

**POST- INVASION IRAQ: THE PLANNING AND THE REALITY AFTER THE INVASION**  
**FROM MID - 2002 TO THE END OF AUGUST 2003.**

**A WITNESS STATEMENT BY MAJOR GENERAL TIM CROSS CBE**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Committee will have seen my biography but I thought it might be helpful to start with some overview comments from my experiences before 2002.

As the Cold War ended and the 1990's emerged I served under the then Major General Rupert Smith in the 1<sup>st</sup> Gulf War with 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Division. Far from the relative certainties of Germany and the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) we deployed over 35,000 troops to fight not a defensive battle, falling back on our lines of communication, but an offensive campaign against an unknown enemy. Logistically it was completely different to potential operations in BAOR and very challenging, but we had very robust logistic capabilities from which to draw – more of which in reference to Iraq in 2002/03 later.

Many purely military lessons emerged from that deployment, but I also saw the effect of large scale warfare, not just on the military but on the civilian population and non-military players and – notwithstanding my earlier N Ireland and Cyprus experiences – I began to sense that, along with the complexity of operations lay the absolute necessity for what we now call the 'Moral Component of Fighting Power' – the ability to get people to fight - and the vital nature of the 'Military Covenant'. There was much discussion on this - the realisation that war is more than just numbers of equipment (what we now call the 'Physical Component') and an ability to fight that equipment well (the 'Conceptual Component'); it is also about leadership, morale, etc and issues like justice and righteousness – the 'Just War' etc - both in the reasons for the war in the first place and in its conduct. The UN Resolutions were accepted as an important pre-cursor to our engagement – and the decision that we should not 'drive-on' to Baghdad was generally accepted in that light. I also saw the Laws of Armed Conflict played out on a

large scale, and the reality of the need for such International agreements as the Geneva Convention – the treatment of prisoners etc.

These realities were reinforced during the rest of the decade as war and genocide beset Europe in the Balkans, and of course elsewhere in Asian and Africa – particularly Rwanda. With the signing of the Dayton Accord in 1995 I deployed with the then Major General Mike Jackson to the Balkans as part of 3 (UK) Division and the NATO Implementation Force (IFOR), returning again in 1997/98 with SFOR. Along with many others I quickly began to realise that this was a different business – a much more complicated business than traditional ‘warfare’ – which is why we began to call these sorts of deployments ‘Complex Emergencies’. Importantly for me I also began to meet and engage widely with many non-military players. International Organisations like the UN Agencies – the UNHCR and WFP; bi-lateral agencies and other Government Departments like USAID and DFID; and of course the mass of NGO’s - ranging from the first XI (OXFAM, CARE, World Vision) down to the very small. And of course the Media. These were complex operations amongst a web of non-military actors – actors who were clearly key to achieving ‘success’ – however that was being defined.

In 1996 I had attended the Higher Command and Staff Course, an operational level course which teaches/educates on such subjects as ‘Campaign Planning’, the sequencing of operations and the inter-relationships – joint, combined and multi-agency – of the various players in the theatre of operations, stressing the importance of inter-departmental planning across-government. It prepared me well for Brigade Command.

Having returned from Bosnia in 1998, I returned to the Balkans in late-January 1999 with KFOR as the Commander of 101 Logistic Brigade, in theory to support and help implement a peace agreement that was, at the time, being negotiated at Rambouillet. The initial aim was to move quickly into Greece and Macedonia and then move on up into Kosovo itself. Events, as they usually do, were to overtake us and I found myself engaged in a major humanitarian operation – building and running refugee camps in Northern Macedonia and Albania (and Kosovo later) - as well as planning for everything from war fighting

to a range of peace support operations. This deployment provided a further turning point in my understanding of the changing nature of conflict. In some respects there is nothing new in any operation, but I came away convinced that the pendulum had firmly swung away from using just military force to being a conflict decisively to an end. Effective military action had to be orchestrated and executed alongside the various humanitarian and other governmental players, establishing the secure environment within which these other players set about achieving the declared 'End State' – however unclear that might be. To achieve this it was clear that we needed a collective doctrine – a more comprehensive approach; an agreed clarity of purpose and unity of effort in what we were engaging in.

Politically I sense that this period – which was obviously long before Sep 2001 – was extremely influential on future events – particularly of course Iraq and Afghanistan. I would argue that the failures in Rwanda had a significant impact on our political leaders, both internationally (including Kofi Annan and the UN) and nationally (including Tony Blair). The Prime Minister's speech in Chicago in 1999, along with various academic papers, led many to talk of 'Conditional Sovereignty' and of a 'moral imperative' to intervene when states proved unwilling or unable to deal with internal genocide or humanitarian crisis.

I am convinced that our success in Kosovo played a key part in the development of this thinking. I met the Prime Minister both in the refugee camps and in our military headquarters in Macedonia during the conflict, and afterwards at No 10; I am sure that he felt vindicated – in my view with some justification - in his leadership during this time and when Sep 11<sup>th</sup> happened it was therefore no surprise, to me anyway, that he initially responded as he did. Unfortunately I have to say that in my view he failed to recognise that events post - Sep 11<sup>th</sup> were not equivalent in scale or complexity to what we then set about. In that sense I would argue that our – and his - success in Kosovo significantly coloured his subsequent judgement.

Set in this context I will now outline events as I experienced them in 2002/03, running through from my involvement in the UK, Washington, Kuwait and the Iraq.

