

1 (11.35 am)

2 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning. Welcome back everyone and

4 welcome to Major General Wilson. Good morning.

5 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Good morning.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Before the break we were hearing from

7 General Pigott about the British planning taking place.

8 "Planning" was not a phrase he particularly endorsed,

9 but scoping work taking place in the MoD in London and  
10 elsewhere.

11 We are now going to hear a British perspective on  
12 the US planning taking place in Tampa, that has already  
13 been mentioned, and the role that the United Kingdom  
14 played in that process. So welcome to you,  
15 General Wilson.

16 I will remind you, as I do all witnesses, that they  
17 will later be asked to sign a transcript of their  
18 evidence to the effect that their evidence is truthful,  
19 fair and accurate.

20 We recognise that witnesses are giving evidence  
21 based on their recollection of events, and we do, of  
22 course, check what we hear against the papers we have  
23 access to, which we are still receiving, because it is  
24 the combination of the two that provides the full  
25 account.

1           With that, I will hand over to Sir Martin Gilbert.  
2           Martin?  
3   SIR MARTIN GILBERT:   General Wilson, could you describe to  
4           us your role in 2002 at the United States  
5           Central Command in Florida and what was your chain of  
6           command?  
7   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:   Yes, indeed.   Thank you very  
8           much.  
9           Before I do that, would you, with your indulgence,  
10          allow me to just set a context, because we are talking  
11          about CentCom and I'm not convinced that actually the  
12          wider audience understands what we are talking about and  
13          how it all works.   I will try and do this as briefly as  
14          I can.  
15   SIR MARTIN GILBERT:   Please do.  
16   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:   We are talking about a unified  
17          command.   In the United States there are eight of those  
18          with regional responsibility and there are four with  
19          functional responsibility, and we need to understand how  
20          this is.   So we need to go back even further than the  
21          Liberation of Iraq Act.   We need to go to the Goldwater  
22          Nichols Act of 1986, and the Goldwater Nichols Act, as  
23          I'm sure many of you will know, fundamentally  
24          restructured how defence was conducted by the  
25          United States at the top end, and that's what it did.

1 It picked up on the lessons of before, then Panama, and  
2 actually picked up some of the very early lessons that  
3 came out of Vietnam.

4 In order, I think, as an observer, to take  
5 a perspective, you need to understand how can it be that  
6 these great men were able to do that and yet not do  
7 that.

8 So the business of unified command and the  
9 Goldwater Nichols Act sets the context, and what it  
10 essentially did -- I'm paraphrasing through -- was to  
11 strengthen civil leadership in the Pentagon. It  
12 improved the advice, the Military/Strategic, military  
13 operational advice available to the National Command  
14 Authority, the President, it created the position of the  
15 Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and it empowered the  
16 unified commanders. These warlords, somebody described  
17 them as, who, in an American global perspective, are  
18 responsible for great chunks of land mass and sea mass,  
19 but until that time did not have the means to influence  
20 effect.

21 The Goldwater Nichols Act changed that. So it  
22 empowered the warlords, as we shall call them, of which  
23 Tommy Franks in Central Command was one, however, it  
24 depowered the role of the single service chiefs, and so,  
25 at the end, when they had gone through this process, you

1 had, in my opinion, a strengthened Secretary of Defence,  
2 a strengthened office of the Secretary of Defence, OSD,  
3 where the Wolfowitzs and the Feiths would come into play  
4 later on, and already had done, created the post or,  
5 rather, strengthened the post of the Chairman of the  
6 Joint Chief of Staff, who became the principal military  
7 adviser to the President, but crucially it empowered the  
8 unified commanders -

9 I would just like to take that a bit further, if  
10 I may - who, although they don't own things, they get  
11 given things, resources, men and material, when  
12 a mission is assigned to them within their respective  
13 areas of operational responsibility, their chunks of  
14 land mass and seas.

15 When we take the CentCom, we are talking about  
16 a chunk of land mass and sea mass of 25 countries at  
17 that time. It has changed now because they have redrawn  
18 the boundaries. 25 countries, 500 million people,  
19 18 major ethnic groups, 65 per cent of the then known  
20 oil reserves, water, friction, strategic fault lines.  
21 To the east, Pakistan. At the time that you are  
22 interested in, we have an India/Pakistan issue going on.  
23 To the west, the Horn of Africa and the east coast of  
24 that continent, from Somalia through Kenya to Egypt and  
25 up to the eastern end of the Mediterranean. That's

1 relevant because it comes into play later.

2 Strategic fault lines on the Horn of Africa coming  
3 east across the Arabian peninsula through into  
4 Afghanistan, through -- sorry, through Iraq into Iraq --  
5 into Afghanistan, and then, nestling at the top, those  
6 most fantastic -- what we euphemistically call "stans"  
7 those former satellites of the Russian Federation;  
8 Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and so on and so  
9 forth, so a huge area, and -- I'm coming to the end --  
10 history tells us that horrible, horrible things have  
11 happened there in the past.

12 We can go back to 1980, the unfortunate failure of  
13 the Iranian hostage rescue, we can go to the first  
14 Gulf War, we can talk about the USS Cole incident, an  
15 Aegis state-of-the-art cruiser that Al-Qaeda took on at  
16 Yemen, we can talk about Mogadishu and Somalia,  
17 setbacks, and we can talk about Afghanistan.

18 So Franks has this set of a difficult piece of real  
19 estate, and when he is given a mission, as he had been,  
20 he is given forces with which to conduct that mission.  
21 His chain of command post-Goldwater Nichols is to the  
22 Secretary of Defence, to the President and that's it.  
23 No dotted lines. It is on that line.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Just to interrupt, not to the Chairman of the  
25 Joint Chiefs?

1 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: No. That's a dotted line. The  
2 solid line is to the Secretary of Defence, to the  
3 President of the National Command Authority, and there  
4 is -- you may well conclude that there are advantages  
5 and disadvantages to that.

6 So that's the first point I would make. So the  
7 other issue that I would just want to, if I may, talk  
8 about, is the borders, because they are relevant to how  
9 this pastiche comes together. When we look at Iraq, we  
10 look north to Turkey, and, of course, Turkey sat beyond  
11 Franks' area of operational responsibility; it fell into  
12 the EUCON (European Command).

13 So we have got a border, we have got a military  
14 border and boundary. They are always quite delicate  
15 things, and, as I said, over to the east we have the  
16 Pacific Command boundary between India and Pakistan,  
17 not unhelpfully on a fault line.

18 General Franks did not have in his AOR, therefore,  
19 Turkey, and he did not have Syria, but if we walk round  
20 the land mass, of course he had Jordan, he had  
21 Saudi Arabia, he had Kuwait, and so on and so forth in  
22 the patch, nine and a half time zones away from his  
23 headquarters in Tampa, and we can talk about that too.

