

1 (2.00 pm)

2 SIR JOHN SCARLETT

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Good
4 afternoon, Sir John. A fuller house than we have been
5 having.

6 Our witness this afternoon is Sir John Scarlett, who
7 was chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee from
8 2001 to 2004.

9 Many of you will know that Sir John went on to be
10 the head of the Secret Intelligence Service, a job from
11 which he has recently retired and we will not be
12 covering his work in that role this afternoon.

13 The objective for this session is about the
14 intelligence assessment that was available about Iraq in
15 the period before and up to military action started.

16 Two previous inquiries, the Hutton Inquiry in 2003
17 and the Butler Inquiry, of which I was a member, in
18 2004, have gone over much of this ground, but both
19 concentrated on weapons of mass destruction and we need
20 to look at other aspects of intelligence as well. Was
21 the intelligence community being asked and answering
22 other crucial questions too that might have helped us to
23 know what to expect during and after military action.

24 We will pick up some points from the evidence given
25 by Sir William Ehrman and Tim Dowse on 25 November.

1 There will, of course, be limits to detail we can cover
2 in this public session to avoid damaging national
3 security. We will, therefore, be holding further
4 sessions on this subject in private.

5 I notice that Adam Holloway MP is reported today as
6 having produced a paper on British involvement in Iran.
7 There may be points in that which will be relevant to
8 our inquiries, but it is not a matter for this session.

9 If we conclude that more generally there is evidence
10 that can be brought out in public without endangering
11 national security, we would then arrange further public
12 sessions next year.

13 Now, we recognise that witnesses are giving evidence
14 based on their recollection of events, and we are of
15 course checking what we hear against the papers to which
16 we have access and which with we are still receiving.

17 To conclude this opening, I remind every witness
18 that they will later be asked to sign a transcript of
19 the evidence to the effect that the evidence they have
20 given is truthful, fair and accurate.

21 And with that preliminary, perhaps, Sir John,
22 I could start by asking you about the role of the Joint
23 Intelligence Committee and how it works and how does it
24 go about its business. Could you say something on that?

25 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Mr Chairman, yes, of course.

1 The JIC, Joint Intelligence Committee, is based in
2 the Cabinet Office and it is a committee which meets
3 weekly. It has the responsibility for presenting
4 coordinated intelligence assessments to government at
5 the most senior level -- Prime Minister, senior
6 ministers and officials dealing with policy and
7 decision-making -- and, of course, the subject matter is
8 almost entirely on -- and has been for many years --
9 defence, security, foreign affairs.

10 It has got a long history, started in the 1930s,
11 moved from the Cabinet Office from the Chiefs of Staff
12 in 1957, and since 1968 it has been supported by
13 Assessment Staff, a small support analytical team.

14 Its key feature is that it brings together those who
15 are responsible for intelligence collection,
16 intelligence assessment and policy-making, and it brings
17 them together in that sort of forum on a regular basis.

18 If I can perhaps just say quickly about the
19 structure, output and tasking and that will give you the
20 overall picture, if that's all right.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, do.

22 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Of course it is an established body, to
23 put it mildly, but that is not to say the arrangements
24 don't change from time to time.

25 What I'm talking about is the Committee, as it

1 functioned when I was in charge of it, which is
2 September 2001 until July 2004 -- at that time it was
3 composed of senior officials from the major departments
4 dealing with those issues that I have just described:
5 The Foreign Office, MoD, Home Office, Cabinet Office. I
6 could go you on. But including the Chief of Defence
7 Intelligence, Deputy Chief Defence Intelligence and then
8 the heads of three intelligence agencies, SIS, the
9 Security Service and GCHQ.

10 As Chairman of the Committee at that time in 2002,
11 from mid 2002, I was answerable for the efficient
12 functioning of the Committee and the Secretariat of
13 which I was head, to Sir David Omand who was the
14 newly-installed Security and Intelligence Coordinator.
15 But I was responsible for the presentation of
16 intelligence assessment to government, and that's how we
17 divided the responsibilities up.

18 I mentioned Assessment Staff. It is a key body and
19 comes up frequently here, about 25 people, usually on
20 secondment two to three years, from other government
21 departments. The Chief of Assessment Staff was a full
22 member of the JIC, five deputies and five teams with an
23 assessment staff covering a very wide range of issues,
24 and the Secretariat to support the activity of the
25 Committee, do minutes, distribution of reports and

1 so on.

2 In terms of output, its main product, if you like to
3 use that word, are JIC assessments dealing with
4 long-term or short-term and immediate issues, depending
5 on what the tasking is. And in my time we were doing
6 approximately three of those a week, those assessments.

7 They would be drafted by the relevant Assessments
8 Staff team, circulated around the departments
9 represented on the JIC, brought back to a Current
10 Intelligence Group meeting at sort of senior working
11 level, where they were discussed and made ready as
12 drafts for discussion at the JIC. And at a weekly
13 meeting of the JIC they would be discussed.

14 Those discussions were never formulaic, they were
15 always substantial, often robust and I can hardly think
16 of an occasion when something went through on the nod.
17 There was always significant discussion, and from time
18 to time assessments would be sent back for redrafting,
19 recirculation, either coming back to the Committee or
20 being agreed out of Committee.

21 The assessments were all source, by that I mean
22 based on diplomatic reporting, open source material and
23 secret intelligence. That is their point. And they are
24 distributed automatically either from the Cabinet Office
25 or through departments to the offices of Prime Minister,

1 Foreign Secretary, Defence Secretary, Home Secretary,
2 major departments involved with policy-making. And then
3 widely -- I mean, across a relevant government
4 departments, Chiefs of Staff and so on.

5 Assessment is not the only product -- it is
6 important to say this -- particularly in times of crisis
7 and conflict, and we had quite a few of those at that
8 time because this was the time when, of course,
9 post-9/11, international terrorism was very heavily on
10 the agenda, there had been the campaign in Afghanistan
11 and then, of course, the aftermath, as it was at that
12 time. In Afghanistan throughout the middle of 2002
13 there was the major stand-off between India and
14 Pakistan, and then Iraq built up.

15 But throughout times of, you know, great tension and
16 crisis and particularly conflict, there was heavy use of
17 intelligence updates which sometimes became issued on
18 a daily basis and were a product of Assessments Staff,
19 but all the same, consulting with JIC member
20 departments.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Could I just interject? Did the updates
22 carry the full authority of a JIC assessment or are they
23 in a distinctive category?

24 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: They were not discussed at the JIC and,
25 of course, couldn't be if they were being done on

1 a daily basis. So at the top of an update it would say
2 this is issued on the authority of Assessments Staff,
3 but I think the wording was "acting in consultation with
4 other departments", and they go out on a daily basis.
5 And, of course, if subsequently people were unhappy with
6 something which had been issued, they could say so and
7 a correction or record put out, although I never
8 remember that happening.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: And just as a second postscript on that, as
10 updates come in, they will eventually find reflection in
11 the next assessment on the same subject?

12 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Yes. And often you find the same points
13 coming up. But, of course, if updates were going out on
14 a daily basis, as they were from the beginning of
15 March 2003, to mid May, for example, then there was an
16 awful lot of detailed material.

17 The assessments, the classic JIC product, have
18 certain sorts of distinguishing features. Two, I think,
19 I would bring out. The first is that by long tradition
20 they seek to achieve an agreed view on a particular
21 issue. There is no tradition -- there was no tradition
22 and there is no tradition of dissenting minority
23 judgments being formally recorded in the way that
24 happens in the United States.

25 If it is not possible to reached an agreed view,

1 then there won't be an agreed view and the reasons for
2 it may be stated, that for this reason, that reason,
3 uncertainties of intelligence or whatever.

4 The second point is that the people drafting the
5 assessments, the Assessments Staff and, of course, the
6 members of the JIC themselves, as a body, you are
7 dealing there with people who have access to all
8 available intelligence on whatever issue is being
9 discussed.

10 Now, finally, in terms of tasking, the tasking of
11 the JIC took place, takes place, against the backdrop of
12 what is called the Requirements and Priorities round.
13 That sets the national intelligence priorities for
14 everybody involved in intelligence collection and
15 assessment.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: On an annual footing?

17 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Annual. Well, it is reviewed every year
18 and that process of review is coordinated by the Chief
19 of Assessments Staff and Assessments Staff officers and
20 analysts. But it is done on an interdepartmental basis.
21 It is a rigorous process and the draft of the
22 requirements and priorities list is brought to the JIC
23 for the JIC's approval, and it is submitted for final
24 approval to the senior ministers who form the
25 Committee -- or at this time formed the Committee of

1 Security and Intelligence: the Prime Minister, the
2 Foreign Secretary, the Home Secretary and other senior
3 ministers.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Is it right to suppose that there is a degree
5 of flexibility? We have heard from other witnesses in
6 a broader sense that Iraq rose from below number 20 in
7 the priority list to number 1 in quite short order in
8 2002/2003. I imagine the priorities list is capable of
9 that sort of adjustment in year, if events require it.

