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From Director, News

The Rt. Hon. Gerald Kaufman, M.P.,
The House of Commons,
LONDON.
SW1A 0AA

2 April, 2003

Dear Mr. Kaufman,

Thank you for your letter.

Andrew Gilligan was asked on Radio 5 Live:

"Can you tell from where you are whether the bombing of The Republican Guard is effective?"

He began his answer - "We can't tell." Your letter does not mention this. Thereafter Andrew's remarks were founded on legitimate professional judgement. He cited the Kosovo campaign where the number of Serbian armoured vehicles damaged was less than had been hoped. Andrew also was relaying what Iraqis had told him - and that is the way he puts it. Further, Andrew's judgement was self-evidently not definitive. Later in the interview he said "So far they (those with doubts about the effectiveness of the bombing of the Republican Guard) may be right." He did not say they were right.

On your point about monitoring and minding - I am sure that you have watched and listened enough to know that for nearly a fortnight - since the Iraqis changed their way of dealing with foreign journalists - we have been alerting our audiences that reporters cannot move around the city exactly as they please - and that pieces are monitored. This particular Radio 5 interview with

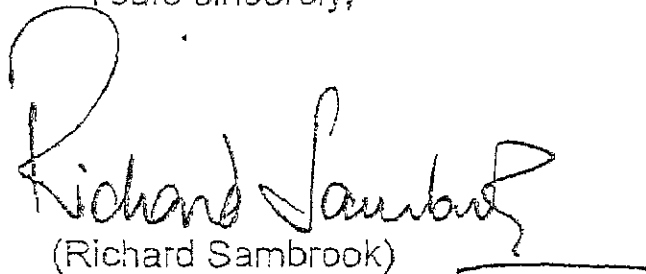
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150

Andrew Gilligan - most unusually - did not carry the warning - it should have done. But it would be unreasonable not to acknowledge that we have been telling audiences time and again about these restrictions. As for minders - the BBC Baghdad team does have a minder, although he does not accompany them all the time. Having had conversations with members of the team I am confident that Andrew's piece was not influenced by him.

You will not be surprised in the light of my remarks above that I do not accept that we have breached the guidelines in the way you state.

Yours sincerely,


(Richard Sambrook)



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From Director, News

Alastair Campbell, Esq.,
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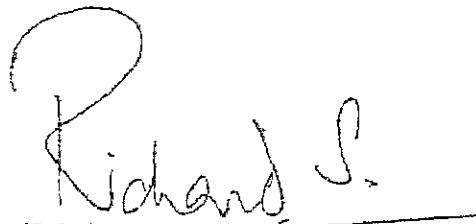
3 April, 2003

Dear Alastair,

Regarding your letter yesterday about Andrew Gilligan's comments about Central Command, we have listened to Radio 4 and Radio 5 Live's morning output and cannot find the passage you quote. Could you be more specific about where you heard it?

Clearly if it is exactly as quoted and not attributed it is unacceptable. However we would like to find the exact broadcast you are referring to before making a final judgement.

Yours sincerely,


(Richard Sambrook)

BBC/4/0154 152

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10 DOWNING STREET
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Director of Communications and Strategy

4 April 2003

Dear Mr. ...

Thank you for your letter of 3rd April. I'm sorry, the quote about 'rubbish from Central Command' was on News 24. I enclose a transcript. It was the last sentence. Sorry to have wasted your time in saying it was on radio. But I agree, and I hope you will see from the transcript, that this was unacceptable for someone supposed to be a professional BBC broadcaster.

Yours faithfully
Alastair Campbell

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

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BBC/4/0155 153