24 So we are talking about nine and a half hours and  
25 all the complications of Eastern Standard Time, which is

1        what Washington would be on, and the potential for  
2        friction that that might -- that that might create.

3            Last piece of this, if I may. I took up post in Tampa  
4        in April -- I can't remember exactly when -- 2002.

5        I was the third British senior officer, and my immediate  
6        predecessors had done a comparatively short time, but it  
7        was decided that the longer-term interests would be  
8        furthered by me doing longer, for continuity, and so  
9        I was very fortunate to have that.

10        At that time, we are, of course, post-9/11, we are  
11        well into the campaign in Afghanistan. We are --  
12        I can't exactly remember whether decisive operations had  
13        finished, but it was certainly pre-Bonn, so we are  
14        moving well down there. The coalition, I think, of  
15        35 nations to support the Global War on Terror were  
16        camped on the trailer park, literally camped on the  
17        trailer park at the headquarters in Tampa. So you had  
18        this sort of huge variety there, normally, with some  
19        linkage into the Global War on Terror or some direct  
20        linkage into Afghanistan.

21        So there is a coalition management issue going on,  
22        there is an Afghanistan campaign issue going on. There  
23        is a Global War on Terror because we have got things  
24        going on in the Horn of Africa, around Djibouti and that  
25        sort of stuff going on, and, as we now know, we are

1       doing -- the Americans are doing discrete planning,  
2       compartmented, very compartmented planning for Iraq.  
3       I thought I would offer that.

4   SIR MARTIN GILBERT:   Thank you.   When you arrived, what were  
5       your instructions and how did you fulfill them within the  
6       system at CentCom?

7   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:   The function -- it was made  
8       very clear to me, and I was working at -- I was, working  
9       for the joint commander at the Permanent Joint  
10       Headquarters in Northwood.   I was what -- one of those  
11       things -- that the former Chief of Defence Staff Lord Boyce  
12       described as an outstation, albeit I'd choose to think  
13       sort of a rather important one, but I was one of many  
14       outstations and we can talk to that when we build  
15       a picture of communication, because that comes in,  
16       I think, later on.

17       My instructions were quite simple.   My purpose, and  
18       my talented team of soldiers, sailors and airmen, men and women,  
19       were to serve as a conduit for communication between the  
20       operational level headquarters, Central Command,  
21       commanded by General Tommy Franks, and the permanent  
22       headquarters at Northwood, a conduit for information.

23   SIR MARTIN GILBERT:   When you arrived, what did you find at  
24       CentCom was the emerging thinking on Iraq?

25   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:   Nothing.   I didn't find



1 anything, because the shutters were firmly down. I and  
2 my people were in the foreign exclusion category and  
3 I mean, there was no sort of nodding and winking,  
4 that's the way it was. So my focus -- and I was on  
5 a steep learning curve; I had come from Kosovo, so I was  
6 on quite a steep learning curve -- was finding out where  
7 they had come from with Afghanistan, where they were  
8 with Afghanistan and the direction in which they were  
9 heading. That was my focus within a Global War on  
10 Terror overarching piece.

11 I was not made aware, nor was I briefed to find out  
12 what was going on at that time within Central Command  
13 for discrete planning.

14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: When did this change? When did Iraq  
15 come within the argument?

16 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: It did change. It changed in  
17 the latter part of June of 2002 and it changed very  
18 suddenly from where I sat in Tampa. The change was  
19 signalled by what was then the draft planning order for  
20 Iraq, early stage work, being authorised to be sent to  
21 the Permanent Joint Headquarters and that is what  
22 happened.

23 Soon thereafter, there was a high level team visit  
24 led by General Sir Anthony Pigott, which I was invited  
25 to join and he spoke to that this morning, when they

1 closed in Washington and then came down to Tampa.

2 So the first -- it is almost a defining moment this,  
3 in a way. This is when, not just we, the British, but  
4 also, I understand, the Australians, were made privy to  
5 the planning that had gone to that point by the US.

6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In addition to being made privy to the  
7 planning, at what point were you asked by the  
8 United States, what questions of the possibility of  
9 integrating British forces into the overall American  
10 plan, when did this become, if it did become, a question  
11 of discussion?

12 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: That comes later, and we can --  
13 I will certainly speak to that, of course, and that  
14 takes us into the beginning of August, when we had --  
15 when the United Kingdom had received an invitation from  
16 Central Command to attend the whole, as opposed to half,  
17 which is what we had done previously, of the two-day CENTCOM  
Commander's Conference  
18 programme.

19 This -- I can't remember exactly when the invitation  
20 went out, some time in July, and the -- after debate --  
21 whatever discussion in London, I was instructed that --  
22 I pulled a long straw, or the short straw, depending  
23 your perspective, and I was going to step up as  
24 the representative and I was going to say words that  
25 were produced for me, helpfully, which I received the

1 day before I was due to get on my feet. I think it was  
2 the seventh iteration, and that was the briefing note on  
3 which I based my remarks when I addressed that  
4 conference, which was all military and I followed the  
5 Australian and I spoke to it.

6 I understand the briefing note I spoke to has been  
7 disclosed to you, so I presume you are well sighted upon  
8 that.

9 May I just take it back a bit, just to the end  
10 of June? I said -- a sort of metaphorical curtain was  
11 drawn back. Things did change and my recollection is  
12 that the immediate priority was for UK minds to be  
13 directed on what had come down across the tube, if you  
14 like, in terms of the plan, and it naturally raised all  
15 manner of understandable questions: how had they got there, what  
16 was the process, what were the assumptions, what were  
17 the risks, how did they get from where they were to  
18 this -- in Northwood, laid out on a desk. Nobody knew.  
19 The Brits didn't know. I certainly didn't know.

20 So you can imagine the wires went hot, secure wires  
21 went hot, and we were -- my people -- and of course, we  
22 were given an injection of additional brain processing  
23 power in people to help handle the many requests for

24 information, and so on and so forth. So the priority initially is  
trying to understand and explain.

1           So that was the immediate piece, and then slowly we  
2           were able to try and follow through the process. If you  
3           wish me to talk to that, I can.

4   SIR MARTIN GILBERT: What were the range of possible options  
5           for the United Kingdom that you were discussing?

6   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: To what period are you  
7           referring?

8   SIR MARTIN GILBERT: From this moment in August when ...

9   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: So you are now talking about  
10          the briefing note that you have seen? I would need to  
11          refer to my own notes to refresh my memory, if that's  
12          all right. Is that ...?

