

Determined to Go to War: Unanswerable Questions. WMD, Bin Laden and the UN Security Council

A list of Questions that neither Bush nor Blair Could Answer

By [Tony Benn](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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In January 2003, in the months leading up to the war on Iraq, TONY BENN gave a list of questions that neither Bush nor Blair would answer...

President Bush announced that his patience was exhausted and made it clear that he was determined to go to war, while, in London, the Prime Minister echoed the same message, but in slightly more conciliatory language.

We therefore must expect an attack, probably next month, against the opposition of an international peace campaign that has transformed public opinion and cannot be ignored.

For what we are being told by the White House and Downing Street is simply not true. This can be easily demonstrated by asking simple questions that have not been and cannot be answered.

1. Why has the tragedy on September 11 2001, which was about terrorism, for which Osama bin Laden was blamed, now been replaced by the demand for a war against Iraq, for which no evidence has been produced, suggesting that it was involved in that attack?
2. What weapons did the US supply to Osama bin Laden when they sent him to Afghanistan to get the Russian troops out?
3. What weapons did Britain and the US supply to Iraq in the period just before the invasion of Kuwait, which companies sold them and did the two governments provide any financial support for these sales?
4. Why did the US government seize 8,000 pages of the 12,000-page dossier submitted by Iraq to the United Nations in response to the UN resolution 1441?
5. What evidence do the British or US governments have in their possession that proves the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and has that evidence been submitted in full to the UN inspectors?
6. If all the US and British information about the existence of these weapons was submitted to Hans Blix, what efforts have been made to locate them?
7. Why, if that evidence was made available to the inspectors who are now working in Iraq, did Hans Blix say that he had no evidence?

8. If the demand for inspectors to go into Iraq was the basis of resolution 1441, will the British and US governments agree to give extra time to them when Blix reports to the security council on January 27?
9. Is it the intention of the British and US governments to table a new resolution at the UN security council meeting on January 27 calling for military action against Iraq?
10. If so, on what basis would such a resolution be tabled?
11. If the security council refuses to support such a resolution, will Bush and Blair accept that decision?
12. What would be the legal basis in international law, under the charter of the UN, which would be used to justify a pre-emptive military attack, other than when authorised by the security council?
13. Would such an attack constitute a war of aggression, rendering those responsible liable to prosecution under the new International Criminal Court, the establishment of which has been endorsed by the British government?
14. If civilians die as a result of any military attacks on Iraq, when such an attack has not been authorised by the security council, would their deaths be described as war crimes and would British forces be faced with such a charge before any such criminal court?
15. If such charges were made, what protection would the British government offer to those so charged, comparable to the US decision to exempt all US citizens from the jurisdiction of the court?
16. If no such guarantee can be given, what is the legal position, under British military law, of British service personnel who refuse to obey orders to attack Iraq, which might render them liable to prosecution for war crimes, and would they be liable to prosecution for refusing to obey such orders?
17. What role can Members of Parliament play in representing service personnel faced with this problem, given that the House of Commons has not been permitted to debate and vote upon a motion authorising military action.
18. Does the government accept that, in the absence of parliamentary approval, British service personnel retain the right to object to the war on conscientious ground and will chaplains to the forces be allowed to advise them as to the moral issues involved?
19. Will British forces use depleted uranium ammunition?
20. What preparations have been made to assist Iraqis injured in the war and will Iraqi refugees be admitted to Britain?

There are many other questions that need to be put. The overwhelming majority of the peoples of Britain, the United States and the world are totally opposed to the policies now being pursued by President Bush and Mr Blair.

If they take us into a war for oil that could inflame the Middle East and lead to a global conflict, they will be solely responsible.

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