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From Director, News

Alastair Campbell, Esq.,
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21 March, 2003

Dear Alastair,

Thank you for your letters. I will respond in detail to the questions you raise but first want to make some general points.

It is not true to say I always try to justify all our journalism. I have admitted errors in the past, will do so here and no doubt in the future – where appropriate. All journalism is imperfect. However ours is not as flawed as you repeatedly suggest. Neither are we naive enough to suppose the timing of this particular complaint is pure chance.

Regarding David Aaronovitch's column, we discussed it here at some length. There have been occasions on some of our programmes where the case for war might have been put more strongly. Where we have identified those over recent weeks we have sought rapidly to correct any imbalance. There have also been many programmes where the arguments in support of Government policy have been heard consistently and strongly: on our main TV bulletins for example with their focus on the Prime Minister and Cabinet spokesmen.

We have gone to considerable effort, in current affairs programmes like "The Case Against Saddam" and Jane Corbin's Panoramas clearly to outline the nature of the Iraqi regime and the threat it poses.

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134