

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Flag C



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA



Director of Communications and Strategy

5 July 2003

Dear Mr Gleeson

In advance of your meeting to discuss the allegations that were made against the Government on the Today programme on May 29, and subsequent events, I thought it would be helpful to send you the enclosed.

It sets out, as fully as possible, how the Government has sought to deal with this issue since the allegations were first broadcast. I have included all the correspondence between myself and the BBC, and between colleagues in Government and the BBC. You will see from this that these serious allegations were not put to us in advance. You will see the swift denial, made with the backing of the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which had little or no effect upon subsequent reporting. You will see also that we did strive to resolve this privately. You will also see, from the exchanges the BBC has had both in correspondence and on air with Geoff Hoon and Ben Bradshaw, that we strongly dispute the BBC claims that the allegations were put to us before broadcast.

I am assuming that you will have been provided with all the relevant transcripts of evidence through the Foreign Affairs Committee. You will find in this file documentation referred to in the paragraph above and a transcript of the Thursday May 29 broadcast. I have also attached the text of Mr Gilligan's Mail on Sunday article of Sunday 1 June.

I am sorry to have sent you so much material, but I think it important, particularly in light of the way recent BBC reporting following Mr Gilligan's evidence to the FAC has sought to redefine the allegations, that you have all this material to hand.

I note from press cuttings that the BBC views my complaint as an attack upon the independence of the BBC. I want to assure you that is not the case. I respect the BBC's independence. I believe the BBC is one of the country's

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

CAB/1/0023

greatest assets and I have long been an admirer of its ethos, much of its journalism and many of its journalists.

It is also being said that I intend to use this issue as the basis of a broader attack upon the BBC. Let me assure you that whatever concerns we have expressed about coverage of Iraq, or about what we see as the agenda-driven journalism of some journalists and some parts of the BBC, they are not the issue here.

At issue here is one specific set of allegations, profoundly damaging to the Prime Minister, the Government and our Intelligence Agencies, which we know to be false and which we have sought, first privately and then publicly, to have corrected. It is about one story, the procedures that were or were not followed, pre and post broadcast, and the difficulties we have had in seeking redress for the broadcast of such a serious and false allegation, which has since been repeated, because of the BBC's reach and deserved reputation, in hundreds of media outlets in dozens of countries around the world - some examples of which are attached.

I hope this is helpful. I do not intend to inform the press that we have sent this to you.

Yours sincerely

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

Dermot Gleeson

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Director of Communications and Strategy

5 July 2003

Dear Dame Ruth

In advance of your meeting to discuss the allegations that were made against the Government on the Today programme on May 29, and subsequent events, I thought it would be helpful to send you the enclosed.

It sets out, as fully as possible, how the Government has sought to deal with this issue since the allegations were first broadcast. I have included all the correspondence between myself and the BBC, and between colleagues in Government and the BBC. You will see from this that these serious allegations were not put to us in advance. You will see the swift denial, made with the backing of the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which had little or no effect upon subsequent reporting. You will see also that we did strive to resolve this privately. You will also see, from the exchanges the BBC has had both in correspondence and on air with Geoff Hoon and Ben Bradshaw, that we strongly dispute the BBC claims that the allegations were put to us before broadcast.

I am assuming that you will have been provided with all the relevant transcripts of evidence through the Foreign Affairs Committee. You will find in this file documentation referred to in the paragraph above and a transcript of the Thursday May 29 broadcast. I have also attached the text of Mr Gilligan's Mail on Sunday article of Sunday 1 June.

I am sorry to have sent you so much material, but I think it important, particularly in light of the way recent BBC reporting following Mr Gilligan's evidence to the FAC has sought to redefine the allegations, that you have all this material to hand.

I note from press cuttings that the BBC views my complaint as an attack upon the independence of the BBC. I want to assure you that is not the case. I respect the BBC's independence. I believe the BBC is one of the country's

CAB | 1 | 0025

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

greatest assets and I have long been an admirer of its ethos, much of its journalism and many of its journalists.

It is also being said that I intend to use this issue as the basis of a broader attack upon the BBC. Let me assure you that whatever concerns we have expressed about coverage of Iraq, or about what we see as the agenda-driven journalism of some journalists and some parts of the BBC, they are not the issue here.

