

1 (11.15 am)

2 MR JOHN JENKINS AND MR FRANK BAKER

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome.

4 MR JOHN JENKINS: Good morning.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning. Welcome back and welcome to  
6 our witnesses. This is the last session of the day and  
7 the objective of it is to examine the UK's policy  
8 towards Iraq during 2009, asking about UK/Iraq relations  
9 during 2009 and about the relevant developments in Iraqi  
10 politics, about the UK's continued interest in Iraq  
11 after the end of the combat mission and about how  
12 effective the UK's government's objectives are being  
13 fulfilled after the military withdrawal.

14 Our witnesses for the session are  
15 Ambassador John Jenkins, HM Ambassador to Iraq since  
16 December, I believe, and formerly Director for  
17 Middle East and North Africa in the FCO, and  
18 Frank Baker, Deputy Director for the Middle East from  
19 2007, but Ambassador Designate to Kuwait, I believe.  
20 Welcome to you both.

21 We have got an hour, or a bit more if we need it.  
22 Two things I say before every session, we recognise that  
23 witnesses are giving evidence based on their  
24 recollection of events. We, for our part, are checking  
25 what we hear against the papers that we have access to,

1 some of which are still coming in. I remind every  
2 witness that he will later be asked to sign a transcript  
3 of the evidence given to the effect that the evidence  
4 they have given is truthful, fair and accurate.

5 With which, I will turn to Sir Roderic Lyne to open  
6 the questions.

7 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you. So we are talking about the  
8 period from 2007, late on, to 2009, effectively the end  
9 of our remit, which is the time the British troops  
10 withdraw, when you were the Director and Deputy Director  
11 for this area in the Foreign Office.

12 For part of that period, but not now, there was  
13 a dedicated group dealing with Iraq. Can you describe  
14 how that fitted into your wider command and why there  
15 isn't now a dedicated group dealing with Iraq? Does  
16 Iraq not matter anymore?

17 MR JOHN JENKINS: When I took over at the beginning  
18 of September 2007, that was the moment at which what had  
19 been a separate Iraq directorate was merged back into  
20 the Middle East and North Africa directorate, which is  
21 where it had come from in 2004, I think it was,  
22 2004/2005.

23 But we -- and my predecessor -- the former Director  
24 for Iraq had been Simon McDonald. That job disappeared  
25 and Frank, who arrived, I think, a week after I arrived,

1 in MENAD, took over as essentially Deputy Director for  
2 MENAD, fulfilling much the same function as Simon had  
3 done before, as Director for Iraq.

4 We had a separate Iraq group in MENAD until earlier  
5 this year, when we decided, because of the transition  
6 which was actually happening to this more normal  
7 relationship with Iraq, that it made more sense to see  
8 Iraq within the wider context of the Gulf, and that's  
9 the reason that happened in that way.

10 Frank, if you want to ...

11 MR FRANK BAKER: I will just add a couple of thoughts. My  
12 title, when I came back to London in September 2007 was  
13 actually Deputy Director in MENAD and Head of the Iraq  
14 Group. So I was very clearly designated as the head of  
15 that Iraq Group, and, at that stage, we had about 35 or  
16 36 people working within the Iraq Group together with  
17 the 36 people who were on the ground, Foreign Office  
18 officials who were to the ground, in Iraq.

19 The change that John has just alluded to, where the  
20 Iraq Group essentially became an Iraq team, within a  
21 Middle East group happened in May this year, and it was  
22 really, I think, symptomatic of the fact that, as  
23 we moved towards what we would classify to be a more  
24 normal bilateral relationship in Iraq, we needed fewer  
25 people in London, but we kept the same numbers on the

1 ground in Baghdad, in Basra and Erbil, which gave us the  
2 ability to pursue that bilateral relationship on the  
3 ground in country, which, of course, is what we do  
4 historically.

5 I perhaps could also add that, when we made these  
6 changes, we brought the numbers of people working on  
7 Iraq in the Foreign Office down to about 10 or 11.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry to interrupt, could we slow it down  
9 just a little bit to help the transcriber?

10 MR FRANK BAKER: We brought the numbers working Iraq down to  
11 10 or 11, I think it is probably 11, which is still  
12 a considerable amount more than one would expect to be  
13 working on a bilateral desk in the Foreign Office. In  
14 Afghanistan, of course, we have a lot of people, but  
15 apart from Afghanistan, I think the numbers we have on  
16 Iraq are still larger than anywhere else.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: We heard from Sir William Patey the other  
18 day that when he was Ambassador in Baghdad, and he was  
19 your predecessor but one, so we are talking about the  
20 period immediately before 2007, 2005 to 2007, or 2006 to  
21 2007, he was getting pretty well daily telephone calls  
22 from Number 10.

23 We have also talked to Sir Nigel Sheinwald, who  
24 clearly was running a lot of things hands-on from  
25 Number 10 at that stage.

1           In the period in which you were the Director, where  
2           did the prime responsibility for handling Iraq policy on  
3           a day-to-day basis rest? Was it still somewhere around  
4           Number 10 Cabinet Office, or was it with the  
5           Foreign Office and other Whitehall indemnities,  
6           Ministry of Defence, DFID and so on?

7   MR JOHN JENKINS: Iraq policy, in my time in MENAD,  
8           remained very much a cross-Whitehall construct and there  
9           was -- there were various fora within Whitehall for  
10          dealing with this. One was the Iraq Strategy Group,  
11          which essentially was a Cabinet Office convened group.  
12          There was -- there were weekly meetings in which MoD  
13          convened to discuss not just military aspects of Iraq  
14          but the security/political/economic nexus.

15          I think the way -- the way I felt about our role,  
16          the Foreign Office's role in the two years -- my two  
17          years in the job -- was that we needed to think about  
18          the trajectory the longer-term trajectory, when we  
19          emerged from what was quite often a crisis management  
20          role in certainly 2006 and 2007, and, to a certain  
21          extent, it would be true in 2008, when we emerged from  
22          that, to think about how we managed the longer-term  
23          relationship with Iraq.

24          That was something that didn't necessarily impinge  
25          on the day-to-day policy handling of what was happening

1           inside Iraq, but it was something that would impinge on  
2           the way we constructed our own footprint in Iraq and the  
3           way we thought about our own interests in Iraq and how  
4           we pursued those beyond 2008, was the way I thought  
5           about it in 2007.

6           So we were trying to think in the longer-term sense  
7           about where we went and when we emerged from this sort  
8           of slightly foggy environment in which we were in when  
9           I took over in 2007, how we then managed our relations.

10          Frank, I don't know if you want to ...?

11   MR FRANK BAKER: I think to go back to the first part of the  
12          question, Sir Roderic, my experience, certainly  
13          from September 2007, was that this was very much cross-  
14          Whitehall driven.

15   SIR RODERIC LYNE: Can I just come back on that first part?  
16          Because I know Sir Martin Gilbert will want to explore  
17          this question of strategy with you a bit more, but just  
18          in terms of process, you were obviously reporting  
19          upwards in the normal way to the Foreign Secretary, and  
20          the Embassy in Baghdad was getting its instructions from  
21          the Foreign Office, but to what extent in this period  
22          were you also reporting across the street to officials  
23          in Number 10 and to what extent were you and the Embassy  
24          in Baghdad being steered from Number 10 directly?

25   MR JOHN JENKINS: We were reporting into the Cabinet Office

1           because the Cabinet Office was convening the Iraq  
2           Strategy Group and the Iraq Strategy Group --

3   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   It was headed by the Prime Minister's  
4           foreign affairs adviser.

5   MR JOHN JENKINS:   Indeed.  That looked at Iraq strategy in  
6           the round, and I think we were all concerned at the time  
7           to make sure we were joined up on this, and I think the  
8           same went for the Embassy in Baghdad and our missions in  
9           Basra --

10  SIR RODERIC LYNE:   Were they still ringing up the Embassy in  
11           Baghdad frequently?

12  MR JOHN JENKINS:   Were who ringing?

13  SIR RODERIC LYNE:   Number 10, the Cabinet Office?

14  MR JOHN JENKINS:   My impression was they were ringing them  
15           up much less frequently, but we were -- they were  
16           certainly ringing them up and we were ringing them up.  
17           Me not so much; Frank much more.

18  SIR RODERIC LYNE:   Thank you.  Martin?

19  SIR MARTIN GILBERT:  Christopher Prentice talked on  
20           Wednesday about what he called the complexity and  
21           difficulties of Iraqi politics.  I wonder if you could  
22           perhaps elaborate on his comments, particularly in the  
23           context of the UK's objectives and aspirations for Iraq,  
24           which, of course, are very much part of our remit as an  
25           Inquiry.  For example, the relative influence and power

1 of Sunni, Shia and Kurds in the Iraq at the time of our  
2 military departure.

3 MR JOHN JENKINS: From 2007 onwards?

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Yes.

5 MR JOHN JENKINS: I mean, the fundamental problem we all  
6 had, I think, in 2007, remained security.

7 I think, you know, it was -- one of the reasons for  
8 General Petraeus's surge was a perception, which turned  
9 out to be right, that the absolute pre-condition for any  
10 sort of evolution of any sort of politics, democratic  
11 politics, in a state like Iraq is the provision of basic  
12 security.

13 So I think in terms of the way that the dynamics  
14 between the various groups in Iraq -- and these are  
15 ethnic, they are religious, they are sectarian, they are  
16 all sorts of things -- worked, you could observe the  
17 tensions, you could observe historic tensions and  
18 historic frictions between the various groups.

19 On a day-to-day basis, some of these were being  
20 played out in terms of violence between the various  
21 groups and, indeed, within certain of these groups,  
22 intra-Shia violence, for example. But it was difficult  
23 in those circumstances to have a sort of clear view of  
24 how the politics were working from day-to-day and how  
25 they would evolve, and we saw this particularly,

1 I suppose, most visibly with the Sadrists. It always  
2 happened with Sadrists. I think the original Sadrist  
3 ceasefire, looking back, was clearly one of the turning  
4 points, because, once the Sadrists decided they weren't,  
5 basically, as a group as a whole, going to pursue the  
6 path of violent confrontation, then they created some  
7 sort of space for the emergence of a political  
8 accommodation.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry to interrupt. Slow down, please.

10 MR JOHN JENKINS: I'm sorry, yes.

11 I think it became clearer, as we went through into  
12 2008 and then into 2009, especially with -- after Charge  
13 of the Knights and then with provincial elections, that  
14 there was -- that there was -- a much more visibly  
15 emergent political trajectory in Iraq, and you can see  
16 this happening in terms of the way the groups related to  
17 each other, the various groups related to each other,  
18 and the negotiations they engaged in. They engaged in  
19 negotiations on the various bits of legislation, but  
20 before the Council of Representatives they engaged in  
21 negotiations, for example, on the various military  
22 agreements that were being pursued by the United States  
23 and by us. That, in a way, is the most encouraging  
24 trend.

