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## George Bush, Tony Blair and the century's greatest crime

**What US and Britain did to Iraq is nothing short of state terrorism**

By Linda S. Heard

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It's been almost 10 years since the US and Britain unleashed 'Shock and Awe' on the Iraqi capital Baghdad ostensibly to punish a rogue dictator for hoarding weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in non-compliance with binding UN Security Council resolutions. In reality, Saddam Hussain had shut down his nuclear programme and destroyed Iraq's chemical and biological weapons more than a decade earlier.

UN weapons inspectors were almost certain of this fact and were on the point of giving Iraq a clean bill of health until they were leant-on by Uncle Sam. Indeed, the man who had supervised Iraq's WMD programme for a decade Saddam's son-in-law Hussain Kamal confirmed as much to CIA intelligence officers and UN officials following his defection to Jordan in 1995.

What was done to Iraq was nothing short of state terrorism beginning with 10 years of crippling sanctions that brought Iraq to its knees and were believed to have been responsible for the deaths of up to 500,000 children who died from malnutrition, lack of medicine and disease from polluted water supplies.

Rather than heed growing international calls to lift those sanctions, George W. Bush and his neoconservative band chose war which they and their British cohort Prime Minister Tony Blair then sold to gullible Western populations on lies too numerous to list. They were aided by a complicit right-wing media with Rupert Murdoch leading the charge, according to the diaries of Blair's former spin doctor Alastair Campbell.

Blair was aware that the war would be illegal in the absence of an explicit UN resolution, as his legal advisor attorney general Lord Goldsmith had determined, but he went ahead regardless even as millions of anti-war protestors thronged London's streets. He didn't hesitate to sign-off on an intelligence dossier for public consumption falsely claiming that Iraq could deploy WMD against British interests within 45 minutes of receiving the order to do so — and another containing tracts from a student's thesis published on the internet, typos and all.

Credible insiders who dared to challenge such nonsense such as weapons expert Dr David Kelly, who challenged the 45-minute claim, Ambassador Joseph Wilson, who refuted Bush's allegation that Iraq had sought to purchase uranium from Niger, and British translator Katherine Gunn who disclosed that the US was spying on UN Security Council members, were discredited.

Kelly was found dead in suspicious circumstances; Wilson's wife Valerie Plame was exposed as a CIA agent by a US government media lackey. Gunn was arrested for breaching the Official Secrets Act and sacked.

One of the most respected figures in America Colin Powell signed the death of his own career when he spouted trumped up allegations against Iraq in the UN, a presentation he was to bitterly regret, calling it a painful blot on his record.

World's greatest con

In short, the war was one of the world's greatest cons. It had nothing to do with Iraq's WMD or the removal of a dictator; it was part of a greater neoconservative plan to ensure America's

global domination as General Wesley Clark confirmed in his book *Winning Modern Wars: Iraq, Terrorism and the American Empire*.

“As I went back through the Pentagon in November 2001, one of the senior military staff officers had time for a chat. Yes, we were still on track for going against Iraq, he said. But there was more. This was being discussed as part of a five-year campaign plan, he said, and there were a total of seven countries, beginning with Iraq, then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Iran, Somalia and Sudan.”

Up to a million Iraqis lost their lives as a result of the war and subsequent invasion and occupation; according to the respected journal *The Lancet*, over 600,000 had been killed as of July 2006, not to mention thousands of US and coalition military personnel.

Former World Bank chief economist Joseph Stiglitz announced that the war impacted the US economy to the tune of \$3 trillion (Dh11.1 trillion). And for what! The only beneficiaries of this willful blunder chiefly perpetrated by Bush and Blair have been Iran that holds sway over the Shiite-dominated Nouri Al Maliki government and various terror organisations that have used western crimes against Iraq as a recruitment call. Today, Iraq is poised on the brink of all out civil war.

The Conservative MP and Minister without Portfolio Kenneth Clarke recently told the BBC that Iraq was “the most disastrous foreign policy decision of my lifetime ... worse than Suez”. You don’t need Einstein’s IQ to realise that, but the Iraq Inquiry chaired by Sir John Chilcot, and set up in 2009, has failed in its mission.

It’s been characterised by the British prime minister as “an establishment stitch-up”.

Where’s the public anger? American newspapers are running stories about the death of Bush’s pooch Barney and his penchant for painting while a tanned Blair has been busy accepting a Polish Business Leaders’ Award and pontificating on David Cameron’s plan to hold a referendum on Britain’s continued EU membership.

The deadly duo should be sharing a cell in The Hague awaiting trial for war crimes, but as we see time and time again, victors’ justice translates to no justice at all.