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Thursday, 27th January 2011

(2.00 pm)

Evidence of ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE

SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Good afternoon and welcome, everyone.

Welcome to our witness this afternoon, Admiral the Lloyd Boyce. You were Chief of Defence Staff between February 2001 and 2003.

This is Lord Boyce's second appearance before the Inquiry, having previously appeared with Sir Kevin Tebbit in December 2009.

Now we recognise that witnesses are giving evidence based on their recollection of events and we, of course, check what we hear against the papers to which we have access and which we are receiving.

I remind each witness on each occasion you will later be asked to sign a transcript of the evidence given to the effect that it is truthful, fair and accurate.

With these preliminaries I will turn to Sir Roderic Lyne to open the questions. Roderic.

SIR RODERIC LYNE: Lord Boyce, I would like to start by understanding what appreciation MoD had in the course of 2002 of the UK's strategy towards Iraq, the political strategy. We have declassified today the letter that the Defence Secretary sent the Prime Minister,

1 the minute he sent him on 22nd March 2002. That's in
2 the pre-Crawford period, in which he asked the Prime
3 Minister to ask President Bush at the Crawford meeting
4 if we could be given access to American military
5 planning on Iraq.

6 You were at the subsequent meeting at Chequers with
7 the Prime Minister just before he went to Crawford.
8 Were the points in this letter discussed in the Chequers
9 meeting and was a view on how the Americans would
10 respond to the request that we should be included in
11 their military planning?

12 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: You ask about what the -- what was
13 going on in 2002 with regards to Iraq. Of course, Iraq
14 wasn't off our plot entirely, because we were engaged in
15 the operations in No-Fly Zones. So it was not something
16 which hadn't been looked at at all.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: And the naval embargo as well.

18 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Indeed, yes. Absolutely. So it
19 was something which the MoD was keeping a watching eye on,
20 if you like. Our pre-occupation, of course, at that
21 time was Afghanistan in the early part of 2002 and
22 establishment of the international security assistance
23 force in Kabul and so on. We were aware, because we
24 were monitoring it, that there were concerns over and
25 above the No-Fly Zone - concerns about whether or not

1 containment was working, whether the sanctions could be
2 hardened up or made special or tightened up, and that
3 there was concern about whether or not Iraq was being
4 sufficiently well contained. The letter¹ to which you
5 refer wasn't one which was initiated in the MoD as far
6 as I can recall, and I think the advice to the Prime
7 Minister was actually generated by his own Cabinet
8 Office, but I saw the minute. The Chiefs of Staffs
9 weren't involved in it-- in its construction I mean. So
10 no planning so far as any military option for Iraq was
11 considered at that particular time other than reaction
12 to No-Fly Zone crises of one sort or another.

13 At the meeting in Chequers -- no particular
14 preparations were made for that -- it was -- as I saw it
15 anyway, it was a scoping opportunity for the Prime
16 Minister to consider all options for dealing with Iraq
17 from sanctions to potentially a military option, which
18 military options were the United Nations to be not
19 satisfied that Iraq was complying with the resolutions
20 which then existed. The feeling was very strongly that
21 we should proceed down a United Nations route and
22 I think -- I guess my presence at Chequers on that
23 particular occasion was simply if there were questions
24 coming up about what could be done militarily, what was
25 our capability should we be asked to do something.

¹ Lord Boyce subsequently contacted the Inquiry, having had an opportunity to review further papers, and asked for a footnote to be included stating 'I have subsequently had drawn to my attention a letter which I saw and commented on in March 2002 which was sent from the Defence Secretary to the Prime Minister. This was referred to during my hearing by Sir Roderic Lyne.'

1 The point of asking for access to the United States
2 planning machine was if the Americans were going to
3 start going down a route of planning for military
4 operations in Iraq, and if the Prime Minister was going
5 to indicate that we might be -- that might be something
6 following the United Nations resolution which we would
7 be involved in, then the earlier we got involved in the
8 planning, the earlier we would get an understanding of
9 what might be required of us.

10 We were already anyway embedded in CentCom, the
11 headquarters which was running the Afghanistan
12 operation, Operation Enduring Freedom. There was no
13 knowledge of our people working on Afghanistan, that anything
14 was going on as far as Iraq was planning at that
15 particular stage.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: We have heard from other witnesses in the
17 course of this current round of hearings differing views
18 on what people understood around Whitehall in exactly
19 the period we are talking about. Sir Richard Wilson and
20 others, Lord Wilson now, have spoken to us about the
21 fact that containment indeed remained, as you say, the
22 official policy of the government right through until
23 September of that year, and Lord Wilson also said that
24 on his forward look at issues coming up that he
25 regularly did as Cabinet Secretary, Iraq was not looming

1 as a priority issue at this time.

2 On the other hand, in our most recent conversation
3 with Mr Blair, from that it emerged that he had been in
4 his exchanges with President Bush at the beginning of
5 December 2001 looking at the question of whether or not
6 action against Iraq was going to become part 2 -- a part
7 of Phase Two of the war against terror, and there was
8 a lot of comment in the press at that time, a lot of
9 speculation. This is in late 2001 -- that the Americans
10 were beginning to focus on Iraq. Statements were made
11 about this by British Ministers, by Jack Straw, by Ben
12 Bradshaw, the Foreign Office Minister at the time and so
13 on.

14 So the subject was around, but you certainly up to
15 the point of April 2002 were not getting the impression
16 that the possibility of using military action in some
17 shape or form in Iraq was going up the list of perhaps
18 probabilities rather than possibilities. That wasn't
19 the impression you were getting at the time where you
20 sat?

21 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: No. That's probably slightly
22 stronger the other way really. After 9/11 and in the
23 winter months of 2001 there had been, as you say, in the
24 press speculation about whether Americans would use this
25 as an excuse to go to Iraq. We were flatly saying we

1 are not considering or contemplating military action in
2 Iraq. We were really quite strongly against that. We
3 were certainly not doing any thinking about any sort of
4 military adventure into Iraq in the early part of 2002,
5 other than as I say maintaining our No-Fly Zone
6 capabilities and so forth.

7 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I don't know if you had a chance to look
8 at the evidence that we took from Mr Blair the other
9 day, but you would have been surprised to discover that
10 in December of 2001 there were quite substantive
11 exchanges between Number 10 and the White House about
12 the possibility of Iraq becoming part of a Phase 2?

13 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, if they were, they weren't
14 ones which we were apprised of.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Clearly through the letter from Mr Hoon,
16 then the discussion at Chequers it was decided that we
17 should ask to be part of the American military playing
18 and after Crawford I am right in saying that's what
19 happened?

20 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes.

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: We --

22 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Sorry. That was after Crawford.

23 SIR RODERIC LYNE: After Crawford.

24 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: We understood that the Prime
25 Minister had asked President Bush that we should come

1 into military planning. Immediately after Crawford that
2 didn't start happening. It took some time for that to
3 percolate through the system and start happening.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: It percolated when?

5 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Midsummer I should think.

6 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Now we wouldn't have made that request
7 unless we thought this was a serious possibility.

8 I mean, this was more than just contingency?

9 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think it behoves any responsible
10 military planner to make sure he is considering all the
11 options that might come in the future. If the Americans
12 were going to go down the route of taking military
13 action against Iraq, and particularly if it was to
14 enforce some United Nations resolution, then it was very
15 important for us to understand what was going on at the
16 earliest possible stage rather than being brought in at
17 a late stage where we wouldn't have any opportunity to
18 say what our capabilities are or how we should shape our
19 capabilities to fit in with whatever plan was being
20 produced. That happens quite a lot, not just in this
21 instance, but it can happen in any scenario, building
22 scenario, you start to think what you might be required
23 to do should you be asked to do it.

24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: In the process that was going on in
25 Washington clearly understanding what was going on in

1 the Pentagon was important, and we were told by Simon
2 Webb that after the Crawford meeting the Foreign Office
3 was happy for the MoD to lead the policy engagement with
4 the United States, and obviously it was also being led
5 at Number 10, because the Pentagon were very much
6 calling the shots, the balance of power in the American
7 system was resting with them at that time.

8 Was that something that involved you as well as
9 Simon Webb or the uniformed branch of the MoD? Were you
10 consciously trying to be part of that linkage?

11 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: We were indeed. One tried to use
12 one's relationship in my case with the Chairman of the
13 joint Chief of Staffs who was my opposite number to keep
14 a handle on what was actually happening.

15 However, the way in which the American organisation
16 was run was that, rather than the balance of power being
17 in the Pentagon's hands, almost all the power was in the
18 Pentagon's hands at a stage when Mr Rumsfeld took charge
19 of the machine. Although I think David Manning had
20 a good relationship with his opposite number, Condi
21 Rice, I don't think the same necessarily pertained in
22 terms of the Foreign Office and their relationships
23 either at civil servant or official level or at
24 Ministerial level.

25 So an entree into what was going on in America needed

1 to be done through the Pentagon or American defence system.
2 However, going to the Pentagon didn't necessarily make
3 life any much easier or make transparent what was going
4 on, because the system which Mr Rumsfeld ran was that he
5 dealt almost exclusively with General Franks. As time
6 went on that became more and more the case. Very often,
7 although I was speaking to General Myers who was the
8 Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I often knew more
9 about what was going on in the American machine than he
10 did.

11 SIR RODERIC LYNE: When you were having these conversations
12 with General Myers --

13 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Sorry. I was also talking to
14 General Franks as well.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: When you were having your exchanges with
16 Generals Myers and Franks were you clear in your own
17 mind what the Prime Minister's objectives were, the
18 direction that he was driving at that stage?

19 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, the answer to that is I think
20 the understanding I had and certainly one I transmitted to my
21 interlocutors was that we would try to pursue a UN
22 route. That was not something the Americans saw as
23 being necessary, as I understood it, but it was one that
24 was being emphatically held to.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: UN route to what end?

1 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: To try to persuade Saddam Hussein
2 to give up his weapons of mass destruction.

3 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But the American policy was explicitly
4 and overtly to change the regime in Iraq?

5 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes, it was and our policy
6 absolutely specifically was not that, not regime change.
7 I can't remember how many times I must have said to
8 either Myers or Franks that our policy was not regime
9 change. It did not feature in our future strategy.
10 That was something the Prime Minister and Foreign
11 Secretary felt very strongly and we continued to
12 transmit that to the Americans.

13 SIR RODERIC LYNE: The Prime Minister felt that very
14 strongly.

15 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: That's what I got from his -- the
16 meetings I had with him: "We don't do regime change".

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: That's what he said?

18 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I'd like to move on to September of 2002
20 or the autumn of 2002. Ian Lee in his evidence to us
21 said that when he took up his position as the MoD's
22 Director General of Operational Policy in September 2002
23 there was uncertainty about whether, coming back to the
24 point we were just discussing, whether the UK's
25 objective was regime change or disarming Saddam's

1 presumed WMD programme, WMD disarmament?

2 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, he may have had doubt in his
3 mind. I had none in mine.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Even as late as September?

5 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: As late as March 2003. If regime
6 change happened as a result, if we eventually finished
7 by taking military action -- I am talking now about
8 2003 -- and the regime changed as a result that was
9 a consequence of what we did rather than as a direct
10 reason for going in and that was something which -- and
11 indeed I conveyed to my staff who were working with
12 Americans at any level that was always to be the
13 line that we were taking.

14 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Did this, in fact -- this, if you like,
15 difference in the American and the British view of the
16 intended end state in the possible operation, military
17 operation against Iraq, did that actually affect at all
18 the way we made our military plans?

19 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I don't think so really, because if
20 you are going to try to remove the -- if Saddam Hussein
21 was not going to give up his weapons of mass destruction
22 and we were taking them from him, there were two or
23 three alternatives he could have done. He could have
24 run away, in which case the regime may still have been
25 there and not necessarily Saddam Hussein, in which case

1 you would have to deal with a new regime who agree to
2 give up their weapons of mass destruction. The way of
3 actually achieving the aim of taking away the weapons of
4 mass destruction would have to be done by military
5 force. So whether the regime was there or whether it
6 changed or not, that couldn't be done until someone from Iraq
7 decided to give the weapons up.

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Effectively if he had not backed down and
9 we had to use military force, the regime at that point
10 was going to go anyway?

11 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes.

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So what you planned for was not directly
13 affected by this?

14 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: How it was explained and justified within
16 an overall political strategy obviously was different.

17 I'd like to turn very briefly to the Northern
18 option. I don't want to go through this in great
19 detail, because we have been through it with many
20 witnesses. There are just a couple of points on which
21 it would be helpful to us to have clarification.

22 Firstly, do you recall what consultations the MoD
23 had with the Foreign Office about whether or not the
24 Turks, the Turkish government was likely to facilitate
25 use by us of the so-called Northern option?

1 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes. Well, first of all let me say
2 that the Foreign Office at a senior level were always
3 present at my Chiefs of Staffs meetings that I chaired
4 and probably at a Three Star and up level - which is a senior
5 person. So they were aware of all our thinking.

6 When we started thinking about potential military
7 options we were not just thinking of North. We were
8 looking at west and south as well. The west fell away
9 fairly quickly as a possibility. The south was always
10 sort of lurking in the background, if you like, but we
11 thought that the North made sense to fix the Iraqi
12 forces in that part of the country, to do what we could
13 to secure the oil fields before they got trashed by
14 Saddam Hussein and also to do what we could to preserve
15 the Kurdish state up there and make sure there was not
16 an assault on the Kurds from either the Turks or the
17 Iraqis.

