

SECTION 15.2

CONCLUSIONS: CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

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Introduction and key findings

1. This Section contains the Inquiry's analysis, conclusions and lessons in relation to the deployment of civilian personnel in Iraq, the evidence for which is set out in Section 15.1.
2. This Section does not address:
 - the recruitment, deployment or impact of UK police officers in Iraq, addressed in Section 12;
 - whether sufficient civilian personnel were deployed to achieve the UK's objectives in Iraq, or the contribution that civilian personnel made to Iraq's reconstruction, both addressed in Section 10;
 - the funding of civilian deployments, including the cost of protective security measures, addressed in Section 13; or
 - the Government's reviews of the UK approach to post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation, and the creation of a deployable UK civilian stand-by capability, addressed in Sections 10.3 and 10.4.

Key findings

- Before the invasion of Iraq, the Government had made only minimal preparations for the deployment of civilian personnel.
- There was an enduring gap between the Government's civilian capacity and the level of its ambition in Iraq.
- There was no overarching consideration by the Government of the extent to which civilians could be effective in a highly insecure environment, or of the security assets needed for civilians to do their jobs effectively.
- The evidence seen by the Inquiry indicates that the Government recognised its duty of care to UK-based and locally engaged civilians in Iraq. A significant effort was made to keep civilians safe in a dangerous environment.

Overview

3. Between 2003 and 2009, UK and Iraqi civilian personnel made an essential contribution to the UK's efforts to help rebuild Iraq. They often did so in extremely dangerous circumstances. Some locally engaged (LE) staff and UK-based contractors lost their lives.
4. The initial deployment of only a handful of civilian personnel reflected pre-invasion assumptions about the limited extent of the likely UK contribution to the post-conflict reconstruction and administration of Iraq.
5. Soon after the invasion, Mr Blair called for a significant increase in the UK civilian effort. Further calls to strengthen the UK civilian presence in Iraq followed.

- 6.** The Government had no pre-existing machinery for recruiting and deploying at speed large numbers of civilians with the appropriate skills. As a result, efforts to deploy larger numbers of civilians to Iraq fell well short of targets.
- 7.** There was a particular shortage of Arabic speakers and reconstruction expertise.
- 8.** From late summer 2003, concern about staff safety led to the progressive introduction of protective security measures for civilian personnel in Iraq and placed additional constraints on civilian deployments.
- 9.** Government departments recognised their duty of care obligations to personnel working in Iraq. Significant effort and resources went into keeping staff safe.
- 10.** In the absence of a government-wide approach to risk or an effective framework for assessing the value of civilian personnel in a highly insecure environment, the Government struggled to establish a co-ordinated approach to the deployment of civilians.
- 11.** The Iraq Reconstruction Service Medal and the Locally Engaged Staff Assistance Scheme were appropriate responses to the issues they addressed.

Pre-invasion planning and preparation

- 12.** Sections 6.4 and 6.5 address the UK's pre-invasion planning and preparation for its role in the Occupation of Iraq. In the absence of effective cross-government machinery for drawing together all aspects of planning and preparation, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Department for International Development (DFID) pursued broadly complementary objectives, but did so separately. This left significant gaps in UK civilian capabilities that were overlooked.
- 13.** The UK did not plan or prepare for the deployment of more than a handful of civilians to Iraq, other than in direct support of military operations.
- 14.** The FCO 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.
- 15.** The FCO did make effective preparations, however, for resuming diplomatic representation in Baghdad. The British Office Baghdad opened, on schedule, on 5 May 2003.
- 16.** DFID was reluctant, before the invasion, to engage in planning and preparation for anything other than the immediate humanitarian response to conflict.
- 17.** DFID did, however, make pre-conflict preparations to support those multilateral institutions providing humanitarian assistance in Iraq and the region.

18. The MOD made provision for civilian support to military operations in Iraq, as it would for any military operation. Military planners identified and drew attention to the gap in those UK civilian capabilities that would be needed for post-conflict reconstruction and administration.

19. Neither the FCO nor DFID took responsibility for addressing that gap.

20. The shortage of the requisite civilian expertise within government was a significant constraint on the planning and preparation for post-conflict operations and on the eventual scale of the UK civilian contribution.

