

Witness	Role	Dates
Dr Nicola Brewer CMG	Director General Regional Programmes, Department for International Development	June 2002 - August 2004

Please provide dates and specific names as far as possible in your answers.

**A) 2002**

**I. You were Director General Programmes between June 2002 and August 2004. How much of your time was taken up by Iraq? Did it change over time?**

It changed significantly over that period. By about mid December 2002 and then until early April 2003 it was taking up most of my time, displacing most of my other responsibilities as DG Regional Programmes. I handed over direct supervision of DFID's Iraq operations to Suma Chakrabarti a few weeks before Clare Short resigned in May 2003. I continued to be copied in to some papers for the Secretary of State on Iraq, and to contribute to Whitehall coordination, for example I attended the Secretary of State's meeting with the new Chief of Defence Staff on 22 June 2003.

**II. Sir Suma Chakrabarti told us that the first time DFID was engaged in substantial Whitehall discussion on Iraq policy was when the Ad Hoc Group on Iraq was established in September 2002. Had you been involved in any Whitehall planning for Iraq before this point? If so, what was the focus of that planning?**

Not directly, as far as I recall. I knew from DFID's Europe, Middle East and Americas Director, Carolyn Miller, who reported to me from June 2002, when she or members of her Iraq team started attending regular Whitehall meetings. I think that was around September 2002. By early October 2002 DFID was certainly sharing information on its humanitarian contingency planning with Cabinet Office, which had been underway since at least June 2002.

**III. We understand that you led efforts to encourage the Ministry of Defence to include DFID in discussions on Iraq in 2002. Can you briefly explain (with dates):**

- **what led you to approach the Ministry of Defence;**

MOD was the obvious 'entry point' for getting DFID more closely engaged, given their leading role in any military planning. I knew senior MOD officials from previous jobs, especially working on conflict issues and the Global Conflict Pool as FCO Global Issues Director. Clare Short had also asked me to meet General Tim Cross, which I did on 3 December 2002, specifically to discuss greater DFID/MOD engagement.

- **what action you took;**

I used my previous contacts with MOD to identify the right people to see, to get them to see me, and to persuade them of the benefits of involving DFID more closely in planning. I met Ian Lee and Simon Webb on 20 December 2002 and had a further meeting with Simon on 10 January 2003. I think I met Tony Piggott around the same time or a little later.

- **how the Ministry of Defence responded; and**

They responded very positively: individuals, both civil and military, welcomed greater engagement with DFID.

- **what role DFID was expected to play in the event of military action against Iraq.**

Initially, the expectation was that we would provide and fund others to provide humanitarian assistance and what were called 'Quick Impact Projects' (QIPs). Later, the focus was on support for infrastructure rebuilding and reconstruction more generally, including Iraqi capacity building.

#### IV. **Were there any areas of disagreement?**

There were unresolved funding issues (who would pay for what, what would come from the Reserve, how much would DFID contribute), and MOD concerns that DFID was not planning to be present, quickly enough, 'on the ground' in the same way – with money readily available for QIPs – as it had been in the Balkans. There was initially a misunderstanding about how DFID delivers, ie through funding development partners both UN bodies and other agencies including civil society organisations, not usually directly, through its own staff.

#### V. **How were they resolved?**

At official level, through the regular Chiefs of Staff meetings in the MOD, which I started to attend, I think from about February 2003 and at the Cabinet Office chaired Ad Hoc Group. I also attended meetings in the Cabinet Office briefing room, COBR, from about late January 2003, and the FCO Political Director's regular Iraq meetings from about the same time. And we briefed Clare Short to raise major issues with her Cabinet colleagues and in Cabinet.

#### VI. **Carolyn Miller told us: *"I do genuinely feel that at my level and probably a level above me as well it worked quite well. Sometimes we had to push to get information, but generally it wasn't much of a struggle"*. Do you share that view?**

Yes.

