



Oral evidence

Taken before the Foreign Affairs Committee on Wednesday 25 June
2003

Members present:

Donald Anderson, in the Chair
Mr David Chidgey
Mr Fabian Hamilton
Mr Eric Illsley
Andrew Mackinlay
Mr John Maples
Richard Ottaway
Mr Greg Pope
Sir John Stanley
Ms Gisela Stuart

Memorandum submitted by Mr Alastair Campbell

Examination of Witness

Witness: MR ALASTAIR CAMPBELL, Director of Communications and Strategy, 10 Downing Street, examined.

Q897 Chairman: One preliminary announcement, which I hope will be to the benefit of everyone. We expect a division at around four o'clock and I then intend to adjourn for a period of some 15 minutes. Mr Campbell, welcome to what some will see as the lion's den, but which of the roles you play remains to be seen. I note that one newspaper talked of "Campbell in the soup", but we will wait to see. We would prefer to see your appearance before the Foreign Affairs Committee as one in which we are carrying out our task of a proper responsibility to Parliament and the public in a matter of very serious concern, namely the decision to go to war in Iraq. You know our remit is to test whether the information presented to Parliament was complete and accurate in the period leading up to military action in Iraq, particularly with regard to weapons of mass destruction. You know the charges which have been made against your role, effectively that in your zeal to make the case you embellished the evidence to the point of misleading Parliament and the public at a vital time relating to peace and war. There are four relevant documents. In 1998 the late Derek Fatchett and Doug Henderson presented to Parliament a three

FAC/2/0260

page paper. Again, we are told that in March of last year there was a Joint Intelligence Committee assessment which the *Independent* of 9 June claimed was suppressed after being put up by the JIC as not being sufficiently strong. The more relevant dossiers are those of 24 September of last year, based on a Joint Intelligence Committee assessment, and the dossier published in early February of this year where clearly alterations were made to enhance the effect, alterations to existing documents which had been plagiarised, for example "opposition" changed to "terrorist". Obviously my task is to provide the platform and I anticipate that my parliamentary colleagues on the Committee will be ready to question you on all the relevant matters, particularly on the document of 24 September of last year and that of 3 February of this year. First, some preliminary questions. Mr Campbell, looking back now, is there anything that you did which you regret?

Mr Campbell: In relation to the briefing paper that was issued in February 2003 I obviously regret the fact that a mistake was made within the drafting process whereby ----

Q898 Chairman: A mistake?

Mr Campbell: It was a mistake, and I have set out the background to that in my memorandum to you. If you want I can go through and explain how I believe that mistake occurred, or I can answer more generally on whether you think there are more areas where I should regret. From the general perspective, I believe that we were involved in communicating on a very, very serious issue why the Prime Minister and the Government felt as strongly as they did about the issue of Iraq and Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. At various stages we were communicating the intense diplomatic activity that was going on as the Prime Minister and the Government sought to avoid military conflict. At a further stage we were communicating during what was a military conflict. Now, during all that time with a media that we are operating with around the clock, around the world, on an issue like that, we are involved in and responsible for a huge number of, if you like, pieces of communication. Within one of them, and I have explained the background in the memorandum, there was a mistake.

Q899 Chairman: You say "a mistake". Are you saying you are particularising a single mistake?

Mr Campbell: I am saying that, yes.

Q900 Chairman: What was that single particular mistake?

Mr Campbell: The mistake was as follows: in relation to the second paper, the paper that was issued in February 2003, the idea for that came from a group that I chair, continue to chair, and have chaired for some time now, called the Iraq Communications Group. That is

FAC | 210261

comprised of people from the Foreign Office, from the MoD, from DFID, from the intelligence agencies, it is comprised of people from the unit that we can come on to discuss, the CIC. During January at one of those meetings the intelligence agencies gave information that had come to light, new information, which was releasable in the public domain, and they gave permission for that to be done, about the scale of the Iraqi apparatus that was working against the interests of the United Nations' weapons inspectors. In other words, the efforts that the Iraqis were making to prevent the weapons inspectors from doing their job. It was interesting. It was information, for example, about the fact that ----

Q901 Chairman: You give more particulars, but there was new intelligence information provided?

Mr Campbell: That was, if you like, the catalyst for the idea for the paper that followed.

Q902 Chairman: What was the mistake?

Mr Campbell: This was discussed over a period of about three weeks at these weekly meetings that I chair. The mistake that was made was around about 20 January what had happened was this: I had asked the CIC to prepare a draft paper, at this stage we were not exactly clear about how we were going to deploy that paper, I can come on to how we did deploy it in the end, ----

Q903 Chairman: Colleagues will no doubt come in on that.

Mr Campbell: What happened was I commissioned the CIC to begin drafting a paper which would incorporate the intelligence material, some of the intelligence material that had been authorised for use in the public domain, and other information about this theme, the whole theme of Iraq being configured as a state and its state apparatus designed to conceal weapons of mass destruction from the United Nations' weapons inspectors. The CIC then asked around the system if you like, the Foreign Office, MoD, other Government departments that may have an interest in this area, for any papers that they had on this, information that they might have on this in their research departments. People talk about this 12 year old PhD thesis, it was not a 12 year old PhD thesis, ----

Q904 Chairman: What was the mistake?

Mr Campbell: I will come to the mistake but I think it is important that I explain the background because this is how the mistake happened. During that process the Foreign Office research department sent this journal from September 2002 by Dr al-Marashi, who you interviewed recently. That then went to the CIC. At that point within the CIC work from that paper was taken and absorbed into the draft

FAC/2/0262

that was being prepared within the CIC. That was the mistake, without attribution.

Q905 Chairman: So the mistake in the February document was to transpose that learned article without attribution?

Mr Campbell: It was to take parts of that article and put them into the draft that was being developed without attribution.

Q906 Chairman: Why did you then send a letter of apology to Sir Richard Dearlove, because he had nothing to do with that?

Mr Campbell: I did not send a letter of apology to Sir Richard Dearlove.

Q907 Chairman: Have you sent letters of apology to anyone?

Mr Campbell: I have not sent a letter of apology to Sir Richard Dearlove.

Q908 Chairman: Have you sent letters of apology to anyone?

Mr Campbell: Not in relation to this. I do not think we have actually got to the impact of that mistake.

Q909 Chairman: That will be pursued later. I am now on a separate question. Have you, as a result of that February dossier, sent letters of apology to anyone?

Mr Campbell: No. What I have done, and what I did immediately when the mistake subsequently came to light sometime after the February paper had been published - because at that stage I did not know this had happened, nor did anybody else outside the CIC know that this had happened - when that draft paper was circulated to us we assumed this was Government material, Government sourced material, so therefore some of the changes that you have been discussing in earlier hearings were made by experts within Government on a draft which they believed to be a Government draft. That was the mistake.

Q910 Chairman: Back to my question. Have you, as a result of that document, apologised to anyone?

Mr Campbell: On the day that the mistake was revealed, first on Channel 4 and then on BBC *Newsnight*, and Dr al-Marashi went on to the media, the following day - this indicates how seriously we took it - I spoke to the security intelligence co-ordinator, I spoke to the Permanent Secretary of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, I spoke to the head of the Secret Intelligence Service, I spoke to the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee to explain that something had gone wrong. Equally, the other thing that we did was the Prime Minister's

FAC/2/0263

spokesman on behalf of the Prime Minister at a briefing that day acknowledged that mistakes had been made and we said that this should not have happened, and obviously subsequent to that we sought to establish what had happened.

Q911 Chairman: What you did in those conversations could not be construed as an apology?

Mr Campbell: What it was, was saying to the intelligence services that the care that should have been taken in the production of a document which contained some of their material was not sufficient. I have a sufficiently good relationship with these intelligence officials not for them or me to present that as an apology but as a discussion about how this had happened and how we stop it happening again.

Q912 Chairman: You had that discussion. Have you thought of having a discussion with Mr al-Marashi who told this Committee last week, as you know, that certain of his relatives could have been put in danger as a result of the careless use of his material?

Mr Campbell: I have not had a discussion with Dr al-Marashi. I read what he said to the Committee and obviously that is something that you have to take seriously when somebody makes that sort of ----

Q913 Chairman: How would you take it seriously?

Mr Campbell: I am happy to say to Dr al-Marashi that the mistake that occurred should not have occurred and apologise for that. I have to say in relation to what he said to the Committee, it does not really sit with the fact that this plagiarism was exposed by him on the BBC and, as he said to your Committee, he is the first person that you go to on the Internet if you look into these issues. It is not as if his expertise in this area and the fact that he has contributed material on this area was new. Having said all that, ----

Q914 Chairman: It was not the fact of his expertise, it was the use made of his expertise in this document which could harm him.

Mr Campbell: I accept there is a palpable difference between somebody writing for a journal like the *Middle East Review* and somebody's material being used in a British Government paper. I should just emphasise on that, the criticism at the time was that we did not acknowledge him, not that we did. At the time of publication, with the exception of people within the CIC, nobody knew that that was where it came from.

Q915 Chairman: Do you accept that the effect of that 3 February dossier was to cast doubts on the credibility of the rather more important dossier of 24 September?

FAC | 2 | 0264

Mr Campbell: Only if Parliament and the public were to view them in exactly the same light. What I mean by that is that they were very, very different in their scale, in their breadth and in their intended impact.

Q916 Chairman: So it is less important as to whether one was well-founded?

Mr Campbell: No, I did not say that. The dossier in September 2002 was one of the most important pieces of work developed during the entire build-up to the conflict.

Q917 Chairman: And its impact could have been reduced by the rather slapdash negligent way of putting together the February document?

Mr Campbell: I do not accept that because I think the two have to be seen in isolation. The dossier of September 2002 was put together, as I say, over many months, it had the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee in the lead on every aspect of its production, and it was a serious, thorough piece of work setting out why it was so vital to tackle Saddam and WMD. The second paper was not.

Q918 Chairman: It was not a serious piece of work?

Mr Campbell: No, the second paper was not vital to the case of why we had to deal with Saddam and WMD.

Q919 Chairman: Do you accept it was a "complete Horlicks"?

Mr Campbell: I accept that a mistake was made and I accept that it was right that we apologised for that mistake, and I think I have identified where the mistake was made.

Q920 Chairman: Do you feel now that you regret publishing it in the first place?

Mr Campbell: I think the idea of a paper setting out, as it sought to do, the scale of Saddam Hussein's apparatus of concealment and intimidation against the UN was a good thing to do. It should not have happened in the way that it did. I have explained as best as I can, having gone over it, why that happened. The reality is that had it not happened like that it would have been a perfectly good thing to do, but it did happen like that.

Q921 Chairman: And in the circumstances you were sorry it was done?

Mr Campbell: Yes, obviously I think it has been regrettable.

FAC | 2 | 0265

Q922 Sir John Stanley: Mr Campbell, I have to say I found some of the answers you gave to the Chairman less than credible. First of all, I must put to you your suggestion that the issue of concealment was some sort of peripheral issue as far as Members of Parliament were concerned in deciding whether or not to support the Government is wholly unfounded. The issue of concealment was absolutely central. The issue was why could the weapons inspectors not find the weapons of mass destruction and was it worthwhile going on pursuing that particular avenue of search. The Government's justification for the war was that we could not rely on further time being given to the weapons inspectors because of the programme of concealment. I have to put it to you that the judgment you have gained that the issue of concealment was peripheral, I think was profoundly mistaken.

Mr Campbell: I did not say the issue of concealment was peripheral, I said that paper was not remotely as significant as the dossier in September 2002. The dossier in 2002 attracted, I think I am right in saying, more interest around the world. Number 10, the Foreign Office and the BBC websites virtually collapsed on the day. It had a massive print run. It was the product of months and months of detailed work with the intelligence agencies. It was a huge break with precedent. It was a very important document. The briefing paper in February was given to six journalists on a plane to America. The reason that it was subsequently put into the House was to inform MPs on it because the Prime Minister, as you may recall, was in America at the time and was returning to make a statement on his talks with President Bush. I am not saying the issue of concealment was not hugely important, I am saying that that briefing paper was not nearly as significant as the dossier.

Q923 Sir John Stanley: You have just touched on the second reason why I found your initial answer less than credible. You said that you were unaware, apparently, of this mistake, that you believed the so-called 'dodgy dossier', the one which in your memorandum you said you conceived, so it is your 'dodgy dossier', was a dossier which had the same intelligence veracity, the same level of intelligence approval as the original September document.

Mr Campbell: No, I did not say that.

Q924 Sir John Stanley: You said you assumed it was a document on all fours with the previous one. You said that in answer to the Chairman.

Mr Campbell: No. The procedures that the dossier of September 2002 went through were wholly different from those of February 2003, that is why as a result we have actually put in place new procedures about how intelligence material is handled in any documents put into the public domain.

FAC/2/0266

Q925 Sir John Stanley: So you knew that the procedures that had been followed were wholly different from the ones that were followed for the September dossier?

Mr Campbell: Not until the mistake was exposed by the media.

Q926 Sir John Stanley: Mr Campbell, you are responsible as the Director of Government Communications not merely for what goes on inside Number 10 but also for the CIC unit inside the Foreign Office. You cannot seriously pretend to this Committee that you did not know the procedures that were being followed for the clearance or not of the second 'dodgy dossier'?

Mr Campbell: I am well aware of what the procedures were. I am simply saying to you that the procedures were different. On the dossier of September 2002 the lead person was the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, it was produced by the Joint Intelligence Committee; the dossier in February was not. The point I am making, and that I have made in the memorandum I have given to you, is a mistake was made within the CIC. I was not aware that had been done until Channel 4 and then *Newsnight* revealed that. I had never heard of Dr al-Marashi, nor had the other people who had commented on the paper. The changes that the Chairman referred to on the text were made by people thinking they were making changes to make more accurate a Government draft.

Q927 Sir John Stanley: So you are saying to the Committee now, which is confirming what the Committee's evidence is, that you were aware of the different procedures and when the document came to you for final putting to the Prime Minister, you were aware that it had not been through the normal intelligence clearance processes?

Mr Campbell: It had been through the procedures as they existed at that time. We put in place new procedures thereafter. The difference is that the Joint Intelligence Committee Chairman was responsible for the production of the WMD dossier in 2002, the second one I was responsible for as the Chairman of the group which commissioned it. The intelligence agency which provided intelligence for use in the public domain had authorised its use in the normal way as the procedures existed at that time. It was a result of the mistake in the way that it was made that subsequent to that we agreed new procedures so that anything with an intelligence input has to be cleared by the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee.

Q928 Sir John Stanley: When you briefed the Prime Minister before he made his statement in the House on 3 February, did you tell the Prime Minister that the document which he as Prime Minister was placing in the Library of the House, the 'dodgy dossier' that day, had neither been seen in draft or in final form by the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee?

FAC/2/0267

Mr Campbell: There was no need for the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee to see it under the procedures as they were then.

Q929 Sir John Stanley: That is not the question I put to you, Mr Campbell.

Mr Campbell: The answer is no, because it did not arise.

Q930 Sir John Stanley: The answer is no.

Mr Campbell: The answer is no, because it did not arise. There was no need for the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee to see something which the issuing agency had already cleared for public use properly, according to the procedures as they were then, for public use in that document.

Q931 Sir John Stanley: We will see in a moment whether it was necessary for you to tell the Prime Minister that. I will come to that in a moment. Were you aware that the draft of the 'dodgy dossier' had neither been seen in draft or in final form by the Secretary of the Cabinet?

Mr Campbell: I was not aware or unaware of that. The Cabinet Secretary is not part of the group that I chair of senior people from various Government departments, including the Cabinet Office. I had not sent it to the Cabinet Secretary. The Cabinet Office is represented on that group.

Q932 Sir John Stanley: Do you think you should have sent it to the Cabinet Secretary, given the fact that it was going to be placed in the Library of the House of Commons?

Mr Campbell: It was not the sort of document that I felt should be sent as a matter of routine to the Cabinet Secretary.

