

SECTION 4.2

IRAQ WMD ASSESSMENTS, JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2002

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Introduction and key findings

1. This Section addresses:

- the assessment between late July and late September 2002 of Iraq's capabilities and intentions to develop, produce and use chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles;
- the production of the Government dossier *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, which was published on 24 September; and
- Mr Blair's statement to the House of Commons that day.

2. A significant number of the documents relevant to the events considered in this Section are already in the public domain, including:

- documents published by the Hutton Inquiry, including the four drafts of the dossier produced in September 2002; and
- documents released in response to FOI requests.

3. The Inquiry has examined most of the original, unredacted, versions of these documents and, in some cases, is adding further information to that already in the public domain. In a small number of cases, however, primarily emails given to the Hutton Inquiry, the Government has been unable to provide copies of the original documents.

4. The roles and responsibilities of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) and the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) are addressed in Section 2.

5. The development of UK strategy during the period addressed in this Section is addressed in Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5.

6. The military planning for a campaign in which chemical and biological weapons could be used, and in particular the arrangements to provide protection for UK forces, are addressed in Section 6.1 to 6.3.

Key findings

- The urgency and certainty with which the Government stated that Iraq was a threat which had to be dealt with fuelled the demand for publication of the dossier and led to Mr Blair's decision to publish it in September, separate from any decision on the way ahead.
- The dossier was designed to "make the case" and secure Parliamentary and public support for the Government's position that action was urgently required to secure Iraq's disarmament.
- The JIC accepted ownership of the dossier and agreed its content. There is no evidence that intelligence was improperly included in the dossier or that No.10 improperly influenced the text.

- The assessed intelligence had not established beyond doubt either that Saddam Hussein had continued to produce chemical and biological weapons or that efforts to develop nuclear weapons continued. The JIC should have made that clear to Mr Blair.
- In his statement to Parliament on 24 September Mr Blair presented Iraq's past, current and potential future capabilities as evidence of the severity of the potential threat from Iraq's weapons of mass destruction; and that at some point in the future that threat would become a reality.
- The dossier's description of Iraq's capabilities and intent became part of the baseline against which the UK Government measured Iraq's future statements and actions and the success of weapons inspections.
- The widespread perception that the September 2002 dossier overstated the firmness of the evidence has produced a damaging legacy which may make it more difficult to secure support for Government policy, including military action, where the evidence depends on inferential judgements drawn from intelligence.
- There are lessons which should be implemented in using information from JIC Assessments to underpin policy decisions.

Late July and August 2002

Mr Blair's meeting, 23 July 2002

7. Mr Blair's meeting on Iraq on 23 July did not take firm decisions and he commissioned further advice and background material on the issues.

8. On 23 July, Mr Blair discussed Iraq with Mr Jack Straw (the Foreign Secretary), Mr Geoff Hoon (the Defence Secretary), Lord Goldsmith (Attorney General), Sir Richard Wilson (Cabinet Secretary), Admiral Sir Michael Boyce (Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS)), Sir Richard Dearlove (Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS)), Sir Francis Richards (Head of the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ)), Mr John Scarlett (Chairman of the JIC), Mr Jonathan Powell (Mr Blair's Chief of Staff), Baroness Morgan (Mr Blair's Director of Political and Government Relations), Mr Alastair Campbell (Mr Blair's Director of Communications and Strategy) and Sir David Manning (Mr Blair's Foreign Policy Adviser and Head of the Cabinet Office Overseas and Defence Secretariat (OD Sec)).¹

9. The meeting and the advice prepared for Mr Blair and other participants are addressed in detail in Section 3.3.

10. The Cabinet Office paper, 'Iraq: Conditions for Military Action', which was prepared to inform the discussion, was based on the assumption that Iraq was in possession of prohibited weapons and material and was not complying with its UN obligations; but

¹ [Minute Rycroft to Manning, 23 July 2002, 'Iraq: Prime Minister's Meeting, 23 July'](#).

it did not address the issue of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities and intentions or the actual threat posed by Iraq's WMD at that stage.²

11. Sir Richard Dearlove discussed policy towards Iraq in a meeting with Dr Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's National Security Advisor, in Washington on 19 July.³

12. The report of that discussion stated that the US view was:

- There was "growing evidence of the construction of CBW production and links to terrorists [in Iraq] stoking fears of a repeat 9/11 with WMD".
- There was a strong strategic case for removing Saddam Hussein. Continued development of WMD was not in doubt.
- A casus belli already existed.

13. Sir Richard reported that he was told a US "decision [on action] had already been taken – the question was only how and when".

14. Sir Richard also reported that, in a separate discussion with a senior US official, he had been told that the US Administration's intention was to set the threshold on UN weapons inspections so high that Iraq would not be able to hold up US policy.

15. Sir David Manning drew Mr Blair's attention to the report, commenting:

"Not much doubt here that the Administration is bent on action soon, and convincing itself that it has strong strategic, as well as a historical duty to act.

"Our views on links between Iraq, terrorism and development of WMD are different from Condi's: not proven at best ...

...

"C [Sir Richard Dearlove] will be able to give the full picture tomorrow."⁴

16. Mr Powell commented: "Strengthens the need for and urgency of your note to Bush."⁵

17. Sir David Manning gave Mr Blair an Annotated Agenda for the meeting on 23 July, including inviting:

- Mr Scarlett to set the scene with a "very brief summary" of the intelligence on the position inside Iraq; and
- Sir Richard Dearlove to provide a brief account of his recent talks in Washington. He had returned "convinced that the Administration have moved up a gear".⁶

² [Paper Cabinet Office, 19 July 2002, 'Iraq: Conditions for Military Action'](#).

³ Report, 22 July 2002, 'Iraq [C's account of discussions with Dr Rice]'.

⁴ Minute Manning to Prime Minister, 22 July 2002, 'Iraq'.

⁵ Manuscript comment Powell to Prime Minister on Minute Manning to Prime Minister, 22 July 2002, 'Iraq'.

⁶ [Minute Manning to Prime Minister, 22 July 2002, 'Iraq Meeting: 23 July: Annotated Agenda'](#).

18. Sir David also identified questions Mr Blair might ask, including what sort of battlefield environment was anticipated, and the response to any use of biological weapons (BW) or chemical weapons (CW).

19. The record of the 23 July meeting written by Mr Matthew Rycroft, one of Mr Blair's two Private Secretaries for Foreign Affairs, noted:

- Mr Scarlett summarised the intelligence and latest [4 July] JIC Assessment: "Saddam's regime was tough and based on extreme fear. The only way to overthrow it was likely to be by massive military action." Saddam Hussein was "worried and expected an attack", but he was "not convinced" that an attack would be "immediate or overwhelming". Real support for Saddam Hussein was "probably narrowly based".
- Sir Richard Dearlove reported that there was "a perceptible shift in attitude" in Washington: "Military action was now seen as inevitable." President Bush "wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy. The NSC [National Security Council] had no patience with the UN route and no enthusiasm for publishing material on the Iraqi regime's record."⁷

20. Mr Rycroft recorded that the meeting concluded that the UK "should work on the assumption that the UK would take part in any military action". Mr Blair also asked for further advice on a number of issues, including that Mr Scarlett would send Mr Blair a full intelligence update.

21. In a separate record circulated more widely in Whitehall, Mr Rycroft wrote that it had been suggested that Mr Scarlett provide a weekly update, on Friday mornings for Mr Blair's weekend box.⁸

22. In his account of the meeting in his diaries, Mr Campbell wrote, in relation to the points made on WMD, that:

- Mr Straw had "said of the four powers posing a potential threat with WMD ... Iraq would be fourth. He [Saddam Hussein] does not have nukes, he has some offensive WMD capability. The tough question is whether this is just regime change or is the issue WMD."
- Mr Blair "said he needed to be convinced first of the workability of the military plan, and second of an equally workable political strategy. Jack [Straw] said we could probably get the votes for a UN ultimatum, but the Americans may not want to go down that route. TB saw regime change as the route to dealing with WMD."⁹

⁷ [Minute Rycroft to Manning, 23 July 2002, 'Iraq: Prime Minister's Meeting, 23 July'](#).

⁸ [Letter Rycroft to McDonald, 23 July 2002, 'Iraq: Prime Minister's Meeting, 23 July: Follow Up'](#).

⁹ Campbell A & Hagerty B. *The Alastair Campbell Diaries. Volume 4. The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq*. Hutchinson, 2012.

23. In his memoir, Mr Straw wrote that he:

“... ran through the four countries that posed a potential threat to world peace because of their unauthorised and highly dangerous weapons systems – North Korea, Iran, Libya, and Iraq. I thought it important to raise the issue as to whether we should contemplate not joining the US in any American military effort against Iraq. I was concerned that the case against Iraq (why did it merit the most severe action? what differentiated it from the other three?) had not at that stage been made: and also about the potential consequences for Tony’s leadership, and the survival of his government.”¹⁰

24. Sir Richard told the Inquiry that he had had “quite contentious and difficult conversations”. He had returned from Washington “deeply concerned that there was momentum in parts of [US] Administration”, and he had warned Mr Blair about that momentum.¹¹ In relation to his “alleged comment” about the intelligence being fixed around the policy, Sir Richard told the Inquiry that was really a reference to the attempts “to join up terrorism and Iraq” with which he “radically disagreed”.

25. Sir Richard Dearlove’s report of his meetings in Washington and the comment that “the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy” are addressed in more detail in Section 3.3.

26. Sir David Manning asked Mr Scarlett for advice on a number of issues, including a review of Saddam Hussein’s military capabilities and intentions.

27. It is not clear what was said about Iraq’s WMD in Mr Blair’s meeting on 23 July, but the following day Sir David Manning explained to Mr Blair his concern that:

“... we (and I suspect the Americans) have only a hazy idea of Saddam’s retaliatory capabilities if and when we attack Iraq. CDS [Adm Boyce] was unable to say whether we would expect to fight in a CBW [chemical and biological warfare] environment. The answer has a crucial bearing on the plausibility and viability of US military plans.”¹²

28. Sir David wrote that he had “therefore, asked John Scarlett to review all the intelligence on Saddam’s military capabilities and intentions, including:

- What military equipment do we think Saddam possesses, and in what state of readiness?
- In particular, does he [Saddam Hussein] have chemical and biological agents; and if so, can he weaponise them?
- If he can weaponise them, do we believe he can deliver them by missile or aircraft?”

¹⁰ Straw J. *Last Man Standing: Memoirs of a Political Survivor*. Macmillan, 2012.

¹¹ Private hearing, 16 June 2010, pages 34-35.

¹² [Minute Manning to Prime Minister, 24 July 2002, ‘Iraq’](#).

29. Sir David pointed out that Iraq had not used chemical or biological agents during the 1991 Gulf Conflict, but he was unsure whether that was because Iraq did not have the capability or for other reasons. He was:

“... anyway left very uneasy by Mike Boyce’s suggestion that the Americans believe that Saddam would only use CBW as a last resort. If this is the American assessment, it strikes me as alarmingly complacent. Saddam will know that once the US launches an attack, the game is up. From his point of view, it will be last resort time from the moment the first Marines hit the beach. And with all the wisdom of the armchair strategist, it seems to me that the temptation to let fly at the Kuwait bottleneck, with everything in his armoury, could be very strong indeed.”

30. Mr Scarlett was also asked to “do more work on regime cohesion” in the light of what Sir David described as “a risk of American wishful thinking”.

31. Mr Scarlett subsequently provided a list of points on Iraq, to which he believed answers were needed, for Sir David Manning to use during his visit to Washington (see Section 3.3).¹³ The points on Iraq’s WMD were:

- Iraq’s CBW and ballistic missile capability ...
- Saddam’s ‘red lines’ which would provoke him to use CBW against Coalition Forces or his neighbours.
- What would be the Israeli response to an Iraqi CBW attack?”

32. A JIC Assessment addressing Sir David Manning’s questions about Iraq’s military capabilities was produced on 9 September. That is addressed later in this Section.

33. On 29 July, Sir David Manning delivered to Dr Rice a Note from Mr Blair to President Bush.

34. Mr Blair sent President Bush a “Note on Iraq” dated 28 July which was intended to influence President Bush’s thinking on Iraq.¹⁴ The Note and the subsequent discussions between Sir David Manning and senior members of the US Administration, including President Bush, and Mr Blair’s own discussion with President Bush, are addressed in Section 3.3.

35. Mr Blair’s Note included six elements for “A Strategy for Achieving a Coalition”.

¹³ [Minute Scarlett to Manning, 26 July 2002, ‘Iraq: We do not know enough about ...’](#).

¹⁴ [Note Blair \[to Bush\], 28 July 2002, ‘Note on Iraq’](#).

36. One of the elements was the need to explain why action to disarm Iraq was necessary. In a paragraph on “**The Evidence**”, Mr Blair wrote that he had been told that the US thought evidence was unnecessary but his view was “we still need to make the case”. He suggested:

“If we recapitulate all the WMD evidence; add his [Saddam Hussein’s] attempts to secure nuclear capability; and, as seems possible, add on the Al Qaida link, it will be hugely persuasive over here. Plus ... the abhorrent nature of the regime. It could be done simultaneously with the deadline.”

37. In a final section addressing “**The Military Plan**”, Mr Blair wrote that he had been advised that there was a “risk of CW being used” if a military attack was launched which did not result in the rapid collapse of the Iraqi regime.

38. Sir David Manning had a “pre-meeting” with Mr Richard Armitage, the US Deputy Secretary of State.¹⁵

39. Sir David told the Inquiry that he had raised a number of detailed points with Mr Armitage:

“... Why now? What if Saddam Hussein were to use weapons of mass destruction during a military campaign? What would follow military action? What role ... would the United States see the United Nations playing, and what was the United States planning to do about the Middle East Peace Process [MEPP]?”¹⁶

40. Sir David said that he had told Mr Armitage that he “didn’t think we had answers to those questions”. Mr Armitage had replied that he thought they needed a lot more work and that: “It was better to be right than to hurry.”

“Summer reading”

41. In response to a request from Mr Powell, Mr Scarlett sent Mr Blair “classified reading material on Iraq” including two documents produced by the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) on proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and Iraq:¹⁷

- ‘Proliferation Study of Iraq’, providing an in-depth study of each of Iraq’s programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction, produced in August 2002; and
- an ‘aide memoire on Weapons of Mass Destruction and Proliferation’, including Iraq, produced in June 2002.

¹⁵ Public hearing, 30 November 2009, page 16.

¹⁶ Public hearing, 30 November 2009, pages 16-17.

¹⁷ Minute Scarlett to Powell, 1 August 2002, ‘Iraq: Classified Reading Material’.

42. The first was a document of almost 500 pages, “designed to provide a comprehensive reference and briefing document” for use by government departments, providing details of:

- Iraq’s nuclear, chemical and biological programmes and their potential means of delivery, particularly ballistic missiles;
- procurement mechanisms in recent times;
- the critical goods which Iraq would require for WMD-related programmes;
- goods and technologies which Iraq was actively seeking;
- developments in indigenous military production; and
- Iraq’s conventional arms purchases.¹⁸

43. The document replaced a version produced in 1996.

44. A one-page summary of key judgements was provided, including:

- The location and condition of the concealed Al Hussein missiles was “unknown”, but there was “sufficient engineering expertise to make them operational”.
- Iraq had “begun development” of ballistic missiles with a range of more than 1,000km, but it would “not be able to produce such a missile before 2007 provided sanctions remain effective”.
- Iraq was “continuing to carry out research into nuclear weapons development at a theoretical level” and intelligence indicated that it might have recalled its nuclear scientists from civilian work in 1998.
- Iraq might “be trying to develop centrifuge enrichment of uranium”, but that was “likely to produce significant, if not insurmountable problems”.
- “Some clandestine procurement has been attempted abroad using foreign front companies. Many ‘dual-use’ items such as machine tools and electrical equipment have been acquired which would be available for the nuclear programme.”
- It was assessed that Iraq had “no intention of restoring its CW agent production to pre-Gulf Conflict levels” but it “could begin the production of mustard gas on a significant scale at any time and the nerve agents sarin and VX within weeks”.
- It was assessed that Iraq was “continuing to conceal the full extent of its BW programme in order to preserve a limited offensive capability and that it could revive its BW programme within a matter of weeks without much difficulty or outside assistance”.
- Iraq’s CBW production capability had “been dispersed to survive a military attack and UN inspections”.

¹⁸ [Paper Defence Intelligence Analysis Staff, August 2002, ‘Proliferation Study: Iraq’](#).

45. The second document addressed several countries of concern.¹⁹ A two-page Annex provided comments on Iraq.

46. On Iraq's nuclear weapons, the DIS stated that the intelligence on Iraq's nuclear weapons programme was "limited". Saddam Hussein had held regular meetings with Iraqi Atomic Energy personnel and expressed continuing support of atomic energy. There was:

"No confirmed weapon-related facilities have been identified but some civil research continues at Tuwaitha and rebuilding of Military Industrial Complex facilities continues. Many scientists from the former nuclear weapons programme are known to work at ... al-Tahidi and may conduct nuclear-associated research. Any links to a weapons programme have yet to be established."

47. On Iraq's ballistic missiles systems, the DIS set out Iraq's activities to develop short range systems. On long-range missiles, it stated that Intelligence indicated Iraq had:

- a longer-range SCUD-derived missile "under development". That was "probably linked to the construction of a new large liquid propellant rocket engine static test stand";
- continued work on longer-range systems but it was "unlikely to produce such new systems within five years if sanctions remained effective"; and
- "reported ambitions for missiles with ranges of 2,000 to 3,000km".

48. In addition, the DIS had "recently noted a world-wide drive to acquire production-level quantities of materials for making solid rocket motors and a continued emphasis on guidance and control technology".

49. On Iraq's chemical and biological programmes the DIS stated:

- There had been "some refurbishment" of the former CW precursor production facility near Habbaniyah, but "this could not support large-scale CW agent production".
- The possibility existed that Iraq had "a series of transportable production facilities, although none have yet been identified, possibly as a result of denial and deception".
- Iraq had "the necessary command and control structure necessary to deliver CBW weapons". There were "no specifics on preferred delivery options" but they could, in the future, include the L-29 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV).

50. It is clear from the documents on the No.10 files that Mr Blair read the papers.

¹⁹ [Paper Defence Intelligence Analysis Staff, June 2002, 'aide memoire on Weapons of Mass Destruction and Proliferation'](#).

51. When No.10 asked for reading material for Mr Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in September 2002, Mr Scarlett provided the same documents.²⁰

Reservations about the wisdom of publishing the dossier

52. As set out in Section 4.1, Mr Tom McKane, Deputy Head of OD Sec, was asked in March 2002 to chair an inter-departmental group to take forward work on the substance of a paper for publication on Iraq.²¹ Mr Campbell was to retain the lead role on the form of the document and timing of its publication.

53. Mr McKane sent the latest versions of the “three Iraq public documents: on WMD, Weapons Inspections and Abuse of Human Rights” to Sir David Manning on 21 June, asking whether the three documents should be treated as a package or the WMD paper should be published separately.²² Mr Scarlett’s preference was for the latter, but most officials in the inter-departmental group thought the papers should be published together.

54. Mr McKane also produced a draft Foreword “which could be issued in the name of Mr Straw or jointly by him, Mr Hoon and Ms Short [the International Development Secretary]”.

55. On 16 July, Sir David Manning, Mr Powell and Mr Campbell agreed that publication of the three papers on Iraq should be put on hold.²³

56. The Cabinet Office paper of 19 July recommended that Ministers should:

“Agree to the establishment of an ad hoc group of officials under Cabinet Office chairmanship to consider the development of an information campaign to be agreed with the US.”²⁴

57. There was no mention of that issue in the record of Mr Blair’s meeting on 23 July.²⁵

58. Mr McKane told the Inquiry that the proposal had come from the MOD and that he had seen it as related to, but separate from, the production of the dossier.²⁶ The dossier seemed to him to be:

“... about putting the fact[s] before the British public in a way that would explain why this [Iraq] was a problem and a problem that had to be dealt with.

“So ... it might have formed an element of a broader information campaign.”

²⁰ Minute Scarlett to Rycroft, 5 September 2002, ‘Iraq: Classified Reading Material’.

²¹ [Manuscript note Rycroft to McKane, 25 March 2002, on Minute Ricketts to Patey, 22 March 2002, ‘Iraq: Preparing Material for Public Release’.](#)

²² [Minute McKane to Manning, 21 June 2002, ‘Iraq: Public Documents’.](#)

²³ [Minute Manning to McKane, 16 July 2002, ‘Iraq: Public Documents’.](#)

²⁴ Paper Cabinet Office, 19 July 2002, ‘Iraq: Conditions for Military Action’.

²⁵ [Minute Rycroft to Manning, 23 July 2002, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s Meeting, 23 July’.](#)

²⁶ Public hearing, 19 January 2011, pages 79-80.

59. On 5 August, Mr Peter Watkins, Mr Hoon's Principal Private Secretary, wrote to Sir David Manning suggesting that there was "a need to bolster our public lines on Iraq for the summer while not changing our fundamental posture that no decision has been taken on military action".²⁷

60. Mr Watkins wrote that the Government was "likely to face a long hot summer of media speculation about the possibility of military action". He suggested strengthening the presentation of existing lines and reinforcing them with recent quotes from Mr Blair and others "about the WMD threat posed by Saddam Hussein". MOD and FCO officials were working on that but careful drafting would be required "to avoid foreshadowing the document now under consideration in the Cabinet Office". He added:

"The aim would be to reinforce the message that the threat is real, without suggesting that we have determined any particular policy to counter it."

61. Mr Watkins suggested there was a need for "some closely held inter-departmental thinking on a contingent information strategy in support of any decision to take military action against Iraq".

62. Sir David Manning was not persuaded that action was needed immediately and asked Ms Anna Wechsberg, one of Mr Blair's two Private Secretaries for Foreign Affairs, to follow up.²⁸

63. Sir David also sent a copy of the minute and his comments to Mr Scarlett.

64. Ms Wechsberg spoke to Mr Hoon's Private Office to say that No.10 was "not enthusiastic" about the proposals. It was agreed that, unless the MOD identified "other arguments for proceeding, the idea will be dropped for now".²⁹

65. In a minute on 8 August, reporting developments while Mr McKane had been on leave, Mr Jim Drummond, Assistant Head OD Sec (Foreign Policy), wrote that, in the context of the public debate on Iraq "raging on in the press", Sir David Manning had "been very clear that he wants no action taken on the release of the dossier or any private briefing of those engaging in the debate".³⁰

66. Mr Drummond also reported that Mr John Williams, FCO Press Secretary (formerly Head of FCO News Department), had told Mr Straw that "releasing the dossier would be a bad idea because it has insufficient evidence to convince public opinion".

²⁷ Letter Watkins to Manning, 5 August 2002, 'Iraq: Public Posture and Information Strategy'.

²⁸ Manuscript comment Manning to Wechsberg, 6 August 2002, on Letter Watkins to Manning, 5 August 2002, 'Iraq: Public Posture and Information Strategy'.

²⁹ Manuscript comment Wechsberg, 7 August 2002, on Letter Watkins to Manning, 5 August 2002, 'Iraq: Public Posture and Information Strategy'.

³⁰ Minute Drummond to McKane, 8 August 2002, 'Iraq'.

67. Mr McKane had an interdepartmental meeting planned for 19 August. Mr Drummond suggested that if it went ahead, it might be “small and informal to consider the options for a press campaign if/when Ministers take political decisions about Iraq”.

68. Mr Williams had written a minute on 2 August which prompted Mr Edward Chaplin, FCO Director Middle East and North Africa, to write to Mr Andrew Patrick, FCO Head of Newsroom, that: “Although the dossier includes some good material, it presents little new evidence of Iraq’s WMD to justify a move away from our policy of containment/deterrence.”³¹ He had discussed the issue with SIS who took “the same view”.

69. Mr Chaplin suggested that special briefings for key foreign leaders would be needed “in addition to any dossier”, to “convince them that the Iraqi WMD threat was real, drawing on intelligence material more freely than would be possible in a public document”.

70. That might be extended to:

“... a selection of opinion-formers in the UK ... In private briefings one could be much more explicit about the threat, using recent JIC Assessments (SIS have suggested that this could be done without undue threat to sources), plus a political briefing and, perhaps, a description of the damage which a relatively small quantity of WMD could inflict in urban areas of Britain.”

71. Mr Chaplin also reported that another senior FCO official had pointed out the risk of “binning the dossier, given that it has already been so heavily trailed”, and suggested a briefing note could still be published “nearer the time of military action” along the lines of a document on the “sins of Saddam” produced in 1998.

72. Mr Chaplin suggested the message would be that:

“... there is still a serious potential threat to UK national security; action has to be taken; the problem could still be resolved peacefully; but if Iraq pursues this route, military action as a last resort is right.”

73. Mr Chaplin concluded that, if Mr Patrick and Mr Williams thought his proposals were “a runner”, the idea could be developed with the Cabinet Office and others and submitted to Ministers “after the holiday season”.

74. Mr Chaplin’s minute was sent to the Private Offices of Mr Straw and Mr Mike O’Brien, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, and to Sir Michael Jay, FCO Permanent Under Secretary (PUS), and other senior officials.

³¹ [Minute Chaplin to Patrick, 9 August 2002, ‘Iraq’.](#)

75. In his statement to the Inquiry, Mr Williams wrote that he had been “instinctively against the idea of a dossier” which seemed to him:

“... to rest on uncertainties, as by definition we did not know what Iraq had done with weapons and materials which it had been told by the UN to account for, but hadn’t. That is not to say I questioned the general concern about Iraq, only that I had a feeling we would be in difficulty if we were asked for evidence of things that were inherently unknown to the international community.”³²

76. Mr Williams added that he:

“... had no inkling that Iraq may no longer possess such weapons, only an anxiety that we could not know the extent of weaponry which the UN was unable to inspect or verify.”

77. Mr Williams also wrote that his recollection was that “there was never a voice raised” in Mr Straw’s presence, “or in the flow of paper ... that ever raised doubts that Iraq still possessed weapons of mass destruction”.³³

78. Mr Williams stated that he had done nothing about his concerns until August 2002, when he “vividly” recalled that he felt “he had to do something”, and he wrote a note asking Mr Straw, when he returned from holiday, to try to persuade Mr Blair “to forget about a dossier”.³⁴ He had argued that the Government should not take it upon itself to prove what the inspectors had not been able to prove. The note was overtaken by Mr Blair’s announcement at Sedgefield, which is addressed later in the Section, and Mr Williams did not receive a response.

79. The Government has been unable to find either Mr Williams’ minute of 2 August or any subsequent minute to Mr Straw in August 2002. Mr Williams’ minute of 4 September is addressed late in this Section.

80. During an unpublicised visit to the US on 20 August, Mr Straw informed Mr Colin Powell, US Secretary of State, that:

- **Mr Blair had been irritated to find himself in the position, where the US and UK had been “outed” before they had been able to make the case with the public for action against Iraq.**
- **The UK’s draft dossier on Iraq did not in his view lead inexorably to the conclusion that military action was the only way to deal with Saddam Hussein.**
- **A better case for action could be made.**

³² Statement, December 2010, paragraph 7.

³³ Statement, December 2010, paragraph 10.

³⁴ Statement, December 2010, paragraphs 13-14.

81. When Mr Straw and Secretary Powell met on 20 August, they discussed Mr Blair's Note to President Bush of 28 July and its impact on thinking in the US.³⁵

82. In relation to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, Secretary Powell told Mr Straw that dossiers on the "case for action" were being prepared:

"True believers would see a smoking gun no matter what. But most of the stuff Iraq was importing was dual-use. It was not clear that the situation was any more serious this year than last."

83. Mr Straw handed over a copy of the UK's draft dossier:

"Although it made clear that Saddam was a very bad man, the contents did not lead inexorably to the conclusion that the only way to deal with him was by military action."

84. Mr Straw told Secretary Powell that he had discussed the position with Mr Blair the previous day. Mr Blair was concerned and had:

"... asked him to stress that the problem was that we had been 'outed' long before we had been able to make the case with the public for action ..."

85. Addressing the "public case", Mr Straw said that the UK dossier:

"... needed a compelling last chapter. We could make a better case than the one we had made so far. Traditional Cold War-style containment did not work for WMD. Rogue states did not have as much at stake as the Soviet bloc."

86. On 19 August, Mr McKane chaired a "restricted" inter-departmental meeting on an information strategy on Iraq.³⁶

87. The MOD had provided an outline of the shape an information strategy might take, with the objectives of attaining "domestic acquiescence" and regional and international support.

88. The meeting also discussed the forthcoming International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) report (on Iraq's WMD). It was perceived as "useful", but the UK should "resist any calls" to publish the dossier, "which would be seen by the media as a positive indication of UK preparations for a military operation against Iraq".

89. In conclusion, Mr McKane:

"... re-iterated the sensitive nature of the meeting. It was important that no work was taken forward in the absence of a policy decision, and that no action was taken that might be misconstrued by the media as an indication of the UK's policy decision."

³⁵ [Letter McDonald to Manning, 21 August 2002, 'Foreign Secretary's Visit to the US, 20 August 2002'](#).

³⁶ Minute [Cabinet Office junior official] to McKane, 21 August 2002, 'Information Strategy – Iraq'.

90. It is not clear who attended the meeting as the record was not sent to participants.

91. Mr McKane described the meeting to the Inquiry as a “throat clearing exercise”.³⁷

92. Reporting on a meeting on 22 August to update Sir David Manning on developments concerning Iraq, Mr Tom Dodd, a junior official in OD Sec, wrote that the IISS would be publishing “an academic dossier” on Iraqi WMD on 9 September:

“Officials have considered whether we should publish our own dossier in advance or shortly afterwards. However they feel that the HMG dossier should only be published in the context of Ministerial decisions on a policy change towards Iraq and as part of a fully-fledged media campaign.”³⁸

Revision of the WMD paper

93. Mr Scarlett had been working on the WMD paper in the dossier during August.

94. On 8 and 9 August, there was an email exchange between the Assessments Staff and the MOD about whether there was evidence available on Iraq’s ballistic missile work outside the activities permitted by the UN:

- The MOD was asked if it could provide two to three “examples of ballistic missile related sites” which were relevant to the claim that Iraq was breaking the limit of 150km range permitted by the UN.³⁹ Mr Scarlett was “keen” to include them in the dossier. The MOD was also asked for “an explanation of the shed going up at al-Rafah”, which Mr Scarlett also wanted to mention.
- The MOD replied that it was not sure what it could provide but it would “see what we can do”.⁴⁰
- In a subsequent email, the MOD stated that al-Rafah was a known engine test site, which had been bombed in 1991 and December 1998.⁴¹ It was “no surprise” that Iraq was putting “a lid on the new stand to prevent imagery observation of test objects – the implication being that the stand is nearing completion and/or there will be something to test on it”.
- The MOD also commented: “You will recall that ... we said that ... points about buildings being reconstructed ... rely on inference and comparisons with what they were trying to do before the Gulf War with BADR-2000. A big assembly building does not automatically make large missiles ... If the Chairman wants

³⁷ Public hearing, 19 January 2011, page 79.

³⁸ Minute Dodd to Manning, 23 August 2002, ‘Iraq’.

³⁹ Email [1525] [Assessments Staff junior official] to [MOD junior official], 8 August 2002, ‘Dossier – missile sites’.

⁴⁰ Email [1646] [MOD junior official] to [Assessments Staff junior official], 8 August 2002, ‘Re: Dossier – missile sites’.

⁴¹ Email [1815] [MOD junior official] to [Assessments Staff junior official], 8 August 2002, ‘Re: Dossier – missile sites’.

to make the UK paper into a smaller clone of [...] ... I would tend towards relying on quality ...”

- The MOD suggested “Further to your request to make the public paper more exciting”, text describing facilities which had “potential applicable to production of the prohibited long-range missile that Iraq is known to be developing”, and a reference to “concerted efforts to acquire additional manufacturing technology for its missile programmes” with some items “inevitably” slipping through the embargo.⁴²

95. On 19 August, Ms Jane Hamilton-Eddy, one of the Deputy Heads of the Assessments Staff, sent a further draft of the dossier to the DIS. She wrote that Mr Scarlett had recently reviewed the document, and made changes. The presentation of the CBW sections had been revised “to bring out more clearly our judgements” although the text itself was “not new”.⁴³ Mr Scarlett was also:

“... particularly keen to include examples of suspicious facilities, so can I ask that we look closely at the relevant areas to see if anything more can be said.”

96. Ms Hamilton-Eddy added that the aim was to have the revised document ready “by the end of the summer break”.

97. While the revised draft largely contained the same material as the draft sent to Sir David Manning by Mr McKane on 21 June (see Section 4.1), there were a small number of additions.⁴⁴ Those included:

- In relation to the material for which the inspectors had been unable to account, Iraq’s “declarations to UNSCOM [UN Special Commission] deliberately obscure the picture”.
- “Iraq’s military forces maintain the capability to use these weapons, with command, control and logistical arrangements in place.”
- “Facilities of concern include the Castor Oil Production Plant at Habbinayah, which could be used in the production of ricin ... and the Al-Dawrah Foot and Mouth Disease Vaccine Plant, which was involved in BW agent production before the Gulf War.”
- Details of the possible delivery means for chemical and biological agents.
- “Following the expulsion of weapons inspectors in 1998 Iraq has increased [covert efforts to acquire technology and materials with nuclear applications]. There is compelling evidence that Iraq has sought the supply of significant quantities of uranium from Africa.”

⁴² Email [1806] [MOD junior official] to [Assessments Staff junior official], 9 August 2002, ‘Re: Dossier – missile sites’.

⁴³ Minute Hamilton-Eddy to [DIS junior official], 19 August 2002, ‘Iraq Public Dossier’.

⁴⁴ Minute [DIS junior official] to [DIS junior official], 30 August 2002 attaching ‘Iraq Public Dossier’ Paper [Cabinet Office], [undated], ‘Iraqi WMD Programmes’.

- A box on the gas centrifuge uranium enrichment process which described “Many hundreds or thousands of centrifuges ...”
- “Iraq admitted to UNSCOM it had 50 chemical and 25 biological warheads [in 1991] but did not use them.”
- Iraq had retained “up to 20”, Al Hussein missiles, rather than “more than a dozen”.
- The new facilities at al-Rafah “would not be needed for systems that fall within the UN permitted range of 150km. The Iraqis have recently taken measures to conceal activities at this site.”
- “Some aspects of this [the new missile-related infrastructure under construction], including rocket propellant mixing and casting facilities at the Al Mamoun Plant, appear to replicate those linked to the prohibited BADR-2000 programme that were destroyed in the Gulf War or by UNSCOM.”

98. The DIS responded on 30 August, stating:

- The UK did not “know where CBW work was being conducted – by its nature it can be conducted in small facilities or labs ... Even if only a few litres of agent a day had been manufactured in the 1,200 or so days since UNSCOM left, a considerable stockpile could have been built up.”
- Iraq had a capability to produce biological “agents” as well as weapons.
- Iraq had repeatedly claimed that the agents in “unaccounted for CW weapons would have deteriorated sufficiently to render the weapons harmless. But this was found not to be the case by UNSCOM when they examined Iraqi weapons, many years after they and [sic] been filled (in fact the inclusion of stabilisers in the nerve agent would prevent decomposition).”
- Iraq had admitted that it had 75 chemical warheads for SCUD type missiles.
- It had “nothing else to offer” on Iraq’s ballistic missile programmes.
- Iraq had started to take journalists to facilities to “demonstrate that they are benign”.
- Dr Hans Blix, the Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC, had recently stated that there were “some 700 sites” in Iraq the inspectors would like to visit. None were “proven WMD sites” and if specific facilities were mentioned in a public dossier, there was a risk Iraq would target those facilities for visits by journalists “in an attempt to undermine the impact of the dossier”.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Minute [DIS junior official] to [DIS junior official], 30 August 2002, ‘Iraq Public Dossier’.

JIC Assessment, 21 August 2002: 'Iraq: Saddam's Diplomatic and Military Options'

99. A JIC Assessment of 21 August concluded that in a conflict Saddam Hussein would order missile strikes and the use of CBW against Coalition Forces, supporting regional states and Israel.

100. The JIC had little intelligence on Iraq's CBW and little insight into how it would fight. Its conclusions reflected the Committee's own judgements.

101. In relation to Saddam Hussein's intentions to use CBW and missile strikes, the sense of certainty that Iraq had chemical and biological weapons and that it would use them in the Key Judgements reflected a wider judgement than could have been derived from the information in the Assessment itself.

102. At the request of the MOD, the JIC issued an Assessment on 21 August considering "what diplomatic options Saddam has to deter, avert or limit the scope of a US-led attack".⁴⁶ The judgements on these issues are set out in Section 3.4.

103. In addition, the Assessment considered Saddam Hussein's "military options for facing a US-led attack" and how his analysis about each course of action might "change as an attack becomes increasingly imminent". It examined Iraq's options for the short term, whether Saddam Hussein might seize the initiative, how Iraq might respond to a US military build-up, Saddam's options in "war" – including the use of missiles and WMD, and "alternative scenarios and at the death".

104. Iraq's options for the use of weapons of mass destruction were considered "only briefly" as the JIC would assess those in early September, but the JIC offered two Key Judgements:

- "Early on in any conflict, Saddam would order missile attacks on Israel, Coalition Forces and regional states providing the US with bases."
- "Saddam would order the use of CBW against Coalition Forces at some point, probably after a Coalition attack had begun. Once Saddam was convinced that his fate was sealed, he would order the unrestrained use of CBW against Coalition Forces, supporting regional states and Israel."

105. The Assessment stated that "Saddam would probably order missile attacks" and the JIC judged that attacks on Israel would be "an attempt to attract Israeli retaliation and thus widen the war, split the Coalition and arouse popular opinion in the Arab States". Missiles "could be armed with chemical or biological warfare (CBW) agents", although "Saddam might be deterred at least initially by the threat of Israeli nuclear retaliation."

⁴⁶ [JIC Assessment, 21 August 2002, 'Iraq: Saddam's Diplomatic and Military Options'](#).

106. The Assessment also stated:

- Iraq had a “limited number of long-range missiles ... available”; the JIC assessed “12-20 650km range Al Hussein missiles”.
- Iraq had produced more than 50 Al Samoud missiles with a range of 150km.
- Attacks on Coalition Forces in Kuwait would require Iraq to deploy short-range missiles into the “No Drive Zone [south of the 32nd parallel – imposed in resolution 949 (1994)]”.
- A pre-emptive missile attack on Israel was “less likely because it would show Iraq had been lying about its retention of long-range missiles”.

107. Although it had “little intelligence on Iraq’s CBW doctrine” and knew “little about Iraq’s CBW work since late 1998”, the JIC judged it “likely that Saddam would order the use of CBW against Coalition Forces at some point, probably after Coalition attacks had begun”. Iraqi CBW use “would become increasingly likely the closer Coalition Forces came to Baghdad. Military targets might include troop concentrations or important fixed targets in rear areas such as ports and airfields.”

108. Addressing the possibility of “Alternative scenarios and at the death” the Assessment also stated:

- Saddam Hussein “might pursue an extreme course of action at an earlier stage” if he judged it to be “worth the risk of providing the US with overt justification to attack”.
- Unorthodox options might include “the early or pre-emptive use of **CBW**”; “**CBW terrorism**: although Saddam probably lacks the capability to deploy a sophisticated device, he could cause widespread panic”.
- “Should he feel his fate is sealed, Saddam’s judgement might change to ‘bring the temple down’ on his enemies no matter what the cost”. At that stage, “Saddam would order the unrestrained use of CBW against Coalition Forces, supporting regional states and Israel, although he would face practical problems of command and control, the loyalty of his commanders, logistics problems and the availability of chemical and biological agents in sufficient quantities to be effective and the means to deliver them.”

109. The *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction*, the Butler Report, stated:

“The Key Judgements ... would rightly have been prepared on a precautionary basis. Perhaps for that reason, we have observed that when set against the intelligence on Iraqi programmes contained in advice to Ministers in March [2002], the JIC assessment reflected more firmly the premise that Iraq had chemical and biological weapons and would use them in war. Underpinning this must have been

a presumption that, if Iraq did not have stocks of these weapons, it would quickly produce agent, weaponise it and deploy weapons to units ...⁴⁷

110. The Butler Report also stated:

“We were told that the JIC’s conclusions were based in part on one human intelligence report from one source, but mainly on the JIC’s own judgements. They thus represent an insight into the views of JIC members of Iraq’s chemical and biological weapons capabilities at that time.”⁴⁸

111. Mr Julian Miller, Chief of the Assessments Staff from September 2001 to November 2003, told the Inquiry that the Assessment had:

“... picked up a report from an established source which referred to the intention to use weapons. I think it didn’t distinguish between chemical and biological. It implied both were intended to be used. [...]”⁴⁹

Dr Blix’s interview, 25 August 2002

Dr Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC, gave an interview on NBC’s *Meet the Press* programme on 25 August.⁵⁰

Asked whether Iraq possessed biological, chemical or nuclear weapons, Dr Blix responded that there were “many open questions” but the inspectors did not have proof that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction.

Dr Blix also pointed out that “an absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence”.

Other points made by Dr Blix are set out in Section 3.4.

Mr Blair’s position at the end of August 2002

112. In August, debate in the US about whether military action would be taken against Iraq intensified.

113. The events and debate within the UK Government before Mr Blair’s press conference in Sedgefield on 3 September are addressed in Section 3.4.

114. On 26 August, in a major speech to a National Conference of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on the threat from terrorism, the US Vice President, Mr Dick Cheney, stated that Saddam Hussein had “made a science out of deceiving the international

⁴⁷ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 292.

⁴⁸ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 293.

⁴⁹ Private hearing, 5 May 2010, page 11.

⁵⁰ NBC, 25 August 2002, *Meet the Press*.

community”.⁵¹ The “Iraqi regime has in fact been very busy enhancing its capabilities in the field of chemical and biological weapons” and that “we now know that Saddam has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons ... Many of us are convinced that Saddam will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon.”

115. Vice President Cheney added that there was “no doubt” that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and was “amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us”.

116. In a telephone call on 29 August, Mr Blair and President Bush discussed Iraq, including the need to make clear that Iraq was the UN’s problem and that the issue was total disarmament of Iraq’s WMD and associated systems not just the reintroduction of inspectors.⁵² Mr Blair:

“... wanted the UN to meet that challenge, but if it could not we would have to act. So we should remake the case, put together the evidence against Saddam, and work up a UNSCR [UN Security Council resolution] ...”

117. When Mr Blair returned to No.10 after his holiday, he set out his concerns about the public debate, and that he and President Bush had been “outed” as having decided on military action when no decisions had been taken.

118. As part of a wider note to No.10 officials on 30 August about the strategy on Iraq, Mr Blair set out his position:

“I don’t need any convincing as to where we are on this. The state of opinion, the difficulties. The problems are compounded by the fact that [President] Bush and myself have been ‘outed’ as having decided for war, come what may, when actually no decisions have been taken. So the arguments are all being made against any action, when we are not yet in a position to make the arguments for it. But all this can be turned round in time, with the right strategy.

“My basic view on Iraq is clear and hard. The policy of containment ... has worked up to a point, but can’t continue indefinitely; there is no doubt that, uncontained, Iraq is a threat; they are trying to acquire nuclear weapons capability; they are developing ballistic missile capability for biological and chemical weapons of a longer-range; they retain substantial WMD stocks ...

“Opinion against action divides into two: those always opposed and the usual anti-American lobby; and those, a large number, who ask entirely sensible questions, but who might support action if the questions were answered.”⁵³

⁵¹ The White House, 26 August 2002, *Vice President Speaks at VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars] 103rd National Convention*.

⁵² Letter Rycroft to McDonald, 29 August 2002, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s Phone Call with President Bush, 29 August’.

⁵³ [Note Blair \[to No.10 officials\], 30 August 2002, \[extract ‘Iraq’\]](#).

