

1 Tuesday, 20 July 2010

2 (10.00 am)

3 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning and welcome everyone, and  
5 welcome to our witness, Baroness Manningham-Buller, and  
6 you were Director General of the Security Service from  
7 2002 to 2007.

8 We have published one declassified document this  
9 morning, which will be up on our website.

10 Apart from that, just two things, which I say on  
11 every occasion: we recognise that witnesses give  
12 evidence based on their recollection of events and we,  
13 of course, check what we hear against the papers to  
14 which we have access and we are still receiving, and  
15 I remind each witness on each occasion that she will  
16 later be asked to sign a transcript of her evidence to  
17 the effect that the evidence given is truthful, fair and  
18 accurate.

19 With those preliminaries, I'll turn to  
20 Baroness Prashar.

21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you, Chairman.

22 You are our first Security Service witness and  
23 I think it would be very helpful if you would give us  
24 a very quick resume of how the Security Service was  
25 involved in the intelligence and policy relating to

1 Iraq.

2 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Perhaps can I precede that with  
3 a sort of more general description of the role of the  
4 Security Service --

5 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: That would be helpful.

6 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: -- which is to collect  
7 intelligence from a range of sources, some of them  
8 secret, on threats to the United Kingdom and to develop  
9 that intelligence, to analyse it and, where necessary,  
10 to act on it in mitigating or reducing those threats and  
11 also using intelligence generated by us to provide  
12 information to government on which policy can be based  
13 and on which more general countermeasures can be  
14 developed.

15 In terms of Iraq, we were not directly involved in  
16 the decision-making to go to war in Iraq; that was  
17 generally other people, although we were involved,  
18 obviously, in a number of meetings and in some of the  
19 discussions and of course in the JIC. Our focus was  
20 then on dealing with the manifestations of terrorist  
21 threats in the United Kingdom since 9/11, and since 9/11  
22 and before our work was increasing exponentially. It  
23 increased very much more when we went into Iraq, but our  
24 main focus was dealing with the protection of the  
25 United Kingdom.

1 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What about espionage and sabotage?

2 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: We were still concerned, as we  
3 are today, with the threat from espionage and the threat  
4 from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.  
5 In law we still have a responsibility to work on serious  
6 crime. In practice, while I was Director General we  
7 pretty well gave that up because of the pressure of work  
8 on terrorism, and of course terrorism, not only  
9 terrorism from a global perspective but Irish terrorism,  
10 continued to take quite a lot of our resources.

11 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: There was establishment of the Joint  
12 Terrorism Analysis Centre in 2003. Can you say a little  
13 bit about that?

14 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Yes. Obviously, after 9/11 we  
15 were all considering the implications of this attack on  
16 the way we did business and before the arrival of JTAC,  
17 there were a lot of separate bits round Whitehall doing  
18 terrorist assessment, but actually my Service had the  
19 sort of monopoly responsibility for producing terrorist  
20 assessments and had done for many decades, and we  
21 suggested that we should give up this monopoly role and  
22 build something that was cross-departmental.

23 I had extensive discussions with David Omand, who  
24 I think has given evidence on this, on creating this new  
25 organ. Several departments were anxious about this,

1 notably the MoD and the DIS to begin with, but once  
2 everybody decided to go for it, departments like the MoD  
3 were very supportive and I think we created something  
4 which thrives -- I don't know how big it is today --  
5 which brought views from across the Whitehall community,  
6 from within the intelligence community, from other  
7 departments, and led to a more comprehensive and richer  
8 analysis of the threat.

9 It has also, JTAC, become very helpful in guiding  
10 investigations and operations and it is much imitated.  
11 When I was Director General, senior visitors to London  
12 very regularly wanted to visit it and it became  
13 a tourist destination, almost too much of one, and was  
14 imitated by many other countries.

15 So I think it was a way of dealing with a large  
16 amount of material in an ordered and comprehensive and  
17 cross-departmental way, of which I and many others  
18 involved from other departments, the other agencies, the  
19 MoD, the police, government departments, should be  
20 proud.

21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can you say a little bit about your  
22 personal position as a member of JIC and those aspects  
23 of the work that you were involved in?

24 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Yes. As you know from,  
25 I think, probably other witnesses, the JIC is an

1 organisation which deals with quite a broad range of  
2 issues and there will be people there who are experts on  
3 what is being discussed and people there who are not  
4 expert on that particular thing but come as an informed  
5 outsider to give commentary, to ask questions.

6 I started -- I had obviously sat on the JIC before  
7 I became Director General intermittently. When I became  
8 Director General, I attended it as regularly as I could  
9 if I wasn't travelling. So I was party to, as all other  
10 members of the JIC were, the JIC assessments that came  
11 out.

12 I was obviously more authoritative and able to speak  
13 better, I think, on the terrorist papers than on the  
14 ones about Iraq, on which my Service is obviously not an  
15 expert, compared to other government departments.

16 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But how complete was the  
17 intelligence picture and how did your Service go about  
18 filling the gaps in relation to Iraq?

19 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: The intelligence picture on  
20 what?

21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: On Iraq.

22 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: It wasn't for my Service to  
23 fill the intelligence gaps and the picture was fragmentary  
24 and, as you will know from the fact that some of the SIS  
25 intelligence has been withdrawn, the picture was not

1 complete. The picture on intelligence never is. My  
2 Service's job was to try and have as thorough and  
3 complete a picture as possible on threat within the UK  
4 and to British interests overseas and neither I nor my  
5 predecessors nor successors would ever suggest that was  
6 ever going to be complete.

7 But if I can refer to the letter from me as Deputy  
8 Director General from March 2002 which was released --  
9 a redacted version was released today, six months before  
10 I became Director General we felt we had a pretty good  
11 intelligence picture of a threat from Iraq within the UK  
12 and to British interests, and you will see from that  
13 letter we thought it was very limited and containable.

14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Before we move on, my last question  
15 really is: was there any other personal involvement that  
16 you had on policy in Iraq that you haven't covered? Did  
17 you, for example, advise ministers, or was there any  
18 other personal involvement in this area of work?

19 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Certainly I had regular  
20 discussions with the Home Secretary and with the  
21 Permanent Under Secretary in the Home Office, and you  
22 will see from the JIC assessments on terrorism that  
23 actually they are very consistent. Therefore I can't  
24 give you specifics but there was an expectation,  
25 I think, from pretty early on that the threat from

1 terrorism would increase. What I don't think we  
2 appreciated early on would be the effect on UK citizens  
3 and -- but that was becoming apparent during 2002 and  
4 2003.