**B) Planning with the US**

**I. When and how did you become aware the UK had started planning with the US for possible military action against Iraq? When and how did you become aware that the US had started post war planning?**

I can't pinpoint a date. I was probably aware of consideration of military action as one of the theoretical options before I took up my job in DFID in the summer of 2002. Military action was one of the potential scenarios considered by DFID in contingency planning work on Iraq which I saw in September 2002. In terms of awareness of joint UK/US military planning, I'd date it to preparations for Carolyn Miller's participation in the Whitehall team which visited Washington in November 2002. Certainly it was clearer that post-conflict planning was underway by the time of the follow up Whitehall visit to Washington in January 2003. In late December 2002 we in DFID were conscious of the need to have access to military scenarios to assist our contingency planning. In mid January 2003 the MOD were involving us in generic strategic planning but not yet sharing specific dates/locations with us, ie not crossing the operational security barrier. In early February 2003 I pressed Ian Lee to arrange an MOD briefing for Clare Short on the military campaign plans. That briefing took place on 12 February. One of the aims of my visit to Washington and New York in late February 2003 was to find out how advanced US, and UN, 'aftermath' planning was, focused on the humanitarian effort.

**II. What was your understanding, at that point, of what planning had taken place, when it had started and who was involved?**

In addition to the points set out in answer to the previous question, I was aware by October 2002 that Whitehall discussions were taking place about 'day after' issues, in which DFID highlighted the need to take account of the possible use of chemical or biological weapons.

**III. Carolyn Miller participated in a cross Whitehall delegation led by Edward Chaplin to Washington in November 2002. Did you have any discussions with US counterparts about the state of planning for Iraq at this point? If so, when, with whom, and what did you learn?**

Not until I went to Washington in February 2003 – though I did meet Andrew Natsios, head of USAID, on at least one occasion when he visited DFID; I don't remember talking to him about Iraq.

**IV. Did Carolyn Miller's report from her November visit change your understanding?**

It reinforced concern over US reluctance to accept a meaningful role for the UN.

**V. Carolyn Miller told us that during that November 2002 visit "*My main inputs in that meeting were on the humanitarian side. The Foreign Office led the reconstruction side of those discussions*". DFID would lead the reconstruction in the aftermath, so why was DFID not leading on reconstruction or at least contributing to discussions on reconstruction in November 2002?**

An FCO lead made sense because of the importance the UK attached to securing a major UN role in Iraq (FCO coordinates negotiations with the UN), and because reconstruction planning needed to be coordinated with progress on the political process in Iraq, again an FCO lead.

- VI. **Carolyn Miller visited the US for “Day After” talks with the US and Australians in January 2003. She reported to your Secretary of State that inter-US tensions remained regarding a role for the UN but that the USAID was supportive of the UK’s position. What was the UK’s position?**

That the UN had an essential role to play in humanitarian and reconstruction work, and also in achieving international political legitimacy. It also had relevant experience, through the Oil For Food programme, which no other organisation had.

- VII. **In January the US created ORHA (the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance). You visited Washington and New York on 26 – 27 February 2003. What role was the UN prepared to consider in post-invasion Iraq?**

I found less constraint in the UN over talking about ‘day after’ contingency planning than I expected. UN officials were planning for humanitarian action irrespective of UNSCR authorisation of use of force. Their focus was on the period of occupying forces – they wanted clarity on coalition forces’ plans. They were only just starting to think about a post-conflict period, where the extent of a UN mandate would affect how much they could do.

- VIII. **What exactly did they tell you about the role they were prepared to play?**

That it all depended on whether or not we got a second UNSC Resolution. UNDP and the OFF programme clearly had knowledge about conditions and systems in Iraq (eg the electricity and judicial systems).

- IX. **What was the state of UN planning for Iraq?**

It was focused on humanitarian assistance and not very developed on the relationship between the occupying power and humanitarian agencies. They were planning for a range of scenarios.

- X. **What did the UN staff tell you about the messages they were receiving from the US about the expected contribution of the UN in the aftermath?**

They didn’t say much about this. My sense was that they weren’t getting the clarity they wanted from the US either on military planning or on the UN’s role in post-conflict arrangements.

- XI. **How did the UN feel about US expectations?**

We didn’t discuss that at any length: they knew we were working to influence the US on a leading role for the UN.

- XII. **Did the UN's understanding match the messages you heard directly from Garner and the other US officials you met on your February visit?**

Broadly, in so far as we discussed it, yes. The assumption was that there wasn't yet US agreement on a clear role for the UN.

