



A Collection of articles written by South Tynesiders opposing the continued occupation of Iraq as well as to oppose the threat posed to world peace by the US, Britain and other powers as they continue to threaten Syria, Iran, Cuba, DPRK and other countries.



**South Tyneside
Stop The War Coalition**



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Preface

The South Tyneside Stop The War Coalition is a local group of people with diverse political, religious and cultural views. It was founded by a group of concerned South Tynesiders shortly before the U.S. led invasion of Iraq in March.

We now believe that being against a prolonged U.S./U.K. occupation of Iraq is not enough - we should have a positive vision of how to build a better world without war. We are not a political party with a fixed set of ideas that all supporters are expected to sign up to - indeed, we celebrate diversity and open debate, believing them key to a more prosperous and peaceful world.

Although U.S. President George Bush has announced the end of military action, Iraq is still an occupied country in a state of disorder - and the world is still in a state of uncertainty as to whether further military action will happen elsewhere as part of the "war on terror".

South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition believes that the control of world events should not be left to the decisions of President Bush, Tony Blair and a few other powerful and rich people. Millions of British people - including many who eventually decided to support the war - were deeply troubled by the idea of Britain being involved in a military invasion of another country, against normal United Nations conventions, and according to a plan mostly devised by a right-wing American government but with the British government playing a major part.

More than a thousand people from South Tyneside signed our petitions against the war, and dozens took part in public meetings, demonstrations, peace vigils and other actions, locally and nationally. During our campaigning, we also found many examples of people in the borough taking independent anti-war actions - including putting banners on their houses, taking part in prayer vigils, as well as lobbying politicians via telephone, mail, email, text messages and other forms of communication. Large numbers of people still believe that the war was unjustified, illegal by the normal standards of international law, and likely to make the world a more dangerous place over the medium, and long terms. Many believe that terrorist attacks are likely to increase in number and severity in future as a consequence of the war.

The South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition has more than a dozen active supporters - and more than one hundred people have indicated that they want to continue to help our work in various ways. A major focus of our present campaigning is against the war-mongering right-wing zealots at the heart of the present American government and the support they receive from the British government. However, the anti-war movement is not anti-American, on the contrary it supports the rich diversity of the American people and that their culture is better represented in our counterpart anti-war groups in the USA than in the present American government.

South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition has a local-based, do-it-yourself approach to campaigning and the primary question we ask is: "How can people acting on a relatively small-scale, locally, influence wider events nationally and internationally?" We also affirm that "Another world is possible! We must create it!"

August 6, 2003

Silence is Shame

While reading the 1988 autobiography of Joan Baez it was remarkable how relevant it is today.

One chapter called ***Silence is Shame*** brought to mind the quotes of Martin Luther King:

“Tyranny exists when good people remain silent.”

“He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps perpetrate it; he who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.”

It was also a timely reminder of how important it is to have protest and pressure groups like CND, the Anti-Nazi League, and the Stop the War Coalition.

These groups and many more like them have worked tirelessly to unearth the underhand dealing and expose the lies of political thugs, fanatical right-wingers and a government of hypocrites.

It was groups like these who helped to inspire the ‘ordinary folks’ around the World to raise their voices and their banners on February 15th 2003.

Those of us who were there marched together in Brotherhood and Sisterhood in an atmosphere of positive optimism.

Although our protests did not prevent the horrific rain of cruise missiles into Baghdad when the war started on 19th/20th March, and the consequent deaths of innocent people, the rest of the World watched with revulsion as the UK and USA showed no mercy on Iraq or its

people.

So it is now we need those groups more than ever to organize and to inform the “ordinary folk” about the **TRUTH** of what is going on and to work together in creating a peaceful world

.

You may say I’m a dreamer but I’m not the only one.

[Alan Trotter, July 2003]

Science and Openness: Fact and Fiction

Richard Preston is one of the world's best popular science journalists. When he wrote books about astronomy [First Light] and medical microbiology [The Hot Zone] he found the scientists involved in these fields open-minded and keen to share their work – as well as themselves as human beings – with the wider world. What emerges from these books, which mix 'human interest' and 'hard science', is a picture of real science as done by real human beings – who, for example, chat about the sports programmes they watched last night on t.v. in between doing highly technical observations of the most distantly visible galactic structures.

When Richard Preston turned his attention to biological weapons research, he entered a closed, secretive, reality-denying world, where the people involved were not prepared to talk openly, nor to disclose their findings to a wider public under their own names, nor to reveal the human realities of their work. So he wrote a book of fiction [The Cobra Event], using the same reporting techniques as for his previous books, but in which human identities were disguised and blurred by fictionalisation. He claims of this book: 'the historical background is real, the government structures are real, and the science is real or based on what is possible'. In other words: he does his best to tell it as it is - or might be - in circumstances that make truth-telling difficult. [Rumour – and perhaps the odd reliable intelligence source! – suggests that Bill Clinton read The Cobra Event as an antidote to the bio-weapons intelligence reports he was being fed by the defence establishment while American president.]