25 Now, do I think these are still sensitive and

1 occasionally tense relations? Yes, I do. But I think  
2 that what has happened since 2007 is that it has become  
3 possible to envisage a future for Iraq where there is  
4 a more or less stable democratic and more responsive  
5 system in place, which allows the various groups which  
6 will remain, I think, very conscious of their individual  
7 identities, to negotiate their difficulties or their  
8 disagreements in a political rather than a violent  
9 manner, if you see what I mean, if that answers your  
10 question.

11 I don't know, Frank, if you wanted to --

12 MR FRANK BAKER: I would absolutely agree with that.

13 I think one can't overstate how the improvement in the  
14 security situation throughout 2007 for a number of  
15 factors, which John has alluded to, to which I would  
16 add, and I think Christopher talked about this, there  
17 was the surge, there was, of course, the Sons of Iraq,  
18 the Sunni groups coming back into the fold, there was  
19 the agreement between the ISCI and the Sadrists, the  
20 two big Shia groupings after the terrible events in  
21 Karbala, in August 2007, to have their ceasefire.

22 There was also, I think, an improvement throughout  
23 this period, although it really only became noticeable  
24 in 2008, in the quality of the Iraqi security forces,  
25 and I think there was also -- and this is on personal

1 experience of having visited Iraq on many occasions,  
2 I have been around much of the country -- I think that  
3 also the Iraqi people reached that point where they were  
4 just sick of the violence and they had had enough of the  
5 violence, and, because of the emerging political sense  
6 in Iraq, I think that message got through loud and clear  
7 to the Iraqi leadership and the Iraqi politicians, and  
8 I think that security improvement then paved the way  
9 actually for quite an interesting political development  
10 in 2008.

11 If you go back to February 2008, in the Council of  
12 Representatives, you had the passage of three very  
13 important pieces of legislation. You had the  
14 Accountability and Justice Law, which was essentially  
15 undoing some of the de-Ba'athification stuff that had  
16 been done in 2003. You had the law for the provincial  
17 elections, which subsequently were to take place  
18 in January 2009 and, critically, you had the Provincial  
19 Powers Law.

20 Now, I say critically because one of the big  
21 question marks, I think, previous to that, had been what  
22 kind of relationship was the central government in Iraq  
23 going to have with the provinces, and the Provincial  
24 Powers Law, which went through the Council of  
25 Representatives laid a lot of that out. It didn't

1 answer all of the questions, but it certainly laid out  
2 a framework and it also gave an opportunity to the  
3 provinces, if they wished to take it, which none of them  
4 have, to actually set themselves up as superprovinces  
5 within a federal Iraq. That has not happened.

6 I think the critical point about that was that those  
7 three pieces of legislation had been talked about for  
8 18 months previously, but, because of the security  
9 problems, there is a distrust between the various  
10 elements. They couldn't come to any kind of overall  
11 agreement on those three pieces of legislation.

12 By February 2008, they were able to do so.

13 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How effective was the government in  
14 being able to redress the economic balance with regard  
15 to Saddam's having, for example, deprived the south of  
16 so many resources?

17 MR FRANK BAKER: I think, again, by 2008, I think things  
18 were improving. I think the fundamental problem that  
19 Iraq faced -- you are right to point out -- was that the  
20 legacy, of course, of Saddam -- many witnesses have  
21 talked about this, I won't go over the same ground --  
22 but if you look at the Iraqi economy, it is so heavily  
23 reliant on hydrocarbons that, until they were able to  
24 rehabilitate the oil sector, there was not simply the  
25 money around to be able to begin the real work of

1 rehabilitation of the economy, or, indeed, of the  
2 regeneration of the economy or of the services.

3 Yes, the international community poured a lot of  
4 money in, we know that, and that has been discussed  
5 previously, but fundamentally, for the Government of  
6 Iraq they needed the rehabilitation of the oil industry.

7 Now, that is still a work in progress and, frankly,  
8 that has not gone anything like as quickly or as far as  
9 I think Iraqi people would like. What helped in 2008,  
10 of course, was the huge increase in the oil price, which  
11 actually gave them a big budget surplus which they were  
12 able to begin to utilise to carry out some of these  
13 tasks, and I think that was reflected in many ways as  
14 the improvement in security and the gradual, very  
15 gradual, attempts to begin to improve the economy around  
16 Iraq, and, of course, wherever you go in Iraq, it is  
17 different. In the north of Iraq you have a thriving  
18 economy because they have had ten years longer to get to  
19 that position. In the south and in the centre it is  
20 a different story.

21 But I think that then was seen in the results of  
22 the January 2009 provincial elections, because, on that  
23 basis, I think Prime Minister Maliki's rule of law  
24 party, State of Law party, did well.

25 MR JOHN JENKINS: Can I add something? I think the whole

1 debate about the provincial status for the southern  
2 area, crystallised a lot of this sense within Iraq of  
3 the dangers of sectarianism, or the dangers of too great  
4 an emphasis on sectarianism. In the end, it didn't  
5 happen. I think it aroused, at the time, quite a lot of  
6 anxiety within Iraq, and perhaps even more anxiety  
7 outside Iraq amongst some of Iraq's Sunni neighbours,  
8 about the emergence of a sort of super-Shia province  
9 down in the south, which was essentially the way it was  
10 being framed. It didn't happen.

11 If you look at what happened in provincial  
12 elections, Prime Minister Maliki's party did very well  
13 on the back of the Charge of the Knights, on the back of  
14 a sense that he gave most Iraqis that then he was  
15 getting a grip of the security situation, and actually  
16 quite a few of the secular parties did well.

17 So the voting patterns themselves reflected a much  
18 more fluid, I thought -- I still think -- a sense of  
19 Iraqi identity. I don't think that's irreversible, but  
20 if you look at what is happening now with the line-up  
21 for the national elections in March, there is clearly  
22 a sense that people -- the politicians in Iraq wanted to  
23 try and cover all the bases in their different lists.  
24 So you have got Shia with Sunni with Kurd. The ideal  
25 line-up seems to be a mixture of everything.

1           I think on the economic side clearly it is a work in  
2           progress and the [unclear], I think, still has a long  
3           way to go, but getting the hydrocarbon sector sorted out  
4           and getting international oil companies in as fast  
5           possible is going to be massively important.

6   SIR MARTIN GILBERT: It is a work in progress with economic  
7           problems, not with --

8   MR JOHN JENKINS: I think it is not just the objective facts,  
9           it is also what people think is happening and it is  
10          their aspirations. I think people's expectations of  
11          what the government in Baghdad and the provincial -- the  
12          various local governments can deliver went up very  
13          steeply after 2003.

14          You see it with the massive influx of consumer  
15          goods, cars, televisions, you know, satellite stuff,  
16          into Iraq over the last five years, absolutely huge.  
17          People have an aspiration for a better life, but, of  
18          course, the more they get of these things, the more they  
19          need electricity, which can't be delivered, and so  
20          forth. So there is sometimes a mismatch between the way  
21          people think their lives should be going and the way  
22          that, actually, their lives are going, even if there is  
23          an improvement.

24   SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Also going back to pre-2003, how do you  
25          assess from 2007 the achievements of the Maliki

1 government and generally of the constitutional framework  
2 of Iraq with regard to human rights and the rule of law?

3 MR JOHN JENKINS: I think on the rule of law I'm quite  
4 impressed actually, and I say this both with my previous  
5 hat and my current hat on as well.

6 If you go to Baghdad, you can actually tune in on  
7 the television to the trials, some of the trials of  
8 people from the Saddam era being transmitted live. Now,  
9 there are normally two or three judges, they will show  
10 the lead judge, but they won't show the junior judges  
11 and they wouldn't necessarily show the prosecuting  
12 counsel or the defence counsel, but the fact they are  
13 doing this in such an open way actually is unique in the  
14 Middle East. There is nowhere else I can think of where  
15 this happens, and the judges I have met in Baghdad are,  
16 I think, good and courageous people. You have to be  
17 pretty courageous, I think, to allow yourself to be  
18 photographed, to be put on television conducting these  
19 trials.

20 Certainly I think the sort of things that Maliki's  
21 government has been saying about the rule of law -- he  
22 calls himself and his party -- it is called the State of  
23 Law -- suggests that whatever the effectiveness of the  
24 imposition of the rule of law might be at any given time  
25 in Iraq, he recognises that this is what people want,

1 and I think that's actually an important factor.

2 There is also -- there is an essentially an  
3 anti-corruption commission, a national anti-corruption  
4 commission in Baghdad, which was set up, I think, under  
5 the CPA but is now an Iraqi institution and is very well  
6 regarded. Corruption remains an issue in Iraq, but  
7 I think the fact that there is such a visible  
8 institution which is actually taking steps to deal with  
9 some of the allegations on corruption, is pretty good.

10 It is a work in progress, but what I have seen so  
11 far gives me some cause for optimism, I think. Frank?

12 MR FRANK BAKER: Perhaps I could add I think I would be  
13 perhaps slightly less optimistic. I think that  
14 certainly it has come a long way since 2002 and I now  
15 have personal experience of Iraq in the 1990s,  
16 admittedly in the north after the coalition had ejected  
17 Saddam, but, nevertheless, from the stories that one  
18 hears from Iraqi Kurds who now remember those periods,  
19 clearly the situation in Iraq is now hugely better. But  
20 I do think there are still a number of -- there is  
21 a very long way to go, and I think one of the  
22 fundamental problems in Iraq at the moment is actually  
23 the policing. In a sense, it goes back to -- when you  
24 have a system that is based on confession, then it is --  
25 it can be extremely difficult, particularly in that type

1 of society, to ensure that human rights and the rule of  
2 law are consistently adhered to.

3 One of the big projects that we have been doing over  
4 the last few years, through the conflict prevention  
5 budget, the Whitehall conflict prevention budget, is  
6 actually introducing the concept of forensic evidence  
7 into Iraqi -- the Iraqi police force, and, indeed, the  
8 Iraqi courts and judiciary, in an attempt to try and  
9 move them away from this confession basis.

10 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Is that having success?

11 MR FRANK BAKER: It appears to be. It is difficult to  
12 really know, but, anecdotally, I would say yes. There  
13 was one story that I heard recently, which was where  
14 a young girl was killed, was found, and the family  
15 reported that she had been killed by an intruder. The  
16 police went along and, carrying out the forensic tests  
17 that they had been taught to do by the British police,  
18 they were actually able to prove that she had been  
19 killed in an honour killing by her family.

20 So I think, in that sense, it is -- this is  
21 anecdotal, I accept, but I think it is beginning to make  
22 a difference, but there is a very, very long way to go  
23 and I really don't think we should be overstating it at  
24 this stage.

