
Cabinet Office must release secret memos on Iraq

Posted by Brenna1508 - 2008/09/04 10:52

I am delighted at this decision by Richard Thomas. Richard Thomas, the information commissioner, has told civil servants to release undisclosed material which could provide "evidence that the dossier was deliberately manipulated in order to present an exaggerated case for military action". After all the lies and subterfuge, perhaps those responsible for the deaths of nearly one million civilians in Iraq, as well as injuries or death to almost 3,000 of our own troops, will be shown in their true light and the Hutton report discredited as the whitewash it was.

The commissioner points out that comments made by political figures - such as press officers in Downing Street - as opposed to intelligence officials, do not require protection on grounds of national security. "Specifically, he does not consider that the comments arising from bodies other than the Defence Intelligence Staff, and some of the comments made by officials to the Defence Intelligence Staff relating solely to the drafting of the dossier, can be said to amount to information whose exemption is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security."

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cabinet-office-ordered-to-release-secret-memos-on-iraq-dossier-918050.html>

Re:Cabinet Office must release secret memos on Iraq

Posted by DavieDites - 2008/09/04 11:00

Good post Brenna

I hope those in government at the time are feeling a little loose in the bowels department. I would love to see prosecutions.

Re:Cabinet Office must release secret memos on Iraq

Posted by DoricMan - 2008/09/04 11:27

This disgraceful episode in our recent history is something that I cannot forgive or forget. We were all dragged into this unnecessary and criminal, war and is something I feel ashamed of.

Robin Cooke for all his faults stood up against going into America's war, and how I wish there had been more like him in Government and in Parliament at the outset.

Re:Cabinet Office must release secret memos on Iraq

Posted by Clare - 2008/09/04 12:26

DavieDites wrote:

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Hi Davie

I was personally astonished when the media made such a huge fuss about Alistair Campbell's "book". I was further amazed that people even bought it. The man was a complete liar and the profile he had was unbelievable given the fact he wasn't even elected yet he had so much power under Blair.

Yes Brenna, and just look at what they did to Dr David Kelly and his family in order to keep the extent of their lies hidden.

Re:Cabinet Office must release secret memos on Iraq

Posted by dws - 2008/09/04 15:07

DavieDites wrote:

The Gaithering @ Scotsgait - Scotsgait

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Good post Brenna

I hope those in government at the time are feeling a little loose in the bowels department. I would love to see prosecutions.

Agreed on all counts. Watch the establishment try to bury it though; it's an uncomfortable scenario for them if they could be held legally accountable for their actions.

If a precedent is set, there will be a lot of folk diving for cover.:blink:

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Re:Cabinet Office must release secret memos on Iraq

Posted by LYDIA REID - 2008/09/04 22:05

DoricMan wrote:

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Robin Cooke for all his faults stood up against going into America's war, and how I wish there had been more like him in Government and in Parliament at the outset.

I met Robin Cooke a few times his reaction I believe was more political manoeuvring than a stand against the Iraq war. I don't believe he possessed that much integrity.

Obviously, I could be wrong and I would like to be proven wrong. It was quite a nice feeling to think that a few Labour MPs were full of that type of honour. Yes, I wish too that more MPs had less consideration for their own careers and more care for the future of this country.

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Re:Cabinet Office must release secret memos on Iraq

Posted by Clare - 2008/09/05 00:30

Political maneuvering Lydia? He resigned as Leader of the House, went against the Government and effectively ended his political career! His resignation speech is worth recalling.

This is the first time for 20 years that I have addressed the House from the back benches.

I must confess that I had forgotten how much better the view is from here.

None of those 20 years were more enjoyable or more rewarding than the past two, in which I have had the immense privilege of serving this House as Leader of the House, which were made all the more enjoyable, Mr Speaker, by the opportunity of working closely with you.

It was frequently the necessity for me as Leader of the House to talk my way out of accusations that a statement had been preceded by a press interview.

On this occasion I can say with complete confidence that no press interview has been given before this statement.

I have chosen to address the House first on why I cannot support a war without international agreement or domestic support.

