

**SIS3<sup>1</sup>**

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** I think I'm going to christen today's session "Operation Brevity".

Welcome to [SIS3]. The session is being held in private because we recognise much of the evidence on the areas we wish to cover will be sensitive within the categories set out in the Inquiry's Protocol on Sensitive Information -- for example, on grounds of international relations or national security. 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 witnesses are giving evidence based on their recollection of events. We are of course checking what we hear against the papers to which we have access.

I remind every witness on every occasion that they will later be asked to sign a transcript of their evidence to the effect that the evidence they have given is truthful, fair and accurate. For security reasons, we will not be releasing copies of the transcript outside the Inquiry's offices at 35 Great Smith

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<sup>1</sup> This officer is referred to as SIS3 throughout the Inquiry's documentation.





the post-conflict search for WMD and what was SIS's role within that plan?

**SIS3:** Initially, [REDACTED] I assumed, as others did, that there was indeed WMD. I mean, it was very swiftly shown that the nuclear reporting was pretty accurate and the missile reporting was accurate. But the CBW, obviously, that became clear within a few weeks that there was a problem. We had expected to come across facilities or shells and so on, and we didn't. Therefore there was already political clamour, if you like.

I can't remember exactly when the institutions were established, but I would say in probably early May we had a subcommittee of the JIC, which was established for WMD, which I think John Scarlett chaired. I was a member of, certainly for a period, until it all became a little bit too technical and not very operational.

The Iraq Survey Group was established in double quick time by the Americans, and I assume we were consulted at the political level about that, but basically this was the President deciding he wanted to have Iraq swept, as it were, for WMD, because it was rather important to him and to everybody else that that was found.

So he tasked, as I recall, Condi Rice, who at that stage was National Security Adviser. She turned to George Tenet, who was Director CIA, and George Tenet appointed David Kay.

So the ISG, Iraq Survey Group, was under formation, I would say, in early May.<sup>4</sup> [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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<sup>4</sup> The witness went on to explain the SIS relationship with the ISG



SIS3:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SIR MARTIN GILBERT:

[REDACTED]?

SIS3:

[REDACTED]

But it was already clear by [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] June 2003 that one or two sources -- you know,  
it wasn't as we had thought it was.

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIR MARTIN GILBERT:** At the early stage, how many people were working at Vauxhall Cross on the WMD issue?

**SIS3:** On the WMD issue? Well, I would put it at around [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

**SIR MARTIN GILBERT:** What was the relationship between the people working on WMD and other SIS Iraq operations and activities?

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIR MARTIN GILBERT:** How did SIS co-operate and co-ordinate with DIS?

**SIS3:** Well, the whole Whitehall thing was very closely integrated, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. We were in perpetual touch with them. We needed their expertise. They sometimes needed our help. I never had any concerns about that. There were obviously concerns before the conflict, which were discussed in the Butler Inquiry. But actually it was very tight afterwards, and, of course, a lot of it was driven by John Scarlett and the Assessments Staff. So it wasn't an issue.

**SIR MARTIN GILBERT:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

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[REDACTED]

**SIR MARTIN GILBERT:** Thank you very much.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Rod?

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** You said that our intelligence on the nuclear side was largely borne out. To what extent is that really the case, particularly with regard to what we had assessed on procurement efforts, aluminium tubes, yellowcake from Niger and so on?

**SIS3:** Well, actually we had made relatively small claims on the

nuclear side. The Niger story is like a modern equivalent of the Schleswig Holstein question. I did once understand it; I no longer do. So I had to refresh my memory from the Butler Inquiry, and I think the Inquiry concluded that the claim that they'd sought yellowcake was a justified one on the evidence that we had. We had never claimed that they had actually acquired it. And the reporting on which that was based [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] got frightfully mixed up with some fabricated documents. So that's the bit I've rather largely forgotten. But there was also [REDACTED], which got much less publicity.

So I think the Niger uranium thing was pretty unfortunate really, and I think if desk officers in the Service had had their way, probably would never have seen the light of day. But anyway it did, and of course it then found its way into Bush's Union Address and so on.

On the tubes, I think that we didn't make such enormous claims in relation to the tubes. I'm afraid that there again I have forgotten the detail.

But the pressure was never on the nuclear bit, nor on the missile bit. It was all about CBW in particular, and that was because of the visibility of the 45-minute report. That's what everyone was fixed on and where the political argument lay.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** Just to complete the [REDACTED] story, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]?<sup>8</sup>

**SIS3:** [REDACTED].

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<sup>8</sup> Sir Roderic asked for further clarification of the challenges facing SIS' contribution to the search for WMD. The witness set out the constraints and competing priorities.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED].

SIS3: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]?

SIS3: [REDACTED]

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]?

SIS3: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** I just want to look quickly at the [REDACTED] case.<sup>9</sup> At the time it was running you weren't in that area of operations, but you did look into the validation of it after the conflict, and rather a sorry story.

What did you discover about the way in which [REDACTED] had appeared and how we had handled [REDACTED]'s information?

**SIS3:** Well, I'm trying to remember which way round it is. I think [REDACTED] was the source and [REDACTED] the subsource; is that right?

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** I think that's right. [REDACTED]

**SIS3:** Sorry, there's communication [from the back of the room] that it was the other way round. [REDACTED] was the source and [REDACTED] was the subsource.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** [REDACTED]

**SIS3:** [REDACTED].

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** Well, you do now, but we are under Privy Council terms. But [REDACTED] was the subsource of the intelligence [REDACTED] [REDACTED]?

**SIS3:** Well, this was at the time, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I knew of course about the [REDACTED] case, I think more by word of mouth, simply because it had become something of a cause celebre.

[REDACTED] in June 2003, I think it was, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] we realised that [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

So that unravelled very, very quickly.<sup>10</sup> [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

So I wasn't entirely surprised to discover that things were not quite as we had portrayed them, and we then --

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** [REDACTED]?

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]

We withdrew the intelligence, I think very quickly. It was obvious that this was not a good case.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** Who decided to withdraw the intelligence?

