

1 (11.30 am)

2 MAJOR GENERAL ANDY SALMON

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning.

4 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Hello, Sir John.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome and welcome back. We now welcome
6 Major General Andy Salmon and you commanded British
7 forces in southern Iraq from August 2008 to March 2009?

8 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: That's right, sir, yes.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

10 I say on every occasion, we recognise that witnesses
11 give evidence based on their recollection of events and
12 we, of course, check what we hear against the papers to
13 which we have access and which we are still receiving
14 and I remind every witness on every occasion that he
15 will later be asked to sign a transcript of the evidence
16 to the effect that the evidence given is truthful, fair
17 and accurate.

18 With those preliminaries done, I'll turn to
19 Baroness Prashar to open the questions.

20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you very much indeed.

21 You said you went to Iraq in August 2008?

22 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: That's right, right at the beginning
23 of August.

24 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: And that was soon after the
25 Prime Minister had set out a new strategy for Iraq.

1 Against that background, can you summarise for us
2 the objectives that you had as a commander for the bulk
3 of the UK troops?

4 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Yes, the first one was to make sure
5 that 14 Division of the Iraqi Army was at what was
6 called operational readiness, level 2, which basically
7 meant that they were able to conduct a self-sustaining
8 operations with minimum coalition assistance. That was
9 first key thing: get 14 Division to ORA level 2.

10 The second one was to make sure that we handed over
11 Basra International Airport to Iraqi control.

12 The third and the fourth were rather more general,
13 which were seeing the military in a supporting role to
14 make sure that we helped economic development, people
15 like Michael Wareing coming in, and also supported what
16 we were hoping were going to be a set of reasonable
17 elections of which the date was uncertain at that stage.

18 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: That was the local elections, yes.

19 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: So those were the four main things.

20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Did those significantly change
21 during the time you were there until about March 2009?

22 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: No, they did not. I think it was just
23 a question of making sure that the timeline was clear
24 because when the Prime Minister announced those just
25 before I arrived as the GOC, we weren't clear on how

1 long this was going to take.

2 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Okay.

3 We have heard from previous commanders of the
4 MND South East that they were formally responsible both
5 to the Chief of Joint Operations in the UK and the
6 American corps commander in Baghdad. Was that still the
7 case in your time?

8 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: That was absolutely the case. So
9 I was what was called operational -- opcom, operational
10 command to the Chief of Joint Operations and also to
11 General Lloyd Austin, who was the corps commander in
12 Baghdad.

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What role did the US play in the
14 south at that time?

15 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: The US played a considerable role and
16 I think it is worth adding that I was a coalition forces
17 commander, so I had both US troops under command and had
18 access to considerable US resources. Also what was
19 important to realise is that there were coalition
20 objectives, which were slightly wider than just the UK
21 ones that we have just discussed. So I was responsible
22 for all coalition force operations in the whole of the
23 southeast, not just the achievement of specific British
24 objectives.

25 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Did that change after the Charge of

1 the Knights? How did that relationship -- because you
2 and the Americans had an great involvement in Basra.

3 Did that have an impact on that relationship?

4 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, I think -- I wasn't around for
5 Charge of the Knights. So I came in some, I think it
6 was, three months after most of that had been sorted.
7 But I think one of the significant strategic things that
8 had changed is that it was more of a coalition operation
9 down in the southeast, with the accompanying resources,
10 that I have just discussed.

11 So there was considerable interest obviously from my
12 corps commander about how the south was going to go. It
13 was seen as a strategic opportunity.

14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Were you getting the same messages
15 from London and from Baghdad? Was there any -- because
16 you said earlier you had clear objectives. Were the
17 messages the same that you were getting from London and
18 from Baghdad?

19 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: I think from London they were very
20 consistent, they were very clear objectives. We had to
21 work out what the timeline was going to be, it was
22 conditions-oriented. And from Baghdad I had a set of
23 corps objectives which were slightly wider, which is
24 basically to secure the southeast, to make sure that the
25 extremist militias were -- you know, really disappeared

1 and to grow civil capacity and to support the
2 development of Iraqi security forces as a whole.

3 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Were there disagreements about the
4 timeline, the time of the withdrawal of the troops
5 between London and Baghdad?

6 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: No, there weren't. I think what was
7 very fortunate right at the beginning of my time, we
8 were able to have a sensible conversation with
9 General Austin which set an approximate timeline as the
10 end of spring in 2009, for where we could consider
11 moving British troops out of Basra.

12 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to ask a bit more about the
14 situation you found when you got to southern Iraq in
15 August 2008. It was a relatively benign period compared
16 with what had gone on year or two before. I think we
17 are familiar from a lot of evidence about some of the
18 underlying causes but it would be interesting to hear
19 your view of what you inherited as a situation and why
20 it was as it was.

21 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: I think the main big difference was
22 the Charge of the Knights. So the public monopoly of
23 violence was very much owned by the Iraqi security
24 forces. They were really in the lead and they had
25 enough critical mass in the province to be able to

1 control security. That was the main difference.

2 The second one is just as we have discussed, which
3 meant that there were considerable more resources for me
4 as a commander than some of my predecessors had been
5 able to call on as a result of this strategic
6 opportunity. So those were the two main things.

7 Security was getting better. The level of violence
8 had significantly reduced. For example, the number of
9 rocket attacks before the Charge of the Knights was some
10 200 a month; by the time I arrived in the summer, we
11 were down to about four or five a month. Some of our
12 troops were still getting improvised explosive devices
13 set on the roads, so they were still trying to attack us,
14 but in general terms the level of violence had much
15 reduced. The militias that had been so prominent before
16 Charge of the Knights had pretty well disappeared. So
17 there were increased security and greater opportunities
18 to do other things.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: How important was it that we were exposing
20 much less surface with the move to the airport?

21 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: What actually had happened after the
22 Charge of the Knights is that we reversed some of our
23 policies before then and we were actually far more
24 involved out in the city, especially with mentoring
25 Iraqi troops.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Rather than with occasional strike
2 operations?

3 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: That's right. We were far more
4 holistically engaged. I think the other thing to
5 mention is that security wasn't irreversible, so there
6 was still quite a lot to be done. There were extremist
7 militias still around attacking, not visible. The Iraqi
8 security forces needed to be a bit more cohesive; we
9 needed to increase their operational tempo. So there
10 were things that needed to be done.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to ask a bit about the wider
12 all-Iraq context because you have the awakening in
13 central Iraq and you have other developments which are
14 benign in their effect. Did that mean that the corps
15 headquarters in Baghdad was able to make more resources
16 potentially available to you if you needed them?

