

1 (3.35 pm)

2 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, welcome to our witness this afternoon
4 and to all those of you in the room. Our witness this
5 afternoon is Lt Gen James Dutton. You served in
6 a number of roles in Iraq, I think. I think -- just to
7 go through to make sure I have got them right -- in
8 early 2002, part of the planning team within the MoD.
9 You then took part in the invasion as commanding
10 3 Commando, and then, returning to Iraq, you were GOC
11 MND South East from June to December 2005, and finally
12 as Deputy Chief of Joint Operations, which you were
13 from February 2007 until October 2008.

14 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: That's right.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I think this session should last
16 up to one and a half hours. We recognise that every
17 witness gives evidence based on his recollection of
18 events, and we check what we hear against the papers to
19 which we have access. We are publishing this afternoon,
20 on our website, relevant extracts from the now
21 declassified Hauldown Report, which, you,
22 General Dutton, wrote in December 2005, following your
23 period as GOC in MND South East. Against that
24 background, I'll ask Sir Martin Gilbert to start the
25 questions.

1 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: When you returned from your post in
2 Washington as the Chief of Defence Staff Liaison Officer
3 in the Pentagon, you went to work for General Pigott in
4 his Iraq Planning Group. I think that was in March
5 2002.

6 Can you tell us to what extent your role in
7 Washington had been linked to Iraq?

8 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Not at all, certainly initially, in
9 that I was the first CDSLO to go to Washington. It was
10 the then CDS's, Admiral Boyce's, idea to get a man
11 permanently into the joint staff in the Pentagon. That
12 was something he had agreed with his opposite number
13 and, of course, the focus of attention was absolutely on
14 Afghanistan. I arrived there after the bombing had
15 started but before we had sort of won, if you see what
16 I mean.

17 So that was very much the focus of attention up
18 until Christmas. I left, I think, middle to late March,
19 probably late March, and handed over to John Cooper, by
20 which time we had started -- the joint staff had
21 clearly -- the Pentagon joint staff had clearly started
22 not just to deal with Afghanistan -- that was still the
23 focus of their attention, but they had a much wider
24 interest -- and we were all interested to know whether
25 there was any planning going on for other potential

1 operations.

2 I used to ask that question of the J-3,
3 General Newbold, a US Marine Corps general, and he would
4 be quite honest in saying that they were doing staff
5 checks for any number of contingencies and, if asked
6 specifically about Iraq, he would not deny that they
7 were looking at what they could do, if asked to, but my
8 role in Washington was really nothing to do with Iraq.
9 It was a general liaison but specifically
10 Afghan-related.

11 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Had you formed any general impressions
12 about --

13 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: I think it was obvious -- it was clear
14 that they were looking at force levels, what they were
15 likely to need in an enduring way in Afghanistan and,
16 therefore, what might be available for anything else
17 that came up.

18 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: When you were with the Iraq Planning
19 Group, General Pigott told us in his evidence that the
20 group was created to -- his word was to undertake
21 scoping work.

22 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes.

23 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Can you describe the type of scoping
24 work that you undertook?

25 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes, I mean, it was relatively ad hoc,

1 was my feeling here. I mean, I came back, I was waiting
2 to take command of 3 Commando Brigade, which was then
3 deployed to Afghanistan for Operation Jacana, and I had
4 hoped to take command of the brigade in Afghanistan but,
5 for obvious, quite good reasons, that was not considered
6 a good idea. So I was delayed in taking command. So
7 I had a couple of months spare, and I'm a Royal Marine
8 so the Royal Navy would have employed me for those two
9 months, but I think General Pigott, and certainly I,
10 felt there was perhaps more use in me coming and working
11 for him in view of the experience that I had just had in
12 six months in Washington.

13 So it was all pretty ad hoc. I was asked to report
14 weekly to General Pigott -- in fact, I saw him far more
15 frequently than that -- and to do some work for him
16 which was best described, at the time, and now, as
17 prudent military contingency planning on what we might
18 be able to do if there were a political decision and
19 a political Directive to do so.

20 So that's what I spent my time doing.

21 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: So in terms of the question of the
22 force package. I mean, normally, discussion of force
23 package would come up from the government decision.

24 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes. We got to nothing like talking
25 about force packages at that stage. We were talking

1 very much in terms of ends, ways and means. If there
2 were to be a political decision made to do something in
3 Iraq, what might the Americans do, what might we be able
4 to do, as I say, if that decision were made and, you
5 know, how would the various bits of Whitehall contribute
6 to that and what might be the longer-term aim.

7 So it was very much conceptual thinking at that
8 stage. We really were not talking force -- well,
9 certainly nobody I was speaking to was talking force
10 packages at that stage.

11 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Did you see any evolution of objectives
12 during this period, which was, what, from March
13 to July 2002?

14 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, I think we crystallised thinking
15 to some extent on what we could do if asked to do it.
16 So it was very much -- it was always going to be in
17 support of a coalition -- certainly in support of the
18 United States, perhaps of a wider coalition and it
19 was -- the various ends were, you know -- what effect it
20 would have on AQ, which was still, you know,
21 a principal -- because this was not long after 9/11 and
22 we didn't know what AQ's capability was going to be for
23 further attacks. Also, what the aims were in terms of
24 weapons of mass destruction and -- but also what the
25 consequences would be and, therefore, what else would

1 have to happen in order to stabilise Iraq afterwards.

2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Were other departments involved in this
3 scoping work?

4 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: To a limited extent. It was
5 definitely a Ministry of Defence lead in looking at
6 possibilities. Other departments were more or less
7 willing to talk to us. I think the FCO was quite
8 willing -- my recollection is that DFID was not
9 particularly willing to talk to us at that stage, because
10 there wasn't a political direction and they didn't
11 feel -- I'm guessing they didn't feel that they had the
12 authority to do this sort of contingency planning.

13 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: My final question on this period is,
14 when you moved on in July, how far had the scoping work
15 evolved? Had you seen a sort of progression?

16 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: I mean, it came down to about six
17 sheets of paper in the end, and we played with these
18 sheets of paper quite a lot. These were essentially
19 diagrams, they were flow diagrams of ends, ways and
20 means. I would say, by the time I left it in July, we
21 had still really not -- we still certainly weren't
22 talking about force packages. We were still talking
23 about what capability the UK may have, if asked to
24 deploy it, and to what effect.

25 I recall one of General Pigott's lines used to be

1 quite rightly, you know, first of all, is this possible,
2 you know, and, if it is possible, how might it be
3 achieved and, if it was achieved in this way or that way
4 or another way, what could UK contribute to that? So we
5 were looking at it very much from the -- almost an
6 intellectual point of view.

7 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: That's very helpful, thank you very
8 much.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: I'd like to move on to your next phase and
10 I'll ask Sir Lawrence Freedman to pick up the
11 questioning.

12 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: As a sort of transitional question,
13 because you assumed the command of 3 Commando Brigade
14 in July 2002, had the work you had undertaken for
15 General Pigott included the possibility of an amphibious
16 assault in southern Iraq?

17 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: No, the first -- I mean, the first
18 time I heard of force packages being discussed were
19 really quite a lot later in 2002, late autumn,
20 timescale.

21 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So the issue developed during the
22 course of 2002?

23 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes.

24 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The original plan presumably, whilst
25 it was still being discussed, was for a land

1 contribution through the north and only one unit,
2 40 Commando, on the Al Faw peninsula, supporting mine
3 clearance. How, in your recollection, did the plan
4 evolve into a full, amphibious assault?

5 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: It wasn't even 40 Commando
6 specifically at the earliest stage, it was a commando
7 unit and, of course, this was the time of Op Fresco, the
8 fireman's strike, which had some effect as well on force
9 levels and capabilities. 40 Commando came about actually
10 because it was by far the best worked-up and exercised
11 unit and, in fact, in the autumn they were out in
12 29 Palms in California exercising with the US Marine
13 Corps on a regular exercise schedule.

14 So it made sense for it to be them, but at the
15 earliest stages, it was just a commando unit that could
16 contribute to assisting the US effort to seize the oil
17 infrastructure intact on the AL Faw peninsula.

