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Today

Galloway to be suspended from Commons over Iraq (Update4: Banned for 18 days by "oily cretins")

By: Sunday Times/Talksport/Mail/BBC/Leninology on: 17.07.2007 [17:24] (1014 reads)



Robert Winnett and Holly Watt, 15th July

Update: George Galloway hits back strongly on his radio show. Powerful stuff. Guest **Andrew Gilligan** (remember him?)
Listen at: <http://www.spiderednews.com/GeorgeGalloway.htm?vid=135639>

For a little background to the probes into the Mariam Appeal, at UK taxpayers expense, also read: [link](#)

Update2: Mail again making accusations about cash from Miriam fund

Update3: The suspension - and Galloway's response (VIDEO LINK, 7 min: <http://www.spiderednews.com/GeorgeGalloway.htm?vid=136893>)

Update4: Oily Cretins - Lenins Tomb Blogspot

ALSO, A MESSAGE FROM GEORGE:___

As a result of today's decision to suspend me from parliament, a one-off show has been arranged on 18th July on Talksport (1053 - 1089) from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. British Summer Time

I look forward to giving you my views and hearing yours!

TO SPEAK TO ME LIVE CALL: 08717 223344

Or TEXT: 81089

Or EMAIL VIA THE TALKSPORT WEBSITE: <http://www.talksport.net>

George Galloway <http://www.georgegalloway.com>

(17628 bytes) [c]

GEORGE GALLOWAY, the MP who campaigned against the Iraq war, is to be suspended from parliament over his links to the United Nations oil-for-food programme in Iraq.

The parliamentary standards watchdog will rule this week that Galloway failed properly to declare his links to a charitable appeal partially funded from money made by selling Iraqi oil under Saddam Hussein, according to a source close to the inquiry. The one-month suspension for Galloway, often referred to as "Gorgeous George", is one of the most severe given to an MP.

Galloway, who was expelled from Labour, is now an MP for the Respect party. He may also be asked to apologise to the Commons for his behaviour but will launch a robust defence of his conduct. He denies any wrongdoing.

The UN oil-for-food programme was set up to allow Saddam to sell Iraqi oil to buy humanitarian supplies, but he corruptly awarded oil contracts to politicians and businessmen around the world.

In 1998 Galloway founded the Mariam Appeal, which campaigned for the lifting of sanctions on Iraq. The appeal, which paid Galloway's wife and funded international travel for the MP, received almost £450,000 from Fawaz Zureikat, a Jordanian businessman who was also a trustee of the appeal. It subsequently emerged that more than half of this money came from the proceeds of Iraqi oil sales. An investigation by the American Senate alleged that the Mariam Appeal was used by the Iraqi regime to finance Galloway.

However, the MP strenuously denies that he was complicit in any such arrangement and claims he is the victim of a smear campaign. He says he had no idea that the money donated had come from Iraqi oil sales.

The Mariam Appeal, which raised more than £1.4m, has never filed any accounts and the parliamentary authorities have been unable to account for some of the expenditure.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article2076249.ece>

Galloway faces Commons ban over 'illicit' Iraq cash
By IAN DRURY - More by this author »

Last updated at 21:05pm on 15th July 2007

MP George Galloway is set to be suspended from Parliament over his links to a charity bankrolled by illicit deals involving Saddam Hussein's regime.

He will be barred from the Commons for one month by Parliament's standards watchdog for failing properly to declare his connections with the Mariam Appeal, it was reported.

Mr Galloway, who became an MP for his own Respect party after being expelled from Labour, may also be asked to apologise for his behaviour by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, Sir Philip Mawer.

Last month a damning report by the Charity Commission concluded that the Mariam Appeal, established by Mr Galloway in 1998 to deliver medical aid to Iraq and arrange treatment outside Iraq for sick Iraqi children, took 'significant' amounts of money improperly from Iraq.

It said Mr Galloway, a trustee, may have known the appeal - which campaigned against sanctions on Iraq - received £230,000 of aid money that had been diverted from the UN oil-for-food programme in Iraq.

The charity watchdog's report, published after a 16-month inquiry, found that Mr Galloway and fellow trustees broke the law by taking the cash, but it only gave him a slap on the wrist because the money was all spent on humanitarian causes.

The Commons ban would be one of the most severe given to an MP. Mr Galloway, who was ridiculed after appearing on Celebrity Big Brother, has vehemently denied any wrongdoing and has claimed he is the victim of a smear campaign.

He called last month's Charity Commission findings 'sloppy, misleading and partial'. He could not be contacted yesterday.

