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THE HALABJA GASSING AND OTHER LIES ABOUT IRAQ

Arthur Kemp reveals the lies behind Bush's war in Iraq

Obviously we're not in a position to confirm the material in this article, but it seems well enough referenced and researched to at least suggest that we shouldn't take some of the Bush/Blair war propaganda at face value. Remember that their tales come from the same psyops team which produced the totally fictitious story about Iraqi soldiers tipping babies out of incubators in Kuwaiti hospitals during the first Gulf War.

The current war being waged by Britain and America against Iraq is based on some of the most grotesque, blatant and shameless lies ever to be seen in the International Political arena. The single greatest lie has to do with an incident in March 1988 when a Kurdish village in northern Iraq was subjected to a chemical weapon attack, killed up to 5000 people.

None other than George W. Bush himself has repeatedly told the US public, and the world, that this attack was carried out by the Iraqi regime as part of its campaign against the Kurds, who are agitating for their own separate state. This has been echoed by Tony Blair, British prime minister, in his attempts to whip up the British public into a war frenzy as well.

An example of Bush's propaganda came in his radio address to the US nation on 16 March 2003, the 15th anniversary of the Halabja attack. In that speech, Bush told the world that "(T)his weekend marks a bitter anniversary for the people of Iraq. Fifteen years ago, Saddam Hussein's regime ordered a chemical weapons attack on a village in Iraq called Halabja. With that single order, the regime killed thousands of Iraq's Kurdish citizens. Whole families died while trying to flee clouds of nerve and mustard agents descending from the sky. Many who managed to survive still suffer from cancer, blindness, respiratory diseases, miscarriages, and severe birth defects among their children." (1)

This allegation has been repeated ad nauseum in the printed media (2) and on television. (3)

THE TRUTH – 1991 CIA REPORT TOLD U.S. GOVERNMENT THAT THE IRANIANS CARRIED OUT THE ATTACK

The truth of the Halabja incident is in reality very different to that which Bush and his media allies push out. The CIA's own senior political analyst during the Iran Iraq war, Stephen C. Pelletiere, who was responsible for drawing up a report for the US government on the incident, stated very firmly that the Iranians, and not the Iraqis, were responsible for the massacre of Kurds by chemicals at Halabja in 1988. Pelletiere's report was in fact published in the New York Times on 31 January 2003. (4)

Pelletiere explained in the New York Times his background to the affair:

"I am in a position to know because, as the Central Intelligence Agency's senior political analyst on Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war, and as a professor at the Army War College from 1988 to 2000, I was privy to much of the classified material that flowed through Washington having to do with the Persian Gulf. In addition, I headed a 1991 Army investigation into how the Iraqis would fight a war against the United States; the classified version of the report went into great detail on the Halabja affair." (5)

Pelletiere continues:

"This much about the gassing at Halabja we undoubtedly know: it came about in the course of a battle between Iraqis and Iranians. Iraq used chemical weapons to try to kill Iranians who had seized the town, which is in northern Iraq not far from the Iranian border. The Kurdish civilians who died had the misfortune to be caught up in that exchange. But they were not Iraq's main target." (6)

"And the story gets murkier: immediately after the battle the United States Defense Intelligence Agency investigated and produced a classified report, which it circulated within the intelligence community on a need-to-know basis. That study asserted that it was Iranian gas that killed the Kurds, not Iraqi gas." (7)

"The agency did find that each side used gas against the other in the battle around Halabja. The condition of the dead Kurds' bodies, however, indicated they had been killed with a blood agent – that is, a cyanide-based gas – which Iran was known to use. The Iraqis, who are thought to have used mustard gas in the battle, are not known to have possessed blood agents at the time." (8)

The Halabja incident is the most prominent shameless example of American and British lies about Iraq. There are however others as well.

MORE LIES – BRITISH COMPILE REPORT FROM 12 YEAR OLD INTERNET DATA

The British government produced a dossier of Iraq's supposed crimes in On Monday 3rd February 2003, in which it claimed to have compiled a complete catalogue of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. This was done to try and convince the British public of the need for war against Iraq.

