

1 (11.35 am)

2 COLIN SMITH

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning and welcome.

4 COLIN SMITH: Good morning, thank you very much.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: In our second session this morning, we are  
6 continuing with the theme of policing and in this  
7 session we are hearing from Colin Smith. You were in  
8 Iraq from January 2005 to April 2006, but your role  
9 changed through that time.

10 COLIN SMITH: That's correct, yes.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: To be sure we have got it right, from  
12 January 2005, you were part of a US assessment team and  
13 then from February to May, you were the UK Senior Police  
14 Adviser in Basra in MND South East, and then,  
15 from May 2005 to April 2006, you were the UK Chief  
16 Police Adviser in Iraq based in Baghdad.

17 COLIN SMITH: That's the gist of it, yes.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. This session will continue to  
19 look at the approach taken to police reform in Iraq  
20 including the development of strategy and available  
21 resources.

22 I say on every occasion I recognise witnesses give  
23 evidence based on their recollection of events and we  
24 check what we hear against the papers to which we have  
25 access and which we are still receiving.

1 I remind each witness on each occasion that they  
2 will later be asked to sign a transcript of the evidence  
3 to the effect that the evidence given is truthful, fair  
4 and accurate.

5 With that out of the way, could we start by just  
6 a brief address to what happened pre-deployment? Were  
7 you given a clear sense of the roles or role -- the  
8 initial role, reporting lines, duration and did you get  
9 any kind of briefing on a strategy for police reform in  
10 Iraq, and how the situation you were likely to find was  
11 developing?

12 COLIN SMITH: Yes, certainly. I became aware of the  
13 opportunity about October/November 2004. I think  
14 through my Chief Constable, Paul Kernaghan, who was  
15 also, as you will be aware, ACPO International Affairs  
16 at the time.

17 He knew that I was coming to the end of a 30-year  
18 policing career and wanted to finish -- I wasn't seeking  
19 further promotion. I wanted to do something which  
20 really took me back to the beginning in the Royal Ulster  
21 Constabulary and, also, it fitted my force for me to go  
22 for that period.

23 I spoke with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, in  
24 a sense negotiated a contract with them, to deploy for  
25 a 12-month period, as a Senior Police Adviser in Iraq in

1 Basra.

2 I subsequently attended a hostile environment  
3 survival training course in Wales, which I thought was  
4 a good week. I was already a firearms trained officer  
5 from my 15 years in the RUC. So I arranged, through  
6 Paul Kernaghan, with my own force firearms unit to do  
7 a refresher, safety and draw- fire, defensive  
8 techniques.

9 I had the opportunity of speaking to my predecessor,  
10 Kevin Hurley, and I think we had a curry together in  
11 Hampshire and a chat on what was happening there. Then  
12 I suppose things moved fairly rapidly with the team  
13 coming out of the Pentagon, Donald Rumsfeld, the Iraq  
14 Security Advisory Team, ISAT, which wanted me to join  
15 very quickly in January.

16 So it was up to MoD, London where I had a quick briefing  
17 with them and then off to Washington in January --  
18 around January 5th, briefing with the Americans there on  
19 the situation -- that was a good background briefing on  
20 their perspective -- back to the UK and then straight  
21 out to Baghdad for that period.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Was that initial phase with the US-based team  
23 part of the same contract as you had had with the  
24 Foreign Office?

25 COLIN SMITH: It was, yes. I think it was simply convenient

1 for me to go there and it was also a pre-brief for me as  
2 well.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: In the course of that briefing and  
4 preparation and, indeed, the US-led exercise, you must  
5 have formed a pretty clear vision of the state of  
6 policing in Iraq in its different guises?

7 COLIN SMITH: Yes, very much so because, as part of that,  
8 I had access to the Minister of the Interior, I had  
9 access to meetings with General Petraeus, who was at  
10 that time head of MNSTC-I.

11 I went down to Basra, with a Brigadier Leso,  
12 who was a Carabinieri officer who was also on that team.  
13 So I got a good understanding of what was happening in  
14 Baghdad and Basra. The Baghdad part was interesting,  
15 because I had that background when I eventually arrived  
16 in MND South East. So, yes, it was a good overall  
17 introduction to what was happening.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: I think we would like to pursue that initial  
19 role in Baghdad for a bit. I'll ask Baroness Prashar to  
20 pick that up.

21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you very much. When you  
22 deployed to Baghdad, you were part of the assessment  
23 team which was set up by Donald Rumsfeld?

24 COLIN SMITH: That's correct.

25 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Was this going to be part of your

1       role, as you understood it, or was it added on when you  
2       got there?

3       COLIN SMITH: I think it was added on at the beginning, as  
4       I mentioned to Sir John. I think, as I was deploying at  
5       the same time, the United States requested a senior UK  
6       police officer to go on that team. So it made sense for  
7       me to join that team, albeit it meant that there was  
8       a gap before I ended up with General Riley in  
9       MND South East.

10      BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What was the purpose of this  
11      assessment team? What were they supposed to be doing?

12      COLIN SMITH: It was quite difficult. In a sense, it was  
13      set up by Donald Rumsfeld. Gary -- General Luck is very  
14      much a sort of a legendary general in the American  
15      military. He was seen as a man who had a great  
16      background, and it was really to go out there and see --  
17      a bit lessons learned after 18 months. It wasn't about  
18      apportioning blame. It was really a look at where it  
19      was.

20      My understanding was that there wouldn't be  
21      a report, it was to be a verbal debrief to  
22      Donald Rumsfeld by Gary Luck and his deputy,  
23      General Ray Odierno, who subsequently is, I understand,  
24      still in command there now, and I think that eventually  
25      morphed, as it always did, into a Powerpoint

1 presentation, but I'm not sure there was ever a report  
2 that came back.

3 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Were you the only British member of  
4 this team or were there any other --

5 COLIN SMITH: No, there was a Royal Naval captain from the  
6 MoD, who went with me, but there was only two police  
7 officers, myself and a brigadier, although I think he  
8 had another Carabinieri with him.

9 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Are you able to share the key  
10 findings of the assessment that was made by the --

11 COLIN SMITH: Yes, I think from my point of view it was,  
12 I think, two issues, really. There was no silver  
13 bullet, that this was a realisation that this was a long  
14 campaign now. I think it was one of a number of issues,  
15 probably American, audit by an Auditor General, who  
16 I think also appeared at the same time, which was  
17 seminal in deciding that this was no longer about  
18 war-fighting, it was about transition, and I think it  
19 was from Gary Luck that perhaps the idea came that it  
20 was now time to start training the Iraqi security  
21 forces, the army, and I think then the police for this  
22 transition.

23 So I think this perhaps -- they took back this view  
24 that this was the way forward; it wasn't just about  
25 fighting former regime elements or terrorists or

1 Al-Qaeda, but actually now building up the capability of  
2 Iraqis.

3 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So it is the realisation that  
4 a transition had to take place.

5 COLIN SMITH: Yes, I think it would be fair to say probably  
6 that General Petraeus and MNSTC-I was working on this.  
7 It wouldn't be fair to say that suddenly, at this point,  
8 someone decided, but I think it was a seminal moment  
9 deciding this was the way forward and I think that's  
10 what I understood from the conversations with Gary Luck  
11 and -- we didn't actually all get together to do  
12 a formal presentation. I did inputs to --

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What contribution were you able to  
14 make?

15 COLIN SMITH: I put inputs on what I saw. In Baghdad, what  
16 I saw was very much -- at CPATT and places like that,  
17 was a military-led training of police, very much the  
18 Iraqi army was the first priority. I came into my first  
19 contact with the police special commandos -- I think in  
20 my statement I have never referred to them as  
21 "paramilitary", because they don't even come into that  
22 category -- very strange individuals, who --  
23 interestingly, there was some concern amongst the  
24 American state officers there that I would be -- I would  
25 say that were very critical of them, and I was, but

1 I felt at the time this was a necessary evil that they  
2 needed because the Iraqi army was not capable, but in  
3 long-term, there would be problems with human rights  
4 abuse, that these were not trained police officers.

