

Simply Appalling

A jaundiced eye on the news

Saturday, May 21, 2005

Complete testimony of George Galloway

[Note: While many copies of Mr. Galloway's opening statement are available on the Web, this is the only complete transcript of which I am aware. Unfortunately, the United States Senate has declined to make the transcript of Mr. Galloway's testimony available.]

Testimony of Mr. George Galloway, Member of the British Parliament, before the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Permanent Subcommittee

Senators Norm Coleman and Carl Levin attending

SEN. COLEMAN: Mr. Galloway, I'm pleased to have you before the committee today.

What I'm going to do is briefly summarize the evidence before we give you a chance to give your sworn testimony.

The Oil-for-Food program was used to support those who were favorable to Iraq. Former Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan confirmed this.

I would think that you would admit that your efforts to oppose the sanction were well received by the regime. I know it's been quoted to you many, many times--but your, I would say, infamous statement to Saddam Hussein on January 21, 1994, where you said to Saddam, "Your Excellency, Mr. President, I greet you in the name of many thousands of people in Britain who stood against the tide and opposed the war of aggression against Iraq and continue to oppose the war by economic means, which is aimed to strangle the life out of the great people of Iraq."

You then went on to say you greet the Palestinian people, you went on to note that you thought "the president would appreciate knowing that even today three years after the war I still meet

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with families who are calling their newborn 'son of Saddam.'"

You went on ultimately at the very end to say, "Sir, I salute your strength, your courage, your indefatigability, and I want you to know that we are with you." And I believe it was in Arabic (????), which means "Until victory, until victory, until victory in Jerusalem." And I also would note that you would say that you deeply regret those comments and that the comments were not aimed directly at Saddam but were aimed at the Iraqi people.

In the fall of 1999 you headed a two-month London-to-Baghdad bus trip to gain support for lifting the sanctions on Iraq.

We have your name on Iraqi documents, some prepared before the fall of Saddam, some after, that identify you as one of the allocation holders, that your allocations were then used by Fawaz Zureikat, operating under the name of Meridian Petroleum and Middle East Advanced Semiconductor to actually lift the oil.

We note too, based on the statements of former Iraqi officials as well as some documents and in the cases of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and Alexander Voloshin correspondence in documents, that allocation holders knew that surcharges or oil allocations were paid to Saddam Hussein, and that allocation holders were aware of this and were responsible for the payments.

We have also heard testimony regarding several documents retrieved from the Iraqi Ministry of Oil that demonstrate how Iraq allocated oil to its friends and allies.

Exhibit 13, which you see displayed, (inaudible) Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's dealing with (inaudible) in Phase 11

That chart also lists Contract N1104 with Middle East Advanced Semiconductor.

Footnote 93. Your testimony regarding a SOMO commercial invoice dated June 27, 2002, that shows Middle East Semiconductor loaded 2,360,860 barrels of Iraqi crude oil pursuant to SOMO crude oil sales contract N1104.

Exhibit 12. We heard testimony regarding correspondence between the executive director of SOMO to the Iraqi Oil Minister providing details of contract N1104 and listing your name in parentheses, next to Middle East Advanced Semiconductor and Fawaz Zureikat, who we know lifted the oil. Again statements of detainees, including former Vice President Ramadan, confirm that the name in parentheses--your name--is the allocation holder.

Your testimony regarding Contract N1104, which was signed on December 12, 2001, between SOMO and Fawaz Zureikat,

Navajo president vetoes same-sex marriage ban

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March 1 memo a fake

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Party boy no more

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In ecclesia Romae nolite quaerere, nolite dicere

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Department of Defense teaches creationism in DoD highschools

Bush on Tom Delay, with a trap for the Democrats

Newt nominates Hillary

president of Middle East Advanced Semiconductor.

Your testimony regarding SOMO commercial invoice B13201 that shows Meridian Petroleum lifted 1,014,403 barrels of Iraqi oil pursuant to SOMO crude oil sales contract N923.

Exhibit 45. We heard testimony regarding SOMO chart entitled "Crude Oil Allocation during Phase 9 Memorandum of Understanding" that indicates that contract N923 was executed between SOMO and Mr. Fawaz Zureikat (slash) George Galloway (slash) Meridian Petroleum.

Exhibit 9. We also heard testimony regarding the memo from the executive director of SOMO to the Oil Minister requesting approval of contract N923. The document includes an official Ministry of Oil stamp dated 1/15/2001 and provides details of a contract N923 signed with Meridian Petroleum Company, (parens) Fawaz Zureikat (dash) Mariam's Appeal, indicating that the allocation recipient of the contract N923 was Fawaz Zureikat - Mariam's Appeal.

Mr. Galloway, as I indicated in my opening statement, this is not a court of law. This committee has simply made available information obtained during the investigation from interviews with former Iraqi officials and Iraqi documents to lay out how the Oil-for-Food program worked--how allocations were given to favored friends, how allocation holders made substantial commissions on those allocations to oil companies, what Ramadan called "compensation for support."

But another official in talking about another allocation holder said, "Of course they made a profit. That's the whole point." Surcharges and oil contracts were given back to the Saddam regime and were the responsibility of the allocation holder.

The evidence clearly indicates you as an allocation beneficiary, who transferred the allocations to Fawaz Zureikat, who became chairman of your organization Mariam's Appeal.

Senior Iraqi officials have confirmed that you in fact received oil allocations and that the documents that identify you as an allocation recipient are valid.

If you can help provide any evidence that challenges the veracity of these documents or the statements of former Iraqi officials, we'd welcome that input.

Mr. Galloway, you're appearing before the subcommittee without asserting any privilege or immunity. Indeed, your appearance before the subcommittee is entirely voluntary and on your own accord. No subpoena was issued to secure your appearance.

A stealth attack on the courts, with an allusion to Schiavo

But you *chose* to be a Baptist!

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Phil E. Buster recuperates after Terri Schiavo's death

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In case you were wondering who is really behind Guantánamo

Sealed with a fish

You're appearing before the subcommittee concerning matters that do not arise out of the performance of any of your official duties as a member of the British Parliament but instead concern actions taken by you in your capacity as a private citizen.

Before we begin, pursuant to Rule 6, all witnesses who testify before this subcommittee are required to be sworn.

At this time I'd ask you to rise and please raise your right hand.

[Swearing in]

SEN. COLEMAN: We'll be using a timing system today, Mr. Galloway. You have 10 minutes for an opening statement. If you need more time, we'll certainly accommodate that, and you may proceed.

[Opening statement as given by Times Online]

GALLOWAY: Senator, I am not now, nor have I ever been, an oil trader. and neither has anyone on my behalf. I have never seen a barrel of oil, owned one, bought one, sold one - and neither has anyone on my behalf.

Now I know that standards have slipped in the last few years in Washington, but for a lawyer you are remarkably cavalier with any idea of justice. I am here today but last week you already found me guilty. You traduced my name around the world without ever having asked me a single question, without ever having contacted me, without ever written to me or telephoned me, without any attempt to contact me whatsoever. And you call that justice.

I told the world that Iraq, contrary to your claims did not have weapons of mass destruction.

I told the world, contrary to your claims, that Iraq had no connection to al-Qaeda.

I told the world, contrary to your claims, that Iraq had no connection to the atrocity on 9/11 2001.

I told the world, contrary to your claims, that the Iraqi people would resist a British and American invasion of their country and that the fall of Baghdad would not be the beginning of the end, but merely the end of the beginning.

Senator, in everything I said about Iraq, I turned out to be right and you turned out to be wrong and 100,000 people paid with their lives; 1600 of them American soldiers sent to their deaths on a pack of lies; 15,000 of them wounded, many of them

The smell of fear

Tart Fest: Tucker Carlson interviews Guckert/Gannon (updated)

Fresh appearance of the Virgin

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Mind Bender

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Update on the Iraqi airlift

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disabled forever on a pack of lies.

Now I want to deal with the pages that relate to me in this dossier and I want to point out areas where there are - let's be charitable and say errors. Then I want to put this in the context where I believe it ought to be. On the very first page of your document about me you assert that I have had 'many meetings' with Saddam Hussein. This is false.

I have had two meetings with Saddam Hussein, once in 1994 and once in August of 2002. By no stretch of the English language can that be described as "many meetings" with Saddam Hussein.

As a matter of fact, I have met Saddam Hussein exactly the same number of times as Donald Rumsfeld met him. The difference is Donald Rumsfeld met him to sell him guns and to give him maps the better to target those guns. I met him to try and bring about an end to sanctions, suffering and war, and on the second of the two occasions, I met him to try and persuade him to let Dr Hans Blix and the United Nations weapons inspectors back into the country - a rather better use of two meetings with Saddam Hussein than your own Secretary of State for Defense made of his.

I was an opponent of Saddam Hussein when British and Americans governments and businessmen were selling him guns and gas. I used to demonstrate outside the Iraqi embassy when British and American officials were going in and doing commerce.

You will see from the official parliamentary record, Hansard, from the 15th March 1990 onwards, voluminous evidence that I have a rather better record of opposition to Saddam Hussein than you do and than any other member of the British or American governments do.

Now you say in this document, you quote a source, you have the gall to quote a source, without ever having asked me whether the allegation from the source is true, that I am 'the owner of a company which has made substantial profits from trading in Iraqi oil'.

Senator, I do not own any companies, beyond a small company whose entire purpose, whose sole purpose, is to receive the income from my journalistic earnings from my employer, Associated Newspapers, in London. I do not own a company that's been trading in Iraqi oil. And you have no business to carry a quotation, utterly unsubstantiated and false, implying otherwise.

Now you have nothing on me, Senator, except my name on lists of names from Iraq, many of which have been drawn up after the

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installation of your puppet government in Baghdad. If you had any of the letters against me that you had against Zhirinovskiy, and even Pasqua, they would have been up there in your slideshow for the members of your committee today.

You have my name on lists provided to you by the Duelfer inquiry, provided to him by the convicted bank robber, and fraudster and conman Ahmed Chalabi who many people to their credit in your country now realize played a decisive role in leading your country into the disaster in Iraq.

There were 270 names on that list originally. That's somehow been filleted down to the names you chose to deal with in this committee. Some of the names on that committee included the former secretary to his Holiness Pope John Paul II, the former head of the African National Congress Presidential office and many others who had one defining characteristic in common: they all stood against the policy of sanctions and war which you vociferously prosecuted and which has led us to this disaster.