119. Mr Blair stated: “The basic strategy should be to answer these questions and, in doing so, set ... Iraq in a bigger context.” The steps to do that included:

- raising the whole issue of WMD up the agenda with a separate strategy for each country developing WMD, “in particular [those] acquiring nuclear technology in secret”; and
- setting out the “unique danger posed by Iraq ... an inherently violent and unstable regime, with a track record of external aggression, unmitigated by any moderate elements unlike other WMD countries”.

September 2002

Mr Blair’s decision to publish the dossier

120. On 2 September, Mr Campbell wrote to Sir David Manning, Mr Powell and Mr Rycroft, saying that Mr Blair was “alarmed, and angry, at the way parts of our thinking and planning on Iraq are seeping into the media in an uncoordinated and undisciplined way”.⁵⁴ “Above all”, Mr Blair was “concerned what the US Administration must think”. Mr Blair intended to use his press conference the following day (in his Sedgefield constituency) to make the general position clear and “give people a public script”.

121. The FCO advice to Mr Blair before the press conference in Sedgefield on 3 September 2002 stated unequivocally that Iraq had and was hiding WMD; and that it had continued its chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic missile programmes after the departure of UN weapons inspectors in December 1998.

122. The FCO advice conflated past, present and potential future capabilities and conveyed a sense of certainty about Iraq’s capabilities and intentions without acknowledging that the judgements were inferential and that there were uncertainties about Iraq’s current capabilities and caveats about the absence of intelligence in the existing JIC Assessments.

123. The FCO asserted the belief that Iraq had recently accelerated its weapons programmes, but it did not substantiate that assertion.

124. In preparation for his press conference in Sedgefield, Mr Blair asked for information on a number of issues, including a summary of:

- “what we knew of the existing Iraqi WMD programme, in particular ballistic missile technology (and its significance); and nuclear weapons technology (including why the civil nuclear programme they are funding is almost certainly misused for weapons programmes)”.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ [Minute Campbell to Manning, 2 September 2002, \[untitled\]](#).

⁵⁵ [Minute Blair to Manning, 1 September 2002, \[untitled\]](#).

125. The FCO response was sent to No.10 on 2 September by Mr Mark Sedwill, one of Mr Straw's Private Secretaries who had been attached to UNSCOM between 1996 and 1998.⁵⁶

126. Addressing the question “**Does Iraq possess WMD?**”, the FCO stated:

“Yes. Iraq is still hiding weapons of mass destruction in a range of locations. The regime has admitted hiding chemical, biological weapons and missile parts ...

“The Iraqi regime has admitted producing large quantities of chemical warfare agents ... It has also admitted ... producing biological warfare agents ...

“In the course of their work between 1991 and 1998, UN weapons inspectors were unable to account for thousands of tonnes of so-called precursor chemicals used in the production of weapons; hundreds of tonnes of chemicals used in the production of VX nerve agent; up to a dozen ballistic missiles with a range of over 600 kilometres; and tens of thousands of special munitions which can be used in chemical and biological weapons.”

127. Addressing “**Developments in Iraq's WMD programmes Since the Last Inspections?**”, the FCO stated:

“... the Baghdad regime continues to pursue ballistic missile, nuclear, chemical and biological programmes in breach of its UN obligations.

“We believe that Iraq has recently accelerated its weapons programmes. For example:

“Saddam's ballistic missile programme has made continued progress and facilities damaged by Operation Desert Fox in 1998 have been repaired. We believe that he is planning to extend the range of his current missiles beyond the 150km limit imposed by the UN ...

“We have reports of increased nuclear procurement. We think R&D on a nuclear weapons programme has restarted. If sanctions are lifted, we believe that Saddam could develop a nuclear weapon within 5 years. If he were able to procure fissile material from outside Iraq, then he might possess a nuclear capability in a much shorter timeframe.

“We believe that the Iraqi regime continues its biological and chemical weapons programmes.”

128. The FCO advised Mr Blair that Iraq did not have an active civil nuclear programme and that almost all its facilities had been dismantled after 1991. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspected “the small quantity of radioactive material which Iraq was permitted to keep for research”. The FCO added: “In these circumstances,

⁵⁶ [Letter Sedwill to Rycroft, 2 September 2002, 'Iraq'](#).

it is more important than ever that the ... inspectors are given unconditional and unrestricted access ...”

129. The FCO stated that “UN measures” had “played a vital role in frustrating Saddam’s ambitions to develop WMD” and described the new sanctions regime adopted by the UN on 14 May 2002 as demonstrating “that the international community remains united in its determination to control the export of military-related items to Iraq”.

130. In response to a potential suggestion that the absence of the promised dossier demonstrated the weakness of the Government’s case, the FCO stated:

“Not at all. The scale of the Iraqi WMD programme uncovered by UN inspectors in the 1990s demonstrates the extent of Saddam’s ambitions. And his previous use of chemical agents against his own people demonstrates that he will show no compunction in using such weapons.

“... All of our intelligence reporting, revelations from Iraqi defectors and past experience tells us that Iraq is taking advantage of absence of inspections to revive its chemical, biological and nuclear programmes.”

131. The FCO also referred to the examples of past Iraqi concealment and deceit identified in UNSCOM’s final report in 1999.

132. The FCO stated that further details on Iraq’s WMD programmes were set out in the draft dossier on Iraq, which had been produced earlier in the year for possible publication.

133. A separate FCO brief on the policy of containment stated:

- The purpose of the policy (of containment) had been to ensure that Iraq was disarmed through two main elements:
 - disarmament through inspections regimes; and
 - reducing Iraq’s ability to finance its WMD programmes by controlling its revenues from oil.
- The policy had “some success in dismantling Saddam’s arsenal when the inspectors were able to operate”, and it had “slowed his efforts to rebuild WMD”. The arms embargo had “been effective in preventing Saddam acquiring new complete weapons systems”.
- But, “in the absence of inspectors”, Iraq could “work on its WMD programmes unimpeded” and Iraq was “in violation of a string of Security Council resolutions intended to curb” those programmes.
- Controls on revenues were “eroding”, giving Saddam “access to large sums over which the international community had no control” and “much” of that was “certainly going into his high-priority WMD programmes”.

- Although the sanctions regime had been “targeted on goods of most concern”, no sanctions regime would “be completely effective in stopping a ruthless and well-funded regime getting its hands on some of the goods and technology needed for a WMD programme”.⁵⁷

134. In his press conference, Mr Blair stated that Saddam Hussein was, “without any question, still trying to develop” a “chemical, biological, potentially nuclear capability”; and that to allow him to do so would be “irresponsible”.

135. Mr Blair announced that the “dossier” setting out the evidence of Iraq’s attempts to develop its “chemical, biological and potentially nuclear capability” would be published in the “next few weeks”.

136. Mr Campbell wrote that the hardest question to answer was “Why now?”

137. On 3 September, in his Sedgefield press conference, which lasted 90 minutes, Mr Blair stated:

“... I think I would be right in saying that many of your questions will be on Iraq ... I sense that some of you believe we have taken all the key decisions but just haven’t got round to telling you. That isn’t the case ... We, at every level of government, have been and remain in close dialogue with the United States of America about this issue and where we are in absolute agreement is that Iraq poses a real and unique threat to the security of the region and the rest of the world. But Saddam Hussein is continuing in his efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction ... We have to face up to it, we have to deal with it and will. The issue is then what is the best way of proceeding.”⁵⁸

138. A number of questioners pointed out that public opinion had moved against the idea of a strike against Iraq “partly because people feel that there hasn’t been much evidence ... We have heard again and again that there is a dossier of evidence about Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction. Why haven’t we got it up to now and when are we going to see it?” Would there be any evidence in the dossier which had been “gleaned in the last four years” that Saddam Hussein had “moved any further down the route to nuclear weapons? There were suggestions that there was “not going to be much new”; and that, in terms of public opinion, there was “a mountain to climb”.

139. In response to the first question, Mr Blair replied:

“Originally I had the intention that we wouldn’t get round to publishing the dossier until we’d actually taken the key decisions. I think it is probably a better idea to bring that forward.”

⁵⁷ [Minute Gray to Ricketts, 3 September 2002, ‘Iraq: Containment: Query from No.10’](#).

⁵⁸ The National Archives, 3 September 2002, *PM press conference* [at Sedgefield].

140. Mr Blair added: “A lot of the work has already been done, there needs to be some more work and some more checking” but “the best thing to do is to publish ... within the next few weeks”. When that happened:

“... people will see that there is no doubt at all the United Nations resolutions that Saddam is in breach of are there for a purpose. He [Saddam Hussein] is without any question, still trying to develop that chemical, biological, potentially nuclear capability and to allow him to do so without any let or hindrance, just to say, we [sic] can carry on and do it, I think would be irresponsible.”

141. In terms of the specifics of Iraq’s WMD, Mr Blair made a number of comments including:

- “... there is no doubt that at some point the Iraqi regime were trying to develop nuclear weapons ... I believe that there is evidence that they will acquire nuclear weapons capability if they possibly can.”
- “Now we will provide what support we can for that, although of course the absence of inspectors ... means there is necessarily a limit. But I don’t think we should be in any doubt about the nature of this regime, they will acquire whatever weapons they possibly can.”
- “Certainly they were trying to obtain a nuclear weapons capability. I think there is some evidence that they continued to do so.”
- “... [W]e don’t really know what is happening now, there are huge amounts of stocks of chemical, biological weapons unaccounted for.”
- “... [W]e can’t be quite sure what is happening on the nuclear side ... but on the biological and chemical weapons side there is no doubt about it, there are vast stocks of these weapons unaccounted for by the previous weapons inspectors.”
- “And in addition there is real concern that there is ballistic missile technology.”

142. Mr Blair suggested that the reason Iraq might not be letting inspections take place was because “the last time the inspectors were in there, they uncovered so much that the Iraqi regime was deeply embarrassed”. He also argued that people would “think about it differently once they see the evidence”.

143. Mr Campbell wrote in his diary on 3 September:

“The hardest [question] was: ‘Why now? What was it that we knew now that we didn’t before that made us believe we had to do it now?’ It was not going to be at all easy to sell the policy in the next few months ...”⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Campbell A & Hagerty B. *The Alastair Campbell Diaries. Volume 4. The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq*. Hutchinson, 2012.

144. Mr Campbell added that announcing the publication of the dossier would “raise expectations massively. Today was about beginning to turn the tide of public opinion and it was going to be very tough indeed.”

145. The Inquiry asked Mr Blair for a statement addressing whether, before his press conference in Sedgefield, he had refreshed his memory in relation to the 15 March 2002 JIC Assessment, ‘The Status of Iraqi WMD Programmes’.⁶⁰

146. In his statement, Mr Blair wrote:

“The basis for the statements I made on the issue of Saddam and WMD were based, of course, on the JIC Assessments and on the whole history of Saddam and WMD going back over many years, including his use of chemical weapons, the findings of previous UN inspectors, his well documented attempts at concealment.

“... [F]or my press conference at Sedgefield ... I requested and received a special briefing from the FCO. I would probably also have re-read the JIC report of 15 March 2002 and the list of unaccounted for items from the UNSCOM reports. I draw attention to the first part of the [FCO] briefing of 2 September 2002, in particular to the reference that ‘we believe that Iraq has recently accelerated its weapons programme’; ‘increased nuclear procurement’; and to the fact that UN inspectors in 1998 ‘were unable to account for thousands of tonnes of so-called precursor chemicals’.”⁶¹

147. As Section 4.1 sets out, the decision to produce a document for publication setting out the facts on WMD in relation to countries of concern, including Iraq, was taken in mid-February 2002 and was briefed to the press shortly thereafter.⁶²

148. Speculation about the publication of a document on Iraq’s WMD and its significance in relation to a decision about military action against Iraq had continued throughout the spring and summer of 2002.

149. On 16 July, No.10 decided to put publication on hold and that further decisions would be needed on its precise form.⁶³

150. On the same day, Mr Blair had told the Liaison Committee that if policy on Iraq moved into a new phase, a document would be published.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Inquiry request for a witness statement, 13 December 2010, Q3(a) page 2.

⁶¹ Statement, 14 January 2011, page 4.

⁶² *The Observer*, 24 February 2002, *Blair and Bush to plot war on Iraq*.

⁶³ [Minute Manning to McKane, 16 July 2002, ‘Iraq: Public Documents’](#).

⁶⁴ Minutes, Liaison Committee (House of Commons), 16 July 2002, [Evidence Session], Q 87-88.

151. Asked what had led to his change of mind in early September and the decision to publish the dossier, Mr Blair told the Hutton Inquiry:

“What changed was really two things which came together. First ... there was a tremendous amount of information and evidence coming across my desk as to the weapons of mass destruction and the programmes ... that Saddam had.

“There was also a renewed sense of urgency, again, in the way that this was being publicly debated ...

“President Bush and I had a telephone call towards the end of that [August] break and we decided ... we really had to confront this issue, devise our strategy and get on with it and I took the view ... that we really had to disclose what we knew or as much as we could of what we knew.”⁶⁵

152. Mr Blair added: “The aim of the dossier was to disclose the reason for our concern and the reason why we believed this issue had to be confronted.”

153. Sir David Manning told the Inquiry that Mr Blair:

“... wanted to publish information as he saw it was because he thought it was important that the public were as aware as possible of the pressures that he had seen coming across his desk.”⁶⁶

154. Mr Campbell told the Inquiry that the decision to bring forward the publication of the dossier was a way of trying to calm the situation.⁶⁷ Mr Blair had wanted “to set out for the public, in as accessible a way as possible, the reasons why he had become more concerned” about Iraq.

155. In his memoir, published in 2010, Mr Blair wrote:

“One other rather fateful decision was taken at that time. Reasonably enough, people wanted to see the evidence on Saddam and WMD. This evidence was contained in intelligence. It was not practice, for obvious reasons, to disclose intelligence. We decided we had to do it. Many times afterwards, I regretted the decision. The ‘dossier’, as it was called, later became the subject of the most vicious recrimination and condemnation. In reality, it was done because we could see no way of refusing it, given the clamour for it. The very unprecedented nature of it was, however, part of the problem. Both opponents and supporters of the war were urging us to share with the public the evidence we had.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 28 August 2003, pages 2-3.

⁶⁶ Public hearing, 30 November 2009, page 64.

⁶⁷ Public hearing, 12 January 2010, pages 66-67.

⁶⁸ Blair T. *A Journey*. Hutchinson, 2010.

156. In his memoir, published in 2012, Mr Straw wrote:

“Earlier in the summer there had been a mounting and understandable clamour for more and more explanation about why we and the US were now taking the threat from Iraq so much more seriously than we had before 9/11. People assumed we must know much more than we were letting on. Through the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], SIS and the other agencies, we did ... have access to what we believed to be reliable intelligence about Saddam’s continuing intentions in respect of his banned weapons. The mistake we made – on both sides of the Atlantic – was to believe that the best way to respond was to include a declassified summary of some of the intelligence in the dossier.”⁶⁹

157. Mr Blair’s announcement galvanised thinking on the draft Iraq dossier.

158. On 2 September, in response to a discussion with Mr Rycroft about “the need for a capping piece for the Iraq dossier currently sitting on the shelf”, Mr McKane provided a draft, which set out “the argument for effective action against Saddam Hussein”.⁷⁰

159. Mr McKane concluded:

“If you or David think the draft is worth developing and refining, the next step would be for me to circulate it ... We should also, as you and I agreed, be considering whether there is more up to date material which could be incorporated in the dossier itself.”

160. The draft referred to the general threat from the spread of chemical and biological weapons and stated that Saddam Hussein’s regime was a “particularly dangerous example” of that general threat because of “his track record and his continuing flouting of international norms of behaviour. That is why it is so important to deal now with the threat he represents.”

161. The draft also stated:

- Since 1998, the UN had “tried repeatedly to persuade Saddam to comply” with his obligations, but he had sought “At every turn ... to divert attention from his failure to comply.” The “only reasonable explanation” for that “prevarication” was that “he has something to hide, something he is unwilling to give up”.
- “... [W]e cannot wait for ever for the right answer from Saddam, when all the time he is engaged in work on weapons which could threaten our [sic] own population and certainly the population of his neighbours. If we were to do so, particularly after 11 September, and our patience were to be rewarded with another devastating attack, we would rightly be castigated for our inaction.”

⁶⁹ Straw J. *Last Man Standing: Memoirs of a Political Survivor*. Macmillan, 2012.

⁷⁰ [Minute McKane to Rycroft, 2 September 2002, ‘Iraq’](#).

- The facts in the dossier “as a whole” presented a picture of a regime which was “so opposed to international norms of behaviour that it must be confronted effectively now”.

162. Mr Rycroft suggested that Mr McKane should develop the draft.⁷¹

163. Sir David Manning wrote: “Yes. Let’s see what the response is.”⁷²

164. In his statement for the Inquiry, Mr McKane wrote that Mr Blair:

“... had decided the dossier should be ready for publication within weeks, in order to explain publicly why effective action had to be taken to counter the threat posed by Iraq. This is brought out in the draft ‘capping piece’ which I sent to Matthew Rycroft ...”⁷³

165. Asked about the origins of the capping note, Mr McKane told the Inquiry that it “followed an exchange with either Sir David Manning or Matthew Rycroft in which we agreed that the draft needed something ... which would encapsulate the main points”.⁷⁴

166. Mr McKane subsequently stated:

“I suppose what I was doing was trying to answer the question: why should we take action now? So it is related to the shift in approach that was marked by the meeting on 23 July and the greater sense of pace and urgency that was injected thereafter.”⁷⁵

167. Following the Sedgefield press conference, Dr Michael Williams, Mr Straw’s Special Adviser, wrote to Mr Straw reporting that the Director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) had informed him that it would be publishing its dossier on the threat posed by Iraq’s possession of weapons of mass destruction and past practices of deception in relation to UN inspections.⁷⁶ Dr Williams thought that it would “be helpful in moving towards a more informed debate about Iraq which is long overdue”.

168. Commenting on the draft UK dossier, Dr Williams wrote that he shared many of Mr John Williams’ views:

“The text I’ve seen is not significantly different from one I saw in late Spring.

“It is certainly not a ‘killer’ dossier. The material is often poorly presented and would benefit from professional editing to make it a sharper assessment.

⁷¹ Manuscript comment Rycroft to Manning, 3 September 2002, on Minute McKane to Rycroft, 2 September 2002, ‘Iraq’.

⁷² Manuscript comment Manning to Rycroft, 3 September 2002, on Minute McKane to Rycroft, 2 September 2002, ‘Iraq’.

⁷³ Statement, 8 December 2010, page 5.

⁷⁴ Public hearing, 19 January 2011, page 83.

⁷⁵ Public hearing, 19 January 2011, page 84.

⁷⁶ [Minute Williams \[Michael\] to Straw, 3 September 2002, ‘Iraq Publication’](#).

I am surprised that we do not have stronger material ... We need, I believe, to regard the publication of the strongest material as a political imperative.”

169. Mr McKane wrote to Mr Stephen Wright, FCO Deputy Under Secretary Defence and Intelligence, on 4 September asking the FCO to renew the chapters in the dossier it had produced on ‘Human Rights Abuses’ and the ‘History of Weapons Inspections’ to “ensure they are as up to date and hard hitting as possible”.⁷⁷

170. Mr McKane stated that Mr Scarlett had “already started work to refresh the WMD chapter” and asked for comments on the draft capping piece.

171. Sir David Manning replied:

“This looks good.

“Let’s point out that there has been no monitoring since ?1998 when the inspectors were expelled in violation of UNSCRs.”⁷⁸

172. The Assessments Staff had already sought more information from the DIS.⁷⁹

173. The DIS provided additional material on:

- missile numbers on 4 September;⁸⁰
- “Nuclear Weapons” on 5 September;⁸¹
- WMD funding on 6 September;⁸² and
- chemical facilities on 6 September.⁸³

The FCO position on the problem posed by Iraq

174. The FCO was also developing a script addressing why the problem of Iraq’s WMD, unlike the programmes of other countries, including Iran, could not be resolved through containment and diplomacy.

175. The argument relied on Saddam Hussein’s past behaviour and his continuing refusal at that time to admit weapons inspectors as required by resolution 1284 (1999).

⁷⁷ [Minute McKane to Wright, 4 September 2002, ‘Iraq: The Dossier’.](#)

⁷⁸ Manuscript comment Manning to McKane, 4 September 2002, on [Minute McKane to Wright, 4 September 2002, ‘Iraq: The Dossier’.](#)

⁷⁹ Email [1626] [DIS] to [Cabinet Office], 4 September 2002, ‘Iraqi WMD Dossier’.

⁸⁰ Email [1642] [DIS] to [Cabinet Office], 4 September 2002, ‘Iraqi WMD Dossier – Missile numbers’, attaching Minute [DIS], 4 September 2002, ‘Al Hussein Accounting’.

⁸¹ Email [1232] [DIS] to [Cabinet Office], 5 September 2002, ‘Iraq Dossier – Nuc section’.

⁸² Email [1529] [DIS] to [Cabinet Office], 6 September 2002, ‘Iraq Dossier – WMD funding’ attaching Document, [undated], ‘Iraq dossier – Section on Illicit Income Generation and WMD-funding’.

⁸³ Email [1708] [DIS] to [Cabinet Office], 6 September 2002, ‘Dossier’.

176. With its advice to No.10 on “possible UNSCRs and a game plan for securing them” of 4 September, which is addressed in Section 3.4, Mr Straw’s Private Office also provided:

- a “script on why the problem of Iraqi WMD was being treated differently from other WMD programmes”; and
- a “note setting out the broader problem of WMD proliferation and the action we are taking to tackle it”.⁸⁴

177. The script on Iraq’s WMD stated that there were:

“... particular concerns about Iraq’s WMD programmes. Since Iraq’s persistent obstruction forced the UN Inspectors to leave in 1998, Iraq has maintained its chemical and biological weapons programmes, and is developing ballistic missiles capable of delivering them to targets beyond the 150km limit imposed by the UN for defensive systems.”

178. The “key differences between Iraq and other countries such as Iran and North Korea” were that:

- Saddam Hussein had used WMD.
- UNSCOM had uncovered the scale of his programmes.
- Iraq had “been shown to have broken every commitment it has ever made under the NPT [Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons] and BTWC [Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention] (it is not a member of the CWC [Chemical Weapons Convention])”.
- Iraq was “in flagrant violation” of 14 UN Security Council resolutions relating to its WMD and missile programmes, and was in violation of nine of the remaining 13 obligations on other issues.

179. The script added that the UK approaches “to Iraq and to other governments with WMD programmes of concern” were “fundamentally identical”: political and diplomatic engagement. But:

“... in the case of Iraq, the diplomatic route has been constantly obstructed by Saddam’s intransigence and duplicity, and has been blocked altogether since Inspectors left in 1998 – leaving us no alternative but to consider other options.”

180. The note, ‘Proliferation of WMD: The Wider Context’, described the “wider problem of the proliferation of WMD and long-range missiles” and “An additional increased concern since 11 September 2001” that international terrorists would obtain WMD. Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Libya and Syria were identified as “priorities for counter-action ... (as the most likely to pose a threat to the UK, our allies, or deployed UK forces)”.

⁸⁴ [Letter Sedwill to Manning, 4 September 2002, ‘Iraq’ attaching Paper ‘Iraq: UNSC Action’ and Note, ‘Proliferation of WMD: The Wider Context’.](#)

181. The note stated:

- The UK was “keen to raise awareness of the WMD and missile threat beyond the US/UK partnership, to draw others into closer co-operation in countering the threat”.
- “[M]ain efforts over the past year” had been directed “at key EU partners – particularly the **French** and **Germans**”.
- The UK was the US “partner of choice in countering WMD and missile proliferation”.
- The US Administration was “clearly more interested in deploying tools at the robust end of the spectrum”, including “direct action”, rather than “diplomatic processes to strengthen the treaty regimes or build wider multilateral consensus against proliferation”.

182. Mr Tim Dowse, Head of FCO Counter-Proliferation Department in 2002, told the Inquiry that, in a paper on counter-proliferation strategy produced in July/August 2002, Iraq was viewed as a priority because it might be “the exception to the broader rule that WMD programmes are generally acquired for defensive purposes”.⁸⁵

183. Mr Dowse added that it had been the political context which made Iraq a priority.

184. In a subsequent private hearing, Sir William Ehrman, FCO Director International Security in 2002, told the Inquiry that the paper, approved by Mr Blair in August 2002, stated:

“In country programme terms, our top CP [counter-proliferation] priorities are:

“Iraq – because its WMD may be the exception to the rule that such programmes are usually driven by defensive needs and, more importantly, are the most likely to be deployed against UK forces and those of our allies.”⁸⁶

185. Asked if the “threat from WMD from Iraq” would have continued to be contained if sanctions had been maintained, Mr Dowse told the Inquiry:

“... the nuclear threat would have been contained and there would have been constraints on his other activities, although we believed he was making progress with missiles, with chemical and biological weapons, despite the constraints.

“The problem was ... we did not have high confidence that the sanctions regime would be maintained ...”⁸⁷

186. Mr John Williams produced advice on a media strategy for Iraq on 4 September.

⁸⁵ Public hearing, 25 November 2009, page 55.

⁸⁶ Private hearing, 14 June 2010, pages 2-3.

⁸⁷ Public hearing, 25 November 2009, page 60.

187. In response to a request from Sir Michael Jay, Mr John Williams provided advice on a media strategy for Iraq on 4 September.⁸⁸

188. Mr Williams advised that there was a lot to be done, but it could be done “with simple arguments and plain language”. Mr Blair’s press conference had shown that the media landscape could be changed “in a way that separates the hard core critics from the doubters who are open to persuasion”. The key would be to “put the burden of the argument on to Iraq and on the critics”:

“Detailed facts will be necessary but not enough.

“We should make the case with conviction ... The tone ... should reflect difficult choices, which on balance leave us no alternative but to protect the peace and stability we have come to take for granted ... The public ... needs to feel it shares a sense of reaching a point where minds have to be made up ... In the end, it will come down to an appeal for the public’s trust that the Prime Minister has got a big judgement right in circumstances where there is no easy answer.”

189. The means of dealing with Iraq were “not yet decided”.

190. Mr Williams set out the elements of a possible argument:

- The Iraqi regime was a “uniquely dangerous example” of a threat to peace.
- Saddam Hussein’s record was “a challenge to the whole international community”.
- The “harsh facts have to be faced, and addressed, whether or not we are able to deal with the threat by asserting the authority of the United Nations, whether or not military force becomes necessary”.
- The threat would not go away, it would “become more dangerous”.
- The events of 11 September 2001 had shown that distant threats could not safely be ignored.
- Saddam Hussein had in the past provided a safe haven for terrorists.

191. There was a “need to stress the general threat Iraq poses to international peace and stability, as well as the direct and specific threat of its WMD being used against us”. Mr Williams also cited Saddam Hussein’s human rights abuses.

192. Mr Williams stated that the “evidence dossier” was:

“... unlikely to be enough by itself to win the argument: it will convince persuadable opinion only if launched in the right environment, framed by a broad case that establishes Iraq as a threat to international peace and security. There is no ‘killer fact’ in the dossier which ‘proves’ that Saddam must be taken on now, or this or that weapon will be used against us.

⁸⁸ [Minute Williams \[John\] to PS/PUS \[FCO\], 4 September 2002, ‘Iraq Media Strategy’.](#)

“But it does make a convincing case that Iraq has been trying to recruit people for a nuclear weapons programme and to acquire materials usable in such a programme; and that it has been trying to extend the range of some missiles in breach of Security Council resolutions. These are too deeply buried ... there is too long a prologue on what was happening before the inspectors were withdrawn. The dossier should either be re-structured, and perhaps pared down, or have an executive summary.”

193. Mr Williams warned that the exercise would be “counter-productive” if the media was allowed to “trap” the Government “into having to provide ‘proof’ to Appeal Court standards”. The focus should be on an audience that knew we could not have “certain knowledge of what is going on inside a closed tyranny”, but would:

“... take seriously a careful assessment which avoids over-statement and appeals to people to trust the judgement of those taking the decisions ... understand that intelligence is partial, dangerous to acquire and limited in what it is safe to put out in public. If the dossier is judged by these ... standards it will be worth doing.”

194. Mr Williams also addressed the possible timing of publication depending on whether “the UN route” was agreed, and the need for a longer-term strategy for Iraq. He concluded that Mr Blair’s press conference had already had an impact, with a *Sky* poll showing “48 percent favour military action, with 52 percent against”. This suggested that public opinion was more fluid than the critics believed.

Mr Campbell’s meeting, 5 September 2002

195. Sir David Manning commissioned Sir Richard Dearlove to examine whether SIS had material for inclusion in the dossier.

196. Sir Richard Dearlove told the Hutton Inquiry that Sir David Manning had telephoned him on the morning of 4 September and they had:

“... discussed ... to what extent it would be possible to put intelligence from my service into the public domain; and I said that I thought it would be possible ... but I would insist on grounds of source protection on having the last word in withholding material from publication, if necessary.”⁸⁹

197. In a discussion on 5 September, Sir Richard Dearlove told Mr Straw that SIS had new material for which the sourcing was “strong but indirect” which might be used in the dossier. There might also be a “significant increase of relevant intelligence” before publication of the dossier on 25 September.⁹⁰

198. Sir Richard also told Mr Straw that the draft dossier “was weakened by the JIC doctrinaire approach to its drafting”. It would be “better if SIS made its own in-house judgements on the release of material from sources”. SIS had established a team that

⁸⁹ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 15 September 2003, pages 87-88.

⁹⁰ Minute SIS, 5 September 2002, ‘SOSFCA – Iraq Discussions with C on 5 September’.

was working on the text, which would be speaking to Mr Scarlett about the re-draft (of the dossier) on 6 September.

199. Sir Richard Dearlove agreed that Mr Straw could tell Mr Campbell about the SIS drafting exercise.

200. Mr Campbell wrote in his diaries that Mr Straw told him on 5 September that he had seen Sir Richard, who “had agreed to go through all the relevant material [for the dossier]”.⁹¹

201. Asked what his comment about the draft being weakened by the JIC’s doctrinaire approach had meant, Sir Richard Dearlove told the Inquiry:

“Good question. I mean, the answer is I have seen this reference and I’m not sure. There must be something specific that that refers to. It must be something to do with material from one of our sources and how it was presented. I’m sorry. I mean, I’m sure if you searched long and hard enough in SIS records, we could turn it up, but it would be difficult, I think. I’m really not sure what that is.”⁹²

202. A revised structure for the dossier was agreed at a meeting chaired by Mr Campbell on 5 September, which also decided that Mr Scarlett and Mr Miller would lead the work.

203. Mr McKane wrote to Mr Campbell on 4 September with suggestions for the agenda of the meeting to be chaired by Mr Campbell the next day “to discuss how to take forward” Mr Blair’s decision to publish the dossier.⁹³

204. The suggested agenda comprised:

- Timetable for publication
- The shape of the Dossier – ie should all three chapters be published together?
- Arrangements for allowing the US Government the opportunity to comment on our documents
- Press lines to be used in connection with the IISS report to be published on Monday 9 September ...”

205. Mr McKane wrote that he was sending Mr Campbell “the latest version of the Dossier – though John Scarlett’s people are doing further work on the WMD chapter”. Mr Campbell had already been sent the “first draft of a capping piece to answer the question: ‘Why Now?’”

⁹¹ Campbell A & Hagerty B. *The Alastair Campbell Diaries. Volume 4. The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq*. Hutchinson, 2012.

⁹² Private hearing, 16 June 2010, page 55.

⁹³ [Minute McKane to Campbell, 4 September 2002, ‘Iraq: Public Dossier’](#).

206. The version of the dossier sent to Mr Campbell was the 20 June draft of the dossier sent to Sir David Manning and others, including Mr Campbell, on 21 June; it did not include the later draft of the WMD paper produced by Mr Scarlett in mid-August.

207. Mr Campbell's meeting on 5 September was attended by Sir David Manning, Mr Scarlett, Mr Miller, Mr McKane, Mr Desmond Bowen, who was about to succeed Mr McKane, Mr Wright, Mr Chaplin, Mr John Williams and Mr Paul Hamill, Communication and Information Centre (CIC).⁹⁴

208. Reporting the outcome of the meeting to Mr Powell, Mr Campbell wrote:

- There would be a “substantial rewrite” with Mr Scarlett and Mr Miller “in charge”.
- The structure would be “as per TB’s [Mr Blair’s] discussion”.
- It had been agreed that there had to be “real intelligence material” in the document.
- Mr Scarlett would take the draft to the US on Friday 13 September.⁹⁵

209. Commenting on the meeting, Mr Campbell wrote that the dossier:

“... had to be revelatory and we needed to show that it was new and informative and part of a bigger case. John Williams ... was offering to write it full time. John Scarlett was clearly aware of the responsibility, he was so serious ... He warned us that there was very little re nuclear.”⁹⁶

210. Following the meeting, Mr Miller recorded the agreement on a revised structure for the dossier, and who would be responsible for action on each of the seven sections:

- Section 1: Background to the bloody nature of Saddam’s regime. How he gained and retains power. **[Action: FCO/MED]**
- Section 2: Saddam’s use of power ... Human rights abuses. **[Action: FCO/MED]**
- Section 3: Short link section covering the international community’s demand to dismantle Iraq’s WMD capability ... to ensure Iraq’s regional ambitions did not cause further instability. **[Action: Assessments Staff]**
- Section 4: Effects of using WMD and ballistic missiles. Why the international community was right to be concerned then and why we are still concerned now. **[Action: Assessments Staff]**
- Section 5: The history of UN weapons inspections. What UNSCOM found? What the Iraqi’s [sic] subsequently admitted. History of concealment and obstruction (including the withdrawal of UNSCOM and the failure to co-operate with UNMOVIC. What remains unaccounted for? **[Action: Assessments Staff]**

⁹⁴ Email McKane to Blackshaw, 5 September 2002, ‘Meeting with Alastair Campbell’.

⁹⁵ Email Campbell to Powell, 5 September 2002, [untitled].

⁹⁶ Campbell A & Hagerty B. *The Alastair Campbell Diaries. Volume 4. The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq*. Hutchinson, 2012.

- Section 6: What is the current situation concerning Iraq’s WMD programmes? Account of his ... capabilities. New procurement activity and retention of experts. Use of illicit funding and circumvention of ‘Oil-for-Food’ arrangements. What is the threat posed by Iraq’s on-going WMD programmes? **[Action: Assessments Staff]**
- Section 7: Why we cannot continue to rely on containment and why we should act now. Future intentions. **[Action: FCO/MED]**⁹⁷

211. Mr Miller wrote that much of the work was seen as “cutting and pasting” existing material, and that the Communications and Information Centre (CIC) had “offered to ... co-ordinate the various inputs and produce a revised draft of the dossier”. That would be discussed at a meeting on 10 September.

212. Mr Sebastian Wood, Counsellor, British Embassy Washington, wrote that Mr Scarlett had told him:

- Mr Blair wanted the paper on “what Saddam has been doing since 1998 and how we currently assess his WMD programmes” to be “as intelligence-rich and convincing in detail as possible”, and Mr Scarlett expected to be “able to ‘break out’ some current intelligence”.
- Mr Scarlett would come to Washington with a draft and Sir David Manning wanted the Embassy to tell the US that Mr Scarlett had been “designated” by Mr Blair to take the dossier forward”.⁹⁸

213. Mr Williams suggested revising the “capping piece” for the draft dossier.

214. On 5 September, Mr Williams sent Mr McKane a revised version of the draft capping piece for the dossier, which he described as offering “suggestions” on how it might be amended to “make the document easier for Ministers to defend in interviews”.⁹⁹

215. Mr Williams’ changes included reference to Saddam Hussein’s regime being “uniquely” dangerous and that it had a “capacity for aggression”. He also described the material in the dossier as “**our best publishable assessment**” of the facts.

216. Mr McKane told the Inquiry that his only recollection of an exchange with Mr Williams on the dossier was of his comments on the draft capping note “which were designed ... to improve the draft and make ... it read better”.¹⁰⁰

217. Mr McKane stated that his draft was “overtaken by the decision to move responsibility” for the dossier, from OD Sec to the Assessments Staff when it was decided that it would be “more overtly an intelligence-based document”.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Letter Miller to Grey [sic], 6 September 2002, ‘Iraq: Public Dossier’.

⁹⁸ Minute Wood to Gooderham, 5 September 2002, ‘Iraq: Dossier: Scarlett’s Visit’.

⁹⁹ Minute Williams to McKane, 5 September 2002, ‘Iraq: The Dossier’.

¹⁰⁰ Public hearing, 19 January 2011, page 81.

¹⁰¹ Public hearing, 19 January 2011, pages 82-83.

218. Mr Williams produced a draft executive summary for the dossier over the weekend of 7 to 8 September.

219. Mr Williams wrote to Mr Campbell on 6 September saying that he had spoken to Mr Straw and Sir Michael Jay about the “the media-friendly editorial job that will need to be done when John Scarlett and his team have produced the dossier”.¹⁰² They were “happy” for him “to devote whatever time necessary” to work on the draft and he would be able to work full time on it (from the week beginning 16 September).

220. Mr Williams added that it would, in his view, “be good for the Foreign Office if we could do it that way”. He also offered a press officer with a “very good eye for the kind of material which works with the media”, to work with Mr Scarlett and his team “on producing the right kind of material”.

221. In his statement for the Inquiry, Mr Williams wrote that at Mr Campbell’s meeting on 5 September:

“It was clear that no decision had been taken about who would produce the dossier. John Scarlett said that intelligence had no experience of writing documents for publication and would need the help of a ‘golden pen’. He turned to me. Alastair Campbell did not take this up. At the end of the meeting I asked Alastair what his intention was. He said he was inclined to give the task to the No.10 Strategic Communications Unit.

“When I reported this ... to the Foreign Secretary and Michael Jay, they were clear that the dossier must be produced by the Foreign Office, not No.10, and I should be the ‘golden pen’.”¹⁰³

222. Mr Williams added that he was “still sceptical of the whole idea”, but the “dossier was going to happen”. He was about to accompany Mr Straw to the UN General Assembly in New York, so he asked Mr Scarlett:

“... if he would like to give me the material he intended to use, so that I could show him how to produce it in publishable form. I did this over the weekend. It was a routine job of taking the strongest points and putting them in an executive summary, while taking care to reflect their content accurately, and introducing them with the sort of language that was familiar from speeches and interviews given by ... [Mr Blair and Mr Straw].”

223. Mr Williams stated that the “result was underwhelming”, that there was “nothing much new”, and that his “feeling that this was not a good idea persisted”.¹⁰⁴ He had been “relieved” when he heard that No.10 had decided that Mr Scarlett would write the dossier.

¹⁰² Minute Williams [John] to Campbell, 6 September 2002, [untitled].

¹⁰³ Statement, December 2010, paragraphs 16-17.

¹⁰⁴ Statement, December 2010, paragraph 17.

224. The document which Mr Williams produced was released by the FCO in February 2008 in response to a Freedom of Information request.¹⁰⁵

225. Mr Williams told the Inquiry:

“Some journalists have detected similarity between the shape of my effort and the finished product, but it would have been surprising if an organisation which had never produced a public document [had] not taken some pointers from a professional.”¹⁰⁶

226. Following Mr Campbell’s meeting on 5 September, four drafts of the dossier were prepared and circulated for comment to JIC members and other officials in the FCO, the MOD, the Cabinet Office and the Intelligence Agencies, on 10, 16, 19 and 20 September. Each is addressed later in this Section.

Mr Blair’s meeting with President Bush, Camp David, 7 September 2002

227. In a press conference before the discussions at Camp David Mr Blair stated that Iraq had to be dealt with. The purpose of the meeting with President Bush was to work out the strategy.

228. Mr Blair’s meeting with President Bush at Camp David on 7 September, and the press conference which preceded the meeting, are addressed in Section 3.4.

229. In the press conference, Mr Blair stated:

“The point I would emphasise ... is the threat from Saddam Hussein and weapons of mass destruction, chemical, biological, potentially nuclear weapons capability, that threat is real. We only need to look at the report from the International Atomic [Energy] Agency this morning¹⁰⁷ showing what has been going on at the former nuclear site to realise that. And the policy of inaction is not a policy we can responsibly subscribe to. So the purpose of our discussion today is to work out the right strategy for dealing with this, because deal with it we must.”¹⁰⁸

230. In response to a question, Mr Blair emphasised concern about Iraq’s attempts to develop nuclear weapons and the importance of the IAEA report he had mentioned which showed there was “a real issue that has to be tackled here”. He stated that, on the way to Camp David, he had been reading “the catalogue of attempts by Iraq to conceal its weapons of mass destruction, not to tell the truth ... over a period of years”.

¹⁰⁵ Paper, [undated], [John William’s re-draft].

¹⁰⁶ Statement, December 2010, paragraph 18.

¹⁰⁷ The IAEA issued a press release (IAEA Press Release 2002/11) on 6 September 2002 stating: “With reference to an article published today in the New York Times, the International Atomic Energy Agency would like to state that it has no new information on Iraq’s nuclear weapons programme since 1998 when its inspectors left Iraq. Only through a resumption of inspection ... can the Agency draw any conclusion with regard to Iraq’s compliance with its obligations ... relating to its nuclear activities.”

¹⁰⁸ The White House, 7 September 2002, *President Bush, Prime Minister Blair Discuss Keeping the Peace*.

231. Asked about international support, Mr Blair replied that:

“... people were asking perfectly reasonable questions ... but the one thing no one can deny is that Saddam Hussein is in breach of the United Nations resolutions on weapons of mass destruction ... that that poses a threat not just to the region, because there is no way, if those weapons are used, that the threat would simply stay in the region.

“People understand that. Now we have got to make sure that we work out a way forward that, of course, mobilises the maximum support, but does so on the basis of removing a threat that the United Nations itself has determined is a threat to the whole world.”

232. The British journalists covering the Camp David meeting focused on the WMD dossier.

233. The *Sunday Express* anticipated a “Dossier of Doom”.¹⁰⁹

234. An editorial in the *News of the World* claimed that the dossier would be “as devastating as it is vital”. It would show that “evil Saddam has enough chemical and biological stocks to attack the entire planet, and the missile technology to deliver them”. It would confirm that he is on the brink of nuclear capability. The editorial concluded: “We believe Mr Blair CAN convince us a military attack on Iraq is right. We have faith in our Prime Minister.”¹¹⁰

235. In their meeting, Mr Blair told President Bush that he was in no doubt about the need to deal with Saddam Hussein.

236. Mr Blair also set out the need to build a case to persuade the international community of the threat posed by Iraq, including the potential for fusion of WMD and terrorism.

237. During the discussion with President Bush, Mr Blair set out the need to make a good public case against Saddam Hussein, publishing all the evidence. The UK would publish a dossier. He stated that the US and UK:

“... must build our case, persuading the international community of the nature of the threat. In particular we must get over to our publics the reality that any crisis in the Gulf generated by Saddam would inevitably involve us.”¹¹¹

238. Later Mr Blair stated that there was a need to explain the case for action fully to public opinion: “While insisting that no-one wanted war, we must spell out why we had to act.” That included reminding people of the horrors of Saddam Hussein’s regime.

¹⁰⁹ *Sunday Express*, 8 September 2002, *PM Sets Out Dossier of Doom*.

¹¹⁰ *News of the World*, 8 September 2002, *Blair Will Win The PR Battle*.

¹¹¹ Minute Manning to Prime Minister, 8 September 2002, ‘Your Visit to Camp David on 7 September: Conversation with President Bush’.

239. Mr Blair said there was a:

“... natural reluctance to do difficult things, made worse by ignorance ... of Saddam’s capabilities and intentions. We had to correct this, at the same time answering the legitimate question of why we were taking action now. 11 September [2001] was a powerful argument for dealing with threats before they materialised ... At some point, WMD and terrorism would come together, with appalling consequences, unless we took action.”

