

## INTELLIGENCE ON IRAQ WAR

## Australia relied on 'thin, incomplete' report

BBC ONLINE

Australia relied on "thin, ambiguous and incomplete" intelligence to go to war in Iraq, according to an inquiry.

But the independent report by Philip Flood, a diplomat and former spy master, clears Prime Minister John Howard of "politicising" intelligence.

Its conclusions echo those reached by separate US and UK inquiries prompted by the failure to find the banned Iraqi weapons that formed the case for war.

Australia sent 2,000 troops to Iraq last year; 900 are still in the area.

Prime Minister Howard commissioned Flood's inquiry in March, on the recommendation of a parliamentary committee investigating the role Australia's spy agencies had played in the build-up to war.

The BBC's Sydney correspondent, Phil Mercer, says the Flood report, like its US and British equivalents, blames intelligence failures on spy agencies, sparing the politicians.

Investigators attached to Flood's team interviewed Howard, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and Defence Minister Robert Hill.

The Flood report also says that Australia, like other countries in the region, was not aware enough of the threat posed by Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), the militant group which has been blamed for the bomb attacks in Bali in 2002 that killed more than 200 people, many of them Australian tourists.

The report says Australia's spies should have known more about the "terrorist capabilities and intentions" of JI.

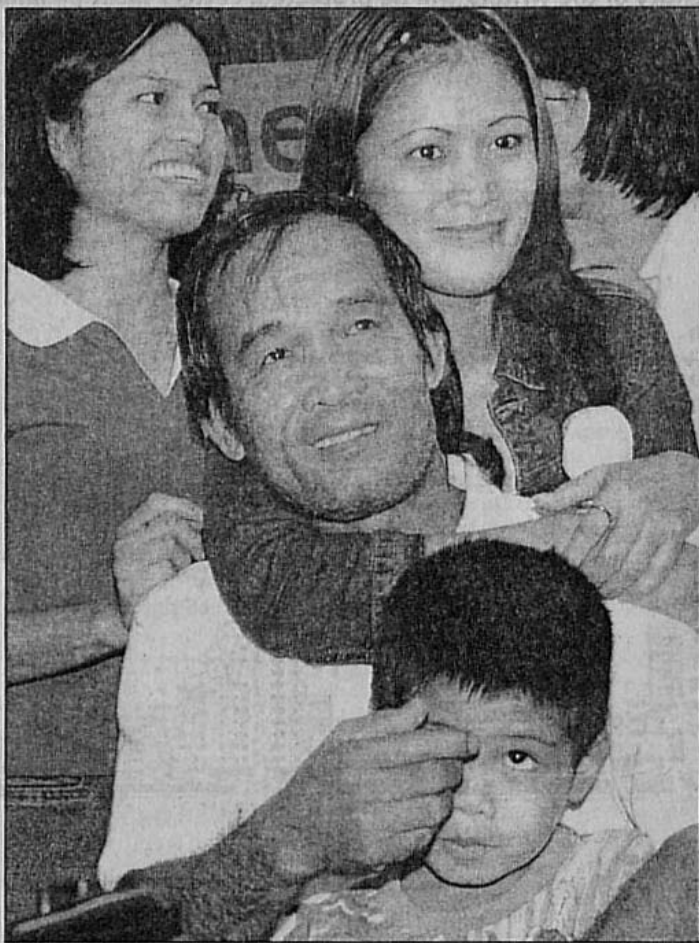
But it says that there is no evidence Australia had any specific warning of the Bali attack.

Prime Minister Howard has hailed the report for clearing his government of allegations it interfered with pre-war intelligence on Iraq to fortify its argument for backing the US-led war.

Howard is set to face the electorate in September or October this year in a campaign which pits him against the staunchly anti-war Labor Party leader, Mark Latham.

Latham has pledged to withdraw what remains of Australia's Iraq contingent if he wins the election.

The Flood report makes several recommendations for the reform of Australia's spy agencies - all but one of which Mr Howard has said he will implement.



Freed Filipino hostage Angelo de la Cruz (C) is reunited with his children Jack (L), Jenny (R) and Jerick (bottom) after his arrival at Manila airport yesterday. De la Cruz arrived home a national hero after a harrowing 17-day hostage ordeal in Iraq.

PHOTO: AFP

## UN to evacuate staff from Gaza

## Israel violating int'l law by constructing barrier: EU

REUTERS, AP, Jerusalem

The United Nations plans to evacuate non-essential foreign staff from the Gaza Strip because of the deteriorating security situation, a U.N. official said yesterday.

