

FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Informal minutes of the meeting on Thursday 10 July at 10.00 am,
in Committee Room 8

Members present: Chairman, Mr David Chidgey, Mr Eric Illsley, Mr Andrew Mackinlay, Mr Bill Oler, Mr Richard Ottaway, Mr Greg Pope and Sir John Stanley.

The Decision to go to War in Iraq

1. The Committee noted the article in the 'Times' newspaper that day concerning the suggestion by the Ministry of Defence that one its officials, Dr David Kelly, was the source of Mr Gilligan's report on the origin of the '45 minute' claim in the September 2002 dossier.
2. The Committee agreed that the Chairman should write to:
 - i) Rt Hon Mr Geoff Hoon MP, Secretary of State for Defence, to confirm when Dr Kelly met Mr Gilligan; and
 - ii) Mr Andrew Gilligan, to confirm when he met with the source of the '45 minute' claim.
3. It was also agreed that the Clerk would clarify Dr Kelly's position and employment status with the Foreign Office.
4. The Committee further agreed that the Chairman would chase up the reply promised by the Secretary of State during the oral evidence session on Friday 27 June concerning the passage of information by the US authorities to the British intelligence services regarding the 'uranium from Niger' claims.
5. Sir John Stanley proposed that the Committee invite Dr Kelly to give oral evidence on Tuesday 15 July.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 4

Noes, 3

David Chidgey
Andrew Mackinlay
Richard Ottaway
Sir John Stanley

Eric Illsley
Bill Oler
Greg Pope

It was agreed that Dr Kelly would be invited to give oral evidence.

6. The Committee agreed to delegate the examination of the sidelining of the Foreign Secretary's private evidence proposed by the FCO to the Chairman, Sir John Stanley and the Clerk.

FAC/1/0053

Foreign Policy Aspects of the War against Terrorism

7. The Chairman drew to Members' attention the meeting with senior FCO officials recently returned from Baghdad, organised at the Committee's request, which would be held on Tuesday 15 July at 9.30 am in Conference Room B, 1 Parliament Street.

Visit to the Middle East

8. The Committee noted the current security situation in Iraq. It agreed to consider alternative locations, including Syria and Afghanistan, at its meeting on Tuesday 15 July. The most up-to-date, relevant travel advice would be available at the meeting.

Geoffrey Farrar
Second Clerk of the Committee

10 July 2003

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