- XIII. **How confident were you at the end of your February visit that the US would support a role for the UN in the aftermath? What sort of role? What was the basis for that judgement?**

I was cautiously encouraged that US officials were more willing to talk to me about a UN role than I expected. But I judged that this was only inching forward: there was definitely not agreement that the UN should be in the lead for coordinating post-conflict planning.

- XIV. **How confident were you about the overall state of US planning for the aftermath after that visit?**

Not very confident. I heard very little detail. The ORHA team seemed under staffed and still to be in the process of moving in to the basement of the Pentagon building. But I was impressed by Jay Garner's energy, and already knew and respected Tim Cross who was working with him.

- XV. **Were there any particular areas of concern?**

Jay Garner was concerned about having a secure environment for reconstruction, and about being able to pay and use the Iraqi civil service. He wanted more UK staff to join ORHA, to have a UK Deputy, and for the UK to take responsibility for a geographic sector.

- XVI. **What advice did you give your Secretary of State about the planning assumptions DFID should make after you returned from this US visit?**

That we needed to go on pushing the UN track, and to extend DFID's contingency planning.

- XVII. **What direction did you give DFID teams on planning for the aftermath?**

To extend our contingency planning.

- XVIII. **Sir Suma Chakrabarti told us that DFID did plan for the possibility that "*we didn't get the second resolution and we didn't get the UN mandate, and essentially we had a US viceroy in the field leading*". How mature was the planning for this scenario compared to planning on the basis that the UN would lead in the aftermath?**

It isn't easy to make that comparison, because planning for a UN-led scenario was bound to be more developed, since it was at the heart of how DFID usually operated: funding UN agencies (and NGOs) to deliver on the ground. Planning for the scenario that we ended up with was inevitably less 'tested' than that. But we put a lot of effort and resource into thinking through how we would be able to operate in a constrained

environment; we assessed the level of Iraqi capability to run basic services as fairly high, though we recognised that this had to be tested on the ground. At the time (before the conflict began) our planning was still heavily focused on immediate humanitarian assistance, and concerns about how the use of chemical and biological weapons would hamper that.

XIX. **What humanitarian and reconstruction roles did the UK plan for in the absence of a UN mandate?**

The numerous (4, I think) strategy documents DFID wrote during this period set these roles out. I'd describe them generally as provision of basic needs (water, sanitation, food) and infrastructure for basic services. There was a lot of discussion about QIPs and then emergency infrastructure and building capacity in the key Iraqi departments.

XX. **Did you have any further conversations with US and UN counterparts before military action? What was the focus of those discussions?**

I accompanied Clare Short on her visit to New York and Washington in mid March. The focus continued to be to explore the extent of UN and US preparedness and to reinforce the need for a UNSC mandate.

XXI. **At what point did you realise that the UN would play only a minor role in the aftermath?**

Probably around February/March 2003 when we failed to get the second Resolution, though we didn't give up straight away on the UN role, partly because Clare Short had such a strong reputation and track record in working with the UN and World Bank.

XXII. **Lord Turnbull said: "*we were aware, with increasing alarm, from visits to the US that things weren't going very well at their end. We massively underestimated just how bad it was*".**

I agree that we underestimated this.

XXIII. **Sir Suma Chakrabarti said: "*We believed for too long that our ways of influencing the Americans would work*".**

I think that's right.

XXIV. **Looking back, do you think were signs that the UK should have noticed earlier about the US approach to the aftermath? What impact would that have had on UK planning?**

Probably, yes. The logical impact would have been to set up the IPU earlier, and put greater effort into unity of command and purpose for reconstruction, and to practical implementation, not just policy.

**C) Direction from the Secretary of State**

- I. Several witnesses (including Sally Keeble and Lord Boyce) said that Clare Short put restrictions on DFID staff from in relation to planning for Iraq. Were you ever given instructions by your Secretary of State not to discuss any aspect of planning with Whitehall colleagues?**

No. She wanted to be kept informed of all meetings we attended and consulted before we attended new meetings. She instructed us to ensure all options, not just the military option, continued to be kept open and discussed: she did not want DFID to work on the basis that war was inevitable. She did not instruct us not to discuss any aspect of planning or not to share information. In the interests of thorough planning, we interpreted her authorisation as widely as possible.

