

## SECTION 6.5

# PLANNING AND PREPARATION FOR A POST-SADDAM HUSSEIN IRAQ, JANUARY TO MARCH 2003

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## Introduction

1. Sections 6.4 and 6.5 consider the UK's planning and preparation for a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq between late 2001 and March 2003.
2. The two parts address:
  - the development of UK post-conflict strategy and objectives;
  - planning and preparation to implement those objectives;
  - UK civilian and military planning machinery;
  - UK influence on US planning and preparation and the impact of US planning on the UK; and
  - Parliamentary interest in post-conflict planning and preparation.
3. The two parts do not consider:
  - military plans for the invasion, which are addressed in Sections 6.1 and 6.2;
  - intelligence on weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or preparations for the post-invasion search for WMD, addressed in Section 4;
  - the financial and human resources available for post-conflict administration and reconstruction, addressed in Sections 13 and 15; and
  - the outcome in post-conflict Iraq, which is addressed in Sections 9 and 10.
4. This Section covers the 10 weeks between the decision to deploy UK forces and the first post-invasion meeting between Mr Blair and President Bush at Camp David on 26 and 27 March 2003.
5. The preceding period, from mid-2001 to Mr Blair's decision on 17 January 2003 to deploy UK forces to support US military preparations, is addressed in Section 6.4.
6. Key findings for Sections 6.4 and 6.5 are listed at the start of Section 6.4.
7. The Inquiry's conclusions relating to both parts are at the end of this Section.

## Second round of inter-agency talks, Washington, 22 January 2003

8. **In the run-up to the second round of trilateral inter-agency talks on post-conflict issues in Washington on 22 January 2003, UK officials focused on how to influence US thinking on the post-conflict role of the UN.**
9. **Mr Peter Ricketts, FCO Political Director, predicted that discussion on the role of the UN would be "hard going". The US was wedded to a prolonged US occupation and opposed to any substantial role for the UN.**
10. The first round of US/UK/Australia inter-agency talks on post-conflict issues took place in Washington on 6 November 2002 and is described in Section 6.4.

- 11.** By the first week of January 2003, no date had been set for the second round.<sup>1</sup>
- 12.** The FCO Iraq Morning Meeting on 7 January concluded that Sir David Manning, Mr Blair's Foreign Policy Adviser and Head of the Cabinet Office Overseas and Defence Secretariat (OD Sec), should ask Dr Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's National Security Advisor, to "unblock" the talks if US officials were unable to clear the way for a second round to take place in the week of 20 January.
- 13.** Three days later, the FCO had arranged for the talks to take place on 22 January.<sup>2</sup>
- 14.** Mr Ricketts visited Washington on 13 January. He reported to Mr Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, that the US had done good work on humanitarian issues, but was distrustful of the UN and "still clinging to ... a wholly unrealistic expectation that they [the US] will be welcomed in as liberators".<sup>3</sup> Mr Ricketts suggested that the forthcoming UK/US/Australia post-conflict talks in Washington and visits by Mr Straw and Mr Blair later in the month were opportunities to influence official and Presidential thinking.
- 15.** Mr Ricketts' report was copied to Sir David Manning.
- 16.** Mr Ricketts' visit also exposed continuing differences between the UK and US on the post-conflict role of Iraqi exiles. During talks with National Security Council (NSC) officials about where to find suitable administrators for post-conflict Iraq, Mr Ricketts advised: "Iraqi exiles were unlikely to come into this category or carry much credibility in Iraq."<sup>4</sup>
- 17.** At the first FCO Iraq Morning Meeting after his return from Washington, Mr Ricketts reported that:

"... the US show no sign of accepting our arguments on transitional administrations. They are wedded to the idea of a prolonged US occupation, and opposed to any substantial role for the UN. We are likely to find the 22 January day after talks hard going in this respect."<sup>5</sup>
- 18.** On 13 January, US officials briefed the British and Australian Embassies in Washington on US humanitarian planning. The British Embassy reported that the US had "what appeared to be a well researched and internally co-ordinated planning document", focused on the provision of emergency relief by the US military until the UN and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) could resume their activities. The US military would set up a Civil-Military Operations Centre (CMOC) HQ and regional branches. Each branch would incorporate a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) and a US Agency for International Development (USAID) presence to facilitate

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<sup>1</sup> Minute Chilcott to PS/PUS [FCO], 7 January 2003, 'Iraq Morning Meeting: Key Points'.

<sup>2</sup> Minute Dodd to Manning, 13 January 2003, 'Ad Hoc Group on Iraq'.

<sup>3</sup> Minute Ricketts to Private Secretary [FCO], 14 January 2003, 'Iraq: The Mood in Washington'.

<sup>4</sup> Telegram 47 Washington to FCO London, 14 January 2003, 'Iraq: Day After Issues: Ricketts Visit to Washington. 13 January'.

<sup>5</sup> Minute Tanfield to PS/PUS, 15 January 2003, 'Iraq Morning Meeting: Key Points'.

co-operation with the military. CMOC and DART recruitment was under way. The US was co-ordinating closely with the UN and NGOs, had funded the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to pre-position emergency assistance and expected the World Food Programme (WFP) to be a significant partner in the delivery of food.

**19.** The Embassy also reported that US officials had envisaged that the post-conflict talks in Washington on 22 January would focus on emergency relief and reconstruction, before accepting a UK and Australian suggestion that they also address future political structures for Iraq.<sup>6</sup>

**20.** The record of a restricted meeting of the cross-Whitehall Ad Hoc Group on Iraq (AHGI) on 14 January stated that the UK and Australia were being given full access to US aftermath planning.<sup>7</sup> The MOD had established a team at the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) to examine aftermath issues. Relevant departments would be involved in the team's planning and the MOD would pass papers to the Cabinet Office for wider distribution. The record stated, however, that "without a higher level political and legal framework, MOD planning cannot advance very far".

**21. On 14 January Mr Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, announced publicly that the UN had begun humanitarian contingency planning for Iraq.**

**22.** In response to a question at a press conference on 14 January about the humanitarian consequences of war, Mr Annan stated:

"We have been doing some contingency planning on that and we are extremely worried about the fallout and consequences of any such military action. Obviously we do not want to be caught unprepared. So we have gone ahead and made contingency plans, and we are in touch with governments that can provide some financial assistance for us to move our preparations to the next level. But we are worried."<sup>8</sup>

**23. On 22 January, Mr Straw approved the briefing prepared for the UK delegation to the US/UK/Australia inter-agency talks in Washington.**

**24. The briefing material focused on unresolved differences between the UK and US on the wider post-conflict role of the UN.**

**25. It envisaged the Coalition military handing over to an interim, civilian administration operating under UN auspices, "as soon as practically possible".**

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<sup>6</sup> Telegram 44 Washington to FCO London, 13 January 2003, 'US/IRAQ: Day After Humanitarian Planning'.

<sup>7</sup> Minute Dodd to Manning, 15 January 2003, 'Iraq'.

<sup>8</sup> UN News Centre, 14 January 2003, *Secretary-General's press conference*.

**26. The briefing listed strategic decisions needed “very soon so that planning can proceed”:**

- **how to establish a secure environment;**
- **how to meet the basic needs of the Iraqi people;**
- **the level of ambition for political reform;**
- **the extent to which economic reform should be left to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank; and**
- **the environmental clean-up plan.**

**27.** The follow-up to the 6 November US/UK/Australia post-conflict talks in Washington took place on 22 January.

**28.** In his record of the 17 January meeting of the AHGI, Mr Jim Drummond, Assistant Head (Foreign Affairs) OD Sec, stated that preparations for the talks were on track and that the UK had supplied a number of papers on the main issues.<sup>9</sup> The US had not, so far, shared any papers with the UK.

**29.** Mr Drummond also stated that the MOD had started its own detailed aftermath planning, “just in case UK forces ended up controlling a part of Iraq”. The questions raised would be used “to give a practical edge to the Washington discussions”.

**30.** On 17 January, Mr Dominick Chilcott, FCO Middle East Department (MED), submitted an “Annotated agenda/overarching paper” to Mr Straw.<sup>10</sup>

**31.** In the covering minute, Mr Chilcott sought Mr Straw’s agreement that UK officials should “argue for following a UN, rather than a unilateral, American-led, route on day-after issues” and “make clear that we need broad agreement soon on these issues, so that we can clarify the role which UK forces will play”. Mr Chilcott reported that MOD officials were content with that approach.

**32.** Mr Chilcott explained that the UK had shared a number of papers on post-conflict issues with the US, but had received very little in return:

“We had hoped that by now US thinking would be beginning to converge. But differences between departments remain as stark as before. At one end of the spectrum, the Pentagon, who regard the UN as irredeemably incompetent, advocate the US leading a day-after operation, co-opting willing allies for an extended period, until a new Iraqi government is ready to take over. At the other end sit the State Department who favour an internationalist approach with UN blessing. The NSC are somewhere in the middle. CENTCOM [Central Command] have set up a large military team to work up plans for taking over the government of Iraq. The risk is

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<sup>9</sup> Minute Drummond to Manning, 21 January 2003, ‘Ad Hoc Group on Iraq’.

<sup>10</sup> [Minute Chilcott to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 17 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Day-After Issues’.](#)

that, in the absence of a consensus position on day-after, the CENTCOM plan will be followed *faute de mieux*.

“We believe any unilateral US day-after plan would be seriously flawed. It would lack international legitimacy, as the UN is unlikely to support it. We expect the Iraqis’ euphoria at being liberated from Saddam to turn quickly into resentment and anger at being subject to a foreign army of occupation, a sentiment which is likely to be reflected more widely in the Arab world. In a hostile domestic and international environment, it will be more difficult to embed lasting political and economic reforms ... All in all, a recipe for a mess, with Coalition forces obliged to stay on in Iraq for years.

“The arguments for following the UN route look compelling and ... would be very much in US interests ...

“As soon as practically possible, we envisage the Coalition military handing over to an interim, civilian administration operating under UN auspices. With international legitimacy, such an interim administration would be supported in the region and probably tolerated in Iraq. Reforms conducted under its supervision would be more likely to stick. And it would aim to oversee a sort of ‘Bonn process’<sup>11</sup> for Iraq, under which the Iraqis themselves would create new political structures ... Lasting reform in Iraq will take a long time and the UN is more likely than Washington to have the patience for the long haul.

“The Americans, not unreasonably, refuse to put their forces under UN control ... The answer may be a Kosovo model, where parallel security and civilian presences co-exist, both blessed by the UN, with the security forces responsible for supporting and co-ordinating closely with the civil presence but not under UN control.

“We are unlikely to persuade all the agencies in Washington to see it our way on day-after in one session of talks on 22 January. But our aim remains to get an agreed Coalition approach. Without it the legal basis on which our own forces would act will be, at best, unclear and possibly unsafe. We also need broad agreement so that we can plan in detail how UK forces should conduct themselves in the aftermath of military action. The Secretary of State [Mr Straw] will arrive in Washington shortly after our talks conclude. We will ... recommend how he might follow up in his talks with Colin Powell [US Secretary of State]. Day after issues should probably be on the agenda for the Prime Minister’s meeting with President Bush on 31 January.

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<sup>11</sup> A reference to the process initiated at the international conference on the future of Afghanistan convened by the UN in Bonn, Germany, in December 2001. At the Conference, Afghan leaders reached agreement on the creation of an Afghan Interim Authority.

“The Australians, as the other troop contributing nation, have been invited to join the day-after talks in Washington. We have spoken to their representatives here in London and understand that they share our strong views on the desirability of action through the UN.”

**33.** Mr Chilcott concluded:

“We have no intention of surfacing this work. But if it leaks, we shall emphasise that it does not imply any change of the policy objectives and that it is simply prudent contingency planning.”

**34.** The ‘Annotated agenda/overarching paper’ attached to Mr Chilcott’s minute stated that “strategic decisions on the issues in this paper are needed very soon so that planning can proceed and a follow-up mechanism [be] agreed”.<sup>12</sup> Issues were organised under five headings:

- Security

“An urgent task will be to **establish a secure environment** to facilitate humanitarian operations and to provide the foundation for normal society to flourish and self-sufficient development to begin ... We shall need quickly to provide legitimate and transparent law and order and the necessary civil structures, backed by the Coalition military, to deliver it. Ideally, the ordinary Iraqi police should co-operate. But will they? And what is the basis of the law to be enforced – is it Iraqi law or something else?

“We shall also want to prevent internecine violence. Our handling of the defeated Iraqi forces will be critical. We shall need a DDR [demobilisation, demilitarisation and re-integration] plan for them, consistent with our vision for the future of Iraq’s armed forces ...”

- Relief and reconstruction

“The scale of the challenge will depend on the extent of damage and displacement following conflict and the extent of disruption to oil production ... The main humanitarian issues are:

- (a) **How will the basic needs of the Iraqi people – food, medicine, shelter, power, emergency reconstruction and protection/personal security – be met?** ... Military action will disrupt the involvement of expats and NGOs in the distributions systems ... We assume other UN agencies ... and the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] would be best placed to cope with refugees, although there may be a period when they cannot get access to them. How advanced is US thinking on civil/military co-operation?

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<sup>12</sup> [Paper Middle East Department, 15 January 2003, ‘Second Round of US-UK talks, Washington: 22 January 2003’.](#)



- (b) **Who will pay for humanitarian operations? What is the future of OFF** [the UN-administered Oil-for-Food programme]? ... Do the US think there is much potential for Iraq to borrow against future oil revenues to fund reconstruction?
- (c) ... What plans exist for dealing with zones contaminated by the use of CBW [chemical and biological weapons]?
- (d) There will be a need to move quickly from **relief towards reconstruction** and generating local Iraqi economic activity ... It will be particularly important to promote security and the rule of law at the local level to allow this to happen.”

- Political

“We want S[addam] H[ussein]’s regime replaced with something much better. **How high should our level of ambition be in promoting political reform?** ... Is a western-style democracy possible?

...

“We have no prescription for the **shape of a civilian administration (whether or not UN-led)**. But we shall want an arrangement that gives the Coalition military the freedom to operate alongside the UN interim administration, without putting their forces under UN command and control ... What sort of courts should we have for bringing individuals in SH’s regime to justice?

“A linked question is the extent to which we **replace Iraqis with international civilian** staff in the interim administration. We should probably dismantle the security agencies completely. But many ministries may be turned around with just a few changes at the top ... To what extent shall we need to root out Ba’ath Party elements?

“The interim administration will need to set in hand **a process to allow new political structures to emerge**. We shall need visible Iraqi participation in such a process at an early stage. It should be for the Iraqi people themselves to produce the ideas ... although the status within Iraq of many individuals in the exile community is low.”

- Economic

“The interim administration will also have an important economic reconstruction and reform task. One of the keys to this will be ensuring that **Iraq’s oil** revenues are maximised, consistent with the effect on the global oil market. We shall need to consider whether this is best achieved by returning control of Iraqi oil exports from an international civilian administration to Iraq rapidly or in slower time ...

“To what extent do we leave the task of **promoting economic** reform ... to the IMF/ World Bank? What is US thinking on rescheduling Iraq’s US\$100bn plus debt?”

- Environmental

“Do we have an **environmental clean-up plan?**”

**35.** The annotated agenda referred to a number of background papers<sup>13</sup> prepared over the preceding months:

- ‘Scenarios for the future of Iraq post-Saddam’ (FCO, 11 October 2002);
- ‘Security Sector Reform’ (FCO, 10 December 2002);
- ‘International Administrations for Iraq, what, who and how?’ (FCO, 17 October 2002);
- ‘Interim Administrations in Iraq’ (FCO, 12 December 2002);
- ‘Bonn process’ (FCO, January 2003);<sup>14</sup> and
- ‘Economic issues in Iraq after post-Saddam regime change’ (FCO, October 2002).

**36.** The annotated agenda made no reference to the UK’s specific responsibilities in southern Iraq. Nor did it consider the possible contribution of different UK government departments to the UK post-conflict effort.

**37.** Mr Edward Chaplin, FCO Director Middle East and North Africa, commented to Mr Straw: “After 22 January we will need to raise the level of exchanges with the US, in order to reach agreement on these key issues.”<sup>15</sup>

**38.** Mr Straw approved Mr Chilcott’s recommendations and reported that Secretary Powell had told him the US working assumption was that the US and UK would be in Iraq for a long time after military action.<sup>16</sup>

**39.** The annotated agenda was shown in parallel to Mr Geoff Hoon, the Defence Secretary, and Ms Clare Short, the International Development Secretary.

**40.** Mr Stephen Pollard, Head of MOD Overseas Secretariat (Sec(O)), invited Mr Hoon to note the intended scope of the meeting.<sup>17</sup> Mr Pollard explained that, in the US:

“... much of the running is being made by CENTCOM, which has set up a large military team to work up plans for Phase IV<sup>18</sup> of the campaign. The MOD are well plugged in to this through our PJHQ representatives at Tampa. But other issues will need resolution at higher level, not least the legal authority for what will amount to an army of occupation following any hostilities, and the extent to which the UN will

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<sup>13</sup> All but the paper on the Bonn process are described in Section 6.4.

<sup>14</sup> [Paper Hetherington, January 2003, ‘What would an Iraqi Bonn process look like?’.](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Manuscript comment Chaplin, 17 January 2003, on Minute Chilcott to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 17 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Day-After Issues’.](#)

<sup>16</sup> Minute Sinclair to Chilcott, 20 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Day-After Issues’.

<sup>17</sup> [Minute Pollard to APS/Secretary of State \[MOD\], 17 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Phase 4’.](#)

<sup>18</sup> The military term for the post-conflict phase of military operations in Iraq.

be involved, both in mandating any stabilisation and reconstruction activities and in overseeing them.

“... Unexpectedly, the FCO have just decided that they wish to seek the Foreign Secretary’s approval for the general line they wish to take in discussion ... that we should be pressing the US to follow a UN rather than a unilateral US-led route, in dealing with day-after issues. The FCO take the line that any unilateral US plan would lack international legitimacy, and that without an agreed Coalition approach the legal basis on which our own forces might operate would be at best unclear and possibly unsafe.”

**41.** Mr Pollard stated that there was “some force” in the FCO argument and that Mr Ian Lee, MOD Director General Operational Policy (DG OpPol), was content to take part in the Washington talks on that basis.

**42.** Mr Pollard advised that the FCO was likely to brief Mr Straw to follow up the talks with Secretary Powell and was also expected to put post-conflict issues on the agenda for Mr Blair’s meeting with President Bush on 31 January. The MOD would be closely associated with the drafting of that advice. Mr Lee would advise on his return from Washington whether Mr Hoon should raise the issue in his weekly telephone call to Mr Donald Rumsfeld, US Secretary of Defense.

**43.** Sir Kevin Tebbit, MOD Permanent Under Secretary (PUS),<sup>19</sup> commented separately to Mr Hoon:

“My main observation on what is a good paper is that this rather underplays the fissiparous tendencies within Iraq and the risk that groups are as likely to fight each other as Coalition forces. More detailed work is needed in my view on how to keep Kurds, Turkomans, Shia, Sunni and, perhaps Southern Marsh Shia together in one national entity – and indeed to handle those other three groups – people bent on revenge against S[addam] H[ussein]’s regime relics, and the outsiders/exiles who may find themselves less welcome than they expect. All points to the need for a very strong initial security presence, with a clear link to the political reform process. A still stronger case in my view for the US to want a wider Coalition, made possible under UN auspices.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> In keeping with variations in use within departments, the Inquiry refers to the most senior civil servant in the FCO and the MOD as the Permanent Under Secretary (PUS), but in all other departments as the Permanent Secretary. The Permanent Under Secretaries and Permanent Secretaries are referred to collectively as Permanent Secretaries.

<sup>20</sup> [Manuscript comment Tebbit on Minute Chilcott to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 17 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Day-After Issues’.](#)

**44.** Ms Carolyn Miller, DFID Director Middle East and North Africa and the DFID member of the UK delegation, informed Ms Short that the annotated agenda had been “put together rapidly”, but DFID had been able to feed in a number of points, including:

“... the importance of establishing a secure environment for humanitarian aid; the need to factor in the risks of operating if CBW are used; the requirement for affordable financing arrangements for relief and reconstruction especially if OFF collapses; and the importance of moving from dependence on handouts to an Iraq-led economic recovery”.<sup>21</sup>

**45. Separate MOD briefing for the Washington talks listed questions to which “we must first have answers” before the UK assumed post-conflict responsibilities:**

- **the future of the Iraq military, police and local and regional government;**
- **the legal basis for Coalition involvement in civil security;**
- **military sectors;**
- **the military’s role in managing oil production; and**
- **when humanitarian agencies would take the lead in providing assistance.**

**46.** The briefing prepared for Mr Lee, the senior MOD member of the UK delegation for Washington, included “baseline assumptions” for UK force contributions in four post-conflict phases. The briefing stated that, in the absence of a US decision on timelines, the assumptions were only illustrative.<sup>22</sup>

**47.** The suggested UK land force contribution under each phase was:

- US military administration (0-6 months): war-fighting forces (large scale);<sup>23</sup>
- Coalition administration (6-12 months): large scale reducing to medium scale;<sup>24</sup>
- civil administration (12-24 months): medium scale reducing to small scale;<sup>25</sup> and
- full Iraqi governance (24 months plus): small scale reducing to advisory teams.

**48.** The briefing stated that the UK military would: “Take regional responsibility for AM [aftermath] operations in our current War-fighting JOA [Joint Operational Area], at least for the first six months.” Military tasks would include setting the conditions for successful DDR/SSR (Security Sector Reform) programmes. The military would also support a civil/ NGO lead in:

- humanitarian operations, including distribution of food and water, provision of shelter and control of internally displaced persons;

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<sup>21</sup> [Minute Miller to PS/Secretary of State \[DFID\], 18 January 2003, ‘UK/US/Australia talks in Washington: 22 January’.](#)

<sup>22</sup> Minute Sec(O)4 to DG Op Pol, 21 January 2003, ‘Visit to Washington – Iraq Aftermath’.

<sup>23</sup> Defined in the 1998 *Strategic Defence Review* (SDR) as deployments of division size or equivalent.

<sup>24</sup> Defined in the 1998 SDR as “deployments of brigade size or equivalent” for war-fighting or other operations.

<sup>25</sup> Defined in the 1998 SDR as “a deployment of battalion size or equivalent”.

- support to local government and administration; and
- emergency reconstruction.

**49.** The briefing included questions to which “we must first have answers” if the UK was to contribute along those lines:

- What should be the future of the Iraqi military, police and local and regional government, and at what level should the Coalition do business with them, “as we will have to do”?
- What would be the legal basis for Coalition forces’ involvement in civil security?
- Did the US envisage “sectorisation” as in Bosnia or “central locations and force projection” as in Afghanistan as the model for Phase IV Coalition Force structure? If sectorisation, would the US provide additional forces in the UK sector to perform humanitarian tasks for which UK capacity was limited?
- What role would the military have in managing oil production?
- When did the US assume humanitarian agencies would take the lead in providing humanitarian assistance?

**50.** On 20 January, Mr William Ehrman, FCO Director General Defence and Intelligence, advised Mr Straw that clarity on US thinking would follow the talks in Washington on 22 January.<sup>26</sup> In the meantime, on a personal basis, he suggested: “we should start to think internally about elements relating to aftermath that might need to go into a future Security Council resolution ... Such elements include: aftermath UN administration; oil management; and the future of IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency]/UNMOVIC [UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission].”

**51. On 20 January, two days before the second round of post-conflict talks in Washington, President Bush confirmed publicly his decision that all US post-conflict activity was to be placed under the leadership of Secretary Rumsfeld.**

**52.** On 18 December 2002, President Bush decided in principle to place the Department of Defense (DoD) in charge of all post-conflict activity (see Section 6.4).

**53.** That decision was confirmed publicly on 20 January, when President Bush issued National Security Presidential Directive 24 (NSPD 24), consolidating all post-conflict activity in the new DoD-owned Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Minute Ehrman to Private Secretary [FCO], 20 January 2003, ‘Iraq: military aspects and aftermath’.

<sup>27</sup> Bowen SW Jr. *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009.

**54.** The consolidation of post-conflict planning in ORHA led to a “turbulent” period of adjustment.<sup>28</sup>

**55.** Mr Frank Miller, NSC Senior Director for Defense Policy and Arms Control, who in summer 2002 had been appointed to head the NSC Executive Steering Group on Iraq in order to “jump-start” US post-war planning (see Section 6.4), recalled DoD officials saying “you guys stay out, we don’t need your help”.<sup>29</sup>

**56.** Mr James Kunder, acting Deputy Administrator of USAID, described USAID as “stunned” by the sudden disappearance of the NSC Humanitarian Working Group led by Mr Elliot Abrams, NSC Senior Director for Democracy, Human Rights and International Organizations.

**57.** *Hard Lessons*, Mr Stuart Bowen’s account, as US Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, of the US experience of reconstruction between 2002 and 2008, explained that Lieutenant General (retired) Jay Garner, Head of ORHA, faced a range of challenges.<sup>30</sup> They included:

- the practical tasks of staffing, housing and equipping the new organisation;
- lack of access to material produced by the earlier inter-agency planning process;
- ambiguity in the division of responsibilities between ORHA and Joint TaskForce 4 (JTF-4), the separate post-conflict planning unit embedded in CENTCOM; and
- disagreement with General Tommy Franks, Commander-in-Chief CENTCOM, over ORHA’s operational independence from CENTCOM.

**58.** Against that difficult background, Lt Gen Garner succeeded in organising ORHA into three “pillars”: humanitarian assistance, civil administration and reconstruction. The humanitarian pillar took on the food programme and disaster relief from the NSC Humanitarian Working Group. The reconstruction pillar started using contracts negotiated by USAID to engage technical experts. The civil administration pillar faced the difficulty of finding credible information about public services and ministry functions in Iraq and was the least well developed of the three.

**59.** Ms Short described the decision to make the Pentagon responsible for all post-conflict planning as “stunning”.<sup>31</sup> She told the Inquiry:

“... if you then wanted the world to come together and support the reconstruction of Iraq, you needed ... the military to do their bit, and then you needed to bring

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<sup>28</sup> Bowen SW Jr. *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Bowen SW Jr. *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Bowen SW Jr. *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Public hearing, 2 February 2010, page 58.

everybody in, and that's what we were trying to achieve. So to hand it all over to the military is a bit foolish, because your chances then of getting co-operation from the rest of the international system may be diminished.”<sup>32</sup>

**60.** Ms Short also said that:

“... all this enormous State Department planning, which included the danger of chaos and sectarian fighting and so on, was thrown away. ORHA and the Pentagon took over. They believed there wasn't going to be any trouble and people would be waving flowers at them, and off they went. They believed their own propaganda, and the British Government's capacity to think better ... was just subverted and thrown away, to our deep, eternal shame.”<sup>33</sup>

**61.** Sir Kevin Tebbit described some of the consequences of the changes:

“I had numerous ... meetings with very senior people in the Pentagon ... where we were trying to stress the importance of actually getting the right sort of planning in to Phase IV for the aftermath ... where ... they had discarded the State Department's advice, and indeed people ... and I could not get across to them the fact that ... the Coalition would not be seen as a liberation force where flowers would be stuck at the end of rifles ... [T]his was absolutely not accepted, and I think, as far as the Pentagon was concerned ... they just thought that Iraq would be fine on the day ... and everybody would be happy.”<sup>34</sup>

**62.** Sir Peter Ricketts told the Inquiry:

“I think the crucial problems [with post-conflict planning] arose from the late decisions in the US to put a department and an organisation in charge which had not been prepared for this role. I do think, if the careful State Department work had been allowed to feed through into operational planning for the post-conflict phase, that would have been more successful. I think it would have been easier for us to dock with it, and the overall effect on the ground would ... have been a stronger operation from earlier on.”<sup>35</sup>

**63.** Mr Alastair Campbell, Mr Blair's Director of Communications and Strategy from 2000 to 2003, told the Inquiry: “Assumptions were made about the State Department planning.” He asserted that: “once we had realised ... that the Pentagon appeared to be taking the lead on almost every level ... the Prime Minister was ... rattling a lot of cages within the British system and asking for an awful lot of things to be done”.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Public hearing, 2 February 2010, page 61.

<sup>33</sup> Public hearing, 2 February 2010, page 85.

<sup>34</sup> Public hearing, 3 December 2009, page 62.

<sup>35</sup> Public hearing, 1 December 2009, page 92.

<sup>36</sup> Public hearing, 12 January 2010 (afternoon session), pages 69-70.

**64. In his evidence to the House of Commons Liaison Committee on 21 January, Mr Blair emphasised the importance of the post-conflict phase:**

**“You do not engage in military conflict that may produce regime change unless you are prepared to follow through and work in the aftermath of that regime change to ensure the country is stable and the people are properly looked after.”**

**65. In his evidence to the House of Commons Liaison Committee on 21 January, Mr Blair stated:**

“It is a terrible responsibility ever to commit troops to action, but I believe we were right to do it in both Kosovo and Afghanistan. When I say is it right and is it do-able, is it do-able militarily but also is the aftermath something that you can handle as well, because I think that is important too.”<sup>37</sup>

**66. Asked about the risks of military action for stability in Iraq and the region, Mr Blair stated:**

“That is precisely why part of any preparations is to make clear, firstly that the territorial integrity of Iraq is sacrosanct ... and ... why we must make sure that we try and do everything we can to follow through. That is why I say military conflict, if it comes to that, is not the end of the issue; there are humanitarian questions, there are questions of what type of government, and all these things have got to be looked at very carefully. We are obviously in detailed discussion with people about them.”<sup>38</sup>

**67. Asked about the role of opposition groups in a reconstructed Iraq, Mr Blair said:**

“I think it is important that we try to make sure that any potential successor government has the requisite stability but, also, has as broad a representation as possible ... One of the things I am wary about at this point in time is saying ‘Look, this is exactly what we believe should happen’ in circumstances where we have not actually got to the point of saying we should have a conflict.”<sup>39</sup>

**68. Sir George Young (Conservative) asked Mr Blair:**

“Is it not the case that actually the more difficult stage is stage two [nation-building], and that is the stage at which we might get more involved. To what extent are you confident that the whole strategy will not be undermined because stage two does not follow through the success of stage one [military action]?”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Liaison Committee, Session 2002-2003, *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Liaison Committee Tuesday 21 January 2003*, Q 67.

<sup>38</sup> Liaison Committee, Session 2002-2003, *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Liaison Committee Tuesday 21 January 2003*, Q 110.

<sup>39</sup> Liaison Committee, Session 2002-2003, *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Liaison Committee Tuesday 21 January 2003*, Q 112.

<sup>40</sup> Liaison Committee, Session 2002-2003, *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Liaison Committee Tuesday 21 January 2003*, Q 117.



**69.** Mr Blair replied:

“You do not engage in military conflict that may produce regime change unless you are prepared to follow through and work in the aftermath of that regime change to ensure the country is stable and the people are properly looked after.

...

“I think that if stage one is successful, then you will find that the international community wants to come behind that and make sure the Iraqi people are given the chance to develop free from the repression of Saddam. I expect that there will be considerable international support for that, and it is important that we do it ... I think it is extremely important that we do not take our eye off Afghanistan ... Getting rid of the Taliban was not the end, for me. The end is Afghanistan reconstituted as a country that has got its own internal system working properly and does not threaten the outside world. In exactly the same way in Iraq, if we come to changing the regime ... then I think it is extremely important that we make the most detailed preparations and work within the international community as to what happens afterwards.”

**70.** In his memoir, Lord Mandelson, who had resigned from the Government in January 2001, recalled that, in January 2003, he asked Mr Blair:

“What happens after you’ve won? ... You can go in there, you can take out Saddam but what do you do with Iraq? You’re going to have a country on your hands. I don’t know what your plan is. I don’t know how you are going to do it. Who is going to run the place?’ Tony replied: ‘That’s the Americans’ responsibility. It’s down to the Americans.’”<sup>41</sup>

**71.** Asked by the Inquiry whether the assumption had been that the US would do most of the post-conflict planning, Mr Blair stated that:

“... the Americans, of course, would have the primary responsibility, but let me be absolutely clear I was most certainly not thinking it was to be left to the Americans. The reason why we had done a lot of planning ourselves was precisely because we knew we were going to be part of the aftermath ...”<sup>42</sup>

**72.** The second round of official-level talks between the US, the UK and Australia took place in Washington on 22 January.

**73.** The talks made little progress.

**74.** US officials advised that US/UK differences on the role of the UN would need to be resolved between Mr Blair and President Bush.

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<sup>41</sup> Mandelson P. *The Third Man: Life at the Heart of New Labour*. Harper Press, 2010.

<sup>42</sup> Public hearing, 21 January 2011, page 124.

**75. UK participants commented on the small amount of time left to prepare post-conflict plans.**

**76.** On 22 January, Mr Chaplin led an FCO/MOD/DFID delegation to Washington for talks on post-conflict planning with the NSC, State Department, DoD, USAID and an Australian delegation.

**77.** The British Embassy summarised the outcome:

“Some progress in persuading the Administration of the merits of a UN role – but NSC advise that this will need Prime Minister/Bush discussions to resolve.

“Overall, US Day After planning is still lagging far behind military planning. But they have agreed to two working groups: on the UN dimension; and on economic reconstruction issues. Experts will stay in touch on humanitarian co-ordination, bringing war criminals to justice, and the legality of any international presence in Iraq.”<sup>43</sup>

**78.** The Embassy also reported “confusion” over how the decision to establish ORHA, operating out of DoD alongside JTF-4, would work in practice.

**79.** On de-Ba’athification, the Embassy reported that Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, NSC Senior Director and Ambassador at large to the Iraqi Opposition, had stated that, after Saddam Hussein’s departure, top officials in Iraqi ministries should be replaced by “internationals”, who would rely as much as possible on remaining Iraqi personnel not tainted by the former regime.

**80.** Sir Christopher Meyer, British Ambassador to the US from 1997 to 2003, told the Inquiry that, in January 2003, a contact in the NSC informed him:

“... we are going to have to get rid of the top people, Saddam’s henchmen, but we can’t de-Ba’athify completely, otherwise there will be no administration in Iraq and no school teachers and no nothing and we are going to need some of these people”.<sup>44</sup>

**81.** Mr Chaplin, Mr Lee and Ms Miller produced supplementary reports for their respective Secretaries of State.

**82.** Mr Chaplin informed Mr Straw that the talks had gone “better than expected”, but had revealed that, “as we expected, apart from on humanitarian relief and immediate post-conflict reconstruction, the US have not yet made much progress on a lot of the day-after agenda. Most of the issues have not yet gone to principals.”<sup>45</sup> The US “seemed very confident that Coalition forces would have the right in international law to occupy and administer Iraq after a conflict”, which was not the view of FCO lawyers.

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<sup>43</sup> Telegram 89 Washington to FCO London, 23 January 2003, ‘Iraq: US/UK/Australia Consultations on Day After Issues: 22 January 2003’.

<sup>44</sup> Public hearing, 26 November 2009, page 98.

<sup>45</sup> Minute Chaplin to Secretary of State [FCO], 22 January 2003, ‘Iraq: “day-after” issues’.

**83.** Mr Chaplin reported that since “military action could start within a few weeks”, it had been agreed to have the first meetings of the new working groups the following week, if possible.

**84.** Mr Lee reported to Mr Hoon that the US was beginning to take the aftermath seriously and was willing to work with the UK and Australia in the various working groups, but there was little time left.<sup>46</sup> During his visit Mr Lee had arranged a call on Lt Gen Garner at which he had said the UK was “keen to be involved” as ORHA took shape. Lt Gen Garner had been grateful and suggested that the UK feed in ideas rather than wait for him to make requests.

**85.** Mr Lee recommended that Mr Hoon raise post-conflict planning in his next phone conversation with Secretary Rumsfeld in terms that it was a vital issue that needed “to be sorted now because it affects both the UK decision to commit to hostilities ... and also international support”, and that there was a need for clarity on “who is responsible to whom for what on day after planning and then execution”.

**86.** Ms Miller informed Ms Short that the talks had provided a useful opportunity to deepen understanding between DFID and the MOD. Unlike the US participants, members of the UK delegation had been in agreement on the main lines of policy.<sup>47</sup> She added that support from Australia on the role of the UN and humanitarian concerns had been particularly helpful.

**87.** Mr Chaplin told the Inquiry:

“By January 2003, though, as it turned out, that was rather late in the day, though we hoped we would have more time, the Americans were at least listening ... So we bombarded the Americans with lots of good advice, we hoped, on the handling of the aftermath and said it needed to be considered, which actually matched pretty well with what the State Department had done.”<sup>48</sup>

**88.** Mr Straw told Secretary Powell on 23 January that the UK expected its troops to be in Iraq for “quite a long time”.

**89.** Mr Straw saw Secretary Powell in Washington the day after the inter-agency talks.<sup>49</sup> The Embassy reported that, in addition to emphasising the need to involve the UN in

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<sup>46</sup> Minute Lee to PS/Secretary of State [MOD], 23 January 2003, ‘Aftermath: Visit to Washington’.

<sup>47</sup> Minute Miller to PS/Secretary of State [DFID], 23 January 2003, ‘UK/US/Australia talks, Washington: 22 January 2003’.

<sup>48</sup> Public hearing, 1 December 2009, page 37.

<sup>49</sup> Telegram 91 Washington to FCO London, 23 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Foreign Secretary’s Lunch With US Secretary of State, 23 January’.

post-conflict administration, Mr Straw responded to a question about how long UK troops would stay, saying:

“... our assumption was that they would be around for quite a long time. We had gone for the biggest of the three options we had considered ... partly in order to help with the occupation.”

**90.** Before he had seen the record of the Washington talks, Mr Mike O’Brien, FCO Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, set out his views on the creation of a democratic federal Iraq in a note to Mr Straw.<sup>50</sup> Mr O’Brien argued that US plans for a post-conflict “military regime” would “go down badly in the Muslim world”. Instead, the period between a second resolution and the start of military action should be used to set out a programme for bringing about a democratic federal Iraq run by Iraqis. He recommended “a major exercise” to bring together opposition groups to negotiate a constitution, with Western assistance, as soon as possible. Mr O’Brien added that a transitional authority “would need to rely on the recruitment of Iraqis from within the Saddam Hussein administration as well as some of the diaspora opposition”.

**91.** Mr Chaplin commented:

“I have no problem in setting democracy as a goal for Iraq ... But we have to be careful how we present this. To most Arabs ‘democracy’ means imposing Western style institutions on the Arab world, for our own benefit. It is wiser ... to talk about the application of universal principles such as democratic values, good governance, the rule of law and so on ...

“My only point of disagreement in Mike O’Brien’s analysis is that ‘we’ ie the Coalition should negotiate a new constitution for Iraq with Iraqi opposition groups. Firstly ... a new constitution must be seen to be developed by the Iraqis themselves. What we will be doing is holding the ring to allow that process to take place. Secondly Iraqi opposition groups are a very disparate bunch. A few of them ... represent a constituency on the ground in Iraq. Most of them represent only themselves.”<sup>51</sup>

## Follow-up to the inter-agency talks

**92.** Immediately after the 22 January Washington talks, the Cabinet Office told departments that follow-up work was urgent. Officials were instructed to take the initiative with the US.

**93.** The AHGI co-ordinated follow-up to the Washington talks.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Minute O’Brien to Straw, 22 January 2003, ‘Post Saddam Iraq’.

<sup>51</sup> [Minute Chaplin to PS/Mr O’Brien, 28 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Day After’.](#)

<sup>52</sup> [Letter Drummond to Chaplin, 23 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Working Groups’.](#)

**94.** On 23 January, Mr Drummond allocated responsibility for following up the five issues on which the participants in the Washington talks had agreed the need for further co-ordination:

- The role of the UN. The NSC would lead for the US; Mr Stephen Pattison, Head of FCO United Nations Department (UND), for the UK.
- Economic issues. State Department to lead for the US; FCO Economic Advisers for the UK.
- Humanitarian issues. DFID was already working with the NSC and USAID and would continue to co-ordinate with the FCO, MOD and others.
- War crimes. The US appeared to favour a two-tier approach, with the Iraqi legal system trying those suspected of war crimes against the Iraqi people and a different system for war crimes against Coalition Forces, though this was not agreed policy. US and UK lawyers and policy-makers on both sides would discuss, with the FCO in the lead for the UK.
- Rights of the Occupying Power. FCO and MOD legal advisers would pursue with US legal advisers.

**95.** Mr Drummond added that Brigadier William Rollo, MOD Director of Military Operations, would take forward post-conflict military planning through the British Embassy Washington and links into CENTCOM.

**96.** Mr Drummond emphasised that the work was urgent. The UK “should take the initiative in arranging the work of the groups” and individual leads should report progress to the Cabinet Office by 7 February.

**97.** The first meeting of UK members of the UN group was held on 31 January and the first meeting of the economic group on 3 February.<sup>53</sup>

**98.** UK members of both groups travelled to Washington in the week of 3 to 7 February for inter-agency discussions.

## **The UK Common Document**

**99.** UK military planners were encouraged by the level of detail in US Phase IV plans presented at the CENTCOM planning conference on 23 and 24 January, but expressed concern about:

- **whether the level of ambition in US planning would be matched by political will and resources;**
- **the underlying assumption that the plan could be implemented without international support or interference;**

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<sup>53</sup> Minute Dodd to Manning, 3 February 2003, ‘Ad Hoc Group on Iraq’.

- the assumption that the UK military would remain welcome in Iraq; and
- lack of clarity on medium- and long-term objectives.

**100. PJHQ proposed a “Common Document” that would be endorsed by the FCO and DFID, to ensure the UK delivered the consistent message needed to influence US post-conflict planning.**

**101.** On 20 January, a PJHQ official provided Major General Rob Fry, Deputy Chief of Joint Operations (Operations), with “a proposed way forward on Phase IV work”.<sup>54</sup> The official advised:

“The first issue that we have faced in doing this work is that many (senior) people have been generating ideas to contribute to the Phase IV planning, but to date without a conceptual framework ... The result has been a sense of increasing concern that the issue is not being adequately gripped (which in turn has prompted further high level input). To address this and using a slightly modified version of CENTCOM’s framework, we have formulated just such a framework and called it ‘the Common Document’ ... The aspiration is that ... we will be able to produce a cross-Government agreed UK ‘manifesto’, from which we would be able to guide subsequent engagement with the US. It also provides a mechanism for systematically identifying issues that need to be resolved.

“... We also need to integrate any SPG [Strategic Planning Group] work that has been done on this subject and cross-check it against UK peacekeeping doctrine ... [I]t is in the first instance intended as a planning tool, a mechanism for pooling UK thinking on aftermath. We should not be in the business of doing the thinking, just collecting it and making it coherent.

“... The Common Document has yet to be briefed outside the department, but will need FCO and DFID input to be any use ...

...

“Unfortunately time is not on our side, however, and we have an increasing concern about our ability to populate the framework in the time available ... We recommend, therefore, that we should hold a week long cross-government planning seminar to help complete the document. Effectively this would be a single ‘big-push’ to pull together all government thinking on aftermath ...

“Overcoming the institutional resistance to such a proposal would also be a challenge ... To make it work, we would need active support (not just acquiescence) from the top of MOD, the FCO and DFID (and probably the Cabinet Office). This might take some effort ...

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<sup>54</sup> [Minute PJHQ/Hd of J9 Pol/Ops to MA/DCJO\(Ops\), 20 January 2003, ‘Op TELIC: Taking Forward Aftermath Planning’.](#)

“Nevertheless, I think the arguments for pursuing the idea are persuasive. First and foremost is the fact that Iraq seems to be the Prime Minister’s Main Effort, and aftermath his chief concern. So far we seem to have little to reassure him. Second, time is not on our side ... Third, because of the way this war is being planned in the US, we risk missing a major trick if we do not give the UK components the policy guidance they need to inform the US planning.”

**102.** A joint MOD/PJHQ delegation attended a Phase IV planning conference convened by the US Joint Staff at CENTCOM in Tampa on 23 and 24 January.<sup>55</sup> Participants addressed Phase IV planning in more detail than at the Washington talks on 22 January.

**103.** The PJHQ record stated that the conference “substantially enhances confidence in US planning”, but that:

“Significant strategic issues [are] not yet resolved, including whether the level of ambition evident in US planning will be matched by US political will, and therefore by resources.

“... The strength of the US approach to Phase IV ... is that their plan has been prepared in isolation, on the basis that the US needed to be ready to go it ‘alone, unafraid and unilateral’. As a result it is clear that they have a detailed operational model that broadly covers all the bases and makes sense. Conversely, the weakness of the US approach is that the plan has been developed on the assumption that it can be implemented without the acceptance of, or interference from, the international community.”<sup>56</sup>

**104.** The MOD participants endorsed the PJHQ assessment.<sup>57</sup> They stated that, although the UK delegation had left Tampa “enormously heartened” by the level of detail in US planning:

“... US military (and other) planners have made a number of very big assumptions (eg that they will remain welcome) in developing plans for delivering success in the aftermath. The lack of clarity on how the medium- to long-term objectives will be delivered, and how these will be conditioned by the short term, was our greatest area of concern.”

**105. The Chiefs of Staff approved the creation of the Common Document as a means to establish a framework for UK policy that would guide those trying to influence US thinking.**

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<sup>55</sup> Minute DOMA AD(ME) and Sec(0)4 to MA/DCDS(C), 27 January 2003, ‘US Iraq Reconstruction Conference – Tampa 23-24 Jan 03’.

<sup>56</sup> Minute Op TELIC CPT Ldr to MA/DCJO(Ops), 24 January 2003, ‘Reconstruction Planning Integration Conference held at US Central Command: 23/24 Jan 03’.

<sup>57</sup> Minute DOMA AD(ME) and Sec(0)4 to MA/DCDS(C), 27 January 2003, ‘US Iraq Reconstruction Conference – Tampa 23-24 Jan 03’.

**106.** Lieutenant General John Reith, Chief of Joint Operations (CJO), proposed the creation of a Common Document to “capture the UK’s position across the range of Phase IV issues” in a paper for the Chiefs of Staff on 27 January.<sup>58</sup>

**107.** Lt Gen Reith stated that US planning had developed rapidly. It was based on a single unified plan for Iraq with which Coalition partners would be expected to comply. The US distinction between humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction remained. USAID/CENTCOM plans for the former were “relatively well advanced”, with the “Humanitarian Assistance Plan” already endorsed by President Bush. Reconstruction options were “well-formed on paper”, but waiting on key strategic decisions.

**108.** Lt Gen Reith argued that the UK needed immediate engagement, at the right levels, with a consistent message, if it was to influence US plans. He proposed a document, with DFID and FCO buy-in, that would mirror the terminology used in US planning and set out UK aspirations and potential involvement against each of the current US planning objectives. Without it, it would be “difficult to deliver to our embedded liaison staffs the necessary guidance that they require to shape early US thinking, or to ensure that UK policy guidance is met”. That was needed as soon as possible.

**109.** Lt Gen Reith proposed a two day planning seminar the following week. It would need to be more than a “talking shop”. Its aim should be to deliver “an authoritative account of ‘UK policy’”, to be validated by senior staff from across government before being put to Ministers.

**110.** The Chiefs of Staff discussed the proposal at their meeting on 29 January. They concluded that “the Phase IV Common Document ... would establish a framework UK policy, which would ... provide guidance to the embedded UK staffs charged with influencing US thinking”.<sup>59</sup>

**111.** The PJHQ Phase IV planning seminar took place on 5 February and is described later in this Section.

## **Post-conflict discussions with the French**

**112.** Meetings in late 2002 and early 2003 revealed a strong convergence between senior UK and French officials’ views on post-conflict issues.

**113.** French officials warned that the UK should not let optimistic scenarios blind it to potential problems, including political disintegration.

**114.** France would want to play a role in post-conflict Iraq, but would not want to “dive into a quagmire”.

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<sup>58</sup> Minute Reith to COSSEC, 27 January 2003, ‘Op Telic: UK Approach to Phase IV Planning’.

<sup>59</sup> Minutes, 29 January 2003, Chiefs of Staff meeting.



**115.** Mr Chilcott visited Paris on 29 January to update the French Government on UK thinking on post-conflict issues. His visit was the latest in a series of contacts between FCO officials and their French counterparts at which post-conflict issues had been discussed.

**116.** Mr Giles Paxman, Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy Paris, had discussed UK thinking on post-Saddam Hussein Iraq with two senior French officials on 16 October 2002.<sup>60</sup> One official was reported to have commented that he:

“... feared that the removal of Saddam would lead to general anarchy in Iraq with attacks on Ba’ath Party symbols, settling of accounts and widespread violence as in Albania. It might need a relatively authoritarian regime to re-establish order. We should not rule out the possibility that this might be done by the Ba’ath Party organisation.”

**117.** In December, Mr Simon Fraser, FCO Director for Strategy and Innovation, reported that a French interlocutor had:

“... argued that we needed to think carefully about the potential for political disintegration in Iraq after a war. There could be many unforeseen consequences including political instability motivated by revenge. We should not let the optimistic scenarios blind us to the potential problems. The same went for the wider regional implications.”<sup>61</sup>

**118.** The purpose of Mr Chilcott’s visit on 29 January was to be “as transparent as possible” to “prepare the ground in case we had to move quickly on the day after, not least so that the EU should be engaged at that point”.<sup>62</sup> Mr Chilcott reported that he was struck by how far UK and French views converged. The officials he had seen were confident France would want to play “a proactive role” in any aftermath, even if they did not participate in the military operation, but they would not want to “dive into a quagmire”.

## UK military campaign objectives

**119.** Draft UK military campaign objectives were circulated to the FCO, MOD and DFID in late January.

**120.** Mr Desmond Bowen, Deputy Head of OD Sec, reported to Sir David Manning that Ministers were “generally content” with the draft, but that there needed to be a lot of work on the objectives covering the period between the end of hostilities and the establishment of a new Iraqi government.

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<sup>60</sup> Letter Paxman to Fraser, 18 October 2002, ‘Scenarios for the future of Iraq after Saddam’.

<sup>61</sup> Minute Fraser to Ricketts, 23 December 2002, ‘Planning talks: Paris: 20 December’.

<sup>62</sup> Minute Chilcott to Chaplin, 30 January 2003, ‘Day After Talks with the French’.

**121.** On 22 January, Mr Bowen consulted Mr Lee, Mr Chaplin and Dr Nicola Brewer, DFID Director General Regional Programmes, on draft military campaign objectives.<sup>63</sup>

**122.** Dr Brewer copied the draft objectives to Ms Short, explaining that the MOD had consulted DFID on three other papers that day: two on the impact of CBW on civilians and a more general paper by the MOD Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS).<sup>64</sup> Dr Brewer observed “signs ... that MOD and the military are beginning to take more seriously the humanitarian implications for military planning and of any conflict”.

**123.** Sir Suma Chakrabarti, DFID Permanent Secretary from 2002 to 2008, told the Inquiry that, from January 2002, there were much better links between military and DFID planners: “until that point we didn’t have much of an idea of what military planning consisted of and how humanitarian assistance should link into that”.<sup>65</sup>

**124.** Mr Bowen requested written comments on a revised draft of the military campaign objectives on 28 January.<sup>66</sup>

**125.** Dr Brewer informed DFID colleagues that the revised objectives incorporated the main points she had made at a meeting chaired by Mr Bowen to discuss the draft. Those were:

- the need to highlight humanitarian consequences of military action earlier in the draft;
- the need to factor in “stabilisation” objectives from the start, not just during the “aftermath”; and
- the need for references to essential infrastructure to cover utilities, “especially electricity”, transport and key buildings, as well as oil.<sup>67</sup>

**126.** Mr Bowen sent a revised draft to Sir David Manning on 29 January.<sup>68</sup>

**127.** The draft incorporated a number of additional written comments proposed by DFID and agreed by Ms Short.<sup>69</sup>

**128.** Mr Bowen explained to Sir David Manning that the objectives “flow from our policy objectives published on 7 January”. They had not been agreed by departments, although Ministers had seen them and were “generally content”.

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<sup>63</sup> Letter Bowen to Lee, 22 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’.

<sup>64</sup> Manuscript comment Nicola [Brewer] to PS/SOS [DFID] on Fax Bowen to Lee, 23 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Objectives’.

<sup>65</sup> Public hearing, 8 December 2009, page 19.

<sup>66</sup> Letter Bowen to Lee, 28 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’.

<sup>67</sup> [Manuscript comment Brewer to Fernie on Fax Bowen to Lee, 28 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’](#).

<sup>68</sup> [Minute Bowen to Manning, 29 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’ attaching Paper \[unattributed and undated\], ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’](#).

<sup>69</sup> Manuscript comment Short on Minute Bolton to PS/Secretary of State [DFID], 28 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’.

**129.** Mr Bowen emphasised that those objectives covering the period between the end of hostilities and the establishment of a new Iraqi government needed a lot of work:

“... these would need to go a lot wider in terms of civil administration (involving the UN) and a process for arriving at representative government. Much of this latter area is nowhere near agreed between the US and the UK ...

“It will be important before the Coalition embarks on military action to ensure that we share the same military objectives with the US, otherwise the strategic direction of the campaign risks falling apart ...”<sup>70</sup>

**130.** Mr Bowen sent a further revision of the military campaign objectives, incorporating comments from Mr Straw and Whitehall departments, to Sir David Manning on 11 February.

### **Mr Blair’s talks with President Bush, 31 January 2003**

**131.** In late January, Mr Blair suggested to President Bush that delaying military action by one month would provide additional time to work up more coherent post-conflict plans.

**132.** Mr Blair sent President Bush a Note on 24 January, in which he wrote that the biggest risk they faced was internecine fighting in Iraq when a military strike destabilised the regime.<sup>71</sup>

**133.** Mr Blair also listed a number of potential advantages in delaying military action by one month to late March/early April, including the additional time that would allow for working up more coherent post-conflict plans.

**134.** Sir David Manning told the Inquiry that delay would have opened “all sorts of possibilities”, including an awareness of the risks being run by setting up ORHA very late.<sup>72</sup>

**135.** Ms Short commented that, given the lack of preparedness, she expected the date to be put back: “I wouldn’t have believed we would go that quickly, given how unready everything was.”<sup>73</sup>

**136.** FCO briefing for Mr Blair’s meeting with President Bush on 31 January advised Mr Blair to make two points: that “the US needs to pay much more attention, quickly, to planning on ‘day after’ issues; and that the UN needs to be central to it”.

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<sup>70</sup> [Minute Bowen to Manning, 29 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’ attaching Paper \[unattributed and undated\], ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’.](#)

<sup>71</sup> Letter Manning to Rice, 24 January 2003, [untitled] [attaching Note Blair.](#)

<sup>72</sup> Public hearing, 30 November 2009, page 85.

<sup>73</sup> Public hearing, 2 February 2010, page 64.

**137. Officials explained that operational planning was constrained by the continuing absence of an overall framework for post-conflict Iraq.**

**138.** Section 3.6 describes the range of advice prepared for Mr Blair's meeting with President Bush on 31 January.

**139.** Advice on post-conflict issues was included in a number of documents prepared separately by the FCO, the MOD, the Cabinet Office and DFID.

**140.** Briefing prepared by the FCO included in its list of objectives: "To convince President Bush ... the US needs to pay much more attention, quickly, to planning on 'day after' issues; and that the UN needs to be central to it."<sup>74</sup> Key messages included:

- Our officials ... need agreement from us [Mr Blair and President Bush] on overall framework to carry out operational planning.
- Coalition needs an overall 'winning concept'. Should embrace both military action and 'day-after' administration in Iraq. Would be pointless and damaging to win war and lose peace.
- Would be irresponsible to abandon Iraq quickly after toppling Saddam. Risk of civil war would be real. And Iraq's neighbours would get dragged in, creating instability in the whole region.
- We must leave Iraq and region better off after our intervention. As well as disposing of Iraq's WMD and its oppressive security forces that means presiding over wide political and economic reforms. Will take time to introduce and take root, and will go beyond a military occupation. So international community is in for long haul.
- All the evidence from the region suggests that Coalition forces will not be seen as liberators for long, if at all. Our motives are regarded with huge suspicion. The Iraqis, including those in exile, (and the Arabs more generally) want us gone quickly. Our occupation and administration of Iraq will become more unpopular and its lawfulness more debatable, the longer it continues.
- Blunt fact is that in those circumstances any reforms are unlikely to stick. Iraqis will need legitimate international presence holding the ring while they themselves set up new, Iraqi, structures. Can't foist these on them. Iraqi opposition groups can be involved but should not be parachuted into power.
- So we should plan to keep period of government by military Coalition as short as possible, and introduce quickly an international administration with UN blessing.

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<sup>74</sup> [Paper Middle East Department, 30 January 2003, 'Prime Minister's visit to Camp David, 31 January: Iraq'](#).

- Our joint irritation at some aspects of the UN should not blind us to the significant advantages it can bring in Iraq after the conflict.
  - Iraqis more likely to accept a UN-mandated transitional administration than a Coalition or US one. Same goes for Arab world ...
  - By reducing hostility to the Coalition UN route reduces risk that our actions serve as a recruiting sergeant for Islamist terrorist organisations.
  - Makes sense for UN to be in charge of oil revenues to avoid accusations that aim of military action was to get control of oil.
  - UN provides best forum for managing humanitarian agencies ...
  - UN will make it easier for other countries to support practically and politically, reforms we want.
  - By making burden sharing easier, UN provides the best prospect of a clean exit strategy.
  - UN has the stamina to stay in Iraq for a long time, which will be needed for our ambitious reforms to stick.
- UN's record on transitional administrations is not perfect. But getting better with experience ...
- Understand US concern to keep control of military and security issues. Agree UN should not take this on – at least, not at first ...
- ... Can get best of both worlds: UN legitimisation and freedom of action with a UNSC [UN Security Council] mandate ...
- UNSG [UN Secretary-General] must appoint right Special Representative ...
- Restoring oil production will be an immediate challenge. Oil sector will need some technology and a lot of capital. We must encourage an open investment regime and a level playing field for foreign companies.
- Our media and Parliament have not yet focused on day-after questions. But it would be very difficult to sustain a UK contribution to day-after if our occupation of Iraq were opposed, in Iraq and in region. Don't want a repeat of the 1920s."

**141.** The background note stated that US hostility to the UN:

"... should not be allowed to prejudice the Coalition against the crucial advantages it brings. Putting the UN in the centre of reforming Iraq, after the Coalition topples Saddam is as important as following the UN route to disarm Iraq.

“The way to present the case is to focus on the practical advantages of involving the UN. But there is also the question of international legitimacy. We shall need UNSC authorisation for practical purposes eg any change to the sanctions regime and to the Oil-for-Food arrangements, as well as for the far-reaching reforms we plan to introduce to Iraq. The lawfulness of an occupation, post-conflict, will also be related to the lawfulness of the military action itself.”

**142.** The note stated that the US was “putting a huge effort into humanitarian relief and immediate post-conflict reconstruction, which the military expect to control”, but US thinking on the transition between Coalition military administration and the transfer of power to a new Iraqi government was “bogged down in inter-agency disputes”.

**143.** On Iraqi exiles, the background note stated that they “can join the debate on Iraq’s future but will have to test their credibility with the Iraqi people, not be parachuted in by the US/UK”.

**144.** The background note concluded that Mr Blair’s visit was well timed to influence US planning:

“Without agreement, which can only come from President Bush and the Prime Minister, on the overall framework for day-after, operational planning will continue to be handicapped.”

**145.** The briefing provided by the MOD included a section on “aftermath”.<sup>75</sup> Suggested lines for Mr Blair to use with President Bush included:

- There was no doubt the Coalition could win the war, but it was “equally certain that we face a risk of ‘losing the peace’”.
- Any post-conflict honeymoon would be brief, if it occurred at all.
- Strategic questions about future governance were not academic and needed answering quickly.
- Choices made early in the campaign “can shape – often irrevocably – our options months, even years later”.

**146.** The short Cabinet Office paper from Mr Drummond offered a “few OD Sec points, just in case they slip through the briefing”.<sup>76</sup> Those included:

- the importance of offering a clear public vision for the future of Iraq;
- the need to press for agreement on the post-conflict role of the UN;
- the importance of integrated Coalition planning on post-conflict issues;
- the need for “top political impetus” on post-conflict issues;

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<sup>75</sup> [Letter Williams to Rycroft, 29 January 2003, ‘Prime Minister’s briefing – Iraq’ attaching Paper \[unattributed and undated\], ‘Iraq – Aftermath’.](#)

<sup>76</sup> [Minute Drummond to Rycroft, 28 January 2003, ‘Iraq: US Visit’.](#)

- the importance of transparent use of oil revenues; and
- the need to argue for a level playing field for UK companies on new oil exploration contracts.

**147.** In response to a request from Mr Blair, Mr Chaplin provided additional briefing on:

- The humanitarian situation – described as “the one area where US Day After planning is reasonably advanced”. Mr Chaplin attached a short note from DFID listing three key issues from a humanitarian and developmental perspective:
  - refining the military options to minimise civilian suffering, damage to essential services and disruption to existing humanitarian systems;
  - a leading UN role in relief and reconstruction as soon as possible;
  - agreement on affordable financing mechanisms for relief and reconstruction.<sup>77</sup>
- Options for a second resolution (see Section 3.6). Mr Chaplin attached a note from UND suggesting additional material for a second resolution, which would affirm the Security Council’s willingness to take on the post-conflict administration of Iraq.<sup>78</sup> The proposed material was close to that in resolution 1244 (1999) establishing a UN administration in Kosovo.
- UN involvement in the aftermath, where the UK delegation had made “some impact” in the talks on 22 January, but which was “only likely to make progress if the US side gets a signal from the President to take it seriously”.<sup>79</sup>

**148.** Mr Chaplin advised that, even if the US remained unwilling to endorse a UN administration specifically in a second resolution, it might be possible to agree compromise language, “including reaffirmation of commitment to Iraq’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, the UN’s readiness to help facilitate a political process to encourage the development of new institutions, readiness to mobilise resources for the reconstruction of key infrastructure, protection of human rights, the safe return of refugees and so on”.

**149.** In his diaries, Mr Campbell described preparations for the meeting between Mr Blair and President Bush, including the preparation of a further Note on the strategy (see Section 3.6).<sup>80</sup>

**150.** A four-page document entitled ‘Countdown’ appears in the No.10 files for 30 January 2003.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Paper DFID, 30 January 2003, ‘Briefing for Prime Minister’s Meeting with President Bush’.

<sup>78</sup> Paper UND, 30 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Second Resolution – Additional Elements’.

<sup>79</sup> Letter Sinclair to Rycroft, 30 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s visit to Camp David, 31 January: Additional Briefing’ [attaching Paper Chaplin, 30 January 2003, ‘Prime Minister’s visit to Camp David, 31 January: Iraq’](#).

<sup>80</sup> Campbell A & Stott R. *The Blair Years: Extracts from the Alastair Campbell Diaries*. Hutchinson, 2007.

<sup>81</sup> Note [Blair to Bush], [undated], ‘Countdown’.

**151.** The Cabinet Office could not confirm the origin of the document but it appears to be the Note referred to by Mr Campbell and has manuscript additions in Mr Blair's hand.

**152.** The document comprised a series of headings with very short bullet points, including "Aftermath Questions":

- What would happen immediately, "a new Iraqi government or US run?"
- What type of Iraqi government would be the aim in the medium term?

**153.** Mr Blair raised aftermath planning issues with President Bush and Dr Rice in Washington on 31 January.<sup>82</sup>

**154.** Mr Blair was told that detailed planning on humanitarian issues was progressing well, but a dilemma remained over how to handle the transition to civil administration and what sort of Iraqi government should emerge. Mr Blair suggested that a UN badge was needed for what the US and UK wanted to do, and would help with the humanitarian problems.

**155.** The minutes of the 3 February FCO Iraq Morning Meeting stated that the talks between Mr Blair and President Bush had not focused on day after issues and that the MOD had "flagged up the urgent need for progress on the key questions".<sup>83</sup>

**156. Mr Blair's comments to President Bush did not convey the full extent of UK concerns about the state of post-conflict planning.**

**157. Section 6.4 explains that Mr Hoon had advised Mr Blair on 16 January that:**

- "a satisfactory plan for the aftermath" was needed before any decision to use UK forces deployed to the region; and
- a US political decision on military action could be taken in mid-February, with operations beginning in mid-March.<sup>84</sup>

**158. By 31 January, time was running out to ensure that, before the conflict began, there was an agreed US/UK plan for the post-conflict administration and reconstruction of Iraq.**

**159. Mr Blair's conversation with President Bush represented a missed opportunity to exert pressure on the US to add necessary impetus to that task.**

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<sup>82</sup> Letter Manning to McDonald, 31 January 2003, 'Iraq: Prime Minister's Conversation with President Bush on 31 January'.

<sup>83</sup> Minute Tanfield to PS/PUS [FCO], 3 February 2003, 'Iraq Morning Meeting: Key Points'.

<sup>84</sup> [Letter Hoon to Blair, 16 January 2003, 'Iraq: UK Land Contribution'](#).



**160. Nor did Mr Blair take prompt action after his conversation with President Bush. His next interventions on post-conflict planning were:**

- to tell Cabinet on 6 February that post-conflict planning “needed greater emphasis”; and
- to convene a first Ministerial meeting on humanitarian issues on 13 February, a meeting that did not address wider post-conflict concerns.

**161. Mr Blair did not raise post-conflict issues again with President Bush until his Note of 19 February and did not discuss the subject with him until 5 March.**

**162.** During the talks in Washington Dr Rice handed Sir David Manning two documents:

- ‘Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Planning’, a document dated 7 January prepared by Mr Abrams’ inter-agency Humanitarian Working Group; and
- ‘Immediate Post-War Concerns’, a document dated 31 January incorporating an updated version of the US strategy document ‘Iraq: Goals, Objectives, Strategy’ (see Section 6.4).<sup>85</sup>

**163.** Sir David Manning asked the FCO, the MOD, the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) and the Cabinet Office for comments on the two documents. DFID was not consulted.

**164.** Mr Drummond proposed using a special meeting on “aftermath” scheduled to replace the AHGI on 7 February to co-ordinate a response.<sup>86</sup> He suggested that the agenda also cover:

- “State of preparedness” on a range of issues including the political process, oil, humanitarian issues and SSR;
- “Timetable for completion of work”; and
- “Gaps”.

**165.** The meeting on 7 February appears to have focused on preparing key messages on post-conflict issues for Mr Hoon and Sir David Manning to put to Secretary Rumsfeld and Dr Rice in Washington on 12 February.<sup>87</sup> The Inquiry has seen no evidence that it addressed the other agenda items.

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<sup>85</sup> Letter Manning to McDonald, 2 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Post-War Reconstruction Planning’ attaching Paper [unattributed], 7 January 2002 [sic], ‘Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Planning’ and Paper [unattributed], 31 January 2003, ‘Immediate Post-War Concerns’.

<sup>86</sup> Letter Drummond to Chaplin, 4 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Aftermath’.

<sup>87</sup> Letter Drummond to Chilcott, 10 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Key Messages’.

## Official-level discussions with the US

**166.** On 29 January the US asked whether the UK would be prepared to take the lead on restoring Iraq's judicial system and police force in the two months after regime change.

**167.** The US also requested that the UK help it “get to grips” with war crimes.

**168.** Mr Straw instructed officials to help on judicial and police issues “as much as possible”, but “on the basis of what is practical”.

**169.** On 29 January, Mr Peter Gooderham, Political Counsellor at the British Embassy Washington, reported that the NSC had asked whether the UK, as one of the Occupying Powers, would be willing to take lead responsibility for getting the Iraqi judicial system and police “up and running within 60 days” of regime change, and whether someone from the UK could spend a week in Washington to help “get to grips” with war crimes.<sup>88</sup> The US would want the Coalition to deal with war crimes committed by Iraqis during hostilities, but questions remained about prosecution of crimes from previous conflicts. The NSC had been given two weeks to come up with answers.

**170.** FCO officials advised Mr Straw that two junior officials planned to visit Washington the following week to develop a joint policy on war crimes with the US, but that taking lead responsibility for the judicial system and the police would be:

“... a massive undertaking, with implications for the UK's role as an ‘Occupying Power’, that should more properly be an international effort, mandated by the UN. So we shall avoid getting drawn on this request.”<sup>89</sup>

**171.** The FCO advice was copied to the Cabinet Office, but not to any other department.

**172.** On 3 February, Mr Straw instructed that the UK “should help the US on police and judicial matters as much as possible”, but accepted that “this help has to be on the basis of what is practical”.<sup>90</sup> He requested further advice after the next round of US/UK talks on post-conflict issues.

**173.** UK support for SSR and judicial issues is addressed in Section 12.

**174.** At the trilateral UK/US/Australia UN working group on 5 February, the US rejected UK compromise proposals for a hybrid governance structure in Iraq that might satisfy US and UK views on the role of the UN.

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<sup>88</sup> Letter Gooderham to Chaplin, 29 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Day After: US Requests for Assistance on Judicial Issues’.

<sup>89</sup> [Minute UND \[junior official\] to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 31 January 2003, ‘Iraq the Day after – US Requests for Assistance on Judicial Issues’.](#)

<sup>90</sup> [Minute \[FCO junior official\] to UND \[junior official\], 3 February 2003, ‘Iraq the Day after – US Request for Assistance on Judicial Issues’.](#)

**175. Dr Rice was firm: there could be no high-level UN administrator or UN involvement in running even technical Iraqi ministries.**

**176.** At the meeting of the trilateral UN working group in Washington on 5 February, the UK delegation, headed by Mr Pattison, shared preliminary UK thinking on the potential scope and structure of UN involvement in a transitional civil administration with a US inter-agency team led by Mr Abrams.<sup>91</sup>

**177.** Mr Pattison reiterated that the UK believed that UN involvement in post-conflict administration would produce political and practical benefits including:

- local support for an international reforming presence;
- the potential for burden sharing and “capturing expertise”; and
- better prospects for an exit strategy.

**178.** The UK understood that the US would seek to maintain freedom of operations on security, SSR and the pursuit of WMD and war criminals, but the UK believed that it was possible to devise a “hybrid” structure that would meet UK and US concerns and achieve a prosperous, stable and representative Iraq. Mr Pattison added that “UN involvement in an international presence was a top priority for the UK as the Prime Minister had told Bush”.

**179.** The UK presented elements of a draft Security Council resolution, emphasising that these did not represent an agreed UK position. Key elements included:

- a Coalition security presence with a broad security mandate, headed by a US general;
- a civilian transitional administration with a defined reformist mandate and monitoring function, headed by a UN executive administrator;
- a separate political process involving a Special Representative of the Secretary-General along the lines of the Bonn (Afghanistan) or Dayton (Bosnia Herzegovina) models;
- a consultative mechanism to involve the Iraqi people; and
- a Joint Implementation Board (JIB) consisting of representatives of the international security presence and international civilian presence.

**180.** Mr Abrams commented that the UK seemed to envisage a much larger role for the UN than the US had been considering. The US continued to be cautious about embracing a more extensive role for the UN and was sceptical about the UN’s ability to deliver.

