

Statement of Richard John BARTON

This statement consists of 11 pages, each signed by me.

I am the above named person and this statement is an overview of my service as the United Kingdom Chief Police Advisor in Iraq, between March 2006 and March 2007.

I make this statement based on my recollection of events over that time and I reserve the right to add, alter or correct information contained therein. I have included some areas where I think genuine improvements could be made. These are marked in italics.

It is provided for the use of the Iraq Inquiry.

I am currently an International Policing Advisor working as an associate tutor for the National Policing Improvement Agency. I provide Strategic Command and Leadership training to developing countries, (such as Ethiopia and Rwanda) or those countries that have specific policing capacity and capability requirements (such as Trinidad and Indonesia).

Prior to this, I was a serving police officer, retiring in August 2009.

My career path in the police service was mainly as a detective, with experience in Specialist investigations, Head of Major Crime Branch and Anti corruption pro-active operations.

I am a graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy (2003).

In From 2003 to 2006 I was serving as a Chief Superintendent, a Divisional Commander in charge of territorial policing for East Sussex. I had responsibility for all

policing operations within that area including critical incidents, investigations and community policing.

In late 2005 I applied for the post of UK Chief Police Advisor in Iraq at Temporary Assistant Chief Constable and was successful.

My reason for applying was two fold. Primarily, I believe that my skill profile and experience up until that time could genuinely make a difference in the country. Secondly, I was looking for a new challenge at the apex of my career.

I commenced my attachment to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) on the 27th March 2006 following a short defensive firearms course and a 'hostile environment' training course. I also received a one day contextual briefing at the FCO.

I had the opportunity to meet my predecessor, Colin Smith, on at least two occasions and he provided me with briefings relating to the strategic and tactical issues regarding the UK policing mission.

The application process for the job was straightforward but it began to highlight to me at this early stage the deficiencies in the UK response to International Policing.

The initial decision to let officers go on international missions is initially in the hands of the relevant Chief Constable. My own Chief Constable at the time (Sussex) was supportive of the attachment but it was made quite clear to me that there were no guarantees regarding postings or jobs on my return.

Despite some recent positive developments in the domain, the cross-government International Policing Advisory Board (IPAB) being one, international policing is still seen as the 'Cinderella' of the police service. There are many reasons for

this, not least of which is the understandable focus of many forces on the 'local' delivery of policing services.

The officer with overall responsibility for International Policing at the time was Chief Constable Paul Kernaghan.

It is really important, and probably fundamental to initiating any meaningful change in the future, to recognise that Mr Kernaghan had this responsibility *in addition* to his role as a Chief Constable for Hampshire Constabulary.

That said, from the date of the interview to the end of my service in Iraq, Mr Kernaghan was always supportive and engaged, to the extent that he visited the UK mission in Iraq in company with the then President of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Chief Constable Ken Jones.

To date, whilst there is a Chief Constable with portfolio responsibility for International Policing, *there is no full-time ACPO representative*. Given the range of activity that exists on the International Policing stage, including training, operations, advisory roles and liaison officers, it still surprises me that this is the case.

The Chief Police Advisor role in Iraq had been relocated from Baghdad (Embassy based) to the airbase at Basra and I arrived there to find that I had been allocated office space right next door to the General Officer Commanding, General John Cooper.

The military could not have been more helpful and I did feel that there was thirst for specialist policing knowledge at a strategic level.

Additionally, I had been allocated a military police captain as a Military Assistant. Whilst I did have some previous military experience, this post was invaluable to me in the

early stages of my posting and I would recommend this partnership approach in any future deployments.

My primary task upon arrival in Basra was to undertake a review of the mission. This review was commissioned at a meeting in the FCO on the 21st March 2006.

I can produce a copy of the completed review, known as the 'Situational Review of the United Kingdom Civilian Police Mission in Iraq' as RJB/1.

In summary the review advocated:-

- A revised personnel structure
- A policy review
- Requirement for a communications strategy
- Development of workstreams in specialist areas-Major Crime Investigation and Internal Affairs

Three strategic priorities emerged:-

- I. The mission to focus on building wider links across the criminal justice system
- II. The mission must be engaged in developing Internal affairs, Major Crime and Intelligence function within the Iraqi Police Service (IPS)
- III. The mission must identify a realistic model which facilitates draw down and eventual complete handover to IPS

The week of 27th March 2006 was taken up with visits to areas of my responsibility, in order to gain as much information as possible. I travelled to the Joint Training

Academy at Shaibah, a police training school which was largely staffed by UK Police Trainers then visited the Consul General's office in Basrah Palace.