- II. Sir Suma Chakrabarti told us that the Cabinet Office ban on engaging NGOs and the UN agencies about planning on Iraq was lifted in October 2002. What instructions had your Secretary of State given on discussions with external partners?**

I don't remember the ban as coming from Clare Short. Her concern was that we shouldn't stoke any assumption that war was inevitable.

- III. What discussions, that have not already been covered, did you have with external counterparts on contingency planning for Iraq; and did this help DFID planning?**

I talked to John Vereker, former Permanent Secretary at DFID and then Governor of Bermuda, about his experience of reconstruction in the Balkans. It was helpful in terms of thinking about DFID staffing needs and the importance of Whitehall coordination.

**D) The decision to lead in the South**

- I. One of the pivotal decisions in 2003 was the UK's decision to assume lead responsibility for a Southern sector. Carolyn Miller told us: "*My recollection is that we were asked to play a role in that after the decision had been made*". She qualified her answer by saying "*this is quite a while ago, so I wouldn't be totally sure on that*". What was your understanding at the time of how the UK came to take the lead in the South?**

I don't know when it first came up. Jay Garner raised the possibility of UK responsibility for a geographical sector with me when I visited Washington in late February 2003. This was fed in to Whitehall discussion through the reporting telegram from Washington.

- II. Did the US ask or did the UK offer?**

I think I assumed at the time that it was the former.

III. **Who made the decision?**

I believe it was a Cabinet decision.

IV. **Were you involved in debates within DFID and across Whitehall about whether the UK should agree to lead the South and what the implications would be?**

Not on whether or not we should agree to lead in the South. But I think the implications were discussed as part of what it would mean if the UK played an 'exemplary' role, and the financial consequences of that.

V. **We understand the Ministry of Defence prepared briefing for their Secretary of State in February 2003 for a discussion with the Foreign Minister and International Development Secretary about the UK's potential lead of a sector. Were you involved in briefing your Secretary of State for this meeting? If so, what did you advise?**

I don't remember offering, or having the opportunity to offer, advice on whether or not we should lead a sector.

VI. **Did this inter-ministerial discussion take place? If so, what did you understand to be the nature of the discussion?**

From the papers I saw in preparation for making this witness statement, I understand there was a meeting, chaired by the Prime Minister, on humanitarian issues on 13 February at which there was a discussion about what an exemplary humanitarian assistance approach would be.

VII. **When and how did you learn that the decision had been taken that the UK would lead the South?**

I'm not sure. It might have only been clear after I was directly supervising DFID's Iraq effort, ie after the beginning of April 2003.

VIII. **What effect did this have on DFID's plans?**

I wasn't directly involved by that time. But from what I know of the thoroughness of DFID planning and project management, they would have reviewed all of their plans.

IX. **Sally Keeble told us she thought the question of whether DFID would concentrate on one sector "*should have been sorted out very much earlier*". Would you like to comment?**

I would see this as part of the wider question of whether the UK as a whole should concentrate on one geographical sector.

X. **Carolyn Miller said that, "*I think the concept of exemplary was just one of these things that came up and faded away. I think we, as officials, were just looking at what we needed to do, as DFID, to do a good job in Iraq*". What is your**

**recollection of where the “exemplary” concept came from, what it meant, how long it lasted and its influence on the UK’s approach to Iraq?**

I believe, from the papers I’ve seen, that it first came up at that 13 February meeting with the Prime Minister. I remember initially thinking that the word could be evidence that the importance of humanitarian assistance was fully factored into planning across Whitehall. I agree with Carolyn that officials, and the military, all wanted to do a good job in Iraq. Then we started working through the implications, particularly the financial implications for the UK of taking on such a significant burden, and in the absence of an agreed international effort. By early to mid March I would say there was less use of that term and more focus on immediate deployments. For example, I think DFID sent its first staff member to UK 1Div in Kuwait around then.

