



From Director, News

BBC Correspondence
With Sambrook

Alastair Campbell, Esq.,
Director of Communication and Strategy,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON.
SW1A 2AA

16 June, 2003

Dear Alastair,

Thank you for your latest fax. Let me try again to address your concerns.

You still complain that in one of his many pieces Andrew Gilligan referred to the Joint Intelligence Committee as "a Number 10 Committee" rather than a "Cabinet Office Committee." I can only find one such reference. I concede that the Cabinet Office is not the same as a Prime Ministerial Department though I note that the first objective of the CO is to "support the PM in leading the government." In this instance, Andrew was attempting to simplify a description of the administration of government. I hardly think that amounts to "obvious ignorance" about intelligence issues.

You continue to believe Andrew Gilligan is in conflict with the Producer Guidelines. The Guidelines do say that our programme makers should be reluctant to rely on only one source. This guideline is not an outright ban, and as I explained in my previous letter Andrew Gilligan's judgements about that source (and the judgement of others involved in the decision to broadcast the story) were taken in context. A variety of sources over a period of time had spoken to BBC journalists about their concerns on matters relating to intelligence and WMD. However, we made it plain to the audience that the concern about the dossier's presentation of the 45 minute WMD threat derived from a single source.

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