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Domestic Propaganda and the News Media
'Dodgy Dossier'
Project: Domestic Propaganda and the News Media
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January 13, 2000: Real-Time Video Manipulation Technology Could Be Abused, Says CBS News Chief; Technique Can Make 'Missiles Hitting Baghdad and Airplanes Crashing Look Real'

Camera 1　Camera 2　Camera 3

L-VIS 1　L-VIS 2　L-VIS 3

CBS Production Truck

The Final Result As Seen On TV

Virtual First Down *[Source: Princeton Video Image]*

Following the publication of a front-page article in the New York Times on the use of fake, digitally-created images in some CBS programs like "The Early Show", CBS executives call a press conference to defend and explain the practice. While the technology has been used in sports broadcasting for several years now (see 1999 and After), many are troubled by its use in news programs. CBS Television used the technology developed by Princeton Video Image to superimpose a digitally created CBS logo to block out an NBC-sponsored sign in Times Square during its news coverage of New Year's Eve celebrations. Dan Rather, the CBS anchor, calls that "a mistake". "At the very least we should have pointed out to viewers that we were doing it." Both NBC and ABC told the New York Times that they had not used the technology in their news broadcasting. But CBS defends the practice. "Anytime there's an NBC logo up on our network we'll block it again", says Leslie Moonves, the president of CBS Television. Andrew Heyward, the president of the news division, acknowledges the potential for abuse or deception: "He said that he understood the argument against the use of the technology—which is widely employed in sports and some entertainment shows—on news programs. The danger is 'that it looks too real and therefore it's wrong or potentially wrong,' he said. 'I certainly agree it's potentially subject to abuse.' He noted that advances in computer-generated techniques had made things like missiles hitting Baghdad and airplanes crashing look so real that it was incumbent on networks to underscore that these were not real images. 'We're not sitting here rubbing our hands, saying how can we use this again,' Mr. Heyward said. 'We are not in the deception business. We're in the reality business; we're in the accuracy business. To the extent that this technology interferes with that core belief

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Princeton Video Image]

we're not going to do it. We will absolutely take seriously the use of this tool.'" [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/12/2000; NEW YORK TIMES, 1/13/2000; INDEPENDENT, 1/24/2000; NEW YORK TIMES, 1/27/2000]

Entity Tags: Dan Rather, Andrew Heyward, Princeton Video Image, Inc., CBS News
Category Tags: Marketing and Public Relations, 'Dodgy Dossier'

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September 13, 2001: Conservative Columnist Calls for 'Carpet-Bombing' Muslim Countries, Slaughtering Leaders, and Forcibly Converting Survivors to Christianity

Conservative columnist Ann Coulter writes an enraged op-ed for the National Review. Reflecting on the 9/11 attacks and the loss of her friend Barbara Olson in the attacks (see (9:20 a.m.) September 11, 2001), Coulter says America's retribution should be immediate and generalized: "This is no time to be precious about locating the exact individuals directly involved in this particular terrorist attack. Those responsible include anyone anywhere in the world who smiled in response to the annihilation of patriots like Barbara Olson. We don't need long investigations of the forensic evidence to determine with scientific accuracy the person or persons who ordered this specific attack. We don't need an 'international coalition.' We don't need a study on 'terrorism.' We certainly didn't need a congressional resolution condemning the attack this week." Coulter says a "fanatical, murderous cult"—Islam—has

Ann Coulter. [Source: Universal Press Syndicate]

"invaded" the nation, welcomed by Americans and protected by misguided laws that prohibit discrimination and "'religious' profiling." She blasts airport security measures that insist on checking every passenger—"[a]irports scrupulously apply the same laughably ineffective airport harassment to Suzy Chapstick as to Muslim hijackers. It is preposterous to assume every passenger is a potential crazed homicidal maniac. We know who the homicidal maniacs are. They are the ones cheering and dancing right now." She concludes by calling for all-out vengeance: "We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity. We weren't punctilious about locating and punishing only Hitler and his top officers. We carpet-bombed German cities; we killed civilians. That's war. And this is war." [NATIONAL REVIEW, 9/13/2001] In October 2002, Reason magazine's Sara Rimensnyder will call Coulter's screed "the single most infamous foreign policy suggestion inspired by 9/11." [REASON MAGAZINE, 10/2002]

