

Tuesday, 2 February 2010

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2 (10.00 am)

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RT HON CLARE SHORT MP

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THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning and welcome to everyone, and

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welcome to our witness.

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The objectives of this session, we will be hearing

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from Clare Short, who was Secretary of State for

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International Development from 1997 until May 2003, when

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you resigned over the Iraq question. I think everyone

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in the room will be aware that Clare Short has written

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and spoken extensively on her views on Iraq, and today

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is an opportunity to hear those views within the process

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of this Inquiry and an opportunity for Clare Short to

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respond to the many comments made by others about DFID

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and, at times, by herself. We have already heard twice

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from Sir Suma Chakrabarti, and this afternoon we will be

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hearing from Hilary Benn, who was Secretary of State for

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International Development from 2003 to 2007.

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Now, I say two things at the beginning of every

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session: the first, that we recognise that witnesses are

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giving evidence based in part on their recollection of

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events and we cross-check what we hear against the

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papers.

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Second, I remind every witness that they will later

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be asked to sign a transcript of the evidence to the

1 effect that the evidence given is truthful, fair and
2 accurate.

3 With those preliminaries, I will turn straight away
4 to Sir Martin Gilbert to open the questions. Martin?

5 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In a letter which has just been
6 declassified about one minute ago, your private
7 secretary wrote to John Sawers at Downing Street on
8 15 March 2001:

9 "The International Development Secretary is
10 concerned that DFID was not invited to contribute to the
11 discussions that led to the formulation of the proposed
12 new policy framework on Iraq."

13 To what do you attribute this exclusion?

14 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, when DFID was set up in 1997,
15 there were old habits because the old ODA had been part
16 of the Foreign Office, so -- and the Foreign Office
17 really minded losing control of the budget and the
18 policy. So there were some old habits of just not
19 bothering with DFID and there was some of squashing it,
20 because people were annoyed, and in this instance, given
21 the subsequent developments and the deliberate exclusion
22 of DFID and a lot of others, I think, and myself,
23 I don't know whether that particular instance was the
24 old habits or a deliberate exclusion or a mixture of the
25 two.

1 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: When it came to the actual discussion
2 of the new Iraq policy framework, we asked Mr Blair on
3 Friday whether it had been discussed in Cabinet, and he
4 replied that it had not been discussed in Cabinet, but
5 he went on to tell us:

6 "The discussion we had in Cabinet was substantive
7 discussion."

8 Do you recall such a discussion and what was your
9 contribution to it at that time?

10 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Are you talking about at that time?

11 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Absolutely.

12 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: The first thing to say -- and I'm
13 not the only one saying it -- the Cabinet doesn't work
14 in the way, and didn't under the whole of the time I was
15 in government, in the way that, according to our
16 constitutional theory, it is supposed to work.

17 I mean, the meetings were very short. There were
18 never papers. There were little chats about things, but
19 it wasn't a decision-making body in any serious way, and
20 I don't remember at all Iraq coming to the Cabinet in
21 any way whatsoever at that time.

22 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So the phrase "substantive discussion"
23 is not as you recall?

24 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I do not think there was substantive
25 discussion, I am afraid, of anything at the Cabinet.

1 I think the Butler Report was right, it became a sofa
2 government, and if ever you raised an issue that you
3 wanted to bring to the Cabinet, Tony Blair would see you
4 beforehand and cut it off, saying, "We don't want those
5 things coming to the Cabinet", which he did to me
6 in July before we broke up for the summer, when the
7 Cabinet doesn't meet, when there was stuff in press
8 about Iraq and I said, "I really think we should have
9 a discussion about Iraq", and he said, "I do not want us
10 to because it might leak into the press". It was
11 leaking into the press anyway.

12 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: That was my next question: at what
13 point did you raise your concerns about Iraq with him,
14 and how did you express them? What were your concerns
15 at that time?

16 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I asked in July, because we were
17 coming to the break-up, if we could have a discussion on
18 Democratic Republic of Congo, I think Sudan and, for
19 personal reasons, Iraq, because Iraq had been in the
20 press, and he asked to see me before the next Cabinet
21 meeting and said, "I promised to talk to you about Iraq.
22 No decisions have been made, but I don't want it to come
23 to the Cabinet because it might leak and hype things
24 up."

25 Then there was no Cabinet all through the summer

1 break, which there isn't, you know, and Parliament --
2 THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry to interrupt. We are in 2002, are we?
3 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes. Then we went to Mozambique
4 together on the way to the meeting in Johannesburg of
5 ten years after Rio on the world conference on
6 sustainable development, and I can't remember whether
7 I asked to see him. Anyway, he saw me privately there
8 and said, "Don't worry, we are going through the UN",
9 and I said, "What are the military options? I really
10 think we should make progress on Palestine, get the
11 Palestinian state, transform the atmosphere in the
12 Middle East, get the Arab countries to help us with
13 Iraq. This would be a better way of doing things", and
14 he said, "On the military, I haven't had any
15 presentation. I will make sure that you are informed".
16 I think that's now factually not true.

17 I have a diary, if any of this you want -- it is not
18 a very fancy diary, but there are kind of
19 contemporaneous notes of some of these things I'm
20 saying.

21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Different to the notes in your book?

22 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, the notes in the book are taken
23 from the diary, but they don't include all of it.

24 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Papers to which we have had access show
25 that, as late as late 2002, you and your senior

1 officials were feeling frustrated by your continued
2 exclusion from other parts of the Whitehall planning
3 machine, particularly the Ministry of Defence.

4 How did you know that you and your department were
5 being excluded?

6 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, for example, from September
7 I personally, having been to a meeting in Geneva, where
8 most of the UN humanitarian agencies -- well, all of
9 them, are based, and we had a lunch and
10 Jacob Kellenberger was there, who was the Chairman of
11 the ICRC, a very fine, international agency, and we all
12 talked informally about Iraq and whether we should be
13 preparing, and whether, if you prepare, it makes war
14 more likely and all that.

15 He said, "I am absolutely preparing --"

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry, could you slow down?

17 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Sorry.

18 He said, "We are preparing completely. We are
19 preparing people and stocks", and going back from that,
20 I thought: we should prepare for all eventualities,
21 including war, but including the avoidance of war, and
22 not talk it up, so thus making more and more likely.

23 So -- I'm sorry, having said that, I have forgotten
24 what your question was. That was a preamble answer.

25 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How did you learn that you and the

1 department were being excluded?

2 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes. So following that, looking at
3 all risks, there is the risk of the use of chemical and
4 biological weapons. On this, I was seeing the
5 intelligence. Whitehall sources closed down what one
6 normally saw, but I had always seen the foreign policy
7 intelligence because of the job I was in, and I knew
8 that the intelligence agencies thought Saddam Hussein
9 didn't have nuclear, would if he could, but he was
10 nowhere near it, and there were probably laboratories
11 and people trying to have chemical and biological, but
12 it wasn't saying, "There is some new imminent threat".

13 So I was reading that, but if we were contemplating
14 war, there would be a risk of the possible use, and then
15 our job is to think about the Iraqi people. If it was
16 used, is there an antidote, could we do anything?

17 So we asked for a briefing and we normally got
18 briefings from defence intelligence like on the Sudan
19 war and whether either side could win and things like
20 that, regularly, and this just didn't come and didn't
21 come.

22 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So these exclusions were specifically
23 with regard to Iraq? You were being briefed on other
24 humanitarian issues around the world?

25 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Oh, yes. I mean, I had close

1 working relationships with a lot of the military over
2 Sierra Leone, Kosovo, Bosnia, East Timor and so on. No
3 problems. But suddenly, we couldn't get an answer, and
4 at that stage I didn't know why. Is it inefficiency?
5 What is the problem?

6 Then, also, if you are preparing for all
7 eventualities, and given the fragility of the situation
8 in central Iraq, all the sanitation and water,
9 electricity systems were poor, and the UN system was
10 reporting that, who were providing food for the people
11 of Iraq under Oil For Food -- we needed to talk about,
12 if there was going to be military action, what kind of
13 military action, what kind of targeting? Was there
14 a risk that sewage systems and water systems and
15 electricity systems would be destroyed, which I think
16 happened to a considerable extent in the first Gulf war.

17 So again, I was asking for a meeting about the
18 strategy and, again, we couldn't get it. So it started
19 to become clear there was some kind of block on
20 communications.

21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: What did you then do to break the
22 block?

23 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: It was also extended to the
24 intelligence agencies with whom we also had continuous
25 relationships. Of course, at the end of the Cold War,

1 they were desperate for new tasks and were shrinking and
2 they wanted to help us with Africa and used to come and
3 see me quite a lot, the various Cs, to say, "Please, can
4 we help?" So it was that kind of relationship, and
5 then, suddenly, I wasn't allowed to talk to them about
6 what was going on, what were the risks, and on that
7 I made a fuss, and David Manning, who was then the
8 foreign policy adviser in Number 10, in the end,
9 I think, having spoken, Tony Blair, said, yes, we could
10 talk to the intelligence agencies.

11 So by then it was clear that there was some kind of
12 block on communications. Normal communications were
13 being closed down.

14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Then after David Manning gave you this
15 assurance, did the situation change? Were you satisfied
16 with your access to the intelligence?

17 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, I had had a couple of meetings
18 with C and I still was seeing the paper intelligence.
19 I think Number 10 didn't know I saw that or I think that
20 would have stopped too.

21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: When did the Prime Minister himself
22 become aware and how did he react? Did you have any
23 direct contact with him to get greater access
24 particularly to the military planning?

25 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I had, as I said, the meeting with

1 him in July, when I asked for it to come to the Cabinet,
2 the discussion in Mozambique.

3 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Had they given you the access, these
4 discussions? Had they led to the access?

5 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: What tended to happen was, when one
6 made a big fuss, some unblocking happened. We got, in
7 the end, a paper on the risk of the use of chemical and
8 biological weapons, which said it was uncertain, if
9 there was a long stand-off round Baghdad, it might
10 happen. There wasn't really an antidote that we could
11 get anyway. That paper did eventually come. You have
12 probably seen it, and, of course, everything that has
13 happened since makes me know that there was deliberate
14 blockage and there were all sorts of private meetings,
15 and all the normal systems of Whitehall are that
16 meetings that might be relevant to your departmental
17 responsibilities would always be minuted and those
18 minutes would be circulated. Phone calls with other
19 ministers internationally, or President Bush would
20 normally be minuted in a letter and circulated, all
21 those things closed down. So the normal structures of
22 Whitehall communications start to close down.

23 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Raising your concerns at Cabinet was
24 not an option?

25 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I raised my concerns at Cabinet

1 repeatedly, but what we had at Cabinet were little
2 chats. They weren't decision-making meetings. So Tony
3 would say, "Well, Jack, you have been to see
4 Colin Powell", and that had all been in the press
5 anyway, "Why don't you tell us how the meeting went?"
6 So Jack would make a few jokes, as he does, and so on.

7 The first meeting of the Cabinet after the summer,
8 people did, obviously having read the press, sort of
9 said, "This is dangerous. What about the Palestinians?
10 Can't we do that first?" A number of people said
11 things. So people sort of got their worries off their
12 chest at that meeting, and Tony reassured, and "Don't
13 worry, nothing has been decided", type remarks.

14 Then, thereafter, the discussions at Cabinet were
15 little chats about what had been in the media that week.
16 There was never -- and I think this is a very serious
17 machinery of government question that is forming the
18 conclusions of what went wrong -- there was never
19 a meeting -- I think it should have been Defence and
20 Overseas Policy because they are all the Chiefs of the
21 Defence Staff and SIS and all the Permanent Secretaries
22 as well as the Secretaries of State to do with foreign
23 affairs. There was never a meeting that said: what's
24 the problem? What are we trying achieve? What are our
25 military/diplomatic options? We never had that coherent

1 discussion of what it is that the problem was and what
2 the government was trying to achieve and what our bottom
3 lines were. Never.

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: My last question relates to timing. By
5 the time, as we see from the documents -- by the time
6 that you and your officials were going given full access
7 to the military planning process, that was already well
8 advanced. Do you feel that you had enough time, once
9 you had become privy to the military planning, enough
10 time to make the type of dispositions that you needed to
11 make from DFID?

12 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I don't think anyone had enough
13 time. Don't forget, we none of us knew when it was
14 going to start. There was no imminent threat. There
15 was no reason why it had to be as quick as it was. So
16 we were good at, and still are, I'm sure, good at,
17 funding UN agencies -- I mean, people don't understand
18 this about DFID. We don't have thousands of people who
19 come over the hill to do humanitarian things, we fund
20 the international system, put in more expertise and
21 extra money.

22 If something is failing, we have a unit that gets
23 the feedback, and we could do that quite quickly and we
24 are very good at it. So we started to put money for
25 preparations into the international system, including

1 the ICRC, the Red Cross, the International Committee of
2 the Red Cross, and, of course, the UN had something like
3 1,000 Iraqis employed inside Iraq distributing the Oil
4 For Food, because something like 60 per cent of Iraqis
5 were dependent on that food. So that network was all
6 over the country.

7 So we could quite quickly put in place the
8 arrangements for emergency humanitarian responses. That
9 bit worked. I see Tim Cross said there wasn't
10 a humanitarian crisis. That was because this was
11 working. The ICRC were fixing up electricity and sewage
12 when it got damaged, because, otherwise, we would have
13 cholera, and the hospitals were being looted in Baghdad
14 and we were saying, to Boyce "Please get
15 Franks to protect the hospitals or protect the ICRC
16 suppliers."

17 So I simply want to say the humanitarian thing
18 worked because a lot of work was done by a lot of people
19 and we played our part in that.

20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: But in terms of the aftermath planning
21 and when you would be sending your own people --

22 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Absolutely, absolutely. On that, we
23 were then saying, immediately after the invasion, we are
24 going to, in legalities and so on, Geneva Convention
25 obligations of an occupying power, and the duty there is

1 to deal with humanitarian needs and keep order. So we
2 would expect the military, in the first instance, to
3 make sure people were fed and to keep order, and, like,
4 our military, the sort of -- the week they went, were
5 ordering food. It was all done on a wing and a prayer,
6 it was all incredible, and then, in terms of
7 reconstruction, we were saying -- and the Treasury were
8 saying, they did a working party -- I couldn't get any
9 extra money. So we were just into a new financial year
10 and the whole of my contingency reserve was 100 million,
11 and, you know, you get other emergencies in other parts
12 of world; there was Afghanistan, southern Africa, the
13 Horn, et cetera.

14 I kept saying, "We need more money if we are to do
15 more". No answer. Then the Treasury had a working
16 party and said, "We will need a UN lead after any
17 military phase, because then you can get the World Bank,
18 the IMF, other agencies will come in and we will get
19 money from others".

20 So we were arguing all this, and if you have looked
21 at the papers, it goes on and on and on across Whitehall
22 and it is not just my department, the Treasury
23 are saying it, the Foreign Office is saying it, "We've
24 got to get a UN lead so we can get full international
25 support and cooperation, so we can do the

1 reconstruction".

2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you very much. I think my
3 colleague Sir Roderic Lyne is going to move on to that
4 area.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Before him, I think Baroness Prashar would
6 like to ask one question.

7 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You said, when you went to
8 Mozambique with Mr Blair, he assured you that you would
9 be given some briefing about military options. When was
10 that? I didn't get the date.

11 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: It was September. I haven't got the
12 day in September in my mind.

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: September 2002?

14 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes.

15 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But there had been a meeting on
16 23 July 2002 where these options were discussed, and you
17 were not at that meeting?