**E) Agreeing divisions of responsibility between MOD, FCO and DFID, particularly on security sector reform**

**I. What division of responsibilities for the conflict and aftermath phases were agreed across Government departments before military action commenced?**

I don’t remember a specific division of responsibility between Government departments on this before military action began. The working assumption would have been that DFID, MOD and FCO would work together on security sector reform, as they had done in other countries funded through the Global Conflict Pool, like Sierra Leone. I do remember discussing division of humanitarian responsibilities between ‘embedded’ DFID staff and the military at a Chiefs of Staff meeting in the MOD in early 2003, and on other occasions.

**II. Specifically what was agreed between departments on delivering security sector reform in the aftermath? Who would provide the professional expertise?**

DFID had recognised expertise in security sector reform. It was an issue discussed between the FCO, DFID and MOD at meetings of the Global Conflict Pool, which I used to attend before I joined DFID, for example. So this was a sector DFID considered as part of its contingency planning. I saw DFID work on it in early March 2003. But the broad assumption – this was before de-Ba’athification – was that there would be Iraqi capability to work with.

**III. On Security Sector Reform Paul Boateng said that DFID had “*expertise*” and “*considerable funding*” but suspected that there was “*a degree of resistance on the part of DFID to getting involved*”.**

**Carolyn Miller told us: “*I remember no reluctance to getting involved in security sector reform at all. I do remember that it was highlighted as an important area for us to potentially contribute to. Again it is possible that there were delays in DFID being able to move forward. Things moved forward more slowly than would have been ideal*”.**

**What part did DFID plan to play in security sector reform?**

I don’t remember any resistance, and do recall that DFID was looking at this as part of its contingency planning at least as early as March 2003.

IV. **What were the obstacles to DFID moving forward faster?**

I don't remember during my time of direct involvement any sense that there were DFID obstacles on this.

V. **What division of responsibilities was agreed between DFID and the UK military before military action commenced?**

After DFID/MOD coordination improved in early 2003, a number of secondments and attendance at each other's regular meetings were agreed. In particular there would have been clear 'rules of engagement' agreed for every DFID member of staff embedded with MOD units.

VI. **Geoff Hoon told us: "*We became very heavily involved in reconstruction, frankly, to an extent that eventually I judged was not appropriate, because we were expecting that soldiers would be replaced doing some of these basic administrative jobs by civilians, and, indeed, we had been promised by both the Foreign Office and by DFID that that would happen*".**

**Carolyn Miller told us, "*I don't remember reconstruction being such a big issue, but I think -- I am not sure that it was ever laid out totally clearly on exactly what numbers anybody was expecting at any point in time*".**

In the optimal, UN-led scenario, DFID would have focused on shaping, instructing and funding other agencies and organisations to actually do reconstruction work. DFID staff no longer employed technical experts like water engineers for example: we funded other organisations which did. There was initially (in early 2003) some misunderstanding in the MOD about this, which might have recurred with the frequent turn over of military personnel on the ground. And of course the operating context changed when we didn't get the UN lead, to which DFID and other government department had to adapt. In particular, we all had to find UK technical experts of a kind no longer employed by DFID. I think we let a contract with Crown Agents to do so, but that was after the period I directly supervised DFID's work on Iraq.

VII. **Why do you think there was confusion about the expected level of staffing that DFID and the FCO would provide?**

For a number of reasons, including initial lack of clarity about the legal context, funding and the role of the UN, as well as lack of understanding about how DFID had changed its operating approach since the ODA days of technical cooperation. Later, the confusion might have stemmed from uncertainty about what would happen – and what did happen – on the ground after the initial military phase; and subsequently the difficult security environment.

VIII. **Do you think that historical precedents (e.g. UK operations in the Balkans) may have led to misplaced assumptions being made about DFID's role?**

Probably.

**IX. Were any changes made to the division of responsibilities at any point after 19 March 2003? If so, why were the changes made and what were they?**

Yes, DFID and other Government departments had to adapt to the fact that our collective working assumption of a UN lead wasn't going to materialise. Most of the detailed changes were worked out after the immediate conflict phase, and after I was directly involved with DFID's Iraq work.

**F) Legal uncertainty before UNSCR 1483 was passed**

**I. Carolyn Miller referred in her evidence to the greatest challenge DFID faced in the planning being the delay in knowing “*what was legally possible and how we could move*” in the aftermath. Why did it take so long in the case of Iraq to obtain clear legal guidance about the scope of possible engagement?**

I don't know; this wasn't an issue on which DFID led.

