

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

**For the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee on  
Thursday 17th July 2003  
2.45pm Private  
in Room 16**

Apologies:

1. The Decision to go to War in Iraq

At 3 o'clock, oral evidence will be heard from Andrew Gilligan, in private. Mr Gilligan will be accompanied by a colleague.

It appears from his letter that Mr Gilligan will not be prepared to answer any questions about his primary source.

The Committee may wish to discuss how it will handle this situation.

The options are:

- Let it rest, because pursuing this matter will turn Gilligan into a martyr
- Make a Special Report to the House, that Gilligan has refused to answer, and leave it to the House to take a view
- Make a Special Report to the House, that Gilligan has committed a contempt, and recommending a course of action

If the Committee makes a Special Report, the Report will only be granted precedence as a privilege matter if the Speaker so decides. Otherwise, it lies upon the Table, dependent on the Government or Opposition to grant it time. There is practically no possibility of that happening today.

The Committee might wish to reflect on how a Special Report presented to the House today will look in September, when events outside the House will have moved on.

You may wish to make the following remarks, or something like them, when opening the evidence session:

FAC/1/0051

Mr Gilligan, you have refused to answer a question put by me in writing, on behalf of the Committee. That is why you are here today. You will be aware that a witness appearing before a Committee of Parliament is bound to answer all questions which the committee sees fit to put to him, and that no witness may excuse himself because of his adherence to a professional code or indeed on any other ground.

This Committee has the power, if it sees fit, to make a Report to the House of the circumstances of a refusal to answer a question put by it. The powers of the House in dealing with such a matter are considerable.

I wanted you to be aware of this before the questioning begins. Can you confirm that you have fully understood the meaning and significance of what I have said to you?

[This is all a bit formal, but it probably should be. In a sense, he is being read his rights.]

2. Any other business

The Committee will presumably wish to discuss its travel plans.

The Clerk can give a report of the board for a new specialist, if the Committee wishes.

The office will be staffed on at least one day per week throughout the recess, usually more, and the press cuttings service will be maintained.

FAC/1/0052