Q933 Sir John Stanley: In your memorandum to us, Mr Campbell, you say in relation to the September dossier: "I emphasised at all times both in our discussions and in any written outcomes of our various meetings circulated within the system that nothing should be published unless the JIC and the Intelligence Agencies were 100 per cent happy".

Mr Campbell: Correct.

Q934 Sir John Stanley: When you came to brief the Prime Minister on 3 February about the nature of the 'dodgy dossier', did you make clear to him that at no point had the intelligence agencies been consulted as to whether they were 100 per cent happy with the document?

FAC/2/0268

Mr Campbell: That there relates to the September 2002 dossier on WMD.

Q935 Sir John Stanley: It is equally applicable to this document.

Mr Campbell: It is not because, as I have explained, the procedures were different. I explained to the Prime Minister the purpose of the briefing paper, which was to give it to six Sunday newspaper journalists on a flight to Washington. I explained where there was new intelligence which had been cleared for public use and I explained that there was other material within the document about the nature of Saddam's infrastructure of concealment and intimidation. I certainly did not say to him, for example, that this was taken from a Middle East journal because I did not know that to be the case.

Q936 Sir John Stanley: But you must certainly have been aware that open sources were being used and the material had been culled off the Internet because the computer records show quite clearly that members of your own staff inside Number 10 were involved in the putting of this material on to the Internet and were involved in a major way in the drafting of it.

Mr Campbell: Well, if you read the memorandum that I gave to you, I think this story of the four people who allegedly authored the report says a huge amount more about the reporting of these issues than it does about the reality. If I may, Chairman, I would like to explain that in some detail.

Q937 Sir John Stanley: Can I just finish my line of questioning and perhaps we can come back to that.

Mr Campbell: Yes.

Q938 Sir John Stanley: As you know, Mr Campbell, the clear inadequacy of your briefing of the Prime Minister led the Prime Minister to - I am sure inadvertently - very seriously mislead the House of Commons on February 3. The Prime Minister said, and I will quote it in full: "We issued further intelligence over the weekend about the infrastructure of concealment. It is obviously difficult when we publish intelligence reports, but I hope that people have some sense of the integrity of our security services. They are not publishing this or giving us this information, making it up, it is the intelligence that they are receiving and we are passing it on to people".

Mr Campbell: That is wholly accurate.

Q939 Sir John Stanley: Every Member of the House of Commons who heard that would have been in no doubt that this second dossier was taken through the full JIC process, had JIC approval, had full JIC status. In fact, as we know, it was very largely simply culled off the

FAC/2/0269

Internet and the House of Commons a few weeks later took a decision on whether or not to go to war on this country and this particular document was an element in that decision. That was a very, very grave failure of briefing of the Prime Minister by yourself, I suggest, Mr Campbell. Do you acknowledge that to be the case now?

Mr Campbell: I think that is a very, very grave charge and I think it is one that I reject. If you look at the front cover of the document: "The report draws upon a number of sources, including intelligence material, and shows how the Iraqi regime is constructed to have and to keep WMD and is now engaged in a campaign of obstruction of the UN weapons inspectors". That is accurate. In relation to the processes with the intelligence agencies, the SIS - the lead agency on this - volunteered the information for public use. They were content for it to be used in this paper. The reason I keep coming back to the difference between the two things is the JIC process that you describe in relation to the first and the most substantial report, that was a JIC document, it was produced by the Joint Intelligence Committee; this was a briefing paper produced by the team that I chair. The Prime Minister put it into the House, he did not present it in the same way. If you recall with the first report, Parliament was recalled for the Prime Minister to make a statement and a debate to be held upon it. The procedures for that were different. The procedures that have now been put in place have been strengthened so that the procedures that applied to the WMD dossier of September 2002 now apply to all documents with an intelligence input. That was a change that I was instrumental in putting in place after this mistake in the CIC was exposed.

Q940 Sir John Stanley: Mr Campbell, do you not recognise that a hugely greater area of mistake resulted than simply the indefensible plagiarism of material off the Internet? The hugely greater mistake that resulted in parliamentary and constitutional terms was your total failure to brief the Prime Minister correctly as to the process that had been used, the fact that none of this material had come through with the Joint Intelligence Committee Chairman's approval, and the House of Commons was left under the illusion, as indeed was the Prime Minister, that in terms of the authenticity and reliability of this information it came with the JIC seal of approval on it when that was not the case?

Mr Campbell: The Prime Minister did not say it was with the JIC seal of approval and as the Prime Minister made clear in the ---

Q941 Sir John Stanley: "... issued further intelligence over the weekend"; did any Member of Parliament think that did not mean something with JIC approval?

Mr Campbell: I think any Member of Parliament would recognise the difference between a document such as that one, with the detail that is

hAC|2|0270

in it and the kind of production that it is and the way that it was put out at the time, as I say, as part of a massive, global communications exercise, and this paper that was given to a few Sunday journalists travelling with the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, as he made clear again in the House today, was content with the paper as it was. What he is not content with, and nor am I, is the fact that in its production a mistake was made. We have acknowledged that mistake, we have apologised for that mistake and we have put forward these new procedures to make sure it does not happen again, and I do not honestly see there is much more that we can do than that.

Q942 Sir John Stanley: Mr Campbell, I have to put it to you the contrast between the covers makes it absolutely ---

Mr Campbell: --- I think the contrast is far greater than that.

Q943 Sir John Stanley: The contrast between the covers makes it absolutely clear that you should have alerted the Prime Minister unmistakably to the fact that the preparation of these two documents was quite different ---

Mr Campbell: He knows that ---

Q944 Sir John Stanley: --- That the second document had no JIC approval and that he, I am quite certain, if he had known that and had been told that there is no way he would have said what he did to the House of Commons when he made his statement on 3 February. That statement suggested that this was intelligence of veracity coming from intelligence sources with intelligence approval; we now know that to be false.

Mr Campbell: Had the Prime Minister had those concerns he would have raised them directly with me; he has not. Equally, I have had many, many discussions with the intelligence agencies, and the intelligence material that was in that document was accurate. The reason I keep coming back to the difference in these documents is the fact that that first document of September 2002 was hugely important, it was a huge break of precedent for the intelligence agencies to be sharing so much information like that with Parliament and the public. The second document was a different sort of communication, and the Prime Minister has not said to me, "I should have been told that this had not gone through the JIC clearance", because he knew that where there was intelligence material in that document it had been cleared for use by the issuing agency, and that was the procedure at the time.

Q945 Sir John Stanley: Yes, but I am sure the Prime Minister is sufficiently aware of the huge dangers of mixing intelligence material with material taken off the internet and I am sure the Prime Minister is also aware that if he had been properly briefed on those dangers the first thing he would have said to you is, "Mr Campbell, make certain

FAC | 2/0271

this is cleared by the Chairman of the JIC before it is put in the Library."

Mr Campbell: All I can do is refer you to what the Prime Minister said in the House of Commons today where he makes clear ---

Q946 Sir John Stanley: He made the statement today, absolutely rightly, that he was left completely in the dark at the time he made his statement on 3 February that the greater part of this document had been culled off the internet and there were these two significant inaccuracies in it.

Mr Campbell: Can I just say on that at that point, neither he nor I nor anybody in a senior position on my Iraq Communications Group was aware that that was the case. That is the point I keep coming back to. In relation to the changes, I have explained those changes were made by experts within the government commenting upon what they did not know to be Dr al-Marashi's work. It is only, for example, where "hostile groups" became "terrorist organisations", and it was because they said, "Hold on a minute, you are not talking about hostile groups, you are talking about terrorist organisations, you are talking about Islamic Jihad, you are talking about Hamas, you are talking about some of the groups that are trying to destabilise the Iranian regime."

Q947 Sir John Stanley: Is it not a fact that the Prime Minister has, rightly, instructed that all published material that contains intelligence material must in future be cleared by the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee? Does that not of itself make it self-evident that the procedures you were following and the briefing of the Prime Minister were grossly inadequate?

Mr Campbell: No it does not because it was not initially the Prime Minister who got in place these new procedures, it was me with the Joint Intelligence Committee and the Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator, and the Prime Minister is content with the decisions that we came to.

Q948 Sir John Stanley: I am fascinated to know that in this matter apparently you seem to determine the Government's procedures.

Mr Campbell: I do not determine the Government's procedures and that totally misrepresents what I said. I entered into a discussion with the Head of the Secret Intelligence Service, the Chairman of the JIC and the Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator, Sir David. The procedures were agreed in an exchange of correspondence between me and Sir David, having been discussed with the agencies, and they were signed off by the Prime Minister. Those procedures are now in place.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr Mackinlay please?

FAC | 2 | 0272

Q949 Andrew Mackinlay: Mr Campbell, on page 4 of your statement you make it clear, as you have over the past few minutes, and you say: "When new SIS intelligence came to light, which was authorised for use in the public domain, which revealed the scale of the regime's programme of deception and concealment, it was my idea to base a briefing paper for the media upon it." You also went on a few moments ago to explain on 3 February and you said: "I explained" - that is to the Prime Minister - "where there was new intelligence." Would you be able this afternoon to take us through those paragraphs or sections of this document which were the new intelligence material?

Mr Campbell: The bulk of any new intelligence material was principally in sections one and three. It related to the activities of the Iraqi regime. It is the material about the bugging of hotels, about the monitoring of the movements of officials, it is the material about the organisation of car crashes and the like.

Q950 Andrew Mackinlay: Indeed, it is very precise, and therefore it would be possible for you overnight, would it not, with a highlighter to highlight precisely that which is above the line in terms of this intelligence material and that which is "other sources"?

Mr Campbell: It would be but I would also have to check if the agencies were happy for that to be done.

Q951 Andrew Mackinlay: You overlook the chasm you are falling into. You have said repeatedly that they have signed this information off.

Mr Campbell: There may be information within that paper which is intelligence information but not necessarily identified as such.

Q952 Andrew Mackinlay: You have confused me because the way I was following you, you said that new information came to light which was authorised for use in the public domain. That is all I am asking for, that category which was authorised for use in the public domain.

Mr Campbell: I have referred to some of that in the answer that I gave to you earlier.

Q953 Andrew Mackinlay: You understand the category I am asking about. Overnight would you highlight, or however way you want to indicate that which is in that category?

Mr Campbell: I think it would probably take longer than that.

Q954 Andrew Mackinlay: Why?

Mr Campbell: Because I would have to go through the kind of processes that Sir John has just been talking about.

FAC | 2 | 0273

Q955 Andrew Mackinlay: By Friday morning?

Mr Campbell: I would hope to be able to do that and the Foreign Secretary could perhaps bring it, but that is something that would have to be agreed by probably all of the intelligence agencies.

Q956 Andrew Mackinlay: If it was not, I think you would need to come up with an explanation as to why because I just cannot understand the logic of it. I do not want to labour the point. It was only when the "plagiarism" issue came to light that media attention grew, you say. When did you have that awful moment when you discovered now what has become known as the "Horlicks". When was that moment, that sinking feeling (we have all had it) of "whoops"?

Mr Campbell: As I recall, that moment was on the way back from an interview the Prime Minister had done with Jeremy Paxman and I think - this is from memory, dredging my memory here - when we were going through what we described as our "masochism" strategy whereby the Prime Minister basically went out and was getting beaten up by the public in interviews. I think I am right in saying Channel 4 made a reference to this story on the 7 o'clock news and *Newsnight* did a very brief interview with Dr al-Marashi in the evening.

Q957 Andrew Mackinlay: Approximately, which day was that then?

Mr Campbell: That was the day ---

Q958 Andrew Mackinlay: It is beyond 3 February, is it not?

Mr Campbell: I think it was the 7th. I think it may be in my note.

Q959 Andrew Mackinlay: Okay, can I assume that within an hour or two the Prime Minister was told?

Mr Campbell: It may have been the 6th. The Prime Minister was told pretty quickly, yes. He by then, I think from memory, had gone on to his constituency and I was on the way back to London.

Q960 Andrew Mackinlay: I have to say to you I have been reading this afternoon and I have listened carefully to Sir John Stanley reading out the precise words of the Prime Minister's statement of 3 February. You might think me stupid ---

Mr Campbell: --- no.

Q961 Andrew Mackinlay: --- but I cannot conclude any other reason, reading those words again and again, than that this document was an intelligence document. It is not conditional. In fairness to you, it says the document draws upon a number of sources including intelligence sources, but did you and the Prime Minister discuss him

FAC/2/0274

making a formal statement or using a parliamentary occasion (taking the initiative rather than responding to questions) to clarify that point?

Mr Campbell: The briefing paper that had been given to the Sunday papers on the trip to Washington was put in the Library in the House on the Monday in advance of the Prime Minister's statement on his talks with President Bush.

Q962 Andrew Mackinlay: I have told you on the receiving end of his statement what I interpreted it to be.

Mr Campbell: All I can say on that is if you look at the first dossier, the 2002 dossier, it actually makes a very big point of the fact that this is an unprecedented development. It explains what the JIC is, who is on it and how it works. I think if you do look at the other one, particularly, as I say, the way it was used, this is a huge communications exercise, I think all I can do is point to the front of the paper which says it draws upon a number of sources including intelligence.

Q963 Andrew Mackinlay: By the time it has gone beyond this awful moment, what I cannot understand is, bearing in mind it is not just Andrew Mackinlay who is confused, clearly it is a lot of other people, probably 650-odd MPs, why did the Prime Minister and/or yourself (you counsel him legitimately) not say we really ought to clarify this in a formal statement or even a written statement to the House?

Mr Campbell: The Prime Minister was asked about it, again from memory, in the House and has also had a number of written questions about the issue.

Q964 Andrew Mackinlay: But he was never proactive on it, was he?

Mr Campbell: On the day Channel 4 and the BBC exposed the fact that some of this material had come from Dr al-Marashi's article in September 2002, the Prime Minister's spokesman in the very next briefing said, "Something has gone wrong here, it should not have happened, mistakes have been made and we will have to look at it." It did not take us that long to establish what had happened. Those in the CIC responsible admitted what had happened and it was as a result of that we then discussed and put in place the new procedures.

Q965 Andrew Mackinlay: Who represents the Cabinet Office on the CIC. You said they are represented; who is he or she?

Mr Campbell: From time to time it is the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, it is sometimes his deputy, and that is who it usually is.

Q966 Andrew Mackinlay: So the Joint Intelligence Committee were

FAC/2/0275

privy to the document of 3 February?

Mr Campbell: They were part of the discussions about the deployment of the paper. Ultimately the decision finally to use the paper in the way that we did was made as part of our media strategy for the trip to the States. To go back to the point that I was discussing with Sir John, the issuing agency, the Secret Intelligence Service, had already authorised us to use the intelligence material in the public domain.

Q967 Andrew Mackinlay: Yes, but presumably the Cabinet Office Secretary was represented at the critical moment when it was decided to go with this information, albeit it might have been delegated to you to sign it off?

Mr Campbell: There was a process that went on over a period of weeks. I think I am right in saying it was 7 January that the SIS said there was this new material which could be deployed in the public domain. Over the next three weeks there were three different meetings discussing all sorts of other ---

Q968 Andrew Mackinlay: --- Would the Cabinet Secretary be privy to the fact, to use the term, that there were other sources other than the intelligence material going to be drawn into this document?

Mr Campbell: I am not aware that the Cabinet Secretary himself was involved at all.

Q969 Andrew Mackinlay: No, but his representative.

Mr Campbell: Certainly because what my group did was commission --

Q970 Andrew Mackinlay: Who is that person?

Mr Campbell: I cannot remember who for sure was around the table at that time.

Q971 Andrew Mackinlay: It is minuted so you could let us know, please.

Mr Campbell: On 7 January?

Q972 Andrew Mackinlay: Or if you think there are a number of meetings you could say Joe Bloggs on that day and so-and-so on that day.

Mr Campbell: In relation to this particular document there were four meetings.

Q973 Andrew Mackinlay: Let's have whoever is privy to, present or

FAC | 2 | 0276

the circulation, please?

Mr Campbell: Yes.

Q974 Andrew Mackinlay: On the September document, on page 2 of your statement you say discussions with the Chairman of the JIC on presentational issues, which is your job as a journalist . **Mr Campbell:** Former!

