1 Tuesday, 1 December 2009

2 (10.00 am)

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning.

4 Good morning everyone. Not quite as many in the

5 "everyone" as there have been on previous days, but you

6 are very welcome.

7 The objectives of this session following on from

8 sessions with Sir Christopher Meyer last week and

9 Sir David Manning yesterday is to continue building the

10 Committee's understanding of the run-up to military

11 action and the immediate post-war conflict phase.

12 We have heard the perspectives of senior

13 UK officials in Washington and New York and Number 10

14 and today we will hear the views of the Foreign Office

15 in London, and, in the days ahead, the views of the

16 Ministry of Defence and the military.

17 This session will focus on developments of UK policy

18 towards Iraq from the end of 2001 until the start of

19 military action in March 2003 and the earlier months of

20 the post-conflict phase.

21 As before, we are taking a broadly chronological

22 approach starting towards the end of 2001, and we are

23 aiming to pick up a number of overarching themes,

24 depending on how much time we have and what emerges in

25 the course of session.

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1 I would like to recall, once again, that the Inquiry
2 has access to thousands of government papers, including
3 the most highly classified for the period we are looking
4 at. We are developing a picture of the policy debates
5 and the decision-making processes at the time, and these
6 oral evidence sessions are an important element in
7 informing the Inquiry's thinking and complementing
8 documentary evidence. It is important that witnesses
9 are open and frank while respecting national security.
10 I would like to remind witnesses, as I do on each
11 occasion, that they will later be asked to sign
12 a transcript of their evidence to the effect that the
13 evidence they have given is truthful, fair and accurate.
14 Perhaps we might begin by inviting Sir Peter and
15 Sir Edward to decide their role during the period in
16 question.
17 SIR PETER RICKETTS and MR EDWARD CHAPLIN
18 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. Yes,
19 I was the Foreign Office's Political Director for the
20 period from September 2001 through to July 2003 and, as
21 such, was in charge of the FCO's overall Iraq effort and
22 particularly took a close interest in the multilateral
23 negotiations, particularly in the UN.
24 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr Chaplin.
25 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Thank you. In that period I was

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1 Ambassador in Amman, in fact, from May 2000
2 until April 2002, then I returned to London to take up
3 my job as Director for the Middle East and North Africa,
4 therefore the senior official working directly to Peter
5 in charge of the whole of Middle East policy, including
6 Iraq, although my direct responsibility for Iraq ceased -- the
7 in September 2003.
8 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Are there any preliminary points
9 either of you want to make before we get to the
10 questions?
11 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Can I just make a brief comment about
12 the provision of documents to the Inquiry? I said right
13 at the outset of this that we were one hundred per cent
14 committed to giving every support we could to the
15 Inquiry. I think the FCO has now provided more than
16 11,000 documents.
17 Sir Christopher Meyer in his evidence session last
18 week, pointed out, I think, five documents in the course
19 of his evidence that he had not been able to retrieve
20 from the archives. When I saw that, I immediately asked
21 what the position was. I gather that Sir Christopher
22 had asked about 48 hours before to see a number of
23 documents. We were able to find pretty rapidly four of
24 the five he referred to and they are being sent to the
25 Inquiry; the fifth, was, I think, a personal message to

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1 Number 10, which will have to be retrieved from the
2 Cabinet Office archives. He also asked for a number of
3 others, most of which we have also located and are
4 sending to the Inquiry, with one or two still to be
5 chased down.
6 Most of these documents were only making a fleeting
7 reference to Iraq as part of a wider round-up of events,
8 such as an annual review, which is why they hadn't been
9 part of the initial trawl of documents sent to the
10 Inquiry, but I just wanted to reassure that the FCO's
11 retrieval of documents I think is proceeding effectively
12 and to reiterate again our absolute commitment to
13 finding any document that the Inquiry wishes to have.
14 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Sir Peter. I think it is perhaps
15 worth remarking we have received a very large store of
16 government documents already from the whole array of
17 relevant departments, including the FCO. The flow
18 continues as new material emerges out of the questioning
19 or out of our search requirements.
20 Can I say, I, for my part, and I know my colleagues
21 are satisfied that the government is honouring its
22 promise to provide us full and complete access and there
23 isn't any holding back. If there were, we should kick
24 up a stink about it, but there isn't, as things go on.
25 Perhaps as a final word on this, if you put in more

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1 than about three key search words you get the entirety
2 of a government department's archive. So there has to
3 be a process of selection and identification, which does
4 mean that the flow will continue probably throughout
5 most of the Inquiry's sittings.
6 With that, may we turn to the questioning,
7 Sir Martin?
8 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: My first question is from the
9 perspective of the Foreign Office, from your
10 perspective, when did it become apparent that the
11 United States was contemplating a more active approach
12 to regime change in Iraq than during the first years of
13 the Bush administration, during the first year?
14 SIR PETER RICKETTS: As I say, I think in my first evidence
15 session, it was part of the inherited policy of the US
16 that regime change in Iraq was a good thing, that it
17 became part of the Iraq Liberation Act of the Clinton
18 era. It was in Condoleezza Rice's article in Foreign
19 Affairs and it was referred to from time to time by the
20 President. So the concept of regime change was in the
21 bloodstream of the Republican administration.
22 You have heard from other witnesses that in the
23 immediate aftermath of 9/11 the issue of Iraq came up
24 with President Bush and others referring to Iraq and
25 questioning whether there was any link between Iraq and

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1 the 9/11 attack. We did not have any information that
2 there was.
3 Looking back, I think the fact is there was
4 a process, evolution, from an aspiration immediately
5 after 9/11 to a settled determination through to
6 a policy to carry it out, and that process really
7 covered the whole period from September 2001 right
8 through to the summer of 2002.
9 I think there is a risk of putting, with the benefit
10 of hindsight, a pattern on events that they didn't seem
11 to have at the time. I don't feel that there was
12 a particular point, certainly any time between 9/11 and,
13 say, Crawford, where it was unmistakably clear that
14 there had been a change of US policy.
15 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Within the Foreign Office thinking, by
16 the spring of 2002, even with a possible tighter
17 sanctions regime, did containment have any real meaning
18 for you in terms of the disarmament of Iraq, as mandated
19 and reiterated by the UN over more than a decade?
20 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I don't think that the containment
21 policy that we were pursuing pre-9/11 was any longer fit
22 for purpose and the policy options papers that we put to
23 Ministers in March in advance of the Prime Minister's
24 visit to Crawford canvassed both what we called
25 "toughened" containment or an option which was

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1 theoretical at that time, some form of intervention in
2 Iraq to achieve our weapons of mass destruction
3 objectives by another means.
4 By "toughened" containment we really meant a much
5 more intrusive, vigorous weapons inspection regime,
6 bearing in mind that, throughout this period, our policy
7 objective was the removal of Saddam's weapons of mass
8 destruction and not regime change.
9 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: You mentioned the run-up to Crawford.
10 I would like to ask you, Sir Peter, if you could
11 describe to us the advice which the Foreign Secretary
12 was receiving before the Prime Minister went to Crawford
13 with regard to the whole question of Iraq and how to
14 deal with Iraq, and, in this advice, how were the UK
15 objectives formulated and discussed?
16 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Certainly. The most considered
17 document that I recall was one produced by the
18 Cabinet Office but with input from the FCO and other
19 departments, I think dated 6 March, intended for the
20 Foreign Secretary and other Ministers, which was an
21 assessment of the position at that stage.
22 As I mentioned, it set out our objective, which
23 throughout was the removal of Saddam's weapons of mass
24 destruction. It proposed one way of doing that, which
25 was toughened containment and an intrusive inspection

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1 regime through the UN. It canvassed other ways of
2 achieving that regime change through an uprising in
3 Iraq, through an air campaign or through a ground
4 campaign. It put up in lights officials' very serious
5 doubts that a legal base for any action of that kind
6 would exist at that stage, and it already began to
7 discuss issues of whether regime change would actually
8 lead to a better position, ie would it lead to
9 substituting Saddam Hussein for another Sunni strongman.
10 Now, that advice was to Ministers collectively. We
11 then had an office meeting with the Foreign Secretary
12 later in March, I think on the 18th, where we discussed
13 all that set of issues, as a result of which he put
14 a series of minutes to the Prime Minister in advance of
15 Crawford, including a very private and personal minute,
16 which subsequently leaked on the Internet in 2005, which
17 set out very clearly Jack Straw's thinking into which
18 I had been feeding that the objective of removing
19 Saddam's weapons of mass destruction was best pursued
20 through a UN inspection route. We already had that
21 route mapped out in our minds.
22 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Can we look briefly, one by one, at the
23 conditions that the United Kingdom was pressing on the
24 United States as essential if Britain were to join
25 a military mission against Saddam Hussein and the extent

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1 to which they were being met?
2 First of all, how far was the government able to
3 convince public opinion, which was one of the
4 conditions, that a military option might be required?
5 How hard was this done? By what means?
6 SIR PETER RICKETTS: It was certainly a clear view among
7 Ministers. You heard from Sir David Manning yesterday
8 about the Prime Minister, but also Jack Straw, that, in
9 taking this policy forward, this policy which we
10 favoured at that time of strengthening a more intrusive
11 inspection regime targeted on the weapons of mass
12 destruction, that we needed to have a more informed
13 public debate about the threat from Saddam's weapons of
14 mass destruction and about the implications for regional
15 security of Iraq in its current position.
16 That was certainly a strand in ministerial thinking
17 throughout that period.
18 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How do you account for the scepticism,
19 the general scepticism of the British public, that
20 Saddam constituted a serious danger to the region.
21 SIR PETER RICKETTS: We had spent the previous months
22 concentrating on the threat from Al-Qaeda in
23 Afghanistan. We had been through the military
24 intervention in Afghanistan and we were still, at that
25 stage, involved in the aftermath of that, an

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1 international security force and the civilian effort in
2 Afghanistan. There was a lot of public attention on
3 Al-Qaeda and the threat from Afghanistan.
4 As we have discussed in previous evidence sessions,
5 we had, in Whitehall, been seriously concerned about the
6 threat from weapons of mass destruction and the risk
7 that they would be reconstituted as the sanctions regime
8 broke down and Saddam got access to more money, and it
9 had been a consistent worry.
10 9/11 and the evidence of terrorist interest in
11 weapons of mass destruction was a further boost. It was
12 a very strong strand in the Prime Minister's thinking
13 and the Foreign Secretary's thinking, but it hadn't been
14 a big feature of public presentation of the
15 counter-terrorism strategy. Therefore, as we focused
16 harder on Iraq, as that was clearly rising up the US
17 political agenda, it was important that we should get
18 out to the public more information about what we saw as
19 the threat from Saddam, Iraq's weapons of mass
20 destruction.
21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Do you feel that was done effectively?
22 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I feel it was certainly a major
23 preoccupation of Ministers and it led on to a number of
24 developments for -- following on during the year, such
25 as the dossier produced in September 2002, which

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1 I didn't myself have any great part in. But this was
2 a consequence of the ministerial wish to have more
3 information out on the public record.
4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: If I could turn to you, Mr Chaplin,
5 with regard to another of the conditions, that Britain
6 could not, as it was put to the United States, really
7 involve itself in possible military action or support
8 for the United States, if there were not serious
9 development in the Middle East peace process.
10 To what extent were we warning the United States
11 about the danger of double standards if we were seen to
12 be taking more aggressive action towards Iraq, while at
13 the same time not intervening effectively or trying to
14 intervene effectively in the Arab/Israel dispute?
15 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I think that's a good point.
16 To remind ourselves of the background at that time,
17 Iraq wasn't the only major issue in the Middle East that
18 was grabbing ministerial and, indeed, Prime Ministerial
19 attention. The peace process was in serious difficulty
20 and there were very strong -- as Director of the Middle
21 East and North Africa, we were daily recipients of
22 agonised messages from leaders in the Middle East about
23 precisely the point you have made about double
24 standards: how is it you are concentrating so heavily on
25 Iraq, when actually what is really troubling us and what

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1 is undermining moderate governments in this part of the
2 world is you, the West's, failure to do anything --
3 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Chaplin, I'm sorry to break in. The
4 transcriber is having a bit of difficulty. Perhaps if
5 you put your mic a little closer.
6 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Shall I go back a bit?
7 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, thank you.
8 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: As I said, the governments of the
9 Middle East were extremely concerned, much more
10 concerned, and this was very clear from my time in
11 Jordan, talking to the King, as I did quite often, about
12 his concerns in the region. Of course, Iraq was a major
13 concern, but not in the way we thought. It was a major concern
14 concern to Jordan, because of Jordan's dependence on Iraq for
15 oil and for trade. What really concerned the King, like
16 most other leaders in the region, was the dire situation
17 in the Arab/Israel dispute since the Intifada had broken
18 out again in late 2000 and the apparent failure of the
19 American administration or anybody else to do anything
20 about it.
21 Of course, the double standards to which he referred
22 were very much in people's minds and something that
23 would haunt us right through into military action in
24 Iraq. We can come back to that later, if you like, but
25 I think it is fair to say the Prime Minister was

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1 extremely seized of this and I think made repeated
2 efforts to persuade President Bush and the
3 US administration that this really had to be taken
4 seriously.
5 As you say, it was one of the -- always one of the
6 elements that came up in the discussion of, "If we had
7 to take military action, what are the circumstances that
8 we should seek to contrive at the time?" and one of
9 those was always very strongly in the Prime Minister's
10 mind, a serious effort on the Middle East process to
11 show that we were giving as much attention to that as we
12 were to Iraq.
13 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Were there obstacles which we had to
14 face with regard to that in connection with the
15 United States' view?
16 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I don't think so. The message was
17 received. The question is whether real action followed.
18 There were attempts by the US to at least mitigate some
19 of the worst events, things were happening in the
20 West Bank, Israeli action in the West Bank, the siege of
21 Ramallah and Yasser Arafat and so on. This was all
22 headlined day in and day out in the Middle East and was
23 doing serious damage.
24 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How important in connection with this
25 link was the President's commitment to the road map

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1 in June and what was our input to that?
2 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: We were all involved in feeding ideas
3 to -- for the road map, this plan that we hoped both
4 sides would sign up to and would take us through to
5 resume a path towards peace.
6 But, of course, the problem was getting both sides
7 in the right place, to actually produce the meaningful
8 commitments which would persuade the other side that the
9 concessions were worth making. So it was slow progress.
10 Indeed, I think the road map wasn't published until
11 rather later than we would have wanted.
12 SIR PETER RICKETTS: May I just interject one point of
13 context? We now look at Crawford as a key event in the
14 Iraq saga, but for those of us preparing at the time for
15 the Prime Minister's visit, the Arab/Israel issue was at
16 least as major a concern. It was a time when the
17 Israelis were occupying the West Bank and there was
18 military pressure on Jenin. The briefing for the
19 Prime Minister was at least as concerned with
20 Arab/Israel and I think his discussions with the
21 President were as much concerned with that as with Iraq.
22 It was an issue which he was passionately concerned
23 about and very, very active in pressing the President
24 on.
25 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: We will come later to the Arab capitals

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1 in the later phase, but if I could move on just very
2 briefly, Sir Peter, to look at the third of the
3 conditions, which was the ability of the United Kingdom
4 to persuade the United States to go what was called the
5 UN route by means of a new Security Council Resolution,
6 the return of the inspectors.
7 My question is: how far did Saddam's past rejection
8 of this route, of the UN inspectors, of full disclosure,
9 weigh with us in terms of how realistic even a tough
10 resolution could be?
11 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Well, I think we had all along seen
12 effective weapons inspection as the best way of dealing
13 with the weapons of mass destruction problem, and, of
14 course, we had the experience of the 1990s, we had
15 UNSCOM being blocked and hindered and then the
16 withdrawal of UNSCOM. So we knew that if we were going
17 to have a serious weapons inspection regime, it had to,
18 first of all, have wide backing in the Security Council
19 and, secondly, have really effective, tough measures
20 requiring Saddam to cooperate. That's why we and the
21 Americans spent so long trying to assemble a unanimous
22 Security Council Resolution on some very, very demanding
23 measures, and, actually, looking back on 1441, it is
24 pretty extraordinary in terms of the intrusiveness and
25 the extent of the inspection regime which it imposed on

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1 Iraq with the support of every member of the Council.