5 I think what struck me was I thought long-term would  
6 be two or three years when, in fact, it was probably  
7 about three months and my view of them subsequently  
8 changed throughout that year of what these individuals  
9 and what they represented.

10 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you very much.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's turn now to Basra, when you finally get  
12 there. Martin?

13 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I would like to ask you about the  
14 situation when you arrived in MND South East. We will  
15 come back later to how the situation developed, but  
16 could you describe the security situation when you  
17 arrived?

18 COLIN SMITH: Very hot. I remember that. The security  
19 situation was not what I would call benign. It wasn't  
20 that I would pop down to one of the lovely river  
21 restaurants in Basra and have a meal in the evening, but  
22 I could move around. I had a bodyguard security team,  
23 part of a group and, wherever I went, I could go in  
24 a 4x4 armoured vehicle with a bodyguard team. I could  
25 go down and see the chief of police, I could go to

1 Az Zubayr to the training centre, I could go to  
2 Basra Airport and meet the general and the Provost  
3 Marshall. So I had a certain freedom of movement. It  
4 wasn't totally benign, but it was acceptable at the  
5 bottom end of doing my job.

6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: When you arrived, what was your  
7 assessment of the Iraqi police service?

8 COLIN SMITH: Initially they were there, they seemed quite  
9 a large number of them. They did seem to have some  
10 reasonable equipment. I think my concerns were around  
11 leadership. I think the military were doing a first  
12 rate job in providing them with equipment, uniforms,  
13 weapons. They were looking like a police force. But  
14 I think my first meetings with the chief of police and  
15 some of his senior officers was not encouraging.

16 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Were there any concerns at that time  
17 about either corruption or infiltration?

18 COLIN SMITH: I think my predecessors had told me about  
19 their concerns. I went with a background in my mind.  
20 When I exactly became aware of how corrupt and the  
21 influence of the militia was, was probably a few weeks  
22 into it. My initial meetings with the chief of police  
23 were almost a face-to-face, "Let's just start with  
24 a clean slate and see how we go", but it didn't take  
25 long to become aware of what was happening in Al-Jameat

1 and some of the -- the Criminal Intelligence Unit and  
2 the DIA and other areas like that.

3 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Were there specific measures you were  
4 able to take to try to address those concerns?

5 COLIN SMITH: Measures? Yes. I think one of the  
6 difficulties that I think one has to look at is that  
7 myself, my predecessors, my successors, we had no  
8 executive authority over the Iraqi police in any way.  
9 So I could not tell even an Iraqi traffic officer what  
10 to do. So as we became aware -- and we did, I mean,  
11 long before the 19 September incident at Jameat, we as  
12 police advisers, and the military, were aware of grave  
13 concerns over serious crimes, murders, assassinations,  
14 kidnapping that were taking place.

15 What we sought to do -- all we could seek to do  
16 about it was to deal initially with the chief of police,  
17 General Hassan, who was powerless. His argument, "I can  
18 do nothing. I can't hire a policeman, I can't fire  
19 a policeman" and then, subsequently, as this developed  
20 and my role had moved to Baghdad, was to go to see the  
21 Ministry of the Interior, and I think I went on two or  
22 three occasions, once with the Deputy Ambassador, where  
23 we presented the Minister of the Interior, Bayan Jabr,  
24 with a list of individuals whom we had serious concerns  
25 about. Nothing happened.

1           Subsequently later, after the Jameat incident, when  
2           Sir Ronnie Flanagan was present, again another list of  
3           72 names was happened, they just moved around, and  
4           I don't think, even at the end of my time, anything had  
5           happened in any form.

6           What we also tried to do was to develop their  
7           internal affairs capacity as sort of complaints and  
8           discipline. So we again, in Basra, Dave Haverley  
9           (?) and his team were working with them. I, in Baghdad,  
10          was pushing and colonels would come down from the DIA,  
11          very good, honest colonels would turn up Basra and have  
12          a look at it and disappear very quickly. One time they  
13          came down with 20 officers and we had a building and  
14          they disappeared. We tried to arrange to set a DIA up  
15          in the airport, in the APOD, under British protection.  
16          I don't think that progressed. It certainly didn't when  
17          I was there in terms of overall.

18          So the only two ways we could do anything was from  
19          the police was to put pressure and advise the ministry  
20          and the Iraqi Government this was happening and it could  
21          do something or, secondly, to get -- the only other  
22          option was for the British military to detain people  
23          and, by sort of 2005, that was really not, I think, seen  
24          as the way forward.

25          The difficulties, and I think what the corruption

1 highlighted, was the actual inability of the ministry  
2 and the minister to have any power in Basra. He, at  
3 that time -- Bayan Jabr was a SCIRI and the governor and  
4 the political were Sadrists. So although it was Shia,  
5 they were a different level. So, yes, this all became  
6 apparent and, as I said, because we didn't have  
7 executive authority, we could only push, and we did,  
8 very strongly, and the Foreign Office did, the  
9 Ambassador, the Consul General, pushed very strongly,  
10 but it was really an Iraqi issue that we saw but were  
11 powerless.

12 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you very much.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I'll turn to  
14 Sir Lawrence Freedman now. Lawrence?

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Did you have a strategy when you  
16 were Senior Police Adviser? Was there one that you were  
17 working to? Did you have to develop one?

18 COLIN SMITH: I had to develop one. When I arrived, there  
19 was a sort of security sector reform which seemed to  
20 have come from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo,  
21 previous existence, which was fine in its basic form  
22 about recruitment, equipment, training, firearms,  
23 et cetera, et cetera, but what was lacking was, I felt,  
24 was a sort of long-term strategy, five years probably,  
25 ideally 5, 10 to 15 and I set about trying to develop

1 one. But the difficulty there again was that this was  
2 in MND South East, this was a coalition strategy.

3 What was sadly lacking and, despite the efforts by  
4 Doug Brand and Bob Davies and others, was there was no  
5 Iraqi police strategy. There was no Iraqi security  
6 strategy. So whatever we did was in effect doing up  
7 what we were going to do to support them without  
8 actually knowing what their clear, long-term plans were.

9 So we set about doing a development strategy, which  
10 in its initial form was literally two pages, which was  
11 about developing an efficient, effective, credible  
12 community-supported police service. That's not Surrey  
13 police, it is not UK police, it is not European, it is  
14 a common statement about any police force in the world,  
15 and that then set some principles about being  
16 achievable, sustainable, with Iraqi buy-in, which  
17 I think was the key thing. We could give them all the  
18 equipment in the world but if they didn't want it, or  
19 they didn't know what to do with it -- and then some  
20 strategic drivers, and five key areas I felt we should  
21 concentrate on. Just spreading ourselves over  
22 everything -- we should concentrate on some key areas  
23 and we should subdivide those with the military. They  
24 would do some key infrastructure areas, we would do  
25 specialist.

1           So that was the original strategy that I think came  
2           out around about March/April.

3   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just to be clear, did this cover  
4           wider criminal justice reform?

5   COLIN SMITH: It didn't, no. That's something probably at  
6           the end a comment I would make, but it didn't. In Basra  
7           I had a prisons adviser, who was very much dealing with  
8           infrastructure, building prisons, conditions, human  
9           rights, and I had a criminal justice adviser, but it  
10          didn't have an overall rule of law emphasis. It was  
11          a police development strategy, an IPS development  
12          stage. It was fairly limited.

13   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So was somebody else doing work  
14          on --

15   COLIN SMITH: I said I had an adviser who was working to --  
16          I think it was working through DFID on other areas, but  
17          at that time -- and in subsequent years that has  
18          certainly changed in areas I have worked in. But at  
19          that time it was very much ancillary to what was my core  
20          process.

