President George W. Bush
Oral History Project

BRIEFING MATERIALS

Tony Blair
July 7, 2023

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Presidential Oral History Program
1997    Tony Blair becomes prime minister as he leads the Labour Party to a landslide victory in the general election. Blair has been a Member of Parliament for Sedgefield since 1983 and leader of the Labour Party since 1994.


2000    George H.W. Bush meets with Blair while making a private visit to London. Blair follows up by sending George W. Bush a note wishing him well in the 2000 election. (Stevens, p. 189)

2001    Bush is inaugurated as the 43rd U.S. president on the 20th.


            On the 16th, the U.S. launches air strikes against military communication targets in Iraq. (Bumiller, pp. 144-145)

            On the 27th, Powell holds his first meeting with NATO leaders, where he reportedly assures them that the U.S. would not unilaterally withdrawal from the Balkans. (*The Washington Post*, 02/28/2001)

June     Blair and the Labour Party wins its second consecutive landslide election on the 7th. (Blair, p. 344)

July     Bush and Blair attend the G-8 summit in Italy. (*The Washington Post*, 07/07/2001)
From the 18th to 20th, Bush travels to the U.K. where he meets with Queen Elizabeth II and with Blair at the prime minister’s country residence at Chequers. (Laura Bush, *Spoken from the Heart*, New York: Scribner, 2010, pp. 191-192; Bush, p. 231; Cherie Blair, pp. 262-263; http://history.state.gov)

**August**

On the 6th, Bush is presented with the President’s Daily Brief (PDB) on al-Qaeda and the FBI’s current Osama bin Laden-related investigations. Rice reads the report but finds that no intelligence is “actionable.” (Elisabeth Bumiller, *Condoleezza Rice: An American Life*, New York: Random House, 2009, p. 161; Condoleezza Rice, Hearing of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, 04/08/2004, p. 27)

**September**

Al-Qaeda launches terrorist attacks in the U.S. on the 9th. Nearly 3,000 people die in the attacks, including 67 from the U.K. Blair is in Brighton, England to give the biennial address to the Trades Union Congress at the time of the attacks. Blair announces that he will not be able to deliver his speech and returns immediately to London, where he implements emergency measures. Blair issues a statement announcing that he would stand “shoulder to shoulder” with the U.S. and begins speaking with world leaders to help build a broad coalition of support for the coming war on terror. (Anthony Seldon, *Blair Unbound*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007, pp. 1-18; Blair, pp. 343-351; Cherie Blair, pp. 250-253; Stephens, pp. 196-199)

Bush calls Blair on the 12th at 7:30 a.m. Washington time. Blair is the first foreign leader Bush speaks with after the attacks. Blair says that he is with the U.S. 100%. Bush reassures Blair that the U.S. will not lash out in its response and will carefully plan effective action that will hurt the terrorists. Blair sends Bush a follow up note after the conversation. (Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002, p. 44; Bush, p. 140)

Also on the 12th, NATO invokes Article 5 for the first time in the organization’s history. The UN also passes Resolution 1368 recognizing the right of self-defense and recognizing terrorist acts as acts of war. (Stephen Knott, *Rush to Judgment: George W. Bush, the War on Terror, and His Critics*, University of Kansas Press, 2012, p. 111; George W. Liebmann, *The Last American Diplomat*, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012, p. 218)

On the 15th, the U.S. Congress passes a joint resolution authorizing the use of force against those responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

At a meeting at Camp David on the 15th, Bush decides to focus the immediate U.S. response to 9/11 on those directly responsible for the terrorist attacks, al Qaeda and the Taliban. Bush decides to hold off on taking action against Iraq unless definitive proof is found linking Saddam to the attacks. (Woodward, *Bush at War*, pp. 90-91; Bush, p. 189)
Blair travels to New York on the 20th where he meets with Mayor Rudy Giuliani and then flies to Washington to meet with Bush. Bush agrees with Blair that al Qaeda and the Taliban are the priority in formulating the response to the attacks. After having dinner with Blair, Bush gives a speech to a joint session of Congress, which puts foreign states on notice that supporting terrorism will be met with dire consequences. Blair sits with Laura Bush during the address. (Blair, pp. 353-355; Bush, p. 192; Stephens, p. 200; *The Washington Post*, 09/21/2001)

On the 21st, Blair attends an emergency meeting of the European Council in Brussels. (Blair, p. 356)

Also on the 21st, Bush receives a President’s Daily Brief finding no link between Iraq and al-Qaeda. ([http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB326/](http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB326/))

On the 28th, the UN Security Council (UNSC) unanimously passes Resolution 1373 pledging cooperation in fighting terrorism and setting up a commission led by the British to monitor cooperation. (*USA Today*, 11/09/2001; [http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2001/sc7158.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2001/sc7158.doc.htm))

*October*

Blair gives a speech at the Labour Party conference in Brighton on the 2nd.