5 Can I make a few more general points?

6 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: It would be very helpful.

7 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I think for the Inquiry in  
8 considering this very complex issue, it is important to  
9 say that threat from Al-Qaeda did not begin at 9/11. My  
10 Service was already engaged in concern about the threat  
11 posed by Al-Qaeda from the late -- mid- to late 1990s;  
12 after all the fatwa by Fawwaz from Osama bin Laden was issued in  
13 London in 1996. We had various operations at that time,  
14 some of which had connections to Afghanistan, and well  
15 before 9/11 we were anxious and worried and doing  
16 investigations.

17 I think one of the things that is often forgotten,  
18 and I was asking my colleagues to produce it yesterday  
19 and they couldn't remember it, was that actually a month  
20 after 9/11 the government put a paper into the public  
21 domain -- I'm sure the Inquiry is aware of that -- which  
22 was full of intelligence. If you like, that was the  
23 first dossier, which was who was responsible for 9/11,  
24 to which my Service and I contributed.

25 So our focus was actually not on Iraq, on which we

1 had very few people working, not on Iraqi activity in the UK,  
2 but our focus was on various forms of terrorism relating  
3 partly to AQ and partly to extremism from that sort of  
4 area. That was our focus.

5 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you very much.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: I turn to Sir Lawrence Freedman then.  
7 Lawrence?

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You have just mentioned your letter  
9 that has been declassified and put on our website of  
10 March 2002, to John Gieve at the Home Office, and it  
11 deals with the possible threat to the UK from Iraqi  
12 agents in the event of an effort to topple  
13 Saddam Hussein's regime.

14 Perhaps you could just give us a gist of the nature  
15 of the threat that you saw at the time from the regime  
16 itself.

17 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I think you asked David Omand:  
18 were we asked to produce this? I think I can assure you  
19 we were not. The Service would regard it as its duty to  
20 alert government to threats as they emerge -- this is  
21 pre-JTAC.

22 As I said to Lady Prashar, we regarded the threat,  
23 the direct threat from Iraq as low. We did think -- and  
24 it comes in that letter -- that Saddam Hussein might  
25 resort to terrorism in the theatre if he thought his

1 regime was toppled, but we did not believe he had the  
2 capability to do anything much in the UK. That turned  
3 out to be the right judgment. What the letter -- has  
4 been redacted from the letter, like I say, in general  
5 terms is that is partly as a result of action we took.  
6 But I don't think the threat in the UK was anything  
7 other than very limited.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You mentioned that you were not  
9 asked to produce this assessment. What was it about the  
10 circumstances of March 2002, which is before Crawford  
11 and so on, that led you to think it would be useful to  
12 produce an assessment?

13 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: That's a difficult one to  
14 answer and I noted that it is before Crawford. I said to  
15 Richard Norton-Taylor of The Guardian, when I gave an  
16 interview to him, that at the time of 9/11, when I went  
17 to America the next day with Sir Richard Dearlove and  
18 Sir Francis Richards -- sorry, I'm deviating, but there  
19 is a point.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That's fine.

21 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: We flew back over New York,  
22 where fires were still burning, and I think we were all  
23 in separate ways reflecting on what this meant for our  
24 organisations and generally, and also on how the  
25 Americans would react, and at that stage I have to say

1 it did not occur to me that we would be going to war in  
2 Iraq a year and a half later; but sometime between then  
3 and my writing that letter in March 2002 it must have  
4 become apparent that this was a possibility. So I think  
5 it became apparent much quicker than I remembered until  
6 I went back and reviewed the papers but I can't tell you  
7 specifically what triggered that.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The letter refers to some things  
9 that the Iraqis might try -- and, as you say, they are  
10 believed to have limited capabilities -- if there is an  
11 effort to topple the regime and it is suggested that  
12 what he could do, he would try only if the survival of  
13 the regime is threatened.

14 At that time did you -- I'm asking you to go back to  
15 what you thought at this time -- did you see regime  
16 change itself, the effort that was going on, as likely  
17 to lead so far to a real challenge to the survival of  
18 the regime or just a sort of series of measures of the  
19 sort there had been during the 1990s, that might be seen  
20 to put a threat on the regime that they could possibly  
21 survive?

22 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I am afraid, Sir Lawrence,  
23 I really can't honestly answer that. I don't think  
24 I anticipated what would happen, but it is hard to  
25 remember eight years on exactly the provenance of that.

1 I think it is worth saying that that letter --  
2 I mean, throughout my career I have been involved in the  
3 Service producing analyses like this and writing to  
4 alert senior officials of them. So this seemed to us  
5 presumably at the time part of routine work. I'm sorry  
6 I can't be more helpful.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: It may or may not be relevant but the  
8 Cabinet Office was at the very same time, March 2002,  
9 starting work on options. So that would have been in  
10 the air, in the atmosphere, exactly in that month.

11 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Yes. If I go back to the 9/11  
12 release of information by the government on  
13 4 October 2001, which I re-read, in that document there  
14 is no reference to Iraq and certainly in the early time  
15 we were focused on Afghanistan and the implications of  
16 this for that theatre.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: As the effort to develop plans for  
18 regime change, the United Nations Resolution, the  
19 build-up in the preparations, did your estimate change  
20 at all about the risk to the UK from Iraqi agents?

21 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: No.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And you have already, I think,  
23 answered this, in suggesting that you felt pretty  
24 confident that your assessment was correct. Can you say  
25 whether there were any attempts even by Iraqi agents to

1 do anything as a result of --

2 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: No, there weren't.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There weren't.

4 Can I just ask you then about one -- perhaps just  
5 one other question related to this. This is a letter to  
6 the Home Office. It is copied to a number of other  
7 people. Would you expect there to be any direct  
8 response to a letter like this or is it the sort of  
9 thing that gets noted perhaps to go forward into a JIC  
10 assessment? Was there much response to what you had  
11 written?

12 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I think it is worth -- I don't  
13 remember whether there was a response but -- yes, there  
14 was a response and I'll come back to that, but these  
15 letters are churning out.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: They are standard?

17 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: They are standard and therefore  
18 you would not always expect a response.

19 My recollection, though, is that officials in the  
20 Home Office were -- and senior officials -- were anxious  
21 that action might need to be taken against Iraqi  
22 nationals in the UK and there was quite a debate,  
23 including on the possibility of deportation, on which  
24 I can remember advising the Home Secretary and others  
25 would be unlikely to be possible because of ECHR

1 considerations.

