

Minister's special adviser and Director of Communications, Alastair Campbell; former Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, Dame Pauline Neville Jones; Director of Studies at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Dr Gary Samore; former Porton Down scientist and former Chief Executive of the Royal Society of Chemistry, Dr Thomas Inch; former UNSCOM inspector, now Director of the IISS-US, Terence Taylor; former senior intelligence analyst at the Australian Office of National Assessments, Andrew Wilkie; student and writer on Iraqi affairs, Ibrahim al-Marashi; and BBC journalist Andrew Gilligan. We received written evidence from most of these and from others. Our advisers were Wyn Bowen of Kings College, London, Richard Cobbold, Director of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI) and Tim Youngs of the House of Commons Library. To each of them we are most grateful.

6. We are strongly of the view that we were entitled to a greater degree of co-operation from the Government on access to witnesses and to intelligence material. Our Chairman wrote to the Prime Minister (requesting his attendance and that of Alastair Campbell); the Cabinet Office Intelligence Co-ordinator; the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee; the Chief of Defence Intelligence; the Head of the Secret Intelligence Service; and the Director of GCHQ. None of them replied. It was the Foreign Secretary who informed us that they would not appear. The Chairman wrote a further letter to Alastair Campbell and after an initial refusal he agreed to appear. We asked for direct access to Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) assessments and to relevant FCO papers. That was refused, although some extracts were read to us in private session. We are confident that our inquiry would have been enhanced if our requests had been met. We agree with Alastair Campbell that "it would have been very odd to have done this inquiry" without questioning him,³ and we regret that other witnesses, some of whom we suspect felt the same way as Mr Campbell, were prevented from appearing. Yet it is fair to state that within the Government's self-imposed constraints the Foreign Secretary sought to be forthcoming, spending more than five hours before the Committee, and reading to us in private session limited extracts from a JIC assessment dated 9 September 2002.

7. In contrast, the Prime Minister has repeatedly said in the House that he will co-operate fully with a parallel inquiry by the statutory Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC).⁴ This is hardly surprising, since the Committee was appointed by and reports to him, and it meets entirely in private. The Foreign Affairs Committee, on the other hand, was appointed by and reports to the House of Commons, and we meet almost entirely in public. We believe that our inquiry is the more credible of the two, and that it would have been in the Government's best interests to have given full co-operation. We have more to say in a later section in this Report on the status of the ISC and on the need for this Committee to have access to intelligence material.⁵

³ Q 1057

⁴ See, for example, HC Deb, 4 June 2003, col 147

⁵ See paras 160 to 171 below

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