Q975 Andrew Mackinlay: Very good. The point is presentational issues, drafting suggestions and PM's suggestions. Those were your words. Did he accept your suggestions?

Mr Campbell: Some he did and some he did not.

Q976 Andrew Mackinlay: Okay, would you be able to tell us which ones (not now) were included in, even if you cannot tell us the ones which were excluded out?

Mr Campbell: I can probably say some of both.

Q977 Andrew Mackinlay: Overnight perhaps?

Mr Campbell: I think, for example, the first draft was put forward by the Chairman of the JIC and I looked at it. For example, there was a paragraph about Saddam Hussein's illicit earnings and it said about £3 billion of earnings, the bulk of which was illicit. I asked whether it is possible to quantify just how much of that was illicit and the answer came back from John Scarlett 100 per cent, that kind of thing. In another area - and I know the accusation is I sexed it up, I think this is sexing it down - in the passage on human rights, for example, there were some very graphic descriptions of the nature of the regime which the draft described as "vivid and horrifying". I felt we should let it speak for itself. Do you need to say that? The Prime Minister also made suggestions.

Q978 Andrew Mackinlay: Do you know which they were?

Mr Campbell: He made suggestions about the structure of the document at quite a late stage in the drafting and the Chairman of the JIC, as it happened, said he did not think that was a better structure than his and stuck with his.

Q979 Andrew Mackinlay: Did you write the Executive Summary?

Mr Campbell: No.

Q980 Andrew Mackinlay: Who would have done that?

Mr Campbell: The Chairman of the JIC wrote the Executive Summary.

FAC | 2 | 0277

Q981 Andrew Mackinlay: Did subsequently any member of the SIS complain about the production or the conclusion, anything about the document or the manner of its presentation?

Mr Campbell: Not to me and not to the Prime Minister.

Andrew Mackinlay: You are not aware of that? Thank you very much.

Q982 Richard Ottaway: Mr Campbell, the Prime Minister today and you this afternoon have said that every word of both the dossiers is true. As you are well aware, the September 02 document has nine main conclusions of the current position, one of which is that uranium had been sought in Africa and had no civil nuclear application in Iraq. Are you still saying that is true?

Mr Campbell: I am saying that is the intelligence that the JIC put forward. I am not an intelligence expert and my position on this is if something comes across my desk that is from John Scarlett and the JIC, if it is good enough for him, it is good enough for me.

Q983 Richard Ottaway: Given that the documents on which that claim was based have been passed to the International Atomic Energy Authority and found to be false, have the JIC notified you they had doubts about this?

Mr Campbell: I am aware of the issue. I am equally aware, and this is probably something best raised with the JIC than with myself, that the JIC say it does not necessarily negate the accuracy of the material they, the JIC, put forward.

Q984 Richard Ottaway: You are saying rather what the Foreign Secretary said yesterday and saying this is not my claim, we are just passing on intelligence here.

Mr Campbell: I am certainly not and the reason why I say if it is good enough for John Scarlett it is good enough for me is that I completely accept the integrity and professionalism of their process.

Q985 Richard Ottaway: As far as you are aware, he is still standing by that claim?

Mr Campbell: As far as I aware the claim he puts in this document, whilst I understand there is this issue to do with forgeries, my understanding (and again this is something that is not necessarily my expertise) is that that is not British intelligence material that is being talked about.

Q986 Richard Ottaway: The second main conclusion that is being queried is the 45-minute point, which you have dealt with quite extensively in your memorandum. The Foreign Secretary made a

FAC | 2 | 0278

similar point yesterday about the 45 minutes. Are you saying the same today that this is what the intelligence people are telling you and it must be true?

Mr Campbell: When the first draft of the September 2002 dossier was presented to Number 10, I think I am right in saying that was the first time I had seen that and again, as I say, having seen the meticulousness and the care that the Chairman of the JIC and his colleagues were taking in the whole process, I really did not think it was my place, to be perfectly frank, to say, "Hold on a minute, what is this about?" What is completely and totally and 100 per cent untrue - and this is the BBC allegation, which is ostensibly I think why the Chairman called me on this - what is completely and totally untrue is that I in any way overrode that judgment, sought to exaggerate that intelligence, or sought to use it in any way that the intelligence agencies were not 100 per cent content with.

Q987 Richard Ottaway: You use some rather interesting wording in your memorandum that to suggest it was inserted against the wishes of the intelligence agencies was false. Was it put in at your suggestion?

Mr Campbell: No, otherwise --- It existed in the very first draft and, as far as I am aware, that part the paper stayed like that.

Q988 Richard Ottaway: Have you gone back to the JIC on that point since publication?

Mr Campbell: I can assure you that I have had many, many discussions about this issue with the Chairman of the JIC, not least in preparation for this hearing.

Q989 Richard Ottaway: And they are still standing behind it?

Mr Campbell: Absolutely, absolutely. In relation to that particular story, which as Sir John Stanley said to the BBC correspondent last week, is about as serious an allegation as one can make, not just against me but against the Prime Minister and the intelligence agencies, they are basically saying that the Prime Minister took the country into military conflict and all that entails - loss of military and Iraqi civilian life - on the basis of a lie. Now that is a very, very serious allegation.

Q990 Richard Ottaway: Can I suggest it is Parliament that took the country into war.

Mr Campbell: The allegation against me is that we helped the Prime Minister persuade Parliament and the country to go into conflict on the basis of a lie. I think that is a pretty serious allegation. It has been denied by the Prime Minister, it has been denied by the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, it has been denied by the Security

FAC | 2 | 0279

and Intelligence Co-ordinator and it has been denied by the heads of the intelligence agencies involved, and yet the BBC continue to stand by that story.

Q991 Richard Ottaway: You believe that time will prove you right on that one?

Mr Campbell: I know that we are right in relation to that 45-minute point. It is completely and totally untrue, and I do not use this word ---

Q992 Richard Ottaway: I am talking about the substance.

Mr Campbell: It is actually a lie.

Q993 Richard Ottaway: You are being accused of being involved in its insertion in the document. I am quizzing you on its veracity.

Mr Campbell: I am saying in relation to that if it is good enough for the Joint Intelligence Committee, it is good enough for me. I am not qualified to question their judgement upon it but I have seen and been privy to the kind of processes and the meticulousness with which they approach that. When you have a situation when all of those people, from the Prime Minister down, the Foreign Secretary, the FCO Permanent Secretary, the heads of all the agencies deny a story and the BBC persist in saying it is true, persist in defending the correspondent whom you took evidence from last week, when I know and they know that it is not true, I think something has gone very wrong with the way that these issues are covered.

Q994 Richard Ottaway: One of you is wrong.

Mr Campbell: I know who is right and who is wrong. The BBC are wrong. We have apologised in relation to Dr al-Marashi and I think it is about time the BBC apologised to us in relation to the 45-minute point.

Q995 Richard Ottaway: I will leave that to the BBC, if you do not mind. Can I move on, in the preparation of the September 2002 document did the Government ever receive any information from the intelligence services that Iraq was not an immediate threat?

Mr Campbell: Sorry, can you just repeat that point?

Q996 Richard Ottaway: Did the Government ever receive any information from intelligence services that Iraq was not an immediate threat?

Mr Campbell: Not to my knowledge. I really do think that is a question for the intelligence agencies.

Q997 Richard Ottaway: You were looking at the intelligence there.

FAC | 2 | 0280

Mr Campbell: I do not see all the intelligence and I would not expect to see all the intelligence.

Q998 Richard Ottaway: But you were having meetings with the JIC.

Mr Campbell: I was but that is not a point of which I am aware. You asked whether the Prime Minister received any and I am saying it is not for me to know.

Q999 Richard Ottaway: You will be well aware of the source of this question because it was on the radio this morning; is it true that the intelligence agencies produced a six-page dossier March 2002 which stated there was no new evidence of a threat from Iraq?

Mr Campbell: Not that I have seen. The genesis of the September 2002 document, as again I set out in the memorandum, did start out as a broader document that was being prepared in the Foreign Office about the general issue of weapons of mass destruction, including other countries that it was looking at. It was as the Iraqi issue developed during the course of that year that a decision was taken by the Prime Minister and his colleagues to focus on Iraq and focus in the way that we duly did on the report on the intelligence assessment of Iraq's WMD.

Q1000 Richard Ottaway: So the answer to that is no, you did not see anything?

Mr Campbell: No.

Q1001 Richard Ottaway: Three weeks before the dossier was published Whitehall sources were quoted as telling the Defence Editor of *The Times* that they would not be revelatory. A few days later another Whitehall source tells the Security Editor of *The Guardian* that the dossier would no longer play a central role because there was very little new in it. Then comes a document which you have described as a very important document. How do you account for the difference in the comments and the dossier that emerged just a few weeks later?

Mr Campbell: I happen to think that the Defence Editor of *The Times* is an extremely good journalist. I have probably ruined his career by saying that! All I can say about that is that it is not true. There has been this vein of reporting for some time that the WMD dossier was transformed in the last few days prior to publication, and that was not the case. The very first substantial draft that was put forward by the Joint Intelligence Committee was very largely the basis of what was duly published and presented to Parliament.

Q1002 Richard Ottaway: Fine. Can I go to a question which the Chairman brought up at the beginning about whether you apologised to anyone and, frankly, I thought you slightly skirted round some of

FAC/2/0281

the direct questions. Did you apologise to the John Scarlett, the Head of the JIC, for what had happened?

Mr Campbell: Again it depends --- I phoned up and said to John, who is a friend of mine and who I work with closely and regularly, "Something terrible has gone on with this. We have got to sort it out because I do not want anything that we do to reflect badly upon you and your reputation and we have got to sort that out." I have got no doubt in the various conversations during that period - and I spoke to him, I spoke to the head of the SIS, I spoke to Sir David Omand, I spoke to a number of people in the intelligence agencies - I will have said, "I am really sorry this has happened." I saw there was some story which appeared recently that I wrote this grovelling personal letter of apology to the Head of the SIS. I am not saying this because I do not believe in apologising, it is just as a matter of fact I did not send him a letter, but no doubt I have acknowledged many times our regret about the mistake made in the production of the February 2003 briefing paper.

Q1003 Richard Ottaway: So you did apologise verbally?

Mr Campbell: I certainly said, "I am really sorry for the mess this has caused and for the fact it is going to be said that this casts doubt upon you guys." The fact is my assessment of them within the government and large parts of the public at large is that their integrity is pretty much unchallenged.

Q1004 Richard Ottaway: Can I quickly ask you about the Coalition Information Centre; who appointed them?

Mr Campbell: The Coalition Information Centre started as an entity during the Kosovo conflict where it was made up of people from different government departments and also from people from other overseas governments, the United States, Spain, France I think at some point, Germany, a number of governments. In terms of how they are appointed, once we were setting up this cross-departmental team, which continues in a smaller form now, essentially what happens is we trawl departments to try to find people who can be seconded, so on that, again from memory, I think there were discussions between myself, the head of personnel at the Foreign Office, Mike Granatt who is in charge of the GICS and trying to find people who could be seconded for three months, six months, what have you. The other personnel issues are resolved by me getting on to my opposite numbers in different parts of the world and saying, "Can you spare anybody good to come and work on this operation?"

Q1005 Richard Ottaway: What sort of data did they have access to?

Mr Campbell: It would depend on the level of clearance that they had within their home departments. For example, the person who was its

FAC/2/0282

last head until recently (who is now on secondment to the CPA in Baghdad) I would think had pretty high security clearance. Most of them I suspect would not.

Q1006 Richard Ottaway: And are they still in operation?

Mr Campbell: It is not operating in the same way that it did and, as I say, the people who were there during the height of the recent military conflict have actually gone to Baghdad.

Chairman: We have now come to the point where there is one minute before 4 o'clock. So I think it probably best rather than start with Greg Pope if we adjourned at this stage for a quarter of an hour and Greg Pope will begin immediately when we return at quarter past four.

The Committee suspended from 4.00 pm to 4.15 pm for a division in the House.

Chairman: The division is over. Mr Pope?

Q1007 Mr Pope: Thank you, Chairman. Mr Campbell, the charges against you really are of the gravest nature: that you exaggerated the evidence to persuade a reluctant Parliament to vote for a war which was not popular. We heard in evidence from Mr Gilligan of the BBC last week and he alleged that you transformed the original September dossier, and if I can just quote what he said in evidence, my "source's claim was that the dossier had been transformed in the week before it was published and I asked" - that is Gilligan - "'So how did this transformation happen?', and the answer was a single word, which was 'Campbell'". That is an incredibly damaging allegation. Could you comment on its veracity?

Mr Campbell: As I explained earlier, the story that I "sexed up" the dossier is untrue: the story that I "put pressure on the intelligence agencies" is untrue: the story that we somehow made more of the 45 minute command and control point than the intelligence agencies thought was suitable is untrue: and what is even more extraordinary about this whole episode is that, within an hour of the story first being broadcast, it was denied, emphatically: it then continued. We were in Kuwait at the time - the Prime Minister was about to get a helicopter to Basra - it was denied: the story kept being repeated: the following day the BBC returned to it and it was denied - by now we were in Poland and I remember being called out of a breakfast with the Prime Minister and the Polish Prime Minister because I had asked to speak to John Scarlett, the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, just to absolutely double/triple check that there was nothing in this idea that the intelligence agencies were somehow unhappy with the way that we behaved during the thing and that there was no truth at all that anybody at the political level put pressure on the 45 minute point and John said, "Absolutely. It is complete and total nonsense and you can

FAC | 2 | 0283

say that with my authority". Then the Prime Minister had to come out of the breakfast with the Polish Prime Minister; he was about to do a press conference about the Polish EU referendum campaign and, of course, the British media are all asking about this lie, which is what it was.

Q1008 Mr Pope: On the 45 minutes, what you have refuted up until now is the allegation that you inserted the 45 minute claim into the dossier and I am trying to make a different point which is that there is an allegation not that you inserted it but you gave it undue prominence; that this was a background piece of information; it was based on a single piece of uncorroborated intelligence advice and yet it was given undue prominence. It is mentioned in the foreword by the Prime Minister and it is mentioned three other times throughout the document and it is a chilling allegation - that our troops in Cyprus or our troops perhaps if they went into Iraq could face a 45 minute threat of the deployment of a chemical attack?

Mr Campbell: Well, it is true that when the BBC representative came to the Committee last week he claimed that all he had ever alleged was that we had "given it undue prominence". I am afraid that is not true. What he said last week was not true. It was a complete backtrack on what he had broadcast and written about in the *Mail on Sunday*, *The Spectator* and elsewhere. Now the reason why I feel so strongly that we, the government, from the Prime Minister down deserve an apology about this story is it has been made absolutely clear not just by me - you can put me to one side and I am well aware of the fact that I am defined in a certain way by large parts of the media, but when you put in the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, the Head of the Secret Intelligence Service, the Government Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator all saying emphatically "This story is not true" and the BBC defence correspondent on the basis of a single anonymous source continues to say that it is true, then I think something has gone very wrong with BBC journalism.

Q1009 Mr Pope: Are you saying that he lied not just to the Committee but on the radio? I have the transcript of the *Today* programme of 4 June. He said, "The reason why this story has run so as long" - and this is a direct quote - "is nobody has actually ever denied the central charge made by my source".

Mr Campbell: The denial was made within an hour of the lie being told on the radio. Now, I am not suggesting that he has not had somebody possibly say something to him but whatever he has been told is not true, and I think in relation to the briefing paper, when that mistake was discovered, we put our hands up and said "There is a mistake here" and we found out where it happened and we dealt with it, and I would compare and contrast with an organisation which has broadcast something - not just once but hundreds of times since - that is a lie.

FAC/2/0284

Q1010 Mr Pope: And on the other charge that you pressurised the intelligence agencies to exaggerate the evidence, that is also a lie?

Mr Campbell: Totally untrue and what is more, again, the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, the Head of SIS, the Intelligence and Security Co-ordinator have all authorised me to say with their full support that is not true.