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** And the original --

**SIS3:** I'm sure it then went upstairs.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** The original intelligence had gone directly to the Prime Minister in September 2002, just before the dossier was published, although it wasn't reflected in the dossier. Do you recall that?

**SIS3:** So I understand. Let me emphasise, I had no direct involvement at that period. So what I understand is what I have heard since or learned as part of the Butler Inquiry.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** [REDACTED] review of the case didn't extend as

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<sup>9</sup> This is the new source on trial in September 2002 whose reporting was withdrawn by SIS in July 2003.

<sup>10</sup> The witness described the steps taken to validate the source.

far as reviewing how the intelligence was used when it came in, in September 2002, when it first came in?

**SIS3:** We knew what had happened to the intelligence. The question is --

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** What did happen to the intelligence?

**SIS3:** Well, you are describing it to me, that it went to the Prime Minister and so on. My job was to validate --

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** How did it go to the Prime Minister?

**SIS3:** I don't know. I had no direct involvement.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** What I want to know is whether your researches showed you how it had gone to the Prime Minister and whether your usual procedures for checking intelligence before you put it to a very high level had been followed in this case.

**SIS3:** No. My job -- that was part of a sort of review, if you like, for Butler. But my role at this point was entirely about validating the case, and I had no direct knowledge of what had happened previously.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** That's for others. Okay.

Now, on the validation of the case, do you recall how quickly the withdrawal of the case was communicated to the Prime Minister?

**SIS3:** We withdrew the reporting, the three reports, on 29 July 2003.<sup>11</sup> [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Now, the question

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<sup>11</sup> The witness explained what the process for this was and that a senior member of SIS would have communicated the decision to the Chief of the Assessments Staff.



of what was said to the Prime Minister, or how it got through to the Prime Minister, would have been a matter for the Chief of the time and directors.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** When you looked into the case, discovered that it wasn't valid, what conclusions do you recall drawing about this case as a whole?

**SIS3:** Well, I think it illustrated, first of all, the dangers of a chain of sourcing, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

So that's one point, obvious enough, and obvious enough in relation to [REDACTED]<sup>12</sup> as well. So you need to be extremely careful with those chains of reporting.

The second point is that when you have senior people who reach down into the machinery and try moving the cogs, if I may put it like that, I think you end up with a -- you obviously disenfranchise the operational chain of command. You cut out expertise, and perhaps you also disable that element of challenge which is, I think, a very important part of operational life in the Service.

The third point is there was a judgment which I learned about, I would say, in mid-2003, but I was only aware of the authorship of it this year, that we had overpromised and underdelivered. I absolutely agreed with that judgment. It's precisely what we did.

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<sup>12</sup> A different source, whose reporting is still considered reliable.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** Thank you. That's very clear and concise.

When you refer to "senior people", which people are you referring to?

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Within the Service or --

**SIS3:** No, I meant within the Service. Again, I had no -- I'm operating on hearsay. So I think --

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** You were a senior member of the Service. You have talked about senior people reaching down into the cogs of the machine.

**SIS3:** Well, it was the Chief of the time, and that was well known. But the point I'm making is that at the time I had an inward looking role. I had no -- it's hearsay. It's what people said.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** It's a bit more than hearsay because [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and you have made some, I think, entirely professional remarks about the way in which it was handled, and within the privacy of this room we respect that. But we do need to have a clear understanding ourselves of how this went wrong.

**SIS3:** Yes, and it was controversial at the time.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** Yes. It caused some disquiet among senior members of your service, the way it was handled.

**SIS3:** Well, disquiet, if you like -- one of those Whitehall words -- at a senior level; I think rather more at an operational and working level.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** Well, let's be less Mandarin-esque about it. By rather more --

**SIS3:** I think people were genuinely annoyed and concerned.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** And that's not just ex post facto. At the time they felt the procedures were not being followed properly and this was risky; is that right?

**SIS3:** I think that's right.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** And you talked about lessons going back to [REDACTED] and the need to be extremely careful. That's the first of the three lessons you drew from this. But in this case, what were the pressures -- were they political pressures, for example -- that caused your very professional service, with years of experience behind it, not to be as careful as it should have been over a source of this kind, an unvalidated, untested source?

**SIS3:** Well, it was obviously pressure -- whether you describe it as political pressure or merely pressure from Assessments Staff -- to have more material, in a sense responding to the tasking that we had received. Clearly when you are under a lot of pressure to produce intelligence, there is a risk that you will take short cuts.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** Had the Chief got too close to the Prime Minister?

**SIS3:** I was not in a position to observe. But -- and I certainly wasn't in a position to observe. But I think the issue was that -- I mean, it soon became an issue that there was a public portrayal, if you like, of senior intelligence officers, a public portrayal of them as Whitehall courtiers, and I think that was damaging externally in relation to the reputation of the Service for professionalism, and furthermore damaging -- particularly with younger officers in the Service, damaging for their sense and the Service's own sense of intellectual integrity.

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** Thank you.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Thanks. I think we will go straight on. We will break probably in half an hour, maybe.

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** Now to CURVE BALL.

**SIS3:** Yes.

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** Perhaps you could just take us through the problems with CURVE BALL, when they became apparent, whether there were some concerns and when they emerged.

**SIS3:** [REDACTED] One of the problems with this case was that this was [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

I mean, the reporting was finally withdrawn at the end of September 2004. The discovery of these trailers complicated the thing. We didn't get access to CURVE BALL, direct physical access to CURVE BALL, until<sup>13</sup> [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

We devoted, I think, an enormous amount of effort to it, and there were certain things that, you know, checked out his description of [REDACTED]. He had produced a large number of reports, many more than <sup>14</sup> [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

The validation effort, I guess, took, frankly, ages. I didn't get into the ins and outs of the whole issue, partly because I didn't understand some of the scientific stuff. But it was very clear that there were strong differences of opinion of people on the ground about the trailers, about CURVE BALL and so on.

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<sup>13</sup> The witness explained the issues that had arisen because the reports had been received through a foreign liaison service.