18 So it appeared to be a neat option. We imagined in
19 the very early stages that because there was a NATO plan
20 giving access to come through Turkey to go towards Iraq,
21 but that was something which should not present a great
22 difficulty. Certainly when I spoke to the Chief of the
23 Turkish General Staff, General Ozkuk, in the very early
24 days, September/October or so, there didn't appear - well, he
25 didn't seem to think it would be a particular problem.

1 The Foreign Office were being engaged on this as
2 well. I can't tell you who or what the Ambassador
3 himself was doing. Certainly at a later stage the
4 Defence Secretary visited his opposite number in Turkey
5 as indeed I did - as I said, to the Chief of the Turkish General
6 Staff.

7 I think where we had a misappreciation really was
8 that the Chief of the Turkish General Staff prior to
9 2002 I suppose was really a very powerful person in
10 Turkey. What he said, went. I think that General Ozkuk
11 -- in fact, I know General Ozkuk had a far more
12 democratic way of going about things. Of course there
13 was an election in Turkey in the autumn of 2002. Ozkuk
14 was I think determined to show that he was a person with
15 a democratic ideal rather than the military taking
16 charge of the government whenever they felt they wanted
17 to, which, of course, is part of Turkish history.

18 I think we rather thought that Ozkuk had more power
19 than he probably did or that he was not prepared to take
20 on -- was it Erdogan, the new -- anyway the new head of
21 the Turkish state, who didn't want to get engaged with
22 the forces coming through Turkey, certainly not the
23 British ones, either for historical reasons because they
24 didn't like Brits or they didn't want to get engaged
25 anyway.

1 Nonetheless we persevered for probably longer than we should
2 have done in trying to get a route through Turkey and
3 indeed used the Americans as our interlocutor on
4 a number of occasions as well, either at the Rumsfeld
5 level or below.

6 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So as we were building up our plans for
7 a Northern option we were not getting a red light from
8 the Chief of the General Staff in Turkey and you
9 presumably were also not receiving a lot of cautionary
10 advice from the Foreign Office in their political
11 reading of the situation either otherwise you wouldn't
12 have gone on doing it?

13 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Not at all. I haven't read all the
14 evidence Foreign Office officials have given. I can't
15 recall at any time being told to back off. As you said,
16 we pressed on and we pressed on until the bitter end
17 when we had to make a final decision. The Americans
18 started giving us warnings in the -- around late
19 October/November time that we were probably pushing
20 against a closed door, but we still even then carried on
21 believing we might do it, because it had a -- that
22 particular option seemed to be the more sensible one to
23 go down if we were going to commit a large sized
24 landforce, because Kuwait -- the southern option, which
25 depended on coming through Kuwait -- Kuwait is a small

1 country. Could it actually cope? The fact that we had
2 a NATO route going through Turkey and at one time,
3 although that changed fairly quickly, we were going to
4 have a dominant role in the North. That actually
5 changed in fairly short order, but there was a very
6 clear task for us to do.

7 SIR RODERIC LYNE: SIS have told us through their then
8 chief, Richard Dearlove, that they did have a different
9 view. He said that in the summer of 2002 he had a clear
10 understanding that the Turks were not going to agree to
11 military deployment through Turkey. He said he was
12 talking to you regularly. Was this being fed through to
13 you?

14 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, I don't -- I can't recall
15 Sir Richard Dearlove saying that to me. As I say, I was
16 talking to Ozkuk and he was giving me sort of not
17 exactly bright green lights but certainly not saying
18 "Don't bother to darken my door again".

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: He wasn't warning you off. By October
20 obviously you were having doubts, because from October
21 you asked for contingency planning for a role in the
22 south for UK forces if the North wasn't going to be
23 viable?

24 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Uh-huh.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Now the main planning effort still went

1 on focused, as you said just now, really until a very
2 late stage until January on-going through the North.

3 We have heard from a number of witness that really
4 by January it looked like a dead duck, the North.

5 Switching from a Northern option to a southern
6 option for lots of military reasons is not actually that
7 simple a matter. Indeed, geographical reasons, reasons
8 of equipment and climate and logistics and so on, things
9 you will know about more than I do.

10 Why did the final switch happen quite as late as
11 January?

12 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Although the final switch did
13 happen around mid-January, really our minds in terms of
14 planning and thinking about it and looking at all the
15 potential pitfalls or difficulties or whatever had
16 started, as you say, probably as far back as October; but
17 during the course of December we really thought that was
18 possibly where we were going to finish up.

19 We could afford to do - to run both plans, if you
20 like, simultaneously, although the logistics of going south
21 were going to present more problems. Part of the
22 indication we were getting in December was if we were
23 going to switch south the Americans would give us a huge
24 amount of help with regards to making room in
25 Kuwait and also helping with logistics support and so

1 forth. So that removed quite a large element of worry,
2 if you like, about how we were actually going to manage
3 that particular option. So we could afford to take the
4 decision quite late. It wasn't starting with a fresh
5 plan in the middle of January. The southern plan was
6 pretty well developed, in fact almost entirely developed, by
then.

7 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Thank you. I will ask Baroness Prashar
8 to pick up the questions. Usha.

9 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Lord Boyce, we mentioned earlier
10 that the FCO had been content to let the MoD lead on
11 engaging the Pentagon in planning for Iraq. You will
12 notice that we have today published some declassified
13 documents which indicate that the US believed as early
14 as May 2002 that the UK was prepared to offer
15 an armoured division for operations against Iraq, the
16 offer having been made by a UK officer.

17 David Manning had been told this on a visit to
18 Washington and the Defence Secretary appears to have
19 been concerned that the USA might have been given
20 a formal indication of the UK's likely commitment that
21 Ministers had approved at this time.

22 Were you concerned at that a premature offer like this
23 could undermine any subsequent impact and
24 influence if the UK did subsequently did formally offer
25 a division to the USA?

1 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, I read some of the evidence
2 of people saying this was happening. Let me absolutely
3 assure you that no-one was authorised to make such
4 an offer. In fact, quite the contrary. I was
5 painstaking, both myself and also in telling all my
6 subordinates dealing with the Americans, there was no
7 offer to be put on the table about what the British
8 contribution as far as land forces might be at all. We
9 made a tentative -- of course, everything was always anyway
10 caveated by provided we had the right sort of legal and
11 parliamentary permission anyway, but right up until the
12 autumn our offer was in place -- the package 2 which the
13 panel is familiar with, the maritime and air components,
14 that we were absolutely not able to tell the Americans
15 that we could offer a division at any time. All my
16 meetings with the Americans, and indeed those of my
17 subordinates with the Americans, were always caveated in
18 that particular way.

19 Where this particular idea that a division was on the table
came
20 from I have absolutely no idea. Whether the Americans
21 jumped to that conclusion because we provided a division
22 in 1991 during Desert Storm, which I suspect could be
23 the case, I don't know; but no-one had that authority to
24 make the offer to the Americans down the MoD chain. If
25 someone made it, I don't know -- if you can give me

1 a name, fine -- as far as I know I haven't been given
2 a name or tracked down this person who was supposed to
3 have said this -- certainly I am not aware of anybody.
4 When this blew up in the MoD in the summer we were
5 unable to find out who this person was. So I don't
6 believe there was such a person. I think it was
7 an assumption that was made "Oh, you will do what you
8 did before when we went into Iraq. We can expect
9 a division, can't we?" And that rhetorical question was
10 never answered and that was then an assumption.

11 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So your understanding is that this
12 was an impression or an assumption made by the Americans
13 based on what had happened in the Gulf war?

14 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: That's my guess. That's pure
15 speculation. They were given no reason or comfort in
16 that area by any person with any authority to do so.

17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: We have also published today
18 a document that makes clear that when UK was formally
19 invited into US planning you made very clear to Generals
20 Myers and Franks that this was on the basis that no
21 political decision had yet had been made as to UK's
22 involvement in military action.

23 What action did you take to reinforce this message
24 through the UK chain of command to ensure that orders
25 were dealing with USA counterparts and the MoD staff

1 operated within the political instructions when
2 discussing the potential UK force packages?

3 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think it would have definitely
4 been mentioned in Chiefs of Staffs meetings, at Op COS
5 meetings. I would have mentioned it bilaterally with
6 all the military people who were interacting with senior
7 Americans, such as the Chief of Joint Operations,
8 General Pigott, the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff for
9 Commitments, my own -- the Chiefs of Staff of the Navy,
10 Army and Air Force. It was made absolutely clear that every
11 time we spoke to the Americans that no commitment was
12 guaranteed until a political tick had been received.

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: From your point of view you think
14 the message was very clear to all those dealing with --

15 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Absolutely and I think I said in my
16 previous evidence all of us, as I say, engaging with the
17 Americans kept on saying this. The reaction of the
18 Americans was always "Yes, I hear what you say but come
19 the day, we know you will be there", until right towards
20 the end.

21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But there is some further
22 declassified exchanges between the MoD and Sir David
23 Manning that indicate that in September 2002 at
24 a CentCom planning conference the MoD representative
25 appears to have offered the USA a more forward leaning

1 position on the size of the UK's possible contribution
2 than Number 10 had authorised. Were you aware of this at
3 the time?

4 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: What contribution was this?

5 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: This is in September 2002?

6 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: It was about the size of the UK.

7 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: About the size of the UK's
8 contribution.

9 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Package 2 was on the table then.
10 No authorisation had been given by the Prime Minister or
11 Defence Secretary to say that we could offer anything
12 more than that. In fact, we were explicitly not saying
13 that we were prepared to make available any land
14 commitment, let alone a division commitment.

15 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So how would the MoD representative
16 have sort of offered a more forward leaning position on
17 the size of --

18 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I am not sure. Which MoD
19 representatives are these?

20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: This is something which was Manning
21 to Watkins:

22 "The Prime Minister has agreed that we should
23 present package 2 as a potential UK contribution at
24 a CentCom planning conference this week. The Prime
25 Minister does not want us to make any suggestion at this

1 stage that we might be able to offer a major
2 contribution -- land contribution to a force in Iraq,
3 and separately and heavily caveated we have indicated to
4 CentCom that we are still considering a land option."

5 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: That's exactly right.

6 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: That's exactly what happened?

7 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Of course, we had to consider what
8 might happen if we had to produce a land option, but it
9 wasn't something that was proposed to the Americans at
10 that particular stage. I think the authorisation didn't
11 come through for that until the end of October.

12 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: October.

13 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Can we turn on to the switch to the south
14 option. I will ask Sir Lawrence to pick this up one.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you. When you saw that things
16 were moving from the north to the south, what sort of
17 assessments did you make of particular risks and
18 liabilities for the UK that could result from that
19 switch?

20 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Timing would have been one. You
21 know, obviously our transit to theatre if you
22 like, was going to take slightly longer. There was
23 the -- there was a risk of the actual logistic effort
24 but that was mitigated by the fact the Americans were
25 going to help us. There was the fact we were going to

1 be going into a more desert area rather than the area in
2 the north and therefore that requires desertification of
3 some of the kit. So that required some effort there. But
4 the Americans, as I say, were particularly helpful in
5 making room for us in Kuwait and the size of Kuwait as
6 a launch pad, if you like. It is a small country and
7 there is a large number of military forces piling
8 through it, it would stretch their capacity to look
9 after us. As I said, the Americans were extremely
10 accommodating in making all those aspects a lot easier.

11 The desertification of tanks, for example, was one
12 which required some fast footwork to make sure we got
13 the right sort of kit into theatre to modify the tanks
14 sufficiently in terms of air-conditioning and sand
15 protection. That was always a rather tightly drawn
16 thing -- tightly run requirement in order to make sure
17 we would be ready in time for when the engagement went
18 ahead.

19 We had already made quite a substantial effort about going
for 20 the southern option already. So some of
21 the non-risks or de-risking, if you like, was that it was
22 going to mean we would be working alongside our
23 Amphibious Task Group, which was going to be entering,
24 the battle plan had them coming, through the Al Faw peninsula
which
25 meant we were working closely alongside them, which

1 could be convenient in some ways for the logistics
2 supply. We wouldn't have to be running the British
3 logistics in through the north and through the south. We could
4 concentrate bringing them through the south which we
5 then serviced both the Commandos and the UK land forces
6 as well. So that was a help, if you like, and, of
7 course, the other aspects of support to those units
8 would all be fed through the south rather than splitting
9 out either side of Iraq. So, whatever risks there were
10 in switching to the south, in many senses were outweighed
11 by some of the benefits, if you like, in making the
12 switch.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What about the assessment of what
14 you were likely to face when you got there? I just note
15 that JIC didn't produce an assessment on southern Iraq
16 until February 2003. Obviously a decision had been
17 taken. I am curious as to what sort of intelligence you
18 had on what you were likely to face?

19 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: In terms of the Iraqi defences and forces
and so
20 forth?

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And I guess the --

22 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I don't think we thought there was
23 going to be anything significantly more challenging in terms of
that -
24 the Iraqi fighting capability was not going to be
25 s more challenging -- any more challenging

1 than that in the north. I don't remember, I am afraid,
2 what the quantum of the Iraqi divisions were and whether
3 they were -- which were revolutionary guards, which were
4 the slightly higher quality ones and the rest. What
5 going into the south did -- as the battle plans started
6 to develop, one of the advantages appeared to us in
7 going in through the south was that we were to be given
8 an area of operations which would be ours to look after,
9 which would be in a sense neater as an option than
10 working alongside 4th Infantry Division which would be
11 the case having come in from the north. So that in
12 a sense was going to make it a cleaner operation for us.

13 Our job, of course, as we saw it, was going to be to
14 fix the Iraqi or defeat the Iraqi divisions in the south
15 to make sure the Americans had untrammelled progress
16 towards the north without having to worry about their
17 rear or their flank as they moved towards Baghdad. That
18 gave us a very clear mission aim as well.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I suppose one of the aspects that is
20 relevant in terms of the point you just made in terms of
21 this would be an area we would be looking after is just
22 a sense of the political and social composition of the
23 region and the likely issues you might face. Did you
24 have much work done on that?