17 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: They were. For example, I had about
18 \$100 million worth of resource to use for
19 reconstruction. We were starting to introduce more
20 troops, in particular to train police and border forces.
21 So the troop level -- the US contribution went up to
22 nearly 2,000 in addition to the 4,100 force that I had
23 as a UK commander. But that was a very deliberate thing
24 because they wanted to really maximise on this
25 opportunity that had been created as a result of Charge

1 of the Knights.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: I have one other question. Before I get to

3 it though, you said the militias disappeared; can you

4 unpack that bit? Where did they go to? Did they just

5 go home?

6 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Some did go home. Some put down their

7 arms, some fled to Iran and some of the extreme groups

8 were still around, operating from either the other side

9 of the border or around Basra itself.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

11 The last question I wanted to raise was: you now had

12 under your command and in your area of operations Iraqi

13 military forces, your own UK and coalition ones,

14 including quite a lot of Americans. How did you manage

15 to forge some sense of unity of purpose, given that

16 collection?

17 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Yes, I think there is one thing that

18 I just wanted to make you clear upon: that I didn't

19 command any Iraqi forces. So we were just supporting

20 Iraqi forces.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: But they were in your area of operations and

22 operating?

23 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: I suppose we would say -- and this is

24 the way that we put it -- we kind of reversed that

25 language and we said: well, we are in their area of

1 operation. So from the very beginning it was all about
2 putting Iraqis in the lead, allowing them to ask us for
3 the sorts of things that we could provide them to help
4 them, and then make sure that through, I suppose, deeper
5 partnering, deeper embedding, we became much more
6 effective in influencing and teach, coach and mentoring
7 Iraqi forces, which meant that we had a much more
8 effective and closer relationship based on mutual trust
9 and respect.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. One last thing from earlier evidence.

11 At the time of Charge of the Knights we have heard
12 that in effect Prime Minister Maliki pretty much did it
13 himself with General Mohan around, but the amount of
14 organised systematic staff effort available to the Iraqi
15 military forces was, to put it politely, less than
16 sufficient.

17 Did that change in your time? Did they build up
18 that capability?

19 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Yes, that changed considerably. What
20 we decided to do was to help the Iraqis build a much
21 more effective security architecture because one of our
22 objectives was to make sure that they could secure Basra
23 by themselves and they could provide enduring Iraqi-led
24 security and stability.

25 So the staff effort side of life was very much

1 focused on the command and control side in what was
2 called the Basra op centre and we had a team of people
3 from the ARRC out teach, coach and mentoring and
4 building up the capacity as well as providing support
5 with creating the right infrastructure to run this
6 architecture.

7 Whilst all of that was happening, we were very much
8 focused on making sure that things were much more joined
9 up. For example, on the intelligence side, we created
10 a fusion cell and made sure that the good Iraqi human
11 intelligence was coupled with the coalition force more
12 technically oriented intelligence, to make that side
13 more effective.

14 Then we built a series of joint security stations
15 around the province which was designed for Iraqi
16 military and Iraqi police forces to come together,
17 enabled by our military transition teams and the growing
18 number of police training teams that were coming in.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: My colleague Sir Martin Gilbert would like to
20 pick up the questions in a moment, not least on the
21 policing side of what you were doing.

22 Just to complete though, was this a fairly
23 even-paced tour that you had or did it change materially
24 between the beginning, your arrival, and when you left
25 in 2009?

1 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: It changed quite a lot because in the
2 first few months, until about October, I would say that
3 we were conducting full-spectrum counter-insurgency. So
4 not only were we doing all the work with Iraqi
5 conventional forces; we were also doing some targeted
6 operations as well with Iraqis to really break the back
7 of the insurgency.

8 At the same time we were building the architecture
9 and we were also -- which wasn't as evident in the first
10 few months as it was in the last six months -- really
11 working hard on the reconstruction and development side
12 with our American allies and also with the Provincial
13 Reconstruction Team.

14 Then behind the scenes also, which I suppose
15 Nigel Haywood has already mentioned, there was quite
16 a lot of diplomacy going on to try and really connect
17 different bits of the Iraqi populace: the security with
18 civil authority, civil authority with the people.

19 So the first three months was really dominated by
20 high operational tempo and then all of a sudden a very
21 marked decrease in the violence and the atmospherics and
22 the tension that had existed in the city. People were
23 starting to realise that things were looking more
24 normal, they were looking forward to elections, and
25 I think by the end of October there was a real tipping

1 point when we were shifting then -- and this is the
2 answer to your question -- when we were shifting from
3 the security really being in the lead to security being
4 much more of a supporting actor in readiness for the
5 elections after the end of that year.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Requiring then quite a lot of agility and
7 responsiveness to the shift in the situation?

8 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, I think that the one thing that
9 we were able to do was to have a joined up and
10 integrated approach, not only amongst coalition
11 agencies, all the stakeholders concerned, but also with,
12 for example, USAID, the UN, the regional embassy office,
13 which was which was the Secretary of State's influence
14 there, in support of Iraqis at all levels; I mean,
15 creating all sorts of different relationships.

16 I think because we all had a very simple plan,
17 which we had created together and partly brokered in the
18 period between May, when we started our preparations,
19 and by the time I arrived in August, we had a very
20 joined-up and integrated approach, which gave us at
21 least a chance of unity of effort and unity of purpose.

22 Then by really working hard on creating the right
23 relationships with Iraqis, we saw a common picture, we
24 were in touch with each other all the time, and with the
25 way that we were running and managing that campaign

1 approach, we were able to adapt fairly quickly.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. I'll turn to

3 Sir Martin Gilbert now. Martin?

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I would like to focus first on the

5 Iraqi forces division and then on the Iraqi police.

6 You told us that one with of your principal

7 objectives was to achieve operational readiness of

8 14 Division. How was this affected by the improved

9 security situation? How did that impact on it?

10 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, there was a lot more time and

11 space to be able to really focus on teach, coach and

12 mentoring and all the training aspects of that.

13 One of the things that we did was decide very early

14 on, around September, to deeply embed and actually put

15 some of our mentors in Iraqi vehicles and in their

16 bases, to create a much stronger relationship and also

17 to reduce profile of coalition forces in the city,

18 because at that stage we were still using some of our

19 big vehicles, which were called Mastiffs.

20 So we were trying to adapt to better security

21 conditions and trying to accelerate that process, which

22 allowed us to have a much more meaningful training

23 relationship with Iraqis, not only on the ground but in

24 their bases, but also in places like Shaibah, which is

25 where we were already doing quite a lot of training.

1 So when you are not worried about being attacked all
2 the time, then it is much easier to get on with doing
3 some of the other things, like train, you know, without
4 the fog of violence.

