

Irrelevant & Sensitive

[21/04/2021, 21:13:48] Simon C: Who the hell has briefed the Times and Tel that I advised PM to change his phone number? I don't think this is true, by the way – I certainly don't remember ever having told him this! We've all told him to get off WhatsApp, but I don't remember ever telling him to change his number!

[21/04/2021, 21:35:20] Simon C: Actually, it is a re-run of a Walters story that he wrote a couple of weeks after Dom left. It is just a bastardised version to that I think which someone has reheated...

[21/04/2021, 21:57:58] Jack Doyle: Your office bloke said we couldn't deny this...

[21/04/2021, 21:58:07] Jack Doyle: Exactly

[21/04/2021, 22:00:19] Jack Doyle: I'm happy to proceed with any line I'm given. We can kill at lobby.

[21/04/2021, 22:00:33] Simon C: I think this is all being taken out of context, completely. PM complained once last summer that he was constantly being contacted – so I joked about stopping handing out his number. It was in a morning meeting, or something like that. It was nothing to do with "lobbying" as they are now trying to spin it.

[21/04/2021, 22:01:10] Jack Doyle: Ok we should have had a proper chat about this. I thought NR had spoken to you about it

[21/04/2021, 22:02:59] Simon C: No – NR hasn't talked to me. You can take this in whatever direction you want, to be honest. We could position this as being absolutely standard security advice to Ministers, if you want. Nothing to see here sort of stuff

[21/04/2021, 22:03:12] Jack Doyle: Ok

[21/04/2021, 22:04:11] Simon C: Or anything else you want, to be honest! This is just drivell.

[21/04/2021, 22:04:58] Simon C: I am just much more concerned about the general point, as discussed, to be honest. This endless string of historic stuff is just a massive drain on all of our time/effort

[21/04/2021, 22:05:37] Jack Doyle: Yep.

[21/04/2021, 22:08:18] Simon C: I have just checked, by the way, about how this one was handled. CO press office (often a mess, as far as I can see) say that this story first went in to No 10 press office, who referred it to CO. What Tel put to CO was exactly the same as Walters – that I had warned PM about not doing business on WhatsApp (I actually warned Martin, not PM). Tel never put stuff about changing phone number to CO

[21/04/2021, 22:08:47] Jack Doyle: Nor me. Speaking to NR

[21/04/2021, 22:11:52] Simon C: When my office told me that the WhatsApp thing was being re-run to get a view from you! Looks like it is a handling balls up and Tel not being straight about what they had

[21/04/2021, 22:12:16] Jack Doyle: Yeah. Ultimately does it matter a row of beans?

[21/04/2021, 22:12:49] Jack Doyle: Still we should have organised to knock it down

[21/04/2021, 22:13:15] Simon C: Not at all, to be honest. As I said, my worry is the bigger trend and impact on us all. And I also