

Andrew Gilligan-INTERNET

From: Andrew Gilligan-INTERNET
Sent: 30 June 2003 04 03 PM
To: 'maplesj@parliament.uk'
Subject: FW analysis of campbell's evidence - main part (1 more to come)

John,

As promised here is my analysis of the Campbell evidence. I've added some further notes at the bottom.

Andrew

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From: Andrew Gilligan-INTERNET
Sent: 30 June 2003 13 14
To: Andrew Gilligan-INTERNET, Mark Damazer, Kevin Marsh, Richard Sambrook and PA
Subject: analysis of campbell's evidence - main part (1 more to come)

On the dodgy dossier

The exchanges on the dodgy dossier offer no direct proof about my source's charges, because they all relate to the September dossier. But since much of Mr Campbell's evidence on the dodgy dossier can be compared with other information in the public domain, it does allow us to test his use of language and his general truthfulness.

At Q946, Sir John Stanley asks him about the "sexing up" of Dr al-Marashi's work in the February dossier. Mr Campbell admits that it was done "for example, where 'hostile groups' became 'terrorist organisations'."

Actually, Dr al-Marashi's original words in his thesis were about "opposition groups in hostile regimes", not hostile groups. Mr Campbell is trying to minimise the import of Downing Street's changes to Dr al-Marashi by misrepresenting what he wrote in the first place. "Opposition groups" are not very close to terrorists. "Hostile groups" are much closer.

On its own this does not amount to much. It could easily be a slip. But it starts to build up. Mr Campbell also tells the Committee that "we have apologised *in relation to* Dr al-Marashi." (Q994, my italics). This is sort of half-true - the Government has expressed general regret, if not quite apologised, for not attributing Dr al-Marashi's work. But it clearly gave members of the Committee - certainly Sir John Stanley, see Q1152 - the impression that the Government had actually said sorry to Dr al-Marashi himself. As we know, they had not.

At Q964 Mr Campbell is asked whether the Government acknowledged a mistake over the dodgy dossier at the time the plagiarism was exposed. He replies: "The PM's spokesman in the very next briefing said, 'Something has gone wrong here, it should not have happened, mistakes have been made and we will have to look at it.'"

As the morning lobby briefing note of 7 February (on the Downing Street website) makes clear, the PM's official spokesman did not in fact say anything like this. He said: "Some (sic) of the second section was based on (sic) Dr al-Marashi's work which, in retrospect, we should have acknowledged... In our view, there was nothing for which we had to apologise... The document was solid and accurate and we stand by it... We reject completely the comment that the Government [in the PM's statement on 3 Feb] misled Parliament."

This continued to be the Government's position until the Foreign Secretary's evidence to you last week.