<sup>14</sup> The witness explained that CURVE BALL had produced more reports than the new source on trial in September 2002 whose reporting had been withdrawn in July 2003.

So in retrospect it looks odd that it took such a long time to sort it out, and now people have written books about CURVE BALL.

So I'm not sure I can add much more than that really in terms of the story. It was a sort of massive distraction, and I think there was a supposition that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
I don't think that's right. And I suppose altogether the conclusion [REDACTED] but how much it's quite difficult to say.

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** So was it really the -- in a sense we are going to come on to, in a second, mobile BW. But as it became apparent that they were not what had been said, that must have started to create doubts certainly before September 2004 that this was probably not reliable.

**SIS3:** It was contentious right from [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. No one supposed that everything was hunky-dory. It was just the whole validation, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This was a massive effort, and the people in the ISG didn't agree about it either.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Agree among themselves?

**SIS3:** As far as I could tell, no. And it became -- the ISG was very much into the whole trailer thing. We didn't find the trailers. It was an ISG discovery, and to be honest, I really thought, you know, this was a matter for the experts. They couldn't work out whether it was for hydrogen, for something else. As I understand it, the upshot was it was something to do with hydrogen for balloons that they needed for artillery surveillance or something.

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** There is an interesting question here that we would like your views on, which is about how you deal with these areas where technical expertise is needed, I suppose especially here where somebody might have used processes that wouldn't necessarily have followed the patterns that the west would follow. So you would have to work out whether this was fit for a certain sort of purpose or another sort of purpose, and it wouldn't be necessarily the way you were doing it yourself.

So how do you manage this? Because, as you have indicated, the experts -- every agency that was dealing with this seems to have disagreed at some point. What do you need in SIS to be able to make proper judgments about this sort of thing?

**SIS3:** Well, of course, one accepts that people are going to do things in their own way in different countries. I think part of the complication was that these trailers resembled, at least, some trailers or trucks or whatever that the Russians had originally produced. So there was that element which was complicating.

Well, of course,<sup>15</sup> [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

But, as I say, experts -- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the experts disagreed, and that makes it very, very difficult, obviously, for others to make a judgment. In a sense you have to wait for the whole thing to play itself

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<sup>15</sup> The witness described the expertise available to SIS

out.

But the fact that CURVE BALL was controversial was known right from the beginning. It wasn't lack of effort or it wasn't any false trust in CURVE BALL that led this whole exercise to take so long.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Just a supplementary on expertise. The expertise in the nuclear field, for example, is extremely well-established and it's, in a sense, almost easy to access within the secret community. Similarly for missiles, missile technology.

Chemical and biological is much more diffuse as an area for expertise; is that right? And how far is SIS able to reach outside the secret community for, for example, chemical industry, for real expertise in particular aspects?

**SIS3:** Well, I think real expertise -- I mean, we had<sup>16</sup> --

[REDACTED]

I can't remember now whether it was indeed a Butler recommendation, but the question of expertise and how we sustain it and so on, is a critical issue for the Service, and indeed for Whitehall generally. The generations of people that we have had, the experts that we have, are getting old and we need to renew, and I think the problem, particularly on the [REDACTED] side, is that actually the overall community, or at least until

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<sup>16</sup> The witness provided more details about the sources of expertise available to SIS.

recently, was shrinking fast. People who had [REDACTED] [REDACTED] there weren't many of them left. This was not just an issue for SIS. It was a much bigger issue for Whitehall generally.

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** Just to take this particular question to a conclusion, in a sense you have got two different strands here. You have got experts discussing mobile BW and you have got intelligence people wondering about this particular chap [REDACTED] [REDACTED] you'd been concerned about from the start. These two things sort of running together, before you finally feel able to say, actually we have to withdraw this. One on its own wouldn't have been sufficient.

**SIS3:**

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:

■ ?<sup>17</sup>

**SIS3:**

17 Sir Lawrence asked for the witness' views on how overseas partners had handled this issue.



[REDACTED]

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** Thank you.

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** How did you validate [REDACTED] and the intelligence of [REDACTED] after the conflict?

**SIS3:** <sup>18</sup> [REDACTED]

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** [REDACTED]?

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]

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<sup>18</sup> The witness set out the steps that had been taken to validate some of the other sources on WMD. With regard to material from a source whose reporting had been withdrawn in the autumn of 2004, the witness explained that intelligence had come from a subsource. The witness outlined in detail the steps taken to validate the material and the conclusions SIS had reached which had led to the withdrawal of the material.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIS3:**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I think what was complicating around the case was that [REDACTED] was on the fringes of or perhaps in touch with one or two people who were also part of Ayad Allawi's Iraq National Accord, as I remember, and there was a certain amount of stuff in the press later on, some time in 2004 I think, about actually this intelligence had been pushed at us by the INA. But I think that was discounted by Butler, I think rightly, and we didn't have any suspicion that that's what had happened, that actually the INA didn't operate like that.

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** When did you become aware of the fact that [the source] was unreliable?

**SIS3:** Well, it's hard -- you know, it was a question -- the moment we didn't find WMD or CBW, in every case there was a big

question mark.

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** And did [the source] give you any explanation why no WMD?

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** When the doubts emerged, did you communicate that to Ministers, and if so how, how was it communicated?

**SIS3:** There was an enormous amount of interchange actually between ourselves and Assessments Staff and John Scarlett and so on, during this whole period. You know, the issue of validation was running through Whitehall on a daily basis, and therefore we kept Assessments Staff up to date with how we were doing, as it were. That reporting was finally withdrawn, I think, in late September 2004, when we had finally kind of got through to everybody and tried to work it out.

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** I think it was in June that it was communicated to Whitehall about the fact that [REDACTED] had been negatively reported, and it wasn't withdrawn until about September. Why was there a time lag?

**SIS3:** I find that quite hard to answer. Why was there a time lag? I know it was communicated informally. Why did it take time? It's partly because when you have got reports officers, they want to have every single question answered. There's a sort of pernickety aspect to all this.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Recalling Butler and that process, negative validation is just as difficult as positive validation, it seems to me from memory of the evidence given to Butler in this case and others. As you were saying just now, is this right, you

really have to be even more thorough in withdrawing reporting, or at least as thorough, as you have to be in validating it to allow it to go forward?

