

1 (2.00 pm)

2 GENERAL SIR MIKE JACKSON, GCB, CBE, DSO, DL

3 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Good afternoon and welcome.

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Thank you.

5 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Welcome to those in the room. Our  
6 witness for this afternoon's session is General Sir Mike  
7 Jackson. You were C-in-C Land Forces from 2000 until  
8 the end of January 2003 at which point you became Chief  
9 of the General Staff until your retirement in  
10 August 2006.

11 Now in these appointments you worked alongside  
12 General Dannatt and you were his predecessor as CGS.  
13 You will not have had much chance I am afraid to catch  
14 up on General Dannatt's evidence this morning so we are  
15 not going to question you with direct regard to that.  
16 That wouldn't be sensible. We will though cover and  
17 draw on some of the same issues.

18 Now I say this on each occasion. I recognise  
19 witnesses give evidence based on their recollection of  
20 event and we check what we hear against the papers to  
21 which we have access, some of which we are still  
22 receiving. I remind each witness on each occasion he  
23 will be asked to sign a transcript of evidence to the  
24 effect that the evidence given is truthful, fair and  
25 accurate.

1           With those preliminaries out of the way I will ask  
2           Sir Roderic Lyne to open the questioning. Rod.

3   SIR RODERIC LYNE: Sir Michael, you told The Times earlier  
4           this year:

5           "People look at a single service chief as though he  
6           was responsible for everything the army does. Would  
7           that it were so."

8           Now that's very modest, but you were obviously  
9           a senior decision-maker in the Ministry of Defence, the  
10          Chiefs of Staff Committee, the Defence Board throughout  
11          this period. How much of your time as Chief of the  
12          General Staff were you actually having to spend on Iraq?

13   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It varied as time went on. If my  
14          memory is correct, I assumed the appointment of CGS on  
15          1 February 2003, i.e. some six weeks or thereabouts  
16          before the operation began. You will understand that the  
17          first few months of my tenure were very much concerned  
18          with Iraq. As time went on this became less so. There  
19          were other things which needed to be done as well, of an  
20          organisational nature in particular, when we were  
21          looking at how the army should be for the future. So  
22          that degree of involvement was very intense right at the  
23          beginning of my tenure, and then diminished as time went  
24          on for all the reasons I have outlined.

25   SIR RODERIC LYNE: How throughout your time as CGS did you

1 keep in touch with the situation there? You went out  
2 there occasionally? You had some regular channels of  
3 information?

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. There are a number of channels  
5 I think here. Perhaps the most important is the visit.  
6 I have I think a note here somewhere of the number of  
7 times that I went out -- eight or nine times in my time.  
8 It was obviously vital to do that. You can't really get  
9 a sense of what it is like on the ground sitting in  
10 Whitehall.

11 So first-hand visiting and talking to commanders on  
12 the ground in particular is a vital part of that.

13 Other channels of information: the reporting system  
14 into the MoD via Permanent Joint Headquarters, of  
15 course, as the Operational Command Headquarters; and  
16 Chiefs of Staff meetings. -- I did not sense any dearth  
of information.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: As you watched it unfold, did you feel  
19 that at the beginning through the campaign phase and  
20 then most importantly thereafter the British Government  
21 had a clear strategy for what it was trying to do in  
22 Iraq?

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: For the first part, yes. For the  
24 second I am rather less certain.

25 To be fair, in the run-up to the commencement of

1 military operations the great concern was, "Are we going  
2 to win this?" Now what was meant by "winning" there of  
3 course was the defeat of Saddam Hussein's forces in the  
4 field, so-called Phase III. I had no concerns there.  
5 The American army at that time worked under a very clear  
6 doctrine of: in, overwhelming force, win, out.  
7 I paraphrase, but that's what it boils down to. Anybody  
8 who knows the American army will know that what they set  
9 out to do in Iraq was absolutely playing to their  
10 strengths and their doctrine of that time: mass  
11 manoeuvre. I was much more concerned about so-called  
12 Phase IV, the aftermath, where I certainly personally  
13 did not have confidence that Washington had worked this  
14 through, and, in fact -- and I know you have heard  
15 evidence from General Tim Cross, who I used to speak to  
16 quite regularly at this time -- there was a sense that  
17 whilst the manoeuvre war would be complete quickly and  
18 decisively, Phase IV would not be so.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Did you feel there was a consensus in  
20 Whitehall around the strategy that embraced military and  
21 civilians, political leadership, different departments  
22 involved, MoD, Cabinet Office, Foreign Office,  
23 Number 10, DFID.

24 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I am afraid I didn't. There are  
parallels to Phase IV to what happened

1 in Kosovo, what happened in Bosnia. Nothing repeats  
2 itself exactly, far from it, but there are parallels and  
3 I was involved personally in the Balkans quite a bit.

4 What you are trying to do is take a country from  
5 some dark past and move it into a rather better future  
6 where it has stability, where it has an economy growing  
7 and all of that. If Donald Rumsfeld didn't like the  
8 phrase "nation-building" I think it is rather apt for  
9 what you are trying do.

10 This, of course, is not a job purely for soldiers.  
11 Far from it. It does need all the sinews of Government  
12 to come together to a single purpose. We are not as  
13 good at that as we ought to be, but I don't suppose we  
14 are very much worse than any other country either, but  
15 getting the interdepartmental Whitehall piece together  
16 seems to be very difficult, for reasons about which  
17 I can speculate but I don't know.

18 Indeed, I recall on one occasion going so far in the  
19 late summer of 2003, when it was becoming clear that  
20 Phase IV was messy, as to making the suggestion there is only  
21 one way to do this, and that is to appoint a minister  
22 for Iraq. It didn't find a great deal of favour I fear.  
23 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Was it more difficult with some bits of  
24 Whitehall than others? Were there outliers in this  
25 process?

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: The obvious partners in policy terms  
2 are the Foreign Office and I think both at the Whitehall  
3 end and particularly on the ground the relationship  
4 between the diplomat and the military was pretty good in  
5 my view.

6 The other major partner, of course, is DFID. That  
7 I think went less well. I cut my own teeth on this one  
8 in the old organisation of the Overseas Development  
9 Agency, which was, of course, within the Foreign Office.  
10 There was a step change with the inauguration of the  
11 Department for International Development, and a sense  
12 that objectives were not aligned as harmoniously as they  
13 should have been, because if the United Kingdom sets out  
14 on this or that strategic course with some very high  
15 stakes, it seems to me it is incumbent upon the whole of  
16 the Government machinery to work to that end.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you.

18 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Right. I will turn next to  
19 Sir Lawrence Freedman. Lawrie?

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The 1998 strategic defence review  
21 and the defence planning assumptions within it set out  
22 the readiness assumptions of the armed forces, including  
23 obviously for the army. As Commander-in-Chief Land you  
24 were responsible for producing trained and equipped  
25 units of the British Army able to meet these readiness

1 assumptions. Could you set out what these assumptions  
2 were and how well a scenario such as Iraq was  
3 encompassed within them?

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I am going to have to dig quite hard  
5 here I think. My memory tells me that the defence  
6 planning assumptions which had emerged from the  
7 strategic defence review of 1997/1998 allowed for, from  
8 time to time, a large commitment, which in land force  
9 terms was at the divisional level; this was not  
10 regarded as anything we could contemplate on an enduring  
11 basis, a one-off from time to time, and I think the  
12 pattern of operations since the end of the Cold War more  
13 or less bears that out.

14 More germanely we would be able to maintain  
15 a medium sized commitment, i.e. at brigade level,  
16 indefinitely and we could on a one-off basis add a second  
17 medium commitment.

18 There was some small print about a small scale,  
19 which I honestly now can't remember, but I think it is  
20 within the ability to produce a second brigade on  
21 a short-term basis.

22 Those were the planning assumptions, and those  
23 assumptions are not just a bit of intellectual  
24 experiment, because they drive for structures, they  
25 drive stocks, they drive equipment. Indeed one is

1 reminded that in terms of geography some rather strange  
2 things were said at the end of the Cold War regarding  
3 hot and sandy places; and the outcome in terms of size,  
4 structure and equipment for Iraq do to a large extent  
5 flow from those assumptions.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So how difficult did you find it to  
7 see how what was coming up in Iraq in 2003 would fit?

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes --

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you think the capabilities had  
10 been developed sufficiently by that time?

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I mean, we became increasingly clear  
12 as 2002 passed that -- let us put it no more strongly  
13 than this -- the probability of a large scale effort  
14 required by the army was increasing and therefore it was  
15 prudent obviously to look at how we would meet that, if  
16 indeed it materialised into a concrete request.

17 Now the force generation process of that autumn was  
18 quite complicated. If my memory serves me right, the  
19 initial bid was for a maritime and air component, but  
20 really leaving ground forces out of it for reasons which  
21 I never quite got to the bottom of. As the autumn  
22 progressed the land component came in and started to be  
23 looked at, division minus, division, division plus. And,  
24 of course, in the autumn it was on the northern axis, as  
25 proposed to come in from the north through Turkey.

1           So there was a lot of to-age and fro-age over that  
2           force generation process as it became clearer that  
3           Turkey was not going to be willing to allow access  
4           through its territory for this purpose; and therefore  
5           the whole order of battle was in a state of flux until  
6           actually, if I remember properly, early 2003.

7   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  When it appeared in the initial  
8           planning that there wouldn't be a large land  
9           component -- you have indicated you found that  
10          puzzling -- what was your own view?  Did you think it  
11          was important to have a land component?

12   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON:  Yes, yes.  If we leave the politics  
13          to one side as far as one is able, if the United Kingdom  
14          was to come alongside the United States as the junior  
15          partner or the major junior partner -- we keep  
16          forgetting I think that there were many other countries  
17          involved -- then it seemed to me that part of this  
18          strategic purpose here is to influence the major  
19          partner's planning and execution.  That in my estimate  
20          requires a substantial land force contribution.  
21          I didn't, I think, Sir Lawrence, quite answer your  
22          previous question in full.

23                 As we looked at the various permutations were we  
24                 confident we could put a division into the field?  Yes,  
25                 we were.

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Despite all the other things that  
2 were going on?

3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. The real worry was FRESCO, the  
4 fire fighters strike, which was taking over 10,000  
5 people from the army, but nonetheless we were confident  
6 we could put together a large scale commitment.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You have mentioned the importance of  
8 being able to influence the Americans. Do you think  
9 there was a direct relationship between the size of the  
10 military capability we are offering and the amount of  
11 influence we get?

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, I think there is actually.  
13 traction When you look at which other nations involved got  
14 with Washington, I would be hard-pressed to answer that.  
15 So I think there is -- it may not be a linear  
16 relationship, but there is I think a very firm  
17 connection there.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In addition to that sort of purpose  
19 how important were questions of morale and the standing  
20 of the British Army in terms of wishing to be involved  
21 in what was going to be one of the major campaigns of  
22 the decade?

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: In terms of morale I am not quite  
24 sure I am with you there. Put it like this --

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Geoff Hoon told us he got a sense

1           that the army didn't want to be left out.

2   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think that's fair comment. I was  
3           about to say that if you put it the other way round, what  
4           would have been the army's sense had the operation gone  
5           ahead on the original British offer of a maritime and  
6           air component but without a land component? I think the  
7           army would have been, to put it mildly, rather  
8           disappointed.

9   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How were these sorts of arguments  
10          developed, say, within the Army Board and then passed on  
11          into the Command Headquarters and into the Whitehall  
12          decision-making?

13   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I am not sure I can remember  
14          precisely, but I have very little doubt that the Army  
15          Board's view would have been as I have just outlined,  
16          and therefore the then CGS would have represented that  
17          view to the CDS and the Secretary of State.

18                 As I say, I never quite got to the bottom of why  
19          that opening offer or concept was as it was,  
20          but we know what happened, that over the autumn a more  
21          balanced contribution came into being.

22   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So your assumption would be it was  
23          almost unthinkable that a major operation of this  
24          sort --

25   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, unthinkable is quite strong.

1 As I say, I was mystified by the original thinking and  
2 did not quite understand it.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: One argument might have been the  
4 concern about cost or a concern about the stretch on the  
5 army given that there were a number of other operations  
6 around at the time that we were still involved in.

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: But, as I have said, none of them  
8 would have prevented and didn't, because we know what  
9 happened in the end, in terms of, therefore, the burden  
10 upon the army.

11 As to the cost, yes, of course it is more expensive  
12 if you add in a large land component and you are  
13 increasing risk in the sense of certainly casualties,  
14 for example.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you have to adjust your planning  
16 and training readiness cycles to make this option  
17 available? Were there adjustments you had to make?

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, it was an interesting  
19 construct in the end, but I am sure you have heard  
20 evidence of the formation readiness cycle. So at any  
21 one time you had on tap at least one brigade, probably  
22 two, who were either at or just coming towards the end  
23 of their full training cycle.

24 So in the sense of having a lead army brigade the  
25 system allowed for that, but, of course, the eventual

1 construct was a single large, very large armoured  
2 brigade, the Air Assault Brigade, which is outside or  
3 was outside of the formation readiness cycle, because it  
4 was a contingency formation, and then 3 Commando Brigade  
5 coming in to make a very interesting divisional  
6 construct.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Why was it interesting?

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Because you had a heavy brigade, a  
9 light brigade and amphibious brigade under a two-star  
10 Headquarters which I don't think we have done before,

but

11 it was the right construct for the task which confronted  
12 1 [UK] Armoured Division.

13 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I would like to ask one or two questions  
14 about the pre-invasion preparation.