18 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Absolutely. He told me in
19 Mozambique, and there's a note in my diary, "I haven't
20 had a presentation", because I was saying to him, "What
21 are the military options?" He said, "I haven't had
22 a presentation. I will come back to you. Don't worry".
23 Clearly, that was one of the many misleading things
24 he said.

25 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: After that September, were you given

1 a presentation about military options?

2 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: The military came to my office and
3 did a -- I remember -- I can't remember the name --
4 a big guy -- about the air targets and how there was
5 going to be very, very careful targeting and taking our
6 point about the fragility of the sewage, water,
7 electricity, a rather persuasive, impressive man. So we
8 had that, but no presentation of all the military
9 options, no, but that to reassure us on the worry about
10 the possibility of destroying the infrastructure and
11 leaving Iraq in an unholy mess which happened in another
12 way anyway.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to follow up on that trip to
14 Mozambique, I think I'm right that this is the one that
15 Alastair Campbell records discussing with Tony Blair,
16 the dossier, the idea of the production of a dossier.
17 Were you aware of any of these discussions about how to
18 present policy at that time?

19 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: On the dossier, I'm not sure
20 I recall the dates, I wasn't part -- and the discussion
21 I had with Tony Blair in Mozambique, apart from the
22 things we did in Mozambique, was just the two of us,
23 Alastair Campbell wasn't present.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But you didn't discuss that issue
25 with him then?

1 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No. There was a note that went
2 around Whitehall about the drawing up of the dossier,
3 and I remember my private secretary asking me if
4 I wanted to engage and I said no. There are only so
5 many battles that you can fight. You might think that
6 I don't give up on anything, but I decided to stay out
7 of that one.

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I would like to go back into the
9 machinery of government that you mentioned. You said
10 there wasn't substantive discussion in Cabinet, but the
11 argument we have heard from Mr Blair, from
12 Jonathan Powell, from Alastair Campbell, among other
13 witnesses, is essentially that it didn't matter if the
14 official Cabinet Committee didn't meet or if, indeed,
15 committees were ad hoc with a small "a" and a small "h",
16 but that what mattered was that policy on Iraq was being
17 discussed intensively with the relevant people, with the
18 appropriate information, with challenge, with risk
19 assessment, with diversity of views.

20 Was that the impression you had?

21 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Absolutely not. I believe in the
22 old-fashioned Civil Service way of running things and
23 I was a private secretary years ago in the Home Office
24 when Sir John Chilcot was a young assistant secretary.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You did better than him.

1 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, who knows? But I think that
2 if -- ministers should be in charge of their department,
3 but all voices should come to the table, everything
4 should be challenged and looked at. No one gets
5 everything right. You improve things by that kind of
6 discussion, and my department became famous as an
7 effective organisation and I think it was because we did
8 things in that kind of way.

9 The government doesn't, and didn't, work like that.
10 It is partly the 24-hour news thing. So everything is
11 for the media. Power is pulled into Number 10.
12 Everything is announced to the media. After the
13 guillotines came in, the House of Commons is now
14 a rubber stamp, it doesn't scrutinise, things are
15 guillotined. It doesn't even finish scrutinising bills
16 before they go off to the Lords, who do a better job
17 than the Commons.

18 I think the machinery of government in Britain now
19 is unsafe, and it leads to endless litigation, before
20 bills are properly -- not thought through policy. That's
21 a general critique.

22 In the case of Iraq, there was secretiveness and
23 deception on top of that. So I heard Tony Blair talking
24 when he gave evidence to you about an ad hoc committee
25 with a small "a" and small "h". I simply don't accept

1 that. There were no minutes. It is just not a proper
2 way to proceed.

3 If you are discussing things that other departments
4 are supposed to know about and are supposed to be
5 preparing for, and they are completely excluded from the
6 discussion and don't know what the government is
7 planning, I think this is a chaotic way of doing things.

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You don't think that they were really
9 looking at a range of options and at all the possible
10 risks in this course.

11 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I presume you are looking at the
12 leaked documents. The Downing Street memo now tells it
13 all; that Blair had given his word that he was in favour
14 of regime change and would be with Bush.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: We will come back to that, but you could
16 see who the people were around the Prime Minister
17 advising him, although, clearly, you weren't one of
18 them. But wasn't this a group that was pretty expert
19 and diverse? Did it have expertise in the Middle East?

20 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, one, I didn't know they were
21 meeting, two, it is an in-group. That's the way
22 Number 10 worked. You keep Tony's favour and Alistair
23 doesn't brief against you, if you do whatever they want,
24 and challenge is the opposite.

25 Indeed, I have a friend who was doing research at

1 the time, and therefore interviewing people at
2 Number 10, and a message came back to me that
3 I shouldn't keep challenging in the Cabinet. I was
4 making myself unpopular.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So you didn't see the options paper
6 of March 2003, which is now, of course, out on the
7 Internet, but you didn't see that at the time?

8 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: March 2003?

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Sorry, March 2002. In March 2002, before
10 the Prime Minister had his Chequers briefing before
11 Crawford, the Cabinet Office circulated something called
12 the options paper. I think they have described it to us
13 as a background paper, not a paper for decision.

14 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, we didn't see that at all.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You didn't see that at all.

16 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, no, no.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You are clear about that?

18 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes, I have seen it since.

19 Could I just say another thing? The Foreign Office,
20 as you will know, had some famous Arabists, who spoke
21 Arabic, who had served in the Arab world. I think they
22 were kept completely marginalised, not allowed to give
23 their advice. They were seen as dangerous because they
24 might not agree.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Okay. Why do you think you were kept out

1 of the policy planning process? Was it because it
2 didn't concern your department or was it because
3 Number 10 didn't trust you?

4 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: You have to ask them, in a way.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: We have asked.

6 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: It did concern --

7 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You probably saw the answer you had from
8 Alastair Campbell.

9 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes, indeed. He and I never got on.
10 I didn't obey him, and, therefore, he would brief
11 against you and that's how the government worked.

12 Sorry, repeat the question.

13 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I was asking: was the argument that it
14 just didn't concern your department, this planning
15 on Iraq, or was it personal to you?

16 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I don't know, but, one, it did
17 concern the department and both the humanitarian and the
18 reconstruction and we were the lead department on the
19 World Bank, for example, and had enormous relationships
20 with the UN and all the rest of it.

21 On me, I believed in what the stated policy was,
22 I believed that the sanctions were causing so much
23 suffering in Iraq that we couldn't just go on. I never
24 heard Robin put his view, but I understand -- and that's
25 another example that the Cabinet discussions weren't

1 very serious. I understand his view was that
2 containment could go on. That wasn't my view. Because
3 of the suffering of -- you know, the Unicef figures on
4 child suffering and so on were truly awful.

5 So I believed in coming back to Iraq, getting the
6 weapons inspectors back in, keeping the UN together, if
7 necessary using military action to get Saddam Hussein.
8 If need be, I thought we should look at the possibility
9 of getting him to the International Court as we had done
10 with Milosevic. So why exclude me when I believed in
11 what they said the policy was?

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I would like to come back to that last
13 point in a minute, but just pursuing the machinery of
14 government just one more step first, I mean, what we
15 have heard from Mr Blair, Mr Powell, Mr Campbell, is
16 that the Iraq decisions were effectively very much
17 a personal judgment that the Prime Minister of the day
18 made, that this was based on the very strong
19 convictions, which, indeed, he described to us in his
20 evidence on Friday, but they have argued that it was his
21 responsibility as a leader, as Prime Minister, to take
22 the tough decisions and that these were then endorsed by
23 the Cabinet.

24 You said it wasn't substantive discussion, Mr Blair
25 said it was. It is a Cabinet of which you were

1 a member. Then these decisions were endorsed by the
2 House of Commons, of which you are still a member. Now,
3 if you and other Cabinet ministers weren't satisfied
4 with the information you were getting, you weren't
5 satisfied with the level of debate or the decisions,
6 surely it was up to all of you to do something about it?

7 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: The first thing to say is that
8 I noticed Tony Blair in his evidence to you, kept saying
9 "I had to decide, I had to decide", and, indeed, that's
10 how he behaved, but that is not meant to be our system
11 of government. It is meant to be a Cabinet system,
12 because, of course, if you had a presidential system,
13 you would put better checks into the legislature.

14 So we were getting -- his view that he decided, him
15 and his mates around him, the ones that he could trust
16 to do whatever it was he decided, and then the closing
17 down of normal communications and then this sort of drip
18 feed of little chats to the Cabinet.

19 Now, that's a machinery of government question and
20 there is a democratic question, but, also, there is
21 a competence of decision-making question, because
22 I think, if you do things like that, and they are not
23 challenged and they are not thought through, errors are
24 made, and I think we have seen the errors.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But the Cabinet endorsed this.

1 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, the last meeting was the
2 meeting with the Attorney General, which I presume you
3 are going to come on to.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: In just a minute, yes.

5 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: It was hardly an endorsement. By
6 then, everything was very, very fraught, enormous
7 pressures and it kind of -- I think he misled the
8 Cabinet. He certainly misled me, but people let it
9 through.

10 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Sorry, who misled the Cabinet?

11 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: The Attorney General. I think now
12 we know everything we know about his doubts and his
13 changes of opinion and what the Foreign Office legal
14 advisers were saying and that he had got this private
15 side deal that Tony Blair said there was a material
16 breach when Blix was saying he needed more time.
17 I think for the Attorney General to come and say there
18 is an unequivocal legal authority to go to war was
19 misleading, and I must say, I never saw myself as
20 a traditionalist, but I was stunned by it, because of
21 what was in the media about the view of international
22 lawyers, but I thought, "This is the Attorney General
23 coming just in the teeth of war to the Cabinet. It must
24 be right", and I think he was misleading us.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Have you had a chance to read the

1 evidence given by the Attorney General, the then
2 Attorney General, by Sir Michael Wood, and also, indeed,
3 Mr Blair's evidence on the legal position, all of which
4 was given last week? That's a lot of transcript.

5 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I have read the Attorney General's.
6 I have read Jeremy --

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Greenstock?

8 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes, a man I have great regard for.
9 So I have read all that carefully and I have listened to
10 most of the Prime Minister on the radio.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: There was in the Prime Minister's
12 evidence --

13 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: The former Prime Minister, sorry.

14 SIR RODERIC LYNE: In Mr Blair's evidence there was
15 a summary, an encapsulation of the legal position, which
16 he endorsed as being --

17 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: You made a rather competent summary,
18 if I remember rightly.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I simply did a Civil Service summary of
20 what we had heard in the previous ten hours. You have
21 seen that?

22 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I have.

23 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Okay. In your book you wrote about
24 Lord Goldsmith's final advice which you have just
25 referred to and you said there:

1 "It is difficult not to believe he was leant on."

2 Now, Lord Goldsmith has denied that he acted under
3 pressure. He said he reached a purely legal decision in
4 his evidence, and Mr Blair said that he could not recall
5 any specific discussions that he had had with
6 Lord Goldsmith at this critical stage and he said that
7 Lord Goldsmith had given legal advice and that this was:

8 "... done in a way which we were satisfied was
9 correct and right."

10 Now, do you accept what Lord Goldsmith and Mr Blair
11 have said about this?

12 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I am afraid I don't. I noticed that
13 Lord Goldsmith said he was excluded from lots of
14 meetings. That is a form of pressure. Exclusion is
15 a form of pressure. Then, that he was -- it was
16 suggested to him that he go to the United States to get
17 advice about the legal position. Now we have got the
18 Bush administration, with very low respect for
19 international law. It seems the most extraordinary
20 place in the world to go and get advice about
21 international law.

22 To talk to Jeremy Greenstock, who -- I'm surprised
23 by his advice. I think to interpret 1441 to say you
24 have got to come back to the Security Council for an
25 assessment of whether Saddam Hussein is complying, but

1 there shouldn't be a decision in the Security Council,
2 is extraordinarily Jesuitical. I have never understood
3 it before, and I think that's nonsense, and it wasn't
4 the understanding of the French and so on, because I saw
5 the French Ambassador later.

6 So I think all that was leaning on, sending him to
7 America, excluding him and then including him, and
8 I noticed the chief legal adviser in the Foreign Office
9 said in his evidence that he had sent something and
10 Number 10 wrote, "Why is this in writing?"

11 I think that speaks volumes about the way they were
12 closing down normal communication systems in Whitehall.

13 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But there was a critical week before the
14 conflict started on 20 March. It was on 13 March that
15 Lord Goldsmith came into his office and told his
16 officials that, on balance, he had come to the view that
17 the better view was that the revival argument could be
18 revived without a further determination by the Security
19 Council.

20 I suppose the question is: in the days before
21 13 March, specifically, was he subjected to pressure?
22 Was this a decision not reached purely on legal grounds?

23 Now, he has said not, Mr Blair effectively has said
24 not. Do you have any evidence that, in that period,
25 pressures were applied of a non-legal kind to the

1 Attorney General? He had legal discussions with the
2 Americans in February, but I'm talking about the period
3 between 7 March, when he gave his formal advice, and
4 13 March, when he had come to this clear, on balance
5 conclusion.

6 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, I do not have any evidence, but
7 I think him changing his mind three times in a couple of
8 weeks, and then even -- in order to say unequivocally
9 there was legal authority, to require Tony Blair to
10 secretly sign a document saying that Iraq was in
11 material breach, and not to report any of that to the
12 Cabinet, is so extraordinary -- and by the way, I see
13 that both Tony Blair and he said the Cabinet were given
14 the chance to ask questions. That is untrue.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: That is really my next question, because
16 in March 2005, after you left office, you wrote to
17 Lord Goldsmith stating that in the Cabinet meeting of
18 17 March, you had attempted to initiate a discussion but
19 that this was not allowed.

20 What was it that you were trying to discuss in the
21 Cabinet on 17 March, and why were you not able to do so?

22 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I had asked for that special meeting
23 with the Attorney General and it had been readily agreed
24 that it would take place. That was the first time he
25 came to the Cabinet that I'm aware of. He sat in

1 Robin Cook's seat because Robin didn't come to that
2 meeting. Again, I don't know why he didn't come and
3 argue, but he didn't. There was a piece of paper round
4 the table. We normally didn't have any papers, apart
5 from the agenda. It was the PQ answer, which we didn't
6 know was a PQ answer then, and he started reading it
7 out, so everyone said "We can read", you know,
8 we didn't -- and then -- so he -- everyone said, "That's
9 it". I said, "That's extraordinary. Why is it so late?
10 Did you change your mind?" and they all said, "Clare!"

11 Everything was very fraught by then and they didn't
12 want me arguing, and I was kind of jeered at to be
13 quiet. That's what happened.

14 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So you went quiet?

15 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: If he won't answer and the
16 Prime Minister is saying, "Be quiet", and that's it, no
17 discussion, there is only so much you can do, and on
18 this, because I see the Prime Minister -- the Attorney,
19 the then Attorney, to be fair to him, says he was ready
20 to answer questions but none were put.

21 I did ask him later, because there was then the
22 morning War Cabinet, or whatever you call it, that he
23 did come to and he gave all sorts of later legal advice,
24 and I asked him privately, "How come it was so late?"
25 and he said, "Oh, it takes me a long time to make my

1 mind up".

2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: The argument on this Cabinet meeting we
3 have heard --

4 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I would like to ask you to ask for
5 the books -- you know the Cabinet secretary keeps
6 a manuscript note and there is another private secretary
7 that keeps a manuscript note on this. I think you
8 should check the record.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: We note that.

10 The argument has been made that the Attorney General
11 is a senior legal officer of the government. When he
12 actually reaches a decision on this, there is no point
13 in the Cabinet debating it because he has come to the
14 firm legal view on this, and, therefore, there wasn't
15 actually anything at that point to discuss. You just
16 have to accept his authority, as a law officer, on this
17 question, but you don't agree with that?

