

RELEASE IN
PART B6

From: sbwhoeop [redacted]
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To: H
Subject: fyi, more on Hague, Tony, EU. Sid

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H: Of interest, Hague latest briefing, hostile to Tony. Tories desperately do not want Blair there, want to run their own European policy, mostly anti-EU, and indeed break with past and continuity on Europe. Tory Party split, with anti-EU faction dominant, its base virulent, and Cameron straddling as best he can. Hague leans anti-Europe. S

London Times
October 22, 2009

'Appointing Blair as EU president will have consequences', warns Hague

William Hague's strident attack on his fellow Briton reportedly left some of the EU ambassadors baffled
Francis Elliott, David Charter and Tom Baldwin

William Hague has been conducting a behind-the-scenes campaign to convince European ambassadors that Tony Blair would be a bad choice for European Union president, *The Times* has learnt. The Shadow Foreign Secretary used a lunch organised by the Swedish presidency in London last week to lobby the most senior diplomats of the 26 other EU nations against the appointment.

EU leaders had hoped to choose the new president at next week's summit, but the Czech Republic's last-minute objections to the Lisbon treaty have scuppered that. President Sarkozy of France wants a quick decision, however, and is understood to be pushing for a special one-day summit in Brussels next month to fill the new post.

In making the Conservatives' case against Mr Blair, Mr Hague said that while in Downing Street the former Prime Minister had consistently placed a higher priority on US interests than on those of Europe. Mr Hague also reminded the diplomats of Mr Blair's actions in the run-up to the Iraq war, according to one of those attending the lunch last Thursday. A claim that Mr Hague told the ambassadors that the Tories would regard Mr Blair's appointment as a "declaration of war" by the EU was denied, however. A spokesman for Mr Hague said that the phrase was "a bit strong". Nevertheless, it was not disputed that Mr Hague made clear that the move would have consequences for relations between Britain and Brussels. Diplomats said that there was a "clear mark of hostility".

"Mr Hague wanted to leave the ambassadors in no doubt that the Conservative Party is opposed to the appointment of Tony Blair as president of the European Council and [that] it would only underline the lack of accountability and legitimacy involved in the creation of the position in the first place," Mr Hague's spokesman said. Mr Hague's strident attack on his fellow Briton reportedly left some of the ambassadors baffled.

Mr Hague is currently in Washington for talks with members of the Obama Administration, including Hillary Clinton, the Secretary of State, with whom he raised the issue of the Conservatives' membership of a right-wing alliance of European parties with allegedly anti-Semitic members. He accused critics of running a smear campaign against some of the group, led by Michal Kaminsky, head of Poland's Law and Justice Party.