You quote Mr Dahar Yassein Ramadan. Well, you have something on me, I've never met Mr Dahar Yassein Ramadan. Your sub-committee apparently has. But I do know that he's your prisoner, I believe he's in Abu Ghraib prison. I believe he is facing war crimes charges, punishable by death. In these circumstances, knowing what the world knows about how you treat prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison, in Bagram Airbase, in Guantanamo Bay, including I may say, British citizens being held in those places.

I'm not sure how much credibility anyone would put on anything you manage to get from a prisoner in those circumstances. But you quote 13 words from Dahar Yassein Ramadan whom I have never met. If he said what he said, then he is wrong.

And if you had any evidence that I had ever engaged in any actual oil transaction, if you had any evidence that anybody ever gave me any money, it would be before the public and before this committee today because I agreed with your Mr Greenblatt [Mark Greenblatt, legal counsel on the committee].

Your Mr Greenblatt was absolutely correct. What counts is not the names on the paper, what counts is where's the money. Senator? Who paid me hundreds of thousands of dollars of money? The answer to that is nobody. And if you had anybody who ever paid me a penny, you would have produced them today.

Now you refer at length to a company names in these documents as Aredio Petroleum. I say to you under oath here today: I have never heard of this company, I have never met anyone from this company. This company has never paid a penny to me and I'll tell you something else: I can assure you that Aredio Petroleum has

unconstitutional

Speaking of war criminals: John Kerry in Cambodia

Ramsey Clark on international justice; Bill Clinton on Saddam

Doomed if you do and doomed if you don't

Photo from Abu Ghraib?

Ah, to live free in Denver!

Insurer pays Armenians—90 years later

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Sharon quicker on the draw

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Sermon of the Day

And they said the Democrats would ban the Bible...

Xymphora on the Palestinian election

Addicting students to fascism

Word of the Day (metric)

Lyric of the Day

"Rethinking" tactics (updated)

Statistic of the Day

never paid a single penny to the Mariam Appeal Campaign. Not a thin dime. I don't know who Aredio Petroleum are, but I daresay if you were to ask them they would confirm that they have never met me or ever paid me a penny.

Whilst I'm on that subject, who is this senior former regime official that you spoke to yesterday? Don't you think I have a right to know? Don't you think the Committee and the public have a right to know who this senior former regime official you were quoting against me interviewed yesterday actually is?

Now, one of the most serious of the mistakes you have made in this set of documents is, to be frank, such a schoolboy howler as to make a fool of the efforts that you have made. You assert on page 19, not once but twice, that the documents that you are referring to cover a different period in time from the documents covered by The Daily Telegraph which were a subject of a libel action won by me in the High Court in England late last year.

You state that The Daily Telegraph article cited documents from 1992 and 1993 whilst you are dealing with documents dating from 2001. Senator, The Daily Telegraph's documents date identically to the documents that you were dealing with in your report here. None of The Daily Telegraph's documents dealt with a period of 1992, 1993. I had never set foot in Iraq until late in 1993 - never in my life. There could possibly be no documents relating to Oil-for-Food matters in 1992, 1993, for the Oil-for-Food scheme did not exist at that time.

And yet you've allocated a full section of this document to claiming that your documents are from a different era to the Daily Telegraph documents when the opposite is true. Your documents and the Daily Telegraph documents deal with exactly the same period.

But perhaps you were confusing the Daily Telegraph action with the Christian Science Monitor. The Christian Science Monitor did indeed publish on its front pages a set of allegations against me very similar to the ones that your committee have made. They did indeed rely on documents which started in 1992, 1993. These documents were unmasked by the Christian Science Monitor themselves as forgeries.

Now, the neo-con websites and newspapers in which you're such a hero, senator, were all absolutely cock-a-hoop at the publication of the Christian Science Monitor documents, they were all absolutely convinced of their authenticity. They were all absolutely convinced that these documents showed me receiving \$10 million from the Saddam regime. And they were all lies.

In the same week as the Daily Telegraph published their

U.S. anti-U.N. aid bloc to dissolve

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Are they practicing for Iraq or for Toledo?

Who the hell writes this stuff?

I'd like that with fries—hold the prayer

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WaPo finally reports College Republican larceny of the elderly

WaPo notices assault on Christmas

U.S. assumptions continue to be dashed on the I-rock of reality

Washington Supremes say uncounted votes may be counted

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Hollywood to start catching up on cashing in

The Law Lords have decided — Let those people go!

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Christmas fascism

Ohio's Secretary of State plans run for governor — Ohioans need help

Crazy is as Crazy does

Chilean dictator and secret police get their comeuppance

Anti-human-rights law to go to the Law Lords

Assault on Christmas continues—media fighting the good fight (updated)

documents against me, the Christian Science Monitor published theirs which turned out to be forgeries and the British newspaper, Mail on Sunday, purchased a third set of documents which also upon forensic examination turned out to be forgeries. So there's nothing fanciful about this. Nothing at all fanciful about it.

The existence of forged documents implicating me in commercial activities with the Iraqi regime is a proven fact. It's a proven fact that these forged documents existed and were being circulated amongst right-wing newspapers in Baghdad and around the world in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Iraqi regime.

Now, Senator, I gave my heart and soul to oppose the policy that you promoted. I gave my political life's blood to try to stop the mass killing of Iraqis by the sanctions on Iraq which killed one million Iraqis, most of them children, most of them died before they even knew that they were Iraqis, but they died for no other reason other than that they were Iraqis with the misfortune to be born at that time. I gave my heart and soul to stop you committing the disaster that you did commit in invading Iraq. And I told the world that your case for the war was a pack of lies.

I told the world that Iraq, contrary to your claims did not have weapons of mass destruction. I told the world, contrary to your claims, that Iraq had no connection to al-Qaeda. I told the world, contrary to your claims, that Iraq had no connection to the atrocity on 9/11 2001. I told the world, contrary to your claims, that the Iraqi people would resist a British and American invasion of their country and that the fall of Baghdad would not be the beginning of the end, but merely the end of the beginning.

Senator, in everything I said about Iraq, I turned out to be right and you turned out to be wrong and 100,000 people paid with their lives; 1600 of them American soldiers sent to their deaths on a pack of lies; 15,000 of them wounded, many of them disabled forever on a pack of lies.

If the world had listened to Kofi Annan, whose dismissal you demanded, if the world had listened to President Chirac who you want to paint as some kind of corrupt traitor, if the world had listened to me and the anti-war movement in Britain, we would not be in the disaster that we are in today. Senator, this is the mother of all smokescreens. You are trying to divert attention from the crimes that you supported, from the theft of billions of dollars of Iraq's wealth.

Have a look at the real Oil-for-Food scandal. Have a look at the 14 months you were in charge of Baghdad, the first 14 months when \$8.8 billion of Iraq's wealth went missing on your watch. Have a look at Halliburton and other American corporations that stole not only Iraq's money, but the money of the American

Another reason I won't be supporting Hillary for President in 2008

Holy Holy War!

From a femme dyke's "Manifesta"

You just can't make this stuff up! Kerik withdraws

It's the press's fault

Desertions growing

Oh, those moderates!

Missing person: Marion Boyd — last seen in Canada

The power of nightmares

Chicken deconstructed

A very odd headline

Hinzman refugee hearing in Canada - Day 2

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Take your vitamins

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Hinzman refugee hearing in Canada - Day 1

Ohio vote now official

Early warning on Guantánamo torture from the FBI

Thailand bombs its Muslim region with 100 million origami

Army may be opening your garage door

No court martial for recalcitrant troops

Canada must decide whether to support U.S. war crimes

Bev Harris vs. Keith Olbermann

Evidence from torture OK, says the government

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Irregularities in Warren County Ohio (updated)

Napalm being used again in Iraq?

Tavis Smiley leaving NPR

A fun site

Ottawa shutting down for Bush, spinning like a top

David Broder's delirium

The death of the Left?

Halliburton losing its ass—Oh sorry, that was our ass

Will the administration be going on "Orange alert"?

taxpayer.

Have a look at the oil that you didn't even meter, that you were shipping out of the country and selling, the proceeds of which went who knows where? Have a look at the \$800 million you gave to American military commanders to hand out around the country without even counting it or weighing it.

Have a look at the real scandal breaking in the newspapers today, revealed in the earlier testimony in this committee. That the biggest sanctions busters were not me or Russian politicians or French politicians. The real sanctions busters were your own companies with the connivance of your own Government.

SEN. COLEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Galloway.

Mr. Galloway, can we start by talking about Fawaz Zureikat. Do you know the individual?

GALLOWAY: I know him very well.

SEN. COLEMAN: In fact you were Best Man at his wedding?

GALLOWAY: I was.

SEN. COLEMAN: And at some point in time he became chair of Mariam's Appeals. Is that correct?

GALLOWAY: He did. Yeah.

SEN. COLEMAN: And can you tell me when that occurred?

GALLOWAY: I think in late 2000 or early 2001.

SEN. COLEMAN: Before Mr. Zureikat was chair of Mariam's Appeal, who had that position?

GALLOWAY: I was the founding chairman.

SEN. COLEMAN: Was there someone between you and ---

GALLOWAY: Mr. Hoffman (?)

SEN. COLEMAN: And do you recall when he had that position?

GALLOWAY: I don't.

SEN. COLEMAN: Mr. Zureikat was a significant contributor to Mariam's Appeals. Is that correct?

GALLOWAY: He was the second biggest contributor. The main

Small but sweet victories

Tony Blair's Orange Alert (updated)

Spooks or Troops? The White House can't decide

What if the French had really done this?

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How the Republicans handle a disputed election

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Gathering momentum

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The case of Carolyn Parrish

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A curious hostage release

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The best place in the world to do business (edited)

A slender reed (updated 11/08/04)

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John Kerry's last flip-flop

Kerry swoops past Bush in electronic futures

contributor was Sheik Zayed, the ruler of the United Arab Emirates, which you've glossed over in your report because it's slightly embarrassing to you. And the third major contributor was the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, which you've equally glossed over because it's embarrassing to you.

And both of those individuals are your friends.

SEN. COLEMAN: How much did Mr. Zureikat contribute to Mariam's Appeals?

GALLOWAY: Roughly 375,000 English pounds.

SEN. COLEMAN: About \$600,000?

GALLOWAY: I don't know the conversion. But it's 375,000 Sterling.

SEN. COLEMAN: If you can, uh... By the way, Mr. Zureikat was your representative--uh, designated representative--for the activities of Mariam's Appeals. Is that correct?

