

War Criminals Rewarded for their Contribution to World Peace: Only in America Can Tony Blair Go Out in Public

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

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When U.S. media pundits claim that every other nation on earth honestly believed the absurd lies George W. Bush told about Iraqi weapons and ties to terrorism, the grain of truth is that one leader of one foreign nation went along with the lies: British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Bush gave Blair a medal of freedom as a reward. I picture millions of Iraqi refugees without proper food or medicine in Jordan and Syria strong in spirit and grateful for their fate thanks to Blair's assistance in freeing them from their homes.

On August 31st, President Obama spoke from the Oval Office, assuring us that the War on Iraq had been launched to disarm a nation. Disarming a nation is a criminal basis for a war, a fact that I wish would quit getting lost in the madness of what we actually debate in this country. But Obama's claim to have opposed this war that he funded as a senator and continued as a president rests on the idea, not just that he was lucky enough not to yet be in the Senate when it started, but that he didn't at that time yet pretend to believe the lies. Now he finds it important to put up that pretense when nobody else believes it anymore, in order to urge us to "turn the page" on the crime of the century.

Obama's embrace of the Iraq war lies, which included the "surge" lies so valuable now in Afghanistan, coincided with Tony Blair's book tour. When Blair was performing his poodle tricks in 2002 and 2003 he was questioned and mocked at home and in Parliament, but given endless standing ovations in Congress. Nothing has changed. In Ireland on his book tour — the current equivalent of a triumphal march after a return from foreign slaughter — Blair faced protests and an attempted citizen's arrest. In London the planned protests were so large that Blair canceled his event, stuck his tail between his legs, and whimpered away. In Philadelphia, on the other hand, Blair has just been presented with a Liberty Medal at the Constitution Center by none other than Bill Clinton, as reward for Blair's . . . wait for it . . . "steadfast commitment to conflict resolution." Only in America.

I haven't read Blair's book (Blair is the proper spelling) and I don't think I could be paid enough to do so. But I want to recommend a different book instead. Someone else who was part of the British government during the lead up to the War on Iraq has also just published a book. It doesn't have any cute stories in it about sitting in the wrong chair in the Queen's palace, but it does tell the truth about Blair's deadly lies, for which he should have been — and nearly was — impeached, and for which he should be prosecuted.

The book is "Failing Intelligence: The True Story of How We Were Fooled into Going to War in Iraq," by Brian Jones, the former head of the UK Defense Intelligence Staff's nuclear,

biological, and chemical section. Jones was in charge of the type of claims that Blair used in his famously sexed up dodgy dossier to sell his nation on war. But Jones and his staff were cut out of the process. They were told that evidence existed that they could not see and would have to take on faith, evidence Jones still hasn't seen but which was "withdrawn" as inaccurate by the government after the war began.

Jones did not accept the mysterious evidence of "weapons of mass destruction" on faith. He formally registered his concerns with his superiors at the time. But he did not resign in protest or go public, either. Jones seems, from his book, to be a very cautious bureaucrat whose view of the world does not differ radically from the worldview of Bush or Blair. But he has come gradually, through a series of inquiries into the war lies, to understand that the lies were intentional and to speak out against them. Jones notes that the discussion at 10 Downing Street on July 23, 2002, recorded in the Downing Street Minutes, did not include any consideration of the security of Britain and seemed based on the premise that continued good relations with the United States was of greater importance than the risk of a terrorist attack.

Jones would never have sworn that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction. He even finds the question lacking, pointing out how swiftly a nation can create and use biological or chemical weapons whether or not it currently has them, as long as it has the know-how, which Iraq did. But, contrary to what you might hear in the U.S. media, Jones — the man in charge of this area in Britain — did not have any evidence that Iraq did have biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons. In fact, Jones knew Iraq to be far from possessing nuclear weapons. And he said so, albeit privately and through approved professional channels.

"Now listen, Brian," he records his boss lecturing him, "I don't know what it is but you really seem to have a problem with authority, don't you? Decisions have been made, a position has been established and it is our responsibility as good civil servants to accept that and support the line as best we can."

Jones refused to go along, and he says that he tried to go public with his concerns following his retirement but before the invasion of Baghdad. Jones retired two months before the war began. "I thought it was important that the public should understand these differences [between various types of weapons conflated through the term "WMD"] and I drafted an article that explained them," Jones writes. "I was surprised that my request to Whitehall for clearance for me to submit it for publication was promptly approved. Unfortunately, no one wanted to publish it."

A version of that article, dated July 2003, is here:

<http://warisacrime.org/downloads/jones.pdf>

You can see why nobody wanted to publish it. It does not blow the whistle on the war liars, explain how the experts were cut out of the process, or denounce the war. It presents itself as academic quibbling over the use of terminology. Jones' account of his gradual movement in the months and years following the invasion reads, at first, more as a profile in pusillanimity than courage. He literally has a weak heart and is concerned about his health during the stress of testifying to the Hutton, Butler, Chilcot and other inquiries. Asked at the Hutton Inquiry how he would have felt had his staff gone to the press with their concerns, Jones replied:

“I would have thought they were acting well beyond the bounds of what they should have been doing. I would have been very disappointed and very annoyed.”

Never mind that over a million Iraqis might have been kept very much ALIVE. That concern never enters Jones’ book. And yet, as he methodically recounts, he came to speak out in public inquiries and in the press about the corrupt process through which Blair dragged Britain into a U.S. war of aggression. Jones lays the blame for his nation’s role solidly on Blair.

Now, it occurs to me that Washington, D.C., is crawling with respectable bureaucrats like Jones, none of whom have published a book like his. And it occurs to me that they are less likely to do so because of the climate in which they live. In Britain, there have been constant investigations since the war was launched. They have been limited and can in most cases accurately be characterized as white washes. They have not involved criminal prosecution. But they have been there. And those who have spoken up a bit have been lauded and encouraged to speak up a little more.

This climate, I think, has encouraged the leaking of all the official British documents through which we in the United States have learned about our own government’s war plans. The activism of the Stop the War Coalition has been relentless, but — unlike in the United States — it has penetrated major media outlets. Producers and editors have urged Jones and others to make their information known and to publish books. We haven’t seen a proposal in Washington to investigate the war lies since 2005 when the Democrats were lying about what they’d do if we gave them a majority in Congress. On the contrary, it is now popular in Washington to claim you supported the 2007 “surge” and knew Iraq would turn out to be a “good war” all along.

Jones’ prescription for reform at the close of his book is a single intelligence agency with a single head answerable to the Parliament. As his book reveals in detail, just as in the United States, the tangled web of rival agencies in the UK is a liability. I agree with Jones’ proposed reform, although I hardly think spying — even when limited to spying, and excluding assassination and other tricks of the CIA — has earned the moniker ‘intelligence.’ I’d be inclined to go with ‘stupidity’ for a while.

“Would you please share that piece of stupidity with the committee?”

“Is there a consensus on this point within the stupidity community?”

“I have the utmost respect for the views of our stupidity agents.”

Et cetera.

More substantively, of course, we will only be able to “turn the page” to a page that looks sufficiently different when there are deterrents to the sort of abuses engaged in by Bush and Blair. Blair WAS, in fact, a single head of government answerable to Parliament, and Parliament failed to impeach him.

Now, if we could just begin enforcing the law and stop handing out medals.

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