2 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Can I just add to that, because -- as I perhaps should have said at the beginning, I was head of

4 the Middle East Department from late 1996 until late

5 1999, so I was quite closely involved, although at

6 a more junior level, in the whole saga of weapons

7 inspection, UNSCOM, the expulsion of weapons, inspectors

8 and military action in Desert Fox in 1998.

9 So when you say, "How heavily did this weigh?" it,

10 of course, weighed heavily, I think, on both sides of

11 the Atlantic, this track record, that Saddam Hussein

12 would go to almost any lengths, including being

13 willing to suffer the consequences of military action

14 , rather than cooperating with the

15 United Nations and the international community.

16 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So could one say that from the start of

17 the post-Crawford UN route, which, as Sir Peter says,

18 was pursued with tremendous energy and effort, that

19 there was always the recognition that, however tough

20 a resolution might be, it might simply not be effective?

21 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I think that was in our minds, but

22 there were some differences from 1998. We had

23 a different resolution base, 1284, which was still

24 there, unimplemented, but with the creation of a new

25 body, UNMOVIC, and UNMOVIC was designed, in the course of

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1 negotiations over the year that led up to the adoption of
2 1284 in late 1999, to reassure the Iraqis, amongst
3 others, that it was a neutral, independent body which
4 would do the right thing if only Iraq would do the right
5 thing.
6 So there was some hope, but in any case we all
7 recognised that the best way to resolve this was to
8 assemble enough pressure, including the threat of
9 military action, to get the inspectors back in and get
10 them working properly. At least that was my ...
11 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: During these negotiations where Britain
12 and the United States were in a way taking the lead --
13 during this process, were there things, were there parts
14 of the negotiation which, if you like, flagged up
15 potential amber or even red flags with regard to the
16 attitude of the other principal powers involved?
17 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Yes, I think there were -- there was
18 suspicion on the part of some of the other members of
19 the P5 that our intention might be to set the bar so
20 high that Saddam could not possibly cross it and we were
21 extremely concerned, as Sir Jeremy Greenstock set out to
22 you, to make sure that we set a very tough but
23 achievable goal for Saddam Hussein.
24 Some of the ideas that circulated early on in the
25 resolution drafting phase probably were beyond that

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1 point and would not have been possible for
2 Saddam Hussein to achieve, and the pressure of others in
3 the Permanent 5 and in the wider Security Council was
4 useful, I think, in bringing the resolution back to
5 a point where it was achievable, but very tough.
6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Those that were reluctant to go that
7 route, those countries that were reluctant to go that
8 route, how was their reluctance overcome? What was the
9 argument that we were able to use?
10 SIR PETER RICKETTS: A classic process of negotiation, both
11 in the Security Council and in capitals, successive
12 discussions of drafts of resolutions, starting
13 in September soon after President Bush's speech to the
14 UN and all the way through to the adoption of the
15 resolution in early November. I mean, endless rounds of
16 negotiation on texts of resolutions.
17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So we had no problem with not setting
18 the bar too high?
19 SIR PETER RICKETTS: On the contrary, our intention was
20 always that it should be a resolution that was capable
21 of being implemented, and that the demand should be
22 tough but not one that was impossible for him to meet.
23 Actually, in the end, the key part of the resolution
24 that was the final subject of negotiation, as Sir Jeremy
25 set out, was not so much the intrusiveness of the

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1 inspection regime because I think most people accepted
2 that, because of the past history, if we were going to
3 have an inspection regime it had to be a very intrusive
4 one, but the concern was automaticity or not, what
5 happened if Saddam did not comply?
6 I think, in the end, the Security Council was
7 convinced that it had to be, you know, a quite
8 exceptionally tough resolution.
9 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I would like to turn to an issue of
10 intense interest and speculation and that is the
11 question of when Britain embarked on its own military
12 planning with regard to Iraq.
13 I wondered if you could tell us, Sir Peter, about
14 the small group of senior officials and military
15 planners established in late April 2002 by the
16 Ministry of Defence, just after the Crawford meeting, to
17 think about the issues that would be involved in any
18 military operation in Iraq as a basis for British
19 contingency planning. To what extent was the
20 Foreign Office involved in these military discussions
21 and what was the outcome of them?
22 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Well, the answer is yes, we were
23 involved from the outset. Of course, in addition, the
24 FCO had a seat at the Chiefs of Staffs table, so we were
25 always part of the Chiefs of Staff discussions week by

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1 week throughout this period.
2 As you say, in addition, the MoD convened a small
3 group of officials in late April of 2002. I think
4 General Tony Pigott, who will be a witness with you
5 shortly, was the key MoD -- the key military general in
6 the position at the time and began to look at some of
7 the wider implications.
8 We didn't discuss military planning as such. We
9 discussed the implications of military planning for
10 other departments' activities, and the key initial work
11 that I was involved in was trying to define an end-state
12 for any military action we took. We had never supported
13 the idea simply of regime change, that was not our
14 proposal, but to say disarming Saddam of his weapons of
15 mass destruction was not adequate either, and so we
16 developed some ideas on what an end-state should be, the
17 sort of Iraq that we would want to see, law-abiding,
18 sovereign, with territorial integrity, not posing
19 a threat to its neighbours, respecting its obligations
20 on weapons of mass destruction and so on.
21 We worked up in that group an end-state which was
22 one of the political implications of any military plan.
23 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Was this end-state formulation made
24 public at the time?
25 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Not, not at the time but it informed

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1 the debates that continued through the summer. I saw it
2 turning up in Cabinet Office documents in July, setting
3 out a rather more advanced phase of our planning, and
4 then I think it fed in through to the military plans
5 because military plans tend to start with what is the
6 objective that you are seeking to achieve. So it became
7 embedded in our planning exercise.
8 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: The end-state was essentially
9 a law-abiding Iraq within its existing borders,
10 cooperating with the international community and no
11 longer posing a threat?
12 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Yes.
13 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Was this something which could also be
14 achieved through 1441, through the UN route, or did it
15 really depend upon regime change, a drastic change?
16 SIR PETER RICKETTS: It is hard to imagine that an Iraq of
17 that kind was possible with Saddam Hussein in charge,
18 and if -- because the presumption of this work was that
19 in due course there would be a military operation. If
20 one had a military operation and was seeking an
21 end-state like that, it is quite hard to imagine that
22 you would still have Saddam Hussein in charge at the end
23 of it. So it was not an objective, but it was very
24 likely to be a consequence.
25 I do think that it was always possible throughout

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1 this exercise that Saddam Hussein could have chosen to
2 cooperate and we could have achieved the objectives of
3 1441 without a military campaign, but if we got into
4 a military campaign, I think it is hard to imagine the
5 conclusion of that without the disappearance of
6 Saddam Hussein.
7 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Could I add one point? There was also
8 the possibility, perhaps you have touched on already,
9 that under pressure, including from the military pressure and
10 build-up, Saddam Hussein would be persuaded by other
11 Arab heads of government to step down and go into exile;
12 in other words, we would achieve a change in the
13 regime's policies without military action.
14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: When the military planning began, how
15 far was it impeded by the need not to give the public
16 the impression that military action was indeed under
17 contemplation and in due course in preparation?
18 SIR PETER RICKETTS: It wasn't impeded at the sort of level
19 we were doing it because we were doing it in
20 a confidential way. We were preparing contingency
21 advice, because clearly no decision had been taken on
22 any military operation and that was in parallel with the
23 contingency work that the chiefs of staff and the
24 military planners were doing on possible UK
25 contributions.

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1 I think Sir David Manning set out to you the key
2 points in that.
3 Just moving forward a stage, it only really became
4 an issue when it would have been necessary to make
5 certain public steps in preparation. There we come much
6 further forward to October/November of 2002, where, for
7 example, embarking on call-up of reservists would have
8 sent very powerful public signals.
9 We, in the FCO, were working closely with the MoD
10 then to make sure that that was orchestrated so that it
11 helped the pressure to achieve 1441 and didn't cut
12 across that pressure, but that's coming at a later stage
13 in the story.
14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How far did the British participation
15 in military planning -- including, for example,
16 Major General Wilson, who was with Central Command in
17 Florida, and whom we will be seeing later this week --
18 add to the United States' perceptions that participation
19 in military action was all but inevitable.
20 SIR PETER RICKETTS: It is hard to answer that without being
21 from the United States, but from the records that I saw,
22 the Prime Minister and David Manning and the Foreign
23 Secretary could not have been clearer with the
24 United States, throughout the period from Crawford
25 onwards, that if the UK were to be part of some eventual

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1 military operation, not at that time decided, then it
2 would be essential that we exhausted every option short
3 of that, most particularly through the UN. That could
4 not have been clearer.
5 So I know that Sir Christopher Meyer was told at
6 various points by US interlocutors that our "yes" was
7 heard louder than our "but", but nonetheless, I think
8 the "but" was extremely clear, that this was working
9 with the Americans on preparations and plans and
10 contingencies, but all subject to a very clear
11 ministerial position that we were determined to exhaust
12 UN avenues in the first place.
13 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I understand that the UN avenue was
14 very much a caveat. Nevertheless, those that were
15 involved in the military plan, those in the
16 Foreign Office who were involved with it, was there not
17 somewhere a presumption that, in due course, there would
18 have to be a military operation, that with all the UN
19 route and the sanctions and the inspectors and Saddam,
20 that the presumption was actually, "We are going to go
21 to war"?
22 SIR PETER RICKETTS: That was not my presumption, no. My
23 presumption was that we were now in a phase of diplomacy
24 backed by the threat of force. It had been containment
25 up to 9/11. By the summer of 2002, it was diplomacy

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1 backed by the threat of force and the threat of force
2 became more and more obvious as the autumn went on.
3 But I was conscious of two things. First of all,
4 I was absolutely sure that it would not be possible for
5 British forces to join military operations without the
6 agreement of the Law Officers, the CDS would require the
7 Attorney General to make clear that he was giving
8 a lawful order in ordering our troops into military
9 operations. So that was an absolute requirement, and,
10 also, that the UN route offered Saddam Hussein the
11 opportunity to comply.
12 All along, right through to the eve of the second
13 resolution, I thought it was possible, perhaps not
14 likely, but possible, that Saddam Hussein would choose,
15 rather than face overwhelming military force, to
16 cooperate and comply. So it was never for sure that the
17 UK would be part of military operations or even really
18 that military operations were inevitable. I always
19 thought there was another option.
20 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Could I just add to that from my
21 perspective?
22 On your first point, I think at every level,
23 including mine, the point was always underlined to the
24 Americans that although we might be talking about
25 contingency planning, which was an essential thing to

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1 do, no decision had been taken and no decision would be
2 taken until much later, and that, as Sir Peter has
3 pointed out, there were various conditions for our
4 participation in military action, should it come to
5 that.
6 Secondly, I think it is fair to say that there was
7 a surge of hope after 1441. 1441 was quite a remarkable
8 achievement and if the Security Council could once more
9 come together, as it had before, and we could see
10 a track record going way back into the 90s, that, when
11 the Security Council were united, Saddam Hussein took
12 notice, as indeed he did on this occasion by letting the
13 inspectors back in, that there might, after all, be
14 a route to resolving this problem through the inspection
15 route and without military action.
16 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I would like to ask you about your
17 particular bailiwick with regard to the preparations of
18 military action with all these caveats of course.
19 What was being done in the wider Middle East context
20 to prepare countries like Egypt and Jordan,
21 Saudi Arabia, to accept the possibility that there might
22 be military action in the event of the UN route failing?
23 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I don't think it was quite like that.
24 Obviously there were very frequent conversations with
25 leaders in the Arab world, particularly those likely to

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1 be most affected. I already mentioned conversations
2 I had when I was Ambassador in Jordan. There were real
3 fears about the impact of military action in Iraq
4 articulated very clearly by the King of Jordan and
5 others, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia - 6
in terms of the impact it would have on the
7 stability of the Middle East, and the impact it would
8 have on the peace process -- the double standards I have
9 indicated -- and, indeed, the impact it would have on
10 the wider campaign against terrorism post-9/11. So they
11 were flagging those up.
12 What we were doing in the messages we were passing
13 to all these governments, particularly those with any
14 influence in Baghdad, was, "We hear all that and we can
15 see it very clearly, as clearly as you can, but this is
16 a very serious problem and it has to be resolved. We
17 have been at this for 11/12 years, we cannot go on,
18 particularly after 9/11, without resolving this threat".
19 Therefore, our hope was that they would add their
20 own actions and pressure through private or public
21 means, to persuade the Iraqi regime to start cooperating
22 seriously with the UN, and we assured them that, if they
23 did that, then, you know, we would react accordingly.
24 We were not looking for an excuse to take military
25 action, far from it. We did want this problem resolved,

