



“The Hutton Report” — a whitewash of the Blair government??



Lord Hutton

During the sitting of the Hutton inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the suicide of biological weapons expert, Dr. David Kelly, the persona of Lord Hutton and the demeanour he displayed during the Inquiry's sittings were constantly praised within the press. Such was the form of the proceedings and the evidence produced it was widely anticipated that Tony Blair would get, at the least, a real roasting when the Inquiry report was published. That widely-held view was the reason why the Judge's report utterly stunned the political and media community.

Tony Blair's government was exonerated of lying about the intelligence reports on weapons of mass destruction possessed by Iraq, before the launching of the war, and also regarding the public release of Dr. Kelly's name as the source quoted by a BBC reporter, in a report which alleged that the Prime Minister's office had hyped-up the intelligence reports of WMD in order to win the case for going to war against Iraq.

Instead of the political funeral of Tony Blair, the nation was instead watching his exoneration and those who had questioned his integrity were being harried to bow before him in repentance. Two of the BBC's top men were 'required' to resign. Gavyn Davies, and Greg Dyke, the Chairman and Director General of the BBC respectively, were out of office within 24 hours of the publication of the report.

Greg Dyke, who has expressed his rejection of some aspects of the Hutton Report, has promised a full response to it in the very near future.

But after the initial shock, a backlash of outrage began to mount. BBC staff congregated outside a number of their centres to protest at the unfairness of the Hutton Report. Lawyers began to ask questions about the setting up of this inquiry in which Blair's government set the parameters of the inquiry as well as picking the judge. Furthermore, questions were being asked as to why Tony Blair, a central figure in the whole matter, was not brought before the inquiry? The BBC is also asking why Lord Hutton made no mention of another BBC interview with Dr. Kelly which appeared to give support to Andrew Gilligan's radio report which is at the centre of the row. Andrew Gilligan too has resigned.

In his resignation statement he said of Lord Hutton's report: "It seeks to hold reporters . . . to a standard that it does not appear to demand of . . . Government dossiers." This is a key point since the dossier which persuaded the nation to go to war had a falsehood as its very heart!

Where are the WMD?

The inquiry made no reference whatever to the real matter at the centre of this whole rumpus — where are the weapons of mass destruction, the existence of which was deemed to be a direct threat to the UK and therefore justified the war with Iraq and the death of many members of the security forces?



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This matter is not going to go away and doubtless will provide a future opportunity to those seeking retribution for what they will consider unfair treatment at the hands of the Hutton Inquiry.

US changes its mind

President George Bush's National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, has stated that the US now knows that its intelligence reports on WMD were wrong. This echoes the comments of the former senior US weapons inspector, David Kay. He has said that the intelligence reports that Iraq possessed stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons were false. Robin Cooke, former Blair government minister, has repeated his call for Tony Blair to own up to the fact that he was wrong in going to war against Iraq, upon the basis of intelligence which reported WMD which now an increasing number of people, in a position to know, are saying do not exist. It is not over yet for Tony Blair.

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