Blair publishes a dossier on the 4th providing evidence that al Qaeda, with support from the Taliban, is responsible for the 9/11 attacks. (Seldon, p. 59; Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 196)

Blair travels to Moscow on the 4th to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin and then flies to Pakistan on the 5th to meet with President Musharraf. Blair makes a final stop in Delhi before returning home. (Blair, pp. 358-360; Seldon, p. 61)

The U.S. and U.K. launch airstrikes in Afghanistan on the 7th. Blair visits the Middle East three days later to help reassure Arab leaders. U.S. and U.K. troops are deployed on the ground in Afghanistan by November. (Blair, pp. 360-361; Seldon, p. 63; *The Washington Post*, 1/14/2003)

On the 13th, Bush announces that the U.S. intends to withdraw from the ABM Treaty within six months. This decision enables the administration to conduct tests of missile defense technology by next summer. (*The Washington Post*, 12/16/2001)

Blair returns to the Middle East on the 30th to visit Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel in an effort to gain support for the war in Afghanistan and to discuss the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. (Seldon, p. 65)
**November**  
Bush authorizes the use of military tribunals to try captured terrorists. Rumsfeld signs a memorandum to use eighteen counter-resistance techniques at Guantánamo Bay in December. Blair later calls Guantánamo Bay a justifiable necessity. (Knott, p. 131; Bumiller, p. 170; http://www.findlaw.com)

Blair meets with Bush in Washington on the 7th where they discuss obstacles they are facing in Afghanistan. Blair also reportedly makes the argument that making progress in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process is important in gaining international support for the war on terror. (Woodward, *Bush at War*, pp. 296-297)

On the 11th, Bush speaks for the first time before the UN General Assembly to help build international support for the war on terror. Bush also renews his calls for the creation of a Palestinian state and, for the first time, refers to the state as Palestine. (*The New York Times*, 11/11/2001)

On the 13th, Kabul falls to the Northern Alliance with little opposition. The next day Jalalabad surrenders. (Rumsfeld, p. 399; *The New York Times*, 11/18/2001)

Bush sends retired General Anthony Zinni to the Middle East as a special envoy to secure a ceasefire between the Israelis and Palestinians. The White House implores Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to take greater measures in preventing terrorism following suicide bombings that killed 25 Israelis. (*The Washington Post*, 12/03/2001)

**December**  
The UN holds a conference in Bonn, Germany to set up a governance plan for Afghanistan. The Bonn Process calls for a multi-national peacekeeping force under British leadership and is ratified by the UNSC on the 20th. Hamid Karzai is named chairman of the interim government, which is installed on the 22nd. U.S. Defense Department officials had supported a “smaller footprint” to avoid the U.S. being seen as occupiers. John Negroponte, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, adds that it is important the peacekeepers do not interfere with U.S. efforts to round up any remaining al-Qaeda and Taliban forces in Afghanistan. (Douglas Feith, *War and Decision*, New York: Harper, 2008, pp. 134, 140; CNN, 12/20/2001)

On the 25th, Rice learns that India is moving nuclear missiles to the Pakistani border and telephones Powell. Powell makes phone calls to leaders, and then visits the area in January. (Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor*, New York: Crown, 2011, pp. 125-126; *The Washington Post*, 12/29/2001)
January

Saddam begins to reopen negotiations with the UN regarding weapons inspections. (Blair, p. 395)

Blair meets with Karzai at the Bagram airport in Afghanistan. (Blair, p. 369)

Bush delivers his State of the Union address on the 29th, which identifies Iraq, Iran and North Korea as the “Axis of Evil.” (Robert Woodward, Plan of Attack, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004, p. 87; Bumiller, p. 174)

February

Bush announces on the 7th that Taliban and al-Qaeda detainees will be treated humanely in accord with the Geneva Conventions, but neither are entitled to POW status. However the detainees will be provided with many POW privileges. (Office of the White House Press Secretary, 02/07/2002)

March

Cheney meets with Blair in London before traveling on to the Middle East. During the meeting Cheney and Blair discuss the war in Afghanistan, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and Iraq. (Dick Cheney, In My Time, New York: Threshold, 2012, pp. 371-374)

April

Blair and his family visit Bush in Crawford, Texas, where Blair and Bush discuss Iraq, including the possibility of regime change. During the trip, Blair convinces Bush to re-commit to the Middle East peace process. The next day at a press conference with Bush, Blair advocates working through the UN to force Saddam to abide UN resolutions on weapons inspections. In a speech at the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library in College Station, Blair calls for an “enlightened self-interest that puts fighting for our values right at the heart of the policies necessary to protect our nations.” (Stephens, pp. 212-213) Blair also argues that any action against Iraq is tied to establishing peace in the region as a whole. (John Rentoul, Tony Blair: Prime Minister, London, Faber & Faber, 2013, p. 661; Blair, pp. 398-402; Cherie Blair, pp. 264-267; Bush, p. 232; Laura Bush, p. 255)

Following Israeli incursions into Palestinian areas, representatives from the U.S., EU, UN, and Russia meet in Madrid to set up the Madrid Quartet as a framework for the Middle East peace process. The group calls for the implementation of the cease-fire agreements that had previously been brokered. A deal to free Arafat is made at the end of the month. (Elliott Abrams, Tested By Zion, New York: Cambridge, 2013, p. 32; Bush, pp. 401-402; Cheney, pp. 380; Rice, pp. 140; The New York Times, 03/30/2002, 04/29/2002; The Washington Post, 04/15/2002)

May

On the 24th, Bush and Putin sign the Moscow Treaty, pledging to reduce their arms by two-thirds. (http://whitehouse.gov)

June

Bush delivers a speech at West Point on the 1st outlining his “Bush Doctrine” on the legitimacy of military preemption.
On the 24th, Bush reiterates his calls for the creation of an independent Palestinian state and controversially calls for the Palestinian people to replace Arafat. (Bush, p. 404; Abrams, p. 43; Rice, pp. 146-147; The Washington Post, 06/25/2002)

Bush and Blair attend the G-8 economic summit from the 25th to 27th in Canada. The G-8 leaders announce billions of dollars in aid to help African countries reform their governments and economies. (Bush, p. 335; The New York Times, 06/28/2002)

**July**

On the 26th during a closed UNSC meeting, Negroponte announces that the U.S. will veto any UN resolutions condemning Israeli abuses that fail to also condemn Palestinian terrorism. The announcement, which becomes known as the Negroponte doctrine, comes in the wake of a UN investigation of alleged Israeli abuses in the Jenin refugee camp. (Liebmann, p. 235; Daily News, 08/02/2002)

**September**

Bush addresses Congress on the 4th asking for support to take action against Iraq.

