

treme fear. The only way to overthrow it was likely to be by massive military action. Saddam was worried and expected an attack, probably by air and land, but he was not convinced that it would be immediate or overwhelming. His regime expected their neighbours to line up with the U.S. Saddam knew that regular army morale was poor. Real support for Saddam among the public was probably narrowly based.

C reported on his recent talks in Washington. There was a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy. The NSC had no patience with the UN route, and no enthusiasm for publishing material on the Iraqi regime's record. There was little discussion in Washington of the aftermath after military action. . . .

The Defence Secretary said that the U.S. had already begun "spikes of activity" to put pressure on the regime. No decisions had been taken, but he thought the most likely timing in U.S. minds for military action to begin was January, with the timeline beginning 30 days before the U.S. Congressional elections.

The Foreign Secretary said he would discuss this with Colin Powell this week. It seemed clear that Bush had made up his mind to take military action, even if the timing was not yet decided. But the case was thin. Saddam was not threatening his neighbours, and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea or Iran. We should work up a plan for an ultimatum to Saddam to allow back in the UN weapons inspectors. This would also help with the legal justification for the use of force. . . .

Congressmen Seek Answers

This open letter to President Bush, dated May 5, requests immediate information concerning a leaked document in Britain, which indicated the existence of a secret Bush/Blair pre-war deal. It was signed by 88 members of Congress, led by Rep. John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.), Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee and Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus. The leak has essentially been acknowledged by the Blair government.

We write because of troubling revelations in the Sunday London *Times* apparently confirming that the United States and Great Britain had secretly agreed to attack Iraq in the summer of 2002, well before the invasion and before you even sought Congressional authority to engage in military action. While various individuals have asserted this to be the case before, including Paul O'Neill, former U.S. Treasury Secretary, and

Richard Clarke, a former National Security Council official, they have been previously dismissed by your Administration. However, when this story was divulged last weekend, Prime Minister Blair's representative claimed the document contained "nothing new." If the disclosure is accurate, it raises troubling new questions regarding the legal justifications for the war as well as the integrity of your own Administration.

The *Sunday Times* obtained a leaked document with the minutes of a secret meeting from highly placed sources inside the British Government. [See previous article.] Among other things, the document revealed:

- Prime Minister Tony Blair chaired a July 2002 meeting, at which he discussed military options, having already committed himself to supporting President Bush's plans for invading Iraq.

- British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw acknowledged that the case for war was "thin" as "Saddam was not threatening his neighbours and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea, or Iran."

- A separate secret briefing for the meeting said that Britain and America had to "create" conditions to justify a war.

- A British official "reported on his recent talks in Washington. There was a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy."

As a result of this recent disclosure, we would like to know the following:

1. Do you or anyone in your Administration dispute the accuracy of the leaked document?
2. Were arrangements being made, including the recruitment of allies, before you sought Congressional authorization to go to war? Did you or anyone in your Administration obtain Britain's commitment to invade prior to this time?
3. Was there an effort to create an ultimatum about weapons inspectors in order to help with the justification for the war as the minutes indicate?
4. At what point in time did you and Prime Minister Blair first agree it was necessary to invade Iraq?
5. Was there a coordinated effort with the U.S. intelligence community and/or British officials to "fix" the intelligence and facts around the policy as the leaked document states?

We have of course known for some time that subsequent to the invasion there have been a variety of reasons proffered to justify the invasion, particularly since the time it became evident that weapons of mass destruction would not be found. This leaked document—essentially acknowledged by the Blair government—is the first confirmation that the rationales were shifting well before the invasion as well.

Given the importance of this matter, we would ask that you respond to this inquiry as promptly as possible. Thank you.