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Heaven's Gate

By Chris Floyd

07/01/05 "Moscow Times" - - This week, President George W. Bush gave a big speech "explaining" the Iraq war to the American people. It was the usual load of lying blather and false piety -- deeply, even murderously cynical. But there's no point in wasting a single thought over these clown shows anymore. Bush is a nasty little moral cretin fronting a gang of elitist thugs whose only concerns are loot and power. Nothing he says has the slightest credibility. Only his actions -- crimes soaked with human blood -- have any meaning or truth.

So let's deal in truth. Let's talk about crime. Specifically, the flagrant war crime committed by Bush and his comrade in moral cretinhood, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, in May 2002, as TomPaine.com reports. Yes, 2002 -- long before the ground invasion of Iraq in March 2003. The "Downing Street Memos" -- top-level British government documents whose authenticity has been confirmed by Blair's own office -- show clearly that Bush and Blair began a ferocious air war against Iraq in May 2002, despite the unequivocal ruling by Blair's lawyers that such a campaign constituted a clear act of military aggression: the "supreme international crime" for which the Nazi leaders were condemned at Nuremberg.

The avowed purpose of this bombing campaign -- openly admitted by U.S. military brass -- was to destroy Iraq's defenses in preparation for the long-planned ground assault. It began months before the U.S. Congress gave its rather vague approval for possible military action to enforce the disarming of Iraq's nonexistent WMD. And it had nothing to do with the "no-fly zones" maintained for years over southern Iraq by the United States and Britain, ostensibly to prevent Saddam Hussein from using aircraft to suppress Shiite unrest. (Strangely enough, the only time Saddam actually tried to use airpower against the Shiites, in 1991, he was given explicit permission to do so by America's leaders at the time: President George H.W. Bush and Pentagon chief Dick Cheney.)

Bush and Blair's secret air war against Iraq is perhaps the most blatant and indefensible aspect of their multi-headed war crime in Iraq. No amount of

contorted legal quibbling or weasel-worded readings of UN resolutions can justify such a large-scale military action undertaken without the approval -- or even the notification -- of Congress and Parliament. And the documents make clear that the Anglo-American leaders knew the air campaign was illegal -- as was the whole case for "regime change," which the memos admit was "weak" and unsupported by evidence.

But the memos reveal that Bush and Blair had already decided on war, during their April 2002 meeting at Bush's ranch in Crawford. No doubt the two Christian leaders -- who bray their faith in Jesus at every opportunity -- knelt in prayer together as they sealed their pact of blood. From that point on, the memos show, Blair and Bush ignored all concerns about legality, all questions about the shaky WMD evidence and the extensive worries of many insiders about the near-total lack of planning for the postwar situation. They sought only to "create the political conditions" for war, manufacturing public consent through slick, fear-mongering propaganda and, in the memos' most famous phrase, by "fixing the facts and intelligence around the policy" of aggression.

Thus, with full knowledge that they were following in the footsteps of the Nuremberg criminals, Bush and Blair began the war in May 2002, dropping hundreds of tons of bombs on Iraq over the next 10 months. Not only were they clearing the path for the coming invasion, but the memos show that the leaders also hoped to provoke Saddam into retaliating, thereby giving them a PR excuse for war: "self-defense" against Iraqi "aggression."

But Saddam, this "raging madman" lusting to destroy America with his fearsome weapons, did nothing. He sat meekly while his air and naval defenses were pounded. And here we see how the bombing campaign strips bare the Big Lie that drove the whole enterprise: the supposed threat of Saddam's WMD. The Crawford knee-benders never would have launched their war if they really believed Saddam might rain anthrax on Jerusalem or slip Osama a plutonium core. They knew, as his lack of response to the air assault proved, that the WMD threat was empty, that Saddam, their former ally, was a broken reed.

In fact, Saddam spent the months of bombardment frantically offering a virtual surrender: unhindered WMD inspections, free elections under international supervision, support for any U.S. position on Israel-Palestine, vast oil concessions. But these offers, negotiated through back channels with U.S. intelligence and leading neo-conservatives, were spurned by Bush. The New York Times reported in November 2003. The moral cretins wanted conquest, not disarmament or Iraqi freedom; they wanted the power and status given to "war leaders," as Bush himself told the family biographer, Mickey Herskowitz, in 1999, CommonDreams reports.

"One of the keys to being seen as a great leader is to be seen as a commander-in-

chief," then-candidate Bush told Herskowitz. "My father had all this political capital built up when he drove the Iraqis out of Kuwait and he wasted it. If I have a chance to invade ... I'm not going to waste it. I'm going to get everything passed that I want to get passed and I'm going to have a successful presidency."

Thus, by his own admission, Bush regards war -- slaughter, ruin, chaos and terror -- as the measure of success, the path to greatness. He sees blood as the prime lubricant for his rapacious domestic policies. He uses unprovoked military aggression to achieve his personal and political goals.

In what way, then, is he different from the moral cretins who were hanged at Nuremberg?

Annotations

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The Sunday Times, June 26, 2005

The Real News in the Downing Street Memo

Los Angeles Times, June 23, 2005

Two Years Before 9/11, Bush Talked of Invading Iraq, Says Ghostwriter

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Saddam's Desperate Offers to Stave Off War

The Guardian, November 7, 2003

The Case of the Last-Minute Offer

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The Iraq Avalanche Cannot Be Stopped

Informed Comment, June 24, 2005

How the Downing Street Memos Were Leaked

The Sunday Times, June 26, 2005

The Downing Street Memo Reader

Rolling Stone, June 22, 2005

From Memos, Insights Into Ally's Doubts About War

Washington Post, June 28, 2005

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