

1 (2.00 pm)

2 LIEUTENANT GENERAL WILLIAM ROLLO and

3 LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN COOPER

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon.

5 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Good afternoon.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, let's make a start. The objective of
7 this afternoon's session is to continue the narrative as
8 the situation on the ground developed, and our two
9 witnesses are Lieutenant General Rollo and
10 Lieutenant General Cooper, both of whom have served as
11 the GOC commanding the Multi-National in the south-east
12 based in Basra, and also later as senior military
13 representative in Baghdad.

14 So I think, General Rollo, you were in Basra from
15 July to November 2004?

16 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Just into December.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: And General Cooper, you were there from
18 December until June the following year?

19 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: July the following year.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: A bit longer in each case. We heard
21 yesterday from General Riley, who was in the role in the
22 intervening period, and just to get the chronologies
23 established, General Rollo you were in Baghdad July 2007
24 to March 2008? Not quite?

25 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: I got there in June, but took over in

1 July.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: And immediately followed by yourself,
3 General Cooper, until March 2009?

4 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Correct.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: We have got up to three hours. Whether we
6 need all of this, we will see. Can I just record, as
7 I normally do, that the Inquiry has access to a very
8 large stack of government papers, including the most
9 highly classified for the period we are talking about.
10 We are developing the picture both of policy debates and
11 decision-making and events, and these evidence session
12 are important in complementing our thinking and the
13 documentary evidence.

14 It is important that witnesses are open and frank
15 and at the same time we have to respect national
16 security in these hearings. We recognise that witnesses
17 are giving evidence based on recollection. We will, of
18 course, check what we hear against the papers of the
19 time to which we have access and some of which are still
20 coming in.

21 I remind every witness that he will later be asked
22 to sign a transcript of the evidence to the effect that
23 the evidence they have given is truthful, fair and
24 accurate.

25 With those preliminaries, I will ask

1 Sir Martin Gilbert to start the questions.

2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: General Rollo, we heard this morning
3 that the Coalition force was responsible for security
4 until the CPA was wound down in June 2004. Where did
5 specific responsibility for security, including law and
6 order and police, lie when you took over in July?

7 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Well, I reckoned it lay with me.
8 Clearly, the political authority, in formal terms at
9 least, had shifted with the transfer of authority. But
10 as I understood it, we still had the overall
11 responsibility for maintaining -- the coalition forces
12 still had overall responsibility for maintaining
13 security.

14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Were there other ways in which the
15 change affected your mission, the change of the ending
16 of the CPA?

17 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Yes, I think so. I mean, I wasn't
18 there. I took over four days after the transfer of
19 authority. So while I had been and visited before,
20 clearly I wasn't in command while the CPA was still
21 there. But, again, as I understand it, when it was
22 there, there was a -- at least the potential for
23 a coordinated governance and economic approach within
24 the coalition, held within the coalition, and afterwards
25 then the Iraqi Interim Government under Prime Minister

1 Allawi was in place and the Governors in each province
2 had responsibility for the politics and the
3 administration there.

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: What was the security situation when
5 you arrived, and how did it evolve?

6 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Okay. In the south, when I arrived,
7 it was basically quiet. I did not have the problems
8 that existed further north, where there was a pretty
9 full-scale, I think, Sunni insurgency going on. There
10 was only a very small Sunni population and it was
11 keeping its head down. You know, the Shia effectively
12 had won. Their government was now in control in
13 Baghdad. So there wasn't, or shouldn't have been, any
14 question of a sort of Shia insurrection.

15 But, of course, the politics were completely
16 immature and the Shia disagreed with each other, whether
17 that was the Sadrists and Badr in Al-Amarah, or
18 different political factions within Basra itself or,
19 indeed, disagreements between the various governors and
20 Baghdad.

21 And on top of that, there was good old-fashioned
22 tribal fighting particularly in the criminal gangs north
23 of Basra, and there was straight criminality as well.

24 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How did you cope with that? What did
25 you have at your disposal to deal with that?

1 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Well, I had Multi-National Division
2 South East, which was about 13,000 to 14,000 people,
3 about 8,000 British, 3,000 Italians, a very good Danish
4 battalion, some Romanians, Czechs and a number of
5 smaller contributions.

6 In addition to that, there was a -- in my area there
7 was no Iraqi army. There was what had just become the
8 Iraqi National Guard and subsequently became part of the
9 Iraqi army later on, but that was very small. It was
10 a single brigade. And there were a fairly large number
11 of policemen. In theory, in Basra there were anything
12 up to 28,000 policemen across the province, but they
13 varied widely in effectiveness.

14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: You felt you could cope with this?
15 There was no storm on the horizon or worries on the
16 horizon?

17 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: In July when I took over, things were
18 actually very quiet. I used to take part in the evening
19 conference call with all the divisional commanders, and
20 my colleagues in the north would have lots to report and
21 I had very little.

22 The Sadrist disturbances that had happened in April
23 and May had died away, they were keeping quiet, and
24 I think overall there was still a slight moment of
25 euphoria following the transfer of authority.

1 That didn't last, and in early August there was
2 a clash in Najaf between US forces and the Mahdi Army,
3 the Sadrists. I don't think it was just because of the
4 clash, I think they felt under pressure. They may have
5 been pressurised by other people and they might have
6 been short of money, I think. But the result was -- or
7 the result escalated in Najaf to the extent there then
8 began to be a fairly major, predominantly US operation
9 for the reconrol of Najaf. There was a lot of fighting
10 in the cemetery and Al-Sadr himself was headquartered in
11 the Imam Ali Mosque there, and that caused tremendous
12 angst, I think, right across the Shia south. I think
13 quite wrongly. Or they were very uncomfortable with the
14 US -- pictures of US air attacks on Najaf and scenes of
15 fighting in areas which they regarded as extremely holy
16 and were extremely holy to them. And, I think quite
17 unfairly, they blamed the Americans -- or there was
18 a tendency to blame the Americans and, therefore, the
19 coalition and, therefore, us for what was happening.

20 The result of that was that call from the Sadrists,
21 I think, for a general attack on the coalition in the
22 south I think to take the pressure off them there. And
23 the immediate impact of that was attacks in
24 Al Nasiriyah, in Al Amarah and in Basra.

25 I think the important thing for me was not so much

1 the attacks themselves, but the context. And the
2 context was this unhappiness with what was going on,
3 which I felt meant that we had to play our response
4 extremely carefully, because if we lost Shia consent
5 overall, clearly that became a strategic threat to the
6 coalition's operations.

7 Our response differed in each place. In
8 Al Nasiriyah, the Italians responded, there were
9 negotiations, the Sadrists subsided. In Al Amarah, the
10 British battle group there, fought the Sadrists to
11 a standstill over a period of about a month, and in
12 Basra it was particularly difficult as there was no
13 Governor and the Council were united only in believing
14 that they did not want what was going on in Najaf to
15 happen there.

16 So we played it quite long and we waited for,
17 I think, the right moment when we would have -- when the
18 Sadrists had made a sufficient nuisance of themselves,
19 the public opinion would be happy with firm measures to
20 remove them.

21 In the event the conflict was resolved when Sistani,
22 Ayatollah Al-Sistani, came back rather dramatically from
23 his sick bed in London and produced a negotiated
24 solution, and that changed the mood absolutely
25 dramatically. People were convinced that everything

1 would now come right and that really set the scene for
2 the next period.

3 Shall I pause there or do you want me to go on?

4 THE CHAIRMAN: It is a very complex and shifting picture,
5 isn't it, with the politics going on. Is the opposition
6 to the coalition forces in your area at that time really
7 about us being -- or was it about trying to get
8 political advantage between different groupings within
9 the local population in the south-east?

10 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: I didn't feel there was general
11 opposition, certainly not to the extent of a general
12 feeling that we shouldn't be there and that that
13 justified armed attack on us.

14 I think the Sadrists at that stage had a degree of
15 sympathy because of what was going on in Najaf. When
16 Najaf was finished, the circumstances changed and I felt
17 then that people had started to focus on the elections.
18 There was a general wish to get back to where they had
19 been before, which was focusing much more on, you know,
20 getting back to normal and improving their own daily
21 lives, and that things which got in the way of that,
22 including Sadrist criminality or terrorist attack, would
23 not get much sympathy. And that created a very
24 different environment for the way that we were able to
25 respond to it.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. I don't think it is for this Inquiry to
2 try to follow tactical shifts or whatever, but in
3 general terms it seems to me that with a very shifting
4 situation you were probably having to adjust your forces
5 and approach all the time. Is that right?

6 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Broadly, yes. After the -- I suppose
7 there is a question of priorities which may come up
8 here, but in broad terms we had to do three things. In
9 order to hand over, there had to be effective governance
10 and there had to be adequate Iraqi security forces. So
11 the critical path, the main effort, lay along creating
12 those forces. I was directed to do that and I was quite
13 clear about it.

14 At the same time, we had to get there, and for that
15 to happen and to maintain overall consent, it seemed to
16 me there had to be economic development and
17 reconstruction, about which I felt really strongly. And
18 that would preserve the overall level of consent. So
19 all the time one had those three lines of operation in
20 mind.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: In terms of reconstruction and economic
22 development, I mean there was a chronic shortage of
23 resources throughout the whole period, I think, from
24 what we have been hearing, but I wonder how far, as far
25 as you think that was true, that affected your own

1 military operations because of the effect on local
2 sentiment? There was a lot of disappointment we have
3 been told, to put it mildly.

4 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: I think that's fair. There was, in
5 theory, quite a lot of money around. Congress had voted
6 \$20 billion. That proved extremely difficult to get at.
7 It consisted mostly -- it was led mostly, I think, in
8 major construction projects which would clearly take
9 some time to get going. The staff required to turn that
10 into fact in terms of letting contracts and designing
11 the plants concerned were thin on the ground, and in the
12 event, what I had hoped would be a significant chunk of
13 that coming to the south never really materialised in my
14 time.

15 The next chunk of money was called CERPS, which was
16 American military money and that we did have access to.
17 We could get up to \$500,000 a time under my signature,
18 and --

19 THE CHAIRMAN: And that came straight down the joint chain
20 of command --

21 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: It did.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: -- from Baghdad --

23 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: And on the rare occasions when
24 I wanted more than that, I could apply to the
25 Corps Commander and get it.

1 British money was thinner on the ground from my
2 perspective. I was told that there was a significant
3 amount of DFID money, about £300 million, but also that
4 that had been put into the Iraq Trust Fund under the UN,
5 which I think was entirely appropriate when the UN was
6 present, but perhaps less appropriate when it wasn't.
7 And I think I had £10 million under my own hand, but
8 I could only dole it out in chunks of up to 50,000
9 without reference to the Treasury.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: £50,000 is not a very big project.

11 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: No, it didn't go very far.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Looking at the general picture of Iraq at
13 this time, there is Iraqi oil money that, from evidence
14 we have heard already, suggests that was almost
15 inaccessible. It probably dealt with sequestrating, but
16 it wasn't available to spend. You never came across
17 a trace of that sort of funding?

18 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: No, the oil money would, in theory at
19 least, have gone directly through the Ministry of Oil
20 into the central government. There was not much
21 evidence of any flow of money down from Baghdad into the
22 ministries in Basra.

23 But you asked originally about the effect. The
24 effect was important, because (a) there was a sort of
25 general sense of mood, and (b) there was a specific

1 issue over employment for young men, and if they weren't
2 being employed by us, then they were clearly open to the
3 Sadrists or anybody else who wanted to pay them.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. I have got a couple of questions which
5 verge from a layman to a professional witness on the
6 border, but one is rules of engagement. I'm thinking
7 back to Northern Ireland days. In the absence of an
8 effective police service, police force -- you have
9 euphemistically described them as somewhat mixed,
10 I think -- a lot of that task has to fall on the
11 military, the task of maintaining order, perhaps dealing
12 with serious, particularly armed, criminality.

13 Were there difficulties about that or was the
14 British Army so experienced in working that track that
15 it was all right?

16 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Not all the Iraqis were ineffective.
17 We focused on getting relatively small numbers of them
18 to a relatively good standard.

19 In answer to your point on ROE, I felt they were
20 fine. I thought that against the threat that we had,
21 self-defence rules on the whole were perfectly
22 applicable. The enemy, when he appeared -- there was no
23 doubt about who they were. They were standing there and
24 they were shooting at you and we could shoot back.

