

1 (2.00 pm)

2 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon.

4 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Good afternoon, Sir John. Hello.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Good
6 afternoon, Lord Walker. In this session, we are hearing
7 from General the Lord Walker, former Chief of the
8 Defence Staff and, before that, Chief of the General
9 Staff. The objective of the session is to examine the
10 key discussions and decisions taken on Iraq and their
11 implementation during his period in post until
12 April 2006.

13 I would like to express the gratitude of the
14 Committee to you, Lord Walker, for being so flexible,
15 both in finding a date and in adjusting this afternoon's
16 timing. Thank you.

17 Two preliminary points I always make: we recognise
18 that witnesses are giving evidence based in part on
19 their recollection of events, and we, of course,
20 cross-check what we hear against the papers.

21 I remind every witness that they will later be asked
22 to sign a transcript of the evidence given to the effect
23 that it is truthful, fair and accurate.

24 With those preliminaries out of the way, can I turn
25 to Sir Lawrence Freedman to open the questions? Thank

1 you.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you.

3 General Walker, for the invasion, you were Chief of

4 the General Staff. In the summer of 2002, did you

5 assess that the army would be ready to offer a division

6 for an invasion?

7 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, can I just correct you? Of

8 course, I wasn't Chief of the General Staff during the

9 invasion.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: No, the preparations for the

11 invasion.

12 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: The preparations, correct.

13 I think we knew that we could put a divisional-sized

14 force in the field after about six months of sensible

15 preparation as we were planning assumptions. So,

16 in July 2002, we knew that by about January we could

17 have something ready if we were asked to.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That assumption was based on the

19 Strategic Defence Review assumption that --

20 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, and it was based on -- we

21 had been fairly busy as an army, as you know. We had

22 been in Bosnia, Kosovo, we had had the ARRC deployed

23 a couple of times. We had Afghanistan 2001. So we had

24 a pretty good feel for what we were capable of.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That was December 2002. What

1 concerns did you have as time passed and you weren't
2 actually being asked to prepare this division?

3 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, the usual ones: our being
4 able to go public with our training and to be able to get
5 the Urgent Operational Requirements that such
6 a deployment would need manufactured in time, so they
7 could be both fitted where necessary and trained with,
8 where necessary. Those were my principal concerns.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The current CDS has told us this
10 morning that, in the event, there was about four months'
11 preparation time. Did you think that was enough?

12 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I would have preferred to have six
13 months, but if you end up with a period that is shorter
14 than that, everybody works twice as hard.

15 What we weren't sure was whether the industrial base
16 was operating on a sort of 24/7 basis at the time. So
17 I was a bit concerned about that, but, as we approached
18 nearer the time, I knew we could probably get ourselves
19 ready, but the important thing was that our commanders
20 should not say they were ready until they were ready.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Again, going back to this morning's
22 evidence, which I realise you may not have heard, there
23 was a suggestion from down the chain of command -- we
24 were hearing that things were ready, but, actually, they
25 weren't as ready as all that. In particular, a large

1 amount of the kit had not arrived, or, if it had
2 arrived, it had not been properly distributed. Were you
3 aware of those sorts of problems?

4 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Not at the time, because, of
5 course, I wasn't there, but, I mean, it would not have
6 surprised me to have found that that was the case.
7 Certainly it was the case in Gulf War 1 when we had
8 problems with our asset tracking.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But of course, that was in 1991, so
10 one might have hoped that, by 2003, those sorts of
11 problems had been overcome.

12 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think with sufficient warning
13 they would have done, but, like all these events, when
14 you are rushing around to get yourselves ready to fight
15 a war, you have got make sure that stuff gets to places,
16 and it doesn't always get to the right places in the
17 right quantities, and the tracking systems were still,
18 I think -- others would have told you -- were still
19 found somewhat wanting by the end of the war.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Indeed. Just going back again, we
21 have been told by Lord Boyce that he felt he was
22 prevented from discussing preparations with the Chief of
23 Defence Logistics. Were you aware of that?

24 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think all Chiefs knew that we
25 were having great difficulty being allowed to talk about

1 stuff, being allowed to order stuff, being allowed to do
2 the sorts of things we felt were essential precursors to
3 any activity of that sort.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you feel that it was creating
5 risks for your forces?

6 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: It was obviously creating some
7 risks, but we are used to dealing with risk, and,
8 I suppose, by the time the green light is given for an
9 invasion, then you make your plan accordingly and get on
10 with it. So I don't think it was a sort of risk that
11 would have made us pull the rug from under the planning that
12 was going ahead.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Again, going back, we have had a lot
14 of evidence of the different options that were being
15 presented to government at this time, and obviously some
16 would have been easier to meet with a shorter timescale.
17 What did you think about the advisability of offering
18 a full division?

19 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I suppose the thing that concerned
20 us most of all was the stretch, I think it is a slightly
21 bad word, "overstretch", but the stretch that the army
22 would be put under at that time. I think we had still
23 troops in Kosovo. We still had Op Banner running in
24 Northern Ireland, we still had troops in Bosnia, and,
25 for the Balkans event, we were on the ticket for

1 a reinforcing battalion should anything go wrong.

2 So I knew that we were going to have to -- we could
3 do it, but we were going to have to make sure that the
4 harmony guidelines, which were essentially that we
5 should try to give people two years' between operational
6 tours, would be broken, and that there would be some
7 specialisms within the force which were at an extremely high
8 premium, people like petroleum operators and those sort
9 of folk, intelligence -- human intelligence people, that
10 we probably didn't have enough of unless we took them
11 from elsewhere.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It has been suggested to us that the
13 army were very keen to be involved in the operation,
14 there were options that didn't involve the army to that
15 sort of degree. Is that an accurate sort of comment?

16 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think the army's always keen to
17 be involved. I don't recall at any stage having said,
18 "Hey, look, you can't leave us out of this", certainly,
19 and indeed, whatever operations -- whichever option had
20 been undertaken, we would have been involved in some
21 form or other, but I think the more important thing was
22 to make sure that what came out of the plan, and you may
23 have had it referred to before, was what we called
24 a winning concept. We needed to make sure that there
25 was going to be a winning concept in which we could play

1 a sensible role.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I want to come back to the idea of

3 the winning concept in a moment, because it is obviously

4 a very important one.

5 Just staying about this, there is in the papers --

6 and we've heard from Jonathan Powell too -- an

7 expression of concern about the morale of the army, if,

8 in what was clearly the biggest operation around, they

9 were not involved at divisional level. Would that be

10 a --

11 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I didn't detect that, I am afraid.

12 It was not something that, as head of the army, I had

13 any anxiety about. Certainly, the sort of lead elements

14 of our forces, people like the Parachute Brigade, they

15 were up for it. They were quite happy that they should

16 be included in the planning, and, no doubt, at the lower

17 levels, there would have been expressions of

18 exasperation if we weren't involved.

19 But certainly at our level, I hope we were being

20 somewhat more balanced about it to recognise what the

21 art of the possible was.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you're sure that you weren't

23 suggesting this was an issue that had to be taken --

24 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Not as far as I was concerned, no.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you. Let's talk about this

1 idea of the winning concept. There is a question here
2 of our winning concept, but perhaps more importantly the
3 American winning concept. As I understand it, an awful
4 lot of effort was put into testing the ideas of an
5 American winning concept. Is that fair?

6 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I would describe the winning
7 concept as being a concept that was winning for the
8 whole of the force going in. This was not a winning
9 concept for us only, as I understood it, and there were
10 a number of options being discussed, as you know: there
11 was the northern Turkey option, there was the southern
12 option. It was a sort of watchword we had on the board
13 in the Chiefs of Staff room, and, as we went through the
14 build-up in the Chiefs of Staffs Committees, at the end
15 of it, we would ask that question: have we convinced
16 ourselves that this is going to be a winning concept
17 yet? When I handed over at the end of January, we had
18 not.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Why didn't you think you had then?

20 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think it was combination of all
21 the factors. There was -- we hadn't done the deal with
22 the Turks in the north, the anxieties about a small
23 point of disembarkation in the south with the potential
24 for biological and chemical weapons being used was
25 a pretty dangerous one for inserting troops into that

1 sort of country, and I think it was only sort of in the
2 latter stages that the whole nature of the American plan
3 became clear. Clearly, they had some operational
4 security matters they needed to attend to, and it was
5 only towards the end we began to get full visibility of
6 everything that everybody was intending to do, because
7 there was a lot of discussion about what might happen.
8 What actually would happen hadn't come across the
9 Chief's desk at that stage.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: We have obviously taken a lot of
11 evidence about the northern option versus the southern
12 option. What you just said suggests that you were none
13 too sure, with the loss of the northern option, that we
14 did have a winning concept. Could you explain why?