At its best, science investigates reality by the open consideration of

ideas and checkable physical evidence. Ideas and evidence are put into the public realm and [literally and metaphorically] knocked about in open debate. Those ideas and evidence that stand up to the hard knocks of public scrutiny generally pass for something approaching the truth – until better ideas or other evidence are found. Science at its best is hence democratic and progressive. It is also commonplace [since it deals with a common reality we all share] and humbling [since it reveals extraordinary wide-ranging notions that put us in our place in the wider scheme of things].

The best scientists have normal human prides and other flaws, but they also have a kind of humility – they acknowledge their uncertainties, and understand that while they work with nature they do not really control it. They also tend to be open about their work. The worst scientists lack humility and can come to believe they alone have unique intelligence, and that they can control nature. They often claim ‘certainties’ that they do not have. They tend to be secretive. And the work they produce tends to result in distortion of the truth [because it is not properly scrutinised in open forums that can bring out errors]. The truth becomes even more distorted when secretive scientific research is incorporated into the command-and-control power ‘games’ of the ‘power elite’ – political, military and/or corporate. As Richard Preston puts it: ‘Open, peer-reviewed biological research can reap great benefits. ... What is dangerous is human intent.’

All of which is a preamble of sorts to an opening consideration of the death in suspicious circumstances, on Thursday, July 17, of Dr David Kelly - a previously mostly anonymous man who, apparently, was one of Britain’s leading experts on biological weapons, employed by the British ministry of ‘defence’, and who had been involved in weapons inspection work in Iraq.

Dr Kelly’s family have said this weekend that ‘all those involved should reflect long and hard’ on his death – and who could disagree with them on that?

As it has been reported in the mainstream media, the ‘case’ of Dr Kelly’s death is quite ‘open-and-shut’: a quiet and decent academic scientist, unused to publicity, cracked under pressure after becom-

ing caught up in a vicious public row between government and media over claims of ‘spin-doctoring’ of intelligence reports [apparently including work done by Dr Kelly himself] and while in a distressed state, he committed suicide – painkillers-and-wrist-slashing being his chosen method, according to suggestions in police statements. Conspiracy theorists – rushing to conclusions in their own ways – are suggesting more sinister alternative possibilities. The truth is that at present the circumstances leading up to Dr Kelly’s death are generally uncertain, but his death was troubling and mysterious – something, indeed, for ‘all those involved to reflect long and hard’ about.

According to the normal conventions of British law, the cause of a suspicious death is something for an inquest jury of randomly selected British citizens to reach a verdict about. In other words, judgement on Dr Kelly’s death should not be left to a single judge, however independent, appointed to lead a judicial inquiry by a Prime Minister whose own involvement in the course of events leading to Dr Kelly’s death is open to question. The basic questions for that public inquest jury to consider are, effectively, those that apply to every doubtful death: did he ‘fall’? or was he ‘pushed’?

Meanwhile, there are many legitimate questions the wider British public has a right to ask and to get answers to, including:

- what exactly was Dr Kelly doing in his years as a British tax-funded biological weapons researcher?
- why were his evaluations of the present state of bio-weapon research and development in Iraq [which can hardly be regarded as British state secrets, and which were crucial issues in the government’s ‘justifications’ for going to war] not released more openly for others to evaluate?
- in short, what did he really know?

Historical Post-Scripts

From *Paul Fussell, The Great War and Modern Memory, Chapter VI*. [Embedded quotes are from *Robert Graves, Goodbye To All That*]: “The attack is to be preceded by a forty-minute discharge of gas from cylinders in the trenches. For security reasons the gas is euphemized as ‘the accessory’. When it is discovered that the manage-

ment of the gas is in the hands of a gas company officered by chemistry dons from London University, morale hits a comic rock-bottom. 'Of course they'll bungle it,' says Thomas. 'How could they do anything else?' Not only is the gas bungled: everything goes wrong. The storeman stumbles and spills all the rum in the trench just before the company goes over; the new type of grenade won't work in the dampness; the colonel departs for the rear with a slight cut on his hand; a crucial German machine gun is left undestroyed; the German artillery has the whole exercise taped. The gas is supposed to be blown across by favourable winds. When the great moment proves entirely calm, the gas company sends back a message 'Dead calm. Impossible discharge accessory', only to be ordered by the staff, who like characters in farce are entirely obsessed, mechanical, and unbending: 'Accessory to be discharged at all costs.' The gas, finally discharged after the discovery that most of the wrenches for releasing it won't fit, drifts out and then settles back into the British trenches. Men are going over and rapidly coming back, and we hear comically contradictory crowd noises: 'Come on!' 'Get back, you bastards!' 'Gas turning on us!' 'Keep your heads, you men!' 'Back like hell, boys!' 'Whose orders?' 'What's happening?' 'Gas!' 'Back!' 'Come on!' 'Gas!' 'Back!' A 'bloody balls-up' is what the troops called it. Historians call it the Battle of Loos."

From *Matthew Arnold, Dover Beach*:

"... we are here as on a darkling plain
swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight
where ignorant armies clash by night."