Bush meets with Blair at Camp David on the 7th to discuss Iraq. During the meeting, Bush agrees to work through the UN to force Saddam to cooperate with weapons inspections. Blair later writes that securing a commitment from Bush to work through the UN had been his primary objective for this meeting. After the meeting Blair and Bush both speak about the importance of eliminating Saddam’s WMD program. (Blair, pp. 406-407; Bush, p. 239; Cheney, pp. 390-391; The New York Times, 09/08/2002)

Blair releases a dossier providing intelligence from the Joint Intelligence Committee on Saddam’s WMD program. Additional intelligence is released in February, 2003. (Blair, pp. 404-405)

On the 12th, Bush appeals to the UN to work with the U.S. to eliminate Iraq’s WMDs in a speech to the General Assembly. Bush adds that the U.S. would act alone if necessary. The question of whether to first seek the UN resolution had been seriously debated within the administration. (Bush, p. 237; Rice, pp. 180-184; Woodward, Plan of Attack, p. 151; The Washington Post, 09/13/2002)

**October**

Congress passes a resolution on the 11th authorizing the use of force against Iraq.

**November**

On the 8th, the UNSC unanimously passes Resolution 1441 giving Iraq a final opportunity to disarm. Syria was reportedly the last hold-out. The resolution gives Iraq one month to issue a declaration of its weapons programs and to begin the verification process. (Rice, pp. 183-185; DeYoung, p. 420; The Washington Post, 01/14/2003)

**December**

The Bush administration announces on the 19th that Iraq’s weapons declaration to the UN is in material breach of UN Resolution 1441. However the administration
says it will let UN weapons inspections play out and continue to work within the UN process. (*The New York Times*, 12/20/2002; *Daily News*, 12/19/2002)

On the 21st, Tenet presents his intelligence on Iraq’s WMD program to Bush, calling it a “slam dunk” case. (Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, pp. 247-250; Bumiller, pp. 197-198)

2003

*January*

On the 27th, UN Weapons Inspector Hans Blix issues its first of several reports to the UNSC finding that Iraq has not disarmed as required under UN Resolution 1441. His team also discovers warheads and “indications of the highly toxic VX nerve agent.” (Bush, p. 244; Blair, pp. 410-418; Rice, p. 185; *The New York Times*, 01/28/2003)

On the 31st, Blair meets with Bush in Washington to make the case for seeking a second UN resolution against Saddam. Bush, Cheney, Rice, Powell, and Rumsfeld reportedly state that a second resolution would not be required under international law, but Blair argues that a second resolution would be very helpful for gaining political support at home. Blair later writes that it was not clear if he would survive the expected House of Commons vote without a second resolution. Bush agrees the next day to seek the second UN resolution. (Blair, p. 411; Bush, pp. 244-247; Cheney, pp. 397-398; Rice, pp. 199-204; Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, p. 356; *Sunday Telegraph*, 02/02/2003)

*February*

Powell presents the case that Iraq has WMDs to the UNSC on the 5th. (George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, New York: Perennial, 2007, pp. 371-375; DeYoung, p. 442-450; Rice, pp. 199-201)

On the 24th, the U.S. introduces a second resolution in the UNSC to authorize the use of force against Iraq. The U.S. and U.K. face opposition from France, Germany, Russia, China and Syria. Spain and Bulgaria strongly support the second resolution, and Mexico and Chile are reportedly key swing votes. Other members of the UNSC in 2003 include Angola, Cameroon, Guinea, and Pakistan. Nine votes are needed for passage. (Blair, pp. 420-424; Bush, p. 245; Rice, pp. 201-204; *The Mirror*, 03/14/2003)

*Feb.-Mar.*

A January 31st NSA memorandum instructing agents to electronically eavesdrop on six UNSC members who are reportedly undecided about the second Iraqi resolution is leaked. (*The Times*, 03/03/2003)

*March*

Meeting with representatives of North Korea and China, the U.S. proposes a six-party framework to hold talks on North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. North Korea had admitted to having a nuclear weapons program last October and, in January, withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. (Rice, p. 248; *The New York Times*, 02/25/2003)
France, Russia and Germany announce they will likely veto a UNSC resolution authorizing the use of force. (Blair, p. 427; Liebmann, p. 227)

Blair works with Blix to develop a compromise resolution on the 10th to give Iraq a short window to pass five tests. Chile signals it would support the compromise if it is not vetoed, but France makes it clear on the 12th that it would veto any second resolution authorizing the use of force regardless of what the weapons inspectors find. Blair later writes that this effectively blocks any chance for passing a second resolution. (Blair, pp. 427-430; Rice, pp. 200-204; Liebmann, p. 227)

On the 12th, the UNSC passes for the first time a resolution endorsing Palestinian statehood. The U.S. votes in favor of the resolution. (Daily News, 03/12/2003)

On the 15th, Chile proposes a 30-day deadline for Iraq, which reportedly gains French support. However the U.S. reportedly opposes the proposal because of concerns regarding the U.S.’s military timetable and the climate in Iraq. (Liebmann, p. 227)

Blair travels to Portugal on the 16th to discuss Iraq with Bush, Spanish President Aznar, and Portuguese Prime Minister Durao. Blair writes that the Azores were chosen to help maintain Spanish and Portuguese support for the coalition. The leaders agree that it is time to withdraw the second UN resolution. (Blair, p. 430; Bush, p. 252; Rice, pp. 201-204; http://history.state.gov)

