

Political Assassination: Media Disinformation regarding the Death of Dr. David Kelly

UK Physicians respond to The Guardian

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Global Research editor's note

The following letter by Drs. C Stephen Frost, David Halpin and Christopher J Burns-Cox was sent to The Guardian in response to a review of Norman Baker's recently published book *The Strange Death of David Kelly*.

The article by Richard Norton-Taylor suggests in no uncertain terms that the Hon. Norman Baker is a "conspiracy theorist".

The authors of the letter are prominent physicians who have analysed the causes of Dr. Kelly's death in several Global Research Articles.

Dear Sir

Richard Norton-Taylor struggles mightily to discredit Norman Baker and his recently published book *The Strange Death of David Kelly*, in his review of that book (Guardian, 1 December 2007). The struggle is all the more confusing because Norton-Taylor does concede that "the inquiry [the Hutton Inquiry] into the circumstances surrounding Kelly's death, which also became a quasi-inquest, shed a bright light on the way Downing Street, with the help of intelligence chiefs who should have known better, conspired to draw up the disgraceful Iraqi weapons dossier."

Norton-Taylor entirely misses, and one has to wonder whether he does so deliberately, the central point made by the many reasonable people who are concerned that Dr David Kelly has been denied a proper inquest: that due process of law has not been followed, indeed it has been comprehensively subverted.

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=20061128&articleId=3988>

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=6333>

These two articles point unerringly to a Government cover-up. The importance of such a cover-up (in the context of the investigation of the suspicious death of the world expert on biological and chemical weapons who, at the time of his death, was perceived to be blowing the whistle on the Government which had taken the country to illegal war on a pack of lies)

cannot be over-emphasised. That is the end of the argument. Richard Norton-Taylor (and others in his position) should be pressing for a proper investigation of Kelly's death, ie a proper inquest, rather than wasting his time attempting to rubbish Norman Baker's book, while claiming the moral high ground. Otherwise, there is a risk that he and other apparent apologists for the dreadful Blair and Brown governments are seen in the future as the shameless enablers that perhaps they are.

Yours faithfully

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Alone in the woods

Richard Norton-Taylor is unconvinced by the conspiracy theories in *The Strange Death of David Kelly* by Norman Baker

Richard Norton-Taylor

Saturday December 1, 2007

Guardian

The Strange Death of David Kelly

by Norman Baker

399pp, Methuen, £9.99

Norman Baker, Liberal Democrat MP for Lewes, is one of parliament's most persistent harassers of ministers and officials. Over the past year he has diverted his energy to the many theories, encouraged by some disturbing and unanswered questions, surrounding the death of David Kelly, the government's highly respected weapons expert whose body was found in a wood near his Oxfordshire home on July 18 2003. An unintentional whistleblower, his remarks to the BBC reporter Andrew Gilligan, about how the Blair government had exaggerated the threat posed by Saddam's weapons programme, provoked an intense and ugly row between Downing Street and the BBC, leading ultimately to Kelly's death.

With terrier-like persistence Baker searches and turns over all the conspiracy theories, which began to hatch even before Lord Hutton's inquiry ended. The inquiry into the circumstances surrounding Kelly's death, which also became a quasi-inquest, shed a bright light on the way Downing Street, with the help of intelligence chiefs who should have known better, conspired to draw up the disgraceful Iraqi weapons dossier. Hutton, as we all know, cleared the government and criticised the BBC. He also concluded that Kelly had indeed committed suicide, but skirted over some of the questions about what exactly caused his death.

When his body was found, his left wrist was cut open and an empty pack of coproxamol painkilling tablets was in his jacket pocket. Baker makes much of apparently conflicting evidence about Kelly's last movements, when precisely he died and when his body was

discovered. It is extremely rare, he writes, for a death to follow injury to the ulnar artery. He examines the motives of all those he says had a possible interest in getting rid of Kelly, including US and British agents. In the end, Baker seems to come down in favour of an Iraqi exile group on the grounds that more revelations from Kelly would have further dented its credibility.

This reviewer believes that Kelly was the victim of the escalating fight between Alastair Campbell's Downing Street and the BBC, with the Ministry of Defence – Kelly's employers – outing him, then continuing to hound him on the government's behalf. Baker points to an incident during Kelly's appearance before the Commons foreign affairs committee shortly before he died. Kelly was unsettled, the author agrees, by a detailed question from the Liberal Democrat MP David Chidgey, about a conversation the weapons expert had with the Newsnight science editor, Susan Watts. Kelly evaded the question, thus misleading the committee.

Kelly "would be exposed as less than truthful, something that went strongly against his personal ethic", writes Baker. "He thus took a sudden decision to end it all." This, according to him, is the "most plausible" explanation for Kelly's suicide. Surprisingly, what he does not say is that Kelly was asked about Watts after Chidgey had been briefed by Gilligan. The question, which Kelly was to remark later had "totally thrown him", contained material that Gilligan had supplied in an email to Chidgey. The Hutton inquiry was told that such email priming by Gilligan of Chidgey was unprecedented and "highly inappropriate". Baker passes over this.

There is no evidence supporting the many theories that Kelly was murdered and plenty of evidence supporting the conclusion that he was driven to suicide. Baker may have done a service by reminding us of one of the nastiest episodes arising from the invasion of Iraq. Perhaps he should now concentrate his energy on current iniquities.

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