21   SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: As we have heard, the aim initially  
22          in MND South East was to be exemplary. Was this phrase  
23          still being used?

24   COLIN SMITH: Yes, I think I heard it. We must set an  
25          example for the rest of the -- it was fine, except, if

1       you set yourself up on a pedestal, don't be surprised if  
2       you get knocked down. It was a little bit unwise to  
3       make those statements. I wouldn't make them.

4       SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What about the model of police  
5       force? And again this is an issue we have touched upon  
6       already. I would be interested in your views about the  
7       military desire to create a Carabinieri-style police  
8       force, as against different sorts of perhaps more  
9       UK-based models?

10      COLIN SMITH: Yes, as a strategic aim there, that's an aim  
11      for a police force, a community-based police force. It  
12      doesn't mean it is a soft touch, it is not Surrey or  
13      shire constabularies. I have seen the statements. It  
14      was a basic police force that had to have community  
15      support. It had to be supported by the public it had to  
16      represent because the police in Basra were not seen as  
17      the arm of a state. This was a Shia area, this was  
18      a police force that was largely Shia, so it should be  
19      dealing with crime, community, domestic violence,  
20      serious assaults. It was not there -- that area as  
21      a counter terrorist unit.

22             But the fascination with paramilitary policing  
23      doesn't surprise me. I spent many years in  
24      Northern Ireland. I think it was misplaced on a number  
25      of reasons. First of all I think people misunderstood

1 the background of Iraq policing. It was mentioned to me  
2 that this was different, it was unique. It wasn't.  
3 Iraq policing was set up as a British colonial model in  
4 1922, after the Cairo conference. Yes, it had  
5 a gendarmerie because it had a lot of deserts and it was  
6 nice to ride around on camels and police it. But  
7 I remember conversations with Deputy Minister Ali Ghalib  
8 , who was a super-- one of the many professional  
9 policemen I met, who was proud of the fact that even in  
10 the 1960s and '70s they were using British police training  
11 books. There was a forensic manual which was written by  
12 a colonel. That must have been written in the '30s.  
13 But they were very proud of this tradition.

14 The paramilitary element came under Saddam Hussein,  
15 when he set up this raft of security institutions, all  
16 keeping an eye on each other, from the poor old police  
17 at the bottom, who were under-resourced underfunded,  
18 right the way up to the Republican Guard and the  
19 Fedayeen. So it wasn't natural and the danger I saw,  
20 which refers to my original comment about the special  
21 police commandos, that we were, for the wrong reasons,  
22 simply creating an internal security force a la  
23 Saddam Hussein.

24 I think the other issue is people misunderstand the  
25 Carabinieri, an Italian model, a fine body of men and I

1 have had a lot of friends over the years with them.  
2 They are an organisation of trained police officers who  
3 operate in a military formation, but their key is they  
4 are trained police officers. They have full police  
5 power, they have investigative powers, forensic. They  
6 operate as a unit. They are not in a sense  
7 paramilitary in what we would know perhaps in other  
8 contexts. So I think this was an error. I think it  
9 comes down to the old adage that when you are up to your  
10 neck in alligators, it's hard to remember you are there  
11 to drain the swamp because the casualties that the  
12 police were taking were so high, that the Iraqi army was  
13 incapable, that the coalition really wanted to move  
14 back, that this appealed.

15 I don't think -- I think the -- and I think my  
16 successors and predecessors all felt the same, that this  
17 was not a British policing system, it was a basic  
18 community system, which would have worked in New York or  
19 Paris.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you. In your statement you  
21 say that:

22 "The UK had two priority areas: in MND South East:an  
23 operational training and mentoring role, and in Baghdad  
24 a strategic role. Attempts to balance the two were not  
25 always successful."

1           Could you expand a little bit on that statement?

2   COLIN SMITH: Yes, I mean the first part of it, I think the  
3           role in MND South East was the Brits were really looking  
4           after policing. This was our prerogative. We were  
5           going to set up an exemplary police force. We had the  
6           full range of training. So it was really operational.

7           Baghdad was slightly different. There were some  
8           training elements but it was more of a strategic role,  
9           working with the Ministry on the Iraqi side and working  
10          with the Americans, the coalition leaders, on the other  
11          side. So it was a strategic area.

12          And I felt that certainly the link between the two  
13          was not always there. The link between the Americans,  
14          between MNSTC-I and CPATT, was not there to  
15          MND South East, and I think that this was an error.

16          I think it was due perhaps to the fact that the  
17          Americans had plenty on their hands in Anbar and Mosul  
18          and everywhere else -- Fallujah -- and the Brits were  
19          doing their bit -- they have done Northern Ireland so  
20          they must be quite good at this -- and I felt that there  
21          wasn't that link, and then, as we got in, as

22          I previously mentioned, the Jameat -- it was aware that  
23          the Iraqis didn't have that link. So MND South East was  
24          almost like a bit of a country that was sitting there,  
25          almost like a bit of Northern Ireland from the UK

1 mainland. It was there, the British army were there,  
2 they were good guys, the British police were helping and  
3 we would get on with it. So it didn't really mesh.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: When you went to Baghdad, as Chief  
5 Police Adviser, how did then MND South East look to you  
6 from there? What visibility did you have of the  
7 problems?

8 COLIN SMITH: It looked a bit isolated. I saw the problems  
9 in MND South East and I think some of the problem that  
10 the British military were facing there paled into  
11 insignificance with what some of my American colleagues  
12 were trying to deal with in Fallujah and Mosul, Tikrit,  
13 places like that, the sheer volume of it.

14 I think there was a similarity and I think when  
15 I got to Baghdad, I had the opportunity to work closely  
16 with American police advisers, IPLOs, ICITAP  
17 trainers. We both came to the very same view; this was  
18 a military-run organisation. This whole thing was  
19 military-run. And I think I make the comment that you  
20 probably read three or four times about the troopship  
21 and the rowing boat. I think we all had that view.

22 But certainly my view of MND South East was it was  
23 okay going your own way while things were working out  
24 but if things went wrong, we might have problems and  
25 I think, financially, we probably lost out because there

1 was a lot of resources that CPATT had that never came  
2 down to MND South East that might have helped in some  
3 other areas, and it was only towards the end of time  
4 that we started to see, certainly post-Jameat, that the  
5 American CPATT, MNSTC-I links that really moved down.  
6 I think the British military talked to the British  
7 military in Baghdad -- and again I'm not quite sure how  
8 that linked, but I did feel it was isolated and could  
9 have been more joined up.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: When you were acting as Chief Police  
11 Adviser, who assumed day-to-day responsibility for  
12 police reform in MND South East?

13 COLIN SMITH: When I took the job, it was effectively  
14 combining two posts. There was two deputy constable  
15 posts. I was fortunate to have two deputies, a deputy  
16 in Basra, and a deputy in Baghdad, who were both very  
17 capable, very experienced officers. So they were there  
18 to look after, in a sense, the operational side. It was  
19 part of my remit to go to Baghdad -- was to increase UK  
20 influence at a strategic level, which had for different  
21 reasons waned over certainly probably since the time that  
22 Doug Brand was there. It had dropped off, not due to  
23 any individuals but simply circumstances.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Were you able to do that?

25 COLIN SMITH: In hindsight, if I have regrets -- and I do --

1 I had four/five years to think about it -- I think  
2 probably I was split in two ways, that if I was in  
3 Baghdad, I really needed to be in Basra, and if I was  
4 Basra, there was things in Baghdad and as security  
5 deteriorated a bit in Basra and difficulties of getting  
6 there, I think General Dutton -- I watched his evidence  
7 and he made a comment he only saw me twice -- I think  
8 that was probably about right. I wasn't worried about  
9 that because I had a good team there but this was at the  
10 time when to go from Baghdad to the Green Zone to  
11 BIAP down to Basra and back could take four days.  
12 We didn't have much in the way of secure communications  
13 and, to be fair to Sir General Dutton -- friends in many  
14 respects but we had different views. He was never  
15 ringing me up saying, "Colin, I must see you," and  
16 neither was David saying, "Look, I can't cope with  
17 this."

