

## Who Is The Liar?

Hans Blix has said that Tony Blair was like an **insincere salesman** when he based his case for war on Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Mr Blix is getting very close to calling Tony Blair a liar. Like Mr Gilligan did – an allegation that was thoroughly refuted by the Hutton Inquiry. Unfortunately, Mr Blix's remarks are beyond Lord Hutton's remit, so let us review who has actually told the truth and who has not.

Tony Blair said that Iraq had **programmes** for making WMD:

In recent months, I have become increasingly alarmed by the evidence from inside Iraq that despite sanctions, despite the damage done to his capability in the past, despite the UN Security Council Resolutions expressly outlawing it, and despite his denials, Saddam Hussein is continuing to develop WMD and with them the ability to inflict real damage upon the region and the stability of the world.

David Kay and his team have discovered that Iraq **had programmes for making WMD**. So Mr Blair was telling the truth.

Hans Blix was instructed by the UN Security Council to investigate Iraq's WMD programmes and report his findings to them. He found, but **did not report**, that Saddam had a variety of rocket warheads apparently configured to scatter "bomblets" filled with biological or chemical agents. This was a blatant lie of omission.

Mr Blair, by contrast, told no lies.

Sun, 02/08/2004 - 22:31 | [digg](#) | [del.icio.us](#) | [permalink](#)

## Truth and Lies

"This was a blatant lie of omission"

Intriguing thought, this. I must question it in search of truth. Does that say that if everyone says nothing, that everyone is committing a blatant lie of omission? Or if everyone qualifies everything they say, then is everyone telling the truth? No matter how confabulated?

Not taking sides here, for the rational reasons noted below. Not

sure what to say about this, so i won't say Blair or Blix. I'll listen to both, taking each statement and weighing it on its merits, but not dwelling on it fixedly.

I tend to think rather than "told no lies" or "this was a blatant lie of omission", the key question is the search for larger truth. Trying ot look for that, rather than the search for who might be lying, comissionally or omissionally.

The search for truth also I would think involves intent to find it. I am less concerned with wording of a sentence, or lack of wording, then i am with the reality of what is.

The reason that I mention this is that it is all to easy to get caught up in sides, "who" said what, and "who" didn't say what, and "who" is telling the truth, and "who" is lying. Take every statement with a grain of salt, and assemble the best findings that we have to work with. Humans are fallible especially with words, and especially when the conclusion is drawn about the meaning of words after the fact of speaking them. If we pick apart sentence structure or pregnant pauses, we're dealing only in minutiae of two sides with allegiances or camps, justifying their own precise wordings, arguing a non-essential point or points in phrasing a sentence or two, well after the fact. Sometimes that entirely confabulates the essential issue.

Seeking truth. What is the reality of what is?

by a reader on Tue, 02/10/2004 - 16:34 | [reply](#)

## **Blix v. "everyone"**

reader<sup>a</sup>16:34,

You lost me somewhere in all that, but as regards your opening sentences, the difference between Blix not reporting banned items and "everyone" saying "nothing" in a general abstract situation, is that Blix was charged with a positive, specific task, while (lacking other information) "everyone" is not.

Blix's task involved at its very core verifying Iraq's compliance (or non-compliance) with UN Resolution 1441; this was the *raison d'etre* of Blix's responsibility, it's the only reason we even know his name in the first place. Given this responsibility, for him to "bury", even subtly, items which are wholly germane to the issue of Iraq's compliance or lack thereof (I would have mentioned the banned UAV Blix found rather than the "bomblets" thing, but very well), is indeed a "lie of omission". Unlike "everyone", Hans Blix had a *positive responsibility* to report such things.

The real problem of course is that Blix approached his job as if his responsibility was not to very Iraq's compliance or lack thereof with Resolution 1441 at all, but rather, to prevent a war between the US and Iraq. This was dishonesty of a rather different sort.

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by a reader on Tue, 02/10/2004 - 20:18 | [reply](#)

## Blurred Responsibility

It would help a lot if a person charged with a specific responsibility would stick to talking about what they are responsible for; too often, a limited authority and specific knowledge of one area is used to cast wide aspersions. This is where Blix goes wrong I think. If he has something specific to say about the inspection process in Iraq, that which he knows, fine. If he is using his stage as a bully pulpit to speak about foreign and domestic policy, that is neither his field of knowledge, nor can it even be a credible role for him.

Blix is no more credible to me than the average person on the street when it comes to spouting off about world politics. Tony Blair, on the other hand, is sticking to his area of responsibility, the office he was elected to, the office he holds, and the carefully considered weighty decisions of that office.

by a reader on Wed, 02/11/2004 - 00:12 | [reply](#)

## Lies were necessary

Er - I don't see how your quote illustrates your point. In your quote, TB states:

"Saddam Hussein is continuing to develop WMD"

This is ambiguous. It could mean that he has WMD and is continuing to develop them or that he is just developing them. Reading the rest of the document we find statements like the following:

"As a result of the intelligence we judge that Iraq has:

1. Iraq has continued to produce chemical and biological agents;
2. Military plans for the use of chemical and biological weapons, including against its own Shia population. Some of these weapons are deployable within 45 minutes of an order to use them...."