On the 17th, Bush orders Negroponte to withdraw the second resolution at the UN and gives Saddam a 48-hour ultimatum to leave Iraq. The ultimatum was drafted with help from the British, including key parts supporting the Middle East peace process. In a national address later that night, Bush explains that the UNSC “has not lived up to its responsibilities, so we will rise to ours.” (Bush, pp. 430-433)

On the 18th, Blair gives his speech opening debate in the House of Commons on the Iraq crisis. The Blair government wins approval for action against Iraq in the House of Commons by a 412-149 vote. (Blair, pp. 433-437)

On the 19th, Bush gives the order to launch Operation Iraqi Freedom. The invasion begins with British special forces securing oilfields and U.S. airstrikes against targets at Dora Farms, where intelligence had suggested Saddam might be. (Blair, p. 437; Rumsfeld, pp. 460, 466; Tenet, pp. 389-395)

On the 27th, Bush and Blair meet at Camp David, where Blair helps convince Bush that the UN should play an important role in post-war Iraq over Cheney’s and Rumsfeld’s objections. From Camp David, Blair travels to New York to meet with Kofi Annan. Annan says he would like for the UN to play a vital role in post-
war Iraq but should not take the lead until the country has been stabilized. (Blair, pp. 442-443; The New York Times, 03/29/2003)

April

Blair meets with Bush in Ireland, where the two leaders discuss Iraq and North Korean multi-party talks. The Six-Party Talks begin in August between North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the U.S. (The Washington Post, 04/08/2003)

Bush travels to Belfast in Northern Ireland on the 7th and 8th to meet with meet with Blair to discuss the reconstruction of Iraq. Bush also meets with Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern and political leaders in northern Ireland. (http://history.state.gov)


On the 30th, Bush announces the Road Map for Middle East peace. Blair supports the plan. (Bush, p. 405)

May

On the 1st, Bush declares from the USS Abraham Lincoln the end of major combat operations in Iraq. Rumsfeld announces from Kabul the end of major combat operations in Afghanistan that same day. (Bumiller, p. 215; The Washington Post, 05/02/2003)

On the 5th, the Bush administration announces the release of about 12 detainees from Guantánamo after Powell hears increasing complaints from other countries about their citizens being detained. (The New York Times, 05/06/2003)

On the 7th, Bush announces L. Paul Bremer will head the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and serve as special envoy to Iraq to oversee reconstruction efforts. (L. Paul Bremer, My Year in Iraq, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006, p. 76; Anderson, p. 149)

On the 16th, Bremer announces de-Baathification.

On the 22nd, the UNSC unanimously passes a resolution giving the UN a key role in post-war Iraq. It lifts the 13-year economic sanctions on Iraq and transfers legal control over Iraq’s oil industry to the U.S. and Britain for one year. (Blair, p. 449; Rice, p. 215; Daily News, 05/20/2003; The Philadelphia Inquirer, 05/23/2003)

Rice and Powell discuss the agenda for a meeting with Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs William Burns and Middle East envoys. The goal is to get Israel to endorse the Road Map. Bush cancelled a meeting with Sharon due to the increasing violence. Sharon reportedly argues that the peace plan should require the Palestinians to disarm violent groups before Israel pulls back
forces in the West Bank and dismantles Jewish settlements. (*The New York Times*, 05/22/2003)

Bush signs the $15 billion President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) on the 27th.

Blair visits the troops in Basra on the 29th and also meets with Bremer. (Blair, p. 449)

Andrew Gilligan of the BBC reports on the 29th that the claim from the September 2002 dossier that Saddam’s military planning allowed for part of his WMD program to be reconstituted in 45 minutes was incorrect. He also reports that the government probably knew it was based on faulty intelligence and included it in the dossier anyway. The story ignites a major controversy. (Blair, pp. 449-450)

**June**

Bush and Blair attend the G-8 economic summit on the 1st and 2nd in France.

Bush travels to the Middle East on the 2nd to help build support for the implementation of the Road Map. Bush meets with Sharon and with Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas in Jordan on the 4th. (Rice, pp. 216-219; *The New York Times*, 06/19/2003, 06/20/2003)

**July**

On the 13th, the CPA announces the appointment of a 25-member Iraqi Governing Council. It includes members of all Iraqi factions but is predominantly made up of Shiite Muslims and prominent exiles. (Blair, p. 461; *The New York Times*, 07/13/2003)

Blair addresses a joint session of Congress on the 17th to accept the Congressional Gold Medal. During the speech, Blair says that climate change cannot be ignored and that “we need to go beyond even Kyoto.” (*CNN*, 07/17/2003)

On the 22nd, Saddam’s sons, Qusay and Uday, are killed during a U.S. military raid. (Bremer, p. 114)

**Summer**

The Bush administration works with the UN on the Liberian crisis. Bush sends in U.S. Marines to serve as peace-keepers in August until the African Union arrives. (Rice, pp. 230-233)

**August**

On the 14th, the UNSC passes Resolution 1500 that establishes the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq and recognizes the Governance Council as the sovereign government in Iraq. (http://www.refworld.org)

On the 14th, a U.S. helicopter accidentally knocks over a religious banner in Sadr City, unleashing protests and riots. It is part of an overall increase in violence including an uprising lead by Muqtada al-Sadr, an extremist Shia cleric with ties to Iran. Five days later, the UN headquarters is attacked, killing over 20 UN staff,
including Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Iraq Sérgio Vieira de Mello. Al-Sadr’s militia attacks a patrol of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment in Sadr City, as violence continues to escalate during the fall and winter into 2004, particularly in Basra. (Blair, p. 465; Bremer, pp. 135, 190-192; Anderson, p. 163; Bremer, p. 135; The Washington Post, 08/22/2003)