Q1011 Mr Pope: Can I move on to a different area about the machinery of government? Clare Short came before the Committee recently and she said that crucial decisions in the run-up to the conflict with Iraq were made by an entourage in No 10, that this entourage sucked the decision-making process out of the Foreign Office into No 10, that the people who make up the entourage are not elected, that the members of the entourage are yourself, Sally Morgan, David Manning, Jonathan Powell? Is that the case?

Mr Campbell: No, it is not. What is true is that I would say, if you were to say who in relation to Iraq were the officials in Downing Street who spent the most time with the Prime Minister in terms of the many foreign trips that he was doing, in terms of briefing, in terms of general meetings, it probably was the four, but in relation to that whole period he had meetings every single day with the Foreign Secretary and the Defence Secretary in particular, with the Deputy Prime Minister, with the group that comprised those three plus the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary, the Leader of the House - now the Home Secretary, with Margaret Beckett, and with Clare Short, and also with officials including some of the intelligence officials that we have been discussing.

Q1012 Mr Pope: What I am putting to you, though, is there is a lacuna here in that the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee of the Cabinet has not met since 28 June 2001; the War Cabinet, the ad hoc committee on Iraq; did not start meeting until mid-March, so we have this long period of time when there is no Cabinet Sub-committee meeting, the ad hoc committee, the sub-committee of the Cabinet on Iraq, had not started meeting and in that gap the decision-making process on a day-to-day basis about Iraq was essentially being made by an unelected coterie around the Prime Minister.

Mr Campbell: No. I really do not accept that because the decisions were being taken by the Prime Minister and by ministers and it has always been the case that Prime Ministers and ministers have advisers and I just do not accept the picture as it was portrayed by Clare Short when she came to the Committee. As I say, in the build-up to the conflict and during the conflict that group was meeting the whole time. Prior to that the Prime Minister was meeting with his ministerial colleagues all the time. As Robin Cook said to the Committee last week there was regular discussion in the whole Cabinet. I do not think a week went by where Iraq for some months was not the dominant

FAC | 2/0285

issue.

Q1013 Mr Pope: A couple of brief questions about the second dossier, the February one. I notice that in your memorandum to the Committee on page 6 you said that during the third week of January the material, that is Dr Marashi's material, was simply absorbed into the briefing paper. Could you tell us who absorbed it into the briefing paper?

Mr Campbell: I think it would be wrong if I were to name the individual within the CIC who did that because I think it would look like, and I no doubt would stand accused of, seeking to evade responsibility. I take responsibility for that paper. It was done by an official to whom had been passed a number of different papers and, as I say, I do not think there was any malign intent, I do not think there was any attempt to mislead, and it is also worth pointing out, as the Prime Minister did again today, that nobody has seriously challenged the substance. Also a lot of the changes which were discussed earlier were changes, as I say, made by experts within government who possibly had more up-to-date information than Dr Al-Marashi, which is not to undermine him or his work. I think that is probably as much as I really should say about the individual. It was simply within the CIC.

Q1014 Mr Pope: But you can see why the Committee is concerned and why Parliament is concerned, because what you have essentially got here is an academic thesis that has been down-loaded, it has been used without --

Mr Campbell: No. We keep going back to this myth about the twelve year old PhD thesis. It was an article from a Middle East journal.

Q1015 Mr Pope: But the article is used without Dr Al-Marashi's permission, he is not credited with it, and worst of all, I think, is the possibility that his relatives back in Iraq may have been persecuted because of that.

Mr Campbell: Well, were that the case it would be very, very regrettable and I completely accept that, and I certainly hope that is not the case but, as I said earlier, the accusation that we faced when I was having the horrible moment coming down from the *Newsnight* studio in Gateshead was that we had not drawn attention to him and, as he said himself to the Committee, he is well known in this field, but I do accept there is a world of difference between writing something in the *Middle East Review* and something being subsequently discovered to be part of the British government's briefing paper that we issued to the Sunday press.

Q1016 Mr Pope: Just finally, do you share the Foreign Secretary's assessment that the second dossier in hindsight was a mistake? In fact, a complete Horlicks?

FAC | 2 | 0286

Mr Campbell: I certainly accept it was a mistake. You and he both support Blackburn and maybe you drink Horlicks down there but I think down the road in the rather less effete Burnley they will probably say it is a storm in a teacup - or drink Bovril!

Q1017 Mr Chidgey: Mr Campbell, I would like to come back to an area that Mr Mackinlay was discussing with you earlier in this session in relation to the September dossier. You, I think, confirmed for the record then that you discussed with the Chairman of the JIC the presidential issues - I should not say that - the presentational issues regarding the dossier?

Mr Campbell: It is not even a word, "presidential" issues.

Q1018 Mr Chidgey: I bet there were. Anyway, let's come back to the issues. It is rather complicated but I think the Committee really does want to get to the bottom of this. Can you try to visualise for us how different the September dossier would have been if it had not been for your discussions on presentational issues?

Mr Campbell: The short answer is not very much. It was agreed fairly early on in the process that the Prime Minister would write a foreword. Other than literally drafting points I do not recall any substantial changes being made to the executive summary. As the draft evolved there were discussions about structure and the ordering material and the use of graphics and the use of pictures and such like and some of the titles of the different chapters, but the honest answer is not very much. This is the work of the Joint Intelligence Committee.

Q1019 Mr Chidgey: You appreciate how important this issue is. The accusation has been made that this document was adjusted, altered, sexed up - whatever - for a particular political purpose so one has to be somewhat pedantic and get exactly to the bottom of how the process worked. You said, and it is on the record elsewhere, that this process took many months to evolve. I think it would be very helpful if, perhaps not today but shortly afterwards, you could let the Committee have information on the suggestions that were made by you and your team as this document evolved. For example, it must be the case surely that in this process, as the drafts were continuing or continuously upgraded or amended, copies of earlier drafts would have been kept electronically within your Department, within your team. It would be very helpful if it was possible for us to have copies of those earlier drafts so that we could satisfy ourselves that there were no attempts to change the essence of the document in order to pursue a particular political point. Is that possible?

Mr Campbell: Can I say again on that the JIC would have to be content that they were willing to do that but that is certainly something I can take back and ask them if they are.

FAC|2|0287

Q1020 Mr Chidgey: I accept that, of course, but this is at the heart of the issue - that this document was deliberately changed for political purposes.

Mr Campbell: I accept that.

Q1021 Mr Chidgey: And anything you can give us to demonstrate otherwise would, of course, be very helpful, by Friday.

Mr Campbell: As I say, I do not think I can make that judgment for the intelligence agencies who were producing the various drafts as they evolved, but in relation to the changes that I was suggesting on either changes that I was suggesting or that I was putting forward to the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee on behalf of the Prime Minister, and I have gone and looked at all of them, I have no difficulty with you seeing any of them but, again, I just have to be sure that the Joint Intelligence Committee are happy that there is nothing in there that does reveal things they might not want revealed.

Q1022 Mr Chidgey: I understand that but can you also let us have them in calendar order so we can have them dated so we can see how the process evolved from the CIC?

Mr Campbell: I think I am right in saying that the CIC - this is where I think these things, I have to say, I think in large parts of the media deliberately have been completely conflated.

Q1023 Mr Chidgey: In your discussions with the Joint Intelligence Committee, put it that way.

Mr Campbell: Yes. I have no problem with that. As I say, I cannot sit here and say on behalf of the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee that he would be happy with every single draft being put into the public domain. I just do not know.

Q1024 Mr Chidgey: Well, perhaps you can have that discussion and do what is necessary from that position. You mentioned also earlier in response to Mr Mackinlay that the executive summary of the dossier of September was written by the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee. Did you in any way assist with the presentational issues in that foreword?

Mr Campbell: Given that the presentational issue says "Executive Summary" and then it is the text there is not much by way of presentation there. I accept that but, again, I would have to go back and look at all the different drafting suggestions that I made but, in terms of any substance, none at all.

Q1025 Mr Chidgey: That would be helpful. Also I think Mr Mackinlay asked you whether anyone in the SIS or any other security agencies

FAC/2/0288

was unhappy with the end result of the dossier. Can you confirm that nobody expressed any concern or reservation about the dossier as it was finally published from our security intelligence?

Mr Campbell: None of the people who were involved in its production that I was dealing with expressed any misgivings.

Q1026 Mr Chidgey: So you were unaware should there have been anyone who was so described?

Mr Campbell: I was not aware of anybody within intelligence agencies who was saying to us in relation to the production of this dossier they were unhappy with it.

Q1027 Mr Chidgey: You mentioned in your note to us, and I am paraphrasing to save time, that it was a major break with precedence for the intelligence community to allow information from them to be put into the public domain, which of course we understand, and that this break with precedent was not something taken lightly. Did any of the people involved in the intelligence and security agencies at any time question the wisdom of this procedure, this precedent in breaking with the traditional method of keeping their information close to the secret? Did anyone resist your decision to break with the established policy?

Mr Campbell: No. I have no doubt at all there would have been a debate within the intelligence community, because it was such a break with precedent, as to whether it was the right thing to do and all I can say is that the Joint Intelligence Committee, which as you know includes the heads of the agencies and obviously the Chairman, expressed no such reservations to Prime Minister or to me.

Q1028 Mr Chidgey: So as a result of the debate that was held with the Joint Intelligence Committee, at the end of that debate all those involved were content?

Mr Campbell: That is correct.

Q1029 Mr Chidgey: And there would be no reason for anyone therefore to pursue the route that we have discussed at length with the BBC?

Mr Campbell: No, and that is why I was so confident in issuing the denial that we did of the initial BBC story, and then, once the stories persisted, why I went back and said, "Look, this thing is still kicking around somewhere, is it true?", and they were emphatic, "It is not".

Q1030 Mr Chidgey: You say in your note that the intelligence judgments contained in the dossier were entirely those of the Joint Intelligence Committee. Can you tell us at all what in the dossier falls

FAC | 2 | 0289

into the category of intelligence judgments, and what does not?

Mr Campbell: I think I would have to say it all does in that the document is, if you like, their assessment of the state of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction programme. Now, if you are saying which of it is, as it were, secret intelligence then that is really something for them to say, but this is the distillation of the Joint Intelligence Committee assessments that were being presented to the Prime Minister.

Q1031 Mr Chidgey: For example, we know from evidence we have taken from the Foreign Secretary that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office takes the credit for parts 2 and 3 of the dossier, so I presume --

Mr Campbell: In the drafting.

Q1032 Mr Chidgey: I see. There is a distinction.

Mr Campbell: But the document has the imprimatur of the Joint Intelligence Committee. It is their document and, as I said in my written statement to you, this process evolved at the start though the initial drafting was being done in the Foreign Office. Once the decision was taken for this to be primarily an intelligence-based document, the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee took responsibility for it.

Q1033 Mr Chidgey: And so --

Mr Campbell: Not the Foreign Office.

Q1034 Mr Chidgey: So he, as the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, signed off the whole dossier. He was not just signing off that which involved a judgment on the intelligence?

Mr Campbell: The whole thing, and what is more I literally mean "signed off" because the foreword was agreed - the Joint Intelligence Committee had to be happy that the foreword was a fair reflection; it was obviously going to form part of the basis of what the Prime Minister was going to say to Parliament when he presented it when Parliament was recalled; when the document after all the various drafting processes was presented, it literally was presented. The Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee said. "Right, here you, here it is", not "Here you are, have another go at rewriting it". That is not how it worked.

Q1035 Mr Chidgey: Can I just make some specific references to the documents, and I will try not to be too long on this but when you look in some detail and read very carefully I think it is chapter 3, page 19/20, where we talk about chemical agent production capabilities, that struck me as a particularly even-handed written explanation of Iraq's capabilities, or potential in terms of their ability to produce

fvac/2/0290

chemical weapons in relation to the basic infrastructure and processing equipment that would be necessary for an industrialised country to produce the chemicals that that economy would need. It seemed fairly even-handed. But when we go forward in the document to the foreword or to the very summary that occurs the language becomes much tougher and I am sure, Mr Campbell, as an extremely experienced journalist you understand exactly how words can be used with a slightly different emphasis which together in a document create a much stronger emphasis. The impression I got reading this through was that, whilst in the foreword in the early parts of the document it would appear that there was absolutely no question at all that Iraq had not only the capabilities but the stocks, the intent, the delivery systems - the whole charabanc, if you like - to launch a very serious threat against its region and ourselves if our forces were in the theatre through chemical weapons, the actual detail within the document did not put that emphasis on at all. It pointed out capabilities, possibilities, maybe, could be - you understand where I am coming from?

Mr Campbell: I do.

Q1036 Mr Chidgey: I wonder if you could help us on how has that happened in the drafting of the report which you were so closely involved with, clearly?

Mr Campbell: On that specific I cannot. I think that it is not for me to speak for the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee but I think if he were here he would point out that there are various ways in which intelligence can be assessed and judged. For example, I can recall, I think Mr Ottoway earlier asked for the sorts of changes that we might have discussed and you are absolutely right that words can say different things. I remember in relation to the uranium issue, and I think it says in the document, that they had "sought to secure" and I can remember saying, "Well, can that be explained? Have they actually secured anything?", and he said, "Well, intelligence, our best assessment of it, is not, therefore 'sought to secure' is the best way to express the reality of our current intelligence assessment". Now, I am happy to look at the two passages you have drawn attention to --

Q1037 Mr Chidgey: That would be very helpful.

Mr Campbell: I was very conscious when this process was being gone through of how assiduous the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee in particular was at spotting potential inconsistencies, things being expressed in slightly different ways that might lead to cause for doubt or confusion, and my experience at the time was that they did an extraordinarily good job at addressing those and, as I say, I am happy to look at that one in particular.

Q1038 Mr Chidgey: Can I just take that slightly different aspect of this discussion? On page 16 the dossier sets out the quantities of

FAC | 2 | 0291

various chemicals that were unaccounted for, and I am not going to record these figures of course - they were used by the Foreign Secretary and I think again by the Prime Minister at various times - but what to me is missing from this report is any indication of the implications of the degree of threat that those quantities could pose. For example, 8.5 thousand litres of anthrax sounds an awful lot but in fact it is less than a quarter of a petrol tanker load leaving the terminal in my constituency seventy times a day, so there is no indication here what degree of threat these quantities or other quantities that could be produced could cause. Was that ever discussed? Was there ever any discussion with the intelligence services that one should try to put some scale on this?

Mr Campbell: No. This is often described as a dossier that was used to "make the case for war". Now, it actually was not. It was a dossier that was produced to set out the reason why the British government were so concerned about the issue and the Joint Intelligence Committee put together its best assessment of that situation. What it did not do then was speculate as to how these might be used, the sort of damage that they might do, and I think if it had been that sort of document we would have fallen foul of the criticism that we were trying to exaggerate, alarm. If we were suddenly to say, "With this much of anthrax you could do this" - there were other pieces of communication around the system that were doing that kind of thing but this was not one of them.

Q1039 Mr Chidgey: But those assessments must have been made because you say the dossier is not making the case for what we were considering but we were clearly considering that as an option, so assessments must have been made of what the impact of the capability that it was claimed Iraq had or Saddam Hussein had on our troops or armed forces. That must all have been done.

Mr Campbell: Again, I cannot recall that there was a discussion about developing the document in the way that you are suggesting. It think it was always envisaged as this kind of document.

Q1040 Mr Chidgey: You are aware that in evidence yesterday the Foreign Secretary - I think his phrase was that the document did make "the best case"?

Mr Campbell: It made the best case, our best assessment of the state of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction --

Q1041 Mr Chidgey: Not the best case for going to war?

Mr Campbell: It is not that sort of document.

Mr Chidgey: Thank you.

GAC/2/0292

Q1042 Ms Stuart: Mr Campbell, may I refer you to your own statement in submission to the Committee? You say in opening that the overall strategy for Iraq was laid down by the Prime Minister?

Mr Campbell: And other Cabinet members.

Q1043 Ms Stuart: And others, yes, "from where I sat". Can I go just a little bit further, and precisely where you did sit? Did you sit in on those meetings only wearing the hat of Director of Communication, or would you in that process have an input into policy and strategy?