GALLOWAY: For the activities of Mariam's Appeals. Yes.

SEN. COLEMAN: And when did he get that position?

GALLOWAY: I think late 2000.

SEN. COLEMAN: Late 2000. Looking at Exhibit 9--and I think you have the books in front of you--that appears to be a document from the Ministry of Oil that testimony has indicated that the signature is an accurate signature.

Do you have any reason to believe that that document is false?

GALLOWAY: Well, I have told you that I have never heard of Aredio Petroleum, and I've told you that the Mariam Appeal never received a single penny from Aredio Petroleum. So the information at the top of the page, if you've translated it accurately, is false.

SEN. COLEMAN: Have you heard of Middle East ASI company?

GALLOWAY: Yes. That's Mr. Zureikat's company.

SEN. COLEMAN: I turn to Exhibit 12.

And that purports again to be a stamp of the Ministry of Oil of Iraq and this purports to be showing the details of a contract signed with Middle East ASI company, Mr. George Galloway and Fuwaz Zureikat. So Middle East ASI is Mr. Zureikat's company?

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GALLOWAY: Middle East ASI is Mr. Zureikat's company. He may well have signed an oil contract. It had nothing to do with me.

SEN. COLEMAN: He was chair of Mariam's Appeals in 2000. I take it you knew him well. Did he ever talk with you about his dealings with oil in Iraq?

GALLOWAY: He did better than that. He talked to everybody. He talked to every English journalist that came through Baghdad-- who he helped at our request to get the interviews and to get to the places that they wanted and needed to go. He was introduced to everyone as a major benefactor of the Mariam Appeal and as a businessman doing extensive business in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East.

SEN. COLEMAN: I'm asking you specifically, In 2001 were you aware he was doing oil deals with Iraq?

GALLOWAY: I was aware that he was doing extensive business with Iraq. I did not know the details of it. It was not my business.

SEN. COLEMAN: So this is somebody who was the chairman of committee that you know well and you're not able to say that he was...

GALLOWAY: Well, there's a lot of contributors - I've just been checking -- to your political campaigns.

SEN. COLEMAN: There's not many at that level, Mr. Galloway -

GALLOWAY: I've checked your website. There are lots of contributors to your political campaign funds. I don't suppose you ask any of them how they made the money they give you.

SEN. COLEMAN: Certainly not at \$600,000 American.

But let me ask you again, just so that the record is clear--that it's clear on the record--that you're not contesting then the validity of Document 12, Exhibit 12. You're indicating that Mr. Zureikat could have had dealings with Iraq. You're saying that at that point in time you're not aware that he had oil dealings with Iraq?

GALLOWAY: First of all, I've only seen this document today. And I'm telling you that insofar as my name is in a parenthesis the information in it is false.

I've no reason to believe that Mr. Zureikat's company didn't do that particular oil deal.

But this is your problem in this whole affair. There is nobody arguing that Mr. Zureikat's company did not do oil transactions

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and many other--much bigger, frankly--business contracts with Iraq. There is nobody contesting that Mr. Zureikat made substantial donations to our campaign against sanctions and war.

My point is--you have accused me, personally, of enriching myself, of taking money from Iraq. And that is false and unjust.

SEN. COLEMAN: Mr. Galloway, do you recall an interview you had with a Jeremy Paxman in April 23 of 2003,

[Addressing aide] Can we have a copy of the transcript of that?

I'd like to refresh your memory.

[To aide] Can you get a copy of that.

As we get you a copy, you were asked a question, talking about business dealings with Mr. Zureikat in Iraq. And at the least the transcript that I have--and I'd ask you to let me know if it's incorrect--your quote is, something about business in Iraq

"Well, I'm trying to reach him"--this is in 2003--"I'm trying to reach him to ask him if he's ever been involved in oil deals because I don't know the answer to that." So in 2003 you're saying you don't know the answer to whether he was involved in oil deals?

GALLOWAY: Well, I told you in my previous two answers--I knew that Mr. Zureikat was heavily involved in business in Iraq and elsewhere, but that it was none of my business what particular transactions or business he was involved in--any more than you ask the American and Israel Public Affairs Committee [AIPAC] when they donate money to you or pay for your trips to Israel, where they got the money from.

SEN. COLEMAN: So Mr. Galloway, you would have this committee believe that your designated representative from the Mariam's Appeal becomes the chair of the Mariam's Appeal, was listed in Iraqi documents as obviously doing business, oil deals with Iraq, that you never had a conversation with him in 2001 or whether he was doing oil business with Iraq.

GALLOWAY: No, I'm doing better than that. I'm telling you that I knew that he was doing a vast amount of business with Iraq. Much bigger, as I said a couple of answers ago, than any oil business he did. In the airports he was the representative of some of the world's biggest companies in Iraq. He was an extremely wealthy businessman doing very extensive business in Iraq.

Not only did I know that, but I told everyone about it. I

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emblazoned it in our literature, on our Web site, precisely so that people like you could not later credibly question my bonafides in that regard. So I did better than that.

I never asked him if he was trading in oil. I knew he was a big trader with Iraq, and I told everybody about it.

SEN. COLEMAN: So in 2003, when you said you didn't know whether he was doing oil deals, were you telling the truth at that time?

GALLOWAY: Yes, I was. I've never known until the *Telegraph* story appeared that he was alleged to be doing oil deals. But his oil deals are about one-tenth of the business that he did in Iraq. So I did better than telling people about his oil deals. I told them he was doing much, much more than that.

SEN. COLEMAN: So Exhibit 14, which purports to be a contract with Middle East Semiconductor, Contract M1214. Middle East Semiconductor, again, is Mr. Zureikat's company, is that correct?

GALLOWAY: Yes, it is.

SEN. COLEMAN: So do you have any reason to believe that this document is false?

GALLOWAY: Well, the parenthesis, if the parenthesis implies--as you've been arguing all morning that it implies--that this was being signed for by Middle East Advanced Semiconductors in order to pass the money on to me, is false.

Mr. Zureikat and Middle East Semiconductors or any other company have never given me any money. And if they had, you would have it up here on a board, and in front of the committee here.

SEN. COLEMAN: I take it, Mr. Galloway, that in regard to any surcharges paid to Saddam--I think it's Footnote 89, which refers to the surcharge for the contract, focused on Mariam's Appeal--you're saying that that document, first of all, any contract between Iraq and Mariam's Appeals is false?

GALLOWAY: Well, Senator, I had gotten used to the allegation that I was taking money from Saddam Hussein. It's actually surreal to hear in this room this morning that I'm being accused of giving money *to* Saddam Hussein.

This is utterly preposterous, utterly preposterous, that I gave \$300,000 to Saddam Hussein. This is beyond the realms of the ridiculous.

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05/23/2004 - 05/29/2004

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Now. The Mariam Appeals finances have been investigated by the Charity Commission on the order of Lord Goldsmith.	06/27/2004 - 07/03/2004
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(You'll recall him, Senator. He's the attorney general. Practically the only lawman in the world that thought your war with Iraq was legal, thought Britain joining your war with Iraq was legal.)	07/11/2004 - 07/17/2004
	07/18/2004 - 07/24/2004
He ordered the Charity Commission to investigate the Mariam Appeal. Using their statutory powers, they recovered all money in and all money out ever received or spent by the Mariam Appeal. They found no impropriety. And I can assure you, they found no money from an oil contract from Aredio Petroleum--none whatsoever.	07/25/2004 - 07/31/2004
	08/01/2004 - 08/07/2004
SEN. COLEMAN: And the commission did not look at these documents relating to this contract with Iraq. Is that correct?--	08/08/2004 - 08/14/2004
	08/15/2004 - 08/21/2004
GALLOWAY: --No, but they looked better than that, Senator.--	
SEN. COLEMAN: --I'm not asking you better. I'm asking the question whether they looked at these documents.--	08/22/2004 - 08/28/2004
	08/29/2004 - 09/04/2004
GALLOWAY: --Senator, you're not listening to what I am saying. They did better than that.	
	09/05/2004 - 09/11/2004
They looked at every penny in and every penny out. And they did not find, I can assure you, any trace of a donation from a company called Aredio Petroleum, or, frankly, a donation from any company other than Mr. Zureikat's company. That's a fact.	09/12/2004 - 09/18/2004
	09/19/2004 - 09/25/2004
SEN. COLEMAN: If I can get back to Mr. Zureikat one more time. Do you recall a time when he specifically -- when you had a conversation with him about oil dealings in Iraq?	09/26/2004 - 10/02/2004
	10/03/2004 - 10/09/2004
GALLOWAY: I have already answered that question. I can assure you, Mr. Zureikat never gave me a penny from an oil deal, from a cake deal, from a bread deal, or from any deal. He donated money to our campaign, which we publicly brandished on all of our literature, along with the other donors to the campaign.	10/10/2004 - 10/16/2004
	10/17/2004 - 10/23/2004
SEN. COLEMAN: Again, Mr. Galloway, a simple question. I'm looking for either a yes or no. Did you ever have a conversation with Mr. Zureikat where he informed you that he had oil dealings with Iraq, yes or no?	10/24/2004 - 10/30/2004
	10/31/2004 - 11/06/2004
GALLOWAY: Not before this <i>Daily Telegraph</i> report, no.	
	11/07/2004 - 11/13/2004
SEN. COLEMAN: Senator Levin.	
	11/14/2004 - 11/20/2004
SEN. CARL LEVIN (D): Thank you, Mr. Galloway.	