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<sup>91</sup> Telegram 167 Washington to FCO London, 5 February 2003, ‘Iraq: US/UK/Australia talks on “Day After” Issues’.

**181.** After the talks, Mr Tony Brenton, Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy Washington, explained to Mr Abrams that the UK “very much hoped” to be consulted before the US took decisions on areas in which the UK had “a crucial interest”, including the post-conflict role of the UN and governance of the Iraqi oil sector. Mr Abrams suggested that Sir David Manning should ask Dr Rice to share emerging US thinking.

**182.** The British Embassy reported the next day that Mr Abrams had discussed the UN role with Dr Rice.<sup>92</sup> Her view was firm: the US agreed that some kind of UN mandate should be sought as the basis for post-conflict Coalition activity, but there was no question of any high-profile UN role in administering the country. UN agencies’ contribution to humanitarian relief and reconstruction would be crucial, but there could be no high-level UN administrator or UN involvement in running even technical Iraqi ministries.

**183.** After the first meeting of the trilateral economic working group, UK officials reported that DoD had prepared detailed contingency plans for Iraq’s oil industry, but that there was “a conspicuous disconnect” between those plans and civilian planning for economic development and management.

**184.** The UK delegation to the meeting of the trilateral economic working group in Washington on 5 February included representatives of the FCO, DFID, the Treasury, the British Embassy and the UK Delegation to the IMF/IBRD (International Bank of Reconstruction and Development).<sup>93</sup> The US delegation included a team from the State Department and representatives of DoD, USAID, the NSC and the US Treasury.

**185.** The British Embassy reported that the working group had agreed to co-operate on defining practical economic steps to be taken in the first three to six months of military occupation. The UK would contribute its ideas by 14 February.

**186.** US thinking on short-term reconstruction was reported to be at an early stage. Little thought had been given to the financing gap that might arise if Iraqi oil output were severely constrained.

**187.** The Embassy reported that DoD had detailed contingency plans to protect and restore the oil sector and was well aware of the importance of that sector for reconstruction. In the best case (minimal damage, current levels of output restored after two to three months) it estimated that the sector could make a net contribution of US\$12bn in the first year after any conflict; in the worst case it could be a net cost of US\$8bn.

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<sup>92</sup> Telegram 172 Washington to FCO London, 6 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Day After’.

<sup>93</sup> Telegram 169 Washington to FCO London, 6 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Meeting of Trilateral Working Group on “Day After” Economic Issues: Short Term Reconstruction’.

**188.** The Embassy also reported that US planning on longer-term external financing had made little progress.<sup>94</sup> The US recognised the difficult external financial challenges that were facing Iraq in the longer term and agreed to the early informal involvement of international financial institutions (IFIs). It favoured rescheduling rather than forgiveness of Iraq's Paris Club debt and inclined towards extending rather than cancelling compensation payments for damage caused by the 1991 invasion of Kuwait.

**189.** The UK delegation stressed that early progress was important. Donors needed some certainty about Iraqi liabilities before they would be prepared to commit substantial new resources.

**190.** The FCO member of the UK delegation, the Economic Adviser for the Middle East and North Africa, reported separately to Mr Drummond that the UK participants had stressed that a substantial UN role in the transitional post-conflict administration was “not only politically important but crucial to hopes of effective financial burden-sharing and key to the early attraction of investment in the oil sector”.<sup>95</sup> He added:

“DoD are ploughing ahead with detailed contingency planning for the oil sector in the initial military administration phase. But – apart from USAID preparations on the humanitarian side – there was a conspicuous disconnect between this and civilian planning for economic management and policy development within Iraq ...”

**191.** The FCO delegate reported that it had also been agreed that the UK and US would approach the IMF and IBRD separately to make clear there was a major role for both organisations and to encourage them to step up their analysis and contingency planning.

### **DFID humanitarian contingency planning**

**192.** The House of Commons debated humanitarian contingency planning on 30 January.

**193.** Ms Short explained that:

- **The international community needed to agree that the UN should lead on post-conflict reconstruction.**
- **Preparations by UN humanitarian agencies were as good as could be expected, but the international humanitarian system was “under considerable strain”.**
- **DFID would play its part in the humanitarian system, but its own resources were limited.**

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<sup>94</sup> Telegram 170 Washington to FCO London, 6 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Meeting of Trilateral Working Group on “Day After” Economic Issues: External Finance Issues’.

<sup>95</sup> Teleletter FCO [junior official] to Drummond, 6 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Meeting of US/UK/Australian Working Group on “Day After” Economic Issues: Assessment and Follow Up’.

**194.** On 30 January, Mrs Caroline Spelman, Opposition spokesperson for International Development, introduced an Opposition Day debate in the House of Commons on humanitarian contingency planning. She contrasted the Government's "worrying silence" on humanitarian aspects of war in Iraq with the numerous statements from Mr Hoon and Mr Straw on the military build-up and diplomatic activity, and sought reassurances from Ms Short that there were "comprehensive humanitarian contingency plans" in place.<sup>96</sup>

**195.** In response, Ms Short stated:

"It is necessary to prepare to minimise harm if military action is taken and to make arrangements for the reconstruction of the country as rapidly as possible. To achieve that, we need to ensure that the UN takes the lead in the reconstruction, as it did in Kosovo, East Timor and Afghanistan. That needs to be agreed across the international community."

**196.** Ms Short explained that:

"All parties have recently been more willing to prepare for all contingencies, including the military in the United States of America, but it has not been easy to get discussions and analysis going across the international system to prepare for all those. Anyone who pauses to reflect intelligently on the strains and tensions across the international system because of the crisis would realise why that has been difficult ... but my department has been working for a considerable time on all contingencies. That work is developing and we are getting more co-operation from some of our international partners which was difficult to get before."

**197.** Ms Short reported that Iraq's infrastructure was:

"... in chronic disrepair. Hospitals, clinics, sanitation facilities and water treatment plants suffer from a terrible lack of maintenance. The result is that the Iraqi people's lives are perilously fragile. Their coping strategies have been worn away by years of misrule. The public facilities to help them cope are run down, often to the point of uselessness."<sup>97</sup>

**198.** Preparations by UN humanitarian organisations and the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) were "as good as they can be", but given the number of risks and uncertainties, it was very difficult to prepare.

**199.** Ms Short set out five humanitarian risks of military action:

- the "very serious risk" of "large-scale ethnic fighting";
- damage to water and sanitation facilities as a result of attacks on electricity supplies to Iraqi anti-aircraft facilities;

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<sup>96</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 30 January 2003, columns 1042-1043.

<sup>97</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 30 January 2003, columns 1053-1054.

- environmental damage and delays to reconstruction because of booby-trapped oil installations;
- disruption to OFF; and
- use of CBW.

**200.** Ms Short added that collaboration between military and humanitarian planners needed to keep improving.<sup>98</sup> She warned that the international humanitarian system was “under considerable strain” with:

“... enormously complicated problems with drought and food shortages in southern Africa, the horn of Africa and Angola. Every day five million people in Afghanistan need food aid, and the humanitarian situation on the west bank and Gaza is very serious and getting worse. My department’s resources and those of the international humanitarian system are therefore strained.”

**201.** In response to a question from Mr Crispin Blunt (Conservative) about the resources available to DFID, Ms Short explained that the UK contribution to any international humanitarian crisis, as determined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), was just over 5 percent of the total. She cautioned that, faced with demands elsewhere, the international humanitarian system and DFID’s own budget were strained: “We will play our part in the international system, but the Department is not flush with resources – I must frankly warn the House that they are short.”<sup>99</sup>

**202. At the end of January, officials advised Ms Short that the UK might be expected to make a contribution to humanitarian relief and reconstruction in Iraq that was much larger than DFID’s contingency reserve.**

**203.** On 21 January, at Ms Short’s request, Mr Alistair Fernie, Head of DFID Middle East and North Africa Department, advised “how to maximise the chances of securing additional funding from the Treasury to cover the costs of [a] DFID humanitarian response”.<sup>100</sup>

**204.** Mr Fernie recommended that Ms Short should speak, rather than write, to Mr Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. A letter would invite a formal response, and Treasury officials were likely to caution Mr Brown against providing any broad assurance on funding and might recommend that DFID “unpick” its 2003/04 spending plan, to be agreed shortly, in order to provide more funding for Iraq.

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<sup>98</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 30 January 2003, columns 1055-1056.

<sup>99</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 30 January 2003, columns 1057-1058.

<sup>100</sup> Minute Fernie to PS/Secretary of State [DFID], 21 January 2003, ‘Iraq contingency planning: financial provision’.

**205.** Mr Fernie continued:

“Mr [Mark] Lowcock’s [DFID Director Finance and Corporate Performance] advice is that the best time to extract maximum funds from the central Reserve is when the political pressure is at its height. We might guess that such a time will come in a month or so – by which time budgets for our existing programmes would be more secure, with our 2003/04 framework finalised and on its way to publication.”

**206.** Ms Short commented: “No – I don’t want to ring Ch X [the Chancellor of the Exchequer] ... I wanted to put humanitarian considerations into Gov[ernment] mind not just to squeeze some money.”<sup>101</sup> Rather than write or speak to Mr Brown, she would write to Mr Blair. That letter was sent on 5 February.<sup>102</sup>

**207.** On 31 January, in response to a further request from Ms Short, a DFID official provided advice on how much the UK might be expected to contribute to “humanitarian relief/reconstruction” in Iraq.<sup>103</sup> Assuming the UK provided 5.6 percent of the total humanitarian/reconstruction costs (in line with the UK’s share of OECD Gross National Income), the UK’s contribution could reach US\$640m (£400m) a year for the next three years.

**208.** The official added:

“It is important to consider that DFID ‘traditionally’ (Balkans/Afghanistan) contributes between 8-10 percent for total relief/reconstruction costs ... This would mean that under a high case military scenario, with low oil revenues and where reparation/debt claims are not reduced, **annual costs to HMG [Her Majesty’s Government] could be in excess of US\$1bn.**”

**209.** The minutes of the 3 February FCO Iraq Morning Meeting recorded that DFID was coming under pressure to step up its humanitarian planning after the House of Commons debate on 30 January.<sup>104</sup> Dr Brewer had explained to the meeting that there were serious domestic and international financial constraints.

**210.** DFID’s financial resources are addressed in more detail in Section 13.1.

**211. FCO lawyers advised UK participants in the post-Washington talks on the rights of the Occupying Power that, under international law, aspects of the post-conflict reconstruction of institutions and infrastructure could fall outside the competencies of an Occupying Power.**

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<sup>101</sup> Manuscript comment Short, 22 January 2003, on Minute Fernie to PS/Secretary of State [DFID], 21 January 2003, ‘Iraq contingency planning: financial provision’.

<sup>102</sup> Email DFID [junior official] to Fernie, 22 January 2003, ‘Iraq: submission of 21 January’.

<sup>103</sup> Minute DFID [junior official] to PS/Secretary of State [DFID], 31 January 2003, ‘Iraq: cost of humanitarian relief/reconstruction and potential UK contribution’ attaching Paper [draft], ‘Iraq: Relief and reconstruction: implications for UK Government’.

<sup>104</sup> Minute Tanfield to PS/PUS [FCO], 3 February 2003, ‘Iraq Morning Meeting: Key Points’.



**212.** On 31 January Mr John Grainger, a Legal Counsellor in the FCO, sent Mr Pattison a “basic principles” paper on rights under international law to occupy and administer post-conflict Iraq. The paper was for use by Mr Pattison during talks in Washington the following week and was copied to Mr Ricketts, Mr Ehrman and other FCO officials.<sup>105</sup> The paper was also copied to Mr Martin Hemming, the MOD Legal Adviser, but it is not clear whether it had been discussed with the MOD in draft.

**213.** Mr Grainger explained that he had discussed occupation rights with the State Department Legal Advisors, who acknowledged they had not done any systematic thinking on the issue, but that he had not yet discussed the issue with DoD.

**214.** Mr Grainger’s paper stated:

“The rights of Coalition forces to occupy Iraq following a conflict would be closely related to their rights under international law to use force. It is likely that those rights will be based on the express or implicit authorisation of the United Nations Security Council ... to be interpreted within the overall objective of Iraqi compliance with disarmament obligations imposed by the Security Council and the requirement for restoring international peace and security in any area ... As regards Occupation post-conflict, the authorisation will again only justify such steps as are necessary to achieve the above objectives.

“To the extent that Iraq came under Coalition control during the course of any conflict the rights and obligations of the Coalition would be those of an Occupying Power, as set out in detail in Articles 42 to 56 of the Regulations annexed to Hague Convention IV of 1907, and in Geneva Convention IV ... of 1949 ... In general, the Occupying Power must take all measures in its power to restore and ensure public safety by respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the law in the occupied State ... Detailed provisions include limited rights to take possession of and use state property ...; to remove officials and judges ...; and to amend the penal laws of the occupying territory ... The Geneva Convention also provides a comprehensive code on the protection of the civilian population and internees.

“In these and other areas it is likely that aspects of reconstruction of institutions and infrastructure post-conflict could fall outside the competencies of an Occupying Power under international law. For these reasons it is important that a further Security Council resolution be adopted under Chapter VII as soon as possible to confer upon the Coalition and/or other States and international organisations as appropriate the necessary powers ... A United Nations administration would not be an occupying power and would not be constrained by the provisions of international humanitarian law though it should apply general international law ... Equally a

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<sup>105</sup> [Minute Grainger to Pattison, 31 January 2003, ‘Rights Under International Law to Occupy and Administer Iraq after a Conflict’ attaching Paper \[unattributed and undated\], ‘Rights Under International Law to Occupy and Administer Iraq after a Conflict’.](#)

military presence in Iraq post-conflict mandated by the UN would no longer be an occupying power regulated by the Hague and Geneva Conventions.”

**215.** Mr Michael Wood, the FCO Legal Adviser, sent a copy of Mr Grainger’s paper to Mr Straw on 28 February.

### **Parliamentary discussion of post-conflict issues, 3 February 2003**

**216.** In Parliament on 3 February, Mr Blair offered “absolute assurances” that the UK would deal with any humanitarian consequences of conflict and undertook to “try to ensure that we move in to help get Iraq back on its feet”.

**217.** Mr Mandelson asked Mr Blair about preparations for recovery and reconstruction in the House of Commons on 3 February:

“In addition to the need for political transition, the humanitarian and refugee demands could be immense. Will he outline to the House what preparation is being made for that at the United Nations and by key members of the international community? What structure for reconstruction is being put in place? In terms of donor funding, will Britain join America – and, I think Switzerland and Canada – in making an early offer of resources for those purposes?”<sup>106</sup>

**218.** Mr Blair replied:

“... we must deal with those vital points. We are in discussion with allies and the United Nations about reconstruction. The Foreign Secretary and I have spoken to the Secretary-General of the United Nations about that. If there is a conflict and Saddam’s regime is removed, it is important to give absolute assurances and undertakings to the people of Iraq that we shall deal with any humanitarian consequences. In such circumstances, we must also try to ensure that we move in to help get Iraq back on its feet as quickly as possible. This country is willing to play its part in that with others.”

**219.** In answer to a question from Mr Tony Baldry (Conservative) about the extent of discussions taking place with UN agencies, Mr Blair replied that detailed discussions were under way and that: “We are well aware that we must have a humanitarian plan that is every bit as viable and well worked out as a military plan.”<sup>107</sup>

**220.** Sir Christopher Meyer told the Inquiry:

“... the worry at the time, was that there would be some kind of humanitarian disaster ... What just disappeared from the calculations was the understanding that, after Saddam was toppled, you were going to have to maintain law and order and

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<sup>106</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 3 February 2003, column 28.

<sup>107</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 3 February 2003, column 36.

guarantee the continuity of the central services; otherwise you would lose the Iraqi population very rapidly, and that was discussed.”<sup>108</sup>

**221.** In early February, Mr Ricketts advised Mr Straw that the 22 January Washington talks had made little progress on the principle of UN involvement in post-conflict administration, and that the US envisaged the UK being responsible for administering one-fifth of Iraq. The UK risked being drawn into a “huge” and “complex” commitment in Iraq for an uncertain period.

**222.** Mr Ricketts recommended using a series of forthcoming Ministerial contacts at Cabinet level, which he described as a moment of “maximum leverage” on the US, to press the case for UN involvement.

**223.** In his minute to Mr Straw on 7 February, copied to Mr O’Brien, Sir Michael Jay (FCO PUS), and other FCO senior officials, Mr Ricketts stated:

“As we approach the critical phase on Iraq, I thought it would be useful to look ahead to the decisions that will be needed on issues where the FCO is leading and set out the work coming forward to the Foreign Secretary.”<sup>109</sup>

**224.** Mr Ricketts reported on the follow-up to the 22 January post-conflict talks in Washington. He stated that Mr Pattison had led a team “to have another go at getting into the US bloodstream the advantages of UN authorisation and involvement of the UN and its agencies in the civil administration of Iraq. He made a bit of headway. But this is water on a stone.” Meanwhile, the Pentagon was accelerating planning for a Pentagon-run “aftermath organisation” under a US civil administrator alongside the continuing US military presence. With the US envisaging the UK being responsible for administering one-fifth of Iraq, “we risk being drawn into a huge commitment of UK resources for a highly complex task of administration and law and order for an uncertain period”.

**225.** Mr Ricketts continued:

“So we have a pressing interest in convincing the Americans to accept the benefits of a model giving the UN the lead on civil administration. Coalition military forces would then be responsible for carrying out security tasks, including dealing with WMD, while a civilian transitional administration would be set up headed by a UN executive administrator and drawing on the resources of the UN, IFIs and a broad range of countries, as well as involving Iraqis themselves in the administration as quickly as possible. This would not only be more realistic and sustainable, but also be much more acceptable to Arab opinion than US/UK military-led occupation. (It is also a further argument for getting a second resolution in advance of conflict, which may be one reason for the allergic reaction in parts of the US system to a UN-led administration.)

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<sup>108</sup> Public hearing, 26 November 2009, page 93.

<sup>109</sup> Minute Ricketts to Private Secretary [FCO], 7 February 2003, ‘Iraq Strategy’.

“Since most of the US work is going on in the Pentagon, a key opportunity to influence the Americans will be the Defence Secretary’s talks with Rumsfeld in Washington on 12 February. A brief setting out the best points in favour of the UK’s model is being co-ordinated in the Cabinet Office, and will be served up to Mr Hoon, and also to the Foreign Secretary and David Manning, for use later in the week with Powell and Rice.

“This is a key issue with huge resource implications. Now is our moment of maximum leverage on the Americans, and I think it should be a high priority for discussions with them over the next fortnight. It may be an issue to be taken up by the PM with Bush before US thinking sets in concrete.”

**226.** Mr Ricketts also informed Mr Straw that there was inter-departmental agreement that “the FCO should lead policy work on planning for post-conflict Iraq”. The first task of the new Iraq Planning Unit (IPU) would be “to start assembling answers to the many questions thrown up by PJHQ as they begin to plan for coping with the situation military forces will find in Iraq as soon as conflict finishes”.<sup>110</sup>

**227.** Mr Straw commented: “Good note ... I need to talk to [Secretary] Powell re this.”<sup>111</sup>

## Creation of the Iraq Planning Unit

**228.** The inter-departmental (FCO/MOD/DFID) Iraq Planning Unit (IPU), based in the FCO, was established on 10 February to improve Whitehall co-ordination on post-conflict issues.

**229.** Although the IPU was an inter-departmental unit, its head was a senior member of the Diplomatic Service and it was integrated into the FCO management structure.

**230.** The draft Terms of Reference for the IPU stated that:

- The IPU would report to Mr Chaplin in the FCO. The Terms of Reference did not define the relationship between the IPU and senior officials in DFID and the MOD.
- The IPU would work “within broad policy guidelines set by the Cabinet Office”.
- The main purpose of the IPU would be to provide “policy guidance on the practical questions” that UK civilian officials and military commanders would face in Iraq.
- The IPU was intended “to bring influence to bear on US plans”.

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<sup>110</sup> Minute Ricketts to Private Secretary [FCO], 7 February 2003, ‘Iraq Strategy’.

<sup>111</sup> Manuscript comment Straw on Minute Ricketts to Private Secretary [FCO], 7 February 2003, ‘Iraq Strategy’.

**231. Tasks assigned to the IPU by the AHGI included consideration of:**

- the shape of the Iraqi political process needed to underpin the transition to Iraqi rule;
- management of Iraq's oil; and
- whether and where the UK should run its own sector before the restoration of Iraqi sovereignty.

**232. After the creation of the IPU, the AHGI remained responsible for co-ordination of all post-conflict planning and preparation across government, including consular planning and civil contingencies.**

**233.** At the FCO Iraq Morning Meeting on 3 February, Mr Alan Charlton, FCO Personnel Director, asked about military timing.<sup>112</sup> Mr Ricketts advised that “the newspapers weren’t a bad guide: ‘we need to have our preparations in place by end Feb[ruary]’”.

**234.** The same day, Mr Ehrman reported to Mr Ricketts that the Pigott Group, an MOD-led, inter-departmental group of senior officials (see Section 6.4), had decided that there was a need for a senior FCO official to co-ordinate full-time with the MOD, DFID and others the rapidly increasing volume of work on aftermath planning.<sup>113</sup>

**235.** Mr Ehrman suggested that “in addition to work on overall legality ... we will need sub-groups on WMD, OFF, SSR, humanitarian, reconstruction, judicial, possibly terrorism. All this to feed into and influence the various aftermath groups in Washington.”

**236.** Mr Ricketts informed Mr Chaplin on 4 February that he had agreed with Sir Michael Jay and Mr Ehrman that:

“... the FCO should consolidate the lead we have already taken in this area [post-conflict issues] with the work that Dominick Chilcott has been doing under your supervision.

“I am sure that this work will now grow fast, particularly with the prospect of the UK inheriting responsibility for a good slice of southern Iraq following a military conflict.”<sup>114</sup>

**237.** Mr Bowen chaired a meeting in the Cabinet Office on 4 February, attended by officials from the FCO, the MOD and DFID, at which it was decided to set up an inter-departmental (FCO, MOD and DFID) unit.<sup>115</sup> The unit would be headed by an FCO official, Mr Chilcott, to “prepare for the aftermath in practical operational terms”. Wider strategy would continue to be co-ordinated through the AHGI.

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<sup>112</sup> Manuscript comment Brewer, 3 February 2003, on Minute Tanfield to PS/PUS, 31 January 2003, ‘Iraq Morning Meeting: Key Points’.

<sup>113</sup> Minute Ehrman to Ricketts, 3 February 2003, ‘Pigott Group, 3 February’.

<sup>114</sup> [Minute Ricketts to Chaplin, 4 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Day After Planning’](#).

<sup>115</sup> [Letter Bowen to Ehrman, 5 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Operational Policy Unit’](#).

**238.** Mr Bowen explained to participants at the meeting that there was “a good deal of uncertainty about American intentions in administering Iraq in the event of (and after) hostilities to remove Saddam Hussein’s regime”. Meetings in Washington that week should bring greater clarity but were unlikely to produce decisions.

**239.** Mr Bowen reported that participants at the meeting had recognised that:

“... even if some of the big strategic issues remained unresolved, a lot of detailed management issues were likely to arise. Much was likely to emanate from CENTCOM, which had the prospectively imminent task of administering a country whose leadership had been removed. With this in mind we agreed that we should set up an Iraq Operational Policy Unit with contributions from the FCO, DFID and MOD ... My view was that we needed an integrated unit with high calibre representation to work through the sort of issues that would confront the Coalition on the ‘day after’. **Their initial remit would be to develop policy guidance to enable the administration of Iraq pending the appointment of a transitional civil administration, consistent as far as possible with the longer term vision for the future of Iraq.** They would need to work their way, with the US, through issues as diverse as humanitarian relief, policing, administration of justice, local government and provision of utilities, environmental recovery and priorities for the return to normality. The view we all reached was that this unit ought to be up and running from Monday 10 February ... It will need staff who think strategically and operationally and have some background in state reconstruction from other cases (in order to feed in the lessons of eg Kosovo and Afghanistan).”

**240.** Mr Bowen explained that the new unit would work alongside the FCO consular and emergency units (described in more detail in the Box ‘The FCO Emergency Unit’ later in this Section), and with the Defence Crisis Management Centre (DCMC) in MOD and the Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (CHAD) in DFID.

**241.** The UK’s expectation was that:

“... General Franks of CENTCOM will be in overall charge of Iraq, with the military chain of command operating, which would involve [Major] General [Robin] Brims [General Officer Commanding 1st (UK) Armoured Division (GOC 1 (UK) Div)], being in charge of a sector of Iraq. Brims would need civilian support in theatre (beyond an MOD Polad [policy adviser]), but it was too early to judge at what level; it was clear that there would need to be FCO and DFID input. The extent to which the US were planning on providing civil support to a British sector was as yet unclear.”

**242.** Mr Bowen reported that participants at the meeting had identified other possible requirements, including “a British office in the UK sector, a special envoy and an Ambassador”. The new unit was only the first step.

**243.** Mr Bowen suggested “Iraq Operational Policy Unit” as a name for the new body. He asked Mr Ehrman, Ms Miller, Mr Pollard and Brig Rollo to take action to set up the unit and reported that Sir David Manning supported the thrust of the proposed approach.

**244.** The Chiefs of Staff meeting on 5 February was informed that: “Output from the FCO unit would feed US planning through the newly appointed Major General Tim Cross, the senior UK secondee to ORHA, working for Lt Gen Garner.”<sup>116</sup> The unit would be informed by the PJHQ seminar on post-conflict issues.

**245.** Mr Ricketts explained to Mr Straw that the new unit would be headed by Mr Chilcott, located in the FCO’s Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Directorate and include participants from the MOD and DFID. It would be closely linked to the Cabinet Office co-ordinating machinery.<sup>117</sup>

**246.** The IPU, headed by Mr Chilcott, was established on 10 February.<sup>118</sup>

**247.** On 11 February, Mr O’Brien chaired an internal FCO briefing on post-conflict issues, at which he commissioned work from the IPU and “stressed the need to consider how our work fitted into a managed exit strategy”.<sup>119</sup> Mr O’Brien suggested that other Arab states’ contribution to the modernisation of Iraq “would assist in [the] process of exiting and handover”.

**248.** The record of the FCO Iraq Evening Meeting on 27 February stated that Mr Straw had asked Mr O’Brien to focus on post-conflict issues.<sup>120</sup>

**249.** The Inquiry has seen no other evidence of that decision or explanation of the role Mr O’Brien was expected to play.

**250.** Mr O’Brien was actively engaged on post-conflict issues after the creation of the IPU, including a visit to New York and Washington to discuss Phase IV with the US and UN in March.<sup>121</sup>

**251.** On 17 February, Sir Michael Jay sent draft terms of reference for the IPU to Sir Andrew Turnbull, the Cabinet Secretary, copied to Whitehall Permanent Secretaries. The draft, which had already been discussed with DFID, the MOD and the Cabinet Office, stated:

“The unit will operate within broad policy guidelines set by the Cabinet Office. In the FCO, it will report to the Director Middle East and North Africa Command [Mr Chaplin]. Its main customers will be British military planners in PJHQ, MOD and,

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<sup>116</sup> Minutes, 5 February 2003, Chiefs of Staff meeting.

<sup>117</sup> Minute Ricketts to Private Secretary [FCO], 7 February 2003, ‘Iraq Strategy’.

<sup>118</sup> [Minute Chilcott to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 20 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Day-After \(Phase IV\)’](#).

<sup>119</sup> [Minute APS/Mr O’Brien to Chilcott, 11 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Day After Issues’](#).

<sup>120</sup> Minute Tanfield to PS/PUS [FCO], 27 February 2003, ‘Iraq Evening Meeting: Key Points’.

<sup>121</sup> Minute Chilcott to Private Secretary [FCO], 3 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Phase IV (Day After)’.

mainly through them, British officers and officials seconded to the Pentagon and CENTCOM.

“The main purpose of the unit will be to provide policy guidance on the practical questions that British civilian officials and military commanders will face, in the event of a conflict in Iraq. The advice will be designed to help them to minimise the suffering of the Iraqi people and to deal with the civil administration of any sector of Iraq under the control of British forces, particularly during the period before a transitional civilian administration is established. It will aim to ensure that British operational military planning for the post-conflict phase in Iraq is consistent with and promotes the UK’s policy objectives on the future of Iraq. In doing so it will take particular account of the key role of the UN.

“The unit will aim to bring influence to bear on US plans by providing similar guidance, through PJHQ and MOD, to seconded British personnel working within the US military planning machinery and through the Embassy to the NSC and other parts of the US Administration.

“The unit will also provide a focus in Whitehall for developing policy advice and recommendations, as required, on strategic questions concerning a post Saddam Iraq.

“The role of the unit will be reviewed in three months.”<sup>122</sup>

**252.** The record of the 17 February meeting of the AHGI stated that the US and UK military build-up continued and the US “impetus to war” had not slowed.<sup>123</sup> The IPU had been formed initially “to meet a UK military planning need for detailed policy guidance on occupation issues”. In the event of UK participation in the occupation of Iraq it was likely to expand considerably.

**253.** The record continued:

“We need to agree with the US on the role of the UN in any civilian transitional administration. We see advantage in a major UN role for reasons of legitimacy, expertise in certain areas and burden-sharing. However, in exchange for sanctioning a transitional administration, the UN Security Council may require a larger UN role than the US currently envisage.

“Our original planning envisaged a period of up to three months of military rule. Latest reports from CENTCOM suggest the US envisage moving to civilian rule more quickly ...

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<sup>122</sup> Letter Jay to Turnbull, 17 February 2003, ‘Iraq Planning Unit’ attaching Paper [unattributed and undated], ‘Proposed Terms of Reference for the tract [sic] Planning Unit’.

<sup>123</sup> Minute Dodd to Manning, 17 February 2003, ‘Ad Hoc Group on Iraq’.



“The Planning Unit [IPU] will also focus on the shape of the Iraqi political process needed to underpin a handover to Iraqi rule, which the US see as occurring 18 months to two years after invasion. Other issues include the management of Iraq’s oil and whether and where the UK should run its own sector until Iraqi sovereignty is restored.”

**254.** The record of the next meeting, on 21 February, described the co-ordinating role of the AHGI:

“... the Ad Hoc Group draws together work related to Iraq as follows:

- Work on post-Saddam issues led by the Iraq Planning Unit. This includes the HMT [HM Treasury]-led sub-group on economic and financial issues;
- Consular planning; and
- HMT/CCS [Civil Contingencies Secretariat]-led domestic contingency planning (the Stephens Group).

“AHGI receives updates on military and intelligence issues, but these issues are handled elsewhere. AHGI provides a forum for deciding how to cover any new Iraq-related issues. There is some read across from pre-existing DTI [Department of Trade and Industry] and HMT Whitehall groups looking at oil.”<sup>124</sup>

**255.** The evidence in this Section indicates that, after the creation of the IPU, neither Sir Michael Jay, nor Mr Ricketts as the senior FCO official tasked by Sir Michael to direct all aspects of FCO Iraq work, instructed the IPU or other parts of the FCO contributing to the IPU to:

- provide thorough analysis of a range of possible post-conflict scenarios, not just the best case;
- identify the need for contingency plans and preparations to address each of those scenarios; or
- provide a realistic assessment of the UK’s civilian capabilities and resources in the light of its likely obligations in Iraq.

### **Domestic contingency planning: the Stephens Group**

**256.** After expressions of concern by Permanent Secretaries about the possible impact on the UK of war in Iraq, Sir Andrew Turnbull had agreed in January 2003 that the AHGI should conduct further work on domestic contingencies.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Minute Dodd to Manning, 25 February 2003, ‘Ad Hoc Group on Iraq’.

<sup>125</sup> Minute Dodd to Manning, 13 January 2003, ‘Ad Hoc Group on Iraq’.

**257.** On 10 January, the AHGI had agreed that:

- The Treasury should review its November 2002 paper on the impact of conflict on the UK economy (see Section 6.4).
- The DTI would revisit its October 2002 paper on the oil market (see Section 10.3) and look at the potential impact of conflict on UK industry.
- The Department for Transport (DfT) would review its November 2002 transport paper (see Section 6.4).
- The Cabinet Office would circulate the latest version of the CCS paper on the potential impact on the UK of operations against Iraq (see Section 6.4) for comments from departments.
- The CCS would draft an Action Plan to be circulated to the AHGI for comment, setting out actions the Government would need to take should conflict be imminent.

**258.** Mr Jonathan Stephens, Treasury Director Public Services, circulated a revised draft of the CCS paper to Permanent Secretaries on 20 January.<sup>126</sup> He invited each department to identify key actions that needed to be taken to manage and mitigate risks.

**259.** Mr Stephens also announced the creation of a Domestic Implications Sub-Group of the AHGI (subsequently known as the Stephens Group), which would meet for the first time on 24 January.

**260.** The Stephens Group continued to work on the domestic implications of military action during February and March.<sup>127</sup>

**261.** On 19 March, the Private Office of Mr Gus O'Donnell, Treasury Permanent Secretary, sent a paper by Mr Stephens on the domestic implications of military action to Permanent Secretaries.<sup>128</sup> The paper stated that initial work on the issue had identified priority risks requiring further work. Those had been grouped into three cross-cutting areas:

- public behaviour and community cohesion;
- health and public service implications of military requirements; and
- fuel disruption, tourism and unemployment.

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<sup>126</sup> [Letter Stephens to Phillips, 20 January 2003, 'Iraq: Domestic Implications of Military Action' attaching Paper \[unattributed and undated\], 'Domestic Impact of an Iraq Operation – Risk to PSA Targets', and Paper Civil Contingencies Secretariat Assessments Team, 17 January 2003, 'Potential Impact on UK of Operations Against Iraq'.](#)

<sup>127</sup> Minute Dodd to Manning, 17 March 2003, 'Ad Hoc Group on Iraq'.

<sup>128</sup> Email Martin to Permsecs, 19 March 2003, 'Domestic Implications of Military Action' attaching Paper Stephens, 'Domestic Implications of Military Action with Iraq – Next Steps'.

**262.** Mr Stephens summarised the key issues:

- Demands on police resources arising from the possibility of simultaneous challenges, including “heightened security environment, support to military preparations, public order and the possible renewal of the firefighters’ dispute”. Mr Stephens stated that the Cabinet Office and Home Office had work in hand on the issue, in conjunction with the police and the MOD.
- Policy on bringing Iraqi prisoners of war or civilian casualties to the UK for treatment. The IPU and CCS were co-ordinating work on the issue.
- Fuel disruption. DTI and CCS had identified short-term mitigation measures and longer-term resilience options.
- Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA). Departments had confirmed that there were no major concerns. The Cabinet Office was working separately on provision of military resources for civil contingencies.
- Impact on departments of fuel price rises. Departments had confirmed they did not expect major problems.

**263.** Mr Stephens listed additional action points for departments on specific issues related to public order, community cohesion, asylum and the NHS.

### **PJHQ planning seminar**

**264.** The PJHQ planning seminar to discuss the UK Common Document took place on 5 February.

**265.** Participants were told by PJHQ that US planning was moving fast and that within a week or so it would be very difficult to reverse what the US had decided.

**266.** The PJHQ Phase IV planning seminar on 5 February was attended by junior officials from the Cabinet Office (Mr Tom Dodd, OD Sec), DFID (Mr Fernie) and the FCO.<sup>129</sup> Discussion centred on the PJHQ Common Document (given the title ‘Iraq – Phase IV Subjects’), which set out UK and US positions on post-conflict security, reconstruction, civil administration and humanitarian assistance, and issues needing resolution.

**267.** The FCO record of the seminar was addressed to Mr Chilcott and summarised the key messages from PJHQ planners:

- US planning was “going ahead fast, whether we like it or not”. Once Secretary Rumsfeld had signed it off “in about a week’s time” it would be “very difficult to reverse what has been decided”.

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<sup>129</sup> Minute MED [junior official] to Chilcott, 6 February 2003, ‘Iraq: PJHQ Meeting on “Aftermath”’ attaching Paper [unattributed], 5 February 2003, ‘Iraq – Phase IV Subjects’.

- Steers were needed for Maj Gen Brims and two UK officers in “key planning positions”: Brigadier Albert Whitley (Senior British Land Adviser (SBLA) at the Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) in Kuwait) and Maj Gen Cross,<sup>130</sup> working to Lt Gen Garner in ORHA.

**268.** The record of the FCO Iraq Morning Meeting on 6 February stated that: “PJHQ have a large number of practical questions, on which they need urgent policy guidance.”<sup>131</sup>

**269.** Maj Gen Whitley told the Inquiry that US Lieutenant General David McKiernan, Coalition Forces Land Component Commander, had initially asked him to lead on planning for “post hostilities” and to be his “eyes and ears” on the subject with other headquarters.<sup>132</sup> With the creation of ORHA and the augmentation of CFLCC by Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7, the post-invasion military command), Lt Gen McKiernan, who already had deputies for Operations and Support, had felt it essential that the then Brigadier Whitley be given more authority. In mid-February 2003, with the agreement of Lt Gen Reith, Lt Gen McKiernan appointed Brigadier Whitley Deputy Commanding General (Post Hostilities), with the rank of (acting) Major General.

**270.** Maj Gen Whitley told the Inquiry he was instructed to: “Do what you can, with what we have and when we can. Produce a plan for CFLCC for Phase IV.” That plan came to be known as Eclipse II and is described in the Box ‘Eclipse II – the CFLCC plan for Phase IV’ later in this Section.

**271.** MOD officials briefed Mr Hoon on the IPU and the Common Document on 12 February:

“In the UK officials have set about establishing a bespoke structure that will provide policy guidance on aftermath issues – initially, principally to the UK military, but also more widely ...

“Central to this effort is the Iraq Policy Unit [sic] ... Advising this in an expert capacity is the Iraq Aftermath Strategic Planning Group in the MOD. The main effort of the IPU is to populate a document (‘The Iraq Stage IV Subjects Document’) that is essentially a structured list of questions with answers that will allow departments to give policy guidance, and will form a ‘core script’ that will permit our various personnel embedded in US structures to give a unified message on the UK vision for post-conflict Iraq. Many of these are issues of detail, but they have real practical import (for example – whether the US plans to dollarize the Iraqi economy will affect the currency that is issued to 1 Div, who will need to pay contractors in their AO [Area of Operations]).”<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> The author of the record was unsure of the name of the individual working to Lt Gen Garner, but must have meant Maj Gen Cross.

<sup>131</sup> Minute Tanfield to PS/PUS [FCO], 6 February 2003, ‘Iraq Morning Meeting: Key Points’.

<sup>132</sup> Statement, 25 January 2011, page 3.

<sup>133</sup> [Minute Sec\(O\) \[junior official\] to PS/Secretary of State \[MOD\], 12 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Aftermath – Briefing for Meeting with OGD Ministers’.](#)

- 272.** A briefing note prepared for staff in the UK National Contingent Headquarters (NCHQ) in Qatar referred to a revised version of the Common Document dated 11 February that has not been seen by the Inquiry.<sup>134</sup>
- 273.** The Inquiry has seen no evidence that the IPU updated the Common Document during preparations for the US inter-agency Rock Drill on post-conflict issues on 21 and 22 February.
- 274.** The Rock Drill is addressed in detail later in this Section.
- 275.** On 20 February, Mr Chilcott updated Mr Straw on the first nine days of the IPU. It had “a core staff (from FCO, MOD and DFID), a large room, and IT”. The Unit was working well with other departments and UK military planners and had “successfully contracted out a lot of work”.<sup>135</sup>
- 276.** Mr Chilcott told Mr Straw that ORHA was emerging as the IPU’s key counterpart in the US and that Maj Gen Cross and the IPU were “two sides of the same coin and [would] work increasingly hand in glove”.
- 277.** Mr Chilcott told the Inquiry that, although numbers were small (“maybe only six, eight, ten, for the first couple of weeks”), the IPU drew on expertise elsewhere in Whitehall that allowed it to pull together a strategic view.<sup>136</sup> While military planners and PJHQ were planning what would be needed as troops occupied territory and became “responsible ... for the administration of where they were”, the IPU was “thinking about the political process and the big issues about the development fund for Iraq or oil policy or what to do about war criminals or the importance of legitimacy and legal questions”.
- 278.** Asked how influential the IPU had been, Mr Chilcott stated:
- “... I don’t think our main issue was having to convince other parts of the government machinery that they should be doing things that they didn’t want to do.
- “I think we were really synthesising the views and expertise across government.
- “Where we needed to have clout ... was in influencing the United States, and I think, there, we ... had no more clout than a sort of body of middle to senior ranking British officials would have had with their American counterparts.”<sup>137</sup>
- 279.** On the relationship with ORHA, Mr Chilcott said that: “ORHA in some ways weren’t really our counterparts because they were the sort of operational implementers ... as well as the drawers up of the plan, whereas we ... were writing policy papers and briefing and lines to take.”<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> [Paper SO2 \[NCHQ\], 13 February 2003, ‘Introductory Note to Folder on Phase IV Planning’.](#)

<sup>135</sup> [Minute Chilcott to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 20 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Day-After \(Phase IV\)’.](#)

<sup>136</sup> Public hearing, 8 December 2009, pages 7-8.

<sup>137</sup> Public hearing, 8 December 2009, pages 8-9.

<sup>138</sup> Public hearing, 8 December 2009, page 20.

**280.** Mr Bowen told the Inquiry that one reason for establishing the IPU was to set up a counterpart to ORHA: “as soon as we ... understood where the centre of gravity was in America ... we set up ... a centre of gravity that could interact with it”. At this early stage in the relationship, before misgivings about ORHA had begun to emerge in Whitehall, that seemed still to be the intention.

## Preparing for the UK’s “exemplary” role in the South

**281.** On 3 February, Maj Gen Brims told UK military commanders that, in the event of an invasion, UK forces could “set the pace” for Phase IV operations.

**282.** Maj Gen Brims issued the first GOC Directive for UK military commanders involved in Operation (Op) TELIC<sup>139</sup> on 3 February.<sup>140</sup> It stated: “We only win on successful implementation of Phase IV”, and continued:

“The Phase IV requirements have yet to emerge. I am confident that our people have the physical and mental agility to attend to it quickly, thoughtfully and effectively ... But two important points:

- a. There must be no triumphalism ... we must restore, foster, Iraqi dignity in our AO and work together as far as possible to achieve Phase IV for their benefit.
- b. We shall probably be the first Coalition forces to implement Phase IV. We can set the pace. The world media will be reporting our activities.”

**283.** Also on 3 February, DFID officials recommended to Ms Short that DFID second six Civil/Military Humanitarian Advisers to the UK military and ORHA, in order “to take further forward our objective of refining the military planning options to ensure the humanitarian consequences of any conflict in Iraq are fully addressed”.<sup>141</sup>

**284.** The Inquiry has not seen Ms Short’s response, but DFID did second a number of staff over the following weeks.<sup>142</sup>

**285.** Later in February, DFID officials sought policy guidance from Ms Short on the scope of DFID co-operation with military forces in “complex emergencies”.

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<sup>139</sup> Operation TELIC was the codename for the involvement of UK Armed Forces in the military campaign to remove the threat from Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction.

<sup>140</sup> Minute Brims to various, 3 February 2003, ‘Op Telic – GOC’s Directive One’.

<sup>141</sup> Minute Conflict & Humanitarian Affairs Department [junior official] to PS/Secretary of State [DFID], 3 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Refining the Military Options’.

<sup>142</sup> [Letter Warren to Rycroft, 7 March 2003, \[untitled\] attaching Paper DFID, \[undated\], ‘DFID Planning on Iraq’.](#)

**286.** Ms Short informed Mr Blair on 5 February that, “after a slow start”, DFID was “getting real co-operation” from the MOD, FCO and Cabinet Office.<sup>143</sup> It was involved in drafting military campaign objectives and was experiencing more co-operation from UN agencies and the US. Ms Short reported that she had approved a limited number of DFID secondments to UK and US military planning units.

**287.** Ms Short stated that the main outstanding issue was the scale of the UK contribution to the humanitarian and reconstruction effort in Iraq. A “fair share” would be about 5.6 percent of the total, equivalent to the UK share of OECD gross national income, and would amount to approximately £440m a year for three years. It was for Mr Blair to decide whether he thought the UK should make a “modest” contribution along those lines, or “aim higher”. If so, it would need to be an effort on behalf of the whole government, not just DFID.

**288.** Ms Short concluded:

“I think the way in which you could best help is to make clear across the system that you want humanitarian considerations to be given more weight. In addition it would help if we could settle the financial questions.”

**289.** The same day, Mr Lee sent Mr Hoon a request from Ms Short to be briefed by MOD officials on the planned military campaign. The request was for Ms Short to be briefed “on similar lines” to Mr Straw and Lord Goldsmith, the Attorney General.<sup>144</sup> Mr Lee debated whether the briefing should focus on post-conflict issues, but concluded: “As full and frank a briefing within the constraints of operational security will be a key element in achieving a joined up approach and help build on the good relationships we have set up over the last few weeks.” He also advised that No.10 had asked to be consulted on the terms of any briefing for Ms Short.

**290.** Mr Martyn Williams, Mr Hoon’s Private Secretary, asked: “Doctrinally pure advice on involving DFID SofS [Secretary of State]. Are you happy for me to consult No.10?”<sup>145</sup>

**291.** Mr Hoon agreed to the proposal.<sup>146</sup>

**292.** The Inquiry has seen no record of No.10 approving the briefing for Ms Short, which took place on 12 February.

**293. Mr Annan told the press on 5 February that there was no agreement on the post-conflict role of the UN.**

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<sup>143</sup> Letter Short to Blair, 5 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Humanitarian Planning’.

<sup>144</sup> [Minute Lee to PS/Secretary of State \[MOD\], 5 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Briefing the international development secretary’.](#)

<sup>145</sup> [Manuscript comment to SofS \[MOD\] on Minute Lee to PS/Secretary of State \[MOD\], 5 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Briefing the international development secretary’.](#)

<sup>146</sup> [Manuscript comment Hoon, 6 February 2003, on Minute Lee to PS/Secretary of State \[MOD\], 5 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Briefing the international development secretary’.](#)

**294.** At a press conference after the meeting of the Security Council on 5 February (addressed in Section 3.7), Mr Annan stated that, after any conflict, “the UN always had a role to play”.<sup>147</sup> He added that the post-conflict role of the UN in Iraq:

“... has not been discussed. As you know, we are doing some contingency planning on the humanitarian side. This is also something that we have given some preliminary thought to, but we are not there at all.”

**295. Mr Blair told Cabinet on 6 February that planning for the aftermath and humanitarian relief needed “greater emphasis”.**

**296. The same day, he commissioned a paper on “aftermath and humanitarian issues”, to be co-ordinated by the FCO.**

**297.** Mr Blair told Cabinet on 6 February that “planning for the aftermath of military action and humanitarian relief needed greater emphasis”.<sup>148</sup>

**298.** Mr Straw said that the aftermath was “being discussed intensively” with Ms Short and Mr Hoon.

**299.** Points made in discussion included:

- The word “aftermath” was “ill-chosen: it incorrectly implied that Iraq would be utterly destroyed by military conflict whereas we should gear our thinking around the future of the people of Iraq and their interests”.
- The reconstruction and development of Iraq would “provide opportunities for British companies to be involved”.
- The focus after hostilities “had to be on civil society which had suffered 35 years of tyranny that had reduced the country to the point where 60 percent of the population relied on United Nations food programmes”.
- It was “essential” that the UN should be involved in Iraq’s redevelopment after any military action “to avoid the military occupation being viewed as an army of occupation”.

**300.** On 6 February, Mr Blair held a meeting with Mr Straw, Mr Hoon and senior officials from the MOD, the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), No.10 and the Cabinet Office to discuss how to minimise civilian casualties during an air campaign. The meeting is described in more detail in Section 6.2.

**301.** At the meeting, Mr Blair commissioned a paper on “aftermath and humanitarian issues” for 14 February.<sup>149</sup> No.10 instructed the FCO to co-ordinate with the MOD, DFID and the Cabinet Office.

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<sup>147</sup> UN News Centre, 5 February 2003, *Secretary-General’s press encounter following Security Council meeting and Luncheon on Iraq (unofficial transcript)*.

<sup>148</sup> Cabinet Conclusions, 6 February 2003.

<sup>149</sup> [Letter Rycroft to Watkins, 6 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s Meeting, 6 February’](#).



**302.** The request appears to have been overtaken by a further Ministerial meeting on humanitarian issues on 13 February at which DFID, the FCO and the MOD were asked by Mr Blair to co-ordinate advice for him to use with President Bush.<sup>150</sup>

**303.** In separate letters to Mr Blair on 10 February, Mr Straw and Mr Hoon endorsed Ms Short's views on improved co-operation between departments.

**304.** Mr Straw told Mr Blair that DFID, the MOD and the Cabinet Office had been co-operating closely on humanitarian issues.<sup>151</sup> Work on humanitarian and other long-term planning issues would be strengthened by the creation of the IPU.

**305.** Mr Straw commented that humanitarian planning was the area of "long-term work" where the UK probably had fewest differences with the US. It was an area, unlike some others, where the US seemed to agree on the need for close UN involvement. The US and UK Missions in New York were working on the fine-tuning of OFF arrangements to make them better suited to the circumstances of post-conflict Iraq. In addition, the US military was:

"... developing detailed plans for relief and reconstruction teams to follow in the wake of advancing military forces in Iraq to begin immediately the urgent tasks of restoring water and electricity supplies and repairing public buildings. The US are clearly aware of the importance of delivering quick wins to show the Iraqi people and the world the benefits of Coalition action."

**306.** Mr Straw explained that much work remained to be done on economic reconstruction. An inter-departmental visit to Washington that week had revealed that, although there were, "as always", clear differences between US government agencies, there did still seem to be an opportunity to influence their thinking.

**307.** Mr Hoon responded to Ms Short's question about the scale of the UK humanitarian contribution.<sup>152</sup> He accepted that, in the "very short term", the UK military would play "a very significant role", but early thought would also need to be given to the timing of transition to purely civil structures. The key issue was to resolve differences with the US over the role of the UN.

**308. A JIC Assessment on 10 February warned of the possibility of terrorist attacks against Coalition Forces in Iraq, during and after conflict.**

**309.** On 10 February, at the request of the MOD and the FCO, the JIC produced its second Assessment on the potential terrorist threat in the event of conflict in Iraq.<sup>153</sup>

**310.** The earlier Assessment, produced on 10 October 2002, is described in Section 6.4.

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<sup>150</sup> [Letter Cannon to Bewes, 13 February 2003, 'Iraq: Humanitarian Issues'](#).

<sup>151</sup> [Minute Straw to Prime Minister, 10 February 2003, 'Iraq: Humanitarian Planning'](#).

<sup>152</sup> Letter Hoon to Blair, 10 February 2003, 'Iraq: Humanitarian Planning'.

<sup>153</sup> [JIC Assessment, 10 February 2003, 'International Terrorism: War with Iraq'](#).

**311.** The “Key Judgements” in the February Assessment included:

“I. The threat from Al Qaida will increase at the onset of any military action against Iraq. They will target Coalition forces and other Western interests in the Middle East. Attacks against Western interests elsewhere are also likely, especially in the US and UK for maximum impact. The worldwide threat from other Islamist terrorist groups and individuals will increase significantly.

...

III. Al Qaida associated terrorists in Iraq and in the Kurdish Autonomous Zone in Northern Iraq could conduct attacks against Coalition forces and interests during, or in the aftermath of, war with Iraq.”

**312.** An updated Assessment, produced on 12 March, judged that: “Senior Al Qaida associated terrorists may have established sleeper cells in Iraq, to be activated during a Coalition occupation.”<sup>154</sup>

**313.** Treasury briefing for Mr Brown on 11 February warned of the possibility of substantial pressure on the UK to make a disproportionate contribution to post-conflict Iraq.

**314.** On 11 February, Treasury officials invited Mr Brown’s views on their “preliminary thinking” on the Treasury’s interests in a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq.<sup>155</sup> The paper drew on earlier Treasury work in September 2002 on the implications of war in Iraq for the global, regional and Iraqi economies.<sup>156</sup> Officials advised that the Treasury’s main interest was to ensure Iraq’s prosperity and stability while sharing fairly the cost of achieving that outcome. The cost was difficult to predict but “potentially massive”. It comprised:

- peacekeeping costs; the peacekeeping force in Yugoslavia had numbered 40,000 at its peak, with the cost to the UK of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) reaching £325m in 1999/2000. Iraq would probably need more troops, given its ethnic and religious tensions, the likelihood of score-settling and its sheer size;
- humanitarian expenditure;
- environmental costs arising, for example, from the use of WMD or oil fires;
- “general reconstruction”, which could cost between US\$1.5bn and US\$8bn a year (including humanitarian costs); and
- economic stabilisation, through an IMF programme.

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<sup>154</sup> [JIC Assessment, 12 March 2003, ‘International Terrorism: War with Iraq: Update’.](#)

<sup>155</sup> [Minute Treasury \[junior official\] to Chancellor, 11 February 2003, ‘HMT policy on post-Saddam Iraq’ attaching Paper CEP/HMT, \[undated\], ‘What should HMT policy be on post-war Iraq?’](#)

<sup>156</sup> [Email \[Treasury junior official\] to Bowman, 6 September 2002, ‘What would be the economic impact of a war in Iraq?’ attaching Paper HMT, September 2002, ‘What would be the economic impact of war in Iraq?’](#)

**315.** The paper warned that there could be substantial pressure on the UK to make a “disproportionate” contribution, and suggested that an “emerging policy position” would be to:

- maximise Iraqi contributions;
- push for debt rescheduling;
- maximise contributions from the multilateral development banks, and secure IMF and World Bank engagement;
- push for bilateral contributions to the reconstruction effort to take into account military contributions (with countries that would make no military contribution paying a higher share of reconstruction costs); and
- ensure a finance ministry/IFI lead on financing issues, with no money committed until a proper needs assessment had been done.

**316.** The Treasury informed the Inquiry that Mr Brown did not comment on the paper.<sup>157</sup>

**317.** Treasury officials sent Mr Brown further updates on the likely total cost of war, including humanitarian and reconstruction costs, later in February.

**318.** The Treasury’s response to departments’ requests for additional funding to cover the anticipated costs of post-conflict Iraq is covered in detail in Section 13.1.

**319. The FCO sent guidance on post-conflict issues to overseas posts on 7 February. The guidance stated that:**

- **The UK was planning on a contingency basis for what the international community should do if Saddam Hussein were removed.**
- **The UK wanted to hand back power to the Iraqi people as quickly as possible, but with Iraq “radically reformed for the better”.**
- **Timing of the three stage transition was uncertain.**
- **Iraq’s public administration could be expected to work “adequately” once senior regime officials had been removed.**
- **The role of the UN was still a matter of active debate.**

**320.** On 7 February, the FCO sent guidance on “day after” issues to all overseas posts.<sup>158</sup> The guidance stated that the UK’s goal was disarmament of Iraq’s WMD, not regime change, but that, since military action could not be ruled out, it was “sensible to plan on a contingency basis, for what the international community should do in Iraq” if Saddam Hussein’s regime were removed from power.

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<sup>157</sup> Email Treasury to Iraq Inquiry, 26 February 2010, [untitled].

<sup>158</sup> Telegram 67 FCO to Abidjan, 7 February 2003, ‘Iraq: “Day After” Questions’.

**321.** In the background material for posts, not to be used with external contacts, the FCO explained that Coalition Forces would become the de facto government of Iraq as soon as Saddam Hussein fell. The UK would aim to hand back power to the Iraqi people as quickly as possible, but would want to see Iraq “radically reformed for the better” before doing so.

**322.** The FCO explained that the timing of the three stage transition was uncertain. Coalition military rule was likely to last as long as it took to establish a civilian transitional administration, “perhaps weeks, rather than many months”. The transitional administration would last “rather longer”, as it would take time to agree political structures to introduce reforms.

**323.** The FCO stated that Iraq had “a relatively sophisticated public administration” and expected that:

“... it will work adequately once the most senior old regime officials have been removed. Iraq should not be like Kosovo, where ministries and public services had to be created from scratch.”

**324.** The FCO explained that the role of the UN was “still a matter of active debate” in the US and between the US and UK. It concluded:

“We are in contact with a number of international players, including in particular the US, about these sensitive matters. We are not making the content of these contingency talks public. Nor should you.”

## Maintaining pressure on the US

**325. The Chiefs of Staff were briefed on the three-phase US Phase IV Plan on 10 February. They were told:**

- **US planning was evolving slowly because of disputes in Washington about the primacy of the different bodies involved.**
- **Without a common approach to the underlying issues in the UK, it would not be possible to exert influence on the US process.**

**326. The Chiefs of Staff commented that there would be a significant requirement for other countries to share the post-conflict burden. The FCO undertook to explore the issue.**

**327.** Maj Gen Fry updated the Chiefs of Staff on US Phase IV planning on 10 February.<sup>159</sup> The US had divided Phase IV into three stages: IVa – Stabilisation; IVb – Recovery; and IVc – Transition to Security.

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<sup>159</sup> Minute Fry to COSSEC, 10 February 2003, ‘Aftermath Planning’ attaching Paper DCJO(Ops), 10 February 2003, ‘Aftermath Planning’.

**328.** Maj Gen Fry invited the Chiefs to note that:

- The US intended the immediate post-conflict stabilisation period to last between three and six months: “By necessity and tactical imperative there is implicit UK acceptance of this direction.”
- US thinking on the recovery phase, expected to last up to two years, was evolving and could be shaped by the UK: “The UK has a comprehensive network of embedded staff who need clear direction if they are to meet UK intent.”
- It was not clear where the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) responsible for security sector issues from the start of the recovery period would be found: “A UK view on the potential role of HQ ARRC [Allied Rapid Reaction Corps] is required.”
- Boundaries within Iraq would change with the transition from stabilisation to recovery: “If the UK wish to retain Sector South East a clear message needs to be sent to CFC [Coalition Forces Commander, Gen Franks].”
- The US assumed continued UK two-star leadership and “prolonged commitment” of a brigade. The duration of the UK’s commitment needed clarification.
- The US needed to take critical decisions about UN involvement soon.

**329.** Maj Gen Fry explained that US planning was evolving slowly because of disagreement between DoD and the State Department over governance and the primacy of CFLCC, JTF-4 and the “Iraq Office of Post-war Planning [ORHA]”. The UK had a colonel and small team in CFLCC “with the lead on the stabilisation stage” and a colonel with a small team in JTF-4 “with a focus on the recovery stage”. Maj Gen Cross would deploy to ORHA with a small team shortly. To exert influence, there needed to be a common UK approach to the issues, which was “currently lacking”. The IPU had been tasked to take that work forward.

**330.** Under existing US plans, once “post-hostility conditions” were achieved, CJTF would take over from CFLCC as the military headquarters responsible for Phase IV, but a decision was still needed on CJTF’s “parentage”. One option was to deploy the ARRC to take over as CJTF Iraq, incorporating JTF-4.

**331.** The paper described key tasks for the stabilisation phase, but offered no assessment of troop numbers needed to perform them.

**332.** The first detailed estimate of the type (but not the size) of force required to deliver different tasks was in Lt Gen Reith’s draft Concept of Operations for Phase IV on 25 March.

**333.** The Chiefs of Staff discussed Maj Gen Fry's paper on 12 February.<sup>160</sup> They observed that there would be a substantial requirement for other countries to share the burden. The FCO undertook to explore the issue.

**334.** General Sir Mike Jackson, Chief of the General Staff, questioned whether the potential role for the ARRC was for the UK AO or all of Iraq, and whether it was to be used in its NATO or national role.

**335.** The potential deployment of the ARRC is addressed in Section 6.2.

**336. MOD officials briefed Ms Short on the military campaign on 12 February.**

**337.** On 12 February, MOD officials explained to Ms Short the general shape of the campaign, the policy on targeting and the approach to post-conflict operations.<sup>161</sup> The record stated she was: "reassured that MOD was 'catching up with the reality' ... that humanitarian operations need to be an integral part of ... campaign planning", but "reiterated in the strongest possible terms" her belief that the practical benefits of a second resolution were worth a delay until the autumn. Ms Short's main interest was mitigation of the impact of conflict on the Iraqi people, including in the event of CBW use. Working with the military in any UK Area of Responsibility (AOR), she wanted the UK to set "a benchmark standard for recovery and reconstruction".

**338. Briefing for Mr Hoon's discussion of post-conflict issues with Dr Rice on 12 February listed eight "Key Gaps/US-UK policy differences", including the role of the UN, de-Ba'athification, SSR and economic policy.**

**339.** Mr Hoon discussed post-conflict issues with Dr Rice and Secretary Rumsfeld in Washington on 12 February.

**340.** Briefing prepared by the MOD Iraq Secretariat stated that US aftermath planning was "impressive on details", but "riddled with holes at the political and strategic levels".<sup>162</sup> With the US divided on the merits of involving the UN, the key issue was the legal basis for any continuing occupation of Iraq. The UK assessment was that a specific mandate was needed. Without that the Coalition would "face both obligations and constraints which will face us with a choice between illegality and ineffectiveness".

**341.** The briefing listed eight "Key Gaps/US-UK policy differences" on post-conflict planning:

- UN mandate.
- Transitional administration. The UK wanted to see transition to a UN-led civilian administration as soon as possible.

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<sup>160</sup> Minutes, 12 February 2003, Chiefs of Staff meeting.

<sup>161</sup> Minute Lee to PS/Secretary of State [MOD], 13 February 2003, 'Briefing for International Development Secretary'.

<sup>162</sup> Minute Johnson to PS/Secretary of State [MOD], 10 February 2003, 'Secretary of State's Visit to Washington: Iraq'.

- Vetting policy. “Is it the US aim to de-Saddam, or de-Ba’ath Iraq? If the latter, how much of the party structure do we wish to remove? In the short term, and in the long term? What level of compromise/co-operation with Iraqi officialdom will be necessary and/or acceptable in the early stages of Phase IV? Depending on the US intention, can they provide UK forces with means of identifying particular officials for removal from office or detention? How will the Coalition process those removed from office? ... How will government functions be maintained if key officials are removed?”
- Oil. The UK would press for transparency of oil management, greater UN involvement than was envisaged and early setting of the date for handing control of oilfields back to Iraq.
- National governance. A decision on the final shape of an Iraq administration (the end state) was of “critical importance” to the earliest phases of the military effort.
- Economic policy. What were the plans for preventing macroeconomic collapse?
- SSR. What would the new security apparatus look like? At a tactical level, UK forces needed guidance on how to treat different parts of the Iraqi security infrastructure as they encountered them.
- Humanitarian. The source of the extra resources needed by the UK military to deliver humanitarian assistance in the absence of a significant NGO or UN presence was not known and there was no plan for the worst case scenario.

**342.** It is not clear whether the FCO or Cabinet Office saw the MOD briefing.

**343.** Separately, Mr Drummond sent Mr Lee “key messages” on post-conflict Iraq for Mr Hoon to use with Secretary Rumsfeld and for Sir David Manning to use with Dr Rice later in the week.<sup>163</sup> The messages, agreed by officials in other departments and No.10, included material on the importance of securing a UN mandate to legitimise international rule, establishing a substantial UN role in post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, engaging IFIs to plan economic reconstruction, avoiding the perception of a UK/US “oil grab” and securing “a level-playing field for UK business in oil and other areas”.

**344.** The proposed message on dismantling the Iraqi regime was:

“Must detain senior leadership and leading members of Saddam’s security forces and put them through proper legal process. But we will need Iraqi technocrats, who may have gone along with Saddam’s regime, to run the country. Our officials are talking about handling war criminals etc. Must have an agreed policy this month.”

**345.** It is unclear whether the reference to “an agreed policy” referred to war criminals, technocrats, or both.

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<sup>163</sup> [Letter Drummond to Lee, 11 February 2003, ‘Iraq Post Conflict: Key Messages’ attaching Paper Cabinet Office, 11 February 2003, ‘Iraq Post Conflict: Key Messages’.](#)

**346.** The British Embassy Washington reported that on 12 February Mr Hoon raised the issue of financing reconstruction from oil sales with Secretary Rumsfeld, who agreed that oil proceeds were key and should not be misinterpreted as a reason for the conflict.<sup>164</sup> DoD would make it clear that oil proceeds should go to Iraq's people. OFF was a good basis on which to work.

**347.** The Embassy also reported agreement during Mr Hoon's talks with Secretary Rumsfeld and Dr Rice that "broad UN cover for day after management in Iraq would bring political, financial and legal benefits. But this cover should not come with inefficient micro-management by UN agencies."<sup>165</sup> The Embassy commented that, although ORHA remained "disputed turf" and Mr Hoon had heard conflicting accounts of its role while in Washington, it would be the "key body in ruling and reconstructing a defeated Iraq". The UK was "slightly ahead of the game" in already having Maj Gen Cross there, but the US would welcome more UK secondees.

**348.** Neither the Embassy's report of Mr Hoon's meeting with Secretary Rumsfeld nor the record written by Mr Peter Watkins, Mr Hoon's Principal Private Secretary, referred to any discussion of de-Ba'athification.<sup>166</sup>

**349.** Mr Hoon told the Inquiry that, at the meeting, he handed Secretary Rumsfeld a paper which, while not using the word "de-Ba'athification", had:

"... emphasised ... that there would be people who had joined the Ba'ath Party ... not because they necessarily were enthusiastic supporters of Saddam Hussein, and we felt that there ought to be a distinction between those who were enthusiastic supporters and those who simply joined the party in order to gain position ... and I think a similar argument arises in relation to the army".<sup>167</sup>

**350.** The Inquiry has been unable to identify the paper handed over by Mr Hoon.

**351.** During Mr Hoon's meeting with Dr Rice she expressed concern that the existing military campaign plan for the South of Iraq assumed local administrators would remain in place. Her assessment was that those individuals, who were mainly Sunni in an otherwise Shia area, would flee after the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime.<sup>168</sup> Mr Hoon's response was to point to the value of achieving UN cover for Coalition operations in Iraq.

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<sup>164</sup> Telegram 203 Washington to FCO London, 13 February 2003, 'Iraq: Defence Secretary's Visit to Washington'.

<sup>165</sup> Telegram 204 Washington to FCO London, 13 February 2003, 'Iraq: Defence Secretary's Visit to Washington: Day After Management'.

<sup>166</sup> Minute Watkins to Policy Director, 13 February 2003, 'Meeting with Donald Rumsfeld: 12 February 2003'.

<sup>167</sup> Public hearing, 19 January 2010, page 160.

<sup>168</sup> Letter Watkins to Manning, 13 February 2003, 'Defence Secretary's call on Condi Rice: 12 February 2003'.



**352.** Mr Hoon told the Inquiry:

“... we were concerned that the planning for the aftermath was not as detailed and as comprehensive as we would have liked. Indeed, in a visit to the Pentagon in ... February, I took with me a list of the things that we hoped that the United States would take account of.”<sup>169</sup>

**353.** Mr Hoon added:

“... they welcomed the suggestions that we were making, but ... I accept that not all of those items on my list were followed up and followed up in the timescale that we expected”.

**354.** Sir Kevin Tebbit discussed post-conflict planning with Mr Frank Miller, NSC Senior Director for Defense Policy and Arms Control, on 12 February. Sir Kevin was told that ORHA was responsible for implementation only; policy remained with the NSC-led inter-agency group. Sir Kevin stressed the importance of UK involvement in both strands but was informed that the UK knew all there was to know: US planning was thin, but was all the system could cope with at that point.<sup>170</sup>

**355. US officials’ evidence to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 11 February revealed “enormous uncertainties” around US post-conflict plans.**

**356. The Committee’s response was one of “incredulity”.**

**357. Sir David Manning emphasised to officials in No.10 and the Cabinet Office the need to keep pressing the US for the work to be done.**

**358.** On 11 February, Mr Marc Grossman, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, and Mr Douglas Feith, US Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, gave evidence on US post-conflict plans to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.<sup>171</sup>

**359.** The British Embassy Washington reported that the message to the Foreign Relations Committee was “liberation not occupation”, with an assurance that the US did not want to control Iraq’s economic resources.

**360.** The Embassy highlighted the degree of uncertainty surrounding US plans:

“In the ensuing discussion, Feith said that military occupation could last two years. Both admitted to ‘enormous uncertainties’. They said that they did not know how the Iraqi oil industry would be managed, who would cover the costs of oil installation reconstruction, or how the detailed transition to a democratic Iraq would operate.

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<sup>169</sup> Public hearing, 19 January 2010, pages 82-83.

<sup>170</sup> Minute Tebbit, 13 February 2003, ‘Note for File: Phone Call with Frank Miller – 12 February’.

<sup>171</sup> [Telegram 196 Washington to FCO London, 12 February 2003, ‘Iraq “Day After”: US Makes Initial Planning Public’.](#)

The Committee's response was one of incredulity, with encouragement to plan for the worst, as well as the best, case."

**361.** Sir David Manning commented to Mr Bowen, Mr Matthew Rycroft (Mr Blair's Private Secretary for Foreign Affairs) and Mr Nicholas Cannon (Mr Blair's Assistant Private Secretary for Foreign Affairs):

"Last para[graph] shows scale of problem post-Saddam. We must keep pushing for this work to be done."<sup>172</sup>

## **Revised UK military campaign objectives**

**362.** The UK shared its draft military campaign objectives with the US in mid-February.

**363.** Those objectives relating to the post-conflict phase of operations emphasised the role of the UN and the international community, and the UK's wish to withdraw from Iraq as soon as possible.

**364.** The objectives made no reference to the UK's obligations and responsibilities as an Occupying Power.

**365.** There is no indication that the objectives were linked to any assessment of feasibility or the resources needed for implementation.

**366.** Ministers had expressed themselves "generally content" with the draft objectives in January, but did not have an opportunity collectively to discuss the issues raised until Mr Blair's meeting on post-conflict issues on 6 March.

**367.** Sir David Manning described the objectives to Dr Rice as compatible with but not identical to US objectives.

**368.** Lord Goldsmith's approval of the objectives before publication is addressed in Section 6.2.

**369.** On 11 February, Mr Bowen sent Sir David Manning a revised draft of the UK's military campaign objectives, incorporating comments from Mr Straw and Whitehall departments.<sup>173</sup> Only DFID offered comments on post-conflict issues.

**370.** FCO concerns centred on how to present any reference to regime change.

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<sup>172</sup> Manuscript comment Manning on Telegram 196 Washington to FCO London, 12 February 2003, 'Iraq "Day After": US Makes Initial Planning Public'.

<sup>173</sup> [Minute Bowen to Manning, 11 February 2003, 'Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives' attaching Paper Cabinet Office, February 2003, 'Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives'](#).