2 But there was quite an animated exchange of  
3 information, which you may have the papers on, about  
4 whether people should be deported, as they had been in  
5 the first Gulf War. That had been a slightly messy  
6 process, which we were not anxious to relive, and  
7 I think we were not convinced that anybody presented  
8 sufficient threat that action needed to be taken against  
9 them, even had that been possible to do legally.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What the letter says is that most of  
11 the DGI agents here in the UK were watching out for  
12 their own opposition forces.

13 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Yes. I think that it is  
14 perhaps worth saying that from the Service come a range of  
15 material to government: Security Service reports -- now  
16 of course much of that is subsumed in broader JTAC  
17 reporting -- letters from the top to senior people. When  
18 I was Director General I would be sending several of  
19 these a week. On some there were reactions. Some  
20 formed the basis of subsequent discussions with  
21 ministers. Some fed into JIC analysis. But there is  
22 a standard flow of information because clearly it is  
23 important that ministers and senior officials know what  
24 domestic intelligence work is showing and illuminating.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to clarify, you said there was

1 a response and then you referred to considerations of  
2 deportation of Iraqi nationals and the problems for  
3 human rights that that would cause. Were there any  
4 other responses at all?

5 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Well, there was discussion  
6 about whether -- I think with the Foreign Office --  
7 about whether the Iraqi Interest Section in London  
8 should be closed. There were sort of things about if  
9 war came, what would it be necessary to do.

10 I have to say my Service felt pretty relaxed on that  
11 side of things. We were far from relaxed about the  
12 threat from Al-Qaeda, which again, if I can refer to  
13 that open document, said back in 2001 the UK was  
14 a target. There was increasing information around the  
15 world of that. That was where our energies were placed.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I'm going to ask you some questions  
17 about that soon. Can I just ask one final question,  
18 which is related to the things that Iraqis might have  
19 done, and this refers to the proposition that Saddam's  
20 regime were in some way responsible for providing  
21 support, potential support to Al-Qaeda, and even might  
22 have been involved in 9/11.

23 Did you give any credence to these sorts of  
24 assessments?

25 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: No. I think you have material

1 suggesting that there had been intelligence on  
2 occasional contact in the past but I think -- I wrote  
3 this down when I was preparing for today -- there was no  
4 credible intelligence to suggest that connection and  
5 that was the judgment, I might say, of the CIA. It was  
6 not a judgment that found favour with some parts of the  
7 American machine, as you have also heard evidence on,  
8 which is why Donald Rumsfeld started an intelligence  
9 unit in the Pentagon to seek an alternative judgment.

10 But there were tiny scraps suggesting contact,  
11 usually when Saddam Hussein felt under threat, and the  
12 danger was that those tiny scraps of intelligence were  
13 given an importance and weight by some which they did  
14 not bear. So to my mind Iraq, Saddam Hussein, had  
15 nothing to do with 9/11 and I have never seen anything  
16 to make me change my mind.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Were you given sight of some of the  
18 material produced by the Pentagon?

19 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I don't think I was. Probably  
20 a good thing; it would have made me cross.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I'll turn to Sir Martin Gilbert  
23 now. Martin?

24 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: By March 2003 we had already been  
25 militarily involved with Iraq in the first Gulf War, in

1 the No Fly Zones and indeed in Naval operations in the  
2 Gulf. From your view, from your perspective, did any of  
3 these involvements affect the domestic terrorist threat?

4 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I think the -- as I have said,  
5 the domestic -- the threat within the UK and to British  
6 interests overseas was gradually increasing during this  
7 period and during 2002/2003 we were receiving more and  
8 more intelligence showing that the UK was a focus.  
9 I suppose the attack in Istanbul in early 2003 on the  
10 HSBC and the British Consulate was a significant  
11 manifestation of an attack on British interests.  
12 Osama bin Laden had made it clear that America and their  
13 allies were targets.

14 As time went on, and the real change came 2003/2004,  
15 when there was a sharp increase of threat intelligence  
16 relating to British citizens -- perhaps you want to come  
17 on to that in a minute, but that's the main change.

18 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I think another of my colleagues wants  
19 to ask on that. If I could just go back to the  
20 immediate pre-conflict period, what assessments were you  
21 making with regard to the terrorist threat, should  
22 Britain become involved in a US-led conflict?

23 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I think you will see from our  
24 report in early 2003, which is reflected in the JIC  
25 reporting, that the threat from Al-Qaeda would increase

1 and the Iraq threat was similar to what I have already  
2 said to Sir Lawrence.

3 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Was there some assessment of what this  
4 threat might be, should we support the United States but  
5 not militarily?

6 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: No, I think that's probably  
7 a false distinction because I think even if we had  
8 supported the United States in sentiment but not  
9 militarily, we would still have been seen as supporters  
10 so it probably wouldn't have altered it. I don't know.  
11 That's a very hypothetical question.

12 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Okay.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: On to the post-conflict period. Roderic?

14 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You mentioned earlier your interview with  
15 Richard Norton-Taylor of The Guardian, which I assume  
16 was the one that you gave which was published on  
17 11 November 2006. In that interview you said that --

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry to interrupt. I think there is a typo  
19 in the titling of that. I believe you gave it in  
20 July 2009.

21 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I don't remember. It was to  
22 mark the 100th birthday.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: It was July 2009, we have just discovered.

24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: The Guardian magazine,  
25 Richard Norton-Taylor, whether it was 2006 or 2009 --

1 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Yes, it was definitely not  
2 2006. It was after I retired.

3 SIR RODERIC LYNE: We will come back to November 2006 in  
4 a minute.

5 You are quoted as saying that as US and UK forces  
6 were preparing to invade Iraq, you were asking "Why  
7 now?"

8 "She said it 'as explicitly as I could. I said  
9 something like, "The threat to us would increase because  
10 of Iraq."'"

11 Going back to 2006, in 2006, if this date is  
12 correct, on 9 November, you gave a speech at Queen Mary  
13 College, London, in which you, in a slightly more  
14 round-about way, more or less made the same point about  
15 Iraq. You said specifically that the interpretation by  
16 British Moslems of UK foreign policy as anti-Muslim in  
17 particular related to the UK's involvement in Iraq and  
18 Afghanistan.

19 The Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of  
20 Commons in 2004 concluded that war in Iraq had possibly  
21 made terrorist attacks against British nationals and  
22 British interests more likely in the short-term.

