

unreasonable for us to make factual observations. Asked why we were picking on Andrew Gilligan, the PMOS said that if inaccurate information had been given about the role of the JIC, we were perfectly entitled to correct it. If this issue was going to be discussed in sober and serious way, it was important for people to understand who sat on the Committee, what its remit was, how it worked, to whom it reported and where it was based.

Asked the difference between a Downing Street Committee and a Cabinet Committee given the fact that Cabinet Committees met in Downing Street and the Cabinet Secretary worked there, the PMOS said that it had been alleged recently that all manner of people sat on the JIC, including officials at Downing Street. As the September dossier stated, "The JIC is a Cabinet Committee with a history dating back to 1936". It reported through the Cabinet Secretary - who, incidentally, worked in the Cabinet Office, not Downing Street - to the Prime Minister. It didn't meet in Downing Street.

Put to him that Mr Gilligan had been right to say that the JIC was not the intelligence services, the PMOS said he had clarified that the Heads of the intelligence services sat on the Committee. We were not talking about junior representation. It was a Committee which brought together the Heads of the intelligence services. Put to him that it was others within the intelligence services, not the JIC itself, who were concerned about the material that had been used, the PMOS said that these issues had been discussed at great length over the past few days. He did not think it would be particularly fruitful to reprise what had been said. The important point was that the judgements which had been brought forward in the dossier had been the considered judgements of the JIC. As everyone was well aware, the purpose of the Committee was to bring together the Heads of the different intelligence services and others so that they could pull the threads together and provide a rounded assessment.

Asked if he was departing from normal practice not to brief on the JIC by pointing out that there had been no row, the PMOS said that he had merely been making the point that the judgements brought forward had been judgements made by the JIC. Asked if he was denying that there had been a row, the PMOS said that as he had already underlined, Mr Gilligan's assertion this morning was wrong. Asked to concede that there had been a 'gentlemen's disagreement', the PMOS said that he hadn't been party to the discussions that had taken place - nor would it have been appropriate for him to have been so. Asked if there had been 'vigorous' discussions at the JIC, the PMOS repeated that he hadn't been there. What had been produced was the considered judgement of the JIC. He did not doubt that a discussion had taken place. That was what tended to happen when a group of people met in a room, particularly to make an assessment.

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