

1 (2.00 pm)

2 GENERAL SIR MIKE JACKSON, GCB, CBE, DSO, DL

3 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Good afternoon and welcome.

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Thank you.

5 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Welcome to those in the room. Our

6 witness for this afternoon's session is General Sir Mike

7 Jackson. You were C-in-C Land Forces from 2000 until

8 the end of January 2003 at which point you became Chief

9 of the General Staff until your retirement in

10 August 2006.

11 Now in these appointments you worked alongside

12 General Dannatt and you were his predecessor as CGS.

13 You will not have had much chance I am afraid to catch

14 up on General Dannatt's evidence this morning so we are

15 not going to question you with direct regard to that.

16 That wouldn't be sensible. We will though cover and

17 draw on some of the same issues.

18 Now I say this on each occasion. I recognise

19 witnesses give evidence based on their recollection of

20 event and we check what we hear against the papers to

21 which we have access, some of which we are still

22 receiving. I remind each witness on each occasion he

23 will be asked to sign a transcript of evidence to the

24 effect that the evidence given is truthful, fair and

25 accurate.

1 With those preliminaries out of the way I will ask
2 Sir Roderic Lyne to open the questioning. Rod.

3 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Sir Michael, you told The Times earlier
4 this year:

5 "People look at a single service chief as though he
6 was responsible for everything the army does. Would
7 that it were so."

8 Now that's very modest, but you were obviously
9 a senior decision-maker in the Ministry of Defence, the
10 Chiefs of Staff Committee, the Defence Board throughout
11 this period. How much of your time as Chief of the
12 General Staff were you actually having to spend on Iraq?

13 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It varied as time went on. If my
14 memory is correct, I assumed the appointment of CGS on
15 1 February 2003, i.e. some six weeks or thereabouts
16 before the operation began. You will understand that the
17 first few months of my tenure were very much concerned
18 with Iraq. As time went on this became less so. There
19 were other things which needed to be done as well, of an
20 organisational nature in particular, when we were
21 looking at how the army should be for the future. So
22 that degree of involvement was very intense right at the
23 beginning of my tenure, and then diminished as time went
24 on for all the reasons I have outlined.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: How throughout your time as CGS did you

1 keep in touch with the situation there? You went out
2 there occasionally? You had some regular channels of
3 information?

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. There are a number of channels
5 I think here. Perhaps the most important is the visit.
6 I have I think a note here somewhere of the number of
7 times that I went out -- eight or nine times in my time.
8 It was obviously vital to do that. You can't really get
9 a sense of what it is like on the ground sitting in
10 Whitehall.

11 So first-hand visiting and talking to commanders on
12 the ground in particular is a vital part of that.

13 Other channels of information: the reporting system
14 into the MoD via Permanent Joint Headquarters, of
15 course, as the Operational Command Headquarters; and
16 Chiefs of Staff meetings. -- I did not sense any dearth
of information.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: As you watched it unfold, did you feel
19 that at the beginning through the campaign phase and
20 then most importantly thereafter the British Government
21 had a clear strategy for what it was trying to do in
22 Iraq?

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: For the first part, yes. For the
24 second I am rather less certain.

25 To be fair, in the run-up to the commencement of

1 military operations the great concern was, "Are we going
2 to win this?" Now what was meant by "winning" there of
3 course was the defeat of Saddam Hussein's forces in the
4 field, so-called Phase III. I had no concerns there.
5 The American army at that time worked under a very clear
6 doctrine of: in, overwhelming force, win, out.
7 I paraphrase, but that's what it boils down to. Anybody
8 who knows the American army will know that what they set
9 out to do in Iraq was absolutely playing to their
10 strengths and their doctrine of that time: mass
11 manoeuvre. I was much more concerned about so-called
12 Phase IV, the aftermath, where I certainly personally
13 did not have confidence that Washington had worked this
14 through, and, in fact -- and I know you have heard
15 evidence from General Tim Cross, who I used to speak to
16 quite regularly at this time -- there was a sense that
17 whilst the manoeuvre war would be complete quickly and
18 decisively, Phase IV would not be so.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Did you feel there was a consensus in
20 Whitehall around the strategy that embraced military and
21 civilians, political leadership, different departments
22 involved, MoD, Cabinet Office, Foreign Office,
23 Number 10, DFID.

24 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I am afraid I didn't. There are
parallels to Phase IV to what happened

1 in Kosovo, what happened in Bosnia. Nothing repeats
2 itself exactly, far from it, but there are parallels and
3 I was involved personally in the Balkans quite a bit.

4 What you are trying to do is take a country from
5 some dark past and move it into a rather better future
6 where it has stability, where it has an economy growing
7 and all of that. If Donald Rumsfeld didn't like the
8 phrase "nation-building" I think it is rather apt for
9 what you are trying to do.

10 This, of course, is not a job purely for soldiers.
11 Far from it. It does need all the sinews of Government
12 to come together to a single purpose. We are not as
13 good at that as we ought to be, but I don't suppose we
14 are very much worse than any other country either, but
15 getting the interdepartmental Whitehall piece together
16 seems to be very difficult, for reasons about which
17 I can speculate but I don't know.

18 Indeed, I recall on one occasion going so far in the
19 late summer of 2003, when it was becoming clear that
20 Phase IV was messy, as to making the suggestion there is only
21 one way to do this, and that is to appoint a minister
22 for Iraq. It didn't find a great deal of favour I fear.
23 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Was it more difficult with some bits of
24 Whitehall than others? Were there outliers in this
25 process?

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: The obvious partners in policy terms
2 are the Foreign Office and I think both at the Whitehall
3 end and particularly on the ground the relationship
4 between the diplomat and the military was pretty good in
5 my view.

6 The other major partner, of course, is DFID. That
7 I think went less well. I cut my own teeth on this one
8 in the old organisation of the Overseas Development
9 Agency, which was, of course, within the Foreign Office.
10 There was a step change with the inauguration of the
11 Department for International Development, and a sense
12 that objectives were not aligned as harmoniously as they
13 should have been, because if the United Kingdom sets out
14 on this or that strategic course with some very high
15 stakes, it seems to me it is incumbent upon the whole of
16 the Government machinery to work to that end.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you.

18 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Right. I will turn next to
19 Sir Lawrence Freedman. Lawrie?

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The 1998 strategic defence review
21 and the defence planning assumptions within it set out
22 the readiness assumptions of the armed forces, including
23 obviously for the army. As Commander-in-Chief Land you
24 were responsible for producing trained and equipped
25 units of the British Army able to meet these readiness

1 assumptions. Could you set out what these assumptions
2 were and how well a scenario such as Iraq was
3 encompassed within them?

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I am going to have to dig quite hard
5 here I think. My memory tells me that the defence
6 planning assumptions which had emerged from the
7 strategic defence review of 1997/1998 allowed for, from
8 time to time, a large commitment, which in land force
9 terms was at the divisional level; this was not
10 regarded as anything we could contemplate on an enduring
11 basis, a one-off from time to time, and I think the
12 pattern of operations since the end of the Cold War more
13 or less bears that out.

14 More germanely we would be able to maintain
15 a medium sized commitment, i.e. at brigade level,
16 indefinitely and we could on a one-off basis add a second
17 medium commitment.

18 There was some small print about a small scale,
19 which I honestly now can't remember, but I think it is
20 within the ability to produce a second brigade on
21 a short-term basis.

22 Those were the planning assumptions, and those
23 assumptions are not just a bit of intellectual
24 experiment, because they drive for structures, they
25 drive stocks, they drive equipment. Indeed one is

1 reminded that in terms of geography some rather strange
2 things were said at the end of the Cold War regarding
3 hot and sandy places; and the outcome in terms of size,
4 structure and equipment for Iraq do to a large extent
5 flow from those assumptions.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So how difficult did you find it to
7 see how what was coming up in Iraq in 2003 would fit?

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes --

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you think the capabilities had
10 been developed sufficiently by that time?

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I mean, we became increasingly clear
12 as 2002 passed that -- let us put it no more strongly
13 than this -- the probability of a large scale effort
14 required by the army was increasing and therefore it was
15 prudent obviously to look at how we would meet that, if
16 indeed it materialised into a concrete request.

17 Now the force generation process of that autumn was
18 quite complicated. If my memory serves me right, the
19 initial bid was for a maritime and air component, but
20 really leaving ground forces out of it for reasons which
21 I never quite got to the bottom of. As the autumn
22 progressed the land component came in and started to be
23 looked at, division minus, division, division plus. And,
24 of course, in the autumn it was on the northern axis, as
25 proposed to come in from the north through Turkey.

1 So there was a lot of to-age and fro-age over that
2 force generation process as it became clearer that
3 Turkey was not going to be willing to allow access
4 through its territory for this purpose; and therefore
5 the whole order of battle was in a state of flux until
6 actually, if I remember properly, early 2003.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: When it appeared in the initial
8 planning that there wouldn't be a large land
9 component -- you have indicated you found that
10 puzzling -- what was your own view? Did you think it
11 was important to have a land component?

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, yes. If we leave the politics
13 to one side as far as one is able, if the United Kingdom
14 was to come alongside the United States as the junior
15 partner or the major junior partner -- we keep
16 forgetting I think that there were many other countries
17 involved -- then it seemed to me that part of this
18 strategic purpose here is to influence the major
19 partner's planning and execution. That in my estimate
20 requires a substantial land force contribution.
21 I didn't, I think, Sir Lawrence, quite answer your
22 previous question in full.

23 As we looked at the various permutations were we
24 confident we could put a division into the field? Yes,
25 we were.

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Despite all the other things that
2 were going on?

3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. The real worry was FRESCO, the
4 fire fighters strike, which was taking over 10,000
5 people from the army, but nonetheless we were confident
6 we could put together a large scale commitment.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You have mentioned the importance of
8 being able to influence the Americans. Do you think
9 there was a direct relationship between the size of the
10 military capability we are offering and the amount of
11 influence we get?

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, I think there is actually.

13 traction When you look at which other nations involved got
14 with Washington, I would be hard-pressed to answer that.
15 So I think there is -- it may not be a linear
16 relationship, but there is I think a very firm
17 connection there.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In addition to that sort of purpose
19 how important were questions of morale and the standing
20 of the British Army in terms of wishing to be involved
21 in what was going to be one of the major campaigns of
22 the decade?

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: In terms of morale I am not quite
24 sure I am with you there. Put it like this --

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Geoff Hoon told us he got a sense

1 that the army didn't want to be left out.

2 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think that's fair comment. I was
3 about to say that if you put it the other way round, what
4 would have been the army's sense had the operation gone
5 ahead on the original British offer of a maritime and
6 air component but without a land component? I think the
7 army would have been, to put it mildly, rather
8 disappointed.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How were these sorts of arguments
10 developed, say, within the Army Board and then passed on
11 into the Command Headquarters and into the Whitehall
12 decision-making?

13 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I am not sure I can remember
14 precisely, but I have very little doubt that the Army
15 Board's view would have been as I have just outlined,
16 and therefore the then CGS would have represented that
17 view to the CDS and the Secretary of State.

18 As I say, I never quite got to the bottom of why
19 that opening offer or concept was as it was,
20 but we know what happened, that over the autumn a more
21 balanced contribution came into being.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So your assumption would be it was
23 almost unthinkable that a major operation of this
24 sort --

25 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, unthinkable is quite strong.

1 As I say, I was mystified by the original thinking and
2 did not quite understand it.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: One argument might have been the
4 concern about cost or a concern about the stretch on the
5 army given that there were a number of other operations
6 around at the time that we were still involved in.

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: But, as I have said, none of them
8 would have prevented and didn't, because we know what
9 happened in the end, in terms of, therefore, the burden
10 upon the army.

11 As to the cost, yes, of course it is more expensive
12 if you add in a large land component and you are
13 increasing risk in the sense of certainly casualties,
14 for example.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you have to adjust your planning
16 and training readiness cycles to make this option
17 available? Were there adjustments you had to make?

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, it was an interesting
19 construct in the end, but I am sure you have heard
20 evidence of the formation readiness cycle. So at any
21 one time you had on tap at least one brigade, probably
22 two, who were either at or just coming towards the end
23 of their full training cycle.

24 So in the sense of having a lead army brigade the
25 system allowed for that, but, of course, the eventual

1 construct was a single large, very large armoured
2 brigade, the Air Assault Brigade, which is outside or
3 was outside of the formation readiness cycle, because it
4 was a contingency formation, and then 3 Commando Brigade
5 coming in to make a very interesting divisional
6 construct.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Why was it interesting?

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Because you had a heavy brigade, a
9 light brigade and amphibious brigade under a two-star
10 Headquarters which I don't think we have done before,

but

11 it was the right construct for the task which confronted
12 1 [UK] Armoured Division.

13 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I would like to ask one or two questions
14 about the pre-invasion preparation.

15 We had evidence from Lord Boyce, CDS at the time, of
16 course, that he had not had authority from Ministers to
17 speak even to the Chief of Defence Logistics until quite
18 late in the planning process. General Reith told us
19 that the authorisation for visible preparations came
20 only in December of 2002. Now I think that we
21 understand that the planning assumption for something on
22 the scale then being contemplated was probably six
23 months.