Backing Blair

The present Prime Minister is the most successful leader of the Labour party in my lifetime.

I hope that he will continue to be the leader of our party, and I hope that he will continue to be successful. I have no sympathy with, and I will give no comfort to, those who want to use this crisis to displace him.

I applaud the heroic efforts that the prime minister has made in trying to secure a second resolution.

I do not think that anybody could have done better than the foreign secretary in working to get support for a second

resolution within the Security Council.

But the very intensity of those attempts underlines how important it was to succeed.

Now that those attempts have failed, we cannot pretend that getting a second resolution was of no importance.

French intransigence?

France has been at the receiving end of bucket loads of commentary in recent days.

It is not France alone that wants more time for inspections. Germany wants more time for inspections; Russia wants more time for inspections; indeed, at no time have we signed up even the minimum necessary to carry a second resolution.

We delude ourselves if we think that the degree of international hostility is all the result of President Chirac.

The reality is that Britain is being asked to embark on a war without agreement in any of the international bodies of which we are a leading partner - not NATO, not the European Union and, now, not the Security Council.

To end up in such diplomatic weakness is a serious reverse.

Only a year ago, we and the United States were part of a coalition against terrorism that was wider and more diverse than I would ever have imagined possible.

'Heavy price'

History will be astonished at the diplomatic miscalculations that led so quickly to the disintegration of that powerful coalition.

The US can afford to go it alone, but Britain is not a superpower.

Our interests are best protected not by unilateral action but by multilateral agreement and a world order governed by rules.

Yet tonight the international partnerships most important to us are weakened: the European Union is divided; the Security Council is in stalemate.

Those are heavy casualties of a war in which a shot has yet to be fired.

I have heard some parallels between military action in these circumstances and the military action that we took in Kosovo. There was no doubt about the multilateral support that we had for the action that we took in Kosovo.

It was supported by NATO; it was supported by the European Union; it was supported by every single one of the seven neighbours in the region. France and Germany were our active allies.

It is precisely because we have none of that support in this case that it was all the more important to get agreement in the Security Council as the last hope of demonstrating international agreement.

Public doubts

The legal basis for our action in Kosovo was the need to respond to an urgent and compelling humanitarian crisis.

Our difficulty in getting support this time is that neither the international community nor the British public is persuaded that there is an urgent and compelling reason for this military action in Iraq.

The threshold for war should always be high.

None of us can predict the death toll of civilians from the forthcoming bombardment of Iraq, but the US warning of a bombing campaign that will "shock and awe" makes it likely that casualties will be numbered at least in the thousands.

I am confident that British servicemen and women will acquit themselves with professionalism and with courage. I hope that they all come back.

I hope that Saddam, even now, will quit Baghdad and avert war, but it is false to argue that only those who support war support our troops.

It is entirely legitimate to support our troops while seeking an alternative to the conflict that will put those troops at risk.

Nor is it fair to accuse those of us who want longer for inspections of not having an alternative strategy.

For four years as foreign secretary I was partly responsible for the western strategy of containment.

Over the past decade that strategy destroyed more weapons than in the Gulf war, dismantled Iraq's nuclear weapons programme and halted Saddam's medium and long-range missiles programmes.

Iraq's military strength is now less than half its size than at the time of the last Gulf war.

Threat questioned

Ironically, it is only because Iraq's military forces are so weak that we can even contemplate its invasion. Some advocates of conflict claim that Saddam's forces are so weak, so demoralised and so badly equipped that the war will be over in a few days.

We cannot base our military strategy on the assumption that Saddam is weak and at the same time justify pre-emptive action on the claim that he is a threat.

Iraq probably has no weapons of mass destruction in the commonly understood sense of the term - namely a credible device capable of being delivered against a strategic city target.

It probably still has biological toxins and battlefield chemical munitions, but it has had them since the 1980s when US companies sold Saddam anthrax agents and the then British Government approved chemical and munitions factories.

Why is it now so urgent that we should take military action to disarm a military capacity that has been there for 20 years, and which we helped to create?