18 So in retrospect I think there was other things  
19 I would have sought to have done in terms of senior  
20 police. I would have liked to put someone in CPATT  
21 I would have look liked to have an ACC in Baghdad but  
22 this was not there at the time. But it is a hindsight  
23 decision.

24 I think I also mentioned in my statement that when  
25 I arrived, Jonathan Riley, another general who I had

1 interesting times with -- and I like them both dearly --  
2 we are both professionals and we will have meetings and  
3 we will throw a few expletives at each other and then we  
4 will come out and we will agree on it.

5 He offered me an office at the APOD, next to him,  
6 in February 2005, but because I felt my relationship, my  
7 line of command was the Foreign Office, I went to  
8 Basra Palace. In hindsight I think that might have been  
9 perhaps a decision that I would do differently. My  
10 successor did exactly that.

11 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thank you.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Turning now to Roderic Lyne.

13 SIR RODERIC LYNE: By the middle of 2005 there were around  
14 250 UK police officers and contractors assigned to Iraq.  
15 Of course, that included the training contingent that  
16 was actually in Jordan. What were the remainder doing?

17 COLIN SMITH: 57 were at JIPTC in Jordan. I think the  
18 UK had the second biggest. About 20 to 23 seconded  
19 police officers were down at Az Zubayr doing the  
20 training, basic recruit training, specialist training.  
21 Of the Armourgroup, who were probably about 135 at that  
22 time out of that figure, they were spread in Basra to  
23 different places, Shatt Al Arab. There were quite  
24 a large number in Muthanna and, of course, a number of  
25 those, I think about 35 or 40 in Muthanna, were funded

1 by the Japanese and the Dutch under a separate contract,  
2 and the preponderance were in Muthanna. They were doing  
3 training -- basic recruit, TIPS training, specialist  
4 training, firearms training -- and I think that the  
5 large number of those Armourgroup officers were very  
6 credible performers, which left Muthanna, for a number  
7 of reasons, able to transition fairly quickly.

8 It showed what we could have done if we had had a  
9 benign environment right across the whole of  
10 MND South East.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Is it possible to generalise about their  
12 previous police experience?

13 COLIN SMITH: I think the UK was very fortunate at that  
14 time, that the Patten report into the RUC had changed it,  
15 PSNI was set up, a number of officers -- and I think  
16 that was by agreement -- took compensation, retired  
17 early -- something like 80 per cent of  
18 Armourgroup at one stage were ex-RUC and people  
19 I worked with, and some of them at inspector/chief  
20 inspector level. These were people who had specialist  
21 skills. Some of them worked in the TIPS, ex-RUC Special  
22 Branch officers -- totally unique -- no other country  
23 could match that.

24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Can you unscramble TIPS?

25 COLIN SMITH: It is an acronym that has no meaning. It

1 probably came from "tip-off". The nearest you would come in the  
2 UK is Crimewatch. It was set up by a predecessor. What  
3 happened was it was a number that was circulated, based  
4 very much on the Northern Ireland experience, a  
5 confidential telephone, that all army Land Rovers had  
6 the number. It was very successful. People rang in to  
7 say that there was a bomb planted here etc--

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: It was a public hot line?

9 COLIN SMITH: Yes, but it developed on beyond that, which  
10 I think -- for certain reasons I cannot really develop  
11 what its capability was but it was very successful.

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So in Muthanna there were enough people  
13 to do a good job? Overall did you have enough people to  
14 deliver policing reform or what would you have needed to  
15 have done it better?

16 COLIN SMITH: Probably about 1,000 officers, I think, is  
17 realistic, if you were going to do a root and branch,  
18 because it was clear -- and I have heard Stephen White  
19 earlier and I know subsequently my own views -- having  
20 talked to him -- this wasn't just a bit of tinkering,  
21 a bit of fine tuning. This was what we were building, not only  
22 in terms of structure and everything else but in terms  
23 of basic policing skills. Years under Saddam Hussein,  
24 it had been under-resourced, underfinanced. It was at  
25 the bottom.

1 SIR RODERIC LYNE: 1,000 international officers within Iraq  
2 in the different provinces?

3 COLIN SMITH: Yes, who would have done, I have to say, when  
4 I mentioned that, would have taken over some of the work  
5 that the military were doing. If you ask me did I want  
6 8500 soldiers and 250 police trainers, no, I would rather have  
7 7,500 soldiers and a thousand police trainers. But that  
8 wasn't to be.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: What did you do to try to get something  
10 near to the resources that you actually needed to do the  
11 job?

12 COLIN SMITH: Constant harassing and reporting to the  
13 Foreign Office, to the secondment unit and on to the  
14 Iraqi policing unit. It became aware that there wasn't  
15 the extra resources.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Iraqi policing or Iraqi policy?

17 COLIN SMITH: The IPU. Sorry, yes, the international  
18 secondment unit, which are the people who provided the  
19 staff, and Iraq Policy Unit, who were the larger body in  
20 the FCO. So I knew from my predecessors and their  
21 experience that it was realistic not to expect to get  
22 a thousand.

23 SIR RODERIC LYNE: What answers did you get to your  
24 harassment?

25 COLIN SMITH: That we had a certain budget that was

1 allocated from GCCP and other funds and that was it, and  
2 it was up to me then to get the best bang for the bucks,  
3 as they say, by putting people in positions that would  
4 have impact and would do something.

5 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So the idea of doing an exemplary job by  
6 then had been replaced by doing the best with what you  
7 have got?

8 COLIN SMITH: I think that was a fair assessment and I have  
9 to say the FCO responded well to my constant changes.  
10 Part of the difficulty was not only getting officers  
11 there but getting them with the right skills.

12 SIR RODERIC LYNE: In MND South East the policing contingent  
13 subdivided into three main groups: the UK policing  
14 civilian advisers, the contractors operating under  
15 a contract from the FCO and then US contractors.

16 COLIN SMITH: Yes.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Were all these people working in the same  
18 direction?

19 COLIN SMITH: I don't think they were initially. I think  
20 the IPLOs, who worked the Dynacorps were really working  
21 as part of CPATT and they saw their role as looking at  
22 very much logistics. They didn't see them themselves  
23 coming under British military command. They didn't see  
24 themselves coming under my command. So they attended  
25 weekly meetings with the Provost Marshal in the APOD,

1 MND South East headquarters, but they really were  
2 operating -- I brought them in -- when I looked at the  
3 development strategy, I brought them on board and their  
4 views were taken. I tried to bring them in to be more  
5 inclusive but it was difficult because they just saw  
6 themselves as part of CPATT, which was a US-led  
7 organisation.

8 They didn't see themselves as part of the team.  
9 I made them welcome and I think by the time I left,  
10 I would like to say again the work Dave Haverley(?) and  
11 his team did -- that we brought them all on board.

12 The Armourgroup when I arrived, were very much on  
13 a contract, set to do certain things -- mentoring,  
14 monitoring, advising and I was slightly surprised to find  
15 they weren't actually under my control. So I couldn't  
16 task them.

17 That was changed. I think by the time I left for  
18 Baghdad it was agreed that they worked under the senior  
19 police advisers in each of the provinces. So Muthanna  
20 had, I think, a superintendent or a chief inspector and  
21 the Armourgroup staff worked very much alongside them under  
22 their direction. That, I think, was of benefit to them  
23 because it gave them senior representation. They  
24 weren't simply a contractor working out on the side,  
25 that could be pushed around. They had their own

1 structure and I think towards the end that was working  
2 and I think Muthanna was a good example of what could  
3 have been done.

4 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Apart from personnel, did you have the  
5 resources you needed?