It is clear, then, that Tony Blair is not referring to programmes in the sense of having plans to develop WMD, but not actually having WMD. Rather he thinks that Iraq has WMD and is continuing to develop them.

The US and British government \*had to\* lie about WMD in order to drum up enough support for the war among people that mattered (e.g., congress). The real reasons for the war were as follows:

1. To send a message to a post-911 world that belligerent dictatorships will no longer be tolerated.
2. To bring freedom and democracy to the people of Iraq.
3. To realise Iraq's full potential as an oil producer (this very important reason is not defended nearly enough by supporters of the war).

4. To secure military bases in the Middle East

5. To better ensure the flow of intelligence from the Middle East.

It would have been just too hard to sell all these (good) reasons for war. So, they were made secondary.

by a reader on Wed, 02/11/2004 - 04:12 | [reply](#)

## had to lie

reader<sup>@</sup>4:12 writes,

*The US and British government \*had to\* lie about WMD in order to drum up enough support for the war among people that mattered (e.g., congress).*

The U.S. Congressional vote authorizing war against Iraq occurred in October 2002. Kindly point out which lies about WMD you think the U.S. government (British government is irrelevant here) to its Congress prior to that vote. Thanks,

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by a reader on Wed, 02/11/2004 - 06:00 | [reply](#)

## had to lie

Difficult to know where to begin.

Read this speech by George Bush given in early Oct 2002, prior to the Congressional vote:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html>

Here are some extracts:

"We've also discovered through intelligence that Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disperse chemical or biological weapons across broad areas. We're concerned that Iraq is exploring ways of using these UAVS for missions targeting the United States."

The Director, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, US Air Force, did not agree with this view.

"We know that Iraq and al Qaeda have had high-level contacts that go back a decade. Some al Qaeda leaders who fled Afghanistan went to Iraq. These include one very senior al Qaeda leader who received medical treatment in Baghdad this year, and who has been associated with planning for chemical and biological attacks. We've learned that Iraq has trained al Qaeda members in bomb-making and poisons and deadly gases."

Intelligence agencies knew of tentative contacts between Saddam and al-Qaeda in the early 1990s, but found no proof of a continuing relationship.

"Saddam Hussein is harboring terrorists and the instruments of terror, the instruments of mass death and destruction."

"The evidence indicates that Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program. Saddam Hussein has held numerous meetings with Iraqi nuclear scientists, a group he calls his "nuclear mujahideen" -- his nuclear holy warriors. Satellite photographs reveal that Iraq is rebuilding facilities at sites that have been part of its nuclear program in the past. Iraq has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes and other equipment needed for gas centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons."

CIA and UN reports up through 2002 showed no evidence of an Iraqi nuclear weapons program. And it was established at the time that the aluminium tubes could not be used to enrich uranium. Yet the lie that they could be was recirculated for months. There was no faulty intelligence here.

"If the Iraqi regime is able to produce, buy, or steal an amount of highly enriched uranium a little larger than a single softball, it could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year."

This is just scare-mongering.

"Knowing these realities, America must not ignore the threat gathering against us. Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof -- the smoking gun -- that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud."

Again, scaremongering that had no basis in fact.

"Before being barred from Iraq in 1998, the International Atomic Energy Agency dismantled extensive nuclear weapons-related facilities, including three uranium enrichment sites"

The inspectors were withdrawn - not barred - in 1998 when it became clear the Clinton administration was going to bomb Iraq.

BTW, don't throw the Oct NIE back at me in response. Or, if you do, please use the declassified version, and also read:

<http://www.ceip.org/files/pdf/Iraq3FullText.pdf>

by a reader on Thu, 02/12/2004 - 01:39 | [reply](#)

## **It's simple really...**

From [http://www.meib.org/articles/0311\\_iraq1.htm](http://www.meib.org/articles/0311_iraq1.htm):

"The eradication of WMD was always an important part of the Administration's strategy, but it was (and is) far from being the whole. And this fact was never hidden, although the WMD piece was publicly much more prominent than were the larger, strategic elements. This was hardly surprising, since the Administration was trying to give potential allies (e.g., Germany, France) something they could endorse, and the destruction of Iraqi WMD was a far easier goal for the Europeans to support than a proposal for sheer

US power projection would have been.

Still, the decision to be relatively coy about the strategic goals of Operation Iraqi Freedom carried a risk: If WMD were not found, there would be some explaining to do. When the decision to emphasize WMD was made, this risk seemed relatively low. In retrospect, it was not."

by a reader on Thu, 02/12/2004 - 21:43 | [reply](#)

### **the lie of omission was from ...**

the lie of omission was from Blair or certainly from his ministers who knew the 45 minute claim did not threaten the UK as claimed in the media but only related to battlefield weapons.

Although since the 45 minute claim was itself found to be bogus then its moot.

In contrast Blix DID mention the so-called "bomblets" which may or may not have been intended to scatter weapons, many items are dual-use in that way and of course we have never found the chem/bio weapons we speculate that could deliver.

by a reader on Fri, 02/27/2004 - 13:14 | [reply](#)