1 Wednesday, 9 December 2009

2 (10.00 am)

3 LIEUTENANT GENERAL ANDREW FIGGURES and LIEUTENANT GENERAL

4 SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning.

6 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Good morning.

7 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Good morning.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's open the session. The objective of

9 this first hour and a half following on from yesterday's

10 session on the invasion and previous sessions on the

11 planning leading up to the invasion, our objective this

12 morning in the first hour and a half is to gain an

13 understanding of the situation on the ground in Baghdad

14 from about July 2003 through to April 2004, and we will

15 move on to the situation in Basra and the south later in

16 the morning.

17 Our witnesses are Lieutenant General Sir Freddie Viggers

18 and Lieutenant General Andrew Figgures, welcome both.

19 You were the Senior British Military Representatives in

20 Iraq based in Baghdad for our period, weren't you?

21 I think I should just mention the fact that the Inquiry

22 recognises that the death of Baha Mousa in British

23 custody and the battle for Danny Boy took place during

24 the period we are discussing today. Both of these are now,

25 or will be, the subject of separate public inquiries.

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1 To avoid prejudicing the work of other inquiries, the
2 Committee therefore does not expect to deal with
3 these matters in substance during these sessions.
4
5
6 I would like to recall that the Inquiry has access
7 to thousands of government papers, including the most
8 highly classified, for the period we are considering and
9 we are developing the picture of the policy debates and
10 the decision-making processes as we go along. These
11 evidence sessions are an important element in informing
12 the Inquiry's thinking and complementing the documentary
13 evidence. And it is important for us that witnesses are
14 open and frank in their evidence while respecting
15 national security.
16 We recognise that witnesses are giving evidence
17 based on their recollection of events. We are of course
18 checking what we hear against the papers to which we
19 have access and which are still coming in. I remind all
20 witnesses that they will later be asked to sign
21 a transcript of that evidence to the effect that the
22 evidence they have given is truthful, fair and accurate.
23 With those preliminary remarks perhaps I can turn to
24 Sir Lawrence Freedman to open the questioning.
25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I would like to ask you both about

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1 your understanding of the role of the Senior British
2 Military Representative, and perhaps start with
3 General Viggers because you were first.
4 Could you just give us some indication of what your
5 understanding of this role was and who you felt you were
6 reporting to both within Iraq and in London?
7 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: The construct of the military
8 component of the Coalition Provisional Authority, which
9 became known as Combined Joint Task Force 7,
10 was developed in the period March to
11 April 2003. At that time I was working for
12 General Sir Mike Jackson as his Chief of Staff at
13 Wilton. Actually he had just moved up to become head of
14 the army, and in the construct it showed a flag for
15 a British two-star officer to work as a deputy commander
16 to the American senior commander. So it wasn't in the
17 corps headquarters, but it was in the military element
18 of the Coalition Provisional Authority as it was to be.
19 And having been involved in the force generation process
20 at the army's headquarters in Wilton, it made sense that
21 I had some expertise of that, I had also served in
22 Bosnia, and Sir Mike said, "I'd like you to go and do
23 that job". So that's how I got there.
24 The post matured in the following weeks and my focus
25 became essentially acting as the military point of

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1 contact within the Coalition Provisional Authority
2 bringing together, coordinating, the military elements
3 of what we were doing with the civilian elements of what
4 we were doing. I also acted as a reporting focus back
5 to the MoD to the Chief of Defence Staff, to the Chief
6 of Joint Operations and one or two others. But
7 essentially it was reporting back to London as to what
8 was developing, working as the American commander's
9 deputy for the reconstruction elements.
10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to clarify your role as the
11 American commander's deputy, was that basically meaning
12 that you were working with forces throughout Iraq and
13 not just those in Basra --
14 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: I had an Iraq-wide focus.
15 I didn't command any troops. I certainly didn't command
16 the troops in Multi-National Division South-East, that was
17 the role of the British GOC, but I certainly had
18 a national focus for the interests of British -- the
19 British military and, as it turned out, the civilians
20 too, who were operating outwith Basra.
21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And General Figgures, by the time
22 you took over, this role changed -- you took over
23 in September?
24 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Yes, it had refined. I think I was
25 quite clear that I was responsible for ensuring that the

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1 Chief of the Defence Staff and the Chief of Joint
2 Operations understood the situation.
3 I was responsible for providing military advice to
4 Sir Jeremy Greenstock. I was responsible for doing
5 everything I could do to support Jeremy Greenstock in
6 his role. And as for my appointment as Deputy Commanding
7 General post-hostilities, General Sanchez was extremely
8 clear what my role was. Seldom had I been given so much
9 clear direction and I could give it you now should you
10 wish it.
11 I was to act as his deputy in the link with the CPA.
12 He couldn't spend all his time with the CPA -- I had
13 to fulfil his role in that. I had to enable the CPA --
14 and I think that's a very critical point -- enable the
15 CPA by assessing the support required to ministries
16 without alienating them, usurping their role or losing
17 control of CJTF7 resources. I had to see, from a CJTF7,
18 Combined Joint Task Force 7, perspective CPA
19 programme and policy. I had to lead on multinational
20 issues, because a key point of the Coalition Forces was
21 achieving unity of purpose and bringing together the
22 components of the force and understanding their role, and the
23 freedom of action that they had been given was
24 important.
25 I had to provide a British perspective to Coalition

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1 operations. I had to -- and I think this is indicative
2 of the way the Americans think of us -- I had to
3 maintain, within the CJTF7 chain of command, strong links
4 with MND South East; in other words, to make sure it was
5 properly part of the theatre effort rather than an
6 independent action. I had to provide leadership to the
7 civil affairs effort. They were called C9. I had to
8 provide leadership on political and coalition matters to
9 the planning element of the combined joint task force,
10 and I had to develop, in conjunction with the
11 General Sanchez's political adviser, the political input
12 to our planning and direction.
13 So from that, I think it was very clear that we
14 realised this was not just a military activity; it was
15 inextricably linked with the CPA and we had to work
16 closely together.
17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I just check with
18 General Viggers, did you have that role in terms of
19 liaison with the CPA as well?
20 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Absolutely. In the early
21 days, in the beginnings of the build of the Coalition
22 Provisional Authority, and it was quite a lumpy process,
23 frankly.
24 We arrived as the office of reconstruction and
25 humanitarian aid had been there for a few days, not many

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1 more than a couple of weeks, but it was quite clear from
2 the start that the way it was built wasn't going to
3 match the requirement.
4 So in my time -- one of the challenges of that
5 authority, the senior authority in the country, was to
6 build itself, and creating the UK presence inside the
7 palace where the CPA was was a key issue.
8 The things that I was involved in were to establish
9 our presence and our role in the command joint task
10 force military construct as well as the civil-military
11 construct, to provide a positive contribution to their
12 planning and activities, and there was a degree of
13 inexperience on the military and civil side about how to
14 do these sorts of tasks.
15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I just want to clarify this
16 question, which is potentially very interesting, about
17 the British commander having a role of quite
18 a significance with the CPA itself.
19 Now, we have got into personalities a number of
20 times in this Inquiry and we are now talking about
21 American personalities. But there is quite a lot of
22 reporting that relations between Paul Bremer and
23 General Sanchez were not the greatest, shall we say.
24 Were you holding the ring between them in some sense?
25 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: No, I don't think that and I think

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1 it would be -- or did not appear to me, and I wouldn't
2 have used the expression, "the relationships were not
3 the greatest". The command relationship between
4 General Sanchez and Ambassador Bremer was not
5 immediately clear to me and I quite often discussed it
6 with General Sanchez. But with respect to his command relationship,
7 he was under op com General Abizaid and he had the task to
8 support Ambassador Bremer, but not hand his forces over.
9 So if Ambassador Bremer wanted something done, then
10 he would say to General Sanchez, "Do it" and
11 General Sanchez would make the appropriate plan to carry
12 that out. But, of course, inevitably in such close
13 relationships, you don't necessarily want to go
14 Commander to Commander. Further down, you got into what
15 General Sanchez would call "drug deals". I'm not sure
16 what that necessarily is --
17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think we had better put that in
18 quotation marks.
19 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: I did put it into quotation marks.
20 And that was you needed something done in, say, the oil
21 ministry, you went to the civil affairs people and said,
22 "Right, we need some help here, let's get on and do it."
23 And that, I think -- I go back to my point -- was about
24 losing control.
25 He didn't have a huge effort -- in our terms,

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1 relatively, yes, it was large, but in terms of the
2 problem that he was facing in Iraq, it was relatively
3 small. So he had to keep control on that and that's why
4 he was quite specific to me to make sure that we didn't
5 lose control of our assets.
6 Now, what was the relationship like. The
7 relationship was not made easy by this particular
8 command relationship, but I have to say I have the
9 greatest admiration for General Sanchez. He was
10 a thoroughly professional officer, he did everything
11 that he could do to ensure the success of the mission as
12 I think any officer, soldier, would do. So certain
13 things would irritate us, but, quite frankly, you just
14 got on and did it.
15 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: My time was before Andrew's
16 perspective. We suffered from the fact that we had done
17 no work-up training as a headquarters, as a civil-military
18 headquarters. So in many ways the first few months was
19 the work-up training to deliver a post-conflict Iraq, in
20 place, being affected by the events of the day. And so
21 much of this does depend on personal relationships,
22 confidence, trust, a willingness to delegate and all of
23 those frictions of life between a civil leader, and
24 Paul Bremer had huge experience round the world of this
25 sort of thing, building a professional relationship