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1 and that was as much, we thought, in their interest as
2 ours.
3 Of course, their perception of the threat, the WMD
4 threat, was not as serious as ours, with the one
5 exception perhaps of Iran, the neighbour that had
6 suffered quite severely from the actual use of WMD,
7 I have to say.
8 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: This dialogue continued right up to the
9 failure of the second resolution?
10 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Absolutely, yes, not least because there
11 was this idea, put forward by the Saudis, of the
12 possibility of persuading Saddam Hussein to step down if
13 enough time could be found after a final, final
14 ultimatum had been signed.
15 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How serious was that initiative?
16 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I think it was a serious idea, but
17 I don't think I ever saw much evidence that it was being
18 seriously followed up. Indeed -- well, perhaps it would
19 be fair to say that we didn't meet the conditions that
20 the Saudis and others thought were necessary, which was
21 really in their minds, I think, a second resolution and
22 then a gap of some weeks to allow Saddam Hussein to
23 comply or not comply. The hope was that in that period
24 he would step down and go into exile.
25 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: That, in a way, is another example of

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1 why the failure to obtain a second resolution really
2 affected the outcome and there was an alternative
3 outcome that was not war.
4 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Yes, although within the Foreign Office,
5 at least, one of the reasons we were pressing very hard
6 for a second resolution -- and perhaps we will come on
7 to this -- was to create a greater sense of legitimacy
8 for the whole operation which was going to be crucial
9 for the handling of the aftermath.
10 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Right. You have mentioned the
11 aftermath and I would like to ask Sir Peter, as early
12 as July 2002, the Foreign Office was asking about what
13 serious work the United States administration was doing
14 to hold Iraq together after Saddam's regime had been
15 overthrown.
16 Can you tell us what Britain's main concerns were at
17 that time, in the summer of 2002, with regard to
18 a future Iraqi leader, to the Kurds, to the Shias and
19 the need for a United States-led administration?
20 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Yes, with the proviso that it was not
21 clear to anyone, I think, in the summer of 2002 that
22 that was the inevitable destination, that we would have
23 a military operation and a new regime in Iraq and then
24 a post-conflict period, but we did indeed, from --
25 really from Crawford onwards, think in London and begin

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1 to talk to the Americans about that.
2 I mentioned our thinking about an end-state. We
3 were clear about the importance of territorial integrity
4 for Iraq, that we did not want to see Iraq come apart
5 with an independent Kurdish state being formed. We were
6 concerned that Iraq should evolve in the direction of
7 a stable neighbour in the region and not posing a threat
8 to its neighbours, and we were clear that the preferred
9 course, if it should come to a war and then
10 a post-conflict period, should be a UN-led
11 administration.
12 In Kosovo, we had had a UN-led transitional
13 administration, building on existing structures there.
14 In Afghanistan, we had had a very strong UN presence led
15 by Mr Brahimi, supporting a Loya Jorga, and then
16 a domestic process, and so we approached it in the same
17 frame of mind, that the UN had real experience in
18 dealing with post-conflict situations, a unique
19 legitimacy in doing so and that was our preferred route.
20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How did the United States respond to
21 that?
22 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I don't think in the summer of 2002 --
23 and subject to correction from Mr Chaplin -- they were
24 putting a great deal of thought into the aftermath
25 period. I think that only really picked up steam in the

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1 autumn, when our own discussions with them began to
2 intensify. In fact, Mr Chaplin was very much leading
3 that work. But it wasn't until the autumn, I think I'm
4 right in saying, that we started to really engage the
5 Americans in a serious discussions of this.
6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: It was in this earlier period that we
7 really were applying our thought to what the aftermath
8 situation would be and, as you say, the extent to which
9 the end-state would apply?
10 SIR PETER RICKETTS: We were indeed, because we had always
11 been concerned from early on in talking about the
12 possibility of regime change that regime change itself
13 is a wholly inadequate concept, because if it changes
14 and the regime that follows is equally bad, you have
15 achieved nothing.
16 So the only point of going through all this is to
17 come out with a position which is better for the people
18 of Iraq, better for the region and better for
19 international security. So we were thinking from an
20 early stage, yes.
21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In August 2002, very much to the
22 concern of the British Government, the newspapers here
23 were reporting a serious rift between the American
24 embassies on regime change, on the removal of Saddam by
25 force and on our emphasis on Iraq's weapons of mass

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1 destruction and going by UN Resolutions, the UN route.
2 How serious was this disagreement and how did it
3 show itself in the meetings between our respective
4 officials?
5 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I think it was not so much
6 a disagreement between the UK and US governments, but it
7 was more that US public opinion, US press and commentary
8 began to assume that war was inevitable and on a short
9 timetable and was well ahead of where the
10 US administration were.
11 As you heard from Sir David Manning, at the end
12 of August, the President himself and Condoleezza Rice
13 were assuring the Prime Minister and Sir David that
14 there were no firm plans and that the decision to go to
15 the UN was already taken. Of course, we were very
16 concerned. Indeed, the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw,
17 went in the middle of August for a long and detailed
18 discussion with Colin Powell about precisely this, in
19 which the Foreign Secretary set out very forcefully and
20 eloquently the case that the Prime Minister then made at
21 Camp David a few days later for the return to the UN,
22 which the President then announced in the September.
23 So we were certainly redoubling our consultations
24 with the US administration, but, as I say, I think it
25 was, if anything, more a gap between where US

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1 decision-making was and US public opinion was than a gap
2 between the US and UK governments.
3 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How serious was the feeling that those
4 in Washington urging the abandonment of the UN route
5 might get the upper hand?
6 For example, Sir Jeremy Greenstock told us last week
7 that he had actually said he would have personal
8 difficulties in continuing with the UN if that element
9 of Washington thinking were to continue.
10 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Yes, we were seriously concerned, yes,
11 because we had all along attached the highest importance
12 to the United Nations and the weapons inspectors.
13 Sitting in London, I was clear that if there was to
14 be a rapid move to military action without a final
15 opportunity for Saddam Hussein to comply, I didn't see
16 how we could be part of that.
17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: This was conveyed very forcefully,
18 I take it, at every level?
19 SIR PETER RICKETTS: It was indeed, and it was very much
20 part of the reason for the Foreign Secretary
21 exceptionally going to Washington in the middle
22 of August to see Colin Powell.
23 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Mr Chaplin, I would like to ask you
24 about a very important cross-Whitehall mission that you
25 headed in Washington in early November 2002, which

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1 dealt, I believe with the role that the UN were playing
2 in the transition in Iraq after the end of the Saddam
3 regime from military to civilian rule and to UN rule.
4 How did your mission proceed and what were the sort
5 of arguments and debates?
6 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Well, in fact, I was in Washington
7 several times. I think I was there in June, although
8 not specifically on that subject. I was certainly there
9 in November 2002, and in January 2003, leading
10 a cross-Whitehall team. We also included the
11 Australians, because the Australians had relevant recent
12 experience from East Timor of the sort of model that we
13 thought the Americans should follow.
14 The main objective was indeed to persuade them that
15 the UN should have a key role as soon as the fighting
16 had stopped, if it came to that. Of course, all of this
17 was on the caveat that this is not what we wanted, but
18 we needed to plan sensibly, and we, I suppose,
19 underlined, in particular, the legitimacy point, which
20 we have already discussed, but also the practicalities
21 of the burden sharing in terms of the skills of the
22 people you would need to administer a shattered economy,
23 a shattered society, after an invasion, and could not
24 easily be found just within our own resources. The UN
25 had a lot of experience in this sort of affair, Kosovo,

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East Timor and so on, and were well used to doing it, and they could be there for the long haul. This was obviously going to take years to -- they were going to need years of support and help in Iraq.

But also burden sharing in the sense of the financing, that if the Americans were determined to do it on their own, they were going to end up with a bill for the whole lot, and the political responsibility for it going right. It seemed to us obvious that they should go the UN route.

I have to say our arguments, certainly at my level, didn't have much impact. There was no problem convincing the State Department. Throughout this period I had a lot of contact with -- my opposite member was Bill Burns, and we had both been Ambassadors in Amman together, so we knew each other quite well. There was no problem convincing the State Department that this was the right way to go, and indeed that applied to a whole lot of post-war planning.

The problem was elsewhere in Washington, as has already been described by Sir Christopher Meyer, and it was a real US blind spot. I think they had a touching faith that, once Iraq had been liberated from the terrible tyranny of Saddam Hussein, everyone would be grateful and dancing in the streets and there would

1 really be no further difficulty and the Iraqis would
2 somehow magically take over and restore their state to
3 the democratic state that it should be in.
4 We tried to point out that that was extremely
5 optimistic. I think one of the problems that the
6 Americans had this view was that they relied heavily on
7 what they were hearing from different opposition groups,
8 and these were the opposition groups outside Iraq. We
9 were always a great deal more sceptical about what they
10 were saying and what they were claiming would happen in
11 the aftermath of an invasion, but I think some Americans
12 were hearing some very happy talk from the likes of
13 Mr Chalabi that, once Saddam Hussein had gone, they
14 didn't need to worry, everything would be fine, the
15 subtext being particularly if they handed over power to
16 someone like Mr Chalabi.
17 We were always very firmly of the view and expressed
18 this to everyone including the Americans, but also in
19 the region, that we held no particular candle for any
20 opposition, any exiled group. We had a view that they
21 carried actually very little credibility where it
22 mattered in Iraq. Of course, they had their own point
23 of view and they would have to test that where it
24 mattered back in Iraq when we got to that point or
25 stage.

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1 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: These discussions are taking place in
2 November and they are predicated upon a future Iraq
3 without Saddam and we are pushing for the UN group
4 there, the UN contribution there.
5 How much, in your mind, when you were in those
6 discussions in Washington, was there a feeling that the
7 UN route towards Saddam's disarmament, was not going to
8 work, that somehow this was urgent because there would,
9 or could, inevitably be a military operation?
10 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I think I talked before about the surge
11 of hope after 1441. So I think we still had hopes,
12 certainly on the UK side, that the UN route would
13 produce the result that we wanted without military
14 action.
15 I mean, we did get some traction. By January 2003,
16 though, as it turned out, that was rather late in the
17 day, though we hoped we would have more time, the
18 Americans were at least listening. We produced a raft
19 of papers that you have probably seen by the Iraq Policy
20 Unit which was in operation by then. So we bombarded
21 the Americans with lots of good advice, we hoped, on the
22 handling of the aftermath and said it needed to be
23 considered, which actually matched pretty well with what
24 the State Department had done. They had something
25 called the Future of Iraq Project. They had got

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1 together lots of Iraqis, academics and so on, producing
2 very detailed assessments of what would need to be done
3 to rebuild Iraq.
4 But I think there was -- probably difficult to
5 overestimate the degree of scepticism, not to say
6 outright hostility towards the UN from some quarters of
7 the US administration. They really didn't want to hand
8 things over to the UN. They just thought that was
9 against US interests and against the interests of Iraq.
10 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In regard to our planning, thinking
11 about the post-Saddam Iraq, you were present at the
12 Prime Minister's seminar in Downing Street --
13 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Yes.
14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: -- on 19 November 2002 --
15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: At this moment, can I just say for
16 the sake of transparency, this was a seminar that took
17 place at my instigation because I was aware of
18 misgivings amongst some specialists in Iraq, about the
19 direction of policy and it involved Toby Dodge,
20 Charles Tripp, Steve Simon, Michael Clark and
21 George Joffe, as well as myself.
22 I should also state that that was my only direct
23 engagement in Iraq policy-making.
24 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
25 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I have studied as carefully as I can

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1 the discussion about -- among the academics, their
2 input, and my question is, as a result of this
3 particular meeting, with its rather serious array of
4 possible options for post-Saddam Iraq, did this generate
5 further thinking within the Foreign Office and any
6 evolution of thinking?
7 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Yes, it did. It was a useful meeting
8 and I felt useful to expose the Prime Minister to some
9 of the likely problems after an invasion. I mean, there
10 is -- there had been a difficulty for everybody making
11 sense of what was going on inside Iraq. Of course, we
12 had no embassy there. We had a watching brief from
13 Amman, including diplomats from the embassy in Amman
14 going in to Iraq from time to time as the situation
15 permitted, but our information was certainly patchy. So
16 it was very useful to have the input from those
17 specialists who had studied it in depth as to the sort
18 of problems that -- particularly the state of Iraqi
19 society, what shape it was likely to be in after long
20 years of Saddam Hussein and sanctions and so on.
21 That certainly fed into the work being done by
22 Dominic Chilcott, whom I think you are seeing later, as
23 head of the Iraq Policy Unit, and into the papers that
24 we were preparing, and, therefore, into the stuff that
25 we were giving the Americans.

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1 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: One last question on this because
2 Baroness Prashar will be taking up the topic of the post
3 conflict Iraq planning, indeed what was done.
4 Did a point come in February/early March, when the
5 post-Iraq planning became more intense because it seemed
6 clear that the UN route was not going to work?
7 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: It was already pretty intense from late
8 2002, as far as we were concerned. Yes, it did
9 become -- it became sort of more real as we realised
10 that a time was likely to be short. I mean, I have to
11 say that, after the passage of 1441, apart from the
12 surge of hope that we might solve this through the UN
13 route, there was also a surge of hope, certainly on my
14 part, that this would give us more time.
15 Indeed, some exchanges I had with my opposite number
16 in Washington suggested that, despite all the
17 difficulties of military forces that had gone to the
18 region having to wait, it was not impossible to think
19 that one could delay things until the autumn of 2003,
20 and that would have been a very good thing, not least
21 because we would then have extra time for the planning that
22 was necessary. I suppose what I observed, to come back
23 to your question, in Washington was something of
24 a scramble of planning with the setting up of ORHA,
25 which I suspect we are going to come to in a bit more

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1 detail.
2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you very much.
3 Sir Peter, I want to move on to, if you like, the
4 final steps towards the military conflict, and
5 I wondered, first of all, how important were the
6 apparent weaknesses in Iraq's 12,000-page declaration
7 of December 7th in creating a sense that Iraq was
8 already in breach of Resolution 1441 and that the
9 inspectors were unlikely to be satisfied with their
10 ongoing quest that had only just begun?
11 I see a lot of discussion about this, particularly
12 between Britain and the United States, and I wondered
13 what your reflections were on that.
14 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I think the impact in Washington of the
15 incomplete declaration was very strong because it tended
16 to confirm the sceptics who thought that Iraq -- Saddam
17 was most unlikely to comply with the resolution.
18 Our response in London to that was to say, "Hold on,
19 operational paragraph 4 of the 1441 provided that
20 a further material breach was both an inadequate
21 declaration and a failure to comply", and we absolutely
22 did not give up hope that, despite an inadequate
23 declaration, we could, by effective inspection and good
24 intelligence to the inspectors, perseverance, show
25 progress in the inspection.