25 MR JOHN JENKINS: I think the forensic work is very

1 important. It is not just us that have been doing this,  
2 I think the Americans have been doing a lot on policing  
3 down in Al Basra, and the Kurds themselves had a head  
4 start on this anyway, because of the head start they had  
5 in the 1990s. I think -- and there are forensics on the  
6 forensics side, there are forensic laboratories  
7 functioning forensic laboratories - now set up around the  
8 country, some of them with our help.

9 I think the challenge will be sustaining this over  
10 the long-term with -- when policing advisers and so  
11 forth leave, because that will -- to a certain extent  
12 this is a sort of mindset thing.

13 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: A final question before I hand over to  
14 Sir Roderic Lyne, which takes us back, not just to 2003  
15 but really to 1991, and that relates to Kuwait and Iraqi  
16 relations to Kuwait and where these stand and, in  
17 particular, what role the UK has played in what the  
18 relations are today.

19 MR FRANK BAKER: Well, I think that clearly the bilateral  
20 relationship between Iraq and Kuwait will always be  
21 overshadowed by what happened in 1990. I think that is  
22 natural. The key issue now is for the Iraqis and the  
23 Kuwaitis to come to a long-term agreement within the  
24 bilateral relationship and that means acceptance by Iraq  
25 of the relevant Security Council resolutions, relating

1 to the border, and agreement between Iraq and Kuwait  
2 over the outstanding issues of compensation, and  
3 movement by Iraq, on which there has been some recently  
4 on the Kuwaiti missing. Those are the major factors  
5 there.

6 I think that we have seen over the last three or  
7 four years some small movement. The Kuwaitis have an  
8 Ambassador to Baghdad who has been in Baghdad -- he isn't  
9 there permanently but does visit -- on a regular basis, and  
10 there have been good bilateral contacts between the two  
11 sides.

12 The key now, I think, is for the international  
13 community, particularly the friends of Iraq and Kuwait,  
14 to sit down with the two sides and to try and help them  
15 to resolve these long-term outstanding issues, and  
16 I think that is something that we look forward to -- we  
17 are looking forward to trying to do in 2010, after the  
18 Iraqi elections have taken place.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: We heard yesterday from witnesses talking  
20 about this last period, how there had really been some  
21 very significant improvements in Iraq, obviously  
22 particularly in the south-east region, which we were  
23 discussing, and you have said, Mr Jenkins, that one has  
24 got to a state of I think what you described as a more  
25 or less stable and democratic situation, in which the

1 different groups are able to mediate their differences  
2 more by negotiation than by violence, as previously, and  
3 a situation in which political parties are beginning to  
4 operate on a less sectarian basis.

5 In terms of democratic norms, how far has Iraq got  
6 on the road to democracy, would you say?

7 MR JOHN JENKINS: Erm, that's a, "How long is a piece of  
8 string?" question.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: It would be if I said, "How long would it  
10 take to get there?" I'm asking how far it has got up to  
11 now.

12 MR JOHN JENKINS: I think given -- I mean, Iraq has never  
13 had -- has never had a democratic system in any way that  
14 we would understand. The modern Iraqi state was  
15 essentially set up as a patrimonial state governed by  
16 elites in their own interests, sustained latterly by  
17 oil. So this transition to a national democratic,  
18 accountable and responsive system is a hugely -- and in  
19 many ways it is unique in the region and it is unique  
20 partly because of the comprehensiveness of the  
21 democratisation agenda stemmed from the CPA activity,  
22 but has come through into what is happening now with the  
23 mergence of Iraq as a sovereign state.

24 It is also unique in the sense that this will be the  
25 first Arab state for a thousand years to have a majority

1 Shia government. So to a certain extent, they are --  
2 there is no map for this. There is a map for the sort  
3 of procedures. There is a map for the sort of  
4 institution, you can have at the centre. There is a map  
5 for the sort of elections you can conduct, but there  
6 isn't a map for how, in practice, this works in a state  
7 which has so many potential fissures, as Iraq does,  
8 between communal, inside communities, between -- the  
9 different bits of Iraq on the economic side and so  
10 forth.

11 Given that, I think that, where Iraq has come to, as  
12 we speak, is pretty remarkable. The provincial  
13 elections at the beginning of this year, the turnout was  
14 between 50 and 60 per cent, which is high: (a), it is  
15 a real figure, and (b), in terms of Middle East --  
16 probably in terms of this country as well, this is  
17 a remarkably high figure.

18 I think there was a risk with the national elections  
19 in March that the turnout will be lower. Because  
20 I think it is still fragile, because I think -- having  
21 the habit of mind which sees democracy as something you  
22 actually have to work at is difficult and is not common  
23 at all in the Middle East.

24 But I think this -- the way that politics has  
25 emerged as an alternative to the violent settling of

1 disputes seems to be something that most Iraqis actually  
2 want. I think one of the turning points, one of the  
3 key -- if you can pinpoint what changed when was when  
4 Ayatollah Al-Sistani essentially said to people, "Vote.  
5 It is important that you vote".

6 I think one of the lessons that the Shia in  
7 particular drew from what happened in the 1920s in Iraq  
8 is that they didn't actually participate in the process  
9 of conducting a modern state with the British mandated  
10 authority at the time. They were determined not to  
11 repeat this mistake and they concluded that, as the  
12 majority community in Iraq, it was, and is, in their  
13 interests to have a system that reflects their weight of  
14 numbers in the allocation of power at the centre.

15 They also know that they need to bring along the  
16 other communities with them, the Sunnis and the Kurds.  
17 They know, I think -- or at least a substantial portion  
18 of them know -- that they can't do this by violence.  
19 You cannot impose this on the Sunnis.

20 I think that in itself is a guarantee of the  
21 sustainability of some sort of democratic system in  
22 Iraq. How exactly over the next ten years this system  
23 will evolve and what sort of democratic system or  
24 accountable responsive system we will be looking at in  
25 ten years' time, I still find it quite difficult to

1 predict, but they do have the institutions. They have  
2 the Council of Representatives, which is actually  
3 functioning pretty well, it passes laws, it has debates,  
4 but it doesn't have endless debates without passing  
5 anything which happens elsewhere in the Middle East  
6 where you have similar assemblies. It is not a done  
7 deal. It is not a done deal.

8 If you look at the history of Iraq and the history  
9 of military coups in Iraq, you have to think that is  
10 always a possibility, a real possibility, in the future,  
11 but I think where we are at the moment is -- it is much  
12 better than we thought it was going to be back in  
13 2004/2005.

14 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Yes. I mean, obviously, if one goes back  
15 to early 2003, one of the stated objectives of the  
16 leaders of the coalition was that, after Saddam Hussein,  
17 there should be democracy in Iraq, and there were people  
18 who argued, for precisely the reasons you have given,  
19 that this is a singular experience, unique experience in  
20 the Middle East and in Iraq's history, that this was  
21 simply not realistic.

22 But what you call the democratisation agenda which  
23 is now being pursued, but with, as you say, some way to  
24 go and no certainty as to success, this is now  
25 a realistic agenda?

1 MR JOHN JENKINS: Yes, I believe it is.

2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: In the circumstances of today?

3 MR JOHN JENKINS: I believe it is.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Can I ask you about de-Ba'athification?

5 Yesterday, General White-Spunner was telling us how some  
6 of the Iraqi generals and commanders he was working with  
7 were people who had, as it were, been de-Ba'athified and  
8 then had come back into service.

9 To what extent over the last two years/three years,  
10 since 2009, has there been a corrective to perhaps  
11 excessive de-Ba'athification under the CPA in 2003? Are  
12 people being rehabilitated on the basis of their  
13 abilities and merits now?

14 MR JOHN JENKINS: I'm told -- to be quite honest, I don't  
15 know how far this is true, but I am told that many of  
16 the senior officers, the generals in particular, in the  
17 Iraqi armed forces had -- have some sort of Ba'athi  
18 background or background in the Saddam armed forces.  
19 Now, of course, it is true that under Saddam, if you  
20 want to get on in the armed forces, you need to be  
21 a member of Ba'ath Party.

22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Not just in the armed forces?

23 MR JOHN JENKINS: Not just in the armed forces. How far  
24 that is being done on the basis of merit, I don't know,  
25 is the answer to that. The people who deal most closely

1 with the Iraqi security forces, which are the Americans,  
2 say that the standard -- the competence of the Iraqi  
3 armed forces is going up. They are getting better and  
4 there are elements within the security forces who are  
5 very good; elements who aren't so good, but elements who  
6 are good.

7 So on that basis, I would say that actually the  
8 professionalism of the armed forces is going up, and, to  
9 a certain extent, this must partly be because they have  
10 retained enough professional expertise and experience  
11 within their ranks to make that possible.

12 You will also hear from people who say that this is  
13 a risk. It remains a risk by having people who have  
14 a Ba'athi background within the armed forces at senior  
15 levels, and I think one of the things we have seen since  
16 the -- the most recent spike in bombings in Baghdad,  
17 which started in August, have been renewed accusations  
18 that elements -- unreconciled elements of the  
19 Ba'ath Party, based externally, are deeply involved in  
20 these attacks and retain the will and the aspiration to  
21 re-emerge as a political force, as a sort of politically  
22 irredentist, a political force within Iraq.

23 I find it very difficult to judge the force of those  
24 claims, but the conclusion I draw is that there is  
25 clearly a balance to be drawn between using professional

1 competence and experience of former army officers under  
2 Saddam, to provide the backbone of the modern Iraqi  
3 security forces and dealing with the suspicions and  
4 fears of others, that this is the reintroduction of an  
5 element of the Ba'ath Party, unreconcilable elements of  
6 the Ba'ath party, back into the security forces.

7 I don't know how that balance is going to be struck.  
8 I don't know exactly what the balance at the moment is,  
9 what the reality of this is, but it is clearly  
10 a political issue inside Iraq and will remain  
11 a political issue beyond the national elections  
12 in March, I suspect.

13 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Going beyond the military, we heard from  
14 earlier witnesses how a lot of teachers, doctors, civil  
15 servants, competent professionals, who had to be in the  
16 Ba'ath Party in order to do what they did, were  
17 excluded. Do you feel that that has now been corrected?

18 MR JOHN JENKINS: I do not have a real sense of that.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Do you want to comment on that?

20 MR FRANK BAKER: If I could. I would comment more about  
21 government employees in Ministries across Baghdad where  
22 I think it is certainly the case that a large number of  
23 Sunnis, and, therefore, by definition, former  
24 Ba'ath Party members, are now being employed -- have  
25 been employed, in fact, for the last two or three years.

1           If you look at, for example, the Ministry of Water,  
2           where a lot of them are technocrats, but the Minister  
3           for Water had made an effort to bring back a lot of the  
4           previous Ba'athist experience in order to try to get the  
5           Ministry up and running properly back in about  
6           2007/2008. So I think the indications there are, yes,  
7           they have done so.