**SIS3:** What we didn't want is a situation where we withdrew it, and then discovered that actually there was rather more there than we thought.

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** You wanted to be sure of your ground.

**SIS3:** And then we would have looked extremely foolish. With [REDACTED]<sup>19</sup> it was dead simple. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Done, clear, and indeed we put the letter out pretty quickly.

With both CURVE BALL and [REDACTED], there was a lot more -- it was a lot more complex than that. Yes, it would have been cleaner and simpler, and no doubt more attractive to people in Whitehall, if, you know, we had sort of served up the withdrawals quicker. But all the doubts were well communicated to the Butler team, and indeed when I re-read the Butler Report the other day, it's all there. The formal withdrawal may have taken place in late September 2004, but actually the status of the reporting is well reflected in the report.

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** Any observations on the validation process?

**SIS3:** Around [REDACTED] and so on?

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** Yes.

**SIS3:** I've got observations about the original case work, but not about the validation process.

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<sup>19</sup> The new source on trial in September 2002 whose reporting was withdrawn by SIS in July 2003

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** So what are the observations on the case work?

**SIS3:** Well, I think when you have somebody who is a routine reporter, who then suddenly comes out with new stuff, in an area they'd not reported on before, you know, you have got to take extra care.

I would, I think, want to lodge one cultural point about the [REDACTED] case, which is not perhaps apropos exactly what we are talking about, but I just want to make the point anyway.

The 45-minute report, which this was, you know, that was -- if you were within the Service, it was really quite a, in a way, a disturbing moment. If you look back to the SIS before then, it's quite hard to reconstruct people's thinking, but I think the view was that if you issued a report and sent it across the river -- in time-honoured SIS language, you sent it across the river -- then you ceased to be -- you were owner of source protection, but you were not the owner of the report, and what Whitehall wanted to do with the report was Whitehall's business.

This was not fire and forget, but that conveys a certain sort of sense that, you know, you put out, and then what happens to it is up to Whitehall, provided the source is not endangered.

What the 45-minute report told us was that perhaps we had not absorbed the lessons from Scott or earlier, namely that we remained owner of that reporting in every respect until it was completely time-expired and everybody had forgotten about it.

When I look back to my last few years in the Service, that was a lesson that I took from this episode, and we remained -- we were extremely jealous, if you like, if that's the right way of putting it, of the ownership of our reporting and the way in which people handled it or reproduced it or presented it, particularly when it had a public face.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Thank you.

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** I just want to go back to ISG. Now, you have given us quite a lot of information, background, already on how it was formed and your relations, how many people you had involved.

Just briefly, can you describe the relationship between SIS and ISG? You have sort of given some indications of the awkwardness. Were you basically sharing material with them, were they with you?

**SIS3:** In a sense they had all our past reporting. We obviously did some further work on the issues, and when we had something new and interesting, we gave it to them. I don't recall that there was -- our contribution was there, but it wasn't major.

So we pursued our own operational effort. We had this highly integrated system in London, and the ISG itself was something rather sort of cobbled together, and I don't think history is going to be particularly kind to the ISG [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] That all in a sense worked well. Then they were producing their interim reports and so on. We didn't have any part in that, other than to keep a watch over source protection issues.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]<sup>20</sup> But there was quite a lot of talk of golden nuggets and all that kind of stuff, and I personally thought that was

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<sup>20</sup> The witness outlined the steps taken to remind the ISG of intelligence material relating to missiles.

whistling in the wind. I couldn't see what all that was about.

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** What it is it about?

**SIS3:** I don't know. I never really understood at the time. There were certain things which might possibly indicate that there was more to WMD than people were now concluding, but I never really thought that those were going to change the picture in any respect. [REDACTED] I felt when we came across things that looked conceivably as though they might be traces of CW, my job was to make sure (1) that this discovery was substantive, and (2) that it was substantiated, and to stop people seizing things. When first news comes through, to stop them seizing on that, because the last thing we could afford was to make some hullabaloo out of some discovery and then discover that there was nothing there.

So I was very keen during this period that what SIS came up with should not be seized upon in this way, because then we would be back at the problem that we previously had.

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] You have mentioned people seizing on reports. Clearly this did happen with the initial reports on mobile BW. That's presumably what you had in mind.

**SIS3:** Not really, actually, because we were not involved directly in that.

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** But when Kay's interim report came round, and you have mentioned that did seem to have been seized on by the Prime Minister --

**SIS3:** Yes, but there were other things that we might have come across which -- sorry, I wasn't thinking of that.

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** So there were things that you had actually managed to hold back, to keep in perspective?

**SIS3:** I didn't hold them back. I just made sure that they were treated with the right level of scepticism until we had actually validated them.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** "Held back" in the sense of reined in?

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** Reined in, rather than suppressed.

**SIS3:** I felt that was part of my job, actually, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** But John Scarlett, Richard Dearlove, have made some quite big personal commitments to the story before the war, and so what ISG said was going to be of some quite considerable interest to them.

How would you assess the relationship at that level, not in terms of sharing information, but what was actually likely to be reported between SIS and ISG?

**SIS3:** We as a service did not feel that we had a role in relation to reports that were put out by Kay and Duelfer. We were not an assessment service. We didn't have the analytical resources. We just tried to make sure that, when they relied on our intelligence, that the sourcing was protected. The whole thing was driven out of the Cabinet Office by John Scarlett and Assessments Staff, and of course DIS, and Martin Howard, I recall, was at that point deputy head of DIS, and they were right in the thick of analytical piece.

I do recall, of course, drafts flicking backwards and forwards all the time, which we would sort of look through for source protection issues, but I was particularly keen that we should not get engaged in the drafting exercise. We were not qualified to do it. We had too much else to do, and the proper



place for pursuing that liaison with the ISG was actually within the Cabinet Office.