10 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Yes. Of course, the trouble with
11 a rigorous system like that is that you run the risk of
12 being inflexible and being set on certain tramlines. So
13 the recognition for flexibility is built in -- I will
14 come back to that point in a second, if I may, because
15 it is relevant to the way in which the work programme is
16 formulated, because underneath that requirements and
17 priorities process there is, every four months,
18 constituted the medium term work programme where the
19 actual subject matters for the papers are agreed,
20 because of course it takes time to write these papers,
21 usually about three weeks, and you have to have long-term
22 planning. So you have to have some long-term planning,
23 medium-term planning. Equally, everybody recognises
24 that you have to be flexible and be ready to take
25 short-term priorities.

1 I have to say I don't recognise the point about Iraq
2 being about number 20 --

3 THE CHAIRMAN: That was a development earlier.

4 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Maybe. In our context, Iraq was, you
5 know, in almost all respects a top priority across all
6 issues throughout the period I'm talking about. There
7 are other top priorities too, as I have tried to
8 explain.

9 Finally, I suppose my final point is who sponsors
10 these assessments and who decided -- we were talking
11 about the medium-term work programme, where it is an
12 interdepartmental process. But every paper, you know,
13 effectively tries to answer a set of questions, and
14 those questions are put by a sponsoring department.

15 So the great majority of cases, the papers are
16 sponsored by the Foreign Office or the Defence Ministry.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: The great majority, but self-tasking remains
18 a possibility if the JIC --

19 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Yes, the JIC is capable and certainly
20 able to task itself, and that from time to time does
21 happen. Of course, the Cabinet Office also can be
22 a tasking department, but any member department can be
23 a tasking department.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: One other question on this structure and
25 process set of issues: how far does the JIC's work

1 programme, reflecting as it does the priorities
2 requirements, itself influence or play into the
3 resourcing of the intelligence agencies and where they
4 put their own effort?

5 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, of course, the resource allocation
6 within the intelligence agencies has to take close
7 attention and pay close attention to the priorities
8 listed under requirements and priorities, and there are
9 certain priority targets which the collection agencies
10 are effectively obliged to pursue if they are a very
11 high priority to the list.

12 But there is a recognition in the system that you
13 can't be too rigid in this respect, and at the end of
14 the day exactly where resources are allocated, that has
15 to be under the authority of the heads of the agencies
16 themselves because there isn't a simple equation between
17 the importance of priority and resources required to
18 actually pursue it operationally.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: It is tempting to ask which side of that
20 relationship you most enjoyed being on, whether it was
21 chairman or head of an agency, but let's leave that.

22 I would like to turn now to the interface between
23 intelligence, JIC assessment essentially, and
24 policy-making. First of all, the JIC and its Chairman
25 interface directly with ministers. Can you say a bit

1 about how that actually happens?

2 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, of course, it is the case that

3 almost by definition, as I have just described, the JIC

4 is designed to be at the interface between intelligence

5 and policy. The Chairman of the JIC, therefore, plays

6 a key role in that respect. Of course, the Chairman of

7 the JIC has authority, because he is Chairman of the

8 JIC, and his job or her job is to represent the views,

9 which are very thoroughly considered, of the JIC itself.

10 He doesn't have a separate status, separate from the

11 Committee itself. He carries his authority, because he

12 is carrying the authority of the Committee and he is

13 representing those views, and then he has interface with

14 senior ministers or the Prime Minister within the

15 structures and channels which exist for that interface

16 to take place.

17 I can explain that a bit further, if you like.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: I think it would be helpful just to go

19 a little further into that. It is not merely a matter

20 of a flow of paper up and down or there are face-to-face

21 meetings, there are discussions?

22 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, yes -- I mean, the main channels

23 that I would describe -- again, I'm talking of my own

24 time here, it's changed a bit since -- the most formal

25 channel down which presentations are made would be at

1 meetings of what was then called DOP, Defence and
2 Overseas Policy Committee of the Cabinet chaired by the
3 Prime Minister, which holds, you know, its regular
4 meetings, or its meetings, as it decides to hold them,
5 taking a range of issues.

6 At the particular time we are talking about, the DOP
7 did meet to discuss Iraq, it met to discuss
8 international terrorism, it met to discuss terrorism
9 threats to the UK and some regional issues around the
10 Middle East and south Asia.

11 When that happened and there were senior ministers
12 present, the Prime Minister and the chair, then each
13 meeting would begin with a presentation of the latest
14 intelligence picture on the subject concerned by the JIC
15 Chairman. So that was quite a formal moment, where the
16 views of the intelligence community considered and so on
17 were represented by the JIC Chairman, and it is quite
18 a good example of the way the system should work.

19 In addition, of course, at any moments of crisis --
20 and I talked about daily updates -- in moments of actual
21 conflict -- and there were two of those in my time, the
22 Afghanistan conflict and the Iraq conflict -- there is
23 the equivalent of the War Cabinet. I mean, the sort of
24 jargon around the Cabinet was we talked about the War
25 Cabinet. I'm not sure it formally had that title.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: But there was an inner group of senior
2 ministers who met on a regular footing?

3 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: And in a way, it was a conflict, at the
4 time, version of DOP. And that met -- I think I'm right
5 in saying from just before the start of the conflict
6 through to the end, but certainly from about mid-March
7 that met every day in the morning, and the JIC Chairman,
8 I, attended those meetings. And, again, they routinely
9 began with an update of the intelligence picture from
10 the JIC Chairman.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: I think the point to register, which you have
12 made, is that there is no, as it were, intervening veil
13 or distorting mechanism between the output of the JIC
14 through its Chairman to the senior ministers in times
15 like those.

16 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: No.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: It is a direct relationship.

18 Could you say just a little about the more routine
19 flow of business and how the information works its way
20 around ministers and senior officials?

21 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, of course, again, from the point
22 of view of the JIC, it has its formal product, its
23 assessments and the updates, and occasionally also
24 something called a JIC note which is not easy to
25 distinguish from an assessment, but it does exist as

1 well.

2 There is one other mechanism whereby the Assessments
3 Staff and the JIC Chairman makes intelligence points, if
4 you like, to ministers and particularly to the
5 Prime Minister, which will be through papers submitted
6 to, in my case, almost always the foreign policy
7 adviser, Sir David Manning. For example, in the run-up
8 to the conflict in Iraq I sent him a note drawing
9 attention to the JIC papers which had just been taken on
10 the likely impact of conflict in the north of Iraq or
11 the south of Iraq. So I was drawing that to his
12 attention.

13 In addition, if he was -- the Prime Minister was
14 meeting a foreign colleague of some kind, there might be
15 a range of issues they were going to discuss together.
16 I would put in a summary of the JIC judgments around
17 these issues, or it might be that David Manning would
18 have some particular questions which related to an
19 intelligence issue of some kind or another, and one
20 would say this is what the intelligence is saying, this
21 is what the JIC has recently said.

22 That's from the JIC point of view, but that's not
23 the only way in which intelligence issues get covered
24 with ministers.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. I was going to ask you about -- whether

1 this is a one-way flow, assessed intelligence, JIC
2 policy into the policy machinery at the highest level or
3 is there an interaction, policy starts getting formed or
4 at least influenced by intelligence, you become aware of
5 that? If there was, as it were, a skew or an addition
6 or a subtraction that needed to be made, would you have
7 the opportunity to register that?

8 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Yes, almost always that would be done --
9 it would either be done, let's say if it was an ad hoc
10 group meeting around a particular subject, and, again,
11 the JIC Chairman or his representative would be present
12 at such an ad hoc group and such matters would be done
13 there, but they would be done at senior official level.
14 Or if I saw something happening or we saw something
15 happening which didn't look right or something was being
16 said which we didn't think was quite right, then one
17 could always go back but it would be to, in this case,
18 David Manning, "You need to be aware of this, you need
19 to be aware of that, I want the Prime Minister to be
20 aware of this or aware of that".

21 THE CHAIRMAN: One last point by way of background and
22 introduction, intelligence starts with tasking, but it
23 goes into collection. Then there has to be validation
24 and analysis of it before the assessment emerges at the
25 end of the pipeline.

1 There have been suggestions over time that sometimes
2 analysis is given too little importance in the whole
3 process, sometimes perhaps that it is missed all
4 altogether. Is this something that does happen or is it
5 something that changes through time, or is there
6 something so rooted and grooved in the whole history of
7 the set-up that it is in balance almost automatically?

8 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: No system is perfect and the
9 relationship between collection, dissemination, comment,
10 analysis, assessment and then policy-making is, of
11 course, quite a subtle one.

12 The way the system in the UK has worked -- I think
13 was working at this time and, broadly speaking,
14 continues to work -- is that a report will be issued by
15 the collection agency, there is the possibility for that
16 collection agency to make comment on the report and very
17 often put it into context compared with what other
18 reports have said on a given subject. Then that will be
19 issued to quite a wide range of customers.

20 Now, those customers will include profession
21 analysts: analysts in the Foreign Office, analysts
22 particularly in the defence ministry, particularly of
23 course in the Defence Intelligence Staff who, as you
24 know, are an extremely important body of analysts and
25 a very big consumer of detailed intelligence reports.

