

Thursday, 3 June 2010

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Welcome, General Tyler. We are welcoming this afternoon Major General Tim Tyler.

The session is being held in private because we recognise much of the evidence in the areas we want to cover will be sensitive within the categories set out in the Inquiry's "Protocol on Sensitive Information", for example on the grounds of international relations or defence capability. In particular we want to use this session to explore issues covered by classified documents.

We will apply the Protocol between the Inquiry and HMG regarding documents and other written and electronic information in considering whether and how evidence given in relation to classified documents and/or sensitive matters more widely can be drawn on and explained in public either in the Inquiry report or, where appropriate, at an earlier stage.

If other evidence is given during this hearing which neither relates to classified documents nor engages any of the categories set out in the "Protocol on Sensitive Information", that evidence would be capable of being published, subject to the procedures set out in the Inquiry Secretary's letter to you.

We recognise that every witness gives evidence based on their recollection and we check what we hear against the papers.

I remind every witness on each occasion that they will later be asked to sign a transcript of their evidence to the effect that the evidence given is truthful, fair and accurate. Now, on this occasion, for security reasons, we can't release copies of the transcript outside this building, upstairs. But of course you can have access whenever you want here.

I think, with that, I would like to ask really an opening question. You gave us a written statement, for which many thanks indeed.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I hope it covered the sort of things you were after.

THE CHAIRMAN: Most helpful, and that then means we've got some understanding already of your ISG role. We are asking questions today only in relation to that, but we would like a little more detail. So could you say a little bit to colour in, or flesh out, your role and function in the ISG? What was it like?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: What was it supposed to be and what was it like? Actually, I think the two are pretty similar. I think it is important to recognise that there were the two definite bits: there was the deputy commander of the Iraq Survey Group and then there was the senior British military representative within the Iraq Survey Group.

THE CHAIRMAN: In the chain of command? In one chain of command?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, we will talk about this, because I had two reporting chains which reflected the difference in the ISG, as I think I set out.

So Keith Dayton, as the commander actually, described himself as being the taxi driver. It was his job to get the intelligence, because the ISG was an intelligence-led operation. Taskforce 75 -- or 45, or whatever its number was -- was a military operation that went round looking. The ISG was set up to analyse the -- or to take the intelligence, which is always a slightly unusual word, and then try and relate that to the ground. So it was intelligence-led obviously and Keith described his role to me as being the taxi driver and Kay, and subsequently Duelfer and his cohort, were the people who paid the fare.

So as a deputy commander of the ISG my role was very specifically about making sure that the taxi operated, if that is a reasonable analogy.

As a senior UK rep, I had two lines of reporting, formal ones. One was to DIS in London, to [REDACTED] and Rockingham I think it was called.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Rockingham cell.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: The Rockingham cell.

THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry, [REDACTED] at the time?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well I can't remember what his role was but he was in DIS.

THE CHAIRMAN: Not head of DIS?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: No, no, the head was Ridgeway who we had nothing to do with. Howard was in charge and then Rockingham reported to Howard and [REDACTED].

THE CHAIRMAN: Right.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: So I reported directly back to the Rockingham cell for the intelligence aspects and being a sort of senior UK rep and then to PJHQ on all military aspects.

THE CHAIRMAN: Content -- substance of the collection -- and the analysis coming in, or the first analysis; that was going back to DIS via Rockingham --

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Yes, anything to do with the intelligence operation went in through DIS.

Now, on the ground, I had informal relations -- well, not informal. I liaised with the Senior British Military Commander, the SBMRI, who was Andrew Figgures, who told me the other day that he had come and talked to you, at that time and [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Similarly, I had relations with the UK component of the US corps, which was at that stage the senior command and the senior intelligence officer, partly because he had the responsibility for the -- specialist responsibility for the behaviours of the debriefers, or interrogators, which of course is a specialist area and you have to have the appropriate training, which I didn't do. So in theatre there was that complication. Then of course we had the cell down in Basra, so I had relations with the UK divisional commander down in Basra. So that was all not command-related, but the two clear reporting chains were back to Rockingham and to PJHQ.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have been known to use the phrase "knitting": it was quite a complex bit of knitting, but workable?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Funnily enough, there is a picture of the knitting which I found in the papers and I thought, "My goodness, if I had known the extent of the knitting outside of the bit that I had seen, I think it..."

THE CHAIRMAN: Was there an Australian strand, by the way?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: There was an Australian strand. The three nations -- I must remember to answer your last question.

There were three nations involved in this: the US, the UK and Australia. The Australians had a Lieutenant Colonel who was their senior bod who acted in a similar way to me, but with far less direct contact. His was much more a military -- just a sort of PJHQ chain.

So did the knitting work? From my point of view it was straightforward and therefore it did work, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. So it was very straightforward from my point of view.

But when you look at the overall picture of the intelligence picture which had been generated before the operation, you've got to realise that there were many independent, but talking to each other, organisations forming a variety of opinions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: You know, hence the role for -- and I'm not familiar with how it worked before, but for Scarlett's committee to try and bring all that together and certainly so that was evident as to how things had been before the operation

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The interesting thing about the ISG, and what was regarded as groundbreaking at the time -- which was partly that no-one had ever tried to look at an intelligence operation and then look at it backwards from what you actually found on the ground -- is that they had put as many agencies as possible into one organisation and sat them on the same floor in a open plan office, therefore bringing those disparate views and approaches just about as close as you could. As far as I could tell, communication between these organisations was pretty good and you did actually have people from different agencies coming together in the biological warfare cell and different agencies coming together in the procurement cell. So actually the way it was put together actually on the floor looked much better than the knitting diagram does. That was, I think, the trick in bringing the ISG together which was unique.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: -- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

But at the time, of course, the main effort in Iraq was in dealing with the insurgency [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED].
I think one last one from me, before getting to the meat of it,
was you had a phone call or a conversation with someone to say
you are going off to do this thing: pre-briefing, direction,
instructions, guidance?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I was just talking to Margaret about that outside. Yes, I only went there for a relatively short time which, as history turned out, was probably a good thing because over the gap and then my successor, Graham Morrison, came in. So I appeared in a gap. I had one of those lovely things, a short gap between jobs anyway, so I had some time and I did get the call. I spent -- and I can't remember how long, I spent a couple of days reading quite a lot of background papers, making sure I had read the famous dodgy dossier back to front so I knew what I was after --

THE CHAIRMAN: And the September dossier, I hope.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: And the September report. Although I'm not sure how widely circulated that had been, but I did read that and I can't remember when. I spent a day in the Rockingham cell looking at the way we were going and what people understood about the nature of the business there and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], and I spent a day with PJHQ looking at the more military side and also getting into the way in which the wider intelligence picture was being operated, because as I said in my report you couldn't ever distance yourself completely from the wider intelligence operation that was going on in Iraq.