25 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Our feeling was that actually it might be

in

1 a sense an easier place to deal with than the north, or
2 further north I mean, because the Shia/Sunni mix in the
3 south was that the vast majority of the people in the south
4 were Shia as opposed to the more heavy or original mix of
5 Sunnis further north where we thought there would be
6 problems between the Sunnis and Shia once the country --
7 once we got past war end. Therefore, we were dealing
8 with one sector which hopefully would be working
9 together on-side and would be cooperative with us as we
10 tried to sort of regenerate the country after the
11 fighting was over.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So the general presumption was that
13 the Shia would be more at least supportive?

14 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes, and we wouldn't have a lot of
15 Iraqi internecine warfare going to manage as well
16 between two different sects, if you like.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You mentioned also the questions of
18 timing. Now clear advice to the Ministers during the
19 planning process of 2002 was for a large scale
20 operation, six months preparation and warning time was
21 needed to prepare the force, and nine months would have
22 been the optimum. In the end you got a lot less than
23 that. What were the sort of problems that arose because
24 of that?

25 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Because of the fact we only had

1 a short time to plan it?

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes.

3 LORD WILSON: Well, it meant that everything was being done
4 at a rush. It meant that some final -- the achievement
5 of some aspects of the full operational capability
6 weren't achieved until literally the nth hour. That in itself
7 would have put pressure on the people who were going in
8 because it meant they wanted to get to the start line in
9 time. I don't believe at the end of the day that
10 anybody was -- that our capability at the end of the day
11 was in any sense seriously degraded by that, but
12 nonetheless it did make it a tight run thing.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I want to ask you a few more
14 questions about that soon.

15 Can I just ask -- I am interested why there is
16 advocacy of a larger package when there is these risks,
17 logistical risks still apply. You have already
18 mentioned that the air and sea components were a sort of
19 accepted part of the UK contribution really from almost
20 as soon as connections were made with the Americans that
21 was the case. So the issue was always about the land
22 component.

23 So we see from the papers -- were the chiefs pushing
24 quite so hard on the land component?

25 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: If we were going to make

1 a contribution -- well, I think one of our concerns was
2 if we didn't produce a land component at all, we could
3 always be -- we judged that we would almost certainly be
4 asked to produce a sizeable land component for the phase
5 once the fighting had finished, once the country had
6 been defeated. Our feeling was that to be engaged in
7 the actual fighting part of it would at least let us to
8 take some charge of our end of the territory when it
9 came down to doing what became known at Phase IV
10 afterwards.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I stop you at that point because
12 it is an interesting point. Just to be clear what you
13 are saying, you are saying not that you didn't assume
14 anyway that you would be involved substantially in the
15 aftermath. It was where you would be involved in the
16 aftermath?

17 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think that we -- absolutely, yes.
18 We couldn't see how we would not be involved in the
19 aftermath, particularly because we had been involved in
20 the fighting with the other two phases. We just
21 imagined that there would be a high expectation we would
22 be asked to contribute in the regeneration and
23 reconstruction.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Your concern is if you were not
25 engaged in the Phase III, as it were, you might find

1 yourself involved in Phase IV in some inappropriate
2 place?

3 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: We thought that would certainly
4 happen, yes.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Sorry. I interrupted you. You were
6 giving other reasons why you pushed for the large force?

7 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: As far as the size of force was
8 concerned, the absolute minimum size force would be need
9 to be at sort of brigade level. Anything smaller than
10 that doesn't particularly work in terms of integrating
11 with another formation such as an American division. If
12 we were to make that brigade really useful to the
13 Americans, it would probably need to have a divisional
14 headquarters looking after it to make sure that -- to
15 get it all right, all the right enablers in terms of permanent -
16 in terms of support that would make it actually viable
17 to be able to stand on its own, if you like. It is not
18 a huge move then anyway to move from that into
19 a division minus, which is what we actually finished up
20 with. As it happens, it was a good decision to make so
21 far as the coalition effort was concerned, because the
22 Americans were under-resourced to go in from the
23 south -- to start the invasion of Iraq, because, as we
24 all know, of course, they failed to get permission to
25 invade from the north from the Turks.

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I just put to you two quotes,
2 two memoirs that suggested another reason as well. The
3 first is from Tony Blair's memoir: "Mike Boyce was clear
4 that the optimum from the British perspective was
5 package 3."

6 That's the one with the armed forces:

7 "He said he would have a real problem with the army
8 if they were not fully involved and such involvement
9 alone gave us far greater influence in shaping US
10 thinking. This was also my own instinct."

11 That's his quote. Then Jonathan Powell in his book
12 "The New Machiavellian" says:

13 "In the case of Iraq 2002 the Chief of Defence Staff
14 told us that the forces wanted to participate on the
15 ground of division strength with their own command and
16 that it would damage morale if they were restricted to a
17 mere supporting role from sea and air while the
18 Americans and others carried out the ground campaign.
19 Indeed, the army welcomed the original plan to invade
20 Iraq from Turkey. Talking about Tikrit Saddam's
21 heartland rather than the easier target of Basra."

22 Can you comment on those?

23 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: There are two points there. One is
24 about the Army's feeling about whether they should be
25 involved or not and the other is the influence, two

1 issues there.

2 So far as the Army wanting to get involved from what
3 you just said there, of course the Army would want to be
4 engaged in a war. Remembering where they were at the
5 particular time, they were involved with firefighting.
6 18,000 or so people were being used because the
7 government could not cope with the firefighter strikes.
8 Had they continued to do that when everybody else went
9 to war you can imagine how they would have felt. They
10 are trained to fight. They are the most professional
11 army in the world. They would be sitting around and
12 hosing down houses while the Marines, the Navy and Air
13 Force would be busy. What do you think they would
14 think? They would be disappointed they weren't
15 involved. So yes. It would have been untruthful of me
16 not to represent that to the Prime Minister which I did.

17 It was not a factor of saying if you don't do this
18 the Army are going mutiny or to want to go home or whatever. Of
19 course not. It would be wrong not to have apprised him
20 of the fact that the Army would be dismayed if they
21 weren't engaged on a -- particularly having been as
22 successful as they had been during Desert Storm in 1991.

23 So far as influence is concerned, I think that there
24 is no doubt in my mind anyway that to produce something
25 of a divisional size force rather than brigade size

1 force would give us influence with the Americans in what
2 was going on, not just in Iraq but also in other
3 relationships as well. I know there have been
4 discussion about other people giving evidence and indeed
5 myself and I think irrespective of what other people
6 have said, I believe we did have influence. It forced
7 the Americans to go down the UN route, if you like, the
8 high politico strategic level. It certainly involved
9 quite a lot of - at the tactical level, quite a lot of
10 shaping of tactics which we were able to influence and
11 which I can't give you the detail of. I actually know
12 that a number of our commanders who were highly
13 respected - at quite a junior level - would get traction in
14 a way in which they would not have done if we had not
15 had a divisional size contribution.

16 The whole aspect of how the war should be conducted
17 in terms of targeting. We had a differing view from the
18 Americans and the Americans came more to our way in
19 terms of the proportionality, legality, collateral
20 damage and all those sorts of things. We shaped quite
21 a lot of the American thinking in terms of how one
22 should actually not trash the joint and try to leave
23 something at the end for us to regenerate from; which
24 was very much - --- the view of some Americans was you reduce it
rubble
25 and sort it out afterwards. That was not our view.

1 The way we actually managed Al-Zubayr and Basra are good
2 demonstrations of that.

3 So, contrary to what some people said earlier I
4 absolutely disagree with that. I think it had a lot of
5 influence. It allowed me to pick up the phone every day
6 to talk to General Myers or General Franks. They
7 wouldn't pick up the phone necessarily to the Chiefs of
8 Defence Staff of other countries that weren't involved
9 at all or which had very light contributions.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you. You mentioned the
11 firemen's strike and Operation Fresco. Now Ministers
12 were advised in the summer of 2002 that these
13 commitments meant that it would not be possible to
14 generate a large scale land component because of all
15 these other substantial problems as well, Afghanistan
16 and so on. By October the Prime Minister was being
17 advised that a large scale land commitment was possible.
18 How had this been managed, because the issue had not
19 gone away.

20 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: We were having to switch forces
21 around to get our high readiness battle ready force out
22 of the firefighting routine, draw more on the Navy and
23 Air Force. The Navy and Air Force were involved in the
24 Fresco operation as well; to draw more on them as well,
25 and to shuffle the numbers to make sure we could free up

1 those who were capable in terms of readiness, recent
2 training and so forth. They could be freed up from
3 firefighting tasks to get themselves ready for a war fighting
task.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Now once in October you said it
5 seemed likely there was going to be a large land
6 component. By the time the Defence Secretary announced
7 the package on 20th January 2003 it was much larger than
8 had been intended in October. Fry told us over time the
9 scale of ambition got larger and larger.

10 Why did this happen? You had a force larger than
11 the package deployed in 1991, for example?

12 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I can't answer that question.

13 I can't remember what happened for 1991 for
14 a start - in terms of size I mean. The package was being
15 shaped to deal with the task we thought we might
16 encounter. Of course in October they are still looking
17 at the Northern option anyway and at that time, by sort
18 of late October, we were going to embed ourselves with 4
19 Infantry Division and the force was being developed to
20 make sure we could actually complement what their battle
21 plan was. That was the reason.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thanks. Was a manpower cap ever
23 placed on the size of the force by Ministers?

24 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: There probably was later on.

25 Ministers got obsessed by more than one person -- any

1 one single person going in let alone troops, battalions
2 or brigades. I don't recall in October there being
3 a manpower cap per se.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Later on?

5 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Later on as they became obsessive,
6 if you wanted to send out more than one person you
7 needed Ministerial approval to do it?

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Why was that?

9 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I suspect it was political. We
10 said there were 350 people out, 351 is not what we told
11 everybody, therefore we are misleading Parliament. We
12 need to get approval first. It certainly wasn't
13 military that was for sure.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You found this frustrating?

15 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes, yes. One didn't have
16 flexibility. One had to grind one's way through the
17 Ministerial approval process to do very small alterations in
18 terms of manpower, feet on the ground type questions.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The Prime Minister of the time told
20 us last week that every time he was asked for something
21 by the military, he gave it to them. Did you ask the
22 Prime Minister for relaxation on --

23 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: That I had carte blanche to do what
24 I wanted to do? I wouldn't have been given it I am sure
25 if I had done so. That was a process. It was not

1 something -- it was frustrating. It wasn't actually
2 stopping me doing things. Anyway, what the Prime
3 Minister necessarily said if everybody came to him and
4 asked him to do something, yes, I know he says that; and
5 actually getting it delivered is quite a different
6 matter altogether. One has to cascade it out of his
7 office into whoever's relevant office it was, whether it
8 was the Chancellor's or Foreign Secretary's or whatever.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You agreeing something you thought
10 with the Prime Minister and then found it very difficult
11 to extract it?

12 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Absolutely, yes.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can you give us some examples?

14 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Particularly on the money side.
15 Don't worry. You can have whatever money you want. Go
16 and see the Chancellor. Then a brick wall there. That's
17 defence in the round, not talking about this operation.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes, we need to distinguish between
19 defence in general and the specifics of this
20 operation. Was there anything in particular to Iraq of
21 that sort that you --

22 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: We had caps and restrictions the
23 whole time which we then had to break through in order
24 to free up, for example, on the subject of urgent
25 operational requirements, UORs, there was a cap of

1 £150 million to start of with. So that restricted, you
2 know drawing money out of the Treasury is like getting
3 blood out of a stone anyway. That just provided another
4 impediment to fast process.

5 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Just to observe if I can cut in on the
6 manpower cap, we have not found any written record of a
7 manpower cap. I wonder how it would be imposed by the
8 Secretary of State for Defence at a Ministerial level?

9 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Probably. It wouldn't be a Prime
10 Minister issue. As I say, I don't remember a manpower
11 cap being imposed during the planning time.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So it's coming in later on and
13 there's concern about having stated Members to
14 Parliament, not misleading Parliament on this issue?

15 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Again on numbers questions, how much
17 was the number of troops you wanted there based on
18 an assessment of what you might be facing in Phase IV?

19 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, again thank you for
20 triggering that particular thought in my mind. Of course,
another
21 reason for having a divisional sized force is that you
22 might be able to win the battle with a lean, mean force
23 but winning the regeneration or restructuring afterwards
24 inevitably does require a lot of people on the ground
25 moving around and where a hi-tech fighting capability

1 doesn't actually help you. You actually have to have
2 bodies and a divisional sized force also seemed to be
3 a sensible sized force to cope with the restructuring
4 once the fighting was over in the region in which we were
5 operating, ie the south province.

6 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Thanks. Let's turn on to now to one or
7 two questions on equipment readiness. Martin, would you
8 like that take that up.

9 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Yes. I would like to just ask you
10 about the question of asset tracking that was raised by
11 a number of earlier witnesses.

12 Exercise Saif Sareea has been highlighted as being
13 of considerable use in assisting operations in desert
14 conditions. One of the major lessons from Saif Sareea
15 was the need for an advanced asset tracking system.

16 Speaking of the invasion of Iraq General Reith told us:

17 "There wasn't a shortage of equipment in the end.

18 What there was was an inability to track it. We knew it
19 was in theatre but some of it we couldn't find."

20 Can you tell us after Saif Sareea what action you
21 were able to direct to be taken to ensure that this
22 problem of asset tracking was addressed?

