

man responsible was Alastair Campbell, who wanted the dossier “sexed up.”

The dubious Mr. Campbell was, earlier in his life, a professional gigolo, according to a 1999 biography by British journalist Peter Osborne.

Remember Eden and Suez

The “45 minutes” claim has come back to haunt Blair. Challenged on it on June 4, Blair told the House of Commons that it was entirely the work of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). It was the JIC which had prepared the 55-page dossier released to the public last September. The top-secret JIC—made up of the heads of the three security services, the chief of defence intelligence, and other senior officials—is seldom in the public eye. Its job is to evaluate information produced by MI-5, MI-6, GCHQ-Cheltenham, Special Branch, and other intelligence services and sources. In this way, the collection and interpretation of intelligence are kept separate from each other; JIC’s assessments are expected to be objective and agenda-free. Its papers usually only cross the desks of senior ministers and officials.

Departing from traditional secrecy, Blair said in his foreword to the dossier that he “wanted to share with the British public the reasons why I believe this issue to be a current and serious threat to the U.K. national interest.” The “45 minutes,” naturally, was at the core of the “current and serious threat” psywar.

Secret memos leaked to the *Sunday Times* June 1, indicate that the Iraq dossier was the product of extensive consultations between John Scarlett, the JIC’s chairman, and Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister’s communications director. In the days leading up to its publication, drafts of the dossier were sent to Campbell; Jonathan Powell, the Prime Minister’s Chief of Staff; Sir David Omand, the government’s terrorism and security coordinator; and Sir David Manning, the Prime Minister’s senior foreign policy adviser. Scarlett, according to insiders, was under pressure from Campbell to write a conclusion highlighting the most important “facts” in the dossier. A former MI-6 board member, he protested that assessments contain not facts but judgments; by their nature they cannot be definitive. It appears that, after the wrangling, Downing Street covered its back by requiring Scarlett’s formal endorsement of the dossier. He wrote to Campbell that he was “content” with the final text, which “reflects as fully and accurately as possible,” the Iraq WMD intelligence.

But, according to reports in the June 4 *Daily Telegraph* and June 5 London *Guardian*, the most senior levels of the British intelligence services are seething with anger, at the political manipulation of intelligence work. The *Telegraph* says that many professionals are recalling, how then-Prime Minister Anthony Eden distorted intelligence, to rig Britain’s involvement in the 1956 Suez War. Soon thereafter, Eden was forced out of office.

Vietnam Taking Rightful Place in the World

by Mike Billington

German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder visited the tomb of Vietnamese revolutionary Ho Chi Minh on May 15, placing a wreath in honor of the father of post-colonial Vietnam—once vilified as a terrorist and enemy of the West. The characterization was absurd—Ho Chi Minh was moved by a deep admiration for the principles of the American Revolution. The German Chancellor’s wreath symbolized the recognition of that character by the West; but Schröder went further, identifying the historic connection between “communist” Vietnam and “communist” East Germany, as a positive resource in today’s crisis confronting civilization. He referred to the “intense exchange between Vietnam and the former G.D.R. (East Germany),” with more than 7,000 Vietnamese scientists and academicians trained at G.D.R. universities.

Adding to Asia’s Economic Potential

Today, the issues of the Cold War, and those of the colonial era, are no longer relevant, as both nations look to the future. Schröder pledged Germany’s assistance in the reconstruction and modernization of Vietnam’s economy, while Dresden Technical University will establish a special department at Hanoi Technical University that will enable young Vietnamese to acquire a full German-standard degree.

This collaboration is as important for Germany, and the rest of Europe, as it is for Vietnam and Asia generally. With the dollar-based financial system falling and the included collapse of the American economy, Europe—itsself in depression—is looking to Eurasian development, and the huge potential for growth in Asia, as the market for the industrial potential of its own economies.