THE CHAIRMAN: Sure. I just wondered who was designing your role, your function?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, it had grown from the start.

THE CHAIRMAN: Out of the original circle?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Out of the original documents? Funnily enough, I don't remember reading it, although I'm sure I did. But looking at the original Frag O at which it was set up, the model there had stood the test of time -- and I think a point worth making now in the context of this is that the very clear

direction that I was given was that this was to be a genuinely open search for the truth; that it was an intelligence-led organisation; that Dr Kay had been appointed to lead it; that he had the executive responsibility for that; that, yes, there would be a UK interest and it was important for me to make sure, without ever upsetting sensitivities, to keep Rockingham and London informed as to where we were going. But there was never any indication that a particular answer was being sought.

Then I think the other point which I do want to say quite early, because I feel very strongly about it and there is a danger I might miss it, is that actually the intelligence analysts who had spent their lives looking at Iraq who, generally speaking, were still convinced that there were WMD to be found, and the one or two -- both UK and US -- people who had been working in the inspection regime over a number of years who, generally speaking, felt they weren't to be found; all worked very closely together and in an entirely objective way. I was very impressed with them.

So that when a sniff suddenly occurred, you know, we would get something really interesting, the excitement of course came to boiling pitch and that was where you occasionally saw this otherwise good liaison across the floor, so to say -- because this particular agency wanted to be the person who put their hands on it. We used to have one of those once a week and then when you realised that actually it wasn't that, actually everything calmed straight down and people were back to being genuinely analytical and behaving in an entirely honourable way. There were one or two -- and there was one girl in particular who, when she realised that actually it was wrong, it really affected her, but she went all the way to that point and at that point she said, "I'm sorry, I've got to go home" and she had been there for -- so I was very impressed by the way in which the

people behaved in the ISG.

THE CHAIRMAN: Just going back, I mean you got there at the beginning of 2004.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: By then there was no sense of, as it were, a security mission in the sense of, "These things are still lying around, we've got to keep them safe from terrorist organisations or the former regime"?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: That had all gone, it was purely a retrospective?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: It was definitely an intelligence-led operation.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, okay.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: And when I got there, Kay's September report had generated an expectation in capitals and there were quite a number of people who weren't surprised that he went, because they were feeling that way, and there were a significant number who felt that he had got it wrong. So it was very balanced at that time and you see that coming through in Duelfer's status report, because even if he had a preconception he certainly doesn't reflect that in his status report.

THE CHAIRMAN: Which was not an interim report because he didn't want one?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, the first big problem was when Kay went there was a responsibility for somebody to report to Congress in about February and what were we going to do about that?

THE CHAIRMAN: I can't resist a tiny reminiscence, but I got

there briefly with the Butler Committee in the summer after your time, and just becoming aware of this huge archive of untranslated material, documents from targets, found documents and the rest of it. If you were going to do the job thoroughly to the last inch it was going to take decades really?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Yes, and prioritising was always the challenge.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, I think --

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: And how you prioritised the document -- well, there were ways of prioritising documents you couldn't understand, but they were pretty rough and ready and it was a needle in a small haystack, as opposed to a big one.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Martin, over to you.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In your statement you explain the problem of the shortage of interpreters and the UK sometimes struggled to meet its --

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Quota.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: -- commitment. Can you explain to us what was the UK commitment and by how much and for what duration did it fail to meet its commitment?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I'm sure somewhere in here there is a bit of paper I could find, but we are talking about, I guess, no more than ten and we tended to be struggling to get -- you know, it would be two or three on occasions and that would sometimes be two and sometimes be three and what we sought to do was to try and make sure that we managed the gaps into the right places. I mean there is a list somewhere so I would hate to say -- if you want the number I'm sure I can find it.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: No, we have got the number.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: If you've got the number -- you are probably looking at it and I am not. But in overall terms it was quite a small number that we had and a relatively small variation.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Who in the UK was responsible for providing them?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, we had the opportunity to get civilian and military ones and I can't remember quite how we did it, but it was part of the manning list. Every week we submitted a return, which I think you have been given copies of, they are called the assess reps and you will see that there was a list on the front of each one of those saying who was due in and who was due out and identifying the problem back to PJHQ, and that was also copied into the Rockingham cell. So that was how it was handled. And that was the same for interpreters, for analysts, for military staff.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How did the shortage of interpreters impact on the operations?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, I don't want to answer that question purely in the UK context, because they were all part of a pool and I think my same general comments apply to the debriefers.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Right.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: It was part of the constraint on undertaking operations of all sorts, be those document translation or trips out, and by and large the military ones went out and the civilian ones stayed in, although that wasn't necessarily the case. Civilians could go out if they agreed to.

But there were lots of other constraints on the operations and the most predominant one was the security situation in the

place that we were going and the ability of ourselves to provide appropriate security and, in the case of particularly difficult areas or particularly sensitive operations, to liaise with the security forces in whose area of operation we were moving to make sure that was coordinated.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you have your own dedicated force protection capability?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Me personally?

THE CHAIRMAN: No, you the ISG, or did you have to borrow it all the time?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: We had a wonderful body of national guardsmen who guarded the perimeter and then we had, within the organisation, these collections of things called "mobile collection teams", which was an odd word, which was a force of -- I'm struggling to remember now, but I think it was sort of 200 or 300, manned mostly by the US, again mostly reservists, and equipped by them. But our commitment was to provide some of the team commanders and, as I said in my report, they tended to be junior officers who were used to what to do round the back streets of Belfast and could therefore get round the back streets of Baghdad in vehicles. So our commitment to that was relatively small.

But as the overall security situation got worse, it was more difficult to man some of the operations, particularly around Baghdad. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So I think the major constraint on us going out and about was

the security situation and in any case we had, as I say, this prioritised list of operations which we would keep reviewing. That was done twice a week by the ops cell. There would be a list of tasks that were produced by the analysts and those would go into the ops cell to assess the state of the risk and the other resources that would be available. So it would be wrong to say that interpreters per se was a major difficulty: it was one of those things that had to be managed.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: And was there a certain point at which the security problems overrode the personnel?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: No, not in my time. I wouldn't describe any step functions. Just in the three months that I was there it just got gradually worse, to the extent that I used to have a soft skin vehicle when I went down to Baghdad and I was quite comfortable when I started, and my successor very quickly had an armoured vehicle after I left.