13   SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Yes, indeed.

14   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Basically, what the intent was,  
15          caveated, of course, no commitment, was to offer  
16          commentary on, I suppose, really, an early commentary,  
17          early observations upon the work that had been done by  
18          the US planning staffs on Iraq, and that is what  
19          I sought to do, drawing from the note, expressing  
20          gratitude that we had been involved, reaffirming our  
21          commitment to Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan,  
22          and the Global War on Terror, expressing sympathy and  
23          understanding for the US view on Iraq and  
24          Saddam Hussein, sharing concerns over leaving him to  
25          develop weapons of mass destruction and the associated

1 threat, making the point that we appreciated being given  
2 the opportunity to contribute to their planning without  
3 commitment, and also examining options to support, if  
4 politically so decided.

5 I restated from memory, as directed, the UK formal  
6 policy position. That was in headlines, no decision in  
7 favour of action in Iraq beyond enforcing the  
8 north/south No Fly Zones, and then I went into offering  
9 observations on the plan, the advantages, that it had  
10 built upon what had gone before, tried and tested C2,  
11 and that we knew, US/UK, each other's strengths and  
12 weaknesses, we had a good insight into our respective  
13 military cultures. We had worked before, and so on and  
14 so forth.

15 Then I talked about from a purely military perspective  
16 the sort of things that might be done if -- caveat,  
17 caveat, I can't stress this too much, I would have  
18 been shot if I had extended my brief on this and  
19 I understood that very clearly.

20 Then I talked through the various possible things  
21 that could be done. I spoke to the northern option, but  
22 that we, on the UK military side, would understand -- we  
23 could engage with further in our thinking if we  
24 understood the effects that were being sought, both in  
25 the north and so on and so forth.

1           I said that unless political and legal issues were  
2           resolved, difficult for the UK to deliver even basic  
3           support and perhaps it would be easier if the  
4           thinking -- the curtain was drawn back further to allow  
5           other nations in, making the point of multinationality,  
6           making the point of coalition to be above and beyond  
7           just us and the Australians, which it was, if my memory  
8           serves, at that point.

9           That was pretty much it. I think it was about six  
10          minutes. There were no questions. I was the last to  
11          speak, and then we all rushed off for hamburgers.

12       SIR MARTIN GILBERT: There was no response, or, when it  
13          came, what was the response?

14       MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Probably "Yoo-hahs" and a few  
15          of those delightfully American idiosyncrasies.

16       THE CHAIRMAN: Could I ask one thing: were you able to form  
17          any impression as to how seriously the US military were  
18          taking our caveats? Were they being interpreted as  
19          really for form's sake?

20       MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: This is the "yes/but" piece?

21       THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

22       MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Very difficult for me to make  
23          a judgment on that. What we were able to follow up  
24          with, I was able to follow up with and my job was  
25          really -- I split the responsibility in terms of

1 dialogue and talking with US interlocutors, military,  
2 I would take sort of the two stars and up, and my very  
3 talented deputy, an army brigadier, would take the one  
4 stars and below, and that's the way we did it.

5 So we were able to sort of get the feedback from  
6 this note: very pragmatic was, I think, my  
7 impression at the time; accommodating, I think it was  
8 sort of reassuring to them and they understood the  
9 commitment, the caveats. They knew that this wasn't --  
10 we weren't even on a set of traffic lights yet. This  
11 was the first piece.

12 But my sense was one of relief and reassurance from  
13 them, and this chimed back actually to what I remember  
14 was said to General Sir Anthony Pigott's team. I think  
15 by General Abizaid, who was then the Director of Joint  
16 Staff in the Pentagon when he called earlier at the end  
17 of June, when he said, "We need your advice. We need  
18 your counsel" -- which actually was hugely flattering,  
19 I thought -- not my counsel, but the wider, corporate,  
20 military thinking power in the UK and the outstations.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Just before Sir Lawrence comes in, just going  
22 back slightly out of sequence, the opening up of the  
23 door into the US planning process in June 2002, what was  
24 your understanding of why the door was open? Who had  
25 the key and who opened it?

1 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: I don't know the answer to  
2 that.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Right, but would you assume it was at  
4 a political level?

5 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: I mean, they -- as a sort of  
6 tribe, they are -- if 'no foreign' is 'no foreign', I mean,  
7 you can get shot if you step over painted lines on  
8 concrete. So I could only presume that this was  
9 direction that had come down -- in fact, Franks -- when  
10 this happened, Franks was -- he was forward. So this  
11 had obviously come down and the curtain was drawn back.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: It had to come to General Franks from the  
13 office of the Secretary of State for Defence.

14 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Absolutely, that would be my  
15 assumption.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thanks very much.

17 Going back to this conference at the start  
18 of August, we have heard about your six-minute  
19 contribution, but you would have been sitting in on  
20 a lot of very other interesting material on the state of  
21 American planning, which, as I understand it, by this  
22 time, had matured quite a lot. Can you give us a sense  
23 of the nature of American plans at that time and, as you  
24 listened to them, what did you see, in terms of your  
25 sympathetic commentary on them, might be the difficult



1 parts of it and the stronger parts of it?

2 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Yes. Would it be helpful to

3 you if I tried to -- as it were -- guide us down the

4 critical path and the critical dependencies that they

5 had gone through, which we didn't know then, but which

6 we know now? Would that be helpful?

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I'm sure it would be helpful

8 briefly, and then, please keep in mind what you knew

9 then as well as --

10 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: This is this hindsight piece,

11 isn't it?

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes.

13 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: That's what we know now,

14 I didn't know then, but what we know now is that towards

15 the end of November 2001, General Franks was invited to

16 produce a commander's concept for military action in

17 Iraq. That's what he was subsequently formally tasked

18 to do and it had been, as I understand it, the Secretary

19 of Defense who had had that first conversation with him,

20 and then this was, if you like, ratified through the

21 Joint Staff, putting the planning directive down. So

22 that's the end of November 2001.

23 What, as I understand it, was going on at that time

24 was that the Secretary of Defense was reviewing the 60

25 or so contingency plans on the shelf for action anywhere

1 in the world, the big operational plans, of which Iraq  
2 was one, and this was the 1003 operational plan.

3 This plan, as I understand it, really had --  
4 although it had been looked at, I think, in 1998, when  
5 a thing called "Desert Badger" was done, which you would  
6 have in your background reading, this was in the  
7 No Fly Zone, it hadn't really been given an intellectual  
8 going over since then. That's what happened initially.

9 The view that, as I understand it, General Franks  
10 took was: it is a little bit dated; it doesn't bring in  
11 the lessons that we have learnt recently from  
12 Afghanistan; it doesn't recognise the significant  
13 developments over 12 years since the first Gulf War; it  
14 reflects the -- what was called, I think, the Powell  
15 doctrine of significant force, optimum force, force  
16 levels, Gulf War 1.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: This doctrine basically is that you  
18 needed a large force so there are as few risks as  
19 possible, which was not Rumsfeld's view.

20 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Absolutely. He wasn't  
21 happy with that, and it was six to seven months to carry out, the  
22 equivalent force levels going back 12 years.