[Philip Talbot, 20/07/03]

Humanity Has Long Abhorred Violence, and Murder

Humanity has long abhorred violence, and murder, our laws are designed against violence, and murder. Our lives revolve around avoidance of violent confrontations, and murder, to this end the stance against violence has led to schools being free from corporal punishment, and our homes to become violence free, with every effort being made to broadcast the message of zero tolerance towards domestic violence, and violence in general.

Yet war is an exception to the case, in legitimising this departure from civilised behaviour and stooping to the base and animalistic modes of behaviour, there has evolved special dispensations based on pragmatism, and the need for self protection from those who seek to do violence with a view of gaining advantages that otherwise would not be possible.

It is important to keep in mind the phrase of “gaining advantage” for wars are never fought for any other reason than economic, and pecuniary advantages, be it land, or resources such as; water, minerals, oils, and or slave labour, or on the other hand new markets for products, and or expansion of the consumer base.

In the past often wars were based on territorial squabbles, between intransigent opponents, whom found the need for acquisition far out weighed the temporary instability, and expenses of war.

However, at the dawn of the 21st century, war has become the means of consolidating the failing economies, that have their basis on greed, and consumerism. For in the limited money supply economics, re-

sources, and assets having been traded for nominal denominations prevalent around the world monetary system taking little note of the resource allocation.

Resource allocation must be further explored, albeit in a cursory, and shallow fashion. Keeping in mind resource allocation alludes to ownership, which inherently implies owners, and their rights thereof. Further highlighting the right of indigenous people to indigenous resources, which could be traded for other resources, and commodities lacking within the boundaries of their domicile. Simply put wars of the 21st century are in fact an all out assault on the rights of people around the world. "Rights" that must remain sacred if we are to subscribe to notions of civilised transaction, with a view to stability of our societies, ultimately leading to a life free from molestation, threat, and danger for all the human family.

Alas any war that is fought, or is to be fought is an indictment to failures of those statesmen whom have precipitated the choice of committing violence with a view to cover up their singular failure in discharging their duty that mostly have been elected for. The reality often going missing, in the mêlée of building up to wars, and the subsequent euphoria of victory is; the failure of the statesmen in finding civilised solutions to problems they are facing, and further consciously choosing the path of violence and murder. The fact that opponents will die, for these to become victorious is stating the obvious, alas those soldiers whom have been sent to kill the opponents will die too, for in wars people will die, and the number of dead will include friend as well as the enemy. Therefore, those whom advocate war, in fact are murderers regardless of their contentions of just cause or otherwise. Further it would be stating the obvious, for any nation facing imminent dangers and threats, there is no need for convincing that nation to choose the path of self defence and protection, which brings about the need for questioning the conduct of those governments whom advocated war on Iraq, with ever increasing desperation, finally resulting in personal attacks on Saddam, and his person. The interesting fact never mentioned, was, Saddam, and Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri invited President Bush and Dick Cheney to a duel to settle the score. An idea that had the world media poking fun at the depth of the stupidity of those who countenanced such ideas, yet little time later, President Bush was openly going to war only to eliminate

Saddam, and his weapons of mass destruction.

The fact was, and is, Saddam offered little in the way of a threat to national security of US, and UK. A historical fact considering the length of the war, and the manner of defeat of an ill equipped, and rag tag Iraqi Army. However since the downfall of the tyrannical regime of Saddam, one fact is clearly emerging; annexation of the Iraqi oil by the warring factions, and its incorporation into various American corporate bodies. With further money being siphoned off by those managing to get the lucrative contracts for rebuilding Iraq. Simple fact is if these players were to divert such funds from US, and UK taxes, they most probably would have been found guilty of fraud, and sent to jail, however the by going through the route of war, they have laundered their proceeds, at the cost to those who died fighting this war.

The simple fact you should all remember is; crime should not pay, however sophisticated the criminal, and his or her methods of committing crimes. In other words it is up to you to be aware of why violence is chosen in preference to civilised mode of human discourse?

Nader Naderi [21/05/03]

G8 Demonstration: Geneva 1st June 2003

An eyewitness report from Alan Newham

Over 100, 000 people took part in a demonstration against the G8 conference taking place in Evian, France. The participants were mainly from France and Switzerland but there were many from other European countries, as well as speakers from the U.S.A., Ivory Coast, Iraq, Palestine, and a representative from ' Focus on the Global South '.

Meetings were held in various locations: in Geneva and Lausanne, Switzerland, and in Annemasse, France, over the three days preceding the demonstration. In Geneva there were a number of well attended meetings e.g. on debt, Imperialism and War, Financial instability, armed globalisation and the crisis of "global governance " and "End the Occupations; No to Permanent War ". The latter meeting being attended by 500 people and included a speaker from A.N.S.W.E.R. [Act Now to Stop War and End Racism] a U.S. organisation who have organised demonstrations across the U.S.A.
[<http://www.InternationalANSWER.org>]

Further speakers included :

George Galloway M.P. who was well received with a standing ovation when he argued that there was no contradiction between fighting Imperialism ; the highest state of Capitalism, and Capitalism itself. He referred to the United Nations as a thieves and beggars kitchen and predicted that allied forces in Iraq would be begging to be taken home as a result of an Intifada. He called for the adoption of the Cairo Declaration Dec. 2002. to build bridges to connect all the various worldwide movements who are concerned about the state of the world so that we can end wars and change the system.

