British General seeks UK Iraq withdrawal

The head of the British Army has said presence of UK forces in Iraq "exacerbates the security problems".

The head of the British Army has said the presence of UK armed forces in Iraq "exacerbates the security problems".

In an interview in the Daily Mail, Sir Richard Dannatt, Chief of the General Staff, is quoted as saying the British should "get out some time soon".

He also said: "Let's face it, the military campaign we fought in 2003, effectively kicked the door in."

There are currently more than 7,000 British soldiers in Iraq, based largely in Basra in the south of the country.

A Ministry of Defence spokesman said Britain had "a clear strategy" and worked with international partners "in support of the democratically elected government of Iraq, under a clear UN mandate."

BBC political editor Nick Robinson described Sir Richard's remarks as "quite extraordinary".

He said the new head of British army was "effectively saying we are making the situation worse in Iraq and worse for ourselves around the world by being in Iraq".

"I don't say that the difficulties we are experiencing round the world are caused by our presence in Iraq but undoubtedly our presence in Iraq exacerbates them

The comments "directly contradicted so much of what the government had said", our correspondent added.

Sir Richard might be issuing a "very public warning" to the next prime minister, he said.

In his interview, Sir Richard added that any initial tolerance "has largely turned to intolerance. That is a fact."

Sir Richard, who took on his role in August, also said planning for what happened after the initial successful war military offensive was "poor, probably based more on optimism than sound planning".

'Not invited in'

He said: "I don't say that the difficulties we are experiencing round the world are caused by

our presence in Iraq but undoubtedly our presence in Iraq exacerbates them."

Sir Richard told the newspaper: "We are in a Muslim country and Muslims' views of foreigners in their country are quite clear.

"As a foreigner, you can be welcomed by being invited in a country, but we weren't invited certainly by those in Iraq at the time."

He added: "Whatever consent we may have had in the first place, may have turned to tolerance and has largely turned to intolerance."

The original source of this article is BBC
Copyright © [Global Research](#), BBC, 2006

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: **Global Research**