6 COLIN SMITH: In terms of my own staff?

7 SIR RODERIC LYNE: To do the job you wanted, financial or  
8 otherwise.

9 COLIN SMITH: No, I mean financially I really didn't have  
10 a budget. The Armourgroup contract was funded by the  
11 FCO, posts that were there. I really had people in  
12 posts. The military had the funding, I think --  
13 I forget what the figure was, £70/80 million to provide  
14 equipment and training, so I really had no sight of that  
15 and I didn't want to get involved in that with a small  
16 number of people. I eventually brought a staff officer  
17 out, which I thought was useful, and over time I felt we  
18 had sufficient staff to do a job. The danger of  
19 bringing more people out was there was more problems on  
20 accommodation, there was more problems on movement. So  
21 one had to be realistic to say this is the optimum.

22 I think we got towards the optimum by the end of  
23 2005/the beginning of 2006, where -- unfortunately post  
24 Jameat and other incidents -- it had moved on. You  
25 know, one is continually playing chase-up. You are

1           where you want to be, but you wanted to be there three  
2           months ago.

3   SIR RODERIC LYNE: Did you feel that you had an effective  
4           chain of command going through to Whitehall from which  
5           you could get results in terms of support and your  
6           requirements and what you were being asked to achieve?

7   COLIN SMITH: I felt in terms of resources, if I wanted  
8           people, I could get them, albeit with a push-in, that  
9           they were very supportive of my plans and strategies,  
10           where I wanted to go. What I felt was the problem in  
11           the command chain -- and I'm sure others have mentioned  
12           it -- was that I was a member of ACPO, so Paul Kernoghan  
13           seconded me to the Home Office, who lent me to the  
14           Foreign Office, who then sent me to Iraq.

15           Whilst we had the ability to get police officers --  
16           and Paul was supportive and my own force was supportive  
17           and the Iraq Policy Unit was very good in sending me  
18           strategies and plans regularly -- I felt what was  
19           missing in the UK was a support team, a police support  
20           team. There was no PJHQ, there was no MoD. So I had  
21           no one no one on the ground in London who was  
22           representing the back room support; it was all being  
23           done upfront. It was being done in Basra and Baghdad in  
24           difficult circumstances and I was surprised to find --  
25           and again I see that, you know, policy was being made in

1 MoD and Foreign and Commonwealth Office and DFID at  
2 joint meetings involving sort of RAF wing commanders and  
3 Naval captains -- good people because I would never run  
4 any of them down, super people, but you thought why are  
5 they doing this? Why isn't something here? Now, Paul  
6 Kernoghan was very supportive. Paul's role was in ACPO.  
7 He was a chief Constable. He was there to look after  
8 the interests of the 53 forces, to support us -- and  
9 I felt he did an excellent job supporting us -- but  
10 there wasn't this London-based team of police officers,  
11 and there must have been, God knows, good retired  
12 officers, again from the RUC or somewhere, who could  
13 have managed the proliferation of policy that just  
14 descended by the summer of 2005. Everyone seemed to be  
15 writing a strategy or a plan or something and you just  
16 felt that this was bypassing you. Plans were -- in  
17 command structure. Plans were being drawn up in  
18 MND South East I never saw, they just turned up, and  
19 some of them I got invited to see the final draft and  
20 you just felt that this was a total mismatch. If we  
21 were there as the architects of the Iraqi police  
22 service, we really weren't even looking at the bricks,  
23 we weren't seeing what was happening.

24 So I felt that the command chain -- as an  
25 individual -- Foreign Office through, initially -- I

1 think Simon Collis, Stuart Innes in Basra -- was good  
2 but I have to say I think they faced limitations. When  
3 I came into some difficult confrontations with GOCs,  
4 I felt the Foreign Office was powerless to pursue my  
5 interest and I suddenly realised that maybe I was  
6 working with the wrong people, not because they were  
7 unintentioned, but they didn't have the power to take  
8 forward this and that the real nexus of power rested  
9 with the GOC in MND South East.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I'll turn to Sir Martin Gilbert  
11 now. Martin?

12 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: In your statement you write about the  
13 deteriorating security situation in MND South East from  
14 the summer of 2005. Can you tell us how it declined and  
15 what you saw as the drivers at the time?

16 COLIN SMITH: It declined as, I suppose -- the British  
17 turning up as liberators -- and this was July, Paris,  
18 1944 -- suddenly it turned inwards. I mean, not just  
19 debate, I suppose, but perhaps as the Shia realised that  
20 it wasn't going to be all their way -- that it changed  
21 and the attacks became more frequent on the British  
22 military. Two CRG officers. One ex-RUC who I knew very  
23 sadly were killed. The development of the EFP  
24 explosive, of projectiles really started to put the anti  
25 up, that our ability to operate, as it had done, with

1 a bodyguard team was rapidly going, whereas -- what  
2 effect that had was on really the mentoring, monitoring  
3 and advising, and mentoring, an awful phrase --  
4 mentoring to me is I sit with someone for six hours  
5 a day, I attend meetings with him, I know everything he  
6 does and I advise him, not turning up -- initially it  
7 was turning up a couple of times a week for an hour.  
8 The chief of police didn't want me to attend his  
9 meetings.

10 At the end of that period it was turning up in the  
11 back of a Warrior armoured car for a quick 20 minutes  
12 chat before we moved on. So the ability to do our job,  
13 the ability out in Maysan and in Basra, working out at  
14 Shatt Al Arab, for our Armourgroup people just became  
15 more and more difficult. An example I may use is Jameat, which  
16 we identified as a problem. By the summer, May/June, of  
17 2005 it was virtually impossible to get there. The  
18 Foreign and Commonwealth Office under its security  
19 adviser was saying "Far too dangerous to go there, Shia  
20 flats, a bad area", and the military were saying, "We  
21 are not going to take you there. We're not an escort  
22 service. We can't get you there."

23 The ability to do this monitoring, advising and  
24 mentoring just wasn't possible.

25 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Were there differences in the ability

1 of movement for the different groups --

2 COLIN SMITH: There was different duties of care, I think,  
3 that came, and this was a matter of concern with the  
4 military, and I know again all my other colleagues, who  
5 were ex-RUC, we take the view that you are risk-aware.  
6 I think the Foreign Office took a view that it was  
7 risk-averse, I think ACPO took a view it was risk-averse  
8 and I'm sure Doug, Stephen and others knew that if we  
9 had a policeman seriously injured or killed, that was  
10 virtually the end of our work, so there was that concern.  
11 Armourgroup again, because a lot of them were ex-RUC  
12 but again I must mention New Zealanders and Australians  
13 with a military or police background, were able to operate  
14 in armoured vehicles. They had full body armour  
15 protection, they carried MP5 carbines, so they were  
16 almost self-contained, but they still needed to move  
17 with military convoys to get there.

18 The IPIOs couldn't go in British military and they  
19 couldn't go in Armourgroup. Armourgroup couldn't go  
20 in British military. I couldn't go in Snatch vehicles.  
21 Actually I couldn't get in an American helicopter,  
22 though I have to admit I did, and I couldn't go in what  
23 was called a Rhino. So there were all sorts of these  
24 different issues.

25 We all had different arrangements and different --

1 and I think this was a constant source of frustration  
2 with the military, who felt that, you know, we were all  
3 there part of a team and I think, defending Stephen and  
4 myself, we felt almost the same, but we knew what the  
5 restrictions we worked within and it became a sense of  
6 frustration and tension with the military.

7 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Could you have been given a higher  
8 priority in terms of movement, given the --

9 COLIN SMITH: I think it was discussed. I think that was  
10 probably the most irksome -- was having, not so much  
11 myself because I had worked with the military for 15 years  
12 and I'm quite capable of getting a load master to get me  
13 on a helicopter. But I think  
14 for Armourgroup, who were contractors, it was  
15 particularly frustrating to be sitting at the APOD for  
16 four days at a time in a tent to get back to Muthanna or  
17 Maysan where helicopters were flying off not always full,  
18 I think, and that was raised with Sir Ronnie Flanagan,  
19 he took it up, and I think towards the end it improved  
20 but at the same time it improved, the number of  
21 helicopters started to drop off, so again we were where  
22 we wanted to be three months before.

