

WEDNESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> JULY 11am (post MoD statement on 8<sup>th</sup>)

IRAQ/BBC

The Prime Minister's Official Spokesman (PMOS) advised journalists that the Defence Secretary, Geoff Hoon, was writing again today to the Chairman of the BBC Board of Governors, Gavyn Davies, because of an apparent confusion at the BBC this morning. The organisation seemed to think that we were asking them to name the source of their story. We were not. The person who might be the source had already volunteered his own name and had also offered to appear before the ISC in person. It was therefore not a question of the BBC revealing their source. We were not asking them to breach anyone's confidence. On the contrary. We were simply requesting them to confirm whether or not the person who had come forward was their source. This was not a trap, as some had suggested. Mr Hoon would be writing to the BBC today to supply them with our name. We were merely asking them to say whether it was the wrong one or not. If it was wrong, then no doubt they would want to say categorically that that was the case, if only to confirm that the source was a senior intelligence official - because quite clearly the person concerned could not be described as such. He was a technical expert who had worked for a number of Government Departments, including the MoD where he was currently working, although his salary was paid by another Department. This issue was important because the BBC had consistently put the onus for the allegations which had been made on the status of its source. The BBC Governors had said in a statement on Sunday night that it was that status which justified the use of a single anonymous source for the story. This morning, the Daily Telegraph had quoted the BBC as confirming privately that Andrew Gilligan had met his source in a central London hotel on 22 May - the same day the person who had come forward had had his meeting with Mr Gilligan. Was that coincidence or not? Today the BBC would be given the name of the individual concerned. Only Mr Gilligan and a few senior managers at the BBC would be able to answer our question as they compared our name with the name supplied by Mr Gilligan.

Asked to explain how Mr Gilligan's source and the individual from MoD could be the same when Mr Gilligan had told the FAC that he had known his source for years whereas the MoD person had said that he had known Mr Gilligan only for a matter of months, the PMOS said that as he understood it, the MoD person who had come forward might have met Mr Gilligan in a number of different guises over the years in terms of the different jobs he had done. Asked if he was implying that our man had in fact known Mr Gilligan for years, the PMOS said that he was simply making the point that the individual

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