The veteran journalist Robert Fisk put it best: "James Wolfensohn who was originally 'our' Middle East envoy... left in frustration because he could neither reconstruct Gaza nor work with a 'peace process' that was being eroded with every new Jewish settlement and every Qassam rocket fired into Israel... I bet he [Blair] doesn't mention the Israeli wall which is taking so much extra land from the Palestinians. It will be a 'security barrier' or a 'fence' (like the famous Berlin 'fence' which was actually called a 'security barrier' by the East German authorities at the time). There will be appeals for restraint 'on all sides', endless calls for 'moderation', and none at all for justice (which is all the people of the Middle East have been pleading for over the past 100 years)."

And the Palestinians should undoubtedly be worried about what lies ahead with the advent of this new envoy, since backstabbing features high on Mr. Blair's list of accomplishments. Despite public awareness of the enmity between him and Gordon Brown, the current British Prime Minister, Blair has gone to considerable lengths to cover up the extent of his animosity towards Brown. This includes the pretence that he has handed over the post of Prime Minister with any degree of grace.

However, the recent leaking of a confidential document gives the lie to this, and proves that Tony Blair had initially planned to sack Gordon Brown from his post as Chancellor of the exchequer immediately after the last election. This paper provides the draft speaking notes for the Prime Minister, a briefing for the "new Chancellor" and a list of personal qualities Mr. Brown's successor should have!

It also emerged recently that Cherie Blair had repeatedly urged her husband to fire Mr. Brown, and that Mr. Blair had told his friends of his plans to ditch the Chancellor. The changes were to be abrupt and ruthless, and the proposals indicate that Mr. Brown was to be kept in the dark about the proposed changes, while his own civil servants would be asked to work on those plans without telling him!

On the leaked list of actions that were to be taken by the Prime Minister in the first week after the election, the first item deals with the planned reshuffle (displacing Mr. Brown), while the second priority would be to discuss the high-level plans with the new Chancellor. So clearly Mr. Blair meant business...

Indeed the tension between the two men was so high that others in the government complained of being treated like children in a dysfunctional relationship. The former educational secretary recently stated that this tension "made decision-making impossible". Indeed, Blair was heard to complain that Brown's influence over domestic policy had stifled many of his reforms, stating that "Every time I've ever introduced a reform... I wish in retrospect I had gone further". Given the harm his so-called reforms have already done to date, we clearly have something to thank Gordon Brown for damage control!



Kurt Waldheim

In addition to the dirty tricks and gutter-level political manoeuvring that has characterised Tony Blair's operational style albeit with a firm veneer of glossy double-talk his time in office has also seen a growing venality in public life.

Although many of the changes listed in that document were subsequently brought in, preparations to radically reshape the Government and split the Treasury were rapidly abandoned after Mr. Brown stepped in to rescue Labour's struggling election campaign. The Prime Minister had initially tried to sideline the Chancellor from the campaign by putting one of his staunchest allies in charge, but when Labour continued to slip in the polls, it allowed Gordon Brown to conclude a deal (in return for rescuing the failing campaign) that effectively ensured that *he* would be Mr. Blair's successor.

In addition to the dirty tricks and gutter-level political manoeuvring that has characterised Tony Blair's operational style albeit with a firm veneer of glossy double-talk his time in office has also seen a growing venality in public life. The Blairs have been repeatedly criticised for taking "freebie" holidays in Italy, Egypt and Barbados including accepting invitations from the likes of the unsavoury Silvio Berlusconi, when he was the premier of Italy.

The latest proof of this kind of shameless greed has been the Blairs' request to continue using the Prime Minister's mansion in Buckinghamshire until their 3.6 million pound London home in Connaught Square is ready for occupation. The Chequers estate ranges over 1000 acres, costing 1738 pounds a day to maintain. Opposition MPs have