

Wednesday, 16 June 2010

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's make a start. This afternoon we welcome Sir Richard Dearlove, who was Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service from August 1999 until July 2004. We expect this session to last up to three, three and a half hours, so we will take a couple of breaks in the course of it.

The session is being held in private because we recognise much of the evidence on the areas we want to cover will be sensitive within the categories set out in the Inquiry's Protocol on Sensitive Information -- for example, on grounds of international relations or national security. In particular, we want to use this session to explore issues covered by classified documents.

We apply the Protocol between the Inquiry and HMG regarding Documents and Other Written and Electronic Information in considering whether and how evidence given in relation to classified documents, and/or sensitive matters more widely, can be drawn on and explained in public, either in the Inquiry Report or, where appropriate, at an earlier stage.

If other evidence is given during this hearing which neither relates to classified documents nor engages any of the categories set out in the Protocol on Sensitive Information, that evidence would be capable of being published, subject to the procedures set out in our letter to you.

We recognise witnesses give evidence based on their recollection of events, and we check what we hear against the papers.

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

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: And in terms of our policy?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Our policy at that time was to listen --

well, our policy at that time was containment.

¹ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: And in terms of our priorities, your and SIS priorities, where did Iraq stand within --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Pretty low, actually. I think there were so many other things going on. I mean, the amount of effort we were devoting to Iraq then was not very high. Our intelligence coverage was sporadic, although I think it's around that time that we begin to acquire one or two better sources. And a lot of the reporting, you know, is in relation to the effectiveness of the sanctions regime, rather than internal reporting on the regime.

But, you know, it's a target which is there amongst Middle Eastern requirements. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

But I think one thing that's worth -- and this will come up, I'm sure, later. Around that time SIS is probably at historically its smallest since World War 2. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I think this is quite an important fact to stress. The service is very small and it's doing an enormous amount. You know, you have got to bear in mind you have got the Balkans

¹ The witness explained that, in his view, the UK/US intelligence relationship was very important to the UK and that he would have kept the Foreign Secretary fully briefed on that relationship.

crisis it's just gone through and many other issues. So if you look around the world, you will find that the effort devoted to various different issues, even, relatively speaking, quite important ones, is quite tiny.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In terms of WMD and proliferation, who were the greater tenders of the resources?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

But there is growing concern, particularly on the PM's part at that time, on the issue of proliferation. And actually there's a lot of discussion, I remember about that time too, with the FCO about the lack of a sort of pro-active policy on proliferation.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: The Prime Minister's concerns spanned all these?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes, and I would say, you know, it's a really -- it's already a really significant coming issue.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Then 9/11 happens.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Then 9/11 happens.

THE CHAIRMAN: Rod?

SIR RODERIC LYNE: 9/11 obviously the watershed and, understandably, you go to Washington pretty soon after, 20 September. One of the things you --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I go sooner than that. Anyway --

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Certainly you are recorded as being there on 20 September. [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I think that might actually have been my second visit. I was put on an RAF Tristar two days afterwards by the Prime Minister, and flew to Washington [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I then go back again. But anyway ...

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: ² [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

² The witness outlined his trips to the US post 9/11. On some occasions he had travelled with the Prime Minister's Foreign Policy adviser, David Manning.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

course?"

It then sets out, in a very clear and cogent way over four or five pages, essentially the arguments for heading the Americans off a course of direct action against Iraq.

Do you recall this episode of [SIS4] going to see David Manning -- normally you were the interlocutor with David Manning -- and what led to it?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I don't recall the exact details that led to it. I can recall the circumstances that led to it. I mean, at that particular time in SIS there are two senior officers, reasonably senior officers, who have a lot of knowledge of this part of the world, [SIS4] and [SIS9]⁴. There is a sort of dearth of expertise in the Foreign Office at that sort of level of sophistication, and I'm pretty sure that this initiative comes out of me, David and [SIS4] talking amongst each other [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I would regard this as an informal attempt to make [SIS4]'s knowledge and expertise available to David. That's my memory of this.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

⁴ This officer is referred to as SIS9 throughout the Inquiry's documentation

So this paper is produced, sent across very quickly, and then sent, as I say, more formally under your letter of 3 December. But by 3 December, which is early in the following week, there are two other papers which I assume are also written by [SIS4].

The second attachment to your letter is called "Iraq further thoughts", and again refers to the meeting on 30 November. It says:

"At our meeting on 30 November we discussed how we could combine an objective of regime change in Baghdad with the need to protect important regional interests."

Then as that paper goes on it sets out what is called a route map. I don't know if you have found it yet.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: No, I haven't.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Let me pause while you get it in front of you. I'm not going to go through it textually, but it would help for you to have it in front of you.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: That's fine.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Just reading this as a layman, the first paper essentially puts out the arguments against regime change. The second paper puts out the arguments for it and a route map for it. I wondered which of these papers reflected your views, and whether this would be the result of a process of consultation between you and [SIS4] and perhaps others.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: No, these were sort of think pieces by [SIS4]. They don't, you know, represent my views. I mean, I think that you should regard them as sort of catalysts that were there to be helpful to Manning and people in the FCO, to stimulate their thinking.

Frankly, what my views may or may not have been are largely

irrelevant, I think. This was some think pieces written by [SIS4] for the benefit of Central Government because of his level of expertise.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: But you send them, your office; your private secretary sends them to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes, absolutely.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: So they come across to them as the SIS --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Absolutely not, no. They come across as [SIS4]'s ideas. It was well known that [SIS4] had this expertise and these were written by him. They had no status as official papers at all. Don't get carried away, Rod. This is quite different from policy papers and the Foreign Office. These have absolutely nothing to do -- they are [SIS4]'s ideas about aspects of the situation in Iraq, and they are known to be that. They are people picking [SIS4]'s brain, just like [SIS9]'s brains were picked at various times.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: They are very good, very expert papers.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: They are clever papers, and they reflect the degree of expertise that [SIS4] has.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: A lot of the things that are said in them turned out to be remarkably accurate, were borne out by events.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I think [SIS4] is very perspicacious, if I may say so.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: On their status, if C sends papers on the Prime Minister's foreign affairs adviser, and then he sends them also, or at least his private secretary does, to the Foreign Secretary's private secretary, that underlines their importance. The Foreign Secretary then replies to your office, his private

secretary:

"Thank you for your letter of 3 December which the Secretary of State has read. He thought the two papers very perceptive and hopes that the Prime Minister reads them. I'm sending a copy to David Manning."

