

Minister who is answerable to Parliament. The media can bandy all sorts of allegations about what I do and they can say things about the Prime Minister but the one thing you cannot do, as everybody in this room knows, if you are an elected politician is lie to the House of Commons. Now, the allegation that has been made by the BBC's defence correspondent, repeated in large parts of the media, as I say, here and around the world, is that the Prime Minister did exactly that, he put to the country and to Parliament a false basis for putting at risk the lives of British servicemen. That is an accusation against the Prime Minister, against the Foreign Secretary, against the Cabinet, against the intelligence agencies, against me and against the people who work with me. Now that is why I take it so seriously, not because of me because, as I say, I am absolutely used to being described in all sorts of ways by journalists who, frankly, I would match a politician's integrity against theirs any day of the week. I simply say in relation to the BBC story: it is a lie, it was a lie, it is a lie that is continually repeated and until we get an apology for it I will keep making sure that Parliament, people like yourselves and the public know that it was a lie.

Chairman: Mr Campbell, this is the Committee's first meeting with you, I hope it will not be the last. Thank you very much.

CAB | 1 | 0334