



Leaked British Documents Reveal Deception About Iraq War Entry

The London Telegraph has published excerpts of leaked secret British documents that reveal pre-war deceit by former Prime Minister Tony Blair and ongoing friction between British and American military commanders in Iraq November 21.

The *Telegraph* documents included a revelation that British military officials had begun to plot the Iraqi invasion in February 2002, long before Blair admitted his government was contemplating the invasion. "Formation-level planning for a deployment took place from February 2002," the documents revealed. But Blair [told](#) Parliament on July 16, 2002 that "There are no decisions which have been taken about military action."



The *Telegraph* reports also reveal that despite public pronouncements by both the Blair and Bush administrations that the two nations had a "special relationship," British commanders chafed at the cavalier way that American commanders in Baghdad issued commands to their British counterparts in the southern region of Basra. Britain served as the main American partner in the "coalition" to invade Iraq and dislodge Saddam Hussein from his dictatorship. But British chief of staff Colonel J.K. Tanner [soured](#) on America as a result of Washington dictates because the Americans never even asked British views before they made plans for the coalition:

"I now realise that I am a European, not an American. We managed to get on better...with our European partners and at times with the Arabs than with the Americans. Europeans chat to each other, whereas dialogue is alien to the US military... dealing with them corporately is akin to dealing with a group of Martians."

Tanner had served as chief of staff to British commander in Iraq Major-General Andrew General Stewart, who was only a little less negative in his [assessment](#) of the American coalition partner: "As the world's only superpower, they [the US] will not allow their position to be challenged. Negotiation is often a dirty word."

The *Telegraph* articles also reveal that British soldiers — like their American counterparts — were as unprepared for the post-war reconstruction as they were competent in subduing Saddam Hussein's forces. Brigadier General Bill Moore, the commander of British 19 Mechanized Brigade, [explained](#) that the British government basically had no plans for reconstruction and left it all up to the military. "The lack of involvement by the FCO [Foreign and Commonwealth Office], the Home Office and the Department for International Development was appalling. We were just left to get on with the task of nation-building ourselves." British soldiers had no individual training on the reconstruction either.



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on November 23, 2009

Brigadier General Ian Dale [noted](#) that “we give troops deploying to Northern Ireland a mandatory two-month training package, whereas for Telic ours consisted of a CD-Rom.”

Photo of Tony Blair in Basra: AP Images



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