Mr. Galloway, could you take a look at the Exhibit Number 12...	11/21/2004 - 11/27/2004
GALLOWAY: Yes.	11/28/2004 - 12/04/2004
SEN. LEVIN: ... where your name is in parenthesis after Mr. Zureikat's?--	12/05/2004 - 12/11/2004
GALLOWAY: Before Mr. Zureikat's, if I'm looking at the right exhibit--	12/12/2004 - 12/18/2004
SEN. LEVIN: I'm sorry. I was going to finish my sentence -- my question, though. My question was, where your name is in parenthesis after Mr. Zureikat's company.	12/19/2004 - 12/25/2004
GALLOWAY: I apologize, Senator.	12/26/2004 - 01/01/2005
SEN. LEVIN: That's all right. Now, that document--assuming it's an accurate translation of the document underneath it--would you... you're not alleging here today that the document is a forgery, I gather?	01/02/2005 - 01/08/2005
GALLOWAY: Well, I have no idea, Senator, if it's a forgery or not.	01/09/2005 - 01/15/2005
SEN. LEVIN: But you're not alleging.	01/16/2005 - 01/22/2005
GALLOWAY: I'm saying that the information insofar as it relates to me is fake.	01/23/2005 - 01/29/2005
SEN. LEVIN: I -- is wrong?	01/30/2005 - 02/05/2005
GALLOWAY: It's wrong.	02/06/2005 - 02/12/2005
SEN. LEVIN: But you're not alleging that the document...	02/13/2005 - 02/19/2005
GALLOWAY: Well, I have no way of knowing, Senator.	02/20/2005 - 02/26/2005
SEN. LEVIN: That's fine. So you're not alleging?	02/27/2005 - 03/05/2005
GALLOWAY: No, I have no way -- I have no way of knowing. This is the first time...	03/06/2005 - 03/12/2005
SEN. LEVIN: Is it fair to say since you don't know, you're not alleging?	03/13/2005 - 03/19/2005
GALLOWAY: Well, it would have been nice to have seen it before today.	03/20/2005 - 03/26/2005
SEN. LEVIN: Is it fair to say, though, that either because you've not seen it before or because -- otherwise, you don't know. You're not alleging the document's a fake. Is that fair to say?	03/27/2005 - 04/02/2005
	04/03/2005 - 04/09/2005
	04/10/2005 - 04/16/2005

04/17/2005 - 04/23/2005

GALLOWAY: I haven't had it in my possession long enough to form a view about that.

04/24/2005 - 04/30/2005

SEN. LEVIN: All right. Would you let the subcommittee know after you've had it in your possession long enough whether you consider the document a fake.

05/01/2005 - 05/07/2005

GALLOWAY: Yes, although there is a -- there is an academic quality about it, Senator Levin, because you have already found me guilty before you -- before you actually allowed me to come here and speak for myself.

05/08/2005 - 05/14/2005

05/15/2005 - 05/21/2005

SEN. LEVIN: Well, in order to attempt to clear your name, would you...

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GALLOWAY: Well, let's be clear about something.

SEN. LEVIN: Well, let me finish my question. Let me be clear about that, first of all.

Would you submit to the subcommittee after you've had a chance to review this document whether or not, in your judgment, it is a forgery? Will you do that?

GALLOWAY: Well, if you will give me the original. I mean, this is not -- presumably, you wrote this English translation.

SEN. LEVIN: Yes, and there's a copy underneath it of the...

GALLOWAY: Well, yes, there is a copy of a gray blur. If you'll give me -- if you'll give me the original ...

SEN. LEVIN: The copy of the original.

(CROSSTALK)

GALLOWAY: Give me the original in a decipherable way, then of course I'll...

SEN. LEVIN: That would be fine. We appreciate that.

GALLOWAY: Yes.

SEN. LEVIN: Now, at the bottom of this document, assuming -- assuming it's not a forgery for a moment, it says "surcharge." Are we together?

GALLOWAY: Yes.

SEN. LEVIN: "As per the instructions of Your Excellency over the phone on 12/11/01 of not accepting the company's proposal

unless they pay the debt incurred since phase eight."

If, in fact -- if, in fact, Mr. Zureikat's company paid a surcharge or a kickback to the Iraqi government in order to obtain an allocation of oil, would that trouble you?

GALLOWAY: Well, as it turns out, from your own testimony, that practically everyone in the world, and especially the United States, was paying kickbacks.

SEN. LEVIN: My question... It troubles me a great deal. As you've heard from my statement today, I'm very much troubled that we have an oil company that was involved in this and we're going to go after that oil company.

Now let me ask you. I've expressed my view about Bayoil. So now let me ask you about Mr. Zureikat's company.

If in fact Mr. Zureikat's company paid a kickback to the Iraqi government in order to obtain this allocation, would you be troubled? That's my question.

GALLOWAY: Yeah. That's a good question. And will you allow me to answer it seriously and not in a yes-or-no fashion? Because I could give you a glib--

SEN. LEVIN: Providing you give us an answer, I'd be delighted to hear it.

GALLOWAY: Here's my answer and I hope it does delight you.

I opposed the Oil-for-Food program with all my heart. Not for the reasons that you are troubled by, but because it was a program which saw the death—I'm talking about the death now; I'm talking about a mass grave—of a million people, most of them children, in Iraq. The Oil-for-Food program gave 30 cents per day per Iraqi for the period of the Oil-for-Food program—30 cents for all food, all medicine, all clothes, all schools, all hospitals, all public services. I believe that the United Nations had no right to starve Iraq's people because it had fallen out with Iraq's dictator.

David Bonior, your former colleague, Senator, whom I admired very much--a former chief whip here on the Hill--described the sanctions policy as "infanticide masquerading as politics." Senator Coleman thinks that's funny, but I think it's the most profound description of that era that I have ever read--infanticide masquerading as politics.

So I opposed this program with all my heart. Not because Saddam was getting kickbacks from it--and I don't know when it's alleged these kickbacks started. Not because some individuals

were getting rich doing business with Iraq under it. But because it was a murderous policy of killing huge numbers of Iraqis. That's what troubles *me*. That's what troubles me.

Now, if you're asking me, "Is Mr. Zureikat in some difficulty?" -- like all the other companies that it would appear paid kickbacks to the Iraqi regime--no doubt he is. Although it would appear he's quite small beer compared to the American companies that were involved in the same thing.

SEN. LEVIN: Now my question...

GALLOWAY: That's what-- I told you what troubles me.

SEN. LEVIN: I'm not asking you-- [crosstalk]

My question... Now that you've given us your statement about your feeling about the Oil-for-Food program--My question is, Would you be troubled if you knew that Mr. Zureikat paid a kickback in order to get an allocation of an oil contract? That's a very simple question.

GALLOWAY: It's Mr. Zureikat's problem, not mine.

SEN. LEVIN: It would not trouble you?

GALLOWAY: It's Mr. Zureikat's problem, not mine.

SEN. LEVIN: And so that if a kickback, which was illegal under international--now you may not agree with the U.N., but that's the international community that you're attacking, which is fine. You're entitled to do that. You're entitled and I'll defend your right to do it. But you're attacking a U.N. program--which is your right to do--which was aimed at providing humanitarian assistance to try to alleviate the problems that the sanctions provided--which is your right to do. But my question--which you are so far evading--is, Would you be troubled if that U.N. Oil-for-Food program was being circumvented by the kind of kickbacks which were taking place and being given to Saddam Hussein in order to obtain allocations under that program *if* Mr. Zureikat participated in that kickback scheme, which violated the U.N. sanc... You may not have agreed with it, but it violated the program. Would it trouble you if he violated that U.N. program in that way? That's my question.

GALLOWAY: Senator, there are many things--

SEN. LEVIN: I know. Other things trouble you. But can you just give us a straightforward answer? You've given us a long explanation of other things that trouble you, which is your right. Now I'm asking you whether *that* troubles you.

GALLOWAY: It troubles me that it might put him in difficulty. It troubles me that it might now lead to a prosecution of him. It troubles me that this will be further smoke in the smokescreen. But I, root and branch, opposed this [SEN. LEVIN: I understand...] Oil-for-Food program.

SEN. LEVIN: There were a lot of things you opposed, but you don't believe should be circumvented in illegal ways. Isn't that--

GALLOWAY: But, please, Senator! You supported the illegal attack on Iraq. Don't talk to me about illegality--

SEN. LEVIN: Sorry about that. I didn't. But that's beside the point. [Crosstalk] That's beside the point. You're wrong in your--

GALLOWAY: Well, I'm collectively talking about the Senate. Not you personally.

SEN. LEVIN: Well, that's okay. Let me go back to my question. I don't want to get involved in--

GALLOWAY: Why not? You want to talk about illegality?

SEN. LEVIN: No.

GALLOWAY: You launched an illegal war, which has killed a 100,000 people. You want me to be troubled?

SEN. LEVIN: No, I want you to answer questions which are fairly put and directly in front of you. Now I'll ask you one last--two last questions. *If--if--*Mr. Zureikat's contribution to Mariam's Appeal came from the sale of oil--or his share of the sale from oil--which he was able to obtain because he paid a kickback in violation of the U.N. program. Would that contribution trouble you? That's my question.

GALLOWAY: Well, Senator--

SEN. LEVIN: If you can't give a short answer, just--

GALLOWAY: I'll give as short as I can, and I appreciate your fairness in this.

Fundraising for political purposes is seldom pretty, as any American politician could testify. I took the view--I can be criticized for it, have been criticized for it--that I would fundraise from the kings of Arabia whose political systems I have opposed all my life in order to raise funds for what I thought was an emergency, facing a disaster. And I did not ask Mr. Zureikat which part of his profits from his entire business empire he was making donations to our--

SEN. LEVIN: That wasn't my question. My question was, Would it trouble you if you found that out?

It's okay. You're not going to answer. I want to go to my next question.

You're simply not going to answer. I will say, American politicians who find the source of money after it's given to them is troubling--they find out something they didn't know afterwards--frequently will--and hopefully, I think always--at least frequently will return that money, will say they disagree with the source of the money. Hopefully all of us will do that. But whether or not we all live up to that standard, you clearly do not adopt that as a standard for contributions to Mariam's Appeal. You're not going to look at the source of the money; you're just simply going to accept the money, and you've made that clear.

I wanted just to ask you about Tariq Aziz.

GALLOWAY: Yeah.

SEN. LEVIN: Tariq Aziz. You've indicated you, you--who you didn't talk to and who you did talk to. Did you have conversations with Tariq Aziz about the award of oil allocations? That's my question.

GALLOWAY: Never.

SEN. LEVIN: Thank you. I'm done. Thank you.

SEN. COLEMAN: Just one follow-up on the Tariq Aziz question. How often did you uh ... Can you describe the relation with Tariq Aziz?

GALLOWAY: Friendly.

SEN. COLEMAN: How often did you meet him?

GALLOWAY: Many times.

SEN. COLEMAN: Can you give an estimate of that?

GALLOWAY: No. Many times.

SEN. COLEMAN: Is it more than five?

GALLOWAY: Yes, sir.

SEN. COLEMAN: More than ten?

GALLOWAY: Yes.

SEN. COLEMAN: Fifteen? Around fifteen?

GALLOWAY: Well, we're getting nearer, but I haven't counted. But many times. I'm saying to you "Many times," and I'm saying to you that I was friendly with him.