So those papers, as you say, in the absence of a lot of other thinking going around, look from the record to be not only high quality, but probably papers that are read by the two highest political decision-makers on this subject, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, and inevitably will have an impact.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Are you trying to imply -- if you are trying to imply that SIS is making policy, I totally, totally reject that.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: I'm not --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I don't know what you are driving at, Rod. The fact is I'm picking the brains of a British official who knows a lot about the issue. Are you suggesting that it would be a good idea if the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary hadn't done that?

SIR RODERIC LYNE: No. I'm trying to elucidate --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: You have to understand the service is not the Foreign Office. It's not a policy department. It's a department which is essentially an operational department, which contains a lot of people with some really remarkable knowledge and expertise. This incident is an opportunity to sort of open up that expertise at the top of Government, on a very sensitive issue, admittedly, when there's a lack of expertise, and I don't think you should give it any more significance than that.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: I'm not trying to imply anything. I am trying

to establish its place in the chain of events and of policy development and its significance, and the reason I quoted the Foreign Secretary's letter to you was because you said these are think pieces by [SIS4], they didn't necessarily represent your views, and I want to be clear about the status.

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: ⁵ [REDACTED]

⁵ In the exchange that followed, the witness described the nature of the UK/US intelligence relationship. He explained the process by which he would brief the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, sometimes orally. He also explained the formal submissions process.

[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's turn to Chequers and Crawford.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: This is going to lead up to the Chequers meeting in early April, and then the Crawford summit and its aftermath.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I'm really interested in terms of just an understanding almost of the nature of the institutional relationship between SIS and the Foreign Office.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, as a very sensitive submission put to the FCO, it would go through PUS [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] to the Foreign Secretary and would be seen only by named individuals [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Then moving on to 7 March, and looking forward now to the visit to Washington in April, there's a number of things stated about [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Then it says:

"The PM was keen to move forward on Iraq."

Now, this is before the Chequers meeting. So, again, I'm interested in: did you have a sense that already Iraq was now moving up the Prime Minister's own priorities?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I think it certainly was, by March 2002.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

⁶ Sir John asked about the witness' briefing of Ministers in early 2002. In the subsequent answer, the witness explained how 9/11 had changed SIS' position in Whitehall and led to a need for a close relationship with the Prime Minister as well as the Foreign Secretary. He also explained how he had engaged with the FCO's Permanent Secretary on managing this new dynamic. The witness was then asked about the context and views expressed at the meeting at Chequers on 4 April 2002.

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: One of my questions was -- you made the important point before, that regime change didn't necessarily mean military action.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: No.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And could at this stage mean a variety of things.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: It could mean a variety.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Do you think that's how, from your memory of the discussion at Chequers, the Prime Minister was viewing it, without having fixed on a particular method at this time?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I think you have got to look at it in the broadest, most general sense.

⁷ Sir Lawrence referred to evidence that suggested that the witness had believed, in April 2002, that the Prime Minister wanted to lead, not just support the process of regime change.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In your recollection from the Chequers meeting, would the Foreign Secretary, Chief of Defence Staff, gone along with this sort of view of the Prime Minister? Were they more cautious?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I'm not sure. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I mean, bear in mind, one is talking to the PM here in terms of his relationship with the US President. So I am not going to speculate on what CDS -- all I would say, the other thing you have to bear in mind in dealing with the US military, and the DOD in particular, is that they are always -- people know this better than I do -- scenario planning. So the moment that ideas begin to appear above the horizon, they start scenario planning.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: ⁸ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

⁸ Sir Lawrence referred to evidence that suggested that the witness' view at the time of the Chequers meeting had been that the Prime Minister, though not necessarily all his key advisers, had understood that Libya posed a bigger threat than Iraq, and understood the risk, therefore, of focussing on WMD in relation to Iraq.

questions about, if you are making the case to topple the regime in Iraq, how important does WMD have to be in that? It's just the relationship between those two.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I think the other -- April 2002, our concerns about Iraqi WMD are above the level of routine, but, you know, they are well-established. There's the assumption that Iraq's interest in WMD continues.

The intervention of Libya here as a serious problem is new and very dramatic, and the intelligence is very strong.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So the logic is if we are going to be making a case on WMD, Libya has now got to be the priority. So don't make that --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, Libya is going to be, at the moment, pretty near the top of the list, given where Libya is geographically in relation to Europe.

THE CHAIRMAN: I know you want to get on, but just one point of interpretation, Richard, on the 4 April minute on Iraq. When it says the PM wants to lead, not just support the process, is one to understand by that, if there's going to be a process of regime change, we want to stay in some degree of control over it, rather than just follow the US, or is it we want regime change and we want to be in charge? Is it the former?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I think it's the former. It's keeping our hands on what's going on and not letting the Americans run away with the ball.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: ⁹ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

⁹ Sir Lawrence asked about discussion prior to Crawford. The witness set out what he believed would have happened but he could not recall the discussions in any detail.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we deserve a break. Let's have five minutes.

(A short break)

THE CHAIRMAN: Lawrence, you wanted to do a bit of a reprise.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: On that, did the Prime Minister report back to you on any intelligence discussions, including the role of SIS, afterwards?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I don't recall that. I don't recall anything coming back after Crawford.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: He didn't say that to you?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: To be honest, I don't remember. The trouble is if I say "yes", I'm making it up. I just don't have a recollection of it. If you could find some documentation, fine, but ...

THE CHAIRMAN: By the way, on a side point, your recollection of Crawford, not as to what was said, but was the Chief of Defence Staff there? He was, wasn't he? Sorry, Chequers, I mean, not Crawford.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I'm pretty sure that Mike Boyce was at Chequers, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Because he said in public evidence he couldn't remember.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I'm pretty sure he was there. Normally he would have been, because for a meeting like that, I would have

been there and he would have been. We were usually there together for meetings like that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Rod, back to you.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Moving the story forward, on 23 July the Prime Minister had a meeting at Number 10, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I just want to look at the intelligence background to that.