Travel at this time was under a strict security code designated by the FCO and largely undertaken by helicopter. I also travelled to Camp Smitty, a remote base in Muthanna province where a UK Police advisor was stationed (Chief Inspector) in charge of up to 40 contracted staff from 'Armorgroup', who were in the main retired police officers from UK and Commonwealth countries.

The relationship between 'CivPol' (FCO attached serving officers) and the contractors was at times strained. The quality of the contractors varied, from first class former officers who just wanted to continue policing in order to 'make a difference', to other former officers who were clearly there only to get a wage. I had no problem with the motivation of some individuals but it was clear that a few individuals were taking the brunt of the difficult and dangerous task of mentoring the IPS.

I quickly established a rapport with Mr David de Stacpoole, the Country Manager for Armorgroup, who supported me in removing any individuals who were not supplying high quality service and in retaining those staff members who were doing a good job. This also supported the move toward PIC (Provincial Iraqi Control).

The following week was taken up with 'Command Briefings' and a journey to Baghdad to meet the Ambassador. I also met my team in Baghdad who were the face of UK policing. These few individuals in Baghdad were making a contribution to the policing reform effort that was disproportionate to their number. *The mere presence of a British police officer in the heart of transitional policing governance provides credibility to the multi-national effort way beyond its real effect.*

The next two weeks were spent constructing the review, and a VTC was undertaken, between London, Baghdad and Basrah.

Frustratingly, I was unable to attend some important intelligence briefings due to the period of time it took to undertake Developed Vetting.

I was 'Security Cleared', but other agencies would not accept that level of vetting (understandably), so for at least 3 months [REDACTED]

I would recommend that there should be a facility to 'fast-track' some Vetting applications on the basis of need during an international operation.

Additionally, I had no secure communication network for 3 months and when the FCO system was finally installed it only worked intermittently. The co-location with the military was ideal in terms of partnership working, but this major technical inhibitor was frustrating, for both myself and the London FCO civil servants who had a constant thirst for knowledge about how the mission was proceeding. Much of this information was therefore passed either by phone to Basrah Palace for onward transmission.

It was clear to me that the working relationship between the military and the FCO was not as strong as it could have been. This was no doubt exacerbated by the physical location of the two teams. Despite the strong leadership skills of both the GOC and the CG there was a definite disconnect. The policing mission fell between these two stools, ostensibly an active 'on the ground' mission, but neither 'military' nor 'civilian' in its approach.

Strong evidence of this disconnect was the relationship between the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and the daily tasking of the military.

During my first few months it was rare to see the PRT represented at the table at most meetings.

This again may have been a result of the lack of co-location and the transport difficulties encountered due to the hostile environment.

Contrast this to my position. I could easily attend most military meetings (bar those with 'secret' status whilst waiting for my Developed Vetting) and despite some misconceptions about my rank and status, (an inordinate amount of time seems to be wasted by both the civil service and the military in deciding who outranks who) I was welcomed at the table

One aspect of the mission was particularly wearing. At times the levels of staffing needed to change up or down dependent on the need at the time. These changes of staffing and numbers created accommodation issues that needed to dovetail with the security requirements. The FCO seemed unable to move with any speed to cater for these changes and it was not uncommon for my deputy (and on occasion myself) to be embroiled in a 'who lives where' debate with junior FCO staff.

I fully understood the security implications but this activity unnecessarily diverted too much time away from the core task.

If I ran a mission of this size again I would recommend that a *police resource manager be appointed, to perform a similar role to the resource managers in UK forces and act as an intermediate partner with the FCO.*

I arrived in Basra post Operation 'Corrode', an anti corruption operation targeting corrupt IPS units.

A key activity, post Operation Corrode, was to form the new Department for Internal Affairs. A key focus for the mission and therefore the FCO in London, was the build of the discrete unit within the military complex.

The Royal Engineers accomplished this in a month, a real feat that enabled the personnel build to begin from within the IPS.

The FCO continuously requested updated results from this unit, which wasn't an issue for me, but it did show the importance of the policing professional input.

Just setting up a fully effective pro-active anti-corruption unit in the more benign environment of the UK would take a year at least, and I know there was an anticipation of quick 'results'.

A major part of the work was to ensure that police stations were being inspected regularly and were hitting 'metrics'. This system relied on a 'red-amber-green' measures, which emanated from the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team (CPATT) in Baghdad.

