

Let me now turn to your individual points .

- I believe John Humphrys's question to Mike O'Brien might have been better if John had said "the Government was determined to use force if necessary.". However, the subject of the interview, the manner of the question's delivery and the exchanges that preceded it made it clear that it was a 'devil's advocate' question. The Radio 4 audience would have understood the context and that John was trying to test an argument – whether the Government's policy meant that the use of force was, in effect, inevitable. Mike O'Brien was given adequate time and space to explain the Government's position.
- However, I think John's remark about the politics of the vote – "The Conservative Party effectively saved their (the Government's) bacon" is reasonable. It is literally true that the Government would have had a majority without the Conservatives – but it is surely right that had the Conservatives voted against the amendment and the substantive motion the Government would have been in significantly deeper trouble.
- Tom Carver's report on Security Council diplomacy was the latest of a number he had filed for 'Newsnight' over a number of days from the United Nations. He had been observing closely many of the diplomatic manoeuvres. Tom had developed a variety of sources from different UN delegations - and on the day the second resolution was withdrawn Tom had conversations with several diplomats. It is against this background, and the experience of reporting from Washington and New York for many years, that he formed the judgements that concern you. It would have been better to have had on-screen contributions from his diplomatic sources to buttress his script - but they wanted to stay off the record. Perhaps he should have referred, in general terms, to those sources – but I am content that his judgements were informed ones.

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