[REDACTED]

On that basis, I wonder if you would just like to summarise what the picture was that you [REDACTED] [REDACTED] reported at the Prime Minister's meeting on the 23rd.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: ¹⁰ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

¹⁰ In the exchange that followed, there was a detailed discussion about the alleged link between Saddam Hussein and terrorism. The witness explained that the UK intelligence community and the JIC had made clear that, although there had been contacts between the Iraqi regime and Al Qaida, there was no evidence of co-operation.

a build-up of intelligence on Iraq during the summer. By the time, you know, we get to the dossier being written in September, there's certainly more substance available than some of us had expected. [REDACTED]

Maybe one of the things one should interpose here, because no one has really taken any notice of it and I think you as a Committee ought at least to give it some consideration, when we are talking about the intelligence -- Butler didn't look at it --

[REDACTED] One should think in terms of a holistic body of material about WMD.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: In our system all of that [REDACTED] feeds into and informs the JIC process along with everything else.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Is there any equivalent to that in the

American system, of putting together the picture for the National Security Adviser and the President?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes, I think it's put together in the NSC. So when they are writing NIEs, national intelligence estimates, which are the nearest equivalent, I think, to JIC papers, or NSC papers, they will be drawing on [various sources].

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Then when this gets presented to the Prime Minister, and he is having an important meeting on the subject, what impact does this have on him? Is he more inclined perhaps than others -- he can only believe what people tell him, he is not an intelligence expert himself -- to take the conjunction of terrorism and WMD seriously? [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, I don't think the Prime Minister ever accepted the link between Iraq and terrorism. I think it would be fair to say the Prime Minister was very worried about

the possible conjunction of terrorism and WMD, but not specifically in relation to Iraq. It's one of the things that -- in fact, I think, one could say this is one of his primary national security concerns, given the nature of Al Qaeda.

Bear in mind -- I'm not quite sure of the timing of this, but it's about this time that we are finding some pretty disturbing things inside Afghanistan. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Looking at Iraq, you've got to bear in mind, there's a bigger context. There are other things going on, which are influencing the way that people think and [have to] consider if you are looking at the issues generically. Okay, if you are looking at Iraq specifically, I agree, Iraq is Iraq. But if you are looking at WMD, you know, the concern -- and, I mean, also simultaneously with this, you know, you have a crisis between India and Pakistan

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I mean, it's difficult for me. You must understand the broader context, post-9/11. We can sit here now calmly, with the benefit of hindsight, but there were many elements about which people were deeply, deeply concerned.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: That's a point that I think a lot of witnesses have stressed, and I think we were all there at the time too. You are quite right to underline the era we were in then and the way that affected decision-making.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] ? ¹¹

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes, I do. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Was it suggested that we should do something further to follow it up?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, I know that -- I couldn't identify the date, but at a period DFID becomes a much more important part of discussions about Iraq. I would imagine, if you look back at the record, DFID appears -- I remember having certain meetings with Clare Short, for example, at the request of Number 10, I might add. And I think -- I'm not sure of the dates, but they were probably after this meeting, in the second half of the year.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: They weren't at that meeting. My recollection is that she was asking for briefing, and indeed it was agreed that you should brief her bilaterally.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes, I went and briefed her.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: But that's different from DFID becoming involved in the Whitehall process, planning the aftermath. It's a separate channel.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I agree, it's a separate channel. But there became much more discussion of that issue later in the year.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

¹¹ Sir Roderic asked the witness if he recalled there being concern within Whitehall about the absence of planning for the aftermath.

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Moving on, pre-conflict planning.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can we just move on now. Following July 2002, what planning did the security services undertake in order to prepare for military action against Iraq?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, in SIS the planning started very early on.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You mean well before July?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Oh yes. I mean, in anticipation of Iraq being a much greater preoccupation and a much greater issue for SIS -- hang on, I've got some notes here.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: And it was preparation for military action?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: No, no. This was, I would say -- pre-conflict planning, is the way I would put it. [REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Okay. But my question really is: following the 2002 meeting that you have just been discussing with Sir Roderic Lyne, what planning did you take to prepare for military action against Iraq? Because there is a minute of August 2002 which says:

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: ¹² [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So SIS -- this is where we differ, maybe, from other Government departments. We need to be very fast out of the blocks when we think there's going to be a crisis. You have to make your dispositions very rapidly and very quickly, and we started very early. I think we probably started maybe earlier than any other Government department.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: At what stage did you judge that the Turkish route would not be possible, and did you share that thinking?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes. Well, this is quite extensively discussed. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

It became evident to me pretty early on [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: When would that be?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I would have to check. I don't know.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: When you say "early", would it be before July? What stage, what time of the year? Beginning of the year, middle of the year, after July?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I think probably in the summer some time.

¹² The witness explained the steps that had been taken inside SIS and through engagement with other departments.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] It was clear that the Turkish general staff [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were not going to agree to a British military deployment through Turkey.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Were you given reasons why they wouldn't do that?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: No, but it was pretty obvious.

THE CHAIRMAN: There was, of course, a significant change of Turkish government, wasn't there, in the early autumn?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes, there was, but --

THE CHAIRMAN: But this was before that.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: This was very much the Turkish military.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: And did the military share your understanding of the situation about that time?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, I think pretty early on -- I would have to go back and check, but in that period, in the autumn, it became clear that there was going to be no British military deployment through Turkey. The Turkish generals essentially were not going to change their minds.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Did you share that thinking with the military? Did you offer them any advice?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I mean, I would have reported that instantly. I mean, I was in touch frequently. Mike Boyce and I were regularly talking to each other. But I think it was evident. It would have been evident on the attache military channels at about the same time. I don't think -- but obviously it was of concern because it would affect very profoundly how the thing was planned.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