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1 with his senior military commander took time. I would
2 agree with Andrew: Rick Sanchez, he went the extra mile
3 to make it work -- in a very febrile atmosphere.
4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What you say fits in one description
5 I have seen of the process of assembling a motor car
6 while driving. You were suffering from the fact that
7 there was no plan that had been handed down to you as
8 you arrived?
9 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: I would go further. We didn't have
10 a map and the radiator was empty too. This car wasn't
11 running well.
12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: When you arrived, did you have any
13 sense that -- had you been warned this is what you were
14 going to face or did it become glaringly obvious on
15 arrival?
16 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Yes, before we
17 came it was rather like going to the theatre to see one
18 sort of play and realising you were watching a tragedy
19 as the curtains come back.
20 We suffered from the lack of any real understanding
21 of the state of that country post-invasion. We had not
22 done enough research, planning into how the country,
23 post-sanctions -- the country coming out of 30 years of
24 the Ba'athist regime, the dynamics of the country, the
25 cultures, the friction points between Sunni, Shia, Kurd,

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1 the malevolent influence of people from the region, none
2 of that had really been thought through.
3 So as this curtain came back, what we thought we
4 were going to be dealing with, which was essentially
5 a humanitarian crisis and a population willing to
6 support us, was a long way from that.
7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just what sort of support were you
8 given on arrival in terms of trying to make sense of
9 this tragic situation?
10 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: From where? From --
11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Well, there is a variety of
12 possibilities. From London, in terms of --
13 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: London was no better
14 informed, neither was Washington.
15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you have any political advisers
16 with you from --
17 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: I was fortunate to have
18 a civil servant from the MoD who had been with my
19 predecessor for a year through the planning process. So
20 he knew -- he had the track that we had been travelling
21 thus far.
22 But beyond that, the MoD itself had not really built
23 itself, there was no clear focus in the early days for
24 who we were to plug into, and that takes us
25 into all sorts of issues of confusion, plugs and sockets

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1 within Whitehall, and there were lots of sockets and
2 lots of plugs but not too many of them were joined up.
3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: This is obviously an issue we will
4 be coming back to.
5 General Figgures, how were things by the time you
6 arrived?
7 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: I suppose I was very much more
8 fortunate in that we had a man on the ground with whom
9 I had worked many times is a great friend. So one was
10 able to have these informal conversations.
11 I don't suppose I was surprised. I was perhaps
12 astonished, but I had the opportunity of preparing
13 myself. So I got direction from the CDS, I got
14 direction from the CJO, his staff briefed me. It was
15 clear that we didn't know very much.
16 I think one can be a little too perfectionist on
17 these occasions. I suspect if we look back at the
18 history of the Second World War, we had -- we made
19 a plan but it certainly wasn't -- didn't go according to
20 the plan. And however much time we had spent studying
21 this issue, I doubt that we would have achieved
22 80 per cent.
23 You have to have the ability to cope with the
24 situation as it develops on the ground. So I think the
25 question which we have to answer for the future is: do

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1 we have the horsepower, both intellectual and physical,
2 to deal with a rapidly changing situation which we
3 couldn't possibly have conceived?
4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The general criticism is not that
5 the plan was wrong, but that there wasn't a plan at all?
6 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Correct. There was no --
7 part of the challenge we faced was -- my memory is
8 a little hazy on this, but from memory the planning of
9 the first phase, the getting into the country, there was
10 an assumption that it would take roughly 100 and
11 something days to get from the start line into Baghdad.
12 The first Armoured Division entered Baghdad 16 days
13 after it left its start line. That was a stunning
14 military operation. But in so doing, it caught everyone
15 by surprise, because we arrived at Baghdad Airport and
16 looked round and said, "Now what are we going to do?"
17 Part of the planning was assumed to be have been
18 able to take place during the advance. The advance was
19 against soft targets, there was no coherent -- there was
20 lots of sniping and low-level tactical stuff, - but there
21 was no onion ring defence structure that we'd been told
22 we would be facing when the Republican Guard, et cetera,
23 was not there.
24 So we arrived in the capital with a hugely
25 celebratory population and the honeymoon lasted a few

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1 days and then we were the guilty b*******. We were not
2 laying on everything that we were expected to do. They
3 were saying to us, "You people put a man on the moon and
4 now you are telling us we can't have electricity? We
5 don't believe you. You are now my opponent". All that lack of
6 understanding was what Bremer and his civil military team
7 was trying to deal with while building itself.
8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: On that basis, how did you see your
9 priority? Both of you listed an enormous number of
10 things you were expected to do. What did see as your
11 main priority?
12 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: For me, it was first to
13 get -- and of course Rick Sanchez was arriving at the
14 same time. The American coalition was moving from its
15 war-fight structure, where there was a commander of the
16 Land Forces Component, as the language has it, and
17 a corps headquarters, so two three-star generals,
18 McKiernan and Wallace, dropping down to one, which was
19 Wallace's successor, Rick Sanchez. And he and Bremer
20 got on well and he said, "I want him to carry on as my
21 senior military man".
22 It was to get into the American military planning
23 frame of mind and the process, but also to find out
24 inside the CPA who actually had the lead in the various
25 functional areas. Walt Slocombe, for example, to take

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1 on the build of the Iraq army; Bernard Kerik to look
2 after the policemen. Actually finding these people,
3 bearing in mind we were not living in the Green Zone at
4 the time, that itself occupied a number of days, to work
5 out who we should be speaking to and who should we join
6 together in the planning process. So very stovepiped in
7 the early days.
8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you were basically trying to get
9 the lay of the land, how we fit in and locate ourselves
10 within it?
11 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: And to build links with
12 Basra. It was a very important process. You are
13 speaking to Graeme Lamb later today. I think we had
14 a conversation every day, or I did with his Chief of
15 Staff just to ensure that the linkages -- and the
16 communications were quite flaky -- that the passage of
17 information flow was as good as it could be. That was
18 by no means good. It was difficult to get accurate
19 information flowing.
20 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: I would say when I arrived, and
21 I had had this very good preparation, we were attempting
22 to understand the situation we were in. The assumption
23 was that this was a stabilisation operation and really
24 a mopping-up activity, which eventually the level of
25 military activity would diminish and the reconstruction

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1 would pick up, the economy would pick up, the essential
2 services would be re-established and the governance
3 would be implemented.
4 Well, it was quite clear, after an analysis of the
5 incidents and where they were occurring, that this was
6 not a stabilisation operation, particularly in the Sunni
7 triangle and the area round Baghdad. And, indeed -- and
8 Bremer mentions it, he could never really get a picture
9 of the command structure, and I think perhaps he was
10 over-ambitious in expecting a picture of the enemy
11 command structure. Who were the enemy? What were the
12 enemy doing? What was their intent? How successful
13 were they against their intent? What were we doing to
14 them? All these were unknowns in this period.
15 So it was to establish what was going on and we came
16 to the conclusion that we were in the grip of an
17 insurgency and a growing insurgency, and we briefed
18 General Abizaid on that in October and I have to say
19 I don't think the chain of command was overwhelmed by
20 this judgment because it wasn't what was meant to
21 happen.
22 However, they were all of agile mind and he very
23 quickly understood the issue and set us working on what
24 we were going to do about it. And I believe
25 General Abizaid and Ambassador Bremer went back to

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1 Washington in late October to consider this issue with
2 the Pentagon, and one of the big issues was the
3 indeterminate nature of the plan: When was it actually
4 going to deliver transfer of sovereignty to the Iraqis;
5 when were the Iraqis going to run their own affairs
6 again?
7 Ambassador Bremer had produced this seven-stage plan
8 which was widely publicised, but you didn't know when it
9 was going to end. And the Iraqis, I think, for those
10 I spoke to -- and one has to be careful about anecdotal
11 evidence because what did we really know about what was
12 going on -- felt badly let down.
13 They had been given the impression that we would
14 take over, as Freddie says, get the show back on the
15 road and then hand it over to them. That didn't happen.
16 So this question of legitimacy arose, there was the question
17 of disappointment, the economy wasn't picking up,
18 unemployment was rising. There were many causes for
19 discontent and this fed the insurgency. And
20 General Abizaid said, "What is the one thing that we
21 could do to reduce this?"
22 We are victims of our past, it is stuck in the
23 memory of the British staff that the great thing
24 about Malaya had been that we declared we were going to
25 make Malaya independent. That solved the problem, not

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1 at a stroke, but it actually gave a vision that the
2 country could be led towards.
3 So the point here was there had to be a date in the
4 diary at which sovereignty was going to be transferred
5 back to the Iraqis and everybody had to be seen as
6 working towards it. That was the big idea he took back.
7 Reading "Occupying Iraq", clearly it was
8 a successful idea, so many people had that idea. But
9 that was the direction we then got back from that
10 meeting in Washington to actually speed the whole thing
11 up, get a plan about handing it over, and instead of
12 going through a very laborious process of developing the
13 governance, developing the economy, developing the
14 security force structures, we had to do the best we
15 could in the time available.
16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think that's a very valuable
17 context in terms of the thrust of policy, which is to
18 extract ourselves in the centres and hand things over --
19 as we have been discussing, it maybe didn't all quite
20 work out that way. But for the moment I was going to
21 hand you back to Sir Martin.
22 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: General Viggers, Sir Lawrence has
23 mentioned prioritisation. I would like to ask you, when
24 you arrived, how the various military tasks such as
25 reconstruction, finding WMD and training the Iraqi