5 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How did you measure progress in the
6 training? Was a baseline established after Charge of
7 the Knights to which you could work?

8 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: There was. There was a formal
9 assessment mechanism and we agreed that with the
10 Americans. It was very important of course because we
11 had Americans doing part of the training too along with
12 us. So to have a joint agreed assessment criteria,
13 which was standardised with the whole of Iraq, was going
14 to be very important for people to agree that we had
15 indeed met the right level of capability when the time
16 came.

17 So we had a very simply set of metrics and we used
18 to do a regular assessment with Iraqis, all agreed, and
19 I suppose that the majority of that capability was
20 achieved by Christmas, before 2009.

21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: That's very helpful.

22 Were there any tensions between the timeline which
23 you established for completion of the training
24 satisfactorily yourself and the timescale which the
25 Prime Minister had laid down in December 2008 for our

1 withdrawal?

2 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: No, there weren't. The key thing that
3 had been missing in the intervening period between the
4 July prime ministerial announcement and the December one
5 was that the fact that we now knew when the elections
6 were going to take place, and the elections were going
7 to take place in January. So that was able to focus
8 everybody's mind in a very positive sense on preparing
9 for those elections and making sure that they were safe
10 and secure and free and fair.

11 So that was the only thing that we didn't have when
12 I first arrived. So things were stacking up reasonably
13 well: the elections, 14 Division was going to plan, the
14 handover to Iraqis at Basra International Airport was
15 going to plan, violence had subsided, we were starting
16 to see much more reconstruction effort, Basra was
17 looking cleaner, the police were beginning to be more
18 harmonised, there were less security forces on the
19 streets and lots of investors were coming in and there
20 was some economic reconstruction and development taking
21 place. The port of Umm Qasr was seeing a massive
22 increase in trade.

23 So the picture, given six months, was remarkably
24 different from when I had arrived. It was -- it felt
25 like -- and other commentators use the words -- radical

1 transformation.

2 So things were stacking up very nicely for
3 a sensible timetable to be announced in December time,
4 which was very realistic. The key thing that we didn't
5 have at that particular stage was a new security
6 agreement with the Iraqis. So that was the only
7 sticking point at that stage.

8 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Right.

9 What was the input of the Americans on the training
10 of 14 Division and how did this affect your own work?

11 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, there wasn't much input for
12 14 Division but we were looking at the Iraqi security
13 forces as a whole. So the American input in particular
14 was on training police, border -- well, the Department
15 of Border Enforcement and some of the ports of entry at
16 a place called Shalamcheh and at Umm Qasr.

17 So what we were doing was expanding our Iraqi
18 security force training effort but the expansion was
19 really as a result of more American capability coming in
20 and being made available for that.

21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How effective a force was the Iraqi
22 police when you arrived?

23 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, there were different bits of the
24 Iraqi police.

25 There were the national police who were very

1 effective, trained centrally under Carabinieri-type
2 principles, who were very respected.

3 There was the Department of Border Enforcement,
4 which was fairly basic I have to say, very short of
5 resources, hadn't really been mentored and partnered
6 effectively before. So this was a rather new endeavour.

7 The standard police or the ordinary policeman in the
8 station in Basra, there had been a considerable purge of
9 those by the head of police in between Charge of the
10 Knights and when I arrived; I think he purged about
11 4,000 policemen out of the whole of the force. So a lot
12 of the effort was directed at those elements by the
13 police training teams that were coming in on an
14 exponential basis from September right through until we
15 left.

16 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: You mentioned earlier the militias.
17 Had the infiltration of militias into the police ended
18 by your time or was it still an issue which had to be
19 dealt with?

20 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: It wasn't a visible issue, I think
21 partly because of the purge and partly because the
22 security by the Iraqi army particularly was very tight.

23 The one thing that we were trying to do was to
24 harmonise the police and military activity and to, for
25 example, instead of having separate checkpoints about

1 50 yards apart with the Iraqi military's guns trained
2 partly on the police that they didn't always trust, we
3 managed to get them to have joint checkpoints and start
4 to communicate and share ideas together. So that was
5 all part of the process.

6 So the militia issue had pretty well dissipated by
7 the time we got to October/November.

8 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In regards to the police training, how
9 far were your troops involved in the training and what
10 was your relationship during this period with the senior
11 UK police adviser? What was the dynamic there?

12 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, we had some police underneath
13 the commanding Assistant Chief Constable, Geoff Cooper,
14 who was spending some time up in Baghdad working on
15 Foreign Office security sector reform issues up there,
16 mentoring issues, as well as more hands-on,
17 community-type policing down in Basra. What we were
18 trying to do was to get their very highly specialised
19 expertise chiming with the more general expertise that
20 was being provided by the US military police who were
21 coming down to train in the new joint security stations.

22 So we worked with a guy called General Adel, who was
23 the head of police down in the southeast, on making sure
24 that we had the right inputs from Geoff Cooper's team,
25 which were complementing inputs lower down at the

1 district and police levels in the joint security
2 stations with the PTT.

3 So it was part of a concerted and joined-up effort.
4 That did take some time to sort out, clearly, because,
5 you know, this was a very dynamic scenario, as you can
6 imagine.

7 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you very much.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: I'll turn to Sir Lawrence Freedman now.
9 Lawrence?

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The expiry of UNSCR 1790 at the end
11 of 2008 meant that we had to negotiate a new legal basis
12 to keep troops in Iraq and, as we have heard, the
13 negotiations went right up to the wire.

14 What effect did this uncertainty have on you and
15 your troops in terms of what they were able to do?

16 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, because the negotiations went
17 right up to the wire, we had to have a contingency plan
18 to transition early. So if we didn't get the agreement,
19 we would have seen a premature extraction of UK combat
20 capability out of the south.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just pause there. What would have
22 been, do you think, the implications of that, if we had
23 to do that? What were the problems you foresaw?

24 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, I don't think that we would have
25 been able to meet the Prime Minister's conditions and

1 achieve all of his objectives. For example, we wouldn't
2 have been able to support and help the Iraqis manage the
3 elections towards the end of January.

4 But also we would have seen the insert of US combat
5 capability into Basra, which could have played,
6 I suppose, to the media in lots of different ways. That
7 would not necessarily have been seen as a helpful thing.
8 So I think it was potentially an embarrassing situation
9 to consider. Luckily that didn't happen.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Carry on as to where you were before
11 I interrupted you.

12 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: So I think we got the agreement
13 literally, I think, on Christmas Eve -- sorry, New
14 Year's Eve. So we were fine in terms of the conditions
15 to allow us to operate in exactly the same way in the
16 majority of areas that we had been doing in any case.