24 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

25 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: In fact there was at best four. Sir Jock

1 Stirrup said that two months would have made a big
2 difference.

3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, it would.

4 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: You agree with that?

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I do. There were political
6 considerations,
7 of course, as the autumn wore on. I understand the
8 sensitivity that the Government did not wish to send
9 signals, as it was put to me, as if war was inevitable.
10 Therefore, as you have heard from more than one
11 witness I think, Sir John, the release of UORs,
12 release of purchasing additional stocks did not take
13 place until December, somewhat late in the day. One
14 obvious example of this was that
15 there was not enough desert combat clothing.

16 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Yes.

17 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: There were 10,000 thereabouts on the
18 stocks, because that's what defence planning assumptions
19 said. We would never put more than a medium commitment
20 into a desert environment, which would be about 10,000,
21 and we put in nearly 40,000, and it was late in the day
22 too.

23 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I was going to come to that particular
24 point not because it is the most important feature of
25 the scene perhaps.

26 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It is symbolic I think.

1 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Indeed. Adam Ingram in his evidence as
2 Minister for the Armed Forces told us that stories about
3 shortages of desert clothing were exaggerated and
4 misrepresented by the media. He said although some
5 troops were deployed in green uniforms there was desert
6 combat uniforms waiting for them in theatre. In effect
7 he said while the situation was not ideal it was not as
8 bad as it was sometimes portrayed. You make the point
9 it was symbolic in terms of how the troops themselves
10 felt.

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. It has I think a connection to
12 the soldier's individual sense of morale and and his
13 readiness to do the job, and doing a job in the desert
14 requires desert combat clothing. I don't know whether
15 they were all in theatre or not. I do remember almost
16 anecdotally, if you like, on my first visit
17 in early March 2003, before the operation began,
18 discussing with my military assistant, my MA, since we
19 both had desert combat kit from previous experiences,
20 whether we should wear it or not, and we decided we
21 wouldn't. It sounds banal, but, you know, one was
22 sensitive to this symbolic dimension of clothing.

23 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Yes. From the very particular to the
24 quite general. Manpower caps. Now I understand it is
25 quite normal to have manpower caps placed on

1 a prospective operation and on the size of the land
2 force to be deployed, but I think it would help us,
3 certainly me, to understand a bit more about the purpose
4 and origin of manpower caps. Are they about money or
5 are they about sustainability or what.

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Sir John, I think you would be
7 better off asking a politician. They are the ones who
8 impose these caps. You are quite right. Historically
9 every operation I have been on there is always
10 an argument about numbers. There was the famous case in
11 Gulf I where a battalion went out and was then sent back
12 again, because basically the army was rumbled I think by
13 the then Secretary of State.

14 On the other hand, would you send the whole
15 British Army, every available man, on every occasion?
16 No, of course you wouldn't.

17 I think there is a combination here between the
18 professional military estimate of what it is going to
19 take to do the job which the politicians have set you,
20 and that will veer towards I suspect, human nature being
21 what it is, the generous, because you want a bit up your
22 sleeve. The politician will be attempting to minimise
23 risk, both of casualties and of money, and therefore
24 this debate will always be there I suspect.

25 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: In the particular case we are discussing

1 is it actually the availability of forces ready for
2 deployment that would influence the setting of a cap?
3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, certainly not on this occasion
4 or really any other I can think of.
5 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I think I just want to ask very briefly
6 about the change in strategy you mentioned from the
7 northern route through to coming up through the Gulf.
8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.
9 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Which was a decision only taken in
10 January of 2003 for an operation to deploy in March.
11 Was that a big risk factor in the preparation or, as
12 it turned out, not?
13 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Do you mean military risk --
14 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Yes.
15 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: -- or logistic risk?
16 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: No, more military risk I think.
17 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I don't think so. If you recall,
18 the northern option was to give a rather more discrete
19 area and mission to the British contingent, which would
20 be operating mainly in Kurdistan. There was a sense
21 that this was more identifiable perhaps as a single
22 national axis and task. I seem to recall there was
23 a concern about a three-star headquarters to run it and
24 we didn't seem to have one. That detail went away as
25 the plan changed.

1 Then there was some quite fast footwork to mesh in
2 the British contingent with the American plan from the
3 south. They too had been looking at the north. It
4 wouldn't have been purely British, but it would have
5 been British command.

6 I think the facts bear it out in the end. You know,
7 we put it together and it worked.

8 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: It worked. Quite. I think the thing
9 that perhaps brings together both the military and the
10 logistic risk aspect of the change to the south -- what
11 about the judgment on overall readiness? There was
12 a foreshortened planning period, heavily foreshortened.
13 Then there was an even more foreshortening of the actual
14 route in and that had big logistic consequences,
15 which --

16 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, actually it was probably
17 logistically simpler. It was a long way from -- I can't
18 remember the port right at the north-east corner
19 of the Mediterranean. It was a long way to the Iraqi
20 border, several hundred miles.

21 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: So the traffic jam around Kuwait at the
22 top of the gulf was not a problem?

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It is always a problem, but I am
24 trying to look at the relative logistic challenge of the
25 two. You had a much longer sea journey but a far, far

1 shorter road line of communication.

2 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Just before I leave it, I want to get
3 clear the notice periods. As we understand the original
4 planning assumptions a large scale deployment should
5 have had nine months at best in the planning
6 assumptions. Eventually it was reduced to four and
7 insofar as the actual route in, it was two.

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Two.

9 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Did that weigh in on the judgment of
10 readiness in late March?

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No.

12 Let me just start with another logistic observation,
13 if I may. Over the winter of 2002/2003 certainly as
14 many people and as much materiel was moved as in Gulf I
15 in half the time, and I think it was rather more
16 materiel. So the logistitions, as ever, pulled their
17 rabbits out of the hat.

18 In terms of your readiness concern, readiness is
19 a concept which derives from state of training, manning,
20 equipment, husbandry, all of that.

21 Where you go is perhaps in this sense less obvious
22 or less important to the fact you are ready. We will
23 not go round the houses of desert equipment again
24 perhaps. We have dealt with that and you could say that
25 was a lacking point of readiness for that particular

1 task, but we look at readiness more as the state of
2 training.

3 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Final point for information for me. Does
4 readiness also imply some assessment of the state of the
5 enemy?

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No.

7 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Ready to deal with X, but not with Y?

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, not in its sort of purest sense
9 of readiness. It is: how well trained are you? Do you
10 have the people? Do you have the equipment? Then you
11 apply that to the particular circumstances.

12 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Yes.

13 We did have evidence from one of the commanders in
14 theatre that signing off on readiness for his level
15 really did take account of the fact that the Iraqi army
16 was pretty much known to be nth rate rather than first
17 rate.

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I now see where you are coming from.
19 So be it. I was trying to give you a generic answer to
20 the conceptual point about readiness.

21 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Sure.

22 Okay. One last point from me. Again this is
23 focusing right down again. We have heard from a number
24 of reservists, particularly those who were deployed as
25 individuals rather than in formed units, that they were

1 not prepared, received, used in a way that made them
2 feel competent as part of the British Army effort. Is
3 that in part a matter of the speed of having to plan,
4 prepare and deploy?

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, I think that's fair, and
6 a degree of political warning, the timeliness of the
7 political decision-making in order to mobilise
8 reservists.

9 We are better than we were certainly. I remember
10 when it first happened in Bosnia was not good at all.
11 There was no real process then. We are better. We have
12 the Reserves Mounting Centre up in Yorkshire somewhere,
13 I have forgotten I am afraid. Chilwell is in my mind.
14 No matter. There is a place where reservists go where
15 they are kitted out, where they are given refresher
training
16 to bring them up to a better speed. I am not saying it
17 is perfect and it won't match to start with their
18 regular counterpart. That said, whilst we are on the
19 subject of reserves, it is striking that you go out
20 and visit and frankly you cannot tell a regular from
21 a reservist. They are absolutely integrated. It is
22 I think a great plaudit to the reserves, to the
23 Territorial Army, how they have switched from the Cold
24 War posture to being part of what the regular army does
25 on a day-to-day basis.

1 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: And am I right to recall that taking part
2 in a larger proportion of the total effort than
3 historically they have ever done in recent times?

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: My sense is 10 per cent is a pretty
5 standard yardstick in terms of proportion.

6 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Within that --

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: That's very rough, of course. What
8 you have in that 10 per cent are some very specialist
9 skills which are held in the reserves for obvious
10 reasons. They are only required from time to time. It
11 would be very expensive to hold them permanently in the
12 regular army.

13 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Thank you. I think we need to turn to
14 the aftermath planning now. Lawrence?

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You have already mentioned your
16 concerns about whether or not Washington had thought
17 this through and I will come back to that in a second.

18 Just to talk first about the UK planning. First as
19 C-in-C Land and then as CGS, what were you being advised
20 about the assumptions about the length and scale of the
21 likely commitment to Iraq by the army beyond the initial
22 invasion?

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I don't think that had been tied
24 down in a sense of: it is going to be that duration, you
25 are going to be there for a year, or whatever the case

1 may be. For those of us perhaps with some experience
2 elsewhere, if there is one thing that stands out, it is
3 may be one thing to defeat by manoeuvre by the armed
4 forces or whatever, but it is quite another thing to
5 re-establish the country concerned into a stable
6 position where it is functioning, it has governance, it
7 has the rule of law. These are very big tasks indeed.

8 You only have to look at the interventions which
9 have taken place since the end of the Cold War. Amongst
10 many other things I think I find self-evident is
11 duration. So I have no memory of any finite time being
12 given to Phase IV.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What about drawing down,
14 disengagement of at least a proportion of our forces?

15 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: There was a very strong sense in
16 Whitehall to bring down the force level as quickly as
17 possible. I think at its height it was about 40,000,
18 all services, mainly army obviously on the ground.
19 That reduced very quickly to something around 15 I think
20 over a matter of almost weeks, if not just a few months.

21 At the time there was a philosophy that -- it stems
22 from the Strategic Defence Review, that what the United
23 Kingdom is good at and should maintain that ability is
24 rapid deployment -- rapid effects, and basically then
25 over to somebody else. You can see some evidence of

hand

1 that in the way we handled Kosovo, but it wasn't going
2 to be the case in Iraq I am afraid.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So did you think this was
4 unrealistic at the time?

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It worried me, and I think my visit
6 reports reflect that. As the honeymoon period came to
7 its all too-rapid end and as violence increased
8 gradually in the late summer of 2003, yes, it was
9 a concern that we would be too thin on the ground.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: We will talk later about what was
11 actually happening after the invasion. I just want to
12 concentrate on the planning at the moment --

13 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Uh-huh.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- as to whether the concerns that
15 you mentioned were --

16 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think it is fair to say certainly
17 I didn't and I don't think anybody said, "You have got
18 this one wrong", that the degree of violence which then
19 ensued was forecast. So it was in a way an assumption
20 that there would be, if not benign, it would be
21 a tolerable security situation in Phase IV.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Again just sticking for the moment
23 with the UK position, General Robin Brims told us prior
24 to the invasion he was not clear what the post-conflict
25 activity was going to be. Had he raised those concerns

1 with you?

2 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I do believe he did, yes.

3 I remember very well, and I have already mentioned the
4 visit I made just after taking over as CGS and before
5 the operation commenced, I spent two or three days
6 with Robin in the Kuwaiti desert. I have no doubt --
7 I can't remember specifically -- that we discussed the
8 aftermath, but you can't -- I would need to give you
9 a rather more exhaustive answer, because -- is this the
10 moment to do it?

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Please do.

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Phase IV planning rested with the
13 State department in Washington throughout 2002 and the
14 Foreign Office were the lead department here in Britain.

15 Then you will recall I think in January, but it was
16 pretty late in the day, the responsibility in Washington
17 shifts from the State department to the Pentagon. My
18 understanding is the State had done a lot of work. My
19 understanding also is that the Pentagon were unimpressed
20 by this work and thought it was perhaps unnecessary.

21 I don't know. I have already mentioned Tim Cross
22 talking with me and saying, you know, he didn't have
23 a sense that the whole matter was being addressed as
24 rigorously as it should have been.

25 So there was concern, yes, that what would Phase IV

1 look like and how was it going to be? The dominant
2 sense in Whitehall was that we were looking at
3 a potential humanitarian problem, not a security
4 problem, and, of course, events showed that there was
5 not a humanitarian problem but there was a security
6 problem after two months or so.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You have made a couple of references
8 to Whitehall. Just to unpick who we are talking about,
9 the last reference presumably you are referring to DFID
10 or --

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, DFID are, of course, the
12 purveyors of humanitarian aid, but I think the
13 Government's concern about Phase IV was a humanitarian
14 disaster, and clearly -- and in particular it wouldn't
15 want to see scenes of human distress on the area which
16 the British were occupying.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: When you referred earlier to
18 pressure from Whitehall on troop numbers, which bit of
19 Whitehall are we talking about?

