

I asked my intelligence source why Blair misled us all over Saddam's WMD. His response? One word...



# CAMPBELL



By  
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**T**HE location was a central London hotel and the source was waiting as I got there. We'd both been too busy to meet for nearly a year, but there was no sign this would be anything more than a routine get-together.

We started off by moaning about the railways. Only after about half-an-hour did the story emerge that would dominate the headlines for 48 hours, ruin Tony Blair's Basra awayday and work the Prime Minister into a state of controlled fury.

The source agreed with Blair about one thing. He, too, was adamant that Iraq had had a Weapons of Mass Destruction programme in the recent past. He pointed out some tell-tale signs that the chief UN weapons inspector, Hans Blix, seemed to have missed. But he knew, better than anyone, that it didn't amount to the 'imminent threat' touted by Ministers.

And he was gently despairing about the way No 10 had spoiled its case by exaggeration 'Typical Downing Street,' he said, half smiling, half annoyed.

We'd discussed the famous Blair dossier on Iraq's weapons at our previous meeting, a few months before it was published last September. 'It's really not very exciting, you know,' he'd told me. So what, I asked him now, had changed?

'Nothing changed,' he said. 'Until the week before, it was just like I told you. It was transformed the week before publication, to make it sexier.'

What do you mean? Can I take notes?

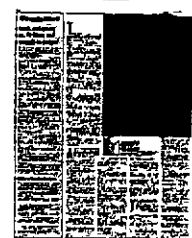
'The classic,' he said 'was the statement that WMD were ready for use in 45 minutes. One source said it took 45 minutes to launch a missile and that was misinterpreted to mean that WMD could be deployed in 45 minutes. There was no evidence that they had loaded conventional missiles with WMD, or could do so anything like that quickly'

I asked him how this transformation happened. The answer was a single word 'Campbell.'

What? Campbell made it up? 'No, it was real information. But it was included against our wishes because it wasn't reliable.'

**A**NOTHER saucepan had been thrown in what looks like the increasingly troubled marriage between Downing Street and the secret world.

Last week's was only the most recent in an unprecedented series of intelligence leaks directly challenging the Prime Minister. After the teachers and the firemen, the spooks have become the latest group of public



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