17 With the relationship that we established with
18 Iraqis, them being in the lead the whole time and us
19 asking them how they wanted to us help, there wasn't so
20 much of a cultural shift from December 31 to January 1,
21 which perhaps was slightly different as far as the
22 Americans were concerned in other areas, where they had
23 been definitely in the lead until January 1 and then
24 realised that they had to be much more in support of
25 Iraqi security forces. That wasn't quite the same

1 situation down in Basra. So that's one thing.

2 The other thing was that we had to agree where we
3 were going to base UK forces, to make sure that the UK
4 jurisdiction was right, and then we had to agree
5 protocols for various types of operations which were
6 above the run of teach, coach and mentoring, military
7 transition team, partner-type operations and training.
8 So some of the, for example, arrest-type operations, we
9 needed to make sure that we had the right protocols in
10 place and joined-up, targeting procedures worked out, so
11 that we could still support Iraqis in prosecuting those.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So in general were you reasonably
13 confident that this MOU would be signed, even though it
14 was going to the wire, or did it create a large amount
15 of uncertainty in what you were trying to do?

16 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, nothing is signed until it is
17 signed. We were confident that the negotiations were
18 going in the right way. We were also confident, when we
19 saw what the jurisdiction issues were going to be, that
20 we could manage to operate pretty well in the same way
21 as we did, so that we could complete our tasks and meet
22 the necessary conditions. But, as ever, when things go
23 to the wire, people get a bit apprehensive because it is
24 uncertain, but we had a very clear contingency plan in
25 place for that.

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So basically from late 2008 through
2 into early 2009 there was a transformation in your role
3 but it was relatively smoothly handled despite this
4 uncertainty of getting the negotiations through?

5 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, I think there was on paper
6 a definite transformation because we were definitely in
7 support. But in practice very little changed.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In the spring of 2009, after the
9 combat mission came to an end, what sort of preparations
10 did you need to make for that?

11 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, the preparations for transition
12 started as soon as we got there back in August.

13 We did two big things before Christmas: one was to
14 put the whole of the force and the mission on what we
15 call an expeditionary footing and we said that the force
16 will have to be at 30 days' notice to move, so that if
17 we end up transitioning early, then we have cleared most
18 of the stocks, logistics, stores, ammunition, weapons,
19 things that weren't being used and had built up over the
20 years of the campaign, out, so that we could transition
21 effectively. So expeditionary footing and aggressive
22 housekeeping, I think we used to call it.

23 Then, of course, all the other things that we were
24 thinking about: where the US southern division was going
25 to be based wasn't clear right at the beginning, so we

1 were working with the Americans very hard to think about
2 the implications of their basing needs because there
3 would be quite a lot, for example, if it was in the
4 coalition operating base in Basra, then there were
5 infrastructure, equipment, stores, logistics were going
6 to have to be handed over and a price agreed for that
7 transaction; as well as potentially building new
8 headquarters for the Americans to operate in.

9 So the whole host of infrastructure, logistic,
10 contractual issues that had to be worked right
11 throughout this process, but we started as early as
12 possible in just clearing the things out that we didn't
13 need.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Interesting as a commander you are
15 in a very different situation to your predecessors.

16 First, you know you are going to leave; the
17 Prime Minister has said so. Secondly, you have a large
18 number of American troops around you.

19 What effect did this have on, I guess, the morale of
20 the British troops involved? Were they pleased to be
21 going home? Was there a sense of anticlimax perhaps at
22 the end of the mission? I'm just interested in the sort
23 of different environment in which you are now operating.

24 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Actually I think, like any soldier
25 anywhere, once you say, "This is when we are going to go

1 and do this and this is what we have to do and this is
2 roughly when it is all going to be complete", then
3 people become rather focused. It is the uncertainty
4 that gets people, not necessarily the certainty. And we
5 were very fortunate in that we had all of those things
6 in place, minus a date, which rapidly became announced.
7 So that was the first thing.

8 The second thing was the way that we decided to do
9 the mission. We really joined up and integrated with
10 absolutely everybody and there were lots of people who
11 were getting out and doing really useful things; for
12 example, working with the Provincial Reconstruction Team
13 in support of Iraqis, much more involved in training
14 some of the Iraqis in some of their organisations.

15 So there was plenty for everyone to do and when you
16 are tidying up and doing all that housekeeping, the
17 people who don't always get out on the ground have a lot
18 to do too. So there is real focus and energy as
19 a result of a combination of all of those things.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you think it might have been
21 useful to stay a bit longer, given that you were finding
22 useful things to do?

23 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, it is not for me to say whether
24 it is useful or not. I think we had to focus on
25 achieving what the Prime Minister had outlined and then

1 we needed to make sure that we were reducing the
2 enablers and the line of communication impact so that we
3 could continue to operate and expand the campaign in
4 Afghanistan. So there was a real grand strategic sense
5 that we had to do this thing as well.

6 But the other point which a lot of people felt after
7 six years of campaigning was that we needed to finish
8 this right and we needed to have some closure on some of
9 the things that had happened before. Lots of people had
10 lost their lives and some of these soldiers were on
11 their third tour, so they had experienced some of the
12 violent times.

13 I think when people see, for example, Basra looking
14 more secure and cleaner, with people going about their
15 normal lives, there is a sense of satisfaction that's
16 derived from having been through some quite hard times
17 to get there.

18 So there were all those issues to be considered.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It is in a sense paradoxical: the
20 point at which we are leaving, the forces are doing some
21 of the things they were hoping to do right from the
22 start.

23 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, they probably were doing some of
24 those things right from the start but then the campaign
25 oscillated and dipped to a rather violent one for

1 a couple of years.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What about your relations with the
3 American commander and the troops' relations with the
4 Americans? Were they quite smooth?

5 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Very good. I had met my commander,
6 who was General Austin, a couple of times before
7 I arrived. So we had some very open, transparent,
8 candid discussion about what was required down in the
9 southeast.

10 The one thing that I was fortunate in being was
11 a coalition forces commander and I said, "Well, if I'm
12 going to be a commander, to do all of these things down
13 in the southeast, then clearly I need all the resources
14 to do it. I want to deliver your campaign and your
15 intentions". And he just gave us everything that we
16 asked for and there was a symbiotic relationship from
17 start to finish.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just finally, how far were you
19 involved in planning the UK's ongoing mission in Iraq
20 after the combat mission had come to an end?