23 What General Franks determined very early, as  
24 I understand it, was that whatever he and the team at  
25 CentCom came up with, it needed to have three dimensions

1 to it. It needed, if you like, a robust option; in  
2 other words, all the enablers fell into place within the  
3 AOR. The countries that were required provided the  
4 staging, the basing, the overflight, the three critical  
5 enablers that he needed to project force.

6 So a robust option. A further (Reduced) option, as it would  
7 sound: they didn't all sign up; and then his worst case  
8 option was the unilateral 'go it alone'. He did see that  
9 was the worst case option.

10 He then -- because I don't think he had been given any so  
11 contemporary accounts, made his own assumptions. So he had to make  
his own, which he

13 did, coming up to -- from the operational level to the  
14 strategic level, and so he took as his end state,  
15 probably informed by the Iraq Liberation Act, regime  
16 change, coupled to, of course, WMD removal. He looked  
17 very hard at the strategic and operational risks, and  
18 I can talk to those if you wish. He identified what we  
19 would, and they would, call centres of gravity, which he  
20 euphemistically referred to as "slices" and he  
21 identified a set of lines of operation or lines of  
22 military action to be directed against the centres of  
23 gravity as he saw them.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: These centres -- it is a doctrinal,  
25 jargony term. It basically means the point is that, if

1       you attack, the other side will become particularly  
2       vulnerable.

3       MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Absolutely.

4       SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: These tend to be places?

5       MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Not necessarily. In our  
6       thinking, people can have discussions about how many  
7       centres of gravity you should have. In other words, if  
8       you strike it and you irreparably damage your centre of  
9       gravity, you will have your end-state delivered to you  
10      because you will have won.

11       Now, that's a simplistic way of looking at it and  
12      some will say that there are more than one centre of gravity, not a  
debate I feel any

14      longer qualified to engage you in. So what we have are  
15      centres of gravity and lines of operation in a matrix,  
16      multiple, and then, where these hit, where the synergies  
17      are, that was the beginning of this thinking.

18      Then, of course, he would look through the  
19      doctrinal, dare I say it, lens, and basically apply the  
20      art, as well as the science, into the military thinking.

21      This would be simplistically put: don't hit at  
22      strength, take the indirect approach, more manoeuvre  
23      than attrition, and it is the relationship between the  
24      two. That's what he would be looking at and, therefore,  
25      what you would see --

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Again, because you may be familiar  
2 with these concepts, just to be clear what we are  
3 talking about here is that you avoid, if possible, the  
4 main body of the enemy army, so you don't have  
5 a stand-up fight, you go to your main target.

6 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Yes, you avoid strength, and  
7 what you are trying to do is to get inside the mind of  
8 your opponent and to influence his actions and behaviour  
9 inside his decision cycle, and this is fundamental to  
10 the sort of piece here, and by using or running forward  
11 an operation on different lines of operation -- so you  
12 are hitting different things against different centres  
13 of gravity at high tempo with optimum simultaneity, you  
14 place yourself in a position of advantage to beat his  
15 time to think and react.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Basically, he is disoriented, you  
17 say.

18 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Then, if you can, at the lower  
19 level, at the level of combat, apply, if you can find  
20 him - 'find, fix and strike'; I won't go through the details, but --  
and they  
21 can. If they can see the enemy, they can destroy him.  
22 This where, if you think about the design -- and this  
23 will come out much later -- you think of three, if not  
24 four, dimensions, including the dimension of space, and  
25 this is where technology and the advantage of technology

1 dominance really come in and gives you the edge; you  
2 are always looking for the edge.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: By the end of July, General Franks  
4 has developed this sort of concept and when we are  
5 talking about these different lines of attack,  
6 presumably for the reasons that we heard before the  
7 break, you have got to -- there are not many lines in  
8 which you could enter Iraq. There is obviously an air  
9 campaign, but you have got a northern line and you have  
10 got a southern line.

11 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: When I use the term, these  
12 aren't geographic lines, as I'm sure you will  
13 understand. A line of operation, for  
14 example -- let me just - would be 'operational  
15 fires'. So this is shooting missiles from the eastern  
16 Mediterranean and the Gulf; special forces, operational manoeuvre,  
17 information operations, influencing behaviour, if you  
18 like. Political and military, civil and military,  
19 unconventional warfare as a distinct line of operation,  
20 working with, as we know now, CIA teams, working with  
21 disaffected groups, working with unconventional warfare  
22 aspects and so on and so forth. This is what I mean by  
23 those lines of operation.

24  
25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: As you listen to all of this, and

1 with your caveated presentation to come, how do you see  
2 the UK actually fitting in, because you presumably would  
3 be hearing about quite an extraordinary range of  
4 capacities? What's the role for the UK in all of this?

5 You indicated that General Franks would have been  
6 assuming, possibly, that other countries would help, but  
7 maybe only as enablers, but is there a sense of a role  
8 of the British forces in all of this at this time?

9 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: I understand the question.

10 That was not my remit and that was -- whatever I thought  
11 privately, that was not a judgment that I was in the  
12 business of making or conveying in any sense.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But did the Americans give you  
14 a sense of where they were thinking, "If the British are  
15 going to come along, we understand the caveats, where  
16 might they be more useful?"

17 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Not at that stage. When we  
18 talked -- you have seen what I said at the conference on  
19 2 August, where I talked to possible employment options  
20 without commitment. So this is still very, very early  
21 in a very dynamic iterative process.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Let's move it along a bit. There  
23 are a number of packages, as we have heard, being  
24 developed in the UK. They are around by this time. At  
25 what point, then, are you able to start discussing with

1       the Americans, if we made a political decision, where  
2       would it be useful for us to fit in?

3   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:  I say this is a dynamic  
4       process, and as Lord Boyce said yesterday and  
5       Sir Anthony Pigott said this morning, it was changing  
6       all the way through 2002.  So there was no -- insofar as  
7       I'm concerned, at my level, there was no sort of  
8       instruction from London to me to say, "Tell them this".  
9       It didn't happen.  There was a continual process of  
10      dialogue at the strategic level down to the operational  
11      level, which is when the joint commander was coming in,  
12      and indeed below him, because, as we move, I guess, into  
13      sort of the back-end of the summer -- I may have some of  
14      the dates wrong here -- the operational commander was  
15      beginning to seed liaison teams with the CentCom  
16      components.

17      We didn't really talk about those, but I think it  
18      was implicit, I hope, in what I said, and Sir Anthony  
19      talked to it this morning.  So the army Central Command,  
20      three-star army, based in Kuwait.  Air force, marines,  
21      navy, special forces, logistics.  So if we see them as  
22      the sockets, then into those sockets get plugged Brit  
23      liaison teams, and as we go to the right, those are  
24      upgunned, for example, the recent Chief of Air Staff,  
25      Air Chief Marshal Glen Torpy was with the RAF



1 component, a naval Admiral with the navy and so on and  
2 so forth.