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1 security forces were prioritised, and in particular,
2 what advice you were able to offer on prioritisation.
3 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Certainly at the outset – and it
4 was as a result of not having defined the ends, ways and
5 means of how we were going to deliver this phase of the
6 campaign -- there was no real sense of priority. We were
7 to a degree reacting to what we found. So in the early
8 days, everything -- everything -- was a priority and the
9 end result was nothing really was a priority.
10 What we discovered was much more in terms of
11 relationships and the sort of virtual and vicious cycle
12 of -- you have to be secure in, for example, delivering
13 power to centres of population. You need the security
14 of the generating stations and the power lines and you
15 have to deploy on those. That takes troops away from
16 the centres of population. The power lines were being
17 disrupted, sabotage and so on. So that left them
18 feeling insecure, which brought the issue back to
19 security.
20 So it was trying to get traction in a kaleidoscope
21 of issues, security and rebuild and the apparent
22 inability to get the facts out on the street, to
23 convince highly suspicious people that our intentions
24 were genuine, that we were there genuinely working for
25 the benefit of the Iraqis.

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1 So our role in this was, as the coalition military
2 headquarters inside the Coalition Provisional Authority,
3 to bring together, or to try to bring together, the
4 various heads of the functions to say, "We need some
5 sequencing here. You can't run off and try to rebuild
6 that oil station if you haven't got us prepared to put
7 a battalion on the deck for the six months it is going
8 to prepare. We need a sense of order in the way these
9 things are planned."
10 We had no prisons to put people in, or judges, we
11 had no courts. So merely arresting people and throwing
12 them into pens wasn't actually going to improve the
13 sense of security and wellbeing and confidence in the
14 international community.
15 So I go back to my point about the first three or
16 four months was in effect making the plan in contact.
17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So essentially there couldn't be
18 a campaign plan initially because of the lack of
19 knowledge, for whatever reason, of what the situation
20 was like on the ground?
21 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: I think that's fair.
22 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So you spent the first thee or four
23 months when you should, in a way, have been given
24 something very specific to do to prepare --
25 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: I think that's fair. And, of

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1 course, being in the country was hugely helpful because
2 you were on the ground and you were talking to Iraqis
3 although not enough. So that helped to develop it.
4 But I don't sense that we really closed with the
5 issue -- I'm talking now about General Abizaid of CENTCOM
6 and the key civilians -- until probably
7 late July/early August. We were beginning to sense we
8 can get some sort of scheme now as to how we were going
9 to deal with this.
10 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How were the resources for this
11 acquired? What was the problem with regard to
12 resources?
13 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: A gradual flow in of
14 expertise, more trained people to develop the
15 thinking as much as the doing, to get some sense of
16 buy-in, not only from the military side,
17 international -- of course, the coalition task force
18 were becoming more and more international. They came
19 with their own national baggage of rules of engagement
20 and all that. So there was a military challenge. But
21 the bigger one was to ensure that the people responsible
22 for power distribution, the introduction of the new
23 Iraqi currency and all these other very important things, were
24 properly coordinated. That was an issue as much for the
25 capitals, London, Washington, than it was for the CPA in

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1 Saddam's palace in Baghdad.
2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: You were able to convey this back to
3 London?
4 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Yes, through the various --
5 we sent back reports twice a week. We were on the
6 videolinks, we were trying to keep London and Washington
7 aware. But the difficulty I had was that I didn't sense
8 that there was a real locus in town that was actually
9 picking up the vibes of what we were saying and then
10 doing the thinking bit, to say, what is London's role?
11 What is Washington's role in making this happen?
12 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: What ought that locus have been?
13 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: A single minister. Without
14 the single minister to drive it forward it was very
15 difficult to get the officials to focus on the whole issue --
16 the military people were focusing very much on the
17 military bits, the Foreign Office on their bits, DFID,
18 frankly, focused on not much, but no one was driving at
19 Cabinet level and I think we suffered from that.
20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.
21 THE CHAIRMAN: Could I just interject before Sir Lawrence
22 comes in.
23 Overall, looking at the Coalition in those first three
24 or four months, was there simply a huge shortfall of
25 scale of effort to combine security responsibility right

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1 across the country with the civil administration --
2 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Yes.
3 THE CHAIRMAN: -- of a medium-sized country?
4 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Yes, I think that's fair.
5 And remembering that in the governorates, as they were
6 called, the 18, there was no administration to connect
7 with.
8 Initiative was not a thing to show during the
9 years of the Ba'athist regime. Getting people to step up
10 to take responsibility, to find these people, given
11 that the top four layers had been cast aside, was
12 difficult.
13 THE CHAIRMAN: You spoke about the inflow of human resources
14 of different kinds over that period. Was there in your
15 judgment a real appreciation growing in both London and
16 Washington of the scale of the enterprise that we then
17 faced?
18 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Yes. It was, in my view, too
19 slow and it was halting.
20 One had to, as it were, kick the ball a lot to get
21 it to the other end of the pitch, so people at a senior
22 level grasped the need to deliver the aftermath with the
23 same, if not greater intensity, that we delivered the
24 invasion.
25 THE CHAIRMAN: In the absence of that senior political

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1 figure in London, which you advocate as a lesson
2 learned, in hindsight perhaps, did you have multiple
3 line of reporting and informing into London -- leave
4 aside the Washington axis -- ie MoD in its various
5 aspects, as well as PJHQ and the CJO and the rest of it,
6 but also DFID, Foreign Office? Whatever?
7 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: My line of reporting was into
8 the MoD, but I know it was copied then from there
9 to the Permanent Joint Headquarters, to our
10 representative in Tampa and to the General in Basra.
11 But I was expecting, hoping, the MoD would then push
12 that out into other bits of Whitehall.
13 THE CHAIRMAN: It is fair to ask, isn't it, because you were
14 part of a combined operation, was the American line of
15 reporting open to CENTCOM and into DoD, Pentagon, was
16 that, as it were, a free flowing channel of information,
17 advice, recommendation, out of Baghdad?
18 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: It was a different construct,
19 of course. General Sanchez reported back to
20 General Abizaid in Doha and Tampa, and I'm not clear on
21 how the chain went on the American civil side.
22 THE CHAIRMAN: CentCom reports direct to the
23 Defence Secretary to the President, it is just there.
24 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: What surprised me was the
25 apparent lack of engagement from the State Department.

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1 THE CHAIRMAN: You had USAID in Baghdad by then?
2 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Yes, we did.
3 THE CHAIRMAN: I think I had better turn it back to
4 Sir Lawrence, but these are important and interesting
5 questions, I think, particularly in this early phase.
6 Lawrence?
7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You anticipated mine. I just want
8 to look at the constitutional arrangement now just
9 quickly in relationship to the UN.
10 We have heard from previous witnesses that the basic
11 British objective was to, in a sense, hand the problem
12 of the administration of Iraq over to the
13 United Nations, that the United States was reluctant
14 about this but that a compromise was reached. And that
15 this was reflected in resolution 1483.
16 I just want to get your sense of what difference
17 this made to your understanding of your role, the
18 British positions as an Occupying Power and so on, the
19 fact that the UN actually were going to have a limited
20 presence, but growing presence in Baghdad.
21 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: I think in the period of sort
22 of May/June, the effect of the poor relationship between
23 the American Government and the United Nations was
24 apparent on the ground in the staff levels of Bremer's
25 headquarters. People were unreasonably and unfairly

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1 dismissive, in my view, of the potential role that the
2 UN had –
3 they had been there throughout the sanctions, they
4 knew quite a lot and could have been used as a force for
5 good in terms of preparing the campaign plan, but there
6 was a real stand-offishness about the American civil --
7 particularly the civil side.
8 I don't think I would aim that at Paul Bremer
9 personally, but his staff were kind of bruised by the
10 perceived friction that the UN was laying in front of
11 them. And I spoke to Rick Sanchez and I said "I really
12 do think someone needs to go and start talking to
13 these people and the Red Cross and start to try to build
14 at a practical level some sort of working relationship",
15 and we started to do that.
16 Sergio de Mello then appeared and once he had
17 appeared, the doors then started to open. Tragically,
18 of course -- and you can say it was probably no surprise -
19 that he was murdered by the truck bomb under his window
20 later on, but his loss was -- and his loss to the
21 Coalition and also to the international community - was
22 a defining moment.
23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In terms of your own role, one of
24 the problems that ORHA had was the lack of clarity about
25 its authority within Iraq.

