

In addition, in early March, the Director General of the IAEA, Dr Mohammed El Baradei, described the documents on which an important claim in the September dossier was based (the Niger uranium claim) as "not authentic" - and indeed cast doubt on other aspects of the September dossier's claims about a nuclear weapons programmes.

We thus made a judgement that the information provided by the source fitted into a pattern of concerns - and that it was perfectly proper to report the allegations made by Andrew Gilligan's source. Your correspondence and evidence to the FAC ignores this background - which is central to any understanding of the BBC's journalism.

3. Unease in the Security Services

As we have told you before, a number of BBC journalists who have close contact with both the military and the security services had reported that their contacts were concerned that intelligence reports were being exaggerated to strengthen the case against Saddam Hussein. In particular they were saying that whilst low scale Weapons of Mass Destruction existed they did not pose the level of threat the government was suggesting. Many journalists in other news organisations were receiving similar briefings.

For example:

Peter Beaumont and Gaby Hinsliff wrote (*Observer* 24 February 2003) of disagreement between the intelligence services and Downing Street - "the essence of the disagreement is said to have been that intelligence material should be presented 'straight' rather than spiced up to make a political argument." Their article also talks about "fairly serious rows" between at least one member of the JIC and Alastair Campbell.

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