

Bring Down Blair By Defeating Bush!

by Mary Burdman

"This election in the United States is being watched very closely in Britain, because it is much more important for us than anything happening here for a long time," a leading British military historian emphasized, in a discussion with this author on Oct. 4. The Presidential election will have a big impact in Britain: If George Bush loses, this will be a "crushing blow for Prime Minister Tony Blair, since he is so closely tied to Bush. If Bush goes down in November, he will leave Blair exposed."

The questions being raised in the United States, about Bush's mental state, are also being raised in Britain about Blair, as several British political observers have told *EIR* in recent weeks. One noted that Blair is now being seen as "completely disregarding reality." Blair's "self-belief" about his Iraq war policy, in the face of proof that he had been repeatedly warned beforehand about the disastrous consequences of the invasion, shows that he "is not quite sound in the head."

Inside Britain, "the Establishment"—particularly the Foreign Office "mandarins"—has recently taken steps to undermine Blair, by leaking secret documents showing Blair's machinations to get into the war on Iraq with Bush and Dick Cheney in Spring 2002, even as highest-level diplomats expressed their doubts about the whole operation. But, although you can hear the political knives being sharpened in London, Blair is still crusading on.

A fatal flaw of the Anglo-Dutch liberal parliamentary system which rules Britain, is that there is no separation of powers. The U.S. Congress or Judiciary can (and should) act against a wrong Presidential policy, but when a British Prime Minister has a majority as big as Blair's New Labour Party, there are few options for effective action against him. The methods resorted to, are usually scandal or health "problems." Big events will be needed to bring Blair down.

Muddy Waters

Britain's internal political waters are turbid. Early Autumn is the time of national party conferences, before the Parliament re-opens in October. No effective opposition to Blair is coming out of these conferences. The biggest opposition party, the Conservatives ("Tories"), are slogging along with some of the lowest political ratings in decades. Tory

leader Michael Howard, just one year in office, is acting like a lawyer, not a political leader. Howard cannot attack Blair on his insane foreign policy, because the Tories fully supported the war, despite the broad opposition of the British population. Howard also provides no alternative whatever to the speculative housing bubble, which is the dominant feature of the British "economy" these days.

The "third" party, the Liberal Democrats, always opposed the war, but is infected with other insanities, including a rabidly "environmentalist" policy.

Before the Iraq debacle, Blair would have been riding high against such feeble opposition. That is not the case now. On Sept. 30, at the end of the Labour Party conference, he announced he would be undergoing a procedure to correct his heart flutters, for which he had been suddenly hospitalized last year. All appears fine with his health, but, obviously, doubts are growing about his much-touted fitness. Then, Blair made an unprecedented announcement, saying that he is determined to serve a full third term (generally, five years) as Prime Minister, if Labour wins the next national elections, which are now set for Spring 2005. However, Blair said, that would be it. Downing St. also announced that Blair and his wife Cherie have bought a 3.6 million pound "retirement" home in London.

Such announcements are simply *not* "done" in British politics. First, elections are not fixed: A Prime Minister strengthens his influence, by calling elections when the opposition is most in disarray. Second, the party has final say on leadership. A Prime Minister either behaves as if he is going to be there forever—as Margaret Thatcher tried to do until she was forced out against her will—or he resigns, effective immediately—as Harold Wilson did.

Rumors are flying. Blair seems determined to block the efforts of his key rival, Chancellor Gordon Brown, to succeed him as Labour Party leader. A full third term would take Blair to 2009 or 2010, and if he stays on that long, Brown's leadership bid would die on the vine. Blair could be trying, one British observer noted, to hold off Brown, until some "Blair clones" (horrible thought!) are hatched to move into the succession.

Blair's bid to consolidate his position has only led to a broad view that he actually set himself up as a long-term "lame duck."

Blair was so shameless as to refuse to apologize for all his lies about Iraq's alleged "weapons of mass destruction," and the deep divisions his war drive has created in Britain. The same Blair who had claimed in September 2002, that Saddam "has existing and active military plans for the use of chemical and biological weapons, which could be activated within 45 minutes"—had to admit in his Labour Party keynote on Sept. 28, that: "The evidence about Saddam having actual biological and chemical weapons, as opposed to the capability to develop them, has turned out to be wrong. I acknowledge that

and accept it.”

But further he would not go. And the *Guardian* reported Sept. 29, that Blair had frantically struck out a sentence saying he was “genuinely sorry” about the profound disagreements in Britain over the war.