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1 We worked on that through December and January
2 and February. As others have said, of course, good
3 detective work was not enough. I mean, the test in the
4 resolution was full cooperation and we were looking for
5 signs of full cooperation, and, as January/February wore
6 on, it became increasingly clear we were not getting
7 that, but I think the impact of the incomplete
8 declaration was greater in Washington than it was in
9 London.
10 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Then with the three successive reports
11 by Hans Blix and the inspectors, was that pattern
12 repeated or did Britain find itself becoming more
13 convinced that this wasn't the full cooperation that was
14 required?
15 SIR PETER RICKETTS: We were getting increasingly worried
16 that it wasn't and Hans Blix' report of 27 January
17 suggested that UNMOVIC as well were concerned at the
18 level of cooperation. We had had a number of finds on
19 the basis of intelligence, as other witnesses have
20 described to you. We then had a rather different tone
21 from Mr Blix in his early February report. So it was up
22 and down at that period, but, yes, the trend, I think,
23 was towards growing concern and anxiety that we were not
24 at least getting full cooperation as provided in the US
25 resolution.

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1 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: At what point were we able to make some
2 assessments as to what timeframe Saddam should be
3 allowed within which to comply?
4 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Well, in January we found that the US
5 tempo was accelerating again towards military action and
6 we made a major effort from the Prime Minister
7 downwards, but including myself and others, and frequent
8 visits to and discussions with Washington, to make the
9 case again for more time. That developed into the idea
10 of a second resolution and then into the six tests, all
11 of which really were further efforts to give
12 Saddam Hussein a further opportunity to demonstrate full
13 cooperation after the shaky start that he had made.
14 I don't think we ever said six month or four months
15 or three months are essential, but we were certainly
16 feeling in January that more time was needed.
17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Then, with the failure of the second
18 resolution, this really threw everything into confusion.
19 Was there a point at which one could argue that the
20 steady build-up of troops which was taking place as
21 a spur to Saddam's compliance, that at a certain point
22 it became the inevitability of military action by those
23 troops?
24 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Yes, I think that's fair, and other
25 witnesses have described to you the difficulty of trying

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1 to ride the two horses of the political timetable, of
2 allowing enough time for a genuine conclusion that the
3 inspections had not produced full cooperation and the
4 military build-up, and I felt myself one of those who
5 was at the centre of that tension.
6 We were, as you say, trying our best to use the
7 build-up as leverage on Saddam Hussein to see at last,
8 at the 11th hour and 59th minute, that full cooperation
9 was a better course than the alternative.
10 With the failure of the second resolution, when it
11 became clear that we did not have nine votes, indeed we
12 would get vetos, I think we finally lost traction for
13 the political process and then it became a question of
14 the military timetable, but right up until that point we
15 were still trying to use the leverage that that
16 provided.
17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Right. Was there any discussion among
18 Ministers and officials as to whether, after the failure
19 of the second resolution, there might still be the
20 possibility of some form of Security Council consensus
21 with France that would be more likely if inspectors were
22 given more time?
23 SIR PETER RICKETTS: There were constant discussions, daily,
24 hourly discussions between the Prime Minister and the
25 Foreign Secretary and officials about our tactical

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1 options, but I think with the conclusion that we would
2 not get a second resolution the effective opportunity of
3 further time for further inspections ran out because we
4 did not have a good counter to the argument that
5 Saddam Hussein had been given an opportunity to show
6 full cooperation and, after four months, was not showing
7 it, and that, absent a second resolution, there was no
8 reason to think that a further one or two or three
9 months would reverse that process.
10 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Were they putting that argument to
11 those that were proposing -- say, the Canadians and
12 others -- that there should be a greater time limit, for
13 example, a 45-day extension, if you like, of the
14 compliance?
15 SIR PETER RICKETTS: My recollection of that period is that
16 we saw the only real remaining hope, given the growing
17 evidence that there was not full cooperation, was
18 a further tightening of the pressure through a second
19 resolution with an ultimatum. But an ultimatum without
20 a second resolution, a simple extension of time at that
21 point seemed to us to be unlikely to achieve anything.
22 I don't know whether Mr Chaplin has a more detailed
23 remembrance.
24 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Just to add an observation really.
25 I think the papers you have seen show you that ideas

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1 were being put up right until the last minute, including
2 after it seemed clear that a second resolution wasn't
3 going to happen, for example, after the French President had
4 made clear that he would veto any such
5 resolution. Nevertheless, ideas were going up about how
6 to devise an ultimatum which could show beyond
7 reasonable doubt that we had exhausted every possible
8 peaceful option. I think the 45-day option you referred to
9 came from the six more neutral members of the Security
10 Council.
11 But my observation really is to underline, I mean,
12 why did the political track run out at this stage. Why
13 wasn't there scope to extend it further? I think there
14 was -- and this was very clear, I think -- a fundamental
15 lack of trust at the heart of the Security Council
16 amongst the Permanent 5, and in particular between the
17 United States and France, and I think it boiled down to
18 the fact that the United States could not -- did not
19 believe that there were any circumstances in which the
20 French would join military action, whatever happened,
21 however much time we gave the inspectors, whatever
22 Saddam Hussein did.
23 There was some evidence for that, although, at my
24 level, my French opposite numbers waxed indignant that
25 they had ruled out military action, they just didn't

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1 have the same view of the threat as we did, they would
2 claim. But there was that disbelief on the US part, and
3 on the French part there was disbelief that there were
4 any circumstances in which the United States would agree
5 to a peaceful exit from this, that they were going to
6 get Saddam and they were just using this UN process as
7 an excuse. We were in the, actually, not unusual
8 position of trying to bridge that gap, and in the end we
9 couldn't and that's why the political road ran out.
10 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Was there no way that Britain could
11 have taken an independent stance on this? For example,
12 Sir Jeremy Greenstock had proposed a seven-day
13 ultimatum, and yet, this somehow didn't get any
14 traction, I take it, with the United States. Could it
15 have been negotiated?
16 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Sir Peter was there, but I think the
17 seven days, which was a very short period, was imposed
18 by the Americans.
19 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I think after four months, the idea
20 that a few more days was going to make much difference
21 didn't have much credibility. At this point you come
22 back to what Sir David Manning was telling you yesterday
23 about the Prime Minister's fundamental conviction that,
24 having exhausted the UN route -- and I think he judged
25 that by now the UN route was exhausted -- his commitment

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1 was to be with the United States in supporting the
2 United States in this effort to combat Saddam Hussein
3 and his weapons of mass destruction.
4 So at that point, I think, that sense of commitment
5 and his own commitment to the goal of removing WMD by
6 military force, if it was not possible by the UN, became
7 the dominant force of the policy.
8 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So that commitment essentially meant
9 that those who felt there had been or should be more
10 time for Saddam, however limited, really had no say, no
11 input?
12 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Everybody had an input and there had
13 been absolutely strenuous efforts and ingenuity
14 exercised by all concerned to think of new ways and yet
15 new ways of giving Saddam Hussein yet another
16 opportunity to show full cooperation, but I think around
17 the time that the second resolution clearly was not
18 going to pass, I think that Ministers conclude that
19 the UN route was to all intents and purposes exhausted.
20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: My final question relates to the
21 48-hour ultimatum to Saddam that he and his son should
22 leave Iraq or face war. To what extent was that an
23 Anglo-American ultimatum and an Anglo-American decision?
24 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I do not have a clear memory of that,
25 I am afraid. I'd have to do further research on that.

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1 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: No, nor do I, and I haven't actually
2 seen any sort of documentary evidence that lay behind
3 that ultimatum, but I think it picked up on the idea we
4 mentioned earlier, that there was an idea coming out of
5 the region that, at the last gasp, a chance should be
6 given to resolve this peaceably by the route of
7 Saddam Hussein going into exile or stepping down and
8 handing over to somebody else.
9 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So could that ultimatum have activated
10 in a way what you were saying earlier, the suggestions
11 by various governments, such as the Saudi Arabian
12 Government, that Saddam would go into exile or there
13 would be some peaceful removal of Saddam?
14 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I think if somebody had produced
15 a credible proposal and had proved that Saddam Hussein
16 was serious about accepting it, then of course we would
17 have paused, but that didn't happen.
18 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you very much.
19 THE CHAIRMAN: I think we are coming fairly close to having
20 a break, but before we do, and before Baroness Prashar
21 takes up the questioning after the break, I will just
22 ask my colleagues if they would like to follow up.
23 Sir Roderic?
24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Sir Peter, you have talked of the options
25 paper that was drawn up in the Cabinet Office in

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1 March of 2002 and said that the Foreign Secretary had
2 put minutes to the Prime Minister, including one that
3 had subsequently leaked, about the paper before the
4 Prime Minister went to Crawford.
5 Can you remember whether this paper was discussed
6 collectively by Ministers, by Cabinet Ministers, before
7 the Prime Minister went to Crawford, and can you recall
8 what decisions Ministers took on the options that were
9 presented to them in the paper?
10 SIR PETER RICKETTS: My memory is the same as
11 Sir David Manning's, as he explained to you yesterday,
12 that there was no particular decision point before
13 Crawford from which a new policy emerged. I remember
14 more a process of feeding in advice to the
15 Prime Minister in preparation for Crawford.
16 I can't tell you whether there was a meeting of
17 Ministers. It was not one that I was present at. The
18 Cabinet Office paper was certainly a comprehensive paper
19 that was put up to Ministers, all the relevant Ministers
20 at the same time and I know that the Foreign Secretary
21 had a number of bilateral conversations with the
22 Prime Minister in the run-up to Crawford. I'm not aware
23 of any collective sort of Cabinet ministerial
24 discussion.
25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: We have all read the paper. It is an

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1 impressive piece of work. It is what you would probably
2 call a classic Civil Service piece of drafting. It is
3 very comprehensive.
4 Are you saying, in effect, that this paper, having
5 been put up to the Prime Minister and other Cabinet
6 Ministers, there were no decisions on it, that then
7 there was a vacuum thereafter?
8 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I'm not saying there was a vacuum. I'm
9 saying it did not seek decisions, it did not put options
10 for Ministers to decide. Actually, there were no
11 decisions to take at that time, because, as Sir David
12 explained to you yesterday, the purpose of the
13 Prime Minister's visit to Crawford was to sound out
14 where President Bush was, to compare notes with him and
15 then to come back and to set work in hand, which is what
16 happened.
17 The Prime Minister came back and set work in hand
18 which led on then to the work in Whitehall which we have
19 talked about, the private meetings on implications of
20 potential military action and so on.
21 So it wasn't a decision-making point and, as I have
22 said in earlier evidence, actually the most operational
23 issue on the agenda at Crawford was the crisis between
24 Israel and Palestine and the --
25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I will come on to that in a minute.

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1 I simply observe that Sir Christopher Meyer has argued
2 that our policy did change in this period, that he
3 received -- and he put this in print in his book --
4 instructions of a different kind, taking his cue from
5 a Sir David Manning coming out a few days after the
6 options paper was drafted, and, when you look at the
7 paper and you compare it with what he said, it would
8 appear that the paper had been part of a process of
9 shifting policy.
10 If I can now turn to the Middle East peace process
11 and just ask Mr Chaplin, you said that you were
12 disappointed that the Americans moved so slowly on the
13 road map, that it was published so late in the day. Why
14 was the American administration so reluctant to move
15 forward with the road map and to what extent might this
16 have been due to pressure from Israel on the
17 administration?
18 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I think this, as you know, is a very
19 long saga and the US administrations have always
20 struggled to find a way through. Perhaps it is fair to
21 say that they had many other preoccupations,
22 particularly after September 2001, and they were subject
23 to pressure from Israel and Israel's friends in the
24 United States. So it wasn't exactly a surprise. It was
25 a disappointment, not least because what to us was the

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1 compelling case for ensuring that there was some visible
2 progress, some visible improvement at least of the
3 situation in the occupied territories, in order to
4 provide a better backdrop for what we were trying to do
5 with Iraq.
6 SIR RODERIC LYNE: We were setting this as a very important
7 condition really, a very important part of our position
8 that there should be movement on the Middle East process
9 as part of the pre-conditions, if you like, for our
10 support on Iraq, and at Crawford this was subject
11 number 1, because the situation was so bad, the Intifada
12 was so bad, but you are saying it really wasn't
13 surprising that the Americans, despite all that, moved
14 so slowly?
15 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I'm not saying they didn't try, I'm just
16 saying those are very intractable problems.
17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But we felt they could have gone faster
18 with it, despite it being a very intractable problem?
19 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: They could have tried harder.
20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: They could have tried harder. Thank you.
21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It wasn't my original question but
22 just following on from that, I remember hearing during
23 2002 a number of arguments from Americans that the road
24 to peace in the Middle East went through Baghdad, that
25 somehow this was going to make matters easier. Did you

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1 remember discussions on that? Did you ever see any
2 merit in that view?
3 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: It wasn't the sort of thing that I heard
4 from my opposite numbers in the State Department. It
5 was part, I think, of President Bush's rhetoric at one
6 stage, so it was rather on the sort of neo-con tendency,
7 that somehow, if democracy would break out in Iraq, and
8 then, lo and behold, democracy would break out in
9 Palestine and this would be a terrifically good thing.
10 It would have been, but we didn't think it likely.
11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you have discussions with the
12 Israelis on this issue, on what they thought about Iraq?
13 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: We were in touch with the Israelis.
14 I saw the Israeli Ambassador here from time to time.
15 They, of course, had a keen interest in what we were
16 planning to do in Iraq, and within the region,
17 ironically, probably Israel and Iran took -- they were
18 the two states that took the most positive view of the
19 removal of Saddam Hussein, for obvious reasons.
20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you.
21 My question was going back to what you were saying
22 before about the aftermath of the war -- and obviously
23 we are going to come into this in some detail and what
24 happened after the war, but I would be interested in how
25 you saw thing in terms of preparations for the aftermath