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1 Now, as the CPA comes in, it has a clearer
2 authority. You sort of move from a situation where you
3 are trying to empower Iraqis to a situation where
4 Paul Bremer was clearly in charge. Did you see that
5 having a very clear impact on the way Iraqis viewed the
6 Coalition?
7 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: I don't think -- I don't
8 think ORHA made a bit of difference to Iraqi
9 perceptions. They weren't there for very long and they
10 didn't have the time to build the connectivity. The CPA
11 started to arrive and it was a case of "stand aside, new
12 kid on the block. Thank you very much. The airport is
13 down the road."
14 They didn't really have any traction at all, and
15 I think part of the problem was that they were coming in
16 on a flawed mission. They were looking at a whole deal
17 of humanitarian assistance to deliver, a sort of
18 Kosovo 2 really, lots of refugees and people to help.
19 The people never left their homes. The weapon
20 technology was such that if you stayed at home -- food
21 was never a problem - if you stayed at home and stayed
22 away from the palaces and the barracks, you were not going
23 to get hurt.
24 So that exacerbated the challenge of the CPA,
25 because you had a functioning capital city but no power

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1 full of people, nowhere to go. I'm sorry, it goes back
2 to this lack of intellectual horsepower on the
3 reconstruction phase from the very earliest start.
4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Two of the key decisions that people
5 now look back to as yet another defining moment were the
6 de-Ba'athification and the disbanding of the Iraqi army.
7 What was your view of these decisions? From your
8 perspective, how were they taken?
9 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: The de-Ba'athification thing
10 was crazy. One has to remember that the Shia community
11 and the Kurdish communities were up for this. Their
12 enemy was the Ba'ath Party. It was the Ba'ath Party
13 that kept the Shia under suppression for years.
14 But the effect of that was that, in our area, in
15 army/military terms, your senior rank became a major.
16 You cannot build an army or a police force at the rank
17 of major. We had no one to connect to. And the
18 Americans -- Jerry Bremer was hard over on it. We were
19 saying to him "this is not going to work, you need to
20 bring into our tent people who understand how it works,
21 who have been trained, who we can commission to do
22 things."
23 So that was -- it was a bad move. And it was
24 understanding that to be a professional anything in that
25 country you had to sign the piece of paper. If you

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1 didn't sign the piece of paper, you didn't get a job.
2 So it wasn't that you were a fully signed up
3 member of the Ba'athist torture gang, if you wanted to
4 be a doctor or a soldier or whatever, you signed the
5 piece of paper. So it was flawed logic.
6 I must confess to have been completely confused
7 about who made what decisions and when about the Iraqi
8 military. Most of it faded away during the 16 days of
9 the invasion. As it were, the ordinary conscript foot
10 soldier, they ran home with their guns. The Republican
11 Guard melted away. I can remember General Scott Wallace
12 saying "I watched them flipping out of Baghdad into the
13 Sunni triangle, Fallujah, Ar Ramadi, Habbanija."
14 The effect of that though was to create thousands of
15 out of work, poor, disenchanted military people with
16 guns, and it took too long to persuade the coalition
17 provisional authority that we have to give these people
18 something to live on, if it is a dollar a day or
19 something. And we ended up with, of course,
20 demonstrations at the Martyr's Gate at the edge of Green
21 Zone, and we ended up shooting a couple of them. It
22 didn't help.
23 So those sort of strategic defining decisions didn't
24 help very much.
25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Was your advice ever asked on this?

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1 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: It was not with the
2 de-Ba'athification. It was with the excluded military.
3 And I can remember going with Walt Slocombe in to see
4 Paul Bremer and saying "this has got to stop. The
5 numbers at the gate now are over 1,000, 2,000, 3,000,
6 and we have to start giving these people a little bit of
7 respect and the means to live on" or you are going to
8 create the insurgency that Andrew talked about.
9 It happened anyway, but we weren't doing much to
10 ameliorate the effect. His view was, "I hear what you
11 are saying, but they have been shooting our soldiers" --
12 it took him too long to get it, really.
13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That, in a sense, goes to part of
14 the problem which we shall be coming on to through the
15 whole period of the CPA, which is that Bremer did have
16 a need to assert his authority and deal with challenges,
17 yet actually there was only limited power that the
18 coalition could deploy in these circumstances.
19 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Civil and military. That's
20 true. And he got frustrated. We all did. Because you
21 could see that something was a very clear and obvious
22 thing to do, but getting it done from the point of
23 trying to find somebody who could have the confidence to
24 stand up publicly -- as an Iraqi - and do it was all
25 part of the friction of life.

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1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How quickly did it become apparent
2 how big a mistake this had been -- and I think that's
3 a question for General Figgures -- and what steps were
4 taken to reverse it?
5 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: I think I would take a slightly
6 different view. It has almost become part of the great
7 mythology that this was a terrible deliberate blunder.
8 Freddie actually alludes to it: What was the
9 Iraqi army at the end of all this? Well, when I arrived
10 in September, if you had seen those retired Iraqi army
11 officers, they definitely were retired.
12 General Paul Eaton had a plan to develop the new Iraqi
13 army. I think, if one had put to the majority of the
14 population that the old arrangements were going to
15 continue, we would have had a severe issue with the
16 Shia.
17 I will just bring it -- a small example: the
18 Iraqi Civil Defence Corps had been set up. This was the
19 means by which local security could be achieved through
20 the mobilisation of Iraqis to defend their homes.
21 So these organisations, these units, were formed by
22 the divisions in the areas in which they existed, and
23 they were equipped, they were provided transport and
24 minimal command and communications. They were units
25 of limited capability and their capability was severely

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1 limited because of the fact that they had no logistics,
2 they were dependent upon the multinational divisions for
3 those, and they had no medical support.
4 Now, there were a large number of Iraqi doctors who
5 had no employment, but they were members of the
6 Ba'ath Party, and we had a general medical officer who
7 was very competent and seemed a perfectly reasonable
8 man. I went along to see the Minister of Health and
9 said, "Look, I think we could mobilise these former
10 doctors and we can provide medical support to the Iraqi
11 Civil Defence Corps". He said, "Well,
12 General Figgures, that's very good and there is a lot of
13 logic behind what you say, but let me tell you this,
14 I will not tolerate it. I will not have him in
15 a position of authority. He can be an ordinary doctor
16 if he wants to be, but he can't be part of the chain of
17 command in the medical services supporting the Iraqi
18 Civil Defence corps." And that approach was prevalent
19 right across the piece.
20 So the two dimensions of it: disbanding the army --
21 the army really, I think, would have been a liability.
22 There would have been the question of its loyalty. Yes,
23 we had severe problems of disbanded officers and their
24 contribution to the insurgency, but what contribution to
25 the insurgency would they have made as part of a formed

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1 body, equipped, informed and so on? You know, there was
2 some merit in getting rid of that organisation and
3 starting again.
4 Where I think we were not good was saying, "Okay, we
5 have disbanded them, screened those who were in the
6 army, identified those who were capable of future
7 employment and re-employing them after" having, in some
8 way, sanitised them or convinced ourselves that they
9 were likely to be loyal to the new Iraq and then paying
10 the appropriate pensions -- in fact, buying off, which
11 is a very powerful technique -- the others.
12 So we didn't do that, and as has been alluded, there
13 was quite a debate over that and it became a matter of
14 principle.
15 Equally, with the Ba'athists, the Multi-National
16 Divisions, I think, using it as a bit of a lightning
17 conductor to say, "Look, we can't run the educational
18 services without employing Ba'athists, because the
19 teaching profession seem to be, you know, an arm of the
20 Ba'athist party." And the CPA said, "Well, you have got
21 to get rid of them", so we came to an accommodation.
22 Things like that would have caused friction, but
23 at the end of the day those on the Iraqi Governing
24 Council -- and, indeed, one should remember, I think,
25 the de-Ba'athification had been handed over to them --

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1 they took a very hard line on this and they were not
2 forgiving.
3 So I think whether, in the deliberations on the
4 decision, they realised they were between a rock and
5 a hard place or whether they just didn't understand the
6 second and third order consequence of it, I don't know,
7 but we were not good at managing the consequences once
8 they became apparent.
9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to finish up on the military
10 side, I think it is the general -- not that the Iraqi
11 army could have been reconstituted as an army, but that
12 not paying wages and pensions or giving any respect
13 meant that you created a lot of enemies. I'm not quite
14 sure anybody would suggest that you could certainly have
15 deployed them in a new role.
16 On the de-Ba'athification point, what you seem to be
17 suggesting is that once it had been done, it was very
18 hard to bring people back. But I wonder if it was the
19 case that if it hadn't been done and people were just
20 allowed to adjust, it might have been easier for them to
21 stay, or would you still have had the Shia hostility
22 from the Shia --
23 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: I think this is a good illustration
24 of us not really having the feel for the people or the
25 country. There would be no normalisation. People were

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1 being murdered, scores were being settled and they would
2 have just been taken down.
3 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Absolutely. It is difficult
4 to overstate the Saddam effect.
5 While he was alive, out there somewhere, and while Uday
6 and Qusay were out there too, the top end of the
7 Ba'athist mountain was still affecting that country.
8 The fear of that -- and, of course, they came from the
9 Tikrit tribe and so they had a power base, so it was
10 quite interesting -- it is an interesting balance
11 between making a policy decision and making it effective
12 on the deck.
13 What we didn't do, for example, was to remove from
14 Baghdad every big, black car with tinted windows, because
15 that's how the Ba'athists moved about. Having said we
16 had done away with the Ba'athists, the cars were still
17 out there. So the ordinary Iraqi on the street said,
18 "They haven't. They are still there. They are driving
19 past us. The same policeman who murdered my brother is
20 standing on that street corner", sort of thing.
21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just following that through, if you
22 are thinking about the reactions of the Iraqis to the
23 coalition, and given what we have mentioned earlier
24 about the plans to hand over and leave, one of the
25 difficulties you must have had is the sense that you

