

**THE DOWNING STREET MEMO**, a British-government document on Iraq leaked in May to the *Sunday Times*, may be as close as the American public will get to a “smoking gun” implicating the Bush White House in manipulating this country into war. A July 23, 2002, memo (actually, the minutes of a British cabinet meeting) written by Matthew Rycroft, a Downing Street foreign-policy aide, appears to confirm what *Chronicles* maintained even before the ill-fated imperial adventure in Mesopotamia: The Bush White House desired a war with Iraq and was willing to twist, distort, even fabricate “evidence” to justify an invasion. And neither the White House nor Downing Street has denied the authenticity of the memo.

The key paragraph in the particularly infamous memo (one of a number of documents leaked to British journalist Michael Smith) reports on the impressions of “C” (Richard Dearlove, then head of MI6, the British intelligence service) after a visit to Washington. According to “C,” the White House viewed military action against Iraq as “inevitable.” President Bush “wanted to remove Saddam through military action” and to use the “conjunction of terrorism” and weapons of mass destruction (WMD’s) to justify war. The White House was so intent on war that “the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy.” “C” maintained there was “little discussion in Washington of the aftermath” of military action, implying that the Bush administration had no postwar plans for Iraq and no exit strategy. (The apparent lack of U.S. postwar planning was also mentioned in other leaked Downing Street documents.) Judging by Dearlove’s observations, the Bush administration was growing impatient and wanted to get on with the war, was willing to “fix” intelligence to justify “regime change,” and was not especially concerned with planning ahead.

Rycroft’s memo further reported that the United States was then contemplating two options for the coming war. The first, dubbed “generated start,” would involve a slow buildup of U.S. forces, a quick air campaign and a strike at Baghdad, something like the “shock and awe” operation that was eventually launched. The second seemed to point to possible

U.S. plans to provoke an incident to justify a “running start” option. In this option, the United States would use forces already in the region, launching an air campaign “initiated by an Iraqi casus belli.” In the meantime, the Pentagon “had already begun ‘spikes of activity’ to put pressure on the regime” months before Congress authorized military action in October 2002.

As related in the British memos, at least some U.K. cabinet members advised against a rush to war. British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw thought it “clear that Bush had made up his mind to take military action” but called the case for war “thin.” The U.S./U.K. coalition needed a pretext for war since Saddam was “not threatening his neighbors” and his WMD capability “was less than that of Libya, North Korea, or Iran.” These are important admissions, since both British Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Bush cast the alleged Iraqi threat in almost apocalyptic terms before the war. (President Bush, for instance, told reporters in September 2002, that Iraq could launch a chemical- or biological-weapons attack in 45 minutes.) Straw suggested posing an ultimatum to Saddam on allowing U.N. weapons inspectors back into Iraq. Such an ultimatum would “help with the legal justification” for war, as Saddam would likely refuse.

In another leaked memo from March 25, 2002, Straw wrote that there was “no credible evidence” linking Iraq to Osama bin Laden or September 11, a connection the Bush White House was alleging at the time to manipulate U.S. public opinion. And what would come after regime change? Again, Straw contradicts the public line of the war party, writing that installing a democracy in Iraq seemed highly unlikely. Straw wrote that Iraq “has NO history of democracy. No one has this habit or experience.”

True, the Downing Street memos show us only what British-government officials were thinking. We have no equivalent from the White House. Nevertheless, when taken together with the mass of material readily available to anyone curious enough to log on to the internet, it seems clear that the White House manipulated this country into war.

What’s missing in all this is the question of Bush’s motivation. Why did this

president personally want a war with Iraq? Bush was apparently obsessed with Iraq long before he became president. During the 2004 election campaign, journalist Russ Baker interviewed the *Houston Chronicle*’s Mickey Herskowitz, who worked with Bush on a ghostwritten memoir (*A Charge to Keep*). Herskowitz told Baker that Bush “was thinking about invading Iraq in 1999 . . . He said, ‘One of the keys to being seen as a great leader is to be seen as a commander-in-chief.’ And he said, ‘My father had all this political capital built up when he drove the Iraqis out of Kuwait and he wasted it.’ He went on, ‘If I have a chance to invade . . . if I had that much capital, 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.’” According to Baker, White House communications director Karen Hughes eventually took charge of the project, and Bush staffers took Herskowitz’s notes and tapes of conversations with Bush.

