

**Mr. Iain Duncan Smith (Chingford and Woodford Green):** The Leader of the House has said that rogue elements within the intelligence services are undermining the Government and that their numbers are growing. Does the Prime Minister agree with him?

**The Prime Minister:** It is obvious from what the "Today" programme has said—if that source is to be believed—that of course there was somebody from within the intelligence community who spoke to the media. But I want to say that the security services and intelligence services do a superb job on behalf of this country. Over the six years that I have been Prime Minister, they have been magnificent in the information that they have given, in their professionalism and in their integrity.

**Mr. Duncan Smith:** The question is not the "Today" programme but that the Leader of the House made very serious allegations about the security services. I agree with the Prime Minister that the security services fulfil a monumental role on behalf of the Government, but the Leader of the House said that they are seeking deliberately to undermine the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister can clear this up right now. Can he tell us how senior he believes these people are and how many of them there are, and what he intends to do about these allegations?

**The Prime Minister:** In fairness to the Leader of the House, he did not say that the security services were engaged in anything, but that somebody from the security services was talking—and it is pretty obvious that that is the case. The right hon. Gentleman asks me who it is and how senior, but according to the BBC, the source is anonymous, so obviously I do not know. There is serious point in what the right hon. Gentleman says, but I do not believe that the person who is talking is a member of the Joint Intelligence Committee and I want to make it clear to the House—I have spoken and conferred with the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee—that there was no attempt, at any time, by any official, or Minister, or member of No. 10 Downing street staff, to override the intelligence judgments of the Joint Intelligence Committee. That includes the judgment about the so-called 45 minutes. It was a judgment made by the Joint Intelligence Committee and by that committee alone.

**Mr. Duncan Smith:** But the Prime Minister is equivocating. *[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Let the Leader of the Opposition speak.

**Mr. Duncan Smith:** The Leader of the House, in an interview with *The Times* and on the "Today" programme, did not talk about one person, but about a growing number of members of the security services. The Leader of the House made allegations about the security services—[Hon. Members: "Ooh!"]—and the Prime Minister is not supporting him. We are also hearing allegations from others in the social services that the Prime Minister misled Parliament and the country in the run-up to the war. Those are highly serious allegations. Surely the essential way to deal with the problem is for the Prime Minister to publish the dossier given to him by the JIC before the one that he published in September. Will he do that today?

**The Prime Minister:** In relation to all those issues, the Intelligence and Security Committee is at full liberty to go through all the Joint Intelligence Committee assessments and produce a report on them. Because of the importance of the issue, it is only right that a report be published so that people can make a judgment on it.

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However, the claims that have been made are simply false. In particular, the claim that the readiness of Saddam to use weapons within 45 minutes of an order to use them was a point inserted in the dossier at the behest of No. 10 is completely and totally untrue. Furthermore, the allegation that the 45-minute claim provoked disquiet among the intelligence community, which disagreed with its inclusion in the dossier—I have discussed it, as I said, with the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee—is also completely and totally untrue. Instead of hearing from one or many anonymous sources, I suggest that if people have any evidence, they actually produce it.

**Mr. Duncan Smith:** But the Leader of the House is not an anonymous source. The Prime Minister stands in his place saying that these allegations are wrong. If so, and if he did not add the 45-minute point to the dossier, why will he not publish the dossier given him by the JIC before he finally published the one in September? Surely that would clear up the point, because it was given to him as evidence that could be put in the public domain. He can do that now and clear the matter up. Of course we welcome the fact that the Intelligence and Security Committee will look into it, but I remind the whole House that the Prime Minister will let that Committee see only the intelligence reports that he wants it to see. It reports directly to him and he can withhold any part of, or all of, its reports. However, the Committee is being asked to investigate the Prime Minister's role and that of his closest advisers. Given the allegations made by the Leader of the House today, surely the only way to clear up the problem is to have an independent inquiry?

