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'APOLOGY OVER SADDAM FACTS'

**BYLINE:** Ian Smith

**BODY:**

DOWNING Street made a red-faced apology yesterday as they admitted parts of an intelligence dossier on Iraq were out of date and ripped off from a **student's** thesis.

The dossier, released this week, was a key part of Tony Blair's bid to convince the public of the need for war.

Officials had claimed it was based on intelligence sources and proved Saddam Hussein was trying to hide his weapons from UN inspectors. It was even praised by US Secretary of State Colin **Powell** at the UN on Wednesday as a "fine paper".

But academics claimed passages of the dossier had been lifted directly from their work without permission.

Several pages had been copied - complete with spelling mistakes and grammatical errors - from an article by Ibrahim al-Marashi, a 29-year-old Californian **student**, using information from the 1991 Gulf War.

Yesterday, Blair's spokesman said: "We should have acknowledged we used some of his work. It was a pull-together of a variety of sources.

"We should, to clear up any confusion, have acknowledged which bits came from public sources and which bits came from other sources."

But he insisted the dossier was "solid" and the bulk of it was based on genuine intelligence information.

He said: "The first and third sections of the dossier, which are largely based on intelligence material, describe the extreme lengths to which Saddam has gone to hide his weapons and obstruct the inspectors.

"The second section describes how the Iraqi regime is structured, and it is parts of that which were based on Dr Marashi's work. It does not throw into question the accuracy of the document as a whole."

Last night, however, intelligence experts and anti-war campaigners accused the Government of lying in a bid to justify military action.

Former Labour minister Peter Kilfoyle said: "I am shocked that on such thin evidence we

should be trying to convince the British people that this is a war worth fighting.

"It suggests that there is a degree of duplicity taking place which has no place in a modern, open, democratic society."

Another former Labour minister, Glenda Jackson, said: "It is another example of how the Government is attempting to mislead the country and Parliament on the issue of a possible war with Iraq.

"And of course to mislead is a parliamentary euphemism for lying."

Respected intelligence expert Professor Michael Clark said the plagiarism "invalidates the veracity" of the rest of the document.

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