

**Select Committee on Foreign Affairs Written Evidence****Further supplementary memorandum from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office****LETTER FROM THE FOREIGN SECRETARY TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE, 2 JULY 2003**

The evidence submitted by the Government to your Committee including that provided in confidence has set out the position on the central allegation that intelligence was improperly inserted into the assessment on Iraqi WMD published on 24 September 2002. The allegation has clearly been shown to be untrue. It is important that we have been able to establish this since it was potentially so damaging not only to the Government but to the reputation of the Joint Intelligence Committee and the Intelligence Agencies who were, in effect, being accused of succumbing to political pressure.

In case there is any continuing misunderstanding about the inclusion of intelligence material in the briefing paper, "Iraq, its Infrastructure of Concealment, Deception and Intimidation" (February 2003), I am taking the opportunity of this letter to supplement written and oral evidence already given on this point.

The Chairman of the JIC and 'C' have confirmed that the intelligence material described in Alastair Campbell's memorandum of 27 June was provided by the SIS. It came from a range of sources. Much of the intelligence was recent. It was regarded by the Service as reliable and significant. Its release to the CIC for public use was authorised by 'C', which was fully in accordance with longstanding instructions for the use of intelligence. The JIC Chairman was aware that the information had been released with 'C's authority and regarded this as consistent with established procedures. On this point the correct arrangements were followed. The references to the intelligence material in the final document were accurate.

The problems arose in the drafting of Section 2 of the paper as Alastair Campbell has acknowledged and new procedures to deal with these problems have been put in place.

You may like to know that the contents of this letter have been agreed by 'C' and the Chairman of the JIC.

FAC/3/0283

Secretary of State

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

July 2003

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5 February 2003 US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, makes presentation to Security Council on case for action, claiming that Iraq is failing to disarm and is deceiving inspectors over true state of proscribed weapons programmes.

14 February 2003 Blix/El-Baradei brief open session of Security Council.

7 March 2003 Blix/El-Baradei brief Security Council.

20 March 2003 Start of Coalition Military Action against Iraq

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Before the war broke out no conclusive WMD had been found. The official justification of the coalitions use of military force against Iraq was to disarm the country of its weapons of mass destruction because they posed a threat to international peace and security and because the inspections process was not working. If US inspectors continue to fail to uncover significant amounts of WMD, the reason why the US and UK went to war needs to be carefully analysed and objectively reassessed on both sides of the Atlantic.

PART II: INFORMATION GIVEN TO THE UK PARLIAMENT IN THE PERIOD LEADING UP TO MILITARY ACTION IN IRAQ

"As a result of the intelligence we judge that Iraq has: continued to produce chemical and biological agents; military plans for the use of chemical and biological weapons, including against its own Shia population. Some of these weapons are deployable within 45 minutes of an order to use them."

BRITISH DOSSIER ON THE THREAT POSED BY IRAQ, PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 24 2002

The September 2002 dossier

20. On 24 September 2002, Prime Minister Tony Blair released an intelligence report on Iraq, often referred to as the "British dossier"[14]. One of the major new claims in the dossier was the assertion that "As a result of the intelligence we judge that Iraq has . . . sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa, despite having no active civil nuclear power programme that could require it." [15] The evidence that Iraq sought to obtain uranium from an African country, Niger, played a major role in the case against Iraq. The evidence was a central component of the assertion that Iraq was developing nuclear weapons, the only true weapon of mass destruction. This evidence was subsequently used by the US State Department in its response to Iraq's arms declaration, by the President in his State of the Union address, and by numerous senior US Administration officials, including Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. However, the IAEA revealed on 7 March 2003 that the evidence was forged.

21. The release of the dossier received widespread media coverage, with the claim that Iraq sought uranium from Africa being prominently featured on network news and the front pages of major newspapers around the world.

22. On the 10 October 2002, the US House of Representatives passed the resolution authorising the use of force against Iraq, and the Senate followed suit on 11 October. In the weeks leading up to and after the vote on the resolution, over 180 members of Congress cited the threat of Iraqi nuclear capability as a reason for supporting the use of force in Iraq. Numerous members specifically cited the Iraq's

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