

said that it was up to Lord Hutton to decide how to conduct his inquiry. We had given him a job to do. People should let him get on and do it.

Asked if the Prime Minister had been consulted about the MoD's statement before its release last week, the PMOS reminded journalists that, as we had freely acknowledged at the time, Downing Street had been consulted. That said, it was important to be clear that MoD procedures had been followed. Obviously it was only right that the Department should have been the one to make a decision about the matter. Asked about the disciplinary rules to which Dr Kelly might have been subjected, the PMOS said that, contrary to stories over the weekend which were completely wrong, the MoD had made it clear that Dr Kelly had been told that there was no threat to his pension. They had also underlined that the most Dr Kelly would have faced would have been a verbal reprimand and a reminder of the rules about unauthorised meetings with journalists.

Asked why the MoD had felt it necessary to identify Dr Kelly, the PMOS said that these were matters which Lord Hutton would no doubt want to examine and reach his own judgement about. That said, it was important for people to be fully aware of the sequence of events. Dr Kelly had come forward to identify himself voluntarily. Subsequently, the MoD had decided that it was possible Dr Kelly might be Andrew Gilligan's source and that it would therefore be improper not to make it known that an official had come forward - hence the MoD's statement. In its response to the statement, the BBC had claimed that their source did not work in the MoD. At that point, all we had done was to set out the fact that the person was not a senior intelligence officer but a technical expert. Asked if Dr Kelly had, at any point, been given an assurance that his name would not become public, the PMOS said that as he understood it, the MoD had warned him that it was likely his identity would be discovered because of the relatively few number of people working in his field. Put to him that the MoD's apparent readiness to confirm Dr Kelly's name was problematic, the PMOS said that this was an issue which Lord Hutton would no doubt want to consider. That said, the key point in all this was the fact that relatively few people worked in Dr Kelly's area. There had therefore been a strong likelihood that suspicion would fall unfairly onto others. Asked who had made the decision to confirm Dr Kelly's name, the PMOS said that the matter had been handled in accordance with MoD procedures and had been overseen by those at the top of the MoD in view of the fact that it been the lead Department. Asked if the decision would have had to be approved at Ministerial level, the PMOS said that it would have been approved in accordance with MoD procedures. The Department itself had already made its position clear. Pressed about Geoff Hoon's role, the PMOS referred journalists to the MoD for an explanation of its procedures. He had no intention of pre-judging Lord Hutton's inquiry.

CAB/1/0235