240. A plenary meeting between President Bush and Mr Blair and their teams followed the restricted discussion.¹¹²

241. Presentational issues were discussed between officials and in the plenary, including the “Why now?” question.

242. Mr Blair stated that since 1998, there was evidence, including in the 6 September International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report (see previous comment), of continued development of WMD. He also thought that the nature of the Iraqi regime “should become part of our case on WMD”; and that: “We needed an active strategy to take the debate to the rest of the world.” He set out the UK’s plans to publish the dossier within a few weeks.

243. Mr Campbell emphasised the need for people “to understand what BW actually did”; and that the “media threshold would be high, so the dossier would need to include new facts from the last four years”.

JIC Assessment, 9 September 2002

244. On 9 September, the JIC issued an Assessment of Iraq’s possession of chemical and biological weapons and possible scenarios for their use.

245. The Assessment contained a number of significant changes which strengthened previous JIC judgements on Iraq’s possession of chemical and biological weapons and the likelihood of their use.

246. In response to the request from Sir David Manning for advice on the possible scenarios for Iraqi use of chemical and biological weapons, the JIC commissioned an Assessment.¹¹³

247. The Assessment was discussed in “an informal CIG [Current Intelligence Group] of experts” and then considered by the JIC on 4 September.

¹¹² Letter Rycroft to Sedwill, 8 September 2002, ‘Prime Minister’s Meeting with Bush, Camp David 7 September: Public Presentation of Iraq Policy’.

¹¹³ [Minutes, 4 September 2002, JIC meeting.](#)

248. A number of key points were made in the JIC discussion:

- “Once finalised it [the Assessment] would be of immense interest to Ministers and officials, and would help to underline the importance and seriousness of the threat Iraq posed with these weapons. The fact that Saddam Hussein possessed these capabilities, and that he showed every sign of being prepared to use them, was significant.”
- “Another important message, which needed to be brought out more clearly in the draft, was that if the chips were down, and Saddam believed his regime to be under real threat of extinction, nothing was going to deter him from using such weapons. Readers of the paper needed to be reminded of Saddam’s unpredictability, and of the fact that his thought processes did not work in a recognisably Western rational and logical way.”
- “The draft should also distinguish more clearly between the three different ways in which Iraq might use its offensive chemical or biological capabilities: in weaponised form against military targets; in an unconventional attack on military targets; or as part of a sponsored terrorist attack aimed at spreading fear and influencing public attitudes”.
- “[S]ince the draft had been written and circulated, an important and valuable supply of new intelligence had been received, from a variety of sources, judged by the producers to be reliable and authoritative. The draft needed to ... include this intelligence with an expert assessment of its significance.”
- “It [the Assessment] also needed to be clearer which of its judgements were based on firm intelligence, which were based more on informed assessment or interpretation, and where the major gaps in the UK’s knowledge and understanding of Iraq’s capabilities remained.”
- “It was possible that further insights from intelligence would be forthcoming in the relatively near future. These might not only inform any future Assessments but might also need to be reflected somehow in the dossier on Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction programmes that was being prepared for publication.”

249. Mr Scarlett proposed that the paper should be revised to reflect the discussion and then reviewed “at working level by the relevant experts”. Once that was done, the paper would be issued in its final form.

250. The Key Judgements of the JIC Assessment of 9 September stated:

- Iraq has a chemical and biological weapons capability and Saddam is prepared to use it.
- Faced with the likelihood of military defeat and being removed from power, Saddam is unlikely to be deterred from using chemical and biological weapons by any diplomatic or military means.
- The use of chemical and biological weapons prior to any military attack would boost support for US-led action and is unlikely.

- Saddam is prepared to order missile strikes against Israel, with chemical or biological warheads, in order to widen the war once hostilities begin.
- Saddam could order the use of CBW weapons in order to deny space and territory to Coalition Forces, or to cause casualties, slow any advance, and sap US morale.
- If not previously employed, Saddam will order the indiscriminate use of whatever CBW weapons remain available late in a ground campaign or as a final act of vengeance. But such an order would depend on the availability of delivery means and the willingness of commanders to obey.”¹¹⁴

251. The Assessment stated that it had taken “account of new intelligence that has recently become available on Iraq’s intentions”. Unusually, it stated explicitly that it had “an intelligence cut off point of 4 September”.

252. To provide context, the Introduction to the Assessment stated:

“Recent intelligence casts light on Iraq’s holdings of weapons of mass destruction and on its doctrine for using them. Intelligence remains limited and Saddam’s own unpredictability complicates judgements about Iraqi use of these weapons. Much of this paper is necessarily based on judgement and assessment.”

253. The JIC added:

“Iraq used chemical weapons on a large scale during the Iran/Iraq War. Use on the same scale now would require large quantities of chemical weapons and survivable delivery means in the face of overwhelming US air superiority. Iraq did not use chemical weapons during the [1991] Gulf War. Intelligence suggests that Iraq may have used the biological agent, aflatoxin, against the Shia population in 1991. We do not believe that Iraq possesses nuclear weapons and there is no intelligence that Iraq is currently interested in radiological dispersal devices.”

254. Other key elements of the Assessment are set out in the Box below.

JIC Assessment, 9 September 2002: ‘Iraqi Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons – Possible Scenarios’

Chemical and biological capabilities

“Based on intelligence on the nature of Iraqi CBW weapons, known delivery means, continuing procurement activity, and experience from previous conflicts”, the JIC judged:

- Iraq currently had available “either from pre Gulf War stocks or more recent production, a number of biological warfare (BW) and chemical warfare (CW) agents and weapons”.

¹¹⁴ [JIC Assessment, 9 September 2002, ‘Iraqi Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons – Possible Scenarios’.](#)

- “following a decision to do so, Iraq could produce significant quantities of mustard agent within weeks ... [and] the nerve agents sarin and VX within months (and in the case of VX ... may have already done so)”.
- Production of VX and sarin would be “heavily dependent on hidden stocks of precursors, the size of which are unknown”.
- Iraq could produce “more biological agents within days”.
- “the commencement of large-scale production of chemical and biological agents would probably go undetected, and a decision to do so may already have been taken. The location of production facilities is unknown.”
- Even if stocks of weapons were “limited”, that would “allow for focused strikes against key military targets or for strategic purposes (such as a strike against Israel or Kuwait)”.
- Iraq “could deliver CW and BW agents by a variety of means including free fall bombs, airborne sprays, artillery shells, mortar bombs and battlefield rockets”.
- Iraq had told UNSCOM that it had “filled 25 warheads with anthrax, botulinum toxin and aflatoxin” for the Al Hussein missile and “developed 50 chemical warheads” for the missile.
- Iraq retained “up to 20 Al Hussein and a limited number of launchers”.
- “One intelligence report suggests that Iraq has ‘lost’ the capability to develop warheads capable of disseminating chemical and biological agent and that it would take six months to overcome the ‘technical difficulties’”.
- “an emergency operational capability with conventional warheads” was “probably available” for the Al Samoud and Ababil-100 short-range ballistic missiles.
- “Iraq may have other toxins, chemical and biological agents we do not know about”.
- “the effectiveness of any CBW attack would depend on the method of delivery, concentration of the target, dissemination efficiency, meteorological conditions and the availability of suitable defensive counter measures”.

“Other recent intelligence” indicated that:

- production of chemical and biological weapons is taking place;
- Saddam attaches great importance to having CBW, is committed to using CBW if he can and is aware of the implications of doing so. Saddam wants it to dominate his neighbours and deter his enemies who he considers are unimpressed by his weakened conventional military capability;
- Iraq has learned from the Gulf War the importance of mobile systems that are much harder to hit than static sites. Consequently Iraq has developed for the military, fermentation systems which are capable of being mounted on road-trailers or rail cars. These could produce BW agent;
- Iraq has probably dispersed its special weapons, including its CBW weapons. Intelligence also indicates that chemical and biological munitions could be with military units and ready for firing within 20-45 minutes.”

Intentions for use

“Intelligence indicates that Saddam has already taken the decision that all resources, including CBW, be used to defend the regime from attack. One report states that Saddam

would not use CBW during the initial air phase of any military campaign, but would use CBW once a ground invasion of Iraq has begun. Faced with the likelihood of military defeat and being removed from power, we judge that it is unlikely there would be a way to deter Saddam from using CBW.”

The JIC judged that “several factors could influence the timing of a decision ... to authorise the use of CBW weapons”:

- the availability of stocks of CW and BW agents;
- the survivability of ... delivery means ... Once a military campaign is under way the pressure will increase to use certain assets before they are destroyed;
- the survivability of command and control mechanisms ... Intelligence indicates that Saddam’s son Qusay may already have been given authority to order the use of CBW ... Saddam may ... specify in advance ... the specific conditions in which unit commanders should use these weapons e.g. once Coalition Forces have crossed a particular geographical line;
- the reliability of the units ... Late in any campaign commanders may not be prepared to use CBW if they judge that Saddam is about to fall.”

The JIC also examined **possible scenarios** for the use of CBW weapons.

- **Before a conflict** – The JIC stated that the aim “would be to incapacitate or kill Coalition troops in their concentration areas. Intelligence indicates that ... Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Israel and Kuwait” had been identified as targets. “Turkey could also be at risk. Both chemical and biological weapons could be used ... But the use of CBW weapons carries serious risks and Saddam will weigh up their military utility against the political costs. Use ... would expose the lies and deception ... The early, widespread use of CBW or non-lethal agents would affect Coalition military planning ... On balance however we judge that the political costs of using CBW weapons would outweigh the military advantages and that Saddam would probably not use CBW ... pre-emptively.”
- **During the ground phase** – “There is no intelligence on specific Iraqi plans for how CBW would be used in a conflict. Large numbers of chemical munitions would need to be used to make a battlefield impact. BW could also be used although it is less effective as a tactical weapon ... But the use of even small quantities of chemical weapons would cause significant degradation in Coalition progress and might contribute to redressing Coalition conventional superiority ... Iraq could make effective use of persistent chemical agents to shape the battlefield ... by denying space and territory to Coalition Forces. Booby-traps and improvised explosive devices could be used ... to inflict local losses in urban areas. It is also possible that Saddam would seek to use chemical and biological munitions against any internal uprising; intelligence indicates that he is prepared to deliberately target the Shia population. One report indicates that he would be more likely to use CBW against Western forces than on Arab countries.”
- **Drawing Israel into the conflict** – “... One intelligence report suggests that if Saddam were to use CBW, his first target would be Israel. Another ... suggests that Iraq believes Israel will respond with nuclear weapons if attacked with CBW or conventional warheads. It is not clear if Saddam is deterred by this threat or judges it to be unlikely in the face of US pressure on Israel not to take such a course of action.”

- **Unconventional use of CBW** – “Although there is no intelligence to indicate Iraq has considered using chemical and biological agents in terrorist attacks, we cannot rule out the possibility. [...] Saddam could also remove his existing constraints on dealing with Al Qaida ... Intelligence indicates that Saddam has specifically commissioned a team of scientists to devise novel means of deploying CBW.”
- **“At the death”** – “In the last resort Saddam is likely to order the indiscriminate use of whatever chemical and biological weapons remain available to him, in a last attempt to cling on to power or to cause as much damage as possible in a final act of vengeance. If he has not already done so by this stage Saddam will launch CBW attacks on Israel. Implementation of such orders would depend on the delivery means still available, the survivability of the command chain and the willingness of commanders to obey.”

255. The JIC acknowledged that much of the Assessment was “necessarily based on judgement and assessment”.

256. The Butler Report highlighted that the new judgements relied heavily on inferences made by the JIC in its assessment of recently received intelligence reports.

257. Mr Scarlett told the Hutton Inquiry that the Key Judgements in a JIC Assessment:

“... represent the formal view of the JIC on the central questions which are being considered in the Assessment itself. They are not a summary of the main points in the text. They are a bringing together and drawing on existing JIC Assessments, a wide body of information which may be outside, much of it open source, secret intelligence, in addition, and other relevant factors, such as past behaviour, past actions and so on.”¹¹⁵

258. In response to the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) report in February 2004, the Government stated that the purpose of the Key Judgements section of JIC Assessments was “to highlight the judgements to be drawn from the intelligence assessed”; it was “not intended to be a summary of the main facts in the paper”.¹¹⁶

259. The Butler Report stated that the JIC Assessment of 9 September “was prepared in parallel with the Assessment of 21 August”, and that:

“Its tone was set by its first Key Judgement, which reflected a significant change from previous JIC judgements on Iraqi possession of chemical and biological weapons.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 23 September 2003, pages 79-80.

¹¹⁶ *Government Response to the Intelligence and Security Committee Report on Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments*, 11 September 2003, Cm6118, February 2004, paragraph 7.

¹¹⁷ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 294.

260. The first Key Judgement stated:

“Iraq has a chemical and biological weapons capability and Saddam is prepared to use it.”

261. The Butler Report commented:

“The JIC made clear that much of the [9 September] Assessment was based on its own judgement, drawing on the work done for its Assessment of 21 August. But we were struck by the relative thinness of the intelligence base supporting the greater firmness of the JIC’s judgements on Iraqi production and possession of chemical and biological weapons, especially the inferential nature of much of it.”¹¹⁸

262. Sir John Scarlett explained to the Inquiry that the “relationship between collection, dissemination, comment, analysis, assessment and then policy-making was a subtle one”.¹¹⁹ Intelligence reports were issued by the collection agency and there was the possibility for that agency “to make a comment on the report and very often put it into context compared with what other reports have said on a given subject”. Reports were then issued to customers across government “particularly ... in the Defence Intelligence Staff who are ... an important body of analysts”. Those customers played a role in the Current Intelligence Groups, but it was the job of the Assessments Staff to bring it all together into a “big picture assessment”.

263. Sir John Scarlett stated that the 9 September Assessment had a “separate judgement on the capabilities which existed”; and that it was not intended to be a worst case scenario. The change was the firm judgement on Iraq’s current possession of agents and weapons which:

“... referred to recent intelligence on the production of weapons now taking place, the development of mobile systems and then, importantly, on the regime and Saddam’s intent. The great importance that he attached to the possession of chemical and biological weapons and his readiness to use them if necessary, including to defend the regime from attack.

“He saw possession as a central feature of his regional power position and continued ability to project influence.

“That intelligence on intent was significant – taken to be significant.

“It was also noted that we did not know specific plans for CBW use in the event of conflict, the location of production facilities, the size of stocks.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 304.

¹¹⁹ Public hearing, 8 December 2009, pages 17-18.

¹²⁰ Public hearing, 8 December 2009, pages 39-40.

264. Addressing the judgements that had been reached, Sir John Scarlett stated that it was “not at all unusual for an intelligence base behind judgments to be limited or described as sporadic and patchy”. The intelligence received in September was:

“... judged against a set of standing judgments from the past which I’d been at pains to point out were already quite strong ...”¹²¹

265. Sir John subsequently stated: “We thought there was a sound intelligence base, and we had a firm judgment. That’s the point I want to make.”¹²²

266. Mr Miller added:

“The discussion on 4 September at the JIC really was one that gelled with the very firm view amongst the community about both the possession and the readiness to use, on Saddam’s part, these weapons.

“We went away, in the light of that discussion, and wrote the paper which is the final Assessment and expressed those views really quite specifically and as very firm judgments which did, I think, pin down the view of the JIC community at that point. It was the moment which sticks with me as being quite an important one in terms of the arrival of new intelligence, and the precipitation of a discussion in the JIC which led to a very firm expression of the judgments it had reached on both possession and intent.”

267. In response to a question about the categorical nature of the Key Judgements in comparison with the detailed text in the 9 September Assessment, Sir John Scarlett emphasised the importance of the distinction to be drawn between the strength of the intelligence base on which an Assessment drew and the firmness of the JIC’s Key Judgements; and that the JIC had, in September 2002, made “quite firm judgements” despite the limitations in the intelligence.¹²³

268. Mr Miller told the Inquiry that the document discussed by the JIC on 4 September:

“... wasn’t a full JIC Assessment, and it was full of ... caveated language ...

“In the discussion, the point was made by one of the JIC members that at this stage we should, as a Committee, be very clear on what we were telling Ministers, and there was a view expressed in terms that, despite the caveats in the document prepared by the Assessment Staff, the view was that Saddam did possess the weapons and would be ready to use them, and that was the view that was shared around the JIC table, and which the JIC specifically wanted set out in those terms as the advice that Ministers should read from their intelligence committee.

¹²¹ Private hearing, 5 May 2010, page 42.

¹²² Private hearing, 5 May 2010, page 43.

¹²³ Private hearing, 5 May 2010, pages 85-86.

“So you are absolutely right to distinguish between the body of the paper and the judgements, but it is a distinction which was made consciously and with deliberation.”¹²⁴

269. Sir John Scarlett told the Inquiry that the 9 September Assessment “stayed in place as the confirmed view of the JIC in the months that followed and it didn’t change significantly”.¹²⁵

270. The Assessments Staff and most members of the JIC were not aware at the time of the details of the sourcing chains and that little of the information provided by “reliable sources” was based on first-hand knowledge.

271. In the context of comments on the intelligence underpinning the judgements in the Assessment of 9 September, the Butler Report stated:

“... the JIC did not reflect in its Assessment, even if only to dismiss it, material in one of those reports suggesting that most members of the Iraqi leadership were not convinced that it would be possible to use chemical and biological weapons.”¹²⁶

272. Commenting on the Assessment, the Butler Review concluded that:

“By mid-September 2002, therefore, readers of JIC assessments will have had an impression of continuity with, but also some change from, the JIC assessment of 15 March:

- a. The continuing clear strategic intent on the part of the Iraqi regime to pursue its nuclear, biological, chemical and ballistic missile programmes.
- b. Continuing efforts by the Iraqi regime to sustain and where possible develop its indigenous capabilities.
- c. The apparent considerable development, drawing on these capabilities, of Iraq’s ‘break-out’ potential. Although Iraq’s nuclear programme continued to be constrained, there was strong evidence of continuing work on ballistic missiles, including the development and production of systems with ranges in excess of limits set by the United Nations. There was also evidence from one source, supported by one complementary report, of Iraq having the ability to produce biological agent in mobile facilities, and additional evidence of activity at one site formerly associated with Iraq’s biological warfare programme. Finally, there were recent intelligence reports, albeit mainly inferential, that Iraq was producing chemical agent. For analysts, intelligence on Iraqi production of biological and chemical agent would have been put alongside Iraq’s proven ability to weaponise agent onto at least some delivery systems, and separate intelligence

¹²⁴ Private hearing, 5 May 2010, pages 86-87.

¹²⁵ Public hearing, 8 December 2009, page 41.

¹²⁶ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 304.

reports on Saddam Hussein’s intention to use chemical and biological weapons if attacked.”¹²⁷

273. The Butler Report stated that the “more definite judgements inside the Assessment” were based on:

“... significant new intelligence in August and September 2002 ... Four reports were received in total, from three sources, which were influential ... The first provided material from a range of original informants reporting via an intermediary to the source.¹²⁸ We have noted, however, that the individual items from the informants did not confirm directly that Iraq had chemical weapons. They came from senior Iraqi officials who were believed at the time to have direct knowledge of Iraq’s intentions, use, deployment or concealment of chemical weapons, but were based for most of the informants on an assumption (not direct knowledge) that Iraq had such weapons.”¹²⁹

274. The Butler Report added:

“The second and third [reports] were from a source who had previously reported reliably and who continued to do so in the following months. This source, too, could not confirm from direct experience that Iraq had chemical weapons, resting on reporting ‘*common knowledge*’ within his circle that chemical agent production was taking place. The second report from this source seems to us to duplicate much of the first.”¹³⁰

275. The fourth intelligence report described in the Butler Report:

“... was a single report, from a reliable and established source reporting a new subsource who did not subsequently provide any further reporting, which was described as ‘*confirming*’ the intelligence on Iraqi mobile biological agent production facilities received from the liaison service. Contrary to the JIC view at the time, we believe that this report would have been more accurately described as ‘*complementary*’ to, rather than ‘*confirming*’, it.”¹³¹

276. Mr Miller told the Inquiry that the intelligence reports were from:

- “one established and reliable source, which was quoting senior Iraqi officers, [...], about the use of CBW”;

¹²⁷ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 306.

¹²⁸ “We were told by SIS during the course of our Review that there is now doubt about the reliability of this reporting chain and hence of the reports derived from it. Section 5.9 provides further detail.”

¹²⁹ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraphs 300-301.

¹³⁰ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 302.

¹³¹ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 303.

- “another one of the very well established sources [...] about the determination of the Iraqi regime to have CBW capable missiles, and the reliance on those weapons as being a contributor or an important part of the ability to project power in the region, to establish Iraq as a regional power”; and
- “a reliable source”, “about the use of CBW against the Shia population internally”.¹³²

277. Mr Miller added:

“So there was a body of reporting by September that was talking not about technical details of production, but about an understanding that these weapons were available, and that there was a clear place for them in Iraq’s thinking about how to conduct itself and how to maintain regional influence.”

278. Mr Miller concluded:

“As the Assessment said, the intelligence was patchy. It was sporadic. It didn’t flow through in great volumes routinely, particularly prior to the summer of 2002. But I think the sense of the community was that yes, we are not getting a full picture, but we are getting here a pretty consistent picture, even if it is a rather patchy one, sufficient to inform these judgements, but certainly as additional intelligence came through in the course of 2002, the sense was that that did then begin to provide a weightier basis for reaching the conclusions that were set out in September.”¹³³

279. Asked about the sources, their background and reliability and whether they were providing hearsay evidence, Mr Miller explained:

“There were different sources. In the Assessment Staff we didn’t seek to have expertise in the sourcing of the intelligence. So we relied on rather summary accounts of the sourcing given in the reports, which tended to characterise it as new or established, reliable or not yet proven, and we give some indication of whether the reporting was direct or indirect.”

280. Mr Miller told the Inquiry that reporting which influenced the Assessment came from six new reports, “from apparently solid sources”.¹³⁴

281. Sir John Scarlett stated that “at the time, the separation of the different streams of reporting wasn’t always clear to the Assessment Staff”, and that:

“... with the slight benefit of hindsight, I can say now that essentially we are talking about three different streams of reporting ... which were coming through

¹³² Private hearing, 5 June 2010, page 11.

¹³³ Private hearing, 5 June 2010, page 12.

¹³⁴ Private hearing, 5 June 2010, page 15.

in a two-week period at the time the 9 September Assessment was being prepared and discussed.”¹³⁵

282. Sir John stated that:

- the source who had produced “the 45-minute report as well”, was “an established and reliable reporting [source], but reporting from a line of ... named sub-sources”; and
- that source “was quoting his knowledge” and had been “speaking in very definite terms about their continued possession [of chemical and biological weapons]”.¹³⁶

283. The “45 Minute” report “quoting the sub-sources on the intention to use [CBW]” was withdrawn on 28 September 2004 (see Section 4.3).¹³⁷ Sir John said he had known “in about May 2004” that there was “a big question mark about that report”.

284. In relation to the production of biological agent, Sir John Scarlett stated that a report in early September:

“... from an established and reliable source ... referred to a ... fermentation system, which ... was judged to be very likely to be a reference to the same general capability and the same focus on mobile production capabilities, and that was referred to in assessments after that as corroboration for the mobile reporting.

“So a lot of weight was placed upon the reporting [...] from that source.”¹³⁸

285. Sir John stated that the reporting on mobile production facilities was withdrawn on 29 September 2004.¹³⁹

286. Mr Miller told the Inquiry:

“... we were the recipients of the intelligence on the basis described and we gave weight to those descriptions, but we didn’t try to get underneath the surface of what had led to a conclusion particularly about the reliability of any particular stream.”¹⁴⁰

287. Asked how much the JIC had known about the sources, Mr Miller added:

“Generally not a great deal. From time to time, when there was a particular source which the agencies attached great weight to, there was some briefing given on why they were attaching particular weight to a source. But it was all at a fairly high level of generality, and there was, for the bulk of the reporting, nothing more than the descriptors on the individual reports.”

¹³⁵ Private hearing, 5 June 2010, page 13.

¹³⁶ Private hearing, 5 June 2010, page 20.

¹³⁷ Private hearing, 5 June 2010, page 21.

¹³⁸ Private hearing, 5 June 2010, page 18.

¹³⁹ Private hearing, 5 June 2010, page 21.

¹⁴⁰ Private hearing, 5 June 2010, page 30.

288. Sir John Scarlett added:

“... at that time none of us in the Assessment Staff, including me, knew the details of this sourcing. Nor were we clear how many lines of reporting there were, and I know that because just before the conflict I was asking ... how many lines of reporting are we actually talking about? ...”¹⁴¹

289. The withdrawal, in September 2004, of reporting on Iraq intentions for the use of CBW and earlier reporting on mobile biological production facilities, is addressed in Section 4.3.

IISS Assessment, 9 September 2002

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) published a dossier, *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Net Assessment*, on 9 September.¹⁴²

In his press statement, the Director of the IISS, Dr John Chipman, said that the IISS objective had been “**to assess, as accurately and dispassionately as possible, Iraq's current WMD capabilities**”.¹⁴³ The task was challenging: “**Iraq made every effort to obscure its past, obstruct dismantlement of its present assets, and retain capabilities for the future.**”

Other comments made by Dr Chipman included:

- UNSCOM's experience showed that no on-site inspections could succeed “unless inspectors develop an imaginative and carefully co-ordinated counter-concealment strategy”.
- UNMOVIC would need “time to develop and refine the unique inspection techniques required” and to develop “considerable field experience to develop the necessary tradecraft to deal with Iraqi obfuscation efforts”.
- The “strength of Baghdad's commitment to possess WMD” was “measurable in part by its efforts to resist unfettered UN inspections”.

The IISS dossier identified the differences in view amongst experts as to whether Iraq was focused on reconstituting its biological and chemical warfare capabilities or was “prepared to risk detection and re-invest massive resources in pursuit of nuclear weapons”.¹⁴⁴ There was, however, “general agreement” that it was “very unlikely to have achieved the ability to produce sufficient fissile material for nuclear weapons”. But if Iraq:

“... were able to acquire sufficient fissile material from foreign sources, it could probably produce nuclear weapons on short order, perhaps in a matter of months. This is based on the plausible assumption that Iraqi designers, working from the 1991 baseline, have been able to complete the preparations for building a nuclear weapon ...”

¹⁴¹ Private hearing, 5 June 2010, pages 30-31.

¹⁴² IISS Dossier, 9 September 2002, *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Net Assessment*.

¹⁴³ IISS Press Statement Dr John Chipman, 9 September 2002, *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Net Assessment*.

¹⁴⁴ IISS Dossier, 9 September 2002, *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Net Assessment*.

The IISS stated that Iraqi acquisition of fissile material was “not a high probability”, but “it has to be seen as a real risk that could dramatically and quickly shift the balance of power”.

The IISS regarded Iraq’s biological weapons programme as “the least understood and accounted for by 1998”. Iraq could “plausibly” have retained substantial quantities of growth media and BW agent. It was “not known for certain” whether Iraq had resumed production of agent, but it seemed “a safe bet that it has, or will, in the face of an impending attack”.

The IISS judged that, from Baghdad’s perspective, biological weapons presented “Iraq’s closest approximation to nuclear weapons as an instrument of deterrence or terror”. But, in practice, “the magnitude of Iraq’s BW threat depends on its delivery capability, which appears limited”.

The IISS stated, however, that even if Iraq had not advanced the designs for missile warheads since 1991, and depending on the agent used and a number of ambient factors, “casualties in an unprotected population could run in the hundreds or even thousands”. If Iraqi aircraft could survive opposing air forces and air defences, delivery by airborne spray devices would be “even more deadly”.

The IISS described Iraq’s chemical weapons arsenal as “better known and less threatening”. It had “probably retained a few hundred tonnes of mustard and enough stable precursors to produce a few hundred tonnes of sarin/cyclosarin and perhaps a similar amount of VX”. It could have mobilised production facilities to produce fresh CW agent, but its current capability probably comprised “hundreds of tonnes of agent ... and perhaps a few thousand munitions”. Before 1991 it had had “thousands of tonnes of agent and tens of thousands of effective munitions”. Iraq had an ability to “deliver chemical warheads on its rocket and artillery pieces, as well as aerial bombs”, but its capability effectively to deliver chemical munitions with missiles or aircraft over longer distances was “questionable”. Unless Iraq had advanced its pre-1991 designs, its ability efficiently to disseminate chemical agent with missile warheads was “extremely limited”.

The IISS concluded that Iraq most likely had a small force of ballistic missiles, “perhaps a dozen or so”, with a range of 650km and capable of delivering CBW warheads.

Finally, the IISS stated:

“As in the past, the threat or use of force may compel Iraq to extend greater co-operation, but signs of weakness and division in the Security Council are likely to invite Iraqi backsliding ...

“Either course of action carries risks. Wait and the threat will grow. Strike and the threat may be used ...”

Confirmation of Mr Scarlett's responsibility for producing the dossier

290. On 9 September, it was confirmed that Mr Scarlett and the Assessments Staff would be responsible for the production of the Iraq dossier.

291. After a discussion with Mr Scarlett, Mr Campbell wrote setting out the process by which the dossier would be produced:

“The first point is that this must be, and be seen to be, the work of you and your team, and that its credibility depends fundamentally on that.

“The second is that you are working on a new dossier, according to the structure we agreed at the meeting last week, to meet the new circumstances which have developed over recent weeks and months. Therefore, the rush of comments on the old dossier are not necessary or totally relevant. People should wait for the new one which will be more detailed and substantial.”¹⁴⁵

292. Mr Campbell wrote that the structure agreed the previous week was “roughly”:

- why the issue arose in the first place
- why the inspection process was necessary
- the history of concealment and deception
- the story of inspectors, leading to their departure
- the story of weapons unaccounted for, and what they could do
- a section on ballistic missile technology
- CW/BW
- nuclear
- the sanctions regime, and how the policy of containment has worked only up to a point
- illicit money
- the repressive nature of the regime
- why the history ... makes us worried he cannot be allowed further to develop these weapons.”

293. Much of the content of the dossier would be “obviously historical”, and that was “a vital part of the overall story”. Mr Campbell added:

“The media/political judgement will inevitably focus on ‘what’s new?’ and I was pleased to hear from you and your SIS colleagues that, contrary to media reports today, the intelligence community are taking such a helpful approach to this in going through all the material they have. It goes without saying that there should be nothing published that you and they are not 100 percent happy with.”

¹⁴⁵ Minute Campbell to Scarlett, 9 September 2002, [untitled].

294. Mr Campbell also wrote:

“Our public line is that the dossier will set out the facts which make HMG judge Iraq/WMD to represent a real threat. It will be detailed and comprehensive.”

295. Mr Campbell set out the need to avoid leaks and comments to the media which might “talk up the dossier”, adding:

“We should be making clear that even with the intelligence material, the picture can never be a complete one because the inspectors have been out for so long.”

296. “[M]ost of the draft material” would be available later that day, “with the Agencies providing the sections relevant to the middle part of our structure [Iraq’s chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic missile programmes], and the FCO providing the more historical material”. Mr Scarlett would “want to go through the material before submitting a consolidated draft to No.10 and others”.

297. Mr Campbell would “chair a team”, including officials from the FCO and No.10, who would “go through the document from a presentational point of view and make recommendations” to Mr Scarlett, who would decide whether they would be incorporated in the dossier.

298. Once Mr Scarlett had reached a view on what would be “incorporated”, a “judgement” would be needed on “whether a single person should be appointed to write the final version”.

299. Mr Blair had “expressed an interest in seeing an advanced draft”. The timing and arrangements for the launch of the document, including the involvement of Mr Blair and other Ministers, were to be addressed once an advanced draft of the document was available.

300. Mr Campbell concluded by referring to US intent to produce “a series of dossiers” and wrote that he was “confident” that the UK dossier could complement rather than conflict with them.

301. Mr Campbell’s minute was sent to Mr Straw and Mr Hoon as well as to the intelligence Agencies, Sir David Omand, Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator, and senior officials in the FCO and the MOD.

302. Mr Campbell wrote that he had had a meeting with Mr Scarlett on the dossier before being “joined by three SIS people”, and they had “agreed a process for writing the report”. He and Mr Scarlett had agreed that “the FCO was trying to take it over”, and Mr Scarlett wanted ownership.¹⁴⁶

303. Mr Campbell also wrote that he told Mr Straw that Mr Williams “should be part of the team, not the writer”.

¹⁴⁶ Campbell A & Hagerty B. *The Alastair Campbell Diaries. Volume 4. The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq*. Hutchinson, 2012.

304. In a minute to Mr Blair in June 2003 Mr Scarlett wrote that, following Mr Blair's announcement on 3 September, the structure of the dossier had been discussed between Sir David Manning, Mr Campbell and himself and their respective teams.¹⁴⁷ The purpose of the dossier was "to present a more detailed account of Iraqi capabilities to be placed in the wider context".

305. Mr Scarlett added:

"Unlike the previous drafts, it would refer specifically to intelligence material. It was agreed that since this would now be an intelligence-based document I, as JIC Chairman, rather than OD Secretariat would be in charge of the process. These agreements were set out in detail in Alastair's note to me of 9 September ..."

306. Mr Scarlett added that the drafting of the revised document was co-ordinated by Mr Miller, "working with representatives of Departments, including DIS, SIS, GCHQ, and FCO". The draft had been discussed at "two meetings of two to three hours each" and there had been "numerous exchanges of drafts and constant consultation between the experts concerned". The intelligence Agencies had agreed to the involvement of Mr Daniel Puce, a Press Officer in No.10, and Mr Williams and others from the FCO Press Office. JIC members were asked to consult Ministers during the drafting process "as appropriate".

307. Mr Scarlett also wrote:

"The aim was to ensure that the public assessment deployed the intelligence effectively, taking account of the reliability of the information and the demands of source protection."

308. Mr Scarlett told the Hutton Inquiry that he had had a discussion with Mr Campbell before the meeting on 9 September to say that:

"... it was very important that only one person and one unit had ownership and command and control of this exercise, that that should be me, that I wanted it stated clearly in writing; and I wanted that to be the outcome of the meeting ..."¹⁴⁸

309. Mr Blair told the Hutton Inquiry:

"... the whole purpose of having the JIC own this document was in order to provide the absolute clarity and certainty ... that in the end they were perfectly happy with this. And I think it was ... it was essential that anything we said ... in the dossier we could hand on heart say: this is the assessment of the Joint Intelligence Committee."¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ [Minute Scarlett to Prime Minister, 4 June 2003, 'September 2002 Iraq Dossier'](#).

¹⁴⁸ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 23 August 2003, pages 56-57.

¹⁴⁹ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 28 August 2003, pages 18-19.

Draft dossier, 10 September 2002

310. A DIS record of a meeting held by Mr Miller on 9 September recorded that the DIS had been asked to address a number of points including:

- “the provision of more detail on Iraq’s military capability to use WMD”;
- “the provision of more information on the retention of experts and expertise relating to WMD”;
- “to provide information if possible on the diversion and attempted illicit procurement of dual-use materials and equipment”; and
- “the provision of a timeline for the development of a nuclear weapon by Iraq if it were to acquire fissile material.”¹⁵⁰

311. Mr Scarlett produced a first draft of the new dossier on 10 September which drew on the 9 September JIC Assessment and the recent intelligence reports about Saddam Hussein’s willingness to use chemical and biological weapons. The draft stated that Iraq could deploy such weapons within 45 minutes of the order being given for their use.

312. A first draft of the revised dossier was produced on 10 September and sent to Mr Campbell, Mr Powell, Sir David Manning, Sir David Omand, the Private Secretaries to Mr Straw and Mr Hoon, Mr Desmond Bowen, who succeeded Mr McKane as Deputy Head of OD Sec in the week beginning 9 September, and to Mr John Williams.¹⁵¹

313. Mr Scarlett wrote that he had had “considerable help from John Williams and others in the Foreign Office”. The draft required further work and he could not confirm that he was “content with the overall tone ... and the balance between the main text and the Annexes”, but it had “now reached the stage where it would be useful” to have advice on presentation from Mr Campbell. Mr Williams might also offer further views.

314. Mr Scarlett added that the draft drew “on all the available intelligence identified so far”. He was “most grateful for the co-operation of the SIS, GCHQ and the DIS in constructing the key section on Iraq’s capabilities”; and the drafters continued to “check for any further intelligence for inclusion in the text”.

315. Mr Scarlett concluded by asking recipients to “hold the text very tight” and to “continue to refrain from public reference to its contents”.

316. The draft Foreword drew heavily on Mr Williams’ 5 September revisions to Mr McKane’s draft “capping piece”.

317. The Executive Summary stated that the paper set out the Government’s “knowledge” of Iraq’s programmes to acquire weapons of mass destruction, traced

¹⁵⁰ Minute DIGI to [CDI and DCDI Private Offices and others], 9 September 2002, ‘Iraq Dossier Meeting – 9 Sep 02’.

¹⁵¹ Minute Scarlett to Campbell, 10 September 2002, ‘The Iraq Dossier’.

their history, and, “Drawing on very sensitive intelligence”, set out the assessment of current capabilities and showed how the picture was “continuing to develop as new information becomes available”.

318. Specifically, the Executive Summary stated that recent intelligence had added to the picture of Iraq’s capabilities and indicted that Iraq:

- attached “great importance to the possession of weapons of mass destruction and that Saddam Hussein is committed to using them if necessary”;
- envisaged “the use of weapons of mass destruction in its current military planning and could deploy such weapons within 45 minutes of the order being given for their use”;
- had “begun dispersing its most sensitive weapons, equipment and material because Saddam is determined not to lose the capabilities developed in the last four years”;
- was “preparing plans to conceal evidence of its weapons of mass destruction from any renewed inspections, including by dispersing incriminating documents”;
- had “acquired mobile laboratories for military use, corroborating earlier report[ing] about the mobile production of biological warfare agents”;
- had “purchased large quantities of uranium ore, despite having no civil nuclear programme that could require it”.

319. The draft comprised six sections:

- Saddam Hussein’s regime and his rise to power;
- Saddam Hussein’s wars;
- Iraq’s WMD programme – the threat in 1991;
- The response of the international community;
- The history of UN weapons inspectors;
- Iraqi chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic missile programmes: the current position.

320. The section on Iraq’s current capabilities stated:

“Intelligence plays a central role in informing government policy towards Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes. The reports are often very sensitive ... But, taken with Saddam’s record of using chemical weapons and the evidence from UN weapons inspections, the intelligence builds a compelling picture of Saddam’s capabilities.

“This section sets out what we now know ...”

321. Other statements in the section included:

- Iraq could “deliver chemical and biological agents using an extensive range of artillery shells, free-fall bombs, sprayers and ballistic missiles”.
- “Intelligence from reliable and well-informed sources has become available in the last few weeks. This has confirmed that Iraq has chemical and biological weapons and the Iraqi leadership has been discussing a number of issues related to them.”
- “[T]he order to produce ... chemical and biological agents has been given”.
- Intelligence had confirmed that the Iraqi military had acquired mobile facilities to produce biological agent.
- “If Iraq acquired sufficient fissile material from abroad we judge it would take at least two years to make a working nuclear device. However, Iraq could produce an improvised nuclear device within a few months but this would be unreliable.”

322. Addressing the specific issue of the use of intelligence “about the deployability of CBW within 45 minutes”, Mr Scarlett wrote in his minute to Mr Blair in June 2003:

“This intelligence came from a line of reporting judged to be reliable and was consistent with standing JIC judgements it was included by the drafters and approved by the JIC. It’s [sic] inclusion was not suggested by No.10. The report was highlighted in the same terms in a JIC Assessment of 9 September.”¹⁵²

323. Mr Scarlett added that the 9 September Assessment reflected other recently received intelligence and that was “recorded in the dossier under the heading, ‘Recent Intelligence’”.

THE VIEW OF THE JIC

324. The JIC discussed the dossier on Iraq in its meeting on 11 September, including that:

- **the Committee’s authority would lend important weight to the dossier’s content and enhance its impact; and**
- **the dossier needed to “convey accurately but dramatically the rising concern about Iraq’s weapons programmes” and that recent intelligence had shed light on progress since 1998.**

325. Mr Scarlett wrote to JIC members on 10 September asking for comments on an additional section which he had agreed with Mr Campbell “would be considered for inclusion in the ‘dossier’”.¹⁵³ It gave “an account of the JIC assessment of developments in Iraqi WMD programmes since UNSCOM inspectors were withdrawn in late 1998”,

¹⁵² [Minute Scarlett to Prime Minister, 4 June 2003, ‘September 2002 Iraq Dossier’.](#)

¹⁵³ [Minute Scarlett to JIC Members, 10 September 2002, ‘Iraqi WMD: Public Presentation of Intelligence Material’.](#)

which would “demonstrate that this question has been the subject of continuous assessment throughout the four years and has been brought to the regular attention of the Government”.

326. Mr Scarlett wrote that he “hoped to be able to brief you further at JIC on 11 September” and that he “would particularly welcome your comments on the attachment”, which set out key points from relevant JIC Assessments.¹⁵⁴

327. Mr Scarlett also sent the 10 September draft of the dossier to the members of the JIC on 11 September. Describing it as “very much work in progress”, Mr Scarlett wrote:

“... several sections ... are already being rewritten. Nevertheless, you need to see where we have got to. I would be grateful if you could study the intelligence-related sections ... and let me or Julian Miller have your views by mid-day tomorrow, if not at this afternoon’s JIC. We particularly need advice on any remaining security implications of publishing ... We also need to be sure that overall the balance of the judgements remains consistent with those previously reached by the JIC.”¹⁵⁵

328. A member of the DIS expressed concern about the reference in the draft to Iraq producing an improvised nuclear device (IND).¹⁵⁶

329. The DIS official wrote:

“As I feared, the whole issue of Iraq considering the development of an IND has gained momentum. I would like to delete all mention of INDs in the dossier, but the CO [Cabinet Office] consider it vital to the picture for no sensible reason. Unfortunately an Iraqi JIC paper referred to it (against DI52 advice) and that is being used as a justification. This will probably grow as the dossier is released to the press, with the result that the spotlight will be diverted from the real, important issues. However, this does not concern the CO. If you have a chance to advise CDI [Chief of Defence Intelligence] before this afternoon’s JIC, I would appreciate your support on the removal of all mention of INDs ...”

330. The DIS official stated that he had only agreed language saying that Iraq would not go down this route.

331. There is no mention of INDs in the published version of the dossier.

¹⁵⁴ Minute Scarlett to JIC Members, ‘Iraqi WMD: Public Presentation of Intelligence material’ attaching Draft Paper, ‘Iraq and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Joint Intelligence Committee Assessment’.

¹⁵⁵ Minute Scarlett to JIC Members, 11 September 2002, ‘Iraq WMD: Papers for Public Presentation’.

¹⁵⁶ [Email \[1331\] DIS \[junior official\] to DIS \[junior official\], 11 September 2002, ‘Non-existent Iraqi INDs’.](#)

332. A separate email from the same DIS official stated that a member of his team would “not give the idea of an IND time of day” and assessed there were only two scenarios to consider:

“(a) If Saddam still thinks he has time on his side, he will try to develop a nuclear weapon ... Iraq won’t succeed while sanctions are in place, and will take at least five years once sanctions are removed ...