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1 on the eve of the war in March? How concerned were you
2 about preparations?
3 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I think we were all very concerned at
4 the lack of preparations in terms of what we could see
5 happening in Washington. What was happening there was
6 that the rather detailed work that had already been done
7 by the State Department over many months, didn't seem to
8 be finding its way into the policy-making, the
9 preparation for the aftermath, which was all in the
10 hands of the Pentagon. The Pentagon took the decision
11 to set up this organisation, ORHA, and appoint an
12 ex-General to be in charge of it.
13 But there was a certain disregard -- an
14 unwillingness, I think, to use the State Department
15 expertise to devise a policy and -- or indeed to attach
16 some of the experts who actually knew a lot about the
17 region and spoke the language and so on.
18 Again, this goes back to what I was saying earlier
19 about a touching belief that we shouldn't worry so much
20 about the aftermath because it was all going to be
21 sweetness and light.
22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But you were worried about the
23 aftermath --
24 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Yes.
25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- and you were also arguing very

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1 strongly that the UN should have an important role in
2 the aftermath. Had that discussion made any progress
3 by March?
4 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: As I said, we had had these two quite
5 detailed discussions when I had led missions to
6 Washington in November 2002 and January 2003, and
7 I think it was the second of those meetings we had
8 actually sent across -- one of the papers we had sent
9 across was precisely, I think you may have seen, "Why a
10 UN administration in Iraq would be good for US
11 interests". It was spelt out, the points I have already
12 referred to as to why we thought this was a good idea,
13 and we had also tried to underline that this did not
14 mean putting US forces under some sort of UN control.
15 We could understand why that would be unacceptable, but
16 there were already in existence models, possibly from
17 East Timor, where you could have overall UN's blessing
18 for a set-up in which the military side was still taken care
19 of by a coalition, establishing a chain of command, and
20 civilian powers were taken care of by a UN special
21 representative, and that was the model that we were
22 advocating.
23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think, as we have heard both from
24 Sir Jeremy Greenstock and Sir David Manning, one of the
25 consequences of the loss of the second resolution and

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1 the degree of distrust that developed amongst the
2 Permanent 5 was that it was going to be much harder to
3 find a route for the UN into the aftermath planning,
4 into the actual administration.
5 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: We did get there eventually with
6 a resolution in May 2003, a bit late.
7 THE CHAIRMAN: I think we will be picking that up after the
8 break.
9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I'm interested in the anxieties that
10 might have developed, because you spoke earlier about
11 how our political track was running out, but, in
12 practice, a new political track was about to begin, and
13 the disjunction between the two you could see at the
14 time might spell trouble.
15 SIR PETER RICKETTS: You could. If I might just pick up,
16 and we will come on to this after the break, but
17 actually the remarkable thing to me was that we did
18 manage to get 1483 by 22 May. Two months after this
19 catastrophic breakdown in the Permanent 5 unity in the
20 Security Council, we came out with a 27-paragraph
21 extremely complex, detailed important resolution, which
22 provided for a lot of the future administration of
23 Iraq --
24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: We will be coming to that. There
25 are very specific questions about that.

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1 SIR PETER RICKETTS: -- so I think the remarkable thing is
2 how effectively the Security Council did pull together
3 again.
4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: My concern -- and this is my only
5 point -- is that the views in March, as we were about to
6 go to war, must have been very pessimistic about what
7 was likely to happen, given the state that you have
8 described of American thinking, of the fact that the
9 State Department had done this work, that this was now
10 being disregarded, ORHA had just been set up
11 in February, I think. Was there a warning to Ministers
12 that we just were maybe not prepared enough for what we
13 were about to take over?
14 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I think Ministers were aware and indeed,
15 at their level, they constantly stressed to their
16 American opposite numbers the need for proper aftermath
17 planning. The message we got back was -- the message we
18 constantly got from the American side, particularly
19 those that were frustrated with the lack of planning, as
20 they saw it, was, "Please, could we make this clearer at
21 a higher level in the US administration?" Colin Powell
22 didn't need to be convinced, but President Bush and
23 Donald Rumsfeld did.
24 So, yes, we were very concerned that -- I mean, our
25 response was, as I say, to keep feeding in the ideas of

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1 what we thought was the sensible way ahead on the issues
2 that the US administration was obviously going to be the
3 greater partner of this enterprise and we were going to
4 be the junior partner, and to offer, which was accepted,
5 people to sit alongside the US opposite numbers, in
6 particular, General Tim Cross, who was basically
7 Jay Garner's number 2, and then we followed up with
8 John Sawers going to Baghdad to be a senior member of
9 the CPA, and a number of others, I think 20 or so,
10 across Whitehall. But that was an attempt to improve
11 what was a pretty dire state of lack of planning.
12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In a sense, is it fair to say at
13 this stage that we had a plan for regime toppling but
14 not particularly for regime change?
15 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Just commenting on the eve of war, when
16 you go into a war, you go into a period of complete
17 uncertainty. You never know what is going to happen,
18 and this was one concern we had. We had many others.
19 We had concerns about CBW attack on our troops. We had
20 concerns about Iraqi retaliation against the region,
21 against British assets, against other regional
22 countries. We had a whole series of concerns and we
23 didn't know how long this conflict period would last.
24 In addition, we had concerns about the state of
25 US planning for the aftermath, but it was one of

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1 a number of concerns as the peace process ended and the
2 conflict loomed.
3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The one thing you did know is, if
4 the campaign was successful, we would be responsible
5 with the United States for Iraq. So we needed some idea
6 of what we were going to do.
7 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Indeed, and we had been doing a lot of
8 detailed planning on that. We were very concerned at
9 the very late stage that the lead on the US side would
10 switch from the State Department to the Pentagon and to
11 Jay Garner. We will perhaps come on to talk about the
12 implications of that, but, yes, we were certainly
13 concerned about that.
14 THE CHAIRMAN: I suppose a state of great uncertainty is an
15 ideal time to take a break.
16 SIR PETER RICKETTS: May I make one more comment, just back
17 on Sir Roderic's point, if you don't mind, one last
18 thought on Crawford and whether there were new policy
19 decisions taken by the British Government in the run-up
20 to it?
21 Just to leave it on the record, my own perception
22 was that the Prime Minister did not go to Crawford with
23 any new policy decision to put to President Bush.
24 I think President Bush's confirmation that he had asked
25 for some planning to be done in CentCom moved us on to

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1 a new phase, because it then became necessary for the
2 British Government to decide how to engage with that
3 planning and how to take that forward, but I don't
4 feel -- I know that Sir Christopher has talked about
5 having new instructions. I think he was referring to
6 the approach that Sir David Manning took in his meeting
7 with Condoleezza Rice just before Crawford, where he had
8 begun to set out the position that, if the Americans
9 wanted to establish a coalition, then they would need to
10 meet the conditions laid down by their coalition, but it
11 felt to me at the time like this was not a new departure
12 in British policy, but following the confirmation in
13 Crawford, we were in a new phase of planning. Decisions
14 really only came much later.
15 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Let's break now and for those in
16 the room who would like to share the break and go
17 outside, please be back within ten minutes, because then
18 we will have to close the doors and that will be it for
19 the rest of the morning, I am afraid, for those of you
20 who don't make it in time. Thank you.
21 (11.23 am)
22 (Short break)
23 (11.40 am)
24 THE CHAIRMAN: I think it will have been obvious to all of
25 us that we have been having some microphone problems

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through the morning. So we are going to try a different seating arrangement, tweaking various elements of the system. I hope it will work better, but I beg your indulgence. We will try to make it work as well as we can, as soon as we can. That said, and if you could hear me say that, I will turn to Baroness Prashar to open the questioning.

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you very much indeed, Chairman.

I want to look at the whole question of the post-conflict planning, but before I get into that, Sir Peter, you said before the break that there was a presumption there will be a military operation, but that regime change wasn't the objective, but was a consequence.

Now, against that background, what sort of planning was taking place about the aftermath?

SIR PETER RICKETTS: We started planning in the autumn of 2002, and at that point, of course, it wasn't clear exactly what scenario there would be in terms of a new regime in Iraq, but we assumed, I think, from that point onwards, that we would be dealing with an Iraq without Saddam Hussein and in the aftermath of a military intervention.

Therefore, we based our planning on the assumption

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1 that the right vehicle for that would be the UN, which
2 had had extensive experience of post-conflict
3 stabilisation work in a number of different countries.
4 But we looked at a range of scenarios and a range of
5 possible outcomes from ones where it might be possible
6 to work with large parts of the previous Iraqi
7 administration to scenarios where it would not, and we
8 had to look at a fairly wide range of scenarios.
9 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What were your objectives? What did
10 you want to achieve?
11 SIR PETER RICKETTS: That's back to the end-state that we
12 worked out, that I talked about in earlier evidence. In
13 other words, we focused on removing Saddam Hussein's
14 weapons of mass destruction, in the process ensuring
15 that Iraq was able to safeguard his territorial
16 integrity, to have a government that represented all of
17 the people, respected human rights, was a good neighbour
18 in the region rather than a source of instability. We
19 had a number of objectives set out in the end-state,
20 which, as I say, we began drafting in April 2002 and
21 which was incorporated into the military plans.
22 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can you give me some detail in terms
23 of what were the structures and the processes for
24 post-conflict planning in the FCO and across Whitehall?
25 SIR PETER RICKETTS: From the summer or autumn of 2002, the

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1 Cabinet Office, Sir David Manning and his team in the
2 Cabinet Office were taking an interest in this and the
3 FCO were leading work on a large part of that planning.
4 Initially, it was done from our Middle East department
5 under Edward Chaplin, among the many other things they
6 had to do. We devoted more and more people to that as
7 the autumn went on into the early part of 2003 and,
8 by February 2003, we formed a separate unit to
9 concentrate on planning for the post-conflict period.
10 But, of course, we were not the only actors. Other
11 departments around Whitehall were very involved as well
12 and had to be involved. The MoD, of course, because
13 there had to be a clear meshing with the military
14 planning, but also DFID, and DFID's particular focus in
15 the pre-conflict period for the post-conflict period was
16 on the humanitarian issues, and DFID led work in
17 Whitehall in preparation for the humanitarian emergency
18 that we assumed would follow immediately from any
19 military action.
20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Was this a question of coordination
21 with other government departments or was it a kind of
22 policy planning across the government departments?
23 SIR PETER RICKETTS: It was certainly a question of
24 coordination. It began more as a policy planning
25 exercise, when we were still clearly in a contingency

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1 phase, as the likelihood of military action became more
2 and more strong, it acquired a much more operational
3 focus and we began to plan operationally for deployment
4 of people in support of ORHA, the humanitarian responses
5 through DFID, and then all the other aspects of
6 planning. So it became more operational as the months
7 went on.
8 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What advice were you giving to the
9 Ministers at Number 10 at this stage and up to the
10 aftermath?
11 SIR PETER RICKETTS: First of all, that it had to be taken
12 extremely seriously; secondly, that we were very
13 doubtful indeed about the neo-con assumption that
14 international forces would be welcomed as liberators
15 and, as Mr Chaplin was saying, that somehow very quickly
16 Iraqi political life would resume and the occupying
17 forces would not carry these responsibilities. We were
18 very doubtful about that. We warned Ministers that this
19 would be a long period of post-conflict work for the
20 international community, which is why we then said that
21 we thought it was important that, if possible, the UN
22 should take on the lead.
23 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Was this advice being listened to?
24 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Absolutely, and Mr Blair and the
25 Foreign Secretary, in their many conversations, always

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1 made a point, I think, of stressing to the US that they
2 must take planning for post-conflict Iraq just as
3 seriously as planning for any military operation.
4 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But how did you know about the wider
5 Iraqi politics and society, given the fact that there
6 had been no sort of Embassy there for a number of years?
7 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Shall I pick up on that? We had
8 a number of sources. As I think I mentioned earlier,
9 our Embassy in Amman had a watching brief on Iraq, and
10 actually Amman's not a bad watching post for that, a lot
11 of Iraqi exiles there and a lot of trade with the
12 country. That included diplomats from time to time
13 visiting Baghdad and southern Iraq. We had a lot of
14 contacts with exiled groups, most of whom seemed to be
15 in London -- I mean, they were in London and Washington,
16 but a lot of them were in Washington[1], and they would be
17 in regular contact with the people who worked with me in
18 the Middle East department.
19 We had contacts with close allies, like the French
20 and others, who had long experience of, and still had
21 representation in, Iraq, and then we had a number of
22 academic institutions. Everyone was focusing very much
23 on this issue, and Sir Lawrence Freedman has already
24 mentioned the meeting of academics in Number 10. But
25 there were other -- you know, Chatham House and others

[1] The witness has subsequently clarified that he meant to refer here to London.

