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PERMANENT UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE

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Dear David,

ANDREW GILLIGAN AND THE SINGLE SOURCE

An official in the MOD has volunteered that he had a discussion with Andrew Gilligan on 22 May, one week before Gilligan's allegation about the interference in the production of the September dossier and the '45 minute story'. He is an FCO official seconded to the MOD's Proliferation and Arms Control Secretariat, with a long history of authorised dealing with the press in the course of his duties, though not in this case.

He was interviewed today by his line manager and my Personnel Director for two hours. The official claims that he met Gilligan to discuss Gilligan's experiences in Baghdad because he believed it would be helpful to him in his own role as a BW expert with long scientific/academic association with the Iraqi weapons programme, past experience as a UN Inspector and an expectation that he would be returning to Iraq to debrief Iraqis associated with their WMD programme shortly. It would appear, from what he has told us, that their discussion touched on some of the issues subsequently referred to by Gilligan in the press in a number of ways:

- In response to a question from Gilligan about the failure of Iraq to use WMD and the inability to find them, he said that conditions early in the war were not favourable and that there were command and control problems subsequently, and that the small arsenal of WMD remaining would be difficult to find without human information;
- on the issue of the 45 minutes, raised by Gilligan, he said that he did not know to what it refers (not having access to the intelligence report);
- asked why it should be in the dossier, he said that he replied "probably for impact";

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