“(b) In the last resort – when his regime and he are about to fall with the US infantry on the doorstep, he will use what ever he can do rapidly – eg indiscriminate spreading of CB agents and toxic chemical ... One point which I believe everyone has missed in the ridiculous debate on INDs is that there will be one obvious last ditch action that Saddam will take in the spirit of torching the oilfields as he retreated in 1991 ... demolish the store of natural and low-enriched yellowcake ... in the southern outskirts of Baghdad .. There is no risk of a nuclear blast ... However ... Saddam would want to play on the irrational fears in Western opinion as he heads for a safe haven. He would, of course, blame ... the US ...”¹⁵⁷

333. The DIS official also provided draft language explaining how difficult nuclear weapons were to make.

334. At the JIC on 11 September, Mr Scarlett explained that his “purpose in circulating the draft, and in tabling it for discussion, was to invite comments on its content. In particular on the question of whether or how best to describe or present the work the JIC had done in the last several years to assess Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction capabilities and intentions.”¹⁵⁸

335. The minutes record that the main points which were made were:

- “a. the part of the draft that looked at what was known or assessed from intelligence was at the heart of the dossier with the potential to have a significant impact. It needed to be as factual as possible, and to convey accurately but dramatically the rising concern about Iraq’s weapons programmes. It needed in particular to emphasise the importance of recent intelligence in shedding light on the progress Iraq had made since 1998, and on Saddam Hussein’s readiness to deploy and use these weapons;
- b. it made good sense both to describe the way that the JIC and the central intelligence machinery had kept Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction programme under regular review, and to outline in the main body of the text what the Committee’s key judgements or messages to Ministers and policy makers since 1998 had been. The Committee’s authority would lend important weight to the dossier’s content and enhance its impact. But on balance, to avoid setting

¹⁵⁷ [Email \[1132\] DIS \[junior official\] to DIS \[junior official\], 11 September 2002, ‘Questions from \[Assessments Staff junior official\]’.](#)

¹⁵⁸ Minutes, 11 September 2002, JIC meeting.

unhelpful precedent, it would be better not to quote directly from specific or identified JIC Assessments themselves.”

336. It was also suggested that it would be a good idea to keep the Intelligence and Security Committee informed of what was proposed.

337. Mr Scarlett invited Mr Miller:

“... to lead on preparing a revised version of the dossier for further comment, to be circulated later in the week. The new draft would in particular describe the impact of recent intelligence and explain the evolution and significance of the JIC’s assessments. The Committee’s agreement to the section of the draft dealing with the intelligence assessment would be sought before the dossier was finalised.”

338. There is no record of any discussion of the substance of specific points in the draft dossier.

339. Sir Richard Dearlove, Sir Francis Richards, Air Marshal Joe French (Chief of Defence Intelligence), Sir David Omand, Sir David Manning, Mr Simon Webb (MOD Policy Director), Mr Bowen, Ms Eliza Manningham-Buller (Deputy Director General of the Security Service), and Mr Mike Grannatt (Cabinet Office Director General, Government Information and Communication Service (GICS)), were among those present at the meeting.

340. In its discussion of the future work programme, the JIC “agreed that there was an increasing appetite for papers on aspects of the Iraqi question”.

341. Mr Scarlett told the Hutton Inquiry that his instructions from the JIC were “to keep what we were writing in line with standing JIC Assessments and also with recent intelligence”.¹⁵⁹

342. Mr Scarlett also stated that the JIC had given its formal agreement to taking on the dossier; and that it had responded with several important points. It wanted the drafters to:

- “... convey the rising level of concern on which the JIC took its view about Iraq’s programmes and development of weapons of mass destruction.”
- “... in particular ... to highlight the progress which was being made since 1998, despite sanctions.”
- “... make it clear the JIC assessment that Iraq was ready to use these weapons.”
- “... take full account of the recent intelligence which had been coming in.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 23 September 2003, page 159.

¹⁶⁰ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 23 September 2003, page 85.

343. Sir Richard Dearlove told the Hutton Inquiry that he had seen the draft dossier before the JIC meeting, and that it was “normal practice” for him “to be closely briefed” before JIC meetings.¹⁶¹ He added that the process of producing the dossier had been “covered very closely on a day-to-day basis” by an SIS team, and that he had been “kept closely involved”.

344. Asked if any comments from the DIS had been raised on the 45 minutes point at the JIC discussion on 11 September, Sir Richard Dearlove told Lord Hutton on 15 September: “Not that I can recall. It was not raised.”¹⁶²

345. An SIS officer, who was not an expert in the issues addressed in the dossier, sent a colleague unsolicited general views about the draft. The officer questioned the language used in the draft, which he thought needed to be more convincing in answering the questions “Why Iraq?” and “Why now?”. The minute was also sent to senior managers. It was drawn to the attention of Sir Richard Dearlove, by his Private Secretary, before a meeting with Mr Blair on 12 September.¹⁶³

346. Sir Richard Dearlove’s Private Secretary recorded that Sir Richard found the comments useful and timely, and that Sir Richard had drawn on them extensively in his meeting with Mr Blair.¹⁶⁴

347. The meeting with Mr Blair is addressed later in this Section.

OTHER COMMENTS ON 10 SEPTEMBER DRAFT DOSSIER

348. Mr Bowen pointed out that it was unclear what Saddam Hussein intended to do with any weapons of mass destruction and long-range ballistic missiles.

349. Commenting on the draft dossier of 10 September, Mr Bowen wrote:

- “The bit of the jigsaw that doesn’t quite hang together is what Saddam intends to do with the WMD he has been so intent on acquiring. It is one thing to ask the rhetorical question: what could they be used for except making mischief regionally; it is another to be able to point to stated objectives either from the intelligence or public documents. It is, of course, the case that you point to the facts of Saddam’s aggression and repression and use of WMD; perhaps we can make more of this and his unpredictability.”
- “In looking at the WMD sections, you clearly want to be as firm and authoritative as you can be. You will need to judge the extent to which you need to hedge your judgements with ... caveats. I appreciate that this can increase the authenticity of the document in terms of it being a proper assessment, but that needs to be weighed against the use that will be made by the opponents of

¹⁶¹ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 15 September 2003, page 90.

¹⁶² The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 15 September 2003, page 94.

¹⁶³ Minute [SIS internal minute], 12 September 2002.

¹⁶⁴ Minute [SIS internal minute], 12 September 2002.

action who will add up the number of judgements on which we do not have absolute clarity.”

- “... [T]here are two key sections ... which will need to be given proper prominence ... Why Are We Concerned and the Conclusions.”
- “I think it would be helpful to draw together the state of advancement of both chemical and biological capability, with military thinking and the delivery means.”
- “It would be helpful if there was more about where ballistic missiles are likely to be targeted rather than what countries are in range.”¹⁶⁵

350. Mr Bowen concluded:

“Finally the question which we have to have in the back of our minds is ‘Why Now?’. I think we have moved away from promoting the idea that we are in imminent danger of attack and therefore intend to act in pre-emptive self defence. The approach is rather that Saddam has failed to abide by the UNSCRs and his flouting of international law and continuing acquisition of WMD cannot be tolerated any longer. This difference is important because the focus shifts to Saddam’s continuing efforts to equip himself with WMD, which is what the evidence shows.”

351. Mr Bowen’s comments on the draft Foreword are addressed later in this Section.

352. Asked whether he had felt under pressure to firm up the judgements in the draft as a result of Mr Bowen’s comments, Mr Scarlett told the Inquiry that he had “no memory” of seeing the document and no action had been recorded on it.¹⁶⁶

353. Mr Sedwill asked the UK Permanent Mission in New York for advice on whether the UK should table the dossier in the Security Council in support of a US resolution on Iraq.

354. In advice for No.10 on 27 August, Mr Straw had addressed a possible draft resolution containing an ultimatum to Iraq to readmit inspectors, and what President Bush might say in his speech to the UN General Assembly on 12 September as part of a wider challenge to the UN to demonstrate that it could tackle the problem of WMD in the hands of rogue states.¹⁶⁷ He suggested that a subsequent Security Council discussion might provide “a peg for publishing via the UN the long-awaited ‘Iraq Dossier’”.

355. On 11 September, Mr Sedwill reported that he had sent the draft dossier to Mr Straw’s “party” in New York, to check whether they think it is along the right lines”.¹⁶⁸ He had also asked Sir Jeremy Greenstock, UK Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, to advise on whether any or all of it might be tabled in the Security Council to support the UK intervention when the US tabled their resolution.

¹⁶⁵ Minute Bowen to Scarlett, 11 September 2002, ‘The Iraq Dossier’.

¹⁶⁶ Public hearing, 8 December 2009, pages 58-60.

¹⁶⁷ [Letter McDonald to Manning, 27 August 2002, ‘Iraq: Ultimatum’.](#)

¹⁶⁸ [Email Sedwill to Gray, 11 September 2002, ‘Dossier 10/9 Version - Comments’.](#)

It is clear from the email that the timing of publication was uncertain, and that Mr Sedwill and Mr Campbell had discussed the possibility of publication in the week beginning 17 September.

356. Mr Sedwill commented that the draft was “much better than earlier drafts” and “could move further in the direction of factual analysis”. The document needed to “set out the problem, rather than the solution”; people “should conclude that for themselves”. He made a number of detailed suggestions for additions and amendments to the draft. His suggestions included:

- The Executive Summary could be “tweaked a bit” to “explain the centrality of WMD” to Saddam Hussein’s rule, for example his projection of power.
- “Crucially”, Section 2 needed to “explain the role of WMD in the political mythology which has sustained the regime, implicitly why giving it up would amount to a change of regime and how responsibility for WMD rests with those parts of the apparatus on which Saddam depends for his own security. People need to understand that for Saddam giving up WMD is not like a British Govt deciding we don’t need Trident any more ...”
- Section 3 should be depersonalised “a bit”, with references to “the regime” rather than Saddam Hussein.
- The effects of chemical and biological agents could be explained “more vividly”.
- Sections 3 and 4 should be combined to “demonstrate more explicitly the link between UNSC [UN Security Council] action and persistent Iraqi obstruction”.
- The history of weapons inspections was “an interesting story and would give the media a better feel for the difficulties they faced and the persistence of the Iraqi obstruction”. It should be expanded.
- Section 6, setting out the detail of Iraq’s programmes, was the “crux” of the dossier and should be as factual as possible.

357. Mr Sedwill subsequently reported that Mr Straw had endorsed his comments and offered a number of additional points.¹⁶⁹

358. Mr Straw’s suggestion that the Foreword should be signed by Mr Blair is addressed later in this Section.

359. A junior official in the UK Permanent Mission to the UN in New York (UKMIS New York) replied that it would “probably be a bit much to deposit the whole report with the Security Council, though we could deposit something like Section 6 if this were felt useful”.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Email Sedwill to Gray, 11 September 2002, ‘Iraq Dossier: 10/9 Version – Foreign Secretary’s Comments’.

¹⁷⁰ Letter FCO [junior official] to Sedwill, 12 September 2002, ‘Iraq: The Dossier’.

360. The official also commented that the draft was “a substantial improvement” and suggested adding a number of points, including:

- “Something showing the elaborate Iraqi apparatus of concealment would demonstrate to just what lengths this government is going to keep its hands on WMD”.
- It “would be desirable to give more detail of dodgy procurements ... We need to show the lengths Iraq has been willing to go to get its hands on WMD components”.
- Explaining why Iraq’s unilateral destruction of WMD was of such concern, “ie it allowed Iraq to obscure its WMD stocks and capabilities, eg by claiming to have destroyed more items than was actually the case”.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM NO.10

Mr Blair’s speech to the TUC, 10 September 2002

In the first section of his speech to the Trades Union Congress (TUC) on 10 September, Mr Blair set out the rationale for tackling the problem of Iraq – “why I say Saddam is a threat that has to be dealt with”.¹⁷¹

Mr Blair stated that “when the weapons inspectors were evicted from Iraq in 1998 there were still enough chemical and biological weapons remaining to devastate the entire Gulf region”. He also stated that Saddam Hussein had a nuclear programme, which he had denied and which had been “disrupted” by inspections. He was in breach of “23 outstanding UN obligations requiring him to admit inspectors and disarm”.

361. The Assessments Staff reported that No.10 was understood to want the dossier to be as strong as possible within the available intelligence, subject to it being owned by the Joint Intelligence Committee.

362. On 11 September, Mr Blair wrote to the Speaker of the House of Commons, and to the Lord Chancellor, asking for Parliament to be recalled in the week beginning 23 September (see Section 3.4).¹⁷² Mr Blair wrote:

“By then, important discussions at the UN will have taken place. And the Government will be in a position to publish the dossier on what we know of the Iraqi regime and its WMD programme.”

¹⁷¹ *The Guardian*, 10 September 2002, *Full text of Tony Blair’s TUC address*.

¹⁷² [Letter Blair to Martin, 11 September 2002, \[untitled\]](#).

363. An email from an official in the Assessments Staff at 1pm on 11 September stated:

“We have now received comments back from No.10 ... Unsurprisingly they have further questions and areas they would like expanded.”¹⁷³

364. The official wrote that the “main comments” from No.10 were:

“1. They liked the use of a specific personality ... in the paras on CW. Can we add any more personalities, related to BW, nuclear, BM [ballistic missiles], who are doing jobs now that are suspicious [sic] because of their previous role ...

“2. Is there any intelligence that Iraq has actively sought to employ foreign experts, in particular in the nuclear field?

“3. They want more details on the items procured for their nuclear programme – how many did they buy, what does this equate to in terms of significance to a nuclear programme?

“4. Can we say how many chemical and biological weapons Iraq currently has by type! If we cant give weapons numbers can we give any idea on the quantity of agent available!

“I appreciate everyone, us included, has been around at least some of these buoys before, particularly item 4.”

365. The official concluded:

“But No.10 through the Chairman want the document to be as strong as possible within the bounds of available [sic] intelligence. This is therefore a last (!) call for any items of intelligence that agencies think can and should be included.”

366. In a postscript, the official added:

“[...] we have already discussed the continuing need to say something about Iraq’s capability to make INDs [Improvised Nuclear Devices] (as per March JIC paper).”

367. The email was not specific about who in No.10 was being quoted or how the message was conveyed.

368. A series of internal emails within No.10 on 10 and 11 September, some of which were written after the email from the Assessments Staff, discussed the approach to be taken in the dossier.

¹⁷³ Email Assessments Staff [junior official] to “agencies and departments”, 11 September 2002, ‘Iraqi dossier – Questions from No.10’.

369. Mr Pruce commented on 10 September that he thought the dossier should focus on Saddam Hussein as much as possible and use personal witness statements about Saddam's abuses and quotations from Saddam's speeches. He added:

"In the public's mind the key difference between this text and the IISS text will be the access to intelligence material I like the idea of a history of JIC Assessments Might we also include a general statement on the nature of the intelligence services and their role ..."¹⁷⁴

370. On 11 September, Mr Pruce wrote:

"Who will issue the text? Us? The Cabinet Office? Why don't we issue it in the name of the JIC? Makes it more interesting to the media."¹⁷⁵

371. Mr Pruce suggested that:

- The draft should be personalised onto Saddam "as much as possible".
- The aim should be to "convey the impression that ... over the past decade he [Saddam Hussein] has been aggressively and relentlessly pursuing WMD while brutally repressing his own people".
- Wherever there was a reference to weapons, there should be a description of their destructive capacity.

372. Mr Pruce commented that the section on intelligence would be:

"... the one that readers will go to first. This draft already plays up the nature of intelligence sourcing. I think we could play this up more The more we advertise that unsupported assertions (eg Saddam attaches great importance to the possession of WMD) come from intelligence the better The history of JIC Assessments will help too ..."

373. Mr Pruce's comments on the Foreword are set out later in this Section.

374. Mr Philip Bassett, a Special Adviser in No.10, commented:

"Very long way to go I think ... we're in a lot of trouble with this as it stands now".¹⁷⁶

375. Mr Tom Kelly, the Prime Minister's Official Spokesman, wrote that the draft had "one central weakness", it did "not differentiate enough between capacity and intent":

"We know he is trying to get WMD – and this shows those attempts are intensifying But can we show why we think he intends to use them aggressively, rather than in self-defence We need that to counter the argument that Saddam is bad, but not mad

¹⁷⁴ Email Pruce to Mathews, 10 September 2002, 'Dossier'.

¹⁷⁵ Email Pruce to Campbell, 11 September 2002, 'Draft Dossier (J Scarlett Version of 10 Sept)'.

¹⁷⁶ Email Bassett to Pruce and Campbell, 11 September 2002, 'Draft Dossier (J Scarlett Version of 10 Sept)'.

We also ... need more direct argument on why containment is breaking down
In other words, putting the emphasis as much (maybe more) on the present and future, as the past

“The key must be to show that Saddam has the capacity, and is intent on using it in ways that threaten world stability, and that our ability to stop him is increasingly threatened.”¹⁷⁷

376. Mr Rycroft responded:

“yes, part of the answer to ‘why now?’ is that the threat will only get worse if we don’t act now – the threat that Saddam will use WMD, but also the threat that Iraq’s WMD will somehow get into the hands of the terrorists [...] This all links into the illicit money, since the more funds he has – and his cash pile is growing all the time – the more likely he is to buy fissile material etc”.¹⁷⁸

377. Mr Godric Smith, the Prime Minister’s Official Spokesman, wrote:

“I think there is material here we can work with but it is a bit of a muddle and needs a lot more clarity in the guts of it in terms of what is new/old In each area we need to distinguish between the two and better source (as much as we can) to intelligence It needs to be more factual if anything, less assertion based, with the rhetoric stripped out as I think this undermines it”.¹⁷⁹

378. Mr Bassett responded that he agreed with Mr Smith and suggested that the language of the dossier was “too journalistic”, it needed to be written “more in officialese” and “much more weight and detail”:

“- crucially though, it’s intelligence-lite ... All intelligence material tends to read like unevidenced assertion, and we have to find a way to get over this a) by having better intelligence material [...], b) by having more material (and better flagged-up), and c) more convincing material ...”¹⁸⁰

379. There was a meeting between Mr Campbell and Mr Scarlett, and others from No.10, at 6pm on 11 September.¹⁸¹

380. In his diaries Mr Campbell wrote that he:

“... gave some suggestions later re a different structure. We had the basic story and now had to fill it out. TB looked at it and said it was pretty compelling stuff.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Email Kelly to Campbell, 11 September 2002, ‘Dossier’.

¹⁷⁸ Email Rycroft to Kelly and Campbell, 11 September 2002, ‘Dossier’.

¹⁷⁹ Email Smith to Pruce and Campbell, 11 September 2002, ‘Draft Dossier (J Scarlett Version of 10 Sept)’.

¹⁸⁰ Email Bassett to Smith, Pruce and Campbell, 11 September 2002, ‘Draft Dossier (J Scarlett Version of 10 Sept)’.

¹⁸¹ Emails Blackshaw to Poston and Mathews, 11 September 2002.

¹⁸² Campbell A & Hagerty B. *The Alastair Campbell Diaries. Volume 4. The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq*. Hutchinson, 2012.

381. When Mr Miller asked to talk to someone in No.10 about the latest thinking on the dossier, “without getting into circulating copies just so as they are on the right track”, Mr Smith suggested he should speak to Mr Campbell or Mr Tom Kelly on 13 September.¹⁸³

382. On 13 September, Mr Campbell wrote:

“Meeting with Julian Miller ... to go through the new structure. I was worried that it was going to have to rely too much on assertion ...”¹⁸⁴

383. In relation to the recall of Parliament, Mr Campbell also wrote:

“I was worried that the dossier was going to be too assertive and that even though the agencies presented it as their work, it would be seen as us trying to spin them a line.”

384. Mr Campbell told the Hutton Inquiry that, in relation to the dossier, he had told Mr Scarlett: “The drier the better, cut the rhetoric”; and that “the more intelligence based it was, the better”. There was a need to distinguish between material in the Government’s dossier and the IISS publication.¹⁸⁵

385. Asked about the emails from Mr Pruce, Mr Smith and Mr Bassett, Mr Campbell said that he could not recall seeing them.¹⁸⁶

386. Mr Campbell was not asked about the emails from Mr Kelly and Mr Rycroft.

387. Mr Scarlett told the Hutton Inquiry that he had not seen the No.10 emails at the time but he could see from the documents presented to him that some of the main comments had been made orally in the discussion that had taken place in Mr Campbell’s office at 6pm on 11 September 2002.¹⁸⁷

388. Asked whether he had received the comments from No.10 orally from Mr Campbell, Mr Scarlett stated that the person who had drafted the email recalled only that Mr Scarlett had said to him that the points were from No.10. Mr Scarlett had “no recollection” and “no record” of receiving the points, or who they were received from.¹⁸⁸

389. Mr Campbell subsequently told the Hutton Inquiry that, in relation to the content of the emails between Mr Bassett, Mr Smith and Mr Pruce, he stood by what he had said on 19 August 2003; and that he could not recall pointing out any of the sentiments to Mr Scarlett in their meeting on 11 September.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸³ Email Smith to Campbell, 12 September 2002, ‘Dossier’.

¹⁸⁴ Campbell A & Hagerty B. *The Alastair Campbell Diaries. Volume 4. The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq*. Hutchinson, 2012.

¹⁸⁵ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 19 August 2003, page 35.

¹⁸⁶ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 19 August 2003, pages 36-39.

¹⁸⁷ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 23 August 2003, page 61.

¹⁸⁸ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 23 August 2003, page 63.

¹⁸⁹ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 22 September 2003, pages 159-160.

390. Mr Scarlett stated that he remembered Mr Bassett being at the meeting with Mr Campbell, but he did not remember what Mr Bassett had said and he did not remember taking any notice of it.¹⁹⁰ Mr Scarlett added:

“... the general advice that I took away from Alastair Campbell, from nobody else ... was that the ... draft ... needed, ideally, to have more detail in it, needed to be less assertive, less rhetorical ... And indeed the 16th September draft was clearly striking a slightly different tone in its language.”

391. Asked about the views expressed in the emails and their impact, Mr Campbell told the Inquiry:

“That may have been their honestly held opinions, but I didn’t agree with them. I actually thought that the paper that John Scarlett produced on September 10 was ... a very, very good piece of work. So, as I said at the Hutton inquiry, they are all perfectly entitled to make those points, if that’s their opinion, but, ultimately, it would not be their decision ...”¹⁹¹

392. Mr Blair told the Hutton Inquiry that he was aware of the process for producing the dossier, and his view was that it was “important that it made the best case we could make subject, obviously, to it being owned by the Joint Intelligence Committee”.

393. There is no evidence that Mr Blair saw the emails on the issue between officials in No.10.

394. Asked, in the light of the comment that No.10 had wanted the dossier “to be as strong as possible within the bounds of available intelligence”, whether he was aware that process (the email exchange) was going on, Mr Blair told the Hutton Inquiry that he had been aware of that, and “it was important that it [the dossier] made the best case we could make subject, obviously, to it being owned by the Joint Intelligence Committee”.¹⁹²

395. Mr Blair added that, as Parliament was being recalled and he would be presenting the dossier, he had been concerned to make sure the dossier made the “best case”:

“Provided that is clearly understood as meaning that it is only if the intelligence agencies thought both that the actual intelligence should be included and that there was not improper weight being given to any aspect of that intelligence.”¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 23 September 2003, page 151.

¹⁹¹ Public hearing, 12 January 2010, page 83.

¹⁹² The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 28 August 2003, page 6.

¹⁹³ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 28 August 2003, page 7.

THE US PERSPECTIVE

396. The discussions with the US about President Bush’s speech to the UN General Assembly on 12 September are addressed in Section 3.4. Key points from the speech are set out in the Box below.

President Bush’s speech, 12 September 2002

In his speech to the UN General Assembly on 12 September, President Bush set out his view of the “grave and gathering danger” posed by Saddam Hussein and challenged the UN to act to address Iraq’s failure to meet the obligations imposed by the Security Council since 1990.¹⁹⁴

President Bush made clear that, if Iraq defied the UN the world must hold Iraq to account and the US would “work with the UN Security Council for the necessary resolutions”.

But the US would not stand by and do nothing in the face of the threat.

President Bush set out Iraq’s failure to meet those obligations imposed by the UN, including:

- “Right now, Iraq is expanding and improving facilities that were used for the production of biological weapons.”
- UN inspections had revealed that Iraq “likely maintains stockpiles of VX, mustard and other chemical agents, and that the regime is rebuilding and expanding facilities capable of producing chemical weapons”.
- Iraq continued “to withhold important information about its nuclear program”; employed “capable nuclear scientists and technicians”; and retained “the physical infrastructure needed to build a nuclear weapon”. It had “made several attempts to buy high-strength aluminium tubes used to enrich uranium for a nuclear weapon”. If Iraq acquired fissile material, “it would be able to build a nuclear weapon within a year”.
- Iraq’s “state controlled media” had “reported numerous meetings between Saddam Hussein and his nuclear scientists, leaving little doubt about his continued appetite for these weapons”.
- Iraq also possessed “a force” of SCUD-type missiles with greater than permitted range and was “building more ... that can inflict mass death throughout the region”.
- Iraq had “subverted” the Oil-for-Food programme “to buy missile technology and military materials”.
- Despite the UN’s demands for the return of inspectors, Iraq had had “four years ... to plan and to build and to test behind the cloak of secrecy”.

Challenging the UN to act, President Bush stated:

“We know that Saddam Hussein pursued weapons of mass murder even when inspectors were in his country. Are we to assume that he stopped when they left? The history, the logic and the facts lead to one conclusion: Saddam Hussein’s regime

¹⁹⁴ The White House, 12 September 2002, *President’s Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly*.

is a grave and gathering danger. To suggest otherwise is to hope against the evidence. To assume ... good faith is ... a reckless gamble ... [T]his is a risk we must not take.

“We have been more than patient ... Saddam Hussein has defied all these efforts and continues to develop weapons of mass destruction. The first time we may be completely certain he has ... nuclear weapons is when ... he uses one. We owe it to all our citizens to prevent that day from coming.”

397. Mr Scarlett discussed the draft dossier with US Administration officials on 12 September.

398. Sir Christopher Meyer, British Ambassador to the US, reported that, in meetings on 12 September, US Administration officials had welcomed Mr Scarlett’s briefing on the UK plan to publish a dossier on Iraqi WMD on 24 September.¹⁹⁵

399. Mr Scarlett had “stressed the importance of co-ordinating UK and US public presentation strategies”. The issues discussed included:

- recent Iraqi attempts to procure aluminium tubes; and
- the differences between US and UK assessments of the timelines for Iraq to acquire a nuclear weapons capability. President Bush had said publicly, notably in his speech to the UN General Assembly, that, if it obtained fissile material, Iraq could build a nuclear weapon within a year.

400. Sir Christopher Meyer also wrote:

“US interlocutors all pointed more generally to the need not to get trapped into juridical standards of proof. The bulk of the case should rest on history and common-sense argument, rather than specific new intelligence. When it came to Saddam’s WMD, absence of evidence was not the same as evidence of absence. We should not be afraid to argue that, just as in 1991, Iraq’s programmes were probably much further advanced than we knew.”

401. One official in the National Security Council suggested:

“... setting out convincing arguments as to why Saddam continued his costly pursuit of WMD. Deterring attacks on the regime was not a full explanation. For Saddam, WMD were weapons of choice, not of last resort. In particular ... [he] believed, Saddam wanted nuclear weapons so that he could threaten or use CW or BW in the region, and use his nuclear capability to deter nuclear retaliation ... we should not be afraid to make this argument publicly.”

¹⁹⁵ Telegram Misc 2 Washington to FCO London, 12 September 2002, ‘Personal Public Dossiers on Iraqi WMD’.

402. Mr Scarlett also discussed the draft with the CIA:

“The WMD section of the 10 September draft was also shown to the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and they made comments.”¹⁹⁶

SIS report, 11 September 2002

403. On 11 September, SIS issued a report stating:

- **Iraq had accelerated the production of chemical and biological agent;**
- **it had built further facilities throughout Iraq; and**
- **Saddam Hussein was determined to maintain his CBW capability.**

404. SIS expected to receive additional material through the same source.

405. Reflecting concerns about source protection, the report was given a very limited distribution to named senior officials.

406. The report did not make clear that SIS was not itself in contact with the source whom it considered had direct access to Iraq’s programmes.

407. The Butler Report stated:

“One further intelligence report which has been described to us as being significant was received between the production of the JIC’s Assessment of 9 September and the publication of the Government’s dossier. This ... reported that production of biological and chemical agent had been accelerated by the Iraqi regime, including through the building of further facilities throughout Iraq.”¹⁹⁷

408. Notes of a telephone discussion between Sir Richard Dearlove and Mr Scarlett on 11 September recorded that Sir Richard told Mr Scarlett:

- SIS was “on the edge of [a] significant intel breakthrough”. The intelligence was from a “first contact with BCW phenomenal access”. It could be the “key to unlock” Iraq’s BCW programme.
- Asked whether the source definitely had “the access”, Sir Richard replied “yes”.
- Sir Richard expected “additional material in 3-4 weeks time”. He mentioned a “CD with everything in it”.
- Sir Richard believed that it would be too risky to include the material from the new source [in the dossier]: “The moment we publish Saddam will lock up his BCW scientists.”

¹⁹⁶ Intelligence and Security Committee, *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments*, Cm5972, September 2003, paragraph 74.

¹⁹⁷ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 305.

- Sir Richard was reported to have “summarised the report”, stating: “Production closed down but sufficient stocks already.”
- Mr Scarlett agreed that the report would not be fed into “today’s discussion [of the draft dossier]”. He was: “Not happy with draft. Section 6 & 7 are keys.”¹⁹⁸

409. A letter from Sir Richard Dearlove’s Private Secretary to Sir David Manning, with two copies of the report (one for Sir David and one for Mr Powell) recorded that Sir Richard had “referred” to the report during his meeting with Sir David on 10 September.¹⁹⁹

410. Sir Richard Dearlove told the Butler Review that he had been aware of the report and had mentioned it to Sir David Manning at a meeting on 10 September.²⁰⁰ He had subsequently arranged for the report to be sent to No.10.

411. SIS issued the new intelligence report on 11 September.²⁰¹

412. The report stated that, in early September, a senior official who had a background of involvement in Iraq’s CW programme described a particular military establishment’s participation in BW and CW programmes, including:

- “The regime had demanded accelerated production of BCW substances. Senior workers were working a seven day week and safety measures, which were common in the 1980s, were now being ignored ...”
- “Although BW and CW production is centred on Baghdad, the regime has built further facilities throughout Iraq. There was now excess capacity, with more production facilities than there were suitably qualified and trusted staff to operate them.”
- Chlorine gas produced at the facility was “shipped to ‘Iraq Atomic Energy’”.
- “... [A]nthrax was being produced at a separate facility ...”
- “Approximately two weeks ago, an order was received to stop producing prohibited substances at ... [the establishment]. All machinery producing these substances was to be decontaminated and the remaining prohibited substances sent to storage. The same order had been sent to all MIC [Military Industrial Commission] factories involved in producing BCW in Iraq.”

¹⁹⁸ Note [PS/C transcription in September 2003 of handwritten notes], 11 September 2002, [telephone conversation between Sir Richard Dearlove and Sir John Scarlett].

¹⁹⁹ Letter PS/C to Manning, 11 September 2002.

²⁰⁰ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 578.

²⁰¹ Report [SIS], 11 September 2002, ‘Iraq: Accelerated production of Chemical and Biological Warfare (BCW) Substances throughout Iraq suspended end of August’.

413. The report stated that the SIS source had commented that:

- “Saddam Hussein was determined to maintain his CBW capability. If the major production centres near Baghdad were attacked and damaged, the regime would order staff to relocate to an alternative undamaged site.”
- Iraq “was concentrating its efforts on the production of anthrax and that Iraq had received a lot of help from neighbouring and friendly countries”.
- The action was “in preparation for the admission of weapons inspectors”.
- “New accommodation for senior scientists and their colleagues was being built near to the major BW and CW production sites. The families of those scientists would, in effect, be held hostage. They would be discouraged from deserting or from leaking information about activities at their facilities that might lead to the sites being targeted for bombing by allied forces.”

414. An SIS comment informed readers that:

- Chlorine was “one of the base chemicals for the production of CW agents such as mustard and the nerve agent sarin”.
- Chlorine was also used in the production of uranium trichloride “which in turn may be used as a feed material for the electromagnetic isotope separation process (EMIS) to enrich uranium for weapons production”. Iraq had previously admitted, in its declarations to UNSCOM, “attempting to pursue this route to produce weapon grade highly enriched uranium” before 1991; and, “Although Iraq encountered problems in scaling up the production capability, it had succeeded in producing a small quantity of lower enrichments and was continuing to resolve the problems before the EMIS programme was halted by Coalition air strikes.”

415. The report was described as “high impact” and the source was described as: “A new source on trial with direct access.” SIS advised that readers would “receive relevant briefing as soon as can be arranged”.

416. The report was sent to Mr Simon McDonald (Mr Straw’s Principal Private Secretary), Sir Michael Jay, Mr Wright, Mr Chaplin, Mr Ehrman, Sir David Manning, Mr Scarlett, Mr Bowen, Mr Miller, Mr Peter Watkins (Mr Hoon’s Principal Private Secretary), Sir Kevin Tebbit (MOD Permanent Under Secretary) and Mr Webb.

417. It was not sent to Sir David Omand, AM French, Mr Tony Cragg, MOD Deputy Chief of Defence Intelligence (DCDI), or the Heads of GCHQ or MI5.

418. Documents seen by the Inquiry state that the distribution was approved personally by Sir Richard Dearlove.

419. A minute for the file written by SIS9 recorded that he and Sir Richard Dearlove had briefed Mr Blair on the sources of the report (of 11 September) on 12 September.²⁰² The sources were not named but Mr Blair was given details of the source's background and his access, and his relationship with the sub-source.

420. Mr Blair was also briefed on two other sources who had provided recent reports.

421. Sir David Manning, Mr Powell and Mr Campbell were present.

422. Mr Campbell wrote:

“Meeting with TB, Jonathan, DM, AC, C and a SIS colleague re chemical and biological weapons, and what Blix would be looking for if the inspectors went in. It showed what was going on was really bad and getting worse, that he [Saddam Hussein] was determined to keep WMD for reasons of regional power. They were strategically vital and he was going to keep them come what may. C said we could use some of the material through assertion.

“They were confident this stuff was real, not being run against us. SIS believed the regime would collapse and there would be lots of defections etc. Very interesting meeting.”²⁰³

423. Sir Richard Dearlove told the Butler Review in 2004 that he had had a meeting with Mr Blair on 12 September to brief him on SIS operations in respect of Iraq, and that he had briefed the Prime Minister on each of SIS' main sources including the new source on trial.²⁰⁴

424. Sir Richard also told the Butler Review that he had:

“... underlined to the Prime Minister the potential importance of the new source [of the 11 September report] and what SIS understood his access to be; but also said that the case was developmental and that the source remained unproven.”

425. The Butler Report stated that SIS had hopes that this source would become a major asset.²⁰⁵ In particular, the source had indicated to SIS that he would be able to provide substantial and critical additional intelligence in the near future.

426. SIS4 suggested that Mr Blair had already known about the intelligence before the meeting between Mr Blair and Sir Richard Dearlove on 12 September, and that he wanted to see the product.²⁰⁶

²⁰² Minute [SIS internal record], 12 September 2002.

²⁰³ Campbell A & Hagerty B. *The Alastair Campbell Diaries. Volume 4. The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq*. Hutchinson, 2012.

²⁰⁴ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 578.

²⁰⁵ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 574.

²⁰⁶ Private hearing Part 1, page 58.

427. Sir Richard Dearlove told the Inquiry that “it would have been very rare” for him to have talked to Ministers or Mr Blair “about our source base”.²⁰⁷

428. Asked about Mr Blair’s reaction, Sir Richard told the Inquiry that Sir David Manning had asked him to give Mr Blair a briefing “which would give him [Mr Blair] more of a flavour for what was actually going on on the ground”.²⁰⁸ Mr Blair “had an appetite for that sort of briefing which was a pretty rare event”, and had had a “fair amount of general discussion” with SIS9 “about the difficulties and problems we were facing”.

429. Asked whether, as some witnesses had suggested, he had been precipitate in going to Ministers with the report so quickly, Sir Richard replied:

“I think in the circumstances, I don’t agree ... because if you issue a report like that in the middle of a crisis, you’re going to get a phone call from a Ministerial office within a short period of time.”²⁰⁹

430. Sir Richard also stated that in the circumstances it would have been “impossible” not to issue the report; SIS could not “sit on something as potentially important” as that.²¹⁰

431. The SIS report of 11 September was used by Mr Scarlett and Mr Miller in reaching key judgements about Iraq’s chemical and biological weapons capabilities included in the Government dossier published on 24 September.

432. Specifically it provided the assurance for the judgements that Iraq had:

- “continued to produce chemical and biological agents”;
- “military plans for the use of chemical and biological weapons ...”

433. The judgements on Iraq’s production of chemical and biological weapons and the circumstances in which they could be used became the baseline for subsequent advice to Ministers and public statements on the threat posed by Iraq.

434. The Butler Report concluded that the intelligence report (of 11 September) had “a major effect on the certainty of the statements in the Government’s dossier of September 2002 that Iraq possessed and was producing chemical and biological weapons”.²¹¹

435. The Butler Report added that the SIS report had provided “significant assurance to those drafting the ... dossier that active, current production of chemical and biological agent was taking place”.²¹²

²⁰⁷ Private hearing, 16 June 2010, page 53.

²⁰⁸ Private hearing, 13 July 2010, page 33.

²⁰⁹ Private hearing, 13 July 2010, pages 34-35.

²¹⁰ Private hearing, 13 July 2010, page 35.

²¹¹ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 401.

²¹² *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 405.

436. In the context of Sir Richard Dearlove's evidence, that he had told Mr Blair on 12 September 2002 that the SIS report issued on 11 September was developmental and the source unproven, the Butler Report stated:

"Nevertheless, it may be that, in the context of the intense interest at that moment in the status of Iraq's prohibited weapons programmes, and in particular continuing work on the dossier, the concurrence of events caused more weight to be given to this unvalidated new source than would normally have been the case."²¹³

437. In his evidence to the Inquiry, Sir Richard Dearlove maintained that material from the report of 11 September had not been used in the dossier:

"... maybe I should add now, because I'm sure you are going to question me ... I think this is an important point, so we don't waste too much time on it. I can say very authoritatively there was no material in the dossier [from the new source on trial in September 2002].

"I can also say, if you actually look at the introduction to the dossier, it refers to assessed intelligence, specifically assessed intelligence. [The new source on trial] was not assessed intelligence, and therefore are actually authoritatively excluded because they don't fall into that category, and I had put my foot down and said this material could not be used."²¹⁴

438. Sir Richard subsequently told the Inquiry that he had insisted that the September reporting was not included in the dossier because he wanted to retain the source for use during inspections.²¹⁵

439. Sir John Scarlett told the Inquiry that the "further intelligence" reporting on the "acceleration" of the "production of chemical and biological agent" was "regarded as significant".²¹⁶

440. Sir John subsequently stated that the report issued on 11 September was "influential" and "did famously influence what was said in the dossier".²¹⁷ He also referred to a further report from the same source in late September and that "a composite version" of the two reports had been "issued in early April 2003" and that it "was still considered to be sound reporting as of that date".

441. The SIS report of 23 September is addressed in the Box below.

²¹³ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* ["The Butler Report"], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 578.

²¹⁴ Private hearing, 16 June 2010, page 56.

²¹⁵ Private hearing, 13 July 2010, pages 30-31.

²¹⁶ Public hearing, 8 December 2009, page 41.

²¹⁷ Private hearing, 5 May 2010, page 20.

SIS report, 23 September 2002

On 23 September, SIS issued a second report from the same sourcing chain as the 11 September report. That stated VX, sarin and soman had been produced at Al-Yarmuk, and were loaded into a variety of “containers”, including “linked hollow glass spheres”. The source commented that there had been “accelerated production of CW substances at Al-Yarmuk for several years”. It was described by SIS as expanding and clarifying the intelligence in the first report, and that it was “valuable intelligence”.²¹⁸

The report was circulated to the same restricted group as the report on 11 September, with the addition of Mr Mark Bowman, Mr Brown’s Private Secretary.

It arrived too late to have influenced the conclusions in the dossier.

442. When the reporting was reissued in April 2003 Mr Scarlett was not informed that SIS had doubts about the reliability of the reporting chain. That is addressed in Section 4.3.

443. The potential impact of the reporting on Mr Blair’s statement to the House of Commons on 24 September is addressed later in this Section.

Mr Straw’s speech, 14 September 2002

Mr Straw’s speech to the UN General Assembly on 14 September focused on the critical role the UN had to play in world affairs, and the “three rising challenges” of failing states, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.²¹⁹

Addressing the threat from proliferation, Mr Straw stated: “Nowhere is the case for universal support for the enforcement of the UN’s law stronger than in the field of weapons of mass destruction.” He added:

“... with one infamous exception – no States have resorted to these, the world’s worst weapons.

“That exception is Iraq. For two decades, Saddam has defied and frustrated every attempt to enforce the international rule of law. Iraq is the only country to be condemned by the United Nations for breaching the Convention on Chemical Weapons. Iraq has fought two wars of aggression ... No country has deceived every other country in the world as systematically and cynically as Iraq. And no country presents as fundamental a challenge to the United Nations ...”

²¹⁸ Report [SIS], 23 September 2002, ‘Iraq Details of CW Production at Al Yarmuk’.

²¹⁹ FCO News, 14 September 2002, ‘*Security is not an option, it is a necessity - Straw (14/09/02)*’.

Draft dossier, 16 September 2002

444. In a note to No.10 officials covering a range of issues on 15 September, Mr Blair wrote on Iraq:

“The dossier is crucial. The expectations must be right. Remember the case we need to make is for the return of a tough inspection regime, not that he [Saddam Hussein] is about to launch a strike. In my view, advice to me from the JIC is sufficiently persuasive.”²²⁰

445. Mr Blair told the Hutton Inquiry:

“The purpose of the dossier was to respond to the call to disclose the intelligence we knew but at that stage the strategy was not to use the dossier as the immediate reason to go to conflict, but as the reason why we had to return to the issue of Saddam and weapons of mass destruction ...”²²¹

446. There were a number of significant changes in the revised draft of the dossier of 16 September, including giving prominence in the Executive Summary to:

- the IISS judgement that Iraq could obtain a nuclear weapon within months if it obtained fissile material, rather than the JIC’s more conservative view of one to two years which was not mentioned in the Summary;
- Saddam Hussein’s readiness to use weapons of mass destruction and his determination to retain them; and
- a statement that the JIC judged that Iraq continued to produce chemical and biological agents.

447. Mr Scarlett sent a revised version of the dossier to JIC members on 16 September, which put the description of Iraq’s chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic missile programmes first.²²²

448. The draft did not contain a draft Foreword; the development of the text signed by Mr Blair is discussed later in this Section.

449. The key additions to the Executive Summary from the previous draft were references to:

- the “valuable assessment” in the IISS paper of 9 September, including that it judged “Iraq could assemble nuclear weapons within months of obtaining fissile material from foreign sources”;

²²⁰ Note Blair [to No.10 officials], 15 September 2002, [extract ‘Iraq’].

²²¹ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 28 August 2003, page 10.

²²² Minute Scarlett to JIC Members, 16 September 2002, ‘Iraq WMD: Papers for Public Presentation’ attaching Paper, ‘Iraq’s Programme for Weapons of Mass Destruction: The British Government Assessment’.

- intelligence providing a “fuller picture of Iraq’s plans and capabilities” and showing that Saddam Hussein did “not regard them only as weapons of last resort”; he was “ready to use them ... and determined to retain them”; and
- intelligence allowing the JIC to judge that Iraq had “continued to produce chemical and biological agents”; and that Saddam Hussein and his son Qusay had “the political authority to use” WMD.

450. The draft included a new Chapter 1 on the role of intelligence, which stated:

“Intelligence rarely offers a complete account of activities which are designed to remain concealed. And the nature of Saddam’s regime makes Iraq a difficult target ... Nonetheless, we have been able to develop a range of well positioned sources. The need to protect and preserve these sources inevitably limits the detail that can be made available. But intelligence has provided important insights into Iraqi programmes, and into Iraqi military thinking. Taken together with what is already known from other sources, this builds our understanding of Iraq’s capabilities and adds significantly to the analysis already in the public domain.

“Iraq’s capabilities have been regularly reviewed by the ... JIC, which has provided advice to the Prime Minister on the developing assessment on the basis of all available sources ... [T]his paper includes some of the most significant views reached by the JIC between 1999 and 2002.”