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1 were convening all sorts of interesting experts and we
2 tried to keep up with that as much as possible. There
3 was a huge flood of academic work and journalistic work
4 going on.
5 So I don't think we lacked for sources of
6 information, but I think one of the problems is that
7 actually nobody outside Iraq, including Iraqi exiles,
8 quite realised how broken Iraqi society had become in
9 the last few years under Saddam Hussein and the pressure
10 of sanctions and so on.
11 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But you made no attempt to fill
12 these gaps. Why was there such a lack of information
13 about Iraq?
14 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I don't think there was a lack of
15 information. As I have described, it came from multiple
16 sources and we tried to keep in touch with it. What I am
17 saying is the information compiled outside Iraq didn't
18 necessarily accurately reflect the reality inside Iraq,
19 and nobody really had that information.
20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You were in Jordan at the time?
21 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I was in Jordan from May 2000
22 until April 2002.
23 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: How would you characterise your
24 coverage on the reporting of Iraq during that time?
25 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: We reported on it constantly because it

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1 was of deep concern to the Jordanian Government.
2 The discussions we had with the Jordanian Government
3 in this period were more about what we were going to do
4 about the sanctions regime. Jordan, you may remember,
5 at the time of the first Gulf War, had to deal with
6 a lot of popular support for Saddam Hussein and that
7 popular support was very much still there.
8 One of the problems that I think previous witnesses
9 have referred to, about the weakening of the
10 containment, was that the sanctions regime and the
11 Oil For Food programme was seen as some sort of
12 collective punishment of the Iraqi people and made the
13 Jordanians very upset. So there was quite a lot of
14 pressure on the government.
15 This goes back to the double standards we were
16 talking about earlier, because, of course, similar
17 suffering was being seen on the same television screens
18 of Al Jazeera and others of Palestinians suffering from
19 what the Israelis were doing. So it was quite powerful.
20 But the main Jordanian concern at that time was what
21 our narrowing and deepening of sanctions would actually
22 mean for them, because, as I mentioned earlier, I think,
23 they were very heavily dependent on Iraq for their oil
24 supplies -- oil was supplied at a very favourable
25 price -- and very dependent on the export of goods --

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1 which was perfectly legitimate -- under a Memorandum of
2 Understanding, which was very important to the Jordanian
3 economy. So they were very nervous that what we were
4 proposing to do with the narrowing of the sanctions
5 would have a bad effect on them, particularly as the
6 Iraqis made it very clear that if Jordan was to support
7 that change or take part in any of the ideas being
8 talked about, for example, of reinforcing monitoring on
9 the borders, then those favours would be cancelled;
10 there would be no more trade, there would be no more
11 oil.
12 Therefore, a lot of the discussion at that time,
13 when I was in Amman, was about whether, if it came to
14 that, other Arab states would step in and provide Jordan
15 with some sort of safety net; in other words, supplies
16 of oil at a similarly favourable price and outlets for
17 their goods.
18 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Going back to the planning, because
19 I do really want to understand, in terms of the planning
20 that was going on in the UK, who was dealing with that
21 in the United States and what were the links between the
22 two governments on that?
23 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Well, in the early stages, it was being
24 led by the State Department and I think I mentioned
25 earlier, the Future of Iraq Project and I think you have

1 probably seen some of the papers that that produced.
2 Very detailed, drawing on Iraqi sources, a lot of Iraqi
3 exiles were involved, as I understand, drawing those up.
4 But, as has already been described, the
5 State Department, having been in the lead, then lost the
6 lead to the Pentagon, and the Pentagon had a rather
7 different approach and we have already been into that.
8 They had a different approach in the assumptions they
9 made about what would follow military invasion. They
10 had a different approach in wanting to have nothing to
11 do, or as little to do as possible, with the
12 United Nations, but they were very much leading it and
13 it was they who set up the ORHA organisation.
14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What steps, if any, did they take to
15 involve us in the thinking and planning?
16 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: They didn't take many steps to involve
17 their own colleagues in the administration in planning.
18 On the other hand, they were perfectly happy to listen
19 to us. Whenever I went to Washington, on those two
20 missions I led in November 2002 and January 2003, I was
21 received in the Pentagon, but actually the main
22 discussions were in the National Security Council and
23 chaired, as I recall, by Elliot Abrams, at which all the
24 relevant departments were represented.
25 So it wasn't that they didn't listen, and they were

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1 grateful for the papers that we provided and the ideas
2 that we provided, but I don't think the main ideas we
3 were putting forward, in particular about, as we saw it
4 the Whitehall, the necessity of getting the UN involved in
5 the administration, I don't think those ideas got much
6 traction where they counted, which was with the
7 Pentagon.
8 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Did we make a very strenuous effort
9 to influence them? Because the picture one is getting
10 is that communication was taking place between
11 Number 10, the Prime Minister, the President,
12 Condoleezza Rice and Sir David Manning, and the
13 conversations taking place between yourselves and the
14 Foreign Secretary and Colin Powell. But was this part
15 of the problem, that there was not across the board
16 communications, or were we actually talking to the wrong
17 people?
18 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I think these points were made at all
19 levels up to and including the Prime Minister talking to
20 President Bush.
21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What was the response?
22 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: The response was usually, "Yes, we hear
23 what you are saying, and you may have a point there",
24 and so on, but it just never translated further down
25 into a change of direction by ORHA.

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1 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I think to make just one point, I think
2 the decision that Secretary Rumsfeld and the ORHA
3 organisation should be given the lead was an internal
4 organisational decision that we didn't have much
5 visibility of or traction on in the end, and I think it
6 reflected the fact that, at that point, with a war
7 impending, the Pentagon was the dominant policy player
8 in Washington, and that is something that, in the end,
9 we were not able to have very much traction on.
10 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But we were not -- how much of this
11 was kind of conditioned by the fact that the
12 conversations were very much focusing on regime change
13 and there wasn't much attention being paid in the
14 United States to the aftermath?
15 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I don't think it was so much that,
16 I think it was that, with war looming, and with the
17 Pentagon the key policy-making department on that, they
18 were also able to get for themselves the lead on
19 post-conflict work as well.
20 I suppose it seemed to them that it made sense to
21 put both of those elements into a single whole, but, in
22 fact, what it did was take away from the
23 State Department the lead in an area that they had been
24 working on over several months, and I think in practice
25 meant that ORHA started with very little time, very

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1 little expertise, very few people on what turned out to
2 be an enormous undertaking that it was too big for.
3 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Of course, the widely recognised
4 problems with the Organisation of Reconstruction and
5 Humanitarian Assistance, and, of course, the Coalition
6 Provisional Authority. But what was your understanding
7 of the problems and what did the FCO and the government
8 as a whole do to address these?
9 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Shall I perhaps start and then ask
10 Mr Chaplin to take up the story?
11 When it was clear that ORHA was going to be given
12 the lead on the US side, I suppose we had a choice of
13 either to join in or stand back from it. Since we were
14 participating in the military action, we had
15 a responsibility to be part of the post-conflict
16 stabilisation work, and, therefore, we decided to opt in
17 to ORHA, to send people into ORHA and to engage with
18 them.
19 All our planning assumed that, at the moment the
20 fighting stopped, it would have to be for the coalition
21 armed forces to provide the initial security and the
22 initial humanitarian support to the population, because
23 security wouldn't allow civilians to operate there. So
24 it was clear that there was going to be a very initial
25 phase where it was the responsibility of armed forces.

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1 It is like that in every conflict.
2 But then it became clear that this ORHA organisation
3 would move in from Kuwait and would take over civilian
4 responsibilities. But there we come to an area where
5 there was a disagreement between London and Washington
6 and that was on the legal powers that an occupying power
7 has in a country under occupation.
8 I think we were probably more concerned about the
9 legal authority of ORHA and we were clear -- the legal
10 experts can give you more evidence on this -- that
11 absent a UN Security Council Resolution, then our
12 occupation was governed by the fourth Geneva Convention
13 and the 1907 Hague powers, which are fairly restrictive
14 in what they allow occupying forces to do. You can give
15 them some responsibilities, but they are fairly
16 restrictive.
17 That's why we pressed forward quickly for
18 a comprehensive Security Council Resolution which gave
19 us the authority --
20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: This is 1483?
21 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Yes, but that took until 22 May to
22 achieve, and in that period we were participating in
23 ORHA, but under some constraint, because our view of the
24 legal obligations was fairly narrow, whereas I think it
25 is fair to say that on the US side they were getting on

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1 with it and they had a more extensive view of what ORHA
2 should be doing.
3 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But this resolution, as I understand
4 it, you know, recognised the US and the UK, but did not
5 sort of endorse it. Is that ...?
6 SIR PETER RICKETTS: As I said before, I think it is a very
7 impressive piece of work eight weeks after the Security
8 Council were so divided and it provides in some detail
9 for the administration of Iraq including Oil For Food
10 and oil revenues and the development of Iraq.
11 The most tricky policy point in the drafting,
12 I think, was the relationship between the UN and the
13 coalition, the -- the "authority" as it is called in the
14 resolution, and the resolution provides that there will
15 be a special representative of the UN, which became
16 Mr Vieira de Mello, and he would work in coordination
17 with the authority, but the UN were very concerned not
18 to be subjugated to the authority of the coalition.
19 Equally, as Mr Chaplin has said, there were many on
20 the American side who didn't want to feel that they had
21 lost the initiative to the UN. So the resolution
22 reflects a careful balance providing for close
23 coordination effectively. It goes back to an agreement
24 which Mr Blair and President Bush struck at the Belfast
25 summit shortly after the fighting in which it was agreed

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1 that the UN would have a vital role. The Americans
2 accepted that. That was then translated into 1483, but
3 it was a very important text for giving British
4 officials and workers the authority we felt we needed.
5 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can I go back to a point you
6 mentioned earlier, that you decided to work with the
7 organisation and you sent some people? You seconded
8 some people to this organisation. What sort of people
9 did you send and what kind of skills did they have?
10 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Well, the most senior person we sent in
11 the initial stages was Tim Cross, who was a retired
12 General but with some relevant experience, I think, in
13 post-conflict work.
14 Then really we responded to US demands on our own
15 perception of where we could most add value in sending
16 other people -- well, other senior people. Of course,
17 we sent later, John Sawers to be part of the Coalition
18 Provisional Authority. But there were others from
19 across Whitehall with particular expertise who fitted
20 into gaps that the Americans said needed filling.
21 We hoped that by putting people alongside their US
22 counterparts that we would be able to exert some direct
23 influence on what they were planning to do. But the --
24 that wasn't always easy.
25 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What was the reporting mechanism?

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1 You had people on the ground. Were they reporting back
2 to you what was happening?
3 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: One of the problems with the lack of
4 planning by ORHA was lack of decent communications.
5 THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry to interrupt, do you mean physical
6 communications?
7 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Yes, email and other communications. So
8 in terms of finding out what was going on on the ground,
9 we did have communications. Of course we were setting
10 up in parallel our own embassy as well, but most people
11 were using unclassified email to communicate in the
12 early weeks and it took some time to sort out decent
13 communications. Even communications within Baghdad
14 weren't all that good, let alone with capitals.
15 SIR PETER RICKETTS: One other point perhaps to add is
16 because we, on the military side, took particular
17 responsibility for the south, the southern provinces,
18 I think our contributions to ORHA tended to be
19 concentrated in the southern province as well. So we
20 were taking on quite a lot of responsibility for the
21 civilian presence in the south as well as the military
22 presence.
23 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Do you feel that you had the right
24 people and the resources and the people in the right
25 places immediately after the invasion?

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1 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I think in the immediate aftermath we
2 had, I think, about 20 of the 200 or so people who
3 deployed into Iraq from Kuwait in those early days.
4 Therefore, I think we were making a very proportionate
5 contribution.
6 I think we struggled to increase the numbers of
7 trained civilians who were prepared to deploy. As the
8 need grew, we found it more difficult and, indeed, by
9 mid-April, we were formally asking other government
10 departments around Whitehall to provide officials or
11 contract people who could go out and fulfil these roles,
12 but we found it hard to increase the numbers of
13 civilians at the rate required. I think that's true.
14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I think Sir Roderic Lyne wants to
15 come in.
16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Yes. I just wanted to make sure that I'm
17 clear about a couple of points that we have covered
18 since the break.
19 Mr Chaplin, in describing the early stages of the
20 aftermath planning, the British Government was working
21 on the assumption that the United Nations would play the
22 central role in the post-conflict administration of
23 Iraq. Was this assumption shared at least in the early
24 stages of the planning process by the US administration
25 or not?

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1 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: No. Certainly, once the lead had been
2 taken by the Pentagon, they made it very clear that they
3 were not going to, I think in their phrase, "hand over
4 Iraq to the UN", quote, unquote. That didn't mean in
5 the end that the Americans saw absolutely no role for
6 the United Nations, and, indeed, after the passage of
7 1483, there was quite a considerable role for the UN,
8 but in the early stages, the messages from Washington
9 were they were going to do it on their own, thank you
10 very much.
11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So we thought the UN were going to do it,
12 they were determined that the UN were not going to do
13 it. Were we discussing our assumptions with the
14 United Nations Secretariat?
15 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I can't remember that in detail.
16 I think -- I'm sure we were in touch with different
17 members of the UN Secretariat, preparing for what we
18 thought would be inevitable, and indeed turned out to be
19 the case, that sooner or later they were going to be
20 playing a role. So we wanted to be in touch with them
21 to see what sort of role they thought they could play.
22 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Just one point: through much of this
23 planning process we were working on the assumption that
24 there would be a second resolution and Security Council
25 backing for the military phase, which we thought would

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1 then lead naturally on to a leading UN role in the
2 immediate post-conflict phase.
3 I think the failure to get a second resolution and
4 the acrimonious dispute in the Security Council, which
5 we talked about earlier this morning, made it more
6 difficult actually for Kofi Annan and the UN to play
7 a prominent role in the early aftermath.
8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But if the UN were going to take over
9 immediately after a conflict in a large country, surely
10 they would have needed quite a considerable time to gear
11 up for this and plan for it?
12 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: That's one of the reasons why we wanted
13 more time; not just to give a greater chance for
14 a peaceful resolution, a longer inspection time, the
15 setting of ultimatums and so on that we covered before
16 the break, but also so there would be more time for
17 planning.
18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So actually, it wasn't really realistic
19 to think that they could do this from a standing start
20 in a very short period? It just wasn't have been
21 feasible?
22 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: No. That is probably fair.
23 Nevertheless, what we would want to happen was agreement
24 that the UN should come in at the earliest possible
25 stage, and the UN can, as you know, gear themselves up

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1 quite quickly sometimes.
2 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I worry that we may be conflating
3 timescales here. At the period we were developing our
4 thinking about UN lead in the summer of 2002, autumn of
5 2002, winter of 2002, it was not clear at all the timing on
6 which military action might happen, indeed whether it
7 would happen at all, and whether there would have been
8 full UN authorisation in the second resolution for it.
9 So at that period, we were talking in more general
10 terms with the UN. By the time it became clear, the
11 timescale for military action, I think it was then also
12 clear that the US would not be prepared to have UN
13 administration. Therefore, by then we were on the track
14 of working with ORHA. But I think it was a reasonable
15 planning assumption in the autumn of 2002 that we could
16 work for a UN transitional authority, and at that time
17 the UN still had time prepare for it.
18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Despite the fact that, the autumn of
19 2002, it must have been pretty clear that there was very
20 little enthusiasm in the UN, either in the Secretariat
21 or among other member states, for military action
22 against Iraq. We really had to struggle after all to
23 get the first resolution.
24 SIR PETER RICKETTS: We got the first resolution
25 unanimously, which certainly provided the possibility