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1 would go and that these people would come back, so that
2 it was difficult to get confidence, take risks with the
3 coalition authorities.
4 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: I think there was a key
5 influence base that it took too long to connect with,
6 and that was the sheikhs.
7 There is another map of Iraq. One map shows you the
8 18 governorates. There is another map which shows you
9 the sheikhdoms. General Abizaid in about July said we
10 have got to talk to these people. These people have
11 power and influence over their own tribal areas, and
12 there is an alternative means of getting the truth into
13 the mind of the Iraqi by working through the Sheikh, the
14 power of the Sheikh, the respect that they have.
15 So instead of -- as well as, rather, building this
16 thing called democracy in this place, one could have
17 done better to connect with those people and maybe even
18 delegate some of the responsibility to them, for
19 example, for the transfer of power through a sheikhdom.
20 We had could have paid them to exercise discipline in
21 the way they exercise it over their people to make it
22 happen. And it took too long for people in the CPA to
23 recognise that there was an influence base that could
24 have been used for good.
25 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: With regard to achieving what

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1 General Viggers has called our positive contribution,
2 could I ask you both to describe your relationship with
3 various other parties in Iraq, perhaps starting with the
4 UK Special Representative?
5 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Yes, I met with John Sawers.
6 I met him out there. I had not met him before. We met
7 at least once, or twice a day very often. I met someone
8 I didn't even know was there, called Chris Segar, who
9 was the original Ambassador who was -- we had an Embassy
10 then outside the Green Zone down on the riverside, the
11 original embassy, who knew -- he and his people knew an
12 awful lot about the place and had been there through the
13 invasion period[1].
14 So, very professional. On reflection I just wish
15 that Jeremy Greenstock had come in with us at the very
16 start because of his international status. It would
17 have helped hugely to inject Brit influence into the
18 overall conduct of the civil side of the campaign
19 because of his stature and his experience. And I would
20 add perhaps Sir Hilary Synnott to working in Multinational
21 Division South-East.
22 These are two highly qualified, highly experienced
23 players. Had we had them in from the outset we might
24 have got more traction through the American system.
25 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Did the relationship with the

[1] On checking the transcript, Lt Gen Sir Freddie Viggers has requested that a footnote be added to clarify that Chris Segar was not based in Iraq during the invasion.

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1 United Nations change with the arrival of
2 Jeremy Greenstock?
3 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Sadly it had been affected
4 hugely then by the truck bomb that killed de Mello. An
5 awful lot of the international community left the
6 country, and it was very clear that the terrorists, the
7 foreigners, the influencers could see that the way to
8 get at the coalition, its credibility, its authority,
9 was to attack the international community and force them
10 out. And they left.
11 And so it was a question of having to rebuild
12 international non-CPA presence in the city. The same
13 with the Red Cross.
14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How was that done?
15 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Slowly, because what we had
16 to do was rebuild confidence that we could produce
17 secure -- and maintain secure compounds for these people
18 to operate in. But it wasn't just being in a compound.
19 To do their job, they had to get out.
20 I said to the ICRC on more than one occasion
21 you would help yourself if you didn't drive
22 around the country with big red crosses on your trucks."
23 They said, "We cannot do that, that is fundamentally
24 against everything we stand for." I said, "Then you are
25 going to get shot at." You could see that the thought

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1 process of the opposition was to get into the
2 international community's psyche by killing
3 internationals.
4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In terms, again, of influences and
5 relationships, what were they with regard to the British
6 forces in the south?
7 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: The GOCs will give you
8 a better feel for that.
9 My sense was their presence wasn't that great in the
10 regions. The CPA itself was hardly in evidence at all
11 in the early months because we didn't have the manpower
12 to populate them. So it was certainly General Petraeus,
13 who was commanding the 101st in Mosul, he delivered the
14 CPA plan almost entirely. There were no other points of
15 contact up there in the early days, and of course it
16 grew, the more we got people in and they got
17 acclimatised and used to operating. But the load was
18 carried in the early months by the military in the
19 regions.
20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Finally on the question of your
21 relationships basically with the Whitehall machine and
22 you mentioned briefly DFID, could you tell us a little
23 more about that?
24 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: As I said in my end of
25 tour report which has now turned up -- I will leave

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1 a copy with you -- but I think I referred to it as a sad
2 and sorry tale.
3 My own experience had been working in Bosnia when it
4 was then called the Overseas Development Agency.
5 Baroness Linda Chalker ran it and it was hugely
6 effective. An agent came out almost literally with
7 a suitcase full of cash, delegated powers to the unit
8 level to deliver quick improvement projects, as they
9 were called, to build confidence.
10 All we got from DFID were one assessment after
11 another, and eventually the conclusion it was a bit
12 dangerous and we wouldn't be here. I didn't see, I'm
13 afraid, DFID as a positive contributor in my time
14 at all. And I think there is an issue for you, which is
15 the construct of government.
16 For my money, they should be an agent of the
17 Foreign Office. They are a delivery agent to fit the
18 UK's strategic policy, not a stand-alone policy
19 definition branch in its own right.
20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: General Figgures, can you comment on
21 that, on the DFID contribution?
22 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Well, we faced the dilemma between
23 the short- and the long-term. There was no doubt that
24 we did a lot of things to buy immediate effect, which
25 actually in the longer term damaged the economy. And

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1 you certainly need an agency, and it became part of our
2 plan that you developed, or helped a country,
3 facilitated the economic development of the country,
4 over a period of time.
5 Now, if you can't do both, what do you do? Well, it
6 is no good having success in the future if you are dead
7 tomorrow. Equally, there is no point winning tomorrow
8 to die in the end. So the deduction is you have to
9 resource this type of operation for short-term effect to
10 allow those who have freedom of action on the ground to
11 carry out those things which are going to get them
12 influence with the local population, win the consent of
13 the local population and at the same time have a means
14 of developing the governance, developing the essential
15 services, developing the economy.
16 But people have to be prepared to work to the
17 campaign plan, and these actions come together at
18 certain stages. And if you are -- you have an agency
19 which is not signed up to the campaign plan -- and it
20 goes back to our previous discussion -- someone has to
21 be in overall charge of this. If you have someone who
22 is not prepared to sign up to it, then you are actually
23 working against the grain that you are trying to follow.
24 Now, my experience in Baghdad with DFID was,
25 I thought, surprisingly good and this is all about

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1 personalities. It is all about establishing where are
2 we aligned, where are we at issue, what are we going to
3 do to resolve the issue.
4 At the end of the day is not to decide who is the
5 best man, the end of the day is to win the war. So we
6 all have to be a little more accommodating to achieve
7 the mission.
8 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Sitting where we were in
9 Baghdad, it was -- one of the benefits was you could see
10 how different areas were being dealt with. And I think
11 back to the day that in General Petraeus's area they
12 took out Uday and Qusay Hussein in a very violent day's
13 activity. Within two days, because Dave Petraeus had
14 the means at his disposal, in terms of money and
15 expertise, the area of that gunfight was cleared, the
16 house was demolished, everyone who lived in the region
17 who had a bullet hole in his wall was given
18 compensation. He regained the confidence of that
19 community.
20 I don't believe that Robin Brims, Graeme Lamb,
21 Peter Wall, I don't believe our GOCs in the south-east
22 corner had anything like that amount of
23 non-kinetic combat power and it showed.
24 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.
25 THE CHAIRMAN: Could I, just before Sir Lawrence comes in,

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1 ask about one aspect of the burden of responsibility
2 that was shouldered by the military in the absence of
3 anyone else in these first few months, and that's to do
4 with policing, more than justice actually, but just
5 straight policing.
6 The Iraqi army had disbanded itself. There was
7 still the remnants of a structure for civil policing, I
8 think, at least in the south, I believe, but across the
9 country I really don't know at all. Was this something
10 that the military simply had to take responsibility for,
11 absent anyone else?
12 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Well, there were many police forces
13 in Iraq, for a first thing, which I think was part of
14 the astonishment, and so, "How did the Iraqis run them?"
15 was the first question. Secondly, the police forces
16 were not high in the pecking order of esteem in Saddam's
17 time, as it was relayed to us. Their notion of policing
18 was not our notion of policing and therefore I think it
19 was extremely difficult in the first instance to get
20 engagement with them. It was done very much on
21 a personality basis.
22 We then had a conflict about how we were going to
23 deal with it. We come back to the military view; it
24 sometimes can be accused of being short-termist, but the
25 divisional commanders had a problem: the police weren't