451. The text on Iraq’s programmes was significantly expanded. As well as more detail on Iraq’s attempts to procure material that could be used for prohibited programmes, and judgements from JIC Assessments, changes to the previous text included:

- a box describing the effect of detonating a 20-kiloton nuclear warhead over a city;
- the addition of statements that: there had been “recent production of chemical and biological agents”; intelligence confirmed that Iraq continued to produce chemical agents; and “we know from intelligence that Iraq has continued to produce biological warfare agents”;
- a statement that intelligence had provided “**Confirmation**” that chemical and biological weapons played an important role in Iraqi military thinking;
- two separate statements that the Iraqi military “may be able to deploy” chemical and biological weapons within 45 minutes of a decision to do so;
- the replacing of the judgement that, if Iraq obtained fissile material, it would take at least two years to make a working nuclear device, by a statement that it would be “much shorter” than the five years Iraq would require to produce a nuclear weapon once sanctions were lifted or became ineffective, and, “depending on the effectiveness of Iraqi weapons design”, that could be “between one and two years”; and

- the replacing of the reference to an ability to produce an unreliable IND within a few months, by a reference to Iraqi experimentation with radiological dispersal devices (RDDs) during 1987, but the programme “never progressed beyond the research stage and was dropped”. A box described such devices as an “ineffective weapon”.

452. The draft also contained a new “Conclusion” summarising the current position.

453. Mr Scarlett asked that the “representatives” of JIC members attending a meeting to be chaired by Mr Miller at 0900 the following morning, should “come armed with suggested additions/ deletions/amendments to be decided at the meeting”.²²³ He also asked for “final comments” by 1300 on 17 September.

454. Mr Scarlett cautioned:

“In public presentation terms, this draft remains a highly sensitive document. I would therefore be grateful if you each retain very tight control over its distribution ...”

455. Mr Scarlett held a meeting “to work up a strategy on Iraq” later that day.²²⁴

456. A minute from Mr Kelly to Mr Campbell on 17 September suggests that this discussion was essentially about plans for printing and publishing the document and preparing supporting material.²²⁵

457. Mr Miller told the Hutton Inquiry that the draft dossier was discussed in a meeting he chaired on 17 September.²²⁶

458. The Defence Intelligence Staff expressed concerns that some of the statements in the draft on Iraq’s chemical and biological weapons could not be substantiated by the intelligence it had seen.

459. A member of the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) wrote to the Assessment Staff early on 17 September reflecting concerns that some of the statements on chemical and biological weapons in the draft could not be substantiated by the intelligence seen by the DIS.²²⁷ The comments included:

- **“Executive Summary, Para 3 – 1st Bullet:** The judgement ‘has continued to produce chemical and biological agents’ is too strong with respect to CW. ‘has probably’ would be as far as I would go. And ‘continued to produce BW agents’. This is quite strong considering what the int actually says. [Iraq has a biological production capability and can produce at least anthrax, botulinum toxin, aflatoxin

²²³ Minute Scarlett to JIC Members, 16 September 2002, ‘Iraq WMD: Papers for Public Presentation’.

²²⁴ Email Blackshaw to Kelly and Smith, 16 September 2002, ‘Iraq Strategy’.

²²⁵ Minute Kelly to Campbell, 17 September 2002, ‘Publication of the Dossier’.

²²⁶ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 11 August 2003, page 155.

²²⁷ Minute ADI PS [DIS junior official] to JIC Assessments Staff, 17 September 2002, ‘Iraqi WMD dossier – Comments on Revised Draft (15 Sept 2002)’.

and ricin within day of the order to do so. Sought mobile facilities to produce biological agent. [...]]”

- **“Executive Summary, Para 3 – 2nd Bullet:** The judgement ‘has military plans for the use of chemical and biological weapons, some of which could be ready within 45 minutes of an order to use them’. Is also rather strong since it is based on a single source. ‘Could say intelligence suggests ...’”
- **“Part 1, Chapter 2, Para 16:** The statement ‘... Iraq continues to produce chemical and biological agents.’ This is too strong. See comment above. Suggest ‘may continue to produce’ even ‘probably continues to produce’.”
- **“Part 1, Chapter 3, Para 1 – 1st Bullet:** The statement ‘which has included recent production of chemical and biological agents;’ is too strong from the CW perspective. This is based on a single source.”
- **“Part 1, Chapter 3, Para 5 Recent Intelligence:** From the CW perspective the language is too strong since the information is based on single sources. The wording ‘intelligence shows that’ is too strong and inappropriate” ‘reports that’, ‘indicates that’, ‘suggests that’ would be more appropriate.”
- **“Part 1, Chapter 3, Para 8 – Line 1:** The statement ‘Intelligence confirms that Iraq has continued to produce chemical agent.’ This is far too strong considering the available evidence. The word confirms is totally inappropriate. “Intelligence suggests that ...’ would be better”.
- **“Part 1, Chapter 3, Para 12:** The statement ‘We know from intelligence that Iraq has continued to produce BW agents’. This is quite strong considering what the int actually says ...”
- **“Part 1, Chapter 3, Para 16:** The statement ‘Iraq has continued to produce CBW agent’. Some elements of the summary repeat the same overly strong statements as in the rest of this chapter.”

460. The response to the DIS concerns is addressed later in this Section.

461. Mr Blair and officials within No.10 offered a number of comments on the draft.

462. Mr Pruce commented that the new draft:

- “re-ordered the text, with the new intell nearer the front (might be able to bring it further forward)”;
- “added a short chapter on JIC and intelligence”, which was “Good but could give more details”;
- “kept in the longer nuclear timelines ... We need to think carefully about how these will appear to compare with the IISS figure of a weapon within a few months”; and

- “added a short conclusions table – not sure this adds a lot to the Executive Summary”.²²⁸

463. Mr Pruce summarised:

“The re-organised material paints a more convincing picture, but the facts remain thin on nuclear”.

464. Mr Campbell sent Mr Scarlett his and Mr Blair’s comments on the draft dossier on 17 September.²²⁹

465. Mr Campbell wrote that Mr Blair thought it was “a very good job and it was convincing”, but had a number of comments. These included that Mr Blair:

- thought the chapter on the current position on Iraq’s chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic missile programmes “should be re-ordered, to build towards the conclusion through detail”;
- “like me, was worried about the way you have expressed the nuclear issue ... Can we not go back ... to ‘radiological device’ in months; nuclear bomb in 1-2 years with help; 5 years with no sanctions”;
- “thought we should make more of the ‘no civil nuclear’ point, and list dual-use products”; and
- “felt we don’t do enough on human rights”.

466. Mr Campbell’s own comments included:

- “... we should make more of the point about current concealment plans.”
- The Executive Summary “would be stronger if we said that despite sanctions and the policy of containment, he [Saddam Hussein] has made real progress”.
- The statement that Saddam’s sons “may have” the authority to use chemical and biological weapons in the text was weaker than the statement in the Summary that they had that authority.
- “Can we say that he [Saddam] has secured uranium from Africa?”

467. Mr Campbell also asked for Mr Scarlett’s views on the draft Foreword for Mr Blair. This is addressed later in this Section.

468. In his diaries Mr Campbell wrote:

“I got the new dossier draft and did detailed comments ... TB also read it and made some comments. Nuclear was the most difficult part. Scarlett and I chatted away re that.”²³⁰

²²⁸ Email Pruce to Kelly, Campbell and others, 17 September 2002, ‘Dossier – 16 September Draft’.

²²⁹ Minute Campbell to Scarlett, 17 September 2002, [untitled].

²³⁰ Campbell A & Hagerty B. *The Alastair Campbell Diaries. Volume 4. The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq*. Hutchinson, 2012.

469. In an email to Mr Scarlett on 17 September, Mr Powell wrote:

“The dossier is good and convincing for those who are prepared to be convinced

“I have only three points, none of which affect the way the document is drafted or presented

“First the document does nothing to demonstrate a threat, let alone an imminent threat from Saddam In other words it shows he has the means but it does not demonstrate he has the motive to attack his neighbours let alone the west We will need to make clear in launching the document that we do not claim to have evidence that he is an imminent threat The case we are making is that he has continued to develop WMD since 1998, and is in breach of UN resolutions The international community has to enforce those resolutions if the UN is to be taken seriously

“Second we will be asked about connections with Al Qaida [...]

“Third, if I was Saddam I would take a party of western journalists to the Ibn Sina factory or one of the others pictured in the document to demonstrate there is nothing there How do we close off that avenue to him in advance?”²³¹

470. In his response Mr Scarlett stated:

- A note was being prepared on Iraq and Al Qaida.
- The dossier stressed the problems [in identifying prohibited activities], posed by dual-use facilities and the ease of concealment. That “applied to trained inspectors let alone journalists”.²³²

471. Mr Campbell commented:

“I think we risk complicating the issue if we get into links with Al Qaida The dossier, and the debate in Parliament, are explicitly about Iraq/WMD On the question of sites, we should in our briefing make clear that we assume he will sanitise one of them for the media, and pull some stunt, but remain robust re our judgements Re the ‘imminent threat’, point, that is why TB’s foreword sets out ‘the case I am making’. John, I will show him your revisions and hopefully get the Foreword signed off today”.²³³

472. In a further email on 18 September, Mr Powell emphasised that he was “not suggesting any changes to the dossier, just flagging up points where we are going to need to mould expectations in advance of publication and on publication”.²³⁴

²³¹ Email Powell to Scarlett, 17 September 2002, ‘Dossier’.

²³² Email Scarlett to Powell, 18 September 2002, ‘Re Dossier’.

²³³ Email Campbell to Scarlett and Powell, 18 September 2002, ‘Re: Dossier’.

²³⁴ Email Powell to Campbell and Scarlett, 18 September 2002, ‘Re: Dossier’.

473. Mr Powell concluded:

“The threat argument will be a major problem in the press/parliamentary assault after the dossier comes out and we need to flag up the point in the preface at publication and during the debate We need to set the test for ourselves at a level we can meet”.

474. Later on 18 September, Mr Campbell sent Mr Scarlett the impressions of a member of his team whom he had asked to read the draft.²³⁵ Mr Campbell wrote that “Overall, she found it convincing”, “CW/BW in particular”. She had, however, found the nuclear section confused and unconvincing, and it had left her thinking that there was “nothing much to worry about”. The section “lacked the clarity of the rest of the document”.

475. Mr Campbell added:

“Sorry to bombard on this point, but I do worry that the nuclear section will become the main focus and as currently drafted is not in great shape.”

476. Mr Scarlett informed Mr Campbell that he had seen the comments and was taking account of them in the revision of the dossier.²³⁶

477. Commenting on the Executive Summary, Mr Ed Owen, Mr Straw’s Special Adviser, wrote that it did not read “well enough to give a sceptical reader the confidence to believe that the dossier provides the necessary information”.²³⁷

Draft dossier, 19 September 2002

478. Mr Scarlett informed the JIC on 18 September of the latest position on the draft dossier, and that “a final version would have to be agreed and with the printers by the end of the following day”.²³⁸

479. The co-ordination arrangements for producing the draft and deciding on its handling had “gone well”. Mr Scarlett also “said he wanted to thank all those from the intelligence community who had played a part in the document’s production. Their helpful, balanced, co-operative and collaborative approach had been much appreciated.”

480. There is no record of any substantive points being raised.

481. Sir Stephen Lander, Director General of the Security Service, Sir Francis Richards, Sir Richard Dearlove, Mr Webb, Mr Cragg, and Sir David Omand were amongst those present. Sir David Manning, AM French and Mr Bowen were not present.

²³⁵ Email Hatfield to Scarlett, 18 September 2002, ‘Another dossier memo’.

²³⁶ Email Scarlett to Campbell, 18 September 2002, ‘Another dossier memo’.

²³⁷ Email Owen to Scarlett and others, 17 September 2002, ‘Re Iraq – Dossier’.

²³⁸ Minutes, 18 September 2002, JIC meeting.

482. Mr Scarlett told the Hutton Inquiry that at the JIC on 18 September:

“The Committee also noted that some new intelligence had come in on nuclear matters which would need to be incorporated in the draft.

“The Committee raised no particular point – no points of further debate or contention.”²³⁹

483. On 18 September, Mr Scarlett sent Mr Campbell detailed responses to his and Mr Blair’s comments.²⁴⁰

484. The response to Mr Blair’s comments included:

- The revised restructuring suggested by Mr Blair would have “less impact than the original”.
- Mr Scarlett had explained “the decision to drop earlier references to an improvised nuclear device, on which there is no intelligence”.
- No change had been made to the timelines for Iraq to acquire a nuclear weapon which summarised the JIC position, but one paragraph had been revised to bring out the judgements more clearly.
- Dual-use products had been listed separately; and the impact was “much improved”.
- Material on human rights abuses had been added and the issue was given “a little more prominence” in the Executive Summary.

485. Mr Scarlett also addressed Mr Campbell’s more detailed comments, including that the language on current concerns and plans had been strengthened and the Summary brought out the point suggested by Mr Campbell – that Iraq was making progress despite sanctions and containment.

486. Addressing comments in Mr Campbell’s minute of 17 September, Mr Scarlett told the Hutton Inquiry:

“... we looked again at what we were saying in the draft about Iraq’s concealment plans and activities – what the intelligence was saying, and also how we were expressing the success or otherwise of sanctions and the policy of containment.

“This, of course, was a point that we had been expressly asked to highlight by the JIC at its meeting of 11 September.

“... [I]ntelligence ... was very clear about Iraq’s confidence that it could learn lessons from its past experience with the inspectors, and pursue effective concealment plans.”²⁴¹

²³⁹ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 23 September 2003, page 88.

²⁴⁰ Minute Scarlett to Campbell, 18 September 2002, ‘Iraq: Weapons of Mass Destruction’.

²⁴¹ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 23 September 2003, pages 94-95.

487. In his diaries, Mr Campbell recorded that, on 18 September, he also:

“... went through nuclear section with Julian Miller, which was OK. JS [Jack Straw] was keen to keep in the very downbeat assessment.”²⁴²

488. In an email on 19 September, Mr Campbell recorded that he told Mr Miller:

“... it would be simpler to have just one clearer section on nuclear timelines, perhaps along the following lines ...

“It is impossible to be precise about nuclear timelines We can be clear however, that provided sanctions and export controls remain in place and effective, it is not possible for Iraq to develop nuclear weapons. This is because although they have the expertise, the design data, the planning and the intent they do not have the material necessary for the production of fissile material. This contrasts with CW/BW, which they can produce indigenously. Even if sanctions were removed, we assess that it would take up to five years for them to develop nuclear weapons. The timelines are considerably shortened however if Iraq manages to obtain fissile material illegally from overseas In these circumstances, the JIC assessed in early 2002 that they could produce nuclear weapons in between one and two years”.²⁴³

489. Mr Scarlett sent the draft dossier to Mr Campbell on 19 September.²⁴⁴

490. The minute was also sent to JIC members “on a personal basis, reflecting the continuing sensitivity of the document and the imperative need to avoid leaks”.

They were asked to let Mr Scarlett have “any essential further comments on this draft by 15:00 today”.

491. Mr Scarlett wrote:

“I should draw your attention to some changes to the Executive Summary reflecting comments from the Foreign Office; to a simplified account of Saddam’s nuclear programme; and to a restructuring of the final section on Saddam’s Iraq to bring out the human rights issues more clearly. In particular you should note that we have toned down the reference to aluminium tubes ... and removed it from the Executive Summary. This reflects some very recent exchanges on intelligence channels. Finally, I have recast the conclusion to remove the chart, which a number of readers considered to lack impact.”

²⁴² Campbell A & Hagerty B. *The Alastair Campbell Diaries. Volume 4. The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq*. Hutchinson, 2012.

²⁴³ Email Hatfield to Scarlett, 19 September 2002, ‘Nuclear Section’.

²⁴⁴ [Minute Scarlett to Campbell, 19 September 2002, ‘Iraqi WMD: Public Presentation of Intelligence Material’](#) attaching Paper, 19 September 2002, ‘Iraq’s Programme for Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government’.

492. A concluding paragraph in the Executive Summary, stating that Saddam Hussein would “use his weapons of mass destruction to protect and eventually project his power”, reflected a revised Conclusions section at the end of the paper which stated:

“Four themes dominate even the most sober account of Saddam Hussein’s rule in Iraq:

- Brutality ... against his own people,
- Aggression against neighbour states,
- Cynicism in dealing with the Iraqi people, regional states and the International Community; and,
- Single minded pursuit of military power and above all weapons of mass destruction as the most effective means of exercising that power.

“This paper has set out our assessment of Saddam’s current holdings ... as well as his programmes for their development. Although our knowledge is partial, the paper concludes that he possesses mass destruction weapons and the means to produce them and to deliver them. His development programmes continue. An analysis of what he will do with these weapons now and in the future, must rest upon his record and our current information, including intelligence. It is reasonable to conclude that he will use whatever weaponry he has to hand to protect his power and eventually to project it when he feels strong enough to do so.”

493. Other changes included:

- the firming up of the judgement on the timeline for deploying chemical and biological weapons, from “may be able” to deploy within 45 minutes to “are able”;
- the addition of a statement that Iraq had learned lessons from its previous experience with inspections to identify and exploit weak points and that sensitive equipment and papers were easily concealed;
- the addition of a statement that the “possession of mobile biological agent production facilities” would “also aid concealment efforts”; and
- the omission of the box explaining the difficulties of producing a nuclear weapon and the inclusion of one which described the elements of a nuclear programme and the process to convert those elements into a reliable weapon. The only comment on the difficulty was that the complexity was “much greater for a weapon that can fit into a missile warhead than for a larger Nagasaki-type [free fall] bomb”.

494. In an email to Mr Scarlett, Mr Campbell commented that he did not think the revised Conclusion worked and that he would “either revert to, and strengthen” the previous format (a box summarising key points), or drop the section.²⁴⁵ Mr Campbell also wrote that the Foreword covered most of the points made in the Conclusion.

²⁴⁵ Email Campbell to Scarlett, 19 September 2002, [untitled].

495. In an email to Mr Campbell and Mr Scarlett on the afternoon of 19 September, Mr Powell wrote that he agreed with Mr Campbell that the Conclusion should be dropped.²⁴⁶

496. Mr Powell also:

- asked what headline “we want” in the *Standard* on the day of publication; and
- pointed out that the statement that Saddam Hussein was “prepared to use chemical and biological weapons if he believes his regime is under threat is a bit of a problem”, because it backed up the argument that there was “no CBW threat and we will only create one if we attack him”.

497. Mr Powell added:

“My memory of the intelligence is that he has set up plans to use CBW on western forces and that these weapons are integrated into his military planning.”

498. In further comments later on 19 September, Mr Campbell raised three further points in relation to nuclear weapons.²⁴⁷

499. In relation to the time required to produce a nuclear weapon, the draft text on nuclear timelines (paragraph 23) stated:

“In early 2002, the JIC assessed that UN sanctions on Iraq were hindering the import of crucial goods for the production of fissile material. The JIC judged that while sanctions remain effective, Iraq would not be able indigenously to produce a nuclear weapon. If they were removed or proved ineffective, it would take Iraq at least five years to produce a weapon. But we know that Iraq retains expertise and design data relating to nuclear weapons. We therefore judge that if Iraq obtained fissile material and other essential components from foreign sources, the timeline for production of a nuclear weapon would be shortened and Iraq could produce a nuclear weapon in between one and two years.”²⁴⁸

500. Apologising for not having spotted the point earlier, Mr Campbell wrote:

“If we are saying that it would take between one and 2 years for them to build a nuclear weapon by illegal means, why would it take 5 years with no sanctions? A lay reader may assume that no sanctions would mean he could do what he wanted and therefore, presumably, what he needed between 1 and 2 years

“If the answer is that it would take 5 years to go from planning to reality, whereas he could purchase ready-made material from overseas, and so cut the timelines, I think that should be made explicitly clear”.

²⁴⁶ Email Powell to Campbell, 19 September 2002, ‘RE: [untitled]’

²⁴⁷ Email Blackshaw to Scarlett, 19 September 2002, ‘Re final points for your 5pm meeting’.

²⁴⁸ Paper Assessments Staff, 19 September 2002, ‘Iraq’s Programme for Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government’.

501. Secondly, Mr Campbell commented that the draft text on radiological dispersal devices added little.

502. Finally, Mr Campbell suggested that the text of the draft relating to attempts to purchase two different machines which “could be used” in a gas centrifuge uranium enrichment process (paragraph 21, fourth and fifth bullets), might be amended to read “is required to”.²⁴⁹

503. In his diaries on 19 September, Mr Campbell wrote:

“Most of my work at the moment was on the dossier. Nuclear timelines just about sorted ... I agreed to drop the conclusion. Some people reasonably convinced, others not. We’d end up convincing those who wanted to be and not those who didn’t.”²⁵⁰

504. Sir Richard Dearlove told the Hutton Inquiry that he “reported to my directors, I think on 19 September that we had had full visibility of the process of preparing the dossier and that the whole process had gone extremely well”.²⁵¹

Preparation of Mr Blair’s Foreword

505. The Foreword for the dossier was largely written by Mr Campbell, following conversations with Mr Blair. It was produced in the week before publication separately from the main text of the dossier.

506. Mr Scarlett and the JIC were asked for comments.

507. In comments on the Foreword in the draft dossier of 10 September, Mr Pruce wrote:

“... the Foreword is good but whose voice is it? Do we need a Minister to sign it off? Probably not”.²⁵²

508. Mr Sedwill wrote that the Foreword needed to make Saddam Hussein’s defiance of the UN “a key issue”.²⁵³ This was what distinguished him “from other dictators and holders of WMD”.

²⁴⁹ Email Blackshaw to Scarlett, 19 September 2002, ‘Re final points for your 5pm meeting’.

²⁵⁰ Campbell A & Hagerty B. *The Alastair Campbell Diaries. Volume 4. The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq*. Hutchinson, 2012.

²⁵¹ The National Archives, 28 January 2004, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly* [“The Hutton Report”], paragraph 187.

²⁵² Email Pruce to Campbell, 11 September 2002, ‘Draft Dossier (J Scarlett Version of 10 Sept)’.

²⁵³ [Email Sedwill to Gray, 11 September 2002, ‘Dossier 10/9 Version - Comments’](#).

509. Mr Owen agreed with Mr Sedwill. He suggested that the Foreword needed:

“... to refer to the UN in the first sentences. This is after all, about the authority of the UN and international law. This is the only way we can win the argument in Parliament and elsewhere ...”²⁵⁴

510. Mr Straw suggested that the Foreword for the dossier “should be in a narrative form” by Mr Blair, and that it needed “a killer” paragraph on “Saddam’s defiance of the UN, only annexation of another member state and unprecedented use of WMD”.²⁵⁵

511. Writing before the decision had been taken that Mr Blair would sign the Foreword or the text had been drafted, Mr Bowen wrote:

“I take it as read that the Foreword is a political piece, signed by the Prime Minister or another Minister. In that text it would be useful to make the point that what follows is the work of officials drawing on sensitive intelligence material. The Foreword can be as loaded as we like in terms of the political message (provided it is consistent with the dossier itself), whereas the text itself should be the judgement of the experts.”²⁵⁶

512. The minute was copied to Mr Campbell, Mr Powell and Sir David Manning.

513. Mr Campbell produced a draft Foreword for Mr Blair on 16 September.²⁵⁷
The draft began:

“The document published today is the work of the Joint Intelligence Committee ...”

514. Referring to the intelligence which had “formed the judgements” in the dossier, the draft stated:

“I and other Ministers have been briefed in detail on the sources, and are satisfied as to their authority, and the authority of the information they have disclosed.

“What I believe they established beyond doubt is that Saddam has continued to produce chemical and biological weapons that he continues in his efforts to develop nuclear weapons, and to extend the range of his ballistic missile programme.

“This picture ... has become more not less worrying. Faced with the picture put before me on seeing a succession of JIC papers on the subject, as Prime Minister I have a choice: do I ignore this evidence or do I act to address the threat?”

²⁵⁴ Email Owen to Sedwill, 11 September 2002, ‘Dossier 10/9 Version – Comments’.

²⁵⁵ Email Sedwill to Gray, 11 September 2002, ‘Iraq Dossier: 10/9 Version – Foreign Secretary’s Comments’.

²⁵⁶ Minute Bowen to Scarlett, 11 September 2002, ‘The Iraq Dossier’.

²⁵⁷ Email Hatfield to Blackshaw, 16 September 2002, ‘Draft’ attaching Document, [undated], ‘Dossier Foreword by TB’.

“I am in no doubt that the threat is serious, and current; and that he has made progress on WMD and that he has to be stopped.”

515. The draft concluded:

“The case I make is not that Saddam could launch a nuclear attack on London or another part of the UK (He could not). The case I make is that the UN resolution[s] demanding he stops his WMD programme are being flouted; that since the inspectors left four years ago, he has continued with this programme; and the inspectors must be allowed in to do their job properly.

“It is the minimum necessary to ensure that he does not get to use the weapons he has, or get hold of the weapons he wants.”

516. A draft was sent to Mr Powell and Sir David Manning on 17 September, asking for comments as soon as possible before it was shown to Mr Blair or Mr Scarlett.²⁵⁸

517. Mr Powell offered three comments on the Foreword:

- “I think it is worth explicitly stating, as TB keeps saying, this is the advice to him from the JIC. On the basis of this advice what other action could he as PM take. Something like ‘I am today taking the exceptional step of publishing the JIC’s advice to me because I want MPs and the British public to see the advice on which I am acting. When you have read this I ask you to consider what else a responsible PM could do than follow the course we have in the face of the advice?’”
- “We need to do more to back up the assertions. We cannot of course publish the detailed raw intelligence on which this report is based without endangering the lives of agents. But all the statements in this report are backed up by detailed intelligence reports, the veracity and sources of which have been verified by the intelligence agencies. Is there any independent verification we can cite?”
- “In the penultimate para you need to make it clear Saddam could not attack us at the moment. The thesis is he would be a threat to the UK in the future if we do not check him.”²⁵⁹

518. When Mr Campbell sent his and Mr Blair’s comments on the draft dossier to Mr Scarlett on 17 September, he also asked Mr Scarlett for his views on the draft Foreword.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Email Blackshaw to Manning, 17 September 2002, ‘Iraq Dossier Foreword’. The draft was replaced 20 minutes later by a slightly amended version circulated with – Email Hatfield to Powell, 17 September 2002, ‘Revised Dossier Foreword’.

²⁵⁹ Email Powell to Campbell and Manning, 17 September 2002, ‘Re: Revised Dossier Foreword’.

²⁶⁰ Minute Campbell to Scarlett, 17 September 2002, [untitled].

519. Mr Campbell wrote that Mr Blair:

“... has also read my draft Foreword, which I enclose (he will want another look at it before finally signing it off but I’d appreciate your views at this stage).”

520. The draft Foreword was sent to Mr Scarlett by Mr Campbell’s office.²⁶¹

521. The original version of the final paragraph had been amended to read:

“I believe that faced with the information given to me by the JIC in recent months, the UK Government has been right to support the demands that this issue be confronted and dealt with. We must ensure that he does not get to use the weapons he has, or get hold of the weapons he wants.”

522. Mr Scarlett sent suggested changes to the draft Foreword to Mr Campbell on 18 September.²⁶² The changes included:

- The first sentence was revised to state: “The document published today is based, in large part, on the work of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), which is chaired by the Cabinet Office ...”
- The second sentence of the second paragraph was revised to make clear that it was the Government, not the JIC, which was publishing the document.
- The fifth sentence of the fourth paragraph was amended to remove the reference to Mr Blair and Ministers having been briefed on the sources of intelligence and having been satisfied as to the authority of their information. It was amended to state: “I and other Ministers have been briefed in detail on the intelligence and are satisfied as to its authority.”
- A new final sentence was added to the fifth paragraph stating: “I also believe that, as stated in the document, Saddam will now do his utmost to try to conceal his weapons from the UN inspectors.”
- A new final sentence was added to the eighth paragraph stating: “I am quite clear that he will go to extreme lengths, indeed has already done so, to avoid giving them up.”
- The reference to information from the JIC “in recent months”, in the first sentence of the final paragraph, was replaced by the words “over the past three years”.

523. Mr Scarlett also wrote:

“For me the key points are the references to the JIC and the use of intelligence. I am now seeking views of JIC colleagues on this amended text and will revert as soon as possible.”

²⁶¹ Email Blackshaw on behalf of Campbell to Scarlett, 17 September 2002, ‘Views Please’; Email Hatfield on behalf of Campbell to Scarlett, 17 September 2002, [untitled].

²⁶² Email Scarlett to Campbell, 18 September 2002, ‘PM’s dossier foreword’.

524. The same version of the Foreword was sent to members of the JIC with the following message from Mr Scarlett:

“This is under active discussion now and reflects amendments I have made. The aim is to have the text agreed by close of play today. Please come ready to discuss at this afternoon’s JIC meeting.”²⁶³

525. The Government has been unable to find the original document but an email to Sir David Omand and Mr Miller indicates that it was dispatched late morning on 18 September.²⁶⁴

526. Mr Campbell informed Mr Scarlett on 18 September that Mr Blair had “signed off” the Foreword, and that it incorporated “all the points you made on the draft I sent yesterday”.²⁶⁵

527. Sir David Omand responded to Mr Scarlett on 18 September:

“Coming on well. You will have more than enough comment. Highlighted on the attached copy are a few suggested polishings.”²⁶⁶

528. The changes proposed by Sir David included amending:

- the text in the first sentence of the first paragraph, to read: “... in large part, on secret intelligence, as assessed by the Joint Intelligence Committee ...”;
- the third paragraph to read: “In recent months, I have been increasingly alarmed by the evidence from inside Iraq that despite sanctions, despite the damage done to his capability in the past, and despite the UNSCRs expressly outlawing it, and despite his denials, Saddam Hussein is continuing to develop WMD ...”;
- the fifth paragraph by replacing the words “the JIC reports to me have” in the first sentence with the words “the assessed intelligence has”;
- the eighth paragraph by replacing the reference in the second sentence to Saddam Hussein seeing “possession of WMD” as vital to his strategic interests with the phrase “building up of his WMD capability”, and adding a reference in the final sentence to hiding weapons as one of the ways to avoid giving them up; and
- the final paragraph by replacing the reference to information given to Mr Blair by the JIC over the last three years with a reference to the information “available” to Mr Blair.

²⁶³ [Note, \[18 September 2002\], ‘Message from John Scarlett’.](#)

²⁶⁴ [Email JIC Action Desk to Omand & Miller, 18 September 2002, ‘Urgent message to JIC members & enclosure’.](#)

²⁶⁵ Email Hatfield on behalf of Campbell to Scarlett, 18 September 2002, ‘Foreword’.

²⁶⁶ [Email Omand to JIC Action desk, 18 September 2002, ‘Revised Foreword’ attaching ‘Scarlett amended Draft TB Foreword – dossier.doc’.](#)

529. Sir David Omand told the Inquiry that he did not recall the JIC discussing the text of the Foreword at its meeting on 18 September.²⁶⁷

530. Mr Webb recorded that he had asked for the reference to [JIC] “papers” in the draft to be replaced by “work”, “to reduce the risk of a FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] action succeeding”.²⁶⁸

531. The Inquiry has not seen comments from any JIC members other than Sir David Omand and Mr Webb.

532. Sir David told the Inquiry that he had “highlighted bits that needed polishing” and “sent it back” to Mr Scarlett.²⁶⁹ Some of his comments had been incorporated and some had not.

533. Comparison of the draft texts shows that almost all Sir David Omand’s comments were reflected in a further version of the draft Foreword sent by Mr Scarlett to Mr Campbell on 19 September.²⁷⁰

534. Mr Campbell replied to Mr Scarlett on 19 September:

“Re the foreword, I don’t like the first sentence which makes him sound a bit James Bond-y. Can we discuss?”²⁷¹

535. In the published version of the Foreword, the first sentence did not include Sir David Omand’s proposed amendment.²⁷²

536. Mr Scarlett sent a “final draft version of the dossier” to Mr Campbell on 20 September.²⁷³ He wrote that the Prime Minister’s Foreword was “now incorporated within the overall document”.

537. In his letter to Mr Blair of 4 June 2003, Mr Scarlett wrote:

“The Foreword was drafted by you. I and some JIC members, commented on your draft before it was finalised.”²⁷⁴

²⁶⁷ Public hearing, 20 January 2010, page 19.

²⁶⁸ [Minute Webb to PS/Secretary of State \[MOD\], 20 September 2002, ‘Iraq Dossier’.](#)

²⁶⁹ Public hearing, 20 January 2010, page 22.

²⁷⁰ Email Scarlett to Campbell, 19 September 2002, ‘Dossier Foreword by TB’.

²⁷¹ Email Blackshaw [on behalf of Campbell] to Scarlett, 19 September 2002, [untitled].

²⁷² *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 3.

²⁷³ Minute Scarlett to Campbell, 20 September 2002, ‘Iraqi WMD: Public Presentation of Intelligence Material’ attaching draft dossier, ‘Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government’.

²⁷⁴ [Minute Scarlett to Prime Minister, 4 June 2003, ‘September 2002 Iraq Dossier’.](#)

538. In a letter to Mr Tam Dalyell on 16 July 2003, Mr Blair wrote:

“I have always made it clear that the Foreword was signed by me and was separate to the Executive Summary and the body of the text of the ... dossier ...

...

“The Foreword was put to the Chairman of the JIC who confirmed at the time that there was nothing which conflicted with the contents of the dossier.”²⁷⁵

539. Asked whether he had drafted the Foreword, Mr Campbell told the ISC that normally he, “Jonathan Powell and others would have ideas and we’d probably have a discussion with the Prime Minister”.²⁷⁶ In relation to the Foreword in the dossier, Mr Blair had been “very ‘hands on’ in terms of what was produced and what was sent ... to John Scarlett”.

540. Mr Scarlett told the ISC that he had checked and amended the draft Foreword “for factual accuracy and consistency with the text”, but he regarded it “as a policy statement by the Prime Minister”.²⁷⁷

541. Mr Campbell told the Hutton Inquiry that he had “prepared a draft [of the Foreword] based upon a discussion with the Prime Minister, and with others, about what should go into that draft”.²⁷⁸

542. Asked about how the Foreword had been produced, Mr Blair told the Hutton Inquiry:

“... as I say in my statement ... I would have told Alastair Campbell what are the items I think that are important, specific points that should be in it, on the basis of the drafts produced ... I should say at this point that probably my statement [to Parliament on 24 September] was the thing I was concentrating most upon.”²⁷⁹

543. In his subsequent evidence to the Hutton Inquiry, Mr Campbell confirmed that the Foreword had been drafted on the basis of a discussion with Mr Blair and Mr Campbell’s colleagues.²⁸⁰

544. Mr Campbell told the Inquiry that Mr Blair had:

“... said in terms intelligence can’t give you the whole picture, intelligence is not necessarily always going to be right, but the intelligence he saw ... and as it was explained to him and as he had repeated discussions and

²⁷⁵ Letter Blair to Dalyell, 16 July 2003, [untitled].

²⁷⁶ The Hutton Inquiry, ‘Extracts of evidence given by Alastair Campbell to ISC 17/07/03’, page 11.

²⁷⁷ Intelligence and Security Committee, *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments*, Cm5972, September 2003, paragraph 76.

²⁷⁸ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 19 August 2003, page 44.

²⁷⁹ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 28 August 2003, pages 8-9.

²⁸⁰ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 22 September 2003, page 173.

meetings about it, it led him to the conclusion, as he set out in the Foreword, that he did believe it was established beyond doubt that Saddam had continued to produce chemical and biological weapons, that he continued to put his efforts to develop nuclear weapons, and that he has been able to extend the range of his ballistic missile programme, and he sees WMD as essential to his political survival.”²⁸¹

545. Sir Richard Dearlove told the Inquiry that he did not recall seeing the Foreword.²⁸²

The final version of the dossier

546. Mr Scarlett sent a “final draft version of the dossier” to Mr Campbell on 20 September.²⁸³ He wrote that he had taken account of additional comments received over the last 24 hours, and that he was:

“... content that the text now reflects as fully and accurately as possible the intelligence picture on Saddam’s mass destruction weapons.”

547. Copies of the minute and draft dossier were sent to Mr Powell, Sir David Manning, Sir David Omand and “JIC Members”.

548. The draft included Mr Blair’s Foreword. Other changes from the previous draft included:

- the omission of the Conclusions section;
- amendment of the text on nuclear timelines to clarify that “while sanctions remain effective Iraq would not be able to produce a nuclear weapon. If they were removed or prove ineffective, it would take Iraq at least five years to produce sufficient fissile material for a weapon indigenously”;
- removal of the reference to RDDs; and
- omission of the phrase “if he believes his regime is under threat”, in relation to the statement that Saddam Hussein would be willing to use chemical and biological weapons.

549. The text in the published version relating to machines which could be used in a gas centrifuge process was not changed.

550. In response to questioning about his decision to omit the qualifying phrase in relation to Saddam Hussein only using chemical and biological weapons if his regime was under attack, and the impact of that omission on the perception of the threat, Mr Scarlett told Lord Hutton that the change “was as a result of the exercise

²⁸¹ Public hearing, 12 January 2010, page 90.

²⁸² Private hearing, 16 June 2010, page 57.

²⁸³ Minute Scarlett to Campbell, 20 September 2002, ‘Iraqi WMD: Public Presentation of Intelligence Material’ attaching Paper, 20 September 2002, ‘Iraq’s Programme for Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government’.

of my professional judgement and that of my colleagues in [the] Assessment Staff”.²⁸⁴ They had been “prompted to look again” at that passage by Mr Powell’s email, of 19 September, in the context of the “instructions from the JIC to keep what we were writing in line with standing JIC assessments and also with recent intelligence”:

“When we looked at it again, we realised ... that there was no standing JIC assessment which made it clear whether we were defining Saddam’s threat ... or CW posture ... as defensive or offensive. More to the point, there was recent reporting, in addition, which was not reflected here, but which was quite clear reporting, which placed his attachment to CBW and the importance that he placed on it very much in the context of his perception of his regional position, his plan to acquire and maintain regional influence and, as one report, and maybe more, put it: to dominate his neighbours. In other words, the recent intelligence was more complex ... Bearing those points in mind, we concluded that this was not right and therefore we took that out.”

551. Mr Webb sent Mr Hoon a copy of the draft dossier on 20 September, advising that it had been “given an extremely restricted circulation (essentially JIC members only)” and that he had “no discretion to copy this document further”.²⁸⁵ Arrangements were being made to brief Opposition leaders, Select Committee chairs and junior ministers on 23 September before the debate on 24 September, and key allies.

552. Mr Webb told Mr Hoon that AM French’s staff had been “closely associated with the preparation of the detail of the dossier” and he understood they were “content from a professional DIS point of view with the judgements” it contained. The paragraphs on the acquisition of aluminium tubes and nuclear timelines were “more cautious” than US Department of Defence views and no consultation with the US was planned “outside intelligence and White House channels”.

553. Mr Webb concluded that he had:

“... some reservations as a JIC member about citing the Committee’s views explicitly (lest we become less usefully direct in our future judgements) but the way this has been achieved has reassured me.

“Overall I am content to recommend the material ...”

554. The record of Mr Scarlett’s meeting at 1300 on 20 September stated that copies of the dossier would be made available for Cabinet on 23 September.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ The National Archives, 28 January 2004, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly* [“The Hutton Report”], paragraph 215.

²⁸⁵ [Minute Webb to PS/Secretary of State \[MOD\], 20 September 2002, ‘Iraq Dossier’.](#)

²⁸⁶ Minute [Cabinet Office] to Rycroft and others, 20 September 2002, ‘Iraq Dossier: Public Handling and Briefing’.

555. Mr Blair had “committed” Mr Scarlett to provide “an intelligence briefing” for the Chairs of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Select Committees and the Intelligence and Security Committee in the week of 16 September.²⁸⁷

556. In a minute to Mr Blair in June 2003, Mr Scarlett wrote:

“As is natural in the JIC drafting process, there was a debate about a number of issues ... but agreement was reached on the final text ...”²⁸⁸

557. Mr Scarlett also wrote:

“The JIC agreed that all intelligence-based sections in the document would be submitted to it before they were finalised. The draft assessment was discussed at the JIC on 11 and 18 September. The final draft was circulated to JIC members on 19 September and subsequently agreed by them. It was sent to me by Alastair Campbell on 20 September²⁸⁹ ... I regarded this as the formal moment at which I was taking responsibility for its contents. I noted to Alastair that the draft Conclusion ... which had been drafted by me and formed part of earlier versions of the document, had been dropped. I regarded it as superfluous.”

558. Mr Scarlett added:

“At no stage in the drafting process set out above was there an attempt, from No.10 or elsewhere, to overrule the judgements of the JIC or my judgement as the person in charge.”²⁹⁰

559. Mr Scarlett stated that the minute had been seen by his colleagues on the JIC.

Iraq’s denial that it had weapons of mass destruction

Iraq informed Mr Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, on 16 September that it had decided to allow the return of inspectors and that it was ready to discuss the practical arrangements with the UN.²⁹¹

In his speech to the UN General Assembly on 19 September, Dr Najji Sabri, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, offered Iraq’s “condolences to the American people, especially the families of the victims” of the 11 September 2001 attacks and told the Security Council that he had been instructed by President Saddam Hussein to convey excerpts from his letter to the General Assembly, which presented “Iraq’s position on the latest developments in the relationship between Iraq and the Security Council”.²⁹²

²⁸⁷ Email Powell to Scarlett, 16 September 2002, ‘Iraq’.

²⁸⁸ [Minute Scarlett to Prime Minister, 4 June 2003, ‘September 2002 Iraq Dossier’.](#)

²⁸⁹ Mr Scarlett was, in fact, referring to his minute to Mr Campbell of 20 September 2002, not a minute from Mr Campbell to him.

²⁹⁰ [Minute Scarlett to Prime Minister, 4 June 2003, ‘September 2002 Iraq Dossier’.](#)

²⁹¹ Letter Sabri to Annan, 16 September 2002, [untitled].

²⁹² UN General Assembly, ‘Fifty-seventh session 19 September 2002’ (A/57/PV.17).

In the letter, Saddam Hussein declared that Iraq was “totally clear of all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons”; and challenged President Bush’s “insinuation” that Iraq was linked to the attacks on 9/11 and international terrorism.

Iraq’s position in its letters and statements to the UN, and the UK responses, are addressed in more detail in Section 3.5.

Mr Blair’s Foreword

560. In the Foreword to the dossier, Mr Blair emphasised Iraq’s WMD capabilities and the potential threat they posed.²⁹³ The full text of the Foreword is set out in the Box below. The Inquiry has highlighted in bold text the points it regards as particularly important in relation to the assessment of Iraq WMD capabilities and intent.

Mr Blair’s Foreword to the 24 September dossier

The document published today is based, in large part, on the work of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). The JIC is at the heart of the British intelligence machinery. It is chaired by the Cabinet Office and made up of the heads of the UK’s three Intelligence and Security Agencies, the Chief of Defence Intelligence, and senior officials from key government departments. For over 60 years the JIC has provided regular assessments to successive Prime Ministers and senior colleagues on a wide range of foreign policy and international security issues.²⁹⁴

Its work, like the material it analyses, is largely secret. It is unprecedented for the Government to publish this kind of document but **in the light of the debate about Iraq and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), I wanted to share with the British public the reasons why I believe this issue to be a current and serious threat to the UK national interest.**

In recent months, I have been increasingly alarmed by the evidence from inside Iraq that despite sanctions, despite the damage done to his capability in the past, despite the UN Security Council resolutions expressly outlawing it, and **despite his denials, Saddam Hussein is continuing to develop WMD, and with them the ability to inflict real damage on the region, and the stability of the world.**

Gathering intelligence from inside Iraq is not easy. Saddam’s is one of the most secretive and dictatorial regimes in the world. So **I believe people will understand why the Agencies cannot be specific about the sources, which have formed the judgements in this document, and why we cannot publish everything we know.** We cannot, of course, publish the detailed raw intelligence. **I and other Ministers have been briefed in detail on the intelligence and are satisfied as to its authority.** I also want to pay tribute to our Intelligence and Security Services for the often extraordinary work that they do.