15 We had evidence from Lord Boyce, CDS at the time, of  
16 course, that he had not had authority from Ministers to  
17 speak even to the Chief of Defence Logistics until quite  
18 late in the planning process. General Reith told us  
19 that the authorisation for visible preparations came  
20 only in December of 2002. Now I think that we  
21 understand that the planning assumption for something on  
22 the scale then being contemplated was probably six  
23 months.

24 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

25 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: In fact there was at best four. Sir Jock

1           Stirrup said that two months would have made a big  
2           difference.

3   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, it would.

4   SIR JOHN CHILCOT: You agree with that?

5   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I do. There were political  
          considerations,

6           of course, as the autumn wore on. I understand the  
7           sensitivity that the Government did not wish to send  
8           signals, as it was put to me, as if war was inevitable.

9           Therefore, as you have heard from more than one  
10          witness I think, Sir John, the release of UORs,  
11          release of purchasing additional stocks did not take  
12          place until December, somewhat late in the day. One  
          obvious example of this was that

14          there was not enough desert combat clothing.

15   SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Yes.

16   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: There were 10,000 thereabouts on the  
17          stocks, because that's what defence planning assumptions  
18          said. We would never put more than a medium commitment  
19          into a desert environment, which would be about 10,000,  
20          and we put in nearly 40,000, and it was late in the day  
21          too.

22   SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I was going to come to that particular  
23          point not because it is the most important feature of  
24          the scene perhaps.

25   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It is symbolic I think.

1 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Indeed. Adam Ingram in his evidence as  
2 Minister for the Armed Forces told us that stories about  
3 shortages of desert clothing were exaggerated and  
4 misrepresented by the media. He said although some  
5 troops were deployed in green uniforms there was desert  
6 combat uniforms waiting for them in theatre. In effect  
7 he said while the situation was not ideal it was not as  
8 bad as it was sometimes portrayed. You make the point  
9 it was symbolic in terms of how the troops themselves  
10 felt.

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. It has I think a connection to  
12 the soldier's individual sense of morale and and his  
13 readiness to do the job, and doing a job in the desert  
14 requires desert combat clothing. I don't know whether  
15 they were all in theatre or not. I do remember almost  
16 anecdotally, if you like, on my first visit  
17 in early March 2003, before the operation began,  
18 discussing with my military assistant, my MA, since we  
19 both had desert combat kit from previous experiences,  
20 whether we should wear it or not, and we decided we  
21 wouldn't. It sounds banal, but, you know, one was  
22 sensitive to this symbolic dimension of clothing.

23 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Yes. From the very particular to the  
24 quite general. Manpower caps. Now I understand it is  
25 quite normal to have manpower caps placed on

1 a prospective operation and on the size of the land  
2 force to be deployed, but I think it would help us,  
3 certainly me, to understand a bit more about the purpose  
4 and origin of manpower caps. Are they about money or  
5 are they about sustainability or what.

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Sir John, I think you would be  
7 better off asking a politician. They are the ones who  
8 impose these caps. You are quite right. Historically  
9 every operation I have been on there is always  
10 an argument about numbers. There was the famous case in  
11 Gulf I where a battalion went out and was then sent back  
12 again, because basically the army was rumbled I think by  
13 the then Secretary of State.

14 On the other hand, would you send the whole  
15 British Army, every available man, on every occasion?  
16 No, of course you wouldn't.

17 I think there is a combination here between the  
18 professional military estimate of what it is going to  
19 take to do the job which the politicians have set you,  
20 and that will veer towards I suspect, human nature being  
21 what it is, the generous, because you want a bit up your  
22 sleeve. The politician will be attempting to minimise  
23 risk, both of casualties and of money, and therefore  
24 this debate will always be there I suspect.

25 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: In the particular case we are discussing

1 is it actually the availability of forces ready for  
2 deployment that would influence the setting of a cap?

3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, certainly not on this occasion  
4 or really any other I can think of.

5 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I think I just want to ask very briefly  
6 about the change in strategy you mentioned from the  
7 northern route through to coming up through the Gulf.

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

9 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Which was a decision only taken in  
10 January of 2003 for an operation to deploy in March.

11 Was that a big risk factor in the preparation or, as  
12 it turned out, not?

13 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Do you mean military risk --

14 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Yes.

15 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: -- or logistic risk?

16 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: No, more military risk I think.

17 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I don't think so. If you recall,  
18 the northern option was to give a rather more discrete  
19 area and mission to the British contingent, which would  
20 be operating mainly in Kurdistan. There was a sense  
21 that this was more identifiable perhaps as a single  
22 national axis and task. I seem to recall there was  
23 a concern about a three-star headquarters to run it and  
24 we didn't seem to have one. That detail went away as  
25 the plan changed.

1           Then there was some quite fast footwork to mesh in  
2           the British contingent with the American plan from the  
3           south. They too had been looking at the north. It  
4           wouldn't have been purely British, but it would have  
5           been British command.

6           I think the facts bear it out in the end. You know,  
7           we put it together and it worked.

8   SIR JOHN CHILCOT: It worked. Quite. I think the thing  
9           that perhaps brings together both the military and the  
10          logistic risk aspect of the change to the south -- what  
11          about the judgment on overall readiness? There was  
12          a foreshortened planning period, heavily foreshortened.  
13          Then there was an even more foreshortening of the actual  
14          route in and that had big logistic consequences,  
15          which --

16   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, actually it was probably  
17          logistically simpler. It was a long way from -- I can't  
18          remember the port right at the north-east corner  
19          of the Mediterranean. It was a long way to the Iraqi  
20          border, several hundred miles.

21   SIR JOHN CHILCOT: So the traffic jam around Kuwait at the  
22          top of the gulf was not a problem?

23   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It is always a problem, but I am  
24          trying to look at the relative logistic challenge of the  
25          two. You had a much longer sea journey but a far, far

1 shorter road line of communication.

2 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Just before I leave it, I want to get  
3 clear the notice periods. As we understand the original  
4 planning assumptions a large scale deployment should  
5 have had nine months at best in the planning  
6 assumptions. Eventually it was reduced to four and  
7 insofar as the actual route in, it was two.

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Two.

9 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Did that weigh in on the judgment of  
10 readiness in late March?

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No.

12 Let me just start with another logistic observation,  
13 if I may. Over the winter of 2002/2003 certainly as  
14 many people and as much materiel was moved as in Gulf I  
15 in half the time, and I think it was rather more  
16 materiel. So the logistitions, as ever, pulled their  
17 rabbits out of the hat.

18 In terms of your readiness concern, readiness is  
19 a concept which derives from state of training, manning,  
20 equipment, husbandry, all of that.

21 Where you go is perhaps in this sense less obvious  
22 or less important to the fact you are ready. We will  
23 not go round the houses of desert equipment again  
24 perhaps. We have dealt with that and you could say that  
25 was a lacking point of readiness for that particular

1 task, but we look at readiness more as the state of  
2 training.

3 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Final point for information for me. Does  
4 readiness also imply some assessment of the state of the  
5 enemy?

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No.

7 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Ready to deal with X, but not with Y?

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, not in its sort of purest sense  
9 of readiness. It is: how well trained are you? Do you  
10 have the people? Do you have the equipment? Then you  
11 apply that to the particular circumstances.

12 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Yes.

13 We did have evidence from one of the commanders in  
14 theatre that signing off on readiness for his level  
15 really did take account of the fact that the Iraqi army  
16 was pretty much known to be nth rate rather than first  
17 rate.

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I now see where you are coming from.

19 So be it. I was trying to give you a generic answer to  
20 the conceptual point about readiness.

21 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Sure.

22 Okay. One last point from me. Again this is  
23 focusing right down again. We have heard from a number  
24 of reservists, particularly those who were deployed as  
25 individuals rather than in formed units, that they were

1 not prepared, received, used in a way that made them  
2 feel competent as part of the British Army effort. Is  
3 that in part a matter of the speed of having to plan,  
4 prepare and deploy?

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, I think that's fair, and  
6 a degree of political warning, the timeliness of the  
7 political decision-making in order to mobilise  
8 reservists.

9 We are better than we were certainly. I remember  
10 when it first happened in Bosnia was not good at all.  
11 There was no real process then. We are better. We have  
12 the Reserves Mounting Centre up in Yorkshire somewhere,  
13 I have forgotten I am afraid. Chilwell is in my mind.  
14 No matter. There is a place where reservists go where  
15 they are kitted out, where they are given refresher  
training  
16 to bring them up to a better speed. I am not saying it  
17 is perfect and it won't match to start with their  
18 regular counterpart. That said, whilst we are on the  
19 subject of reserves, it is striking that you go out  
20 and visit and frankly you cannot tell a regular from  
21 a reservist. They are absolutely integrated. It is  
22 I think a great plaudit to the reserves, to the  
23 Territorial Army, how they have switched from the Cold  
24 War posture to being part of what the regular army does  
25 on a day-to-day basis.

1 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: And am I right to recall that taking part  
2 in a larger proportion of the total effort than  
3 historically they have ever done in recent times?

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: My sense is 10 per cent is a pretty  
5 standard yardstick in terms of proportion.

6 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Within that --

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: That's very rough, of course. What  
8 you have in that 10 per cent are some very specialist  
9 skills which are held in the reserves for obvious  
10 reasons. They are only required from time to time. It  
11 would be very expensive to hold them permanently in the  
12 regular army.

13 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Thank you. I think we need to turn to  
14 the aftermath planning now. Lawrence?

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You have already mentioned your  
16 concerns about whether or not Washington had thought  
17 this through and I will come back to that in a second.

18 Just to talk first about the UK planning. First as  
19 C-in-C Land and then as CGS, what were you being advised  
20 about the assumptions about the length and scale of the  
21 likely commitment to Iraq by the army beyond the initial  
22 invasion?

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I don't think that had been tied  
24 down in a sense of: it is going to be that duration, you  
25 are going to be there for a year, or whatever the case

1           may be. For those of us perhaps with some experience  
2           elsewhere, if there is one thing that stands out, it is  
3           may be one thing to defeat by manoeuvre by the armed  
4           forces or whatever, but it is quite another thing to  
5           re-establish the country concerned into a stable  
6           position where it is functioning, it has governance, it  
7           has the rule of law. These are very big tasks indeed.

8           You only have to look at the interventions which  
9           have taken place since the end of the Cold War. Amongst  
10          many other things I think I find self-evident is  
11          duration. So I have no memory of any finite time being  
12          given to Phase IV.

13       SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What about drawing down,  
14          disengagement of at least a proportion of our forces?

15       GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: There was a very strong sense in  
16          Whitehall to bring down the force level as quickly as  
17          possible. I think at its height it was about 40,000,  
18          all services, mainly army obviously on the ground.  
19          That reduced very quickly to something around 15 I think  
20          over a matter of almost weeks, if not just a few months.

21          At the time there was a philosophy that -- it stems  
22          from the Strategic Defence Review, that what the United  
23          Kingdom is good at and should maintain that ability is  
24          rapid deployment -- rapid effects, and basically then  
25          over to somebody else. You can see some evidence of

hand

1           that in the way we handled Kosovo, but it wasn't going  
2           to be the case in Iraq I am afraid.

3   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  So did you think this was  
4           unrealistic at the time?

5   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON:  It worried me, and I think my visit  
6           reports reflect that.  As the honeymoon period came to  
7           its all too-rapid end and as violence increased  
8           gradually in the late summer of 2003, yes, it was  
9           a concern that we would be too thin on the ground.

10  SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  We will talk later about what was  
11           actually happening after the invasion.  I just want to  
12           concentrate on the planning at the moment --

13  GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON:  Uh-huh.

14  SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  -- as to whether the concerns that  
15           you mentioned were --

16  GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON:  I think it is fair to say certainly  
17           I didn't and I don't think anybody said, "You have got  
18           this one wrong", that the degree of violence which then  
19           ensued was forecast.  So it was in a way an assumption  
20           that there would be, if not benign, it would be  
21           a tolerable security situation in Phase IV.

22  SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:  Again just sticking for the moment  
23           with the UK position, General Robin Brims told us prior  
24           to the invasion he was not clear what the post-conflict  
25           activity was going to be.  Had he raised those concerns

1 with you?

2 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I do believe he did, yes.

3 I remember very well, and I have already mentioned the  
4 visit I made just after taking over as CGS and before  
5 the operation commenced, I spent two or three days  
6 with Robin in the Kuwaiti desert. I have no doubt --  
7 I can't remember specifically -- that we discussed the  
8 aftermath, but you can't -- I would need to give you  
9 a rather more exhaustive answer, because -- is this the  
10 moment to do it?

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Please do.

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Phase IV planning rested with the  
13 State department in Washington throughout 2002 and the  
14 Foreign Office were the lead department here in Britain.

15 Then you will recall I think in January, but it was  
16 pretty late in the day, the responsibility in Washington  
17 shifts from the State department to the Pentagon. My  
18 understanding is the State had done a lot of work. My  
19 understanding also is that the Pentagon were unimpressed  
20 by this work and thought it was perhaps unnecessary.  
21 I don't know. I have already mentioned Tim Cross  
22 talking with me and saying, you know, he didn't have  
23 a sense that the whole matter was being addressed as  
24 rigorously as it should have been.

25 So there was concern, yes, that what would Phase IV

1 look like and how was it going to be? The dominant  
2 sense in Whitehall was that we were looking at  
3 a potential humanitarian problem, not a security  
4 problem, and, of course, events showed that there was  
5 not a humanitarian problem but there was a security  
6 problem after two months or so.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You have made a couple of references  
8 to Whitehall. Just to unpick who we are talking about,  
9 the last reference presumably you are referring to DFID  
10 or --

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, DFID are, of course, the  
12 purveyors of humanitarian aid, but I think the  
13 Government's concern about Phase IV was a humanitarian  
14 disaster, and clearly -- and in particular it wouldn't  
15 want to see scenes of human distress on the area which  
16 the British were occupying.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: When you referred earlier to  
18 pressure from Whitehall on troop numbers, which bit of  
19 Whitehall are we talking about?