1 And then they play their role in the current
2 intelligence groups which I was talking about and the
3 formulation of the wider assessments.

4 But it is the job of assessments and assessments
5 staff to bring all that work together -- the raw
6 intelligence, the comment from the collection agencies,
7 the contribution from the profession analysts -- and put
8 it into the big picture assessment which is what does
9 all this actually mean. And that's the difference, of
10 course, if one tries to get it right, between assessment
11 and analysis.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: That's the general. Let's move more to the
13 particular, and can I ask Sir Roderic Lyne to pick up
14 the questions?

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Sir John, you have said that the Cabinet
16 Committee, DOP, did meet to discuss Iraq in the period
17 running up to the war. Can you recall roughly how often
18 from September 2001 to early 2003 the Cabinet Committee
19 actually met and discussed Iraq?

20 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: The DOP? No, I can't, I am afraid. Of
21 course, there were meetings such as the one in
22 July 2002, with which discussed Iraq and it has been
23 discussed subsequently. I can't give you a number as to
24 how many times it met.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But it wasn't particularly frequent?

1 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: As a formal meeting of the DOP, no.

2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Turning on the JIC's assessments, you

3 said that Iraq was in almost all respects a top priority

4 for the JIC. The Butler Report noted that Iraq's

5 weapons of mass destruction were designated as a JIC

6 first order of priority, while Iraq's political issues

7 were third order of priority.

8 How low a priority is third order and what lay

9 behind this distinction?

10 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, the research I have done, you

11 know, while preparing for this session here has shown me

12 that, or has suggested to me that it was a priority 1

13 across a range of political issues as well. So that's

14 a slight discrepancy which I can't comment on further.

15 Certainly as far as the work of the JIC was

16 concerned, in 2002 and in 2003, Iraq in all respects was

17 a very high priority, and I can explain that further.

18 The situation before early 2002/2001 maybe -- I am

19 afraid I'm not completely sure as to where it was in the

20 priority list.

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So can you say a bit more, looking at

22 2002/2003, about which aspects of Iraq the JIC was

23 addressing?

24 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: This is, I think, an important point

25 because, of course, the work of the JIC in this respect

1 took the form first of all of doing the status reports
2 on the WMD programmes, and that was a sort of backdrop
3 feature of the work of the Committee.

4 But as it became clear that a major crisis and
5 really difficult situation was developing around Iraq
6 during 2002, it became clear that a range of other
7 assessment requirements, if you like, needed to be
8 tackled.

9 So in the spring and early summer, we developed
10 a programme of work which sought to answer certain broad
11 questions or themes and make sure that we were
12 monitoring these through the assessment process, during
13 this period.

14 So the subjects that we were covering were what we
15 called regime cohesion; in other words, really how
16 stable was the Saddam regime, what did it rely upon, you
17 know, what were the foundations for its strength or
18 weaknesses, where relevant, and how would it stand up to
19 the kind of pressure which seemed likely to be applied
20 to it? That was clearly a continuing process of
21 watching that.

22 What kind of diplomatic and military options did
23 Saddam have. Faced with this pressure, how was he going
24 to behave and how was he behaving and what should we
25 record about that? What impact was all this going to

1 have upon the internal cohesion -- obviously the
2 cohesion of the regime but the cohesion of the country,
3 if you like, given the centrifugal pressures there, in
4 particular the impact on the situation in the north and
5 then the situation in the south. The attitudes of other
6 states in the region. An awful lot of complicated
7 issues and questions and politics that arose there in
8 terms of regional reactions, many of them quite varied.
9 And then the impact of this developing crisis,
10 particularly when it became more acute on the threat
11 from international terrorism.

12 And those were major themes that were under JIC
13 consideration throughout, well, certainly the last nine
14 months of 2002 and then well into 2003, and we did
15 a whole series of assessments and papers on them.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So how would you say the balance broke
17 down between focus on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction
18 and focus on these other issues of the region and the
19 regime cohesion?

20 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: In term of formal numbers of papers, of
21 course there were many more papers on all those subjects
22 that I have just listed than on a formal status of the
23 WMD programme of a kind which was done, for example, in
24 March 2002 or in September 2002. Or had been done in
25 May 2001.

1 That -- but that is a slightly simplistic way of
2 looking at it, first of all because there were a number
3 of papers done at this time on the weapons of mass
4 destruction and proliferation issues on either
5 a regional or global basis, Middle East proliferation
6 issues, chemical and biological weapons on a global
7 basis, long-range missiles, nuclear trade in WMD
8 materials and so on, all of which included work on Iraq
9 amongst other countries.

10 And, of course, the paper about military options,
11 for example, is going to contain some work on chemical
12 and biological weapons and so it came up quite
13 frequently, a paper on the situation in the south and
14 what might happen there. We certainly had to consider
15 the possibility that chemical and biological weapons
16 would be used by the regime in the event of a conflict.

17 So the picture is slightly complicated in terms of
18 balance, but that's the best answer I can give, I think.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You say the situation was changing in
20 this period. Was it the situation within Iraq that was
21 changing or was it, as Sir Peter Ricketts put it to us
22 earlier, tolerance of Iraq that changed after 9/11?
23 That is to say the situation with regard to Iraq changed
24 rather than the internal problem?

25 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Yes, the internal situation in Iraq was

1 not the main dynamic here, I wouldn't say. It became
2 highly relevant, of course, as the regime came under
3 pressure from outside, but the pressure was coming from
4 outside. And I agree with Peter Ricketts, his
5 comment -- and comments from others -- that what had
6 changed was the readiness, particularly of the
7 United States, to continue its previous posture
8 vis-à-vis Iraq after 9/11.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: With all the benefits of hindsight of
10 which we are properly careful, do you think that the JIC
11 could and should have done more work on the political
12 situation in Iraq, and in particular on the question of
13 what might happen after Saddam Hussein left or was
14 forced to leave power?

15 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, of course, it is tempting to say
16 with hindsight, yes, but that's not my honest answer.

17 We did do -- and we knew that we had to watch these
18 issues, we certainly knew that we had to understand as
19 well as we could the developing internal situation in
20 Iraq and the way Saddam himself might be thinking and
21 reacting to the situation.

22 I mean, that was clearly an important requirement
23 and a lot of effort was put in trying to get that right.
24 Of course, it was an exceptionally difficult thing to
25 get right.

1 In terms of the impact internally, well, I referred
2 to assessments which were done early on in 2003 on the
3 impact in the north and then the impact in the south,
4 and these were substantial assessments which were pretty
5 detailed and blunt in their conclusions. And as I have
6 said, I made a point of drawing those particularly to
7 the attention of the Prime Minister's office.

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: How well placed did you feel the JIC was
9 to address all of these questions relating to Iraq?

10 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, only as well placed as the quality
11 of the intelligence coming in, of course. And this was
12 a very difficult target, and on many of them the amount
13 of intelligence available was limited. And if it was
14 limited, well, then there was a limit to what the
15 assessments could do. But bearing in mind the
16 intelligence base, I would say that the range of issues
17 that were covered by the JIC at that time were both
18 wide-ranging and I think probably quite well chosen.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: You told us something in the introductory
21 remarks about how ministers and other important
22 customers are briefed and informed. Coming to the Iraq
23 context itself and intelligence about it, I recall that
24 the Butler Committee published an introductory chapter
25 on the nature and uses of intelligence, and what you

1 have said already makes one understand that intelligence
2 is a highly professional and even technical business
3 with its own special language and significance.

4 Are ministers, as it were, among our key customers,
5 simply assumed to pick it up as they go along or is
6 there some more formal kind of preparation that's
7 possible, or does the Chairman of the JIC himself or
8 herself have to act, as it were, as a travel guide or
9 interpreter?

10 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: There is no formal induction process for
11 new ministers or, indeed, new prime ministers in how to
12 interpret intelligence.

13 I'll go back to the point when I say I'm talking
14 about my own time as Chairman of the JIC. To my
15 knowledge there was no formal induction process of that
16 kind and so, of course, it was one of the jobs of the
17 JIC Chairman to ensure that intelligence was being sort
18 of understood and properly presented and interpreted.

19 But it is important to explain that, as I have
20 already sort of indicated, this wasn't the only channel
21 through which the Prime Minister or senior ministers
22 have access to intelligence. A very important channel
23 is that they receive the intelligence reports of
24 particular note and interest and importance and
25 relevance to policy-making as they come through and as

1 they are issued independently by the collection
2 agencies.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: And picking up, one assumes, does one, the
4 nuances and the caveats of all of that in those reports?

5 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, if they are properly presented,
6 yes. But, in fact, one with of the jobs of the policy
7 departments is probably, and in most cases is carried
8 out, that they are given a report maybe put up to the
9 Secretary of State concerned with a comment from the
10 policy official saying, "We think this means this and
11 that means that". In addition, of course, the
12 Secretaries of State, the Prime Minister, meet the agency
13 heads. So they are getting input that way. That's
14 separate from the JIC Chairman.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: So when it comes to key ministers being
16 briefed on Iraq intelligence, it is mostly the JIC
17 Chairman, it is also heads of the agencies themselves,
18 it is also their most senior official advisers, all of
19 whom would be building in that minister's mind a picture
20 of Iraq intelligence.