Entity Tags: Ann Coulter, Sara Rimensnyder
Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline, Events Leading to Iraq Invasion, US International Relations
Category Tags: Media Complicity, Faith-Based Rhetoric, 'Dodgy Dossier', 'Mission Accomplished', 1949 Peekskill Riots, 2001 Clinton 'Vandal Scandal', 2004 Presidential Elections, 2008 Presidential Elections, British Disinformation Campaigns, CDMT State Dept, CIA Disinformation Campaigns, Conservative Opposition to Obama, Gender-Based Rhetoric, Iraqi Defectors and the INC, Lynch Disinfomation, Plame-Niger Controversy, Race-Based Rhetoric, 'Friedman Unit', 'Jeff Gannon' Controversy, Conservative Media Pundits

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December 6, 2002-March 18, 2003: Pundit O'Reilly Flip-Flops on Question of Iraqi WMDs

On December 6, 2002, conservative media pundit Bill O'Reilly says about Saddam Hussein, "I can't, in good conscience, tell the American people that I know for sure that he has smallpox or anthrax or he's got nuclear or chemical and that he is ready to use that. I cannot say that as a journalist or an American." O'Reilly is far more certain on February 7, 2003, when he tells his listeners, "According to the UN, he's got anthrax, VX gas, ricin, and on and on." On February 23, 2003, he

says flatly, "This guy we know has anthrax and VX and all this stuff." Then on March 18, 2003, just two days before the US invades Iraq, he says that he isn't sure what kind of WMDs Saddam Hussein may possess: "Here's the bottom line on this for every American and everybody in the world: Nobody knows for sure, all right? We don't know what he has. We think he has 8,500 liters of anthrax. But let's see." [FAIRNESS AND ACCURACY IN REPORTING (FAIR), 5/2003]

Entity Tags: Bill O'Reilly, Saddam Hussein, United Nations

Timeline Tags: Events Leading to Iraq Invasion

Category Tags: Media Complicity, Media Coverage of Iraq War, Conservative Media Pundits, 'Dodgy Dossier', 'Mission Accomplished', 1949 Peekskill Riots, 2001 Clinton 'Vandal Scandal', 2004 Presidential Elections, 2008 Presidential Elections, British Disinformation Campaigns, CDMT State Dept, CIA Disinformation Campaigns, Fairness Doctrine, Health Care Reform Controversy, Iraqi Defectors and the INC, Lynch Disinfomation, Plame-Niger Controversy, Marketing and Public Relations, Race-Based Rhetoric, White House Iraq Group, 'Friedman Unit'

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February 3, 2003: Britain Releases 'Dodgy Dossier' Plagiarized from Grad Student's Magazine Article, Other Sources

The British government releases a dossier titled "Iraq: Its Infrastructure of Concealment, Deception, and Intimidation." The government says the dossier is based on high-level intelligence and diplomatic sources and was produced with the approval of Prime Minister Tony Blair; it also wins praise from US Secretary of State Colin Powell (see February 7, 2003). Unfortunately, the dossier is almost wholly plagiarized from a September 2002 article by university student Ibrahim al-Marashi. [MIDDLE EAST REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, 2/23/2003] Al-Marashi was doing postgraduate work at Oxford University when he wrote it. [INTERNATIONAL POLICY FELLOWSHIPS, 10/1/2006] The article is entitled "Iraq's Security and Intelligence Network: A Guide and Analysis," and was published in the Middle East Review of International Affairs Journal (MERIA). [MIDDLE EAST REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, 2/23/2003] The British dossier plagiarizes two other articles as well, both from Jane's Intelligence Review (see February 8, 2003), some of which were published as far back as 1997. MERIA is based in Israel, which even moderate Arabs say makes it a suspect source, and all the more reason why the origin of the information should have been cited. [GUARDIAN, 2/7/2003] MERIA, an Internet-based magazine with about 10,000 subscribers, is edited by Jerusalem Post columnist Barry Rubin. [JERUSALEM POST, 2/8/2003] Rubin will responds dryly: "We are pleased that the high quality of MERIA Journal's articles has made them so valuable to our readers.… As noted on the masthead of each issue and all our publications, however, we do appreciate being given credit." [MIDDLE EAST REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, 2/23/2003] Al-Marashi, currently working at California's Center for Nonproliferation Studies, describes himself as an opponent of Saddam Hussein's regime: "As an Iraqi, I support regime change in Iraq," he says. [REUTERS, 2/8/2003; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 2/7/2007]

