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Director of Communications and Strategy

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Dec R. Howard

As you know, I have been engaged in private correspondence with you in recent weeks about the allegations on the BBC on the conduct of the Government, and of me, in relation to the WMD dossier of September 2002.

I heard your interview on the Today programme this morning and would like now, in view of the continuing interest in this, to ask a number of questions. You said that the BBC had never alleged that we took the country into conflict on a false basis. I disagree. Indeed, could I point you to the introduction by John Humphreys before he spoke to your correspondent on the Today programme prior to my appearance at the FAC. He said:

“Mr Campbell will answer questions about allegations made on this programme by Andrew Gilligan that the case for going to war was exaggerated, specifically that one of the dossiers presented by Mr. Blair had been sexed up to make it appear that Saddam was a greater threat to the West than the intelligence justified.”

That is one of many statements on the BBC by reporters and presenters making clear that Mr. Gilligan made these allegations, and that they amount to charges that the Government, from the Prime Minister down, misled Parliament and public about the case on which he had led the country into conflict.

I think you will agree that this was certainly the allegation as MP's, press and public understood it at the time, as the voluminous coverage and the Parliamentary concern have shown. Could I have a response by the end of the day; given that is the time scale I am seeking to meet in relation to the issues the FAC has asked me further to address I think it is fair and reasonable. And of course, like me you will already be immersed in the detail as a result of our previous, thus far private exchanges.

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