25 There were restrictions on pre-planned offensive

1 operations, but they were -- again, you can conduct an
2 operation perfectly happily and when you are attacked
3 you can respond. It wasn't an issue.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: We were told, I think by General Stewart,
5 that over time, members of the awkward squad, if I can
6 put it that way, learned what our rules of engagement
7 were. They would have their weapons on the ground just
8 in front of them knowing that it would just be
9 impossible for us to shoot and then pick them up.
10 I don't know if that sort of phenomenon was a real
11 concern.

12 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: It didn't become so. On the whole
13 things were either quiet or they were very noisy, and it
14 was straightforward.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Right.

16 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: I only had to ask for one --
17 I delegated authority for air attack in
18 Al Amarah and I had to ask for a change in the rules of
19 engagement for the Black Watch up near Baghdad later on,
20 but it was a relatively minor one.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. I think the other question I had, you
22 told us of the make-up of your forces in the
23 south-east -- 8,000 British troops, about 5,000 made up
24 of various contributions -- not so much a question of
25 was that enough, but did that give you enough

1 flexibility to respond to particular events, perhaps
2 multiple events at different places? Al Amarah was
3 a particular problem you mentioned at some point. You
4 had the forces you could shift and move around
5 sufficient for your needs?

6 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: I think just is the answer to that.

7 I was clear, though, that the answer to more forces
8 ultimately was more Iraqis, and the real trick was to
9 raise effective Iraqi forces, and that the way to do
10 that was to take relatively small numbers and to try to
11 instil into them a sense of loyalty to the state, which
12 was really quite difficult to achieve. It was either
13 the old state, which nobody liked very much in the
14 south, or it was the new one, which they didn't really
15 know and understand and that had been potentially, from
16 their perspective, appointed by the Coalition. So
17 loyalties were fragile and depended on human contact.

18 But, for instance, with the police, we formed or
19 expanded something called the TSU. You may remember the
20 initials from Northern Ireland. We gave them special
21 uniforms, better kit, more training, we recruited them
22 from ex-soldiers and the whole idea was to give them
23 an esprit de corps and a sense that they were something
24 special and were outside the normal tribal or local
25 loyalties they were otherwise subject to. And we

1 expanded that approach across four provinces.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: It is more than a year in since the invasion
3 itself now when your tour starts in this role. I just
4 want to ask generally about levels of equipment and so
5 on.

6 There were problems and difficulties right at the
7 start of the invasion, getting the right stuff in the
8 right place and finding it. Is it right that after
9 a year or more that had settled down or were you still
10 feeling the pinch?

11 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: No, I don't think so. We had the kit
12 we needed.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: And in particular moving around, moving our
14 forces around was not a difficulty? Helicopters, ground
15 movement, whatever?

16 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: General Petraeus always used to tease
17 me about helicopters and say that he had 230 in his
18 division when he arrived and how many did I have. Well,
19 14. But that was enough for what we needed to do at the
20 time.

21 In terms of vehicles, we had a sufficient number of
22 Warrior fighting vehicles, so that -- we can choose the
23 vehicles for the environment. When it became very
24 unpleasant, then we could -- we had tanks, we had
25 Warriors, which the opposition could not do serious

1 damage to, and we used them.

2 Outside of that, then we were back into Snatch Land
3 Rovers, which at that stage, while they could be -- they
4 could clearly be damaged by IEDs, they were remarkably
5 tough against the threat at that time.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Thank you.

7 We have faced a slight problem of approach. I think
8 we ought to take up the security set of issues with
9 General Cooper, despite the fact there is a year's gap
10 or more, just to see how the contrast emerged before we
11 go back into political and other matters for your own
12 time.

13 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Could I just say that after the
14 problems in August, which actually culminated in
15 September with a raid on the Sadrists which put them
16 back in their box, by December I felt that things were
17 relatively on track. Our relationships with Governors
18 were good, we had reinvested in the Iraqi Security
19 Forces who were coming along. The general sense of
20 optimism was there with the elections about to come up.
21 But I'll stop there.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: And I would like to come back a bit later on
23 particularly the Black Watch deployment to North Babil.
24 A separate thing.

25 But General Cooper, you arrived, remind me, in

1 December 2005 and -- well, what did you find when you
2 arrived?

3 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: In December 2005 an event had happened
4 in September that had produced a breaking of contact
5 between the Basra Provincial Council and Government and
6 the MND.

7 At that time, relations in the other three provinces
8 were -- the threat of Shia militias was on the increase,
9 but was containable and manageable. And I would just
10 like to pick up on a point that came out of the first
11 set of questions, and I think you said yourself,
12 Sir John, almost addressing the nature of the conflict.

13 The nature of the conflict when I arrived generally
14 was for the struggle for political and economic power
15 between the three factions that exist in Iraq. The
16 nature of the conflict in the south was for that same
17 struggle for political and economic power between the
18 various Shia political groupings. And that's, to a degree,
19 what we were seeing. The dominant threat, as General Rollo
20 mentioned, was obviously the Martyr Sadr and its
21 militia, the Jaish Al Mahdi, the Mahdi Army. And over
22 time they became increasingly active and increasingly
23 well equipped, not the least with direct assistance from
24 Iran

25 So, as I got in in December, we had had a national

1 election that had yet to produce a government and didn't
2 produce a government for five to six months, and that
3 created a vacuum, which I'm sure you will want to
4 examine. And on the security side, everything
5 was containable but there was this sense of increasing military
6 activity, particularly from the Jaish Al Mahdi.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Did you inherit pretty much the same
8 force construct --

9 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Pretty much, yes. The MND was 13,500,
10 ten nations, and the only addition I would make to
11 General Rollo's comment is in Muthanna we had
12 Australians and Japanese as well as everyone else he
13 mentioned. 13,500, ten nations.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: You mentioned the increasing technical
15 sophistication of the threat that you were facing not
16 least because of imports. Did that involve any
17 significant shift in your equipment needs or in your
18 tactical approach?

19 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Yes, the emergence of a thing called
20 the passive infrared explosively formed projectile had
21 an impact on lower level tactical issues. I have to say
22 that the response from the United Kingdom scientific and
23 defence community was very good, both in terms of
24 personal equipment and vehicles.

25 It became a tactical issue with which we could deal,

1 but it was sometimes unpleasant.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. I'm not sure what other things in
3 security policy, security activity during your tour need
4 to be got out. I suppose one way to ask it is did you
5 hand over pretty much what you inherited at the end of
6 the six months?

7 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: No, at the end of my tour, we handed
8 over the first province from coalition.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: That was, what, Al Amarah?

10 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Yes, on 13 July that year. We handed
11 Muthanna over the first province to the Iraqis. For us, a fairly
12 straightforward operation, for the Iraqis in historical
13 and constitutional issues, clearly very, very important:
14 the first recovery of their sovereignty, so to speak,
15 and for them it was very, very important.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. General Rollo mentioned earlier the
17 National Guard formation which was eventually, I think,
18 subsumed into the Iraqi Army. I think we heard from
19 another witness that their motivation, their sense of
20 loyalty and identity was really quite different from
21 that of a national army, that they were very locally
22 focused.

23 I don't know whether that phenomenon had gone away
24 by the time you took over?

25 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: I will raise two issues. The first is

1 the Iraqi army.

2 By late 2005, 2006, the nascent Iraqi Army had
3 actually made a lot of progress. The local Iraqi
4 division was the Tenth Iraqi Division -- and clearly
5 there had been, therefore, nine before it and there were
6 more to come -- and they were largely recruited locally.
7 And over time we learned that we needed to perhaps
8 consider moving them from the local area. But by and
9 large their chain of command did their very best to be
10 a national force, but nevertheless were all products of
11 our local tribes and that did have an impact.

12 The other force that needs to be touched on is the
13 police. Up until the divorce, so to speak, in
14 September 2005, we and the police training teams had
15 been able to get access to police stations in Basra.
16 And the progress, I believe -- and clearly I wasn't
17 there at the time -- I think had been quite good.

18 By keeping us out of Basra, we then were unable to
19 put our hands on the Iraqi police, and two or three
20 things happened. At the grass roots level a lot of the
21 training, a lot of the equipping that we had put in
22 disappeared, and it also allowed, in terms of this
23 struggle for political and economic power inside the
24 police force, a series of murder squads and corruption
25 to become endemic. And they were -- some of them were

1 linked to political parties, others were merely
2 gangsters.

3 But that produced a climate of lawlessness inside
4 the police, inside Basra. But because we were not
5 allowed to go back into contact until May of 2006, it
6 meant that we lost ground and we lost time. And it
7 was -- one of the key issues when we did get back to
8 Basra was the rebuilding of the Iraqi police service,
9 which was really quite difficult and became an issue for
10 the next several months.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: The term "Basra" throughout this period of
12 the discussion is Basra city?

13 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Basra City. The wider Basra province,
14 although in theory the ban on us existed, it was easy
15 to work round it.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Just as a tailpiece, you handed over
17 Al Muthanna to the Iraqi Army. Did that include the
18 policing responsibility as well?

19 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Yes, absolutely. And Muthanna was
20 absolutely ready to go. The Governor and myself had
21 a long debate about the conditions. It was Provincial
22 Council lead. They had control of the police, the
23 Ministry of Defence had control of the army. The
24 province went over in July and has been largely stable
25 ever since.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Just one other question from me and then we
2 can get back in time again.

3 Your area of operations had two other command, or
4 boundaries. You had a Multi-National Division. You had
5 two American divisions, did you, on your borders?

6 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Yes, to the north. We had a Polish
7 division to the north of Al Amarah and further to the
8 west we had American forces.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. I'm just wondering, this may even be
10 looking forward to your much later roles in Baghdad
11 itself, managing that kind of set-up with different
12 national components. Any problems for you as --

13 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: No, we were part of the Multi National
14 Corps and it is a routine issue to coordinate with your
15 boundaries, with your neighbouring formations.

16 We did that, we had liaison officers and, of course,
17 we had -- we were all under the same corps. So actually
18 it wasn't really an issue. I think the key issue for us
19 was keeping the main supply route open from Kuwait up
20 through and then on to the rest of the corps. And,
21 again, that was well established and well structured.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

23 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I would like to turn to a slightly more
24 general issue. General Lamb mentioned to us last week
25 the importance of Iraqi consent and tolerance, and

1 I wondered how respectively you found the presence or
2 absence of that impacted on what you were trying to do?
3 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: When I got there, I could walk round
4 in a soft hat quite happily. Actually when I left,
5 I could. In between, it varied very widely.

6 In Al Muthanna, as General Cooper has mentioned, it
7 was always quiet. It was like going to mid Wales is my
8 description. It was sleepy, agricultural and very
9 quiet. Al Nasiriyah most of the time was fine.
10 Al Amarah went up and down. And central Basra, for most
11 of the time, was all right and you could walk around
12 a market and talk to people. There was no -- some
13 people would look through you, but most people, if you
14 said "salaam aleikum" you would get a response.

15 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Yes, I think in a conflict with
16 the nation in which we were engaged, the consent of the
17 people is absolutely fundamental.

18 Over time -- and one of the issues I always said
19 when I was GOC MND South East was that we are not
20 talking about military success here, we are talking
21 about Iraqi success. And, of course, only the Iraqis
22 can deliver that success.

23 Now, the level of consent varied, not only
24 geographically but through time, and the difference
25 between political consent and popular consent sometimes

1 was at odds. For example, we had a great -- well, we
2 had -- in most parts of Basra we were welcomed by the
3 local people. General Rollo mentioned soft hats. But
4 at the same time we were not actually engaged in any
5 real sense politically with the local council. So
6 consent is doctrinally as well as of a matter of fact
7 a key element, arguably the centre of gravity of
8 a successful counter-insurgency campaign. And over
9 time -- and when we get to our time in Baghdad, for
10 example, I think you will see that consent grew and
11 largely it was Iraqi consent for Iraqi solutions to
12 Iraqi problems.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: There is more to say about that perhaps a bit
14 later on, but I mentioned a little while ago,
15 General Rollo, the Black Watch Battlegroup deployed to
16 North Babil, and I think we would like to hear the story
17 of that.

18 Whose idea was it, was it a good idea and how did
19 it go?

20 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Okay. Context first. In the autumn
21 of 2004 we were in the run-up to the elections. That
22 was -- all of our missions, I think, it certainly was
23 mine, was to create the conditions for successful
24 elections.

