

MH

gilligan intelligence

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(Sent to MH by editor 28/5/03)

WHAT MY MAN SAID

"Q: What about the Blair dossier {Sept 2002}? When we last met {in spring 2002} you said the dossier wouldn't tell us anything we didn't already know.

A: Until the week before it was just the same as I told you. It was transformed in the week before it was published, to make it sexier.

Q: What do you mean?

A: The classic was the statement that WMD were ready for-use within 45 minutes. Most things in the dossier were double-source but that was single source. And we believed that the source was wrong. He said it took 45 minutes to construct a missile assembly and that was misinterpreted {in the dossier} to mean that WMD could be deployed in 45 minutes. What we thought it actually meant was that they could launch a conventional missile in 45 minutes. There was no evidence that they had loaded missiles with WMD, or could do so anything like that quickly.

Q: So how did this transformation happen?

A: Campbell.

Q: What do you mean? They made it up?

A: No, it was real information. But it was included in the dossier against our wishes because it wasn't reliable. It was a single source and it was not reliable."

He said Downing Street had asked if there was anything else on seeing the dull original dossier and had been told about this and other things.

Other examples - he mentioned the African uranium, although said he had no personal knowledge of that because he doesn't do nuclear.

Other quotes. "What you have to understand is that 10-15 years ago there was a lot of information. With the concealment and deception operation {by the Iraqis} there was far less material."

"I believe it is 30 per cent likely there was a CW programme in the six months before the war, and more likely that there was a BW programme, but it was small because you couldn't conceal a larger programme. The sanctions were actually quite effective. They did limit the programme."

"Most people in intelligence weren't happy with it {the dossier}, because it didn't reflect the considered view they were putting forward."

On the aftermath. "We don't have a great deal more information yet than we had before. We have not get very much out of the detainees yet."