21 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Very little really. My main job as
22 far as that was concerned was to make sure that the
23 conditions were right; so, for example, enabling the
24 Naval assistant training team down at Umm Qasr to be
25 able to sustain and fulfil their mission because

1 obviously when MND South East was up and running we did
2 help them a bit, provide them with some facilities and
3 enablers, but they were going to have to do that in much
4 more autonomous sense. So just making sure that that
5 was all sorted.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you very much.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: I will turn to Sir Roderic Lyne now.

8 Roderic?

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You have talked about the very joined-up
10 and integrated approach that existed during your period
11 of command. To what extent was this happening under the
12 aegis of an overall strategic plan given to you rather
13 than a set of individual departmental plans?

14 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, we had a set of objectives.
15 There was no comprehensive strategic plan that I ever
16 saw. So what we decided to do -- when I say "we", that
17 is the Consul General, the head of the Provincial
18 Reconstruction Team who came in after a few months of my
19 being there, Keith Mackiggan, and to a certain extent
20 the head of US regional embassy office, decided to ensure
21 that we had much more collective consensus, joined-up
22 approach, because nobody was in charge.

23 So that was the only way that we could think of
24 working out what the strategy needed to be and how we
25 were going to prosecute that strategy, run it, steer it,

1 effectively. So we basically got together and decided
2 that's what we were going to do and worked it from
3 there.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: We have already heard from the
5 Consul General and the head of the PRT. In fact they
6 regretted that you weren't sitting beside them at the
7 time we heard them, simply for scheduling reasons.

8 When you say nobody was in charge, who should have
9 been in charge?

10 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: That's a good question on how we run
11 joined-up, integrated, whole-of-government approaches.
12 I was clearly in charge of the military line of
13 operation and Nigel likewise on the diplomatic political
14 side and Keith on the development side. But who is
15 actually going to make all of these things work properly
16 and agree who is going to support or who is going to be
17 supported at various times throughout the campaign?

18 That's an issue that is probably still out there and
19 is something that perhaps needs to be examined and is
20 a learning point from this campaign.

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Let's examine it a little further.

22 We have now heard from all three of you that you
23 succeeded in theatre level in joining things together to
24 produce an effective comprehensive result of
25 British Government effort and, as you say, you also

1 joined in with the American regional office at the time.
2 This is five years after we have gone into Basra.

3 Now, how do you think, having done that successfully
4 on the ground, it should have been run before you, both
5 at theatre level and also up your chain of command?
6 Should there have been, for example, some central
7 co-ordinating point in Whitehall, feeding down to
8 somebody visibly in charge on the ground so that then
9 you could all operate together? Is that how it should
10 have happened?

11 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: I think there were central
12 co-ordination points in Whitehall: the Stabilisation
13 Assistance Fund, I think all the government departments
14 were represented in the committee that ran that, and
15 there was probably an Iraq group and there were probably
16 joined-up things being discussed at Cabinet Office level
17 to try and bring all the different government
18 departments together.

19 Rather than focus on the period beforehand, I would
20 say there are probably things to learn and what we
21 should now be thinking of because circumstances are very
22 different, they have changed considerably from when we
23 went in in 2003, and I think there are probably a number
24 of areas that need to be examined. I'm not going to say
25 what the right answer is because I think some of the

1 this is quite involved work which is -- potentially can
2 be quite significant.

3 When you are talking about whole-of-government
4 approaches, some of the big implications of that is how
5 you organise different government departments in
6 Whitehall. I know that this particular government is
7 looking at that and the creation of a National Security
8 Council perhaps is one answer to try and have a central
9 co-ordinating and directing -- strategic directing body
10 to make sure that all the other levers of power are
11 synchronised in the right way. That's one way of
12 looking at it.

13 I think also the other thing to bear in mind is that
14 every campaign is slightly different. So, for example,
15 a UK national campaign, in terms of command and control,
16 is probably a lot easier than a multi-national campaign
17 of the type that, for example, exists in Afghanistan,
18 where the stakeholders, different institutions,
19 different organisations exist and it is probably quite
20 a challenge to get everything joined up.

21 The way that we worked it was based on support and
22 supported, with gathering our resources on the table and
23 working out how to divide those resources to deliver
24 what we thought right. So some sense of joint,
25 integrated, whole-of-government set-up in theatre to

1 prosecute a section of the campaign -- if it's
2 a multi-national one, for example, in Helmand in
3 Afghanistan or elsewhere -- would probably be a good
4 thing to do and very much a positive lesson from our
5 experience.

6 The other issue is: where do you put, for example,
7 all the other government department actors up the chain
8 of command? So, for example, on the military side we
9 have the Permanent Joint Headquarters, and from London
10 the Ministry of Defence, but what actually happens is
11 that military line is channelled through the Permanent
12 Joint Headquarters down to the commander in theatre, and
13 then it is the commander in theatre's job to join that
14 line up again with, for example, in our case, the
15 Consul General and the head of the Provincial
16 Reconstruction Team.

17 So what I'm saying is that it could be joined up in
18 Whitehall, then it gets extracted down at Permanent
19 Joint Headquarters and then our job is to join it up
20 again and the reporting lines are different depends on
21 which department you are in. So if you are in the
22 Foreign Office, your reporting line goes straight up to
23 the Foreign Office from the Consul General, whoever he
24 is, and the same in terms of development: it goes
25 straight into DFID and, you know, hopefully gets joined

1 up at that level.

2 So there are structural constraints in making sure
3 that campaigns reflect whole-of-government approaches on
4 the ground that probably need to be examined, and I'm
5 sure some of them have been examined and there are some
6 reasonable practices going on as far as the UK is
7 concerned in Afghanistan. I'm sure that some of these
8 things have been looked at as a result of our
9 experiences.

10 But who is in charge? I mean, that still hasn't
11 been decided.

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So if, a year and a half ago, when you
13 were there, we had asked you and the Consul General,
14 "Are you working to a strategic plan for this area?",
15 the answer, as you have already said, would be, "No, we
16 have objectives, we have a timetable for withdrawal but
17 we don't have a single strategic plan for the area".

18 And if --

19 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Not one that was visible to us.

20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Well, it is no good if it is not visible
21 to the guy in charge or the guys in charge on the
22 ground. And if we had said, "Which minister in the
23 British Government and which senior official in the
24 British Government has overall responsibility for what
25 we are doing, this big effort that we have been involved

1 in, which is both civilian and military, over the course
2 of six years in the southeast of Iraq?", what would your
3 answer have been?

4 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: It was in the main the military guy
5 because it became a very military oriented operation.

6 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Yes, but at the time that you were there,
7 the balance was shifting because the security situation
8 had improved. And if you had been asked, "Who is the
9 minister in charge of this back in Whitehall?", would
10 you have known the answer to the question?

11 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Not really.

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: No.