**II. Who provided DFID's legal advice?**

DFID relied on FCO Legal Advisers, and the broader Government legal advice.

**III. What discussion took place between Whitehall Departments to determine what issues needed to be addressed, and the options for doing so?**

Clare Short and DFID officials were active in asking for the legal advice, and warning of the implications for the UK as an occupying power, and also for what reconstruction, as opposed to humanitarian work, we would be able to do.

**IV. What impact did this debate have on deployments to ORHA/CPA before UNSCR 1483?**

Before 1483, the legality issue was a serious concern, which worked in the same direction (ie to limit deployments to ORHA) as doubts about ORHA's capability or its role if – as we were still pressing for – the UN got a mandate to lead post-conflict arrangements.

**G) Negotiations for UNSCR 1483 and the implications**

**I. Clare Short shared her frustrations about the process for negotiating UNSCR1483 saying: “*Then, normally, when a UN Resolution is being negotiated, there are lots of telegrams with each draft. Suddenly, none of that. Nothing. I can't see what is happening*”.**

**Carolyn Miller told us “*There may have been a day or so when we didn't know what was happening next, but I certainly seem to remember reading a lot of updates on how the resolution was going*”. What involvement did you have in the negotiating process?**

As I knew from my previous job, as FCO Director of Global Issues, negotiating instructions on UNSCRs are formally coordinated by the FCO's UN department, with a

lot of informal consultation between UKMisNew York, often at the level of the Permanent Representative and the FCO relevant Director, with Whitehall consultation through Cabinet Office machinery where necessary and feasible: negotiations often move fast – and overnight, in London terms. I was not personally involved in drafting negotiating instructions on UNSCR 1483 but followed the process through telegrams and the Whitehall meetings I attended.

**II. When did you realise the UK would definitely be a joint Occupying Power? What were the arguments for that position?**

It became apparent after the failure to secure a second Resolution. I believe the arguments were based on international law: I remember discussions about the implications of the Geneva Convention and The Hague regulations.

**III. What was your understanding of the implications for the UK Government of the responsibilities that would entail, and the resources that would be required to fulfil them?**

These implications were being discussed across Whitehall as my period of direct involvement was ending. We were making clear DFID's concerns about the UK's legal responsibilities and powers, and the financial consequences.

**IV. Was this understanding shared across government? What was done to adjust UK (and in particular DFID's) efforts as a consequence?**

Yes, though it inevitably took some time to clarify, and to work through all the detailed implications. The consequences included decisions about provision of funding from the Reserve, and for which channels humanitarian assistance and, later, reconstruction efforts could be delivered, ie more directly by the UK.

**H) Staffing after military action commenced, including the deployment of UK staff to ORHA then the CPA**

**I. Sally Keeble's statement to the Inquiry said that DFID was slow to second staff to ORHA and then the CPA. Do you agree?**

It didn't happen quickly at first, in the case of ORHA which was during my time, but there were considered reasons for the delay.

**II. Where there any discussions across Whitehall about the numbers, seniority and skills of staff to be sent to ORHA, then the CPA? If so, what was the nature of those discussions and the agreed action?**

I was no longer involved by the time the CPA took over from ORHA. There was discussion about secondments to ORHA, which I think were more detailed after the IPU was set up.

**III. Andy Bearpark said that: "Whatever your limited civilian resource is, it must match exactly into where you insert it into the military machine. If you can only afford one person, that person has to be the equivalent of the Commanding**

**General. If you can afford three people, you can place them two ranks down, and if you can only afford one junior person, that person must be on the personal staff of the Commanding General". What consideration took place in DFID about putting civilians into the military organisation and how to achieve effective co-ordination of action?**

DFID had good experience of working with the military, both in post-conflict situations and in humanitarian emergencies. We started considering from late 2002 how, who and where to put civilians into military structures.

**IV. Did you have discussions in Whitehall about support to staff deployed to Iraq? If so, what were the key issues, and what was the agreed action?**

Yes, and this continued and increased after my period of direct involvement. Initially the issues included security, CBW protection, legality and funding. We also considered our duty of care as employer, worked jointly with FCO on security protection for staff and organised counselling and other welfare support.