18 I'm sorry, I have forgotten the aim of your question
19 now.

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: You are answering it. It is how did
21 it evolve into a full-scale --

22 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: I think it evolved because, you know,
23 that looked fine, if that had been a simple, discrete
24 operation with -- which was possible to be achieved with
25 no outside influences or effects. I think the more we

1 looked at it, the more we realised that, you know, the
2 possibility of the Iraqi forces then trying to do
3 something out of Basra or from further north, would have
4 meant that perhaps the combat power ashore would have
5 been insufficient at that stage.

6 So we then started to look at a greater effect.

7 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Had the Defence Secretary announced
8 the deployment of 3 Commando Brigade on 10 January, to
9 what extent was the deployment of an -- was this
10 deployment an insurance against the UK having no land
11 forces contributing to operations in Iraq, given the
12 position of the Turkish Government and the reservations
13 MoD had expressed earlier about deploying through
14 Kuwait?

15 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: I really don't know the answer to
16 that. I don't know what was in the Defence Secretary's
17 mind when he made that announcement.

18 I don't think we were clear, were we, by then?
19 Sorry, was that January?

20 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Yes --

21 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes, we were clear by then that we
22 were not going through the north, weren't we? But of
23 course, the Americans were not clear, at that stage,
24 that they were not going through the north. They were
25 not clear actually until much later into March. But

1 I really don't know what was in his mind in terms of
2 making sure there was British involvement. I rather
3 felt that it was -- the US genuinely needed a capability
4 to assist them in this operation, which was in a sense
5 a sideline, because their main aim was to get to the
6 Euphrates River crossings at Nasiriyah and then on to
7 Baghdad and beyond, and they didn't want to be
8 distracted and to have to leave relatively large
9 elements of forces either securing Basra and/or the oil
10 infrastructure. So this was a genuine task which we
11 could undertake, which would relieve them of that
12 necessity.

13 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So from your perspective, in a way,
14 you didn't need to know an awful lot more about what
15 else was going on because you had a very particular and
16 discrete task?

17 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Absolutely, yes. I personally was in
18 favour -- I mean, I was the brigade commander, so
19 I would say this, wouldn't I -- I personally was in
20 favour of a complete brigade deployment, because I felt
21 that that gave us more of the insurance that we needed.
22 Of course, 45 Commando, the third unit of the brigade,
23 wasn't available to me. One large company was standing
24 by for firefighting and the other two companies were
25 involved with other forces, other UK forces. So that

1 unit was not available to me.

2 So I think it is true to say that part of the
3 deal -- not a good word, but you know what I mean --
4 with the US, for getting 15 MEU -- 15 Marine
5 Expeditionary Unit -- under command was that we would
6 deploy as much of the brigade as we could and certainly
7 its command element.

8 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Now, amphibious operations are
9 notoriously quite risky. What did you see as the risks
10 attached to this operation? How did you highlight
11 these?

12 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, I mean -- you are absolutely
13 right, it was risky and, of course, with the benefit of
14 hindsight, it is easy to think now, "Actually, it was
15 pretty simple really", and certainly at above tactical
16 level, the Iraqis didn't fight back, and so, you know,
17 what was all the fuss about?

18 That wasn't how it appeared, of course, when
19 I arrived in Kuwait in January and we were building up
20 the force and training and integrating and so on
21 in February, because we genuinely believed and the
22 intelligence showed -- suggested that they would fight
23 back and they had that capability and, you know,
24 a multitude of examples of how we believed they would
25 fight back.

1 So it was a risky operation because it was
2 potentially an opposed helicopter assault to seize the
3 oil infrastructure. But the oil infrastructure was
4 hugely important because of the environmental
5 consequences of them blowing -- the economic
6 consequences -- what is it, 92 per cent of the Iraqi
7 economy or something then, maybe slightly less now,
8 flowing through those pipes to the oil platforms at sea.

9 So it was potentially a risky operation, but that
10 risk was mitigated by the fact that we were operating
11 with the US Naval Special Warfare Group, which were
12 clearly optimised for that sort of operation.

13 Certainly, 40 Commando, who had sailed round in the
14 amphibious task group had done integration training and
15 did lots more when they got there, integration training
16 with the American SEALs. There was a huge element of
17 surprise because, of course, in as much as they were
18 expecting anything, we assumed that the Iraqis would
19 expect a long air campaign before the land campaign. So
20 we knew we had surprise on our side, and so, you know,
21 those were the risk-mitigating factors. It was a risk
22 that we believed we could take.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So some of these risks mitigated by
24 the fact that you were doing it with the Americans?

25 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes, and not just with the SEALs, but

1 all the fire power that came with that as well, the
2 AC130 gunships, the fast air, you know, enormous fire
3 power.

4 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: The previous major amphibious
5 operation which I think you were involved in was the
6 Falklands, when we had Fearless and Intrepid, and both
7 of these had just ceased being available.

8 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So what sort of problems --

10 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: I mean, this wasn't in any way
11 a classic amphibious operation. It wasn't really,
12 truly, an amphibious operation, because the beach
13 profiles of the Al Faw peninsula are so slight that
14 there is no chance of getting a conventional landing
15 craft onto a beach. So having the LPDs would have been useful
16 perhaps for other reasons and for support, but not to
17 conduct the landing, which is why I chose to fly all but
18 one company of the brigade ashore, and the whole of the
19 MEU -- the whole of the American MEU were ashore.

20 So the assault was from a land base, albeit most of
21 40 Commando came ashore, in fact. This was one of the
22 key tasks, to time the arrival of 40 Commando ashore
23 with the CH47 helicopters in time to make the assault
24 but not too soon because of all the logistic
25 consequences of having them there.

1 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: One question in a second. How did
2 you plan to bring your armour ashore.

3 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: We planned to bring it ashore -- this
4 was light armour, of course, this was CVR(T). We
5 planned to bring it ashore over a beach that was going
6 to be called Red Beach, using American heavy LCAC --
7 air-cushioned landing vehicles, and we did lots of training
8 for that and lots of rehearsal and we pre-loaded the
9 armour on to those LCACs on -- I can't remember the name
10 of the American ship now, but an American LSD -- and
11 that was originally the plan to get that ashore across
12 Red Beach.

13 In the end, that plan very nearly came to fruition,
14 but not quite. That beach was heavily mined with lots
15 of obstacles. We were actually pretty close to having
16 cleared the mines from both landward side and seaward
17 because, of course, 40 Commando were ashore by then,
18 when the LCACs were pulled, because it was considered
19 that the risk to them was too great.

20 So we eventually put the -- but, of course, by
21 then -- I mean, that -- to say that didn't concern me
22 isn't true, it concerned me a lot, but by then we knew
23 that the hold that 40 Commando had on the Al Faw
24 peninsula with 42 Commando as well, having flown in to
25 secure that northern flank, was sufficient that we had

1 time to get the light armour in by another route.

2 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So if they had been seriously
3 opposed, that would have been more of a problem than it
4 turned out to be?

5 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: My guess is that, had it been
6 seriously opposed, they wouldn't have pulled the LCACs,
7 because the risk to the LCACs would have been less than
8 the risk to the force ashore.

9 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: What was the impact of the
10 withdrawal of the American helicopter support after the
11 crash which killed your reconnaissance force?

12 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: It delayed the arrival of 42 Commando
13 on to the Al Faw by about 10 to 12 hours. So that
14 essentially was the effect again, as the US helicopter
15 commander, the marine air wing commander said
16 afterwards. By then, we knew that the threat to
17 40 Commando was not so significant that it was worth
18 taking the risk of ordering those helicopters to fly
19 again when they clearly didn't want to.

20 Again, my belief is that, had 40 Commando been
21 extremely hard-pressed on the base of the Al Faw
22 peninsula, then that decision would have been different.

23 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: So basically, the risks that were
24 taken by and large with this military operation were
25 geared to the fact that, as it was being conducted, it

1 was apparent that it wasn't going to be as demanding --

2 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: The system -- the American system of

3 allocating fast air is a good example of how they do

4 this. You know, it goes to the area of greatest need.

5 You can launch as many pairs of attack helicopters or

6 aircraft as you like, thinking they are coming your way.

7 The decision is subsequently made centrally as to where

8 the area of greatest need is. If somebody else has

9 a greater need, you don't get the aircraft.

10 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Just finally, are there any further

11 observations you would like to make about this

12 operation?

13 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: No.