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I am not sure I can really
21 give you the answer to that. There would be some
22 pressure from within the MoD, but I suspect there was
23 also governmental level pressure as well, but I do not
24 know that.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you have this sort of background

1 concern. You are aware of Robin Brims' uncertainty
2 about what he is supposed to do. There is
3 a humanitarian question which is very short term if it
4 is going to arise.

5 You mention in your book you are clearly aware of
6 the struggles your counterpart in the United States Eric
7 Shinseki had been having with Donald Rumsfeld about
8 troop numbers which was also related to this --

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, about troop numbers.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- troop numbers and the aftermath
11 and how many you might need. What I think -- Lord Boyce
12 has also told us about these sorts of concerns.

13 There was a request from Downing Street for the
14 military to say that there was a workable plan. What's
15 unclear is how there could be a workable plan when all
16 this uncertainty and anxiety surrounded Phase IV.

17 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Part of this is, of course, the
18 difficulty of being the junior partner I think you have
heard evidence to this effect.

20 The chain of command, if you like, or civil
21 administration ran back of course to Baghdad, to ORHA as
22 it was -- have I got the right way round -- ORHA first
23 and then the CPA?

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes.

25 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Therefore it was not easy to run

1 a completely
2 independent operation, both civil and military,
3 in the south. There is an interesting parallel, is
4 there not, with Afghanistan, where there is
5 an inclination for perfectly understandable reasons to
6 look at Helmand as though it was the whole of
7 Afghanistan, as we did with Basra in relation to Iraq,
but it has to fit
8 into the overall campaign plan.

9 I am not sure that does answer the question.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I suppose my question is partly
11 about how serious you thought -- you gave some
12 indication before that you didn't quite envisage how bad
13 it was going to be.

14 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: The security situation, yes.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The security situation, but it is
16 also at what point do you -- do the lights flash red
17 within Whitehall to Government saying, "You should be
18 aware that there is a real danger here of things going
19 very badly wrong afterwards even though we are all
20 confident about what will happen in Phase III".

21 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It's a very intriguing question as
22 to how the warnings and indicators do get through.

23 I mean certainly and I think you have seen them --
24 I wrote fairly comprehensive visit reports each time to
25 try to get a sense of how I felt it was; to say nothing,

1 of course, of the operational chain of command on
2 a day-to-day basis, coming back to PJHQ. Of course, we
3 forget to some extent that in the late 2003/4 the
4 situation got pretty ugly in the so-called Sunni
5 triangle in and around Baghdad. It was not nearly as
6 bad as that in the south. Now there were problems, of
7 course, but the levels of violence were very bad at that
8 time in Baghdad.

9 I don't know the answer to your question actually.
10 I will give it some more thought and see if I can come
11 up with a better ...

12 I think what you are asking me to say is what
13 trigger is there to say to senior level of the MoD,
14 Defence Secretary and then across --

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think it is part of an overall
16 risk assessment. When we are about to enter into
17 a major campaign, when there is considerable confidence
18 about our ability to defeat the enemy in let's say
19 Phase III, but there seems to be widespread concern
20 throughout the senior levels of the armed forces that
21 preparations are inadequate for what's going to follow
22 next.

23 Is it highlighted as a risk to Government from the
24 armed forces?

25 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. I am now with you. Forgive

1 me. I am now clear. We are talking about before,
2 really, rather than in the event.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes.

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. I mean, I can remember saying
5 I think in the chiefs, "Phase III will happen but we
6 should really be worrying more about Phase IV". I think
7 there was a sense as the junior partner we could not
8 really get our hands on the levers which were going to
9 set the atmosphere for Phase IV. And, of course, those
10 worries beforehand were exacerbated by the decisions to
11 disband the Iraqi security forces, to de-Ba'athify right
12 down to a very low level, even talking about
13 privatisation of the state industries, in particular
14 oil, at a time when Iraq had gone through this
15 extraordinary trauma of invasion and defeat of the
16 regime.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: We will talk about those later.

18 Just my final question: to what extent was your thinking
19 on this influenced by the prospect of the UK having its
20 own bit of Iraq in the south-east? I have to say it is
21 still unclear to us the actual decision-making that led
22 to Britain acquiring that particular responsibility.

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I will try to help you as much
24 as I can. It flows, of course, from the strategic
25 decision to ditch the north and come in from the south

1 on the American main access.

2 I suspect what happens -- I don't know, but

3 I suspect what happened I don't think the UK

4 volunteered to go to Baghdad, for example, although

5 there is an interesting side element to that.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: We will come to that.

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: A manoeuvre brigade to Baghdad?

8 Because I think that is quite an interesting area. It

9 is almost inevitable, and really when you think about

10 it I can't think of another way to do it, when you are

11 running a Phase IV situation, wherever it may be, people

12 do finish up with areas of responsibility and it makes

13 huge sense to do that.

14 I think therefore looking beyond Phase III the UK

15 said, "Yes, this is where we are going to finish up at

16 the end of the manoeuvre. It would be sensible to make

17 this our area of responsibility thereafter."

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So one follows logically from the

19 other?

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think so, yes.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you very much.

22 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It seemed to me to be entirely

23 sensible.

24 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: We would like to turn to another aspect

25 of the planning for the aftermath. Martin?

1 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Before we look at the question of how
2 the coalition partners as occupying powers planned to
3 maintain law and order in the aftermath, I would like to
4 ask you what were the MoD's doctrine and also planning
5 assumptions about a military police contribution to the
6 UK's responsibilities under the Hague and Geneva
7 Conventions to maintain law and order in the event that
8 we invaded another country?

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: That's a very interesting question,
10 because there is quite a difference between the British
11 and American approaches here, or there was.

12 Now I think United States have been through quite
13 a doctrinal rethink, but certainly -- and I saw it in
14 the Balkans as well -- when it comes to public order and
15 the indigenous police force don't exist or they are not
16 capable, it was the American way to use military police
17 in this role.

18 We don't have the mass to be able to do that, and --
19 just as in Northern Ireland, an infantry soldier or
20 indeed any soldier who finds himself on the street or
21 whatever acts partly as a policeman. The Royal Military
22 Police for us are in a rather more specialist role.
23 They have their internal disciplinary function, a very
24 important one. They have a professional mentoring
25 function within the indigenous police force, but the

1 sense of using military police as if they were civil
2 police in those numbers is not an option for us. We
3 just don't have that number.

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: There had been, of course in Germany in
5 1945 -- this is probably the last occasion when it
6 obtained, that the Royal Military Police were
7 responsible for maintaining law and order.

8 What had happened in the meantime to change that?

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: The difference between an army of
10 1 million plus and one of 100,000 I suspect. Just
11 numbers. I mean, I don't know off the top of my head
12 how many Royal Military Police there are in the army but
13 at the most it would have been 2,000 or 3,000, something
14 of that order.

15 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Can you tell us at what point in the
16 planning that discussions began about how we would
17 fulfil our responsibilities for law and order?

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It is something the British Army has
19 been doing really since the then period of deployment in
20 Northern Ireland began in 1969. I think it was taken as
21 almost a sine qua non that we know how to do this in
22 terms of public order. Northern Ireland, Bosnia,
23 Kosovo. It is not as if we were without experience
24 I think in how to handle this.

25 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: What assumptions were being made about

1 who would fulfil these responsibilities?

2 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Oh, well, that would be manoeuvre

3 units in their own area of responsibility.

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Were you satisfied we had sufficient

5 resources in the aftermath to do that, given the notable

6 drawdown?

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. I mean, I have already said

8 I think the speed of the drawdown after Phase III, you

9 know, I was a little wary, but, of course, that took

10 place in the honeymoon period, which lasted, if my

11 memory serves me right, for about two months or so in

12 the south, maybe a little longer. It was not until

13 that point that violence really started in the south, by

14 which time that major drawdown had already taken place

15 and there was inevitable reluctance I think to go back

16 up again.

17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

18 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Right. Moving on now, Usha, for you,

19 legal issues.

20 BARONESS PRASHAR: Yes, indeed. As part of the planning

21 I want to turn to legal issues.

22 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Sorry, Baroness. To?

23 BARONESS PRASHAR: Legal issues. In your autobiography,

24 "Soldier", you say that the Chiefs of Staff discussed

25 the question on legal basis for military action and

1 collectively agreed that you needed to be sure of your
2 ground. I think this led to General Boyce seeking the
3 Attorney General's assurance on the legality. Was it
4 after Lord Goldsmith's advice on 7 March in which he
5 said a reasonable argument could be made that no further
6 resolution would be necessary to authorise the use of
7 force?

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Was what after that?

9 BARONESS PRASHAR: Did Lord Boyce see the Attorney --

10 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

11 BARONESS PRASHAR: -- after 7 March?

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No.

13 BARONESS PRASHAR: When was it?

14 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: If I get the sequence right, the
15 Attorney published I think in February a discursive, if
16 I may call it that --

17 BARONESS PRASHAR: That's right.

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: -- opinion in which he laid out the
19 arguments both for and against the legal status of
20 a decision to invade Iraq without coming to a judgment
21 in the matter. We all know lawyers, do we not? On the
22 one hand, and then upon the other, with the greatest
23 respect.

24 It was subsequent to that document, which was
25 available to the Chiefs, that we discussed the matter

1 and said, "This is not enough". Admiral Boyce
2 particularly, obviously as the CDS who would give the
3 executive order for deployment, sought more -- what is
4 the best way of putting this -- a not only clearer but
5 definitive statement of legality, and that led to the
6 second, much shorter, document which you are perfectly
7 well aware of, I am sure, Baroness.

8 BARONESS PRASHAR: Indeed.

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Where the Attorney concluded that
10 the so-called second resolution was not strictly
11 necessary. I say so-called, because, of course, there
12 had already been 17 resolutions at this point. The
13 'second' resolution description seems to me to be
14 a reflection of the politics, the national politics of
15 the time rather than an accurate historical count.

16 BARONESS PRASHAR: So you did see the longer document that
17 Lord Goldsmith had written in February?

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

19 BARONESS PRASHAR: Then you also saw the one on 7 March.

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

21 BARONESS PRASHAR: But you did say Lord Goldsmith did
22 provide an assurance in the form of a letter dated
23 14 March to the MoD legal adviser, and you say in your
24 biography again:

25 "Notwithstanding the Attorney General's advice that

1 the war was legal, you decided to do your own homework."

2 What research did you undertake?

3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I looked at the sequence of events
4 both in the Gulf itself in and around Iraq and what
5 occurred at the United Nations. We start with 678,
6 which is the reaction of the Security Council to Saddam
7 Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. The next important one is
8 687, which is the UN's imprimatur on the ceasefire
9 agreement which was concluded between the coalition and
10 Iraqi chains of command at the end of Gulf War I, if
11 I may use that phrase.

12 I underline ceasefire, because that's what it was
13 and that's what it remains, or did remain until
14 a complete new legal basis was established with the
15 arrival of an independent and sovereign Iraqi
16 Government.

17 687 laid down a number of conditions. I think there
18 were about 12 of them. Obligations laid upon
19 Saddam Hussein, which over the next decade or more he
20 basically ignored. I already reflected that we come to
21 1441, the 17th -- I think I am right on that number --
22 it may be 16 but of that order. So between the real
23 second, 687, and the 16th, there are, whatever it is, 14
24 resolutions, all of which are saying to him, "You have
25 not done that which you contracted to do. You must do

1 it".

2 In my view he was in defiance of the United Nations
3 for those 12 years, whatever it was. As far as I am
4 concerned it seemed to me that this defiance eroded the
 authority of the United Nations.

8 So I concluded. Being aware of the fact we are
9 signatories to the International Criminal Court, I did
10 not wish to become the neighbour of the man I had a bit
11 of a part in putting there, Slobodan Milosevic.

12 BARONESS PRASHAR: Can you recall when you did this
13 research? Was it before or after the letter that had
14 been received by the MoD legal adviser on 14 March?

15 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I can't. It is probably before,
16 during and after I think.

17 BARONESS PRASHAR: So you were actually trying to satisfy
18 yourself along with the opinion you were getting from
19 the Attorney General?

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

21 BARONESS PRASHAR: Thank you very much.

22 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I might just add a coda. I'd been
23 through a similar personal experience when it came to

Kosovo.

24 BARONESS PRASHAR: So you did that at that stage as well?

25 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It depends on your view of the then

1 emerging doctrine now known as Responsibility to
2 Protect, although that phrase had not been invented at
3 the time of Kosovo, the prevention of humanitarian
4 disaster.

5 BARONESS PRASHAR: Can you recall any other occasion when
6 such an assurance was sought from the Attorney General?

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It was sought for Kosovo.
8 I remember reading it.

9 BARONESS PRASHAR: Okay. Can I now move on to the
10 sustainability of military commitment, because on the
11 eve of the invasion, that was on 19 March, the Foreign
12 and Defence Secretaries wrote to the Prime Minister and
13 I quote:

14 "It will be necessary to draw down our current
15 commitment to nearer a third by no later than autumn in
16 order to avoid long-term damage to the armed forces.
17 Keeping forces in Iraq would be outside our current
18 defence planning assumptions."

