

"MI6 feels that it has been pushed rather unwillingly into the limelight by the Government. It is a shot across the bows." (a second "source")

Nick Fielding, *Sunday Times* 1 June, reported that the dossier was the result of a "deal after months of bitter disagreements between intelligence chiefs and Blair's aides. Campbell had attempted to persuade the agencies to include hard-hitting conclusions. They were reluctant to agree because they said the case was not proven."

Furthermore on 22 March, the UN Chief Weapons Inspector, Hans Blix, criticised the manipulation of intelligence to make the case for war - accusing the coalition of using "shaky" evidence. Robin Cook - soon after his resignation - echoed that, questioning the Government's evidence (such as that in the September dossier) that Iraq presented an imminent threat: "it was difficult to believe that Saddam had the capacity to hit us."

It was in this context that we judged that reporting the claim made by Andrew Gilligan's source was in the public interest.

Having dealt with the context, let me turn now to the report on the Today programme. This week you have misrepresented our journalism.

- You have said we accused the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and other ministers of lying. We have not.
- You have said the BBC deliberately accused the Prime Minister of misleading the House of Commons and of leading the country into war on a false basis. We have not.
- You have accused the BBC of damaging the integrity of the political process. We believe we have done the opposite.

The nub of what the BBC reported was:

- unease among some of the intelligence community about the use of intelligence in government dossiers
- the assertion of one senior and credible source - who has proved reliable in the past - that the "45 minute claim" was wrong and was inserted late into the dossier.

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