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I am not sure I can really  
21 give you the answer to that. There would be some  
22 pressure from within the MoD, but I suspect there was  
23 also governmental level pressure as well, but I do not  
24 know that.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you have this sort of background

1 concern. You are aware of Robin Brims' uncertainty  
2 about what he is supposed to do. There is  
3 a humanitarian question which is very short term if it  
4 is going to arise.

5 You mention in your book you are clearly aware of  
6 the struggles your counterpart in the United States Eric  
7 Shinseki had been having with Donald Rumsfeld about  
8 troop numbers which was also related to this --

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, about troop numbers.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- troop numbers and the aftermath  
11 and how many you might need. What I think -- Lord Boyce  
12 has also told us about these sorts of concerns.

13 There was a request from Downing Street for the  
14 military to say that there was a workable plan. What's  
15 unclear is how there could be a workable plan when all  
16 this uncertainty and anxiety surrounded Phase IV.

17 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Part of this is, of course, the  
18 difficulty of being the junior partner I think you have  
heard evidence to this effect.

20 The chain of command, if you like, or civil  
21 administration ran back of course to Baghdad, to ORHA as  
22 it was -- have I got the right way round -- ORHA first  
23 and then the CPA?

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes.

25 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Therefore it was not easy to run

1 a completely  
2 independent operation, both civil and military,  
3 in the south. There is an interesting parallel, is  
4 there not, with Afghanistan, where there is  
5 an inclination for perfectly understandable reasons to  
6 look at Helmand as though it was the whole of  
7 Afghanistan, as we did with Basra in relation to Iraq,  
but it has to fit  
8 into the overall campaign plan.

9 I am not sure that does answer the question.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I suppose my question is partly  
11 about how serious you thought -- you gave some  
12 indication before that you didn't quite envisage how bad  
13 it was going to be.

14 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: The security situation, yes.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The security situation, but it is  
16 also at what point do you -- do the lights flash red  
17 within Whitehall to Government saying, "You should be  
18 aware that there is a real danger here of things going  
19 very badly wrong afterwards even though we are all  
20 confident about what will happen in Phase III".

21 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It's a very intriguing question as  
22 to how the warnings and indicators do get through.

23 I mean certainly and I think you have seen them --  
24 I wrote fairly comprehensive visit reports each time to  
25 try to get a sense of how I felt it was; to say nothing,

1 of course, of the operational chain of command on  
2 a day-to-day basis, coming back to PJHQ. Of course, we  
3 forget to some extent that in the late 2003/4 the  
4 situation got pretty ugly in the so-called Sunni  
5 triangle in and around Baghdad. It was not nearly as  
6 bad as that in the south. Now there were problems, of  
7 course, but the levels of violence were very bad at that  
8 time in Baghdad.

9 I don't know the answer to your question actually.  
10 I will give it some more thought and see if I can come  
11 up with a better ...

12 I think what you are asking me to say is what  
13 trigger is there to say to senior level of the MoD,  
14 Defence Secretary and then across --

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think it is part of an overall  
16 risk assessment. When we are about to enter into  
17 a major campaign, when there is considerable confidence  
18 about our ability to defeat the enemy in let's say  
19 Phase III, but there seems to be widespread concern  
20 throughout the senior levels of the armed forces that  
21 preparations are inadequate for what's going to follow  
22 next.

23 Is it highlighted as a risk to Government from the  
24 armed forces?

25 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. I am now with you. Forgive

1 me. I am now clear. We are talking about before,  
2 really, rather than in the event.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes.

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. I mean, I can remember saying  
5 I think in the chiefs, "Phase III will happen but we  
6 should really be worrying more about Phase IV". I think  
7 there was a sense as the junior partner we could not  
8 really get our hands on the levers which were going to  
9 set the atmosphere for Phase IV. And, of course, those  
10 worries beforehand were exacerbated by the decisions to  
11 disband the Iraqi security forces, to de-Ba'athify right  
12 down to a very low level, even talking about  
13 privatisation of the state industries, in particular  
14 oil, at a time when Iraq had gone through this  
15 extraordinary trauma of invasion and defeat of the  
16 regime.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: We will talk about those later.

18 Just my final question: to what extent was your thinking  
19 on this influenced by the prospect of the UK having its  
20 own bit of Iraq in the south-east? I have to say it is  
21 still unclear to us the actual decision-making that led  
22 to Britain acquiring that particular responsibility.

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I will try to help you as much  
24 as I can. It flows, of course, from the strategic  
25 decision to ditch the north and come in from the south

1 on the American main access.

2 I suspect what happens -- I don't know, but  
3 I suspect what happened I don't think the UK  
4 volunteered to go to Baghdad, for example, although  
5 there is an interesting side element to that.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: We will come to that.

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: A manoeuvre brigade to Baghdad?  
8 Because I think that is quite an interesting area. It  
9 is almost inevitable, and really when you think about  
10 it I can't think of another way to do it, when you are  
11 running a Phase IV situation, wherever it may be, people  
12 do finish up with areas of responsibility and it makes  
13 huge sense to do that.

14 I think therefore looking beyond Phase III the UK  
15 said, "Yes, this is where we are going to finish up at  
16 the end of the manoeuvre. It would be sensible to make  
17 this our area of responsibility thereafter."

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So one follows logically from the  
19 other?

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think so, yes.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you very much.

22 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It seemed to me to be entirely  
23 sensible.

24 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: We would like to turn to another aspect  
25 of the planning for the aftermath. Martin?

1 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Before we look at the question of how  
2 the coalition partners as occupying powers planned to  
3 maintain law and order in the aftermath, I would like to  
4 ask you what were the MoD's doctrine and also planning  
5 assumptions about a military police contribution to the  
6 UK's responsibilities under the Hague and Geneva  
7 Conventions to maintain law and order in the event that  
8 we invaded another country?

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: That's a very interesting question,  
10 because there is quite a difference between the British  
11 and American approaches here, or there was.

12 Now I think United States have been through quite  
13 a doctrinal rethink, but certainly -- and I saw it in  
14 the Balkans as well -- when it comes to public order and  
15 the indigenous police force don't exist or they are not  
16 capable, it was the American way to use military police  
17 in this role.

18 We don't have the mass to be able to do that, and --  
19 just as in Northern Ireland, an infantry soldier or  
20 indeed any soldier who finds himself on the street or  
21 whatever acts partly as a policeman. The Royal Military  
22 Police for us are in a rather more specialist role.  
23 They have their internal disciplinary function, a very  
24 important one. They have a professional mentoring  
25 function within the indigenous police force, but the

1 sense of using military police as if they were civil  
2 police in those numbers is not an option for us. We  
3 just don't have that number.

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: There had been, of course in Germany in  
5 1945 -- this is probably the last occasion when it  
6 obtained, that the Royal Military Police were  
7 responsible for maintaining law and order.

8 What had happened in the meantime to change that?

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: The difference between an army of  
10 1 million plus and one of 100,000 I suspect. Just  
11 numbers. I mean, I don't know off the top of my head  
12 how many Royal Military Police there are in the army but  
13 at the most it would have been 2,000 or 3,000, something  
14 of that order.

15 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Can you tell us at what point in the  
16 planning that discussions began about how we would  
17 fulfil our responsibilities for law and order?

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It is something the British Army has  
19 been doing really since the then period of deployment in  
20 Northern Ireland began in 1969. I think it was taken as  
21 almost a sine qua non that we know how to do this in  
22 terms of public order. Northern Ireland, Bosnia,  
23 Kosovo. It is not as if we were without experience  
24 I think in how to handle this.

25 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: What assumptions were being made about

1           who would fulfil these responsibilities?

2   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Oh, well, that would be manoeuvre  
3           units in their own area of responsibility.

4   SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Were you satisfied we had sufficient  
5           resources in the aftermath to do that, given the notable  
6           drawdown?

7   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. I mean, I have already said  
8           I think the speed of the drawdown after Phase III, you  
9           know, I was a little wary, but, of course, that took  
10          place in the honeymoon period, which lasted, if my  
11          memory serves me right, for about two months or so in  
12          the south, maybe a little longer. It was not until  
13          that point that violence really started in the south, by  
14          which time that major drawdown had already taken place  
15          and there was inevitable reluctance I think to go back  
16          up again.

17   SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

18   SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Right. Moving on now, Usha, for you,  
19          legal issues.

20   BARONESS PRASHAR: Yes, indeed. As part of the planning  
21          I want to turn to legal issues.

22   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Sorry, Baroness. To?

23   BARONESS PRASHAR: Legal issues. In your autobiography,  
24          "Soldier", you say that the Chiefs of Staff discussed  
25          the question on legal basis for military action and

1           collectively agreed that you needed to be sure of your  
2           ground. I think this led to General Boyce seeking the  
3           Attorney General's assurance on the legality. Was it  
4           after Lord Goldsmith's advice on 7 March in which he  
5           said a reasonable argument could be made that no further  
6           resolution would be necessary to authorise the use of  
7           force?

8   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Was what after that?

9   BARONESS PRASHAR: Did Lord Boyce see the Attorney --

10   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

11   BARONESS PRASHAR: -- after 7 March?

12   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No.

13   BARONESS PRASHAR: When was it?

14   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: If I get the sequence right, the  
15           Attorney published I think in February a discursive, if  
16           I may call it that --

17   BARONESS PRASHAR: That's right.

18   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: -- opinion in which he laid out the  
19           arguments both for and against the legal status of  
20           a decision to invade Iraq without coming to a judgment  
21           in the matter. We all know lawyers, do we not? On the  
22           one hand, and then upon the other, with the greatest  
23           respect.

24           It was subsequent to that document, which was  
25           available to the Chiefs, that we discussed the matter

1 and said, "This is not enough". Admiral Boyce  
2 particularly, obviously as the CDS who would give the  
3 executive order for deployment, sought more -- what is  
4 the best way of putting this -- a not only clearer but  
5 definitive statement of legality, and that led to the  
6 second, much shorter, document which you are perfectly  
7 well aware of, I am sure, Baroness.

8 BARONESS PRASHAR: Indeed.

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Where the Attorney concluded that  
10 the so-called second resolution was not strictly  
11 necessary. I say so-called, because, of course, there  
12 had already been 17 resolutions at this point. The  
13 'second' resolution description seems to me to be  
14 a reflection of the politics, the national politics of  
15 the time rather than an accurate historical count.

16 BARONESS PRASHAR: So you did see the longer document that  
17 Lord Goldsmith had written in February?

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

19 BARONESS PRASHAR: Then you also saw the one on 7 March.

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

21 BARONESS PRASHAR: But you did say Lord Goldsmith did  
22 provide an assurance in the form of a letter dated  
23 14 March to the MoD legal adviser, and you say in your  
24 biography again:

25 "Notwithstanding the Attorney General's advice that

1 the war was legal, you decided to do your own homework."

2 What research did you undertake?

3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I looked at the sequence of events  
4 both in the Gulf itself in and around Iraq and what  
5 occurred at the United Nations. We start with 678,  
6 which is the reaction of the Security Council to Saddam  
7 Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. The next important one is  
8 687, which is the UN's imprimatur on the ceasefire  
9 agreement which was concluded between the coalition and  
10 Iraqi chains of command at the end of Gulf War I, if  
11 I may use that phrase.

12 I underline ceasefire, because that's what it was  
13 and that's what it remains, or did remain until  
14 a complete new legal basis was established with the  
15 arrival of an independent and sovereign Iraqi  
16 Government.

17 687 laid down a number of conditions. I think there  
18 were about 12 of them. Obligations laid upon  
19 Saddam Hussein, which over the next decade or more he  
20 basically ignored. I already reflected that we come to  
21 1441, the 17th -- I think I am right on that number --  
22 it may be 16 but of that order. So between the real  
23 second, 687, and the 16th, there are, whatever it is, 14  
24 resolutions, all of which are saying to him, "You have  
25 not done that which you contracted to do. You must do

1           it".

2           In my view he was in defiance of the United Nations  
3           for those 12 years, whatever it was. As far as I am  
4           concerned it seemed to me that this defiance eroded the  
          authority of the United Nations.

8           So I concluded. Being aware of the fact we are  
9           signatories to the International Criminal Court, I did  
10          not wish to become the neighbour of the man I had a bit  
11          of a part in putting there, Slobodan Milosevic.

12 BARONESS PRASHAR: Can you recall when you did this  
13          research? Was it before or after the letter that had  
14          been received by the MoD legal adviser on 14 March?

15 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I can't. It is probably before,  
16          during and after I think.

17 BARONESS PRASHAR: So you were actually trying to satisfy  
18          yourself along with the opinion you were getting from  
19          the Attorney General?

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

21 BARONESS PRASHAR: Thank you very much.

22 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I might just add a coda. I'd been  
23          through a similar personal experience when it came to  
Kosovo.

24 BARONESS PRASHAR: So you did that at that stage as well?

25 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It depends on your view of the then

1 emerging doctrine now known as Responsibility to  
2 Protect, although that phrase had not been invented at  
3 the time of Kosovo, the prevention of humanitarian  
4 disaster.

5 BARONESS PRASHAR: Can you recall any other occasion when  
6 such an assurance was sought from the Attorney General?

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It was sought for Kosovo.  
8 I remember reading it.