19 Were you involved in the provision of this advice?

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I imagine that I would have been
21 insofar as one of the duties of the Chiefs of Staff is
22 to assist the Chief of Defence Staff to formulate his
23 military advice to the Government. The language is
24 quite dramatic. I am not sure I would have used that
25 language myself.

1 BARONESS PRASHAR: I mean, apart from the language being
2 dramatic, did it strike you as being quite late in the
3 day to offer the advice? I mean this is on the eve of
4 the invasion, 19 March?

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, not particularly. It is very
6 difficult I think -- where are we now -- some -- it is
7 eight years on, isn't it?

8 BARONESS PRASHAR: It is.

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It is difficult to go back to that
10 atmosphere, but the primary consideration prior to D
11 Day, 19 March, was: can we do
12 the military task immediately in front of us, i.e. defeat
13 Saddam Hussein's forces in the field?

14 What is now obvious, and of germane concern to the
15 Inquiry, are the problems of Phase IV. At the time
16 there were concerns, but,
17 to use the phrase, it wasn't the wolf that
18 was nearest to the sledge that was defeating
19 conventionally Saddam Hussein's forces.

20 BARONESS PRASHAR: You said you were concerned about the
21 aftermath. Had you personally raised these concerns
22 about exceeding the defence planning assumptions before?
23 With whom and to what effect?

24 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Baroness, the defence planning
25 assumptions I think arrived with the strategic defence
review in 1998 and I think we have been outside of the

1 assumptions ever since they were published.

2 BARONESS PRASHAR: You mean from day one?

3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Pretty much, yes, yes. We were
4 running operations outside of the envelope defined by
5 those assumptions which we talked about earlier on in
6 terms of simultaneity and all of that, and size.

7 BARONESS PRASHAR: But were you involved in advising the
8 ministers just how quickly the forces would be
9 withdrawn, or did you make clear to them?

10 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Without doubt it would have been
11 discussed in the Chiefs, and I suspect I expressed the
12 same sort of reservations that I have expressed today.
13 But, you know, the Chiefs operate by consensus, and

indeed

14 formally it is the Chief of the Defence Staff who
15 carries the responsibility of the military advice,
16 having, of course, discussed it with his single service
17 chiefs.

18 BARONESS PRASHAR: But, I mean, you said earlier that the
19 security situation deteriorated and we had already too
20 few troops left. You know, there was a drawdown from
21 about 40,000 you said to about 15?

22 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I would have thought that occurred
23 probably May/June, by May/June.

24 BARONESS PRASHAR: So what were the operational implications
25 of this? I mean, was this discussed, understood?

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, that was always the intention,
2 because the large scale concept -- in
3 in land component terms we are talking probably around
4 30,000 or 25 certainly -- the concept is you put in that
5 large commitment on a one-off basis and then you must
6 then downsize, because the army cannot sustain
7 a deployment of 25,000 to 30,000 indefinitely.

8 BARONESS PRASHAR: So in other words that was already the
9 plan?

10 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. I mean, I think that's
11 perfectly fair. Yes.

12 BARONESS PRASHAR: Okay. Thank you.

13 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I think we are getting into the reality
14 of the aftermath now. Before we break in a few minutes,
15 I will ask Sir Martin Gilbert to take us into it.
16 Martin?

17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: We published today on our website some
18 declassified extracts from the visit report you wrote on
19 your return to the United Kingdom from Iraq in May 2003.
20 In it you say:
21 "Although it is only about 30 plus days since combat
22 operations ceased, public perception and expectation is
23 critical in maintaining security. This situation is
24 compounded by comprehensive stripping of public sector
25 infrastructure, inability to pay public sector

1 employees, a lack of NGO support and planning and
2 a complete lack of direction and effective action from
3 ORHA."

4 My first question is: had any of these circumstances
5 been anticipated in advance? Had there been any sort of
6 discussion of this type of scenario?

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Not in the degree to which events
8 actually occurred. As I have said, I don't think
9 anybody forecast the severity of inter-ethnic violence
10 which occurred, Sunni/Shia.

11 The looting was far less a phenomenon in the south
12 than it was in and around Baghdad, I think.

13 I mean, there was a honeymoon period in the south.
14 I mean, I can remember walking through the souk without
15 body armour, without a steel helmet, indeed buying
16 a carpet I think, but that did not last for very long.
17 I think it is fair to say that nobody that I am aware of
18 in an official capacity at any rate -- perhaps there
19 were some Arabists who might have had their own views on
20 the matter foresaw that within three months we would be
21 facing a situation as raw as it became.

22 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: During the visit itself were you being
23 told anything about the possibility of a further serious
24 deterioration of the security situation?

25 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Not in early visits, not in the

1 south, but yes, because you had the ethnic problem in
2 Baghdad and around, which you didn't have in the same
3 way at all in southern Iraq.

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How did you feel this would impact on
5 our position there?

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Sorry? What would impact?

7 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: The worsening of the security situation
8 in the centre of Baghdad.

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, we had to come off that
10 initial rather soft profile that was being rightly in my
11 judgment used by British soldiers on the ground as the
12 security situation worsened .We started having to use
13 armoured vehicles, etc, etc. In other words, a rather
14 harder profile, and one which gives you a difficult
15 balance as between maintaining security, maintaining
16 your own protection and the effect upon the consent or
17 otherwise of the population, so-called hearts and minds
18 a difficult balance to strike.

19 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

20 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Are you done, Martin?

21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Yes.

22 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I think this is a good moment to have
23 a break of about ten minutes. Thank you.

24 (3.10 pm)

25 (A short break)

1 (3.20pm)

2 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: We will restart and Sir Roderic Lyne will
3 continue the questions.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You have described the situation in which
5 in 2003/4 the Americans were facing a much worse
6 situation in Baghdad than we were having to cope with in
7 MND South East.

8 Were they asking us to help reinforce them further
9 north?

10 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: On one occasion the answer to that
11 is yes, and I think this was May 2003 possibly even late
12 April. In other words very
13 soon after the conclusion of the conventional manoeuvre
14 operations. When the American army was relatively thin
15 on the ground -- when I say relatively, compared to
16 what it became later in Baghdad, because of their own
17 force flow and there was, as we know, very considerable
18 disorder, some of it pretty violent, in Baghdad whilst
19 the south was relatively benign.

20 My memory tells me that there was a proposal,
21 I think coming from theatre itself, that Britain could
22 help out by sending a brigade up to the Baghdad area,
23 obviously for a limited period of time, but to help out
24 in a deteriorating security situation. That proposal
25 did not find favour in London.

1 SIR RODERIC LYNE: This was based not just on numbers
2 I believe but also on techniques that they were still --
3 the Americans were very much war-fighting troops.
4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.
5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: They were partly wanting, as I understand
6 it, to draw on our experience of stabilisation.
7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think that's perfectly fair.
8 There were those two planks. One, that they were
9 relatively thin on the ground and, secondly, at that
10 time -- although I for one acknowledge just how much the
11 US Army has hoisted in the lessons of that time and
12 changed its doctrine
13 looking for experience of how to
14 handle that sort of street disorder. I think that's
15 the origin of the proposal that this should take place.
16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Who in London turned it down?
17 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I didn't. That's for sure.
18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You were in favour of it, were you?
19 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I was in favour. My recollection is
20 that I was a lone voice in the Chiefs of Staff.
21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: It was the Chiefs rather than the
22 political --
23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, there would have been
24 a political view as well.
25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: The chiefs recommended against it?

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: That's my recollection. Which would
2 probably I suspect have chimed with the political mood,
3 which was, "We have done what we said we would do. We
4 are in the south and that's where we going to stay".

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Isn't that a bit odd? We have gone there
6 in large numbers --

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think it is a bit myopic. I have
8 already made the point that Basra and southern Iraq is
9 not Iraq. Far from it. We should have been looking at
10 the campaign as a whole, but it didn't happen.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You were outvoted.

12 Now we heard this morning from your successor,
13 General Dannatt, that the following spring, around
14 March/April 2004, there was a proposal which he said --
15 because he at that time was out at Rheindahlen as the
16 Commander-in-Chief of the ARRC. He was rung up by
17 General Richards who at the time was ACGS --

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: He was my right-hand man.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: -- to be told that the Chiefs that day
20 had discussed six possible options for dealing with the
21 situation in Iraq, or dealing actually with a request
22 from the United States to us to take command of nine
23 Shia provinces, and the chiefs looked at six possible
24 options, three of which would have involved deploying
25 the ARRC to Iraq.

1 These also did not fly. Can you recall that
2 sequence of events and --

3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Not as clearly as I can the brigade
4 that we have just spoken about, but I do recall there
5 was much discussion about what was the
6 optimum Command and Control laydown for Iraq. It
7 changed a lot as the situation changed.

8
9 I don't want to repeat what you have heard elsewhere,
10 but, of course, you had a four-star Force Commander over
11 a single three-star Corps Commander. The argument goes
12 you could have put in another three-star
13 headquarters without any difficulty, and perhaps there is
14 some advantage.

15 There are political problems with deploying the
16 Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, because, of course, it's
17 a NATO Headquarters and this was not a NATO operation;
18 and some NATO members -- how to put it -- saw the
19 operation in different political terms than Britain.

20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But we were a year on now. Some of these
21 wounds had been healed --

22 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Some, yes.

23 SIR RODERIC LYNE: -- and we had new UN Security Council
24 Resolutions and so on?

25 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Again, my own view I am pretty

1 certain, was: we should look at this very carefully. If
2 this is an advantage, if this will give us a better
3 Command and Control laydown, then we should look at it
4 very carefully. But again I don't think there was much
5 appetite for doing more outside of southern Iraq as the
6 boundaries were then.

7 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So we had invested fairly heavily, partly
8 because we wanted to be influential in this operation,
9 but we weren't really prepared to add to our investments
10 in terms of our standing, our leverage with the
11 Americans and so on.

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: One of the --

13 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And then our contribution to the overall
14 success of the operation. The Americans wanted this but
15 we were not ready to do it?

16 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: There was no great appetite.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: No appetite?

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Again I suspect it is about
19 political risk. I spoke
20 positively of how you lay down a force within
21 an internal security situation in that the division will
22 have its own area of responsibility, and then below that
23 the brigade and battalions, etc. All of that makes
24 entire sense.

25 When you bring in the national dimension, they

1 become almost sort of extensions of national territory.
2 They can be seen politically in that way, which is
3 actually a disadvantage to looking at the campaign as
4 a whole. You know, the boundary between southern Iraq,
5 the British area of responsibility and the rest of Iraq
6 was not an international border, but at times it began
7 to feel a bit like that -- and not just Iraq, I have seen
8 it in the Balkans and elsewhere as well.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: When you talk about political risk,
10 politically by this stage the Iraq war had become pretty
11 unpopular.

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Certainly the mood was changing. We
13 should remember opinion polls were saying two to one in
14 favour.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: In the spring of 2004?

16 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, at the time of the operation
17 commencement.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: That is what I mean. There had been
19 a change over those 12 months.

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. Indeed. I am just calibrating
21 that.

22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Yes. So the political calculus was
23 different. As General Dannatt told us, what then
24 happened was the Prime Minister and others had to go off
25 to G8 summits and so on ending up with the NATO summit

1 at which it was decided that the ARRC would deploy not
2 to Iraq but to Afghanistan in 2006 together with
3 a substantial contingent of British forces.

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Uh-huh.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So we had finessed this. Afghanistan it
6 would appear had become a more popular conflict at this
7 stage than Iraq. Was that your sense?

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. I would not perhaps put it in
9 quite those words myself, but I understand the thought
10 that lies behind it.

11 I have already made the point that the ARRC is NATO
12 Headquarters and Iraq was not a NATO operation, whereas
13 Afghanistan at that point was planning to become one.
14 You know, the ARRC is a jewel in the NATO Command and
15 Control crown, and it was an obvious move to spot the
16 ARRC as the Headquarters to start this change off.

17 As to the broader point about acceptability,
18 I can but agree with you that as Iraq went on
19 without visible real -- in the sense of how it is seen
20 by the public -- improvement, its approval ratings went
21 down.

22 Equally I think there is a sense that then,
23 certainly, Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban was
somewhat
24 put on the bank burner; there was an increasing
acknowledgment
25 that the Taliban had been defeated but they had not been

around

1 destroyed; and that they had spent the intervening years
2 reorganising and retraining and all of that; and that
3 the minimalist international military force which had
4 been in Iraq from 2002/3/4, ISAF, more or less in and

5 Kabul itself, and then the Provincial Reconstruction
6 Teams throughout the country, not manoeuvre forces but
7 just a presence to help, were not enough. More was going
8 to have to be done.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Would it be too conspiratorial to suggest
10 that we were in the dog house with the Americans for
11 turning them down over their request to send the ARRC to
12 Iraq but got ourselves out of it by our decision on
13 Afghanistan?

