

working properly, into the full Cabinet by the Prime Minister with the lead minister usually coming in behind giving further explanation.²¹⁰

Dame Pauline went on to give a further explanation of her concerns about the apparently less formal system now in place:

... there is the danger that you do not get properly recorded decisions and properly analysed decisions. ... There is also the question of accountability. ... It does not necessarily lead to a worse discussion, the discussion will depend on the quality of the people in the room, to be really brutal about it, so it does not mean that worse policy is made. It does mean that that policy is less embedded in the government as a whole because a whole series of other participants are not there and therefore bound by it.²¹¹

146. The extent to which the Cabinet and its Committees are or are not fully engaged in determining policy and exercising control over officials goes wider than foreign policy, and thus wider than this Committee's responsibilities. But we have heard enough to be concerned. We urge our colleagues on the Public Administration Committee to look closely at these issues.

147. The committee wholly supports the interdepartmental structures which were put in place prior to the war; however, this raises questions over accountability and responsibility. We were surprised to find a clear lack in knowledge of the staff of these interdepartmental groups such as the CIC. This was reflected in our evidence session with the Foreign Secretary.²¹² **We recommend that there should be clarity over which Department has lead responsibility for groups such as the CIC. That Department should then be accountable to the relevant select committee. This would avoid the situation where nobody is prepared to take responsibility for certain interdepartmental groups.**

The security and intelligence machinery

Relations between the agencies and the media

148. Based on her experience some ten years ago, Dame Pauline Neville Jones told us that "there are no ground rules" regarding contacts between the intelligence services and journalists.

Basically and fundamentally these are not people who talk to the public and personally I do not think they should or to journalists. There clearly was turbulence inside the machine and some people have been talking, ... I would not draw general conclusions about attitudes inside the services on the basis of conversations that appear to have taken place between some journalists and some individuals. It is dangerous to draw that conclusion because you do not know what they represent, what their motive is and whether to put any weight on it.²¹³

²¹⁰ Q 358

²¹¹ Qq 360, 378

²¹² Q 792

²¹³ Q 383

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