23 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: As you say, Saif Sareea did
24 identify the problem and I think Saif Sareea took place
25 in the summer of 2001. Is that right? I can't

1 correctly say. It was identified as a shortcoming. The
2 technology to produce an adequate tracking system was
3 then now set in hand. We are now talking about in 2002
4 and the time it takes to get the R&D and so forth to
5 produce a tracking system simply hadn't developed. It
6 was absolutely correct that a lot of our stores problems
7 in theatre come 2003 were as a result of poor asset
8 tracking - and I wonder what the situation is today if we
9 were to go and ask. It is probably embarrassing to find
10 the answer I think.

11 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Were Ministers aware of the risks
12 involved?

13 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: About the risk about not having
14 asset tracking? I don't know. I don't know the answer
15 to that. I mean, we were conscious of the problem and
16 so I am sure that the Chief of the Logistics organisation --
17 the Chief of Defence Logistics - would have been trying to
18 do the best he could, but he wouldn't have had the
19 technology you should really have in place in that
20 timescale; and were Ministers apprised that we hadn't
21 put in some excellent, guaranteed system? I don't know.
22 I can't recall.

23 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: There simply hadn't been time since
24 Saif Sareea?

25 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: No, to develop that particular

1 lesson, or rather to produce the technology to produce the kit
2 to do the asset tracking.

3 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Thank you. Can I turn to Lawrence?

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just on that the problem had come up
5 in Desert Storm. It wasn't a new problem. Asset
6 tracking was one of the lessons from 1991. Why do you
7 think it hadn't been addressed effectively since then?

8 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Money I should think. That's why
9 I asked. Perhaps one should ask the question whether we
10 have an asset tracking system today.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: We have looked at the point. Do you
12 think this is one of those issues that falls through the
13 cracks, because a single service doesn't have
14 a particular commitment to it? It is not a high
15 priority item?

16 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: That's not supposed to be how it
17 works. That's why we have a try service or centralised
18 logistics organisation, if you like. So that shouldn't
19 be a reason for a single service not having -- this
20 would come under the defence logistics budget and would
21 either be scratched out for savings measure as not affordable or
rather it
22 gets pushed to the right.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It is the role of champions for
24 a lot of these programmes?

25 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: The champion would be the defence

1 logistics. It would be very much within his budget
2 area, if you like. But reprofiling it, I imagine it is
3 probably still going on today. Perhaps that's an unkind
4 comment. I don't know.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just on a couple of other issues
6 which you alluded to earlier in terms of the actual
7 readiness of forces as the war started, which are body
8 armour and NBC. When you visited UK forces in Kuwait
9 before the invasion in March were you given indications
10 by any commanders or officers you spoke to that they
11 were lacking particular items of equipment such as body
12 armour and ammunition or the urgent operational
13 requirements couldn't be located?

14 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: No. But the one area of equipment
15 which did give me concern was our ability to cope with
16 any biological or chemical threat and therefore the
17 right kit for that, which is basically the suit you
18 wear, the protection equipment you wear, and also a gas
19 mask. That's something which did trouble me. That was
20 our sort of worst case scenario - once we went over the
21 line, of having chemical or biological weapons thrown at
22 us; and a lot of effort was put into making sure those
23 who would be going in the leading echelons did have the right
IPE, the
24 right sort of protective equipment, and everybody had
25 their gas mask checked which at the time I went out was

1 not particularly -- was a shortfall. However, by the
2 time 19th March came, I think just about everybody --
3 there was a very, very small percentage, less than 1% of
4 people who had not been through a chamber and made sure
5 their mask worked correctly. Everybody had the
6 protection equipment even if it wasn't necessarily
7 completely in date. It was certainly usable.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: At the Chief of Staff meeting on
9 19th March it was recorded:

10 "Only 3% of respirators had been checked, the issue
11 having been overtaken by events."

12 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think if you read on I understand
13 by the time we actually went over, 0.5 had not been.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That was 19th March.

15 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, by -- my recollection is not
16 the same as that. I think that bit of paper that you
17 have there, and I would have to refer to it, does it not
18 go on to say that later on about 0.5% had not been
19 checked?

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: We will have to check that.

21 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I have another piece of paper that
22 says that anyway.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think this is quite -- we will
24 check it and come back to it. It is obviously quite
25 an important issue. Certainly troops we have spoken to

1 didn't seem to feel they had all the kit they needed.

2 Now on the body armour issue, were you aware that
3 commanders had taken the decision to redistribute body
4 armour because sufficient amounts couldn't be located in
5 theatre?

6 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: No. My understanding was everybody
7 had body armour. Whether there was a sufficient number
8 of enhanced body armour kits was something which didn't
9 percolate out -- and the need to redistribute such that
10 appeared in theatre wasn't something which percolated up
11 to the Chiefs of Staff. It was something done on the
12 ground by the commanders on the ground to make sure that,
13 because the delay of getting some of the enhanced --
14 sufficient numbers of enhanced body armour kits into
15 theatre, that it was distributed amongst the leading
16 echelon troops.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I mean, one of the issues is there
18 does appear to be a disconnect in the chain of command
19 between some of the concerns that were still in theatre
20 and at your level when you tell the Secretary of Defence
21 that you are ready to go, you seem to be unaware of
22 these issues that are bothering people in Kuwait. Is
23 that fair?

24 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes, but I think one -- it's fair
25 comment in sort of black and white terms. If I were to

1 try to put a colour in it, in my 42 years in the service
2 many, the vast majority, of those years in operational
3 commands in one sort or another, either in command or in
4 charge of a unit or in charge of a force, I don't
5 suppose there was a single day where there were not
6 defects in any of those commands. A commander's job is
7 to judge whether those defects or shortfalls in
8 equipment terms are ones which prevent him from carrying
9 out his mission. Can he move? Is it safe to operate
10 it? Can he move, and can he fight and win? That's
11 happening the whole time, 24 hours a day as things fall
12 over or a store or piece of kit does not arrive or
13 whatever. One relies on the local commander, the person
14 in charge of his battalion or ship or squadron to decide
15 when he has got to a point where he decides that the
16 shortage is something he can't cope with to deliver
17 either safety, maneuverability or fighting capability. Then
18 he will say "I have to stop for one of these three
19 reasons". So the whole time you are making adjustments
20 and doing patch-ups to work around it or whatever.

21 So I guess at that particular time the commanders on
22 the ground who were getting ready for the invasion felt
23 that they were -- they had operational capability to do
24 what they needed, because they were able to distribute
25 what they had to those troops they thought they needed

1 to deliver the end result they were required to.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There's issues and issues here.

3 There is things that you can cope with and get round,

4 but I would have thought particularly on the chemical,

5 and biological weapons issue, given this is why we were

6 there in the first place, and at the time it was assumed

7 the Iraqis both had the stuff and might use it, we have

8 already published a declassified JIC assessment of 19th

9 February which stated:

10 "Southern Iraq is the most likely area for the first

11 use of CBW against both coalition forces and the

12 population."

13 That area would be one in particular where you would

14 want to be pretty sure the troops were prepared?

15 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Indeed. That's why I go back to look at my

16 documentation. I thought by the time 19th or 20th March

17 came that we had a satisfactory level of kitting out of

18 gas masks and IPE.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: That's something we need to check.

20 Thank you.

21 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Thank you. I think we will take a break

22 in a few minutes but I would just like to pick up the

23 theme that Sir Lawrence has been addressing in a general

24 way, understanding that what is involved here is

25 a professional judgment, not a pursuit of perfection,

1 which is unattainable.

2 We published a number of documents and extracts
3 about the reporting of equipment readiness to Defence
4 Ministers in the run-up to the invasion and you have
5 told us in your statement how the process works with
6 information coming up through the chain of command, then
7 on to Defence Ministers.

8 I am sure you were, but can I just check whether you
9 were aware that Lord Bach as Minister for Defence
10 Procurement was expressing his concerns at the time
11 about quality and accuracy of information? Were you
12 aware and were his expectations realistic or were they,
13 as it were, too perfectionist?

14 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Sorry. What exactly did Lord
15 Bach -- what was his exact concerns?

16 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: He expressed concerns about the quality
17 and accuracy of information being provided. This is
18 before the actual invasion -- about the arrival of
19 equipment in the theatre of operations.

20 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I am afraid I can't remember.

21 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: You are at the top of the chain of
22 command looking down as stuff is coming up about this.
23 Ultimately the professional judgment is one you have to
24 make in that role and you were satisfied, I take it,
25 that you were getting sufficiently accurate and

1 up-to-date information up through the chain of command,
2 whereas Lord Bach was saying "Can't we go straight down
3 to theatre and hear it at first-hand". He was being
4 advised strongly "No, that doesn't work"?

5 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, it's not how we tend to do things
6 in the British armed forces. That's not meant to be
7 a disparaging comment in regard to anyone else. Our mission
command
8 system and the training that we put our people through
9 is such that commanders at every level are delegated
10 certain responsibilities and you don't go below that
11 command level to ask a individuals whether they are
12 satisfied whether their leaders are actually doing the
13 job properly and reporting it correctly. You rely on
14 them through the training you have given them to give
15 you an accurate assessment of what in this particular
16 case their operational capability is, and that hopefully
17 will be passed up through the command chain; and that if there
18 is a problem, it will get to you.

19 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: It would help us to get our bearings on
20 the issue about the judgment about readiness in the
21 equipment sphere. We have seen several times and you
22 have used it in your own statement the phrase
23 "showstoppers". There were not any actual showstoppers.
24 There were the natural imperfections of human affairs
25 but nothing that was a showstopper. Is it possible to

1 put your finger on what could have been a showstopper in
2 the situation in Iraq?

3 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I suppose if there had been -- well
4 to come back to the chemical warfare stuff, if there had
5 been a serious shortfall such that the leading echelons
6 couldn't be properly equipped or their gas masks did not
7 work for whatever reason, then that would have been
8 something that would have caused us quite an impediment.
9 If the tanks had not been able to get their air
10 conditioning units on top sorted out in time, that would
11 have made fighting in those things extremely difficult
12 and therefore unwise and therefore a delay might have to
13 be sought or an alternative.

14 If you have got a -- if you were struck by some
15 unknown -- some malignant disease or something and half
16 your troops were taken out with some sickness, that
17 would be a showstopper. So it can be a variety of
18 things.

19 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Yes. When Tony Blair gave us evidence
20 first time around, he said and I am quoting:

21 "It was very important one of these issues to do
22 with logistics, and there is an expertise that the Army
23 has on this. I needed to know from them that they could
24 do it and they would be ready. That's what they assured
25 me and they were."

1 We know from a Number 10 note that you gave the
2 Prime Minister an assurance on 13th March that the armed
3 forces faced no serious equipment problems. This
4 assessment is the result of all the stuff coming up
5 through the chain of command and from the logistics
6 organisation. Is there anything else that comes into
7 the final assessment?

8 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: There are actually two channels
9 into the Chiefs of Staff or to myself, if you like, to
10 make that judgment. There is the route -- there is the
11 official route, if you like, with first of all the Chief
12 of Defence Logistics reporting on how his organisation is,
13 and the Chief of Joint Operations speaking to his own
14 command chain; but, if you like, a double backing or
15 double checking what's going on is being conducted by
16 the single services themselves, who although they have
17 handed over their forces to the Chief of Joint
18 Operations to utilise and conduct the operations, they
19 have a paternal interest in how their army, Navy or Air
20 Force units are -- the readiness that they are achieving
21 and whether everything is all right as far as they are
22 concerned.

23 So, if you like, there's a double banking going on,
24 which does provide a sort of a cover or a long stop, if
25 you like, for what you are hearing up the CJO chain or

1 CDL chain.

2 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Just a final point and then we will
3 break. The Prime Minister, as he said in the quote I
4 have just read out, was fully satisfied with what not
5 only the army could do but was ready to do and did do.

6 Lord Bach with a bit of contrast was not himself
7 fully satisfied that the readiness assessment was one
8 that he could rely on and just take for granted. Am I
9 right to think what you have told us is that there is
10 a discipline system of processes underlying the ultimate
11 judgment. It is not just "Well I think it is going to
12 be okay on the day"?

13 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: No. You are correct. I mean,
14 there is a system, and I can't tell you what check off
15 lists there are going up, but there will be various
16 levels as you go up where commanders at each level are
17 satisfying themselves that their subordinate commands
18 are ready to deal with was required.

19 As far as Lord Bach is concerned, as you say, he was
20 also working with the Vice Chief of Defence Staff on the
21 matter of equipment and UORs and so forth. He sat in on
22 the Ministerial meetings which we had very regularly
23 leading up to 19th March, and if he wanted to make his
24 concerns known as he thought something was
25 a showstopper, he would have the opportunity to do so.

1 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Right. Let's take a short break now and
2 come back and talk about the military timetable.

3 (A short break)

4 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Chairman, if I could just add
5 a couple of helpful comments which I have done a little
6 bit of research on?

7 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Of course.

8 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: First of all your questions about
9 readiness and so forth, one supplementary thought to
10 that. It comes back to my point about the back marking
11 or long stopping done by the single services. I can
12 just give an example. It may help to clarify what I was
13 talking about. I remember reading in my -- refreshing of my
14 mind looking through the papers. I saw a note written
15 to me by the then Chief of the General Staff on 10th
16 March 2003, because he had just been out to theatre
17 where you can be absolutely certain he would have
18 visited the chain of command down to the most junior
19 person and various people up. He concludes by saying:

20 "The British forces are prepared for a wide range of
21 war fighting and aftermath tasks and are ready to deliver
22 decisive combat power."