3 So there was a lot of scoping, discussion, looking,  
4 talking and thinking going on at those levels.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What I'm interested in is, as you  
6 are having these discussions, if I was an American  
7 planner, it could get a bit irritating after a while to  
8 say, "Well, hypothetically, this is the sort of thing  
9 the Brits might do." At some sense you would want to  
10 firm this up. How was that happening? Were we able go  
11 a little bit beyond a hypothesis or was it, "This may  
12 well happen, although we can't actually confirm it at  
13 the moment"?

14 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: I understand your question.  
15 I said, in answer to an earlier question, that the  
16 Americans were pragmatic, accommodating and very  
17 flexible. I was never put on the spot, if I can put it  
18 as crudely as that. I was never brought in at any level  
19 and they said, "Look, what's going on?" They know  
20 what's going on, they knew what was going on at that  
21 level because it was my job to make sure they did, that  
22 we were in a process, we were into ' permissions and  
23 authorities', and they knew that very well: indeed that no  
24 commitment could be made until the process moved  
25 forward.

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But they still had to make certain  
2 assumptions in the planning. Can I ask you about the  
3 northern option? Can you give us some sense then of how  
4 this developed, which involved potentially a high  
5 profile British role, coming in through Turkey?

6 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: We need to just step back  
7 a little bit into the process because what  
8 General Franks developed in his commander's concept,  
9 after he had briefed it first to the National  
10 Security Council and the Secretary of Defence and  
11 subsequently to the President, that then moved from  
12 commander's concept into a plan, and that served up the  
13 first plan, if you like, the big sort of plan, called  
14 "Generated Start", which probably took the best of the  
15 old plan but it updated it and so on and so forth.

16 Generated Start. So this was significant force  
17 levels-ish, built up over time, looked a bit like the  
18 first one, but updated, four phases -- we can talk to  
19 those if you wish -- and what that basically did,  
20 simplistically put, was to create a five-front approach  
21 to the problem, essentially five fronts. Then again we  
22 are not talking -- there is an element of geography in  
23 this, and basically the concept was that, against the  
24 risk set, they needed to prevent for a start, which had  
25 happened before, as we know, scuds being -- or missiles

1       going into Israel. So that had to be somehow mitigated,  
2       and the broad thinking was that special forces would do  
3       that in the west.

4           Then, moving up to the north, the issue was oil, it  
5       was also reassuring the Kurds, it was perhaps  
6       preventing, shall we say, any opportunism or  
7       adventurism. So we had a "fixing", and by that we mean  
8       reducing the ability of the enemy to vacate positions in  
9       order to mass somewhere else, so a fixing position.

10          Then we had, if you like, the main entry point, and  
11       the obvious and traditional entry point in four forces,  
12       which was through Kuwait. So the land component  
13       commander would be developing that. And then we would  
14       have the air component commander, that would be  
15       enveloping, if you like, or striking, degrading the  
16       centres of gravity that had been identified, and this is  
17       the slices that we talked about, and then we wrap, as  
18       the fifth front, the whole thing in an information  
19       operation, strategic deception, operational deception  
20       framework, to mask and disguise intent in order to get  
21       the edge and increase the advantages for Franks to the  
22       detriment of his opponent.

23          So the concept broadly: five fronts, and that was  
24       sort of the next piece.

25          In there, I think, in the early stages -- I don't

1 remember -- and I may be wrong on this. I don't  
2 remember -- yes, there was talk of 4 Infantry Division  
3 but I think the Americans themselves had -- in fact  
4 I know they did -- genuine doubts about the do-ability  
5 of the northern option. I don't mean in the sense of  
6 the -- there was an issue with Turkey. There was  
7 a convenience to it, of course, because five corps, the  
8 corps that were going to do the heavy lifting, I think  
9 I am right in saying they were Germany-based.  
10 Sir Anthony talked about the NATO plan that got you to,  
11 if you like, looking over the border into Iraq but not  
12 cross it. There were, as history showed, going to be  
13 complications over that piece. Why? Because, as I said  
14 in the introduction, this was the boundary of European  
15 Command and Central Command, so there was  
16 an ownership-enabling issue, and so on and so forth.  
17 So somebody says -- again, I think I might have read  
18 somewhere that actually General Franks was encouraged  
19 to -- it may have come out of one of the thinking  
20 discussion sessions -- put more substance into the  
21 north, other than just special operational forces.  
22 So the north piece came in, 4ID. 4 Infantry  
23 Division, a very technologically swept-up, very, very  
24 capable division indeed, were identified. They were, as  
25 you know -- we are getting too far ahead now -- were put

1           into 37 ships and held essentially at the eastern end of  
2           the Mediterranean.

3   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:   What you said was very interesting  
4           about the northern part of this.   As we look at the  
5           papers as they are coming through in the UK, in London,  
6           there is a constant stress on the north, as to whether  
7           the British can make a unique contribution, and  
8           presumably this is being discussed at CentCom.   Is it  
9           being discussed at CentCom?

10   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:   As I mentioned to you, on  
11           2 August I spoke to the northern option and I, under  
12           direction, floated the notion that if everything was to  
13           fall into place, there might be a tract or we might be  
14           able to make a contribution there.

15   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:   This is potentially quite  
16           interesting, that we have the British floating the idea  
17           that it would be really very useful to do all these  
18           things that we heard about yesterday, in the north, you  
19           have mentioned again: look after the Kurds, hold down  
20           Iraqi forces and make sure something untoward didn't  
21           happen between Turkey and the Kurds, say.   But the  
22           Americans themselves were never wholly committed or  
23           wholly sure that this would happen in that way?

24   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:   I don't think I can -- I mean,  
25           I'm not going to conjecture on that.   I don't know is

1 the answer. My sense at the time -- there was an  
2 awful -- I mean, put to one side the British piece of  
3 this, there was an awful lot of effort, as you know,  
4 from the papers that you have read, political effort,  
5 diplomatic effort, that was invested into Turkey in  
6 order to set the conditions, should it be required, for  
7 the passage of substantial forces above and beyond  
8 basing, staging and overflight, which of course was sort  
9 of in place anyway at Incerlik) because of servicing  
10 the No Fly Zone in the northern sector. I think that  
11 progressively my understanding was that people were  
12 eventually starting to just say, "This isn't going to  
13 happen. We are going to have to find a way round this".

14 Now, General Ozkok, who was the chief of the Turkish  
15 general staff, I seem to remember, not only was he  
16 visited by the great and the good, US and UK, in the  
17 period, but of course, he visited -- he came to Tampa  
18 in November as a part of the dialogue, and if I remember  
19 correctly, his line was sort of consistent really, "We  
20 have got elections coming up. We don't know the  
21 outcome. Quite wrong for me to predict. Can't make any  
22 assurances".

