

Tony Blair: Reinventing A War Criminal

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Britain's most despised and discredited man ended his 10 year reign June 27 when he stepped down from office transferring his ruling Labor Party's leadership to successor Gordon Brown. He had no choice because of seething public displeasure over his allying with George Bush's illegal wars on Iraq and Afghanistan. Most Brits oppose them, yet the vast majority of Labor and Conservative MPs, including new prime minister Gordon Brown, supported them early on, now may have second thoughts, but are constrained by close relations with Washington making them reluctant to back down from what they once disingenuously trumpeted as a noble cause.

That's an open question, however, the London Guardian's Jonathan Steele posed and answered June 29 if Mr. Brown was listening. Steele's message to "The new man in No 10" is "seize the day....break with Bush now....signal a fresh start by taking Britain out of Iraq." Don't bet on it. Steele says Brown is a committed "Atlanticist." He's likely weighing the proper way to begin engaging his US ally. Steele tells him how, pointing to other loyal NATO members as examples. France and Germany sent no forces to Iraq, and Italy, Spain and the Netherlands withdrew theirs. It caused no rupture in relations with Washington for any of them after some name calling at first. Why not Britain now? Steele stresses how refreshing a policy change at "No 10" would be "after the subservient Blair years."

Tony Blair began his tenure May 2, 1997 with a formidable approval rating as high at times as 90% but ended it in the mid-20% range or lower. The same is likely for George Bush already at 26% in the latest Newsweek poll suggesting it's even lower than that. Immediately post-9/11, he was compared to Lincoln, FDR and Churchill combined. It was laughable then and seems ludicrous now for a hated man barely hanging on and trying to avoid what growing numbers in the country demand - his removal from office by impeachment along with Vice-President Cheney.

The feeling of many in Britain is that by allying with George Bush, Mr. Blair left a legacy of "dashed hopes and big disappointments, of so much promised and so little delivered." That's in spite of helping advance the Northern Ireland peace process, begun before he took office, and that leaders in Ireland had lots more to do with than him.

Just hours after standing down, the announcement everyone knew in advance came, surprising no one but angering most. Referring to the so-called Quartet, the BBC reported June 27: "Tony Blair is to become a Middle East envoy working on behalf of the US, Russia, the UN and the EU." The London Guardian called him "the Quartet's fifth horseman," an appointment that "beggars belief." In his new capacity, he'll replace former World Bank president James Wolfensohn who resigned last year for lack of progress he never had a chance to achieve in the first place.

Neither will Mr. Blair, nor will he try to, as Alvaro de Soto, former UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and envoy to the Quartet, explained in his leaked End of Mission Report. It noted Wolfensohn was originally to cover the entire peace process, but what emerged for him was a narrowly constricted role. De Soto said he was “highjacked....by US envoys and (Secretary Condoleezza) Rice.” As a result, Wolfensohn stepped down from his job in April, 2006 with “a more jaundiced view of Israel (and US) policies than he had upon entering.”

Based on his sordid war criminal record post-9/11, Tony Blair won't likely have the qualms that got James Wolfensohn to resign his job. He's taking it to reinvent himself, but that's no more likely than convincing carnivores to become vegetarians. He'll first visit Ramallah in the West Bank, showing up as a Trojan horse fooling no one about what's behind his slick-tongued hypocrisy.

In its effort to obscure more than enlighten, BBC omitted this explanation and could barely go beyond saying Mr. Blair “faces an uphill task to address Palestinian misgivings over his ties to Israel and the US.” Left out as well were the reasons why. How can a war criminal reinvent himself as a peace envoy to the region he waged war against and have any credibility or hope of achieving anything. Further, how could he do it when his brief is quite opposite public pronouncements about it.

Under the false mantle of peacemaker, he's Washington's man and the West's envoy to Israel. His job is to continue six decades of ethnic cleansing war and repression against defenseless Palestinians, support open conflict doing it if necessary, ally with an illegitimate quisling Fatah government, and outrageously claim he's there seeking peace.

Tony Blair is a war maker, not a peacemaker. He's a criminal and, like George Bush and Dick Cheney, should be held accountable for his crimes. He willfully partnered with the Bush administration in its wars of aggression in Afghanistan, Iraq and against the occupied people of Palestine. He joined in cutting off essential aid to the Palestinian people and renounced its democratically elected Hamas government without ever giving it a chance to prove itself. He also supported Israel's aggressive wars against Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank, and, in short, partnered in backing war and avoiding peace. He now has a new title in his new job. His mission is the same. He'll bring no peace to the Middle East nor does he intend to.

