

# Long-Awaited Chilcot Report Shows US and UK Had No Reason to Invade Iraq



By Claire Bernish | [Activist Post](#)

In a damning commentary on the rush to invade Iraq, Sir John Chilcot's inquiry found "diplomatic options had not" at the time "been exhausted. **Military action was therefore not a last resort**" – as then Prime Minister Tony Blair led the people of the U.K. to believe.

While the Chilcot [Report](#) proffers scathing insight into the circumstances surrounding the U.K.'s part in one of the most contentious invasions of a sovereign state in modern times, findings dually skewer then U.S. President George W. Bush's reckless rush to force military action.

"Military action might have been necessary later," the [BBC summarized](#) several key points found by the Inquiry, "but in

March 2003: There was no imminent threat from Saddam Hussein; The strategy of containment could have been adapted and continued for some time; The majority of the Security Council supported continuing UN inspections and monitoring.

“Judgments about the severity of the threat posed by Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction – known as WMD – were presented with a certainty that was not justified” and **“Intelligence had ‘not established beyond doubt’ that Saddam Hussein had continued to produce chemical and biological weapons.”**

Comprehensive in scope at [2.6 million words](#), the report covers the U.K.’s role in Iraq from 2001 to 2009, and includes preparations for the invasion, troop preparedness, the actual conflict, and the lack of forethought of the consequences – both in civilian and other casualties, as well as other repercussions – aggression would have on the country and region.

Chilcot investigated the nuanced codependent relationship between the U.S. and U.K. under the leadership of Bush and Blair, [paraphrased](#) by the *BBC*, “former prime minister Tony Blair overestimated his ability to influence US decisions on Iraq; and **the UK’s relationship with the US does not require unconditional support.**”

Though many expected the seven-year investigation to ‘whitewash’ widely-known mistakes in intelligence and support for the U.S. goal of “regime change,” Chilcot did not hesitate to keenly criticize the unjustified and heightened rush to initiate an all-out military assault – despite the report’s somewhat subdued language in doing so.

Nor does the report let either government off the hook for the enormity of the tragedy – in the civilian death toll, lack of planning for the aftermath in Iraq, nor in Blair’s capitulation to Bush’s bellicosity, despite lack of sufficient justification for war. Indeed, “despite explicit warnings, the

consequences of the invasion were underestimated,” as the report’s [Executive Summary](#) states.

While the findings severely undercut the total number of Iraqi civilian noncombatants killed – at least 150,000 by July 2009 – Chilcot did admit the figure’s shortcomings.

Further, the report notes despite warnings about the potential for an invasion to destabilize the region – and what that ensuing stability might mean far into the future – Blair (and thus Bush, without stating as much) pressed the case for invasion past the point of disputability.

Additionally, Blair’s previous reluctance to involve the U.K. militarily in favor of forcing the Iraqi leader to accept the return of U.N. weapons inspectors, the report found, vanished following his visit to Bush’s Crawford, Texas, ranch. As it [states](#):

Following his meeting with President Bush, Mr Blair stated that Saddam Hussein had to be confronted and brought back into compliance with the UN.

The acceptance of the possibility that the UK might participate in a military invasion of Iraq was a profound change in UK thinking. Although no decisions had been taken, that became the basis for contingency planning in the months ahead.

Flawed intelligence – the bulk of Bush’s justification for the invasion – should have been questioned by members of Parliament, but wasn’t, the report noted, adding the putative procedures determining legal justification for such an action were “far from satisfactory.”

Overall, the Blair-led government “failed to achieve its stated objectives.”

“If Tony Blair and other politicians responsible had told the

truth it [the Iraq War] never would have happened,” asserted Kate Hudson, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament general secretary and organizer of a massive protest, as [cited by RT](#). **“A country was destroyed, millions of innocent Iraqis were killed, British soldiers were killed, and terrorism has spread across the Middle East. Those responsible must now be brought to justice.”**

In the years following the effectively unjustified invasion of Iraq, countless advocates, activists, and policy critics have issued calls for the summary prosecution of members of the Bush and Blair administrations for war crimes and/or crimes against humanity. Whether or not the Chilcot Inquiry’s findings will add sufficiently to the rather stunning case in favor of doing so remains to be seen – as do other potential repercussions – though it’s widely [believed](#) the report doesn’t quite go far enough to do so.

Indeed, by not making a summary judgment on legality, a seeming paradox has been created. While any judgment concerning legal issues in the Iraq War must be undertaken in a court of law, the report’s open hinting there could mean for prosecution based on this evidence could be seen as allowing such proceedings – but contrarily could suggest the evidence to prosecute the politicians responsible isn’t sufficient.

Encompassing 12 full volumes – some 6,000 pages – the Chilcot Inquiry had been expected to take just two years – but instead took seven. Considering the sheer volume of information contained therein, it’s possible further revelations will become apparent in the days ahead.

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