Article Used Information from 1991 - He examined Iraq's secret police and other, similar forces in detail, using captured Iraqi documents from the 1991 Gulf War and updating that information to be more timely. [MIDDLE EAST REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, 9/2002] The dossier contains entire sections from al-Marashi's article quoted almost verbatim, including typographical errors contained in the original. When asked about the plagiarism, al-Marashi says he was not approached by the British government for permission to use his work. "It was a shock to me," he says. Chris Aaron, editor of Jane's Intelligence Review, says he had not been asked for permission to use material from his article in the dossier. The dossier uses the three articles to detail methods used by the Iraqi government to block and misdirect UN weapons inspectors' attempts to locate weapons stockpiles in Iraq. The dossier claims that while the UN only has 108 weapons inspectors inside Iraq, the Iraqi government has 20,000 intelligence officers "engaged in disrupting their inspections and concealing weapons of mass destruction." The dossier claims that every hotel room and telephone used by the weapons inspectors is bugged, and that WMD-related documents are being concealed in Iraqi hospitals, mosques,

and homes. Powell will cite the dossier as part of his presentation to the UN detailing evidence of Iraqi weapons programs (see February 5, 2003). [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 2/6/2003; BBC, 2/7/2003] When the media exposes the origins of the dossier, Blair officials will concede that they should have been more honest about the source material (see February 6, 2003).

British 'Inflated' Some Numbers, Used More Extreme Language - Al-Marashi, who learns of the plagiarism from a colleague, Glen Rangwala (see February 5, 2003), says the dossier is accurate despite "a few minor cosmetic changes." He adds: "The only inaccuracies in the [British] document were that they maybe inflated some of the numbers of these intelligence agencies. The primary documents I used for this article are a collection of two sets of documents, one taken from Kurdish rebels in the north of Iraq—around four million documents—as well as 300,000 documents left by Iraqi security services in Kuwait." [BBC, 2/7/2003] Al-Marashi and Rangwala both note that the dossier uses more extreme language. "Being an academic paper, I tried to soften the language" al-Marashi says. "For example, in one of my documents, I said that [the Iraqi intelligence agency known as the Mukhabarat] support[s] organizations in what Iraq considers hostile regimes, whereas the [British] document refers to it as 'supporting terrorist organizations in hostile regimes.'" [GUARDIAN, 2/7/2003; NEW YORK TIMES, 2/8/2003]

Third Attempt to Pass Off Old Information as New Evidence - This is the third time in recent months that Downing Street has tried to pass off old, suspect information as damning evidence against Iraq. In September, it released a 50-page dossier, "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government," that used years-old information from the Foreign Office and British intelligence to make its case (see September 24, 2002); UN inspectors and British journalists visited some of the "facilities of concern" and found nothing (see September 24, 2002). In December, Downing Street released a 23-page report, "Saddam Hussein: Crimes and Human Rights Abuses," that was heavily criticized by human rights groups, members of Parliament, and others for reusing old information. When that dossier was released, the Foreign Office put forward an Iraqi exile who had been jailed by Hussein for 11 years. The exile displayed handcuffs he said had been placed on him while in captivity. Afterwards, the exile admitted that the handcuffs were actually British in origin. [GUARDIAN, 2/7/2003]