So in a crisis there are very well-established ways and means of dealing with military deployments and they function very efficiently, plus the fact, you know, I would see CDS on a frequent basis, or be talking to his chief staff officer if he wasn't available. So we were very, very closely knitted together.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: And to what extent did you co-ordinate your plans with the FCO? How did that work?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, I mean, the link between FCO and SIS I would describe as umbilical. It's extremely close. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Then there are the personal links between senior officers and the heads of department. There's the link between myself and the Secretary of State and his private office. What I would say -- I think others around the table will know this -- the relationship, the functioning relationship between the FCO and SIS is exemplary. You won't find a closer one between an intelligence service and a foreign ministry anywhere, I don't think. It's well-established, well understood how it works, and has very clear processes as well.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But there's a note on 14 January, when Sir Ricketts, briefed on FCO's preparation, ends by saying good joint planning was now essential. If it was working well, why was that --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: But you are moving on -- if you are actually into a -- well, if you are going to fight a war -- let's put it like that -- which was clear, you have to set up additional structures.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Were they set up? Did that work well?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes, we worked very well. There were no real problems in this area, I don't think.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's move on to the intelligence base on Iraqi WMDs. I'll ask Martin to take up the questions.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In comparison with Iran, Libya, North Korea, the other countries of concern, how strong would you judge the intelligence base to be on Iraq's WMD at the end of 2001/beginning of 2002?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Until [REDACTED] comes on stream, not very strong on -- actually I think there's an important point to make here to qualify this, which I don't think you as a Committee know. Well, you might do, and if you do, it will make life simpler.

If you look at page 40 of the WMD dossier published in September, there is a box which gives the detail of what UNSCOM discovered and destroyed in Iraq during the first inspection regime.

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: This is in the Rolf Ekeus period?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes. This is the first inspection regime. This is really important, I think.

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

That is the sort of legacy of UNSCOM, and of course it has a profound effect on British thinking about what Iraq has got and what hasn't been found, and you can't historically ignore that.

THE CHAIRMAN: It creates the material balance notion, doesn't it?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Which incorporates both what may survive, does it, but also what may have been destroyed by the regime, unknown to UNSCOM?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes. So you have this picture of what was found and destroyed and, as Sir John says, what hasn't been found.

So you have that legacy, which means we know quite a lot about Iraq's capability. It's historical by then, but still highly relevant.

As the sanction regime bites on Iraq, and Iraq becomes less significant, our coverage is modest, I would say. ¹³ [REDACTED]

¹³ The witness explained the importance of a new source that had come on stream. This was not the new source on trial in September 2002, whose reporting SIS withdrew in July 2003.

[REDACTED]

Now, I think what you also have to bear in mind is that intelligence penetration of savage dictatorships at this level is not an everyday event. You don't get many sources. You get lots of sources around the edges. You get occasional sources with occasional access. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is there somebody, other people?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: There are other sources which are important, but I think we are coming on here to the end of 2001/2002.

[REDACTED]

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: [REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: [REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: If I could just focus for a moment more on

this period of the end of 2001/beginning of 2002, did you brief the Prime Minister at that time on the extent of SIS's recent reporting and on the agent base?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: No, I don't think I -- to be honest, I can't recall. It would have been rare for me to have briefed a minister. I'm not saying it didn't happen, but it would have been very rare for me to talk to the Prime Minister about our source base.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: As Iraq was rising up the agenda, were extra resources devoted? What was the process whereby we devoted more of your resources to Iraq?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

But bear in mind, as I say, recruiting sources with access, with a regime like this -- it's easy to recruit people who don't have access, but to get people who really know secrets or are close to the heart of the regime, this is tough, not impossible.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Among other reasons why it's particularly tough, because the key people are not allowed out of the country?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes, the inaccessibility of people who really know secrets, who, generally speaking, don't mix, who live within an enclosed circle, whose movements are restricted. It is very difficult to get at these types of people.

THE CHAIRMAN: Lawrence, over to you on the dossier.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Now, obviously we have taken evidence on

about it historically because I have read it, but I don't actually recall that.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just now looking at a discussion you had with the Foreign Secretary on 5 September, who asked you for your views on the first draft. Again, this must have been an earlier version, rather than the one that was set in motion a few days later. There's an interesting comment, where you say:

"The draft was weakened by the JIC doctrinaire approach to its drafting."

I was just wondering what you meant by that.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Good question. I mean, the answer is I have seen this reference and I'm not sure. There must be something specific that that refers to. It must be something to do with material from one of our sources and how it was presented. I'm sorry. I mean, I'm sure if you searched long and hard enough in SIS records, we could turn it up, but it would be difficult, I think. I'm really not sure what that is.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

I'm just curious about who is drafting what at this stage, and what role SIS are --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Basically I didn't usually talk to Alastair about these things myself. Someone else in SIS did, who was responsible.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Who would that have been?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Probably one of the senior [SIS] officers, the people who deal with the distribution of intelligence to customers. But it would have been someone very senior.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But you don't recall?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I don't recall precisely who it was.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Do you have any recollection of the shifts in the drafting over this period?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, I have a recollection of the JIC meetings, the successive JIC meetings, and the subcommittee of the JIC which was pulling all this stuff together over time. It was quite a long drawn-out exercise.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So would you be taking a direct interest yourself in the content of the dossier, how it was put together and worded?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: To the extent that it included material from SIS sources and exposed our knowledge to public gaze, I would be taking a strong interest in it.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What mechanisms would you use to make sure that material in there had been validated?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: That would be the responsibility of the [requirements] officers who prepared the [SIS] reports. But, I mean, maybe I should add now, because I'm sure you are going to question me about [the new source on trial in September 2002]¹⁴, I think this is an important point, so we don't waste too much time on it. I can say very authoritatively there was no material in the dossier [from the new source on trial in September 2002].

I can also say, if you actually look at the introduction to the dossier, it refers to assessed intelligence, specifically assessed intelligence. [The new source on trial] was not assessed intelligence, and therefore are actually authoritatively excluded because they don't fall into that category, and I had put my foot down and said this material could not be used.

¹⁴ SIS withdrew the reporting from this source in June 2003

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I want to go through in a second just some of the things that were included.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I'm just wondering first if you expressed any concerns at the time, during the course of the drafting, of the extent to which caveats were dropped, as to whether it was becoming more definite than you might have seen in a normal JIC report, for example?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, I think the -- let's leave the introduction aside.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you mean the introduction or the foreword?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: The foreword by the Prime Minister. I'm talking about the text of the report. I don't think I was involved in drafting either. I didn't see the foreword and I didn't see the introduction, I don't think. That's my recollection anyway.

