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Blair: We face a new war in Iraq

By GEORGE JONES
POLITICAL EDITOR

BRITISH troops are back at war in Iraq at the centre of a new battle against global terrorism, Tony Blair said yesterday.

The first conflict to remove Saddam Hussein, and the so far non-existent weapons of mass destruction, had developed into a struggle against foreign insurgents and remnants of the former regime, the Prime Minister added.

Sixteen months after President George W Bush declared that combat operations were over, and after a week which has claimed 300 lives, Mr Blair conceded for the first time that a full-scale "new Iraq conflict" was under way.

He said the country had become the "crucible" in which the future of the battle against global terrorism would be determined.

Mr Blair's admission followed the disclosure by The Daily Telegraph on Saturday that he had been warned a year before the American-led

copters have threatened to kill them by today unless the Americans release women prisoners in the Abu Ghraib and Umri-Qasr jails.

The US military says it holds only two Iraqi women, both of them high-security detainees involved in Saddam's weapons programmes, and it will not negotiate.

Mr Blair denied that coalition and Iraqi forces were losing the war against terrorism, though he accepted the extremists had the capability to kill innocent people, Britain would "see the job done".

His decision to acknowledge that a new and wider conflict is under way is a change of tactics. Previously, Mr Blair has argued that the situation was improving, with trouble confined to a few hotspots.

In an interview with The Sunday Telegraph yesterday, Gen Sir Mike Jackson, the head of the Army, conceded that British soldiers were now fighting a "counter-insurgency war". He said August had been a busy month and British troops were involved in "war fighting". Many of the terrorists were foreign fighters supported from outside Iraq, he added.

Mr Blair, who is facing a backlash from activists at next week's Labour conference in Brighton, is now seeking to present the conflict as part of a wider struggle against international terrorism.

He urged his critics at home and abroad to set aside the arguments over whether Britain had been right to go to war, even though there were still "unanswered" and legitimate questions about the information the Government had about WMD.

"Now is not the time for the international community to divide or disagree but to come together," Mr Blair said. In the new conflict, there was only one side for "sensible and decent" people to be on.

Dr Alawi, who visits Washington and New York later this week, said Saddam could go on trial for crimes against humanity next month.

Dr Alawi, referring to the war crimes tribunal set up to try Saddam, told American television: "I don't think it will take a long time, because the evidence against him is... overwhelming. So we hope justice is served."

Asked if that meant a death sentence, he replied: "The death penalty has been restored in Iraq."

Dr Alawi also insisted that Baghdad was succeeding in a war against the "forces of evil".

He said his government was determined to press ahead with elections in January but appealed for help from the United Nations. He said he was not asking for more troops and Mr Blair said no such request had been made.

According to Sunni leaders, the prospects for the release of Mr Bigley and the Americans appeared bleak.

The Islamic Clerics Association, which has negotiated the freedom of dozens of foreign nationals, said it had not heard from the kidnappers. "Usually

Return to Sarajevo: The daughter of ITN's Michael Nicholson tells of her emotional journey to the orphanage where she was rescued 12 years ago



Natasha Nicholson, 21, at the Ejelevo orphanage, where she lived until she was nine. Going back was difficult. 'I was afraid of what might come out of the woodwork' Elizabeth Grice: Page 3

Inside Saddam may go on trial next month

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invasion that post-war Iraq would cause major problems, and that no one had a clear idea of what would happen.

The previously secret documents had said a stable post-war government would be impossible without keeping large numbers of troops there for "many years".

Mr Blair, beside Iyad Alawi, the interim prime minister of Iraq, at 10 Downing Street, vowed to see through the struggle and defeat the terrorists. He said Britain would not "desert" the Iraq people.

He refused to put a time-scale on how long British troops would be in Iraq, but denied suggestions that it could be for 10 or 20 years.

Mr Blair and Dr Alawi said the two governments were working hard to secure the release of a British man, Kenneth Bigley, and two Americans who were seized on Thursday in Baghdad. Their

Extremist gains in German polls

Germany's far-right and former Communists were predicted to make large gains in regional elections yesterday according to exit polls, as Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's Social Democrat party was punished for its economic reforms.