**371.** In his advice to Mr Straw, Mr Chaplin had argued against avoiding all mention of regime change:

“It seems to me unrealistic to expect that the Americans will sign up to a common set of campaign objectives which does not include explicit mention of regime change (put in the context of disarmament), especially once military action has begun. At that point it would be very difficult to claim publicly that, although we were taking part in military action, we did not intend or expect the regime to fall.”<sup>174</sup>

**372.** Mr O'Brien had proposed specific wording to Mr Straw that “should satisfy the Americans but stop short of making regime change an explicit element of UK objectives” by establishing more clearly that regime change was needed to secure long-term disarmament:

“The UK’s overall objective for the military campaign is to create the conditions in which Iraq disarms in accordance with its obligations under UNSCRs [UN Security Council resolutions] and creates the circumstances in which Iraq remains disarmed in the long-term.”<sup>175</sup>

**373.** Mr Straw included that proposal in a letter to Mr Blair on 11 February, in which he expressed “serious concerns” about the presentation of military campaign objectives:

“It is particularly important to explain carefully any reference to regime change. We must underline that this is only necessary because Iraq has consistently refused to comply with UN Security Council resolutions. Otherwise people here and in the region will assume that we had been intent on regime change all along.”<sup>176</sup>

**374.** The MOD comments on the draft objectives had focused on whether they provided “enough top cover to derive appropriate CDS and targeting directives to enable us to work in coalition with the US”.<sup>177</sup>

**375.** DFID had proposed the addition of references to:

- addressing, rather than minimising, any adverse humanitarian consequences of the military campaign;
- demonstrating to the Iraqi people, rather than reassuring them, that their security and well-being was the UK’s concern; and
- ensuring that sanctions were lifted and that the OFF programme and resources were available to meet the needs of the Iraqi people.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> [Minute Chaplin to PS \[FCO\], 4 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’.](#)

<sup>175</sup> [Minute \[FCO junior official\] to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 7 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’.](#)

<sup>176</sup> [Letter Straw to Prime Minister, 10 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’ attaching Paper \[unattributed\], ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’.](#)

<sup>177</sup> [Letter Lee to Bowen, 4 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’.](#)

<sup>178</sup> [Letter Brewer to Bowen, 4 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’.](#)

**376.** The draft circulated by Mr Bowen on 11 February stated:

**“The UK’s overall objective for the military campaign is to create the conditions in which Iraq disarms in accordance with its obligations under UNSCRs and remains so disarmed in the long term.”<sup>179</sup>**

**377.** The Coalition’s main tasks in support of that objective were to:

- a. overcome the resistance of the Iraqi security forces;
- b. deny the Iraqi regime the use of weapons of mass destruction now and in the future;
- c. remove the Iraqi regime, given its clear and unyielding refusal to comply with the UN Security Council’s demands;
- d. identify and secure the sites where weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery are located;
- e. secure essential economic infrastructure, including for utilities and transport, from sabotage and wilful destruction by Iraqis; and
- f. deter wider conflict both inside Iraq and the region.”

**378.** The UK’s wider political objectives in support of the military campaign were to:

- a. demonstrate to the Iraqi people that our quarrel is not with them and that their security and well-being is our concern;
- b. work with the United Nations to lift sanctions affecting the supply of humanitarian and reconstruction goods, and to enable Iraq’s own resources, including oil, to be available to meet the needs of the Iraqi people;
- c. sustain the widest possible international and regional coalition in support of military action;
- d. preserve wider regional security, including by maintaining the territorial integrity of Iraq and mitigating the humanitarian and other consequences of conflict for Iraq’s neighbours;
- e. help create conditions for a future, stable and law-abiding government of Iraqis;
- f. further our policy of eliminating terrorism as a force in international affairs.”

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<sup>179</sup> [Minute Bowen to Manning, 11 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’ attaching Paper Cabinet Office, February 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’.](#)

**379.** The paper listed seven immediate military priorities in the aftermath of hostilities:

- a. provide for the security of friendly forces;
- b. contribute to the creation of a secure environment so that normal life can be restored;
- c. work in support of humanitarian organisations to mitigate the consequences of hostilities and, in the absence of such civilian humanitarian capacity, provide relief where it is needed;
- d. work with UNMOVIC/IAEA to rid Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery;
- e. facilitate remedial action where environmental damage has occurred;
- f. enable the reconstruction and recommissioning of essential infrastructure for the political and economic development of Iraq, and the immediate benefit of the Iraqi people; and
- g. lay plans for the reform of Iraq's security forces."

**380.** The paper stated that:

- Those tasks would, "wherever possible", be carried out in co-operation with the UN.
- UK military forces would withdraw as soon as possible.
- The UK hoped to see early establishment of a transitional civilian administration.
- The UK would work with the international community to build the widest possible international and regional support for reconstruction and the move to representative government.

**381.** The paper concluded with the 7 January description of the desired end state for a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq (see Section 6.4).

**382.** On 12 February, the Chiefs of Staff noted that work on the UK objectives paper had been concluded, but not finally endorsed. The paper would be "ready for release at the start of any offensive campaign".<sup>180</sup>

**383.** Mr Hoon discussed the objectives with Secretary Rumsfeld in Washington on 12 February.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Minutes, 12 February 2003, Chiefs of Staff meeting.

<sup>181</sup> Letter Manning to Rice, 14 February 2003, 'Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives'.

**384.** Sir David Manning sent a copy to Dr Rice on 14 February.<sup>182</sup> He explained that the UK military campaign objectives were “compatible but not identical” to ‘Iraq: Goals, Objectives, Strategy’ (the US document handed to Sir David by Dr Rice on 31 January).

**385.** Sir David explained that the UK and US were committed to ridding Iraq of WMD and recognised the need to remove the current Iraqi regime if military action proved necessary, but the UK document avoided references to “liberation”. No firm decision had been taken, but the likelihood was that the UK would publish its objectives if and when military action was decided.

**386.** A final version of the military campaign objectives, with changes to the introductory paragraphs (reflecting the outcome of negotiations in the UN Security Council) but not to the objectives themselves, was placed in the Library of the House of Commons by Mr Hoon on 20 March.

**387.** In a speech on 11 February, Mr Straw explained that the UK’s first objective in Iraq was disarmament. The next priority was to work with the UN to help the Iraqi people recover.

**388.** In a speech at the International Institute for Strategic Studies on 11 February, Mr Straw stated that if military action did prove necessary, “huge efforts” would be made “to ensure that the suffering of the Iraqi people” was “as limited as is possible”.<sup>183</sup> They deserved “the chance to live fulfilling lives free from the oppression and terror of Saddam”; and to “choose their own destiny and government, and to pursue a prosperous life within a safe environment”. The UK’s first objective was disarmament, but the “next priority would be to work with the United Nations to help the Iraqi people recover ... and allow their country to move towards one that is ruled by law, respects international obligations and provides effective and representative government”.

### **Mr Blair’s meeting on humanitarian issues, 13 February 2003**

**389.** Mr Blair convened two Ministerial meetings on post-conflict issues in February and March 2003. The first, on 13 February, covered the specific question of humanitarian assistance. The second, on 6 March, addressed wider post-conflict issues and is addressed later in this Section.

**390.** At the meeting on 13 February, Mr Blair listed three UK post-conflict priorities:

- that the UN “must play a key role”, which he did not define;
- a UK lead on humanitarian issues in southern Iraq; and
- mobilisation of other contributors.

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<sup>182</sup> Letter Manning to Rice, 14 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives’.

<sup>183</sup> *The Guardian*, 11 February 2003, *The Foreign Secretary’s address to the International Institute for Strategic Studies*.

**391.** The lack of precision in the instructions to departments from No.10 after the meeting was indicative of the Government's persistent failure to define the component parts of the post-conflict task and how different departments would be responsible for addressing them.

**392.** In particular, the relationship between humanitarian relief and wider reconstruction, and between short-, medium- and long-term post-conflict tasks, tended to be overlooked or left unclear.

**393.** Throughout the planning process Mr Blair continued to request, and receive, separate advice on post-conflict issues from Mr Straw, Mr Hoon and Ms Short.

**394.** Mr Blair convened a meeting on humanitarian issues with Mr Straw, Mr Hoon, Ms Short, Admiral Sir Michael Boyce (CDS) and No.10 officials in the margins of Cabinet on 13 February.<sup>184</sup> Sir Michael Jay, Sir Kevin Tebbit and Mr Chakrabarti were not present.

**395.** The IPU briefing for Mr Straw set out three objectives for the meeting, including:

- “• encourage Ms Short to engage fully in planning;
- persuade Ms Short that she should allow DFID money to finance small scale [reconstruction] projects in the area administered by a UK commander.”

**396.** On the assumption that discussion might stray beyond humanitarian issues, the briefing included “a background note on other key ‘Day After’ issues”, including:

**“For how long do we want to run a geographical sector of Iraq?”**

“... it seems very likely that UK forces (under US command) will find themselves occupying an area of south-east Iraq ...

...

“In practical terms, administration of a geographical sector will be very labour intensive. It will be dangerous and difficult ...

“There is likely to be a hybrid model of both geographical sectors under different interim administrations, and lead countries responsible for some issue nation-wide. So, for example, the US want to lead on military issues throughout Iraq. But the detail of a hybrid model remains unclear.”<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> [Letter Cannon to Bewes, 13 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Humanitarian Issues’.](#)

<sup>185</sup> [Minute Iraq Planning Unit \[junior official\] to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 12 February 2003, ‘Meeting on Iraq Day After Issues Before Cabinet 13 February’.](#)

**397.** The other issues listed were:

- whether the UK wanted to lead on justice;
- the role of the UN; and
- UK commercial involvement.

**398.** Before the meeting, Mr Bowen advised Sir David Manning that:

“The Prime Minister will ... want to seek Clare [Short]’s engagement in the potential humanitarian relief operation and reconstruction – which will need funding and the commitment of human resources as a priority.”<sup>186</sup>

**399.** The No.10 briefing note for Mr Blair stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss “humanitarian aspects of developments in Iraq”, but that there also needed to be “quick agreement on a US/UK policy for a post-conflict Iraq, so that plans can be made”.<sup>187</sup>

**400.** Those wider issues were not addressed.

**401.** At the meeting, Mr Hoon reported on his Washington visit.<sup>188</sup>

**402.** Ms Short commented on the scale of the potential humanitarian crisis, stressed that military assets should not be used for humanitarian operations and suggested that NGOs would want to see a UN role.

**403.** In response to a question from Mr Blair about whether the UK should “take the lead on humanitarian action in the southern zone”, Ms Short said that she was in favour. The UK could do an “exemplary job” in the zone on both military and humanitarian fronts.

**404.** The No.10 record of the meeting stated that Mr Blair concluded:

- The UN must play a key role, both to reassure the NGOs and also for political reasons, to avoid the impression of a US takeover of Iraq. He asked DFID, FCO and MOD to co-ordinate advice so that he could discuss with President Bush.
- We should seek to take the lead on humanitarian issues in the southern zone of Iraq.
- We must work up a strategy for mobilising other contributors on the humanitarian side: France and Germany could play a role, as could Japan.”

**405.** No further instructions were sent to departments by No.10.

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<sup>186</sup> Minute Bowen to Manning, 13 February 2003, ‘Meeting on Iraq: Humanitarian Follow-up’.

<sup>187</sup> [Minute Cannon to Prime Minister, 13 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Humanitarian Planning’](#).

<sup>188</sup> Letter Cannon to Bewes, 13 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Humanitarian Issues’.



**406.** Mr Hoon instructed MOD officials to take forward work with the FCO and DFID.<sup>189</sup> Mr Watkins explained to Mr Simon Webb, MOD Policy Director:

“As he has discussed with CDS, PUS and you, the Secretary of State is clear that the MOD should act as the conduit for UK views to the US Post War Planning Office [ORHA] which has been established in the Pentagon. If the UK is to influence the Office’s approach, it must present it with a consistent joined-up line: we cannot allow individual Whitehall departments to transmit possibly disparate messages to their secondees in the Office.

“The underlying theme of yesterday’s meeting was that all relevant government departments need to contribute to what will be a major undertaking. The role of pulling together the Whitehall line on this side of the Atlantic belongs naturally to the FCO. Mr Hoon presumes that the FCO will now move quickly to pull together the views of the relevant departments ... Mr Hoon’s clear recollection is that all three Secretaries of State concerned were asked to provide the Prime Minister with co-ordinated advice on how the UK should structure its approach to post-conflict planning and what level of contribution it should be prepared to make (not just the narrow UN point ...). I have spoken to No.10 and the Foreign Secretary’s Office accordingly.

“Mr Hoon would be grateful if you would speak to your counterparts in the FCO and DFID to ensure this work is being taken forward in the right lines.”

**407.** In his statement of 14 January 2011, Mr Blair explained to the Inquiry that:

“... we broke down planning into three parts: humanitarian – the priority for DFID; Military – with the MOD; and political with the FCO ...

“Though the Iraq Planning Unit was formally established in February 2003, some planning was already under way and co-ordinated by the ad hoc officials group [AHGI] from October 2002 ... but above all planning was under way within departments ...

“... [I]ndividual Secretaries of State were responsible for each separate stream. The Cabinet was debating the issue and there was a constant process of exchange at official level passed up to me and the Ministers. As we came to recognise ... it would have been better to have had more integrated planning at an earlier time; and certainly there is a lesson there.”<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> [Minute Watkins to Policy Director, 14 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Humanitarian Issues’.](#)

<sup>190</sup> Statement, 14 January 2011, pages 13-14.

**408.** On 14 February, Ms Short advised Mr Blair of constraints on the UK's ability to perform an "exemplary" humanitarian role in Iraq.

**409.** In response, Mr Blair restated the need to "get the US to accept the UN role".

**410.** Ms Short sent Mr Blair a letter on 14 February setting out "key humanitarian issues and some thoughts on the UN's role which we need to pursue with the US".<sup>191</sup> Ms Short advised:

"The vulnerability of the Iraqi people to humanitarian catastrophe should not be underestimated ... Iraq should be an upper middle or high income country. Instead its average earnings have plummeted in the last two decades, its population is largely dependent on food handouts, its agricultural sector operating well below capacity. Iraqi people's lives are perilously fragile – their private coping strategies worn away by years of misrule ... The situation in the centre and south of Iraq is much worse than in the north ..."

**411.** Ms Short also expanded on her comments on the UK's ability to do an "exemplary" job, made at Mr Blair's meeting on 13 February. She told Mr Blair there was a "great opportunity" for the UK to play "an exemplary humanitarian role" in a sector under UK control, within an agreed international framework set out in a second resolution. Such a resolution "should address the UN's lead role after conflict and underline the prioritisation of humanitarian considerations".

**412.** Ms Short also highlighted budgetary constraints. She could not:

"... take resources from other poor and needy people to assist post-conflict Iraq. Without some understanding on finance, I cannot responsibly commit DFID to the exemplary partnership with MOD which we discussed."

**413.** In her evidence to the Inquiry, Ms Short focused on the resolution's importance to reconstruction, rather than humanitarian efforts:

"... we knew that if we didn't get another UN resolution, we were in big trouble. We could do humanitarian, but you can't reconstruct the country, and that became an absolute obsession of Whitehall."<sup>192</sup>

**414.** Mr Blair wrote on his copy of the letter: "We must get the US to accept the UN role."<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> [Letter Short to Blair, 14 February 2003, 'Iraq: Humanitarian Planning and the Role of the UN'](#).

<sup>192</sup> Public hearing, 2 February 2010, page 68.

<sup>193</sup> [Manuscript comment Blair on Letter Short to Blair, 14 February 2003, 'Iraq: Humanitarian Planning and the Role of the UN'](#).

## UN preparations

**415.** Mr Annan briefed members of the UN Security Council on humanitarian contingency planning on 13 February.

**416.** Mr Annan and Ms Louise Fréchette, UN Deputy Secretary-General, briefed members of the Security Council on the UN Secretariat's humanitarian contingency planning and financial requirements on 13 February.<sup>194</sup>

**417.** Mr Annan reported that Ms Fréchette had led a steering group of the relevant UN departments, funds and programmes since November 2002 to prepare contingency plans in case of conflict. The task would be complex because of the large number of Iraqis already dependent on international aid through OFF.

**418.** Ms Fréchette explained that the UN agencies had developed an integrated humanitarian plan for Iraq, working with the six neighbouring countries, the ICRC and NGOs. US\$30.6m had already been pledged and the UN was preparing a request for a further US\$88.8m. Much more would be needed in the event of a “medium-case scenario” of two to three months' acute conflict, which would trigger a “flash appeal”.

**419.** The US\$2.22bn UN Flash Appeal for Iraq was launched on 28 March (see Section 10.1).

**420.** Mr Straw raised the Security Council briefing with Mr Annan on 14 February.<sup>195</sup> Mr Annan's concerns were understandable, but “the US was doing a huge amount on this, and the UK was contributing and planning also. DFID were active, and keen on UN cover for an operation.” Mr Annan stated that all the humanitarian agencies also wanted UN cover, including for the reconstruction effort.

**421.** Mr Straw “pointed out that there was in this area an inverse relationship between loudness of rhetoric and willingness to contribute hard cash”.

**422.** Sir Jeremy Greenstock, UK Permanent Representative to the UN from 1998 to 2003, told the Inquiry that the UK Permanent Mission to the UN in New York (UKMIS New York) discussed post-conflict Iraq with the UN Secretariat in February 2003.<sup>196</sup> There were very clear indications the UN did not want the administration of Iraq to become its responsibility. It was more focused on the things it was very good at:

“... food supply, some policing perhaps, help for the political process and other aspects of services to a population or territory in trouble but not to take full responsibility.”

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<sup>194</sup> Telegram 257 UKMIS New York to FCO London, 14 February 2003, 'Iraq: UN Humanitarian Contingency Planning'.

<sup>195</sup> Telegram 268 UKMIS New York to FCO London, 15 February 2003, 'Iraq: Foreign Secretary's Meeting with the UN Secretary-General: 14 February'.

<sup>196</sup> Public hearing, 15 December 2009, page 5.

## The absence of a “winning concept”

**423.** In mid-February, officials expressed concern about two significant risks:

- the potential “nightmare scenario” of no second resolution and, at best, only a weak legal basis for military action; and
- the continuing absence of a coherent plan for the administration of Iraq.

**424.** Over the previous year, Ministers, the military and officials had identified effective preparation for the post-conflict phase as a requirement for strategic success.

**425.** Mr Hoon had reminded Mr Blair as recently as 16 January that a satisfactory post-conflict plan was needed before a decision was taken to deploy UK forces (see Section 6.4).

**426.** As the extent of US opposition to a UN lead on civil administration became clearer and the likely start date for military action approached, the Government needed to reassess policy and prepare for the possibility that the US could not be persuaded of the UK view.

**427.** No reassessment of UK policy took place.

**428.** Section 3.7 describes Mr Chaplin’s analysis of the prospects for a Ministerial-level meeting of the Security Council on 14 February. On 13 February, he advised Mr Ricketts that it was:

“... probably the last opportunity to reflect on whether we can extract ... a better outcome ... than at present looks likely.

“... No SCR and a feeble, at best, legal basis for military action is a nightmare scenario ... A quick collapse of the Iraqi regime (quite likely); subsequent clear proof, because we find the stuff, that we were right all along about the Iraqi WMD threat (\*questionable – what convinces the experts may not convince public opinion unless it is pretty spectacular); and a smooth transfer to a democratic and stable government (improbable, especially without UN cover) would reduce the damage. But this is a high risk route.”<sup>197</sup>

**429.** On 14 February, officials advised No.10 of the critical importance of a satisfactory post-conflict plan as part of an overall “winning concept” for Iraq.

**430.** A Cabinet Office paper on “winning the peace” gave a clear description of the potential scale of the post-conflict task and the long list of issues still to be resolved with the US.

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<sup>197</sup> [Minute Chaplin to Ricketts, 13 February 2003, ‘Iraq: The Endgame’.](#)

**431. The paper warned that there was “no coherent plan of how Iraq will be governed beyond the first 3 to 6 months”.**

**432.** On 14 February, in response to a request for a note on key messages for use with the US, Mr Drummond sent Sir David Manning a paper on “winning the peace”, cleared with the IPU.<sup>198</sup>

**433.** Mr Drummond stated: “A satisfactory plan for post-conflict is critical to whether we have a ‘winning concept’.”

**434.** “Victorious Coalition forces” could expect to find an Iraq with certain “broad characteristics”:

- the remains of a command state with “some sound technical institutions, which should recover with Saddam’s influence removed”;
- a “brutal security apparatus with the layers closest to Saddam requiring disbandment and the rest substantial reform”;
- a “dysfunctional judicial system”;
- large numbers of displaced people;
- the majority of the population hungry should the OFF programme collapse;
- health, education and other public services that had declined rapidly over the last 20 years;
- damage to key infrastructure, “perhaps less than other conflicts if the campaign is quick”;
- an oil-dependent country with potential and the skills available to recover quickly if well managed;
- a secular Islamic state “with potential for much greater fundamentalism”;
- tribal, sectarian and, especially, ethnic divisions;
- neighbouring states “keen to press their interests” and a region “deeply nervous, if not hostile, to a continuing US military presence in Iraq”.

**435.** It was expected that any Iraqi welcome for the removal of Saddam Hussein would be short lived:

“... liberation will quickly become occupation ... So the Coalition must have a clear public plan for restoring Iraqi representative government, for the use of oil revenues for the benefit of all Iraqis, and the means to bring early benefits of change to the Iraqi people. This will also help with the region and those members of the international community who did not support military action.

“We must not underestimate the task. In recent years, we have had to remove governments in Kosovo and East Timor and replace them with international

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<sup>198</sup> [Minute Drummond to Manning, 14 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Winning the Peace’ attaching Paper OD Secretariat, 11 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Post Conflict: Key Messages’.](#)

administrations, but they are much smaller both in size (Wales not France) and population (2.5m in Kosovo, 25m in Iraq). In Afghanistan we have worked with a local political process and administration. In Iraq we face having to replace a government and remove a political party which has dominated Iraqi politics and institutions for over 40 years. So some similarities to post-war Germany.”

**436.** On post-conflict planning, the paper stated:

“The US has assumed for planning purposes that it will lead the government of Iraq following military victory. It has consulted extensively with the Iraqi exile population, many of whom are well informed about the situation in Iraq, but have their own agenda. There has been extensive CENTCOM and DoD planning for the military campaign and the first 60 to 90 days. PJHQ are plugged into this well, and have helped to shape some aspects of it. There is also good progress in planning to follow up the military advance with immediate humanitarian support for the Iraqi population. But there is no serious US assessment of the consequence of CBW use on the civilian population.

“PJHQ started their own detailed planning exercise as soon as it became clear that UK forces might have control over the Basra area of southern Iraq (city population 1.5m alone) from the very early stages of the campaign ... Whitehall inter-departmental teams have visited [the US] several times since last autumn to discuss the issues. Some decisions cannot of course be made until the Coalition can assess the situation post-conflict. But there is no coherent plan of how Iraq will be governed beyond the first 3 to 6 months. This risks the continuation of a military government becoming increasingly unpopular. This would be even more likely if the US proceeded with a plan of dividing Iraq into three sectors for military government.

“The US envisages that there will be three phases post-conflict:

- A military government led by a US general for the first 3 to 6 months to re-establish security and deal with the humanitarian crisis.
- Then a civilian-led international government charged with rebuilding democracy from the bottom up, restoring key services and increasing oil production. The US hope this would last 12 to 18 months but accept it might take longer.
- Handover to an Iraqi representative government at which point Coalition forces would withdraw.

“Our key concerns are to manage the task, by ensuring that we have legal cover, as much support as possible within Iraq and internationally, and as much help in both money and skills from the international community.”

**437.** The paper stated that decisions needed to be reached with the US on:

- Legitimacy. The US had been told that the UK required the UN to legitimise the post-conflict government of Iraq and to resolve legal problems around sanctions

and OFF. “This would require a further resolution. It should be achievable if the Security Council is satisfied with the extent of UN involvement in the transition ... Even Rumsfeld is beginning to accept the need for it. On current plans it would not be presented until the end of the conflict.”

- UN administration. This would make sense for “international acceptability and for the skills, which the UN could bring ... But the US is set against, because they believe the UN has performed poorly elsewhere. We are therefore proposing that the UN’s expertise should be used in technical areas such as education and health. A UN Special Representative ... will be required to pull the UN machinery together locally ... We have given the US proposals for UN involvement. Mr Hoon pursued with Rumsfeld, and you will want to follow up with Condi Rice.”
- The political process. “We need urgently to pin down a process so that it can be announced as soon as a decision is taken to remove Saddam by force ... Again we have given the US outline proposals, but should firm them up.”
- Humanitarian issues. “Although the US has good plans to bring in humanitarian relief behind the military it has not thought through how to encourage NGOs and UN specialised agencies to engage. The international community also needs a contingency financing plan ...”
- The economy. A joint working group with the US was working on a plan for transparent management of Iraq’s oil revenues, which needed “a political push in the US”.
- Reconstruction contracts. The US needed to be encouraged to create “a level playing field”.
- Security. The Pentagon wanted to withdraw units from Iraq as quickly as possible. “We must prevent the UK bearing a disproportionate share of the security burden at a time when military overstretch is causing problems with meeting our other priorities. If we are not to replicate the problems seen in Afghanistan, we will also need the US to agree early on to [a] single holistic plan for Security Sector Reform. We have offered outline proposals for the security sector. We should offer a plan.”
- Justice. The US had asked the UK to lead on the revival of the Iraqi justice system.
- Sectorisation. The UK needed “urgently to understand the recent US suggestion that Iraq be divided into three geographical sectors and that we should run one of them (a much bigger area than the Basra Area of Operations) with enormous personnel and financial implications”.
- The timeframe. “US plans are very ambitious. The reforms planned are unlikely to be achieved within a two year period. We are likely to need longer engagement in Iraq if we are to leave a durable legacy, but we should deliver the latter stages under an Iraqi administration. The US will need to be persuaded of this fact.”

**438.** The paper did not address the scale of the potential UK contribution.

**439.** Mr Drummond explained that the IPU would take forward detailed planning, aiming for a paper that Sir David Manning could send to Dr Rice for Mr Blair to discuss with President Bush the following week.

**440.** It is not clear whether Mr Blair saw the paper.

**441.** Sir David Manning instructed Mr Cannon to “have [a] first look + mark up”, but there is no evidence of further action.<sup>199</sup>

**442.** The Inquiry has seen no comment on the paper from No.10.

**443.** There is no indication that Mr Drummond’s paper was discussed further or that the IPU prepared a second paper before Mr Blair’s conversation with President Bush on 19 February.

**444. On 14 February, Secretary Rumsfeld identified lessons for Iraq from the experience of nation-building in Afghanistan. The goal in Iraq was not to impose a US template, but to create conditions for Iraqis to form their own government.**

**445. Secretary Rumsfeld stated that a US-led Coalition in Iraq would stay as long as necessary and leave as soon as possible.**

**446.** In a speech in New York on 14 February, Secretary Rumsfeld drew lessons for Iraq from the US experience of nation-building in Afghanistan:

“Afghanistan belongs to the Afghans. The objective is not to engage in what some call nation-building. Rather it is to help the Afghans so they can build their own nation. This is an important distinction. In some nation-building exercises well-intentioned foreigners ... can create a dependency.”<sup>200</sup>

**447.** Secretary Rumsfeld stated that a US-led Coalition in Iraq would be guided by two commitments, to “[s]tay as long as necessary and to leave as soon as possible”:

“We would work with our partners as we are doing in Afghanistan to help the Iraqi people establish a new government ...

“The goal would not be to impose an American-style template on Iraq, but rather to create conditions where Iraqis can form a government in their own unique way, just as the Afghans did with the Loya Jirga which produced a representative government that is uniquely Afghan.

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<sup>199</sup> [Manuscript comment Manning to Cannon, 18 February 2003, on Minute Drummond to Manning, 14 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Winning the Peace’ attaching Paper OD Secretariat, 11 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Post Conflict: Key Messages’.](#)

<sup>200</sup> US Department of Defense, 14 February 2003, *Speech: Beyond Nation Building*.



“This is not to underestimate the challenge that the Coalition would face. Iraq has several advantages over Afghanistan. One is time. The effort in Afghanistan had to be planned and executed in a matter of weeks after September 11th. With Iraq, by contrast, there has been time to prepare. We have set up a Post War Planning Office to think through problems and co-ordinate the efforts of Coalition countries and US Government agencies. General Franks in an inter-agency process has been working on this for many months.

“A second advantage is resources. Afghanistan is a poor country that has been brutalized by continuous war – civil war and occupation. Iraq has a solid infrastructure with working networks of roads and [resources] and it has oil to help give free Iraq the means to get on its feet.”

**448. In his speech to the Labour Party Spring Conference, Mr Blair stated that the UK should be as committed to rebuilding Iraq as to removing Saddam Hussein.**

**449. He offered no detail on what form that assistance might take.**

**450.** Before his speech to the Labour Party Spring Conference in Glasgow on 15 February, Mr Blair asked officials for information on a number of issues, including some raised by Ms Short in her letter of 14 February:

- “(a) How many Iraqi children under the age of five die each month? (We have seen the figure of 150 deaths per 1000. Is this accurate, and what does it mean in actual numbers?)
- (b) How many political prisoners are there in prison in Iraq at any time?
- (c) Is Northern Iraq better administered than the rest of Iraq? If so, what concrete examples can we give?
- ...
- (f) How were the Shia and Kurd uprisings after the Gulf War put down?
- (g) What was Iraq’s standard of living in the 1960s compared with eg Portugal, Taiwan, and others? And today?”<sup>201</sup>

**451.** The FCO response emphasised the unreliability of the available data, in particular for infant mortality and the number of political prisoners.<sup>202</sup> The FCO also advised that the comparative figures on GDP per capita came from different sources and should only be used as indicators, although the comparison between Iraq and Portugal was “particularly illuminating”.

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<sup>201</sup> [Minute Rycroft to Owen, 14 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s Speech’.](#)

<sup>202</sup> [Letter Owen to Rycroft, 14 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s Speech’.](#)

**452.** At Mr Rycroft's request, the FCO later provided additional comparators for GDP growth and new figures on infant mortality agreed with DFID.<sup>203</sup>

**453.** Mr Rycroft drew on the FCO response to recommend text for inclusion in Mr Blair's speech.<sup>204</sup> Mr Rycroft made no reference to the reliability of the data.

**454.** Some of the material provided by the FCO and Mr Rycroft was incorporated into the speech, in which Mr Blair described Iraq as:

"A country that in 1978, the year before he [Saddam Hussein] seized power, was richer than Malaysia or Portugal. A country where today, 135 out of every 1,000 Iraqi children die before the age of five<sup>205</sup> – 70 percent of these deaths are from diarrhoea and respiratory infections that are easily preventable. Where almost a third of children born in the centre and south of Iraq have chronic malnutrition.

"Where 60 percent of the people depend on food aid.

"Where half the population of rural areas have no safe water.

"Where every year and now, as we speak, tens of thousands of political prisoners languish in appalling conditions in Saddam's jails and are routinely executed.

"Where in the past 15 years over 150,000 Shia Muslims in southern Iraq and Muslim Kurds in northern Iraq have been butchered, with up to four million Iraqis in exile round the world, including 350,000 now in Britain."<sup>206</sup>

**455.** Mr Blair concluded:

"If the international community does not take note of the Iraqi people's plight but continues to address it casually this will breed terrorism and extremism within the Iraqi people. This cannot be allowed to happen.

"Remember Kosovo where we were told war would destabilise the whole of the Balkans and that region now has the best chance of peace in over 100 years.

"Remember Afghanistan, where now, despite all the huge problems, there are three million children in school, including for the first time in over two decades one and a half million girls, and where two million Afghan exiles from the Taliban have now returned ...

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<sup>203</sup> [Fax Owen to Rycroft, 14 February 2003, 'PM's Speech Question'; Fax Owen to Rycroft, \[undated\], 'Iraq: Prime Minister's Speech'.](#)

<sup>204</sup> [Minute Rycroft to Prime Minister, 14 February 2003, 'Iraq: Scotland Speech'; Minute Rycroft to Prime Minister, 14 February 2003, 'Iraq: Scotland Speech – additional points'.](#)

<sup>205</sup> The figure of 135 per 1,000 appears to have been taken from Ms Short's letter of 14 February to Mr Blair and not the material supplied by the FCO. Ms Short's letter made clear that the figure referred only to central and southern Iraq and quoted a figure of 72 per 1,000 for the north.

<sup>206</sup> *Scoop Independent News*, 17 February 2003, *Prime Minister Tony Blair's Glasgow Party Speech*.

“Ridding the world of Saddam would be an act of humanity. It is leaving him there that is in truth inhumane.

“And if it does come to this, let us be clear: we should be as committed to the humanitarian task of rebuilding Iraq for the Iraqi people as we have been to removing Saddam.”

## **DFID contingency planning**

**456.** In mid-February, DFID officials sought Ms Short’s views on how DFID should deploy its limited resources and what balance to strike between planning for an “exemplary role” in southern Iraq and supporting the UN and the wider international effort throughout the country.

**457.** Officials recommended certain actions to ensure that DFID was adequately prepared for a range of roles.

**458.** Ms Short rejected a number of her officials’ recommendations on the grounds that they might imply that military action was a certainty or presupposed a significant role for DFID to which it could not yet commit.

**459.** Ms Short did so despite accepting that, as a consequence, DFID would not be prepared for an immediate response in the event of military action or a humanitarian crisis on the ground.

**460.** Ms Short withdrew her objections by early March.

**461.** On 17 February, DFID officials advised Ms Short on the implications of the decisions taken at Mr Blair’s meeting on 13 February.<sup>207</sup> DFID needed to balance the decision that the UK should take the lead on humanitarian issues in southern Iraq with its commitment to support the international system, in particular the UN, in humanitarian work across Iraq and the region. DFID needed to prioritise its “scarce human and financial resources” between those activities.

**462.** DFID officials had discussed the idea of an “exemplary role” briefly with senior UK military officers and the MOD, who were ready to contribute “in circumstances where the military may be the only people able to deliver humanitarian assistance, or they are needed to facilitate access by others”. The Chiefs of Staff would discuss the humanitarian role of the UK military on 19 February. Officials recommended to Ms Short that, at that meeting, DFID would need to give a clearer steer on the role it expected to play and what it thought the military should do.

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<sup>207</sup> [Minute Conflict & Humanitarian Affairs Department to PS/Secretary of State \[DFID\], 17 February 2003, ‘Iraq – Contingency Planning: Deployment Plan’.](#)

**463.** Officials recommended that:

“... we plan at this stage to do all four of these activities:

- a) Support humanitarian needs nationally and in the region, primarily through the UN and Red Cross/Red Crescent movement
- b) Work alongside and influence humanitarian action by US DART teams
- c) Work alongside the UK military
- d) Undertake DFID bilateral humanitarian action.

“These activities are complementary and doing them all could maximise our impact – working in an exemplary way in a part of the country under UK military control (though activities b), c) and d) will have greater influence if we are co-operating closely with the UN and US delivery of assistance elsewhere in the country (through activities a) and b)).”

**464.** Officials also recommended a number of “pre-deployment steps which we need to initiate now to be adequately prepared to play these roles effectively”:

- establishing a forward base in Kuwait to allow DFID to build its capacity for deployment into Iraq, potentially including a field presence in a UK military AOR and/or Baghdad;
- deployment of a Humanitarian Adviser to Amman to liaise and work with humanitarian partners;
- regional assessment missions, including to Cyprus, Egypt, Turkey and Iran;
- deployment of a Civil-Military Humanitarian Adviser to 1 (UK) Div in Kuwait and regular visits to CENTCOM in Qatar; and
- secondments to support humanitarian co-ordination, initially to the UN Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC) in Cyprus.

**465.** Officials warned Ms Short:

“If we do not have people and assets in place and ready in time, we will not be able to respond quickly and as may be needed. Once conflict has begun logistical constraints will make it extremely difficult to respond unless we have put the preparations in place.”

**466.** Officials advised that the US was planning to carry out humanitarian work across Iraq, including in the South. If the UK did not agree with that approach, it would need to convince the US at “very senior level” that it should change its plans and that the UK was adequately resourced to play an exemplary role, which was not currently the case. It might be more realistic to supplement and influence US efforts in a UK sector. Officials recommended working alongside the US DART field office in Kuwait, “to protect and supplement the proposed exemplary role for UK humanitarian action”.

**467.** On working alongside the UK military, the advice stated that:

- The military was considering how to revise plans to allocate resources to a potentially significant humanitarian role, but that, given the military's resource constraints, it could be "highly advantageous" if Coalition military units could supplement the UK effort with medical teams and NBC units, where it was weakest.
- DFID needed to retain flexibility to deal with the possibility that, initially, the UN and other humanitarian organisations might not be able to operate in Iraq. In those circumstances, "we would need to rely on military forces supported by embedded DFID civil/military humanitarian advisers and/or a DFID operational team".
- Significant planning and preparation had been carried out, but some sectors were poorly covered, including "fuel supply (supporting electricity generation and distribution systems), water and sanitation and the power sectors". The security environment and the ability of humanitarian agencies to engage was a "principal concern". Past experience showed that "direct DFID/UK military humanitarian action can save lives [and] alleviate suffering, and assists the process towards recovery and stabilisation".

**468.** On DFID-led interventions, officials advised that the military might provide security and logistics to support DFID "assessments" and:

"... depending on priority needs potentially including the maintenance and management of key infrastructure including water and sanitation, transport infrastructure and electricity generation and transmission infrastructure in an AOR. Under these circumstances DFID would assist with technical programme support directly or via specialist contractors retained internationally. However, it has to be noted that our human resource capacity is limited (CHAD-OT [Operations Team] can provide around 25 specialists, including recruiting additional experts) and the scale of need could be immense and we may face ... the threat of CBW. Therefore we should concentrate on those tasks where our experience and expertise would add most value. Working alongside Coalition military where necessary and with US DART capacity where it would enhance humanitarian response."

**469.** The advice concluded with a section on resource constraints. Until DFID received an indication from the Treasury or No.10 that further funds would be forthcoming, it was planning on the basis that "a substantial share of DFID's Contingency Reserve" would supplement CHAD's emergency funds and MENAD's Iraq programme budget. If a total of £60m were available from those sources in 2003/04, DFID would plan initially to commit £35m for immediate relief. Exactly how to allocate that amount would depend on the nature of the conflict and other factors, but an indicative allocation might be:

- £20m to support the work of UN agencies, the Red Cross and NGOs across Iraq;

- £5m to fund UK military Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) to help generate stability within communities; and
- £10m for DFID's own rapid response capacity.

**470.** The advice stated:

“Under many scenarios, £35m is unlikely to be perceived as an adequate UK contribution to any immediate relief effort, particularly if OFF collapses. Leaving £25m for further humanitarian need, medium-term rehabilitation and reconstruction could also look very sparse. Action in response to the Secretary of State's previous two letters [Ms Short's letters of 5 and 14 February] to the Prime Minister on this rests with No.10.

“If the military is involved in the direct delivery of humanitarian assistance, there will be an issue about who pays. MOD claim to be financially stretched and are keen for DFID to pay ...”

**471.** Ms Short held a meeting to discuss those recommendations on 18 February, attended by Dr Brewer, Ms Miller, Mr Fernie and other DFID officials.<sup>208</sup> Mr Chakrabarti was not present, but was sent a copy of the record.

**472.** Ms Short stated that she was unwilling, without a clear financial package, to plan to do more than “support the UN, key international agencies, and perhaps provide some financial assistance to the UK military for Quick Impact Projects”. She had repeatedly made it clear in various forums (to Mr Blair in person and in writing, and in the House of Commons) that DFID did not have the financial resources to play a major role.

**473.** Within those constraints, Ms Short was content for officials:

- to start discussions about possible support to NGOs not yet involved in Iraq that had specific technical expertise in areas such as water and sanitation;
- to work closely with the US on a humanitarian response, but only if there was an overarching UN mandate and financial cover; and
- “in principle”, to make money available to the UK military for QIPs, to be re-examined if there was no UN mandate and the UK military was “working under a US lead”.

**474.** Ms Short did not agree to a forward base in Kuwait on the grounds that it would imply that military action was a certainty. DFID could make scoping visits to the region and arrange for vehicles to be ready for transportation, but the equipment should not be pre-positioned in the region. Ms Short “accepted that this would mean that DFID would not be prepared for an immediate response in the event of military action or a humanitarian crisis on the ground”. She suggested that DFID consider providing more

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<sup>208</sup> [Minute Bewes to Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department, 19 February 2003, 'Iraq Contingency Planning: Update'](#).

funds to the ICRC, which was undertaking similar preparations to those recommended by DFID officials.

**475.** Ms Short also rejected the proposed deployments to Amman and the HIC in Cyprus, on the grounds that it pre-supposed a significant role for DFID, which it was as yet unable to promise.

**476.** The meeting considered DFID's response to three possible scenarios:

- a. US/UK bilateral action; no second Security Council resolution (SCR); US military governor without UN mandate:
  - DFID would work through whichever international agencies were willing to engage: the UN, Red Cross, and others.
- b. Second SCR but overall US lead:
  - DFID would provide funding to UK military for QIPs; and work through the UN, Red Cross and others.
- c. Second SCR with UN mandate:
  - DFID would wish to be positively engaged – exactly how would depend on financial package available.”

DFID would need to consider each scenario, and variations on them, in the light of the amount of finance made available.

**477.** Ms Short also asked officials to reconsider wording used in draft replies to Parliamentary Questions that suggested DFID had “well-established systems for responding to humanitarian crises”. Iraq was a very different case.

**478.** Dr Brewer briefed the Chiefs of Staff on DFID's approach to humanitarian planning on 19 February.

**479.** Ms Short's meeting was a key exchange that defined DFID's approach to the immediate pre-conflict period:

- **DFID would prioritise “humanitarian considerations” over wider reconstruction.**
- **In the absence of further resources for humanitarian assistance and to avoid suggesting that military action was a certainty, DFID:**
  - **would prioritise support for the UN and the wider international effort throughout Iraq and the region;**
  - **would not prepare for contingencies that exceeded its current resources; and**
  - **would not deploy its full humanitarian response capability to support the immediate humanitarian effort in Iraq.**

**480.** Although Mr Chakrabarti did not attend the meeting on 18 February, by then he should have been aware:

- of the possibility that the UN would not lead the post-invasion reconstruction effort;
- that the US might fail to produce a satisfactory post-conflict plan; and
- that the UK military required effective DFID support if the UK was to meet its likely obligations in Iraq.

**481.** In those circumstances, as Permanent Secretary, Mr Chakrabarti should have:

- ensured that DFID officials had:
  - analysed the risks associated with DFID's plans for a limited contribution to the UK's humanitarian and reconstruction effort in post-conflict Iraq;
  - assessed the need for contingency preparations for a much broader role in humanitarian relief and reconstruction; and
- shared the findings with Ms Short.

**482.** There is no indication that Mr Chakrabarti engaged on the issue with Ms Short, DFID officials or the military, either before the meeting on 18 February or in the weeks remaining before the invasion.

### **“Sectorisation”**

**483.** During February, UK officials became increasingly concerned about the risk that the UK might agree to take responsibility for a geographical sector of Iraq before the implications of doing so had been examined.

**484.** A draft IPU paper on “sectorisation”, not yet agreed with the MOD, recommended that the UK should make clear to the US that it was unwilling to take responsibility for a sector for more than 60 days unless its presence was authorised by the UN and there was to be an early move to a UN transitional administration.

**485.** IPU guidance for UK officials attending the US inter-agency Rock Drill on post-conflict issues on 21 and 22 February stated that, in the very short term, the UK would have to administer a small area, most likely around Basra, where its troops were present at the end of hostilities.

**486.** The UK would not make a commitment to administer a division-sized area in the medium to long term.

**487.** On 14 February, Mr Ehrman reported to Mr Ricketts that at a “[Sir David] Manning meeting” on post-conflict issues, Sir David had “expressed strong concern that junior



CENTCOM planners seemed to be dreaming up an ever larger area of Iraq for the UK to administer”.<sup>209</sup> The Chiefs of Staff had advised Mr Blair that it would be easier for the UK to play a smaller post-conflict role if it was part of a Coalition fighting force; the opposite now seemed to be the case. Sir David had said that:

“[Mr Richard] Armitage [US Deputy Secretary of State] was talking of military administration for two years. The Pentagon seemed to be more sensible, talking of six months. Did we [the UK] not need to reduce our 40,000 troops to around 5,000 by the end of six months? And who would pay for all this? Some on the US side seemed to be saying: you pay for what you administer.”

**488.** Mr Ehrman had suggested to Sir David that if the UK were to take on a sector it should be getting as many like-minded allies as possible to join it:

“We should use the Anglo-Italian and Anglo-Spanish summits for this. Simon Webb wondered whether Spain and Italy would be able to contribute. They were almost fully committed in Kosovo, and we were trying to line up Spain as the next ISAF [International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan] lead. David Manning however favoured using the summits for the purpose I suggested. He also said we should look to involve Arab countries: Egypt, Jordan, UAE, and maybe also Malaysia and Pakistan.”

**489.** Mr Ehrman informed Mr Ricketts that Sir David Manning had asked the MOD:

“... to get the best information they could, at a senior level, on what size of sector was really being proposed for the UK; and FCO, with MOD, then to let No.10 have views on the issues which would be involved in its administration, and how we would seek to deal with these”.

**490.** Mr Ehrman said that the FCO would be setting up a meeting with the MOD at official level the following week.

**491.** On 17 February, the IPU sent Mr Ehrman a paper on sectorisation as part of his briefing for a meeting on post-conflict issues chaired by Lieutenant General Anthony Pigott, Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Commitments) (DCDS(C)).<sup>210</sup>

**492.** In the covering minute, the IPU proposed objectives for the meeting, including agreement on the need for “express international authorisation of any Coalition occupation of Iraq (ie a ‘third’ Security Council resolution)”, and for:

“... an early move from a Coalition military occupation to a UN interim administration: we need to make clear to the US that we shall not be prepared to stay at all long (60 days?) under a US/Coalition administration. If there is an early move to a

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<sup>209</sup> [Minute Ehrman to Ricketts, 14 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Day After’.](#)

<sup>210</sup> [Minute Iraq Planning Unit \[junior official\] to Ehrman, 17 February 2003, ‘Iraq: General Pigott’s Meeting: Sectorisation and UN Involvement’ attaching Paper \[undated and unattributed\], ‘A UK Geographical Sector of Iraq?’.](#)

UN interim administration, we should be prepared to be 'lead nation' for a sector. It would be useful to discuss what this might mean in practice. A lead on security and willingness to take a lead role in UN discussions?"

**493.** The IPU explained that there was "a slight difference" between MOD and FCO advice being prepared for No.10. The FCO proposed that the UK should take the lead on security in a sector "only if there is a UN interim administration". The MOD "appear willing to contemplate taking on a rather greater burden in a sector so long as there is a UN-authorised Coalition/US administration".

**494.** The two positions were reconciled in the joint briefing on post-conflict UN involvement prepared by the IPU for Mr Blair's conversation with President Bush on 19 February.

**495.** In the paper on sectorisation, prepared with input from UND and FCO Legal Advisers, the IPU assumed that under any military plan UK forces would secure a "UK sector" in southern Iraq. Four questions then arose:

- how long should UK forces remain?
- should other UK civilians/administrators be in Iraq?
- what should be their task?
- which area should they be in?"

**496.** Options ranged:

- from occupying as small an area as possible (initial plans were for around 1,600 sq km<sup>211</sup> around Basra and Umm Qasr) for as short a time as possible (until we can hand over to someone else, or simply withdraw without leaving a bloodbath)
- to occupying a large area of south-eastern Iraq and administering it as an occupying power for perhaps 2-3 years, until an Iraqi administration takes over."

**497.** The paper listed four constraints on the UK approach to sectorisation:

- growing debate about the legality of occupation the longer Coalition Forces remained in Iraq without a UN mandate;
- UK and US interpretations of their responsibilities under international law might differ;
- reduction in UK force numbers "must begin by July/August, to achieve reduction to medium scale by October/November";
- financing: military costs alone would be £2.5bn. The paper asked: "MOD: is this known to Treasury?"

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<sup>211</sup> The figure of 1,600 sq km was used repeatedly in policy and briefing papers during January and February 2003. This was mistaken. It should have been approximately 16,000 sq km.

**498.** The IPU listed pros and cons of sectorisation:

Pros

International Profile (though this could be negative).

Ability to make a real difference: exemplary administration of a sector, setting the standard for others operating elsewhere.

Control: less dependent on others (US in particular).

Cons

Exposure: the former colonial power again administering Iraq. Possible resentment, even resistance. Much would depend on the international environment.

Expense. Long-term commitment / military overstretch / drain on other human resources (NHS staff, armed policemen).

We want a united (albeit federal) Iraq. Lengthy occupation of sectors by [a] different power would mean different systems of administration, and make a united Iraq more difficult to achieve. (? Bosnia)”

**499.** The IPU offered a tentative conclusion, in which it square bracketed all references to the possible duration of the UK’s responsibility for a sector. The IPU stated that “in any foreseeable circumstances, the UK has the capacity to secure and occupy for [six] months” the 1,600 sq km initially envisaged, “though we think it is in fact rather larger than that”, and to “take on a wide range of tasks”. The larger the sector, the shorter the time the UK could administer it for. On that basis, the IPU recommended:

“We need to make clear to the US that **we are unwilling to take responsibility for a sector for more than [60 days] unless our presence is clearly and expressly authorised by the UN, and there is to be an early move to a UN transitional administration**. So we can operate as ‘lead nation’ (ensuring security) within a UN transitional administration, but are not willing to take on a medium-term (two year) administration on our own, under a US occupation of Iraq which lacks UN authorisation. We should tell the US that, were we to find ourselves in that position, we would want to hand over to them [at the end of 60 days]. And they would find it extremely difficult to find anyone to share the burden.”

**500.** The record of Mr Ricketts’ Iraq Evening Meeting on 18 February stated that “a possible UK sector” had been one of the subjects discussed at post-conflict talks with the MOD attended by Mr Ehrman and Mr Chilcott.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Minute Tanfield to PS/PUS [FCO], 18 February 2003, ‘Iraq Evening Meeting: Key Points’.

**501.** The IPU paper's broad assumption in favour of administration of a small sector for a short period was reflected in the guidance for UK officials attending the US inter-agency Rock Drill on post-conflict issues on 21 and 22 February.<sup>213</sup>

**502.** The guidance, agreed by Mr Ehrman and Lt Gen Pigott, was submitted to Ministers on 20 February.<sup>214</sup>

**503.** In the second half of February, Treasury officials expressed concern about the resource implications of the UK taking on responsibility for a geographical sector of Iraq.

**504.** They advised that the "emerging politics" of post-conflict Iraq pointed to a much longer and larger commitment than initial MOD estimates suggested.

**505.** Papers by No.10 and the Treasury on the financing of post-conflict reconstruction also emphasised the risk of a significantly higher cost to the UK in the absence of a UN mandate.

**506.** On 19 February, Treasury officials updated Mr Brown on post-conflict issues for meetings with Mr John Snow, the US Secretary of the Treasury, and other G7 Finance Ministers:

"Iraqi reconstruction may come up at this meeting. Even if Mr Snow does not raise it, you may wish to. Our sense is that momentum on the issue is developing very fast, and there is a risk that the financing agenda could be set by policy decisions taken in Foreign and Defence Ministries. Sharing ideas with Mr Snow may be a useful way to begin to redress this balance. An additional approach would be to write round Whitehall colleagues sharing your concerns (for instance, about the economic and financing implications of foreign and defence policy decisions)."<sup>215</sup>

**507.** Officials attached a paper identifying three "pitfalls" on the path to achieving Treasury objectives in Iraq (establishing prosperity and stability while sharing the cost fairly):

- UN cover. Without this, the UK would have to contribute more to the reconstruction effort, IFIs would find it hard to engage, and the international community would be unable to resolve crucial financing issues such as debt rescheduling.
- Being realistic about the decisions a transitional Iraqi government could take. It could be illegitimate and destabilising for the transitional government to take decisions on Iraqi economic policy.

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<sup>213</sup> [Minute Chilcott to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 20 February 2003, 'Iraq: Day-After \(Phase IV\)' attaching Paper \[unattributed\], 'Iraq Day After: Guidance for Officials at US ROCK Drill'.](#)

<sup>214</sup> [Minute Pollard to PS/Secretary of State \[MOD\], 20 February 2003, 'Iraq: Day After'.](#)

<sup>215</sup> [Minute \[Treasury junior official\] to Chancellor, 19 February 2003, 'Update on Iraq' attaching Paper Country Economics and Policy Team, 19 February 2003, 'Iraqi reconstruction: pitfalls and process'.](#)

- The implications of establishing administrative sectors in Iraq: “If the UK takes on one, the cost – in terms of money and administrative burden – could rocket, and our stay lengthen.”

**508.** The paper stated:

“... we should learn and apply some generic post-conflict lessons including: ensuring UN involvement does not stretch to running economic policy or co-ordinating reconstruction; not committing resources until a needs assessment has been done; and trying to prevent foreign ministries taking financing decisions (even by default).

“The momentum of this issue makes it difficult for us to influence decisions, as does the concentration of decision-making in the US White House/NSC and Department of Defense. But the UK is feeding into this at official level via a new Iraq Planning Unit – we are leading an economic sub-group within this.”

**509.** Mr John Dodds, Head of the Treasury Defence, Diplomacy and Intelligence Team, sent comments to Mr Brown the same day, focusing on sectorisation:

“... a key decision that will need to be taken very soon is whether ... the country should be split into sectors for administrative and peacekeeping purposes and whether the UK should take responsibility for one of the sectors.

“This is a decision that will have substantial public expenditure implications. If there were a UK sector we would find ourselves locked into the management of the aftermath for a substantial period (perhaps as long as five years) rather than allowing other countries – who will not have borne any costs of the conflict itself – to make their contribution.”<sup>216</sup>

**510.** Mr Dodds added that the net additional cost to the UK “would certainly be hundreds of millions of pounds a year”, more if there were no UN authorisation. The US appeared to favour a sectoral approach, but the need to bring in expertise from the widest possible range of sources and to avoid the perception that the UK was occupying “part of the Arab world” argued for a more internationalist approach. Mr Dodds explained that Treasury officials were taking every opportunity to stress to FCO and MOD colleagues that Mr Brown would want to have an input to any decision on sectorisation, but recommended that he underline the point himself with Mr Blair, Mr Straw and Mr Hoon.

**511.** The following day, a Treasury official provided further advice to Mr Brown and Mr Paul Boateng, Chief Secretary to the Treasury.<sup>217</sup> He reported that the Treasury now had the MOD’s first estimates of the likely total cost of conflict in Iraq “if a decision is

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<sup>216</sup> Minute Dodds to Chancellor, 19 February 2003, ‘Iraq – “Aftermath” – UK Role’ attaching Paper Dodds/ [Treasury junior official], 19 February 2003, ‘Iraq conflict – public expenditure impact’.

<sup>217</sup> [Minute \[Treasury junior official\] to Chancellor, 20 February 2002, ‘Iraq: update on potential cost and how should we present them?’](#)

made to stay ... and provide a medium-term stabilisation/peace keeping force". The upper limit, based on what was feasible in military terms, was a two-year commitment at a total cost of £1.6bn. The advice continued:

"The extent to which any of this is optional is unclear. We think that, because of our Geneva convention obligations, it will be impossible to resist keeping a substantial force in theatre for at least six months post the end of fighting ... In practice the emerging politics of a post-conflict Iraq point to a much more substantial commitment both in terms of size and length of stay."

**512.** The official raised the need to take into account the cost of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. He did not expect that the Treasury's insistence that departments (mainly DFID) should meet those costs through budget reprioritisation would hold. As a "worst case", he anticipated £250m for humanitarian costs and £250m for reconstruction costs in the UK financial year 2003/04 (with figures for future years to be determined later).

**513.** On 24 February, Mr Jeremy Heywood, Principal Private Secretary to Mr Blair, sent Mr Mark Bowman, Mr Brown's Principal Private Secretary, a paper on financing Iraqi reconstruction prepared by the No.10 Policy Directorate. Mr Blair wanted to share the paper with the US as soon as possible.<sup>218</sup> The paper was also sent to the FCO, DFID, DTI and the Cabinet Office.

**514.** The No.10 paper stated that the cost of "reconstruction and nation-building" in Iraq would be between US\$30bn and US\$105bn, excluding the direct cost of conflict and post-conflict peacekeeping. Only an administration enjoying the legitimacy provided by the UN would be free to engage with the financial markets to secure funding for Iraq's long-term future.

**515.** Mr Bowman replied on 25 February, explaining that the Treasury "fully supports the main message of the paper, that, in the absence of a UN mandate, the financing costs of reconstructing Iraq will be significantly higher".<sup>219</sup> Mr Bowman offered detailed comments on the text and pointed out that the Treasury was already involved in complementary work alongside the IPU and in liaison with the US and Australia.

**516.** Mr Straw's Private Office reinforced the message that work was already under way elsewhere, adding that "interdepartmental discussion is needed to get the complex issues touched on right".<sup>220</sup> It added that, while it was welcome that No.10 wanted to share UK concerns and explore options with the US at a high level, the paper needed improvement. If shared with the US in its current form it would undermine efforts to build up a constructive bilateral dialogue on post-conflict economic issues.

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<sup>218</sup> [Letter Heywood to Bowman, 24 February 2003, 'Iraq: Reconstruction' attaching Paper \[unattributed and undated\], 'Financing the Reconstruction of Iraq'](#).

<sup>219</sup> [Letter Bowman to Heywood, 25 February 2003, \[untitled\]](#).

<sup>220</sup> [Letter Owen to Heywood, 25 February 2003, 'Iraq: Reconstruction'](#).

**517.** A revised draft was prepared, but not shared with the US.<sup>221</sup>

**518.** UK/US discussion of the post-conflict financing of Iraqi reconstruction is described in Sections 10.1 and 10.2.

## The post-conflict Rock Drill

**519.** The stated aim of the UK delegation to the US inter-agency Rock Drill on 21 and 22 February was to encourage the US to draw the conclusion that the job of administering Iraq was too large for the US, that a large Coalition was the key to success, and that this could only be achieved by securing UN authorisation for Phase IV.

**520.** Instead, the Rock Drill only confirmed the scale of the shortcomings in US post-conflict planning, including the deficiencies of ORHA, and the continuing gap between UK and US positions on the role of the UN.

**521.** Sectorisation remained unresolved after the Rock Drill.

**522.** On 19 February, the Chiefs of Staff discussed post-conflict planning in the context of the forthcoming US Rock Drill, an inter-agency rehearsal for post-conflict administration convened by Lt Gen Garner and scheduled for 21 and 22 February.<sup>222</sup> The FCO (Mr Ehrman), the Cabinet Office (Mr Bowen), SIS, Maj Gen Cross and, for the first time, DFID (Dr Brewer) and the IPU (Mr Chilcott) were present.

**523.** Lt Gen Reith reported that Mr Blair wanted:

“... an exemplary aftermath but [was] not committed to any particular size of UK AOR pending further advice on objectives, capability and capacity to sustain. It was ... unclear who the US anticipated placing as sector leaders given that few other nations would be able to support the task within three months. Therefore, there may be an unsupportable expectation that the UK would control a relatively large area. Pragmatically, however, aftermath operations would commence locally whenever and wherever hostilities ceased, not necessarily coincident with any plan.

“The FCO view was that other nations should be involved as soon as possible and that early commitment to any nascent US sector plan should be avoided ...

“The UK line to take at the Rock Drill would be the commitment in principle to the immediate involvement in aftermath ops but not yet to any long-term plan, noting the PM’s wish to exert maximum influence in aftermath planning. Clarity was needed on the proposed command chain in Phase IV and whose political and legal authority would prevail.”

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<sup>221</sup> [Manuscript comments Manning and Drummond on Email Heywood to Banerji, Manning, Powell and Adonis, 3 March 2003, ‘Financing the Reconstruction of Iraq’ attaching Paper \[unattributed\], ‘Financing the Reconstruction of Iraq’.](#)

<sup>222</sup> Minutes, 19 February 2003, Chiefs of Staff meeting.

**524.** Dr Brewer set out DFID’s approach to humanitarian planning. The UK was “well placed to play an exemplary role in humanitarian support in the UK AOR but saw UN authorisation as essential to effective involvement”. DFID had identified four potentially complementary routes for delivering support (through UN agencies, the US military, UK military and DFID bilaterally), subject to five possible scenarios ranging from no UNSCR to an “all embracing UN mandate”. At the two extremes, it would only be “politically possible” to provide a small amount of assistance without a second resolution, while a “full UN mandate” would require funding of £300m-£400m per year. Training for a small number of DFID staff had begun, but their deployment would depend on progress at the UN. Ms Short, while working for full commitment through the UN, would not be seeking additional resources beyond DFID’s £100m contingency reserve.

**525.** Dr Brewer restated DFID’s position in a letter to Mr Bowen on 24 February, which was copied to the MOD, FCO and Treasury.

**526.** The Chiefs of Staff agreed that humanitarian operations formed an essential part of the overall campaign, not least as a force protection measure, and should therefore attract Treasury contingency funding. Adm Boyce directed that humanitarian assistance be covered in the joint FCO/MOD position paper on post-conflict issues for the Rock Drill, which should make clear the potential for conflict and post-conflict phases to run in parallel from an early stage.

**527.** Adm Boyce summarised the key points of the discussion on post-conflict preparations, including that:

- the Rock Drill should be used “to secure maximum [UK] influence without early commitment to detail”;
- a “UN-approved international civilian administrator” would be required;
- UK Phase IV activity should centre on the region around Basra; and
- the UK military commitment should be “scaled down from large to medium in the autumn”.<sup>223</sup>

**528.** On 20 February, Mr Chilcott sent Mr Straw an IPU guidance note for officials taking part in the Rock Drill.<sup>224</sup> It had been agreed with Mr Ehrman, the MOD and the Cabinet Office, but not DFID.

**529.** Mr Chilcott’s covering minute to Mr Straw stated:

“There is barely any mention of the UN in the CENTCOM plans we have seen for Phase IV (post-conflict) to date. But there are gaps in the plan, which is still fluid and which we have the opportunity to influence. We shall encourage the US players at

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<sup>223</sup> The only reference to reducing troop numbers “in the autumn” seen by the Inquiry. All subsequent references are to a reduction “by the autumn”.

<sup>224</sup> [Minute Chilcott to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 20 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Day-After \(Phase IV\)’ attaching Paper \[unattributed\], ‘Iraq Day After: Guidance for Officials at US ROCK Drill’.](#)



the Rock Drill to draw the conclusion that the job of administering Iraq is too large even for the US to undertake, that putting together a large Coalition – drawing on Arab countries – is the key to success, and that this can only be achieved by getting UN authorisation for Phase IV.”

**530.** The attached guidance note focused on the arguments participants should deploy in support of “at least UN authorisation of the transitional administration, and ideally ... a UN transitional administration” and offered them “strategic” guidance on the UK contribution.

**531.** The guidance note stated that the UK and US agreed that “there must be a phased approach to the ‘day after’”. For the UK, that meant “(a) military administration, (b) a UN transitional administration and (c) handover of power to a new Iraqi government”. The US referred to “stabilisation”, “recovery” and “transition to security”.

**532.** On sectorisation, the guidance stated:

- UK will have, in the very short term, to administer the area where its forces are at the end of hostilities. No commitment to administer divisional size area in the medium to longer term. More likely a small area around Basra.
- No commitment to administering any part of Baghdad.
- Where we are involved in administration, will want to be so in an exemplary fashion.”

**533.** On the UN, it stated:

“We need at least UN authorisation of the transitional administration, and ideally want a UN transitional administration. UN authorisation means a non-US figurehead. We need to explore further the right mix of US, UN and other elements to achieve a transitional administration which:

- is acceptable to the Iraqis;
- gains UN Security Council support;
- looks competent enough for the US.

“We should argue for:

- A UN executive administrator overseeing the international civilian transitional administration. Possibly a central European, with a high preponderance of Americans beneath him.
- The UN supervising/mentoring the majority of Iraq’s technical ministries, eg health, agriculture, finance, energy.
- A separate UN figure, supported by the international community and acting in close liaison with the US, overseeing the political process leading to a new constitution, a referendum and elections.

- The US-led Coalition providing security, mandated by the UNSC but not answerable to the UN.
- The World Bank and IMF overseeing economic reconstruction, both the policy framework and the award of contracts above a certain threshold, under UN authority.”

**534.** The guidance stated that the UK force would reduce from large scale (three brigades plus) to medium scale (one brigade plus) “if possible by the autumn”.

**535.** The UK would make no commitment on any “vertical” (functional) sector, but, in keeping with Mr Straw’s instruction of 3 February, the paper stated that the UK would consider, but not commit to, providing support for UN-led justice sector reform “provided we had the right cover”.

**536.** Mr Straw commented that he was “very glad” to see how much the paper highlighted the UN’s role and that he was “ready to weigh in at any time with [Secretary] Powell”.<sup>225</sup>

**537.** Mr Pollard showed the IPU paper to Mr Hoon the same day.<sup>226</sup> He explained that a more detailed cross-government paper, setting out potential UK involvement in Iraq in the short, medium and long term, would be prepared after the Rock Drill.

**538.** The first paper matching that description was the ‘UK Vision for Phase IV’, sent to No.10 on 26 February and described later in this Section.

**539.** The Rock Drill on 21 and 22 February was the first time representatives of all US military and civilian agencies involved in post-conflict administration had met in one place.<sup>227</sup>

**540.** The UK team was led by Mr Chilcott, accompanied by a military secondee to the IPU, a DFID representative, Maj Gen Cross and (acting) Maj Gen Whitley.<sup>228</sup>

**541.** The British Embassy Washington reported that:

“The inter-agency rehearsal for Phase IV ... exposes the enormous scale of the task ... Acknowledgment that this is beyond US capabilities. Private realisation by some that it will require a UN umbrella, but planning does not take account of this ...

“Overall, planning is at a very rudimentary stage, with the humanitarian sector more advanced than reconstruction and civil administration.”<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Minute Owen to Chilcott, 21 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Day-After (Phase IV)’.

<sup>226</sup> [Minute Pollard to PS/Secretary of State \[MOD\], 20 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Day After’.](#)

<sup>227</sup> Bowen SW Jr. *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009.

<sup>228</sup> Telegram 235 Washington to FCO London, 24 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Day After: Rehearsal of Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance’.

<sup>229</sup> Telegram 235 Washington to FCO London, 24 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Day After: Rehearsal of Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance’.

**542.** The record of the FCO Iraq Morning Meeting on 24 February stated that the Rock Drill:

“... revealed a large gap between the US’s ambitious plans and their ability to deliver. Our message, that they need the Coalition and, therefore, UN authorisation, appeared to hit home.”<sup>230</sup>

**543.** On 25 February, Lt Gen Garner discussed the Rock Drill with Maj Gen Cross. According to Maj Gen Cross, Lt Gen Garner was irritated at US colleagues’ lack of understanding of the scale of the task ahead, but did not seem to have tackled the issue with Secretary Rumsfeld. Maj Gen Cross added that Lt Gen Garner was being “run pretty ragged briefing people” and had little time to lead ORHA.<sup>231</sup>

**544.** Maj Gen Cross told the Inquiry that:

“... [the IPU] was very small and at that stage I sensed that we had no thoughts of our own post-war.

“So when Dominick [Chilcott] and the team came out to the Rock Drill ... all that happened was that people listened to this debate rather than saying, ‘This is what we think we should be doing.’”<sup>232</sup>

**545.** Mr Chilcott told the Inquiry:

“We saw ORHA for the first time in action at a Rock Drill in the United States on 21 and 22 February, and there, I think, we realised quite how undercooked ORHA was as an operation ...

“... [T]hey hadn’t been in place very long, and although Jay Garner ... was a thoughtful, reasonable man who had experience of Iraq ... most of the people who he had asked to join him were at that stage, you know, like him, former retired military officers and one didn’t get a sense that this was drawing on the best information and best knowledge that was available to the US administration ...

“... And I remember at the Rock Drill thinking that the scale of the challenge that they are taking on is absolutely enormous, and the time they have got to do it is very short and the number of people they have got to do it who really know about how to run these things is actually very small.

“... [I]t wasn’t an organisation or an event, the Rock Drill, that inspired, I think, any of us with a great deal of confidence that this was going to go smoothly.

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<sup>230</sup> Minute Tanfield to PS/PUS [FCO], 24 February 2003, ‘Iraq Morning Meeting: Key Points’.

<sup>231</sup> Minute Cross to DCDS(C), 25 February 2003, ‘Bullet Points from Cross Since VTC with DCDS(C)’.

<sup>232</sup> Public hearing, 7 December 2009, page 20.

“So we had misgivings about whether we should be too closely associated with what ORHA was doing. We also had other reasons to hesitate about the day after, which was to do with the legality of ORHA’s ambition. ORHA had quite a high degree of ambition in the amount of reform and reconstruction it was proposing, and we felt without specific Security Council authorisation this would go beyond what we were allowed to do as Occupying Powers on the basis of the Geneva Convention and the Hague Regulations. So we had a legal issue and we had a kind of policy issue about whether this should be a DoD beast, that made us hesitant. We certainly reported our views on the shortcomings of ORHA when we went back.”<sup>233</sup>

**546.** Asked what the reaction had been in London, Mr Chilcott explained:

“We doubled our efforts in our bilaterals with the Americans to try and swing them back into a sort of concept of operations that we felt was more likely to bring success.

“So the ORHA Rock Drill was on 21 and 22 February, the Prime Minister chaired a Ministerial meeting on day after issues on 6 March, which ... raised the high level of Ministerial engagement on these issues, and Mike O’Brien ... led discussions on day after issues on 13 March, which I attended as well, and then there was the 16 March Azores Summit.

“So there were a series of high level events where we were making our points to the Americans.”

**547.** Mr Chilcott added:

“I can’t remember the lack of sense of preparation on the American side for a clear post-war plan ever being brought up as a reason for the UK not to be involved in whatever operation might be coming, because at the same time we had much bigger things to worry about.

...

“And this may seem difficult to believe, but even until quite late in the day, we were not sure ourselves in the Foreign Office ... whether the UK would be involved ... we were only absolutely sure a relatively few number of days before things kicked off that we were going to be involved.

“And there was even that wobble ... when Rumsfeld said on television that if the UK wants to come with us that’s fine, but if they don’t, we understand and we will go it alone [see Section 3.8]. And that, I think, reflected at the time genuine doubt, certainly within the IPU and, I think, more widely in Whitehall, as to whether we were really going to be engaged or not.”<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Public hearing, 8 December 2009, pages 21-23.

<sup>234</sup> Public hearing, 8 December 2009, pages 25-26.

**548.** In his written evidence to the Inquiry, Maj Gen Whitley explained:

“A ‘Rock Drill’ is US parlance for a complete mission rehearsal which assumes there is a plan – there was not. Instead this conference ranged across US departments describing how they were going to rewrite children’s history books, form an Iraqi Fanny Mae,<sup>235</sup> what training for personnel was needed for ORHA, what weapons they would have and so on ...

“I have no idea if there were any UK objectives for the aftermath at all. The only US articulation of an end state was ‘A country within current borders with a democratically elected government’. The only direction I am aware of from the Prime Minister was that ‘the behaviour of British Forces is to be exemplary’. Both inadequate ...