Herskowitz, Bob Woodward (*Bush at War*), and Richard Clarke (*Against All Enemies*) have all told similar stories regarding Bush’s predisposition toward war with Iraq. It’s likely that the pro-Israeli dispensationalist views of Bush’s evangelical Christian Zionist supporters (and the Likud lobbyists in his administration) played a role in his intent to go to war. The sheer fun of imperial games and military adventures, too, may have been more than Bush II could resist. And the oil lobby may have made arguments for the “strategic” value of Iraq. If what Herskowitz claims is true, however, it was old-fashioned political cynicism that did the trick for “W.” Perhaps he and Karl Rove were made for each other.

—Wayne Allensworth

**GUANTANAMO BAY** is the subject of continuous debate. Can the United States detain indefinitely members of the Taliban captured in Afghanistan, or Al Qaeda insurgents captured in Iraq, at our military base in Cuba? What sort of interrogation measures are permissible by international law in order to obtain information to protect Americans from the continuing threat of terrorism? What rights, under international law and treaties, are the detainees entitled to? No one

knows the answers to any of these questions, because they are matters of first impression. We have never been engaged in a struggle quite like this one; we have no treaties with the terrorists; and, while particular protocols, such as the Geneva Conventions, govern the treatment of prisoners of war declared by sovereign countries, there is no authoritative pronouncement from the U.S. Supreme Court regarding treatment of the Gitmo detainees. Some lower courts have suggested that the detainees are entitled to some form of "due process," but no one knows precisely what that means.

As might be expected, given that some of the detainees were bound, sooner or later, to find legal counsel and bring lawsuits, the Bush administration has been fairly careful, as events in wartime go. The detainees appear to have food of at least as high a quality as the soldiers who are their caretakers; they are allowed to keep copies of the Koran; they have medical treatment available; and, apparently, none have yet died as a result of their treatment in captivity. Commentator Michelle Malkin reported that "[e]very single detainee currently being held at Guantanamo Bay has received a hearing before a military tribunal," where detainees may contest the facts on which their classifications as "enemy combatants" are based. "As a result of those hearings," according to Malkin, "more than three dozen Gitmo detainees have been released." These status hearings are apparently comparable to the requirements of the Geneva Conventions and appear to be fully consistent with the Supreme Court's recent *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld* decision, which held that, in the case of U.S. citizens detained in military custody, due-process requirements, such as hearings and an opportunity to contest one's detention, must be provided. This is probably more than any other similarly situated country has done to secure the rights of her sworn fateful enemies.

Still, the critics of the Bush administration's conduct have not been mollified. In the most interesting instance, the senior senator from Illinois, Richard Durbin, took to the Senate floor on June 14 to read from what he claimed was an account of interrogation at Gitmo recorded by an FBI agent. Some detainees had been shackled, the agent reported; sometimes, the air-conditioning was turned off, rendering cells too hot, and sometimes it was turned up, rendering them too cold; rap music was played in-

cessantly to soften up detainees to get information out of them. In words that he soon came to regret, Durbin declared: "If I read this to you and did not tell you that it was an FBI agent describing what Americans had done to prisoners in their control, you would most certainly believe this must have been done by Nazis, Soviets in their gulag, or some mad regime—Pol Pot or others—that had no concern for human beings. Sadly . . . this was the action of Americans in the treatment of their prisoners." Durbin proceeded to call for an investigation.

Instead of launching an investigation, however, the senator's comments ignited a firestorm. The obvious points were gleefully made by Republicans: Hitler, Stalin, and Pol Pot had killed tens of millions, and this doesn't exactly compare with turning the air-conditioning on and off. Durbin also touched the rhetorical third rail in American ethnic politics, since no one is now permitted to invoke the holocaust except to protest the holocaust. After Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley (one of the few sensible moderate voices in the Democratic Party) castigated Durbin for his Nazi comparison, and after a week of refusing to back down, Durbin went back to the Senate floor and did the requisite tear-filled, voice-choking, crow-consuming apology.

Wholly apart from the problem of whether there is any law that governs what we do in terrorist detentions, and whether what we are doing is necessary in a struggle of this kind, it does appear that the President's critics have yet to find an acceptable critical political vocabulary to analyze the War on Terror.