23 So -- does that help? So as well as the sort of
24 official chain is the thing, you have a single service
25 very senior officer going down there who will speak to

1 the captain or the sergeant as well as to the general.
2 So it is not just people being cut out of any
3 opportunity to communicate. They will have actually had
4 an opportunity to speak to him or indeed, equally
5 importantly, his MA who is with him on the side, if they didn't
6 feel like talking to the general. That was one point.

7 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Thank you. That's helpful.

8 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: If I can just come back to
9 Sir Lawrence, I was groping around trying to think of
10 some figures for the equipment to deal with preparation
11 for chemical and biological. The two bits of paper I
12 have been able to find quickly is an extract from
13 a minute on 10th March from Lord Bach's office to say
14 that:

15 "By 17th March all personnel will have their optimum
16 fit of respirator. The testing was the most advanced in
17 the world. All personnel have successfully been through
18 the CS gas chamber in their respirator."

19 So that's really -- there is a report from the Vice
20 Chief Defence of Staff in his --

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I am not sure that came over very
22 clearly.

23 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I will say it again. I have been
24 told off for not speaking loudly enough.

25 I was just saying on 10th March there was a note

1 from Lord Bach's office about respirators saying it was
2 a better position than we thought, that:

3 "By 17th March all personnel would have their
4 optimum fit of respirator. The testing was the most
5 advanced in the world. All personnel have successfully
6 been through the CS gas chamber in their respirator",
7 where you actually walk through to make sure it is
8 working.

9 I notice that the then Vice Chief of Defence Staff,
10 Air Chief Marshal Bagnall, in his evidence says only
11 0.5% of personnel tested did not have a perfect fit by
12 19th March. So that's where I was getting my figure
13 from.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I think we will have a look at those
15 --

16 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Thank you for that.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- and check those.

18 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Lawrence, over to you.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEMAN: Just you mentioned the report of Mike
20 Jackson's visit to Kuwait, which was dated 10th March.
21 We have declassified an extract from that which says, if
22 I can quote to you:

23 "The introduction of resource accounting has created
24 an imperative to drive down stock holdings. As a result
25 in the name of accounting orthodoxy we lack basic items

1 such as desert clothing. I am unsure whether the cost
2 of storing such items would really have been more than
3 the inflated price we have no doubt paid by procurement
4 under ULR action, but I am certain as to the negative
5 impact and the moral component that failure to provide
6 these items has had ...", and it goes on to say a few
7 more things.

8 Was that a common problem, that the sort of just in
9 time logistics meant that there weren't sufficient
10 items?

11 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes. I mean, I was going to raise
12 this at the end, Chairman, under lessons, and
13 I can probably deal with it now, but certainly
14 just enough just in time, in my mind is complete... --
15 is a perilous area. It was adopted for reasons of
16 accrual accounting, for one of the reasons. Another was
17 to reduce stock on shelves, basically, and I believe that
18 it plays havoc with trying to meet defence planning
19 assumptions. It is never just enough and it is never
20 just in time when the actual crunch really comes, and
21 I can wax more lyrical about that later on under
22 lessons, if you like.

23 So I agree with his observation. In the context of
24 this business about desert clothing, it is true that on
25 19th March -- and I don't know what the quantity is --

1 but certainly a large number of troops had to wear their
2 combat service 95; in other words, the green as opposed
3 to desert camouflage kit. It didn't affect their
4 ability to fight actually at that time of the year,
5 because it wasn't that hot - that the slightly thicker
6 cloth didn't actually -- but in terms of their morale
7 and feeling and looking good, if you like, which is
8 an important part of fighting capability, there is no
9 doubt it had its own effect, but it didn't actually stop
10 them from actually going out and doing the fighting when
11 the time came. It became more of an issue actually
12 after the fighting stopped rather than actually during
13 those early phases.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you. I want to just ask a few
15 questions about the timetable.

16 On 15th January the chiefs briefed the Prime
17 Minister -- 15th January 2003 -- briefed the Prime
18 Minister on the military plans. We have seen papers
19 that make it clear from this that the military view was
20 that it would be possible for the troops to be
21 maintained in quite a decent state of readiness for some
22 time after the middle of March. So I recognise there
23 wasn't a preference to fight later --

24 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: There was a preference.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There wasn't a preference to fight

1 at the height of the summer heat --

2 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Ah! Right.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: -- but the implication of the papers
4 was there was no military imperative to start operations
5 in the middle of March neither for us nor the US. Is
6 that right?

7 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think there was no overriding
8 imperative insofar that we were not capable of fighting
9 in the height of summer, ie July or August. There is
10 a time -- there is a length of time you can actually
11 spend waiting poised and to maintain the fighting
12 efficiency, motivation, training and fitness of people
13 who are so poised, and bearing in mind that the
14 amphibious task force, the amphibious element was ready
15 to go on 15th January, if I recall rightly, had they
16 been waiting until the middle of summer, they would have
17 been sitting in a ship for a very long time, if you
18 like.

19 So you do need to consider the -- how long people
20 can stay poised for and how long the elastic can stay
21 stretched, if you like, ready to be sprung -- you know,
22 the spring can be -- you know, coiled up ready to go
23 before it starts to actually become less elastic, and so
24 that will be a consideration, plus the fact that we were
25 all -- as far as the land force is concerned in Kuwait,

1 you are talking about a fairly small chunk of territory
2 with a lot of people on it. How long can you stay in
3 such a small area as far as the Kuwaitis were concerned
4 apart from anything else before you do something?

5 So you don't want to be hanging around too long
6 before you start losing your edge in operational
7 readiness terms.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But, as we have heard, the troops
9 were really just getting there and getting themselves
10 sorted out.

11 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: No, I am just saying --

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There is a limit on how --

13 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: How long they can stay for.

14 Certainly what is not correct is -- rather it was never
15 a consideration we had to go because we couldn't fight
16 in July, for example.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So if you had been told to stay for
18 a couple more months, for example, you could have
19 managed that?

20 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think two months would have been
21 holding people on the ground for -- there would be some
22 people who would have got there earlier. Of course,
23 people were coming to theatre from the middle of
24 February onwards. I think had they had to hang around
25 until, say, July or --

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Until June.

2 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Until the end of May, beginning of
3 June, I think you will notice a falling away of battle
4 readiness and of their capability to fight as
5 efficiently as they might, but it would have been
6 possible, yes.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: It wouldn't be impossible?

8 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: But certainly I think and -- we
9 certainly couldn't, for example -- to take that to the
10 other extreme, we certainly couldn't have done so until
11 September, for example, and I would very much have
12 counselled against that for the length of time rather
13 than the environmental conditions.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I mean, how much, when you were
15 discussing on 15th January with the Prime Minister, was
16 the synchronisation of military timetable and the
17 diplomatic timetable an issue, because this is obviously
18 what this question is about?

19 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, there was always
20 a synchronisation point right from the early autumn,
21 where, you know, we could not do anything until the
22 UNSCR 1441 had been secured, when we could do something overt
and
23 so forth. So that was always a consideration.

24 I think that -- what I guess something we discussed
25 would have been that, as we were looking for a second

1 resolution in February/March, that one of the things to
2 persuade Saddam Hussein to cave in would be the overt
3 preparations for invasion that he would have seen. You
4 know, there was a manifestation of the fist behind --
5 you know, the steel behind the soft diplomatic approach
6 to persuade him to do something. So you have to sort of
7 continue to build up forces. So that was worth timing
8 in. So there would have to be some sort of
9 synchronisation, yes.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But did you have -- were you asked
11 whether you could, if necessary, delay the start of the
12 operation weeks, months as we moved into March 2000?

13 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: We had those discussions and my
14 advice to the Prime Minister was, if required to, we
15 could fight in the height of summer. Some people --
16 there had been speculation about whether we were capable
17 of fighting in July and August when it was very hot, and
18 I said to him -- I think I said to him we would not be
19 -- you could not expect people to wait poised until the
20 late summer for reasons of time rather than temperature.
21 You would then have to stand down, withdraw people,
22 change people over, bring another brigade out or
23 whatever. You would have to recock your readiness, if
24 you like.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Were there any discussions within

1 the MoD, within the forces about preparing to do that,
2 if necessary?

3 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: We hadn't got to that stage
4 frankly, but had --

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: There --

6 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think the way things were moving
7 I guess really from the middle of January, when the
8 amphibious task force was ready, and had reached FOC through to
9 March and the build-up of forces, it appeared that we
10 were heading towards a sort of mid-March type of date
11 for going, of starting the fighting, if that's when it
12 was going to start at all, and it didn't seem likely
13 that we would be asked to hang back for another three
14 months, for example, six months because -- for whatever
15 reason.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So presumably you were watching what
17 was happening in the United Nations quite carefully at
18 this time?

19 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Just so.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And it must have become apparent
21 that the British diplomatic effort on the second
22 resolution was facing some trouble?

23 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But you didn't see that necessarily
25 as something that might lead to a delay in actually

1 launching the operation?

2 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think I saw it rather the other
3 way. It seemed to me as the diplomatic effort was
4 unravelling in the middle of March -- you know, the
5 early part and towards the middle of March, it seemed
6 more and more likely that we would have to actually --
7 more likely we would be going in.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You make a point in your witness
9 statement that was made by Geoff Hoon's Private
10 Secretary when he wrote to David Manning, how for
11 a variety of reasons the proportion of the overall
12 combat power available provided by the UK was going to
13 be quite substantial. The figure cited is 30% of the
14 available tanks. This implies potentially quite a bit
15 of leverage over the United States.

16 Do you think Ministers had a clear sense of the --
17 of how important we had become to the overall effort at
18 the start of the campaign?

19 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think so, but it may have been
20 slightly offset by the fact that we knew in our heart of
21 hearts, and indeed Rumsfeld made it perfectly clear in
22 the middle of March, when finally he and Myers and
23 Franks got it, that we weren't going to go until we had
24 the political tick to go, and he made his outburst
25 saying, "In that case if you aren't going to be there,

1 we will manage on our own. Thanks very much indeed".

2 Of course, that was always true from the very start.

3 I personally don't, contrary to what some other
4 people -- I personally don't think they could have gone
5 on 19th March if we had not gone -- if we had not been
6 there, because of the way of what happened up in Turkey
7 with the 4th Infantry Division; and the quantum we
8 provided - not just, by the way, as far as land forces were
9 concerned, but don't forget -- let's not forget that our
10 contribution for the amphibious landing was significant.

11 We were running that particular sector of the
12 invasion under our command with, in fact, one of the US
13 marine units assigned to our own commandos. So that was
14 a substantial thing. Had we dropped that out, that
15 would have just destroyed, if you like, the entry on the
16 south-eastern part of the country; and our air
17 contribution, which includes our missiles contribution
18 from submarines and so forth, was also significant. So
19 I think yes, Rumsfeld was right in saying, "Yes, we can
20 manage on our own", but he wouldn't have managed on 19th
21 March is my opinion.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How long do you think it would have
23 taken them to recover from the --

24 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Unless he wanted to do what
25 Americans sometimes call a running start, in other

1 words, go with forces in being, and then get 4 Infantry
2 Division brought round and up and bed in - they didn't
3 start -- I seem to recall they didn't really start to
4 get into a position of doing any sensible fighting or
5 anything else until after 20th April or so. They could
6 have started a running start, but they would still not
7 have been able to on 19th March, because just the
8 re-writing of the air plan would have been a substantial
9 task, because we were so integrated into it you would
10 have to completely, you know, tear it up and start with
11 a blank sheet of paper - and that's not a trivial task.
12 So I think they would have been delayed a few days at
13 the very least.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to follow this up a bit more,
15 we have heard that our forces were scrambling in a sense
16 to get ready, how concerning the equipment delays for
17 individual troops were or not. It was definitely
18 a rush.

19 Did you ever think about asking for another week or
20 so just to improve the situation, or was the assumption
21 always that a date had been set and one way or the other
22 we would make the date?

23 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: We set a date where we couldn't be
24 ready, which was 15th March. We set a date when we
25 could be ready, which was around 20th March. Had we had

1 another week, would it have made a substantial
2 difference? Probably not in terms of our capability.
3 So, with pressures on, people were invited to meet that
4 date and actually, come the day, they actually did -
5 pretty much entirely.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you very much.

7 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I will turn to Sir Roderic Lyne now about
8 the implications of the switch to the south. Rod.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: The role we played in the campaign
10 focused on the south and south-east, then led us into
11 holding responsibility for the occupation in those areas
12 and actually, as it turned out, for running MND
13 (South-East).

14 Mr Blair told us in his recent statement that the
15 actual decision to take on this wider responsibility for
16 the south was made following the advice of the Foreign
17 and Defence Secretaries on 19th March 2003, that is, at
18 the time we invaded and only then was that formal
19 decision made.

20 What thought was given before the invasion to the
21 responsibilities and liabilities that we would find
22 ourselves taking on in our area of operation after the
23 campaign was over?

24 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes. We had discussed this in our
25 COS meetings or Op COS meetings about what the rules

1 were relating to occupying powers, how one was supposed
2 to behave, how one treated, for example, the Iraqi army,
3 whether they capitulated or whether they were made
4 prisoners of war or whatever - because you get different
5 treatments for different things - how long could you hold
6 prisoners of war for, when they would be released once
7 the Iraqi forces were defeated.

8 We had started to do our revision, if you like, or
9 to comprehend what being an occupying power actually
10 meant - as well as, we were aware of the fact we would also
11 be looking for a United Nations' support, and therefore
12 a resolution for the reconstruction and
13 regeneration as soon as possible, to get the United
14 Nations involved.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So the hope was that the United Nations
16 would take over a lot of the responsibilities that
17 actually in the end we found ourselves carrying out?