13 Apart from working closely with the Consul General
14 and the PRT, there was also Michael Wareing and his
15 economic initiatives and the Basra Development
16 Commission. We heard from Michael the other day.

17 To what extent were you helping him to deliver his
18 objectives?

19 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: To a huge extent. It is not just me;
20 it was because we had a joined-up development approach.
21 So that the Provincial Reconstruction Team, the -- what
22 was called the civil/military ops team that was mainly
23 very American-focused, plus, for example, organisations
24 like the US Army Corps of Engineers, who were managing
25 a huge infrastructure, a \$300 million programme, we had

1 joined all of those up and so we created what was called
2 the Basra Development Plan, which Keith led on, which we
3 helped him with, by providing him with some of the
4 horsepower he needed to be able to create the right
5 plans and then to know how to deliver them.

6 So we had a very joined-up approach. So we were all
7 supporting Michael Wareing. It was all part of our
8 mission that we had agreed together.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: The horsepower that you had to provide
10 was horsepower in terms of human resources, financial
11 resources, security?

12 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: It was mainly human planning resources
13 and security on the ground. Clearly, especially in the
14 early months, August, September, October --

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: These were military planners?

16 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Yes, military planners, because when
17 I first arrived there was a separation in terms of
18 planning between the Provincial Reconstruction Team and
19 the military/civil CMIC-type activity, reconstruction
20 area.

21 So one of the things we decided to do was join it up
22 straight away and we created what were called joint
23 reconstruction action teams. They were hybrid
24 inter-agency teams. They were very focused on delivery
25 on the ground in support of Iraqi needs in the area to

1 start with, essential services, so sewage, water,
2 electricity and trash.

3 What we learned as we were going along, trying to
4 make these teams more effective, is that actually we
5 simply needed to be just much more joined up and
6 integrated. Indeed, we had a learning session in around
7 November where we got all the agencies together into
8 a room and came out with ideas for how we could improve
9 and make the mission work even more effectively, and the
10 big answer that came out was: well, actually, instead of
11 having separate communications teams or separate
12 influence teams or separate reconstruction areas, we
13 might as well just have the same one. So we blistered them
14 all together and worked to a common plan.

15 But to be able to do that, we needed to give --
16 because we were supporting -- and it was right to
17 give -- the right human resources to be able to make at
18 that work properly.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Is this a model, this model you developed
20 there, that has been picked up, absorbed back into
21 Whitehall thinking, used in Afghanistan, put into the
22 main bloodstream of the Stabilisation Unit and so on?

23 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: I don't really know. I know that the
24 Stabilisation Unit examined what we were doing and
25 reported very favourably on it when we were there. They

1 did several reports, so they found things that developed
2 and moved on from their original examination around the
3 summer of 2008, so that was good news.

4 I know from talking to other commanders in Helmand
5 that there was an element of joined-up planning on the
6 development side in any case and there were mixed
7 military/civilian Provincial Reconstruction Teams,
8 partly because of the security situation in Helmand,
9 whereas that hadn't been the case when we were in Basra.

10 The initiatives that we came out with, as far as
11 I can work out, were fairly unique and even American
12 commanders commented on those, looked at those, thought
13 they were good practice and have tried to learn from
14 some of the things that we have done for the campaign in
15 Afghanistan.

16 Now, whether it has gone into government and
17 somebody has looked at it and picked it up and said,
18 "Why don't we do more of that and institutionalise it?",
19 I don't know the answer to that.

20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Was this approach a sort of method of
21 working that you applied to some of the big projects
22 like, as you mentioned earlier, delivering the airport
23 to Iraqi civilian control, opening up the port of
24 Umm Qasr?

25 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: It was a common approach. It was one

1 of the themes of our campaign.

2 First of all, put Iraqis first. Listen to them,
3 respect them, connect with them right and be patient.
4 Never tell Iraqis to do anything. Always listen to
5 their needs and sit down and discuss in a very patient
6 way with them about what they wanted from us. Help them
7 wherever possible. Connect everybody together, in terms
8 of our own agencies with the Iraqi ones, and then work
9 out a common plan, and then go and deliver it together.

10 That's basically the theme of all of this and we
11 applied that everywhere. It wasn't just on the military
12 side; it was in the economic side, the development side,
13 the political side -- especially during the elections,
14 that was another illustration -- as well as the security
15 side.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Did you ever get a sense that some of
17 your uniformed staff, your soldiers, were being used on
18 civilian tasks because the civilian agencies couldn't
19 afford to get the requisite staff out there because it
20 would have cost them much more to do so or they didn't
21 have the resources and you did? That effectively the
22 military were being used and the defence budget was
23 being used to do something that ideally might have been
24 done by civilians?

25 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, we didn't live in a perfect

1 world and we learned a lot over the six years of the
2 campaign that, you know, delivering in quite a violent
3 scenario demands short-term things to be done and you
4 need considerable amounts of military there to enable
5 that to happen.

6 Some agencies are going to be able to work in that
7 environment and some aren't, partly because of their
8 training, their background, their skill sets; also
9 partly because of different attitudes to risk and the
10 protocols that exist around that issue.

11 At the same time as when you are being very
12 comprehensive in the way you are doing things, there are
13 always going to be hazy areas in between where the
14 military theoretically finishes its military task and
15 the civilians start theirs. So there is a gap. Well,
16 you just have to fill the gap and, as a commander,
17 I really didn't care who filled that gap. It just
18 needed to be done.

19 What we actually did was create this hybrid approach
20 where we joined up to fill the gap. It is just part of
21 being in a campaign amongst the people when you have to
22 deliver in all the levels of power in every area and
23 where you realise you can't really separate the
24 security -- we called them ellipses of operation because
25 we didn't think it was a linear process. So we couldn't

1 separate the security ellipse from the political ellipse
2 and the economic one. So they were all like a Venn
3 diagram, I suppose, interrelated, and only by having
4 that approach can you really strategically accelerate
5 a situation to achieve a semblance of stability.

6 SIR RODERIC LYNE: The approach which you used very
7 successfully with your civilian colleagues obviously
8 differed from the approach that had been followed
9 before.

10 Did you get a sense in the briefing you were given
11 before you went out that this gap had existed, and that
12 was that one of the factors that compelled you to take
13 the approach you did to make sure that it was covered?

14 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: I think from the very beginning of our
15 preparations, which began for my headquarters in May, so
16 some three or four months before we started to really
17 get a grip on the campaign -- I think I, by virtue of my
18 background, have always existed in a joined-up
19 environment and my headquarters was a multi-national
20 joint headquarters in any case. So I had US marines,
21 Dutch marines, I had logisticians, Navy, Army, Air Force
22 people, all in my organisation.