23 So that was a difficulty and at the end I think my  
24 final trip, the only way I could get into Basra Palace  
25 was in a helicopter in the hours of darkness and that

1 was difficult to arrange.

2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: You mention in your statement the  
3 drop-off in helicopter availability. I think you give  
4 the figure of 40 per cent of your flights. Do you know  
5 why this change was announced?

6 COLIN SMITH: I'm not sure. I just know -- and again this  
7 was no criticism of the military, they had what they  
8 had, but I think at one stage -- a figure of -- we had  
9 14 helicopters in Iraq, and that morning I had gone from  
10 Baghdad to Balad where the 101 American Airborne was  
11 and they had something like -- I counted 40 Chinooks and  
12 about 100 Black Hawks sitting on the grounds and the  
13 Chinooks were not going to be used, there were just  
14 there because they were an airborne division and they  
15 brought them with them. Even incidents of flying in and  
16 out of Washington in the Green Zone. A couple of Pumas  
17 that tended to break down -- you know, it was just on  
18 the very edge of minimalist of support in terms of  
19 movement.

20 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: You mentioned earlier the question of  
21 duty of care. Can you tell us who was responsible for  
22 the duty of care for the different groups?

23 COLIN SMITH: The duty of care was with the Foreign and  
24 Commonwealth Office. We abided by their security in  
25 Basra and in the embassy, where we were accommodated in

1 Baghdad. We were subject to their policies, their  
2 restrictions. So if they put an area out of bounds in  
3 Basra, that applied to me. They worked with the  
4 military, obviously, in overlap. But, no, my duty of  
5 care was with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, but  
6 I also had a role in a sense as contingent commander for  
7 all the police officers in Iraq and their duty of care  
8 was back to ACPO. So it was a balance but really  
9 Foreign and Commonwealth Office was the prime --

10 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: I think shall we take a five minute break.  
12 Let's break for five minutes and come back in for the  
13 last half hour.

14 (12.24 pm)

(Short break)

16 (12.35 pm)

17 THE CHAIRMAN: We have got a few more questions we would  
18 like to get through but first I'll ask Sir Roderic Lyne  
19 to pick up the questions.

20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: If I can just recap a little, you said  
21 earlier that you had come to the conclusion that the  
22 real power lay with the GOC Southeast, at least in that  
23 area, ie with the military. You, I think, regretted the  
24 fact that you were not able to co-locate with the  
25 military at Basra air station and indeed recommended

1 that your replacement should be based at the military  
2 headquarters, and in your statement you refer to police  
3 primacy being a much used phrase, but a military lead  
4 being inevitable. There were around 200 police advisers  
5 and contractors in the area, as opposed to 8,000 British  
6 troops in MND South East, which makes the balance of --

7 COLIN SMITH: We were slightly outnumbered, yes, only  
8 slightly.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Slightly outnumbered. So that's the  
10 background. In terms of progressing police reform, what  
11 did that mean? What was the impact of that imbalance?

12 COLIN SMITH: I think it meant -- and that's probably not  
13 only the same criticism of MND South East, but in  
14 Baghdad as well was you ended up with a military  
15 approach to training, which was very much  
16 quantity-driven rather than quality. I think there was  
17 a general misunderstanding in the military about the  
18 difference between training a policemen and a soldier.  
19 If I may, a soldier, when you train him, you take him to  
20 a barracks somewhere and you train him with firearms,  
21 you drill him, you turn him into part of a unit. He  
22 operates as a unit with a sergeant and probably an  
23 officer, he goes away 200 miles, he performs and he  
24 comes back.

25 The police officer undergoes basic training. In the

1 UK, when I joined the RUC, it was six months. It has  
2 now dropped off, but the key point beyond that initial  
3 training is you have a probationary period of two years  
4 with a tutor constable. So a police officer learns most  
5 of his skills on the street, working with the community,  
6 dealing with different incidents. It is not just about  
7 a law book and a gun and a nice uniform, it is about  
8 that. And that was the difficulty.

9 It was the same in Baghdad. It was churning out X  
10 hundreds through eight-week training courses, and then  
11 shoving them out to Fallujah with a Glock pistol in one  
12 hand, and that, I thought, was where we went.

13 Where we evolved in fact was to try and give the  
14 military those bits of logistics that they were very  
15 good at: dealing with equipment, uniforms and trying to  
16 concentrate on the professional skills, particularly  
17 criminal intelligence, forensics, intelligence and the  
18 those areas. But the limitations on movement, because  
19 the military were not able to provide the movement we  
20 wanted, limited that. And again I don't blame the  
21 military for that. As the situation reverted back to  
22 almost war fighting again, we didn't have the spare  
23 capacity to take two police officers to the Jameat,  
24 provide a 16-man guard squad for four hours or  
25 eight hours. So what we wanted to do -- and that was

1       where the frustrations and tensions came -- between  
2       myself and Jonathan Riley and Jim Dutton -- or  
3       Sir Jim, I should say -- that was just professional  
4       tensions. We knew we wanted to do but neither of us  
5       could actually do it.

6       SIR MARTIN GILBERT: What in general were the relationships  
7       like between the civilian police officers and the  
8       military?

9       COLIN SMITH: I think they varied. I think overall they  
10       were good. I think there were some classic examples,  
11       some really good relationships developing. In others  
12       they were slightly fractious, but it was individuals and  
13       a difficult environment, and I think, you know, the GOC  
14       had pressure on them to perform and they were seen as  
15       the biggest organisation there, and they had this  
16       upstart of a deputy Chief Constable, a two-star  
17       equivalent, which they used to look almost in  
18       amazement -- how can this guy be a 2-star equivalent --  
19       turning up and wanting to run things. We were a small  
20       number of people in not only the UK, but American  
21       police, with this massive resource that wasn't ours.  
22       I was effectively going to the GOC and saying, "I want  
23       you to do this, I want you to do that, and I want these  
24       people taken here and I want this helicopter here,  
25       forget what else you are doing."

1           So that was it. But basic relationships --  
2           I remember Jonathan Riley made the lovely comment in  
3           a NATO presentation about Hampshire beat bobbies and RUC  
4           officers only interested in traffic and human rights.  
5           That certainly wasn't my understanding of the RUC -- in  
6           terms of traffic, I should mention. And the human  
7           rights bit, well, we saw the Jameat and so on.

8           I think it was just misperceptions and perhaps if I  
9           had been at the APOD and I had managed to have a glass  
10          of whisky or beer with Jonathan, we might perhaps  
11          have got round some of these difficulties that existed.  
12          So that's a criticism myself of where we were.

13       SIR RODERIC LYNE: You, of course, worked with three  
14          different GOCs in your 15 months. How difficult did the  
15          fact that they kept handing over make your job? You had  
16          to build relationships with different personalities each  
17          time. There was a discontinuity. What was the impact  
18          of that?

19       COLIN SMITH: It wasn't helped by having different GOCs, who  
20          came with their own personal styles, and that was, you  
21          would expect -- in the UK police anyway we do the same  
22          thing. I think allied to that, the different  
23          instructions that were coming out of London, about this  
24          is the plan this week and now -- I tell you what, we are  
25          into condition-based transition -- that they had to do.

1       So I think it was not just personalities, that didn't  
2       help, but it was also the changing demands and the  
3       changing environment we found ourselves in. Put the  
4       three together and you didn't have a good combination  
5       for police reform progress.

6       SIR RODERIC LYNE: Was this essentially a clash between  
7       short-term requirements being placed upon the military  
8       and you were working on programmes that were inevitably  
9       long-term because of the time it takes to achieve  
10      security sector reform and train up a police force?