21. The review of the UK's approach to post-conflict reconstruction, begun in September 2003, addressed the management of the UK's contribution, including "the identification and training of civilian personnel and the maintenance of databases, with deployable capability".¹

22. Although successive reviews changed significantly the UK's approach to reconstruction and stabilisation, they had limited impact on the UK's civilian deployment in Iraq.

Meeting the initial demand for civilian personnel in Iraq

23. The Inquiry estimates that, on the eve of the invasion, the UK had between 10 and 16 non-MOD civilians ready to deploy to Iraq. That very small number reflected the assumptions underpinning UK planning and preparation for post-conflict Iraq, including that:

- 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.

24. Between April and October 2003, Ministers and officials pressed for an increase in the UK civilian deployments to the US-led Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) and its successor, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), in Baghdad, Basra and elsewhere in Iraq.

25. Government departments were not equipped to respond to those demands.

26. On 17 April, Mr Blair agreed that the UK should "increase significantly the level of ... political and practical support to ORHA, including the secondment of significant numbers of staff in priority areas".²

¹ [Letter Owen to Fergusson, 5 February 2004, 'Post Conflict Reconstruction: Paper for the DOP, 12 February' attaching Paper \[unattributed\], \[undated\], 'Post Conflict Reconstruction'.](#)

² [Letter Rycroft to McDonald, 17 April 2003, 'Iraq: ORHA'.](#)

27. The FCO, under the direction of Sir Michael Jay, the Permanent Under Secretary, co-ordinated the Whitehall response.

28. The FCO's approach was ad hoc, reflecting the absence of:

- adequate pre-invasion planning;
- a Whitehall mechanism for co-ordinating the urgent recruitment of volunteers; and
- clear US job descriptions for the vacant ORHA/CPA posts in Iraq.

29. On 22 April, with no clear job descriptions to draw on, Sir Michael Jay called on departments to “take a broad view in looking for volunteers”.³ He stated that “enthusiasm and personal qualities are likely to be just as important as specific expertise”.

30. Officials informed the 22 May meeting of the Ad Hoc Ministerial Group on Iraq Rehabilitation (AHMGIR) that 61 UK officials had been seconded to ORHA, five of them in Basra. Officials were able to provide Ministers with only very basic information on the functions of 35 of the 61, explaining: “Some secondees have yet to be allocated specific roles.”⁴

31. On 25 July, Sir Michael Jay described the training and deployment since April of “over 100 civilian staff from sixteen different branches of government” as an exercise having “no modern precedent”.⁵

32. While recognising that some of the difficulties faced by the UK reflected shortcomings in US plans, the Inquiry considers the deployment to have been unsatisfactory. Volunteers appear to have been recruited in a hasty and haphazard manner, without procedures to assess their suitability for a very challenging task. Civilians arrived in Iraq more slowly than required, with inadequate preparation and to fill positions that were ill defined.

33. As early as June 2003, concerns emerged that some civilians deployed to Iraq were not capable of meeting the physical requirements of working in such a difficult environment.

34. Ms Emma Sky, CPA Governorate Co-ordinator for Kirkuk from June 2003 to February 2004, told the Inquiry that she was not given a briefing by the FCO before travelling to Iraq. Instead she had received a phone call telling her “You’ve spent a lot of time in the Middle East. You will be fine.”⁶

35. Between June and August 2003, Ministers and officials pressed for a more ambitious response to the demand for civilian personnel. The UK sought to deploy

³ [Letter Jay to Turnbull, 22 April 2003, ‘Iraq: UK Support for the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance \(ORHA\)’](#).

⁴ Annotated Agenda, 22 May 2003, Ad Hoc Group on Iraq Rehabilitation meeting.

⁵ [Letter Jay to Turnbull, 25 July 2003, ‘Iraq: UK support for reconstruction’](#).

⁶ Private hearing, 14 January 2011, page 2.

individuals with the right skills and appropriate levels of seniority, and to provide leadership by appointing a UK Head of CPA(South):

- On 3 June, Mr Blair called for Whitehall to return to a “war footing”.⁷ There needed to be “a strong civilian team in the South. In general, there needed to be a much stronger civilian grip”.
- On 2 July, Baroness Amos, the International Development Secretary, recommended the deployment of additional staff with the right skills and seniority.
- On 10 July, Ministers agreed that the UK effort in the South should be increased and that a UK figure should be made Head of CPA(South).
- On 28 August, the AHMGIR agreed, “subject to security concerns”, that Sir Hilary Synnott, Head of CPA(South), should be given “such assistance and staff as he deemed necessary”.⁸