THE CHAIRMAN: On a side note, we have had a lot of evidence much more generally about the duty of care responsibilities and the problems particularly where you've got mixed civilian and military. Did you have that responsibility within ISG for the UK component?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I had responsibility for the UK component.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any problems thereby?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, there were some things which came up and if you wanted to read some of the reports you may have seen, there was the issue of the protection against incoming missiles and small arms, which I had to have a conversation about and actually it was fine.

We did have one quite interesting debate which was that at

some point it looked as if we were having our national guard people withdrawn and we were going to have contractors guarding their perimeter and even contractors coming out with the MCTs, at which point I had to dive for the UK doctrine of law on this and I had to say to the General, "We won't be able to operate like that". Actually, that was dealt with and in fact me saying that was apparently the clincher which meant that the US turned some more national guardsmen out for us. So those sorts of relations between myself and Keith Dayton were very good.

In the case of civilians who came out as analysts, it was, I recall, actually in the end a matter of their choice. But we would make sure that they understood what they were doing.

THE CHAIRMAN: I was just going to ask that question: is volunteering enough by a civilian who is under a different regime or set of expectations of duty of care?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I'm sure the rules are much clearer now than they were then, so I can't remember where I turned to for advice on this. But we did have conversations and, as I recall, my thinking was, first of all establish whether the individual is happy to do this operation or not, and that would vary operation to operation, and then secondly step aside and think whether you think the operation is worth doing with a commensurate risk. So in the end it was my responsibility to say whether they should or shouldn't.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, okay, thanks.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: But I'm not sure it was ever written down anywhere. I mean, being the deputy adjutant general after that, I think I probably would have written it down.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Can you give some indication of perhaps the number or percentage of tasks which you didn't feel were carried

out because of these issues?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: No, because there was this big list of operations and we prioritised them against risk and benefit much more generally. So it would be wrong to assume that there was one thing which we said, "We can't do it because it is too risky": there was always something which was more important than others.

Of course if something was inherently -- there isn't an objective level of risk. It's always subjective and you can alter it by the degree of wraparound you put around it. So if you really thought it was very important, it would be very risky at one level of security and less risky at another level of security. That was why I said earlier that there were times when we did it ourselves and there were times when we would have to coordinate an operation so that we were getting additional support, you know, from the organisation in whose area we were operating.

[REDACTED]

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Can I turn to debriefers and the shortfall in debriefers. What impact did the shortfall have in terms of your ability to get --

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Can I just step back from answering the question a little bit and say that one thing that absolutely startled me was both the UK and US lack of capability in this area going into an operation of that sort.

When Saddam was captured, it's my view that no-one had ever thought about quite what was going to happen when they captured him. There wasn't a debriefing team that had been put in place

who had thought about how they were going to do it and there was a bit of a struggle about who was going to do it. So I don't think that the coalition, generally speaking, had thought about this properly before and certainly it didn't have a plan to get on to a smarter footing while we were there.

So the military -- both the US and the UK -- have a structure of people who are trained to question, by and large, prisoners of war and some of them are more qualified than others, and they were deployed in what I consider to be a task which was well outside the expectation and we are very lucky that we have -- I didn't realise this until I got there -- quite a number of policemen as reservists who are trained questioners. So we relied on them fairly heavily and they were much respected by the US. We seemed to do rather better than they did.

Then I think the next point to make is that one has to get absolutely the right understanding of what these people were doing. The analysts would say, "I'm trying to find out about subject X and I think person Y must know something about it", and they would then identify a line of questioning, would brief the debriefer, who would then discuss with the analyst how you might go and the difficulties and how you keep lines open and the sort of questions you would use to corroborate what other witnesses were saying. So it was quite a long, complicated process to get this right. Then you would go and talk to Tariq Aziz or whoever it was, or Chemical Ali, who by and large didn't want to talk to you. Duelfer makes this point very clearly: Tariq Aziz doesn't want to talk to you and is very good at answering questions in a way which is very difficult to corroborate afterwards and is conceived to be quite unhelpful and you are doing it all through an interpreter, because despite the fact that Tariq Aziz spoke good English, he wasn't going to help us by speaking English.

So while this was (a) a surprise to me, and (b) finding them

was difficult, I wouldn't want you to draw a conclusion that that was the reason we didn't get anything out of the high value detainees. I mean Duelfer, in the status report -- and no doubt you will have asked him this -- makes this point, that actually getting useful information out of almost anybody in the HVDs was very, very difficult.

THE CHAIRMAN: Strong accent, underlining "useful": I mean they talked and talked and talked.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: For reasons you will understand I was never allowed to witness these, but they were very good at talking, as I understand it.

The other interesting thing is that we are talking about a [REDACTED] Staff Sergeant TA talking to one of the world's most competent statesmen who has run rings around the UN Security Council on more than one occasion. So that's why I make the point that if we were ever going to go back into something like this again -- and I jolly well hope we are doing it in Afghanistan -- I think this is a really specialist job, to have the right sort of people who are good at this and speak the language.

Where we found ourselves in the spring of 2004 was that we didn't have those people and there didn't seem to be, on either side of the Atlantic, a recognition that this was an issue. Of course, at the same time we had Abu Ghraib going on and all sorts of things, so it was quite a difficult time.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED] --

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: [REDACTED]?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED].

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: [REDACTED]?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So the idea that somehow you could get someone who is a good analyst and a good linguist all into one person I think is probably not a realistic thought.

THE CHAIRMAN: And quite arguably it was easier than Afghanistan would be likely to be, in the sense that most of the high value targets would be English speaking, even if they chose not to, but they were English comprehending. Afghanistan is really rather different.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Yes, probably. I think -- well, I'm not an expert on that.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Can I turn briefly to the UN weapons inspectors. In the DIS paper on the ISG of this May, there is a comment that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I referred earlier to the two sort of categories of people who sat on the shop floor and they were the analysts, who spent their time looking from outside, and the inspectors who had come from inside. They are two very different sorts of person, for a start. I mean, there is a personality thing here. The person who spent his time in Langley looking at

data and analysing things is not generally the sort of person who has volunteered to go and mix it in some inspections in -- so they tended to be rather different personalities.