18 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, I did. I was stunned by his
19 advice, but, as I have said, I thought, in the teeth of
20 war, the Attorney General of the United Kingdom coming
21 to the Cabinet to give legal advice, this is a very
22 serious, monumental thing, and that's his advice, and
23 I'm very surprised, but we must accept it. That was my
24 view.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You have now had the benefit of seeing

1 the earlier advice he had given, his formal advice to
2 the Prime Minister of 7 March, which is a much fuller
3 document looking at more than one option.

4 Do you think it would have actually changed the
5 Cabinet's decision if they had been given a chance to
6 see that advice of 7 March?

7 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I think people would have thought it
8 was much more equivocal and risky and wanted to be more
9 sure and -- and less certain -- and the other thing --
10 I didn't know, until Elizabeth Wilmshurst resigned and
11 it was in the press, that both the Foreign Office legal
12 advisers had said there was no legal authority.

13 I think we should have been told that, and I also
14 think -- because the side documents -- because you can
15 tell he was uncertain. He made Blair write and sign
16 a document saying Saddam Hussein was not cooperating
17 under the terms of 1441 and was in material breach.

18 When Blix was saying -- do you remember he got rid
19 of the ballistic missiles and he said, "These are not
20 matchsticks", or toothpicks, or something, do you
21 remember? And he was asking for more time. So at the
22 time when Blix was asking for more time, the
23 Prime Minister secretly signed to say there was no
24 cooperation and Blix was saying I'm getting some
25 cooperation. So -- I mean, this is disgraceful.

1 SIR RODERIC LYNE: That was because Resolution 1441 had
2 required a determination that Iraq was in further
3 material breach.

4 The argument which was made by the Foreign Office
5 legal advisers, and still is made by Sir Michael Wood,
6 and had been made by Lord Goldsmith until 11 February,
7 was that only the Security Council could give that
8 determination, but Lord Goldsmith subsequently came to
9 the view, the better view, as he called it, that this
10 determination did not have to be given by the Security
11 Council but it still had to be given by somebody.

12 So wasn't he then correct in going to the
13 Prime Minister for that determination, so that, as it
14 hadn't been given by the Security Council, it had been
15 given by a member state of the United Nations?

16 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: One, I don't accept that 1441 can
17 mean you have to come back to the Security Council for
18 an assessment but not a decision. I just think that's
19 a piece of nonsense, even though Jeremy Greenstock
20 argues it and I respect him enormously. I still --
21 I think that is unbelievable.

22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: There are different views on that.

23 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I know, but I'm just saying that.

24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: That's your view.

25 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: But secondly -- and it was the view

1 of many other countries and other lawyers, of course.
2 I think the very fact the French asked for a different
3 word and didn't get it doesn't mean that the opposite
4 holds.

5 But secondly, if the Attorney General is coming to
6 us and saying, "This is -- this complex way in which I'm
7 interpreting 1441 and therefore the Security Council
8 can't decide whatever Blix is saying, therefore I have
9 asked the Prime Minister to give a written assurance",
10 I think we should have been told that.

11 That was all kept from us and we were just given the
12 PQ answer that said: unequivocal legal authority, no
13 questions asked, no doubt. I think that's misleading.

14 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Can I finally move on to the question
15 that you did refer to earlier that I said we would come
16 back to? In his evidence on Friday Mr Blair gave the
17 view that -- and I'm going to quote here:

18 "... if we had left Saddam there ... with the intent
19 to develop these weapons and the know-how and the
20 concealment programme, and the sanctions had gone ...
21 today we would be facing a situation where Iraq was
22 competing with Iran, competing on both nuclear weapons
23 capability and competing as well in support of terrorist
24 groups."

25 I have left a few words out in the middle of those

1 quotations where they simply interrupt the flow, but you
2 can see the full quotation in the transcript. Now,
3 that's what Mr Blair I think called his 2010 question.

4 Was it a question that we actually either had to
5 take military action to topple Saddam in order to remove
6 this threat, or, if we didn't do so, Iraq was going to
7 become both a nuclear and a terrorist threat as Mr Blair
8 suggested in his 2010 question.

9 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, I think that's -- you know,
10 historically inaccurate. For example -- well, first of
11 all, there was what the stated policy was supposed to
12 be, which was: we can't leave Saddam Hussein there, not
13 in compliance with the UN, and sanctions forever, and
14 they are eroding, therefore, we need to take action, the
15 argument that I agree with. But there was no evidence
16 of any kind of an escalation of threat. So there was no
17 hurry. I mean, that's one of the kind of untruths, the
18 exaggeration of the risk of the WMD.

19 So get the inspectors back in, get disarmament and
20 compliance. If you get that, the logic is release
21 sanctions, open up the country. Now, going on alongside
22 that, and I'm sure that's in the public domain, were
23 initiatives from the Saudis and the Jordanians about
24 possibly getting Saddam Hussein to go into exile, which
25 would have been an attractive option, it seems to me.

1 The intelligence was that there was no nuclear and he
2 didn't have the means, but, if he could have done it, he
3 would. So there was no immediate threat there, and the
4 evidence on the chemical and biological was people
5 thought there were laboratories and people working.
6 There were doubts even if it was weaponised.

7 So surely, if we had gone more calmly and slowly and
8 got -- I would have liked Saddam Hussein to be sent to
9 the International Court for crimes against humanity and
10 crimes against peace as we got Milosevic. I remember
11 Anne Clwyd bringing that up in the House of Commons and
12 Tony Blair saying he was looking at it, but it was never
13 seriously looked at.

14 So I'm saying we could have gone more slowly and
15 carefully and not had a totally destabilised and angry
16 Iraq into which came Al-Qaeda that wasn't there before,
17 and that would have been safer for the world, and that
18 Tony Blair's account of the need to act urgently
19 somehow, because of September 11, I think does not stack
20 up to any scrutiny whatsoever.

21 We have made Iraq more dangerous as well as causing
22 enormous suffering and diminishing our reputation.

23 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So you think there were alternative ways,
24 other than toppling Saddam Hussein, of preventing him
25 from becoming a more serious threat?

1 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: As I have said, Saudi Arabia and
2 Jordan were talking about getting him into exile. There
3 was the possibility of the International Criminal Court.
4 He wasn't popular in his country. There is an argument
5 about very strong sanctions that you actually lock
6 countries in, and it is better to open them up, because
7 then, as with Serbia, that's the way we got -- in the
8 end, the people of Serbia sent Milosevic to the
9 International Criminal Court. That was all another
10 option.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But what about the argument that Saddam
12 would have become a supporter of international
13 terrorism?

14 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Firstly, the American people were
15 misled by the suggestion that Al-Qaeda had links to
16 Saddam Hussein. Everybody knows that is untrue, that he
17 had absolutely no links, no sympathy. Al-Qaeda were
18 nowhere near Iraq until after the invasion and the
19 disorder that came from that.

20 So there is no doubt that, by invading in this
21 ill-prepared, rushed way, not only did we cause enormous
22 suffering and loss of life, we made Iraq more dangerous
23 and unstable and spread Al-Qaeda's presence in the
24 Middle East. So I am afraid --

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Was Saddam a supporter of international

1 terrorism?

2 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I believe -- I remember this back
3 from my advice period -- they used to send people to get
4 students here who were not sympathetic to the regime.
5 There was that kind of activity.

6 That is not the same -- in no way, shape or form did
7 he have any links or sympathy with Al-Qaeda-type ideas.

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You have made several references now to
9 Kosovo and Serbia and so on. You strongly supported the
10 action taken in Kosovo where we also did not have the
11 endorsement of the Security Council, and which is an
12 action which Mr Blair, in his Texas speech, and
13 subsequently, to a degree, indeed, in his evidence on
14 Friday, has held up as a positive example of regime
15 change.

16 Why was it right to use force against Milosevic, one
17 of the semi-fascist dictators, as Mr Blair called them,
18 but not against Saddam Hussein, who, arguably, was
19 a more dangerous semi-fascist dictator?

20 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: In international law, although this
21 is an evolving area, there is agreement amongst most
22 people, including Kofi Annan, who said it publicly, that
23 military action to prevent a humanitarian emergency is
24 permissible, and I remember the strange precedent they
25 used to give, Tanzania's invasion of Uganda, which

1 seemed such a strange one, but that was all in the
2 argument at the time, and Kofi Annan said, "When
3 I became Secretary General of the UN, I didn't do it
4 just to protect the sovereignty of states, but also to
5 protect the human rights of people". So there was
6 a much, much bigger consensus.

7 I mean, my own view on Serbia's expansion and all
8 the ethnic cleansing is that we should have acted
9 earlier to prevent it, and we could have done that, and
10 we had a very weak UN peacekeeping thing that just took
11 in supplies, and I think it could have protected
12 Sarajevo and stopped the attacks myself. So it was
13 last-minute, it was universally agreed. The refugees
14 were pouring over the border. That's where I first --
15 or they were stuck at the border. That's when I first
16 met Tim Cross.

17 So it was a different case, and one has to look at
18 the -- of course, there are lots of nasty regimes in the
19 world, some of which are our friends, if you come to the
20 Middle East. But you have to go case by case and you
21 have to look at what your objective is and what is best
22 for the people of that country and the world and how you
23 can best act, and you need to do this in a considered
24 way.

25 What we did in Iraq was very dangerous,

1 ill-considered and has made Iraq more dangerous and
2 destroyed lots of property and destroyed lots of
3 people's lives.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But when Mr Blair in a policy speech over
5 a year before you resigned -- he said this in his speech
6 in Texas:

7 "If necessary, the action should be military ..."

8 He is not just talking about Iraq here:

9 "... the action should be military, and, again, if
10 necessary and justified, it should involve regime
11 change."

12 He went on to say:

13 "I have been involved, as British Prime Minister, in
14 three conflicts involving regime change: Milosevic; the
15 Taliban; and Sierra Leone."

16 Now, that's a statement by the Prime Minister of
17 policy.

18 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Sierra Leone was a civil war, it's
19 not regime change. If that's what he said, he wasn't
20 right about --

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: What did you, as a Cabinet member, feel?

22 Was this the government's policy now?

23 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, he made the speech. I thought
24 it was quite a good speech. There is this doctrine or
25 proposal in the international system of the idea of the

1 responsibility to protect, that where you have got
2 a government that either can't or won't protect its
3 people, the responsibility should transfer to the
4 international community. This is to redefine the idea
5 of sovereignty, the absolute sovereignty of individual
6 states.

7 Then there was a very good report by a Canadian
8 commission that spells it all out beautifully, but then,
9 of course, the international community should
10 intervene -- so it is not immediately military action --
11 to do whatever they can to bring relief to the people,
12 but military action would be the last option. It should
13 be considered according to the just war theory, you
14 know, proportionate, is there any other way, and only be
15 done if you can put things right afterwards.

16 Now, I agree with that. We won't get it now.
17 Because of Iraq, people don't have the trust in the
18 international system, but that would have been a good
19 way of dealing with things like Zimbabwe, if we could
20 have moved the world there, but the mess we made of Iraq
21 means there is no trust, especially in developing
22 countries, for the Security Council members to behave in
23 a fair way in such matters.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Usha, do you want to --

25 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.

1 I want to go back on the way legal advice was
2 handled in Cabinet, because, after that, you wrote to
3 the Attorney General complaining about the breach of the
4 Ministerial Code, and I want to read the relevant
5 paragraph in the Ministerial Code to check that's what
6 you were referring to. It says:

7 "When advice from the law officers is included in
8 correspondence between ministers or in papers for the
9 Cabinet or ministerial committees, the conclusions may,
10 if necessary, be summarised, but if this is done, the
11 complete text of the advice should be attached."

12 So you are suggesting all you had was the summary,
13 that the actual --

14 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: All we had was the Parliamentary
15 answer. So --

16 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So you didn't have any attachment to
17 it?

18 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Nothing whatsoever, and the
19 Ministerial Code says that any form of legal advice
20 should be circulated, and it wasn't.

21 Now, of course, it is complex, because he was
22 changing his opinion so quickly.

23 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Then you wrote to the
24 Attorney General, but both he and Lord Turnbull said
25 that this wasn't a breach of the Ministerial Code, and

1 if I remember rightly, you then submitted the same
2 letter to the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

3 Now, was this matter resolved, or did you let it
4 drop?

5 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, the trouble with the
6 Ministerial Code -- because, also, you're not -- under
7 the Ministerial Code, you are not supposed to mislead
8 Parliament, and, if you do, you are supposed to correct
9 the misleading, and there was a lot of misleading in
10 Parliament, too, by the Prime Minister of the day, but
11 of course, the way to enforce the Ministerial Code is
12 the Prime Minister, so what can you do?

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: No, but this is why you did send it
14 to the Committee on Standards in Public Life. Did you
15 get a response from them?

16 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I don't remember -- I joined with
17 some barristers in making a complaint to the Bar Council
18 that, acting as a barrister, he had breached the
19 principles of giving proper advice, and they took legal
20 advice and said, when he gave us his advice, he was
21 acting as a minister, not as a barrister. So,
22 therefore, they had got themselves out of it,
23 understandably. So that was the -- and I think the
24 complaint --

25 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I think you did write to

1 Alistair Graham. That's what I remember.

2 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I'm sorry, I don't recall. I would

3 have to look it up.

4 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But you didn't pursue that?

5 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I pursued it, I thought, as far as

6 I could go, and got rebuffed, and, as I say, the

7 Ministerial -- I think it is another machinery of

8 government question. I think the Ministerial Code is

9 unsafe because the enforcement mechanism is the

10 Prime Minister, and if he is in on the tricks, then you

11 have got no way of holding anyone to the

12 Ministerial Code.

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But at any stage, you were not given

14 a full picture, all you saw was a summary --

15 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: It was not even a summary.

16 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: -- or the Parliamentary --

17 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: The Parliamentary answer that said

18 unequivocally, no doubt, no question, there is authority

19 for military action, which I, at the time, thought "This

20 must be it". It was stunning, but -- and when I found

21 out what went into it, I think we were misled, and

22 I really think we should have been told the views of the

23 Foreign Office legal advisers as well.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: I think we might take a break now and come

25 back in ten minutes or so. Thank you.

1 (10.52 am)

2 (Short break)

3 (11.03 am)

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, let's resume and Baroness Prashar will
5 take up the questions.

6 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you. We are now slightly
7 going to shift gear and I want to look at DFID's own
8 planning in late 2002/2003. Now, from September 2002,
9 DFID started discrete planning -- am I right -- and you
10 were determined to avoid the perception that DFID was
11 planning for war? Is that right?

12 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Exactly right.

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So how did you manage the tension of
14 getting your department to plan as thoroughly as
15 possible for the consequences of military action that
16 you didn't want to happen? I mean, you were avoiding
17 that, but you had to plan. How did you manage or deal
18 with that?

19 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I appreciate the question, and, of
20 course, because we didn't talk it up, there are a lot of
21 people who like to claim that we didn't prepare, but it
22 was Jacob Kellenberger who really clarified it for me.

23 They were already preparing, but I thought, "No, the
24 right thing is to prepare for all eventualities. We
25 could have a success. We could have Blix succeeding and

1 sanctions being lifted, and whole international -- so we
2 should prepare for all eventualities".

3 That includes the possibility of military action,
4 that includes the possibility ... so that's very clear
5 and not difficult, and then the only other question
6 is -- because everyone keeps saying, "Are you planning?
7 Are you planning?" as they are trying to make war
8 inevitable, and I kept saying, "We are planning for all
9 eventualities".