Why is it necessary to resort to war this week, while Saddam's ambition to complete his weapons programme is blocked by the presence of UN inspectors?

Israeli breaches

Only a couple of weeks ago, Hans Blix told the Security Council that the key remaining disarmament tasks could be completed within months.

I have heard it said that Iraq has had not months but 12 years in which to complete disarmament, and that our patience is exhausted.

Yet it is more than 30 years since resolution 242 called on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories.

We do not express the same impatience with the persistent refusal of Israel to comply.

I welcome the strong personal commitment that the prime minister has given to middle east peace, but Britain's positive role in the middle east does not redress the strong sense of injustice throughout the Muslim world at what it sees as one rule for the allies of the US and another rule for the rest.

Nor is our credibility helped by the appearance that our partners in Washington are less interested in disarmament than they are in regime change in Iraq.

That explains why any evidence that inspections may be showing progress is greeted in Washington not with satisfaction but with consternation: it reduces the case for war.

Presidential differences

What has come to trouble me most over past weeks is the suspicion that if the hanging chads in Florida had gone the other way and Al Gore had been elected, we would not now be about to commit British troops.

The longer that I have served in this place, the greater the respect I have for the good sense and collective wisdom of the British people.

On Iraq, I believe that the prevailing mood of the British people is sound. They do not doubt that Saddam is a brutal dictator, but they are not persuaded that he is a clear and present danger to Britain.

They want inspections to be given a chance, and they suspect that they are being pushed too quickly into conflict by a US Administration with an agenda of its own.

Above all, they are uneasy at Britain going out on a limb on a military adventure without a broader international coalition and against the hostility of many of our traditional allies.

From the start of the present crisis, I have insisted, as Leader of the House, on the right of this place to vote on whether Britain should go to war.

It has been a favourite theme of commentators that this House no longer occupies a central role in British politics.

Nothing could better demonstrate that they are wrong than for this House to stop the commitment of troops in a war that has neither international agreement nor domestic support.

I intend to join those tomorrow night who will vote against military action now. It is for that reason, and for that reason alone, and with a heavy heart, that I resign from the government.

Read it Lydia. It says a great deal and had the liar Blair listened, or had the spineless Labour hordes sitting on their fat backsides on the benches listened, perhaps we would not be in the sorry mess we are today.

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Re:Cabinet Office must release secret memos on Iraq

Posted by Clare - 2008/09/05 11:10

dws wrote:
DavieDites wrote:
Good post Brenna

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Agreed on all counts. Watch the establishment try to bury it though; it's an uncomfortable scenario for them if they could be held legally accountable for their actions.

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Let's hope so dws. Maybe we'll get Blair to the Hague after all one of these days.

Doric, I can relate to your feeling of shame about the whole mess. The hypocrisy is nauseating. In the recent condemnation of Russia I listened with amazement to the Yanks and our own lot as they spoke with breathtaking arrogance on the subject of invading other states and countries. They didn't bat an eyelid as they delivered their lectures. Now Brown is stirring it at the EU against Russia too. What a bunch of lunatics these people are. It's important to keep reminding people of what we did in Iraq Doric: so many have forgotten that it's actually quite scary.

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Re:Cabinet Office must release secret memos on Iraq

Posted by Bananaman - 2008/09/05 20:52

Thanks Brenna,

It goes to show that not all politicians are spineless unprincipled party aparatchiks.

I sometimes despair of the level of political debate as it seems that if you support party A then you accept everything party A's mouthpieces say and everything else said by people from other parties is rubbish.

There are good people across the spectrum and their ideas should be listened to with respect and any debate should be on the issues using facts and counter-argument.

Instead we get the personality led 'shoot the messenger' approach which actually cheapens the whole process.

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Re:Cabinet Office must release secret memos on Ira

Posted by Brenna1508 - 2008/09/05 21:35

Bananaman commented: It goes to show that not all politicians are spineless unprincipled party aparatchiks. Indeed not Bananaman - rebellion is alive and well as is shown at: <http://tinyurl.com/6ncbdt>
(This refers to an article on the politics.co.uk site but the url won't transfer across cleanly).

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