

1 Wednesday, 14 July 2010

2 (10.00 am)

3 GENERAL SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning. Well, good morning and welcome  
5 to those who are here this morning. I won't say  
6 "everyone", that's rather too large a word, but good  
7 morning and welcome, and welcome to our witness.

8 Today we are hearing from a number of witnesses and  
9 this afternoon they are John Dodds, a former Treasury  
10 civil servant, and the Rt Hon The Lord Boateng, the  
11 former Chief Secretary to the Treasury and a member of  
12 the Cabinet at the time of the invasion of Iraq, but  
13 this morning our witness is General  
14 Sir Kevin O'Donoghue.

15 General O'Donoghue held a series of roles throughout  
16 the course of United Kingdom operations in Iraq, and we  
17 shall be asking him about those today. Just to be  
18 clear, from 2002 to 2004, you were Deputy Chief of  
19 Defence Staff for health?

20 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: That's correct.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: From 2005 and 2007, you were Chief of Defence  
22 Logistics and then, in April 2007, following the  
23 merger of the Defence Logistics Organisation and the  
24 Defence Procurement Agency, you became Chief of Defence  
25 Materiel, the post you currently hold.

1 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Indeed.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: As CDM and also as Chief of Defence  
3 Logistics before that, you were ex officio a member of  
4 the Defence Council and the Defence Board.

5 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Indeed.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I say this on each occasion: we  
7 recognise that witnesses give evidence based on their  
8 recollection of events and we, of course, check what we  
9 hear against the papers to which we have access and  
10 which we are still receiving.

11 I remind each witness on each occasion that they  
12 will later be asked to sign a transcript of the evidence  
13 to the effect that the evidence they have given is  
14 truthful, fair and accurate.

15 Now, this morning, Sir Roderic Lyne regrets he is  
16 unable to be present, but he will be with us for the  
17 afternoon sessions.

18 With those preliminaries, I'll turn straight to  
19 Baroness Prashar to open the questions.

20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you, Chairman. Sir Kevin, you  
21 were the first Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Health). Is that  
22 right?

23 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: That's right.

24 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can you just explain what your role  
25 was between 2002 and 2004, please?

1 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes. As you say, I was the first  
2 DCDS (Health). My role was delivering -- ensuring the  
3 delivery of the outputs of the Defence Medical Services.  
4 Alongside me, another 3-star was the Surgeon General,  
5 who was responsible for clinical outcomes, clinical  
6 governance, professional development and training of the  
7 Defence Medical Services.

8 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So you were dealing with  
9 administration and --

10 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, and ensuring the delivery of  
11 the outputs, which were essentially twofold. One is  
12 trained military medical regulars and reserves to deploy  
13 when required, and that training happened in the  
14 National Health Service, and the other side was the  
15 health of the armed forces.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry to interrupt. We have got  
17 a transcription going on. It would be kind if you could  
18 go a bit slower.

19 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Sorry, got it. I was warned.

20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So this was kind of a double-headed  
21 approach, that you would deal with the administration  
22 and the Surgeon was dealing with the clinical side. Is  
23 that right?

24 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Absolutely.

25 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Now, the 1998 defence review

1 highlighted the medical support as an area of weakness  
2 when it came to expeditionary operations.

3 What improvements had been made in the provision of  
4 medical support by the time planning commenced in 2002  
5 for any potential military invasion in Iraq?

6 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: That I don't think I can answer.  
7 I arrived in September 2002. The planning was underway.  
8 I can tell you about the planning specifically for  
9 Iraq --

10 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: That would be very helpful.

11 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: -- but what had happened between  
12 1998 and 2002 --

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: No. My question really is the  
14 weakness had been identified in 1998, but I really want  
15 to know, by the time you got there, what improvements  
16 had been made?

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Or what was the state you inherited  
18 in September?

19 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes. Well, the -- the regular  
20 medical services were undermanned, but recruiting was in  
21 place. The medical equipment was being put in place  
22 in September, the medical modules were being -- the  
23 equipment for the medical modules was being gathered  
24 together, but they weren't -- or rather, the planning to  
25 gather them together was in place. We weren't actually

1       allowed to buy anything until later. So the planning  
2       was quite well-advanced. It was underway. It was  
3       well-advanced. People knew what the plan was going to  
4       be, depending on whether we went in from the north or  
5       from the south, of course, different plans, but the  
6       equipment -- the UORs had not yet been ordered.

7   BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So what you are saying is, when you  
8       arrived in 2002, the planning was advanced?

9   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

10   BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: They had made the improvements that  
11       were recommended in 1998. Would you say that?

12   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I actually don't know what  
13       improvements were recommended in 1998, I am afraid, but  
14       the planning process -- you can't do the medical plan  
15       until you know the operational plan. When you know the  
16       operational plan and you have got the casualty  
17       estimates, then you can do the medical plan, and that  
18       medical plan was in hand and it was there.

19       The equipment wasn't all there, but the planning was  
20       well underway.

21   BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I understand. So what were the  
22       assumptions on which the medical planning for the  
23       deployment was based? What were the assumptions on  
24       which the planning was based?

25   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: The casualty estimates. If you

1 will let me refer to my notes, had we gone in from the  
2 north -- if I can just talk about the overall plan to  
3 start with -- we believe we needed four field hospitals,  
4 180 beds in Cyprus and we would evacuate by C130, which  
5 would require building airstrips.

6 As it happened, we went in from the south, from  
7 Kuwait. This plan required the PCRFB, the primary  
8 casualty receiving facility, HMS Argos, two 200-bed  
9 field hospitals deployed, a third one as a strategic  
10 reserve and casualty staging flights through Cyprus,  
11 which had its hospital beds increased by 90.

12 So that was the plan that we then got to and that's  
13 the one we executed.

14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I see.

15 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: The estimates, I think you were  
16 interested in. Yes, sorry. Yes, we reckoned on  
17 a 30-day campaign, one day intensive combat, five days  
18 normal combat, 24 days routine activity and the  
19 estimates there were 30 killed in action, 120 wounded in  
20 action as the base case.

21 The worst case was a second day of intensive combat,  
22 50 killed in action, 190 wounded in action. That's from  
23 the ground forces. That's a divisional estimate. Three  
24 to six aircraft lost to enemy action. Had chemical  
25 weapons been used, perhaps 200 casualties for treatment

1 and 100 killed. Had it been a single, well-executed  
2 attack, biological weapons, difficult to plan in  
3 advance, restrictions of movement of course, flying home  
4 an index case to sort out what agent it was. That index  
5 case would have come back in isolation, in an isolation  
6 pod, and we had the third field hospital as an isolation  
7 hospital, if that's what we needed.

8 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But were there any shortfalls at the  
9 time of deployment and what was done to address them?

10 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: There were shortfalls in some of  
11 the medical modules.

12 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What was done to address this?

13 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: We had worked out what equipment  
14 we needed. We were allowed to discuss that informally  
15 with industry in, I think, about mid-November. We  
16 weren't allowed to place the orders until early to  
17 mid December, which we did £34 million/£35 million worth  
18 of UORs, and those came in between then and March.

19 Some items may not have arrived by March, but they  
20 came fairly shortly afterwards and we topped up the  
21 modules.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Just before we move further ahead, I would  
23 like to get clear in my own mind, are the basic planning  
24 assumptions for the medical side of a major operation,  
25 which, as it were, sit there, and then, when it comes to

1       planning for a real operation, the two either come  
2       together or there may be differences in the actual  
3       planning for the large-scale operation now currently  
4       being planned for?

5               Is there a background set of planning assumptions or  
6       is it simply specific to an operation that is being  
7       contemplated?

8   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  There are a set of background  
9       planning assumptions, which are the defence planning  
10      assumptions, and the defence directory, which tells you  
11      how many regular field hospitals, how many reserve field  
12      hospitals and so on.  You can't actually determine  
13      exactly what you need to deploy until you know the  
14      geography, the commander's operational plan and the  
15      likely casualty estimates.

16  THE CHAIRMAN:  Did Telic, as it were, conform to the  
17      underlying planning assumptions on the medical side?

18  GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  Yes.

19  THE CHAIRMAN:  That's really the key, I suppose.

20  GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  Yes.

21  THE CHAIRMAN:  We were, as it were, scaled up to do it at  
22      that level of -- with a large-scale land package.

23  GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  Yes, because large-scale is not  
24      intended to go on forever.

25  THE CHAIRMAN:  Thank you.

1 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can I just move on to the planning  
2 and the delivery of medical capability? When did you  
3 become involved in the medical planning for operations  
4 in Iraq?

5 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: September.

6 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: September. What percentage of your  
7 time was being devoted to Iraq during this period?

8 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think, during that period, most  
9 of my time between then and deployment.

10 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So you were actually giving most of  
11 your time to the plan?

12 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, I think. It was quite  
13 a long time ago.

14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: It was a long time ago, indeed.

15 Now, we heard from Lord Boyce that he was not able  
16 to consult the chief of defence logistics during the  
17 preparations because he was restricted, told by the  
18 Secretary of State not to do so. Did these restrictions  
19 apply to the medical planning as well?

20 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Well, not from September onwards,  
21 when I had arrived.

22 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So from September onwards, there  
23 were no restrictions and you were able to go ahead?

24 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, whether there had been  
25 recollections before that, I'm afraid I don't know.

1 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So you were able to procure the  
2 necessary medical supplies from industry?

3 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No. Oh, no. No, no. We were  
4 allowed to informally discuss with industry  
5 from October. Sorry, from November.

6 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: November 2002?

7 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Then he were able to procure  
8 from December onwards. You are not allowed -- I say one  
9 is not allowed to procure anything for a specific  
10 operation until the Treasury give that authority, and  
11 that was given in December.

12 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Okay. How did you use the casualty  
13 estimates to assist with medical contingency planning?

14 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Having been given by the  
15 operational staff the likely casualty estimates and  
16 deciding on the evacuation rate, "How long do you intend  
17 to keep people in the field hospital? When did you  
18 intend to evacuate them back to the UK?" you can then  
19 work out the number of beds you need.

20 So for role 3 that's the mathematical process. You  
21 have to take account, not only of your own casualties,  
22 but enemy prisoners of war and any civilians that might  
23 come in as well.

24 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You mentioned the chemical and  
25 biological warfare, but what medical planning had been

1           undertaken in the event that the Iraqis used chemical  
2           and biological weapons against the UK forces?

3   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  As I said, we estimated perhaps  
4           200 casualties for treatment, and that is not really  
5           different from other sorts of casualties.  Of course,  
6           it's different, but the way they are looked after is not  
7           dissimilar, with the 100 killed.

8           Biological, there were plans for restriction of  
9           movement, an index case or cases would be flown back to  
10          UK in isolation and then we would have isolated those  
11          affected until we knew what it was, what the treatment  
12          might be, and we wouldn't have brought back casualties  
13          with biological illness until we knew what we were doing  
14          with them, until we knew what the effect was.

15  BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:  But was sort of December  
16          authorisation in time to procure the medical supplies?

17  GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  No, we ordered everything.  As  
18          I said, £34 million of UORs were ordered.  Not  
19          everything arrived by the time we needed to deploy it  
20          but as that equipment that was late came in, so we  
21          deployed it.  I don't think there was anything -- this  
22          is for the Surgeon General at the time to say, but he  
23          did say at the House of Commons Defence Committee there  
24          was no clinical issue about that lack of medical  
25          equipment.

1 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So the shortage of that equipment  
2 didn't actually --

3 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: According to the Surgeon General  
4 of the time.

5 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But with 46,000 UK forces deployed  
6 to the Gulf at the time, did you feel confident that  
7 there was a robust plan, if attacks did occur?

8 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

9 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You were quite confident of that?

10 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes. Where it wavered a little,  
11 for interest, is when we tried to deploy  
12 33 Field Hospital out of Marchwood military port and  
13 Greenpeace blocked it and trapped the ships in the  
14 harbour. We then had to fly a very much smaller field  
15 hospital out to 22 Field Hospital to set up in Kuwait,  
16 but 33 got out there in time for the launching  
17 operation.

18 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can I move on to the sort of  
19 reservists and the National Health Service?

20 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Hm-mm.

21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: The NEO report into Operation Telic  
22 said:

23 "The mounting of Operation Telic was further  
24 complicated by longstanding shortfalls in specialist  
25 personnel. Specialisations most affected included

1 medical personnel, including nurses, surgeons and  
2 anaesthetists."

3 Did you address these shortfalls to ensure the  
4 deployment was fully manned?

5 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, the shortfall of regulars  
6 was made up by reservists. There were something like  
7 2,800 medics deployed and about 700 or 800 of those were  
8 reservists.

9 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Were you satisfied that the Defence  
10 Medical Services could fully support the invasion forces  
11 and the subsequent operations while you remained in the  
12 post?

