

YME

Mark Damazer

From: Stephen Mitchell
Sent: 09 June 2003 04:57 PM
To: Mark Damazer
Subject: FW: On the sept 24 point

Fyi I asked Kevin to look back specifically at what Ag said when the Sept dossier was published this is his reply

-----Original Message-----

From: Kevin Marsh
Sent: 09 June 2003 15:56
To: Stephen Mitchell
Subject: On the sept 24 point

I've just listened back to Gilligan on 24 September - and re-read Campbell's point. I am more convinced than I was before that he is on the run. Or gone bonkers. Or both.

When Campbell says that Gilligan said there was "little that was new" in the dossier, he is half-right. That was Gilligan's (and everyone else's) judgement on the document as a whole. However, AG picked out a number of things that were new - though as he said several times, his judgements were based on a 30 minute reading of the dossier.

AG began his 2-way immediately after publication by saying

"The tabloid headlines if you like ... are the fact that some WMD may be ready within 45 minutes although that seems to be contradicted later in the document when it says that they haven't actually weaponised some of them"

Later he also says:

"And the argument that he is ready to use them is new - but it's not really backed up by any evidence .. the Prime Minister says.. in his forward that we cannot be specific about the sources"

In short, it was one of the key points - Gilligan's top point, as it happens - picked out

He does not say - as Campbell claims - that he knew about the "45 minute" CB readiness. Campbell is clearly confused because AG also said:

"And the other tabloid headline if you like is that Saddam has some missiles which might be capable of reaching British bases on Cyprus .. but again, we actually knew that."

Reading the transcript, one might be tempted to think he was referring to something else that we "already knew". Listening, however, it's clear that is not the case.

Of course, whatever Gilligan said at the time is irrelevant: he assumed he was dealing with an honest - if self-contradictory - document. He did not know then of the apparent process by which it came to take its final Sept 24 form... nor that the key claim (which, to reiterate, he picked out at the time as the top headline) was in any way contentious. Which is, of course, what he says in terms in the Mail on Sun 1 June.

For what it's worth, I don't think Campbell has anywhere to go on this - he isn't going to shift our story: not by endless transcripts, not by regurgitating producer guidelines.

Shouldn't we be taking the view from now on that only if he makes a genuinely new point do we reply to him?

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