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PERMANENT UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE

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Dear David,

ANDREW GILLIGAN AND THE SINGLE SOURCE

Since my letter to you yesterday afternoon, there has been a further development which points more strongly to our official as being the "source" for the Gilligan allegation about the dossier (albeit with plenty of room still for the possibility of embellishment from other sources and misrepresentation by the journalist).

Today's Times carries an article by Tom Baldwin which contains further hints as to Gilligan's informant. There are three new pointers, specifically:

- "BBC journalists have been told that Mr Gilligan's anonymous source is among the 100 British intelligence and weapons specialists currently in Iraq as part of the ISG"
- "Attempts to contact...source in the past month to ask supplementary questions has proved unsuccessful because of the nature of his position"
- Asked if now based abroad the executive replied "Something like that".

Although the official is not in Iraq at present I understand that he was there recently, after his conversation with Gilligan on 22 May and was planning to visit again later this month as an expert helping with the work of the Iraq Survey Group searching for WMD. The fact that the BBC are uncertain of his precise whereabouts, is consistent with the official's statement at the MOD's interviews yesterday that he has had no contact with the BBC since 22 May. Gilligan will have been aware of his general plans to visit - the official states that this was the reason why he agreed to meet Gilligan in the first place - but the cutting of contact since then would explain the BBC's lack of precision in their knowledge about the exact timings of his presence in Iraq itself.

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