21 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Yes.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Is that just about as good a system as one
23 can devise?

24 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Erm.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: You said there was no formal training.

1 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: No.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: There used not to be for judges, but now

3 there is.

4 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, I sort of haven't come ready to

5 give a view on whether there shall be formal training of

6 prime ministers or not, but ... I'm presenting, and

7 I have presented, the system as it was at that time and

8 there's a lot of form to it, a lot of tradition to it,

9 a lot of structure to it and a lot of regularity to it.

10 And in moments of great tension and conflict that

11 regularity is, if you like, daily presentation.

12 But there is not in the United Kingdom, and there

13 has never been, a system of daily intelligence briefing

14 through all circumstances, tense and not so tense, of

15 the intelligence picture and the product of the

16 intelligence agencies and the analytical bodies and

17 assessment bodies to the Prime Minister or senior

18 ministers.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: I will push this question just one stage

20 further, if I may: that is whether it is an advantage to

21 have experienced ministers in key roles at times of

22 crisis when it comes to comprehending, taking in,

23 understanding and, indeed, acting on intelligence

24 material?

25 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, experience is always an advantage

1 but it is not on its own enough. Many qualities clearly
2 go into good policy-making and good decision-making and
3 good leadership.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Our Inquiry is tasked with finding lessons to
5 be learned from the Iraq experience, and although it
6 wasn't the case, at least not for the Prime Minister and
7 the Foreign Secretary at the time, it could be the case
8 that a newly appointed and new government and wholly
9 inexperienced team of senior ministers come in and are
10 faced with a major crisis with intelligence input, would
11 the system that we have had and practised for so long be
12 adequate in those circumstances?

13 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: That is a good question, and it is worth
14 saying that in the situation I'm describing, the
15 intelligence community was dealing with top levels of
16 government which had been in place for quite some time
17 and had been through quite a few crises by the time this
18 developed.

19 If we had that kind of situation with a brand new
20 government and a range of ministers who were not
21 experienced, it would be essential for them to be
22 properly guided, properly briefed on the significance of
23 material and its nature and so on to be properly
24 understood. So I would agree wholeheartedly.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Roderic?

1 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You referred earlier to the difficulty of
2 getting information about Iraq. Obviously the JIC
3 doesn't have to deal with easy targets; they wouldn't
4 come to the JIC. So in the JIC you are only looking at
5 difficult issues.

6 How exceptionally difficult was Iraq among the
7 targets that the JIC had to deal with?

8 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, do you mean the JIC or do you mean
9 intelligence -- Iraq as an intelligence target?

10 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I mean Iraq as an intelligence target.

11 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Of course it was very difficult, but
12 lots of intelligence targets, as you said, are
13 difficult. Maybe I might develop that a little bit.

14 All totalitarian states are difficult almost by
15 definition as intelligence targets and that's one of the
16 reasons they are totalitarian states. If we are
17 thinking about getting access to sources of really
18 valuable information which, of course, is by definition
19 what we are talking about, then achieving that access is
20 very difficult in a tightly controlled totalitarian
21 environment, which will be backed by strong security
22 agencies and a climate of intimidation and maybe even --
23 well, almost certainly fear. So you have that problem.

24 In addition, you have the problem that the normal
25 contextual information, which is around normal countries

1 and societies which are relatively open or completely
2 open, is missing in a highly totalitarian environment.
3 So you don't have a free press, you don't have the kind
4 of access which comes from free and easy travel, you may
5 not have -- and we didn't have in Iraq -- all the
6 benefits which come from having an embassy in the
7 country. We hadn't had an embassy there for over ten
8 years. So the value that of reporting was missing.

9 So those -- all that applies to quite a number of
10 countries, I suppose. But as I have already indicated,
11 perhaps it did particularly apply -- not uniquely but
12 particularly apply -- to Iraq because in that case the
13 levels of fear and intimidation were very high. And,
14 therefore, that affected definitely the difficulty of
15 getting access especially to intelligence on weapons of
16 mass destruction.

17 I will come back to that in a minute. There was
18 also the point that we had through the 1990s been quite
19 reliant on information coming from the UN inspectors
20 from UNSCOM and, indeed, from the occasional very high
21 level and valuable defector, such as Hussein Kamel in
22 the mid 1990s. Once the inspectors had left in
23 late 1998, that source, if you like, disappeared.

24 I think also -- and this is slightly straying into
25 the intelligence collection point of view, but it is the

1 question and obviously I can answer it. Issues relating
2 to Iraq which are relevant are that with a large number,
3 certainly by the time I'm talking about, of high
4 priority targets relating to Iraq, whether it was the
5 WMD programme or programmes, but there was also the
6 behaviour, thinking and capabilities of the military
7 more generally, the thinking of the leadership, the
8 behaviour and intentions of the opposition and so on.

9 Secondly, when we are talking about the nuclear or
10 chemical or biological or missile programme, we are
11 talking about the most secret parts of what is already
12 a highly secretive state. We are talking about secret
13 parts which are highly compartmented. So you might
14 achieve access to somebody who knows a lot about
15 a particular part, a particular programme, but by
16 definition they are not going to have a broader picture.

17 So you need a lot of such sources at a ground level
18 to really get detailed information about the programmes.
19 And, of course, with WMD you have the well-known
20 programme of dual use, where it is very difficult to
21 interpret any information or intelligence that you
22 acquire as to whether it is relevant to the programmes
23 for whether it is not.

24 And that is a particular problem for the deployment
25 of signals intelligence or imagery. So there were lots

1 of reasons as to why Iraq was a very difficult target.
2 It was difficult to produce intelligence on it, but
3 I don't think I would say that it was unique in that
4 way.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Was it as difficult to get intelligence
6 about political affairs there, as you say, things like
7 the thinking of the leadership, the thinking of the
8 military commanders, what was happening in the
9 opposition, what was happening more generally perhaps in
10 Iraqi society, as it was to get information about WMD?
11 If we had put more effort into getting that kind of
12 information, would we have been able to get more?

13 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: I wouldn't say so. They were both very
14 difficult. And we did have insight, some insight, we
15 believed, into the thinking of the leadership and,
16 indeed, the work that was done subsequently in Iraq
17 after the conflict by the Iraqi Survey Group would
18 suggest that some of those insights were not far off the
19 reality.

20 The problem was, of course, that, as I said, this
21 was a highly autocratic state, where almost everybody
22 revolved around the person, the thinking, the behaviour
23 and whims of the leader. So it was what was going on in
24 his mind which was critical, and that was very difficult
25 to fathom. And by its nature such a society generates,

1 deliberately or not, obfuscation and uncertainly.

2 Nobody quite knows who knows what about what. There is
3 a great deal of uncertainty of knowledge.

4 So an individual, maybe a very senior military or
5 civilian commander who you would normally expect to have
6 quite a confident view of a particular issue or
7 capability or whatever it might be, in a society like
8 that might not or might have a quite -- might say, well,
9 I don't know about this but, you know, I have got
10 a friend who does who tells me this, and you wouldn't
11 really know whether that was true or not.

12 That is a feature of any totalitarian society to
13 a degree, but it was a feature of Iraq and I think the
14 Iraq Survey Group work showed that it was a very
15 important feature.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You said earlier that the JIC as part of
17 its method draws on all sources?

18 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Yes.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: How much use was made of non-intelligence
20 sources particularly in trying to work out questions in
21 society, ethnic strains, sectarian strains, oppositional
22 tendencies, the fragility of Iraq?

23 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, that was certainly all taken into
24 account. There wasn't a very detailed understanding or
25 set of knowledge available, I think, to any part of the

1 government machine on some of those points that you have
2 just made.

3 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Would that include tapping into academic
4 expertise, people who were actually able to visit Iraq
5 in a non-official capacity?

6 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, it would. I can't immediately
7 think of a particular moment when that was called upon
8 or quoted or cited. But that's not to say that that
9 wasn't feeding into the analytical process, you know, at
10 some point in the cycle. And obviously the opposition
11 side of it had to be handled with care and was handled
12 with care. Anything which they sort of said, or
13 opinions they had or information they claimed to have
14 was treated with a great deal of caution.

15 So that was always understood to be a difficult
16 area. An awareness of the fragility of the country and
17 in particular the ethnic tensions, of course that was
18 very high, and that is clear from the assessments that
19 we did.

20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So opposition and exile sources you would
21 include in opposition treated with caution?

22 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Definitely.

23 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Can we now turn to the way in which the
24 assessment of Iraq's WMD programmes evolved in the two
25 years leading up to the conflict.

1 To what extent was it actually a static situation
2 that you were looking at? To what extent did new
3 intelligence become available in this period from 2001
4 to spring of 2003 that might significantly have altered
5 your assessments in one direction or another?