36. Departments did not rise to the challenge:

- Sir Hilary Synnott told the Inquiry that, on his arrival in Basra on 30 July: “The phones didn’t work ... and nobody had thought to provide me with any form of computer.”⁹
- On 5 September, Mr Neil Crompton, Head of the Iraq Policy Unit (IPU), reported that the view in Iraq was that the job there was “doable”, but the UK needed to “throw massive resources at the problem now”.¹⁰ CPA(South) was “woefully under-staffed”. It was clear that the UK would have to fill the positions itself rather than rely on third-country nationals or CPA Baghdad.
- On 23 September, Mr David Richmond, the Prime Minister’s Deputy Special Representative on Iraq, reported that UK “influence in CPA Baghdad is limited; we supply only 100 out of its 1,000 staff there”.¹¹
- Sir Hilary Synnott told the Inquiry: “One of my key requests was at the end of August when I asked for, I think, 37 additional expert staff ... By 1 January, 18 out of 37 had arrived.”¹²

37. Departments’ weak response to the instruction to strengthen the UK civilian presence in Iraq represented a missed opportunity to alleviate some of the problems created by the failures of pre-invasion planning and preparation.

38. It is not possible to assert that the rapid deployment of all the additional personnel requested would have materially altered the situation in Iraq. It is, however, the Inquiry’s

⁷ [Minute Cannon to McDonald, 3 June 2003, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s Meeting, 3 June’](#).

⁸ Minutes, 28 August 2003, Ad Hoc Group on Iraq Rehabilitation meeting.

⁹ Public hearing, 9 December 2009, page 9.

¹⁰ [Minute Crompton to Chaplin, 5 September 2003, ‘Visit to Iraq: 31 August to 3 September’](#).

¹¹ Minute [junior official Cabinet Office] to Sheinwald, 25 September 2003, ‘Iraq Senior Officials Group Meeting’.

¹² Public hearing, 9 December 2009, page 45.

view that the UK's ability to influence developments in Iraq was diminished by their absence (see Section 9.8).

Duty of care and risk management

39. Between 2003 and 2009, decisions on civilian deployment were closely linked to assessments of the security threat in Iraq and departments' interpretation of their duty of care to staff.

40. Steps taken by departments to manage the threat to staff included the provision of:

- pre-deployment security training;
- secure transport;
- close protection teams; and
- hardened accommodation.

41. Protective security could not eliminate the risk of death or injury. A number of LE staff and UK-based contractors working for the UK Government were killed in Iraq.

42. The evidence available to the Inquiry shows that the Government made serious efforts to mitigate the risk of injury and death. In addition to protective security measures:

- The FCO and DFID carried out frequent reviews of security in Baghdad, Basra and other locations in Iraq.
- During 2004, the FCO introduced improved structures for managing security issues at its posts in Iraq, with responsibility shared between named decision-makers in London and Iraq. Those arrangements were kept under review.
- When the threat was assessed to exceed the protection afforded by the security measures in place, officials and, where appropriate, Ministers, took quick decisions to lock down buildings or to withdraw staff temporarily.

43. The number of civilian personnel in Baghdad and Basra fluctuated as Ministers and officials sought to reconcile departments' duty of care to staff with operational needs and the finite resources available for enhanced security in the face of a constantly evolving threat:

- On 27 May 2004, Mr Stuart Jack, Head of the FCO Iraq Operations Unit (IOU) advised Mr Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary: "we are currently at the limit of technical measures we can apply to protect staff in Iraq".¹³
- On 8 October 2004, officials advised Mr Straw that the FCO was "reaching the limits" of its ability to increase effective protection.¹⁴

¹³ [Minute Jack to PS \[FCO\], 27 May 2004, 'Iraq: Civilian Staffing and Security'](#).

¹⁴ Minute Iraq Directorate [junior official] to PS [FCO], 8 October 2004, 'Staff Security in Iraq'.