Nicola Bullard spoke on behalf of Focus on the Global South. She claimed there were big protests across Asia on Feb.15th 2003 and that there had been a three day conference to analyse and discuss priorities for an International peace movement in Jakarta, Indonesia. The product of which is "The Jakarta Peace Concensus" document. [www. Focusweb.org]

A Belgian delegate referred to a court case against U.S.Army General Franks and other as yet unidentified soldiers, filed by twenty victims of war crimes committed by U.S. troops during the recent war in Iraq. Access to the documentation [CD-Rom], the complainants and the International team of lawyers can be obtained through- info @stopuser. be [+32]499/40 93 17

Vittorio Angeletto organiser of the European Social Forum in Florence, Italy 2002. stated that we needed to link the war in Iraq with Neo Liberalism because, he argued all those who opposed war were not necessarily against Neo Liberalism. A social war as well as a military war was being conducted there was no difference between the bombing of Iraq and 30 million people dying of Aids. Our movement is not only about war but the future of the world.

Abdul Amir Raibi an Iraqi, wanted to talk about Iraq under occupation. He said the U.S.had led the war under false pretences, that they had destroyed the state of Iraq but not destroyed Saddam Hussein. He also stated support for the Jakarta Peace Concensus call for the establishment of an independent Iraqi congress. He referred to the emergence of 22 organisations in Iraq who were opposed not only to the regime of Saddam Hussein but to the occupation of their country. The organisations had consulted with each other to seek an independent political movement. He also stated that Iraq needed the support of the anti war movement and that the Iraqi people needed to know that people around the world supported them.

There were many other speakers. They came from Turkey, Spain, France, Germany, Sweden, Palestine, U.S.A., Ivory Coast, Ireland and the U.K.

The Demonstration began in Geneva at 6am on Sunday 1st June when the five main bridges across the river Rhone on the edge of Lake

Geneva were blocked by demonstrators. This had the effect of delaying the G8 conference by two hours as minor delegates and bag carriers were prevented from crossing the bridges to gain access to Evian.

The march itself began from the English Gardens on the bank of the lake at 10am. A huge and Colourful column headed for the Swiss/French border, just before which we were met by thousands of demonstrators who had set out from the French town of Annemasse. Together we passed through the deserted border control. Along the way the road had many bridges overhead which were full of well-wishing local people who applauded the march. Peace flags were evident in many apartment and office buildings.

It was more than a pleasant surprise to note that there were no police in sight from start to finish. However, during the evening in Geneva trouble did occur, but what I observed was in part due to the riot police charging around the town setting up blockades without any discernable reason. It certainly provoked the local youth who were up for a little bottle throwing. Yet there was damage to property and some looting. This was met with stun grenades and tear gas. It is unfortunate that a peaceful demonstration of 100,000 people can be undermined by a few idiots out to cause trouble.

All in all the demonstration was successful and there was clear evidence that further protests will continue to be organised around the world be they against war, poverty and injustice.

SALAAM SHALOM PEACE PACE PAIX

[Alan Newham, 09/06/03]

Defeating the Warmongers Means Giving Rise to Modern Arrangements

One of the features of the modern day anti-war movement, and this is increasingly apparent in the South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition and many other anti-war groups in the region, is the growing awareness that the anti-war struggle cannot be continued in the old way and that a fresh approach is called for. What is more significant is that this is not just some future prospect which is being called for but this fresh approach is something that is in the making. One of the greatest achievements of the work which has been carried out to date is that up and down the country there are numerous groups of activists thinking along the lines of finding this fresh approach.

In South Tyneside, and other districts in the region, there are now anti-war groups where nothing existed before. What is now becoming clear is that whilst before there were very few people who were prepared to meet to discuss and carry out activities after open war had finished now that is no longer the case. Whilst, the numbers of activists locally are still small, relative to the numbers that become involved in the movement when the threat of war is greatest, it is clear that a shift is taking place. This shift is being accompanied by a change in perceptions of the movement and in the thinking. Things are shifting from a conception of the anti-war movement as a pressure group aimed at persuading those in power to cease their warmongering activities to a conception of the movement that engages in serious discussion and actions as to how the people can empower themselves and to unite around a programme to defeat the warmongers once and for all.

This was very evident in the small conference that the South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition organised after the end of the Iraq war and at the beginning of the occupation of Iraq by US and Britain in May. One speaker reflected the seriousness of the work that our movement is undertaking for the future of humanity when he said “wars of the 21st century are in fact an all out assault on the rights of people around the world. “Rights” that must remain sacred if we are to subscribe to notions of civilised transaction, with a view to stability of our societies, ultimately leading to a life free from molestation, threat, and danger for all the human family.” Another stressed the importance of organising locally when he said. “We in the South Tyneside Stop The War Coalition should play our part. We should continue our efforts.” Another raised a vital question that “people have to do their own thinking and organising and create new arrangements to give this movement for peace permanent life.” And he elaborated his view that the movement should fight to establish an anti-war government. Another pointed to developing the Peoples Assembly along a truly democratic path that empowered people from below and also said the group should consider directly standing anti-war candidates in the public elections.