“The appointment of Garner and the creation of ORHA provided very clear indications that DoD would take control of the aftermath. This became very clear during the Rock Drill during which the State Department was publicly sidelined ... I ... repeated my misgivings but without any great belief there was anything [the] UK could do even if it was prepared to get engaged ...”<sup>236</sup>

**549.** After the Rock Drill, Mr Chilcott reported that the US military envisaged seven sectors in post-conflict Iraq, while ORHA would organise into three.

**550.** Mr Chilcott advised against accepting a likely US offer for the UK to head an ORHA sector.

**551.** Sectorisation remained unresolved after the Rock Drill. Mr Chilcott set out his understanding of the latest position on 24 February:

“Sectors mean different things at different times in Phase IV. And the military and ORHA have different sized sectors in mind ...”<sup>237</sup>

**552.** Mr Chilcott explained that it was not yet possible to know how large the UK Division’s AOR would be in Phase IVa, the stabilisation phase. In Phase IVb, the recovery phase, CENTCOM planners envisaged Iraq being divided into seven sectors, each headed by a two-star general. Whether a two-star general would have a division under his command would depend on the availability of forces and the degree of difficulty in maintaining stability:

“If there is organised resistance to the Coalition’s presence, the number of boots needed on the ground could considerably outstrip the Coalition’s ability to provide them. In Belfast, a city of 750,000, during the troubles, some 250 terrorists kept

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<sup>235</sup> The US Federal National Mortgage Association.

<sup>236</sup> Statement, 25 January 2011, page 9.

<sup>237</sup> [Paper Iraq Planning Unit, 24 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Phase IV: Sectorisation’.](#)

16 battalions busy. Basra province (the most likely UK AOR) has a population of about two million.”

**553.** Mr Chilcott reported that (acting) Maj Gen Whitley needed guidance from London on the size of the UK commitment to Phase IV. He added that, at the Chiefs of Staff Committee on 19 February, Adm Boyce:

“... thought we should aim to reduce to a medium size (ie one brigade) within six months and then stay at that level for as long as necessary.<sup>238</sup> Provided we can attract suitable partners to join us (and that would almost certainly depend on having UNSCR authorisation for Phase IV), having a UK two-star in charge of one of the sectors would be a reasonable outcome.”

**554.** Mr Chilcott explained that ORHA would organise into three sectors – north, central and south, aligned with military sectors containing “very large numbers of people”. For as long as ORHA had no UN mandate, its work would be politically controversial and was “likely to be very messy”. Mr Chilcott advised against accepting an expected offer from Lt Gen Garner for Maj Gen Cross to lead one of the three sectors.

**555.** It is not clear who saw Mr Chilcott’s paper, but some of the issues raised were discussed at a meeting chaired by Mr Blair on 6 March.

**556.** Lord Boyce told the Inquiry:

“... the initial expectation was that we would be there for a while, without defining exactly what it was. But we certainly weren’t expecting, the day after achieving success, to start drawing down our numbers; we were expecting to be there for a considerable period of time.”<sup>239</sup>

**557.** Lord Boyce explained: “I thought we would be there for three or four years at least, and said so at the time.” He added:

“The theoretical planning against the defence planning assumptions is you don’t do this sort of operation for an extended period longer than about six months. But it never seemed to me very likely that we would be out [of] there in six months.”

## Seeking US agreement on the post-conflict role of the UN

**558.** Mr Blair’s Note to President Bush on the second resolution, sent on 19 February, said little about post-conflict issues.

**559.** There is no indication that, when Mr Blair discussed Iraq with President Bush on 19 February, he raised either post-conflict planning or the post-conflict role of the UN.

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<sup>238</sup> The minutes of the Chiefs of Staff meeting, quoted earlier in this Section, recorded Adm Boyce as saying only that the UK military commitment should be “scaled down from large to medium in the autumn”.

<sup>239</sup> Public hearing, 3 December 2009, page 101.

**560.** On 18 February, in response to a request for advice for Mr Blair’s discussion with President Bush the next day (see Section 3.7), Sir David Manning wrote that there would be a much better chance of gaining support for the second resolution:

- if it was clear that the UN would have a “key role” after any military action and that a “massive humanitarian aid programme” would be instituted; and
- by publishing and implementing the Road Map on Israel/Palestine before any military action.

Sir David advised Mr Blair that both points would be a “tough sell” with President Bush, but “both are very important in helping us to win the argument”.<sup>240</sup>

**561.** Mr Blair sent President Bush a six page Note on 19 February, reflecting the seriousness of the UK’s concerns about the second resolution.<sup>241</sup> The Note is addressed in detail in Section 3.7.

**562.** At the end of the Note, Mr Blair offered “two further thoughts”:

- Publishing the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) Road Map would have “a massive impact”.
- There was a “need to start firming up the humanitarian work for the aftermath of the conflict ... and show how we will protect and improve the lives of Iraqi people”.

**563.** Mr Blair and President Bush spoke by telephone on 19 February.<sup>242</sup>

**564.** Before the call, the FCO submitted the advice on key messages for use with President Bush commissioned at Mr Blair’s meeting on 13 February.<sup>243</sup> The briefing paper was prepared by the IPU in collaboration with the MOD, the Treasury, DFID and the Cabinet Office, and listed reasons for moving quickly to a UN interim administration operating alongside a “robust Coalition military presence to ensure security”.

**565.** The FCO concluded:

“The greater the degree of UN involvement, the greater our ability to take part in aftermath. Without UN involvement, ongoing UK participation will be very difficult – real legal and legitimacy problems.”

**566.** The conversation between Mr Blair and President Bush is described in Section 3.7.

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<sup>240</sup> Minute Manning to Prime Minister, 18 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Points for Bush’.

<sup>241</sup> Note [Blair to Bush], [undated], ‘Note’.

<sup>242</sup> Letter Rycroft to McDonald, 19 February 2003, ‘Iraq and MEPP: Prime Minister’s Telephone Conversation with Bush, 19 February’.

<sup>243</sup> Letter Owen to Rycroft, 19 February 2003, ‘Iraq Day after: UN involvement’ attaching Paper FCO, [undated], ‘Iraq Day After: UN Involvement’.

**567.** There is no indication in the record that Mr Blair raised either post-conflict planning or the post-conflict role of the UN during his conversation with President Bush.<sup>244</sup>

**568. Mr Mandelson raised UK military concerns about post-conflict planning with Mr Blair on 23 February.**

**569.** On 23 February, after visits to Japan, Korea, Bahrain and Qatar, Mr Mandelson emailed Mr Blair and Mr Jonathan Powell, Mr Blair's Chief of Staff, about Iraq, commenting that "people are more worried about what follows a war than winning it".<sup>245</sup> Mr Mandelson stated that:

"American occupation and rule will be highly de-stabilising and will, in my view, radicalise opinion far more than the military action itself ... At the moment, the Arab League is well balanced ... If post-Saddam Iraq goes wrong we can expect mounting trouble. I should add here that Air Marshal Brian Burrige [UK National Contingent Commander (NCC)] and [Major] General Peter Wall [Deputy Chief of Operations] whom I saw at the US/British HQ outside Doha are also worried about post-Saddam planning. I am not sure exactly what is worrying them so much but they fear an FCO reluctance to 'post plan' too much, that we are not developing our own independent views but following in the American train and that we will not have sufficient strength on the ground to enforce our own judgements and will over the best arrangements for Iraqi governance after the hostilities.

...

"They wonder whether the perceived lack of British pre-planning over the humanitarian follow up is because Clare [Short] won't accept the likelihood of war. They emphasise the clear up – in different scenarios – will be huge. Are we all really ready for it, they wonder."

## **The potential for violence in the South**

**570. The potential scale and complexity of the post-conflict task facing the UK in southern Iraq was made clear in a February JIC Assessment.**

**571. The JIC warned that failure to meet popular expectations over humanitarian aid and reconstruction and rapidly to restore law and order could undermine support for any post-Saddam Hussein administration.**

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<sup>244</sup> Letter Rycroft to McDonald, 19 February 2003, 'Iraq and MEPP: Prime Minister's Telephone Conversation with Bush, 19 February'.

<sup>245</sup> Email Mandelson to Powell, 23 February 2003, 'Back from travels'.



**572.** On 19 February, at the request of the Cabinet Office, the JIC produced the Assessment 'Southern Iraq: What's in Store?'.<sup>246</sup> Key Judgements included:

- “Coalition forces will face large refugee flows, possibly compounded by contamination and panic caused by CBW use. They may also face millions of Iraqis needing food and clean water without an effective UN presence and environmental disaster from burning oil wells.”
- “Iran does not have an agreed policy on Iraq beyond active neutrality. Nevertheless Iran may support small-scale cross-border interventions by armed groups to attack the Mujahideen e Khalq (MEK). The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) will continue to meddle in southern Iraq. Iranian reactions to a Coalition presence in southern Iraq remain unclear but are unlikely to be aggressive.”
- “Post-Saddam the security situation in the South will be unpredictable. There is a high risk of revenge killings of former regime officials. Law and order may be further undermined by settling of scores between armed tribal groups.”
- “Popular support for any post-Saddam administration in the South will depend on adequately involving the Shia in the government of Iraq as a whole as well as engaging the remains of the state bureaucracy in the South, local tribal leaders and Shia clerics in local government.”

**573.** The JIC emphasised that intelligence on southern Iraq was limited.

**574.** In addition to assessments of Iraqi military dispositions and the immediate Iraqi and Shia responses to an attack, the JIC looked at Iranian policy and the post-Saddam Hussein political and security landscape.

**575.** The Assessment stated that Iran's aims in response to a Coalition presence in Iraq included:

- preventing refugee flows into Iran;
- ensuring a leading role for its allies among the Iraqi Shia (the Supreme Council for an Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and its armed wing the Badr Corps);
- minimising the size and duration of a US presence; and
- destroying the MEK.

**576.** Iran had interests throughout Iraq, but might consider that it had the greatest influence to pursue them in the South, through armed Shia groups such as the Badr Corps. The Badr Corps was estimated to be 3,000 to 5,000 strong, but “with the addition of reservists this may increase up to 20,000”.

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<sup>246</sup> [JIC Assessment, 19 February 2003, 'Southern Iraq: What's in Store?'](#)

**577.** The JIC assessed that:

“If the Coalition does not deal with the MEK, Iran may make limited cross-border rocket attacks on them ... [T]he Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) might act to undermine any post-Saddam peace that did not take Iran’s concerns into account ... We judge that both Iranian conservatives and reformers are anxious to avoid provoking a US-led attack on Iran. We therefore assess that **Iranian-inspired terrorist attacks on Coalition forces are unlikely, unless the Iranians thought the US had decided to attack them after an Iraq campaign.**”

**578.** The JIC assessed that the Iranian regime was preoccupied with domestic concerns and was not in a strong position to project its power into Iraq.

**579.** Shia politics in post-Saddam Hussein Iraq were described as “highly unpredictable”:

“Saddam’s regime has centralised power and stifled opposition. The only networks of influence in the South that exist outside of the Ba’ath Party are the tribes and the followers of some of the senior Shia clerics. Once the regime has collapsed, Coalition forces will find the remains of the state’s bureaucratic structures, local tribal sheiks and religious leaders. There will also be a number of fractious armed groups, some strengthened by arms seized during the collapse of the regime. The external opposition will attempt to assert authority, but only those with armed forces on the ground or support from senior Shia clerics, such as SCIRI or Da’wa, another Shia Islamist group, are likely to succeed to any extent ...

“Given that the Shia in southern Iraq have borne the brunt of regime oppression since 1991, there is a high probability of revenge killing of Ba’ath officials, both Sunni and Shia. This could be particularly widespread and bloody ... Beyond that the extent of any further breakdown of law and order is difficult to predict. But there will be large numbers of armed groups and some potential for tribal score-settling ... Overall there is a risk of a wider breakdown as the regime’s authority crumbles. There are no indications, however, of Shia preparations for an all-out civil war against Sunni Iraqis ... Iraqis may not welcome Coalition military forces, despite welcoming the overthrow of Saddam. **The establishment of popular support for any post-Saddam administration cannot be taken for granted.** It could be undermined by:

- damage to holy sites;
- major civilian casualties;
- lack of a UNSCR authorising a new administration;
- heavy-handed peace enforcement;
- failure to meet popular expectations over humanitarian aid and reconstruction;
- failure rapidly to restore law and order;

- failure to involve the Shia adequately in a post-Saddam administration; and
- failure to be seen to run the oil industry in the interests of the Iraqi people.”

Two factors might work in the UK’s favour:

- “• surviving networks of influence with whom we could work, including remains of state bureaucracy and food-distribution networks, tribal leaders and religious figures; and
- receptivity of the population to information from external media and leaflet drops.”

**580.** Mr Blair asked officials for advice on the implications of the JIC Assessment.<sup>247</sup>

**581.** Mr Cannon explained that the Cabinet Office and the IPU were “co-ordinating policy work in Whitehall on a range of issues likely to face our forces in southern Iraq regardless of whether there is a formal UK zone of control”.<sup>248</sup> The Rock Drill had provided an opportunity to put across the UK’s views on UN involvement and showed “the extent of US determination, at the highest level, to go it alone with minimal UN cover”.

**582.** Mr Cannon’s advice did not refer to the comment on the “rudimentary” state of US planning included in the report on the Rock Drill from the British Embassy Washington, which was not received in Whitehall until late on 24 February.

**583.** Mr Cannon provided Mr Blair with a list of IPU activities, drawn from Mr Chilcott’s note of 20 February, as an indication of the extent of the work in hand. Mr Cannon drew particular attention to a paper in preparation “outlining our principles and ‘red lines’ for a post-Saddam Iraq ... for use initially by David Manning with Condi Rice and ... possibly by you with President Bush”.

**584.** A set of IPU papers addressing those issues was sent to No.10 on 26 February.

**585.** In his statement to the Inquiry, Mr Blair wrote:

“... what we anticipated, was not what we found ... for example, the JIC report of 19 February 2003, specifically on the South of Iraq, says the risks were refugees, environmental damage and the impact of CBW strikes.”<sup>249</sup>

**586.** Mr Blair subsequently told the Inquiry:

“The benefit of the South was that it was Shia absolutely predominantly. So I felt we were going to be in an Area of Operation where it was frankly going to be easier for us ...

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<sup>247</sup> Minute Cannon to Prime Minister, 24 February 2003, ‘Southern Iraq: Aftermath Issues’.

<sup>248</sup> Minute Cannon to Prime Minister, 24 February 2003, ‘Southern Iraq: Aftermath Issues’.

<sup>249</sup> Statement, 14 January 2011, page 14.

“... [W]hat they [the JIC] were warning of was obviously right and important, but we felt that we had a better chance of managing this.

“I would just draw attention also to what they say about Iran too, because ... their basic view is that it is unlikely that Iran would be aggressive.”<sup>250</sup>

**587.** Mr Blair’s views on pre-invasion analysis of post-conflict Iraq are addressed later in this Section.

**588.** Several contributions to a paper published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in January 2003, read by Mr Blair in February, described the potential for violence in a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq.

**589.** The paper prompted Mr Blair to ask a number of questions about plans for post-conflict.

**590.** In mid-February Mr Blair read the Adelphi<sup>251</sup> Paper *Iraq at the Crossroads: State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change*, published by the IISS.<sup>252</sup>

**591.** Several contributors to the Adelphi Paper warned of the potential for violent disorder in post-conflict Iraq.<sup>253</sup>

**592.** Dr Isam al Khafaji (International School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Amsterdam) cautioned that “the horrendous task of overthrowing Saddam’s regime may prove to be less painful than that of dealing with the interest groups that have taken firm root in Iraqi society and owe varying forms and degrees of allegiance to the power structure that has been in place since 1968”.<sup>254</sup> He considered that violence was likely in the immediate aftermath of US military action but did not anticipate a civil war along sectarian (Sunni versus Shia) lines. He also considered that a period of foreign occupation was likely to be resented by the Iraqi population and become a cause for violence.

**593.** Looking at southern Iraq, Dr Faleh Jabar (Birkbeck College, London) cautioned against assumptions that the Shia community was homogenous and likely to be quiescent in the transition to a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq.<sup>255</sup> He warned that, while the Shia south might welcome an end to Ba’athist rule, the internal dynamics of the

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<sup>250</sup> Public hearing, 21 January 2011, pages 120-121.

<sup>251</sup> The IISS website describes the Adelphi series as “the principal contribution of the IISS to policy-relevant original research on strategic studies and international political concerns”.

<sup>252</sup> [Letter Rycroft to McDonald, 20 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Political and Military Questions’](#).

<sup>253</sup> Dodge T & Simon S (eds). *Iraq at the Crossroads: State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change*. IISS Adelphi Paper 354. Oxford University Press, January 2003.

<sup>254</sup> Al Khafaji I. *A Few Days After: State and Society in a Post-Saddam Iraq*. In: Dodge T & Simon S (eds). *Iraq at the Crossroads: State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change*. IISS Adelphi Paper 354. Oxford University Press, January 2003.

<sup>255</sup> Jabar FA. *Clerics, Tribes, Ideologues and Urban Dwellers in the South of Iraq: the Potential for Rebellion*. In: Dodge T & Simon S (eds). *Iraq at the Crossroads: State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change*. IISS Adelphi Paper 354. Oxford University Press, January 2003.

community (tribal loyalties and divisions, and increased Islamic fundamentalism) “could also bring forth unfettered chaos”.

**594.** Mr David Ochmanek (RAND Institute) concluded that, even if any invasion were successful in defeating the Iraqi military and deposing Saddam Hussein’s regime:

“Success in the endgame – providing a secure environment for the remaking of the political system and culture of Iraq – cannot simply be assumed. The emergence of tribally-based or ethnically-based insurgent or terrorist groups unreconciled to the post-Saddam order cannot be ruled out, particularly if the regime in Iran chose to sponsor and harbour such groups ...”<sup>256</sup>

**595.** The Adelphi Paper prompted Mr Blair to ask the FCO, the MOD and DFID a number of questions about the military campaign (addressed in Section 6.2) and post-conflict issues on 20 February.<sup>257</sup> The three departments were asked to provide answers by 24 February.

**596.** On post-conflict issues, Mr Blair asked:

“How do we prevent the Shias rising up to take over from the Sunnis?”

“What is our plan for the successor Government in Iraq? Is it a military ruler? Or a military ruler first then a path to more democratic rule mapped out?”

“What is the UN role in the new Government?”

“What are the precise humanitarian issues we need to address and what are our plans for them?”

**597.** The FCO and DFID answered Mr Blair’s questions on post-conflict issues.

**598.** FCO officials advised that:

- The Shia response to the removal of Saddam Hussein would depend to a great extent on the length of the Coalition occupation.
- The US plan to put a US general in charge of the transitional civilian administration was flawed.
- The duration of the transitional administration was “anyone’s guess”.
- The very high level of US ambition was not matched by resources.
- There was no reason the Iraqi civil service should not continue to function.
- UN involvement was needed to provide the legal mandate to reform and restructure Iraq.

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<sup>256</sup> Ochmanek D. *A Possible US-led Campaign Against Iraq: Key Factors and an Assessment*. In: Dodge T & Simon S (eds). *Iraq at the Crossroads: State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change*. IISS Adelphi Paper 354. Oxford University Press, January 2003.

<sup>257</sup> [Minute Rycroft to McDonald, 20 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Political and Military Questions’](#).

**599. DFID explained that its humanitarian plan involved working primarily through the UN. If additional resources were made available, it would consider a more active bilateral role in any UK-controlled zone. The department also expressed severe doubts about the adequacy of US humanitarian preparations.**

**600.** The FCO answered three of Mr Blair's questions of 20 February about post-conflict issues.<sup>258</sup> On preventing a Shia uprising, it advised the key would be:

"... to assure the varied Shia communities that they will be fairly represented in future Iraq ... A majority would probably hope to see a secular government ... Much will also depend on the length of a Coalition 'occupation'. If they see Western control becoming quasi-permanent, this too may arouse opposition, probably encouraged by neighbours like Iran."

**601.** Mr Blair told the Inquiry that, from autumn 2002:

"... we focused very much on what we would find and how we would deal with it. Also ... I raised this issue myself several times, you know, how would the Sunni/Shia relationship work out?"

...

"There was very much discussion of the Sunni/Shia issue, and we were well aware of that ... people did not believe that you would have Al Qaida coming in from outside and ... that you would end up in a situation where Iran ... would then try deliberately to destabilise the country."<sup>259</sup>

**602.** On plans for a successor government, the FCO stated:

"We and the US envisage a three-stage process following the conflict.

"Immediately after military action, the effective ruler of Iraq will be General McKiernan, the Coalition Land Forces Commander, reporting to General Franks in the US.

"Once the country has been stabilised, the US intend to establish a civilian administration in Iraq. To do this they have created ... ORHA ... We think this part of the US plan is flawed. We have argued for a UN-led or UN-authorized civil administration, and we do not think having a US General in charge is sensible.

"How long the [civilian] Transitional Administration would operate is anyone's guess. The US argue it will be 18 months – 2 years ... Their level of ambition is very high and not matched by their resources ... They aim to help the Iraqis rewrite their constitution and establish pluralist politics, to hold elections and to create a free market economy.

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<sup>258</sup> [Letter Sinclair to Rycroft, 25 February 2003, 'Iraq: Political and Military Questions'](#).

<sup>259</sup> Public hearing, 29 January 2010, pages 192-194.

“The first elections would be local. The goal of the Transitional Administration will be to create an environment in which national elections are possible. After elections, the Transitional Administration will be able to hand over to an elected national government.

“We believe that, contrary to the assumptions sometimes made, the Transitional Administration will be able to draw on a relatively competent Iraqi civil service. The Iraqi civil service has continued to function through several regime changes,<sup>260</sup> and we see no reason why it should not do so again, with changes at the highest level only.”

**603.** Mr Blair told the Inquiry that, if there had been “even more focus” on planning, the UK “would still have been focusing essentially on the humanitarian side, with an assumption that we would inherit a functioning civil service infrastructure, and it was that assumption that proved to be wrong”.<sup>261</sup> The UK “didn’t plan for ... the absence of this properly functioning civil service infrastructure”.

**604.** In response to Mr Blair’s question about the role of the UN in the new government, the FCO stated that any Transitional Administration would require UN Security Council authorisation.

**605.** The FCO advised that UN involvement would also be needed to:

- provide the legal mandate to reform and restructure Iraq;
- secure international and regional support;
- bring in the IMF and World Bank;
- adapt the OFF and sanctions regimes; and
- verify WMD finds and destruction.

**606.** The FCO added that the Coalition would still need to lead on security, and that Security Council authorisation would be required for both civilian and security functions.

**607.** DFID answered the fourth of Mr Blair’s questions, on humanitarian issues and the UK plan to address them.<sup>262</sup> The department advised that the scale of the humanitarian crisis would depend on the nature of the conflict. A key priority was therefore to minimise risks to civilians, infrastructure and, in order to protect Iraqi revenues, oil production. DFID emphasised that:

“There is more scope to **refine the Coalition military options and minimise these risks**. If this is not done, the consequences ... are potentially too great for the international humanitarian system to plan on current resources.”

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<sup>260</sup> It is not clear what this referred to. The Ba’athist regime had been in place since 1968.

<sup>261</sup> Private hearing, 29 January 2010, pages 180-181.

<sup>262</sup> [Minute Rycroft to Prime Minister, 26 February 2003, ‘Political and Military Questions on Iraq’ attaching Paper DFID, 24 February 2003, ‘DFID Input to Prime Minister’s questions of 20 February’.](#)

**608.** DFID also stated that the military would need adequate plans to deal with the civilian impact of CBW use before the UN and NGOs arrived. More generally, the role of UN agencies and NGOs would be determined by the extent of UN cover. There were also “severe doubts about the adequacy of US humanitarian preparations”.

**609.** Mr Blair’s question about the plan for addressing humanitarian issues was answered in one sentence:

“DFID is planning to work primarily through UN agencies, unless extra financial resources are available, in which case a more active bilateral role in any UK-controlled zone could be considered.”

## A UN “badge” for post-conflict Iraq

**610.** Mr Blair raised the importance of a UN “badge” with Gen Franks on 25 February.

**611.** He told Parliament later the same day that the UN must have a “key role” in post-conflict Iraq and that discussions were under way on exactly what that role would be.

**612.** Sir David Manning explained to Dr Rice that Mr Blair attached importance to the UN’s role, but was clear that UN involvement must not be at the expense of efficient administration and effective reconstruction.

**613.** On 25 February, Mr Blair told Gen Franks that he “still hoped that the UN could be brought on board” and that: “In any post-Saddam administration, the UN ‘badge’ would help pull the international community, including the Arabs and European public opinion back on board.”<sup>263</sup>

**614.** Mr Blair and Gen Franks also discussed the possibility that “an occupation could work in several ways on a continuum from a US occupation of Japan model downwards” and that “it was important to work on the details, to avoid any perception of a US occupation”.

**615.** Mr Watkins informed Mr Hoon (who was due to meet Gen Franks in Qatar on 26 February) that, during a meeting earlier in the day, Gen Franks had told Adm Boyce that Iraq would need to be under Coalition control for some time, during which there would need to be discussion with the UN on establishing a UN mandate.<sup>264</sup> Gen Franks had added that, contrary to press speculation, the US was not seriously considering anything along the lines of post-Second World War Germany or Japan. He had also agreed with a comment from Mr Webb that, in order to convince regional opinion of its intent, the US needed to start talking to the UN, but the US did not want to do anything

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<sup>263</sup> Letter Cannon to Owen, 25 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s meeting with General Franks’.

<sup>264</sup> Minute Watkins to Secretary of State [MOD], 25 February 2003, ‘Meeting with General Franks: 26 February’.



that looked like pre-emption while the second resolution was still under discussion. Mr Watkins recommended that Mr Hoon use that opening to pursue with Gen Franks the UK's preference for "a 'transitional civilian administration' under UN auspices".

**616.** Mr Hoon and AM Burrige met Gen Franks in Qatar on 26 February. The MOD record makes no reference to discussion of the duration of a transitional administration or a UN mandate.<sup>265</sup> During an exchange on the build-up of Coalition Forces in the region, Mr Hoon told Gen Franks that "politicians had a natural tendency to put off decisions. It was important that the military robustly told the politicians when they had to go."

**617.** Mr Blair made no reference to post-conflict planning in his statement on Iraq to the House of Commons on 25 February.<sup>266</sup>

**618.** In response to questions from Mr Iain Duncan Smith, Leader of the Opposition, about UN humanitarian contingency planning and "what contingencies the Government have planned for a representative government in Iraq", Mr Blair stated:

"In relation to humanitarian considerations and what type of government might succeed the government of Saddam ... that is something we are discussing closely with allies and the UN. I should like to emphasise that in my view if it comes to conflict the UN's role in the resulting humanitarian situation and in finding the right way through for Iraq will be immensely important ..."<sup>267</sup>

**619.** Mr Charles Kennedy, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, asked Mr Blair:

"... what post-war scenario do the Government envisage? Would they prefer a United States-administered post-conflict Iraq or some form of UN protectorate? What will our contribution be in such circumstances?"<sup>268</sup>

**620.** Mr Blair stated that, if it came to conflict, he had:

"... made it clear that the UN must have a key role; exactly what that role will be is another thing that we are discussing with the UN and with allies now."<sup>269</sup>

He did not answer Mr Kennedy's question about the UK contribution.

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<sup>265</sup> Minute Williams to DG Op Pol, 27 February 2003, 'Secretary of State's call on General Franks (CENTCOM) – 26 February 2003'.

<sup>266</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 25 February 2003, column 126.

<sup>267</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 25 February 2003, column 128.

<sup>268</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 25 February 2003, column 129.

<sup>269</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 25 February 2003, column 129.

**621.** In response to a question from Mr Tony Worthington (Labour) about whether he had been party to plans, reported in the US press, for a US general to administer Iraq, Mr Blair replied:

“... no decisions have yet been taken on the nature of how Iraq should be administered in the event of Saddam’s regime being displaced by force. I said earlier that I thought that the role of the UN had to be well protected in such a situation. The discussions that we are having on that matter are proceeding well. When we have reached conclusions and decisions, we can announce them so that people can discuss them.”<sup>270</sup>

**622.** Parliamentary debate on Iraq on 25 and 26 February is addressed in more detail in Section 3.7.<sup>271</sup>

**623.** Sir David Manning and Dr Rice discussed post-conflict issues on 25 February.<sup>272</sup> Both agreed the need to think soon about the “aftermath” and to keep discussing the role of the UN.

**624.** Sir David told Dr Rice that it would be important to show that the UN was fully involved in running post-Saddam Hussein Iraq:

“If we had gone the UN route to disarm him, it would be entirely consistent to maintain the UN route to rebuild the country once his regime had gone. There were also important questions of expertise and financing to consider. The UN was a critical source of both. This was an important issue for the Prime Minister, although he was clear that UN involvement must not be at the expense of efficient administration and effective reconstruction.”

**625.** Sir David offered to send Dr Rice a paper setting out the UK’s ideas.

## The DIS Red Team

**626.** In late February, the MOD established a small “Red Team” within the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) to give key planners in Whitehall an independent view of intelligence assumptions and key judgements.

**627.** Key judgements in the first report produced by the DIS Red Team included:

- the need for Coalition Forces to prevent the emergence of a security vacuum;

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<sup>270</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 25 February 2003, column 137.

<sup>271</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 25 February 2003, column 123.

<sup>272</sup> Letter Manning to McDonald, 25 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Conversation with Condi Rice’.

- **the danger that Iraqi support would erode rapidly in the absence of an acceptable interim administration and a clear road map to an Iraqi-led administration; and**
- **the risk of creating fertile ground for Al Qaida.**

**628.** In late February, the MOD established a small “Red Team” within the DIS to give key planners in Whitehall an independent view of intelligence assumptions and key judgements, to challenge if appropriate and to identify areas where more work was needed.<sup>273</sup>

**629.** Papers were copied to the Chiefs of Staff, PJHQ, the MOD, the FCO, the IPU and the JIC. There is no evidence that they were seen in No.10.

### The DIS Red Team

Between February and April 2003 the DIS Red Team produced five reports on post-conflict issues:

- ‘Regional Responses to Conflict in Iraq and the Aftermath’;
- ‘Obtaining and Retaining the Support of the Iraqi People in the Aftermath of Conflict’;
- ‘What Will Happen in Baghdad?’;
- ‘The Future Governance of Iraq’;
- ‘The Strands of the Rope’ (an assessment of the steps needed to achieve an effective Iraqi Interim Administration and hand over to a representative government of Iraq).

The first two reports are addressed in this Section. The other three were issued in April, after the start of the invasion, and are described in Section 10.1.

Four of the five reports were described as drawing on “a variety of sources inside the Allied intelligence community and ... a panel of regional experts assembled ... by Kings College, London”.<sup>274</sup> Professor Sir Lawrence Freedman was listed as one of the contributors to the first paper.

The fifth report, on Baghdad, “sought the perspectives of academic sources and members of the Iraqi exile community in UK (military and civilian) to gain fresh insights, and to a certain extent reflects their views”.<sup>275</sup>

All five reports were copied widely within the MOD, to PJHQ (Lt Gen Reith), the JIC (Mr Scarlett) and to the FCO/IPU (Mr Ehrman and Mr Chilcott). The last three were also addressed to the MOD/DIS US Liaison Officer. It is not clear how they were used.

<sup>273</sup> [Minute PS/CDI to APS2/SofS \[MOD\], 25 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Red Teaming in the DIS’.](#)

<sup>274</sup> Minute PS/CDI to APS2/SofS [MOD], 28 February 2003, ‘Iraq Red Team – Regional responses to conflict in Iraq and the Aftermath’ attaching Paper, DIS Red Team, ‘Regional Responses to Conflict in Iraq and the Aftermath’.

<sup>275</sup> [Minute PS/CDI to various, 7 April 2003, ‘Iraq Red Team – What Will Happen in Baghdad?’](#)

**630.** The first Red Team report ('Regional Responses to Conflict in Iraq and the Aftermath') was issued on 28 February.<sup>276</sup> It described Iraq as "a very complex society" and cautioned that "any attempt to analyse it in neat categories based on religion, ethnicity or tribe will almost certainly be over simplistic". The report advised that, by comparison with the previous British mandate in Iraq, which had relied on advisers like Gertrude Bell with an intimate knowledge of the country and its people, "our understanding of Iraqi society today can be shallow".

**631.** The Red Team's key judgements drew heavily on earlier JIC Assessments and included:

- the need for Coalition Forces to assume immediate responsibility for law and order to avoid other forces stepping into an internal security vacuum;
- that most Iraqis would initially view the Coalition as a liberating force, but support was likely to erode rapidly if the interim administration was not acceptable to the population and it could not see a road map towards a pluralist, representative Iraqi-led administration;
- the risk of creating fertile ground for Al Qaida, which could deliberately cause civilian casualties to undermine the establishment of a representative Iraqi-led administration.

**632.** The report stated that Al Qaida:

"... seeks removal of Western presence/influence from the Gulf and wants to see the US/UK operation go badly. AQ [Al Qaida] are currently in some disarray but will wish to take the opportunity presented by the US/UK operation to re-establish credibility and encourage widespread anti-Western activity in the region. However:

- Initially AQ shares a common goal with the Coalition: regime change. Once completed, goals will diverge rapidly and UK/US forces will present a rich target for terrorist attack.
- AQ fears the establishment of a pluralist, representative Iraqi government as it undermines their argument that Muslims can only achieve self-determination in a unitary Islamic theocracy. They could deliberately cause civilian casualties to undermine the Coalition's position."

## **Obstacles to an "exemplary" UK effort**

**633.** Dr Brewer set out Ms Short's views on the scale of DFID's post-conflict contribution in a letter to departments on 24 February.

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<sup>276</sup> [Minute PS/CDI to APS2/SofS \[MOD\], 28 February 2003, 'Iraq Red Team – Regional responses to conflict in Iraq and the Aftermath' attaching Paper, DIS Red Team, 'Regional Responses to Conflict in Iraq and the Aftermath'.](#)

**634. Ms Short was keen for DFID to support an exemplary humanitarian effort in any UK-controlled sector, but DFID's role would be constrained by:**

- the extent of the UN mandate; and
- the financial resources available (under most scenarios DFID would want to allocate significant funding to UN agencies working throughout Iraq).

**635. DFID was doing scoping work on the role it might play if there were a UN mandate, but the department did not have Ms Short's authority to deploy operationally or to make substantive plans to deploy "in an exemplary role".**

**636. Ms Short stated her position in Cabinet on 27 February.**

**637. Ms Short held a meeting on Iraq with DFID officials, including Dr Brewer and Mr Fernie, on 24 February.<sup>277</sup> The record was copied to Mr Chakrabarti's Private Office.**

**638. The record stated that there was "increased recognition across Whitehall of the likely scale of post-conflict activity, and the essential nature of UN involvement and authority if this was to be effectively addressed". Ms Short emphasised the importance of a "substantive" second resolution that clearly justified any action taken under it. She asked officials "to keep closely abreast of the debate on the legality of occupation of Iraq without any UN mandate".**

**639. Officials reported that ORHA's state of preparedness was "extremely worrying":**

- Humanitarian plans were the most advanced, but ORHA did not yet have sufficient funds, staff or capacity to deliver them.
- Reconstruction plans were "not nearly as well advanced as they should have been at this point".
- Civil administration plans were the least advanced, and ORHA "would not be ready by the six week deadline they had been set".
- Logistical support planning had only just begun. ORHA had "not even started on such vital areas as telecommunications".

**640. The record of the meeting stated that Ms Short would write to Mr Blair after Dr Brewer's forthcoming visit to New York, setting out the dangers this situation would pose in the event of early military action that was not authorised by the UN and did not enjoy wide international support.**

**641. The meeting also considered financial issues. Although the MOD and FCO "appeared to be more aware of the financial constraints, and the need for the widest possible burden sharing within the international community, we [DFID] had as yet no clear response to the issue of the limitation of DFID's engagement imposed on it by our**

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<sup>277</sup> [Minute Bewes to Miller, 25 February 2003, 'Iraq contingency planning: update'](#).

financial situation". Ms Short reported that Mr Brown "had indicated to her, in a private conversation, that he 'would do what he could to help'".

**642.** The same day, Dr Brewer sent Mr Bowen and senior officials in the MOD, FCO and Treasury a letter setting out Ms Short's position on what DFID could do following any conflict.<sup>278</sup> The letter reflected the conclusions of Ms Short's meeting with DFID officials on 18 February and Dr Brewer's presentation to the Chiefs of Staff on 19 February.<sup>279</sup>

**643.** Dr Brewer stated:

"Although she [Ms Short] would be keen for DFID to support an exemplary humanitarian effort in any UK-controlled sector, our [DFID's] role will be constrained by the extent of the UN mandate and the financial resources available to us. We have a strong commitment to the UN agencies, and would want to allocate significant funding to them under most scenarios. Drawing heavily on our contingency reserve and existing humanitarian aid and Iraq budget lines is unlikely to release more than £60-70m for humanitarian assistance to Iraq in 2003/04. Given our predictions of the humanitarian needs, with this level of funding we would not be able to play the exemplary role [in the South] the Prime Minister has asked for, and it would be irresponsible of us to plan to do so."

**644.** On the UN mandate, Dr Brewer stated:

"The role which DFID can play in funding our usual humanitarian partners may be further constrained by perceptions of the legality of any conflict and what happens afterwards, and also by humanitarian principles of impartiality and independence. UN mandates justifying not only military force but also a continuing international presence afterwards are critical to ensuring the international community can engage fully with the predicted enormous needs."

**645.** Dr Brewer described DFID's potential role under four scenarios closely based on those discussed at the DFID meeting on 18 February:

- "No second UNSCR, no mandated UN humanitarian role." DFID would fund those international agencies willing to accept UK money and best placed to respond.
- "Second UNSCR but no mandated UN humanitarian role (overall US lead)." DFID would additionally fund UK military QIPs, although without additional resources, the total was unlikely to exceed £5m. "We have doubts about how much the UN would be able to do beyond immediate relief with only a thin second SCR if a US-led Coalition assumed medium-term control of the country."

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<sup>278</sup> [Letter Brewer to Bowen, 24 February 2003, \[untitled\]](#).

<sup>279</sup> [Minute Fernie to Private Secretary/Secretary of State \[DFID\], 21 February 2003, 'Iraq: Deployment Options'](#).

- “Second UNSCR and clear humanitarian mandate.” DFID would want to be “positively engaged” with the UK military, US humanitarian effort and the UN. It would also “consider bilateral operations in any UK sector”, but commitments to UN agencies across Iraq and the region would “severely financially constrain what we could do in a UK-controlled sector with the UK military and other partners”.
- “Second UNSCR, clear humanitarian mandate and additional resources.” With adequate finances, DFID “would be able to play the exemplary role suggested by the Prime Minister”. Without, DFID could discuss with the MOD what the exemplary role might entail, but could not plan for it “without more comfort on resources”.

**646.** Dr Brewer stated that DFID staff were committed to advising the MOD and Armed Forces in all circumstances and that MOD-DFID links were now strong. DFID was also doing “scoping work” on the role it might play if there were a UN mandate:

“But we do not currently have political authority to deploy operationally, or to make substantive plans to deploy in an exemplary role (eg commissioning or pre-positioning material). Our Secretary of State has made our financial position clear in two letters to the Prime Minister.”

**647.** Dr Brewer’s letter illustrated the absence of an agreed UK approach to the provision of humanitarian relief, highlighting the gap between DFID’s focus on supporting the UN, Red Cross and NGOs across Iraq and the UK military’s focus on the humanitarian situation in its Area of Operations (AO) in the South.

**648.** MOD officials expressed growing concern about UK preparations for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and longer-term reconstruction in the South.

**649.** On 26 February, Mr David Johnson, Head of the MOD Iraq Secretariat, expressed concern to Mr Hoon’s Private Office about humanitarian assistance during the early stages of military conflict.<sup>280</sup> The MOD and DFID believed US plans for humanitarian assistance were inadequate, in particular because they relied on delivery by NGOs, which would not be there in numbers early on. The UK military would therefore need:

“... immediate access to sufficient expertise and resources to ... make good the deficiencies in the US plans. In particular ... DFID experts deployed in theatre, who can advise what is actually required ... (as opposed to soldiers making it up as they go along) ... There are lead-times associated with this ... Waiting till after a second SCR is leaving it too late. We know DFID haven’t got any money. That is why they need to ask for some, now.”

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<sup>280</sup> Email sec(O)-Iraq to sofs-ps [MOD], 26 February 2003, ‘Humanitarian Assistance’.

**650.** Mr Webb commented on Dr Brewer's letter on 27 February.<sup>281</sup> He suggested to Mr Lee that there were "wider consequences for the overall success of the campaign from the effectiveness of the CIMIC [civil-military] component, to which we should draw Ministers' attention collectively".

**651.** Sir Kevin Tebbit, who saw Dr Brewer's letter a few days later, commented on 7 March:

"The problem here is that DFID have a wrong view of what the Armed Forces can or should do to administer humanitarian relief, as distinct from civil, UN and NGO agencies – including DFID themselves."<sup>282</sup>

**652. Mr Blair told Cabinet on 27 February that humanitarian and reconstruction planning needed to take "centre stage" and that he would raise the issue with President Bush.**

**653.** In Cabinet on 27 February, Mr Hoon reported on his meeting with General Franks in Qatar the previous day (see Section 3.7).<sup>283</sup> Mr Hoon had discussed concerns with General Franks that:

"Not enough planning had been done on the post-conflict phase of operations, including humanitarian relief. British forces could find themselves in charge of a portion of Iraq quite quickly if resistance to Coalition military action collapsed. It would be helpful if experts from the Department for International Development could work with military planners in the region and consider pre-positioning humanitarian supplies so that there was no hiatus in the event that military action took place."

**654.** Ms Short told Cabinet that experts had been involved in talks in the Pentagon. Preparations were "just beginning and needed to be expedited". A UN legal mandate was "essential" for the humanitarian and reconstruction tasks that lay ahead. Without that, "proper preparation was impossible". That matter "needed to become a priority for the Coalition". It would be "difficult" to accommodate action in Iraq within her department's contingency reserve: "Greater resources were likely to be needed."

**655. The Inquiry considers that Ms Short's reluctance to prepare for a wider UK post-conflict role, though not critical to the outcome, and consistent with DFID's statutory role, contributed to the Government's failure to ensure that the UK was adequately prepared and resourced to carry out its likely obligations in Iraq.**

**656.** Mr Blair said that he would continue to push for a further Security Council resolution.<sup>284</sup> President Bush's commitments the previous day on the MEPP

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<sup>281</sup> Manuscript comment Webb to DG Op Pol, 27 February 2003, on Letter Brewer to Bowen, 24 February 2003, [untitled].

<sup>282</sup> Manuscript comment Tebbit, 7 March 2003, on Letter Brewer to Bowen, 24 February 2003, [untitled].

<sup>283</sup> Cabinet Conclusions, 27 February 2003.

<sup>284</sup> Cabinet Conclusions, 27 February 2003.



(see Section 3.7) were “helpful”. Looking beyond the current divisions in the international community, it would be “important to seek unity of purpose through the humanitarian and reconstruction work which would follow any military action”. Planning in this field “needed to take centre stage”. He would pursue that with President Bush “in the coming days”. The “transitional civil administration in Iraq should have a United Nations mandate, although the scale of United Nations involvement should balance the administrative effectiveness with the necessity for proper authority”.

**657.** In his diaries, Mr Campbell wrote:

“At Cabinet, things were pretty much rock solid ... I could sense a few of them only fully realising ... the enormity of the decisions, the enormity of the responsibility involved ... Clare [Short] was doing her usual ... and for her was relatively onside. She wanted to do a big number on aftermath preparations but TB was there ahead of her. He was very calm, matter of fact, just went through where we were on all the main aspects of this.”<sup>285</sup>

**658. Mr Straw sought advice from Mr Wood on the legal authority for post-conflict reconstruction.**

**659. Mr Wood set out the legal constraints on an Occupying Power. He stated that the longer an occupation lasted and the further the tasks undertaken departed from the objective of the military intervention, the more difficult it would become to justify an occupation in legal terms.**

**660. On 10 March, Mr Wood told the Attorney General's Office that the UK view of the legal framework for occupation appeared to be getting through to the US.**

**661.** Mr Straw's Private Office requested advice from Mr Wood on Ms Short's observation in Cabinet that there appeared to be no legal authority for post-conflict reconstruction:

“Is this true? The Foreign Secretary thinks that it is. If so, it underlines the importance of having effective UN authority in place very quickly (the so-called third resolution). The Foreign Secretary knows that officials are already in touch with DFID about this but would like this work to be given even higher priority.”<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Campbell A & Hagerty B. *The Alastair Campbell Diaries. Volume 4. The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq*. Hutchinson, 2012.

<sup>286</sup> [Minute McDonald to Wood, 27 February 2003, 'Iraq Post-Conflict'](#).

**662.** On 28 February, Mr Wood advised:

“The legal basis for the occupation of Iraq by Coalition forces in a post-conflict phase would depend initially on the legal basis for the use of force. That legal basis is likely to be Security Council authorisation for military action to enforce Iraq’s WMD obligations under SCRs. But the longer an occupation went on, and the further the tasks undertaken departed from this objective, the more difficult it would become to justify an occupation in legal terms.

“Without a Security Council mandate for the post-conflict phase, the status of the occupying forces would be that of belligerent occupants, who would have the rights and responsibilities laid down by international humanitarian law as set out in particular in the Hague Regulations of 1907 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949. The rights of belligerent occupants are quite limited ...

“FCO Legal Advisers are closely involved in the establishment of our policy on the post-conflict phase. This stresses the need for rapid UN involvement, and in particular for UN authorisation of, if possible, the presence of and the activities to be undertaken by the Coalition. The Foreign Secretary will know of the efforts we are making to persuade the US of the merits of our position. We understand that they are almost ready to share with us a draft of the so-called third resolution.”<sup>287</sup>

**663.** Mr Wood attached copies of:

- Mr Grainger’s advice of 31 January on the general position in international law;
- FCO legal advice to the IPU on occupation rights relating to oil; and
- FCO legal advice to the IPU on occupation rights and the administration of justice.

**664.** Mr Grainger had sent advice on occupation rights relating to oil to the IPU on 14 February.<sup>288</sup> In it, he advised that, under the 1907 Hague Convention:

“... the Occupying Power acquires a temporary right of administration, but not sovereignty. He does not acquire the right to dispose of property in that territory except according to the strict rules laid down in those regulations. So occupation is by no means a licence for unregulated economic exploitation.”

**665.** Mr Grainger also advised that, in the event of there being no government in active control of Iraq, there would need to be changes to existing arrangements for OFF, which assumed a degree of Iraqi Government involvement in the programme’s operation.

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<sup>287</sup> [Minute Wood to McDonald, 28 February 2003, ‘Iraq Post-Conflict’.](#)

<sup>288</sup> [Minute Grainger to Iraq Planning Unit \[junior official\], 14 February 2003, ‘Occupation Rights: Iraqi Oil’.](#)

**666.** FCO Legal Advisers had sent the IPU an overview of the legal framework for the post-conflict administration of justice on 16 February.<sup>289</sup> The paper, which was copied to the MOD, explained that:

- With certain exceptions, the penal laws of the occupied territory would remain in force (Geneva Convention IV, Article 64).
- Again with certain exceptions, the administration of justice should remain in the hands of the incumbent administration and courts (Geneva Convention IV, article 64; Hague Regulations, Article 43).
- Where possible, existing personnel involved in the administration of justice should remain in their positions (Geneva Convention IV, Article 54).

**667.** The paper also listed some of the issues “it may be useful to consider ... in advance of a conflict”:

- identification of laws to be applied, amended, repealed or enacted by an occupying force;
- a scoping study of the current state of the criminal justice system;
- identification of systems for seizure and preservation of evidence and maintenance of known crime sites; and
- development of a public information and awareness campaign.

### The legal framework for Occupation

As Occupying Powers, the UK and US were bound by international law on belligerent occupation. Its rules are set out in the 1907 Hague Regulations (Articles 42 to 56), the Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949 (Articles 27 to 34 and 47 to 78) and the 1977 First Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts.<sup>290</sup>

Article 42 of the Hague Regulations defines an Occupation as follows:

“Territory is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army. The occupation extends only to the territory where such authority has been established and can be exercised.”

Article 43 of the Hague Regulations provides that the Occupying Power “shall take all the measures in his power to restore, and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country”.

<sup>289</sup> Minute Hood to UND [junior official], 16 February 2003, ‘Occupation Rights: the Administration of Justice’.

<sup>290</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross, 29 October 2010, *The ICRC’s mandate and mission*; International Committee of the Red Cross, 29 October 2010, *War and international humanitarian law*.

Sir Michael Wood, the FCO Legal Adviser from 1999 to 2006, explained in his second witness statement:

“While some changes to the legislative and administrative structure may be permissible if they are necessary for public order and safety, more wide-reaching reforms of governmental and administrative structures are not lawful. That includes the imposition of major economic reforms.”<sup>291</sup>

**668.** Mr Straw commented on Mr Wood’s advice on 1 March:

“This is good advice: having UN authority for post-conflict Occupation makes sense politically as well as legally. I’d be happy to receive further advice from Michael Wood, or talk to him, about whether I should lobby C Powell on progress.”<sup>292</sup>

**669.** Mr Simon McDonald, Mr Straw’s Principal Private Secretary, sent those comments to Mr Wood on 4 March, after Mr Straw had spoken to Secretary Powell.<sup>293</sup>

**670.** Mr Straw told the Inquiry:

“I was clear that under international law ... we would be bound by the 1907 Hague Regulations as well as the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. We would therefore be considered an Occupying Power with responsibility for providing ‘public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country’. We would need specific UNSCR authorisation for powers and duties beyond these instruments.”<sup>294</sup>

**671.** Ms Cathy Adams, Legal Counsellor in the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers, told Mr Wood on 28 February that the Attorney General had received a letter from Mr William Haynes, General Counsel at DoD, which, among other issues, dealt with post-conflict questions.<sup>295</sup> Ms Adams advised:

“We have not seen here any papers relating to post-conflict planning. I expect the Attorney [General] would be interested to know how matters are progressing on this issue particularly as regards outstanding legal concerns.”

**672.** Mr Wood replied on 10 March, the same day as Sir David Manning sent Dr Rice a UK draft of a possible third resolution. Sir Michael explained that a good deal of thought had been given to the issue in the FCO and MOD.<sup>296</sup> The UK view had been urged on

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<sup>291</sup> Statement, 15 January 2010, pages 2 and 3.

<sup>292</sup> [Manuscript comment Straw, 1 March 2003, on Minute Wood to McDonald, 28 February 2003, ‘Iraq Post-Conflict’.](#)

<sup>293</sup> [Minute McDonald to Wood, 4 March 2003, ‘Iraq Post-Conflict’.](#)

<sup>294</sup> Statement, 19 January 2011, page 18.

<sup>295</sup> Letter Adams to Wood, 28 February 2003, ‘Letter from General Counsel of the US Department of Defence [sic]’.

<sup>296</sup> Letter Wood to Adams, 10 March 2003, ‘Letter from General Counsel of the US Department of Defence [sic]’.

the US “and appears gradually to be getting through”. He suggested that in any reply to Mr Haynes’s letter, the Attorney General “might refer briefly to this matter, and to our wish to remain in close contact on legal issues”.

**673.** On 27 February, DFID officials had sought Ms Short’s guidance on “the scope of DFID co-operation with UK (and potentially other) military forces in support of UK government objectives in a complex humanitarian emergency”.<sup>297</sup> Officials explained that the approach adopted in Kosovo and developed in Afghanistan, but not universally accepted as good practice in DFID, provided for:

- UK and/or allied military forces to assist vulnerable populations directly when there was insufficient humanitarian capacity to meet their needs;
- funding of military QIPs “which contribute to the security and stability of the environment thus facilitating humanitarian, recovery and development programmes and enabling legitimate political developments to take root”;
- secondment of humanitarian specialists to UK military forces; and
- “the flexibility to decide ... the degree of co-operation with combatant military forces whose operation may, or may not, be endorsed by the UN”.

**674.** Ms Short replied: “Thanks – I am minded to maintain our position. We must check if [there are] any legal implications.”<sup>298</sup>

**675.** On 28 February, a junior DFID official advised:

“I cannot see any International Development Act problems here. Section 3 of the Act ... says: ‘The SofS [Secretary of State] may provide any person or body with assistance for the purpose of alleviating the effects of a natural or man-made disaster or other emergency on the population of one or more countries outside the UK’.

“... [W]hich pretty much allows you to do what you like, so long as it is for the purpose of alleviating the effects of a disaster or emergency on the population of a country outside the UK.

“This is understood as applying pretty much to the immediate effects of an emergency, and not to long term rehabilitation or development ... Once you move into development assistance you must be motivated by poverty reduction. But you can still use soldiers to provide assistance if that is the best way of reducing poverty.”<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> [Minute DFID \[junior official\] to PS/Secretary of State \[DFID\], 27 February 2003, ‘Civil Military Relations in Complex Emergencies – DFID Position’.](#)

<sup>298</sup> [Manuscript comment Short, 27 February 2003, on Minute DFID \[junior official\] to PS/Secretary of State \[DFID\], 27 February 2003, ‘Civil Military Relations in Complex Emergencies – DFID Position’.](#)

<sup>299</sup> [Email \[DFID junior official\] to Mosselmans, 28 February 2003, ‘Civil Military Relations in Complex Emergencies – DFID Position’.](#)

**676.** It is not clear whether that advice was seen by Ms Short.

**677.** On 28 February, the MOD warned No.10 that the UK was “currently at risk of taking on a very substantial commitment that we will have great difficulty in sustaining beyond the immediate conclusion of conflict”. Specific concerns included:

- the extent of practical US support for UK humanitarian assistance;
- the absence of an ORHA plan for administering Iraq;
- the US expectation that the UK would take on an unsustainable commitment in the South-East;
- US decision-making moving so fast that, even though the UK was trying to influence US thinking, “UK policy will have largely to be about managing the consequences of US decisions that are taken for us”;
- the risk that the UK, as an Occupying Power, might be expected to make up a significant part of any funding shortfall for reconstruction.

**678.** Lt Gen Garner was reported to be attracted to the idea of abandoning the plan to have three ORHA sectors in Iraq in favour of mirroring the seven proposed military sectors.

**679.** On 28 February, Mr Hoon’s Private Office sent Sir David Manning an update on military planning.<sup>300</sup> The paper was also sent to the Private Offices of Mr Straw and Mr Brown, and to Mr Bowen, but not to DFID.

**680.** Much of the section on post-conflict planning was devoted to US preparations. The paper stated:

“For the immediate aftermath, most of the planning is now considered to be complete, but there remains significant effort required to agree how those plans should be implemented. There are significant outstanding policy issues which require resolution before the beginning of operations. For the later stages of the aftermath, planning is also gathering speed (meaning that important policy decisions are being made now by the US that will dictate the course of the aftermath).”

**681.** The paper stated that CFLCC and ORHA were taking forward planning, but that there were “important issues of dispute between them”. The UK was “very heavily engaged in military (CFLCC) planning at a senior level”, with (acting) Maj Gen Whitley as Deputy Commanding General (Post Hostilities), and had “good visibility” of ORHA thinking thanks to the embedded UK staff.

**682.** The paper stated that orders for the initial aftermath would issue shortly, setting out the responsibilities of an Occupying Power. There was also a “superficially impressive”

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<sup>300</sup> Letter Williams to Manning, 28 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Planning and Preparation’ attaching Paper [unattributed], 28 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Planning Update – 28 February 2003’.

plan to manage early provision of humanitarian assistance, but “a distinct lack of planning by the US” on local and national civil administration:

“An initial plan to divide the country in two (largely arbitrary) parts, with Baghdad as a third entity, may not last the test of time ... Garner has now seen the CFLCC ‘7 sectors’ map and appears attracted to mirroring those for civil administration – but there is still no concept of how to interact with either current Iraqi civil governance structures ... or the military divisions. This might be an area where [the] UK can provide some useful guidance.”

**683.** The paper listed several UK concerns:

- “Humanitarian Assistance/Stability Provision.” The UK plan was “to make most use of the US humanitarian provision”, but DFID and the UK military had concerns about the level of practical US support that would be available and the likely initial absence of NGOs and international organisations. Because of the block on the deployment of DFID advisers to Kuwait, UK military planning to cover the gap was going ahead without guidance. The absence of funding was even more pressing.
- “Roll-out of regional administration.” ORHA had still not thought through the detail of how it would administer Iraq. There was a risk of giving the impression of a military occupation.
- “Military lay-down.” It was “absolutely clear” that, of the seven military sectors, the US expected the UK to take leadership of the South-East. Without Coalition partners that would be beyond UK capabilities in the “medium term”. The UK was **“currently at risk of taking on a very substantial commitment that we will have great difficulty in sustaining beyond the immediate conclusion of conflict”**.
- “Policy lacunae.” There were still many unresolved details in US planning. The UK was seeking to influence US thinking, but US decision-making was moving so fast that “UK policy will have largely to be about managing the consequences of US decisions that are taken for us”.
- “Funding.” This remained “a great unknown”. US planning assumed the rest of the world would pick up 75 percent of the bill for reconstruction. That was “possibly hopelessly optimistic”. As an Occupying Power, the UK would be at the front of the queue of countries the US would approach to make up any deficit.

**684.** Mr Cannon commented: “Prime Minister and Jonathan Powell should see.”<sup>301</sup>

**685.** Some of the issues raised in Mr Hoon’s letter were discussed at Mr Blair’s meeting on post-conflict issues on 6 March.

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<sup>301</sup> Manuscript comment Cannon, 28 February 2003, on Letter Williams to Manning, 28 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Planning and Preparation’ attaching Paper [unattributed], 28 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Planning Update – 28 February 2003’.

**686.** In a Written Parliamentary Question on 28 February, Dr Tonge asked what financial provision had been made to fund the reconstruction of Iraq in the aftermath of war.<sup>302</sup> Mr Boateng replied: “The Government believe that the role of the United Nations and other multilateral institutions will be vital in addressing the reconstruction of Iraq in the aftermath of any war and are liaising closely with allies on this issue.”

### The ‘UK Vision for Phase IV’

**687.** The ‘UK Vision for Phase IV’ equated the scale of change envisaged for Iraq to post-Communist reforms in central Europe. Success would require “huge efforts”, “a large coalition” and “a lot of time”.

**688.** On 26 February, the FCO sent No.10 a set of papers commissioned by Sir David Manning:

- key talking points for Mr Blair to draw on with President Bush;
- a ‘UK Vision for Phase IV’;
- an outline structure for the interim civil administration, already sent to Lt Gen Garner;
- a draft letter from Sir David Manning to Dr Rice setting out arguments for a UN-authorised transitional administration; and
- a list of “11 good reasons” for a third resolution.<sup>303</sup>

**689.** The papers were copied to the Private Offices of Mr Brown, Mr Hoon and Ms Short, but it is not clear from the correspondence how extensively they had been discussed with Treasury, MOD and DFID officials beforehand.

**690.** It is not clear whether any of the papers were seen by Mr Blair.

**691.** The covering letter from Mr Straw’s Private Office to Mr Rycroft explained:

“You will see that the key point to make to the Americans remains the need to have UN Security Council authorisation for the civil transitional administration. There are signs that General Franks and Jay Garner ... understand this. But convincing Mr Rumsfeld will be much more difficult.”

**692.** The proposed messages for Mr Blair to deliver to President Bush were:

- Winning the peace is important, but more difficult, than winning the war. We need to leave Iraq radically changed for the better.
- We are committing just under a third of our Armed Forces to the fighting. We shall also be staying on for the ‘aftermath’ – Phase IV. But we shall have to

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<sup>302</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 28 February 2003, column 760W.

<sup>303</sup> [Letter Owen to Rycroft, 26 February 2002, ‘Iraq: Phase IV’.](#)



reduce by a third within six months. You can continue to count on us to do our bit.

- The Phase IV task is huge, comparable to the transformation of central European countries after the fall of the Berlin Wall – beyond what even the US can manage by itself. We shall need to build a broad coalition. We shall need more countries to provide peacekeeping forces. We must involve the UN agencies, other countries and international organisations in reconstructing the country. We need their expertise and finance.
- ... I would like to begin lobbying potential contributors now. Can we agree to this?
- ... [I]n order to ease the passage of the second UN Security Council resolution ... there could be advantage in explaining our intention to go for a third resolution for Phase IV.
- It will take some weeks and months, after securing UN authorisation, to get a provisional civil administration ready to move to Iraq. So for the initial post-conflict period, our Coalition forces, supported by Jay Garner's Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, will be in charge of Iraq. The choices we make in those first weeks and months will significantly shape the future development of Iraq. Then we can hand over the task to the wider international effort, mandated by the UN.
- We should be absolutely clear that Coalition military forces will remain under General Frank's command.
- I am not starry-eyed about the UN's management record. I do not propose that the UN should take over the running of Iraq. But the Security Council's authorisation is crucial to building support internationally for our efforts.
- We need to identify a senior international figure (but not a Brit, American or Australian) who could serve as the Head of Civil Administration.
- Our officials have excellent links on the detailed planning for Phase IV. They should continue to work closely together on the key issues. These include ... how to deal with those closest to Saddam's regime ... and rebutting the accusation that this is a war about oil ...
- One last important thing – it will be very helpful to get the weapons inspectors back into Iraq quickly to verify findings of Iraqi WMD.”

**693.** The ‘UK Vision for Phase IV’, written by the IPU, opened with the statement:

“A successful mission means winning the peace as well as the war. We should aim to leave Iraq radically changed for the better. That means an Iraq which:

- Has given up its attachment to WMD
- No longer supports terrorism
- Has appropriately sized, reformed armed forces and intelligence/security agencies
- Does not threaten its neighbours
- Complies with its international obligations
- Enjoys a broad-based, representative government, which respects human rights
- Has a fair justice sector
- Has been weaned off its dependency on the Oil-for-Food programme and is determinedly travelling along the path towards becoming a free market economy
- Trades normally and is set to normalise its relations with international financial and trading organisations.<sup>304</sup>

“That is a lot to achieve – similar in scale to the post-communist reforms of central European countries. Success will require huge efforts from the Iraqis themselves and from the wider international community. The support of countries in the region will also be critical. We shall need to pull together a large coalition to provide the resources for the task. And it will take a lot of time – perhaps many years – to achieve success.”

**694.** The paper set out the UK’s expectations for the three stages of Phase IV:

- Phase IV Alpha. Military administration by CFLCC, then, when conditions permit, ORHA, under CENTCOM command. Key issues would be:
  - constraints placed on the military’s powers to administer Iraq by international humanitarian law;
  - the urgent need to provide clean water, sanitation, food, shelter and medicines; most of that task would fall to UN agencies and NGOs, with the Coalition providing the secure environment in which assistance could be delivered;
  - early resurrection of OFF;
  - maximising Iraqi involvement from the outset through a consultative council to advise the military and ORHA; and

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<sup>304</sup> [Paper Iraq Planning Unit, 25 February 2003, ‘UK Vision for Phase IV’.](#)

- working with existing Iraqi structures as far as was consistent with the security of Coalition Forces and the objectives of military action.
- Phase IV Bravo. In the UK's view, this would begin as soon as there was a UN mandated international civil transitional administration (CTA) in place, supported by UN-mandated Coalition military:
  - With a UN mandate it would be possible to increase the number of countries contributing forces in what could still be an uncertain environment.
  - The aim of Phase IV Bravo would be to transform Iraq "along the lines of the vision".
  - The UK was still working with the US on possible elements for the CTA's composition: "The trick will be to make it sufficiently international and UN friendly to win the support of the UNSC but not to put the UN in charge of areas where it has a poor management track record".
  - The duration of Phase IV Bravo would be determined by the time taken to draw up a new constitution and to elect a new government.
- Phase IV Charlie. Coalition Forces and the CTA would withdraw, but Iraq would continue to need help restructuring its economy and possibly with public administration more generally.

**695.** The FCO letter to No.10 also enclosed an outline structure for the interim civil administration during Phase IV Bravo, which had already been sent to Lt Gen Garner.<sup>305</sup> The outline stated:

"Once Iraq is stabilised and it becomes possible to move to Phase IVb (recovery), it would be desirable to transition the Interim Civil Administrative structure to a more broadly-based structure, authorised by a UN Security Council resolution. That would enable wide international support, and could make the most of international experience without hindering effective leadership.

"The structure would be headed by a 'High Representative' ... ideally a Muslim figure ... Beneath him would be several co-ordinators heading up vertical pillars covering humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, civil administration and 'democratisation'. To assist him in his task, and until such time as the 'democratisation' pillar delivered appropriate constitutional reform and a broadly based, representative system, there would be an Iraqi Consultative Council. Working alongside him would be a security co-ordinator who would be responsible for security sector reform and liaison with the Coalition military commander."

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<sup>305</sup> [Paper \[unattributed and undated\], 'Phase 4b Organization'](#).

**696.** The thinking behind the vision was expressed most clearly in the draft letter from Sir David Manning to Dr Rice, which stated that it would be helpful to be able to say soon how the US and UK saw the government of Iraq after Saddam Hussein:

“Our starting point is that the humanitarian, reconstruction and civil administration tasks are too complex and too resource intensive for the US and UK to undertake alone ... Most potential contributors ... will only feel comfortable participating ... if there is a UN authorising mandate. They will not arrogate to themselves the right to redesign Iraq, however desirable the end state. And nor would we. We shall need Security Council authorisation for legal reasons too.”<sup>306</sup>

**697.** The draft letter concluded:

“Handing Iraq’s reconstruction over to a UN-authorized CTA will allow us to reduce our presence in Iraq and leave the country with honour. Indeed, unless we do so, I am far from convinced that we can succeed in Phase IV.”

**698.** The FCO explained that the draft letter did not refer to the outline for Phase IVb that had been shared with Lt Gen Garner, “in case David Manning thought it was a bridge too far, at this stage, to put to Condi Rice”.<sup>307</sup>

**699.** The letter appears never to have been sent. When Sir David next wrote to Dr Rice, on 10 March, it was in the context of work on a draft Security Council resolution.

**700.** The FCO sent a separate draft ‘Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’ to No.10 on 28 February.

**701. President Bush described the US post-conflict commitment to Iraq in a speech on 26 February. He stated that rebuilding Iraq would take “a sustained commitment from many nations, including our own: we will remain in Iraq as long as necessary, and not a day more”.**

**702.** In a speech at the American Enterprise Institute on 26 February, described in more detail in Section 3.7, President Bush stated:

“If we must use force, the United States and our Coalition stand ready to help the citizens of a liberated Iraq ...

“We will provide security against those who try to spread chaos ... We will seek to protect Iraq’s natural resources from sabotage by a dying regime, and ensure those resources are used for the benefit of the owners – the Iraqi people.

“The United States has no intention of determining the precise form of Iraq’s new government ... All Iraqis must have a voice in the new government, and all citizens must have their rights protected.

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<sup>306</sup> Letter [draft] Manning to Rice, 24 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Phase IV’.

<sup>307</sup> [Letter Owen to Rycroft, 26 February 2002, ‘Iraq: Phase IV’.](#)

“Rebuilding Iraq will require a sustained commitment from many nations, including our own: we will remain in Iraq as long as necessary, and not a day more. America has made and kept this kind of commitment before – in the peace that followed a world war ...

“There was a time when many said that the cultures of Japan and Germany were incapable of sustaining democratic values ... Some say the same of Iraq today. They are mistaken. The nation of Iraq – with its proud heritage, abundant resources and skilled and educated people – is fully capable of moving toward democracy and living in freedom.”<sup>308</sup>

## UK commercial interests

**703.** UK oil firms had begun to express concern about access to post-Saddam Hussein oil contracts in the second half of 2002 (see Section 6.4).

**704.** By 27 February, officials were concerned that UK reticence in contacts with the US was disadvantaging UK firms across a range of business sectors.

**705.** In early 2003, UK companies in other sectors approached Trade Partners UK (TPUK), the division of British Trade International (BTI) responsible for promoting UK exports, for advice on business opportunities in post-conflict Iraq.<sup>309</sup> A number of companies expressed concern about a repeat of the situation in 1991, when UK firms lost out heavily to US companies on reconstruction contracts in Kuwait.

**706.** On 12 February Mr Bill Henderson, TPUK Director International Group 1, explained to Baroness Symons, joint FCO/DTI Minister of State for International Trade and Investment, that, until early February 2003, UK Government discussion of commercial opportunities in Iraq had largely been restricted to officials in order “to avoid giving undue prominence to the commercial aspects of HMG’s handling of the crisis”.<sup>310</sup>

**707.** Mr Henderson reported that, on 12 February, he had chaired a meeting with the FCO, the Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD) and, for the first time, a representative of the British Consultants and Contractors Bureau (BCCB) to discuss how best to provide assistance to UK companies outside the oil and gas sector. Mr Henderson expressed concern that “the overall Whitehall agenda appears to attach little importance to the commercial aspects and the interest of UK companies”.

**708.** The need to secure “a level-playing field for UK business in oil and other areas” was one of the key messages for the US on post-conflict Iraq, agreed on 11 February.

**709.** On 27 February, Mr Henderson remained concerned that UK reticence was disadvantaging UK companies: “the US (and probably France who have a Trade Office

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<sup>308</sup> *The Guardian*, 27 February, Full text: George Bush’s speech to the American Enterprise Institute.

<sup>309</sup> [Minute Henderson to Symons, 12 February 2003, ‘Iraq: post-conflict commercial issues’.](#)

<sup>310</sup> [Minute Henderson to Symons, 12 February 2003, ‘Iraq: post-conflict commercial issues’.](#)

in Baghdad) are ahead of us on this, and are taking a much more open stance”.<sup>311</sup> He recommended to Baroness Symons that she agree a “more open, pro-active approach” to dealing with UK companies.

**710.** Baroness Symons sent that advice to Mr Straw and Ms Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, stating that:

“... the pressure from businesses is building and I fear that some of our business community fear we are not engaged. Some think that the US and France are ahead of the game already ...”<sup>312</sup>

**711.** Government lobbying on behalf of UK firms is addressed in more detail in Section 10.3.

## The UK ‘Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’

**712.** The UK ‘Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’, written by the FCO in October 2002, was revised at the end of February 2003.

**713.** Mr Straw saw its principal value as a means to reassure domestic and Iraqi public opinion of the UK’s intentions in Iraq.

**714.** The ‘Vision’ was a statement of aspirations that assumed a level of agreement with the US that did not yet exist on plans for post-conflict Iraq.

**715.** The ‘Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’ was a separate document to the ‘UK Vision for Phase IV’, which is addressed earlier in this Section.