- On 6 June 2006, Mr Andrew Noble, FCO Director of Security, stated: “we are operating at the limits of what can be achieved, consistent with running a diplomatic mission”.¹⁵
- On 22 January 2007, Dr Rosalind Marsden, the British Consul General in Basra, reported that she had been advised by her Overseas Security Manager that “we are beginning to push our luck”.¹⁶

44. The critical contribution of some of the protective measures introduced in Iraq is reflected in comments by Mr Robert Tinline, Head of the Basra Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in 2007 and 2008. In April 2007, he informed the FCO that more than 1,200 rockets and mortars had been fired at the Basra Palace site since September 2006.¹⁷ Although the BPC had been hit 70 times:

“We were fortunate that none of our staff were killed or injured ... But we also made our own good fortune. Four accommodation ‘pods’, the bar, the gym and both the main office buildings received direct hits – but because they were hardened, no serious injuries resulted.”

45. The progressive introduction of protective security measures between 2003 and 2008 placed growing constraints on civilians’ ability to carry out their jobs effectively.

46. LE staff and contractors became critically important to the UK reconstruction effort.

47. The limited availability of secure transport had particular consequences for the way civilians operated.

48. Mr Martin Dinham, DFID Director Europe, Middle East and Americas from 2005 to 2007, told the Inquiry that, during 2006 and 2007, access to a number of infrastructure projects was so difficult that “we had to arrange to work through local contractors ... taking videos, taking digital images, contacting us by email, meeting them in safe locations so we could actually supervise at one remove”.¹⁸

49. From mid-2003, officials had recognised that measures to protect civilians from the security threat could have implications for the UK’s ability to achieve its strategic objectives in Iraq.

50. Despite the warnings, the Government failed to establish a strategic framework for assessing the impact of the security threat and protective security measures on UK objectives or to agree an appropriate response.

¹⁵ [Minute Noble to Casey, 6 June 2006, ‘Security of our Posts in Baghdad and Basra’.](#)

¹⁶ [Letter Marsden to McDonald, 22 January 2007, ‘Basra Palace: Response to Increased IDF Threat’.](#)

¹⁷ [eGram 17758/07 Basra to FCO London, 30 April 2007, ‘Basra: Move of the British Embassy Office’.](#)

¹⁸ Public hearing, 17 December 2009, page 43.

51. In July 2003, Mr Peter Collecott, FCO Director General Corporate Affairs, commented on the tension between achieving UK objectives in Iraq and duty of care to staff. He advised Mr Straw:

“We will inevitably be faced with some very difficult prioritisation decisions: activity v. security in Iraq; activity in Iraq v. priorities elsewhere.”¹⁹

52. Concerns increased after the attacks on the UN headquarters in Baghdad in August 2003.

53. Mr Crompton advised Mr Straw:

“Resources for security assets are an issue. But the principle should be that we provide the number of security assets we need for people to do their jobs properly, rather than limit the number of tasks we take on to the number of security assets we have on the ground (as some around Whitehall have been suggesting). This will be expensive.”²⁰

54. Over time, the tasks that UK civilians were able to carry out in Iraq became increasingly limited. In June 2006, the IPU characterised the FCO approach to security as “risk averse”.²¹ It stated that, where officials judged that a particular task exposed personnel to greater risk than the mitigating measures in place to deal with that risk, the task would not be undertaken.

55. The withdrawal of the majority of civilian staff from the Basra Palace site to Basra Air Station and Kuwait in response to a rapid deterioration in security in late 2006 followed that pattern.

56. Sir Peter Ricketts told the Inquiry that he was clear that the British Embassy Office would have to leave Basra Palace once it was known that the UK military would be moving out.

57. Officials reported in December 2006 that the rapid withdrawal had raised concerns among the UK’s partners about its commitment to civilian operations.

58. The Government did not assess to what extent civilians could be effective in a highly insecure environment. Nor did the principal government departments concerned reach agreement on a cross-government framework for managing risk in such circumstances.

59. By late 2006, UK civilian activity in Iraq, particularly in Basra and the South, had become severely constrained by the security situation. Only after the change in the security environment brought about by the Charge of the Knights, the Iraqi military

¹⁹ Minute Collecott, 11 July 2003, on Minute Millett to PS [FCO], 11 July 2003, ‘Iraq: Security’.

²⁰ [Minute Crompton to PS \[FCO\], 28 August 2003, ‘Ad Hoc Ministerial’.](#)

²¹ [Minute IPU \[junior official\] to PS/PUS \[FCO\], 30 June 2006, ‘Iraq: Review of Security’ attaching Paper Iraq Policy Unit, June 2006, ‘Review of Security of Staff and Missions in Iraq’.](#)

operation in March 2008 to drive Shia militias out of Basra, was there a strategic context in which the effectiveness of UK civilians in the South was no longer determined by the security threat and the availability of protective measures.

