

**MEDIA MONITORING UNIT**



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TRANSCRIPT

Programme(s)	BBC News24
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Subject / interviewee	War in Iraq - Andrew Gilligan
Prepared by:	Paul Ellis
Contact numbers:	020 7276 1080 - Pager 07659 137 572 - 24hrs, every day

**Presenter:** Let's go live now to the Iraqi capital, it's just after nine in the morning there, our correspondent Andrew Gilligan is on the line. Some of his movements are restricted and his reports are monitored by the Iraqi authorities. Andrew it has to be said with an invading force about what eighty kilometres from the capital it is looking rather a beautiful morning there.

**Andrew Gilligan:** Yes it is and obviously the better the weather really the worse it is for the Iraqis because there are fewer obstacles in the way of seeing things from the air. But the Defence Minister whose press conference you quoted there had some interesting things to say about the defence of Baghdad. He admitted that the Republican Guards defending the capital had taken what he called some sacrifices but he said they were quite small. He said the morale of the Republican Guard was high and they were ready to fight. Interestingly he, he did as you also played I think mention that they would take the fight outside Baghdad rather than withdrawing in to the city and having the, having the fighting entirely within the city which is a slight change from his previous position.

**Presenter:** It is a slight change isn't it Andrew suggestion had been that after its experience in the 1991 Gulf War the Republican Guard wouldn't stay and be blown apart? In fact there were suggestions that they'd pretty much vacated those areas that are being so heavily bombarded in the southern outskirts and perhaps it was empty desert that was being pounded.

**AG:** Yes, I mean, it's very difficult to know how successful the American bombardment has been we simply can't trust claims of either side. I remember the Americans claiming great things for the success of their bombing campaigns of Serb forces in Kosovo and it turned out that they'd destroyed thirteen tanks in seven weeks. So it's very difficult to know what's really happening out there. It's also I think premature to characterise this as the start of the decisive battle. What we saw yesterday and the day before about eighty kilometres south of Baghdad were more like skirmishes than real battles. Each side was testing each other really.

**Presenter:** Yes now it seems something far more major may be happening. There were bombardments overnight Andrew tell us more.

**AG:** We heard some enormous blasts and we, we do hear these things all the time now. The targets again regime targets, we don't know precisely the extent of the damage but we believe that several of the regime buildings have been targeted.

**Presenter:** Right President Saddam through his Information Minister, we've seen the footage of that, has urged the Iraqi people to fight a holy war against the invaders. Our correspondents with US forces are getting intelligence briefings that suggest that three of the President's appearances since the start of the war have been taped the same day. They're drawing

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*attention to extraordinary details like the same smudges on the furniture, the curtains arranged the same way, that the room's just rearranged. When any of that is put to Iraqi officials what do they say?*

AG: I have to say that hasn't been put to Iraqi officials. I've seen Saddam give two televised speeches and then a couple of other silent appearances if you like just talking to minister and the two televised speeches I saw looked completely different. Indeed you might even say it was a different Saddam, may be it was. The backdrop was different, the appearance of the President was different, the way he spoke; one he was wearing glasses the second he wasn't, one he was reading from a hand written text the second he had a prepared speech. Lots of things were different so I'm not quite sure where these intelligence assessments come from it might just be more rubbish from Central Command.

Presenter: *Andrew thank you.*

End

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From Director, News

Alastair Campbell, Esq.,  
Director of Communications and Strategy,  
10, Downing Street,  
LONDON.  
SW1A 2AA

4 April, 2003

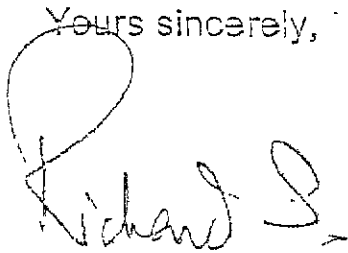
Dear Alastair,

Thank you for your letter and the transcript of Andrew Gilligan on News 24. I agree his final phrase is unacceptable. In mitigation I would only say it was live and at the end of an interview, the rest of which seems to me be appropriate. Gilligan has also been adept at highlighting from Baghdad weaknesses in the Iraqi regime - for example, this morning's interview when he pressed the Foreign Minister on Saddam Hussein's whereabouts which the Minister was unable to deal with.

Nevertheless this particular phrase was unacceptable, which I regret, and will take it up with Andrew Gilligan.

Thank you for drawing it to my attention.

Yours sincerely,

  
(Richard Sambrook)

BBC/4/0158

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10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

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10 DOWNING STREET  
PRESS OFFICE  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Director of Communications and Strategy

7 April 2003

You accepted that when Andrew Gilligan referred to information from CentCom as "just more rubbish from coalition", this was unacceptable. Could I ask what was done to communicate that view to Mr. Gilligan. I assume that when a correspondent says or does something which is unacceptable, that is made clear to him. However, his sneering contempt for anything put out by this coalition was on display once more this morning when he said on the Today programme,

"We don't know if they've got it under their complete control but for once I think we can believe the American claims that this could be it."

This makes clear that he does not believe the claims made by the US military. So, further to your acceptance that 'just more rubbish' was unacceptable, is "for once I think we can believe the American claims" acceptable? If so, could you point me to the occasions when the coalition has not told the truth to Mr. Gilligan?