—Stephen B. Presser

**TWO WOMEN MARINES** and a female Navy petty officer were killed, and eleven were wounded, when their convoy was ambushed on the night of June 23 in Fallujah. The Pentagon took several days to confirm the casualties, and media coverage was thin. If Americans took note of the tragedy at all, it was not to recoil (at last) at the horror of mothers, wives, and daughters dying on the battlefield. On the contrary, the single bloodiest day for American women in the Iraq war (the deadliest for American women in uniform since a kamikaze claimed the lives of six nurses aboard the U.S.S. *Comfort* in 1945) moved us one step closer to accepting women in combat as routine. Nearly 50 female American soldiers and

Marines have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. Over 300 have been wounded. At least ten American children have lost their mothers to the war. Contrast these figures with the total number of American female war dead during the entire Vietnam War: eight nurses.

Courageous journalists such as Brian Mitchell and organizations such as the Center For Military Readiness have presented enough evidence to choke an elephant that women are not equal to the rigors of combat and that further sexual integration of the Armed Forces will undermine our national defense. Their arguments are ignored by feminists, who, rather than confront the reality that the Armed Forces use softer physical-fitness standards for women than for men, speak of equal opportunity and American values. Marine Lt. Col. Sara Phoenix, currently serving in Fallujah, told *USA Today* that "The ideal of equality is not just about the right to vote or work. This notion that women are somehow not able to perform their jobs in the military in a combat environment flies in the face of everything we say we value in the USA."

Does it? Americans value 19-year-old girls being raped and sodomized as prisoners of war and 23-year-old single mothers being torn apart by shrapnel? Where is the public outcry?

The groundwork for the events of June 23 began decades ago with legislation such as former senator Pete Dupont's sexual integration of the service academies. At the time, the idea of women on aircraft carriers, much less in the cockpits of fighter jets, would have been laughable. When women are at last assigned to submarines, Americans will not even notice.

Republican legislators take pains to point out that it is women in combat to which they object, not women in the military. The Iraq war has shown this to be a distinction without a difference. As the more practically minded Army Sergeant Rachel Deaton told *USA Today* of her assignment in Baghdad, "I could stay on base my whole time here and be in just as much danger," adding that keeping female soldiers out of the line of fire would require "keep[ing] us in Kuwait."

That is not likely. American law, for now, prohibits women from serving in combat-arms specialties such as infantry, armor, and artillery; however, the Army, determined to push the envelope, now "collocates" female soldiers in support specialties with forward-deployed combat units in Iraq. Since these support

jobs (mechanics for the most part) could be filled by men, we do not have to think too hard to determine the Army's intentions—particularly when, on June 16, to much fanfare, 23-year-old Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester was awarded our nation's third-highest award for valor, the Silver Star, for killing three Iraqis in a firefight. Sergeant Hester is a believer, telling the *Washington Post* that "Women can basically do any job that men can." Mission accomplished. The ghost of Jessica Lynch has been exorcised at last.

Sergeant Hester is not the first woman to be awarded a Silver Star. Two nurses earned the medal in World War II for heroism at Anzio. Hester is, however, the first woman to be decorated so highly for action in close combat. If purists are concerned with whether affirmative action might have influenced Sergeant Hester's award, they can compare her citation to Silver Star citations from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. The more important question is, "Why was a woman in a situation where she might earn a Silver Star in the first place?" The media attention lavished on Hester provides the answer. In the *Post's* words, "[t]he medal, rare for any soldier, underscores the growing role in combat of U.S. female troops in Iraq's guerrilla war, where tens of thousands of American women have served . . ."

—Christopher Check

**WHENEVER WASHINGTON** targets some poor, misbegotten country for "regime change," references to that unfortunate nation's media by Western journalists are usually preceded by the modifier *state-owned* or *state-controlled*. The inference is clear: These guys are shills, not real journalists. Yet the West has its own state-owned and controlled media: The Brits have the BBC, and continental Europeans all run the same show, the only difference being that the strings are a bit more visible. State-funded propaganda is a feature of American "journalism" as well, although here the effort to pretend that PBS isn't following a political line is more elaborate—and even convincing on occasion.

