

Deconstructing Justifications for Invading Iraq

Written by Josh Schott

This PDF is auto-generated for reference only. As such, it may contain some conversion errors and/or missing information. For all formal use please refer to the official version on the website, as linked below.

Deconstructing Justifications for Invading Iraq

<https://www.e-ir.info/2013/01/03/deconstructing-justifications-for-invading-iraq/>

JOSH SCHOTT, JAN 3 2013

During World War II, the United States government made preparations to become the new global super power following the end of the war. To realize the goal of global dominance, US officials created the concept of the "Grand Area." The Grand Area is a region "to be subordinated to the needs of the American economy" and "strategically necessary for world control" (*The Chomsky Reader* 317). The needs of the American economy include freely accessing foreign markets, resources, and creating and maintaining a climate conducive to private investment in foreign countries. The Grand Area includes the Western Hemisphere, the Far East, the former British Empire, western and southern Europe, the Middle East, and Eurasia. The Middle East serves as the focal point of the Grand Area because of the region's massive oil reserves. The State Department described the region as "a stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history... probably the richest economic prize in the world in the field of foreign investment." President Eisenhower described it as the most "strategically important area in the world" (*Deterring Democracy* 53). Shortly after WWII the US began the process of taking over effective control of the region, expelling France and keeping Britain as a subordinate co-pilot. The interests of the local population not considered.

To exercise effective control of the region, the US established a subservient local management. The local management consists of pliable and weak monarchical dictators who obey their western masters and ensure the flow of profits to the US, Britain, and US and British oil companies, preventing the vast majority of the local population from benefitting from their own resources, who also suffer greatly under the oppressive rule of the US-puppet regimes. Turkey and Israel serve as the regional enforcers, providing security for the oil-rich monarchical dictatorships, with US and British military bases stretching from North Africa to the Indian Ocean, but not actually stationed in the Middle East until after the first Gulf War (*World Orders Old and New* 198). When Iraq, one of the US's dearest client states, misunderstood US messages and invaded Kuwait – another US client state – threatening the US-organized power balance, the US projected its full military power and obliterated Saddam Hussein's forces. The US seized this opportunity to maintain a strong military presence permanently in Saudi Arabia and in the surrounding Gulf states, further strengthening the US's ability to shape the regional balance of power. Saddam Hussein defied US hegemony and the US could not tolerate a "rogue" regime that would control the second largest oil reserves in the world. The 9/11 terrorist attacks provided an excellent opportunity for the US to rope Iraq into its control again.

Less than a year after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the US and UK governments began beating the drums of war to invade Iraq on the grounds of the baseless allegations of Saddam Hussein's connection to Al-Qaeda and his possession of weapons of mass destruction. When those allegations proved to be false, the US invaded Iraq to spread democracy and liberate the Iraqi people from the Saddam Hussein dictatorship. The United States actually invaded Iraq to strengthen and expand its ability to exert hegemony over the focal point of the Grand Area, to control Iraq's oil reserves, and to liberalize Iraq's economy.

The Bush Administration declared that Saddam Hussein had long established ties to Al-Qaeda, providing one reason to invade Iraq. The administration provided no evidence besides baseless declarations. Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein proved to be the two most unlikely allies, since the US's refusal to allow Bin Laden to join in the efforts to attack his secular enemy, Saddam Hussein, in the First Gulf War contributed to Bin Laden's decision to turn against the US (*Failed States* 22). According to the Senate's "Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence on

Deconstructing Justifications for Invading Iraq

Written by Josh Schott

Postwar Findings About Iraq's WMD Programs and Links to Terrorism and How They Compare With Prewar Assessments", Hussein distrusted Al-Qaeda and viewed Islamic extremism as a threat to his regime. The report states, "Debriefings of key leaders of the former Iraqi regime indicate that Saddam issued a general order that Iraq should not deal with Al-Qaeda" (105). Hussein also issued a decree outlawing an "extremist" sect of Islam, Wahhabism, threatening offenders with the death penalty when he began to see evidence that Wahhabists started to come to Iraq (67). The report also indicates that Hussein unsuccessfully attempted to capture the Al-Qaeda leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, although the Bush administration gave al-Zarqawi's presence in Iraq as evidence of a connection between Iraq and Al-Qaeda (69). The report resoundingly concluded that Saddam Hussein and Al-Qaeda had no connections. Furthermore, in an interview on September 16, 2001 with Tim Russert, Dick Cheney said the US has no evidence linking Saddam Hussein to 9/11 (Cheney 2001). Sadly, in 2006, three years after the invasion of Iraq, eighty-five percent of US troops in Iraq believed the war was to "retaliate for Saddam's role in the 9/11 attacks" and seventy-seven percent believed a major reason for the war was "to stop Saddam from protecting Al-Qaeda in Iraq" (Swanson 166-7).

The Bush Administration never concerned itself with terrorism, since invading Iraq only stoked the flames of hatred towards the US and increased the threat of terrorism. Furthermore, the Bush Administration knew before-hand that invading Iraq would increase the threat of terrorism. In 2002, the National Intelligence Council "predicted that an American led invasion of Iraq would increase support for political Islam and would result in a deeply divided Iraqi society prone to violent internal conflict." The NIC also predicted that Islamic extremist groups would spread its operations throughout the world defending Muslim lands from attack by Western powers (*Failed States* 18). The CIA stated in 2005 that "Iraq has become a magnet for Islamic militants" and that "Iraq may prove to be an even more effective training ground for Islamic extremists than Afghanistan was in Al Qaeda's early days, because it is serving as a real world laboratory for urban combat" (18-9).