15 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think -- I can't remember when
16 we lost the northern option.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It was around the start of January,
18 I think.

19 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Was it? Was it as early as that?
20 The reason I was concerned was that the north seemed to
21 have a number of attractive features to it.

22 First, we were mounting it through a NATO ally;
23 secondly, it was causing the enemy to face activity on
24 two fronts, but the downsides, of course, were that we
25 were going to have a slightly split logistic effort. So

1 that's why --

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Perhaps you could explain what you

3 mean by the "split logistics effort".

4 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, there was bound to be

5 something going into the south anyway. We would

6 probably get involved with some of the seaborne maritime

7 activities down there, and, were we going to bring all

8 our logistics through the north for the rest of our

9 people or were we going to have to divert our line of

10 communication down to the south to resupply our forces,

11 once in the country, that way?

12 So there was a logistic question mark. We never had

13 to get to the bottom of it at the end, because, of course,

14 it didn't come to pass.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: One of the issues in terms of

16 whether you go through the north and the south is where

17 you end up and what responsibility you took on there.

18 There is a couple of points I would just like to

19 take you through here. The first is: CDS described the

20 plan at the time as sort of get in and get out, the idea

21 was that we would do some high intensity warfare, secure

22 the area, and then, hopefully, hand over to somebody

23 else. Was that your recollection?

24 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: No, my recollection was always

25 that we would -- I suppose it was my experience as much

1 as anything that told me it wouldn't be a get in and get
2 out. It would certainly be get in, do the hard, heavy
3 lifting, and then reduce to a level which would allow
4 a country under reconstruction activity to go ahead.

5 So that you would have the security sector reform
6 piece with police and army being trained probably by the
7 military, aided and abetted by the police, but then the
8 reconstruction of economic governance and all the other
9 things would come into play and allow you to withdraw
10 your heavy-duty lifting people, leaving the framework of
11 perhaps a few operational troops and the -- those
12 required to undertake the tasks.

13 But I never thought it was a get in, get out quick,
14 I have never believed in that. I mean, why Dayton was
15 only signed up for one year, I shall never work out
16 either.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So your experience in Bosnia had
18 told you that an enduring commitment, as had been spoken
19 of --

20 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, it wasn't just my experience
21 earlier. It was the empirical evidence of all the
22 activities we had become involved in.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Given this, did you have
24 a preference in terms of the north or the south?

25 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I must say, ab initio, I did

1 favour the north, yes.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Because of where you were likely to

3 end up?

4 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think because it seemed to me to

5 contribute more to this notion of a winning concept than

6 everybody going in from the south.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In terms of the overall winning

8 concept, which you have indicated depended on what the

9 Americans were doing as well as us, we have had this

10 debate, but it is a question as to whether Phase 4 is

11 a integral part of the winning concept and whether you

12 would wish to be satisfied that we really did have

13 a decent plan for what was going to happen.

14 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think the truth of that is no.

15 My assessment of the winning concept is applied

16 essentially to the combat operations initially.

17 With hindsight, of course, I would have worried more

18 about the aftermath than I did. I had a feeling at the

19 time that with the machinery that was being set up for

20 the aftermath, that that was going to be all right.

21 Like others, I felt that the country was ready to

22 undertake whatever needed -- reconstruction needed to

23 be, and that it wasn't going to be as broken a country

24 as some of the ones we had been in, and, therefore,

25 economic regeneration would be faster and the Phase 4

1 activities, whatever they might have been, seemed to be
2 at the time, would have taken place. So my winning
3 concept analysis was of the fight itself.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So that was your main concern. What
5 were your main concerns within that part of it?

6 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: As I said, I think the first one
7 was the narrowness of the port of entry, getting large
8 numbers of troops all through that southern area. The
9 notion that we, the Brits, would have a limited
10 objective, so we needed to recognise that the area --
11 I mean, essentially, we were providing a sort of flank
12 protection for the main forces going up, but being given
13 a piece of real estate down towards the border with the
14 sea, and that included Basra, which, as you know,
15 extended over time.

16 So the main concerns were making sure we had enough
17 people to do that, but did not find ourselves in the
18 situation where we were being asked to extend our area
19 of operation to the point at which we were unable to
20 support logistically our troops.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What sort of conversations did you
22 have with your opposite number in the States at this
23 time?

24 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Virtually none. He was --
25 Rich Shinseki -- you are talking CGS?

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes, CGS.

2 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Rich Shinseki was effectively
3 engaged in the saving of the 155-millimetre gun at the
4 time. Although I met him on a number of occasions, Iraq
5 didn't seem to be at the same place on his agenda as it
6 was on ours. I presume you know the system that they
7 have there, which is quite different to ours.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: He did say, possibly after you had
9 left the CGS, that he thought 500,000 troops would be
10 needed to assure security in Iraq following the
11 invasion. Did you have any sort of conversation like
12 that with him?

13 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Not really. You know how the
14 different two systems work?

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes, with the CentCom ...

16 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Yes, and so, interesting -- and
17 this was part of the difficulty. It wasn't that he
18 was -- it wasn't an area of interest for him, but it was
19 that one didn't feel that he had any serious influence
20 on what was happening at the far end, because it was
21 being run by CentCom straight to the Sec Def, and the
22 Sec Def did a lot of work with the Chairman of the Joint
23 Chiefs, but I never, even when I was CDS, I never came
24 across any of their machinery where the single service
25 chiefs seemed to be involved in the decision-making

1 process. I'm sure they were, but not on a sort of
2 arrangement where, as an individual, I would spend time
3 with my opposite number in that context.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There was concern in the US army
5 which he expressed, but it wasn't just from him, that
6 Donald Rumsfeld's concern to demonstrate the possibility
7 of taking Iraq with quite a small force would leave
8 a gap in terms of what was going to be available
9 afterwards. Were you aware of those concerns and did
10 you share them?

11 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Yes, I was, and I think at the
12 military level we were all slightly anxious about the
13 way in which it appeared that the Sec Def was driving
14 this, quite unlike our own experience, where our
15 Defence Secretary and Prime Minister tend to seek the
16 advice. It seemed to me that he was making up these
17 decisions and in many cases ignoring the advice of some
18 of his military men.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just my final question before
20 handing over, we have talked a bit about the aftermath
21 planning and again you are somebody who'd had a lot of
22 experience in all of this.

23 What efforts did you take to ensure that the army,
24 and, indeed, the forces more generally, were taking this
25 issue seriously?

1 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, I mean, I went out -- the
2 first thing I did when I became CDS was I went straight
3 out to Iraq and I went out with Kevin Tebbit, and I
4 think it was the same time as Bremer had arrived, and
5 had a look round. It was very much a honeymoon period
6 at that stage. We walked through Sadr City, berets and
7 no flak jackets. We walked down the markets in Basra,
8 berets and no flak jackets, the usual sort of smiling
9 citizens, some of them -- certainly not hostile, some of
10 them a bit sort of stand-offish.

11 So it wasn't apparent at that stage, because
12 I think, even at that stage, Jay Garner hadn't been
13 given the sideways push. So I had been through with
14 Tim Cross and his team, in the interim, while I was no
15 longer CGS and before I became CDS, and did some going
16 around talking to people, and I felt that although Tim
17 was very anxious that not enough had been done, at least
18 I felt that what had been done was there, and, at first
19 flush, when I went in there, it didn't seem as though
20 things were going to go as badly wrong as they
21 subsequently did.

22 At that stage, I came back from that visit and we
23 were talking more about the modus operandi of the
24 Americans in Baghdad, who wouldn't get out of their
25 vehicles and presented a very hard face to the citizens

1 of Baghdad, and so my immediate discussions with my
2 opposite number in the States was to try and start
3 changing that, and I suppose it was only about three
4 months later when it became clear that the aftermath
5 planning was really extremely bad.

6 So we looked at a series of things that ought to be
7 done, and we, with our various links, suggested this is
8 what we should go about, both nationally and
9 internationally, and multinationally.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think we have some questions
11 coming on that.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Rod, did you want to come in on that?

13 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Just one separate question, Lord Boyce,
14 your predecessor as CDS, famously asked to be given
15 a very clear yes or no answer on the question of the
16 legality of our involvement in the operation because he
17 needed it to be able to pass on down the chain of
18 command to the component forces.