8           I think, if I may, just to revert to your previous  
9           question about the democratisation, I think these two  
10          are related because one of the big changes we have seen  
11          since 2005 has actually been the re-emergence of the  
12          Sunnis as a political force in Iraq, with the Sunnis  
13          having essentially taken their toys out the pram and  
14          walked awayback in 2004, not actually partaking in  
15          the 2005 provincial elections, not really being a part  
16          of the 2005 national elections, and, in fact, what we  
17          saw in 2009 was that they played a full part in that and  
18          they are going to play a full part in the national  
19          elections scheduled for March this year.

20          In that sense, we are seeing the Sunnis now coming  
21          back and trying to play a full role -- a large part of  
22          the Sunni movement. There are still -- as John has  
23          alluded to, there are still irreconcilables out there.

24   SIR RODERIC LYNE: I would like to come back in a few  
25          minutes to the irreconcilables and the problems of

1 security. Before I do that, I wonder if I could just  
2 turn briefly to something we were discussing earlier  
3 this morning with Peter Watkins, which is the  
4 negotiations on the status of forces agreement, which  
5 subsequently became a MOU, to provide for continuing  
6 British military involvement with Iraq after the  
7 withdrawal of our forces?

8 What was the view -- we have heard what the view was  
9 in the Ministry of Defence. Did the Foreign Office have  
10 a view, looking at the broad strategy for policy towards  
11 Iraq after withdrawal on the importance of a military  
12 component to that policy?

13 MR JOHN JENKINS: I think we were clear from the beginning  
14 of our joint time in MENAD that a substantial defence  
15 relationship with Iraq was an important component of the  
16 wider bilateral strategy towards Iraq. How exactly that  
17 relationship was going to be constituted and how we got  
18 there from where we were in September 2007 was a -- was  
19 partly a process issue and it was partly an issue of  
20 what the market would bear.

21 The details -- I mean, the detailed negotiation --  
22 the detailed -- the policy formation on the drawdown of  
23 forces in Iraq and the negotiation of the -- a defence  
24 agreement, were matters for the MoD, principally,  
25 assisted, as Peter said this morning, by the embassy in

1 Baghdad. But we were clear in the beginning that we  
2 wanted to build on the relationships that we had  
3 established from 2003 onwards with Iraqi -- the Iraqi  
4 security forces, and, indeed, with Iraqi -- successive  
5 Iraqi governments, to establish a defence relationship  
6 that met the needs of both sides, which is what I mean  
7 by what the market will bear, and there was a process of  
8 exploration of that, and the end, where we have come  
9 out, I think, is probably quite a good place.

10 What we have at the moment provides us with a  
11 platform, not just for the next year or the next two  
12 years, but potentially for the next ten years.

13 Frank, do you want to come in?

14 MR FRANK BAKER: I agree with that. I think we always saw  
15 the defence relationship as an important part of the  
16 wider bilateral relationship, but I think we agreed back  
17 in 2007, but possibly had been agreed before that,  
18 but -- that -- that up until then, in a sense it was the  
19 central part of the relationship with Iraq and we needed  
20 to get away from that and have it as an element of the  
21 wider bilateral relationship, as we do, of course, with  
22 many other countries around the world.

23 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Christopher Prentice told us that there  
24 were some very deep suspicions about what we were really  
25 after in this component. How did we handle that?

1 MR JOHN JENKINS: I think there were suspicions. I think --  
2 and, of course, Iraqis look at us, at the whole range of  
3 our activities in Iraq, in the context of the history of  
4 the 20th Century and the history of our relationship in  
5 the 20th Century, and they look back to 1932 from the  
6 establishment of the Iraqi state and the Anglo-Iraqi  
7 treaty and so forth, and they think that we served too  
8 much of our own interests in the formation of the modern  
9 Iraqi state, and this included our defence interests.

10 I think it was that sense, which is very strong  
11 among most Iraqis, and certainly in the political class,  
12 many of whom had fathers and grandfathers who fought  
13 against us in the 1920s, carries through into the way  
14 that the Iraqis look at us now.

15 I think there is -- it is one of the remarkable  
16 things in Iraq, that, at the same time, there is  
17 a certain amount of suspicion of the British, and  
18 I think we are one of the only countries, if not the  
19 only country, for whom the Iraqis have a specific  
20 nickname going back to the 1920s.

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Which is?

22 MR JOHN JENKINS: Abu Naji, meaning "Father of Naji".

23 SIR RODERIC LYNE: It is untranslatable?

24 MR JOHN JENKINS: It is untranslatable, but that is what  
25 they call us.

1 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Is it complimentary or not?

2 MR JOHN JENKINS: It depends on the context and it depends  
3 on who is saying it to you. People find it quite funny.  
4 It is wry, I think. A slightly backhanded compliment.

5 But combined with this sort of suspicion that the  
6 British are these nasty, cunning operators, who never  
7 quite tell you exactly what they think and what they  
8 mean, there is also a sense of affection, I guess  
9 affection -- "affection" is not quite the right word,  
10 but a sort of sense of compulsive affection for the  
11 British.

12 You find this particularly, I think, with a lot of  
13 Iraqi military personnel, many of whom, if they are old  
14 enough, were trained by us in the 1960s and 1970s and  
15 whose army, police forces essentially, were structured  
16 along British lines.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: When you look at the tortuous course of  
18 those negotiations that Peter Watkins described to us,  
19 was it clear to you, with the strategic overview that  
20 you had in the Foreign Office, as to whether the Iraqis  
21 really wanted us to stay militarily in the way we were  
22 proposing or didn't? Were we receiving mixed signals  
23 from them?

24 MR JOHN JENKINS: I think -- I mean my view of those  
25 protracted negotiations was that there was a process of

1        discovering what each side wanted, and that wasn't  
2        entirely clear at the beginning.

3            I think -- I think in the end, the fact we got an  
4        agreement in the end tells me that there was enough will  
5        at a high enough level in the Iraqi system for this  
6        agreement to be concluded and for this agreement to be  
7        seen as serving Iraqi interests as well as British  
8        interests to get it done. I think there were competing  
9        roles in the Iraqi system. I think it is true, as Peter  
10       said this morning, that the Iraqi military in particular  
11       saw the value of this relationship and wanted us to have  
12       an agreement and, within the Iraqi military, the  
13       Iraqi navy in particular was very strong for this.

14           I think there were political difficulties with this,  
15        both inside the Iraqi Government and inside the COR, the  
16        Council of Representatives, which is always difficult  
17        for any Middle Eastern government to negotiate.

18        SIR RODERIC LYNE: We have heard from a number of witnesses  
19        how much gratitude was expressed, particularly in the  
20        last stages, to us by Iraqis in Basra in particular for  
21        what we had done and the sacrifices we had made. It  
22        does seem paradoxical that, after huge sacrifices, in  
23        terms of lives and huge expenditure of resources made  
24        from 2003 onwards, that we were left, in the end, having  
25        to plead for a very small agreement.

1 MR JOHN JENKINS: I think fundamentally there was, and is,  
2 acute sensitivity inside Iraq about sovereignty, and  
3 this was an Iraqi Government, an Iraqi system, which had  
4 emerged out of great turmoil. It needed -- partly to  
5 establish its own credentials and partly because they  
6 felt this was a question of self-respect, I think many  
7 senior Iraqi politicians felt that they needed to show  
8 that agreements -- any agreement concluded was concluded  
9 on satisfactory -- on terms satisfactory to Iraq.

10 I think there was an element of the historic  
11 suspicion of British motives in all of this, but, in the  
12 end, that was outweighed by eventual -- the eventual  
13 achievement of clarity on the interests, the national  
14 Iraqi interests that this sort of thing served.

15 I think the same actually probably happened with the  
16 US Status Of Forces Agreement, which took longer to  
17 achieve than we all thought.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But where the prize for them was  
19 obviously much greater in terms of what they were going  
20 to receive from it, by a factor of many.

21 MR JOHN JENKINS: Indeed.

22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Yes. How did they view our decision to  
23 withdraw at the time that we decided to withdraw? Was  
24 that a positive or a negative for them?

25 MR JOHN JENKINS: You mean the time when --

1 SIR RODERIC LYNE: When we announced that we were -- yes,  
2 and the trajectory and the final withdrawal. What was  
3 the impact of that on the relationship?

4 MR JOHN JENKINS: I mean, this was part of the same -- it  
5 was part of the same sort of -- the same sort of  
6 context. Maliki, I think, was quite clear that he  
7 wanted -- that he wanted the Iraqi security forces to be  
8 able to assume responsibility for delivering security  
9 directly to Iraqis, as soon as possible. So the issue  
10 then became whether -- the competence, the ability of  
11 the Iraqi security forces to do this in given provinces  
12 or given areas, given governments, by September 2007.

13 Something like, I think, half of the governments  
14 have been handed over to Iraqi provincial control. So  
15 there was already this process in train. We had handed  
16 over three of the four in the south. The last one was  
17 Basra. Basra was, of course, particularly significant  
18 because of the size of the city and of the -- the size  
19 of the city and its economic importance in terms both of  
20 oil production and of oil exports.

21 This was also overlaid by political rivalries  
22 between the various parties and factions in the city and  
23 between Basra and Baghdad. So it was quite  
24 a complicated situation, but I never thought that Maliki  
25 himself, or actually any senior Iraqi politicians,

1 thought that the idea of our withdrawal, British  
2 withdrawal, was a bad thing or unwise.

3 There was an issue about timing and there were  
4 various timings proposed for the handover of Basra to  
5 provincial Iraqi control, which eventually happened on  
6 16 December, but that only happened because Maliki  
7 agreed to it. In the end, he agreed to it because he  
8 was satisfied that the Iraqi security forces could  
9 actually perform the jobs that they were supposed to do.

10 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So the issue was that he thought we were  
11 handing over too soon?

12 MR JOHN JENKINS: He wanted to be sure on the basis of what  
13 he was being told by his professional advisers and,  
14 indeed, the advice he was receiving from the MNF  
15 command, that we all thought that the Iraqis could do  
16 the job.

17 Now, in the end, the difference between the date at  
18 which we originally envisaged for the handover of Basra  
19 to Iraqi control and the actual handover, it was  
20 a matter of a month, two months. So it wasn't actually  
21 that long. I think it was more a question of assurance,  
22 of having a sort of level of assurance, Maliki having  
23 a level of assurance and, indeed, MNFI having  
24 a satisfactory level of assurance that the Iraqi  
25 security forces, with the military and the police, could

1 do the jobs assigned to them in Baghdad, and they got  
2 that in the end.

3 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Was the pressure to hand over sooner  
4 being driven from London? Was there a great desire in  
5 London to get this done as soon as possible?

6 MR JOHN JENKINS: We were already on a downward trajectory  
7 in terms of troop levels. There was certainly a lot of  
8 discussion in London about how this would be achieved  
9 and what the timeline would be. But equally, I think --

10 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Was this politically-driven or was it the  
11 military wanting to get their forces out as soon as they  
12 could?