SEN. COLEMAN: And you describe him as "a very dear friend"?

GALLOWAY: I think you've quoted me as saying "a dear, dear friend." I don't often use the double adjective, but--

SEN. COLEMAN: --I was looking into your heart on that.--

GALLOWAY: --but "friend" I have no problem with.

Senator, just before you go on--I do hope that you'll avail yourself of this dossier that I have produced. And I am really speaking through you to Senator Levin. This is what I have said about Saddam Hussein.

SEN. COLEMAN: Well, we'll enter that into the record without objection. I have no further questions of the witness. You're excused, Mr. Galloway.

GALLOWAY: Thank you very much.

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Friday, May 20, 2005

Proposed Gaza withdrawal ends in Israeli sparring match

Last February the Israeli parliament went along with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to withdraw Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip. The withdrawal has since been postponed till mid-August.

It has surely been the most tendentious decision by the Israeli government of recent times. The Israeli Gazans don't plan to move, and there is more than a little skepticism that the withdrawal will ever happen. It is said to be splitting Israeli society down the middle, with the result that even the wives of the diplomatic corps cannot live side by side peacefully.

Here's what happened in a recent bout. In one corner we had Anne Ayalon, wife of the Israeli ambassador to the U.S. In the

opposing corner was Judy Nir Moses-Shalom, wife of the Israeli Foreign Minister, who would normally be the favorite in this challenge match.

Mme. Shalom entered the ring, fresh from her hairdresser, ready to pull someone's bleached hair out by the roots. You see, Mme. Shalom didn't get to meet Madonna when Madonna was in Israel, and this low blow came because someone at the Washington embassy—we won't name names—failed to fit Mme. Shalom into Madonna's itinerary.

Mme. Shalom—whose family is among the controllers of Israel's free and independent media—therefore allowed the family newspaper to report that Mme. Ayalon "mistreated domestic workers in the Washington embassy" and that she "called some workers 'retarded' and screamed at others." While no one disputes the veracity of the charge—least of all the workers—this amounts to a kidney punch in diplomatic circles.

But Ayalon was no push-over and gave as good as she got. Her husband the Ambassador fired off a letter of complaint to the Israeli attorney general alleging that the Shaloms (especially Mrs. Shalom) had been interfering in the embassy's work—a remarkable jab in view of the fact that an embassy would normally take its directions from the Foreign Minister.

But Mme. Ayalon has been under the guidance of a top Israeli trainer. A Sharon "senior figure"—who employed the royal "We" when speaking to the press—said that "Ayalon is an excellent ambassador. We are pleased with his work and as far as we're concerned he should continue." This effectively blocked the anticipated counterpunch.

If the *Telegraph* has it right, the public was invited to attend this little bout because Foreign Minister Shalom has been reluctant "to support enthusiastically Mr Sharon's policy of withdrawal this summer from Gaza and part of the West Bank."

Okay, okay. I support the withdrawal. So when do I get to meet Madonna?

5:13 PM [Add a comment](#) [Link to this post](#)

The Psyops plane

While checking out sources on the previous post, I came upon the EC130-J, also known as "the Flying Broadcaster," which is a modified Hercules C130.

According to a blog of Radio Netherlands,

The EC-130J Commando Solo III is a specially-modified C-130J Hercules medium transport aircraft that conducts information operations, psychological operations and civil affairs broadcasts in AM, FM, HF, TV and military communications bands. These missions are flown and run by the the 193rd Special Operations Wing, an Air National Guard Unit. Commando Solo was used prior to and during military operations in Iraq, and **more recently for broadcasts to Cuba.**

The first broadcast of TV Marti via plane apparently started in August of last year. Back in 1999 Reuters [described](#) Radio Marti as a "U.S.-owned station, **intended to broadcast unbiased news to the Cuban people.**"

Do you think we could get them to point that thing at us?

11:38 AM [Add a comment](#) [Link to this post](#)

How the RAF Hercules C130 was shot down in Iraq

I'm reluctant to write about this. The story is based on an anonymous source (or sources) who has viewed a military report that has not yet been released, and the report itself is only an interim report. If I get this wrong and rioting breaks out, I'll have to retract this post, and then my credibility, such as it is, will be in shambles. So with those caveats, which I recommend to all journalists everywhere...

On January 30, a Royal Air Force Hercules C130, a transport plane, went down in Iraq causing the greatest loss to British forces in any one incident. Speculation surged for a few days as to the cause, then was forgotten.

On Tuesday Thomas Harding of the *Telegraph* [wrote](#) that a cause has been determined—

An interim Ministry of Defence report has ruled out almost everything apart from enemy fire and it was suggested that a missile or rocket-propelled grenade could have brought down the aircraft.

But an official told The Daily Telegraph yesterday that the report concluded that the Hercules had been shot down by anti-aircraft artillery, as it flew at a low altitude, possibly 150ft.

"It was shredded by a multi-barrelled 20mm canon," the official said. "They have worked out that's what caused the crash."

The gun is believed to have been a 1960s twin-barrel Zu-23, made in China or the Soviet Union, left over from the Saddam Hussein regime.

It has an effective range of 2,000 yards and can be mounted on a lorry or set on wheels.

It is not known why the Hercules, which was equipped with sophisticated defensive measures, was flying at low altitude for the 40-minute trip.

11:17 AM [Add a comment](#) [Link to this post](#)

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Answer to yesterday's Trivia question

Question: *Which Hollywood actor said in 2002 that George Galloway was one of the two people he would most like to kill?*

That would be John Malkovich, which gives us a clue to what it's like being John Malkovich.

According to the BBC,

Malkovich is reported to have said that the Glasgow Kelvin MP, George Galloway, was one of two people he would most like to kill.

The source of Malkovich's anger appears to be Mr Galloway's condemnation of Israel's action against Palestinians and his criticism of the west's policies on Iraq.

The actor was addressing students at the Cambridge union debating society when he was asked who he would most like to "fight to the death".

Malkovich, star of movies including *Dangerous Liaisons* and *The Killing Fields*, replied: "I'd rather just shoot them."

He named Mr Galloway and The Independent newspaper's Middle East correspondent **Robert Fisk**.

....

Last month [April 2002], Mr Galloway renewed his call for people in Scotland to boycott goods from Israel in response to violence in the Middle East.

9:39 PM [Add a comment](#) [Link to this post](#)

The only Saudi who couldn't get away

I almost feel sorry for Princess Hana Al Jader, confined to house arrest while facing charges of slavery that could get her 20 years. What with all those Saudi nationals getting special permission to fly out of the country after 9/11 and George Bush holding hands with Crown Prince Abdullah, she must take a very dim view of U.S. justice. It must appear as if she were being singled out. After all, the "crimes" she's charged with are standard practice back home.

Her attorney was back in court this week, trying to get her out of her electronic bracelet. [According to the *Boston Herald*](#), "James Michael Merberg maintained the princess has no plans to flee and wants to clear her name of charges she abused two maids from Indonesia."

But as they used to say during World War II, "Loose lips sink ships." One of her sons blabbed and—

her teenage sons' loose lips might have sunk her cause.

Federal agents claim one son told a delivery driver not to unpack a shipment of items for Al Jader's home good export business because the family was moving.

"The statement made by the defendant's sons to the delivery driver - not to unpack the boxes because the family was moving back to Saudi Arabia - should not, and cannot, be dismissed as indicative of intended flight," [U.S. Attorney] Merritt said.

If you can parse that last sentence, you will understand the view taken by the Department of Justice. Let me know.

Previous posts

Saudi princess misbehaving (updated) (4/1/05)

A bracelet for the princess (4/29/05)

8:59 PM Add a comment Link to this post

Off to a slow start

I've fallen into the trap of pondering imponderables. Hope to emerge later.

11:56 AM Add a comment Link to this post

Fast Fact of the Day

No British government has taken office with majority support since 1935.

—Henrik Hertzberg writing in "Blair's Bushy Tail"

10:26 AM Add a comment Link to this post

Wednesday, May 18, 2005

Go Citgo: Join the BUY-cott!

From Jeff Cohen at CommonDreams.org—

Citgo is a U.S. refining and marketing firm that is a wholly owned subsidiary of Venezuela's state-owned oil company. Money you pay to Citgo goes primarily to Venezuela -- not Saudi Arabia or the Middle East. There are 14,000 Citgo gas stations in the US. (Click here <http://www.citgo.com/CITGOLocator/StoreLocator.jsp> to find one near you.) By buying your gasoline at Citgo, you are contributing to the billions of dollars that Venezuela's democratic government is using to provide health care, literacy and education, and subsidized food for the majority of Venezuelans.

Let me add that unlike so many Leftie-Liberal promotions of products that turn out to be a great deal more expensive (such as shade-grown coffee) and beyond the reach of the commoner, Citgo gasoline is one of the cheapest brands.

What a deal! (Of course we should sip, not guzzle.)

5:15 PM [Add a comment](#) [Link to this post](#)

Trivia question of the day

Which Hollywood actor said in 2002 that George Galloway was one of the two people he would most like to kill?

[Answer tomorrow.]

1:36 PM [2 Comments](#) [Link to this post](#)

George Galloway: An item you may have missed

I hope you were able to catch some of George Galloway's testimony before the U.S. Senate committee yesterday [[transcript of opening statement](#)]. He did as well or better than I had expected. Galloway also appeared on Charlie Rose last night, which is material for another post. But my subject is a little item that appeared in yesterday's *Independent*.

The essence of the accusations against Galloway is that he accepted oil money from Saddam Hussein through a middleman: Jordanian businessman Fawaz Zureikat.

Oh, let's let Judith Miller of the *NY Times* [describe](#) it, since we know she'll give the government its best shot—

Coleman and Levin questioned Galloway about several Iraqi oil records that listed as recipients of oil rights either him or his appointed representative, a Jordanian businessman named **Fawaz Zureikat**, who is the head of Galloway's cancer charity, Mariam's Appeal, and a contributor to Galloway's political campaign. **Zureikat could not be reached for comment on Tuesday.**

Mariam's Appeal, and several companies associated with Zureikat, are listed on records that the committee says document allocations worth 20 million barrels of oil from 2000 to 2003. The panel's investigators have said that Galloway used the charity to conceal oil payments. But the committee has produced no documents that show that Galloway or his charity actually received any oil money.

Galloway said the documents might be forgeries, and said that the people who had confirmed their

authenticity were Saddam-era officials who would soon be tried for war crimes by what he called Iraq's American "puppet" government.