19 As CGS until early 2003, and subsequently as CDS,
20 were you concerned about the tenuousness of the legal
21 base for joining in this military action and the
22 controversy internationally around it?

23 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Up until we got the letter --
24 I mean, it was almost a one-liner -- saying we were
25 legal, we were all anxious about it, but once we had got

1 that, we put our fears aside and got on with it.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks. I'll turn to Sir Martin Gilbert now.

3 Sir Martin?

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Before military action, what was your
5 understanding the responsibility would be of the
6 military once we took control of Basra and the
7 south-east and how did that change following your visit,
8 which you mentioned?

9 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: This lesson of -- I think they
10 call it a comprehensive approach now, which is the
11 process by which you rebuild a broken country and
12 involves all aspects. It involves the citizens, it
13 involves the politicians, it involves all the
14 professional people outside there.

15 I think I had come to the conclusion, having seen it
16 not work in other places, that the chances of ever
17 creating the machinery to make it work were going to be
18 pretty slim. The second thing, I think, that became
19 very clear to me is that these things always take much
20 longer. I remember in the days of 2003 and 2004,
21 whenever we briefed the Prime Minister I would take
22 a chart across showing how many more of the army we had
23 trained and how much of the civil defence corps was in
24 place, how much of the facility protection force was
25 there, how much of the police was being put in place, and these

1 were sort of optimistic charts that demonstrates the
2 numbers were building time after time, but the truth of
3 the matter is -- and you only have to look at
4 Afghanistan now to see how long it takes to create
5 a proper set of armed forces or security apparatus for
6 any country -- so although -- sorry, a slightly long way
7 to answer your question, but the fact was I had no -- if
8 you like, I wasn't looking at this through rose-coloured
9 spectacles, I knew it was going to take a long time.

10 What changed, I think, was the fact that the
11 circumstances in which we were trying to do it turned
12 out to be a jolly sight worse than we had anticipated.

13 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How did that affect your understanding
14 of what would be delivered by the military and what
15 would be delivered by others?

16 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I suppose in the absence of others
17 to deliver so many of the things which were others'
18 responsibilities, many of those responsibilities fell to
19 the military, and it diverted them from some of their
20 security duties. You know, quick impact -- quick impact
21 projects, all these other sorts of things were brought
22 in, and the armed forces like doing those. They find
23 that they very rewarding in terms of what -- the
24 reaction you get from the local population with whom you
25 are trying to work.

1 If you can create a small school or a small clinic
2 or get some water supply going, which always needs a bit
3 of money and probably isn't going to last very long
4 because it has been done by a soldier rather than
5 a doctor or an educationalist or an engineer, but it has
6 an immediate impact and it gives them much more clout
7 with the local population.

8 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How was that affected by the rather
9 rapid start of the drawdown of our troops?

10 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I don't think it was. It became
11 very clear that the CPA down in Basra had not been
12 entirely satisfactory in its early days. The money that
13 was flowing from the British Government was pretty small
14 and the money that was coming down from the Americans in
15 Baghdad was quite large but beset with bureaucracy.

16 So what it probably meant was that some of the
17 activities that would have allowed a military commander
18 to carry out purely military operations in Basra, had to
19 give way to providing force protection for civil
20 authorities having to do things for the local population
21 which otherwise they wouldn't have done.

22 Not that they minded doing it, I don't think, but
23 they would have been able to handle some of the security
24 issues rather better if all their troops had been
25 focused on some of the security issues.

1 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Because of the worsening security
2 situation, two extra military battalions had to be sent
3 in, I think, in September 2003. Was this something that
4 could have been anticipated, or, in hindsight, do you
5 feel --

6 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I don't think it could be
7 anticipated. We weren't anticipating the situation
8 deteriorating to that extent, to be honest. If
9 I remember, we talked about two extra battalions being
10 sent. I would have to look at the papers, but I think
11 what we did was we extended the sort of takeover time of
12 people rather than sending in extra forces at the time.
13 I think we sent one extra battalion in and the other one
14 was sort of an extension of take it to leave more troops
15 on the ground.

16 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: At that time, that seemed to be
17 a reasonable balance --

18 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, we respond as much as we can
19 to the requests of the commanders on the ground, and
20 certainly that was their request. PJHQ clearly filter
21 it all, and, providing the force provider, in the form
22 of the CinC land, has the troops, there is obviously
23 no reason why they shouldn't go there.

24 It does have an impact clearly on the harmony
25 guidelines and families and so on. So you have to take

1 that into account.

2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Rod, do you want to come in on this?

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Just a quick one. You said, like so many

5 witnesses, that we ran into a situation that we simply

6 hadn't anticipated, but why do you think the coalition

7 had so signally failed to anticipate the situation? Was

8 this a failure of intelligence, or was it that they

9 hadn't done risk assessment, or what?

10 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: No, I think all of that had been

11 done. I think that the extent to which the situation

12 changed so dramatically was brought about because we

13 were unable across the piece -- I mean, I do not think

14 you can decouple Baghdad from Basra from Fallujah, from

15 all these places. I think there is a sort of flow that

16 goes through, but I think what we hadn't managed to do

17 was to put together a reconstruction package which meant

18 that people's lights turned on quickly, that water

19 flowed in their baths, that the sort of things which you

20 and I would take for granted weren't available to the

21 extent they had been led to believe.

22 Now, of course, they were rather anticipating it

23 more quickly than it could ever be delivered, but it

24 just went on and on and on, and eventually, people like

25 Moqtadr Al Sadr and his JAM, or whatever it was called,

1 Jaysh Al Mahdi, they filled the vacuum.

2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But the coalition also had not

3 anticipated: (a) that liberators would quickly turn into

4 occupiers in the eyes of the Iraqis, although a number

5 of people had warned of this; and (b) that sectarian

6 strife would break out in a country that again some

7 people saw as ripe for it.

8 Why had these perceptions not fed their way into the

9 planning of the process?

10 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, I mean, we looked at

11 a number of scenarios, including that one, but the

12 judgment was made at the time that they would be so

13 delighted to get out from under the yoke of

14 Saddam Hussein, that having the nice coalition army

15 there to help them deliver things would be something

16 that they looked forward to and benefited from.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: This was a British judgment as well as an

18 American judgment?

19 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think so.

20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: That's what you were being fed from the

21 political machine?

22 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: It was before we went there.

23 Clearly -- it was clearly found to be wrong afterwards.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just following on from that, when

25 you were in there and you are now CDS, you have given us

1 one explanation for the development of more hostile
2 attitudes amongst the Iraqi population. What was your
3 general analysis of why, over the 2003/2004 period,
4 things were deteriorating so rapidly?

5 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, in part, as I say, because
6 I don't think the reconstruction effort was going as
7 well as it should, but, secondly, I also think that
8 the -- some of the decisions made in the first six
9 months were bad decisions.

10 I think the de-Ba'athification issue meant that you
11 removed a complete layer of administrative competence
12 and security competence from an equation which badly
13 needed them. So I do not think that was a particular
14 help.

15 I think the other thing was that there were
16 clearly -- and perhaps, as a result of that, clearly
17 a number of folk who were fomenting exactly the
18 situation which developed, and, as you probably know, we
19 had special forces trying to operate to cut that cancer
20 out of the system, and the place was unlike, I suppose,
21 other parts. It was never under central control. These
22 were regional fiefdoms with local mayors, local leaders,
23 having really quite a powerful clout in different parts
24 of the country. So you have got a very different sort
25 of loose federation of these various states.

1 I also think that the focus on Baghdad didn't serve
2 the whole of Iraq particularly well. It became very
3 Baghdad-centric and everything seemed to be pointed
4 towards Baghdad. So, for example, the electricity that was
5 meant to come to Basra was diverted to Baghdad because
6 this was seen as the key by some.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So in all of this, and particularly
8 looking at the problems of Basra, the Basra area, and
9 from what you have said, there was a general lack of
10 services, there was a priority given to Baghdad, this
11 created opportunities for others.

12 How important did you think at this stage were
13 external actors -- I'm thinking particularly of Basra --
14 such as the Iranians, although obviously Al-Qaeda
15 presumably had some interest in that part of Iraq?

16 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, I think we knew that they
17 were in communication with some of the Sadrists and
18 various other people in Iraq itself, but we did have
19 troops up on the border and there was some tinkering
20 along the border where they moved various observation
21 posts and so on.