23 Now, how significant in your view a factor was Iraq  
24 compared with other situations that were used by  
25 extremists, terrorists, to justify their actions?

1 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I think it is highly  
2 significant and the JIC assessments that I have reminded  
3 myself of say that.

4 By 2003/2004 we were receiving an increasing number  
5 of leads to terrorist activity from within the UK and  
6 the -- our involvement in Iraq radicalised, for want of  
7 a better word, a whole generation of young people, some  
8 British citizens -- not a whole generation, a few among  
9 a generation -- who were -- saw our involvement in Iraq,  
10 on top of our involvement in Afghanistan, as being an  
11 attack on Islam.

12 So although the media has suggested that in  
13 July 2005, the attacks on 7/7, that we were surprised  
14 these were British citizens, that is not the case  
15 because really there had been an increasing number of  
16 British-born individuals living and brought up in this  
17 country, some of them third generation, who were  
18 attracted to the ideology of Osama bin Laden and saw the  
19 west's activities in Iraq and Afghanistan as threatening  
20 their fellow religionists and the Muslim world.

21 So it undoubtedly increased the threat and by 2004  
22 we were pretty well swamped -- that's possibly an  
23 exaggeration -- but we were very overburdened by  
24 intelligence on a broad scale that was pretty well more  
25 than we could cope with in terms of threats to plot --

1 leads to threat plots and thing that we needed to pursue.

2 Of course, also we were dealing at that time with  
3 a number of young British citizens who went to Iraq to  
4 fight not with Her Majesty's forces but against them,  
5 and I can't now recall the numbers but it was quite  
6 a few. I think we thought about 70/80, something like  
7 that. I could check that. I can't remember exactly.  
8 But we became aware of this. Obviously these  
9 individuals were not travelling to Iraq directly but we  
10 became aware in Iraq, where people were being taken into  
11 custody who were British citizens who had travelled there.

12 So it became a strong motivation and in my speech in  
13 Queen Mary College I said this publicly. I think it is  
14 worth saying that I needed the approval of the  
15 Home Secretary to make any public speeches and he cleared  
16 the text with me, and John Reid and I discussed that  
17 part of it and he agreed that I should say that in  
18 public.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So you're saying you had evidence that  
20 the Iraq conflict, our involvement in the Iraq conflict  
21 was a motivation, a trigger, for people who were  
22 involved in the attacks in London in July 2005, who were  
23 going to Afghanistan to fight.

24 Were there other attacks or planned attacks in which  
25 you had evidence that Iraq was a motivating factor?

1 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Yes. I mean, if you take the  
2 video wills that were retrieved on various occasions  
3 after various plots, where terrorists who had expected  
4 to be dead explained why they had done what they did, it  
5 features. It is part of what we call the single  
6 narrative, which is the view of some that everything the  
7 west was doing was part of a fundamental hostility to  
8 the Muslim world and to Islam, of which manifestations  
9 were Iraq and Afghanistan, but which pre-dated those  
10 because it pre-dated 9/11, but it was enhanced by those  
11 events.

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So was support for an Iraqi Jihad,  
13 expressed like that, part of this single narrative  
14 spanning different extremist Islamic groups?

15 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: In some quarters, yes, and  
16 arguably we gave Osama bin Laden his Iraqi Jihad, so  
17 that he was able to move into Iraq in a way that he  
18 wasn't before.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: The Madrid bombing of 11 March 2004  
20 appears to have been related to Iraq, a consequence of  
21 Iraq; perhaps an attempt to put pressure on the Spanish  
22 government to withdraw its forces from Iraq. Were there  
23 other attacks that were designed to achieve a specific  
24 political effect, particularly to put pressure on  
25 governments to withdraw from Iraq?

1 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: So many plots, I wrote them  
2 down to remind myself because it is three years since  
3 I retired. I think we felt that Madrid was significant  
4 because of its timing. I think that there are a number  
5 of other plots which may have had that political motive  
6 ultimately but I can't immediately recall one that we  
7 were as confident as that about.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Could I just ask you, you said the timing of  
9 the Madrid plot. Is that because there was a new  
10 Spanish government recently elected?

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: No, it was during the elections.

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: It was on the eve of the election.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: It was related to that political situation?

14 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Well, it looked likely to be.  
15 And of course the Spanish government, if you recall,  
16 rushed to attribute it to ETA. I have some sympathy  
17 with my Spanish colleagues because whenever an attack  
18 happened or was about to happen, we were pressed very  
19 quickly to say who had done it and we don't often know.

20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But you didn't have evidence of an attack  
21 of that very specific kind being planned in Britain to  
22 put pressure on the British Government relating to an  
23 election or political events here, if you can recall?

24 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: No. I mean, we were always  
25 concerned about terrorism in the run-up to elections

1 but, no, not directly.

2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Now, some witnesses that we have heard  
3 have argued that it was necessary or right to remove  
4 Saddam's regime in order to forestall a fusion of  
5 weapons of mass destruction and international terrorism  
6 which was, in their view, expected to come from Iraq at  
7 some point after the war, beyond 2003.

8 In your view did the toppling of Saddam Hussein  
9 eliminate a threat of terrorism from his regime?

10 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: It eliminated the threat of  
11 terrorism from his direct regime; it didn't eliminate  
12 the threat of terrorism using unconventional methods of  
13 chemical, bacteriological or indeed radioactive. So  
14 using weapons of mass destruction as a terrorist weapon  
15 is still a potential threat.

16 After all Osama bin Laden said it was the duty of  
17 members of his organisation or those in sympathy  
18 with it to acquire and use these weapons. It is  
19 interesting that we have -- such efforts as we have seen  
20 to get access to these sort of materials have been  
21 low-grade and not very professional, but it must be  
22 a cause of concern to my former colleagues that at some  
23 stage terrorist groups will resort to these methods. In  
24 that respect I don't think toppling Saddam Hussein is  
25 germane to the long-term ambitions of some terrorist

1 groups to use them.

2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: From what you said earlier about the  
3 relatively small amount of resource that your Service  
4 was required to give before 2003 to monitoring Iraqi  
5 intelligence and potentially terrorist activities in  
6 this country, and your very large focus on Al-Qaeda,  
7 there is an indication that you did not at that time see  
8 Saddam Hussein's regime as an important sponsor of  
9 terrorism directed at least against this country.

10 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: That is correct.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Does it therefore follow from that that  
12 you don't subscribe to the theory that at some point in  
13 the future he would probably have brought together  
14 international terrorism and weapons of mass destruction  
15 in a threat to western interests?