**716.** On 27 February, Mr Straw discussed the draft ‘Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’, originally prepared by FCO officials in October 2002 (see Section 6.4), with Mr Campbell.<sup>313</sup> The draft had been shown to the AHGI on 11 October 2002, when it had been decided that the paper should “remain in reserve”.<sup>314</sup>

**717.** Mr Straw believed that “public commitment on the lines of the draft could have a powerful impact in Iraq and the region as well as on the British domestic debate”. The ‘Vision’ should not be launched or trailed until the UN had voted on the second resolution because of the risk that it would be presented as “discounting” the role of the Security Council. Care would also be needed to avoid confusing the message that the justification for military action rested firmly on disarmament of WMD.

**718.** Mr Straw thought it essential that the UK, US and “other Coalition members” spoke to a common script. That underlined the importance of making progress with the US on

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<sup>311</sup> Minute Henderson to Symons, 27 February 2003, ‘Iraq contingency planning: commercial aspects’.

<sup>312</sup> [Minute Symons to Straw and Hewitt, undated, ‘Iraq: Commercial Aspects’.](#)

<sup>313</sup> [Letter Owen to Rycroft, 28 February 2003, ‘A Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’ attaching Paper \[unattributed and undated\], ‘A Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’.](#)

<sup>314</sup> Minute Dodd to Manning, 14 October 2002, ‘Ad Hoc Group on Iraq’; Paper [draft] FCO, [undated], ‘Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’.

day after planning. Although there was nothing in the UK draft that “could not be squared with US policy” as set out in President Bush’s speech, “elements ... go further than the US has so far done in public or, on some issues including UN involvement, in private”.

**719.** The FCO sent No.10 the latest draft of the ‘Vision’, which had been seen by officials in the MOD, Cabinet Office, Treasury and DFID, explaining that work was in hand to ensure coherence with military campaign objectives already agreed by Ministers.<sup>315</sup>

**720.** The new version expanded the criticism of Saddam Hussein, added a reference to the military consequences should he refuse to co-operate with the UN and inserted two references to “democratic government” in place of the previous version’s single reference to “democratic principles”.

**721.** The new description of overall aims explained that:

“Our aim is to disarm Saddam of his weapons of mass destruction, which threaten his neighbours and his people. Our presence in Iraq if military action is required to secure compliance with UN resolutions will be temporary. But our commitment to support the people of Iraq will be for the long term. The Iraqi people deserve to be lifted from tyranny and allowed to determine the future of their country for themselves. We pledge to work with the international community to help the Iraqi people restore their country to its proper dignity and place in the community of nations, abiding by its international obligations and free from UN sanctions.”

**722.** The five principal aims remained unchanged from the October paper:

- “Freedom”;
- “Good Government”;
- “International Respect”;
- “Peace”;
- “Prosperity”.

**723.** The list of ways in which the UK/Coalition would help was also largely unchanged, offering support with:

- an early end to sanctions;
- Iraq’s reintegration into the region;
- generous debt rescheduling;
- increased aid from the international community;
- an international reconstruction programme;
- investment in Iraq’s oil industry;

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<sup>315</sup> [Letter Owen to Rycroft, 28 February 2003, ‘A Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’ attaching Paper \[unattributed and undated\], ‘A Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’.](#)

- renewal of international education and cultural links; and
- institutional and administrative reform.

There were three additions to the October 2002 list:

- ensuring the military campaign was as swift and carefully targeted as possible;
- working with the UN and the international community to meet emergency humanitarian needs; and
- enabling Iraqis “to establish their own democratic government as quickly as possible” and encouraging UN involvement in the process.

**724.** Mr Bowen commented on the draft on 4 March.<sup>316</sup> He suggested that, in addition to drawing on wording in the military campaign objectives, the draft could:

“... reflect more closely how we would wish post-Saddam Iraq to be governed ... We are also concerned about the extent to which the document implies responsibility for Iraq’s future being largely the UK’s rather than that of the international community.”

**725.** Specific recommendations included:

- replacing the reference to an “independent and democratic Iraq” with “an Iraq with effective and representative government”; and
- extensive redrafting of the section on UK/Coalition support in order to distinguish between the Coalition contribution “in the immediate wake of conflict” and what “we” and the international community, working with the Iraqi people, would do within months of the conflict.

**726.** Mr Hoon endorsed Mr Bowen’s proposed redraft, commenting that “it would be useful in terms of credibility to be able to set out our vision in the more specific text ... recognising that this may add to the challenge of reaching agreement with the US”.<sup>317</sup>

**727.** Both sets of comments were copied to No.10.

**728.** A revised version of the ‘Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’ was sent to No.10 on 15 March, the day before the Azores Summit. It incorporated Mr Bowen’s proposal to replace “democratic” with “effective and representative government”, but did not reflect his broader recommendation for extensive redrafting.

**729.** On 27 February, the British Embassy Washington reported that the US was showing “growing acceptance” of the idea of a civilian administrator backed by a UN mandate.

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<sup>316</sup> [Letter Bowen to Owen, 4 March 2003, ‘Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’.](#)

<sup>317</sup> [Letter Williams to Owen, 5 March 2003, ‘A Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’.](#)



**730.** The British Embassy Washington reported the outcome of a call on ORHA and the NSC by Dr Brewer on 27 February. Thinking on the UN was evolving. The US accepted it would need technical help with humanitarian and reconstruction work and was showing growing acceptance of an international civilian administrator backed by a UN mandate, but remained opposed to a direct reporting line to the UN.<sup>318</sup>

**731.** Separately, the Embassy suggested giving more support to ORHA. It would be vital to the long-term success of UK action in Iraq and any assistance would be “gratefully received and effectively used”. So far three staff had been provided, including Maj Gen Cross. That was “a drop in the bucket”. The Embassy suggested staff already earmarked for posting to Baghdad might be one source.<sup>319</sup>

**732.** The secondment of UK officials to ORHA is addressed in Section 15.

**733.** Mr Straw spoke to Secretary Powell on 3 March (see Section 3.7). He reported to No.10 that, in the context of a discussion about the lack of serious planning for post-conflict, he had told Secretary Powell that, “whilst the US Administration had to be the best judge of its long term interests”, he “thought it would reap a whirlwind if it failed to secure legitimacy for what it was doing in respect of Iraq. We were not there yet.”<sup>320</sup>

**734. By 4 March, senior members of the US Administration were said to have accepted the need for a Security Council mandate, a role for the UN after the initial military occupation and the need for a UN Special Co-ordinator.**

**735.** Mr Tony Brenton, Chargé d’Affaires at the British Embassy Washington, reported overnight on 3/4 March that senior members of the US Administration had accepted the need for a Security Council mandate, a role for the UN after the initial military occupation and the need for a UN Special Co-ordinator, although there were differing views over how the UN figure would relate to an Iraqi Interim Council.<sup>321</sup> The US hoped to organise a “Bonn Conference” on the Afghan model, four to six weeks after the invasion, involving external opposition figures and tribal leaders from inside Iraq. The conference would produce an administrative council, which would gradually take on authority over a period of months as it moved Iraq towards elections or a constituent assembly. Mr Brenton reported that he had underlined to the US the UK’s wish to see a structure which brought international legitimacy and buy-in, and had expressed “polite scepticism” about the qualities of those members of the external opposition best known to the UK.

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<sup>318</sup> Telegram 256 Washington to FCO London, 27 February 2003, ‘Iraq Day After: US Views on UN Role’.

<sup>319</sup> [Telegram 257 Washington to FCO London, 27 February 2003, ‘Iraq Day After: UK Role in Post-Conflict Iraq’.](#)

<sup>320</sup> Letter Straw to Manning, 4 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Conversation with Colin Powell, 3 March’.

<sup>321</sup> Telegram 284 Washington to FCO London, 4 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Day After’.

**736.** At the FCO Iraq Morning Meeting on 4 March, Mr Chilcott described Mr Brenton's report on the evolving views of US Principals as:

“... a further good example of even the most senior levels of the US Administration showing themselves open to good arguments firmly put at the right time. We needed to go on making these arguments.”<sup>322</sup>

## Growing pressure for Ministerial decisions

**737.** Mr Blair produced a manuscript Note on 3 March setting out a list of potential actions to help secure Security Council support for the second resolution. Potential actions included agreeing:

- a UN role in post-conflict Iraq;
- a broad-based government;
- the humanitarian effort.<sup>323</sup>

**738.** Mr Blair's Note is addressed in more detail in Section 3.7.

**739.** On 4 March, Mr Ricketts told Mr Straw that he and Sir David Manning had discussed advice from Sir Jeremy Greenstock on the second resolution and believed that the “best package” might include for the US to make clear that it “accepted a significant UN role in post-conflict Iraq”.<sup>324</sup>

**740. On 3 March, the AHGI advised Sir David Manning that Ministers needed to give their urgent attention to the possibility that the UK could be running an area of Iraq within weeks.**

**741.** The record of the 28 February meeting of the AHGI was sent to Sir David Manning on 3 March.<sup>325</sup> On the question of the UK assuming responsibility for a sector of Iraq it stated:

“Although military action is not certain, we may be confronted with the realities of running a part of Iraq within weeks.

“The question of geographical sectors, whether for security or to provide civilian government as well, whether we should offer to lead one and how much it would cost, is of increasing concern. The US military plan, which has been adopted, has the UK running a sector covering a significant part of Iraq. In the event of war, UK forces will end in occupying part of Iraq, but a sector covering four provinces, as the US propose, is probably beyond our national capacity. There are concerns in home departments about implications for their resources of any commitment to provide

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<sup>322</sup> Minute Tanfield to PS/PUS [FCO], 4 March 2003, ‘Iraq Morning Meeting: Key Points’.

<sup>323</sup> [Note \[Blair\], 3 March 2003, \[untitled\]](#).

<sup>324</sup> Minute Ricketts to PS/Straw, 4 March 2003, ‘Iraq: UN Tactics’.

<sup>325</sup> Minute Dodd to Manning, 3 March 2003, ‘Ad Hoc Group on Iraq’.

civil government in a UK sector. We [the AHGI] agreed that Ministers needed to give this question their urgent attention.”

**742. On 4 March, Adm Boyce issued the first draft of the Execute Directive for Op TELIC, for planning and guidance purposes only.**

**743. He instructed Lt Gen Reith to work closely with US commanders on preparations of Phase IV.**

**744.** Adm Boyce issued the first version of the Execute Directive for Op TELIC on 4 March.<sup>326</sup> In his covering minute to Lt Gen Reith, he explained that the Directive was being issued in draft form for planning and guidance purposes only. It was to be read on the clear understanding that no political decision had yet been taken on combat operations, but “events could move very fast”. Lt Gen Reith’s focus would be to work closely with US commanders “on all aspects of potential operations in support of Phases III and IV”.

**745.** The Directive itself was addressed to the Commander Joint Operations (Lt Gen Reith) and listed three objectives “in Support of the UK’s Higher Political Intent:

- (1) Support efforts of humanitarian organisations to mitigate the consequences of hostilities.
- (2) Facilitate international efforts for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraq.
- (3) Contribute to the preservation of the territorial integrity of Iraq and the wider regional security ...”<sup>327</sup>

**746.** A number of specific tasks were linked to those objectives, including:

- “Protect, and be prepared to secure, essential Iraqi political, administrative and economic infrastructure from unnecessary destruction in order to reassure the Iraqi people and facilitate rapid regeneration.”
- “Deter opportunistic inter-ethnic and inter-communal conflict.”
- “Within available resources, be prepared to support humanitarian efforts to mitigate the consequences of conflict.”
- “As quickly as possible, establish a safe and secure environment within which humanitarian aid agencies are able to operate.”
- “If directed, be prepared to contribute to the reform of Iraq’s security forces.”

**747.** A final version of the Directive, authorising military action in Iraq and with the points listed above unchanged, was issued on 18 March.

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<sup>326</sup> [Minute CDS to CJO, 4 March 2003, ‘Chief of Defence Staff Execute Directive to the Joint Commander Operation TELIC’.](#)

<sup>327</sup> Paper MOD, 28 February 2003, ‘Chief of Defence Staff Execute Directive to the Joint Commander Operation TELIC’.

**748.** Lt Gen Reith presented two papers to the Chiefs of Staff on 4 March advocating an expanded combat role for UK forces. He advised that the implications for Phase IV should be a consideration.

**749.** Mr Hoon and the Chiefs of Staff agreed that the UK should not actively seek a wider role, but should be ready to consider any unsolicited US requests on their merits. Implications for Phase IV operations would be one of a number of considerations.

**750.** On 4 March, Lt Gen Reith sent the Chiefs of Staff two papers setting out proposals for employing UK land forces on combat missions with or without “a dedicated ‘UK box’” based on “the agreed 1 (UK) Div AO”. The papers are described in more detail in Section 6.2.<sup>328</sup>

**751.** Lt Gen Reith explained that a UK box would “allow UK forces to move first in a ground offensive and thereby set the conditions for the ‘exemplary performance’ in Phase IV”, but US resistance to the creation of a UK box would “probably only be overcome by high level intervention”.

**752.** In the first of the two papers, Lt Gen Reith addressed the advantages and disadvantages of “UK ownership of its full AO from the start”. Under the existing Base Plan, the UK AO would expand into space vacated by US forces as they moved north and UK forces would not be able to shape their own Phase IV AOR. Lt Gen Reith explained that one of the contingency plans already worked up by the Land Component Command (LCC) assumed full UK ownership of its AO from the start. There could be “no doubt at all that this represents a far better option for UK forces than the Base Plan”.

**753.** In the second paper, Lt Gen Reith explained that his forthcoming meetings with Lt Gen McKiernan and others would “almost certainly be the last chance that the operational commanders will have to discuss the plan face to face before ground operations commence”. US commanders were likely to press him on UK land contributions beyond the provisions in the Base Plan.

**754.** Lt Gen Reith put forward two options:

- “National focus with limited operational exposure.” The Base Plan, involving “operations within the AO as presently defined, concentrating on making the early transition from Phase III to Phase IV, with an end state defined as ‘exemplary performance’ in Phase IV within Basra region”.
- “Coalition focus with unconstrained operational exposure.” Among the disadvantages of this approach was a reduction in the number of troops

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<sup>328</sup> Minute Reith to COSSEC, 4 March 2003, ‘Op Telic employment of UK forces’ attaching Paper CJO, 3 March 2003, ‘Op TELIC Land Options for 1(UK) Armoured Division – update’ and Paper CJO, 4 March 2003, ‘Op TELIC Land Options for 1(UK) Armoured Divisions – Alternative Options’.

available for Phase IV operations in the UK AO, which “may impact on our ability to produce exemplary early effect during Phase IV”.

**755.** Lt Gen Reith concluded:

“US commanders are likely to press on branch planning and UK land contributions beyond the provisions of the Base Plan.

“The situation is changing: the potential for a UK box remains my aspiration but is in practical terms receding ...

“In discussing the campaign, and subject to their [the Chiefs of Staff] agreement, CJO will balance the desire to husband our land forces for Phase IV in our own AO, against the possible Coalition requirement to take a greater part of the Phase III effort, with the risks this implies in terms of the ease with which we transition to Phase IV.”

**756.** The Chiefs of Staff discussed the papers on 5 March.<sup>329</sup> They rejected the proposal for a UK box.

**757.** In Lt Gen Reith’s absence, Maj Gen Fry sought guidance from the Chiefs of Staff on offering “UK ‘niche’ contributions beyond the provisions of the Base Plan” in the context of the requirement to deliver an exemplary Phase IV.

**758.** The Chiefs of Staff noted that delivering an exemplary Phase IV required “the concomitant resources and OGD [other government department] commitment”. Adm Boyce stressed that Phase IV could not be delivered by military activity alone.

**759.** Adm Boyce directed Lt Gen Reith to “push for a ‘niche’ role for the UK ... and make it clear that the UK was ready to be asked to contribute further in order to exploit any operational opportunities that arose during the campaign”, subject to US logistics support and assurances that UK forces would be “relieved-in-place” as soon as possible for Phase IV activities in the South.

**760.** Mr Watkins informed Sir David Manning on 6 March that Mr Hoon and the Chiefs of Staff judged that “it would not be wise at this late stage to seek a major revision to the US plan”, but that the plan could make better use of some of the niche capabilities in 1 (UK) Division.<sup>330</sup> Mr Hoon had agreed that the UK should encourage US commanders to identify a niche role. The US was looking at a number of variations to its plan, including involving 7 Armoured Brigade in “decisive manoeuvre operations beyond south-eastern Iraq” and “possibly in a decisive phase around Baghdad”. That would raise a number of issues, including for post-conflict operations.

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<sup>329</sup> Minutes, 5 March 2003, Chiefs of Staff meeting.

<sup>330</sup> [Letter Watkins to Manning, 6 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Options for Employment of UK Land Forces’.](#)

**761.** Mr Watkins explained that Mr Hoon and the Chiefs of Staff had therefore agreed that the UK “should not actively seek this sort of wider role, but that we should be prepared to consider any unsolicited US requests on their merits”.

**762. President Bush and Mr Blair discussed Iraq on 5 March.**

**763. Mr Blair told Cabinet the following day that President Bush had agreed that the UN should be “heavily involved” in post-conflict Iraq.**

**764. There was no clarification of what was meant by “heavily involved”.**

**765.** Mr Blair and President Bush discussed Iraq on 5 March.

**766.** Mr Rycroft advised Mr Blair that the key points he should make to President Bush included that it was: “Crucial to have [a] UN role post-conflict.”<sup>331</sup>

**767.** Mr Blair spoke to President Bush proposing further amendments to the draft resolution. Mr Blair and President Bush also briefly discussed the military plan.<sup>332</sup> Mr Rycroft informed the FCO that Mr Blair considered it important that there was a “UN badge” for post-conflict work.

**768.** Mr Blair told Cabinet on 6 March that he had agreed with President Bush on the need for the UN to be “heavily involved” in “the post-conflict situation, in the event that military action was necessary”.<sup>333</sup>

**769.** Points made in discussion included that the reconstruction of Iraq would require a UN mandate, not just UN involvement; otherwise the right of Coalition Forces to engage in reconstruction work would be limited by their status as an occupation force.

### **Mr Blair’s meeting on post-conflict issues, 6 March 2003**

**770. Before Mr Blair’s meeting on humanitarian and other post-conflict issues on 6 March, the UK remained without an agreed approach to humanitarian relief.**

**771. On 5 March, PJHQ warned the MOD that DFID had indicated that it would focus its humanitarian effort on areas of Iraq with the greatest need and not necessarily the UK’s AO.**

**772.** On 5 March, PJHQ alerted the MOD to its concerns about provision of humanitarian assistance in a UK AO in the immediate aftermath of conflict.<sup>334</sup> PJHQ advised that it had planned to “piggy-back” on US arrangements, but it was now apparent that the US plan depended heavily on the provision of funding to international organisations (IOs) and NGOs. Those organisations were unlikely to be present in the

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<sup>331</sup> Minute Rycroft to Prime Minister, 5 March 2003, ‘Bush Call’.

<sup>332</sup> Letter Rycroft to McDonald, 5 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s Conversation with Bush, 5 March’.

<sup>333</sup> Cabinet Conclusions, 6 March 2003.

<sup>334</sup> Minute PJHQ [junior official] to MOD Sec(O) 4, 5 March 2003, ‘Op TELIC: resourcing of humanitarian assistance’.

first weeks after any conflict. PJHQ had also assumed that DFID would be responsible for providing humanitarian assistance. Dr Brewer's letter of 24 February to Mr Bowen suggested that DFID believed that the most effective way to distribute humanitarian assistance was through IOs and NGOs, and that they would focus their resources on areas of greatest need (rather than necessarily on the UK's AO). PJHQ estimated that between £30m and £50m a month for two months would be required to cover the provision of humanitarian assistance in the UK AO in the immediate aftermath of any conflict.

**773. Ms Short informed Mr Blair that, without resources greater than her department's entire contingency reserve, "it would be impossible for DFID to take a leading role in humanitarian delivery in the South-East" of Iraq.**

**774.** Ms Short held a meeting with DFID officials to discuss Iraq, and in particular the legality of "reconstruction work" without a covering UN mandate, on 5 March.<sup>335</sup> Ms Short concluded that without a clear mandate for reconstruction, DFID could only legally fund or undertake humanitarian work. The meeting agreed that:

"... under circumstances where DFID would be involved in humanitarian work only, DFID's contingency reserve could be drawn upon. This might provide around £60-65m. In the event that a wider DFID role was possible, should we be asked by No.10 or others how much funding DFID would need, we should mention an initial sum of £100m."

**775.** Ms Short also agreed the need to:

"... move away from any expectation that DFID would undertake an 'exemplary' role, or ... focus exclusively on any one area. This decision was taken on the basis that there would be substantial need elsewhere in Iraq other than simply in the South East; that the extent of our involvement would not be clear for some time, as the different variables affecting it fell into place; and that we needed to avoid being so closely associated with one area that we were seen as the 'donor of last resort', for all unfunded needs. However, we should make clear that, given the right UN mandate and authority, we would aim to work alongside the UK military, as well as elsewhere, with others, as appropriate."

**776.** Ms Short said that she would use Mr Blair's meeting on 6 March to press him to:

- examine carefully the legality of different post-conflict options for the UK;
- press the US on the need for "sufficient preparation" before any conflict began; and
- consider options for extending the deadline before the vote on a Security Council resolution or putting forward a revised text.

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<sup>335</sup> [Minute Bewes to Fernie, 6 March 2003, 'Iraq update: 5 March'](#).

**777.** Ms Short set out her views in a letter to Mr Blair before the meeting:

“... the reconstruction of Iraq without an explicit UN mandate would breach international law. Without the UN mandate the Coalition would be an occupying army with humanitarian duties under the Geneva Convention, but – like the Israelis in the Occupied Territories – without any rights to change institutional arrangements. The UN is clear that without the right mandate they could only respond to immediate humanitarian needs. My understanding is that the US has not yet accepted all our arguments on the UN role. Unless they do, DFID could do no more than support UN humanitarian efforts, and few others would be willing to engage.

...

“You should be aware that the US and the international humanitarian community are not properly prepared to deal with the immediate humanitarian issues. Visits to Washington suggest that the newly created US Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance is well led but under-staffed, under-resourced and under-prepared for the scale of the challenge ...

“But the US is improving its humanitarian preparedness daily. A little more time would make the US much better able to deal with some of the humanitarian consequences of conflict. My department is doing what we can to advise the UK military on preparations for delivering humanitarian assistance including in the initial absence of the UN and most international NGOs. We too could also be better prepared given more time.

“You must also be aware that without resources larger than my whole contingency reserve – just under £100m – it would be impossible for DFID to take a leading role in humanitarian delivery in the South-East ...”<sup>336</sup>

**778.** Ms Short’s letter was also sent to Mr Brown, Mr Straw and Mr Hoon.

**779.** On 6 March, Mr Blair chaired the first Ministerial meeting convened solely to address humanitarian and other post-conflict issues.

**780.** Officials recommended that the UK should not seek responsibility for general administration of a geographical area of Iraq in the medium term and pressed Ministers to take an urgent decision on the issue.

**781.** No decision was taken.

**782.** Officials asked Ministers to agree a new set of objectives and guiding principles for the post-conflict occupation of Iraq.

**783.** The objectives and guiding principles were not discussed at the meeting.

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<sup>336</sup> [Letter Short to Blair, 5 March 2003, ‘Post Conflict Iraq: UN and US Roles’.](#)



**784.** Although there was no guarantee at that stage that a UN mandate along the lines sought by the UK would be forthcoming, Mr Blair stated that planning for “medium-term post-conflict action” should continue on the assumption that there would be a UN mandate.

**785.** For the first time, Mr Blair requested a consolidated UK plan for post-conflict Iraq, including the key decisions for Ministers to take.

**786.** DFID and the MOD remained unable to agree a joint approach to UK humanitarian operations in the area likely to be occupied by UK forces.

**787.** After Cabinet on 6 March, Mr Blair chaired a meeting on post-conflict issues with Mr Brown, Mr Hoon, Ms Short, Baroness Symons, Sir Michael Jay and “other officials”.<sup>337</sup>

**788.** The IPU prepared an annotated agenda in consultation with other departments.<sup>338</sup>

**789.** With the invasion possibly only weeks away, the IPU explained that US and UK planning assumed that, in the “medium term after the conflict”, Coalition Forces would be “re-deployed into six or seven geographical sectors in order to provide a secure environment for the civil transitional administration to conduct humanitarian assistance and reconstruction work”. The US expected the UK Division in Iraq to be responsible for a geographical sector (see Section 6.2), which would be very expensive and carry wider resource implications. The UK Division would probably be based in or near Basra, with the size of its AOR depending on a number of factors, including the permissiveness of the environment and the size of the Division in relation to the rest of the Coalition.

**790.** The annotated agenda stated: “Ministers need urgently to take a view on this before the military planning assumptions become a fait accompli.” Ministers were asked:

- Whether they agreed that the UK did not have the resources to make an “exemplary” effort in providing for basic humanitarian needs in the area controlled by a UK Division. The potential cost of making a “significant difference” in a UK AO likely to contain 20 percent of Iraq’s population was estimated at between US\$400m and US\$2.4bn for the first year, depending on disruption to OFF and the extent of the damage caused by conflict. That was “well beyond” the financial and implementing capacity of DFID and the MOD, and could become a significant medium-term commitment if the local population became dependent on UK assistance. The alternative to an “exemplary effort” was to “give our assistance to UN agencies and NGOs”, supplemented by support for QIPs in the UK’s area.
- To choose between options for a medium-term post-conflict military presence. The Chiefs of Staff believed it would be necessary to reduce the UK’s military

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<sup>337</sup> [Letter Cannon to Owen, 7 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Post-Conflict Issues’.](#)

<sup>338</sup> [Paper IPU, 5 March 2003, ‘Planning for the UK’s role in Iraq after Saddam’.](#)

contribution from about 45,000 to 15,000 in the “medium term (by the autumn)” to “avoid long term damage to the Armed Forces”. At the same time, the US expected the UK to contribute forces “for the security of a geographic area ... over the medium term”. The IPU considered it “reasonable to assume that a brigade should be able to manage a single, well-populated province” the size of Basra, but there were four options available:

- a brigade responsible for security in a single province;
  - a UK divisional headquarters could take responsibility for security, under Coalition command, in a wider area of Iraq (US planners envisaged Basra, Maysan, Dhi Qar and Wasit being a single sector), supported by Coalition partners, which, the paper recognised, could be difficult to find;
  - deployment of the ARRC in addition or as an alternative to a brigade;
  - withdrawal of all forces in the medium term, though the paper warned that would be politically difficult.
- Whether to follow the US plan to administer Iraq as a whole and not seek general UK responsibility for the administration of any geographic area in the medium term. The US plan was to administer Iraq as a whole from Baghdad, “which must be right”. In any area where the UK took responsibility for security, it could, with a UN mandate, also take on wider responsibility for reconstruction (including humanitarian assistance and aspects of civil administration), but that would “very likely be beyond the resources of the UK alone and have implications for domestic departments”.
  - Whether any UK involvement in the medium term should be conditional on a UN mandate.
  - To agree a set of objectives for post-conflict occupation of Iraq. The UK’s objectives would be achieved when Iraq had been “radically changed for the better”. The US ambition was reform leading to “a liberal market economy and multi-party democracy”, and was consistent with UK objectives as set out by Mr Straw in Parliament on 7 January. From a UK perspective, the IPU envisaged an Iraq that:
    - had “a broad-based, effective and representative government”;
    - had “given up its attachment to WMD”;
    - had armed forces and intelligence services of “an appropriate size ... well on the way to being reformed”;
    - complied with its international obligations;
    - respected human rights and made “significant progress towards a fair and effective justice sector”;
    - was not dependent on OFF and was “well on the way to becoming a free market economy”;

- was not subject to sanctions and had “begun to regularise its relations with international financial and trading organisations, with a view to it not being economically hamstrung by debt and reparations”.
- To agree a set of principles that would be useful from a planning perspective and guide UK involvement in the short term. Those principles were that the UK would:
  - meet its international legal obligations;
  - minimise the suffering of the Iraqi people;
  - be limited in what it could do to change Iraq until there was a new UN Security Council mandate;
  - help Iraqis to help themselves by using their own institutions to run the country;
  - stress that its presence in Iraq was temporary, but the commitment to support the people of Iraq was for the long term;
  - stress that Iraq’s natural resources were for the people of Iraq;
  - as far as possible, ensure that short-term involvement did not exceed resources currently committed and “keep options open for the medium term”;
  - expect evidence of WMD to be verified by UN inspectors;
  - seek to internationalise its presence in Iraq “as soon as possible”. Ministers were asked whether they were content for officials to approach potential contributors.

**791. The IPU checklists of objectives and guiding principles made no reference to operational preparations for the UK’s post-conflict role in Iraq.**

**792. MOD advice to Mr Hoon was explicit about the inadequacy of those preparations:**

- **UK involvement in post-conflict administration would require a significant civilian component: none had been identified.**
- **Under existing US plans, the UK would need substantial military support from other nations: there were no formal arrangements to gather such support.**
- **US planners assumed a UK contribution to Phase IV that was potentially greater than could be sustained: if Ministers wanted to set limits, they should do so now.**
- **There was a need to consider the worst case: an enduring large scale military commitment with commensurate civilian support.**

**793.** The MOD advice to Mr Hoon stated:

“... any UK involvement in the administration of post-conflict Iraq will necessarily require a significant civilian administrative and specialist component; this component has not yet been identified or resourced by OGDs. **This is the key issue.**

**The success of civil administration will be essential to Iraq’s long term future. The UK military cannot do this on their own.**

“... [T]he current defence planning assumption is that UK forces can only sustain large scale operations for a period of six months without doing long term damage to capability. This implies that UK forces reduce to a Medium Scale (i.e. roughly one brigade) post-conflict TELIC commitment.

“... US planning is currently tending to assume UK involvement in Phase IV at a level that is the maximum, if not higher than, that we can sustain. **If Ministers wish to set limits on the UK’s Phase IV contribution they should be set now so that US planning can be adjusted ...**

“... [A]s US planning stands, the UK will need substantial support from other nations. There are no arrangements yet in place formally to gather such support. Such support will be largely contingent on a suitable second/third UNSCR and a UN mandate for the occupation of Iraq. The FCO need to build on their recent ‘market survey’ to identify candidates and persuade them to shorten the time it will take them to deploy.”<sup>339</sup>

**794.** Possible levels of UK commitment to Phase IV were set out in an annex:

- i. **Maximum payoff (and maximum cost):** Tackle a problem area (eg Basra) with a UK two-star lead (subsequently becoming a multinational HQ). A UK Brigade in the SE sector. HQ ARRC taking on the CJTF(I) role early for six months. UK involvement (but not military) in a reconstruction pillar. This would be contingent on US burden sharing on HQ ARRC CIS [communications and information systems].
- ii. **Regional (+):** The SE Sector with a UK two-star lead (subsequently becoming a multinational HQ). A UK Brigade in the SE sector. No HQ ARRC but UK involvement (including military) in a reconstruction pillar and a significant staff contribution to CJTF-I.
- iii. **Regional:** The SE Sector with a UK two-star lead (subsequently becoming a multinational HQ). A UK Brigade in the SE sector.

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<sup>339</sup> [Minute Sec\(O\)4 to PS/Secretary of State \[MOD\], 6 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Aftermath – Medium to Long Term UK Military Commitment’.](#)

- iv. **Regional (-):** A UK Brigade in the SE sector – not UK led. UK involvement (including military) in a reconstruction pillar.
- v. **Regional (- -):** A UK Brigade in the SE sector – not UK led.”

**795.** Mirroring the urgency expressed in the IPU annotated agenda, the MOD warned that, in the absence of settled UK policy on the scale or duration of the UK contribution to post-conflict Iraq, that contribution risked being determined “by decisions being taken by CENTCOM now”.

**796.** The MOD identified a number of specific concerns, including:

- US plans envisaged the UK having responsibility for security in one of seven sectors. The UK had neither agreed formally nor challenged the US assumption. Nor had other departments scoped what non-military UK contributions could be sustained. The UK was “**currently at risk of taking on an unsustainable task if there is no further Coalition contribution to the occupation of Iraq**”.
- If the UK did lead a military sector, there was a risk of the UK military being “intimately involved” in the civil administration, “not a role they would seek”. There was “**a pressing need to identify civil capacity across the international civil admin effort, including to support civil administration in a UK military sector**”.
- The UK was “**carrying some risk of early humanitarian assistance failures in the UK AO**”.

**797.** The policy considerations included:

- the degree to which the UK wanted to stand “shoulder to shoulder” with the US, “a fundamental political judgement ... where are the UK’s red lines?”; and
- the UK’s attitude to the future of Iraq. “Does the UK wish to become intimately involved in reconstruction and civil administration? This is not a military task ... but it will both affect and be affected by the level of military engagement. It will also have significant resource implications, across government.”

**798.** The briefing concluded with a section on the worst case:

“Much of the above is predicated on best-case assumptions for the progress of a conflict (swift, short and successful), the condition of Iraq post-conflict (infrastructure not greatly damaged by fighting, limited internecine conflict) and the degree of international buy-in with civil and military resources, including cash (considerable and UN endorsed). The Secretary of State may wish to take the opportunity of this meeting to remind his colleagues that there is at least a credible possibility that none of these conditions will obtain.

“Even if there is a second (and possibly third) UNSCR this is no guarantee of broad-based international buy-in into Phase IV ... [T]here is a real possibility of the UK (along with the US and a few forward leaning smaller military nations) being committed to Phase IV engagement without international burden sharing and without an immediate exit strategy. At its worst this could expose the UK to an enduring Large Scale military commitment (20-30,000 in theatre) – and the commensurate civil support required to contribute to the rebuilding of Iraq ... The potential consequences are severe ... This is not the most likely risk, but it is one that increases the further the outcome post-conflict is from a UN-mandated solution.”

**799.** In a speaking note for Mr Hoon, officials highlighted concerns about the tendency of discussion of the post-conflict phase, and the IPU annotated agenda, to focus on the military contribution:

“A military presence will be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for success in Iraq. **A large, organised and properly funded humanitarian assistance plan (supported by DFID) is needed from the outset.**

“... The UK should identify now what civil contribution it will make to rebuilding in Iraq and consider the cross-Government resource consequences.

“We must not shy away from the fact that there remains a very credible worst case scenario that we shall want to proceed without either a second UNSCR or wider international practical support. The possible implications of this for the UK, across the board, are severe ...

“We should put in hand detailed work to consider these implications and ways of mitigating possible effects.”

**800.** The record of the meeting on 6 March shows that Mr Hoon raised the question of DFID/MOD co-ordination. There is no indication that Ministers discussed the wider issues raised by MOD officials.

**801.** Mr Cannon told Mr Blair that Ministers needed to make progress on three interlinked issues: the humanitarian response; the UN mandate; and whether the UK should “take over control of” a geographical sector in Iraq.<sup>340</sup> Mr Cannon explained:

- Ms Short’s demands for additional UN cover and funding had left the military concerned that the job of securing Basra might be compromised by lack of DFID advance planning.
- Reports from Washington indicated the US had “moved a long way” on the UN mandate.
- Basra was “the obvious choice” if the UK decided to take on one of seven geographical sectors in Iraq.

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<sup>340</sup> [Minute Cannon to Prime Minister, 5 March 2002, ‘Iraq: Post-Conflict Issues’.](#)

**802.** At the meeting on 6 March, Ms Short repeated her concerns about the need for a UN mandate.<sup>341</sup> She also stated that DFID humanitarian advisers had been deployed in support of UK forces and that the DFID contingency fund would prioritise Iraq. The funding available to DFID would not, however, provide for an exercise on the scale of Kosovo.

**803.** Mr Brown commented that the military operation would be very costly. Estimates for a major humanitarian operation were running at US\$1.9bn to US\$4bn. The burden of reconstructing Iraq should not be borne by just the US and the UK; other countries and the EU should contribute. In the long term, Iraq's oil should fund the country's reconstruction. Mr Brown was particularly concerned that UK funds should not be used to repay Iraq's debts to Germany, France and Russia.

**804.** Mr Hoon warned that a humanitarian crisis "could cause operational problems for the military and expose us to public criticism", underlining the need for joint DFID/MOD planning.

**805.** The record stated:

"The Prime Minister concluded that:

- (a) DFID and MOD should draw up a plan for immediate humanitarian action in the Area of Operations of British forces.
- (b) Planning for medium-term post-conflict action should continue on the assumption that a UN mandate (the 'third/fourth resolutions') would be forthcoming. The FCO should draft the necessary resolutions, which we should share with the US. The FCO should prepare a Phase IV plan with other departments, including the key decisions for Ministers to take.
- (c) The Chancellor should draw up a funding plan, including securing funding from wider international sources ...
- (d) The Prime Minister was prepared to pursue with President Bush our need for a UN mandate for a post-conflict administration."

**806.** Mr Blair also stated that sectorisation would need to be addressed and should be covered in the Phase IV plan.

**807.** Ministers "did not have time to address" the IPU's draft objectives for post-conflict Iraq or the principles to guide UK involvement in the short term.<sup>342</sup> Both were re-submitted to Mr Blair on 12 March.

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<sup>341</sup> [Letter Cannon to Owen, 7 March 2003, 'Iraq: Post-Conflict Issues'](#).

<sup>342</sup> [Minute Cannon to Prime Minister, 12 March 2003, 'Iraq: post-conflict planning: objectives and principles'](#).

## The UK plan for Phase IV

**808.** The FCO described the ‘UK overall plan for Phase IV’, prepared by the IPU and shown to Mr Blair on 7 March, as “work in progress”.

**809.** The plan stated that the US was leading on Phase IV planning and that UK personnel were well placed to influence that work.

**810.** It listed three sets of decisions that Ministers needed to take either immediately, before the conflict began or very soon after the start of hostilities.

**811.** The plan contained little detail on post-conflict tasks and no new material on sectorisation, but warned:

“... we need to be clear that if we take on leadership of a military sector, previous deployments of this type suggest that we are likely to inherit wider responsibilities than purely security.”

**812.** Officials recommended postponing decisions on the extent of the UK’s post-conflict commitment until after the start of hostilities.

**813.** The ‘UK overall plan for Phase IV’ was shown to Mr Blair on 7 March.<sup>343</sup> Much of the plan, prepared by the IPU, was drawn from the annotated agenda prepared for the meeting on 6 March.

**814.** A letter from Mr Straw’s Private Office stated that the plan was:

“... work in progress. A full plan could say quite a lot more about the shape of civilian government, the treatment of war criminals and other matters, most of which we are working on.”<sup>344</sup>

**815.** The IPU described Phase IV as “the military term for the part of the plan that takes place after the fighting has finished” and stated: “In practice Phase IV starts the moment Coalition forces enter Iraq.”<sup>345</sup>

**816.** The plan stated:

“The US is leading on post-conflict or Phase IV planning. The military part in this is being led by CENTCOM’s Land Component Headquarters, and the civil piece by its Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). We have military officers and officials seconded to both. They are well placed to influence planning. The UN is also carrying out contingency planning. We are tracking that as well. There are decisions for Ministers to take about the level of UK engagement in Phase IV and key points on which to influence US planning.”

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<sup>343</sup> Minute Rycroft to Prime Minister, 7 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Weekend Papers’.

<sup>344</sup> [Letter Owen to Rycroft, 7 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Phase IV’.](#)

<sup>345</sup> [Paper Iraq Planning Unit, 7 March 2003, ‘The UK overall plan for Phase IV’.](#)



**817.** The IPU listed actions needed that week:

- “UK forces will be ready to fight soon. By then **we need to have promulgated some principles**<sup>346</sup> **to guide the campaign** for the first few days of Phase IV. And UK forces are likely to be the first to confront this.”
- “Of equal urgency is the need **to ensure our humanitarian relief effort is in place**. The scale of the UK effort for humanitarian operations depends on assessed need and the expected contributions of others. **Ministers will need to agree this.**” Issues of concern included:
  - the absence of detailed US plans for humanitarian operations;
  - the impact on UK planning of uncertainty about the legitimacy of military conflict and the status of the Occupation;
  - the dependence of some DFID plans on further financing decisions; and
  - UK forces’ lack of funding and capacity to fulfil their humanitarian obligations in the absence of other providers.

The UK military needed resources for humanitarian assistance to reduce the risk of humanitarian disaster. Ms Short and Mr Hoon needed “**to agree on the modalities**”.

**818.** Before the conflict began, there needed to be agreement with the US on:

- A Security Council resolution allowing OFF to continue.
- An “**authorising UNSCR for Phase IV**”. The agreement should be announced “to encourage/galvanise the international community to advance their own preparations”. US policy was “moving in our direction but still has some way to go”. The UK needed to:
  - work with the US to identify and define the role of the head of the interim civilian administration; and
  - “push US thinking” on an Iraqi consultative council towards arrangements visibly inclusive of all segments of the population. Getting the right political framework was “crucial” given that the initial period of Phase IV would be perceived as a military occupation and that “the work done during the first weeks and months will shape the mould for what follows”.
- Objectives for the day power was handed back to Iraq (as set out in the annotated agenda of 5 March).

**819.** Very soon after the start of hostilities the UK needed “**to agree what our medium-term contribution to Iraq should be (say from the autumn onwards). For this will shape our conduct in the short term.**” Sectorisation would be a key determinant of UK policy.

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<sup>346</sup> The principles were broadly as set out in the annotated agenda of 5 March.

**820.** The IPU repeated the advice in the annotated agenda of 5 March that the UK should follow the US plan to administer Iraq as a whole and not seek “general UK responsibility for the administration of any geographic area of Iraq in the medium term”. The IPU added:

**“However, we need to be clear that if we take on leadership of a military sector, previous deployments of this type suggest that we are likely to inherit wider responsibilities than purely security.”**

**821.** The Inquiry has seen no response to the Phase IV plan.

**822.** Mr Rycroft put five other FCO papers to Mr Blair, most of which had been prepared before Mr Blair’s request of 6 March:

- elements of a resolution “authorising our post-conflict requirements”;
- issues UK forces might confront in the first 48 hours of hostilities;
- the role of UN weapons inspectors (see Section 4.4);
- ‘Iraq Day After – Oil’; and
- ‘Preliminary UK Views on Economic Actions in First 30/60 Days’.<sup>347</sup>

**823.** The IPU prepared the paper on oil. It is not clear which, if any, of the others was written by the IPU.

**824.** The FCO advised No.10 that the paper setting out elements for a possible resolution was “broadly in line with emerging US thinking”. The suggested elements included the proposal that a UN Special Co-ordinator (UNSC) would be appointed, and would in turn appoint or supervise the creation of an Iraqi Interim Council.<sup>348</sup>

**825.** Other core elements of the draft resolution were:

- authorisation for Member States acting under unified command to provide an international security presence in Iraq;
- continuation of OFF, overseen by the Security Council, to ensure the transparent and fair use of Iraqi oil revenues;
- creation of a UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to co-ordinate the work of NGOs and UN agencies.

**826.** UK efforts to secure a UN mandate for a post-conflict administration, culminating in the adoption of resolution 1483 on 22 May, are described in detail in Section 9.1.

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<sup>347</sup> Minute Rycroft to Prime Minister, 7 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Weekend papers’.

<sup>348</sup> Paper [unattributed and undated], ‘Iraq: Phase IV Elements for a possible resolution’.

**827.** The paper on issues for the first 48 hours listed 16 questions that would need answering, but offered no answers.<sup>349</sup> It is not clear whether the MOD or DFID had been consulted before the document was sent to No.10.

**828.** The list of questions included:

- Which economic assets would need securing?
- What message should be delivered to the Iraqi people?
- What would be the most effective UK contribution to humanitarian relief?
- “With Whom Should UK Forces Work?”
  - Who should be indicted (‘black list’), or detained until the situation is secure (‘grey list’)?
  - Who can we identify in advance as Iraqis we might work with? (‘White list’)?
  - How are these people to be identified on the ground?
  - What should be the immediate handling of members of Iraqi security organisations? Presumably key players on the National Security Council, the leadership of the Special Security Organisation and the Special Republican Guard would be on a black list?
  - What about the police and regular Army?”
- How far should UK forces respond to civil unrest in urban areas?
- What assurances could be given to Russia or France about the security of their assets?

**829.** The IPU paper on oil policy had been shown to Mr Straw on 28 February.<sup>350</sup> Mr Chilcott described it as “preliminary, official-level thinking”, incorporating comments from a range of departments. He explained to Mr Straw that the IPU intended to share the paper with the US “in due course”.

**830.** In the paper, the IPU judged that it would take “enormous investment over a number of years” to overcome decades of underinvestment in Iraq’s oil infrastructure. That work should be a major focus for the international administration, but much of the initial work would fall to the interim administration. It would be important to ensure any such moves by the interim administration were “clearly in the interests of the Iraqi economy and people” and carried out transparently, and that production was “not pushed beyond OPEC-type depletion rates, even though this could be in the interests of the Iraqi people”.

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<sup>349</sup> Paper [unattributed and undated], ‘The first 48 hours’.

<sup>350</sup> [Minute Chilcott to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 28 February 2003, ‘Iraq Day After – Oil Policy’ attaching Paper IPU, 27 February 2003, ‘Iraq Day After – Oil’.](#)

**831.** The IPU saw no reason for a radical overhaul of an industry which was “relatively well run given the circumstances”. The US had identified individuals in Iraq and the diaspora who could take on key roles. The UK should do the same. “Winning hearts and minds” among oil workers and making sure they were paid would be vital. The UK would want to be seen to help get oil pumping while putting out “robust messages” that it had no selfish interest in doing so.

**832.** Four types of oil contract needed to be considered: OFF oil purchase contracts, which should continue with minimal disruption; and new contracts for tackling fires, investment in new fields and rehabilitation of infrastructure, all of which would need to be transparent and open to UK firms. It was important to make sure the US kept the UK Government in the picture.

**833.** As next steps, the IPU recommended the UK should:

- convene a meeting with UK oil companies to make use of their expertise;
- obtain the US data on the Iraqi oil sector, including personnel;
- carry out detailed research on key oil infrastructure in the UK sector;
- hold preliminary discussions with UK firms to ensure they were well placed to pick up contracts;
- develop an oil sector information campaign;
- calculate the cost of paying Iraqi oil workers;
- factor rapid assistance for oil field installations into UK military planning;
- start work on appropriate UN resolutions, including for the continuation of the OFF programme; and
- research existing oil investment agreements with Iraq.

**834.** On 2 March, Mr Straw had commented: “V[ery] good paper.”<sup>351</sup>

**835.** UK policy on the management of Iraq’s oil reserves is addressed in Section 10.3.

**836.** The last paper in the set shown to Mr Blair, on economic actions in the first 30 to 60 days, had been written in mid-February as the UK contribution to the trilateral working group on economic issues.<sup>352</sup>

**837.** The paper did not allocate responsibility for individual post-conflict tasks or identify the likely resources needed, but is the most detailed piece of non-military planning for post-conflict Iraq seen by the Inquiry.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> Manuscript comment Straw, 2 March 2003, on Minute Chilcott to Private Secretary [FCO], 28 February 2003, ‘Iraq Day After – Oil Policy’.

<sup>352</sup> Minute Dodd to Manning, 3 March 2003, ‘Ad Hoc Group on Iraq’.

<sup>353</sup> Paper [unattributed], 14 February 2003, ‘Iraq Day After: Preliminary UK Views on Economic Actions in First 30/60 Days’.

**838.** The paper set out strategic and operational objectives against six different issues: humanitarian relief; public finances; oil; Ba'ath Party and former elite economic issues; reconstruction and economic strategy; and effective economic administration. The operational objectives were divided into action needed before the fall of the existing Iraqi regime, "immediate" actions for the first 30 days afterwards and "pressing" actions for between 30 and 60 days.

**839.** The section on public finances included as one of its key strategic objectives: "Avoiding disintegration of civil service and public services." The "specific operational objective" before regime change was to reassure employees that salaries would be paid. Objectives for the 30 days after regime change included ensuring salaries continued to be paid and "decisions about pay policy towards security services and military".

**840.** The paper was unchanged from a version shared with the US State Department on 14 February, when it had been described to US officials as "very much work in progress, not completely co-ordinated here [in London]".<sup>354</sup>

**841.** The Inquiry has seen no evidence of further work on the document.

#### TREASURY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE IMF

**842.** Mr Jon Cunliffe, Treasury Managing Director for Macroeconomic Policy and International Finance, called on the IMF internal task force on Iraq in Washington on 6 March.<sup>355</sup>

**843.** The UK Delegation to the IMF reported that the task force had made "some significant progress", but that staff emphasised the sheer scale of the debt problem facing Iraq, well in excess of the capacity to pay. Without taking account of the need to front-load reconstruction costs, IMF staff estimated it could take 20 years to pay off less than a third of Iraq's potential debt burden of US\$300bn (incorporating external debt of US\$90bn and compensation payments to Iran and Kuwait). IMF staff were pulling together background information on the economy, the state of institutions and priorities in case the IMF became involved in either policy advice or technical assistance. Potential areas of involvement included currency reform, fiscal policy, the oil sector and external debt. Planning was "highly tentative". Experience of other post-conflict situations had taught the IMF that "the situation on the ground can turn out to be extremely different from prior expectations and that this then impacts on the policy advice".

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<sup>354</sup> Letter Economic Policy Department [junior official] to US State Department official, 14 February 2003, 'Iraq Day After: Trilateral Economic Discussions – Follow-up'.

<sup>355</sup> Telegram 21 UKDel IBRD Washington to FCO London, 7 March 2003, 'Iraq and IMF'.

## DFID update on humanitarian assistance

**844.** A DFID update on humanitarian planning for No.10 on 7 March stated that:

- In the event of conflict, DFID would assess the scale of the humanitarian need, identify the UN agency best placed to respond and provide immediate funding.
- DFID would also be advising the military, to whom immediate responsibility for assistance would fall.
- Reconstruction plans were less well advanced. DFID's focus had been on ensuring the international community and the US recognised the scale of the task and the need for a UN mandate.

**845.** DFID urged Mr Blair to press the case with the US immediately for a resolution authorising reconstruction. UK participation in military action should be made conditional on such a resolution.

**846.** Sir David Manning advised Mr Blair to engage President Bush on the issue the following week, but to focus first on the second resolution.

**847.** Mr Blair received a DFID update on humanitarian assistance and reconstruction planning on 7 March.<sup>356</sup> The paper stated that the principle underlying DFID's humanitarian assistance was "to provide rapid support to whoever is best placed to meet the immediate needs of the people". There was now a DFID staff presence in ORHA and 1 (UK) Div in Kuwait, with further deployments to the region and UN agencies imminent. £10m had been earmarked for UN and NGO contingency planning and supplies were in place to provide shelter for up to 25,000 people. DFID would:

"... respond to the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people through supporting the international humanitarian system, principally the UN, Red Cross/Crescent and key NGOs to save lives and alleviate suffering. We would be able to allocate up to £65m from our contingency reserve."

**848.** In the event of conflict, DFID would assess the scale of the humanitarian need, identify the UN agency best placed to respond and provide immediate funding for it to do so, although immediate responsibility for assistance would fall to the military, to whom DFID would be giving advice.

**849.** The paper stated that reconstruction plans were less well advanced. The focus of DFID's work, in collaboration with other government departments, had been "to ensure the international community, especially the US, realises the enormous scale of the task and the necessity of a UN mandate". Uncertainty over that issue was holding up planning, but DFID had held discussions with the World Bank and other partners. One of

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<sup>356</sup> Letter Warren to Rycroft, 7 March 2003 attaching Paper DFID, [undated], 'DFID Planning on Iraq'.

the first tasks would be to put Iraq's debt on an agreed international footing. DFID would aim, with the Treasury, "to play a lead role in the IFIs in gaining such an agreement".

**850.** Dr Brewer sent Sir David Manning supplementary material for Mr Blair to use with President Bush, which explained the need for a resolution to authorise reconstruction activity and the financial advantage of having one.<sup>357</sup> Dr Brewer explained that the draft speaking note had been seen by Ms Short, Mr Chakrabarti, Mr Chilcott (in Mr Ricketts' absence) and Mr Bowen. She concluded:

"We judge that the time to press our case with the Americans is now: they need to know how much this matters for us and for the prospects of others engaging in the reconstruction effort."

**851.** The suggested points for Mr Blair to put to President Bush included:

- the constraints on occupying forces in the absence of a resolution expressly authorising a continued international presence in Iraq; and
- the negative impact the absence of a resolution was having on planning by large parts of the international system.

**852.** The DFID draft included the suggestion that Mr Blair conclude with the statement: "That apart, I need this UN mandate before I can give the go-ahead."

**853.** Sir David Manning forwarded Dr Brewer's letter to Mr Blair on 8 March, with the comment:

"You will need to engage Bush on this soon – but my view is that we should concentrate on 2nd Resolution this w/e [the weekend of 8 and 9 March] and start on the UN heavy lifting on Monday/Tuesday [10 and 11 March]."<sup>358</sup>

**854.** Mr Blair discussed the need for a further resolution on post-conflict Iraq with President Bush on 12 March.

### **DIS Red Team report on retaining the support of the Iraqi people**

**855.** The second report by the DIS Red Team stated that internal Iraqi support was likely to be the single most important factor in achieving success in Iraq.

**856.** The Red Team recommended that, if there was any doubt about the Coalition's ability to meet Iraqi expectations in an exemplary fashion, steps should be taken as soon as possible to lower those expectations.

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<sup>357</sup> [Letter Brewer to Manning, 7 March 2003, 'Iraq/Post Conflict: Legal and Financial Imperatives' attaching Paper \[unattributed\], 7 March 2003, 'Iraq/Post Conflict: Legal and Financial Imperatives: Points for the Prime Minister to use with President Bush'](#).

<sup>358</sup> [Manuscript comment Manning to Prime Minister, 8 March 2003, on Letter Brewer to Manning, 7 March 2003, 'Iraq/Post Conflict: Legal and Financial Imperatives'](#).

**857.** The aim of the second report from the DIS Red Team ('Obtaining and Retaining the Support of the Iraqi People in the Aftermath of Conflict'), issued on 7 March, was: "To identify the optimum structure of the Immediate and Interim Administrations in Iraq and other measures most likely to obtain and retain the support of the Iraqi people."<sup>359</sup>

**858.** The Red Team listed six key judgements and three key considerations:

**"Key judgements:**

- Internal Iraqi support is likely to be the single most important factor to the success of the whole operation. After a 'honeymoon period', Iraqi support is likely to become fragile and will depend on the way the early phases of the military campaign were conducted and the effectiveness of the immediate post-conflict administration.
- The Immediate Administration will be established as a 'belligerent occupation', which will require Coalition forces to provide a wide range of administrative support, as well as maintaining law and order.
- The form of the Interim Administration is not yet clear, but in descending order of acceptability is likely to be:
  - UN Assistance Mission with strong US/UK civilian and military contributions.
  - US-led civilian administration.
  - 'Full blown' UN administration – on the lines of UNMIK [UN Mission in Kosovo] or UNTAET [UN Transitional Administration in East Timor].
- The critical success factor from the outset will be the engagement of local representatives in advisory bodies at national, regional and local level. Iraqi representation must not be restricted to Iraqi exile bodies.
- Opportunities must be taken to hand over administrative responsibility to local authorities as they become competent and are approved by advisory bodies.
- Law and order, including the judicial process, will require special handling and the retention of executive authority by the Interim Administration.

...

**"Key Considerations.**

- **Fragility of Popular Support** ... There is likely to be widespread support for Coalition forces in the immediate aftermath, but it will be extremely fragile. Retaining support will depend on:
  - The conduct of the early phases of the campaign ...
  - Providing food, water, medical assistance and shelter ...
  - Prompt action to mark and clear unexploded ordnance ...

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<sup>359</sup> [Minute PS/CDI to APS2 SofS \[MOD\], 7 March 2003, 'Iraq Red Team – Obtaining and Retaining the Support of the Iraqi People in the Aftermath of Conflict' attaching Paper DIS Red Team, 7 March 2003, 'Obtaining and retaining the support of the Iraqi people in the aftermath of conflict'.](#)



- Preventing interference in internal Iraqi affairs by outside states (principally Turkey and Iran).
- Providing a credible promise of increasing Iraqi involvement in administration with a road-map to Iraqi-led government, whilst ensuring no particular group feels unduly disadvantaged.

“If any of these conditions are not met, we must expect support rapidly to evaporate in all or part of the country.

- **Clarity of the Information Campaign message ...**
- **Legal Position:** in the post-war period, irrespective of the status of UNSCRs, the US/UK forces in Iraq will be in ‘belligerent occupation’. This obliges them to:
  - Restore and maintain public order and safety by ‘*respecting the laws in force ... in the occupied state*’.
  - Assume responsibility for administering the occupied area.
  - Take responsibility for the medical care of inhabitants.
  - Supply the civil population with food, medical supplies, clothing, bedding and shelter.
  - Facilitate relief schemes, if required.
  - Facilitate the operation of postal facilities, religious observance and schools.
  - Issue a proclamation making the existence, extent and special regulations of the occupied territory clear to the inhabitants.
- UK forces are also obliged to apply the standards of the European Convention on Human Rights, whereas US forces are not. This could present complications with respect to the removal of detainees from Iraq, for example.
- These responsibilities remain in force until the Occupation ceases.
- Expectations that the Coalition forces will be able to deliver these responsibilities are high; so if there is doubt over our ability to meet them in an ‘exemplary’ fashion we should take steps to lower expectations as early as possible.”

**859.** The section of the report on “Post-War Structures” stated that Iraq was “not a ‘failed state’”, nor was it recovering from a bloody civil war. The people were “proud” and would “respond badly to condescension or perceived insults”.

**860.** On law and order and the judicial system, the Red Team judged that:

- “● [O]nce an assessment has been made of the effectiveness of local police forces it should be increasingly possible to include them in military-led law and order operations”.
- The Iraqi judicial system was “largely dysfunctional” and an “interim judicial system may be necessary”.
- The prison system was likely to need “a complete overhaul and supervisory regime”, although the infrastructure might be “useable”.

**861.** The Red Team concluded that:

- Iraqis look forward to improved circumstances post-conflict and their expectations that they will be engaged by the Coalition in achieving this need to be accommodated.
- The way the military campaign is run, and the early stages of post-war operations, will determine the degree of support the Coalition receives from the Iraqi people; if it is not well handled, we risk compromising overall success.”

**862.** There is no indication of any response to either of the Red Team’s pre-conflict reports, including the warning of the terrorist threat from Al Qaida against civilians and Coalition Forces in Iraq.

### **UK military and humanitarian co-ordination in the South**

**863.** In early March, Lt Gen Reith discussed the expansion of the UK combat role with US commanders. He continued to advise the Chiefs of Staff to extend the UK AO.

**864.** Lt Gen Reith visited the Middle East from 5 to 7 March, where he discussed optimising the use of 1 (UK) Div combat power “in some detail” with General John Abizaid, Gen Franks’ Deputy Commander (Forward), and then with Lt Gen McKiernan.<sup>360</sup> The record of the visit stated that Lt Gen Reith “offered” two options for UK forces to play a role in later operations: providing additional combat power to the US advance on Baghdad, or deploying forward by air to the Baghdad area to “assist in developing stability in case of sudden regime collapse”.

**865.** A manuscript note on Maj Gen Fry’s copy of the record stated:

“CDS was most unhappy ... COS [Chiefs of Staff] & SofS [Secretary of State] riding instructions were to not offer anything outside the UK AO but be receptive to requests (‘request mode rather than push mode’). CDS wanted to talk to CJO [Lt Gen Reith] immediately – but will close the loop on Saturday [8 March]. In the meantime this note is being kept away from Ministers’ offices.”<sup>361</sup>

**866.** Gen Jackson visited UK forces in Kuwait between 6 and 8 March and was involved in Lt Gen Reith’s discussion with Lt Gen McKiernan (see Section 6.2).<sup>362</sup> He reported to Adm Boyce that:

“Hampered by lack of domestic and international consensus on Phase III, planning for Phase IV remains the most immature aspect of the operation. The key to success in Phase IV will be legitimisation through multi-nationality, if possible underpinned by a further UNSCR ... Early multi-nationalisation of the occupying force should provide

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<sup>360</sup> Minute Dutton to PSO/CDS, 7 March 2003, ‘CJO visit to Middle East 5-7 Mar 03’.

<sup>361</sup> Minute MA/CJO to PSO/CDS, 7 March 2003, ‘CJO visit to Middle East 5-7 Mar 03’.

<sup>362</sup> [Minute CGS to CDS, 10 March 2003, ‘CGS Visit to Op TELIC’.](#)

the perception of legitimacy that the current narrow Coalition lacks. But realistically, current ill-feeling may run deep enough to prevent a thaw ...

“... Lt Gen Abizaid would like to avoid an occupation model based on sectors as used in the Balkans ... I observed that a territorial solution may be difficult to avoid as nations would wish to influence a given sector and military commanders would want clear boundaries for operations and interaction with civil authorities ...

“... I judge that, realistically, it will be some time before Coalition partners join US and British forces in any real strength, if at all. I draw two conclusions from this: first, that as much as possible of Iraq’s administrative and military structure should be preserved; and second, that we should beware rapid US drawdown on the American assumption that UK (perhaps through the ARRC) will form the focus for an international force that in the event fails to materialise.

“... GOC 1 Div [Maj Gen Brims] made it clear to me that in clarifying his role in Phase IV, he needed simply to know what his title was, to whom he would be responsible, and how quickly a civil administrator would be appointed. While he judges that Basra has adequate short-term food stocks, it will urgently need water, electricity and medical supplies ... Only the ICRC has humanitarian stocks in position ... there was little confidence within 1 Div that DFID has a coherent plan in place. I support GOC 1 Div’s intent to manage Phase IV with as light a touch as possible, but it will be important to establish the rule of law quickly – the question, as in Kosovo, will be whose law? ...”

**867.** Gen Jackson concluded:

“We are ready not just to demonstrate solidarity with our Coalition partner, but to contribute considerable and potentially decisive combat power to achieve rapid success in Phase III. Rapid success will set the conditions for Phase IV, which in turn will determine the overall success of the enterprise.”

**868.** A “Critical Decision Checklist” prepared for Mr Hoon on 7 March listed actions that had to be taken before UK forces were committed to action, including provision of resources for immediate humanitarian assistance.

**869.** DFID and the MOD remained unable to agree a joint approach to UK humanitarian operations in the area occupied by UK forces.

**870.** On 7 March, Mr Lee prepared a “Critical Decision Checklist” for Mr Hoon, listing actions that “have to be taken before forces could be committed to action”.<sup>363</sup> Three were linked to post-conflict planning:

- “Provision of resources for immediate humanitarian assistance (in hand);”

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<sup>363</sup> [Minute Lee to PS/Secretary of State \[MOD\], 7 March 2003, ‘Critical Decision Checklist’.](#)

- “Agreement with US on Phase IV assumptions (IPU in hand)”; and
- “Finalisation of military campaign objectives (Cabinet Office, in hand)”.

**871.** Separate MOD advice to Mr Hoon stated that DFID expected to distribute humanitarian relief through IOs and NGOs that would not be present until the environment was benign.<sup>364</sup> UK forces could find themselves in control of part of Iraq, including Basra, before IOs and NGOs were willing to enter the country. Ms Short’s agreement that DFID should take part in planning to manage the consequences of war was welcome, but DFID’s likely plan was to distribute relief wherever there was a need, not just in the UK AO. There was a danger that, even with DFID engagement, UK troops would lack the resources to deal with the humanitarian difficulties they faced. Officials recommended that the only way to be sure UK forces had access to the humanitarian supplies they might need was for DFID to channel its funding directly through the military.

**872.** Section 13.1 describes the subsequent exchange between the MOD, DFID and the Treasury on how to fund delivery of humanitarian assistance in the UK’s AO.

**873. On 9 March, Ms Short threatened to resign from the Government if the UK took military action against Iraq without UN authorisation.**

**874.** In an interview for *BBC Radio 4* on 9 March, Ms Short said she would resign from the Government if the UK took military action against Iraq without UN authority.<sup>365</sup> Asked whether she thought Mr Blair had acted “recklessly”, Ms Short described the situation as “extraordinarily reckless”. She continued:

“... what worries me is that we’ve got the old spin back and we have detailed discussions either personally or in the Cabinet and then the spin the next day is: ‘we’re ready for war’ ...

“If it takes another month or so, that is fine ... And I think you could get a world where we see the UN in authority ... proper care for the people of Iraq, because at the moment the preparations to care for the humanitarian aftermath of any military conflict are not properly in place.

“And there’s another major legal point – if there isn’t a UN mandate for the reconstruction of Iraq ... [i]t will in international law be an occupying army and won’t have the authority to make changes in the administrative arrangements in Iraq.”

**875.** In her memoir, Ms Short wrote that when she arrived in DFID on 11 March, Mr Chakrabarti and senior officials had obviously been asked by No.10 to find out what

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<sup>364</sup> [Minute MOD D/Sec to PS/Secretary of State \[MOD\], 7 March 2003, ‘OP Telic: DFID involvement and the funding of immediate humanitarian assistance’.](#)

<sup>365</sup> *BBC News*, 10 March 2003, *Clare Short Interview*.

it would take to make her stay on as International Development Secretary.<sup>366</sup> After discussion, they agreed that the conditions were:

- “1. Publish Road Map [for the Middle East]
2. Absolute requirement UN mandate for reconstruction
3. UN mandate for military action.”

**876.** Mr Chakrabarti wrote to Sir Andrew Turnbull later on 11 March to explain Ms Short’s position and to recommend “more frequent and systematic discussion of these issues between senior Ministers” and between Mr Blair and Ms Short, who needed reassurance that her concerns would be taken fully into account. Mr Chakrabarti understood that Mr Blair might ask senior Ministers to meet more regularly if conflict started, but advised starting these meetings sooner, “given the scale and significance of the decisions being taken”.<sup>367</sup>

**877.** Sir Andrew Turnbull informed officials in No.10 and the Cabinet Office of revised arrangements for Ministerial meetings on 18 March.

**878.** On 10 March, the House of Commons International Development Committee published its Report *Preparing for the Humanitarian Consequences of Possible Military Action Against Iraq*. The Committee stated: “We are not yet convinced that there is, to use the Prime Minister’s words, ‘a humanitarian plan that is every bit as viable and well worked out as a military plan’.”<sup>368</sup> The Committee advised: “it is essential that in planning for the possible humanitarian consequences of military action the worst case scenario, involving ethnic conflict, is considered”.<sup>369</sup> The Committee recommended that DFID issue a statement immediately outlining its humanitarian contingency plans.

**879.** Ms Short’s statement on 13 March is described later in this Section.

#### MR STRAW’S STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, 10 MARCH 2003

**880.** Mr Straw made a statement on Iraq to the House of Commons on 10 March, described in more detail in Section 3.8, in which he addressed the potential consequences of military action. Mr Straw stated that the international community would have “a duty to build a secure, prosperous future for the Iraqi people”. In his meeting with Mr Annan on 6 March, he had proposed “that the UN should take the lead role in co-ordinating international efforts to rebuild Iraq, and that they should be underpinned by a clear UN mandate”.<sup>370</sup>

<sup>366</sup> Short C. *An Honourable Deception: New Labour, Iraq and the Misuse of Power*. The Free Press, 2004.

<sup>367</sup> [Letter Chakrabarti to Turnbull, 11 March 2003, ‘Iraq’](#).

<sup>368</sup> Fourth Report from the International Development Committee, Session 2002-2003, *Preparing for the Humanitarian Consequences of Possible Military Action Against Iraq*, HC 444-I, page 5.

<sup>369</sup> Fourth Report from the International Development Committee, Session 2002-2003, *Preparing for the Humanitarian Consequences of Possible Military Action Against Iraq*, HC 444-I, page 17.

<sup>370</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 10 March 2003, column 23.

DIS REPORT: 'BASRA: POST SADDAM GOVERNANCE'

**881.** On 11 March, the DIS reported anecdotal evidence that Iraqi citizens were arming themselves as protection against an anticipated breakdown in law and order after the removal of Saddam Hussein.

**882.** The same report identified the Ba'ath Party as Basra's most important administrative institution.

**883.** On 11 March, the DIS produced the paper 'Basra: Post Saddam Governance'.<sup>371</sup> It was the first of a series of DIS reports on southern Iraq and came with the caveat that much of the content was "necessarily speculative".

**884.** It is not clear who saw the DIS report, but it seems likely that it would have been sent to all those, including senior officials in the MOD and the FCO, but not DFID, who received copies of the Red Team reports.

**885.** The report listed a range of possible local responses to military action, ranging from reprisals against Ba'ath Party and Security Force personnel to the collapse of law and order.

**886.** The DIS described the Ba'ath Party as "Basra's most important administrative institution". The local organisation mirrored that of the rest of the country:

"Most party members will have joined for reasons of professional and social advancement. It can be assumed most prominent members of Basra's professional classes (eg senior port officials, heads of local government departments, University Heads etc.) will be party members. They may however have little role in directing the party or ensuring regime control."

**887.** The DIS stated that the "upper echelons ... (Director level)" of most Basra governorate departments, which covered the full range of local administrative functions, would be members of the Ba'ath Party.

**888.** The DIS advised that there was "very limited reporting on the organisation of Iraq's Civil Police. And we have no information specific to Basra." It added that there was anecdotal evidence from elsewhere in Iraq suggesting civilians were fearful of a general breakdown in law and order and were arming themselves. Disarming them "might be interpreted as running contrary to cultural norms and could be resisted by the civil populace".

**889.** Those conclusions were broadly consistent with views expressed in US intelligence briefings produced in January and March.

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<sup>371</sup> [Report DIS, 11 March 2003, 'Basra: Post Saddam Governance'](#).

**890.** In January 2003, a US National Intelligence Community Assessment had judged that a post-Saddam Hussein authority in Iraq would face “a deeply divided society with a significant chance that domestic groups would engage in violent conflict with each other unless an occupying force prevented them from doing so”.<sup>372</sup> The Assessment identified three divisions:

- The “principal division” between Sunni Arabs, the Shia and the Kurds. Based on ethnicity and religion, it also had a geographical aspect, with the groups concentrated in the central, southern and northern regions of Iraq respectively.
- Divisions between “tribal identities”. Although 75 per cent of Iraqis identified with a tribe, many of those would be urban residents who probably felt little allegiance to their tribal leaders. Many Iraqi tribes were associated with Saddam Hussein, although for most this was based on self-interest and they could be expected to seek accommodation with any successor regime.
- Divisions between those associated with Saddam Hussein’s regime and its victims.

**891.** A March 2003 CIA report on the Iraqi police and judiciary provided a general description of both, but highlighted the lack of information held by the US on local level officials, including their identities, loyalties and involvement in human rights abuses under Saddam Hussein’s regime.<sup>373</sup> The issue had been a lower intelligence collection priority than Iraqi WMD, conventional military capabilities and leadership dynamics.

#### DFID’S HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY AND IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE PLAN

**892.** DFID produced an outline ‘Humanitarian Strategy and Immediate Assistance Plan’ for Iraq on 12 March.

**893.** The paper, prepared for Ms Short, was a statement of DFID’s, rather than the UK’s, priorities. It sought to retain “maximum operational flexibility” for DFID in the face of continuing uncertainty and limited resources.