All the way through, and continued, you know, Blix was maintaining his position that while they may be there he hadn't seen them but he had had a jolly good look. These people -- and to be honest Duelfer I think must have had to pinch himself really not to start from that position and I thought he was an exceptionally capable and honourable bloke as well, but they definitely were from the sceptic community. They were very lively, bright people who knew their way around Iraq very well.

THE CHAIRMAN: Expert as well.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I always try just to be careful not to say someone is an expert in this, because the whole point about this was there had been lots of experts who had come up with views. They had a very particular experience. There were bits of Iraq they knew very well. There were clearly lots of bits -- and Duelfer in his status reports explains the lengths to which the Iraqi intelligence service had gone -- and they realised that they were being treated like that, but as the picture emerged of it being less and less likely that we were going to find particularly smoking guns, there was a tendency they had perhaps to become a bit more vociferous. But I did also say to you earlier on, which is a point I wanted to make that, that actually everybody I thought behaved with great integrity when it came to actually getting down to it and saying, "What have we found and what is our interpretation of this and what shall we do next", and so on.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So there is no way that they impeded things; they just merely had a sort of sceptical downer on things?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: And all these people, all these people

on both sides, although their personalities were very different, were people who wanted to live with their own consciences and realised that this was a major issue and wanted to make their opinions well heard.

SIR MARTIN GILBERT: My last question is also one that is raised in the DIS papers about the short tours and whether you felt they were a problem and whether this was also a problem for others? Compared, say, with the Americans?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, I have had lots of conversations about this and there are definitely two sides -- not on this specific point, but in -- there were definitely two sides. I met Americans who had been there for 18 months and never had a day off and they should have been sent home ages before. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So you can be there for too long and equally you can be there for too short a time.

I'm conscious that we were on relatively shorter bursts than our American colleagues. We worked pretty hard to make sure that the effect of that was minimised by scheduling people into the right sort of place and by trying to get the end of it. It was well understood by the Americans that we had a different way of doing it.

In my own case, and it was good fortune, I think, that actually I left the day the -- I arrived when Kay had resigned and I left the day the status report was published. It couldn't have been better. Then my successor went right through the final stages. So, you know, there are times when it would have been worse had I not gone after six months in July. So I think there is an issue, but I wouldn't raise it as something which was of fundamental significance.

Now, if we talk about civilians, of course, and we had lots of civilians -- both MoD, civil servants, [REDACTED] and they were entirely their own men and women, so some of them could stay for as long or as short as they wanted to. But the DIS people tended to be on a six month tour. But so long as you could schedule it, it was potentially a good thing.

Also the experts changed, so there were occasions when we said, "We don't actually need this individual, there is a phase that's gone", and there was a phase when we were doing, say, for example, we were playing around with ground penetrating radar and we got people out for a short period to meet the task. So we were actively managing that, it wasn't a rigid six months.

THE CHAIRMAN: A bit like wrestling with a bedstead, wasn't it, ground penetrating radar?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, actually, technically it looked a bit easier than that. I think the trouble was that the confidence one had in its product was still pretty low. Although it was very advanced, it still didn't provide high levels of comfort.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Lawrence, over to you.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You've said a number of times you arrived as David Kay resigned and of course David Kay resigned well away from Iraq. Did you meet him at all?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: No. No, he had gone on leave just before Christmas and I arrived just after Christmas.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But you would have been in a position to see the impact on ISG of his departure?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Oh yes.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So there was, without doubt, a pause when we were not being directed as well as we might have been anyway and of course that came after -- there was about a three week -- Kay left some instructions and then went and didn't come back, so the fact that Duelfer arrived after six weeks of my time and actually it was -- so there was a period in which the direction was not as firm as it might have been.

The other issue that we struggled with at the time which took people's mind off things, off the search, was what on earth to do about the report because the DCI was quite keen to report to Congress on time.

THE CHAIRMAN: He had to.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, there was a debate about whether it was Kay's responsibility or his responsibility. So we set about trying to draft an interim report and that, in the absence of the DCI's appointed representative, was almost impossible because the various different heads were not being corralled in the way that they were when Duelfer arrived. That issue, unsurprisingly therefore, took attention away from what potentially we ought to have been doing. Now, whether that was significant or not, I don't think it's -- I would find it difficult to judge.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I mean you also said there was sympathy for [REDACTED]?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But had come to a non-Bush conclusion?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Had come to a non-Bush conclusion and the problem was that he had come to it without sufficient of the evidence. He had gone so far from the September position which had said, "These are the things and I'm sure we are going to find something", to say, "No, we got it all wrong", that it was not a position which, to be fair, anyone was satisfied with. I suppose if you knew a little bit about it, you might think that this was pressures from governments which said, "No we can't accept that", and that would be a false interpretation. I mean nobody in the ISG felt that the job had been done sufficiently and there was a need to carry on, whether they were a sceptic or not. So there was a general -- we had to do more to clarify the position. Even if you were a Kay supporter or a Kay anti, there was no sense that we should pack up and go home at that point.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You said capitals were quite careful, but did you have a sense on the UK side of concerns about the political impact of Kay's resignation and the message that he had given?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: There were clearly political ramifications and we read about them with some amusement in the media and the speculation that was going on. But they genuinely didn't interfere with what we were trying to do. A decision had

been taken early, and I think rightly, that we were never going to let the media into the ISG. It was always going to be handled at a distance. So we weren't beseiged by the press -- because there was a clear policy that we weren't going to talk to them anyway. So I think that helped.

As I say, the clear view in the ISG that the job had not been done, despite what Kay had said, even if you thought he was going to be right in the end, was that there was more to do. So we didn't have any difficulty with the capital's view, which was very clear to us, that they didn't think the job had been done either. So I think we were all genuinely aligned and there wasn't any sense in which we were being asked to do it just to save face. Genuinely people felt that the job had not been done properly.

THE CHAIRMAN: With two, as it were, different levels of perception anyway: in capital's we must have been right all along, there must be something, but at the ISG level, professionally we haven't actually done the task yet. The two were congruent although different?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Yes. They didn't have any difficulty at that point. The excitement which occurred, of course, which eventually got into the media, goodness knows how, was over the Duelfer status report and the golden bullet conversation. I would love to know who leaked that -- it wasn't me -- but there was at that moment a sense of, "Couldn't you say more in the status report?" That was the only time when the issue of how, and to what extent are politics going to be involved in this, came to the fore. Again, I think perhaps this is unfashionable and certainly wouldn't be good Mirror headlines, but actually it was handled very honourably. Duelfer had had a briefing at No. 10 when he came out, which he presumably told you about, and

what he said to me was that he was concerned about what the Prime Minister was going to say and I can't remember exactly his words but certainly the impression I got from Duelfer was he said that the Prime Minister said, "Go and do what you've got to do and come back with the truth".

