

The Iraq Factor: Secret Memo to Tony Blair

Condoleeza Rice committed to regime change in early 2002

By [Global Research](#)

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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The leaked government Memo addressed to PM Tony Blair was dated 14 March 2002, one year before the invasion of Iraq.

It was first published by Global Research on June, 14, 2005. It demonstrates the complicity of Tony Blair in building a pretext to wage war on Iraq.

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The following Memo addressed to Prime Minister Tony Blair is purported to have been written by Blair's foreign policy advisor David Manning. It was written in anticipation of PM Blair's Visit to the Texas Ranch.

It indicates that now-Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice was committed to "regime change" in early 2002. It also outlines some problems a postwar Iraq might face. The document is presented as transcribed by the ["Raw Story"](#)

SECRET - STRICTLY PERSONAL

FROM: DAVID MANNING DATE: 14 MARCH 2002

CC: JONATHAN POWELL

PRIME MINISTER

YOUR TRIP TO THE US

I had dinner with Condi [Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice] on Tuesday; and talks and lunch with her and an NSC team on Wednesday (to which Christopher Meyer also came). These were good exchanges, and particularly frank when we were one-on-one at dinner. I attach the records in case you want to glance.

IRAQ

We spent a long time at dinner on IRAQ. It is clear that Bush is grateful for your support and has registered that you are getting flak. I said that you would not budge in your support for regime change but you had to manage a press, a Parliament and a public opinion that was very different than anything in the States. And you would not budge either in your insistence that, if we need pursued regime change, it must be very carefully done and produce the right result. Failure was not an option.

Condi's enthusiasm for regime change is undimmed. But there were some signs, since we last spoke, of greater awareness of the practical difficulties and political risks. (See the attached piece by Seymour Hersh which Christopher Meyer says gives a pretty accurate picture of the uncertain state of the debate in Washington.)

From what she said, Bush has yet to find the answers to the big questions:

- how to persuade international opinion that military action against Iraq is necessary and justified;
- what value to put on the exiled Iraqi opposition;
- how to coordinate a US/allied military campaign with internal opposition (assuming there is any);
- what happens on the morning after?

Bush will want to pick your brains. He will also want to hear whether he can expect coalition support. I told Condi that we realized that the Administration could go it alone if it chose. But if it wanted company, it would have to take account of the concerns of its potential coalition partners. In particular:

- the UN dimension. The issue of the weapons inspectors must be handled in a way that would persuade European and wider opinion that the US was conscious of the international framework, and the insistence of many countries on the need for a legal base. Renewed refusal by Saddam to accept unfettered inspections would be a powerful argument;
- the paramount importance of tackling Israel/Palestine. Unless we did, we could find ourselves bombing Iraq and losing the Gulf.

YOUR VISIT TO THE RANCH

No doubt we need to keep a sense of perspective. But my talks with Condi convinced me that Bush wants to hear your views on Iraq before taking decisions. [sic] He also wants your support. He is still smarting from the comments by other European leaders on his Iraq policy.

This gives you real influence: on the public relations strategy; on the UN and weapons inspections; and on US planning for any military campaign. This could be critically important. I think there is a real risk that the Administration underestimates the difficulties. They may agree that failure isn't an option, but this really does not mean that they will avoid it.

Will the Sunni majority really respond to an uprising led by Kurds and Shias? Will Americans really put in enough ground troops to do the job if the Kurdish/Shi'ite stratagem fails? Even if they do will they be willing to take the sort of casualties that the Republican Guard may inflict on them if it turns out to be an urban war, and Iraqi troops don't conveniently collapse in a heap as Richard Perle and others confidently predict? They need to answer these and other tough questions, in a more convincing way than they have so far before concluding that they can do the business.

The talks at the ranch will also give you the chance to push Bush on the Middle East. The Iraq factor means that there may never be a better opportunity to [sic] get this Administration to give sustained attention to reviving the MEPP. [Middle East Peace Process]

DAVID MANNING

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