

Chilcot report into Iraq war: What do the papers say?



Thursday morning's papers were dominated by the Iraq war report. *Credit: ITV News*

Thursday morning's newspapers were no less critical of Tony Blair than Sir John Chilcot's [report](#) into the Iraq war itself.

Sir John's report found Tony Blair exaggerated the threat posed by Saddam Hussein, led Britain into war before peaceful options had been exhausted and sent ill-equipped British troops into battle.

A total of [179 British personnel died](#) in the conflict between March 2003 and February 2009.

Here is what the papers had to say:

- Daily Mail

Branding Mr Blair a "Monster of Delusion" on its front page, the Daily Mail says Sir John's report exposed his "duplicitous, dishonest, secretive, shallow and incompetent conduct of Tony Blair, who bears heaviest responsibility for dragging Britain into the Iraq war".

- Daily Mirror

The Daily Mirror highlights Mr Blair's promise to US President George Bush that "I'll be with you whatever" and called Sir John's findings a "devastating indictment".

"From exaggerated intelligence about WMDs to justify going to war and revelations of Blair's poodle-like pledges to George Bush to a fatal lack of planning for the occupation and failure to properly equip our troops, Chilcot is damning, damning, damning," the newspaper's leader says, but adds that it is not definitive.

"On this pivotal issue of whether Blair led the country into an illegal war, we believe very serious questions still remain unanswered," the leader states.

- Daily Telegraph

The 2.6 million word report revealed a "litany of mistakes and misjudgments" according to the Daily Telegraph.

However, looking to its consequences, the leader says: "Despite the emotional demands of some families (exploited by Labour Left-wingers such as Jeremy Corbyn) there can be no move to charge Mr Blair with war crimes. The International Criminal Court exists to consider battlefield atrocities, not the actions of elected leaders: judging them is the job of voters."

- The Guardian

The Guardian says Mr Blair's blind faith in Mr Bush ruined a country, shattered trust and trashed his reputation. The newspaper referred to his "with you whatever" promise as the "defining sting", with the results of that loyalty having far-reaching consequences.

"The gap between the public and the private rationale fed the mistrust which has since - amplified by the banking and MPs' expenses crises - fuelled the Brexit vote."

- Daily Express

The Daily Express says Mr Blair "deserves to be vilified", although the report raises wider failings.

"The most unforgivable of these is the Ministry of Defence's failure to provide our troops with the equipment they needed," the leader states.

- The i

Oliver Duff, editor of the i, said the consequences of Mr Blair's "inflation" of intelligence "will echo for decades".

The former prime minister's press conference on Wednesday was "a masterclass in appearing to accept culpability, while picking apart the charge sheet," he added.

- The Sun

The Sun labels Mr Blair a "Weapon of Mass Deception" whose actions "condemned 179 British troops and countless Iraqis to their deaths".

Its leader says: "You could have said no, Tony. Even to our main ally. You could have said, as many did, that the case for war was too tenuous. We doubt relations with the US would have suffered long-term. And 179 troops would still be with the families now demanding to see you on trial."

- The Times

The legacy of the war means "mere survival is the most that many Iraqis can hope for" while in Britain its link to a 'dodgy' dossier has fuelled mistrust of the security services and cynicism about government," according to The Times.

"At each end of the period covered by the Chilcot report a British prime minister has faced the consequences of his catastrophic misjudgments - Mr Blair's on Iraq, and David Cameron's on the referendum. Their successors have their work cut out to rebuild the public's trust," the leader says.

- Financial Times

The Financial Times says the report will disappoint those looking for "clear and decisive" condemnation of Mr Blair, given the main charge against him is that he "deliberately and knowingly lied to the public and parliament" about Saddam Hussein.

However it concludes: "There is much to lament about the way Britain is governed. But with the Chilcot report at least, the UK establishment has proved it is determined not to let gross failure pass unmarked."

Last updated Thu 7 Jul 2016