25 In Baghdad there was a view that their continued

1 lack of control of Fallujah and the area immediately
2 around it was a threat, and you could see why. There
3 were bomb-making factories in Fallujah which were
4 supplying bombers who went into Baghdad and caused
5 enormous damage.

6 But there are various ways of dealing with that,
7 which they thought through and decided in the end the
8 only way was a large scale assault. In order to get the
9 military conditions for that right, to assemble
10 sufficient number of forces, they had to draw in
11 reserves from across all the divisions across Iraq in
12 what I thought was a fairly bold and determined way.
13 And effectively they bet the ranch on a successful
14 operation in Fallujah and they took risk, particularly
15 in the north and to a much lesser extent in the south in
16 order to do so.

17 In that context I got a request from the Corps
18 Commander to say would we help. Again, context: There
19 had been a number of previous requests that we should
20 operate further north than our divisional boundary,
21 which had all in the past been turned down. Before my
22 time.

23 So I think strategically from the point of view of
24 being a coalition member, the SBMR(I) at the time in
25 Iraq, John McColl, felt strongly that we should deal

1 with this request favourably. Militarily it made
2 perfect sense. Every other division was supplying a
3 reserve. And as it happened, it occurred over the
4 period of the handover when effectively I had an extra
5 battle group.

6 So -- and we finessed the dates so that I could
7 release it while maintaining the reserve in the south.

8 So those are the two good reasons for doing it.
9 There were difficulties. It was a long way away, it was
10 an area the battle group didn't know although most of it
11 was desert, and it took a -- you know, because I sent it
12 with every extra goody I could to make sure they were as
13 self-sufficient as possible, that was a slightly
14 disproportionate use of the resources concerned and it
15 had to work very closely with an American formation at
16 a level which we would not normally do.

17 And so we had to put extra people in because the
18 radios, for instance, were not completely compatible. We
19 had to do it the old-fashioned way with liaison
20 officers. All workable, but it just takes a lot of
21 effort.

22 How did it go? Well, they had a difficult time,
23 which they did extremely well. The aim was achieved, in
24 that we clearly made a contribution to the operation.
25 They relieved an American force which was able to

1 participate, and we demonstrated we were a good
2 coalition member. And they were effective on the
3 ground. Their physical mission was to help the American
4 Marine force which was very thinly spread in the area
5 and to block routes up and down the river, but it caused
6 a huge amount of controversy at home, as far as I could
7 judge, because it was seen as an extension of what we
8 were doing. And there was a Scottish factor as well.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, and part of that domestic concern was
10 about overstretch of forces, et cetera.

11 Just one thing, you retained command of the battle
12 group, didn't you, but how did that work? Or was it not
13 quite like that?

14 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: I put them under -- or they were
15 placed under -- I retained what we call operational
16 command. So I gave the battle group commander his mission,
17 but they were under local tactical command of the local
18 American commander. So he could do certain things with
19 them. They would operate in his area and he had to
20 coordinate their operations with him. He couldn't break
21 the force up and nor could he change the mission that
22 I had given them, but it was a perfectly effective
23 normal command and control concept and we do this
24 elsewhere.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Just to round it off, despite the

1 haroush(?) at home, here, it was a successful military
2 operation of a limited scale, limited scale but
3 successful?

4 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: That was my view, yes.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: For the uninitiated can you just expand
6 a bit on the Scottish factor as well that you
7 alluded to?

8 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Well, it was the Black Watch, it was
9 a Scottish battalion. My judgment, insofar as I could
10 make it, from -- in sitting in Basra, was that there was
11 a level of political dissent in Scotland which the
12 deployment of the battle group and the casualties they
13 suffered stirred up. No more strongly or no more or
14 less than that.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Operationally that was not something that
16 you could take into account? You needed to use the
17 forces at your disposal presumably as part of a single
18 British Army?

19 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Absolutely. Nor was it something
20 that, frankly, I anticipated.

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Okay.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can I, just following on from
23 that -- you mentioned before your time that there had
24 been similar proposals, which had been rejected, to move
25 forces outside our normal area.

1 Can you just explain the way that the requests were
2 made, as I say particularly this request was made for
3 the Black Watch. To whom, and was there a degree of
4 negotiation about it?

5 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: The request came formally in a letter
6 from the corps commander to me, which I then forwarded
7 back up my own chain of command to Northwood, and I know
8 it then went to London.

9 I don't know how the previous requests were made.
10 They could have gone that way. There are a number --
11 they could have gone through the SBMR(I) of the time.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Presumably it went with the
13 recommendation from you about how easily it would be to
14 do this?

15 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: It did. I said that it was feasible.
16 I said whether you want to do this or not is above my
17 call, but tactically in my judgment it could be done.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And while this judgment was being
19 made, were you consulted further or did you just wait to
20 hear until the order came back from London?

21 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Two things happened. I was asked to
22 provide more detail on various aspects of how it could
23 work, and secondly, events became quite compressed in
24 terms of time.

25 I felt I had to give them a -- the battalion

1 concerned a warning order because they were about to go
2 back to the UK. And in order to prepare properly, they
3 had to be given notice that it was going to happen.

4 The effect of that, of course, was that the moment
5 I gave that warning order, two seconds later it was in
6 the press and I think that probably placed a degree of
7 pressure on the government at home.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Which way? Because the government
9 then -- I mean, having given an indication it might do
10 something, would be seen to be giving way --

11 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: You would have to ask them that. But
12 it certainly produced pressure to make a judgment one
13 way or the other.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Were you asked for a risk
15 assessment?

16 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Of course I was.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What was your advice?

18 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: There was a risk, but it was
19 manageable. That's why I sent an armoured infantry
20 battle group. It was the heavily most protected formation
21 that I had. I sent them with a load of extra things to
22 help and I thought that the area they were given, which
23 initially was all west of the river, west of the
24 Euphrates, was manageable. I thought the original risk
25 assessment was that it was a clearly much more

1 unpleasant area than the south normally was, but that
2 the overall level of risk would not exceed that which --
3 the circumstances we had had in August in Basra, which
4 they had been part of.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you.

6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: You've mentioned Al Muthanna province,
7 the Iraqi-isation there, but could you describe in your
8 respective times what general reconstruction and Iraqi
9 capacity building was taking place and what role the
10 military played in it?

11 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Iraqi-led reconstruction was very
12 thin on the ground. In fact, it was non-observable. In
13 terms of what we were doing, I guess there were two
14 strands, but the main one I was concerned with was my
15 own.

16 I had a so-called ops support branch in the
17 divisional headquarters and an engineering branch with
18 an engineer colonel. And then down at brigade level
19 they had a similar system, which was actually very well
20 manned. And we reinforced our limited military
21 expertise by using Territorial Army officers who had
22 relevant qualifications.

23 So we had a couple of Powergen engineers who
24 liaised with the local electricity company. We
25 focused first of all on essential services and on

1 maintaining the power system particularly
2 through August, because, I think as General Lamb
3 experienced, August is extremely hot and unpleasant.
4 When the power supply fails everybody gets very bad
5 tempered, very quickly.

6 So that was an early area of focus. As the period
7 wore on, we focused on drains because, again, in the
8 winter it floods and the system was very underdeveloped.
9 We lacked expertise to do this and I felt that (a) we
10 lacked money, and (b) we lacked expertise.

11 And there was a slightly -- in my view a slightly
12 sterile debate between short-term, so-called quick
13 impact projects which could be caricatured as just sort
14 of street cleaning for the sake of it and the rubbish is
15 there the next time, and long-term reconstruction, which
16 inevitably took much longer to put in place.

17 My view was you could have a plan, and we created
18 a plan as to what a perfect water system -- we probably
19 took it over, we improved it -- what a perfect water and
20 sewage system in Baghdad would look like and we just
21 filled in the dots.

22 So even if you had a small bit of money you could
23 use it in a way which was sensible and coherent to the
24 longer term.

25 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In terms of the funding, what were the

1 procedures whereby you could seek funding and were you
2 sometimes successful?

3 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Yes. I found that the American
4 system was extremely generous and the CERPS system we
5 could use. The Congressional money, as I said, didn't
6 flow. The British system I used for very small amounts.
7 It simply wasn't worth going through the full process to
8 get large amounts.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You mentioned that before. You just
10 didn't try the Treasury?

11 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: I tried it once.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Can you tell us what happened?

13 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: They asked for an investment
14 appraisal. Investment appraisals are things -- I
15 suppose one of the options is you don't do it at all,
16 and it took two months. I thought we haven't got time
17 to do this or the staff effort to do it, and the
18 American system was much easier so we just used that.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you just gave up on the Treasury?

20 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Yes. It was just common sense. You
21 go with the flow. There is no point -- I commented
22 towards the end of the tour that we needed a better
23 system, but -- and I also wanted a better system of
24 getting access to British expertise.

25 SIR RODERIC LYNE: While we are on this point, how much help

1 were you getting from DFID?

2 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: I think when I took over, DFID were
3 in a post-CPA phase and had not really decided what they
4 wanted to do in Basra. Later on, they were, I think,
5 working to a different set of priorities in the country
6 as a whole and were not that keen to engage in what
7 I felt were my priorities anyway, and --

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Why not?

9 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: I think they had different ones.
10 They were looking at -- as I understand it, they were
11 looking at Iraq as a whole. They wanted to spread their
12 money over the entire country.

13 The staff in Basra, in the consulate, felt that this
14 was where their place should be, with the consul,
15 working as a team up there, and I got to the stage of
16 saying I wanted to let the contract with Mott MacDonald,
17 the British engineering firm which were there, and they
18 decided in that case they would supply a couple of
19 people because they felt they wouldn't look very good,
20 which I agree with.

21 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Did you have direct contact with DFID
22 representatives? Were they part of your life?

23 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: I saw them when I went to see the
24 Consul and I had regular weekly meetings with him. But
25 they were not intimately engaged in what I felt they

1 should have been, which was an integrated effort.

2 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Despite the fact that the
3 British Government, of which DFID is a part, had decided
4 that the southern four provinces would be an area of
5 special British effort? They didn't seem to to be
6 working to that part of the agenda?

7 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: It didn't feel like that. I mean, to
8 me the way this should have been working was that our
9 contribution to the campaign was, as you described,
10 a coordinated effort to improve conditions in the south
11 across the board.

12 The -- that was certainly true of us and that
13 clearly was the major British military effort. I didn't
14 get that feeling, for reasons I guess I can understand,
15 that that was the case across the board.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: How about your relationship with the
17 Consul General in Basra?

18 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Simon Collis I thought was absolutely
19 excellent. I got on very well with him, we met
20 regularly and he had a very good feel for local
21 politics. I had no difficulty there at all.

22 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Good.

23 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: General Cooper, can I ask the same
24 question of you?

25 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: I think the key about this is a couple

1 of the principles of counterinsurgency are have
2 a long-term plan and having an integrated government.
3 That means you have got to have an Iraqi solution.

4 We worked at local level with the -- at each
5 province with the Iraqi subcommittee of the council that
6 was working on this and we actually even took people out
7 of the country to -- the Lebanon, I think, at least on
8 one occasion, to build a plan with them. So it was
9 theirs It was their priorities, their plan and their
10 ownership.

11 But there is a lesson here in terms of resources.
12 If you wanted to deliver an integrated comprehensive
13 approach inside a counterinsurgency campaign, resources
14 form part of that. And the Americans were talking
15 about, and still talk about, money as a weapons system.

16 I bid for and was given \$66 million of Commanders'
17 Emergency Response Programme, US money, and before
18 I left, I think we bid for, and I suspect my successor
19 got, about another 17 million in that year. I could not
20 get anything like that in a short-term basis from the
21 UK.

22 Now, I don't whinge about that. Comparing American
23 resources with the UK is always a slightly wasted
24 effort. DFID were involved to a large degree, quite
25 rightly, in longer term development. And if you look at

1 Basra now, I think (inaudible) figure of 750 million
2 spent over the last seven or eight years, and they
3 produced statistics talking about schools, water supply
4 and I think that's all jolly good.

5 And this is part of the tension inside a campaign of
6 this nature: It takes time to deliver. And you can
7 focus on the short-term, which by and large I think the
8 military tended to, because we could do that, but you
9 have also got to put it hand in hand with a long-term
10 firm, comprehensive development programme that we can
11 get involved in but in which the Iraqis absolutely have
12 to have ownership.

