

The 'British Watergate' Can Bring Down Blair and Cheney

by Mark Burdman

Very damaging inside testimony by British Prime Minister Tony Blair's own chief of staff on Aug. 18, signalled that Britain's establishment has made the decision to axe Blair, precisely over the corrupt efforts he made to falsify intelligence to justify U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney's "preventive war" doctrine being applied to Iraq.

On Aug. 11, Lord Hutton, former Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland and a very senior figure in the British Establishment, began his inquiry into the circumstances of the July 17 death of Dr. David Kelly, an expert on Iraqi weapons. Kelly died, an apparent suicide, after being hounded by Blair's defense minister and other of his minions; Kelly had called into question the Blair government's justification for going to war against Iraq.

Within ten days in August, Hutton's inquiry knocked the props out from Blair, making his departure from power almost certain in the coming weeks. More than that, the revelations emerging from the inquiry could have devastating consequences for U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney and his gang of neo-imperial war-mongers in Washington.

Blair Fully Implicated in Kelly's Death

When Blair himself first announced that Hutton would be conducting the inquiry, he petulantly insisted that its brief be restricted to nothing more than the specifics of what happened to Dr. Kelly on July 17. Lord Hutton replied publicly that he, and he alone, would decide the scope of his inquiry. Blair, at that time cavorting through Asia, responded angrily, but to no avail. Now, as a result of the inquiry, his credibility lies in tatters, and London insiders are talking of a "British variant of Watergate" to describe what Hutton and his investigating counsels are uncovering.

First, by the end of that the inquest's first week, it emerged

that Blair had been involved personally in efforts to force Dr. David Kelly's name to be made public, as part of an intensive attempt by 10 Downing Street to discredit and undermine the senior defense weapons expert. Blair's government knew, though the British public then did not, that Kelly had been the source for the report by BBC Defense correspondent Andrew Gilligan, that 10 Downing Street had "sexed up" the September 2002 Blair "dossier on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction" (WMDs), to make the "Iraqi threat" seem far greater and more imminent than it actually was.

The Aug. 15 London *Times*, owned by the usually pro-Blair Rupert Murdoch, ran a banner headline, "Prime Minister Is Implicated in Kelly Case." The *Times* wrote that the new evidence regarding Blair "gave fresh insight into the extraordinary pressure Dr. Kelly came under in the weeks before his death."

But the inquiry's major bombshell did not explode until Aug. 18. Blair's chief of staff Jonathan Powell was the witness on that day. During his appearance, it was revealed that he had written e-mails during September 2002, *counterposing reality to the alleged Iraqi threat*, in direct opposition to the propaganda then emanating out of Blair's office, and more specifically, out of the Prime Minister's mouth.

Powell revealed he had written on Sept. 17, 2002 to John Scarlett, Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee coordinating body for the British intelligence services, about the forthcoming "dossier on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction": that "The dossier is good and convincing for those who are prepared to be convinced. . . . We will need to make it clear, in launching the document, that we do not claim that we have evidence that [Saddam] is an imminent threat." The dossier, Powell stressed, "does nothing to demonstrate a threat, let alone an imminent threat from Saddam. . . . In other words, it



The British establishment's apparent move to dump Prime Minister Tony Blair (left) in the near future, is effectively a call for Vice President Cheney (right) to resign. Blair's "WMD dossier" frauds were concocted to justify Cheney's "preventive war" doctrine—against Iraq.

shows he has the means but it does not demonstrate he has the motive to attack his neighbors, let alone the West." Powell added that "If I was Saddam, I would take a party of Western journalists to the Ibn Sina factory . . . to demonstrate there is nothing there." He asked, ironically, "How do we close off that avenue to him in advance?"

On its front page, the Aug. 19 *Guardian*—under the headline, "Blair Was Told: Iraq No Threat"—called the Powell e-mail "explosive." It counterposed Powell's words of Sept. 17 to those of Blair, when launching the Iraqi WMD dossier on Sept. 24: "I am in no doubt that the threat is serious and current, that [Saddam] has made progress on WMD, and that he has to be stopped. . . . He has existing and active military plans for the use of chemical and biological weapons, which could be activated within 45 minutes."

The *Independent* lead editorial on Aug. 19 bore a headline that sounded like a criminal indictment: "Now We Know

That No. 10 Did Order a Rewrite of the Dossier To Justify War."

In other words, the Blair argument for war against Iraq was a gigantic fraud. The Jonathan Powell revelation represents a kiss of death for Blair, especially as he is a central figure in the British Establishment policy structure. As Lyndon LaRouche put it on Aug. 19, "The British Establishment has made the decision to axe Blair."