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I just pursue this a little bit  
24 more? Again, we heard yesterday, until the start  
25 of January, British planning without a political

1 decision to agree on a large land role was based upon  
2 a northern option, yet it is not clear to us whether  
3 this came from the Americans, "This is the most useful  
4 thing the British can do", or from the British, "This is  
5 what we would really like to do". Which would you  
6 say --

7 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: It is not entirely clear to me  
8 either. I think the minds met and I think decisions --  
9 not decisions, but options, firmed up.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And --

11 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Preferences may be firmed up,  
12 I should say.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But the consequence of this was that  
14 there was far less planning for the role that we  
15 eventually performed, which was to come in through  
16 Kuwait. Is that fair?

17 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Are you asking me -- from whose  
18 position? From the American position or from the  
19 British position?

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Both, I think.

21 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: I wouldn't comment because I'm  
22 not able to comment in detail on the British side at  
23 that point. Others will do that for you. My focus  
24 remained on the American side.

25 But there is also another point put in here because

1 the planning -- the centres of planning effort on the  
2 American side changed over time and I think we need to  
3 perhaps introduce this point. We need to -- I said nine  
4 and a half time zones at the outset, and of course, what  
5 happened, as you will know from your papers, is that  
6 General Franks established what had been planned.  
7 I think for three years, a forward Command Headquarters  
8 in Qatar, thereby reducing significantly the problems of  
9 exercising command. That's what he did. Then he -- and  
10 when he did that, if you like, half the brain power, the  
11 military planning intellectual capability, went forward  
12 with him. For my part, what I was authorised to do was  
13 to advance a percentage of my own staff to move forward  
14 too, and then, in the fullness of time, the National  
15 Contingent Commander' headquarters element closed up in the same  
16 timeframe, as you will hear from Air Chief Marshal  
17 Sir Brian Burridge next week.

18 So my point to you is that in this evolving dynamic  
19 process, which you know -- and I'm now into all the  
20 modelling has been done, the simulations have been done,  
21 they have rehearsed it, the trucks have been rehearsed  
22 by strategic command, they have modelled the flow rates,  
23 all the sort of crunchy, critical detail has been done,  
24 but the serious planning had moved from Tampa into  
25 Qatar. I think -- well they had certainly gone over



1       there in November, maybe October, come back for  
2       Thanksgiving, went back again. So that's where it had  
3       moved to. I wasn't a part of that effort.

4       SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That's very helpful and that will be  
5       a focus for some later questions with another witness.  
6       Thank you very much.

7       THE CHAIRMAN: Just before Sir Martin comes in, I have  
8       a sidenote on that, which is to ask, in the context of  
9       the northern question, if I can so describe this, this  
10      is across the CentCom boundary with another American  
11      command; but the plan is for an operation that is wholly  
12      within CentCom's area and responsibility. Who manages  
13      that interface? Is it done bilaterally between the two  
14      regional commanders or does the Def Sec or his office  
15      have to manage it?

16      I am thinking how much more difficult to manage when  
17      half of CentCom has moved over to Qatar.

18      MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: If I may say so, I think that's  
19      exactly on the point. The main thing about boundary is  
20      always an area of concern and requires a lot of effort.

21      What should happen, what did happen, is that  
22      bilateral discussions started, to my memory, quite early  
23      on between European Command and Central Command, and,  
24      indeed, liaison teams were exchanged. Interestingly, at  
25      some point later than that, there was also a liaison

1 team from the UK Operational Headquarters, a very small  
2 team which was co-located, in order to keep the flow of  
3 information, the oil in the machinery, if you like,  
4 coming back to -- in order to try and populate the sort  
5 of joint recognised picture, this political, diplomatic,  
6 military picture that people on the outstations like me  
7 were trying to help the decision-makers in London to get  
8 the mood and the atmospherics and what the concerns were  
9 and the latest position.

10 That is what I choose to think of as the spokes of  
11 the wheel and coming down to the hub, which -- my hub  
12 was in joint headquarters. This net was aligned, it was  
13 a two-way flow of information.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks very much. Martin?

15 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: We would be very interested to know,  
16 General, how your American counterparts at Tampa viewed  
17 the various force packages that the United Kingdom was  
18 offering, the three options, and in particular  
19 package 2, which we understand was the one actually  
20 presented to the Americans for planning purposes.

21 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: With gratitude.

22 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: With any discussion about the  
23 differences on the --

24 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: The discussion continued almost  
25 every hour of almost every day. It was understandably

1 dynamic, iterative and endless, and, of course, one of  
2 the things, if I may, about that is, when you have  
3 got -- we are talking about benefits, I picked up one of  
4 the benefits of the dialogue -- when you have got  
5 professionals, as you will know very well, sitting -- it  
6 doesn't matter what nationality they are, if they are  
7 engaging, you get value from that process. There are  
8 benefits from the process of the dialogue because we  
9 bring different perspectives and cultures and thinking  
10 and ordered processes to it, and that was happening and  
11 that was a benefit to them.

12 I take you back to the point that the then Director  
13 of the Joint Staff said to General Pigott at the end  
14 of June, "We need your counsel. We need your advice",  
15 and this was a benefit to the Americans. So could we  
16 change things? Yes, we could influence at the tactical  
17 level, probably, or in the supporting level, how things  
18 were done and they were hugely grateful for it.

19 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: We know that Ministers here in Britain  
20 didn't take a decision about the scale of British  
21 involvement until early 2003. Yet, as Lord Boyce told  
22 us yesterday, the American commanders assumed, from the  
23 outset, perhaps, that the United Kingdom would provide  
24 a whole division?

25 What did you do to clarify our position on this,

1           since it hadn't yet been confirmed?

2   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:  I don't know whether -- I don't  
3           know and I didn't know then and I don't know now --  
4           whether General Tom Franks always believed  that  
5           militarily the Brits would be there.  I don't know that.

6           I never -- although I saw him every day because we  
7           were into central briefings every day, and of course he  
8           was away a lot -- I was never asked that question.

9           I wasn't asked that question by him.  I wasn't asked the  
10          question by his three-star deputy and I wasn't asked the  
11          question by my principal interlocutor, who was, if you  
12          like, what we call the J3, J and 3, equals 'operations'.