The official, speaking in Jerusalem, said the move followed after a decision was taken to move Gaza to security level "Phase Four" - one step below the maximum "Phase Five," which requires all international staff to leave.

AP adds: During a visit to the Jewish state, EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana on Thursday said Israel's West Bank separation barrier violates international law.

Solana's comments came just two days after the European Union infuriated Israeli leaders by supporting a UN General Assembly resolution calling on Israel to tear down the barrier in compliance with a world court ruling.

"A country has the right to build a fence on its own territory but we believe the route of this fence is contrary to international law,"

Solana said during a joint news conference with Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom.

Moments earlier, Shalom said "the government and people of Israel are deeply disappointed by Europe's decision to vote with the Palestinians and against the fence."

"The EU should be engaged in promoting Palestinian reform in Gaza and Ramallah, not Palestinian manipulation in the UN," Shalom said, adding that Europe's vote "encourages the Palestinians to continue their evasion of responsibility" on fighting terror.

The two men met for an hour before the news conference amid an atmosphere of rising tensions between Israel and Europe.

Israel says the string of fences, walls and barbed wire that will eventually stretch 425 miles keeps out suicide bombers. Palestinians say the construction of the barrier is a land grab since it cuts into the West Bank at several points.

"The fence goes through occupied territories and from the very

beginning we have been against that, it's no surprise," he said.

"The security of Israel and the protecting of the Israeli people is something we have always supported and we'll continue to support," Solana added.

Israel's Foreign Ministry summoned European ambassadors for consultations Wednesday to express Israel's displeasure over the European position on the barrier.

Shalom said Israel had hoped the meetings with Solana would focus on improving Israeli-European relations but were redirected because of the UN vote.

"This visit is now taking place in the shadow of Europe's vote... Much of our time today was spent in a frank discussion of the issue," Shalom said.

The United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly passed a resolution Tuesday calling on Israel to take down the barrier and comply with a nonbinding ruling issued earlier this month by the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands.

## Iraq hostages plead for lives on tape

REUTERS, Baghdad

Lined up in a dark room, seven foreign truck drivers pleaded for their lives in a video tape filmed by militants holding them hostage in Iraq - the tension broken only when an Egyptian told his mother not to worry.

Nervous and sweating, the three Indians, three Kenyans and the Egyptian gave their names and nationalities on the tape, given to foreign news agencies yesterday.

At the end of the tape -- and after he had asked not to be beheaded -- a smiling Mohammed Ali Sanad from Egypt tried to reassure his family.

"Mum, if you see me on TV don't get worried, we are with the best people, the Iraqis. They are feeding us, but this is routine and must happen so they can stop infidels from entering Iraq," he said.

"You too my kids, Ahmed and Ali, don't worry. I am coming at the end of the month as I promised you, but if we die then I say thank God."

None of the militants were visible in the tape, but a few of the hostages glanced sideways when they spoke.

As one of the Indians nervously spoke to the camera, Sanad could be heard saying to him in Arabic: "Tell them we're in danger. Tell them we're in danger."

## Saddam lawyers file new complaint with human rights court

AFP, Paris

Lawyers for ousted Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein said Thursday they had filed a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights calling on France to make the United States respect the Geneva Conventions.

The complaint is based on article one of the Geneva Convention, which calls on all signatories to "respect and to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances," Emmanuel Ludot, one of Saddam's attorneys, told AFP.

According to Saddam's defense team, Washington "has not respected the Geneva Convention at all," specifically articles 85 and 105 which detail the required living conditions for prisoners of war and

provisions for their representation. Ludot said Saddam's lawyers "are physically incapable of meeting their client as the detaining power has acted in such a way as to paralyze the rights of the defense, pure and simple."

The case also refers to the European Convention on Human Rights, which stipulates that all defendants have the right to the time and facilities needed to prepare their defense, and to question all necessary witnesses.

He explained that the legal team opted to file its complaint against France because it is a signatory to both the Geneva Conventions and the European Convention on Human Rights.

France "can thus defend its image as a defender of human rights," Ludot added.

## Euro-MPs back Barroso as new Brussels chief

AFP, Strasbourg

EU lawmakers yesterday confirmed the nomination of ex Portuguese premier Jose Manuel Durao Barroso as next head of the European Commission, despite criticism notably over his support for the Iraq war.

The European Parliament voted by 413 in favour and 251 against Durao Barroso, who emerged as a compromise candidate last month to head the EU's executive arm from November. Forty-four MEPs abstained.

He was supported by the conservative European People's Party (EPP), the biggest party in the Strasbourg assembly, but faced criticism from Socialists and Greens notably over his support for the Iraq war.