16 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: It is a hypothetical theory.  
17 It certainly wasn't of concern in either the short term  
18 or the medium term to my colleagues and myself.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Overall, looking at the sort of two,  
20 three, four years after the conflict began in 2003 --  
21 and you have referred to the consistency of JIC reports  
22 on this -- to what extent did the conflict in Iraq  
23 exacerbate the overall threat that your Service and your  
24 fellow services were having to deal with from  
25 international terrorism?

1 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Substantially.

2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And is this an impact that has continued  
3 beyond the time that you were Director General, which  
4 was up to, I think, 2007? Was it a long-term impact?

5 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I can't answer that because  
6 when I signed the Official Secrets Act in April 2007  
7 I had seen no secret intelligence until I reminded  
8 myself in preparation for appearing in front of you  
9 today. So you would have to ask my successor that.

10 But it looks to me as though -- from reading the  
11 press, on which we now have to rely, with all the  
12 drawbacks of that -- that there is a continuing problem,  
13 the threat is still severe, as I read it, and it has  
14 mutated and developed in different ways. But I cannot  
15 speak with authority on the threat today.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You speak with the authority of a member  
17 of the upper house of the legislature --

18 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Which has no access to  
19 intelligence.

20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: -- and I'm sure you are well informed on  
21 current affairs.

22 The final question from me: once the decision had  
23 been taken to invade and the campaign had happened, were  
24 there actions that the coalition, in your view at the  
25 time, could have taken to mitigate the way in which the

1 conflict was becoming a motivator for Islamic extremists  
2 arrangement the world? Were there things that it could  
3 have done or should have done to mitigate that effect?

4 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: This is speculative but I think  
5 that planning for the peace, there is plenty of evidence  
6 that that wasn't done sufficiently or certainly not done  
7 by the Americans. And I think that after the military  
8 success it was critically important to try and ensure  
9 that the lives of ordinary Iraqis improved in  
10 substantial ways with the toppling of this dictator.

11 The insistence, for example, of the Americans on  
12 sacking, you know, much of the Civil Service and the  
13 Army, the Ba'athists, was an error. Others much better  
14 informed than me will have given you evidence on that.  
15 I was asked on a visit to the United States on other  
16 matters to talk to Paul Wolfowitz about this issue and  
17 to seek to persuade him that it was not sensible to do  
18 this.

19 But if it had been possible to resolve things in  
20 a more constructive and better way than it turned out to  
21 be, it is possible the degree to which threats arose  
22 might have faded. But this again is hypothetical. The  
23 fact is that the threat increased, was exacerbated by  
24 Iraq, and caused not only my Service but many other  
25 services round the world to have to have a major

1 increase in resources to deal with it.

2 In 2003, having had an upgrade in resources after  
3 9/11, which my predecessor agreed, and another small one  
4 in -- another one, not small actually, in 2002, by 2003  
5 I found it necessary to ask the Prime Minister for  
6 a doubling of our budget. This is unheard of, it's  
7 certainly unheard of today, but he and the Treasury and  
8 the Chancellor accepted that because I was able to  
9 demonstrate the scale of the problem that we were  
10 confronted by.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: A doubling of your budget because of  
12 Iraq?

13 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Well, the two are connected.  
14 The upsurge in leads in the UK was beginning -- was  
15 happening during the summer of 2002, getting increased  
16 during 2003 and really took off in 2004, and we got the  
17 money agreed in the autumn of 2003.

18 So we were faced with the difficulty of doing  
19 a major expansion of the Service, recruiting many more  
20 people, moving into new offices round the United  
21 Kingdom, opening eight new offices, overhauling much of  
22 what we did, rethinking the way we did things, because  
23 there wasn't any point in becoming twice as big and  
24 doing twice as much; we wanted to do five times as much.  
25 That was necessary because the amount of material and

1 leads we had which we did not have the resources, even  
2 with extensive police help, to pursue.

3 So alongside the creation of JTAC, the development  
4 by David Omand of the counter-terrorist strategy, we were  
5 going through a major change and expansion and dealing  
6 with the most over -- almost overwhelming amount of  
7 terrorist leads and terrorist plots that we had had for  
8 many years.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Can you recall who asked you to see  
10 Paul Wolfowitz and when approximately?

11 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: No, I am afraid I haven't.

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: What year are we talking about?

13 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Oh dear. I think -- no,  
14 I would have to check that. I don't know.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And you don't remember who asked you to  
16 see him?

17 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: It may have been the  
18 Foreign Office. You know, when people -- as  
19 Director General, when I went to the United States,  
20 I sometimes was asked to do things for other  
21 departments. I think, if I recollect, at whatever stage  
22 it was, sort of almost any visitors to the United States  
23 were being asked to press on this particular issue and  
24 I think I was just one of many. And I was seeing him  
25 anyway.

1 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But you didn't convert him?

2 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Not a hope.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: I think Sir Lawrence would like a follow-up  
4 question.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes, I would like just to go back to  
6 before the war. You were giving evidence, assessments  
7 of an increased risk of Al-Qaeda and other Jihadist  
8 reactions to a potential war in Iraq.

9 Could you give us a sense of the difference between  
10 the sort of things you were anticipating and what you  
11 actually experienced?

12 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I think it is fair to say that  
13 we didn't foresee the degree to which the British  
14 citizens would become involved. Our focus in the 1990s  
15 and earlier on these issues involved, for example,  
16 members of Algerian extremist groups, members of Libyan  
17 extremist groups and others.

18 We had had a operation to which David Omand referred  
19 in his evidence, which was a case in Birmingham in 2000,  
20 where we retrieved and prevented the detonation of  
21 a large bomb. David Omand said he thought that was  
22 related to Al-Qaeda. That was the case at the time  
23 I thought I retired. We now think, I gather from my  
24 colleagues, it probably wasn't. But those were British  
25 citizens of Bangladeshi origin planning an attack,

1 target unknown, disrupted, convicted; one convicted.

2 But certainly I think during 2003/2004 we realised  
3 that this was not, as it were, the focus -- the focus  
4 was not foreigners. The rising and increasing threat  
5 was a threat from British citizens. That was a very  
6 different scenario to, as it were, stopping people  
7 coming in. It was what has now become called home  
8 grown.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But prior to the war you were still  
10 anticipating a severe threat, but more likely from  
11 Algerian or Libyan persons?