13 Iraqi money did not come on line in 2005/2006
14 because, quite frankly, it wasn't capable of coming on
15 line. If you then looked at -- when Bill and I were
16 then -- 2007/2008, the government was more mature, it
17 had access to greater funds and the result was better.

18 And, again, this goes back to this time issue, it
19 takes time for things to change. It takes time for
20 reconstruction to come on line, it takes time for that
21 to have an effect on the local population to build
22 consent.

23 So, yes, it was difficult. We made progress as and
24 when we could, but I was always conscious that the
25 Iraqis were going to deliver this, not us.

1 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: During your time did the security
2 situation have an impact on the pace of the
3 improvements?

4 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Clearly, places, for example, like
5 Al Amarah if we were engaged in a significant action
6 then it would slow things down. But interestingly,
7 again, a council led by the (inaudible) Office of the Martyr Sadr
8 political party, they called themselves Hussein
9 ideology, but they were actually Sadrist, even when
10 things were difficult we had access to a very good
11 development subcommittee inside the Council. So they
12 played the politics and the redevelopment reconstruction
13 issues sometimes in parallel.

14 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Were there specific improvements that
15 you had seen by the end of your time which made an
16 impression?

17 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Yes, although -- over six or seven
18 months, yes, of course. One would see more water,
19 better sewerage in certain areas, but the bits weren't
20 joined and will not be joined for a long time.

21 We have to remember that the south generally is the
22 victim of 30 years plus of Saddam's neglect of it and
23 you can't repair that overnight. We have been there
24 seven or eight years, it is going to take many more
25 years before an Iraqi solution to this is going to

1 develop and be seen.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Still on the tolerance and the consent, there
3 is -- individual events can bear on this, I guess.

4 I just wanted to ask each of you about one particular
5 aspect which had both impact here at home in the UK in
6 terms of negative publicity and to ask you what, if any,
7 effect that had more generally on the situation in the
8 south-east. But the first, I suppose, is General Rollo.

9 You deployed the Black Watch to Dogwood Camp and
10 that made a considerable stir here in the UK. What
11 about the effect on the ground, in terms of public
12 opinion, tolerance, consent, whatever? Any?

13 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: In the south? No. I have to say the
14 attitude of the Shias is that if the Sunni were being
15 given a hard time, this was time enough. And they
16 were -- we thought there might be some blowback from
17 Fallujah and there was always, I suppose, the
18 possibility that the Sadrists might have made common
19 cause with them, but they didn't in the end and so there
20 wasn't.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: And are local Iraqi media getting underway at
22 this time?

23 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Yes, they were.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Rather a lot? In terms of channels, outlets
25 and whatever?

1 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Again, most the news for the national
2 channels were in the north. The south was quiet, so it
3 wasn't news.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, same question, General Cooper, for you.
5 I'm thinking of the alleged abuse photos that were
6 published in the News of the World. It was in your
7 time, I think, or wasn't it?

8 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: This is in Al Amarah or ...?

9 THE CHAIRMAN: I can't remember where it was alleged.
10 I think it probably was. There was a great stir at
11 home, News of the World photos, they turned out to be
12 without substance. Any back impact on the ground? No.

13 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: The only issue I remember having an
14 impact on the ground was the publication of the Danish
15 cartoon. Everything else was manageable and could be
16 dealt with through sensible negotiation and debate with
17 our Iraqi local interlocutors.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Hilary Synnott said something that
19 I certainly found interesting about information flows in
20 the south-east, and he said that really one of the most
21 important and powerful information sources and networks
22 is simply street gossip. What I don't know and forgot
23 to ask him, or didn't ask, was whether we had the means
24 to become aware of what was being said around and is
25 there any way at all of influencing that, stopping false

1 rumours or denying false stories?

2 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: You had -- shall I kick off? You
3 clearly had a means. You had -- you had your own
4 interpreters, you had local staff who came in and off
5 camp. You had contacts through patrols and patrol
6 reports coming in. You had your contacts between the
7 leadership of the various elements and the chain of
8 command with their local Iraqi interlocutors. So you
9 could pick up rumours very easily.

10 You could do your best to counterbalance them,
11 again, by that interchange right through and, you know,
12 you could do joint press conferences. We held a weekly
13 press conference, I think, in the PIC but -- you know,
14 you tended to be slightly after the event and there were
15 some long -- they were very quick to pick up on
16 something, rightly or wrongly, often wildly wrongly and
17 wrongly.

18 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: I think the only thing I would add to
19 that is in Iraq perception a reality -- that's a direct
20 quote from Ambassador Ryan Crocker -- on many occasions.
21 And, of course, there is a cultural and a political
22 divide there. We were the guests in the country and,
23 therefore, Iraqi perceptions would always be seen
24 through that prism.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: I think we are coming up to a natural time

1 for a break -- before we turn to Baghdad after the
2 break. But I wonder whether either of you are want to
3 make any final observations about your time in Basra,
4 and then I think I will ask Sir Lawrence and
5 Baroness Prashar. And all of you. Perhaps we will go
6 round the table.

7 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: General Cooper, you have said
8 several times that it is something that the Iraqi people
9 had to do for themselves and you talked earlier about
10 tolerance and consent. But consent seemed to have
11 declined since the invasion.

12 Could you have done something different to sort of
13 maintain that consent?

14 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Influence operations were important and
15 working with the local politicians to try and get our
16 message across peacefully and proactively with local
17 Iraqis was important. But the fact of the matter is --
18 I go back to this thing of the perception -- we were
19 outsiders in their country. We did a series of
20 campaigns that made the point that we are here for a
21 finite time to achieve an effect to the benefit of the
22 Iraqis. The two watchwords I used in my influence
23 campaign were "sovereignty" and "prosperity", because
24 that's effectively -- our analysis was that is what the
25 people of southern Iraq want. They want their own

1 sovereignty. They want to be in charge. They want us
2 gone and they want prosperity. They want something that
3 they didn't have and they want that for their children
4 and their children's children.

5 But consent is a perishable commodity and over time
6 that consent was eroded. It was, of course, fed by --
7 that diminishing consent -- by political developments,
8 which was to our benefit: which was the establishment of
9 an Iraqi democracy. If you can find a population to
10 cast their democratic vote to express their political
11 feelings, don't be surprised if a foreign force that is
12 sitting inside their country, as a result of that, their
13 growing democracy is seen as something they don't
14 particularly want there.

15 So I think we did what we could, we were as
16 proactive as I could be within resources, but there were
17 certain political parameters which in some cases created
18 friction, but on the others I welcomed. As I said, in
19 some ways despite the fact the security situation may
20 have been affected by diminishing consent, actually in
21 the longer term it was a sign of campaign success,
22 because it was putting the Iraqis in the position they
23 needed to be in.

24 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: General Rollo, do you have any
25 comment on declining consent?

1 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: I felt -- I go back to some of the
2 comments that have been made before about expectations.
3 There was a -- probably a wildly unrealistic expectation
4 that we were going to wave a wand and southern Iraq
5 would suddenly leap ahead. But I could see why, and
6 I share, I think, their sense of frustration.

7 Southern Iraq is dirt poor. It is dirt poor by
8 comparison to Kuwait on one side, but it is poor even by
9 comparison with Baghdad. You go round Baghdad and you
10 could be in Italy, large chunks of it anyway, or in
11 southern Italy. It is developed, organised everything
12 else, and southern Iraq was not.

13 And I felt that there was an opportunity there and,
14 indeed, a necessity, when you look at the fact that the
15 line of communication flowed through there, that we had
16 the country's one major port, that we were sitting on
17 top of a huge oil and gas reserve to really flow money
18 in. This is not a comment about the British Government,
19 but as a coalition, and I felt that if we had been able
20 to do that, then we would have changed the dynamics of
21 the -- the politics and their reaction to us.

22 Now, the counter-argument is that security even then
23 wasn't good enough, and that if security isn't good
24 enough then the money just pours away. I'm expressing
25 my personal feeling there rather than commenting on the

1 accuracy of the judgment.

2 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can I ask another question on the
3 short-term and the long-term. We have been very struck
4 by the fact that it is six-month assignments. How much
5 are you able to build on the work of your predecessors
6 given that it is a short-term six-month space? If we
7 are looking at the long-term, I think it is important
8 that the work is built upon.

9 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: You will probably be uniquely placed
10 to judge the accuracy of this statement, but I felt that
11 we came -- firstly, six months was too short. I must be
12 quite clear about this. It was a vastly complicated
13 place, for commanders in particular, particularly the
14 divisional commander. I think longer tours would have
15 been entirely sensible.

16 But we did come at it, I think, with a common
17 background of experience, a common doctrine and we were
18 all, I think, trying to achieve the same things.

19 I would be very surprised if you do not find a common
20 emphasis on security sector reform as the key to our
21 main effort and the key to success. That had to be
22 accompanied also by progress in governance and progress
23 in the economy. Those are the three pillars of any
24 successful effort in this sort of situation.

25 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: I actually said in my Post Operation

1 Report when leaving Basra that I thought that my
2 successor's successor should do at least 12 months.
3 I actually said I would be prepared to bring my family
4 to live in Kuwait and do a longer term in southern Iraq.
5 That was the type of approach that I think we should
6 have taken.

7 I think in terms of what does lack of continuity
8 mean, I think there is a case here, and whereas I agree
9 with General Rollo absolutely that successive officers
10 commanding looked at the key issues, clearly I looked at
11 it slightly differently to my predecessor and my
12 successor looked at it slightly different to me, his
13 successor looked at it slightly different to him. And
14 if I had a comment that I have given before to military
15 inquiries it is that the continuity of command from
16 Permanent Joint Headquarters, for example, could have
17 been, I think, slightly tighter. And there is perhaps
18 a confusion between what we call mission command -- tell
19 me what to do but not how to do it -- and this very
20 central operational-level continuity of command that
21 I think across the piece could have been better.

22 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can you unpack that for me, "it
23 could have been a bit tighter"?

24 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: As I say, the people I mentioned who
25 were in Basra, in command, quite rightly took their own

1 views. But the operational commander, the British
2 operational commander was in Permanent Joint
3 Headquarters -- this is not a criticism of an
4 individual, it's of an institution because there were
5 several people involved. I think the continuity of
6 command and direction could have been slightly tighter
7 to avoid these slight shifts, and sometimes quite
8 significant shifts actually, between one commander and
9 the next, compounded by short tour lengths.

10 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: The same comment could be made, of
11 course, from the coalition commanders in Baghdad. But
12 I suspect -- I don't know what your direction was, mine
13 was to keep it quiet. I think that's a phrase you have
14 heard before.

15 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So there was not the complexity of
16 having to, sort of, have a direct command from Baghdad?

17 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Well, command is command and in terms
18 of maintaining continuity of approach, it rests with the
19 responsible commanders and the responsible commanders
20 were in Baghdad.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Slightly different issues, although
22 they overlap. But just first, General Cooper, you were
23 there when there was the terrible bombing in Samarra
24 in February 2006. Did that have a big impact on the
25 mood, the atmosphere, even in the south?

1 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Yes, but it was moderately transient.

2 The point General Rollo made was that the Sunni
3 population in the south was really quite small and over
4 my seven-month tour, the rate of murders of Sunnis did
5 go up, but it wasn't massive and a lot of that would be
6 because they kept themselves to themselves and kept out
7 of the way.

8 There was huge emotion involved when the Golden
9 Mosque was destroyed and, of course, we all got very
10 concerned, but over the next several weeks it calmed
11 down.

12 The key issue obviously was it had greater impact,
13 for example, in Baghdad where the Sunni and Shia
14 populations are larger and are cheek by jowl.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And this was the time when people
16 started to talk about Iraq heading towards a civil war.

17 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Which, of course, did not emerge.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: My other questions are going back to
19 the question of the police. We heard this morning from
20 Sir Jeremy about the -- talking to the Prime Minister in
21 September 2003 and hence dressing the security and
22 importance of the police as being the key to that, and
23 they had a sense then that this was probably unrealistic
24 in terms of what could be achieved, and the point was
25 made that indeed it is still a problem.

1 Now, you have described taking over the situation
2 when there was a real problem, because the Basra police
3 were beyond your influence. Now, this was obviously
4 a deal that took place after the incident of
5 September 2005, so before your time. But you were
6 living with the after effects of it. Could you just
7 explain a bit what that deal was and with whom, that
8 kept us out of Basra?

