

Dear Governors

As I mentioned in my e-mail last week, my natural pessimism was telling me that the WMD story was far from over, despite the general support which the Governors and the BBC were getting from many sources at the time. However, even at my most pessimistic, I certainly never anticipated the tragic turn of events which has happened since then. This has created an entirely new situation, in which all of us will have to re-examine our conduct

You will have seen that the BBC has now confirmed that David Kelly was the primary source for the Gilligan story on the Today programme on 29 May, and was the source for the Susan Watts stories on Newsnight on 2 and 4 June. This will result in the BBC and the Governors being asked a number of very direct questions about our role in the events of the last six weeks. In the first few hours following the BBC announcement there have been a huge number of red herrings thrown into the air. Some of the attacks which have been aimed at the BBC and the Governors have been based on complete misunderstandings of the facts, but that will not stop them from being endlessly repeated

I have been thinking about the main issues which will be thrown at us and the organisation. Here is my current take on the key issues, given my present state of knowledge

1. Did Andrew Gilligan accurately report the words of David Kelly in the story on Today?

As we were told at our special Governors' meeting, senior management has seen the contemporaneous notes of the meeting with David Kelly taken by Andrew Gilligan. Management is satisfied that the notes are consistent with Gilligan's report, and that he accurately reported what he had been told by Dr. Kelly. Most of the salient features of the Gilligan report were repeated by Susan Watts on Newsnight

Susan Watts quoted her source as saying that in the run-up to publishing the dossier, the Government was obsessed with finding intelligence on immediate Iraqi threats. The Government's insistence that the Iraqi threat was imminent was a Downing St interpretation of intelligence conclusions. She added that the source said that "people at top of the ladder didn't want to hear some of the things", and said "that's why there is the argument between the intelligence services and the Cabinet Office/Number 10". To me, these quotes substantiate the burden of Andrew Gilligan's report.

2. Did David Kelly know what he was doing, or was he duped?

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