14 SIR LAWRENCE FREEDMAN: Thanks very much.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: I'll turn then to Baroness Prashar and your

16 time as GOC in the MND South East.

17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Can we fast forward to June 2005

18 when you arrived in MND South East? At that point, what

19 proportion of your resources were devoted to security

20 sector reform and what to providing security?

21 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: It is difficult for me to remember

22 what percentage. I can tell you what we wanted it to

23 be.

24 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Tell me, what was your priority?

25 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: The priority was definitely security

1 sector reform, because there is no doubt -- one tends to
2 forget because you know what has happened since. We
3 were really quite optimistic about what was happening in
4 Iraq, certainly in southeast Iraq, at that period in
5 2005. I can remember being told actually, in my
6 briefings in the MoD, that my job was to go there for
7 six months and make sure nothing went wrong because
8 things were going right and, you know, just keep the
9 thing ticking over and we will be okay. There will be
10 the referendum, there will be the elections, there will
11 be a government and all will be well.

12 So the priority was security sector reform. What,
13 of course, skewed that massively was, shortly after my
14 arrival, when the threat from the infrared -- what do we
15 call things? EFPs, explosively formed projectiles. The
16 shape charges suddenly started in the south and then
17 started to proliferate amongst the rest of the country
18 as well, and that required us of course to spend -- to
19 use a lot more effort in protection of forces.

20 I mean, my tour was split almost exactly into half: before
21 I went on R&R in September, I used to travel round with
22 my sort of command group in two armoured -- I think they
23 were Toyota, you know, land cruisers. I used to drive
24 through Basra, through the traffic jams, go to the
25 palace to see the Consul General, drive back again. We

1 would let the City Battle Group know we were on the road
2 but we didn't have any extra protection.

3 The second half, my vehicles never left the
4 compound, we did all movement by air or, if the vehicles
5 did move, they were in convoys protected by armoured
6 vehicles.

7 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So those were the constraints, but
8 what was the strategy for security sector reform? How
9 did you go about this?

10 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Essentially, you know -- essentially,
11 it was to maintain the suppression of the violence to
12 the extent that we could with the forces we had, whilst
13 building up and developing the Iraqi security forces as
14 quickly as possible, so that they -- so that they could
15 take on that task from us.

16 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But were the British troops embedded
17 with the Iraqi military at this stage and did that
18 continue throughout your time there?

19 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Embedded? Not in the sense that --
20 not in the sense that they were later in 2007 and 2008,
21 when we had MITT teams, as they became known. I'm sure
22 you are all familiar with that term now, but the MITT
23 teams embedded with the Iraqi forces.

24 At that stage, we were training them slightly from
25 a distance. We were, of course, running the training

1 centre up at Tallil on their behalf. In fact, one of
2 the things I did was a sort of small ceremony, handed
3 over to the commander,
4 General Abdul Latif, which must have been up about
5 sort of August -- August 2005.

6 So -- but we had trainers up there training them, we
7 had embedded trainers with General Latif and his
8 headquarters staff. We had them in each of the Brigade
9 Headquarters as well, but we didn't have -- I'm pretty
10 certain we didn't -- I'm certain we didn't have teams
11 embedded in battalions.

12 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: On the police side, who had overall
13 responsibility for the police reform in MND South East?

14 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, we did. I mean, we did, in that
15 nobody else -- there was nobody else to do it and, of
16 course, police was a concern then and it has become
17 a bigger concern since, and it always was a concern
18 because, you know, it was a very large police force,
19 some of it untrained, with quite a lot of evidence to
20 show that it was corrupt and there were policemen
21 wearing the uniform who weren't policemen or, if they
22 were policemen, they certainly weren't on the side of
23 law and order.

24 So we were attempting to improve that force whilst
25 it was still being a police force, and I know that the

1 MoD wrote to you on this subject, after I was asked --
2 this three-point -- there was nothing particularly
3 magical about my three-point plan. It was a very simple
4 plan, but it was designed in some ways to counter what
5 I thought was a feeling that was coming from elsewhere,
6 that the only answer to the Basra police force was to
7 disband it completely and start again from scratch.

8 We believed then, and I still believe now, that that
9 was just a wholly impossible thing to do, because you
10 needed a police force, and so the only thing you could
11 do was work with what you had got and try to improve in
12 incrementally over time.

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What role was the chief police
14 adviser playing in relation to --

15 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, the chief police adviser by the
16 time I got there, I think had moved to Baghdad. This is
17 Colin Smith? Yes, he had moved to Baghdad. So I only
18 saw him about twice in my tour when he came down.

19 We did have some policemen. We had
20 a superintendent, whose name I can't now remember, who
21 arrived half way through my time there. I mean, we had
22 some excellent policemen, but simply not sufficient to
23 take on the role of police training, which is why it had
24 to be done in a -- in a very poor way, but as best we
25 could, by the military.

1 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: So you didn't see very much of the
2 chief police adviser, other than --

3 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: I didn't see Colin Smith. He was
4 based in Baghdad at that time and he came down on
5 a couple of occasions. I saw quite a lot of -- the
6 policemen whom we did have down in southeast -- because,
7 of course, remember then Basra Palace was still up and
8 running, the Consul General was still there and those
9 sorts of elements were still over there. So we would
10 see them in the airport quite often and I would see them
11 over in the palace and we had a working group which
12 I think we set up during my time there and, you know, we
13 made lots of attempts to try to improve our
14 relationship.

15 I mean, there was nothing wrong, with you, know, the
16 individual policemen who came over there. They were all
17 huge enthusiasts and very experienced. There just
18 weren't enough of them.

19 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What was wrong with the relationship
20 that you were trying to improve? Were there tensions in
21 that relationship?

22 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: There had always been the story that
23 there were tensions in the relationship. I generally
24 found, actually, that those stories sort of tend to
25 emanate out of London. The closer you get to the real

1 business on the ground, the better the relationship
2 between all the departments of government.

3 So, you know, the relationship between the
4 Ministry of Defence and DFID on the ground is fantastic.
5 It was in Iraq and it certainly was during my year in
6 Afghanistan recently, because that's individuals dealing
7 with individuals. The relationship tends to get rather
8 more strained the further back you get towards the
9 policy level, which isn't surprising.

10 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: On the ground, you are all working
11 together to make it work?

12 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes, absolutely. Working together to
13 make it work. That's not to say that there wasn't an
14 element of criticism, probably of the military by the
15 police and by the police of the -- the military of the
16 police as well. But that wasn't -- my criticism of the
17 UK's policing -- expeditionary policing effort has never
18 been aimed at the individual policemen who do it, simply
19 the fact that I don't believe we, in the UK, have
20 a system for expeditionary policing that will work in
21 the sort of environment of Iraq or Afghanistan.

22 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What role did the military play in
23 respect of the police reform?

24 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, doing some of the training.
25 Certainly I recall early in my time as GOC going over

1 to, I think it was Muthanna -- I can't remember where it
2 was now -- no, it can't have been, because it was UK
3 troops, but anyway, I went to a particular base and was
4 surprised to find a young senior NCO giving a lecture to
5 quite clearly some older and much more experienced
6 policemen through an interpreter with a series of
7 Powerpoint slides and it was pretty basic stuff. It
8 would be through an interpreter and I remember talking
9 to him afterwards over a cup of coffee and said "What's
10 your background?" He said "Infantry", I can't remember
11 his regiment now. "What's your background for doing
12 this?" He had no background at all. A bit of common
13 sense, he read a book last night and put together some
14 slides, but nobody else was doing it and you could see
15 it was having an effect on the audience who were getting
16 something out of it.

17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Were you having to sort of align the
18 military aspects of police reform with the civilian
19 police advisers, and how did your resources compare?

20 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Can you ask that one again?

21 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Were you seeking to align the
22 military aspects of police reform with the work of the
23 civilian police advisers?

24 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes, we were always trying -- I was
25 always trying to corral everybody together to work

1 towards the same end and it didn't really matter to me
2 whether it was a policeman training policemen or
3 a soldier training policemen, so long as we agreed the
4 end-state of those policemen.

5 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: There was agreement on the
6 end-state?

7 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: There was certainly agreement locally
8 on the end-state. But I never -- you know, I have never
9 felt that we have understood yet, as a country, the
10 requirement for policing in that sort of environment and
11 I think that's where the fault is, not with the
12 individuals.