Well, Kim Sengupta and Terri Judd of the UK's *Independent* were able to reach Mr. Zureikat for comment, and he had some **interesting things to say**.

The Jordanian businessman accused of passing oil money from Saddam Hussein to George Galloway has revealed that **he is once again trading in Iraq and making trips to America with the approval of the US authorities**.

Fawaz Zureikat was speaking publicly for the first time since he was named by a US Senate investigative committee examining the United Nations oil-for-food programme. He told *The Independent* that **neither the new government in Baghdad nor US officials had raised any objections to him renewing his trade with Iraq**.

Commenting on Galloway's assertion that "If I had [taken oil money] I would be a very rich man and the person who made me rich would already be in the public domain," Zureikat agreed and said—

The reason for these claims is obvious. They are throwing this up to take attention away from all the violence going on in Iraq and because George has just got back into Parliament.

The reporters go on to inform us that—

The Jordanian Christian said he had **never been questioned about his alleged role in the oil-for-food affair or about Mr Galloway**.

US diplomatic sources confirmed yesterday that Mr Zureikat has been granted visas to visit the US since the war, and that there have been no US obstacles to the renewal of his commercial ventures in Iraq.

Hmmh.

I wish I could locate a full transcript of the testimony before writing about a tangentially related item, but I can't wait.

Galloway is a Scotsman who is clearly not loved by the newspaper of that name. The paper has a [brief editorial](#) that I give here in its entirety—

THE irresistible force of George Galloway met the immovable object of a US Senate committee yesterday. Mr Galloway gave a combative performance defending himself from charges that he had benefited personally from Iraqi oil bribes. The US senators were equally adept, pressing home their questions in the face of Mr Galloway's rhetoric. Who won? In the short term, Mr Galloway was able to show that the Senate has found no concrete evidence showing that oil bribes ever came into his possession. On the other hand, his verbal gymnastics failed to answer some basic questions put to him by the senators.

Specifically, **he pointedly refused to distance himself from his Jordanian collaborator, Fawaz Zureikat**, who was chairman of the Mariam Appeal set up by Mr Galloway ostensibly **to help a four-year-old Iraqi girl suffering from leukaemia. Much of the cash that went to the appeal came from Zureikat.** The Americans claim to have solid evidence that Zureikat was involved in questionable oil trading. However, Mr Galloway refused to condemn Zureikat and instead blustered about the corruption of US politics.

Mr Galloway cannot have it both ways. If funding for the high-profile Marian Appeal, which gave Mr Galloway much publicity, did ultimately come from Iraqi bribes, should this not be condemned? **There are other forms of corruption besides lining one's own pockets.**

The U.S.-U.K. coalition are really out to get this guy, aren't they? I recall similar criticisms being made of Mother Teresa.

Previous posts

[George Galloway's triumph \(5/7/05\)](#)

[Galloway before Senate committee this morning \(5/17/05\)](#)

11:36 AM [Add a comment](#) [Link to this post](#)

Tuesday, May 17, 2005

[Two judicial nominees to Senate floor tomorrow](#)

A reader has just passed along an email from Senator Harry Reid.

He says that Bill Frist has informed him that the nominations of Priscilla Owen and Janice Rogers Brown will be brought to the Senate floor tomorrow.

Reid calls this "the most important fight of my political life."

He wants to use comments from the public as a part of the debate. If you have some thoughts to pass on, you may do so at <http://democrats.senate.gov/filibuster-form.cfm>

And call your Senators!

5:50 PM 2 Comments [Link to this post](#)

Castro holds a rally; Posada arrested

If we could hold a rally attended by hundreds of thousands to end the Iraq War, it might indeed be the beginning of the end. Oh, Bush would take the day off and go to Camp David, Cheney would go hunting and Rumsfeld would find some paperwork to catch up on. Press reports would say that they were barely aware, if at all, of what was going on in the streets of Washington. But secretly, really, they would be peaking out from behind the curtains.

Well, that may have to wait until the draft is reinstated. I hope sooner, but it may not be so. The true American Way is apathy.

In Cuba on the other hand they had no problem drawing the crowds. [According to](#) Anita Snow of the AP,

Hundreds of thousands of Cubans answered Fidel Castro's call to file past the American mission early Tuesday in a "March against Terrorism," **demanding that the United States arrest a Cuban exile sought in a deadly airliner bombing three decades ago.**

"Down with terrorism!" the 78-year-old Castro shouted in brief comments before leading the march outside the U.S. Interests Section. "Down with nazi doctrines and methods! Down with the lies!"

Wearing his traditional olive green military uniform and cap, **the Cuban president walked six or seven blocks without assistance, despite an accidental fall in October that shattered his left kneecap.**

Ah, the hated dictator! Can you imagine George Bush getting that close to his people?

Protesters were calling for the arrest of Castro's longtime foe, Luis Posada Carriles, a Cuban exile who recently traveled to the United States, where he is seeking political asylum. Venezuela has requested the extradition of Posada in the 1976 airliner bombing that killed 73 people.

Posada denies involvement in the bombing.

Well, it's not just that.

Cuban officials — **and newly released U.S. archives** — also link Posada to other violent actions, some of them military, some aimed at civilians. **The declassified U.S. documents indicate he was on the CIA's payroll until a few months before the 1976 bombing.**

Hard to believe, isn't it? But could the CIA still be active?

During a Monday night TV appearance, Castro complained that Posada while remains free, the United States continues to fund groups dedicated to subverting his government.

"This is the empire's answer, **money to foment destabilization,**" he said, adding, "**money for terrorist acts, money for subversion.**"

Meanwhile, the U.S. continues to leave the border open to terrorists and claims ignorance—

U.S. officials have said they are not actively seeking Posada because there are no American warrants for his arrest, **and expressed doubts as recently as last week that Posada was even in the United States.**

This is all very strange because Posada was just recently interviewed at his condo by reporters from the *Miami Herald*—

In his first media interview since arriving in the United States earlier this year, Posada again denied involved in the airliner explosion in a story published Tuesday by the Miami Herald.

"They accused me of being the intellectual

author of fabricating a weapon of war and of treason to the homeland. No one saw me make a bomb," Posada said Wednesday in a two-hour interview at a luxury condominium in Miami. "Sincerely, I didn't know anything about it."

But he refused to confirm or deny playing a role in a series of 1997 bombings targeting Cuban tourist sites, including one that killed a young Italian tourist. "Let's leave it to history," he told the Herald.

Posada **applied for political asylum after his March arrival in Miami** following an illegal trip through Central America.

Breaking news

Sometimes it just doesn't pay to talk to the press. Oscar Corral and Alfonso Chardy of the *Miami Herald* [report](#)—

Cuban militant Luis Posada Carriles was arrested by Homeland Security agents at a house in Southwest Miami-Dade County Tuesday afternoon as he prepared to leave the country, after withdrawing his asylum application to avoid an international incident between the United States and Cuba, the Herald has learned.

Agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement picked up Posada as he was leaving the house where he had been staying, said his South Florida friend and benefactor, Santiago Alvarez, who was distraught.

Alvarez said the Homeland Security agents who took Posada into custody cited an interview with the exile militant published Tuesday in the Herald as the main reason for the arrest.

A Homeland Security source confirmed Posada's detention.

Posada boarded a government helicopter Tuesday afternoon, **escorted by armed guards**. The Blackhawk helicopter, belonging to Customs and Border protection, **flew off to an undisclosed location**.

This doesn't read like the usual account of a person arrested for

terrorism and may not be as it appears—

The arrest also came on the day the U.S. government summoned Posada to an asylum interview in downtown Miami. But instead of appearing at the interview, Posada gave a news conference at a warehouse near Hialeah where he said he was having second thoughts about going forward with his asylum application.

Hours later, Posada's Coral Gables immigration attorney said he formally withdrew the application and that his client was thinking about leaving the country.

Posada's main South Florida benefactor, Alvarez, then **suggested that Posada's departure was imminent and that he would leave just as secretly as he slipped into the country in March.**

The extraordinary turn of events unfolded Tuesday, just hours after Posada finished reading a lengthy statement and answering questions during his second encounter with the media since arriving in Miami and applying for asylum -- claiming he was being persecuted by Cuban agents bent on abducting or assassinating him. His first interview was with the Herald which published it Tuesday.

The possibility Posada might leave the country would please some U.S. government officials who feared the militant's presence in the United States was an international embarrassment....

....

One Homeland Security official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity [sic], said recently that the Bush administration was considering the option of denying Posada asylum but offering him refuge in a third country.

Something tells me that Mr. Posada, with his CIA background, will not be suffering from overly harsh prison conditions.

11:16 AM [Add a comment](#) [Link to this post](#)

Galloway before Senate committee this morning (corrected)

George Galloway, the newly elected Member of Parliament from the Respect Party, who ran against Blair and the Iraq war, has come to the U.S. to testify before the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Permanent Subcommittee on Investigation. The hearing is to begin at 9:30 am EST and will probably be shown on CSpan. According to CNN, Galloway is the last witness scheduled to appear.

Galloway was the first MP to call Blair a liar and was ejected from the Labor Party.

In December of last year Galloway won a libel suit against *The Telegraph* to the tune of £150,000. According to the BBC,

The judge said the allegations were "seriously defamatory" of Mr Galloway.

He said readers of the Telegraph claims may have understood them to mean:

- Mr Galloway had been in Saddam's pay, secretly receiving about £375,000 a year.
- He diverted monies from the oil-for-food programme, thus depriving the Iraqi people of food and medicines.
- He probably used the Mariam Appeal, a campaign Mr Galloway launched to raise money for an Iraqi girl with leukaemia, as a front for personal enrichment.
- What he had done was tantamount to treason.

Mr Justice Eady said: **"It was the defendants' primary case that their coverage was no more than 'neutral reportage' of documents discovered by a reporter in the badly-damaged foreign ministry in Baghdad, but the nature, content and tone of their coverage cannot be so described."**

Telegraph foreign correspondent David Blair had earlier told the judge how he had found the documents inside the Iraqi foreign ministry.

The Senate committee holding hearings is chaired by Republican Norm Coleman, who is attempting to reimplicate Galloway.

Jim Lehrer of the PBS NewsHour gave Galloway's response saying,

He scoffed at the allegations today:

Galloway: The truth is that I have never bought nor sold a drop of oil from Iraq, or sold or bought a drop of oil to anybody. And if I had I'd be a very rich man. And the person who made me rich would already be in the public domain.