The important thing is that today people are seriously searching for ways to develop the movement in order to defeat the warmongers. There is also a growing realisation that the key to achieve this is to unleash the people’s initiative by organising in such a way that the people consciously participate in decision-making at every level. Defeating the warmongers means giving rise to modern arrangements.

Roger Nettlehip [July, 2003]

The Plot of ‘The Project’: A Review

The common world of public reality is shared by all. It has always been complex and difficult to understand. But it has now become so distorted by spin-doctors and other truth corrupters that one can witness large-scale public events and yet not be really sure, even at the most general level of factual truth, what is going on.

Some general-level factual truths about events in the USA on 11 September 2001: four civilian planes were apparently hijacked by people linked to the al Qaeda network, which is nominally led by Osama bin Laden; two of the planes crashed in the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre, New York; another plane crashed into the Pentagon, Washington; the fourth plane, which apparently was heading for the White House, Washington, crashed into the Pennsylvania countryside. Viewed on television, these events almost looked fictional and contrived. The swirl of disinformation - some deliberate, some accidental – that emerged from the rubble of that day of destruction soon added to the general confusions. Many specific factual claims about these events are – rather disturbingly – doubtful to varying degrees. No one is really sure what happened to any degree of precision, nor who was really responsible. But it is a matter of fact that thousands of people died or otherwise suffered in them, or as consequences of them. Most people, regardless of political persuasion, regard the deaths, suffering and destruction relating to the 11 September events as terrible. For some leading members of the present American government, however, they represented ‘opportunities’.

This word ‘opportunities’ does not have to be put into the mouths of Washington insiders by political opponents, or conspiracy theorists. It is a word they have used freely themselves. The U.S. national security advisor Condoleezza Rice, for example, said that the main purpose of the first meeting of the U.S. National Security Council, the

day after 11 September, had been: 'To think about how do you capitalize on these opportunities.' [New Yorker magazine, April 2002.]

While the apparent terrorist attacks were happening for anyone who wanted to watch them live on t.v.- or endlessly replayed afterwards – U.S. president George Bush was to be seen simultaneously talking to a group of schoolchildren in Florida, where his brother is governor. For most of the rest of that day his movements and whereabouts are uncertain. Rumour has him scuttling from bunker to bunker, mostly preoccupied with his own personal safety. Perhaps a more realistic – or even charitable – interpretation of his absence from public view is that he just did not know what he should do or say. Others did – and soon began to provide him with plots and script-lines they had been writing for more than a decade.

In 2000, a year before the violent events of 11 September, a 'think-tank' called the 'Project for the New American Century' published the latest of what had been a long-running series of policy statements. This one was called 'Rebuilding America's Defences: Strategy, Forces and Resources'. It was a grand sounding document by a grand sounding group, but was, in fact, essentially, a statements of the right-wing war-mongering prejudices of a small group of men, including: Richard Cheney, U.S. vice president; Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. defence secretary; Paul Wolfowitz, who is Rumsfeld's deputy; and Richard Perle, ostensibly a private businessman with oil, arms and media interests, in fact a major U.S. foreign policy decision maker with a direct 'hot-line' to the White House. In their 2000 document, these men called for a massive increase in U.S. arms spending, so that American could 'fight and win multiple, simultaneous, major theatre wars'. They acknowledge, however, that the American People were not then willing to support such action, nor to pay the taxes required to buy the military equipment and fund the wars. What was needed to change minds, they said, was 'some catastrophic and catalysing event – like a new Pearl Harbour'. It is actually rare to see such machiavellian calculations stated so openly. But it is a fact that these people put their aims - and one might even say hopes - quite openly on the public record – in advance of 11 September. The events of 11 September were indeed 'opportunities' for such people – something they had been waiting for ... for quite some time.

In 1992, in the aftermath of the first Gulf war, Cheney, then the older George Bush's defence secretary, and Wolfowitz, then, formally at least, quite a lowly U.S. government official, drafted a memo entitled 'Defence Planning Guidance', which was their strategic plan for the mid-1990s. It suggested the principle international aims of U.S. should be to 'establish and patent a new order' and to 'prevent the re-emergence of a new rival'. In problem areas, it recommended the use of 'pre-emptive-strikes', and the abandonment of broad-based multilateralist United Nations based styles of 'containment' diplomacy. No alliance was to be regarded as stable or long-term. They saw the U.S. as moving between 'ad hoc' alliances, 'often not lasting beyond the crises being confronted'. With what might be thought a sensational lack of diplomacy, the memo suggested potential 'rivals' as including Japan, in the Far East, and Germany, specifically, and the European Union, more generally, in the West. This document was 'leaked', and, perhaps unsurprisingly, provoked controversy when it was published in the press – so much controversy, in fact, that it was officially disowned by the then American government. A government spokesman said it was a piece of 'low level' speculation drafted by an 'idealistic' minor official in the defence department [presumably Wolfowitz] and that Cheney himself had 'not even seen it'. A few months later, however, when Bill Clinton was elected to replace the older Bush as president, Cheney owned up to being not only a reader but also a writer of the memo, and he and Wolfowitz proudly published it in a slightly revised version. They then left Washington: Wolfowitz went to an academic post at Chicago University, Cheney to a business posting with Halliburton, an oil, arms and media conglomerate, with which Richard Perle also had affluent associations.