Blair's appointment sends a clear message to the region. Peace is not on the agenda nor will he help Palestinians get what they want most – an end to 60 years of Israeli repression, discrimination, occupation and colonization; freedom, justice, real peace and security; a sovereign integral independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital; and the guaranteed right affirmed everyone in Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that: “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and return to his country.” UN Resolution 194 mandated Palestinians that right in 1948 and reaffirmed it in the General Assembly 130 times with near-universal consensus except for Israel, the US and a Pacific Island state or two pathetically going along at times.

From “No 10” to the Middle East – A Record of Shame

Tony Blair is despised and discredited at home, hated across the world, and the Arab street condemns him. Appointing him peace envoy to the region he warred against is a galling insult to its people, all others of conscience and all humanity. Nonetheless, he has the job and started off on his last day in office June 27 telling his Parliament: “The absolute priority

is to try to give effect to what is now the consensus across the international community – that the only way of bringing stability and peace to the Middle East is a two-state solution.”

The London Independent’s veteran Middle East correspondent, Robert Fisk, summed up the feelings of many in his article dated June 23 titled: “How can Blair possibly be given this job?” He began it saying “I suppose that astonishment is not the word for it. Stupefaction comes to mind. I simply could not believe my ears in Beirut (where Fisk is based) when a phone call told me that Lord Blair of Kut al-Amara (where British forces were defeated by the Ottomans in WW I) was going to create ‘Palestine.’ ” Fisk continued calling Blair “vain, deceitful, a proven liar, a trumped up lawyer (with) the blood of thousands of Arab (people) on his hands.”

He’ll not be welcomed or aided with a brief constricting him within vaguely stated areas of Palestinian governance, economics and security rather than letting him take on the entire range of issues causing the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. Unstated is what his real mission is that Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert set straight by calling Mr. Blair “A true friend of the State of Israel.” Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni added: “Tony Blair is a very well-appreciated figure in Israel,” and an official Israeli government statement said Blair “will (be) provide(d) with all necessary assistance in order for him to carry out his duties.”

Indeed he will, and it’s to support Israeli interests by denying Palestinians theirs. Governance means by the illegitimate Fatah; economics is funding it with weapons and materials against Hamas as well as propping it up financially; and security is by hard line street enforcement and continued conflict aimed at routing the elected government and installing a quisling one over the entire Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT).

Tony Blair is the right man for the wrong job and the wrong man for the kind of job he should be sent to do. He has no interest in peace and a long sordid record of contempt for Palestinian rights and justice from his committed one-sided support for Israel. His job is to further the concocted “clash of civilizations” against “heathen Arab terrorists” blaming the victims for crimes he helped commit against them. He feigns helping Palestinians by allying with Fatah’s traitorous Mahmoud Abbas in the West Bank while continuing to condemn and marginalize the democratically elected Hamas government in Gaza.

Abbas conspired with Israel and the US going back to Oslo or earlier. He partnered with his western-supported paramilitary warlord muscleman, Mohammed Dahlan, for war on Hamas hoping to unseat it violently but failed. He then brazenly dismissed the legitimate Hamas government June 17, appointing an illegitimate “emergency” quisling one in its place. He’s its president and western darling and former World Bank and IMF official Salam Fayyad was made prime minister. Writer and editor Rami Khoury calls it a “government of the imagination.” He also said “Appointing....Blair....is something like appointing Emperor Nero to be the chief fireman of Rome,” and add to that the notion of having the fox look after the henhouse.

He’s mandated to back Fatah in its role as Israel’s enforcer and deny Palestinians any chance for freedom, equity and justice. Tony Blair will go to the region in a limited subservient role for Israel and the US. He’s to play frontman shoring up support for Abbas, Fayyad, and Dahlan, work against the interests of the legitimate Palestinian government and its people, and leave the heavy lifting undermining efforts to Washington and Jerusalem. He’s going in spite of being totally discredited in the region by people who

despise him. He did nothing for them nor will he ever, yet this arrogant man claims he's going to bring real peace to the region.