Police stations were assessed on the basis of identifiable measures such as 'How many staff in the station' 'How many guns available' etc.

This is fine for pure quantitative measurements but it took little account of quality. Quantitative performance measures are also open to interpretation and abuse (there are many instances of crime figures being manipulated in the past in the UK for instance).

Whilst I could see and hear the political imperative around the measurement, 'hit the target and we can hand over to the Iraqis' (I paraphrase, but that was the implication,) it is clear to me that we may have been making the fatal mistake of 'hitting the target and missing the point'.

Much fine work was undertaken in these station visits by UK Civilian Police, accompanied by the Joint Services Police whilst being protected by British Army soldiers, but even today I couldn't hold my hand on my heart and say that it was the best way of measuring the 'efficiency' of a police service.

Conversely, in August 2006, Operation Sinbad was conceived. This was an intensive community-by-community approach entailing multi-partnership work with schools, hospitals and other communities in an ordered and logical way. This operation was a joint operation supported by the FCO and the military. It included police station uplift as part

of the process, drawing upon global experience in building secure communities in areas as diverse as Rotterdam, Boston and New York. This experience was wholly embraced by the then General Officer Commanding, Richard Shirreff.

Operation Sinbad was well targeted, well founded and well executed. Its major drawback was again the length of time available to implement any meaningful change. None of the mentioned city examples changed their social structure overnight, so a four-month operation was just not long enough.

Another key focus of the mission was to build links with the wider rule of law organs. These joint working practices are commonplace in democratic countries so it was important to build the standard systems that exist in an effective Criminal Justice system. Of course, the police are only a part of that system.

Getting civilian lawyers and judicial experts onto the ground proved difficult.

My understanding was that the Crown Prosecution Service had no ability/desire to send prosecutors abroad in the advisory context. *This facility would have been incredibly useful to the wider Rule of Law build* and when we did finally get a lawyer (a Canadian who provided first class service in respect of the build of the Department for Internal Affairs) the worth of such roles became clear.

Towards the end of my service in Iraq, the security situation had worsened so much that it was impossible to move around the city in anything other than a Warrior (armoured personnel carrier). Mortar attacks on Basrah Palace were routine and the Combined Operating Base (COB) at the airport was suffering similar attacks, many with fatal consequences. Many operations were mounted just to get the civilian police mentors in and out of the police stations.

Bearing in mind the risk to the soldiers and my staff it was imperative to me that my staff made the best use of their time in the police stations that would often be as short as twenty minutes, to minimise the risk of attacks on the operation.

Contrast this to a visit to a UK police station by a UK inspection team, they would expect at least one full day.

Following the planned withdrawal from Basrah Palace, the key elements of the FCO (including the CG) moved to the COB.

The PRT was under new leadership, (Daniel Korski) who brought a wealth of experience to the reconstruction effort. By then, the PRT had become an integral part of the strategic and tactical planning processes.

One deficiency (and something I would insist upon in any future operations) was the lack of a police advisor within the J5 (Plans) HQ element of the military operation.

Arguably, one could look at this at an even greater strategic level.

To the best of my knowledge there is no full time police advisor within Northwood PHQ.

Given the nature of global conflict and the focus on the post conflict security sector reform this appears to be a major gap in the UK response.

Ultimately, the challenges of post conflict security sector reform seemed to be too big for the military, the FCO, or any reconstruction team working in isolation.

The multi-agency team (task force) that is required to genuinely build secure communities, was not mature in May 2006, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office just didn't seem nimble enough to cope with the changing demands of the reconstruction environment. (To be fair, the

International policing team has now been absorbed into the Stabilisation Unit and works in a more cohesive way).

There have been many developments in the arena of International Policing since 2006/7, not least of which the commitment by the MOD Police to supply greater numbers to policing missions worldwide. This still seems like a 'sticking plaster' when compared to the more comprehensive (and realistically resourced) approach of agencies such as the Australian Federal Police (AFP) who have a full-time International Deployment Group (IDG). The AFP also have the ability to place liaison officers with specialist skills into key areas/posts quickly. The change management history associated with the build of the AFP IDG was not without difficulty, but it has risen above the vested interests and internal cultural inhibitors to become an effective international organ with specialist expertise and skills.

To better approach the important task of security sector reform in the future, with a particular focus on the civilian policing function, the UK should consider the feasibility of adopting a federal style approach to the International Policing function along the lines of the AFP.

I submit this statement to the Inquiry for its use.

Richard John Barton

7th June 2010