**IRAQ 2002/03****THE UNITED KINGDOM**

In 2000, having attended the Royal College of Defence Studies in London - where we addressed the political/military strategic level of war and gained further insight into the diplomatic and political imperatives - I was promoted in Major General order to assume the appointment of Director General the Defence Supply Chain (DG Def SC); I was therefore involved in the initial considerations and planning for possible logistic operations post – Sep 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 and in the run up to 2002/03.

In the intervening years since 1990/91 we had conducted major changes to our logistic structures and capabilities. In essence we had introduced a very dominant 'Business Imperative' into our processes, resulting in the closure of many of our logistic depots/facilities, large scale reductions in our holdings of Materiel (vehicles, spares, ammunition, fuels/oils etc) and a much more 'Joint' approach – including the appointment of RN, Army and RAF personnel into what had previously been single service appointments. Taken together with other changes, there is no doubt in my mind that collectively this had a significant impact on the robustness of our logistic capability. In place stock levels were significantly reduced and the 'Business Imperative' began – in my view – to unbalance the 'Operational Imperative.' Much of our logistic planning and procurement became too heavily dependant on early political decisions; decisions which in 2002/03 were not forthcoming.

In the autumn of 2002 I was stood up to be the 2-star Joint Force Logistic Component Commander (JF Log C Comd) of the Joint Force being prepared for possible operations against Iraq. The initial intent was to establish, alongside the US Forces in their European Command (EUCOM), a several hundred Kilometre Line of Communication (L of C) from the Eastern Mediterranean, through Turkey to an area around Silopi. Should events dictate, the British 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Division would then have moved down that L of C in order to move into Northern Iraq and then, together with the US 4<sup>th</sup> Division, secure the northern oilfields.

We had no formed headquarters established for this role so I began to build one. We were eventually allocated space in the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), from where we conducted various exercises to prepare us for whatever should emerge. At this stage there was no clarity on whether such operations would actually take place, but we were comfortable with that, recognising the uncertainty of the political developments emerging. However, this appointment took me, along with the Joint Task Force Commander and the other Component Commanders, to Tampa in Florida and to CENTCOM, to take part in the various coalition planning conferences/'rock drills'.

In Tampa itself General Franks and his staff at CENTCOM were keen to go. They were an impressive headquarters. They had been incredibly busy for the previous 18 months, particularly since Sept 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. They had planned and then executed operations in Afghanistan, they had been planning options for Iraq for some time, and some were even debating what was likely beyond Iraq - with Syria and Iran being seen as likely suspects. They were tired – 18 hour days over many months – but they had a good, robust military plan. They held the usual planning 'rock-drills' and it was pretty clear to me that the military 'phases' 1 to 3 would not fail. However:

- General Franks was due to hand over his appointment in the summer of 2003, as were many of his headquarters; understandably from a military perspective he wanted to crack on with his team and execute what they had been planning for so long.
- There was a strong sense that the military were leading the charge, pressed by Secretary Rumsfeld and the DOD in Washington. Whilst they obviously wanted to be sure that robust military options were available one sensed that diplomacy was being left behind – or was considered unnecessary. My sense was that, given half a chance, General Franks would have been delighted to have begun operations by the turn of 2002/03.

- There was scant evidence of any serious so-called 'Phase IV' planning. As the UK JF Log C Comd – and carrying the baggage of my previous deployments – I tried to work through the immediate implications of the proposed operations and their possible aftermath; not just the military logistic implications, but the issues of refugees, humanitarian support and immediate reconstruction. I reckoned that at least some of these problems were sure to come my way. I cannot claim to have given any immediate thought to the longer term reconstruction – physical or political – of Iraq - nor perhaps, as an operational level military commander, should I have done. But importantly I got no sense of anyone else doing so either, neither in the UK nor in the US. These were war-fighters, not 'nation builders', and any attempts to introduce 'Phase IV' reconstruction planners – of which there were a few, led by a US 1-star Engineer – into the inner circle were re-buffed. More importantly from my perspective, whilst this issue was acknowledged when I raised it back in the UK at the PJHQ there was a reluctance to close with it, for some sensible but also some not so sensible reasons. The emphasis at this stage was ensuring that we – the UK Military – could sit alongside the US in the war fighting phases of the operation and that logistically we could be sustained; longer term reconstruction was not seen as MoD business. Whilst that may have been a fair assessment, I got no sense that anyone else in Whitehall was thinking through the detail of this either.
- Overall, I therefore saw no evidence of a (relatively) clear Strategic Level 'End State' for post-war Iraq, or an overall Campaign Plan for how we would get to that 'End State'. All such debates seemingly ended with the military defeat of Saddam's forces.

By Christmas we, the UK, were clearly pretty convinced that Turkey was not going to allow us in through their territory. I for one was pleased when the decision was made to pull out of this Northern Option and go for the Southern approach – via Kuwait. We probably could have made the North work, but logistically life would have been tough – very tough – and sticking to some of the proposed timelines would have been extremely demanding. In truth I am not sure we would have done so.

So, with some regrets but overall relief, I handed over the logistic lead to a 1-star led HQ, and I returned to my day job as DG Def SC. But within a couple of weeks or so I was rung and asked (told!) to go to Washington. Working to DCDS(C) I was initially to act as an LO to a new post-war planning organisation being established in Washington. After a couple of initial briefings I deployed in early February 2003.