For example, during the Kosovo war, the *NewsHour With Jim Lehrer* (the PBS flagship news show) aired a segment on *Antiwar.com*—at a time when the Clinton administration was emitting a barrage of war propaganda designed to justify an attack on a country—Serbia—that represented no threat to the United States or

her legitimate interests. During the Iraq war, however, they did no follow-up story—and the reason seems to be a discernible shift in ideological tone.

No one denies that public television and National Public Radio have an unmistakably liberal tinge, but one aspect of the liberal tradition that allows other views to get through the door is at least a formal commitment to intellectual diversity and open discussion. Under the previous regime, while it was undoubtedly biased leftward, some truly dissident conservative or libertarian views that might otherwise not be heard somehow slipped through the cracks. I seem to remember that PBS once interviewed Joe Sobran during the Clinton years, an experience that both parties will doubtless not soon forget.

Under the new Bushian dispensation, which deems that ideological "balance" must somehow be achieved, there's no chance that anything outside the narrow spectrum running from the neoconservative left to the neoconservative right is ever going to sully the mundane purity of PBS's centrist soul. The new chief honcho of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Kenneth Tomlinson, has declared that public television and radio are "biased" and need more "balance"—which, in practice, has meant that the neoconservatives have been able to smuggle themselves in as representatives of the officially approved "right-wing" point of view.

A case in point is *Tucker Carlson Unfiltered*, a new show featuring the bow-tied poster boy for politically correct "conservatism" and a panel of guests who span the spectrum from the *Weekly Standard* to the *New Republic*: David Frum, Jonah Goldberg, Steven F. Hayes, and David Horowitz, representing the neocon right; Peter Beinart, Christopher Hitchens, and Katrina vanden Heuvel representing the left—with two out of three being left-neocons.

Not content to grab the spotlight for themselves, the neocons in the Bush-run CPB are angling to purge the place of liberals—or, indeed, anyone deemed hostile to the current regime. The May 2 *New York Times* reported, "Without the knowledge of his board . . . Tomlinson contracted last year with an outside consultant to keep track of the guests' political leanings on one program, 'Now with Bill Moyers.'" In a June 16 report, the *Times* exposed Tomlinson's \$14,700 in payments to someone by the name of Fred Mann,

a longtime Washington-based political consultant whose last position was as director of the job bank and alumni services at the National Journalism Center in Herndon, Virginia. The center trains young ideologues for jobs as journalists, seeding the print media and the airwaves with up-and-coming neocons and party-line Republicans. Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND) reveals that Mann's job was to keep tabs on the various talking heads invited by PBS to share their views, and the results are Orwellian: "We have all of these sheets that describe the guests and it says: anti-Bush, anti-Bush, pro-Bush, anti-Bush. It appears to me to be not so much an evaluation of is this slanted, is it liberal, does it have an agenda; it is the evaluation of is this program critical of the president?"

The Republicans never even tried to get rid of American's state-run media: They aim to take it over and turn it into their own propaganda organ. Given that PBS, like the Post Office, will always be with us, this attempt to turn public broadcasting into a high-toned version of Fox News deserves a rude rebuff.

—Justin Raimondo

**OBITER DICTA:** Mark your calendar now for The Rockford Institute's inaugural **Winter School**, January 2006, Rome. The theme for the week, "Lions and Christians," will consider the contributions of the early Roman Empire as well as the lessons from the early Church about living life under a hostile regime. With lodging and meals at a Trastevere convent, the Winter School is designed with full-time students and other budget-conscious travelers in mind. Full-time students interested in financial assistance, *Chronicles* readers interested in supporting our scholarship fund, or anyone requiring more information should contact Christopher Check at (815) 964-5811.

Our poet is **Peter Hunt**, a widely published essayist and critic who sits on the editorial board of the *Chesterton Review*. His poetry has appeared in various journals and magazines.

Our cover and interior art are provided by our designer, **Melanie Anderson**. Mrs. Anderson received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University.

Additional interior art is provided by **Elizabeth Wolf** of Chicago. Miss Wolf received her B.F.A. from the School of Art at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



# The Republic We Betrayed

A republican government is an exercise in human optimism, and patriotic republicans must engage in an unrelenting struggle against that human entropy we used to know as Original Sin. Any American citizen today can quote, or at least dimly recall, Washington's declarative challenge in his Farewell Address:

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labour to subvert these great Pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and citizens.