Mr Campbell: No. In relation to policy, as I say in the note, policy decisions are taken by the Cabinet headed, as you know, by the Prime Minister. Now I was involved in a lot of the discussions about policy and strategy on Iraq and I am there as an adviser to the Prime Minister.

Q1044 Ms Stuart: In that context, if I follow up a submission made by Mr Pope and drawing reference to Clare Short's evidence, she drew the conclusion from the information she had been given and discussions within the Cabinet that it was quite clear that the decision was made by the international community or others that we would go to war in February and March, and that from about September onwards the rest of it was simply preparing the country for that fact. How would you assess that statement?

Mr Campbell: I reject it. I was with the Prime Minister, for example - I cannot remember exactly which weekend it was - when he seemed to spend literally into double figures of hours on the telephone to I think at the time the leaders of Mexico and Chile and others seeking to keep the whole issue of the United Nations' route as a way of avoiding conflict, and that was the strategy at that time. Equally, however, the Prime Minister made clear before that in his phrase the United Nations had to be the place where this was resolved, not avoided as an issue. I just do not recognise this characterisation of the Prime Minister as somebody who had taken a prior decision and that then we were all just - not just me but the intelligence agencies and everyone else - pawns in his game to take the country into a war with George Bush. I do not recognise that. On the contrary, I saw somebody who was working round the clock, flat out, trying to keep this thing on the United Nations' route as a means of avoiding conflict. Clare Short has to speak for herself in relation to what her impression was of what the Prime Minister was doing at the time but, as she said, I spent a lot of time with the Prime Minister and that is the Prime Minister I saw. Again, I just think that sometimes people make assumptions about not just this Prime Minister but any senior politician that they are acting out of some terrible motive, and it is nonsense. I have seen the Prime Minister now in relation to several conflict situations where he is very, very conscious of the responsibility of saying, "We are going to send British forces into military action and some of them may die". Now, the

FAC | 2 | 0293

idea that you just do that glibly or that you try and "sex up" a dossier as a way of trying to persuade the public that you should do it actually - I know scepticism is fine but are we really so cynical that we think a Prime Minister, any Prime Minister - forget the fact it is Tony Blair, any Prime Minister - is going to make prior decisions to send British forces into conflict and would not rather avoid doing that?

Q1045 Ms Stuart: I think it would be useful to have your interpretation of this but can I come back to the second dossier and again your own evidence on this where you make reference to how you commissioned that dossier back in January, which was then subsequently used as a briefing for six journalists on the way to the United States? What were the instructions as to the purpose of this second dossier back in January? What did you tell them to prepare? For what?

Mr Campbell: As you say, I deliberately, both in giving evidence to you and in my paper - as far as I am concerned the dossier was the WMD dossier of 2002. The purpose of the briefing paper that we commissioned in January was to get our media to cover this issue of the extent to which Saddam Hussein was developing his programme of concealment and intimidation of the United Nations' inspectors because, if you remember, at the time there was a lot of discussion "Why is it so hard for the inspectors to get in and find these weapons?", and in a sense this was a part of that answer. It actually was not the full answer. As I have said in my paper to you, I never envisaged this as being a significant thing, and I can send to you the coverage at the time. It was minuscule. It got a few paragraphs in the Sunday papers, it got no broadcast coverage, it was only when this Dr Al-Marashi issue came to light on my train journey from Gateshead that it started to get any coverage at all, so it was intended - it was a tactical decision, if you like, in relation to giving it to those journalists as opposed to any other group of journalists or putting it out on the website or whatever we might have done. This was just a decision taken at that time just as the Prime Minister was going to see George Bush, but it was never meant to be a huge deal. I always felt that the information within it that they would find interesting, which, indeed, was the case, related to the fact that there was this ratio of 200:1 - 200 Iraqi agents to every UN inspector - and also some of the things they were doing in relation to bugging and following and organising car crashes and all the rest of it was interesting but it was not making the case for war, and I think in relation to both of these documents all of these facts were well known when it came to the most important debate in Parliament about committing British forces; all these issues were well known by then. People knew by then that something had gone badly wrong in relation to the second document and as I recall it, in relation to the first, nobody in that debate raised the issue of the 45 minutes point. So this idea that we had pumped this out as the most significant piece, if we had we had done it pretty badly because it did not appear to resonate with members of Parliament at all.

HAC/2/0294

Q1046 Ms Stuart: But what I am still not clear about is you must have given some indication of what you wanted this document prepared for. It then ends up being in the House of Commons and it is being referred to by Secretary of State Colin Powell. Are you suggesting that any MP would have been able to know the difference between the significant one --

Mr Campbell: No.

Q1047 Ms Stuart: Yet he quoted it so it was taken seriously?

Mr Campbell: Okay. To answer your question directly, what was it intended for, it was intended to generate some media discussion and debate about this issue. Why was it so hard for the UN weapons inspectors to do their job? That is what it was for, and I think I probably have to take some responsibility for Colin Powell raising it because when we were out in Washington I gave a copy to my opposite number, and I suspect that is possibly how it got into, as it were, the American system. I do not think there has been quite the fuss there that there has been here, I have to say.

Q1048 Ms Stuart: On the bottom of page 6 of your submission you say, again in relation to the second dossier: "The changes were made because the officials making them believed they rendered the account more accurate". Now my understanding of a process which would render something more accurate would indicate you go back to source. How else do you know the changes you are making would make it more accurate?

Mr Campbell: No. The point I am making on page 6 of my note is that those commenting upon it were not aware of who the source was and in any event, within that document, there was government-sourced material so, for example, in relation to some of the changes that were made, as I say, in some cases as has been pointed out there have been changes that you could argue make the situation more dramatic, for want of a better word. In others, Dr Al-Marashi's paper has suggested there are more Iraqi agents involved in certain operations than our experts believed to be the case, so again this was, as it were, "sexed down" rather than up.

Q1049 Ms Stuart: But I think I still have a slight difference with your definition of how you render something more accurate because if I render it more accurate then I go back to check my sources and change my wording rather than --

Mr Campbell: No. The point I am making is that the CIC asks for these various pieces of work, all sorts, whether it is an article or a briefing paper or whatever, they go in and somebody puts together a draft; it absorbs part of this material without attribution and, as I said before, that was the mistake. The attribution was not put on to it as it

FAC | 2 | 0295

should have been. Now, had those then looking at this known that was where part of this source material came from, you are quite right, you could have got on the phone and said to Dr Al-Marashi, "Look, you say in your paper this. Would you mind if we use this?", and judging from his evidence he might well have said "No", in which case that would have been the end of the matter. Had he said "Yes", you might have said, "Well, it says this, we have information based on - whatever it might be, intelligence or whatever - that, in fact, it is this. Is that something you would think is right or wrong?" Or what you might do, and this I do not think would have detracted anything from the paper at all because, as I say, nobody seriously challenged most of the content, is say to him, "Could we use it simply with your name attached to it?"

Q1050 Mr Illsley: Just following on from that I am going to challenge some of the serious content of it. The one thing that we have received evidence on in this Committee which is worrying me from start to finish is the quality of the intelligence material which you have obviously worked with and which has gone into the document.

Mr Campbell: On the second dossier?

Q1051 Mr Illsley: Yes. I am just going to follow on from what my colleague, Gisela, was speaking about. There is a section at the beginning of the document, page 3, which relates to Hans Blix and the UNMOVIC team and the document says that, "Journeys are monitored by security officers stationed on the route if they have prior intelligence. Any changes of destination are notified ahead by telephone or radio so that arrival is anticipated. The welcoming party is a giveaway". That was in the second document published on 30 January. On 14 February, two weeks later, Hans Blix told the United Nations, "Since we arrived in Iraq we have conducted more than 400 inspections covering more than 300 sites. All inspections were performed without notice and access was almost always provided promptly. In no case have we seen convincing evidence that the Iraqi site knew in advance that the inspectors were coming". Now, granted that was two weeks after your document was published but it tends to suggest that some of the intelligence you were working with or which had been provided to you was either out of date or wrong.

Mr Campbell: Well, in relation to that, again, all I can say is that this, from my perspective doing the job I do, came to light through one of the chief intelligence agencies. It was their intelligence.

Q1052 Mr Illsley: I am not disputing that.

Mr Campbell: I know there was some co-operation between Hans Blix and the intelligence agency but I am not aware of what Hans Blix would or would not know about - what he said is not inconsistent with the idea that there was a significant campaign of intimidation and

FAC | 2 | 0296

deception. That was the point the document was meant to make. In other words, when they get these welcoming parties, is that because they know where they are going and they have managed to clean up the place they are going to? I think that is partly the point that is being made. Now that has come, as I say, as intelligence, and the issuing agency was the SIS.

Q1053 Mr Illsley: As I say, I am challenging the content of the document because, in my opinion, I do not think it is a document that adds anything to the argument basically and I think the whole thing is a complete mess - but anyway. Coming back to the point about intelligence, did you see raw intelligence material that security services had or were you provided with assessments from the senior intelligence community?

Mr Campbell: In relation to this?

Q1054 Mr Illsley: In relation to the first dossier now. In general, the intelligence you were able to see up to September before and after, did you see raw intelligence or was this material provided to you as assessments from the intelligence services?

Mr Campbell: Again, I am not sure how much or how little of this I am supposed to divulge but I certainly saw the Joint Intelligence Committee assessments on which the September report was based.

Q1055 Mr Illsley: Did you ever have any discussions with the intelligence services as to the quality of the material that was coming your way? Were you happy with it? Did you ever pass any comment on it? I think you said to one of my colleagues earlier that if the head of intelligence service said this was a kosher piece of information, that was fine by you. Did you ever argue with them? Challenge them?

Mr Campbell: It was not a question of arguing. On that Iraq Communications Group that I chair, as I said in my note, there is a senior representative of the SIS - in fact, two - so you have discussions with them the whole time, and often if at a particular time as a communications strategy might be evolving there is a particular theme that you were seeking to pursue, there are people within the intelligence services who will just - and I am not saying these are full-time presentation people - think "Well, I know that No 10 has got an interest in this particular theme at the moment, might this be something they might be interested in? Should I discuss it?" They might come and see me and say "Look, this has come from this or that", but I think I probably have to leave it there in relation to what they showed me and how we discuss it.

Q1056 Mr Illsley: Does nothing occur that would have led anybody

FAC | 2 | 0297

within the intelligence services to resent your involvement or your presence on these committees, and I am thinking now in terms of the Gilligan argument and the leaks from intelligence sources pointing the finger at you for everything?

Mr Campbell: The BBC's defence correspondent came here and talked about his weird and wonderful meetings with his source, and that may be the person he knows within the intelligence community. I do not know who that is, I do not know how serious a person it is or how senior. All I know is that the people that I deal with and have dealt with now over some years in several very difficult sets of circumstances like Kosovo, like Afghanistan, like Iraq, I find of the highest professionalism and, in many instances, the highest bravery. Now it is not a question of me just saying, "Well, if it is good enough for him it is good enough for me". You form judgments about people over time and, as I say, the people that I have dealt with on this are the people in the leadership of the intelligence community who, I think, are people of very high standard.

Q1057 Mr Illsley: But you are adamant that you never throughout the whole of this went to the intelligence services and rejected a piece of evidence that they put forward, enhanced it, exaggerated it, doctored it?

Mr Campbell: Absolutely not and there are many reasons why I wanted to come to the Committee and I agree with some of the comments that have been made in recent weeks and I think it would have been very odd to have done this inquiry had I not - that is something we can discuss but I felt that from the start - but one of the reasons from my own perspective, because the truth is, if you are in my position or even more if you are in the Prime Minister's position, lots and lots of things get written about which are completely untrue, and to be perfectly honest 95 per cent of them do not matter a damn and are forgotten the next day, but I think to say, not just in the *Daily Mail* or the *Daily Telegraph* but on the BBC, that I was involved conniving with the intelligence agencies to do this - I just cannot think of a more serious allegation than that, and to have a culture that says, "Well, it is just another story. Who cares? What are you bothered about?" - and, as I think I explained to you in my note, I have been trying to get an acknowledgement from the BBC that this story is wrong for weeks. I have a sheaf of correspondence with them about it. Now, what are you supposed to do?

Q1058 Mr Illsley: That is the point I am going to come on to in a second. I think we could place on record here as well that perhaps your presence would not have been required had this Committee's request for scientific intelligence material been agreed to by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. We could have satisfied ourselves had we seen that information.

FAC | 2 | 0298

Mr Campbell: Can I just say on that, in relation to the scrutiny of the intelligence services for which the Prime Minister has ministerial responsibility, there have been a lot of changes and developments on that but it is fair to say that that particular one, to go back to your point, is a bit above my pay grade.

Q1059 Mr Illsley: Just on the question of the evidence, we did hear in relation to journalists and intelligence sources, were we to believe what we were told the other day, that every major newspaper has two or three, perhaps even four, contacts within the intelligence agencies; that they have got each other's telephone numbers, and they have easy access to information. Do you believe that, given your background as a journalist and given your position over the last few years working with the intelligence agencies, or do you accept that there is that amount of leakage of material to journalists?

Mr Campbell: No. There are systems, and again it is probably not for me to explain them in detail but there are systems, that allow the press to make inquiries of the intelligence community but this picture that was painted by one of the witnesses last week of intelligence agencies wandering all round London meeting BBC correspondents --

Q1060 Mr Illsley: In their own offices.

Mr Campbell: I am sorry. Maybe I am terribly naive and maybe Chris Mullin's book was spot on about it but I have to say that is not my experience, fine book though it was.

Q1061 Mr Illsley: Are you just going to take it on the chin then as regards the BBC, or is there anything you can do as regards those allegations? Can you challenge them or do you think it is just not worth the candle?

Mr Campbell: No. As I say, a lot of the stories are not worth the candle; I think this one is. One of the reasons I raised that point with you in my memorandum was because I envisaged that one of the questions might be, "Well, if this story is so bad what have you done about it?", and the truth is privately we have been trying to seek acknowledgement about this for some weeks and it is absolutely hopeless, because when you are dealing with the BBC I am afraid they just will not admit that they can get things wrong.

Q1062 Richard Ottoway: Now you know how the Tory party feels!

Mr Campbell: I am really not here to make political points.

Q1063 Mr Maples: You used to encourage them!

Mr Campbell: Encourage them to -- ? The point is that I think there is a world of difference between political exchanges and the rest of it and

FAC | 2 | 0299

a story broadcast on the BBC followed up by every single national newspaper, followed up in newspapers around the world, that says the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, with the connivance of me and the intelligence agencies, persuaded Parliament and the country to go to war on a false basis I think is a pretty unbelievable allegation to make unless you can sustain it, and I have not seen a single thing that sustains it. I have seen the defence correspondent change his story time and time again, talking about one source, then there were four sources, then his sources were journalists on other newspapers - if that is BBC journalism, then God help them.

Q1064 Mr Maples: Can I take you back to what we affectionately now here call the "dodgy" dossier --

Mr Campbell: I have noticed the phrase being used repeatedly.

Q1065 Mr Maples: I just wanted to make sure we were talking about the same document. I am interested in the role of these four officials whose names were originally on the website and you have gone some way to explaining their role in your note to us and let us just go through them. The one who you do not know who you say was a member of the CIC was, I believe, a Foreign Office official called Peter Hammill?

Mr Campbell: That is not the name, no. There was a - actually, I think his background is not Foreign Office, I think he may be MoD, but there was an official who was working in the CIC that is certainly one of the four names.

Q1066 Mr Maples: Well, the name that was on the website -- ?

Mr Campbell: Was Paul Hammill.

Q1067 Mr Maples: I am sorry. My mistake. What was his role in this? He was part of the CIC?

Mr Campbell: He was a full-time member of the CIC.

Q1068 Mr Maples: So he was an important person in the preparation of this assessment?

Mr Campbell: He was a member of the CIC team.

Q1069 Mr Maples: Did you know that in the Foreign Office register his job title is "Head of Story Development"?