October

On the 2nd, Chief U.S. Weapons Inspector David Kay reports that the Iraq Survey Group did not find WMDs in Iraq, but did find laboratories for chemical and biological weapons. (http://www.cia.gov)

On the 14th, the U.S. vetoes a UNSC resolution condemning Israel’s border security fence as illegal. The vote comes just days after Israel launched airstrikes inside Syria against an alleged terrorist training camp in retaliation for a suicide bombing of a Haifa restaurant. Syria called for the UN to condemn the airstrikes. (The Australian, 10/07/2003, The Jerusalem Post, 10/16/2003)

November

On the 15th, the CPA and the Iraqi Governing Council agree to the governance plan which would transfer sovereignty from the CPA back to Iraq by June 30th, 2004. (Bremer, p. 231)

On the 18th, Bush visits Blair in London and at Blair’s house in Sedgefield. (Bush, p. 231; http://history.state.gov)

On the 19th, the UNSC unanimously endorses the Road Map peace plan in the Middle East despite Israeli objections. The plan had been reportedly accepted by both Israeli and Palestinian leaders last year. The U.S. tried to prevent the vote after it was unable to include harsh language condemning terrorism into the Russian-sponsored UNSC resolution. (The Washington Times, 11/20/2003)

On the 24th, the U.S. agrees to let the International Atomic Energy Agency adopt a resolution deploiring Iran’s nuclear program and create a fast-track procedure to take the issue to the UNSC if Iran violates the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Powell negotiated the language of the proposal with the Europeans after it was unable to get the matter before the UNSC. (The New York Times, 11/25/2003)

December

On the 14th, Saddam is captured. (The New York Times, 12/16/2003)

Blair and Bush announce that Libya has agreed after nine months of secret negotiations to abandon its nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons programs. The talks had begun with an overture from Colonel Muammar Qaddafi as coalition forces were beginning the invasion of Iraq. (The New York Times, 12/21/2003; Agence France Presse, 12/20/2003)

2004
January

Britain’s ambassador to the UN, Jeremy Greenstock, meets with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Bremer and Negroponte to discuss the timing of the Iraqi elections. (Liebmann, p. 249)

On the 28th, Lord Hutton releases his report on the September 2002 dossier, which finds that the Blair government did not knowingly include faulty intelligence in the dossier. (Blair, pp. 456-460)

March

Bremer convinces the Governing Council to bring in the UN special envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, to help develop a process to choose an interim government. Bremer continues to face resistance from Ali Sistani, a Shiite cleric who has been demanding direct national elections. (Bremer, pp. 310-311, 315)

On the 17th, Powell visits Afghanistan and meets with President Hamid Karzai. The elections are postponed from June to August and Powell urges faster voter registration and a pledge of $1 billion in allocated funds by the U.S. for Afghanistan. (The New York Times, 03/18/2004)

On the 31st, four Blackwater contractors are killed in Fallujah. The next month the U.S. launches Operation Vigilant Resolve in an attempt to take control of Fallujah. The First Battle of Fallujah is resolved through negotiation, as U.S. forces continue to face resistance from the Mahdi army in Najaf, Kufa, Kut, Sadr City, and other southern cities. This period reportedly becomes the deadliest of the war to date. (Rumsfeld, pp. 532-538; Bremer, pp. 310-315, 354)

April

Sharon sends Bush a letter on the 14th announcing his disengagement plan to move all Israelis out of Gaza and some settlements in the West Bank. The letter, which had been drafted with help from the U.S., meets with some criticism in Europe, but is supported by Blair. Blair visits the White House on the 17th and argues that disengagement “gives us the opportunity to help the Palestinian Authority with the economic, the political and the security measures they take and they need to take in order to get to the point where the concept of a viable Palestinian state becomes a real possibility.” (Abrams, p. 110; The New York Times, 04/17/2004)

The first Abu Ghraib photos appear on “60 Minutes II” on the 28th.

May

The UNSC unanimously passes Resolution 1546 on the 8th endorsing the transition of sovereignty from the CPA to an Iraq interim government by June 30th, while continuing international control over security forces in Iraq. The U.S.-British-sponsored resolution was introduced on the 6th. (Liebmann, p. 243)

June

Bush hosts the G-8 economic summit in Georgia from the 8th to 10th.

The U.S. returns sovereignty to Iraq on the 28th. The CPA ceases to exist as the appointed interim government, headed by Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, takes
over. Bremer leaves the country immediately and Negroponte presents his credentials as the U.S. ambassador to Iraq to senior Iraqi officials on the 30th. Bush and Blair are sitting together at the NATO summit meeting in Istanbul when they receive confirmation that Iraq is sovereign. (Bush, p. 359; Rice, p. 278; Liebmann, pp. 241-256; http://web.ebscohost.com)

On the 30th, Powell and Annan visit the western Sudan area of Darfur. The State Department has begun an investigation to see if genocide has occurred by sending an Atrocities Documentation Team (ADT) to interview Darfuri refugees. (Samuel Trotten and Eric Markusen, eds., Genocide in Darfur, New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 21; The Washington Post, 06/30/2004)

August

U.S. forces encircle al-Sadr’s forces around Najaf, home to one of Shiite Islam’s holiest shrines, to step up efforts to eliminate insurgent forces in Iraq prior to next January’s elections. Sistani helps negotiate a truce in which al-Sadr’s forces agree to disarm and leave Najaf. The interim government agrees to withdraw U.S. and Iraqi forces from Najaf and not to prosecute al-Sadr’s forces, leaving al-Sadr free to participate in elections. (Liebmann, pp. 248-249; The New York Times, 08/27/2004)