The Muslim world has a strong sense of unity, and the Muslim world perceives Western aggression against a Muslim country as an attack on the entire Muslim world. This aggression creates "terrorists", as shown by the reports of Israeli think tanks and Saudi intelligence that state, "the vast majority" of foreign militants in Iraq "are not former terrorists but became radicalized by the war itself," responding to the "calls to defend their fellow Muslims from 'crusaders' and 'infidels'" who are mounting "an attack on the Muslim religion and Arab culture." A Center for Strategic and International Studies study discovered that "85 percent of Saudi militants who went to Iraq were not on any government watch list, al-Qaeda members, or terrorist sympathizers," proving that the invasion radicalized the vast majority of militants (20).

The numbers don't speak well for the Bush Administration's "tough-on-terrorism strategy", either. According to terrorism specialist Peter Bergen, 2003 had the most incidences of terrorist attacks in two decades and, in 2004, that number tripled. Additionally, Iraq never experienced the devastation wrought by suicide attacks before the invasion of Iraq, but between 2003 and 2005, Iraq experienced 400 suicide attacks. Whereas, the number of suicide attacks worldwide between 1980 and 2003 amounted to 315 (21).

Violence breeds more violence. Osama Bin Laden understood this concept and the Bush Administration either did not understand the concept or did not care. Al-Qaeda organized the attacks on the World Trade Center because Al-Qaeda knew the US would resort to violence, and invade and occupy Muslim countries, which would radicalize the Muslim world and "mobilize support among the far larger constituency" (23). Not resorting to violence and dismantling the American Empire would have been the most effective way to combat terrorism after 9/11. Expert on Islamic militancy, Fawaz Gerges concludes that after 9/11, "the dominant response to Al Qaeda in the Muslim world was very hostile, specifically among jihadis, who regarded it as a dangerous extremist fringe" (22). The Bush Administration did not use this to its advantage, but decided to replace the hostility towards Al-Qaeda with hostility towards the US.

The findings of the bipartisan 9/11 Public Discourse Project, which comprised of members of the 9/11 Commission shows evidence of the Bush Administration's lack of concern for combating terrorism. The project formed with the goal to assess and pressure the government to adopt the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission to prevent further terrorist attacks. In 2005 the project produced a report finding "that the Bush Administration and Congress

Deconstructing Justifications for Invading Iraq

Written by Josh Schott

had made minimal or unsatisfactory progress on eight of the fourteen recommendations by the 9/11 Commission for overhauling the government to deal with terrorist threats” (32). The Bush Administration exploited the American public’s fear of terrorism after 9/11 to invade and occupy two countries for reasons that had nothing to do with combating terrorism.

Although many Americans believed Saddam Hussein’s connection to Al-Qaeda provided a reason for invading Iraq, Congress granted Bush the authorization to invade Iraq solely on the grounds to dismantle Hussein’s alleged weapons of mass destruction program that apparently posed a grave threat to international security. Both reasons have proven utterly false. The administration knew that Iraq had no such programs. According to national security and intelligence analyst John Prados, “The planners knew that Iraqi WMD programs were either nascent, moribund, or non-existent – exactly the opposite of the President’s repeated message to Americans” (25). On February 24, 2001 in a briefing with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa, Colin Powell stated, “He [Saddam Hussein] has not developed any significant capability with respect to weapons of mass destruction. He is unable to project conventional power against his neighbors” (Powell 2001). Condoleezza Rice said in July 2001 in an interview with Wolf Blitzer, “We are able to keep arms from him. His military forces have not been rebuilt” (Rice 2001). If Hussein did not pose a threat to his weak neighbors, then how did he pose a threat to the US, who has the strongest military known in human history? If Hussein did not have any significant capability with respect to WMDs in 2001, then how did he have such capabilities less than a year later? According to President Bush’s former Treasury secretary Paul O’Neil, the Bush administration began planning to invade Iraq before Rice and Powell made the previous statements. O’Neil said as early as January 2001 that the Bush administration planned to remove the Saddam Hussein regime and started to look for justifications for an invasion (Moniz and Despeignes). If the Bush administration planned to invade Iraq months before Powell and Rice said Hussein had no WMD capabilities and posed no threat to international security, then the reasons for invading Iraq had absolutely nothing to do with a threat posed by Iraq’s non-existent WMD program.

Ample evidence provided well before the invasion shows that Iraq did not have a WMD program. Scott Ritter, former Chief U.N. Weapons Inspector from 1991-1998 told the U.K. *Guardian* on September 19, 2002, “since 1998 Iraq has been fundamentally disarmed”, with 90 to 95 percent of its weapons of mass destruction capability verifiably destroyed. Iraq unilaterally destroyed its own equipment without U.N. supervision and without documentation, when the U.N. ordered Iraq to hand everything over to the U.N. to be destroyed and documented, which complicated the verification process a little bit. The remaining 5 to 10 percent consisted of the percentage of Iraq’s material that the U.N. could not find, not the percentage that Iraq proved to possess. The unaccounted 5 to 10 percent did not constitute a threat or a weapons program, but still prohibited, if Iraq still retained that amount. However, no evidence showed that Iraq retained that material. When the U.N. inspection program ended in 1998, the U.N. inspection team verified and documented that the U.N. and the Iraqi government eliminated 100% of the infrastructure and the facilities needed to build nuclear weapons. The U.N. also “had in place means to monitor – both from vehicles and from air – the gamma rays that accompany attempts to enrich uranium or plutonium” and the U.N. never found anything. Iraq would need to build weaponisation and enrichment capabilities costing tens of billions of dollars to reacquire its weapons of mass destruction program. Nuclear weapons require enormous quantities of electricity and highly controlled technologies not readily available on the market. The US and the rest of the international community could detect the entire process quite easily, even without close scrutiny (Ritter 2002).