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: From what you have said -- I don't want to spend too much time on this -- there was confidence in Duelfer when he came along, or did he take time to -- I mean presumably a lot of people knew him anyway, but did he take time to establish himself? He did have a different approach as well?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Yes. The moment Kay resigned, the people in the know were saying it had to be Duelfer and it was just a question of time. I think -- well, you will have asked him the question, "Did you take much persuading?" and I think he did take a bit of persuading. But the name was beginning to bubble around early in January that he would be the right person and he went down very well, you know, he was very good at talking to people.

I mean it was quite funny, he did wonder why he should speak to this British brigadier -- "What has he got to do with it?".

THE CHAIRMAN: What, you?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Me. So I discovered that he quite liked the way I made tea, so that was a good entree. Then we did get on pretty well and then I think he found that it was quite useful to have somebody who was slightly outside to bounce ideas off, particularly as I said in my notes about how to handle unwelcome news to the capitals and the importance of consultation.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay?

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]? [REDACTED].

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED].

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: Roderic, over to you.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: I would just like to sort of get clear on the relationships between the taxi driver and the tea maker in their uniforms, which is how you've described Dayton and yourself, and the fare payer. Who was actually the boss? Who was the person driving this? Was it the fare payer, the passenger in the back?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Yes, and I'm using Dayton's analogy to me.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Yes, I know.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Yes, he was very clear that this was -- the president had appointed, had told the DCI, to do this and the DCI had appointed first Kay and then Duelfer to lead the search from an intelligence-led perspective. There was never, in my

mind, any doubts that Dayton was happy with that.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Yes.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: And no doubt in my mind that he behaved in a way which was consistent with that. So when a potential operation came up, you know, he would say, "Right, so" -- because he was responsible for the security of these people, he would say, "Well, what are we going to do, why are we going to do it, what is the benefit?", and in the end -- you know, a bit like the question you asked me about duty of care, you know, he was taking that sort of responsibility and making sure it was properly coordinated. But in the end it was the decision of the special adviser as to how we should go about it and, as I said in my notes, you know, Duelfer took ownership of the reports which he made, absolutely, and Dayton never sought to change -- this was a pretty consultative environment, but in the end it was perfectly clear that it was Duelfer's pen that went on the bottom and he would live by his own judgment.

Duelfer made it very clear that he wasn't going to accept -- and one of the reasons that the status report was written the way it was was he simply wasn't prepared to accept any previous assessment, at least until he had got to know the people and how they had come about it and so on. He didn't say, "Never, I've got to start again", but he said, "I'm not prepared to take any judgments that have been made until I understand better what you have been doing and the evidence that went behind it".

SIR RODERIC LYNE: And he was reporting to whom?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: He reported, I think, to the DCI, whose name I've forgotten. The deputy chief.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Was he being steered and instructed by the DCI?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Was he reported to? Yes. Did we have regular television conversations with the DCI? Yes. I can't say that I was in on all of them but there were routine ones which Dayton and I attended with Duelfer and the chief of staff. He would report to the DCI and the DCI would question him. But his direction was very clear to establish the truth and Duelfer made it perfectly clear that he was not going to write a report which reflected anyone's, other than his own, opinion.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Now, having you there as deputy commander, obviously we were taking our share of the responsibility but did it also mean that we had a disproportionate influence in the ISG?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Disproportionate compared with what?

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Well, compared to the scale of our input, the ratio between HMG and the US government?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I suppose it depends how you measure it in terms of outcome. Did we have a seat at the top table to watch what was going on and make sure that our views were sought at the appropriate moment? Yes, we did. You could argue, I think, that that was probably proportionate in terms of the commitment that we had made to the operation in the first place, not necessarily to the resources associated with the ISG. I don't think anyone suggested for a minute that we were not getting the engagement that we should.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: And you were able to put your oar in? I mean, for example in the VTCs if you wanted to get a point across, they were receptive to it in this fairly harmonious working industry?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Yes, and when Dayton wasn't there I was it and I sat next to Duelfer when we were doing it and I sat in the chair when we were talking to CENTCOM. I mean, it didn't happen very often, but I was in all of those.

I haven't really answered your question about proportionate influence. There wasn't an outcome that we were trying to achieve other than the truth.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Well, we tried to get it across to them, among other things, that their work was going to have an impact not just in the United States but also in Britain and therefore there was a lot of sensitivity around that. Was that part of your role?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I tell you what really surprised me was the fact the Americans were putting so much effort into it in the first place, because no American soldier who I spoke to thought that WMD were important in the operation OIF at all. They were all about dealing with the impact of 9/11 and the threat that it had posed. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED].

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Also I mean one aspect of the work of the ISG was on the terrorist link, wasn't it, it wasn't just about WMD?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: It was. In my comments I sought to try and explain that. You couldn't do anything in Iraq without having an eye on the terrorism issue because it affected absolutely everything you did. When you were talking, as we were, and you were out and about talking to lots of people, some of whom had been quite influential and certainly were representative of some of the factions, it would have been foolish to have avoided those sorts of conversations.

There were documents which came our way which hinted at -- and I remember one particular excitement when they thought we've got the smoking gun over AQ in Iraq, which in the end I don't think was, but there was that aspect. So as I said, the CT component was much more, I think, in the end about making sure there was a coherent counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency intelligence picture built up for the whole of Iraq, rather than any particular desire specifically to find out anything about -- although I suppose I don't know what the orders to the other intelligence organisations in the military commands were about trying to establish an AQ link. That was certainly something that particularly interested us, but as almost a by-product of trying to work out what was going on in the insurgency and feed that into the overall picture.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: We have had some evidence, not from ISG but from elsewhere, that within the very close working relationships between British and American official representatives of one kind or another, some uniformed and some not, in Iraq there did arise from time to time problems of information sharing because of American rules about NOFORN and so on. Your expression suggests that you bumped into this, was it a serious issue with you?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I think I mentioned it. It was a regular thorn in one's side. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

SIR RODERIC LYNE: You kept Scotch whiskey behind the door did you?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I could tell you some stories! To break off a moment, when I arrived there [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Score one all!

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, I didn't have a problem.

