

Blix says Iraqi blood on Bush, Blair hands

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Former IAEA chief Hans Blix condemns former US president George W. Bush and former British Premier Tony Blair for waging war in Iraq.

In an interview with the British newspaper, the Daily Mail, Blix censured former US and UK governments for having misled their nations by magnifying former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's alleged accumulation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

The alleged existence of such weapons was then used by the UK and the US governments as a pretext to launch the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Blix, who directed the then UN weapons inspection team, told the paper that Bush and Blair's obsession with Saddam's planned ouster led them to embark on a 'witch hunt' to bring down the former Iraqi leader.

"They were convinced they had their witch in front of them, and they searched for the evidence and believed it without critical examination," said Blix on Saturday.

"When you start a war which cost(s) thousands of lives you should be more certain than they were," added the former director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

He also said that his counsel on the absence of WMDs in Iraq fell on deaf ears in the presence of Tony Blair.

"It would prove paradoxical and absurd if 250,000 troops were to invade Iraq and find very little," Blix had cautioned Blair ahead of the Iraq invasion.

"If the UK had really insisted then on the UN path being exhausted, they could have slowed the military build-up ... but that wasn't the case. They eventually had so much military in the [Persian] Gulf that they felt they had to invade," The 81-year-old former UN official went on to say.

Blix called the war "illegal" but expressed doubt that the retired leaders would be held accountable in a court of law.

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