This hearing should be fun. Galloway is not likely to put up with Republican grandstanding and has voluntarily come to the U.S. to appear.

Correction: I originally stated that *The Telegraph* was "a Murdoch paper." It's not.

Follow-up post

George Galloway: [An item you may have missed \(5/18/05\)](#)

8:52 AM 3 Comments [Link to this post](#)

Monday, May 16, 2005

A slight shudder and a pulling-away

If you like your sex on the S&M side, nothing can beat what Blair has taken from Bush—the lies, the humiliation, the constant demands for more, the golden showers when Blair just wanted a quiet little talk about their relation and Bush would just whip it out and pee on him.

It's tough being a British Prime Minister. Still, somebody's got to do it. The best hope for whoever's in office is that the next American President will be a woman—preferably a dyke.

Now amidst the sweat, the smells, the blood, the body of Tony Blair's government has recoiled ever so slightly from the embrace of the Washington bear. The issue was Uzbekistan.

Tony had tolerated Bush's grunge boy—"Uzi," as Bush liked to call him—for years. Last year the Foreign Office had even had to suspend the British ambassador to Uzbekistan, Craig Murray. Here's what the *Guardian* wrote of Murray in "The envoy who said too much"—

His mistake had been to write a letter to Tony Blair and George Bush alerting them to the daily torture meted out to dissidents in Uzbekistan, their new ally in the war on terror.

Tony was trying to pretend he didn't know about Bush's little fling, so notes like that—delivered directly rather than through appropriate channels—could be awkward. They were all just good friends—really!

But this time Uzi has gone over the line and, as *The Telegraph* described it, was "slaughtering women and children 'like rabbits.'" Blair himself likes a bit of the rough stuff, but when it comes to hunting, he can be a little prissy.

Today Alec Russell and Nick Allen were reporting—

Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, who faces criticism for British support of Uzbekistan's dictatorial regime, condemned its record.

He said the situation was "very serious" and there had been a "clear abuse" of human rights.

Mr Straw's remarks were in contrast to the near silence in Washington where the brutal crackdown in Uzbekistan has posed an acute dilemma.

President George W Bush has made the spread of freedom and democracy the dominant theme of his second term and has lauded the toppling of autocratic governments in other former Soviet republics, in particular Georgia and Ukraine.

But the support of President Karimov, a former communist apparatchik, is vital to America's hopes of making Afghanistan a success and preventing the spread of militant Islam in the region.

....

The clashes erupted in a region where a drive for more democracy and greater autonomy is intertwined with a push by extremists to found a pan-Islamic state across Central Asia.

Protesters stormed the prison and freed 23 businessmen charged with promoting Islamic extremism. This allegation is, human rights groups say, frequently trumped up against government critics.

But just as Blair was trying to clean up a bit, the phone rang. It was Vladimir on the line—for George.

.... Moscow rallied round its old satellite.

Sergei Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, blamed provocation "staged by groups similar to the Taliban".

He said Russia would maintain its support for Mr Karimov in his fight against Islamic extremists.

Blair just felt like hissing.

Now that wimp¹ of an ambassador Craig Murray is trying to spoil everything that Bush and Blair ever had together. I mean, if he didn't like *blood*, why did he get into the business of diplomacy in the first place?

Craig Murray ... said Whitehall's and Washington's backing for the regime was partly to blame for the unrest.

"The Americans and British wouldn't do anything to help democracy in Uzbekistan," he told the Independent on Sunday. **He had been unable to persuade Whitehall to fund pro-democracy activists.**

Now Blair must stay indoors while he leaves it to his Foreign Secretary to do damage control—

Mr Straw said London had "long been concerned about abuse of human rights, about a lack of democracy".

Britain's policy was very clear, he said, adding that there was a need for "much higher standards in the treatment of Uzbek prisoners".

But like so many caught in abusive relationships, Blair will likely kiss and make up once the dust over Uzi has settled.

Footnotes

¹To understand what I mean by the term, I would recommend Murray's [speech](#) of November 9, 2004—"The trouble with Uzbekistan."

Oh, all right. Just one little excerpt—

... on an everyday basis, there is ... no way to protest. There is no freedom of the media, no freedom of religion, no freedom of speech, no freedom of assembly. A regime so harsh to the

many, so luxurious for the few, rules only by the harshest of repression. There are not only exit visas, but still the propusk system of internal movement control. Almost all of those born on state farms are condemned to be, in effect, serf labour for life.

.... **Not a word of dissent appears in the Uzbek media** indeed not one word of my speeches ever did. **Strangely the US Ambassador's comments were often carried at some length.**

That may add to your appreciation of this little story from the *Guardian*—

One FCO [Foreign & Commonwealth Office] official suggested in his correspondence with Murray, that the ambassador should have just called the abuses "horrid", sat down, and then toed the line. Murray replied: "As you may know I have a slight speech impediment and cannot call anything 'howwid'."

[\[back\]](#)

10:52 PM [Add a comment](#) [Link to this post](#)

Quote of the Day: The counterrevolutionary

The people of Uzbekistan want to see a more representative and democratic government, but that should come through peaceful means, not through violence.

—Scott McClellan, White House Press Secretary, [as quoted in](#) Sergei Blakov's "An iron fist, without the glove"

10:42 PM [Add a comment](#) [Link to this post](#)

A note on Comments

It appears that HaloScan's limit on comments as a free service has been exceeded on this blog. The result is that the posts will show only "Add a comment" rather than the number of comments.

You may still comment, the comment will be saved and will appear when you click on "Add a comment."

I suppose I'm going to have to become a "Premium" member of HaloScan. (Yes, that means to "pay a premium.")

Or I may revert to the Blogspot commenting system, which has been greatly improved.

12:16 PM 1 Comment [Link to this post](#)

The Second American Revolution goes nuclear

What do these events have in common?

- In the lead-up to the Iraq invasion the Pentagon drew up contingency plans for the use of tactical nuclear weapons, which was **referred to** as "the nuclear option."
- In January 2004 the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) **approved changes** to their hearing rules that will ease the resumption of licensing of nuclear reactors so that U.S. energy will have a "nuclear option."
- In this week of May 2005, the Republicans in the Senate are threatening to take the "nuclear option" of ending use of the filibuster for judicial nominees.

If you answered "nuclear option" I'm afraid you've gotten lost in a metaphor.

What these items have in common is that they are proposals to radically change the rules that the American government has followed and to which the American public has been accustomed for a very long time. "Nuclear" has become the metaphor for "revolutionary rule change."

It is a clever way not only to frame but to conduct a revolution. "Rule change" sounds so innocent, doesn't it? Who could possibly be alarmed by the announcement of a "rule change"? Certainly not the public.

In the 70s there was an the anti-war slogan: "What if they held a war and nobody came?" The contemporary right-wing counterpart to this would be "What if we staged a revolution and nobody noticed?"

Republican (and plenty of Democratic) toadies, guided by their right-wing paymasters, are staging a quiet revolution. None of the old "blood in the streets" sort of thing, which is bad for business. (The Brown Shirts, of course, have been and will be used as needed to suppress protests.)

The hope is to be quieter and more precise this time—to be, as tactical nuclear weapons **have been described**, "less contaminating, more discriminate, and more versatile."

When it comes to government overthrow, left-wing revolutions

tend to be more physically violent. They are, after all, "bottom-up" affairs, since rulers do not readily give up power through the democratic—or any other—process.

But right-wing revolutions are top-down matters—one oligarchy pitted against another. They can be subtle, even "democratic"—as was the case with Hitler—or minimally violent, as with the coup, where instead of blood in the streets we see blood in the palace followed by a massive crack-down on dissent.

We are in the midst of a right-wing revolution. Make no mistake about it. In fact, to say that we are "in the midst" is too mild; we are in the end-stage of that revolution.

If this revolution is allowed to succeed, all that will be left is a lingering pretense of democracy and a shell of constitutional government. The American hope for democracy and peace here and abroad will be crushed, replaced by the despair of a "nuclear wasteland"—a wasteland ruled by right-wing oligarchs. And that is what "going nuclear" is all about.

7:49 AM 1 Comment [Link to this post](#)

Sunday, May 15, 2005

Christo-Republican judge apologizes

Dallas District Judge Faith Johnson threw a party last October for the recapture of Billy Wayne Williams, who had jumped bond.

According to the AP,

"You just made my day when I heard you had finally come home," Judge Faith Johnson told Billy Wayne Williams, who had been convicted in absentia of aggravated assault after he disappeared a year ago. "We're so excited to see you, we're throwing a party for you."

....

Before he was brought into the courtroom on Monday, the judge directed staff members as they placed balloons and streamers around the courtroom. A colorful cake was decorated with his name and one candle to signify the year he spent on the lam.

"It seems like everyone wants to have a party, and it's fun for you people, but not for me," Williams told reporters as he was led away in handcuffs.

Seana Willing, executive director of the Texas Commission on Judicial Conduct, said she found the incident troubling. "It's the kind of thing I look at and scratch my head and wonder, 'What was she thinking?'" Willing said.

She questioned whether the party violated standards of decorum and impartiality.

"The whole purpose of it was to mock him, to make him feel bad. **I guess she could have put him in the stockade, in the pillory, in front of the town square and let people mock him,**" Willing said.

That would have been the Christian thing to do.

According to a follow-up yesterday, The State Commission on Judicial Conduct has since admonished her and "also discovered that Johnson had planned for a TV crew to capture Williams' expression when he entered the courtroom."

The judge has issued a qualified apology—

"If my celebration of the return of fugitive Billy Wayne Williams offended any member of the community, I deeply apologize," Johnson wrote in a statement released Thursday.

This is not the first time Judge Johnson has been a newsmaker. Michael King of the *Austin Chronicle* repeated an account of the way she was carrying on back in 2002 at the Texas Republican Convention (you just knew she was a Republican, didn't you?)—

... the Saturday morning prayer rally devoted specifically to that purpose featured Dallas District Judge Faith Johnson proclaiming, **"Father, draw the unsaved judges unto you. Then, and only then, Father, will they be able to truly be the righteous judges that you would have us to be."** Afterward, **Johnson conceded that such a measure, however desirable, is not quite yet legally enforceable....**

Well, the Republicans are going to be working on that this week in Washington.

Saddam to write memoirs

Roula Khalaf of the *Financial Times* has reported that according to Giovanni di Stefano, one of Saddam Hussein's attorneys, Saddam has "resolved in recent weeks to start writing his biography."