So people could come in to use my system and although we couldn't get online to databases, they could get back to UK data which had come through. So it was an irritant which we had to mitigate and I can't say the extent to which that really constrained activity. Where relations were good, which generally speaking they were between the Brit and the American cells, they found some ways of working around it, but we weren't the only people who suffered from it.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: So it was a bugbear but it was a bugbear which was a familiar one?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: And there was nothing to -- it was being handled at the highest possible level.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: No, we've heard this story from others [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I mean that's on the information side. On the decision-making side, did you find at times that decisions were taken that you should have been consulted on that you weren't, that were taken for granted, or that didn't happen at all?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: No, as I explained, there were only

three people who could walk into -- because American generals have rather a different way of doing business than British ones. There were only three people who could walk into the general's office without stopping at his XO or his chief of staff. One was the chief of staff, one was me and one was the special adviser. And I used to, and because I had that access I didn't have to fight for it.

Now we had all these routine planning meetings in which I was always involved -- I mean, I can't guarantee that there were things that were discussed that I might have been involved in that I wasn't, but I was never conscious of a decision having been taken or an approach being followed with which I would be unhappy. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] very easy to get on with. Having worked in the diplomatic circuit for a bit, he had a very inclusive style with the people who he needed to be inclusive with. I've heard tales -- when I've described this to some of my colleagues who have worked with their American counterparts, they've simply not recognised the characteristics at all. So I think we were very fortunate in Keith's appointment to that because it meant that that worked well.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Can we just do a couple of minutes on the Duelfer report, which you've already referred to, and then I think perhaps we will have earned ourselves a cup of tea and a chocolate biscuit.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delete chocolate.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Delete chocolate in the case of the chairman.

Why in the end was it a status report rather than an interim report?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, I'm sure you asked Charles the

choice of words and I'm not sure that I can answer that very specifically, but he saw the choice of wording. We had had an interim report from Kay and so I sense that Duelfer, and I referred to this earlier, was his own man and would not have wanted to have been confused with Kay. What he wanted to do was to set out what his approach was going to be, but he recognised that people would be interested in what had happened and his report covers both those things, you know: what has happened, how are we going about it and how am I going forward? He chose the word "status" to describe those combinations of points that he wanted to put forward.

My recollection is that he initially said, "I'm not going to report to Congress, I've only been here six weeks, I'm not ready to report", at which point the DCI will have said, "That'll bit tricky, you know, you may be independent, Charles, but Congress is still Congress", and I think he recognised that actually it was quite useful to put his pegs in the ground and this was a way of doing it. You are nodding, maybe that's the sort of impression that he gave you too. I have had these conversations with him but it was six years ago.

THE CHAIRMAN: He precluded himself from offering conclusions.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: He definitely was not going to offer conclusions. But he was very loyal -- from the moment he arrived and he looked around, he immediately, I think, warmed to the people and warmed to the ISG, so he did want to show that the ISG had been working hard on behalf of Congress and the US and the UK. So he wanted to get that theme in and I think that theme comes through the report.

My recollection is that he wrote most of it personally, you know, he sat down with his pen after six weeks and he wanted to present to Congress what he thought, as he would describe it, the

status of the ...

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Did you have to make sure, or were you asked to make sure, that his report reflected the British government's concerns?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: He didn't want the report to reflect any government's concerns. He wanted it to reflect his view of the ISG. We did have some conversations about whether it should be shared with capitals in draft and my recollection is that his initial reaction was that it was his report and he was Duelfer and he would write what he wanted, thank you very much indeed, and as it is a status report, what part have they got to play in it? I'm sure others had a bearing on it, but I explained to him why, properly handled, with a set of ground rules, and it can be explained -- you know, I had a few conversations with Nigel Sheinwald and John Scarlett explaining what he was trying to achieve and under those rules if they wanted to comment, then they would be given the opportunity so to do. That was where the golden nugget question came back, because Scarlett in his written comments back said, "What about a few of the golden nuggets?" referring to the Kay earlier report and saying, "Couldn't you say that we've got much further with these ones?" And you will know that Duelfer declined.

I want to be very clear about this: that was conducted in a very dispassionate, logical way. You know, London said, "What is he going to do about the report?" and I explained the type of report he was going to write and London said, "Well, we'd rather" -- and I said, "That's not what Duelfer is going to do and he told you that when he was in London on his way through", and, "Are we going to see it?", "Yes, you are going to see it." "Can we comment?" "Yes, we can." "Will you reply to our comments?", "Yes, we will."

And once the comments had come in and the replies had gone in, end of conversation. That was it and Duelfer was then allowed to --

SIR RODERIC LYNE: No phone call at that point from Nigel Sheinwald or John Scarlett to you saying, "Can't you make sure that he puts in the nuggets?" I mean they said, "Fair cop, gov, your report Mr Duelfer, no problem"?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: We had exactly those types of conversations, you know, "Why can't he?" and we relayed these conversations, but there was never a sense of desperation and pressure being applied, because I think --

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Gentle persuasion rather than arm twisting?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, I think it was a classic -- I don't know your background, I'm afraid, but having worked in the Ministry of Defence at a senior level, you know, papers are read and comments are done and they are done in a dispassionate and logical way. Arguments went backwards and forwards and it felt very like that.

While, quite clearly, the people who had been party to the advice offered on both sides of the Atlantic to the decision to go to war felt passionately about it, people behaved in a very, I think, honourable and dispassionate way during these processes.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: And just looking at the nuggets from a different angle, given that by this stage some of the nuggets had turned out not to be made of gold, or were fool's gold, wasn't this an opportunity actually to straighten that out?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: No, not by this stage. They were still possibly and --

THE CHAIRMAN: No conclusion?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: And Duelfer didn't say, no, the nuggets were wrong; equally he didn't say the nuggets were right.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Shouldn't he have taken the opportunity to have cast some doubt if the previous impression had created a perception one way?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: He was very careful not to -- you know, if he wasn't going to go one way, he certainly wasn't going to go the other way either. He said, "If I'm going to say what the status is, I'm going to say what the status is and it would be improper for me to make ...", well it depends what you mean by positive or negative conclusions, but " ... positive or negative conclusions just one way". He said, "I don't think the work has been done. It would be wrong of me to say one thing or another".

Now if I give you an example of something which I was personally involved very closely in: the old biological trailers, which had been used by Colin Powell on the floor of the UN to say "we've found it". Are you familiar with it?

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Yes.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: You must be familiar with it, yes. At the time this report was written there was nobody in the ISG who seriously thought there were biotrailers. We could have said, I'm sure I discussed with Charles -- and I'm using surnames to make sure we don't get confused with Duelfer -- you know, "What are you going to say about the trailers?" And I don't think he said anything about the trailers because he could have said, "There is less than 0.1 per cent probability that this was", but he didn't because he wanted to keep his powder dry both ways.