At issue here is one specific set of allegations, profoundly damaging to the Prime Minister, the Government and our Intelligence Agencies, which we know to be false and which we have sought, first privately and then publicly, to have corrected. It is about one story, the procedures that were or were not followed, pre and post broadcast, and the difficulties we have had in seeking redress for the broadcast of such a serious and false allegation, which has since been repeated, because of the BBC's reach and deserved reputation, in hundreds of media outlets in dozens of countries around the world - some examples of which are attached.

I hope this is helpful. I do not intend to inform the press that we have sent this to you.

Yours sincerely

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

Dame Ruth Deech

CAB/1/0026



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Director of Communications and Strategy

5 July 2003

Dear Dame Pauline

In advance of your meeting to discuss the allegations that were made against the Government on the Today programme on May 29, and subsequent events, I thought it would be helpful to send you the enclosed.

It sets out, as fully as possible, how the Government has sought to deal with this issue since the allegations were first broadcast. I have included all the correspondence between myself and the BBC, and between colleagues in Government and the BBC. You will see from this that these serious allegations were not put to us in advance. You will see the swift denial, made with the backing of the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which had little or no effect upon subsequent reporting. You will see also that we did strive to resolve this privately. You will also see, from the exchanges the BBC has had both in correspondence and on air with Geoff Hoon and Ben Bradshaw, that we strongly dispute the BBC claims that the allegations were put to us before broadcast.

I am assuming that you will have been provided with all the relevant transcripts of evidence through the Foreign Affairs Committee. You will find in this file documentation referred to in the paragraph above and a transcript of the Thursday May 29 broadcast. I have also attached the text of Mr Gilligan's Mail on Sunday article of Sunday 1 June.

I am sorry to have sent you so much material, but I think it important, particularly in light of the way recent BBC reporting following Mr Gilligan's evidence to the FAC has sought to redefine the allegations, that you have all this material to hand.

I note from press cuttings that the BBC views my complaint as an attack upon the independence of the BBC. I want to assure you that is not the case. I respect the BBC's independence. I believe the BBC is one of the country's

CAB|1|0027

greatest assets and I have long been an admirer of its ethos, much of its journalism and many of its journalists.

It is also being said that I intend to use this issue as the basis of a broader attack upon the BBC. Let me assure you that whatever concerns we have expressed about coverage of Iraq, or about what we see as the agenda-driven journalism of some journalists and some parts of the BBC, they are not the issue here.

At issue here is one specific set of allegations, profoundly damaging to the Prime Minister, the Government and our Intelligence Agencies, which we know to be false and which we have sought, first privately and then publicly, to have corrected. It is about one story, the procedures that were or were not followed, pre and post broadcast, and the difficulties we have had in seeking redress for the broadcast of such a serious and false allegation, which has since been repeated, because of the BBC's reach and deserved reputation, in hundreds of media outlets in dozens of countries around the world - some examples of which are attached.

I hope this is helpful. I do not intend to inform the press that we have sent this to you.

Yours sincerely

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

Dame Pauline Neville-Jones DCMG

CAB/1/0028



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Director of Communications and Strategy

5 July 2003

Dear Mr Sondhi

In advance of your meeting to discuss the allegations that were made against the Government on the Today programme on May 29, and subsequent events, I thought it would be helpful to send you the enclosed.

It sets out, as fully as possible, how the Government has sought to deal with this issue since the allegations were first broadcast. I have included all the correspondence between myself and the BBC, and between colleagues in Government and the BBC. You will see from this that these serious allegations were not put to us in advance. You will see the swift denial, made with the backing of the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which had little or no effect upon subsequent reporting. You will see also that we did strive to resolve this privately. You will also see, from the exchanges the BBC has had both in correspondence and on air with Geoff Hoon and Ben Bradshaw, that we strongly dispute the BBC claims that the allegations were put to us before broadcast.

I am assuming that you will have been provided with all the relevant transcripts of evidence through the Foreign Affairs Committee. You will find in this file documentation referred to in the paragraph above and a transcript of the Thursday May 29 broadcast. I have also attached the text of Mr Gilligan's Mail on Sunday article of Sunday 1 June.

I am sorry to have sent you so much material, but I think it important, particularly in light of the way recent BBC reporting following Mr Gilligan's evidence to the FAC has sought to redefine the allegations, that you have all this material to hand.

I note from press cuttings that the BBC views my complaint as an attack upon the independence of the BBC. I want to assure you that is not the case. I respect the BBC's independence. I believe the BBC is one of the country's

CAB/1/0029

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

greatest assets and I have long been an admirer of its ethos, much of its journalism and many of its journalists.