9 BARONESS PRASHAR: Okay. Can I now move on to the  
10 sustainability of military commitment, because on the  
11 eve of the invasion, that was on 19 March, the Foreign  
12 and Defence Secretaries wrote to the Prime Minister and  
13 I quote:

14 "It will be necessary to draw down our current  
15 commitment to nearer a third by no later than autumn in  
16 order to avoid long-term damage to the armed forces.  
17 Keeping forces in Iraq would be outside our current  
18 defence planning assumptions."

19 Were you involved in the provision of this advice?

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I imagine that I would have been  
21 insofar as one of the duties of the Chiefs of Staff is  
22 to assist the Chief of Defence Staff to formulate his  
23 military advice to the Government. The language is  
24 quite dramatic. I am not sure I would have used that  
25 language myself.

1 BARONESS PRASHAR: I mean, apart from the language being  
2 dramatic, did it strike you as being quite late in the  
3 day to offer the advice? I mean this is on the eve of  
4 the invasion, 19 March?

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, not particularly. It is very  
6 difficult I think -- where are we now -- some -- it is  
7 eight years on, isn't it?

8 BARONESS PRASHAR: It is.

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It is difficult to go back to that  
10 atmosphere, but the primary consideration prior to D  
11 Day, 19 March, was: can we do  
12 the military task immediately in front of us, i.e. defeat  
13 Saddam Hussein's forces in the field?

14 What is now obvious, and of germane concern to the  
15 Inquiry, are the problems of Phase IV. At the time  
there were concerns, but,

16 to use the phrase, it wasn't the wolf that  
17 was nearest to the sledge that was defeating  
18 conventionally Saddam Hussein's forces.

19 BARONESS PRASHAR: You said you were concerned about the  
20 aftermath. Had you personally raised these concerns  
21 about exceeding the defence planning assumptions before?  
22 With whom and to what effect?

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Baroness, the defence planning  
24 assumptions I think arrived with the strategic defence  
25 review in 1998 and I think we have been outside of the

1 assumptions ever since they were published.

2 BARONESS PRASHAR: You mean from day one?

3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Pretty much, yes, yes. We were  
4 running operations outside of the envelope defined by  
5 those assumptions which we talked about earlier on in  
6 terms of simultaneity and all of that, and size.

7 BARONESS PRASHAR: But were you involved in advising the  
8 ministers just how quickly the forces would be  
9 withdrawn, or did you make clear to them?

10 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Without doubt it would have been  
11 discussed in the Chiefs, and I suspect I expressed the  
12 same sort of reservations that I have expressed today.  
13 But, you know, the Chiefs operate by consensus, and

indeed

14 formally it is the Chief of the Defence Staff who  
15 carries the responsibility of the military advice,  
16 having, of course, discussed it with his single service  
17 chiefs.

18 BARONESS PRASHAR: But, I mean, you said earlier that the  
19 security situation deteriorated and we had already too  
20 few troops left. You know, there was a drawdown from  
21 about 40,000 you said to about 15?

22 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I would have thought that occurred  
23 probably May/June, by May/June.

24 BARONESS PRASHAR: So what were the operational implications  
25 of this? I mean, was this discussed, understood?

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, that was always the intention,  
2 because the large scale concept -- in  
3 in land component terms we are talking probably around  
4 30,000 or 25 certainly -- the concept is you put in that  
5 large commitment on a one-off basis and then you must  
6 then downsize, because the army cannot sustain  
7 a deployment of 25,000 to 30,000 indefinitely.

8 BARONESS PRASHAR: So in other words that was already the  
9 plan?

10 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. I mean, I think that's  
11 perfectly fair. Yes.

12 BARONESS PRASHAR: Okay. Thank you.

13 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I think we are getting into the reality  
14 of the aftermath now. Before we break in a few minutes,  
15 I will ask Sir Martin Gilbert to take us into it.  
16 Martin?

17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: We published today on our website some  
18 declassified extracts from the visit report you wrote on  
19 your return to the United Kingdom from Iraq in May 2003.  
20 In it you say:

21 "Although it is only about 30 plus days since combat  
22 operations ceased, public perception and expectation is  
23 critical in maintaining security. This situation is  
24 compounded by comprehensive stripping of public sector  
25 infrastructure, inability to pay public sector

1 employees, a lack of NGO support and planning and  
2 a complete lack of direction and effective action from  
3 ORHA."

4 My first question is: had any of these circumstances  
5 been anticipated in advance? Had there been any sort of  
6 discussion of this type of scenario?

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Not in the degree to which events  
8 actually occurred. As I have said, I don't think  
9 anybody forecast the severity of inter-ethnic violence  
10 which occurred, Sunni/Shia.

11 The looting was far less a phenomenon in the south  
12 than it was in and around Baghdad, I think.

13 I mean, there was a honeymoon period in the south.  
14 I mean, I can remember walking through the souk without  
15 body armour, without a steel helmet, indeed buying  
16 a carpet I think, but that did not last for very long.  
17 I think it is fair to say that nobody that I am aware of  
18 in an official capacity at any rate -- perhaps there  
19 were some Arabists who might have had their own views on  
20 the matter foresaw that within three months we would be  
21 facing a situation as raw as it became.

22 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: During the visit itself were you being  
23 told anything about the possibility of a further serious  
24 deterioration of the security situation?

25 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Not in early visits, not in the

1 south, but yes, because you had the ethnic problem in  
2 Baghdad and around, which you didn't have in the same  
3 way at all in southern Iraq.

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How did you feel this would impact on  
5 our position there?

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Sorry? What would impact?

7 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: The worsening of the security situation  
8 in the centre of Baghdad.

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, we had to come off that  
10 initial rather soft profile that was being rightly in my  
11 judgment used by British soldiers on the ground as the  
12 security situation worsened .We started having to use  
13 armoured vehicles, etc, etc. In other words, a rather  
14 harder profile, and one which gives you a difficult  
15 balance as between maintaining security, maintaining  
16 your own protection and the effect upon the consent or  
17 otherwise of the population, so-called hearts and minds  
18 a difficult balance to strike.

19 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

20 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Are you done, Martin?

21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Yes.

22 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I think this is a good moment to have  
23 a break of about ten minutes. Thank you.

24 (3.10 pm)

25 (A short break)

1 (3.20pm)

2 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: We will restart and Sir Roderic Lyne will  
3 continue the questions.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You have described the situation in which  
5 in 2003/4 the Americans were facing a much worse  
6 situation in Baghdad than we were having to cope with in  
7 MND South East.

8 Were they asking us to help reinforce them further  
9 north?

10 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: On one occasion the answer to that  
11 is yes, and I think this was May 2003 possibly even late  
12 April. In other words very  
13 soon after the conclusion of the conventional manoeuvre  
14 operations. When the American army was relatively thin  
15 on the ground -- when I say relatively, compared to  
16 what it became later in Baghdad, because of their own  
17 force flow and there was, as we know, very considerable  
18 disorder, some of it pretty violent, in Baghdad whilst  
19 the south was relatively benign.

20 My memory tells me that there was a proposal,  
21 I think coming from theatre itself, that Britain could  
22 help out by sending a brigade up to the Baghdad area,  
23 obviously for a limited period of time, but to help out  
24 in a deteriorating security situation. That proposal  
25 did not find favour in London.

1 SIR RODERIC LYNE: This was based not just on numbers  
2 I believe but also on techniques that they were still --  
3 the Americans were very much war-fighting troops.

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: They were partly wanting, as I understand  
6 it, to draw on our experience of stabilisation.

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think that's perfectly fair.  
8 There were those two planks. One, that they were  
9 relatively thin on the ground and, secondly, at that  
10 time -- although I for one acknowledge just how much the  
11 US Army has hoisted in the lessons of that time and  
12 changed its doctrine  
13 looking for experience of how to  
14 handle that sort of street disorder. I think that's  
15 the origin of the proposal that this should take place.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Who in London turned it down?

17 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I didn't. That's for sure.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You were in favour of it, were you?

19 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I was in favour. My recollection is  
20 that I was a lone voice in the Chiefs of Staff.

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: It was the Chiefs rather than the  
22 political --

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, there would have been  
24 a political view as well.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: The chiefs recommended against it?

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: That's my recollection. Which would  
2 probably I suspect have chimed with the political mood,  
3 which was, "We have done what we said we would do. We  
4 are in the south and that's where we going to stay".

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Isn't that a bit odd? We have gone there  
6 in large numbers --

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think it is a bit myopic. I have  
8 already made the point that Basra and southern Iraq is  
9 not Iraq. Far from it. We should have been looking at  
10 the campaign as a whole, but it didn't happen.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You were outvoted.

12 Now we heard this morning from your successor,  
13 General Dannatt, that the following spring, around  
14 March/April 2004, there was a proposal which he said --  
15 because he at that time was out at Rheindahlen as the  
16 Commander-in-Chief of the ARRC. He was rung up by  
17 General Richards who at the time was ACGS --

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: He was my right-hand man.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: -- to be told that the Chiefs that day  
20 had discussed six possible options for dealing with the  
21 situation in Iraq, or dealing actually with a request  
22 from the United States to us to take command of nine  
23 Shia provinces, and the chiefs looked at six possible  
24 options, three of which would have involved deploying  
25 the ARRC to Iraq.

1           These also did not fly. Can you recall that  
2           sequence of events and --

3   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Not as clearly as I can the brigade  
4           that we have just spoken about, but I do recall there  
5           was much discussion about what was the  
6           optimum Command and Control laydown for Iraq. It  
7           changed a lot as the situation changed.

8  
9           I don't want to repeat what you have heard elsewhere,  
10          but, of course, you had a four-star Force Commander over  
11          a single three-star Corps Commander. The argument goes  
12          you could have put in another three-star  
13          headquarters without any difficulty, and perhaps there is  
14          some advantage.

15          There are political problems with deploying the  
16          Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, because, of course, it's  
17          a NATO Headquarters and this was not a NATO operation;  
18          and some NATO members -- how to put it -- saw the  
19          operation in different political terms than Britain.

20   SIR RODERIC LYNE: But we were a year on now. Some of these  
21          wounds had been healed --

22   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Some, yes.

23   SIR RODERIC LYNE: -- and we had new UN Security Council  
24          Resolutions and so on?

25   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Again, my own view I am pretty

1           certain, was: we should look at this very carefully. If  
2           this is an advantage, if this will give us a better  
3           Command and Control laydown, then we should look at it  
4           very carefully. But again I don't think there was much  
5           appetite for doing more outside of southern Iraq as the  
6           boundaries were then.

7   SIR RODERIC LYNE: So we had invested fairly heavily, partly  
8           because we wanted to be influential in this operation,  
9           but we weren't really prepared to add to our investments  
10          in terms of our standing, our leverage with the  
11          Americans and so on.

12   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: One of the --

13   SIR RODERIC LYNE: And then our contribution to the overall  
14          success of the operation. The Americans wanted this but  
15          we were not ready to do it?

16   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: There was no great appetite.

17   SIR RODERIC LYNE: No appetite?

18   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Again I suspect it is about  
19          political risk. I spoke  
20          positively of how you lay down a force within  
21          an internal security situation in that the division will  
22          have its own area of responsibility, and then below that  
23          the brigade and battalions, etc. All of that makes  
24          entire sense.

25                 When you bring in the national dimension, they

1           become almost sort of extensions of national territory.  
2           They can be seen politically in that way, which is  
3           actually a disadvantage to looking at the campaign as  
4           a whole. You know, the boundary between southern Iraq,  
5           the British area of responsibility and the rest of Iraq  
6           was not an international border, but at times it began  
7           to feel a bit like that -- and not just Iraq, I have seen  
8           it in the Balkans and elsewhere as well.

9   SIR RODERIC LYNE: When you talk about political risk,  
10           politically by this stage the Iraq war had become pretty  
11           unpopular.

12   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Certainly the mood was changing. We  
13           should remember opinion polls were saying two to one in  
14           favour.

15   SIR RODERIC LYNE: In the spring of 2004?

16   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, at the time of the operation  
17           commencement.

18   SIR RODERIC LYNE: That is what I mean. There had been  
19           a change over those 12 months.

20   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. Indeed. I am just calibrating  
21           that.

22   SIR RODERIC LYNE: Yes. So the political calculus was  
23           different. As General Dannatt told us, what then  
24           happened was the Prime Minister and others had to go off  
25           to G8 summits and so on ending up with the NATO summit

1 at which it was decided that the ARRC would deploy not  
2 to Iraq but to Afghanistan in 2006 together with  
3 a substantial contingent of British forces.

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Uh-huh.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So we had finessed this. Afghanistan it  
6 would appear had become a more popular conflict at this  
7 stage than Iraq. Was that your sense?

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. I would not perhaps put it in  
9 quite those words myself, but I understand the thought  
10 that lies behind it.

11 I have already made the point that the ARRC is NATO  
12 Headquarters and Iraq was not a NATO operation, whereas  
13 Afghanistan at that point was planning to become one.  
14 You know, the ARRC is a jewel in the NATO Command and  
15 Control crown, and it was an obvious move to spot the  
16 ARRC as the Headquarters to start this change off.

17 As to the broader point about acceptability,  
18 I can but agree with you that as Iraq went on  
19 without visible real -- in the sense of how it is seen  
20 by the public -- improvement, its approval ratings went  
21 down.

22 Equally I think there is a sense that then,  
23 certainly, Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban was  
somewhat  
24 put on the bank burner; there was an increasing  
acknowledgment  
25 that the Taliban had been defeated but they had not been

around

1 destroyed; and that they had spent the intervening years  
2 reorganising and retraining and all of that; and that  
3 the minimalist international military force which had  
4 been in Iraq from 2002/3/4, ISAF, more or less in and  
5 Kabul itself, and then the Provincial Reconstruction  
6 Teams throughout the country, not manoeuvre forces but  
7 just a presence to help, were not enough. More was going  
8 to have to be done.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Would it be too conspiratorial to suggest  
10 that we were in the dog house with the Americans for  
11 turning them down over their request to send the ARRC to  
12 Iraq but got ourselves out of it by our decision on  
13 Afghanistan?