22 I think that the intelligence community were
23 convinced that they were having a lot of influence in
24 terms of what was going on, but I can't recall that any
25 of our generals and their headquarters actually came

1 across direct involvement from Iran.

2 They were put under a lot of pressure from Baghdad

3 to do something about this Iranian influence, but there

4 was nothing very much they could get their hands on.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So this was a supposition that there

6 was something going on?

7 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: No, no, I think it was probably

8 true there were --

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But it was hard to get any --

10 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: -- but it was hard to get any

11 concrete evidence and be able to take people out.

12 I suspect in -- I suppose it was -- what was it -- in

13 the middle of 2004, when Basra did blow up, there was

14 evidence, yet again, of influence from across the

15 border, but, again, there wasn't anybody there who

16 appeared to be an Iranian Republican Guard actually in

17 place.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Presumably it wasn't a great surprise to

19 you that, if you have a conflict of this kind in Iraq

20 and the situation gets messy, that both Al-Qaeda and the

21 Iranians would seek to go in and, as it were, exploit

22 that situation to their advantage?

23 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: No, not a surprise at all.

24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Should we have thought rather more about

25 that before we created that situation?

1 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, you say we have created the
2 situation. I mean, there wasn't a great deal that one
3 could have done. If you come back to Rich Shinseki's
4 500,000, then you might have been in some sort of
5 position to seal the border, but, of course, having
6 looked at sealing those bits of the border, it was
7 almost impossible to do it unless you had vast numbers
8 of troops.

9 So, yes, it was a cause of anxiety, but there was
10 not a great deal that we could have done, other than
11 linking in in a diplomatic sense, and if you remember
12 at the time, our Iranian Ambassador -- and we had
13 a military liaison officer positioned with him for this
14 very purpose -- he was given very limited access to --

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But the fundamental security problem was
16 internal, exploited to a degree by these external
17 actors?

18 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Correct.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think this was an issue we put to
21 the current CDS as well, with a very similar answer. So
22 the Iranians were exploiting the situation. Did you
23 have any sense of Al-Qaeda being a factor affecting
24 their operations in the south-east?

25 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Not so much in the south-east, no.

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That was part and parcel --

2 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: We were involved in trying to sort

3 them out slightly in Baghdad, but not so much in the

4 south.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to move on a bit, or to see how

6 the situation is deteriorating, our assumption

7 presumably had always been that at some point we would

8 wish to hand over to Iraqi forces. Did the

9 deterioration keep on pushing that back as an

10 aspiration?

11 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think it did, but I think it

12 wasn't just the deterioration, it was the rate at which

13 we could generate Iraqi security forces as well, which

14 had been very optimistic, as I said earlier, and always

15 takes longer to achieve than one imagines.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The role of the police forces -- and

17 this, presumably, was even more difficult than the army?

18 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: It was, trying to get policemen to

19 come out and train policemen was the most difficult

20 thing you can imagine, and the police were, as far as we

21 knew, much more riddled with corruption than any of

22 those who had signed on to the new Iraqi army, and even

23 once the training had started, it was quite clear that

24 we were going to have a much more difficult job with the

25 police forces than we had had with the army. I suspect

1 the police force is still being trained.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: We have heard from a lot of witnesses that
3 there is a real question about the concept of British
4 policing as applied to a Middle East or a further east
5 country, and that the tradition of
6 a Gendarmerie/Carabinieri is actually more appropriate
7 for armed police services.

8 Do you think that the right answer is the mix of
9 both or is it to choose one or other policing model?

10 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: No, I think it has to be the other
11 out there. I don't think the British bobby on the
12 streets is a concept that would work in that part of the
13 world. I think a Gendarmerie or a paramilitary force is
14 certainly the right answer for that sort of place.

15 After all, very early on, we set up a training place
16 in Jordan for 300-odd, I think, policemen, but the
17 stories, the anecdotal stories, where these chaps were
18 getting the right sort of training returning to their
19 police stations and being littered around the country in
20 their new police stations and meeting their old boss
21 who'd say, "Oi! If you think that's how you are going
22 to behave, you have got another think coming. Get back
23 in line".

24 So it needed almost a sort of, "Let's start at the
25 beginning", and a paramilitary answer has got to be the

1 right answer, I think.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thanks.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to summarise where we are, we
4 have gone into Iraq, we wished to reduce the numbers of
5 our forces, harmony guidelines and other reasons. The
6 situation has now deteriorated, you can't get Iraqi
7 forces up to speed to help take over.

8 In this context, was there a need for more forces to
9 go in, for greater resources to be put into the security
10 problems in Iraq?

11 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I'm trying to remember whether
12 that was one of our solutions. The answer is, although
13 we may have tinkered at the edges with sort of the odd
14 battalion or so here, and there was a rejigging of the
15 boundaries, as far as I can remember, when we sort of
16 took the Italians and we took on -- Al Muthanna, the
17 province over on the west, and we at some stage ended up
18 with a Japanese workforce out there, but, no, I can't
19 remember there being a debate about a serious increase
20 in numbers. I don't think that happened in broad terms
21 until General Petraeus and his surge came along.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That was much later. So you didn't
23 see that as a means of coping with the situation in
24 which you found yourself?

25 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I mean, the difficulty was much

1 more in -- worrying about the security sector reform.
2 It seemed, if we couldn't produce large numbers of
3 troops of the sort of quantities that really could quell
4 and keep an area quiet, the best way to go was to really
5 focus on security sector reform, do our level best to
6 increase the speed at which they can be trained and the
7 rate of turnout of the security forces, rather than put
8 large numbers of troops on the ground to try and --
9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You have indicated this was going to
10 take a long time.
11 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Yes, it was.
12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Is the assumption realistic about
13 what we could do in Iraq?
14 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I can't remember what the
15 assumptions were. They seemed to be changing all the
16 time, if I remember, but what I think we recognised was
17 that, increasingly, we would move from a situation where
18 we had looked for an end-state which was entirely
19 satisfactory to one that was adequate.
20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think it was exemplary even.
21 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Exemplary was a rather bad phrase, we
22 used to say that we would make the south an exemplar of
23 what could be achieved. I think that's how it was
24 described, but I think that the exemplar was referring
25 to, if you like, the sort of situation in that part of

1 the world. By the time we had got to the middle of
2 2004/early 2005, I think we recognised that exemplary
3 was dead, adequate was going to be not what most of us
4 would have wanted, but was good enough for government
5 work out there.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you. Can I just ask one more
7 question and then I will be turning to some equipment
8 problems/issues that colleagues may want to come in on,
9 but one question on the use of our forces in Iraq.

10 There were approaches made by the United States to
11 send 16 Air Assault to Baghdad and I think you had
12 opposed that. Is that correct?

13 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Yes.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Why was that?

15 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: You say I opposed it. We, the
16 Chiefs, collectively, opposed it. Well, I say
17 "collectively", we didn't all agree about it, but it
18 seemed to me that this was in the early days and I think
19 it must have been shortly after John Sawers' arrival,
20 which would have been mid-2003. We had enough of
21 a problem keeping our logistic supplies and the
22 expertise needed down in the south. I also came to
23 conclusion, having seen Baghdad, this vast, sprawling
24 city in which there weren't enough troops really to
25 control it in the true sense the word -- I think the

1 Americans must have had about 130,000 at one stage, of
2 which about 80 were in Baghdad and we were offering to
3 send up 3,000, or 3,500. I did not think they were going
4 to alter the price of fish, to be honest.

5 We have a slightly rose-coloured view about -- or at
6 least, we did at that stage -- about how much better we
7 were at internal security, whatever you like to call
8 counter-insurgency operations, we had a rather better
9 view of ourselves than we thought the Americans were capable of.
10 In fact, we brought quite a lot of their divisional
11 commanders across to our training grounds here to have
12 a look-see.

13 I have to say they caught up extremely quickly and,
14 in fact, have probably overtaken us in their application
15 of the doctrine involved, but at that time we thought we
16 were quite good and I think there was a view that, if we
17 could get some nice smiling paras on the streets of
18 Sadr City, this would transform Baghdad overnight, and
19 I am afraid I didn't subscribe to that.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That's quite important and probably
21 accurate observation.

22 Do you think there was an underestimation in the UK
23 that the sort of doctrine and training that had worked
24 well for us and had been effective in a lot of
25 interventions in which we had been involved,

1 particularly in the Balkans, would be appropriate in the
2 very different circumstances of Iraq?