12 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: More likely also from Al-Qaeda  
13 abroad. I mean, Al-Qaeda had not focused on the UK. It  
14 attacked us abroad in 2003 but it became clear that its  
15 ambition was to attack us in the United Kingdom. So we  
16 had the Heathrow plot, we had the Canary Wharf plot and  
17 so on. We had the shoe bomber, Richard Reid; we had the  
18 second shoe bomber, Saajid Badat; and we had a string of  
19 plots leading to convictions.

20 It is not something I would have normally said in  
21 open session but when Jacqui Smith said it publicly,  
22 I think in 2008, that between 2001 and when she spoke  
23 there had been, I think she said, 16 substantial plots  
24 of which roughly 12 were stopped. 7/7 occurred,  
25 tragically. 21/7 would have occurred if they had been

1 competent. It was not detected in advance.

2 Richard Reid was not detected in advance.

3 There were -- obviously there is a judgment here  
4 about what constitutes a substantial plot -- roughly  
5 a dozen which were stopped and of those, many did  
6 involve other countries and people in other countries,  
7 but in most of them British citizens predominated.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: As part of the war, your view was  
9 that a war in Iraq would aggravate the threat from  
10 whatever source to the United Kingdom?

11 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Yes.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How did you communicate this view to  
13 the Prime Minister?

14 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: It was communicated through the  
15 JIC assessments, to which I fed in.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There were JIC assessments that  
17 warned of this threat. Did you have any direct  
18 conversations yourself with the Prime Minister or other  
19 senior members of the government, particularly about  
20 this issue?

21 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I don't recall with the  
22 Prime Minister -- I did talk about it with the  
23 Home Secretary.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you feel that this particular  
25 aspect of the overall assessment about the pros and cons

1 of going into Iraq was taken sufficiently account of?

2 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I think this is a difficult  
3 question because -- I mean, at some stage you are going  
4 to ask me about lessons learned. The imperative of the  
5 government was to do this and the view was, I think,  
6 implicit that if there was resulting terrorism, that  
7 would be dealt with in the medium term. So in a way it  
8 is a question of balancing the short and the medium  
9 term.

10 Additionally, you could say that even if terrorism  
11 increases, that shouldn't stop you doing what you  
12 believe, as the government believed, to be right. I saw  
13 it as my job to continue to say, as objectively as  
14 I could, what our judgment of the terrorist threat was.  
15 That judgment was the Service's at the beginning of this  
16 period and then became the JTAC judgment. And that's,  
17 looking back through the papers, pretty consistent, as  
18 I think you agree.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There wasn't any particular  
20 controversy amongst the intelligence agencies about that  
21 judgment?

22 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Not that I recall, no.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So are you confident then that there  
24 was no doubt in the government's mind that, as you say,  
25 weighing up all these different factors, which may not

1           have been a determinant factor of whether to go to war  
2           or not, but the issue was there?

3   BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I can't tell you to what extent  
4           senior ministers read the JIC assessments. I don't know  
5           the answer to that. I believe they did read them. But  
6           if they read them, they can have had no doubt.

7   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just a final question: were there  
8           other issues unrelated to Iraq in which you were able to  
9           talk directly to the Prime Minister?

10   BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Yes, I mean, I have -- the  
11           Director General of the Security Service has the right  
12           in law to have direct access to the Prime Minister if he  
13           or she asks for it and I did see the Prime Minister  
14           regularly, usually in broad meetings with others, and  
15           more later on in the period than at the beginning of the  
16           period you are considering.

17   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But there was not a one-to-one on  
18           this particular issue.

19   BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: No.

20   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you.

21   THE CHAIRMAN: You said a little while back, in answer to  
22           a question from Sir Roderic Lyne, that in your judgment  
23           the effect of the invasion of Iraq was to substantially  
24           increase the terrorist threat to the United Kingdom.  
25           Two questions really on that. How far is that really

1 the hard-evidence-based judgment and how far is it  
2 a broad assessment?

3 And the other is: so many other forces are at work,  
4 particularly in overseas theatres -- there is the  
5 Middle East issue in the round, there is Pakistan, there  
6 is Afghanistan, there is Somalia, there is Yemen --  
7 where does Iraq fit into that picture as a driver for an  
8 increase in terrorist threat to the UK and so on?

9 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I think we can produce evidence  
10 because of numerical evidence of the number of plots,  
11 the number of leads, the number of people identified,  
12 and the correlation of that to Iraq and statements of  
13 people as to why they were involved, the discussions  
14 between them as to what they were doing. So I think the  
15 answer to your first question: yes.

16 The answer to your second: it would be wrong to  
17 suggest that this is UK-centric. We were anxious --  
18 I mean, again, people believe that Yemen has just come  
19 on to the radar. Yemen was a real concern back in --  
20 Somalia, all these other places -- back at the  
21 millennium and Iraq is not the only issue which has  
22 motivated terrorists in this area. It pre-dates Iraq.  
23 If we get -- it post-dates Iraq.

24 But what Iraq did was produce a fresh impetus of people  
25 prepared to engage in terrorism and I think that, if you

1           asked me to produce evidence, I could produce that.

2   THE CHAIRMAN: Given the interaction between terrorism and  
3   the counter-terrorism policies of the government on the  
4   one hand and the Iraq situation both before, during and  
5   after the invasion itself, how were the two high-level  
6   policy areas brought together in government in your  
7   time?

8   BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Well, they weren't at the  
9   beginning. I mean, David Omand wrote CONTEST with input  
10   from all of us, I think it was sort of 2002/2003. It  
11   wasn't actually published of course until 2006 and  
12   I would suggest it didn't really begin to have  
13   a substantial effect until probably 2005.

14           So therefore at the stage that the government was  
15   deciding to take military action we had a pretty  
16   embryonic counter-terrorist policy and there wasn't  
17   a correlation between that and the Iraq decisions.  
18   Later on, the counter-terrorist policy encouraged in  
19   policy-making the thinking of the implications of  
20   actions more formally than had previously been the case.

21   THE CHAIRMAN: You spoke about JTAC in the beginning of your  
22   evidence this morning. JTAC essentially are the  
23   tactical event level but did that drive a greater  
24   address to higher-level policy because of the stream of  
25   reporting from JTAC?

1 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I think I dispute that it was  
2 all tactical. Quite a lot of it was -- the reports are  
3 of different levels for different audiences.

