

THE GERMAN “I TOLD YOU SO”

The next WikiLeaks dump is about to reveal to the world what the United States really thinks of the world leaders it pretends to like and the degree to which it overlooks corruption among friends (it sounds like the reports will include confirmation that Hamid Karzai is corrupt, among other things).

Knowing that it's coming adds just a bit of irony to the publication of excerpts from a German document liberated to refute some claims Bush made in his memoir.

Among other things, the document describes the Germans warning the US—in February 2003—of just how badly the Iraq war would turn out.

According to the notes – all in German – the meeting amounted to 90 minutes of verbal blows, which primarily stemmed from Rice's “relatively rigorous and uncompromising” defense of the US position. The same notes indicate that [German foreign minister envoy Klaus] Scharioth didn't budge an inch toward Washington, either. In retrospect, though, they document a high point in German diplomatic history, because the objections and predictions put forward by Berlin on that Tuesday have turned out to be legitimate and correct.

The crux of the German argument was that the political costs of a war in Iraq would be “higher than (the) political returns.” While Rice predicted that Iraq would take advantage of the “opportunities for reconstruction” like the ones Germany enjoyed after 1945, the delegation from Berlin countered that the rapid establishment of a democracy in Baghdad was “not (to be) expected.”

The Germans also predicted that the real

beneficiary of a war in Iraq would actually be Iran, and that a US-led attack would further complicate efforts to reach a solution in the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Likewise, they prophesized that going to war would precipitate a “terrorist backlash.” Scharioth stressed that it was important “to win over the hearts and minds of the Muslim elite and youths,” according to the notes, and that this was “not to be achieved” by going to war. He also added that doing so would greatly increase the danger of prompting an “influx to Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism.”

I’m particularly interested in the warnings that this would empower Iran. It was definitely predictable that the war would strengthen Iran. But it always seemed as if the Bush Administration never even considered that possibility.

Well, at least Condi was warned.