14 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I don't know.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But, I mean, how we stood with the
16 Americans was important to you, as you have already
17 said. You don't recall on this?

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No. Certainly it never struck my
19 mind there was a conspiracy afoot, no. I mean ...

20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Political calculus.

21 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Perhaps.

22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Some voices in the MoD, I think Sir Kevin
23 Tebbit, if I remember his evidence correctly, was one,
24 were concerned that we would be overstretching ourselves
25 by going into Afghanistan before we had finished the job

remember

1 in Iraq but here was the decision point. Where did you
2 stand on that decision?

3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: The planning for the NATO

4 involvement, the NATO takeover in Afghanistan, if I

5 rightly, started in 2005, maybe a little earlier;

6 there was a very intricate plan whereby NATO would take

7 over operations in Afghanistan on a province by province

8 basis, working, if it makes any sense, in

9 an anti-clockwise direction north around west, south

10 eventually south-east and the Pakistan border, and with

11 Helmand being in that plan for the summer of 2006. In

12 2004 the British planning assumptions were that we would

13 be either out of Iraq or down to a training team ,a large

14 training team basis, but we would not be conducting

15 operations. We know that those conditions were not

16 met --

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I will come back to --

18

19 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: -- but that was the assumption. Is

20 that enough or do you want -- there is another --

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I am going to come back to that a bit

22 later on.

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: There is another factor which

24 I would want to ...

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Please do. No, no. Sorry.

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: You might be thinking that when it
2 became clear that the Iraq drawdown timetable had
3 slipped and was not, therefore, going to fit the initial
4 deployment into Afghanistan, one should delay
5 Afghanistan; but we were part of this major NATO plan
6 with a great impetus and momentum behind it, and so we
7 did find ourselves for 18 months or so I think it was,
8 having to balance off these two theatres.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you.

10 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Let's turn now to further into the Iraq
11 campaign and Lawrence, over to you I think.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: A major tenet of the strategy when
13 you were CGS was Iraq-isation. On 21 January 2004 you
14 wrote, on return from Iraq:

15 "The new Iraqi Army remains embryonic. It is
16 important that perceptions of those unaccustomed to the
17 provision of combat power are not seduced into believing
18 the NIA will be an effective guarantor in the short
19 term."

20 What prompted you to form this view?

21 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I cannot now remember what my
22 thought process was, though I felt it right to remind or
23 to flag up to anybody reading that report that we should
24 not overestimate the speed with which we can rebuild the
25 Iraqi security forces.

1 I suspect at the back of my mind was the requirement
2 to give reality to this rather than any rose-tinted
3 spectacles, and that it was embryonic at that time.
4 I visited, I think it was 10 Division, who were in the
5 south at that point. Every time I went I would visit
6 them. Indeed, I went to the "Royal Military Academy"
7 Baghdad every time, the Officer Training School, which
8 was framework British-led, because there is the seed
9 corn of the leadership of the Iraqi Army of the future.
10 It was at times two steps forward, one step back to
11 rebuild an army.
12 Many of them were still smarting from being sacked.
13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So did this suggest to you that the
14 problem was the timescale of the policy or that the
15 policy itself was flawed?
16 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, no, timescale. Timescale,
17 Sir Lawrence.
18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So by this time it is known there is
19 going to be a transfer of civil authority away from the
20 CPA. Did this create concerns about how arrangements
21 for security and wider law reform would be managed after
22 the end of the CPA?
23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I am so sorry. I haven't quite got
24 that.
25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How concerned were you about what

1 would happen after the CPA handed over --

2 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: What, to the Iraqi Government?

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- to the Iraqi Government, yes.

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Oh, no. My sense was that:to hold

5 a referendum on the constitution, to hold initial

6 elections and to see a properly arrived at Iraqi

7 Government was a huge step towards achieving the overall

8 strategic objective. The CPA was symbolic of a legal

9 regime occupation, which in today's world has a very

10 harsh ring about it. It was inevitable, because that was

11 the state in law, in international law

12 when the border was crossed for heaven's sake; but the

13 sooner we got out of being occupiers, and rather being
there by

14 the consent and invitation of a duly and properly

15 elected Iraqi Government -- this was a huge

16 step along the road we needed to travel.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But did you think they could cope

18 with the law and order issues they would then face?

19 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, if you remember, there were

20 very careful memoranda of understanding as between the

21 new government and the coalition forces in order to

22 finesse perhaps differing views or positions on

23 authority for law and order, and that changed as things

24 went on. You remember we then come to the province by

25 province handover, etc. But I regarded the arrival of

1 that first elected government, as I say, as a huge
2 stride in the right direction.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So if we then move into that period,
4 April 2005 you wrote on return from a further visit to
5 Iraq that:

6 "In contrast to the satisfactory progress with the
7 development of the Iraqi Army, the lack of discernible
8 progress with the IPS [the police force] is alarming.
9 It could become our Achilles' heel because without an
10 effective IPS, not to mention a criminal justice system,
11 there can be no rule of law, a prerequisite for our
12 eventual military disengagement."

13 Then you went on to comment that the UK civilian
14 policing effort both in scale and effort was not, in
15 your view, correct for Iraq.

16 This is not as we have heard a view that the
17 civilian police advisors themselves felt was shared by
18 their Iraqi colleagues. So could you please expand
19 a bit on this.

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: In my experience rebuilding an army
21 is a simpler task than rebuilding a police force. Why
22 is that? I think it is different motives. In any
23 society a soldier will be differently motivated to
24 a policeman, so I don't want to be simplistic, but
25 I often would talk to Iraqi soldiers and officer cadets

1 and officers under training, you know, "Why have you
2 come back into the Iraqi Army?", "Because I wish to
3 serve the new Iraq". I don't think they were spinning
4 a line. This was a genuine sense of wanting to be part
5 of a far better future for the country than had been the
6 past, and therefore coming with a sense of national
7 identity.

8 The police, of course, are local and regional, and
9 in a country, any country or state which has ethnic
10 divisions, there can be difficulties with getting
11 a police force who see their *raison d'etre* as the rule
12 of law within the country as a whole, rather than local
13 advantage perhaps here or there. So getting a new
14 police force in a divided society which is raw, as Iraq
15 was at that time, to act on behalf of all Iraqis and not
16 just their own tribe is a far bigger and more difficult
17 challenge than it is for soldiers. I think this is what
18 lay at the bottom of that sort of observation from me,
19 because certainly the police in Saddam Hussein's time
20 had been used to behaving in a completely lawless way
21 without regard to the law. They would run it as they
22 chose, steal money and all the rest of it, corrupt.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You commented the British Army were
24 *de facto* in the lead on policing but, "Without
25 appropriate funding and resources". We have heard from

1 a number of other witnesses that the military resources,
2 human, financial, logistical, vastly outstripped those
3 of the civilian effort on policing.

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I agree.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Particularly that of the advisers.

6 We have also had a considerable volume of evidence that
7 despite having many strengths the military does not
8 necessarily possess the skills to carry out policing
9 tasks. Was that what you were alluding to when you
10 mentioned the army lacked the resources to fill the
11 tasks?

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: In terms of police instructors from
13 Britain or where else to assist the Iraqi police force,
14 there were very few in number, but I think you have
15 heard evidence from senior policemen. I have in mind
16 50-odd, something of that nature.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That was in Jordan, yes, doing the
18 training.

19 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, that's not enough to go
20 hands-on training. It is enough to set policy,
21 programmes and all the rest of it, but to do the actual
22 hands-on work, that is by no means enough.

23 So by default a lot of this fell to the coalition,
i.e. in
24 this case British soldiers, which is not ideal. I accept
25 that entirely. A soldier is not the ideal instructor

1 for a policeman, but he is better than nothing, and this
2 goes back to where we were rather earlier. Our ability
3 nationally to bring all the sinews together to achieve
4 the effect we wish, you know, leaves something to be
5 desired. There is a constitutional problem here, and
6 that is, of course, armed policemen, but I am sure you
7 have heard evidence to that effect.

8 It is very interesting that in the Balkans as well
9 we had this problem, and this is where the one then
10 police force within the United Kingdom which routinely
11 carried arms, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, came in.

They

12 produced a lot of instructors. That has now changed.
13 So there are some in-built difficulties in this
14 particular area at least.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I mean, in talking to Sir Martin
16 before the break you mentioned the qualities of the
17 British Army when having to do policing-type law and
18 order jobs in Northern Ireland --

19 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: And elsewhere.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- and elsewhere, but you don't
21 necessarily think this was something that was the basis
22 for instruction and wasn't something that could be
23 passed on in that way. It could be argued that if the
24 army had that quality then they would be able to help
25 with police instruction.

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: If we had the quality?

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: If we were able to do policing
3 ourselves --

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I beg your pardon. Yes, but the
5 "policing" that soldiers do is far from ideal policing.
6 Ideal policing is when there are no soldiers there at
7 all, which is where we got to in Northern Ireland, thank
8 heavens, after a long haul.

9 I think my point is where you have considerable
10 public disorder and violence being used, the policeman
11 goes nearer to, if you like, the gendarmerie approach
12 than the unarmed constable patrolling the High Street.

13 Equally, well, an army in those circumstances will
14 also come towards the gendarmerie approach. I mean, in
15 Northern Ireland we were not fighting a conventional
16 enemy by manoeuvre warfare. Far from it. So that's the
17 common ground in a situation whereby you have to
18 whatever extent the use of firearms, explosives, etc.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you. Just one final question.
20 You said on your return from Iraq in October 2005:

21 "Though there was no sense of defeatism in theatre,
22 the possibility of strategic failure was mentioned in
23 earnest on this visit more than on any before."

24 It just might be useful for you to say: did you
25 believe the situation was recoverable?

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The next question: what did you
3 suggest we should do about it?

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, it wasn't what we should do in
5 terms of the UK. It was a question of the campaign as
6 a whole. Perhaps it is worth me saying for those who
7 may read or listen that every time I went to Iraq I did
8 not only go to the south. I would also go at least to
9 Baghdad, and sometimes to further flung places as well.

10 Therefore a lot of the concerns, such as the one you
11 have just mentioned, and certainly I think on this
12 occasion, more reflect the sense I found in Baghdad than
13 in the south; in late autumn 2005 things in the
14 Sunni triangle were not looking good. We had Fallujah
15 and all of that, and I think in Baghdad there was worry.
16 I don't think I sensed that in the south.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What about the point that you
18 retired in the summer of 2006? What then were your
19 views of the prospects of the campaign?

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think my sense was: we have got to
21 see this through. It has got a little better than it
22 had been, but this was before General David Petraeus'
23 influence on the situation. But at all costs we must
24 see this through. I don't think I sensed on leaving
25 office in the summer of 2006 that we were staring

1 failure in the face. We were not there, nor had we
2 been.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Okay. Thank you very much.

4 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Turning back to Sir Roderic Lyne.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: As the situation became more difficult,
6 were the commanders on the ground, for example, when you
7 met them -- did they feel able to ask you for
8 reinforcements to help them cope with it?

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. I am sure on each and every
10 occasion there would have been much discussion about
11 force levels and all of that. If behind the question,
12 Sir Roderic, is: was there a specific request for this
13 or that? Not that I can recall, other than helicopter
14 lift was -- but I know you have heard a lot of evidence
15 about that -- but in terms of additional forces on the
16 ground I don't recall a specific request. But you have
17 spoken to just about every ground commander, so I hope
18 I am right in that --

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Yes. I mean, we were --

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: -- recollection.

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: -- discussing with your successor this
22 morning a specific request that was made in his time,
23 but, as you told me a few minutes ago, from 2004 the
24 assumption was that by 2006 our numbers would have been
25 drawn down very, very considerably.

1 How strong in your time in office were the political
2 pressures on you to get those numbers down, to effect
3 a drawdown and transition to the Iraqi control, at least
4 in our area of the MND South East.

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: The drawdown took place as we have
6 discussed over a pretty short period of time, pretty
7 shortly after the end of the manoeuvre phase. We then
8 stayed at around more or less I think 12,000, 10,000,
9 that sort of number, almost throughout until really
10 towards the end of the British deployment.

11 So I don't recall there being huge pressure to
12 reduce further on how MND South East stabilised in
13 numbers and certainly I would have resisted it,
14 had it been the case.

15 Was there a sense in London and Whitehall of wanting
16 to bring the British deployment to an end? Yes, I think
17 there was, not least because of the commitment towards
18 Afghanistan.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Perhaps this is a good point then to come
20 into the interplay between those two commitments.
21 Again, as we heard from your successor this morning, but
22 talking about the period leading up to 2006, the way he
23 described it was that in about 2005 we had a policy
24 intended to withdraw our forces from Iraq and make the
25 transition to Iraqi control in our area of operations,

1 but we simultaneously faced a situation in which the
2 situation in the south-east began to deteriorate very
3 seriously. The insurgency there came up and hit us.
4 This happened while we were preparing through 2005 to
5 make the deployment that took place in the middle of
6 2006 to Afghanistan.

