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# Mayor of London Calls Bushies 'A Gang of Thugs'

By David Swanson

December 7, 2005

Ken Livingstone, the Mayor of London, England, threw a bash for anti-war activists this evening and denounced the Bush Administration as "a gang of thugs." He praised the work of those present from the US and the UK who have worked to end the war, including offering high praise for Cindy Sheehan, who also spoke.

"You are the majority of Londoners," Livingstone said, referring to those who want the war ended and who view the behavior of the Bush Administration as criminal. In reference to reports that Bush wanted to bomb the headquarters of Al Jazeera, Livingstone said "Anywhere else we call that Murder Incorporated."

He said that next year he planned to hold an international conference against the clash of civilizations. He cited London as an example of a city where there is no clash, where people of various ethnic and religious backgrounds live together. After the bombings in the Underground, he said, "not one person in London attacked another person." (Presumably he was making an exception for the police.)

Kate Hudson of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament also addressed the crowd this evening, praising "the Mayor for Peace," for his opposition to the war, his support for nuclear disarmament, and for building harmony and equality among communities in London. Hudson also praised Sheehan, before asking us to remember absent friends, including the Christian Peace Team hostages, one of whom, Norman Kember, is known to many London peace activists, and Anas Altikriti of

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the Muslim Association of Britain, who has gone to Iraq to try to help free the hostages.

Before Livingstone introduced Cindy, he mentioned that the media sometimes calls him "anti-American." He said: "I'm not anti-American. I love America. I love Americans' competence, their lack of deference, their belief that they can achieve their best. I hope some day we can get a government as good as the American people, a government with the morality of Cindy."

Cindy began her remarks by saying "I've been called anti-American too! What happens is that they can't attack our message, so they attack the messenger."

Nobel prizewinning playwright Dario Fo has written (or is still writing up to the last minute) a play about Cindy, which will be performed in London on Saturday night. Cindy said she planned to go to the debut of "Peace Mom" and sit in the front row and heckle herself with calls of "Traitor!"

Cindy returned the Mayor's praise, saying that she hoped we could get his bravery and integrity into our government at home.

"The Mayor did call them gangsters," Cindy said of the Bush Administration, "and that's right. But, " she told the crowd, "your prime minister is an accomplice."

Cindy discussed various US war crimes, including the admitted use of chemical weapons on Fallujah. She condemned these actions, but said she wanted Londoners to know that "Most Americans wholeheartedly oppose what our government is doing. And we're fighting to take back our government!"

But, "we're complicit," she added. "Why weren't we in the streets in 2000 when the Supreme Court put Bush in the White House?"

"We condemn the random killings on 9-11," Cindy added. "And the London bombings. And we condemn the insurgents in Iraq for killing our soldiers, but we do not blame them. In every foreign occupation through history, there has been an insurgency. If you want to end the insurgency, you end the occupation."

Cindy also discussed the Downing Street Memos, which six months ago so angered her with their frank revelations of duplicitous war-making by the Bush and Blair administrations. "We thought the Downing Street Memo would be the turning point," she said. "But today I was on a radio show in London, and a guy said 'Bush and Blair didn't know that Saddam didn't have weapons of mass destruction before the war.' "

Cindy concluded:

"We need an investigation! We are fighting for impeachment of these criminals!"

That line got huge applause.

The Mayor closed by quoting a remark that William Jennings Bryan made in response to Carnegie claiming he loved



America: "We're glad you love America. When you're done with it, can we have it back?"

Livingstone said that Cindy was heir to that tradition.

MORE to come.....

Thursday: We're off to Scotland for the day to meet with Parliament in Edinburgh and rally in Glasgow. Meanwhile back in London, the Stop the War Coalition will hold a press conference about Saturday's upcoming conference, and about Britain denying a visa for the conference to Sheikh Hassan Al Zargani. Speakers will include Americans Ann Wright and Kelly Dougherty.

Friday: I'm planning to meet with some British labor folks. Labor unions here give free office space to the Stop the War Coalition and support its efforts. Makes me a bit ashamed of the US labor movement. Friday night there's a reception for international delegates to the conference.

Saturday: All day conference. It's sold out. The place holds 1,300, and 2,000 may show up. Saturday evening is the debut of "Peace Mom," a play by Dario Fo.

Sunday: an additional strategy meeting about cross-oceanic alliances and tactics.

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