**The Prime Minister:** As far as I am aware, the Leader of the House was not making an allegation about the intelligence being wrong. On the contrary, he was rebutting the allegation that the intelligence was wrong. In relation to the Intelligence and Security Committee, it is not true that I will withhold from it the Joint Intelligence Committee assessments. I will give it all the JIC assessments. In addition, the Committee can, in accordance with its normal practice, interview those people in the security services who drew up the JIC reports. That is surely a fair way to proceed. I will then publish the report.

If I may say so to the right hon. Gentleman, he had intelligence briefings as well. I suspect that the problem for him is that he has been wondering over the past few days whether to jump on this particular bandwagon or not, and he has made the wrong choice.

**Mr. Duncan Smith** *rose*—

**Hon. Members:** More!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Duncan Smith:** The allegations made by the Leader of the House today have changed everything. He is alleging that elements of the security services are actually seeking to undermine the Government. The Prime Minister cannot pretend that this is just a simple and small issue. The whole credibility of his Government rests on clearing up these charges. I simply say to the Prime Minister that these allegations are not going to go away. He has one former Cabinet Minister who says that he has duped the Cabinet; another says that he committed a monumental blunder; and, today, the Leader of the House has attacked members of the security services. Surely the reality is that the only way is to hold an independent judicial inquiry, if he will not produce the evidence, and to do it today.

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**The Prime Minister:** I have already said that we will produce all the evidence for the Intelligence and Security Committee. I really think that that is the sensible and right way to proceed. It can then come to a considered judgment and I will publish the report. I repeat that all the allegations that have been made are completely without any substance. Indeed, if the right hon. Gentleman wants me to, I shall go through a few more. For example, it was reported that there was a meeting in New York between the Foreign Secretary and Colin Powell in which they expressed their doubts about weapons of mass destruction. On the day concerned, the Foreign Secretary was in France. As for the allegation in *The Mail on Sunday* that the German Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, ambushed me over weapons of mass destruction—lies. I have the following statement from the German embassy:

"The German embassy rejects in the strongest possible terms your"—

*The Mail on Sunday's*—

"claims made on today's front page article . . . The content and the quotations attributed to Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer are pure fiction."

That at least is consistent. It was alleged that the source for the 45 minute claim was an Iraqi defector of dubious reliability. He was not an Iraqi defector and he was an established and reliable source.

**Mr. Duncan Smith:** The truth is that nobody believes a word that the Prime Minister is saying now. *[Interruption.]* That is the truth. We now have the unedifying sight of the Leader of the House being sent out to do the Prime Minister's bidding and to attack elements of the security services, which is disgraceful. Will the Prime Minister either publish that dossier right now, or hold an independent inquiry so that the public can judge for themselves?

**The Prime Minister:** Again, let me point out to the right hon. Gentleman that what the Leader of the House was saying was what was clearly true, which is that there were people speaking anonymously to the media. I want to repeat, however, that in respect of Iraq and of every issue that I have handled over the past few years, our intelligence services have been absolutely magnificent.

I say, with the greatest respect to the right hon. Gentleman, that the fact is that in the end there have been many claims made about the Iraq conflict. It was claimed that hundreds of thousands of people were going to die in it: that it would be my Vietnam; that the middle east would be in flames; and—the latest claim—that weapons of mass destruction were a complete invention by the British Government. The truth is that some people resent the fact that it was right to go to conflict. We won the conflict: thanks to the magnificent contribution of the British troops, Iraq is now free, and we should be proud of that.

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**Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Skye and Inverness, West):** The Prime Minister is saying that more time is needed and asking for public patience when it comes to finding categoric evidence of weapons of mass destruction, but does he not understand that many people, in this country and internationally, treat that with some scepticism? More time and a degree of patience with regard to the progress already being made were exactly what Dr. Hans Blix appealed to the UN for. The Prime Minister was unwilling to extend that courtesy to Dr. Blix, despite having voted for it. Why then does he expect people to extend that courtesy to him?

**The Prime Minister:** For two reasons, the situation is completely different. First of all, what I said in relation to Hans Blix: I do not have the words in front of me now, but I think that what I said in this House, when asked many times, was that, if Saddam was co-operating fully, time was not the issue. The process could take as much time as Dr. Blix needed. However, if Saddam was not co-operating fully—and even Dr. Blix found that he was not—that meant that Saddam was in breach of resolution 1441.