13 MR JOHN JENKINS: I think it was a mixture of things. Some  
14 of it was to do with what was happening inside Iraq  
15 itself and where we thought Iraq security was going. In  
16 2007, of course, before the surge, at the beginning of  
17 2007 -- 2006 and the beginning of 2007, before the  
18 surge -- Iraqi security looked a lot worse than it did  
19 by the end of 2007, so the fact there had been the surge  
20 and the fact that Iraqi security, on the whole, was  
21 improving, it was still pretty bad in parts of Iraq, but  
22 the trend line was pretty clear, meant that it became  
23 possible to envisage the sort of downward glide path  
24 that we followed, but I think we were clear -- we were  
25 all clear, all along, that this needed to be done in

1 such a way as to preserve good order in Basra.

2 Frank, do you want to ...?

3 MR FRANK BAKER: I think that last point is the critical  
4 point. We were all agreed that we had to have a glide  
5 path, but that glide path had to ensure that we  
6 protected what would be our legacy in Basra.

7 I think that was also something that was shared, not  
8 from a legacy perspective, but from a security  
9 perspective by the Government of Iraq and by Maliki and  
10 his close advisers.

11 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I would like to ask you about the  
12 meeting in December 2008 of the NSID, where the  
13 Foreign Office was asked, and it was agreed that the  
14 Foreign Office would seek agreement on a new, long-term  
15 strategy with regard to Iraq once the military phase was  
16 over.

17 Could you explain to us how the strategy was agreed  
18 between the departments and essentially what the  
19 strategy was?

20 MR FRANK BAKER: The second part of the question first. We  
21 recognised early on the need to have -- I think, up  
22 until 2007, because of the security situation and  
23 because of other factors there had been a -- quite  
24 understandably, we had been reacting to specific events  
25 on a very short-term basis and we recognised early on

1 that, through the fog of what was occurring in Iraq and  
2 because the security situation meant that we weren't  
3 able to -- our people on the ground weren't able to get  
4 out as much as we would want them to be able to do, so  
5 there were vast areas in our knowledge that, frankly,  
6 were missing, there were gaps in our knowledge around  
7 the country, but through this fog we really wanted to  
8 lay out the thinking of where we wanted Iraq to be in  
9 the next five to ten years.

10 This was the -- our initial thinking and then how --  
11 what we could do to try and help Iraq get to that  
12 position. Of course, that -- there were two strands to  
13 that really. There was what we hoped -- hoped Iraq  
14 would look like in the medium to long-term and there was  
15 the issue then of the bilateral relationship and how we  
16 wanted that to move forward, and how -- where the two  
17 crossed over, how we could help Iraq, through the terms  
18 of the bilateral relationship, move to the position that  
19 we wanted Iraq to be in.

20 Frankly, we discovered very early on that five to  
21 ten years at that stage was far too ambitious, and so we  
22 dropped back to a position of three to five years.  
23 We took this forward essentially as an Iraq Strategy  
24 Group/Cabinet Office-led process, including all  
25 Whitehall departments that were interested, the

1 Foreign Office, the MoD and DFID, of course, but also  
2 UKTI, the Treasury and others.

3 I think most of the writing was carried out by  
4 myself, John Jenkins, and the people who worked for us  
5 in the Foreign Office, but with -- with considerable  
6 input from, particularly, the Ministry of Defence and  
7 the Department for International Development.

8 This work began at the end of -- the last quarter of  
9 2007. I think what we discovered in those early days  
10 was that it was actually very difficult to have  
11 a sensible -- even a short-to-medium-term strategy  
12 without clarification on what the glide path for our  
13 combat forces was going to be, and so we did a lot of  
14 the preparatory work at the end of 2007 and the  
15 beginning of 2008, but then, as we were then getting  
16 into the discussion about glide path, we then parked the  
17 work for about three or four months.

18 Following the events in Basra, the Charge of the  
19 Knights, at the end of March, the beginning  
20 of April 2008 -- and I think a number of previous  
21 witnesses have testified to this; Christopher Prentice  
22 and Nigel Haywood among them, and Peter Watkins this  
23 morning -- when saying that, in many ways, actually what  
24 came out of the Charge of the Knights made that glide  
25 path easier for us to see.

1           We then returned to the work on the strategy in the  
2 middle of 2008 and we spent most of the autumn of 2008  
3 finalising it, and, in fact, the document that went to  
4 NSID in December I think actually covered the strategy  
5 which had been agreed around Whitehall and had been  
6 agreed at high level meetings chaired by the Foreign  
7 Secretary, actually, in which we had discussed the final  
8 version of the strategy which was then put out for  
9 formal agreement to NSID.

10 MR JOHN JENKINS: Can I just add it was clear to me from  
11 quite an early stage that it was going to be very  
12 difficult to produce a sensible strategy until you had  
13 an assurance on security in Iraq. Unless you had --  
14 unless you knew this place was going to be stable in  
15 some sense, it was impossible to predict what sort of  
16 bilateral relationship you could have with it.

17           So in a sense, the strategy marched along with what  
18 was happening in Iraq and it became progressively easier  
19 to think through where we were going to be in five  
20 years' time as the security situation itself seemed to  
21 emerge more clearly as something that the  
22 Iraqi Government, with the assistance of MNF, the  
23 Americans in particular, were getting to grips with.  
24 So it is one of the reasons I think it took such a long  
25 time to produce, because you could have a set of

1 aspirations, but you couldn't necessarily map it on  
2 to -- on to a credible vision of the future until you  
3 had more assurance on security.

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Where did those aspirations stand with  
5 regard to our relationship with Iraq and the region and  
6 our perception of Iraq as an important factor in the  
7 region?

8 MR JOHN JENKINS: Iraq is a fundamental player in the  
9 Middle East, partly because of its position, partly of  
10 its economic -- potential economic power, partly because  
11 of the very distinct nature of Iraq's confessional --  
12 politico-confessional make-up.

13 So on the assumption that a stable, sustainable and  
14 democratic Iraq would emerge from this, which became --  
15 which became a more credible assumption as we moved from  
16 2007 to 2008, our aspiration was to develop the sort of  
17 normalised, but distinctive, relationship with Iraq that  
18 we had never had really with an Iraqi state. In many  
19 ways, this would be a very distinctive relationship,  
20 bilateral relationship, for us in the Middle East as  
21 a whole.

22 We tried to capture in the strategy a broad sense of  
23 what that might look like. So we identified the sort of  
24 interests we had in Iraq as a force for stability in the  
25 Gulf, as a force for economic development more widely in

1 the region and, as a -- in some sense, a democratic or  
2 a governmental -- a model of governance, a potential  
3 model of governance, new governance in the Middle East.  
4 I think those aspirations remain. I think it remains  
5 where we are.

6 Clearly, how Iraq fits into the region -- you may  
7 ask questions about this -- is an important part of this  
8 because whatever relationship we have with Iraq, it is  
9 going to be a relationship that is dictated, not by us,  
10 but it actually is negotiated in some sense between us  
11 and an emergent and newly confident Iraq.

12 That's, I think, the sense of what the  
13 Prime Minister was talking about from 2008 onwards in  
14 terms of a transformation -- a transformed relationship  
15 with Iraq.

16 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I would like to look a little bit more  
18 closely at security, which was absolutely critical, as  
19 you have just said. Without security, one couldn't  
20 really plan for anything else. We have heard this from  
21 other witnesses, and earlier witnesses have really  
22 broken it down into different components: the Shia  
23 insurgency; the Sunni insurgency; the general  
24 competition for power and resources within Iraq, but  
25 also, of course, the element that linked up with

1 international terrorism, Al-Qaeda in Iraq, partly Iraqi  
2 national, partly external fighters coming in.

3 At the time that you both took up your positions, to  
4 what extent had Iraq become a magnet for international  
5 terrorism? What was the scale of that element of it  
6 there?

7 MR JOHN JENKINS: I came from Syria to my last job. So  
8 I had been looking at Iraq actually from across the  
9 border, which the Iraqis, and indeed many others,  
10 claimed was the most poorest and most toxic border, in  
11 terms of international terror and access for foreign  
12 fighters to Iraq.

13 My sense is that the highwater mark was under  
14 Zarqawi. Now, when Zarqawi was killed in early 2007,  
15 looking back, after that, the threat -- certainly the  
16 perception of the threat from foreign fighters inside  
17 Iraq declined. It is still there, but his tactics --  
18 his intensely brutal shock tactics had clearly  
19 alienated, not just many outside Iraq, but many inside  
20 Iraq as well, and I think that was -- when I look back  
21 and I think about how this all panned out, in many ways  
22 it was similar to what would -- it was analogous to what  
23 happened in Algeria in the 1990s and, indeed, in Egypt  
24 in 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998. You eventually have these  
25 sort of killing machines inside states which then

1 alienate host communities, and I think, in addition to  
2 that, the decision by the Iraqi Government to seek  
3 reconciliation and co-optation of Sunni groups was also  
4 a major factor, I don't think that would have been  
5 possible if they themselves hadn't been so alienated by  
6 the behaviour of Zarqawi and other Al-Qaeda in Iraq  
7 operatives.

8 I think there was still a threat. I think what we  
9 have seen, you know, the three bombing spikes  
10 in August, October and December, seemed to me to have  
11 a significant Al-Qaeda in Iraq element to them. There  
12 may be other elements, but that's the modus operandi,  
13 the targeting, the intent, all point, to me, to groups  
14 who want, not just to disrupt the political process so  
15 they can get a better deal for themselves, but disrupt  
16 the political process entirely, for nihilistic reasons.

17 So I think there were groups within Iraq who have  
18 retained the capacity and the will to stage  
19 spectacles, but I don't think this is at anything like  
20 the level it was in 2005 and 2006, when it was feeding  
21 off sectarian -- internecine sectarian conflict in Iraq,  
22 and I think in a sense, as the politics moves on, so  
23 does the threat diminish.

24 There is still -- there are still, I am sure,  
25 foreign fighters coming into Iraq, but at nothing like

1 the level they were coming in in 2005, 2006 and early  
2 2007.

3 SIR RODERIC LYNE: In terms of sort of numbers of attacks  
4 and estimated -- and obviously we are talking very much  
5 on what is in the public domain here -- numbers of  
6 fighters involved, can you give us a sort of -- some  
7 comparative feel for how it is now compared to how it  
8 was at the peak?

9 MR JOHN JENKINS: At the peak -- I'm relying on memory here.  
10 At the peak, we were talking about small hundreds coming  
11 across the border and now we are talking about tens.

12 MR FRANK BAKER: Yes, I think that's right, but I think  
13 actually, in a sense, that's misleading, because the  
14 peak, 2004/2005/2006 was as much about Al-Qaeda and  
15 foreign fighters utilising the local Sunni population as  
16 it was about the number of foreign fighters who were  
17 actually in theatre.

