



SECRETARY OF STATE

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MO 6/17/15C

2 July 2003

Dear Richard,

My attention has been drawn to your letter of 29 June to Ben Bradshaw and I would like to correct a number of specific points relating to the MOD.

During his interview on the Today Programme with Ben Bradshaw on 28 June John Humphrys said that Andrew Gilligan 'checked with the Ministry of Defence' before broadcasting his story. This is simply not true, as the record below makes clear.

Shortly after that interview was broadcast, at 8.50am, Andrew Gilligan called the MOD duty press officer. Two press officers were present as this was during the handover period. Mr Gilligan said he was calling to 'note that he had spoken to the Chief Press Officer before the programme was broadcast and that was what he had said.' He then rang off without offering any explanation.

I deduce from this call that the basis for John Humphrys' claim that the story was 'checked with the MOD' is the conversation Mr Gilligan had with the Chief Press Officer at approximately 6.30pm on 28 May.

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