Dossier Product of Heated Debate - The Observer writes of the current "dodgy dossier" that discussions between Blair's head of strategic communications, Alastair Campbell, foreign policy adviser David Manning, senior intelligence officials, and the new head of British homeland security, David Omand, resulted in a decision to "repeat a wheeze from last autumn: publishing a dossier of 'intelligence-based evidence,'" this time focusing on Iraq's history of deceiving weapons inspectors. The dossier had to be released before chief UN inspector Hans Blix could make his scheduled report in mid-February. The previous dossier, about Iraq's dismal human rights record, had led to what The Observer calls "several stand-up rows between Omand and Campbell, with the former accusing the latter of sprinkling too much 'magic dust' over the facts to spice it up for public consumption." That dossier left "the more sensationalist elements" in the forward, but for this dossier, "there was no time for such niceties. Led by Campbell, a team from the Coalition Information Center—the group set up by Campbell and his American counterpart during the war on the Taliban—began collecting published information that touched on useful themes." Al-Marashi's work became the central piece for the cut-and-pasted dossier, which The Observer says was compiled so sloppily that, in using the al-Marashi report and one of the Jane's articles, two different organizations were confused with one another. [OBSERVER, 2/9/2003]

Entity Tags: Hans Blix, UK Security Service (MI5), David Omand, Glen Rangwala, Ibrahim al-Marashi, Middle East Review of International Affairs Journal, Jerusalem Post, Jane's Intelligence Review, Mukhabarat, David Manning, Colin Powell, Blair administration, Christopher Aaron, United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, UK Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), Coalition Information Center, Alastair Campbell, Saddam Hussein, Barry Rubin, Center for Nonproliferation

Studies, British Foreign Office, Tony Blair
Timeline Tags: Events Leading to Iraq Invasion
Category Tags: 'Dodgy Dossier', Media Coverage of Iraq War

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February 5, 2003: Author Learns of British Government Plagiarism of His Work for 'Dodgy Dossier'

Glen Rangwala, a lecturer in politics at Cambridge University, realizes that a just-released dossier on Iraqi WMDs released by the British government is almost wholly plagiarized from the work of his colleague, graduate student Ibrahim al-Marashi. Rangwala alerts al-Marashi to the dossier in an e-mail after being sent a copy of the online version by researchers in Sweden. A Cambridge undergraduate student forwards a copy of Rangwala's e-mail to journalists. "I found it quite startling when I realized that I'd read most of it before," Rangwala later tells the press. "Apart from passing this off as the work of its intelligence services, it indicates that [Britain] really does not have any independent sources of information on Iraq's internal policies. It just draws upon publicly available data." [GUARDIAN, 2/7/2003; OBSERVER, 2/9/2003] In his e-mail, posted on the discussion board of the organization Campaign Against Sanctions on Iraq, Rangwala cites numerous identical passages in the dossier and in al-Marashi's article. [GLEN RANGWALA, 2/5/2003] Rangwala notes that in the article al-Marashi acknowledged using 12-year old data, but "the British government, when it transplants that information into its own dossier, does not make that acknowledgment." Al-Marashi says that when he learned his material had formed the basis for the dossier: "[I was] flattered at first, then surprised that they didn't cite me… It was a case of cut and paste. They even left in my mistakes." [JERUSALEM POST, 2/8/2003] Al-Marashi also comments, "I'll be more skeptical of any British intelligence I read in future." [LONDON TIMES, 2/7/2003]
Entity Tags: Ibrahim al-Marashi, Blair administration, Glen Rangwala
Timeline Tags: Events Leading to Iraq Invasion
Category Tags: 'Dodgy Dossier'

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February 6, 2003: Media Exposes Plagiarized 'Dodgy Dossier,' Notes Information Is 12 Years Old

The British media learns that a dossier entitled "Iraq: Its Infrastructure of Concealment, Deception, and Intimidation" that was released by the British government to bolster its case for Iraqi WMD is plagiarized from publicly available magazine articles (see February 3, 2003). Prime Minister Tony Blair's office initially stands by the report, which becomes colloquially known as the "Dodgy Dossier" (a term apparently coined in an editorial by The Observer—see February 8, 2003), saying the dossier had been "put together by a range of government officials." It also says, "We consider the text as published accurate." However, Blair officials will eventually admit that the government should have credited the article. [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 2/6/2003; BBC, 2/7/2003] A Channel 4 news report notes: "None of the sources are acknowledged, leading the reader to believe that the information is a result of direct investigative work, rather than simply copied from pre-existing internet sources…. Apart from the obvious criticism that the British government has plagiarized texts without acknowledgment, passing them off as the work of its intelligence services, there are two further serious problems. Firstly, it indicates that [Britain] at least really does not have any independent sources of information on Iraq's internal politics—they just draw upon publicly available data. Thus any further claims to information based on 'intelligence data' must be treated with even more skepticism. Secondly, the information presented as being an accurate statement of the current state of Iraq's security organizations may not be anything of the sort. [Ibrahim Al-]Marashi—the real and unwitting author of much of the document—has as his primary source the documents captured in 1991 for the Iraq Research and Documentation Project. His own focus is the activities of Iraq's intelligence agencies in Kuwait,