13 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: There was a much more fundamental
14 issue, so far as you are concerned?

15 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes.

16 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to pick up the theme of the IED
18 threat as it developed. You have talked about it a bit
19 already. Countering it as the threat both, I think,
20 intensified in terms of the technology behind it and
21 also the volume of level of attacks, what is the -- or
22 what was, at that time, the response from
23 MND South East?

24 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: We tried to respond at every level.
25 At the simplest -- actually, it is not different to what

1 we are doing now in Afghanistan. At the simplest, it
2 was tactics, techniques and procedures. So the more we
3 became aware of how the opposition laid these devices,
4 the more we changed our procedures, and hugely important
5 to get that training back to the UK so that the
6 soldiers can be trained before they get out there. So
7 that constant business of evolving TTPs, as we called
8 them.

9 Then there was the sort of the huge technical
10 effort, which I think you will be aware of and probably
11 we don't want to go into in any detail here, but suffice
12 to say I was hugely impressed, though not surprised, by
13 the level of effort and speed and outcome of the
14 technical business of countering these things.

15 Then, of course, there is the business of trying to
16 identify who the people are who are laying them, where
17 they are getting the components from and how you can
18 interdict the supply and/or arrest the main
19 perpetrators.

20 So, as we became aware, as we built up that sort of
21 intelligence, we would conduct operations to take
22 those people out or to take them into custody.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Just picking up a couple of
24 points in that, looking to the scientific and technical
25 effort, was that principally being done in theatre or

1 back in UK?

2 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, both, but back in UK certainly,
3 with a very, very close and strong and rapid linkage.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Did you yourself, as GOC, have, as it were,
5 scientific, technical advice, engineering advice?

6 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes, we had -- I'm trying to remember
7 exactly where it came from now, but certainly we had
8 a scientist, we had a Ministry of Defence or Qinetiq or
9 something -- anyway, scientist, out there the whole time
10 who was the main link but, you know, there were
11 multiple -- there were multiple links. This is an area
12 where no expense was spared.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: We have heard, I think, totally
14 unsurprisingly, that there has been a great deal of
15 concern about the use of Snatch Land Rovers at that
16 time. Equally, we are clear from the evidence we have
17 had that the response to IEDs is not simply a matter of
18 the level of armour in vehicles. There is a great deal
19 more than that behind it.

20 I wonder, when you arrived in theatre, what was
21 Snatch usefully used for and appropriately used for, and
22 did that change? Was its role -- did it have to be
23 reduced as the IED threat rose?

24 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes, Snatch served a really useful
25 purpose in built-up areas where it was not easy -- in

1 some cases not even possible -- to get more heavily
2 armoured vehicles, so -- and, again, over time, these
3 things changed, but Snatch was not necessarily an
4 unpopular vehicle, at some stages, with some soldiers,
5 depending on what was happening.

6 But, of course, I recall -- I don't remember which
7 month it was now -- it was probably July or August when
8 there was a particularly nasty incident in Maysan, where
9 I think three or four soldiers from the Staffords were
10 killed and they were in Snatch Land Rovers and that was
11 IEDs, so it became obvious at that point that this
12 vehicle was not optimised in any way to counter that.

13 But, as you rightly say, there is no vehicle that is
14 completely bomb-proof. You just make a bigger bomb.
15 But that's -- you know, that's a simplistic answer and
16 clearly, you know -- and vehicles go in and out of
17 fashion, you know. I'll perhaps just make the point
18 that the Viking vehicle, because it was a Royal Marine
19 invention, the armoured Viking vehicle, in 2007, was the
20 most popular vehicle of choice in Helmand province.
21 Circumstances changed, the threat changed, other
22 vehicles came, and now it is not a particularly popular
23 vehicle.

24 So you know, they go in and out of fashion,
25 depending on the threat.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, just a couple more points on Snatch in
2 particular, because we have been given so much testimony
3 about it.

4 Was part of its utility, not only in
5 manoeuvrability, agility within built-up areas, but also
6 the perception of the British military presence?

7 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Oh, yes, absolutely, because it was
8 a low-profile vehicle -- you know, if you turn up in
9 a Warrior, you send a very different message to turning
10 up in a Snatch Land Rover.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: So there must be -- and not least for the
12 Commanding General -- quite a tricky multicompartmented
13 judgment to draw on as to when you shift your use of
14 armoured vehicles for force protection up the hill, if
15 you like, going into heavier vehicles.

16 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes, but there was an element of "You
17 have got what you have got". So you might have to use
18 them, even if you know they are not the vehicle
19 optimised for that particular -- and then you ask for
20 different ones and, over time, they appear.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Was that actually a feature of your six
22 months as GOC, that you actually began to need and ask
23 for different levels of armouring?

24 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: It must have been, but I don't
25 actually sort of recall it now as a -- I mean, we were

1 certainly aware that, once the EFP arrived -- we either needed
2 to move people more by air or we needed different
3 tactics, techniques and procedures or we needed more
4 heavily armoured vehicles. So all that was playing the
5 whole time.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Looking at your haul down report, helicopters
7 are the thing you centre on in terms of risk, the
8 equipment-related response to the IED threat more than
9 to ground vehicles?

10 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: I think, with that, still on the same theme,
12 I'll turn to Sir Roderic.

13 SIR RODERIC LYNE: In the haul down report you note that the
14 IED threat meant that military resources had to be
15 applied to security and stability operations and
16 self-protection with commensurately less to the main
17 effort, which was security sector reform.

18 How much of the effort and force numbers did you
19 have to shift from security sector reform to force
20 protection, and what was the consequence in terms of the
21 tasks you couldn't do any longer?

22 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes. Difficult to recall that in sort
23 of straight percentage numbers terms now and similar to
24 the question I think was asked earlier on, in that, you
25 know, there was definitely -- I mean, I didn't put much

1 in my haul down report for reasons I think I said in the
2 first paragraph, which you have got there, because
3 people tend not to read haul down reports if they are
4 very long and the communication was so good over the
5 whole time that I didn't feel it was necessary. So, if
6 I put it in my haul down report, it was because it was
7 a particularly big issue and it was because we very much
8 felt that we had started off our six months there able
9 to concentrate really on training and the whole SSR
10 theme, but had been diverted by, you know, the
11 circumstances to not being able to do as much of that as
12 we wanted to. I can't really express that in
13 proportional terms.

14 SIR RODERIC LYNE: It was a sort of incremental process to
15 a degree?

16 THE CHAIRMAN: It would help us with the transcript if you
17 could speak a bit louder.

18 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes, yes.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: As an alternative to shifting parts of
20 a finite force from one task to the other, did you ask
21 for reinforcements to help you deal with the force
22 protection issues so that you could continue with the
23 main effort?

24 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Not that I can recall in any sort of
25 large sense. I do recall -- the trouble is I'm now

1 mixing up what I asked for myself and what was asked for
2 when I was at the other end, at PJHQ being asked for them.
3 I can't remember if we asked for the reserve -- any of
4 the reserve battalions to be deployed. I think we might
5 have done, but we would only have been talking here
6 about a company's worth, 120/150 men. So I think the
7 answer is probably not.

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Obviously, it is very difficult to recall
9 details after five years, especially when you have
10 served in so many different theatres at different times.
11 But in terms of the broad instruction you were given as
12 you went out there, were you essentially -- did you feel
13 that you were encouraged to think that you should get on
14 with the job within the force that you had for your six
15 months and that was it, and you weren't really to expect
16 significantly more?

17 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Nobody wanted to deploy any more
18 troops and, you know -- or any more helicopters. In
19 fact, I can recall a conversation with DCDS(C), perhaps a
20 slightly light-hearted one which was "Don't, whatever you do,
21 ask for any more helicopters". Of course, we did end up
22 asking for lots more helicopters and we got some more
23 helicopters, but the circumstances changed, but the
24 whole view was: we are about to have a referendum and
25 then we are going to have an election, security sector

1 reform is moving slowly but steadily, the Iraqi army is
2 building up, the police force is still a bit of
3 a disaster area, but it is getting better and will, over
4 time, get better still, because these things always lag,
5 and all will be well.

6 So it was very much a feeling of we are heading
7 towards -- you know, I do recall, you know, we had a --
8 I can't remember what we call it now. A disengagement
9 plan? We were working continually on the handing over
10 eventually of areas and then provinces to Iraqi control.