This rule applies not only to republics, added the retiring president, but "extends with more or less force to every species of free Government."

For Washington, then, a republican government does not reside in constitutional form alone but rests on the virtue of its citizens. Patriotic rhetoric aside, we Americans have never been a particularly virtuous people. Like most peoples, we have got drunk and blasphemed, fornicated and philandered, lied, cheated, and stolen. Puritan New England was notorious for premature births. If, however, we were hardly better than the French, we were no worse, and if we were not distinguished for virtue in the Christian sense, we had more than enough *virtù* in Machiavelli's sense—the courage and toughness to take control over our own lives.

By republican government, I do not mean a nonmonarchical state, though that is the most common sense, since many monarchs have presided over constitutional orders that limited the ruler's power far more effectively than either the American or the Athenian democracy. Differences in political form, as both Machiavellians and Aristotelians understand, are less important than differences in character, and, in its essence, the term *republic* is opposed not to monarchy but to tyranny. Tyrants rule according to the whim of the sovereign or of the class that keeps the sovereign in power, whether that class is a military elite, the Commu-

nist Party, or the fickle mob.

A republic, by contrast, is governed by law and custom, and the rulers of a republic may not and cannot violate the constitutional order in a good cause. Although he had fought a revolutionary war to free the American colonies from British rule, Washington was not particularly averse to the English system, and he would have conceded that, despite George III's exercise in personal rule, the British monarchy could generally be called a free, if not a popular, government.

A *republic*, in the wider sense in which I am using the term, is equivalent to Aristotle's *politeia*, a constitutional order based on *nomos*, a word that includes both written laws and inherited traditions. A shorthand way of expressing this is John Adams' Burkean maxim, "A government of laws and not of men," though the word *laws* might lead the unwary to conclude that, since a democratically elected legislature can pass any law it likes, such a legal commonwealth could overturn the social, moral, and political order (as Mr. Blair is doing in Britain), so long as the government continued to win elections.

Both Adams and Burke would have been appalled by such a suggestion. As Burke said early in his career: "Prescription is the most solid of all titles, not only to property, but, which is to secure that property, to government. They harmonize with each other, and give mutual aid to one another." As readers of Russell Kirk will know, *prescription* is a legal term referring to an uninterrupted possession (of property or right) going back to time immemorial; thus, law and prescription together form the basis of any constitutional order.

Prescriptive rights do not always find their way into written laws, at least not until they are challenged and require a defense. The founding decades of the American republic—roughly from the Stamp Act crisis of 1765 to the ratification of the Bill of Rights in 1791—represent such a challenge. Americans demanded both the rights they thought they enjoyed as Englishmen and also the rights to which they had become accustomed as American colonists. The government of Britain had not only threatened the ex-

isting colonial charters but pushed its authority to censor the press and, by using the legal fiction of general writs, invaded shops, warehouses, and even homes in search of contraband and untaxed goods. Neither the king nor the parliamentary leadership regarded these actions as tyrannical—which, indeed, they were not, since unrest within Britain was repressed by similar measures.

The men of Massachusetts, however, were a troublesome lot, and, ever since the Stamp Act, their leaders (the Boston Patriot Committee) had been fomenting rebellion by forming and drilling militia bands throughout the state. As Americans, they had the habit of defending themselves against the attacks of the French and their Native American surrogates. Unlike their compatriots in England, then, Americans regarded the possession of firearms as a traditional right, and their stockpile of arms at Lexington was only the next step, dictated by logic and necessity, in their plot to defend themselves from the British. The political struggle turned into armed conflict when British forces were sent to seize the arms stockpiled by the militiamen.

The Declaration of Independence lists some of the grievances in its more important, but less read, second part. Some of the most glaring have to do with political administration. The king is accused of not providing justice by his refusal to assent to useful laws and by his general interference in local legislation and courts, which includes the subordination of judges to the governor and the denial of trial by jury; he has similarly interfered in the colonial legislatures and taken away charters—in other words, he has deprived the colonies of their rights to govern themselves, and he has denied the traditional right to petition for redress. He has taxed the colonies without consulting their legislatures, quartered troops upon the citizens, and "made the military independent of and superior to the Civil Power."

This is only a summary, but it gives us the flavor of their concerns, which are basically fourfold: a simple abuse of power (quartering troops); economic interference (taxation and interference in