13 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Oh, yes. Where it got difficult  
14 was we had -- I'm trying think back -- we had Bosnia,  
15 Kosovo, a number of other operations going as well.

16 The key in Iraq was to make sure we had exactly the  
17 right people in Iraq. What we started to do was invite  
18 National Health Trusts, hospitals, to send a surgical  
19 team, a surgeon, anaesthetist, some operating theatre  
20 technicians, as a package for perhaps three months to  
21 Kosovo, to look after any injuries that might have  
22 happened in places like that.

23 So we made sure that Iraq was properly staffed and  
24 some of the other operations -- were properly staffed,  
25 but not necessarily by the Defence Medical Services.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Usha, I would like to butt in again.

2 This is on a tangent, but we've been taking quite  
3 a lot of evidence about expeditionary police numbers and  
4 available manpower which, on a voluntary basis, has  
5 proved very difficult in the British system. In the  
6 case of medical staff and the National Health Service,  
7 this is not a problem, to find volunteers to take part  
8 in packages or to find Health Trusts to supply them?

9 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, and of course there are two  
10 sorts of volunteers. There are the TA -- well, there  
11 are the regulars who work in the National Health Trusts  
12 because that's where they have to work in order to stay  
13 credited and trained properly across a range of clinical  
14 conditions that they need to. Then there are the TA,  
15 who by and large work in a National Health Trust  
16 because, otherwise, they are not clinically accredited  
17 and up to date, and then there are civilian  
18 National Health people, personnel, who will volunteer.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: At what point did you begin  
21 discussing with the National Health Service the likely  
22 size of the scale that you would require from the  
23 National Health Service staff and the reservists?

24 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: We didn't use any  
25 National Health Service staff for the first part of the

1 operation and I'm not sure that we used them ever in  
2 Iraq.

3 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: When did you start having  
4 discussions with them, that you might require them in  
5 terms of planning?

6 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Of the reservists?

7 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Hm-mm.

8 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I don't know. I think that was  
9 going on when I arrived. Certainly the ramp process,  
10 the return of military personnel to the UK, injured  
11 military personnel to the UK, a lot of planning had gone  
12 into that and I can talk about that separately if you  
13 wish.

14 So I think we were talking to the  
15 National Health Service because, when we did get on to  
16 inviting the National Health Service to provide  
17 civilian, if you will, clinicians, we didn't go to those  
18 hospitals that hosted a TA field hospital, otherwise it  
19 is a double-whammy, so to speak.

20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You were talking to them, and what  
21 preparation was being afforded to them?

22 THE CHAIRMAN: To the reservists.

23 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Oh, the field hospitals went  
24 to -- up in Yorkshire, two medical Brigade Headquarters.  
25 There is a very good training set-up there, in a hangar.

1           It is what looks like a field hospital and the  
2           training --

3   BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:  From your point of view, was  
4           it satisfactory?

5   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  Oh, yes, yes, yes.

6   BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:  You were quite content with the  
7           preparation?

8   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  Yes, I was, yes.  I think where  
9           it might have got difficult -- and I'm really just  
10          speculating here -- is where individual reservists came  
11          out later to join and they, of course, hadn't gone  
12          through the collective training.  So their collective  
13          training had to be done when they were in theatre.

14                 But certainly, for the assault phase, there was no  
15          problem.

16   BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:  Looking back, what lessons did the  
17          Defence Medical Services draw from this invasion?

18   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  I think two.  One is that we need  
19          more regular medics.  The regular doctors have patient  
20          lists, the way the process works, and they can't be away  
21          too long from the National Health Service.  One reason  
22          is their public waiting list.

23                 The other didn't occur at the start of Iraq, but if  
24          you send a surgeon anaesthetist and some professional  
25          nurses and technicians to a place like Kosovo, where

1       there is no real work to do, they are there as an  
2       insurance policy, I think the medics would say three  
3       months is about as long as you can leave them there  
4       before they have to go back to pick up their skills,  
5       I think what the Surgeon General would call their  
6       medical dexterity.

7               So you need rather more, as you mentioned,  
8       anaesthetists and orthopaedic surgeons, general  
9       surgeons. Some of the professional nurses, we were  
10      short of IDU nurses. So more people.

11             That was put in place during the campaign and there  
12      were pay increases and so on, and rewards were put in  
13      place.

14   BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So steps were taken?

15   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Steps were taken. The second  
16      thing, although I'm a great believer in UORs for the  
17      right reason, we didn't have enough on the shelves. We  
18      should have had more equipment to the shelves.

19             I think it came at an awkward time, and you might  
20      say, "You would say that, wouldn't you?" We just  
21      changed the whole process of the medical modules, the  
22      medical modules -- for example, an orthopaedic module --  
23      the defence consultant adviser, the senior orthopaedic  
24      surgeon will say what he wants in that module. You then  
25      start spending money and gathering it in.

1           The reason I'm in favour of UORs is some of that  
2           equipment of course can be gathered in and put on the  
3           shelves. Other bits of equipment, you really need the  
4           latest bit of equipment. So it is better there to buy  
5           that at the time.

6   BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So it gives you flexibility?

7   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes. So the two messages are  
8           more people, which was underway while I was there, and  
9           more equipment on the shelves but not all of it.

10   BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.

11   THE CHAIRMAN: Before passing the baton to  
12           Sir Martin Gilbert, just pursuing that last point, there  
13           is a dilemma there, isn't there, between, if you like,  
14           the shelf-life of fully-stocked shelves and the need to  
15           have the latest stuff coming in when an operation  
16           becomes imminent? How is that addressed? Is it  
17           a matter of a rolling judgment to be made? How does one  
18           tackle it? You say there is a lesson. I'm sure there  
19           is.

20   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: UORs we need for three reasons.  
21           One is geography and, you know, you might need something  
22           special for a particular area of the world. Second is  
23           the opposition, you need to keep up with the threat.  
24           The third one is, when you are talking about -- is one  
25           where it is sometimes better not to stock things. That

1 is a rolling judgment, as to what you put on the shelf  
2 and what you don't.

3 My memory might be failing me here, but I think it  
4 was ventilators, where we did have them on the shelf and  
5 the defence consultant adviser, when he saw them, said  
6 "They are 20 years old. They are too old. We need new  
7 ones", and I think it was ventilators, but we then --

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Because there would be some kind of chemical  
9 filter which would age or there are better ones now  
10 available?

11 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Much better, yes, more modern,  
12 and the doctors, of course, want the ones that they are  
13 using in the National Health. So it is better in  
14 a sense to -- which is what we did -- get an enabling  
15 contract with the National Health, who use thousands of  
16 these things, and say "Can we call off 100 at very short  
17 notice and pay for them at the time?" and that's what we  
18 have started to do.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Martin, over to you.

20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Can I turn to the time when you were  
21 Chief of Defence Logistics and, could you tell us what  
22 percentage of your time was devoted to Iraq and did this  
23 change over time?

24 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: A proportion of my time was  
25 devoted to Iraq, but bear in mind it was January 2005

1 when I arrived. Iraq had been going for a while. The  
2 war had been won. Actually, it was fairly peaceful in  
3 the latter days of my time as DCDS (Health). I can  
4 remember going to Basra to see the field hospital and it  
5 was fine, although there were an awful lot of young men  
6 around on the streets with nothing to do, and that was  
7 my sort of impression.

8 By the time I got to be Chief of Defence  
9 Logistics, there were more -- there was more than just  
10 Iraq going on. We had Afghanistan, we had a number of  
11 different operations going on, which I was supporting  
12 and I also had the strategic goal to complete, the  
13 strategic goal of reducing costs by 20 per cent.

14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I'll come on to that in a moment, but  
15 can you describe what the Defence Logistic  
16 Organisation's responsibilities were in relation to the  
17 operations in Iraq when you arrived?

18 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes. If I can talk about the  
19 Defence Procurement Agency and the Defence Logistic  
20 Organisation. The Defence Logistic Organisation was  
21 responsible for the supply chain, getting equipment and  
22 commodities from the UK or from Germany, from the base  
23 area, out to Iraq and, in the UK, from industry into  
24 what we call the purple gateway, which is where all the  
25 stuff gets into the military defence supply chain, and

1 getting that out to theatre in the priority given by the  
2 Permanent Joint Headquarters. So we were the  
3 deliverers, but the decision on priorities came from the  
4 Permanent Joint Headquarters. So that was half of it,  
5 if you like. The other half -- sorry, and those  
6 commodities included ammunition and food and clothing as  
7 well as the spares for the vehicles and equipment.

8 The other half was actually project teams making  
9 sure that the equipment that was out there was  
10 supported. So where there was -- in-service equipment,  
11 the support, the spares and so on, the maintenance  
12 schedules were all done by the DLO.

13 Where new equipment was required, the DPA tended to  
14 buy that. Once they had bought it, the requirement to  
15 support it came to us, and there were some variations on  
16 that. Mastiff, which you will know about, because the  
17 Chief of Defence Procurement at the time and I had  
18 already set up a through-life project team which  
19 happened to be in the DLO, the DLO procured Mastiff.

20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How did the relationship with PJHQ  
21 work? How effective was it with regard to priorities?

22 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think it was effective.

23 I mean, the theatre commander would say what he wanted,  
24 basically what he intended to do and, therefore, what  
25 equipment he needed out there or what spares he wanted

1 out there, where his priorities lay, was it spares for  
2 those vehicles, was it ammunition, what exactly was it?  
3 PJHQ would then give direction to my organisation which,  
4 in those days, was call the DTMA, the Defence Transport  
5 and Movement Agency and is now called the DSCOM, Defence  
6 Supply Chain Operations and Movement, who then put into  
7 effect the movement of stuff out to theatre.

8 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: It was an efficient system?

9 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, I think so. There were  
10 always shortages of things, but I don't think the  
11 process was faulted. I think there will always be  
12 shortages of spares, and we can talk about that if you  
13 wish.

14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I would like to come on now to the  
15 Haddon-Cave Report, how it describes the efficiency  
16 saving challenges that you were facing between 2002 and  
17 2005 and the implications that had on effectiveness.  
18 You, of course, inherited a plan which required you to  
19 make, I believe, 20 per cent savings by 2005/2006. Did  
20 this target have an impact on your ability to support  
21 operations in Iraq?

22 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I don't believe it did, no.

23 I don't believe it did.

24 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Are there any other comments you would  
25 like to make on Haddon-Cave?

1 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I don't think so. The department  
2 accepted most of Haddon-Cave's recommendations, were  
3 busy implementing them.

4 No, as far as I'm concerned, from 2005 onwards, it  
5 didn't affect operations. In fact, I made sure it  
6 didn't affect operations. It may well have affected  
7 other areas and we may well have -- I did -- move  
8 priority, effort and money into supporting Iraq and all  
9 the other operations we were dealing with away from  
10 contingent forces.

11 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So it had no adverse effect on the  
12 actual operations?

13 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No.

14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: One of the major lessons identified in  
15 previous Inquiries and reports into the Iraq invasion  
16 has been the problem called by lack of asset tracking  
17 system and we have heard from General Brims how he knew  
18 the kit had arrived, but not where it was, and this was  
19 not, of course, a new problem for MoD. It was  
20 identified, I believe, after the first Gulf War and also  
21 exercise Saif Sareea. Was this still a problem by the  
22 time you arrived as Chief of Defence Logistics?

23 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, it was. Our successive  
24 automated systems for asset tracking had been taken as  
25 savings measures throughout the years, so we didn't have

1 an end-to-end asset management system. There were  
2 a number of systems out there, Vital(?) was the army  
3 system, REDEL(?) was the navy system, USAS(?) was the  
4 air force system. The army, out in theatre, had a thing  
5 called UNICOM Q(?), which they -- but these weren't all  
6 linked up. So there wasn't an end-to-end flow of an  
7 item being issued, it flowing down the chain and  
8 being -- or rather an item being demanded, it flowing  
9 down the chain, being issued to a unit and re-ordering  
10 taking place from industry.

11 That was -- there were a lot of hand-to-hand bits of  
12 paper that had to go on to keep track of that and then,  
13 of course, it failed on occasions.

14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Were there any specific measures you  
15 were able to put in place?

16 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Since my time as CDL and now CDM,  
17 we have put in place a thing called MJDI, the management  
18 of the joint deployed inventory. The interim system is  
19 in Afghanistan now. That is based on the RAF system.  
20 So it is not a huge step forward. It is just  
21 a progression from something that worked pretty well for  
22 the RAF and for army aviation in the past, and that  
23 manages what is in theatre.

24 There is MMIT, the management of material in  
25 transit. That is in place and further enhancements will

1       come. There is a thing called JDTS, the joint demand  
2       tracking system, which is a little bit like, if you have  
3       ordered something from Amazon and it hasn't arrived, you  
4       can get online and find out where it is. This --  
5       quartermasters can now get online and find out where  
6       there bit was when it last passed a note.