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1 that there would be a further material breach and,
2 therefore, the possibility that there would be military
3 action.
4 At that time, I think it was, you know, entirely
5 reasonable to look forward, even in those circumstances,
6 to a UN-led transitional authority. As time went on,
7 that became less and less easy for the UN to work with.
8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So this ended up putting us in a very
9 difficult position, because we went on until quite
10 a late stage in the assumption, or at least the hope,
11 that the UN would come in and pick up the pieces after
12 the conflict, and then we found ourselves in what you
13 might call Colin Powell Pottery Barn territory, "If you
14 break it, you fix it", and, at rather short notice, we
15 and the United States had to become the fixers.
16 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I think that was one of the
17 consequences of the breakdown of consensus in the
18 Security Council.
19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: My other question is about again coming
20 back to the question of what we expected to happen after
21 the campaign, and I think you have made it clear that we
22 certainly did not share the rosy assumptions of many in
23 the United States administration that this was going to
24 be, as one administration author put it, a "cake-walk".
25 Equally, Mr Chaplin said that we didn't fully

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1 comprehend how fractured Iraqi society had become under
2 Saddam Hussein.
3 Now, you, I'm sure, would have been comparing notes
4 very intensively in this period with other countries in
5 the region, neighbours of Iraq, and also with our
6 European partners, other people who had perspectives on
7 Iraq, some of whom had embassies there, as well as with
8 outside experts.
9 Were there others outside the British Government who
10 were warning that there was a high risk of ethnic and
11 sectarian conflict after a military campaign, that the
12 Iraqis, given the history of Iraq from 1920 onwards,
13 were quite likely both to turn on each other and to turn
14 against the occupiers?
15 You said that we were warning that the status of
16 liberator would quickly turn into occupier. Did other
17 people see this as a bigger risk than it was seen within
18 the Foreign Office and the British Government?
19 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I think, as you would expect,
20 particularly with a difficult subject like Iraq, there
21 was a range of views being expressed by outsiders -- of
22 course, some of those outsiders had their own agendas.
23 If you start from a position of principle that the
24 invasion of Iraq was a very bad thing, then you tend to
25 amass the evidence to underline it is a very bad thing

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1 because of the dreadful consequences that will follow,
2 but there was a lot of perfectly sound analysis going on
3 which did indeed point out the dangers of ethnic and
4 sectarian strife.
5 Some of it was a bit exaggerated, I felt. The idea
6 that Iraq would split into three neat sectarian parts.
7 I never thought -- and indeed the academics I talked to
8 never thought it was very likely. Indeed, I think one
9 of the points brought out in the meeting we have already
10 referred to of the academics who came to Number 10 was
11 that there was a much more nationalist spirit in Iraq
12 than one might expect looking at it from the outside.
13 I think over the years, one of the ways that
14 Saddam Hussein had survived was going back to, if you
15 like, a classic divide and rule, but using the tribes
16 and different ethnic groups, playing off one against the
17 other in order to keep control himself.
18 That had produced a mindset which meant that -- and
19 there was also of course a regime of complete fear,
20 certainly as far as the Shias and the Kurds were
21 concerned, so that's what I'm thinking of when I'm
22 referring to a near-destroyed society, which made it
23 more difficult to pick up the pieces than we and
24 certainly the Americans had expected.
25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: What I'm groping for here is, how strong

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1 was the professional advice that was going up to
2 Ministers that a likely consequence of military action
3 against Iraq would be ethnic and sectarian conflict?
4 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: It was certainly flagged up from an
5 early stage from the middle of 2002, certainly in papers
6 that went up from me and from my departments, that a lot
7 depended on the circumstances in which military action
8 would be taken. I think we've covered some of that, the
9 legitimacy argument, but there was a risk of being stuck
10 with responsibility for chronic instability in Iraq.
11 But the effort, if you like, was then put into
12 trying to convince particularly the Americans that we
13 needed to contrive the circumstances in which those
14 risks were at least reduced, to give ourselves the best
15 possible chance of success in rebuilding Iraq after
16 military action.
17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But we didn't contrive those
18 circumstances?
19 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: We didn't and we needed a number of
20 things, including more time, to do that.
21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Or the coalition didn't, to be fair, with
22 one's "we".
23 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Yes, but I think it was not inevitable
24 that military action would have been followed by the
25 sort of degree of ethnic and sectarian violence that we

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1 saw, and in the planning, if things had got better,
2 particularly early law and order and a better grip on
3 security in Baghdad, it might not have happened that
4 way.
5 So again, with hindsight, it looks inevitable and
6 that we should have foreseen the inevitable that was
7 going to be the deep violence we saw. I'm not sure it
8 was inevitable and I think some of the things that went
9 wrong in the early stages of ORHA contributed to that.
10 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I agree with that. I don't know if we
11 are going to come on to talk about decisions on
12 deba'athification, dissolving the army and so on, but
13 there were a number of factors, you know, decisions that
14 were taken after the invasion which had a very negative
15 impact.
16 THE CHAIRMAN: Sir Lawrence, you wanted a brief
17 intervention? Then we must get back to the question.
18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes. Some of the ground I wanted to
19 cover has just been covered but I just want to follow up
20 on this inevitability question. Iraq had been run by a
21 Sunni elite with a majority Shia population. Wasn't it
22 always likely that regime change in effect would mean
23 a transfer of power from the Sunni to the Shia and
24 wasn't that always likely to involve a degree of
25 reaction from the Sunni? Rather than splitting into

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1 three separate parts, that was always a likely outcome
2 of toppling a Sunni elite regime?
3 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Yes, you are absolutely right.
4 Historically, we, the British, in the mandate years had
5 inherited this from the Ottoman empire, that you used a
6 sort of Sunni officer/administrative class to administer
7 Iraq, and that's how things had been.
8 We did foresee that the inevitable result of
9 democracy, under whatever form, being introduced into
10 Iraq was that the likely outcome would be a Shia
11 majority government and that this would be a traumatic
12 event for the Sunni population. Hence our emphasis on
13 encouraging, in the days of the coalition provisional
14 administration, to visibly reach out to give the message
15 that all parts of Iraqi society, including the, if you
16 like, disenfranchised Sunnis, should have their role to
17 play in the reconstruction of Iraq.
18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you.
19 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can we then move on to
20 deba'athification, because you were saying that it was
21 inevitable.
22 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: No, I didn't say that, I don't think.
23 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: No, you said that the causes of
24 violence post-invasion were not inevitable; it was due
25 to the policy pursued on deba'athification. Can you say

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1 a little bit about that?
2 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Well, I think there are a number of
3 things. I think Sir Peter has already referred to one.
4 The first failure was a failure to ensure a secure
5 environment, particularly in Baghdad and the Sunni parts
6 of the country. Things were better in the south, and of
7 course in the north things were different anyway because
8 there had been for some years de facto Kurdish autonomy.
9 But in Baghdad and the central Sunni areas there were
10 simply not enough coalition, in this case US, forces on
11 the ground to ensure law and order.
12 So I think there were a number of factors. That was
13 one factor. The exclusion of the Sunnis or the feeling
14 that they were being excluded from discussion of the
15 future of Iraq was another, which was reinforced by the
16 decisions on deba'athification and on the dissolution of
17 the army, not that all civil service ministries or all
18 the army were uniquely staffed by Sunnis. That's not
19 the case. But that was certainly a factor which
20 produced a large and alienated and, in many cases,
21 resentful section of the population.
22 If you add to that the fact that the arms dumps, the
23 huge dumps of conventional arms -- never mind WMD but
24 the huge arms dumps -- were not properly guarded or in
25 some cases not guarded at all, so that any disaffected

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1 group could go and help itself to arms, then you have,
2 as I think David Manning has already referred to
3 yesterday, a pretty dire situation in terms of security.
4 I think the other factor that was greatly
5 underestimated in the planning was the need to manage
6 Iraqi expectations about how quickly things could be put
7 right, and we certainly suffered this ourselves down in
8 the south. I think for the average Iraqi it seemed
9 reasonable to expect that, once the military action was
10 over, then good things would start to happen in terms of
11 reconstruction, in terms of electricity supply,
12 reconstruction of sewerage systems and so on, and when
13 that didn't happen, it was a short step in the mindset
14 that was part of the legacy of that long period of
15 dictatorship to think that if it wasn't happening, that
16 was because it was a deliberate choice; it couldn't be,
17 could it, that the world's superpower was simply not
18 able to bring those good things about, it must be
19 because they were deliberately deciding not to allow
20 those things to happen, and then you would be off on a
21 sort of conspiracy theory of why that should be.
22 Remember, there were all sorts of rumours around
23 that, because it was some time before Saddam Hussein was
24 found and captured, secretly we were planning to put
25 Saddam Hussein back into power. That may seem

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1 incredible now but that was certainly one of the
2 feelings.
3 So what I am saying is there were a number of
4 decisions which contributed to making a very difficult
5 environment for us and a rather benign environment for
6 different terrorist groups to start chipping away at the
7 security. And hence the rapid deterioration in
8 security.
9 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: And what did we do about this?
10 Because we had concerns. And were we still playing a
11 second fiddle to the United States?
12 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Oh, the United States remained the major
13 partner in this enterprise throughout. There is no
14 hiding that. But we did our best to influence them in
15 what we thought was the right direction: by engaging
16 with them, by having people alongside them -- we have
17 already referred to the senior people who were
18 dispatched, as well as more expert people -- and by
19 having a constant dialogue with them about how to
20 improve the situation.
21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Did we actually at any stage rethink
22 our objectives or try to change policy in response to
23 what we found on the ground?
24 SIR PETER RICKETTS: We certainly did. I think Ministers
25 became aware very quickly that things were not going

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1 well on the ground. Jack Straw was certainly aware of
2 that from mid-April, and he was working in Whitehall to
3 gear up the UK contribution. Perhaps most strikingly,
4 the Prime Minister, when he visited in early June, came
5 back with a very forceful sense that ORHA was a shambles
6 and that we needed to move on very rapidly to a much
7 better, tighter organisation.
8 You are seeing, I think, Sir John Sawer's full
9 evidence shortly and he will be able to speak to you
10 about the position that he found when he arrived on
11 8 May as our representative to the CPA, and his early
12 reporting convinced me and others that ORHA absolutely
13 was a mess and that we needed to work very quickly to
14 strengthen it. Ministers were immediately on to their
15 counterparts. We concentrated on making sure that we
16 did as well as we possibly could in the south, which was
17 the particular area that we had been given
18 responsibility for.
19 But John Sawers and then Bremer, when he
20 arrived a few days later, in the middle of May,
21 immediately tried to get a grip on the organisation, the
22 structure, the leadership, the coordination, to get
23 a functional organisation working.
24 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I mean, we are in the realms of
25 lessons learned. In retrospect, are there things that

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1 you could have done differently or better in terms of
2 planning?
3 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Well, to give my response to that,
4 I think the crucial problems arose from the late
5 decisions in the US to put a department and an
6 organisation in charge which had not been prepared for
7 this role. I do think, if the careful State Department
8 work had been allowed to feed through into operational
9 planning for the post-conflict phase, that would have
10 been more successful. I think it would have been easier
11 for us to dock with it, and the overall effect on the
12 ground would, I think, have been a stronger operation
13 from earlier on.
14 So I think that was one lesson that I would have
15 learned: don't switch the lead in post-conflict
16 stabilisation work just before the conflict breaks out
17 because that will guarantee you that the organisation
18 that hits the ground isn't functional.
19 I think on the UK side we certainly did learn
20 lessons about having a better mechanism for generating
21 civilian co-capability: experts trained, prepared, ready
22 to deploy into these sorts of situations. We now have
23 in Whitehall a stabilisation unit with a large database
24 of people who are prepared to go and work in Iraq and
25 Afghanistan. That's a direct legacy of the difficulty

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1 we had in assembling the right numbers of civilians
2 early on in this crisis.
3 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Mr Chaplin, do you have any views?
4 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Yes, I agree with all of that.
5 I suppose the main lesson learned was you have to have
6 a strategy and have a proper plan. You do a lot more
7 preparatory work than was done in this case to prepare
8 for the post-military phase, and crucial to that is
9 something we have already referred to about contriving
10 circumstances in which you have maximum legitimacy and
11 therefore maximum support, and learn the lesson that
12 even a power with the resources at its disposal that the
13 United States has cannot do nation-building on that
14 scale on its own, and therefore you do need the UN
15 organisation heavily involved.
16 When you have done all that and you have got
17 a decent plan and an idea of what you are aiming for,
18 then you need to identify the resources that are
19 necessary to carry that out, and Sir Peter has already
20 referred to the lesson learned about -- it was certainly
21 one of the constraints in the early months -- seeing the
22 need for additional expertise but not having the
23 mechanisms to identify, train and dispatch those people
24 anything like quickly enough.
25 SIR PETER RICKETTS: These are not just diplomats and

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1 administrators, of course. They are people who know how
2 to run power stations, sewage plants,
3 electricity-generating works, judges, lawyers, prison
4 administrators. You need an enormous range of skills
5 available very quickly.
6 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Would you say that in the run-up to
7 the invasion too much effort was put into diplomacy and
8 not much attention was paid to the aftermath?
9 SIR PETER RICKETTS: No, I wouldn't accept that. I think it
10 is always possible to say we should have paid more
11 attention to the aftermath. I believe that the intense
12 efforts that were put into diplomacy from September 2002
13 to March 2003, in which I was involved every single day,
14 I think, of that period, were worth it because I think
15 there was all along a chance that it would have given
16 Saddam Hussein the opportunity to comply and therefore
17 to have avoided war, and I think the consequences of
18 war, as we are talking about now, are so serious that it
19 is right to break every sinew in trying to avoid war.
20 That said, we did put a lot of effort into planning
21 the aftermath alongside the feverish work on diplomacy
22 to avoid war. No doubt we could have done even more.
23 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: No, my question was -- of course,
24 the right effort had to be put into diplomacy but was
25 there not much effort put into scenario planning,