**894.** On 12 March, DFID officials sent Ms Short DFID’s outline ‘Humanitarian Strategy and Immediate Assistance Plan’ for Iraq.<sup>374</sup> The covering minute explained that the strategy aimed to address DFID’s key objectives of “saving lives and relieving the suffering of the Iraqi people whilst adhering to our principles of impartial humanitarian response. In view of the uncertainties and our limited resources, we are planning to retain the maximum operational flexibility.”

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<sup>372</sup> US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *Report on prewar intelligence assessments about post-war Iraq*, 25 May 2007.

<sup>373</sup> US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *Report on prewar intelligence assessments about post-war Iraq*, 25 May 2007.

<sup>374</sup> [Minute Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department \[junior official\], 12 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Humanitarian Strategy and Immediate Assistance Plan: Information Note’.](#)

**895.** Officials highlighted three issues:

- The UK military had an obligation under international law to provide humanitarian assistance. DFID was helping the MOD to plan and prepare for those responsibilities in the UK AOR, “making it clear that DFID and international agencies will be focused on the Iraq-wide humanitarian needs”.
- Until there was a permissive security environment, CHAD-OT remained ready to deploy, but not immediately to establish a forward base, which might affect DFID’s ability to respond on the ground in Iraq.
- Planning was based on the assumption that £65m was available for “immediate response needs”. Given the scale of potential need in Iraq, those funds would be committed quickly and certainly within the first three months.

**896.** The attached paper stated that the humanitarian strategy was “based on DFID’s humanitarian principles, which includes seeking the best possible assessment of needs and giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress”. It listed four aims:

- to save lives and relieve suffering;
- to respond to immediate humanitarian needs in Iraq and neighbouring countries;
- to protect and restore livelihoods; and
- to support rapid transition from relief to recovery.<sup>375</sup>

**897.** The paper explained that policy development and operational planning were constrained by six factors:

- the uncertain military outcome;
- the wide range of humanitarian scenarios;
- limited DFID human resources;
- uncertainty over financial resources;
- the need to differentiate between support to Coalition Forces and support to “traditional humanitarian partners”; and
- the need for a clear DFID security policy in response to the NBC threat.

**898.** The humanitarian strategy would focus on:

- ensuring co-ordination of the international effort;
- working with the UN to maintain OFF;
- providing assistance through the UN, Red Cross and NGOs;
- supporting the UK military’s stabilisation and relief effort; and
- designing humanitarian interventions that take account of longer-term recovery and reconstruction issues.

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<sup>375</sup> [Paper Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department, 12 March 2003, ‘Iraq Humanitarian Strategy and Immediate Assistance Plan’.](#)



**899.** On the single page describing the “Operational Plan”, officials explained that: “In view of DFID’s limited resources, we will retain **maximum flexibility to respond to changing scenarios and needs.**” It listed seven actions that were planned or under way:

- “Information Management”: CHAD-OT staff in Kuwait and Jordan were to collate, analyse and disseminate field information. DFID was evaluating the need to send staff to Turkey, Iran and Cyprus, and would retain a limited capacity to deploy assessment teams to localised crisis points.
- “Humanitarian Advice/Funding”: CHAD advice in the field and in London to inform policy and funding decisions.
- “Direct Support to the UN”: secondment of specialists to support the co-ordination and information activities of the UN’s Humanitarian Assistance Centre (HIC) and Joint Logistic Centre (UNJLC).
- “Advice to the Military/Coalition”: two secondees advising 1 (UK) Div and one official in ORHA, all contributing to DFID’s “information gathering system”, and a further secondment to the National Component HQ in Qatar under consideration.
- “Material Support”: DFID’s stockpile of non-food items, vehicles and equipment brought to immediate readiness, with some elements positioned in Kuwait and elsewhere in the region.
- “Direct Implementation”: officials ready to assess and undertake limited relief and immediate rehabilitation operations through supervised QIPs “implemented by our traditional partners and possibly the UK military. This could include building or repairing critical infrastructure required for the humanitarian effort.”
- “Oil-for-Food Programme”: maintaining and protecting OFF or a variant mandated by the UN.

**900.** Ms Short responded: “Thanks.”<sup>376</sup>

**901.** On 12 March, Mr Hoon’s Private Office informed No.10 that MOD and DFID advisers had been working together for some time, but that it was only “very recently”, with the decision to deploy a DFID adviser to HQ 1 (UK) Div, that it had been possible to engage in detailed planning for humanitarian operations within the UK AO.<sup>377</sup> “As a consequence our planning is far less mature than we would ideally like.” The absence of funding for 1 (UK) Div to undertake humanitarian assistance was of “crucial concern”.

**902.** In a letter to Mr Blair on 12 March, Ms Short appeared to distance herself and her department from collective responsibility for the UK’s humanitarian and reconstruction effort in Iraq.

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<sup>376</sup> Manuscript comment Short on Minute Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department [junior official], 12 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Humanitarian Strategy and Immediate Assistance Plan: Information Note’.

<sup>377</sup> [Letter Williams to Cannon, 12 March 2003, ‘Iraq Post-Conflict Issues’.](#)

**903. The letter stated that DFID humanitarian preparations were well in hand; those of the UN humanitarian agencies and the US and UK military were not.**

**904.** On 12 March, Ms Short set out her misgivings about the state of humanitarian planning in a letter to Mr Blair.<sup>378</sup> DFID preparations were well in hand; those of the UN humanitarian agencies and the US and UK military were not. Ms Short argued that “UK Armed Forces are not configured or supplied to provide substantial humanitarian relief” and that the US military were even less prepared:

“Their focus is on recovery and reconstruction, whereas the most critical period for their involvement will be during the immediate relief phase, during which the implementing partners on whom their plans rely will almost certainly be unable to deliver.”

**905.** Ms Short listed three critical steps, in addition to a UN mandate, needed to improve the situation:

- giving the lead co-ordinating role to the UN;
- clarity over the resources available to DFID to support the provision of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance; and
- more time.

**906.** Ms Short also confirmed that DFID had “earmarked £65m for Iraq ... the majority of my entire contingency reserve for next year [2003/04]”.

**907.** The letter was also sent to Mr Hoon, Mr Straw, Mr Brown and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

**908.** Mr Hoon responded on 14 March.<sup>379</sup> He endorsed Ms Short’s conclusion that international preparedness was insufficient, but insisted the UK and US military were doing all they could with available resources, and argued that she understated the priority the US attached to humanitarian issues.

**909. Ms Short outlined DFID’s humanitarian preparations to Parliament on 13 March.**

**910. In her statement, Ms Short announced that DFID was also considering longer-term reconstruction and reform issues.**

**911.** In response to the request from the International Development Committee on 10 March for DFID to issue a statement outlining its humanitarian contingency plans, Ms Short issued a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament on 13 March.<sup>380</sup> She described how planning had progressed over the previous month: “My assessment of the overall level of preparedness of the international community to cope with the

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<sup>378</sup> Letter Short to Blair, 12 March 2003, [untitled].

<sup>379</sup> Letter Hoon to Blair, 14 March 2003, ‘Iraq: post conflict issues’.

<sup>380</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 13 March 2003, column 21WS.

humanitarian challenges which may lie ahead in Iraq is that it is limited, and this involves serious risk.”

**912.** Ms Short stated that DFID would have two roles in the event of conflict:

- to help advise UK Armed Forces on their obligations under the Hague and Geneva Conventions; and
- to use the funds, expertise and influence available to it to support delivery of humanitarian assistance by the international community.

**913.** She added that DFID was deploying staff to key locations in the region, had brought DFID’s stockpile of non-food items, vehicles and equipment “to immediate readiness”, was procuring additional supplies and was positioning some of those stocks in Kuwait and elsewhere in the region.

**914.** Ms Short explained that she had decided to supplement the extra £3.5m announced on 10 February<sup>381</sup> to support UN humanitarian contingency planning with a further £6.5m, part of which would support a small number of NGOs in their contingency preparations. That was in addition to DFID’s ongoing humanitarian programme for Iraq, expected to amount to £8m in 2002/03, and its regular funding to the UN and other humanitarian agencies, which included provision for emergency preparedness worldwide.

**915.** Ms Short announced:

“My Department is also considering the longer term reconstruction and reform issues. It is clear that a UN mandate will be required to provide legal authority for the reconstruction effort, and to make possible the engagement of the international financial institutions and the wider international community.”

**916.** DFID provided further information in its detailed response to the Committee’s report on 21 March.<sup>382</sup>

**917. The Inquiry has seen no evidence that a cross-government humanitarian plan for Iraq was ever produced.**

**918. One week before the invasion, with no reference to potential timescales, costs or measurable outcomes, the DFID paper did no more than restate DFID’s position on an issue where there was no cross-government consensus.**

**919. The ‘Humanitarian Strategy and Immediate Assistance Plan’ was the last DFID plan prepared before the invasion of Iraq.**

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<sup>381</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 10 February 2003, column 526W.

<sup>382</sup> House of Commons International Development Committee Second Special Report of Session 2002-03, *Preparing for the Humanitarian Consequences of Possible Military Action Against Iraq: Government Response to the Committee’s Fourth Report of Session 2002-03*, HC 561.

**920. DFID did not produce any proposals for longer-term reconstruction until 27 March.**

### **Extending the Oil-for-Food programme**

**921.** Dr Rice gave Sir David Manning an account of White House thinking on the handling of Iraqi oil on 13 March. The OFF programme should be left in place, but sanctions lifted to allow Iraq to use the proceeds as it chose. OFF should be phased out when there was an Iraqi entity ready to take over revenues. The US also wanted to make clear that military operations would not be paid for out of Iraqi oil money. In response, No.10 asked the FCO to prepare a note on UK plans for Iraqi oil revenues for Mr Blair to use in public.<sup>383</sup>

**922.** On 14 March, the FCO instructed the UK Mission to the UN in New York to start discussions with the US delegation on a possible resolution to modify the OFF programme and sanctions regime should military action lead to the absence of an effective Iraqi government.<sup>384</sup>

**923.** The UK position was summarised in the FCO background papers for the Azores Summit, sent to No.10 on 15 March:

“If the Iraqi regime falls, new arrangements will need to be put in place to enable the OFF to keep functioning. Our current plan is to table a resolution soon after conflict starts ... We are seeking to amend some of the procedures to speed up the process for humanitarian goods ...

“We would hope that the Secretary-General would be able to transfer full control over oil revenues to a properly representative Iraqi Government as soon as possible (not as the US have suggested, an Iraqi ‘entity’, which could, particularly if US appointed, fuel suggestions that the Coalition was seeking to control Iraqi oil).”<sup>385</sup>

**924.** Resolution 1472, adopted unanimously on 28 March, transferred authority for administering the OFF programme to the UN Secretary-General for a period of 45 days, with the possibility of further renewal by the Security Council.

### **Plans and preparations on the eve of the invasion**

**925. In early March, the structure of ORHA and of the post-conflict Iraqi Interim Authority (IIA) remained uncertain.**

**926.** On 6 March, a UK official working for ORHA in Washington reported to Mr Chilcott that ORHA would welcome “UK ideas on how to handle [the] Iraqi Foreign Ministry” and

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<sup>383</sup> Minute Cannon to Owen, 14 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Iraqi Oil Post-Conflict’.

<sup>384</sup> [Telegram 149 FCO London to UKMIS New York, 14 March 2003, ‘Iraq – Military Action – Sanctions and Oil for Food – Strategy Paper’.](#)

<sup>385</sup> [Letter Owen to Rycroft, 15 March 2003, ‘Azores Summit’ attaching Paper FCO, ‘Iraq – Oil for Food Programme \(OFF\) and Sanctions’.](#)

“UK information on Iraqi ministries – structure, numbers, who are good Iraqis to work with”.<sup>386</sup> The official stated that Principals had still not agreed ORHA’s structure in Iraq, ORHA’s relationship to the UN or to the IIA, or the role of different Iraqi groups in the IIA. The official also commented that: “ORHA has an overwhelmingly military feel, despite Gen Garner’s best efforts to be called ‘Mr’.”

**927.** An IPU official sent Mr Chaplin and Mr Chilcott a set of possible principles to guide the composition of the IIA on 10 March.<sup>387</sup> Those included:

- sensitivity to ethnic and sectarian balance, the secular/religious mix and the role of tribes, without reinforcing or reinventing divisions in Iraqi society;
- ensuring that diaspora returnees included technocrats and “religious charitable organisations”;
- remembering that many of the diaspora were in Arab countries; and
- that members of the external opposition “must have hands-on skills and/or real support within Iraq”.

**928.** Mr Chaplin agreed with all but the last. He argued that:

“... external oppositionists of any stripe should be free to try their luck back in Iraq. The Coalition can perhaps judge their skills, but not their political credibility. Only Iraqis can do that.”<sup>388</sup>

**929.** On 10 March, Mr Fraser sent Sir Michael Jay and Mr Ricketts advice on the implications of military action for the international system.<sup>389</sup> Mr Fraser attached a paper prepared by the Directorate of Strategy and Innovation (DSI) listing “the risks and opportunities of quick, successful, UN-sanctioned military action leading to the installation in Iraq of an international administration (ie a best case scenario)”, to “help us to focus on some of the issues we may confront quite early on the morning after”.<sup>390</sup>

**930.** The risks covered Iraq, the region and more general issues. Under “Iraq internal”, the paper listed:

- Internal rebellion; major unrest
- External military intervention (eg by Turkey; Iran)
- Power vacuum (providing ideal conditions for criminal elements; drugs; people-trafficking)
- Iraqi oil fields rendered unusable.”

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<sup>386</sup> Email [British Embassy Washington junior official] to Chilcott, 6 March 2003, ‘ORHA: reporting’.

<sup>387</sup> Email [IPU junior official] to Chilcott, 10 March 2003, ‘ORHA: reporting’.

<sup>388</sup> Email Chaplin to Chilcott, 10 March 2003, ‘ORHA: reporting’.

<sup>389</sup> [Minute Fraser to Jay, 10 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Implications for the International System’](#).

<sup>390</sup> Paper DSI, [undated], ‘Iraq – Risks and Opportunities’.

**931.** The paper warned that seeking but failing to secure a second resolution would increase many of the risks listed, including by “reducing the effectiveness of any Day After work (so eg increased chance of a power vacuum forming in parts of Iraq or external intervention)”.

**932. On 10 March, the British Embassy Washington reported that the US had agreed a broad outline for the transitional administration of Iraq:**

- a Civilian Administrator responsible for key ministries and reporting to Coalition Forces;
- a UN Special Co-ordinator responsible for UN agencies and reporting to the Security Council; and
- an IIA under Coalition oversight, administering the less sensitive ministries.

**933. UK officials commented that the US seemed to be “moving in the right direction”. No.10 would be asked to inject the UK’s advice on Phase IV.**

**934.** Mr Brenton reported on 10 March that the US had agreed the “broad outlines of the structure of transitional arrangements” in Iraq in the period between military rule and Iraqi government.<sup>391</sup> The three components of the transitional arrangements were:

- a Civilian Administrator reporting to Coalition Forces and responsible for key ministries;
- a UN Special Co-ordinator responsible for UN agencies and reporting to the Security Council; and
- an IIA to administer the less sensitive ministries and agencies, under Coalition oversight.

**935.** There was agreement in Washington that those arrangements “would need to be blessed via a UNSCR”. The State Department had been commissioned to start work on a draft. But the Coalition would remain in overall control until it felt comfortable enough to hand authority to the Iraqis: the US would “not allow sovereignty to be passed to the UN”.

**936.** On 10 March, Sir David Manning wrote to Dr Rice, enclosing a draft resolution on post-conflict Iraq.<sup>392</sup> He described the purpose of the resolution as:

- to provide legal and political “cover” for the UK and other nations to contribute to reconstruction;
- to build support in Iraq and the Arab world for reform;

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<sup>391</sup> Telegram 321 Washington to London, 10 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Day After Planning’.

<sup>392</sup> Letter Manning to Rice, 10 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Post-conflict administration’.

- to “provide an exit strategy”; and
- to re-unite the international community.

**937.** The record of the 11 March FCO Iraq Morning Meeting stated that: “US Principals still seem to be moving in the right direction on ‘Day After’ thinking. No.10 will be asked to hurry along the injection of our Phase IV advice.”<sup>393</sup>

**938.** On 12 March, Mr Chaplin updated heads of key FCO posts abroad on progress “as we enter the endgame”.<sup>394</sup> He reported that the post-conflict phase “should offer opportunities to rebuild a degree of international consensus after the blood spilled over the second SCR”. Guidance would issue separately (the Phase IV Core Script), but heads of post could already stress to interlocutors the principles guiding the UK approach, including a major role for the UN and giving clear responsibility to the Iraqi people (not just exiles) to decide the constitution and institutions they wanted.

**939.** On 13 March, Sir Michael Jay informed FCO staff in London and at posts abroad that the FCO Emergency Unit would be open from 0900 on 14 March and the Consular Crisis Centre from 17 March.<sup>395</sup>

### The FCO Emergency Unit

The FCO Emergency Unit, responsible for co-ordination of all aspects of FCO Iraq policy during the military campaign, opened on 14 March.

The FCO Consular Crisis Centre opened on 17 March.

Both operated 24 hours a day throughout the military campaign.

Sir Michael Jay informed FCO staff on 13 March that the FCO Emergency Unit would be open from 0900 on 14 March and the Consular Crisis Centre from 17 March.<sup>396</sup> Sir Michael explained:

“This does not imply that military action is inevitable, or that a date has already been set for its start should it become unavoidable. We continue to work flat out to secure a further UN resolution that will lead to Iraq’s disarmament. But we must be prepared for all contingencies, and events are moving fast.

“Peter Ricketts ... together with William Ehrman ... is co-ordinating the FCO’s overall response to the crisis. Edward Chaplin ... is Deputy Crisis Co-ordinator. They will continue to work from their current offices. Charles Gray ... has been appointed Crisis Manager.

“As well as political and briefing sections ... the EU [Emergency Unit] will also include a Pol Mil [politico-military] Section ... which will be responsible for liaison with the MOD. There will also be a member of Consular Division embedded in the Unit, who will liaise with the Consular Crisis Centre. The Emergency Unit will work in close

<sup>393</sup> Minute Tanfield to PS/PUS [FCO], 11 March 2003, ‘Iraq Morning Meeting: Key Points’.

<sup>394</sup> [Telegram 33 FCO London to Riyadh, 12 March 2003, ‘Iraq: The Endgame’.](#)

<sup>395</sup> [Telegram 130 FCO London to Abidjan, 13 March 2003, ‘Opening of FCO Emergency Unit’.](#)

<sup>396</sup> [Telegram 130 FCO London to Abidjan, 13 March 2003, ‘Opening of FCO Emergency Unit’.](#)

co-operation with the various other [FCO] geographical and functional departments engaged in crisis related work ... and Press Office. It will also work closely with the Iraq Planning Unit which, for the moment, continues to lead on the less immediate, longer-term, post-conflict planning issues.”

Mr Ricketts had been chairing regular FCO morning and evening meetings on Iraq since late 2002 (see Section 6.4). The last of those meetings took place on the morning of 14 March.<sup>397</sup>

After the closure of the Emergency Unit on 2 May, Mr Ricketts resumed daily Iraq policy meetings in his office from 6 May.<sup>398</sup>

On 20 March, Sir Michael Jay informed Mr Straw that almost 5 percent of FCO staff in London had been redeployed to work on Iraq, including 170 volunteers to temporary positions in the two emergency units.<sup>399</sup>

That number far exceeded the combined total of appointments to the IPU, to the new Embassy in Baghdad and to ORHA (see Section 15.1).

**940. On 13 March, Mr Blair told Cabinet that President Bush had promised a UN mandate for reconstruction.**

**941.** Mr Blair spoke to President Bush on the afternoon of 12 March (see Section 3.8).<sup>400</sup> Among the issues discussed was a US statement on the need for a further UN resolution on post-conflict Iraq.

**942.** Mr Blair told Cabinet on 13 March that work continued in the UN to obtain a second resolution (see Section 3.8).<sup>401</sup> He also stated that “the reconstruction of Iraq after a conflict would need a United Nations Security Council resolution”. The US had “now agreed” to that.

**943.** In the discussion, points made included that UN authority for the reconstruction of Iraq was “essential so that all countries and international institutions could contribute”.

**944.** In her memoir, Ms Short wrote that, after Cabinet on 13 March, Mr Blair told her that President Bush had “promised [a] UN mandate for reconstruction”.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> Minute Kernahan to PS/PUS, 14 March 2003, ‘Iraq Morning Meeting’.

<sup>398</sup> Minutes, 1 May 2003, FCO Emergency Unit Iraq Meeting.

<sup>399</sup> [Minute Jay to Secretary of State \[FCO\], 20 March 2003, ‘Iraq Contingency Planning and Prioritisation’.](#)

<sup>400</sup> Letter Rycroft to McDonald, 12 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s Telephone Conversation with President Bush, 12 March’.

<sup>401</sup> [Cabinet Conclusions, 13 March 2003.](#)

<sup>402</sup> Short C. *An Honourable Deception: New Labour, Iraq and the Misuse of Power*. The Free Press, 2004.



## Presidential approval of US post-conflict plans

Between 10 and 12 March, President Bush approved important elements of the US post-conflict plan:

- a policy of “light” de-Ba’athification that would preserve Iraq’s administrative capacity;
- use of the Iraqi Army as a labour force for reconstruction, but not its demobilisation;
- the transfer of governance authority to an Iraq Interim Authority (IIA) with Iraqi exiles and Kurdish groups at its core, and the Coalition determining the pace at which power was transferred.

On 10 March, Lieutenant General (retired) Jay Garner, Head of the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), briefed President Bush on ORHA’s post-conflict plan, warning that: “a tremendous amount of work was still necessary to make the inter-agency post-war plans operational”.<sup>403</sup> He identified three priorities: funding for Iraq’s public service, police and army; the rapid deployment of “international stability forces” after the fall of Saddam Hussein; and the need to use the Iraqi Army for reconstruction. The President authorised Lt Gen Garner’s proposal to use the Iraqi Army “to populate a large labor force for reconstruction efforts”.

The same day, Mr Frank Miller, NSC Senior Director for Defense Policy and Arms Control, secured President Bush’s agreement to a policy of “light” de-Ba’athification in order to preserve Iraq’s administrative capacity.

Two days later, on 12 March, Mr Douglas Feith, US Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, briefed President Bush that the Iraqi Army would not be demobilised. He also proposed the transfer of power “shortly after Saddam’s fall” to an IIA. Iraqi exiles and Kurdish groups would become the core of the IIA, working in partnership with the Coalition’s transitional authority so that Iraqi citizens would have some political control from the outset, with the Coalition determining the pace at which power was transferred.

President Bush endorsed the plan. *Hard Lessons* observed that the plan assumed Iraqi governmental institutions would emerge from the war reasonably intact and that the plan’s implementation was therefore dependent on the course of the war.

The post-conflict demobilisation of the Iraqi Army is addressed in Section 12.1.

**945. After talks in Washington on 13 and 14 March, UK officials suggested that UK/US thinking on the role of the UN was “80 percent congruent”.**

**946. Sir David Manning was informed that the principal point of difference was US resistance to a UN representative exercising control over the transitional administration.**

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<sup>403</sup> Bowen SW Jr. *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009.

**947.** Mr O'Brien and Mr Chilcott discussed post-conflict issues in Washington on 13 March.<sup>404</sup> The British Embassy reported that US interlocutors accepted the need for a "UN badge" for Phase IV and that there was "general agreement that the [UK] draft [resolution] was 80 percent congruent with the [US] Administration's position", but the US wanted to retain as light a UN touch as possible, with Coalition control over a Transitional Civilian Administration (TCA) and the IIA. Finding the right UN Special Co-ordinator would be key.

**948.** The Embassy reported that Mr O'Brien's US interlocutors had confirmed that the administration of Iraq would be "uniform". ORHA would not treat areas controlled by UK forces differently and there was "no question of food distribution or public sector salaries stopping at the borders of any British sector". Although the Ba'ath Party would be disestablished, "the vast majority of members would need to be left in place".

**949.** Mr Chilcott stayed in Washington for a second day of talks on 14 March.<sup>405</sup> The Embassy reported that US participants had stated that control over the TCA, and in particular the IIA, could not be given to a UN Special Co-ordinator and that most of the tasks the UK assigned to a UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) would be carried out by the Coalition-led TCA.

**950.** The AHGI discussed the UK/US consultations on the role of the UN on 14 March, before officials in London had seen the report of Mr Chilcott's second day of talks in Washington.<sup>406</sup>

**951.** On 17 March, Mr Dodd reported the AHGI discussion to Sir David Manning:

"There is '80 percent agreement' with the US on the role of the UN. For example, the US agrees that food distribution and civil service salaries should be organised nationally. The remaining significant point of difference is whether the transitional administration should be subordinate to a UN representative. The FCO believe it unlikely that the UN Security Council will mandate the administration unless it is."

**952.** Mr Dodd also reported that the IPU was considering how best to approach other donors for support on Phase IV.

**953. Concerns remained about UK companies' access to reconstruction contracts in Iraq.**

**954. Mr O'Brien used his visit to Washington on 13 March to lobby on behalf of UK firms.**

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<sup>404</sup> Telegram 341 Washington to FCO London, 13 March 2003, 'Iraq day after: Mr O'Brien's visit'.

<sup>405</sup> Telegram 346 Washington to FCO London, 14 March 2003, 'Iraq day after: US proposals for post-conflict administration'.

<sup>406</sup> Minute Dodd to Manning, 17 March 2003, 'Ad Hoc Group on Iraq'.

**955.** On 10 March, Mr Brenton had reported that “a commercial contact” had passed the British Embassy Washington a version of a USAID invitation to select US companies to bid for a US\$600m contract for infrastructure reconstruction.<sup>407</sup> USAID had confirmed that the invitation had been issued on 12 February with a closing date of 27 February. Mr Brenton had pressed for more transparency.

**956.** Mr Brenton also reported that it was not clear how that USAID contract related to a separate contract “allegedly being let by the US Army Corps of Engineers” and reported in the UK press on 9 March.

**957.** That contract, the US\$7bn contract for “repair work on Iraq’s oil sector” awarded to US engineering firm KBR, a subsidiary of Halliburton, by the US Army Corps of Engineers on 8 March, later emerged as the single largest reconstruction contract in Iraq.<sup>408</sup>

**958.** On 13 March, during his visit to Washington, Mr O’Brien lobbied Mr Andrew Natsios, USAID Administrator, for UK companies to be awarded reconstruction contracts.<sup>409</sup> Mr Natsios advised that, for security reasons, USAID had invited only a few US companies with the necessary clearances to bid for the 17 primary reconstruction contracts. There were no such constraints on subcontracts, and he hoped that UK companies and NGOs with the right expertise would be successful in securing those contracts. In response to a question from Mr O’Brien, Mr Natsios said that it would be possible for UK companies to acquire the necessary security clearances to bid for primary contracts.

**959.** Mr O’Brien also lobbied the European Directorate of the NSC on oil contracts.<sup>410</sup> He accepted that it was reasonable for US companies to be the recipients of DoD money for emergency contracts to repair damage to oil infrastructure, but the field should be opened up “once Iraqi money came on stream”. The NSC official agreed.

**960.** On 14 March, Mr Straw commented on Baroness Symons’s minute, described earlier in this Section, in which she drew attention to concerns in the UK business community about the level of the Government’s engagement with the US on commercial issues. Mr Straw stated: “This is really important.”<sup>411</sup> His office instructed Mr Chilcott to factor Baroness Symons’s concerns into the IPU’s follow-up to Mr O’Brien’s discussions in Washington.<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> Telegram 320 Washington to FCO London, 10 March 2003, ‘Iraq Day After: Infrastructure Reconstruction Contracts’.

<sup>408</sup> Bowen SW Jr. *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009.

<sup>409</sup> Telegram 341 Washington to FCO London, 13 March 2003, ‘Iraq Day After: Mr O’Brien’s Visit’.

<sup>410</sup> Letter Gooderham to Chilcott, 13 March 2003, Iraq: Day After: The Oil Sector’.

<sup>411</sup> [Manuscript comment Straw, 14 March 2003, on Minute Symons to Straw and Hewitt, \[undated\], ‘Iraq: Commercial Aspects’.](#)

<sup>412</sup> Minute McDonald to Chilcott, 14 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Commercial Aspects’.

**961.** No.10 officials updated Mr Blair at his request on 15 March, following press and Parliamentary interest in UK access to reconstruction contracts and the involvement of Halliburton.<sup>413</sup> Mr Blair was informed that UK companies would be eligible for subcontracted work under the US\$600m USAID contract and that Mr O'Brien had agreed to send USAID a list of "trustworthy UK companies", including those with experience of contracting for the MOD, which might acquire security clearance to bid for primary contracts. The briefing note made no mention of the US\$7bn oil repair contract.

**962.** Government lobbying on behalf of UK companies and the involvement of UK firms in post-conflict reconstruction is addressed in Section 10.3.

## The UK military plan

**963.** On 14 March, Mr Blair approved a proposal to extend the UK's AO northwards during Phase III if commanders on the ground judged it sensible.

**964.** Lt Gen Reith sent the Chiefs of Staff an update on military planning options on 10 March (see Section 6.2).<sup>414</sup> The update reflected the Chiefs' comments on Lt Gen Reith's two papers of 4 March and his discussions with senior US commanders between 5 and 7 March.

**965.** Lt Gen Reith recommended that the Joint Command be authorised to operate north of the current planned UK AO, no further than al-Amara, "on the understanding that the Division will only exploit forward as far as security and transition to Phase IV within the current AO allows".

**966.** Lt Gen Reith outlined the plan to extend the UK AO to the north at the Chiefs of Staff meeting on 10 March.<sup>415</sup> He stated that the "current UK AO could potentially result in enemy forces around Basra interfering with Phase IV operations". There was "a clear military task to ensure that enemy forces in the areas outside the current UK AO were unable to interfere with the UK Main Effort".

**967.** The Chiefs of Staff were "concerned that extending the AO would overstretch Phase III and Phase IV resources and potentially detract from the Main Effort in the UK AO".

**968.** Adm Boyce directed Lt Gen Reith "to proceed with the main effort, of an exemplary Phase IV, in the original AO (Southern AO) with operations in the Northern AO as required to achieve a speedy and successful Phase III and to shape Phase IV".

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<sup>413</sup> Minute Cannon to Prime Minister, 15 March 2003, 'Iraq: Reconstruction Contracts'.

<sup>414</sup> Minute Reith to COSSEC, 10 March 2003, 'Iraq – Military Planning Options Update' attaching Paper CJO, 10 March 2003, 'Iraq military planning options – an update'.

<sup>415</sup> Minutes, 10 March 2003, Chiefs of Staff meeting.

**969.** AM Burridge wrote in his Hauldown Report in early May:

“Our overriding consideration was for the GOC [Maj Gen Brims] to condition his own AO, in preparation for stability operations (Phase IV), rather than inherit circumstances [created by others] ...”<sup>416</sup>

**970.** Mr Blair held a meeting with Mr John Prescott (the Deputy Prime Minister), Mr Hoon, Lord Goldsmith, Adm Boyce, Sir Andrew Turnbull and No.10 staff on 11 March to discuss legal and military issues.<sup>417</sup> Mr Straw attended part of the meeting.

**971.** The meeting is addressed in more detail in Sections 3.8 and 6.2.

**972.** The briefing note for Mr Blair stated that the “main purpose of the meeting” was confirmation of the viability of the overall military plan.<sup>418</sup> Questions for Mr Blair to raise included whether the US had a “winning concept” and what conditions UK forces should expect in Basra.

**973.** Adm Boyce told the meeting he was “confident that the battle plan would work”.<sup>419</sup>

**974.** Asked about that statement and whether it included the aftermath, Lord Boyce told the Inquiry: “No, not in that statement.”<sup>420</sup>

**975.** After the meeting, Mr Watkins sent Sir David Manning an outline of the military plan for Iraq and advice on decisions needed on the development of the UK’s role (see Section 6.2).<sup>421</sup>

**976.** On the question of the expansion of the UK AO northwards, Mr Watkins explained:

“The US Land Component Commander has ... developed a plan that would expand the UK Area of Operations by up to 150km up to and beyond al-Amara [in Maysan province] (but short of al-Kut [in Wasit province]) ...

“The case for pushing a UK formation northwards will ultimately have to be judged at the time. Clearly it will depend to some extent on what is happening in the Basra area. It is also the case that an exemplary Phase IV operation depends on a satisfactory conclusion to the conflict phase. The Defence Secretary therefore judges that the senior UK operational commander (the Chief of Joint Operations) should be authorised to expand the Phase III Area of Operations northwards if that is required to achieve a satisfactory outcome to Phase III. The focus for the UK in Phase IV should, however, remain the South-Eastern Area of Operations as currently understood.”

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<sup>416</sup> Report Burridge to CJO, 8 May 2003, ‘NCC Operation Telic Hauldown Report: 07 Feb 03 – 08 May 03’.

<sup>417</sup> [Letter Rycroft to McDonald, 11 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Legal and Military Aspects’.](#)

<sup>418</sup> Minute Rycroft to Prime Minister, 11 March 2003, ‘Iraq Military: 1300 Meeting’.

<sup>419</sup> [Letter Rycroft to McDonald, 11 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Legal and Military Aspects’.](#)

<sup>420</sup> Public hearing, 27 January 2011, page 85.

<sup>421</sup> [Letter Watkins to Manning, 11 March 2003, ‘Iraq: the Military Plan’.](#)

**977.** Mr Watkins reported that Mr Hoon judged that the UK should be “forward-leaning” on the idea of extending the UK AO north during the conflict phase, “provided that UK commanders judge this sensible in the circumstances at the time”.

**978.** Mr Watkins sent the letter to the Private Offices of Mr Straw and Mr Brown, and to Mr Bowen, but not to DFID.

**979.** Mr Blair approved the plan on 14 March.<sup>422</sup>

**980.** The advice on which Mr Blair based his decision was incomplete.

**981.** Mr Hoon stated in January 2003 that credible plans for the aftermath were needed before it could be concluded that the overall US plan represented a “winning concept”, and that further work was needed on a satisfactory plan for the aftermath before the UK committed forces to military action, but he failed to press the point further with Mr Blair.

**982.** Mr Hoon’s advice to Mr Blair on military options in October 2002, on the shift to the South and the deployment of UK forces in January 2003, and on the expansion of the UK’s AO and AOR in March 2003, while recognising the significance of the post-conflict phase, offered little analysis of wider, non-military implications.

**983.** It was Sir Kevin Tebbit’s responsibility, as PUS, to ensure that military advice from Adm Boyce to Mr Hoon was placed firmly in that wider context and reflected broader analysis of the UK’s overall obligations, capabilities and strategic objectives.

**984.** Lt Gen Reith was emphatic about the strategic significance of Phase IV in a paper on the UK response to the “legal, security and humanitarian assistance demands of Phase IVa” sent to the Chiefs of Staff on 11 March.<sup>423</sup>

**985.** In his covering minute, Lt Gen Reith informed the Chiefs of Staff that “legal obligations placed on the UK as an Occupying Power will be extensive”. He advised:

“Phase IVa is likely to be the decisive phase of this campaign. This is recognised by the US and considerable inter-agency planning effort has gone into creating structures and providing resources to deal with anticipated security and H[umanitarian] A[ssistance] issues; we can have confidence in these plans. However, Phase IVa will not be the initial main effort; some political expectation management may be required.”

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<sup>422</sup> [Letter Manning to Watkins, 14 March 2003, ‘Iraq: The Military Plan’.](#)

<sup>423</sup> [Minute Reith to COSSEC, 11 March 2003, ‘Phase IVa – A UK Response’\\_attaching Paper Reith, 11 March 2003, ‘Phase IVa – A UK Response’.](#)

**986.** The paper on the UK response to Phase IVa described Phase IV as “strategically decisive” and highlighted a number of significant gaps in post-conflict planning:

- the absence of a detailed UK/US policy on the role of the military in maintaining law and order and detaining civilians;
- a risk that UK forces would face a humanitarian situation for which they were not resourced unless there was early agreement that DFID would fund humanitarian assistance through military channels;
- the military was still waiting for the Treasury’s agreement to an initiative for £10m to be made available to UK forces for QIPs; and
- the absence of a decision on how or whether the UK would pay Iraqi public sector salaries.

**987.** The paper included, in full, US definitions of the end state for Phases IVa, b and c:

- Phase IVa: “a stable environment in which the territorial integrity of Iraq is intact; civil order is maintained; repairs to damaged civil infrastructure are under way; humanitarian assistance is provided by the civilian sector; and an interim administration is in place”.
- Phase IVb: “responsibility for stability and security passing from Coalition military to responsible Iraqi institutions; rule of law is fully established; necessary civil infrastructure is functioning and economic development is under way; lessening dependence on humanitarian assistance; and a transitional civil administration is in place with increasing Iraqi participation”.
- Phase IVc: “a durable, secure and stable Iraq sustained by Iraqis, in which the rule of law is well established and civil order is maintained by Iraqi authorities; civil infrastructure is functioning and economic development continuing; lessened dependence on humanitarian assistance; authority had been transferred to an Iraqi national government”.

**988.** In the paper, Lt Gen Reith explained that CFLCC had instructed all commanders to:

“... liaise with and monitor local administrations within their area of responsibility ... but ... only to directly intervene in the administrative process when necessary to maintain public order and safety, or to prevent human suffering. Existing Iraqi government organisations should be allowed and encouraged to function as normal and no attempt should be made to reorganise or replace existing structures.”

## Eclipse II – the CFLCC plan for Phase IV

The CFLCC plan for Phase IV, known as Eclipse II, was the product of the post-conflict planning effort led by (acting) Major General Albert Whitley, CFLCC Deputy Commanding General (Post Hostilities). Eclipse II had close links to CFLCC's combat operations planning, but not to broader Washington policy debates.<sup>424</sup>

*After Saddam*, the 2008 RAND report for the US Army on US post-conflict planning, stated that Eclipse II had been through 15 revisions by the middle of March 2003, with the final draft released on 12 April.<sup>425</sup>

The RAND report concluded that CFLCC “was gaining a realistic appraisal of the potential security challenges that would confront Coalition forces”, but failed to challenge military planning assumptions, including the degree to which the remnants of the Iraqi Government would provide essential services and security.

In his written statement to the Inquiry, Maj Gen Whitley explained that Eclipse II was named after the 1945 US plan for post-war Germany.<sup>426</sup> It was “an attempt to produce some coherence for the military aspects of Post Hostilities and give subordinate commands, responsibilities, direction and tasks”. The “tiny” planning team in ORHA produced the civil mirror image.

Maj Gen Whitley judged that the plan had “some local practical effect”, but was “inadequate”.

**989.** On 11 March, at the height of the UK's effort to secure Security Council backing for a second resolution (see Section 3.8), Mr Straw advised Mr Blair of the need for a “Plan B” for the military in the event that the Government failed to secure a majority in the Parliamentary Labour Party for military action.

**990.** Mr Straw's Plan B envisaged the UK “taking responsibility for a sector and for humanitarian and reconstruction work” in order to make “a major UK contribution to the overall campaign” without being directly involved in the invasion.

**991.** At that stage, officials were still pressing, without success, for Ministers to agree draft objectives for post-conflict Iraq and principles to guide short-term UK involvement that could be shared with the US.

**992.** It is not clear whether Mr Straw had discussed the feasibility of his idea with others.

**993.** On 11 March, Mr Straw advised Mr Blair that he should not go to Parliament seeking approval for military action unless he could be sure of a majority in the

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<sup>424</sup> Dale C. *Operation Iraqi Freedom: Strategies, Approaches, Results and Issues for Congress*. Congressional Research Service, 15 December 2008.

<sup>425</sup> Bensahel N, Oliker O, Crane K, Brennan RR Jr, Gregg HS, Sullivan T & Rathmell A. *After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq*. RAND Corporation, 2008.

<sup>426</sup> Statement, 25 January 2011, page 12.



Parliamentary Labour Party and the House of Commons. He advised of the need to “start working up a Plan B for our Armed Forces if we cannot be sure of the [House of Commons’ approval for their inclusion in the initial invasion of Iraq”.<sup>427</sup>

**994.** Mr Straw advised:

“... it need not be a disaster for you, the Government, and even more important for our troops, if we cannot take an active part in the initial invasion, provided we get on the front foot with our strategy.

“I am aware of all the difficulties ... But I understand that the US could if necessary adjust their plan rapidly to cope without us. In these circumstances we could nevertheless offer them a major UK contribution to the overall campaign. In addition to staunch political support, this would include ... as soon as combat operations are over, full UK participation in the military and civilian tasks, including taking responsibility for a sector and for humanitarian and reconstruction work. We could also take the lead in the UN on securing the ... resolution to authorise the reconstruction effort and the UN role in it which the US now agree is necessary.”

**995.** Efforts to secure Parliamentary approval for military action in Iraq are addressed in Section 3.8.

## **UK objectives for post-conflict Iraq**

**996.** The draft objectives and guiding principles for post-conflict Iraq were resubmitted to Mr Blair for approval on 12 March.

**997.** No decision was taken and there is no indication that Mr Blair discussed the objectives and principles with Ministers.

**998.** In the absence of a decision from Mr Blair, post-conflict planners remained without clear Ministerial guidance on the nature and extent of the UK’s post-conflict commitment.

**999.** On 12 March, one week before the start of the invasion, Mr Cannon re-submitted to Mr Blair the IPU’s draft objectives for post-conflict Iraq and principles to guide short-term UK involvement.<sup>428</sup>

**1000.** One item had been added to the objectives prepared for Mr Blair’s meeting on 6 March: that the new Iraqi government should maintain Iraq’s territorial integrity.

**1001.** Mr Cannon stated that the IPU proposals were “not contentious in UK terms”, but “clear policy approval now would assist our planning for post-conflict operations”. He explained that the objectives had not been drafted for publication: the UK’s aims would

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<sup>427</sup> [Minute Straw to Prime Minister, 11 March 2003, ‘Iraq: What if We Cannot Win the Second Resolution?’](#)

<sup>428</sup> [Minute Cannon to Prime Minister, 12 March 2003, ‘Iraq: post-conflict planning: objectives and principles’.](#)

be set out in the “vision for Iraq and other public messages (likely to be held back until we are ... actually at war: until then we would not wish to be seen to be actively pursuing regime change ...)”.

**1002.** On the principles, Mr Cannon stated:

“The **principles** are those which should guide our occupation, if only short-term, of Iraqi territory. They are pretty uncontroversial. But our military commanders would find this sort of guidance, endorsed by Ministers, very useful.”

**1003.** Mr Cannon concluded:

“If you approve these objectives and principles, the next step would be for Iraq Planning Unit to share them with the Americans. There is no reason to think that they cut across American views in any way.”

**1004.** The evidence seen by the Inquiry indicates that Mr Blair saw Mr Cannon’s minute, but not whether he approved the draft objectives and principles.<sup>429</sup>

**1005.** There is no indication that Mr Blair discussed the objectives and principles with Ministers.

**1006.** Mr Bowen sent a revised draft set of ‘British Post-Conflict Objectives’ to senior officials in the FCO, the MOD and DFID on 25 March, six days after the start of the invasion.

**1007.** **The first Treasury paper on financing post-conflict reconstruction to be shared with No.10 recommended spreading the burden as widely as possible.**

**1008.** **If the UN was not involved, the resources available would be substantially smaller and the IMF and World Bank would be unlikely to engage.**

**1009.** On 14 March, Mr Bowman sent No.10 the paper on financing Iraqi reconstruction requested by Mr Blair on 6 March.<sup>430</sup>

**1010.** The paper was the first Treasury paper on post-conflict financing to be shared with No.10.

**1011.** The Treasury estimated the total cost at up to US\$45bn for the first three years, in addition to military costs, and warned that, without UN authorisation of arrangements for a transitional administration, Iraqi oil might only pay for a fraction of the total.

**1012.** The best way to pay for reconstruction would be to spread the burden as widely as possible, drawing in contributions from non-combatants, IFIs and Iraq itself, and

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<sup>429</sup> [Manuscript note \[tick\] on Minute Cannon to Prime Minister, 12 March 2003, ‘Iraq: post-conflict planning: objectives and principles’.](#)

<sup>430</sup> [Letter Bowman to Cannon, 14 March 2003, \[untitled\] attaching Paper HM Treasury, March 2003, ‘Financing Iraqi Reconstruction’.](#)

ensuring Iraqi revenues were not diverted into debt or compensation payments. By far the most significant factor in making that happen would be political legitimacy conferred by the UN.

**1013.** The Treasury stated that OFF provided “an obvious way to pay for immediate humanitarian needs”, by using the approximately US\$4bn unspent in the UN OFF account and restarting oil exports. That depended on oil production facilities surviving the conflict relatively intact. In the most benign circumstances, with rapidly increasing production and high oil prices, oil revenues “could make a very significant contribution” to ongoing relief and reconstruction. Future oil revenues were another possible source of funds, but, officials warned, Iraq had already accumulated “massive and probably unsustainable debts” that way.

**1014.** The Treasury concluded that, given fiscal constraints in the UK and US, total resources for reconstruction would be “substantially smaller if the UN were not involved”. That, combined with the likelihood that the IMF and World Bank would be unable to engage in such circumstances, “could make it harder to put Iraq on a path to peace, stability and democracy”.

### **The Azores Summit, 16 March 2003**

**1015.** Mr Blair discussed preparations for the Azores Summit with President Bush on 14 March.<sup>431</sup> Mr Blair said that “at some point we needed to set out our views on post-conflict, including humanitarian issues”.

**1016.** The UK’s revised ‘Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’, sent to No.10 before the Azores Summit, was intended to reassure the Iraqi people and wider audiences of the Coalition’s intentions for Iraq after Saddam Hussein’s departure.

**1017.** The wording of the UK draft and the later text agreed with the US and Spain at the Summit made no specific or measurable commitments for which the Coalition could be held directly to account.

**1018.** The FCO background papers sent to No.10 before the Azores Summit included a revised version of the UK’s ‘Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’.

**1019.** The IPU explained to Mr Straw’s Private Office that the intention was for the Vision to be:

“... launched in a manner that provides maximum impact, both with the Iraqi people and with wider public opinion. The Vision and the messages accompanying its launch will be critical to reassuring Iraqis and the Arab world about our post-conflict objectives ...

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<sup>431</sup> Letter Rycroft to McDonald, 14 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s Conversation with Bush, 14 March’.

“The text is now being shared with US contacts. The purpose of this is to ensure that there are no surprises and that our Vision is consistent with any similar exercise that the US plans to conduct. We do not though plan to produce a joint document or simply to reflect US views in our own.”<sup>432</sup>

**1020.** Changes to the earlier text circulated on 28 February included:

- removal of the reference to freedom from the fear of torture;
- under the heading “Good Government”, removal of the words “and democratic” from the phrase “an independent and democratic Iraq”;
- removal of the commitment to work “to ensure a military campaign is as swift and carefully targeted as possible”;
- the addition of a commitment to “prioritise resources to feed and care for the people of Iraq”;
- a reference to enabling the Iraqi people to establish their own “effective representative government” to replace the earlier reference to establishing “democratic government”;
- “Seeking a fair and sustainable solution to Iraq’s debt problems” in place of “Negotiating generous debt rescheduling”;
- the addition of a commitment to help “the transition to a more prosperous and dynamic economy”; and
- the addition of a reference to Iraq’s oil industry being managed “fairly and transparently”.<sup>433</sup>

**1021.** Mr Straw’s Private Office explained to No.10 that “Washington is negotiating with the NSC on the Vision for Iraq. We hope to ensure that the final version has the presentational impact of the UK’s ... draft.”<sup>434</sup>

**1022.** The FCO also suggested that Mr Blair talk to Mr Annan from the Azores. Key messages might include: “look forward to the United Nations having a significant role after any conflict in helping Iraq move quickly towards new prosperity and stability”.

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<sup>432</sup> [Minute Bristow to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 14 March 2003, ‘A Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’.](#)

<sup>433</sup> [Letter Owen to Rycroft, 15 March 2003, ‘Azores Summit’ attaching Paper FCO, ‘A Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi people’.](#)

<sup>434</sup> [Letter Owen to Rycroft, 15 March 2003, ‘Azores Summit’.](#)

**1023.** Sir David Manning had already consulted Sir Jeremy Greenstock on whether Mr Blair should speak to Mr Annan.<sup>435</sup> Sir David informed Mr Blair that Sir Jeremy felt that “on balance” Mr Blair should speak to Mr Annan “to keep him in play”. Sir Jeremy suggested explaining that, if the second resolution failed and conflict occurred:

“... we shall want to involve the UN as rapidly, and fully, as possible, once military action is over. We are pressing for a real role for a UN Special Co-ordinator. One of our principal concerns has been, and will remain, to try to safeguard the UN system.”

**1024.** Sir David commented to Mr Blair:

“Incidentally, this would play well with Clare [Short] who has sent me a message saying how important she thinks it is that you are in close consultation with Kofi [Annan] over Iraq.”

**1025.** Mr Blair spoke to Mr Annan on 16 March, before the start of the Azores Summit (see Section 3.8).<sup>436</sup> They discussed the importance of a strong UN role in post-conflict Iraq, the need for a relationship between the UN and “whoever was occupying Iraq”, and a resolution establishing the relationship between the occupying force and occupied Iraq.

**1026. At the Azores Summit, Mr Blair emphasised the presentational benefits of UN involvement in post-conflict Iraq. He told President Bush and Mr José María Aznar, the Prime Minister of Spain:**

- **it was necessary to give the impression that the administration of Iraq was under UN authority, and the clearer the UN role the better; and**
- **the UN should be seen to give overall authorisation, but could certainly not run everything.**

**1027.** At the Azores Summit, Mr Blair, President Bush and Prime Minister Aznar discussed the likelihood that the invasion would be welcomed, but the risk that there would be communal violence. They also discussed the role the UN should play, including that it would not be able to deal with communal violence.<sup>437</sup> That would need to be “handled rapidly by the military”.

**1028.** Mr Blair stated that the role of the UN in post-conflict Iraq must be defined very carefully:

“We must give the impression that the administration was under UN authority. The clearer the UN role, the better. It was vital that UK public opinion understood that we were not taking possession of Iraq’s oil.”

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<sup>435</sup> [Minute Manning to Prime Minister, 14 March 2003](#), ‘Iraq: Contact with Kofi Annan’.

<sup>436</sup> Letter Campbell to Owen, 16 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Kofi Annan, 16 March’.

<sup>437</sup> Letter Manning to McDonald, 16 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Summit Meeting in the Azores: 16 March’.

**1029.** Mr Blair also stated that the UN should be seen to give overall authorisation, but it could certainly not run everything. He wanted the UN Security Council to remain seized of the Iraqi issue.

**1030.** The record of the discussion was to be shown only to Mr Straw and Mr Hoon and their Principal Private Secretaries.

**1031. The Azores ‘Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’ incorporated many elements of earlier UK drafts, but the wording on democracy, terrorism and the nature of the Iraqi threat to the world reflected US priorities.**

**1032.** The ‘Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’ issued by Mr Blair, President Bush and Prime Minister Aznar at the Summit on 16 March is described in more detail in Section 3.8. It adopted a more oratorical tone than the UK text, but shared much of the substance.<sup>438</sup> Key differences included:

- the omission of any explicit reference to oil;
- insertion of a reference to terrorism (“We will fight terrorism in all its forms. Iraq must never again be a haven for terrorists of any kind”);
- insertion of a reference to democracy (“We will support the Iraqi people’s aspirations for representative government that upholds human rights and the rule of law as cornerstones of democracy”); and
- insertion of named references to Iraq’s constituent peoples (Iraq’s “rich mix of Sunni and Shiite Arabs, Kurds, Turkomen, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and all others”).

**1033.** On post-conflict reconstruction, the three leaders declared:

“We will work to prevent and repair damage by Saddam Hussein’s regime to the natural resources of Iraq and pledge to protect them as a national asset of and for the Iraqi people. All Iraqis should share the wealth generated by their national economy ...

“In achieving this vision, we plan to work in close partnership with international institutions, including the United Nations ... If conflict occurs, we plan to seek the adoption, on an urgent basis, of new United Nations Security Council resolutions that would affirm Iraq’s territorial integrity, ensure rapid delivery of humanitarian relief, and endorse an appropriate post-conflict administration for Iraq. We will also propose that the Secretary-General be given authority, on an interim basis, to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people continue to be met through the Oil-for-Food program.

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<sup>438</sup> Statement of the Atlantic Summit, 16 March 2003, ‘A Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’.

“Any military presence, should it be necessary, will be temporary and intended to promote security and elimination of weapons of mass destruction; the delivery of humanitarian aid; and the conditions for the reconstruction of Iraq. Our commitment to support the people of Iraq will be for the long term.”

**1034.** Mr Blair commented further at the concluding press conference:

“... should it come to conflict, we make a pledge to the people of Iraq ... who are the primary victims of Saddam ...

“... [W]e will help Iraq rebuild – and not rebuild because of the problems of conflict, where if it comes to that we will do everything we can to minimise the suffering of the Iraqi people, but rebuild Iraq because of the appalling legacy that the rule of Saddam has left ...”<sup>439</sup>

**1035.** On 16 March, in a television interview with Sir David Frost, Mr Brown said the UK “would be committed, if there were to be military action, to the reconstruction of Iraq”.<sup>440</sup> He explained that reconstruction “should take place under the auspices of the United Nations”.

**1036.** Mr Straw set out the UK’s approach to reconstruction in more detail in a speech to the Newspaper Society Annual Conference on 1 April (see Section 13.1).

## Post-Azores concerns

**1037.** UK concerns about shortcomings in post-conflict planning and preparation, and uncertainty about the nature and scope of the UK’s role in post-conflict Iraq, persisted after the Azores Summit.

**1038.** FCO legal advice on 17 March about the compatibility of post-conflict tasks with the rules and obligations of military occupation stated that Security Council authorisation:

- was not needed for humanitarian assistance or “rehabilitation” in the sense of essential repair work closely connected with humanitarian assistance; but
- would be required for any reconstruction or institutional reform beyond what was necessary for the relief effort.

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<sup>439</sup> *The Guardian*, 17 March 2003, *Full text: Azores press conference*.

<sup>440</sup> *BBC News*, 16 March 2003, *BBC Breakfast with Frost Interview: Gordon Brown, MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer March 16th 2003*.

**1039.** Mr Huw Llewellyn, an FCO Legal Counsellor, wrote to the IPU on 13 March to emphasise the need for concrete information about ORHA's plans now that there were UK secondees in the organisation. He stated:

“This is important because if UK forces are in control of the Basra area, the UK will be the Occupying Power in that area and it will be the UK's international obligations which are engaged.”<sup>441</sup>

**1040.** Mr Llewellyn wrote to the IPU again on 17 March to explain that he had intended to comment in detail on an ORHA plan for “post-liberation” Iraq but that, after meeting Maj Gen Cross, it had become clear that “ORHA plans in reality are much more limited”.<sup>442</sup> ORHA now appeared to intend to “do the minimum necessary to allow Iraqi ministries to function” before handing over to a “UN Security Council authorised administration after about ninety days”. Given Maj Gen Cross's planned role, Mr Llewellyn suggested that developments should be monitored and views fed in as necessary through him.

**1041.** The same day, Mr Llewellyn also advised the IPU on the compatibility of various post-conflict activities with the rules of military occupation.<sup>443</sup>

**1042.** Mr Llewellyn explained that Security Council authorisation was not required for humanitarian assistance. The position was more complicated for “rehabilitation” and “reconstruction”:

“Rehabilitation

“As I understand it, this means essential repair work, (for example to schools, hospitals, government buildings, roads). It is closely connected with basic humanitarian assistance.

“... Article 55 of the Hague Regulations requires the Occupying Power to ‘safeguard’ the capital of public buildings etc. Repair work would be consistent with that obligation ...

“Reconstruction

“You list under this heading matters such as reform of the judiciary, security sector and police reform, demobilisation, reform of government and its institutions, the education system, and the banking system ... it might also include the building of new roads and other structures to assist the regeneration of Iraq.

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<sup>441</sup> Minute Llewellyn to Bristow, 13 March 2003, ‘ORHA Plans’.

<sup>442</sup> Minute Llewellyn to Bristow, 17 March 2003, ‘ORHA Plans for the Administration of Iraq: Military Occupation’.

<sup>443</sup> [Minute Llewellyn to IPU \[junior official\], 17 March 2003, ‘Potential Humanitarian and Reconstruction Activities in Iraq’.](#)



“Construction of entirely new roads and buildings may in some circumstances be permissible – where this is necessary for the relief effort or, for example for maintaining security or public order. As you know, the scope for action on the other issues ... is limited. Any action going beyond these limits would require Security Council authorisation.”

**1043.** Mr Llewellyn offered further observations on 18 March, in which he emphasised that “sweeping” institutional and personnel changes would not be permitted.<sup>444</sup>

**1044.** The FCO informed No.10 that the UK continued to make progress reconciling UK and US positions on the post-conflict role of the UN, but significant differences remained.

**1045.** The US accepted the need to internationalise Phase IV activity but wanted to keep the “whip hand”, an approach that was “almost certainly not negotiable in the UN Security Council”.

**1046.** The FCO advised that the US must be held to the commitments made at the Azores Summit. No Security Council authorisation would mean no wide international effort and the likelihood of a much less consensual environment in which to operate.

**1047.** As “best friends” of the US, the UK should continue to offer advice on what would and would not work.

**1048.** On 17 March, the FCO informed Sir David Manning that the UK continued “to make some good progress” in bringing together UK and US positions on the UN.<sup>445</sup> The US now accepted that:

- “The Phase IV reform and reconstruction task is much too big for the US/UK to go it alone. All the traditional nation-builders will be required – the IFIs, the UN, NGOs, and the big bilateral donors (eg the EU and Japan). We need wide international support to allow us an exit strategy.”
- Security Council authorisation would make it easier to secure international support.
- The international community would need a new Security Council mandate to have a legal basis for a reform programme which would go beyond what was allowed by the laws of armed conflict.

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<sup>444</sup> [Minute Llewellyn to IPU \[junior official\], 18 March 2003, ‘Potential Humanitarian and Reconstruction Activities in Iraq’.](#)

<sup>445</sup> [Letter Owen to Manning, 17 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Phase IV \(Day-After\): US/UK Discussions on an Authorising UNSCR’.](#)

**1049.** At the same time, some important differences remained. In particular, the US wanted:

- the resolution authorising Phase IV to identify the US-led civil transitional authority as the main body leading reform and reconstruction;
- the UN Special Co-ordinator to be subordinate to the Coalition military commander;
- the US to oversee the process leading to the creation of the IIA;
- the IIA to be managed closely by the Coalition rather than lightly supervised by the UN Special Co-ordinator; and
- the Coalition to continue to exercise control over IIA decisions in areas for which the IIA had been given responsibility.

**1050.** The FCO concluded:

“... the US want the UN Security Council to authorise them to take charge of the reform and reconstruction of Iraq. Although they accept the need to internationalise activity in Phase IV, they want to keep the whip hand.

“The US approach is almost certainly not negotiable in the UN Security Council. And the last thing we need is another prolonged and acrimonious wrangle in the Council over the details of the day after arrangements ...

“We made clear to the US last week, (and many times before that) our view on the shortcomings of their Phase IV concept. President Bush’s public statement at the Azores Summit and the US/UK/Spanish vision for Iraq provide good foundations on which to build. We must keep the US to these commitments. The alternative would be grim – no Security Council authorisation would mean no wide international effort, and the likelihood of a much less consensual environment in which to operate: in short, far from a recipe for mission success.

“The next procedural step is for the US to send us their version of the draft UNSCR for Phase IV ... Meanwhile, we should continue to offer our advice, as their best friends, on what is and is not likely to work.

“The key to reconciling US and UK differences may lie in the personality of the figure identified as the UN Special Co-ordinator.”

**1051.** The FCO did not address the implications for the UK of a failure to reconcile those differences.

**1052. Ms Short advised Mr Blair of continuing shortcomings in humanitarian preparations.**

**1053.** On 17 March, at Ms Short's request, DFID officials prepared a paper on shortcomings in humanitarian preparations and steps needed to address the situation.<sup>446</sup>

**1054.** Ms Short sent the paper to Mr Blair with the comment: "This summarises what needs to be done to improve humanitarian preparedness. Perhaps we could really focus on this next week."<sup>447</sup>

**1055.** A No.10 official advised Mr Blair that the main problems identified by DFID were:

- underfunding of humanitarian agencies;
- agencies not ready to respond effectively and lacking experience outside northern Iraq;
- the need for Coalition forces to provide humanitarian assistance until there was a permissive security environment; and
- the risk that OFF might break down.

**1056.** The official informed Mr Blair that DFID's proposed solutions included:

- increased funding for DFID and the MOD;
- rapid securing of a permissive security environment; and
- a resolution transferring management of OFF to the UN Secretary-General.<sup>448</sup>

**1057.** The official assessed that the DFID analysis was "probably about right". The MOD had been pressing DFID to help for some weeks, so it was useful that DFID now recognised the need to help. DFID was seconding two people to work with the US and the Cabinet Office was working to broker a deal on additional funding with the Treasury (see Section 13.1).

**1058.** The official recommended a meeting with Mr Brown, Mr Hoon, Mr Straw and Ms Short to discuss humanitarian issues later in the week.

**1059.** Mr Annan told the press on 17 March that the UN would need a Security Council mandate for some of the post-conflict activities it would have to undertake in Iraq.

**1060.** Mr Annan spoke to the press after a meeting of the Security Council on 17 March:

"... if there is military action, the [Security] Council of course will have to meet to discuss what happens after all that. I think I have made it clear that regardless

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<sup>446</sup> [Minute Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department \[junior official\] to Private Secretary/Secretary of State \[DFID\], 17 March 2003, 'Iraq: Humanitarian Assistance' attaching Paper \[unattributed and undated\], 'Iraq: What is lacking in terms of being prepared for an effective humanitarian response and what would it take to address that?'](#)

<sup>447</sup> [Manuscript comment Short on Minute Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department \[junior official\] to Private Secretary/Secretary of State \[DFID\], 17 March 2003, 'Iraq: Humanitarian Assistance'](#)

<sup>448</sup> [Minute \[No.10 junior official\] to Prime Minister, 17 March 2003, 'Iraq: Humanitarian Assistance: DFID Views'](#)

of how this current issue is resolved, the Security Council is going to have a role to play. And I think that was also implied in the communiqué that came out of the Azores. That the UN has an important role to play in the post-conflict Iraq and the Council will have to discuss that. The Council will have to give me a mandate for some of the activities that we will need to undertake.”<sup>449</sup>

**1061.** Sir David Manning spoke to Dr Rice on 18 March and explained that the UK hoped to see the US draft of a post-conflict resolution.<sup>450</sup> He welcomed the news that Dr Rice planned to see Mr Annan in New York the following week. Sir David considered it “extremely important to emphasise our commitment to the UN’s post-conflict role, as we had done at the Azores Summit”.

**1062. Mr Blair told Cabinet on 17 March that the US had confirmed that it would seek a mandate for post-conflict reconstruction.**

**1063.** A specially convened Cabinet attended by Lord Goldsmith, the last before the invasion, was held at 1600 on 17 March (see Section 3.8).<sup>451</sup>

**1064.** Mr Blair told Cabinet that the US had confirmed that it “would seek a UN mandate for the post-conflict reconstruction of Iraq”. Oil revenues would be administered under the UN’s authority.

**1065.** Late on 17 March, Ms Anna Bewes, Ms Short’s Principal Private Secretary, informed Mr Heywood that, subject to her deciding she could remain in government, Ms Short would like to take up Mr Blair’s suggestion that she visit New York and Washington to follow up his conversations with Mr Annan and “to take forward discussions on humanitarian and reconstruction assistance with the UN, IFIs and US”.<sup>452</sup> Ms Short would report back to Cabinet on 20 March.

**1066. On 17 March, Mr Blair met Dr Barham Salih, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) “Prime Minister” of northern Iraq, at No.10.**

**1067.** Section 6.4 describes Mr Blair’s meeting with Mr Masoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and Mr Jalal Talabani, leader of the PUK, at No.10 on 19 December 2002.<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> *UN News Centre*, 17 March 2003, *Press Encounter with the Secretary-General at the Security Council stakeout (unofficial transcript)*.

<sup>450</sup> Letter Manning to McDonald, 18 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Conversation with Condi Rice’.

<sup>451</sup> [Cabinet Conclusions, 17 March 2003.](#)

<sup>452</sup> [Letter Bewes to Heywood, 17 March 2003, \[untitled\].](#)

<sup>453</sup> Letter Rycroft to Sinclair, 19 December 2002, ‘Iraqi Kurds: Meeting with Prime Minister, 19 December’.

**1068.** Mr Blair wrote to Mr Barzani and Mr Talabani on 12 March 2003 and again on 17 March in response to concerns they had raised about regional security in northern Iraq.<sup>454</sup> In the letter of 17 March, Mr Blair stated that he knew from the meeting in December 2002 that Mr Barzani and Mr Talabani shared the UK's "vision of an Iraq which has a genuinely representative government and where there are greater human rights for all Iraqi people, greater liberties and greater democracy".

**1069.** During a meeting with Mr Blair at No.10 on 17 March, Dr Salih said that it would be important to hand over quickly to the Iraqi people as much of the running of Iraq as possible, but that he did not want the UK and US military to leave early.<sup>455</sup>

**1070. Concerns about ORHA continued to grow as ORHA staff deployed from Washington to Kuwait in the days immediately before the invasion.**

**1071. FCO officials expressed concern about the small number of civilians working for an organisation that was expected to be responsible for the initial post-conflict civil administration of Iraq.**

**1072. On his way to Kuwait, Maj Gen Cross gave Mr Blair a clear picture of the inadequate state of post-conflict plans.**

**1073.** ORHA staff left Washington for Kuwait on 16 March.<sup>456</sup> The inter-agency tensions that had hampered post-conflict planning in the US were soon compounded by new logistical obstacles. Although Gen Franks had placed ORHA under the operational command of Gen McKiernan's CFLCC, when Lt Gen Garner's advance party arrived at CFLCC headquarters, there was no space available for them. Post-conflict planners in ORHA, JTF-4 and CENTCOM were soon scattered across five locations in Kuwait, the US and Qatar.

**1074.** Maj Gen Cross deployed to Kuwait on 18 March, travelling via London.<sup>457</sup>

**1075.** In his written statement to the Inquiry, Maj Gen Cross said that while in London he briefed Mr Blair:

"I was as honest about the position as I could be, essentially briefing that I did not believe post-war planning was anywhere near ready. I told him that there was no clarity on what was going to be needed after the military phase of the operation, nor who would provide it. Although I was confident that we would secure a military victory I offered my view that we should not begin that campaign until we had a much more coherent post-war plan."<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> Letter Blair to Barzani and Talabani, 12 March 2003, [untitled]; Letter Blair to Barzani and Talabani, 17 March 2003, [untitled].

<sup>455</sup> Letter Rycroft to Owen, 17 March 2003, 'Northern Iraq: Prime Minister's Meeting with Salih, 17 March'.

<sup>456</sup> Bowen SW Jr. *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009.

<sup>457</sup> Statement Cross, 2009, page 15.

<sup>458</sup> Statement, 2009, page 15.

**1076.** Maj Gen Cross told the Inquiry:

“He [Mr Blair] was engaged ... So we had a very sensible conversation, and at the end of it I do remember saying, in so many words, I have no doubt at all we will win this military campaign. I do not believe that we are ready for post-war Iraq ...

“He nodded and didn’t say anything particularly. But I’m sure he understood what I was saying.”<sup>459</sup>

**1077.** In his written statement, Maj Gen Cross explained that:

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

- Not everyone believed that there would actually be a war; if there was to be one, then there was certainly no consensus that we (the UK) should be involved;
- There was no coherent UK, pan-Whitehall, view of what post-war Iraq should look like;
- There was serious reluctance to take on the US over their views;
- If events did unfurl differently to ‘the plan’ – such as it was – there was an underlying belief that the US would quickly be able to bring whatever was necessary to bear;
- There was, therefore, some seriously wishful and woolly, and un-joined up, thinking going on!”<sup>460</sup>

**1078.** Maj Gen Cross told the Inquiry he had found no single cross-Whitehall perspective on events and that it took some time to get agreement that he should go to Kuwait:

“At this stage it is very, very late in the day to be deciding whether or not we are going to be engaged in these post-war operations. So I felt very isolated is the truth.”<sup>461</sup>

**1079. Mr Straw discussed the “military feel” of ORHA with Secretary Powell on 19 March.**

**1080.** On 14 March, Mr Ehrman had raised the need to “civilianise” ORHA with Mr Straw. There were three FCO personnel there, but only one representative of the State Department.<sup>462</sup> ORHA would provide the initial civilian government of Iraq and it was strongly in the UK’s interests to increase the size of the civilian contingent within it. He hoped that Mr Straw would raise the issue with Secretary Powell when they next spoke.

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<sup>459</sup> Public hearing, 7 December 2009, page 34.

<sup>460</sup> Statement, 2009, page 16.

<sup>461</sup> Public hearing, 7 December 2009, page 31.

<sup>462</sup> Minute Ehrman to Private Secretary [FCO], 14 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Aspects and Day After’.

**1081.** Mr Straw raised the issue on 19 March.<sup>463</sup> Secretary Powell agreed with Mr Straw's view that "ORHA had a fairly military feel".

**1082.** The development of UK policy towards ORHA is described in Sections 9.1 and 10.1.

**1083.** In response to advice from officials on the global diplomatic agenda that would follow a short and successful military campaign, Mr Straw asked what would happen if there were "a long and unsuccessful war".

**1084.** Mr Straw's question was not put to officials and there is no indication that it was considered further.

**1085.** On 18 March Mr Fraser sent Mr Straw a paper on "the diplomatic agenda in the aftermath of a short and successful war in Iraq", covering the US, the EU, NATO, the wider Middle East, the UN and the global economy.<sup>464</sup> The paper stated that:

"Much will depend on how the military campaign goes, the success of the post-war settlement and whether we are able to provide useable evidence to the international community that Saddam presented a real threat. **For the purposes of this paper, we assume a positive outcome on all three.**"

**1086.** The section on relations with the US recommended focusing on "a relatively small number of deliverables" on Iraq, the MEPP, WMD proliferation, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and climate change. On Iraq, the paper recommended:

"We should continue to argue strongly for US agreement to a genuine UN role in the administration and reconstruction of Iraq, including an effective EU contribution ... We should also seek to ensure that UK companies get a fair crack of the whip in post-conflict Iraq."

**1087.** On 21 March, Mr Straw asked: "What about if it is a long and unsuccessful war?"<sup>465</sup>

**1088.** Mr Straw's question was not included in the formal response to Mr Fraser's paper sent from Mr Straw's Private Office on 1 April.<sup>466</sup> There is no indication that it was considered further.

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<sup>463</sup> Letter McDonald to Manning, 19 March 2003, 'Iraq: Foreign Secretary's Conversation with US Secretary of State, 19 March'.