## **WASHINGTON**

On Jan 20<sup>th</sup> the President had signed a Presidential Directive (No 24) which authorised the creation of what was initially called the 'Office of Post-War Planning' (the OPWP) and a short time later became the 'Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance' (ORHA). Whilst this was undoubtedly a good move it was, to put it mildly, a bit late! Certainly compared to the detailed planning for the reconstruction of Germany, which began months before D-Day in 1944 with a team several 100, if not several 1000, strong. I am unclear as to how the decision came about, but it was clear that Rumsfeld had seized control of the team. A core member of the neo-conservative clique, along with Wolfowitz, Feith and others, and, I sense, led by Cheney rather than Bush himself, Rumsfeld set up the OPWP right in the heart of the Pentagon. I arrived in the very early stages, under instruction to discover if this was genuinely a pan-Washington bureau, with authority to drive the overall planning effort, or simply a 'side-show'. I arrived to find a man called Jay Garner and a small team setting up in about half-a-dozen offices inside the Pentagon.

Garner was a man I immediately warmed to. A retired US Army 3-star General, he had met Rumsfeld in 2000 when, as I understand it, the company that he had established after retirement was doing some work on the US Space programme. Rumsfeld clearly liked and remembered him. Perhaps more importantly, Garner had commanded what we called Operation Haven, the deployment in Northern Iraq to bring relief to the Kurdish IDPs in the mountains post the 1991 Gulf War. We (the UK) had put a good part of 3 Commando Brigade under his command, and they had worked well together – so he was

at least pleased to see me, although I sensed that he was a little surprised that the UK had sent out a serving 2-star. At this stage we were the only non-US members of the OPWP.

Garner had responded immediately to the call from Rumsfeld and, at very little notice, had given up leading his company and effectively became a civil servant – at substantial material cost. He then did exactly what I had done when I was told to form the 2-star JF Log C Headquarters for Turkey; he rang his mates and former comrades. He quickly gathered a crop of retired 1, 2 and 3-star Generals and, via contacts in the Pentagon, got a hold of some young serving blood to support them. I brought with me just my MA – an excellent RN Lt Cdr - a submariner ‘Pusser’ – and we settled in.

I had a number of contacts in Washington; some in the UN as a result of my earlier work with the various Agencies but, crucially, I knew well the then boss of the UNDP, Mark Malloch-Brown - subsequently the Chief of Staff to the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, and thereafter his Deputy; and latterly the Minister in the Foreign Office. Mark is a long standing family relative and friend; he and his wife and family then lived in Georgetown and I spent just about every week-end with them. Also, through the then Secretary of State for DFID, Clare Short MP – who I had got to know well as a result of the operations in Macedonia/Albania/Kosovo in 1999, and with whom I had discussed events as they were unfurling before I deployed to Washington - I received introductions into the USAID, including an opportunity to meet with Nastios, the then head of the agency. I also had links to the Embassy and to other parts of the Pentagon via various military contacts.

The early days were inevitably a bit of a blur but several issues emerged by late February:

- I began to grasp the enormous effect of September 11 on the psyche of the Washington Beltway. I had understood it intellectually, but now I began to understand it emotionally. There was a palpable sense of being ‘at war’ and a strong sense that ‘we’ (the US) could no longer wait for democracies to emerge around the world - they would have to be ‘force-fed.’



- Pan-Beltway there had clearly been and was still a great deal of serious thought going on about Iraq. But it was not being brought together anywhere else. Garner was seemingly it. Having confirmed that with UK I was reinforced with a little support from the FCO and some contact with a DFID official based in New York; Clare Short would not allow him to work with me on a full-time because of her well known concerns. This was, I am bound to say, unhelpful for me, and it was also an early indicator that Whitehall was not much more joined up than Washington!
- I did receive considerable support from the British Embassy in Washington. I must however say that I was very surprised that the post of Ambassador was gapped at this stage; the deputy head of mission was clearly capable, and kindly gave me both time and support as I began to work my way through the maelstrom, but not to have an experienced Ambassador in-post seemed at best a serious oversight, and at worst somewhat negligent.
- By putting the OPWP deep in the Pentagon Rumsfeld alienated the rest of the so-called 'Beltway Bandits'. It took me quite a while to secure the necessary pass so that I could get in and move around un-escorted, but civilians – even US government officials - were either reluctant to come into the Pentagon or couldn't get in anyway. There were a few, but very few, non-military folk who joined the team - of which more below.
- By spending my weekends with the Malloch-Brown's I met a very wide range of UN and US officials, and I was able to build-up a picture of the inevitably varied views and opinions. Apart from anything else, through these contacts I was struck by the deep animosities between the various Washington departments – it was clear for example that many in the State Department deeply resented the DOD and Rumsfeld, almost to the point of wishing strategic failure. But as I discussed the situation with these various players one could also

not help but feel that UK engagement was limited; I got no sense of UK pressure on the US; no 'demands' for clarity over the intended 'End State' or the planning to achieve it.

- Garner held various meetings and study periods, including a 'rock-drill' on the 20 - 22 February, from which it became abundantly clear that there was no agreed strategic plan. Whilst some good work had obviously been done, there was a huge disparity/diversity of views/opinions, and there seemed to be virtually no political direction as to what post-war Iraq was to look like. Again, no declared End-State; no Campaign Plan.
- The UK sent a small team of officials out to join me at this 'rock-drill', including Dominick Chilcott, who I met for the first time. Overall the team listened rather than trying to influence the debate. Collectively it was agreed that the post-war planning was at best limited.
- Garner was being pulled any number of ways and he found himself in an almost impossible position. At the February 'rock-drill' we managed to find someone (Tom Warwick) who had clearly given much thought to post-war Iraq. Garner got him into the team, only to be told a week or so later that he had to "let him go" – this direction came either from or via Rumsfeld, maybe from Cheney himself, and was almost certainly because Warwick was not a neo-conservative and worked in/for the State Department. Put simply, he was not 'one of the team' – even though he was a man with a depth of understanding, strong views and great knowledge. The clear message was that Garner was not at liberty to build a genuinely pan-Beltway team and that he was subject to veto – it was apparent that if people's views did not reinforce the neo-con paradigm then they would not be allowed to join the team, or interfere from outside it.
- Whilst Garner had indeed been given the task of post-war planning he certainly had no authority over any-one working elsewhere across the Beltway; and crucially there were