18 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: We have had evidence in a statement from
20 Lord Williams, who at the time as Michael Williams was
21 Jack Straw's special advisor, and who is a man, although
22 not a military man, with huge experience of UN
23 operations in different parts of the world, in which he
24 has said:

25 "Plans for a military campaign are usually based on

1 calculations of risks involved, but it is apparent that
2 in the case of Iraq this was only done in the most
3 narrow sense."

4 Now he's reflecting there evidence we have had from
5 quite a lot of people, which is that the actual risks of
6 the military campaign were indeed planned and factored
7 in, but the wider risks, the risk of a security vacuum,
8 a breakdown of law and order, a vacuum in political
9 power in the administration of the country, the risk
10 that you mentioned earlier of internecine conflict, the
11 risk of possible interference from a neighbouring
12 country known to be hostile to the United States and the
13 United Kingdom, those were the wider risks that appeared
14 not to have been factored into the plan.

15 Is it a fair comment that those wider risks were not
16 built in, and whose responsibility should it have been
17 to make sure that we had really thought about them and
18 prepared for them?

19 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think that there are a number of
20 assumptions which have been made which with the benefit
21 of hindsight were probably optimistic, to say the least,
22 about what the state of the country would be after the
23 invasion.

24 First of all, we recognised there could very well be
25 a humanitarian problem with regards to how the refugees

1 -- or with regards to giving food, water and help to
2 people who had been displaced or whatever, and a lot of
3 our focus was I think at the humanitarian level rather than the
4 governance of the country, in other words, picking up
5 the point about law and order and so forth. There was
6 an expectation that we would find more of a structure
7 which was ready to step into place than actually turned
8 out to be the case in May, even before the
9 de-Ba'athification and the disbandment of the Iraqi
10 army, which is further downstream.

11 I think that we probably took too narrow a view
12 about what might be required in the aftermath in terms
13 of the governance aspects of life.

14 Who should have been in charge of it? Well, I don't
15 suppose really the Ministry of Defence thought it was
16 their particular role to do that. It was something that
17 possibly should have been done possibly by the Foreign Office or
18 even by DFID.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: The Ministry of Defence -- I mean, you
20 and your team identified this risk when you briefed the
21 Prime Minister on 15th January. The record of that
22 meeting has the Prime Minister being told that:

23 "Aftermath planning was still quite immature and any
24 rapid regime collapse followed by a power vacuum could
25 result in internecine fighting between the Shia and

1 Sunni populations, particularly in Baghdad, and
2 adventuring by adjacent countries and ethnic groups that
3 irretrievably fractured the country."

4 So you had got it pretty well right.

5 Having identified this, who should have ensured --
6 this is still three months before the invasion -- two
7 months before the invasion -- sorry; my mathematics --
8 that we had covered off those risks? Should somebody
9 have taken that statement you made and said, "Who the
10 hell is doing something about it?" and made sure it
11 happened?

12 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I guess we were looking -- well,
13 certainly we were interested to see what the Americans
14 were doing on this front and not finding a very helpful
15 picture in terms of their own preparations for that sort
16 of assessment.

17 Of course, that's not an assessment with which they
18 agreed anyway. I think there was a belief on the
19 American side that the country would be liberated and
20 therefore amenable to carry -- you know, switching
21 quickly from being defeated into a country that was
22 pleased to see them as the liberators and would be very
23 supportive in getting up new government structures in place
24 and so forth, which was far too rosy a picture, and they
25 were told so on a number of occasions.

1 Who should have been -- from the Ministry of Defence
2 point of view we recognised the fact that we would have
3 to have the right number of people on the ground to be
4 able to provide the security ring, if you like, or the
5 security situation which would allow other departments
6 to go in and do what was required in terms of
7 reconstruction.

8 I guess that this was something where we didn't have
9 a right sort of central -- you know, Whitehall -- as far
10 as UK is concerned a sufficiently good cross-government
11 discussion on this, and there was no sort of single
12 person gripping it from -- at the Ministerial level,
13 this particular picture.

14 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Did that keep you awake at night as Chief
15 of Defence Staff? Your people had identified this
16 issue. You couldn't see anything being done about it
17 visibly on the American side or elsewhere in Whitehall,
18 but your chaps were going to be in there having to cope
19 with it in the absence of planning and preparation.

20 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, the way that we were planning
21 to cope with it was to make sure that we -- it's a sort
22 of task which the British armed forces have done in the
23 past of actually going in and providing reconstruction
24 and security to a country. So I think we were looking
25 to do the sort of things we were used to doing. Where

1 the top cover was coming from in terms of politics and
2 so forth was being left to the Foreign Office.

3 SIR RODERIC LYNE: One of the things that we were
4 specifically required to do -- I mean, all of your
5 people are trained to be familiar with the Geneva and
6 Hague Conventions. When you occupy another country, you
7 take on a duty to restore and maintain law and order in
8 your area of responsibility.

9 Were your forces, the fighting forces, staffed
10 actually to do that, because it needed doing more or
11 less from day one?

12 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think so. I believe so. I mean,
13 as I said, because of the internal security operations
14 that the armed forces had done in the past, it was
15 something which was endemic and part of the training
16 certainly of the army, and they had that capability as
17 part of their background, if you like.

18 SIR RODERIC LYNE: I mean, we have heard from other
19 witnesses that looting broke out pretty well
20 straightaway and indeed continued more or less without
21 cease for months afterwards, that arms depots were not
22 secured and guarded, because coalition forces either
23 didn't have sufficient troops to carry out those duties,
24 or, with regard to looting, they actually didn't have
25 instructions that this was part of their duties, which

1 implies that they weren't really staffed or equipped to
2 deal with that issue and it got out of control.

3 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, I can't -- I mean, you are
4 talking now sort of -- sort of late April/early May
5 I guess.

6 SIR RODERIC LYNE: As soon as the military campaign -- as
7 soon as you have taken somewhere the next day you are
8 responsible for law and order on the streets.

9 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, absolutely, and as far as I
10 am aware -- not aware -- that certainly happened, for
11 example, in Al-Zubayr. I am just talking about the
12 British sector at the moment.

13 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But it didn't happen everywhere?

14 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: We had checkpoints -- I mean,
15 I can't -- until the end of April such things as
16 checkpoints and patrols and so forth were going on, and
17 there are records showing where we -- for example, in
18 Al-Zubeir how we moved from helmets to berets fairly
19 early on. So foot patrols and normal security patrols
20 were happening.

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But as time went on law and order broke
22 down, was not restored and the situation got worse
23 rather than better. We started by the autumn
24 withdrawing a substantial number of our forces, because
25 it was time for them to turn over, and fighting forces

1 are different from forces you need to ensure law and
2 order in the post-conflict situation.

3 The UN had not come in and British forces and other
4 coalition forces were left trying to deal with this
5 situation, which, going back to January, you had warned
6 the Prime Minister about.

7 Your people had coped as best they could in the
8 initial phase of this, but then they found themselves
9 having to go on with it for a very long time afterwards.
10 Didn't that impose a real strain?

11 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I can't say what wrapping-up was
12 done after 1st May, because I was not there to observe
13 it.

14 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Well, it was fairly obvious from anybody
15 watching television screens and so on that the situation
16 deteriorated. I am really asking about whether we
17 should have, given the identification of the problem,
18 and could have -- and by "we" I mean -- I am not
19 necessarily meaning the Ministry of Defence, because you
20 were left holding the baby -- have planned and prepared
21 for this much more effectively than we did or ensured
22 that, because, as you say, responsibilities lay across
23 the other side of the Atlantic in a bigger measure, that
24 it was planned for?

25 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, the sort of the things that

1 were going on to the best of my recollection in April as
2 we were taking down Basra and Al-Zubayr, to take the two
3 major towns, as I say, security patrols had been set up.
4 Shuras were being arranged, and discussions with local
5 government officials and so forth were in hand.

6 So certainly during April it seemed to me that we
7 were making every effort we could to engage with the
8 civic authorities to start setting in place the
9 governance -- you know, to see what needed to be done to
10 help them to get governance underway.

11 What I could observe, as I say, during April was
12 that that was actually under way. The sort of things
13 I expect our forces, which they are trained for, to do,
14 to get alongside the locals, to provide policing, with a
15 small p, to get alongside the local authorities, to see
16 what was required both in terms of law and order as well
17 as restoring utilities and so forth, that was actually
18 happening.

19 The subsequent -- what happened after 1st May and
20 what -- if that started to come unhinged and unravel
21 I can't -- I can't tell you what was going on in
22 Whitehall to deal with that or who was addressing it or
23 who was taking the lead on addressing it.

24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Possibly too late by then to address it.

25 I think Baroness Prashar would like to look at some

1 aspects of this in a little more detail.

2 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Indeed.

3 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you very much indeed.

4 Can I, first of all, start looking at the
5 discussions you may have been having with the United
6 States on the aftermath planning?

7 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Uh-huh.

8 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You have obviously described your
9 concerns about the post-conflict but Simon Webb when he
10 gave his evidence told us that the earliest, even the
11 earliest conceptions of planning phases there was doubt
12 in the MoD about the US's capacity to stabilise Iraq
13 after invasion.

14 Do you have any recollection if there was any
15 discussion on the need for post-conflict strategy at
16 Chequers meeting prior to Prime Minister's visit in
17 April 2002?

18 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: No, I don't -- I don't recall that
19 being mentioned at all.

20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Not mentioned at all?

21 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I don't recall it being mentioned.
22 It may have been, but I don't recall it being mentioned
23 at all.

24 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: At what point in the planning did
25 the US approach to aftermath begin to concern you?

1 I mean, when did you become concerned about it?

2 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I guess it's really when the State
3 Department, which had a -- seemed to us had a fairly
4 respectable plan -- I am afraid I can't get my mind round
5 the dates -- certainly the State Department felt they
6 had the lead on this, General Powell and his
7 organisation, and they had a plan and they had the people
8 to execute the plan or to implement it; but they got
9 sort of swept aside when Rumsfeld took charge of the
10 whole lot. I mean swept aside. They were just -- the
11 plan was dropped in the waste-paper basket as far as I
12 can work out and the people were dismissed or sent on to
13 other things. That was one area which concerned me.
14 The other area which concerned me is that in talking to
15 senior people within the Pentagon, which I did, and not
16 just for General Myers, but when I visit and speak to
17 generals and what have you, there was this expectation
18 that where we went ahead with this,, following the
19 invasion, that the coalition would be seen as
20 liberating the country and that they would be hugely
21 welcomed and everybody would be personally delighted to
22 see them, and hugely co-operative because they were so
23 pleased to see them, and in a way they would feel
24 liberated. It was impossible to persuade the people
25 I spoke to, and this was so further down, to some of my

1 subordinates as well, impossible to dissuade the
2 Americans that this would not be the case.

3 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You became concerned when
4 responsibility moved from the State Department to the
5 DOD?

6 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes.

7 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: That was the start of your concern.
8 Did you share your concern with the Prime Minister and
9 the Secretary of State?

10 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: We certainly discussed -- yes, with
11 the Prime Minister and also with my Chiefs of Staff, and
12 as I have mentioned previously, at my Chiefs of Staff
13 table, I had representatives from Number 10 Foreign
14 Office.

15 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: How did they react and what action
16 did you take if necessary?

17 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: They were concerned as well.

18 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Was any action taken?

19 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I don't recall what the Foreign
20 Office did in terms of whether Mr Straw spoke to Colin
21 Powell or officials spoke to their opposite numbers.

22 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: The Chairman wants to step in.

23 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Sorry, I am pretty certain David
24 Manning spoke to Condi Rice about it.

25 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I was only going to say there was a very

1 senior American general -- I am afraid his name has gone
2 from my head -- who before the invasion expressed the
3 view that very large number of troops would be required?

4 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Shineski.

5 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: So there were divided opinions even in
6 the American military about the aftermath --

7 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Not divided for very long, because
8 he got fired.

9 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I suppose what I am asking is you would
10 have been aware of the fact that there were divided
11 opinions even within the American military at senior
12 level?

13
14 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes, I was aware of it and there
15 were I guess two reasons why there were division of
16 ideas. There was the one bunch of people probably, certainly,
led
17 by Rumsfeld who definitely had a view that we do war
18 fighting, we don't do peacekeeping or nation building.
19 That was not just an idle mantra. That was
20 passionately, passionately believed, and combined with
21 the new idea about warfare, where everything could be
22 done electronically or by high tech and therefore didn't
23 require boots on the ground, it meant you went in with
24 lots and lots of high tech with as few people as
25 possible, did what you needed to do and got out fast.

1 So that sort of attitude of mind "We do war fighting
2 and furthermore we do it at this very high tech level",
3 meant you were going to have a very anorexic force level
4 in terms of number bodies, of soldiers. That was one
5 view that was certainly held by Rumsfeld.

6 Then you have the other side, like the Chief of the Army,
7 Shinseki, who believed that that was not a very sensible
8 course of action, because he could see (a) the high tech
9 didn't necessarily give you what you wanted, and also the
10 need for having the troops on the ground when you got
11 down to providing advice and security and a stabilisation
12 force until you got your new structures in place.

13 I think more people sided with him than they did with
14 Rumsfeld frankly but that's my personal feeling rather
15 than -- I can't give you any factual evidence on that.

16 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Thank you.

17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: You met General Franks on 26th
18 February 2003. What impressions did you form of how
19 CentCom's aftermath planning had developed?

20 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think by February they got as far
21 as appointing General Garner. I can't remember.