As for Iraq’s chemical weapons, the US bombed the only factory manufacturing the chemical agents, sarin and tabun, in the country during the first Gulf War, and then U.N. inspectors destroyed the rest of the remaining factory and whatever chemical agents and equipment remained. Even if Iraq hid some of the chemical agents and equipment that the U.N. could not find, sarin and tabun only have a shelf life of five years and degraded to “useless sludge.” Since the US and the U.N. destroyed the manufacturing facility, there would be no way for Iraq to create new chemical agents. Furthermore, the U.N. inspection team found and destroyed the only VX gas nerve agent facility, and destroyed all the remaining VX agent and equipment to manufacture it. As with building nuclear weapon facilities, acquiring the research, facilities, and equipment for manufacturing chemical weapons proves very expensive and readily detectable, even without close scrutiny. Also, manufacturing chemical weapons emits detectable gases, and the U.N. monitored Iraq via satellite and by other means, seeing no emissions of such gases (Ritter 2002).

Deconstructing Justifications for Invading Iraq

Written by Josh Schott

The same rings true for Iraq's biological weapons program. The U.N. found and destroyed Iraq's facilities and equipment used for manufacturing anthrax and other biotoxins and destroyed the remaining anthrax and biotoxins. Anthrax only has a shelf life of three years, so if Iraq did hide some left over anthrax, it degraded by 2001. Ritter explained in the interview, "biological research and development was one of the things most heavily inspected. We blanketed Iraq – every research and development facility, every university, every school, every hospital, every beer factory; anything with a potential fermentation capability was inspected – and we never found any evidence of ongoing research and development or retention" (Ritter 2002).

An International Atomic Energy Agency report confirms Ritter's statements. The report states that for the period of April 1 to October 1, 1998, the IAEA Nuclear Monitoring Group conducted 243 monitoring inspections at 137 locations, 37 of which were not previously inspected. The number of inspections conducted under the IAEA's ongoing monitoring and verification plan, since the inception of the Nuclear Monitoring Group in 1994, totals 1,540. The Nuclear Monitoring Group did not make a prior announcement of inspection for the majority of the inspections and the IAEA conducted many of the inspections with UNSCOM. The report states that the Nuclear Monitoring Group did not detect any prohibited materials, activities, or equipment during the inspections (IAEA 1998, 3). Additionally, the results of radiometric surveys of Iraq's main watercourses showed no indication that Iraq conducted any prohibited nuclear activities and the results of the helicopter gamma surveys of former Iraqi nuclear-related facilities showed no indication of undeclared activities (4-5). The report concludes:

"The verification activities have revealed no indications that Iraq had achieved its programme objective of producing nuclear weapons or that Iraq had produced more than a few grams of weapon-usable nuclear material or had clandestinely acquired such material. Furthermore, there are no indications that there remains in Iraq any physical capability for the production of weapon-usable nuclear material of any practical significance" (6).

During the year leading up to the invasion, when the Bush Administration conjured up apocalyptic scenarios wrought by a WMD addicted Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi government generally cooperated with the U.N. and followed U.N. resolutions. On September 16, 2002, before the Security Council approved Resolution 1441, Iraq's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Naji Sabri, sent a letter to Secretary General Kofi Annan, stating that Iraq will allow U.N. weapons inspection teams to return to Iraq without conditions. Sabri wrote to Annan:

"I am pleased to inform you of the decision of the Government of the Republic of Iraq to allow the return of United Nations weapons inspectors to Iraq without conditions... The Government of the Republic of Iraq has based its decision concerning the return of inspectors on its desire to complete the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and to remove any doubts that Iraq still possesses weapons of mass destruction... To this end, the Government of the Republic of Iraq is ready to discuss the practical arrangements necessary for the immediate resumption of inspections" (Sabri 9/2002).

The United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1441 on November 8, 2002. The resolution issued Iraq a final opportunity to comply with previous U.N. resolutions that required Iraq to abide by its disarmament obligations and established the implementation of a U.N. and IAEA inspection team to verify the completion of the disarmament process by allowing the inspection teams "immediate, unimpeded, unconditional, and unrestricted access to any and all, including underground areas, facilities, buildings, equipment, records, and means of transport which they wish to inspect." The resolution also called for the Iraqi government to provide a comprehensive declaration of all aspects of its WMD program. If Iraq failed to meet these obligations, it would face "serious consequences" (U.N. Security Council 2002, 2), implying military force would be used against Iraq. Naji Sabri responded angrily to the resolution within five days of the Security Council's adoption of the resolution. In a letter to Kofi Annan, he wrote:

"We hereby inform you that we will deal with resolution 1441, despite its bad contents, if it is to be implemented according to the premeditated evil of the parties of ill-intent, the important thing in this is trying to spare our people from harm...Therefore, as we said in the foresaid agreement and press statement, we are prepared to receive the inspectors, so they can carry out their duties, and make sure Iraq had not developed weapons of mass destruction, during their absence since 1998" (Sabri 11/2002).