6 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, of course, it was an evolving
7 process. This is, you know, quite a complicated subject
8 and it is difficult to avoid going into some detail,
9 although I realise I mustn't do that too much. But
10 essentially, the starting point for the period that we
11 are covering was the assessment which was done by the
12 JIC in May 2001, which drew on two big assessments in
13 the year 2000 as to the status of the programme. And
14 that set, if you like, a sort of starting point for the
15 assessment, which essentially was that the nuclear -- it
16 would not be possible to develop a nuclear weapon whilst
17 sanctions remained in place and so they would have to
18 either be evaded or lifted.

19 That said, there was some -- there was heightened
20 concern, certainly by May 2001, about possible
21 nuclear-related procurement and longer-term plans to
22 enrich uranium.

23 On chemical weaponry at that time, Iraq was assessed
24 to retain some stocks of chemical weapons, chemical
25 agents and weapons, but there were no details on

1 locations or quantities. But there was a lot of
2 attention being paid to the reconstruction of the
3 chemical production facilities which had been used in
4 the past for chemical agent production.

5 On biological weapons, at that point it was stated
6 that there was clear evidence of continuing biological
7 warfare activity. That was at a time when the
8 intelligence about mobile production laboratories first
9 came into play, and that was taken seriously. And as
10 with chemical, there was a lot of emphasis on the
11 capability of Iraq's biological sort of industry to
12 start production of agents very quickly if a decision
13 was taken to do that.

14 And then on the question of missiles, both extending
15 to an illegal extent the range of the permitted missiles
16 that they were permitted to have under the
17 Security Council Resolutions, beyond 150 kilometres, if
18 they were to extend that and then in fact to design
19 longer range missiles, that was given a lot of
20 prominence in the assessment as a step change in the
21 progress that they were making. So that was a sort of
22 baseline.

23 In terms of the way -- and of course it was
24 a baseline which it was set against -- and this is an
25 important point -- a background, if you like, picture of

1 Iraq's proven ability to weaponise chemical and
2 biological agent on to delivery systems -- artillery
3 shells, free fall bombs, airborne sprayers, as
4 well as ballistic missiles, and their experience of
5 command control, logistical support for chemical weapons
6 use and, of course, their previous readiness to use it.
7 And that was the basic position, the basic assessment.

8 That was in May 2001 and I might just say here that
9 that assessment described knowledge of developments in
10 Iraq's WMD and ballistic missile programmes as patchy.
11 There was no clear intelligence on the nuclear
12 programme. There was good intelligence on former
13 chemical and biological warfare facilities. The future
14 of the biological warfare programme was described as
15 unclear although intelligence was cited in support of
16 individual items or judgments. The intelligence
17 on missile programmes was good. That was the way the
18 intelligence base was described at that time.

19 The next big assessment was done in March 2002,
20 which was essentially -- and I won't go over the detail
21 again, but essentially confirmed many of those judgments
22 with certain nuances. Significant progress on the
23 missile programme was noted, that the most important
24 change at that point was there was a stronger judgment
25 about the capability to produce and plans to produce

1 biological warfare agent, and that reflected a better
2 understanding of the mobile facilities -- what was
3 thought to be a better understanding of the mobile
4 facilities -- and the refurbishment of a former
5 production facility.

6 And it was said then that Iraq was judged to be;
7 self-sufficient in the production of biological weapons.
8 So a significant weight was based on the mobile
9 laboratories at that time.

10 Also at that point -- and this is important mainly
11 for later on -- we drew attention in the assessment to
12 the issue of dispersal. As the prospect of inspectors
13 coming back grew, of course their attention focused on
14 how do we conceal things, and one of the ways in which
15 you conceal weaponry is to dismantle or disperse it.
16 And there was intelligence to show at that time, in
17 about March 2002, that thinking was being given to that
18 and orders had gone out accordingly and there had been a
19 temporary dispersal of what was called "sensitive
20 equipment" after 9/11.

21 The judgment at the end of that paper was:

22 "It is clear that Iraq continues to pursue a policy
23 of acquiring WMD and their delivery means."

24 It was a firm underlying judgment that Iraq was
25 pushing where it could, but there was little detailed

1 intelligence on nuclear and chemical warfare programmes.
2 And, of course, this was set against the underlying
3 judgments on command and control and logistical support,
4 weaponisation, as I have just said.

5 Now, that meant that the questions which were not
6 clear was what they possessed and whether they possessed
7 currently agent of chemical warfare or biological
8 warfare and whether they were producing currently agent.
9 We talked about sort of changes.

10 Now, in August and early September,
11 late August/early September 2002, there was further work
12 done by the JIC on this issue, particularly in
13 early September, and that was when new intelligence was
14 coming in which had a significant influence on the
15 judgments.

16 So this was quite firm judgment existing already, as
17 I have described, but it became firmer in important
18 respects, which I will explain.

19 Now, there was a paper, an assessment, on
20 9 September 2002, which reaffirmed -- and that was on
21 Saddam's options for using chemical and biological
22 weapons. But it was in fact a separate judgment on
23 capabilities which existed. I know that it has been
24 described as a possibly a worst case scenario paper, but
25 it wasn't intended to be that. That paper reaffirmed

1 existing judgments on the ability, if so decided to
2 produce agent -- the availability of a range of delivery
3 systems and the development of missiles beyond the
4 permitted limits.

5 The change was in the judgment on current
6 possession, which now became firm:

7 "Iraq has currently available a number of CW and BW
8 agents and weapons from pre-war stocks or recent
9 production."

10 And the paper referred to recent intelligence on the
11 production of weapons now taking place, the development
12 of a mobile systems and then, importantly, on the regime
13 and Saddam's intent: The great importance that he
14 attached to the possession of chemical and biological
15 weapons and his readiness to use them if necessary,
16 including to defend the regime from attack:

17 He saw possession as a central feature of his
18 regional power position and continuing ability to
19 project influence.

20 That intelligence on intent was significant -- taken
21 to be significant.

22 It was also noted that we did not know specific
23 plans for CBW use in the event of conflict, the location
24 of production facilities, the size of stocks.

25 Now, a draft of that assessment was discussed in

1 detail at the JIC on 4 September. It was noted that the
2 fact that Saddam possessed this capability and was
3 prepared to use them was significant and needed to be
4 brought to the attention of ministers. Close attention
5 was paid at the meeting to the recent important and
6 valuable intelligence, which was described as reliable
7 and authoritative, and the assessments staff were
8 instructed to firm up the judgment on possession in
9 particular in the light of that intelligence, and that
10 happened in the paper which was produced on 9 September:

11 "It was also noted that further intelligence might
12 be forthcoming in the near future."

13 And, indeed, further intelligence did come in
14 in September, which reported on the acceleration on the
15 production of chemical and biological agent. And that
16 too was regarded as significant.

17 So I will go into a bit of detail there, because
18 that is the background to that assessment in
19 early September and that was really the assessment which
20 then stayed in place as the confirmed view of the JIC in
21 the months that followed and it didn't change
22 significantly as a set of judgments.

23 There was a lot of discussion all the time around
24 the issue, but the judgment was the firm view of the JIC
25 and it wasn't challenged during that time.

1 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you. That's very helpful.

2 If I can just summarise this evolving process that

3 you have set out, and you have identified the points at

4 which it appeared to change, what you were describing to

5 the readers of your assessment, including the

6 Prime Minister, Cabinet ministers, Chiefs of Staff, was

7 a picture in which you were both getting some additional

8 intelligence in on the Iraqi WMD programme and,

9 importantly, in which this intelligence showed that

10 further work was being done. It wasn't just a better

11 photograph of the static picture, it was a better

12 photograph of a moving picture. Would that be accurate

13 and fair?

14 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Yes. That's quite a good way of

15 describing it. The static picture, if you like, if one

16 takes that nothing is ever static in this area, but the

17 static picture, if one takes static as of mid 2001, was

18 of a fairly firm judgment based on limited intelligence,

19 but taking account of a lot of other issues, including

20 past behaviour, and behaviour not just in terms of use

21 but also of deception and concealment and so on.

22 And then intelligence adding to the picture and

23 firming up those judgments. And that's the word I have

24 to use, of "firming up".

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Just before I hand back to

1 Sir John Chilcot, if we now move forward to March 2003,
2 we heard last week from Sir William Ehrman that some
3 late intelligence had come in relating to Saddam's
4 capabilities.

5 Can you say what new intelligence arrived in the
6 days running up to the conflict and how and when this
7 was reported to the Prime Minister and other ministers?

8 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Yes, of course I can. If I can just
9 pick up one point in a sense from what I have just said,
10 I said that the judgments, the firm judgments, as I set
11 them out in the autumn of 2002, remained in place in the
12 period following, and a key point there was that no
13 contradictory intelligence was received during that
14 time. And I think that's a point that William Ehrman
15 made himself and then he talked about the intelligence
16 which came in in March 2003.

17 This needs to be seen in the context of the policy
18 of dispersal and concealment. Throughout 2002 and early
19 2003, the assessments and the updates drew attention to
20 Iraqi plans for dispersal as part the policy of
21 concealment from the inspectors. Actually, we
22 highlighted that as an issue in March 2002 and it was
23 mentioned in a September assessment and also in
24 a December assessment, which was done on the declaration
25 to the UN under 1441.

