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Chilcot and the End of the Anglosphere

By Justin Raimondo
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Do we really need a 2.6 million word report on how Bush's poodle, a.k.a. former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, allowed his country to be pulled into a conflict that claimed hundreds of British lives, thousands of American lives, and at least 150,000 Iraqi lives, while plunging the entire region into a maelstrom of terroristic chaos?

A good decade after being announced, the Chilcot report has finally been released, and what it shows is that the phrase "Bush's poodle" is blatantly unfair to poodles: after all, even a poodle is known to have gone off its leash every once in a while – but not Tony. Included in the report is a letter from the Prime Minister to Bush that, as Mark Hosenball reports for Reuters, lays the essential issue bare:

"In the very first sentence, Blair promised Bush: 'I will be with you, whatever.'"

"The inquiry report quoted a top Blair aide as saying that he and another adviser had tried to get the prime minister to drop the sweeping promise. But the aide told the inquiry Blair ignored their recommendations."

The rest of the letter laid out the possible complications that could – and did – arise in the wake of invasion and occupation of Iraq, and here Blair's qualms come out. But none of that matters because the first sentence obviates all possible objections and underscores what was and still is at stake: British sovereignty.

The neoconservatives who ginned up the Iraq war are enamored of the concept of the “Anglosphere”: Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States acting in concert as a stabilizing democratizing force on the world stage. Another variant of this schema is “Atlanticism,” i.e. a permanent military alliance between the US and Britain embodied in NATO as some kind of world police force. Indeed, the Atlanticists have their very own lobbying group, the Atlantic Council, which includes all the requisite foreign policy bigwigs united behind the idea that the United States and Britain have a moral responsibility to recreate the old British Empire, albeit with Washington rather than London its imperial epicenter.

This *New Statesman* essay traces the influence of the Anglosphere idea on the British conservative movement, counterposing it to the left’s vision of a Britain immersed in the European Union. You’ll note that both alternatives are essentially identical in that the British would renounce their sovereignty in favor of submergence in a larger entity. Independence isn’t an option.

Now that the British people have decisively rejected the EU, we can expect that this right-wing version of the same nonsense will rear its ugly head in “elite” circles. Which is yet more proof that these self-described “elites” just don’t get what is happening in Britain, and the world at large: the revival of nationalism, regionalism, and secessionism, as against the globalist daydreams of utopian world planners and world-savers.

What these folks refuse to understand is that the global trend is against globalism of any sort: in the US, nationalism is on the rise, as the unlikely victory of Donald “America First” Trump has made painfully clear to our panicked political class. In Britain, the victory of “Brexit” – led, in large part, by the insurgent United Kingdom Independence Party and Nigel Farage, its fiery spokesman – was a victory for “Britain First.” And on the continent, nationalist-populist movements are arising that threaten the supranational constructs erected by political elites, including not only the EU but also NATO. Secessionist movements, like the drive for Catalanian independence, are on the rise, much to the dismay of the globalists.

The Chilcot report shows the dangers of subordinating national sovereignty to some overriding concept: British intelligence passively accepted the clearly doctored “evidence” of Iraqi “weapons of mass destruction.” This was the operational corollary of Blair’s craven subservience to the Bush White House – although, as the massive Chilcot report is examined more closely, I’m sure we’ll find some instances in which the British improvised all on their own. You’ll recall, for example, that President Bush cited the British as the source for his assertion that the Iraqis had sought uranium to make a nuclear weapon from “an African nation” that turned out to be Niger. This was based on a transparently fraudulent bundle of documents, and the saga of the Niger Uranium forgeries is one of the enduring mysteries of the lies that lured us into war.

The Chilcot report also tells us that Blair was fully aware that the invasion of Iraq would increase the incidence and severity of terrorism, both in the region and in the West. British intelligence warned that terrorism would “increase in the event of war, reflecting intensified anti-U.S./anti-Western sentiment in the Muslim world, including among Muslim communities in the West.”

These warnings were ignored, naturally, because the neocons who were intent on regime change in Iraq and throughout the Middle East were and are fanatics, for whom the loss of human life and security is not only incidental but an *opportunity* for them to advance their agenda of militarism, domestic repression, and perpetual war.

When Ron Paul defied the (bipartisan) conventional wisdom during the 2008 Republican presidential debates and declared that jihadist terrorism is “blowback” for decades of Western intervention in the Middle East, he was viciously attacked by the clueless Rudy Giuliani and the usual array of neocons, who all declared he was through as a serious candidate. That proved not to be the case: indeed, that moment catapulted him to national prominence, and energized a grassroots movement that is still growing today. And what Chilcot shows is that the British intelligence community privately *agreed* with his view that they hate us for our policies and not our freedom. Yet the political class, both here and across the Atlantic, went ahead with their harebrained scheme to “democratize” the Middle East in spite of the risks and dangers it imposed.

No, we didn’t need a 2.6 million word report telling us what should be clear to any person with the least amount of common sense: that aggression invites retaliation. But the injured cries of phony remorse mixed with defiance and denial coming from the War Party are music to my ears, a concert of hypocrisy and brazen refusal to accept responsibility that will show anyone who cares to listen what I could’ve told you – and *did* tell you – from the first day of the war: that these people are monsters who have to be kept as far away from the levers of power as possible.