

I think it's important that if people dully have evidence, they produce it. But it is wrong, frankly for people to make allegations on the basis of so-called anonymous sources when the facts are precisely the facts we've stated.

WATTS:

But in some cases, anonymous sources are the only way to gain insight into the intelligence world. We've spoken to a senior official involved with the process of pulling together the original September 2002 Blair weapons dossier. We cannot name this person because their livelihood depends on anonymity. Our source made clear that that in the run-up to publishing the dossier, the Government was obsessed with finding intelligence on immediate Iraqi threats. The Government's insistence the Iraqi threat was imminent was a Downing Street interpretation of intelligence conclusions. His point is that while the intelligence community was agreed on the potential Iraqi threat in the future, there was less agreement about the Iraqis posed at that moment. Our source said:

UNNAMED SOURCE:

That was the real concern - not so much what they had now, but what they would have in the future. But that unfortunately was not expressed strongly in the dossier, because that takes the case away for war - to a certain extent. But in the end I was just a flurry of activity and was very difficult to get comments in because people at the top of the ladder didn't want to hear some of the things.

WATTS:

Our source talks of a febrile atmosphere in the days of diplomacy leading to the big Commons debate of September last year. He also talks of the Government seizing on anything useful to the case, including the possible existence of weapons that being be ready within 45 minutes.

UNNAMED SOURCE:

It was a statement that was made and it just got out of all proportion. They were desperate for information, they were pushing hard for information which could be released. That was one that popped up and it was seized on and it's unfortunate that it was. That's why there is the argument between the intelligence services and the Cabinet Office / Number Ten - because they picked up on it and once they've picked up on it, you can't pull it back from them.

WATTS:

And again specifically on the 45-minute point:

UNNAMED SOURCE:

It was an interesting week before the dossier was put out because there were so many people saying "well I'm no so sure about that", or in fact that they were happy with it being in, but not expresses the way that it was, because the word-smithing is actually quite important. The intelligence community are a pretty cautious lot on the whole, but once you get people presenting it for public consumption then of course they use different words.

WATTS:

The problem is that the 45 minutes point was not corroborated. For sceptics it highlights the dangers of relying too heavily on information from defectors. Journalists in America are accused of running propaganda from the Iraqi National Congress.

RAY MCGOVERN:

All these folks have their own personal agendas, all have axes to grind. The most unreliable source are sources that come out of the immigrant or defector circles. More so when you're talking about a fellow like Chalabi, he's been out of Iraq since the

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