18 I think, as John has just said, the key -- the  
19 brutality of Al-Qaeda and the fact that -- of AQI and  
20 the fact that Iraq was historically a liberal state,  
21 secular state, did not -- the ideology of Al-Qaeda did  
22 not actually appeal to the vast majority of Iraq people.

23 It tactically suited the Sunni rejectionists in the  
24 immediate aftermath of 2003 to align themselves with  
25 AQI, but, by 2006, I think they recognised that,

1 actually, there was nothing in common. It no longer  
2 suited them to have that alliance. The Sons of Iraq  
3 operations that the Americans carried out, which were  
4 very effective, the Americans were only able to do so  
5 because, by that stage -- it was the Sunni tribal  
6 leaders who came to the Americans and who said,  
7 "Actually, we recognise that this Al-Qaeda beast is not  
8 for us and we want to co-operate with you to remove it  
9 from within our midst".

10 So I think the number of foreign fighters was  
11 certainly perhaps among the low hundreds in 2005 and  
12 2006. It is right down now to very, very few, certainly  
13 very few crossing the border now.

14 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So in this period 2003 to 2006, building  
15 up to the peak, you had Al-Qaeda essentially exploiting  
16 the situation in Iraq?

17 MR FRANK BAKER: Absolutely.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You had some hundreds coming in from  
19 outside and then recruiting more than hundreds from  
20 disaffected Sunnis who now, effectively, they have  
21 a much harder time with, because, as you say, they don't  
22 really share the ideology.

23 MR JOHN JENKINS: No, they don't want to be told what to do.  
24 They don't want to be told how to dress and what music  
25 not to listen to and how to treat their women and so

1       forth by these people coming from outside, and I think  
2       that was the clear lesson of Zarqawi.

3             You can't -- can I just add, you can't divorce this,  
4       of course, from the regional context, because it was  
5       clear, it is clear, that these foreign fighters coming  
6       across the border -- they weren't just coming across the  
7       Syrian border, I don't think -- were being sponsored by  
8       groups outside Iraq in the hope of turning Iraq into  
9       a long-term failed state. That didn't work. I think  
10      that enterprise has been defeated.

11            There is -- this doesn't mean that you won't get  
12      further bombings in Baghdad of the sort we've seen this  
13      year, I think we will, but I don't think it any longer  
14      has any sort of credible, achievable aim, even the  
15      achievable, nihilistic aim of creating failure, of  
16      creating chaos.

17            The Americans construct interesting -- they -- they  
18      have enormous amounts of data and they have had enormous  
19      amounts of data which they have been processing, both in  
20      terms of raw data on security incidents and in terms of  
21      polling data since 2003, and if you look at their graphs  
22      of the violence, of the incidence of violence across  
23      military targets, civilian targets, you know, the  
24      coalition and Iraqi targets, the peak was 2005. The  
25      peak was just after the assault on the great mosque at

1           Samarra. It then declines. We are now at a level  
2           where -- of security incidents of violence, crude  
3           violence in Iraq, which we last saw in 2003.

4           It has been a remarkable decline. Some of that  
5           is the surge, some of it is Charge of the Knights, but  
6           a lot of it was this emergence of the political and  
7           democratic process.

8   SIR RODERIC LYNE: The maturing political situation that is  
9           helping to alleviate that.

10           What does this mean in terms of the ability of  
11           British now to operate in Iraq, not just your Embassy,  
12           British business, British visitors of any kind. How  
13           much of a threat is there to them?

14   MR JOHN JENKINS: I think the threat is declining, but risks  
15           may be going up, because, although the threat may  
16           decline, the more we and others try to move out of  
17           Baghdad, just Basra and Erbil and get around the country  
18           and operate more normally, we will be more exposed than  
19           we are at the moment. I think this is something -- this  
20           is something I am acutely conscious of. It is something  
21           the international oil companies themselves are acutely  
22           conscious of. Shell and BP have both taken up residency  
23           for the moment in our Consulate General down in Basra,  
24           which is at the Basra airbase at the COB. They will  
25           move out from that at some point and they will need to

1           make their own security arrangements, which they will,  
2           but my sense is that they are confident they can do so.  
3           They will employ private security companies, I assume.  
4   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   Just to disentangle "COB"...

5   MR JOHN JENKINS:    It is the contingency operating base.  
6   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   It is the contingency operating base, and  
7           it is now led by the Americans?

8   MR JOHN JENKINS:    It is basically an American base with our  
9           Consulate General implanted.

10   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   But no British forces there, other than  
11           security personnel?

12   MR JOHN JENKINS:    There are British military officers there  
13           from time to time, because they come up from Umm Qasr,  
14           the naval --

15   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   But the combat forces we had before are  
16           not there anymore?

17   MR JOHN JENKINS:    No.

18   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   Are there other nationalities there?

19   MR FRANK BAKER:    There are.   The Japanese are there, the  
20           Turks are actually in Basra, they're not on the COB,  
21           they have their own consulate in Basra.

22   MR JOHN JENKINS:    This remains -- you know, security of  
23           operation in Iraq is in some way becoming a more acute  
24           challenge for us now as the situation becomes better.  
25           It is almost a paradox.

1 MR FRANK BAKER: If I could just say what we are seeing in  
2 Iraq at the moment is a situation whereby British  
3 multinationals who are used to managing risk are  
4 actually going to Iraq: BP, Shell, Rolls Royce, for  
5 example are now going into Iraq.

6 I think for the SMEs it is much more difficult  
7 because the security situation is still acute enough to  
8 concern, except in the north where we are seeing huge  
9 numbers of British -- sorry, I don't want to overstate  
10 it.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: In the Kurdish areas.

12 MR FRANK BAKER: In the Kurdish areas. We are seeing  
13 a large number of British companies that are now  
14 operating in northern Iraq.

15 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: We have heard from several witnesses in  
16 the last two days about the UK's economic work in Basra,  
17 and we have seen in our documents the tremendous effort  
18 now being made, over the last year and more, to really  
19 create a real UK/Iraqi economic nexus.

20 Can you explain to us what part the FCO is playing  
21 in helping to promote a strong Iraqi economy?

22 MR JOHN JENKINS: I mean, we -- HMG's effort was really  
23 joined up on this over the last three and four years,  
24 was really joined up on the ground, was joined up in  
25 Baghdad, in Basra and Erbil, and that is where we were

1 co-located with DFID and with the MoD and so forth.

2 The management of the Michael Wareing mission in the  
3 south and the development of the Basra Development  
4 Commission and its associated bodies, was a matter  
5 principally for DFID, but it was one we strongly  
6 supported. But that support was expressed most  
7 concretely by the way we operated on the ground in Basra  
8 and I think Keith Mackiggan talked about this quite  
9 a lot yesterday and Nigel Haywood talked about it quite  
10 a lot yesterday.

11 I think, going forward, there has been improvement  
12 in budget execution in Iraq. I think if you look at the  
13 amount of money that they are now spending effectively,  
14 it is considerably more than it was two and three years  
15 ago. That's important because the key to the economic  
16 future of the Iraq is going to be job creation, and it  
17 is very -- if you talk to anybody in Basra in  
18 particular, once they said, "Thank you very much for  
19 getting rid of Saddam, we can now talk more freely", the  
20 second thing they say is, "We would like a job", and  
21 I think this is critical.

22 Now, I think revitalising the energy sector, the  
23 hydrocarbon sector, is clearly important, but I don't  
24 think the hydrocarbon sector on its own is going to  
25 produce large numbers of jobs. You need to get the

1 money into the local economy in the way you develop  
2 small and medium enterprises. I think that is going to  
3 be the challenge.

4 I think there is a real role for us and other donors  
5 in providing more sustained and effective support to the  
6 central government in Iraq in terms of the way that they  
7 manage their resources, and I think this is a matter  
8 which I think the World Bank actually also needs to play  
9 a major role in.

10 There is a World Bank mission in Baghdad, which is  
11 based actually in our Embassy in -- compound in Baghdad  
12 but they have a slightly fractured -- they have people  
13 in Beirut and they have people in Amman as well who are  
14 operating this. This needs to be sort of brought and  
15 focused into Baghdad and that, I think, is going to be  
16 the big area for -- where we can help.

17 MR FRANK BAKER: Yes, I think also -- there are some quite  
18 stark figures, actually, about the Iraqi economy, in  
19 that youth unemployment, which is essentially young male  
20 unemployment in many ways, is now standing at over  
21 30 per cent, and the problem with the oil sector, while  
22 the oil sector will bring in huge amounts of money, it  
23 will only employ about 1 per cent of the Iraqi  
24 workforce, even if most of the jobs go to Iraqis. So  
25 the oil money will provide the means to improve -- to

1 diversify the economy, but in itself it won't create the  
2 jobs that are required.

3 What Iraq clearly desperately needs is inward  
4 investment, and it is the investment and it is the small  
5 and medium enterprises that need to come in from  
6 outside. That means essentially having to reform their  
7 investment laws which are very much a throwback to the  
8 old Ba'athist, almost Stalinist times, where it was all  
9 about statism and it was all about Iraq and they did not  
10 encourage -- in fact, didn't want any external  
11 investment.

12 They also need to reform their banking system,  
13 because there is a big issue about -- in fact,  
14 a complete lack of a banking system at the moment.

15 So these are areas where we have identified there is  
16 a real opportunity for us to work with the Iraqis within  
17 the bilateral relationship, because, obviously, it is in  
18 our interests to help Iraq overcome these problems.

19 DFID are doing quite a lot of work on capacity building.  
20 In particular, we are looking at investment laws and we  
21 are now -- our successors will be sitting down and  
22 looking at other ways that we can drive this particular  
23 agenda forward.

24 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Did these problems impede the  
25 developments after the April 2009 Iraqi invest?

1 MR FRANK BAKER: Yes, indeed, yes. The Iraq invest  
2 conference was hugely successful and there was a great  
3 deal of interest here, but, as I said earlier, the  
4 multinationals are fine because they can handle the  
5 security and they can actually handle a lot of the  
6 investment problems, they can find a way round those and  
7 they are used to working in those conditions anyway, but  
8 for the small and medium enterprises, a lot of whom went  
9 to the Invest Iraq conference, have actually -- their  
10 initial soundings have shown them that there are these  
11 two big blockages: one is security, but the other is  
12 this problem of investment and the local commercial law.

13 MR JOHN JENKINS: I was just going to say one small thing.  
14 I think there is a lot of inherited sclerosis in the  
15 Iraqi system as a whole, I mean, of course, because of  
16 politics and economics and so forth, but the other thing  
17 that strikes me very forcibly about Iraq is that the  
18 Iraqis themselves are very conscious that they have had  
19 30 years out in the cold, isolated from the  
20 international community, isolated from global trends and  
21 they are very, very keen not just to get back in the  
22 middle of pack, but actually to be better than their  
23 neighbours.

