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Downing Street Memo: US Media Starts To Ask About Smoking Gun

by Michael in New York on [6/08/2005 11:19:00 AM](#)

The Bush/Blair conference **finally saw the president asked about the Downing Street Memo.**

It was the most attention paid by the media in the USA so far to the "Downing Street memo," first reported on May 1 by *The Sunday Times* of London. The memo is said by some of the president's sharpest critics, such as Democratic Rep. John Conyers of Michigan, to be strong evidence that Bush decided to go to war and then looked for evidence to support his decision, wrote USA Today.

The defense both offered up was strange to say the least. In short, both Bush and Blair said the memo by top British officials saying Bush had long planned to go to war and was going to find the evidence to back that up no matter what was wrong. Why? Because it was written before they went to the UN one last time.

Huh? So the memo saying Bush planned to invade Iraq long in advance of going through the motions of asking the UN to intervene and offering up tainted, flimsy evidence as if it were incontrovertible was wrong because it was written *before* the farcical UN visit? Well, when else can you write down plans to do something in advance? After the fact? Presumably, if the memo had been written after the UN visit, Bush would say it was wrong because it didn't acknowledge all the (insincere) steps he'd already taken.

USA Today has a good breakdown of the memo and why various news organizations have taken so long to cover it. The good news? The story was kept alive by the blogs and your emails. And can anyone from the UK weigh in on this argument that "fixed around" (as in the evidence was fixed around Bush's desire to invade Iraq) does not have the same illicit connotations across the pond as it does here? Maybe someone could email this query to William Safire, the language maven at the NYT at safireonlanguage@nytimes.com

Robin Niblett of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank, says it would be easy for Americans to misunderstand the reference to intelligence being "fixed around" Iraq policy. " 'Fixed around' in British English means 'bolted on' rather than altered to fit the policy," he says to USA Today.



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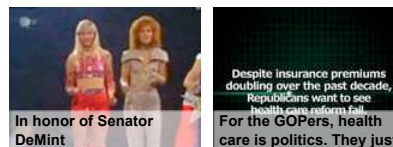


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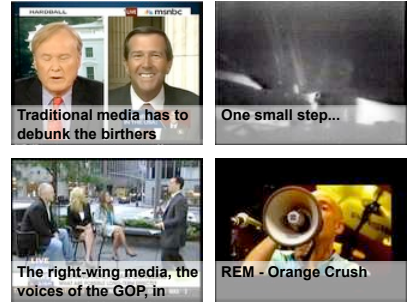
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