which -- the degree of neglect that had
9 characterised the rule of Saddam Hussein and its effect
10 on virtually every institution except for the
11 Republican Guard.

12 Everywhere you looked it was not so much destruction
13 that was the issue, it was simply neglect. And you have
14 heard about the oil infrastructure. That was a classic
15 case.

16 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: I think the mood of the people,
17 particularly in the Shia south, was a key factor. This
18 was a deeply traumatised society. It had grown up under
19 a punitive sort of central government where Basra got
20 very little even though it generated quite a lot of
21 Iraq's wealth. And the whole culture was one of
22 "deliver unto me and I have no responsibility to deliver
23 unto myself" writ large. And that was not the fault of
24 the Basrawi people as individuals, it was the culture
25 they had lived in for the previous 35 years.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

2 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can I ask a question following on
3 from that? While it is understandable that it was not
4 possible to be aware of what you may find in terms of
5 the neglect and so on, but given the fact that there
6 really wasn't a plan, there was de-Ba'athification,
7 there was no major international involvement, no NGOs
8 concerned and the task which you faced was onerous, why
9 wasn't there enough flexibility in terms of keeping the
10 forces at the level they were, because you say it was
11 a very quick drawdown? So why was there no flexibility
12 even afterwards when there was some assessment made of
13 what the situation is?

14 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: I think while we were drawing down
15 the force, security was at an acceptable level and there
16 was still a lack of realisation of the gravity of the
17 situation that was a few months ahead of us.

18 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So you are saying the situation was
19 not as bad as it became later?

20 GENERAL SIR PETER WALL: No, it got much worse after the
21 force had come down to its steady state level. For
22 example, we had got there by about July and the
23 situation didn't deteriorate in security terms
24 significantly really until about October --
25 September/October.

1 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: By the time I took command, the
2 force had increased in size again.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Partly by accretions to the multinational --

4 LT GEN JONATHAN RILEY: Partly multinationally, but there
5 were additional British units that had been added back.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you both very much. We have been
7 pointing to the pieces of the jigsaw in slightly
8 a non-chronological order, but it has been a very
9 helpful session.

10 I'm grateful to all those who have given evidence
11 today and to those who have been attending the hearings.
12 We are going to start tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock
13 when Sir Jeremy Greenstock, appearing for the second
14 time but this time in his role as UK special
15 representative in Iraq from September 2003 until
16 March 2004. Then in the afternoon, more pieces of the
17 military jigsaw. We will be seeing
18 Lieutenant General William Rollo and
19 Lieutenant General John Cooper, who jointly will cover
20 their time in Basra as GOC commanding the MND South East
21 and later roles as the senior British military
22 representative in Iraq.

23 So tomorrow, Sir Jeremy in the morning, generals in
24 the afternoon. Thank you all very much.

25 (5.01 pm)

1 (The Inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am the following day)

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