Out in the cold politically speaking - but presumably not in terms of personal circumstances - these three men, along with Rumsfeld and a few others, set up their grand-sounding Project for the New American Century in the mid-90s. In a series of published statements, they fleshed out their 'vision'. It included the generally aggressive and wider-world stifling 'Wolfowitz Doctrine' of: 'Deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional and global role'. More specifically, they hawked a policy that endorsed a hard-line Zionist approach to the problems of Palestine – effectively rejecting the Oslo peace process from the start. Iraq they regarded as 'unfinished business', to be ended forcibly by the 'removal of Saddam's regime

from power’.

Although sidelined by Clinton – whom they regarded as a ‘usurper’ of the Republican Party’s ‘rightful’ place at the centre of power – these American right-wing warmongering zealots did - unknowingly perhaps at first - find an unlikely seeming ally across the Atlantic – the supposedly centre-left British prime minister Tony Blair - who had his own ‘project’, which he called ‘New Labour’.

Blair, Cheney, Perle, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, share a number of common ideas. One is a top-down approach to political decision making, in which a small ‘elite’ at the centre of power – presumably believing themselves possessing special ‘intelligence’ – make command and control decisions, which are then disseminated to the people by a force of spin-doctors using diverse public manipulation techniques – always in the name of ‘The People’, of course. Another is a distaste for patient styles of diplomacy – patience being a quality generally despised by those who prefer the quick fixes, crude them/us divisions, and absolute ‘conclusions’ of ‘military solutions’. Specifically they all disapproved of an approach to Iraq favoured by most of the U.N. – and, on the whole, by Blair’s ‘friend’ Bill Clinton - based on containment and gradual disarmament of Saddam’s tyrannical regime by weapons inspections and broadly supported resolutions. [This policy had many critics from both the left and right – but the paradoxical seeming present evidence – i.e. the absence of physical evidence of ‘weapons of mass destruction’ in Iraq - strongly suggests that it was working.]

In the absence of real and solid intelligence and understanding, politicians, and others, resort to rhetoric. There are styles of rhetoric that lead to war, and styles of rhetoric that might lead to more peaceful ways. Blair’s rhetoric, from almost the moment he came to power in 1997, seemed always leading towards a war against Iraq. It is difficult to review Blair’s use of words in relation to Iraq over many years without concluding that he actually did want Britain to go to war against Saddam’s regime. His mantra of ‘diplomacy backed by force’ as ‘the only’ solution to the situation in Iraq - first heard in a t.v. interview in 1997 – as well as his talk of his ‘absolute certainties’ in relation to such matters as claims about Iraqi possession of ‘weapons of mass destruction’ and its willingness to use them - led the way to the invasion of that country in 2003 by forces that included British forces. A

harsh interpretation of Blair's outlook is that he wanted a war against a known tyrant in order to bolster the image of himself as modern 'moral crusader' - and that he was willing to use every possible public manipulation device to get such a war. A slightly milder interpretation is that he did indeed favour the diplomatic U.N. route, but only because he believed it would lead to war eventually. A perhaps more charitable interpretation is that he played an elaborate and complex mind-game with himself and the British people – conning himself and others into believing that he and they wanted to pursue a peaceful route, but were being forced into a violent one by 'bogey-men' such as Saddam and bin Laden. But however one looks at Blair's mind, based on what he actually said, it does seem directed towards an aggressive war. He might never have admitted it openly – or even to himself - but he too seems to have been waiting for 'opportunities'.

Early in 2001, the younger George Bush replaced Clinton as U.S. president – after a dubious election victory, with many suspicions hanging over voting processes in Florida, where Bush's brother is governor. In February of that year, Bush entertained Blair at Camp David, Maryland. Blair was the first overseas leader to be granted a Camp David meeting with Bush. A few days before Blair travelled, an agenda was faxed to London from Washington. It included a foreign policy item typed in bold: **IRAQ**. What was actually agreed on Iraq by the two men at the meeting is uncertain. But widely reported remarks by Bush to Blair suggest that the two agreed to force Saddam into a corner where he could not 'cross any line or test our will'. A member of Blair's entourage later said of the meeting, anonymously: 'We realised that here was someone who was going to back with military force what we had been saying for years' [Observer, 16/03/03]. In other words, it seems reasonable to conclude that the plans to invade Iraq were made long before 11 September, but that pretexts were needed in order to act on them – 'opportunities' were required, in other words.