significant gaps in his team. No media plan being developed, indeed no embedded professional media staff; no political advisors in the widest sense; no-one focussed on the WMD issue; no-one from the Treasury, Health, Education etc. And as far as those department's who did provide staff were concerned, it was clear (from Natsios amongst others) that their people were on 'attachment'; they would report back to State or USAID for their direction - they were not truly under Garner's 'command'. There was thus little or no early 'Unity of Command' or 'Unity of Effort.'

- It was not certain at this stage if Garner and the team would actually deploy. What became clear very quickly was that he was getting fed up with Washington; his personal solution was to get out and deploy to Kuwait, where he believed he would find greater freedom to operate. At this stage I was – I stress – still a 'Liaison Officer', but Garner and I were at least beginning to get to know one another and I increasingly admired his patience and fortitude. However, we did differ on many things, and my sense was that this move away from Washington was a mistake. Hard though it was, this office had to be genuinely pan-Beltway or it was nothing, and it needed greater International/UN engagement. I told Garner that I believed he shouldn't leave Washington until we had a properly constructed team; if he didn't get one then we shouldn't go anywhere.
- The situation is perhaps best summed up by reference to the ORHA telephone directory dated 27<sup>th</sup> February 2003; at its starkest it shows that as we prepared to move to Kuwait Garner had:
  - A 'Front Office' - Garner, a Deputy and a COS - with 3 'outer office' staff
  - An immediate support team of
    - 4 in a sort of 'think tank' – his so called 'Initiatives Group' or "brains trust".
    - 3 in the legal team

- 1 in Public Affairs – a mid-West Newspaperman (a Naval Reservist)
- A Humanitarian Co-ordinator (Ambassador George Ward); he had a Deputy and just 10 slots in the telephone directory, of which 4 were still vacant.
- A Reconstruction Co-ordinator (Lew Lucke); he also had a deputy and 34 slots, 9 of whom were focussed on getting the oil/energy sector; 4 of his slots were vacant.
- A Civil Administrative Co-ordinator (Mike Mobbs), he had a deputy plus 16 slots, 6 of which were still vacant.
- 3 Regional Teams, two of which were led by retired 1-stars US Generals; the third, focussed on Baghdad, was to be led by a lady from the State Department called Barbara Bodine, who joined us in early March. These regional teams were to be capable of getting out onto the ground to act as Garners eyes and ears and to co-ordinate the overall effort. Each, at this stage, was barely a handful strong.
- Supporting the whole structure was an 'Operations Group' led by a retired 3-star US General, Jerry Bates. He was to co-ordinate the communications and life support infrastructure. His team - according to the telephone list – was to be 83 strong, but as we prepared to leave Washington 63 of those slots were vacant.
- I was shown, along with my MA and my initial FCO representative, as an 'Allied LNO' – along with an Australian Major General (Ford) who had just joined us at that point. He was in an impossible position, trying to fathom everything out; I spent some time with him, and briefed the Australian Embassy Staff. I got no sense that anyone in the UK was speaking regularly with other possible international players.

In all there were 170 line serials on the directory, but 77 were vacant; and whilst the others had names quite a few of those were names that had been identified but had not yet actually joined the team. This for the office that was going to be responsible for the initial humanitarian support and reconstruction of Iraq and, in theory anyway, was to be the focus for longer term reconstruction planning. It was all woefully thin.

After some discussion Garner did agree to go to New York (3<sup>rd</sup> March 2003) to meet with the UN Deputy Secretary General, Louise Frechette, partly with the intent of offering to include a UNLO in his team. The meeting was not easy, with Frechette and her team constantly reminding Garner, and indirectly me as the UK's man, that we would be legally accountable for Iraq once the fighting was over. They recognised the offer of an LO but could not accept it. Whilst there we met with Jeremy Greenstock and John Negroponte amongst others, but it was a short visit, up and down in a day, and I reluctantly came to the conclusion that it was not a really serious attempt to engage – the UN was seen virtually unanimously as a side-issue.

Throughout February/March my MA and I worked from early morning until late evening trying to get our minds around how this was all coming together; we then retreated to the Embassy to construct a summary of what was happening to be sent back to the UK, before flopping into bed for a few hours in a flat we had rented in Arlington. Initially I tried to be positive and suspected that there were lots of things that I hadn't yet seen; a feeling that there must be more to it than this! Pretty quickly I began to realise that there wasn't. The situation really came home to me at a lunch with Rumsfeld and about a dozen others when I was asked for my opinion on how things were going. I responded that I had two principle concerns.

- First, troop levels. I reminded them that in N Ireland in the 1970's we had well over 20,000 troops deployed to deal with security. In Kosovo in 2000 the International Force was around 60,000 strong for a province the size of a couple of UK counties. For a country the size of Iraq the coalition would initially have about 150,000 and I knew the explicit desire was that

within 6 months the US would reduce to around 50,000. This to me was ambitious, to put it mildly.

- Secondly, we needed to broaden Garners team and internationalise the post-war rebuilding of Iraq. I understood the political difficulties but I argued that if we were to build democracy and re-build the physical infrastructure then we would need a much stronger 'home' team, representatives from the international community, and UN expertise in a wide range of areas.