14 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I don't know.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But, I mean, how we stood with the  
16 Americans was important to you, as you have already  
17 said. You don't recall on this?

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No. Certainly it never struck my  
19 mind there was a conspiracy afoot, no. I mean ...

20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Political calculus.

21 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Perhaps.

22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Some voices in the MoD, I think Sir Kevin  
23 Tebbit, if I remember his evidence correctly, was one,  
24 were concerned that we would be overstretching ourselves  
25 by going into Afghanistan before we had finished the job

1 in Iraq but here was the decision point. Where did you  
2 stand on that decision?

remember

3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: The planning for the NATO  
4 involvement, the NATO takeover in Afghanistan, if I  
5 rightly, started in 2005, maybe a little earlier;  
6 there was a very intricate plan whereby NATO would take  
7 over operations in Afghanistan on a province by province  
8 basis, working, if it makes any sense, in  
9 an anti-clockwise direction north around west, south  
10 eventually south-east and the Pakistan border, and with  
11 Helmand being in that plan for the summer of 2006. In  
12 2004 the British planning assumptions were that we would  
13 be either out of Iraq or down to a training team , a large  
14 training team basis, but we would not be conducting  
15 operations. We know that those conditions were not  
16 met --

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I will come back to --

18  
19 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: -- but that was the assumption. Is  
20 that enough or do you want -- there is another --

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I am going to come back to that a bit  
22 later on.

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: There is another factor which  
24 I would want to ...

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Please do. No, no. Sorry.

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: You might be thinking that when it  
2 became clear that the Iraq drawdown timetable had  
3 slipped and was not, therefore, going to fit the initial  
4 deployment into Afghanistan, one should delay  
5 Afghanistan; but we were part of this major NATO plan  
6 with a great impetus and momentum behind it, and so we  
7 did find ourselves for 18 months or so I think it was,  
8 having to balance off these two theatres.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you.

10 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Let's turn now to further into the Iraq  
11 campaign and Lawrence, over to you I think.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: A major tenet of the strategy when  
13 you were CGS was Iraq-isation. On 21 January 2004 you  
14 wrote, on return from Iraq:

15 "The new Iraqi Army remains embryonic. It is  
16 important that perceptions of those unaccustomed to the  
17 provision of combat power are not seduced into believing  
18 the NIA will be an effective guarantor in the short  
19 term."

20 What prompted you to form this view?

21 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I cannot now remember what my  
22 thought process was, though I felt it right to remind or  
23 to flag up to anybody reading that report that we should  
24 not overestimate the speed with which we can rebuild the  
25 Iraqi security forces.

1 I suspect at the back of my mind was the requirement  
2 to give reality to this rather than any rose-tinted  
3 spectacles, and that it was embryonic at that time.  
4 I visited, I think it was 10 Division, who were in the  
5 south at that point. Every time I went I would visit  
6 them. Indeed, I went to the "Royal Military Academy"  
7 Baghdad every time, the Officer Training School, which  
8 was framework British-led, because there is the seed  
9 corn of the leadership of the Iraqi Army of the future.  
10 It was at times two steps forward, one step back to  
11 rebuild an army.

12 Many of them were still smarting from being sacked.  
13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So did this suggest to you that the  
14 problem was the timescale of the policy or that the  
15 policy itself was flawed?

16 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, no, timescale. Timescale,  
17 Sir Lawrence.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So by this time it is known there is  
19 going to be a transfer of civil authority away from the  
20 CPA. Did this create concerns about how arrangements  
21 for security and wider law reform would be managed after  
22 the end of the CPA?

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I am so sorry. I haven't quite got  
24 that.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How concerned were you about what

1 would happen after the CPA handed over --

2 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: What, to the Iraqi Government?

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- to the Iraqi Government, yes.

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Oh, no. My sense was that:to hold

5 a referendum on the constitution, to hold initial

6 elections and to see a properly arrived at Iraqi

7 Government was a huge step towards achieving the overall

8 strategic objective. The CPA was symbolic of a legal

9 regime occupation, which in today's world has a very

10 harsh ring about it. It was inevitable, because that was

11 the state in law, in international law

12 when the border was crossed for heaven's sake; but the

13 sooner we got out of being occupiers, and rather being  
there by

14 the consent and invitation of a duly and properly

15 elected Iraqi Government -- this was a huge

16 step along the road we needed to travel.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But did you think they could cope

18 with the law and order issues they would then face?

19 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, if you remember, there were

20 very careful memoranda of understanding as between the

21 new government and the coalition forces in order to

22 finesse perhaps differing views or positions on

23 authority for law and order, and that changed as things

24 went on. You remember we then come to the province by

25 province handover, etc. But I regarded the arrival of

1           that first elected government, as I say, as a huge  
2           stride in the right direction.

3       SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So if we then move into that period,  
4           April 2005 you wrote on return from a further visit to  
5           Iraq that:

6            "In contrast to the satisfactory progress with the  
7           development of the Iraqi Army, the lack of discernible  
8           progress with the IPS [the police force] is alarming.  
9           It could become our Achilles' heel because without an  
10          effective IPS, not to mention a criminal justice system,  
11          there can be no rule of law, a prerequisite for our  
12          eventual military disengagement."

13          Then you went on to comment that the UK civilian  
14          policing effort both in scale and effort was not, in  
15          your view, correct for Iraq.

16          This is not as we have heard a view that the  
17          civilian police advisors themselves felt was shared by  
18          their Iraqi colleagues. So could you please expand  
19          a bit on this.

20       GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: In my experience rebuilding an army  
21          is a simpler task than rebuilding a police force. Why  
22          is that? I think it is different motives. In any  
23          society a soldier will be differently motivated to  
24          a policeman, so I don't want to be simplistic, but  
25          I often would talk to Iraqi soldiers and officer cadets

1 and officers under training, you know, "Why have you  
2 come back into the Iraqi Army?", "Because I wish to  
3 serve the new Iraq". I don't think they were spinning  
4 a line. This was a genuine sense of wanting to be part  
5 of a far better future for the country than had been the  
6 past, and therefore coming with a sense of national  
7 identity.

8 The police, of course, are local and regional, and  
9 in a country, any country or state which has ethnic  
10 divisions, there can be difficulties with getting  
11 a police force who see their *raison d'etre* as the rule  
12 of law within the country as a whole, rather than local  
13 advantage perhaps here or there. So getting a new  
14 police force in a divided society which is raw, as Iraq  
15 was at that time, to act on behalf of all Iraqis and not  
16 just their own tribe is a far bigger and more difficult  
17 challenge than it is for soldiers. I think this is what  
18 lay at the bottom of that sort of observation from me,  
19 because certainly the police in Saddam Hussein's time  
20 had been used to behaving in a completely lawless way  
21 without regard to the law. They would run it as they  
22 chose, steal money and all the rest of it, corrupt.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You commented the British Army were  
24 *de facto* in the lead on policing but, "Without  
25 appropriate funding and resources". We have heard from

1 a number of other witnesses that the military resources,  
2 human, financial, logistical, vastly outstripped those  
3 of the civilian effort on policing.

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I agree.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Particularly that of the advisers.  
6 We have also had a considerable volume of evidence that  
7 despite having many strengths the military does not  
8 necessarily possess the skills to carry out policing  
9 tasks. Was that what you were alluding to when you  
10 mentioned the army lacked the resources to fill the  
11 tasks?

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: In terms of police instructors from  
13 Britain or where else to assist the Iraqi police force,  
14 there were very few in number, but I think you have  
15 heard evidence from senior policemen. I have in mind  
16 50-odd, something of that nature.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That was in Jordan, yes, doing the  
18 training.

19 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, that's not enough to go  
20 hands-on training. It is enough to set policy,  
21 programmes and all the rest of it, but to do the actual  
22 hands-on work, that is by no means enough.

23 So by default a lot of this fell to the coalition,  
i.e. in  
24 this case British soldiers, which is not ideal. I accept  
25 that entirely. A soldier is not the ideal instructor

1 for a policeman, but he is better than nothing, and this  
2 goes back to where we were rather earlier. Our ability  
3 nationally to bring all the sinews together to achieve  
4 the effect we wish, you know, leaves something to be  
5 desired. There is a constitutional problem here, and  
6 that is, of course, armed policemen, but I am sure you  
7 have heard evidence to that effect.

8 It is very interesting that in the Balkans as well  
9 we had this problem, and this is where the one then  
10 police force within the United Kingdom which routinely  
11 carried arms, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, came in.

They

12 produced a lot of instructors. That has now changed.  
13 So there are some in-built difficulties in this  
14 particular area at least.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I mean, in talking to Sir Martin  
16 before the break you mentioned the qualities of the  
17 British Army when having to do policing-type law and  
18 order jobs in Northern Ireland --

19 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: And elsewhere.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- and elsewhere, but you don't  
21 necessarily think this was something that was the basis  
22 for instruction and wasn't something that could be  
23 passed on in that way. It could be argued that if the  
24 army had that quality then they would be able to help  
25 with police instruction.

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: If we had the quality?

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: If we were able to do policing  
3 ourselves --

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I beg your pardon. Yes, but the  
5 "policing" that soldiers do is far from ideal policing.  
6 Ideal policing is when there are no soldiers there at  
7 all, which is where we got to in Northern Ireland, thank  
8 heavens, after a long haul.

9 I think my point is where you have considerable  
10 public disorder and violence being used, the policeman  
11 goes nearer to, if you like, the gendarmerie approach  
12 than the unarmed constable patrolling the High Street.

13 Equally, well, an army in those circumstances will  
14 also come towards the gendarmerie approach. I mean, in  
15 Northern Ireland we were not fighting a conventional  
16 enemy by manoeuvre warfare. Far from it. So that's the  
17 common ground in a situation whereby you have to  
18 whatever extent the use of firearms, explosives, etc.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you. Just one final question.  
20 You said on your return from Iraq in October 2005:

21 "Though there was no sense of defeatism in theatre,  
22 the possibility of strategic failure was mentioned in  
23 earnest on this visit more than on any before."

24 It just might be useful for you to say: did you  
25 believe the situation was recoverable?

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The next question: what did you  
3 suggest we should do about it?

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, it wasn't what we should do in  
5 terms of the UK. It was a question of the campaign as  
6 a whole. Perhaps it is worth me saying for those who  
7 may read or listen that every time I went to Iraq I did  
8 not only go to the south. I would also go at least to  
9 Baghdad, and sometimes to further flung places as well.

10 Therefore a lot of the concerns, such as the one you  
11 have just mentioned, and certainly I think on this  
12 occasion, more reflect the sense I found in Baghdad than  
13 in the south; in late autumn 2005 things in the  
14 Sunni triangle were not looking good. We had Fallujah  
15 and all of that, and I think in Baghdad there was worry.  
16 I don't think I sensed that in the south.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What about the point that you  
18 retired in the summer of 2006? What then were your  
19 views of the prospects of the campaign?

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think my sense was: we have got to  
21 see this through. It has got a little better than it  
22 had been, but this was before General David Petraeus'  
23 influence on the situation. But at all costs we must  
24 see this through. I don't think I sensed on leaving  
25 office in the summer of 2006 that we were staring

1 failure in the face. We were not there, nor had we  
2 been.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Okay. Thank you very much.

4 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Turning back to Sir Roderic Lyne.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: As the situation became more difficult,  
6 were the commanders on the ground, for example, when you  
7 met them -- did they feel able to ask you for  
8 reinforcements to help them cope with it?

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. I am sure on each and every  
10 occasion there would have been much discussion about  
11 force levels and all of that. If behind the question,  
12 Sir Roderic, is: was there a specific request for this  
13 or that? Not that I can recall, other than helicopter  
14 lift was -- but I know you have heard a lot of evidence  
15 about that -- but in terms of additional forces on the  
16 ground I don't recall a specific request. But you have  
17 spoken to just about every ground commander, so I hope  
18 I am right in that --

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Yes. I mean, we were --

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: -- recollection.

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: -- discussing with your successor this  
22 morning a specific request that was made in his time,  
23 but, as you told me a few minutes ago, from 2004 the  
24 assumption was that by 2006 our numbers would have been  
25 drawn down very, very considerably.

1           How strong in your time in office were the political  
2 pressures on you to get those numbers down, to effect  
3 a drawdown and transition to the Iraqi control, at least  
4 in our area of the MND South East.

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: The drawdown took place as we have  
6 discussed over a pretty short period of time, pretty  
7 shortly after the end of the manoeuvre phase. We then  
8 stayed at around more or less I think 12,000, 10,000,  
9 that sort of number, almost throughout until really  
10 towards the end of the British deployment.

11           So I don't recall there being huge pressure to  
12 reduce further on how MND South East stabilised in  
13 numbers and certainly I would have resisted it,  
14 had it been the case.

15           Was there a sense in London and Whitehall of wanting  
16 to bring the British deployment to an end? Yes, I think  
17 there was, not least because of the commitment towards  
18 Afghanistan.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Perhaps this is a good point then to come  
20 into the interplay between those two commitments.  
21 Again, as we heard from your successor this morning, but  
22 talking about the period leading up to 2006, the way he  
23 described it was that in about 2005 we had a policy  
24 intended to withdraw our forces from Iraq and make the  
25 transition to Iraqi control in our area of operations,

1 but we simultaneously faced a situation in which the  
2 situation in the south-east began to deteriorate very  
3 seriously. The insurgency there came up and hit us.  
4 This happened while we were preparing through 2005 to  
5 make the deployment that took place in the middle of  
6 2006 to Afghanistan.