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

Mr. Richard Sambrook  
BBC, By Fax: 0208 576 7120

BBC/4/0159

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**BBC** News

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From Deputy Director, News

Alastair Campbell, Esq.,  
Director of Communications and Strategy,  
10, Downing Street,  
LONDON,  
SW1A 2AA

8 April, 2003

Dear Alastair,

Thank you for your letter of 7th April regarding a report by Andrew Gilligan on "Today" Richard is away today and I am responding on his behalf.

We speak to Andrew - and many other correspondents - about their work. I need hardly say that all those conversations are confidential. They will remain so - as a matter of principle.

I turn now to the Andrew Gilligan report about which you complain. From time to time there have been problems trying to make sense out of the briefings provided by a variety of sources - from soldiers in the field, from Centcom, from the Pentagon and from the Ministry of Defence.

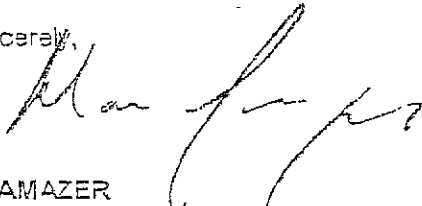
I am not suggesting that inaccuracies in any coalition briefing are a consequence of deliberate misinformation and deception. It is, after all, a fast-moving story. Nevertheless the fact that some claims have been made which have turned out to be premature or inaccurate provide the context for Andrew Gilligan's remarks.

I would also draw attention to the circumstances of his report. He was speaking live as he watched events unfold before him. I quote:

"There has been a major battle within I'd say 500 or 600 yards of us for an artillery position and the presidential compound on the other side of the river from our hotel. We've heard intense small arms and mortar fire, we've seen two American armoured personnel carriers and we've seen black clad figures we believe to be American troops running along the banks of the river. The artillery position went up in flames and the Presidential palace, the Americans claim, is under their occupation. We can certainly confirm that they are there, we don't know if they've got it completely under their control but for once I think we can believe the American claims that this could be it."

So the passage vividly makes clear what Andrew is seeing and hearing - and in this case underlines the veracity of a coalition briefing. What you see as a sneer at the end is not that - but a reflection of some of the problems with some of the briefings at an earlier stage of the conflict.

Yours sincerely,



MARK DAMAZER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, BBC NEWS

BBC/4/0160

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From: The Rt. Hon. Gerald Kaufman, M.P.

RS



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

10 April 2003

Mr Richard Sambrook  
Director, News  
BBC  
Room 5601, Television Centre  
Wood Lane  
London W12 7RJ

Dear Mr Sambrook

Wednesday 9 April was, by any criterion, a historic day in world affairs. I watched the 6pm news on BBC 1 and, to my astonishment, heard Huw Edwards ask your correspondent in Baghdad, Mr Ornaar, why only hundreds of Iraqis were out on the streets celebrating, instead of thousands. I watched the 10 pm BBC1 news. This time Mr Edwards asked Mr Ornaar why only thousands of Iraqis were out on the streets of Baghdad celebrating when the city has a population of 5 million.

I began to think that this was a deliberate editorial line when, on Newsnight at 10.30 pm that night, Jeremy Paxman made the point that "the demonstrators are only a tiny proportion of the population." He then went on to say that the celebrations took place in "only a small area" of the city. Your correspondent in Baghdad, Paul Ward, then told Mr Paxman about public opinion among Iraqis in the city, based on one conversation with a Shia and one conversation with a Sunni. When later in the programme Mr Paxman interviewed a United States military spokesman in Doha, his line of questioning was such as to lead this extremely well-mannered spokesman to say to Mr Paxman, "We shouldn't be over-focussed on the negatives."

Later in that Newsnight, statistics provided included a large number of Iraqi civilian casualties, when the coalition has provided no such statistics, and it is impossible to believe any statistics put out by the Iraqi regime. Pictures were shown of some grievously burned children, with the implication that they were among the casualties of coalition action. ITN, showing the same pictures, explained that these children had been injured when playing with ammunition; whose ammunition was not specified. No such explanation was provided by the BBC.

Of course, if we are looking at demonstrations, the BBC gave immense coverage to the anti-war demonstration in London before the conflict began which, although claiming to be national, involved only a tiny proportion of the population and took place in only a small area of London. With regard to the demonstrations in Baghdad on Wednesday, neither Mr Edwards nor Mr Paxman could have had the faintest idea of what was happening in those areas of this huge city where cameras and reporters were not present.

I believe that the BBC has much to answer for in its coverage of these events, and request your response.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Kaufman

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10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Director of Communications and Strategy

11 April 2003

Dear Mr Sambrook

Even by Andrew Gilligan's standards (which are low), the following on Radio 4 this morning was a disgrace:

"People here may be free but they're passing their first days of freedom, in more than fear than they've ever known before actually. I mean the old fear was, was you know habitual low level. This is, this is a much greater fear that their property's going to be invaded, their, their daughters will be raped and they'll be killed.

I mean frankly I'm speaking to you on, on probably some of the only electrical equipment in Baghdad that hasn't been stolen because we are, our hotel is protected by a ring of US Marines, but not many other places are."

It is hard to resist the notion that some journalists, having talked up what they predicted would be a failure, are now determined to present military success as a disaster. Mr. Gilligan, and to a certain extent Rageh Omaar, are among them. They veer from one exaggeration to another. Nobody says it's perfect. But the nature of BBC reporting out of Baghdad throughout this conflict has done you little credit, and I hope you will undertake an honest and deep analysis of it.

No need to reply.

Yours sincerely

p.c.

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

Richard Sambrook  
BBC, By Fax: 0208 576 7120

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