7 As Sir Richard Dannatt put it, this had created the
8 risk of a perfect storm coming to fruition around 2006
9 as, in his view, it did.

10 Now when ministers took their decision on
11 Afghanistan, were they advised, and did they appreciate
12 that they were cutting off their options in Iraq by the
13 decision to make this large deployment to Afghanistan?

14 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: The decision regarding what part
15 Britain would play within the NATO adoption of the
16 campaign in Afghanistan I think was made in 2004, late
17 2004. I could stand to be corrected there, but that's
18 my --

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: That corresponds with what your successor
20 said to us this morning.

21 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: You see, at that time it was not
22 unreasonable to have forecast Iraq drawn down to
23 probably a few hundred, if that, by the time we had
24 signed up to deploy under the NATO Afghanistan plan.

25 The quandary, the being squeezed from two sides was

1 that in reality the Iraqi timetable did not run as had
2 been forecast, as I said a moment ago, by which time
3 there was much momentum behind the NATO plan, and
4 I think the view was we could not suddenly put up our
5 hand and say, "We can't do this in Afghanistan", because
6 it was not just a matter of us. It would have been, you
7 know, the whole NATO effort in that country, which would
8 have been quite severely disrupted.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But did the Prime Minister and Defence
10 Secretary, when they agreed to that, understand that
11 they had cut off the option of having substantial troop
12 numbers remain in Iraq should the assumption that Iraq
13 was going to go smoothly turn out to be wrong? Did they
14 appreciate they had lost the option?

15 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I don't think I can answer that as
16 to quite how the -- that risk was put to the Prime
17 Minister, because I didn't do that.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Would you not have put it to the Defence
19 Secretary?

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Oh, yes. I would love to have
21 the minutes of the Chiefs of Staff meeting concerned
22 with me but I dare say they are available to you.
23 I suspect what would have been said would be something
24 along the lines of, "Yes, we can do our part in the NATO
25 Afghanistan plan provided that we get the drawdown in

1 Iraq done, and if it is not done, there will be very
2 considerable risk in this". I suspect it was that sort
3 of advice which would have gone up.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: John Reid actually asked for specific
5 assurances that we could handle both situations from the
6 Chiefs of Staff.

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, at a pinch, as we had to.

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And he was told --

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Considerable pinch.

10 SIR RODERIC LYNE: He was told by the CDS in writing on
11 19 September 2005:

12 "Our ability to fulfil our plan in Afghanistan is
13 not predicated on withdrawal of such capabilities from
14 Iraq and, notwithstanding these qualifications, in the
15 event that our conditions-based plan for progressive
16 disengagement for withdrawal from southern Iraq is
17 delayed, we will still be able to deliver our DOP(A)
18 mandated force levels in Afghanistan."

19 So basically he is saying the army can ride both
20 bicycles at once. Could it?

21 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, it did.

22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: It did in a way -- let's say not bicycles
23 but engines. As General Dannatt memorably said, the
24 army was running hot. He said this morning, if you go
25 on running hot, the engine blows up. Did we come very

1 close to that situation as a result of trying to do both
2 things at once? You yourself have said ever since the
3 SDR was enunciated in 1998 we had been beyond its
4 assumptions, but at this point were you not way beyond
5 the SDR assumptions?

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Considerably beyond them, but let's
7 be clear as to what that actually means. You know, we
8 are an army of six ground manoeuvre brigades at the
moment. You only
9 have to put one brigade on the ground and to maintain
10 your two-year tour interval and you must back it with
11 a further four. So you need five to produce one on
12 a two-year tour interval. If you choose to reduce that
13 interval, then you can obviously produce more deployed
14 on the ground. You know, these are balances and
15 judgments to be made.

16 So the quote from the CDS saying that the army can
17 do both is a fair one, because it can. The judgment is
18 how much you are going to have to reduce between tour
19 periods, for example. I mean, that's a judgment. What
20 is a strain on morale? That can be argued two ways as
21 well.

22 So I think the outcome is that we were able to do
23 it. There is another whole issue here, which is what
24 size of force for Afghanistan in that first summer?
25 There is a very good, I think, argument that we should

1 have gone in with more, had we achieved drawdown in Iraq;
2 but we had not, not completely anyway.

3 SIR RODERIC LYNE: There is also the question of for how
4 long can you continue like that, because the SDR did not
5 posit two enduring simultaneous medium term operations.

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No.

7 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But as it turned out we went into
8 Afghanistan in June 2006 and did not get out of Iraq
9 until approximately the same moment of 2009. So for
10 three years we had 8,000, 7,200, those sorts of numbers
11 in southern Iraq while we were building up towards and
12 beyond those numbers in Afghanistan. That really -- did
13 that over-stretch the machine?

14 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, it went beyond the policy of
15 a two-year tour interval, without doubt, because the
16 arithmetic does not allow it. You were there looking at
17 what -- I think Iraq was down to about 8,000 by then and
18 Afghanistan initially 3. So we were looking at 11 to
19 12,000 deployed, going down in Iraq and increasing in
20 Afghanistan. Out of a deployable field army of
21 something in the order of 75,000, yes, that is
22 sustainable arithmetically. The judgment is on the
23 morale factor, the commitment factor, and that you can't
24 put a template on and it is a judgment.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So were you sounding warnings about this

1 in your advice to the CDS and Defence Secretary?

2 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I believe as it became clear that we
3 were not going to achieve the timeline in Iraq then yes.

4 I would much preferred to see a brigade go into
Afghanistan

5 at the beginning, but I think that would have been too
6 much. But equally well, I appreciated along with
7 everybody else that by that time we were very much
8 a key, not the key, a key part of the NATO plan in
9 Afghanistan and it was not in my view
10 have been open to us to put up our hands and say, "I am
11 sorry. Despite what we have said for the last two
12 years, we are not now going to do what we have said we
13 would", because that would have very considerable
14 ramifications on the whole campaign plan for
15 Afghanistan.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So having made that very serious
17 commitment to Afghanistan on its own merits, had we, in
18 fact, as far as Iraq was concerned, from that point
19 onwards committed ourselves to an exit strategy and
20 deprived ourselves of the option, if we wanted it, of
21 making a substantial reinforcement to deal with losing
22 control of law and order in Basra?

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, because if you have to
24 reinforce, you would have to. You know, we are not
25 talking about -- sorry, I have just gone through the

1 numbers. I don't want to be tedious about this. Much
2 of the army's ability to do things in a deployed theatre
3 in terms of duration and size is a function of your
4 judgment as to how much pressure -- how much you will
5 reduce your benchmark of two years between operational
6 tours.

7 Now if, for example, in the south of Iraq in the
8 last year it had gone really, really wrong and we started
9 to lose a lot of casualties, then could we have
10 reinforced? Yes, at considerable strain, but yes.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And for how long?

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Ah. Six months perhaps. I mean,
13 you have a deployable army of something in the order of
14 75,000 to 80,000 soldiers. They are deployable. Not
15 all at the right stage of training, not all of them will
16 have the full range of equipment. I mean, it is not
17 a sort of black and white. There is not some fence over
18 which you jump. There is a sliding scale here of -- we
19 go back to readiness actually, because that's all part
20 of the readiness concept. But, for example, in Kosovo,
21 had the air campaign not worked we were seriously
22 looking at so-called option B minus of putting 50,000
23 soldiers into the field out of an army of about double
24 that. That can be done, but it can only be
25 achieved probably as a one-off for

1 a few months, but there's a sliding scale here. You
2 have to make the judgment as between the degree of
3 operational requirement and the strain which it puts at
4 the other end.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: That strain --

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: And there is no formula, there is no
7 template here. This is balance.

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: It is not just a numbers question, is it,
9 because the strain can be felt much more acutely in some
10 specialist areas.

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: For example, some of the enablers, as we
13 have heard from some of the other witnesses, and some of
14 the vital cogs in the machine can break even if the
15 machine as a whole is able to take it. So you
16 presumably had to factor that into your calculations as
17 well?

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, of course. It is perfectly
19 clear and this says something about whether we have the
20 army balanced within its 100,000 or so trained soldiers
21 by function, because if some of the army is enjoying
22 three-year tour intervals and some of the army is
23 putting up with 15 months, we have too much of one --
24 that's the simplistic conclusion -- and too little of
25 the other, but that's for the particular circumstances.

1 You may subsequently get a second set of
2 circumstances where the reverse may be true, depending
3 on what you are asked to do. I mean, field artillery,
4 for example, we use once in a while. Chaps you need all
5 the time. A balance.

6 SIR RODERIC LYNE: This all gets fairly technical, but the
7 big decisions have to be taken by non-specialist people,
8 Prime Ministers and the like. Did you discuss this with
9 the Prime Minister face-to-face?

10 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Were you satisfied that he was aware of
12 the degree of stretch on the army when you were in
13 charge, when you were in command of the army?

14 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I hope so, but, of course, the
15 routine connection between the senior military and the
16 Government, the Prime Minister, is through the Chief of
17 Defence Staff. The single service chiefs have a right
18 to ask for audience with the Prime Minister, but it is
19 not a routine matter whereas, of course, CDS briefing
20 the Cabinet is a routine matter. Now occasionally
21 I would stand in for the CDS when he was abroad or
22 something, and so there was contact that way, but that's
23 the constitutional position.

24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But you were the head of the service that
25 was doing the heaviest lifting --

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Sure.

2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: -- on an operation of massive importance
3 to this country. Are you saying you never discussed it
4 with the Prime Minister, or it wasn't a regular
5 discussion? Do you recall in your time as CGS at any
6 point the Prime Minister enquiring into the army's
7 feelings about this case?

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Not that way round do I recall.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: No. The other way round?

10 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: On occasion, yes, but you must
11 remember -- and these were the circumstances at the
12 time -- the CDS was another soldier. It is not as
13 though he was from one of the other two services,
14 and so I had confidence that the CDS was also reflecting
15 these considerations which we have been going through
16 for the last ten minutes or so.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Okay. Thank you very much.

18 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: We have some equipment questions we would
19 like to address. Lawrence?

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: One you will not be surprised to
21 hear is Snatch Landrover, which I would like to start
22 with.

23 This was introduced in August 2003 for
24 an operational need which we have heard about and
25 understand, but it always had a potential vulnerability

1 to -- IEDs, explosive devices, and this vulnerability
2 eventually became painfully rather real.

3 I was just wondering, to start with, how and at what
4 point concerns about this vulnerability were raised up
5 the chain of command to you.

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Snatch Landrovers were deployed to
7 Iraq because they were available or could be made
8 available as we drew down in Northern Ireland, and
9 without them it would have been completely
10 soft-skinned Landrovers. That's where the state of the
11 equipment inventory was at that point.

12 The Snatch Landrover was only designed to give
13 protection from low velocity rounds and shrapnel and it
14 wasn't set out to do anything else, but it was better
15 than a completely unprotected vehicle.

16 As the situation deteriorated in southern Iraq, of
17 course the vulnerabilities of the Snatch Landrover
18 became tragically more and more apparent, and we then
19 enter a difficult and muddled story as to the
20 replacement, or the addition of better protected vehicles
21 into the deployed army's inventory, and the whole FRES
22 story comes into this as well.

23 I mean, all of that said, there is a limit to the
24 amount of metal you can stick on a vehicle. I think you
25 have heard far better evidence than I can give you on

1 this from people who are technically far better
2 qualified; but there is a limit to the amount of metal,
3 and the ability of the opposition to up the kinetic
4 energy that can be applied can go rather faster than our
5 ability to with stand that.

6 So the amount of metal on a vehicle is important but
7 it is not the complete answer, and you would finish up
8 with a vehicle which is far too large often to go down
9 small streets in an urban area.

10 So again the picture is not black and white, and
11 there is not some sort of fence you can jump over and
12 all of a sudden you have a vehicle which is immune to
13 whatever your opponents may try to do.

14 So I think I will stop there, because I am sure you
15 are going to ask me a supplementary or several.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Several.

17 To what extent were the options of either improving
18 Snatch, and you have explained some of the limits on
19 that but there were things that might help you with
20 detonation of weapons, for example, or looking for a
21 alternative vehicle. To what extent were you involved
22 in those discussions? Were you pushing for
23 an alternative?

24 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: This is one of those areas where it
25 can be very frustrating as a single service chief,

1 because you don't have the chequebook and you don't
2 place the orders. At that time we were somewhat -- what
3 is the word I seek -- quaintly known as customer 2 in
4 the procurement construct, which says something about
5 how the user was regarded.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Could you explain that a bit more?

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, I can. I can't remember which
8 reorganisation of the Defence Procurement Agency this
9 was, but McKinsey's were brought in to give highly, no
10 doubt, qualified advice as to how to do this; and they
11 came down with the idea that the armed services are
12 customer 2, the user, and won't have the money. The
13 money will rest with the Equipment Capability staff, the
14 central staff of the MoD, customer 1, and they will
15 issue the requirements to the Defence Procurement
16 Agency, as was, who will do the purchasing. That was
17 the construct.