9 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: It wasn't a deal, it was a political
10 statement by the Basra Provincial Council that as
11 a result of the incident that saw -- that took place at
12 the police station in September, that they would
13 disassociate themselves from it. As I said, largely
14 that occurred -- we would go into a police station and
15 some policemen would still allow us in, but the vast
16 majority were following the provincial council direction
17 that they weren't to have anything to do with us.

18 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But we didn't try to get it
19 reversed?

20 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: If you jump forward to the time that
21 Prime Minister Malaki became Prime Minister -- I go back
22 to this point -- is I said to General Casey and
23 General Chiarelli, my two United States coalition
24 superiors in Baghdad, this is the Shia south with the
25 Shia government in Baghdad. Only that Shia government

1 can deliver the political conditions to make security
2 and the economy get better.

3 Prime Minister Malaki came down, I think, in June in
4 a first attempt to try and produce some form of
5 political solution or improvement on the provincial
6 council, which was run by a governor called Wa'ali,
7 who was actually a bit of a minority government. He was
8 a bit of a -- and the whole Council was split.

9 That had limited success. In an Iraqi way, they
10 produced a council of five or a committee of five who
11 were going to go and try and take progress forward. By
12 that time we had got back into the police stations.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How were you able to achieve that?

14 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Because in May a Lynx helicopter was
15 shot down over Basra, which created a major security
16 incident. And after that the Provincial Council decided
17 that perhaps they needed to do some business with us, so
18 they re-engaged with us.

19 It wasn't always perfect, but it was better than it
20 had been. As I said, then the Prime Minister came down
21 and tried to move things forward. I'm sure you are
22 going to touch on this in the second session, but the
23 political conditions weren't right for him to achieve
24 what he later achieved in 2008 with Charge of the
25 Knights. But it was an attempt and, again, it

1 demonstrated this point that only the Iraqis can produce
2 a long-term success in their own country. We can
3 assist, we can guide, we can kickstart it, but this is
4 a political issue and only the Iraqi political system
5 can deliver it.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In terms of delivering a reliable
7 police force, you indicated before that this had been
8 a real setback.

9 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Yes, absolutely. In the absence of
10 a central government in Baghdad to exert political
11 authority across the country, to a degree it was
12 a vacuum, chaos runs into vacuums. There was another
13 type of vacuum inside the police service inside Basra,
14 and as I said, murder squads and a lack of decent
15 policing resulted.

16 This is Basra. I would just stress that the other
17 three provinces, we continued to making progress and we
18 had access to the police there. Thus they achieved
19 Provincial Iraqi Control in advance of Basra.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How did you try to rectify the
21 situation when you were back in contact with the police
22 in Basra?

23 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: The only way you can do it is to get
24 police training teams and soldiers into each individual
25 police station. And actually what we did was we did

1 a complete review of the whole of the Basra police
2 stations and were then able to grade them -- which part
3 of the city was better than which where do we have to go
4 back to the very beginning. Most of it was pretty
5 depressing. Most of it was we needed to start again.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Given that they are there and
7 presumably they're making, in their terms, rather good
8 use of their positions, how do you start afresh with
9 them? Do you have to remove the people, do you?

10 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Yes, some policemen could be removed
11 and, again, in a immature political country it was very
12 difficult to say "you are removed". Quite often people
13 were told they were removed and weren't removed. Others
14 were removed, went away and came back.

15 We began to develop with Baghdad a new Internal
16 Affairs division that we put on the airport, that we
17 were resourcing and we were getting Baghdad trained and
18 the idea was that they would be grown independent of
19 people in Basra, have no connection with people in Basra
20 and over time would be able to move into their own
21 police service and begin to exercise the law of the
22 sovereign nation rather than internally grown policemen.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Was that achieved?

24 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Over time it was to a greater or lesser
25 degree, and, again, you have to jump forward two or

1 three years to see the effect. The police force in
2 Basra today is far better than it was in 2005 and 2006
3 and, again, that goes back to the issue of time,
4 training and resources.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But the major complaint, criticism,
6 of British forces was that to some extent we had lost
7 the police, we had lost our ability to influence this
8 critical area of security?

9 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Yes, but you have got to go back to the
10 reason why. And the other point is, of course, if the
11 United Kingdom wants to be involved in complex issues
12 like this, it needs to understand that the army can
13 do -- the military can do so much in terms of producing
14 a basic police service, but only policemen can train and
15 develop policemen and we do not have an expeditionary
16 capability to do that.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Were you being given any help --

18 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Yes, I had an outstandingly good senior
19 policeman with a very good team, very brave policemen
20 whose terms and conditions of service are different to
21 ours, but did their very best to get in to the police
22 stations when we had access again in Basra. As I say,
23 in the meantime, they were working in Dhi Qar province and
24 Maysan province and in Muthanna province. And when they
25 had access, they went back in and started all over

1 two aspects to the job. You were the DCG, the Deputy
2 Commanding General, the MF-I and you were the so-called
3 Senior British Military Representative in Iraq.

4 My predecessor, Graeme Lamb, had ploughed
5 a particular furrow and I think each SBMR(I) developed
6 the job in a slightly different way. The way that
7 I chose to do it was to -- as you might guess after my
8 comments this morning, was really to push on three
9 aspects in particular. The first one I had, which
10 Graeme had set up, was to oversee the work of a joint
11 MNF-I US Embassy Iraq team, some call it the Energy
12 Fusion Cell, which was responsible for looking at
13 essential services, including the development of
14 a coherent Iraqi energy strategy. It proved elusive.

15 The second one was to work with the newly appointed
16 economic coordinator in the US embassy to try to bring
17 together what the military were doing, what the various
18 bits of the US Government were doing and what the Iraqis
19 were doing to improve economic development and
20 capacity building. And I worked very closely with
21 somebody called Ambassador Charlie Ries and with the
22 Deputy Prime Minister, Barham Salih, to do that.

23 The third one was -- specific one was to set up
24 a task force to develop an Iraqi national initiative on
25 the port at Umm Qasr.

1 But there were -- there were a number of other niche
2 areas. The nice thing about being a deputy is you can
3 put your fingers in wherever you want to within the time
4 available.

5 As SBMR(I) then clearly I was responsible for making
6 sure that on the one hand the government in London
7 understood what was happening in Baghdad and what issues
8 were likely to arise for them, and conversely that --
9 secondly and conversely, that General Petraeus was aware
10 of what the government's position was. And thirdly,
11 generally trying to make sure, or contributing to the
12 Ambassador's effort to make sure that everything was
13 joined up, that the British effort as a whole was joined
14 up. And I think those tasks remained constant.

15 The stress you place between the two would vary over
16 time and it did in my time. I put a fair amount of time
17 into the British side at the beginning, less in the
18 middle and a bit more at the end.

19 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How was the coordination of the other
20 UK and US agencies? An important aspect of your work?

21 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: My personal coordination with the
22 ambassador, Christopher Prentice, and with the head of
23 DFID for Iraq, Johnny Baxter, was very good. I got on
24 well with them, saw a lot of them and I would like to
25 think we were reasonably joined up.

1 With the -- on the American side, and I was a member
2 of the command team -- I went to all the major
3 briefings. I went to one or two that Graeme had
4 avoided, and I think I was as in the know as I could
5 expect to be, and I was -- General Petraeus was happy
6 that I developed the lines that I have mentioned and
7 encouraged me to do so.

8 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: And you were able to push these various
9 enterprises forward effectively?

10 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: With varying levels of success. They
11 were not easy, but yes.

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Can I just come back on this? Why on
13 earth were things like energy and economic development
14 military matters four years after the conflict, a year
15 after the Malaki government had come into power?
16 Shouldn't this have been put into the hands of
17 civilians? I mean, are you qualified to lead economic
18 development strategies?

19 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Of course I'm not. On the energy
20 side there are a number of major interfaces with the
21 security situation. The northern pipeline was
22 repeatedly blown up and as a result a third of the
23 potential Iraqi oil exports were not happening. The
24 result of that was eventually we fortified significant
25 chunks of the line literally by digging a berm and

1 a ditch and a fence and garrisoning it for stretches of
2 100 kilometres or more. That was quite expensive, but
3 it was dirt cheap compared with the opportunity cost of
4 not getting it out.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Should somebody have thought of doing
6 that rather earlier?

7 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Possibly, but they did do it then and
8 it took time to do and it worked. And in some curious
9 way the attacks dried up even in other sectors as
10 a result. I suspect they worked out a different way of
11 making money out of it. There was a huge nexus between
12 security and corruption in the oil refinery, for
13 instance, at Baiji, north of Baghdad feeding into the
14 insurgency.

15 The security, the oil infrastructure as a whole, was
16 absolutely critical to the government's ability to fund
17 the campaign. By then they were -- Iraqi income,
18 government income was becoming significant. They were
19 spending their own money to develop their own forces.

20 On the power side, again, the Sunni insurgents in
21 particular -- the Shia did not do it on the whole --
22 used to attack the power system as a way of discrediting
23 the government. They never did it, for whatever reason,
24 in a completely coordinated fashion, but they did do it
25 repeatedly and it damaged the credibility of the

1 government.

2 So, again, maintaining the security of that and
3 making sure that when breaks occurred they were
4 corrected as -- or they were repaired as rapidly as
5 possible was important.

6 One of the initiatives I took was to try to
7 develop -- to start to develop a military engineering
8 battalion which could conduct work like that because in
9 very high threat areas the civilians would not go.

10 So the economic side, there continued to be a -- as
11 you went down the command structure into the provinces,
12 there were -- there was very close military liaison
13 between the military chain of command, the Provincial
14 Reconstruction Teams and the local Iraqi government and
15 if they were working properly, they were working as
16 a team.

17 The -- so, again, trying to make sure that where we
18 have -- we were, for instance, spending military money,
19 we were spending it in accordance with -- if you like,
20 embassy and Iraqi Government priorities in a joined-up
21 way was an important part of it. Otherwise we could
22 fritter money all over the place.

23 Does that begin to answer that question?

24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: That's very helpful.

25 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Can I turn to you?

1 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: By the time, I took over from
2 General Rollo, the American forces were at 140,000
3 strong, the surge was at its highest and those 140,000
4 troops were under the direct command of an American
5 three-star Corps Commander. I did not feel in the least
6 put out by the fact that, as Deputy Commanding General,
7 actually I wasn't going to have my hands on that,
8 because the British contribution at that point had
9 diminished significantly from the 13,500 troops
10 I commanded in Basra down to 5,000 or 6,000 at that
11 particular time. I felt that's just a fact of life,
12 quite frankly.

13 I picked up the economic line of development that
14 General Rollo described, and just picking up something
15 you said there, Sir Roderic, I mean, as I operated in
16 various theatres around the world one thing that has
17 become very clear to me is when you mix military and
18 civilian in an integrated team, what you get is greater
19 than the sum of the parts. And in the energy fusion
20 cell there was a very good mix of military, American and
21 British civilian expertise and Iraqi expertise. And
22 actually what came out of that was better than just
23 having any single element in it.

24 That approach we applied elsewhere. Bill mentioned
25 Umm Qasr. We developed the transport world to try and

1 help the Iraqi infrastructure develop an intermodal
2 transport system. I got involved in a similar joint
3 aviation group that eventually handed over Iraqi
4 aerospace to Iraqis on 1 January this year. We
5 developed a railway group, again, mixing civilians and
6 military. We developed a thing called the public finance
7 management action group. It is not a particularly
8 short name, but it was aimed to help the Iraqi Finance
9 Ministry deliver a better budget execution and, again,
10 it was a very good mix of military people with the
11 US Treasury people who had been surged in to help.

12 And we also did something similar in trying to get
13 best practice across the various Iraqi ministries
14 through a ministerial coordination committee. So, again,
15 a mix of military and civilians all aimed to have
16 a synergistic effect to help the Iraqis help themselves
17 to develop.

18 And that was my particular line. We, of course --
19 I still had the Senior British Military Representative
20 in Iraq position, and as the year went on, increasingly,
21 as we looked to renew our own strategic agreement with
22 Iraq, that had increasing weight.

23 But I think in terms of the Deputy Commanding
24 General, the point was still there: it gave us
25 influence, it gave us access, it made us part of the

1 command team. But let's not pretend that as we
2 diminished and the Americans grew we were actually going
3 to have a command role there.

