

Tony Blair and Gordon Brown to blame over Iraq war, says Army report

By [Rupert Hamer](#)

Global Research, June 30, 2009

[The Mirror](#) 28 June 2009

Region: [Europe](#)

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A secret report by Army bosses to be presented to the Iraq war inquiry blames Tony Blair and Gordon Brown for the botched occupation of the country.

The dossier – prepared for ex-military chief General Sir Mike Jackson – criticises then Chancellor Mr Brown for withholding funds to rebuild Basra for FIVE months after our troops went in. And the 100-page document attacks Mr Blair for “uncritically” accepting flawed US plans for the March 2003 invasion, which led to tens of thousands of deaths, including those of 179 British troops.

The report – Stability Operations in Iraq – will not be officially made public because the inquiry’s head, Sir John Chilcot, ruled all documents will remain secret.

But the contents have been leaked to the Sunday Mirror.

We can reveal that a lack of cash for the operation meant British troops sent to fight in Iraq:

Used mobile phones to communicate in combat because radios did not work.

Were forced to leave wounded soldiers on the battlefield for an average of two-and-half hours before getting them to a field hospital.

Needed more “spy in the sky” aircraft to track rebel fighters.

Lacked machine guns, night- vision equipment and grenade launchers when protecting supply convoys.

Were in danger of breaching the Geneva Convention by having so few resources. The convention says occupiers must provide vital services such as humanitarian aid and water.

In a broadside at the then PM Mr Blair, the report says the battle for the hearts and minds of ordinary Iraqis was lost because of a lack of planning and the five-month delay in starting to rebuild their country.

It says: “The failures to plan... seriously hindered Coalition chances of stabilising post-Saddam Iraq. The lack of improvements to essential services and the standard of living together with disorder meant many locals who were ‘sitting on the fence’ were not persuaded to support the Coalition.”

It was only after riots in Basra in August 2003 that Mr Brown agreed to release £500million

for reconstruction work, the report says.

And it contradicts six years of Government spin which claimed ordinary Iraqis backed the “liberation”, saying troops “found themselves fighting insurgents without clear support (from local people)”.

MOST DAMNING CONCLUSIONS:

- Flawed US plans were rubberstamped by Blair
- Brown blocked vital funding for five months
- It took mass rioting in Basra to make him pay up
- Chaos lost us the battle for Iraqi hearts & minds

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