Aug 90-Jan 91—this is the subject of his thesis. As a result, the information presented as relevant to how Iraqi agencies are currently engaged with UNMOVIC is 12 years old." [CHANNEL 4 NEWS (LONDON), 2/6/2003]
Entity Tags: Ibrahim al-Marashi, Blair administration
Timeline Tags: Events Leading to Iraq Invasion
Category Tags: 'Dodgy Dossier', Media Coverage of Iraq War

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February 7, 2003: 'Dodgy Dossier' a 'Cut-and-Paste Job' By Downing Street, Coalition Information Center; Authors Instructed to Focus on Obstruction

The so-called "Dodgy Dossier," a report on Iraqi attempts to deceive UN weapons inspectors recently released by the British government (see February 3, 2003), is discovered to be, in the words of The Guardian, a "journalistic cut-and-paste job" compiled largely from public sources, written by four junior officials in Alastair Campbell's communications office, and published with "only cursory approval from intelligence or even Foreign Office sources." [GUARDIAN, 2/7/2003; LONDON TIMES, 2/8/2003] A "well-placed source" tells The Guardian that the dossier is the work of Downing Street and the Coalition Information Center, the organization set up after 9/11 to push the US-British case for the war on terrorism. The source calls a key section of the dossier riddled with "silly errors." The report was apparently not vetted by British intelligence. [GUARDIAN, 2/7/2003] A spokesman for British Prime Minister Tony Blair says that neither he nor nor Alastair Campbell, one of his advisers, had actually seen the report before it was released, instead saying that it had been "seen by the relevant people." Campbell's aides told communications staffers that they wanted a report that drew together evidence "proving" Iraq was obstructing UN officials in finding Iraqi WMD; they did not want a more even-handed report acknowledging that UN weapons inspectors were nowhere near to finding a so-called "smoking gun" proving Iraq possesses such weapons. Former defense minister Peter Kilfoyle says: "It just adds to the general impression that what we have been treated to is a farrago of half-truths, assertions and over-the-top spin. I am afraid this is typical of the way in which the whole question of a potential war on Iraq is being treated." [LONDON TIMES, 2/8/2003] Responding to criticisms of the report as being propaganda, a Downing Street source says, "What we are absolutely determined is that this will not stop us sharing information with the public as and when we think we can." [OBSERVER, 2/9/2003]
Entity Tags: Paul Hamill, Coalition Information Center, John Pratt, Alastair Campbell, Alison Blackstone, British Foreign Office, Murtaza Khan, Peter Kilfoyle
Timeline Tags: Events Leading to Iraq Invasion
Category Tags: 'Dodgy Dossier'

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February 7, 2003: Antiwar Group Identifies 1999 Book as Another 'Dodgy Dossier' Source

The so-called "Dodgy Dossier," a report on Iraqi attempts to deceive UN weapons inspectors recently released by the British government and quickly proven to be plagiarized from out-of-date articles from publicly available sources (see February 3, 2003), has already been shown to have been compiled from a graduate thesis and several magazine articles. Now the anti-war group Voices in the Wilderness says it has identified a passage from the dossier as being lifted directly from a 1999 book, *Saddam Secrets,* written by Tim Trevan. [GUARDIAN, 2/7/2003] Trevan is a former UN weapons inspector who wrote on February 4 that a war with Iraq is necessary: "When you have an advanced state of cancer, surgery becomes a better option than slow lingering death. For me, horrible though war is, it is the equivalent of surgery." [GUARDIAN, 2/4/2003]
Entity Tags: Tim Trevan, Voices in the Wilderness, Blair administration
Timeline Tags: Events Leading to Iraq Invasion
Category Tags: 'Dodgy Dossier'