Deconstructing Justifications for Invading Iraq

Written by Josh Schott

Unfortunately, Iraq's compliance with Resolution 1441 did not spare the Iraqi people from harm.

On November 27, UNMOVIC and the IAEA conducted their first inspections in Iraq (United Nations 2002). Eleven days later, on December 8, Iraq submitted a 12,000-page declaration of all aspects of its WMD program. The declaration affirmed that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction or programs to develop them (Burns and Sanger). Charles Hanley of the *Associated Press* reported on January 18, 2003, that after two months of unannounced U.N. inspections of thirteen sites labeled as "major sites of concern" by US intelligence, the evidence shows no indications Iraq reconstituted its nuclear weapons program. The report states, "the international experts have uncovered no 'smoking guns' in Iraq in almost 400 inspections since late November." The Bush Administration cited satellite images of new structures at former nuclear weapons facilities as evidence that Hussein revived his nuclear weapons program. For example, the administration used images of new structures at the former nuclear weapons facility at Tuwaitha as evidence; however, the IAEA scrutinized that facility twelve times and found no prohibited materials, activities, or equipment. Likewise, the CIA accused Iraq of developing U.N. prohibited long-range missiles at the al-Mutasim missile factory, but after five announced visits to the factory in December, the U.N. inspectors found no such activities or intentions (Hanley).

Ten days before the invasion of Iraq, International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Mohamed ElBaradei delivered a presentation to the U.N. Security Council on the progress of inspections in Iraq. He noted that Iraq's industrial capacity has considerably deteriorated over the past four years because of the lack of foreign support (from the US and its allies) that it often received in the 1980s, the flight of skilled Iraqi personnel, and the lack of maintenance of sophisticated technology. The deterioration of Iraq's industrial capacity induced negative effects on Iraq's ability to reconstitute its WMD program. He continued to explain the status of inspections by informing the Security Council that nuclear inspections in Iraq total 218 at 141 sites, 21 of which have not been inspected previously (ElBaradei).

The Bush Administration accused Iraq of purchasing uranium from Niger, providing a pretext for the invasion. ElBaradei addressed this false allegation in his presentation as well. He said Iraq provided a thorough explanation of its relations with Niger and explained that the accusation arose from a visit of an Iraqi government official to several African countries, which included Niger in February 1999. The IAEA compared the form, content, format, and signature of the correspondences retrieved from the government of Niger with the documents and the correspondences that the US provided as evidence. He stated in his address, "Based on thorough analysis, the IAEA has concluded with the concurrence of outside experts that these documents which formed the basis for the report of recent uranium transaction between Iraq and Niger are in fact not authentic. We have therefore concluded that these specific allegations are unfounded" (ElBaradei).

ElBaradei summed up the IAEA's findings by stating that no evidence shows that Iraq resumed its nuclear activities at those newly constructed facilities identified in the satellite images, nor at any other inspected sites. Iraq also did not attempt to import any uranium since 1990. ElBaradei confirmed to the Security Council, "After three months of intrusive inspections, we have to date found no evidence or plausible indication of the revival of a nuclear weapon program in Iraq" (ElBaradei).

To conclude his presentation, ElBaradei pointed out that facing increasing pressure from the international community in the past three weeks, Iraq worked very hard to cooperate during the inspections process, especially during interviews with Iraqi personnel and provided ample evidence that could resolve IAEA concerns (ElBaradei). The inspections worked, the IAEA and UNMOVIC needed to continue to monitor Iraqi facilities accorded by international law, to ensure the complete and secure disarmament of Iraq. Iraq complied with Security Council Resolution 1441 and met every demand set forth by the international community. Sadly, US-led coalition forces invaded Iraq ten days after ElBaradei's speech. The Bush Administration had no conceivably, legal reason to invade Iraq, since Iraq complied with Resolution 1441.

The Bush Administration used the testimony of several Iraqi defectors who claimed that Saddam Hussein did have a clandestine WMD program as evidence of Iraq's clandestine WMD program. However, the Defense Intelligence Agency concluded that the information provided by the defectors displayed no credibility or value. Additionally, many

Deconstructing Justifications for Invading Iraq

Written by Josh Schott

of the defectors “invented or exaggerated their credentials as people with direct knowledge of the Iraqi government and its suspected unconventional weapons program” (Jehl). The US government had absolutely no evidence showing that Iraq possessed WMD capabilities and, in fact, the evidence proved the complete opposite of the Bush Administration’s assertions that Saddam Hussein possessed such devastating weapons. The Bush Administration blatantly lied to lead the US into a devastating and illegal war.