7               So there are a number of things that we had put in  
8       place. I'm delighted to say that the future logistic  
9       information system, which I have been seeking for  
10      a number of years, was agreed last week and so we will  
11      be able to -- what we need to be able to do is link up  
12      the demand system, the transit system, the issue system  
13      and the financial system so that the whole thing is  
14      end-to-end and is coherent.

15   SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How is this affected by multiple  
16      operations?

17   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Once it is issued, once it is out  
18      there, it will be fine.

19   THE CHAIRMAN: How long will it take to implement?

20   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I have asked, now we have  
21      authority to go ahead, if we can bring bits of it  
22      forward quite urgently so that operations, at the very  
23      least, can benefit from this.

24               Stock accounting can benefit from it as well.

25   SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I would like to turn now to the

1 question of the service life of equipment. In its  
2 annual report for 2007 and 2008, the MoD states:

3 "The continuing heavy and intense use of the  
4 equipment in harsh operational environments will also  
5 have an inescapable, medium-term impact on their life."

6 What impact did the employment in Iraq have on the  
7 expected life of equipment, and service type of  
8 equipment?

9 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Some of it quite a lot. Partly,  
10 it was the environment. Partly, it was the evolving  
11 enemy threat and, partly, it was because we were using  
12 the equipment in quite a different way from that for  
13 which it was originally procured.

14 If I can give you an example, the vehicle-mounted,  
15 weapon-locating radar, the radar that detects incoming  
16 missiles or rockets. That was running up to 23 hours  
17 a day out in Iraq. It was designed for the north German  
18 plain, to run -- to shoot and scoot, so to speak. So to  
19 identify an enemy artillery or mortar battery and then  
20 move. So it was designed to run for one or two hours  
21 a day.

22 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: What provision is made with regard to  
23 equipment if it reaches the end of its useful life  
24 earlier than anticipated?

25 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: We need to replace it. We either

1       need to replace the modules, the LRUs, the line  
2       replacement units, some of which, of course, if it is  
3       a one-off buy of equipment, they are quite difficult to  
4       buy again. So we use what we have on the shelves. We  
5       try to get industry to manufacture something which might  
6       be obsolete, or you have to buy another piece of  
7       equipment. You might need to buy another piece of  
8       equipment anyway, because the threat may have evolved.

9       SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Who bears the cost of replacing the  
10       equipment? Is this the MoD core budget or is it the  
11       Reserve?

12       GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: If you need to replace it for the  
13       operation, that's the Reserve. If it is wearing out  
14       quicker than we had intended, there is a discussion and  
15       I don't think that discussion is yet complete.

16       SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Now, the National Audit Office reports  
17       that between July 2007 and the end of operations in Iraq  
18       in July 2009, 71 per cent of demands for logistic  
19       support and supply deliveries met the MoD's own supply  
20       chain targets in terms of days taken to deliver. Is  
21       71 per cent an acceptable percentage or is it something  
22       that can be improved?

23       GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think you need to look at it  
24       from the other end. Did it affect the outcome of  
25       operations and, if it did, then, no, it is not good

1           enough. I don't believe it did, and you need to delve  
2           a little further into the metrics.

3           The fact that a priority 1 demand is placed on the  
4           UK doesn't necessarily mean there is a piece of  
5           equipment that's not working. It might mean that in the  
6           forward store they have used the spare that they have  
7           got there to mend the equipment and what they are doing  
8           is backfilling the store. It might mean that the  
9           equipment is not working and Mastiff is a very good  
10          example, which I could talk about, if you wish.

11       SIR MARTIN GILBERT: What I would like to ask, were you  
12          trying to achieve more than 71 per cent or was --

13       GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, 90 per cent is the target for  
14          priority 1 demands. The fact that you have priority 1  
15          demands -- there are two real reasons, I suppose. One  
16          is medical kit, and by and large that's okay, and the  
17          other is because there was a shortage of spares on the  
18          shelves or in industry. So priority 1 demands are  
19          made -- and, no, I have left -- I left the target at  
20          90 per cent, because it meant it came up red each month  
21          and I took a very close interest in it.

22       SIR MARTIN GILBERT: What were the barriers to making this  
23          higher in Iraq? What was the sort of technical --

24       GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I was talking about Mastiff. If  
25          I can just get the figures. In June 2006, for example,

1 we were told that 108 Mastiffs were required and the  
2 idea was they would be on the sort of Kuwait to Basra  
3 roads, or possibly the Kandahar to Bastion roads.

4 This was actually a very good procurement, the FMS  
5 case, the foreign military sales case, from the  
6 United States, was signed in July 2006. We bought an  
7 initial spares pack costing \$4 million and -- included  
8 in that were 40 axles for the vehicles. The Americans  
9 thought we were mad, "What on earth do you want 40 axles  
10 for?"

11 We then sent quite a lot to Kuwait -- to Afghanistan  
12 and we used 387 axles in 18 months because we were using  
13 them off-road. We were using them for something the  
14 vehicle wasn't designed for. So there was a shortage of  
15 axles and it took a while before we identified another  
16 source of supply other than from the original  
17 manufacturer. But that's an example of why there might  
18 be a shortage.

19 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: There was no way of anticipating this?

20 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Our anticipation was that we  
21 wouldn't need 40, so we bought 40 just in case and, as  
22 soon as we started using the vehicles in a completely  
23 different way -- under a UOR, you buy the UOR and you  
24 buy the first 12 months' worth of spares and you have to  
25 make a judgment. The Americans had quite a lot of

1           experience with using the Cougar, which is what they  
2           call our Mastiff, and we -- that's the judgment we made,  
3           based on their data. They, of course, were using them  
4           in the way we thought we would use them and we didn't.

5   SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In Iraq itself, the shortages impacted  
6           on --

7   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, hardly at all in Iraq. There  
8           were, for example, in that period, 17 strikes on  
9           Mastiffs in Iraq; there were 112 strikes on the vehicles  
10          in Afghanistan.

11                 So there really wasn't -- there wasn't too much of  
12           a problem in Iraq. If there was a problem in Iraq, it  
13           was because the spares were being used up very rapidly  
14           in Afghanistan.

15   SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Other equipment, not just the Mastiff,  
16           supplied across the board?

17   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: There were -- on supplies of  
18           spares, there are always challenges with UORs, in that  
19           you buy a vehicle or a piece of equipment quickly, you  
20           estimate the spares package, you then need the data to  
21           say, "We got it right. Good", or "We got it wrong, we  
22           didn't" -- you then need to buy more spares and, when  
23           a number of different countries, particularly the  
24           United States, are buying the same equipment by the  
25           thousand, as opposed to by the 100, the spares tend to

1 go in that direction first rather than to us.

2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks. I would like to ask you some  
4 questions about recuperation, to start with the  
5 background, so we understand it properly.

6 Could you say something about the general role the  
7 DLO plays, or played, in the process of recuperating as  
8 part of operational deployments, on the one end, at the  
9 front end, you have got things being used up; at the  
10 other end, you have got recuperation, both of stocks as  
11 well as of people, of course. What does the DLO do to  
12 bring about recuperation when there is a live operation  
13 running on a big scale?

14 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: The DLO is very much part of it.  
15 The mission of the DLO was delivering logistics for  
16 operations and it is very definitely for operations,  
17 because that is all round what I call the operation  
18 planning side. So it is supporting individual training,  
19 supporting collective training, then deploying to  
20 operations, sustainment on operations, recovery from  
21 operations, and then the bit you are asking about, the  
22 reconstitution of the equipment back up to the required  
23 degree of readiness so that the whole operational  
24 planning cycle can start again.

25 So the DLO was involved in that complete planning

1 cycle, including reconstitution at the end.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: I assume, but I may well be wrong, that DLO  
3 has an important stake in determining the rate of  
4 desired recuperation, when you can get round the cycle.  
5 Somewhere there must be a decision made about how  
6 quickly you want to try to recuperate back to  
7 operational readiness.

8 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, that is not the DLO decision.  
9 That is an operational planner's decision, in that -- as  
10 I think you know, the army believes that six months  
11 deployed on operations and 24 months between operations  
12 is the right ratio. That's the current planning  
13 assumption.

14 So you in effect have two -- a total of two years to  
15 go from returning from operations right round the cycle  
16 ready to deploy again, and that includes  
17 reconstitution -- reconstituting the equipment.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. Looking on a sidenote -- I mean, I'm  
19 guessing that recuperation of the human assets of the  
20 armed services is actually the real key, but then stocks  
21 and support is part of that.

22 When you start an operation, although it is possible  
23 for commanders to say they are ready, when stock  
24 holdings fall below the level the defence assumptions  
25 imply, what implication does that have for the

1 completion of the cycle? When you start under the  
2 readiness level, if that's the right ... you are  
3 understocked at the start of a major operation, but you  
4 are still ready to conduct it, but does that slow down  
5 the whole process of recuperation right round the cycle  
6 or is it the duration of the operation?

7 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, it would slow it down  
8 because if -- take armoured vehicles, for example. If  
9 half your armoured vehicles are ready, high readiness,  
10 and half aren't -- and I'm just plucking a figure out of  
11 thin air -- then you concentrate on the half that are  
12 ready, get those trained, keep those properly maintained  
13 and turn your attention to the other half once the  
14 operations have been launched, but you can -- I mean, it  
15 is a continuous process.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. I'm very conscious that this is  
17 a public forum and there is a limit to what it is proper  
18 to say. So a very general observation would be welcome  
19 on how much progress, by the time you became CDL, had  
20 been made in recuperating back to operational readiness.

21 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Well, not a lot, and the reason  
22 is that the defence planning assumptions -- now, I'm  
23 perhaps getting on slightly difficult ground. We were  
24 fighting two quite difficult wars at the same time.  
25 There wasn't a lot left in the locker. So what was

1           being used was what we had within that cycle.

2   THE CHAIRMAN: I think that's probably enough.

3   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

4   THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. What about affordability and

5           recuperation? You have got UORs, they were filling in

6           gaps at the front end, and then you have got all the

7           problems afterwards about when you take them back into

8           the core, but what about affordability outwith the UOR

9           funded by the Reserve, of course?

10   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Recuperation during our time in

11           Iraq was not a problem. The funding was not a problem.

12           I don't believe we had come to any agreement as to what

13           happens now that has ended.

14   THE CHAIRMAN: Right. I think I just need to understand

15           this a bit better. The DLO -- you had been conducting

16           a major operation, in fact several -- well, two big ones

17           and lots of others -- you want to get back to the

18           operational readiness stage of the cycle. You can't do

19           that with UORs, you can't do it from -- NACMOs, are they

20           called.

21   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: NACMO, yes.

22   THE CHAIRMAN: You have to do that from the core defence

23           budget?

24   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Well, during the operation, where

25           equipment from the core programme, the core equipment,

1       needed replacing, because it was getting tired, or  
2       needed to come back to the UK to have UOR up-armouring  
3       for example, or whatever, put on it and, therefore, had  
4       to be replaced by others, that -- I don't recall any  
5       difficulty with funding for that.

6   THE CHAIRMAN:   Because that would come from the Reserve  
7       essentially?

8   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:   Yes.

9   THE CHAIRMAN:   Because it is part of a live operation?

10   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:   Absolutely.

11   THE CHAIRMAN:   Okay.   One other thing.   You have not only  
12       got the issue of "Recuperating, can you afford it?" yes,  
13       you can get the money then from the Reserve because it  
14       is a live operation going on, but you also had a whole  
15       set of rather tough efficiency targets you were having  
16       to meet throughout the whole period.   Does that have an  
17       effect on recuperation rates?

18   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:   It probably will, but at the time  
19       it didn't affect recuperation for the equipment that was  
20       needed for operations.   It had an effect on other  
21       contingent forces --

22   THE CHAIRMAN:   Yes.

23   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:   -- but not those equipments that  
24       were required for operations.

25   THE CHAIRMAN:   There isn't a moment when you can sort of

1           sound a gong and say "We have recuperated"?

2   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  No.

3   THE CHAIRMAN:  But if you are pursuing a really tough set of  
4           efficiency targets, if there were such a gong, it would  
5           be sounded rather later or, no, not necessarily?

6   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  I think it is quite a difficult  
7           question because, recuperating to do what?  That's the  
8           question.  There will be decisions to be made about what  
9           equipment the three services need in the future, the  
10          army in particular.

11   THE CHAIRMAN:  So contemplating the possibility of another  
12          major operation, the level of recuperation you have  
13          reached at the point when you contemplate that potential  
14          operation will determine whether or not it is a goer?

15   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  Indeed.

16   THE CHAIRMAN:  Yes, thanks.  You became CDM in --

17   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  2007.

18   THE CHAIRMAN:  2007.  So the process of recuperation goes on  
19          right through this period?

20   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  Yes.

