

# Does BBC's Jeremy Bowen understand what constitutes a 'direct link'?

by Robert Harris

Since the release of the Chilcot Report, many have said former UK prime-minister Tony Blair is directly responsible for the rise of Islamic State. In [substantive causal relationship](#) between two things, with, for example, the 'direct link' between smoking and lung cancer. The term 'direct link' is defined by one [hit hard by the US troop surge](#), which began in 2007, as well as greater political effort by Iraqi leaders to fight the effects of sectarianism. Sectarian conflict almost came to an end, with a dramatic reduction in violence through 2008. Unfortunately, the Iraqi prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, would subsequently curry favour with his Shia support base, which alienated the Sunni community. Worse still, the US president, Barack Obama, did not make a substantive effort to renew the right of immunity from prosecution for US occupation forces after 2011, as former Defense Secretary [were reversed](#), while Islamic State split from the al-Qaeda franchise, allowing for the terrorist group's rapid military successes during 2014. Jeremy Bowen described George W. Bush II as an extremely 'incompetent' US President, but spared no ire whatsoever for Barack Obama's failed policy of extricating the US from a deeply unpopular war, a move which was surely born of political expediency, rather than