

No dead Lebanese children on TV today

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George Bush is just following John Reid in ensuring any trials following today's arrests are irretrievably prejudiced.

It is a fact that only the closest Blair circle bothers to deny, that if young British Muslims are turning to terrorism, it is the Blair-Bush foreign policy of war on Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine that has driven them to it. The majority of British people share their outrage at our foreign policy. That is not to condone the response of irrational violence. Terrorism is plain wrong. But it is Blair who has, through his evangelical embrace of the neo-con foreign agenda, massively increased any current threat of terrorism to the UK.

But let us do what none of the 24 hour news channels are doing; draw breath and count up to ten. What has actually happened so far?

There have been, reportedly, 21 people arrested. There have been no terrorist attacks, no explosions. US sources are reported as saying that explosive devices have been found, but no news from the Police as yet.

I am reminded of the Forest Gate arrests and the notorious "Chemical weapon vest" which was threatening London and required 270 policemen and a four mile air exclusion zone to deal with. The media was shoving that out just as uncritically as it is shoving out this air attack, even though it made no sense. Anyone who knows anything about weapons knows that for a chemical weapon you want maximum dispersal - the last thing you are going to do is wrap it in fabric around a human body. And why the air exclusion zone? Were they going to throw the vest at a passing jet? The media never did ask any of those questions.

Similarly, I recall the famous ricin plot, where again police and the professional pundits said millions could have been killed. In the event, of course, it turned out there was no ricin and no plot.

And I remember Jean Charles De Menezes, the "suicide bomber", with his "bulky jacket", with "wires sticking out", who "leapt" the ticket barriers and "raced" onto the tube. All lies.

So I am waiting with a little healthy scepticism to see the truth of this "al-Qaida plot" bringing "Mass murder on an unprecedented scale".

Of course, it helps New Labour look Churchillian, and explains why Israel had to be supported in the ethnic cleansing of South Lebanon, part of the "Arc of extremism". It is interesting that the timing of these arrests exactly today, after "months" of surveillance, was determined by the Prime Minister - the CO in COBRA, the operational command, stands

for Cabinet Office.

The political timing could not have been more convenient – a junior minister had resigned over arms to Israel, and the backbench rebellion demanding a recall of parliament over Lebanon will now be containable in the name of standing together in the War on Terror. And the news agenda has been seismically shifted. The public mood is instantly tilted from sympathy for the people of Lebanon, leading to questioning of the War on Terror, to renewed fear that “Islamic fascists” are planning to kill us all.

So to recap: Blair’s crazed foreign policy has made us a genuine potential target for terrorist attack. The government manipulates and spins that threat to political advantage.

We wait for the court system to show whether this was a real attempted attack and, if so, it was genuinely operational rather than political to move against it today. But the police’ and security services’ record of lies does not inspire confidence.

As Britain’s outspoken Ambassador to the Central Asian Republic of Uzbekistan, Craig Murray helped expose vicious human rights abuses by the US-funded regime of Islam Karimov. He is now a prominent critic of Western policy in the region.

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