September

Charles Duelfer, who had replaced Kay as head of the Iraq Survey Group earlier in the year, issues the group’s full report. It suggests that Saddam had dismantled his WMD program so that sanctions would be lifted but had maintained the infrastructure needed to rapidly reconstitute his WMD program in the future. (Blair, p. 375)

November

On the 2nd, Bush defeats Senator John Kerry (D-MA) to win reelection as president. Blair calls Bush the next day to congratulate him on his victory. Blair says that he had gone to bed the night before thinking that Bush had lost. (Bush, p. 295)


On the 12th, Blair becomes the first foreign leader to visit Bush at the White House after the presidential election. At a press conference with Blair, Bush says, “I believe we’ve got a great chance to establish a Palestinian state, and I intend to use the next four years to spend the capital of the United States on such a state.” (Austin American-Statesman, 11/13/2004) Bush and Blair agree that Arafat’s recent death could potentially open the door to make significant progress in the Middle East peace process. Arafat is replaced by Abbas as president of the Palestinian Authority in January. (Abrams, p. 119)
On the 15th, Powell announces his resignation. (Rice, p. 289)

2005

January

Iraq holds elections on the 30th to create a National Assembly charged with the task of drafting a new constitution and selecting a three-person presidency council and prime minister. New elections will be held in December once the constitution is ratified by referendum in an October election. The elections are held using party lists and a nationwide constituency as opposed to geographic districts. The election is boycotted by Sunni politicians, which had been a concern prompting some to question whether the January election should be postponed. Sistani’s Shia allies win over half of the 275 seats. The bulk of the remainder of seats go to the Kurdish Alliance and the secular Iraqi group. (Liebmann, pp. 242, 249, 259; http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov)

February

On the 14th, Lebanon’s former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri is assassinated after calling for Syria to pull out of Lebanon. (The New York Times, 02/17/2005; Associated Press, 02/15/2005)

March

Blair hosts a Middle East peace process conference in London on the 1st in which the participants outline the steps the Palestinian Authority needs to take to work towards statehood. Bush had supported Blair’s call to hold the conference in November following the death of Arafat and sends Rice to London to attend. Rice and the French foreign minister jointly call on Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon. The U.K., U.S. and France had previously co-sponsored a UN resolution calling on Syria to pull its troops out of Lebanon last September. Syria announces on the 5th it will withdraw its military forces from Lebanon. (Blair, p. 511; Rice, pp. 337-340; Financial Times, 03/02/2005; The Guardian, 03/02/2005)

On the 31st, the UNSC passes a resolution to have the International Criminal Court investigate violence in Darfur. Rice works with council members as the U.S. abstains from the vote. The Bush administration is reportedly fearful of taking actions that would legitimize the court. (The Washington Post, 07/31/2005)

May

The Labour Party under Blair wins its third consecutive election. However, the party’s majority is cut from 160 to 66 seats. (Blair, p. 506)

July

Blair hosts the G-8 Economic Summit at Gleneagles in Scotland from the 6th to 8th. Blair also invites China, India, Brazil, South Africa, and Mexico, along with numerous Arab and African leaders to discuss an ambitious agenda including climate change and African issues. After gaining Bush’s support on both issues, Blair is able to lead the G-8 to recommit itself to partnering with African countries to help achieve sustainable growth and development. The G-8 also agrees on an approach to working on the problem of climate change. (Blair, pp. 546-565; http://history.state.gov)
Terrorist attacks in London leave over 50 dead on the 7th. (Blair, pp. 546-565)

Cherie Blair travels to Rwanda to meet Laura and Jenna Bush, who are touring African countries to survey the early results of Bush’s AIDS relief program. Laura Bush and Cherie Blair had discussed traveling together in Africa after the Gleneagles summit. (Laura Bush, pp. 328-333)

December

On the 6th, Rice responds to European pressure for answers on secret detention camps and transporting terrorist suspects to Europe. She states that the U.S. respects the sovereignty of other countries and does not act without getting a country’s permission. At a meeting with European Union foreign ministers on the 7th, she reports, “As a matter of U.S policy, the United States obligations under the CAT [UN’s Committee against Torture]…extends to U.S. personnel wherever they are….” (The Washington Times, 12/09/2005) When questioned on secret prisons, however, Rice refuses either to acknowledge or to deny their existence. (The Washington Post, 12/06/2005)

2006

January

On the 26th, Hamas wins the Palestinian legislative elections, beating the Fatah movement under Abbas. Abbas continues serving his four year term as president. He was elected in January, 2005. (http://2001-2009.state.gov; Bumiller, pp. 279-281)

February

Al-Qaeda bombs the Shia holy site, the Samarra mosque, in an effort to spark sectarian violence. (Blair, p. 464)

May

Blair meets with Bush at the White House on the 25th. (http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov)

The U.S. announces on the 31st it will join nuclear talks with Iran if Iran first agrees to suspend its nuclear program. The U.K., Germany and France are currently conducting talks with Iran. Bush greenlights the shift in U.S. policy after receiving word from Blair that he and key allies in Europe would be willing to support tough sanctions against Iran if it fails to negotiate in good faith. (Rice, pp. 461-465; USA Today, 5/31/2006)

July

On the 12th, Hezbollah commandos in Lebanon launch an attack into Israel, killing Israeli soldiers. Israel, who had just suffered a deadly attack by Palestinian militants in Gaza last month, launches a military campaign against Lebanon. (Rice, pp. 471-473; Bumiller, pp. 291-295; The Washington Post, 07/27/2006)