**V. Sally Keeble raised concerns about the skills profile of the London based DFID teams working on Iraq. She said in her statement: "Given the high level of skills of DFID staff, and the discussion the previous autumn about the need to identify people with relevant skills, I fully expected the units to have staff with a wide range of skills, including language skills and practical and/or policy experience of Iraq". Were you involved in any discussions about the experience and skills required? If so, when and what action was agreed, and how was it followed up?**

Yes. Carolyn Miller, Suma Chakrabarti and I had fairly constant discussions about staffing levels and the available skills and experience. We kept structures and staffing under constant review, and changed it as the circumstances changed, for example bringing in two additional senior members of staff working to Carolyn on humanitarian and reconstruction, soon after the invasion and later creating a separate Iraq Directorate. Not having an existing extensive country programme in Iraq was a constraint: it limited DFID's direct experience and relevant language skills.

**VI. Did you have any concerns about the skills profiles in the DFID London Iraq teams? If so, what action did you take to improve the situation?**

We had a dedicated, capable and extremely hard working team, which included some of DFID's most talented staff. We knew that we couldn't conjure up people with geographical or linguistic experience. We did frequent exercises to review staffing requirements and to redeploy staff. As I recall, we suspended some of our usual internal appointment processes to deploy people. As the relevant Director General, I got excellent backing and cooperation from all my DFID colleagues in doing this.

**VII. Looking back, do you think the London teams had the most appropriate skills profile for the tasks faced?**

In this case, I'm not sure that hindsight taught us a lot we didn't realise at the time. We knew we had knowledge gaps and that it would have been desirable to have people

with recent experience on the ground as well as development experience – but since we didn't have an in-country office, that wasn't an option.

**VIII. Looking back, do you think DFID sent sufficient numbers of staff with appropriate skills to Iraq fast enough in 2003 to help meet the UK's responsibilities as a joint Occupying Power?**

I think we did do all we could in the circumstances to help meet UK responsibilities.

**I) Your involvement in Iraq from March 2003 until August 2004**

**I. Carolyn Miller explained that her role on Iraq diminished after the invasion. Chris Austin assumed responsibilities for Iraq and then Jim Drummond arrived in September 2004 to take up the new position of Director Iraq. Did your role in relation to Iraq change, and if so, how and why?**

Yes – as outlined in my answer to the first question in section A. From autumn 2002, Suma Chakrabarti and I kept under constant review staffing levels and responsibilities on Iraq, how work on Iraq was going, and the impact that our workload on Iraq was having on other DFID work in my areas of responsibility. In early April 2003, he and I agreed that he should take over from me direct supervision of DFID work on Iraq for the following reasons:

- coordination between DFID and OGDs, in particular MOD but also No. 10, FCO and Cabinet Office, had significantly improved (which had been one of my key immediate tasks);
- the issue was reputationally critical for DFID, and therefore one on which the Permanent Secretary naturally needed to be engaged;
- for me, as the relevant DG, as well as the Permanent Secretary also to continue to spend a considerable proportion of time on Iraq, risked both duplication of senior level supervision and significant neglect of the rest of my responsibilities.

This handover was formalised by Suma Chakrabarti chairing an internal DFID meeting with the Iraq team (it had recently been expanded to include Chris Austin, I think), either on the day we took the decision or the following day. I ceased to chair or attend regular internal DFID Iraq team meetings from that date, ie early April 2003. As DG Regional Programmes I was still copied into major internal documents and attended some Whitehall and DFID Ministerial meetings.

**II. What Iraq issues were of greatest concern to you during the remainder of your period as Director General? What action did you take to address these?**

I think the deteriorating security situation, brought home in particular by the explosion at the UN HQ. So staff welfare and security remained a concern, which I discussed with the security experts and we agreed joint DFID and FCO protection arrangements. Relations with other Whitehall departments, given my links with OGDs, continued to be something I kept an eye on, especially MOD, FCO, CO and No. 10. We had some positive comments about that, including from the new Chief of Defence Staff.

