

Comment from builder of bombed pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum:

Britain's record on Sudan highlights hypocrisy over Iraq

Tom Canarffin
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The following observations were submitted by Tom Canarffin, who built the Al-Shifa Pharmaceutical Factory in Khartoum, Sudan, that was bombed by the United States in 1998 on the false pretext that it was making a chemical component of nerve gas. Canarffin subsequently worked as technical manager for the Baaboud family, which owned the factory, and has travelled extensively throughout the Middle East.

I am just a simple engineer, with simple principles. I endeavour to see what I see and only quote and specify what I can verify. I have winced at every step that Britain's Prime Minister Blair has taken, as he dictatorially runs this country towards war.

The word "moral", used as the reason for this slide into an abyss of world conflict that will persist for decades to come I cannot let pass without comment.

Let us examine past events in order to see what Blair's interpretation of "moral" is:

In 1998 a non-aggressive state, Sudan, had a number of missiles fired against it, destroying their principal medicine factory. This factory produced 50 percent of the medicine used for the treatment of the serious health problems in this impoverished third world country, putting many thousands of lives at risk.

Both American and British leaders and their advisors insisted that this was correct and justified as they had intelligence which proved without doubt that this medicine factory was actually producing precursors for chemical weapons—something that was never and could never be found.

But wait, what about the first hand knowledge of engineers and technicians in the UK, US, Jordan and

Italy that could have proved otherwise? Also the respective individuals who could have taken any interested party at any time to the facility, to let the so-called "informed" leaders know the truth? Mr Blair, the then minister of defence and the Foreign Office preferred to discredit those who knew the factory intimately and who had lived and worked with the principal financiers and builders of the complex.

Something that was not publicised very much at that time, was what was in the Al-Shifa factory at the time of the bombing. The United Nations had placed an order with Al-Shifa for the supply of 60,000 litres of anti-parasitic medicine for Iraq. This was done under the UN policy of humanitarian aid for oil. The major part of this order was ready for dispatch at the time of the bombing, something that the US and British governments were fully aware of.

Was that morally correct?

It is said that the principal objective in a war against Iraq is to destroy the weapons of mass destruction of a nation who has aggressively occupied other nations and territories. But Wait! What about Israel? They have weapons of mass destruction and have occupied Palestinian territory for decades, definitely more than 12 years, without incurring sanctions: Non compliance with UN resolutions: Constant further advancement into Palestinian lands: Persistent aggression towards its neighbours, and still no sign of the 140,000 troops going to sort that out.

The leaders of both Syria and Jordan have pointed out to Mr Blair the negative outcome of his policy would be with respect to the attitude of the Arab people to

Britain, a warning that was reinforced by the killing of a BAE employee in Saudi Arabia on February 21.

I have lived and worked in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Eritrea and Ethiopia for a number of years. Having many friends and acquaintances from all walks of life in these countries, I can only say that even before September 11 there was an upsurge of anti-American sentiment. I could take you to a number of rich and highly influential Saudi and UAE families, who contributed to Hamas and other Palestinian causes. Added to this now is the ground swell of anti-American and now anti-British feeling amongst ordinary Arabs. This is totally different to 10 years ago when the “Brit” was taken as the person of discretion and the one to trust in all situations. Mr Blair you have alienated us from the Arab world for many years to come and made our work there unsafe.

It is said that America has no colonial aspirations towards Iraq. Why then has there been internationally publicised, American sponsored seminars over the last few months on the opportunities in “the liberated Iraq after March 2003”? Who are they to pre-sell the spoils of war from a country that is definitely not theirs?

The evidence put forward by the powers that be, justifying a war in Iraq, would be thrown out by any respectable court of law. The high school thesis put forward as Britain’s own intelligence brief on Iraq would warrant a technical or professional person being struck off by his professional body. Not so politicians—they seem to gain points by indiscretion and misrepresentation.

In a court of law Mr Bush would be convicted of premeditated murder, as that is what he is planning by sending in his hit men and boasting to the rest of the world about it.

When Mr Blair says “trust me” or “this is morally correct” or “I promise you”, any British person will reply, “Wait a minute Mr Blair! Talk is cheap and your talk no longer has value. Please leave the stage.”



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