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1 operating, and the divisional commander's view of life
2 was: we have got military police, a bit of military
3 police training, we will bring on civilian police.
4 The CPA's view was that actually we had to have
5 a rework of the whole organisation. They had to be
6 retrained and so on. Well, there is a tension there,
7 particularly as the insurgency starts to grow, and
8 I don't think we ever really resolved it until the
9 clarification of responsibility for police training and
10 development was transferred to the people who had the
11 muscle to do it and that was the military.
12 So the policy was done by the CPA, the actual
13 business of running the training establishments,
14 recruiting and so on, oversight, was done with the help
15 of police monitors.
16 But then how many policemen did we have from the
17 United Kingdom? And if I may make a point here, I feel
18 -- and it goes for all the civilians who were deployed
19 with us -- there was no mechanism whereby you
20 established a billet, you filled the billet, you ensured
21 the person who was going to fill the billet was trained,
22 and indeed many of the policemen who came out were
23 without honour in their own police force.
24 Paul Kernaghan, who was the ACPO representative,
25 said, "No Chief Constable gains anything by sending

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1 a policeman here," and the fight to get anyone a medal
2 ribbon to show that they had been there was immense.
3 So as a message in terms of developing the police
4 force, I think it was pretty telling and it also
5 indicated how important we felt that was: not very!
6 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Certainly in the Baghdad
7 area, the police were not a police force, they were the
8 people that were sent out every night by the Ba'athists
9 to take people out of their homes and kill them. They
10 also did their best to slow the traffic down with their
11 whistles on the junctions. So Kerik and then Deputy
12 Chief Constable Doug Brand, the Brit who came out, had
13 to start pretty much from scratch with building a police
14 force in terms of beat cops, but also the more
15 technical -- as well as the command and control, but
16 people who could do the more technical bits of policing.
17 No law and order.
18 There was a further linkage, of course, because even if
19 the cops had arrested someone, there was no judge to
20 take them on, no court, and so on and so forth.
21 An incomplete loop.
22 THE CHAIRMAN: One last question from me on this, if I may,
23 which is: is actually the United Kingdom model of
24 citizens in uniform, unarmed, really a useful pool of
25 experience and professionalism from which to draw if you

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1 are trying a reconstruct a police service in a country
2 and society like Iraq?
3 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Well, I think the experience we had
4 in Northern Ireland -- those police officers who had
5 served there, I think, brought a lot to the situation.
6 I mean -- so -- and there are elements of the British
7 police force with specialist skills who, I think, can
8 bring a lot to it and they did.
9 But it is a question of, so what is the model in
10 that country, and the model in the Arab world is not the
11 model that we would subscribe to. I think it was
12 famously said, "It is not Woking."
13 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. I think I heard it said that, at least
14 in the Saddam regime time, it was simply
15 a governmentally organised extortion racket.
16 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Absolutely,
17 without communications and so on and so forth.
18 THE CHAIRMAN: All right.
19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just following that on, one of the
20 problems that you faced and perhaps were aware of was
21 that Saddam had released about 150,000 criminals from
22 prison just before the war. Were you aware of that?
23 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Yes, and I can't remember
24 exactly the number, but the more we went on and got
25 deeper into the various communities, the more we were

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1 re-arresting the people that he let out two or three
2 weeks before. These were bad people, and they were
3 tooled up. So, yes, it was sort of re-invent the wheel.
4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I just want to go back to a point
5 you have already discussed but now in a bit more detail,
6 about the sense of insurgency and how we responded.
7 Now, one of the underlying features of this period is
8 a drawdown of British forces. So you are starting with
9 20,000, you are drawing down to less than half that
10 number over this period.
11 Was there ever any sense during your time that maybe
12 we needed to think again and have more forces around
13 because the situation was not the one we had been led to
14 expect?
15 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Yes, there was, and it wasn't
16 just the Brits either; there was a general desire in
17 Washington to reduce the force levels of the Americans
18 too, and it was -- it goes back to this notion that this
19 was not job done, this was job just beginning and it was
20 a different job. The issue was not so much quantity of
21 troops but the types of troops we needed to suppress
22 violence but also to do the rebuild.
23 So, yes, I think the force levels were a constant
24 issue. It came up pretty much every week, I think.
25 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Yes, it really revolved around this

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1 business of what were we involved in: Was it
2 stabilisation, gradual handover, rapid handover or
3 getting people to accept we had this ever-growing
4 insurgency.
5 And once the acceptance of the insurgency, what was
6 the solution? Well, part of the solution was to
7 encourage more of the -- the coalition to increase in
8 size, but of course there was diminishing enthusiasm to
9 take part in the counter-insurgency campaign rather than
10 a stabilisation campaign.
11 There was a recognition that no matter how many
12 people you put in the country, really, unless the Iraqis
13 were providing a large proportion of the security
14 forces, you would not be successful. General Abizaid
15 said, "We have got to put an Iraqi face on this," and
16 hence you see this enthusiasm for increasing the size of
17 the Iraqi army, and it is interesting, the original
18 purpose of the Iraqi army was just to safeguard the
19 borders of Iraq. We were training up potentially a very
20 capable force just to guard the borders, when in fact
21 the centre of the country was on fire.
s
22 The question of what we then what did we do with the Iraqi
23 Civilian Defence Corps, which for a long time was
24 going to have a life of a year, well, you would require
25 to be completely devoid of imagination to see that this

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1 thing wasn't going to be finished in a year, so you had
2 to do something with them. Equally, the size of the
3 police force.
4 But there wasn't a lot of enthusiasm to increase the
5 ground forces. The question then became: where should
6 we deploy our forces to best effect? And so there were
7 discussions, which we had: were all the UK forces best
8 employed in Basra or actually, as they were highly
9 capable, could they not deploy elsewhere?
10 Anyway, the case was made but the decision not to
11 redeploy them was taken and as a consequence, instead of
12 looking at it in campaign terms, I think we tended to
13 look at it from the United Kingdom perspective in purely
14 regional terms. But that would be my perspective from
15 Baghdad, and of course I was a prisoner of the Combined
16 Joint Task Force headquarters. Greater minds may have
17 seen a balance of advantage elsewhere.
18 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: As we were handing off, it
19 wasn't just a UK/US fight, there were 30 flags on the
20 map. That will take you into issues of capability and
21 the willingness of the troops under those flags to
22 prosecute offensive operations. There is a whole bag of
23 other issues there, but it wasn't just UK/US.
24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But the overall inclination was to
25 reduce?

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1 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Yes, I think it was related
2 to perception of the Iraq war at home: "not in my name,
3 how come we are building troops up, we've won, haven't
4 we"; the "Mission Accomplished" thing on the aircraft
5 carrier. All of these mixed messages that were going
6 out were very difficult to handle back here, I guess.
7 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: I think you have to be careful of
8 the overall intent-- it was to reduce our forces, but there
9 was an acceptance that from about November onwards we
10 had to increase our security capability, but that wasn't
11 necessarily just more American or UK soldiers, and
12 indeed there is a final balance to be had here. If we
13 could have generated, and successfully generated, more
14 Iraqi forces, then we might have struck the balance, but
15 we didn't successfully generate more capable Iraqi
16 forces in the timeframe that we allowed ourselves.
17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But in the context that you have
18 described -- and perhaps you would like to say a bit
19 more about it now -- of an awareness of a deteriorating
20 security situation, that -- and a general view that
21 boots on the ground are rather important in giving
22 people a sense of security and that it was going to take
23 a long time before you could build up the Iraqi forces,
24 something doesn't add up here; you are just going to be
25 in a downward spiral.

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1 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Well, I think it is the estimate of
2 how long it would take to generate the Iraqi forces. So
3 people assumed, for instance, that the procurement --
4 strangely familiar this -- the procurement of the small
5 arms for the Iraqi army would be a relatively easy thing
6 to do.
7 Well, the rules under which the contracts could be
8 let, single supplier and all the rest of it, got us into
9 trouble. So is it came up to Christmas, everyone said,
10 "We have got all this stuff in place --
11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Sorry, are these British or American
12 rules?
13 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: American rules because it was under
14 American control; the administrator was responsible for
15 the whole of Iraq and had to operate accordingly.
16 So we then had January/February. A lot of these
17 contracts, which we were tracking, were appealed against
18 and we had months of delay in order to equip people.
19 So this was something that had not been anticipated.
20 No one could think in a war-like environment that you
21 would get tied down with pettifogging bureaucracy like
22 that.
23 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: It's the same point really.
24 It was -- I think to people who weren't there, it was
25 surprising and disappointing at how lumpy this road we

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1 were on was.

2 But I go back to my first point: without a basic

3 understanding of what you are going into, you have

4 nothing but to be surprised and disappointed if it

5 doesn't quite go as you had dreamt it might, and that

6 took some time to get into the minds of others.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: If we are talking about the reaction

8 to the insurgency, another criticism that has been made,

9 perhaps more of Washington than London, is the sort of

10 state of denial about whether this really was insurgency

11 but it was just sort of the former regime elements

12 causing trouble, rather than something quite different.

13 Did you experience difficulties in trying to convey

14 the seriousness of what was going on?

15 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Well, I think the first thing we

16 had to do was really understand what was going on, and

17 it took a considerable time, when one thinks back on it,

18 to get the intelligence in place. It wasn't that there

19 was a lack of intelligence but there was a severe lack

20 of human intelligence and there was a lack of the

21 ability to fuse it together to gain the understanding of

22 the situation.