Essentially, I argued that post-war Iraq would require a lot of 'Time, Treasure and Talent'. This did not go down well, to put it mildly. It was pretty obvious that not many were putting such a case to Rumsfeld, or any of the other senior players within the DOD/OSD – the leadership had made up their minds that everything would go well and that was that. Essentially, if a little simplistically, the US plan was that "we do not need a plan". The Iraqi people, it was argued, would respond to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein with huge relief and a desire to establish democracy - and we (the US) would downscale quickly and move on to the next issue. This would be done alone (and unafraid) if necessary. I argued that this was, perhaps, fine as a Plan 'A' – but what was desperately needed was a Plan 'B' and a Plan 'C', and a recognition that what would probably emerge would be an amalgam of the last 2. It was made clear that my views were not welcomed

Back in the UK things didn't appear to be much better. Whitehall had finally formed what we called the Iraq Planning Unit (IPU), but not until mid-late Feb and then with a very small team; embedded within the FCO - quite rightly. Led by the redoubtable Dominic Chilcott, they too were quickly overwhelmed and suffered, like Garner, from the chaos, lack of coherent planning and a chorus of competing voices. My links back to the UK were:

- Daily written reports back to DCDS(C) and the IPU. The committee should have seen at least some of these reports. These were sent also to a variety of other players – including

CJO, the FCO and DFID; they attempted to summarise the events of the day, outline the key immediate issues and other points of interest. In these reports I asked for the UK line on any number of issues – sadly I have to say that I received very little comment, guidance or specific answers to my questions/observations raised throughout my time in post.

- Video Conferences with DCDS (C)
- The occasional visitor from the UK – including IPU and DFID representatives
- I also returned to the UK a couple of times, mainly to brief the IPU and the Chiefs of Staff. Looking back I wonder if I was as blunt as I needed to be about where we were, but I am told I was. I briefed what I saw as Gamers plan as it developed, although there was precious little written down at this stage.

I finally left Washington on 11<sup>th</sup> March and deployed to Kuwait, via the UK, on the 18<sup>th</sup> March. I briefed various people whilst in the UK, including the Prime Minister. I had spoken with Alastair Campbell about the lack of serious press experience in Gamers team and he asked that I call in at No 10. Whilst with him I briefed him on the overall position and, having heard what I had to say, he left and returned with the PM. We talked for about 30 minutes or so; I was as honest about the position as I could be, essentially briefing that I did not believe post-war planning was anywhere near ready. I told him that there was no clarity on what was going to be needed after the military phase of the operation, nor who would provide it. Although I was confident that we would secure a military victory I offered my view that we should not begin that campaign until we had a much more coherent post-war plan.

Overall, after all of the many briefings and conversations that I had in the UK at that time, my sense was that:

- Not everyone believed that there would actually be a war; if there was to be one, then there was certainly no consensus that we (the UK) should be involved;
- There was no coherent UK, pan-Whitehall, view of what post-war Iraq should look like;
- There was a serious reluctance to take on the US over their views;
- If events did unfurl differently to 'the plan' - such as it was - there was an underlying belief that the US would quickly be able to bring whatever was necessary to bear.
- There was, therefore, some seriously wishful and woolly, and un-joined up, thinking going on!

### KUWAIT

In Kuwait, we were established in a hotel complex by the sea, South of Kuwait city. During the weeks there before the war started and finished, and our move into Iraq/Baghdad, there was the inevitable chaos and whirlwind of events unfurling. The key points were:

- The Washington politics continued to be enormously frustrating. Numbers began to increase, but very slowly. The names of people identified to head up or to be a part of the various ministry teams constantly changed, as first the State Department and then the DOD vetoed one name or another. In order to deploy, US civilians had to attend some military-style training at one or other of the military bases (Forts) in the US, so if the DOD didn't like the cut of the jib of a state department nominated persons they simply ensured that they couldn't get trained - and hence they were not able to deploy!
- Back in Washington we had seen a number of exiled Iraqis who occasionally came in to brief Garner. Their role was not apparent to me at the time but here in Kuwait they were becoming pretty vocal; Garner spent a fair bit of time meeting or avoiding any number of



Iraqi's, all of whom lobbied for one thing or another. My requests for a UK view on these people elicited no response.

- Taken together it was very difficult for Garner to build his ministry teams, and every attempt to construct a plan for an Interim Iraq Authority (IIA) was frustrated. The lead for the 'Future of Iraq' work stayed very firmly in Washington, where Chalabi's influence was obviously strong, with Garner kept out of the loop. Garner consistently encouraged me to get the UK to engage with Washington over this issue – I tried, but saw no evidence of us doing so.
- I spent increasing amounts of time meeting with and briefing just about every Embassy in Kuwait. Garner had made it clear that he wanted me to be his "Coalition" Deputy, notwithstanding the fact that the UK had still not confirmed publicly that we had anyone in his team. I was still a LO with a very small team, and I was not receiving any clear direction from Whitehall, other than not to commit the UK to anything! Nonetheless, I accepted that Garner needed my full support and I tried to provide it; I agreed that I would be his "International" Deputy, and that I would take the lead on our interface with the outside world; I therefore actively set about meeting with all those other nationals who approached us. Many of the state department people asked to work with me on the attaché briefings, which I welcomed; and with their support we did manage to draw in several other national representatives. We also met with many of the UN/IO/NGO representatives in Kuwait, attempting again to strengthen our links and keep them aware of our plans. The Committee should have access to the relevant reports; I cannot remember receiving any comments or advice from the UK/FCO at all on how to conduct these numerous meetings – no 'line to take'.
- My UK team was strengthened a little, including a very useful media team provided by Alistair Campbell, effectively from within No 10. But my attempts to get significant numbers

of additional UK personnel were frustratingly slow – asking us to write detailed job descriptions was but one indicator of the UK attitude and approach. I found myself ringing around lobbying my own contacts and then asking ‘formally’ for named individuals who I knew would add real value – usually with little or no ‘official’ agreement/response. I did however manage to get some ‘unofficial’ additional military support.