Blair and Bush attend the G-8 summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, from the 15th to 17th. During the summit, the U.S., U.K., France, and Russia work on a joint statement to deliver on the situation in Lebanon. An agreement is later reached in August establishing a UN peace-keeping force in Lebanon. (Rice, pp. 476-478)
Blair meets with Bush at the White House on the 28th. (http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov)

On the 31st, the UNSC passes a resolution calling for Iran to stop its nuclear program by August 31st or face sanctions. (Bush, pp. 417-418)

**September**

On the 6th, Bush acknowledges for the first time the CIA’s program of secret detention of terrorist suspects in foreign prisons and the use of harsh interrogation methods to collect intelligence. He defends the CIA’s work as “having saved lives.” He also expresses a willingness to work with Congress to authorize new military commissions that were struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court case in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld.* (The Washington Post, 09/07/2006, 09/08/2006)

Blair announces on the 7th that this Labour conference will be his last as leader. (Rentoul, p. 665)

**December**

Blair meets with Bush at the White House on the 7th. (http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov)

The UNSC passes a resolution on the 23rd imposing sanctions on Iran for failing to stop its uranium enrichment program. The resolution was passed unanimously, though with some reported difficulty. (Glenn Kessler, *The Confidante: Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy,* New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2007, p. 239)

**2007**

**January**

U.S. forces launch airstrikes in Somalia against Islamist militias on the 8th.

On the 10th, Bush announces a surge of more than 20,000 troops to Iraq.

On the 14th, Blair and British Defense Secretary Des Browne meet with Gates in London to discuss the surge in Iraq. (The Associated Press, 01/14/2007, 01/15/2007)

**February**

On the 13th, the Six-Party Talks yield an important agreement in which North Korea agrees to shut down its nuclear program in exchange for fuel aid and steps towards the normalization of relations with the U.S. and Japan. The talks had broken down in 2006 when North Korea resumed its nuclear program, prompting the UNSC to pass a resolution calling on North Korea to suspend its program and return to six-party talks. (The Washington Post, 07/05/2006; The New York Times, 07/17/2006; The Korea Herald, 03/08/2007; Bumiller, pp. 306-307)
March

On the 23rd, Iran captures fifteen British sailors and marines conducting a UN-sanctioned operation in Iraqi waters. They are released after two weeks of negotiation. *(The New York Times, 04/05/2007)*

May

Blair announces in a speech at the Trimdon Labour Club on the 10th that he intends to resign as Labour Party leader and prime minister.

Blair meets with Bush at the White House on the 16th and 17th. *(http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov)*

June

Bush and Blair attend the G-8 economic summit from the 6th to 8th in Germany.

At a special party conference in Manchester on the 24th, Blair turns leadership of the Labour Party over to Gordon Brown.

Blair steps down as prime minister on the 27th. That same day, Blair is appointed as the special envoy of the Quartet on the Middle East. The previous envoy, former World Bank president James Wolfensohn, had resigned the previous year. Blair says he will focus on gaining international support and assistance for the Palestinians. However, recent fighting between Hamas and the Fatah movement have further complicated this task. Hamas had overrun the Gaza Strip earlier in the month. *(Blair, p. 646; Rice, pp. 581-582; BBC News, 06/27/2007; Dow Jones International News, 06/27/2007)*

July

On the 19th, Blair travels to Lisbon to attend his first Quartet meeting as special envoy. The group discusses expanding Blair’s mandate and changes his formal title to Quartet representative. Rice represents the U.S. at the meeting. The Quartet agrees to meet again in September to discuss Blair’s upcoming trip to the region. *(Agence Europe, 07/21/2007)*

Blair makes his first trip to the Middle East as the Quartet’s representative. During the five-day trip, Blair meets with Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, as well as senior officials in Jordan, Bahrain, and the United Emirates. *(http://tonyblairoffice.org)*

September

Israel bombs a site in Syria on the 6th where it believes Syria is developing a nuclear weapons program. *(The Charlie Rose Show, 04/25/2008)*

Also on the 6th, the U.S. nominates its former ambassador to Cyprus, Don Bandler, to be a top aide to Quartet Representative Blair. *(Indo-Asian News Service, 09/06/2007)*

Blair returns to the Middle East in mid-September, where he calls for an expansion of the Palestinian security forces to help strengthen the Israeli-
Palestinian peace process. After the trip, Blair reports to the Quartet’s September meeting. (http://tonyblairoffice.org)

**November**  
Bush convenes the Annapolis Conference on the 27th to help implement the Roadmap for Peace. The attendees include Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. (http://presidentialrhetoric.com)

**December**  
The international community pledges $7.4 billion in aid at the Paris donors conference on the 17th to support the Palestinian Authority to help build institutions and promote economic development. (*The Guardian, 12/17/2007; Global Insight Daily Analysis, 05/14/2008*)

**2008**

**February**  
Blair meets with Israeli President Shimon Peres on the 6th to discuss how economic development in the Palestinian Authority can help facilitate political talks and promote peace. (*BBC Monitoring Middle East, 02/07/2008*)

**March**  
Blair travels to Israel to discuss recent violence with Israeli officials.

**May**  
Blair announces on the 13th a new plan aimed to promote economic development and security in the West Bank based on the ideas of the Peace Valley plan. Arguing that political negotiations alone cannot work until conditions on the ground are improved, Blair calls for the easing of restrictions on the free movement of goods and people, the development of an industrial complex to create jobs, and the creation of an economic zone in Jenin. Blair had discussed the plan with Peres in February when Blair visited the region. Peres has been a supporter of the Peace Valley plan. Peres discusses Blair’s plan with numerous foreign leaders, including Bush, who also supports the plan. (*The New York Times, 05/14/2008; Israeli National News, 8/15/2007*)