Blair’s Lies

On Sept. 18, the Foreign Office, representing a key faction of the British Establishment, leaked secret papers from March 2002—a full year before the Iraq invasion—showing that Blair had been clearly warned, including by his own Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, about the long-term consequences of invading Iraq, and the necessity to maintain a large military presence there “for many years.” The documents, which the Foreign Office the next day acknowledged as genuine, were reported in an article by *Daily Telegraph* Defense Correspondent Michael Smith.

Smith documents Blair’s shameless machinations to get Britain in on the war against Saddam Hussein, in the face of strong opposition by more than 50% of the population, and within the Labour Party itself, including in Blair’s own Cabinet. Blair fully supported *regime change* in Iraq from the beginning, all the documents make clear; any weapons of mass destruction were only a secondary issue. This should hardly be surprising: Blair had put heavy pressure on former President Bill Clinton to go to war against Iraq, but Clinton had refused.

The war opposition in Britain made it necessary for Blair to come up with a cover story to justify invading Iraq. A “Secret UK Eyes Only” briefing paper of March 8, 2002, prepared by the Cabinet Office Overseas and Defense Secretariat, documented that there would be big problems in showing a “legal” basis for the war. “Subject to law officers’ advice, none [no legal basis] currently exists,” the briefing paper warned. Regime change has no legal basis in international law, and with no evidence that Saddam was backing international terrorism, “This makes moving quickly to invade legally very difficult,” Smith reported in his article.

But the United States would attack anyway—with or without Britain, the secret paper warned. “The U.S. may be willing to work with a much smaller coalition than we think desirable.” Blair would have to engineer a “staged approach” in order to be in on the action.

Perfidious Operations

Smith’s article documents how Blair, desperate to get in the war, deployed his then-foreign policy adviser Sir David Manning (now British Ambassador to Washington), to work out a strategy with Bush’s National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, and then British ambassador Sir Christopher Meyer. The Blair side was pushing for a new UN Security Council resolution to “justify” the invasion in Britain and Europe.

The pressure was on Blair to come up with a plan by the

time he visited Bush in April at his ranch in Crawford, Texas. On March 11, Blair met Vice-President Dick Cheney in London, and he claimed at a subsequent press conference, that “no decisions have been taken.”

From Washington, Smith reports, Manning wrote to Blair that he had told Condoleezza Rice that the Prime Minister “would not budge in your support for regime change, but you had to manage a press, a Parliament, and a public opinion that was very different than anything in the States. . . . [R]egime change must be very carefully done and produce the right result. Failure was not an option.”

Rice acknowledged, Manning said, that Bush had no answers “to the big questions: How to persuade international opinion that military action against Iraq is necessary and justified; what value to put on the exiled Iraqi opposition; how to coordinate a U.S./allied military campaign with internal opposition (assuming there is any); [and, most important] what happens on the morning after?”

Manning wrote that Blair could get “real influence” with Bush because of international opposition to the war. Blair could contribute on “public relations,” he said, and “on U.S. planning for a military campaign. This could be critically important. I think there is a real risk that the Administration underestimates the difficulties. They may agree that failure isn’t an option, but this does not mean that they will avoid it.”

Foreign Secretary Straw, according to the documents published in the *Telegraph*, was not enamored of the arguments coming from Manning, Meyer, and Rice. He wrote a cautionary “Secret and Personal” letter to Blair on March 25, stating that British action would have to be “narrated with reference to the international rule of law.”

In his letter, Straw told Blair: “The rewards from your visit to Crawford will be few. The risks are high, both for you and the Government.” There was no majority of Labour Party MPs in favor of military action; neither the alleged threat nor any justification for war were apparent. There was “no credible evidence” to link Iraq to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, Straw wrote to Blair. “I believe that a demand for the unfettered readmission of weapons inspectors is essential, in terms of public explanation, and in terms of legal sanction for any military action.”

But the big question remained, Straw said: “What will this action achieve? There seems to be a larger hole in this than anything. Most of the assessments from the U.S. have assumed regime change as a means of eliminating Iraq’s WMD threat. But none has satisfactorily answered how that regime change is to be secured, and how there can be any certainty that the replacement regime will be any better. Iraq has no history of democracy so no-one has this habit.”

Blair went to Crawford in April for his war council with Bush, and returned to Britain to demand production of the notorious, lie-filled Iraq dossier which was used to “justify” the war. Blair’s evil role as the international broker for the Neo-Con policy of unilateral warfare is now fully exposed.