

[Select Committee on Foreign Affairs](#) [Written Evidence](#)**Memorandum submitted by Edward Hibbert**

I write as a member of the public deeply concerned by the decision to initiate military action against Iraq at the time it was taken.

I am of the view that action might have been necessary at some point, but the only reason for it to occur when it did was the presence of an immediate and compelling threat. This was the stated justification. Without this, the lack of adequate humanitarian preparations for the possible consequences of action—for example, I believe DFID had an additional budget of £3.5 million for Iraq at that time—was deeply irresponsible.

Arguments that the worst predicted humanitarian disasters did not materialise are analogous to arguments that the money spent on house insurance is wasted because your house has not burnt down.

The key question, then, is whether there was such a threat. The failure to find any significant weapons of mass destruction creates a very strong presumption that there was not. The intelligence material at the Government's disposal is central to this issue—it appears to either have been significantly wrong, or to have been mis-represented. The controversy concerning the accuracy of material which was published (such as the attempts to obtain nuclear materials) suggest the former.

At the time, it was argued that intelligence could not be published in full for fear of reprisals against intelligence sources. With the change of regime in Iraq this argument no longer applies. I would strongly urge you to push for full publication of the intelligence on which the decision to go to war was taken.

On a separate point, again as a member of the public, I think your inquiry needs to interview the Prime Minister. I appreciate this may be difficult to achieve within your remit. But in the end, it was his decision, based on the information he had seen, and on his judgement. Without understanding those factors, your inquiry may be seen by many to be dealing only with the periphery of the matter.

None of the above is particularly novel. But it is important. I wish you the best of luck with your enquiry.

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Edward Hibbert

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