4 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I turn now to the surge and ask
5 General Rollo what was your involvement in it and either
6 in its planning or in the execution of the surge and how
7 you regarded it in terms of an operation?

8 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Well, it was planned well before
9 I got there. I think it had its genesis, I think, in
10 late 2006. I think there was -- and the decision -- the
11 President's decision, I think, occurred around about
12 then. It didn't complete until, I think, July, more or
13 less as I arrived. It was designed, as I understood it
14 anyway, to provide time for a political -- or for
15 political development to take place on the basis that
16 this, again, was fundamentally a -- I think John used
17 the same term and certainly General Petraeus would --
18 a conflict for power. And it was designed to provide
19 a level -- force levels necessary to provide a degree of
20 stability which would allow that to happen in a way
21 which it had clearly not been happening previously.

22 I think the surge, of course, is shorthand and it
23 describes a significant element of what subsequently
24 allowed progress in the security situation to be made,
25 which was 30,000 extra US combat troops mostly

1 concentrated in Baghdad. But that was not the only
2 element of it.

3 In security terms there were a number of other
4 factors. One of them was that the American machinery to
5 train the Iraqi security forces I think had finally come
6 on line, and it was -- it produced something like
7 112,000 extra Iraqi security forces, police and army
8 over the space that of year.

9 The second factor which changed the force ratios
10 dramatically was the so-called Awakening and the
11 employment of volunteers. And that, again, added
12 roughly 100,000 and we had over 100,000 people on our
13 payroll. And perhaps most significantly, a large chunk
14 of them had probably been part of the opposition.

15 So you really suddenly found a dramatic increase in
16 the overall number of security forces and actually
17 a reduction in the opposition.

18 I think the second thing that happened -- and this
19 is a wild generalisation -- was that the Sunni parties
20 decided that if they were going to have a place in Iraq's
21 future polity, they had to make a deal then while the
22 Americans were still there and they also decided that
23 actually they didn't like AQ. AQ comprehensively
24 overplayed their hand. They began to terrorise the
25 Sunni population they were nesting in, and the tribes as

1 a result resisted and that was then the genesis of the
2 volunteer programme.

3 Thirdly, you had the Sadrist ceasefire from August
4 onwards, which didn't stop JAM terrorism, but by then it
5 could be defined as JAM terrorism because Sadr had
6 declared a ceasefire. So if the special groups were
7 still operating outside that, they were criminal. They
8 had put themselves into a place where they could be
9 dealt with.

10 Fourthly, I think there was a dramatic change in US
11 tactics. The new doctrine that General Petraeus had
12 developed said that instead of focusing on transition to
13 the Iraqis as early as possible, you couldn't rush to
14 failure. You had to partner them, and in order to do
15 that you had to be on the ground alongside them and not
16 to be commuting from these big bases outside the main
17 towns which had been the previous concept.

18 So coalition forces were deployed in small groups
19 into the major towns and smaller ones working alongside
20 bits of the Iraqi army, and co-located police force, and
21 the thought process behind this was that you had to be
22 able to -- if you want the population's not only
23 consent, but support, you had to be able to protect
24 them. So you had to be able to keep, for instance, the
25 terrorists out.

1 And I may be getting down into the detail and the
2 tactics here, but to do that you had to have obstacles
3 and to control access, so that when you cleared an area
4 it stayed clear, and all of those things were done and
5 made a considerable difference.

6 Finally, I think the economy started to flow and you
7 can see real improvements in -- on a number of metrics,
8 and in particular, though, that the flow of money coming
9 into the Iraqi Government itself, was increasing, the
10 oil price was going up, the amount of oil was
11 increasing, that allowed it to start pushing money out
12 to the provinces and to give it more legitimacy. So
13 a number of things were maturing at the same time and
14 all came together.

15 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Is this something you were able to
16 discuss with General Petraeus, have an input with him?

17 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Yes, it was, but it was well
18 underway, and one -- we are talking about touches of the
19 tiller rather than a major change. The major change had
20 occurred long before I got there.

21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Any particular touches of the tiller
22 that you feel were important?

23 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: How one dealt with the Sadrists was
24 always an area which was important to us. And the line
25 that OMS was potentially at least a legitimate political

1 movement and it reflected a real requirement in Iraqi
2 politics to represent people who were poor,
3 underprivileged and, you know, in any other polity would
4 have a political party which was devoted to improving
5 their cause. I'm not saying for a moment that that's
6 what OMS did, but they certainly drew their support from
7 them.

8 There were issues over as we handed provinces over,
9 back to the Iraqis, it was frightfully important that we
10 didn't suddenly abandon them completely. And the fact
11 that we had handed over, we would draw down military
12 forces there -- shouldn't or could have resulted in the
13 fact that at that stage we also withdrew the financial
14 resources that accompanied those forces.

15 It was very important, clearly, that we didn't do
16 that, because otherwise we were pulling the plug on the
17 thing just when you should be trying to accelerate it
18 and life should be getting better. These are small
19 issues.

20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Small but important. Thank you very
21 much.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What impact did the fact that the
23 British were not surging have on the American perception
24 of us and the Iraqi perception of us?

25 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: To a certain extent, I think

1 Richard Sheriff, one of John's successors -- there was
2 a small British surge, but it was designed to set -- it
3 was designed, quite rightly, to set the conditions for
4 handover to the Iraqis.

5 General Petraeus was quite clear that handing over
6 the provinces to the Iraqis up to and including Basra,
7 was absolutely the right thing to do. He had no
8 difficulty with that at all. He was clear, though, that
9 he would want us to be able to continue to have certain
10 effects. He wanted a command and control node there, so
11 that we had the engagement with the local polity and we
12 had visibility of what was happening, and that was not
13 unique to us. This was a policy that we developed for
14 all the provinces as we handed them over.

15 He wanted the ability to reintervene. He wanted an
16 eye kept on the border because there was concern about
17 Iranian passage of weapons over the border. He clearly
18 wanted the line of communication kept open and he wanted
19 to keep control of the airport.

20 So long as we were able to deliver those effects and
21 to push economic development, there wasn't an issue
22 on -- from that perspective, if you see what I mean.
23 This was an area where we were all trying get to.

24 The Iraqi side, I think, there were different
25 parties to. Basically they were frightfully keen for

1 the same reasons we mentioned this morning -- they
2 regarded Basra as their home turf, they didn't think
3 there was a security issue there. They thought there
4 was a political one and that they can sort it out, and
5 they were keen to get -- to regain control of it as soon
6 as they could.

7 And that was what -- the process which took us to
8 PIC and to the appointment of a Basra Operational
9 Commander, General Mohan, who reported direct to the
10 Prime Minister, and events continued from there.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: We will come on to some of those
12 events in a moment.

13 Just, again, in terms of our influence, is the logic
14 of what you are saying that our influence of the
15 Iraqi Government itself declined at this point because
16 they had less interest in what we were particularly
17 offering?

18 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: I guess that would be fair. It
19 didn't necessarily feel like that.

20 Your influence was personal. I'm sure Christopher
21 Prentice's was. And there were any number of issues to
22 engage on, on which the British position was only,
23 frankly, peripheral to a certain extent.

24 We were there, we were contributing and we actually
25 had a significant number of staff within the

1 headquarters in Baghdad whose presence was, and
2 remained, I think, to the end, much appreciated.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What was going on with capacity
4 building and our role in capacity building? I'm
5 interested, again, to pick up a question of the police,
6 but more generally, you were describing a time when
7 things had got better with the army, with the police?

8 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: The detail of what was happening in
9 Basra, you would have to ask the divisional commander at
10 the time. I very deliberately didn't focus on it. This
11 was his business.

12 In Baghdad the area I put a certain amount --
13 a considerable amount of effort into was trying to
14 develop a long-term plan for how we would contribute to
15 the Iraqi -- the Iraqis -- after we had gone,
16 effectively. That hasn't come to fruition, as it
17 happened. But we identified areas of the Iraqi Security
18 Forces, the staff college, officer training and the navy
19 where we thought that our presence would be welcome,
20 where we weren't treading on American toes and where we
21 would, I thought, have beneficial influence on the
22 long-term development of the Iraqi services. And that
23 was, at the time, welcomed.

24 They still had a residue of -- there was still
25 a residue of experience in the senior part of the army,

1 where they looked back to the British way of doing
2 things and the fact that, in their view, that had set
3 them up to be at the time, they thought, the best army
4 in the Middle East.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And in terms of Prime Minister
6 Malaki's view of all this, by this time he had been in
7 power for quite a long time, so did you have a sense
8 that whatever they thought of us, and perhaps going back
9 to a point General Cooper made beforehand of if you have
10 a democracy you have to take what democracy gives you,
11 but there was at last a Prime Minister with serious
12 authority who was able to establish --

13 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: It changed over time. There is --
14 I guess somebody may have mentioned it to you already --
15 Malaki achieved his position precisely because he didn't
16 represent a major political party. He sat in the
17 middle, and that made his position both quite strong
18 from one perspective and extraordinarily difficult from
19 another. He was constantly having to balance his power
20 base.

21 He had particular difficulty with the Sadrists, who
22 had formed part of his government, had comprehensively
23 failed to deliver -- worse than failed to deliver -- and he
24 had got rid of them temporarily. But, you know, they
25 were out there and there were a number of other factions

1 which were pulling him in different ways. I think he
2 had a tremendous boost when he personally led the
3 security forces to regain -- to calm down Karbala at the
4 end of August 2007 and he deserved to get a boost too,
5 because it was a pretty outstanding act of leadership.
6 And I think that's possibly what gave him the idea of
7 doing the same thing in Basra, although that was a much
8 more complex and difficult issue.

9 He then had a really difficult autumn, and by
10 December I think was in all sorts of trouble both
11 personally and physically almost. He was very tired and
12 then life looked up again, and for no apparent reason,
13 and he then really did begin to develop increasing
14 levels of authority, I think, as the campaign came
15 together in the spring of 2008. Authority and
16 confidence.

17 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I mean, you have mentioned this
18 issue of the Sadrists, particularly in the south. How
19 were plans developed to deal with them and how involved
20 were we in that planning?

21 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: The Sadrists overplayed their hand,
22 not actually in Basra but in the centre south, in the
23 area immediately south of Baghdad, by assassinating
24 several chiefs of police and governors in August 2007.
25 There was then a fairly major push against them led by

1 the Iraqis themselves, and they -- as a result of that,
2 Sadr declared his ceasefire which he more or less kept,
3 although there were still terrorist actions. Across
4 the -- as a strategic approach to them? I think the
5 next major shift -- and that sort of dynamic, that Sadr
6 maintained a fragile ceasefire, that there were special
7 groups operating with or without his purview around the
8 edges whom we could and did target and deal with, but
9 the organisation as a whole was one that within limits
10 we wanted to draw back into the political process.

11 That was the dynamic which lasted really throughout
12 the winter until Charge of the Knights and that very
13 sudden turn to Basra. There were then ructions in --
14 then on the roll from then -- and this is in John's time
15 rather than mine -- that then dealt with Sadr City. All
16 of that happened much faster than anybody had
17 anticipated in the spring.

18 The coalition main effort was still clearly focused
19 in the north. After Anbar, Baghdad, what was called the
20 belts around Baghdad, the major operations in the spring
21 were planned to move up the Tigris valley, past Samarra,
22 heading to Mosul and in Mosul itself. So the main enemy
23 was still AQ, but other strands of the campaign plan as
24 it developed in December 2007 was also this business of
25 drawing the Sadrists back in, dealing with them where

1 there were people still outside it and then you get into
2 other aspects of the economy and so on. I won't go on.

3 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Before we turn to General Cooper and
4 the Charge of the Knights, did you have any idea that
5 this was being planned?

6 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: I don't think it was being planned,
7 but let me give you a bit more context to that.

8 What was being planned was a deliberate operation to
9 enhance Iraqi control of Basra, and General Mohan did
10 that with British advice, worked that plan up. And he
11 brought it to Baghdad, he brought the results of that
12 planning exercise to Baghdad. There was then
13 a discussion of ways and means and a view that actually
14 the ways and means would not be available until much
15 later on in the summer, and no decision had been made on
16 whether that would be where those resources would go.

17 The Iraqi Government was developing a much greater
18 say in how the campaign was going to progress and how
19 they would want it to progress. There were other
20 options. You might have decided that you were going to
21 do a very -- undertake a very deliberate operation to
22 clear Sadr City or to restore proper Iraqi control of
23 Sadr City and leave the south for later.