The Danger for Cheney

Blair's appearance before the Hutton inquiry, in the coming days, will undoubtedly speed up his political unravelling. His situation has been made yet more difficult by ensuing testimony, after Powell's, reinforcing the case that it was Blair, and only Blair, who ultimately intervened to "sex up" the dossier. The actual content of the dossier, before it was changed, undermined the argument for a war against Iraq, a war that Blair and his trans-Atlantic friends among Cheney's backers, wanted too desperately.

The Aug. 18 Hutton inquiry testimony has the most immediate implications for the American Vice President. What has drawn little attention outside *EIR*, is that that Sept. 24, 2002 dossier of Blair's 10 Downing Street, was absolutely instrumental in boosting the doctrine of preventive war which had just been publicly codified by Cheney and his gang, in the "National Security Strategy of the United States" released in September. President Bush's June 1, 2002 West Point announcement that preventive war was henceforth U.S. policy, adopted what had been Cheney's policy for a decade, known as the "Wolfowitz Doctrine" in the early-1990s Pentagon Guidance Document. That preventive war policy was aborted during the administration of Bush's father, by the opposition of administration officials like Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger.

The Bush Administration National Security Strategy was made public on Sept. 17, 2002. Blair's dossier came out a week later, and not by coincidence.

The implications of all this make even the much-discussed controversy over the Niger uranium "yellowcake" fraud, pale by comparison. By making the Iraqi threat seem to be a clear and present danger, Blair gave the pretext for activating the Cheney doctrine. It was all the more convenient for Cheney and cohorts, since they could neatly cite the "British evidence" to build their case for war against Iraq.

This also explains what has become both a controversy and a mystery in Britain: namely, why Blair, in building the case for war against Iraq, concentrated solely on "weapons of mass destruction." Even many pro-Iraq war advocates in Britain have wondered why he didn't focus more on "Saddam the monster," or "the humanitarian disaster," to justify launching war. Once it is seen that he was acting in cahoots with the Cheney faction to activate a new era of preventive wars, using Saddam Hussein's Iraq as a convenient pretext, all the pieces fit into place.

‘Blair Is Not Going To Survive’

Jonathan Powell is no average civil servant, but rather a top figure of the British Establishment. He is the brother of Sir Charles Powell, the top foreign policy adviser to Margaret Thatcher when she was Prime Minister. More than that, Sir Charles’ wife Carla (née Bonardi), of an Italian oligarchical family, runs one of the most important salons in London, where elites from many countries, usually of a more conservative bent, are brought together for dinner and political conspiring.

The brothers’ division of labor goes so far, as to include a different pronunciation of their surnames! As one London insider put it on Aug. 19, “Jonathan pronounces his name with the long ‘ow,’ because that is more appealing to a left-wing Labour base, while Charles pronounces it ‘pole,’ because that is more in line with old English usage.”

According to this insider, the Jonathan Powell testimony will do enormous damage to Blair: “He is a leading Establishment figure. He’s a highest-level operative of the powers-that-be. He was probably deployed into 10 Downing Street, originally, to keep an eye on Blair. His loyalty is really not to Blair. Now, he has spilled the beans. The revelations at the Hutton inquiry yesterday raise the question: ‘Does the Establishment want to keep Blair as Prime Minister?’ I think not. The situation we are now witnessing, reminds me of the moves to get rid of Margaret Thatcher in 1990. A new Labour regime, probably headed by [Chancellor of the Exchequer] Gordon Brown, is waiting in the wings. Blair’s position is becoming indefensible, and my reading is, he’s not going to survive. . . . That explosive e-mail of Jonathan Powell, blowing apart Blair’s argument for going to war, makes the original David Kelly accusation, about the government ‘sex-ing up’ the dossier, small potatoes by comparison. The whole issue, of the BBC vs. Alastair Campbell, now recedes into the background. Blair is now directly implicated, and profoundly, in something very serious. It will be most difficult for him to wriggle out of this, and he can’t do what he always does in such situations, jettison by getting rid of scapegoats.”

The source went on: “This has the smell, of a British variant of Nixon’s Watergate. We now see the direct involvement of the top man, in this case a Prime Minister, in dirty machinations, followed by attempts to cover up and lie.” Noting that, while all this is going on, Blair is still on vacation in Barbados, he quipped, “Maybe, with a bit of luck, he won’t come back to Britain! I think Barbados is not the best place for his ultimate destination, given what I know of the laws there. But I’m sure he can find another West Indian island, where the laws on extradition are not enforceable.”

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