<sup>464</sup> [Minute Fraser to PS \[FCO\], 18 March 2003, 'Iraq: Implications for the International System' attaching Paper DSI, \[undated\], 'Iraq – Implications for the International System'](#).

<sup>465</sup> [Manuscript comment Straw, 21 March 2003, on Minute Fraser to PS \[FCO\], 18 March 2003, 'Iraq: Implications for the International System'](#).

<sup>466</sup> Minute McDonald to Fraser, 1 April 2003, 'Iraq: Implications for the International System'.

**1089.** Asked why, given US opposition to a leading role for the UN in post-conflict Iraq, the UK did not have a plan B, Mr Straw told the Inquiry:

“... the only plan B ... in the absence of a central role for the UN, was a central role for the Occupiers, which were the US and the UK. Those were the two alternatives. There was lots and lots of discussion with the United States system ...

“... [I]t wasn't for the want of trying that we ended up in the position we did, but this was one of those absolute classics where the American decision making process was opaque ... you put all these things in and it just sort of flows around and one day there is a decision.”<sup>467</sup>

**1090.** Mr Straw had been aware since January, when Mr Ricketts had likened the process of changing US views to “water on a stone”, that it would be extremely difficult to secure US support for the UK's preferred option.

**1091.** It was Mr Straw's responsibility as Foreign Secretary to give due consideration to the range of options available to the UK should that effort fail. Those included making UK participation in military action conditional on a satisfactory post-conflict plan.

**1092.** Section 6.4 states that Mr Straw did not do so in January 2003.

**1093.** Nor did he address that gap between January and March.

**1094.** FCO guidance on Phase IV sent to all UK diplomatic posts on 19 March stated: “Providing the conditions for success exist – a legal basis for action from the UNSC and a secure environment in which to act – we would expect all the traditional nation-builders to take part.”

**1095.** On 19 March, the FCO sent a “Core Script” on Iraq for all diplomatic posts to use at their discretion with key contacts.<sup>468</sup>

**1096.** The same text was circulated to No.10 and key departments the next day.<sup>469</sup> The covering letter to No.10 stated:

“Until now we have been reluctant to discuss openly how we see Phase IV unfolding. As military action begins, we shall wish to ensure that our ideas for Phase IV – the means by which we shall deliver our ‘Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’ – are given greater prominence.”

**1097.** The paper carried the caveat that it represented current UK thinking, not necessarily agreed Coalition policy, and would evolve as Phase III unfolded. If military

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<sup>467</sup> Public hearing, 2 February 2011, pages 118-119.

<sup>468</sup> [Telegram 150 FCO London to Abidjan \(parts 1 and 2\), 19 March 2003, 'Iraq: Core Script – Phase IV'.](#)

<sup>469</sup> [Letter Owen to Rycroft, 20 March 2003, 'Iraq: Phase IV: Core Script' attaching Paper Iraq Planning Unit, 19 March 2003, 'Iraq: Core Script – Phase IV \(Post-Conflict\)'.](#)



action led to the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime, the UK's goal would be "to transform Iraq along the lines set out in the UK's 'Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi people', launched at the Azores Summit".

**1098.** Once most of Iraq had been stabilised, ORHA would take on supervision of the civil administration, calling itself the International Transitional Civil Authority (ITCA): "We hope that the vast majority of the Iraqi public sector will remain in place and be able to carry on its work, albeit under ITCA's overall direction." In the first weeks, the Coalition's task would be to provide a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian relief by UN agencies and NGOs.

**1099.** After "some weeks", the UN should appoint a Special Co-ordinator for Iraq and set out a mandate for the international community's presence in the country, leading to the establishment of an IIA under the "light supervision" of the Special Co-ordinator. The IIA would establish a constituent assembly along the lines of the Bonn Conference on Afghanistan to agree a constitution. The constitution would be put to a referendum and lead to the election of a "broad-based, representative government".

**1100.** On reconstruction:

"Providing the conditions for success exist – a legal basis for action from the UNSC and a secure environment in which to act – we would expect all the traditional nation-builders to take part. The aim will be to introduce widespread economic and political reforms, as well as improvements in the functioning of the public administration."

**1101.** The core script concluded:

"An important objective for HMG is to ensure a level playing field for UK companies to compete for commercial opportunities that arise in the reconstruction of Iraq."

**1102.** The core script made no reference to the role of the Iraqi opposition or Iraqi exiles in post-conflict arrangements.

### **Parliamentary debate on Iraq, 18 March 2003**

**1103.** In his speech to the House of Commons on 18 March, Mr Blair restated the importance of bringing sustainable development, democracy, human rights and good governance to Iraq.

**1104.** Mr Blair did not explain how, other than by seeking a UN resolution, the UK would contribute.

**1105.** The motion tabled by the Government on 18 March stated that:

"... this House ... in the event of military operations requires that, on an urgent basis, the United Kingdom should seek a new Security Council resolution that would affirm Iraq's territorial integrity, ensure rapid delivery of humanitarian relief, allow for the

earliest possible lifting of UN sanctions, an international reconstruction programme, and the use of all oil revenues for the benefit of the Iraqi people and endorse an appropriate post-conflict administration for Iraq, leading to a representative government which upholds human rights and the rule of law for all Iraqis ...”<sup>470</sup>

**1106.** In his speech in the House of Commons on 18 March, addressed in more detail in Section 3.8, Mr Blair called for a “larger global agenda: on poverty and sustainable development; on democracy and human rights; and on good governance of nations”.<sup>471</sup> He added:

“That is why what happens after any conflict in Iraq is of such critical significance. Here again there is a chance to unify around the United Nations. There should be a new United Nations resolution following any conflict providing not only for humanitarian help, but for the administration and governance of Iraq. That must be done under proper UN authorisation.

...

“The UN resolution that should provide for the proper governance of Iraq should also protect totally the territorial integrity of Iraq. And this is also important: that the oil revenues, which people falsely claim that we want to seize, should be put in a trust fund for the Iraqi people administered through the UN.

...

“Let the future Government of Iraq be given the chance to begin the process of uniting the nation’s disparate groups, on a democratic basis ...

...

“The process must begin on a democratic basis, respecting human rights, as, indeed, the fledgling democracy in northern Iraq – protected from Saddam for 12 years by British and American pilots in the No-Fly Zone – has done remarkably. The moment that a new Government are in place, committed to disarming Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, is the point in time when sanctions should be lifted, in their entirety for the people of Iraq.”

**1107.** Mr Blair stated:

“I have never put the justification for action as regime change. We have to act within the terms set out in resolution 1441 – that is our legal base. But it is the reason why I say frankly that if we do act we should do so with a clear conscience and a strong heart ... Iraq is a potentially wealthy country which in 1979, the year before Saddam came to power, was richer than Portugal or Malaysia. Today it is impoverished,

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<sup>470</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 18 March 2003, column 760.

<sup>471</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 18 March 2003, columns 771-772.

with 60 percent of its population dependent on food aid. Thousands of children die needlessly every year from lack of food and medicine. Four million people out of a population of just over 20 million are living in exile.

“The brutality of the repression – the death and torture camps, the barbaric prisons for political opponents ... is well documented ... We take our freedom for granted. But imagine what it must be like not to be able to speak or discuss or debate or even question the society you live in. To see friends and family taken away and never daring to complain. To suffer the humility [sic] of failing courage in face of pitiless terror. That is how the Iraqi people live. Leave Saddam in place, and the blunt truth is that that is how they will continue to be forced to live.

“We must face the consequences of the actions that we advocate. For those ... who are opposed to this course, it means ... that for the Iraqi people, whose only true hope lies in the removal of Saddam, the darkness will simply close back over.”<sup>472</sup>

**1108.** In his memoir, Mr Blair stated that the “moral case for action – never absent from my psyche – provided the final part of my speech and its peroration, echoing perhaps subconsciously the Chicago speech of 1999” (see Section 1.1).<sup>473</sup>

**1109. A small number of MPs raised post-conflict issues in the debate that followed Mr Blair’s speech.**

**1110.** In the debate that followed Mr Blair’s speech, Mr Duncan Smith stated that it would be wrong not to acknowledge the consequences of military action:

“That is why the Opposition have constantly urged the Government to set out their plans for humanitarian assistance. Our view of the lack of preparedness was endorsed by the Select Committee on International Development ...

“We welcome the written statement made last week by the Secretary of State for International Development, but it did not explain what is being done to improve co-ordination between the Ministry of Defence and DFID. It did not establish whether DFID would set up a mechanism to co-ordinate the UK humanitarian response. It did not set out what will replace the Oil-for-Food programme ... It did not spell out DFID’s plan in the event of Saddam Hussein unleashing any of his arsenal of chemical and biological weapons on his own people. Nor did it give details of how to cope with the flight of refugees ... The questions need to be answered.”<sup>474</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 18 March 2003, columns 772-773.

<sup>473</sup> Blair T. *A Journey*. Hutchinson, 2010.

<sup>474</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 18 March 2003, column 777.

**1111.** In response to an intervention from Mr Elfyn Llwyd (Plaid Cymru) as to why he was “so keen on going to war” if those preparations were so ill-advanced, Mr Duncan Smith stated:

“The hon. Gentleman betrays a certain ignorance. The reality is that we need to deal with Saddam Hussein regardless of those arrangements.”

**1112.** Later in the debate, Mr Alex Salmond (Scottish National Party) asked: “Will the nation-building work? The record of the United States on nation-building has not been impressive.”<sup>475</sup>

**1113.** Mr Tony Worthington (Labour) raised concerns about the scale of the challenge in Iraq:

“What bothers my constituents – it is one of the reasons why the Prime Minister fails to persuade them of the rightness of his approach – is that little or no attention is being paid to the consequences of the action that we are about to take.

...

“We are going to invade a country of Balkanesque complexity where occupying forces will be unable easily to withdraw. We are rapidly in danger of becoming piggy in the middle for every discontented ethnic or religious group in the area. There seems little doubt of speedy, initial victory, but it is worth remembering that the six-day war in the Middle East is still going strong after 35 years. This war has similar potential.

...

“We have to consider the scale of the humanitarian problem. Iraq is a huge country, the size of France. We have to think about feeding 26 million people instantly. That has to be done by the UN, not by the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance ... I hope that the Minister will be absolutely clear in his winding-up speech whether the UN or American generals will be in control ...”<sup>476</sup>

**1114.** Mr John Baron (Conservative) stated that insufficient thought had been given to the consequences of military action:

“Who and what will replace Saddam Hussein? What plans exist for humanitarian relief? We know little about that. What effect will the action have on the stability of neighbouring states?”<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>475</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 18 March 2003, column 821.

<sup>476</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 18 March 2003, columns 832-834.

<sup>477</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 18 March 2003, column 835.

**1115.** Mr Michael Ancram, Shadow Foreign Secretary, while expressing support for military action, asked Mr Straw to explain what provision had been made for humanitarian relief:

“We are told that all is in hand, but we have not yet heard what is in hand or how it will be delivered ... [I]n Yugoslavia we started but we did not finish. This time we must finish.

“We must also ensure that what replaces Saddam Hussein’s brutal regime is a truly representative government, accepted by the Iraqi people and, as Kofi Annan said and the Azores meeting agreed, under the auspices of the United Nations ... If the administration are not representative – if they are not balanced – they will fail ... Above all we must preserve the territorial integrity of Iraq ...”<sup>478</sup>

**1116.** In his concluding remarks, Mr Straw stated:

“As the Prime Minister, President Bush and Prime Minister Aznar agreed in the Azores on Sunday ... a new resolution will be put before the Security Council. I hope very much that it will attract the fullest possible support ... and that the United Nations will be fully and actively involved in the reconstruction effort.”

**1117.** In response to a question from Mr Salmond about the cost of reconstruction, Mr Straw stated:

“... Iraq is an astonishingly wealthy country. The oil is important to this extent: it has the second largest oil reserves in the Middle East. One of the other agreements clearly reached in the Azores, which must also be endorsed by a United Nations Security Council resolution, which we shall propose, is that every single cent and penny of those oil revenues are not plundered by Saddam Hussein and his friends, but used for the benefit of the Iraqi people. I am quite clear that, when that happens, the costs of reconstruction to the rest of the world will be remarkably insignificant. I can also tell the hon. Gentleman that we have already provided funds for contingency work to ensure the smooth passage of the reconstruction work.”<sup>479</sup>

**1118. In the House of Lords, concerns were raised about the potential for ethnic and political violence after Saddam Hussein’s departure.**

**1119.** In the House of Lords debate on Iraq, Lord Redesdale (Liberal Democrat) warned:

“Even with regime change, there will be no simple solution. We will not be able to install a democratic government in the short term. Looking back to the previous Gulf War, there was enormous letting of blood, settling of scores and political upheaval. That will increase ...

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<sup>478</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 18 March 2003, column 894.

<sup>479</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 18 March 2003, column 899.

“We must consider the situation in the context of what has just happened in the United Nations. It could be ourselves and the Americans who have to pick up the pieces in Iraq in the short to medium term.”<sup>480</sup>

**1120.** Lord Elton (Conservative) described the ‘Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People’ issued at the Azores Summit as “aspirational rather than inspirational”.<sup>481</sup> He asked how the Vision would be achieved:

“... what is to be the cost, and under what government. It took the Americans 12 years to get out of Japan after the last world war, and it took us 50 years to unite Germany. It troubles me that so little has been thought and said on this matter until so late in the programme ...

“... [W]e have to remember with compassion the people of Iraq who suffered horrors under tyranny. We must ensure that they do not suffer horrors after a war due to munitions left behind or through internecine strife ...”

## Revised arrangements for Ministerial discussion of Iraq

**1121.** Daily meetings of the “War Cabinet” began on 19 March.

**1122.** Proposals for the creation of a wider Ministerial group covering post-conflict issues were kept under review.

**1123.** The first Ad Hoc Meeting on Iraq, also known as the “War Cabinet”, took place at 8.30am on 19 March.<sup>482</sup>

**1124.** The Ad Hoc Meeting took place daily from 19 March to 12 April, with the exception of Sundays 30 March and 6 April, and was chaired by Mr Blair. Attendees included Mr Straw, Mr Hoon and Ms Short.

**1125.** The remit of the Ad Hoc Meeting was to “cover ... military and other updates and the day’s events”, and “to focus on longer term policy decisions”, although the time for that would be limited and would need to be “rationed carefully”.<sup>483</sup>

**1126.** When Sir Andrew Turnbull explained the new arrangements to Mr Heywood, he proposed that:

“There might also be a case for having a weekly meeting of DOP [the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee] ... perhaps convening just before Cabinet. This would provide an opportunity for wider Ministerial involvement, including on day after issues. I suggest that this is something that David Manning keeps under review.”<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> House of Lords, *Official Report*, 18 March 2003, column 157.

<sup>481</sup> House of Lords, *Official Report*, 18 March 2003, columns 207-208.

<sup>482</sup> Minutes, 19 March 2003, Ad Hoc Meeting on Iraq.

<sup>483</sup> [Minute Drummond to Rycroft, 19 March 2003, ‘Iraq Ministerial Meeting’](#).

<sup>484</sup> [Minute Turnbull to Heywood, 18 March 2003, ‘Iraq’](#).

**1127.** The first meeting of the Cabinet Committee set up to oversee all aspects of the reconstruction of Iraq, the Ad Hoc Ministerial Group on Iraq Rehabilitation (AHMGIR), took place on 10 April.

**1128.** The creation of the AHMGIR and its role in setting the direction of UK post-conflict policy are addressed in Section 10.1.

**1129.** Mr Rycroft's briefing for Mr Blair before the first Ad Hoc Meeting on 19 March explained that there would be a standard agenda each day, including "Humanitarian and reconstruction".<sup>485</sup>

**1130.** Mr Blair told the meeting on 19 March that it was a priority to get a Security Council resolution for the post-conflict phase that would "bring in those who had been opposed to military action".<sup>486</sup> He requested a meeting with Ms Short on 21 March, on her return from discussions with Mr Annan and the US on preparations for humanitarian relief and reconstruction.

**1131.** At their meeting on 19 March, the Chiefs of Staff observed that the US appeared to be shifting its focus to Phase IV and that there had been "much greater US physical preparation for Phase IV than in any previous operation".<sup>487</sup> Adm Boyce instructed Lt Gen Reith "to report the detail of the preparations in-theatre, particularly the nature and tonnage of humanitarian aid stocks".

### **Mr Blair's conversation with President Bush, 19 March 2003**

**1132.** Mr Blair and President Bush spoke at 1240 on 19 March (see Section 3.8).<sup>488</sup> They discussed the military plans and timetable. Mr Blair said that he had "reviewed the military plans and was confident that they would work". Post-conflict issues would be the focus of conversation when they met. A full day meeting was envisaged to cover the ground. Mr Blair suggested that the discussions might include bringing in allies who had opposed military action and co-ordinating a communications strategy.

**1133.** Mr Blair and President Bush discussed post-conflict issues at Camp David on 26 and 27 March, a week after the start of the invasion.

### **Prime Minister's Questions, 19 March 2003**

**1134.** Asked in Parliament on 19 March about the UK's plans for post-conflict Iraq, Mr Blair explained that discussions were under way and referred to the principles set out in the Azores 'Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People'.

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<sup>485</sup> [Minute Rycroft to Prime Minister, 19 March 2003, 'Iraq: 0830 Ministerial Meeting'](#).

<sup>486</sup> Minutes, 19 March 2003, Ad Hoc Meeting on Iraq.

<sup>487</sup> [Minutes, 19 March 2003, Chiefs of Staff meeting.](#)

<sup>488</sup> Letter Cannon to McDonald, 19 March 2003, 'Iraq: Prime Minister's Conversation with Bush, 19 March'.

**1135.** At Prime Minister's Questions on 19 March, Mr David Rendel (Liberal Democrat) asked for assurances that sufficient funds for post-conflict reconstruction would be made available quickly.<sup>489</sup>

**1136.** Mr Blair replied that the purpose of the reconstruction programme in Iraq was not, primarily, to do with the consequences of conflict, "but is actually to do with reconstructing the country after the years of Saddam Hussein and his rule". Funds had already been earmarked for the purpose and Ministers were doing all they could "to make sure that we co-ordinate with American allies and also with other UN partners to ensure that the funds are available and also that the programme is available, so that in the post-conflict situation in Iraq the people of Iraq are given the future that they need".

**1137.** Mr Duncan Smith observed that, when he had asked in the past about the plans for post-conflict Iraq, Mr Blair had been "quite legitimately and understandably, reluctant to give full answers because he would not have wanted to give the impression that war was inevitable".<sup>490</sup> Would Mr Blair now explain what plans there were "to put in place a civilian representative government in Iraq"?

**1138.** Mr Blair replied:

"We are in discussion now with not just the United States, but other allies and the United Nations. We want to ensure that any post-conflict authority in Iraq is endorsed and authorised by a new United Nations resolution, and I think that will be an important part of bringing the international community back together again."<sup>491</sup>

**1139.** Mr Blair referred Mr Duncan Smith to the 'Vision for Iraq and the Iraqi People'. He suggested that the principles of peace, prosperity, freedom and good government included in the Vision "will go some way toward showing that if there is a conflict and Saddam Hussein is removed, the future for the Iraqi people will be better as a result".

### **Security Council debate on Iraq, 19 March 2003**

**1140.** Mr Annan told the Security Council on 19 March that, in any area under military occupation, responsibility for the welfare of the population fell to the Occupying Power.

**1141.** The UN would do whatever it could to help, without assuming or diminishing the responsibility of the Occupying Power.

**1142.** The Security Council held an open debate on Iraq on 19 March. The debate is addressed in more detail in Section 3.8.<sup>492</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 19 March 2003, column 930.

<sup>490</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 19 March 2003, column 931.

<sup>491</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 19 March 2003, columns 931-932.

<sup>492</sup> UN Security Council, '4721st Meeting Wednesday 19 March 2003' (S/PV.4721).



**1143.** During the debate, Sir Jeremy Greenstock stated that: “Whatever the present divisions and resentments, we the Security Council, we the United Nations, have a central role to play on Iraq and on the wider issues associated with it.” That included rapid delivery of humanitarian relief and the earliest possible lifting of sanctions. Sir Jeremy hoped that, “with the active contribution of the Secretary-General”, rapid progress could be made “on this crucial area”. Ms Short was in New York to discuss humanitarian issues and the UK had already set aside “about US\$110m for immediate humanitarian provision if there is a conflict” and was likely to announce further funding.

**1144.** Mr Annan said that the “plight of the Iraqi people” was now his “most immediate concern”. In the short term, a conflict could “make things worse – perhaps much worse”. The members of the Security Council should agree to “do everything we can to mitigate this imminent disaster”.

**1145.** Mr Annan stated that:

“Under international law, the responsibility for protecting civilians in conflict falls on the ‘belligerents’. In any area under military occupation, responsibility for the welfare of the population falls on the Occupying Power.

“Without in any way assuming or diminishing that ultimate responsibility, we in the United Nations will do whatever we can to help.”

**1146.** Mr Annan explained that there would be an appeal for additional funds to finance relief operations and that decisions by the Council would be needed to adjust the Oil-for-Food programme.

**1147.** Mr Annan concluded by expressing the hope that:

“... the effort to relieve the sufferings of the Iraqi people and to rehabilitate their society after so much destruction may yet be the task around which the unity of the Council can be rebuilt.”

**1148.** Mr Straw told the Inquiry that, on 19 March, Mr Annan was reported to have said he did not think there was a role for the UN in the circumstances of internationally controversial military action.<sup>493</sup> Mr Straw said that Mr Annan’s remarks “made an extensive role for the UN doubly difficult”. There had been “no prospect at that stage ... of a central role [for the UN]”.

### **Straw/Hoon joint minute to Mr Blair**

**1149.** Most of the issues raised at Mr Blair’s meeting on 6 March, including the role of the UN, sectorisation and the nature of the UK’s post-conflict contribution in Iraq, remained unresolved as the invasion began.

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<sup>493</sup> Public hearing, 2 February 2011, page 117.

**1150.** On 19 March, Mr Straw and Mr Hoon informed Mr Blair that:

- the UK would not be expected to contribute resources to anything other than security during the first phase of the US post-conflict plan (a transitional administration headed by ORHA);
- it would be premature to take a view on the merits of sectors for the following phase; but
- it would help the US and military planners to agree on the UK's medium-term contribution.

**1151.** The minute concluded with a warning that Coalition partners were thin on the ground. If the campaign did not go well, there would not be many who would be prepared or able to take part.

**1152.** Mr Straw and Mr Hoon considered only the UK's military presence in Iraq. They made no reference to the civilian contribution.

**1153.** Sir Kevin Tebbit expressed concern about the transition from a primarily military effort to longer-term civilian-led reconstruction. It would be necessary to work hard to avoid dependence on the Armed Forces to carry out civilian tasks.

**1154.** Mr Straw and Mr Hoon sent Mr Blair a joint minute on the UK military contribution to post-conflict Iraq on 19 March.<sup>494</sup>

**1155.** The draft was subject to "intensive consultations" at official level in the MOD and the FCO.<sup>495</sup>

**1156.** In the FCO, Mr Ricketts sent the draft to Mr Straw's Private Office with the comment:

"This is a clear note on a crucial issue. If the Secretary of State [Mr Straw] could OK it (I showed him a slightly earlier draft this morning) it can go to No.10 tonight, for discussion at the PM's meeting at 0830 on 20 March."<sup>496</sup>

**1157.** In the MOD, the draft was cleared by Adm Boyce and Sir Kevin Tebbit.

**1158.** Sir Kevin commented:

"In terms of our military capacity, with an eye to the aftermath, it would clearly be preferable to confine ourselves to SE Iraq and not bite off more than we can chew. I accept, however, that we should be prepared, initially, for our forces to be fairly

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<sup>494</sup> [Minute Straw and Hoon to Prime Minister, 19 March 2003, 'Iraq: UK Military Contribution to post-conflict Iraq'](#).

<sup>495</sup> [Minute Chilcott to Private Secretary \[FCO\], \[undated\], 'Iraq: The UK's Military Contribution to Post-Conflict Iraq'](#).

<sup>496</sup> [Manuscript comment Ricketts to Private Secretary \[FCO\], \[undated\], on Minute Chilcott to Private Secretary \[FCO\], \[undated\], 'Iraq: The UK's Military Contribution to Post-Conflict Iraq'](#).

widely dispersed across Iraq, depending on how Phase III goes, because without successful Phase III, Phase IV becomes harder, if not academic. The trick will be to be able to regroup in a smaller area of SE Iraq once hostilities are ended.

“I also agree that we should be clear about our medium/long-term scale of military commitment. While we are putting all we can into the war effort, we should plan ahead to stay broadly within ... [*Strategic Defence Review* guidelines].<sup>497</sup>

“What concerns me most is the process of transiting from a primarily military effort to the civil-led longer-term humanitarian and reconstruction phase. Recent history does not offer too much encouragement and we shall have to work hard to avoid ‘dependence culture’ on the armed forces to do things which should be for civil departments – initially through aid, subsequently through Iraqi own efforts. The politics of the issue do, I believe, point in the same direction. To meet the PM’s wish for us to play an exemplary role, we shall need to remember that memories of the UK in the region from the 1920s are not all positive, and we should make clear our desire to hand over and withdraw on the right basis as early as we can.”<sup>498</sup>

**1159.** In their joint minute, Mr Straw and Mr Hoon warned that some issues “could confront us as early as next week” and invited agreement to five propositions:

- “(a) The maximum size of task that UK forces would contribute to in the early days should not exceed our overall military capability. A focus in the South-East of Iraq would be reasonable.
- (b) The UK contribution to such a task in advance of a Security Council resolution would be limited to the facilitation of humanitarian assistance and a secure environment and the elimination of WMD.
- (c) We therefore need to agree urgently with the US a realistic authorising Security Council resolution for post-conflict Iraq.
- (d) We should agree urgently a plan with the US to help us find military partners to enable us to draw down and, in due course, design an exit strategy.
- (e) In broad terms the MOD will need to draw down its scale of effort to nearer a third of its commitment by the autumn.”<sup>499</sup>

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<sup>497</sup> It is not clear whether Sir Kevin Tebbit referred to the *Strategic Defence Review* or the Defence Planning Assumptions. The MOD has been unable to provide a version of Sir Kevin Tebbit’s manuscript note including the missing words.

<sup>498</sup> [Manuscript comment Tebbit on Email DCMC CRISIS 04-S to CDS/PSO-S, 19 March 2003, ‘Joint Defence and Foreign Secretaries Minute to PM on “Sectors”’.](#)

<sup>499</sup> [Minute Straw and Hoon to Prime Minister, 19 March 2003, ‘Iraq: UK Military Contribution to post-conflict Iraq’.](#)

**1160.** Mr Straw and Mr Hoon gave little detail of what UK forces would be required to do immediately after the invasion:

“Much will depend on how the campaign develops, but in the first few weeks we should expect Coalition forces to be spread across Iraq. The expectation is that UK forces will end up in southern Iraq, loosely centred on Basra. However, we should be prepared for elements of our forces to be dispersed fairly widely across Iraq ...

“US military planning continues to be fluid. But it envisages Coalition forces re-deploying into a more tailored security framework as soon as the situation permits. The military task will be to facilitate a secure environment (including law and order, deterring adventurism and a variety of military-technical tasks) to enable immediate humanitarian relief to be conducted. To help UK forces win hearts and minds, HMT have allocated them £30m for humanitarian purposes in the first month as well as £10m for quick win projects. (Clare [Short] has allocated £20m for UN agencies’ preparations and earmarked another £60m from DFID’s contingency reserve for humanitarian operations. But this is a drop in the ocean; in the worse case, if the Oil-for-Food programme ground to a halt, Iraq could need as much as a billion dollars a month for humanitarian aid.)

“The expectation is that UK forces would be responsible for a task focused on Basra and other key military objectives in the South-East of Iraq, which could include 20 percent of the Iraqi population. This task is broadly proportionate to the size of the UK’s contribution to overall Coalition land forces ...

“In parallel, and under the overall military command, the US plan to bring in a transitional administration<sup>500</sup> to co-ordinate immediate civil relief and humanitarian assistance. The transitional administration is making plans for allocating its limited resources, including provision of public sector salaries, on a nation wide, Coalition basis. There is no expectation that the UK would be asked to contribute any resources to anything other than security. So there is no suggestion that the UK would be left to foot the bill for the civil administration or the costs of humanitarian relief and reconstruction in any area.”

**1161.** Mr Straw and Mr Hoon reported that US planning remained “sensibly flexible” once the initial phase was over and “a major part of Iraq has been stabilised”. It advised that US planning:

“... recognises that parts of Iraq will be more permissive than others and that security could well be provided through something other than sectors. It would be premature now to take a view on the merits of sectors for this stage. We are well placed to influence US thinking with a number of military officers and officials embedded within their military headquarters and in ITCA. **It would be helpful for**

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<sup>500</sup> A footnote explained: “The Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) becomes the transitional administration once it is established inside Iraq.”

**them, and for military planners generally, to agree what our scale of effort should be in our medium-term contribution to Iraq.”**

**1162.** Mr Straw and Mr Hoon advised that it would be necessary to reduce the UK military contribution “to nearer a third by no later than the autumn in order to avoid long-term damage to the Armed Forces” and to remain within current defence planning assumptions: “If Ministers wanted us to, we would need decisions now so that we would be able to recommend what would have to give elsewhere.” Scaling down to nearer a third would limit the UK contribution thereafter to “a maximum of around one brigade, a two-star headquarters and possibly a contribution to higher level command and control”. They recommended telling the US now, for planning purposes, that this was the upper limit of the UK contribution.

**1163.** Mr Straw and Mr Hoon also recorded that the ARRC featured in current CENTCOM planning as a multinational headquarters that could play a role in post-conflict Iraq, but would be the subject of a separate paper (see Section 9.1).

**1164.** Mr Straw and Mr Hoon ended with a section on “**Setting the conditions for success**”. The conditions in which UK forces operated needed to be conducive to success. There needed to be a resolution authorising international activity in the post-conflict period and: “We should also let the US know the key importance of internationalising the security arrangements now so that we can reduce our commitment as set out above. And we would expect US support in building a wider Coalition to operate alongside our forces, allow us to draw down and eventually to provide us with an exit strategy.”

**1165.** Mr Straw and Mr Hoon concluded:

“We should be realistic about the limited prospects of our finding any genuine military capability to help us take this task on. New ... Coalition partners are thin on the ground and, if the post-conflict phase does not go well, there will not be many nations who will be prepared or able to take part.

“And finally, we shall need to return to this issue once we are clear how the campaign is developing and look at our wider contribution in the round.”

**1166.** **The Cabinet Office took a different position on whether it would be “premature” to take a view on the merits of sectors.**

**1167.** Before the joint minute from Mr Straw and Mr Hoon reached No.10, Mr Drummond advised Mr Rycroft that “we need Ministers to decide on sectors”. The joint minute and the question of sectors should be on the agenda for the Ad Hoc Meeting on Iraq (the “War Cabinet”) on 20 March, with Ms Short given the chance to comment on the minute on her return from the US on 21 March.<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>501</sup> [Minute Drummond to Rycroft, 19 March 2003, ‘Iraq Ministerial Meeting’.](#)

**1168.** Mr Drummond suggested that Ministers would want to agree the proposals in the joint minute:

“... provided they are satisfied that:

- UK Forces will be capable of providing security for an area around Basra including about 20 percent of Iraq’s population.
- How long will we have this responsibility, and what is the exit strategy (benign security environment created, UK forces replaced by others). Will we be able to limit ‘our area’ to say Basra by the autumn, when we want to withdraw two-thirds of our troops?
- That the assertion that the transitional administration will handle civil administration including humanitarian reconstruction issues is correct: This is clearly the plan, but it must be doubtful that ORHA will have the capacity, and therefore the troops on the ground may be called on to help. The UK certainly doesn’t have civilian capacity to help govern 20 percent of Iraq.”

**1169.** The joint minute was not discussed at the Ad Hoc Meeting on Iraq at 10am on 20 March, where Mr Blair stated that decisions on the minute were needed at the next meeting on 21 March.<sup>502</sup>

**1170.** Mr Rycroft showed the Straw/Hoon joint minute on the UK military contribution to post-conflict Iraq to Mr Blair on 20 March. Mr Rycroft commented:

“For discussion at 1500 on Friday [21 March]. Do you agree? Key points to fix are: size of our sector, length of time of commitment, exit strategy, proper UN authorisation.”<sup>503</sup>

**1171. On the eve of the invasion, there remained considerable uncertainty about the three phase model for post-conflict Iraq.**

**1172. In the absence of UN authorisation for post-conflict activity or agreement on a UN role, the model, as understood by the UK, remained as much aspiration as plan.**

**1173.** Asked by the Inquiry whether, on the eve of the invasion, there had been a reasonably clear understanding of the UK’s military, political and diplomatic objectives for Phase IV, Mr Chilcott replied:

“Yes, I think the UK view of it was well understood within the UK Government, and I have no reason to think it wasn’t well understood in the UK military as well, which was that we were working on broadly this three-phase model in our minds that we would have a period of occupation, where we would be governed by, as

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<sup>502</sup> Minutes, 20 March 2003, Ad Hoc Meeting on Iraq.

<sup>503</sup> Manuscript comment Rycroft to Prime Minister, 20 March 2003, on Minute Straw and Hoon to Prime Minister, 19 March 2003, ‘Iraq: UK Military Contribution to post-conflict Iraq’.

I said, the Geneva Conventions and the Hague Regulations, where we would be responsible for the welfare of the people. And our main concern at that stage would be establishing a secure environment and ensuring that humanitarian relief was able to get through to those that needed it.

“But we wanted that period to be as short as possible, after which we would move to some interim administration authorised by the UN Security Council.

“It was clear, I think, on the eve of the invasion that we weren’t going to have a UN-run interim administration, but an interim administration authorised by the Security Council was going to be good enough for us. And that would begin the process of reform and reconstruction in Iraq and, at the same time, we would have the UN involved in a political process in parallel that would lead to some kind of convention or conference that would enable a new constitution to emerge and elections on the basis of the new constitution, whereupon with a new Iraqi Government, we could hand over power completely to the new Iraqi Government. And that coalition security forces would be needed for as long as the new Iraqi Government wanted them.”<sup>504</sup>

## The invasion

**1174.** The transition from conflict (Phase III) to post-conflict (Phase IV) military operations began immediately Coalition troops started to occupy Iraqi territory.

**1175.** When that transition began the Government had not taken firm decisions on the nature or duration of the UK’s military commitment in post-conflict Iraq or on the extent of the UK AOR. There had been no systematic analysis of the UK’s military or civilian capacity to fulfil its likely obligations in the South in a range of circumstances, including:

- in the prolonged absence of an authorising resolution;
- in the absence of additional Coalition partners;
- in a hostile security environment with low levels of Iraqi consent; and
- over different timescales, in particular the medium and long term.

**1176.** Each of those issues had been identified as a potential risk to UK strategic objectives in Iraq, but no detailed contingency plans or preparations were in place to mitigate those risks.

**1177.** Ministers, officials and the military continued to assume that:

- there would be early agreement on a post-conflict resolution;
- levels of consent would rise steadily across most of Iraq; and

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<sup>504</sup> Public hearing, 8 December 2009, pages 33-35.

- **despite the scale of the undertaking, the international community would succeed in realising the Azores vision for the social, political and economic transformation of Iraq.**

**1178.** Above all, it was assumed that the US, even without a convincing post-conflict plan, could act as guarantor of the UK's objectives in Iraq.

**1179.** Those assumptions shaped continuing discussions about the nature, duration and extent of the UK's post-conflict military and civilian deployment.

**1180.** Two days after the start of the invasion Mr Blair sought further advice from officials on the size of any UK sector, the duration of the UK commitment and the exit strategy.

**1181.** The invasion of Iraq began overnight on 19/20 March 2003. Military operations during the invasion are described in Section 8.

**1182.** Adm Boyce issued the Execute Directive, the order to Lt Gen Reith to implement Op TELIC, on 18 March.<sup>505</sup>

**1183.** Lt Gen Reith was directed to "assume the UK Phase IV AO will be centred on Basra". In line with the military plan approved by Mr Blair on 14 March, the Directive set clear limits on the expansion of the UK AO during the conflict phase of military occupations. It stated that, to "assist the Coalition in a timely and successful Phase III and to help in shaping Phase IV conditions in the UK AO", Lt Gen Reith should exploit no further north than an east-west line running 90km south of al-Kut, ending at a point 50km north-east of al-Amara.

**1184.** The Directive also stated that it was Adm Boyce's "current intent ... that the UK should aim to draw down its deployed force to medium scale within four months of commencing offensive operations".

**1185.** Mr Hoon placed a document setting out the UK's Military Campaign Objectives, approved by Lord Goldsmith, in the Library of the House of Commons on 20 March (see Section 8).<sup>506</sup>

**1186.** The Execute Directive did not refer explicitly to the Military Campaign Objectives, but was consistent with them.

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<sup>505</sup> [Minute CDS to CJO, 18 March 2003, 'Op TELIC: Authorisation for Military Operations in Iraq' attaching Paper CDS, 'Chief of Defence Staff Execute Directive to the Joint Commander for Operation TELIC \(Phases 3 and 4\)'](#).

<sup>506</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 20 March 2003, column 1087.



**1187.** The Military Campaign Objectives defined the overall objective for the military campaign as:

“... to create the conditions in which Iraq disarms in accordance with its obligations under UNSCRs and remains so disarmed in the long term”.<sup>507</sup>

**1188.** In aiming to achieve the objective as swiftly as possible, the military was required to make “every effort ... to minimise civilian casualties and damage to essential economic infrastructure, and to minimise and address adverse humanitarian consequences”.

**1189.** On post-conflict issues, the objectives stated that the UK would “work with the United Nations to lift sanctions affecting the supply of humanitarian and reconstruction goods, and to enable Iraq’s own resources, including oil, to be available to meet the needs of the Iraqi people”, and “help create conditions for a future, stable and law-abiding government of Iraq”.

**1190.** The document stated that the “immediate military priorities” for the Coalition in the wake of hostilities were to:

- a. provide for the security of friendly forces;
- b. contribute to the creation of a secure environment so that normal life can be restored;
- c. work in support of humanitarian organisations to mitigate the consequences of hostilities and, in the absence of such civilian humanitarian capacity, provide relief where it is needed;
- d. work with UNMOVIC/IAEA to rid Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery;
- e. facilitate remedial action where environmental damage has occurred;
- f. enable the reconstruction and recommissioning of essential infrastructure for the political and economic development of Iraq, and the immediate benefit of the Iraqi people; and
- g. lay plans for the reform of Iraq’s security forces.”

**1191.** The end state for Iraq remained as defined in Mr Straw’s Written Ministerial Statement of 7 January (see Section 6.4).

**1192.** In his Address to the Nation on 20 March (see Section 3.8), Mr Blair stated:

“Removing Saddam will be a blessing to the Iraqi people. Four million Iraqis are in exile. 60 percent of the population dependent on food aid. Thousands of children die every year through malnutrition and disease. Hundreds of thousands have been driven from their homes or murdered.

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<sup>507</sup> [Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives, 18 March 2003.](#)

“I hope the Iraqi people hear this message. We are with you. Our enemy is not you, but your barbarous rulers.

“Our commitment to the post-Saddam humanitarian effort will be total. We shall help Iraq move towards democracy. And put the money from Iraqi oil in a UN trust fund so that it benefits Iraq and no-one else.”<sup>508</sup>

## The role of the UN

**1193. Ms Short set out to Mr Annan the need for a central UN role in humanitarian and reconstruction work.**

**1194. Mr Annan emphasised the need to have clarity on US thinking for UN planning to proceed.**

**1195.** Ms Short visited New York and Washington on 19 and 20 March for talks with the UN, US, World Bank and IMF.

**1196.** In New York, Ms Short underlined to Mr Annan and senior UN officials “the political, legal and practical necessity for a central UN role in humanitarian and reconstruction work, and the strong contribution the UK would make to this”.<sup>509</sup> Mr Annan agreed and emphasised the need for clarity on US thinking so planning could proceed.

**1197.** In Washington, Ms Short emphasised to senior officials in USAID, the NSC and the State Department the need for early agreement on a resolution to extend OFF.<sup>510</sup> She also raised the issue of an “omnibus” resolution on post-conflict administration. It was “practically and politically” important to the UK that the UN play a central role in the administration of post-Saddam Hussein Iraq.

**1198.** At the IMF and World Bank, Ms Short was informed that both institutions were well advanced with preparatory work and ready to engage in Iraq as soon as conditions allowed.<sup>511</sup> Ms Short explained that a resolution on OFF would be followed by a resolution to establish an interim authority with the necessary legitimacy to open the door to IMF and World Bank engagement and allow the comprehensive restructuring of Iraq’s economy to begin.

**1199. How the overall cost of reconstruction would be met remained unclear.**

**1200. Ms Short informed the Treasury that reconstruction costs would need to be considered in the longer term, after the completion of an IFI-led needs assessment in Iraq.**

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<sup>508</sup> The National Archives, 20 March 2003, *Prime Minister’s Address to the Nation*.

<sup>509</sup> Telegram 501 UKMIS New York to FCO London, 21 March 2003, ‘Iraq Humanitarian/Reconstruction: Clare Short’s Visit to New York’.

<sup>510</sup> Telegram 370 Washington to FCO London, 21 March 2003, ‘US: Iraq: Ms Short’s Visit’.

<sup>511</sup> Telegram 25 UKDel IMF/IBRD Washington to FCO London, 24 March 2003, ‘IMF/World Bank: Iraq: Visit of Secretary of State for International Development’.

**1201.** On 21 March, Ms Short explained to Mr Boateng that reconstruction costs would need to be considered in the longer term, “once the post-conflict situation is clearer and we have an IFI-led needs assessment”.<sup>512</sup> The aim should be “to have most of the bill paid from the proceeds of sales of Iraqi oil and support from the IFIs”.

**1202.** The time taken to complete the UN/World Bank Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) for Iraq and the implications for UK planning and Iraq’s post-conflict reconstruction are addressed in Section 10.1.

**1203.** On 21 March, Mr Cannon sent Mr Blair a background note for the Ministerial meeting on post-conflict issues scheduled for that afternoon.<sup>513</sup> Mr Cannon summarised the Straw/Hoon position on the scale of the UK’s medium-term military effort:

- that the US be told now that drawdown of the UK military effort to around one-third by the autumn represented the upper limit of the UK contribution;
- that the UK would seek partners for Phase IV, but the MOD and FCO were not optimistic about the prospects for success; and
- that the US planned an Iraq-wide transitional administration and “the possibility of our taking over civil administration in a ‘British sector’ has fallen away”.

**1204.** Mr Cannon attached an FCO paper on areas of agreement and disagreement with the US on a post-conflict resolution. He explained that:

“The Americans want the Coalition to set the IIA up: we think it would have more legitimacy with the UN playing a lead role. The Americans have just shown us a draft SCR enshrining their ideas: we doubt that it will run in the Security Council. The attached FCO paper sets out where we agree and disagree with the Americans: to close the gap it recommends initially that the Foreign Secretary write to Colin Powell ... and if necessary you talk through the basic principles with President Bush.”

**1205.** Mr Cannon also reported that problems with DFID/MOD co-operation on humanitarian operations “appear to be falling away”.

**1206.** Post-conflict co-operation between DFID and the MOD, including reports of friction between military and DFID personnel in the UK AO, is addressed in Section 10.1.

**1207.** After the Ministerial meeting on post-conflict issues on 21 March, Mr Rycroft informed the FCO and the MOD that Mr Blair agreed to the Straw/Hoon recommendations, subject to further urgent advice on the size of any UK sector, the duration of the UK commitment and the exit strategy.<sup>514</sup> Mr Rycroft’s letter was copied to the Treasury, DFID, the Cabinet Office, SIS and Sir Andrew Turnbull.

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<sup>512</sup> [Letter Short to Boateng, 21 March 2003, ‘Iraq Humanitarian Funding: Reserve Claim’.](#)

<sup>513</sup> Minute Cannon to Prime Minister, 21 March 2003 [wrongly dated 20 March 2003], ‘Iraq: Post-Conflict Issues’.

<sup>514</sup> [Minute Rycroft to McDonald and Watkins, 21 March 2003, ‘Iraq: UK Military Contribution to Post-Conflict Iraq’.](#)

**1208.** Joint FCO/MOD advice followed on 25 March.

**1209.** At the Ad Hoc Meeting on Iraq on 22 March, Mr Blair requested advice from Mr Straw on the UK's approach to reconstruction "and associated conferences".<sup>515</sup>

**1210. Mr Blair discussed the need for a UN "badge" for post-conflict activity with President Bush on 22 March. He suggested that there should be two separate resolutions: one on OFF, which should proceed quickly; and a second on post-conflict administration to follow.**

**1211.** In a telephone call on 22 March, Mr Blair raised the UN's role with President Bush.<sup>516</sup> Mr Blair said that it was essential to get a UN "badge" for post-conflict efforts and that, while the Coalition did not want to hand over the results of its efforts to the UN, a Security Council resolution on post-conflict administration would help the Coalition get access to UN funding, including from the IFIs.

**1212.** Mr Blair proposed that different parts of the draft resolution should proceed on different timescales; a resolution on OFF should move quickly, with one covering administration after the conflict to follow.

**1213. On 23 March, Mr Blair reassured Ministers that UK and US positions on the role of the UN were not far apart. He believed the US was misreading the implications of UN authorisation.**

**1214.** On 23 March, Mr Blair told the Ad Hoc Meeting on Iraq that, on the draft resolution, "British and American positions were not so far apart".<sup>517</sup> He believed that the US was misreading the implications of what UN authorisation meant and added: "It was more a matter of timing than substance."

**1215. At the UN, Mr Annan told Sir Jeremy Greenstock that he would not want to see an arrangement "subjugating UN activity to Coalition activity".**

**1216. Mr Annan also made it clear, in public, that during any occupation it was the Occupying Power that was responsible for the welfare of the people. Without detracting from those responsibilities, the UN would do whatever it could to help the Iraqi population.**

**1217.** Sir Jeremy Greenstock discussed post-conflict Iraq with Mr Annan on 24 March, in advance of a meeting between Mr Annan and Dr Rice later in the day.<sup>518</sup> Sir Jeremy told Mr Annan that he "assumed that the UN would not want to run Iraq nor its security sector". Mr Annan told him that "Coalition respect for Iraqi sovereignty, territorial integrity

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<sup>515</sup> Minutes, 19 March 2003, Ad Hoc Meeting on Iraq.

<sup>516</sup> Letter Cannon to McDonald, 22 March 2003, 'Iraq: Prime Minister's Conversation with Bush, 22 March: Post-Conflict Issues'.

<sup>517</sup> Minutes, 23 March 2003, Ad Hoc Meeting on Iraq.

<sup>518</sup> Telegram 526 UKMIS New York to FCO London, 25 March 2003, 'Iraq Phase IV: UN Dynamics'.

and political independence would be a precondition for a UN role” and that he “would not wish to see any arrangement subjugating UN activity to Coalition activity”.

**1218.** After meeting Mr Annan, Sir Jeremy spoke to Mr John Negroponte, US Ambassador to the UN, who observed that the focus within the Security Council on “no legitimisation of Coalition military action” might make it impossible to secure its authorisation.<sup>519</sup> Sir Jeremy reminded him that without a resolution there would be no IFI or other international funding for reconstruction and it would be “hard to drum up troop contributors to permit an exit strategy for US/UK forces”.

**1219.** Mr Annan told the press:

“... the proposal before the [Security] Council is we would want to resume our work as soon as possible. And whichever authority is seen in charge at the end of the hostilities, we will work with them. We don’t know what – if it is Iraqis, if it’s somebody else – we will need to find a way of working, but we will be working for the Security Council, in accordance with Security Council resolutions covering the Oil-for-Food ...

“... I have made it clear in my discussion with the Council and publicly, that in times of war, it is the belligerents who are responsible for the welfare and safety of the people. I’ve also indicated that, in any situation under occupation, it is the Occupying Power that has responsibility for the welfare of the people. Without detracting from those responsibilities, the UN will do whatever it can to help the Iraqi population.”<sup>520</sup>

**1220.** Sir Jeremy Greenstock told the Inquiry that Mr Annan managed the tension within the UN between a Secretariat “full of resentment” that the UN had been “bypassed” in the decision to go to war, and Mr Annan’s own view and that of some others, that the UN should not be “absent from its responsibilities” in post-conflict Iraq.<sup>521</sup> Sir Jeremy commented that the Secretariat was “in quite an angry mode”, but “got down to the planning work in quite a responsible way”.<sup>522</sup>

## MOD update on Phase IV planning

**1221.** Lt Gen Reith warned the Chiefs of Staff on 21 March that there were already signs that pre-conflict assumptions about the nature and duration of the conflict had been wrong, with implications for Phase IV planning.

**1222.** Lt Gen Reith advised that the Coalition “must be prepared” for high, medium and low levels of consent.

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<sup>519</sup> Telegram 526 UKMIS New York to FCO London, 25 March 2003, ‘Iraq Phase IV: UN Dynamics’.

<sup>520</sup> UN News Centre, 24 March 2003, *Remarks by the Secretary-General upon arrival at Headquarters (unofficial transcript)*.

<sup>521</sup> Public hearing, 15 December 2009, pages 8-9.

<sup>522</sup> Public hearing, 15 December 2009, page 21.

**1223.** Lt Gen Reith produced an update on Phase IV planning for the Chiefs of Staff on 21 March.<sup>523</sup> He warned that Phase IV delivery remained subject to “uncertain US dynamics at the pol/mil [politico-military] level”. US planning continued, but was “primarily bottom-up”, and CFLCC was still seeking guidance on key issues including governance, payment of salaries and “regeneration” of the military.

**1224.** Lt Gen Reith advised that there were already signs that previous assumptions about the nature and duration of the conflict might have been wrong. Phase IV(a) now looked likely to be far shorter than previously expected, while the arrival of other Coalition partners and NGOs looked like taking longer. All this added pressure. The paper listed a number of issues needing resolution, pointing out that some were already well known. They included: the system of governance under Phase IV(b); how to approach SSR; provision of salaries to Iraqis; and how to engage with the Iraqi military and judiciary.

**1225.** On “military realities”, Lt Gen Reith stated that: “The Coalition must be prepared for high/medium/low consent and variations thereof in time and space, including asymmetric attack and intra-factional violence.” “How to deal with non-compliance” was listed as one of the “key issues requiring resolution”.

**1226.** In a second paper, Lt Gen Reith updated the Chiefs of Staff on humanitarian assistance.<sup>524</sup> USAID had led the development of the CMOC/DART structure to provide immediate relief as Coalition forces advanced. UK forces would draw primarily on the US DART, but had developed national contingency plans in case demand outstripped supply, including funding for QIPs and DFID-funded medical supplies.

**1227. On 24 March, Treasury officials advised Mr Brown that:**

- **The Chiefs of Staff considered a medium scale deployment of 10,000-15,000 to be the most the UK could sustain in the medium term without lasting damage to the UK’s forces.**
- **It was unlikely, except in the most benign post-conflict scenario, that the maximum envisaged UK force would be able to deal with all the challenges on its own.**
- **No significant Coalition partners were likely to come forward without an appropriate UN resolution.**
- **Treasury and MOD views differed on the wisdom of taking on a two-star command without “the necessary guarantees”.**

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<sup>523</sup> Minute Reith to COSSEC, 21 March 2003, ‘Phase IV Planning – Taking Stock’.

<sup>524</sup> Minute Reith to PSO/CDS, 21 March 2003, ‘Humanitarian Assistance for Iraq’.

**1228.** Mr Dodds sent advice on the Straw/Hoon joint minute to Mr Brown on 24 March.<sup>525</sup>

**1229.** Mr Dodds reported that the picture looked “rather different to that presented in the correspondence”:

“The Defence Chiefs say that a ‘medium size’ deployment (ie 10,000-15,000) is the most we could sustain in the medium term without lasting damage to our forces. MOD officials tell us they had intended the submission [the joint minute] to pose the question ‘do you want us to do as much as we can (ie this medium size deployment) or as little as we can get away with (ie less)?’ The question is not posed in that form and hence is not answered. **The choice is essentially political, but it is essential to note that the cost of a deployment on this medium scale is about £1bn a year.**”

**1230.** Mr Dodds reported that the concept of sectors in US military planning had moved on:

“The plan now appears to have four ‘two-star commands (ie divisions)’ outside of Baghdad, focusing more flexibly on the tasks that need to be done, rather than being tied down to specific narrow locations.

“The MOD ambition is to have a UK-led ‘two-star command’. However:

- the scale of military effort needed will depend on the permissiveness of the environment ... and the relationship between the military and civil powers;
- it is unlikely, except in the most benign scenario, that the maximum envisaged size of UK force would be able to deal with all the challenges ... on its own;
- without an appropriate UN resolution to legitimise the aftermath, MOD believe it unlikely that any significant Coalition partners will come forward to share our burden ...”

**1231.** Mr Dodds commented that, in that context, Mr Blair’s questions of 21 March about the size of the UK sector, the duration of the UK commitment and the exit strategy were “excellent questions”, but could not be answered easily. More relevant was:

“... how to ensure a permissive environment as quickly as possible, and how to maximise the number of militarily-capable Coalition partners to share our burden.

“And given past experience, while going all out for a suitable resolution, it would be wise to ask what our Plan B would be if we couldn’t get one. MOD currently don’t have an answer to that!”

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<sup>525</sup> [Minute Dodds to Chancellor, 24 March 2003, ‘Iraq: UK Military Contribution to Post-Conflict Iraq’.](#)

**1232.** Mr Dodds recommended that the UK:

- should continue to emphasise to the US that a further UN resolution was vital;
- should stress to the US that UK military capability was stretched to the limit; and
- should not be too ready to take on a two-star command in the aftermath without “the necessary guarantees”. It carried the risk of costs “we cannot afford both militarily and financially”. This was an issue on which the Treasury disagreed with the MOD. Mr Brown’s input “could be invaluable”.

**1233.** Mr Dodds advised that Mr Brown might have a view on “whether to press for a smaller commitment than the £1bn ‘medium’ scale deployment that MOD/FCO have offered”.

**1234.** Mr Dodds explained that the Treasury was feeding those thoughts into FCO papers for Mr Blair’s meeting with President Bush at Camp David on 26 and 27 March. He concluded that it would be useful if Mr Brown could “make an input” at Cabinet (see Section 10.1).

### **Draft UK post-conflict objectives**

**1235.** The FCO response to Mr Blair’s request of 21 March for further advice on the narrow question of the UK military contribution to post-conflict Iraq continued the pre-invasion pattern of analysis and advice that separated military from civilian concerns.

**1236.** The FCO advice, which reflected Treasury concerns and had been agreed with the MOD, warned of the substantial risk that, without a resolution, the UK “would become trapped” into a higher level of commitment than planned.

**1237.** The FCO advised that it would not be possible to decide on the size of a UK military sector before establishing the nature of the task and the scale of the Coalition resources available.

**1238.** The FCO did not address the relationship between the size of a military sector and the wider contingent liabilities, including the impact on potential UK civilian responsibility for administration and reconstruction.

**1239.** On 25 March, the FCO sent its response to Mr Blair’s request for further advice on the size of any UK sector, the duration of the UK commitment and the exit strategy.<sup>526</sup>

**1240.** The FCO advice, agreed with the MOD and copied to DFID and the Treasury, emphasised the risk of “serious long term damage to the Armed Forces” if the UK commitment was not reduced to a third of existing levels by the autumn, but stated that it

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<sup>526</sup> Letter Owen to Rycroft, 25 March 2003, ‘Iraq: UK Military Contribution to Post-Conflict Iraq’.



was not possible to answer Mr Blair's questions definitively. Reducing troop numbers by the autumn and devising an exit strategy depended on a number of factors:

- the outcome of the military campaign;
- the attitudes of the US and the Iraqi people;
- negotiation of an authorising resolution;
- the ability to build a broader Coalition; and
- success in achieving Coalition objectives for Iraq.

**1241.** The FCO warned:

“There is therefore a substantial risk that if we fail to obtain a UNSCR, we will not be able to build the Coalition under overall US leadership. We would become trapped into maintaining a higher level of commitment for longer, with all that this would mean in terms of cost and for the long-term health of the Armed Forces.”

**1242.** On the size of the UK sector, the FCO expanded on the advice in the Straw/Hoon joint minute:

“... we need to determine in the first instance the nature of the military task, and make an assessment of the UK and other Coalition resources likely to be available. Only then can we answer the question about geographical coverage. If the task is to promote a secure environment, the size of the area will depend on the number of troops that are available and the attitude of the Iraqis. The expectation is that Basra, and the area around it, linked to existing administrative boundaries, should be the focus. Plans need to remain flexible until we are able to define the task and confirm the attitude of the population. US thinking appears to have moved away from too early definition of 'sectors' for exactly the reasons explained above.”

**1243.** The Inquiry has seen no response from No.10.

**1244.** The Cabinet Office sent draft UK post-conflict objectives to senior officials in the FCO, the MOD and DFID on 25 March.

**1245.** The draft objectives were to be shown to Ministers before being submitted for formal approval.

**1246.** The objectives restated a familiar list of broad UK aspirations for the future of Iraq that had been under discussion since late 2002.

**1247.** There is no indication whether the objectives were ever adopted formally.

**1248.** Mr Bowen sent draft 'British Post-Conflict Objectives' to senior officials in the FCO, the MOD and DFID on 25 March.<sup>527</sup> The draft incorporated earlier comments from some departments.

**1249.** The draft stated that it remained the UK's wish to see Iraq:

"... become a stable, united and law abiding state, within its present borders, co-operating with the international community, no longer posing a threat to its neighbours or to international security, abiding by all its international obligations and providing effective and representative government to its own people."

It added:

"Our objective is to create conditions for a future Iraqi government which will act to make this aspiration a reality. We will work with the Iraqi people, the UN and other international organisations, and the wider international community to this end."

**1250.** The draft also stated:

"British forces will continue to contribute, for no longer than is necessary at a sustainable level, to the US-led Coalition military presence in the interests of promoting a secure environment in Iraq ...

"We have made plans with our international partners to assist the Iraqi people in the process of transition. With others, we will assist in the return to full Iraqi sovereignty ...

"With others, we will help revive the Iraqi economy and assist reform by:

- a. working with the UN to manage Iraq's oil revenues in order to achieve the maximum benefit for the Iraqi people in an accountable and transparent manner;
- b. supporting an international programme for the reconstruction and repair of Iraq's infrastructure ...;
- c. fostering economic reform ...;
- d. agreeing a comprehensive financial framework of transitional support for Iraq ...;
- e. helping reform Iraq's public administration ...;
- f. supporting the observance of human rights, and legal and judicial reform ...;
- g. helping Iraq generate reformed and accountable security forces acting in accordance with international human rights standards."

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<sup>527</sup> [Letter Bowen to Chaplin, 25 March 2003, 'Iraq: Post Conflict Objectives' attaching Paper \[draft\], 25 March 2003, 'Iraq: British Post-Conflict Objectives'.](#)

**1251.** Mr Bowen suggested that officials should show the draft paper to their Ministers, if they had not already done so: “We will then see the outcome of the Prime Ministerial visit to Camp David and consider formal submission early next week.”

**1252.** There is no indication whether the objectives were ever adopted formally.

**1253. Officials expressed concern about the absence of an Iraqi perspective in UK and Coalition planning.**

**1254.** Mr Lee expressed concern to MOD colleagues about the apparent absence of any Iraqi perspective in the objective-setting process:

“I get no sense in anything we’re doing of an Iraqi input. (State Dept in Washington have had a large ‘Future of Iraq’ project going for some time addressing exactly this point – but it seems to have dropped off the table).”<sup>528</sup>

**1255.** Dr Robert Wilson, an FCO Research Analyst, commented on the failure to engage with Iraqis as the invasion began in a minute to Mr Chilcott on 27 March:

“A point that is being made with increasing force by members of the Iraqi community is that the Coalition is failing to engage them in the process of their liberation ...

“Several people have made the point to me that we need to get Iraqis visibly involved on the side of the Coalition, and in whatever way is possible establish a sense of partnership between the Coalition and the Iraqi population. If we do not do so, we may find that we are dealing not with a jubilant population but one that says, ‘OK, you’ve got rid of Saddam. Now what?’ ...

“The sense of a lack of partnership is unfortunately strengthened by our own focus on the humanitarian side – handing out food, bringing in ‘aid’. Iraqis are proud and don’t feel they need aid or handouts ...”<sup>529</sup>

**1256.** The Inquiry has seen no response either to Mr Lee or to Dr Wilson.

**1257. The first detailed military planning papers for Phase IV were presented to the Chiefs of Staff on 25 March.**

**1258.** On 25 March, Mr Watkins reported to No.10 that: “Southern Iraq is effectively under Coalition control although significant resistance remains in Basra.”<sup>530</sup>

**1259.** The same day, Lt Gen Reith presented the Chiefs of Staff with a draft Operational Concept and draft planning guidance for Phase IV.

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<sup>528</sup> [Minute Lee to Policy Director, 24 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Camp David Meeting’.](#)

<sup>529</sup> [Minute Wilson to Chilcott, 27 March 2003, ‘Failure to Engage with the Iraqis’.](#)

<sup>530</sup> Letter Watkins to Rycroft, 25 March 2003, ‘Prime Minister’s visit to Washington. Iraq: Review of the Military Situation’.

**1260.** Discussion of the two documents and the emergence of the UK AOR in southern Iraq are addressed in Section 8.

### **Mr Blair's meeting with President Bush, Camp David, 26 and 27 March 2003**

**1261.** In advance of the meeting between Mr Blair and President Bush at Camp David on 26 and 27 March, Mr Straw's Private Office sent Mr Rycroft a negotiating brief for what was to become resolution 1483, the resolution defining the roles of the UN and the Coalition in post-conflict Iraq.<sup>531</sup>

**1262.** The negotiating brief, prepared by the IPU, described what was known about the "first few weeks" after the combat phases of the military campaign:

"Immediately after the conflict, the Coalition will be in control of Iraq.

"As soon as it is safe to do so, Jay Garner and his Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) will arrive behind the military and become a transitional administration. Their aim will be to work with the existing Iraqi public administration, so far as possible. Garner will then take forward the reconstruction process. His people will be inserted into the top of the Iraqi ministries, with senior US officials being assigned to each ministry as 'shadow ministers' ...

"ORHA is understaffed and began preparing for its task only a few weeks ago. There are now some ten or so UK secondees embedded in it. Garner would like to be out of Iraq within 90-120 days. Whether ORHA will be able to get any reform programme started in that time is moot. This period is likely to be dominated by humanitarian and security concerns."

**1263.** The IPU advised that ORHA and the Coalition might enjoy a "brief honeymoon", but not if the Coalition seemed set on administering Iraq for more than a brief period. It was therefore necessary to put in place interim arrangements for post-conflict administration that would be accepted by the Iraqi people and the Arab and Islamic world.

**1264.** A resolution was required to authorise those interim arrangements, and to provide a legal basis for "reconstruction and reform":

"Without a UNSCR, other countries, international organisations, the IFIs, UN agencies and NGOs will be comparatively limited in what they can do ... That would leave US/UK with no viable exit strategy from Iraq and a huge bill."

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<sup>531</sup> [Letter Owen to Rycroft, 25 March 2003, 'Prime Minister's visit to Washington: Iraq: UN Security Council Resolution on Phase IV' attaching Paper Iraq Planning Unit, 25 March 2003, 'Iraq: Phase IV: Authorising UNSCR'.](#)

**1265.** The IPU stated that the task for Camp David was to build on five areas where there was already agreement between the UK and US:

- The Coalition, through ORHA, would be responsible for the administration of Iraq for the first few weeks.
- The UN should not be asked to run Iraq.
- The objective should be Security Council authorisation or endorsement for an international presence that would include the UN.
- Coalition, not UN, troops would provide security on the ground.
- As soon as possible, Iraq should govern itself.

**1266.** The differences between the UK and US positions remained significant. The IPU explained that the US approach amounted to:

“... asking the UNSC to endorse Coalition military control over Iraq’s transitional administration, its representative institutions and its revenues until such time as a fully-fledged Iraqi government is ready to take over. It would marginalise the role of a UN Special Co-ordinator. These ideas are a non-starter for the Security Council, would be denounced by the Iraqis and the wider Arab/Islamic world, and would not provide the stability needed to develop the new Iraq.”

**1267.** The brief stated that there was “still some distance to go if we are to agree a way forward to avoid an inchoate start to Phase IV”.

**1268.** The IPU set out a number of “propositions” which it hoped Mr Blair and President Bush could agree. Those propositions and the progress of the negotiations on resolution 1483 are addressed in Section 9.1.

**1269.** Mr Straw sent Mr Blair an FCO paper on Phase IV issues in advance of Camp David.<sup>532</sup> Mr Straw said that he hoped Mr Blair would counter any tendency by President Bush to conclude that the UN had failed over Iraq:

“... the US will need to go on working through the UN, both to authorise the post-conflict work in Iraq so that a wide range of countries can join the peacekeeping and reconstruction effort, and to provide an exit strategy for the US/UK and because the UN itself and its agencies have important expertise to offer”.

**1270.** The FCO paper on Phase IV issues stated that, in addition to US agreement on a UN resolution, the UK needed US agreement on a number of other important political, humanitarian and economic issues, including:

- A Baghdad conference. The US was still thinking of a Coalition conference with the UN in a supporting role. That was the wrong way round for international acceptability.

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<sup>532</sup> Minute Straw to Blair, 25 March 2003, ‘Camp David: Post-Iraq Policies’.

- The role of the IIA. An early statement of intent to hand over power to an IIA while helping the Iraqi people to build a democratic future “should go down well”. The UN Special Co-ordinator should have veto power over the IIA’s decisions.
- Humanitarian issues. UK and US efforts were substantial: “we should play them up in the media”.
- Economic issues. After several wars and 12 years of sanctions, Iraq’s oil revenues alone would not meet the “very heavy” cost of reconstruction, particularly in the short term. “We need to share the burden with other developed countries ... But contacts with them tell us they will make **their contribution conditional on there being an authorising UNSC resolution for Phase IV.**” The World Bank would need to prepare a rigorous needs assessment, but that too would probably need UN cover.<sup>533</sup>

**1271.** On the UK’s bilateral effort, the paper stated that Ms Short was considering where the UK might help with the longer-term contribution to “reform and reconstruction”. SSR and reform of the public administration were two areas where the UK had a comparative advantage. UK public finances were “tight”. If the UK was to keep armed forces in Iraq, “the scope for a major effort on reform and reconstruction will be limited”.

**1272.** The paper stated that the UK’s Armed Forces were fully stretched and would need to scale down to about a third of current levels by the autumn. President Bush would have similar concerns:

“So **we both need an exit strategy**. The key to that will be to get new Coalition partners, **which needs an authorising UNSCR**. US/UK officials are working up a lobbying strategy. But we must be realistic. The number of countries who have real capability to offer is small.”

**1273.** Efforts to secure additional Coalition partners are addressed in Sections 8 and 10.1.

**1274. Mr Blair discussed post-conflict issues with President Bush at Camp David on 26 and 27 March.**

**1275. Mr Blair recommended postponing the debate about what sort of post-conflict resolution was required until victory was secured and the UK and US were in a position of strength.**

**1276.** Mr Blair and President Bush met at Camp David on 26 and 27 March. The meeting is addressed in more detail in Section 9.1.

**1277.** At dinner on the first evening, Mr Blair told President Bush that he did not want his visit to Camp David to focus primarily on a UN resolution to deal with post-conflict

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<sup>533</sup> [Paper FCO, 25 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Phase IV Issues’.](#)

Iraq. The question about what sort of resolution was needed for the administration and reconstruction of Iraq should be parked. Mr Blair said that:

“The time to debate this would come when we had secured victory, and were in a position of strength.”<sup>534</sup>

**1278.** Mr Blair raised Phase IV issues with President Bush the next day. They discussed the need to push for a quick agreement on the resolution to continue the OFF programme, and for a separate resolution that would free up financial and troop contributions from other nations, secure World Bank and IMF involvement and put reconstruction on the right footing.<sup>535</sup>

**1279.** Mr Rycroft recorded that Mr Blair had identified the main issue as whether the UN formed the future Iraqi government or whether the Coalition did so with UN endorsement, but had said that “it was not helpful to expose this distinction yet”.

**1280.** After returning to the UK, Mr Blair told the Ad Hoc Meeting on Iraq that in relation to the post-conflict administration of Iraq, “quiet and effective diplomacy” was the tactic to achieve a new resolution.<sup>536</sup>

**1281.** The process leading to the adoption of resolution 1483 in May 2003 is addressed in Section 9.1.

**1282. Ms Short told DFID officials on 26 March that Mr Blair had given her responsibility for reconstruction in Iraq.**

**1283.** Ms Short held a meeting with key DFID officials on 26 March at which she stated: “The important thing was for the world to know that a resolution for a UN mandate was coming.”<sup>537</sup>

**1284.** At the meeting, officials reported a sense in Whitehall that a resolution on reconstruction might not be achieved. Ms Short made clear that “significant engagement” on reconstruction would need a UN resolution. The Attorney General had been clear at Mr Blair’s meeting that morning that, under the Geneva and Hague Conventions, no changes could be made to the administration by the Occupying Powers, except to keep systems working for civilians. Ms Short asked her office to request that the Attorney General’s advice be committed to paper.

**1285.** Ms Short reported that “the Prime Minister had given her responsibility for reconstruction in Iraq”. She stated that her role should be underpinned by a Cabinet Office Committee chaired by Mr Chakrabarti, adding: “This area was our lead in

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<sup>534</sup> Letter Manning to McDonald, 28 March 2003, ‘Prime Minister’s Meeting with President Bush at Camp David: Dinner on 26 March’.

<sup>535</sup> Letter Rycroft to McDonald, 27 March 2003, ‘Prime Minister’s Meeting with President Bush at Camp David: Iraq Phase IV’.

<sup>536</sup> Minutes, 28 March 2003, Ad Hoc Meeting on Iraq.

<sup>537</sup> Minute Warren to Fernie, 26 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Meeting with Secretary of State’.

Whitehall and we needed to ensure that this was recognised.” Mr Chakrabarti reported that he had already spoken to Sir Andrew Turnbull and Mr O’Donnell about the issue.

**1286.** Ministerial responsibility for post-conflict reconstruction is addressed in Section 10.1.

**1287.** DFID produced its first substantive paper on post-conflict reconstruction at the end of March.

**1288.** DFID described the paper to the Cabinet Office as a “work-in-progress” that set out some “preliminary ideas on reconstruction planning”.

**1289.** DFID officials told Ms Short that it would be useful to show No.10 and the Cabinet Office that DFID was not only the natural lead on the UK’s overall approach to rebuilding Iraq, but also had the human resources and experience to dedicate to it.

**1290.** On 27 March, Mr Fernie sent a draft paper on reconstruction planning to Ms Short.<sup>538</sup> She had seen an earlier draft on 20 March. Officials were:

“... now thinking how to take this forward as part of a more comprehensive DFID-led process across Whitehall, looking at the whole range of international activities needed to help Iraq recover from conflict, sanctions and years of misrule”.