I mean, I think now, you know, with the benefit of hindsight, I was happy with what the dossier said in terms of what we believed at the time that it was written. I wouldn't change my judgment on that, I don't think.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The Butler Report commented that the language may have left readers with the impression that there was fuller and firmer intelligence behind the judgments in the dossier than was the case.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes, I know it said that, but I think it is easy to write these things afterwards. I mean, you know, at the time when that dossier was published, it's what we believed on the evidence available, partly historical -- significantly historical -- partly based on the sources, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, I had been worried about the dossier for a very long time because I didn't feel that we had a very substantive picture from intelligence. We had a substantive picture from historical material.

By the time, you know, the draft was complete, I was, I think, surprised how much material had been assembled. I think you have to recall, when this document was published -- and I would actually refer you also to the Institute of Strategic Studies document. Both were felt to be rather conservative, rather reserved pictures of what Iraq's capability was at that time. You know, it's only now -- and I'm also firmly of the view that we still don't have a complete picture of Iraq's WMD, and I would like to talk about that at some point.

For example, I'm absolutely of the view, and I think I can make a pretty convincing case, that Iraq had weaponised VX, and that that material has never been found. Had even we found one artillery rocket delivery system with VX, what we are talking about might be viewed very differently, and I think that the intelligence on VX, if you actually put it together -- and no one has done this -- is very compelling.

It's very compelling indeed, and one of the things I hope

that comes out from this Inquiry is that actually you will look at these issues, because actually they have been glossed over, and I'm pretty fed up with them being glossed over, because there has been an approach, a sort of selective approach to material, which is driven by people's prejudices. It's not driven by a clear objective look at the facts.

Why did Iraq, on 20 November, order large quantities of VX antidote? There's documented intelligence which is not in doubt.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: You know, so, I mean, I've got very strong views on this. I see this as an opportunity for me to air them, and for people to listen and to take them seriously.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think, hopefully, we will. I think we would like to go through the ISG process. Perhaps that would be a very good time to do that. I'm afraid, nonetheless, there are some things that came up in the dossier that we have to go through, but we can go through them quite quickly.

Can we start with the 45 minutes report, and just where that came from and why it was included?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, it came from [another source]

[REDACTED] with benefit of hindsight, the actual investigation that I instituted later on destroyed the sourcing chain. So we had to withdraw the report.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] at the time there was every reason to believe the intelligence was correct, and actually the intelligence stood up very well to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

It was only after prolonged questioning of the source and sub-sources that we eventually opened up the fact that it was probably not sound. But that came much later.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: One of the problems with the 45 minutes was that it wasn't implausible, obviously, that battlefield munitions would have been prepared in this way. It was the misapprehension that arose, that it was about something other than --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I think that was covered in the Hutton Inquiry, actually. It was specifically about battlefield weapons. If there's anything I blame myself about, it's the fact that this was allowed to appear in the headlines of British newspapers, "40 minutes from". It's just so awful that that happened because it did refer clearly to battlefield weapons.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You didn't think there was anything you could do to clear up the misrepresentation at the time? Because it clearly was at the time --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: You know, once it's in the headlines of the Daily Mail, whatever it was, how do you clear it up, frankly? It's only now that it looks important that it should have been cleared up. Of course, at the time you take a slightly different -- it's all very well to say afterwards, but at the time some of us felt extremely uncomfortable about that because

we knew that it was referring to a battlefield weapon.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The next issue is the yellowcake from Niger. [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: On that, I think, three inquiries have looked at this. I'm absolutely convinced that the [REDACTED] source on yellowcake was good. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The irony about yellowcake is that our reporting on yellowcake, that Iraq had attempted or was attempting to procure yellowcake, I think is right. I still stand by it, and the Butler Report endorses that judgment.

This became a fantastically politicised issue in America, and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I still believe to this day it's correct.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: ¹⁵ [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: My final question on this episode of the dossier again [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: We were extremely worried.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I would just like you to elaborate a bit on this because clearly SIS is seen to have done a good job -- you thought that too -- on the dossier, and helpful, it's come up with stuff and so on. But it goes back to what we were discussing before. You are now in a role where the PM is relying on you a lot.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes. I think a fragile and dangerous position, as one was well aware at the time. I don't deny that. But such are the events of government sometimes.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: That put pressure on you to deliver?

there had been other reporting which had not been withdrawn, which corroborated original reporting.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: The service was always under pressure to improve its intelligence on key issues.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I'm talking in terms of the pedestal by the Prime Minister; did that put extra pressure on you to deliver?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I think of course the service was under pressure in these circumstances.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we have just got time for one more set of questions, and then we will take another break. So, Martin, over to you on Blix and the inspection team.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Indeed. ¹⁷ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: The Iraqis, having been through one inspection regime, had had a lot of practice at, as it were, disguising their activities and intentions.

I also didn't believe that the teams within Iraq could operate very effectively independent of DGI scrutiny, and that it would be very difficult for them to get to any site without the Iraqis knowing beforehand where they were going.

I think we all understood that if Iraq had WMD, there were not going to be massive quantities of them. I think, you know, if you talk to the experts, you can have quite significant holdings, and it can be quite small in terms of quantity and capability.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: This being the case, why did you feel that

¹⁷ Sir Martin referred to evidence which suggested that the witness had expected the inspections process to fail.

the failure to find something might lead, as you put it, to a loss of credibility --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: You know, there was a lot of weight on SIS [REDACTED] to provide the intelligence for finds, and it was going to be tough.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Did you tell the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister about your understanding of why it might not be found because of deception?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I certainly -- certainly the Prime Minister knew my views. He had certainly -- because I remember graphically, he had commented on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the chances of finding anything [REDACTED] I think I had said to him at one time, well, 50/50. But on a day-to-day basis one's views shifted. Some days one was more optimistic. But I wouldn't say I was optimistic ever about having effective inspections.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Did you have a sense that SIS might be able to come up with something significant?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED] I mean, the inspectors had four significant finds, two of which were conventional weapons. [REDACTED]

18 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

¹⁸ The witness described his view of the appointment and role of Dr Hans Blix.