10 So the public perception -- certainly the official
11 opposition tried to make the argument that because I had
12 doubts about the war, we weren't planning, but it is
13 just not true.

14 By the way, I know you have got so many documents
15 and so much publication. Because this myth is about,
16 I would like to ask you to consider publishing just the
17 record of the humanitarian work. It is all there.
18 I have been in DFID reading through it, and for
19 academics and so on they would be able to see exactly
20 what did happen.

21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: That's fine, but you said that -- if
22 you were preparing for all your eventualities, what did
23 you instruct your department to do? What were the
24 eventualities, apart from the humanitarian crisis? What
25 were the other scenarios that you were planning for,

1 that you instructed your department to plan for?
2 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: We went -- the possibility of
3 success and the opening-up of Iraq, which was the nicest
4 thing to plan for, because then you would get the
5 World Bank and everyone would come in and dah-de-dah.
6 Military action authorised by the UN, that's much
7 easier, because you would get total international
8 cooperation, you would get troops from all sorts of
9 countries, you would get all the international players
10 supporting.

11 The worst case scenario is military action without
12 UN authorisation, because we are on our own then, and
13 for the aftermath you have got the difficulty of getting
14 other players in.

15 There was another paper -- I don't think it was
16 ours -- that had the scenario of catastrophic success.
17 What happened actually. Very rapid military success and
18 then breaking into ethnic conflict. So that was
19 foreseen as a risk, and on that, I have to say it is for
20 the military, under their Geneva Convention
21 obligations -- this is the American and our own
22 military -- they should be keeping order.

23 You can't do any reconstruction, and it is very
24 difficult to do humanitarian relief, when you have got
25 chaos and looting and violence. It seems to me they

1 didn't prepare for their Geneva Convention obligations
2 to keep order and provide basic humanitarianism and that
3 was a military failure. I think it is a lesson learned
4 thing. I see the military keeps saying they didn't have
5 this and that. Well, then they should have said to
6 Blair, "We are not ready", because there was no
7 emergency, we could have taken longer.

8 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So what you are really saying to me
9 is that, in late 2002, you had instructed your
10 department to plan for all different scenarios?

11 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Absolutely.

12 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: They were clear about that
13 instruction?

14 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Absolutely, and if you publish the
15 files, which I would ask you to do, that will be clear
16 to everybody.

17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I think you were frequently being
18 challenged that you instructed your department not to
19 engage enthusiastically in cross-Whitehall planning for
20 Iraq, and you have, of course, repeatedly denied this
21 charge on public record. I think it would be helpful to
22 hear what your instructions were to your staff and --
23 whether you -- that you did instruct -- or did you or
24 did you not instruct them not to engage enthusiastically
25 in cross-Whitehall --

1 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: The situation is, as you have just
2 questioned me, that we got down to planning against all
3 eventualities within the difficult atmosphere we had in
4 Whitehall about communications that we have already
5 discussed.

6 There was, though, a moment of shock when
7 Suma Chakrabarti, whom you have met, who was then my
8 Permanent Secretary, and Nicola Brewer, who was then
9 with DFID and is now our Ambassador to South Africa,
10 said there was a very strong rumour that -- the Attorney
11 General saying there wasn't legal authority for war, and
12 he was thinking of resigning, and the military were
13 worried that they might be making soldiers subject to
14 the risk of the International Criminal Court, which, of
15 course, was a new instrument, and I thought, "Good
16 heavens! Am I putting my civil servants at risk by
17 asking them to prepare for the consequences of
18 military action?"

19 So that became a worry, and I think, in the end,
20 Andrew Turnbull asked the Attorney for a view on that.
21 So I think some of the doubt might be around the worries
22 over that -- which was only ever a rumour, we never saw
23 anything in writing, and then I absolutely clarified,
24 even if there was an illegal military action, a war of
25 aggression, it is still right to prepare humanitarian

1 relief. It is always right to prepare humanitarian
2 relief.

3 So that was clear and we had to get on with that,
4 and the truth is, on reconstruction, you go through --
5 there will be a military invasion, the Geneva Convention
6 will apply and so on, the military will be in the lead
7 and we need another UN Resolution -- presumably we are
8 going to come on to this.

9 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: We will come on to that.

10 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, I know, but in terms of my
11 protection for my civil servants, that's clear now.
12 I was thrown into a tizz by the thought I might be
13 asking them to do illegal things, and then it is clear we
14 should prepare for humanitarian, even if this is an
15 illegal war, and any reconstruction requires some kind
16 of UN authorisation anyway, therefore, we are okay on
17 legalities for the Civil Service, though there were lots
18 of legal opinions from the Attorney General, if we
19 didn't have a further UN Security Council Resolution, on
20 what civil servants could and couldn't do. That was
21 a big issue for quite some time.

22 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I want to put something to you which
23 Lieutenant General Sir Robert Fry said to us. He said:

24 "We had DFID representatives who came to the PJHQ
25 who would hardly conceal their moral disdain for what we

1 were about to embark upon."

2 What's your response to that sort of view?

3 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: We had a liaison person with the
4 military who was a former military person herself and
5 I know that the department has gone back to her, given
6 that, and she has said there is no way she showed moral
7 disdain. There was lots of emotion in the country at
8 that time -- but DFID is a very professional, high
9 quality organisation and the liaison person was a former
10 military person. So I think people read back into the
11 script -- you know, the thing was such a mess. What is
12 that thing? "Victory has many parents and failure has
13 none", so -- and people knew about my doubts, so they
14 start conflating it and say, "Yes, it is all DFID's
15 fault really", but it is not -- that is not the record
16 of what people did.

17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So you are saying that your
18 department was clear about your personal views and that
19 did not have a negative impact on planning. Is that
20 what you are saying?

21 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I am saying that. They were clear.
22 People in the country shared -- our view -- my view was
23 it included the possibility of war authorised by the UN,
24 no question. We needed to get rid of sanctions. Iraq
25 was suffering and we had to be willing to contemplate

1 military action. So all my worries would be about
2 whether we did it right, not the possibility of doing
3 it.

4 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can I come on to the planning with
5 external partners? Because, when it came to discussions
6 with external partners, we understand from
7 Sir Suma Chakrabarti that a constraint to DFID planning
8 in September 2002 was that Number 10 had issued
9 instructions to departments not to discuss plans for
10 Iraq with external partners.

11 I think you also shared that sometimes you did not
12 want your department to engage in discussions with
13 external partners. Is that the case?

14 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, there was the Number 10 block,
15 and on NGOs they were kind of queuing up to be involved
16 but, actually, British NGOs hadn't been working in
17 central Iraq. We were in the north and it is a much
18 easier part to work, in the Kurdish area.

19 So at first, we didn't -- we refused to meet with
20 them, the Number 10 block, and then we met with them
21 later and they got more active and gave evidence to the
22 Select Committee and so on. So I think they were sort
23 of a bit cross and thought they weren't being included
24 as much as they might have been, but that flowed,
25 I think, from the initial atmosphere of the Number 10

1 block, when they felt -- and they were excluded
2 initially. But I don't think the NGOs were that
3 significant because they weren't big players in Iraq,
4 apart from in the north, and the Amal, is it, the one
5 that worked in the south, Amarah, I think it is called,
6 something like that.

7 The UN system we did talk to. I think we disobeyed
8 the Number 10 blockade. We acceptability missions to
9 Geneva where the humanitarian part of the UN is and to
10 New York. I think Nicola Brewer led that.

11 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: When was that?

12 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I think that was sort of October-ish
13 and I think Number 10 lifted its -- it said, "Still be
14 careful, but you can talk", something like that. So
15 that was a kind of official mission. I had
16 personally --

17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Just to be clear, so Number 10 had
18 imposed constraints on what you could discuss with
19 external partners, but you personally hadn't?

20 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: That's right.

21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Okay.

22 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Then I and, I think,
23 Suma Chakrabarti, also talked about -- I talked with
24 Kofi Annan a number of times, sort of slightly breaching
25 the Number 10 ruling, and Louise Frechette, who was the

1 Deputy Secretary General and worked on the preparation,
2 because for the UN it was very fraught as well because
3 there was such division around the Security Council.
4 The UN prepared, but kept it quiet.

5 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So what sorts of issues were you
6 discussing with the United Nations and when you sent
7 people to Geneva and to New York?

8 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: As I said earlier, we don't have
9 thousands of people who come marching in to do the
10 humanitarian work like an army; we have money and people
11 and access to expertise that we can inject into the
12 international systems to get them working well, and if
13 there are blockages, we can put in more money, draw down
14 some expert people, get things moving. Food -- Oil For
15 Food, 60 per cent of the people are dependent on -- it
16 comes in on ships. If there is going to be military
17 action, can we keep the food rolling? If not, we are
18 going to have a starving country. What can we do if
19 sewage and electricity and water get bombed? Have we
20 got some capacity to do quick repairs, et cetera,
21 et cetera. The World Health Organisation, what about
22 the hospitals? If there are going to be injuries in the
23 war, can we make sure there is enough drugs? Who is
24 pre-positioning the stocks? All these kind of things.

25 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What were the United Nations telling

1 you about their role, if there was a possibility of
2 military action at that stage?

3 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: At that stage it was --

4 Louise Frechette was leading it, there was a lot of work
5 going on in Geneva, detailed work. I think they said
6 in the November that they had been working for a year
7 quietly, but she had taken it to a higher level.

8 I mean, she was a senior person, that they were
9 preparing for all eventualities but keeping it quiet.

10 That was, I think, the right thing for her to do. She
11 was a very good official.

12 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Did they express any view about what
13 sort of role they envisaged for themselves, the
14 United Nations?

15 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Everyone in the senior levels of the
16 UN was fraught and hoping and hoping that there would
17 only be military action authorised by the Security
18 Council, but, because of the media, everyone was worried
19 that that might not be the case and things might get
20 very messy and difficult, and there was this very
21 fraught atmosphere around the Security Council and that
22 flows onto the floor, the surfaces of the
23 Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General.
24 So the whole thing was tense and people were very
25 worried.

1 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So you were trying to work within
2 this sort of broad context where there was concern and
3 the drumbeat outside in the media was different and you
4 were trying to plan with the United Nations within that
5 broader context?

6 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I knew these people well, I knew
7 Kofi Annan well, I knew Louise Frechette, we had worked
8 on other emergencies in different parts of the world.
9 We understand each other perfectly. We were planning.
10 I wasn't even trying -- I mean, for our bit, the
11 humanitarian bit worked. It is just all the other
12 things fell apart, and the immediate -- you know,
13 keeping people fed, stop them -- not getting cholera
14 outbreaks, getting the water fixed when it was broken,
15 et cetera.

16 The hospitals were decimated in Baghdad, but ICRC
17 came with new supplies, and latterly -- and that was
18 very bad, but, you know what I mean, we did plan, we
19 worked with the UN and so on, and the ICRC, a very, very
20 important agency, they pre-positioned all sorts of drugs
21 and materials and those tablets you put into water if
22 the system is contaminated, so that people could have
23 clean water, and bladders so you can take water from
24 a river, all that. We did all that.

25 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: My final question is why did you

1 accept the instructions to departments not to discuss
2 plans for Iraq with Number 10? What was your
3 understanding of the reasoning, and why did you accept
4 that?

5 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I think the only real issue was the
6 NGOs and they weren't that significant. I mean, Oil For
7 Food had something like 1,000 Iraqis employed. There
8 was a network of people who could deliver humanitarian
9 things and the British NGOs wanted to be in on it all,
10 but they weren't going to be significant players
11 especially in central Iraq. So we could obey on that
12 bit.

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So you thought that didn't really
14 matter?

15 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes, we could talk to them later,
16 which we did.

17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But you continued to have
18 conversations in Geneva and the United Nations?

19 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: That's right.

20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So there was a quiet,
21 behind-the-scenes plan?

22 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes, and with the ICRC.

23 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's move on. Sir Lawrence Freedman?

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you very much. I want to talk

1 to you about the relations with the United States. We
2 have heard a lot about, not only the asymmetries in size
3 between the United States and the United Kingdom, but
4 also the very different structures of government.

5 Who was your natural interlocutor in the
6 United States?

7 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, the head of USAID was
8 Andrew Natsios, so that was the obvious link, and then
9 we always had the State Department. Over Afghanistan,
10 I met Colin Powell and Rich Armitage.

11 So State Department and USAID, and you probably know
12 they did masses of planning, and then, it was just
13 a couple of months before that, it was all thrown away
14 and everything was moved into war and the Pentagon -- it
15 was the most -- so we worked with them quietly and
16 I remember Andrew Natsios, who fought in the first
17 Gulf War and was a Republican and head of USAID, and he
18 said, "The most dangerous possibility is that they
19 get -- that we get chaos and sectarian divisions, and
20 what we must do is chop the top off the Ba'athist
21 system, but not everyone, because every teacher and so
22 on must be a member of the Ba'athist party".

23 I remember him saying that in terms, and how right
24 he was.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: When was that conversation?

1 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I would have to look it up to check,
2 but I would think late 2002, but I could double-check,
3 if you wanted me to.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: As often, you have anticipated my
5 next question, which was about the shift from the
6 State Department to the Pentagon. When did you become
7 aware of the shift in the focus of post-war planning?

8 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I think fairly soon. There is -
9 telegrams flow, and I was an assiduous reader of
10 telegrams. Number 10 would have stopped them coming if
11 they had realised. So I knew it had happened, but it
12 was stunning. You know, the State Department had
13 prepared in enormous detail. Suddenly, it -- but we all
14 knew about the divisions in the US administration and
15 the neo-cons and the people in the Pentagon and so on,
16 but to throw away all the post-war planning, it takes
17 a bit of time to absorb the information you are getting.
18 It is hard to believe that they would do that. But they
19 did.

20 Then Tim Cross was the other -- I knew him from
21 Kosovo --

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I want to come on to Tim Cross. I'm
23 moving ahead with the questions, but I want to come back
24 to Tim Cross in a moment.

25 But just on the State Department planning, had you

1 seen any of this planning? Had you seen any of the
2 results of it, or had you been briefed on it at all?

3 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I had been briefed on it and we had
4 had telephone communications with them and some of the
5 other agencies. I mean, there were some that wouldn't
6 talk to us. The Germans. I knew the German minister
7 very well, but she was extremely upset and wouldn't talk
8 to us, but we were trying to keep everyone in as far as
9 we could, because we would need them all for afterwards.

10 We kept in touch with the State Department and their
11 planning and USAID -- too fast, sorry.

12 We became more and more concerned that, after an
13 invasion, Geneva Convention obligations, if we didn't
14 get some kind of UN authorisation -- we needed it to
15 roll over Oil for Food, because you had to keep doing
16 that, and that was crucial to keep people fed, but,
17 also, if we didn't get some kind of UN authorisation, we
18 wouldn't get the World Bank, the IMF, we wouldn't get
19 other countries. So we were talking that a lot to USAID
20 and they totally agreed and said, "Yes, yes, yes", so we
21 were working away at all that.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I mean, USAID didn't have the same
23 sort of clout within the American system that you had
24 within the British system.

25 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, they are an agency rather than

1 a full government department, but we were also
2 communicating and using the proper machinery of
3 government and Ambassadors and things with the
4 State Department to the same end.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Given that you had had these
6 contacts with the State Department, were you alerted by
7 them in any way about concerns -- probably informally,
8 about concerns about the impact of the shift from the
9 State Department to the Pentagon in terms of post-war
10 planning?

11 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I can't personally remember. I just
12 know everyone was utterly stunned and shocked. So
13 I can't remember people's words, but you can imagine.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I can.