The neo-Nazi National Democratic Party took nine per cent of votes in Saxony while the Party of Democratic Socialism took around 28 per cent in Brandenburg and up to 23 per cent in Saxony. Page 11

No-go Harmison

The England bowler Steve Harmison has pulled out of the tour of Zimbabwe, citing moral objections to President Mugabe. Editorial: Page 21, Sport S14

Walkers' delight

The first exercise of the new right to roam over open country took place in the Forest of Bowland in Lancashire yesterday. Page 2, Editorial: Page 21

Guilty plea 'should cut sentences by one third'

By JOSHUA ROZENBERG
LEGAL EDITOR

JUDGES should be able to reduce sentences by more than a third when defendants show "absolute candour" in admitting their offences, new draft sentencing guidelines published today will advise.

Discounts will apply to all offences, however serious.

The guidelines have been drawn up by the Sentencing Guidelines Council, a new statutory body chaired by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Woolf. David Blunkett, the Home Secretary, said in March that the establishment of the council was a "key reform to put the sense back into sentencing".

However, it was not clear yesterday how he would react to the prospect that some murderers could serve less than the 15 years he regards as the minimum tariff. Under

Mr Blunkett's own guidelines, published last year, there is a minimum tariff of 30 years for the more serious categories of murder.

By law, Mr Blunkett must be consulted about all the council's guidelines. Courts in England and Wales are required to "have regard" to the guidelines, although the final decision on sentencing in individual cases remains with judges and magistrates.

Members of the council decided in June that reduction of sentences for guilty pleas would be an "ideal first guideline".

The council will say rewarding a guilty plea with a discount saves time and money that would otherwise be spent on a contested trial. A reduction also encourages the offender to admit what he or she has done, generally avoiding the need for victims and witnesses to give evidence.

The council agreed in June that there should be flexibility to give more than the proposed maximum discount where there was a particularly early admission of guilt.

"A discount of more than one third may be appropriate where absolute candour is demonstrated," the members said.

Discounts have always been given for a timely plea of guilty, and the new arrangements should give judges and defendants a clearer idea of how long is appropriate.

Until now, sentencing guidelines have been set by the Court of Appeal. The new arrangements give Parliament a role in scrutinising draft guidelines through the Home Affairs Committee.

Other guidelines to be published today by the council will deal with new types of sentences, which will come into force next year.

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John Leslie on life

'I've got a new house and a dog. Someone, please, just get me a wife. And that will be me! I'd get married tomorrow, if I could find the right girl'



Interview Page 15

London Fashion Week

Hilary Alexander talks to Stuart Rose, chairman of the British Fashion Council and chief executive of M&S, about the mix of high fashion and high street



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News

I've seen herbal remedy make tumours disappear, says respected cancer doctor

By CELIA HALL
MEDICAL EDITOR

BRITISH doctors are cautious people but Dr Rosy Daniel has decided to stick her neck out. She says she has seen walking miracles.

To claim that an Indian herbal remedy can help the body rid itself of cancer is an open invitation to critics from orthodox and complementary medicine alike.

But she says she has seen cases of cancer - here and in India - in which the tumours have disappeared.

There is no doubt that she is up against it. There are no clinical trials on the product and there is no evidence that it is active in the body or of how it works.

But Dr Daniel, formerly medical director of the Bristol Cancer Help Centre, says she knows what she has witnessed and believes the time is right to speak out and to try to engage the interest of a wider circle of doctors and researchers.

The product is called Carcotol. It is a mixture of eight medicinal herbs and has its basis in traditional Hindu medicine. It is not taken alone but with a non-acidic diet, a digestive enzyme and very large quantities of water, three to five litres a day.

"All science starts with observation and I am not claiming anything for Carcotol. I am reporting a phenomenon," she said.

"Over the years I have seen a number of remarkable recoveries but since I have been putting people on Carcotol I have seen miracles. I have seen astounding results and they are mounting up. I want to relay this information in the spirit of science."

"For the first time in 20 years I have a medicine that I believe will make a difference."

Even the Bristol centre will not prescribe it because of the lack of clinical evidence, but Dr Daniel would like to see trials on people with end-stage cancer who would be offered the choice of chemotherapy or Carcotol, which seems to be most active in cancers of the digestive tract.

Asked how she knows Carcotol is making the difference rather than all the other things her patients are doing, she answers, candidly: "Well, I don't."

But she says she has seen no ill-effects from the potent mixture - five of the herbs are known to be active and are classed as medicinal - and says only research will answer the questions.

"I have been watching like a hawk to see if there are any side-effects or other complications. I am satisfied that the claims of little or low toxicity are right."