**1291.** Mr Fernie explained that the draft had been revised to take account of comments from Ms Short on:

“... getting the multilateral system working to support Iraqi institutions, the importance of sustainable debt and reparations strategy, and focusing on using and developing Iraqi talent rather than bringing in too many international consultants”.

**1292.** Comments had also been received from the FCO, The Treasury and the Cabinet Office. Those centred on:

- “What we would do if there were no UNSCR authorising reconstruction.” Mr Fernie advised that, with the Attorney General’s advice now in writing, “we should stick to our position that without an SCR the UK can only support humanitarian relief and basic civil administration reform to ensure public security”.
- “Setting reconstruction planning within a wider post-conflict context.” Mr Fernie advised that a broader, more strategic paper would be needed.

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<sup>538</sup> [Minute Fernie to Private Secretary/Secretary of State \[DFID\], 27 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Iraq Reconstruction Planning’ attaching Paper DFID, 27 March 2003, ‘Iraq – Reconstruction Planning: Objectives and Approach’.](#)



**1293.** Mr Fernie explained that the paper would be tabled at a Cabinet Office meeting the next day. He added:

“We will discuss the process for the more comprehensive paper tomorrow afternoon – it will be useful to show to No.10 and the Cabinet Office that DFID is not only the natural lead on this approach but also has the human resources and experience to dedicate to it.”

**1294.** On 28 March, Mr Fernie sent the draft to the Cabinet Office as a “work-in-progress” setting out some “preliminary ideas on reconstruction planning”.<sup>539</sup> Mr Fernie explained that the paper benefited from comments offered by FCO, MOD and Cabinet Office officials at a meeting chaired by DFID, which had raised wider issues about how reconstruction fitted with the UK’s overall approach to rebuilding Iraq and securing international consensus behind that approach. DFID’s view was that the UK needed to “start working now on a broader strategy which binds together the many bits of work going on across Whitehall”.

**1295.** The development of DFID’s approach to post-conflict reconstruction is addressed in Section 10.1.

**1296. The extent of the work still to be done on planning and preparing for the range of post-conflict tasks was apparent from a list of issues prepared by the Cabinet Office on 28 March for consideration by the new Ad Hoc Ministerial Group on Iraq Rehabilitation (AHMGIR).**

**1297.** On 28 March, Mr Drummond sent Mr Bowen a list of issues for consideration by the AHMGIR, including, for some items, an assessment of current plans:

- humanitarian assistance;
- role of ORHA: “competence and UK links with and involvement in”;
- wider UN role on reconstruction;
- political process/fate of the Ba’ath Party: “Outline plan exists, not agreed with US”;
- economy: “Good contacts with US”;
- reconstruction of infrastructure: “Depends on damage. Beginning now. Disagreements with US on role of Iraqis”;
- SSR: “Ideas offered to US, but no plan”;
- public administration reform and service delivery: “No plan yet?”;
- commercial opportunities: “Needs wider policy agreement with US”;
- legal issues: “Some contact with US. No firm agreement. No plan”;

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<sup>539</sup> [Letter Fernie to Drummond, 28 March 2003, ‘Iraq Reconstruction Planning’ attaching Paper DFID, 27 March 2003, ‘Iraq – Reconstruction Planning: Objectives and Approach’.](#)

- disarmament: “No agreement with US on extent of involvement of UN inspectors”; and
- re-integrating Iraq into the international community.<sup>540</sup>

## Witness comments

**1298.** A number of witnesses to the Inquiry commented on the efficacy of the UK’s post-conflict planning and preparation. They identified a range of factors shaping the UK approach, including:

- the unpredictability of the situation on the ground;
- the breakdown in US inter-agency co-ordination;
- limits to UK influence on the US;
- optimism bias, including the hope that conflict could be averted and that any problems that arose after the conflict could be resolved;
- separate departmental priorities;
- the absence of a senior figure responsible for post-conflict planning and preparation;
- inadequate planning machinery;
- insufficient analysis of risk; and
- a focus on preparations for humanitarian relief at the expense of wider post-conflict issues.

**1299.** The extent to which those factors, and others, shaped UK planning and preparation is addressed in the conclusion to this Section.

**1300.** Witnesses told the Inquiry that it would not have been possible to predict the exact circumstances on the ground after an invasion, and that advice prepared in government did not predict the circumstances that did arise.

**1301.** In his memoir, Mr Blair wrote:

“... the aftermath was more bloody, more awful, more terrifying than anyone could have imagined. The perils we anticipated did not materialise. The peril we didn’t materialised with a ferocity and evil that even now shocks the senses.”<sup>541</sup>

**1302.** Mr Blair added:

“There has never been, there never will be, a campaign of any nature that does not turn out differently from what is anticipated.

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<sup>540</sup> [Minute Drummond to Bowen, 28 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Reconstruction Agenda’.](#)

<sup>541</sup> Blair T. *A Journey*. Hutchinson, 2010.

“... We were told there would be a functioning Iraqi civil service. There wasn’t. We were told there would be a humanitarian disaster. It was averted. We were warned that Saddam might fight to the bitter end. He collapsed.

“We were told that Shia/Sunni sectarian violence would be a factor. Actually, to begin with it was much less than feared ...”

**1303.** Mr Blair told the Inquiry “there was nothing that was putting us on notice about the problem we ended up with”.<sup>542</sup> Planning took place, but:

“The trouble was we were planning (a) on an assumption that Iraq had a functioning bureaucracy and civil service, which in the end it didn’t, and (b) our focus really was on humanitarian, environmental and the possibility of use of chemical/biological weapons and so on. I mean, I would say there was a significant amount of planning that went on, unfortunately directed at the wrong things.”<sup>543</sup>

**1304.** Mr Straw told the Inquiry:

“... the consequences of war are unpredictable ... it’s an inherently chaotic process. So the possibilities of aftermath of military action are greater than they are for many other human actions ... What was extremely difficult to predict was the exact circumstances on the ground ... [I]f you look at the detailed planning documents we produced and the State Department produced in early 2003 both we and the Americans were predicting all the things that then happened. What we weren’t able to predict was the exact mix of these things. I mean ... yes, there was a prediction about the possibility of terrorism. We didn’t predict its extent ...”<sup>544</sup>

**1305.** Lt Gen Reith, who had extensive experience of working with humanitarian agencies and NGOs during the 1999 Kosovo campaign,<sup>545</sup> told the Inquiry that, on arrival in Iraq, he had been surprised by the state of the country’s infrastructure:

“All of our intelligence assets were looking at the Iraqi forces. What they weren’t looking at was the infrastructure, and ... when we arrived in there, I was amazed ... that it was completely broken ...”<sup>546</sup>

**1306.** Sir John Sawers, British Ambassador to Egypt before becoming the Prime Minister’s Special Representative on Iraq in mid-2003, told the Inquiry:

“Very few observers actually highlighted the scale of the violence that we could face. I think about the only person in my recollection who got it right was President

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<sup>542</sup> Public hearing, 21 January 2011, page 27.

<sup>543</sup> Public hearing, 21 January 2011, pages 122-123.

<sup>544</sup> Public hearing, 2 February 2011, pages 121-122.

<sup>545</sup> Fourteenth Report from the Defence Committee, Session 1999-2000, *Lessons of Kosovo*, HC 347-I, paragraph 222.

<sup>546</sup> Public hearing, 15 January 2010, page 45.

Mubarak<sup>547</sup> who warned of unleashing 100 Bin Ladens. The combination of an undefeated Ba'athist regime melting away and coming back as a gradually more potent insurgency combined with the attractiveness of Iraq as a means for international terrorists under the umbrella of Al Qaida to have a go at the Americans, combined with Shia extremists supported from Iran, this combination creating the level of violence, the onslaught of violence that I have mentioned, this was not thought through by any observer.

“I think had we known the scale of violence, it might well have led to second thoughts about the entire project. And we could certainly have mitigated some aspects of it had we had a clearer appreciation of it in advance ...

“But I don't think it is reasonable to assume that we should have predicted all this violence in advance, because very few people did actually do that. That wasn't the anticipated scenario that we were stepping into and it was an unprecedented scenario that we found ourselves in.”<sup>548</sup>

**1307.** Lord Boyce told the Inquiry that a number of assumptions had been made about the state of Iraq after the invasion, which, with the benefit of hindsight, were “probably optimistic, to say the least”.<sup>549</sup> There had been:

“... an expectation that we would find more of a structure which was ready to step into place than actually turned out to be the case in May [2003], even before the de-Ba'athification and the disbandment of the Iraqi army ...”

**1308. Mr Lee told the Inquiry that the Government had identified many of the problems that emerged later, but failed to analyse the risk they represented.**

**1309.** Mr Lee commented on the UK's failure to build on its own analytical platform:

“I think there is a valid criticism that on the one hand we had identified an awful lot of these problems, and had identified quite explicitly, as I recall, the question of the aftermath as a crucial element of the campaign overall, and the whole concept of a successful campaign and winning including a successful outcome to that ...

“But we didn't actually carry that through ... into an analysis at the time of what the post-conflict plans actually were on the level of uncertainty that remained, and therefore the level of risk that remained, in the plan on those issues ...”<sup>550</sup>

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<sup>547</sup> Mr Hosni Mubarak, President of Egypt from 1981 to 2011.

<sup>548</sup> Public hearing, 16 December 2009, pages 81-82.

<sup>549</sup> Public hearing, 27 January 2011, page 68.

<sup>550</sup> Private hearing, 22 June 2010, pages 46-47.

**1310.** Mr Lee told the Inquiry that the question of whether the post-conflict period carried too much uncertainty to risk embarking on the conflict had never been asked in those terms:

“... however much you intellectually or analytically describe the wider campaign, psychologically the focus is on the conflict itself. A certain amount of ... optimism, hope, creeps in in respect of the aftermath. That will be sorted out, and there are too many things unknown there to do too much more planning. Therefore you go ahead and hope that you’ve got enough of a structure which can then be supplemented by ad hoc arrangements afterwards, and therefore it will all be sorted out.

“I think, as we know, in practice it turned out to be a lot more difficult than we thought at the time.”

**1311. Several witnesses highlighted the breakdown in US inter-agency co-ordination as a significant obstacle to effective planning.**

**1312. Mr Straw described it as “the fundamental problem”.**

**1313.** In his statement, Mr Blair wrote:

“There was interaction at every level between the UK and the US system. Some of that, as evidence to the Inquiry makes clear, was unsatisfactory, due mainly to inter-agency issues in the US. It is correct also that the shift from the State Department to the Department of Defense in January 2003 made a difference. The shortcomings of the US planning have been well documented and accepted. Our own planning was complicated both by the difficulties of being fully inserted into the US system and the fact that the planning was taking place against the backdrop of fast-changing political and military plans.”<sup>551</sup>

**1314.** Mr Straw went further in directly attributing difficulties with UK planning to the situation in the US. He told the Inquiry that “a significant number of the problems we faced ... could have been avoided by better planning and co-ordination, above all in Washington”.<sup>552</sup> The UK “got caught up in internal administration politics”, but that “didn’t become completely clear until after the invasion”.<sup>553</sup>

**1315.** Mr Straw concluded:

“... the fundamental problem ... was not a lack of planning in London ... [but] the breakdown in co-ordination in Washington between the Department of Defense and the State Department”.<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>551</sup> Statement, 14 January 2011, page 14.

<sup>552</sup> Public hearing, 21 January 2010, page 15.

<sup>553</sup> Public hearing, 8 February 2010, page 104.

<sup>554</sup> Public hearing, 8 February 2010, page 107.

**1316.** Sir Peter Ricketts told the Inquiry that the state of US planning had been “one of a number of concerns as the peace process ended and the conflict loomed”.<sup>555</sup> He added:

“I do think, if the careful State Department work had been allowed to feed through into operational planning for the post-conflict phase, that would have been more successful. I think it would have been easier for us to dock with it, and the overall effect on the ground would ... have been a stronger operation from earlier on.”<sup>556</sup>

**1317. A number of witnesses to the Inquiry commented on the difficulty the UK faced in trying to influence the US.**

**1318.** Sir David Manning told the Inquiry that Mr Blair:

“... was insistent throughout that a lot of thought needed to be given to what happened on what has been called ‘the morning after’. He raised that with the President. This was raised by, I think, most British interlocutors with their American interlocutors.

“I don’t think I could say to you that that was a condition in the end when the UN route failed for military action, but it was certainly something that was important to him.”<sup>557</sup>

**1319.** Sir David also told the Inquiry:

“The Prime Minister throughout is very clear that there has to be a clever plan afterwards, the UN have to be involved, and you can’t do this simply as a military operation.

“The second thing he is absolutely insistent ... [on] is the Middle East peace process.

“So I think he is very clear that it isn’t just a military operation, but getting the American machine to respond to this proves to be enormously difficult.”<sup>558</sup>

**1320.** Sir David added:

“I don’t know whether the Prime Minister discussed a blueprint for Iraq – I don’t think he did, I don’t recall it – with the President. He might have done in his private conversations. But insisting that they had to think about what came next, insisting on the importance of having the UN in there, he was very clear about that. And I suppose the fact that the Americans were doing a lot of planning for Iraq was a reassurance to him.”<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>555</sup> Public hearing, 1 December 2009, pages 59-60.

<sup>556</sup> Public hearing, 1 December 2009, page 92.

<sup>557</sup> Public hearing, 30 November 2009, page 41.

<sup>558</sup> Private hearing, 24 June 2010, pages 42-43.

<sup>559</sup> Private hearing, 24 June 2010, page 58.

**1321.** Asked at what stage the UK would have needed to exert its influence in Washington for post-conflict planning to have been more effective, Sir Christopher Meyer told the Inquiry: “if the Americans had their act together in September/October [2002], and we did likewise, then you could have done it”.<sup>560</sup>

**1322.** Mr Chaplin stated that Ministers “constantly stressed to their American opposite numbers the need for proper aftermath planning”, but the US was “obviously going to be the greater partner of this enterprise and we were going to be the junior partner”.<sup>561</sup>

**1323.** Mr Chaplin added:

“The message ... we constantly got from the American side, particularly those that were frustrated with the lack of planning, as they saw it, was, ‘Please, could we make this clearer at a higher level in the US administration?’ Colin Powell didn’t need to be convinced, but President Bush and Donald Rumsfeld did.”

**1324.** Mr Chaplin explained that the UK response had been “to keep feeding in the ideas of what we thought was the sensible way ahead on the issues” and to provide “people to sit alongside the US opposite numbers, in particular, General Tim Cross”.

**1325.** In his statement to the Inquiry, Maj Gen Cross suggested that UK efforts to exert influence on US thinking achieved little: “I got no sense of UK pressure on the US; no ‘demands’ for clarity over the intended ‘End State’ or the planning to achieve it.”<sup>562</sup>

**1326.** Maj Gen Cross provided an example of his own difficulties in influencing US thinking during his time in Washington in February and March 2003.<sup>563</sup> At a lunch with Secretary Rumsfeld and others, he had challenged the assumption that the overthrow of Saddam Hussein would be greeted with such relief in Iraq that the US would be able to move on quickly:

“I argued that this was, perhaps, fine as a Plan ‘A’ – but what was desperately needed was a Plan ‘B’ and a Plan ‘C’, and a recognition that what would probably emerge would be an amalgam of the last two. It was made clear that my views were not welcomed.”

**1327.** Mr Chilcott told the Inquiry: “we could have any number of variations of our own plan, but what mattered was influencing the American plan, and that was where our main effort was concentrated”.<sup>564</sup>

**1328. FCO witnesses spoke of the difficulty of working for a negotiated settlement while preparing for conflict.**

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<sup>560</sup> Public hearing, 26 November 2009, page 96.

<sup>561</sup> Public hearing, 1 December 2009, pages 58-59.

<sup>562</sup> Statement, 2009, page 10.

<sup>563</sup> Statement, 2009, page 14.

<sup>564</sup> Public hearing, 8 December 2009, page 19.

**1329.** Asked by the Inquiry whether the FCO had been slow to recognise the inevitability of conflict and whether, as a result, it had been too late to make full preparations for what was going to happen, Lord Jay responded:

“I think there are two points there ... There is, was it our judgment that, whatever happened, the Americans were likely to go to war in Iraq and, secondly, if they did, was it inevitable that we should join them?”

“On the first point ... I would not put it as inevitable. I think I would say it was ... certainly towards the end of 2002 quite difficult to see the scenario in which the Americans would conclude that they would not try to seek Saddam Hussein by force. I don’t think it was inevitable. It was always possible that Saddam Hussein could go ... That would clearly have been preferable.

“I would never say that conflict was inevitable. I would say that, from the end of 2002 onwards, it was probable. There was a separate question as to whether Britain would take part in that. When one looks back on it now, with all that has been said since then, the inevitability of Britain taking part seems much greater than it did at the time. It did not seem clear at the end of 2002 and the beginning of 2003 ... it did not seem clear to us in the Foreign Office, that a British participation in the conflict was inevitable. There was an option not to take part in it.”<sup>565</sup>

**1330.** Lord Jay suggested that it was “an extremely difficult thing to do in the minds of the same people, to try to prevent something happening and to prepare for that failure and I don’t think we had the structures available to us to do that”.

**1331.** Sir Peter Ricketts told the Inquiry:

“All along, right through to the eve of the second resolution, I thought it was possible, perhaps not likely, but possible, that Saddam Hussein would choose, rather than face overwhelming military force, to co-operate and comply. So it was never for sure that the UK would be part of military operations or even really that military operations were inevitable. I always thought there was another option.”<sup>566</sup>

**1332.** On the role of the UN, Sir Peter stated:

“In Kosovo, we had had a UN-led transitional administration, building on existing structures there. In Afghanistan, we had had a very strong UN presence led by Mr Brahimi,<sup>567</sup> supporting a Loya Jirga, and then a domestic process, and so we approached it in the same frame of mind, that the UN had real experience in dealing

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<sup>565</sup> Public hearing, 30 June 2010, pages 69-71.

<sup>566</sup> Public hearing, 1 December 2009, page 25.

<sup>567</sup> Mr Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan from 2001 to 2004 and Chairman of the Bonn Conference.



with post-conflict situations, a unique legitimacy in doing so and that was our preferred route.”<sup>568</sup>

**1333.** Sir Peter added that the FCO was:

“... very doubtful indeed about the neo-con assumption that international forces would be welcomed as liberators and ... that somehow very quickly Iraqi political life would resume and the occupying forces would not carry these responsibilities ... We warned Ministers that this would be a long period of post-conflict work for the international community, which is why we then said that we thought it was important that, if possible, the UN should take on the lead.”<sup>569</sup>

**1334.** Mr Chilcott commented that, in the IPU:

“... because it was contingency planning, because right up until the last moment we didn’t know for sure that we were going to be involved in the military action, that maybe psychologically had an effect on us ...”<sup>570</sup>

**1335. Witnesses commented on the responsibilities and priorities of different departments.**

**1336.** Ms Short stated that DFID “got down to planning against all eventualities within the difficult atmosphere we had in Whitehall about communications”.<sup>571</sup> The principal planning failure had been the UK and US military’s failure to plan for “catastrophic success”.<sup>572</sup> Rapid military success followed by ethnic conflict had been foreseen as a risk, but the military “didn’t prepare for their Geneva Convention obligations” of keeping order and providing basic humanitarian relief.<sup>573</sup>

**1337.** Sir Suma Chakrabarti saw the FCO as the natural lead department for post-conflict issues.<sup>574</sup> He commented that the FCO was “more focused on the second resolution than planning for the day after ... There was a vision for Iraq that I think the Foreign Office put together ... So there was thinking going on, but, yes, second resolution was the main issue in their minds, no doubt.”

**1338.** Lord Jay told the Inquiry that “the FCO and DFID were not on the same page in the lead-up to the war ... because ... there were differences between our Ministers on the desirability and the likelihood of war ... What we were faced with ... was not something which DFID had been geared up to do or Clare Short found comfortable.”<sup>575</sup>

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<sup>568</sup> Public hearing, 1 December 2009, page 30.

<sup>569</sup> Public hearing, 1 December 2009, page 65.

<sup>570</sup> Public hearing, 8 December 2009, pages 47-48.

<sup>571</sup> Public hearing, 2 February 2010, page 48.

<sup>572</sup> Public hearing, 2 February 2010, page 46.

<sup>573</sup> Public hearing, 2 February 2010, page 47.

<sup>574</sup> Public hearing, 8 December 2009, page 55.

<sup>575</sup> Public hearing, 30 June 2010, page 72.

**1339.** Sir Kevin Tebbit told the Inquiry that “the so-called comprehensive concept did exist in Whitehall, the idea that we needed to have integrated planning to bring all the instruments of government to bear on the issue ... and we certainly had transparency”, but argued that this was very difficult to achieve quickly across different departmental cultures.<sup>576</sup>

**1340.** Sir Kevin added: “I always felt that we could not quite get other departments to share the urgency that we felt in the Ministry of Defence in terms of their own planning with us.”

**1341.** Lord Boyce told the Inquiry that the MOD did not consider that it was its role to take the lead on post-conflict issues: “It was something that possibly should have been done by the Foreign Office or even DFID.”<sup>577</sup>

**1342. Witnesses offered differing views on whether the Government’s performance would have been improved by the appointment of a senior individual responsible for directing post-conflict planning or the earlier introduction of better planning machinery.**

**1343.** Asked by the Inquiry whether UK planning could have been better, Mr Blair stated:

“I do accept that, yes ... If we were sitting down today, now, if we were in a situation of nation-building again, I think there are changes in our approach that certainly should be done ...

“I think ... the real issue is what you focus on less than the structure; in other words, you could say that we should have had one Minister focusing on the pre-planning, but I would debate that actually, but you may conclude that ... The core of the problem was the focus of what that planning was.”<sup>578</sup>

**1344.** Lord Turnbull shared Mr Blair’s view that the absence of Ministerial oversight was not necessarily the “real issue”.<sup>579</sup> Asked about the absence of an individual or body with overall responsibility for planning, he argued that, although there was no “single controlling mind” and co-ordination should have been better, this was “not material to the outcome”.

**1345.** Sir Suma Chakrabarti took a different view. He told the Inquiry:

“... it would have been better to have had the IPU earlier, firstly, and, secondly, probably a Minister, preferably of Cabinet rank ... who was ... the overlord Minister for this, either in the Cabinet Office or in the Foreign Office ... because this was a

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<sup>576</sup> Public hearing, 3 December 2009, pages 116-117.

<sup>577</sup> Public hearing, 27 January 2008, page 68.

<sup>578</sup> Public hearing, 21 January 2011, pages 130-131.

<sup>579</sup> Public hearing, 25 January 2011, pages 55-56.

top priority for the British Government and various trade-offs had to be made and someone had to make them on a day-to-day basis for the Prime Minister.”<sup>580</sup>

**1346.** Mr Chilcott warned against being “dazzled” by the IPU’s late creation: “a lot of the work that the IPU was able to bring together in a more intense atmosphere had been going on for some time”.<sup>581</sup> But he did accept that the IPU could have been set up sooner:

“... one of the lessons is obviously you can’t begin this sort of thinking too early, and although we did begin serious thinking about the day after in the preceding October ... we could have created the IPU earlier. We could have had a greater sense of the reality of what we were doing.”<sup>582</sup>

**1347. A number of witnesses commented on the Government’s focus on humanitarian preparations at the expense of other post-conflict issues.**

**1348.** In his statement to the Inquiry, Mr Blair wrote:

“The over-riding concern was the humanitarian fall-out from conflict, together with the potential damage, from firing oil wells to the environment and WMD attacks.”<sup>583</sup>

**1349.** Mr Straw told the Inquiry:

“... we had anticipated the problem of a humanitarian crisis sufficiently well that, on the whole, we were able to avoid that, which was good. What we had not anticipated was the extent of the inefficacy of ORHA ...”<sup>584</sup>

**1350.** Lord Turnbull told the Inquiry that, although the UK prepared for the worst case on the humanitarian front, it failed to anticipate the collapse of civil order: “The real problem was security and we probably spent too much time on humanitarian ... if we didn’t establish security, nothing else counted for anything.”<sup>585</sup>

**1351.** Similarly, Lord Boyce stated:

“First of all, we recognised there could very well be a humanitarian problem ... and a lot of our focus was I think at the humanitarian level rather than the governance of the country, in other words, picking up the point about law and order and so forth ...

“I think that we probably took too narrow a view about what might be required in the aftermath in terms of the governance aspects of life.”<sup>586</sup>

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<sup>580</sup> Public hearing, 8 December 2009, page 56.

<sup>581</sup> Public hearing, 8 December 2009, pages 17-18.

<sup>582</sup> Public hearing, 8 December 2009, pages 47-48.

<sup>583</sup> Statement, 14 January 2011, page 13.

<sup>584</sup> Public hearing, 8 February 2010, page 111.

<sup>585</sup> Public hearing, 13 January 2010, page 39.

<sup>586</sup> Public hearing, 27 January 2011, pages 67-68.

**1352. Witnesses identified a number of lessons, including the need to:**

- **assume the worst;**
- **understand the underlying nature of the society;**
- **seek maximum legitimacy and maximum support; and**
- **identify the resources needed.**

**1353.** In his additional statement to the Inquiry on planning lessons learned, Mr Blair wrote:

“Where military action is to remove the regime of a corrupted and brutal state, assume the worst about its capacity, its governing infrastructure and the integrity of its Government systems. There will be nation-building and governance capacity required to be established over a significant time period ...

“... the challenge confronting any nation when a powerful, all encompassing grip is taken away, is formidable. There are powerful, interacting religious and tribal elements and influences. These are hard to manage. Everything we take for granted in our countries in government, public services, institutions and even private sector has to be built or at a minimum, substantially reformed. We simply do not have the international capacity to do this. It needs to be grown ...

“The planning for any aftermath should go deep into an analysis not only of government and governing structures and the readily available information and data, but into the underlying nature of the society, the impact particularly of the regime’s brutality and corruption on the social and business capital of the country and any cross currents to do with religious, tribal or other affiliation, as they have been affected by the regime ...

“The number and nature of forces required for the aftermath of regime change may be radically different from those required for the removal of the regime, in scale, in type of training, in force posture and deployment. These really are genuinely separate missions and should be treated as such ...”<sup>587</sup>

**1354.** Asked whether more effort should have been put into planning for different post-conflict scenarios, Sir Peter Ricketts told the Inquiry:

“It is always possible to say that one could do more. I think we needed a plan that was sufficiently flexible to respond to any scenario that arose after the conflict.”<sup>588</sup>

**1355.** Mr Chaplin told the Inquiry:

“... the main lesson learned was you have to have a strategy and have a proper plan. You do a lot more preparatory work than was done in this case ... and crucial

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<sup>587</sup> Statement, [undated], ‘The Planning Lessons Learned’, pages 1-6.

<sup>588</sup> Public hearing, 1 December 2009, page 95.

to that is ... contriving circumstances in which you have maximum legitimacy and therefore maximum support ...

“When you have done all that ... you need to identify the resources that are necessary to carry that out.”<sup>589</sup>

## Conclusions

**1356.** Clear warnings were given before the invasion of Iraq about the potential for post-conflict political disintegration and extremist violence, the inadequacy of US post-conflict planning and the risk that, in the absence of UN authorisation, additional international support would not be forthcoming.

**1357.** Despite those warnings, the Government failed to ensure that the UK was adequately prepared for the range of circumstances it might encounter in southern Iraq in the short, medium and long term.

**1358.** The Inquiry does not conclude that better planning and preparation would necessarily have prevented the events that unfolded in Iraq between 2003 and 2009, described in Sections 9 and 10, nor that it would have been possible to prepare for every eventuality. Better plans and preparation, however, could have mitigated some of the risks to which the UK and Iraq were exposed, and increased the likelihood of achieving the outcomes desired by the UK and the Iraqi people.

**1359.** The lessons identified by the Inquiry in relation to both the planning and preparation for post-conflict operations and to post-conflict operations themselves are set out in Section 10.4.

## What was known on the eve of the invasion

**1360.** The evidence described earlier in this Section shows that, although there were large gaps in the information on Saddam Hussein’s Iraq available to the UK Government before the invasion, much was known about the state of the country and the possible impact of military action.

**1361.** The degraded state of Iraq’s infrastructure was recognised by UK analysts in January 2002 and was known to Mr Blair by the end of July 2002.

**1362.** The most comprehensive pre-invasion report on the state of Iraq’s infrastructure was the DIS paper of mid-January 2002, seen by Mr Blair at the end of July 2002.<sup>590</sup> With the exception of road and rail transport, the situation described in the paper was comprehensively bleak. The DIS assessed that Iraq’s theoretical power generation capacity was about 10,000 megawatts (MW), but that the “practical limit” was about 5,000 MW, well below “even the most basic demand”.

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<sup>589</sup> Public hearing, 1 December 2009, page 93.

<sup>590</sup> [Paper DIS, 18 January 2002, ‘Infrastructure Briefing Memorandum: Iraq’.](#)

**1363.** The potential consequences of Iraq's poor infrastructure for post-conflict operations were identified in the 4 September edition of the SPG paper on military strategic thinking, which stated:

“Given fractious nature of Iraqi politics, broad regional concern on nature of new Iraqi government, and poor state of Iraqi infrastructure, delivery of stated post-conflict objectives will require lengthy engagement.”<sup>591</sup>

**1364.** The 30 September edition of the SPG paper stated that Iraqi infrastructure was “poorly maintained by the current regime with damage from the war of 1991 still not repaired”.<sup>592</sup>

**1365.** The FCO paper ‘Models for Administering a Post-Saddam Iraq’, presented to the AHGI on 11 October, stated that administering Iraq would involve restoration of critical infrastructure.<sup>593</sup>

**1366.** The Cabinet Office paper on models for Iraq after Saddam Hussein, sent to Sir David Manning on 1 November, listed priorities facing the transitional military government to be established by the Coalition after the collapse of the Iraqi regime.<sup>594</sup> Those included emergency work on infrastructure involving close co-ordination with civilian development agencies.

**1367. The implications of the fragile state of Iraq's infrastructure for the Iraqi people and for achieving post-conflict objectives were clearly stated in an FCO paper for the AHGI in November 2002 and by Ms Short in Parliament on 30 January 2003.**

**1368.** The FCO paper on economic issues in Iraq, sent to AHGI members on 4 November 2002, described Iraq's economy as “distorted and very badly damaged”.<sup>595</sup> The FCO stated:

“Even if a new conflict produces little additional damage, the combination of neglect and war damage means that large investments in many areas and spread over many years, are needed if infrastructure and services are to recover even to their pre-1990 condition. Getting this process under way will be essential to economic revival, to the alleviation of humanitarian problems and to popular support for a new administration.”

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<sup>591</sup> [Paper \[SPG\], 4 September 2002, ‘UK Military Strategic Thinking on Iraq’.](#)

<sup>592</sup> [Paper \[SPG\], 30 September 2002, ‘UK Military Strategic Thinking on Iraq’.](#)

<sup>593</sup> [Paper FCO, \[undated, version received at AHGI, 11 October 2002\], ‘Models for Administering a Post-Saddam Iraq’.](#)

<sup>594</sup> [Minute Drummond to Manning, 1 November 2002, ‘Iraq: Post-Saddam’ attaching Paper ‘Iraq: Models and some questions for post-Saddam government’.](#)

<sup>595</sup> [Paper FCO, \[undated\], ‘Economic issues in Iraq after post-Saddam regime change: internal policy and external engagement’.](#)

**1369.** Ms Short told the House of Commons on 30 January 2003 that Iraq's infrastructure was:

“... in chronic disrepair. Hospitals, clinics, sanitation facilities and water treatment plants suffer from a terrible lack of maintenance. The result is that the Iraqi people's lives are perilously fragile. Their coping strategies have worn away by years of misrule. The public facilities to help them cope are run down, often to the point of uselessness.”<sup>596</sup>

**1370. Papers written in the weeks before the invasion and concerned with the military objective of minimising further damage during conflict did not address the risk to Coalition objectives represented by the underlying fragility of Iraq's infrastructure.**

**1371.** Mr Drummond's paper on “winning the peace”, sent to Sir David Manning on 14 February 2003, stated that Coalition Forces could expect to find an Iraq with certain “broad characteristics”, including damage to key infrastructure, but “perhaps less than other conflicts if the campaign is quick”.<sup>597</sup>

**1372.** The Military Campaign Objectives published on 20 March, stated that, in aiming to achieve the objective as swiftly as possible, the military was required to make “every effort ... to minimise civilian casualties and damage to essential economic infrastructure”.<sup>598</sup>

**1373.** The seven immediate military priorities in the aftermath of hostilities listed in the Military Campaign Objectives included: “enable the reconstruction and recommissioning of essential infrastructure for the political and economic development of Iraq, and the immediate benefit of the Iraqi people”.<sup>599</sup>

**1374.** Section 6.2 addresses military planners' efforts to minimise damage to Iraq's infrastructure during conflict.

**1375. UK planners had little information on which to build an assessment of the capabilities of Iraq's civil bureaucracy.**

**1376. The FCO and the SPG recommended further work to address gaps in the UK's knowledge.**

**1377. There is no indication that those gaps were filled.**

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<sup>596</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 30 January 2003, columns 1053-1054.

<sup>597</sup> [Minute Drummond to Manning, 14 February 2003, 'Iraq: Winning the Peace' attaching Paper OD Secretariat, 11 February 2003, 'Iraq: Post Conflict: Key Messages'.](#)

<sup>598</sup> [Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives, 18 March 2003.](#)

<sup>599</sup> [Minute Bowen to Manning, 11 February 2003, 'Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives' attaching Paper Cabinet Office, February 2003, 'Iraq: Military Campaign Objectives'.](#)

**1378.** Because the Ba’ath Party was closely intertwined with Iraq’s bureaucracy, the failure of the US and UK to agree an approach to de-Ba’athification compounded uncertainty about how the bureaucracy might perform after Saddam Hussein’s departure.

**1379.** In January 2002, the DIS stated that the Ba’ath Party, the Iraqi civil bureaucracy and the armed forces were intertwined: “any ‘regime insider’ succeeding Saddam would find the functional roles of the Party indispensable in administering the state and controlling the populace”.<sup>600</sup>

**1380.** The DIS paper was included in Mr Blair’s summer reading pack at the end of July.

**1381.** The DFID ‘Northern Iraq Desktop Review’, circulated within DFID on 8 August, stated that many civil servants had resorted to alternative sources of income or left the country in order to secure a stable income.<sup>601</sup>

**1382.** The FCO paper ‘Scenarios for the future of Iraq after Saddam’, sent to No.10 on 26 September, stated that it was difficult to judge the extent to which government structures would survive Saddam Hussein’s departure:

- “The national Ba’ath superstructure would almost certainly collapse if Saddam fell as a result of military action, with the leadership seeking refuge. At lower levels, Ba’ath structures might continue”.
- Local power lay with the Ba’ath Party leadership. The limited supporting bureaucracy was unlikely to be able to take on a more extensive role “without a radical overhaul”.
- If Saddam Hussein fell, particularly after US-led military action, “tribal, regional and religious differences would probably come to the fore”.<sup>602</sup>

**1383.** The “aftermath” section of the 30 September edition of the SPG paper on UK military strategic thinking raised concerns about the US approach to de-Ba’athification, which could run counter to the need for basic governance and increase post-conflict reliance on the external authority.<sup>603</sup>

**1384.** The FCO paper ‘International Administration for Iraq: what, who and how?’, sent to the AHGI on 18 October, assessed that, if Saddam Hussein were overthrown quickly or “the bulk of Ba’ath apparatchiks switched sides”, a “light” approach to international administration might be possible, monitoring a local administration’s decisions against

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<sup>600</sup> Paper DIS, 1 February 2002, ‘The Iraqi Ba’ath Party – its history, ideology and role in regime security’.

<sup>601</sup> Minute CHAD Operations Team [junior official] to [DFID junior official], 8 August 2002, ‘Northern Iraq Desktop Review and Background Briefing Document’ attaching Paper, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department, July 2002, ‘Northern Iraq Desktop Review and Background Briefing Document’.

<sup>602</sup> Letter McDonald to Manning, 26 September 2002, ‘Scenarios for the future of Iraq after Saddam’ attaching Paper FCO, ‘Scenarios for the future of Iraq after Saddam’.

<sup>603</sup> Paper [SPG], 30 September 2002, ‘UK Military Strategic Thinking on Iraq’.



principles set out in a mandate provided by the Security Council.<sup>604</sup> If the Iraqi regime fought to the end or the damage to Iraq was extensive, the international administration would need to assume control of key areas.

**1385.** The importance of a “structural analysis of the Iraqi system and the need for reform” was one of seven key judgements in the 6 November edition of the SPG paper on strategic military thinking, which stated that current FCO and DFID papers had revealed “key gaps in our knowledge”.<sup>605</sup>

**1386.** The SPG stated that a “balance must be struck between the competing demands for reform and removal of Ba’athist influence and the need for effective administration”. There needed to be a “detailed structural analysis of the current regime, its instruments of state power and its administration”.

**1387.** Mr Drummond, a member of the UK delegation to the talks on post-conflict issues in Washington on 6 November, made a similar point to Sir David Manning.<sup>606</sup> He reported that, where the UK assumed the Iraqi Government would need “radical reform”, including removal of “the pervasive influence of the Ba’ath Party”, the US believed “reasonably competent ministries” remained beneath permanent secretary level and that, because the Ba’ath Party operated as a parallel structure to government below that level, “less radical change is needed”. Mr Drummond suggested that both the UK and US Governments would need to develop and test their thinking more thoroughly.

**1388.** At Mr Blair’s seminar with academics on 19 November, points made in discussion included that there would be difficult decisions on the extent of co-operation with existing structures, including the Ba’ath Party. Views differed on whether the Ba’ath Party would survive Saddam Hussein’s downfall.<sup>607</sup>

**1389.** The FCO paper on interim administrations, shared with the US on 12 December, stated:

“... Iraq has a reputation for being one of the better-run Arab countries with a well-educated civil service. But we have little first hand evidence of how things work nowadays. We need more information ...”<sup>608</sup>

**1390.** Officials were reported to be working with academics, the Iraqi exile community and diplomatic posts to tackle a number of questions, including: “To what extent are ministries infiltrated by Ba’athist elements? How central are the Ba’athists to the functioning of the ministries? Can the ministries work without them?”

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<sup>604</sup> [Letter Gray to Drummond, 18 October 2002, ‘Papers for the AHGI’ attaching Paper \[unattributed\], 17 October 2002, ‘International Administration for Iraq: what, who and how?’](#)

<sup>605</sup> [Paper \[SPG\], 6 November 2002, ‘UK Military Strategic Thinking on Iraq’.](#)

<sup>606</sup> Minute Drummond to Manning, 8 November 2002, ‘Iraq: Day After’.

<sup>607</sup> [Letter Rycroft to Sinclair, 20 November 2002, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s seminar with academics, 19 November’.](#)

<sup>608</sup> [Paper Middle East Department, 12 December 2002, ‘Interim Administrations in Iraq: Why a UN-led Interim Administration would be in the US interest’.](#)

**1391.** The annotated agenda for the second round of talks on post-conflict issues in Washington on 22 January 2003 asked to what extent Iraqis should be replaced with international civilian staff in an interim administration.<sup>609</sup> Many ministries might be turned around with “a few changes at the top”.

**1392.** Briefing for Mr Hoon’s discussion of post-conflict issues with Dr Rice and Secretary Rumsfeld on 12 February listed eight “Key Gaps/US-UK policy differences” on post-conflict planning, including on de-Ba’athification:

“Is it the US aim to de-Saddam, or de-Ba’ath Iraq? If the latter, how much of the party structure do we wish to remove? In the short term, and in the long term? What level of compromise/co-operation with Iraqi officialdom will be necessary and/or acceptable in the early stages of Phase IV? Depending on the US intention, can they provide UK forces with means of identifying particular officials for removal from office or detention? How will the Coalition process those removed from office? ... How will government functions be maintained if key officials are removed?”<sup>610</sup>

**1393.** The 19 February JIC Assessment ‘Southern Iraq: What’s in Store?’ stated that the only networks of influence in the South outside the Ba’ath Party were the tribes and the followers of some senior Shia clerics.<sup>611</sup> The external opposition would try to assert authority, but only those with armed forces on the ground or support from senior Shia clerics were likely to succeed to any extent.

**1394. Advice to Mr Blair on 25 February 2003 stated that “a relatively competent Iraqi civil service” should continue to function “with changes at the highest level only”.**

**1395.** In advice to Mr Blair on 25 February, the FCO stated:

“We believe that, contrary to the assumptions sometimes made, the Transitional Administration will be able to draw on a relatively competent Iraqi civil service. The Iraqi civil service has continued to function through several regime changes, and we see no reason why it should not do so again, with changes at the highest level only.”<sup>612</sup>

**1396.** The FCO made no reference to the absence of agreement with the US on the extent of de-Ba’athification.

**1397.** The DIS paper on “the ‘post-Saddam’ political and security environment” in Basra, produced on 11 March, described the Ba’ath Party as “Basra’s most important administrative institution”.<sup>613</sup>

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<sup>609</sup> [Minute Chilcott to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 17 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Day-After Issues’.](#)

<sup>610</sup> Minute Johnson to PS/Secretary of State [MOD], 10 February 2003, ‘Secretary of State’s Visit to Washington: Iraq.’

<sup>611</sup> [JIC Assessment, 19 February 2003, ‘Southern Iraq: What’s in Store?’](#)

<sup>612</sup> [Letter Sinclair to Rycroft, 25 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Political and Military Questions’.](#)

<sup>613</sup> [Report DIS, 11 March 2003, ‘Basra: Post Saddam Governance’.](#)

**1398.** Despite concerns about the implications of de-Ba'athification, by 28 March there was no agreement with the US on the issue.<sup>614</sup>

**1399.** During 2002 and early 2003, UK analysts described Iraq as:

- “potentially fundamentally unstable”; and
- facing “a risk of a wider breakdown as the regime’s authority crumbles”.

**1400.** Mr Blair insisted that the Coalition must prevent anarchy and internecine fighting breaking out.

**1401.** He told President Bush that Iraq would be at risk of internecine fighting when a military strike destabilised the regime.

**1402.** On 13 June 2002, the SPG described Iraq as “potentially fundamentally unstable”.<sup>615</sup> Iraq was held together by a strong security apparatus. It would require considerable force to break the security structure, but when that happened the regime would “shatter”. Among the military tasks for the first six months would be the provision of external and internal security, and law and order, “to prevent any potential for inter-ethnic violence”.

**1403.** On 15 January 2003, Mr Blair told the Chiefs of Staff “the ‘Issue’ was aftermath – the Coalition must prevent anarchy and internecine fighting breaking out”.<sup>616</sup> He asked the MOD to look at the big “what ifs”, including internecine fighting, and to develop a strategy.

**1404.** The annotated agenda for the second round of talks on post-conflict issues on 22 January stated that establishing a secure environment would be an urgent task and: “We shall also want to prevent internecine violence. Our handling of the defeated Iraqi forces will be critical.”

**1405.** Mr Blair’s Note to President Bush on 24 January stated that the biggest risk they faced was internecine fighting in Iraq when a military strike destabilised the regime.<sup>617</sup>

**1406.** The JIC Assessment of 19 February stated that there were “large numbers of armed groups and some potential for tribal score-settling” and “a risk of a wider breakdown as the regime’s authority crumbles”.<sup>618</sup> But there were “no indications ... of Shia preparations for an all-out civil war against Sunni Iraqis”.

**1407.** MOD advice for Mr Hoon before Mr Blair’s 6 March meeting on post-conflict issues stated that much of the UK preparation for post-conflict Iraq was based on

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<sup>614</sup> [Minute Drummond to Bowen, 28 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Reconstruction Agenda’.](#)

<sup>615</sup> [Minute Driver to PSO/CDS, 13 June 2002, ‘Supporting Paper for COS Strategic Think Tank on Iraq – 18 June’ attaching Paper \[unattributed\], 12 June 2002, \[untitled\].](#)

<sup>616</sup> [Minute MA/DCJO to MA/CJO, 15 January 2003, ‘Briefing to Prime Minister’.](#)

<sup>617</sup> Letter Manning to Rice, 24 January 2003, [untitled] [attaching ‘Note’.](#)

<sup>618</sup> [JIC Assessment, 19 February 2003, ‘Southern Iraq: What’s in Store?’](#)

“best-case assumptions” on the progress of the conflict, including limited internecine conflict.<sup>619</sup> Officials suggested that Mr Hoon remind Ministerial colleagues that there was “at least a credible possibility that none of these conditions will obtain”.

**1408.** At the Azores Summit, Mr Blair, President Bush and Mr Aznar discussed the risk of communal violence and the need for it to be “handled rapidly by the military”.<sup>620</sup>

**1409.** From September 2002, the FCO warned that war in Iraq might create an easier environment for terrorists.

**1410.** “Maintaining firm control on the internal security situation” was among the “practical steps” to provide stability proposed by the FCO.

**1411.** In late February 2003, the DIS Red Team warned of the risk of Coalition military action creating fertile ground for Al Qaida, which could deliberately cause civilian casualties to undermine the establishment of a representative Iraqi-led administration.

**1412.** The first FCO paper for the AHGI, written in September 2002, stated that war in Iraq might create an easier environment for terrorists to operate in and would create a new incentive for them to act. UK Embassies and other interests might be attractive targets.<sup>621</sup>

**1413.** Three JIC Assessments, on 10 October 2002, 10 February 2003 and 12 March 2003, judged that the greatest terrorist threat in the event of military action against Iraq would come from Al Qaida and other Islamic extremists.<sup>622</sup>

**1414.** The 6 November 2002 edition of the SPG paper on UK military strategic thinking on Iraq stated:

“Operations in Iraq may have a negative impact on the UK’s policy objectives for international terrorism, as poor handling of a post-conflict Iraq has the potential to increase greatly anti-Western feeling in the region; fuelling the very international tensions we have sought to diffuse and arming the forces of extremism.”<sup>623</sup>

**1415.** The FCO paper on Islamism in Iraq, shared with the US in December 2002, warned that it was likely groups would be looking for “identities and ideologies on which

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<sup>619</sup> [Minute Sec\(O\)4 to PS/Secretary of State \[MOD\], 6 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Aftermath – Medium to Long Term UK Military Commitment’.](#)

<sup>620</sup> Letter Manning to McDonald, 16 March 2003, ‘Iraq: Summit Meeting in the Azores: 16 March’.

<sup>621</sup> [Letter Sedwill to Manning, 20 September 2002, ‘Iraq – Consequences of Conflict for the Region and Beyond’ attaching Paper Directorate for Strategy and Innovation, \[undated\], ‘Iraq – Consequences of Conflict for the Region and Beyond’.](#)

<sup>622</sup> [JIC Assessment, 10 October 2002, ‘International Terrorism: The Threat from Iraq’; JIC Assessment, 10 February 2003, ‘International Terrorism: War with Iraq’; JIC Assessment, 12 March 2003, ‘International Terrorism: War with Iraq: Update’.](#)

<sup>623</sup> [Paper \[SPG\], 6 November 2002, ‘UK Military Strategic Thinking on Iraq’.](#)

to base movements”.<sup>624</sup> It was “almost certain that political Islam would become more prominent in post-Saddam Iraq”. The FCO did not expect “a massive surge in extremist sentiment”, but did anticipate that a number of extremist groups were likely to use violence to pursue political ends.

**1416.** The paper proposed a number of “practical steps” to provide stability, including: “Maintaining firm control on the internal security situation and moving quickly to suppress any international terrorist groups in the country.”

**1417.** Briefing prepared by the FCO for Mr Blair’s meeting with President Bush on 31 January 2003 included in its list of objectives: “To convince President Bush ... the US needs to pay much more attention, quickly, to planning on ‘day after’ issues; and that the UN needs to be central to it.”<sup>625</sup> One of the advantages of the UN route was that, by reducing hostility to the Coalition, it “reduces risk that our actions serve as a recruiting sergeant for Islamist terrorist organisations”.

**1418.** Mr Ochmanek, one of the contributors to the Adelphi Paper read by Mr Blair in mid-February, concluded that, even if an invasion were successful in defeating the Iraqi military and deposing Saddam Hussein’s regime:

“Success in the endgame – providing a secure environment for the remaking of the political system and culture of Iraq – cannot simply be assumed. The emergence of tribally-based or ethnically-based insurgent or terrorist groups unreconciled to the post-Saddam order cannot be ruled out, particularly if the regime in Iran chose to sponsor and harbour such groups ...”<sup>626</sup>

**1419.** The first DIS Red Team report, issued on 28 February, warned of the risk of creating fertile ground for Al Qaida, which could deliberately cause civilian casualties to undermine the establishment of a representative Iraqi-led administration.<sup>627</sup>

**1420. Potential Iranian interference in post-conflict Iraq was a theme of UK analysis from February 2002.**

**1421.** In February 2003, the JIC assessed that Iranian reactions to a Coalition presence in southern Iraq were unclear, but “unlikely to be aggressive”. Iran’s aims included ensuring a leading role for its allies among the Iraqi Shia.

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<sup>624</sup> [Paper DSI, \[undated\], ‘Islamism in Iraq’.](#)

<sup>625</sup> [Paper Middle East Department, 30 January 2003, ‘Prime Minister’s visit to Camp David, 31 January: Iraq’.](#)

<sup>626</sup> Ochmanek D. *A Possible US-led Campaign Against Iraq: Key Factors and an Assessment*. In: Dodge T & Simon S (eds), *Iraq at the Crossroads: State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change*. IISS Adelphi Paper 354. Oxford University Press. January 2003.

<sup>627</sup> [Minute PS/CDI to APS2/SofS \[MOD\], 28 February 2003, ‘Iraq Red Team – Regional responses to conflict in Iraq and the Aftermath’ attaching Paper, DIS Red Team, ‘Regional Responses to Conflict in Iraq and the Aftermath’.](#)

**1422.** In February 2002, Mr Sawers identified a number of questions that would need asking of the US if the UK associated itself with a policy of regime change, including: “How would we keep the Iranians from meddling?”<sup>628</sup>

**1423.** On 5 August, the JIC assessed that, after a US attack began, “Iran would probably boost its support for Shia groups working against Saddam”. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) “would be likely to work directly to undermine US influence, eg by manipulating Iraqi groups through propaganda and the selective provision of money and arms, although it would not provoke anything that would provoke US military retaliation”.<sup>629</sup>

**1424.** In September, Mr Chaplin wrote in an internal FCO minute that the job of the Coalition would be to ensure stability, including “preventing interference from neighbours, especially Iran”.<sup>630</sup>

**1425.** The FCO paper ‘Scenarios for the future of Iraq after Saddam’, sent to No.10 on 26 September, judged that Iraq’s neighbours might find it difficult not to get sucked in, and included an explicit reference to Iran as the neighbour most likely to become involved.<sup>631</sup>

**1426.** Mr Hoon’s advice to Mr Blair on 16 January 2003 stated that the UK military plan would need further development to address a number of specific challenges, including “handling Iran”.<sup>632</sup>

**1427.** The 19 February JIC Assessment ‘Southern Iraq: What’s in Store?’ stated that Iran might support small-scale cross-border interventions by armed groups and that the IRGC would “continue to meddle in southern Iraq”. Iranian reactions to a Coalition presence in southern Iraq were unclear, but “unlikely to be aggressive”.<sup>633</sup> Iran’s aims in response to a Coalition presence in Iraq included ensuring a leading role for its allies among the Iraqi Shia (the Supreme Council for an Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and its armed wing the Badr Corps).

**1428.** In response to a request from Mr Blair for advice on the implications of the JIC Assessment and the Adelphi Paper, the FCO advised that the key to preventing a Shia uprising would be:

“... to assure the varied Shia communities that they will be fairly represented in future Iraq ... Much will also depend on the length of a Coalition ‘occupation’.

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<sup>628</sup> [Teleletter Sawers to Jay, 21 February 2002, ‘Iraq: Policy’.](#)

<sup>629</sup> JIC Assessment, 5 August 2002, ‘Iraq: Regional Attitudes and Impact of Military Action’.

<sup>630</sup> Minute Chaplin to Gray, 13 September 2002, ‘Iraq: Post-Saddam Issues’.

<sup>631</sup> [Letter McDonald to Manning, 26 September 2002, ‘Scenarios for the future of Iraq after Saddam’ attaching Paper FCO, ‘Scenarios for the future of Iraq after Saddam’.](#)

<sup>632</sup> [Letter Hoon to Blair, 16 January 2003, ‘Iraq: UK Land Contribution’.](#)

<sup>633</sup> [JIC Assessment, 19 February 2003, ‘Southern Iraq: What’s in Store?’](#)

If they see Western control becoming quasi-permanent, this too may arouse opposition, probably encouraged by neighbours like Iran.”<sup>634</sup>

## **The failure to plan or prepare for known risks**

**1429.** The information on Iraq available to the UK Government before the invasion provided a clear indication of the potential scale of the post-conflict task.

**1430.** It showed that, in order to achieve the UK’s desired end state, any post-conflict administration would need to:

- restore infrastructure that had deteriorated significantly in the decade since 1991, to the point where it was not capable of meeting the needs of the Iraqi people;
- administer a state where the upper echelons of a regime that had been in power since 1968 had been abruptly removed and in which the capabilities of the wider civil administration, many of whose employees were members of the ruling party, were difficult to assess; and
- provide security in a country faced with a number of potential threats, including:
  - internecine violence;
  - terrorism; and
  - Iranian interference.

**1431.** In December 2002, the MOD described the post-conflict phase of operations as “strategically decisive”.<sup>635</sup> But when the invasion began, the UK Government was not in a position to conclude that satisfactory plans had been drawn up and preparations made to meet known post-conflict challenges and risks in Iraq and to mitigate the risk of strategic failure.

**1432.** Throughout the planning process, the UK assumed that the US would be responsible for preparing the post-conflict plan, that post-conflict activity would be authorised by the UN Security Council, that agreement would be reached on a significant post-conflict role for the UN and that international partners would step forward to share the post-conflict burden.

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<sup>634</sup> [Letter Sinclair to Rycroft, 25 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Political and Military Questions’.](#)

<sup>635</sup> [Paper \[SPG\], 13 December 2002, ‘UK Military Strategic Thinking on Iraq’.](#)

**1433.** On that basis, the UK planned to reduce its military contribution in Iraq to medium scale within four months of the start of the invasion<sup>636</sup> and expected not to have to make a substantial commitment to post-conflict administration.<sup>637</sup>

**1434.** Achieving that outcome depended on the UK's ability to persuade the US of the merits of a significant post-conflict role for the UN.

**1435.** The UK could not be certain at any stage in the year before the invasion that it would succeed in that aim.

**1436.** In January 2003, the UK sought to persuade the US of the benefits of UN leadership of Iraq's interim post-conflict civil administration.<sup>638</sup> Officials warned that, if the UK failed to persuade the US, it risked "being drawn into a huge commitment of UK resources for a highly complex task of administration and law and order for an uncertain period".

**1437.** By March 2003, having failed to persuade the US of the advantages of a UN-led interim administration, the UK had set the less ambitious goal of persuading the US to accept UN authorisation of a Coalition-led interim administration and an international presence that would include the UN.<sup>639</sup>

**1438.** On 19 March, Mr Blair stated in Parliament that discussions were taking place with the US, UN and others on the role of the UN and post-conflict issues.<sup>640</sup>

**1439.** Discussions continued, but, as the invasion began:

- The UK had not secured US agreement to a Security Council resolution authorising post-conflict administration and could not be sure when, or on what terms, agreement would be possible.
- The extent of the UN's preparations, which had been hindered by the absence of agreement on post-conflict arrangements, remained uncertain. Mr Annan emphasised to Ms Short the need for clarity on US thinking so that UN planning could proceed<sup>641</sup> and told Sir Jeremy Greenstock that he "would not wish to see any arrangement subjugating UN activity to Coalition activity".<sup>642</sup>

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<sup>636</sup> [Minute CDS to CJO, 18 March 2003, 'Op TELIC: Authorisation for Military Operations in Iraq' attaching Paper CDS, 'Chief of Defence Staff Execute Directive to the Joint Commander for Operation TELIC \(Phases 3 and 4\)'](#).

<sup>637</sup> [Minute Straw and Hoon to Prime Minister, 19 March 2003, 'Iraq: UK Military Contribution to post-conflict Iraq'](#).

<sup>638</sup> Minute Ricketts to Private Secretary [FCO], 7 February 2003, 'Iraq Strategy'.

<sup>639</sup> Paper Iraq Planning Unit, 25 March 2003, 'Iraq: Phase IV: Authorising UNSCR'.

<sup>640</sup> House of Commons, *Official Report*, 19 March 2003, columns 931-932.

<sup>641</sup> Telegram 501 UKMIS New York to FCO London, 21 March 2003, 'Iraq Humanitarian/Reconstruction: Clare Short's Visit to New York'.

<sup>642</sup> Telegram 526 UKMIS New York to FCO London, 25 March 2003, 'Iraq Phase IV: UN Dynamics'.



- **Potential international partners for reconstruction and additional Coalition partners to provide security continued to make their post-conflict contributions conditional on UN authorisation for Phase IV.**<sup>643</sup>

**1440.** Despite being aware of the shortcomings of the US plan,<sup>644</sup> strong US resistance to a leading role for the UN,<sup>645</sup> indications that the UN did not want the administration of Iraq to become its responsibility<sup>646</sup> and a warning about the tainted image of the UN in Iraq,<sup>647</sup> at no stage did the UK Government formally consider other policy options, including the possibility of making participation in military action conditional on a satisfactory plan for the post-conflict period, or how to mitigate the known risk that the UK could find itself drawn into a “huge commitment of UK resources” for which no contingency preparations had been made.

### The planning process and decision-making

**1441.** As a junior partner in the Coalition, the UK worked within a planning framework established by the US. It had limited influence over a process dominated increasingly by the US military.

**1442.** The creation of the AHGI in September 2002 and the IPU in February 2003 improved co-ordination across government at official level, but neither body carried sufficient authority to establish a unified planning process across the four principal departments involved – the FCO, the MOD, DFID and the Treasury – or between military and civilian planners.

**1443.** Important material, including in the DFID reviews of northern and southern Iraq, and significant pieces of analysis, including the series of SPG papers on military strategic thinking, were either not shared outside the originating department, or, as appears to have been the case with the SPG papers, were not routinely available to all those with a direct interest in the contents.

**1444.** Some risks were identified, but departmental ownership of those risks, and responsibility for analysis and mitigation, were not clearly established.

**1445.** When the need to plan and prepare for the worst case was raised, including by MOD officials in advice to Mr Hoon on 6 March 2003,<sup>648</sup> Lt Gen Reith in his paper for the Chiefs of Staff on 21 March<sup>649</sup> and in Treasury advice to Mr Brown

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<sup>643</sup> [Paper FCO, 25 March 2003, 'Iraq: Phase IV Issues'](#).

<sup>644</sup> [Minute Drummond to Rycroft, 19 March 2003, 'Iraq Ministerial Meeting'](#).

<sup>645</sup> Minute Ricketts to Private Secretary [FCO], 7 February 2003, 'Iraq Strategy'.

<sup>646</sup> Public hearing, 15 December 2009, page 5.

<sup>647</sup> [Paper Middle East Department, 12 December 2002, 'Interim Administrations in Iraq: Why a UN-led Interim Administration would be in the US interest'](#).

<sup>648</sup> [Minute Sec\(O\)4 to PS/Secretary of State \[MOD\], 6 March 2003, 'Iraq: Aftermath – Medium to Long Term UK Military Commitment'](#).

<sup>649</sup> Minute Reith to COSSEC, 21 March 2003, 'Phase IV Planning – Taking Stock'.

on 24 March,<sup>650</sup> there is no evidence that any department or individual assumed ownership or was assigned responsibility for analysis or mitigation. No action ensued.

**1446.** In April 2003, Mr Blair set up the Ad Hoc Ministerial Group on Iraq Rehabilitation (AHMGIR), chaired by Mr Straw, to oversee the UK contribution to post-conflict reconstruction (see Section 10.1).

**1447.** Until the creation of the AHMGIR, Mr Straw, Mr Hoon and Ms Short remained jointly responsible for directing post-conflict planning and preparation.

**1448.** In the absence of a single person responsible for overseeing all aspects of planning and preparation, departments pursued complementary, but separate, objectives. Gaps in UK capabilities were overlooked.

**1449.** The FCO, which focused on policy-making and negotiation, was not equipped by past experience or practice, or by its limited human and financial resources, to prepare for nation-building of the scale required in Iraq, and did not expect to do so.

**1450.** DFID's focus on poverty reduction and the channelling of assistance through multilateral institutions instilled a reluctance, before the invasion, to engage on anything other than the immediate humanitarian response to conflict.

**1451.** When military planners advised of the need to consider the civilian component as an integral part of the UK's post-conflict deployment, the Government was not equipped to respond. Neither the FCO nor DFID took responsibility for the issue.

**1452.** The shortage of expertise in reconstruction and stabilisation was a constraint on the planning process and on the contribution the UK was able to make to the administration and reconstruction of post-conflict Iraq.

**1453.** The UK Government's post-invasion response to the shortage of deployable experts in stabilisation and post-conflict reconstruction is addressed in Section 10.3.

**1454.** Constraints on UK military capacity are addressed in Sections 6.1 and 6.2.

**1455.** The UK contribution to the post-conflict humanitarian response is assessed in Section 10.1.

**1456.** At no stage did Ministers or senior officials commission the systematic evaluation of different options, incorporating detailed analysis of risk and UK capabilities, military and civilian, which should have been required before the UK committed to any course of action in Iraq.

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<sup>650</sup> [Minute Dodds to Chancellor, 24 March 2003, 'Iraq: UK Military Contribution to Post-Conflict Iraq'](#).

**1457.** Where policy recommendations were supported by untested assumptions, those assumptions were seldom challenged. When they were, the issue was not always followed through.

**1458.** It was the responsibility of officials to identify, analyse and advise on risk and Ministers' responsibility to ensure that measures to mitigate identifiable risks, including a range of policy options, had been considered before significant decisions were taken on the direction of UK policy.

**1459.** Occasions when that would have been appropriate included:

- after Mr Blair's meeting with Mr Hoon, Mr Straw and others on 23 July 2002;
- after the adoption of resolution 1441;
- before or immediately after the decision to deploy troops in January 2003;
- after the Rock Drill in February 2003; and
- after Mr Blair's meeting on post-conflict issues on 6 March 2003.

**1460.** There is no indication of formal risk analysis or formal consideration of options associated with any of those events.

**1461.** In his statement to the Inquiry, Mr Blair said:

“... with hindsight, we now see that the military campaign to defeat Saddam was relatively easy; it was the aftermath that was hard. At the time, of course, we could not know that and a prime focus throughout was the military campaign itself ...”<sup>651</sup>

**1462.** The conclusions reached by Mr Blair after the invasion did not require the benefit of hindsight.

**1463.** Mr Blair's long-standing conviction that successful international intervention required long-term commitment had been clearly expressed in his Chicago speech in 1999.

**1464.** That conviction was echoed, in the context of Iraq, in frequent advice to Mr Blair from Ministers and officials.

**1465.** Between early 2002 and the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, Mr Blair received warnings about:

- the significance of the post-conflict phase as the “strategically decisive” phase of the engagement in Iraq (in the SPG paper of 13 December 2002<sup>652</sup>)

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<sup>651</sup> Statement, 14 January 2011, page 14.

<sup>652</sup> [Paper \[SPG\], 13 December 2002, 'UK Military Strategic Thinking on Iraq'](#).

- and the risk that a badly handled aftermath would make intervention a “net failure” (in Mr Watkins’ letter to Sir David Manning of 19 November 2002<sup>653</sup>);
- the likelihood of internal conflict in Iraq (including from Mr Powell on 26 September 2002, who warned of the need to stop “a terrible bloodletting of revenge after Saddam goes. Traditional in Iraq after conflict”<sup>654</sup>);
  - the potential scale of the political, social, economic and security challenge (including from Sir Christopher Meyer on 6 September 2002: “it will probably make pacifying Afghanistan look like child’s play”<sup>655</sup>);
  - the need for an analysis of whether the benefits of military action outweighed the risk of a protracted and costly nation-building exercise (including from Mr Straw on 8 July 2002: the US “must also understand that we are serious about our conditions for UK involvement”<sup>656</sup>);
  - the absence of credible US plans for the immediate post-conflict period and the subsequent reconstruction of Iraq (including from the British Embassy Washington after the Rock Drill on 21 and 22 February 2003: “The inter-agency rehearsal for Phase IV ... exposes the enormous scale of the task ... Overall, planning is at a very rudimentary stage”<sup>657</sup>);
  - the need to agree with the US the nature of the UK contribution to those plans (including in the letter from Mr Hoon’s Private Office to Sir David Manning on 28 February 2003: it was “absolutely clear” that the US expected the UK to take leadership of the South-East sector. The UK was “currently at risk of taking on a very substantial commitment that we will have great difficulty in sustaining beyond the immediate conclusion of conflict”<sup>658</sup>); and
  - the importance (including in the ‘UK overall plan for Phase IV’, shown to Mr Blair on 7 March 2003<sup>659</sup>) of:
    - UN authorisation for the military occupation of Iraq, without which there would be no legal cover for certain post-conflict tasks; and
    - a UN framework for the administration and reconstruction of Iraq during the transition to Iraqi self-government.

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<sup>653</sup> [Letter Watkins to Manning, 19 November 2002, ‘Iraq: Military Planning after UNSCR 1441’.](#)

<sup>654</sup> [Manuscript comment Powell to Manning on Letter McDonald to Manning, 26 September 2002, ‘Scenarios for the future of Iraq after Saddam’.](#)

<sup>655</sup> [Telegram 1140 Washington to FCO London, 6 September 2002, ‘PM’s visit to Camp David: Iraq’.](#)

<sup>656</sup> [Letter Straw to Prime Minister, 8 July 2002, ‘Iraq: Contingency Planning’.](#)

<sup>657</sup> Telegram 235 Washington to FCO London, 24 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Day After: Rehearsal of Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance’.

<sup>658</sup> Letter Williams to Manning, 28 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Planning and Preparation’ attaching Paper [unattributed], 28 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Military Planning Update – 28 February 2003’.

<sup>659</sup> [Paper Iraq Planning Unit, 7 March 2003, ‘The UK overall plan for Phase IV’.](#)

**1466.** Mr Blair told the Chiefs of Staff on 15 January 2003 that “the ‘Issue’ was aftermath – the Coalition must prevent anarchy and internecine fighting breaking out”.<sup>660</sup>

**1467.** In his evidence to the House of Commons Liaison Committee on 21 January 2003, Mr Blair emphasised the importance of the post-conflict phase:

“You do not engage in military conflict that may produce regime change unless you are prepared to follow through and work in the aftermath of that regime change to ensure the country is stable and the people are properly looked after.”<sup>661</sup>

**1468.** On 24 January 2003, Mr Blair told President Bush that the biggest risk they faced was internecine fighting, and that delay would allow time for working up more coherent post-conflict plans.<sup>662</sup>

**1469.** Yet when Mr Blair set out the UK’s vision for the future of Iraq in the House of Commons on 18 March 2003, no assessment had been made of whether that vision was achievable, no agreement had been reached with the US on a workable post-conflict plan, UN authorisation had not yet been secured, and there had been no decision on the UN’s role in post-conflict Iraq.

**1470.** UK policy rested on the assumption that:

- the US would provide effective leadership of the immediate post-conflict effort in Iraq;
- the conditions would soon be in place for UK military withdrawal;
- after a short period of US-led, UN-authorized military occupation, the UN would administer and provide a framework for the reconstruction of post-conflict Iraq;
- substantial international support would follow UN authorisation; and
- reconstruction and the political transition to Iraqi rule would proceed in a secure environment.

**1471.** Mr Blair was already aware that those assumptions concealed significant risks:

- UK officials assessed that ORHA, the US body that would assume responsibility for the immediate post-invasion administration of Iraq, was not up to the task.

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<sup>660</sup> [Minute MA/DCJO to MA/CJO, 15 January 2003, ‘Briefing to Prime Minister’.](#)

<sup>661</sup> Liaison Committee, Session 2002-2003, Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Liaison Committee Tuesday 21 January 2003, Q 117.

<sup>662</sup> [Letter Manning to Rice, 24 January 2003, \[untitled\] attaching ‘Note’.](#)

- Significant differences remained between UK and US positions on UN involvement, and between the UK and the UN.
- International partners were scarce and thought to be unlikely to come forward in the absence of UN authorisation.
- UK officials recognised that occupying forces would not remain welcome for long and threats to security could quickly escalate.

**1472.** In the year before the invasion, Mr Blair:

- stated his belief in the importance of post-conflict planning on several occasions, including in Cabinet, in Parliament and with President Bush;
- requested advice on aspects of post-conflict Iraq (including for his summer reading pack in July 2002, for his meeting with President Bush on 31 January 2003, and twice in February 2003 after reading the JIC Assessment of southern Iraq and the Adelphi Paper *Iraq at the Crossroads*);
- at the meeting with Mr Hoon and the Chiefs of Staff on 15 January 2003, asked the MOD to consider the “big ‘what ifs’” in the specific context of the UK military plan;
- convened a Ministerial meeting on post-conflict issues on 6 March 2003;
- raised concerns about the state of planning with President Bush; and
- succeeded in the narrow goal of securing President Bush’s agreement that the UN should be “heavily involved” in “the post-conflict situation”, a loose formulation that appeared to bridge the gap between US and UK positions on UN authorisation and the post-conflict role of the UN, but did not address the substantive issues.

**1473.** Mr Blair did not:

- establish clear Ministerial oversight of post-conflict strategy, planning and preparation;
- ensure that Ministers took the decisions needed to prepare a flexible, realistic and fully resourced plan integrating UK military and civilian contributions;
- seek adequate assurances that the UK was in a position to meet its likely obligations in Iraq;
- insist that the UK’s strategic objectives for Iraq were tested against anything other than the best case: a well-planned and executed US-led and UN-authorised post-conflict operation in a relatively benign security environment;
- press President Bush for definitive assurances about US post-conflict plans or set out clearly to him the strategic risk in underestimating the post-conflict challenge and failing adequately to prepare for the task; or

- **consider, or seek advice on whether the absence of a satisfactory plan was a sufficient threat to UK strategic objectives to require a reassessment of the terms of the UK engagement in Iraq. Despite concerns about the state of US planning, he did not make agreement on a satisfactory post-conflict plan a condition of UK participation in military action.**

**1474.** In the weeks immediately following the invasion, Mr Blair's omissions made it more difficult for the UK Government to take an informed decision on the establishment of the UK's post-conflict Area of Responsibility (AOR) in southern Iraq (addressed in more detail in Section 8).

**1475.** In the short to medium term, his omissions increased the risk that the UK would be unable to respond to the unexpected in Iraq.

**1476.** In the longer term, they reduced the likelihood of achieving the UK's strategic objectives in Iraq.