21   THE CHAIRMAN:  Can you give us a sort of feel for how much  
22          progress has been made over the period up to the end of  
23          the Iraq involvement anyway?  That's our terms of  
24          reference.

25   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  I don't think I should.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Right, okay.

2 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: If I may duck that one publicly.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, do. We might ask for a note in private.

4 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, of course.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Can we turn to Afghanistan, because our  
6 concern, of course, is Iraq but the two interplay very  
7 much.

8 Again, still on the recuperation cycle, at the time  
9 when the decision to deploy into Afghanistan on some  
10 scale was taken -- you may say this again is something  
11 you don't want to discuss, but, broadly speaking, had we  
12 got somewhere round the recuperation cycle just in the  
13 Iraq context at the time of Afghanistan decision?

14 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, each brigade, as it came out  
15 in Iraq, went into a cycle and then redeployed a second  
16 time. So, oh, yes, that process was working.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. You were on the Defence Management  
18 Board in 2005 when the decision was taken to make  
19 a military contribution in Afghanistan. We were still  
20 heavily deployed in Iraq and you also, I think, attended  
21 the Chief of Staff operational meetings.

22 Now, Sir Kevin Tebbitt as PUS told us that he had  
23 his concerns about taking on the additional commitment  
24 and I wonder about the advice for ministers on the  
25 logistics dimension of that decision, the ability of the

1 chain, as it then stood, to supply two  
2 medium-scale operations. Was logistics  
3 a constraint or a significant factor in the deployment  
4 decision?

5 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: It might have been, but wasn't?

7 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, it wasn't. I was confident  
8 that we could logistically support both operations. The  
9 shortage would have been people, not stuff.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: There is one particular aspect, because we  
11 have had evidence of it from, among others,  
12 Sir Jock Stirrup, which is with the air bridge,  
13 particularly in relation to people coming back from R&R,  
14 and Sir Jock said the MoD's strategic transport fleet  
15 for that sort of purpose is limited and, indeed, in some  
16 respects is quite elderly, so you had to have two air  
17 bridges running at the same time. That was do-able?

18 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It was fragile. I think it would  
19 be fair to say that that was one of my highest risks,  
20 the strategic air bridge.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. Was it possible to do anything in  
22 very short order?

23 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: We hired in a lot of commercial  
24 air. People -- and I just need to be slightly careful  
25 what I say. Freight could go straight into theatre.

1 People -- we were slightly -- we were significantly more  
2 careful with. We hired in a lot of commercial air. We  
3 had a hub in Qatar, as far as Iraq was concerned.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. Two things, now we have got the  
5 Afghanistan deployment decision taken. You have got two  
6 sets of forces, they have got to be supplied, two very  
7 different environments. That strikes the layman as  
8 putting quite a lot of pressure on the logistics staff  
9 themselves to manage two very different, quite big  
10 things simultaneously.

11 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think it worked. I know it  
12 worked. The shipping, for example, went from the UK to  
13 Karachi, to unload for -- equipment and stores for  
14 Afghanistan, and then the equipment went through  
15 Pakistan, over -- through the Khyber Pass. It then came  
16 to Umm Qasr and picked up the equipment on the reverse  
17 supply chain that was coming out of Iraq back to the UK.  
18 That was all right. That was efficiently run.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: I think we want to get a sense of whether the  
20 decision to deploy in Afghanistan had an effect --  
21 a back-pressure effect on the Iraq deployment, which was  
22 still very considerable at that time in 2005 and,  
23 indeed, through to 2006 and 2007.

24 I'm not getting a sense that this was forcing  
25 sacrificial choices in between the two in terms of

1 priorities.

2 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Not in logistic terms, other than  
3 specifics like the Mastiff, which I was talking about  
4 earlier, but in general terms, no, it was eminently  
5 do-able.

6 As I say, you would need to ask land command the  
7 effect on the people, and that I can't answer, but as  
8 far as getting equipment and stuff out of industry --  
9 and industry stood up to the mark and produced and we  
10 got it out to theatre.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Right, and the air side of that, as well as  
12 the sea side?

13 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I don't have the figures, but  
14 I think it is something like £60 million I was spending  
15 a year on hiring commercial air.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. Okay. Thanks very much.

17 I have just got one other set of questions, quite  
18 differently, please, but, when you became Chief of  
19 Defence Materiel -- it is "materiel" or "material"?

20 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Materiel, a NATO term.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: In April 2007 -- this was following the  
22 merger of the DPA and the DLO. This is a big  
23 transition, I imagine. Was the transition itself  
24 something, when you have got both Iraq and Afghanistan  
25 going on, an additional burden on you and your staff?

1 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Of course, but what Peter Spencer  
2 and I did -- Peter Spencer was Chief of Defence  
3 Procurement and I was Chief of Defence Logistics --  
4 what we did, when we put the two organisations together,  
5 was really leave the project teams alone and we changed  
6 the top structure.

7 So the project teams, although in some instances  
8 they were dislocated geographically because of DLO and  
9 DPA, they could immediately become virtual through-life  
10 teams, which was the great prize out of the merger,  
11 looking at equipment and support through-life. So the  
12 project teams carried on what they had been doing in  
13 supporting the two operations relatively unhindered by  
14 some high-level changes in management structure and  
15 changing the structure of the DL -- the DE & S  
16 internally -- I have taken very steadily, mindful that  
17 my prime aim in life is to equip and support our armed  
18 forces for operations now and in the future.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: So it is reasonable to accept that the  
20 logistic support for operations in -- because of our  
21 interest in Iraq simply was not affected directly by the  
22 transition?

23 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, and you could argue it was  
24 improved. I mean, the DTMA, which was in Andover,  
25 turned itself into the DSCOM, the Defence Supply Chain

Operations and

1 Movements Centre. I have now moved that to Abbey Wood.  
2 They have electronic links to what is going on. So  
3 support for operations has got very much better --  
4 slicker, perhaps I should say, rather than "better".

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. At this point, you have got a greatly  
6 enlarged portfolio of responsibility, heavy enough  
7 already, but by now much larger still. Does Iraq shrink  
8 in your total perspective of responsibilities and  
9 burdens or was it just there as it was but with an  
10 additional dimension to it?

11 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It is there as it was. I mean,  
12 my attention is focused on what it needs to be focused  
13 on. I mean, if you were to ask me how much time  
14 I allocated to Iraq, I couldn't answer you. 24 hours  
15 a day, if it needs it, and very little, if it doesn't.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Again, but probably for the last time, you  
17 are not having to prioritise attention, effort, between  
18 the two theatres?

19 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Because you have to cover both --

21 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: -- and that's it. Right.

23 A totally responsible piece of history, from which  
24 I exonerate my two Professor colleagues, is it true that  
25 that merger which took place in April 2007 goes right

1 back to Mountbatten in 1964?

2 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think it's the last of the  
3 glimmer in his eye, I think, is my understanding. The  
4 two prizes there -- I mentioned one; being able to look  
5 at equipment through life, instead of buying something  
6 as cheaply as you can and then having to support it  
7 through life, you can look at the through-life costs  
8 through life support. So through-life management was  
9 one of the foundations of it which has now turned into  
10 through-life capability management, and by that I mean  
11 you manage the equipment, you manage the support, you  
12 manage the training, you manage the doctrine, you manage  
13 the totality of delivering a capability, which is DCDS  
14 Capability's business, I do the equipment and logistics  
15 bit.

16 The other key prize in forming DE&S was to get the  
17 services much more involved in equipment procurement,  
18 and so they were part of the decision-making process and  
19 not having it done to them.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Again, I have heard -- this is lay-speak --  
21 it is less a matter now for the users at the operational  
22 end to ask for a piece of kit but, rather, for a piece  
23 of capability. Is that right?

24 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It is, I don't think we are  
25 100 per cent there yet. I would like to specify to

1 industry and, therefore, I need, from the people who set  
2 the requirement, the effects they are trying to create  
3 in the battle space, not something with three inches of  
4 steel painted green or whatever it might be.

5 I think -- there is a balance here. When we are  
6 thinking of a capability in the early days, you need to  
7 specify the effect you are trying to create. When you  
8 get on to contracting for the kit, you have got to be  
9 pretty clear; otherwise, if industry doesn't deliver,  
10 you have no recourse. So I think it depends the stage  
11 you are at in the cycle.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. I must bring things back, I know, to  
13 Iraq, but still with Iraq and Afghanistan, we just  
14 picked up something from the MoD's annual report and  
15 accounts for 2007/2008. It says:

16 "Over the reporting period, the main logistics  
17 efforts switched from supporting Ops in Iraq to those in  
18 Afghanistan."

19 I can see that was so because there was a bigger  
20 operation building up. That's not, however, just for  
21 the last time, a sacrificial choice of priorities, it is  
22 simply the main effort that was going on?

23 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, the effort was applied as it  
24 was required and, of course, there was a major effort  
25 called Op Brockdale, which was the recovery of equipment

1 from Iraq. So at the end of Iraq, a lot of attention  
2 was put into recovering equipment in good order and it  
3 was recovered in good order.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. A last particular point and then  
5 I would just like to ask a closing question on how the  
6 new organisation works in balance with the rest of the  
7 machinery. The question is: we have heard a lot of  
8 evidence about the mounting threat in Basra from IEDs  
9 through 2006, 2007 and 2008 even. So there is UOR  
10 procurement going on for that. That just goes on  
11 steadily unhindered by organisational change.

12 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: So the last question for our better  
14 understanding or certainly mine: you have now got the  
15 acquisition responsibility as CDM. Where does the CDS  
16 equipment capability come? Is he the customer?

17 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: He is the sponsor. He is now  
18 called DCDS (Capability), so he is not just --

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Not just equipment.

20 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Not just equipment, but total  
21 capability. This is through-life capability management,  
22 where he is accountable for making sure that equipment,  
23 training, support is being procured and delivered in  
24 a coherent way.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: So to round off, given our responsibility in

1 the Iraq context, you had a couple of years, actually,  
2 from April 2007, with the new organisational structure.

3 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Hm-mm.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: So far as Iraq was concerned, you worked as  
5 well as ever or a bit better maybe, it would imply?

6 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think so. I don't -- to say  
7 "better" implies that there was better logistic support.  
8 I think we were doing it more slickly, more agilely,  
9 I think we were getting better at delivering what was  
10 required.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. Baroness Prashar would  
12 like to ask a few questions, then we will take a break.  
13 Usha?

14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I really want to understand how the  
15 flow of information between your organisation and the  
16 forces in Iraq operate. Can you just explain that to  
17 me? How did that work?

18 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, I think you need to separate  
19 out requests for UORs and sort of standard logistical  
20 support. If I take the former, a UOR is -- starts its  
21 life in a requirement from theatre and that will be  
22 assessed by the headquarters in theatre. If they  
23 believe it is a valid requirement, it goes back to the  
24 Permanent Joint Headquarters. The Permanent Joint  
25 Headquarters will look at it and, if they believe it is

1 a valid requirement, this then goes to  
2 DCDS (Capability), whose function it is to decide  
3 whether that particular requirement could be met by  
4 something that is already in service or whether it needs  
5 to be something procured from new.

6 That then from MoD headquarters, the main building,  
7 will be decided. The funding route will be decided. Is  
8 it from the core programme, is it from CPF, from  
9 Treasury Reserve?

10 When that is decided, the requirement is clear, the  
11 funding route is clear, then I buy it and I buy it with  
12 its first year's support, and then, within that first  
13 year, a review is held to see whether, first of all, is  
14 the equipment still needed and, if it is needed, have we  
15 got the support right, because we bought a year's worth  
16 of support? So that is the sort of UOR.

17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: The UOR side of it.

18 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: For normal routine logistic  
19 support, we changed -- by the time I took over  
20 in April 2007, we'd changed from what I remember as the  
21 Chief of Staff to the Quartermaster General, just  
22 dealing with the army, into a push system whereby we,  
23 the Quartermaster General's empire, pushed the stuff  
24 forward. We changed from that to a pull system, where  
25 the front line pulled equipment and commodities forward.

1           So they would demand what they wanted instead of having  
2           things just pushed forward.

3   BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:   So they would make a request and you  
4           would --

5   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:   Yes, and they would set the  
6           amount of ammunition they needed, the amount of  
7           ammunition they needed to hold in theatre as a theatre  
8           reserve, the stock levels, which we would work out but  
9           they would look at the sustainment Directive.

10           There is a sustainment Directive pushed out --  
11           issued by the Permanent Joint Headquarters, which says  
12           X per cent of each of the types of equipment has to be  
13           available and from that -- and from the spares usage,  
14           the historical spares usage, we can work out the amount  
15           of stock that need to be in theatre -- sorry.

