

- Andrew Gilligan's use of the phrase "within a few hours" was not precise and perhaps he may have suggested he knew when air strikes would begin. But the more important point concerns civilian casualties. Many people, including the Prime Minister, have said innocent people will die in war. I do not see Andrew Gilligan's point as controversial particularly as it came in the context of a discussion about the likely progress of war in which he had already talked of Saddam's intransigence. More broadly the 'Today' programme has reported the nature of the Iraqi regime in numerous ways over recent weeks. There have been interviews with Iraqi refugees in Britain, and with dissidents, about the realities of life under Saddam. There have also been reports from Kurdistan about Saddam Hussein's treatment of the Kurdish population.
- I do not agree with you about the quality of the Rageh Omaar report. The phrase you quote is clearly reported speech and does not indicate his personal view of US and UK intentions. It is a comment which suggests that those to whom he had spoken were apprehensive, and primarily concerned for their personal safety rather than in any way defiant.
- We discuss the conditions under which our teams are operating daily. Until now there have not been the same restrictions on their movements as applied in previous conflicts - although that is likely to change and we will tell our audiences when it does. And from time to time - when editorially appropriate - our correspondents have already pointed out that they are not able to see a particular place or facility. I should note that today - and for the first time - Iraqi authorities are looking at some of our reports before transmission. We will let the audience know that.

Of course I understand the issue about self-censorship - and that you would prefer we were not there. However, again in line with other organisations, we believe it is important to report from Baghdad and, as I have indicated above, none of our audiences can be under any illusion about the nature of the Iraqi regime.