It is also being said that I intend to use this issue as the basis of a broader attack upon the BBC. Let me assure you that whatever concerns we have expressed about coverage of Iraq, or about what we see as the agenda-driven journalism of some journalists and some parts of the BBC, they are not the issue here.

At issue here is one specific set of allegations, profoundly damaging to the Prime Minister, the Government and our Intelligence Agencies, which we know to be false and which we have sought, first privately and then publicly, to have corrected. It is about one story, the procedures that were or were not followed, pre and post broadcast, and the difficulties we have had in seeking redress for the broadcast of such a serious and false allegation, which has since been repeated, because of the BBC's reach and deserved reputation, in hundreds of media outlets in dozens of countries around the world - some examples of which are attached.

I hope this is helpful. I do not intend to inform the press that we have sent this to you.

Yours sincerely

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

Mr Ranjit Sondhi CBE

CAB/1/0030

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Director of Communications and Strategy

5 July 2003

Dear Professor Jones

In advance of your meeting to discuss the allegations that were made against the Government on the Today programme on May 29, and subsequent events, I thought it would be helpful to send you the enclosed.

It sets out, as fully as possible, how the Government has sought to deal with this issue since the allegations were first broadcast. I have included all the correspondence between myself and the BBC, and between colleagues in Government and the BBC. You will see from this that these serious allegations were not put to us in advance. You will see the swift denial, made with the backing of the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which had little or no effect upon subsequent reporting. You will see also that we did strive to resolve this privately. You will also see, from the exchanges the BBC has had both in correspondence and on air with Geoff Hoon and Ben Bradshaw, that we strongly dispute the BBC claims that the allegations were put to us before broadcast.

I am assuming that you will have been provided with all the relevant transcripts of evidence through the Foreign Affairs Committee. You will find in this file documentation referred to in the paragraph above and a transcript of the Thursday May 29 broadcast. I have also attached the text of Mr Gilligan's Mail on Sunday article of Sunday 1 June.

I am sorry to have sent you so much material, but I think it important, particularly in light of the way recent BBC reporting following Mr Gilligan's evidence to the FAC has sought to redefine the allegations, that you have all this material to hand.

I note from press cuttings that the BBC views my complaint as an attack upon the independence of the BBC. I want to assure you that is not the case. I respect the BBC's independence. I believe the BBC is one of the country's

CAB/1/0031

greatest assets and I have long been an admirer of its ethos, much of its journalism and many of its journalists.

It is also being said that I intend to use this issue as the basis of a broader attack upon the BBC. Let me assure you that whatever concerns we have expressed about coverage of Iraq, or about what we see as the agenda-driven journalism of some journalists and some parts of the BBC, they are not the issue here.

At issue here is one specific set of allegations, profoundly damaging to the Prime Minister, the Government and our Intelligence Agencies, which we know to be false and which we have sought, first privately and then publicly, to have corrected. It is about one story, the procedures that were or were not followed, pre and post broadcast, and the difficulties we have had in seeking redress for the broadcast of such a serious and false allegation, which has since been repeated, because of the BBC's reach and deserved reputation, in hundreds of media outlets in dozens of countries around the world - some examples of which are attached.

I hope this is helpful. I do not intend to inform the press that we have sent this to you.

Yours sincerely

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

Professor Merfyn Jones

CAB | 1 | 0032



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Director of Communications and Strategy

5 July 2003

Dear Professor Monds

In advance of your meeting to discuss the allegations that were made against the Government on the Today programme on May 29, and subsequent events, I thought it would be helpful to send you the enclosed.

It sets out, as fully as possible, how the Government has sought to deal with this issue since the allegations were first broadcast. I have included all the correspondence between myself and the BBC, and between colleagues in Government and the BBC. You will see from this that these serious allegations were not put to us in advance. You will see the swift denial, made with the backing of the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which had little or no effect upon subsequent reporting. You will see also that we did strive to resolve this privately. You will also see, from the exchanges the BBC has had both in correspondence and on air with Geoff Hoon and Ben Bradshaw, that we strongly dispute the BBC claims that the allegations were put to us before broadcast.

I am assuming that you will have been provided with all the relevant transcripts of evidence through the Foreign Affairs Committee. You will find in this file documentation referred to in the paragraph above and a transcript of the Thursday May 29 broadcast. I have also attached the text of Mr Gilligan's Mail on Sunday article of Sunday 1 June.

I am sorry to have sent you so much material, but I think it important, particularly in light of the way recent BBC reporting following Mr Gilligan's evidence to the FAC has sought to redefine the allegations, that you have all this material to hand.