3 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think -- I don't think there was
4 a sort of muddled view about it, I think that's what we
5 did think. I did think that we thought that the sort of thing
6 we had put together in a number of theatres would be
7 relevant, and certainly to start with, watching the
8 Americans try to move from high intensity capability --
9 I mean, these were heavy armoured divisions that went in
10 there -- to having the ability to have a face-to-face
11 talk with an Iraqi on the street, bearing in mind the
12 language, was quite an object lesson of how not to do it
13 ab initio. We had got this experience of -- you know,
14 we still had people fighting in tanks at one end and, at
15 the other end, we had soldiers handing out humanitarian
16 aid all at the same time.

17 So this concept -- and I think people have referred
18 to it -- of the three block war was showing itself to be
19 correct, but -- and I'm sure you are going to come on to
20 it -- we were using the experience we had had in
21 a number of different parts of the world to give us the
22 basis for this, recognising that the training that we
23 had done in the desert in Oman and Saif Sareea and so on
24 all contributed on to our understanding. So we thought
25 we were okay. We did learn one or two things.

1 I think the thing -- sorry, this is a very long
2 answer.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: No, it's very interesting.

4 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: The thing that I think shocked
5 everybody was the advent of the suicide bomb. We hadn't
6 experienced that anywhere else, not in any quantity, and
7 the other thing, I think, that shocked us was the extent
8 to which the technology -- and this is where your
9 Iranian influence comes in, I'm sure -- had, in the very
10 short period we were there, achieved in about six months
11 what it took the IRA in Northern Ireland to achieve over
12 30-odd years.

13 So the rate of technological development of the
14 enemies' IEDs, explosives and operating methods was just
15 fantastically high.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: When we get to 2004, you have got
17 two battles of Fallujah, or one that was almost a battle
18 and one that was. We heard from the Prime Minister at
19 the time that he was concerned about the way that the
20 Americans were going about Fallujah in April 2004. Were
21 they your concerns as well?

22 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: They were. In fact, we didn't
23 want to get involved in Fallujah, and I remember we even
24 ensured that the air support we were giving up from
25 Kuwait was prevented from participating in the Fallujah

1 thing without specific reference to the task and the law
2 officers to make sure that what we were doing was okay.
3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Because you were concerned --
4 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: But on a practical basis, by and
5 large, in the end, what happened was that we were given
6 the patrolling tasks of the rest of Iraq for our air
7 power, whilst they took control of what they did with
8 their air power in Fallujah.
9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Of course, at the same time as that
10 debate is going on, you have the Sadrist uprising?
11 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Yes.
12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did that come as a shock as well?
13 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I mean, when you say "shock",
14 I think all of these things came as a bit of a surprise,
15 because we weren't expecting them, but the truth of the
16 matter was that, of course, Fallujah was always going to
17 have unintended consequences elsewhere, and so, whenever
18 something like Fallujah happens, by and large forces
19 generally are put on the alert to make sure that they
20 are in a position to pick up whatever fallout occurs in
21 their particular areas.
22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Then in -- so you are saying --
23 sorry, just going back, you are saying that the Sadrists
24 took an opportunity. Is that the implication --
25 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: You would have to ask them --

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It seemed like that to you?

2 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Yes, it certainly seemed like it.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Then, in November 2004, when there

4 was a more deliberate plan being prepared for Fallujah

5 with the Iraqis, we were asked to send the Black Watch

6 to North Babil, so in that case, were you more relaxed

7 about --

8 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: No, I wasn't relaxed about it at

9 all. I didn't like it at all, but it is quite

10 difficult, when you are a coalition partner, and one of

11 the leading elements of it, not to respond to some of

12 your ally's requests. After all, they responded to our's

13 regularly. The purpose of getting there was to backfill

14 for some troops that had been taken away for Fallujah.

15 So -- but I don't think -- we did not want to start

16 having our troops operating throughout Baghdad. We had

17 enough of a problem down in Basra. We were providing

18 security to the line of communication coming through

19 from Kuwait for all the stuff that was coming into Iraq

20 and so we were very conscious -- and I was very

21 conscious that one of the things we would do, we would

22 do this on an occasional basis, but not on a regular

23 basis. So the Black Watch was an occasional event.

24 Why I didn't like it was it got such media coverage

25 that I was absolutely convinced they were going to have

1 a go at them the minute they arrived, which is exactly
2 what they did, and killed three of their boys.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you were concerned that it would
4 get an unavoidably high profile?

5 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, partly that. I mean, to be
6 honest, that only became my concern as the event
7 developed, it got too high a profile. Ideally, if we
8 could slip them up there under the cover of darkness, so
9 to speak -- I mean, they were suddenly there, but they
10 were accompanied by a sort of media circus.

11 No, my anxiety was really more that, first of all,
12 we had to demonstrate that we were reasonable coalition
13 partners and -- as much to encourage the other members
14 of the coalition. We found ourselves in a situation
15 where other members of the coalition were now beginning
16 to deploy their troops outside their areas of
17 responsibility. So we agreed that they should go up
18 there for a month.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: After that, over 2005, things don't
20 get any better. Did you have a sense of being sort of
21 stranded in Basra?

22 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, not so much. I used to go
23 out about once every three months, and every time I went
24 out there appeared to be progress. The reporting back
25 in this country was pretty pessimistic, I have to say,

1 but actually, in terms of what was happening in the
2 ground, progress was happening.

3 If you went and visited the military -- not the
4 military academy -- what do they call it -- the military
5 training place and so on, you saw the 10 Iraqi Division
6 was forming up. Their general was beginning to get to
7 grips with it. They were beginning to operate in
8 concert with our chaps on the street.

9 So there were security sector reforms happening and,
10 of course, each general, over his period of time, would
11 have a particular story that was a good story to be able
12 to tell. So I didn't get a sense of drift. It didn't
13 seem to me that the time factor was an issue. I mean,
14 this wasn't going to be something we would just get over
15 as quickly as some had hoped. But I did see genuine
16 progress.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So your view was that it would take
18 time, but we had the time and the progress was being
19 made.

20 What about the influence of the militias within
21 Basra itself? There was an argument, as you know, that,
22 slowly but surely, they were able to fill the vacuum.

23 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, I think they were quite
24 strong and sort of waxed and waned as the leaders of the
25 local militias decided to put pressure on the coalition

1 in one form or another.

2 I mean, it was quite interesting that at various
3 times, of course, the leadership in Basra found itself
4 more than capable of telling them to back off, which it
5 did on a number of occasions. I mean, I'm sorry I'm out
6 of touch, I do not know how the situation is there
7 today. You have probably had evidence that it is
8 getting better, or is it getting worse? I don't know.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Hopefully, it is getting better.

10 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: That's good. So progress is
11 continuing.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think I want to stop that section
13 now. I don't know whether, John, you want to --

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's press on.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I am afraid it is still me then. We
16 are still talking about -- we are going to move now to
17 talk about equipment and other resources.

18 The Strategic Defence Review said that the military
19 should be prepared for expeditionary warfare, such
20 a campaign similar to the one in Iraq. Do you think we
21 had, in 2003, a sound basis upon which to launch this
22 expedition, had the Strategic Defence Review worked
23 itself through satisfactorily?

24 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: No.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Perhaps you could explain why.

1 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: For a start, it was underfunded by
2 well into a billion pounds, probably 500,000 to
3 £1 billion when they signed up -- I'm talking about the
4 98 --

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes, yes.

6 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: So it was never properly funded.
7 Secondly, that the guidelines appeared to be just that,
8 and they had been consistently over -- we'd consistently
9 gone over them for various sorts of reasons at the time.
10 However hard you tried to describe, you know, one
11 operation as a medium six-month operation, none of them
12 had lasted that sort of length. They had gone on
13 longer. So we operated outside our planning
14 assumptions, the SDR hadn't been properly funded, and
15 hence my answer of no.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Given those concerns and the fact
17 that, as we entered Iraq, you could assume that we were
18 going to be in for the longer term, were you able, as
19 you started as CDS -- were you able to put pressure on
20 the government, encourage them to provide extra
21 resources for our forces?

22 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: To be honest, we didn't have
23 difficulty in getting resources for the military
24 adventure. I mean, the UORs had largely been funded, as
25 I understood it, beforehand. The amount of money that

1 was being spent on current operations came from the
2 contingency fund. The more difficulty we had was
3 getting money for the programme itself.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think in late 2003 -- we have had
5 evidence on this -- there was quite a big issue with the
6 Treasury over cash and non-cash, and Geoff Hoon talks
7 about difficult cuts being made in the future equipment
8 programme. Do you recall --

9 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I recall -- the period I remember
10 clearly was the early part of 2004, when the public
11 spending round was coming to a head.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What sort of cuts had to be made at
13 that time?