The conservative leader, who spent two days making his case to the EU parliament before the vote, reiterated his pledge to rise above partisan political affiliations.

## India urges militants to set free hostages

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India is trying to open channels of communication with the militant group, which abducted three of its nationals along with three Kenyans and an Egyptian on Wednesday, to secure their safe and early release, official sources said here yesterday.

Indian External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh, now in Islamabad after attending the Saarc Foreign Ministers' meeting there, said in a statement issued that New Delhi was in touch with the authorities in Iraq to secure the early release of the three Indians taken hostage by the militant outfit, which calls itself as "The Holders of the Black Banner."

In an interview to the Arabic television channel Al-Jazeera, Singh appealed to the militants to free the hostages as they are non-combatants and innocent.

The Minister of State for External Affairs E Ahmed said all possible steps would be taken to secure the

release of the Indian hostages who are in Iraq and working for a Kuwaiti transport firm.

He said the three Indians had gone to Iraq on their own and the Indian government has no role in it.

Ahmed said India has made it clear several times that it is opposed to sending troops to Iraq and that is the reason why no Indian has not so far been harmed anywhere in the world.

Indian Ambassador to Iraq B B Tyagi, who was here, rushed back to Baghdad yesterday to help secure the release of the hostages. The Indian embassy in Jordan has been asked to get in touch with the mission in Kuwait.

The militants have threatened to kill each hostage after 72 hours, a deadline, which expires on the night of Saturday. They are demanding that the countries to which the hostages belong pull their troops out of Iraq. However, neither India, nor Kenya or Egypt have their soldiers in Iraq.



Seven foreign truck drivers held hostage by an Islamic group calling themselves "The Black Banners", sit together at an undisclosed location in Iraq Wednesday. Three Indians, three Kenyans and one Egyptian were abducted by insurgents in Iraq Wednesday. The abductors demand their employers, a Kuwaiti company, to quit their activities in Iraq.

PHOTO: AFP



A Chinese family waits on the second floor of their home for relief Wednesday in Changde, central China's Hunan province. Some 250,000 people have been uprooted by pounding rains and devastating floods sweeping across China, as the death toll steadily climbed, as so far, 381 people have died from rainfall-related disasters since the beginning of the year, with 98 people still missing and 45.7 million affected.

PHOTO: AFP

## Annan rejects Bush claim on safe world

REUTERS, United Nations

The world is no safer than it was three years ago, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said on Wednesday, countering President Bush's claims he had made the world a safer place.

Annan, at a news conference, also criticised a Bush administration decision to withhold \$34 million from the UN Population Fund, saying the agency was saving women's lives.

Annan's remarks could renew strains on ties between the United States and United Nations, which -- while devastated by Bush's inability to win UN backing for the US-led war on Iraq -- had improved following UN help in setting up a new government in Baghdad in time for the US occupation to end.

"No, I cannot say the world is safer today than it was two, three years ago," the UN leader said.

He was responding to a reporter

who asked for comment on the Bush funding move and also whether Annan felt the world had become safer in the last two or three years.

Bush, who has launched two wars since moving into the White House in January 2001, repeatedly asserts in campaign swings ahead of the Nov. 2 presidential election that his policies are making the world safer.

"America is a safer place. Four more years and America will be safer and the world will be more peaceful," he said on Tuesday in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

"The world is a safer and better place as a result of (Iraqi leader) Saddam Hussein not being in power," he told NBC Television in February.

The US administration has withheld funding from the UN Population Fund, known as UNEPA, for three years, accusing it of supporting China's policy of coercive abortion.

## Teens not interested in politics: Study

AFP, Stockholm

Living in "the best of all possible worlds", many teens in Europe's idyllic Nordic region take no interest in politics, believing that they personally could never make a difference, according to a Swedish study set to be published this fall.

"It's not that kids in Nordic countries don't believe in democracy. They do, but when democracy works well, they may not see how they personally can contribute," Erik Amnaa, head of the Young Citizens Program at the Gothenburg University in southern Sweden, told AFP on Tuesday.

Last week, the United Nations' annual quality-of-life Human Development Index ranked Norway and Sweden as the world's two most developed nations in terms of among other things life expectancy, education levels, gender equality and GDP per capita.

Iceland, Finland and Denmark also ranked among the world's 20 most developed nations.

But as they reap the benefits of earlier generations' political activism, teens in the Nordic countries are much less interested in participating in the political process themselves, according to Amnaa, whose team of researchers has for the past two years conducted a survey of 70,000 14- and 15-year-olds in 28 European countries in an attempt to map out different attitudes to politics and democracy.