13          I come back to this point of almost a sort of --  
14          I don't want to overstate it, but it was a sort of sigh  
15          of relief.  That was my sense and I think there were, in  
16          my personal opinion, maybe some other benefits, maybe --  
17          they knew they needed to build a coalition - wrong,  
18          they wanted to build a coalition.  Coalition had been  
19          one of our strong suggestions, multinational was good,  
20          unilateral was not so good, and, therefore, as before,  
21          perhaps it was helpful to them, I don't know, in terms  
22          of building their coalition.  I don't know.  But  
23          certainly what we were able in a modest way, I think, able to  
24          do, particularly for the Afghanistan campaign Coalition , which  
25          went on and I said the car park, the trailer park --

1       it's an amazing place, absolutely amazing -- we were  
2       able to in a modest way was to help busy people, busy Americans  
3       at CentCom to try and manage the Coalition, and so it  
4       was a sort of supporting role --

5       SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In terms of this division, there was no  
6       informal discussion, you were not involved in any sort  
7       of general discussions about whether this was something  
8       they wanted or something we could --

9       MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Discussions continued all the  
10      time but what I -- my riding instructions were very  
11      clear: don't get out ahead.

12      SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Right, thank you.

13      SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: May I just come on to the question  
14      that we discussed a bit with Sir Anthony, which is the  
15      term he didn't like, which is "aftermath" and "Phase 4",  
16      but it is relevant in terms of the military planning.

17      You gave us quite a bit of a description of CentCom  
18      in Tampa, a long, long way away from the places where  
19      the fighting would take place.

20      My first question is: do you get a sense of any  
21      interest or much knowledge about the culture and society  
22      of the country that they are about to go into? Were  
23      they sort of taking briefs on that and what might be  
24      expected from the local population?

25      MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: I understand the question. One

1 of the benefits of the US unified command system -- one of the many  
2 benefits, probably, to them -- of the arrangement is that  
3 they are able to invest time, intellectual effort and  
4 resources into their, the warlords' operational area.

5 We know that their information about Iraq was much  
6 better in 2002/2003 than it had been 12 years before  
7 because of the No Fly Zones and because of the  
8 regular activity. In terms of the -- which is clearly  
9 the point of the question -- in terms of gauging what  
10 assumptions might have been made about the reaction of  
11 the different groups within the Iraqi people, my sense  
12 was that they thought -- they underestimated the  
13 extent -- they underestimated the extent of civil unrest  
14 that we know happened.

15 In fact, I remember very clearly from, if my memory  
16 serves, a commanders' conference fairly early on,  
17 I think it might have been in Kuwait, where one of the  
18 UK military delegation made that very point in  
19 questions, made that very point in questions, and  
20 I personally didn't think it got an entirely  
21 satisfactory answer.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So we are looking at an  
23 extraordinary military machine, which is -- which  
24 CentCom has at his disposal. We have heard a lot about  
25 Rumsfeld and the neo-cons as hoping people would be

1 dancing in the street and there wasn't going to be  
2 a problem, but we have also heard that the American  
3 military don't really have an interest in what we might  
4 call stabilisation operations, reconstruction, whatever.

5 So what did you get a sense, at all, that, as part  
6 of the planning process, was this preparation for what  
7 was going to happen after the fighting stopped?

8 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: General -- from where I sat,  
9 General Franks was very clear about the criticality of  
10 the success of what they called Phase 4. No question  
11 about that whatsoever. That's the first thing.

12 I know conceptually there was a lot of -- he had  
13 a view on how it might be taken. He certainly  
14 understood the sequencing that should happen. He had  
15 not been, I think, impressed with what he was seeing and  
16 hearing in Afghanistan, and I think this is pre-Bonn  
17 now, and he understood the need to have the resources  
18 available and the need for security and the relationship  
19 between reconstruction, humanitarian assistance,  
20 disposable funds and security, civil action.

21 In conceptual terms, his thinking was that there  
22 would be a task force, 'Task Force 4', which actually  
23 was the ORHA, Jay Garner's thing in due course, and the  
24 way he saw it on the critical path is that that would  
25 be a properly staffed and resourced and backed

1 organisation, of some 500 plus, which would in due  
2 course move into a three-star headquarters, based in  
3 Baghdad, probably based upon the Land Component  
4 Commander, General McKiernan, who was doing all that and  
5 that would be -- a (metaphorical) 'tent' would be thrown up and that  
6 would be the beginning of it.

7 That was his intent. But, as you have heard and you  
8 will hear, I have no doubt, his intent was frustrated.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But even with that intent, wouldn't  
10 it have required his commanders to have some sense of  
11 what it would mean for their troops to turn -- I think  
12 the phrase was "war fighters into peacekeepers", and  
13 wouldn't it also have required in that role potentially  
14 a lot more troops than he was actually being given? His  
15 troop numbers were being pushed down, and when the chief  
16 of the army in the US suggested that a lot more would be  
17 needed, he was brushed aside.

18 So was there a concern that, when it came to the  
19 crunch, there would simply not be enough boots on the  
20 ground?

21 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: I can't speak to that. I can't  
22 answer your question. I understand the question. What  
23 I can say to you is that the expectation, his  
24 expectation, was that by the stage of Phase 4 or into  
25 Phase 4, he, they, would begin to see the arrival of



1 coalition follow-on effort and resources in order to  
2 take forward that crucial phase. He also, I understand,  
3 had very clear views about the extent of the  
4 de- Baathification programme. I wasn't with him when  
5 Ambassador Bremer made that decision. In fact, I think  
6 I wasn't with him, but I mean, he [Bremer] basically took out  
7 30,000, if I remember correctly, of the structure, the  
8 head and the shoulders and the brains of the  
9 organisation, and the 250,000 or so former soldiers from  
10 the non-specialist units who melted away. I mean, that wasn't  
foreseen --

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Obviously we will look into that.  
14 This is my final question. One of the things that we  
15 have heard is that the advantage of the British role was  
16 that it brought us some influence in the process, and  
17 one of the things where it was felt that we had  
18 particular expertise was in this sort of operation  
19 because of what we had done in Kosovo and Sierra Leone,  
20 even in Northern Ireland.

21 You have indicated already that we sort of started  
22 to feed in some of these concerns, but you also said,  
23 when an officer raised this, he didn't get a very  
24 satisfactory answer. In this rather critical area, do  
25 you feel that the British were able to influence

1 American thinking, and, if so, what evidence is there of  
2 it?

3 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: What I know is that from very,  
4 very early on, the questions were asked and anxieties  
5 expressed -- not anxieties at that stage, but questions  
6 were asked, looking for reassurance that the aftermath,  
7 Phase 4, was receiving as much, if not more, planning  
8 effort and attention than the three phases that preceded  
9 it. That -- I certainly remember being with the Chief  
10 of the Defence Staff when he discussed it with  
11 General Franks. It was one of the very early things he  
12 said and this was a repeated thing, a repeated thing.

13 Now, whether -- I can't make a judgment on whether  
14 the door was locked, open or not but it wasn't for lack  
15 of boots being applied to that door to get through, and  
16 of course, others will speak to this, better able,  
17 better informed than I was, to give you the opinion, but  
18 I mean, what I do know is that, when Jay Garner and his  
19 small team -- 200 of what should have been 500,  
20 I think -- in the early days turned up at Tampa, there  
21 were issues about who -- you know, lovely man and  
22 everything, but who does he work for? Does he work for  
23 Franks? Does he work for somebody else in the offices  
24 of the Secretary of Defense? This was unclear. This  
25 was unclear.