[REDACTED]

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: So we knew who we were dealing with. But Iraq, as it happened -- it was a sensible decision to take, but it didn't turn out very well.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Blix was very well disposed towards SIS, but I think he thought maybe that it was going to be an easier task than he had undertaken. Actually, for a lot of the time, he wasn't around. He handed it all over to a Greek guy called Pericos -- I can't remember his name now -- and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] You know, we had good [REDACTED] reporting, and I think the one report which I feel sure was correct [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] told us that they had hidden some stuff in a bunker beside a military hospital. I can't remember the name of it. The inspectors managed to turn up without any digging equipment.

THE CHAIRMAN: No ground penetrating radar.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: No ground penetrating radar, and there was a demonstration on the very place that they were meant to examine when they turned up. There were two [intelligence] driven inspections which I think should have been successful and

weren't. That was one of them.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: My final question really is about the sites, the suspect sites, which you suggested, the UNMOVIC visit. I suppose you've answered this in part, but perhaps I could ask it specifically. What confidence did you have, when you alerted them to these sites, that there would be material there?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Bear in mind -- we were reasonably confident of the [REDACTED] material. I was very confident the [REDACTED] material was right, and I still think it probably was right.

The material that -- I mean, we had some haphazard material on the nuclear. This is when we did have a find, where we found documents and centrifuge parts in the garden of a scientist which correspond exactly with the intelligence we had. This stuff had been distributed amongst the scientists. They had been told to take it home and bury it and hide it in their homes.

I can't remember now, but we had a little list of [REDACTED] sites. I think we may have gone up [REDACTED]. Some of those were on the basis of historical analysis. I have more scepticism about those. ¹⁹ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: From an SIS perspective, would more time have given more opportunity to find things?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: It might have done. We hadn't got through the list by the time the inspections finished by any means.

²⁰ [REDACTED]

¹⁹ The witness explained he had been more optimistic about those sites that had been referred to in intelligence reporting.

²⁰ The witness discussed intelligence reports on Iraqi deception and concealment activities.

[REDACTED]

Then the other point was the inspectors went on leave in the middle of -- after they had been there three weeks, they all shoved off on holiday.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Last question, then we will have another break. It's about Blix and his mind. We've now taken evidence from him in this Inquiry. He was facing one hell of a dilemma. If he made a major find, he pulls the trigger. Otherwise he has to prove a negative. He's got an impossible task.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes. I mean, in my view he did make a major find. He found the missile engines which were a clear breach. That was clearly technically discounted. We found them twice because they were shifted by the Iraqis to preserve them. He was in a tough position.

THE CHAIRMAN: Where I was heading though was there is no suggestion -- we had not heard any allegation or imputation -- that however competent or less than competent the work of UNMOVIC was, they were not trying not to find anything.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: No, I don't subscribe to that at all.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's break until quarter past and then come back.
Thank you.

(A short break)

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

MARGARET ALDRED: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED] ?

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED] ?

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE : [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN : [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE : [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN : [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE : [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN : [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE : [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN : [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE : [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Lawrence. I would like to turn to Baroness Prashar. I think you would like to pick up on UNMOVIC.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Yes, A number of questions on that. From what I sensed from what you were saying earlier, were you disappointed with UNMOVIC's performance on the ground?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes, I didn't think it was very convincing.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: And you did say that there was something they found which could be considered as material breach. What do you think they found which could be considered as material breach?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: The Volga -- the rocket engines which were imported to extend the range of their missiles, which would have been beyond the limit imposed at the end of the First Gulf War.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: How do you explain UNMOVIC not finding anything at sites [REDACTED]?

How do you explain that?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, some of the sites were historical. Therefore the chances of finding things were slim because they would have had a chance to clear them.

I mean, the two particular cases -- I have mentioned one, you know, when they arrived at the hospital without the right equipment. So they were never going to find anything. And according to one [REDACTED] report, which I think is also important, they did inspect some rocket artillery, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] armed with VX. It's exactly the weapon system that I would have expected. They didn't realise. They glanced at it, presumably, and went away. Conventional rocket artillery. And I think it probably would be quite difficult to tell that it was VX.

THE CHAIRMAN: You would have to open up the warhead.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: You would have to open up the warhead to see that. [REDACTED]*
I think that was a severe failure.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Do you think Blix was happy with the level of support he was getting [REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: ²¹ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

²¹ The witness described his understanding of Dr Blix's views on the support he was receiving from the intelligence community in the UK and elsewhere.

[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: We have also seen a note -- I think it was 9 January -- where you said the Prime Minister's parting words to you were, "Richard, my fate is in your hands".

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Yes, I know. Well, I think he was

beginning to understand that he was in a tough position vis-a-vis the inspection issue. I think --

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: No, I think when the Prime Minister says something like that -- the one thing if you are head of SIS is you have to be quite robust, and not be sort of put off by such comments.

I think the problem for the Prime Minister at that point in time is it's much more important to him domestically that UNMOVIC has a success than it is to the US administration.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What was your view of Blix's final statement to the United Nations prior to the conflict? Do you think it was an accurate representation of what the inspectors had found?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I honestly don't recall. I mean, I remember having some problems with what they finally presented.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You can't recall what they were?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I can't recall the detail of that now.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: As it progressed, did your expectation of what they would find change? And did you advise the Prime Minister on that?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, I think I was saying to the Prime Minister, it seems unlikely we are going to find anything.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Do you think they should have been given more time?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, I'm not going to express a view on that. I think that's a political issue, and I don't think my

personal views come into it, frankly.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But you must have a view, because if anything would be found --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Obviously it would have been much better from the UK's point of view if UNMOVIC had found something.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But would they have found something, if they'd been given more time?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I don't know. Neither do you.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the bookmakers might have changed the odds.

[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE:

[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:

[REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE:

THE CHAIRMAN:

[REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE:

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN:

[REDACTED] ?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Let's turn to a different topic then, and I'll ask
Baroness Prashar to take up the things. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

²² Baroness Prashar asked about the claim that had appeared in some books that there had been discussions with Iraqi officials prior to military action that had suggested Iraq no longer had WMD. The witness described what he knew of the pre-conflict contacts but stated that such contacts had not provided any new information. Ministers had been fully briefed.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Given the fact that no WMD was found, what could the Iraqis have said or done to convince?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, this is an interesting question, and actually it's a question on which I also have very strong views.

