

# Tony Blair's decade in power

After Labour's landslide general election victory on May 1, 1997, Tony Blair's radical programme promised to restore trust in politics, cut crime, improve health and education and cut child poverty rates by half within 10 years

■ **Sep 1997:** Creation of **Scottish Parliament** and **Welsh Assembly** enacted by referendum

■ **Oct:** Blair meets Sinn Fein leader **Gerry Adams** in attempt to kickstart stalled Northern Ireland peace process

■ **Dec 1997:** Government freezes benefits to single parents, sparking backbench revolt

■ **Apr 1998:** Blair's **Good Friday Agreement** leads to **Northern Ireland Assembly**

■ **1999:** Britain joins U.S.-led war in **Kosovo**. Blair makes war centerpiece of new foreign policy – **doctrine of international community**. Student grants abolished – controversial loans introduced on top of tuition fees

■ **2000:** PM's flagship **Millennium Dome** opens to mark start of century

■ **Jun 2001:** Labour wins second landslide general election victory

■ **Sep:** Following 9/11 attacks on United States, Blair backs President **George W. Bush's** "war on terror"

■ **Oct:** British and U.S. forces attack Afghanistan to overthrow **Taliban** and weaken **al-Qaeda**

■ **2002:** Dome closes, having cost £789 million. Dome continues to cost taxpayers £22m a year to maintain

■ **Sep 2002:** Blair unveils "dodgy" intelligence dossier claiming Iraq can deploy **weapons of mass destruction (WMD)** within 45 minutes

■ **Early 2003:** Blair argues for overthrow of Iraqi leader **Saddam Hussein**, citing alleged possession of WMD. More than 750,000 people protest against coming war

■ **Mar:** **Robin Cook**, leader of House of Commons, resigns over Iraq policy

■ **Mar 19, Iraq War:** UK sends 45,000 troops to join U.S.-led invasion

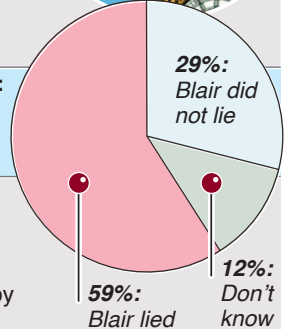
■ **Sep:** Poll shows nearly six in 10 Britons believe Tony Blair lied over WMD threat posed by Iraq in run-up to war

■ **Jan 2004:** Blair wins parliamentary vote on controversial university top-up fees

■ **Jul:** **Butler Inquiry** into pre-war intelligence concludes that 45-minute WMD claim was unsubstantiated

■ **2005:** Report shows 3.8 million children continue to live in poverty in UK, down by only 700,000 since Labour came to power

■ **May:** Labour wins third consecutive general election, but with just 36% of vote – record low for any winning party in UK



■ **Jul 6:** London awarded 2012 Olympics

■ **Jul 7:** Suicide bombers strike London's public transport system during rush-hour, killing 56 people and injuring 700



■ **Nov:** PM suffers his first House of Commons defeat over length of time police can hold terrorist suspects without charge

■ **Mar 2006:** Allegations surface that businessmen who secretly loaned millions of pounds to Labour were nominated for peerages

■ **May:** Labour suffers heavy losses at local elections. **Letter backed by 50 MPs calls on Blair to resign**

■ **Aug:** Blair's popularity hits all time low, with 67% dissatisfied with how he is doing his job

■ **Dec:** Blair is interviewed by police investigating **cash for honours** allegations, albeit not under caution. First such interrogation of a serving PM as part of a criminal case

■ **2007:** Despite NHS spending rising from £34bn to over £94bn a year, improvements fall far short of taxpayers' expectations

■ **Apr:** Home Office figures indicate crime rates have fallen by 35% since 1997, but violent crime and gun crime is on the rise

■ **May 8:** Tony Blair to address reconvened Northern Ireland Assembly – key achievement of his premiership. **Prime Minister expected to stand down within days**



IRAQ'S  
WEAPONS OF MASS  
DESTRUCTION  
THE ASSESSMENT OF THE BRITISH  
GOVERNMENT