Post-invasion assessments confirm that Iraq possessed no weapons of mass destruction or the capability to produce them. After eighteen months of intensive investigations by the CIA-appointed Iraq Survey Group, the investigative team released a final report detailing its findings. The report addressed each form of alleged weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, biological, and chemical. The report stated, “Saddam Hussein ended the nuclear program in 1991 following the Gulf War. ISG found no evidence to suggest concerted efforts to restart the program” (Kay 1). Concerning chemical weapons, the report explained, while the ISG did find some remnants of chemical munitions, the ISG concludes that Iraq unilaterally destroyed its undeclared chemical weapons stockpile in the 1990s and no credible evidence reveals that Iraq resumed or attempted to resume its production of chemical munitions (2). With regard to biological weapons, the ISG reported that Iraq destroyed its undeclared stocks of biological weapons and destroyed remaining holdings of the biological agents. Furthermore, the ISG discovered no evidence indicating that Iraq had plans for a new biological weapons program (4). Comparing the reports and evidence of pre-invasion assessments provided by the U.N. inspection teams and the IAEA with the post-invasion final report of the Iraq Survey Group, the findings and conclusions prove almost exactly the same.

The US never concerned itself with the possibility of an Iraq with WMD capabilities, since the US supplied Iraq with the materials needed to create a chemical and biological warfare program, including virulent strains of anthrax and other biotoxins, and sold Iraq more than one billion dollars worth of components needed to manufacture nuclear weapons and missiles in the 1980s (Blum). During this time, Saddam Hussein used his US funded and manufactured chemical and biological warfare program to kill thousands of Iranians and Kurds. Representative Samuel Gejdenson, Democrat of Connecticut, chairman of a House subcommittee investigating “United States Exports of Sensitive Technology to Iraq,” stated in 1991:

“From 1985 to 1990, the United States Government approved 771 licenses for the export to Iraq of \$1.5 billion worth of biological agents and high-tech equipment with military application. [Only thirty-nine applications were rejected.] The United States spent virtually an entire decade making sure that Saddam Hussein had almost whatever he wanted. . . . The Administration has never acknowledged that it took this course of action, nor has it explained why it did so. In reviewing documents and press accounts, and interviewing knowledgeable sources, it becomes clear that United States export-control policy was directed by U.S. foreign policy as formulated by the State Department, and it was U.S. foreign policy to assist the regime of Saddam Hussein” (Blum).

Even if Saddam Hussein did wield a significant weapons of mass destruction arsenal, he would never use the weapons against the US. During the first Gulf War, he did actually have weapons of mass destruction – thanks to the US and its allies – and when the US showed up on his doorstep and obliterated his military, he still did not use any WMDs against the US. Why would he spontaneously use them against the US and not when the US actually used military force against him? Saddam Hussein’s record of gross human rights violations showed him to be a horror of a human being, but he certainly did not prove to be stupid and he did have a great concern for self-preservation. He knew that the second after he would launch a chemical, biological, or nuclear weapon against the US, Iraq would become a desolate, nuclear waste land as a result of US retaliation. Tyrannical dictators, such as Hussein, oppress their people to secure their power or to ensure self-preservation. Hussein did not want to spontaneously commit suicide. The Bush Administration used the argument that Hussein would provide WMDs to terrorist groups. Hussein knew that any use of a chemical, biological, or nuclear weapon by a terrorist group would be linked to him and he would suffer the grave consequences. The US blamed him for terrorist attacks which he had no part; surely the US possessed the ability to find out if he provided WMDs to a terrorist group. As noted previously, Saddam Hussein viewed Islamic extremists as a threat to his regime and issued a general order not to cooperate with Al-Qaeda; therefore, he would not provide WMDs to Al-Qaeda. Also noted previously, the Bush Administration never concerned itself with the threat of terrorism.

Deconstructing Justifications for Invading Iraq

Written by Josh Schott

The US's blatant disregard of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its conviction to enforce Iraqi obligations to comply with U.N. resolutions, and its subsequent use of military aggression against Iraq creates a double standard in the application and enforcement of international law. Two central agreements formed the basis for the NPT: "In return for renouncing the option of acquiring nuclear weapons for themselves, 'non-nuclear-weapon states' were promised, first, unimpeded access to nuclear energy for nonmilitary use, and second, progress on nuclear disarmament by the five acknowledged nuclear-weapon states (the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, France, and China)" *Failed States* 70). During the Bush presidency, the US routinely violated the NPT. After the 2005 NPT Review Conference Jimmy Carter stated:

"American leaders not only have abandoned existing treaty restraints but also have asserted plans to test and develop new weapons, including antiballistic missiles, the earth-penetrating 'bunker buster' and perhaps some new 'small' bombs. They also have abandoned past pledges and now threaten first use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states" (78).

If the most powerful state can violate the NPT, then why should any other state be obligated to abide by the NPT? This threatens the integrity and validity of international law and treaties. The US invaded Iraq for absolutely no reason citing false allegations that Iraq violated international law, yet the very invasion itself violated international law and the US violated the NPT during the time of the invasion. The US exempts itself from international law, yet plays the role of the international law police force, enforcing international law when it suits its interests. Imagine if other U.N. member states enforced and applied international law the way the US "enforced" international law in Iraq. Based on US precedence, Iran, Canada, or any other state has the right to invade and occupy the US because of its flagrant violations of international law.