Civilian-military co-ordination

60. In the absence of a cross-government framework for managing risk, there was no overarching consideration of the security assets needed for civilians to do their jobs effectively, which UK military assets should be assigned to protect civilians and what constituted an appropriate level of expenditure on protective security in the particular circumstances of Iraq.

61. Sections 6.4 and 6.5 address the shortcomings in UK civilian–military co-ordination during pre-invasion planning and preparation for post-conflict Iraq.

62. Those shortcomings persisted after the invasion.

63. On 11 April 2003, shortly before the opening of the British Office Baghdad, officials advised Mr Straw that no decision had been taken on how to guard the compound perimeter. The MOD was considering the issue, but would “take some persuasion to redeploy to Baghdad from the South”.²²

64. On 15 July 2005, the Iraq Strategy Group (ISG) discussed the first draft of a paper to be signed by Dr John Reid, the Defence Secretary, on the planned drawdown of UK military forces from southern Iraq. The ISG concluded that the draft, which made no reference to the potential consequences of the drawdown for civilian activities, needed to cover more clearly the implications for other government departments and international actors.

65. In the revised paper, Dr Reid stated that, although the drawdown was likely to result in a significant cost saving to the military, other departments operating in Iraq might face increased security costs as they were “forced to seek commercial alternatives to military force protection”.²³ No alternatives were proposed.

66. On 30 September 2005, a joint FCO/MOD/DFID paper recommended the allocation of additional resources to security, including UK military resources. A No.10 official told Mr Blair that Dr Reid did not support the proposal.

67. In October 2005, Dr Reid sought approval to procure a counter-measure to the threat posed to UK troops by Improvised Explosive Devices.²⁴ Ten days later, Mr Hilary Benn, the International Development Secretary, expressed support for the proposal, pointing out that it would also “significantly reduce the current threat against UK forces and DFID staff”.

²² [Minute Gray to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 11 April 2003, ‘Baghdad: Preparing to Open’.](#)

²³ [Paper Secretary of State for Defence, 18 July 2005, ‘Operational Transition in Iraq’.](#)

²⁴ Letter Reid to Browne, 31 October 2005, ‘Iraq UORs: M*’.

Locally engaged staff

68. LE staff played an essential role in the UK effort in Iraq. They became increasingly important as security deteriorated and the mobility of UK personnel became constrained.

69. Officials recognised in 2003 the critical role of LE staff and the personal risk they took in working for the UK Government. The issue came into sharper focus in Basra in April 2006, when the British Consul General reported that most LE staff in the city considered it too dangerous to come into work.

70. On 18 June 2006, an LE member of staff at the British Embassy Office Basra was murdered. His wife, also an LE member of staff, was seriously injured.

71. The visibility of LE staff in the local community made them particularly vulnerable to attack. UK officials in Iraq took steps to manage the risk, including the introduction of flexible shift patterns. DFID local staff in Basra, who were particularly exposed to the threat because of the extent of their work outside the Basra Palace site, had standing permission not to come to work if they felt unsafe.

72. Only in August 2007, faced with a further deterioration in security and growing press interest in LE staff, did officials try, with some difficulty, to reconcile FCO, DFID, MOD and, as the department responsible for immigration, Home Office views to establish “a coherent cross-Whitehall approach”.²⁵

73. The design and implementation of the Locally Engaged Staff Assistance Scheme, announced in Parliament in October 2007, was further hindered by shortcomings in the data on LE staff held by the FCO and the MOD.

74. The evidence seen by the Inquiry indicates that the UK did not fail in its duty of care to LE staff, but the Inquiry concludes that the Government should have recognised sooner that LE staff were uniquely exposed to the security threat and vital to the UK effort in Iraq, and that this was an issue requiring a co-ordinated and agreed approach across departments.

Language skills

75. Several witnesses to the Inquiry commented on the shortage of Arabic speakers among civilians deployed to Iraq throughout the period covered by the Inquiry.

76. There was also a shortage of Arabic speakers available to support the UK military.

77. The deployment of more Arabic speakers would have provided the opportunity to:

- increase UK access to Iraqi institutions and society;
- build greater trust between the UK Government and influential Iraqis; and
- improve UK understanding of political and social undercurrents in Iraq.