Unfortunately for Tony Blair and the British government, the dossier was nothing but a plagiarism of material found on the Internet, with most of it being more than 12 years out of date. (9)

The BBC was even forced to report that the British government's report was "copied from three different articles, including one written by a postgraduate student." (10)

The BBC continued:

"Excerpts from a paper relating to the build-up to the 1991 Gulf War by Californian student Ibrahim al-Marashi were used in the intelligence document. The paper was published in the Middle East Review of International Affairs." (11)

In addition, other portions of the report were taken from old articles in the defence journal Jane's Intelligence Review. (12)

Despite this report therefore being utterly groundless and based on information that was literally more than a decade old, US secretary of state Colin Powell was full of praise for this blatantly inaccurate and non-intelligence driven British concoction, as he tried to justify the war against Iraq. (13)

AMERICAN CASE BASED ON OUTRIGHT FORGERY

That Colin Powell was full of praise for the British report should not be surprising, as the US administration has engaged in its own particularly poor set of lies about Iraq as well.

On 28 January 2003, George W. Bush himself, in his State of the Union address of that date, announced to the world: "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." (14)

The documents, given to International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Mohamed ElBaradei, indicated that Iraq tried to buy 500 tons of uranium from Niger. (15)

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Colin Powell referred to the documents directly in his flamboyant presentation to the U.N. Security Council outlining the Bush administration's case against Iraq. (16)

In December 2002, the US State Department used the information to support its case that Iraq was lying about its weapons programs. (17)

Unfortunately, for Bush and Powell, closer inspection of these documents revealed that they were blatant and obvious forgeries. (18)

One the documents was a letter discussing the uranium deal supposedly signed by Niger President Tandja Mamadou. The UN Weapons inspectors described the signature as "childlike" and said that it clearly was not Mamadou's. (19)

Another, written on paper from a 1980s military government in Niger, bears the date of October 2000 and the signature of a man who by then had not been foreign minister of Niger in 14 years. (20)

The forgery was in fact highlighted by ElBaradei in his 7 March 2003 presentation to the U.N. Security Council (21) but this was simply ignored by both the British and American governments.

The forgery was so shocking that even the top Democrat on the US Senate Intelligence Committee has asked for a FBI investigation into who manufactured the documents. (22)

Sen. Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia said he was uneasy about a possible campaign to deceive the public about the status of Iraq's nuclear program, (23) saying that an investigation would "help to allay any concerns" that the government was involved in the creation of the documents to build support for administration policies. (24) Indeed.

With a background of deception, lies, fraud and forgery like that, the real wonder is that anyone believes anything that the Bush and Blair administrations have to say at all.

Whatever Saddam Hussein's crimes may or may not be, it is clear that the US and the UK have not managed to make a credible case for the war against Iraq, and have been forced to fall back on a tissue of lies and fabrications. The free world can only hope that they are one day called to account.

Sources:

(1) Text of Bush's speech, and an audio copy, can be found at the website of the American embassy in London, <http://www.usembassy.org.uk/bush243.html>

(2) Diary, Matthew Norman, The Guardian, March 13, 2003, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/diary/story/0,3604,913007,00.html>

(3) BBC, Tony Blair's speech to the Trades Union Congress in Blackpool, 10 September, 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2249312.stm

(4 - 8) New York Times, "A War Crime or an Act of War?" STEPHEN C. PELLETIERE, 31 January 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/31/opinion/31PELL.html?pagewanted=all&position=top>

(9 - 13) Iraq dossier 'solid' - Downing Street, BBC, 7 February, 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2735031.stm

(14 - 16) Fake Iraq documents 'embarrassing' for U.S. CNN, Friday, March 14, 2003, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/03/14/sprj.irq.documents>

(17) Senator Seeks FBI Probe of Iraq Documents, Associated Press, 14 March 2003,

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