11     COLIN SMITH: Yes, I think so. I think it was that --  
12      I have always seen it as 5/10/15 years, and I think in  
13      my statement I make a comment, with the RUC, that  
14      collapsed in 1969 and it wasn't until 1980 with the  
15      hunger strike that it really was back. So it took us  
16      10 years in the UK to rebuild a police force not many  
17      miles away from where we are at the moment. To go to  
18      somewhere like Iraq and do the same thing was going to  
19      take a lot of time.

20      I also got the impression that the military felt  
21      they had done their bit, they had gone in there and they  
22      had finished the situation and really they were now  
23      waiting to move on.

24      Their presence -- you know, the target was them on  
25      the ground. So trying to help reform policing was just

1 becoming very difficult.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I'll ask Sir Lawrence Freedman to  
3 pick up the questions.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: On the police, Iraqi police -- what  
5 sort of interaction in all the circumstances you have  
6 now described were you actually able to have with the  
7 Iraqi police?

8 COLIN SMITH: Quite good. I had a fairly good relationship  
9 with General Hassan. I met him, he would phone me, we  
10 would talk around some difficulties. His own position  
11 was quite interesting. In the end of, I think,  
12 April 2005 he did an interview with Rory Carroll of  
13 The Guardian newspaper. When Rory asked him, "Are you  
14 pleased to be a chief of police," he said, "No, I'm  
15 a soldier, I want to be in the army but there aren't any  
16 jobs." And the second question was, "What do you think  
17 of your police force?" And he said, "They are  
18 80 per cent corrupt and working for the militia." And  
19 I got a lot of stick from the press people or FCO about  
20 how he could make those outrageous comments, when he was  
21 speaking the truth. I had a good relationship with him.

22 In Baghdad I had a very good relationship with two  
23 particular gentleman, Ali Ghalib, whom I mentioned  
24 earlier, who was the deputy minister, effectively the  
25 chief police officer, and a gentleman called Hussain Ali

1 Kamal, who was running the intelligence. I had very  
2 good relationships with them. They were two people who  
3 knew where they wanted to be.

4 At a lesser level I met the colonels, the chiefs of  
5 police. Some of them were good, some of them were  
6 filling in time and some of them were just incompetent.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: How were you able to assess and  
8 monitor police effectiveness? If your conversations are  
9 largely at the top, how were you able to actually get  
10 a sense of what was going on?

11 COLIN SMITH: With great difficulty at personal level, but  
12 through the teams, the SPAs in Muthanna and Maysan and  
13 in Basra, and through their contacts, through  
14 conversations with Armourgroup personnel, whom I knew  
15 from my background, they were able to update me where  
16 they were and they give me their impressions and they  
17 were likewise saying -- the same impression. There was  
18 three types of people, the good, the malingerer and the  
19 downright corrupt, and I think as police officers you  
20 don't lose your ability to spot who is in what group,  
21 and they did that.

22 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Understandably, these are pretty  
23 subjective, but probably reliable measures. You didn't  
24 have more formal metrics to --

25 COLIN SMITH: We looked at metrics. I think, in the absence

1 of an overall Iraqi police strategy, we looked at it,  
2 and again the metrics were very much initially around  
3 quantities: the number of people trained, how long they  
4 had been trained for, equipment and weapons training,  
5 specialist skills. So we were able to look at inputs.

6 What was difficult was outputs and outcomes.  
7 Outputs, we could see what they were doing on the  
8 street, we could, where we could, respond to what they  
9 were doing. Outcomes was very difficult to try and  
10 monitor exactly what effect were they having. As I said  
11 earlier, they should have been a police force dealing  
12 with crime. They were not dealing with anything else.  
13 And how they dealt with the militia was an internal  
14 political problem, not a security issue.

15 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What about corruption? What sort of  
16 measures were available to deal with that?

17 COLIN SMITH: That was our work in developing the Department  
18 of Internal Affairs in Basra, trying to deal with -- it  
19 was a way of life that existed. I think many of the  
20 senior police officers I worked with were corrupt. Why  
21 were they corrupt? Because they had got a job, they  
22 didn't know how long they were going to be in the job,  
23 there was no pension, there was no long-term prospects.  
24 It was, when you are in a post, get what you can for so  
25 long as you can and get out. So it was a cultural issue

1 and I think it needed to be addressed, but this was an  
2 issue that was going to take these 15 years. It was  
3 changing a whole culture in a country, not just a few  
4 police officers.

5 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Now you have mentioned the Jameat  
6 police station incident of 19 September 2005. After  
7 that there was the refusal by the Basra  
8 Provincial Council, part of the police, to cooperate  
9 with the Multi-National Force. What effect did that  
10 have on the ability of police advisers to do their job?

11 COLIN SMITH: It made it incredibly difficult.  
12 There was still contact at personal level. While the  
13 chief of police would say he couldn't do this, I know he  
14 was talking to my deputy and others in Basra. But in  
15 terms of being able to progress training, send recruits  
16 off to JIPTC in Jordan or to Baghdad, it was severely  
17 limited.

18 So it was an interruption and an unnecessary  
19 interruption and a difficult one in what was already  
20 becoming a very difficult task.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So what sort of relationship was it  
22 possible to sustain with the Basra police?

23 COLIN SMITH: I think it was personal contacts.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: No more than that?

25 COLIN SMITH: No more really. At official level it was

1       difficult. Some of them interpreted their instructions  
2       differently. Hassan would have to be because he knew  
3       the governor and he knew the instructions would have to  
4       toe the line but others would be a little bit more  
5       amenable. So, like everything else, it was  
6       interpersonal skills that were important there.

7       SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Something called Operation Corrode,  
8       which I think was an anti-corruption programme. Could  
9       you say something about that?

10      COLIN SMITH: Yes, that was set up to look and provide  
11      information to look at vetting of Iraqi police officers,  
12      to look at the DIA, the intelligence unit, to provide  
13      evidence, and I think it was perhaps the first instance  
14      that in MND Southeast the military had turned to the  
15      police in that area. I had RUC officers who were  
16      Special Branch officers who were crack at that. But  
17      before the Jameat, we were not involved in any of the  
18      counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism, looking at these  
19      individuals. Post that I think my deputy and others  
20      were able to lead on a role in it, and I think the  
21      acceptance, even coming out of the MoI, was that this  
22      was wrong -- enabled police on the ground with military  
23      colleagues to take a little bit more management of this,  
24      to actually, although it was not our role -- we were  
25      mentoring, advising -- to take a little bit more

1 positive, to say that these individuals have -- what  
2 happened again was that the DIA was shut down and they  
3 were transferred to another unit; they simply moved  
4 around. So the people who -- intelligence was given to  
5 the Iraqi authorities in Baghdad and the chief of police  
6 were simply still there.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So it wasn't that effective in the  
8 end?

9 COLIN SMITH: I think in the end it was moving to  
10 effectiveness. I think it would be fair to say that we  
11 were vetting officers, we were starting to look, to  
12 become, far more informed, to set up some units that  
13 could do that purpose. But again it was down to the  
14 Iraqis to use that to some effect, which I think was  
15 still -- the will was perhaps lacking.

16 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thanks very much.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's turn to our last questions and that's  
18 from Baroness Prashar.

19 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you. After the Al Jameat  
20 incident, MoD was given the ministerial lead for  
21 policing. What impact did that have?

22 COLIN SMITH: I don't think it had much impact at all on the  
23 ground because no one was quite clear what it meant.  
24 I think, even talking to General Dutton -- he had his  
25 views of what he wanted it to be, which was

1 all-powerful, all-seeing, all-controlling, I'm the man,  
2 you will work for me, and I think -- again you spoke to  
3 General Dutton -- that was not the view shared by the  
4 MoD in London and was not shared by a lot of his  
5 colleagues, who really didn't want to get involved in  
6 police reform; we have got policemen here to do it.