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** It's been suggested to us that Scarlett and Dearlove would have preferred no report, rather than a negative report from ISG. Were you aware of --

**SIS3:** Well, I've never heard that. I can't speak for Richard Dearlove. Indeed, I can't speak for John Scarlett, but I will say that from my knowledge of John, I mean, he just wanted to unearth the truth about all of this. I remember him being an extremely enthusiastic participant in the sort of business of getting the ISG reports right. I mean, he seemed to spend an enormous amount of time on the drafting and exchanges with Duelfer [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** Can I just ask you one question just about the relationship with Number 10 about all of this? This was obviously, because you have already indicated, politically an extraordinarily difficult issue, because claims had been made which were turning out pretty quickly not to be borne out by what was being found.

What was the nature of your -- did you have a relationship with Number 10 on these issues? Were you aware of pressure to come up with nuggets, to delay findings, withdrawal of intelligence or anything like that?

**SIS3:** No. I don't recognise the thought behind delaying or suppressing or whatever material or reports. I don't recall any of that.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** A completely different sort of exercise.

**SIS3:** The business of Iraq was a matter for, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] How they were dealing with Number 10 on the issue of Iraq was entirely a matter for the Chief and for the directors, and I felt I had enough on my plate operationally to -- I was glad to delegate.

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** You were quite comfortable that you were dealing with this on a professional --

**SIS3:** Absolutely.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** One supplementary, if I may. The impression one forms from what you have been saying, and what we have heard from others, is that SIS kept itself pretty much at arm's length from the ISG. Is that partly because you had other and better things to do anyway, or does it also relate to what you said earlier, that the ISG was a different kind of animal, it was an analytic organisation?

**SIS3:** I don't -- you make it sound slightly as though that's a value judgment on us, that we stood apart from the ISG for some reason. But actually it was because there was this enormous organisation, and I can't remember how many people there were involved in it -- hundreds -- crawling all over it. Only some of them knew who we were, in fact very few. We had comparatively little, I think, to offer, and meanwhile, actually, we had, you know, the start of a major insurgency, [REDACTED] and certainly my, and I'm sure [SIS1]'s<sup>21</sup>, view at the time was there was no point us duplicating in some way what other people were doing, when actually this was American territory.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So we were saying to ourselves, well, that's taken care of. We have got lots of other things to do.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Okay, thank you.<sup>22</sup>

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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<sup>21</sup> This officer is referred to as SIS1 throughout the Inquiry's documentation.

<sup>22</sup> Sir John asked about SIS operations in Iraq and the witness set these out in detail.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*

\_\_\_\_\_?

**SIS3:**

[REDACTED]

[illegible]

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Yes.

**SIS3:** And the point was that from, I would say, about the middle of 2004, the Sunnis just didn't recognise what their own interests were. That is to say they were taking on the Americans. Obviously they strongly resented the Shia taking over

the state, although the Sunnis never really accepted that they were only sort of 30 per cent of the population, and they of course had always dominated -- when I say "always", actually I mean pretty much always -- dominated the political system. The monarchy obviously, although it was Hashemite, was Sunni, and they felt that they had had the state stolen away from them. So their immediate reaction, of course, was to fight.

But taking on the Americans, who were the only guarantor that there would be fair play in Iraq, was, to be honest, extremely shortsighted.

So a very important element in all this was [REDACTED] the Sunnis [REDACTED] needed to get themselves played into the state, get a share while the referee was still there, and actually punching the referee on a regular basis was just not a good idea.

We discussed that informally, I think, in Whitehall in 2004.<sup>23</sup> [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** [REDACTED]

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<sup>23</sup> The witness provided further details about SIS operations in Iraq, their genesis and their impact. He also explained the process whereby SIS would have received authorisation from Ministers and the involvement of the FCO and MOD in that process.

[REDACTED]

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** As a matter of interest [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] do the  
Whitehall customers know what SIS's capabilities is [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

or do you have to tell them, and in telling them persuade them  
that it would be a good thing?

**SIS3:** Well, I mean, the key figures who give us clearance -- and  
I'm sure that you are all familiar with the clearance procedure.  
There are certain key figures. But in running these kind of  
operations, you would want to square away Number 10, who are not  
formally part of the submission process, but it would be somewhat  
foolish not to talk about that with Number 10, or indeed the  
Cabinet Office, but without pre-empting the Foreign Secretary's  
sign-off and decision.

People in the FCO at senior level. Well, of course you would  
want to speak on the ground to the ambassador, but probably  
nobody else. All those ambassadors were very familiar with SIS

and so on. Then it would go through William Ehrman or whoever, also talk probably to DCDSC, as the job then was, so Rob Fry or -- anyway ...

So there are certain key stakeholders. You talk to them. They had a really good understanding of what we could do. Whether we were going to achieve it on the ground, of course, is, frankly, another matter. Until you try, you don't necessarily know.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** [REDACTED].  
[REDACTED]?

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]?

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] said to me, what is the one piece of advice you would give me? And I was a bit taken aback. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

But I said to him that everything you do from a military point of view should be geared to a political objective. I'm not going to get into Clausewitz because I have never read him and I don't want to expose a flank here. But it was pretty clear







[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and I don't really understand what happened at that moment when -- the process of negotiations, I think, went on for months before al-Maliki took over. What was HMG's role in that? [REDACTED]?

[REDACTED]

But clearly al-Maliki felt that he was not our first choice, and I think he had a sense later on that we perhaps didn't appreciate him as we might have done, and I think that there's a particular difficulty when a head of government or a head of state gets the idea that HMG would prefer to see somebody else, because if HMG is actually powerless to do anything within the system, then that individual will suppose that HMG's covert arm will be doing things against his interests.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Regime change at the individual level is the fear?

**SIS3:** I think you could put it like that. I say head of government and head of state advisedly. And the risk for SIS, of course, is that suspicion then attaches to the Service when there is actually none that is justified. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** We would like to come on to that, I think, a bit later too.

Let's break for a cup of coffee and come back about quarter to.

**(A short break)**

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** You wanted to put one thing straight.

