

DECLASSIFIED EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT OF A VISIT TO IRAQ BY GENERAL SIR MIKE JACKSON
DATED OCTOBER 2005

This report was addressed to the Chief of the Defence Staff

Date	Paragraph	Declassified Extract
Oct 05	2	Though there is no sense of defeatism in theatre, the possibility of strategic failure was mentioned in earnest on this visit more than on any before.
Oct 05	18	A number of other issues were raised by MND(SE), all relating to our ability to sustain expeditionary operations. 2 key points bear repetition. First, our support Helicopter Fleet is creaking badly. JHF-I is struggling to meet its tasks even with rigorous prioritisation. The impending RiP will exacerbate the problem. Serviceability, flying hours and crew numbers (the Puma airbridge in Baghdad was down owing to a minor injury to an aircrewman) are all factors, but the overall picture is one of an SH force ill-matched to support current operations. If our SH capability is inadequate, our AT fleet is worse. The airbridge to theatre is now so fragile that sustaining an efficient R & R schedule is nigh impossible. Quite apart from the morale effect of inordinate delays, the difficulties with R & R are now beginning to impact significantly on the operational effectiveness of the Division. The situation is so bad that I am asking HQ Land to re-examine, at least in principle, whether we might not re-adopt 4 month operational tours without R & R. Since I suspect there will be very many reasons against this – continuity and our current training cycle to name but 2 – we really need to take stock of our AT capability in the round, especially in light of our impending commitment to Afghanistan.