16   BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:   That's okay, carry on.

17   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:   I was going to say that, in the  
18           early days, both of Iraq and Afghanistan, you tend to do  
19           this on a sort of six-month by six-month basis. In  
20           Afghanistan now, we are on a five-year rolling campaign  
21           plan, which means you can plan further ahead and plan  
22           the support more effectively and actually ship out to  
23           theatre a lot of the spares and hold a spares stock  
24           forward, and so the priority 1 demands that Sir Martin  
25           was talking about earlier are demanded on the forward

1 stock and not demanded right back to the UK.

2 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But in Iraq, did you feel you  
3 received the information from theatre in time to get the  
4 acquisitions and respond to it?

5 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: The UOR acquisitions of course do  
6 take time inevitably. Those are very rarely something  
7 you can buy off the shelf. Even the armed vehicles had  
8 a lot of extra armour and other equipment put on to make  
9 them fit for purpose. So there is always a time -- the  
10 aim is -- the aim has to be that it is delivered within  
11 12 months. We always try to reduce that time.

12 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But were you getting feedback about  
13 how the new equipment was performing?

14 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

15 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You were getting regular  
16 information?

17 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

18 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Were you able to feed that into the  
19 training and the doctrinal pipeline for logistics  
20 sustainability?

21 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, the message from Iraq -- and  
22 Afghanistan, but the message from Iraq, in particular,  
23 that came back was "The kit is good", and it got  
24 progressively better, "But can you make sure it is fully  
25 integrated?"; in other words --

1 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What does that mean?

2 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It means that all the bits that  
3 we have added, the radios, the electronic  
4 counter-measures, the vehicle electrics, for example,  
5 are all properly integrated and don't interfere with  
6 each other. The training package is in place, there are  
7 enough bits of equipment in the UK for the  
8 pre-deployment training. The maintenance packaging is  
9 in place. "Can you send out equipment that is properly  
10 integrated with all those bits rather than just send the  
11 kit?" which is what we did initially.

12 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So you were able to respond to that?

13 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Indeed, and now we don't send the  
14 equipment out until it is properly integrated. So it  
15 may take a little longer, but it is usable on arrival.

16 The other message from theatre was "If you want us  
17 to carry it, please make it lighter."

18 THE CHAIRMAN: And simpler?

19 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Well, that's not the message  
20 actually. It is just "Can you make it lighter?"

21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Lighter, because they had to carry  
22 it.

23 So, from your point of view, the flow of information  
24 was working fine and you were able to take the necessary  
25 action in time?

1 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, I mean, the flow of  
2 information, I think, originally was not good, it got  
3 better. There are a lot of unofficial lines of  
4 communication which are developed because the logistic  
5 command and control system is not in place but, however,  
6 we did it, it worked.

7 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You didn't see any discrepancy  
8 between what the headquarters felt and what those  
9 running the operation felt at the time?

10 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think originally there was,  
11 yes.

12 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: There were discrepancies?

13 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, and there is always  
14 a frustration. If a unit has demanded or requested  
15 a particular piece of equipment, a UOR, and it doesn't  
16 arrive in their six-month tour, they are, of course,  
17 frustrated. The important thing is to make sure that  
18 you have briefed the next unit coming in and you  
19 back-brief that first unit that equipment did get into  
20 the theatre in the timeframe that it took.

21 Do bear in mind, some of these urgent operational  
22 requirements are asked for, they are approved and  
23 funded, we start the process, and then the requirement  
24 changes --

25 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Indeed.

1 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: -- either because our own forces  
2 are doing things differently or the opposition has  
3 changed the way it behaves. So the requirement may  
4 change and that, inevitably, will delay the UOR, and  
5 then there is a judgment to be made by the commander in  
6 theatre, "Do I want the piece of equipment to the  
7 original requirement or do I want it changed?"

8 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you for that.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: I have just been asked: the logistic  
10 commander control, what is it? I don't know.

11 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Well, I mean, it is the whole  
12 business of knowing what the requirement is in theatre.  
13 If I start at the front end, it is the theatre  
14 commander's logistic adviser knowing where all the  
15 logistics are in theatre -- that is one part of it --  
16 and being able to link what the commander's operational  
17 plan will be -- is going to be with the logistic  
18 requirement, and then getting that back through to the  
19 UK to the people who are doing the ordering, to make  
20 sure that that is all happening.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: I think you said a little earlier that in  
22 Iraq, at the beginning anyway, that was not --

23 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It was not in place, no.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: But for late Iraq, it came to be in place?

25 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: And Afghanistan?

2 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Afghanistan, it is in place, but  
3 they are interim arrangements, in that -- for some of  
4 these systems to work really effectively, they have to  
5 be armed-forces-wide. It is not -- it complicates  
6 matters if you have different systems supplying the  
7 Falkland Islands, for example, to Iraq, to Afghanistan,  
8 to ships off the Horn of Africa. It will only become  
9 really effective and efficient and enable to us reduce  
10 the logistic footprint in theatre, because we will know  
11 where everything is, when we can get the integrated  
12 system in place.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Let's break for ten  
14 minutes.

15 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Okay.

16 (11.10 am)

17 (Short break)

18 (11.25 am)

19 THE CHAIRMAN: We will start then. Sir Lawrence Freedman  
20 will take up the questions.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I'm going to ask you a number of  
22 questions about urgent operational requirements and  
23 equipment.

24 First, just to -- looking back on the session before  
25 the break, you gave us the impression that it all really

1       went pretty well. I just wonder how you square that  
2       with the perceptions out there that have been made  
3       rather forcibly to us that we sent our forces into Iraq  
4       with insufficient and inadequate equipment, if the  
5       system was working so well. Why were there these  
6       concerns?

7       GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I'm quite happy that the medical  
8       equipment, when we went our forces in, was fine, and the  
9       PJHQ report on medical support to Telic was a success by  
10      my measure. Fine. By 2005, I think the equipment in  
11      Iraq was progressing well. If you are asking me  
12      questions in that sort of 2003 to 2005 --

13     SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: No, I'm only interested --

14     GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think the equipment is good.  
15     I believe that the equipment that was asked for was  
16     delivered. It was the kit that was wanted. Life  
17     changes, requirement changes. So the equipment that is  
18     asked for nine months later perhaps is not what is  
19     wanted nine months later.

20             But no, I'm very positive, and the personal  
21     equipment, if you talk to soldiers, marines, the RAF  
22     regiment out there at the moment -- they will tell you  
23     that the personal kit is very good.

24     SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think we will come to some  
25     specific examples and you can go through them.

1 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Sure.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Let me move on to the UOR issue,  
3 which we have already discussed a bit.

4 There is about £2 billion worth of UORs provided to  
5 UK forces for operations in Iraq, and sometimes this  
6 involves whole fleets of new vehicles, particularly in  
7 relation to armoured vehicles.

8 Has this been a new development in the use of UORs?

9 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: New development, compared with?

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Well, previous practice in terms of  
11 how UORs have been used. It just seems that Iraq, and  
12 later Afghanistan, take us to a new stage with this  
13 particular device.

14 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think that's right. I think  
15 you are correct.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Then, once you have decided to  
17 purchase a UOR, how do you ensure that there are  
18 sufficient skills and understanding of the product so  
19 that it can be effectively maintained both in the UK and  
20 once deployed in operations?

21 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: The training on the vehicles is  
22 maintenance training as well as driver training and  
23 usage training. I think it would be fair to say that we  
24 haven't had -- we may still not have enough of the  
25 equipments in the training pool in the UK and, of

1 course, when there is a problem in theatre or when troop  
2 levels increase, the commander has two choices: he does  
3 without the vehicles or he takes them from the training  
4 pool.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So there is a tension there  
6 developing?

7 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Oh, yes.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What about spares? You have already  
9 mentioned one example with Mastiff. Have there been  
10 other instances where the spares that have been  
11 purchased have been insufficient?

12 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I'm sure there are. I'm sure  
13 there are lots of examples. I have just offered one  
14 example. But it is the business of buying a piece of  
15 equipment -- either buying a piece of equipment or using  
16 a piece of existing equipment in a way completely  
17 differently from that that you imagined, that the  
18 requirement was set out for.

19 As I say, you buy the first 12-month's spares pack  
20 as part of the UOR, or you have on your shelves, if it  
21 is existing equipment, the spares usage that you know  
22 from the past, and geography and usage changes that.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Then, when the operation is  
24 complete, the long-term support cost of the UOR  
25 presumably will be a factor as to whether or not it is

1 kept in service?

2 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, yes. It is a factor.

3 I think the other factor is: does the equipment itself  
4 have a long-term and wider use than just in that  
5 particular theatre?

6 I mean, bear in mind UORs -- if I take vehicles as  
7 an example. PPVs, protective patrol vehicles, are  
8 bought for a particular purpose at the time. Speed of  
9 getting them into theatre is what is important and they  
10 need to be fit for purpose in that theatre.

11 If you are buying an armoured fighting vehicle, you  
12 need to think that you may still have it in 30 or  
13 40 years' time. You won't know what you are going to  
14 use it for in 30 or 40 years' time specifically, but you  
15 do need to buy it with the stretch potential of sort of  
16 a wet finger in the air, 30 per cent spare volume,  
17 30 per cent spare power, 30 per cent spare electrical  
18 power, and those are two different issues.

19 So one of the factors is: this bit of equipment that  
20 we bought specifically for Iraq, in this instance, does  
21 it have utility in other theatres and is it worth taking  
22 into core and, as you say, what is the cost of support  
23 and what will its use be more widely than just in that  
24 particular theatre?

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The UOR process in a sense is a way

1 of getting into some long-term decisions for perhaps  
2 essentially short-term reasons.

3 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It could be, it could be. But,  
4 as I say, the review, either at the end of operations or  
5 actually within the 12 months, takes place. Do we want  
6 to take it into core? Do we actually not want to take  
7 it into core? Do we wish to dispose of it at the end of  
8 the operation?

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What's the sort of balance in your  
10 experience of the --

11 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Quite a lot, I think. Quite  
12 a lot will be taken into core, because quite a lot of  
13 what we produced for Iraq and Afghanistan is proving  
14 very effective.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I mean, another issue raised in UORs  
16 is that there is a risk in terms of the performance in  
17 theatre of procuring equipment without the usual time  
18 for development and trial. Was that a factor in any of  
19 the equipment deployed to Iraq?

20 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, and you could take again  
21 Mastiff as an example. Had that been a normal  
22 procurement, it would have been through a number of  
23 trials to see what it behaved like cross-country, what  
24 it behaved like with all the extra armour on, all the  
25 things that we would do for a normal vehicle.

1           That, of course, was not done. The imperative was  
2           to get a protected vehicle out to theatre as fast as  
3           possible, which is what we did.

4   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In terms of what you were talking  
5           about before, in terms of what you take from stocks and  
6           what you procure specially, you would have an  
7           expectation that what is already there is going to be  
8           more proven and more reliable when it gets there. So  
9           there is a reliance on UORs, it does potentially have an  
10          operational cost?

11   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes. But it may be that what you  
12          have already got won't fit the geography. Warrior, for  
13          example, might be too heavy to go over some of the  
14          bridges, it might be too bulky to fit through narrow  
15          urban areas. It depends what the requirement is, and  
16          you may well have to up-armour your existing vehicles as  
17          well depending on the threat.

18   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Now, I want to turn to your  
19          responsibility once you became CDM, not just for the  
20          support in sustaining UORs, but also the procurement.  
21          We have touched on this a number of times, I know, but  
22          the sheer volume of UORs has been extremely high,  
23          especially with the added factor of Afghanistan.

24          Were you comfortable with the speed with which they  
25          were delivered to theatre?

1 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes. I mean, I have a metric  
2 which I look at at my board each month, which is the  
3 effectiveness of delivery of UORs and we are delivering,  
4 at the moment, 93 per cent to the required time or the  
5 agreed time, and -- yes, I'm happy with that. My  
6 target, though, is 90 per cent.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In the period from, let's say, the  
8 last five years -- does that represent an improvement  
9 over -- from, say, 2005?

10 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, it represents an improvement  
11 since 2007, where I have got a handle over all of it.  
12 Yes, it does, and I set up a UOR cell to look at the  
13 coherence right across the piece.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So what was it in 2007?

15 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I don't think I could tell you,  
16 because we weren't measuring it as such, but it has  
17 improved.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Are we talking 70 per cent,  
19 60 per cent?

20 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I would think 70/80, but  
21 I actually don't have the percentages to hand.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Do you think these sorts of speeds  
23 have been sufficient to keep British forces ahead of the  
24 threat, or just keeping up?

25 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, and I wouldn't want, here,

1 to go into detail, but I think the kit that we are  
2 issuing is the best -- that we are developing and  
3 issuing is the best that we can.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: To make sure that you are delivering  
5 the UORs as quickly as possible, does that mean that  
6 there are other projects that have to be put on the  
7 backburner?

8 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So that's part of the opportunity  
10 cost again?

11 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, some of the core programmes  
12 are down to a sort of care and maintenance level at the  
13 moment.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: When you became CDM, were you  
15 satisfied that the DPA had the necessary capacity and  
16 skills to deliver the UORs?