22 I think they probably had done by that time. General
23 Garner was a retired general who had been involved in
24 the Desert Storm aftermath planning, if you like, ten
25 years previously. He formed round him a collection of

1 people who were basically friends, if you like, from
2 those days, and he had been put in charge. It was
3 called ORHA, Office of something Reconstruction Agency.
4 He was the person who had been invited to start planning
5 on what the reconstruction task should be. We had
6 people embedded in that staff. General Cross I think
7 was one of them who was there. So they had started to
8 recognise that there was a need to start doing some sort
9 of planning.

10 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Did you have any meaningful
11 discussion about the plans?

12 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Not particularly is the short
13 answer.

14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So this was not something which was
15 kind of a priority at that stage for you?

16 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: No. Out of the times we had
17 together either on the phone or face to face the vast
18 majority of that was talking about the actual battle
19 plan and the fighting phase rather than the peacekeeping
20 phase.

21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can I now move on to what the MoD
22 was doing in terms of aftermath planning because again
23 in your previous appearance before us you said that the
24 MoD did as much work on Phase IV as on the invasion, but
25 we have had a statement from Major General Whitley and

1 he said that in his opinion there was no priority given
2 to Phase IV planning at all. What direction did you
3 give him to guidance planning?

4 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I had an opportunity to see General
5 Whitley's witness statement, to which you are referring
6 I imagine, just before this afternoon.

7 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Indeed.

8 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I find that -- the view that he has
9 taken from his end of the telescope is not one which
10 accords with mine. I can't recall how many COS
11 meetings, Chief of Staffs meetings, we had where we
12 didn't discuss Phase IV, but I don't imagine it was very
13 many, if any. The record probably shows that. We spent
14 a lot of time talking about it at each meeting. Of
15 course the time you spend talking about a subject is not
16 reflected in the minutes, of course. My recollection is
17 that half of most meetings was on Phase IV or half of
18 the meetings about Iraq would be spent talking about
19 Phase IV.

20 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Is it that he is the man on the
21 ground, you know, responsible for aftermath and he has
22 this view that there is no planning?

23 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: As I say -- sorry to interrupt --
24 I think it is very odd too, and having respect to his
25 statement. As I say, I have difficulty knowing where he was
coming from, and the

1 person -- the MoD would not have been speaking to him.
2 He was working for the Chief of Joint -- he was under the
3 Chief of Joint Operations, was his line officer or
4 line manager - or the Deputy Chief of Joint Operations.
5 You will have to ask either General Reith or General Fry
6 whether they ever spoke to General Whitley. I think
7 their recollection will not be the same as his either.
8 I think some of the comments he has made in his report
9 are ones which I don't recognise.

10 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: We have already mentioned 15th
11 January briefing by the Chiefs to the Prime Minister and
12 the record of these meetings show that you expressed
13 doubts about the maturity of the aftermath planning as
14 it currently stood, and the Prime Minister directed that
15 a feasible plan be drawn for the aftermath. What action
16 did you take to ensure that a feasible plan was
17 produced?

18 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, where General Whitley did
19 a remarkably good job was actually getting the
20 humanitarian side of life planned for as far as
21 possible and did a huge amount to prepare for
22 a humanitarian crisis after the invasion in terms of
23 water, food stocks and so on. So we started to get
24 ourselves ready to do as much as we possibly could in
25 that direction.

1 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So when you expressed concerns about
2 the maturity of the aftermath plan, was that about
3 humanitarian concerns or were you looking at medium term
4 reconstruction? What were your concerns?

5 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Medium term, sorry?

6 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Were you concerned about
7 humanitarian issues or were you concerned about medium
8 term reconstruction?

9 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: That was more about the immediate
10 aftermath, immediately after the fighting phase, what
11 would we need to do to provide security in the first
12 instance, but also to provide what we saw as being the
13 most immediate problem would be a humanitarian problem.

14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: In that situation what did you see
15 to be the role of UK civilian departments like DFID and
16 the Home Office?

17 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: We rather hoped having provided the
18 necessary security in an area that the Department for
19 International Development and Aid would actually be
20 there to put civilians in to help with the
21 reconstruction and do all the sort of things they are
22 expert at doing, and which we are not.

23 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can you just tell us what steps were
24 taken to ensure that sufficient civilian capacity would
25 available? What steps were taken by the MoD?

1 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I don't know is the short answer.

2 I don't -- this is an area which frankly where there was
3 a breakdown, because we didn't get the support or we
4 didn't get the introduction of civilian aid in the way
5 that we actually expected it, and General Brims who did
6 have a DFID officer in his headquarters, and to whom
7 I spoke on the ground in Iraq after the invasion or
8 during the invasion, was frustrated by the fact that he
9 was not getting -- was it he or she now -but anyway, the person
10 was not getting the sort of support from head office
11 that they were expecting and I know that General Brims
12 felt equally frustrated.

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: In your statement quite rightly you
14 say that Phase IV was integral to all aspects of the
15 planning and campaign and so on, but General Brims told
16 us:

17 "And when I made my plan to come to the south
18 I reported then and I still don't know what the post
19 conflict activity was going to be".

20 I mean, how you would reconcile the two statements,
21 what you said to us and what General Brims said.

22 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, we had hoped DFID would be
23 showing up in force to work alongside General Brims.

24 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: It was just a hope, it wasn't
25 something that had been completely discussed?

1 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: It was something which we expected
2 the Secretary of State for DFID to be delivering the
3 sort of people. They didn't appear. The frustration by
4 the DFID person on the ground was they were expecting
5 them to appear as well, and they didn't. I don't think
6 there was any will on the part of the Secretary of State
7 to help - either in monetary terms or in people terms.

8 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: The other thing I want to check is
9 you had a meeting with the Prime Minister on 11th March
10 2003. An extract of that record has been declassified.
11 You said that you were confident that the battle plan
12 would work. Did this include the aftermath as well?

13 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: No, not in that statement. No.

14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Not in that. For you the aftermath
15 was very much about the humanitarian issues?

16 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: It was more but the humanitarian
17 issue would be one which hit us first in making sure
18 that we helped the people who had been distressed or were
19 refugees or whatever. That would be the first thing for
20 to us deal with, at the same time as providing necessary
21 security in the areas in which we were actually
22 occupying. That was my battle plan, but in that
23 particular comment is to say that I was content that the
24 fighting plan, if you like, would be successful.

25 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Looking back, do you think we should

1 have had more visibility of what the Americans were
2 doing, because if we were relying on them to take the --
3 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: About Phase IV do you mean?
4 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Yes.
5 LORD WILSON: Yes. Well, I guess so, but I think that -- I
6 am not sure that we would have got more visibility.
7 I can't -- it is difficult to imagine now how we could
8 have got more visibility because I am not sure they were
9 doing sufficient anyway. We had General Cross working
10 with General Garner, so we had him reporting back on
11 what he was planning to do, and what they were planning
12 to wasn't any way going to be able to cope with what
13 eventually happened any case.
14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: If we were concerned should we been
15 more proactive, ask more searching questions? Do you
16 think we did enough?
17 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I guess with a bit of hindsight
18 yes, we should have been asking more questions, but I am
19 not certain we would have got satisfactory answers
20 there.
21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.
22 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Right. Turning to command and control
23 issues, I will ask Sir Martin Gilbert to take this one.
24 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Yes. I would like to ask about the
25 command and control arrangements both before and during

1 the invasion. General Franks, who was the commander at
2 CentCom in Florida, deployed forward to command the
3 invasion. UK had PJHQ in the United Kingdom under
4 General Reith and then also created a forward National
5 Component Headquarters under Air Marshal Burridge.

6 Can you describe to us the decision process to use
7 the National Component Headquarters led by Burridge to
8 command our forces during the invasion?

9 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, you couldn't -- you need to
10 have a forward component from the PJHQ, because the PJHQ
11 was not just doing Iraq. There were a number of other
12 operations it was also running. So you couldn't just
13 sort of it move lock, stock and barrel into Qatar to do
14 that. So the idea of having a forward component
15 commander was one which was used before and one which
16 was used on this occasion.

17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Shouldn't PJHQ itself have been somehow
18 deployed forward like CentCom rather than having
19 additional headquarters --

20 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: CentCom didn't deploy entirely. It
21 deployed an element. Franks himself went forward
22 because, well, he spent some time in Qatar, he didn't spend all
23 the time there. As I was saying, the organisation at
24 Northwood, the PJHQ was not just running Iraq. It was
25 running a variety of other operations as well including

1 Afghanistan.

2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Air Marshal Burridge told us that he
3 visited Tampa a number of times during 2002. At the
4 same time General Reith as CJO was also having
5 discussions with General Franks about planning. Do you
6 think there was scope for Franks to have been receiving
7 differing messages from the UK system during this method
8 of --

9 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I don't think so. The method of
10 having a forward deployed headquarters is well tried.
11 The relationship between the Chief of Joint Operations
12 and his national component commander has been practised
13 on a number of occasions and in this particular case the
14 relationship between the two individuals concerned was
15 a good one. They spoke to each other, heaven knows how
16 many times a day, but they spoke to each other a lot.
17 I would be most surprised -- if Franks was getting
18 different messages from the two people, then I would be
19 most surprised.

20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: One last question on this matter of
21 deployment. Franks deployed his headquarters forward to
22 Qatar in December 2002 and Burridge took part in
23 Operation Internal Look, but his headquarters were not
24 set up next to Franks I think until 8th February 2003.
25 Was there a gap in our influence on understanding of UK

1 planning because of this?

2 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: We took part in Internal Look as

3 well.

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Yes, but --

5 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Whenever it was - in November,

6 December. December, wasn't it?

7 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Burrige only went forward in February.

8 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes, but we took part -- the

9 exercise which took place in December was to test out

10 the plan and see how it, of course, actually worked.

11 Then the people we sent to that particular exercise came

12 back home. Franks did not stay in Qatar after that

13 exercise. He went back to Florida.

14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So there was no gap in our detailed

15 understanding?

16 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: No. Don't forget also we had --

17 sorry. If I may, remind ourselves that we also had people

18 embedded in Tampa as well. There was a liaison officer

19 in Tampa. So we were talking to General Franks there as

20 well.

21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So you were satisfied with regard to

22 the clarity of information reaching us with regard to --

23 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes, I was.

24 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I would like to come on now to the

25 question of drawdown of forces. During your previous
appearance,

1 when you spoke to us before you told us:

2 "The initial expectation was that we would be there
3 for a while without defining exactly what it was, but we
4 certainly weren't expecting the day after achieving
5 success to start drawing down our numbers. We were
6 expecting to be there for a considerable period of
7 time."

8 You also implied that you believed the US drew down
9 their force levels too quickly. The Foreign and Defence
10 Secretaries wrote to the Prime Minister on 19th March,
11 on the eve of the invasion to tell him that UK forces
12 would need to draw down to a third of their size by the
13 autumn to medium scale. Why was this advice given so
14 late?

15 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: It was more a reminder rather than
16 advice. That is a systemic point. The Defence
17 Planning Assumptions allow for the armed forces to have
18 one enduring operation at brigade level and one large
19 scale divisional level operation which lasts for six
20 months. Six months from March was September.

21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: But witness have told us that once we
22 were in Basra we really didn't have sufficient forces to
23 maintain law and order and yet our forces continued to
24 be withdrawn at really a high tempo?

25 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, there were no forces

1 withdrawn during April.

2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: No. When --

3 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I can't speak as to what happened
4 after April.

5 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Had consideration been given as to what
6 force levels might be needed with regard to maintaining
7 law and order?

8 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Yes, and I think that we --

9 I certainly recognise the point that one required to
10 have sufficient forces in order to maintain law and
11 order, but equally we were working very hard, and
12 successfully working, to get coalition partners into Iraq,
13 at brigade size in some cases, as soon as we possibly
14 could. I don't remember when the first, the other foreign
15 units started to arrive, but it was pretty soon -- I think it
16 was in May, in early May. So other troops were coming
17 in to provide -- to free us up in zones where we could
18 therefore concentrate our forces on such as we
19 had.

20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In your statement you say you couldn't
21 recall giving any specific direction to CJO about the
22 withdrawal of UK forces from Iraq. General Jackson told
23 us about the strong sense in Whitehall to withdraw
24 forces as quickly as possible. What was the driver for
25 this?

1 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I can't -- I don't recall us
2 talking about withdrawing forces as quick as possible.
3 I think, as I said, as you yourself have just quoted,
4 I envisaged that we would be in Iraq for a while, a long
5 time.

6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: The official date for the beginning of
7 the withdrawal of forces was, in fact, 19th April,
8 before you retired at the start of May. Can you tell us
9 what intelligence assessment was undertaken to support
10 the drawdown of UK landforces and above all to confirm
11 that the situation in our sector in Iraq was
12 sufficiently under control?

13 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I don't -- can't recall. Do you
14 mean what, in terms of say, whether the Iraqis were
15 defeated or not you mean?

16 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Whether the situation was sufficiently
17 under control for us to be able to do that?

18 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think so far as -- as far as
19 armed -- as far as the fight was concerned in terms of
20 defeating Iraqi armed forces, I don't remember which
21 date where we were satisfied that there was no further
22 army resistance to ourselves, but if you say it is 19th
23 April -- that sounds a bit early to me, but I don't
24 know when one declared mission accomplished as far as
25 the fighting was concerned. I have a feeling it was

1 slightly later than that.

2 In terms of intelligence, ie, who was left still
3 standing, who would provide a threat in terms of a land
4 effort threat as opposed to an ad hoc, you know,
5 insurgents or whatever, there would of course be endless
6 intelligence coming in the whole time about which
7 divisions were left standing or what brigades or
8 whatever, what formations were left standing.

9 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: You don't recall any unease about the
10 implications of a drawdown at that point?

