

issue.

Q1013 Mr Pope: A couple of brief questions about the second dossier, the February one. I notice that in your memorandum to the Committee on page 6 you said that during the third week of January the material, that is Dr Marashi's material, was simply absorbed into the briefing paper. Could you tell us who absorbed it into the briefing paper?

Mr Campbell: I think it would be wrong if I were to name the individual within the CIC who did that because I think it would look like, and I no doubt would stand accused of, seeking to evade responsibility. I take responsibility for that paper. It was done by an official to whom had been passed a number of different papers and, as I say, I do not think there was any malign intent, I do not think there was any attempt to mislead, and it is also worth pointing out, as the Prime Minister did again today, that nobody has seriously challenged the substance. Also a lot of the changes which were discussed earlier were changes, as I say, made by experts within government who possibly had more up-to-date information than Dr Al-Marashi, which is not to undermine him or his work. I think that is probably as much as I really should say about the individual. It was simply within the CIC.

Q1014 Mr Pope: But you can see why the Committee is concerned and why Parliament is concerned, because what you have essentially got here is an academic thesis that has been down-loaded, it has been used without --

Mr Campbell: No. We keep going back to this myth about the twelve year old PhD thesis. It was an article from a Middle East journal.

Q1015 Mr Pope: But the article is used without Dr Al-Marashi's permission, he is not credited with it, and worst of all, I think, is the possibility that his relatives back in Iraq may have been persecuted because of that.

Mr Campbell: Well, were that the case it would be very, very regrettable and I completely accept that, and I certainly hope that is not the case but, as I said earlier, the accusation that we faced when I was having the horrible moment coming down from the *Newsnight* studio in Gateshead was that we had not drawn attention to him and, as he said himself to the Committee, he is well known in this field, but I do accept there is a world of difference between writing something in the *Middle East Review* and something being subsequently discovered to be part of the British government's briefing paper that we issued to the Sunday press.

Q1016 Mr Pope: Just finally, do you share the Foreign Secretary's assessment that the second dossier in hindsight was a mistake? In fact, a complete Horlicks?

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