Once the original reasons for invading Iraq proved to be false, the Bush Administration changed gears and framed the war as being a humanitarian intervention to liberate the people of Iraq and to spread democracy to the region. They provided an after-the-fact justification for the invasion. John Prados's extensive investigation into the justifications for the invasion shows that government documents do not even index the word "democracy" (130). As the other two reasons proved to be false, this reason proved to be a blatant lie as well. Throughout the history of US foreign and military policy, the US never concerned itself about securing democracy for oppressed peoples. The US helped overthrow democratically elected governments and installed oppressive regimes in Guatemala, Chile, Iran, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, and many others. The US intervened in El Salvador's, Colombia's, and Greece's civil wars and revolutions by supporting fascist forces. The US supports oppressive regimes and human rights atrocities perpetrated by US client states in Bahrain, Egypt, Indonesia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and countless others. Additionally, the US militarily occupied Haiti, Cuba, and the Philippines. Focusing on Iraq as an example, however, still shows that the US has no concern for spreading democracy.

In 1958, Abdul Karim Qasim overthrew the oppressive, British puppet regime of Iraq. An official of the British corporation that controlled Iraq's oil disclosed to the British Foreign Office that Qasim wanted "to increase and distribute the national wealth... to found a new society and a new democracy, and to use this strong democratic, Arabist Iraq as an instrument to free and elevate other Arabs and Afro-Asians and to assist the destruction of 'imperialism.'" President Eisenhower noted that the new leader of Iraq had immense and widespread popularity throughout the region (*Failed States* 143). According to former National Security Council staffer Roger Morris, in 1963, John F. Kennedy and the CIA coordinated a regime change in Iraq with the Baath party and Saddam Hussein. Horrendous atrocities followed suit. As in Guatemala, the CIA provided the Baathists with lists of suspected Communists and other leftists and "the Baathists systematically murdered untold numbers of Iraq's educated elite" (144). The US created the very man the Bush Administration and the US government called the new Hitler and, as discussed earlier, supplied him with WMDs. The US adamantly supported the Saddam Hussein regime despite the regime's repressive, tyrannical practices and the use of chemical and biological weapons against Kurdish civilians. Interestingly, when the Iraqi Interim Government brought Hussein to trial, the first trials dealt with atrocities he perpetrated when he received massive amounts of military support from the US government (103).

As an occupying power in Iraq, the US actively attempted to prevent the democratic process from taking place. The editors of the *Financial Times* observes that "the reason the elections of January 2005 took place was the insistence

Deconstructing Justifications for Invading Iraq

Written by Josh Schott

of the Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, who vetoed three schemes by the US led occupation authorities to shelve or dilute them.” The US initially opposed such elections from happening, but because the Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani coordinated mass Iraqi resistance to US subversion of the democratic process, the Iraqis forced the US to allow the elections to take place. The *Wall Street Journal* noted that Sistani “gave his marching orders: Spread the word that Ayatollah Sistani insists that the new government be chosen through a direct election, not by the US or US-appointed Iraqi leaders.” Once the US succumbed to the wishes of the Iraqi people, the US proceeded to subvert the elections by providing every advantage to the US preferred candidate, including state resources and air time on television and support of the US military occupation (160).

Despite the US's espoused pride in freedom of speech within its borders, the US has no such concerns for freedom of speech in the country it occupies. The US governing authority in Iraq expelled the Qatar based news outlet Al-Jazeera. US forces went so far as to bomb Al-Jazeera facilities in Baghdad, killing a Jordanian correspondent. The complaints of the US occupying authority consisted of Al-Jazeera's reporting of civilian casualties in Iraq and reporting on the plight of the Palestinian people (161). The US only believes in freedom of speech when the freedom of speech does not threaten US interests.

The Bush Administration created “legitimate” reasons for invading Iraq to hide the real, heinous reasons for invading Iraq. The US actually invaded Iraq to control Iraq's oil reserves as part of the grand strategy to control the focal point of the Grand Area. In the first few months of the Bush presidency in 2001, Vice-President Dick Cheney created an Energy Task Force designed to develop an energy policy for the Bush Administration. By March 2001, the Energy Task Force prepared a set of documents with a map of Iraqi oilfields, pipelines, refineries and terminals carving Iraq's untapped oil reserves into blocks and allocating the rights of exploration of those blocks to oil companies in a list titled “Foreign Suitors for Iraqi Oilfields Contracts” (Judicial Watch). Additionally, the National Security Council instructed NSC members to cooperate with Vice President Dick Cheney's Energy Task Force for “reviewing international policy towards rogue states” and “actions regarding the capture of new and existing oil and gas fields” (Mayer).

At the same time Cheney's Energy Task force met, the James A. Baker Institute for Public Policy and the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations produced a report at the request of Dick Cheney called the *Strategic Energy Policy Challenges of the 21st Century*. The report states:

“Iraq remains a destabilizing influence to U.S. allies in the Middle East, as well as to regional and global order, and to the flow of oil to international markets from the Middle East. Saddam Hussein has also demonstrated a willingness to threaten to use the oil weapon and to use his own export program to manipulate oil markets... The United States should conduct an immediate policy review toward Iraq, including military, energy, economic, and political/diplomatic assessments... Like it or not, Iraqi reserves represent a major asset that can quickly add capacity to world oil markets and inject a more competitive tenor to oil trade” (45-46).

