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HEADLINE: IRAQ CRISIS: NUMBER 10 ADMITS IT USED THESIS BY **STUDENT**

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BODY:

DOWNING STREET admitted yesterday that it had been wrong not to acknowledge that part of its dossier on Saddam Hussein was copied from a postgraduate **student's** outdated thesis.

The Government's embarrassment over the report, which was praised by General Colin **Powell**, the US Secretary of State, deepened when it emerged that junior spin doctors rather than intelligence experts had compiled it. Among the four Whitehall officials responsible for the project were a personal assistant to Alastair Campbell, Tony Blair's director of communications and strategy, and two Number 10 press officers.

Alison Blackshaw, Mr Campbell's secretary, and Murtaza Khan, a member of the Downing Street corporate communications unit, were accidentally revealed on a government website as having worked on the dossier.

As Labour MPs expressed their anger, Mr Blair's official spokesman was forced to admit that the Government could "learn lessons" over the incident but stressed that the information included was accurate. He also rejected claims by Glenda Jackson, a former minister, that the Prime Minister had lied to Parliament in publishing a report that was in part based on 12-year-old information.

The dossier, which was designed to show Iraq's alleged efforts to hide its weapons of mass destruction, claimed to provide "up to date details" of Iraq's security organisations. But Downing Street confirmed yesterday that much of the document was lifted from a paper by a Californian academic, Ibrahim al-Marashi, who was researching material relating to the build-up to the 1991 Gulf War.

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