14 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, I can't remember the actual
15 figures and I can't remember the detail, but -- at least
16 the detail of the bits of paper. But what we had had
17 to -- we had been given a target, as normal, by the
18 Treasury. We had to decide how we were going to get
19 inside that target. This was largely stuff not directly
20 related to Iraq, because Iraq was funded, but, of
21 course, it was stuff at the back end, it was some of the
22 stuff that was related to some of the longer-term
23 equipment programmes, including infantry battalions,
24 because I think, at that stage, we were going through
25 the reorganisation of the military. I think it included

1 helicopter money, I think it included things like
2 aircraft carriers. It was all big ticket items that
3 were being threatened. I don't think we could do
4 anything about the air bit, other than take Harriers and
5 various other things out of service, because we were in
6 contractual handcuffs for things like Typhoon and so on.

7 So there was indeed a list of stuff that we were
8 having to make decisions about, and I think we drew
9 a line somewhere halfway down the page and said, "If you
10 go any further than that, you will probably have to look
11 for a new set of Chiefs".

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What was above and below the line?

13 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Do you know, I can't remember.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How did helicopters fit into this,
15 for example.

16 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think helicopters, if
17 I remember -- when you say "helicopters", it is a bit of
18 a throw-away phase. It was the amount of money in the
19 helicopter budget area. I think that was above the
20 line. I'm pretty certain, but I would have to see the
21 bit of paper again to remind myself. I'm pretty certain
22 it was above the line.

23 But the line -- it makes as it sound as though we
24 were happy with what was above the line. We weren't
25 happy with any of it, but we had drawn the line below,

1 which would have been more than --

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: As we understand, and as you have
3 made clear, the defence programme itself should create
4 the capacity to fight operations in the future. So if
5 you are in for the long-term in Iraq, and if you are
6 expecting to take on Afghanistan as well, these are --
7 these do have implications down the line, even if not in
8 the next couple of months.

9 So with helicopters -- and you say there are attack
10 helicopters and support helicopters and so on -- were
11 you concerned at the time that our forces were going to
12 face difficulties?

13 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: At the sort of practical level, we
14 knew that we had quite an old fleet and that we wanted
15 our new Merlins to come in because they would give much
16 better performance for troop lift. Chinooks were fine,
17 the other Sea Kings worked hard in hot conditions. They
18 always found it difficult. So we were keen to get those
19 in and they were on the way.

20 I think the money that was taken out of the
21 helicopter budget was a wedge of money that was put
22 across everything from light battlefield helicopters to
23 medium lift helicopters to things, so it wasn't possible
24 to identify exactly which bit of that money was going to
25 pay for what.

1 I mean, with hindsight, of course, when we had that
2 in, we would probably be just about getting the kit in now,
3 as we speak, of what was available, but, in a funny sort
4 of way, that just seems to have been repaired by some
5 rather deft footwork by people in the Treasury and so on
6 buying Danish Merlins and getting these extra Chinooks
7 up and running, which they weren't at the time, and at
8 the time I think you are talking about, early 2004,
9 a study was done which showed that we had a shortfall in
10 helicopter lift of 38 per cent.

11 So the answer was, yes, we did have a shortfall and
12 we had to prioritise to make sure that the commanders in
13 Iraq had sufficient helicopter lift for what they
14 wanted. Of course, operating with helicopters in Basra
15 was quite different to operating between Kabul and
16 Helmand and around a province in Afghanistan, but you
17 can never have enough helicopters.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: CDS told us about the problems with
19 the eight Chinooks, which sounds very frustrating.

20 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Very.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Were you able to make progress --

22 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think finally, and just before
23 I left, we managed to find the money to do what has how
24 happened to them, but it did take two and a half years,
25 and -- I don't know if you have ever been involved in

1 procurement processes, I would encourage you not to do
2 so.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think in a slightly smaller scale
4 in a university.

5 There are three other procurement issues I would
6 just quickly like to run through, just as headlines, to
7 see what you have to say.

8 UAVs. We have had evidence again that there was
9 some frustration at this time that the Americans seemed
10 to have no trouble in getting these and we seemed to
11 have a lot of trouble.

12 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I know, I know. We had a thing
13 called Phoenix -- you are talking about Iraq now?

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes.

15 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Phoenix went out to Iraq and
16 didn't live up to its billing really, which was a shame.
17 Certainly, we had seen the American Predators and their
18 various bits and pieces that they got and many people
19 said, "Why can't we get hold of those?"

20 I mean, I think we were all pretty well frustrated.
21 The trouble is military kit does take a long time to get
22 in, and I think if you looked at what is now available,
23 it all having started at that stage, there is an
24 extraordinary array of UAVs that are in service, but
25 getting them on UORs is a nice idea, but it doesn't

1 always work, because, if you are going to take something
2 in that you have to train people on and equip and
3 restructure a regiment to operate, then it needs to be
4 something that is going to be supported in the longer
5 term and needs to be properly procured.

6 UORs, as you know, very rarely get through life
7 support money as well. So it was a frustrating thing,
8 but I think it was something that has led to at least
9 a decent suite of these things that we have got now.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The UAV issue had been around for
11 some time and we talked about it in the late 1990s as
12 the coming thing in military capability. So it wasn't
13 surprising that we had got this far, without --

14 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, I don't know. We had -- in
15 1996, the Americans had their Predator in Bosnia, for
16 example, and we were just getting to grips with our
17 Phoenix. It wasn't the be all and end all of
18 everything. It kept crashing. It kept falling down.

19 So, as a sort of pragmatist, it does seem to me,
20 that if you are going to get something that really
21 works, you need to work at it. The idea that these UAVs
22 are around in large quantities and are available freely
23 around the world I think is sometimes somewhat
24 misplaced.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It is related to the whole ISTAR

1 question, information, surveillance, reconnaissance,
2 et cetera. This again has been identified as an area of
3 weakness that we tried to find some money for, but it
4 didn't seem to go far enough. Is that fair?

5 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think so. I mean, I think quite
6 a lot of the stuff was brought in -- I mean if you are
7 talking about sort of -- you know, infra-red -- infra --
8 you know, II sights and those sort of sights that
9 were night vision aids, Crew Served weapon sights, I think
10 we were able to get quite a lot of those on the UOR
11 basis for Iraq, and we did have sort of the odd radars
12 and so on that we took out there, but it wasn't clear,
13 I think, right at the beginning, that all this support
14 stuff for heavy-duty surveillance would be needed to
15 start with and as we found ourselves trying to carry out
16 operations against this rather disparate enemy.

17 So people then put in bids for new pieces of kit
18 that has come on the market.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That's always a problem; people want
20 to get the latest stuff. Finally of this list, there is
21 the famous Future Rapid Effects System --

22 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Oh, yes.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- which -- well, we had a debate
24 with CDS at the moment as to whether this was the worst
25 procurement shambles or just there were other

1 competitors, but it does seem to have been something of
2 a shambles.

3 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: It was horrid. When I was CGS we
4 had an in-service date for the FRES of 2007. At that
5 stage, there was then a debate taken as to whether this
6 should be a fairly straightforward vehicle, which could
7 be upgraded over time, and, of course, that was the
8 start of a sorry saga of debates and delays; delays
9 because of the lack of money.

10 So it was an -- because it was not as advanced as
11 many other projects, it seemed to me to get delayed and
12 delayed and delayed, time after time, because the
13 funding, and it might have gone -- if we had gone with
14 it originally, we might well have saved ourselves quite
15 a lot of pain and agony and death by having a vehicle
16 that we could have used in the appropriate circumstances
17 in places like Afghanistan.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So resources, you have indicated, is
19 one reason. Another reason we have been given is that
20 it was too complex a programme, it tried to do too many
21 different things, and also, perhaps, that there were too
22 many points at which somebody could intervene and say,
23 "No, we should do it that way rather than that way", and
24 therefore reflected a lack of streamlining in the
25 procurement process.

1 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I would happily accede to all of
2 those.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: As CGS first, and then as CDS, what
4 do you do about a situation like this? Because it must
5 have been exasperating. Are there ways by which you can
6 try to knock heads together?

7 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: The first thing you do is you go
8 in and you take your old vehicles and you upgrade them
9 and you up-armour them and make sure that they have
10 engines in that work and their steering mechanism
11 doesn't fall apart and then use those. An armoured box
12 will go on for many years. It depends what you apply to
13 it that sort of gives up the ghost.