²⁹³ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 3.

²⁹⁴ The role and composition of the JIC is set out in Section 2.

What I believe the assessed intelligence has established beyond doubt is that Saddam has continued to produce chemical and biological weapons, that he continues in his efforts to develop nuclear weapons, and that he has been able to extend the range of his ballistic missile programme. I also believe that, as stated in the document, Saddam will now do his utmost to try to conceal his weapons from UN inspectors.

The picture presented to me by the JIC in recent months has become more not less worrying. It is clear that, despite sanctions, the policy of containment has not worked sufficiently well to prevent Saddam from developing these weapons.

I am in no doubt that the threat is serious and current, that he has made progress on WMD, and that he has to be stopped.

Saddam has used chemical weapons, not only against an enemy state, but against his own people. **Intelligence reports make clear that he sees the building up of his WMD capability, and the belief overseas that he would use these weapons, as vital to his strategic interests, and in particular his goal of regional domination. And the document discloses that his military planning allows for some of the WMD to be ready within 45 minutes of an order to use them.**

I am quite clear that Saddam will go to extreme lengths, indeed has already done so, to hide these weapons and avoid giving them up.

In today's interdependent world, a major regional conflict does not stay confined to the region in question. Faced with someone who has shown himself capable of using WMD, I believe the international community has to stand up for itself and ensure its authority is upheld.

The threat posed to international peace and security, when WMD are in the hands of a brutal and aggressive regime like Saddam's, is real. Unless we face up to the threat, not only do we risk undermining the authority of the UN, whose resolutions he defies, but more importantly and in the longer term, we place at risk the lives and prosperity of our own people.

The case I make is that the UN resolutions demanding he stops his WMD programme are being flouted; **that since the inspectors left four years ago, he has continued with this programme;** that the inspectors must be allowed back in to do their job properly; and that if he refuses, or if he makes it impossible for them to do their job, as he has done in the past, the international community will have to act.

I believe that faced with the information available to me, the UK Government has been right to support the demands that this issue be confronted and dealt with. We must ensure that he does not get to use the weapons he has, or get hold of the weapons he wants.

Key points in the dossier

561. As discussed by the JIC on 11 September, the dossier highlighted the contribution which recent intelligence had made to the assessment of Iraq's activity since 1998 and on Saddam Hussein's readiness to deploy and use chemical and biological weapons.

562. The Executive Summary of the Iraq dossier stated that, in addition to the public evidence on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, the Government had "significant additional information ... from secret intelligence sources" which, although it could not "tell us about everything", provided "a fuller picture of Iraqi plans and capabilities".²⁹⁵

563. In the chapter on the role of intelligence, the dossier stated that intelligence had "provided important insights into Iraqi programmes and Iraqi military thinking", and that:

"Taken together with what is already known from other sources, this intelligence builds our understanding of Iraq's capabilities and adds significantly to the analysis in the public domain."

564. The dossier stated that the chapter on the current position set out "what we know of Saddam Hussein's chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, drawing on all the available evidence".²⁹⁶ It drew "heavily on the latest intelligence about Iraqi efforts to develop their programmes and capabilities since 1998" to support a list of "**main conclusions**", including that Saddam Hussein continued:

"... to attach great importance to the possession of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles which he regards as being the basis for Iraq's regional power. He is determined to retain these capabilities ..."

CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

565. The dossier stated that, by 1991, Iraq had produced more than 16,000 free-fall bombs and more than 110,000 artillery rockets and shells for the delivery of chemical and biological agents.²⁹⁷ It had also admitted to having 50 chemical and 25 biological warheads available for ballistic missiles.

566. UNSCOM had destroyed 30 of the warheads filled with chemical agents.²⁹⁸ It had also destroyed chemical munitions, agent and precursors and biological seed stocks and growth media, and dismantled or destroyed chemical and biological production facilities.

567. The dossier challenged Iraq's claims that chemical agents produced before 1991 would have deteriorated sufficiently to render them harmless and that it had destroyed all its biological weapons and agent.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁵ *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 5.

²⁹⁶ *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 17.

²⁹⁷ *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 15.

²⁹⁸ *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 40.

²⁹⁹ *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 19.

568. Addressing the chemical and biological weapons and material Iraq might have produced or obtained, which UNSCOM had been unable to account for when it left, the dossier quoted the figures given to Parliament by Mr Straw on 2 May 2002, including “over 30,000 special munitions for delivery of chemical and biological agents.”³⁰⁰ It added:

“The departure of UNSCOM meant that the international community was unable to establish the truth behind these large discrepancies and greatly diminished its ability to monitor and assess Iraq’s continuing attempts to reconstitute its programmes.”

569. In respect of chemical and biological weapons, the Executive Summary stated:

“As a result of that intelligence, we judge that Iraq has:

- continued to produce chemical and biological agents;
- military plans for the use of chemical and biological weapons, including against its own Shia population. Some of these weapons are deployable within 45 minutes of an order to use them;
- command and control arrangements in place to use chemical and biological weapons. Authority ultimately resides with Saddam Hussein. (There is intelligence that he may have delegated this authority to his son Qusay);
- developed mobile laboratories for military use, corroborating earlier reports about the mobile production of biological warfare agents;
- pursued illegal programmes to procure controlled material of potential use in the production of chemical and biological weapons programmes ...”³⁰¹

570. In its “**main conclusions**”, the dossier stated:

- “Iraq has a usable chemical and biological weapons capability ... which has included recent production of chemical and biological agents.”
- “Iraq can deliver chemical and biological agents using an extensive range of artillery shells, free-fall bombs, sprayers and ballistic missiles.”
- “Iraq’s military forces are able to use chemical and biological weapons, with command, control and logistical arrangements in place. The Iraqi military are able to deploy these weapons within 45 minutes of a decision to do so.”³⁰²

571. In the main text, the dossier stated that the JIC had, in the last six months, “confirmed its earlier judgements on Iraqi chemical and biological warfare capabilities and assessed that Iraq has the means to deliver chemical and biological weapons”.³⁰³

³⁰⁰ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 16.

³⁰¹ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, pages 5-6.

³⁰² *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 18.

³⁰³ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 18.

572. In a section on “**Recent Intelligence**”, the dossier stated:

“Subsequently intelligence has become available from reliable sources which complements and adds to previous intelligence and confirms the JIC assessment that Iraq has chemical and biological weapons. The intelligence also shows that the Iraqi leadership has been discussing a number of issues related to these weapons. This intelligence covers:

- **Confirmation that chemical and biological weapons play an important role in Iraqi military thinking:** intelligence shows that Saddam attaches great importance to the possession of chemical and biological weapons which he regards as being the basis for Iraqi regional power. He believes that respect for Iraq rests on its possession of these weapons and the missiles capable of delivering them. Intelligence indicates that Saddam is determined to retain this capability and recognises that Iraqi political weight would be diminished if Iraq’s military power rested solely on its conventional military forces.
- **Iraq’s attempts to retain its existing banned weapon systems:** Iraq is already taking steps to prevent the UN weapons inspectors finding evidence of its chemical and biological weapons programme. Intelligence indicates that Saddam has learnt lessons from previous weapons inspections, has identified possible weak points in the inspections process and knows how to exploit them. Sensitive equipment and papers can easily be concealed and in some cases this is already happening. The possession of mobile biological agent production facilities will also aid concealment efforts. Saddam is determined not to lose the capabilities that he has been able to develop further in the four years since inspectors left.
- **Saddam’s willingness to use chemical and biological weapons:** intelligence indicates that as part of Iraq’s military planning Saddam is willing to use chemical and biological weapons, including against his own Shia population. Intelligence indicates that the Iraqi military are able to deploy chemical and biological weapons within 45 minutes of an order to do so.”³⁰⁴

573. In a section on “**Chemical agent: production facilities**”, the dossier stated: “Intelligence shows that Iraq has continued to produce chemical agent.”³⁰⁵

574. In a similar section on “**Biological agent: production facilities**”, the dossier stated: “We know from intelligence that Iraq has continued to produce biological warfare agents.”³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, pages 18-19.

³⁰⁵ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 19.

³⁰⁶ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 21.

575. The dossier also stated:

“UNSCOM established that Iraq considered the use of mobile biological agent production facilities. In the past two years evidence from defectors has indicated the existence of such facilities. Recent intelligence confirms that the Iraqi military have developed mobile facilities.”³⁰⁷

576. Summarising the section on chemical and biological weapons, the dossier stated:

“Intelligence shows that Iraq has covert chemical and biological weapons programmes ... and has continued to produce chemical and biological agents. Iraq has:

- chemical and biological weapons available, both from pre-Gulf War stocks and more recent production;
- the capability to produce the chemical agents ...
- a biological agent production capability ... Iraq has also developed mobile facilities to produce biological agents;
- ...”³⁰⁸

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

577. The dossier stated that Iraq’s aim pre-1991 “was to produce a missile warhead with a 20-kiloton yield and weapons designs were produced for the simplest implosion weapons”.³⁰⁹ Iraq had pursued a number of programmes to produce highly enriched uranium, for the warhead. The enrichment programmes had made little progress before the Gulf Conflict, but the nuclear programme was supported by a large body of expertise, programme documentation and databases and manufacturing infrastructure.

578. In respect of nuclear weapons, the Executive Summary stated:

“Iraq had:

- tried covertly to acquire technology and materials which could be used in the production of nuclear weapons;
- sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa, despite having no active civil nuclear power programme that could require it;
- recalled specialists to work on its nuclear programme”.³¹⁰

³⁰⁷ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 22.

³⁰⁸ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, pages 23-24.

³⁰⁹ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, pages 13-14.

³¹⁰ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 6.

579. In its “**main conclusions**”, the dossier stated:

“Iraq continues to work on developing nuclear weapons ... Uranium has been sought from Africa that has no civil nuclear application ...”³¹¹

580. The dossier stated that the JIC assessed that Iraq had continued its nuclear research after 1998 and “drew attention to intelligence that Iraq had recalled its nuclear scientists to the programme in 1998”. “Since 1998 Iraq had been trying to procure items that could be for use in the construction of centrifuges ...”³¹²

581. In a section on “**Iraq’s nuclear weapons expertise**”, the dossier stated:

- The IAEA had dismantled the physical infrastructure of Iraq’s nuclear weapons and removed the remaining highly enriched uranium, “But Iraq retained, and retains many of its experienced nuclear scientists and technicians who are specialised in the production of fissile material and weapon design. Intelligence indicates that Iraq also retains the accompanying programme documentation and data.”
- “Intelligence shows that the present Iraqi programme is almost certainly seeking an indigenous capability to enrich uranium for a nuclear weapon ...”
- “Following the departure of the inspectors in 1998 there has been an accumulation of intelligence indicating that Iraq is making concerted covert efforts to acquire dual-use technology and material with nuclear applications.”
- “Iraq’s known holdings of processed uranium are under IAEA supervision. But there is intelligence that Iraq has sought the supply of significant quantities of uranium from Africa. Iraq has no ... legitimate reason to acquire uranium.”
- Intelligence showed that Iraq had attempted to purchase other items that could be used in a nuclear programme, including “repeated attempts covertly to acquire a very large quantity (60,000 or more) of specialised aluminium tubes” with a “potential application in the construction of gas centrifuges used to enrich uranium, although there is no definitive intelligence that it is destined for a nuclear programme”.³¹³

582. The judgements in the dossier about the timelines Iraq would need to acquire a nuclear weapon are addressed earlier in this Section.

³¹¹ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 17.

³¹² *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 24.

³¹³ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, pages 24-26.

BALLISTIC MISSILES

583. In respect of ballistic missiles, the Executive Summary stated:

“As a result of that intelligence, we judge that Iraq has:

- illegally retained up to 20 Al Hussein missiles, with a range of 650km, capable of carrying chemical or biological warheads;
- started deploying its Al Samoud liquid propellant missile, and has used the absence of weapons inspectors to work on extending its range to at least 200km ...
- started producing the ... Ababil-100, and is making efforts to extend its range to at least 200km ...
- constructed a new engine test stand for the development of missiles capable of reaching the UK Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus and NATO members (Greece and Turkey), as well as all Iraq’s Gulf neighbours and Israel;
- pursued illegal programmes to procure materials for use in its illegal development of long-range missiles ...”³¹⁴

584. In its “**main conclusions**”, the dossier stated:

“Iraq possesses extended-range versions of the SCUD ballistic missile ... which are capable of reaching Cyprus, Eastern Turkey, Tehran and Israel. It is also developing longer-range missiles ...”³¹⁵

585. The dossier stated that the JIC:

- drew attention in mid-2001 to a “step change” in progress on Iraq’s missile programme over the preceding two years, and that “work was under way on larger engines for longer-range missiles”; and
- concluded in early 2002 that “Iraq had begun to develop missiles with a range of over 1,000kms”, but it assessed that “if sanctions remained effective”, Iraq “would not be able to produce such a missile before 2007”.

586. In a section on Iraq’s ballistic missile programme since 1998, the dossier stated:

- Iraq had retained up to 20 Al Hussein missiles that “could be used with conventional, chemical or biological warheads and, with a range of 650km are capable of reaching a number of countries in the region including Cyprus”.
- “Intelligence has confirmed that Iraq wants to extend the range of its missiles systems to over 1,000km, enabling it to threaten other regional neighbours.”
- “Iraq’s missile programmes employ hundreds of people.”

³¹⁴ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 6.

³¹⁵ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 17.

- The engine test facility being constructed at al-Rafah would “be capable of testing engines” with ranges over 1,000km and “would not be needed” for systems within the 150km permitted range.
- Iraq had “managed to rebuild much of the missile production infrastructure” destroyed in 1991 and 1998 and new missile-related infrastructure was “under construction”.
- “Despite a UN embargo, Iraq has also made concerted efforts to acquire additional production technology ...”³¹⁶

FUNDING FOR THE WMD PROGRAMME

587. The Executive Summary of the dossier stated that Iraq had an illegal income of some US\$3bn from “illicit earnings generated outside UN control”.³¹⁷

588. The dossier acknowledged that the proportion of those funds that was used to develop or acquire military equipment was unknown, but stated:

“... we have seen no evidence that Iraqi attempts to develop its weapons of mass destruction and its ballistic missile programme ... has been inhibited in any way by lack of funds. The steady increase [in illicit funds] over the last three years in the availability of funds will enable Saddam to progress the programmes faster.”

Questions about the judgements in the dossier

589. The judgements expressed in the dossier and how they were reached have already been examined by the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) and Inquiries led by Lord Hutton and Lord Butler.

590. The report of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC), *The Decision to go to War in Iraq* (HC 813-1), was published on 7 July 2003.³¹⁸ It sought to “establish whether the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), within the Government as a whole, presented accurate and complete information to Parliament in the period leading up to military action in Iraq, particularly in respect of weapons of mass destruction”.

591. The report of the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC), *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments* (Cm 5972), was published in

³¹⁶ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, pages 27-30.

³¹⁷ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 7.

³¹⁸ Ninth Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 2002-2003, *The Decision to go to War in Iraq*, HC 813-1.

September 2003.³¹⁹ The ISC stated that it had “looked at the supporting intelligence in critical areas to ensure that the [JIC] Assessments reflected the intelligence correctly”.

592. *The Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David L Kelly CMG* by Lord Hutton (“The Hutton Inquiry”, HC 247), was published on 28 January 2004.³²⁰

593. In relation to the question of whether the judgements were improperly influenced by Mr Campbell or No.10, Lord Hutton concluded:

“Mr Campbell made it clear to Mr Scarlett on behalf of the Prime Minister that 10 Downing Street wanted the dossier to be worded to make as strong a case as possible in relation to the threat posed by Saddam Hussein’s WMD, and 10 Downing Street made written suggestions to Mr Scarlett as to changes in the wording of the draft dossier which would strengthen it. But Mr Campbell recognised, and told Mr Scarlett that 10 Downing Street recognised, that nothing should be stated in the dossier with which the intelligence community were not entirely happy.

“Mr Scarlett accepted some of the drafting amendments suggested to him by 10 Downing Street but he only accepted those suggestions which were consistent with the intelligence known to the JIC and he rejected those suggestions which were not consistent with such intelligence and the dossier ... was approved by the JIC.

“As the dossier was one to be presented to, and read by, Parliament and the public ... I do not consider that it was improper for Mr Scarlett and the JIC to take into account suggestions as to drafting made by 10 Downing Street and to adopt those suggestions if they were consistent with the intelligence available to the JIC. However I consider that the possibility cannot be completely ruled out that the desire of the Prime Minister to have a dossier which, whilst consistent with the available intelligence, was as strong as possible in relation to the threat posed by Saddam Hussein’s WMD, may have subconsciously influenced Mr Scarlett and other members of the JIC to make the wording of the dossier somewhat stronger than it would have been if it had been contained in a normal JIC Assessment. Although this possibility cannot be completely ruled out, I am satisfied that Mr Scarlett, the other members of the JIC, and the members of the Assessment Staff engaged in the drafting of the dossier were concerned to ensure that the contents of the dossier were consistent with the intelligence available to the JIC.

“The term ‘sexed-up’ is a slang expression, the meaning of which lacks clarity in the context of the discussion of the dossier. It is capable of two different meanings.

³¹⁹ Intelligence and Security Committee, *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments*, September 2003, Cm5972.

³²⁰ *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David L Kelly CMG by Lord Hutton* [“The Hutton Inquiry”], 28 January 2004, HC 247, pages 2-3.

It could mean that the dossier was embellished with items of intelligence known or believed to be false or unreliable ... or it could mean ... that the dossier was drafted in such a way as to make the case against Saddam Hussein as strong as the intelligence contained in it permitted. If the term is used in this latter sense, then because of the drafting suggestions made by 10 Downing Street for the purpose of making a strong case against Saddam Hussein, it could be said that the Government 'sexed up' the dossier. However ... I consider that the allegation ... that the dossier had been embellished with intelligence known or believed to be false or unreliable, which was not the case."³²¹

594. The *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* by a Committee of Privy Counsellors chaired by Lord Butler of Brockwell ("The Butler Report", HC 8980), was published on 14 July 2004.³²²

595. Describing the purpose of the dossier, the Butler Report stated:

"... the dossier was not intended to make the case for a particular course of action in relation to Iraq. It was intended by the Government to promote domestic and international understanding of, and gain support for, the general direction in which Government policy had been moving since the early months of 2002, away from containment to a more proactive approach to enforcing Iraqi disarmament."³²³

596. The Butler Report also stated:

- "The Government wanted a document on which it could draw in its advocacy of its policy. The JIC sought to offer a dispassionate assessment of intelligence and other material on Iraqi nuclear, biological, chemical and ballistic missile programmes."³²⁴
- **"... the language of the dossier may have left with readers the impression that there was fuller and firmer intelligence behind the judgements than was the case: our view, having reviewed all of the material, is that judgements in the dossier went to (although not beyond) the outer limits of the intelligence available.** The Prime Minister's description in his statement to the House of Commons ... [on 24 September] of the picture painted by the intelligence services in the dossier as 'extensive, detailed and authoritative' may have reinforced this impression."³²⁵

³²¹ The National Archives, 28 January 2004, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly* ["The Hutton Report"], paragraph 228.

³²² *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* ["The Butler Report"], 14 July 2004, HC 898.

³²³ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* ["The Butler Report"], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 319.

³²⁴ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* ["The Butler Report"], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 327.

³²⁵ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* ["The Butler Report"], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 464.

597. The Iraq Inquiry has drawn on the evidence offered to those Inquiries, and their analysis and conclusions, in reaching a view on the aspects of the dossier addressed in the following paragraphs.

Defence Intelligence Staff concerns

598. During the drafting of the dossier, questions were raised by staff in the DIS about the basis for the judgements on Iraq's chemical and biological weapons capabilities and its intent to use chemical and biological weapons.

599. The DIS comments on the draft dossier on 17 September, expressing concerns that some of the statements on chemical and biological weapons in the draft could not be substantiated by the intelligence seen by the DIS, which were discussed in Mr Miller's meeting that morning, are set out earlier in this Section.

600. Mr Miller confirmed that no minute was taken of the meeting.³²⁶

601. Mr Scarlett told the Hutton Inquiry that the DIS comments had been discussed by the formal drafting group on 17 September and that:

“They were dealt with within that process and they were not brought forward by the DIS senior management to the level of the JIC.”³²⁷

602. Mr Cragg told the Hutton Inquiry that, at the meeting on 17 September, “it was agreed that the SIS representative would make further representations” to the DIS about the “very tightly held intelligence [the report of 11 September]” and that the SIS representative had spoken to Dr Paul Roper, DIS Director of Science and Technology, and told him that “SIS believed it was good intelligence”.³²⁸

603. Mr Cragg told Lord Hutton that it was reported to him that the concern about the discontinuity between the main text of the dossier and the Executive Summary had been:

“... put ... down to the fact that the Executive Summary pulled together or reflected not merely recent intelligence which was ... contained in the main text, but also the general context of the new intelligence which had been received, such as the knowledge, which we had had for many years, of the capabilities of the Iraqis in their use of chemical weapons and also our knowledge that they had commander control arrangements for the use of these weapons in place.”³²⁹

604. Mr Scarlett subsequently told the Hutton Inquiry that, after the meeting on 17 September, Mr Miller had reported the DIS concerns about the statements on the production of “CW agent”, because it related to “the existence of additional

³²⁶ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 11 August 2003, page 160.

³²⁷ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 23 August 2003, page 67.

³²⁸ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 15 September 2003, pages 37-38.

³²⁹ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 15 September 2003, page 27.

compartmented intelligence [the SIS report of 11 September]”, which had not been seen by the DIS, “which was underpinning the judgement”.³³⁰ He had been told that arrangements had been made to brief “DIS management” on the intelligence. Mr Scarlett added that, in the absence of comment on that point in the DIS comments on the draft dossier on 19 September, silence had been taken as assent.

605. Sir John Scarlett told the Iraq Inquiry that he “was aware that there had been questioning from within the DIS about the fact that they hadn’t seen the compartmented [11 September] report”. He and Mr Miller had “agreed that it would be necessary” for the DIS to be shown the report and, as far as he was concerned, “that happened” and there was “no further awareness” on his part.³³¹

606. In a minute on 19 September to Dr Roper, Dr Brian Jones, the branch head of the nuclear, biological and chemical section in the Scientific and Technical Directorate of the Defence Intelligence Staff, wrote:

“1. ... the generation of the Iraqi dossier which, in the last two weeks has involved a number of iterations which have incorporated new intelligence. It is my understanding that some of the intelligence has not been made available to my branch. Because of this they have had to express their reservations on several aspects of the dossier. Most of these have been resolved. However a number remain ... and it is important that I note for you at this stage the remaining areas where we are unable to confirm the statements made on the basis of the information available to my branch.

“2. Although we have no problem with a judgement based on intelligence that Saddam attaches great importance to possessing WMD we have not seen the intelligence that ‘shows’ this to be the case. Nor have we seen intelligence that ‘shows’ he does not regard them only as a weapon of last resort, although our judgement is that it would be sensible to assume that he might use them in a number of other scenarios. The intelligence we have seen indicates rather than ‘shows’ that Iraq has been planning to conceal its WMD capabilities, and it would be ... reasonable to assume that he would do this.

“3. We have a number of questions in our minds relating to the intelligence on military plans for the use of chemical and biological weapons, particularly about the times mentioned and the failure to differentiate between the two types of weapon.

“4. We have not seen intelligence which we believe ‘shows’ that Iraq has continued to produce CW agent in 1998-2002, although our judgement is that it has probably done so. Whilst we are even more convinced that Iraq has continued to produce BW agent (on the basis of mobile production intelligence) we would not go so far as to say that we ‘know’ this to be the case.

³³⁰ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 23 September 2003, pages 110-111.

³³¹ Private hearing, 5 May 2010, page 47.

“5. Finally ... we are pleased that the claim that Iraq used aflatoxin against the Shia uprising has been excluded from the dossier but we are concerned that the claim in relation to mustard remains as we consider the evidence to be weak.”³³²

607. Dr Jones sent a copy of his minute to the office of Mr Cragg and others in the Defence Intelligence Staff.

608. The following day, the chemical warfare expert in Dr Jones’ team wrote to Dr Roper setting out in detail his concerns about aspects of the dossier.³³³

609. In relation to the statement in the draft Foreword, that Mr Blair believed that the “assessed intelligence has established beyond doubt” that “Saddam has continued to produce chemical and biological weapons”, the minute stated:

“I acknowledge that in this statement the Prime Minister will be expressing his own ‘belief’ about what the assessed intelligence has established. What I wish to record is that based on the intelligence available to me it has NOT established beyond doubt that Saddam has continued to produce chemical [and biological] weapons.”

610. Addressing the statement in the Foreword that “military planning allows for some of the WMD to be ready within 45 minutes of an order to use them”, and a “similar statement” in the dossier, the minute stated:

“This is reported as a fact whereas the intelligence comes from a single source. In my view the intelligence warrants no stronger a statement than ‘... intelligence suggest that military planning allows ...’”

611. Addressing the judgement in paragraph 6 of the Executive Summary, that Iraq had “continued to produce chemical and biological agents”, the minute stated:

“I have seen intelligence that suggests that production of chemical agents has continued but in my judgement this warrants no stronger statement than ‘Iraq has ... *probably* continued to produce chemical [and biological] agents.’”

612. Addressing the judgement in paragraph 6 of the Executive Summary, that “Some of these weapons are deployable within 45 minutes of an order to use them”, the minute stated:

“It is not clear what is meant ... The judgement is too strong considering the intelligence on which it is based.”

³³² Minute Jones to Roper, 19 September 2002, ‘Iraq Dossier’.

³³³ Minute [DIS junior official] to DIST, 20 September 2002, ‘Iraq Dossier’.

613. In relation to statements in Chapter 3 of the dossier, the minute stated:

- Paragraph 1, first bullet: the “statement about ‘recent production of chemical [and biological] agents’” could not “be supported” by the intelligence available to the author.
- Paragraph 5, first bullet: the author believed that the statement that “Intelligence shows that Saddam attaches great importance to the possession of chemical [and biological] weapons” was “far too strong” and “in contrast to other statements in this paragraph which use the term ‘intelligence indicates that’ which is more balanced”.
- Paragraph 8, first bullet: the intelligence available to the author warranted a statement “no stronger” than “Iraq has probably continued to produce chemical agent”, not the statement that “Intelligence shows that Iraq has continued to produce chemical agent.”

614. The minute was copied to Mr Cragg’s office and to Dr Jones.

615. Dr Jones told Lord Hutton that the “problems” with the 45 minutes report of 30 August “fell into three categories”. The information was “second-hand”; it “did not differentiate between ... chemical ... or ... biological weapons”; and there was “a lack of collateral intelligence”.³³⁴

616. Dr Jones explained that the circumstances in which it would be important to deliver biological weapons within 45 minutes “would be fairly special circumstances” and that “had pushed us into thinking perhaps we were talking about chemical weapons”. It was “easy” to put chemical and biological weapons:

“... together in a collective term ... But there was an element of doubt coming into our analysis ... We would have looked, normally, for further definitions to feel really comfortable ...”

617. Dr Jones also stated that they had been “worried” by the absence of evidence relating to the production of chemical agents and that:

“We had not seen the weapons being produced. We had no evidence of any recent testing or field trials ... So that all cast some doubts in our mind on that particular piece of intelligence.”

618. Dr Jones told Lord Hutton that he thought the intelligence was “important” but the references in the draft dossier were “too strong”. It was:

“... reasonable to say that the intelligence indicated that this was the case ... but ... we did not think the intelligence showed it absolutely beyond any shadow of doubt.”

³³⁴ The National Archives, 28 January 2004, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly* [“The Hutton Report”], paragraph 190.

619. Dr Jones told Lord Hutton that he had been informed of the concerns of his staff about the statements on the “continued production of chemical and biological agents”; and that there “was said to be additional intelligence that actually had it been available to us would have removed those concerns”.³³⁵ He had discussed the issue with his Director, Dr Roper. Dr Roper had not seen the intelligence but “a senior official from one of the ... agencies” had “suggested to him that the intelligence judgements that were being made in the dossier were in fact okay because ... they were supported by the additional intelligence”. Dr Jones added that he had said the DIS should express a reservation about the language.

620. Dr Jones subsequently stated that his staff had “no evidence that significant production had taken place either of chemical warfare agent or chemical weapons”.³³⁶

621. Dr Jones also stated that the DIS had “not seen the weapons being produced. We had no evidence of any recent testing or field trials ...”.³³⁷

622. Asked what he had done following receipt of Dr Jones’ minute, Mr Cragg told the Hutton Inquiry that he had:

“... taken the view that on the question of the 45 minutes and of the chemical weapon production, this had already been considered at length with the Cabinet Office in their meeting of 17 September and that I was satisfied with the decisions reached and consequently with the wording of the dossier at that point. On the ... importance attached to the possession of chemical weapons, the absence of proof ... they are not seen ... as weapons of last resort. And the absence of ... definitive proof, that efforts are being made to conceal them. I took the view on each of those there had been much intelligence over the years, not merely in the last few weeks ... which sustained the view taken in the dossier.”³³⁸

623. Asked whether Dr Jones’ minute of 19 September 2002 was “strong language for intelligence personnel”, Mr Cragg replied:

“Yes. I was quite surprised to receive the minute because ... we had tried to explain what the situation was, certainly on the production issue and, as far as I can tell also perhaps, although I am not certain, on the 45 minutes.”³³⁹

624. Mr Cragg stated that he had “taken the view that since all the issues had either been discussed with the Cabinet Office or were well within the general thrust of known intelligence that it was not necessary to raise the issue with Mr Scarlett”.³⁴⁰

³³⁵ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 3 September 2003, pages 83-85.

³³⁶ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 3 September 2003, page 86.

³³⁷ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 3 September 2003, page 93.

³³⁸ The National Archives, 28 January 2004, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly* [“The Hutton Report”], paragraph 194.

³³⁹ The National Archives, 28 January 2004, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly* [“The Hutton Report”], paragraph 194.

³⁴⁰ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 15 September 2003, page 41.

625. Mr Cragg stated:

“... the dossier reflected the JIC Assessments on the recent intelligence; and the JIC Assessments were an accurate reflection, put into context, of the intelligence itself. So it was a flow of perfectly reputable intelligence conveyed by the Assessment Staff and ourselves into the JIC Assessment and thence into the dossier.

...

“... I am quite sure ... the dossier ... does not go beyond ... available intelligence.”³⁴¹

626. Mr Cragg stated that he had subsequently held a meeting with the Director of Global Issues, the Director of Science and Technology and the DIS staff who had attended the Assessment Staff meeting. He had been told, in relation to the 45 minute intelligence:

“... firstly, on the actual detailed intelligence, recent intelligence underpinning the main text and partly the Executive Summary, that the Secret Intelligence Service, SIS, were satisfied that the source was established and reliable and ... they supported the reporting, which had already been included in a JIC Assessment on 9 September.

...

“... My staff also reported ... there had been a discussion ... of the general context in which the new intelligence had appeared which convinced them that it was quite reasonable to take the line they did in Executive Summary concerning the likelihood or the capability of the Iraqis to deploy weapons of mass destruction within 45 minutes of a decision to do so.

...

“... I understand from my staff that there was a discussion of the validity of the source, which would almost certainly have included whether it was single source.”

627. Mr Cragg added that a:

“... single source has to be looked at with some care; but this was a known source, established and reliable with a good reporting record. And the statements he was making, the intelligence he was providing was well in context of known Iraqi approaches.

...

“So in that sense – I think Mr Scarlett said it fairly clearly – there were no qualms about including this reporting.”

³⁴¹ The National Archives, 28 January 2004, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly* [“The Hutton Report”], paragraph 197.

628. AM French confirmed to the Hutton Inquiry that, having seen Dr Jones' minute of 19 September, he had been content with the dossier.³⁴²

629. In response to a question about whether Mr Scarlett had "tightened" the language in the dossier in the draft of 18 September, to take account of the points raised by Mr Campbell in his minute of 17 September rather than the points raised by the DIS the same day, Mr Cragg replied: "Yes."³⁴³

630. Asked about the way in which he had dealt with the comments provided by the DIS and Mr Campbell on 17 September, Mr Scarlett told the Hutton Inquiry that the issues raised by the DIS had been discussed in Mr Miller's meeting before Mr Campbell's minute was received.³⁴⁴

631. Mr Scarlett told Lord Hutton that the intelligence on weapons being available for use within 45 minutes "came from an established and reliable source quoting a senior Iraqi military officer in a position to know this information".³⁴⁵ It had been "judged straight away that the intelligence was consistent with established JIC judgements on the command control and logistical arrangements and capabilities of the Iraqi armed forces ... [F]or the first time in our reporting it gave a particular time, gave some precision."

632. Mr Scarlett stated that:

- It had been agreed that the Assessments Staff would look again at the Assessment and the intelligence report to "bring the text ... into line with what the Assessment and the intelligence said".
- In relation to the DIS suggestion that the wording in the Executive Summary should be qualified by adding "intelligence suggests that", the Assessments Staff had taken the view that "it was not possible to qualify" its judgement in that way: "It was not a summary of the main points in the text, it was a judgement."

633. Mr Scarlett stated that the main text in the dossier was redrafted to reflect the "original intelligence which contained no caveat of uncertainty" and the JIC Assessment.³⁴⁶

³⁴² The National Archives, 28 January 2004, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly* ["The Hutton Report"], paragraph 195.

³⁴³ The National Archives, 28 January 2004, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly* ["The Hutton Report"], paragraph 192.

³⁴⁴ The National Archives, 28 January 2004, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly* ["The Hutton Report"], paragraph 214.

³⁴⁵ The National Archives, 28 January 2004, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly* ["The Hutton Report"], paragraph 184.

³⁴⁶ The National Archives, 28 January 2004, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly* ["The Hutton Report"], paragraph 214.

634. The JIC Assessment of 9 September stated:

“Iraq has probably dispersed its special weapons, including its CBW weapons. Intelligence also indicates that chemical and biological munitions could be with military units and ready for firing within 20-45 minutes.”³⁴⁷

635. In response to a series of questions intended to elicit whether the “assessors” should have had regard to the fact that they did not know to which munitions the report referred, where they were, and that the information was second-hand, albeit relayed through a reliable intermediary, Mr Scarlett replied:

“You are talking as if the assessors ... operate in a vacuum. They do not. They are assessing individual reports against the background of their knowledge. This was a point of precision, to an assessment which already existed about the capability of the Iraqi armed forces in this area.”³⁴⁸

636. Mr Scarlett subsequently stated: “The sentence in the [JIC] Assessment was referring to the intelligence report ... It was not looking at it in the wider context.” That was “taken into account in the main body of the text” but the judgement in the Executive Summary “was a different point”; it did “not just confine itself to one intelligence report”.

637. The Iraq Inquiry wrote to Air Chief Marshal Sir Joe French, Mr Cragg, and Dr Roper asking a number of specific questions about whether they had seen or been briefed on the report of 11 September, and with whom they had discussed the issues that arose.

638. In his statement, ACM French confirmed that he had seen the 11 September report but he “did not receive any further briefing on it”.³⁴⁹ He had not discussed the distribution of the report with either Mr Cragg or Dr Roper and could not “remember receiving any advice or briefing” on it from them. Nor could he “remember detail of the discussion” at any JIC meeting.

639. Asked whether he had asked for the report to be made available to the relevant experts in the DIS for their assessment, ACM French wrote:

“Given the way the compilation of the dossier was being handled with the involvement of the specialists/experts from across the intelligence community, including the DIS, I would have expected them to [be] given the background to this intelligence if not access to the report itself. This was a regular occurrence where intelligence initially on limited distribution would be shared at the experts

³⁴⁷ [JIC Assessment, 9 September 2002, ‘Iraqi Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons – Possible Scenarios’.](#)

³⁴⁸ The National Archives, 28 January 2004, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly* [“The Hutton Report”], paragraph 214.

³⁴⁹ Statement, 9 June 2011.

level to allow common understanding of issues for the drafting of cross intelligence community reports and studies commissioned by the JIC.”

640. ACM French also wrote that he had not discussed the concerns raised by DIS staff with Mr Scarlett, Mr Miller, or any member of the Assessments Staff. He could not “remember the specific discussion” with Mr Cragg or Dr Roper but added:

“... in the regular staffing of JIC papers, the dossier included, it was not unusual for subject matter experts to have differences of opinion over the emphasis given to specific strands of intelligence and those concerns would be raised with me for consideration before final clearance.”

641. Asked on what basis he had given formal DIS endorsement to the judgements in the dossier given the advice of some members of the DIS that the final draft was, in some respects, stronger than the intelligence indicated, ACM French wrote:

“The fact that individuals expressed concern was part of the usual process of debate and assessment which went on regularly within the DIS and within the wider intelligence community as a prelude to a consensus being reached by the JIC. My judgement was that the well tried due process had been followed and I was content with the final draft of the dossier.”

642. In his statement to the Iraq Inquiry, Mr Cragg wrote that he had not seen the report and that he had had “no discussions at the time” with “anybody” about its contents and implications because he “had not received it or had any knowledge of its contents or source”.³⁵⁰ He had “asked Dr Roper to inform Dr Jones ... of the strict compartmenting of the report at the earliest opportunity”.

643. Asked about his response to the concerns raised by DIS staff, Mr Cragg wrote that he had had “a brief discussion with Dr Roper on 17 September about the [DIS] comments on the draft of 16 September”. He had “interrupted a meeting” he was holding with Dr Roper and the DIS Director of Global Issues on 17 September to allow them to hear an account of the meeting held by Mr Miller. The DIS officials who had attended the meeting reported that “the SIS participant had informed them that particularly sensitive intelligence on the production of chemical and biological agent had very recently been received which supported the formulation in the draft”; and that Mr Miller “had concurred” with that. The SIS representative had also informed them that the distribution would be extremely limited.

644. Mr Cragg did not attend the JIC meeting on 11 September. He wrote that the 11 September SIS report was not discussed at the JIC meeting on 18 September.

645. Mr Cragg saw a copy of Dr Jones’ minute to Dr Roper of 19 September in which he stated that he and his staff “considered that in their judgement Iraq was probably

³⁵⁰ Statement, 15 June 2011.

producing chemical and biological agents but they had not seen the intelligence to 'show' this". Dr Jones also reported that they "were even more convinced that Iraq had continued to produce biological agents but that they would not go so far as to say that they 'know' this".

646. Mr Cragg wrote that he had not discussed the minute with Dr Jones or Dr Roper "because I read it after the working day and saw it as reiterating that neither he [Dr Jones] nor his staff had seen the compartmented intelligence to support the formulation in the draft, while at the same time confirming that the judgement of the dossier on this issue was probably right". He did not raise the matter with Mr Scarlett, Mr Miller or the Assessments Staff, "because it was well known to the drafters of the dossier that the DIS' scientific staff had not seen the recent compartmented intelligence on the current production of chemical and biological agent".

647. Mr Cragg was absent from the office from 20 to 24 September. He wrote that he was:

"... satisfied with the draft of 19 September, which was substantially the same as that of 20 September. I took the view that the judgement in the dossier on the current production of chemical and biological agent in the Executive Summary and the formulation in the main text was justified by the available intelligence on production, including in the JIC Assessment of 9 September and my awareness that the compartmented intelligence was seen as reliable. It was also consistent with our overall assessment of Iraqi WMD capabilities."

648. In his statement to the Iraq Inquiry, Dr Roper confirmed that he had discussed Dr Jones' minute of 19 September with him on 23 September and that he could not:

"... recall all that was discussed; I sensed he was annoyed that so much had been happening whilst he had been away. I do remember asking him a specific question along the lines of 'Are you telling me you do not believe there is WMD in Iraq?' His reply was along the line: 'No I am not saying that, on balance I believe there is WMD in Iraq but not with the degree of conviction implied in the draft dossier'."³⁵¹

649. Dr Roper wrote that Mr Cragg had raised Dr Jones' letter with him "possibly later that day [23 September]". Dr Roper described Mr Cragg as "annoyed" that the letter had been sent; and that Mr Cragg "seemed content" when Dr Roper relayed the gist of his conversation with Dr Jones.

³⁵¹ Statement, 27 May 2011.

650. Dr Roper wrote that he was “more concerned” by a letter sent by the chemical warfare expert in Dr Jones’ team on 20 September, which they had discussed with the CW expert the following week. The CW expert had:

“... explained his understanding of the CW position in Iraq noting that there had been thousands of tonnes of chemical agent, much of it destroyed by UNSCOM, but he noted that he couldn’t rule out the existence of a few hundred tonnes of unaccounted stock some of which could retain potency. However his key point was that he had seen no evidence that Iraq had resumed any production of chemical agent since the Gulf War.”

651. Dr Roper wrote that he “was alerted to the existence of new sensitive material on CW production” by an SIS officer by telephone. The conversation was short but Dr Roper recalled that he was told “it referred to evidence of resumption in CW production”. Dr Roper also wrote that he had been “assured” that Air Marshal French and Mr Cragg had seen the document. Dr Roper could not recall the precise date of that conversation, but he thought it had “probably” taken place before 23 September.

652. Dr Roper wrote that he had not discussed the existence of the new intelligence with either AM French or Mr Cragg, or with anyone else. His conversation with the CW expert on 23 September:

“... was very late in the dossier production process and only minor editorial comments on the wording were being called for at this stage. I concluded the conversation with [name of expert] suggesting that those responsible for forming the final judgement no doubt had access to this new intelligence and would take it into consideration. I took no further action.”

653. The Inquiry shares the view of the Butler Review that the dossier contained a stronger assessment in relation to Iraqi chemical weapons production than was justified by the available intelligence.

654. The SIS report of 11 September was a factor in that.

655. Sir Richard Dearlove’s concerns about ensuring the protection of such an important potential source of evidence were, in the circumstances, understandable.

656. But the Inquiry shares the conclusion of the Butler Review that it should have been shown to the experts in the Defence Intelligence Staff who could have commented on the credibility and validity of that report and the subsequent report issued on 23 September and advised their senior managers and the Assessments Staff.

657. Sir Richard Dearlove’s personal intervention, and its urgency, gave added weight to a report that had not been properly evaluated and would have coloured

the perception of Ministers and senior officials. The report should have been treated with caution.

658. The withdrawal after the conflict of three streams of reporting underpinning the judgements in the dossier on Iraq's chemical and biological warfare capabilities and intentions, including the reports of 11 and 23 September and the "45 minutes" report, is addressed in Section 4.3.

659. The Inquiry has identified a number of lessons which arise from the way in which the dossier was produced at the end of this Section.

660. The details of the JIC Assessments on Iraq's WMD between December 2000 and September 2002 demonstrate that the JIC consistently stated in those Assessments that the intelligence on most aspects of Iraq's activity in relation to chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programmes was limited, and that many of its judgements were inferential.

661. The intelligence on Iraq's ballistic missile programmes was more extensive, but there were still significant uncertainties about Iraq's capabilities.

662. In relation to the concerns expressed by the DIS, Lord Hutton concluded:

"... the concerns expressed by Dr Jones were considered by higher echelons in the Intelligence Services and were not acted upon, and the JIC ... approved the wording in the dossier. Moreover, the nuclear, chemical and biological weapons section of the Defence Intelligence Staff, headed by Dr Brian Jones, did not argue that the intelligence relating to the 45 minutes claim should not have been included in the dossier but they did suggest that the wording in which the claim was stated was too strong and that instead of the dossier stating 'we judge' that 'Iraq has: – military plans for the use of chemical and biological weapons, including against its own Shia population. Some of those weapons are deployable within 45 minutes of an order to use them', the wording should state 'intelligence suggests'."³⁵²

663. The Butler Report stated that the 9 September JIC Assessment had been "written to inform military and other contingency planning" but its "precautionary judgements", which were appropriate for that purpose:

"... were subsequently taken up into the dossier, and were taken up in an abbreviated form in which points were run together and caveats on the intelligence were dropped ...

"...The same was true of the 21 August and 15 March Assessments ...

³⁵² The National Archives, 28 January 2004, *Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr David Kelly* ["The Hutton Report"], paragraph 228.