Mr Hussein is writing about his childhood in Iraq, his early exile to Egypt and his misguided military adventures.

He will try to embarrass the great powers that once saw him as a useful buffer against the expansionist ambitions of Iran after the 1979 Islamic revolution. In particular, says Mr di Stefano, he will tell how France and Britain double-crossed him by also helping Iran's Islamic republic during its eight-year war with Iraq in the 1980s.

Memo to Saddam: These guys are as beyond embarrassment as you are.

4:16 PM [Add a comment](#) [Link to this post](#)

Saturday, May 14, 2005

Fast fact of the Day

Our share of the vote is the lowest ever scored in an election by the party that formed the government.

—Robin Cook, British Labor Party MP, who resigned his post as Leader of the House of Commons the week before the Iraq invasion

8:26 AM [Add a comment](#) [Link to this post](#)

Friday, May 13, 2005

Our little runaway

*I'm a walkin' in the rain
Tears are fallin' and I feel the pain
Wishin' you were here by me
To end this misery and I wonder
I wa wa wa wonder
Why, why why why why why you ran away
And I wonder where you will stay*

My little runaway, a run run run runaway

—adapted from [lyrics](#) by Del Shannon

Yesterday I mentioned the odd sequence of events surrounding the White House terror alert, while Bush was out bike-riding, and happily I wasn't the only one to notice. Last night Jeffrey Brown of the PBS News Hour interviewed two homeland security experts—Daniel Kaniewski, deputy director of the George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute, and David Heyman, director of the Homeland Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies—concerning the incident.

For some reason PBS has declined to transcribe [this one segment](#) [audio, at 11:38] of last night's program, so I offer my transcription—

Jeffrey Brown: And, David, the other issue that came up was that the President had not been notified. Were you surprised by that?

David Heyman: I was shocked by that. **It would seem after 9/11 that the first person who would want to know if there's a problem of a possible terrorist attack is the President.** I was also hearing the White House explanation for that—that they were counting on the Secret Service's professionals to do the notification as needed and that they weren't worried about the President's safety.

Those aren't the issues.

If this was a real terrorist attack, who do we want to be in charge? We voted for the President to be in charge, not for the Secret Service, not for others to be ... other people to be in charge. If this had been a terrorist attack, we would want him making the decisions.

Jeffrey Brown: What do you think?

Daniel Kaniewski:¹ I take a different view. I actually trust **the chain of command, so to speak,** that exists in the White House—**whether that's the Secret Service or the political leaders that advise the President.**²

Clearly they had very specific information. For them not to tell the President, I believe it's because they felt that it wasn't a significant threat, they knew the White House was evacuated, and they didn't see this small plane,

again, flying as a significant threat.

So the judgment was made by someone in the White House. But I think that's a legitimate decision that can be made. And again, this would all be different if that plane was viewed as a very significant and imminent threat, which I don't believe anybody today is saying it was.

David Heyman: At the time though that this was taking place, you have literally 60 seconds—perhaps up to 3 minutes—to make a decision about what you're going to be doing, and the President should be notified that the White House is being evacuated, his staff is being evacuated, his wife is safe, who was sitting ... who was in the President's office.

I think we want our President to be in charge and not the Secret Service. And it just seems to me I think the White House is going to come out the next day or so and say "We fouled up on this" and the President's going to say "I want to know." [my transcription]

Brown noted that White House spokesman Scott McClelland has said "The process will be reviewed."

If you're a regular reader of *Simply Appalling*, you will know there's a recurrent theme—that George Bush is even more irrelevant to government decision-making in any matter that the Powers That Be consider important than was Ronald Reagan, who at least had the excuse of incipient senility. I mean, no one in his right mind would let George Bush run a mid-size corporation, much less the U.S. government. The terror threat response was just one more illustration of the truth of this.

But while I'm on the topic of Bush, I wanted to call your attention to a wonderful little character description that Sidney Blumenthal, whose specialty is Bushology, wrote in *The Guardian* yesterday—

In his relationship with Bush, Blair apparently misread the outward signs of American culture and interpreted them through British eyes. **Bush can be so amiable and informal dressed in blue jeans that his manner can be mistaken for openness and cooperation, when it conceals a particular type of American class superiority and indifference.** Bush, after all, seems so friendly compared with the glowering Cheney, who clawed his way upward. **It's not easy for someone who's never travelled in America to grasp the evolution of the Bush**

family from north-east patricians into Texas Tories, and the dissolution of the New England character along the way, especially its sense of responsibility, duty and humility.

Bush's amiability towards Blair merely demonstrates his acceptance of the prime minister into his fraternity, his private club. But even if Blair got Bush exactly right in every nuance, the outcome remains the same. (Gordon Brown and Bush are a car crash waiting to happen. **Bush has an instinctive revulsion for serious intellectuals who have little capacity for the locker-room banter that is his mode of condescension.**)

Previous post

[Bush not told till he finished his bike ride \(5/12/05\)](#)

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Footnotes

¹Kaniewski is one of those people who maintains a half-smile while on camera no matter what is being said *à la* Bill Frist. This identifies him immediately as a strong Republican supporter in my mind. [\[back\]](#)

²Vice President Cheney was in the White House at the time. Probably catching up on some paperwork in the Oval Office. [\[back\]](#)

11:26 AM [Add a comment](#) [Link to this post](#)

Supreme Court prognostication (updated)

Knowing how the Supreme Court will rule before it rules could be very, very useful. Should you jump bond and head for the border? Should you sell that pharmaceutical stock before the company is notified of its billion-dollar-plus liability? Inquiring minds want to know. So a number of people have tried to find the key, with a modicum of success.

Now Sarah Shullman, a law student, has done a study that revealed a very successful prognosticator: the side receiving the greater number of hostile questions is the side that's very likely to lose.

In hindsight that seems obvious, but some tea-leaf readers have been predisposed to interpret the hostile questions as a form of "playing the Devil's advocate." Not so. The Justices mean it.

Shullman had only a limited sample size—10 cases—but she hit 100%. **According to** Tony Mauro writing for *American Lawyer*,

... the methodology has already been tested since she did her study. John Roberts Jr., one of the masters of the trade before taking the bench in 2003, used her theory for a talk he gave on oral advocacy before the Supreme Court Historical Society last year. Picking 14 oral arguments from the 1980 term and 14 from the 2003 term, Roberts found that in fact the most questions went to the losing party in 24 of the 28 cases — an **86 percent rate of accuracy**.

Her study also revealed the Supremes' proclivities to question—

Shullman ... found that Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg asked the most questions — and the least hostile ones — of all the justices, and that Justice Stephen Breyer asked the most hostile questions. But his was equal-opportunity hostility, handed out in equal measure to both sides. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, often viewed as the mystery swing vote, turned out to be highly predictable using this method; she asked more than three times as many questions of the party she then voted against than the party she supported.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist was, oddly enough, one of the least predictable, according to his nearly equal questioning of both sides.

What about Justice Clarence Thomas, who almost always remains silent on the bench?

"Because Justice Thomas is rarely a swing vote, his silence should not pose an obstacle in most cases" to prediction, she writes.

If the Senate hearings on Justice Thomas' nomination are any indication, he's probably looking at girlie mags.

Mauro points out that—

The allure of the question-count method is not just that it is simple, but that **it now will be incalculably easier to use**. Since last October, transcripts of the Court's oral arguments have named the justices asking the questions. (Before, they were listed only as "question," with no identification of the justice asking it.) Now all you need do is to search the .pdf files of transcripts for the names of each justice, and you'll have the count.

Mike or Norm (I can't tell which), writing on a law blog, [has predicted](#) a ruling in favor of the government in *Ashcroft v. Raich*. If any of you would like to predict the outcome of [this case](#) using Sarah Shullman's method, I would be delighted to post your findings. *Ashcroft v. Raich* is not just about getting high in California, it's about state versus federal rights. Or how far the Court will extend the power of Congress under the Commerce Clause of the Constitution.

3:27 pm

Mike has kindly left a link in the comments to a [post](#) at *The Volokh Conspiracy*. It seems they've counted up the questions over there, and things look very bad for the home team. Oh, woe!

Related post

[Marijuana: Better than faith-healing \(1/3/05\)](#)

9:11 AM 1 Comment [Link to this post](#)

Thursday, May 12, 2005

Quote of the Day

Excepting drug activity for personal use or free distribution from the sweep of the CSA [Controlled Substances Act] would discourage the consumption of lawful controlled substances.

—Solicitor General's brief in *Ashcroft v. Raich*

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[Marijuana: Better than faith-healing \(1/3/05\)](#)

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Bush not told till he finished his bike ride

Let's see. Your wife has just been hustled off to some unknown location because of an unknown but imminent threat; your (nominally) second-in-command likewise. Wouldn't you want to know? Wouldn't you want to be told as quickly as possible?

Not if you're "Incurious" George.

Yesterday the Capitol and White House were evacuated. There was a small plane flying in the restricted airspace around Washington, which produced what reporters Alan Levin and Mimi Hall **called** "a frantic 15-minute scene."

A government Black Hawk helicopter and small jet intercepted the single-engine plane shortly before noon and tried to signal the pilot to change course. (**Related video:** [Scenes from the evacuation](#))

When that didn't work, two F-16 fighter jets circled the plane and fired signal flares until it veered away 3 miles from the White House, according to Lt. Jody Vazquez, a spokeswoman for the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD).

The plane was diverted to Maryland, and the two men aboard were briefly taken into custody and questioned but were not charged, according to the Secret Service and FBI. The intrusion "appears to have been accidental," said Secret Service spokesman Tom Mazur.

....

Wednesday's incident was the third highly public evacuation in the past year. A plane carrying Kentucky's governor to Ronald Reagan's memorial service prompted a false alert on June 9. A cloud that appeared on radar screens prompted an alert April 27.

....

President Bush was away from the White House, biking at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Beltsville, Md. Vice President Cheney was rushed from the White House to another location. Mrs. Bush and White House guest Nancy Reagan were taken to an unidentified location.

Bush wasn't told of the threat until he finished his bike ride, said Scott McClellan, a White House spokesman.

"He was not in any danger," McClellan said.

What a guy!

It strangely recalls 9/11, doesn't it? Bush reading stories to children while the Twin Towers burned.

And it recalls 9/11 also by contrast. Yesterday's exercise shows just how quickly they can get those F-16s in the air—when they really want to.

10:20 AM [Add a comment](#) [Link to this post](#)

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