Iraq had plenty of time to, as it were, remove the misunderstanding what existed over its WMD, particularly once UNMOVIC was set up. The way Iraq behaved did everything, as it

were, to convince us that our assessment of the situation was correct. I mean, they had plenty of time to remove the misunderstanding that they had no WMD. They could have done that.

I think one of the problems with Iraq -- you know, now I make a generic comment -- is that there was no source inside the regime that could have told us authoritatively that they didn't have WMD, because I'm pretty sure that the regime itself believed that it did have WMD.

So, you know, you have a chaotic situation inside a dictatorship, with different levels of knowledge, and we didn't have any sources saying there's no WMD. There was no -- and the way that the DGI treated the inspectors from the moment they arrived in country and harassed them, gave everybody every reason to believe they were doing this deliberately, they had something to hide.

So there is this extraordinary period, you know, which actually pre-dates the inspections as well, when Iraq -- if you look historically, if you analyse Saddam, his capacity for miscalculation in relation to the various crises that we went through in the period after, every time he miscalculates about what the intentions are towards Iraq, and gets it successively wrong on each occasion. So you could say that the country was acting in character again.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But if we knew that, if that was our assessment of them, why weren't we more sceptical? Why did we continue to --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I don't think -- I don't have an answer to that particular question. What I'm saying is he always behaved in a way which was provocative, belligerent. He didn't think -- I think up to a late point in time, he didn't think he was going

to be invaded by the Americans.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED] I think it's been implied to us, though not stated as evidence -- that on the one side the US was determined to set the bar so high for compliance with UNSCRs that actually nobody could ever reach it; on the other hand, that Iraq was in such a mess, that in terms of actually producing records, audit trails, even if it had wanted to it would have been incapable of doing it.

Now, between the two is the fact that in practice, politically, Saddam and his regime could, could they, have actually convinced the world they were in compliance. But, nonetheless, there is that balance.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I would agree with that.

THE CHAIRMAN: I wanted just to pick up one other broad theme, and then give you the chance to make us some reflections before we close.

I suppose, coming back to an earlier issue, what role should SIS in the modern age have in the formation and implementation of high policy in the global context? Just to say, because you yourself gave some evidence much earlier today. Do you think that SIS was drawn, for whatever reasons, into a greater involvement in policy making in the Iraq sphere than it would have wished or should have had?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: You know, I would say that SIS was scrupulous and kept its nose out of the policy. I would say: produce some document that shows SIS making policy.

On the other hand, and I think this is important, there are a number of issues which are now primary issues in national security, the obvious ones being terrorism and proliferation, where it's very difficult to make policy effectively without good intelligence, because you are dealing with issues, which are conspiratorial, and therefore not easily analysed in terms of public scrutiny. You've got to have good intelligence on terrorism. Similarly, proliferation programmes are inherently hidden. They have very small footprints. They are hidden within other activities, usually.

Therefore, you know, we are in circumstances where the role of intelligence is elevated to a much higher level of day-to-day significance in terms of the policy makers.

One of the striking things about the lead-up to the Iraq crisis, I think, is the difficulty of the Foreign Office. You know, it was put in it because it didn't have a lot of concrete material to contribute to policy making on these issues because

of -- I mean, certainly on terrorism they were not much involved, and certainly on proliferation, most of the expertise and intelligence lay within the intelligence agencies.

THE CHAIRMAN: Accepting without demur that intelligence must have a part to play in the formation of policy, otherwise policy may take place in ignorance, which would be absurd, and negate the whole purpose of a intelligence service. That said, you have already just mentioned some general characteristics of the way the world is at the moment. Global terrorism is the principal threat, including proliferation within that, if you like.

[REDACTED] in the context of Iraq and the Anglo-US relationship [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We don't have a Vice President, no counterpart to Cheney. Putting it bluntly, our Foreign Secretary and Foreign Office have as interlocutors a State Department and a Secretary of State who were not influential at the time. Similarly, you can argue -- it's been put to us -- that the same was true on the defence axis up to a point. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ?²³

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: [REDACTED]

²³ Sir John asked about the implications of this for SIS.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] my job was to be able to talk, as and when needed, and ask the questions which very often other people couldn't ask.

It's quite interesting, I think, to see the position of the embassy at this period. Unless you have a very particular sort of ambassador -- I mean, this isn't a criticism -- the ambassador is at a disadvantage. I would say David Manning wasn't, because that was because he went there on the back of having done the job essentially of National Security Adviser before he went.

I have very strong feelings about this now because, you know, I'm well aware of the criticisms of me, that I had too close a relationship with the Prime Minister and all this. This is complete rubbish. SIS generally doesn't "do ministers". If you are looking up from underneath, you have no idea what the job of Chief is like, particularly when the world is in crisis, which it was, and you are cast in a role where you become a key interlocutor with ministers [REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

THE CHAIRMAN: Hearing that, and still thinking about how you guard the marches to protect, frankly, both our political system, but also our intelligence community, against too much interpenetration, are the processes within a modern day intelligence agency -- not just SIS, perhaps -- through scrupulous attention to risk analysis, formalising processes, more than you would perhaps otherwise wish to do? Governance issues whereby -- and the analogy for me is whereby, as a retired Permanent Secretary, you could stop a Secretary of State in his or her tracks by appealing to the Public Accounts Committee, or

threatening to.

Do we need, as it were, a reconfigured envelope for --

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Interestingly, we have got a partially reconfigured envelope with the National Security Council, of which I am a strong, strong advocate. I think that if that works correctly and formally, and you have a Prime Minister who chairs a National Security Council, and you have a National Security Adviser with, you know, an effective staff process, maybe some of these problems become more manageable.

But I hasten to add that the crisis of 9/11, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya arming, won't be repeated. The next crisis will be different, and, you know, the machinery for that crisis will maybe not be adequate to handling it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Since you raise the point yourself, but I would have raised it anyway, there has been public comment, even criticism, that the Chief of the SIS in your time in that role became too close to the Prime Minister, to Tony Blair, in his role at that time.