24 The decision to go south the Prime Minister took was
25 taken in the space of -- as far as I'm aware, at least

1 of two or three days and it took everybody by surprise.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Were you given any forewarning that

3 this was going to happen in a matter of a few days?

4 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Yes, because clearly to move people

5 to the south, which he did, that had to be coordinated

6 with the coalition command chain. But I think there

7 was -- and it grew -- what was happening grew over the

8 weekend, but it was -- I think -- I would hate to be

9 held to account on a day, but I think it was a Friday

10 night we were discussing literally at a large meeting,

11 a dinner, a briefing over dinner, what forces would be

12 available to support General Mohan's plan and the answer

13 was "not very many". And while that was happening we

14 were getting the first reports that actually that's what

15 the Prime Minister wanted to do.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So we had been asked to give support

17 to this and we couldn't give very much? Is that what

18 you are saying?

19 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Well, you are absolutely on the cusp

20 of my handover to John here.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: I appreciate that.

22 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: I don't think that -- my only

23 impression was that he didn't expect to be resisted. He

24 felt that if he went down there, it would be rather like

25 Karbala all over again. By taking half of Cabinet,

1 himself and a relatively large, I think, as he saw it,
2 body of troops, that would be enough to overawe the
3 local opposition and to have the required effect.

4 I go back to the point that to Malaki, the Shia
5 south was a political issue, not a military one. Hence
6 we spent months planning Mosul, which was an Iraqi-led
7 operation, but he felt that he could walk into Basra and
8 it would go quiet, was my impression. But I think
9 I should stop there.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The narrative can continue with
11 General Cooper, but the actual move had taken place just
12 before you arrived, or as you arrived?

13 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: As I arrived.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Perhaps you can just describe
15 exactly what did happen?

16 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: I think actually if you go back to the
17 testimony that General David Petraeus gave to the joint
18 sessions of Congress in April last -- 2008, he made it
19 very clear that the coalition was taken by surprise by
20 Prime Minister Malaki's decision to go south.

21 We were working on the premise that we would go to
22 Mosul in much less numbers than he actually employed to
23 Basra. And having taken that decision, and as Bill
24 said, on the Friday it was being debated, at the
25 National Security Committee meeting on the Sunday, the

1 Prime Minister announced he was going, got up and flew
2 to Basra the next day, and then Charge of the Knights
3 emerged. And General Petraeus's view was that this is an
4 Iraqi operation. It clearly can't be allowed to fail.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Could you slow down for the transcriber.

6 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Surely. This is an Iraqi operation.
7 Clearly it cannot be allowed to fail, but equally, the
8 Prime Minister has launched this operation and it must
9 be seen to be followed through by the Iraqis for the
10 Iraqis to have their political and security effect that
11 the Prime Minister wishes to have.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And did it?

13 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: I would say it did. I think it changed
14 the political dynamic inside Iraq significantly. It was
15 high-risk, but it was high-reward and the
16 Prime Minister's personal authority, politically and
17 militarily, was reinforced. And, again, Bill touched on
18 this time over the winter -- I mean, I think the
19 politics at the time were indicating that the
20 Prime Minister may not survive and there could be
21 a political move against him.

22 After Charge of the Knights, he didn't look back and
23 he then moved on and did the same in Sadr City. He did
24 the same in Mosul, he did the same in Diyala province
25 with different levels of effort, but always -- and,

1 again, you would have to ask him this, but my sense was
2 that what he was clear on was that the only exercise of
3 military and security authority inside the sovereign
4 state of Iraq had to be exercised by the sovereign state
5 itself and anything else militias, whatever else, had no
6 place. And that's basically the agenda that, having
7 embarked upon the Charge of the Knights, he followed
8 through.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You have just come back to take over
10 a new command, you have got the year ahead of you,
11 unlike your predecessors. What was the impact on your
12 sense of what your mission was? How did it change your
13 view of what were going to be your immediate tasks and
14 what you hoped for in the long-term?

15 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: It didn't really, in as much as what we
16 saw was the campaign coming together in all its many
17 strands. Bill touched on many of them -- the UK surge,
18 the Iraqi surge, the Safwa(?), which produced -- turned
19 the Sunnis against AQ, the Jaish Al Mahdi ceasefire, the
20 resources as the economy began to build. And I would
21 also add a couple of others: time.

22 People ask why did it take so long for
23 Prime Minister Malaki to go and do this in Basra? Well,
24 the conditions didn't exist before then and they came
25 together in time and space in 2008 and allowed them to

1 do it. It took time to grow an Iraqi security force of
2 now over 600,000. It took time for the political system
3 to begin to mature. It took time for him to exercise
4 his own authority. It took time for the Sunnis to
5 recognise they needed to come inside the political
6 process, not be outside it.

7 So all this happened in a particular time and space
8 and, I think, demonstrated why a broad
9 counter-insurgency strategy was right in Iraq. I mean,
10 you will come to your views on how successful or not it
11 has been. My own view is Iraq continues to carry
12 significant risk, but actually what we have built in
13 place is far better than that which existed before, and
14 Malaki was able to grab the zeitgeist of March 2008 and
15 take it forward.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did that give a suggestion to
17 London, to the army, that maybe our work was done, that
18 we can now start to try to get out?

19 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: I think it was indicative that our exit
20 strategy, which was not new and had been well trailed,
21 was beginning to come to fruition. And, again, remember
22 our own End State was a mature democratic Iraq which posed
23 no threat to its neighbours and was joining the
24 international community. This was a demonstration, to
25 a greater or lesser degree, of that process beginning to

1 come to fruition in Iraq.

2 So, no, I don't think it changed a huge amount. It
3 perhaps took me by surprise in terms of the progress
4 that was suddenly made, but in and of itself I don't
5 think it changed too many thoughts in London.

6 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Unless Sir Martin wants to come in
7 at this point, at the time in the UK this was seen as
8 a bit embarrassing for the British, because this major
9 operation, with great effect, took place catching us by
10 surprise in an area that we thought of as our own.

11 Now, what you are saying is that in strategic terms,
12 this was a good thing, we should be pleased it happened.
13 But did it convey a sense of the irrelevance, maybe, now
14 of the British contribution?

15 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Right. I think the point I made to
16 London when this happened was we have to be honest on
17 what the optics look like here. But equally I go back
18 to the point I made to Baroness Prashar, which in terms
19 of -- you can't have it both ways. You can't ask to
20 make progress in a campaign of this nature and then
21 whinge when it makes you look slightly bad, because the
22 sovereignty which you are trying to imbue Iraq with then
23 works against you.

24 So I think we need to be clear on that. Equally,
25 arguably -- no, equally, the optics of moving in there

1 when the Multi-National Division South East was much,
2 much less than the Multi-National Division had been has to be
3 accepted. And I think -- and you will need to speak to
4 General White-Spunner about this, but one of the
5 points he kept making was we are no longer a division,
6 we cannot respond in the same way that we could when,
7 for example, I had and Bill had 13,500 troops. That in
8 itself in some ways is a reflection of progress. As
9 I say, we cannot have it both ways: we can't make
10 progress with Iraqis and then whinge when it makes us
11 look slightly embarrassed.

12 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: If I can move forward to the drawdown
13 of our troops, to the initial concept of the drawdown
14 and the proposed timetable, I wonder if you could tell
15 us what factors were taken into account in planning the
16 drawdown, particularly, for example, relations with the
17 United States and our own military concepts?

18 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Again, I think we have to be honest.
19 We can't pretend, for example, that Afghanistan didn't
20 have an impact on force levels in Iraq, and I'm sure the
21 Inquiry will come to a view on that one way or another,
22 but, as we had made political progress and handed over
23 provinces to Iraq, then at that point the demand for
24 troops was much less.

25 Now, again, it was said to me by one senior

1 American, General Casey actually, "Just be careful that
2 this isn't too UK-centric, don't lose sight of the Iraqi
3 requirements." And the point I made as General Officer
4 Commanding Multi-National Division Southeast in, for
5 example my Operations Order is, "Try and see things through
6 Iraqi eyes," and that came directly from that comment by
7 General Casey.

8 So the situation changed. We drew down. You will
9 have to speak to the divisional commanders of late 2006
10 and 2007 as to their views: did they have sufficient
11 troops in Basra and elsewhere, when, for example, the
12 militia activity increased. I'm not in a position to
13 make that point.

14 But at the same time we were developing, in a broad
15 counter-insurgency sense, the Iraqi security forces, who
16 were going to produce Iraqi success, and that is
17 effectively what happened in Charge of the Knights.

18 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Right, and what was your specific
19 advice?

20 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: I had been in country two days, and
21 General Petraeus and I had a conversation, and basically
22 I was, based on my last tour, giving him some views on
23 the Governor, on the political position down there, but
24 actually, quite frankly, I wasn't in the best position
25 to give a huge amount of advice because I had been in

1 the country for two days -- I had been in appointment
2 for two days, I had been in the country for a month at
3 that point.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: In terms of thinking about how the
5 final drawdown would take place, what sort of schedule
6 did you have in mind? What sort of issues did you think
7 were going to be critical?

8 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Well, the best chap to give that answer
9 is General Salmon but the view from Baghdad, as we moved
10 towards the end of 2008 and into 2009 and the view I was
11 getting from London was: the conditions are coming to
12 fruition, we need to get a new strategic agreement with
13 Iraq signed by the end of the year, with the UNSCR
14 lapsed, and give us authority to stay there, and at the
15 same time we needed to ensure that what we left behind
16 was sufficiently robust to continue the coalition and
17 the Iraqi mission, and what was left behind was an
18 American force and the Iraqi 14th Division inside Basra,
19 for example, that were able then to take on the issue,
20 and that -- over a period of several weeks the planning
21 for that went ahead and drawdown happened after I left.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What was the issue in terms of the
23 Americans having to take up where we were leaving?

24 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: I remember there was an article in the
25 Times. A very industrious Times reporter went and found

1 an American colonel in Diyala province, who had been in
2 Basra briefly and was able to give a negative comment.
3 But actually, if you talked to people like
4 General Petraeus and General Lloyd Austin, then they
5 were -- first of all, they were consummate coalition
6 soldiers. They were looking for the effect and weren't
7 getting too hung up on the national issues, and they
8 were very content, I would submit, that what was being
9 left behind was balanced, put in place and actually
10 reflected the political and security realities on the
11 ground in southern Iraq at that time.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And what was the view of the Iraqi
13 Government? Were they happy to see us go?

14 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Well, I can report hearsay if you want,
15 but I certainly think that, whereas certain individuals
16 might have felt that they didn't particularly like the
17 United Kingdom, overall it was a reflection of Iraqi
18 sovereignty, realised in a part of the country that they
19 wanted back. It, after all, does sit on most of the
20 large oil resources, it is their people, it is their
21 country.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So you would present it in terms of
23 Shia aspirations in terms of some parties involved,
24 a national aspiration in terms of the infrastructure and
25 oil, rather than the fact that this was the British and

1 they weren't playing a very large role any more and it
2 was time for them to go?

3 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Again, let's be honest. I think
4 history will say of the British overall effort in
5 southern Iraq, "Could have been better," but actually we
6 produced the effect that we set out to do. 179 people
7 died there and none of them died in vain, and what we
8 left behind was certainly better than that which we
9 found.

10 Things didn't go entirely as we would have wished
11 them. There were setbacks. But in the end we left
12 a position in Iraq that was Iraqi, inside a broadly
13 democratic, stable country. So I wouldn't necessarily
14 disagree with the way you characterised it there.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: General Rollo, do you want to come
16 in on this because, although you were before, you will
17 have had the same sense of Iraqi aspirations,
18 presumably?

19 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: No, I did. I tried to describe them,
20 I think. They wanted it back. They felt that it was
21 a political issue, not a security one. So, to that
22 extent, yes, they would be entirely happy to see us go,
23 as you would; it is their country. So I don't think
24 that any of that should take us by surprise.

25 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: But then why was it so difficult to

1 arrange for the continued presence of UK forces in the
2 memorandum of understanding negotiation. Why was
3 that --

4 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Several reasons. First of all, the
5 negotiations with the United States had taken a long,
6 long time. That only came to fruition, I think, in
7 late November -- mid to late November -- and, of course,
8 our mandate ended on December 31. So, first of all, the
9 Iraqis, understandably, wanted to deal with their major
10 partner before they started looking at the others.