17 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you haven't felt a need to make  
19 any improvements --

20 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: In quantity, yes, I have had to  
21 put a lot more people in to delivering UORs. I have got  
22 over 1,000 people at the moment in DE&S delivering UORs.  
23 Hence, some of the core programmes are not being  
24 delivered at the speed that perhaps we originally  
25 wanted. So a lot more effort has gone in and the number

1 of UORs is quite staggering still.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Funding, has that been a limiting  
3 factor at all?

4 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, not that I'm aware of.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There was a change in the  
6 methodology of funding in 2007, or the Comprehensive  
7 Spending Review of 2007. Did that affect procurement?

8 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, because procurement doesn't  
9 start until the requirement is set and the fund  
10 something in place. So it didn't affect procurement.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In terms of the reliance on UORs --  
12 we have had, again, quite a bit of evidence to suggest  
13 that, from the start, the Ministry of Defence was too  
14 dependent upon them for getting equipment and the Public  
15 Accounts Committee have also expressed concern about the  
16 sheer volume of UORs.

17 Do you think there is -- the balance is right here  
18 between having material in stock and UORs?

19 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, I don't think it is. As  
20 I said earlier, I'm a great believer in UORs, but for  
21 certain specific reasons. I don't think the balance is  
22 right. I do think all three services need to be able to  
23 train on the equipment they are going to fight with.

24 Now, that won't always be possible because, as the  
25 threat changes, UORs are procured and the equipment

1 changes, but I do think the basic equipment needs to be  
2 what they train on, they should train on what they are  
3 going to fight.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So --

5 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I would increase the base, I  
6 would -- on the other hand, the UOR process, it is very  
7 slick. I wouldn't want to use it to buy a nuclear  
8 submarine, but I'm quite happy to use it to buy  
9 off-the-shelf bits of equipment that are out there  
10 somewhere. It is where you draw that balance that is  
11 a judgment.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There is a value for money question  
13 here as well.

14 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes. I have targets on me for  
15 performance, cost and time, for the core programme. It  
16 is really performance and time for UORs. So you are  
17 right, there is a value for money.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Do you have any sort of idea what  
19 the mark-up cost is for a UOR procurement as against  
20 a regular procurement?

21 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No. I'm not sure that's  
22 necessarily the case. I mean, I'm not convinced that  
23 competition -- and we do compete UORs where we can. I'm  
24 not convinced that competition gets you best value for  
25 money. It very often gets you the cheapest price on the

1 day, which is not always the same thing.

2 What it does do, of course, is drive innovation.

3 I couldn't put a figure on it. Where lives are in  
4 danger, the imperative is to get the best equipment we  
5 can procure out and operating as fast possible.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to pick up a couple of issues,  
7 we discussed a bit about the issue of training. Who  
8 decides what -- how much equipment should be bought for  
9 training purposes with a UOR?

10 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: The front line commands will say  
11 what they need for training and, if that's agreed, then  
12 I buy it.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So it is up to them?

14 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It is up to them to make the  
15 case.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There is no standard matrix for  
17 these sorts of things?

18 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, there isn't a standard  
19 matrix.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: A looking forward question. There  
21 has been an enormous volume of UORs purchased for both  
22 Iraq and Afghanistan. Do you think there is sufficient  
23 provision available in the defence budget to support  
24 these, given what you have already described as the  
25 inclination to take quite a lot of them on to the core

1 programme?

2 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: That's a much wider question and  
3 I don't think it is actually a question about UORs, it  
4 is a question of how much money there is in the defence  
5 budget.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes, but it is one of the pressures  
7 on the defence budget, because it means that there is  
8 a lot of equipment that was not originally in the core  
9 programme that has now been acquired.

10 So again, as part of a longer-term rebalancing, it  
11 must be important.

12 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Oh, yes, but if it is the right  
13 equipment and is good value for money, then that,  
14 presumably, is better value for money than buying  
15 something else. It is a difficult question to answer in  
16 isolation, but, yes, it is another pressure on the  
17 defence budget, if we choose to take them into core.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just moving on to a question of  
19 industry, how much of a factor is industrial  
20 production -- capacity from industrial production to  
21 deliver urgent capability to the front line? How  
22 important is that?

23 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Industry has stepped up to the  
24 mark. It has been very impressive and I'm not aware of  
25 any difficulties with industry. I mean, ammunition,

1 BAE Systems, who are our providers of major -- providers  
2 of ammunition in this country, have some very impressive  
3 figures for the small arms ammunition, for example, over  
4 1 million rounds a day, once they had stepped up to the  
5 mark to get that flow going through.

6 A number of other companies, Babcocks producing the  
7 Jackal and [the] Aerospace, stepped up to the mark,  
8 increased capability. I have been impressed with  
9 industry UORs.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Presumably, there must be some cases  
11 where the -- the things that we needed just simply  
12 weren't in production. One example -- I want to talk  
13 about a bit more about protective patrol vehicles, but  
14 General Riley told us that vehicles later used to  
15 counter the IED threat simply weren't in production.

16 So are there examples where equipments have been  
17 delayed in service simply because -- not because  
18 industry didn't step up to the mark, but because the  
19 capacity wasn't there in the first place?

20 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Going back to Mastiff is a good  
21 example. I can't remember how many the US Marine Corps  
22 bought, but it was in thousands and we were buying 100  
23 to start with and then another 140. There was  
24 a capacity issue there.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In that case, presumably, there is

1           also this question of us competing with other  
2           purchasers --

3   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  Yes, although --

4   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  -- for the same sort of system.

5   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  Although, in that instance, the  
6           US Marine Corps let us break into their production run  
7           and take out our 108 vehicles very quickly.  The FMS  
8           case, the foreign military sales case, which can take  
9           weeks, took three days in that instance.

10  SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  Are there examples where the need to  
11           purchase from abroad has been a major constraint or  
12           caused delay?

13  GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  No, I don't believe so.  I mean,  
14           anything to do with procurement off the shelf from the  
15           United States was progressed very quickly, very quickly.

16  SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  Has collaboration with other allies  
17           been a factor --

18  GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  I'm just trying to think of other  
19           areas.  No, there hasn't been a problem.

20  THE CHAIRMAN:  The Danes let us get some of their  
21           helicopters.

22  GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  Yes, they did.  That's a very  
23           good example, yes.

24  SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  Again, looking forward, lessons  
25           learned, are there lessons from the particular

1           experience of working with industry that can be applied?

2   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think the defence industrial  
3           strategy, when it comes out, the second version, which  
4           will come out, I understand, after the SDSR is produced,  
5           will need to be very clear what industrial capacity we  
6           need to retain in this country and what we are happy to  
7           buy from overseas, and I think the defence industrial  
8           strategy will need to make that clear.

9   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: This is clearly going to be quite an  
10          important issue if we're managing a contracting  
11          programme. So presumably that again indicates a risk of  
12          reliance on UORs in the future may be that, when you  
13          turn round to industry, it just isn't there.

14   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It may be, but maybe where there  
15          are a number of suppliers in a number of different  
16          countries, you can accept that. If it is a fairly basic  
17          item, where it really must be something that is  
18          guaranteed, maybe you need to pay for a search  
19          capability. I mentioned BAE Systems, they, I think, to  
20          produce 1 million rounds a day, they have got three  
21          shifts. It is one production line, but three shifts.

22   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So it is the ability to reconstitute  
23          in some way?

24   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It is the ability to surge and  
25          then reconstitute, yes.

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Let's talk about, now, another way  
2 of dealing with requirements that may be quite pressing,  
3 which is cannibalisation. It might be useful to set  
4 out, because people have a very clear idea what it means  
5 in other contexts, but what it means in a military  
6 equipment context, to talk of cannibalisation.

7 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It is done with aircraft, it is  
8 done with helicopters. If the requirement, for example,  
9 is to have ten aircraft available for operations, which  
10 require 30 for training and you have got 70/80 aircraft,  
11 there is no point in having aircraft with bits on that  
12 you are not using. You might as well use them for the  
13 Falkland fleet. So anything that goes into depth  
14 maintenance may well or almost certainly have the  
15 engines taken off it.

16 Ships do it in refit. If a ship is in long refit,  
17 it doesn't need all the subsystems on it. They can be  
18 taken and used for other ships, and armed vehicles are  
19 the same.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So this is a pretty routine part of  
21 the way MoD --

22 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think -- sorry.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I was just saying it is a routine  
24 way of using the equipment.

25 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, I think the degree is the

1 question that is more interesting, the degree to which  
2 you are doing it.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So, I mean, has the degree increased  
4 as a result of Iraq?

5 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I don't think it has increased as  
6 a result of Iraq and, in fact, I think it has got  
7 better, as more -- helicopters is a good example -- as  
8 more spares came on stream. So the requirement to take  
9 bits out of other helicopters has reduced.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Does the practice create  
11 difficulties once the equipment is returned from Iraq?

12 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, because the equipment will  
13 have returned from Iraq and go into some sort of deep  
14 maintenance and then be refurbished. What creates more  
15 of a difficulty is if you have a fleet within a fleet,  
16 if the fleet that you have got out in Iraq is different  
17 from the rest of the fleet and that creates difficulty  
18 and cost.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How do you overcome that difficulty?

20 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Ideally, you overcome it by  
21 having a complete fleet fitted for, but not necessarily  
22 fitted with. So it is quite easy to bring equipment  
23 back and send other equipment out and change the  
24 subassemblies and subsystems fairly easy.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: In theatre, that is?

1 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, or -- either -- or back  
2 here.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Being going back to this recurring  
4 theme of training, I think you mentioned helicopters,  
5 the NAO mentioned that the MoD wasn't able to sustain  
6 the majority of the helicopter fleets without  
7 cannibalisation. Does that mean that there is a problem  
8 with the availability of equipment with which to train?

9 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, yes. The availability --  
10 helicopters is a good example, the availability of  
11 helicopters in theatre is as required. It is more of  
12 a challenge for training.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So again, we have got another  
14 example of the sort of knock-on implications for how  
15 prepared individuals are for operation, if they haven't  
16 been able to train sufficiently before they deployed?

17 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think "were" is the answer  
18 there, because a lot of the issues are not to do with  
19 spares. They are to do with maintenance and people  
20 available for training and so on, which is a wider  
21 issue. There were certainly spares problems across all  
22 fleets.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you are basically saying that  
24 there are a variety of issues which may affect, and have  
25 affected, the ability of our forces to train prior to

1 deployment, spares is but one of a number?

2 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Is but one, yes.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But the problem is nonetheless  
4 there?

5 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: As a sort of a general point, again  
7 looking forward to the defence review: are we buying the  
8 right kind of equipment for expeditionary operations?

9 Do you think that one of the results of the combined  
10 impact of Iraq and Afghanistan, the number of UORs that  
11 may now be taken in, that is now gearing us towards  
12 a capability for the future that will be in line with  
13 the sort of things we had been doing in the past,  
14 possibly not in line with the things we may have to do  
15 in the future?

16 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think you are asking me to  
17 second-guess what the Secretary of State may decide  
18 in September and I'm going to duck that.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I wouldn't dream of asking you to  
20 second-guess the Secretary of State, but I do think  
21 there is a question about whether the impact of -- now  
22 almost ten years, if you take into account the start of  
23 the Afghan operation, of counter-insurgency of one sort  
24 or another, has moved the defence equipment profile in  
25 a particular direction.

1 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think it has, but I think  
2 a more fundamental question, which the SDSR will need to  
3 answer is: is that the shape of conflict to come or,  
4 actually, is the future shape of conflict different? So  
5 is this the right equipment for the future or, actually,  
6 is this the right equipment for what we have just been  
7 doing? And that, I suggest we need to wait  
8 until September.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Let me then move on to -- some very  
10 particular equipment questions and one of these we have  
11 already touched upon, but perhaps we can just look at it  
12 a little bit more intensively, starting with  
13 helicopters.

14 What have been the main issues that constrained the  
15 DLO, and latterly DE&S, in making helicopters available  
16 to commanders in Iraq? It is recognised that purchasing  
17 new helicopters in response to commanders' requests take  
18 time -- again, we come back to training; it takes time  
19 to train the air crew:

20 "Therefore, much of the response of the MoD has been  
21 to increase the number of flying hours of helicopters  
22 which are available."

23 Can you explain what that might mean in practice?

24 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It is more spares because of the  
25 normal usage and it is more crew.

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What are the longer-term  
2 implications of that?

3 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It depends whether the helicopter  
4 has a life in -- measured in flying hours or whether it  
5 doesn't, and some do and some don't, and some you can  
6 replace just about everything and finish up with  
7 a perfectly effective helicopter. Others do have a life  
8 but the air frame has a life.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In Iraq, we increased flying hours.  
10 Might we have done that sooner? Would that have been  
11 a way of making sure that more helicopters were  
12 available?