7 As Sir Richard Dannatt put it, this had created the  
8 risk of a perfect storm coming to fruition around 2006  
9 as, in his view, it did.

10 Now when ministers took their decision on  
11 Afghanistan, were they advised, and did they appreciate  
12 that they were cutting off their options in Iraq by the  
13 decision to make this large deployment to Afghanistan?

14 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: The decision regarding what part  
15 Britain would play within the NATO adoption of the  
16 campaign in Afghanistan I think was made in 2004, late  
17 2004. I could stand to be corrected there, but that's  
18 my --

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: That corresponds with what your successor  
20 said to us this morning.

21 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: You see, at that time it was not  
22 unreasonable to have forecast Iraq drawn down to  
23 probably a few hundred, if that, by the time we had  
24 signed up to deploy under the NATO Afghanistan plan.

25 The quandary, the being squeezed from two sides was

1 that in reality the Iraqi timetable did not run as had  
2 been forecast, as I said a moment ago, by which time  
3 there was much momentum behind the NATO plan, and  
4 I think the view was we could not suddenly put up our  
5 hand and say, "We can't do this in Afghanistan", because  
6 it was not just a matter of us. It would have been, you  
7 know, the whole NATO effort in that country, which would  
8 have been quite severely disrupted.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But did the Prime Minister and Defence  
10 Secretary, when they agreed to that, understand that  
11 they had cut off the option of having substantial troop  
12 numbers remain in Iraq should the assumption that Iraq  
13 was going to go smoothly turn out to be wrong? Did they  
14 appreciate they had lost the option?

15 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I don't think I can answer that as  
16 to quite how the -- that risk was put to the Prime  
17 Minister, because I didn't do that.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Would you not have put it to the Defence  
19 Secretary?

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Oh, yes. I would love to have  
21 the minutes of the Chiefs of Staff meeting concerned  
22 with me but I dare say they are available to you.  
23 I suspect what would have been said would be something  
24 along the lines of, "Yes, we can do our part in the NATO  
25 Afghanistan plan provided that we get the drawdown in

1 Iraq done, and if it is not done, there will be very  
2 considerable risk in this". I suspect it was that sort  
3 of advice which would have gone up.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: John Reid actually asked for specific  
5 assurances that we could handle both situations from the  
6 Chiefs of Staff.

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, at a pinch, as we had to.

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And he was told --

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Considerable pinch.

10 SIR RODERIC LYNE: He was told by the CDS in writing on  
11 19 September 2005:

12 "Our ability to fulfil our plan in Afghanistan is  
13 not predicated on withdrawal of such capabilities from  
14 Iraq and, notwithstanding these qualifications, in the  
15 event that our conditions-based plan for progressive  
16 disengagement for withdrawal from southern Iraq is  
17 delayed, we will still be able to deliver our DOP(A)  
18 mandated force levels in Afghanistan."

19 So basically he is saying the army can ride both  
20 bicycles at once. Could it?

21 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, it did.

22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: It did in a way -- let's say not bicycles  
23 but engines. As General Dannatt memorably said, the  
24 army was running hot. He said this morning, if you go  
25 on running hot, the engine blows up. Did we come very

1 close to that situation as a result of trying to do both  
2 things at once? You yourself have said ever since the  
3 SDR was enunciated in 1998 we had been beyond its  
4 assumptions, but at this point were you not way beyond  
5 the SDR assumptions?

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Considerably beyond them, but let's  
7 be clear as to what that actually means. You know, we  
8 are an army of six ground manoeuvre brigades at the  
moment. You only  
9 have to put one brigade on the ground and to maintain  
10 your two-year tour interval and you must back it with  
11 a further four. So you need five to produce one on  
12 a two-year tour interval. If you choose to reduce that  
13 interval, then you can obviously produce more deployed  
14 on the ground. You know, these are balances and  
15 judgments to be made.

16 So the quote from the CDS saying that the army can  
17 do both is a fair one, because it can. The judgment is  
18 how much you are going to have to reduce between tour  
19 periods, for example. I mean, that's a judgment. What  
20 is a strain on morale? That can be argued two ways as  
21 well.

22 So I think the outcome is that we were able to do  
23 it. There is another whole issue here, which is what  
24 size of force for Afghanistan in that first summer?  
25 There is a very good, I think, argument that we should

1           have gone in with more, had we achieved drawdown in Iraq;  
2           but we had not, not completely anyway.

3   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   There is also the question of for how  
4           long can you continue like that, because the SDR did not  
5           posit two enduring simultaneous medium term operations.

6   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON:   No.

7   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   But as it turned out we went into  
8           Afghanistan in June 2006 and did not get out of Iraq  
9           until approximately the same moment of 2009.   So for  
10          three years we had 8,000, 7,200, those sorts of numbers  
11          in southern Iraq while we were building up towards and  
12          beyond those numbers in Afghanistan.   That really -- did  
13          that over-stretch the machine?

14   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON:   Well, it went beyond the policy of  
15          a two-year tour interval, without doubt, because the  
16          arithmetic does not allow it.   You were there looking at  
17          what -- I think Iraq was down to about 8,000 by then and  
18          Afghanistan initially 3.   So we were looking at 11 to  
19          12,000 deployed, going down in Iraq and increasing in  
20          Afghanistan.   Out of a deployable field army of  
21          something in the order of 75,000, yes, that is  
22          sustainable arithmetically.   The judgment is on the  
23          morale factor, the commitment factor, and that you can't  
24          put a template on and it is a judgment.

25   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   So were you sounding warnings about this

1 in your advice to the CDS and Defence Secretary?

2 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I believe as it became clear that we  
3 were not going to achieve the timeline in Iraq then yes.

4 I would much preferred to see a brigade go into  
Afghanistan

5 at the beginning, but I think that would have been too  
6 much. But equally well, I appreciated along with

7 everybody else that by that time we were very much

8 a key, not the key, a key part of the NATO plan in

9 Afghanistan and it was not in my view

10 have been open to us to put up our hands and say, "I am

11 sorry. Despite what we have said for the last two

12 years, we are not now going to do what we have said we

13 would", because that would have very considerable

14 ramifications on the whole campaign plan for

15 Afghanistan.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So having made that very serious

17 commitment to Afghanistan on its own merits, had we, in

18 fact, as far as Iraq was concerned, from that point

19 onwards committed ourselves to an exit strategy and

20 deprived ourselves of the option, if we wanted it, of

21 making a substantial reinforcement to deal with losing

22 control of law and order in Basra?

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, because if you have to

24 reinforce, you would have to. You know, we are not

25 talking about -- sorry, I have just gone through the

1 numbers. I don't want to be tedious about this. Much  
2 of the army's ability to do things in a deployed theatre  
3 in terms of duration and size is a function of your  
4 judgment as to how much pressure -- how much you will  
5 reduce your benchmark of two years between operational  
6 tours.

7 Now if, for example, in the south of Iraq in the  
8 last year it had gone really, really wrong and we started  
9 to lose a lot of casualties, then could we have  
10 reinforced? Yes, at considerable strain, but yes.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And for how long?

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Ah. Six months perhaps. I mean,  
13 you have a deployable army of something in the order of  
14 75,000 to 80,000 soldiers. They are deployable. Not  
15 all at the right stage of training, not all of them will  
16 have the full range of equipment. I mean, it is not  
17 a sort of black and white. There is not some fence over  
18 which you jump. There is a sliding scale here of -- we  
19 go back to readiness actually, because that's all part  
20 of the readiness concept. But, for example, in Kosovo,  
21 had the air campaign not worked we were seriously  
22 looking at so-called option B minus of putting 50,000  
23 soldiers into the field out of an army of about double  
24 that. That can be done, but it can only be  
25 achieved probably as a one-off for

1 a few months, but there's a sliding scale here. You  
2 have to make the judgment as between the degree of  
3 operational requirement and the strain which it puts at  
4 the other end.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: That strain --

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: And there is no formula, there is no  
7 template here. This is balance.

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: It is not just a numbers question, is it,  
9 because the strain can be felt much more acutely in some  
10 specialist areas.

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: For example, some of the enablers, as we  
13 have heard from some of the other witnesses, and some of  
14 the vital cogs in the machine can break even if the  
15 machine as a whole is able to take it. So you  
16 presumably had to factor that into your calculations as  
17 well?

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, of course. It is perfectly  
19 clear and this says something about whether we have the  
20 army balanced within its 100,000 or so trained soldiers  
21 by function, because if some of the army is enjoying  
22 three-year tour intervals and some of the army is  
23 putting up with 15 months, we have too much of one --  
24 that's the simplistic conclusion -- and too little of  
25 the other, but that's for the particular circumstances.

1           You may subsequently get a second set of  
2           circumstances where the reverse may be true, depending  
3           on what you are asked to do. I mean, field artillery,  
4           for example, we use once in a while. Chafs you need all  
5           the time. A balance.

6   SIR RODERIC LYNE: This all gets fairly technical, but the  
7           big decisions have to be taken by non-specialist people,  
8           Prime Ministers and the like. Did you discuss this with  
9           the Prime Minister face-to-face?

10   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No.

11   SIR RODERIC LYNE: Were you satisfied that he was aware of  
12           the degree of stretch on the army when you were in  
13           charge, when you were in command of the army?

14   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I hope so, but, of course, the  
15           routine connection between the senior military and the  
16           Government, the Prime Minister, is through the Chief of  
17           Defence Staff. The single service chiefs have a right  
18           to ask for audience with the Prime Minister, but it is  
19           not a routine matter whereas, of course, CDS briefing  
20           the Cabinet is a routine matter. Now occasionally  
21           I would stand in for the CDS when he was abroad or  
22           something, and so there was contact that way, but that's  
23           the constitutional position.

24   SIR RODERIC LYNE: But you were the head of the service that  
25           was doing the heaviest lifting --

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Sure.

2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: -- on an operation of massive importance  
3 to this country. Are you saying you never discussed it  
4 with the Prime Minister, or it wasn't a regular  
5 discussion? Do you recall in your time as CGS at any  
6 point the Prime Minister enquiring into the army's  
7 feelings about this case?

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Not that way round do I recall.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: No. The other way round?

10 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: On occasion, yes, but you must  
11 remember -- and these were the circumstances at the  
12 time -- the CDS was another soldier. It is not as  
13 though he was from one of the other two services,  
14 and so I had confidence that the CDS was also reflecting  
15 these considerations which we have been going through  
16 for the last ten minutes or so.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Okay. Thank you very much.

18 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: We have some equipment questions we would  
19 like to address. Lawrence?

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: One you will not be surprised to  
21 hear is Snatch Landrover, which I would like to start  
22 with.

23 This was introduced in August 2003 for  
24 an operational need which we have heard about and  
25 understand, but it always had a potential vulnerability

1 to -- IEDs, explosive devices, and this vulnerability  
2 eventually became painfully rather real.

3 I was just wondering, to start with, how and at what  
4 point concerns about this vulnerability were raised up  
5 the chain of command to you.

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Snatch Landrovers were deployed to  
7 Iraq because they were available or could be made  
8 available as we drew down in Northern Ireland, and  
9 without them it would have been completely  
10 soft-skinned Landrovers. That's where the state of the  
11 equipment inventory was at that point.

12 The Snatch Landrover was only designed to give  
13 protection from low velocity rounds and shrapnel and it  
14 wasn't set out to do anything else, but it was better  
15 than a completely unprotected vehicle.

16 As the situation deteriorated in southern Iraq, of  
17 course the vulnerabilities of the Snatch Landrover  
18 became tragically more and more apparent, and we then  
19 enter a difficult and muddled story as to the  
20 replacement, or the addition of better protected vehicles  
21 into the deployed army's inventory, and the whole FRES  
22 story comes into this as well.

23 I mean, all of that said, there is a limit to the  
24 amount of metal you can stick on a vehicle. I think you  
25 have heard far better evidence than I can give you on

1 this from people who are technically far better  
2 qualified; but there is a limit to the amount of metal,  
3 and the ability of the opposition to up the kinetic  
4 energy that can be applied can go rather faster than our  
5 ability to with stand that.

6 So the amount of metal on a vehicle is important but  
7 it is not the complete answer, and you would finish up  
8 with a vehicle which is far too large often to go down  
9 small streets in an urban area.

10 So again the picture is not black and white, and  
11 there is not some sort of fence you can jump over and  
12 all of a sudden you have a vehicle which is immune to  
13 whatever your opponents may try to do.

14 So I think I will stop there, because I am sure you  
15 are going to ask me a supplementary or several.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Several.

17 To what extent were the options of either improving  
18 Snatch, and you have explained some of the limits on  
19 that but there were things that might help you with  
20 detonation of weapons, for example, or looking for a  
21 alternative vehicle. To what extent were you involved  
22 in those discussions? Were you pushing for  
23 an alternative?

24 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: This is one of those areas where it  
25 can be very frustrating as a single service chief,

1           because you don't have the chequebook and you don't  
2           place the orders. At that time we were somewhat -- what  
3           is the word I seek -- quaintly known as customer 2 in  
4           the procurement construct, which says something about  
5           how the user was regarded.

6   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Could you explain that a bit more?

7   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, I can. I can't remember which  
8           reorganisation of the Defence Procurement Agency this  
9           was, but McKinsey's were brought in to give highly, no  
10          doubt, qualified advice as to how to do this; and they  
11          came down with the idea that the armed services are  
12          customer 2, the user, and won't have the money. The  
13          money will rest with the Equipment Capability staff, the  
14          central staff of the MoD, customer 1, and they will  
15          issue the requirements to the Defence Procurement  
16          Agency, as was, who will do the purchasing. That was  
17          the construct.