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1 because there could have been different scenarios and
2 were different scenarios looked at and were they
3 probably considered, discussed?
4 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I think there was a lot of effort put
5 into post-conflict planning. Could we have done more on
6 individual scenarios? It is always possible to say that
7 one could do more. I think we needed a plan that was
8 sufficiently flexible to respond to any scenario that
9 arose after the conflict.
10 As I said earlier, when you cross the Rubicon into
11 military conflict, you then really don't know how it is
12 going to end, how quickly it is going to end and what
13 situation you inherit, and therefore the planning, I
14 think, has to be pretty flexible.
15 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I think Sir Lawrence wants to come
16 in.
17 THE CHAIRMAN: I've just got one question of my own. In
18 this tale of uncertainty and mounting chaos in the
19 immediate aftermath because of the security breakdown,
20 there was one shining light and that was the achievement
21 of the May UN mandate. I wonder if either of you would
22 like to say a little bit about how that was achieved,
23 given that the P5 had been completely fractured by the
24 invasion and the failure the second resolution line, and
25 yet within weeks it was possible to get a unanimous

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1 mandate for the coalition partners. How was this
2 achieved?
3 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Well, I think it is a tribute to the
4 professionalism of the diplomats concerned in the UN and
5 their governments that people very rapidly accepted the
6 reality, whether they liked it or not, of the conflict
7 and therefore the need to make provision for the
8 post-conflict arrangements, and the UK was certainly,
9 very early on, drafting, thinking about, elements for
10 a post-conflict resolution, partly driven, as I said
11 earlier, by our acute sense that the responsibilities
12 and the authorities of an occupying power are very
13 limited, and we knew, therefore, that we needed very
14 rapidly to move on to updating that authority. Not
15 least, we needed to amend the Oil For Food resolution to
16 take account of the new circumstances, we needed to
17 amend the sanctions regime to take account of the new
18 circumstances, we needed to regulate the Iraqi oil
19 revenues and make sure that they were directed for the
20 wellbeing of the Iraqi people. A whole series of
21 complex, urgent, difficult issues, and I think it is not
22 boastful to say that the UK was at the forefront of work
23 in the Security Council, led by Sir Jeremy Greenstock,
24 to get that going again, and it is very interesting
25 actually that, once we were through this traumatic

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1 period of the breakdown in mid-March and on to the next
2 period, we worked very well actually with the French and
3 others in the Security Council, in a pragmatic spirit
4 that we were where we were and we now needed to regulate
5 the post-conflict situation in Iraq. Quite quickly, the
6 P5 and the wider members of the Security Council were
7 able to work and produce this very substantial
8 resolution within eight weeks.
9 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Sir Lawrence and then
10 Sir Roderic.
11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I just want to go back to scenarios
12 and ORHA. Part of its name is "humanitarian
13 assistance". To what extent was it geared, not to the
14 scenarios of post-war, but the scenarios of war itself
15 and in particular the risk of widespread humanitarian
16 distress resulting from military action?
17 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: Shall I deal with that first?
18 That was actually the one part of US planning that
19 was quite advanced and quite detailed, and I suppose
20 what people had in mind was the first Gulf War, which
21 produced a huge flow of refugees, for example, across to
22 Jordan and elsewhere, as well as in the north. So there
23 was a lot of planning went into that. In the event, the
24 military action was so rapid that there was much less
25 humanitarian work to be done than had been assumed. But

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1 that was certainly one of the bits that was well
2 prepared for, I think, including contact with the
3 relevant UN agencies.
4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But in a sense Garner's expertise --
5 who was head of ORHA -- was in that sort of area, more
6 than in actual reconstruction.
7 Just a second point on this: you have talked about
8 problems of the movement of planning from the
9 State Department to the Pentagon -- and ORHA was under
10 the Pentagon. Even then, wasn't it the case that it had
11 difficulty getting a hearing in Central Command, as
12 being a real priority to get into Iraq and get it
13 moving, that the American military itself had other
14 priorities?
15 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: My perception was there was still
16 difficulty, even after the creation of ORHA, in
17 achieving a settled US view of the right way ahead.
18 There may well have been difficulties also with CentCom
19 and their own separate views about what that way ahead
20 should look like, and I remember it being said, when the
21 ORHA organisation decamped to Kuwait prior to the
22 invasion, that part of that was Garner's determination
23 to get away from the bickering in Washington, which he
24 didn't want to be part of and seemed unable to bring to
25 an end.

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1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So, even if the planning had stayed
2 with the State Department, there could still have been
3 and probably would have been that sort or problem?
4 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: There certainly would have been
5 a problem, yes.
6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just a final point. You mentioned
7 the problems with the failure to guard arms dumps,
8 clearly there was widespread looting, and so on. Now,
9 I recall -- and I'm sure others do -- many arguments
10 that were made in late 2002 that you really needed half
11 a million troops to be able to do this properly. This
12 was said in senior circles in the United States.
13 James Dobbins, who was probably the State Department's
14 greatest expert on post-conflict situations, who had led
15 the negotiations on Afghanistan, was saying this.
16 Were we saying to the Americans, "You may have
17 enough troops to win a war but you possibly don't have
18 enough troops to control the society afterwards"?
19 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I think you would have to ask the
20 military witnesses that because, as I recall -- and
21 Sir Peter may be able to pick up on this -- the detailed
22 exchanges with the Americans about the military planning
23 that was going on was left, naturally enough, to our
24 military, and I think -- I remember the phrase that
25 their job was to come back to our government, to the

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1 politicians, with a judgment as to whether or not the
2 Americans had a "winning concept".
3 So, in terms of whether the Americans were planning
4 to put enough boots on the ground to cope with the
5 situation we thought they would face, I don't know
6 whether we particularly emphasised our concern that they
7 were insufficient. What one remembers is that --
8 I mean, Rumsfeld was, I think, deliberately wanting to
9 set out and prove that you could fight this sort of war
10 with a much lower number of troops than had, for
11 example, been used in the first Gulf War.
12 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I don't have anything to add to that.
13 I think in the pre-conflict period I'm not aware that we
14 had those sorts of discussions. I think in the
15 immediate post-conflict period, when we were buried in
16 (inaudible) the problems in the security around Baghdad,
17 we were in deep discussions with the Americans about how
18 many forces and what sort of forces were needed in
19 Baghdad to provide security after the Third Armoured
20 Division had completed its task of winning the war, as
21 it were.
22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: If you were going to disband the
23 Iraqi army, again a decision which I seem to recall we
24 had no part in, you were probably going to need more
25 forces of your own?

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1 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Yes, but as you say, I don't think that
2 that was a decision foreseen beforehand. I think we
3 were assuming that we would need to remove the senior
4 part of the security forces, of course, but that the
5 police, perhaps the more junior members of the security
6 forces, just as the large part of the Civil Service --
7 we would be able to use them, rather than find that they
8 were all sacked and we had to take on the
9 responsibilities ourselves.
10 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: One of the many papers we put across to
11 the Americans in the pre-war phase was precisely on the
12 DDR process that -- in other words, the way we had acted
13 in other post-conflict situations elsewhere, in Africa,
14 for example, a process by which you demobilise but at
15 the same time make use of the armed forces that are
16 there.
17 It didn't happen. John Sawers will be able to give
18 you more detail of this and indeed of deba'athification,
19 and it is probably unfair to say with a snap of the
20 fingers it was decreed that this should happen. It may
21 have been how it looked from the outside, but remember
22 that the Iraqi army was largely a conscript army and the
23 army had largely dissolved, people had taken off their
24 uniforms and gone home. So what was needed was a policy
25 to encourage people to come forward and work for the new

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1 Iraq and have a vetting process that would make that
2 sensible. That didn't happen.
3 On de-Ba'athification, again I think it is easy to
4 underestimate with hindsight how powerful the feelings
5 were amongst those who had suffered most from
6 Saddam Hussein's regime, that the idea that anybody who
7 had served really at any level of responsibility in the
8 organisation that served Saddam Hussein was acceptable
9 in a post-Saddam Hussein situation was simply
10 anathema -- and I think, if you talk to the military
11 commanders in the south, you will find that we suffered
12 from that ourselves -- that somebody who appeared to be,
13 actually, perfectly competent -- I can't remember the
14 name -- to be Chairman of the governing Council that we
15 set up in Basra, it rapidly turned out that he, for
16 whatever reason -- we couldn't judge whether it was
17 right or wrong -- was simply not acceptable to the local
18 population because he was too closely identified with the
19 previous regime.
20 So de-Ba'athification was driven largely by the forces
21 that were now in charge, or potentially in charge; it
22 wasn't just a decision by outsiders.
23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I'm sure we will need to pursue this
24 a bit more but I doubt if we've got time to do it quite
25 now.

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1 THE CHAIRMAN: Roderic, last question?
2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: At what point was the concept developed
3 that the UK would perform an exemplary role in the way
4 that it administered the southern regions of Iraq?
5 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Well, the decision that we should go
6 into the south of Iraq followed from the difficulties
7 about introducing forces through Turkey, which I
8 think --
9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: No, I know about going to the south. It
10 is the notion, which I think was enunciated in public,
11 that we would do this in an "exemplary" way. The word
12 "exemplary" was attached, was set as an objective for
13 us. Can you remember when and how and from where that
14 came up?
15 SIR PETER RICKETTS: Isn't that the normal British approach,
16 that if we are going to do something, we do it in an
17 exemplary way? I can't understand that there would be
18 an instruction that we should do it in other than an
19 exemplary way.
20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: No, it sounds entirely praiseworthy, but
21 it became a strapline for our policy.
22 Were the ends willed towards these means? You have
23 said we had difficulty getting enough people. Did we
24 have the financial resources? Had we integrated the
25 Department for International Development sufficiently

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1 into the planning process and so on actually to perform
2 the exemplary role that we had set for ourselves?
3 SIR PETER RICKETTS: I think we could have done with more
4 resources to back up the ambition to play an exemplary
5 role. If I remember rightly, the initial costs of the
6 people who were deployed into ORHA were going to be met
7 from the DFID budget, but it took some time to set up
8 arrangements to do that and as the requirement grew,
9 I think it outstripped the budget that had been foreseen.
10 So I think there was an underestimate of the number of
11 people and the cost of the role that we found ourselves
12 playing in the south.
13 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I think that's right. I can't remember
14 exactly where "exemplary", which sounds a jolly good
15 thing to have, came from, but if your point is that the
16 resources were never provided to make exemplary
17 performance in our area, the south, a reality, then you
18 are right, they weren't.
19 SIR PETER RICKETTS: It wasn't only a question of money, it
20 was also a question of simply finding the people and
21 that was as difficult, I think, as finding the money.
22 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
23 I think we have come to the end of this session.
24 Just before closing remarks, can I ask Sir Peter and
25 Mr Chaplin: is there anything that you would like to say

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1 or would like to add before we close?
2 SIR PETER RICKETTS: No, I think we have covered the ground.
3 Thank you, Mr Chairman.
4 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Chaplin?
5 MR EDWARD CHAPLIN: I think just one concluding thought,
6 perhaps more as a historical footnote, as someone who
7 was involved back in the '90s in struggling with this
8 regime that simply refused to come into conformity with
9 what the international community was asking for it to
10 do. I mean, there were many repeated attempts to find
11 a peaceful way, there were many attempts to try and make
12 containment work -- and we have been into that --
13 attempts to refresh the containment mechanism.
14 A historical footnote really, as I think this
15 started to unravel in the late 1990s, in the Security
16 Council, when that trust between, particularly, the
17 permanent members started to break down. The issue then
18 was whether to transition, so to speak, some of the
19 files that UNSCOM was dealing with, in particular the
20 nuclear file, and when that didn't happen because of US
21 opposition, I think the trust amongst the Security
22 Council members that we could see a way forward together
23 started to break down.
24 I think my personal conclusion at the time, in the
25 early 2000s, when I found myself dealing with it again,

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1 2002/2003, was that, given the track record and although
2 we should go on giving it every last chance, not least
3 to demonstrate that we were giving it every last chance,
4 a peaceful resolution of the disarmament obligations,
5 which became even more urgent after 9/11, was unlikely
6 and that, therefore, what we had to do -- I referred to
7 this briefly earlier -- was contrive the circumstances
8 in which, if it came to military action, we gave
9 ourselves, the international community, the best chance
10 of coming out with the right result, not just the
11 disarmament of Iraq but the reconstruction of Iraq and
12 achieving all those objectives which we happily set out
13 for ourselves and which were unimpeachable, the ones set
14 out in January 2003, the example, to Parliament. So it
15 was, if you like, the failure to contrive those
16 circumstances that I think is the most serious lack in
17 the lead-up to military action.
18 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I notice already in the course of
19 this Inquiry that the hand of history is heavy on
20 events, and we have had reference already today, not
21 only to the period since 1920 -- although our terms of
22 reference start in 2001, we are highly conscious of that
23 history -- but also back to the Ottoman empire, and for
24 all I know, before we finish, it will go back to
25 pre-historic times.

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1 On Thursday morning we are going to hear from
2 Lord Boyce, Lord Michael Boyce, the chief of the defence
3 staff at the time of the invasion, and Sir Kevin Tebbit,
4 who was Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence
5 from 1998 to 2005. So far we have heard a lot of
6 information about the development of government policies
7 and views on Iraq from 2001, the level of threat posed
8 and the UK's relationship with the United States on Iraq
9 in those years.
10 In our next few hearings we will begin to look at
11 how the UK's military participation in the invasion of
12 Iraq was planned from those in the MoD, the options that
13 were considered in that planning, when the key decisions
14 were taken on the military side and how this was linked
15 to the wider diplomatic process.
16 We will also begin to explore how the United Kingdom
17 planned for Iraq after the initial military campaign and
18 the assumptions made -- we got a bit into that today but
19 there is much more to hear -- and what the
20 United Kingdom's military role in that might be.
21 The Committee would like to thank you, our
22 witnesses, for your evidence this morning and to all of
23 those of you who have sat here and attended this hearing
24 through the morning.
25 The next hearing will start at 9 o'clock, not

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1 10 o'clock, on Thursday, and there is no hearing
2 tomorrow, Wednesday.
3 So, with that, this session is concluded. Thank you
4 all.
5 (12.46 pm)
6 (The Inquiry adjourned until 9.00 am on Thursday
7 3 December)
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SIR PETER RICKETTS and MR EDWARD 2
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