23 You are never, ever going to get a full picture, and

24 I think people imagine -- there is this expression, "the

25 transparent battlefield", you know everything that is

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1 going on, it would be like a chess board, but it is
2 never like that and even if you do see everything, it is
3 not immediately apparent what the intent of the people
4 on the board is.
5 We took a long time to do that but we got this
6 coalition fusion, intelligence cell, we mobilised the
7 Iraqi input to it, and again all that came after this
8 acceptance by General Abizaid that we were in the grip
9 of an insurgency.
10 So it was just getting to grips with the situation
11 which was the issue. Once you had got that, you were
12 then in the business of making the case. But no one
13 wanted to believe you unless you had the evidence. The
14 evidence became increasingly apparent.
15 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: I think there was a range
16 of threats and one can get wrapped round the axle of
17 definitions on this, but there were a spread of
18 organisations and groups, all of whom had agendas and
19 issues. They weren't all the same but their target was:
20 they were venting their vengeance, making their point
21 against the coalition and the international community,
22 and that could be the Shia, it could be the breakaway
23 Kurdish, it could be Iranians coming over the border, it
24 could be one tribe settling scores with another through
25 us. The American soldiers called Baghdad the Superbowl.

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1 "If you want to kill an American, you are going to get $50
2 and do it in Baghdad because there are lots of them."
3 So there was this kaleidoscope of different
4 pressures, which – another point now, which was our
5 inability to get the facts on the street quickly, led
6 to a sort of upsurge of general violence, which
7 undermined the fact that, yes, the electricity wasn't
8 perfect but it was getting better, the oil was
9 beginning to flow and it wasn't going into the American
10 banks either, and that hospitals were beginning. All
11 of -- the level of violence was such that it was very
12 difficult to get a countervailing balancing perspective
13 out there.
14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What you have also described is
15 a problem, which you would say from the British
16 experience -- and you mentioned Malaya -- of hearts and
17 minds. That wasn't being worked out either.
18 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Well, I would disagree. I think --
19 again, November, we produced the campaign plan and it
20 was the consent of the Iraqi population which was the
21 centre of gravity, which we had to --
22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That was November?
23 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: That was November, yes.
24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Quite a lot has happened by then.
25 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Well, indeed, but it is this point

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1 what was going on, and you might have said the consent
2 of the Iraqi population, if you are an occupying power,
3 is a pretty important thing, and I think people realised
4 that, but it was just what levers could they pull to
5 either obtain it and, once it was obtained, maintain it.
6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just a final question before handing
7 over to Sir Martin. One of the arguments at this
8 point -- and I think you alluded to it before -- is, is
9 the occupying force part of the problem or part of the
10 solution. There was an argument that if numbers did go
11 down, if our prominence was far less, in some ways that
12 would remove some of the incentives and targets for the
13 insurgency. Did you share that view or did you think
14 that was too optimistic?
15 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: If you were to discharge your
16 responsibilities as an Occupying Power, then you had to
17 have a security element. The size of the security
18 element was -- should really have been driven by the
19 potential threat and you should have overmatched the
20 threat such that you didn't have the violence. But we
21 never did that because we didn't understand what might
22 then occur.
23 I suspect -- well, the moment of -- violence breeds
24 violence and if you can't deal with it swiftly, then you
25 are actually going to have this level of escalation, and

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1 if you don't deal with the economic conditions, if you
2 don't deal with the essential services, if people have
3 got no idea of what is going to happen with respect to
4 their administration, then there is plenty of causes for
5 discontent.
6 And as Freddie said, if you have former regime
7 elements, there were resistance groups, there were
8 foreign fighters, there were religious extremists, there
9 were criminals, there were a lot of people who were
10 going to gain benefit from violence, and we didn't
11 manage that.
12 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: I think we were all things to
13 all, depending on the population block you came from,
14 and we were very popular with the Shia, provided the
15 Shia got all the power and all the electricity and
16 killed a few Sunnis, and very popular with the
17 Peshmerga, provided we let them keep their guns.
18 Overall, if you stop the Iraqi down Arab Street, he
19 would say, "It's great you're here, don't go, for
20 goodness sake don't go because they will all come and
21 kill us."
22 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: So you get these polls, which would
23 say, "The Coalition forces can't go fast enough, but if
24 the Coalition forces go, there will be chaos." And
25 people were able to rationalise that quite reasonably.

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1 So, "Go as quickly as you can but leave us in peace".
2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I have questions about two turning
3 points, one which you have mentioned, Sir Frederick, and
4 that was the United Nations headquarters bomb in
5 August 2003. I just wondered from both your
6 perspectives what you saw as its implications on
7 the military mission.
8 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: It was a huge blow, a huge
9 blow, and we discovered in the aftermath of Mukhabarat
10 had been in the place for years. They knew -- they knew
11 precisely where to put that truck, and what was said was
12 that we had said to the UN in the early days, "We think
13 you are weak, you are a soft target," and they said, "We
14 have to be accessible," and so the truck, ostensibly
15 carrying water, was able to park itself right under his
16 office.
17 It was a huge blow. It took him about two hours to
18 die and throughout all that time he said, "Tell my
19 people they must not leave this country."
20 Of course, it shook up the workers of the UN right
21 across the country, and the threats kept coming, and it
22 was of no surprise that within a few days they said, "We
23 can't sustain this. Our people are not prepared to go
24 out on the street." The Red Cross were pretty quick to
25 follow.

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1 It undermined -- as we said earlier, depending on
2 whichever faction it was, they would never beat the
3 Combined Joint Task Force, we were too kinetic for
4 that. But to undermine the authority of the overall
5 Coalition efforts, civil and military, the easiest way
6 to do that was to frighten people away, and that's what
7 happened. It was a great shame that -- because he was
8 just beginning to make a strong link to Jerry Bremer,
9 relationships between those of us in the Green Zone and his
10 headquarters were beginning to improve, different levels were
11 talking to each other. It stopped the day he got killed.
12 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: So the problem for us was to
13 encourage them to come back, and I had quite a lot of
14 dealings with their liaison officer, who really was
15 concerned about security, and this was a similar issue
16 with the ICRC, and when we got to our ability to conduct
17 elections, Brahimi was invited and there were
18 discussions. But for all my time it was not considered
19 safe enough for them to operate.
20 And that gave us a big problem because we had the
21 transfer of the Oil For Food Programme
22 -- how were we going to maintain that? I think
23 the United Nations were going to give up that
24 on November 21, 2003.
25 The external piece, the actual acquisition of the

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1 food and the shipping and so on, was relatively easily
2 managed, but the internal piece, handing that over --
3 because it was run by Iraqis and that had strengths and
4 weaknesses. How were we going to take that over, and
5 I say take it over; the CPA wasn't going to take it over
6 but the CPA had to ensure this it continued to work. So
7 how were they going to get the necessary assurance that
8 this was going to work.
9 Well, effectively, a structure, a distribution
10 structure, had to be confirmed, it had to be exercised.
11 The people who were doing this weren't always in
12 a position to do it again. So this involved a huge
13 effort, and again it illustrates the lack of capacity.
14 A number of people were brought out to do it but the
15 only continuity was the military, who provided the
16 legwork to do it.
17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: And my final question to you is about
18 April 2004, and the UN near-simultaneous operations in
19 Fallujah and Najaf. What, in your opinion, was the
20 impact of this on the security in Iraq and did you
21 yourself seek to influence the United States thinking?
22 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Yes. The impact it had was, of
23 course, it confirmed everybody's view, that we were on
24 a downward slide. We had had trouble in Najaf on
25 a number of occasions. This raised the question of who

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1 really was in charge. There was a certain view in the
2 CPA that actually the militias were in charge and the
3 coalition forces had just let this unravel, so they had
4 not nipped it in the bud, and that was a view of --
5 well, virtually the whole of the Shia area, that the
6 Shia had now mobilised themselves, they had had very
7 capable armed forces and that actually our writ no
8 longer ran and we were no longer in a position to
9 neutralise them.
10 And then, of course, as part of this and this desire
11 to increase the security capability in the country,
12 there was a view that we should embrace these militias.
13 They were part of -- very often an arm of the political
14 parties and they should become part of the security
15 apparatus of the Iraqi state.
16 Well, there were varying views on this and I think
17 the then GOC in MND South-east said, "You know, this
18 is all -- wrote a very trenchant letter on the subject
19 saying, "This is all very well, a short-term
20 expedient -- Graeme Lamb -- a short-term expedient but
21 actually you will cause far more trouble than it is
22 worth."
23 I think there were elements of that. You could see
24 how this had been done. There was a desire, for
25 instance, that we had some sort of commando which

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1 consisted of these militias and we would give them the
2 intelligence and they would actually go and do the
3 business. Well, of course, they were pursuing their own
4 agendas. So in a way this contributed to the
5 instability, rather than the stability, of the country.
6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.
7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just on April 2004, the other thing
8 that happened then was the revelations about Abu Ghraib.
9 What effect did you see --
10 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Well, I think it was January 13th
11 that General Kimmitt came in to the morning update and
12 put the CD on the desk and we saw it, and -- well, we
13 knew that we had come to a false crest and there was
14 a pretty serious overhang in front of us.
15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That was when it was known --
16 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Yes.
17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- internally but the actual
18 revelations came out in April. What you say is very
19 interesting. What was your understanding of why this
20 had happened? Did you have a feel as to -- when you
21 were discussing it in January?
22 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Well, I had been asked to visit
23 Abu Ghraib prior to Ann Clwyd visiting, and I went on
24 a number of occasions to understand what we were doing,
25 and my understanding was that there were security