11 Even at that stage, we were talking of that,
12 PIC-ing. I'm not sure we were calling it PIC-ing then.
13 We certainly were by the time I got to PJHQ, but
14 certainly the concept of incrementally handing back
15 areas was in our thinking.

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: On helicopters, you said that, after your
17 R&R, you found that you couldn't drive round, you had to
18 move around by -- you just said you asked for and got
19 more helicopters. We have been told by many witnesses
20 that, if you ask a general if he has got enough
21 helicopters, he never will say he has got enough
22 helicopters.

23 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: No.

24 SIR RODERIC LYNE: So I won't ask you the question in that
25 way, but did you feel that your request for more

1 helicopters in this changed, more dangerous situation,
2 much more dangerous situation, was met within an
3 adequate period of time to a degree that might not have
4 been optimal, but that was, from where you sat, and
5 knowing the art of the possible, a reasonable response?

6 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Hm-mm. Absolutely, and the same
7 response as I used to give from the other end when we
8 were asked for helicopters in both theatres when I was
9 at PJHQ as DCJO Ops. There is a sort of public view
10 that you can sort of buy more helicopters if you need
11 them and that gives you more helicopters. We all know
12 it is not like that.

13 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Tesco don't sell helicopters.

14 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Tesco don't sell them. You don't get
15 them in showrooms. You know, if you ask me my personal
16 view of whether we, as a nation, have underinvested in
17 helicopters since the end of the Cold War, yes, well, we
18 have underinvested in lots of things since the end of
19 the Cold War, in my view, helicopters being one of them.

20 Given the circumstances at the time and the
21 helicopters that we had in the inventory, I certainly
22 felt that PJHQ, the people that I was asking for these
23 helicopters from, were doing their best to provide, if
24 not more helicopters and crews, more hours because, of
25 course, that's just as valuable if you can fly the

1 aircraft for longer and have the spares to allow you to
2 do the servicing to allow that.

3 Certainly, I felt they were doing their best to
4 provide them, and there was a bit of give and take on
5 this because, even in that six-month period, there was
6 a time when we needed lots more helicopters and
7 I suspect, although in the mists of time I have sort of
8 forgotten -- I suspect the referendum period and the
9 election period was part of that, and then, in between,
10 when things sort of potentially quietened down a bit, we
11 were able to release some hours. So there was a bit of
12 give and take, but I certainly always felt there was
13 a sympathetic hearing and an understanding of the
14 requirement.

15 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Were you responsible for the protection
16 of the civilian police officers and the police
17 contractors who were out there?

18 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, there were -- there was
19 a private security company, probably more than one -- in
20 fact it was Armourgroup, I think -- who looked after the
21 FCO, looked after the Consul General and the
22 Foreign Office staff, and indeed also the policemen who
23 worked for him.

24 However, if those policemen -- so if they were
25 travelling from Basra Palace over to the airport for

1 something, then they were escorted by that private
2 security company, as was the Consul General.

3 However, if they were out on the ground with
4 soldiers in a base somewhere and then operating out of
5 that, then, although they probably had that security
6 with them, we still felt we had a responsibility for
7 their security as well.

8 SIR RODERIC LYNE: When they were working with soldiers in
9 the military environment, were they under the same
10 security constraints as the soldiers, or did they have
11 different constraints?

12 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: They were different constraints
13 because they were mandated by a different department and
14 so this was one of the irritations, and has continued to
15 be so, and irritations not just to the soldiers but
16 actually also to the policemen, who wanted to be able to
17 do more but were constrained from doing so because they
18 were under, sometimes slightly and sometimes
19 considerably different, rules.

20 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Still on the policing theme but a rather more
22 specific aspect, Martin?

23 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: I would like to ask a few questions
24 about the Jameat police station incident. I believe you
25 were on leave --

1 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: I was.

2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: -- at the time, but were you surprised
3 by the event and were you aware of problems associated
4 with the police station?

5 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Second question first. Were we aware
6 of problems associated with the police station? Yes.
7 It was -- we knew of all the stories emanating from what
8 may or may not happen to Iraqis who went into that
9 police station. It was visited on a regular basis by
10 the Basra brigade. But we were certainly aware of its
11 reputation and we were aware of the reputation of some
12 of the individuals who worked from there, I can't
13 remember the name of the particular police captain now
14 but who was a sort of -- almost a legendary figure who
15 worked from there.

16 Your first question: did it come as a surprise?
17 Yes, because I mean it was an event that was triggered
18 by individuals getting themselves into a fire fight and
19 then being taken to that police station. So this was
20 not -- it is not as if the Jameat police station
21 incident blew up -- sorry, evolved from a series of
22 other events; it was a particular thing that caused it.
23 So it was certainly a surprise.

24 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: What was the reaction to the incident
25 from London and what was your response to that?

1 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: I was on leave, and so I was actually
2 listening to this on -- I was near Bordeaux at the time
3 and you could just still get Radio 4 on long wave, or
4 you could then, provided the hire car that you had had
5 a decent enough radio, and it did. So I was listening to it
6 -- and then, of course, I was talking to PJHQ on
7 a telephone and then talking to my Chief of Staff who
8 was out there in theatre but essentially it had happened and
9 finished before I could have any effect.

10 What was -- what was the -- I think I didn't
11 realise, until I got back there, what the effect had
12 been. It had certainly -- it certainly caused a huge
13 media shock because you recall the pictures of the
14 soldier on fire, you know, climbing out of his vehicle
15 and so on, and that sort of thing. So it certainly
16 caused a huge shock in that respect. I think there was
17 a feeling -- I know there was a feeling initially that
18 the Brits in the southeast somehow were running their
19 own show, not wholly under American command. That
20 wasn't true, and General Casey denied ever having
21 thought that afterwards, but it was a story that did the
22 rounds at the time.

23 So it obviously had -- it had a huge effect back in
24 London, back at PJHQ. But, you know, it blew up very
25 quickly and actually it calmed down quite quickly

1 afterwards. So it was an incident that then --

2 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: On your return did you make specific
3 proposals as to how to deal with it in the future?

4 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, I remember spending quite a lot
5 of time on the telephone to Robin Brims, who was
6 then the -- who was the deputy commander, the SBMR-I up in
7 Baghdad, as to how this might have been better handled.
8 I mean, I think -- you know, again with the benefit of
9 hindsight, I think one of the mistakes we probably made
10 was, because I wasn't there, although the incident was
11 being extremely well run from the Divisional
12 Headquarters downwards, principally by the brigade
13 commander John Lorimer, who was in charge, but my
14 Chief of Staff as well, there perhaps wasn't as much
15 upwards communication to Baghdad, to keep them in the
16 picture, as would have been useful.

17 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: At what point did your three-point plan
18 come in? Was this a reaction to it or did this --

19 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Oh, no -- well, no, no, not -- no,
20 not -- no, not a particular reaction to it. No, I mean,
21 the three-point plan, you know, which was -- you know --
22 you know what the three points are. I mean, this is not
23 -- as I said earlier, this is not particularly clever
24 stuff; this was a reaction to this idea that somehow the
25 police was such a basket case that you could only throw

1 them all out. And the thing is, of course, you know,
2 you can sack them if you like but they will still turn
3 up the next day in uniform, even if you don't pay them.
4 They had other ways of making money. So, you know, it
5 wasn't a credible idea.

6 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: When the MoD was given the lead for
7 police reform, what effect did this have on theatre?

8 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: This was very close to the end of my
9 time there, and this was the point the point at which
10 Sir Ronnie Flanagan came out, and in fact the Secretary
11 of State, John Reid, came out as well. So the longer
12 term effect, I'm not sure.

13 To be honest, I don't think it had a great --
14 I didn't get the impression it had a great deal of
15 effect at all, because what did it actually mean? On
16 the ground it didn't really mean anything; it meant that
17 one particular Secretary of State felt he was now
18 responsible for police as well as -- but it didn't
19 produce more resources, it didn't, to my mind, sort out
20 the structural problem we have in this country about
21 being able to train those sorts of policemen.

22 SIR MARTIN GILBERT: Thank you very much.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Can I ask Baroness Prashar to pick up?

