

IRAQ WMD DOSSIER : DISSENT IN THE DIS : SPEAKING NOTE

- The DIS is an integral part of the MOD and as such its members, like any other individual within the Department, have the right to raise concerns about eg the misuse of intelligence through their line management chain. Ultimately these concerns can be referred to the Permanent Secretary and then to the Cabinet Secretary
- In the run up to the publication of last September's dossier, there was a considerable amount of debate about the precise wording to be used in which the DIS, like the rest of the UK intelligence community, was heavily involved.
- The same process goes on to a greater or lesser degree before any intelligence assessment is finalised and agreed. Indeed, it is actively encouraged.
- In the course of that process, but before publication, two DIS staff expressed concern to their immediate line manager about the precise language used in some parts of the dossier. These concerns were not so much about the use of intelligence as about the description to be used (eg the distinction between intelligence shows, indicates or suggests)
- Part of their concern reflected the fact that they did not have access to sensitive compartmented intelligence on Iraqi CBW production which was taken into account in the final version of the dossier. Both were informed of this
- Their other concerns related to differences of terminology between the body of the paper and the executive summary on the issue of 45 minutes, and on whether intelligence "showed" that Saddam attached great importance to possessing WMD.
- Both these points were discussed in the drafting phase and the final language was discussed and agreed by the JIC, on which both CDI and his Deputy sit.
- As a general point, all intelligence assessments contain large elements of judgement – indeed that is their purpose – and it is not always possible to incorporate the differing views of what can be a large number of individual analysts. That is the case with any JIC assessment and the dossier was no exception. This is why we have the JIC to act as the final, senior level, arbiter on these issues