

Prosecutors wrap up Bush, Blair hearing
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KUALA LUMPUR The prosecution counsel at the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal closed its case against former United States president George W. Bush and former British prime minister Tony Blair on a charge of war crimes.

The prosecution, in continuing with its case from Saturday, said the US had acted unilaterally and bypassed the United Nations Security Council in launching an attack on Iraq.

The tribunal heard that the United Kingdom and the US had advanced the viewpoint that regime change could be the basis for the use of force against Iraq and that this view was expressed as far back as 1998.

Blair was quoted in the proceedings as saying that even if there was no threat of weapons of mass destruction, he would still have effected regime change in Iraq despite the UK attorney-general's advice to him on March 7, 2003 that regime change could not be the objective of military action.

The prosecution also said US used dubious and faulty intelligence, which included a cut-and-paste job from a student's doctor of philosophy article written in 1995 and the claim that Saddam Hussein was trying to get uranium from Niger, to effect regime change.

It was also revealed that US Secretary of Treasury Paul O'Neill, in his memoirs, stated that Bush had talked about invading Iraq in the first cabinet meeting after he came into power.

Chief prosecutor Professor Gurdial S. Nijar said the arrogance of both the accused in leading their country to war and committing their soldiers to die and to kill others were incredulous.

He said waging an illegal war could never be anything but a crime.

The prosecution urged the tribunal to deliver a guilty verdict to Bush and Blair.

It also called on the tribunal to submit its findings to the International Criminal Court and to include the names of the guilty two in the Register of War Criminals.

The tribunal granted a request by the defence counsel for time to respond to the prosecution's case.

The hearing, which was held in an open court at Yayasan Al-Bukhary in Jalan Perdana, will end on Nov 22.



Kuala Lumpur Foundation to Criminalise War and former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal yesterday. - MOHD YUSNI ARIFFIN

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