THE CHAIRMAN: And a single conclusive remark about anything would have --

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Would have laid him open to criticism:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:

[REDACTED] ?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER:

[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:

[REDACTED] ?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Having said that, let me just give it a moment's thought to see whether there's anything else that I can remember. Oh, the other one was the wretched mortar tubes, wasn't it, and were they a part of the --

THE CHAIRMAN: Of the centrifuge, exactly.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: The centrifuge, yes. I can recall that we were getting more convinced that they -- well, I think they were interesting because they could have been. I think there was a general conclusion that technically they might have been part of the programme but we were not in a position yet to describe what they were.

Against this, the background of this is that I don't think there was anybody who thought that Saddam wasn't enthusiastic about making progress in all these arenas. So when you got to something like ranges of rockets and the use of UAVs and the use of the tubes, or anything else where there was a dual use, at that stage we were a long way from saying whether he was exploiting their dual capability, dual potential, and that's really I think why Duelfer switched his -- not switched, but introduced this regime intent because he said, "We are not going to understand the dual use things and the things like the tubes unless we really understand the nature and the intention of the Iraqi regime". So there was still very definitely a yes and no debate running on the tubes, whereas probably it was more no than yes on the other two examples.

THE CHAIRMAN: The tubes remain something of an enigma, don't

they?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: They do, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: In the sense they would have had to be reengineered for either purpose? Either for centrifuge assemblies or --

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I've very carefully not read Duelfer's final report before I came here in case I got confused and so I can't remember where it ended up.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think I'm going to invite you to speculate. This was a huge financial transaction, the purchase of these tubes. Whatever they were for somebody made a hell of a lot of money in Iraq. That may have actually been the reason?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: It may well have been.

The other thing I think it's worth saying is that Saddam's regime was not the DPA.² When it came to buying equipment it was not defence equipment and support.³ It wasn't managed in a sort of collective way. I mean there's an argument saying he did rather better than we did in some ways, because the way he ran it -- and I'm not a terrorist expert, but it struck me as being very much like a terrorist cell. The pictures of his Cabinet meetings weren't Cabinet meetings, you know, he quite clearly gave very distinct orders to individuals and expected to get the answer "yes" when he said, you know, "How are we doing?"

Now they would have, I'm certain, generated bits of hard evidence so that when he said, "Show me", they were able so to do.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

² Defence Procurement Agency [UK]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

That was the nature of the regime that you were dealing with. So there wasn't one Ministry of WMD: there were lots of people who had been asked to do various things, I'm sure, to which they would have wanted to reply the answer "yes". I remain convinced that, you know, once and if sanctions had been dropped and he had managed to resolve the little problem that he had with the UNSCOM and got rid of them that he would have been back there. I mean he had done it before.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just on that, and that was obviously an important conclusion of Duelfer, the evidence for that mainly came from talking to detainees or was it from documentation?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I can't remember. I mean there were lots of reports going and I can't remember where the particular evidence had come from. I would routinely hear the reports from the cells and they would tell you where it was, where it had come from and why they were reaching that sort of conclusion. But in that particular case, of course, they hadn't reached a conclusion, they would have been, "on the one hand, on the other hand".

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: On finding things out, one of the ways things were found out was going to suspect sites. Was this largely based on the sort of information that UNMOVIC had? Was it being generated by information being found? Because this presumably --

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: If we wanted to go to a site we would always try and make sure there were good grounds for it and so

³ A further reference to the UK MOD procurement organisation

normally you would try and find more than one reason for going. So there was previous UN inspections, there were hints in documentary evidence, reports would come in from HUMINT and the debriefing of the HVDs, and generally speaking we would want to have more than one indicator as to why we would go somewhere. So it was a combination. That was the responsibility of the analysis cell to put all of that together.

THE CHAIRMAN: So you would construct your own, as it were, site visit packages rather than having them delivered ready-made from Rockingham or from anywhere else?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Yes, absolutely and that was part of the operational schedule which was generated internally within the ISG. Yes, if stuff came in from anywhere else it would join the file. So, for example, if there were reports from the SIS that they had heard that somebody said that something was going on there, that would go in to generate a part of the picture and then if there was felt to be sufficient value in using whatever assets we had to go there, then the decision would be made on that basis.

THE CHAIRMAN: That's quite important, actually, isn't it, that there was that degree of autonomy, if you like, of process and judgment within ISG?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Oh absolutely, and that wasn't just a Duelfer-ism, that was present when I got there.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: While you were there was anything found at any sites that was of any major interest?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: We had lots of excitements.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You were describing the excitements before, but you suggested a degree of anticlimax afterwards.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I have to say, during my time we didn't have any real excitements. There were quite frequent discoveries of stuff that should have been tagged but wasn't. But some of that was -- well, a good number of those -- making the connection between the WMD programme and those was quite difficult because frequently they were dual use and this was a big country which needed fertilisers and the rest of it. So those were quite frequent.

I suppose the underwater leads were probably the most exciting and took the longest time to exploit but neither of those -- one in some lakes up to the north and then a couple of things in the River Tigris which took a lot of planning they took a long time to get. There was one of them where there was a report of activity in the river by people who shouldn't have been in the river the night before we got there and that was never -- so there was quite a few of those.

Then there was the famous [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] -- because they were Iran/Iraq mortar bombs but they were conventional but they had been seeping. So we had plenty of those, but there were no -- I mean, because if there had been, we would be having a rather different conversation, I'm sure. It would only have needed one such for us to be having a rather different conversation.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But before the war the failure of the UNMOVIC inspectors to find very much had slowly drawn out some of the confidence that had been there that there were things to be found. So presumably that process was continuing the more sites were visited and nothing was found, the sense that there probably wasn't anything to be found?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Certainly the way I have described it,

even during my time over the CURVE BALL thing there was a movement in one direction. My recollection of what Duelfer said -- although, as I said, I consciously didn't read it again before I came -- was that that was the movement that had continued.