You have dealt, I think, almost with the fact that if you were drawn into it, it is very difficult to resist. One shouldn't perhaps resist, should one?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, you know, if you are the Chief of SIS of the day, and you have the role of the Chief of SIS -- I don't think I had a role as Richard Dearlove. I think I had a role as the Chief. I had a good relationship with the Prime Minister. I think everybody knows that. We got on quite well.

But the idea that somehow that relationship -- I challenge anyone to show me any single document that that was somehow improper. I mean, Menzies had a close relationship with Churchill during World War 2. During any crisis, the head of intelligence, particularly when a crisis is so angular and

difficult, is going to have to deal frequently with ministers.

I wasn't sipping Chardonnay in the evenings with Tony Blair, or nipping off to have breakfast with him in Chequers. I was going to meetings, as the head of SIS, to discuss SIS business in relation to the development of national security policy. I think that the record shows that absolutely clearly.

A lot of people were jealous of my position, and therefore, I think, motivated to talk about it, including the Foreign Secretary of the day. You know, this was a very difficult and awkward period for me.

But should I have said to the Prime Minister, sorry, I'm not coming, it would be rather improper for me to be there? Of course I'm not going to.

THE CHAIRMAN: One last point, then I'll leave it. It's counterfactual. We have two really eminent historians on this Committee, and one or two other interested amateurs.

The counterfactual question. How far was the very close and working relationship, and the one you have described to us as necessary and desirable indeed, between the head of the Secret Intelligence Service and the Prime Minister of the day, in the middle of a global crisis, how far was it personality-dependent and how far was it role-dependent? Would it have been the same in substance with two quite different characters?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Well, I think it was primarily role-dependent, and I think it was fortunate that we got on well with each other.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: One fully appreciates that you had official meetings in your role. But were you in these meetings given the opportunity to challenge? As your role are head of SIS, were you able to say, "Here I draw the line"?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I think I could have said exactly what I wanted when I -- I certainly wasn't constrained. When there were clear points of disagreement [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I was very clear with the Prime Minister, I don't agree with this. I absolutely don't agree with it. So I was prepared to be clear and outspoken on issues where he might have been pushed to take a different view.

But I should point out that I did not force myself into any policy discussion at all. I think if you look at the records of all of these meetings, you will see that I kept my mouth largely shut on policy issues.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'll just ask my colleagues if they've got any final points, because I've got one other quite different thing to raise. If not, the different thing is: you have said at various points throughout this longish session, there have been critical and other remarks made. You have just responded very, if I may say so, thoroughly, and with force and feeling, to the one about personalities.

Are there other reflections you would like to offer, either of a general kind or in response?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Let me check -- I've got some notes here. I might just have a quick look at these.

I must say, I am not happy with David Omand's comment that SIS overpromised and underdelivered. I mean, I would challenge that and say, okay, what did we overpromise? I do not at all accept that, as I don't think we did overpromise at all.

I also have been shown a reference to, which actually surprises me, disenfranchising the chain of command.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Now, I really am -- I think if you talk to

anybody who has worked for me, they will tell you that I'm a hands-off -- perhaps if you can criticise me, it's for being too hands-off, and trusting my staff to do their jobs properly. So that is certainly a criticism which I do not recognise. I'm also a stickler for procedure. So I don't really recognise that. That was another area that came up. I would firmly refute that and say, okay, give me an instance. What are you talking about? And I would say David Omand, okay, overpromised and underdelivered, be precise. What? And without either criticism being documented or specified, I would challenge them very strongly.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SIS realised just how difficult the issues were, and there was extensive discussion.

I don't think, as it were, it had the option of standing aside from the tide of history, however unsatisfactory or difficult the outcome may have been for the service. Now we have the benefit of hindsight, of course.

THE CHAIRMAN: I was going to use the very same phrase. Note that we have among our members of this Committee two historians who are keenly of the difference between contemporary evidence and hindsight.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: The thing that we haven't covered, which actually I think is quite important, is the evidence, I think, which points towards Iraq having armed with VX some of its rocket artillery.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have noted that. I was going to say in closing, which I'm about to do anyway, I think we shall need another short session on things like [the new source on trial in September 2002], that we haven't had time to get into, and the VX could be part of that.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I will give you a list of the reasons why I think that intelligence on VX may have been right. I wouldn't put it any stronger than that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Concluding, we are of course a lessons learned Inquiry, essentially. We are made to quote the narrative as best we can, and then find any key lessons that could be offered to the world in the future.

There have been quite a few embedded in what you have said this afternoon. You don't want to encapsulate that more tightly?

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Can I reserve that for my next session?

THE CHAIRMAN: By all means. The same opportunity will be there.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I need to think about that. I'm sure there's something pithy that I can say.

THE CHAIRMAN: That said then, I'm coming to close the session.

Just before I do, in the same way that we have disclosed to you quotes from witnesses in private hearings that could be construed as critical in some way, we have to consider doing the same in disclosing what you may have said about others, and I've got Hans Blix in mind particularly.

When you come to review the transcript, we will discuss with you passages that might be disclosable to Hans Blix. At the moment I'm certainly minded not, as we didn't with ones we gave to you, to expressly attribute them to yourself, but we might want to say this comes from SIS. But we can discuss that when we come to the transcript.

So I think with that, may I thank you for a long session and a useful one, and look forward to another short one when we can both find it convenient, and to remind that the transcript, I'm afraid, has to be looked at here.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: Unfortunately it's going to be very difficult for me to get -- as you are probably well aware, I've got another quite time-consuming job, especially at this time of the year when it's very busy. So I have identified a date when I think I can come back and read the transcript in June, at the end of June.

THE CHAIRMAN: Right.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: The only thing I wanted to ask is when the next session might be, because I'm not --

THE CHAIRMAN: Margaret, can we say anything at this point?

MARGARET ALDRED: I think we can talk to you about that.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I mean, I'm really out --

MARGARET ALDRED: It probably won't be before the end of June.

SIR RICHARD DEARLOVE: I haven't got a free date in my diary until [REDACTED] So it's going to be very difficult to fit in. It's not unwillingness on my part. It's just fitting it in with other things I'm involved in.

THE CHAIRMAN: We might have a brief word outside, just about the broad envelope, and with that, close the session. Thank you very much.

(The hearing adjourned)