15 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Just another setback in this crazy
16 story we are all inside.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The argument that was used at the
18 time, and which Colin Powell appears to have accepted,
19 was that, as the military would have to be doing most of
20 the work, they would have the people on the ground, they
21 had the resources, it made some sort of sense for them
22 to be responsible.

23 So in part, this is also an argument about the
24 relationship between civil concerns with reconstruction
25 and the military role. Now, this is something that you

1 spent a lot of time on, I know, in DFID. What was your
2 input into those sorts of discussions?

3 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: It all happened very quickly, but
4 the truth is you needed the military to prepare.
5 I don't think either our military or their military
6 prepared enough for their Geneva Convention and Hague
7 obligations to keep order, to keep immediate
8 humanitarian relief, because everything was done on
9 a wing and a prayer and too fast.

10 But if you wanted then the world to come together
11 and support the reconstruction of Iraq, you needed to
12 not only have the military, you needed the military to
13 do their bit, and then you needed to bring everybody in,
14 and that's what we were trying to achieve.

15 So to hand it all over to the military is a bit
16 foolish, because your chances then of getting
17 cooperation from the rest of the international system
18 may be diminished. But I think that was just pure
19 sectarian divisions within the UN system and part of the
20 problem, and Colin Powell was becoming marginalised.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Now, you mentioned Tim Cross and you
22 indicated that you dealt with him in the Balkans days
23 dealing with the Kosovo and suchlike. How closely in
24 touch were you with Tim Cross?

25 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I remember Tony Blair saying, "And

1 we are going to send Tim Cross. He is your friend,
2 isn't he, Clare?" So I knew when he went out to go into
3 ORHA, and when he came back -- I talked to him a number
4 of times on the phone initiated by me, and I think
5 sometimes by him, and he came to see me, I think, on one
6 of his first trips back, and said, "It is terrible, they
7 are still moving the furniture in". I can remember him
8 saying that.

9 Now, I have read his evidence and I'm very surprised
10 by it. I know about ORHA later in Iraq. Because it was
11 such a mess, we decided not to put a lot of people in
12 and just have liaison, and there was an individual he
13 wanted that we didn't particularly think was good, but
14 he said he asked for someone from DFID to go into ORHA
15 then. We had one humanitarian adviser, our
16 Ambassador to the UN office because most of them would
17 be in Geneva, but just because such questions might come
18 up, and I -- after Tim Cross asked, I asked him to
19 liaise with Tim Cross. I also asked Andrew Natsios to
20 talk to Tim Cross. In the end, that didn't prove
21 useful, but it could have done.

22 So I'm surprised by what Tim Cross said. I can talk
23 about the later phase -- I must say the Tim Cross story
24 is such a sad story, and if he was an official from my
25 department, I think it is outrageous that they left him

1 out there all on his own. We would have supported
2 someone better.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I just quote from what he
4 actually says in his memo? I think you have just
5 referred to this. Just reinforcing what you have just
6 said to start with:

7 "Having confirmed that with UK, I was reinforced
8 with a little support from the FCO and some contact with
9 the DFID official based in New York."

10 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes, that's the guy --

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: "Clare Short would not allow him to
12 work with me on a full-time basis because of her
13 well-known concerns."

14 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: That is not true. I asked the
15 department to check that, because I read it, and they
16 said it is not true and that he asked me for some
17 support and I asked our official to liaise with him.

18 I'm sure he believes it, he is a very fine man, but
19 it is not true, according to the records in the
20 department.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That's very helpful.

22 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: There are some questions for later
23 when ORHA gets itself --

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: We will deal with those later. Just
25 in terms of your understanding of where things were, you

1 knew from Tim Cross, and also from your concerns about
2 the shift away from the State Department, that things
3 were not going very well in Washington in terms of
4 post-war planning.

5 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Could I just remind everyone,
6 though, we didn't know what the date was going to be of
7 the war, because now we know it, we can look at this --
8 because it is incredible, the messy way -- and things
9 weren't ready. So although we were worried about all
10 these things, we didn't know how quickly we were going
11 to war.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you didn't know in February that
13 you could be at war in March?

14 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I knew from SIS, the intelligence
15 people. I think one of the American aims
16 was February 15, which was the day of our big
17 demonstration and also is my birthday. So I remember
18 that. But that got put back, and given the lack of
19 preparedness, one was expecting the date to be put back.

20 So we knew there were people pressing for war, but
21 given that things weren't ready, we didn't -- I mean,
22 I wouldn't have believed we would go that quickly, given
23 how unready everything was.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Let me just ask again in terms of
25 the scenarios that you were expecting in terms of what

1 could happen. You have mentioned already your concerns
2 about what would happen if chemical and biological
3 weapons were used and the effect on the population.

4 What about other issues, including some that did
5 arise, such as looting? How much study had been done of
6 that possibility?

7 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: That was the catastrophic success
8 scenario, which was a paper I think from the
9 Foreign Office. I'm just speaking from memory here, and
10 it was that the military would go very quickly and then
11 there was a risk of chaos and sectarian divisions.
12 And -- so that was thought about and I think that's
13 a military failure. That's a Geneva Convention
14 obligation, to keep order. I mean, obviously, DFID or
15 the UN humanitarians can't do that. We can only operate
16 if there is some kind of order.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Now, you have mentioned your
18 birthday on 15 February, the day before is
19 St Valentine's Day, when you wrote a letter to Mr Blair.

20 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: It didn't do any good.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It was -- which we have got
22 declassified. So presumably you have seen this letter.
23 I think it is quite an important letter in this story.

24 You warn in this letter of the risks of humanitarian
25 catastrophe. Now, we have had a lot of evidence that

1 suggested that part of the problem, possibly, was that
2 the risks of humanitarian catastrophe were well
3 understood, and you have already indicated that your
4 department was prepared for these, gave good advice on
5 these, and, in the end, the immediate consequences of
6 the war for that reason were not as bad as many assumed.

7 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: But you know, we spent 100 million
8 on something, achieving that "not bad".

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I'm not saying that that was because
10 it was an easy thing to do. I think -- I suppose what
11 I'm saying is that it was an eventuality that was
12 prepared for --

13 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Hm-mm.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- but that there was a concern that
15 reconstruction itself and the consequences of the loss
16 of law and order, as you describe it, were not fully
17 appreciated. Is it that a fair criticism of what
18 happened?

19 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I think -- I have told you about
20 Andrew Natsios saying that was the greatest danger and
21 the thing he feared most. There was the catastrophic
22 success scenario in planning papers.

23 But then the Pentagon, I think, believed its own
24 propaganda and thought the people of Iraq, who hated the
25 regime -- and it was a hateful regime, of course --

1 would be giving flowers to the soldiers and they really
2 believed their own propaganda and thought they could
3 come out very quickly and that everything would be easy,
4 and that's why they threw away the State Department
5 stuff, and -- I mean, I later read the project for the
6 New American Century documents, and clearly it was
7 a longstanding view of theirs, and they were wrong, but
8 that's why we got the problem, because the people who
9 were now in charge, both militarily and for
10 reconstruction, absolutely believed they would be
11 welcomed and there wouldn't be any trouble.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: At the time when you are writing
13 this -- and obviously you are writing it at a time when
14 there was still considerable hope and expectation of
15 a second UN Resolution -- your hope was that the UN
16 would be able to handle this range of problems, that
17 they would be able to take a leading role in
18 reconstruction?

19 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, this is the second
20 UN Resolution -- well, no, the third -- however many,
21 because we had to have Oil For Food resolutions as well,
22 but this is the question of the legalities of
23 reconstruction.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes.

25 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: It is the same question that the

1 International Court of Justice gave a judgment on in the
2 Palestinian occupied territories. So an occupying power
3 is required to keep order, provide for humanitarian
4 needs, and is not allowed to change the institutions of
5 the country they occupy or its laws.

6 So we knew that if we didn't get another
7 UN Resolution, we were in big trouble. We could do
8 humanitarian, but you can't reconstruct the country, and
9 that became an absolute obsession of Whitehall. It
10 wasn't just my department.

11 If you look at the files, there are endless
12 Foreign Office efforts, and David Manning to Condi Rice
13 and dah-de-dah, and, of course, the group in the
14 US administration that had won and taken over ORHA hated
15 the UN, didn't care about international law, so this --
16 and I think Jack Straw was getting frantic because here
17 is another UN Resolution that we might all fall out
18 about.

19 Then there were opinions by the Attorney General
20 saying, if any Brits went into ORHA, there were certain
21 things they could do and not do because of the law --
22 because of the Geneva Convention --

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: This is obviously getting to the
24 post-war situation. I'm just trying to clarify the
25 lines you were taking before the war, where there is

1 a considerable stress in your letters and those coming
2 from your department on the UN role.

3 Then, at the end of this letter of 14 February, when
4 you are talking about the humanitarian risks, you make
5 an important point about your budget. You say:

6 "My department has tight budgetary constraints. We
7 have major humanitarian disasters across the world and
8 my resources are stretched. I'm happy to prioritise
9 Iraq from my contingency reserve, but I cannot take
10 resources from other poor and needy people to assist
11 post-conflict Iraq. Without some understanding on
12 finance, I cannot responsibly commit DFID to the
13 exemplary partnership with MoD which we discussed."

14 I'm interested to know, first, what sort of
15 resources you are after at this stage, and -- you say
16 you copied this letter to Gordon Brown -- what sort of
17 response you got on that particular request.

18 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, there was this talk of an
19 exemplary role. It was rather late that Britain was
20 taking on the south because at first there was the plan
21 to go through Turkey, and then there was some --
22 I think -- it is fairly late on, but I think Tony Blair
23 convened a meeting, and Gordon Brown was there and
24 Jack Straw and I, about the post-invasion plans and this
25 "exemplary role" phrase came up, and we were up for it.

1 I mean, if you can make the south really go
2 beautifully, that's good for the country and everything
3 else as well as Britain's reputation, but then I had
4 written a number of letters saying, "All we have got is
5 our contingency reserve and I'm supposed to keep that
6 for other emergencies in the world, and we are coming to
7 the end of one financial year and into the other.
8 I mean, if we mean this, there has got to be some money
9 on the table", and what we were getting from the
10 Treasury was no answer, nothing and it was this period
11 of stand-off. Gordon Brown was pushed out and
12 marginalised at the time, and having cups of coffee with
13 me and saying, "Tony Blair is obsessed with his legacy
14 and he thinks he can have a quick war and then
15 a reshuffle", et cetera.

16 So after a lot of delay and a number of efforts, the
17 Treasury set up some kind of working group -- this will
18 be in the papers -- and came with a letter saying,
19 "There is no money. Money is very tight, and,
20 therefore, we have got to have a UN Resolution so we can
21 get the World Bank and the IMF and all the others in".

22 That was a Treasury response, and we only got any
23 extra money from the Treasury, I think, after the
24 invasion had started. So how you can plan an exemplary
25 role when it is that late is impossible.

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So I'm --

2 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: There is one other thing, sorry, on
3 this.

4 At some point, my officials suggested that we send
5 a couple of officials into ORHA -- was it into ORHA? Or
6 maybe with our military, for the south, and I said we
7 should go on a scoping mission but we shouldn't put
8 people in because it was to promise what we couldn't
9 deliver, because we didn't have the money, and if I put
10 people there, as though we were going to bring lots of
11 money, that was misleading.

12 So we sent a scoping mission but we didn't put
13 people -- I can't now remember, but I think it was
14 probably inside the military planning rather than ORHA
15 because we had nothing, no answer, and there is
16 Tony Blair getting all these letters and copies to
17 Gordon Brown. It is just part of the dysfunctional
18 nature of the way the government was operating.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So, so far as you were aware, you
20 sent off this letter on 14 February, you are not aware
21 of a response?

22 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I sent a number of letters about
23 money. The response we got in the end was from
24 Paul Boateng after the invasion had started, and prior
25 to that, we got the result of this working group, or

1 whatever it was called, saying, "There is no money, and
2 that's why we have got to have a UN Resolution for
3 reconstruction, so we can get the IMF, the
4 World Bank" --

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So from that point of view, we were
6 taking on a potentially exemplary role, but when you
7 asked for more resource prior to the war to support this
8 exemplary role, you hadn't been given any promise of
9 extra funds?

10 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No. So there was no reply to a lot
11 of letters and then there was that Treasury working
12 group saying no, really.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I just ask you a final question
14 on the period leading up to the war? We have mentioned
15 the importance of the UN to you, and this was clearly
16 a major concern when it became apparent that a second
17 resolution was not going to be found.

18 What was your reaction when you realised that that
19 was likely to be the case?

20 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, the first thing was they
21 claimed -- and this was untrue -- that the French had
22 vetoed -- and of course, as you know, a permanent member
23 voting against is a veto, it isn't a separate thing --
24 and said they wouldn't support any military action, and
25 that was untrue but that was said repeatedly.

1 I remember saying, "That can't be the -- the French
2 can't have done that", because there had been this
3 French/Russian statement that we needed more time, but,
4 in the end, the authority of the UN had to be upheld,
5 but, again, when they said that French had said that,
6 and, therefore, there could be no second resolution,
7 I believed them at the time.

8 You don't want to disbelieve your Prime Minister in
9 the run-up to a war and you do not want to disbelieve
10 the leader of your party, and you want to be loyal.
11 I did believe them too often, I think.

12 But then I decided -- I mean, my idea was we would
13 prepare for everything and, as I used to call it, we all
14 hold on to Tony Blair's ankles, he might hold on to Bush
15 and we might get the thing done right. That was kind of
16 my idea in my head.

17 Then I -- whatever the date was, 12 March or
18 something -- decided I would do this interview with
19 Andrew Rawsley and say, "If there is not a second
20 resolution, I'm leaving the government", which I did,
21 and, let me say, completely off my own bat, because my
22 poor old civil servants in the press office were hauled
23 over the coals. They had nothing to do with it.

24 So I had this image that we would prepare for
25 everything, we would try to keep it on the UN route, get

1 the thing done properly -- I mean, I had also argued
2 with Blair, "There is no hurry, so why don't we move on
3 Palestine first, and then you would transform the
4 atmosphere in the Middle East and then the chances of
5 doing Iraq right would be massively better?" So that
6 was my concept of what I was doing.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you discuss this with other
8 Cabinet colleagues at the time? We have heard
9 Jack Straw had his idea of a plan B at this time, which
10 would have given us a much reduced military role.
11 Clearly, Robin Cook was considering his position at the
12 time. Did you discuss the situation with them?

13 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, things were enormously fraught,
14 and, you know, this breakdown of normal communications.
15 I had various cups of coffee with Gordon and discussed
16 with him -- and he was very unhappy and marginalised.
17 He was worried about other things beyond Iraq. He would
18 say on Iraq, "We must uphold the UN", and I would say,
19 "I agree, but are we going to do it that way?" and then
20 he would talk about other issues that were worrying him
21 and I would rabbit on about Iraq. So I'm not sure we
22 were communicating terribly fully, but we were having
23 cups of coffee.

24 I talked to Jack Straw when we were on the platform
25 together at the Labour Party conference and said, "Is

1 there any risk that Tony will go to war with the
2 Americans without the UN?" and he said, "I'm not sure
3 but I'm working on it". So we had that conversation.
4 Gordon told me that Robin Cook had told someone in the
5 media that Gordon, Robin and I were against, although
6 I wasn't reading all the media at that time. But even,
7 you see, I didn't know Robin was going to resign. You
8 can see how poor the communication -- well, the
9 discussion in the Cabinet was.