7 I don't think it had much effect on the ground -- I saw  
8 Minister of Defence John Reid in Basra after that and we had a  
9 brief conversation but it didn't -- it didn't lessen where we  
10 were going anyway. The police and the army were moving  
11 together. We may have had our disagreements but the  
12 reality was we had a transition, it was condition based -- we  
13 did a lot of the audit work with them. The joint police  
14 teams were starting to work better, so really  
15 by December, after the Jameat, with the MoD, we were  
16 working better but, to answer your question, I didn't  
17 see any difference really at my level.

18 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So it had no impact on the ground,  
19 as it were?

20 COLIN SMITH: I don't think it did because it was a higher  
21 range decision. Whether it was a foreign minister or a  
22 minister of defence didn't to me make a lot of  
23 difference.

24 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: At the same time Sir Ronnie Flanagan  
25 was asked to conduct a review of the policing and

1 I think he visited Iraq twice and did you accompany him?

2 COLIN SMITH: Yes, I did. I know Sir Ronnie as well for  
3 25 years. He was my mentor in the RUC and we could  
4 probably be called friends. Before he came I gave him a pack of  
5 reading which was all the documents you have probably  
6 seen. I accompanied him in November. He was there  
7 from, I think, the 20th to the 25th. I accompanied him  
8 to meetings in Baghdad with the Minister of the  
9 Interior, where, with the Ambassador, he saw these names  
10 being handed over, so he was able to see what we were  
11 doing.

12 I went to Basra with him and he came back  
13 in January. He had been there previously in May. He  
14 came out with Paul Kernaghan and Hugh Orde from the PSNI  
15 and Colin Cramphorn now sadly deceased, as a  
16 a fact-finding mission. He came back in January. I had  
17 input to him. In January I came to London and sat in  
18 with him and his team on the final report so I had an  
19 input into that and I was pleased with his conclusion.

20 (Overtalking)

21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What seemed to be the significant  
22 recommendations that he made?

23 COLIN SMITH: I think he raised the issue about command and  
24 control and I think he made a very succinct comment in  
25 there, which, if I try and repeat, I'm going to get

1 wrong, about the who and the what and the difference  
2 between command, the difference between control which,  
3 at his level in Northern Ireland, he would have been  
4 well aware of with the military. I thought that was  
5 helpful. I think some of his comments about putting  
6 a senior officer into PJHQ, which I don't think ever  
7 happened, was a good one because it might have started  
8 to get that in. But generally I thought, as I would do,  
9 that some of the recommendations I had given him came  
10 out in his report.

11 So there were bits in there that I think -- yes,  
12 that was okay. Was there anything I totally disagreed  
13 with? No.

14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Were they actually implemented and  
15 what changes occurred as a result of this review and  
16 implementation of the recommendations?

17 COLIN SMITH: I'm not sure. Some of them were fairly  
18 long-term. I think the relationship with the  
19 military -- we got that together, I think, a bit more  
20 because Sir Ronnie is a great man to bang heads  
21 together. So that was helpful. I think it set down  
22 some of the difficulties we were experiencing. I think  
23 it raised more questions probably than it gave some  
24 answers to in some respects, and you will be speaking to  
25 him soon.

1 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Do you think it had a long-term  
2 impact because --

3 COLIN SMITH: Yes, I think again his prioritisation of  
4 MND South East, at least for the period of transition,  
5 was good, and I think he picked up on the point you  
6 raised earlier about my split loyalties between the two,  
7 and he saw that as important, and he saw that perhaps as  
8 a bigger priority, whereas the FCO and my commitments  
9 six months previously had been to get influence in  
10 Baghdad in a strategic -- and I notice my successor  
11 that -- Dick Barton, of course, went to Basra, but his  
12 successor I think after transition, went to Baghdad, or  
13 his successor. So it was still which one are we going  
14 to.

15 I think overall it was good. I think his  
16 recommendations were put into place and, you know, with  
17 Paul Kernaghan's work, set the basis for the future.

18 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to conclude by inviting any  
20 reflections you have on lessons learned, on what was  
21 achieved and indeed what may be future of the policing  
22 in Iraq. So it is really your opportunity.

23 COLIN SMITH: I think on lessons learned -- I think it is  
24 important we learn the lessons but I think it is also  
25 important that we don't try and fight the last war. I

1 think Iraq was fairly unique in many respects and we  
2 need to be careful. I know that the GOC felt that the  
3 British police were not capable, that we needed an  
4 expeditionary capability. Well, I haven't done  
5 parachuting for a long time and I don't intend to go  
6 back to it but I think that was perhaps something that  
7 might have been useful at the time.

8 In terms of where I think we should go as UK police  
9 PLC -- and Sir Ronnie and Paul Kernaghan may have  
10 different views -- I think we should look more towards  
11 Europe. In the two years after I left Iraq I was head  
12 of mission in Palestine, in Ramallah, in Jerusalem, and  
13 I think the European Union has got its act together.  
14 The command bit that was missing while I was in Iraq is  
15 in Brussels. There is CivMil cell, there is this whole  
16 structure and although I'm a Euro sceptic by nature,  
17 I have to say I think they started to do that well.

18 I had problems in Palestine and I think that's  
19 perhaps the future, that we should -- I think the line  
20 of command needs to be sorted out -- do we work for the  
21 FCO, do we work for the military -- before we go. We  
22 should have one organisation that we work for and we  
23 shouldn't have military officers writing policing  
24 reports and so on. We should do that. The support  
25 infrastructure in the UK, I think, follows that.

1           I think we need to look at the nature of the  
2           commitment we take on. I have mentioned frequently  
3           that -- and I'm sure others have -- that we didn't have  
4           any executive power. That was the political decision,  
5           but if I look at the UN mission in Kosovo, where in 1999  
6           we deployed -- different circumstances, but the police  
7           went there with executive powers. There were some very  
8           successful chief commissioners, who were British, who  
9           were able to mentor police officers by having them with  
10          them. So, instead of sitting in on their meetings, they  
11          sat in on theirs, and I think UNMIK, over six years --  
12          and I was in Kosovo last year, and there are still  
13          problems there -- and I'm sure Steve White would have  
14          said -- if we could have done that in Iraq, that would  
15          be the way forward and I'm sure that the security  
16          situation might have been different if we were seen as  
17          being impartial.

18          I think we need to be joined up. I have learned in  
19          Palestine, where my mission started off as a police  
20          mission, very soon we turned it into a rule of law  
21          mission and it became joined up, and I think I'm  
22          a strong supporter of looking at the continuum between  
23          police, prosecution, courts and prisons, and that has to  
24          be the future. We should do that. Iraq, I think, was  
25          a little bit siloed.

1           So that, I think, really are the overall lessons.  
2           The Iraqi police, I think, will go its own way. I was  
3           there for a month last year in Baghdad and what I did  
4           notice was that they are reverting to what they did  
5           before 2003. They are training -- this was the EU  
6           mission, to look at higher police training. The Baghdad  
7           police college will be a three-year training college for  
8           senior police officers. When I spoke to senior Iraqi  
9           policemen, they all quoted legislation and law that took  
10          place before 2003. So they weren't going back to the  
11          Saddam Hussein era but they were going back to what  
12          traditionally they were happy with, and that --  
13          I thought that was quite right. I saw them and  
14          I thought, you know, they have moved on, they have moved  
15          on. But at least another ten years before we can really  
16          assess them.

17        THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Mr Smith. Our thanks  
18          to you for a very interesting session. We will close  
19          this one now and resume at 2 o'clock this afternoon when  
20          our witnesses will be Lieutenant General Anthony Palmer  
21          and Lieutenant General Alistair Irwin. Thank you very  
22          much.

23        (12.56 pm)

24                               (The short adjournment)

25

FENVA