18 So it leaves the single services somewhat at arm's
19 length from the process of acquiring equipment, and, to
20 go to the heart of your question, we need something
21 better to use than Snatch - you may need
22 something bigger. Sorry. I am going back to my point
23 about Snatch still has its place. That's the
24 requirement from the user, but it gets rather tortuous:
25 it's a very arm's length relationship and therefore

1 a very frustrating one.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There are clearly a number of
3 requirements coming up from the users in Iraq that can
4 be handled by UORs, but this is one that is part of the
5 Core Equipment Programme.

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, there was even a debate about
7 that as well. Is this part of FRES or is this something
8 theatre-specific?

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I just want to come to FRES in
10 a second.

11 So really what you are saying is that there's a Core
12 Equipment Programme that is being managed over which you
13 actually don't have an awful lot of influence?

14 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. As I say, it's a very indirect
15 relationship. You know, this is what the army needs.
16 We need to replace our 40 year old armoured vehicles
17 with something far more up-to-date. That's what lay
18 behind FRES, and this is Core Equipment Programme. You
19 are quite right, Sir Lawrence.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So there is trying to sort all of
21 this out -- let's take the FRES example, because General
22 Dannatt gave us a description of how he saw it from his
23 point of view this morning.

24 What he told us was in 2002, when he was ACGS, that
25 the Executive Committee of the Army Board and the

1 Secretary of State had signed off on FRES. They had
2 been able to do that by cancelling other programmes,
3 MRV and Tracer with an in-service date of 2007. Then
4 he said when he returned from the ARRC the requirements
5 and costs of FRES had spiraled upwards and the
6 in-service date was now 2015-2018.

7 Can you recall -- he was not sure what had happened
8 in the interim. Can you fill us in on that?

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I will try, although I still ask
10 myself the same question.

11 When it was signed off by the Executive Committee of
12 the army, I think what that says is the army was clear
13 that this was a requirement for the future. That
14 requirement then goes into the procurement system and if
15 I have said it once, I have said it 1000 times: do not
16 gold plate. Let's go for something we can get into
17 service on time, reasonably at cost, and that will do,
18 shall we say, 80 per cent of the ideal. We can look for
19 the 20 per cent over time and add on, but let us not try
20 and go for 100 per cent at the outset, because we know
21 from experience it takes far more time and it costs much
22 more money.

23 A voice crying in the wilderness sometimes, because
24 we have seen it not only with FRES but with many major
25 equipment programmes: because you only have one

1 chance to get it right -- and I am trying to understand
2 the other side -- the search for perfection will go on
3 by the people who look for design and then procurement.
4 It is not resolved very satisfactorily in my view.
5 FRES is still out there somewhere. We will see if it
6 survives the current defence review.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It remains unclear, where does this
8 gold plating come from? I mean, you are the
9 Professional Head of the Army. Aren't you able to have
10 an influence over --

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I can have an influence but
12 I cannot issue direction. That's the difficulty.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So who was adding these
14 specifications?

15 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: The Defence Procurements Agency as
16 was. I think it is probably that.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Was there a Deputy Chief of Defence
18 Staff (Equipment)?

19 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: He is customer 1 who issues the
20 requirement. I don't think he writes out the
21 specification in detail, but you had two of them here
22 yesterday.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes, and they seem to be confused
24 about it as well. I mean, it is very hard to work out
25 where extra -- they say also there is far too many

1 specifications. So there must be a process by which
2 these keep on getting added, because both you and
3 General Dannatt have said the same thing, "Let's get
4 something into service quickly".

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: To the best of my knowledge it
6 happens, as I say, at the Defence Procurement Agency,
7 who write the specifications which then go to industry.
8 Those detailed specifications are not handled certainly
9 by the service board and only I think in broad
10 parameters by the equipment capability staff. The
11 detailed statement of requirement goes from the then
12 Defence Procurement Agency, to the best of my
13 understanding.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: General O'Donoghue told us that he
15 only bought what the customer asked him for.

16 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, but who says "it must withstand
17 an explosion of this size"? Who says "its ground
18 pressure must not be more than that"? Who says "it must
19 not be more than this weight"? That's not the function
20 of the Army Board. The Army Board says "we want
21 a vehicle that will do this" without going into that
22 sort of detailed specification.

23 Now that has to be done, I accept entirely; but the
24 tendency to push technology one step further than is
25 actually available, that, I think -- I don't want to

1 sound critical, because, you know, presumably if I was
2 doing that job I would be looking for the very best
3 I could get my hands on as well -- but it does lead to
4 delay, extra cost and delay, my goodness, ten years
5 for FRES now.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The other suggestion from General
7 Dannatt was that the delay was because other things were
8 found for the money that had been made available --

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: There is that as well.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- so it just gets pushed to the
11 right to meet immediate needs.

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: There is that as well.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Again I am curious as to how these
14 sorts of decisions are made and the role of professional
15 military advice in making them. Is it -- I mean,
16 presumably the Defence Board is one location for
17 a discussion of this sort?

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, but it didn't really seem to
19 happen in that way. It's a very good question and one
20 which I have often thought about. The balance within
21 the equipment programme of this and that programme, much
22 of that is pretty autonomous work by the DCDS equipment
23 capability under the Vice Chief. I think that's the
24 reporting chain, if I remember rightly, and -- put it
25 another way round, I don't recall the Defence Board or

1 Defence Management Board, as it was in my time, being
2 given options, "You can have X of something for the
3 army, Y of something for one of the other services". It
4 never seemed quite to work like that.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So we keep on hearing about the
6 importance of prioritisation. There's a limited amount
7 of resource. We have to spend it one way or the other.

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Uh-huh.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It remains difficult to work out how
10 the prioritisation takes place.

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I agree.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Is it a question of the more high
13 profile, perhaps politically high profile, or things
14 that seem to go to sort of the essence of the services
15 and what they like.

16 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think there is an element of that.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So then there are these different
18 factors. How does it -- does that mean that things
19 which may be desirable in the short term just get
20 crowded out?

21 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, I think that can happen.

22 I think the army is unlike the other two services which
23 are, as the jargon has it, platform-orientated.

24 In the army it is people-orientated. We equip the
25 man, the other two services man the equipment; and, of

1 course, large war ships, fast jets are at the heart of
2 the other two services' capability. One accepts that
3 entirely.

4 So you have particularly on the maritime side
5 relatively small numbers of large and expensive
6 platforms.

7 In the army, perhaps with one exception of the main
8 battle tank -- but we are not going to be buying any of
9 those for a long time, even if we are still in the main
10 battle tank era -- there are lots of small things, lots
11 and lots of relatively small things, and small programmes
12 which, of course, can be chipped away at without the
13 high drama of chipping away at a future generation of
14 aircraft carriers, for example.

15 There is a sense, I think, in the army that we
16 are -- if times are tight, you can take a bit off the
17 army without it being too dramatic.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But in the case of -- going back to
19 Snatch -- something we were losing lives during 2005,
20 quite a number of them, were you able to push back
21 against this process at all? Did you try to push back
22 against this process?

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, very much so. I have
24 a recollection of what to me was a very important
25 meeting with the then Procurement Minister, Lord

1 Drayson, because I just felt we were not getting
2 anywhere within the normal processes of the MoD, you
3 know, and actually reflecting upon moral duty here.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Was this the process at that led to
5 Lord Drayson --

6 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I think he was able, using his
7 ministerial authority, and to be fair his commercial
8 experience, to cut through some of the Gordian knots
9 which seemed to surround what otherwise was this complex
10 process.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So it needed active political
12 engagement?

13 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I believe so. Certainly I am very
14 clear that Lord Drayson made a real difference.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I move on to another important
16 equipment issue, which is helicopters? We didn't have
17 a chance to discuss this much with General Dannatt this
18 morning, but we have had plenty of evidence on this and
19 particularly of concern in theatre about the lack of
20 helicopters.

21 Again it seems to be one of these things that finds
22 it difficult to get its place in the equipment
23 programme. What were your views on the need for more
24 helicopters and what were you able to do to push on that
25 question?

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It is probably a sine qua non that
2 there are never enough helicopters; but leaving that
3 slightly trite statement to one side, I think if you
4 take the Northern Ireland baseline, we had been
5 extremely well provided for in terms of helicopter lift
6 in Northern Ireland and I think for a lot of people that
7 was the benchmark. It was almost a perfect solution
8 to helicopter support to a ground-based force. We
9 were not able to match that level of dedicated
10 helicopter support in Iraq. The force was larger,
11 to start with the area much larger, and there was, of
12 course, in 2004 -- you will tell me if I am wrong I am
13 sure -- a decision to cap the helicopter procurement
14 budget, and I think some of the difficulties with
15 helicopters stem from that decision.

16 We also had seven or was it eight Chinooks sitting
17 in a hangar at Boscombe Down, where they had been for
18 years, because there had been a most dreadful mess-up on
19 their procurement and they were not deemed to be
20 airworthy.

21 So it is not a very happy story in some ways, this
22 one.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: When we discussed this before, we
24 hear a lot about scenario planning for the armed forces
25 and what fits in, but my reaction to some of that was

1 that it is hard to think of a contemporary operation
2 where helicopters have not been in enormous demand, yet
3 in terms of defence priorities for the UK somehow this
4 doesn't seem to have fed through. We get a number, but
5 it never becomes a large part of our force structure.

6 Is it again coming back to the same problem we were
7 discussing before, that it is something everybody thinks
8 is necessary but it is not their highest priority?

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think that's fair comment. Any
10 question really of looking at how the defence budget is
11 spent -- I am much broader now than helicopters -- it is
12 all a question of priorities and the judgment of those
13 priorities. Your division between equipment
14 purchase and personnel, your division between provision
15 for what we are doing now and provision for what we may
16 have to do in the future, your balance of judgment as
17 between so-called symmetric and asymmetric. Again the
18 difficulty is we cannot know the future, although we may
19 have some views about it, and templates are not
20 available. There are some very difficult judgments.

21 So this balance of priorities is right across the
22 board, and if it is as true in general it is certainly
23 true in the particular of helicopters.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to conclude this, if someone
25 was listening to this they may conclude the basic

1 problem is we are trying to do too much with a limited
2 equipment programme with the result --

3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Not quite. We are not trying to do
4 too much. We are trying to be prepared perhaps for too
5 much.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Well, the next bit of what I was
7 going to say is whether or not the compromises that we
8 have to make to squeeze things in mean that we don't
9 quite do enough properly?

10 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I don't think I can quite agree with
11 the words in which you have expressed that thought.
12 I know what lies behind them. We are still in the era
13 of a force structure and size which emanate from the
14 previous defence review. Some of the assumptions --
15 some, basically all defence planning assumptions really
16 did not last very long at all. Nonetheless you have to
17 have some intellectual handrail here to inform your
18 force structure and your equipment.

19 The fact that they were not upheld by events, were
20 almost overturned by events, just shows what a difficult
21 task it is to try to forecast a future; but then at that
22 point you have what you have, and to change or modify or
23 enlarge capabilities quickly is not an easy matter at
24 all, particularly where you have complicated technical
25 aspects to that equipment.

1 So you have what you have at any one point in time,
2 and you either undertake the political task which the
3 Government sets you or you don't.

4 The search for perfection is nugatory I fear in
5 this, because it ain't going to be there.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In between passivity and perfection
7 I am sure there is a range of possibilities.

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I exaggerate to make the point. We
9 are now well into the midst of another defence review,
10 and not before time in my judgment, which will have to
11 rebalance and rejudge just these questions.

12 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Moving to a rather different area. Usha.

13 BARONESS PRASHAR: Right. We have heard a lot about the
14 frequent rotation of army commanders and the need for
15 longer tour lengths --

16 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Baroness.

17 BARONESS PRASHAR: -- and the fact that six months did not
18 give them enough time to identify the request for
19 military equipment they might need or even gain a full
20 understanding of the local situation.

21 Sir Richard Dannatt in his post-visit report in
22 October 2006 said this issue had been discussed but not
23 resolved. Why was it not resolved in your time?

24 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I think it was resolved.

25 Richard Dannatt may disagree with the resolution we

1 arrived at. That's a different matter.

2 BARONESS PRASHAR: What was the resolution in your time?

3 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: We deliberately at Army Board level

4 decided to re-examine the whole question of tour

5 lengths. This goes back to the early days of

6 Northern Ireland, when it was a four-month tour without

7 any break, any so-called rest and recuperation, R&R.

8 BARONESS PRASHAR: This was four months?

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Four months. That's where we began

10 with deployments in Northern Ireland. I can't remember

11 when that changed, probably four to five years later,

12 some years later.

13 BARONESS PRASHAR: Because it did change to be much longer

14 in Northern Ireland?

15 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. It went to six months with ten

16 days' R&R. That became really the standard pattern

17 which then continued as we went into these intervention

18 deployments after the Cold War, and is very much almost

19 in the army's DNA now. We deliberately said, "Is

20 this right?" To take R&R from Northern Ireland is one

21 thing. You can hop on the ferry. To take R&R from

22 Basra is another, on a long air bridge run by some quite

23 ancient aircraft and therefore you have reliability

24 problems. "Is this right?" Or, "Should we be going for

25 longer?" I for one salute the US Army, which started

1 off I think at 15-month tours in Iraq, now down I think
2 to a year. I am afraid we were not revolutionary in the
3 matter. We said, "No, we cannot go back to four
4 months", even though that would give the advantage of
5 not having to bring people home for ten days in the
6 middle, because you then desperately lack continuity.