“Experienced readers would have seen these warnings in the original JIC Assessments and taken them into account ... But the public ... would not have known ... The dossier did include a first chapter on the role of intelligence, as an introduction for the lay reader. But rather than illuminating the limitations of intelligence ... the language of this Chapter may have had the opposite effect ... Readers may, for example have read language in the dossier as implying that there was fuller and firmer intelligence behind the judgements than was the case: our view, having reviewed all the material, is that judgements in the dossier went to (although not beyond) the outer limits of the intelligence available.”³⁵³

664. The Butler Report also stated that the dossier:

“... did not refer explicitly to the JIC’s uncertainty about the size of stocks of sarin and VX precursors, and hence Iraq’s ability to produce these agents. Nor did it, like the JIC Assessments, refer explicitly to the lack of intelligence on the location of facilities for producing biological and chemical agent, although it did draw attention to the difficulty of assessing the use made of ‘dual-use’ facilities.”³⁵⁴

665. The Butler Report concluded that: **“Partly because of inherent difficulties”**, including the complications created by dual-use programmes, the JIC assessments of Iraq’s chemical and biological programmes were **“less assured”** than the assessments of Iraq’s nuclear capabilities, and that they:

“... tended to be over cautious and in some areas worst case. Where there was a balance of inference to be drawn, it tended to go in the direction of inferring the existence of banned weapons programmes. Assessments were as a consequence less complete, especially in their considerations of alternative hypotheses, and used a different burden of proof.”³⁵⁵

666. The Butler Report stated:

“The intelligence community will have had in mind that Iraq had not only owned but used its chemical weapons in the past. It will inevitably have been influenced by the way in which the Iraqi regime was engaged in a sustained programme to try to deceive United Nations inspectors and to conceal from them evidence of its prohibited programmes. Furthermore, because SIS did not have agents with first-hand knowledge of Iraq’s nuclear, chemical, biological or ballistic missile programmes, most of the intelligence reports on which assessments were being made were inferential. The Assessments Staff and JIC were

³⁵³ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraphs 330-331.

³⁵⁴ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 337.

³⁵⁵ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 454.

not fully aware of the access and background of key informants, and could not therefore read their material against the background of an understanding of their motivations for passing on information.”³⁵⁶

667. The Butler Report also addressed the fact that the SIS report of 11 September had been given a very restricted circulation and drew attention to the:

“... **evidence of difficulties that arose from the unduly strict ‘compartmentalisation’ of intelligence** which meant that experts in DIS did not have access to an intelligence report which became available in September 2002 and played a major role for the JIC in confirming previous intelligence reports that Iraq was producing chemical and biological weapons.”³⁵⁷

668. Sir Richard Dearlove told the Butler Review that:

“... SIS were concerned to minimise knowledge of the existence of the source during what they expected to be an initial, very sensitive, period of development. The source’s intelligence about chemical weapons production was therefore distributed to an extremely limited circle of senior readers.”³⁵⁸

669. The Butler Report stated that:

- It understood “SIS’s concern to give maximum protection to their source in those particular, and transitional, circumstances”.
- It had been “told that in-house SIS technical experts took a preliminary and provisional view that the report should be issued, as being from ‘*A new source on trial*’”.
- “But the exclusion of Dr Jones and his staff from readership of the original report meant that this intelligence was not seen by the few people in the UK intelligence community able to form all-round, professional technical judgements on its reliability and significance.”³⁵⁹

670. The Butler Report added:

- We recognise that circumstances arise in which it is right for senior officials to take a broad view that differs from the opinions of those with expertise on points of detail.
- We do not, however, consider that the report held back from Dr Jones and his staff (which Dr Jones’s superiors regarded as justifying the certainty of

³⁵⁶ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 456.

³⁵⁷ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 452.

³⁵⁸ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 574.

³⁵⁹ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 575.

the language in the dossier) was one to which such considerations should have applied.

- The judgement reached by the JIC in this case should have been able to depend on detailed, expert analysis of the intelligence.
- In the event, the JIC had no reason to know that that had not happened.
- It was understandable that SIS should have wanted to give greater than normal protection to the human intelligence source on this occasion.
- But a problem arose because it was kept from the relevant DIS analysts who had a wider perspective.³⁶⁰
- It would have been more appropriate for senior managers in the DIS and SIS to have made arrangements for the intelligence to be shown to DIS experts rather than their making their own judgements on its significance.
- The fact that it was not shown to them resulted in a stronger assessment in the dossier in relation to Iraqi chemical weapons production than was justified by the available intelligence.
- It also deprived SIS of key expertise that would have helped them to assess the reliability of their new source.
- We have not been presented with any evidence that persuades us that there was an insuperable obstacle to allowing expert-level DIS access to the intelligence.”³⁶¹

671. The Butler Report stated:

“We accept the need for careful handling of human intelligence reports to sustain the security of sources ... We accept that this report was from a new source who was thought to be of great potential value and was therefore of extreme sensitivity. Nevertheless, it was wrong that a report which was of significance in the drafting of a document of the importance of the dossier was not shown to key experts in the DIS who could have commented on the validity and credibility of the report.”³⁶²

672. The Butler Report added:

“... arrangements should always be sought to ensure that the need for protection of sources should not prevent the exposure of reports on technical matters to the most expert available analysis.”³⁶³

³⁶⁰ The Inquiry infers that that is a reference to wider knowledge of chemical and biological weapons programmes.

³⁶¹ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraphs 576-577.

³⁶² *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 452.

³⁶³ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 452.

673. Asked by the Iraq Inquiry whether, in the light of the view expressed at the JIC meeting on 4 September that the 9 September Assessment needed to make clearer where there were remaining major gaps in the UK's knowledge and understanding of Iraq's capabilities, he had felt that this should have been an integral part of the dossier, Sir John Scarlett replied:

"... there was no sort of discussion or conscious decision made to leave out references to limited intelligence. There was no deliberate intention to do that.

"The reason it happened may be because of the way the dossier was structured, and the fact that it began with an Executive Summary, which was explicitly a collection of judgements, as opposed to a sort of listing of intelligence.

"The place where it could have happened would have been in the introduction [Chapter 1: The Role of Intelligence], where we were talking about the nature of intelligence ..."³⁶⁴

674. Sir John added:

"But ... the judgements and confidence in the judgements [in the 9 September Assessment] was high, in spite of the areas where we didn't have knowledge. So it was the gaps in detailed knowledge, rather than [gaps] in confidence about basic judgements."

675. Mr Miller added:

"The intelligence was not all encompassing ... What we tried to do in the Assessment and in the dossier was to describe the intelligence as directly as we could, and then set out clearly and distinctly the judgements which had been reached.

"... We felt it was right that the firmness of the judgements that had been expressed in the classified Assessment [of 9 September] should be echoed in the published ... [dossier]."³⁶⁵

676. Subsequently, in response to a question about the absence of caveats in the Key Judgements of Assessments, which were what Ministers were "meant to read", Sir John Scarlett told the Inquiry:

"... this is... the issue that effectively arose around the drafting of the dossier ... it wasn't because they had deliberately been left out. It was because of the use of the Executive Summary as the equivalent of the [JIC's] Key Judgements."³⁶⁶

³⁶⁴ Private hearing, 5 May 2010, pages 71-72.

³⁶⁵ Private hearing, 5 May 2010, pages 72-73.

³⁶⁶ Private hearing, 5 May 2010, page 86.

677. Sir John added that, after the publication of the Butler Report in July 2004, “all front pages of the Assessments [ie the page with the Key Judgements] have contained a box on the intelligence base” which “spells out the strengths and weaknesses of the intelligence”. That allowed the Key Judgements to be made while flagging up the caveats.

678. Asked if he had expressed any concerns during the drafting of the dossier, for instance about caveats being dropped or because the text becoming more definite than a normal JIC report might have been, Sir Richard Dearlove replied:

“... with the benefit of hindsight, I was happy with what the dossier said in terms of what we believed at the time that it was written.”³⁶⁷

679. In the context of a reference to comment in the Butler Report that the language of the dossier may have left readers with the impression that there was fuller and firmer intelligence behind the judgements in the dossier than was the case, Sir Richard added:

“Yes, I know it said that, but I think it is easy to write these things afterwards. I mean, you know, at the time when that dossier was published, it’s what we believed on the evidence available, partly historical – significantly historical – partly based on the sources, [...]”

...

“... I had been worried about the dossier for a very long time because I didn’t feel that we had a very substantive picture from intelligence. We had a substantive picture from historical material.

“By the time, you know, the draft was complete, I was, I think, surprised how much material had been assembled. I think you have to recall, when this document was published -- and I would actually refer you also to the Institute of Strategic Studies document. Both were felt to be rather conservative, rather reserved pictures of what Iraq’s capability was at that time. You know, it’s only now – and I’m also firmly of the view that we still don’t have a complete picture of Iraq’s WMD ...”³⁶⁸

680. Sir Richard Dearlove’s position on the very restricted circulation of the SIS reports of 11 and 23 September is set out earlier in this Section.

Mr Blair’s Foreword

681. In its report, *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessment*, published in September 2003, the ISC examined “whether the available intelligence,

³⁶⁷ Private hearing, 16 June 2010, page 57.

³⁶⁸ Private hearing, 16 June 2010, pages 57-58.

which informed the decision to invade Iraq, was adequately and properly assessed and whether it was accurately reflected in Government publications”, including three of the statements made in the Foreword.³⁶⁹

THREAT TO THE UK NATIONAL INTEREST

682. In relation to the statement in Mr Blair’s Foreword that he believed Iraq, and its weapons of mass destruction, was “a current and serious threat to the UK national interest”, the ISC stated:

“On the question of what direct threat Saddam, his regime and his WMD posed to UK interests, the evidence is that UK forces deployed in the region to enforce the ... No-Fly Zones were threatened by conventional weapons, and could have been threatened by any biological and chemical weapons that Saddam possessed. Additionally, if Al Hussein missiles had been retained and they were operational with conventional or chemical and biological warheads, they could have attacked UK forces in Cyprus or those conducting operations in the region. Saddam’s WMD programmes and his continued support of them increased this threat.”³⁷⁰

683. The ISC stated that the first draft of Mr Blair’s Foreword had made clear that the Government recognised that Saddam Hussein did not pose a direct threat to the UK: “The case I make is not that Saddam could launch a nuclear attack on London or another part of the UK (He could not).”³⁷¹

684. In the ISC’s view, it was “**unfortunate**” that the point was removed in the published version, “**and not highlighted elsewhere**”.

685. The ISC concluded:

“Saddam was not considered a current or imminent threat to mainland UK, nor did the dossier say so.”³⁷²

686. In its response to the ISC, the Government welcomed that conclusion, adding:

“The dossier was not intended to make the case for military action against Iraq; it was intended to share with the public the intelligence being presented to the Government which (along with much open source information) showed that Iraq was in serious breach of several UNSCRs.”³⁷³

³⁶⁹ Letter Taylor to Blair, 9 September 2003, [untitled]. Published in Intelligence and Security Committee, *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments*, September 2003, Cm5972.

³⁷⁰ Intelligence and Security Committee, *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments*, September 2003, Cm5972, paragraph 82.

³⁷¹ Intelligence and Security Committee, *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments*, September 2003, Cm5972, paragraph 83.

³⁷² Intelligence and Security Committee, *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments*, September 2003, Cm5972, paragraph 111.

³⁷³ *Government Response to the Intelligence and Security Committee Report on Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments*, 11 September 2003, February 2004, Cm6118, paragraph 14.

687. The Government’s response to the ISC addressed a different point to the issue of whether Iraq, and its weapons of mass destruction, was a “current and serious threat to the UK national interest” at the time the dossier was issued.

688. The statement that Mr Blair believed Iraq and its weapons of mass destruction was “a current and serious threat to the UK national interest” reflected his view.

689. But it did not reflect the view of the JIC, which had addressed the threat posed by Iraq and assessed that Iraq’s capabilities and intentions were limited and related to the balance of power in the region and internal challenges.

690. JIC Assessments between January 2001 and September 2002 did not formally consider the threat posed by Iraq to UK interests.

691. In its Assessment of 1 December 2000, the JIC stated:

- “Although Iraqi forces are still large and well organised by regional standards, a **military offensive outside Iraq’s borders would be limited** by shortfalls in equipment and logistics.”
- “UN sanctions have successfully prevented the procurement of new weapon systems.”
- “While **US/UK forces remain** deployed in the region and prepared to intervene militarily, **an attack on Kuwait is very unlikely.**”
- “Iraq has probably [disassembled and] concealed a **handful of 650km range ballistic missiles** that could reach Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and even Israel ... But even if Saddam has such weapons he is **unlikely to use them** except in extremis, in order to preserve his regime or as a final gesture of defiance.”³⁷⁴

692. The JIC Assessment of 28 November 2001 stated:

- “... we judge Iraq had no responsibility for, or foreknowledge of, attacks in the US on 11 September.”
- “**Saddam has refused to permit any Al Qaida presence in Iraq.** He is ideologically poles apart from the Sunni extremist networks linked to UBL [Usama Bin Laden] and fears their impact on the population.”
- “Iraq has long seen terrorism as a potential weapon in its conflict with the US and regional enemies. [...] Since September 11, however, **Saddam is likely to have ruled out such attacks for the time being**, for fear of a heavy US response.”
- “But in the medium term the threat against Western interests and regional states remains credible. **Saddam has not given up terrorism as a policy tool.**”³⁷⁵

³⁷⁴ [JIC Assessment, 1 December 2000, ‘Iraq’s Military Capabilities’.](#)

³⁷⁵ [JIC Assessment, 28 November 2001, ‘Iraq after September 11 – The Terrorist Threat’.](#)

693. The JIC Assessment of 19 April 2002 stated:

“... Iraq is rarely perceived as the greatest security threat within the region. Except for Kuwait, the Gulf States see Iran as the greater long-term security threat and want an Iran-Iraq balance ...”³⁷⁶

694. The JIC Assessment of 9 September 2002 judged that the use of chemical and biological weapons before a military attack on Iraq was “unlikely”.³⁷⁷

695. The Executive Summary of the dossier stated that intelligence showed:

“... Saddam Hussein attaches great importance to possessing weapons of mass destruction which he regards as the basis for Iraq’s regional power. It shows that he does not regard them only as weapons of last resort. He is ready to use them, including against his own population, and is determined to retain them ...”³⁷⁸

696. The Executive Summary also stated:

“But the threat from Iraq does not depend solely on the capabilities we have described. It arises also because of the violent and aggressive nature of Saddam Hussein’s regime. His record of internal repression and external aggression gives rise to unique concerns about the threat he poses. The paper briefly outlines ... Saddam’s rise to power, the nature of his regime and his history of regional aggression. Saddam’s human rights abuses are also catalogued ...”³⁷⁹

697. Mr Powell explicitly cautioned that, while Iraq had the means, the dossier did not demonstrate that it posed an imminent threat. In his email to Mr Scarlett on 17 September, Mr Powell wrote that the dossier:

“... does nothing to demonstrate a threat, let alone an imminent threat from Saddam. In other words it shows he has the means but it does not demonstrate he has the motive to attack his neighbours let alone the west. We will need to make clear in launching the document that we do not claim to have evidence that he is an imminent threat. The case we are making is that he has continued to develop WMD since 1998, and is in breach of UN resolutions. The international community has to enforce those resolutions if the UN is to be taken seriously”.³⁸⁰

698. Addressing Mr Powell’s comments about the “imminent threat”, Mr Campbell replied that was “why TB’s Foreword sets out ‘the case I am making’”.³⁸¹

³⁷⁶ [JIC Assessment, 19 April 2002, ‘Iraq: Regional Attitudes’.](#)

³⁷⁷ [JIC Assessment, 9 September 2002, ‘Iraqi Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons – Possible Scenarios’.](#)

³⁷⁸ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 5.

³⁷⁹ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 7.

³⁸⁰ Email Powell to Scarlett, 17 September 2002, ‘Dossier’.

³⁸¹ Email Hatfield [on behalf of Campbell] to Scarlett and Powell, 17 September 2002, ‘Dossier’.

699. In a further email on 18 September, Mr Powell concluded:

“The threat argument will be a major problem in the press/parliamentary assault after the dossier comes out and we need to flag up the point in the preface at publication and during the debate. We need to set the test for ourselves at a level we can meet”.³⁸²

700. There is no indication that Mr Blair saw the emails from Mr Powell.

CONTINUED PRODUCTION OF CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL “WEAPONS”

701. Commenting on the statement that Iraq “continued to produce chemical and biological weapons”, the ISC stated:

“The use of the phrase ... and the absence of detail on amounts of agents produced in the executive summary and main text could give the impression that Saddam was actively producing both chemical and biological weapons and significant amount of agents.”³⁸³

702. The ISC added:

“However the JIC did not know what had been produced and in what quantities – it had assessed, based on intelligence, that production had taken place. We believe this uncertainty should have been highlighted to give a balanced view of Saddam’s chemical and biological capacity.”

703. Asked if the information available in early 2002 showed that Saddam Hussein’s WMD programmes had changed very little since 1998, and that there were strong caveats about the reliability of the intelligence, Mr Blair told the Inquiry:

“Yes, the principal intelligence ... in March 2002, was that our knowledge was ‘sporadic’ and ‘patchy’ ...”³⁸⁴

704. Mr Blair added that he thought the Assessment went on to say, “but it is clear that Saddam continues his programme”.

705. Asked if it was “wise to say that intelligence is ever beyond doubt”, and if that was “setting a higher standard of proof than it might be possible to sustain”, Mr Blair replied:

“I think what I said ...

‘What I believe the assessed intelligence has established beyond doubt is that Saddam has continued to produce chemical and biological weapons.’

“I did believe it ... and I did believe it, frankly, beyond doubt.”³⁸⁵

³⁸² Email Powell to Campbell and Scarlett, 18 September 2002, ‘Re: Dossier’.

³⁸³ Intelligence and Security Committee, *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments*, September 2003, Cm5972, paragraph 110.

³⁸⁴ Public hearing, 2 February 2010, page 64.

³⁸⁵ Public hearing, 29 January 2010, page 80.

706. Asked whether it was “beyond anybody’s doubt”, Mr Blair stated that the “March 2002 JIC Assessment”, said: “It was clear that ...”³⁸⁶

707. Mr Blair added:

“... if I said, ‘It was clear that’ in the Foreword, rather than ‘I believe, beyond doubt’, it would have had the same impact.”

708. Mr Blair added that, based on the Executive Summary and the information that followed in the Iraq dossier, it was “hard to come to any other conclusion than that this person [Saddam Hussein] has a continuing WMD programme”. Mr Blair could not “see how anyone could come to a different conclusion”.³⁸⁷

709. The JIC Assessment of 9 September stated that intelligence indicated that the production of chemical and biological weapons was taking place and the Executive Summary of the dossier stated that the JIC judged that Iraq had continued to produce chemical and biological agents. Neither supported the statement that the “assessed intelligence has established beyond doubt” that Saddam Hussein had “continued to produce chemical and biological weapons”.

710. The questions raised by the DIS about the validity of these judgements by the JIC are addressed earlier in this Section.

711. The JIC Assessment of 1 December 2000 stated:

- Intelligence suggested “some **biological** and **chemical** warfare activity”. Iraq was “rebuilding its civil chemical industry, including facilities formerly associated with chemical weapons”. The JIC judged that “**Iraq may already be producing biological agent and could produce a small number of chemical weapons within weeks** of a decision to do so”.
- Iraq could “build a **large scale production capability within a few years**” “were economic sanction lifted”.
- The same was “probably true for **biological weapons**”.
- Iraq “could produce small but significant amounts of mustard agent within weeks of a decision to do so. It could produce nerve agent within months ... It could also produce small numbers of CW munitions and missile warheads.”
- Iraq still had “sufficient expertise and material to produce BW without procurement from abroad. It could use legitimate civil or dedicated BW facilities, including mobile laboratories, for this work.”³⁸⁸

³⁸⁶ Public hearing, 29 January 2010, pages 80-81.

³⁸⁷ Public hearing, 29 January 2010, pages 81-82.

³⁸⁸ [JIC Assessment, 1 December 2000, ‘Iraq’s Military Capabilities’](#).

712. The JIC Assessment of 10 May 2001 stated:

- Intelligence reports reflected “**a continuing chemical warfare programme**, including research and development, together with the possible production and weaponisation of agent”.
- The JIC had “good intelligence of Iraq’s former chemical and biological warfare (CBW) facilities, their limited reconstruction and civil production”.
- The JIC had “good intelligence of Iraq’s former CW associated facilities”.
- Intelligence of “other related CW activity, including possible weaponisation” was “less clear”.
- “Whilst the picture as regards biological weapons was unclear,” there were indications of “continuing biological warfare research and the possible production of agent”.³⁸⁹

713. The introduction to the CIG Assessment of 15 March 2002 stated:

“**Intelligence** on Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missile programmes is **sporadic and patchy**. Iraq is also well practised in the art of concealment and exaggeration. A complete picture of various programmes is therefore difficult. But it is clear that Iraq continues to pursue a policy of acquiring WMD and their delivery means. Intelligence indicates that planning to reconstitute some of its programmes began in 1995. WMD programmes were then given a further boost in 1998 with the withdrawal of UNSCOM inspectors.”³⁹⁰

714. On detailed points, the Assessment stated:

- “We continue to judge that Iraq has an offensive **chemical warfare (CW) programme**, although there is very little intelligence relating to it.”
- “From the evidence available ... we believe Iraq retains some production equipment, and some small stocks of CW agent precursors, and may have hidden small quantities of agents and weapons. **Anomalies in Iraqi declarations to UNSCOM** suggest stocks could be much larger.”
- Intelligence on production facilities was “scarce” and “the reconstructed former precursor facility near Habbaniyah” was “insufficient to support large-scale CW agent production”.
- “Other industrial chemical facilities could be used ... but we have no intelligence to suggest they are currently being used in that role.”
- “Intelligence has indicated an Iraqi interest in transportable production facilities for chemical weapons, but these could produce only small amounts of agent and we judge it more likely that the mobile units are filling munitions”.

³⁸⁹ [JIC Assessment, 10 May 2001, ‘Iraqi WMD Programmes: Status and Vulnerability’.](#)

³⁹⁰ [CIG Assessment, 15 March 2002, ‘The Status of Iraqi WMD Programmes’.](#)

- There had been “one uncorroborated report” that Iraq had “filled some artillery rocket munitions with VX in the period 1996-1998, and another that a team of chemists was formed in 1998 to produce 5 tons of VX. The source was told this had been completed by the end of 1998”.
- Work on biological warfare programmes had “continued throughout the period of UNSCOM inspections” and intelligence indicated “that this programme continues. Key figures from the pre-Gulf War programme are reported to be involved.”
- Research and development was “assessed to continue under cover of a number of legitimate institutes and possibly in a number of covert facilities”.
- There was “no intelligence on any BW agent production facilities, but one source indicates that Iraq may have developed **mobile production facilities**”. The Assessment stated: “Though not corroborated, we judge the reporting is technically credible. Imagery has yet to provide firm collateral but has identified a number of sites that could be associated with this programme. The mobile production facilities have yet to be identified.”
- The CIG did not know “which types of agent are produced by these facilities”.
- “A decision to begin CBW production would probably go undetected.”
- Iraq was “judged to be self-sufficient in the production of biological weapons”.

715. In the Key Judgements, the CIG stated that, while research and development programmes continued, Iraq’s actual capabilities were finite. There was no intelligence on the production of chemical and biological agents or weapons.

716. The JIC Assessment of 9 September 2002 judged that:

- “Iraq has a chemical and biological weapons capability and Saddam is prepared to use it.”
- “Iraq currently has available, either from pre Gulf War stocks or more recent production, a number of biological warfare (BW) and chemical warfare (CW) agents and weapons ...”³⁹¹

717. The Assessment stated:

“One intelligence report suggests that Iraq has ‘lost’ the capability to develop warheads capable of disseminating chemical and biological agent and that it would take six months to overcome the ‘technical difficulties’”.

³⁹¹ [JIC Assessment, 9 September 2002, ‘Iraqi Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons – Possible Scenarios’.](#)

718. The Assessment also stated:

“Other recent intelligence indicates that:

- production of chemical and biological weapons is taking place;
- ...”

719. The Executive Summary of the dossier stated:

“As a result of the intelligence we judge that Iraq has:

- continued to produce chemical and biological weapons;
- military plans for the use of chemical and biological weapons ...;
- command and control arrangements in place to use chemical and biological weapons ...;
- developed mobile laboratories for military use corroborating earlier reports about the mobile production of biological warfare agents;
- pursued illegal programmes to procure controlled materials of potential use in the production of chemical and biological weapons programmes ...”³⁹²

720. The main text of the dossier stated:

- “Iraq has a usable chemical and biological weapons capability ... which has included recent production of chemical and biological agents.”³⁹³
- “Intelligence shows that Iraq has continued to produce chemical agent.”³⁹⁴
- “We know from intelligence that Iraq has continued to produce biological warfare agents.”³⁹⁵
- “UNSCOM established that Iraq considered the use of mobile biological agent production facilities. In the past two years evidence from defectors has indicated the existence of such facilities. Recent intelligence confirms that the Iraqi military have developed mobile facilities.”³⁹⁶
- “Iraq has a variety of delivery means.”³⁹⁷

³⁹² *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, pages 5-6.

³⁹³ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 17.

³⁹⁴ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 19.

³⁹⁵ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 21.

³⁹⁶ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 22.

³⁹⁷ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 22.

721. Asked whether Mr Blair’s knowledge of the SIS reporting, of 11 September, could have influenced Mr Blair, Sir Richard Dearlove replied:

“... if you look at what he ... actually says ‘beyond doubt on the assessed intelligence’, this isn’t part of the assessed intelligence.”³⁹⁸

IRAQ’S EFFORTS TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS

722. The ISC also considered the statement that Mr Blair believed “the assessed intelligence has established beyond doubt” that Saddam Hussein “continues in his efforts to develop nuclear weapons”.³⁹⁹

723. The ISC pointed out that the Executive Summary and main body of the dossier were less certain:

- The Executive Summary stated: “As a result of the intelligence, we judge Iraq has ... sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.”
- The dossier itself stated that there was “intelligence that Iraq has sought the supply of significant quantities of uranium from Africa”.

724. Although there were some references to Iraq having a “nuclear programme”, the JIC Assessments and the dossier made clear that Iraq’s efforts to develop a nuclear weapon were effectively constrained by the dismantling of its physical infrastructure by the IAEA and continuing sanctions.

725. There was intelligence which indicated: attempts to procure dual-use equipment which could be used in a nuclear programme; possible attempts to obtain uranium; and that Iraq had retained the knowledge and personnel from its previous programme.

726. But neither the JIC Assessments at the time nor the judgements in the Executive Summary of the dossier supported the statement that the “assessed intelligence has established beyond doubt” that Saddam Hussein “continues in his efforts to develop nuclear weapons”.

727. The JIC Assessment of 1 December 2000 stated:

- Iraq had “retained the scientific cadre associated with nuclear weapons work [...] Unconfirmed intelligence indicates **Iraqi interest in acquiring uranium and continuing nuclear weapons related research after the Gulf War**. None of the intelligence acquired since the war is ‘smoking gun’ evidence. But it remains suspicious and seems indicative of attempts to retain a cadre of expertise, which will decline over time without international access.”

³⁹⁸ Private hearing, 13 July 2010, page 31.

³⁹⁹ Intelligence and Security Committee, *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments*, September 2003, Cm5972, paragraph 88.

- “Iraq still lacks fissile material and the infrastructure to make it.”
- If it were “able to acquire sufficient fissile [material] for a weapon or centrifuges and feed material from outside Iraq”, the time periods to manufacture a crude nuclear weapon and a nuclear warhead could, “with foreign assistance”, be “significantly shortened”.⁴⁰⁰

728. The JIC Assessment of 10 May 2001 stated:

- The JIC had “**no clear intelligence on Iraq’s nuclear programme**”. There was “evidence of increased activity at Iraq’s only remaining nuclear facility and a growing number of reports on **possible nuclear related procurement**”.
- The JIC judged but could not confirm that Iraq was “conducting **nuclear related research and development** into the **enrichment of uranium** and could have longer term plans to produce enriched uranium for a weapon”.
- Iraq had “recalled its nuclear scientists in 1998”. It had made “efforts ... since 1998 to procure items that could be used in a uranium enrichment programme using centrifuges”.
- Those included: “**aluminium [tubes]**” and “**other dual-use items**”.⁴⁰¹

729. The introductory paragraph in the CIG Assessment of 15 March 2002 stated that sanctions were constraining programmes to develop medium and long-range ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons.⁴⁰² The Assessment also stated:

- “Iraq is pursuing a nuclear weapons programme. But it will not be able to indigenously produce a nuclear weapon while sanctions remain in place, unless suitable fissile material is purchased from abroad.”
- Iraq does not possess a nuclear weapons capability.
- Its programme was effectively dismantled by the IAEA.
- Although there was “very little intelligence”, the CIG continued to judge that Iraq was “pursuing a nuclear weapons programme” which was assessed to be “based on gas centrifuge **uranium enrichment** ... the route Iraq was following for producing fissile material prior to the Gulf War”.
- “Recent intelligence” indicated that “nuclear scientists were recalled to work on a nuclear programme in the autumn of 1998, but we do not know if large-scale development work has yet recommenced”.
- “Procurement of dual-use items over the last few years could be used in a uranium enrichment programme. There have been determined efforts to purchase high strength aluminium alloy ...” A shipment stopped in Jordan was

⁴⁰⁰ [JIC Assessment, 1 December 2000, ‘Iraq’s Military Capabilities’.](#)

⁴⁰¹ [JIC Assessment, 10 May 2001, ‘Iraq’s WMD Programmes: Status and Vulnerability’.](#)

⁴⁰² [CIG Assessment, 15 March 2002, ‘The Status of Iraqi WMD Programmes’.](#)

inspected by the IAEA, “who accepted, that with some modifications ... would be suitable for use in centrifuges”; “But there was no definitive intelligence that the aluminium was destined for a nuclear programme.”

- The CIG continued to judge that:
 - “[I]f sanctions were removed or became ineffective, it would take at least five years to produce a nuclear weapon. This timescale would shorten if fissile material was acquired from abroad.”
 - Iraq “was capable of producing an **improvised nuclear device**, but it lacks suitable fissile material. Iraq has in the past explored the use of **radiological dispersal devices**, but the design we have seen was not a credible weapon. There is no intelligence that Iraq is interested in such devices.”

730. The JIC Assessment of 9 September 2002 did not address Iraq’s nuclear aspirations, simply stating: “We do not believe Iraq possesses nuclear weapons.”⁴⁰³

731. The Executive Summary of the dossier stated:

“As a result of the intelligence we judge that Iraq has

- tried covertly to acquire technology and materials which could be used in the production of nuclear weapons;
- sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa ...
- recalled specialists to work on its nuclear programme ...”

732. The main text of the dossier:

- referred to the JIC Assessment in May 2001 that Iraq had continued its nuclear research and that there was intelligence that nuclear scientists had been recalled; but it did not include the warning in that Assessment about the limitations of the intelligence; and
- stated that the IAEA had “dismantled the physical infrastructure of the Iraqi nuclear weapons programme ... But Iraq retained, and retains, many of its experienced nuclear scientists and technicians who are specialised in the production of fissile material and weapons design. Intelligence indicates that Iraq also retains the accompanying programme documentation and data.”⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰³ [JIC Assessment, 9 September 2002, ‘Iraqi Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons – Possible Scenarios’.](#)

⁴⁰⁴ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, pages 24-25.

733. The dossier made clear that Iraq would not be able to develop a nuclear weapon without procuring key equipment and material, but stated:

- “Iraq continues to work on developing nuclear weapons in breach of its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and in breach of UNSCR 687. Uranium has been sought from Africa that has no civil nuclear application in Iraq.”⁴⁰⁵
- “... [T]here is intelligence that Iraq has sought the supply of significant quantities of uranium from Africa.”⁴⁰⁶

734. The FAC stated that the assertion in the September 2002 dossier should have been qualified to “reflect the uncertainty” surrounding the evidence upon which it was based.⁴⁰⁷

735. The ISC took evidence from Sir Richard Dearlove on SIS judgements on the reliability of its “two independent sources” for reporting in June and September 2002.⁴⁰⁸ While the IAEA had called into question documentary evidence it had received in February 2003 and SIS was still conducting further investigations, the ISC reported that it had been told that this “did not affect” SIS’ judgement of its second source and its belief that Iraq was “attempting to negotiate the purchase of uranium from Niger”. The ISC described the SIS judgement as reasonable.

736. In its response to the FAC in November 2003, the FCO stated that: “the claim in the September dossier rested on separate evidence to that judged fraudulent by the IAEA”, and that this intelligence was still under review and had not been shared with the CIA.⁴⁰⁹

737. The Butler Review concluded that the “intelligence was credible” that Iraq had sought to purchase uranium ore from Niger in 1999.⁴¹⁰

738. Iraqi officials had visited Niger in 1999 and further intelligence was received during 2002 which identified that the purpose of the visit had “been to negotiate the purchase of uranium ore, although there was disagreement as to whether a sale had been agreed and the uranium shipped”.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁵ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 17.

⁴⁰⁶ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 25.

⁴⁰⁷ Ninth Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 2002-2003, *The Decision to go to War in Iraq*, HC 813-1.

⁴⁰⁸ Intelligence and Security Committee, *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments*, September 2003, Cm5972, paragraphs 89-93.

⁴⁰⁹ Ninth Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 2002-2003, *The Decision to go to War in Iraq, Response of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs*, Cm6062.

⁴¹⁰ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 503.

⁴¹¹ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraphs 493 and 495.

739. The Butler Report also stated that there was separate intelligence that the Iraqi regime had made enquiries about the purchase of uranium ore from the Democratic Republic of Congo and that there was some evidence that by 2002 a sale had been agreed.⁴¹²

LONGER-RANGE MISSILE SYSTEMS

740. In the Foreword to the dossier, Mr Blair also stated that he believed the assessed intelligence had “established beyond doubt” that Saddam Hussein had “been able to extend the range of his ballistic missile programme”.⁴¹³

741. One of the Key Judgements of the JIC Assessment of 10 May 2001 stated that there had been “a **step change in progress**” in Iraq’s ballistic missile programme over the preceding two years.⁴¹⁴

742. The Assessment itself made clear that the change related to work on development and infrastructure, including work on a “**test stand with the capacity for much larger engines than the Al Samoud**”, rather than production of missiles with ranges beyond the 150km permitted by the UN. It also stated that if Iraq developed short range missiles with a range “well beyond” 150km, that would “represent a **step change in Saddam Hussein’s military capabilities**”.

743. A Key Judgement in the CIG Assessment of 15 March 2002 stated that Iraq had retained “**up to 20 Al Hussein ballistic missiles**” with a range of 650km.⁴¹⁵ The “location and condition” of those missiles was “unknown”, although Iraq had “sufficient engineering expertise to make them operational”.

744. A further Key Judgement in the 15 March CIG Assessment stated that Iraq had “begun development of **medium range ballistic missiles** [with a range of] **over 1000km** that could target countries throughout the Middle East and Gulf region”, but Iraq would “**not be able to produce such a missile before 2007** provided sanctions remain effective”. The Assessment itself stated that “**UN sanctions and the work of the inspectors**” had “caused significant problems for Iraq’s missile industry”.

745. The 15 March CIG Assessment also stated that there were reports that Iraq had “succeeded in developing a number of 200km range variants” of the liquid propelled Al Samoud missile, but it was “unclear” whether those were for operational use or for the research and development of a longer-range missile.

⁴¹² *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 494.

⁴¹³ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 3.

⁴¹⁴ [JIC Assessment, 10 May 2001, ‘Iraqi WMD Programmes: Status and Vulnerability’.](#)

⁴¹⁵ [CIG Assessment, 15 March 2002, ‘The Status of Iraqi WMD Programmes’.](#)

746. The CIG judged that the Ababil-100, a 150km range solid propellant missile, was likely to become operational within two years, and intelligence indicated that Iraq had plans to extend its range.

747. The JIC Assessment of 9 September 2002 stated that Iraq was developing Al Samoud and Ababil-100 missiles with a range of “150km plus”, which were being deployed to military units and could have “an emergency operational capability with conventional warheads”, not a capability to deliver chemical or biological warheads.⁴¹⁶

748. Mr Blair’s statement that he believed that the “assessed intelligence has established beyond doubt” that “Saddam has continued to produce chemical and biological weapons” and that “he continues in his efforts to develop nuclear weapons”, went further than the assessments of the JIC.

749. The JIC should have advised Mr Blair that he could not make that statement.

750. Asked about Mr Blair’s statement that he believed “the assessed intelligence has established beyond doubt” that Iraq has continued to produce chemical and biological weapons, continues in its efforts to develop nuclear weapons, and had been able to extend the range of its ballistic missile programme, Sir John Scarlett told the Inquiry that he:

“... saw the ... Foreword as something quite separate from the text of the dossier itself. The text of the dossier itself I was clearly responsible for drafting.

“The Foreword was overtly a political statement signed by the Prime Minister. So it was his wording and his comments that were there throughout, although I did make one or two, three maybe, small changes on the text of the Foreword, basically to correct one or two small points, which I thought were – or actually add at one point in particular about who received intelligence assessments in the first paragraph, and also to bring it into line with the text of the dossier itself.

“There was a particular point on concealment. I didn’t see it as something that I would change. That’s all I can recall now ... it is quite difficult now to reconstruct the actual sort of process of how this happened several years later ... [B]ut my memory at the time quite clearly was this was something which was the Prime Minister’s and it was going out under his signature. So it was different from the attention that I paid to the wording of the dossier.”⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁶ [JIC Assessment, 9 September 2002, ‘Iraqi Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons – Possible Scenarios’.](#)

⁴¹⁷ Public hearing, 8 December 2009, pages 62-63.

751. Asked whether, given that Mr Blair’s Foreword provided an interpretation of the evidence in the dossier and other interpretations could have been made of the same evidence, the interpretation and assessment should have been issued in separate documents, Sir John Scarlett replied:

“Maybe, yes. But I can’t honestly say that that point was in my mind and I was focused on that issue or that risk at the time. If I had been, then I would have expressed a thought.”⁴¹⁸

752. Sir David Omand, who had taken up his post as the Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator on 3 September 2002, told the Inquiry that his memory was that he “didn’t pay that much attention to this [the Foreword] ... which was a mistake”.⁴¹⁹

753. Asked whether the phrase “beyond doubt” had rung any “alarm bells”, Sir David replied that he had:

“... totally failed to spot the potential problem that would arise through the disjunction between the statement of case being directly associated with the text of the dossier. We [the JIC] were commenting on this as a document the Prime Minister was going to produce under his own name, and he was convinced. So his saying so was not really very exceptional.”

Publication of the dossier, 24 September 2002

Cabinet, 23 September 2002

754. The ISC report in September 2003 stated that Mr Straw, Mr Blunkett, the Home Secretary, and Mr Hoon had had the opportunity to comment on an early draft of the dossier, but only Mr Straw did so.⁴²⁰ Private Offices decided that the draft “did not require ... the personal attention” of Mr Brown or Ms Short. The draft was also sent to Ms Patricia Hewitt, the Trade and Industry Secretary. It was not sent to Mr John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister.

755. The briefing for Ministers produced by the Communications and Information Centre (CIC) on 24 September 2002 drew attention to the statements in Mr Blair’s Foreword about the threat posed by Saddam Hussein and the belief that the assessed intelligence had “established beyond doubt” that he has “continued to produce chemical and biological weapons, that he continues in his efforts to develop nuclear weapons, and that he has been able to extend the range of his ballistic missile programmes”.⁴²¹ It also set out the list of judgements from the Executive Summary of the dossier.

⁴¹⁸ Public hearing, 8 December 2009, page 66.

⁴¹⁹ Public hearing, 20 January 2010, page 22.

⁴²⁰ Intelligence and Security Committee, *Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction – Intelligence and Assessments*, September 2003, Cm5972, paragraph 76.

⁴²¹ [Briefing CIC, 24 September 2002, ‘CIC Ministerial Briefing’.](#)

756. Mr Blair told Cabinet on 23 September that the dossier “would show that the policy of containment had worked up to a point” but Saddam Hussein “continued to rebuild” his weapons of mass destruction.

757. Cabinet met at 5pm on 23 September. The discussion is addressed in Section 3.5.

758. Cabinet members were given a copy of the dossier to be published the following day.

759. In relation to the dossier, Mr Blair told his colleagues:

“... the dossier on Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction would show that the policy of containment had worked up to a point, but that Saddam Hussein ... continued to rebuild his programme to acquire such weapons. The evidence showed his efforts to procure equipment and materials, and to restore production facilities. This was an issue for the United Nations, with whose Security Council resolutions Iraq had not complied. A new resolution was being negotiated.”⁴²²

760. No specific discussion of the contents of the dossier was recorded although in the discussion the point was made that the “development of weapons of mass destruction by Saddam Hussein presented a quite different order of threat”.

761. Summing up the discussion, Mr Blair said that a “crunch point” had been reached:

“The sanctions regime ... was being eroded and Saddam Hussein was on the way to acquiring new capability in weapons of mass destruction. Iraq had to comply with the obligations placed on it by the United Nations ...”

762. Mr Campbell wrote that Mr Blair had explained that the dossier “brought together accumulated evidence about Iraq’s attempts to build WMD, part historical, part intelligence-based”; “not saying that he [Saddam Hussein] was about to launch an attack on London, but we were saying there was an attempt to build a WMD programme in a significant way”.⁴²³

763. Lord Turnbull, Cabinet Secretary from September 2002 to September 2005, told the Inquiry:

“I think the dossier was ostensibly an attempt to inform the public. But one of the effects it had was that the Cabinet all read it and basically decided – they absorbed it and accepted it.”⁴²⁴

⁴²² [Cabinet Conclusions, 23 September 2002.](#)

⁴²³ Campbell A & Hagerty B. *The Alastair Campbell Diaries. Volume 4. The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq.* Hutchinson, 2012.

⁴²⁴ Public hearing, 13 January 2010, page 61.

764. Asked whether there had been a debate about different scenarios and different possible courses, Lord Boateng, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury from 2002 to 2005, replied:

“... there was certainly a discussion around different scenarios that came up in the way in which we addressed these issues in Cabinet ...

“... in the September meeting, where, as you know, we were about to publish the dossier, there was about to be a report to Parliament and there was a discussion around that and it was a full discussion and, in the course of that, colleagues made various contributions and various scenarios surfaced ...

“What we did have was a full discussion around the issues as they were reported to us ...”⁴²⁵

765. Addressing the September 2002 dossier on Iraq in his memoir, written after his resignation from the Government, Mr Robin Cook, the Leader of the House Commons, wrote:

“At Cabinet [on 24 September 2002] I described the dossier as ‘derivative’. What I was expressing was the extraordinary degree to which the bulk of the document was derived from what we know about Saddam’s arsenal ... as it had been in 1991 ... What was doubtful was whether the arsenal that Saddam possessed in 1991 was any guide whatsoever to the state of his capacity in 2002.

“For a start most chemical and biological agents that Saddam had retained for a decade would long ago have degenerated to the point that they were of no operational use. This is a principle of science well known to those who wrote the dossier ... Government Ministers alarmed the public by claims that Saddam had ten thousand litres of anthrax solution unaccounted for since 1991. They never added that the standard life of liquid anthrax is three years ...

“... Last year the US Department of Defense ... revealed, ‘When the Iraqis produced chemical munitions they appeared to adhere to a ‘make and use’ regimen ... Their conclusion was that the shelf life of Iraqi chemical agents was numbered in weeks, not decades.

“Half of the text relating to Iraq’s weapons capacity is drawn from the period before 1998. Much of the remainder depends for its claims of present capacity on historic capabilities ... Stripped of the historical resume ... the dossier is very thin on new evidence on the current position.”⁴²⁶

⁴²⁵ Public hearing, 14 July 2010, pages 4-5.

