

TRANSCRIPT

"Five Live Breakfast", 29 May 2003
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Presenter (P)	<p>Good Morning</p> <p>A senior official involved in preparing the Government's dossier on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction has said the document was rewritten just before it was published to apparently "make it more exciting". The official said the intelligence services were unhappy with the changes. Let's talk to Andrew Gilligan our defence correspondent.</p> <p>Hello Andrew</p>
Andrew Gilligan	<p>Hello</p>
P	<p>This was the dossier published what, last September by the Government?</p>
Andrew	<p>That's right. This is not the famous "dodgy dossier" that was copied off the internet, that came later. This was a much more substantial effort. Parliament was recalled to discuss it. Tony Blair made the opening speech in Parliament, em and, and it dominated the news that day. It was, it's the most substantial statement of the Government's case against Iraq.</p>
P	<p>And what, according to the intelligence services were the problems with it?</p>
Andrew	<p>Well, the draft they originally produced they tell me was actually not terribly exciting, it didn't add very much to what we already knew publicly. What any, kind of anyone who'd followed the story would know publicly, and it didn't satisfy Downing Street and they said eh, look, you know, is there anything more than this – can, can we make this a bit more exciting please.</p> <p>Em, and er, they mentioned a few things which they weren't very happy with and at Downing Street's insistence those were written into the document and one of the main things that em, that they weren't very happy with was this claim that Iraq could deploy its biological and chemical weapons within 45 minutes</p> <p>Now we now, we can be pretty sure now that that claim was actually wrong. Because if they could deploy within that short a time we'd have found the weapons by now, you know if they were that handy then they would have been more or less lying around er, and easily, easy for the troops to find in six weeks. Em, now, you know, what I thought to be honest was that that eh, that claim was wrong in good faith. Em, but er, what my intelligence service source says is that em essentially they were always suspicious about this claim, they did not want it to appear in the document, they did not put it in their original draft because em most of the assertions in the dossier were double sourced, this was only one source, and they didn't believe the source, they thought he had got mixed up. They thought he had got mixed up between the time it took to assemble a conventional er missile assembly and em aa and the idea that em Saddam had a er a weapons of mass destruction missile assembly.</p>
P	<p>So, I mean the implication that the, that Downing Street asked for it to be hyped up to help convince the doubters.</p>
Andrew	<p>Yeah, and, and they're not very happy. I mean the actual quote from my</p>

BBC/1/0018

	source was "most people in intelligence weren't happy with the dossier because it didn't reflect the considered view they were putting forward" and it was a matter of language and nuance as much as em er as actual detail. But the 45 minutes was very important because it went to the heart of the Government's case that Saddam was an imminent threat.
P	Absolutely. But, fundamentally, the intelligence services did believe, did have intelligence that Iraq did have weapons of mass destruction
Andrew	Yeah, they, they do believe that Iraq had a programme and what my source said was that he believed it was about 30% likely that there was a chemical weapons programme even in the six months before the war, and more likely considerably more likely, that there was a biological weapons programme. But he said the programmes they thought were small and not necessarily an imminent threat and sanctions did limit the programmes and, and eh, you know that, that the the issue is about tone and, er and nuance, . [Presenter hmmm]... .. it really is as much as anything else and, and really had they said all that in, in the way they wanted to it wouldn't have been nearly as compelling a case.
P	And, and in a word, the intelligence services, do they still believe weapons of mass destruction will be found in Iraq at some point? –
Andrew	They believe there were some Em, their not sure what to believe now to be honest, because what they are saying is, em, you know, they were int..., they have been interrogating all these em, all these people that they have captured and, and they are not telling them very much
P	Thank you very much Andrew

BBC/1/0019