

evidence to the FAC this morning, the PMOS said that the 45-minute point had been included in the first draft which had been presented by the Chairman of the JIC after he had taken responsibility for the operation. Mr Campbell had been asked to supply the Committee with evidence for that - and had done so in his letter, which would of course be cleared by the JIC Chair. Asked how many different drafts Mr Campbell would have seen during the production of the dossier, the PMOS said that given drafting changes were one of the issues raised by the Committee, this would no doubt be covered in his letter to the FAC. The allegation that we had 'inserted', 'exaggerated', 'sexed up', included information which we had known to be wrong - and which we had known the intelligence services had known to be wrong - was totally false. That was the central point once everything else had been stripped away. As Mr Campbell was making clear in his letter today, the 45-minute point had been in the first draft which had been presented to us by the JIC. No one in Downing Street had inserted or exaggerated it. The judgements that had been made had been taken by the JIC. Asked when Mr Campbell had first seen the initial draft, the PMOS said that as was well known, the JIC had taken over the leadership of the production of the dossier from the FCO after it had been decided that intelligence should form the basis of it. The JIC Chairman had taken responsibility for drawing up the contents. Put to him that Mr Straw had said this morning that the 45-minute claim had not been included in the March version of the dossier, the PMOS repeated that the first draft presented by the JIC had included the 45-minute point. It had not been inserted, exaggerated or put in at Downing Street's request. That was what mattered.

Asked if Mr Straw's assertion this morning that he 'hoped' WMD would be found was an indication that the Government was rowing away from its initial confidence that it *would* be found, the PMOS said that Mr Straw's comments were entirely consistent with what we had been saying from the outset. We remained confident that the evidence existed and that it would be brought forward in due course. The International Survey Group had only started its work in the last two to three weeks. In answer to further questions, the PMOS pointed that when people asked us on what basis we had gone to war, they were ignoring the fact that it was actually Saddam Hussein who had been in violation of countless UN Resolutions in respect of his WMD programmes. Contrary to what some people wanted to believe and how it was presented, we had not suddenly chanced upon these issues last September. The issue of Iraq and its WMD programme had been of concern to the international community for a long time - going as far back as the gassing of the Kurds at Halabja following the Gulf War in the early 1990s.

Asked if Downing Street agreed with the assessment of General John Abizaid, General Tommy Franks' successor, who had told a US Senate Committee this

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