⁴²⁶ Cook R. *The Point of Departure*. Simon & Schuster UK Ltd, 2003.

766. Mr Cook subsequently wrote:

“The dossier ... painted a one-sided picture ... [I]t defiantly proclaimed a certitude for its claims that was at odds with the nuanced tone of every JIC Assessment I read.”

767. Mr Cook added:

“Personally I never doubted that No.10 believed in the threads of intelligence which were woven into the dossier. But that does not alter the awkward fact that the intelligence was wrong and Ministers who had applied a sceptical mind could have seen that it was too thin to be a reliable base for war. No.10 believed in the intelligence because they desperately wanted it to be true. Their sin was not one of bad faith but of evangelical certainty. They selected for inclusion only the scraps of intelligence that fitted the Government’s case. And gave them a harder edge than was justifiable. The net result was a gross distortion. Although every individual claim could be sourced ... the overall effect was to present a false picture of an Iraq bristling with real weapons of mass destruction that turned out not to exist.”

768. In a section reflecting on the issues written after the conflict, Mr Cook wrote:

“Only in the last five days was the word Programme dropped from the title. The clear implication is that No.10 wanted Parliament and public to believe that Iraq had actual weapons ...”

769. In Mr Cook’s view:

“... the most egregious claim of all was that Saddam had attempted to reconstitute his nuclear programme ... The conclusion of the section on nuclear weapons is a masterpiece of false suggestion.”

770. Mr Cook described the section in the dossier addressing what Iraq might be able to do if it obtained fissile material and other essential components as “a fanciful leap into the realm of fantasy”: “This language is frightening. But as evidence that Iraq was a threat it is pathetic and the authors must have known it.”

Mr Blair’s statement to Parliament, 24 September 2002

771. Mr Blair wrote his statement himself and chose the arguments to make clear his perception of the threat and why he believed that there was an “overwhelming” case for action to disarm Iraq.

772. Mr Straw, Mr Hoon, Mr Scarlett and others were asked to identify “any facts that are false and ... any other essential changes that you would like to suggest”.

773. Parliament was recalled from recess on 24 September to debate the case for effective action in respect of the threat posed by Iraq.

774. The Government dossier, *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, was published on 24 September.⁴²⁷

775. Mr Blair's statement to the House of Commons, the questions that followed, and the subsequent debates on Iraq in both Houses of Parliament, are addressed in Section 3.5.

776. In relation to Iraq's WMD capabilities and intent, Mr Blair's statement drew on the dossier, including Mr Blair's Foreword, the material sent to No.10 by the FCO on 2 and 4 September, and subsequent briefing material produced for the debate.

777. Mr Rycroft sent a framework for the statement to Mr Blair, together with background material, on 20 September.⁴²⁸

778. The framework comprised six sections:

- Introduction
- The threat
- The response
- Tackling head-on some of the difficult questions to pre-empt questions
- Consultation with Parliament; and
- Conclusion.

779. In relation to the threat, Mr Rycroft suggested:

“Summarise the dossier: main focus WMD, but also material on the nature of Saddam's regime. History of the inspectors and UNSCRs ...”

780. In the section on the response to the threat, Mr Rycroft set out the framework of the UN route and that Iraq should comply with all the UN's demands; and that Saddam Hussein had:

“... a long history of claiming to offer unconditional access, but then attaching conditions ...”

“For instance, the Iraqi Foreign Minister told the UN last week that Iraq is ‘clear of all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons’. That is a lie. The dossier explains why.”

781. Addressing the question “Why now?”, Mr Rycroft wrote:

“Dossier sets out the threat. It is increasing every year, especially with Saddam's illicit money. Would be unconscionable to be aware of the threat and do nothing.”

⁴²⁷ *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002.

⁴²⁸ [Minute Rycroft to Prime Minister, 20 September 2002, 'Iraq: Tuesday's debate'](#).

782. Addressing the question “Why Saddam?”, Mr Rycroft wrote:

“Need to tackle WMD around the world. Have different strategies for N Korea, Libya etc. With these countries there are at least ... some ways of dealing diplomatically with them. Not possible with Saddam’s Iraq. Only Saddam has (a) record of WMD use, (b) violated so many UN obligations.”

783. Mr Rycroft also wrote:

- “The country [Iraq], region and world would be better off without Saddam, but the issue is his WMD. He must disarm ...”
- There was: “No known link between Saddam and Al Qaida. Terrorism is not the issue – WMD is.”

784. The background documents included a FCO letter providing material to answer points made in the debate.⁴²⁹ In relation to Iraq’s possession of WMD and the risk of proliferation, the brief on military action stated:

- “... as dossier clearly sets out, Iraqi regime has accelerated its weapons programmes since departure of inspectors. Saddam should be in no doubt about our determination to remove the threat of his WMD.”
- “What singles out Iraq as a proliferator is Saddam’s demonstrated willingness to use WMD and wage war against his neighbours. Naive to suppose that we could persuade Saddam through dialogue to give up his weapons ...”
- “In cases of other proliferators [Iran, North Korea and Libya], we have tried to address our concerns through dialogue ... even though some people have criticised us for this.”

785. The detailed briefing on WMD stated that:

- Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and was “still hiding” them “in a range of locations”. The regime had admitted “hiding chemical, biological weapons and missile parts”.
- The UK believed Iraq had “the capability to deliver these weapons to a range of locations”.
- Iraq had “admitted producing large quantities of chemical warfare agents” and “producing biological warfare agents”.
- UN weapons inspectors had been “unable to account for thousands of tonnes of so-called precursor chemicals used in the production of weapons; hundreds of tonnes of precursor chemicals used in the production of VX nerve agent; and tens of thousands of special munitions which can be used in chemical and biological weapons”.

⁴²⁹ [Letter Sedwill to Rycroft, 20 September 2002, ‘Iraq: Commons Debate: Supplementaries’.](#)

786. Addressing developments since 1998, the briefing stated that, “Despite tight controls on imports”, Iraq continued “to pursue ballistic missile, nuclear, chemical and biological programmes”.

787. The detailed text was more nuanced, stating:

- “We believe that Iraq has recently accelerated its weapons programme.”
- There had been “continued progress” on the ballistic missile programme, and facilities damaged in December 1998 had been repaired.
- Saddam Hussein was believed to be “planning to extend the range of his current missiles beyond the 150km limit imposed by the UN”.
- There was concern about “reports of increased nuclear procurement”.
- “We think that R&D on a nuclear weapons programme has restarted.”
- “We believe that the Iraqi regime continues its biological and chemical weapons programmes.”

788. The briefing acknowledged that UN measures had:

“... played a vital role in frustrating Saddam’s ambitions to develop WMD. UNSCOM and IAEA inspectors ... And UN controls on Iraq imports have made it more difficult for Iraq to acquire easily the WMD technology it is seeking.”

789. Sanctions had “helped make Iraqi acquisition of WMD and the means to deliver them more difficult” and had “undoubtedly slowed the pace of their reconstitution”. But there were “always those who are willing to breach sanctions” and “Some equipment” had “reached Iraq’s WMD programmes”.

790. Mr Blair was also sent a copy of the Question and Answer briefing to accompany the dossier.⁴³⁰ Key points of interest included:

- “The dossier shows that Saddam has aggressively pursued his WMD programme. In the four years since the departure of the inspectors things have got worse, not better. It would be irresponsible to ignore those facts.”
- Iraq possessed WMD: it was “still hiding weapons of mass destruction in a range of locations” and it had “admitted producing large quantities of chemical warfare agents”.
- There was “reliable intelligence” on mobile production facilities for biological warfare agents which supported “older reporting from defectors”.
- There was “intelligence relating to continued production” of CBW agents.

⁴³⁰ [Minute Rycroft to Prime Minister, 20 September 2002, ‘Iraq: Tuesday’s Debate’](#) attaching [Paper Press Office, 20 September 2002, ‘Iraq Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government – Q&A’](#).

- If it could “buy highly enriched uranium and essential components”, Iraq might “be able to make a crude nuclear weapon in between one and two years”.
- To deliver a nuclear warhead by ballistic missile, “Iraq would need a more sophisticated design for a missile warhead than any it had before 1991. It could well have done significant research on this while the inspectors have been away, and may have even produced some parts in anticipation. With the acquired fissile material and specialised parts, a warhead could be made for a missile in about two years, but may well fail. Further time would allow the weapon to be developed and tested to improve its reliability.”
- “Iraq has admitted in the past making chemical and biological warheads for its Al Hussein missiles. We believe they could do so again.”
- Iraq had “the capability to have developed” chemical and biological warheads for other types of missiles.
- The dossier focused “on the threat posed by Iraq’s WMD programmes”.
- There was “no evidence that Iraq has supplied WMD materials or advice to any terrorist organisation”.
- Al Qaida was “probably still trying” to develop a WMD capability: “It would benefit greatly from support from a state programme. Allowing WMD to remain in the hands of a regime such as Saddam’s must involve the risk that these weapons will find their way into the hands of terrorists.”

791. Addressing whether there were differences between the US and UK assessments, the briefing stated:

“It is clear that the British and American Governments are in full agreement that Saddam’s WMD programmes remains significant and growing. We are also in full agreement that the international community must take action. Should not be surprised if different analysts using information obtained in different ways at different times come to slightly different technical conclusions – but the fundamental judgements are identical.”

792. Addressing whether the UK’s Iraq policy had created a climate for terrorism, the brief stated:

“... Our Iraq policy is and will remain based on the imperative of containing the very real threat posed by the Iraqi regime to Iraq’s people and its neighbours.”

793. A 19-page briefing produced by the CIC on 20 September set out:

- examples of Iraq’s past obstruction of inspections and its failure properly to disclose information about its programmes;
- statements made by Mr Scott Ritter during his time as a senior member of UNSCOM;

- examples of Iraq’s persecution of its own people and actions against other Muslims in the region, including in Kuwait in 1990-1991; and
- provisions of relevant UN resolutions.⁴³¹

794. In the “Key messages” of a briefing produced for the Labour Party on 20 September, Iraq’s statement (in a letter from Saddam Hussein read to the UN General Assembly on 19 September – see Section 3.5) that it “did not have nuclear, chemical or biological weapons”⁴³² was described as “extraordinary”.⁴³³ The briefing also stated:

“Saddam has accelerated his efforts to develop a biological, chemical and nuclear weapons capability since the expulsion of weapons inspectors in 1998, and the means to deliver them. He is a uniquely dangerous dictator: the only one to have used WMD against his own people and neighbours.”

795. Commenting on the preparation of a core script for use when the dossier was published, Mr Tom Kelly wrote that the “weakness, obviously, is our inability to say that he could pull the nuclear trigger anytime soon”.⁴³⁴ He thought the basic message, that “by then it would be too late”, dealt with that point.

796. Mr Kelly subsequently wrote:

“We should use the full authority of the House to underline the basic message this is a risk we cannot take. If we put someone on earlier [to make comments before Mr Blair’s statement to the House of Commons] there is a danger that the big picture will get lost in the detail of precisely how long it [would] take for nuclear capacity etc. Instead TB can carry the big message this is a man who will do anything he can not just to hang on to power, but to impose his will.”⁴³⁵

797. On 23 September, a draft of Mr Blair’s statement was sent to the Private Offices of Mr Straw, Mr Hoon, Mr Brown, Lord Goldsmith and Sir Andrew Turnbull, and to Mr Scarlett and Mr Bowen.⁴³⁶ They were asked to identify “any facts that are false and ... any other essential changes that you would like to suggest”.

798. In his diaries, Mr Campbell wrote that Mr Blair had “done the statement pretty much himself”.⁴³⁷

⁴³¹ [Briefing CIC, 20 September 2002, ‘Facts about Iraq – Saddam’s Games with Inspectors’, attached to Minute Rycroft to Prime Minister, ‘Iraq: Tuesday’s Debate’.](#)

⁴³² UN General Assembly, ‘Fifty-seventh session 19 September 2002’ (A/57/PV.17).

⁴³³ [Briefing Labour Party, 20 September 2002, ‘Iraq’.](#)

⁴³⁴ Email Kelly to Campbell, 19 September 2002, ‘Tuesday core script’.

⁴³⁵ Email Kelly to Campbell, 19 September 2002, ‘RE Tuesday core script’.

⁴³⁶ [Letter Rycroft to Sedwill, 23 September 2002, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s Statement, 24 September’](#), attaching draft statement.

⁴³⁷ Campbell A & Hagerty B. *The Alastair Campbell Diaries. Volume 4. The Burden of Power: Countdown to Iraq*. Hutchinson, 2012.

799. Mr Blair told the Hutton Inquiry:

“... the most important thing was I was very careful in my statement [to Parliament] to make it clear what we were and were not saying.”⁴³⁸

800. Asked if there was anything in his statement to Parliament he wanted to emphasise, Mr Blair told the Hutton Inquiry:

“I think the only thing ... is just to emphasise the fact that I make it clear what I perceived the threat to be.”⁴³⁹

801. Mr Blair also said:

“... it was essential that anything we said in the course of my statement ... we could hand on heart say: this is the assessment of the Joint Intelligence Committee.”⁴⁴⁰

802. The Iraq Inquiry asked Mr Blair for a statement on who had been involved in the preparation of his statement, and who had cleared the intelligence it contained.⁴⁴¹

803. Mr Blair wrote:

“In respect of my statement of 24 September 2002 to the House of Commons I would have relied principally on the dossier and JIC Assessments and written and oral intelligence briefing, some of which came in just before the statement, in particular the [9] September JIC Assessment which referred to mobile facilities.”⁴⁴²

804. Mr Blair added:

“I have gone back, in the course of compiling this statement, to the vast number of different documents that refer to Saddam and WMD. I simply make the point that the assumptions in all of them was that Saddam was committed in both the intent and the action in developing WMD. Of course, the Iraq Survey Group shows that the intent indeed remained and there were multiple breaches of UN resolutions.”

805. In his statement to the House of Commons on 24 September, Mr Blair began by thanking the Speaker for recalling Parliament “to debate the best way to deal with the issue of the present leadership of Iraq and weapons of mass destruction” and described the dossier as “detailing the history of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction programme, its breach of United Nations resolutions and its attempts to rebuild that illegal programme”.⁴⁴³

⁴³⁸ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 28 August 2003, page 10.

⁴³⁹ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 28 August 2003, page 14.

⁴⁴⁰ The Hutton Inquiry, public hearing, 28 August 2003, pages 18-19.

⁴⁴¹ Inquiry request for a witness statement, 13 December 2010, Q3(a) and 3(b) page 2.

⁴⁴² Statement, 14 January 2011, page 5.

⁴⁴³ House of Commons, *Official Report*, 24 September 2002, columns 1-23.

806. Addressing the problems encountered by the inspectors, Mr Blair placed the issues being addressed firmly in the context of:

“... an 11-year history ... of UN will flouted, of lies told by Saddam about the existence of his chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, and of obstruction, defiance and denial.

“There is one common, consistent theme ... the total determination of Saddam to maintain that programme; to risk war, international ostracism, sanctions and the isolation of the Iraqi economy ...”

807. Addressing the question of why Saddam Hussein had decided in mid-September, but not before, to admit the weapons inspectors, Mr Blair stated the answer was in the dossier, and it was because:

“... his chemical, biological and nuclear programme is not an historic left-over from 1998. The inspectors are not needed to clean up the old remains. His weapons of mass destruction programme is active detailed and growing. The policy of containment is not working. The weapons of mass destruction programme is not shut down; it is up and running now.”

808. Mr Blair stated that the dossier disclosing the intelligence assessments provided by the JIC had been produced because it was “important to explain our concerns about Saddam to the British people”. He added that people were going to:

“... have to take elements of this on the good faith of our intelligence services, but this is what they are telling me ... and my senior colleagues. The intelligence picture that they paint is one accumulated over the last four years. It is extensive, detailed and authoritative.

“It concludes Iraq has chemical and biological weapons, that Saddam has continued to produce them, that he has existing and active plans for the use of chemical and biological weapons, which could be activated within 45 minutes, including against his own Shia population, and that he is actively trying to acquire nuclear weapons capability.”

809. Addressing the content of the dossier, Mr Blair told Parliament that:

- As well as the chemical agents and precursor chemicals, growth media for anthrax and special munitions for the delivery of chemical and biological agents that were “missing and unaccounted for” in 1998, Iraq continued “to produce chemical weapons; has rebuilt previously destroyed production plants across Iraq; has brought dual-use chemical facilities; has retained key personnel ... and has a serious ongoing research programme into weapons production, all of it well funded”.

- "... production of biological agents has continued; facilities formerly used for biological agents have been rebuilt; equipment has been purchased for such a programme; and again Saddam has retained the personnel who worked on it prior to 1991. In particular, the UN inspection regime discovered that Iraq was trying to acquire mobile biological weapons facilities ... Present intelligence confirms that it has now got such facilities." The UK believed Iraq could produce anthrax, botulinum toxin, aflatoxin and ricin, which "all eventually result in excruciatingly painful death".
- Saddam Hussein's previous nuclear programme had been "shut down by the inspectors" and "known remaining stocks of uranium" were "held under supervision" by the IAEA. Key personnel who used to work on the nuclear weapons programme were "back in harness". "But we now know" that Saddam Hussein has also:
 - "bought or attempted to buy" items that could have a use in a nuclear programme; and
 - "been trying to buy significant quantities of uranium from Africa, although we do not know whether he has been successful".
- Iraq's ballistic missile programme was required for the delivery of its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. It was "clear that a significant number of longer-range missiles were effectively concealed from the previous inspectors and remain, including up to 20 extended-range SCUD missiles ... and, by this year, Iraq's development of weapons with a range of more than 1,000km was well under way; and that hundreds of people are employed in that programme, facilities are being built and equipment procured – usually clandestinely. Sanctions and import controls have hindered the programme, but only slowed its progress. The capability being developed, incidentally, is for multi-purpose use, including with WMD warheads."

810. Mr Blair stated:

"That is the assessment, given to me, of the Joint Intelligence Committee. In addition, we have well founded intelligence to tell us that Saddam sees his WMD programme as vital to his survival and as a demonstration of his power and influence in the region."

811. Mr Blair added:

"There will be some who dismiss all this. Intelligence is not always right. For some of the material, there might be innocent explanations. There will be others who say rightly that ... it could be several years before Saddam acquires a usable nuclear weapon – though if he were able to purchase fissile material ... it would be only a year or two."

812. In the light of the information he had set out, Mr Blair asked whether the world would be wise to trust to the “good faith of the current Iraqi regime”. Mr Blair added:

“Our case is simply this: not that we take military action come what may, but that the case for ensuring Iraqi disarmament, as the UN itself has stipulated, is overwhelming. I defy anyone, on the basis of this evidence, to say that that is an unreasonable demand for the international community to make when, after all, it is only the same demand that we have made for 11 years and that Saddam has rejected.”

813. Mr Blair posed, and addressed, three questions: ‘Why Saddam?’, ‘Why now?’; and ‘Why should Britain care?’.

814. On the question ‘Why Saddam?’, Mr Blair said two things about Saddam stood out: “He had used these weapons in Iraq” and thousands had died, and he had used them during the war with Iran “in which one million people died”; and the regime had “no moderate elements to appeal to”.

815. On the question ‘Why now?’, Mr Blair stated:

“I agree that I cannot say that this month or next, even this year or next, Saddam will use his weapons. But I can say that if the international community, having made the call for his disarmament, now, at this moment, at the point of decision, shrugs its shoulders and walks away, he will draw the conclusion dictators faced with a weakening will always draw: that the international community will talk but not act, will use diplomacy but not force. We know, again from our history, that diplomacy not backed by the threat of force has never worked with dictators and never will.

“If we take this course and if we refuse to implement the will of the international community, Saddam will carry on, his efforts will intensify, his confidence will grow and, at some point in the future not too distant, the threat will turn into reality. The threat therefore is not imagined. The history of Saddam and weapons of mass destruction is not American or British propaganda. The history and the present threat are real.”

816. Mr Blair said that Britain should care:

“Because there is no way this man, in this region ... could begin a conflict using such weapons and the consequences not engulf the whole world, including this country.’ That ... is the reason the UN passed its resolutions. That is why it is right that the UN Security Council again makes its will and its unity clear and lays down a strong new UN resolution and mandate. Then Saddam will have the choice: comply willingly or be forced to comply. That is why alongside the diplomacy, there must be genuine preparedness and planning to take action if diplomacy fails.

“Let me be plain about our purpose. Of course there is no doubt that Iraq, the region and the whole world would be better off without Saddam. Iraq deserves to be led by

someone who can abide by international law, not a murderous dictator; by someone who can bring Iraq back into the international community where it belongs, not ... languishing as a pariah; by someone who can make the country rich and successful, not impoverished by Saddam's personal greed; and by someone who can lead a government more representative of the country as a whole while maintaining absolutely Iraq's territorial integrity.

"We have no quarrel; with the Iraqi people. Indeed, liberated from Saddam they could make Iraq prosperous and a force for good in the Middle East. So the ending of this regime would be the cause of regret for no one other than Saddam. But our purpose is disarmament. No one wants military conflict. The whole purpose of putting this before the UN is to demonstrate the united determination of the international community to resolve this in the way it should have been resolved years ago: through a proper process of disarmament under the UN. Disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction is the demand. One way or another it must be acceded to."

817. Mr Iain Duncan Smith, Leader of the Opposition, said that the "key question" was whether Saddam Hussein had "the means, the mentality and the motive to pose a threat to pose a threat to Britain's national security and the wider international order". Mr Duncan Smith concluded that Saddam had the means and mentality. He stated:

"The evidence produced in the Government's report shows clearly that Iraq is still pursuing its weapons of mass destruction programme ...

"The ... dossier confirms that Iraq is self sufficient in biological weapons and that the Iraqi military is ready to deploy those, and chemical weapons, at some 45 minutes' notice."

818. Addressing whether Saddam Hussein had the motive to strike against Britain, Mr Duncan Smith stated:

"... I believe that it is fair to assume that he has ...

"The report shows that Saddam has illegally retained up to 20 Al Hussein missiles, with a range of 650km, capable of carrying the various warheads that he needs, and that he is also developing new ones."

819. Mr Charles Kennedy, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, asked:

"Does the Prime Minister truly believe that, on the evidence published today, a sufficient case has now been made that both clarifies Iraq's present capacity, as well as its intent?"

820. Mr Blair responded:

"... yes I do believe the information we published today shows that there is a continuing chemical and biological weapons programme, and an attempt by

Saddam Hussein to acquire a nuclear weapons capability. That is what I believe, and that is the assessment of the Joint Intelligence Committee – and frankly I prefer its assessment to the assessment of the Iraqi regime, which, let us say, on the basis of experience, is not one that should carry a lot of credibility.”

821. Mr William Hague (Conservative) asked:

“Does the Prime Minister recollect that, in the half-century history of various states acquiring nuclear capabilities, in almost every case – from the Soviet Union in 1949 to Pakistan in 1998 – their ability to do so had been greatly underestimated and understated by intelligence sources at the time? Estimates today of Iraq taking several years to acquire a nuclear device should be seen in that context ... [I]s there not at least a significant risk of the utter catastrophe of Iraq possessing a nuclear device without warning, some time in the next couple of years? In that case, does not the risk of leaving the regime on its course today far outweigh the risk of taking action quite soon?”

822. Mr Blair responded:

“I entirely agree ... For the preparation of the dossier we had a real concern not to exaggerate the intelligence that we had received. For obvious reasons, it is difficult to reflect the credibility of the information, and we rate the credibility of what we have very highly. I say no more than that.

...

“... I entirely agree that the danger of inaction ... far outweighs the danger of action.”

823. Other points made by Mr Blair included:

- “... [I]n my judgement, if we do not deal with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their retention by highly unstable states, often with dictatorial regimes, then perhaps not this year or next, but in the not too distant future, that problem will explode on to the consciousness of the world. I believe that passionately, which is why, whatever the issues in relation to Iraq ... it is important to take a stand now and say that, when we have made determinations on behalf of the international community, we will see them through. If we do not, the message to Saddam and anyone else will be that they can develop these weapons with impunity and that the international community lacks the will to deal with them.”
- “... [T]he point is that if we know that someone has weapons of mass destruction, if they have used them before and if, as a result, the international community has said they must be disarmed of those weapons, surely the greatest risk is letting them carry on developing those weapons and not doing anything about it.”

- "... [I]n the past four or five years the issue of Iraq, weapons inspections and what to do about that regime has come over my desk pretty much week after week ... [I]t has been there as an issue the whole time ... What we know now from the assessment given by our Joint Intelligence Committee is that the very thing that we feared is the very thing that the Iraqi regime is working on."
- "What has happened ... is that, whether we like it our not, now is the point of decision."
- "... We have to be clear that the consequences of saying now to Iraq that we are not going to do anything will be really, really serious."
- "... [W]e have to make the decision, and I do not think we can duck the consequences of that decision."

824. Mr Blair concluded that the threat was not that Saddam Hussein was going to launch an attack on the UK "tomorrow":

"... the threat is that within his own region, or outside it given the missile capability that he is trying to develop, he launches an attack that threatens the stability of that region and then the wider world. All the evidence that we have is that if there is such a conflict in that region, we will not be able to stand apart from it."

ACCURACY OF THE STATEMENT

825. Mr Blair's statement about Iraq's capabilities and intentions included some judgements that were additional to those in the dossier.

826. Mr Blair's categorical statement that the intelligence picture painted by the JIC over the last four years was "extensive, detailed and authoritative", was not an accurate description of the intelligence underpinning the JIC's assessments.

827. There are a number of differences between the draft speech and Mr Blair's statement to the House of Commons where points of detail were added or changed, but its structure and key arguments remained.

828. In the statement, Mr Blair emphasised that the information in the dossier represented the view of the JIC.

829. During a debate on Iraq on 22 February 2007, Lord Butler said that Mr Blair's statement to Parliament "that the picture painted by our intelligence services was 'extensive, detailed and authoritative' ... could simply not have been justified by the material that the intelligence community provided to him."

830. The draft of Mr Blair's statement on 23 September said that the intelligence picture was "extensive and detailed". The words "and authoritative" were added in the final version; it is not clear who made that change or why.

831. The JIC Assessments issued since December 1998 could be described as authoritative. But the gaps and uncertainties in the intelligence which underpinned them were clearly identified.

832. The evidence set out earlier in this Section and in Section 4.1 demonstrates that, since the departure of the weapons inspectors four years earlier, detailed intelligence had been received on many aspects of Iraq's activities, and it was more extensive in some areas than others. The judgement that the intelligence picture was extensive may also have been influenced by the reporting which had been issued since the end of August 2002.

833. Mr Blair characterised Iraq's activities to acquire chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, and a ballistic missile capability to deliver them, as a "programme" which was "active, detailed and growing".

834. That statement was in the draft of 23 September, and there is no evidence that Mr Blair was advised to remove it.

835. The claim that Iraq's WMD programme was "growing" and that it had recently accelerated appeared in the briefing material produced by the FCO and No.10 at that time.

836. Asked whether the JIC Assessments had said that the WMD threat from Iraq was growing, Mr Blair told the Inquiry:

"Yes, it was telling me that in two respects ...

"First ... there were the September JIC assessments that talked of continuing production of chemical weapons. In other words, this was a continuing process. But secondly -- and this did have an impact on me at the time, although this particular piece of intelligence turned out later to be wrong, but at the time, obviously, we didn't know that -- on 12 September ... I was told and specifically briefed about these mobile production facilities for biological weapons. So this was an additional and new factor and this was very much linked to whether and how Saddam might conceal his activities."⁴⁴⁴

837. In the context of questioning about the intelligence reports received in late August and early September and what might have been in Mr Blair's mind when he said that Iraq's programmes were growing, Sir John Scarlett stated:

"... I think it is important to state that that was the reporting that he was seeing, and he was receiving a judgement from the JIC which said that production of agent is continuing and it's happening now.

⁴⁴⁴ Public hearing, 2 February 2010, pages 87-88.

“So it is possible ... to conclude that if you are being told that the production is continuing, it’s possible to conclude that therefore the issue is growing ...”⁴⁴⁵

838. Sir John confirmed that meant the material was accumulating.

839. Asked about the sourcing for the reports of 11 and 23 September, Sir John replied:

“... that source was not substantiated and it was the first of the reporting to be withdrawn ... in late July 2003.”

840. Asked whether the SIS reporting, of 11 and 23 September, might have justified Mr Blair’s use of the word “growing”, Sir Richard Dearlove replied:

“... maybe they account for the Prime Minister saying ‘growing’. I don’t know. I am not sure whether that is true or not.”⁴⁴⁶

841. Mr Blair’s statements in his Foreword to the dossier about the nature of the threat posed by Iraq to UK interests and that he believed “the assessed intelligence” had “established beyond doubt” that Saddam Hussein had “continued to produce chemical and biological weapons, that he continues in his efforts to develop nuclear weapons” are addressed earlier in this Section.

842. The references to Iraq’s chemical and biological programmes in the statement reflected the material in the Foreword and the dossier.

843. A reference to material being “missing” as well as “unaccounted for” was new and implied the material had existed. The word was added to the draft version of 23 September.

844. In his statement to Parliament on 24 September, about Iraq’s efforts to develop nuclear weapons, Mr Blair said that “we know” Saddam Hussein “has bought or attempted to buy” material which could be used in a nuclear weapons programme.

845. Mr Blair’s description in his evidence to the Inquiry, that the information on Iraqi procurement activities in the dossier “could indicate a continuing interest in nuclear weapons” would have been a more accurate description of the position.

846. In listing Iraq’s attempts to procure prohibited technology and materials which could be used in a nuclear weapons programme, which had been set out in the dossier (page 26), Mr Blair stated:

“But we now know the following ... Saddam has bought or attempted to buy ...”

847. The dossier said only that intelligence showed “attempts to purchase”.

⁴⁴⁵ Private hearing, 5 May 2010, pages 14-15.

⁴⁴⁶ Private hearing, 13 July 2002, page 31.

848. Mr Blair stated that it would only take Saddam Hussein “a year or two” to acquire a usable nuclear weapon “if he were able to purchase fissile material illegally”, rather than the fuller and more cautious assessment in the dossier (page 27) that Iraq would need “essential components from foreign sources” to produce a warhead as well as fissile material.

849. Neither the dossier nor Mr Blair addressed the likelihood of Iraq being able to procure both fissile material and other essential components.

850. Mr Blair did not refer to the judgement in the dossier, which reflected the JIC Assessments on the issue, that “while sanctions remain effective Iraq would not be able to produce a nuclear weapon”.⁴⁴⁷ “If”, and only if, sanctions were removed or proved ineffective, Iraq would then need “at least five years to produce sufficient fissile material for a weapon”.

851. Mr Blair also stated that Iraq’s ballistic missile programme was “required for the delivery of chemical, biological and nuclear programmes” and that it was “clear that a significant number of longer-range missiles were effectively concealed from the previous inspectors and remain, including up to 20 extended-range SCUD missiles”. Subsequently, he added that the ballistic missile capability was “being developed for multi-purpose use, including with WMD warheads”.

852. This material was in the draft of 23 September.

853. The dossier (pages 22-23) stated that Iraq had a “variety of delivery means available for both chemical and biological agents”. It made no statement about the delivery of nuclear weapons.

854. The dossier did not include the reference in the JIC Assessment of 9 September 2002 to an intelligence report that:

“... suggests Iraq has ‘lost’ the capability to develop warheads capable of effectively disseminating chemical and biological agent and that it would take six months to overcome the ‘technical difficulties’.”⁴⁴⁸

855. There was no mention in the dossier of concealment of longer-range missiles, other than Iraq’s retention of “up to 20 Al Hussein missiles”.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁷ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 27.

⁴⁴⁸ [JIC Assessment, 9 September 2002, ‘Iraqi Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons – Possible Scenarios’](#).

⁴⁴⁹ *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Assessment of the British Government*, 24 September 2002, page 28.

856. Asked whether his statement that the WMD programme was growing applied to Iraq's nuclear programme, Mr Blair replied:

"... what was set out in the dossier, and set out in very detailed form, incidentally, were all the different items that he had been trying to procure, which could indicate a continuing interest in nuclear weapons."⁴⁵⁰

857. Asked whether it would have taken quite a long time to get from that point to having a usable nuclear weapon, Mr Blair told the Inquiry:

"... if you ask people about the nuclear weapons capability, for example, in respect of Iraq, some people would say, 'Yes, if they are doing it on their own, it is going to take significant amount of time, but you can foreshorten that time if you buy in the material'.

"So one of the reasons – and I emphasise again this whole proliferation issue and AQ Khan in particular – was that it always worried me that any of these countries, if they were so minded, could step up very quickly and get ..."⁴⁵¹

The Butler Review conclusions on the JIC authorship of the dossier

858. In its report, the Butler Review stated:

"We conclude that it was a serious weakness that the JIC's warnings on the limitation of the intelligence underlying its judgements were not made sufficiently clear in the dossier.

"We understand why the Government felt it had to meet the mounting public and Parliamentary demand for information. We also recognise that there is a real dilemma between giving the public an authoritative account of the intelligence picture and protecting the objectivity of the JIC from the pressures imposed by providing information for public debate. It is difficult to resolve these requirements. We conclude with the benefit of hindsight, that making public that the JIC had authorship of the dossier was a mistaken judgement, though we do not criticise the JIC for taking responsibility for clearance of the intelligence content of the document. However, in the particular circumstances, the publication of such a document in the name and with the authority of the JIC had the result that more weight was placed on the intelligence than it could bear."⁴⁵²

⁴⁵⁰ Public hearing, 2 February 2010, page 88.

⁴⁵¹ Public hearing, 2 February 2010, pages 88-89.

⁴⁵² *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* ["The Butler Report"], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraphs 465-466.

859. The Butler Report recommended that governments in the future should make arrangements to avoid putting the JIC and its Chair into an area of public controversy and offered suggestions as to how that might be achieved.⁴⁵³

860. The Report stated:

“... we conclude that if intelligence is to be used more widely ... in public debate in future, those doing so must be careful to avoid its uses and limitations. It will be essential too, that clearer and more effective dividing lines between assessment and advocacy are established when doing so.”⁴⁵⁴

861. The Government accepted the Committee’s conclusions on the public use of intelligence in its immediate response to the report and subsequently stated that: “Any future presentation of intelligence will separate the Government case from the JIC Assessment.”⁴⁵⁵

Conclusions

862. From late February 2002, the UK Government position was that Iraq was a threat that had to be dealt with; that Iraq needed to disarm in accordance with the obligations imposed by the UN; and that it was important to agree to the return of UN inspectors to Iraq.

863. The urgency and certainty with which the position was stated reflected both the ingrained belief – that Saddam Hussein’s regime retained chemical and biological warfare capabilities, was determined to preserve and if possible enhance its capabilities, including at some point in the future a nuclear capability, and was pursuing an active policy of deception and concealment – and the wider context in which the policy was being discussed with the US.

864. But it also served to fuel the demand that the Government should publish the document it was known to have prepared, setting out the reasons why it was so concerned about Iraq.

865. In the spring and summer of 2002, senior officials and Ministers took the view that the Iraq dossier should not be published until the way ahead on the policy was clearer.

866. By late August 2002, the Government was troubled by intense speculation about whether a decision had already been taken to use military force. In

⁴⁵³ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 467.

⁴⁵⁴ *Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction* [“The Butler Report”], 14 July 2004, HC 898, paragraph 467.

⁴⁵⁵ Cabinet Office, *Review on Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction: Implementation of its Conclusions*, March 2005, Cm6492, paragraph 13.

Mr Blair's words, the US and UK had been "outed" as having taken a decision when no such decision had been taken.

867. Mr Blair's decision on 3 September to announce that the dossier would be published was a response to that pressure.

868. The dossier was designed to "make the case" and secure Parliamentary (and public) support for the Government's position that action was urgently required to secure Iraq's disarmament.

869. The UK Government intended the information and judgements in the Iraq dossier to be seen to be the product of the JIC in order to carry authority with Parliament and the public.

870. SIS was commissioned by No.10 on 4 September to examine whether it had any additional material which could be included.

871. Mr Scarlett, as Chairman of the JIC, was given the responsibility for producing the dossier.

872. The dossier drew on the 9 September JIC Assessment, 'Iraqi Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons – Possible Scenarios', which had been commissioned to address scenarios for Iraq's possible use of chemical and biological weapons in the event of military action, previous JIC Assessments and the report issued by SIS on 11 September.

873. The SIS report should have been shown to the relevant experts in the DIS who could have advised their senior managers and the Assessments Staff.

874. Expert officials in DIS questioned the certainty with which some of the judgements in the dossier were expressed. Some of their questions were discussed during the preparation of the dossier. The text was agreed by Air Marshal Joe French, Chief of Defence Intelligence, at the JIC meeting on 19 September.

875. There is no evidence that other members of the JIC were aware at the time of the reservations recorded in the minute by Dr Jones of 19 September and that written by the chemical weapons expert in his team the following day.

876. The JIC accepted ownership of the dossier and agreed its content. There is no evidence that intelligence was improperly included in the dossier or that No.10 improperly influenced the text.

877. At issue are the judgements made by the JIC and how they and the intelligence were presented, including in Mr Blair's Foreword and in his statement to Parliament on 24 September 2002.

878. It is unlikely that Parliament and the public would have distinguished between the ownership and therefore the authority of the judgements in the Foreword and those in the Executive Summary and the main body of the dossier.

879. In the Foreword, Mr Blair stated that he believed the “assessed intelligence” had “established beyond doubt” that Saddam Hussein had “continued to produce chemical and biological weapons, that he continues in his efforts to develop nuclear weapons, and that he had been able to extend the range of his ballistic missile programme”. That raises two key questions.

- Did Mr Blair’s statements in whole or in part go further than the assessed intelligence?
- Did that matter?

880. The Inquiry is not questioning Mr Blair’s belief, which he consistently reiterated in his evidence to the Inquiry, or his legitimate role in advocating Government policy.

881. But the deliberate selection of a formulation which grounded the statement in what Mr Blair believed, rather than in the judgements which the JIC had actually reached in its assessment of the intelligence, indicates a distinction between his beliefs and the JIC’s actual judgements.

882. That is supported by the position taken by the JIC and No.10 officials at the time, and in the evidence offered to the Inquiry by some of those involved.

883. The assessed intelligence had not established beyond doubt that Saddam Hussein had continued to produce chemical and biological weapons. The Executive Summary of the dossier stated that the JIC judged that Iraq had “continued to produce chemical and biological agents”. The main text of the dossier said that there had been “recent” production. It also stated that Iraq had the means to deliver chemical and biological weapons. It did not say that Iraq had continued to produce weapons.

884. Nor had the assessed intelligence established beyond doubt that efforts to develop nuclear weapons continued. The JIC stated in the Executive Summary of the dossier that Iraq had:

- made covert attempts “to acquire technology and materials which could be used in the production of nuclear weapons”;
- “sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa, despite having no active nuclear programme that would require it”; and
- “recalled specialists to work on its nuclear programme”.

885. But the dossier made clear that, as long as sanctions remained effective, Iraq could not produce a nuclear weapon.

886. These conclusions draw on the evidence from the JIC Assessments at the time and the Executive Summary of the dossier, which are set out in this Section. They do not rely on hindsight.

887. The JIC itself should have made that position clear because its ownership of the dossier, which was intended to inform a highly controversial policy debate, carried with it the responsibility to ensure that the JIC's integrity was protected.

888. The process of seeking the JIC's views, through Mr Scarlett, on the text of the Foreword shows that No.10 expected the JIC to raise any concerns it had.

889. The firmness of Mr Blair's beliefs, despite the underlying uncertainties, is important in considering how the judgements in the Foreword would have been interpreted by Cabinet in its discussions on 23 September and by Parliament.

890. In his statement to Parliament on 24 September and in his answers to subsequent questions, Mr Blair presented Iraq's past, current and potential future capabilities as evidence of the severity of the potential threat from Iraq's weapons of mass destruction; and that, at some point in the future, that threat would become a reality.

891. By the time the dossier was published, President Bush had announced that the US was seeking action on Iraq through the UN, and Iraq had agreed to the return of inspectors.

892. Rather than the debate being framed in terms of the answers needed to the outstanding questions identified by UNSCOM and the IAEA, including the material for which UNSCOM had been unable to account, the dossier's description of Iraq's capabilities and intent became part of the baseline against which the UK Government measured Iraq's future statements and actions and the success of weapons inspections.

893. As the next Section of the Report demonstrates, the judgements remained in place without challenge until the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Iraq's denials of the capabilities and intent attributed to it were not taken seriously.

894. As the flaws in the construct and the intelligence were exposed after the conflict, the dossier and subsequent statements to Parliament also became the baseline against which the Government's good faith and credibility were judged.

895. There will continue to be demands for factual evidence to explain the background to controversial policy decisions including, where appropriate, the explicit and public use of assessed intelligence.

896. The Inquiry shares the Butler Review’s conclusions that it was a mistake not to see the risk of combining in the September dossier the JIC’s assessment of intelligence and other evidence with the interpretation and presentation of the evidence in order to make the case for policy action.

897. The nature of the two functions is fundamentally different. As can be seen from the JIC Assessments quoted in, and published with, this report, they contain careful language intended to ensure that no more weight is put on the evidence than it can bear. Organising the evidence in order to present an argument in the language of Ministerial statements produces a quite different type of document.

898. The widespread perception that the September 2002 dossier overstated the firmness of the evidence about Iraq’s capabilities and intentions in order to influence opinion and “make the case” for action to disarm Iraq has produced a damaging legacy, including undermining trust and confidence in Government statements, particularly those which rely on intelligence which cannot be independently verified.

899. As a result, in situations where the policy response may involve military action and the evidence, at least in part, depends on inferential judgements drawn from necessarily incomplete intelligence, it may be more difficult to secure support for the Government’s position and agreement to action.

900. The explicit and public use of material from JIC Assessments to underpin policy decisions will be infrequent. But, from the evidence on the compilation of the September dossier, the lessons for any similar exercise in future would be:

- The need for clear separation of the responsibility for analysis and assessment of intelligence from the responsibility for making the argument for a policy.
- The importance of precision in describing the position. In the case of the September dossier, for instance, the term “programme” was used to describe disparate activities at very different stages of maturity. There was a “programme” to extend the range of the Al Samoud missile. There was no “programme” in any meaningful sense to develop and produce nuclear weapons. Use of the shorthand CW or BW in relation to Iraq’s capability obscured whether the reference was to weapons or warfare. Constant use of the term “weapons of mass destruction” without further clarification obscured the differences between the potential impact of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and the ability to deliver them effectively. For example, there would be a considerable difference between the effects of an artillery shell filled with mustard gas, which is a battlefield weapon, and a long-range ballistic missile with a chemical or biological warhead, which is a weapon of terror.

- **The need to identify and accurately describe the confidence and robustness of the evidence base. There may be evidence which is “authoritative” or which puts an issue “beyond doubt”; but there are unlikely to be many circumstances when those descriptions could properly be applied to inferential judgements relying on intelligence.**
- **The need to be explicit about the likelihood of events. The possibility of Iraq producing and using an improvised nuclear device was, rightly, omitted from the dossier. But the claim that Iraq could build a nuclear weapon within one to two years if it obtained fissile material and other essential components from foreign sources was included without addressing how feasible and likely that would be. In addition, the Executive Summary gave prominence to the IISS suggestion that Iraq would be able to assemble nuclear weapons within months if it could obtain fissile material, without reference to the material in the main text of the dossier which made clear that the UK took a very different view.**
- **The need to be scrupulous in discriminating between facts and knowledge on the one hand and opinion, judgement or belief on the other.**
- **The need for vigilance to avoid unwittingly crossing the line from supposition to certainty, including by constant repetition of received wisdom.**

901. When assessed intelligence is explicitly and publicly used to support a policy decision, there would be benefit in subjecting that assessment and the underpinning intelligence to subsequent scrutiny, by a suitable, independent body, such as the Intelligence and Security Committee, with a view to identifying lessons for the future.

