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# British report absolves Blair of misleading public on Iraq

LONDON (AP) — Prime Minister Tony Blair escaped harsh criticism in an official inquiry into prewar intelligence on Iraq, which faulted him Wednesday for informal decision-making and pushing available intelligence to the limit, but found no deliberate distortions.

Blair said he took full, personal responsibility. But he told parliament, "No one lied, no one made up the intelligence" after the much-awaited report was released.

The commission — headed by Lord Butler, a retired civil service chief — found prewar Iraq had no usable stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons and that British intelligence was flawed, unreliable and incomplete. The five-member commission interviewed Blair, senior Cabinet figures and key intelligence officials.

But while criticizing Blair's "informal" governing style, it absolved him of misleading the public over Iraq, a charge that has dogged the prime minister since he took Britain into the U.S.-led war.

Protesters — including some who wore masks depicting Blair with a Pinocchio-like long nose — greeted the announcement by gathering outside the news conference where the report was released and carrying signs that featured Blair's face and read: B.liar.

Butler's judgment vindicates the British government of some of the harshest charges against it, a week after a Republican-led U.S. Senate committee excoriated a "broken corporate culture" at the CIA and said there had been a "global intelligence failure" on Iraq. CIA director George Tenet resigned before the report was released.

The verdict takes some pressure off Blair, whose popularity and credibility have been battered by the war and continuing violence in Iraq, and by the failure to find any weapons of mass destruction.

His Labour Party did poorly in recent elections, and there have been rumblings within the party calling for his ouster.

Blair's future has wider symbolic and political ramifications months after a pro-war government was voted out in Spain, and with Bush — Blair's chief ally — facing a re-election campaign.

"We have no reason, found no evidence, to question the prime minister's good faith," Butler told reporters.

He concluded "no single individual" was responsible for intelligence failures that led Blair's government to overstate the threat posed by Saddam Hussein.

## Diversity

Continued from page 1

by the Office of Graduate Studies was introduced to further the goal of increasing diversity in the use of race-based admissions.

In a memo to department chairs and deans when the program was announced in January, Giannini said, "Our desire to recruit a more diverse student population is a compelling interest in a more diverse faculty for students in the state of Texas."

The program grants \$1,000 a year to its students; \$1,300 a stipend and the rest for the Masters students will be given for two years while the students will get three.

## Forum

Continued from page 1

Web site.

The speech will focus on Whitson's stay aboard International Space Station. Brian Blake, Bush Library relations specialist.

Whitson's speech is scheduled to last about an hour and be followed by a question and answer session. The forum will be held in the Museum of Art and Theatre and will be followed by a reception in the Library's main hall. Admission is free and open to the public. Reservations are preferred but not required, and can be made by calling 691-4015.

"It's a privilege to hear from an astronaut," Cloutier said. "Especially astronauts like Whitson who, like everyone at NASA, is an explorer doing their job on behalf of the American public."

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## Vaccines

Continued from page 1

since the Sept. 11 attacks.

It took three months and \$23 million to clean up Senate office buildings after deadly anthrax bacteria was discovered in October 2001 in the mailroom of then-Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D. Hundreds of people who work in those buildings were given antibiotics such as Cipro.

Three Senate office buildings were also closed for up to a week this February after the biological toxin ricin was found in the office of Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn.

The legislation guarantees that any company that develops countermeasures to treat diseases and conditions caused by bioterrorism would have a buyer in the federal government. Also included would be antidotes for chemical, radiological and nuclear agents.

Cox said it would be the responsibility of the Homeland Security Department to assess the global threats posed by the different weapons of mass destruction, and the job of the Health and Human Services Department to implement work on countermeasures for the most dangerous threats.

"This is an important day in the defense of our nation," HHS secretary Tommy Thompson said. He noted that, among its first endeavors, the act would allow the government to acquire up to 75 million doses

of the new generation anthrax vaccine early next year.

California-based VaxGen Inc. and Britain's Avacia have the leading candidates. Safety testing is under way, but the hope is that the newer type of vaccine could cut in half the number of shots now required for anthrax inoculation, with few side effects.

The bill also would accelerate the approval process for vaccines and, in an emergency, let the government distribute certain treatments before the Food and Drug Administration approves them.

In cases where the private sector does not respond to the federal incentives, the bill allows the government to operate emergency programs to research and produce vaccines.

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## Awards

Continued from page 1

Among the new services introduced by TS is online permit registration, which began April 29 and ends Friday.

Lange said the marketing and communication efforts for permit registration, which involved radio, print and television ads and NEO e-mails, have been successful.

"Over 99 percent of the student population which normally registers for permits has already done so," Lange said.

Public agencies, jurisdictions, institutions, organizations and corporations were eligible to compete in the 22nd Annual International Parking Awards.

The facility had to be renovated or completed after Jan. 1, 2001. The West Campus Garage and pedestrian passageway were completed in September 2003.

Jackson said the award "parking facilities design with more than 800 spaces" is based on exterior appearance, continuity with surrounding

environment, economy of construction, security, lighting and ease of use.

The aesthetics award is based on architecture, landscaping and graphic and art elements, she said.

The three other categories, which A&M did not win, were "innovation in parking operations and programs," "facility rehabilitation and restoration" and "parking facilities design with less than 800 spaces."

In addition to A&M, awards for the garage and passageway were also given to two firms who helped design the facilities: Prosign Architects and DeShazo, Tang & Associates, Inc.

Rodney Weis, who was named TS parking director in September 2002, said he was pleased that the parking institute presented A&M with awards and asked the staff members to speak on marketing.

"When I came to Texas A&M I said one of my goals was to make Texas A&M the place other universities look to for advice on how to do things correctly in the parking industry," Weis said. "I am pleased that this is already occurring."

## Bethman

Continued from page 1

NWSA, Bethman said she is excited to be chair of the Women's Center Committee. As an elected officer within the organization, Bethman said she may continue to climb ranks within the NWSA.

Bethman also said that her election may also aid the Women's Center at A&M.

"I think this raises the profile of the Women's Center," Bethman said. Bethman said she has high expectations for further development of the Women's Center, hopes that more resources and recognition are in the Center's future.

"The one thing that I want to focus on is helping to facilitate collaboration between women's studies programs and women's studies programs across the nation," Bethman said.

Interim Director of the Women's Studies Program Nikki Vanhightower said that not only is Bethman a good choice for the position, but her vision will take the NWSA forward.

"She has a lot of enthusiasm for her work," said Vanhightower. "It is important for students to know the Center and its recognition."

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Joshua Hobson, Editor in Chief

The BATTALION (ISSN #1055-4726) is published daily, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer session (except University holidays and exam periods) at Texas A&M University, Periodicals Postage Paid at College Station, TX 77840. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, Texas A&M University, 1111 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-1111.

News: The Battalion news department is managed by students at Texas A&M University in the Division of Student Media. News offices are in O14 Reed McDonald Building. Newsroom phone: 845-3313; Fax: 845-2641; Email: news@thebattalion.net; Web site: http://www.thebatt.com

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