1 It was emphasised that that kind of policy would
2 have consequences for the ability to deploy chemical and
3 biological warheads or the necessary delivery systems.

4 Now, an update, an assessment staff update on
5 10 March noted the report, which in fact was issued on
6 7 March -- yes, intelligence, which was issued on
7 7 March actually it was, I think, two reports that -- it
8 was essentially saying there were two versions of the
9 same report, that Iraq had no missiles which could reach
10 Israel and none which could carry germ or biological
11 weapons.

12 The leadership had ordered the dismantlement of the
13 missiles known Al Hussein, 650-kilometre range missiles,
14 to avoid discovery and they thought that they could be
15 quickly reassembled. The JIC had over many months
16 throughout this period reported the assessed existence
17 of these missiles, up to 20 was the expectation. But
18 all along, it had been reported that they had been
19 disassembled and concealed.

20 And DIS advised -- and this was noted in the
21 update --

22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: DIS being --

23 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Defence Intelligence Staff advised, and
24 this was noted in the update, that depending on the
25 method of disassembly used, it might be possible to

1 reassemble in one or two days. But if it was very
2 complex disassembly, then it would be longer.

3 SIS advised that the reference to "germ and
4 biological" might also refer to chemical, just from the
5 context, although that was speculative. So that was
6 what the 10 March reference was about.

7 On 17 March, intelligence was received that chemical
8 weapons had been disassembled and dispersed and would be
9 difficult to reassemble. Saddam had not yet ordered
10 reassembly nor, indeed, asked about chemical weapons.

11 Now, that report was referred to in a JIC note of
12 19 March, which was discussed the same day in a JIC
13 meeting of 19 March, which was the last meeting, of
14 course, before the conflict actually began.

15 The reports were assessed in the context of the
16 policy of dispersal and concealment. They were not
17 understood to be an indication that chemical and
18 biological weapons did not exist. Indeed, they didn't
19 say that but, of course, it was clear from the reports
20 that they might be difficult to find.

21 Previous reporting and updates had already reported
22 separately on the difficulty that Iraq was having or was
23 reported to have in developing or redeveloping chemical
24 warfare warheads for ballistic missiles. And so that
25 issue, which was referred to in a 7 March report was

1 noted in the update on 10 March, about not having
2 warheads capable of dispersal was already a feature of
3 reporting from the end of 2002 and had been noted in
4 updates. An update at the end of December had noted
5 that -- had noted that point, but had also noted the
6 intelligence had said that chemical warheads were still
7 available for short-range artillery, rockets and so on.

8 So that was the picture that was being presented
9 both through the reporting and through the updates.
10 Those reports, I understand, went -- the ones I have
11 just been referring to -- went directly to the
12 Prime Minister's office. And the updates were certainly
13 available to him too. So this information was
14 definitely available.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So your assumption is that on 10 and
16 19 March respectively, the Prime Minister, the Foreign
17 Secretary, the Defence Secretary, the Chiefs of Staff,
18 would have actually seen the update and then the JIC
19 note of 19 March?

20 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: They would also have seen - assumption,
21 that's a slightly loose word. I was certainly working
22 absolutely on the basis that these updates by this
23 stage, that they were being read carefully.

24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Did you get any feedback, any questions
25 about them?

1 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: About that particular point?

2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Yes, did somebody after 10 March ring you

3 up and want to ask you about it?

4 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: No.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: There was no visible reaction to it?

6 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Of course, as I have said, it wasn't new

7 information and the disassembly was a longstanding

8 item --

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So it was presented as confirming

10 a existing --

11 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: It wasn't actually presented as that at

12 the time. It was just reported in the update as being

13 intelligence which had been received. But the

14 intelligence reports themselves, as I have said, went

15 through independently to the Prime Minister and, I'm

16 sure, to senior ministers, because that's the way the

17 system worked.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So did the JIC consider revising its

19 assessment in the light of these reports or not?

20 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, the JIC looked again at the issue

21 and recorded its view in the minute of 19 March and

22 judged then that Iraq had a usable chemical and

23 biological warfare capability, deliverable by artillery

24 shells and possibly by unmanned aerial vehicles. It

25 also said that missiles might be available to deliver

1 CBW, but Iraq might lack the necessary warheads, which
2 was a reference to the difficulty I have just
3 referred to.

4 What did not happen was that the JIC said, right, we
5 have received these reports, this requires a review of
6 our assessment on possession because that's not what the
7 reports said. The reports referred to disassembly and,
8 in one case, of equipment which we had assessed to be
9 disassembled for a very long time. So that wasn't, in
10 fact, new. And disassembly of the chemical weapons, the
11 report which came in on 17 March, so quite a few days
12 later, was not saying that they didn't have it. They were
13 saying that they were concealing it and, of course, the
14 consequence of concealing it was that it would be
15 difficult to use. And, of course, it was highly
16 relevant because that meant they would be difficult to
17 use against US military forces or UK military forces.

18 So I am quite sure that it was taken on board in
19 that context.

20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Just to be absolutely clear about this,
21 these two reports were not a game changing moment?

22 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: No, they were not.

23 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Sir John?

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Just one question on confidence
25 levels.

1 You told us earlier about the nature of the hard
2 target that Iraq was for intelligence collection: no
3 direct access since the UNSCOM inspectors left in 1998.
4 Saddam was playing a two-card trick game, wasn't he? On
5 the one hand, he wanted to get out from under sanctions,
6 which meant appearing to be sufficiently compliant with
7 the UNSCR's non-declaration of WMD stocks or whatever.
8 On the other hand, he maintained -- I think he said
9 himself, didn't he, after he was captured -- he needed
10 to project in the region and to the neighbours the fact
11 that he was the great hero and the possessor of these
12 magical weapons that gave him status.

13 Was that kind of awareness in the minds of JIC right
14 through this process of assessment; in other words, were
15 your confidence levels addressing this kind of
16 consideration?

17 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, that is a very interesting point
18 which comes out of the Iraq Survey Group conclusions,
19 that he had this paradox or ambiguity which maybe is in
20 the nature of a regime like his and a system like his,
21 and it comes out quite clearly from what he said to the
22 survey group people.

23 What is clear from the survey group report is that
24 his top priority was to get out of sanctions. Of
25 course, the survey group goes on to say in their

1 judgment, once he had achieved that -- in 2001 it looked
2 like he was achieving it -- he would then, in their
3 view, move firmly to reconstitute his programmes, so the
4 strategic intent remained.

5 But it was difficult for him to put all his focus on
6 getting out of sanctions, as you have just indicated,
7 Chairman, because he felt he needed to project power and
8 intimidation, if you like, in the region, particularly,
9 I think he said to the survey group, in relation to
10 Iran. And, of course, he was watching the Iranian
11 nuclear programme and chemical and biological
12 capabilities very closely.

13 Did the JIC understand the intensity of that
14 ambiguity and that paradox? No, I don't think --
15 I can't quote -- I can't cite an example of where that
16 was confronted as a paradox and then discussed. And I
17 can't think of anybody else who saw it in quite those
18 terms either. And, of course, that is something that we
19 now understand better because it was possible to talk to
20 him and it was possible to talk to all the people who
21 were around him. So a completely different sort of view
22 is available from what was ever going to be available
23 from intelligence reporting.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I would like to get us on in the
25 final stages of this hearing to the September dossier,

1 but just before I do, we had evidence from
2 Major General Tim Cross earlier in the week on getting
3 first into Baghdad after the invasion to find himself --
4 I have got his exact word -- it is something like
5 astonished at the degree of breakdown, decay,
6 decrepitude in the physical, social and administrative
7 state of affairs in Iraq. It came as shock.

8 We clearly had not been able, from whatever sources,
9 open or otherwise, been able truthfully to estimate the
10 degree of hollowing out that had gone on in Iraq. With
11 hindsight was that a potential intelligence focus that
12 could have been better informed?

13 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: I think I say on that one that one tries
14 to expect a lot from intelligence, but that is not
15 a natural intelligence target. That kind of information
16 and that kind of understanding of the fragility of the
17 structures of the state is -- if it was a -- if it was
18 going to be understood and going to be available, it was
19 an understanding and a picture which could have been, as
20 it were, presented or understood from a whole range of
21 sources, not necessarily from intelligence, which tends
22 to be quite focused.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: It was fair to ask whether its general
24 relevance as context might have been focusing on our
25 assessment of the state of his conventional military

1 forces, and there is that wonderful image from the
2 Soviet Union about the knight dying inside his armour.
3 And we were making assessments of Saddam's conventional
4 military capability right up to the invasion, I imagine.

5 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Yes, we were, and I think we were quite
6 accurate in the assessment that we made, that the
7 military, as a body, would hold together in support of
8 the regime until the moment of a ground invasion. If
9 that invasion was overwhelmingly powerful, then it would
10 probably splinter very quickly and collapse very
11 quickly, and it was clear from the assessments that were
12 done beforehand that although there would be resistance
13 from some of the elite units, particularly maybe around
14 Baghdad or before Baghdad, to a coalition forces, there
15 wouldn't be a serious professional sustained resistance
16 put up. And, indeed, that turned out to be the case.
17 So I think that assessment, which was put out by the
18 JIC, drawing very extensively on advice from the
19 military specialists, turned out to be pretty well
20 correct.