Fisk refers to "His unique blend of ruthlessness and dishonesty." The Arab street understands and despises him for it, but his agenda "go(es) down quite well with our local Arab dictators." Fisk refers to his "slippery use of language....with appeals for restraint on all sides....and moderation" while backing what US State Department spokesman Sean McCormack characterizes as a "well-governed state." That's one with hard line street enforcement and what Fisk calls "lots of (tough) 'terror laws.' "

It's a perfect setup for repressive rule, denying Palestinians all civil and human rights doing it. Blair's the right frontman - from war criminal to street enforcer in the name of peace he has contempt for. The irony is galling. Applied to him, it's "Beyond (the kind of) Chutzpah" Middle East expert Norman Finkelstein wrote about in his book by that title. Watch for him later to be nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for his "efforts." If it gets it, he'll join the ugly ranks of past war criminal honorees like Henry Kissinger, Menachem Begin, Shimon Perez, Yitzhak Rabin, and Kofi Annan in a pathetic weak-kneed supporting role. Mr. Blair will fit right in.

Back Home in London, It's Business As Usual Scaring the Public Twice Over

Episode number one:

On his second day in office, new British prime minister Gordon Brown "was thrust into a new terrorism alert" as the New York Times claimed June 29. London police claimed they found two Mercedes Benz cars "filled with (a significant quantity of) gasoline and nails and a number of gas canisters parked close together in an area known for packed night-clubs and late-night bars," according to the Times. Police also claimed they found and defused an "explosive device" in the area overnight. At once and with no evidence, Al-Queda was named suspect number one, heightened by claims that had these bombs detonated they would have caused great harm. Peter Clark, Britain's most senior counterterrorism police officer, said "there could have been significant injury or loss of life."

So what to do? Round up the usual kinds of suspects and pin it on them, Muslim ones, of course. The New York Times reported July 2 "investigations (were) moving (ahead) at breakneck speed, the police expanded their hunt on Sunday (July 1) for the (London and Glasgow) 'plotters'....the British government called the work of terrorists linked to Al-Queda. Officers raided homes in three cities" bringing the total number apprehended to five (plus three more since). "Police said they had recovered a 'rich trove' of evidence" but presented none beyond claiming earlier to have found gasoline, canisters and nails, hardly the makings of a major terror attack.

Front and center Gordon Brown beginning to earn his bona fides saying "As the police and security services have said on so many occasions, we face a serious and continuous threat to our security. (This incident shows) the need for us to be vigilant at all times and the public to be alert at any potential incidents." Sounding much like George Bush and Tony Blair, he added Britain "will not yield" or be intimidated by a threat from "people who are associated with al-Queda. We will not allow anyone to undermine our British way of life." Counterterrorism expert Sajjan Gohel explained in a telephone interview he didn't think it was "a coincidence (this happened) the day after" Brown took office replacing Tony Blair. A familiar aroma from it is emerging.

Episode number two:

In case the public missed the June 29 event, it was repeated the following day at Glasgow Airport, Scotland. Here's how the New York Times reported it: "British officials raised the country's terrorism threat alert to its highest level on Saturday (June 30) after two men slammed an S.U.V. into entrance doors at Glasgow Airport and turned the vehicle into a potentially lethal fireball" 38 hours after police "uncovered two cars in London 'rigged to explode' with gasoline, gas canisters and nails." For the Times, the claimed presence of these items in the cars constitutes their being "rigged."

Here's the BBC version. Notice the important difference: "Blazing car crashes into airport" it headlined and continued saying "A car which was 'on fire' has been driven at the main terminal building at Glasgow Airport. Eyewitnesses have described a Jeep Cherokee being driven at speed (undefined) towards the building 'with flames coming out' from underneath." The report continued saying "The car didn't actually explode. There were a few pops and bangs which presumably was the (burning) petrol." With no corroborating evidence, the report quoted a "maintenance worker" saying he believed the men "deliberately tried to set the car on fire (and) It looked like they had Molotov cocktails with them."

Little attention was paid to the fact no evidence of them was found, one of the two men in the car was badly burned (a witness claimed by self-dousing with petrol), in obvious pain, required hospitalization, yet both were taken away in handcuffs. They're both now being linked, with no corroborating evidence, to the "rigged to explode" cars found in London.

What do we make of these incidents? Do they sound like terror attacks warranting closing down parts of London and Glasgow Airport as well as heightening security alerts across the UK and US? Did they provide the government emergencies committee Cobra justifiable reason to raise the nation's threat alert to its highest level where it might be put for an impending major terrorist event, invasion or nuclear attack? Or might there be another reason behind it? And is it possible the Glasgow incident was just an unfortunate accident or the work of a disturbed or angry solo perpetrator or two? Also, might normal items like nails, gasoline and canisters found in unattended parked London cars have had nothing to do with mischief? Some suggested answers below.