24 Sir Ronnie Flanagan was mentioned.

25 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I was going to say you mentioned

1 Sir Ronnie Flanagan's review; what changes did you
2 anticipate from this review and did you welcome such
3 a high level of interest in policing?

4 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: I absolutely welcomed it because we
5 spent our time trying to get people more interested in
6 policing, and I had never met Sir Ronnie Flanagan
7 before, and I met him on his first visit and then he did
8 a subsequent visit before he actually wrote his report,
9 which actually, interestingly, I read for the first time
10 three days ago in the MoD, because, of course, I had
11 left the job by then and so never actually saw his
12 report.

13 But it said exactly what I would have hoped -- would
14 have hoped it would have done. I remember he very much
15 took the view that one visit by himself was not going to
16 solve the policing problem in Southern Iraq, and nor was
17 a second visit, but he could certainly apply his years
18 of experience to giving some advice, and he made some
19 points about which I absolutely agree, about the
20 structure of the UK police force. Well, there isn't a
21 UK police force -- the structure of the UK policing
22 capability which makes it entirely unsuited for this
23 sort of work.

24 I think actually I'm saying more on that than he
25 did. He didn't say "entirely unsuited" but it certainly

1 makes it difficult for them to do.

2 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Did you make any contribution to the
3 review itself? I mean, you said you read it recently
4 but did you make contribution at the time --

5 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Only during his visit, which, of
6 course, we facilitated, and I had a long conversation --
7 I had more than one long conversation with him and
8 ensured that he saw all the people that he wanted to
9 see, although I see from the report actually that he
10 complained that he didn't see something. Oh, he
11 couldn't get to the -- he couldn't get to the -- the
12 permanent joint -- whatever it was called, the joint
13 operating centre, but I think that was probably for
14 logistic reasons.

15 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I mean you said that, you know, you
16 agreed with him and in your own haul down report you
17 also state that:

18 "The critical point is, I must stress, that the UK
19 should never have been expected to be able to undertake
20 police restructuring and reform in this sort of
21 environment because they do not have the institutions,
22 structure or expertise to cope."

23 Can you expand a little bit more on that comment,
24 noting that you also have recent experience in
25 Afghanistan?

1 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well -- yes, you know more about the
2 UK police structure, or certainly as much as I do, but
3 it requires a system of double volunteering. You know,
4 the individual policeman has got to volunteer to do an
5 expeditionary operation and then his chief constable has
6 got to agree to that, and at the end of that process you
7 end up with one man, and if the chief constable changes,
8 you might have a different policy.

9 I think -- so, therefore, it takes a particular sort
10 of individual and a particular sort of chief constable,
11 and it is not as if we have got policemen hanging around
12 in this country without a job to do. I mean, we have
13 got enough policemen -- arguably, not enough policemen
14 to police the UK. We haven't got a spare pot of them
15 just waiting to go on an expeditionary operation to
16 assist.

17 Plus the fact I honestly don't believe that they --
18 the sort of policemen that volunteer for this have the
19 necessary background or training to be able to look at
20 -- to be able to use their 30 or 40 years' policing
21 experience to look at a wholly new problem and suggest
22 a solution for that problem.

23 I saw too much evidence of trying to use a UK
24 template and impose it on Basra. And, you know, the
25 county police force plan for any county does not suit

1 southern Iraq, however hard you try.

2 And so what it requires is much broader thinking,
3 using the experience, but then using intellect to work
4 out what would be an appropriate policing system for
5 that scenario.

6 And then, on top of that, I think what we need is
7 the actual policemen. We need -- I actually think we
8 need a force in being and a much larger force on standby
9 available in the same way as we have an army in being
10 and an army on standby. You know, it doesn't need to be
11 anything like the same size but is optimised and trained
12 and ready to deploy to do these sorts of operations. It
13 would be relatively low cost and very high gain.

14 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What sort of expertise do you think
15 they would need? Because, you know, you spelt out what
16 they lacked, but if we were to have such a standing
17 force, what expertise do you think would they need?

18 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, they certainly need all the sort
19 of basic personal protection and soldiering skills,
20 which is why I think you could probably recruit this
21 force not just from the police force but possibly also
22 from ex-military, or indeed from private security
23 companies perhaps, but from various ...

24 But they also -- I mean, clearly they need the basic
25 policing skills. So they need to be trained policemen.

1 Now, I think the Ministry of Defence police training
2 course, I think, is 18 weeks. So, you know, a minimum
3 of 18 weeks' training, plus, hopefully, some experience
4 as well, because you wouldn't necessarily want 21- or
5 22-year olds. You would perhaps want ones mid or -- mid
6 career or late career perhaps, who had left or were
7 about to leave the police or about to leave the army.

8 Many of the skills they require are the same skills
9 that soldiers require.

10 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But you said earlier you were
11 involved in the early planning of the campaign. Who had
12 you anticipated would fulfil the post-invasion policing
13 role or was this not considered at all?

14 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, I wasn't involved -- I mean, I
15 was -- I was involved in the conceptual planning --
16 DCDS's planning team, which did not include looking
17 at that sort of level of detail.

18 Then I commanded 3 Commando Brigade, where I have to
19 say my focus of attention was what happened in the first
20 72 hours, not what happened in the next five or ten
21 years. I mean, I left that to other people. I was
22 aware of some considerable concerns, that actually we
23 had not taken what became known -- and is now in the
24 common lexicon -- Phase 4 planning.

25 But, frankly, phase -- you know, I go back to the

1 point we now know that actually all this was relatively
2 simple, militarily. We didn't know that on 19 March
3 and, frankly, my concentration was on seizing the oil
4 infrastructure, ensuring that it wasn't taken back from
5 us, with a minimum loss of life, potentially against
6 a chemical threat. Policing, five years down the line,
7 wasn't something high on my list of priorities.

8 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But when you left Iraq, what did you
9 assess to be the prospects for the Iraqi police service?
10 Do you have any observations?

11 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, I think -- I think it was -- I
12 think it was the same really as when I arrived, which
13 was, you know, this is not a good organisation; however,
14 it is not wholly bad. Apply the three-point plan,
15 somehow get the Iraqis themselves to get rid of the
16 worst excesses and individuals in the force by some
17 means or another -- legal means, then continue the
18 training programmes that were being set up. There was
19 the one in Jordan, there was the one in Tallil, there
20 was one in Baghdad. We were setting up one in --
21 I think -- we were setting up one in Shaibah actually at
22 the time I left, I seem to recall.

23 So as much training as we can do and then monitoring
24 of those policemen after -- and continue to recruit, so
25 that -- and train them properly on recruiting them, so

1 that, you know, I think my Australian J7 SSR colonel
2 described it as like a barrel of stagnant water: you
3 keep pumping in fresh water from a hose pipe and it
4 takes a long time but eventually all the water is fresh.

5 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: This was long haul? Thank you.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to touch on a few points,
7 which -- I have characterised one of the
8 responsibilities of the GOC and MND South East at the
9 time -- and that's relations with other Iraqis and
10 Iraqis institutions.

11 Could we start with the Provincial Councils because
12 you had four provinces.

13 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Did you have to spend a great deal of time
15 working on those relations and were they similar between
16 the four or were they totally different --

17 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: They were very different. Because of
18 the way it was set up, I spent much less time dealing
19 with Basra because -- Basra as a province, because there
20 was a UK brigadier commanding the brigade there, whose
21 main job it was on a day-to-day basis. So I had less --
22 by design I had less interaction with him. But the
23 other three certainly, in Dhi Qar and Maysan and
24 Muthanna, I did have.

25 Of course, the -- it was the Italian task group --

1 taskforce that was in control in Dhi Qar, and so,
2 a little bit like the British battle group in Basra --
3 the British brigade in Basra, I tended to leave them to
4 their own devices, but I certainly met with the governor
5 there probably three or four times in my six-month
6 period, and one of the reasons actually -- I mean,
7 because, of course, it is always useful to have
8 a specific reason for seeing these people rather than
9 just turning up to drink tea and be polite, and, of
10 course, because we were building up firstly to the
11 referendum and then to the election -- so, you know,
12 they were about to undertake their second and then third
13 general election process in a 12-month period -- or
14 actually an 11-month period -- the planning for that
15 provided a good hook for seeing the governors and their
16 teams.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

18 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: But, sorry, that's the second -- they
19 were very different, especially Maysan.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Did you need to co-ordinate with the
21 Consul General, who is handling on the political front
22 probably on a more continuing basis than you needed to
23 do?