21 Can I just go back, Mr Chairman, on one point, the
22 important point that we were just talking about in terms
23 of the paradox and ambiguity, whether the JIC and the
24 intelligence had given insight into Saddam's state of
25 mind. I think when one reads the Iraq Survey Group and

1 also the book that has been written by --

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Charles Duelfer.

3 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Charles Duelfer's book "Hide and Seek",

4 which is a very interesting book. I would say that

5 elements of Saddam's thinking did come through in the

6 assessments. I had referred earlier on to the

7 importance that was attached to his intent and his

8 awareness of the possession of chemical and biological

9 weaponry as an integral part of his power structure and

10 his influence and his ability to influence neighbours.

11 And that, I think, is correct and that, of course, is

12 one of the things that we saw.

13 Now, the question is he could still have that

14 awareness, he could see that it was very important. It

15 doesn't automatically follow that he then has it; it is

16 just that he knows that he mustn't give away that he

17 doesn't have it. So that's where it becomes

18 complicated.

19 I would just like to make that point.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: I have to say I have often wondered, since

21 the Butler Committee sat, who it was who would be brave

22 enough to tell Saddam that he hadn't got weapons of mass

23 destruction any more.

24 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: It is clear from the Duelfer book that

25 right up until the end, senior military commanders

1 weren't sure whether they did or didn't. There was an
2 element of the boss has got secret weapons somewhere,
3 it's 1945. So there is a certain point behind that.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I would just like to ask you one or two
5 questions about the September dossier. That's not the
6 one that became known as the dodgy dossier, but one that
7 the Prime Minister wrote a foreword to.

8 Can you tell us when and why the decision was made
9 to draw up a document for publication of this kind?

10 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, the origins of the decision to do
11 this document go back to February 2002. At that time
12 papers were being prepared for the Prime Minister's
13 visit -- planned visit to see President Bush in the US
14 in April. And one of the papers that was commissioned
15 by -- Overseas and Defence Secretariat in the Cabinet
16 Office was on weapons of mass destruction and
17 capabilities worldwide and the idea was to have a paper
18 which could be put into the public domain that would
19 have included Iraq, but a number of other countries.

20 The action taken on that was for assessments staff
21 to draft a paper which actually covered four countries,
22 one of which was Iraq.

23 In mid-March, so roughly a month later, it was
24 decided, as a policy decision, to proceed not with the
25 four country paper, but with a draft on Iraq alone. By

1 that stage there was increasing policy attention, as I
2 think you have already heard, to Iraq.

3 On 21 March, I submitted a draft which had been
4 prepared by assessments staff to David Manning and that
5 was a draft which we believed could form a basis for
6 something which would be put in the public domain and it
7 was based on current intelligence assessments at that
8 time.

9 Now, it was decided not to use it at that stage.
10 I don't know exactly why not, but probably the judgment
11 was -- it was a policy judgment obviously that the time
12 wasn't right. But the proposal wasn't dropped and we
13 were asked to keep the draft under review, which we did,
14 updating and so on during the summer.

15 So by end of July, what actually existed was a draft
16 on -- updated from time to time, on current capabilities
17 and then separate sections, which had been drafted
18 again, as I think you have already heard, on the history
19 of UN inspections, which the counter-proliferation
20 department in the FCO, the Foreign Office, had led on,
21 and the history of human rights in Iraq, which the
22 Foreign Office had also led on.

23 That was the sort of documentation which existed at
24 the beginning of September 2002.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So that exists, but it is still at the

1 moment somewhere in the fridge or the freezer. When
2 were you told to take it out of the freezer and warm
3 it up?

4 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, I suppose the person who opened
5 the freezer was the Prime Minister. He made a public
6 announcement on 3 September that the government
7 assessment of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction
8 capabilities would be published in the coming weeks, the
9 next few weeks, I think he said. And then immediately
10 after that on 4 September Overseas and Defence
11 Secretariat circulated those exists papers, unfrozen by
12 that time, to senior officials in the Foreign Office,
13 the Defence Ministry, Cabinet Office and Number 10 and
14 so on, and also to Assessment Staff.

15 So that's when the process of drafting the dossier
16 actually began.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: As you say, this has come together from
18 different places, from the Foreign Office, from the
19 Assessment Staff and so on. Were you, as the Chairman
20 of the JIC, responsible for the overall package, had the
21 Assessment Staff drafting been done under your
22 supervision?

23 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: The Assessment Staff drafting which was on the
24 current capabilities, which had been going on, on and
25 off, since February really, of course that was the work

1 of the Assessments Staff. I submitted a draft to
2 David Manning, yes. I mean, that was a natural part of
3 my responsibility.

4 The wider document -- for example, including the
5 chapters drafted by the Foreign Office, you know, at
6 that stage was sort of separate. Thought hadn't been
7 given as to how they might be brought together. That
8 thinking went on in the first few days, up to
9 9 September, when thought was given as to what sort of
10 document -- you know, would come together. And the
11 decision was in terms of presentation, that there would
12 be an overarching document, that it would contain
13 chapters on the history of Iraq's WMB behaviour and
14 capabilities, on current capabilities and the current
15 assessment, on the history of weapons inspections and on
16 the human rights -- well, Iraq under Saddam. They would
17 all come together in one paper. That the work on WMD
18 both historical and current capabilities was the
19 responsibility of Assessment Staff, answering to myself
20 as JIC Chairman, and to the JIC -- and the JIC -- and
21 that nothing could be produced and certainly published
22 in that area without that authority.

23 It was also decided that sort of overall -- given
24 the centrality of that to the document, overall
25 responsibility for the production of the document would

1 come to me as JIC Chairman, answerable to the JIC, even
2 though the drafting of the human rights and the
3 inspectors chapters had been done elsewhere. But it was
4 a sort of joint effort, if you like. So that was the
5 position as of 9 September.

6 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Now, some of the intelligence on which
7 the judgments about WMD were made in the dossier, you
8 yourself had described earlier as patchy or unclear.
9 You said the stuff on missiles was good.
10 Sir William Ehrman last week again used the term patchy,
11 sporadic, poor limited.

12 Did you come under pressure in preparing this
13 publicly to firm up the language in the dossier? For
14 example, there has been released under the Freedom of
15 Information Act a minute from Desmond Bowen in the
16 Cabinet Office, from whom we have already heard, to you
17 of 11 September that refers to the use that will be made
18 by the:

19 "... opponents of action who will add up the number
20 of judgments on which we do not have absolutely
21 clarity."

22 So was there more clarity than you had confidence in
23 in the way the document eventually came out?

24 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, the answer -- I mean, there were
25 two questions there: was there more clarity and did we

1 come under pressure. The answer to both is no and no.

2 You quote correctly what William Ehrman said about

3 the intelligence base and some of the wording that

4 I have used, and we are drawing on the same sources. I

5 have already referred to the arrival of additional

6 intelligence, which led to a firming up of what were

7 already quite firm judgments, but clear firming up, in

8 early September and they -- and the instructions of the

9 JIC to the drafting group which was overseeing all this,

10 the drafting group, which was an interdepartmental

11 drafting group, was to reflect the recently arrived

12 intelligence in the dossier and to reflect it

13 explicitly, which of course it did explicitly, and to

14 ensure that the judgments which were recorded in the

15 dossier were consistent with what was in the most recent

16 update assessment, which it also did. So that's the

17 answer to that.

18 On the question of pressure, well, of course, I have

19 read now Desmond Bowen's minute. It was addressed to

20 me. I have looked into this obviously since the minute

21 was released, and clearly, I suppose I must have seen it

22 at the time when it was issued on 11 or 12 September.

23 I have got no memory of having seen it. It was marked,

24 as a document to the drafting group, led by assessment

25 staff, but no other action is recorded on it. And the

1 chief of the drafting group has no recollection of
2 receiving it either.

3 Of course, it was an advisory note, it wasn't an
4 instruction. It couldn't have been an instruction. And
5 it was written as an advisory note and, you know, with
6 hindsight and everything else and several years later
7 I don't think it had any impact on me at all.

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So that was advice from a peer and you
9 weren't under pressure from higher up the food chain?

10 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: He actually wasn't a peer. He was a
11 very good colleague, Desmond Bowen. I was clearly
12 senior to him, so I wouldn't have felt any pressure.

13 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Obviously a lot of attention has centred
14 on the 45-minute claim. The dossier said on page 19
15 that Iraq could:

16 "... deploy chemical or biological weapons within
17 45 minutes of an order to do so."

18 But it left it unclear what kind of weapons were
19 meant.

20 Should you, as the person with overall
21 responsibility for the dossier, have corrected the
22 misconception that this might have been held to refer
23 to, say, ballistic missiles?

