

MEMORANDUM TO THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Memorandum from Alastair Campbell.

I am grateful to the FAC for the opportunity to be able to explain how the Government has sought to handle communications issues concerning Iraq.

Overall strategy on Iraq was laid down by the Prime Minister and other Cabinet Members responsible for policy following agreement in Cabinet and, as matters progressed, endorsement by the House of Commons. My role as the Prime Minister's Director of Communications and Strategy was to help take our communications strategy forward. I chaired the cross departmental Iraq communications group, comprised of senior officials from No. 10, FCO, MOD, DIFD, Cabinet Office, SIS, DIS, CIC. This met weekly to discuss and review forward communications strategy. We continue to meet, though not every week. I also chaired the regular morning media meeting of key departments to help take the strategy forward on a day to day basis.

From where I sat, what the Government was seeking to communicate was that a brutal, Iraqi regime possessed and had used WMD, was in persistent defiance of the UN, and a threat to the region and the stability of the world. I saw a Prime Minister determined to play his part in dealing with the issue, who was convinced that the UN was the place to resolve it and who worked flat out to achieve that, because he was determined to avoid conflict if at all possible. If conflict came, he was determined that it should be prosecuted with real vigour to force the collapse of the regime and help rebuild Iraq for the Iraqis. And he was concerned throughout that Cabinet, Parliament and the country were properly informed and engaged in debating and deciding the policies that flowed from these positions as the situation evolved.

My role was to help the Prime Minister and his ministerial colleagues communicate this to various audiences, in the UK and overseas.

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