



## Select Committee on Foreign Affairs Written Evidence

**Correspondence between the Chairman of the Committee, the Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Director of Communications and Strategy, 10 Downing Street**

*Letter to the Director of Communications and Strategy, 10 Downing Street, from the Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee, 19 June 2003*

As you know, we are looking into the decision by the Government to go to war in Iraq. We have been looking in detail at various documents including "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction" published in September 2002 and "Iraq—Its Infrastructure of Concealment, Deception and Intimidation" published in January 2003.

Your name has been specifically linked to the first of these documents, in evidence to the Committee today, as seeking amendments.

When the second document was first published on the internet, the names of the authors were listed and three of the four names given are of people who work directly for you.

In the circumstances the Committee wants to take evidence from you in relation to these two documents as part of this inquiry. Our Clerk will be contacting your office today to arrange with you a mutually convenient time next week for you to give evidence to us.

*Chairman*

Foreign Affairs Committee

*19 June 2003*

*Letter to the Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office from the Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee, 19 June 2003*

As you have no doubt heard through the media, we have been taking valuable evidence over the last three days in our inquiry on the Decision to go to War in Iraq. A large number of issues have arisen during these sessions which we feel it imperative to discuss with you in our public evidence session on Tuesday 24 June. The Committee fears, however, that the one and half hours allotted to this meeting will not

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be sufficient to tackle all the matters we need to discuss in public. I am therefore writing to ask if we could extend the session by half an hour, either starting earlier or finishing later.

I am conscious of how generous you have already been with your time, especially for the private meeting on Friday, but am sure you will understand this request, given the gravity of the matter under investigation. I look forward to your reply.

*Chairman*

Foreign Affairs Committee

*19 June 2003*

*Letter to the Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee from the Director of Communications and Strategy, 10 Downing Street, 20 June 2003*

Thank you for your letter of June 19. I discussed it with the PM last night and as you may know, he has asked the Foreign Secretary to reply. I understand Jack will be in touch shortly, if he has not already been so.

Director of Communications and Strategy

10 Downing Street

*20 June 2003*

*Letter to the Chairman of the Committee from the Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 20 June 2003*

Thank you for your letter of 19 June. As the FCO's Parliamentary Department have already told your Clerk, I gladly agree to extend my public evidence session on Tuesday 24 June by half an hour, starting at noon and finishing now at 2:00pm.

You also wrote on 19 June to Alastair Campbell asking him to appear before the Foreign Affairs Committee. The Prime Minister has asked me to reply.

As you know we discussed this when I met the Committee on 10 June. I made clear (as did the Prime Minister on 11 June in the House) that the long-standing convention is that Downing Street officials do not appear at Select Committees to discuss their work and role in Number 10. I had the impression that there was wide understanding within your Committee as to the reasons for this convention. (There has been one occasion when Mr Campbell gave evidence to the Public Administration Select Committee to assist their inquiry into the review of the Government Information Service; this did not relate to his

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position as the Prime Minister's Director of Communications and Strategy. Mr Campbell gave evidence as a member of the Government review team.)

As you know, the Intelligence and Security Committee is doing its own inquiry into the issues you raise and the Prime Minister has made clear that the government will co-operate fully with that inquiry.

I hope that I will be able to answer all your questions on this during the evidence sessions that you will have with me and the relevant FCO officials; where necessary I shall of course be happy to provide supplementary written memoranda.

*Secretary of State*

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

20 June 2003

*Letter to the Chairman of the Committee from the Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 23 June 2003*

I wrote to you on Friday last, 20 June, informing you of the decision about Mr Alastair Campbell's attendance before your Committee.

Over the weekend I have read most of the transcripts of evidence so far given to your Committee in respect of this inquiry. In addition, there was a newspaper report yesterday about the Committee's inquiries so far which refers to earlier reports specifically claiming that the second dossier placed in the Library of the House on 3 February had been produced for Mr Campbell by four individuals, three of whom worked for Mr Campbell. Mr Campbell will want to tell the Committee that this was not the case and would like to explain the background.

In view of the focus of part of the evidence on issues of communications policy for which Mr Campbell had responsibility as Chair of the cross-departmental Iraqi Communications Group, and also because on these specific allegations about the provenance of the second dossier, the Prime Minister and I have now reviewed the position. We have agreed that Mr Campbell should exceptionally give evidence to your Committee. I should make it clear that, throughout, Mr Campbell himself has wanted to appear before the Committee to rebut the serious allegations that have been made by journalists and others in relation to both dossiers. The concern which the Prime Minister and I had was not ad hominem, but about the wider principle, which I know that in general your Committee appreciates, that staff (whether civil servants or special advisers) working in a personal capacity to the Prime Minister or Ministers should not be required to give evidence to Select Committees. We are however persuaded that there are sufficient special circumstances here—in particular his cross-

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departmental role on Iraq communications—for Mr Campbell's appearance which do not set a wider precedent. I very much hope that your Committee will respect this.

For your Committee's convenience Mr Campbell is preparing a written statement of evidence. I will let you have this once it is ready.

*Secretary of State*

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

*23 June 2003*

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