**SIS3:** Correct. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Thank you. Noted, and we can footnote the reference in the transcript.

Let's resume questions then, and I'll turn to Martin Gilbert.

**SIR MARTIN GILBERT:** I would like to turn to the whole post-invasion security and insurgency story. Perhaps the first question would be: what did [REDACTED] believe to be or see to be behind the attacks on the coalition in 2003 and early 2004?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

**SIS3:** I think at the beginning [REDACTED] was that the attacks were done by former regime loyalists. I can't remember if that is exactly the phrase we used to use.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Former regime elements.

**SIS3:** FREs. Indeed, there was quite a bit of intelligence on that. You had a number of people who had been -- well, of course, Saddam was still around at that time and so on. But there were sort of second string people that [REDACTED] were responsible, whose names I no longer recall, but they were based in Syria. [REDACTED] this was probably former Sunni officers and NCOs operating on the orders of these former -- what were they politburo or central committee in Soviet terms. But I think they were second rung. And Izzat Ibrahim, I think, [REDACTED] was a sort of second figurehead.

Initially [REDACTED] blamed former Ba'athists and so on, but I think it became clear, perhaps by early 2004, that the insurgency was broader than that, and indeed, was really representative of a Sunni community that felt itself

disenfranchised.

You had quite a number of different organisations, and some of them no doubt only existed for as long as the press statement after some particular episode, and then they became something else. But they were across quite a broad spectrum, if you like, from people who were aligned with Al Qaeda to people who actually couldn't stand Al Qaeda.

If you look at it at a human level, I think it's important to understand how individuals reacted to what became clear was highly oppressive behaviour by the Shia authorities, intermingled obviously with their militias, and come 2005/2006, some really bad things were going on. If your relatives had been detained, brutalised, perhaps killed by those authorities or that militia, then you were going to join Al Qaeda or do anything to take revenge on Shia. That's the situation we had got into. This was two-way, obviously.

So the initial view that this was former Ba'athists and former army officers and so on, was swiftly overtaken by a sense that this was a much bigger thing we were dealing with.<sup>24</sup>

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] But actually this was an industry. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

---

<sup>24</sup> The witness explained the support SIS had provided to the military and the balance of effort in relation to different areas of Iraq

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and all these things had to be done against a very difficult security background.

**SIR MARTIN GILBERT:** One of my colleagues is going to take up the question of [REDACTED] very shortly, but if I could just turn very briefly to the question of Iran.

Until June 2004, it seems that our assessment was that Iran had not ordered attacks specifically on coalition forces, although it had clearly provided military training to Iraqis, and later we found evidence that Iran was providing arms at least to the Shia insurgents.

Looking back, how accurate were our assessments at that time of the Iranian connection, the Iranian involvement?

**SIS3:** I think they were pretty good actually. It wasn't hard to work out what the Iranian calculation was.

I mean, first of all, in 2003 you had a lot of anxiety in Tehran about the Americans coming for them as well. Libya, of course, was described on the US side as merely a bump in the road on the way to Baghdad, and the Iranians would have been anxious that they were next up.

So as I recall, from hearsay, if you like, during the period of invasion, all very quiet, Iranians almost occasionally helpful, I think. Then, when it became clear that the US were getting a bit bogged down with the insurgency, and clearly had no appetite for further foreign adventures, then the Iranians decided to stoke it up a bit. You know, you don't have to be a great expert on the Middle East to work out that actually they needed to get the balance right.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Actually, they supported the special groups in Basra. They passed across a lot of IED and probably EFP technology. But they never -- their finger marks were there [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So there was none of that rogue element stuff that the  
Iranians have often employed [REDACTED] this is  
official policy [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] this is, you know, official  
authorised policy from the top. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

But actually the Iranians -- you know, they didn't need  
personally to go on the ground that much. First of all, there  
were an awful lot of Iraqis who had spent the 1990s in exile in  
Iran, who in a sense owed something to Tehran. Actually there  
were quite a lot who spent time here as well. It didn't  
necessarily mean that they were all that favourable to Tehran, or  
indeed the other lot to us. But, you know, they knew Iran well,  
spoke Farsi and so on.

There were certainly some who were what we regarded as  
proxies for Iran, people who had been properly trained up and  
were influential figures, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and these people were clearly on the ground in Iraq,  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

So the Iranians had quite a number of instruments to  
calibrate, and, you know, they were interested in commercial  
activity. They were certainly interested in making sure that

Najaf and Karbala didn't overtake Qom, as it were, as religious centres, and they were helping to supply the groups. Whether they were also supplying the Sunnis, I think, is an open question.

**SIR MARTIN GILBERT:** That was my last question. Was there any substantial evidence of their involvement, either with the Sunni insurgency or with AQ Iraq?

**SIS3:** You will have to check with [REDACTED], but I don't recall anything around support for AQ in Iraq. Of course, you know, al-Zarqawi's whole piece was to create as much mayhem as he could between the Sunnis and the Shia, and indeed AQ senior leadership didn't approve of that policy, as became apparent from some material which I think has ended up in the media. Al-Zawahari didn't like that policy, and it was clearly very damaging for AQ's position in Iran.

Whether the Iranians supplied components and support to the Sunni insurgency in some respects -- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIR MARTIN GILBERT:** Thank you.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Before coming back to Baroness Prashar, to get on to [REDACTED] going back to the beginnings of the realisation that there was an insurgency, were we on to it fast enough in terms of realising it wasn't just former regime elements of a post-invasion plan on the part of the Saddam regime? This is a hindsight question, I know.

**SIS3:** I think the answer is yes. SF were -- the moment the prospect of an operation came into sight, they went for it, and I think that was true more generally. Did we get the politics -- were we looking at the politics quickly enough? I think the



**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** Can we start, first of all, with a brief description of what was [REDACTED]? How, if at all, did it fit with the Government strategy for Iraq, and was it the SIS initiative or a response to the Government's requirement?

[illegible]

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ?

[illegible]

26 The witness explained the process for consulting other government departments prior to seeking a ministerial authorisation.



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]?

