



## U.K. Iraq Inquiry Says Military Intervention in Iraq “Went Badly Wrong”

The report of the Iraq Inquiry, (commonly known as the Chilcot Inquiry after its chairman, Sir John Chilcot), which was created by the British government in 2009 to investigate the nation’s role in the Iraq War, was published on July 6, along with a public statement by Chilcot. In his statement, Chilcot said: “We [the members of the Inquiry] have ... concluded that the circumstances in which it was decided that there was a legal basis for UK military action were far from satisfactory.”



Chilcot’s statement also expressed open disagreement with former Prime Minister Tony Blair:

Mr Blair told the Inquiry that the difficulties encountered in Iraq after the invasion could not have been known in advance.

We do not agree that hindsight is required. The risks of internal strife in Iraq, active Iranian pursuit of its interests, regional instability, and Al Qaida activity in Iraq, were each explicitly identified before the invasion.

Speaking at a news conference in London, Chilcot explained that the planning and execution of the military intervention was seriously flawed and “went badly wrong, with consequences to this day.”

Chilcot, who is a “Privy Councillor,” pointed to the recent suicide bombings in Baghdad, Iraq, that left more than 250 people dead.

“We have concluded that the U.K. chose to join the invasion of Iraq before the peaceful options for disarmament had been exhausted,” Chilcot said. “Military action at that time was not a last resort.”

VOA News reported that on July 6, Blair took responsibility for taking Britain into war, expressing “more sorrow, regret and apology that you can ever know or believe.” However, Blair still insisted the world is a better place because of the removal of Saddam.

Former President George W. Bush, who ordered the invasion of Iraq in 2003, apparently has not changed his mind about the wisdom of that decision. Freddy Ford, a spokesman for Bush, said in a July 6 statement: “Despite the intelligence failures and other mistakes he has acknowledged previously, President Bush continues to believe the whole world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power.”

The statement continued: “[Bush] is deeply grateful for the service and sacrifice of American and coalition forces in the war on terror. And there was no stronger ally than the United Kingdom under the leadership of Prime Minister Tony Blair.”

The BBC reported comments made by Blair while speaking on BBC Radio 4’s *Today* program, in which he acknowledged that mistakes had been made, but still maintained that the decision to join the U.S.-led invasion had been the right one.



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Addressing accusations made by some that he had secretly made a commitment to President Bush to oust Saddam Hussein — and then compounded the deception by overstating the threat posed by Saddam Hussein’s alleged “weapons of mass destruction” in order to convince the British public and MPs to join in the war — Blair refuted these charges to *Today*: “We were giving the United States a very clear commitment that we would be alongside them in dealing with this issue,” he said.

In response to Chilcot’s charge that Blair and his ministers should not have accepted the intelligence reports on Saddam’s weapons at face value, Blair said during the interview that he had relied on these reports, but acknowledged: “It would have been far better to have challenged them more clearly.”

The former prime minister added: “It wasn’t that I wanted to believe it. I did believe it, and one of the reasons for that was because Saddam Hussein had used these weapons against his own people.”

Blair said he understood “all the criticisms” of the invasion, but clung to his belief that British participation was still somehow justified: “When I look at it today I think still that we moved with where the grain of the future is going to be in these countries and this region.”

Blair told *Today* interviewer John Humphrys:

I can regret the mistakes and I can regret many things about it — but I genuinely believe not just that we acted out of good motives and I did what I did out of good faith, but I sincerely believe that we would be in a worse position if we hadn’t acted that way. I may be completely wrong about that.

In an article published by *The New American* last November, “[Save the Apologies, Just Stop Promoting War](#),” former representative and presidential candidate Ron Paul (R-Texas) commented on Blair’s surprising apology for the Iraq War during an interview on CNN the previous month. Paul noted that politicians rarely take personal blame for a misdeed and rarely do they atone for those misdeeds. Paul wrote:

Thus Tony Blair did not apologize for his role in pushing the disastrous Iraq war. He did not apologize for having, as former head UN Iraq inspector Hans Blix claimed, “misrepresented intelligence on weapons of mass destruction to gain approval for the Iraq War.”

No, Tony Blair “apologized” for “the fact that the intelligence we received was wrong,” on Iraq. He apologized for “mistakes in planning” for post-Saddam Iraq. He boldly refused to apologize for removing Saddam from power.

In other words, he apologized that the intelligence manipulated by his cronies to look like Saddam had weapons of mass destruction and posed a threat to the UK turned out to not be the case. For Blair, it was someone else’s fault.

Paul also stated, “If we are waiting for any kind of apology from George W. Bush for Iraq we shouldn’t hold our breath. Likewise if we are looking for any kind of apology from President Obama for a similarly disastrous war on false pretext against Libya we shouldn’t bother waiting.... In fact, far from apologizing for leading the United States into the Libya war based on a false pretext, President Obama is taking US ground troops into Syria on a false pretext.”

In post-Chilcot Inquiry statements emanating from Blair and Bush, we see that both former national leaders continue to maintain that “the whole world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power.”

Considering the highly publicized atrocities being waged against Christians and other minorities in post-Saddam Iraq by ISIS terrorists on an almost daily basis, it is hard to believe how anyone could make the assertions that Blair and Bush have made with a straight face. While volumes could be written



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about the direct connection between the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the persecution of Christians in Iraq, consider these excerpts from an article posted by *The New American* in 2012:

[“Christian Massacres: A Result of U.S. Foreign Policy”](#):

In the wake of the U.S. invasion and occupation — which in 2007 the Congressional Budget Office estimated would cost U.S. taxpayers about \$2 trillion — Christianity in Iraq might very well be fully eradicated. Reliable estimates found that about 1.4 million Christians lived in Iraq before 2003. Today, that number is less than 500,000, with some experts claiming the true figure is actually around 200,000. In all, some two-thirds of the nation’s Christians have already fled or been killed...

Under the secular dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, Christians and other minorities were largely protected from Islamist violence and genocide — unlike in many areas of the Middle East. Indeed, the tyrant’s socialist Ba’th Party was founded by Michel Aflaq, an Orthodox Christian, and actually held “freedom of religion” as one of its core tenets.

Of course, as is well documented, enemies of the Iraqi regime were viciously persecuted and slaughtered. Despite the fact that the U.S. government once supported the regime, Hussein has been properly characterized as a monster. But under the dictator’s iron fist, Christians worshipped openly throughout Iraq and were not treated any worse than Muslims or anyone else.

Anti-Christian violence, prevalent across much of the Middle East, was not tolerated. Almost unprecedented in the entire region’s contemporary history: A [Chaldean] Catholic, Tariq Aziz, served as Iraq’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

Let’s get this straight again: Under Saddam Hussein, who included Christians in his government, Christians worshipped openly throughout Iraq and were not treated any worse than Muslims or anyone else. Now that Saddam has been removed by the U.S.-led invasion that was supported by Britain, ISIS controls large portions of Iraq and beheads, crucifies, and forces into sexual slavery those Christians who have remained there.

Perhaps Messrs. Blair and Bush can explain how this state of affairs is beneficial.

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