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1 internees there and there were criminals who were
2 incarcerated. I went through the whole process: I read
3 the orders, we did a lot of work, again with London, to
4 check that we were compliant with the appropriate Geneva
5 Convention and we were compliant with the instructions
6 that we had been issued.
7 And General Sanchez had personally signed off the
8 orders, so my view was that systemically this was under
9 control, but in my time in the British army I have come
10 across instances where somewhere in the organisation
11 someone takes it upon themselves to behave badly. It
12 will happen; it is what you do about it which is so
13 important.
14 My perception at the time -- and it hasn't been
15 shifted -- was that this was a failure of leadership,
16 where a number of soldiers had been given the freedom to
17 behave badly with those who had been imprisoned for
18 criminal offences.
19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There is another, lets say
20 contradictory explanation, which is a degree of anxiety
21 developing about the insurgency and therefore
22 a tolerance of interrogation methods that would not have
23 been tolerated in other circumstances.
24 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Well, I don't think so, and indeed
25 every time we had a commanders' conference

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1 General Sanchez talked about the proper treatment of the
2 Iraqi people during combat operations, and in fact
3 I sent one of the memoranda back to London. But he
4 talks about the humane treatment of the Iraqi people:
5 "We are committed to restoring the human rights of
6 Iraq and the rule of law. We must treat all civilians
7 with humanity, dignity and respect."
8 So everyone in his chain of command was in no doubt
9 that this was to be done. So when I went to Abu Ghraib
10 and spoke to Colonel Paris, who was the commander of the
11 14th Intelligence Brigade, his people were in no doubt.
12 The commanding officer of the military police battalion
13 was in no doubt. I checked the people, the military
14 people -- and one must differentiate between the
15 military people, because that was one operation, and
16 then there was another operation which was not part of
17 General Sanchez's piece --
18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That was the question I was about to
19 ask.
20 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Well, I don't think you can ask me
21 that because I'm not competent to answer. But certainly
22 down the military chain of command there was no
23 endorsement, sanction, of inhumane behaviour, and
24 indeed, whenever it occurred, it was investigated and if
25 people were found guilty, they were severely punished.

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1 So we tolerated none of that.
2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So when you knew that these things
3 had happened, did you report this back to London --
4 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Yes.
5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Was there a warning that -- the
6 impact that this would have when it became public?
7 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Yes, it was a serious issue,
8 actually. A major prop of a campaign, the winning of
9 the consent of Iraqi people, had been given a savage
10 knock. This is how we apparently -- and, of course, the
11 detail of it was never explained, but inevitably the
12 world press made a meal of it.
13 So it was a severe blow to our ability to prosecute
14 the campaign.
15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you very much.
16 THE CHAIRMAN: I think we have pretty much come to the end
17 of this session but, just before we do, Usha, do you
18 want to raise anything?
19 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I just want to ask a couple of
20 questions.
21 THE CHAIRMAN: Briefly, if we can.
22 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You have actually given us some very
23 valuable insights and analysis of what you found on the
24 ground, and I think some of it is quite sensitive, your
25 understanding. Is this something you have developed

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1 with hindsight or were you actually making those
2 assessments as you went along when you were on the
3 ground?
4 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Yes. This has been quite
5 therapeutic in fact, going through this process, before
6 we turned up in front of you, and I think there are
7 a number of things that we need as a nation to get hold
8 of if we are going to continue to get involved in
9 campaigns of this sort, which I believe we will. And
10 there are issues here for the defence review and the
11 strategic policy of this country and so on. They are in
12 the notes that I have handed in. The lack of
13 a sense of direction from the outset, tying ends, ways
14 and means together, with a road to travel, albeit bumpy,
15 put us on the back foot from the very start and we were
16 playing catch-up rugby, from the time we started,
17 with, frankly, no impact players to bring on to change the
18 team either.
19 There is a crying need, in my view, to train people
20 who work in departments in this capital and get involved
21 in making policy decisions about how to make those
22 decisions, and I am talking here of the civilian side,
23 not just the military one. I would like to see much
24 more civil-military training going on at the strategic
25 level. We had really good people working the tactics, we

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1 had great commanders at general and below doing the
2 operations. What we lacked were people above that who
3 understood the strategy. It is not their fault, they
4 just had not been trained. We have got training
5 establishments and universities and we really do need to
6 close with this because quite a lot of what we have been
7 talking about applies to Afghanistan right now, in my
8 view. We have kind of tripped over the same bumps in
9 the road, not in exactly the same way, but we haven't
10 really progressed at the strategic level.
11 And I stress that. I'm not talking about the
12 soldiers and the commanders and civilians, who did
13 a great job out there too, in the hands-on stuff, but it is
14 the intellectual horsepower that drives these things and
15 needs better coordination. Just
16 two other things. We really have got to grow up
17 about how we manage an information campaign, how we get
18 the facts out there, how we get the truth on the deck,
19 not through the Daily Telegraph but through the Arab
20 media, including the Internet. We are terribly weak at
21 that. And I am afraid we have got to get this DFID thing
22 sorted.
23 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: My second question, if I may,
24 Chairman.
25 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, we are running out of time.

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1 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I know but I just want to ask -- I
2 mean, the other thing that strikes me is that handing
3 over the power back to the Iraqis quickly and wanting to
4 do the job quickly meant that we did not persevere,
5 spend enough time, in building the capacity to getting
6 them ready to actually govern themselves.
7 Do you think there was a kind of a disconnect
8 between that?
9 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Well, I think one has to be
10 careful. We weren't going to build a country from
11 nothing. This was a country which was actually quite
12 a sophisticated country. It had quite a sophisticated
13 power generation and distribution piece. It had
14 a sophisticated oil industry that was focused on export
15 rather than import, and that was one of the issues. It
16 had a reasonable banking system. We weren't going to
17 build it up from nothing. The Iraqis were quite capable
18 of doing a whole range of things, and part of our
19 problem was actually trying to do it for them. We had
20 a shortage of kerosene. Rather than just saying --
21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Well, I'm talking about the
22 infrastructure, in terms of the civil service, the
23 judiciary in terms of governing.
24 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: Again, it is not that this was new
25 to them. They certainly had a civil service, and indeed

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1 many of their civil servants I came across had actually
2 been educated in the United Kingdom. So there was
3 capacity there, it was just that it had to be increased,
4 developed, because, of course, we had isolated them for
5 quite a long time. But you don't have to be an
6 occupying power, you don't have to run a country, in
7 order to help a country develop.
8 So the idea that you handed the reins back as soon
9 as you could and then you facilitated their development,
10 I think, is a good one. But to do that -- I go back and
11 I would emphasise Freddie's point here -- you need to
12 have a focus within your own government. All your
13 ministries have to pull together as you would rather
14 like them to pull together.
15 If I may just say one thing, the one thing we
16 haven't touched on is the Iraqi currency exchange, and
17 it is the thing -- you asked about reflection. I have
18 to say it was an outstanding achievement. No one speaks
19 of it, but as something which was done by the coalition
20 that has enabled the Iraqi nation to develop, I think it
21 was outstanding, and those involved in it were
22 outstanding because a stable currency is a foundation of
23 a stable democracy.
24 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, thank you, General. We were aware of it
25 but it is very good to have it on the record.

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1 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: A stunning operation.
2 THE CHAIRMAN: Rod, a last question?
3 SIR RODERIC LYNE: A quick point, Sir Frederick. The people
4 above who need training, who do you mean?
5 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: Ministers, top civil servants
6 in MoD, FCO, Treasury -- any department that
7 claims to have a role in the conduct of a campaign has
8 to be trained. They have to understand our language,
9 what motivates -- they have to understand the culture of
10 the country. We have got huge experience in this
11 country. We are not using it and we are putting
12 amateurs into really, really important positions, and
13 people are getting killed as a result of some of these
14 decisions. It is a huge responsibility and I just don't
15 sense we are living up to it, as a capital.
16 LT GEN ANDREW FIGGURES: But as a perspective, it is not
17 a military, it is actually a British Government
18 responsibility to train itself to execute its foreign
19 and security policy.
20 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We have overrun, though not
21 badly, but this has been a particularly valuable
22 session. As a committee, we are grateful to our two
23 witnesses.
24 I normally ask you whether you have got anything
25 final to say but I think your closing remarks were

FINAL

1 exactly that.

2 I do want to ask General Viggers: you have mentioned

3 some notes that you have made available to us. If those

4 could be turned into the form that we could then post --

5 LT GEN SIR FREDDIE VIGGERS: I will do.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: -- that would be helpful. Thank you.

7 Well, with thanks to that and to those who have been

8 here this morning, I will break off the session now. In

9 about ten minutes we are going to start with the

10 perspective from Basra and the south, with

11 Sir Hilary Synnott, as well as General Lamb and

12 General Stewart. So we will get both the political,

13 diplomatic and the military dimension on that.

14 And we are continuing after lunch with a similar

15 theme. So thank you both very much indeed.

16 (11.40 am)

17 (Short break)

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