SIS3: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]?

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]

SIS3: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]?

SIS3: [REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]?

SIS3: [REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]?

SIS3: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]?

SIS3: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]?

SIS3: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

SIS3: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Thank you. Turning to Sir Roderic Lyne.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: I would like to move down to Basra 2006 onwards. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

SIS3: [REDACTED].

SIR RODERIC LYNE: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] although it's only a part of

a series of papers being written at the time.

Did Whitehall get it, or did it not understand what the situation was down actually on the ground, the reality on the ground?

SIS3: There was quite an important episode in -- well, a very important episode in September 2005, which is when you had the  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] business of the [REDACTED] and the tanks who drove through the wall of the Jameat police station on 17 September.

I think that episode really should have brought home to people what had happened in Basra. I'm not sure that the message got through from that, in particular what had happened in terms of the criminalisation of the police, not a phrase that one likes to use much, but many of the police stations had photographs of Muqtada al-Sadr in their entranceways. So I think the police had become -- they had sort of integrated to an extent with the

militias, and we had a pretty bad situation. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

I think that was a wake-up call in relation to what had happened in Basra. I'm not sure that was fully appreciated in the months afterwards, and my aim [REDACTED] was indeed to draw attention to the way in which we saw the situation in Basra. This was not intended to be an assessment. It was intended to be a contribution, if you like, on the basis of which Tim Dowse and the assessment staff could then make their assessment.

There had been a practice early on, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] writing a sort of view, if you like, into Whitehall. We were rather hesitant about doing this because we didn't want to bypass other processes and so on. But the fact is that we were talking to a range of people that the mission were not, and it was sometimes rather difficult to get -- I mean, you could pass across hard intelligence, but how do you pass across rather impressionistic views of what was going on? So we then wrote these letters from time to time, and this particular one was based on [REDACTED] and I would then sort of adjust to Whitehall concerns and put in a format which I think helped serve the purposes of Assessments Staff.

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** I was just interested, because you did an earlier assessment [REDACTED].

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] certainly would have reported into Whitehall [REDACTED].

**SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:** It was the write-up of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]?

**SIS3:** Yes.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

SIS3: You could remind me.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Well:

" [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ..."

And so on and so forth.

SIS3: Yes, I remember that now.

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]?

SIS3:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** If I just take a snapshot of the period before [REDACTED], which I would like to discuss in a minute, what was the pre-existing situation before that? How were we doing in Basra? To what extent did we have control? What were we trying to achieve there? Had we left ourselves sufficient force to do the job?

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]?

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** I'm talking about the sort of 2006 period. By the time Basra has deteriorated, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]:

"[REDACTED] ..."

[REDACTED]:

"... [REDACTED]."

[REDACTED].

**SIS3:** [REDACTED] --

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** [REDACTED]? [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. There was a sort of continuing slide downwards, but we were supposed to be in charge of MND South East. We were the lead players there.

**SIS3:** What we were looking for, of course from 2004 onwards, was Iraqi-isation. What we ended up with at this point was a different kind of Iraqi-isation than the one we had envisaged. In other words, we were pulling back and the Iraqi Government was not occupying the space, I think because it was too early for the Iraqi Government to be able to do that. So in that gap you ended up with a different kind of Iraqi-isation, which was militia-isation, criminalisation, intimidation, control over key

economic facilities and points in Basra by particular parties or political forces, whether it was JAM or Fadhila.

My feeling in 2004, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] -- my feeling was that already by that stage we were not prosecuting things which we might have prosecuted in order to retain a level of control which prevented the militias from gaining a measure of ascendancy on the street.

Now, the judgments, of course, about whether to [REDACTED] to be taken by GOC, or brigade commander if the GOC was away, were on the basis of his own standing orders from PJHQ or from the corps, and a sense of whether this was worth it, what the blowback might be, et cetera. So it was absolutely right that the GOC takes the decision.

What I think the episode in September 2005 showed was that the process of the militia-isation and criminalisation of Basra had gone much further than people had thought, and then it wasn't until, I guess, the middle of 2006, when the plan for SALAMANCA was drawn up, and then there was going to be a determined rather more kinetic approach, to use that word much favoured by the military, which has always rather puzzled me -- a kinetic approach to dealing with the militias.

So the question -- and that [SALAMANCA], of course, didn't get through because of the [REDACTED] complicated relationship with JAM and politics in Basra, which I'm sure we will come back to.

But the problem was, therefore, that we had, if you like, pulled back. The Iraqi Government, 10 Division, later 14, could occupy a certain amount of space. You had police who were a real issue -- I mean, dangerous, corrupt, and so on, and I think there were a number of episodes in which actually it was the police who were shooting up contractors or expatriates and one or two





[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and I think a former --  
somebody who has appeared in front of the Inquiry, Jon Day,  
I think offered the figure of 1,600 incoming per month into UK  
bases in MND South East at this period, and that's a hell of  
a rainfall. There were casualties, although I think we were  
fortunate not to have worse.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and I think we need to be absolutely clear that [REDACTED] reserved the right for HMG to respond militarily to any individual or groups planning attacks, that we would interdict any weaponry moving in, and, furthermore, that we would reserve the right to intervene when the Iraqi Government requested us to, if they did. So, in other words, we were circumscribing our military activity to some extent, but I think with no risk to our overall posture.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

13 August, and the ceasefire began on that date, or around that date, and it then covered the withdrawal from the palace, which took place on 3 to 5 September.

Interestingly enough, quite a number of the special groups who were not beholden [REDACTED] also observed this ceasefire. I mean, the aim of the exercise, of course, again was to break off those nationalist elements who were taking us on from those who were supported by Iran pursuing a different agenda, and to try and get JAM and others into a political process. That was the objective.

Muqtada al-Sadr, who of course is the rather idiosyncratic, not to say incoherent leader of JAM, sitting in Iran I think then made a virtue out of necessity by announcing his own six-month freeze on activity on 29 August. But I have always rather felt

that that was him following events, rather than driving events from his bolthole in Iran.