"But until there is any controlled scientific assessment one can't rule that out and until there is clarity about the mechanism of action you cannot be categorical about drug



Dr Rosy Daniel with a capsule of Carcotol, a mixture of eight herbal medicines which she believes has produced 'miracles' in the treatment of cancer



Stephen Wood. "I think it's about changing the acidity of the body," he said



Gillian Gill: outlook was bleak when she contracted cancer in ovaries and liver

interactions either. You will not find these herbs in the British formularies. Even in the Indian formularies there is no claim that any are anticancer agents."

Carcotol was developed by a doctor from Rajasthan, Dr Nandlal Tiwari, who has been using it for 25 years. Dr Daniel, who practises integrated, "mind, body spirit" medicine in London and Bristol, went to India to meet him and look at

his results. "I met about a dozen people who had been told they were terminal, who had really nasty cancers and whose hospital tests results were all clear," she said.

In a study of 1,900 Indian cancer patients taking the product and following the regime, 25 per cent had 75 per cent to 100 per cent benefit, half had 25 per cent to 75 per cent benefit and 25 per cent had little or no benefit.

Exactly how many cancers disappeared is not known. "Benefit" was deemed to be having more energy, putting on weight and being more tranquil.

"With my own patients, my impression is that my results are close to Dr Tiwari's. I look for benefit in the first two months. If there is none then it is not worth going on with it," Dr Daniel said.

She has been using Carcotol for four years, prescribing it as an unlicensed medicine.

To date, 866 patients have been prescribed it and Dr Daniel continues to be in touch with about a quarter of them. Cancers have not progressed or in some cases have shrunk or disappeared, although she has not audited the patients.

The theory is that cancer cells are acidic and cannot thrive in an alkaline environment. "What Dr Tiwari says is that it helps with the secretion of acids from the body. I think it is really a detox herbal remedy which pushes the kidneys, liver and bowel to excrete," she said.

She tends to prescribe it before patients have chemotherapy and afterwards.

Carcotol costs about £90 a month for the highest dose

with another £10 for the digestive enzyme. It is available on the internet but Dr Daniel strongly recommends taking it under medical supervision. More than 20 doctors who use it in Britain can be found on www.carcotolhome.com.

Edzard Ernst, professor of complementary medicine at the Peninsula Medical School, Exeter and Plymouth,

has not worked with Carcotol but said information about it on websites was misleading. He warned people against taking it.

Prof Ernst is dedicated to putting complementary treatments on the map but only when they have been properly tested in robust, well-run clinical trials.

He said: "I was interested to

see that some of the ingredients are unknown and do not appear in any medical reference texts. One, however, is rhubarb, 30mg, so it is not true to say that Carcotol is side-effect free."

"Rhubarb can cause anaemia, diarrhoea, heart arrhythmias, depletion of potassium and other electrolytes. It can cause bone loss and muscle weakness. It also interacts with a long list of prescribed drugs including cardiac medications because of reduced absorption in the intestines."

"I was truly amazed about the claims being made for Carcotol on the websites. It is grossly misleading - hence my warning not to advise anyone to take it."

Dr Richard Sullivan, head of clinical programmes at Cancer Research UK, said the acidity theory harked back to Greek ideas about body humours.

"Very rarely, there can be spontaneous biological regression of a cancer and we don't know why, but not a single herbal remedy has been found to date to be effective against cancers of the gut."

"What is going on may be very intriguing but people see patterns all the time. It is one of the interesting characteristics of human beings."

Gillian Gill

It felt like the arms of an octopus letting go

GILLIAN Gill, a healer and writer from Beigate, Surrey, was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and secondary in her liver in October 2000. The prospect was bleak. She was told her cancer was too big for surgery and was offered chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

As she knew what these treatments could do to the body, she told her doctors that she would try her own medicine for a month or two. "As a healer I decided it was time to walk my talk and to work on myself, giving myself healing and self-hypnosis," she said.

She contacted Dr Daniel the following month and in addition to self-healing and visualisation techniques she adopted a new diet and drank up to nine pints of water a day.

After about six months, when Mrs Gill said she felt she had reached a plateau, Dr Daniel suggested Carcotol and

Mrs Gill added it to her regime. She continued to have her hospital scans and checks during which her consultant measured her stomach swollen by the tumour.

"After the first six to nine months it was 13 finger widths down, and five or six months after that I could feel it going, like the arms of an octopus with lots of knobs, breaking off," she said.