24 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes, I recall being -- you know, one
25 of the first principles, isn't it, of this sort of

1 business is that the military and civilian leader should
2 be co-located, and so I turn up in Basra and find we are
3 not co-located, and, you know, okay, both in Basra but
4 one at the airport, one at the palace. The difficulty
5 of getting together then was more to do with the heavy
6 traffic than anything else, but we did get together as
7 much as possible. Certainly two, three, maybe even
8 four times a week we would be either at the same event
9 or seeing each other for particular reasons, and he and
10 I certainly made every attempt to do things as a pair
11 when we could.

12 So, for instance, the moment I arrived, an operation
13 which had been pre-planned took place on my first or
14 second night there in Al Amarah, in Maysan, which caused
15 the Council there to break off communication with us.
16 Getting that back on track over a period of some weeks,
17 actually, was very much something that the consul and
18 I did together.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. You have mentioned about the --
20 in fact the relationship with the Basra
21 Provincial Council was mainly for the brigadier, for the
22 Basra command. What about the Basra chief of police?
23 Did he come your way at all?

24 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes, General Hassan, I think -- yes --
25 who had been an army officer, of course, and, you know,

1 one had to be sort of aware of the personalities here
2 because General Latif, who was commanding 10 Div, had
3 been very much a junior man to General Hassan in an
4 earlier life, and so there was some tension there,
5 which -- we tried to bring them together more and more.
6 He was an odd character, who I sort of never quite got
7 to the bottom of. He used to have -- he had about four
8 different uniforms, so he had the -- the sort of special
9 police uniform, the commando police uniform, the
10 ordinary police uniform and another one, and he would
11 turn up in a different one each time.

12 You know, on the face of it he was trying to do his
13 best. I suspect now -- I suspected then and I suspect
14 now he was largely ineffective. I think there was quite
15 a threat to him personally from elements of his force.
16 So I think his own self-protection was quite important.
17 But he -- not wildly effective. He used to say some odd
18 things like, "I've got -- I think he said, "I have got
19 14,000 policemen in Basra province, I only need 7,000.
20 I need to get rid of 7,000." But made no steps to do
21 so.

22 **THE CHAIRMAN:** You are describing a situation, in which
23 I think we have heard other evidence, for the -- the
24 position of a chief of police in any of the provinces is
25 very heavily determined both by circumstance, by

1 politics, by threat, both to appointment and to
2 survival.

3 Was this, as it were, a component of the security
4 sector reform programme, to try and put police
5 leadership and command on a safer footing, or was that
6 something simply that only the Iraqis could do for
7 themselves?

8 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: I mean, in sheer physical protection
9 I think we had given him an armoured vehicle, so we had
10 attempted to improve his security there, and, of course,
11 he had -- he was surrounded -- I mean, he -- you know,
12 I don't think we could have added to his security.
13 I mean, rather like General Latif, he had around him,
14 certainly in Latif's case, members of his own family.
15 He had an enormous security protection. So when he
16 travelled anywhere, he was pretty well protected, and
17 I think the policeman was as well.

18 In terms of personal training of him, there had been
19 a plan -- actually very early in my time there. He was
20 going to visit Northern Ireland. He was going to do
21 a trip to Belfast. That was -- there was constant
22 rumours about the fact that he was going to be fired,
23 and so he never felt that secure in being out of
24 country, and so he never actually did that trip.

25 I mean, he -- I have no real evidence to say this

1 but I suspect that he had passed the point in his life
2 and his training where a visit to Belfast would actually
3 have made any difference to his performance.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. This is not a pointed question at
5 yourself but put to you as we have to others. But you
6 had six months. You had had other experience and
7 exposure to Iraq, but you have got this extraordinarily
8 complicated tangle -- I think it is emerging as you have
9 been speaking -- of politics, of local interest, British
10 or provincial, all that. Can one keep a continuous
11 sense of it within a military command the size of
12 MND South East as commanders change?

13 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes, very difficult. I mean,
14 six months there's no doubt is not long enough. You
15 know, I have just spent a year in Kabul and, frankly,
16 that's not long enough either but it is better because,
17 of course, you know, I mean, the entry standard for the
18 rest of the international community on these sorts of
19 deployments is probably 18 months or two years, but they
20 do get rather more leave. But, you know, you need --
21 you really -- to fully understand this, you need decades
22 probably. To even have a really good understanding, I
23 think you need years.

24 So, no, I mean it is absolutely not ideal. But
25 I can't really think of a better -- I mean, certainly

1 increase it to a year for key posts but I can't think of
2 another way of doing it. I mean, the US are now -- you
3 know, are now rotating people through so they are imbued
4 with Afghanistan, and they go back to Tampa or they go
5 to Washington and they are still working on Afghanistan
6 and they go for another year's tour. They are a big
7 enough organisation to do that; we are not.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Last point. Again, were you able to form,
9 did you have, were you given, good information about
10 popular feeling, popular opinion, shifts in attitude.
11 You were working up to, of course, the first national
12 elections on the new constitution. Was that part of
13 your 360-degree horizon or not?

14 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: I mean, I think we never felt truly
15 that we really understood everything that was going on
16 in those four provinces. We simply had not had the time
17 to set up an information or intelligence-gathering
18 structure that allowed us to have that full picture.

19 We know how long it took in Northern Ireland to set
20 up, and that -- you know, that's where houses have
21 numbers, streets have names and people have
22 recognisable, normally only one, name. You know, we
23 were operating in a country that had none of that and
24 where people shift around regularly. No street names,
25 no street numbers. You know? But very difficult to --

1 very difficult to fully understand, and, I mean, we did
2 our best to try and understand from all the resources --
3 the resources that we had available what the popular
4 sentiment, but very difficult to have a full picture,
5 and I suspect we didn't.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I would like to turn to
7 Baroness Prashar again.

8 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Thank you very much indeed. I want
9 to turn to the priority accorded to Iraq and
10 Afghanistan, because you were Deputy Chief of Joint
11 Operations in February 2007. How stretched were the
12 military by operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan,
13 from your point of view?

14 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, I mean, I think others have told
15 that, you know -- that we were stretched, but where does
16 the point become overstretch? I mean, that's in a way
17 a judgment for others to make.

18 We were very conscious of -- in my time at PJHQ of,
19 you know, a finite resource to cover both theatres and
20 whilst it was perfectly possible, of course, to -- to
21 find other troops, the problem was always finding them
22 on an enduring basis. There was eight battle groups --
23 everybody will have said this, you know -- eight battle
24 groups. Eight battle groups on an enduring basis is
25 a lot more than eight battle groups. And so we were

1 always conscious of the fact that running those
2 two theatres in parallel was difficult and stretched the
3 resources available.

4 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But General Sir Nick Houghton told
5 us that the imperative coming out of military strategic
6 demands of the superior headquarters was to rebalance in
7 order to gain strategic coherence in Afghanistan. Were
8 you aware of these pressures on your role?

9 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, I mean, he was my boss. You
10 know, he was Chief of Joint Operations at the time.

11 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: I know he was.

12 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes. So the priority -- I mean, if --
13 I mean, I was his deputy, so I wasn't necessarily
14 getting all the same information, although I would get
15 most of it, actually, because I was his deputy in the
16 true sense, so when he was away, I was standing in for
17 him.

18 I never particular -- I mean, I think we imposed
19 upon ourselves, more than getting any direction,
20 a desire to draw down in Iraq, which would then free up
21 forces.

22 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: What led you to impose this upon
23 yourselves?

24 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, I think because we felt that we
25 had been there a long time. The situation was getting

1 to the point at which the Iraqi armed forces and Iraqi
2 politics could take over. There was this feeling of
3 declining consent over time. Even though we weren't
4 there as an occupation force -- we were there, you know,
5 under a United Nations Security Council resolution -- it
6 was still perceived by some -- you know, we were still
7 foreign forces.

8 So there was a feeling that, you know, the time --
9 the time was coming to move out of Iraq and let them get
10 on with their own lives.