24 Now, that's a marvellous aspiration, but I think --  
25 and you know, of course, it will take time, but I think

1 it is a real -- if it is going to work, it will work  
2 partly because of that, because Iraqis themselves feel  
3 that they want to be leaders. Economically, they want  
4 to be leaders; politically, they want to be leaders in  
5 the provision of security.

6 I think this will help things like providing --  
7 getting better a investment climate. When you look at  
8 what happened with the two oil licensing rounds so far  
9 in Iraq -- you know, it is -- it is like a sort of --  
10 you know, high-powered, reality game show on television.  
11 You can watch this on television, the two licensing  
12 rounds, and you produce the envelopes, one which is the  
13 bid by the oil company and the other which is the bottom  
14 line of the Oil Ministry, and it works really well for  
15 Iraq.

16 I can think of nowhere else in the region where  
17 anything like this is done, or you can contemplate it,  
18 this level of transparency and this ability actually to  
19 get the best -- to be seen to get the best deals for the  
20 country.

21 One example -- and we still have to get -- the oil  
22 companies have to get in there and actually start  
23 operating and so forth, but that itself gives me a level  
24 of -- I hate to use the word "optimism", because I used  
25 it once before and I was told I shouldn't be so

1           optimistic, but I do find it encouraging.

2   MR FRANK BAKER: I think the other encouraging thing is  
3           actually the level of education. The Iraqis, of course,  
4           historically have been a very well-educated people and  
5           although there was a downward dip, certainly in the  
6           period of between 1990 and 2003, nevertheless you are  
7           still looking, historically, a very, very well-educated  
8           country and a return to that level of education.

9           So you have -- the companies that want to invest in  
10          Iraq actually have the levels of sophistication amongst  
11          the Iraqi people to be able to -- to be able to use them  
12          locally and to employ them.

13   SIR MARTIN GILBERT: My final question really that arises  
14          from that to a large extent, I was looking into the  
15          British Council arrangements and also into the youth  
16          training schemes, which are both British initiatives and  
17          I was wondering, in that context, are we conscious -- is  
18          HMG sufficiently conscious of the needs, of the economic  
19          needs, are we prepared to make the commitments  
20          necessary, and where do our commitments stand generally  
21          on the scale of other countries?

22          Obviously, in the military story, the United States  
23          was the dominating factor, but do we have a -- perhaps  
24          a more important, proportionately, role to play in the  
25          economic factors?

1 MR FRANK BAKER: I think we do, but I think our importance  
2 in many ways is actually leveraging the support from the  
3 international community. So by that I mean we obviously  
4 have a very good relationship with the IFIs. It is  
5 working with the IMF and World Bank, as John as already  
6 mentioned. I think it is also working with the EU, and  
7 we haven't touched on the EU yet, but I think that is a  
8 really important part of this, and we have seen a huge  
9 evolution in the EU position towards Iraq over the last  
10 two, two and a half years for a number of factors that  
11 we can talk about, if you wish.

12 But I think that -- so we work within the EU to  
13 ensure that the EU gets involved and helps Iraq,  
14 particularly in the areas of capacity building, and,  
15 indeed, in the areas of the education. I think our  
16 universities have got a role to play here. One of the  
17 things we have in our strategy and, indeed, in our  
18 forward look over 2010 is to increase -- we already have  
19 some very good links, actually, between British  
20 universities and Iraqi universities across the country,  
21 but to increase those links.

22 We look at potential tying up of primary and  
23 secondary schooling as well. Certainly in the north of  
24 Iraq, where I was only three weeks ago, the Iraqi  
25 Kurdish education Minister has a degree from

1 Southampton University and, in fact, was educated  
2 largely here in the UK, as was their higher education  
3 Minister, and they are very interested, in fact, in  
4 introducing essentially a British curriculum into the  
5 north of Iraq, into Iraqi Kurdistan.

6 So I think we are uniquely placed, in that sense, to  
7 be able to move this particular agenda forwards. So,  
8 yes, absolutely.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: A couple of final questions from me  
10 because I know other colleagues will want to come in.

11 We have talked about lots of different components of  
12 the situation. What I would like to ask you about now  
13 is: how has life changed for the ordinary Iraqis in  
14 terms of their living conditions and their personal  
15 security? How would you compare it now with 2007, or,  
16 indeed, the situation as reported in the period up to  
17 2003? Is life getting better for them?

18 MR JOHN JENKINS: I think it is getting better. I think if  
19 you -- we are still restricted ourselves in the way we  
20 can move around parts of Baghdad or parts of Basra, but  
21 I have been around both of them recently and the thing  
22 that strikes me most about both is the bustle of the  
23 market areas. Even when people know that there are guys  
24 out there who want to plant bombs, if you drive through  
25 the main market area in Baghdad, it is absolutely

1 packed, and the same goes for Basra. You see people on  
2 the streets going about their normal daily business in  
3 a way you didn't see it in 2005/2006. In Basra, even  
4 2007, I think.

5 I think part of that is because the power or the  
6 ability of the militias to rule the streets in both  
7 Baghdad and Basra has been diminished, considerably  
8 diminished.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So if you ask the man in the Baghdad  
10 market or the woman in the Baghdad market if life was  
11 better now than it was under Saddam, what answer would  
12 you expect?

13 MR JOHN JENKINS: Some would say it was better under  
14 Saddam --

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Still?

16 MR JOHN JENKINS: -- as people in Russia say that life was  
17 better under the old Soviet Union, but a lot of people  
18 would say, "Life is better now, but we -- but this is  
19 a list of things we need", which they wouldn't, of  
20 course, have given under Saddam, and the list of things  
21 they need is more power.

22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You mean the electric power?

23 MR JOHN JENKINS: Electric power. More services. The  
24 provision of services and the provision of even better  
25 security.

1           The debate -- I mean, after the August, October and  
2           December bombings, the Council of Representatives  
3           focused very much on the ability of the government to  
4           provide the level of security to ordinary people which  
5           it claimed it was delivering, and clearly people think  
6           that there is a mismatch between what the government  
7           says it can do and what it does do.

8           I think the level of security has dramatically  
9           improved, but, as always in these situations, as you get  
10          the sort of upward swing, people's expectations and  
11          people's demands increase.

12          The other thing is jobs. It really is jobs. If you  
13          can provide -- because that remains sticky in Iraq.  
14          Frank was talking about the 30 per cent unemployment  
15          rate among young Iraqi males and that is clearly  
16          a massively significant factor for Iraq's future,  
17          especially when you consider that the Sons of Iraq, the  
18          Sahwa groups, who are being paid at the moment, will  
19          stop being paid some time next year. That's when it  
20          stops, and you need to be able to give them  
21          opportunities to do other things.

22        SIR RODERIC LYNE: Finally, can I ask about the Iranian  
23          neighbour? I mean, historically Iraq was  
24          a counterbalance to Iran. During the conflict Iraq  
25          became an opportunity for Iran, for Iran to intervene

1 and put pressure on the United States and the  
2 United Kingdom, in particular, through the way it  
3 intervened.

4 How are things now in terms of the Iraq/Iranian  
5 relationship and is Iraq going to be in a position in  
6 which it can contribute to the international objective,  
7 the western objective, of bringing Iran back into the  
8 international status quo, which means, by definition,  
9 doing so as a non-nuclear power, a very important policy  
10 objective for us, the United States and the  
11 European Union?

12 MR JOHN JENKINS: I think there is a lot of bad feeling  
13 among all communities in Iraq about the way Iran sought  
14 to exploit the situation in Iraq after 2003. If you  
15 look at the polling data that the Americans have  
16 gathered -- and they do -- part of this polling is about  
17 attitudes of different countries, including us and the  
18 United States, and some of it is about attitudes to  
19 Iran.

20 The most consistently resented country among all  
21 communities in Iraq is Iran. It is a consistent level  
22 of around 70 --

23 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Even among the Shia?

24 MR JOHN JENKINS: Even among the Shia -- of around  
25 70 per cent of Iraqis distrust Iran. That's a

1 remarkably high figure. I think some of this is  
2 historical, some this is a Sunni thing, but the fact it  
3 is also widespread among the Shia I think reflects to  
4 a large extent Iranian behaviour inside Iraq post-2003.

5 In terms of Iraq's ability to help with the nuclear  
6 issue, I think it is -- I think it is limited. I think  
7 essentially that is a -- that is a -- it is clearly an  
8 EU three plus three matter but the focus for this is the  
9 UN.

10 Now, the region, of course, has a role to play in  
11 this but the region is also more exposed to the risks  
12 than others, and I think they are acutely conscious of  
13 this. I think in Iraq as well they are so focused on  
14 building an Iraqi state, a sustainable Iraqi state, that  
15 they see any turbulence, any instability in the  
16 neighbourhood as a domestic risk for them, and I think  
17 that constrains the amount of action that we can expect  
18 from Iraq.

19 MR FRANK BAKER: I would just add to that, I think, that --  
20 I think there was probably an Iranian high point, a high  
21 point of Iranian influence in Iraq and I think it was  
22 probably in 2006/2007. I think that the Iranians have  
23 suffered some fairly big strategic setbacks in Iraq.  
24 They fought extremely hard to prevent the American  
25 Status of Forces Agreement being adopted by the Council

1 of Representatives and failed. They tried to stop the  
2 provincial elections from taking place in Iraq early  
3 last year and failed. The political parties, the Shia  
4 political parties, who are seen to be close to Iran,  
5 perceived to be close to Iran, particularly ISCI -- and  
6 the Sadrists did very badly in those (inaudible)  
7 provincial elections and, as John quite rightly says,  
8 the mood on the streets, both in the south as well as  
9 elsewhere in Iraq, is actually quite strongly  
10 anti-Iranian. That's not to say that they don't want to  
11 have a commercial relationship with them because they  
12 do, and in fact the markets in Basra are flooded with  
13 Iranian products, but they believe that should be  
14 a commercial relationship, rather like the type of  
15 relationship they had with Turkey, and not one of  
16 political interference, which is where they see the  
17 Iranians having come from.

18 I would just add that one of the things that I know  
19 that senior Iraqis have been making clear to the  
20 Iranians on the nuclear file is that Saddam's Iraq is  
21 a good example -- or a bad example of what can happen if  
22 you consistently defy the international community on  
23 issues of weapons of mass destruction.

24 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Mr Jenkins, both you and Mr Prentice  
25 have given us quite a helpful description of what is

1           happening in terms of democracy, and the picture we get,  
2           that it is quite a fragile state at the moment, it needs  
3           to be nurtured, and I think both you and Mr Baker have  
4           talked -- and Mr Prentice indeed -- about the role the  
5           United Nations, the EU, the British Council and others  
6           are playing.

