

Anthony Charles Lynton Blair, Q.C., : ‘Good Riddance ...’

Don't break out the champagne just yet, he still has time to drag the country into another bloodbath...

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Prime Minister Blair's long goodbye – don't break out the champagne just yet, he still has time to drag the country into another bloodbath, he doesn't actually go until 27th June – was typically stage managed. Only the supinely faithful were allowed in to Trimdon Labour Club in his Sedgefield constituency. Sightings of Blair in this, his fiefdom, are as rare as total eclipses of the sun. His constituency work is done by his agent, John Burton. The centre of Sedgefield is the picture postcard English village and for photo-ops, unbeatable.



In 2004 pictures of Blair and Bush having a casual pint in the ancient, beautiful Duncow Inn, with flowers cascading its honey coloured walls, under a cloudless sky, went around the world. As ever, with Blair, reality told a different story. Sleepy Sedgefield, in the wilds of northern County Durham, had been under siege by US security operatives for weeks. They had searched 16th century listed buildings and social housing alike, for weapons, sealed all the manhole covers, interrogated locals having a lazy pint in local pubs. When the great day came, those who had not left their homes before 8 a.m., had to stay there. One regular drinker at the welcoming Inn on the Green, opposite the church which has withstood even Cromwell's civil war, said he had to get there before breakfast, or be housebound. (To be fair, there could be worse tragedies.) At the other end of the day, a manual worker said he had returned home exhausted, to find his road sealed by US personnel. He had to wait, allowed to go nowhere else, for several hours, before gaining access to his own home.

Back at the Duncow Inn, whose food and hospitality is exemplary, the Chef had been dismissed for the day, said locals – and the President's chef took over the kitchen for the 'casual' Blair and Bush sojourn in Blair's 'local'. He has not become known as 'phony Tony' for nothing.

When Reg Keys, who lost his twenty one year old son, Tom, one of six military police killed at Al Majar in eastern Iraq, in June 2003, decided to run against Blair in the 2005 election, as an Independent, the extent of the grip Blair and Burton had, was quickly apparent. Finding a public building to hold public meetings, was nigh impossible, it had to be OK'd by Burton, as did near everything to do with 'free and democratic elections'. Not every one was in Blair's

thrall however, one woman said in despair : ‘ If they pinned a red rosette (the Labour emblem) on a donkey here, it would be elected ...’

‘We only see him for photo-ops and elections’, said another. One hotelier, owner of a welcoming old coaching inn, the Sedgefield Arms, put out a prominent sign in protest at Blair and at Bush’s visit: ‘No politicians, no campaigners, no journalists’, were welcome.

So Tony Blair pitched up for a rare sighting to say goodbye. He left in a motorcade to Northolt military airbase, west of London (ironically, where the body of Princess Diana was flown back ten years ago, the ‘ people’s Princess ‘ as he told the nation, with wobbly lip, in his first year in office. A perfect opening act, as the ‘people’s Prime Minister.’)

He did triumph and wobbly combined in Sedgefield on 10th May. His ‘political journey began and ended’ there. He had ‘reached political maturity as the cold war was ending’, he said. Cynics might say he helped cause a new one, between faiths, of frightening dimensions. He referred to his ‘social compassion’ and desire to ‘help others’. Domestically, he talked of his legacy being lowering of crime (try living in any gun strewn, knife infested UK inner city) rising jobs (as work bases are sold off or outsourced to everywhere from Eastern Europe to India) health (the towering legacy of the National Health Service, free at access, being privatised by the week, in danger of excluding the poorest from its proud ethos) education (the highest illiteracy and innumeracy rate in Western Europe) culture, values (highest teenage pregnancies in Western Europe) and on and on. Maternity leave and equalities which he claimed as his own had, in fact, been European Union directives.

Northern Ireland had been sorted (just days before, wonder what socket wrenching, arm twisting brought that about) and under his leadership Britain had won the 2012 Olympics (the terrorists Blair and Bush’s years have created, across the globe must be rubbing their hands in anticipation, at that triumph.) The mention of the tragedy of July 7th, the day after the Olympic announcement, a word to the bereaved, in an incident which may well have been the result of the attacks on Iraq and Afghanistan (since a public enquiry has been refused, there are no certainties) was not in the script.

Then finally the elephant in the corner emerged. ‘ After 11th September 2001 he ‘ decided to stand shoulder to shoulder with our oldest ally.’ What 9/11 had to do with the invasion of two sovereign countries (since there has never been a claim of Afghans or Iraqis on any of the ‘planes) was, as ever, not explained. He continued blithely that: ‘ Removing Saddam and his sons from power, as with the Taliban’ – the CIA’s creation – ‘ was over with relative ease.’ No mention of Saddam’s fifteen year old grandson also slaughtered, US style – and from this man who is a qualified barrister, sworn to uphold the law; no mention of the immensities of illegalities of historic proportions. There had been a ‘blowback ... from global terrorism’, resulting from the invasions he said, without irony. Can he really not know that for much of the world Britain and the US are perceived as the ultimate terrorists, the rogue states? And not a nod either, towards the families of the soldiers killed and the hundreds of injured he has never visited, in these invasions built on lies, deceit, dodgy dossiers and weapons of mass destruction which Britain and America knew did not exist. They after all, were the main providers of Iraq’s original weapons and knew exactly what had been accounted for. It was ‘outsiders’ destroying Iraq, said Blair (read: ‘ chaos nothing to do with us’.) ‘Outsiders’ ? Breathtaking.

‘Hand on my heart, I did what I thought was right’ he said – twice. Shameless.