18                 So it leaves the single services somewhat at arm's  
19          length from the process of acquiring equipment, and, to  
20          go to the heart of your question, we need something  
21          better to use than Snatch - you may need  
22          something bigger. Sorry. I am going back to my point  
23          about Snatch still has its place. That's the  
24          requirement from the user, but it gets rather tortuous:  
25          it's a very arm's length relationship and therefore

1 a very frustrating one.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There are clearly a number of  
3 requirements coming up from the users in Iraq that can  
4 be handled by UORs, but this is one that is part of the  
5 Core Equipment Programme.

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, there was even a debate about  
7 that as well. Is this part of FRES or is this something  
8 theatre-specific?

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I just want to come to FRES in  
10 a second.

11 So really what you are saying is that there's a Core  
12 Equipment Programme that is being managed over which you  
13 actually don't have an awful lot of influence?

14 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. As I say, it's a very indirect  
15 relationship. You know, this is what the army needs.  
16 We need to replace our 40 year old armoured vehicles  
17 with something far more up-to-date. That's what lay  
18 behind FRES, and this is Core Equipment Programme. You  
19 are quite right, Sir Lawrence.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So there is trying to sort all of  
21 this out -- let's take the FRES example, because General  
22 Dannatt gave us a description of how he saw it from his  
23 point of view this morning.

24 What he told us was in 2002, when he was ACGS, that  
25 the Executive Committee of the Army Board and the

1 Secretary of State had signed off on FRES. They had  
2 been able to do that by cancelling other programmes,  
3 MRAV and Tracer with an in-service date of 2007. Then  
4 he said when he returned from the ARRC the requirements  
5 and costs of FRES had spiraled upwards and the  
6 in-service date was now 2015-2018.

7 Can you recall -- he was not sure what had happened  
8 in the interim. Can you fill us in on that?

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I will try, although I still ask  
10 myself the same question.

11 When it was signed off by the Executive Committee of  
12 the army, I think what that says is the army was clear  
13 that this was a requirement for the future. That  
14 requirement then goes into the procurement system and if  
15 I have said it once, I have said it 1000 times: do not  
16 gold plate. Let's go for something we can get into  
17 service on time, reasonably at cost, and that will do,  
18 shall we say, 80 per cent of the ideal. We can look for  
19 the 20 per cent over time and add on, but let us not try  
20 and go for 100 per cent at the outset, because we know  
21 from experience it takes far more time and it costs much  
22 more money.

23 A voice crying in the wilderness sometimes, because  
24 we have seen it not only with FRES but with many major  
25 equipment programmes: because you only have one

1 chance to get it right -- and I am trying to understand  
2 the other side -- the search for perfection will go on  
3 by the people who look for design and then procurement.  
4 It is not resolved very satisfactorily in my view.  
5 FRES is still out there somewhere. We will see if it  
6 survives the current defence review.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It remains unclear, where does this  
8 gold plating come from? I mean, you are the  
9 Professional Head of the Army. Aren't you able to have  
10 an influence over --

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I can have an influence but  
12 I cannot issue direction. That's the difficulty.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So who was adding these  
14 specifications?

15 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: The Defence Procurements Agency as  
16 was. I think it is probably that.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Was there a Deputy Chief of Defence  
18 Staff (Equipment)?

19 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: He is customer 1 who issues the  
20 requirement. I don't think he writes out the  
21 specification in detail, but you had two of them here  
22 yesterday.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes, and they seem to be confused  
24 about it as well. I mean, it is very hard to work out  
25 where extra -- they say also there is far too many

1 specifications. So there must be a process by which  
2 these keep on getting added, because both you and  
3 General Dannatt have said the same thing, "Let's get  
4 something into service quickly".

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: To the best of my knowledge it  
6 happens, as I say, at the Defence Procurement Agency,  
7 who write the specifications which then go to industry.  
8 Those detailed specifications are not handled certainly  
9 by the service board and only I think in broad  
10 parameters by the equipment capability staff. The  
11 detailed statement of requirement goes from the then  
12 Defence Procurement Agency, to the best of my  
13 understanding.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: General O'Donoghue told us that he  
15 only bought what the customer asked him for.

16 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, but who says "it must withstand  
17 an explosion of this size"? Who says "its ground  
18 pressure must not be more than that"? Who says "it must  
19 not be more than this weight"? That's not the function  
20 of the Army Board. The Army Board says "we want  
21 a vehicle that will do this" without going into that  
22 sort of detailed specification.

23 Now that has to be done, I accept entirely; but the  
24 tendency to push technology one step further than is  
25 actually available, that, I think -- I don't want to

1 sound critical, because, you know, presumably if I was  
2 doing that job I would be looking for the very best  
3 I could get my hands on as well -- but it does lead to  
4 delay, extra cost and delay, my goodness, ten years  
5 for FRES now.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The other suggestion from General  
7 Dannatt was that the delay was because other things were  
8 found for the money that had been made available --

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: There is that as well.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- so it just gets pushed to the  
11 right to meet immediate needs.

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: There is that as well.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Again I am curious as to how these  
14 sorts of decisions are made and the role of professional  
15 military advice in making them. Is it -- I mean,  
16 presumably the Defence Board is one location for  
17 a discussion of this sort?

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, but it didn't really seem to  
19 happen in that way. It's a very good question and one  
20 which I have often thought about. The balance within  
21 the equipment programme of this and that programme, much  
22 of that is pretty autonomous work by the DCDS equipment  
23 capability under the Vice Chief. I think that's the  
24 reporting chain, if I remember rightly, and -- put it  
25 another way round, I don't recall the Defence Board or

1 Defence Management Board, as it was in my time, being  
2 given options, "You can have X of something for the  
3 army, Y of something for one of the other services". It  
4 never seemed quite to work like that.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So we keep on hearing about the  
6 importance of prioritisation. There's a limited amount  
7 of resource. We have to spend it one way or the other.

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Uh-huh.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It remains difficult to work out how  
10 the prioritisation takes place.

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I agree.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Is it a question of the more high  
13 profile, perhaps politically high profile, or things  
14 that seem to go to sort of the essence of the services  
15 and what they like.

16 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think there is an element of that.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So then there are these different  
18 factors. How does it -- does that mean that things  
19 which may be desirable in the short term just get  
20 crowded out?

21 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, I think that can happen.

22 I think the army is unlike the other two services which  
23 are, as the jargon has it, platform-orientated.

24 In the army it is people-orientated. We equip the  
25 man, the other two services man the equipment; and, of

1 course, large war ships, fast jets are at the heart of  
2 the other two services' capability. One accepts that  
3 entirely.

4 So you have particularly on the maritime side  
5 relatively small numbers of large and expensive  
6 platforms.

7 In the army, perhaps with one exception of the main  
8 battle tank -- but we are not going to be buying any of  
9 those for a long time, even if we are still in the main  
10 battle tank era -- there are lots of small things, lots  
11 and lots of relatively small things, and small programmes  
12 which, of course, can be chipped away at without the  
13 high drama of chipping away at a future generation of  
14 aircraft carriers, for example.

15 There is a sense, I think, in the army that we  
16 are -- if times are tight, you can take a bit off the  
17 army without it being too dramatic.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But in the case of -- going back to  
19 Snatch -- something we were losing lives during 2005,  
20 quite a number of them, were you able to push back  
21 against this process at all? Did you try to push back  
22 against this process?

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, very much so. I have  
24 a recollection of what to me was a very important  
25 meeting with the then Procurement Minister, Lord

1 Drayson, because I just felt we were not getting  
2 anywhere within the normal processes of the MoD, you  
3 know, and actually reflecting upon moral duty here.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Was this the process at that led to  
5 Lord Drayson --

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I think he was able, using his  
7 ministerial authority, and to be fair his commercial  
8 experience, to cut through some of the Gordian knots  
9 which seemed to surround what otherwise was this complex  
10 process.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So it needed active political  
12 engagement?

13 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I believe so. Certainly I am very  
14 clear that Lord Drayson made a real difference.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I move on to another important  
16 equipment issue, which is helicopters? We didn't have  
17 a chance to discuss this much with General Dannatt this  
18 morning, but we have had plenty of evidence on this and  
19 particularly of concern in theatre about the lack of  
20 helicopters.

21 Again it seems to be one of these things that finds  
22 it difficult to get its place in the equipment  
23 programme. What were your views on the need for more  
24 helicopters and what were you able to do to push on that  
25 question?

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It is probably a sine qua non that  
2 there are never enough helicopters; but leaving that  
3 slightly trite statement to one side, I think if you  
4 take the Northern Ireland baseline, we had been  
5 extremely well provided for in terms of helicopter lift  
6 in Northern Ireland and I think for a lot of people that  
7 was the benchmark. It was almost a perfect solution  
8 to helicopter support to a ground-based force. We  
9 were not able to match that level of dedicated  
10 helicopter support in Iraq. The force was larger,  
11 to start with the area much larger, and there was, of  
12 course, in 2004 -- you will tell me if I am wrong I am  
13 sure -- a decision to cap the helicopter procurement  
14 budget, and I think some of the difficulties with  
15 helicopters stem from that decision.

16 We also had seven or was it eight Chinooks sitting  
17 in a hangar at Boscombe Down, where they had been for  
18 years, because there had been a most dreadful mess-up on  
19 their procurement and they were not deemed to be  
20 airworthy.

21 So it is not a very happy story in some ways, this  
22 one.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: When we discussed this before, we  
24 hear a lot about scenario planning for the armed forces  
25 and what fits in, but my reaction to some of that was

1 that it is hard to think of a contemporary operation  
2 where helicopters have not been in enormous demand, yet  
3 in terms of defence priorities for the UK somehow this  
4 doesn't seem to have fed through. We get a number, but  
5 it never becomes a large part of our force structure.

6 Is it again coming back to the same problem we were  
7 discussing before, that it is something everybody thinks  
8 is necessary but it is not their highest priority?

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think that's fair comment. Any  
10 question really of looking at how the defence budget is  
11 spent -- I am much broader now than helicopters -- it is  
12 all a question of priorities and the judgment of those  
13 priorities. Your division between equipment  
14 purchase and personnel, your division between provision  
15 for what we are doing now and provision for what we may  
16 have to do in the future, your balance of judgment as  
17 between so-called symmetric and asymmetric. Again the  
18 difficulty is we cannot know the future, although we may  
19 have some views about it, and templates are not  
20 available. There are some very difficult judgments.

21 So this balance of priorities is right across the  
22 board, and if it is as true in general it is certainly  
23 true in the particular of helicopters.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to conclude this, if someone  
25 was listening to this they may conclude the basic

1           problem is we are trying to do too much with a limited  
2           equipment programme with the result --

3   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Not quite. We are not trying to do  
4           too much. We are trying to be prepared perhaps for too  
5           much.

6   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Well, the next bit of what I was  
7           going to say is whether or not the compromises that we  
8           have to make to squeeze things in mean that we don't  
9           quite do enough properly?

10   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I don't think I can quite agree with  
11           the words in which you have expressed that thought.  
12           I know what lies behind them. We are still in the era  
13           of a force structure and size which emanate from the  
14           previous defence review. Some of the assumptions --  
15           some, basically all defence planning assumptions really  
16           did not last very long at all. Nonetheless you have to  
17           have some intellectual handrail here to inform your  
18           force structure and your equipment.

19           The fact that they were not upheld by events, were  
20           almost overturned by events, just shows what a difficult  
21           task it is to try to forecast a future; but then at that  
22           point you have what you have, and to change or modify or  
23           enlarge capabilities quickly is not an easy matter at  
24           all, particularly where you have complicated technical  
25           aspects to that equipment.

1           So you have what you have at any one point in time,  
2           and you either undertake the political task which the  
3           Government sets you or you don't.

4           The search for perfection is nugatory I fear in  
5           this, because it ain't going to be there.

6   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In between passivity and perfection  
7           I am sure there is a range of possibilities.

8   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I exaggerate to make the point. We  
9           are now well into the midst of another defence review,  
10           and not before time in my judgment, which will have to  
11           rebalance and rejudge just these questions.

12   SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Moving to a rather different area. Usha.

13   BARONESS PRASHAR: Right. We have heard a lot about the  
14           frequent rotation of army commanders and the need for  
15           longer tour lengths --

16   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Baroness.

17   BARONESS PRASHAR: -- and the fact that six months did not  
18           give them enough time to identify the request for  
19           military equipment they might need or even gain a full  
20           understanding of the local situation.

21           Sir Richard Dannatt in his post-visit report in  
22           October 2006 said this issue had been discussed but not  
23           resolved. Why was it not resolved in your time?

24   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I think it was resolved.

25           Richard Dannatt may disagree with the resolution we

1 arrived at. That's a different matter.

2 BARONESS PRASHAR: What was the resolution in your time?

3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: We deliberately at Army Board level

4 decided to re-examine the whole question of tour

5 lengths. This goes back to the early days of

6 Northern Ireland, when it was a four-month tour without

7 any break, any so-called rest and recuperation, R&R.

8 BARONESS PRASHAR: This was four months?

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Four months. That's where we began

10 with deployments in Northern Ireland. I can't remember

11 when that changed, probably four to five years later,

12 some years later.

13 BARONESS PRASHAR: Because it did change to be much longer

14 in Northern Ireland?