- Only a couple of weeks before our move into Baghdad my appointment as a Deputy to Garner was still to be formally approved and/or announced. I was aware of various discussions on this issue – the Foreign Secretary wrote to No 10 on the 7<sup>th</sup> April outlining his views and attaching a draft MOU, but it had become very clear to me that there were still serious concerns relating to potential political and legality issues. The only clear instructions I received throughout this period therefore was that I should not commit the UK to financial or any other responsibilities which might tie us into any ORHA plans.
- CDS visited on the 11<sup>th</sup> Apr; representatives from DFID on 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> April. The dialogue with DFID in the round continued to frustrate. I had several telephone conversations with Clare Short and others over this period. There was a strong reluctance to formally support ORHA; we did have DFID representation, but it was no-where near sufficient to meet our needs. Considering the expected scale of the humanitarian suffering, the projected numbers of IDPs, civilian casualties, etc this was, once again, more than a little disappointing.
- Finally, the Foreign Secretary visited on the 14<sup>th</sup> April and whilst with us he did make a public announcement that the UK was engaged in ORHA – formally announcing my presence with Garner. He spent quite a while with us; I briefed him, he met Garner and some of the team and then we had a longer session at the Embassy over dinner. I presented him with what I termed the ‘Must – Should - Could’ paper – essentially a list of skill-sets that I felt were needed if we, the UK, were going to play a full part in the post-war

business, and if we wanted to ensure influence with the US. These skills sets covered areas like security, health, education and the treasury, and senior diplomatic positions and public relations – both to deal with the outside world but also to work internally as our mouthpiece to the Iraqi people. The list was followed up with various other papers/requests, including one by an FCO official asking for pretty minimal engagement; but there was no immediate response to any such requests.

- We did establish reasonably strong links with the military Land Component HQ, and we did begin to conduct some joint planning. But Garner had no authority over the US military and I felt that he was reluctant to force the issue over who would work for you. My view was clear; he would be the ‘Viceroy’ of Iraq, and the military must work for him once he arrived in Iraq/Baghdad. The timing of that arrival was quite a bone of contention. The military campaign was expected to be fairly short and sharp, and as it turned out it was. My view was that Garner should wait until the military combat phases (1-3) were fairly obviously over, and then he should fly in, in a civilian plane, and be presented as the ‘Viceroy’ – a sort of Templar figure. He would then be clearly seen as separate from the military, with authority over them. This view was not shared by the US military, neither really by Garner himself, and it was one of the few times that I found myself publicly speaking out against him. I asked for but did not receive a UK perspective.
- We established good links into the UK Division. Garner wanted to establish an ORHA office/footprint in or around Basra as soon as events allowed, and he wanted it to be UK led – initially by me. Whitehall seemed to refuse to countenance the idea; it was never explained to me why this was so, but I sensed a fear that this would lead to UK having to bear the brunt of reconstruction costs in the South/South West area. I was given fairly clear direction not to agree to this – just about the only clear direction I received on any issue!

- The tension between the US ex-military and military team members and the civilians grew. At the highest level there was a serious breakdown, and I found myself acting as a bridge-builder on numerous occasions. The civilians in the headquarters – particularly Barbara Bodine who was to lead the Baghdad team – found it very hard to break into the military “club”. Tears literally flowed with frustration; and there were some serious rows – Bodine was eventually to leave Baghdad in tears of frustration and anger.
- Throughout my time in Kuwait I had numerous telephone conversations with various individuals back in the UK, and sent back written situation reports, which should be available to the Committee. As noted above, my requests for clarity on UK intent, guidance on policy, etc were generally not forthcoming.
- As the war began the atmosphere within ORHA changed noticeably. Amongst the retired senior military there was an air of excitement and anticipation. For many this was a chance to return to “Operations”, which I somewhat reluctantly put down to a failure to realise that what we were about was not military operations but humanitarian support and reconstruction – it also rather reflected the Presidential encouragement to Garner when he had an audience at the White House back in Washington; he had left the meeting with the encouraging words to “Kick Arse” ringing in his ears – not exactly a recognition of what was required! Amongst the non-military the atmosphere was different. The senior amongst them realised that we were far from ready to get anywhere near what was going to be required of us, and for all of them there was an understandable air of uncertainty and trepidation – especially when the odd missile sailed past our HQ and explosion rocked Kuwait.

Our first forays into Iraq included a visit to Umm Qasr on 1<sup>st</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Division on 6<sup>th</sup> April. A full report of these visits should be available to the Committee. Finally, in one sense fulfilling my worst fears, we left Kuwait to fly into Baghdad in the dead of night (21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> April) in the back of a military

Hercules C130 aircraft. There were barely a dozen of us, with representatives from the media of around the same size.