February 8, 2003: Jane's Says 1997, 2002 Articles Used for 'Dodgy Dossier'

Jane's Information Group, the firm that publishes the Jane's series of journals about global military affairs, says three of its articles were used without credit in a recent dossier released by the British government on Iraq (see February 3, 2003). The articles are from July 1997, August 1997, and November 2002, according to the publishing firm. Jane's Intelligence Review editor Chris Aaron says, "That open sources should be used to compile such a report is not in itself surprising," noting that the dossier's introduction acknowledged the use of some previously published material. "However, the direct copying of entire paragraphs casts some doubt on the processes used to create dossiers of this type.… [W]hen an agency produces a report for classified consumption it will usually identify the nature of the sources used. The fact that the [British] dossier does not identify the source for each bit of evidence in the report could be taken as misleading, or taken to be an effort to disguise the classified material included in the dossier. The real mistake seems to have been to copy sections wholesale, thus making it obvious which parts of the report come from open sources and which are based on information from the intelligence community." A spokesman for Prime Minister Tony Blair says that the central argument of the dossier—that Iraq is systematically blocking the efforts of UN weapons inspectors to locate and document Iraq's WMD programs and stockpiles—remains unchallenged. He calls the work "a pull-together of a variety of sources," and says government officials should have specified which sections came from public material and which were from intelligence sources. [JANE'S INTELLIGENCE REVIEW, 2/2003; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 2/8/2003] The articles from Jane's Intelligence Review are "Can the Iraqi Security Apparatus Save Saddam?", published in November 2002 and written by international security expert Ken Gause, and a two-part article, "Inside Iraq's Security Network," published in July and August 1997 and written by Sean Boyne. [CHANNEL 4 NEWS (LONDON), 2/6/2003]

Entity Tags: Tony Blair, Ken Gause, Jane's Information Group, Jane's Intelligence Review, Blair administration, Christopher Aaron, Sean Boyne

Timeline Tags: Events Leading to Iraq Invasion

Category Tags: 'Dodgy Dossier', Media Coverage of Iraq War

February 8, 2003: British Press Blasts 'Dodgy Dossier'

The London Times pens a scathing editorial regarding the so-called "dodgy dossier," a report on Iraqi attempts to deceive UN weapons inspectors recently released by the British government, which was quickly proven to be plagiarized from out-of-date articles from publicly available sources (see February 3, 2003). The editorial sarcastically envisions the scene in Downing Street in the weeks before the dossier's release, with frantic staffers saying: "What do you mean, there's no smoking gun? Haven't MI6 [British intelligence] got anything? No photographs? No defectors? TB [Tony Blair] is expecting a dossier next week. We promised. He said the Americans liked the last one—quoted everywhere, robust stuff, saved the CIA from having to go public with any sources. So they want another one—Colin Powell's thinking of a spot of show and tell at the UN (see February 5, 2003), and wants to point to independent work by the Brits. So, we better get something—and quick.… Well, one of you had better put something together. Get on the Internet. Just type in ricin and Iraq and see what you find on Google. 20 pages, at least. By tomorrow." The editorial notes that while "[g]overnmental plagiarism is nothing new… plagiarising intelligence is more difficult. There isn't much of it around. And the best is all secret—not easy for a media studies undergraduate to prise out of GCHQ overnight. But what TB wants, TB gets. A Downing Street unit is there to provide it. And as any student knows, extracts from American social anthropology dissertations add the required note of pedantic obfuscation to any jejune essay, with a provenance that is virtually

