

**Q: Do you think that Tony Blair lied about the reasons for going to war with Iraq?**

PH: No. I don't think he lied. There is a certain level at which all politicians lie. But did Blair deliberately tell people the falsehood? No, I don't think so. I think he genuinely believed the stories about weapons of mass destruction.

**Q: But he exaggerated...**

PH: Yes. In England I think there are a lot of people in the labour-party who justified to themselves voting for going to war on the strength of weapons of mass destruction. Now, if you looked at the evidence - there was no evidence that Saddam Hussein had a credible program for producing weapons of mass destruction. Would Saddam Hussein liked to have some? - Yes! Did he have them? - No! The reason he didn't have any is basically that most of them had been destroyed by the inspectors and production was under severe surveillance for quite a long time.

And after that you could see that in a sense the entire Iraqi state was a total mess. When I saw the dossier the Americans and the British separately produced, I thought this is junk. It's complete and utter junk.

No, this was not serious. Now, it then strikes me that anybody who subsequently says „We were lied to. “ Now when people say „there is nothing“ it is guilty conscience. And a lot of people are now complaining that we went to war for nothing. That's probably true and it's no doubt that both the British and the American government produced dossiers that really weren't worth the paper they were written on. And they said that things were far more urgent than they were. All of that is true. On the other hand, the people who voted for that had also an extremely clear option to vote against it.

So, no, Blair didn't lie and a lot of the people who are attacking him now are attacking him from guilty consciousness.

The other problem for Blair is very clear: in terms of the advice given by the British attorney general the only justification that the British government would accept for war was the need to act to weapons of mass destruction and to carry out resolution 1441 and that there was an urgent need to stop Saddam Hussein.

People said that there was an urgent need to stop him. It was quite clear that in a sense that there was not enough justification for that. An a lot of people now feel that they have been cheated but quite frankly, that's their problem, not Blair's because they took it.

**Q: Besides that, do you think that he could be forced to resign?**

The only people that could force Blair to resign really are the ones in his own Labour party. The question is: are they better off if they force Blair to resign? And as far as the country is concerned: if Blair resigns they are not going to get someone who opposed the war and there are not going to be general elections. And even if there were, do you think that the public would be mad enough to elect Ian Duncan Smith who supported the war even more vigorously than Tony Blair?

Nevertheless it really has undermined people's respect and trust in Blair. He lost credibility.

Nevertheless, what gets rid of governments is domestic politics. Like Clinton said: „It's the economy, stupid. “

**Q: Basically what you suggest is that Blair will most probably stay in office because there is a lack of alternatives?**

PH: That's absolutely right, yes. The problem is that Blair actually wants to be seen as an honest and decent person. That's the paradox. But he is a politician and so he always is thinking: „How do I get round this corner? “

Still, Blair is probably one of the more honest Prime Ministers we had.

So, yes, they exaggerated, they exaggerated big time.

**Q: Do you think that operation „Iraqi Freedom“ has helped to initiate a discussion about what Europe is like in respect to the relations to the U.S. and what Europe might become?**

PH: There is a real problem here. What „Iraqi Freedom“ has revealed is that Europe is in many way, in political terms a bit like Poland before the partition in 1795. The Austrians, the Russians and others were paying people to follow their policies.

We have got the same thing now: we have very fundamental divisions. The Americans for example put tremendous pressure on people like the Poles and tried to use them as Trojan horses for American policies. You may have noticed that Poland got 48 F-16 fighter planes for almost nothing.

Not only are a lot of the Eastern European states very open to American influence because money talks, they also tried to buy the Turks with a membership in the EU. Now excuse me, I didn't know that Uncle Sam was the person who decided whether Turkey joined the EU or not.

**Q: But that did not work...**

PH: Of course it didn't work! But what it has done is that the people in the states which Donald Rumsfeld liked to call „old“ Europe got mad because they see this as an interference in the internal affairs of the Union. It has also revealed that the idea of a common security policy is tremendously difficult.

