

Questioned about the suggestion that the JIC's role was to mediate in disputes between the intelligence services and Downing Street and that it had been brow-beaten into submission by No 10, the PMOS said the idea that the Committee had been interfered with politically from the centre and that it had some role in mediating in disputes was simply wrong. He thought the Prime Minister had been pretty clear. It was the JIC's job to have discussions about issues relating to intelligence. Put to him that disagreements needed to be mediated somewhere and that the best place to do it was under the auspices of the JIC, the PMOS said that once all the 'blah' surrounding this issue had been stripped away, we were left with the main point - namely, that the contents of the dossier had been based on the judgements of the JIC. In the end, that was what mattered. That was why it was important people understood what it was and how it worked.

Questioned about John Scarlett's role in the Committee, the PMOS said that he was the chairman and had direct access to the Prime Minister. Other members included the Chief of Defence Intelligence, senior policy makers from the Foreign Office, MoD, Home Office, Treasury, DTI and representatives of other Government Departments and agencies as appropriate.

### **PRESS BRIEFING: 11AM MONDAY 9 JUNE 2003**

#### **IRAQ DOSSIER**

Asked if Alastair Campbell and the Prime Minister would be appearing before the Intelligence Select Committee and the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, the PMOS confirmed that the government had received a request late last Friday from the Foreign Affairs Committee for both the Prime Minister and Alastair Campbell to appear. That was being considered in the usual way and he didn't think anyone would be surprised if the Select Committee were to be informed first of our judgement on that. The PMOS took the opportunity to tell journalists that the Prime Minister would be appearing before the Liaison Committee in the week commencing the 7th July. There was precedent that Downing Street officials didn't appear before committees to discuss their work inside Downing Street. The Prime Minister answered to parliament every week uniquely amongst ministers at Prime Minister's Questions on behalf of Downing Street and the whole government. Alastair Campbell had appeared before the Public Administration Select Committee to discuss the whole issue of government communications when they were reviewing it but that was separate. The PMOS said that the government hadn't received any request from the Intelligence Committee yet, and that was a matter for them. They were publishing their annual report tomorrow and the Prime Minister would be meeting them as he would have done in any event, but it would not be an evidence hearing session.

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