7 Nor did we feel, and perhaps we could have been
8 bolder, that the British Army would understand why they
9 would be required to go for nine months on a unit basis.

10 So, having looked at it, we stayed where we are.

11 Now there is one exception, Baroness: senior
12 officers.

13 BARONESS PRASHAR: That was the distinction that was made by
14 Sir Richard Dannatt this morning.

15 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Now senior officers not deploying
16 with their own headquarters, and the latter are the
17 minority -- the brigadier commanding his own brigade,
18 etc -- the many deputies et al that we have and had,
19 matching their American counterparts, the importance of
20 relations with the local dramatis personae, everybody
21 from the Iraqi Prime Minister downwards for this, six

months

22 seemed to be self-evidently too short, and really
23 I think -- when I left what we had got
24 to the stage where we would look at each and every
25 senior officer being deployed and come to a specific

1 judgment over. The tendency was to go long, and
2 many, many general officers have at least one year
3 one one-year tour under their belt and some have two
4 now.

5 BARONESS PRASHAR: But that didn't happen while you were in
6 post?

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes, for senior officers.

8 BARONESS PRASHAR: It started to change then?

9 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Oh, yes. I am just trying to

10 remember. I think the first three-star deputy in Baghdad
did nine

11 months and I think after that it was maybe another -- it
12 was nine to 12. I mean, that had started very much in
13 my time.

14 BARONESS PRASHAR: But looking back, do you think something
15 different could have been done or do you think that was
16 the right resolution?

17 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, it is where we came to after
18 a thorough deliberation in the Army Board and I don't
19 see any reason to change my view.

20 Certainly with senior officers for all the continuity
21 reasons I have given we should not change that.

22 There may be different views emerge over whether to
23 extend the six-month unit tour. That could be
24 re-debated, but we debated and came to the conclusion
25 that we did.

1 BARONESS PRASHAR: Thank you.

2 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Right. I will turn to Sir Martin Gilbert
3 now.

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: This is a question on rather
5 a difficult area, that of fatalities and Inquiries and
6 inquests.

7 It is inevitable in a conflict situation that there
8 will be fatalities. We have spoken to quite a number of
9 bereaved families about the awfulness of the moment when
10 the knock comes at the door and in particular the
11 difficulties that then follow for them.

12 A particular issue raised with us by the families
13 whom we have seen is the attitude of the MoD and the
14 armed forces. In the view of many of the families of
15 service personnel killed in Iraq they find the military
16 attitude dismissive and overly defensive.

17 Bob Ainsworth told us in his evidence that in
18 respect of bereaved families, as he put it very
19 strongly, "We just weren't getting it right".

20 What is your thought on that and to what extent do
21 you think these criticisms were justified?

22 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Your description was the families'
23 reaction. Could I have the two adjectives -- you said
dismissive
24 and?

25 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Right. The military attitude to their

1 problems was dismissive and was overly defensive.

2 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I am very saddened to hear

3 that. If that is representative of next of kin as

4 a whole, then clearly we have not done all that we

5 should have done, but it is not my sense.

6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: For example in terms of the delays in

7 the time of inquest, which was something --

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Sorry. With?

9 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In terms of, the delays in time of

10 inquest was a concern.

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Ah, I thought it was the military

12 being accused of being dismissive and --

13 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Well, also they felt that one of the

14 reasons why there were delays was that the inquests

15 could not take place until the MoD investigations had

16 been completed and that these were somehow prolonged and

17 significantly delayed.

18 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. I am more comfortable I think

19 now, because I thought you were saying the army was

20 careless or even callous about its losses, and I don't

21 believe that to be the case at all. As to process,

22 legal process, I think, Sir Martin -- am I on the right

23 core ground -- it can be complicated, and legal delays

24 seem to be part of life and I never quite understand why

25 sometimes; but, yes, people have to wait for a long time

1 for inquests. The MoD can be a bit opaque I think as to
2 why it can take so long, but I am not really in any
3 sense a knowledgeable witness in this particular aspect
4 of process.

5 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Was this something, the general feeling
6 of discontent -- for example, it also spilled over into
7 the question of inquiries into friendly fire,
8 blue-on-blue incidents, a feeling that somehow there was
9 reluctance on behalf of the army to delve into it in the
10 way the families felt it could be delved into.

11 Were these things that came to your attention?

12 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, because, and rightly, the chain
13 of command is out with the due process of law. I think
14 that is very important. There must be boards of
15 inquiry. They can be very complicated, where witnesses
16 are geographically spread out, all of that, and I ought
17 to know the relationship between the board of an inquiry
18 and inquest, but I can't quite recall which is supposed
19 to come first. I think it is the board of enquiry, but
20 I could be wrong.

21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Right. It was the board of inquiry.
22 Sometimes three or four years passed.

23 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: It was the board of inquiry.

24 I know that steps have been and were taken in my
25 time and continue to be taken to get a better grip on

1 delay when it comes to boards of inquiry, but I am not
2 sure I can do much better for you than that.

3 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Was this something you ever found
4 yourself drawn to personally.

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Into boards of inquiry?

6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: No, into the concern of the families?

7 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, yes. I mean, it's the
8 Adjutant General's department and I think you have heard
9 from at least one, maybe two AGs. I can't
10 remember specifically, but I have no doubt it would have
11 been the subject of more than one Army Board meeting,
concluding that

12 "We must do better", but some of these legal processes
13 are quite difficult to speed up.

14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: You can't recall your own pushing on
15 the issue?

16 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I am sorry. I am afraid I can't
17 specifically recall, other than my memory telling me,
18 yes, the legal delay in whatever context, but this one
19 in particular, we must try and do better.

20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

21 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Coming towards the end, but Usha, you
22 have a question on training.

23 BARONESS PRASHAR: Yes, indeed. Earlier this afternoon you
24 said the state of training is actually part of
25 readiness?

1 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes.

2 BARONESS PRASHAR: Can you describe the training cycle by
3 which form units of the British Army were prepared for
4 deployment to Iraq?

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Yes. This will take me a minute or
6 two. Forgive me. There are two aspects here, two
7 dimensions. One is training for war. Note there is no
8 article there. Then there is the training for "the"
9 war.

10 Training for war is generic and it is carefully
11 sequenced starting at a relatively low level and working
12 up to, if one can get it in -- it is sometimes quite
13 difficult because of space requirements and all the rest
14 of it -- a full-blown brigade level field training
15 exercise, which is generic. That is the generality of
16 the readiness cycle, that at any one time you have
17 a brigade which is at the peak and therefore is your
18 high readiness brigade.

19 Then training for "the" war. Every unit going on
20 a particular deployed operation, unless it is a no
21 notice Sierra Leone-type 2000 operation, will go through
22 a very carefully planned sequence of training specific
23 to the theatre to which it is going. We used to do it
24 all the time for Northern Ireland and we have modified
25 the way in which we do that so that the training is

1 varied according to whichever theatre now, of course,
2 Afghanistan. There is an organisation whose sole job
3 it is to look at what's happening, to replicate the
4 currency of events in the training given to units
5 getting ready to go.

6 BARONESS PRASHAR: But were any elements of these
7 preparations for Iraq curtailed on grounds of
8 affordability, and, if that was the case, what was the
9 operational impact?

10 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: No, I don't believe there were
11 problems of affordability in that training.

12 BARONESS PRASHAR: Even during the course of the events?
13 Even during the war and the aftermath?

14 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I have no recollection -- no, no.
15 I have no recollection of -- I mean it, would be
16 outrageous if that was the case. No.

17 BARONESS PRASHAR: Can you recall as the situation evolved
18 did the army's training change because you weren't, you
19 know, sufficiently geared to deal with insurgency?

20 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, as I have said, every unit --
21 once rotation had begun and all of that every unit
22 going would go through specific special theatre training
23 which as far as one can would replicate the current
24 conditions and circumstances, and it is very thorough
25 and it takes quite a long time.

1 BARONESS PRASHAR: You were satisfying yourself during the
2 course of this that the training was adequate for the
3 purpose?

4 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I certainly believe so, yes.

5 BARONESS PRASHAR: Were you happy there was sufficient
6 equipment available in training pools, particularly
7 equipment bought on the UORs?

8 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Not always, no. I think it has got
9 better. At the beginning when there was quite a lot of
10 equipment being required on a UOR basis, there was
11 something of a tendency only to buy exactly enough for
12 the deployed force and not to make an additional buy so
13 to train the next force going. It was short-sighted in
14 my view, but those who did the buying will no doubt --
15 we will go back to where we were a little while ago
16 about priority of expenditure -- but it did mean,
17 therefore, that units newly arriving in theatre would
18 have to train on the operational equipment on arrival,
19 which they had not met previously. I think we are out
20 of that one now, but that was true I think in the
21 earlier times, Baroness.

22 BARONESS PRASHAR: In view of time we need to leave it
23 there.

24 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Lawrence?

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: One quick question. There is a view

1 that in 2003 the British felt they were pretty good at
2 counterinsurgency, nation-building, that whole nexus of
3 activities, but by the end of the Iraq campaign to some
4 extent the Americans had taken over. So whereas we
5 started suggesting we could teach the Americans a thing
6 or two, perhaps by the end it was the other way round.
7 Do you think that we were living off our reputation a
8 bit, or that the reputation was deserved but we had
9 underestimated the scale of what we were getting into in
10 Iraq?

11 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: Well, I think I have conceded that
12 the degree of violence was not forecast.

13 No, I think it is the latter of your two
14 alternatives there. It is not an easy subject for the
15 MoD or indeed the British Government, but mass can and
16 does matter. It is all very well to talk of rapier-like
17 and rapid deployment and that, but in a campaign such as
18 it was in Iraq you have got to have the right presence
19 and I think -- we have been here earlier this
20 afternoon -- that the force levels which at the end of
21 the day were acceptable in the longer term in Iraq were
22 on the tight side for the area we had and for the
23 varying levels of violence that we had.

24 As to the US Army, I mean, I pay great credit to
25 them. I think I spoke earlier of the doctrine of the

1 time in early 2003 which won the manoeuvre war in
2 a pretty stunning fashion, but was certainly not up to
3 what they then found. But the way in which -- and much
4 of this is personally down to General David Petraeus,
5 who was a divisional commander at the beginning in
6 Mosul, I think it was -- they looked at what was
7 required and where they were, what the difference was,
8 rewrote the doctrine, got that doctrine implanted into
9 the training system, I think does them great credit.
10 They showed great intellectual agility.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Do you think we should have looked
12 at our doctrine in the same way?

13 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: We have. We do have a lessons
14 learned process. I think we have diluted somewhat the
15 particular land force aspect, because four years ago,
something
16 of that order, the three single service doctrine centres
17 came together as a joint doctrine centre, which has its
18 advantages, but it also may dilute the nitty-gritty
19 detailed thinking about tactics for how such
20 an operation as this counterinsurgency should be
conducted.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you.

22 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: This is coming right to the end now,
23 General Jackson, but this is a lessons learned inquiry
24 we are conducting. I wonder, since we are searching for
25 lessons for the future, looking back over the Iraq

1 experience are there any key pieces of learning, any key
2 regrets, any lessons to take into Afghanistan and the
3 SDR that we have not touched on this afternoon that you
4 would like to reflect on?

5 GEN. SIR MIKE JACKSON: I think we have covered the ground
6 rather comprehensively, but perhaps for emphasis, and we
7 were I think here rather earlier in this session, the
8 United Kingdom has continued since the end of the Cold
9 War to play a major part both militarily and otherwise
10 on the world stage. This is the chosen posture of
11 successive governments. So be it.

12 When the British Government decides to apply
13 military force in pursuit of its political objectives,
14 more often than not it is not just going to be military
15 force which is required to achieve those political
16 objectives; I would urge those concerned to think
17 more deeply as to how better to pull together all the
18 strands of Government required in these sort of
19 operations in order to achieve the political outcome.

20 It is not just a job for soldiers. Soldiers will
21 have a go if there's a vacuum and there is nobody else
22 to do it -- and our discussion of police
23 training is an example here. When the strategic stakes
24 are as high as they are I think a better ability to
25 bring all the sinews of Government together for the

1 effect on the ground must be the right way ahead.

2 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Thank you.

3 I thank our witness, General Sir Mike Jackson, for
4 his evidence this afternoon and that concludes today's
5 hearings.

6 We will resume at 9.30 in the morning on Friday,
7 Friday, 30 July, for what will be the last in the
8 current phase of hearings, when we will hear from Lord
9 Prescott, who served as Deputy Prime Minister until
10 2007.

11 With that I will close this session. Thank you.

12 (5.00 pm)

13 (The hearing concluded)

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