15 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. It went to six months with ten

16 days' R&R. That became really the standard pattern

17 which then continued as we went into these intervention

18 deployments after the Cold War, and is very much almost

19 in the army's DNA now. We deliberately said, "Is

20 this right?" To take R&R from Northern Ireland is one

21 thing. You can hop on the ferry. To take R&R from

22 Basra is another, on a long air bridge run by some quite

23 ancient aircraft and therefore you have reliability

24 problems. "Is this right?" Or, "Should we be going for

25 longer?" I for one salute the US Army, which started

1 off I think at 15-month tours in Iraq, now down I think  
2 to a year. I am afraid we were not revolutionary in the  
3 matter. We said, "No, we cannot go back to four  
4 months", even though that would give the advantage of  
5 not having to bring people home for ten days in the  
6 middle, because you then desperately lack continuity.

7 Nor did we feel, and perhaps we could have been  
8 bolder, that the British Army would understand why they  
9 would be required to go for nine months on a unit basis.

10 So, having looked at it, we stayed where we are.

11 Now there is one exception, Baroness: senior  
12 officers.

13 BARONESS PRASHAR: That was the distinction that was made by  
14 Sir Richard Dannatt this morning.

15 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Now senior officers not deploying  
16 with their own headquarters, and the latter are the  
17 minority -- the brigadier commanding his own brigade,  
18 etc -- the many deputies et al that we have and had,  
19 matching their American counterparts, the importance of  
20 relations with the local dramatis personae, everybody  
21 from the Iraqi Prime Minister downwards for this, six

months

22 seemed to be self-evidently too short, and really  
23 I think -- when I left what we had got  
24 to the stage where we would look at each and every  
25 senior officer being deployed and come to a specific

1 judgment over. The tendency was to go long, and  
2 many, many general officers have at least one year  
3 one one-year tour under their belt and some have two  
4 now.

5 BARONESS PRASHAR: But that didn't happen while you were in  
6 post?

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, for senior officers.

8 BARONESS PRASHAR: It started to change then?

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Oh, yes. I am just trying to  
10 remember. I think the first three-star deputy in Baghdad  
did nine  
11 months and I think after that it was maybe another -- it  
12 was nine to 12. I mean, that had started very much in  
13 my time.

14 BARONESS PRASHAR: But looking back, do you think something  
15 different could have been done or do you think that was  
16 the right resolution?

17 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, it is where we came to after  
18 a thorough deliberation in the Army Board and I don't  
19 see any reason to change my view.

20 Certainly with senior officers for all the continuity  
21 reasons I have given we should not change that.

22 There may be different views emerge over whether to  
23 extend the six-month unit tour. That could be  
24 re-debated, but we debated and came to the conclusion  
25 that we did.

1 BARONESS PRASHAR: Thank you.

2 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Right. I will turn to Sir Martin Gilbert  
3 now.

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: This is a question on rather  
5 a difficult area, that of fatalities and Inquiries and  
6 inquests.

7 It is inevitable in a conflict situation that there  
8 will be fatalities. We have spoken to quite a number of  
9 bereaved families about the awfulness of the moment when  
10 the knock comes at the door and in particular the  
11 difficulties that then follow for them.

12 A particular issue raised with us by the families  
13 whom we have seen is the attitude of the MoD and the  
14 armed forces. In the view of many of the families of  
15 service personnel killed in Iraq they find the military  
16 attitude dismissive and overly defensive.

17 Bob Ainsworth told us in his evidence that in  
18 respect of bereaved families, as he put it very  
19 strongly, "We just weren't getting it right".

20 What is your thought on that and to what extent do  
21 you think these criticisms were justified?

22 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Your description was the families'  
23 reaction. Could I have the two adjectives -- you said  
dismissive  
24 and?

25 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Right. The military attitude to their

1 problems was dismissive and was overly defensive.

2 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I am very saddened to hear  
3 that. If that is representative of next of kin as  
4 a whole, then clearly we have not done all that we  
5 should have done, but it is not my sense.

6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: For example in terms of the delays in  
7 the time of inquest, which was something --

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Sorry. With?

9 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In terms of, the delays in time of  
10 inquest was a concern.

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Ah, I thought it was the military  
12 being accused of being dismissive and --

13 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Well, also they felt that one of the  
14 reasons why there were delays was that the inquests  
15 could not take place until the MoD investigations had  
16 been completed and that these were somehow prolonged and  
17 significantly delayed.

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. I am more comfortable I think  
19 now, because I thought you were saying the army was  
20 careless or even callous about its losses, and I don't  
21 believe that to be the case at all. As to process,  
22 legal process, I think, Sir Martin -- am I on the right  
23 core ground -- it can be complicated, and legal delays  
24 seem to be part of life and I never quite understand why  
25 sometimes; but, yes, people have to wait for a long time

1 for inquests. The MoD can be a bit opaque I think as to  
2 why it can take so long, but I am not really in any  
3 sense a knowledgeable witness in this particular aspect  
4 of process.

5 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Was this something, the general feeling  
6 of discontent -- for example, it also spilled over into  
7 the question of inquiries into friendly fire,  
8 blue-on-blue incidents, a feeling that somehow there was  
9 reluctance on behalf of the army to delve into it in the  
10 way the families felt it could be delved into.

11 Were these things that came to your attention?

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, because, and rightly, the chain  
13 of command is out with the due process of law. I think  
14 that is very important. There must be boards of  
15 inquiry. They can be very complicated, where witnesses  
16 are geographically spread out, all of that, and I ought  
17 to know the relationship between the board of an inquiry  
18 and inquest, but I can't quite recall which is supposed  
19 to come first. I think it is the board of enquiry, but  
20 I could be wrong.

21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Right. It was the board of inquiry.  
22 Sometimes three or four years passed.

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It was the board of inquiry.

24 I know that steps have been and were taken in my  
25 time and continue to be taken to get a better grip on

1 delay when it comes to boards of inquiry, but I am not  
2 sure I can do much better for you than that.

3 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Was this something you ever found  
4 yourself drawn to personally.

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Into boards of inquiry?

6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: No, into the concern of the families?

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, yes. I mean, it's the  
8 Adjutant General's department and I think you have heard  
9 from at least one, maybe two AGs. I can't  
10 remember specifically, but I have no doubt it would have  
11 been the subject of more than one Army Board meeting,  
concluding that  
12 "We must do better", but some of these legal processes  
13 are quite difficult to speed up.

14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: You can't recall your own pushing on  
15 the issue?

16 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I am sorry. I am afraid I can't  
17 specifically recall, other than my memory telling me,  
18 yes, the legal delay in whatever context, but this one  
19 in particular, we must try and do better.

20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

21 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Coming towards the end, but Usha, you  
22 have a question on training.

23 BARONESS PRASHAR: Yes, indeed. Earlier this afternoon you  
24 said the state of training is actually part of  
25 readiness?

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

2 BARONESS PRASHAR: Can you describe the training cycle by  
3 which form units of the British Army were prepared for  
4 deployment to Iraq?

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. This will take me a minute or  
6 two. Forgive me. There are two aspects here, two  
7 dimensions. One is training for war. Note there is no  
8 article there. Then there is the training for "the"  
9 war.

10 Training for war is generic and it is carefully  
11 sequenced starting at a relatively low level and working  
12 up to, if one can get it in -- it is sometimes quite  
13 difficult because of space requirements and all the rest  
14 of it -- a full-blown brigade level field training  
15 exercise, which is generic. That is the generality of  
16 the readiness cycle, that at any one time you have  
17 a brigade which is at the peak and therefore is your  
18 high readiness brigade.

19 Then training for "the" war. Every unit going on  
20 a particular deployed operation, unless it is a no  
21 notice Sierra Leone-type 2000 operation, will go through  
22 a very carefully planned sequence of training specific  
23 to the theatre to which it is going. We used to do it  
24 all the time for Northern Ireland and we have modified  
25 the way in which we do that so that the training is

1 varied according to whichever theatre now, of course,  
2 Afghanistan. There is an organisation whose sole job  
3 it is to look at what's happening, to replicate the  
4 currency of events in the training given to units  
5 getting ready to go.

6 BARONESS PRASHAR: But were any elements of these  
7 preparations for Iraq curtailed on grounds of  
8 affordability, and, if that was the case, what was the  
9 operational impact?

10 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, I don't believe there were  
11 problems of affordability in that training.

12 BARONESS PRASHAR: Even during the course of the events?  
13 Even during the war and the aftermath?

14 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I have no recollection -- no, no.  
15 I have no recollection of -- I mean it, would be  
16 outrageous if that was the case. No.

17 BARONESS PRASHAR: Can you recall as the situation evolved  
18 did the army's training change because you weren't, you  
19 know, sufficiently geared to deal with insurgency?

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, as I have said, every unit --  
21 once rotation had begun and all of that every unit  
22 going would go through specific special theatre training  
23 which as far as one can would replicate the current  
24 conditions and circumstances, and it is very thorough  
25 and it takes quite a long time.

1 BARONESS PRASHAR: You were satisfying yourself during the  
2 course of this that the training was adequate for the  
3 purpose?

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I certainly believe so, yes.

5 BARONESS PRASHAR: Were you happy there was sufficient  
6 equipment available in training pools, particularly  
7 equipment bought on the UORs?

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Not always, no. I think it has got  
9 better. At the beginning when there was quite a lot of  
10 equipment being required on a UOR basis, there was  
11 something of a tendency only to buy exactly enough for  
12 the deployed force and not to make an additional buy so  
13 to train the next force going. It was short-sighted in  
14 my view, but those who did the buying will no doubt --  
15 we will go back to where we were a little while ago  
16 about priority of expenditure -- but it did mean,  
17 therefore, that units newly arriving in theatre would  
18 have to train on the operational equipment on arrival,  
19 which they had not met previously. I think we are out  
20 of that one now, but that was true I think in the  
21 earlier times, Baroness.

22 BARONESS PRASHAR: In view of time we need to leave it  
23 there.

24 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Lawrence?

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: One quick question. There is a view

1           that in 2003 the British felt they were pretty good at  
2           counterinsurgency, nation-building, that whole nexus of  
3           activities, but by the end of the Iraq campaign to some  
4           extent the Americans had taken over. So whereas we  
5           started suggesting we could teach the Americans a thing  
6           or two, perhaps by the end it was the other way round.  
7           Do you think that we were living off our reputation a  
8           bit, or that the reputation was deserved but we had  
9           underestimated the scale of what we were getting into in  
10          Iraq?

11       GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I think I have conceded that  
12          the degree of violence was not forecast.

13                No, I think it is the latter of your two  
14          alternatives there. It is not an easy subject for the  
15          MoD or indeed the British Government, but mass can and  
16          does matter. It is all very well to talk of rapier-like  
17          and rapid deployment and that, but in a campaign such as  
18          it was in Iraq you have got to have the right presence  
19          and I think -- we have been here earlier this  
20          afternoon -- that the force levels which at the end of  
21          the day were acceptable in the longer term in Iraq were  
22          on the tight side for the area we had and for the  
23          varying levels of violence that we had.

24                As to the US Army, I mean, I pay great credit to  
25          them. I think I spoke earlier of the doctrine of the

1 time in early 2003 which won the manoeuvre war in  
2 a pretty stunning fashion, but was certainly not up to  
3 what they then found. But the way in which -- and much  
4 of this is personally down to General David Petraeus,  
5 who was a divisional commander at the beginning in  
6 Mosul, I think it was -- they looked at what was  
7 required and where they were, what the difference was,  
8 rewrote the doctrine, got that doctrine implanted into  
9 the training system, I think does them great credit.  
10 They showed great intellectual agility.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Do you think we should have looked  
12 at our doctrine in the same way?

13 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: We have. We do have a lessons  
14 learned process. I think we have diluted somewhat the  
15 particular land force aspect, because four years ago,  
something  
16 of that order, the three single service doctrine centres  
17 came together as a joint doctrine centre, which has its  
18 advantages, but it also may dilute the nitty-gritty  
19 detailed thinking about tactics for how such  
20 an operation as this counterinsurgency should be  
conducted.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you.

22 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: This is coming right to the end now,  
23 General Jackson, but this is a lessons learned inquiry  
24 we are conducting. I wonder, since we are searching for  
25 lessons for the future, looking back over the Iraq

1           experience are there any key pieces of learning, any key  
2           regrets, any lessons to take into Afghanistan and the  
3           SDR that we have not touched on this afternoon that you  
4           would like to reflect on?

5   GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think we have covered the ground  
6           rather comprehensively, but perhaps for emphasis, and we  
7           were I think here rather earlier in this session, the  
8           United Kingdom has continued since the end of the Cold  
9           War to play a major part both militarily and otherwise  
10          on the world stage. This is the chosen posture of  
11          successive governments. So be it.

12                 When the British Government decides to apply  
13           military force in pursuit of its political objectives,  
14           more often than not it is not just going to be military  
15           force which is required to achieve those political  
16           objectives; I would urge those concerned to think  
17           more deeply as to how better to pull together all the  
18           strands of Government required in these sort of  
19           operations in order to achieve the political outcome.

20                 It is not just a job for soldiers. Soldiers will  
21           have a go if there's a vacuum and there is nobody else  
22           to do it -- and our discussion of police  
23           training is an example here. When the strategic stakes  
24           are as high as they are I think a better ability to  
25           bring all the sinews of Government together for the

1 effect on the ground must be the right way ahead.

2 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Thank you.

3 I thank our witness, General Sir Mike Jackson, for  
4 his evidence this afternoon and that concludes today's  
5 hearings.

6 We will resume at 9.30 in the morning on Friday,  
7 Friday, 30 July, for what will be the last in the  
8 current phase of hearings, when we will hear from Lord  
9 Prescott, who served as Deputy Prime Minister until  
10 2007.

11 With that I will close this session. Thank you.

12 (5.00 pm)

13 (The hearing concluded)

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