Opportunists usually work in devious ways, but their ways are not always mysterious – and sometimes they give their own games away. On 11 September 2001, Jo Moore, a middle-ranking press officer at the British department of transport, started circulating among fellow spin-doctors what was later widely reported as an 'infamous email', in which she said that that day 'was a good day to bury bad news'.

Jo later lost her job – possibly for giving too many of the tricks of her trade away. The ‘bad news’ she thought about burying personally on that day - when attention was distracted elsewhere - was just some relatively minor embarrassing matter of transport policy. Others, elsewhere, had bigger bodies they saw ‘opportunities’ to bury.

Bob Woodward of the Washington Post – and previously one of the reporters who helped to dig out details of the 1970s Watergate scandal – has compiled detailed reports of behind-the-scenes meetings in Washington in the immediate aftermath of 11 September. It is clear from his reports that the men behind ‘The Project’ saw ‘opportunities’ to bury some of their favourite bogey-men in the rubble of and fallout from that day. At a meeting of the National Security Council, Rumsfeld reportedly said: ‘Why shouldn’t we go against Iraq, not just al Qaeda?’ At a cabinet meeting, he argued that Iraq should be ‘a principal target in the war against terrorism’. He was backed up by Wolfowitz: ‘The U.S. would have to go against Saddam at sometime if the war on terrorism was to be taken seriously’. Not everyone present agreed. Traditional conservatives still favoured the ‘containment’ policy. For example, Secretary of State Colin Powell said at a cabinet meeting: ‘If we weren’t after Iraq before 11 September, why would we be going after them now, when current outrage is not directed against Iraq?’ This is a very significant statement, because it shows, quite clearly, that rational Washington insiders at that time did not make connections between Saddam and the events of 11 September. There was and is no evidence of such a link. The people of ‘The Project’, along with others, invented it – and it was then passed around the general public consciousness by the powers of suggestion and the swirl of ignorance and prejudice.

Beyond simplistic talk of a ‘battle between good and evil’, Bush still had very little to say for himself in the immediate aftermath of 11 September. As the weeks went on, however, his script was more and more overtly being written by the men of ‘The Project’. Rationality and caution were abandoned. Most notoriously, Bush branded three countries – which had no direct links with each other, and which, in truth, had ruling regimes that were, in criss-crossing ways, enemies of each other – Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, an ‘axis of evil’. He threatened that these countries and ‘other governments that shield terrorists’ had made themselves targets for U.S. attack. The first

attack came in Afghanistan.

In June 2002, speaking at a 200th anniversary event at U.S. military academy West Point, Bush effectively declared an endless open war by America on any other nation or group of people it defined as 'the enemy' at any given time – his so called 'war on terrorism'. He said containment and deterrence of overseas problems were now 'irrelevant' to U.S. policy. He claimed to have evidence – but produced nothing substantial to back up his claim—of 'terror cells in 60 or more countries'. He said: 'We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats before they emerge ... the only path to safety is the path of action.' Much of his speech was a blend of paranoid nonsense and dangerous warmongering. Most of the words had been composed by the men of 'The Project' over the previous decade.

While Bush was delivering this disturbing speech, Wolfowitz and the others were composing more words for future guidance. A decade after the first 'Defence Policy Guidance', they drafted an update – to cover the years 2004 to 2009. It was 'leaked' to the Los Angeles Times, and published in July 2002. The document recommended 'unwarned' attacks on 'the enemy', 'high volume precision strikes', and even included attempted 'justifications' for the use of 'mini-' nuclear weapons against 'hardened and deeply-buried targets'. The world was thereby forewarned - these men are in some ways not secretive about what they would like to see happen.

With such people directing its overseas policy, it is perhaps not surprising that America has been losing international friends at a speedy rate in recent years. Meanwhile, Britain is the American government's most high profile overseas supporter, but within Britain there is growing unease at British support for the present U.S. government scheme. Increasing numbers of people are troubled by how isolated Britain is becoming internationally because of its military support for the present American government. They are troubled that Britain has become too closely allied to a militaristic American government – which by the terms of its present policy is apparently contemptuous of allies anyway. [Remember: allies are to be picked up and dropped on an 'ad hoc' basis according to the words of the men of 'The Project']. They are also troubled to be seen as supportive

of a U.S. government that seems to want to stifle all popular 'aspirations' that do not tally with the interests of the big corporations, and which has little apparent interest in addressing deeper issues of world poverty and injustice. Above all else they are troubled that their country is tamely supporting an American government that is committed to an irrational paranoid 'war on terror', which is unjust in many particulars, and which is very likely to increase world instability long-term.

Meanwhile, in face-to-face meetings, telephone conversations, and other communications, Tony Blair continues to tell George Bush that Britain stands 'shoulder-to-shoulder' with the American government. When he says this, he speaks perhaps for himself and a shrinking band of personal supporters - not the British people.

