

## INSIDE MAINE



ESSENTIAL  
OBSERVATIONS

Karl Trautman

# President deceived country into war

If you have ever studied American politics, you probably have noticed that most of the basic principles about government concern structure and process. Although not as interesting as philosophy or issues, most people instinctively realize that how public officials make decisions is at the core of our system of government.

Even though structure is critical to government, it is not the most fundamental part of it. Thomas Jefferson wrote, "The whole of government con-

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*The federal government spends \$4.1 billion a month on Iraq. Our aggregate spending stands at \$204 billion. According to the National Priorities Project, the Iraq war has cost Maine \$589.4 million. The war has cost Lewiston alone \$12.9 million.*

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sists in the art of being honest." When it comes to Iraq, President Bush should brush up on his Jefferson.

There is new documentation that suggests that how Bush took us into Iraq was less than honest. The release of the "Downing Street Memo" raises troubling questions about the veracity of our president. It is about time that we had a non-partisan, independent investigation into how we got into the Iraq war.

The memo contains minutes of a meeting that took place on July 23, 2002, in London, eight months before the invasion of Iraq. The top British political leaders were there, including Tony Blair, the defense and foreign secretaries and the heads of the major intelligence agencies. One of the most crucial parts of memo states the following (in describing recent conversations in Washington): "Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy. The NSC had no patience with the UN route, and no enthusiasm for publishing material on the Iraqi regime's record."

A few days ago, Bush and Blair specifically denied a key part of the memo: that intelligence and facts were fixed to support the goal of removing Saddam from power. These recent denials contradict earlier statements from American and British officials that had confirmed the accuracy and authenticity of the memo.

What is the truth? I believe the memo.

When it comes to Iraq, there have been too many distortions, self-deceptions and outright propaganda for me to believe the president. In fact, the

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6/12/05