Since 9/11, Britain, under Tony Blair, chose to partner with the Bush administration's "war on terrorism," leaving aside the question of its legitimacy. Waging that type war or any other requires public support, and what better way to get it than by elevating fear levels with an outside threat made to seem real. Enter Al-Queda and "Enemy Number One" Osama bin Laden. Follow them up with unsubstantiated terror threats or episodes labeled terrorism. Then add color-coded alerts and round-the-clock hyperventilating news coverage with scary headlines at strategic moments like winning public support for repressive legislation, diffusing dissent, re-stoking public angst about terror threats so people don't forget them, and giving a new administration cover to continue the same "war on terrorism" hard line agenda as the previous one.

Isn't the timing of the above British "terror incidents" ironic at least? Don't they raise suspicions by coincidentally occurring on days two and three of the new Gordon Brown administration at a time his predecessor's was hated? Might it also not be important to check the record of past terror scares on both sides of the Atlantic and examine their legitimacy in hindsight? When it's done, threats that headlined for days or longer nearly

always turned out to be fakes based on cooked up intelligence or unsubstantiated claims. They continue being used, however, because they work. By the time they're exposed as phony, it's on to the next cooked up plot. Note Exhibit A, B and C below plus an additional Exhibit D:

Exhibit A:

There's no need reconstructing the phony disinformation campaign about WMDs in the run-up to the Iraq war. Case closed on that one.

Exhibit B:

Around Christmas, 2003, Air France got stand down orders based on claimed evidence Al-Qaeda and Taliban operatives were on Flight 68. It was later exposed as a lie, but it kept Los Angeles International Airport on "maximum deployment" throughout the holiday period and FBI officials working round the clock. The nation was put on "high risk" Code Orange alert, six heavy-traffic Air France flights were cancelled for nothing, and the public was scammed. The scheme was all based on faked intelligence to heighten fear at a strategic moment when the administration felt it was needed.

This happens repeatedly like it did in Exhibit C:

In early June, hyped fake stories made headlines about a plot to blow up JFK Airport's jet fuel tanks and supply lines some outrageous reports claimed would have been "more devastating than 9/11" if it happened. It never did, of course, no crime was committed, but suspects were charged based on conversations between a "source" (identified as an unnamed drugs trafficker) and defendants. It was all faked to heighten fear again, and the "source" was willing to say anything in return for leniency on his pending sentence.

In his 2005 book, "America's War on Terrorism," Michel Chossudovsky explains the notion of a "Universal Adversary." It's being used to prepare the public for a "real life emergency situation" under which no political or social dissent will be tolerated. Other claimed "terrorist" events may be being used as prologue for a much greater one coming at a future time. If it happens, it will trigger a Code Red Alert in the US and something similar in Britain signaling the highest threat level of severe or imminent terrorist or other attack preparing the public for possible imposition of martial law and suspension of the Constitution.

Notice how close Britain is to that now in the wake of two claimed terrorist incidents on June 29 and 30. As stated above, the country was placed on highest level terrorism alert, based on two incidents causing only minor damage from one of them and no substantiation either one was related to terrorism. It's likely, hindsight again will prove neither one was, but the damaging effects of heightened fear by them will have done their job. Gordon Brown is now empowered to be as hard line as his predecessor and will likely have broad support for it in the name of national security. Sound suspicious?

It should surprise no one if one or more similar incidents soon erupt on this side of the Atlantic. The Bush administration needs to reinforce the terror threat at a time popular support for its foreign wars and homeland agenda is waning. What better way to do it than by faking terror threats to heighten fear levels. What easier way is there to win over Congress and get the public to support any homeland measures put in place to "keep us safe."

Exhibit D:

On July 1, ABC News reported a secret "US law enforcement report, prepared for the Department of Homeland Security, warns that al-Queda is planning a terror 'spectacular' this summer." The source is a "senior (always unnamed US) official." The report indicated a similarity to intelligence warnings in summer, 2001 prior to September 11. It also mentioned warnings of the Glasgow Airport incident never sent to the Scottish government. Odd or by intent?

Do present and past terror scare incidents raise suspicions the public is about to be scammed again but this time end up losing what few precious rights remain? People never realize it until it's too late to matter. Even worse, they never seem able to understand the cost. They better learn because the price for inattention and lack of diligence keeps rising and may soon become too high. Edmund Burke warned us that "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Let's hope enough of them in America and the UK got the message.

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