14 So that's what happened to the 432 fleet, the old
15 432 fleet, and then you go partly down the UOR route and
16 you buy specialist vehicles like the ones they now have
17 in large numbers.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It must seem --

19 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Perverse.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- perverse.

21 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Absolutely.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Aren't there ways by which, as CDS,
23 you can do something about the procurement process when
24 there is a particular vehicle of such importance
25 involved?

1 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think my views on the
2 procurement process were not welcome. I have always
3 believed we ought to outsource the whole lot and have
4 a prime contractor do it, but that wasn't the way
5 it was going to be done.

6 The answer is that, even as CDS, one's ability to
7 grip the procurement process is pretty limited, which
8 probably -- tells you the tale about our procurement
9 process.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to conclude this, an NAO
11 reported in November 2006 into recruitment and retention
12 in the armed forces said there were 88 operational pinch
13 points, where forces were particularly stretched. How
14 did -- do you recognise that sort of --

15 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, I don't recognise the figure
16 of 88 but I recognise the operational pinch points.
17 These were all sorts of things, ranging from the odd
18 specialist bit of kit to particularly specialist
19 manpower, where it was not possible to find the numbers
20 that our operations around the world required. There
21 were some in the TA, quite clearly, who were able to
22 mobilise, but by and large the Territorial Army enjoy
23 doing what they do because they were not doing what they
24 normally do. They don't like joining the TA to do what
25 they normally do, and we had to do some of that, I am

1 afraid.

2 So I don't recognise the figure of 88 but

3 I certainly recognise that there were a large number of

4 operational pinch points which meant that we were

5 denying people a proper lifestyle in the army.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thanks very much. I think we are

7 nearly at the end but could I turn to Baroness Prashar?

8 You wanted to ask about Afghanistan?

9 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Yes. Thank you very much indeed.

10 Lord Walker, I want to look at the deployment in

11 Afghanistan and the impact that had on our decisions

12 with relation to Iraq. I think it was in July 2004 that

13 the Prime Minister announced that ARRC would deploy to

14 Afghanistan. Were you involved in these discussions?

15 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Yes, I would have advised him that

16 that was the case.

17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: And what was your view?

18 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, entirely happy. The ARRC --

19 when you say the ARRC, what we are talking about here is

20 -- and I'm sorry, this is going to be a slightly

21 long-ish answer. Can you manage that?

22 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I think we can. If you can, we can.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: We have had some briefing on the ARRC.

24 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Yes, I know. Well, the ARRC was

25 one of the principal rapid deployment headquarters of

1 NATO. NATO had taken on the task of Afghanistan. They
2 had had an ad hoc headquarters put in initially with
3 ISAF headquarters, commanded by General McColl. That
4 had been followed by a Turkish commanded equivalent.
5 The ARRC headquarters was one of the candidates to go in
6 there.

7 The ARRC was a discrete organisation, which had
8 a support battalion and had its own headquarters staff
9 and the mechanisms and signal regiments to run it. They
10 were not deployable anywhere else. The first time they
11 were used was in 1995. They were then used in Kosovo.
12 So they were sitting there as an available headquarters
13 for NATO to use, with nothing on their agenda.

14 It was either handing the whole operation across
15 again to the Americans from the outset, which I do not
16 think the Americans particularly wanted and we, the
17 Brits, didn't want, and I don't think most of the other
18 NATO allies wanted. So the ARRC were put on the list,
19 following, I think it was, the Italian rapid reaction
20 corps, who went there before them, after the Turks, as
21 a discrete headquarters to run the operations out there.

22 They effectively had very little impact on any other
23 operations with our manpower that we were intending to
24 do. So it made sense and it didn't actually,
25 necessarily, have this magnetic effect of drawing troops

1 up. We already had one battle group out there.

2 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But I think Mr Hoon told us that he

3 didn't agree with it, but you said you were quite happy

4 with that decision?

5 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I remember discussing it with him

6 and he said he was not happy with it, and I said, "Well,

7 look, if you are not happy, say no," but he didn't.

8 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: He didn't say no. So when was it

9 decided that we would take responsibility for the

10 Helmand province?

11 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I suppose during the period

12 November 2005-ish?

13 THE CHAIRMAN: I think maybe a few weeks earlier.

14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I think it was probably September.

15 But at that stage did you suspect that it was likely

16 that this would involve a medium-scale commitment? What

17 would be the scale of commitment at this stage?

18 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: One of the difficulties with any

19 deployment, if you deploy a battalion, it effectively

20 takes out your medium-scale capability. You cannot --

21 it doesn't matter what the size of the front end of your

22 fighting force is, it is the logistic bit and it is the

23 support mechanisms that are expensive in terms of

24 deployment. So one battle group was just about as

25 expensive as one brigade. So I don't think we were

1 under any illusions at that stage.

2 But we had -- we had a battle group that was split
3 between Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif up in the north.
4 Mazar-e-Sharif was benign to the extent that the
5 soldiers up there were not producing for NATO the
6 capability that was possible out of British troops.

7 So, with NATO and with our own people, we looked at
8 what needed to be done, and ourselves, as you know, the
9 Dutch, the Estonians, the Canadians, put together
10 a coalition to handle -- with some Americans -- to
11 handle Helmand province. So that was how that came
12 about.

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But giving a commitment to two
14 medium-sized operations, wasn't that not in breach of
15 our Defence Planning Assumptions?

16 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: It was, it absolutely was.

17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So did you advise on that and --

18 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: We made it absolutely clear but as
19 we hadn't stuck within our Defence Planning Assumptions
20 for the previous -- I'm trying to think when we did
21 stick with them since 1998. I don't think we were ever
22 inside them. The important thing was that we had agreed
23 to participate in this NATO-led operation to provide an
24 international security force in Afghanistan, and we
25 could do it, we could do it, but, of course, it was

1 outside the planning assumptions.

2 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But in 2005 the situation in Iraq
3 was becoming very difficult. So were you considering
4 that you may have to send extra troops and how you would
5 manage the two?

6 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: No, I think we were rather looking
7 at it the other way round at the time. We were looking
8 to try and remove troops at that stage from Iraq, in
9 order that we could -- the Helmand -- if I remember, the
10 Helmand thing was due to start in May 2006, the Helmand
11 deployment. So we were, sort of, trying to finesse it
12 so that we could draw down sufficiently in Iraq, bearing
13 in mind also at this stage I think Op Banner was
14 throwing up troops. We were getting to the stage of
15 Northern Ireland drawdown and we were having troops available
16 from Northern Ireland to deploy, which we hadn't had up
17 until then.

18 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So what you are really saying is
19 that our engagement in Afghanistan was reliant on
20 a speedy drawdown in Iraq?

21 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: "Reliant" would be too strong
22 a word, I think. I mean, we wanted to do it but it
23 wouldn't -- I mean, we still had enough troops to do it
24 without a speedy drawdown. It just meant that we were
25 making their lives even more intolerable for them in

1 terms of their operational tour intervals.

2 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Do you think it constrained our

3 options, both in terms of equipment and force levels in

4 Iraq?

5 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: It certainly did that, yes. When

6 we discussed with the commander of the ARRC, he wanted

7 an extra battalion to use as a theatre reserve

8 battalion, which he could fly around the country to

9 points of trouble, and we said he couldn't have it from

10 us.

11 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So you think it stretched the army,

12 both in terms of the options and what they could do?

13 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I think they were working pretty

14 flat out and they were indeed stretched. I can't

15 remember what the tour intervals were but I think they

16 had come down in some cases to some of the engineer

17 battalions to a year between operational tours, to give

18 you some feel for it, as opposed to the two years that

19 we liked to give them.

20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So you were making that very clear

21 to the politicians?

22 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Absolutely.

23 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What sort of response were you

24 getting?

25 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: We were being asked can we do

1 this, and we said, "Yes, we can do it and this is the
2 penalty we pay," but none of those penalties were
3 sufficient, I think, for us to say, "Those are so grave
4 that you should not do this." So we were giving them
5 the advice, which they were following. I don't think we
6 had any difficulty with that.

7 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Any final questions? Martin?

9 No? Laurie? Rod?

10 Right, I think we are coming to the end of the
11 session, Lord Walker, and I would just like to, before
12 offering you the opportunity to give us your final
13 reflections -- one theme, not perhaps the most
14 salient -- but it keeps coming up -- is the issue of
15 tour lengths, particularly for senior commanders in the
16 field, and I think we have been given and have got
17 a reasonable grasp of the fact that units, right up to
18 brigade level perhaps, need their continuity of command
19 and if they move out, command should go with them.
20 Above that level, in certain specialist headquarter
21 roles, would you like just to reflect a bit on the
22 tension between keeping people energised and reasonably
23 safe, on the one hand, and building up their
24 relationships and knowledge of the situation that they
25 are in?