The Mariam Appeal has never filed any accounts and the parliamentary authorities have been unable to account for some expenditure.

The MP was expelled from Labour in October 2003 after his outspoken comments on the Iraq war. He accused Tony Blair and President Bush of acting 'like wolves' in invading Iraq.

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=468624&in_page_id=1770&ito=newsnow

Galloway faces Commons suspension

Mr Galloway has strongly denied receiving money from the Iraqi regime

George Galloway is facing suspension from Parliament for 18 days, after an inquiry by its standards watchdog. MPs said he "damaged the reputation of the House" in his comments about the inquiry into his Mariam Appeal charity.

The suspension was the result of him "concealing the true source of Iraqi funding" and "calling into question" the integrity of standards watchdogs.

The anti-war Respect MP said he had been punished for his "robust" defence by "a jury of my political enemies".

Mr Galloway, who has always denied receiving money from Saddam Hussein's regime, added: "I'm not a punch bag. If you aim low blows at me I will fight back. That's what I have done and that's what I have been suspended for."

'Politicised' inquiry

The MP for Bethnal Green and Bow was expelled from the Labour Party in 2003 following outspoken comments about the Iraq war and has claimed the inquiry was "politicised".

Speaking outside Parliament after the announcement, he said the commissioner had noted six times that "I did not benefit personally by a single penny from Iraq, from the oil-for-food programme or from any other Iraqi source".

He added: "It is clear that what really upset them is the fact I robustly defended myself."

Mr Galloway at best turned a blind eye to what was happening and, on balance, was likely to have known and been complicit in what was going on

Commissioner's report

He said there was "grotesque irony" that Parliament had refused to hold a full inquiry into the Iraq war, but had spent four years "censuring one of the leaders of the anti-war movement for the way that they conducted the anti-sanctions, anti-war campaign".

He said the Mariam appeal had three main donors - two kings and one wealthy businessman, adding: "I never covered up where the money came from, I never asked where the money came from."

Mr Galloway said Parliament should be giving him a medal, not a suspension, for his efforts to stop the Iraq war and "the massacre of hundreds of thousands of people".

MPs to vote

The committee has recommended he be suspended for 18 days from 8 October, after the summer recess - but it must be confirmed by a vote by MPs.

The inquiry by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards began in 2003.

A jury of my political enemies came to that conclusion on circumstantial evidence

George Galloway

But it was suspended during Mr Galloway's successful libel action against the Daily Telegraph, which had suggested he had received money from Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq.

After considering the commissioner's report, the Committee on Standards and Privileges recommended Mr Galloway apologise to the House and be suspended for 18 days.

Commissioner Sir Philip Mawer said Mr Galloway had "consistently failed to live up to the expectation of openness and straightforwardness" and considered the inquiry part of an "attempted political assassination".

Damaged reputation

He said there was "powerful", if circumstantial, evidence that "a substantial part" of donations to the Mariam Appeal from its chairman, Jordanian businessman Fawaz Zureikat, "came from monies derived, via the Oil for Food programme, from the former Iraqi regime".

He said "Mr Galloway at best turned a blind eye to what was happening and, on balance, was likely to have known and been complicit in what was going on."

In its recommendation, the committee said Mr Galloway's "conduct aimed at concealing the true source of Iraqi funding of the Mariam Appeal" and towards those involved with the inquiry had "in our view damaged the reputation of the House".

Party fundraising

Asked about the claim that the case concerned the source of funding, Mr Galloway told reporters: "A jury of my political enemies came to that conclusion on circumstantial evidence."

He also said, referring to cash-for-honours claims and the recent attendance of a convicted rapist at a party fundraising event, that "the people in the building behind me are the last people on earth to criticise" anyone over funding for political campaigns.

The Mariam Appeal was set up by Mr Galloway in 1998 to provide medicine and medical help to Iraqis during the last years of Saddam Hussein's rule and under international sanctions.

He and other trustees were criticised by the Charity Commission last month, for failing to make sufficient inquiries into the sources of donations.

It found the appeal had received significant donations connected with improper transactions made under the Iraqi oil-for-food programme - but said the money had been spent on humanitarian aid.

Mr Galloway and the other trustees have denied any wrongdoing and he said the report was "sloppy, misleading and partial".