²⁵ [Minute IPU \[junior official\] to Private Secretary \[FCO\], 1 August 2007, 'Iraq: Locally Engaged Staff'](#).

78. Two main factors appear to have contributed to the failure to meet the demand for Arabic speakers in Iraq:

- the finite number of Arabic speakers in the FCO; and
- the absence of a mechanism for redeploying Arabic speakers from other FCO jobs at short notice.

79. The Inquiry welcomes the steps taken by the FCO since 2010 to increase the number of Arabic speaker positions at FCO posts in the Middle East and North Africa, and Mr William Hague's decision as Foreign Secretary to open a new FCO language school in 2013 and to prioritise Arabic language training.

80. The Inquiry fully endorses Mr Hague's view that expertise in a foreign language makes UK diplomats:

“... vastly more effective at communicating the viewpoint of the United Kingdom. And it is vital to understanding the political mood in different countries and to spotting trends or anticipating crises.”²⁶

81. There is little evidence, however, that the Government has considered how to respond effectively to a sudden surge in demand for particular language skills, especially where demand may be unforeseen.

Lessons

82. The Inquiry recognises that, since 2003, significant changes have been made to the UK's strategic and operational approach to reconstruction and stabilisation. Some of those changes, including the establishment of a deployable UK civilian stand-by capability, are the direct result of lessons learned from serious shortcomings in the deployment of civilian personnel in post-conflict Iraq.

83. The lessons identified in this Section remain relevant to the UK's evolving approach to reconstruction and stabilisation.

84. Other lessons relating to the strategic role of civilians in post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation operations, the relationship between civilian and military deployments, and the impact of the UK's civilian-led programmes in Iraq are addressed in Section 10.4.

85. The effectiveness of the UK civilian effort in post-conflict Iraq was compromised by a range of factors, including the absence of effective cross-government co-ordination on risk, duty of care and the terms and conditions applicable to personnel serving in Iraq.

²⁶ Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Rt Hon William Hague MP [from *GOV.UK*], 19 September 2013, *Foreign Secretary opens Foreign Office language school*.

- 86.** The difficult working conditions for civilians in Iraq were reflected in short tour lengths and frequent leave breaks. Different departments adopted different arrangements throughout the Iraq campaign, leading to concerns about breaks in continuity, loss of momentum, lack of institutional memory and insufficient local knowledge.
- 87.** Different departments will continue to deploy civilian staff in different roles. Standardisation of all aspects of those deployments may not be appropriate, but greater harmonisation of departmental policies should be considered wherever possible. The same approach should be applied to LE staff.
- 88.** At all stages, including planning, departments must give full consideration to their responsibilities and duty of care towards LE staff, who have an essential contribution to make and will face particular risks in insecure environments.
- 89.** All civilian deployments should be assessed and reviewed against a single, rigorous, cross-government framework for risk management. The framework should provide the means for the Government as a whole to strike an effective balance between security and operational effectiveness, and to take timely decisions on the provision of appropriate security measures.
- 90.** Standardising tour lengths for civilians deployed by different departments would have eased the overall administrative burden and, perhaps, some of the tensions between individuals from different government departments serving in Iraq. But the environment was difficult and individuals' resilience and circumstances varied. The introduction of the option to extend a tour of duty was an appropriate response.
- 91.** Throughout any operation of this kind, departments should maintain two procedures for the systematic debriefing of staff returning to the UK: one to meet duty of care obligations, the other to learn lessons from their experience.
- 92.** It is difficult to separate the issue of the seniority or personal impact of individual civilians from the wider question of UK influence on the US, which is addressed in Section 9.8.
- 93.** In order to identify individuals with the right skills, there must be clarity about the roles they are to perform. Wherever possible, individuals should be recruited for and deployed to clearly defined roles appropriate to their skills and seniority. They must be provided with the equipment needed to perform those roles to a high standard.
- 94.** The Government should consider the introduction of a mechanism for responding to a surge in demand for a particular language capability.
- 95.** The Inquiry views the inability of the FCO, the MOD and DFID to confirm how many civilian personnel were deployed to or employed in Iraq, in which locations and in what roles, as a serious failure. Data management systems must provide accurate information on the names, roles and locations of all staff for whom departments have duty of care responsibilities.