In February 2001 the liver tumours could not be seen on her scan, leaving only a shadow. By the end of the year the solid ovarian tumour had become cystic - a sac full of fluid.

Mrs Gill is convinced that Carcotol has been the key, despite the other holistic measures. "I am sure it is helping. I feel it puts me mentally in a safe place, like putting my brain in a splint. I have become more settled and I associate this with Carcotol," she said.

Stephen Wood

It's not just the pills, it's the whole thing

IT WAS an unusual backache that took Stephen Wood to his doctor. A cancerous lump on another part of his body was removed and Mr Wood, 58, a retired teacher in the Weald of Kent, had a scan.

This revealed a cancer in the spleen which was removed in 2002. Within months, there was a lump on the arm and others in the neck where they could not be removed. He had surgery for the arm.

His cancers were secondary melanomas although the primary cancer was never found. Mr Wood was regularly checked but was next found to have two small cancers in the lungs.

His wife had died of cancer two years previously and, during her illness, they had consulted a GP and ayurvedic practitioner, Dr Mittal Jari, in Brighton, who prescribed the Carcotol regime.

Mr Wood began his Carcotol

two years ago. He was already vegetarian. He adopted the low acid and water regime and drank daily vegetable juice, had acupuncture and practised rishi healing and meditation.

Because he has no spleen, Mr Wood continued to take penicillin to stave off infection. "I was having regular scans and, after six months, the cancers in the lungs were shrinking. Three months after that, you could not see them on an X-ray and the lump in my neck had gone as well."

"My last X-ray in August showed no cancer at all. The doctors are sort of interested, intrigued. Personally, I don't think it's just the pills. I think it's the whole thing."

"I think it's about changing the acidity of the body so that it is able to cope with the cancer cells. I have been given a gift: a new attitude to life. There are so many possibilities before me."

Barbara Jones

An incredible gift has been handed to me

BARBARA Jones is keeping an open mind. She says she really does not know whether it is Carcotol or an experimental treatment given to her on the NHS that has done the trick.

Mrs Jones, from London, has a complex cancer history. A scan that followed a kidney infection in 1997 revealed a liver tumour the size of a grapefruit which was removed.

In 1999 it was established that she had thyroid cancer. Another cancer in her spine was found, for which she had more surgery. By 2001 her liver cancer was back.

She consulted Dr Daniel in October 2002 and started the Carcotol regime together with healing and acupuncture. At the same time she began a thyroid treatment which involved radioactive therapy.

"I have to say that my

conventional doctors have been absolutely incredible," she said. "They have always been willing to go the extra mile for me. I don't want them to feel alienated and I have my scans three or four times a year."

Mrs Jones's liver cancers have not disappeared but they have not grown, as might have been expected.

"My conventional treatment has been very, very important to me and so has the Carcotol. I don't really know what has happened. All I can say is that since I started taking it the liver cancer has not grown," she said.

Mrs Jones also speaks of the gift of life she feels she has been given. "I used to be a control freak. Now I am in a serene and happy place. It feels as if an incredible gift has been handed to me. I feel so lucky, so very fortunate."

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Fears for British kidnap victim

Continued from Page 1
we hear very soon after the kidnapping," said Sheikh Abdul Salam al-Kubaisi, a spokesman for the association. "This time there has been only silence."

Earlier, Hoshiyar Zebari, Iraq's foreign minister, told the BBC that Baghdad would not bow to the kidnapers' demands because it would set "a very bad precedent".

He confirmed that the men had been kidnapped by the Tawhid and Jihad Group, the organisation of alleged al-Qaeda supporter Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

Charles Kennedy, the Liberal Democrat leader, urged the Government not to make a decision on sending any more troops while Parliament was in recess for the party conferences. He said the



Kenneth Bigley: held hostage

breakfast with Frost that Mr Blair had not "levelled with the people" and this had unforgivably eroded trust in politics as a whole.

At a rally opening the Liberal Democrat conference in Bournemouth last night, Mr Kennedy called on Mr Blair to apologise to the country for the "story of betrayal over Iraq". The invasion had been "a tragic folly" and it was too late now to turn back the clock, said Mr Kennedy. But there was one small gesture still open to the Prime Minister.

"Prime Minister, why not just, even now, admit you got it wrong," he added. "Apologise. Say sorry for the damage you have done, the anguish you have caused, the wrongs that you can never now right. At the very least, Prime Minister, just say sorry."

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