23 So we always took a joined-up approach in everything
24 that we did, and as part of our preparation we invited
25 all our different stakeholders, having worked out who

1 they were, to be part of this preparation process. So
2 we had people from DFID down, some of the colleagues
3 from other government departments -- I had been, for
4 example, on the high commander staff course -- all came
5 down. We asked Iraqis to be involved too and we
6 organised seminars of Iraqis to listen to them and work
7 out what they thought would be a very good approach.

8 So we started off by being very holistic in a way
9 that we prepared for the campaign.

10 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Even before you got there?

11 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Even before we got there. So I think
12 one of the successes was because we had done that and we
13 were quite prepared. But we had got everybody's input
14 and created this plan together.

15 So, for example, Nigel Haywood, on the first recce,
16 he and I had a discussion about all of this and we left
17 a few bits of paper for him to look at and comment on,
18 and I think as a Foreign Office diplomat he likes that,
19 and send back his comments. We incorporated them. So
20 by the time we came on the second recce, he felt really
21 that he was involved in the process. And we did that
22 with everybody.

23 So it was a multi-stakeholder approach, I suppose,
24 to use modern parlance.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And this was a new approach?

1 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: I don't know whether it was a new
2 approach; it was just the one that we thought was the
3 most appropriate.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Okay. Just a couple of final questions
5 about how you linked up with people.

6 You talked earlier of the symbiotic relationship
7 with General Austin. You were actually operating in
8 a rather different way in the southeast, in the sense
9 that you were responsible for a plan to remove, to
10 withdraw the British forces from there, which was not
11 what the Americans were doing at the time, and then the
12 Americans were going to then take over and fill in.

13 Was this something that was all completely on all
14 fours with American planning? Did it need some
15 negotiating and brokering with them or were they
16 entirely happy with it?

17 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: I think once we had identified the
18 broad timeframe, then we started to think about what
19 conditions needed to exist, not just for the British
20 objectives to be met and so we could withdraw the
21 military campaign, but what the Americans wanted out of
22 the southeast, what were their aspirations.

23 General Austin's intention was very clear and very
24 simple and straightforward, which was, you know: we need
25 to secure the whole of the southeast, we need to secure

1 the borders, we need to stop lethal weapons and
2 technology being smuggled across down in the southeast
3 and being used in places like Sadr City, and we need to
4 do everything. That's very much the American military
5 approach, so very holistic, and that's what they had
6 learnt, you know, in some very hard circumstances
7 throughout the period of that campaign. So his words to
8 me were, "What don't you get about that? This is very
9 straightforward". And I said, "Fine, give me the
10 resources and we will do it".

11 So for me it was all about creating the right
12 framework and the right picture for that transition to
13 take place. So, for example, where there were security
14 concerns that needed to be addressed on the borders, we
15 discussed what sort of assets would be required for that
16 and they came down; so border training teams or
17 biometric teams for places like Umm Qasr. So having
18 close dialogue and knowing what campaign issues the
19 Americans running the coalition at that particular time
20 were wanting to sort out enabled us to set the
21 conditions for that to happen and enabled it to happen,
22 to facilitate it, and to draw the right picture that
23 they were going to be happy with in order for us to
24 extract the military bit of our campaign.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You say in your preparation phase you

1 involved Iraqis. Obviously you had to co-ordinate and
2 indeed operate with the consent of, under the authority
3 of, the Iraqi sovereign authorities, presumably at both
4 national central level and very much at provincial
5 level.

6 How did that operate? Was that a smooth process?

7 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: I think it was a relatively smooth
8 process throughout, notwithstanding the shift that had
9 to take place in a judicial sense from December 31 to
10 January, the new security agreement.

11 There were differences of course because on the one
12 hand you had the provincial authorities that were really
13 a Basra entity, to a greater or lesser extent, depending
14 on which political parties we're talking about were
15 having their strings pulled by politicians in Baghdad.
16 So that was the civil authority. In terms of the
17 security authorities, a lot of it was controlled
18 directly by Maliki in a central sense. So one of the
19 biggest challenges that we faced was trying to reconcile
20 the central versus decentralised security politics and
21 situation and we worked really hard to try and reconcile
22 those and get them together.

23 Indeed, I think the Consul General and myself spent
24 about three months enabling the governor,
25 Governor Wa'ili, and the head of security,

1 General Mohammed, to come together and work out a common
2 approach to the elections. That was actually quite
3 successful in the in the end, but it was fraught with
4 issues right at the beginning because of that dichotomy.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: I think we are coming to the end of this
7 session and I will welcome your final reflections in
8 a moment but one thing that has been coming through
9 throughout the morning, I think -- can I start with your
10 relationship with corps, with the Americans.

11 We have had, from both reading papers from and other
12 witnesses, a sense that some of your predecessors as
13 MND South East GOC really didn't particularly welcome
14 American involvement. Equally we have heard that the
15 Americans were focused very much on Baghdad and central
16 Iraq and Anbar for much of their time.

17 Is it simply that a benign conjuncture took place in
18 your time whereby the Americans were freer, because of
19 a relative success in the centre of Baghdad, to make
20 resources available and you could use them? It is
21 a push/pull, is it?

22 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: I think the major event that changed
23 the circumstances in the American coalition force
24 commander's view on strategy in the whole of Iraq was
25 Charge of the Knights.

1 Charge of the Knights happened almost as an accident
2 because Prime Minister Maliki decided that was what he
3 was going to do at that particular juncture. We thought
4 the plan was going to take some months before it was
5 going to be implemented. That was hugely successful
6 because the militias were defeated on the streets. This
7 Kyros moment appeared and, you know, nobody was going
8 to let that go. I think partly because of the successes
9 up north, in Anbar in particular, there were resources
10 available that could be spared for -- to seize and
11 really exploit that opportunity. So that's what
12 happened.

13 One of the biggest issues was what was going to
14 happen with Mosul, which was where the next big
15 challenge was. There was always the anticipation that
16 we were potentially going to lose Iraqi combat power to
17 go and help with the situation in Mosul. That never
18 transpired in my time.

19 But I think what was happening in the southeast was
20 almost containment until this opportunity arose, and
21 then it was: right, let's really accelerate this success
22 and see where it takes us. And I think we were very
23 fortunate in my time that the circumstances were very
24 favourable for that and we just exploited it.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I would like to ask you whether

1 it is possible to generalise somewhat from what
2 experience. You used the term much earlier of "critical
3 mass", managing the security situation in particular.