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6901033.stm

Oily cretins (latest attack on Galloway)

You remember, I think, some years ago there was a libellous story in the Telegraph. The newspaper, still then under the control of the now convicted felon Conrad Black, ran a story about documents purporting to show that George Galloway was in the pay of Saddam Hussein. Galloway was awarded £150,000 in compensation for the defamatory claims, and also full legal costs, amounting to over £1.5m. Justice Eady defined the claims in the newspaper's coverage as containing four basic claims that any ordinary reader would take away:

- a) Mr Galloway had been in the pay of Saddam Hussein, secretly receiving sums of the order of £375,000 a year;
- b) He diverted monies from the oil-for-food programme, thus depriving Iraqi people, whose interest he had claimed to represent, of food and medicines;
- c) He probably used the Mariam Appeal as a front for personal enrichment;
- d) What he had done was tantamount to treason.

This was libellous, and these remain defamatory claims to make. However. Immediately upon hearing of the allegations, a pro-war hard-right Tory MP named Andrew Robathan wrote to the Committee on Standards and Privileges to demand that an inquiry be made into them, reminding them as he did that he had fought in the Gulf War. Subsequently a prolonged inquiry was held into this matter, and the Committee has now concluded that George Galloway will be suspended for 18 days from the House of Commons for "damaging the reputation of the House".

This may seem curious. After all, the Commissioners accept Eady's definition of the libellous claims, and the Commissioner for Parliamentary Standards either acknowledges that George Galloway did not personally benefit from "moneys derived from the former Iraqi regime", or accepts that George Galloway did make many declarations of interest over Iraq, eleven times. Further, he finds no instance in which monies from the appeal were improperly spent. There is no suggestion that George Galloway attempted to deceive anyone about his involvement in the Appeal or his interest in the matter. The Commissioner does not believe that George Galloway's views or advocacy were a result of receiving money from Saddam Hussein, because he doesn't accept that George Galloway's views changed or that he received money from Saddam Hussein. The complaint made by Andrew Robathan is clearly unsubstantiated: this should have concluded the matter. So, what gives?

Well, here's a clue: the majority of the Committee voted for the war on Iraq. Two of its members are former chairs of the Labour Friends of Israel. One of them, Kevin Barron MP, played a pivotal role in the witch-hunt of miners' leader Arthur Scargill in 1990. Seasoned red-baiters and warmongers, then, and they had to find him responsible for something. Here is the basis of the suspension: he called into question the motives of the inquiry and therefore brought the House of Commons into disrepute. That is to say, because he dared to suggest that a committee of ten members of parliament might have a political motive, he is suspended. This is pathetic.

Now, the committee did make other complaints, which Galloway disputes, but they say these would have resulted merely in a request for an apology. Namely, they say, George Galloway: didn't use his parliamentary resources in a "reasonable" fashion by using them to help the Appeal (this is stretching the definition of what is "reasonable", but those are the breaks with a bunch of pro-sanctions, pro-war MPs); didn't cooperate with the inquiry and tried to conceal "the true source of Iraqi funding" from them (in fact, the claim that Galloway didn't cooperate is belied by the record of transactions which is available on the website of the committee, in which the Commissioner notes as late as November 2006 that he was very content with Galloway's cooperation); wasn't quite forthcoming enough about declaring his interests (despite the fact that he did discuss it in the House of Commons numerous times, widely advertised the appeal, held meetings in the house, and consequently was satirically known as 'the MP for Baghdad Central'); did not register the Appeal in the Miscellaneous Category (although as they concede, he was not directed to do so when he consulted the previous Commissioner in 1999). This ragbag of petty complaints is the sum of a great effort made over several years to try and impugn the reputation of an antiwar MP.

Added to it are several bizarre implications, which occur throughout the deliberations, but not in the recommendations. At one point, the Commissioner raised a 'suggestion' that had been made to him that Elaine Galloway, George Galloway's former spouse, received £13,000 in payments from the appeal. The Commissioner then claimed to have 'forgotten' who 'suggested' this to him. This allegation of criminal behaviour rests on the person of Ms E Laing, who received payments from the appeal: the implication was that Ms E Laing could be made to look like 'Elaine'. But, as the Commissioner acknowledges, George Galloway tracked down Ms E Laing and passed on the details to him, and so there is no mystery about who Ms E Laing is and what the sum was paid for (secretarial work), and who paid it (Stuart Halford, since she has his personal assistant). So, this smear was introduced into the proceedings and instead of being removed or clarified, was deemed 'peripheral'. Additionally, a photocopy of a purported "minute" of a meeting between Galloway and Hussein in 2002 was introduced at the last minute, having landed on the commissioner's desk some hours before a meeting with Galloway. It was without any explanation as to its specific provenance or how it remained secret until then. It purports to show Galloway suggesting that some of his work on behalf of the Mariam Appeal might be financed by "an oil-related mechanism". The only possible explanation as to its provenance, provided by Ms Alda Barry, was stricken from the record. She explained that it would have been a tape recording. However, since Galloway supplied the Commissioner with the evidence that there had not and could not have been such a tape recording, a letter of apology was sent by the Commissioner on 17th April 2007 to George Galloway, in which he apologised for having tried to prove that such a tape existed. His report nevertheless left open the 'possibility' of such a tape. We are told that it comes from 'intelligence' and that the commissioners "take the view that the alleged record of the meeting between Mr Galloway and Saddam Hussein in August 2002 is authentic", even though they acknowledge that it has not been