24 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, of course, this was -- as you say,
25 had been the subject of great debate and it was

1 considered in detail in the Inquiry by Lord Hutton and
2 it was looked into also by the ISC and also in the
3 Butler Report. And the conclusion has been that it
4 would have been much clearer and better -- as it were,
5 the matter wouldn't have been lost in translation if it
6 had spelled out in the dossier that the word was
7 "munitions", not "weapons". I think that's essentially
8 the point.

9 Of course, that's all the report said. It didn't
10 say more than munitions, and it didn't give further
11 context to it. So anything else would have been
12 assessment or speculation.

13 Now, you know, those comments have been accepted.
14 I would only say that there was absolutely no conscious
15 intention to manipulate the language or to obfuscate or
16 to create a misunderstanding as to what they might
17 refer to.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Were you aware at the time of the serious
19 concerns about this that had been expressed by
20 Dr Brian Jones of the Defence Intelligence Staff?

21 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: I was not.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Just one last question, I think, on the
23 dossier and time is now against us.

24 Is there a contrast between the language of the
25 Prime Minister's foreword and the contents of the

1 dossier taken altogether?

2 There is a sentence which echoes for me in the
3 Prime Minister's foreword, which says:

4 "What I believe the assessed intelligence has
5 established beyond doubt ..."

6 And I just wonder whether recalling that chapter 1
7 of the Butler Report it is ever possible to say assessed
8 intelligence has established beyond doubt. Would you
9 like to comment on that?

10 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, I think there are two things I can
11 say. One is that I and other members of the JIC -- all
12 other members of the JIC -- but I saw the foreword in
13 draft form. So I knew that it said that. I saw the
14 document or the foreword as something quite separate
15 from the text of the dossier itself. The text of the
16 dossier itself I was clearly responsible for drafting.
17 The foreword was overtly a political statement signed by
18 the Prime Minister. So it was his wording and his
19 comments that were there throughout, although I did make
20 one or two, three maybe, small changes on the text of
21 the foreword, basically to correct one or two small
22 points, which I thought were -- or actually add at one
23 point in particular about who received intelligence
24 assessments in the first paragraph, and also to bring
25 into line with the text of the dossier itself.

1 There was a particular point on concealment. I
2 didn't see it as something that I would change. That's
3 all I can recall now, and I have got no other -- it is
4 quite difficult now to reconstruct the actual sort of
5 process of how this happened several years later.

6 I'm not able to completely reconstruct the thought
7 process, but my memory at the time quite clearly was
8 this was something which was the Prime Minister's and it
9 was going out under his signature. So it was different
10 from the attention that I paid to the wording of the
11 dossier.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. Lawrence?

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just staying with the dossier for
14 a moment, we heard, I think from Tim Dowse, that the
15 evidence was put in aluminium tubes, because
16 Vice-President Cheney had mentioned this, though there
17 was also a ranging debate on this issue. Were you
18 comfortable with this inclusion?

19 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Was I comfortable?

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes.

21 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Yes, if I hadn't have been then it
22 wouldn't have been there, definitely.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Were there any other areas where
24 material was included to get in line with the American
25 national intelligence estimates? Or American public

1 presentations?

2 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Is there an indication that that wording
3 was given in order to keep it in line?

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Well, that was the implication from
5 Tim Dowse, that he was concerned if
6 Vice-President Cheney was talking about aluminium tubes
7 in a rather alarming way, and we weren't.

8 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Well, I put it a slightly different way.
9 I understand that point.

10 The fact was that the aluminium tubes, the aluminium
11 alloy which they were seeking to present, was an issue.
12 And it wasn't just an issue because
13 Vice-President Cheney had spoken, it was an issue anyway
14 and it was an issue which had featured quite regularly
15 in JIC assessments in the past. So it was a standing
16 feature of the study that we were doing, and it was
17 regarded as an important issue.

18 It was known, of course, in what
19 Vice-President Cheney said, that the Americans, or many
20 people in the States, had a strong view about this and,
21 indeed, that was reflected in the US national
22 intelligence estimate which was published
23 in October 2002, which used quite strong definite
24 language about this. And the general view in the States
25 was that this was very likely indeed to be related to

1 centrifuge construction.

2 So it was an important issue. We took it very
3 seriously. We thought that there was a serious chance
4 that it was related to centrifuges, but we had no
5 definitive intelligence to that effect and that's why we
6 worded the dossier in the way we did. The intention was
7 to be careful.

8 But it wasn't, as it were, being influenced in that
9 way by the American assessment, but there was dialogue
10 with the Americans about it, of course.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just another issue on the nuclear
12 side. As I understand it, the British view -- and I
13 think this is in published material -- certainly the
14 British view is in published material that nuclear
15 weapons were only an issue if sanctions ended, whereas
16 the American view was that they could be a serious issue
17 even with the continuation of the sanctions regime. Is
18 that fair?

19 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Yes. And, of course, there is a nuance
20 there, because you could have the sanctions regime
21 continuing but being successfully evaded. And certainly
22 our view was -- the British view was that if fissile
23 material was obtained illicitly from outside Iraq, then
24 that would make potentially a significant difference to
25 the capability of that programme.

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just one more point on the dossier
2 and I would like to ask another question. It really in
3 some ways goes to the heart of the problem which has
4 already been raised.

5 It is an assessment of the WMD programme. It is not
6 a threat assessment as such. It is not saying in the
7 material that you prepared why we should or should not
8 be worried about this, and I understand why intelligence
9 agencies and JIC do that.

10 But that means that the interpretation of this
11 evidence was left to the foreword, and there were other
12 interpretations that could have been made of the same
13 evidence.

14 Would it have been wiser to have had the question of
15 how this material should be interpreted as quite
16 separate from the material that you produced? If the
17 Prime Minister wanted to talk about it, he should have
18 talked about it elsewhere?

19 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: And not in the foreword?

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And not in the foreword.

21 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Maybe, yes. But I can't honestly say
22 that that point was in my mind and I was focused on that
23 issue or that risk at the time. If I had been, then
24 I would have expressed a thought.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Then just -- also you mentioned --

1 and this goes back to something you said much earlier
2 when you were talking about the assessments made of the
3 situation in the north and south Iraq -- that these were
4 blunt and presented it to the Prime Minister. When was
5 this?

6 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: February, I think. The first part of
7 February 2003.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Without going into the detail, blunt
9 suggests not very reassuring. I was just wondering what
10 the Prime Minister's reaction was to those assessments?

11 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: I don't know exactly. I can't quote
12 a reaction back, but the assessment about the south did
13 make clear the risk of serious disorder, serious --
14 revenge attacks against the regime, serious humanitarian
15 issues potentially and made the point that it could not
16 be taken for granted that the post-Saddam administration
17 would automatically have this sort of popular support.

18 For that to be the case, then expectations
19 particularly around development and reconstruction,
20 would have to be met and that was clearly stated.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you very much.

22 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Sir John, mine is more
23 a clarification.

24 You said that following the presentation which was
25 made on 4 September, Assessment Staff were instructed to

1 firm up. Can you just unpack that for me? What does
2 that actually mean? What could Assessments Staff
3 instructed to firm up --

4 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: The judgments -- the discussion on
5 4 September, Lady Prashar, was on the basis of a draft
6 classified assessment on chemical and biological options
7 that Saddam had. And so that draft had been written in
8 the preceding week or so. And in that very same time,
9 new intelligence which was significant, described as
10 reliable authoritative intelligence, had come in.

11 That intelligence was discussed at the meeting, as
12 would normally happen, by the JIC. It was considered to
13 be important and so, as a result of that discussion, the
14 draft paper wasn't approved automatically on the spot or
15 by the JIC. The Assessments Staff who were the drafters
16 were sent away to reconsider the judgments, to take more
17 account of the intelligence which was coming in, and in
18 the view of the Committee, that intelligence was
19 sufficiently authoritative to firm up the judgment on
20 whether Iraq did or did not currently possess chemical
21 and biological agents.

22 And there was quite a firm judgment on that already,
23 but it went to a firmer judgment on the basis of that
24 intelligence.

25 So the intelligence was actually cited in the

1 classified assessment to explain -- to explain the
2 change. That was the instruction which, of course, is
3 the job of the JIC to give such an instruction.

4 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: And that was information that was
5 used in the dossier later on?

6 SIR JOHN SCARLETT: Yes. Well, the JIC also said -- because
7 at that stage, it was known that the dossier was
8 beginning to be prepared for publication reasonably
9 soon. So there wasn't a detailed discussion at all
10 about the dossier. That didn't happen until about
11 a week later, but the Assessments Staff were told to
12 take that intelligence into account in what was written
13 in the dossier. But the point was to make sure that
14 what the dossier said was in line with what the current
15 assessment said.

16 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Okay.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: That, I think, brings us to the end of the
18 session unless, Sir John, there was any particular point
19 you would wish to register today.

20 We shall, as a Committee, be pursuing these issues
21 in a private session in the future, but we will now
22 break for about ten minutes, after which we are going to
23 be talking with the two invasion commanders,
24 Air Chief Marshal Burridge and Lieutenant General Brims.

25 Back in ten minutes. Thank you to your our witness.

1 (3.40 pm)

2 (Short break)

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