10 It was Tony Blair told me, when he called me in to
11 see him privately, and said, "Robin has gone -- going
12 today". So it was all fractured and broken down.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you were unaware that Robin Cook
14 had serious misgivings, despite --

15 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I knew he had misgivings, but,
16 remember, all the time -- and Robin had said, "If we do
17 it properly through the UN, we are all for it". So the
18 misgivings were always about breaking out of what was
19 meant to be the policy, which, because of the media, one
20 was fearing all the time.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you had a meeting with the
22 Prime Minister which encouraged you to stay. What were
23 the assurances you were given then?

24 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: He rang me up and was very cross,
25 and I said, "I'll go now". He said, "No, no". Looking

1 back, you can see why. He didn't want two of us going
2 at the same time. But then he said, "Come and see me",
3 and he asked me to see him two or three times and said,
4 "What is your bottom line?" and indeed involved my
5 Permanent Secretary in writing a letter to
6 Andrew Turnbull about -- and I was, "Second resolution,
7 UN lead on reconstruction and", the road map had been
8 negotiated, which should have meant a Palestinian state
9 by the end of 2005, "publication of the road map".

10 He said, "Oh, well, I can" -- he said, "Oh, if you
11 care about the road map, that might help me with Bush",
12 and he had me back in another day and said, "Bush is
13 going to make a statement saying he accepts the road
14 map". I have to say, at that time, I didn't think, if
15 the President of the United States and the
16 Prime Minister of Britain said something as profound
17 as that -- I thought it meant something, rather
18 than just a bit of manipulation, and then he had me in
19 a separate time and said, "I have got Bush to agree to
20 a UN lead on reconstruction, and I want you to stay and
21 we need international cooperation", and -- I'd booked my
22 place to make my resignation statement with the Speaker
23 and the Prime Minister persuaded me to -- I knew we
24 couldn't stop the war, the Conservatives were voting
25 with the government. There was lots of arm-twisting

1 going on about the size of the Labour revolt, but it was
2 going to pass, and I thought, "If we get the Palestinian
3 state and a UN lead on reconstruction, that would be so
4 much better than what would otherwise happen, and I'll
5 stay for that", and I took a heck of a lot of flack for
6 it, but I still think, if we had done those things, it
7 would have been much better.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you very much.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: I think we might take another break at this
10 point.

11 (11.46 am)

12 (Short break)

13 (11.55 am)

14 THE CHAIRMAN: I will turn to Baroness Prashar to reopen the
15 questions. Usha?

16 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you, Chairman.

17 I want to turn to the planning on the eve of the
18 invasion. We heard earlier your Valentine's letter of
19 14 February, but that wasn't the only letter. You
20 wrote, I think, again, on 5 March, and I think there is
21 a statement that you made in the House when you talked
22 about your concern about optimistic assumptions about
23 the aftermath, and you also I think said that it is not
24 as full and complete as it could be, the aftermath
25 planning.

1 So you were obviously raising concerns pretty much,
2 from February onwards. Why do you think the
3 Prime Minister was ignoring the warnings you were giving
4 and going ahead?

5 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I think this gets to the root of why
6 we went and I think now you can see the leaked
7 documents, the Americans were determined to go, Blair
8 had said he would go with them. He couldn't get Britain
9 there without going through the UN, but in the end, if
10 the Americans were going, he was determined to go with
11 them, and I repeat -- I have said it before, but it is
12 very important: there was no need to go at that time.
13 There was no emergency. There was nothing happening
14 that meant we couldn't have more time.

15 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You said that in your letter of
16 5 March, about --

17 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes, I know, but I'm saying it in
18 general. I mean, it is a very important point.

19 Now, this is about the special relationship. Was
20 Blair willing to say to the Americans, "I'm not going
21 with you now, it is too early. Blix should have more
22 time. The international system needs more time to
23 prepare. I promised you I would be with you, but this
24 is the wrong time. We can take another six months"?

25 I think he was so frantic to be with America that

1 all that was thrown away, and if he had done that, his
2 place in history, the UK's role in the world, would have
3 been so much more honourable, and this is -- Britain
4 needs to think about this, the special relationship.
5 What do we mean by it? Do we mean we have an
6 independent relationship and we say what we think or do
7 we mean we just abjectly go wherever America goes
8 because we think that puts us in the big league?
9 I think that was it and it's a tragedy. That's
10 the tragedy.

11 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What is your understanding of what
12 you think he was saying to President Bush at that time?
13 Do you think he was raising these issues with him in
14 terms of after-planning, and was he being given false
15 assurances that it would be all right on the day or the
16 night?

17 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I don't know, but I think he
18 probably thought the Americans could do it. You know,
19 that they knew what they were doing. But you have to
20 ask him. I can only think that's what he thought.
21 Otherwise, good heavens, how irresponsible is this? As
22 we have seen.

23 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But in terms of that special
24 relationship, I mean, we heard him on Friday when he was
25 talking about these were not conditions about the

1 Middle East process and the aftermath, but it was a way
2 of influencing. Do you think we were able to exert
3 enough influence?

4 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I don't think we influenced
5 anything. That's pathetic. I think it humiliates
6 Britain. I think we could have -- I think if we had
7 said, "We are not going now", I'm not certain -- I know
8 Rumsfeld had said, "We will go without you", but, you
9 know, American public opinion was saying, "In coalition,
10 yes; alone, no", and if you look at the so-called
11 coalition of 30, they've got Rwanda, Eritrea, they ran
12 around the poorest countries in the world, getting them
13 to come on the list so it would look like a coalition.
14 They weren't asking them to send any troops, because
15 there had been such a big coalition about the first
16 Gulf War.

17 So I think if Britain had had the courage to mean
18 what we said the policy was, to say, "No, there is no
19 urgency. We're going to take a bit longer and prepare
20 properly, give Blix a bit more time, keep the
21 international" -- because, don't forget, the Russians
22 and the French and the Germans were all saying, "We
23 agree there should be war, if need be, to enforce the
24 authority of the UN." I think that's where Britain
25 should have been, that would have been honourable, and

1 he just wasn't willing to do it.

2 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: As I said earlier, you were raising
3 these concerns, you were not being listened to, why did
4 continue to support the policy?

5 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I supported the policy that
6 I supported, which was doing it all properly through the
7 UN.

8 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: No, I'm talking about the aftermath
9 planning on the eve of the invasion, because you were
10 raising all these issues, you were not being listened
11 to. Why did you continue to support the policy?
12 Because, you know, the aftermath in some ways is more
13 important. I mean, there was a view --

14 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Do you mean, why didn't I resign
15 when I said I would? Is that what you mean?

16 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Yes.

17 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I have tried to answer that. If
18 I knew then what I know now, I would have. But I had
19 the Prime Minister getting the President of the
20 United States to agree to the publication of the road
21 map, which should have meant a Palestinian state by the
22 end of 2005 -- think how that would have transformed the
23 Middle East -- and I had the Prime Minister of Britain
24 promising me that he had got Bush to agree that there
25 would be a UN lead on reconstruction.

1 So although I thought it was wrong to rush and wrong
2 to go, I stayed because I thought, if we did those
3 things, we could avoid the disaster that would otherwise
4 take place.

5 I still agree with myself. If we had done those
6 things, it wouldn't have been such a disaster, but I was
7 conned.

8 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So you are still of the view that if
9 we had more time and more resources, it would have been
10 better?

11 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I still think we should have done
12 what the policy was. I think we should have said,
13 "Saddam Hussein, you can't go on forever, you can't keep
14 fooling the UN. We have got Blix back in. We have got
15 to mean it. We are willing to use military action if
16 you obstruct".

17 I think, given what the Saudis and the Jordanians
18 were saying, we probably could have got Saddam out.
19 There were all sorts of ways through that would have
20 been better. But I agreed with the policy as it was
21 formally stated. I just don't think that was the
22 policy. The policy was: we are going to war and we
23 don't care about the UN. Blair's policy was: I have got
24 to go through the UN, because I've got to do that or you
25 can't get Britain there, but I'm going with the

1 Americans come what may.

2 It is a very sad story.

3 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What about resources? Do you think
4 more resources would have made a difference to the
5 aftermath?

6 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I went to the spring meeting of the
7 World Bank, which -- I was the UK governor of the
8 World Bank, and I knew all those people very well and
9 the World Bank and the IMF were in a desperate state
10 because they thought some of the divisions in the
11 Security Council might come into their institutions and
12 they might get all that bitter division, and they were
13 looking at precedents like Japan, and, you know, could
14 you engage with an occupying power? I convened
15 a meeting with the French, the Germans, and all the
16 Nordics and said, "I know you hate the war, but if we
17 get a UN lead, please, will you come in? This is for
18 the people of Iraq, you know, we need to get
19 international" -- and they all said they would, and
20 I did another letter to Blair saying that, saying, "If
21 we get this right, we can get the world to reunite to
22 help rebuild Iraq".

23 That's why I resigned in the end, because the feeble
24 UN Resolution we did get wasn't good enough. It did
25 cover the World Bank and the IMF explicitly, 1483, but

1 it wasn't strong enough to bring the rest of the
2 international community in, and the Treasury had said
3 throughout about resources, "There are no resources
4 here. We have got to get a UN lead to get international
5 cooperation to get the resources for reconstruction".

6 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Were your other colleagues in the
7 Cabinet raising issues, concerns about planning on the
8 eve of the invasion?

9 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, I think by then everything was
10 so utterly fraught. There was a massive arm-twisting
11 exercise taking place to get people to vote in the
12 Parliamentary Labour Party, and no one was talking to
13 anyone and everything was absolutely in a terrible
14 condition of tension, and people had decided to go with
15 Blair, come what may, apart from Robin.

16 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So the picture you are getting is
17 the machine was cranking on towards military action and
18 not much attention was being paid to, or being listened
19 to, about the aftermath planning?

20 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: There had been preparation for the
21 aftermath planning, and there's endless -- if you look
22 at the files, and I do hope you will consider publishing
23 them, it goes on and on and on that we have to have a UN
24 lead to get all the resources --

25 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You were doing this, but why

1 wasn't --

2 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: So was the Foreign Office. It

3 wasn't only us, but then that was all just swept aside

4 and the decision was made, bang, suddenly we are going

5 to war and -- you can blame the French and concoct the

6 legal authority and off we go.

7 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Were you not given the expression

8 that the United States had this in hand? Because we

9 have seen papers, you know, they thought they were

10 optimistic and they thought it would be fine on the

11 day --

12 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, yes, as we have said --

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: -- you know, they'd be greeted in

14 the streets --

15 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: -- all this enormous State

16 Department planning, which included the danger of chaos

17 and sectarian fighting and so on, was thrown away. ORHA

18 and the Pentagon took over. They believed there wasn't

19 going to be any trouble and people would be waving

20 flowers at them, and off they went. They believed their

21 own propaganda, and the British Government's capacity to

22 think better than was just subverted and thrown away, to

23 our deep, eternal shame.

24 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: I will turn to Sir Martin Gilbert now.

1 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: As the military action began, as you
2 said, no UN lead of any sort had been agreed. How did
3 this affect, at that moment, the division of
4 responsibility between DFID and the military? How did
5 it impact on what you saw as your respective
6 contribution, what you could deliver at that time?

7 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: As I have said, we can do
8 humanitarian any time without legal authority because,
9 you know, you should always help people in need. So
10 even if there was a crime of aggression, you can still
11 go in and help people. So no problem about that, and
12 all the preparations were made for that and we had spent
13 money early to get the UN system and the ICRC ready and
14 we spent more money as it went. That was all absolutely
15 fine.

16 Then, for the aftermath and reconstruction, there
17 are these very serious legal questions about
18 Geneva Convention obligations and the Attorney General
19 was involved in this, giving legal advice, because there
20 was pressure to put British people into ORHA and the
21 Attorney General saying, "They have got to have legal
22 advice about what they can and can't do. They can do
23 the humanitarian, they can't do reconstruction if it
24 means reorganising the institutions of Iraq".

25 So that was a fair old mess, and arguing, "We have

1 got to get the UN Resolution", and of course, Blair had
2 said to me, he had got Bush's promise of a UN lead for
3 reconstruction. Then Bush came to Hillsborough, if you
4 remember, Northern Ireland, and Sally Morgan rang me and
5 said, "He said 'UN' six times in his summing up". So
6 they got him to say "vital role for the UN", but it
7 was -- people say, "You shouldn't expect America to let
8 the UN" -- but America let the UN lead the political
9 process in Afghanistan. It was the same administration
10 with the same views of the UN, but the lead on
11 constructing a new political system in Afghanistan was
12 led out of the UN by Lakhdar Brahimi, so it wasn't
13 ridiculous to think we might be able to persuade Bush to
14 do the same.

15 In fact, I took a copy of the Afghan UN Resolution
16 to the Cabinet to say, "Look, we could do it again, you
17 know, this is all we are asking", but in the end,
18 instead we got 1483, which really fudged and said --
19 I mean, I spoke to Kofi Annan around this time and he
20 said, "We are not going to do a blue wash for this
21 attack and occupation". So the UN wanted to be engaged
22 but was not going to bless it.

23 Then, in the end, we got 1483, which said there will
24 be an interim authority and it had to be brought into
25 being by the occupying powers. It just recognised us as

1 occupying powers. It didn't say it was a legitimate
2 occupation. It just said that's what we were, and other
3 countries wouldn't come in because that was too weak
4 about how you were going to get to a legitimate
5 Iraqi Government. Then I left the government. It was
6 no good. What Blair had promised me wasn't true; he had
7 just conned me. We couldn't do it right. It wasn't
8 strong enough to bring in all the other players,
9 although it did explicitly allow the World Bank, and so
10 on, in.

11 There was, later, another UN Resolution to recognise
12 the beginning of some Iraqi Government authority, and,
13 of course, Ayatollah Sistani insisting on elections or
14 there was going to be even more trouble, because of the
15 US plan to draw up a constitution and take longer before
16 they had any democratic process for Iraq.

17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Can I just go back briefly to that
18 short period when you were at DFID and ORHA had been
19 established?

20 First of all, did the establishment of ORHA lower
21 your expectation at that time that there would be a UN
22 route? Was this something which impeded DFID's
23 involvement?

24 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, we were just in a bit of
25 a lunatic asylum, but we were still doing the best

1 could, and I believed what the Prime Minister said to
2 me, so I was working. I worked fantastically hard at
3 the World Bank spring meeting really using all my deny
4 friendships and so on to get everyone to agree that we
5 would all come together.

6 So ORHA was just another bit of the problem, but it
7 went from Washington to Kuwait and then it moved into
8 Baghdad quite quickly. Then there was -- they had set
9 up this ad hoc ministerial committee that Jack Straw
10 chaired to plan the aftermath, and we were getting
11 pressure -- actually, I had pressure from Tim Cross to
12 agree to a particular individual to do humanitarian in
13 ORHA, and we thought he had performed very badly in
14 Kosovo and we were saying, "Look, we need to have
15 someone we trust to do that", but we sent out a mission,
16 Moazzam Malik, who is a very good official, to have
17 a look at ORHA and see what we could do, and he came
18 back and said, "It is disastrous. It is chaotic. It
19 doesn't know what it is doing".

20 So we decided to put a small liaison humanitarian
21 unit in and to operate outside, because, in the
22 meantime, we are getting reports that the water has
23 broken off here, this hospital has been looted. You
24 can't wait when you have got those kinds of problem.
25 Then there was -- I think Jack Straw went on a visit --

1 I'm still in the government at this stage -- there is
2 a decision to send 100 officials into ORHA. Well, we
3 know about post-crisis. Everyone in the world flies in
4 and you get chaos. A bit of that in Haiti; it is the
5 disaster. So imagine, you have got this totally
6 dysfunctional ORHA and you are going to put in another
7 100 Brits in from all different departments -- they
8 could be the best people in the world, but it is just
9 going to be more mess.

