



From Director, News

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Dear Alastair,

Thank you for your fax of 6 June regarding Andrew Gilligan and the reporting of WMD. I see no likelihood of us agreeing on this matter but I will briefly set out why I think your allegations about our journalism are misguided.

Much of what you write focuses on the question of sources. You are wrong to suggest that our journalism is being driven by a single source. Andrew Gilligan has made it clear that one *specific* concern about the September dossier's presentation of the Government's case derived from a single source - the claim that Saddam Hussein could launch a WMD within 45 minutes of the order being given. But the judgements that were made on the quality of the source and its usefulness were informed by a wider context. The fact is that a variety of sources, over a period of time, have indicated their concern about the way intelligence was used and presented in September and they have voiced this concern both to Andrew and also to other BBC journalists. And, for that matter, to non-BBC journalists. That is why we know there has been tension about the presentation of intelligence.

Further, if we had thought the single source incredible we would not have reported the allegation at all. You would not expect me to reveal the source (and I am gratified that you have not asked) but I can assure you that I am satisfied that the source knew what he/she was talking about. It is fanciful to imply that Andrew - or anyone

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