- III. **Where you involved in discussions about increasing DFID's staffing and financial resources devoted to Iraq? What decisions were made and why? (No need to repeat answers to sections F, G and H above).**

Yes, they were my responsibility until April 2003, though I consulted Suma Chakrabarti. After April 2003, I continued to be involved both as a member of DFID's board of management and as DG Regional Programmes, with responsibility for our staff based overseas and their welfare and security. Decisions on Iraq staffing and financial increases, and worries about personnel security and welfare, were all discussed at board level.

- IV. **When did DFID conduct its first assessment of Iraqi capacity, and how was it revised during your time in post?**

I think there was a 'desk' review in mid to late 2002. It was an important feature of my discussions with the UN during my February 2003 visit, particularly with staff from the Oil For Food programme. The working assumption, recognising that this needed to be tested on the ground, as it was after the invasion, was that there was an educated and skilled Iraqi workforce.

- V. **Did you believe that the UK's objectives for "Iraqi-isation", including in the security sector, were realistic?**

During my period of close involvement, DFID's focus was on Iraqi capability to run sectoral ministries and deliver social and economic services and infrastructure. I don't recall being personally involved in discussion before April 2003 of Iraqi-isation of the security sector but security sector reform was an area in which DFID had recognised expertise. This was of course before 'de-Ba'athification', which removed widely Iraqi capacity, including from the security forces.

- VI. **Were you involved in planning for the UK's involvement in post-CPA Iraq? If so, what decisions were taken, and what were the objectives/constraints?**

No.

- VII. **When you handed over responsibilities on Iraq, what was:**

- **DFID's assessment of the key challenges in Iraq;**

It was shifting from a focus on Quick Impact Projects and humanitarian relief to recovery and reconstruction especially of essential services. I would say that the operating environment and security for DFID staff and consultants had replaced legality and funding as the major constraint/concern. That, and the lack of a leading UN role, meant that we were largely operating without our usual development partners. So identifying local capacity and internationalising the reconstruction effort were other key objectives.

- **DFID's priorities for Iraq;**

The 3 mentioned above: recovery of essential services, local capacity and internationalising the effort.

- **DFID's experience of cooperating with other Whitehall departments – in London and Iraq – to deliver shared objectives;**

By early 2003 the experience was much more positive, and I think it continued to get better in 2004.

- **DFID's experience of cooperating with Iraqis;**

This is not something I got to know much about, by April 2003.

- **DFID's experience of working with external partners, such as the UN.**

Thanks to DFID's long and positive experience of working with and through the UN and its various agencies, they were as open as possible with us. But the negative US attitude towards UN involvement was a major constraining factor on how, and how successfully, DFID could actually work jointly with them in and on Iraq.

## J) **Lessons learned**

### I. **A number of military witnesses have spoken of "frustrations" in relation to DFID's role and performance in Iraq, particularly in the initial stages. Iraq was not the first time DFID and the military had worked closely together. What do you think the position was, and why was there difficulties with the military? What are the lessons?**

One issue is whether "the initial stages" refers to the planning or the military operation stages. DFID did not begin to be closely integrated into cross-government planning until early 2003, only a month or two before the invasion began. An obvious lesson is that DFID should be involved right from the beginning of any international operation with humanitarian, conflict prevention, conflict resolution or reconstruction implications.

There was also initially some frustration about getting things done quickly (eg QIPs). This was often for the best of motives – to improve things for the Iraqis on the ground. I picked up from some of the military a sense that DFID/ODA had done things faster in the Balkans. There was probably an underlying difference of view about how best to do things, in order to get the most sustainable effect. I think that DFID, and FCO, understood that fastest wasn't always best, in terms of getting Iraqis involved in their own reconstruction, and that MOD colleagues came to understand this.

### II. **Do you have any reflections or other lessons from the Iraq experience to give to the Inquiry?**

There should be a single, top level, figure in charge of any specific UK contribution to an overseas reconstruction operation, to include planning for the aftermath of conflict

and implementation (and revision) of those plans. That person should have cross-Whitehall authority, and be supported by the Stabilisation Unit. But even if we had had that throughout the planning, operation and aftermath stages for Iraq, the US would still have been in overall control, not the UK or the UN.

How reconstruction, and the transition from relief to recovery, is done, and by whom, is as important as what is done and when. International coordination and local involvement are both essential, not just desirable.

Desk research is no substitute for on the ground knowledge and analysis of the local political and economic situation and players.

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12 September 2010