

[Select Committee on Foreign Affairs](#) [Written Evidence](#)

Memorandum from Gareth Howell

1. For someone in possession of Sky Television including the Parliamentary Channel and Al Jazeera, and in possession of an enforced stay at home due to RTA on the British roads, I have probably grasped rather better than most Jo Publics, the complexity, and the simplicity, of the Decision to go to War in Iraq. Your detailing me with a number of postponed, and now cancelled, discussions on the question of the "War against Terror" allowed me to research your committee's interview of the Foreign Secretary with regard to the manoeuvrings of the UK at the security council, and Resolution 1441. I felt that the Rt Hon Jack Straw's reasoning was immaculate at all times, and that the procedure followed was the next best thing to a favourable security council resolution vote.

2. If the Prime Minister did make up his mind in August/September last year at Camp David as Claire Short suggests, and I believe that she is correct in this contention, then the wrong questions were being asked. If the Prime Minister and government persuaded the House of Commons to agree to a war on the basis of an amendment and substantive resolution, which provided for all shades and sympathies, other than the outright Arab sympathiser, then it is no harm done to the government, which wanted its way and not much good done to the reputation of parliament, who were persuaded in a thoroughly foolish way to discuss WMD *ad infinitum*.

3. Let us acknowledge that a large Nation of Nation states, which has its seat of military power and weapons of mass destruction (!) destroyed on one fateful day in late 2001, that nation is likely to imagine rightly or wrongly, that there are other states in the world which are now prepared to use WMD against civilian populations as the USA did in Japan in 1945, and that the world order has irrevocably changed.

4. Let us also acknowledge that the discovery that the tragedy of that day in 2001 allowed them to discover that it was one of their own former trained agents, a son of Saudi Arabia, who was the principal protagonist, and there was a perfect recipe for that Nation of Nation states to lash out fairly wildly at anybody who breathed a word against them.

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5. Don't let us look at all at the possibility, discussed by Washington bureaucrats, that this was a colonialist or imperialist campaign of perfectly clear identity. It may extend the power of the dollar as the only currency available in Iraq today but so what? The socialist groups in the UK are not the only ones who talk in such language.

6. The God given right of the US government to determine the complexion and identity of governments and leaders worldwide has been only slightly disputed for some time now, but to find a leader by proxy, such as Bin Laden calculated, gave much greater frustration, than the possibly laughable and unseatable Fidel Castro in Cuba.

MILITARY BASES AND SOVEREIGN STATES

7. There are three military US airforce bases in Saudi Arabia. As we recall from the OPEC stranglehold of the early 70's the Saudis had the power and still have the power to exert total chaos on the world oil markets. Thirty per cent of the oil on the international markets comes from the Kingdom; if it were turned of even out of whim, the world economy would be turned to chaos, lots or little, as the Saudis might have had the gift to choose. Within two days of the US forces approaching Baghdad, they began to build an air/military base North West of the city. An announcement in the press stated that the airbases of the US in Saudi were to be closed, which of course is as unlikely as the sands to run out in the Sahara desert. What is verifiable fact though is that the US government has another base in the area and quite close to Saudi Arabia from which to enjoy further freedom of Arabia. With regard to the rights of sovereign states it would be rather easier to make a local incursion into Saudi Arabia from a neighbouring country than it would from the country itself. Imagine the worldwide contempt for US bases in every home country if a US strike against a sovereign state were made from that state itself!! It is a most unusual circumstance to find a "Holy Terror" calling the tune worldwide for a few months after foul terrorist acts, but an even more unusual circumstance to commit destructive acts on a host nation state from the territory of that nation state itself.

8. Remarks such as these are highly speculative, and although I agree with the Member for Blaenau, Gwent in the debate of the 4 June 2003 that from the beginning to end the whole conflict has been about OIL, it is still begging the question not to discuss the meaning and deception of the expression developed in political parlance and jargon as WMD.

WMD

9. I have recently made a short and belated study of $E=Mc^2$ the illustrious Einsteinian formula which says that energy equals mass times the square of the constant where the constant is the speed of light. With such leaps of imagination the nuclear bomb came into being

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in the 1940's, but not everybody is aware, and certainly few parliamentarians, that a primitive nuclear device may be created using Heavy Water. Heavy water may be extracted from Sea water. It is there in the Gulf. It is not a dangerous substance except in so far as it is necessary to slow down the excessively fast movement of atoms which creates the reaction. To my understanding Heavy Water is part of a weapon of mass destruction. If I were a weapons inspector intent on playing up the importance of the job and playing politics too, if I found Heavy Water in somebody's backyard I would most certainly be able to report back to the powers that be and confide that the owner of the back yard had those weapons. However if I were quick, and I were the owner of the backyard, and I thought that the IAEA inspector/former chairman Hans Blix were going to cause trouble and catch me with the Heavy Water in my back yard, I think I know what I would do with it. "Pour it down the drain", and let it flow gently back to the Arabian gulf. To me this has been the most amusing aspect of the Parliamentary debate, that absolutely nobody to my knowledge has mentioned the details of nuclear devices and their simplicity.

OUTSPOKEN

10. Chairman you don't need me to lecture you or your committee on the rights and wrongs of the Campaign of the Scottish member who has been suspended from parliament Mr Jack Galloway, the eloquent Scottish member. I happen to believe that he was the only member who represented the Arab view effectively; I believe there are a good many British citizens of all religious persuasions who think the same. I do not want to devalue my comments above by making any such conciliatory remarks other than to say that Mr. Galloway's contention to me, outside your committee room 18 months ago that if I had any real feelings for the Arab cause, which I do on account of personal relationship, I would not go any where near a committee which is merely a puppet of government policy. I neither believe that your committee's work is just that. Mr Straw's evidence to you is always useful, but the appointment of an enthusiast for the orthodox synagogue after the last election to the Foreign Office suggested clearly that the Middle East would be the centre of Foreign office policy in these sessions.

Gareth Howell

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