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Director of Communications and Strategy

26 June 2003

Dear Greg

I was sorry that I had to say what I said about the BBC, but I'm afraid private discussion and correspondence on recent events have proved to be pointless. I am regularly assured by Richard Sambrook that when the BBC makes mistakes, you admit it. I'm afraid that is not the case and I have nine years of experience of this phenomenon.

Put to one side our complaint about the BBC's coverage of Iraq recently about which you were dismissive in your letter to the Prime Minister.

On the specific issue of the reporting of allegations about our and my conduct in relation to the WMD dossier, it has been a disgrace. I hope you take time to read the entirety of my, and your correspondent's, evidence to the FAC. I hope you note the contradictions between the latter's evidence and what he broadcast and wrote, as a BBC journalist, at the time. I hope you note the weight of denial by the Agencies.

This story is 100% wrong. Every now and then the BBC might just admit that it doesn't get everything right, and apologise. Today Richard said that the BBC was not making allegations but reporting them. That is not accurate. And if it were, it means you don't know if the story you broadcast was true. On the basis on which you now say this was reported, it means that if a journalist is told by a credible source in the BBC that you are involved in a terrible scandal, that can be reported without corroboration provided the journalist makes clear that this is what is being said, but not necessarily true. That is not journalism.

I am a huge admirer of the BBC, which is one of the UK's greatest strengths and assets and which produced some exceptional journalism on Iraq. But I really believe that if this story is not corrected, and an apology not given, it

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