The aforementioned reports reveal the true intentions of the planners of the invasion of Iraq. However, the planners only viewed Iraq as a piece in the larger imperial board game of controlling the focal point of the Grand Area and the world. As revealed by the neocon organization Project for a New American Century's 2000 report titled *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, the presence of American military bases in the Persian Gulf represent the US's long term goals of committing itself to maintaining hegemony over an area of strategic importance. Over the past several decades the US sought to play a much larger and more permanent role in the regional security and stability of the Gulf (14). The report explains, “From an American perspective, the value of such bases would endure even should Saddam pass from the scene. Over the long term, Iran may well prove as large a threat to U.S. interests in the Gulf as Iraq has” (17). In this case, Iraq serves as a buffer against the great threat of Iran, and if the US conquered Iraq, Iraq can serve as another station for US forces to use as a front in a war against Iran in the future. Many Bush Administration officials, including former Deputy of Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, played and play key roles in the Project for a New American Century. When invading and occupying Iraq, the goal consisted of constructing “a US friendly democracy that would allow America to replace its military presence in Saudi Arabia... with one in Iraq that would allow America to keep shaping the regional balance of power” (*Failed States* 162).

Deconstructing Justifications for Invading Iraq

Written by Josh Schott

As the Clinton doctrine states, “the United States is entitled to resort to unilateral use of military power to ensure uninhibited access to key markets, energy supplies, and strategic resources” (86). The Bush Administration did not just use unilateral force to access key markets, the Bush Administration used unilateral force to rip open and suck everything out of Iraq’s economy. Before the Coalition Provisional Authority dissolved, CPA chief Paul Bremer ensured that US corporations, businesses and other foreign suitors had everything they needed by issuing the 100 Orders. To discuss a few of the Orders, Order #39 orders the privatization of Iraq’s entire public sector, which included two hundred state-owned enterprises, consisting of water, sewage, and electricity services. The order also allows one hundred percent of Iraqi businesses to be foreign owned, as well as establishing the national treatment of foreign companies. The foreign firms then have the privilege of unrestricted and tax-free return of all profits and other funds to the firms’ country of origin. The order concludes with a forty-year lease law, making the order effective for a mandatory minimum of forty years. Order #40 allows the entry of foreign banks into Iraq and allows foreign firms to buy a maximum of fifty percent of Iraqi banks. Order #49 reduces the corporate tax rate of forty percent to a flat rate of fifteen percent and creates a flat income tax at fifteen percent as well. Order #12 “suspends all tariffs, customs duties, import taxes, licensing fees and similar surcharges for goods entering or leaving Iraq, and all other trade restrictions that may apply to such goods.” Finally, Order #17 grants full immunity of foreign firms from the laws of Iraq, including incidences when the firm kills someone or dumps toxic waste into the Tigris or Euphrates rivers (Juhasz). Paul Bremer and the CPA transformed Iraq into a free trade, neoliberal xanadu, allowing US and other foreign firms to feast on the entrails of Iraq’s economy.

The American public would never accept the actual reasons for invading and occupying a country. Imagine if Bush’s speeches emphasized the importance of capturing new and existing gas and oil fields in Iraq, or emphasized the importance of opening Iraq’s economy to allow US firms unfettered access to Iraq’s markets. Also imagine if he included in his speeches that an invasion would increase the threat of terrorism. Instead of sixty-five percent of Americans supporting the invasion, only .1 percent of Americans would support the invasion. The invasion could not happen. The Bush Administration created reasons for invading Iraq. Although previous administrations altered the truth and did not disclose the real reasons for previous interventions or acts of aggression, none can compare with the egregious and blatant lies the Bush Administration told to the American public to rally support for the invasion of Iraq. The Bush Administration knew Saddam Hussein did not have WMDs, yet the Bush Administration said Hussein had the ability to produce a nuclear weapon in six months using non-existent IAEA reports as evidence. The Bush Administration knew Saddam Hussein had no connections to Al-Qaeda, yet the Bush Administration stated Hussein had long established ties to Al-Qaeda. Why and how could the American public fall for such outrageous violations of the truth? Only a year before the war rhetoric intensified, Americans witnessed the horrors of 9/11 and the Bush Administration exploited and amplified their fears. Although the US creates “Ground Zeros” across the globe routinely, Americans experienced their “Ground Zero” for the first time and the Bush Administration used that to its advantage. The Bush Administration framed Saddam Hussein as an Osama Bin Laden with weapons capable of destroying entire US cities. The evidence existed that Hussein had no WMDs or connections to Bin Laden, but one needed to do his or her own research to unearth such evidence, and most people do not have the time or the motivation to dedicate their time to look for evidence contradicting what their president says. Bush used (non-existent) IAEA reports as evidence in his speeches and people felt they had no reason to believe otherwise. Iraqis suffer the cost of the Bush Administration’s lies and the American public’s ignorance and sheep-like behavior. Over one million Iraqis died since the invasion of Iraq as of January 2008 (Opinion Research Business). The war drove many Iraqis from their homes, which includes 2.5 million internally displaced persons and two million refugees (UNHCR 2007). Hopefully, the American public learned the lessons from the fiasco and devastation wrought by the invasion of Iraq and can prevent unjust and horrific wars in the future.

Works Cited

Blum, William. “Anthrax for Export | The Progressive.” The Progressive | Peace and Social Justice since 1909. The Progressive, Apr. 1998. Web. 4 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.progressive.org/0901/anth0498.html>>.

Burns, John F., and David E. Singer. “THREATS AND RESPONSES: ARMS INSPECTIONS; IRAQ SAYS REPORT TO THE U.N. SHOWS NO BANNED ARMS – New York Times.” The New York Times – Breaking News, World News & Multimedia. The New York Times, 8 Dec. 2002. Web. 2 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/08/wo>

Deconstructing Justifications for Invading Iraq

Written by Josh Schott

rld/threats-responses-arms-inspections-iraq-says-report-un-shows-no-banned-arms.html?pagewanted=all>.