But I don't think -- it would be wrong to say that there was, even amongst the UNMOVIC and UNSCOM people, a view that they had done a completely thorough job, because they realised there were large chunks of Iraq where things could have been going on that they had no idea about.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I mean there is an interesting question there. You know, before the war Rumsfeld famously had this observation that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence and the problem of proving a negative. Do you think UNMOVIC could, given time, have come to similar conclusions to the sort that ISG came to or would the Iraqi government activity at that time have created a greater level of doubt as to what had been achieved?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I don't think I'm qualified to comment on UNMOVIC's potential capability, but I think I am qualified to say that the extent to which the Iraqi intelligence service and others were able to confuse UNMOVIC, the extent to which they were capable of avoiding sanctions and exploit the Oil for Food programme; I would say that almost whatever you did in terms of an inspection regime with a Saddam-run government was always likely to have been less than fully conclusive.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you.

Finally, you mentioned again earlier the lack of debriefing capabilities. That must have limited the number of people that could be interviewed. Do you think there was a problem of balance in terms of interviewing people and visiting sites?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: The debriefers were associated absolutely with the detainees, not the people you met out on a trip. If you went on a trip it was the interpreter and whoever was the analyst or someone. So there was only so much debriefing you could do with the number of debriefers you had. I think the debriefer issue -- my sort of negative observations about the debriefers wasn't actually about the numbers, it was actually having people with the right skills to do that sort of debriefing in those sorts of circumstances then -- a lesson for the future, you know, the technicals, the qualifications, the skills, the language and the understanding of the environment. Somebody who is a very good questioner of someone who has been having a fight in a pub in Britain on a Friday night doesn't necessarily have the right background, or the best background. So my point about debriefers was more about the competence to debrief those sort of people.

In terms of the resources, there is never enough resources to do everything you want. In the same way that I've described how we prioritised operations looking at the risk and the balance and the benefit, there was a prioritised list of questioning of the HVDs, depending on where the particular line of inquiry in the various different cells was going.

So there isn't a sort of cut off: yes, we had enough, no we didn't. There's never enough to go around and we prioritised. Generally speaking, my recollection is that there was never a sort of major backlog.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Okay, thanks a lot.

THE CHAIRMAN: We've set ourselves two jobs, really. One is to write the story, and you have given us a lot of help with a particular piece of it. I can't resist the simile: you found yourself with one foot on the riverbank and one foot in the boat

between Kay and Duelfer and you managed to stay afloat. But the second thing we have to do is the lessons, and we've got some of those, but one or two specifics. You talked a bit about duty of care, so I think I might leave that unless there's anything outstanding from your recollection of that?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I don't think there's anything that I would say in terms of purely the military operations armoured protection and so on which you wouldn't have heard from lots of other people.

I think the thing which I would have had rather more to deal with than anybody else was the issue of civilians and the sort of multinational -- you know, under whose rules are we going. It was definitely at that stage writing the rules as we went along.

THE CHAIRMAN: Right. The same point in a way in a different context is getting around the coalition issues about different regimes, protocols and whatever. I took from what you said that co-location was almost as important as anything else: if you can get people from the different agencies, or institutions, or countries sitting together you've got a better chance of making it work than trying to negotiate almost impossibly complex and difficult agreements.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Yes, and I don't think that's a lesson that you would necessarily only draw from this sort of activity. There comes a point where, however well video conferences and other things work, if you've got people trying to solve a problem you need to put them around the same table.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, JTAC in this country is another example of the same thing exactly.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I'm sure.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think --

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: I'm not sure -- and don't forget this is what people regard as a unique intelligence operation, because I don't think anyone before has said, "What was it, what was the intelligence picture, now let's see if we can relate it to what's on the ground". Whether my observation about you've got to put people around the table eventually is as true when you are doing the intelligence gathering from afar, I don't think I'm qualified to judge because that's not a side of the intelligence operations with which I'm very familiar.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is a comparison which we do do a certain amount of, I think, in the UK, from what I've understood, which is red teaming in real-time, alongside. But the retrospective analysis is a different thing and this is the leading case, if not the only case.

The last thing from me though is, given your own background, it's how you bring technical expertise skills to bear in an all-source challenging and uncertain intelligence environment. Do you try to widen the perspective of your technical experts or do you try to keep them to their last but then take their product and have it analysed at a different level or in a wider context? Is that answerable? I'm thinking particularly of things like trailers and stuff where you have had highly specialised expert opinion bearing on a very uncertain stream of intelligence reporting.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, I was going to have to refer to the trailers because there was a very interesting case in point there.

The guy who actually produced the really hard evidence was a guy called [REDACTED] - I think his name was [REDACTED] -- who was not in the DIS. He was a microbiologist who didn't have much to do at the time and he

was well-known, very well-qualified, who I think wrote to Kay and said, "I've got nothing to do, I understand about microbiology, I would love to come and look with you", and Kay passed the letter on to DIS and [REDACTED] was deployed as a microbiologist who understood the action of fermentation and all that stuff. The Americans didn't have a similar individual and he became respected by both sides as being somebody who genuinely understood it.

I think the challenges -- and I'm thinking back to my military career and getting involved in the technical intelligence community -- is how do you make sure that you've got people who understand the technology as it's applied particularly in industrial practices as well as understanding the intelligence process? It would seem to me that a blend of people involved in those sort of jobs would be the right thing to do. I suspect DIS think they achieved that, I don't know.

THE CHAIRMAN: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]?

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, then I think I see where you are going and it makes sense to do that. I think the challenge is always going to be to find the people who really do understand it and come from the technical environment. I suppose one of the things which has always -- well, looking back on it, the way in which we classify things does act as a bar to too much sensible dialogue.

THE CHAIRMAN: Just to share this -- it is not evidence taking at all, but in the Butler Committee, a man sadly now dead, known to Sir Lawrence Peter Freedman, who was GCHQ's historian, gave the

example of there can be no expert available. You said there was only one microbiologist and the US didn't have one, but this was the case of the German V weapons where we believed that it was impossible to build a firework that big because we didn't know about turbine boosters for liquid fuel and so nobody knew at all. That's simply still a question about the uncertainties of intelligence-based assessment. There we are.

Any final observations from yourself about that experience of yours with the ISG? You've given us a great deal to think about.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: It's just worth saying that when I came back I was pretty sure that we wouldn't find them, but if it appeared in the news tomorrow I wouldn't be surprised, still. With all I've thought about it, I still wouldn't be surprised. There could have been one of Saddam's henchmen who was told to go and do something and he did it and we never found it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Lord Butler, in his report five years ago now, carefully left that door open. I'm not sure whether we shall or not.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Well, I'm very happy to be quoted. I don't know, did you ask Duelfer the same question? I mean he might well have said the same thing!

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much indeed. Just a reminder on the transcript, we would ask you to review it.

MAJOR GENERAL TIM TYLER: Yes. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, I will close the session.

(The session closed)