11 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: No, I don't. I don't. As I say,
12 the intelligence would come in and say which division --
13 which Iraqi formations were left existing. By the time
14 we thought the fight had stopped I had been satisfied
15 there were no formations left existing.

16 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you very much.

17 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I think we are coming towards the end of
18 this session. Just on this last point to clear up
19 something, 16th Air Assault Brigade, the decision to
20 withdraw was taken in May after your retirement I think.
21 Do you recall was it envisaged we would be taking out
22 16th Air Brigade earlier?

23 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: To be perfectly honest, no, I can't
24 recall I am afraid. Sorry.

25 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Well, turning right to the end of your

1 terms as CDS, you had your last Chief of Staffs meeting
2 on we understand 30th April 2003. I wonder what at that
3 time looking back your thoughts were about how the
4 campaign might go forward immediately after your
5 retirement, because you did say at one point you thought
6 we might be there for three or four years. I wonder
7 whether it was possible to see through the mists of the
8 future the kind of challenges we might be facing over an
9 extended period?

10 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I suppose I had been drawing on our
11 experience -- very recent experience in Afghanistan and
12 trying to see how things -- you know, what happened
13 there and I suppose Northern Ireland. I don't know how
14 long we were there, about 35 years or something. Any
15 image of actually having done the job and getting out
16 was not one that even remotely occurred to me. We would
17 be there for a long time. Also it would be difficult
18 and tricky even if we didn't -- part of the
19 understanding I had -- in fact, one of the things I laid
20 down was that we should not de-Ba'athify, or whatever
21 the verb is for that, go through de-Ba'athification or
22 indeed disband the Iraqi Army. I saw that as being
23 absolutely essential for the future. If someone told me
24 that was going to happen, I would have given us even
25 more years to hang in there before the situation got

1 sorted out.

2 So, I think there was a feeling on 30th April that as
3 far as the fighting part of the operation was concerned
4 it had gone extraordinarily well. It had been a huge
5 success in terms of defeating the Iraqi armed forces,
6 but by that time some of the effects of looting, bad
7 behaviour, if you like -- of people in Iraq which was
8 coming as something of a surprise, was starting to come
9 home and therefore the situation was looking unlikely we
10 were going to get ourselves out in short order and we
11 would need people on the ground and a lot of help to
12 make it work.

13 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Just one other question before I will ask
14 my colleagues if they have got any final questions and
15 then invite your reflections, if I may, on the whole
16 thing.

17 Just looking back on one particular aspect, looking
18 across Whitehall and your position as the head of the
19 armed services, do you think that the overall
20 coordination of the UK effort, UK PLC, as it is
21 sometimes called, in 2002/3 as it applied to Iraq was
22 an effective coordination effort or not?

23 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: No, not really. I would have
24 raised this anyway when you asked me for my reflections.
25 I would put that fairly high on the list, if not the top

1 of the list. What we lacked was any sense of being at
2 war. Mind you, that has pertained from the years since
3 then as well and it pertained from 2001 from Afghanistan
4 onwards. There was no feeling that we had a War Cabinet
5 or that we had a Cabinet who thought, or Cabinet
6 Ministers who thought, we were at war. I suspect if
7 I asked half the Cabinet were we at war, they wouldn't
8 know what we were talking about. So there was a lack of
9 political cohesion at the very top. In Iraq's case,
10 possibly because some people were not happy about what
11 we were doing there anyway.

12 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: If one was looking for lessons to be
13 learned and to the future, is that a matter of
14 essentially machinery of government or is it more
15 personal qualities?

16 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think it must be machinery.
17 I think it must be machinery. There was no machinery.
18 There was no committee which was chaired by a very
19 senior person, if not the Prime Minister himself,
20 someone he might have deputised to be: "Okay. You are in
21 charge of this Iraq business on my behalf. Bring all
22 the departments together to make sure that at the
23 political level they are all streaming in the same
24 direction and providing cooperation to each other" - as
25 opposed to people giving a serious ignoring to what the

1 requirements are - from the defence point of view,
2 for example, from General Brims".

3 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: There was, we understand, a War Cabinet
4 which began during and after the invasion but not
5 before?

6 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: No.

7 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Would you advocate the setting up of one
8 in the immediate run-up to any major military operation?

9 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Certainly, because it would have
10 exposed at an earlier stage people to having to take
11 decisions -- obviously MoD itself, but also other
12 departments, their responsibilities both during the war
13 part of it and in the post-war phase or the
14 post-fighting phase, when they were expected to step in
15 which by the way is quite early, because in that
16 particular operation we were doing Phase IV at the same
17 time as we were doing Phase III. We had people in
18 berets in Al-Zubayr while there were tanks shooting at
19 each other fifty miles away as they were going up north
20 of Basra.

21 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: I will just turn to my colleagues and ask
22 them if they have any final questions. Lawrence.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Going back to some of the things we
24 discussed earlier about concerns about the aftermath and
25 so on. What is the position of the senior military

1 officer, the most senior military officer when you have
2 a real concern that something may go badly wrong?
3 There's a nagging doubt clearly at the higher levels of
4 the military and elsewhere in the system that the
5 Americans are just not ready for what they are taking
6 on. Obviously it would be very hard to know exactly
7 what was going to come or to the horror of what happened
8 to Iraq in many ways as they sort of moved to civil war
9 later on, but there was concerns. How do you see the
10 role in terms of civil military relations, a senior
11 military officer with these concerns? How far do you
12 push them? At what point do you pull back?

13 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Well, I think that the role or the
14 duty, if you like, which I think now and indeed
15 exercised then, was to make sure firstly my Secretary of
16 State was apprised of my concerns and, secondly, that he
17 reflected those to the Prime Minister; but also if I felt
18 sufficiently strongly about it, to represent them to the
19 Prime Minister myself - and I did on a number of
20 occasions.

21 You know, not by making a special march across the
22 road, as they say, but in the briefings that I was
23 giving the Prime Minister two or three times a week
24 there was an opportunity then for me to say "I am
25 concerned about this, that or the other", from a purely

1 military perspective; and it behoves him to apply the
2 other inputs he gets from the Foreign Office or from
3 DFID or whatever and then take a Prime Ministerial
4 decision about what's he is going to do about it.

5 Sometimes we would have said "Would you please ring up
6 President Bush and say we have a concern about this."
7 And certainly Phase IV was one of the things I advised
8 him to ring President Bush about.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Do you imagine a point in terms of
10 the questions that had been posed to you by Mr Blair is
11 there a war winning strategy, you would have had to say
12 "No, there isn't"?

13 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I think that as far as the war --
14 as far as the fighting phase is concerned we were
15 satisfied we were there. As far as the aftermath
16 planning was concerned, we thought we had something which
17 was going to cope with, as far as our imagination
18 allowed us to look; our imaginations didn't basically go
19 wide enough, if you like, to what actually transpired
20 when the time came. On reflection we should have been
21 more imaginative.

22 So is this whole enterprise going to fail because we
23 haven't got the Phase IV right? If you really thought
24 that was going to happen then, yes, of course we would
25 have to say "I think it is going to fail. What are you

1 going to do about it?" It is not the advice I gave,
2 because I didn't actually happen to think it at the
3 time.

4 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Might we invite your final reflections,
5 Lord Boyce, on the whole of the Iraqi experience up to
6 the time you stepped down as CDS? You have already
7 given us a significant one.

8 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I do put fairly high priority on
9 what you asked me earlier about the need to have a high
10 level group which, if not led by the Prime Minister
11 himself, by someone who he might have deputised to be in
12 charge of a group of very senior politicians at
13 Secretary of State level, obviously assisted by their
14 professional advisers, to get around at that sort of
15 level to make sure that direction is coming from the
16 very, very top, down to various components of government
17 to do what is required to produce a cohesive effect at
18 the end of the day. And that didn't exist at all.

19 I said earlier on that Defence Planning Assumptions
20 say you have six months to launch a large scale
21 operation or how many days to launch a medium scale,
22 three months or whatever. Of course that always depends
23 on when the political whistle is blown for you to
24 actually start running, as it were; and very often what
25 will happen, although you know something is coming up,

1 because you know the starting whistle is not going to be
2 blown, suddenly the politicians want it by yesterday - the
3 solution to the problem they got from a military point
4 of view - but that's something one will always have to
5 endure with because that's life.

6 When you put alongside that the policy of just
7 enough, just in time, which is driven to a large extent
8 by accrual accounting, the wish not to have on the
9 shelves hundreds of millions of pounds tied up not being
10 used, then --

11 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: And for which nominal charges are being
12 made?

13 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: Indeed, and also an industry which
14 itself, a support industry which itself, may be moving
15 into a just enough, just in time philosophy, so whereas
16 your supplier used to have stuff on the shelves to give
17 you, he doesn't want them on the shelves for the same
18 sort of reason. You really need to think quite
19 carefully about whether we got our planning assumptions
20 correct, because, as I said, my experience on a number
21 of times has been we have not quite enough and just not
22 in time when you actually do press the starting button.

23 I think that the feeling that the Cabinet at large,
24 and the Treasury in particular, didn't feel that we were
25 at war was a drawback. Yes, I know words have been

1 said; you can always have everything you want from the
2 Prime Minister, but the fact is the Treasury is
3 inherently unable to deliver money unless it is actually
4 beaten over the head. There is always a drag on the
5 system when you are trying to push through things,
6 whether it is the UORs - by the way, UORs in themselves
7 are not in themselves a solution to the problem. There
8 is no point being told "Here is a UOR for a nice gizmo,
9 a nice new piece of kit which you can only have, by the
10 way, in theatre", if the person operating that kit
11 doesn't see it for the first time until he actually gets
12 to theatre, because he will die trying to learn how to use it.

 That is what is happening. If you
13 were really on a proper war footing that wouldn't happen
14 I don't think. I don't think the Treasury ever thought
15 we were on a war footing. We were.

 I do think at my sort of level, in terms of cross
17 Whitehall coordination, there were aspects I thought were
18 good - and I was delighted at all the meetings I had, you had
19 senior Foreign Office, agency and Number 10 type people
20 represented - and DFID were invited, and when they showed
21 up that was useful as well. I would certainly encourage
22 that.

 I think the business about asset tracking is
24 absolutely crucial, and control of logistics. The
25 message you are getting at the top "Yes, the stuff has

1 left, therefore you must be all right," gives you
2 a false sense of security, if you like. At the bottom
3 end, the stuff is not getting where it should because it
4 has been lost somewhere at point of docking to getting it to
5 the person. The final mile some person called it. I am
6 really wondering whether we even have got that right
7 even today and will we be asked to do it.

8 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Just to interject on that, are you aware
9 whether the Americans have a superior system of tracking
10 right to the final mile?

11 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: I believe they do have. In fact I
12 am fairly certain that they have got one. I may be very
13 unfair implying that we don't have it today, but I am
14 pretty sure the Americans have got one.

15 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: As far as you are aware the state of the
16 art makes it possible?

17 ADMIRAL THE LORD BOYCE: The state of the art certainly does
18 make it possible. I do know that for a fact. There is
19 technology out there which allows you to track the
20 systems.

21 I think that the -- it may be a unique circumstance,
22 but certainly dealing with the Americans was
23 an interesting experience as far as dealing with
24 Washington was concerned. Now that may have been
25 a moment of time because of the personalities involved,

1 but it was pretty dysfunctional. But I think that the --
2 you know, when you are going to a very close coalition
3 in very difficult circumstances it is best to know,
4 whatever capital you are dealing with, to get a fairly
5 good feel for how that capital actually functions; and
6 if it doesn't function well, work out how you are going to
7 manage without it. We did.

8 I made sure that -- for example, the State
9 Department were not being cut in, so they couldn't --
10 our Foreign Office couldn't talk to State. So I made
11 sure I knew what was going on and I briefed the Foreign
12 Office if there were things they should have heard from
13 State. We were trying to work out those sort of
14 mechanisms. It is very important to understand the
15 functionality of a close ally when you are going into
16 an operation such as that.

17 I guess the other thing clearly is the -- as far as
18 the myriad of lessons learned that have been sort of
19 unearthed by the HCDC, internal ones within MoD and so
20 forth - a proper title might be "lessons relearned" for the
21 vast majority of those; and the answer is keep
22 relearning lessons.

23 Finally there is no doubt in my mind, of course,
24 that the aftermath planning fell short of what it should
25 have done through probably a lack of -- well,

1 a combination of things. First of all, the very
2 optimistic view that the big brother on the block, ie
3 the United States, had on what would it be like after
4 the fighting finished, and our own probably rather
5 narrow imagination on where we thought what we had to do
6 immediately post the fighting and not anticipating the
7 sort of internal unrest. You know, when you were
8 putting up new electrical power supplies, you don't
9 expect the copper from the pylons to be stripped off the
10 day after you put them up. So we perhaps could have assumed
11 more of a worse case than we actually did. Whether it
12 would have been believed, of course, had we actually put
13 it up by whoever within our organisation, within the
14 country, whether it was the Treasury or whether it was
15 the politicians, because it would be inconvenient and
16 expensive to believe it, it is another question altogether.

17 SIR JOHN CHILCOT: Well, thank you very much, Lord Boyce.
18 Thanks to our witness today, and thank you by the way
19 for your statement which you have published today. That
20 was helpful.

21 I am about to close this session, but we will resume
22 tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock, when our witness will be
23 Sir Gus O'Donnell, the Cabinet Secretary, and he will be
24 appearing before the Inquiry in his capacity as Cabinet
25 Secretary since September 2005.

1 With that, and thanks to everyone who sat through
2 this session, I'll close it. Thank you.

3 (4.30 pm)

4 (Hearing concluded)

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