

RESTRICTED - STAFF

best, extraordinarily naive – journalists were not seeking information out of academic interest but to construct stories. It was important to know the context of their enquiries and any particular sensitivities before speaking to them. I asked Dr Kelly whether, for example, he knew that one of the other journalists to whom he had spoken, was married to a member of the FAC. He said he did not. This was an illustration of why people were required to seek advice and permission from the press office before speaking to journalists. It was also very important to report back after contacts.

I then asked Dr Kelly to summarise his contacts with Gilligan. He said that he had first met and spoken to Gilligan at the IISS seminar on WMD in September 2002 which took place just before publication of the government dossier. He was unaware of having spoken to Gilligan previously, although it was possible that they might both have been at other similar events without being aware of each other. Gilligan had telephoned in February 2003 to say that he was going to Iraq and would like to meet for some background briefing. I asked Dr Kelly why, given that there was an interval of 24 hours before the meeting, he had not contacted even the FCO press office. He said that he had regarded it as non-sensitive because it was the sort of background that he would have given to any academic or journalist.

Dr Kelly said his next contact with Gilligan was in May. Gilligan rang him to offer feedback from his experiences in Iraq. He had accepted, for the reasons set out in his letter. They met on 22 May in the Charing Cross Hotel [Dr Kelly later said that the meeting took place at about 1745 and lasted until approx 1830]. Gilligan took notes but did not appear to have a tape recorder (although Kelly did not ask and there was no discussion of the basis of the meeting). The vast bulk of the conversation was about Iraqi individuals associated with WMD programmes, the course of the war, and why WMD had not been used. In the course of the latter, as recorded in his letter, Gilligan had raised the reference in the September dossier to the possibility of weapons being deployed in 45 minutes. Kelly had commented that this did not correspond with any weapon system that he knew. Gilligan had asked why he thought the claim had been included in the dossier. Kelly had said that he had assumed that it was for impact. Although he had not known what the claim was based on, it emphasised the immediacy of the threat [I have prepared a detailed comparison of Kelly's account of his conversation with Gilligan's FAC evidence based on the second part of the interview]. I asked why he had not even reported the conversation afterwards, given the public debate about the two government dossiers. Kelly repeated that the discussion had not really been about the dossier and he had not said anything controversial. Indeed, even after Gilligan made his allegations, he had not made any association with their May 22 meeting. It was only when a colleague remarked to him that some of the comments attributed to Gilligan's source sounded similar to his own views that he realised that others might make similar connections, which was why he had written to his line manager. As he had said in his letter, however, he did not believe that he could be Gilligan's primary source because he had not made any allegations against the government and his views also differed from those attributed to the source in other ways.

At this point I asked Dr Kelly whether he was confident that he had accurately reflected the meeting with Gilligan and whether there was anything he had omitted about this other meetings. I stressed that whatever the actual significance of anything