

Helen Tunley

C, 2003

From: Catherine East on behalf of Simon Muir-SEC
Sent: 04 July 2003 19:28
To: Vanessa Michna, Angelamsarkis@aol.com, Dame Pauline Neville-Jones-DO NOT DELETE, Dermot Gleeson; dgleeson@mjgleeson.com, e r davis@bangor.ac.uk, Fabian Monds, Gavyn Davies & PA-Internet, gjj50@dial.pipex.com, hoggs@parliament.uk, irene.adams@weir.co.uk, mwalter@mjgleeson.com, r.m.jones@bangor.ac.uk, richard.eyre@dial.pipex.com, Ruth Deech-INTERNET, ryder@parliament.uk; Sandra Madley, Sue Watson
Subject: FW: Governors' Meeting on Sunday night

Gavyn has asked me to send you the following message.

Dear Governors

As you know I have decided to call a Governors' meeting for 6.30pm on Sunday 6th July in Room 2364, Broadcasting House to discuss the Campbell affair. I do not think that we can wait until the next monthly Governors' meeting to discuss this subject, especially in view of the fact that the publication of the Annual Report will precede the July Governors' meeting, and we need an agreed line to take in public before then.

This is an unusually important moment in our careers as Governors. I am pleased that you have all made yourselves available for this meeting - two of you by phone. We shall be joined by Greg, Richard Sambrook, Caroline Thomson and Stephen Whittle. Sally Osman, Head of Communications, will also be available once we are in a position to agree a statement and to discuss communications. Simon has compiled a pack of background papers which will be issued to you later today.

I do not think that we should seek to take a view during this meeting on whether the Gilligan story was accurate. This is not a question on which we need to take responsibility. Instead, I think we should concentrate on the following three questions:

1. Mr Campbell has made allegations of systemic bias in the BBC's coverage of the war. Should we reiterate our already-published view that these criticisms are invalid, and are therefore rejected by the Board?
2. Mr Campbell has also alleged that the Today programme breached the BBC's producers' guidelines. I believe that we should investigate this allegation, which has been repeatedly made in public, without waiting for an official complaint from Mr Campbell. We can do this on Sunday. We need to consider whether to publish our verdict following the meeting.
3. We should also consider whether to initiate investigations into any other matters of concern. These could include the rules under which BBC journalists are allowed to publish newspaper articles under their names, the nature of the producers' guidelines on the use of single-source, and anonymous-source, material, and the training of BBC journalists, especially in matters relating to regulation, accuracy and impartiality. If we do decide to initiate any such investigations, we may or may not wish to publish that decision now.

I am aware that the Foreign Affairs Committee will be reporting on Monday morning, but I do not think we need to wait for that report, since I hope that we are not going to try to give a verdict of our own on the accuracy of the Gilligan story. In addition, I think that the BBC may be under pressure on Monday, and I think that the Governors should be visible during this time. Whatever we decide at our meeting, we should not be absent from the debate next week.

I look forward to seeing you on Sunday.

With best wishes

Gavyn

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