Bush travels to Israel from the 14-16th, where he meets with Blair, Peres and Olmert. (Abrams, p. 274)

**June**  
Bush travels to London on the 15th to meet with Queen Elizabeth II and Blair. (http://history.state.gov)

**August**  
Palestinian, Israeli, Japanese, and Jordanian officials agree in August to move forward with an economic project based on the Peace Valley plan, which will begin with an agricultural industrial area in southern Jericho. The phrase “Valley of Peace” refers to a southern section of the Israeli-Jordan border. Japan will provide funding. (*Israeli National News, 8/15/2007*)

**September**  
Blair reportedly tells Bush on the 15th that he does not think it will be possible to reach an agreement in the Middle East peace talks in 2008, due in part to the upcoming Israeli elections. Blair argues that instead of high level political
negotiations, they should focus on helping Fayyad improve the situation on the ground in the West Bank. Bush reportedly agrees. (Abrams, pp. 282-283)

The Quartet issues a statement calling for Israel and the Palestinians to fulfill their obligations for peace at their meeting in New York. The statement includes calls for Israel to stop all settlement activity and for the Palestinians to recommit to non-violence and recognition of Israel. (http://tonyblairoffice.org)

December

Israeli launches a military offensive into the Gaza Strip on the 27th following repeated ceasefire violations by Hamas, including rocket attacks aimed at southern Israel. Blair calls for the restoration of “calm” between Israel and Hamas. The Palestinians suspend the peace talks. (Bush, p. 410; http://tonyblairoffice.org)

2009

January

The UNSC passes a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. The U.S. abstains from the vote, reportedly at the urging of Olmert. (Abrams, pp. 299-301)

Bush awards Blair the Presidential Medal of Freedom on the 13th.

Bush leaves office on the 20th.
TIMELINES

- Tony Blair News Timeline, prepared by Rob Martin, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 07/11/2013.

- Timeline of the Bush Presidency, prepared by Justin Peck and Bryan Craig, Miller Center, University of Virginia, 04/30/2010.

SELECTED WRITINGS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS


KEY ISSUES AND EVENTS


• Christopher Adams and Roula Khalaf, “Prospects for Peace in Region ‘Best in Years,’” *Financial Times*, 03/02/2005.


• Sir John Chilcot, *The Report of the Iraq Inquiry*, 07/06/2016. [This document has been provided to the interviewer but not included in the briefing book.]

As Quartet Envoy:

• “President Bush Pleased by Appointment of Tony Blair as Quartet Representative in Middle East,” *White House Press and Documents*, 06/27/2007.

• “EU/Middle East: Quartet Meeting in Lisbon and Questions About Tony Blair’s Mission,” Agence Europe, 07/21/2007.


• “Quartet Meeting Urges Israel and Palestine to fulfill Obligations for Peace,” <https://www.tonyblairoffice.org> (09/26/2008).
Early Relationship with George W. Bush

- Describe your earliest meetings with Bush and how you came to develop a relationship with him. Was there awkwardness because of your close association with President Clinton? What meetings with Bush over the course of your premiership remain especially memorable?
- Did you have discussions with President Clinton about his successor? Had your relationship with Vice President Gore been especially strong?
- Was faith a factor in your relationship? What were your early assessments of Bush as a political leader—his strengths and weaknesses?

The President and the Prime Minister

- What did you foresee as your biggest challenges and opportunities in dealing with President Bush before 9/11? Was terrorism on your common agenda before 9/11?
- Describe your communications with the president after the 9/11 attacks and your government’s priorities immediately thereafter. Did that experience significantly alter your personal relationship with the president?
- Discuss your challenges in assisting the US in going to war in Afghanistan. Was there a shared understanding of the importance of nation-building on both sides of the Atlantic?
- Was Iraq policy a topic of discussion with President Bush before 9/11? How quickly after 9/11 did it become evident to you that Saddam was the next focus?
- Tell us about your relationship with Dick Cheney and your assessment of his role.
- Outline the steps you took to steer the American direction on Iraq. In retrospect, were there realistic opportunities to avoid the Iraq War? Was there a realistic chance that Saddam would leave Iraq or a coup would materialize?
- Discuss the key moments in your relationship with President Bush as war approached.
- Describe your own efforts to secure international cooperation for the war. Was a second UN resolution ever truly feasible? How did you convince President Bush to seek it?
- What is your own assessment of the intelligence about Iraq’s capabilities before going to war? Assess prewar planning for Phase IV, both in your country and in the US.
- Describe your working relationship with President Bush for the duration of the war. Where were your greatest successes/failures? Had you been consulted in advance about the initial CPA order on de-Baathification? How were you getting reports about developments on the ground in Iraq? Did the president include you in his thinking about the Surge in 2006-07?
- Comment on other important issues you worked on with President Bush (the broader War on Terror, Iran, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, aid to Africa, etc.)
- Comment on your efforts to turn President Bush’s position around on issues such as Kyoto.
- You have written that you occasionally discussed the “infrastructure” of Bush’s campaigns with him. Describe your conversations with him about electioneering politics.
**Your Time as Quartet Envoy**
- Tell us about your decision to serve as Quartet envoy. Do you recall having any conversations with President Bush about your decision?
- Were there any differences in how you and President Bush approached the peace process?

**Retrospective**
- What do you feel were your biggest accomplishments working with President Bush?
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Bush presidency. What features of the Bush presidency were overlooked or misunderstood by the press?