4 So there is a question whether on the scale of the
5 UK's efforts in the southeast, after the Shia insurgency
6 at any rate, was really a sufficiently critical mass to
7 contain both the security situation and manage the
8 civilian effort as well.

9 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: It is a very fair question. Again, it
10 depends on the circumstance and the situation.

11 The thing that was unique about our situation was
12 that, as I said earlier, the Iraqis held the public
13 monopoly of violence. That was not in dispute; it was
14 cemented in an exponential way during our nine months'
15 tenure. Whereas before Charge of the Knights that was
16 in dispute; whether, you know, people thought that
17 provincial Iraqi control was done at the right time or
18 whatever.

19 But the fact is if so many different parties are
20 compete -- militias, coalition forces, Brits and Iraqi
21 security force police -- over this area, the monopoly of
22 violence, then whoever has the biggest stick is probably
23 going to be the one who eventually owns it, which is
24 what happened.

25 So there is an issue of critical mass, depending on

1 what you want. On the converse, the converse of that is
2 that what was so good about the situation we found
3 ourselves in, it was the Iraqis who were in charge and
4 we just had to get behind them and help them to become
5 more coherent, more effective and to sustain their own
6 security.

7 So it depends on what sort of campaign you happen to
8 be in. The way that we examined our critical mass was
9 we had a force of 4,100 troops, we had eventually 2,000,
10 roughly, American soldiers, men and women, and we had
11 a few people in the Provincial Reconstruction Team and
12 a few people on the Consulate General's side, and when
13 you look at the utility of all of that lot, the utility
14 is only vested, in terms of shifting a campaign along,
15 in a few people. It is vested in those who establish
16 key relationships; it is vested in those who are
17 training Iraqi troops and have an interface with the
18 public. So what you have to do is try and maximise that
19 lot. So that was our strategy to get over the critical
20 mass issues.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. One other tailpiece, if I may, on
22 critical mass -- well, two actually. One is: there is
23 no sense I'm getting from what you are saying that there
24 is or needs to be any kind of proportionality or ratio
25 between the military effort of a good few thousand in

1 the southeast in your time and the civilian effort,
2 hands full.

3 But that's not the point you make. It is a few key
4 people. Or is it?

5 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: I think what it is is making sure that
6 you maximise the impact of as many people in that
7 construct as possible who can shift a campaign forward.
8 In the main, given our circumstances, the shift was all
9 about practical, hands-on delivery.

10 So what you have to look at when you examine
11 a civilian organisation, like the Provincial
12 Reconstruction Team, is what proportion of people in
13 that organisation have the right practical hands-on
14 skills to be able to deliver things, and how are they
15 linking up with the military? And you ask the same
16 question of the military because you are talking about
17 the military doing the right things. There is a lot of
18 practical skill but they are not always focused in the
19 right direction. So it is joining up all that lot, and
20 that's why I said hybrid joint reconstruction action
21 teams, for example, was one way.

22 So you then ask another question: okay, if we think
23 that we are not going able to deliver practically with
24 all of those resources, then what does that mean? Does
25 that mean we need to set up joint inter-agency training

1 colleges or schools, where we bring everybody together
2 and give them hands-on experience, or what? And those
3 are issues that somebody probably needs to examine and
4 address.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: I think the second point I wanted to raise
6 relates to that. It is really about planning. The
7 joint approach in theatre both for military operations
8 and for joint activity, requires a huge amount of
9 integration of planning effort.

10 The military, typically and professionally, have
11 large numbers and grateful great skills in planning. In
12 the main, civilian departments and agencies don't have
13 anything like the same approach to or perhaps experience
14 of planning. Is there a disproportion there that ought
15 to be rectified?

16 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: There probably is, and there are two
17 things that need to happen. One is that we need to work
18 out a plan jointly and not impose a lovely schematic on
19 a bunch of civilians who have never seen one or anything
20 like it or haven't been involved in the process before.

21 So we have to do these things together from the
22 inception, ideally not on the ground as the bullets are
23 flying. Ideally that is done in a college somewhere,
24 and I think there is some of that that goes on, but
25 I think there needs to be a lot more. It is not just

1 planning; it then leads to delivery skills.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: You say "a college" implying, I think, a UK
3 base, in UK terms. What about PJHQ itself, which is
4 essentially a military planning command headquarters?
5 Is there a sense in which there needs to be some kind of
6 planning capability across departments and activities in
7 the UK, I would say in London, but in Northwood or
8 somewhere?

9 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, I think that's one of the
10 deductions, yes. Now, I don't know how this has been
11 taken forward in the examination of government or the
12 joint defence and security review that's going on at the
13 moment, but somebody needs to be able to not just create
14 the strategy but then work out how it is going to be
15 delivered jointly.

16 So, you know, the two things need to happen: the
17 bottom-up needs to join up with the top-down, because
18 strategy is to nought unless it is implemented right.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: I think it is more an American than a British
20 English term but stovepiping is one of the things you
21 have to work against, isn't it? So that there is
22 a common flow up and down of information, planning,
23 intent?

24 General, you have had a great deal of expeditionary
25 and campaign experience in all sorts of places. Are

1 there any general reflections we haven't touched on this
2 morning that you would like to offer us from all of
3 that, as well as from your time in Iraq this last time
4 around? Because you were in Iraq much earlier.

5 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Well, I think really it is to have
6 a holistic approach to everything: you know, to do your
7 proper stakeholder analysis right up front and get along
8 with them and plan together, and then work out how you
9 can deliver together; and to understand the nature of
10 the problem and your role within that, and it is not
11 normally a simply military one. That's not to say you
12 are trying to grab everything else, but you have to
13 understand that context.

14 I think what I would love to see more of is
15 a learning approach to things. I think that's the big
16 thing for me that comes out of my experiences in Basra
17 and other campaigns, is that we have to be faster at
18 assimilating learning issues and making the changes fast
19 and to be able to be much more adaptive and agile so
20 that we can go with the flow of circumstances and do the
21 right things and not keep on doing the wrong things when
22 circumstances have changed.

23 So I think if we have a bigger learning approach and
24 create more learning organisations, then we are bound to
25 get better at doing things, and in this respect being

1 better at doing things means being very joined-up and
2 integrated, as you say, at all levels from top to down
3 and back up again.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: General, thank you very much. This has been
5 a very thoughtful and thought-provoking set of evidence
6 from you. We are grateful for that.

7 With that I'll close the session and this afternoon
8 we will gather again at 2.00 pm, when we will be taking
9 evidence from Lt Gen Lillywhite, the Surgeon General
10 from 2006 to 2009. So thank you again.

11 MAJ GEN ANDY SALMON: Thank you very much.

12 (12.44 pm)

13 (The short adjournment)

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