Then you had, of course, 14th Division taking over security for Basra and PIC. I think it achieved an enormous amount. I think it saved a lot of lives, [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**SIR RODERIC LYNE:** As you say, there are others to whom we should ask more detailed questions, but I think we ought to move on at this point. Thank you for that.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Okay. Well, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. We have moved to the airport. The effect of our situational understanding and awareness, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] the militia is in effect running the place; is that a fair description of the situation?

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] And the troops -- and of course you are going through this whole roulement process, which I know has been a subject of discussion. You are going through this whole roulement process. So you have people on the ground who have never actually driven those streets in Basra. Their predecessors had, but they have not. They have come in, and they are --

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Come into the airport?

**SIS3:** Come into the airport, and they are in the COB, and no doubt they went in from time to time with reconstruction teams and so on, but they did not know the ground.

So there was a power to intervene, and of course the aim was indeed for Iraqi control to be exercised properly by the army, which, of course, later on they did. But what was the ability of the brigade to come in and wield a big stick? Well, in the end, we weren't required to do so. I think it would have been quite, to be honest, quite challenging.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** General Mohan regarded it as a useful insurance policy for demonstrative purposes, not for use.

**SIS3:** And we had the ISTAR to apply in support and had air cover and so on. So that was a valuable tool as well.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Last thing, then I'll hand it over to Baroness Prashar.

You mentioned the reconstruction teams. After we withdraw to the COB, it's very difficult for them to go on operating.

**SIS3:** Yes

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** I just want to ask a couple of questions about

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<sup>28</sup> Baroness Prashar asked about a particular aspect of security sector reform.



SIS3: Yes.

SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Time is against us.

SIS3: I'll be snappy.

[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: [REDACTED]?

SIS3: [REDACTED]

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** [REDACTED]?

SIS3: [REDACTED]

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** [REDACTED] ?

SIS3: [REDACTED].

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** And to what extent did the coalition intelligence services co-ordinate with intelligence services in the Government of Iraq?

**SIS3:** I don't know, to be honest. [REDACTED]

**BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:** [REDACTED]

\_\_\_\_\_?

SIS3: [REDACTED]

[illegible]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:

[REDACTED]?

SIS3:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]?

SIS3:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

BARONESS USHA PRASHAR:

[REDACTED]?

SIS3:

[REDACTED].

SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I'm sorry we are having to compress this so much. I would really like to run into final reflections.

Two or three key points which you might want to reflect on in your own thoughts. If we run out of time completely, and if there are things that you would really like to say, you might drop us a note. I'm thinking here of what you said earlier about how you co-ordinate technical experts with human intelligence experts as an example.

The first one is Libya, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. Was the Iraq enterprise genuinely influential in helping Libya around the corner, or was it merely --

**SIS3:** Yes, it was. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The Libyans knew they were a pretty easy proposition compared with Iraq. The timing of the initiative was pretty clearly related to Iraq.

[REDACTED]

So my sense was that yes, it was pretty influential in pushing them across that tipping point.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Thank you. You have reflected more than once in the course of this session about relations [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] ?<sup>29</sup>

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]

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<sup>29</sup> Sir John asked whether there were lessons to be learnt about SIS' relationships with intelligence partners.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]?

SIS3: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]?

SIS3: [REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]?

SIS3: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: [REDACTED]

SIS3: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Just five minutes to go.

Lessons and reflections for the Service in dealing with operations in a conflict area, hostages, insurgencies. A lot of learning for the Service?

**SIS3:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] you know, which was -- it wasn't such an absorbing experience. A lot of people, SIS officers, went through the Iraq experience, and I would like to say something at the end about that.

This was mainstreaming a lot of stuff that many people had not come across before. I indicated right at the beginning the paradigm of the way in which we were set up, which I think generated an enormous amount of operational power that the previous way in which things worked didn't have. So I think that was a real lesson.

Did we learn a whole lot of stuff the hard way? I think we learned quite a bit about welfare of officers. I think we didn't recognise -- I blame myself here, by the way -- early enough the strain placed on officers, and I still don't think we probably will know actually for some years yet what the true impact will be, impact on officers of being in this kind of setting

[REDACTED].

That, by the way, was right. Once we got past the initial period, and we knew we were in for a marathon, rather than a sprint, [REDACTED] Certainly no longer, or people lost their perspective. I think that was a lesson for us.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I think we learned obviously quite a lot about the UK military and they learned quite a lot about us, and that is all to the good in terms of the future.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** You wanted to say something about the Service and its members, I think.

**SIS3:** Well, I mean, I have one other reflection, which is sort of Butler-related, and really is to raise a question mark as to whether, in terms of our analytical resources, we are better off now than we were in 2002/2003. I suspect we are worse off.

I also have a concern about the extent to which the JIC is playing the kind of role -- and I'm speaking here as from the moment [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I have a concern whether the JIC was properly anchored, and I hope that the new National Security Council's structure will anchor the JIC, and also drive a level of intelligence community co-ordination which was not there before. That's a sort of general point which we don't have, I guess, time to go into now.

My final reflection is indeed about the officers in the Service. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I just want to put on record a tribute to the remarkable courage, commitment and fortitude exhibited by those members of the Service, in circumstances to which they had not signed up on first entry into the Service, and each individually paid a price for volunteering to serve.

I'm personally extremely proud to have been part of that team and part of that effort. I think it was an extraordinary performance, and I'm furthermore proud of the extent to which we provided for force protection to UK forces that we did. We early

on gave an undertaking that we would be there right up until the last day for UK forces, and we were.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** We are glad to have that on the record. Thank you.

Because time has been pressing on us throughout the morning, if there are further reflections which come into your mind or which on looking back on this session you really would like to share with us, you can always drop us a line; not least reflections on lessons for HMG itself more widely, and the Service. So that's an invitation.

**SIS3:** Thank you.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** With that, thank you very much indeed. The transcript has to be held in this building, but you can access it any time you like here at your convenience.

**SIS3:** Thank you.

**SIR JOHN CHILCOT:** Thank you again.

**(The hearing adjourned)**