4 The point about JTAC is it serves people from  
5 military commanders in the field to investigators in the  
6 police and the Security Service to policy development in  
7 the Foreign Office. So it has a range of different  
8 levels at which it reports and I think, as it has  
9 established itself and gained stature and credibility,  
10 that it is a substantial contribution to policy-making;  
11 again partly through the JIC but also in its own right.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

13 This committee is fortunate in having two historians  
14 amongst its members and I would like to ask you a little  
15 bit about the pre-history, if you like, of the  
16 Security Service insofar as it might relate to Iraq  
17 later.

18 I suppose, is it right, the formative modern history  
19 of your Service was the Cold War and then Irish  
20 terrorism? Were there lessons/experience from either,  
21 but particularly perhaps from Northern Ireland, that  
22 came to be relevant in addressing the Iraq issue and  
23 counter-terrorism and --

24 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Yes, very much so. I think the  
25 experience of Northern Ireland, the mistakes made there,

1 the length of time it took for the agencies to work  
2 constructively together, the police, the RUC in those  
3 days, the Army, ourselves, the other agencies, the  
4 degree -- the length of time it took to develop the  
5 intelligence processes and the lessons learned about the  
6 transmission of intelligence to evidence, the lessons  
7 learned about managing a peace process, about talking  
8 to terrorists; there are a whole range of issues which  
9 helped inform the way we approached this subject. In  
10 particular, I think, the relationship with the police  
11 and the systems we had for moving an operation from an  
12 intelligence investigative phase to an evidential, arrest  
13 and prosecution stage. And a mass of other useful  
14 experiences informed our approach to this  
15 counter-terrorism threat.

16 But of course it was not complete because the  
17 threats are very different. With Irish Republican and  
18 Loyalist terrorism, the threat was from an island to the  
19 west of us. It wasn't global, it didn't come from  
20 anywhere in the world. And Irish terrorists, at least  
21 latterly, were not interested in mass casualty and there  
22 was always the option of a political settlement. Now,  
23 some of those don't prevail in this.

24 Another issue I think that's different is with -- if  
25 you take the provisional IRA, it had a recognisable

1 structure. With good intelligence, you could draw  
2 an organogram of it. You can't do that with Al-Qaeda.  
3 You can say who leading figures are, but it is a much  
4 looser structure. In some areas there is no structure  
5 at all.

6 I found that our American colleagues were certainly  
7 open to discussing with us the lessons learned in  
8 Northern Ireland and using them as a platform for  
9 thinking how to approach these new threats. As I say,  
10 the parallels are not precise at all. But I think it  
11 gave us in the UK, in the British Security Service and  
12 the police, an advantage that a lot of these tricky  
13 issues had been resolved, as it were, over the 30 years  
14 of Irish terrorism.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I would like to ask in a moment  
16 about any lessons from the Iraq years, if you like, for  
17 the Security Service, but I think Sir Roderic Lyne has  
18 a question first.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Just one little point of detail arising  
20 from your conversation with Sir Lawrence Freedman. Did  
21 I understand you to say that you did not have a practice  
22 of regular, scheduled, bilateral, one-on-one meetings  
23 with Mr Blair?

24 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: No.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: At all?

1 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Not a regular schedule of them,  
2 any more than my predecessors had. I could have asked  
3 for one at any time, as I said earlier. But I did see  
4 him regularly in larger meetings because there were  
5 regular meetings in the Cabinet room on a range of  
6 issues of which I was a member.

7 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You didn't have the sort of meeting at  
8 which you could sit down with him once a quarter or  
9 whatever and run through the half-dozen things that  
10 might be on your mind and make sure that these were  
11 directly inputted to him and have a conversation about  
12 them?

13 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: The main conversation was at  
14 least once a week with the Home Secretary.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: With the Home Secretary?

16 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Yes, and that was a frequency  
17 again much more than some of my predecessors. I saw  
18 ministers -- a lot of ministers actually. I regularly  
19 saw the Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary. I saw  
20 them in meetings, I saw them to brief them, much more  
21 extensively than my predecessors had done.

22 So I was the main political -- the person in the  
23 government who answers for the Security Service in  
24 Parliament is the Home Secretary. I worked for three  
25 Home Secretaries, I saw all of them very regularly and

1       discussed a range of issues, and you have seen some of  
2       those papers.

3       SIR RODERIC LYNE:   So if messages were to get through to the  
4       Prime Minister about the expected impact of the Iraq war  
5       on terrorism, it would have come through your  
6       participation in joint meetings, through the  
7       Home Secretary having talked to you and through JIC  
8       papers?

9       BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER:   Yes.

10      SIR RODERIC LYNE:   Those would be the channels.

11                 Now, going back over the previous sort of 10 or  
12      15 years, to the extent you can, had it been the  
13      practice at least for some of your predecessors for them  
14      to have scheduled bilateral meetings with the  
15      Prime Minister?

16      BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER:   Pretty irregularly.

17      SIR RODERIC LYNE:   Irregularly?

18      BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER:   Hm-mm.   I think some of my  
19      predecessors saw the Home Secretary very irregularly.  
20      I think that the sort of broad answer to your question  
21      is that as -- in the last decade the Director Generals  
22      of the Security Service have seen ministers at all  
23      levels much more extensively and much more frequently  
24      and have participated much more broadly in Whitehall  
25      meetings than was once the case.

1           That's quite understandable because, you know, in  
2           the days of the Cold War -- I simplify -- but ministers  
3           tended only to be interested if there was a spy scandal.  
4           It was when terrorism from Al-Qaeda and its associates  
5           and sympathisers became a major political issue, then  
6           the role of Director General of the Security Service in  
7           participating in meetings became much more extensive.

8   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   Would you have any means of comparing the  
9           frequency of your direct access to the Prime Minister  
10          with that of the heads of the other agencies?

11   BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER:   I believe the head of SIS saw  
12          him much more frequently than I did, for understandable  
13          reasons.

14   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   Thank you.

15   THE CHAIRMAN:   I would like to ask two or three specific  
16          questions on lessons learned from the Iraq experience  
17          from the standpoint of the Security Service and its  
18          Director General and then to offer you the opportunity  
19          to give us any general reflections you have.

20                 So the specific ones: first, I suppose, as a member  
21          of -- and you have accepted, as it were, collective  
22          responsibility for the workings of the JIC -- but with  
23          retrospect and with hindsight, the pre-conflict WMD  
24          assessments which have proved to be wrong, is there  
25          anything in the JIC process that might be improved? We

1           have had the Butler Committee; we now have this one.

2   BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER:   Of course the Butler Committee  
3           said some very important things on this and I have  
4           thought about this.

