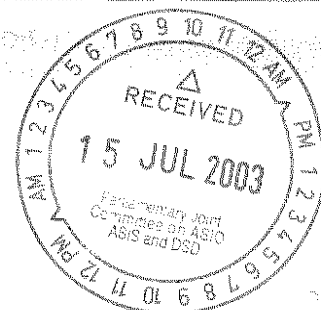


11 July 2003

The Secretary
Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO,
ASIS and DSD
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Sir/Madam,

With regard to the intelligence concerning Iraq's WMD capability which was cited by the Prime Minister in support of his decision to commit Australian troops to the Coalition of the Willing, may I refer you to the letter in *The Weekend Australian* (28/6) from the Prime Minister's Press Secretary Tony O'Leary.

Correcting a previous correspondent, Mr O'Leary said that the PM 'did not cite the so-called "dodgy dossier" in making the case for military action against Iraq.' The dossier to which the PM referred, he said, was the one issued by the British Government in September 2002.

Mr O'Leary claimed that this dossier (<http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page271.asp>) was endorsed by the United Kingdom Joint Intelligence Committee.

I wish to point out that Mr Blair was careful *not* to make such a claim.

In the first sentence of Mr Blair's Foreword, he qualified the contribution of the JIC, saying that 'the document is based, *in large part*, on the work of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC)'.

The Executive Summary that follows goes a little further, saying that the Government's 'judgements *reflect the views* of the Joint Intelligence Committee'.

But reading on, it emerges that the British Government's judgements also reflect the views of *other* sources of intelligence.

In Chapter 3, The Current Position: 1998-2002, under the heading Chemical and Biological Weapons, Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) Assessment: 1999-2002, point 3 says: 'In mid-2001 the JIC assessed that Iraq retained some chemical warfare agents, precursors, production equipment and weapons from before the Gulf War. These stocks would enable Iraq to produce significant quantities of mustard gas *within weeks* and of nerve agent *within months*. The JIC concluded that intelligence...pointed to a continuing research and development programme. These chemical and biological capabilities represented *the most immediate threat* from Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.'

Point 4 continues: 'In the last six months the JIC has confirmed its earlier judgements on Iraqi chemical and biological warfare capabilities and assessed that Iraq has *the means to deliver* chemical and biological weapons.'

However, under the next heading, RECENT INTELLIGENCE, Point 5 says: '**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.**'

Note 1: This assertion is false. The JIC Assessment quoted in Point 4 did **not** say that 'Iraq **has** chemical and biological weapons.' What the JIC confirmed was that Iraq could produce mustard gas *within weeks* and nerve gas *within months* and that it had the *means to deliver* chemical and biological weapons.

Note 2: The subsequent intelligence referred to in Point 5 comes **not** from the JIC but from 'reliable sources'.

Note 3: It is not claimed that the JIC **endorses** this subsequent intelligence.

However, this slippery use of language is the preliminary to the next and most alarming assertion, under the heading 'Saddam's willingness to use chemical and biological weapons', namely: '**Intelligence indicates that the Iraqi military are able to deploy chemical or biological weapons within 45 minutes of an order to do so.**'

This was the intelligence Tony Blair cited to convince the British parliament and the British electorate that Saddam's WMD posed an immediate threat. A close reading of this British Government document

shows that this particular piece of intelligence - and much more - did not come from the JIC and was not endorsed by the JIC.

Throughout, it is the **non-JIC** intelligence that is alarmist, leading the House of Commons foreign affairs committee which reported this week to criticise the language of the dossier as being 'in places more assertive than that traditionally used in intelligence documents.'

The Joint Committee might want to note also that the House of Commons' committee concluded that it was wrong for Downing Street's Communications Director Alastair Campbell to have chaired a planning meeting on the dossier on September 9. Mr Campbell was cleared of 'improper influence' on the drafting of the September 2002 dossier only on the casting vote of the Committee's Labour chairman.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jill Kitson', written over a large, light-colored scribble or mark.

Jill Kitson