10 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So the perception that DFID was
11 reluctant and Downing Street's perception that somehow
12 you were holding back was simply a misunderstanding of
13 the situation?

14 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, no, we thought it would -- ORHA
15 was a mess and putting lots and lots more people in
16 would be dreadful. We put our liaison unit in so that
17 we knew what it was doing, or if it was doing anything.
18 We also had the Attorney General's legal advice about
19 what people who went in could do, and that's all over
20 the files. He wrote a number of letters as well. It
21 wasn't just a one-off thing.

22 Then the Prime Minister said -- Tony Blair, then
23 still the Prime Minister, said, "We have got to put
24 in" -- I think 100 people was the aim, "and DFID should
25 pay for them". Drawing down on the money which by now

1 the Treasury had said we could have, 60 million, up to
2 60 million. You have to justify each tranche, but we
3 could claim that extra money, and we didn't want to
4 take -- neither did the Permanent Secretary, it wasn't
5 just me -- reporting responsibility for what we thought
6 would be chaos and hopeless. So we agreed the
7 Foreign Office could draw down on that money and pay for
8 those people and we would carry on keeping the
9 humanitarian stuff going.

10 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: One last question on this --

11 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: We were reporting that it was chaos.
12 It was absolutely hopeless.

13 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Given the dominance of ORHA and the
14 American role at this stage in the reconstruction, was
15 there any alternative for DFID? Was there any other
16 route that you contemplated using to get your staff in
17 and to work particularly in the south?

18 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, day in day out -- again, if
19 you look at the file, every day to the War Cabinet I'm
20 saying, "There's a breakdown in the electricity in
21 Basra, ICRC are doing this. There is a little outbreak
22 of cholera there, we're doing that". So we were doing,
23 we were busy feeding in people and money and reports and
24 so on, and we asked Admiral Boyce to get Franks to put
25 some protection on the ICRC medical stocks which were in

1 danger of being looted in all the hospitals.

2 So we were very busy, day in, day out, dealing with
3 the immediate mess and, of course, the looting. Because
4 people have talked as though there wasn't looting in Basra.
5 There was. It went crazy too, and there we are, trying
6 to keep people fed, and food on the sea, and then,
7 beyond that, there was -- the World Bank -- we were
8 close with the World Bank and knew them well and knew
9 their effectiveness. They were sending a scoping
10 mission -- this is reconstruction now -- and we worked
11 with them and knew how all of that worked, and we
12 weren't ignoring ORHA, we weren't writing it off, some
13 machinery had to be brought into being, but you can't
14 work in it when it's dysfunctional and there are
15 immediate emergencies we had to attend to, but we kept
16 our eyes open for -- and of course, it did change.

17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: You are satisfied that, given the
18 resources you had, and given the shambles of ORHA, you
19 were able to do the maximum in terms of the things you
20 have been describing, the measures?

21 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: We did the humanitarian and we got
22 the rollover of the Oil For Food, so people could still
23 be fed, and ICRC did a lot of reconnecting electricity
24 and water bladders in Basra as well as Baghdad. They
25 did a magnificent job. So we were doing all of that,

1 and looting -- it was getting worse. The chaos was
2 growing. And then I left.

3 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Just as you are leaving, before you
4 leave, you had gone in, having worked very closely in
5 the planning, in the last short period with the
6 military. What was the relationship, once DFID
7 personnel were in south Iraq with the military? How did
8 that relationship affect your effectiveness?

9 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: On the ground, in Sierra Leone,
10 East Timor, Bosnia and so on we had always had good
11 relationships with the military, because we are
12 can-doers and so are they. On the ground, you know, we
13 all want to get on with it and make things work.

14 Of course, in this case it was totally different
15 because we had been frozen out. I think that affected
16 my relationship with Boyce. I had got on very well with
17 Guthrie, before him, when we worked on Pakistan together
18 and so on, but he had been told to have nothing to do
19 with me obviously, and, as people used to say, he'd
20 spent a lot of his life in submarines and it showed. He
21 wasn't a chatty sort of chap, and when, in the
22 War Cabinet, in the -- when I would go in each day and
23 say, "This is happening in Basra, this disorder, this
24 electricity", it really annoyed him. He wasn't getting
25 those kinds of reports. So he thought I was sort of

1 moaning, but it was true that these things were
2 happening, but I -- you know, you can tell in a small
3 meeting when someone's irritated and he was irritated
4 that I was bringing these reports, but that was my job.
5 So that wasn't a very good relationship.

6 But some of these military that have said to your
7 Committee, "DFID were in their tents", et cetera. DFID
8 is a very good organisation, and whatever doubts people
9 might have had about the war, they know that when we
10 have got to do what we have to do and people have got to
11 be helped, they will do everything. It is admired
12 throughout the world system as one of the most effective
13 development organisations in the world, and I think that
14 is just sort of moaning, and because it was a mess, they
15 are looking for someone to blame, and, of course, DFID
16 cannot work if there is chaos.

17 That is the military's job, under the Geneva
18 Convention, to keep order. So I think Andrew Turnbull
19 rejected those "sulking in their tents" type rubbish.

20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: The real issue was were you able to
21 raise them directly with Geoff Hoon?

22 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I'd had -- Geoff Hoon, suddenly,
23 there is a flurry of correspondence you might have seen,
24 there is all of this, "Keep Clare and DFID out of it",
25 and then, just at the last minute, they are suddenly

1 writing letters saying, "We must make preparations", and
2 I'm saying to our military, "You're going to have to
3 feed people", and they suddenly, in the last week, they
4 ordered food. I mean, it was mad. But they did it, and
5 they wanted to get closer to us suddenly at the last
6 minute, and we didn't sulk. I can just -- neither I nor
7 the officials. The situation was too serious.

8 But the chaos had its consequences and that is
9 a failure of the military, of both militaries, to take
10 seriously their Geneva Convention obligations to keep
11 order, and I think the British military should have said
12 to Blair, "We are not ready". I think that was their
13 duty and they failed in that duty.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: We would like, in a few moments, to ask for
15 your reflections, but, before we do, to come to your own
16 resignation.

17 There are two or three judgment questions I would
18 like to ask, and I suppose the first one is your concern
19 about the -- growing prominence of the United States in
20 the aftermath and the diminishing role for the
21 United Nations is what brings you, by 12 May, to the
22 point of resigning.

23 But you said in your resignation letter that the
24 negotiation for 1483, which defined, if you like, the
25 relative roles of the UN and the coalition afterwards,

1 were secret. You would have been aware that
2 negotiations were going on on a post-invasion
3 UN Resolution, wouldn't you?

4 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes, but you have to remember I was
5 leaving the government, Tony Blair has me in his --
6 alone, and persuades me to stay, asks me to, and
7 promises the UN lead and asks me to stay and work on
8 that, bringing the international community together.
9 No. Then, normally, when a UN Resolution is being
10 negotiated, there are lots of telegrams with each draft.
11 Suddenly, none of that. Nothing. I can't see what is
12 happening. So we knew they were talking about it.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: But you were still relying on the undertaking
14 that Tony Blair had given you --

15 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Absolutely.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: -- about the role of the UN?

17 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Absolutely.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Right.

19 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: So we were kept out. No telegrams,
20 no seeing how -- what words people were working for,
21 none of that, and then suddenly we are told it has been
22 agreed. I think we still hadn't seen it when we got to
23 the ministerial meeting, and neither had anyone else.

24 So there is a break of faith in what Blair had said
25 to me personally, and then the resolution is feeble and

1 it isn't enough to get that international community
2 coming in, which was the whole point of me staying.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to ask about 1483 and its
4 content, and also its effect, in a minute, but was it
5 a breach of faith, as you say, by Tony Blair, to you
6 because Andrew Turnbull, in evidence to us, in effect
7 said it was Bush who said to the Prime Minister, that
8 the UN would have a vital role, and Andrew goes on:

9 "He was fobbing us off. We took false comfort from
10 it."

11 That might have included, might it, Tony Blair?

12 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes, I think -- but Blair had said
13 to me, "Please stay. I have had this promise, then
14 I will need to you help me to get everyone back in, so
15 we can help Iraq to reconstruct", and that was the thing
16 I said, "Okay, I will go for this", plus I thought we
17 were going to get a Palestinian state.

18 Then there was the Hillsborough meeting and this
19 vital role. Now, I think by then Britain didn't have
20 much leverage because we had given it all away,
21 basically. What could Blair do then? But he didn't
22 talk to me. So he didn't have the leverage, didn't get
23 what he had promised and didn't even say, "Clare, look,
24 I'm sorry, I have tried, this is -- what we can do?" da,
25 da, da. So hopeless.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: It is speculative but, had he done that,
2 might you have reconsidered your decision to go?

3 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I don't know. I don't know because
4 the other thing is it became obvious by his behaviour
5 and people around him that the assurances to me had been
6 about, I think managing not having Robin and I going on
7 the same day and not about what was said and the
8 undertakings that were given.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: You have been critical of the content of
10 UNSCR 1483. Is there an argument that it was -- however
11 limited the role for the United Nations that it
12 conferred, that it did nonetheless work to bring the
13 international community back together? Those who had
14 opposed the invasion -- France and Germany and Russia
15 and others -- all came in behind 1483.

16 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, I think the spirit of the
17 Security Council was pretty broken and pretty unhappy,
18 and people let that through, and there was this, "We
19 don't want blue wash, anyway. We are not going to
20 justify what you have done, you shouldn't have done it."
21 It allowed the World Bank and so on in. Did it --
22 I think Oil For Food maybe was done separately.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

24 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: So people were with their bruises
25 but, "We have got to go on, let them have this." But --

1 I mean, in letters that did start to flow around
2 Whitehall again -- the Japanese Prime Minister, the
3 Indians -- Mubarak phoned -- the Egyptian President
4 phoned Blair -- they were all saying, "Get a strong UN
5 afterwards and we will all come in." So that was what
6 was being lost and that was on the record.

7 So you have to deal with what you can do. The
8 Americans wouldn't do anything. Blair was stuck because
9 he had no leverage now. But it was pretty hopeless and
10 everybody knew that, and it wasn't enough to bring
11 everyone in. And we could have got extra troops, we
12 needed extra troops -- if we had had a stronger UN lead,
13 we might have got that -- to keep order.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm going to ask you something you may
15 decline to accept, but to ask you to put yourself in the
16 position of Tony Blair in early May of 2003. The
17 invasion has happened, the military side is pretty much
18 done and there has to be a United Nations
19 Security Council Resolution to try and build the thing
20 back again.

21 Were the terms of 1483 -- this is you in
22 Tony Blair's seat -- the best he could get from the
23 Americans or -- you have spoken about the loss of
24 leverage. Was it --

25 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: The truth is I wouldn't have been in

1 Tony Blair's seat. I would have said, "First the
2 Palestinian state. First, George, if you want me,
3 really move on that. Not just publish the road map;
4 let's get some progress on the ground. There is no
5 hurry. Transform the atmosphere in the Middle East.
6 Get everyone to help us with Saddam Hussein."

7 Secondly, I would have done it all through the UN.
8 We would have been in such a position: the Middle East
9 would have been happy; the world would have been
10 cooperating; we would have got a beautiful resolution;
11 everything would have been better.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: A counterfactual universe.

13 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, no, that was possible. That's
14 what we should have tried for.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: I have got one question on 1483 and its
16 implications, which we have pursued with other
17 witnesses. You weren't any longer part of government at
18 the time of its signature but it defined the
19 United States and the United Kingdom as joint occupying
20 powers.

21 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes, it did, very unusual.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Thereby giving the United Kingdom, I nearly
23 said "burdening" the United Kingdom, with equal
24 responsibility and accountability for everything that
25 happened under and after 1483 across the whole of Iraq,

1 not just in the south-east. Was that a sensible
2 decision? No other country followed as having occupying
3 power status.

4 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: It probably made Blair feel
5 important. I have read Jeremy Greenstock on how he
6 couldn't do anything. It is just a very sad story. But
7 the important thing is -- I mean, we usually have a UN
8 special representative and in the case of Afghanistan
9 Lakhdar Brahimi led the consultations and then the
10 Loya Jirga and all that. That was the big thing for me
11 that was wrong before 1483.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Though we did have Sergio de Mello --

13 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: By the way, on that Kofi at first
14 refused him. The Americans kept asking for Sergio and
15 in the end Sergio had become the UN human rights
16 commissioner. Came back, of course lost his life. But
17 also was in a weak position. Normally, the UN special
18 representative was in a much stronger position, and the
19 US wanted "coordinator", and it was all pretty insulting
20 and hopeless, but no one had any leverage left, and the
21 Americans were gung-ho still at that time, and you
22 remember when Bush flew on to his silly ship and all
23 that. You know, they thought they had done well.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: I have got one last question on this. Just
25 before you leave the government, it was, was it,

1 becoming apparent that the likely outcome, through and
2 just after the invasion, would be a 1483-type
3 UN Resolution; that's to say, without a UN lead but with
4 a role for the UN -- but with a US lead. Was this
5 something to be planned for as a realistic estimate of
6 what could happen as the outcome?

7 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: In those scenarios that I talked
8 about much earlier we had military action without UN
9 authority, the worst case scenario.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: But this was not the worst case, this was the
11 next case.

12 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, no, no, but all I'm saying is
13 that's similar. So we thought about that, but then
14 I think, with that, with me writing a letter saying, "We
15 need more resources then -- and that's the Treasury
16 working party had said, "The way we don't have to put
17 money on the table is to get everybody in. If you are
18 not going to get everybody in, you have got to come up
19 with money." But they didn't do that either.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: So insufficient or no resources available,
21 therefore no plan?

22 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Therefore, all we could do was our
23 humanitarian stuff, and we and the UN system did that
24 well.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. I'm just going to ask my colleagues

1 whether they have any final questions and then I will
2 turn back, if I may, to you. Roderic?

3 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You say that we should have allowed more
4 time, we should have done it all through the UN, and
5 I think you said earlier that the Russians, the French
6 and the Germans were essentially saying that they would
7 be prepared to agree to military action but not at this
8 time.

9 But we have heard the argument from Jack Straw and
10 Tony Blair that President Chirac had said in his
11 broadcast on 10 March that they weren't going to agree
12 in any circumstances. The Prime Minister of the day,
13 Mr Blair, says:

14 "It wasn't that they would veto any resolution, it
15 is that they would veto a resolution that authorised
16 force in the event of breach."

17 Wasn't it the case that --

18 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: That was -- in my view that was
19 a lie, a deliberate lie. At that point -- if you
20 remember Blair, he was grey and thin and under enormous
21 strain at the failure of the second resolution. At that
22 point John Prescott brought Gordon Brown and him
23 together, Gordon came in, and the strategy was: blame
24 the French and claim that they'd said they would veto
25 anything. And they said it at the Cabinet and

1 I thought: they can't have said that, it doesn't make
2 any sense, because there had been a written statement or
3 memorandum or something by France, Russia and, I think,
4 Germany. Was Germany a temporary member or something?

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: No -- yes.

6 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Or was it just a ploy because it
7 was Germany -- saying, "We agree there might need to be
8 military action," but not yes.

9 And, of course, later somebody sent me the whole of
10 Chirac's statement, which was being sent out by the
11 French embassy to those who wrote -- but I didn't see it
12 at the time -- and it is absolutely clear within
13 everything Chirac said that he's not saying, "Never," he
14 is saying, "Not now." And we had Blix asking for more
15 time and getting some success.

16 So that was just -- it was one of the big deceptions,
17 and it was the only way that they could get through, to
18 blame the French, and you remember, the Americans
19 stopped buying French fries and all that?

20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You say the full text of Chirac's
21 statement was being sent out by the French embassy. Did
22 you talk to the French about it? You presumably had
23 your own contacts with France.