11 So we were already very short of time by the time we
12 got into the nitty gritty. In fact, we signed an
13 agreement, and we signed it inside the deadline, only by
14 26 hours, but nevertheless, that's good enough, is it
15 not?

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Sir Martin?

17 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: All Iraqi deadlines are at the last
18 minute.

19 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In July 2008 the new Prime Minister
20 announced the primary tasks to be completed by the UK
21 military before we left Iraq. Could you remind us what
22 those tasks were and how realistic they were?

23 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Yes, he was talking about -- and I'm
24 having to trawl my memory here -- delivering local
25 elections, handing over the airport in good order,

1 developing the economy, and I think they were probably
2 the three main tasks upon which he focused.

3 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: And training --

4 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: I beg your pardon, and continuing to
5 train the Iraqi army.

6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Right. How had these objectives been
7 decided upon. Were you involved in any way in these
8 decisions?

9 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Again, I think there was an analysis.
10 I was asked to comment. I gave comment. But again it
11 was largely at that point the divisional commanders'
12 business and the Permanent Joint Headquarter's business
13 and whereas I had an input, it was largely their views
14 that were reflected in those tasks.

15 But, arguably, if you go back and say, "Iraqi
16 sovereignty is working, Basra is very much back in the
17 fold," what else is there left to do? And of course it
18 was meeting Iraqi aspirations that they achieved Iraqi
19 sovereignty inside their own boundaries.

20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So, essentially, there was no more that
21 we could do to say that we had finished the job or --

22 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: From a military perspective. There is
23 then the long-term strategic agreement, and of course
24 Iraq will stay there long after the current
25 Iraqi Government has gone. We clearly need -- and this

1 is perhaps FCO business rather than the military, but
2 we clearly need to have an enduring working strategic
3 relationship across all government issues with Iraq.
4 From a security perspective they were where they were
5 and all we were doing was getting them ready to finish
6 off what they started in the south.

7 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: How did we set about ensuring that we
8 could deliver these tasks?

9 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Again, you will have to ask
10 General Salmon, who was the GOC at the time. But
11 training, as it is everywhere in the Iraqi -- by us,
12 with them, was done on a judicious mix of objective and
13 subjective criteria. Some of it is, yes, they have got
14 that amount of equipment, they have got that amount of
15 people, they can achieve those actual military tasks,
16 and then you overlay that with judgment based on
17 experience.

18 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Right. And by the time that you left,
19 how would you rate the competence of the Iraqi security
20 forces to carry out these tasks?

21 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: Well, there is clearly risk, not so
22 much from our perspective but from the coalition and, as
23 you look at what is coming in 2010 and 2011, there is
24 risk that the overall security situation in Iraq -- will
25 it be entirely ready for no coalition forces there at

1 all?

2 But in terms of what had been achieved in the south,
3 I think the risk was known about but actually do-able,
4 and if you look at the events of the last 12 months,
5 say, I think probably events would bear that out.

6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Lawrence?

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just a final couple of questions.

9 First, how did the Status of Forces Agreement that we
10 got compare with the one that we wanted? What were the
11 main issues in the negotiation?

12 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: It wasn't as strong as the one the
13 Iraqis had had with the United States, but actually,
14 when you looked at the tasks we were carrying out with
15 the Iraqi army, for example, and with the airport --
16 I was asked my opinion and I believe that, in my
17 military judgment, it was safe for our soldiers and for
18 our people to continue to be there and again, if you
19 look at actually what happened, no one was locked up,
20 no one was put in jeopardy, and it worked.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How were you interacting with the
22 Americans while this negotiation was going on? Were
23 they giving us support in the negotiations? Did we get
24 sight of their discussions before their negotiations
25 were completed?

1 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: The diplomatic community always talk to
2 each other, as you know, Sir Lawrence, and you have to
3 ask Christopher Prentice exactly what Ambassador Ryan
4 Crocker was saying to him and other people like
5 David Satterfield. But of course they were because, of
6 course, it was in the coalition's interests in the
7 broadest sense that, first of all, the Americans and then
8 the other coalition partners had a workable strategic
9 agreement with the Iraqis.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Perhaps you could just describe for
11 us what was the result of that agreement. You have
12 given some indications in terms of the actual continuing
13 British role to this day.

14 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: At that particular time it allowed us
15 to continue to have people like DFID in the coalition,
16 it allowed us to train the 14th Iraqi Army Division, it
17 allowed us to continue to work and operate and allowed
18 us to have a Naval training team down in Umm Qasr to
19 train the Iraqi Navy. It was a workable agreement.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Then just finally from my point of
21 view a question for both of you, just a chance to
22 reflect, because you are presiding over the end of
23 a very difficult mission, which had quite a big impact
24 on the army. What was your sense from an army point of
25 view about what this had meant for the army and what the

1 army had learnt through it, needed to learn in the
2 future and whether it in the end had been a success?

3 LT GEN JOHN COOPER: I think from a military perspective, as
4 I said earlier, I think we have to be honest, it wasn't
5 entirely perfect. From the post-conflict planning you
6 have heard about, I think arguably some of the things we
7 decided were more in the UK interests than necessarily
8 Iraqis. Seeing though Iraqi eyes, I think, is an issue,
9 with similarities to Afghanistan currently that we
10 need to be clear about.

11 We were slow to produce doctrine. I think, if you
12 look at the American change, in contact, the way they
13 changed their doctrine and their posture in Iraq over
14 such a short period of time, there are lessons for us
15 there, and again we need to be honest about that.

16 I think, in resource terms, I was asked the question
17 as General Officer Commanding MND South East, actually
18 on the evening that helicopter was shot down, did I have
19 sufficient resources. At that time I was clear that
20 I did. You will have to ask my successors, 2007, for
21 example, did they have sufficient resources to respond
22 to changing circumstances and situations. I don't know.

23 I think that overall what we produced -- and I have
24 said it before and I will say it again -- what we left
25 in southern Iraq -- for all the difficulties we had,

1 what we left was better than we found. Ryan Crocker
2 said this to Congress, that we would be remembered by the manner in
3 which we departed, not the manner in which we arrived.

4 I concur with that.

5 I think, as I say, we have to be honest on our own
6 lessons learned, but no one of those 179 people that died
7 died in vain.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: And General Rollo?

9 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Let me pick up on -- (a) I agree with
10 all of that, but let me pick up on the lessons piece.
11 I think -- as it happens, I have just taken over the
12 army's doctrine and training command, so I'm very
13 focused on this, and one of the reasons why you kindly
14 let me off coming in January is because we are having
15 a major session on it, not the first and probably not
16 the last, but a large one.

17 To me, the first one, from a purely security
18 perspective, is actually you do need a lot of people to
19 do this if you want to protect the population -- and
20 this isn't germane necessarily to Basra because the
21 politics and the security situation in Basra are always
22 slightly different. But just in principle, part of your
23 aim needs to be to protect the population. That takes
24 a lot of people. No western army can do that.
25 Therefore, training up the indigenous force is a really

1 key activity, and it does take time.

2 The second is the need to improve our ability to
3 support both governments and economic development, and
4 that applies at several different levels. I think that
5 the PRT system worked very well. It needs resource, but
6 that, as a way of coordinating local governance and
7 developing over time their ability to do things for
8 themselves, and the military effort, I think has proved
9 tried and tested and I see no reason why it shouldn't
10 work everywhere else.

11 I think the bit that's more difficult and which I
12 had experience of in Baghdad is actually applying the
13 same level of effort at a national level. I certainly
14 found that we did not have, always anyway, the expertise
15 required to provide advice at a ministerial level on
16 what was a national policy, and I think that's something
17 worth thinking about because however good you are
18 locally, you have got to fit into a national campaign.
19 To have an effect, clearly it has got to work in the
20 country as a whole, and I think that leads on to the
21 third one, which is how we play our part as a junior
22 member of a coalition and how we try to produce an
23 integrated effect within a larger campaign. To me, the
24 lessons are, compared to the Balkans, where actually it
25 was quite easy and the proper thing to do, I think, to

1 have a discrete area with effectively a Union Jack on
2 it, where -- because it is easier to deal with your own
3 third sector, if you like -- with the ODA in those
4 days -- and with diplomats or political advisers in that
5 area, when you get into a larger and much more demanding
6 campaign, as Iraq was and as Afghanistan is, you can't
7 afford to do that, you have to be able to apply the
8 whole resources of the military effort or the political
9 or civil effect in a coordinated and flexible way,
10 centrally directed. You can see that now in Helmand.
11 It is not just a Union Jack now; there are large numbers
12 of Americans there. That's quite right. That's what
13 the military effort demands. And I think that's one for
14 us to take away.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to finish off, given your
16 doctrinal role, and a point that General Cooper made,
17 one of the comments that has been made about what
18 happened in Iraq was that it started off with the
19 British thinking that they were the counter-insurgency
20 experts and stabilisation experts and the Americans were
21 into big forces and war fighting and we were going to
22 teach them a thing or two and show them how it should be
23 done, but it was actually the Americans who revamped
24 their whole doctrine and learned faster and quicker than
25 we did about how to operate in very different and

1 challenging conditions. Is that a fair assessment and
2 do you think we are now catching up?

3 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Can I just start with an observation
4 on that? Dealing with the media in Iraq in 2004,
5 I found they only had two lines. The first one was,
6 "You think you are so much better than the Americans at
7 this." I said, "Thanks a bunch. That's not very
8 helpful, I'm a coalition officer." The second one was,
9 "You think you are so much better at this but really you
10 are not, you are complacent." I said, "Well, I don't
11 agree with that one either." So I think you can
12 overstate the degree of, "We are sitting on a hill." We
13 understood very clearly -- I certainly did and I know my
14 predecessors did and successors -- that we were
15 incredibly lucky by comparison to our colleagues in the
16 north in 2003 and 2004. We had our difficulties and
17 I think probably those couple of weeks in August were as
18 nasty as they were anywhere else. But that was
19 happening all day, every day in the north, throughout.
20 So we were acutely conscious that we were in a
21 completely different position. There may have been some
22 people who did say silly things but that wasn't shared
23 at the command level.

24 Secondly, I completely agree with your point that
25 the American achievement was, I think, a hugely

1 praiseworthy one, both in terms of their ability to turn
2 an army which was, very deliberately and by design,
3 optimised for major combat operations, not for
4 counter-insurgency, into one which became extremely good
5 as it is a tremendous one. John has spoken about our
6 own losses. I would remember that 5,000-plus American
7 dead and up to 30,000 seriously wounded and say that
8 that was an army which, while taking those sort of
9 casualties and doing 15-month tours several times,
10 achieved that. So I have got tremendous admiration for
11 them.

12 In terms of our own ability to learn, I think I
13 completely agree with John: we were slow in rewriting
14 our doctrine. We have now done it. There are a number
15 of other aspects of the intergovernmental effort which
16 were not completely satisfactory, and I think we have
17 learned from those and we are applying them in
18 Afghanistan now.

19 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Good. Thank you.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Any final remarks or observations you want to
21 offer? I think what you have just told us, both of you,
22 that is of genuine interest and significance for our
23 Inquiry. Anything else?

24 In that case, thank you both very much indeed. It
25 has been a valuable session -- pair of sessions. Thanks

1 also to those who have been in attendance throughout the
2 afternoon.

3 I will turn, if I may, to tomorrow, where, at
4 10 o'clock, we have a session seeing Lieutenant General
5 Sir Robert Fry, who had a number of roles, of course,
6 during the campaign he was Deputy Chief of Joint
7 Operations from 2002 through to after the invasion, then
8 became Chief of Defence Staff Commitments until 2006,
9 and finally was Senior British Military Representative
10 in Iraq after that.

11 Then, to conclude the programme for tomorrow, in the
12 afternoon we are seeing Sir Nigel Sheinwald,
13 Sir John Sawers and Desmond Bowen together. These were
14 the senior civil servants in Number 10, the FCO and the
15 MoD responsible for policy on Iraq for most of the
16 period between 2003 and 2008. That was the London
17 triangle which was referred to earlier in the day.

18 So, with that, I will conclude this session. Our
19 thanks to all.

20 LT GEN WILLIAM ROLLO: Thank you.

21 (4.35 pm)

22 (The Inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am the following day)

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FINAL