Among the things Blair is 'shoulder-to-shoulder' with Bush about is presumably Bush's notion of the 'ripple effect' of his 'war on terror'. Bush explains it this way: a pebble is dropped in the water; it makes ripples; 'we focus on the first circle, then expand to the next circle, then the next'. [When he listens to this childish expansion fantasy, does Blair nod in understanding and approval?] In 'The Plot' of 'The Project', Osama bin Laden was in the 'first circle', Saddam was in the 'next circle' ... it is, at the moment, unclear who is in the 'next'. Some have noted the disturbing similarity between Bush's 'ripple effect' and the ideas of a previous generations of Washington 'hawks' – who poured over nuclear-weapon 'kill-circle' charts ... and contemplated the possibilities of 'winnable' nuclear wars.

[Philip Talbot, July 2003]

Peace and Justice Vigil

A selection of prayers from a peace and justice vigil held at All Saints, Cleadon, Saturday, 1st March, 2003. The event, attended by more than 50 people, was organised by the South Tyneside Churches Together movement and supported by *South Tyneside Stop The War Coalition*.

Lead me from death
to Life; from falsehood
to Truth; lead me from despair
to Hope; from fear
to Trust; lead me from hate
to Love; from war
to Peace. Let Peace
fill our hearts,
our world,
our universe.

[Jain community (Prayer of Peace Movement, 1981)]

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.

[Ancient Hebrew blessing (Numbers 6:23-24)]

The sins of the world,
such dreadful sins:
not just the personal sins,
but the solidarity of sin
greater than the total
of individual sins,
nuclear evil in endless fission,
O Lamb of God.

The sin of racial pride
that sees not the faith
that all men are divinely made,
nor the riches of the pigment
in portrait faces,
the same psychology
and religious search,
that each is the sibling
from whom Christ died.

The burgeoning greed
that never heeds the needs of others
involved in a merciless system,
looking only at profit and dividend,
the last possessions that cannot accompany us
at our last migration:
Take away these sins
O Lamb of God.

'The massive sin of war ,
millions of lives impersonally destroyed,
billions of pounds wasted
on weapons, bombs,
truth enslaved,
the hungry still unfed,
grief stalking unnumbered homes:
Weep over us, O Lamb of God.

The sin of the world,
alienation from thee
not just weakness
but evil intention,
organised and unrestrained
with its own momentum
leading to death;
O Lamb of God
take away this sin.

Begin with me,
O Lamb of God,
forgive my sins,
cleanse my heart,
disarm my will
and let me fight
armed with thy truth, righteousness and love
with thy cross of love incised upon my heart
O Lamb of God.

[Christian]

Give more than human wisdom, O Lord,
to those who now take counsel for the nations of the earth.
Across the divides of north and south,
east and west,
across the divides of culture and religion,
ideology and history,
grant a commitment to take away terrorism and anarchy,
and to establish a lasting commitment to justice and peace;
for you are the loving, merciful God for whom our souls long.

Guide us in the straight path,
the path of those whom you have blessed,
not of those against whom there is displeasure,
nor of those who go astray.

[Musil Surah I, The Fatilah or Opener]

All that we ought to have thought and have not thought.
All that we ought to have said and have not said,
All that we ought to have done and have not done;
All that we ought not to have thought, and have thought.
All that we ought not to have spoken, and yet have spoken,
All that we ought not to have done, and yet have done;
For thoughts, words and works, pray we, O God, for
forgiveness.

[Ancient Persian]

O god
let us be united;
let us speak in harmony;
let our minds apprehend alike,
common be our prayer;
common be the end of our assembly;
common be our resolution;
common be our deliberations,
alike be our feelings;
unified be our hearts;
common be our intentions;
perfect be our unity.

[Hindu Scriptures]

O God I fear thee not because
I dread the wrath to come; for how
can such affright, when never was
A Friend more excellent than Thou?
Thou knowest well the heart's design
the secret purpose of the mind,
And I adore Thee, light divine,
Lest lesser lights should make me blind.

[Abu-l-Husain al-Nuri]

Eternal god, whose image lies in the hearts of all people,
we live among peoples whose ways are different from ours,
whose faiths are foreign to us,
whose tongues are unintelligible to us.
Help us to remember that you love all people with your great love,
that all religion is an attempt to respond to you,
that the yearnings of other hearts are much like our
own and are known to you.
Help us to recognise you in the words of truth,
the things of beauty,
the actions of love about us.
We pray through the anointed one,
who is a stranger to no one land more than another,
and to every land no less than to another.

[World Council of Church]

Next National Demonstration



Second People's Assembly for Peace in London

Saturday, August 30, 2003, from 10:00 to 17:30, in Friends Meeting House, Euston Road WC1 (opposite Euston BR).



Our First Assembly raised the banner of Peace as Blair's Parliament preached War. The Stop the War Coalition is convening a second People's Assembly, with delegates elected from every community, to challenge Blair's War Lies, call for an end to the occupation and to bring UK troops home. More information will be placed on the website as it is available.



Organised by Stop the War Coalition

*Contact South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition
for details, E-mail: s.t.stop.war.coal@btopenworld.com*

Silence is Shame!

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