7           But what I really want to understand is what are we  
8           and others doing to ensure that democracy is embedded  
9           and is underpinned by some of the softer issues, you  
10          know, like rule of law, capacity building and  
11          governance? Is it something which is happening on an  
12          ad hoc basis or do we actually collectively have  
13          a strategy to make sure that Iraq is supported, given  
14          what you said earlier, that Iraq wants to be a leader,  
15          both economically and in terms of -- as a democratic  
16          state, or is it kind of a hit and miss, you know, who  
17          happens to have a project it takes on, because in a way  
18          it seems to me we have a responsibility to have some  
19          kind of coherent strategy, not just economically, but in  
20          terms of building Iraq as a society.

21       MR JOHN JENKINS: I think, if you look at the institutions  
22          that -- the key institutions, the governance and  
23          democratic institutions in Iraq today, they are the  
24          product of the last six years.

25          Now, you know, there were some institutions that

1 were tried and discarded. There were some -- there were  
2 various sort of stages of governance and the acquisition  
3 of sovereignty, which Iraq went through since 2003. But  
4 where we have come out, I think, with a central  
5 government, which has authority, with an elective  
6 Council of Representatives, with provincial governments  
7 which are also democratically elected, is quite a good  
8 place and it looks coherent to me.

9 I think the key challenge now for the Iraqi -- two  
10 key challenges domestically -- are going to be improving  
11 the effectiveness of institutions, delivery of  
12 institutions inside Iraq, and agreeing how the remaining  
13 contested internal relations between the centre and the  
14 governments or the provinces will be managed. I think  
15 those are the two key outstanding tasks.

16 I think, in terms of the effectiveness of  
17 governmental institutions, I think that is something  
18 where we need more effective international --  
19 co-ordinated international support for the  
20 Iraqi Government.

21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: We need that but are we playing our  
22 role in that? Are we ensuring it is happening?

23 MR JOHN JENKINS: I certainly hope we will. I think we are  
24 but I certainly hope we will do more, and I think the  
25 UN-- I think the World Bank is an important part of

1           this. The World Bank is not a pan governmental panacea  
2           but it is key to ensuring that economic governance  
3           functions effectively. And the UN. It is the IFI and  
4           the UN, for me, with EU support, which will make the  
5           biggest difference, and I think that's where we need to  
6           focus quite a large part of our own national effort. It  
7           is something we are talking about at the moment actually  
8           here.

9           So I'm actually quite focused on this.

10       BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Will you be giving this a priority  
11           under your tenure?

12       MR JOHN JENKINS: Yes.

13       BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: My second question is about progress  
14           on issues to do with women because it was part of the  
15           constitution in 2005. Has there been any progress on  
16           that area or not?

17       MR JOHN JENKINS: In terms of representation of women  
18           nationally, I think there is quite a good story to tell  
19           actually. In terms of violence against women, I think  
20           this is a national issue in Iraq. We have seen,  
21           particularly in the north, in the KRG, a government  
22           which is prepared to do what it says it wants to do,  
23           which is to take action against honour killings, for  
24           example.

25           I think you are dealing with -- and I think in Basra

1 as well the intimidation of women by militias has  
2 stopped, and I think other people have said, you know,  
3 that actually one of the things the Charge of the  
4 Knights did was reveal what we all thought, which was  
5 that most Basrawis didn't want this to happen, didn't  
6 want their lives disrupted, didn't want to be  
7 intimidated, didn't want their wives and daughters to be  
8 intimidated by the militias.

9 I think -- and there were some very feisty Iraqi  
10 female members of Parliament, many of whom I have met.  
11 All have very distinctive ideas about how this should be  
12 pursued.

13 Sustaining this, of course, is going to be -- like  
14 most things in Iraq is going to be a challenge,  
15 particularly when there are such strong counter-cultural  
16 currents.

17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So are you saying there has been a  
18 steady progress of women in the political process, in  
19 representation?

20 MR JOHN JENKINS: There has been progress. Whether this  
21 is -- steady? There has been progress. There has been  
22 progress, but I think now it will be -- the trick will  
23 be to make sure this continues. I think it is patchy,  
24 the way this has happened around the country. I think  
25 it is certainly easier to achieve -- to achieve progress

1 in urban areas than it is in rural areas on this.

2 Frank, I don't know if you wanted to --

3 MR FRANK BAKER: I think it is also easier in certain parts  
4 of the country, to be honest. I think John has referred  
5 to what the Kurdish regional government have been doing,  
6 and they are some considerable distance ahead, I think,  
7 of where some parts of the rest of the country are. But  
8 it is also true, certainly in the south -- and you talk  
9 to the provincial governor in Basra and he is very clear  
10 about the need to move this particular agenda forward.  
11 So I think the will is there and I think there has been  
12 some progress since 2003 but I think there is still  
13 a very long way to go, and this is -- going back to your  
14 previous question, this is one of the areas that we are  
15 working on within the EU because in a sense these are  
16 the (inaudible), the soft power issues that the EU  
17 should be leading on, and there has been this big change  
18 in the approach of the EU as an institution towards Iraq  
19 over the last --

20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I was interested, why has there been  
21 a change, because you mentioned that earlier?

22 MR FRANK BAKER: I think it has just been, the various  
23 member states, as we have, had changes of government,  
24 and some of the legacy issues from 2003 have, therefore,  
25 disappeared. It has become much easier to work within

1 the EU. I think there is also the fact that Iraq is now  
2 seen, I think, widely, as, if not a success story,  
3 certainly as being in a much better place than it was in  
4 2005/2006, and of course success breeds success and  
5 people actually want to get involved in something they  
6 think might work out at the end, and then I think there  
7 is also, frankly -- there is -- in each individual state  
8 there is a bilateral commercial interest. Iraq is  
9 a country where the bilateral economic ties will be  
10 important in the future, as well as the multilateral  
11 economic ties, and so countries want to get involved,  
12 and one of the ways that countries can do that within  
13 Europe is also being evolved within the EU processes.

14 So we have seen a big increase in the amount of  
15 money that the EU has been allocating towards Iraq, and  
16 we have actually seen, more importantly, an increase in  
17 the size of the European Commission office in Iraq, in  
18 order to ensure that these -- that the EU can become  
19 more involved in these areas.

20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You mentioned some polling data,  
22 attitudes to various countries, and we discussed Iraq  
23 but you also mentioned that they indicated attitudes to  
24 Britain. I wonder if you would give us some indication  
25 of what they say.

1 MR JOHN JENKINS: I can't remember what it does say  
2 (inaudible). I mean, it was quite good. I can't  
3 remember exactly what the figure was. It was about,  
4 sort of, 40/50 per cent (inaudible), which actually in  
5 the Middle East is pretty good since in most Middle East  
6 countries we get about 5 per cent.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There is a puzzle here. I would be  
8 interested in your views. I mean, you have described  
9 very clearly for us, and other witnesses have too, that  
10 since the security situation improved in 2007, so have  
11 many other things: Political progress has been much  
12 greater; the economic progress has been greater; the oil  
13 situation has been sorted out; and you have also  
14 indicated that the Kurds, who in a sense have enjoyed  
15 a degree of autonomy since the early 1990s, are even  
16 further ahead in all of this, which makes the sort of  
17 collapse of the security situation in 2003 and so on all  
18 the more poignant.

19 Now, we have also taken a lot of effort since last  
20 month on the lack of preparation for the post-invasion  
21 scene, on the lack of understanding of just how  
22 shattered the economy and society have been by the  
23 Saddam years, and so on, and we know the terrible cost  
24 to Iraq of that period: 100,000 or more killed, probably  
25 a lot more dying because of inadequate services, almost

1 into a civil war.

2 Do we get any blame at all for the post-invasion  
3 situation or is that seen to be something that is an  
4 inevitable sort of consequence of the vacuum created by  
5 the collapse of the old regime?

6 MR JOHN JENKINS: I haven't had people coming up to me and  
7 saying, "You should have done better." Of course, this  
8 is anecdotal. I've been in Iraq myself three weeks.  
9 I'm sure -- I think it is true that in Basra at various  
10 points in 2006 and 2007 people were saying -- and it is  
11 focused on security actually, the provision of security,  
12 the provision of security -- our provision -- our  
13 ability to deliver security to ordinary people was not  
14 what it should have been.

15 I really don't hear that any more. I think people  
16 are focused on moving forward from where they are now.  
17 Paradoxically -- maybe it is not paradoxical at all --  
18 people do occasionally talk about the 1990s and about  
19 what happened post-1991, and sanctions, the impact of  
20 sanctions. I mean, that in a way is what I hear more of  
21 than what happened in Basra -- in the terms that you  
22 describe, the impact that the sanctions had on the  
23 fabric of Iraqi society and the shattering of the middle  
24 class.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So in a sense there is still -- I

1 mean, you have also mentioned the aftermath of the 1920s  
2 and memories of the British role then, the 1990s  
3 sanctions but also the failure to support the Shia in  
4 the uprising.

5 It just seems surprising that this traumatic period  
6 in Iraqi history seems almost to be sort of passed over.  
7 Is it because it is too close?

8 MR JOHN JENKINS: I can't claim with any great authority  
9 that no Iraqi talks about this, and, you know, I think  
10 one of my personal goals in the coming year is to try  
11 and get out more and actually find out what ordinary  
12 Iraqis are actually thinking about that, but also about,  
13 you know, their lives now.

14 But I think -- you know, I think there is a greater  
15 sense of -- that there is a future among most Iraqis now  
16 in Iraq than they had in the really dark days, when it  
17 looked as if, you know, the internecine -- the  
18 intercommunal sectarian conflict of 2005 was permanent.

19 MR FRANK BAKER: Just one thing. I think it is also  
20 important to remember that -- again, you get back to  
21 Iraq is a quasi-unified country but there are  
22 different parts of it. In the north, for example, 2003  
23 came and went and there wasn't any negativity about it  
24 and no negativity for the people there. I think that  
25 was largely true in the south as well. There was, of

1 course, internal conflict in the south, created between  
2 ISCI, the Bathra -- Bathrists -- Bathras Brigade -- and  
3 the Sadrists, the Jaish al Mahdi, but that was very  
4 much -- as I think you said earlier, that has been very  
5 much put at the door of the Iranians, rather than of  
6 ourselves. So I think in a sense you are always going  
7 to get a slightly skewed response, depending upon who  
8 you ask the question, in which part of the country they  
9 live.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: We will stop there. I normally ask whether  
11 people have final comments but I think we have heard  
12 those in effect.

13 Can I thank our witnesses and those who have been  
14 present this morning. We next meet at 2 pm on Monday,  
15 when we shall have evidence on the transition to full  
16 Iraqi control of security from two Major Generals.

17 Thank you.

18 (1.10 pm)

19 (The Inquiry adjourned until Monday,  
20 11 January 2010 at 2 pm)

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