Schröder also visited Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore on his tour, and set in motion a major German commitment to industrial investment in the region. Just days after Chancellor Schröder’s visit, the French Senate President visited Hanoi to attend one of many French-Vietnamese seminars on cooperation. The French are otherwise deeply involved in the huge power generation development process in the greater Mekong River Valley, covering all of the former Indochina nations (Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia), as well as Thailand and Myanmar.

Vietnam was divided into three states under French colonial rule, was subjected to Japanese occupation during the Second World War, and then to 30 years of devastating wars of liberation against the French and the Americans. It is only



During his May visit to Vietnam, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder met with Tran Duc Luong, the President of Vietnam, under a bust of independence hero Ho Chi Minh—at whose tomb Schröder also laid a wreath. A country whose population equals Germany's, Vietnam is rising in economic standing.

28 years since the end of the Vietnam War, and 17 years since the beginning of “renovation,” the name generally given to the Vietnamese version of “opening up” and reform.

A high point in the extraordinary progress in Vietnam’s development came with the visit of President William Clinton in November 2000, just 25 years after America’s defeat in the Vietnam War. Clinton told the Vietnamese: “I have been deeply moved by my visit here. I came here, in part, because I believe that America and Vietnam are linked not just by a shared and often tragic past that must be honored and remembered, but that we have a bright future that we can build together to liberate our people and their potential.”

Problem of ‘Free Trade’ Policy

Unfortunately, the Clinton Administration did not succeed in moving U.S. foreign policy back to the tradition of nation building which had characterized the policies of Franklin Roosevelt. The dogma of “free trade” has so perverted the historic role of American foreign policy that virtually every foreign service officer today, if asked about American support for infrastructure development in the developing sector, will admit that “we don’t do that anymore.” And yet, what is desperately needed, for both the developing nations and the United States itself, is just such modern infrastructure construction.

Vietnam, for instance, has plans to build 60 more power plants by 2020, with 40 of them needed by 2010. In addition, 15,000 kilometers of new transmission lines will be required, and 50,000 transformer stations. This will require about \$22 billion in capital input, of which Vietnam can now cover about

30% of the total. The state power company EVN has so far brought the national power grid to 492 of the 504 districts in the country, or 97.6%, and reaches 85% of the communes. Electricity consumption is expected to grow by between 13-16% per annum over the period to 2020.

Of the 28 power plants now in the planning stage, 18 will be hydropower and 10 thermal. If the United States had not abandoned the spirit of FDR’s Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), which as recently as the Presidency of Lyndon Johnson generated major investments in the development of water control and power generation in the Mekong River region, America would be in the forefront of investment and support for these projects. Unlike the 1960s, when Johnson failed to recognize that the development process he supported was impossible to achieve under the conditions of the U.S. war policy, the region is now totally at peace, and holds tremendous potential for progress.

Vietnam and Africa

Perhaps the most dramatic example of Vietnam’s new role in world affairs was the gathering of representatives of 24 African countries in Hanoi on May 28-30, for the first Forum of Vietnam and Africa, under the theme “Opportunities for Cooperation and Development in the 21st Century.” Welcoming the delegations from Africa was the architect of Vietnam’s revolutionary victory, Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, who said he was certain that the “comprehensive, traditional, and fraternal friendship will develop forever.”

Although Vietnamese-African ties were first developed between the freedom fighters during the independence wars in Africa and Asia, the new relationship is based on Vietnam’s capacity to give aid and direction to its African allies in the effort to break the bonds of poverty and underdevelopment. Since 1996, as part of the South-South program, hundreds of Vietnamese agricultural experts have gone to work in Senegal, Namibia, Benin, Madagascar, and Congo.

Vietnam’s success in shifting from an undernourished nation to a major exporter of rice and other agricultural products is a valuable experience for many African nations. At the same time, machinery and engineering skills from Africa, and especially South Africa, can be of significant help to Vietnam’s development.

These ties will grow, as will Vietnam’s role in Eurasian development. Perhaps America can finally learn the lesson of the Vietnam War, and participate in these great nation-building endeavors.

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