The second point is that of course the situation is different now that Saddam has been removed from power. The first priority after the conflict—and this, quite rightly, is the reason for the pressure on us—is to take the humanitarian and reconstruction measures necessary to put Iraq back on its feet. The Iraq survey group is 1,300 or 1,400 strong, and it is the main group charged with going into Iraq, investigating all the sites and interviewing the scientists and witnesses. That group is starting its work now—literally now. The reason I ask people to be patient is that the group has just gone into Iraq: it should be allowed to get on with its job, investigate the sites, interview the witnesses and then report back to us.

**Mr. Kennedy:** If the Prime Minister acknowledges that public scepticism exists, rightly or wrongly, will he acknowledge also that it is liable to be increased by the comments of the Leader of the House about the rogue elements in the security services? Whom are the public to trust if the Government are letting it be known that they cannot wholeheartedly trust their own security services? Does not that underline the need for a fully independent judicial review of just what has gone on?

**The Prime Minister:** The intelligence that formed the basis of the dossier that we put out last September was based on Joint Intelligence Committee assessments. There was never any question of Ministers, officials or anyone else trying to override that. With the greatest respect to the right hon. Gentleman, the Intelligence and Security Committee will be able to go through all those intelligence assessments. If the Committee wants to refer to those assessments, it can. That will then be published in its report. Rather than having allegations made by anonymous sources that are completely untrue, is not it better that people with evidence should present it to the Intelligence and Security Committee and allow that Committee to make a judgment?

The right hon. Gentleman says that there is scepticism about the matter, but perhaps he should go back and look at some of the words that he has used and the false allegations that he has made. Then he will see where the scepticism might have originated.

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Q7. [116555] **Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow):** What action he has taken since 14 May to gather documentation in relation to weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

**The Prime Minister:** We believe that documents relating to Iraq's WMD programmes have been carefully concealed, including at the homes of scientists and other personnel connected with those programmes. As I informed the House a moment or two ago, a new organisation, the Iraq survey group, has been set up to take charge of the search for Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, among other things. The group will harness intelligence resources and the investigatory skills of about 1,300 to 1,400 staff from the US, the UK and Australia. It will subsume the existing smaller operations and investigations being carried out by the US military. It will also include former United Nations arms inspectors, and it represents a significant expansion of effort in the coalition hunt for weapons of mass destruction.

**Mr. Dalyell:** Tonight at 7 o'clock, Mr. Speaker has given me an Adjournment debate on the situation in detention of Tariq Aziz. Could the Prime Minister ask the junior Minister at the Foreign Office who will be replying to the debate to enlarge on the processes by which the documentation that is found may relate to trials, not only of Tariq Aziz but of some others? Do we not have to be rather careful, whatever our views, about victors' justice? Surely those people have to be brought to trial one way or another?

**The Prime Minister:** I agree with my hon. Friend: they have to be brought to trial in a proper way. That is something that we are discussing at present both with our allies and with the United Nations. I shall certainly pass on to my hon. Friend, the Foreign Office Minister who will reply to the debate, the points that my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) has made. I hope, however, that he will recognise and support us in one thing. Sometimes over the past few days, it has been almost as if the whole issue of Saddam and weapons of mass destruction were a curious invention. The weapons of mass destruction issue and Saddam have been around for 12 years in the UN, as have Saddam's efforts at concealment. When I was replying to my right hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), I forgot one point. It is sometimes said that it is very curious that, if those weapons were ready to fire, they were not found immediately. The answer to that lies in the very point we made in the dossier, which is that once Saddam started to realise that United Nations inspectors were coming back in, as I think I said continually at the Dispatch Box, there was then a concerted campaign of concealment of the weapons. Indeed, I think I also said—if not at this Dispatch Box, then elsewhere publicly—that one benefit of that, although there were obviously a lot of problems with it, was that it would make it more difficult to reassemble those weapons: but that does not in any shape or form dispute the original intelligence. As for the other point that my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow makes, about the tribunal and how these people are tried, I can assure him that if they are tried they should be tried according to proper and due process.

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