Mr Campbell: I did not know that but --

Q1070 Mr Maples: Do you think that is an appropriate title for somebody involved in --

FAC/2/0300

Mr Campbell: I can see why, if you are not involved full-time in communications issues, it might sound a bit odd but actually what that means is somebody who takes a brief, an issue - as I say, we are talking about different themes that we are trying to pursue, and then turns them into products that might be of interest to the media. That is what they do.

Q1071 Mr Maples: Mr Campbell, I put it to you that no government before this one has ever had an official with the job title "Head of Story Development"?

Mr Campbell: I do not know that was the job title that was given to him. I know what he did in the CIC and what he did in the CIC and what he continues to do on behalf of the government is perfectly legitimate and necessary work.

Q1072 Mr Maples: Where is he now?

Mr Campbell: I honestly think - I do not think it is right for me to talk about individual officials--

Q1073 Mr Maples: I put it to you that he is in Baghdad.

Mr Campbell: He still works for the Iraqi information operation.

Q1074 Mr Maples: In Baghdad, and I wonder whether he is there to keep him from us or whether that is where you put people who offend?

Mr Campbell: No, it is not.

Q1075 Mr Maples: Let us go through the other people in this. Alison Blackshaw is your PA and you say that her involvement was that she typed changes that you made, so you had an editorial input into this document. You actually made changes to it.

Mr Campbell: As I have explained in the memorandum.

Q1076 Mr Maples: Yes, but you made changes obviously at a fairly late stage.

Mr Campbell: I made changes at the very final stage. I changed the title and I stripped out what I considered to be repetitions.

Q1077 Mr Maples: And that is as far as it went?

Mr Campbell: That is as far as it went and in relation to my personal assistant - and forgive me if I feel quite strongly about this one as well - the journalists who have been writing these stories know her because her job on these trips overseas is to look after them and make sure they have visas and their bags are picked up and the rest of it, and the

FAC/2/0301

idea that she would write a paper like this is totally absurd.

Q1078 Mr Maples: I am not suggesting that for a moment; what I am simply saying --

Mr Campbell: Well, the newspapers have, and in questioning to witnesses it has been put by members that that is the case.

Q1079 Mr Maples: It has, but you have explained what her involvement was and I am simply saying that was to put in place amendments which you had made to the document. Now, one of these people was the Downing Street news editor on the website, and I accept your explanation of his involvement, but you dismissed John Pratt as, I think you say, a junior --

Mr Campbell: No. I do not say "junior", I say he is an assistant.

Q1080 Mr Maples: I cannot find it now.

Mr Campbell: He is an administrative support assistant in my office.

Q1081 Mr Maples: You describe him as a "member of the support team in my department". Who does he work for?

Mr Campbell: He works obviously for me but the person he works for is Peter Hyman.

Q1082 Mr Maples: Did Peter Hyman have input into this document?

Mr Campbell: Absolutely not.

Q1083 Mr Maples: Nothing at all?

Mr Campbell: Nothing at all.

Q1084 Mr Maples: But he is a politically appointed specialist adviser in No 10?

Mr Campbell: Who? John Pratt?

Q1085 Mr Maples: No. Peter Hyman.

Mr Campbell: Peter Hyman is. He had nothing to do with this whatever.

Q1086 Mr Maples: Somebody who works for him does, but he had nothing to do with it?

Mr Campbell: Can I explain what John Pratt's role in this ridiculous story was? John Pratt - and I think when people hear this they will be

FAC | 2 | 0302

stunned that this is how stories get into newspapers - this story appeared in *The Guardian* as I explained in my note and it said these four people worked on this report. I can explain to you what the people in my office did, and I think somebody has got hold of the record of this thing and it appears apparently in today's *Independent* newspaper. It was e-mailed from the CIC to one of my staff in No 10 because I wanted to take the latest draft on the plane to America. The person to whom it was sent sits next to John Pratt. She said, "John, have you got a spare disc that I can copy this on to?" John Pratt gave her a disc. It was copied on to the disc. The disc was then handed to my personal assistant. My personal assistant took it on the plane. I made some changes in manuscript, she typed them in. On bringing it back to No 10, she gave it to the website editor. On those prosaic realities is built the most absurd mountain of conspiracy and nonsense.

Q1087 Mr Maples: Well, you have gone some way to correcting that in your memo to us and I accept that, but when we find that somebody is a relatively junior official and all he did was lend somebody else a disc but he works for a politically appointed special adviser who works for you - there are more politically appointed specialist advisers in Downing Street under this administration than there have ever been in the past and their fingerprints are awfully close to all these documents, and I am just suggesting here is another link.

Mr Campbell: I am a special adviser and I have taken responsibility for the second paper. In relation to this, there would be no reason by the way, had I felt it appropriate for Peter Hyman to be involved in this, that he should not have been, but the fact is he was not and I do think - you were saying this was a time for political discussion but I do think there is a political point.

Q1088 Mr Maples: Let me ask something in relation to the Foreign Secretary. In his note to us the Foreign Secretary said in relation to this document, "No FCO ministers or FCO specialist advisers were consulted in the document. No 10 officials including special advisers asked for some changes".

Mr Campbell: That is me.

Q1089 Mr Maples: That is only you?

Mr Campbell: That is me. I am a special adviser.

Q1090 Mr Maples: It says "including special advisers", in the plural. Is that just a grammatical thing?

Mr Campbell: All I know is that the special adviser who was involved in this is the special adviser who was the chair of the Iraq Communications Group and that is me. Peter Hyman had nothing to do with it whatever.

FAC | 2 | 0303

Q1091 Mr Maples: Could we move on to the dossier of the weapons of mass destruction because I want to put to you that we were told by two of our witnesses, Dame Pauline Neville-Jones who is a former Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee and a former Australian intelligent agent, that this document did not read like a Joint Intelligence Committee assessment. The language was not like a Joint Intelligence Committee assessment, and there may be perfectly acceptable explanations for that but the Joint Intelligence Committee assessments tended to be full of qualifications and ambiguities, and "maybe this" and "perhaps that" and equivalents, whereas the document, at least in its executive summary, is much more certain. I do not know if you are aware of the document that was published in 1998 before Desert Fox, and again this is published over the name of Derek Fatchett, the minister at the Foreign Office at the time and is an intelligent assessment, and I want to quote to you two short lines from it: "The Iraqi chemical industry could produce mustard gas almost immediately and limited amounts of nerve gas within months" - "could" - "Saddam almost certainly retains some BW production equipment, stocks of agents and weapons". But in the summary to this document, admittedly four years later, we have, "Iraq has continued to produce chemical and biological agents. Some of these weapons are deployable within 45 minutes". The language is much more definite. What Dame Pauline Neville-Jones said to us is to have been able to go from one to the other there would have to be some new piece of intelligence which really substantiated in a much harder form the second statement, because it is not fundamentally different but certainly different in quality to the first, and I wonder if you saw such intelligence which justified the making of a much stronger claim?

Mr Campbell: I am not intimately acquainted with the Derek Fatchett paper but if you go back to the whole background to the WMD dossier of September 2002 I think the Prime Minister said publicly that one of the reasons why he wanted to do this was because there was continuing new intelligence that he was seeing that made him feel there was a growing threat from Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programme. Now, again, it is not for me to talk about the intelligence or the assessments that are made by the Joint Intelligence Committee but I can only assume that, if there was a change in position, it was as a result of new intelligence which, as the Prime Minister said, was crossing his desk the whole time.

Q1092 Mr Maples: But would you agree the language is different, it is more definite in this dossier? There is another point too, if you look at what is actually said in the dossier the Government published in September, it said, "The JIC concluded that Iraq had sufficient expertise, equipment and material to produce biological warfare agents within weeks using its legitimate bio-technology facilities", and that, "The JIC assessed that Iraq retained some chemical warfare agents, precursors, production equipment and weapons from before the Gulf War. These stocks would enable Iraq to produce significant quantities

FAC|2|0304

of mustard gas within weeks and of nerve agents within months." But in the summary that has become, "Iraq has continued to produce chemical and biological agents." I suggest to you that the summary is a much stronger statement than actually what the main body of the document says. Can I give you another example before you respond to that. On the 45 minutes piece on page 19 of the dossier it says, and this it seems to me is a much lower degree of certainty remark, "Intelligence indicates ..." - not, "The JIC has concluded" - "... that the Iraqi military are able to deploy chemical or biological weapons within 45 minutes." The summary says, "Some of these weapons are deployable within 45 minutes." I am putting to you that there are three respects in which the summary is, I would suggest, almost fundamentally different from what the body of the document suggests.

Mr Campbell: All I can say to you on that is that the executive summary - and this goes for the entire document - was the product of the pen of the Joint Intelligence Committee chairman. So if these are intelligence judgments that he is putting into the dossier, that is because they are the best assessment of the Joint Intelligence Committee. Again, I do not think it is for me to sit and do textual analysis on them. That document was the document which was presented to us. The changes we made in relation to it had nothing to do with the overriding intelligence assessments. I think the point you are trying to put to me is that the executive summary was harder than the body of the text. All I know is that the Joint Intelligence Committee chairman stands by every word of the document.

Q1093 Mr Maples: That may be, but it does not necessarily belie the point I am making. The Prime Minister in his introduction says, "The document published today is based, in large part, on the work of the Joint Intelligence Committee" ----

Mr Campbell: Yes, a lot of it, for example, is UNSCOM reports. There is reference to (inaudible) The JIC imprimatur is on this but it is not as if this issue just sort of started in September 2002.

Q1094 Mr Maples: We know how Government documents are prepared, somebody prepares a draft, it is circulated, points go in and I am perfectly prepared to accept what you say that the first draft came from the JIC and the final product was signed off by them, but I suggest that when you said, "I had several discussions with the chairman of the JIC on presentational issues and made drafting suggestions", you had some responsibility for the sort of things I was saying.

Mr Campbell: I can say that is not the case. As I pointed to in earlier exchanges, there were points that I raised, on some of them the Joint Intelligence Committee chairman would say, "That is absolutely fine, I have no trouble with that at all", on others he would say, "We cannot say that because it would not be our best assessment" or "In fact I

HAC | 2 | 0305

think the way we have done it is better." It was that kind of discussion. It was, as presented as a first draft, a very good and thorough piece of work. So I do not accept the premise, I am afraid.

Q1095 Mr Maples: The problem with this is that when this document was produced everybody, even your political opponents like me, believed it because here is the Government publishing something which is the product of the Joint Intelligence Committee and we believed it. Then along comes the dodgy dossier and it turns out to be certainly not what it said but an amateurish, irresponsible and misleading piece of work, and it was presented by the Prime Minister to Parliament as the product of the intelligence services, and we all find out then what it was. Then we start to think, "Hang on, it casts this in doubt". That, I suggest, is the problem you have got. That incredibly amateurish, irresponsible, dodgy dossier is what has created your problem. I do not think people would give much time to the allegations that you and the people who work with you improved - to use a neutral word - this document if it had not been for the whole story of the dodgy dossier.

Mr Campbell: People can make whatever allegations they like, the serious allegation against me is that I abused intelligence, and that is a pretty serious allegation which we should take seriously and I hope I have made clear that with the authority of the intelligence community leadership I can say that is completely untrue. I made the point earlier that the second briefing paper got next to no coverage. It has had hundreds of thousands, possibly millions, of words written about it since that one mistake within the CIC was made. As I said to you in my memorandum, I simply do not think that should be allowed to define the totality of a huge amount of communications which went on between the Prime Minister and the Government, Parliament and the public. I have given you one example, how many times have you heard on the television or the radio, "This report which was authored by four people working in my office". I have explained to you, that is simply not true. We have said to the media time and again it is not true, but they still run it.

Q1096 Mr Maples: I am not responsible for them.

Mr Campbell: I know you are not, but a lot of the questions you are putting to me are based upon false stories whose authors somehow feel that if they say them often enough people will believe them.

Q1097 Mr Maples: The basis of the questions on the dodgy dossier is us discovering the extent to which you used Dr al-Marashi's paper ---

Mr Campbell: And I have explained how that happened.

Q1098 Mr Maples: I know. --- and that that work was altered in what is obviously an incredibly amateurish way in which this -----

FAC | 2 | 0306

Mr Campbell: No, if I may. It was not altering Dr al-Marashi's work, because the people who were suggesting changes had no idea who Dr al-Marashi was. You can accept that or not. That is where the mistake was made.

Q1099 Mr Maples: Precise sentences ---

Mr Campbell: How many times do we have to acknowledge it was a mistake, apologies were given, new procedures put in place. I can say it hundreds of times if it helps but that is the fact, there was one mistake in this.

Q1100 Mr Maples: What I am pointing out to you is when the public, media and Parliament ---

Mr Campbell: I accept that.

Q1101 Mr Maples: --- they suspect everything else. What I put to you is that what will probably happen is that it is perfectly possible you, and Andrew Gilligan, actually told the truth and what happened here was that everybody slightly exaggerated their position.

Mr Campbell: I did not. I did not have a position. This is the Joint Intelligence Committee. Andrew Gilligan's allegations were about the Joint Intelligence Committee paper, not the other one.

Q1102 Mr Maples: He said that you sought to change it ---

Mr Campbell: No, he said, I sexed it up and I made changes against the wishes of the agencies. That is a lie.

Q1103 Mr Maples: I am suggesting to you it is possible that you sought changes to this document which did not involve countermanding intelligence. After all, your craft is presentation, that is what you are extremely good at, and it would be almost unbelievable if you did not have some input into how this document was presented.

Mr Campbell: As I have said many times before, there is a legitimate place in the political process for dealing with issues of presentation and communication now we have a 24-hour media, round the world, round the clock. He did not say that. He said that I abused British Intelligence. He went further and said it was done against the wishes of the intelligence agencies; not true. I think that is a pretty serious allegation which is why I am very, very grateful for the opportunity to rebut it.

Q1104 Mr Maples: The same allegation has apparently been made - I do not know whether you have seen it - in yesterday's *New York Times*. It says, "A top State Department expert on chemical and

FAC/2/0307

biological weapons told Congressional Committees in closed oral hearings last week that he had been pressed to tailor his analysis on Iraq and other matters to conform with the Bush Administration's views', several Congressional officials said today." You may say, "Here is some rogue agent in the State Department saying this to a rogue journalist", but it is interesting, is it not, how this allegation crops up here and now it has cropped up in Washington as well.

Mr Campbell: Can I explain why I think the allegation crops up. Again, I think this goes to the heart of the way some of these issues are covered by the media. I do not think we should make any bones about this. There are large parts of the media which have an agenda on the issue of Iraq. For most of those parts of the media their agenda is open, it is avowed. If you bought the *Daily Mirror* in the run-up to the conflict, you knew that paper was against our position. If you bought *The Sun*, you knew that paper was passionately supportive of our position on dealing with Saddam. I would identify three stages in this. In the run-up to conflict there was an agenda in large parts of the BBC - and I think the BBC is different from the rest of the media and should be viewed as different from the rest of the media because it is a different organisation in terms of its reputation, in terms of its global reach and all the rest of it - and there was a disproportionate focus upon, if you like, the dissent, the opposition, to our position. I think that in the conflict itself the prism that many were creating within the BBC was, one, it is all going wrong, and I can give you an example ----

Q1105 Mr Maples: Well, I think probably many of us would agree with that.

Mr Campbell: And now what is happening now, the third, the conflict not having led to the Middle East going up in flames, not having led to us getting bogged down for months and months and months, these same people now have to find a different rationale. Their rationale is that the Prime Minister led the country into war on a false basis, that is what this is about.

Q1106 Mr Maples: It is terribly important for all of us that that allegation is laid to rest. I agree it is incredibly serious. I suggest to you the problem we have got now is that it is your word against Mr Gilligan's.

Mr Campbell: No, I do not accept that. It is my word ----

Q1107 Mr Maples: Can I make a suggestion about how it might be possible for us to resolve this. I am not quite sure whether you answered this question before. If we as a Committee were able to see the JIC assessment on which this document was based - because I do not think this in itself was a JIC assessment - and if it takes out the references to bits of sensitive intelligence ----

FAC/2/0308

Mr Campbell: That is a matter for the Prime Minister, not for me.