11 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: But did you feel that that was
12 having an impact on -- the equipment that you were
13 requesting wasn't coming through, because
14 General Shirreff told us that it was clear to him that
15 they were not getting the sort of assets that were
16 really needed. Did you feel that requests were being
17 turned down for equipment because of Afghanistan?

18 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, there was continually, daily,
19 a balancing of, you know, effort between the
20 two theatres, and, as the Chairman said, you know, no --
21 no military commander ever says he has got enough
22 helicopters or enough ISTAR, or enough UAVs or enough
23 anything because, of course, you could always do more
24 with more.

25 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: That's true generally but I'm really

1 trying to establish whether there was a real impact on
2 Iraq because of Afghanistan. I mean, was basically
3 a rebalancing going on which meant that you were not
4 getting the necessary equipment or the resources that
5 you needed?

6 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, it depends what you mean by
7 "needed". You know, in the period we are talking about,
8 prior to the Charge of the Knights incident and then
9 subsequent activity, we were in the business of drawing
10 down. We withdrew from the bases in Basra into the --
11 into a contingency operating base, into the COB at the
12 airport. So, you know, the policy was to draw down,
13 with a view to eventually coming out completely. So
14 those -- you know, the perception was that those
15 resources were not needed in Iraq any longer and that,
16 therefore, they could be deployed to Afghanistan.

17 BARONESS USHA PRASHAR: Okay, thank you.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Turning last to Sir Roderic Lyne. Roderic?

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: You just said that you imposed on
20 yourselves the idea of moving towards drawdown for
21 various reasons. Was it being driven also as
22 a strategy, the transition, from people up the food
23 chain in government? Did you feel there was a strong
24 push for this coming from somewhere?

25 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Well, I mean, did I feel it? Yes.

1 Can I actually tell that you that that was a political
2 direction? No. But, I mean, I would be surprised if it
3 wasn't a political direction because, you know, we never
4 intended to stay in Iraq forever. We went there with
5 a purpose, and, you know, the aim was to get out as
6 quickly as we could, but leaving it in a position
7 whereby it could govern and look after itself and
8 provide its own security, and, you know, economic
9 development and so on would then, hopefully, change the
10 dynamic. So I would be very surprised if that wasn't
11 a political direction but I don't think I ever saw it
12 written down.

13 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But you were in the chain of command and
14 presumably it was and anyway you agreed with it from
15 what you've said. But can we just take your "but"? At
16 the time we are talking about, when you are deputy CJO,
17 the Americans are doing their surge, we are dealing with
18 a very difficult security situation in our patch.

19 Was there a debate going on about either slowing
20 down the transition in the area where we were, until the
21 situation more closely met the criteria you have just
22 described, or of bringing in reinforcements so that we
23 could get on top of security before we left?

24 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: I mean, those debates were happening
25 all the time and especially when Charge of the Knights

1 happened and, you know, we were definitely taken by
2 surprise there. The Americans were taken by surprise
3 there. You know, Prime Minister Maliki really deciding
4 to do this on his own authority, taking a huge political
5 risk, which actually, you know, appeared to pay off.

6 So it was certainly a surprise and there was
7 certainly a big debate about what we could do in order
8 to more successfully -- more comprehensively provide
9 assistance and training and mentoring to the Iraqi
10 brigades that were involved in Charge of the Knights.
11 Now -- and to an extent we did that, we did put in MITT
12 teams, we put in more Mastiff vehicles, and, of course,
13 the US provided forces to do that as well.

14 But -- I'm sorry, what exactly was your question,
15 Sir Roderic?

16 SIR RODERIC LYNE: To what extent we actually considered
17 slowing down the transition --

18 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Oh, I see.

19 SIR RODERIC LYNE: -- or bringing in more force to do
20 effectively what Maliki did with Charge of the Knights,
21 after we had moved out of Basra City.

22 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes. I mean, my recollection is that
23 we never -- we weren't really in a position then,
24 because of what was happening in Helmand, to start
25 moving forces from that theatre back to -- you know.

1 Did we slow down things? I mean, certainly there was an
2 adjustment -- I can't remember the precise -- the
3 precise details, but there was an adjustment to the
4 deployment of vehicles, because, of course, we -- new
5 vehicles were coming on line by then. This is, what,
6 early 2008, isn't it, two years ago? So Easter time
7 2008. New vehicles were coming on line then, the new
8 Ridgeback, I think it was called, vehicle, was about to
9 come out. So -- so more vehicles were about to go to
10 Afghanistan.

11 So we felt we could utilise the Mastiff vehicles.
12 I really am stretching my memory here but I think we had
13 a plan to move vehicles out of Iraq that perhaps we
14 delayed for a period of time to provide the necessary
15 protection for the MITT teams for that period when they
16 were in Basra providing support.

17 SIR RODERIC LYNE: But, broadly speaking, as you were
18 saying, we were by this stage so committed to what we
19 were doing in Helmand that we were pretty constrained in
20 what we could do in Basra?

21 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes, I think that's right. I mean,
22 you could -- would it be wrong to say we had passed the
23 point of no return? I mean, you never pass the point of
24 no return but it would have required a huge effort to
25 start ramping up the force again and perhaps moving out

1 to bases again in the city, having taken -- having taken
2 what at the time was a perfectly reasonable judgment
3 that, because we were more part of the problem than the
4 solution, it was a good idea to get out of those bases
5 and hand them over to Iraqis, relatively successfully.

6 It would -- it would have required a huge change to
7 go back in again and it wasn't anything that anybody
8 wanted to do.

9 SIR RODERIC LYNE: Thank you.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: General Dutton, up until May this year, you
11 were Deputy Commander of ISAF in Afghanistan. Putting
12 that together with all the experience in different roles
13 you have had in and on Iraq, any lessons from all that
14 that haven't come out in the course of what you have
15 been able to tell us this afternoon?

16 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Gosh, that's pretty wide-ranging.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Policing? Structures?

18 LT GEN JAMES DUTTON: Yes, I mean, policing -- I mean,
19 sorry, just for absolute clarity, I actually left -- the
20 year I did in Afghanistan was November 2008 to November
21 2009, so I left -- I left over six months ago. But
22 nevertheless, the question -- it doesn't change the
23 question. I think, certainly, you know, another look at
24 how we want to do expeditionary policing, if indeed we
25 do want to do expeditionary policing, or do we as

1 a nation want to say, "Hey, we don't do that. We will
2 send in the troops but somebody else has to do the
3 policing. We have to have a carabinieri or we have to
4 have ... "

5 And I think it would be useful if that decision was
6 made, and if it was -- if the decision was that we do
7 want to have that capability, then let's get on and
8 provide it. It wouldn't be difficult and it would be
9 quite quick and I don't think it would be that
10 expensive.

11 I think that certainly would be ...

12 I don't think there is anything -- I don't think
13 that there is anything of that sort of -- I mean, tour
14 lengths, but that's a subject that's under constant
15 discussion in the ministry anyway.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: We are very grateful to you. Thank you for
17 your evidence.

18 We are going to resume here on Wednesday at
19 10 o'clock in the morning, when we will be taking
20 evidence from General Sir Kevin O'Donoghue about his
21 roles of Deputy Chief of Defence Staff Health, Chief of
22 Defence Logistics and latterly Chief of Defence
23 Material.

24 I have got one other word to say before we close
25 about the Inquiry's invitation to international lawyers.

1 I announced at the start of public hearings that the
2 Iraq Inquiry has issued an open invitation to
3 international lawyers to comment on the grounds the
4 government relied upon in using force against Iraq. The
5 Inquiry have decided to issue an open invitation, rather
6 than writing to individual international lawyers, to
7 avoid the risk that we might inadvertently fail to write
8 to particular individuals or at the risk of a perception
9 that we had focused on people who were thought to hold
10 a particular view.

11 Now, we are pleased to be able to say that a number
12 of distinguished international lawyers have already
13 responded to our invitations. Others have indicated
14 that they would like to respond but, given their other
15 responsibilities, they need to bit more time to do so.
16 We are, therefore, extending the deadline for
17 submissions on this topic until 13 September.

18 I would encourage those with knowledge and
19 experience in this area to take up this invitation
20 within the terms set out on our website.

21 And with that, I'll close this afternoon's session.

22 Thank you.

23 (5.02 pm)

24 (The Inquiry adjourned until Wednesday, 14 July 2010 at

25 10.00 am)

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