

CONFIDENTIAL

c Broadcast of denials

Richard Sambrook said BBC News disputed the claim that it had alleged the "45 minutes" had been inserted against the wishes of the Chairman of the JIC and Intelligence Chiefs. The source had said "against our wishes" and this had not been extrapolated to any individual. As to denials of the story, the Prime Minister, John Reid, Jack Straw and Baroness Amos were all provided the opportunity on air over the following days. But each time this occurred, it was necessary to repeat the allegations for them to deny.

Following an account from Mark Damazer about how the "45 minute claim" had been disputed by the Government since the broadcast, and a discussion by Governors about the accuracy of the report, Gavyn Davies reminded the Board that it was not a matter for them. He noted that Pauline Neville-Jones did not believe the Intelligence denials have been given due prominence and her criticism of BBC News for the balance of its reporting in this particular area. In response, Richard Sambrook said he would undertake a detailed review of the JIC denials that had been broadcast. Gavyn Davies said however that the majority of the Board had not expressed doubt about the coverage of Intelligence denials and therefore the review that Richard Sambrook had promised would not be made public. Indeed, doing so would indicate a "climb-down" by the BBC.

In response to questions about whether management was comfortable that the required high standard of reporting had been retained throughout *Today* on 29 May, Richard Sambrook said that Andrew Gilligan had been very clear about his report being based on a single source. John Humpnys had, however, used some phrases that were infelicitous, but Andrew Gilligan had put him back on track during their exchanges.

Gavyn Davies reminded the Board that a formal complaint had not been received about *Today*, even though Richard Sambrook had made sure Alastair Campbell was aware of the route he could follow should he wish to do so.

Concluding this part of the discussion, Gavyn Davies said the Board agreed that the Producers' Guidelines had been upheld. The majority view of the Board was that the allegations should have been put to Number 10 in advance of broadcast. However, in light of some concern expressed by Governors about including this in the statement, he would ensure the wording in relation to this aspect was carefully drafted to avoid any indication that this was a requirement for any story that might offend Number 10 in the future. But he believed it important to "nod in the direction" of Number 10 that the notes kept by the programme-makers on contacts with the Government were inadequate for the Board to confirm that every effort had been made to inform the Government appropriately. Finally, the majority view of the Board was that the Government had received sufficient opportunities to deny the story.

3. RULES PERMITTING BBC JOURNALISTS TO WRITE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Gavyn Davies asked the Board to consider whether it should request a review of the rules that currently permit BBC journalists to write newspaper articles.

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