5           I wasn't really part of the JIC at the stage where  
6           that dossier was being put together but obviously I was  
7           aware of it and my recollection -- I have two points,  
8           I think. The first is that we were asked to put in some  
9           low-grade, small intelligence to it and we refused  
10          because we didn't think it was reliable. But because of  
11          the nature of what we do, we had very little anyway.

12          The second one really is the degree to which, if you  
13          are not an expert in the JIC, you need -- your options  
14          for challenge are, to a degree, limited. The people who  
15          knew about Iraq and WMD were Foreign Office,  
16          Ministry of Defence, SIS, DIS, not my Service.

17          I have obviously thought whether my predecessor or  
18          I should have challenged more and I know that a degree  
19          of that intelligence on which too much reliance was put  
20          has been withdrawn as anyway unreliable. I think  
21          that -- and I think that in his evidence David Omand  
22          talked about this interestingly -- I think the JIC is  
23          essential in order to assess, analyse, calibrate raw  
24          intelligence into a report that can go to ministers. It  
25          is not a good thing for raw, unassessed intelligence to

1 be widely distributed because the wrong decisions can be  
2 made. So it has a very important role.

3 At the same time I think that the JIC has about it  
4 an aura which is undeserved. People talk in hushed  
5 tones about the Joint Intelligence Committee. It is  
6 another Whitehall committee. It is fallible. It  
7 produces some excellent things; it produces some less  
8 good things. Reflecting back, with the wisdom of  
9 hindsight, there was an inadequate challenge. That has  
10 all been gone into in Butler and David Omand talked  
11 about it in terms of group-think and the psychology of  
12 everybody feeling it was going one way.

13 I think the important thing about it is it should  
14 never -- its judgments -- it is always recognised and  
15 others must recognise that its judgments may be  
16 fallible. Looking back through the JIC reports, I think  
17 it was pretty good on the terrorist threat actually;  
18 much less good on Iraq. I think that the JIC did try to  
19 go back and look at its past judgments and be  
20 self-critical and you will have seen papers on that.  
21 You will have also seen papers on the extent to which  
22 some of us thought it needed to be more self-critical.

23 I don't know what it is like today. It is always  
24 going to be an imperfect way of doing things but it is  
25 right that we try and do it like that because the

1 alternative is anarchy.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

3 There is one general question arising out of that,  
4 which was looked at by the Butler Committee and we have  
5 now had evidence of it ourselves from a number of  
6 witnesses, and that is the extent to which ministers,  
7 who sometimes may be newly in office or newly in  
8 a relevant office, can be expected, simply by a kind of  
9 osmotic process, to understand the nature and use of  
10 intelligence, its fallibility, its bittiness, how to use  
11 it.

12 Do you think there is scope for a more systematic or  
13 ordered induction process for ministers when we need to  
14 rely on intelligence?

15 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Certainly. This is not a new  
16 issue. Throughout my career, even when quite junior,  
17 I have been involved in helping ministers to understand  
18 the inadequacies of intelligence. I spoke about this in  
19 my speech in the House of Lords, the degree to which  
20 intelligence can be seductive, and dangerously seductive.

21 But I think that for many years the intelligence and  
22 security agencies have sought to help incoming  
23 ministers -- I'm sure it is happening even now --  
24 understand the nature of intelligence, the fact it is  
25 a source of information, it is rarely complete, it needs

1 to be assessed, it is fragmentary. All those issues are  
2 very well documented, both before this Inquiry and well  
3 known.

4 My recollection is there used to be some formal  
5 induction for ministers, not just about, you know, not  
6 leaving their papers on a train and looking after their  
7 laptop, but some more formal discussion on how to  
8 understand and approach intelligence. I think that that  
9 is a valuable point, if it can be achieved.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: If it has fallen away, it should be restored,  
11 you say?

12 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: Yes.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

14 One last question on direct lessons from the Iraq  
15 experience. Given the limited nature of the Security  
16 Service's direct involvement in Iraq but looking to the  
17 terrorist threat during and afterwards, are there any  
18 lessons from the Iraq experience that the  
19 Security Service has learned or has taken up?

20 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I think that -- I suppose what  
21 the lesson for the Security -- and there are some broad  
22 lessons, but the lessons for the Security Service is the  
23 need to be pretty quick and responsive to changing  
24 circumstances.

25 I think we were pretty quick to persuade the

1 government that we needed to expand to meet this problem  
2 but we didn't fully anticipate the degree to which, as  
3 I said, British citizens would become involved.

4 I wrote to David Blunkett -- or to John Gieve, the  
5 Permanent Secretary at the Home Office, in 2004 to  
6 say -- I hope you have this letter; if not, I'm sure my  
7 colleagues can give it to you -- in the wake of  
8 Operation CREVICE, to say that this operation  
9 represented some issues of very real concern and that  
10 the government needed to be thinking about engagement  
11 with the Muslim community, presenting these facts, the  
12 effect of foreign policy on domestic policy, a broad  
13 range of things -- this is March 2004 -- and I suppose  
14 I regret that we didn't anticipate some of that but it  
15 wasn't necessarily foreseeable.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

17 I wonder, are there some more general reflections  
18 you would like to offer at the end of this session?

19 BARONESS MANNINGHAM-BULLER: I think, Chairman, you have  
20 really touched on them. The main one would seem to me  
21 to be the danger of over-reliance on fragmentary  
22 intelligence in deciding whether or not to go to war.  
23 If you are going to go to war, you need a pretty high  
24 threshold, it seems to me, to decide on that, and  
25 I think there is very few who would argue that the

1 intelligence was not substantial enough upon which to  
2 make that decision.

3 I think the second point would be really the  
4 point you picked up on of making sure that the immediate  
5 imperative, as the government saw it, to forestall  
6 Saddam Hussein was connected with the medium-term  
7 increases in the threat and the two were seen together  
8 in a way that they, I suggest, were not entirely.

9 The third one should be, of course, by focusing on  
10 Iraq, we ceased to focus on the Al-Qaeda threat or we  
11 reduced the focus on the Al-Qaeda threat in Afghanistan.  
12 I think that was a long-term, major strategic problem.

13 There were issues about structure, the  
14 Cabinet Office, which I think you have covered.

15 I think those are my main ones.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: With that then, I'll close this session. Our  
17 thanks to our witness. We will resume at 11.30 am, when  
18 we will take evidence from Major General Andy Salmon.

19 So that ends this session. Thank you very much.

20 (11.12 am)

21 (Short break)

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