undetectable. What better way to triple the value of intelligence assets with a thesis from California? It was regrettable that the author had so obvious an Arab name: far less convincing as a footnote than a reference to the trajectory of a military satellite. But perhaps the report could simply say it was a mix of private and public. Isn't that the normal pattern nowadays?" [LONDON TIMES, 2/8/2003] The Observer writes a similarly harsh editorial, noting that such "[d]eception can only corrode public trust," and apparently coins the term "dodgy dossier." The Observer editorial calls the dossier "an Internet cut-and-paste exercise largely lifted from a Californian post-graduate thesis focused on evidence from the invasion of Kuwait 13 years ago" and "sprinkl[ed with] unfounded exaggerations… inserted to strengthen the claims made in the thesis." The editorial says: "Plagiarism is not the main issue. The central issue is that of public trust. At best, this episode demonstrates incompetence and the failure to oversee the most important claims which the government puts into the public domain. At worst, a deliberate attempt to hoodwink and mislead the public will undermine trust in anything the government says about the Iraqi threat at this vital time.… It is not only the government which has access to the Internet. Every claim made will be scrutinized more closely, and by more people, than ever before. Nothing will corrode trust more than to be caught out trying to insult the intelligence of the British public." [OBSERVER, 2/9/2003]
Entity Tags: London Times, Blair administration, Colin Powell, UK Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), Observer
Timeline Tags: Events Leading to Iraq Invasion
Category Tags: 'Dodgy Dossier', Media Coverage of Iraq War

February 10, 2003: Labour Party Lawmaker Calls for Emergency Debate on Plagiarized Dossier

A Labour Party lawmaker storms out of the House of Commons after saying the Blair administration lied about a recent dossier it released that purported to show Iraq's deceiving UN weapons inspectors about its presumed cache of WMD (see February 3, 2003). Tam Dalyell, the longest-serving member in the Commons and a member of Tony Blair's Labour Party, thunders, "To plagiarize an out of date Ph.D. thesis and to present it as an official report of the latest British intelligence information, surely it reveals a lack of awareness of the disastrous consequences of such a deception." Dalyell calls for an emergency debate on the issue. "This is not a trivial leak. It is a document on which is the basis of whether or not this country goes to war and whether or not young servicemen and servicewomen are to put their own lives at risk and indeed thousands, tens of thousands of innocent civilians." [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 2/10/2003]
Entity Tags: Tam Dalyell, Blair administration
Timeline Tags: Events Leading to Iraq Invasion
Category Tags: 'Dodgy Dossier'

February 7, 2007: Britain Admits It Should Have Credited Student's Article for 'Dodgy Dossier'

The British government admits it should have credited a postgraduate student's article as being part of its so-called "Dodgy Dossier" on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (see February 3, 2003). "In retrospect we should have acknowledged" that sections of the document were based on an article by Ibrahim al-Marashi, says a spokesman for Prime Minister Tony Blair. Menzies Campbell, foreign affairs spokesman for the opposition Liberal Democrats, says the incident is "the intelligence equivalent of being caught stealing the spoons.… The dossier may not amount to much but this is a considerable embarrassment for a government trying still to make a case for war." Labour leader Glenda Jackson, an outspoken opponent of war with Iraq, calls the dossier "another example of how the government is attempting to mislead the country and Parliament on the issue of a possible war with Iraq. And of course to mislead is a Parliamentary euphemism

for lying." Blair's spokesman disputes the allegation that the government lied; instead, he says, "We all have lessons to learn." The Blair administration insists the dossier is "solid," no matter what its sources. "The report was put together by a range of government officials," says a Downing Street spokesman. "As the report itself makes clear, it was drawn from a number of sources, including intelligence material. It does not identify or credit any sources, but nor does it claim any exclusivity of authorship." Conservative Party shadow defense secretary Bernard Jenkin says his party is deeply concerned about the dossier. "The government's reaction utterly fails to explain, deny, or excuse the allegations made in it," he says. "This document has been cited by the prime minister and Colin Powell as the basis for a possible war. Who is responsible for such an incredible failure of judgment?" [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 2/7/2003; BBC, 2/7/2003; OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER, 2/7/2003; NEW YORK TIMES, 2/8/2003]

Entity Tags: Walter Menzies Campbell, Bernard Jenkin, Blair administration, Glenda Jackson, Ibrahim al-Marashi, Tony Blair

Timeline Tags: Events Leading to Iraq Invasion

Category Tags: 'Dodgy Dossier', Media Coverage of Iraq War

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