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PRESS RELEASES



BBC Press Release

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BBC response to MoD statement

We note that today the Ministry of Defence has issued a statement saying that an individual working in the Ministry of Defence has come forward to volunteer information about an unauthorised meeting he says he had with Andrew Gilligan on May 22nd.

The description of the individual contained in the statement does not match Mr Gilligan's source in some important ways. Mr Gilligan's source does not work in the Ministry of Defence and he has known the source for a number of years not months.

As we have said before Mr Gilligan met several people in the period before the story was broadcast and discussed Weapons of Mass Destruction in various ways with a number of them. His Today programme story was based on only one of those conversations.

For the single conversation which led to the Today story Mr Gilligan took comprehensive notes during the meeting with his source which do not correspond with the account given in the MOD statement. These notes have already been deposited with the BBC legal department.

We note that the MoD statement says that; "we do not know whether this official is Mr Gilligan's source." Neither do we.

What we do know is that Mr Gilligan's notes and account of what he was told are very similar to the notes of a conversation Susan Watts, Science Editor of Newsnight, had with her source which led to the Newsnight reports of June 2nd and 4th.

These reports contained allegations consistent with the Gilligan report and she described her source as; "a senior official intimately involved with process of pulling together the September dossier."

We reiterate the point we made last week that Susan Watts and Andrew Gilligan have never met, spoken or corresponded about any issues let alone this particular matter.

We do not know whether their respective sources are the same person, as Susan Watts and George Entwistle, the Editor of Newsnight, are unwilling to reveal her source.

However if it is the same source it is quite clear that the information he is now giving to the Ministry of Defence is not a

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