"There is a difference between northern European youths and southern European youths when it comes to what kind of norms and ideals they have in respect to democracy. Southern Europeans have a stronger belief in their own ability to change things through political action," Amnaa said.

While 45 percent of teens from Cyprus, 40 percent from Portugal and 32 percent from Greece would like to become local or national politicians one day, only 15 percent of Danish and Finnish teens, and 21 percent of Swedish and Norwegian teens would consider a similar career, according to Amnaa.



Institute of Information and Communication Technology  
Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology  
Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

## Oracle Professional Wanted

One Oracle professional is wanted for a project being implemented at this institute. The candidate must be a graduate with sufficient experience in Oracle based application development. Oracle certification in application development is preferred. Experience in multiple operating systems will be considered as an added qualification.

The appointment will be for a period of approximately two years on a temporary basis with a monthly consolidated remuneration of Tk 12,500/- (take twelve thousand five hundred only). Higher salary may be offered to candidates with higher qualification and/or professional certification.

Please apply to the undersigned within seven days of publication of this announcement stating your educational qualifications, professional experiences, and contact details including emergency contact phone and email address. Only shortlisted candidates will be called for an interview.

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## Bangladesh Gas Fields Company Limited

(A Company of Petrobangla)  
Court Road, Brahmanbaria-3400  
Bangladesh

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## Re-Tender Notice

## International Tender for Supply, Installation, Commissioning, Operation &amp; Maintenance of Gas Booster Compressors with Accessories at Bakhrabad Gas Field on Rental Basis

Tender No: BGFL/OPS/BC/001(R)

Dated: 20.07.2004

- Bangladesh Gas Fields Company Ltd (BGFL), a Company of Bangladesh Oil, Gas & Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla) intends to install gas booster compressors at Bakhrabad Gas Field's plant outlet in order to increase sales pressure from 400-450 psig to 800-850 psig. Three units of gas compressor each having capacity of flowing 20 MMSCFD complete with accessories will require to be installed at the downstream of process plants. Two of the compressor units will be in operation and the remaining one will remain as standby.
- Sealed bids are invited from reputed firms with international experience in relevant field under International Competitive Bidding (ICB) for supply, installation, commissioning and subsequent operation & maintenance of three units of gas booster compressor on rental basis at Bakhrabad Gas Field, Muradnagar, Comilla, Bangladesh. Initially the period of rental services will be for 3 (three) years, which may be further extended if required through mutual discussion.
- The foreign currency cost will be financed from BGFL's own resources through GOB cash foreign exchange. Local currency cost will also be financed from BGFL's own resources.
- Reputed services companies/firms from all countries except Israel & Taiwan with international experience in providing similar services are eligible to participate in the bidding under single stage, single envelope system for providing services under the contract.
- Details of the scope of services, the conditions of contract, the information required to be furnished by the bidders, mode & procedures for submission of bids etc. are provided in the tender document.
- Bidders will be required to furnish bid bond in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order or Irrevocable Bank Guarantee to be issued by a registered scheduled bank of Bangladesh or a scheduled foreign bank operating in Bangladesh & acceptable to BGFL amounting to USD 30,000.00 (United States Dollar thirty thousand only) or equivalent Bangladesh taka and valid for 90 days from the date of closing of the tender.
- Prospective bidders shall bear all costs associated with submission of bids and BGFL will, in no case, be responsible or liable for such costs regardless of the conduct or outcome of the bidding process.
- The tender document will be available from 26.07.2004 between 0900 hrs and 1400 hrs (BST) on all working days (Sunday to Thursday) on payment of Tk 10,000.00 (Bangladesh Taka ten thousand only), which is non-refundable, at the following address:

Bangladesh Gas Fields Co Ltd  
Liaison Office  
Road # 6, House # 75  
Old DOHS, Banani  
Dhaka-1213  
Bangladesh

- Tender documents will be sold up to 08.09.2004 and no extension in closing date for selling of tender documents will be allowed.
- Bids will be received at the Liaison Office of BGFL at address above up to 1100 hrs (BST) on 09.09.2004 and will be opened on the same day at 1130 hrs (BST) in presence of representatives of the bidders, if any. In case of any unavoidable circumstance such as strike, civil commotion, govt declared holiday, etc., bids will be received & opened on the following working day at the same place and time.
- BGFL reserves the right to accept any or reject any or all the bids or annul the bidding process at any stage without assigning any reason whatsoever and without incurring any liability to the affected bidders.

PRs-09/44(TS)/04

GD-436

General Manager (Technical Services)