Q1108 Mr Maples: But you have some input into these decisions. If that were available to us and, as is your view, that is substantially the same as what the JIC assessment says, it would resolve the issue. Can I move for a couple of minutes to these issues of the machinery of government. It is worrying to some of us who understand, or thought we understood, how the Government works, that the DOP has not met virtually since the election, through Afghanistan, the war on terrorism and the run-up to the Iraqi war. The procedure as I understood it always used to be that the relevant Cabinet Committee would meet, with papers setting out options, really considered Civil Service assessments of what the position was, they would discuss it, make decisions which would be reported to the Cabinet. It says there have been a lot of discussions in Cabinet but those are 23 people, they get 12 minutes each or whatever, they never get into the issues. To find that committee does not meet and has been substituted by informal ad hoc meetings ---

Mr Campbell: They were not informal ad hoc meetings.

Q1109 Mr Maples: Minutes were taken of them?

Mr Campbell: Ministerial meetings, certainly.

Q1110 Mr Maples: But you said that those people who met - David Manning is an official of the Foreign Office but the other three of you are political appointments in Downing Street - Sally Morgan, yourself and Jonathan Powell - you said you were at meetings with the Prime Minister, was the Foreign Secretary always at those meetings?

Mr Campbell: No is the answer to that because the Foreign Secretary does not work in Downing Street. I sit in an office and my phone goes regularly during the day, "Can you pop round and see the Prime Minister". He does not say, "Can you bring Jack Straw every time you come."

Q1111 Mr Maples: So there were meetings which the Prime Minister called at which his special advisers were present and his foreign policy adviser but no other minister?

Mr Campbell: Absolutely, of course there were.

Q1112 Mr Maples: Quite a lot?

Mr Campbell: For example, ministers do not come to meetings with the Prime Minister when he is preparing for Prime Minister's Questions, unless he ----

Q1113 Mr Maples: No, I do not mean that.

FAC | 2 | 0309

Mr Campbell: Those are the sort of meetings I am talking about.

Q1114 Mr Maples: I mean meetings at which decisions were made about advancing ---

Mr Campbell: I did not make decisions.

Q1115 Mr Maples: No, but were you at the meetings?

Mr Campbell: I was at a huge number of meetings with the Prime Minister during the Iraq conflict, and before and since.

Q1116 Mr Maples: No, the meetings at which decisions were taken at which no other minister was present.

Mr Campbell: It depends what sort of decisions you mean. If I were having a meeting with the Prime Minister about whether he should do *Newsnight* with Jeremy Paxman or ITV with Trevor McDonald ----

Q1117 Mr Maples: No, no.

Mr Campbell: That is a meeting, that is a decision. If you are saying that there is a decision about whether the Prime Minister might go to see President Bush on a Tuesday or a Thursday, that is the sort of decision we might take in that group. If you are talking about a decision about whether the Prime Minister was going to commit British forces into action, the idea something like that is going to be taken without full consultation of his ministerial colleagues in the Cabinet is nonsense. Likewise in relation to something like the production of the WMD dossier. The decision to have such a dossier would have been taken with ministers. I just think it is absurd if you think that the Prime Minister, who is one of the busiest, most high profile, most written-about, most talked-about, scrutinised person in the world, does not have a support team around him, whether they happen to be special advisers - and I am well aware the aim of the Conservative Party is somehow to contaminate the concept of special advisers. I work for the Prime Minister, I work very hard for the Prime Minister, I work very hard for the Government, and I do so because I believe in what the Government is doing and I do so not because I am a special adviser but because I work for the Government.

Q1118 Mr Maples: I do not think people would find it extraordinary to find that the Prime Minister had meetings that ministers did not attend, but I think they would find it very surprising that there were meetings at which neither ministers nor officials attended.

Mr Campbell: Sorry, I am an official.

Q1119 Mr Maples: Well, you are a special adviser.

FAC | 2 | 0310

Mr Campbell: Jonathan Powell is the Chief of Staff in Downing Street.

Q1120 Mr Maples: You are both political appointments.

Mr Campbell: Does that mean when Jonathan Powell leaves a meeting with the Prime Minister he somehow is less able or less qualified to write up a note of the meeting and circulate it round the departments which need to be informed?

Q1121 Mr Maples: It does not mean that, but it means you both have great positions of power not having either been elected or gone through the Civil Service selection and reporting and career procedure, and that is a novelty, and it is a novelty to have people in such senior positions. You know this, an Order in Counsel had to be passed ----

Mr Campbell: No, the Order in Counsel is the novelty.

Q1122 Mr Maples: The position which you and Mr Powell hold are what is the novelty. We all know what the facts of this are. What I am suggesting to you ----

Mr Campbell: I think the facts are sometimes hugely exaggerated.

Q1123 Mr Maples: I think people will find it extraordinary that meetings were being held by the Prime Minister at which neither Foreign Office officials nor ministers were present but he held those with politically appointed ---

Mr Campbell: What sort of meetings are you concerned about?

Q1124 Mr Maples: I am concerned about meetings that advance probably the most important foreign policy decision this Government has taken.

Mr Campbell: There was no such meeting about advancing foreign policy positions without ministers if it was a question of formulating policy. Most days during the conflict Jonathan Powell and I would go and see the Prime Minister very early in the morning to discuss what he was going to be doing during the day, what his diary looked like, what phone calls he might be making, what meetings he might be having. The idea that because I am a special adviser somehow there is something terrible about that - I am sorry, I think it is absurd.

Q1125 Mr Maples: All I would put to you, Mr Campbell, is ----

Mr Campbell: Or the idea that I am doing it for political reasons.

Q1126 Mr Maples: You and Jonathan Powell are the first people who have been politically appointed to hold the jobs of the Government's Chief Information Officer and the ----

FAC | 2 | 0311

Mr Campbell: I am not the Government's Chief Information Officer, I am the Prime Minister's Director of Communications. The person in charge of the Government's Information Services is Mike Granatt.

Q1127 Mr Hamilton: Mr Campbell, can I come back very briefly to the Andrew Gilligan accusations against you. You have forthrightly and robustly corrected what you called the lies told by the BBC. I wonder whether you can speculate as to why so-called rogue elements in the Intelligence Services or intelligence community should feed lies to the BBC's defence correspondent, Andrew Gilligan? I am sorry if that sounds like a line out of Chris Mullin's novel but I wonder if you could speculate.

Mr Campbell: I do not think it is sensible to speculate. I do not know who this person is, whether they are what Mr Gilligan says they are, I just do not know. Honestly, I do not worry about what Mr Gilligan does, says, other than where, as I say, he makes a fundamental attack on the integrity of the Prime Minister and the integrity of the Government.

Q1128 Mr Hamilton: Why, when you have very convincingly and persuasively shown that Mr Gilligan has told lies about you and the Prime Minister as far as the 45 minute claim is concerned, were they not corrected?

Mr Campbell: I have no idea. I have, as I say, a stack of correspondence, of exchanges, with the Director of News at the BBC about trying to get some sort of redress for this story which, as I say, is a complete lie. I think his very first reply said to me something like, "I do not think we are going to agree on this" and ever since the posture has been, "We have to defend this story", even though I know there are people within the BBC who have huge concern about it, huge concern about what it does for the reputation of the BBC. That is a matter for them but all I know is that I am going to keep going until we get an apology.

Q1129 Mr Hamilton: Could it not be laid to rest by using the JIC assessment or using the Intelligence data and information, the basis on which you wrote the document? Could it not be for once and for all sorted out by that intelligence assessment being shown to certain individuals within the BBC?

Mr Campbell: I think that would be a pretty extraordinary step, and I would be very surprised if the intelligence agencies supported that.

Q1130 Mr Hamilton: But they are being damaged at the moment, are they not?

Mr Campbell: I think the public are a bit cannier about this than people think. I think they will spot an agenda a mile off. As I say, most

FAC/2/0312

agendas in the media are open, people avow them. When I was a journalist I went to the *Daily Mirror*, I was avowedly pro-Labour, anti-Conservative Government and never hid it. I used to see it as part of my job to go on the television and say, "Vote Labour". I was up-front about it. The *Daily Mail* loathes the Prime Minister, loathes me, loathes the Government, does not hide it. That is an agenda. People are aware of that. The BBC is different. The BBC has got a deserved reputation around the world. I think some of the best journalism during the conflict was on the BBC, I think they have adapted to this whole 24 hour media thing better than a lot of news organisations, but when they have bad journalism amid the good then I think they have a responsibility to admit that. We admit when things go wrong, we have done that in relation to one of the issues we have been discussing today, but they have broadcast it not just once but now hundreds of times.

Q1131 Mr Hamilton: Surely the canny public must conclude they have very good evidence from very good sources?

Mr Campbell: They may do. My experience of the public, whatever YouGov polls say, which usually say whatever they have been asked to say by the paper which has commissioned them, my experience going round the country with the Prime Minister is that actually when it comes to the big issues - and this was a huge issue, taking the country into war in Iraq - they listen to senior politicians, they listen to them with a certain amount of respect because they understand the gravity of the decision they have to take, and I think they believe, contrary to the way the media portray politicians and politics, not just the Prime Minister, not just ministers, but the vast bulk of politicians are in politics for good reasons, trying to do their best by their constituents and by the country. If I say that now, I can hear journalists sitting there in vans outside, waiting and saying, "Shall we say he did well or did badly?" rather than actually give any sense of what was discussed, I can hear them say, "Oh, God, blah, blah, blah", but that is the reality. I think if we carry on with this constant denigration of politics, the political process, we are going down a very bad route. People can say to me, as they do and as I have admitted, "You were pretty heavy when you were a journalist" but I never did not have respect for the political process, Parliament, the politicians and the work that they did, and that included politicians with whom I fundamentally disagreed. I find it incredible and I mean incredible that people can report based on one single anonymous uncorroborated source - and let's get to the heart of what the allegation is - that the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, the intelligence agencies, people liker myself connived to persuade Parliament to send British forces into action on a lie. That is the allegation. I tell you, until the BBC acknowledge that is a lie, I will keep banging on, that correspondence file will get thicker and they had better issue an apology pretty quickly.

Mr Hamilton: That is very clear. I am going to move on to a slightly

FAC | 2 | 0313

different subject now.

Chairman: Let's hope the BBC covers that.

Q1132 Mr Hamilton: I hope the BBC does cover that. I want to take up the point John Maples made about the quality of intelligence. I want to draw your attention to something in the September dossier which reported, and I quote, "There is intelligence that Iraq has sought the supply of significant quantities of uranium from Africa." The claim was repeated by President Bush in his State of the Union address in January 2003 when he said, "The British Government has learnt that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. The documents relating to the alleged agreement for the sale of uranium between 1999 and 2001 were passed to the IAEA for investigation. The Agency concluded fairly rapidly that the documents were in fact not authentic and the specific allegations were unfounded. Subsequent reports suggested the documents have been proved forgeries, one bearing the name of a Niger minister who had been out of office for years." My question is, when did you first become aware of the uranium from Africa claim.

Mr Campbell: The claim as it was put into the dossier?

Q1133 Mr Hamilton: Yes. The claim as it was put into the dossier. When did that become available to you, that information?

Mr Campbell: From memory, when it was in the first draft, but I would have to go back and check that.

Q1134 Mr Hamilton: Is that something you could confirm to us during the course of this week, if possible?

Mr Campbell: Yes.

Q1135 Mr Hamilton: Thank you very much. Did you or anybody at No 10 - you because you are the person responsible for the production of the document - seek -----

Mr Campbell: No, I was not responsible for the production of the document.

Q1136 Mr Hamilton: Sorry, responsible for the presentation of the document as Communications Director.

Mr Campbell: Yes, okay.

Q1137 Mr Hamilton: Did you specifically seek to put the claim about Iraq's attempts to get uranium from Niger, or anywhere in Africa, into that document? Was that a very important part of the document?

FAC | 2 | 0314

Mr Campbell: I do not know whether it was an important part but in answer to the question whether it was I who tried to put it into there, no is the answer.

Q1138 Mr Hamilton: Was any attempt made to highlight the fact that Iraq was trying to buy uranium from Africa? The point is, we are being told on weapons of mass destruction we have evidence of precursor chemicals, or anthrax, of growth media, but we have no evidence of any nuclear production at all, and this was obviously a crucial bit of evidence which was subsequently discredited. Was any attempt made to draw attention to the fact that at the time that claim was being made through intelligence sources?

Mr Campbell: I think there is documentary evidence of Iraq's nuclear weapons programme ambitions but in relation to this, I suppose what you are saying is, were the discussions about how prominently to deploy that piece of information. To be honest with you, I cannot remember the nature of those discussions. I think it was an important point. As I have alluded to earlier, it was one of the points I discussed with the chairman of the JIC. When it says they have sought it, I asked what has been the result of that seeking, has it actually resulted in them acquiring any of those, to which the answer was, "To the best of our assessment, no."

Q1139 Mr Hamilton: When it was clear from the IAEA that the documents were forgeries ---

Mr Campbell: I think there is a dispute about this. I am not as qualified to speak on this as the Intelligence people are. As I understand it, there is a dispute as to whether the documents which are being described as forgeries are the documents on which the claim in the dossier is based. Again, I think that is something where I might be able to go back and speak to the JIC chairman about and see if there is any more he can add to that but I do not think that is for me to ---

Q1140 Mr Hamilton: I accept it is not for you to do that but I think for this Committee that information would be quite important because if the claims that different parts of different documents were based on dodgy intelligence are disproved, that greatly strengthens the case that we, Parliament and the public and the media, were being told some pretty correct bits of information about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and their threat to the region and to the rest of the world. It would back up the Government very strongly, I would have thought.

Mr Campbell: I am aware of the public dispute there has been about that. I think it is probably better that I go back and ask the JIC whether there is any more they can or should say about that.

Q1141 Mr Hamilton: That would be very helpful. Thank you very

FAC | 2 | 0315

much. Can I briefly move on to a few questions about your role in Intelligence and foreign policy making. I know you have been through this quite a lot and you have had a fairly long session with us today, and I am grateful for that, but I want to clarify one or two points in my own mind. Are you responsible as Communications Manager for the terms on which members of the intelligence agencies talk to the press?

Mr Campbell: No.

Q1142 Mr Hamilton: Who has that responsibility?

Mr Campbell: I presume the agencies themselves.

Q1143 Mr Hamilton: You do not have any input into that at all?

Mr Campbell: I know the people who do that but how they operate is entirely a matter for them.

Q1144 Mr Hamilton: I appreciate you may not be able to answer this but why is it that certain members of the intelligence agencies are authorised to talk to the press but not to Members of Parliament, apart from those on the Intelligence and Security Committee?

Mr Campbell: It is very rare for officials like me to talk to Members of Parliament. Ministers are accountable to Parliament. The fact is - and I do not know how long this has gone on - the intelligence agencies are more in the open than they were in the past and they do have, if you like, a media profile. What they do is try to have people who journalists with an interest in some of the areas that the intelligence agencies are involved with can at least have a dialogue with, but I do not think it is as it were any stronger than that.

Q1145 Mr Hamilton: Do you see all CIC papers that come to Downing Street?

Mr Campbell: Not necessarily because a lot of the time they will be assessing things which will not necessarily be of interest, of relevance to the kind of issues I might be involved in at any given time. I can go days and weeks without seeing intelligence if my focus professionally is something to do with public services for a few weeks. Obviously during something like the Iraq conflict or post-11 September there was a lot of intelligence relevant to what I was doing. I think one of the interesting developments there has been in relation to the intelligence agencies is actually their very sophisticated understanding of how within all these conflict situations in particular - and this is something which evolved through Kosovo, Afghanistan and then Iraq - how the realities of the modern media have changed the terms of conflict. We may not like that but it is a fact. So, for example, part of our strategy in those three conflicts was actually to deal with the communications strategies of a dictatorship, under Milosevic, of the Taliban and of

FAC/2/0316

Saddam, and therefore it was helpful to have as much information as possible about what their communications plans were. I have to say they relied in very, very heavy part upon the free speech of the United Kingdom and they exploited it pretty ruthlessly.