13 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It takes time to increase flying  
14 hours because, as I say, you need more spares to keep  
15 the aircraft in the air. You need to adjust maintenance  
16 schedules and, can you extend the time between  
17 maintenance and could you do that in the UK? Could you  
18 also do it in Iraq, in different environmental  
19 conditions?

20 So there are a number of judgments on helicopter  
21 life and airworthiness issues that need to be thought  
22 through fairly carefully involving joint helicopter  
23 command, DE&S, as it is now, and the design authority of  
24 the helicopter.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That's presumably your planning

1 process that has to start at some point.

2 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Presumably it is a question of when  
4 that process started.

5 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: To be honest, I don't know, but  
6 it will have started at the point at which somebody was  
7 saying "We need more hours in theatre".

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That would have been before your  
9 time, presumably?

10 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I'm not sure that it was  
11 actually. I mean, what we are doing is increasing the  
12 hours in Afghanistan significantly. I'm not sure  
13 whether we were challenged to increase the hours in Iraq  
14 until I was CDL and then the process --

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think this is potentially quite an  
16 interesting, important issue as to when the need was  
17 recognised. So in your recollection, when do you think  
18 the planning did begin?

19 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I don't know. I can't answer  
20 that.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It might be helpful if you could  
22 check on that.

23 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, of course. Yes. One is  
24 always trying to get more hours out of a certain number  
25 of platforms.

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Another factor in relation to Iraq  
2 was heat and dust, the conditions of Iraq, and the NAO  
3 noted last year that none of the UK helicopters in use  
4 in Iraq were designed for the sort of conditions they  
5 faced. So what steps did you take to ensure that those  
6 we had in the UK inventory could be used in those sorts  
7 of conditions?

8 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I mean, the effective -- I can  
9 turn that round, the effects were increased erosion to  
10 the main rotor blades and tail blades and damage to  
11 a lot of components due to ingress of sand. So the life  
12 of a lot of the components was shortened. Blades are  
13 eroded because of sand, so you need to replace them more  
14 often.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So essentially, you can't make them  
16 fitter for purpose as such; you have to accept a greater  
17 burden on the spares?

18 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Or you put -- you redesign the  
19 blades.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you can, over time, redesign?

21 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Over time, yes, but, as you  
22 launch an operation, of course you tend to go with what  
23 you have got.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So what was the impact of these  
25 sorts of problems on serviceable rates of helicopters in

1 Iraq?

2 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I don't have the figures going  
3 back to Iraq. If I can give you an example, when we  
4 moved the Merlins from Iraq to Afghanistan, they were --  
5 they came out in August 2009, the first aircraft  
6 deployed to Afghanistan in early November 2009 and  
7 a number of things were done to them. I won't go into  
8 the details. So that, August, September, October,  
9 November, that was preparing them for a different  
10 environment, as well as training the crews to fly in  
11 that different environment.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The NAO in fact identified shortages  
13 of spare parts for Merlin as a particular weakness.

14 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: That is correct, early on, yes.  
15 I don't believe now that shortage of spares for Merlin  
16 is the prime cause for the challenge. It is quite  
17 a young aircraft. It takes a while for these  
18 aircraft -- for us to understand the spares usage,  
19 particularly in a different environment.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But was the spares problem one in  
21 the past?

22 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, it was.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So that was a limiting factor?

24 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It was a limiting factor. We  
25 ordered more spares. They take time to manufacture,

1           they take time to come through.

2   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  There were a number of reports that  
3           we were offered -- various off-the-shelf helicopters for  
4           military operations -- during the course of the Iraq  
5           campaign, particularly US platforms.  Why did we decide  
6           just not to purchase new helicopter types?

7   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  The investment appraisal  
8           concluded that it was not value for money.

9   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  Does that include the issue that you  
10          raised before, about making sure that our troops have  
11          the right sort of equipment they need for their own  
12          protection?

13   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  I'm not aware -- certainly, since  
14          I have been CDL -- CDM, rather, no bid has come to me to  
15          buy new helicopters, other than the recent bids that we  
16          have been talking about.  I mean, we need to be clear  
17          here, the difference between requirement and  
18          procurement.

19   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  I understand.

20   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  You are aware of the Chinook  
21          purchase and the Wildcat orders that we have signed and  
22          so on.

23   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  But, I mean, there isn't -- in this  
24          process of requirements and procurement, presumably  
25          there is some back and forth between the two, in terms

1 of what makes sense, and you presumably can -- you are  
2 the only ones who could advise on what the costs are  
3 likely to be and the practical difficulties. So you  
4 weren't involved in any discussions --

5 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Well, the advice, of course, is  
6 an iterative process and there are a number of factors  
7 to take into account. One is the procurement cost. One  
8 is certify airworthiness cost, which, if it is not  
9 a helicopter that is already in service, can be quite  
10 long and prolonged. One is, what changes need to be  
11 made to the aircraft for theatre entry standard, and  
12 what other helicopters might be out there that we have  
13 already got or are similar to the ones that we have got,  
14 that might be better to bring into service?

15 A lot of different factors in that, and those are  
16 weighed up by the capability area and advice offered to  
17 ministers as to what we should do.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In practice, none of these came out  
19 with buying new types, as opposed to additional  
20 Chinooks?

21 Okay. Let me turn to again another issue that has  
22 been touched on already, which is protective patrol  
23 vehicles, PPVs. There are many parts obviously of the  
24 MoD which have some responsibility for dealing with the  
25 threat posed by improvised explosive devices in Iraq.

1 I would just like to ask you about those areas which  
2 were your responsibility during the period.

3 Firstly, could you just set out as CDL, and then as  
4 CDM, what your involvement in countering the IED threat  
5 was?

6 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Twofold. One was the procurement  
7 of new vehicles; Mastiff we have talked about, Ridgeback  
8 is another one, and a number of others.

9 Secondly, improving the protection of existing  
10 vehicles; Warrior is an example, which required  
11 a progressive series of UORs to build up the protection,  
12 protection against mines, protection against EFP and  
13 shaped charges, protection against RPGs. So a series of  
14 UORs to add protection to existing vehicles.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: One particular relationship between  
16 a vehicle and the IEDs which has caused, as you know,  
17 considerable public controversy, is the use of Snatch  
18 Land Rovers. Was this something discussed by the Chiefs  
19 of Staff and the Defence Board?

20 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, and the challenge there,  
21 which I hope we are just about to answer, was to have  
22 something which was small enough and light enough to be  
23 used in the areas that Snatch was being used in, but  
24 offered much more protection. You may be aware that  
25 programme is called the LPPV, the Light PPV. We have

1 down-selected to two candidates at the moment and the  
2 assessment is going on and we will place an order with  
3 one of them, I have no doubt, fairly shortly.

4 But commanders have always said they need something  
5 the size and the manoeuvrability of the Snatch and, of  
6 course, we have gone from Snatch to Snatch Vixen, to  
7 Snatch Vixen Plus and various sort of protective levels  
8 added, but if you don't have a vehicle that is that  
9 manoeuvrable and that size, then there are some places  
10 you cannot go, except by foot.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can you give us some idea as to when  
12 you think this will be in service?

13 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I could, but I can't remember.  
14 I think next year.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So --

16 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, quite quickly.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But, of course, the controversy has  
18 been around for some time. Given the damage -- the loss  
19 of a number of Snatch Land Rovers, did you have  
20 a sufficiently large fleet to sustain the capability,  
21 given the damage that these were getting?

22 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Certainly the numbers that  
23 commanders required in theatre were maintained, yes.  
24 There is always a lag in adding more protection to them,  
25 of course.

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I don't know whether you can say  
2 this in the public forum, but did the electronic  
3 counter-measures make a difference?

4 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did they have a good serviceability  
6 rate?

7 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: They made a huge difference.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Moving on, in May 2006, MoD decided  
9 to upgrade the FV430 to Bulldog to increase the number  
10 of PPVs available. Was the DLO responsible for  
11 delivering the upgrades and enhancements needed for  
12 Iraq?

13 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, there were two upgrades.  
14 One was what I call the heart and lungs; it was the  
15 power train upgrade. Secondly, it was the up-armouring  
16 ready for Iraq and work carried out by the Defence  
17 Support Group, the old ABRO, and delivered very quickly  
18 out to Iraq.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Was this the first time MoD had  
20 considered deploying an alternative vehicle to Iraq, to  
21 offer greater choice and force protection to commanders,  
22 rather than relying on counter-measures and tactics with  
23 the old ones?

24 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I'm not sure I can answer that  
25 question because, if I can go back to something I said

1 earlier on this morning, when a requirement comes from  
2 theatre, then, once the requirement is agreed by theatre  
3 and PJHQ, it is the capability areas' decision to say  
4 "Have we anything in the arsenal, in the core programme,  
5 that would meet that requirement, either as it is or  
6 armoured or changed, or do we need to go and buy  
7 something completely different?" So that process is  
8 gone through actually on every occasion.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Was there anything available off the  
10 shelf to meet this requirement rather than developing  
11 something or upgrading something?

12 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think it is a lot quicker to  
13 upgrade the Bulldog, put a new engine and gearbox and  
14 running gear in?

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That was judged to be the quickest  
16 way of doing it?

17 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, and -- sorry, the other  
18 advantage there is, of course, there are a lot of them,  
19 so the training on them is not a problem.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How much did the upgraded Bulldog  
21 increase the protection available against IEDs? What  
22 sort of enhancement did it represent?

23 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Significant. I won't go into  
24 details, but significant.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Now, following the review in 2006,

1           you inherited a significant procurement programme for  
2           the new protected vehicles. How was it decided between  
3           which vehicles were sent to Iraq versus which vehicles  
4           were for Afghanistan, at what sort of speed?

5   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: This is a PJHQ decision so  
6           I don't know is the answer.

7   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you weren't --

8   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, a requirement comes and PJHQ  
9           decide on the priorities and I then react to that.

10   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How quickly were you able to build  
11          up supplies?

12   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Mastiff was very quick. I mean,  
13          the requirement was June 2006. The first four vehicles  
14          were in theatre by December 2006. That's 23 weeks from  
15          the time that the foreign military sales case was signed  
16          by the Americans, to the first ones being in theatre.  
17          That's quite impressive, I think, for a new vehicle.

18   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I mean, with Mastiff, it was  
19          signed in July.

20   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Signed in July, yes. The  
21          requirement came in in June, and it was signed in July.

22   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Sorry, how long did it take --

23   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: The first vehicle came to the UK  
24          in November, where it was up-armoured and had all the  
25          other things put on it that we needed to, and the first

1 four vehicles were in Iraq by December 2006.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Was that the target?

3 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: As fast as possible.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just looking back over this whole  
5 episode, can you think of anything else that could have  
6 been done, in procurement terms, to ensure that UK  
7 forces and vehicles had the best possible protection  
8 against IEDs in retrospect? Are there things that we  
9 might have done differently?

10 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think that we had the best  
11 vehicles available at the time out there. If you -- if  
12 you up-armour a vehicle, all the opposition has to do is  
13 double the charge and you are no further forward. So  
14 I think that, on balance, bearing in mind the vehicles  
15 have to be able to drive, have to be able to move, the  
16 power has to be able to drive whatever the weight of the  
17 vehicle is -- so that, I think, was as good as it could  
18 have been.

19 At the same time we were developing new armour, new  
20 ways of doing business. We talked about the development  
21 of electronic counter-measures. So I am content, if  
22 that's the right word, that the best kit that was  
23 available at that time was being delivered to theatre.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And that to have done better, in  
25 a sense, would have required decisions to have been

1 taken much earlier?

2 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: You could have made decisions  
3 earlier if you could have second guessed what the  
4 opposition were going to do. The opposition always has  
5 a vote in this. So ... it is a judgment.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It is a judgment.

7 The last set of equipment questions that I want to  
8 look at concerns ISTAR and UAVs. The MoD's Lessons for  
9 the Future paper in December 2003 noted that:

10 "Coalition Unmanned Air Vehicles, UAVs, offered  
11 versatile capabilities as both surveillance and  
12 reconnaissance and defensive platforms and demonstrated  
13 that they would play a key role in future joint battle."

14 Phoenix, the UK's only UAV deployed for the  
15 invasion, was highlighted by commanders as  
16 a battle-winning capability, although I think it was  
17 discovered that they didn't work very well in heat. Yet  
18 Richard Shirreff, who was GOC in 2007, reportedly found  
19 it unbelievable that after nearly four years of  
20 operation, when he went to be GOC, there was still no  
21 UAV capable of flying in southeast Iraq. The first UAV,  
22 the Hermes 450, arrived in June 2007, shortly after you  
23 became CDM. We have been told that the Australians  
24 managed to fill the field with fully capable UAVs in  
25 Iraq 12 weeks before their operations.