I note from press cuttings that the BBC views my complaint as an attack upon the independence of the BBC. I want to assure you that is not the case. I respect the BBC's independence. I believe the BBC is one of the country's

CAB | 1 | 0033

greatest assets and I have long been an admirer of its ethos, much of its journalism and many of its journalists.

It is also being said that I intend to use this issue as the basis of a broader attack upon the BBC. Let me assure you that whatever concerns we have expressed about coverage of Iraq, or about what we see as the agenda-driven journalism of some journalists and some parts of the BBC, they are not the issue here.

At issue here is one specific set of allegations, profoundly damaging to the Prime Minister, the Government and our Intelligence Agencies, which we know to be false and which we have sought, first privately and then publicly, to have corrected. It is about one story, the procedures that were or were not followed, pre and post broadcast, and the difficulties we have had in seeking redress for the broadcast of such a serious and false allegation, which has since been repeated, because of the BBC's reach and deserved reputation, in hundreds of media outlets in dozens of countries around the world - some examples of which are attached.

I hope this is helpful. I do not intend to inform the press that we have sent this to you.

Yours sincerely

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

Professor Fabian Monds CBE

CAB | 1 | 0034

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Director of Communications and Strategy

5 July 2003

Dear Sir Robert

In advance of your meeting to discuss the allegations that were made against the Government on the Today programme on May 29, and subsequent events, I thought it would be helpful to send you the enclosed.

It sets out, as fully as possible, how the Government has sought to deal with this issue since the allegations were first broadcast. I have included all the correspondence between myself and the BBC, and between colleagues in Government and the BBC. You will see from this that these serious allegations were not put to us in advance. You will see the swift denial, made with the backing of the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which had little or no effect upon subsequent reporting. You will see also that we did strive to resolve this privately. You will also see, from the exchanges the BBC has had both in correspondence and on air with Geoff Hoon and Ben Bradshaw, that we strongly dispute the BBC claims that the allegations were put to us before broadcast.

I am assuming that you will have been provided with all the relevant transcripts of evidence through the Foreign Affairs Committee. You will find in this file documentation referred to in the paragraph above and a transcript of the Thursday May 29 broadcast. I have also attached the text of Mr Gilligan's Mail on Sunday article of Sunday 1 June.

I am sorry to have sent you so much material, but I think it important, particularly in light of the way recent BBC reporting following Mr Gilligan's evidence to the FAC has sought to redefine the allegations, that you have all this material to hand.

I note from press cuttings that the BBC views my complaint as an attack upon the independence of the BBC. I want to assure you that is not the case. I respect the BBC's independence. I believe the BBC is one of the country's

CAB | 1 | 0035

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

greatest assets and I have long been an admirer of its ethos, much of its journalism and many of its journalists.

It is also being said that I intend to use this issue as the basis of a broader attack upon the BBC. Let me assure you that whatever concerns we have expressed about coverage of Iraq, or about what we see as the agenda-driven journalism of some journalists and some parts of the BBC, they are not the issue here.

At issue here is one specific set of allegations, profoundly damaging to the Prime Minister, the Government and our Intelligence Agencies, which we know to be false and which we have sought, first privately and then publicly, to have corrected. It is about one story, the procedures that were or were not followed, pre and post broadcast, and the difficulties we have had in seeking redress for the broadcast of such a serious and false allegation, which has since been repeated, because of the BBC's reach and deserved reputation, in hundreds of media outlets in dozens of countries around the world - some examples of which are attached.

I hope this is helpful. I do not intend to inform the press that we have sent this to you.

Yours sincerely

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

Sir Robert Smith

CAB/1/0036

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Director of Communications and Strategy

5 July 2003

Dear Lady Hogg

In advance of your meeting to discuss the allegations that were made against the Government on the Today programme on May 29, and subsequent events, I thought it would be helpful to send you the enclosed.

It sets out, as fully as possible, how the Government has sought to deal with this issue since the allegations were first broadcast. I have included all the correspondence between myself and the BBC, and between colleagues in Government and the BBC. You will see from this that these serious allegations were not put to us in advance. You will see the swift denial, made with the backing of the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which had little or no effect upon subsequent reporting. You will see also that we did strive to resolve this privately. You will also see, from the exchanges the BBC has had both in correspondence and on air with Geoff Hoon and Ben Bradshaw, that we strongly dispute the BBC claims that the allegations were put to us before broadcast.