## **IRAQ**

In a chaotic start; we spent the first few hours in one of Saddam's old palaces near Baghdad airport and then had a frantic day visiting some of the infrastructure in the city, including a power station and a hospital. We then moved to the North to visit the Kurdish area. Here the response was quite different to that which we had experienced in Baghdad city. We were welcomed as conquering heroes'; the streets were full of people as we visited a number of places over about 2/3 days. We had various meetings with both Barzani and Talabani. Garner was in his element. He remembered them all, and their wives and children, even though he had not seen them for some 12 years. He was personally hugely popular. I was very pleasantly surprised by what we saw; the Kurds had survived reasonably well under the umbrella of the Northern Fly Zone, - their schools, hospitals, parliament etc were all easily the best I would see in the whole of Iraq.

We then returned to Baghdad and set up the headquarters in what became the Green Zone. From there we travelled around and about, visiting the South and attending a myriad of meetings and press conferences. What we found is best summed up as:

- Fear
- Long years of neglect
- Very high expectations
- A US Military who were keen to go home

From a day-to-day survival point of view, life was far from easy. The so-called 'Palace' was very grand but there was no running water or electricity, sanitation, air conditioning etc. and the food was

pretty basic – mostly cold ‘Meals Ready to Eat (MRE’s)’ and bottled water. The main party came up by road from Kuwait and eventually there was some hot food, but the contracted support was not good. The life support, the communications, and so on failed on a regular basis – indeed in order to talk to anyone one had to stand outside in the heat with a ‘Thuraya’ phone – which don’t work indoors – hoping that the person you wanted to speak to was also standing outside waiting to hear from you! The non-military staff immediately began to struggle – simply existing in those conditions was not easy for anyone not used to military operations.

Garner’s lack of authority now became brutally exposed. The ministry teams fanned out and each reported back, initially quite positively. Most found Iraqis prepared to work with us, buildings standing and files etc available – many having been secured at the homes of various officials. But as the security situation began to deteriorate the US military commanders refused to provide sufficient escort vehicles, and then stopped anyone moving around without an escort. Meetings were disrupted and, most crucially, the Ministry buildings began to be targeted and burnt and looted – Garner repeatedly asked for crucial key points to be guarded but his pleas met with little response. Linked to this the contractual support from the USAID reconstruction effort failed to materialise. There were few resources to work with, and a vacuum of inactivity was created.

Garner initiated a series of ‘political’ meetings with the key Iraqi players – essentially the London 7 plus the Iraqi leadership who had not gone into exile. He worked hard to encourage them to work together, in order to form an Interim Iraq Authority, which he wanted up and running by the summer. Garner realised that we couldn’t possibly run the country – we had nowhere near enough people to do that – so we had to enable them to do it themselves. But his efforts were undermined and he got little support from Washington. I received no direction from the UK on our policy on this.

As the security situation worsened the US military response was poor and fragmented. There were not enough troops to tie Baghdad down, never mind the rest of the country, and those troops that were there only managed to inflame things – their posture was aggressive and they only succeeded in

alienating Iraqis who, whilst not pleased to see them in Baghdad, were relatively pleased elsewhere and were largely prepared to work to improve things.

The good news of course was that there was no humanitarian crisis, no initial reconstruction crisis. The war had indeed been hugely successful, no chemical weapons had been used, no burning oil-fields, no mass movement of people, no immediate need for massive aid. There was a serious window of opportunity here, but it slipped quickly away. The high expectations were not met, the media were their usual self and the atmosphere changed for the worse within 2/3 weeks.

In an attempt to influence events we did fly up to Qatar to meet with General John Abizaid and the other military commanders, but this was all to little or no avail. Whilst there, I managed to spend some time with the UK Joint Commander (Brian Burridge) and his staff, but they were able to offer little support; their focus was on the UK area of operations. I did get significant support from the Logistic Brigade Commander, a good friend - he arranged for some equipment, vehicles, and personal protection to be provided for me as the security in Baghdad worsened. However:

- The UK – as in Whitehall - were less helpful. To be fair communications were difficult, but I was given little support – still no idea what our UK strategic intent was, no response to my “Must-Should-Could” paper. If it had not been for my personal contacts within the UK military I would have had virtually no support. I did receive some visitors. General Sir Mike Jackson, now CGS, visited and I briefed him as bluntly as I could – luckily I knew him well, but my briefing entitled ‘Snatching Defeat from the Jaws of Victory’ did not appear to go down too well! The Minister for the Foreign Office (O’Brien) also visited. Asking him for some more serious FCO presence I was informed that ‘we think you are doing a great job.’ Whilst this may have been nice to hear on the one hand, my impression was that Whitehall was uncertain of where to go from here, and I sensed that the FCO felt it better not to be implicated too much in what was happening – rather let the MoD get it wrong!! There were

various discussions about putting UK troops into Baghdad to help with immediate security, but I had no sense of any coherent UK analysis about the political future of Iraq as a whole.

- Throughout this period 1st Armoured Division became increasingly frustrated with ORHA as a body – they received very little direct support, no financial help and little or no direction. Although we had attempted to manage expectations somewhat before the move into Iraq the lack of coherence seemed a surprise to many – and was the source of much angst. I sense that the UK had expected the US to ‘pick up the bills’ as we went along; I am certainly not aware of any substantial sums being put aside by the UK Treasury for post-war reconstruction within the UK sector, or indeed elsewhere – indeed I have subsequently been told that the very reverse was true.
- We eventually established a CPA team in Basra. This ended up being led by an excellent Danish diplomat called Olsen; he did an extraordinary job, but I have to say that in my view he did so with an embarrassing lack of support from the UK; few people and virtually no money.