1 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Yes. I mean, I'm quite clear,
2 I think a minimum tour length for operation,
3 intelligence-type commanders should be a year long,
4 absolutely. And in fact I think they are now. I think
5 we have got over this difficulty of the six-month tour
6 being the feature.

7 You will probably remember that in Northern Ireland
8 a debate raged about four or six months for soldiers,
9 and the four-month tour always seemed extremely short.
10 Even the six month tour does. But I think for those who
11 are working 24 hours a day, seven days a week without
12 a real break, six months is probably a good time for
13 people on the ground. But even there you lose
14 continuity.

15 The Americans, of course, go for a much longer
16 period. It has never been in our military psyche to do
17 the long one but I'm quite convinced that for commanders
18 it should be a year minimum really.

19 Having said that, I saw George Casey as he reached
20 his third year in Iraq. He was a broken man really.
21 You didn't see it on the outside but three years is too
22 long in that job. So about a year is about right.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: People never see their own exhaustion, do
24 they?

25 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: No.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I think Sir Roderic would like to
2 ask one question and then --

3 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Just one more, if I may, a slightly broad
4 question. In your period as CDS, clearly the political
5 direction was coming in a very hands-on way, as we have
6 heard from other witnesses, from the Prime Minister and
7 then from a series of meetings below the Prime Minister,
8 and you, presumably, saw an awful lot of him in that
9 time. Did you feel that the appreciation of the
10 situation in Iraq of our political leadership was the
11 same as the appreciation that you and the military
12 leadership had?

13 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: A difficult question to answer,
14 I have to say. Maybe you had better ask them rather
15 than me, but I did get the feeling that our
16 Prime Minister was concerned about it, but what
17 I couldn't work out was why we didn't -- I mean, people
18 talk rather glibly about put the country on a war
19 footing. We have heard it recently too. But we never
20 seem to be able to grip this rather slippery bar of soap
21 that was Iraq, properly.

22 I always believed that we should have set up
23 at Cabinet -- a senior Cabinet-level officer, a minister,
24 directly under the Prime Minister, with his authority to
25 bang our heads nationally together at all levels, to

1 make sure things happened, because I was certain, I was
2 always certain, that the Prime Minister himself got it,
3 but I could never be certain that him having got it
4 meant that it was going to happen further down, you
5 know, the discussion about whether that particular
6 aspect, which was something to do with DFID, or that
7 particular aspect, which was something to do with the
8 Foreign Office, was going to be followed through with
9 a sort of powerful clout. I never got a feel that that
10 was going to be the case, and the ad hoc ministerial
11 meeting was both ad hoc in name and, I am afraid, rather
12 ad hoc in nature, in my view. Trying to get things to
13 happen at the far end was difficult.

14 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So levers were being pulled but somewhere
15 down the channel of the lever it wasn't really leading
16 to --

17 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I always had a word for this,
18 called the mattress mice. Somehow, from the order being
19 given at the top to its arrival at the bottom, the
20 mattress mice got at it and diluted it to an extent that
21 it didn't happen in the way that the lever puller at the
22 top had anticipated.

23 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You say the Prime Minister was very
24 concerned about the situation, and clearly he was from
25 the amount of personal effort he put into it and from

1 what we heard from him in evidence on Friday, but
2 I think my question about this is not about the level of
3 concern, it is about the level of understanding.

4 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Well, that's the point. I think
5 he did understand. I think -- I mean, whenever
6 a visiting American came here, we would go -- I would
7 take him across to the Prime Minister and he would sit
8 down and he would talk to John Abizaid, he would talk to
9 Dick Myers, he would talk to George Casey, he would talk
10 to any of these people who came across on a one-to-one
11 basis -- when I say a one-to-one, I mean they would have
12 a conversation with just a couple of us sitting round.

13 So I think he got it, I think he really did get it.
14 But, I mean, managing these sort of operations in 2010
15 is quite different from managing them as you might do in
16 the Second World War, and there are so many distractions
17 that one wonders whether the machinery that surrounds
18 somebody who gets it is sufficiently good enough to make
19 sure that his intent gets to where it is meant to get
20 to, and I'm sure his intent was a reflection of the fact
21 that he really did understand it.

22 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can I just ask the other way round?
23 You were saying the lever was being pulled at the top
24 and it wasn't really percolating down. Do you think it
25 was because in the early stage, in the planning stages,

1 there had been no assessment of whether we had the
2 capacity to deliver, or was he given the right kind of
3 advice about the capacity to deliver?

4 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: I am afraid I have always been
5 rather sceptical about this since this whole problem of
6 what is now described as the comprehensive approach
7 raised its head in the Balkans. NATO doesn't have the
8 machinery to do this. Half the problem in Afghanistan
9 at the moment is that they haven't got the sort of
10 mechanism by which you pull all the strands together
11 that need to be pulled together to create a new country,
12 to get governance going, et cetera. We don't have it in
13 our country either, I am afraid. We did set up an
14 organisation. I don't know if I can remember --

15 THE CHAIRMAN: The Stabilisation Unit?

16 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: No, it was called the -- something
17 about reconstruction.

18 MS MARGARET ALDRED: Post-conflict Reconstruction Unit.

19 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Yes, I mean, this was one of the
20 lessons that Iraq showed, so we thought, "Great,
21 let's set up this post reconstruction unit. We will get
22 £10 million out of the Treasury, everybody will make
23 little contributions from their departments."

24 Well, it went into sort of -- and I'm not being
25 critical of it, but it went into university mode: lots

1 of discussions sitting round the table, and I don't know
2 what has happened to it now. But this was meant to be
3 the birth of a piece of machinery that would create
4 exactly the capacity that we talked about, and I have
5 come to the conclusion, after the last four or
6 five examinations of this in various guises, that
7 creating this beast is beyond the wit of man. I don't
8 think it is possible. There are too many competing
9 things. If you look at the Americans: the State
10 Department, the military, the Department of Defence, all
11 squabbling over things, kicking Jay Garner out. We
12 can't do things like that for modern countries, when we
13 are trying to rebuild them.

14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But the point still remains that the
15 focus was very much on military invasion but not so much
16 on the aftermath. Even if, let's say, 40 per cent of
17 planning had been done, we could have mitigated some of
18 the problems.

19 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Correct, and had you had the
20 infrastructure available -- take policing, for example.
21 You know, have you got a list of perhaps retired
22 policemen, who can come out and do this thing for you?
23 Have you got a list of electricians? Have you got
24 people you can call on to come and make the waterworks work?
25 Have you got people who can come and help with the

1 education, the banking and so on. And if you had that
2 and you were able to, on day 23, say, "Right, boys, we
3 are ready for you, off you come," and they had the
4 security apparatus to look after them and they had
5 people to provide them with office space -- it will not
6 surprise you to know how badly (inaudible). When
7 (inaudible) arrived in Sarajevo, he had an empty room,
8 with no windows, no doors, nothing. And we still
9 haven't learned the lessons that we have identified time
10 and time again. Sorry. That wasn't meant to be a --

11 THE CHAIRMAN: On the contrary, I was planning to offer you
12 the opportunity to make your final reflections on this
13 very theme, and you have and thank you, but are there
14 other comments or observations you would like to offer
15 before we close?

16 GENERAL THE LORD WALKER: Only ones that I -- to try and be
17 helpful really. I think the poor old Americans have
18 come in for a lot of criticism, and my personal belief
19 was that the biggest mistake that was made over Iraq,
20 notwithstanding the decision that you may have made your
21 own minds up about, but it was the vice-regal nature of
22 Bremer's reign, and I think -- I mean, I don't want to
23 be personal about this but that particular six months,
24 I think, set the scene for Iraq in a way that we were
25 never going to recover from.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

2 Lord Walker, we are very grateful. I'm grateful to

3 you and I'm grateful to our audience, who have sat here

4 through this witness session.

5 I will close now but just trail the fact that

6 tomorrow morning we meet at 10 o'clock to hear from

7 Clare Short and then in the afternoon from

8 Mr Hilary Benn and from Sir Peter Ricketts.

9 With that, I will close these proceedings. Thank

10 you.

11 (3.25 pm)

12 (The Inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am the following day)

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