1           Then, in the fullness of time, it became apparent  
2           that this Jay Garner's crew and team suitably reinforced  
3           by well received British specialists, including  
4           a political adviser later on, that they were  
5           understaffed, underfunded and that they had profound, in  
6           some instances, I understand, difficulties with the  
7           clarity of their mission.

8   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you very much.

9   THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Sir Roderic, do you have some  
10       questions?

11   SIR RODERIC LYNE: Just sort of three quick wrap-up  
12       questions from me, if I may. When you spoke at the  
13       CentCom conference in August, and you in heavily  
14       caveated terms talked about possible contribution to the  
15       northern option, what scale of land forces did this  
16       imply from the United Kingdom?

17   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Well, again, the note has been  
18       disclosed to you, so you can see exactly, I hope, what  
19       was said. The inference -- I think the inference was one  
20       of substance. So this was somewhere between, I imagine,  
21       I think, a brigade and more.

22       Sir Anthony Pigott talked this morning to the  
23       advantages, and Robin Brims, will, I'm sure, speak in  
24       great detail to you about the advantages of what those  
25       different options provided militarily, in terms of force

1 protection and lots of other things.

2 So that's a bit of woolly answer, I'm sorry, but  
3 I mean, it wasn't -- it was division -- it was division  
4 minus, that sort of order of scale, division brigade,  
5 imprecise, imprecise at that stage.

6 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you. You said that at the point  
7 where your instructions were to offer package 2, which  
8 is air and maritime without a substantial ground forces  
9 dimension, that this gave us influence at the tactical  
10 level and this was at a time, as you said on more than  
11 one occasion, the Americans were very keen to have our  
12 advice, to have our input.

13 When, at a later stage, we moved up from package 2  
14 to package 3, adding in the big land contribution, did  
15 this give us any additional influence to that which we  
16 already by now had got over what was by then a pretty  
17 well developed American campaign plan?

18 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: That question is a question, in  
19 my opinion, that must be directed at the joint  
20 commander, because the joint commander in Northwood was  
21 the architect of the UK military campaign plan, and,  
22 therefore, it should be for him to express an opinion on  
23 the question you have asked.

24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But in your interface with the Americans,  
25 did you sense that, when we went up to this, we gained

1           some additional traction over their plans?

2   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:   In truth, it was not a question

3           that I would be asking myself continually. I come back

4           to the point, they were -- the sense I had from where

5           I was is that they were hugely grateful that,

6           potentially, if all the conditions were met nationally,

7           politically and so on and so forth, if they had to do

8           this, if they had to do this, we would be with them.

9   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   With them in the air, on the sea --

10   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:   With them.

11   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   In some shape or form?

12   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:   Absolutely.

13   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   It didn't have to be with a divisional

14           strength ground contribution, we would still have been

15           with them substantially under package 2?

16   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:   I defer to the joint commander.

17   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   Why did it take so long for the British

18           military side to be convinced that General Franks had

19           a winning concept? What were our reservations, our

20           concerns about his plan?

21   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:   -- I'm going to stay in my lane here  
because

23           that's another question that should go to the Joint

24           Commander, who commanded, who had command authority over

25           that and he is the one who must, I suggest, give you an

1           answer on that.

2   SIR RODERIC LYNE:   Okay.   Thank you.   So we have accumulated

3           quite a number of questions for the joint commander.

4           Thank you very much.

5   THE CHAIRMAN:   Usha?

6   BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:   Can I ask a brief general question?

7           You were there right through this period.   How would

8           you assess your personal influence during this period?

9   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:   Well, again, I don't know the

10          answer to that.

11   BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:   I'm asking you to assess your --

12   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:   Well, how do you measure it?

13          Do you measure it in terms of access?   Do you measure it

14          in terms of changing something as a result of an

15          intervention?   I don't know.

16   BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:   You can have access without

17          influence.   It is really, what were the outcomes?

18   MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON:   We were in a privileged

19          position from the Afghanistan set-up and I inherited

20          a privileged position from my predecessor.   All right,

21          I wasn't a three-star officer, I was a two-star officer

22          but that didn't really change access.   I spoke the

23          language, I had been lucky enough to have spent a lot of

24          time with American forces throughout my career and I had

25          a reasonable understanding of the military -- of the

1 United States military culture, and I was comfortable  
2 with it. I understood what their sort of anxieties  
3 were. I tried to follow the big events so one could  
4 relate to them. I hope we made a difference.

5 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: I have just got one final question of my own  
7 to try to resolve in my own head.

8 You have used various useful similes about the  
9 nature of all the dialogues, the information channels,  
10 the conduits through which information was flowing.  
11 What is the key conduit through which Anglo-US  
12 discussion takes place so far as the folding-in of the  
13 British option, whenever it was chosen and selected and  
14 offered into the US plan? Where was this dialogue? Was  
15 this PJHQ to Tampa? Was it at high level or ...?

16 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: It was PJHQ. Again, I mean,  
17 this is the joint commander's business.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Of course, at the other end of that, the US  
19 end, the critical bit of it has already migrated down to  
20 the Gulf at the point when the decision is taken on our  
21 side. So --

22 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: But communications -- I mean,  
23 it is instantaneous --

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, so it's (overtalking) --

25 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: -- it is instantaneous.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: So it doesn't actually matter all that much,  
2 the pure geography of the communication.

3 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: Only in the implications of the  
4 time zone separation, and, for the US side, the  
5 strategic -- the Pentagon goes to work at that time and  
6 they are going to bed nine and a half time zones away to  
7 the east.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: I pity the Australians. Thank you very much  
9 indeed for your evidence, Major General Wilson. Are  
10 there any final observations you would like to make in  
11 the few moments remaining?

12 MAJOR GENERAL DAVID WILSON: No, thanks.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: In that case, with thanks to you again, and  
14 those who attended throughout this morning, I would just  
15 like to remind those present that this afternoon at  
16 2 o'clock, we have Dominic Asquith coming to see us.  
17 He is presently Ambassador in Cairo, but we can't  
18 get him at the sequence point we would like to, which is  
19 a little further on, so we are going to ask him this  
20 afternoon about the period 2004 to 2007 when he was  
21 directing Iraq affairs in the Foreign Office and then  
22 moving to Baghdad as Ambassador. Then we will try to  
23 fold that in at the right point in the sequence later  
24 on. So if you those who are interested would like to  
25 come back at 2 o'clock, that's when we'll start this



1           afternoon. Thank you all very much indeed.

2   (1.00 pm)

3                               (The short adjournment)

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