Over anything that involves the current American administration there are huge divisions in Europe. I don't think that anyone knows seriously what they've got next on its agenda. So, everybody is trying to be nice to it and try to talk it down from some of their crazy ideas about places like Iran and so on.

I think what the operation in Iraq has clearly revealed is just how divided Europe is at the moment. And these divisions will get worse, not better with the enlargement of the Union.

**Q: But if money talks: the Union will give a huge amount of money to these states from its structural funds and so on.**

PH: The point is, they can „trouser“ that and still ask for more from the Americans. And there is nothing to stop them. If they are rational actors then they will take the Europeans money and say „you're bound to give us that“. But it is not only that the Poles are angry. All the small states are angry too, angry on the big states like Germany and France.

And of course a lot are angry with Britain because of Iraq.

And furthermore nobody really wants to have a trade war with the United States. Europe is not in the position to have a serious common foreign and security policy. What we have to decide very soon is to have better decision procedures and that people have to live with these decisions or that they have to quit. The Poles can't do what they like in the Union and same with the British.

In any case there is a serious division right through the heart of Europe which enlargement will make worse.

**Q: What do you think that the position of Britain will be in a future European Union? Will it slide further away or will it seek to integrate itself more?**

PH: You simply can't tell. There is no doubt that Blair and a large number of other people would like to join the Euro.

**Q: Is that because of economic rationality?**

PH: No, not only. The reasons for joining the Euro are very mixed economically. There are plenty of good reasons for joining it and also many against. What swings it are political ones. Do they really want to be part of Europe or don't they?

The reason people like Blair want to be part of Europe isn't for of narrow economic reasons it's for political ones. Even though he may disagree with other Europeans about the role Europe should play he is a strong European. In the end it is a political decision whether Britain will join the Euro or not, even if it means some economic sacrifices.

Domestically opinions are very divided. I guess Tony Blair would like to join but Gordon Brown doesn't want to because he sees things in very narrow economic terms. And the popular opinion is very divided too.

**Q: The media, for example „The Sun“, are massively against the introduction of the Euro...**

PH: Yes, but that can backfire. Of course not all papers are anti. Maybe at some point people will start to ask themselves: „why is Europe so bad for us and Mr. Murdoch so good for us? “. The mass media have to be very careful in this respect.

**Q: Do you think that the alliance of European states and the US is a more or less forced one which has its basis in shared economic interests?**

PH: The US and Europe have some issues where there is largely consensus. Still, they disagree on a whole range of things. On economics, at the moment the Americans are trying to drive down the value of the dollar to do themselves economically a favour. So there are huge differences on tricked details.

But if you say that these countries believe in some basic values: yes, they do! For example: Do they believe in the fight against terrorism? Yes, they do! Is there any government in Europe who believes that we should go on and squeeze Iran further and weaken the reformist government? No! Is there any government in Europe that would support military action against Iran? No, absolutely not.

The Americans would be on their own. Even senior British officials would consider this as insane. The same with Syria.

Of course when all the G8 leaders are standing around the Geneva lake in Evian everything seems fine and united but there is a cultural difference in mind-set between the present administration in Washington and nearly everybody else in Europe. They just don't think the same.

You know surely that Robert Kagan argued that Americans are from Mars and Europeans from Venus. The thing is that some Americans are. The question is: will they carry on being so influential as they are at the moment?

You have to remember that there are also many Americans who don't support the current government. To which percentage will they amount? Maybe to about ten to twenty five per cent. What percentage is on the other side? About thirty? And what does the rest think? Nobody knows exactly. There is a real patriotic -populist streak in America which is nothing new. The idea that George W. Bush is especially unusual in this respect is crazy. This goes back a long way.

I would say that some Americans are very different from almost all Europeans. And the attitude of these Americans if they continue to be so influential will lead to a major rift with Europe. Not to forget: they will also lead to a major rift with Asia. On the other hand the Chinese are pleased because with the Americans going off like this the heat is taken from them.

For example North Korea: the Japanese are begging that the Americans stay on the diplomatic way, the Koreans are terrified and the Chinese are deeply disturbed about military threats.

**Q: Thank you for the interview.**