"substantiated". Similarly, the Committee members decide, citing only one of the experts who looked at the Telegraph's documents (while ignoring the existence of other forged documents), that on balance they think they're probably not forgeries: whether they are forgeries or not, the information contained in them is certainly untrue, as the Commissioner also concedes. They breach their own standards, too, by insisting on including claims made by utterly discredited witnesses, including one "Tony" Zureikat, whose evidence supposedly supports the claims in the 'minute', but who manages to get the time of the meeting wrong by at least six months (he is vague: it happened in Christmas time or New Year, according to him).

Given that the nature of the evidence they adduce is so flimsy, and so disreputable, the Committee's decisions are naturally sparse. You might have thought that a Committee that was confident in its various assumptions would be a bit more harsh than asking for an apology for not having registered the appeal in Miscellaneous and so on. You might have thought that the basis of a suspension from the House of Commons for bringing it into disrepute would be somewhat stronger than that George Galloway said mean things about the committee's motives. Instead, they have produced a great many conclusions, which proceed from omissions and distortions, and as such the best that they could do with it was trump up some sort of headline-grabbing charge. How pathetic, and how risible. If the Commissioners don't realise that they have brought themselves into disrepute with this disingenuous charade, this can only further confirm the impermeability of the Westminster village to the real world.

<http://leninology.blogspot.com/2007/07/oily-cretins-latest-attack-on-galloway.html>

7 comments

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It is just so inconvenient...

by WarehouseEyes on 15.07.2007 [13:22]

to have an honest, truth-speaking MP in office. It tends to make all the others look bad. So, George must go, based on trumped-up charges, the best that they could find to smear him with.

Listen to the show, WarehouseEyes...

by stopwar on 15.07.2007 [13:26]

and everyone else. There's enough there in the first five minutes to give you a pretty clear idea what is going on.

All is now quiet on the mm about Galloway...

by stopwar on 15.07.2007 [16:54]

I think the "leak" was probably from someone close to Conrad Black, whose newspaper (Telegraph) tried to nail Galloway in 2003.

Looks like The Murdoch Media have been forced to accept (again!) that George Galloway is an excellent and eloquent speaker who has huge support in the UK and around the world.

Been there, done that.

by Gord on 15.07.2007 [21:20]

Galloway sued the Telegraph and won GBP 150,000 over these same allegations.

I hope the now convicted Lord Bunko of Crassharbour gets a macho cell mate.

Yes, Gord...

by stopwar on 16.07.2007 [07:11]

but there have been two further investigations since then, further attempts to make it look as if some of the funds of the Miriam appeal went into Galloway's pocket. In each case, the conclusion was the same. The Times was muckraking, and was stoutly defended by Galloway through his Talksport radio show. So why is The Mail dragging him through the mud yet again?

I like your comment about Lord C - between 20 and 35 years is predicted - and remember how one of this reporters "found" a document proving Galloway was guilty in a shortly-to-be-burning Baghdad building during the invasion - a document later shown to be fake.

The contents of Galloway's speech were quickly taken off the mm media...

by stopwar on 17.07.2007 [16:23]

after Galloway made a statement harranguing British MPs for giving a standing ovation during the resignation of a man who most of the world considered to be a war criminal. Great Stuff, George.

And good for the BBC for providing the video recording which was highly embarrassing to the government of the UK. Same recording as spidered news, but available at:

ht tp://news.bbc.co.uk/player/nol/newsid_6900000/newsid_6902700/6902706.stm?

Now the lies come out in the US media...

by stopwar on 17.07.2007 [17:00]

E.g.

"George Galloway, Professional Jihadist"

ht tp://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/013/884nrzii.asp

"Norm Coleman: I Told You So"

ht tp://www.captainsquartersblog.com/mt/archives/010548.php

CNN even digging up an old story about "Big Brother" in its report.

And just type George Galloway in Google at the moment, and see what comes up as "news"...

Can people please make sure the video of George's response (preferably the one with a BBC logo) gets seen by USAns before these despicable people seize a propaganda victory.

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