

Mr Blair : About Your Book Signing : Dedication Suggestions... Every letter of Every Word is Written in a Child's Blood

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Region: [Europe](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

"Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Psalms 16:18.)

I note you will be signing your book, "A Journey", at Waterstone's flagship book shop, on London's Piccadilly, on the 8th September. As this will seemingly be a day when democracy is suspended, security near unprecedented, bags, cameras, briefcases, mobile 'phones checked in before being allowed to ask for your signature, I may not be able to get to near to you with these suggestions, so some ideas from afar for your dedications.

For your years as an enthusiastic partner in the silent slaughter of Iraq's children under the embargo, a dedication to the seventeen infants in the neo-natal unit of Basra's formerly fine maternity hospital, all who died on the very threshold of life due to your representative at the UN, with his US counterpart, vetoing importation of oxygen. You were jointly responsible for denying even the air that we breathe to Iraq's newborn.

Please sign a volume for the premature baby, born at little over seven months, as my own, now strapping, over six foot son was. Unlike his miraculous medical embrace by the paediatric team, Basra's tiny infant, was, in the looking glass world Iraq had become, placed in an incubator, swaddled in all the staff could find, to keep him warm. Neither the incubator, nor the electricity worked. In your name, incubators too had been vetoed, along with the wherewithal to repair the power grid, in your war against the new born.

This tiny being needed a blood transfusion of a relatively unusual blood group. In desperation the doctor asked me my blood type and from my memory I thought it was the same. I would have course donated, but asked he checked to make sure. There was no laboratory equipment. Giving the wrong blood would be a death sentence. Not giving blood would also be.

Since this is a literary occasion, it would not be complete without some lines to Jassim,*suffering from a virulent form of cancer for which treatment, of course was vetoed. His life hung on the thread of an aid agency somehow bringing the necessary medications from Jordan. Jassim was going to be a poet when he grew up. His prose were haunting, way beyond his thirteen years. He died before the medication arrived.

Esra was seventeen, old enough to know she was dying. Her central nervous system had become paralyzed from the cancer that was devouring her. Ethereally beautiful, she had

been silently crying for three weeks. More than any thing else, she wanted to live. She had her life planned out, her studies, her career. As I left, her grandmother grabbed my hand: "Take her", she said : "Take her home with you, find her treatment, make her better." It was not an unusual occurrence, families were prepared to give their children to complete strangers in the hope that even if they never saw them again, they would recover, have a life. A comment for Esra, would surely be appropriate.

Perhaps a couple of lines could be for the five child shepherds, their father and grandfather, blown to pieces by either an RAF or USAF missiles, illegally "patrolling" the planes near Mosul, with no UN mandate, The youngest child was five and the oldest thirteen. Your Ministry of Defence spokesperson was unable to say who dropped the missile, as the two countries worked in tandem, one 'plane as a "minder" the other as sheep and shepherd bomber, she said. (I paraphrase.) It took villagers all day to collect enough bits of the bodies to wrap in their shrouds - to bury before sunset, as is customary - trying to make sure the pieces matched, by checking skin texture, hair - and whether remains of hands and feet were those of a very small child, slightly older ones, or adult. So little remained that they were ever uncertain whether they had in fact incorporated pieces of sheep and goats within the seven shrouds.

"Why are you bombing flocks of sheep and child shepherds?" I asked your MOD spokesperson.

"We reserve the right to take robust action if threatened", she replied.

"By sheep ...?" I asked - then gave up, despairing.

You and your partners in crime, Presidents Clinton and Bush Jnr's., "boys" definitely had a down on child shepherds. In Basra, ten year old Mohammed, tending his family's sheep, lost an eye and a foot in a bombing and Omar, about the same age, also watching a flock, was decapitated. Please devote some words to them.

Well deserved of your tribute are the five blood spattered children, hauled out of the car in which their parents had been shot dead by "coalition" troops in Tel Afar in January 2005. Covered in their parents blood, they were made to kneel on the ground, mindless with grief and terror. Surely liberated from all normality for all time. "Why did you shoot us?" Asked one: "We were just going home."

Between the embargo and the Downing Street untruths which culminated in the invasion, there are probably three million deaths, every one with a name, an address and a plan as to how they were going to spend the day they died. More than an article is required. But you might feel disposed to devote a line to Margaret Hassan, who headed CARE in Iraq, who had told your Foreign Affairs Committee, prior to "shock and awe", of a country on its knees, and that an invasion would lead to: "... another lost generation of Iraqi children." She did not skulk around with body guards, she returned to Iraq to prepare for disaster and try to ensure she had enough aid and medications to help, when it did.

When she was kidnapped in October 2004, you may well have contributed to her death, standing in Parliament, saying that now we knew what kind of people we were dealing with, kidnapping a wonderful British woman. When I rang your Foreign Office spokesman on Iraq and asked if there was any way this could be retracted as she was certainly Irish - and the Irish were liked and welcomed in Iraq, the British, for obvious reason, were not - he

responded: “We do not need advice from you, Felicity, we are already trying to find out if we had the right woman.” Loose words lose lives, Mr Blair. Winding up those who have absolute control over the life or death of another is also less than smart. When this bravest of beings, begged on video: “Please do not let me die like Ken Bigley ..”, you were out to lunch, dinner, grandstanding, or just generally awol.

Please do not omit a note to the five million orphans, liberated from their parents since 2003, to the million widows, liberated from their husbands, and to the nearly five million refugees, liberated from their homes.

Perhaps your last word should be addressed to the parents of another Mohammed, also ten, suffering from leukaemia – treatment vetoed. It was five months before the invasion. “Please, when you go home, ask Mr Bush and Mr Blair, do they want all our children as child sacrifices?” said Mohammed’s father, as the tears of his mother poured down her face, on to her immaculately pressed abaya. The answer to his question now seems obvious.

In the three weeks before the signing, perhaps you could also research some dedications to the charred, maimed and dispossessed of Afghanistan, of Gaza, the 2006 assault on Lebanon, and the May 31st murders on the aid flotilla. No doubt you have access to minute detail, in your incongruous role as Middle East Peace Envoy. Should you have any problems, I would be delighted to offer further (gratis) assistance.

As a self-proclaimed man of faith, embraced by the Catholic Church, the Commandments instruction : “Thou shalt not kill”, must be somewhat conflicting. Perhaps you could think of your Waterstone’s foray as watershed, with a spiritually restorative list of mea culpas.

Should this by some chance reach you and you consider it a little harsh, just think of it as my “journey”, talking to, looking in to the eyes of a great many of your victims, hearing of their dreams – and witnessing the terrors you colluded to unleash, upon those far away, no threat and who wished so fervently, only to be left alone – and to live.

I note that for the signing, there are “special red and gold editions” of your book, for which you received a reported £4.6 million advance. How appropriate, gold for the millions accumulated, in so many ventures, red for the blood spilled in acquiring it.

Enjoy your book signing, Mr Blair. Every letter of every word, on every line, of every page, is written in a child’s, mother’s, or father’s blood.

*<http://library.chevalier.nsw.edu.au/ni/issue307/endpiece.htm>

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