

Britain: mother of soldier killed in Iraq slams government

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The mother of the 60th British soldier to die in Iraq has denounced the Blair government for allowing her son to die in its “war for oil.”

Royal Highland Fusilier Gordon Gentle, 19 years old, was killed on Monday, June 28. On his first active posting after completing his training in April, Gentle was killed when the army Land Rover he was travelling in drove over an improvised bomb whilst on routine patrol in the southern city of Basra. Two other soldiers travelling with him received non-life-threatening injuries.

Speaking from the family’s home in Pollok, Glasgow, Gentle’s mother Rose told of her devastation at losing at her only son, and her anger at the government for sending him to Iraq in the first place.

She had been at her cleaning job when she received a phone call telling her an army representative, Major Willie Shaw, had arrived at her home. When she returned, Shaw told her that Gordon was dead. The family had been decorating his room ready for his expected leave just a fortnight later.

“I have lost my only son,” Rose said. “But I am so proud of him. He was too young to be sent out there. He was just a boy. It hasn’t really sunk in yet that he is gone. I just want my boy back.”

She asked, “Why don’t Tony Blair and [Defence Minister] Geoff Hoon send their own families out to Iraq? My son was just a bit of meat to them, just a number. They don’t care about him, all they’re worried about is the next election.

“This is not our war. My son has died in their war over oil and they haven’t even taken the trouble of picking up the phone and saying they’re sorry for our loss.”

The family condemned the Ministry of Defence for sending a teenager with just three months in the army

to Iraq. Gordon’s sister, Pamela, said, “They were too quick in sending him there. He didn’t have enough training.”

The young soldier’s uncle, also named Gordon, added, “It’s disgusting the way they’ve treated us. Poor Gordon was just fodder to them.”

The family has said they were given barely any time to digest the news of Gordon’s death before his name was released to the newspaper. They are still awaiting news of when his body will be flown home for burial.

Gordon’s death came just one hour after the US administration, with the support of Prime Minister Tony Blair, brought forward the so-called “transfer of sovereignty” in Iraq by 48 hours.

Plans to bring forward the date for the unelected puppet government to nominally take control of Iraq had been concealed from most of the world, and from the Iraqi people themselves. The formal hand-over ceremony was held before a tiny group of selected guests, behind the heavily fortified walls of the US occupation authorities’ headquarters. No prior public announcement was made of the supposedly “historic” moment.

At the NATO summit in Istanbul, photographers captured the moment when Bush, having received notice that the ceremony had gone ahead, turned to Blair and, for reasons not known to the rest of the gathering, shook hands to congratulate themselves on a job well done.

Later, Bush claimed that the decision to bring forward the transfer was a sign of confidence and strength.

In reality, it is the outcome of the growing national opposition faced by the occupying forces, which no amount of chicanery will forestall. In the meantime, Blair is preparing to forfeit the lives of numerous others

like Gordon Gentle—not to mention those of many more Iraqi civilians. Reports indicate that the British government will shortly announce the despatch of a further 3,000 UK troops to Iraq.



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