Outside were two more 'elephants': in orange jump suits. Abu Baker Deghayes brother Omar has languished in Guantanamo, uncharged for five years. He and his partner, Luci Carolan have campaigned tirelessly against Guantanamo and the Iraq invasion. As the world's media queued to interview them, the vast police presence did their best to keep them from marring Blair's triumphant exit ('apparently there is a dress code in Trimdon and we've failed it' said Carolan) though the police were seen struggling to retain composure as Abu Baker raised his megaphone and yelled: 'Come on out, Tony Blair, the police have the building surrounded, you are wanted for war crimes.'

As Blair was about to leave, a hearse carrying former Labour party activist Maisy Thomas to her place of rest, passed the building. As he emerged, to shake hands with the faithful, the staff in Trimdon Labour Club were clearing to room for her wake. A fitting metaphor for the disaster of the Blair years for Britain, but above all his legacy: the bodies piled from the Balkans to Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Iraq. Incidentally, even the 'Trimdon' faithful were seemingly phony. Many glad handlers were allegedly bussed in from as far away as London by Labour Party Central Office. Blair's photo-op in Sedgefield lasted under an hour then he was off again, to cozy up to his pal, the ultra right, anti-Muslim, French President elect, Nicolas Sarkozy. A 'phone call would have done. Wonder what he is after.

The media, left right or centre, were not kind to Tony Blair's long walk into the sunset. 'A legacy written in blood' was the heading in the left's Morning Star, who quoted Symon Hill of the Campaign Against the Arms Trade: 'Tony Blair came to power promoting "an ethical foreign policy". Ten years later, he leaves office mired in blood and sleaze.' The latter referring to the latest sleaze, the first Prime Minister to be interviewed by the police in a criminal enquiry, as to whether he had sold peerages in exchange for Party donations. Some political commentators feel it not impossible that his whole inner circle might be involved and also find themselves in Court.

Quentin Letts, witty political commentator of the right of centre Daily Mail headed his piece: 'Tony, our doomed Hamlet, takes a last bow.' He was particularly engaged by Blair: '..wearing a lot of makeup (which) had turned that slightly yellow hue ...' When the final lines: 'This country is a blessed nation ... This is the greatest country on earth', rang out, Letts writes: 'Sick bowls. At the double, please!' His colleague the astute Peter Osborne wrote that in the country's history, never has politics 'been so lovingly stage managed', adding: 'He regularly lied to Parliament and the public.' Before Blair, the lying to Parliament was an instantly resignable offence.' No other Prime Minister has ever taken office with such advantages and good will. Yet he squandered every last jot', concludes Osborne.

'It's the final curtain for old Iyin' eyes', write Richard Littlejohn, in the same paper. Whilst heavy weight commentator Max Hastings, formerly of the Telegraph, the journalist who carried the British flag into Port Stanley in the Falklands war, has lately taken against Blair's wars, heading his column: 'How Blair became addicted to taking us to war'. The paper's Editorial writes of a political dream: '... that turned to ashes'.

In the Guardian, commentator Tareq Ali wrote: 'Mr. Blair has done more damage to British interests in the Middle East than Anthony Eden, who led the UK to disaster in Suez 50 years ago.' In his article: 'Adieu, Blair, Adieu', Ali calls him: '...a crafty, avaricious politician ... exiting against a backdrop of car bombs and mass carnage, with hundreds of thousands dead or maimed from his policies and London a prime target for terrorist attack'.

'... haunted by Iraq', is how historian Anthony Howard designated Blair's legacy in the

Independent. In the same paper, the irrepressible and astute Matthew Norman wrote possibly the ultimate political obituary: ‘.. a dangerous charming rogue was (he) blasé about lying, or the classic sociopath who believed his words were true, since they came from his mouth?’ Adding that : ‘So it was that the trinity of his psychological flaws – the pathological craving for attention, exhibited since toddlerhood; the monomaniacal certainty of his own wisdom and moral rectitude utterly amoral disregard for the facts he leaves a trail of ruins ..’ constitutionally and globally. Ouch.

In the Middle East, for the Jordan Times, Jonathon Power wrote: ‘ The era of Tony Blair and George Bush will be remembered for one thing .. the world went backwards on human rights after fifty years of steady advance’. Change should ensure that ‘tyranny is kept in check, that liberty and justice prevail and that the strong do not trample on the weak and vulnerable.’

As Blair announced his departure (allegedly, finally pushed, by a finally desperate Party after his support for the bombardment of Lebanon) David Keogh, a parliamentary researcher and Leo O’Connor a journalist, were jailed for six months for their part in passing a classified paper to an anti war M.P., detailing, allegedly, a conversation between George Bush and Tony Blair, on the 16th April 2004, when, it is alleged, they discussed the bombing of Al Jazeera, in US ally Qatar. The truth tellers jailed and – so far – those who have done nothing but the opposite, walk free.

Sir Roderick Braithwaite, former Senior Advisor to Blair wrote (2nd August 2006, Financial Times) that there were senior diplomats in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and those in the Ministry of Defence who: ‘would not be too upset if (Blair) was tried as a war criminal.’

There was a lone cheerleader for Blair in London, on Friday, Iraq’s ‘President’ Jalal Talabani, who hailed him as a ‘hero’ – but, as others in the corrupt puppet government, the British and US troops are all that stand between his head and his shoulders.

Anti war MP., George Galloway, who hosts a radio programme, told his listeners on Trimdon day, that he had ordered an eco friendly car and told the dealer to paint it black: ‘The colour of Blair’s heart’.

On the same day BBC Radio 5 did an unofficial poll of the reactions of their listeners. Seventy two percent of their comments were summed up succinctly by one listener, who emailed : ‘Good riddance.’

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