Eventually a senior FCO man did arrive to join me. John Sawers, previously our man in Cairo, came in with a small FCO team. We managed to have a couple of conversations before he arrived, but I know that he was still taken aback somewhat by what he found. He arrived at around the time that the US announced their decision to remove Garner and bring in Bremer. This was in my view very badly handled. Garner was effectively hung out to dry by Rumsfeld, and the US Administration in general. He was pilloried in the US press and treated disgracefully. Given an impossible task with no resources or support he had, it is true, retreated to operate at the operational military level, but this was in many respects because he had little option but to do so. Whilst I may argue that he should not have allowed himself to be forced there – or left Washington without greater clarity – it is nonetheless a fact that when he left Baghdad there was genuine sadness and much anger within his team.



Bremer arrived in early June. I flew up to Qatar to meet him and briefed him on the flight back. He could have been presented to the world in a number of ways; his arrival certainly helped establish a more civilian authority, and that was good; Bremer was effectively the Viceroy, the Civilian Provisional Authority – hence the CPA – and he was indeed empowered by Washington. He immediately summoned the senior US Military Commander and ordered him to move his HQ and co-locate with the CPA - and he made it pretty clear that he expected full co-operation. More resources – particularly people - began to arrive and there was a genuine air of expectancy.

Then he dropped his bombshells. Against all advice from Garner and myself Bremer announced that we were to de-mobilise the Iraqi Army, conduct a de-Ba'athification of the Ministries and all other Iraqi government structures, and slow down the political process – there would be no IIA.

These were serious errors of judgement; my sense is that they were not his decisions – or just his - as he clearly came armed with them from Washington. The result was that the coalition alienated large numbers of Iraqis – including, crucially, the military and those who had been working closely with us in the various ministries and infrastructure areas. Politically the CPA would also now have to run the country without the support of those that Garner had spent a significant amount of time developing. I do not understand why the UK did not do more to influence US thinking on these decisions. My sense at the time was that the FCO in particular felt that we were but a small coalition player and that we had to go along with this. In my view this was a major error of judgement and, I am bound to say, it reflects the trend of a refusal or unwillingness by the UK to engage pro-actively and confidently throughout this time.

My last couple of weeks or so were framed by the beginning of an inflow in of UK personnel to the CPA, and the arrival of Sergio de Mello and the UN team. The UK reinforcements were a welcome addition; the majority of them settled quickly and they began to exert an influence - but they were woefully late to the game. As for the UN, I knew some of the team and I spent quite a lot of time briefing and visiting them – including trying to prepare Sergio to meet with Bremer who had, somewhat reluctantly, accepted that they would have to establish a personal relationship. Bremer was, however,

clearly not prepared to allow the UN any freedom of action and he left me to conduct a series of initial meetings with the rest of the UN team. This, together with attempting to convince Bremer of the need to establish an 'International Council', were effectively my last rolls of the dice; I left in late June, frankly dog tired and glad to be away.

### **CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

So, what does all this tell me? As we reflect on how to deal with future 'Complex Emergencies' in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, I sense that we need to further develop our thinking in at least 2 areas:

- How do we develop the idea of "Conditional Sovereignty" that emerged from PM Blair's speeches in Chicago and elsewhere? This includes what used to be called the 'War on Terror' and the declared moral imperative/duty to intervene in the affairs of other states when they commit genocide or conduct ethnic cleansing - and with it our thinking on the applicability of the Just War principles in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- To deal with future events we also need to do more than just 'co-ordinate' better across Whitehall, the so called 'Comprehensive Approach.' I conclude that we need to transform the architecture of Government. I liken it to the journey that we in defence have been on for the last 50 or so years; the move from a separate War Office, Admiralty and Air Ministry to a Ministry of Defence and finally – and painfully slowly – to a PJHQ, and with it a much more coherent approach to Joint and Combined Military Operations. We need now to see how we can better bind together the workings of the MOD, DFID and FCO – and perhaps some other departments - in a similar way, creating either the civil equivalent of the PJHQ – possibly located in the Cabinet Office - or expanding the current PJHQ; either way we need a much better vehicle for pan-Whitehall Strategic Campaign Planning. There should also be broader non-military attendance on such courses as the HCSC, in order to educate and prepare our people.

This in order to better deliver Prime Ministerial and Cabinet intent as we grapple with issues like Africa, Global Climate Change, World Poverty and the implementation of, for example, the UN Millennium Development Goals - as well as our responses to other more traditional security conflicts around the globe.

So, leaving aside the mass of tactical level detail, I am therefore in no doubt that we do need to learn some key lessons from 2002/03, analysing the UK's approach and determining where we got it wrong – if for no other reason than to allow us to reflect on where we are, and where we are going, in Afghanistan! I have no desire to pillory individuals, but it seems to me that there are some fair questions that need answers; for example:

- What was the overall UK Intent in Iraq – was there an agreed, pan-Whitehall, Strategic 'End State' and clear Campaign Plan to deliver it? If not – why not?
- Why was there no agreed, pan-Whitehall, approach to post-war Iraq?
- Why did it take us so long to establish the IPU, and why did we never establish a War Cabinet - or at least appoint an appropriate Minister of State, reporting directly to the Prime Minister, to oversee all related planning issues?
- Why were we so reluctant to challenge the US over their post-war planning assumptions?
- How much money did the UK put aside for post-war Iraq – did the then Chancellor/Treasury have any clear intent to contribute, or did they believe that the whole bill should/would be paid by the US?
- Why did it take us – particularly DFID – so long to engage fully in ORHA and the CPA?
- Why were we so unhelpful in establishing/supporting CPA South?
- Why did we not engage much more strongly in Bremer's fateful decisions to disband the military, conduct de-Ba'athification, and slow down the political process?

And from the answers, what changes are needed to ensure we get it better next time?!