1           It is a story we would like to understand more  
2           about. What, from your perspective, were the  
3           institutional barriers that prevented a more effective  
4           delivery of these types of capability to the armed  
5           forces in quick timescales?

6   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I am afraid I don't know. That  
7           would have been a DPA procurement because it was a new  
8           piece of kit, I think, when I was CDL. I'm not aware of  
9           an issue over the provision of UAVs, and of course now  
10          we have a lot of UAVs in theatre, a lot of different  
11          types of UAV.

12   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But you were coming in in 2007 as  
13          Richard Shirreff was coming in in 2007. So at that  
14          point there was clearly an issue. This issue didn't  
15          come across your desk?

16   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Well, I don't know whether the  
17          requirement was set earlier or not.

18   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What sort of urgency did it have  
19          when you --

20   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: All UORs have a degree of  
21          urgency. So if it is a UOR, if there is a requirement,  
22          they are needed in theatre.

23   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can you imagine why, in the previous  
24          period, it proved so difficult to move this along?

25   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I don't know. Was the

1 requirement set a lot earlier? I don't know. I don't  
2 know the answer.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But you were on the Defence Board  
4 over this period. Wasn't it discussed in the  
5 Defence Board even?

6 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I don't recall it being discussed  
7 at the Defence Board. Unusual for specific equipments  
8 to be discussed in the Defence Board, unusual. That's  
9 chiefs' business really, unless it is a funding issue or  
10 a balance of procurement issue.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It does seem a bit strange, I have  
12 to say, that you have something which commanders have  
13 identified very clearly as being of real value, that  
14 somebody from outside the system is aware that these are  
15 being heralded as the systems of the future, and we seem  
16 to have so much difficulty in bringing new ones into  
17 service.

18 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: But I don't know when the  
19 requirement was set. If Richard Shirreff was the  
20 first commander out there to set the requirement, then  
21 they came into theatre quite quickly; if the requirement  
22 had been set a long time before, then you have a point,  
23 to which I don't know the answer.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Okay. Let's move on to another  
25 issue, where a number of GOCs have given evidence about

1 the value of ISTAR assets, particularly once our freedom  
2 of manoeuvre was limited in Basra, and we have seen  
3 a steady stream of post-war reports citing the need for  
4 more ISTAR capability. How did the Defence Board seek  
5 to respond to these needs and provide the commanders  
6 with what they needed?

7 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Well, when a requirement was laid  
8 upon the DE&S and with an appropriate funding line, ISTAR  
9 assets were funded. I mean, at the moment I have got  
10 a lot of ISTAR UORs going through.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Again, I mean, it seems interesting  
12 that you have got them coming through now but the  
13 problems have been around for some time.

14 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: They have been going through for  
15 the last three years. So ...

16 I'm not trying to duck the issue but I think your  
17 question is one about setting the requirement, not so  
18 much about delivering the bit of kit, and the bit of  
19 kit, the bits of kit -- and there are quite a lot in  
20 Afghanistan -- are coming through as fast as we can  
21 procure them. I think your question is more to do with  
22 when was the requirement set and that I can't help you  
23 with.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I mean, the difficulty has been  
25 around, if you look at the -- since when we started to

1 get stranded, as it were, in Basra, from the middle part  
2 of the past decade. So you haven't been -- you haven't  
3 been seeing the actual requests coming through until the  
4 last two or three years?

5 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: No, because I only took over as  
6 CDM in 2007. Since then there have been a lot of  
7 requests and I have got them. I can't at the moment --  
8 I can't break this down into ISTAR and non-ISTAR but  
9 I have got the figures for UORs coming through, both the  
10 DLO and the DPA and now DE&S. I can't answer your  
11 question about what the DPA were procuring before we  
12 joined together with DE&S.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So when you did become CDM, what  
14 steps were you able to take?

15 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I'm not aware of any delay that  
16 was unavoidable in procuring UAVs or ISTAR assets.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So with these sorts of issues, your  
18 basic position is that if there were delays, this was  
19 the result of the setting of requirements, rather than  
20 the ability of the --

21 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Might have been. Might have been  
22 a technical issue. I mean, these things are technically  
23 quite complex. So it depends to a certain extent: do  
24 you buy something off the shelf, a Predator or Reaper,  
25 or actually is the requirement such that you need to

1           develop something, in which case there are technical  
2           challenges.

3   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  But it would be the technical  
4           challenges that tardiness, possibly, in setting  
5           requirements -- that would be the problem, rather than  
6           the ability of the procurement side of things to  
7           respond?

8   GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  No, certainly in DE&S, the  
9           ISTAR -- my ISTAR operating centre has responded, is  
10          responding, extremely well to UORs.  As I said earlier,  
11          there are some core programmes that have had to be  
12          slowed down, but the requirements for theatre are being  
13          delivered as fast as they can be.

14  SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  Can you give us some idea of some of  
15          the technical problems you were referring to that might  
16          have slowed things down?

17  GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  It is invariably the integration  
18          of the sensor systems with the platform, is the normal  
19          issue.  Some are technically very challenging and I  
20          don't want to go into the details but some of the  
21          requirements, what commanders would like these assets to  
22          be able to do and see and react to, can be technically  
23          very challenging.

24  SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  Systems integration --

25  GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE:  Indeed.

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- is the basic problem?

2 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Hm-mm.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Okay, thank you.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: I think we are coming to the close of this  
5 session, General O'Donoghue. We are very conscious you  
6 have been, since 2005 certainly, at the heart of the  
7 senior decision-making machinery in the MoD and  
8 responsible for supporting operations in Iraq and then  
9 in both equipping and supporting the deployed forces in  
10 two major forces.

11 Now, this morning you have given us a very positive  
12 account of how that was achieved and how it was possible  
13 to equip and support operations in Iraq and then in both  
14 Iraq and Afghanistan without major difficulties. Now,  
15 this has clearly not been the case in other areas. We  
16 have heard from other witnesses -- and I'm thinking of  
17 things like not being able to deploy more than eight  
18 battle groups to the totality of commitments and indeed  
19 sustaining those. We have heard about tour intervals,  
20 you yourself have mentioned the air bridge point and  
21 Sir Lawrence and you have just been discussing ISTAR and  
22 helicopters.

23 Now, there have been several instances this  
24 morning -- and I don't think it derives from what I have  
25 just said -- when you have indicated -- and we

1 understand why -- it is not possible to go into further  
2 detail in a public session. So what we will want to do,  
3 I think, is to reflect on those, and there may be  
4 a number of points we want to ask for written evidence.

5 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Of course.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: But, before we close this session -- and  
7 we're very conscious that this Inquiry is committed to  
8 be as public as possible -- we would like your  
9 considered reflections over this period, from the  
10 vantage point and responsibilities you have had, for our  
11 lessons learned purpose, in the broad. So over to you.

12 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Well, I think, if I can be  
13 specific about logistics and support to start with --  
14 I think it is the importance of logistic information  
15 systems. If we don't know where our kit is, then it is  
16 very difficult to be as agile as one should be, and the  
17 tendency is to overstock in theatre and therefore the  
18 logistic footprint gets bigger.

19 Now, as I said earlier on, we now have agreement to  
20 go ahead with those logistic information systems, but  
21 one of the lessons is we must have that integrated, end  
22 to end logistic information systems for all operations,  
23 not just Iraq. So I think that would be my sort of key  
24 specific point.

25 I think the other point -- and it is coming back to

1 something that I think Sir Lawrence was talking about,  
2 this balance between UORs and kit on the shelf, and  
3 there is a relationship between readiness and the time  
4 the political decisions will give you before you  
5 deploy -- and I accept that politically you won't always  
6 get enough time or as much time as you would like. But  
7 in that case you do need the sustainment stock and the  
8 deployment stock on the shelf for the size of deployment  
9 you are going to make, and I think that would be the  
10 second lesson.

11 I'm going back to my sort of DCDS (Health) days. We  
12 over-relied on UORs there. We should have had more on  
13 the shelf there. I think those are the two sort of  
14 broad issues.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Could I ask in response one question?

16 Because we have heard that one of the major lessons  
17 learned from Op Granby, the first Gulf War, was the lack  
18 of an asset tracking system, and Telic encounters the  
19 same problems, and you have told us this morning about  
20 how the plans are going forward to mend that deficiency.  
21 It has taken an extraordinarily long time. Has that got  
22 anything to do with the point that Sir Lawrence was on  
23 earlier, that the whole of the British armed services  
24 were configured for Cold War essentially but we have in  
25 fact since 1991 been engaged in a succession of

1 expeditionary operations quite different, where asset  
2 tracking has proved to be of significant importance?  
3 Does that account for the slow process, that the whole  
4 sort of stance was facing one way -- I won't say  
5 backwards -- in terms of the Cold War enemy, whilst at  
6 the same time the active engagement was with a quite  
7 different kind of operation?

8 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I think it is the basis of it,  
9 and in the Cold War, of course, the plan was to fight  
10 our way backwards over our supply bases and so that was  
11 one way of thinking.

12 I think the logistic organisation, certainly the  
13 Quartermaster General's organisation, where I was, and  
14 the DLO, when General Sir Sam Cowan set it up -- I think  
15 were very aware that we needed to change the way we did  
16 business, and we needed logistic information systems or  
17 better logistics information systems. There are a lot  
18 of logistic information systems out there. I think it  
19 is 260. What there isn't is an integrated system.

20 I think that has been known for a long time. I have  
21 been certainly agitating for it for a long time.

22 I think it has just fallen off the list of high  
23 priorities, as actually many enablers fall off the list  
24 of high priorities.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: My last point in this series of reflections

1 looking back and forward -- and it is not directed at  
2 all to -- specifically to the logistic procurement  
3 world, but it is -- we have heard, not least in the  
4 field of counter-insurgency, that the US armed forces  
5 went into Iraq with a doctrine and a practice which  
6 turned out to be unsuccessful. They turned themselves  
7 round as a learning organisation with remarkable speed  
8 and effectiveness. We have had a lot of evidence as to  
9 that.

10 Do you, looking at the British armed services as  
11 a whole -- is it yet sufficiently a learning  
12 organisation, using asset tracking as just one  
13 individual example? Does it take in the lessons quickly  
14 enough in your judgment?

15 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes. I mean, I think that lesson  
16 is learned. We procured TAV, which was consignment  
17 tracking, for Iraq. What I don't think we necessarily  
18 do is focus the money we have available on some of the  
19 enablers. That's the difficulty. They are unseen. And  
20 perhaps that's something that we have yet to learn.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Lawrence?

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It is just basically that point.  
23 I was interested in what you said about enablers keep on  
24 falling off the list of priorities, and I guess it is  
25 a problem which you must have felt when you were in

1 charge of logistics, that it is the unglamorous area of  
2 the armed forces, and there is all sorts of stuff in  
3 military history about the neglect of logistics until  
4 you realise it is the most important thing.

5 Is this part of the problem in the way that defence  
6 priorities are set? The pressure is to make sure that  
7 we have the front end, high profile kit and that there  
8 is this tendency to forget all the stuff that makes it  
9 work?

10 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes, although that doctrine, if  
11 indeed that is a doctrine, worked very successfully in  
12 the Cold War.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Because a lot of the time in the  
14 Cold War we were engaged in bluff.

15 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Yes.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But now it is for real.

17 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Indeed.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That may be still a lesson that has  
19 to be learned from Cold War times.

20 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: It is partly that they are  
21 enablers and they are, therefore, less exciting than  
22 some of the other bits of equipment. It is also quite  
23 difficult to cost sustainment. How much money do you  
24 need to spend on sustainment, on stock on the shelves?  
25 And that's quite difficult. There is a lot of judgment

1 involved in that and getting that balance right. Do you  
2 spend a lot of money on sustainment only to have to  
3 write it off when it runs out of its shelf life, or do  
4 you spend less and buy it on UOR when the time comes?

5 I do not think we have got the balance right, as  
6 I said earlier.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There is always this line about  
8 teeth to tail ratios and so on, and tail sounds a bit  
9 unnecessary and the easiest places to cut. Again, I'm  
10 look forward, without asking you to judge what the  
11 Secretary of State may say. Is there a risk that we may  
12 get to situations again where we have the kit but not  
13 the ability to sustain it properly or to get it into the  
14 right place?

15 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: I hope not.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I think there is a theme which  
18 has been emerging through the morning, which we must  
19 take up with other witnesses who are closer to it, about  
20 the process and mechanism for framing the requirement  
21 for a capability.

22 But, with that, can I thank you very much for your  
23 evidence this morning?

24 I note that the second session of the day will begin  
25 at 2 o'clock in afternoon, when we shall be hearing from

1 John Dodds from the Treasury.

2 And, with that and thanks to those who have been  
3 here through the morning, as well as to our witness,  
4 I'll close the session.

5 GEN SIR KEVIN O'DONOGHUE: Good. Thank you.

6 (12.29 pm)

7 (The short adjournment)

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