I am assuming that you will have been provided with all the relevant transcripts of evidence through the Foreign Affairs Committee. You will find in this file documentation referred to in the paragraph above and a transcript of the Thursday May 29 broadcast. I have also attached the text of Mr Gilligan's Mail on Sunday article of Sunday 1 June.

I am sorry to have sent you so much material, but I think it important, particularly in light of the way recent BBC reporting following Mr Gilligan's evidence to the FAC has sought to redefine the allegations, that you have all this material to hand.

I note from press cuttings that the BBC views my complaint as an attack upon the independence of the BBC. I want to assure you that is not the case. I respect the BBC's independence. I believe the BBC is one of the country's

CAB/1/0037

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

greatest assets and I have long been an admirer of its ethos, much of its journalism and many of its journalists.

It is also being said that I intend to use this issue as the basis of a broader attack upon the BBC. Let me assure you that whatever concerns we have expressed about coverage of Iraq, or about what we see as the agenda-driven journalism of some journalists and some parts of the BBC, they are not the issue here.

At issue here is one specific set of allegations, profoundly damaging to the Prime Minister, the Government and our Intelligence Agencies, which we know to be false and which we have sought, first privately and then publicly, to have corrected. It is about one story, the procedures that were or were not followed, pre and post broadcast, and the difficulties we have had in seeking redress for the broadcast of such a serious and false allegation, which has since been repeated, because of the BBC's reach and deserved reputation, in hundreds of media outlets in dozens of countries around the world - some examples of which are attached.

I hope this is helpful. I do not intend to inform the press that we have sent this to you.

Yours sincerely

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

The Baroness Hogg

CAB/1/0038

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Director of Communications and Strategy

5 July 2003

Dear Lord Ryder

In advance of your meeting to discuss the allegations that were made against the Government on the Today programme on May 29, and subsequent events, I thought it would be helpful to send you the enclosed.

It sets out, as fully as possible, how the Government has sought to deal with this issue since the allegations were first broadcast. I have included all the correspondence between myself and the BBC, and between colleagues in Government and the BBC. You will see from this that these serious allegations were not put to us in advance. You will see the swift denial, made with the backing of the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which had little or no effect upon subsequent reporting. You will see also that we did strive to resolve this privately. You will also see, from the exchanges the BBC has had both in correspondence and on air with Geoff Hoon and Ben Bradshaw, that we strongly dispute the BBC claims that the allegations were put to us before broadcast.

I am assuming that you will have been provided with all the relevant transcripts of evidence through the Foreign Affairs Committee. You will find in this file documentation referred to in the paragraph above and a transcript of the Thursday May 29 broadcast. I have also attached the text of Mr Gilligan's Mail on Sunday article of Sunday 1 June.

I am sorry to have sent you so much material, but I think it important, particularly in light of the way recent BBC reporting following Mr Gilligan's evidence to the FAC has sought to redefine the allegations, that you have all this material to hand.

I note from press cuttings that the BBC views my complaint as an attack upon the independence of the BBC. I want to assure you that is not the case. I respect the BBC's independence. I believe the BBC is one of the country's

CAB | 1 | 0039

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

greatest assets and I have long been an admirer of its ethos, much of its journalism and many of its journalists.

It is also being said that I intend to use this issue as the basis of a broader attack upon the BBC. Let me assure you that whatever concerns we have expressed about coverage of Iraq, or about what we see as the agenda-driven journalism of some journalists and some parts of the BBC, they are not the issue here.

At issue here is one specific set of allegations, profoundly damaging to the Prime Minister, the Government and our Intelligence Agencies, which we know to be false and which we have sought, first privately and then publicly, to have corrected. It is about one story, the procedures that were or were not followed, pre and post broadcast, and the difficulties we have had in seeking redress for the broadcast of such a serious and false allegation, which has since been repeated, because of the BBC's reach and deserved reputation, in hundreds of media outlets in dozens of countries around the world - some examples of which are attached.

I hope this is helpful. I do not intend to inform the press that we have sent this to you.

Yours sincerely

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

The Rt Hon The Lord Ryder of Wensum OBE

CAB/1/0040

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Director of Communications and Strategy

5 July 2003

Dear Ms Sarkis

In advance of your meeting to discuss the allegations that were made against the Government on the Today programme on May 29, and subsequent events, I thought it would be helpful to send you the enclosed.