Chairman: Some colleagues have further questions.

Q1146 Sir John Stanley: Mr Campbell, as you have made very clear to the Committee, you have been the subject of extremely serious personal allegations which have been made against you, most particularly the charge that you were responsible for sexing up the JIC-approved dossier of September 2002. The Committee will want to reach a conclusion on that based on the maximum evidential basis it can obtain and I would like to repeat what my colleagues, Mr Mackinlay and Mr Chidgey, said: I think it would be most helpful if you could put in writing to this Committee a list of the drafting amendments you proposed as that document evolved and those that were accepted by the chairman of the JIC and those that were not. If we can have that as fast as possible, that would be very helpful to us.

Mr Campbell: I hope somebody has been taking note of the various requests you have made. On several of them I have no doubt there will have to be discussions in the intelligence community as to what can and cannot be divulged.

Chairman: I can assure you that the Clerk has been taking a list of the requests being made by this Committee. Of course, we understand if some are oral discussions during the course of the meetings you mentioned. It would help this Committee enormously, one, if we could have any written alterations which you have made. We are under a time constraint in that we hope to produce our report by 7 July so ideally we would like them by Friday morning when we meet the Foreign Secretary.

Q1147 Andrew Mackinlay: Just as a point of order, Chairman, that is not quite what I asked for. The narrow issue I asked for was if you would ring-fence that which was the intelligence information which was in the so-called dodgy dossier, bearing in mind it had been signed off and, yes, I want to see what Sir John has asked for. I cannot see there would be any difficulty because the guy said, "Here, Campbell, you can have this, this is in the public domain." All I want is a ring-fence.

Mr Campbell: Yes, but he might have said, "By the way, Campbell, there are bits in here which we do not necessarily want to be identified as intelligence."

Andrew Mackinlay: Okay, I hear what you say.

Q1148 Chairman: We can provide you with a list this evening of those further discussions and questions we would like to be clarified by

FAC | 2 | 0317

you.

Mr Campbell: Okay. Some of them will have to go through the Joint Intelligence Committee and that may not be able to be done very quickly.

Chairman: As speedily as you can.

Q1149 Sir John Stanley: Mr Campbell, I phrased my request specifically in terms of the drafting amendments which you had proposed to what was a non-classified document which is going to be made public. I did it in those terms because I believe that cannot raise any intelligence issues. In terms of those amendments which were rejected, we are not looking for reasons why they were rejected, which might raise some intelligence issues, but what you proposed and the list of what was accepted and rejected. I do not believe it can raise any intelligence issues and I hope we can have that.

Mr Campbell: It might if within the responses there were intelligence issues giving explanations as to why something was or was not possible.

Q1150 Sir John Stanley: I am not looking for that at all. I am looking entirely at your requests and whether they were met or not, full-stop.

Mr Campbell: Fine.

Q1151 Sir John Stanley: Mr Campbell, you have made a very strong pitch on a personal basis for why you require an apology to yourself from the BBC.

Mr Campbell: It went beyond myself.

Q1152 Sir John Stanley: I would like to turn to another apology which I think is very seriously outstanding and on which you may wish to correct your evidence. If I heard you correctly you suggested the Government had made an apology to Mr al-Marashi. Mr al-Marashi's work was lifted off the internet without attribution, it was used in a highly political context to help make the Government's policy case for going to war against Iraq which was a matter which concerned him very greatly. His thesis or his article in the *Middle East Review* in certainly one crucial respect was substantially changed to suggest terrorist linkage between the Saddam Hussein intelligence agency and al-Qaeda which was not what he said in his *Review* article, and members of his family were endangered. I questioned him on the issue as to whether he had had an apology, "Has the Government made any expression of regret or apology to you for the plagiarism of your thesis? Mr al-Marashi: I have never been contacted directly, either by phone call nor in writing, since February 2003 up to the present. Me:

FAC | 2 | 0318

Do you think you might be owed an apology. Mr al-Marashi: I think the least they can do is owe me an apology." I do not believe he has received an apology, I think Mr Campbell you said earlier he had, I hope he will receive a personal apology from you.

Mr Campbell: As I say, I take responsibility for that paper. I have explained why the mistake was made. I am happy to send an apology to Dr al-Marashi on behalf of the entire communications team at No 10 and the CIC, I am happy to do that. As I said earlier, the moment this mistake was exposed by Channel 4 and subsequently by Dr al-Marashi himself on *Newsnight*, that next morning the Prime Minister's spokesman has never attempted to avoid it, hands up, it should not have happened, we are going to look at how it happened, we are going to put procedures in place and that has been done. I have no desire here at all to do anything other than deliver that apology and do that sincerely. If it would help to do that in writing to Dr al-Marashi, I am perfectly happy to do that.

Q1153 Sir John Stanley: I am sure he would appreciate that.

Mr Campbell: Fine. I noticed, when I read Dr al-Marashi's evidence, that one of the Committee members - I think it was Mr Pope - said he would be recommending that we did apologise, that the Committee would be seeking to recommend that we did apologise to Dr al-Marashi. I am happy to do that. If I can pray you in similar aid in relation to Mr Gilligan's story in the BBC, I would be very grateful.

Q1154 Sir John Stanley: Can I turn to what I think is a fundamental aspect of your evidence and your position. Do you recognise that the launching by you of the so-called dodgy dossier has done very, very serious damage to the wider perception of the veracity of the Government's case for prosecuting the war against Iraq?

Mr Campbell: I accept that is stated and I accept there may well be people who believe that. That is why I think it is important, as I have tried to do, to separate out the two documents, underline the significance of the first one, underline the responsibility and thoroughness with which we in the intelligence agencies approached that, explain the difference in relation to the second one and its intended purposes and intended use. As I say again, we are involved in an awful lot of pieces of communication, as I have said several times, and when we make a mistake we hear about it for quite a long time. I actually do not think we have made that many mistakes. This was a mistake, this one we have acknowledged many, many times, it is one which the person responsible for making that mistake feels wretched about, and I know that because I work with the guy. Mistakes do get made. I just ask the Committee, as I have said in my note, to understand the wider context of the amount of communications work we are involved in in trying to deal on a really difficult complicated issue like this with different audiences around the world. We had

FAC | 2 | 0319

strategies for the UK, for the Moslem community in the UK, for Europe, for Asia, for the United States, for the Middle East. I know people talk about, and John Maples has alluded to, the whole issue of this so-called explosion of special advisers in Downing Street, I have a pretty small team and, yes, I can call in some circumstances on resources across government, but in Downing Street I have a pretty small team. We do a lot of work and occasionally mistakes get made.

Q1155 Sir John Stanley: Can we continue on my particular line of questioning. It is a matter of concern to me that you still do not appreciate the fundamental issue which is ----

Mr Campbell: I do.

Q1156 Sir John Stanley: I am sorry, I do not believe you do, which is the relationship between the communications part of Government and intelligence. As you know, I was a ministerial recipient of intelligence for many years and there is one particular sentence I read in your memorandum which filled me with very considerable concern and it is the sentence which reads, in relation to the September 2002 dossier, "I had several discussions with the Chairman of the JIC on presentational issues arising from the dossier and, in common with other officials, made drafting suggestions as the document evolved." The most crucial aspect of the interface between intelligence and policy - and you, Mr Campbell, sit right down in the middle - is that intelligence helps to formulate policy and that policy never, never helps to formulate intelligence. The position which you have now made clear to the Committee, and I believe this is the first time this has come into the public domain, that you are in the business of making and drafting suggestions to the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, that in my judgment, unfair as this may be to you, is seriously going to compromise the integrity of such documents in the future, as indeed they have been compromised in the case of the two Iraq dossiers. You are a very, very skilled communicator, you are known universally as the Government's spin doctor, your business is to put the best possible presentation on the Government's policy, a perfectly *bona fide* role, everybody understands that, but I have to put it to you - and I do not put this to you in an offensive or personal way but in all seriousness because I share one thing in common with you, you said you were concerned to safeguard the integrity of the intelligence services and that is absolutely my position as well - as long as that policy in your paper is known, that you are in the business of making drafting suggestions to the chairman of the JIC, that Alastair Campbell's fingerprints are going to be on JIC source documents, I have to say I do not believe that is conducive to the integrity of the intelligence services.

Mr Campbell: I suspect that is because you may be not persuaded by my integrity in relation to the work that I do. That, if true, is obviously from my perspective regrettable. All I can say is that the memorandum

FAC | 2 | 0320

that I submitted to you was seen by and cleared by the chairman of the JIC who had discussed it with the agencies. Like you, I think the intelligence agencies do an extraordinary job for the country, and the reason why I felt that the briefing paper mistake was so serious was because it did obviously lead to the controversy about which we are still talking. The reason why I moved so quickly to speak to the leadership of the intelligence community and to agree the new procedures now in place was because I do value that hugely. Provided the intelligence services and the leadership are satisfied with the role I play on behalf of the Prime Minister at his instruction, I think that is a perfectly proper thing to do.

Q1157 Sir John Stanley: My colleague, Mr Ottaway, yesterday asked the Foreign Secretary, "Do you think on balance it would be better not to have published it in the first place ...", referring to the dodgy dossier, and the Foreign Secretary replied, "Yes, given what happened --- Certainly it would have been better not to have published it in that form or if it was going to be published to have ensured that it went through the same rigorous procedures as the dossier that was published in September." Do you agree with the Foreign Secretary it would have been far better in hindsight for the Government if the second dossier, the dodgy dossier, had not been published?

Mr Campbell: Clearly.

Sir John Stanley: Thank you.

Chairman: Mr Ottaway, if you could be brief.

Q1158 Richard Ottaway: I will. During the interval I have been musing that a question I put to you may only have been partially answered. I would just like to put exactly the same question to you again. Did the Government ever receive any information from intelligence services that Iraq was not an immediate threat?

Mr Campbell: Not that I saw.

Q1159 Richard Ottaway: That was not the question I asked though.

Mr Campbell: I cannot answer for what the Government may have received if I was not aware of it.

Q1160 Richard Ottaway: You were chairing a cross-departmental --

Mr Campbell: I was not sitting there looking at raw intelligence the whole time.

Q1161 Richard Ottaway: I am not saying raw intelligence. Did you get any assessment from the intelligence services that Iraq was not an

FAC | 2 | 0321

immediate threat?

Mr Campbell: In relation to this point about the immediate imminent threat, the Prime Minister is on the record, I think either in the House or to the Liaison Committee, saying nobody is saying Saddam Hussein is about to launch weapons on the UK next week, the week after, this year, next year, so I am not clear.

Q1162 Richard Ottaway: Did you get any intelligence reports that Iraq was not an immediate threat?

Mr Campbell: None that I can recall that I saw. I do not go around looking for every piece of intelligence.

Q1163 Richard Ottaway: You were chairing a group which covered a heck of a lot of departments.

Mr Campbell: It covered the communication issues on Iraq. Very few of those meetings would have discussed intelligence at all. The discussions that we were involved in there were issues like, for example, when we were trying to get the second resolution. They would have been about which countries we should be speaking to their media. This was not a group that sat with a sheaf of intelligence on the table, in fact it never did that. As I have explained in my memorandum to you, the idea for this second briefing paper arose when one of the SIS representatives at that meeting said there was some new intelligence which could be used publicly on this theme. We did not then sit around saying "Well, let us have a look at this", that was not how it worked.

Q1164 Richard Ottaway: Everyone knew that you were putting together an intelligence case to argue that Iraq was an immediate threat and no-one involved in that at any time picked up any intelligence that this was not the case coming from a different assessment or different approach or different line?

Mr Campbell: I am sorry if I am being thick but I do not understand the point given that the position of the Government was throughout the entire theme that nobody was ever saying that Iraq was going to whack off a missile at Peterborough.

Q1165 Richard Ottaway: Did you get a report saying "It is improbable that they are going to whack off a missile anywhere"?

Mr Campbell: Not that I have seen.

Q1166 Richard Ottaway: Has anyone seen?

Mr Campbell: How can I answer that if I have not seen things that other people have seen?

FAC/2/0322

Q1167 Richard Ottaway: It is possible that someone might have?

Mr Campbell: I really do not know. As I say, forgive me if I am thick but I do not really get the point.

Q1168 Richard Ottaway: The point is it is quite possible that such an assessment was made.

Mr Campbell: But I am not aware of it, therefore how can I comment upon its existence or non existence.

Q1169 Mr Hamilton: Just a very minor point, Mr Campbell. When it was discovered that the February dossier included plagiarised material, would you have expected the Permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign Office, Sir Michael Jay, to have been informed straight away?

Mr Campbell: Well, he was.

Q1170 Mr Hamilton: He says he was not informed straight away on the morning of 3 February.

Mr Campbell: No, no, we did not know until 6 February. 3 February was when the document was put in the Library of the House of Commons.

Q1171 Mr Hamilton: Right.

Mr Campbell: At which point none of us knew.

Q1172 Mr Hamilton: Okay. So he was informed immediately on 6 February when it was discovered, as far as you know?

Mr Campbell: He probably had exactly the same sinking feeling as I had when I saw the news. He and I had discussions, not on the intelligence side of things but about procedures for the CIC, and there was an exchange between me and him. What was agreed there was any material kept within the CIC, used by the CIC, had to be properly sourced, which is the system which operates in Number 10 anyway.

Q1173 Andrew Mackinlay: Just 15 seconds. You understand the thing I have asked, and I understand your point saying you have to clear it in case there was intelligence which was in the so-called 'dodgy dossier' but there might be - might be - a reluctance to identify precisely what it is. Just for the purposes of this conversation, if that is what is told to you, and you relay it back to us, that would rather infer they might have said "Do a document but bring in some other material in order to disguise what is intelligence".

Mr Campbell: No.

FAC/2/0323

Q1174 Andrew Mackinlay: I have misunderstood then. I cannot for the life of me understand why, in a sense, you have got to go back to these fellows because if they said "Here, Alastair Campbell, is intelligence. Sign it off. It can be in the public domain".

Mr Campbell: Yes.

Q1175 Andrew Mackinlay: Then we know the history of the production of this document and also things which were brought in. I cannot see, therefore, how it is impossible to identify with clarity precisely what was handed over?

Mr Campbell: As I say, I did not work on the editorial of this until it was time to sign it off. In the process that went over four weeks there were discussions as the thing was evolving between the people in the CIC working on it and the SIS. Now I am simply saying I do not personally know the judgments which were applied as to what could be identified as intelligence and what might be intelligence that was not thus identified.

Q1176 Chairman: Mr Campbell, one final observation from you which is put that the choice before the Committee is whether we believe Gilligan or you, what are your observations on that?

Mr Campbell: All I can say ---

Andrew Mackinlay: I am not sure that is so.

Q1177 Chairman: Let me ask the question.

Mr Campbell: I work in a pretty exposed position. I work for a Prime Minister who is answerable to Parliament. The media can bandy all sorts of allegations about what I do and they can say things about the Prime Minister but the one thing you cannot do, as everybody in this room knows, if you are an elected politician is lie to the House of Commons. Now, the allegation that has been made by the BBC's defence correspondent, repeated in large parts of the media, as I say, here and around the world, is that the Prime Minister did exactly that, he put to the country and to Parliament a false basis for putting at risk the lives of British servicemen. That is an accusation against the Prime Minister, against the Foreign Secretary, against the Cabinet, against the intelligence agencies, against me and against the people who work with me. Now that is why I take it so seriously, not because of me because, as I say, I am absolutely used to being described in all sorts of ways by journalists who, frankly, I would match a politician's integrity against theirs any day of the week. I simply say in relation to the BBC story: it is a lie, it was a lie, it is a lie that is continually repeated and until we get an apology for it I will keep making sure that Parliament, people like yourselves and the public know that it was a lie.

FAC/2/0324

Chairman: Mr Campbell, this is the Committee's first meeting with you, I hope it will not be the last. Thank you very much.

FAC | 2 | 0325