24 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: At that time I asked my private
25 secretary to get me a -- find out what the French had

1 really said, but this was very fraught and he got this
2 (inaudible) briefings.

3 Shortly after I saw the French Ambassador, and he
4 said, "If only Britain and France would cooperate in the
5 Security Council, we can achieve a lot," and that France
6 was very hurt and upset by the blaming and that it
7 wasn't true that they were saying never, but he would
8 like us to get back together and could I get Blair to
9 ring Chirac, which I tried to do.

10 So, you know, that had gone down, but France wanted
11 to get back to a relationship but Blair said, oh, he was
12 going to America, and the French Ambassador said,
13 "Please, would you get him to ring before he goes and
14 that might help the relationship." But Blair wouldn't
15 do that. He said, "I will ring when I get back."

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: The argument we heard from, I think it
17 was Jonathan Powell, was that at this point asking for
18 more time really wasn't going to make any difference at
19 all. It was effectively clear that Saddam wasn't
20 complying. The French and the Russians, but the French
21 in particular, had made clear that they weren't going to
22 agree to a resolution authorising military action, so
23 actually what was the point of seeking more time.

24 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: That was their line at the time, so
25 they have to keep saying it, but it is not true. And

1 Blix was saying -- do you remember? -- I think people
2 will remember, he said, "These are not toothpicks," when
3 he got rid of all those ballistic missiles, and I have
4 heard Blix since -- and I have read his book, of course,
5 and he said he started off believing there were WMD but
6 then he was getting to the point when they were letting
7 him break up ballistic missiles. They were saying, "Can
8 you bring anything to test the desert? We think we have
9 poured things away here. Could you find out that it has
10 gone?" And he started to see he was getting some
11 progress. And they were terrified. They started
12 smearing Blix, briefing against Blix. They were
13 terrified of Blix's success because then their
14 *causus belli* had gone.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But how much more time was needed?

16 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, there was talk of a resolution
17 from the Chileans asking for 45 days. People were
18 saying -- do you remember, Jack Straw said, "We have to
19 deploy the troops to prevent war, to show we are willing
20 to use it," and then they said, "We've got to go now,"
21 because they can't leave them sweating in the desert?
22 Do you remember the contradiction? And in fact you
23 could have rotated them and brought some home, and if
24 they had done a bit more preparation, it would have been
25 a good thing. I mean, Jeremy Greenstock talked about

1 six months.

2 The point is, there was no emergency. No one had
3 attacked anyone, there wasn't any new WMD. We could
4 have taken more time and done it right.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But there is a real point. You have got
6 the troops deployed out there in huge numbers. You
7 can't just rotate them because you have them prepared,
8 the right kind of forces prepared for them in the right
9 military configurations, and you can't just leave them
10 there indefinitely. So --

11 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, I'm sorry but they weren't
12 ready. They have said that themselves: They weren't
13 ready. And they hadn't faced up to their Geneva
14 Convention obligations. And it is not just go in and
15 bomb a few things and take over, you have got to keep
16 order then, and they weren't ready for that. So I just
17 don't agree.

18 You needn't have deployed them that quickly, but
19 given that you deployed them, you could have had much
20 better preparation, and that would have been a good
21 thing, and got more equipment. And you can bring people
22 home and send them out and they can do some training.
23 Troops do that all the time.

24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But we have heard from other witnesses
25 that this process of inspections was just allowing

1 Saddam Hussein to "jerk our strings" -- I think is one
2 of the expressions that has been used. And he could
3 manipulate it, he could conceal, he could spin it out,
4 and he could just do this until all the pressure had
5 gone off him.

6 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: But that isn't true. I mean, they
7 were saying things like that. In fact, the Arab world
8 was talking more and more about taking him out, getting
9 him into exile, you know, getting more pressure on him,
10 getting a resolution of the problem and him out without
11 a war. It is just not true that he was jerking any
12 strings. He was -- the pressures were mounting and
13 mounting. Why did they agree to the ballistic missiles
14 all being broken up? They were worried.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So you seriously believe that with more
16 time we would have got support or acceptance in the
17 Middle East region, we would have had support in the
18 Security Council, we would have had the French and
19 others on board?

20 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I can't know what would have
21 happened, but there would have been a much, much higher
22 chance of getting all those things and we would have
23 been more ready, and if we had tried and done all those
24 things, there would have been much more honour in what
25 was done, and there was no reason to rush, none

1 whatsoever, except that the Americans wanted to go. And
2 they, I believe, were scared of Blix being successful,
3 and they started to smear him. There is no doubt about
4 it, if you go back to those days and look at the media.
5 Dreadful.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Martin? Lawrence?

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just a couple of questions. First
8 on the money again. You have mentioned resources and
9 you used, some minutes ago, the figure of £60 million.
10 Can you just explain where this amount came from and
11 when it was negotiated?

12 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I'm speaking from memory on the
13 amount but I think it was -- this was -- we had been
14 asking the Treasury and Blair for money, if they wanted
15 us to do more, for a considerable time, and then there
16 was a letter from Paul Boateng, who was the financial
17 secretary to the Treasury at the time, giving
18 30 million, I think it was -- I'm speaking from memory
19 here, but it is roughly right --

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: 20.

21 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: -- to the military for their Geneva
22 Convention humanitarian obligations, out of which they
23 suddenly ordered the food -- and I think this was after,
24 certainly, the special forces had gone on, so it had all
25 started -- and I think 60 million for us to draw down.

1 So we have our own contingency reserve, which we had
2 already spent a lot of, and then, by proving that we
3 needed it, we could draw down that 60 million.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Where did that number come from?
5 Was this your proposal to them or their proposal to you
6 as to what was affordable at the time?

7 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: The number -- I don't remember.
8 Officials talk to each other a lot. 60 and 30 is 90, so
9 it is a bit under 100. I guess it was something like
10 that, but I don't know.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Were you content with that number?
12 Did you think it would be enough for the short-term?

13 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: It was all we had and we were in
14 a crisis. I was still hoping to reunite the
15 international community.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So the Treasury strategy at the time
17 is to get the World Bank and others in, in a sense, to
18 pick up the costs of --

19 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes, and there is a paper. You can
20 check. There is a paper to that effect, saying, "We
21 must get the UN lead because then we will get the
22 World Bank and the IMF, we will get all the other
23 parties and we will all contribute and it won't be a big
24 cost."

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you discuss with this

1 Gordon Brown in the period after the invasion, in terms
2 of --

3 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, I think by then Gordon was back
4 in with Tony, back in with blaming the French. It was
5 all different. No more cups of coffee. He said to me,
6 "Make sure you prepare -- because it was in the media
7 that we weren't preparing, which wasn't true, as we have
8 said. It is a matter of record. And, "Even if you
9 leave the government, I'll have you back," things like
10 that.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So, just in terms of where we were
12 on the financial side, you had got a provision but it
13 was coming rather late, and it would do so long as you
14 were able to get the World Bank in, but there would be
15 a far greater drain on resource if you weren't able to
16 get the World Bank in?

17 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Well, you probably have -- the
18 amount that America spent is -- I can't remember now:
19 a billion a week or ...

20 THE CHAIRMAN: 18 billion.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: They authorised 18 billion.

22 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Yes, so £60 million? You know, it
23 was nothing. There wasn't serious British strategy for
24 no international cooperation, and that had to have money
25 in it; DFID couldn't do it without resources and we

1 asked and asked and asked and neither the Prime Minister
2 nor the Treasury came up with anything except the
3 60 million at the moment when they did.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Another question relating to the
5 period just before your resignation, when it was clear
6 that ORHA had failed and that Bremer was going to be
7 appointed and John Sawers was going to go out. Did you
8 talks to John Sawers at all before he went out?

9 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, I knew him because he had been
10 the -- in Number 10 as the -- and we had worked on
11 Sierra Leone together. He had been the kind of liaison
12 for the Prime Minister because we were very -- in
13 a strong position in Sierra Leone. But, no, I didn't
14 talk to him before he went out.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you weren't engaged with the
16 question of the replacement of ORHA?

17 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: No, the Coalition Provisional
18 Authority? No, that was all being done by America.
19 I don't think anyone bothered to talk to Britain about
20 any of it, no.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Lastly, just in terms of the general
22 approach you are taking and the issues you have
23 mentioned of Palestine and the role of the UN, now, the
24 Prime Minister of the time had clearly spoken a lot
25 about this issue, going back to Crawford, and had made

1 it a major feature of, I think, broad foreign policy, of
2 which Iraq was a part, and he reaffirmed his commitment
3 to this issue when he spoke to us last Friday.

4 I suppose it can be -- we have already put it -- and
5 I'm not sure we put it to him but we certainly put it to
6 others -- that there was a degree of unreality about the
7 expectations of what could be expected at the time, and
8 I think he said in retrospect it probably wasn't a time
9 when you were going to see a lot of progress because of
10 the effects of the second Intifada, as, obviously,
11 others have remarked.

12 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Although we had the road map, so
13 that's a contradiction.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There was the road map, which was
15 progress, but what was there -- was it ever that
16 realistic at this time to expect that it would be that
17 straightforward to move to a Palestinian state? The
18 questions I'm asking are really about how much you
19 really could have hoped at this time, even if your
20 working relationships had been excellent with Blair, on
21 these sorts of issues?

22 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I think Tony Blair sincerely wants
23 to contribute to peace in the Middle East, which is the
24 root of the all the unhappiness and anger in the Arab
25 and Muslim world and so on, as well as terrible

1 suffering, oppression and breaches of international law
2 and all the rest of it, but he doesn't seem to be
3 capable of using the leverage that he has got in his
4 hands. He was in a moment of massive leverage.
5 He should have sequenced it differently and then we
6 would have seen. I mean, either the Americans would go
7 on their own or we might have got some serious progress.

8 Similarly, it seems to me -- you know, Israel has
9 access to the European market, very important to it, in
10 a treaty with human rights obligations, and no one
11 invokes them, and there's another piece of leverage that
12 isn't used, and Britain is one of the countries that
13 doesn't call for that.

14 By the way, I think he is absolutely sincere in
15 thinking that what he did over Iraq was the right thing,
16 by the way. I'm not saying he is insincere. I think he
17 was willing to be deceitful about it because he thought
18 he was right, and that's a serious question, and this is
19 back to that point about the special relationship. You
20 know, what is it and does Britain have any leverage and
21 when do have some leverage, do we use it or not, and we
22 didn't and he didn't try.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just lastly on the UN question --
24 I suppose it is a version of the same question -- you
25 have talked about the UN concern about blue wash, that

1 they didn't want to give retrospective endorsement to
2 what the coalition had done, and again we have had
3 evidence of some reluctance in the UN to get themselves
4 so involved. So was it only a case of us not pushing
5 enough with the Americans? Do you think the UN really
6 was ready to take on a much larger role, given how
7 difficult they knew it was going to be?

8 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Tony Blair had a conversation with
9 Kofi and Kofi said, "We don't want to run post-war
10 Iraq," and he took a lot of comfort from that; he kept
11 repeating it, he clung on to it. But they didn't run
12 post-invasion Afghanistan. You can give the UN its
13 proper role but it isn't going to run everything; it
14 hasn't got the scale of bureaucracy.

15 This whole question of sovereignty and the powers of
16 an occupying power and the occupying power doesn't have
17 a legitimate way of creating the new government,
18 therefore you need the UN to do that, that's not running
19 it. Kofi didn't want to bless what had taken place,
20 "blue wash". He used that phrase to me. But they would
21 have taken on that proper role but it wasn't on offer.
22 The UN was very bruised and it could hear more of the
23 rhetoric coming out of the US, insulting the UN and
24 trying to call the special representative a coordinator.
25 Kofi even gave in on asking Sergio to go. I know it

1 broke his heart when Sergio was killed because he was
2 a personal friend. And that was an American demand and
3 Kofi didn't want it, Sergio didn't want it.

4 So Tony Blair builds on that Kofi Annan saying, "We
5 don't want to run Iraq" -- of course they don't -- to
6 excuse the feeble role that was given to the UN.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The Foreign Office did think they
8 had done quite well in getting the resolution through.

9 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: I have read Jeremy Greenstock's
10 evidence. He got rid of "coordinator"; he got a better
11 phrase. But I do agree with the points that were in the
12 Chairman's questions. Britain had virtually no leverage
13 by then.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: This Inquiry has got two basic tasks,
15 I think, to fulfil. The first is to establish
16 a reliable account of what happened from many people's
17 different perspectives, and the other, of course, is to
18 identify serious lessons to be learned from that whole
19 experience.

20 I would invite you to give any comments you have
21 with that in mind, by way of final remarks today.

22 RT HON CLARE SHORT MP: Thank you.

23 The first lesson is for the Whitehall system in its
24 relationships with the Department for International
25 Development. If we are in a post-conflict or post-major

1 emergency, you have got to involve DFID in the bigger
2 picture; you can't just leave the humanitarian, and as
3 I say, we are the lead on the World Bank, and Whitehall
4 seemed to freeze away from that. I know Number 10 was
5 telling them not to but I think they need to learn it
6 deeply and everyone needs to get together earlier.

7 The lessons for government. I think, as I have
8 said, that the machinery of government has broken down
9 quite badly, and answering things endlessly to the
10 media. The House of Commons is now so powerless, it is
11 a rubber stamp.

12 Too much legislation. They can get anything through
13 and it is not properly scrutinised and the policy is not
14 properly thought through.

15 But I think, when you add secrecy and deceit, the
16 system becomes positively dangerous. I'm still shocked
17 that Britain could do what happened in Iraq and it makes
18 me fear for our government system and we need to learn
19 the lessons so that it can never malfunction so
20 dreadfully again, and that's one of the jobs of your
21 Inquiry and I do hope those lessons will be learned.

22 Thirdly, I think that the role of the Attorney
23 General is completely unsafe now. I mean, poor old
24 Peter Goldsmith. But he was put into the House of
25 Lords -- he wasn't a politician in his own right. Put

1 into the House of Lords by Blair, put in the government
2 by Blair. He was a commercial lawyer. He was kind of
3 excluded and then let in if he said the right thing.
4 Didn't tell us the truth.

5 I think Britain should re-examine the role of
6 Attorney General. I think we would have been much
7 better off having the Foreign Office lawyers' legal
8 advice and, if need be, the government could have
9 employed someone to say, "There is a different view."

10 I think the whole role of the Attorney General has
11 proved to be completely unsafe. I think the Attorney
12 General didn't tell us the truth and misled us as well,
13 but I think the role is unsafe. I think he was in
14 a very difficult position.

15 The fourth thing, I think, is about the special
16 relationship. We really need a serious debate in our
17 country about what we mean by it, whether it is
18 unconditional poodle-like adoration and do whatever
19 America says, or whether we have bottom lines and we
20 sometimes agree and we sometimes don't and we use our
21 influence responsibly, and I think we have ended up
22 humiliating ourselves and being a less good friend to
23 America than we could have been if we had stood up for
24 an independent policy.

25 But that's a bigger question, because you should

1 see, when America asks for something, the Prime Minister
2 and the Chancellor all get terribly excited and love
3 America asking us to do something, and we really need to
4 rethink that.

5 Those are my lessons.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

7 I would like to thank our witness this morning and
8 to thank all of you who have sat here through this
9 morning to hear the testimony.

10 With that, I'll close this session and this
11 afternoon we resume at 2 pm, when we shall be hearing
12 from Hilary Benn, and later on we shall hear from
13 Sir Peter Ricketts in his role as Permanent Secretary of
14 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

15 Thank you all very much.

16 (12.50 pm)

17 (The short adjournment)

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