Cheney, Dick. "Meet the Press." Interview. MSNBC. 16 Sept. 2001. Television. Transcript.

Chomsky, Noam, and James Peck. *The Chomsky Reader*. New York, NY: Pantheon, 1987. Print.

Chomsky, Noam. *Deterring Democracy*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1992. Print.

Chomsky, Noam. *Failed States: the Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy*. New York: Henry Holt and, 2007. Print.

Chomsky, Noam. *World Orders, Old and New*. New York: Columbia UP, 1994. Print.

EIBaradei, Mohamed. "The Status of Nuclear Inspections in Iraq: An Update." Speech. iaea.org. International Atomic Energy Agency, 7 Mar. 2003. Web. 3 Dec. 2011.

Hanley, Charles. "USATODAY.com – Inspectors Have Covered CIA's Sites of 'concern'" News, Travel, Weather, Entertainment, Sports, Technology, U.S. & World – USATODAY.com. USA Today, 18 Jan. 2003. Web. 3 Dec. 2011. <http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2003-01-18-iraq-concern-areas_x.htm>.

International Atomic Energy Agency. Letter Dated 98/10/07 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council. By Mohamed EIBaradei. [NewYork]: UN, 1998. Print.

Jehl, Douglas. "AGENCY BELITTLES INFORMATION GIVEN BY IRAQ DEFECTORS – New York Times." The New York Times – Breaking News, World News & Multimedia. The New York Times, 29 Sept. 2003. Web. 3 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/29/world/agency-belittles-information-given-by-iraq-defectors.html?pagewanted=all>>.

Judicial Watch. Cheney Energy Task Force Documents Feature Map of Iraqi Oilfields. Judicialwatch.org. Judicial Watch, 17 July 2003. Web. 4 Dec. 2011.

Juhasz, Antonia. "The Handover That Wasn't | | AlterNet." Home | AlterNet. AlterNet, 20 July 2004. Web. 6 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.alternet.org/story/19293/?page=1>>.

Kagan, Donald, Gary Schmitt, and Thomas Donnelly. *Rebuilding America's Defenses*. Rep. Project for a New American Century, 2000. Print.

Kay, David. Iraq Survey Group Final Report. Rep. Iraq Survey Group, 30 Sept. 2004. Web. 3 Dec. 2011.

Mayer, Jane. "Letter from Washington: Contract Sport." The New Yorker. The New Yorker, 16 Feb. 2004. Web. 5 Dec. 2011. <http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/02/16/040216fa_fact?currentPage=1>.

Moniz, Dave, and Peronet Despeignes. "USATODAY.com – O'Neill: Iraq Planning Came before 9/11." News, Travel, Weather, Entertainment, Sports, Technology, U.S. & World – USATODAY.com. USA Today, 12 Jan. 2004. Web. 1 Dec. 2011. <http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2004-01-11-oneill-iraq_x.htm>.

Morse, Edward L., and Amy M. Jaffe. *Strategic Energy Policy Challenges of the 21st Century*. Rep. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2001. Print.

Opinion Research Business. New Analysis Confirms 1 Million+ Casualties. Opinion.co.uk. Opinion Research Business, 28 Jan. 2008. Web. 6 Dec. 2011.

Deconstructing Justifications for Invading Iraq

Written by Josh Schott

Powell, Colin. "Briefing with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa." Briefing with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa. Ittihadiya Palace, Cairo, Egypt. 24 Feb. 2001. Address.

Rice, Condoleezza. "The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer." Interview. CNN. July 2001. Television. Transcript.

Ritter, Scott. "Even If Iraq Managed to Hide These Weapons, What They Are Now Hiding Is Harmless Goo." Interview. The Guardian [London] 19 Sept. 2002. Web.

Sabri, Naji. "A Letter from Iraq to the Chief of the U.N." Letter to Kofi Annan. 16 Sept. 2002. Nytimes.com. New York Times, 17 Sept. 2002. Web. 30 Nov. 2011.

Sabri, Naji. "Iraq's Response to Resolution 1441." Letter to Kofi Annan. 13 Nov. 2002. Ciaonet.org. Columbia International Affairs Online, 13 Nov. 2002. Web. 2 Dec. 2011.

Swanson, David. War Is a Lie. Charlottesville, VA: David Swanson, 2010. Print.

United Nations. Activities of UNMOVIC and the IAEA in Iraq. Un.org. United Nations, 27 Nov. 2002. Web. 3 Dec. 2011.

United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees. Statistics on Displaced Iraqis Around the World. United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, Apr. 2007. Web. 6 Dec. 2011.

United Nations Security Council. Resolution 1441. UN.org. United Nations, 8 Nov. 2002. Web. 2 Dec. 2011.

United States. Cong. Senate. Select Committee on Intelligence. Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence on Postwar Findings about Iraq's WMD Programs and Links to Terrorism and How They Compare with Prewar Assessments Together with Additional Views. By Pat Roberts and John D. Rockefeller. 109th Cong., 2nd sess. S. Rept. Washington, DC: United States, Congress, Senate, Select Committee on Intelligence, 2006. Print.

—
Written by: Josh Schott
Written at: Stanford University
Written for: Professor Rush Rehm
Date written: 12/2/11