It sets out, as fully as possible, how the Government has sought to deal with this issue since the allegations were first broadcast. I have included all the correspondence between myself and the BBC, and between colleagues in Government and the BBC. You will see from this that these serious allegations were not put to us in advance. You will see the swift denial, made with the backing of the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which had little or no effect upon subsequent reporting. You will see also that we did strive to resolve this privately. You will also see, from the exchanges the BBC has had both in correspondence and on air with Geoff Hoon and Ben Bradshaw, that we strongly dispute the BBC claims that the allegations were put to us before broadcast.

I am assuming that you will have been provided with all the relevant transcripts of evidence through the Foreign Affairs Committee. You will find in this file documentation referred to in the paragraph above and a transcript of the Thursday May 29 broadcast. I have also attached the text of Mr Gilligan's Mail on Sunday article of Sunday 1 June.

I am sorry to have sent you so much material, but I think it important, particularly in light of the way recent BBC reporting following Mr Gilligan's evidence to the FAC has sought to redefine the allegations, that you have all this material to hand.

I note from press cuttings that the BBC views my complaint as an attack upon the independence of the BBC. I want to assure you that is not the case. I respect the BBC's independence. I believe the BBC is one of the country's

CAB | 11 | 0041

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

greatest assets and I have long been an admirer of its ethos, much of its journalism and many of its journalists.

It is also being said that I intend to use this issue as the basis of a broader attack upon the BBC. Let me assure you that whatever concerns we have expressed about coverage of Iraq, or about what we see as the agenda-driven journalism of some journalists and some parts of the BBC, they are not the issue here.

At issue here is one specific set of allegations, profoundly damaging to the Prime Minister, the Government and our Intelligence Agencies, which we know to be false and which we have sought, first privately and then publicly, to have corrected. It is about one story, the procedures that were or were not followed, pre and post broadcast, and the difficulties we have had in seeking redress for the broadcast of such a serious and false allegation, which has since been repeated, because of the BBC's reach and deserved reputation, in hundreds of media outlets in dozens of countries around the world – some examples of which are attached.

I hope this is helpful. I do not intend to inform the press that we have sent this to you.

Yours sincerely

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

Ms Angela Sarkis CBE

CAB | 1 | 0042

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Director of Communications and Strategy

5 July 2003

Dear Gavyn

In advance of your meeting to discuss the allegations that were made against the Government on the Today programme on May 29, and subsequent events, I thought it would be helpful to send you the enclosed.

It sets out, as fully as possible, how the Government has sought to deal with this issue since the allegations were first broadcast. I have included all the correspondence between myself and the BBC, and between colleagues in Government and the BBC. You will see from this that these serious allegations were not put to us in advance. You will see the swift denial, made with the backing of the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which had little or no effect upon subsequent reporting. You will see also that we did strive to resolve this privately. You will also see, from the exchanges the BBC has had both in correspondence and on air with Geoff Hoon and Ben Bradshaw, that we strongly dispute the BBC claims that the allegations were put to us before broadcast.

I am assuming that you will have been provided with all the relevant transcripts of evidence through the Foreign Affairs Committee. You will find in this file documentation referred to in the paragraph above and a transcript of the Thursday May 29 broadcast. I have also attached the text of Mr Gilligan's Mail on Sunday article of Sunday 1 June.

I am sorry to have sent you so much material, but I think it important, particularly in light of the way recent BBC reporting following Mr Gilligan's evidence to the FAC has sought to redefine the allegations, that you have all this material to hand.

I note from press cuttings that the BBC views my complaint as an attack upon the independence of the BBC. I want to assure you that is not the case. I respect the BBC's independence. I believe the BBC is one of the country's

CAB/1/0043

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

greatest assets and I have long been an admirer of its ethos, much of its journalism and many of its journalists.

It is also being said that I intend to use this issue as the basis of a broader attack upon the BBC. Let me assure you that whatever concerns we have expressed about coverage of Iraq, or about what we see as the agenda-driven journalism of some journalists and some parts of the BBC, they are not the issue here.

At issue here is one specific set of allegations, profoundly damaging to the Prime Minister, the Government and our Intelligence Agencies, which we know to be false and which we have sought, first privately and then publicly, to have corrected. It is about one story, the procedures that were or were not followed, pre and post broadcast, and the difficulties we have had in seeking redress for the broadcast of such a serious and false allegation, which has since been repeated, because of the BBC's reach and deserved reputation, in hundreds of media outlets in dozens of countries around the world - some examples of which are attached.

I hope this is helpful. I do not intend to inform the press that we have sent this to you.

Yours sincerely

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

Mr Gavyn Davies OBE

CAB/1/0044

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL