

# **America's Bid for Empire in the New American Century: the Bush Doctrine and the 2003 Iraq War**



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Topic

Shortly after the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington, the United States government invaded Afghanistan in order to emanate networks and bases that were supporting Al-Qaeda. After succeeding in Afghanistan, the Bush administration stated that the United States and the world needed a broader strategy to deal with the international threat of terrorism. A few months later, the White House released *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (NSS) which is also known as the Bush doctrine. One of the main fundamentals of the doctrine was the strategy of pre-emption to prevent threats to America's security. The doctrine identified three sources of threat: terrorist organizations, weak states that shelter terrorists, and rogue states that have or are determined to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Iraq was mentioned as an example of a rogue state. Less than a half year later, after addressing the United Nations Security Council with evidence, the United States invaded Iraq. Although the invasion of Iraq was carried out more than a year after the 9/11 attacks, the build-up of a public case against Iraq started much earlier. One day after the attacks, Richard Perle, then head of the U.S. Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee, said that 9/11 could not have been carried out without the support and help of one or more governments.<sup>1</sup> The attacks were perceived as acts of war, as it was mistakenly assumed that a government initiated and supported 9/11.

The decision of the Bush administration to invade Iraq is not only interesting from the point of foreign policy decision-making, it also seems to show that it was extremely difficult for officials to imagine that a substantial threat to the security of the United States and the world, was not emanating from a state but from non-state actors that were organized without any pre-planned governmental coordination or sponsoring.<sup>2</sup> Even after it had become publicly clear that Iraq had neither weapons of mass destruction nor any links with Al-Qaeda, the Bush administration continued to claim that the invasion of Iraq was part of the 'war on terrorism', which was necessary for the security of the United States and the world. Moreover, the Bush administration admitted that reaching democracy and freedom in Iraq was problematic and not easily achieved. Many scholars, journalists, and people interested in international relations, still wonder whether the invasion of Iraq was really meant as a means to establish security or that Iraq was part of a broader strategy of the Bush administration to include Iraq in the 'war on terrorism' to achieve other gains.

## 1.2 Research Question

The aim of this project is to examine the reasons behind the Iraq war and assess which international relations theories offer an adequate explanation for these reasons. The central research question is: *Why did America invade Iraq? What were America's aims? And which international relations theories*

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<sup>1</sup> Steven Mufson, 'U.S. urged to target nations that aid terrorism: New York and Pentagon attacks are called acts of war', *The Washington Post*, September 12, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Dan Caldwell and Robert E. Williams, *Seeking security in an insecure world* (Maryland 2006) 117.

*offer an adequate explanation for the invasion?* America's 'war on terrorism' included military action against different terrorist organizations and nations, including Al-Qaeda and Afghanistan. Focusing on all aspects of this war would make the scope of this study too broad for sustained analysis. The reason to focus on Iraq has a lot to do with the significance and impact of this war on worldwide public opinion, international relations, and the global balance of power. If anything, the Iraq war was the largest, longest, and most expensive military intervention for the United States since the war in Vietnam. It was the first major American unilateral military action since the end of the Cold War and the first American experience as an occupying power in the Middle East.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, within the 'war on terrorism' the move towards Iraq was the main reason that caused public criticism towards the Bush administration's overall approach to foreign policy. Throughout the Islamic world (and even beyond that) the United States is perceived as a country that destroyed Iraq for selfish reasons. Another demarcation is made for the theories. There are many theories on international relations explaining conflict. This paper applies the three main theories of international relations, namely liberalism, realism, and constructivism, to the Iraq war. Liberalism and realism, however, contain many different subdivisions. Therefore the idea is to use the most appropriate forms of these theories to explain the Iraq war. In the case of realism, this is classical, offensive, and defensive realism. Concerning liberalism, the focus is on interdependence liberalism, democratic peace theory, and neoliberalism.

### **1.3 Scientific Relevance**

The 9/11 terrorist attacks heralded a new period for American foreign policy. To many people all around the world, not only those active in international relations, but also academics, journalists and civilians, this raised the question why the use of force had become so prominent under the Bush administration. To this day, the search to root out terrorists worldwide has not come to an end. Even as it refrains from brutal interrogations and other extensively criticized aspects of the Bush administration's 'war on terrorism', the Obama administration continues to support other important elements of its forerunner's approach to fight terrorism. The Obama administration decided to continue the CIA's program of transferring prisoners to other countries without legal rights, and keeping terrorism suspects in custody for an indefinite period without trials, even if they were arrested faraway from a war zone.<sup>4</sup> The 'war on terrorism' seems to have no end.

What explains the transformation of the foreign policy strategy of the United States under the Bush administration? Academics have tried to explain the decisions and motivations of the Bush administration and have come up with rather different explanations. According to the dominant view, the United States was forced to defend its status quo and security. According to another view, the Bush administration pursued a strategy motivated by the aim of reaching global hegemony. According

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<sup>3</sup> Dan Lieberfeld, 'Theories of conflict and the Iraq War', *International Journal of Peace Studies* 10:2 (2005) 1.

<sup>4</sup> Charlie Savage, 'Obama's war on terror may resemble Bush's', *The New York Times*, February 18, 2009.

to this evaluation, the United States invaded Iraq as a means to acquire as much power as possible. This research is a contribution to a lively debate that is still going on. Several studies have also dealt with the motivations of the Bush administration by applying international relations theories to the Bush doctrine and the Iraq war, but again, evaluations and conclusions greatly differ. Uncovering the reasons behind the Iraq war and explaining these reasons with international relations theories is not only relevant for the purpose of history and international relations theory, but has a broader significance as the war in Iraq still remains one of the most debated international relations topics. After all, the decisions of the Bush administration did not only have an impact on the United States, but also led to alterations within the international arena. Moreover, the policy of the Bush administration affected the domestic and foreign policy decisions of many other countries. Hence understanding why the United States invaded Iraq and how the invasion evolved in politics, exposes to some degree the nature of world politics as it is today.

#### **1.4 Sources and Methodology**

The sources examined for this study include articles of various newspapers, primarily *The Guardian* (British, centre-left liberal), *The Independent* (British, centre-left liberal), *The New York Times* (American, left-liberal), and *The Washington Post* (American, conservative). The other examined sources consist of reports of the news agencies BBC (British) and CNN (American), articles of news magazines such as *Time* (American, liberal) and *The Weekly Standard* (American, neoconservative), speeches, interviews, memoirs, information memorandums, intelligence reports, national security and energy policy documents, texts of international resolutions, letters, and testimonies. The governmental sources were principally found in the Digital National Security Archive (a non-governmental and non-profit research and archival institution linked to the George Washington University in Washington D.C.), the websites of the U.S. government U.S. Department of Defense, and the online George W. Bush White House Archive, which contains a near complete collection of speeches given by President Bush and his principal officials.

This study uses a qualitative method of analysis. It explores the opinions of scholars by researching historiographical debates in literature about the Bush era; examines and evaluates the reasons given by the Bush administration for the Iraq war; detects the aims behind the Iraq war by studying and comparing a range of diverse sources; and finally determines which international relations theories offer the most adequate explanation for the war. Because different interpretations of sources can lead to completely different evaluations and conclusions, which is all the more true for qualitative research, this paper stays close to the facts and presents important events, such as National Security Council meetings, as accurately as possible.

## **1.5 Outline**

This paper consists of six chapters, of which the first chapter contains a description of the topic, research question, sources, methodology, and scientific relevance. Chapter 2 offers an analysis of the historiographical debates about 9/11, the Bush administration, and the ‘war on terrorism.’ Chapter 3 examines the validity of the Bush administration’s own alleged reasons for the Iraq war. Chapter 4 forms the focus of this project. It examines and evaluates why America invaded Iraq. Chapter 5 offers a description of the international relations theories which this paper uses to explain the Iraq war, namely liberalism, realism, and constructivism, and explains the reasons behind the Iraq war by applying these theories to the facts. The final chapter presents a conclusion which assesses the reasons behind the Iraq war within the entire framework of this study.

## **2. Historiographical Debates**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In the last decade an immense amount of books and articles has been published about the Bush administration. The historiography of the Bush administration is rich, intriguing, complex, exciting, versatile, and filled with dynamic debates about all kinds of different aspects of the Bush era. Currently there are still lively debates going on about the Bush administration, which makes the historiography on the period all the more interesting. It certainly deserves a much more detailed analysis than can be given here. A close examination of the complete literature or even the most prominent literature is a challenging task that would take a lot of time. In the limited period of time, it was only possible to examine a relatively small portion of the literature.

Academic bibliographies, monographs and journals show that most studies about the Bush administration were published between 2002 and 2003. Debates among scholars were the most intensive in this period. Since this paper aims to give a good representation of the historiography of the Bush administration, most studies examined in this paper date from the years 2002 and 2003. As this paper shows, especially 2002 was a busy year for scholars examining the Bush administration and the post September 11 world, because by far the most studies were published in that year. However, this paper also contains several studies published in the period 2004-2010.

The historiographical debates among scholars about the Bush administration can be divided into two periods, namely before and after the March 2003 American invasion of Iraq. Before the invasion the debates mainly centered on the meaning and importance of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The focus was on how and why these events changed (or did not change) the international context of the twenty-first century and the foreign policy strategy of the United States. There were also a great deal of debates and discussions among scholars about the most effective strategies to combat global terrorism. Although all these debates continued after the invasion of Iraq, by then other subjects became more dominant. The post-Iraq invasion scholarly debates focused more on the aims of the Bush administration, the foundations of the war on terrorism, and explaining America's grand strategy with international relations theory. Hence this chapter presents the views of various scholars on pivotal issues and questions about the Bush era, thereby creating a historiographical framework for chapter three, four and five, in which the reasons behind the Iraq war will be analyzed and evaluated by examining the sources described in chapter one.

## 2.2 Pre-Invasion

The studies that are analyzed in the following section cover the period before the American invasion of Iraq. In this period most scholars were principally interested in examining the significance of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The focus was primarily on exploring the impact of these events on the international environment of the twenty-first century and America's foreign policy strategy.

### 2.2.1 Stephen Walt: International Anti-Terror Coalition for Global Security

According to the political scientist Stephen M. Walt (2001), the terrorist attacks that 'destroyed the World Trade Center and damaged the Pentagon' were redefining moments that 'triggered the most rapid and dramatic change in the history of United States foreign policy.'<sup>5</sup> Walt emphasizes that on September 10, 2001, there was absolutely no indication that the United States was about to wage a global war against terrorism. Besides from a clear contempt for certain multilateral agreements and a strong focus on missile defense, the foreign policy priorities of the Bush administration were not radically different from previous administrations. The Bush administration supported further NATO expansion, agreed to keep American troops in the Balkans, approved the existing policy concerning Russia and China, and called for more measures to liberalize global markets. Initially, the Bush administration focused on domestic issues, and had no plans for new international projects. This unadventurous approach to foreign policy changed after September 11. Instead of education reform and tax cuts, the war on terrorism dominated the Bush administration's agenda. The campaign against global terrorism became the central aim of United States foreign and defense policy, and other international objectives were subordinated to this broad objective.<sup>6</sup>

Walt argues that the terrorist attacks of September 11 underlined several aspects of the international position of the United States and its foreign policy. First, September 11 proved that American foreign policy is not cost-free. Al-Qaeda demonstrated that the United States, despite its awesome military superiority and great economic power, is not invulnerable. This made clear that fighting terrorism requires the United States to pay extra costs. Second, September 11 showed that the United States is less popular than it thinks. Although many countries were sympathetic toward the United States after September 11, international support was not unconditional, and important American allies made it clear that they wanted the United States to react with restraint. Third, September 11 made it clear that terrorism is a product of failed states such as Afghanistan. The lengthy civil conflict in Afghanistan led to the emergence of the Taliban regime and Al-Qaeda, and terrorist leaders like Bin Laden used failed states for protection since the mid 1990s. Thus resolving civil conflicts is essential for international and American security. Finally, the American reaction to September 11 proved that even a superpower needs support from other countries. Military action against Al-Qaeda requires access to foreign territory and permission to use foreign airspace.

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<sup>5</sup> Stephen M. Walt, 'Beyond bin Laden: reshaping U.S. foreign policy', *International Security* 26:3 (2001) 56.

<sup>6</sup> Walt, 'Reshaping U.S. foreign policy', 56-57.



International support also justifies the use of force against terrorism.<sup>7</sup> Walt explains that an effective war against terrorism requires the United States to pursue new policies. He emphasizes that the United States should prevent the emergence of new terrorist organizations, and make it difficult for potential enemies to acquire nuclear weapons. To accomplish these objectives, American foreign policy must focus on creating and managing an international anti-terror coalition, increasing control over weapons of mass destruction, reforming Afghanistan, and restoring relations with the Arab and Islamic world.<sup>8</sup>

### **2.2.2 Bruce Kuniholm: Aggressive Action for Global Security**

For the historian Bruce R. Kuniholm (2002), September 11 was a defining moment in America's history. Kuniholm focuses on how and why September 11 changed the international context in which the United States was operating and, like Walt, explains what kind of foreign policy strategy is needed to adapt to this new situation. Kuniholm emphasizes that, in the post September 11 world, regional powers that possess or are trying to acquire weapons of mass destruction have become the most serious threat to international stability and to crucial American interests. September 11 made it clear that it is not only the United States, but the whole international community that was in serious danger.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, after the Cold War, the danger of nuclear war between great powers significantly decreased. Universal threats such as regional wars and international terrorism have made great powers aware of common interests. Rivalry and conflict have become a clash of values and principles which exceed traditional borders and cultures. The new struggle for power is not a conflict between civilizations, but a conflict within states, within cultures, and within a global community about the norms and direction of modern civilization. After September 11 international terrorism has become the enemy; this is an irrational, violent and obscure enemy, which forms a serious threat to civilization. According to Kuniholm, international terrorism can only be effectively battled through massive international cooperation and aggressive action, not only against terrorists, but also against states that harbour them.<sup>10</sup>

### **2.2.3 Margot Light: Military Force Aggravates Terrorism**

The international relations scholar Margot Light (2002) does not agree with Kuniholm's argument which states that aggressive action is effective against terrorism. She offers three arguments against the foreign policy strategy of the Bush administration. The first argument is against the use of military force to combat terrorism; the second refers to the dangers of intervening in civil wars; while the third is against the declaration of a war to abolish terrorism. The first two arguments of Light are based on the 'lessons of history.'<sup>11</sup> First, Light argues that history shows that using massive military force

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<sup>7</sup> Walt, 'Reshaping U.S. foreign policy', 57-63.

<sup>8</sup> Walt, 'Reshaping U.S. foreign policy', 64-65.

<sup>9</sup> Bruce R. Kuniholm, '9/11, the great game, and the vision thing: the need for (and elements of) a more comprehensive Bush doctrine', *The Journal of American History* 89:2 (2002) 431-432.

<sup>10</sup> Kuniholm, 'The great game', 426-427.

<sup>11</sup> Margot Light, 'The response to 9/11 and the lessons of history', *International Relations* 16:2 (2002) 275.

against terrorism tends to create more terrorists. She emphasizes that there are countless cases where the use of military force has aggravated instead of eliminated terrorism. She offers two examples. Israel's use of military force against terrorism has not abolished Fatah, Hamas or Hezbollah. On the contrary, Israeli policy only produces more terrorist attacks and increases the number of people who support terrorist organizations. Light's second example is the history of Russia's relations with Chechnya. Russia's war against Chechen rebels from 1994 to 1996 created rebel warlords and led to repeated terrorist attacks against Russia, and Russia's use of massive military force since 1999 turned many non-violent Chechens into terrorists. Thus although the massive force invasion of Afghanistan led to the overthrow of the Taliban regime, and the elimination and capture of many terrorists, historical experience suggests that the attack on Afghanistan probably created more terrorists than it destroyed.<sup>12</sup> Second, history also shows that intervening in civil wars often has negative consequences. For example, when Soviet troops left Afghanistan in 1989, peace had not been achieved yet. The civil war continued and became even more violent, and eventually the Taliban came to power in 1996. Light emphasizes that, without peacekeepers, the United States and its allies cannot create stability in Afghanistan. However, the problem is that the lengthy intervention of foreign forces may eventually provoke frustration and increase the hostility of the Afghan people. Light's third argument concerns the wisdom of declaring a war against terrorism. She emphasizes that the total elimination of terrorism is virtually impossible. Therefore, a war against terrorism is a war without end.<sup>13</sup>

#### **2.2.4 Mark Drumbl: The Importance of International Law**

The law professor Mark A. Drumbl (2002) analyzes the problem of terrorism from a law oriented perspective. He emphasizes the importance of an effective legal system to prosecute terrorists and oppose and eradicate global terrorism. Drumbl argues that the war-like nature of the terrorist attacks of September 11 proved that terrorism concerns the international community as a whole, and therefore should be dealt with international criminal law and process rather than domestic criminal law. Drumbl argues that international law is more effective than domestic law in constructing an international social norm that condemns terrorism. Furthermore, he claims that prosecuting terrorists through an organized international court can help Western human rights become more representative and decrease the appeal of terrorism, which is according to Drumbl more effective than destroying terrorist camps that can be rebuilt elsewhere.<sup>14</sup>

#### **2.2.5 Andrew Hurrell: Clash of Civilizations?**

The political scientist Andrew Hurrell (2002) focuses on the impact of September 11 on international order. He points out that there has been a great deal of debate and discussion suggesting that September 11 produced a global clash between Islam and the West. The opponents of the vision of a

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<sup>12</sup> Light, 'The lessons of history', 276-277.

<sup>13</sup> Light, 'The lessons of history', 277-279.

<sup>14</sup> Mark A. Drumbl, 'Judging the 9/11 terrorist attack', *Human Rights Quarterly* 24:2 (2002) 323-325, 358-360.

conflict based on religion or civilization propose six main arguments.<sup>15</sup> First, the vision of clashing civilizations neglects the diversity of clashes and contradictions within cultural traditions. Cultures are not closed systems of fixed principles. Second, there are as many versions of Islam as there are of Christianity and the terrorist attacks do not represent dominant Islam. Third, the emergence of traditional values in the Islamic world is not the result of historical development. Cultural and religious traditionalism are reactions to modernity and change. Fourth, the vision of a modern, rational West battling the extremism and irrationality of the Islamic world ignores the fact that denial of Enlightenment rationalism has been a fundamental part of the western cultural, philosophical and political tradition. Fifth, western views of Islam are not unchanging. For example, many people who now serve under the Bush administration viewed the Muslim fighters in Afghanistan in the 1980s as ‘freedom fighters’ heroically battling against the Godless wicked empire of the Soviet Union. Finally, the vision of clashing civilizations fails to see that radical Islamist rebellion and Al-Qaeda terrorism is aimed primarily at governments within the Islamic world which have, allegedly, become corrupted and un-Islamic.<sup>16</sup> Hurrell argues that although the concrete level of support for Al-Qaeda in the Islamic world is very difficult to estimate, the vision that America is the opposite of the Islamic world has remained influential. This vision has been strengthened by America’s support for the forceful policies of the Sharon government in Israel and strengthened even more by the expansion of the war to Iraq. Hurrell emphasizes that there is a very deep-rooted tradition in western international thinking which asserts that the standard tenets of international relations should be abandoned in certain struggles with certain kinds of states or groups.<sup>17</sup>

### **2.2.6 John Gaddis: The Bush NSS and the Ambitious Hidden Agenda**

Like Walt and Kuniholm, the historian John L. Gaddis (2002) considers September 11 a crucial turning point in American history, because it prepared the way for a new American grand strategy by showing that old ones have failed. Remarkably, Gaddis claims that the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were as important as the British burning of the White House and Capitol in 1814, and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.<sup>18</sup> Gaddis argues that the Bush administration’s national security strategy implicated a new, offensive American grand strategy focused on completely transforming the Islamic Middle East. First, the Bush administration abandoned traditional security strategies. According to the administration, the Cold War strategies of containment and deterrence were effective against identifiable regimes operating by identifiable means from identifiable territories, but highly ineffective against obscure networks of terrorism. Bush and his top officials believed that the most effective means to combat terrorism was preventive war, because

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<sup>15</sup> Andrew Hurrell, ‘There are no rules (George W. Bush): international order after September 11’, *International Relations* 16:2 (2002) 193.

<sup>16</sup> Hurrell, ‘There are no rules’, 193-194.

<sup>17</sup> Hurrell, ‘There are no rules’, 194-195.

<sup>18</sup> John L. Gaddis, ‘A grand strategy of transformation’, *Foreign Policy* 133 (2002) 50.

‘today, our enemies see weapons of mass destruction as weapons of choice’ and therefore ‘we cannot let our enemies strike first.’<sup>19</sup> Second, although President Bush regularly spoke of maintaining a balance of power and abandoning unilateral action, his security strategy declared that America would not hesitate to act alone against terrorist threats. According to Gaddis the Bush administration had an ambitious hidden agenda, which was exposed by Bush’s speech about an ‘axis of evil’ made up of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. Gaddis argues that this speech made clear that the invasion of Afghanistan was only the beginning and that Iraq would be the next target of the Bush administration. Invading Iraq would ensure a sufficient supply of oil for the United States. Moreover, invading Iraq would trigger a process that would eliminate oppressive regimes elsewhere in the Middle East.<sup>20</sup>

### **2.2.7 Stefano Guzzini: Unilateralism vs. Multilateralism**

The political scientist Stefano Guzzini (2002) is highly critical of the foreign policy strategy of the Bush administration. He argues that September 11 provided the administration with an opportunity to wage international war against terrorism and, more generally, to restructure American foreign policy. Guzzini emphasizes that the Bush administration pursued a foreign policy that combined unilateralism with military power. According to Guzzini, this strategy was not effective against terrorism. In the Cold War, George F. Kennan stated that only military force would be ineffective against communism, and emphasized the importance of diplomacy and increasing the health of democratic societies. Henry Kissinger stressed that a unilateral quest to maximize security would make other states insecure, which would destabilize the international system.<sup>21</sup> Guzzini emphasizes that by focusing on unilateralism, the Bush administration itself actually undermined the world order. The administration’s unilateralism only produced negative international reactions, which made the war against terrorism a more difficult task than it already was. According to Guzzini, an American foreign policy strategy based on multilateralism and diplomacy would be more effective, because battling international terrorism requires states to consult and cooperate with each other.<sup>22</sup>

### **2.2.8 Michael Cox: New American Hegemony?**

The international relations scholar Michael Cox (2002) emphasizes that 9/11 had a great impact on academic research in the West, because it ‘illuminated with stunning clarity the essential truth of realism: namely, that we live in an international system where the conflict between the haves and have-nots, the ins and the outs, the settled and the dissatisfied powers, continues unabated.’<sup>23</sup> Cox argues that 9/11 had both positive and negative consequences for the United States. On one hand, it

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<sup>19</sup> Gaddis, ‘Grand strategy’, 51-52.

<sup>20</sup> Gaddis, ‘Grand strategy’, 52-55.

<sup>21</sup> Stefano Guzzini, ‘Foreign policy without diplomacy: the Bush administration at a crossroads’, *International Relations* 16:2 (200) 294.

<sup>22</sup> Guzzini, ‘Foreign policy without diplomacy’, 291-295.

<sup>23</sup> Michael Cox, ‘American power before and after September 11: dizzy with success?’, *International Affairs* 78:2 (2002) 262.

negatively affected America's prestige, economy, and international self-confidence. On the other hand, America's response on terrorism strengthened American credibility, created a sense of international purpose and left the United States in a very powerful position in Central Asia. Moreover, 9/11 helped to justify military expansion which further increased American power.

In contrast to Walt, Gaddis and Kuniholm, Cox is more sceptical about the historical importance of September 11. Although Cox acknowledges that September 11 on itself was an important day in American history, he doubts that it will be as significant over the longer term as Pearl Harbor, the early Cold War, or the collapse of the Soviet Union. Cox emphasizes that 'we should beware of scholars bearing false analogies and dramatic tales of a new dawn.'<sup>24</sup> He argues that the 'new' American hegemony after September 11 was actually not new at all; it was the result of important changes in the position of the United States in the international system in the 1990s. Cox emphasizes that the collapse of the Soviet Union set the foundation for the revival of the United States, both economically and militarily. First, the fall of communism led to the creation of a world economic system characterized by the free movement of capital, which was highly advantageous for the United States. The American economy flourished in the second part of the 1990s and took a big lead on Japan, which was once viewed as a serious threat to American economic hegemony. Second, the fall of the Soviet Union eliminated the most serious threat to American power. Subsequently, the United States achieved military superiority in the 1990s. For example, every year after 1992 the United States accounted for approximately 40 percent of the world's military spending. According to Cox, these developments laid the basis for American self-confidence in the 1990s and brought the United States in a dominant position under the Bush administration.<sup>25</sup>

### **2.2.9 Chris Brown: The Limited Threat of Radical Islam**

The international relations scholar Chris Brown (2002) believes that September 11 was not of great historical importance. He emphasizes that the attacks of September 11 presented a critical policing problem for the international community, but did not form a serious threat to the norms of international society. Brown emphasizes that radical Islamic terrorists are a very specific group driven by a very specific set of beliefs, which is unappealing to the majority of the world's citizens, both in the wealthy West and the poor South, including the so-called world of Islam. Therefore, according to Brown, there can be no such thing as a total war on terrorism. The target of the international community is only a specific terrorist group (Al-Qaeda), whose ideology (radical Islam) is not broad enough in its appeal to form a serious threat to the international order.<sup>26</sup> To prove this point, Brown compares the extremist radical ideology of Al-Qaeda with that of a previous threat to international order, namely the Marxist movements of the 1960s during the war in Vietnam. These Marxist movements shared a common ideology and had connections with several terrorist groups, including

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<sup>24</sup> Cox, 'American Power', 262, 274.

<sup>25</sup> Cox, 'American Power', 263-268.

<sup>26</sup> Chris Brown, 'The fall of the towers and international order', *International Relations* 16:2 (2002) 263-264.

the Red Army Faction in Germany, the Red Brigades in Italy and the Weathermen in the United States. These groups were supported by the Soviet Union and were linked to nationalist organizations, such as the IRA in Ireland and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which had adopted Marxism. According to Brown, this was a real international movement, unlike Al-Qaeda, and its ideology appealed to many people all over the world, unlike the ideology of Al-Qaeda. Therefore, Marxism was a serious threat to international order, and extremist radical Islam is not.<sup>27</sup>

### **2.2.10 Joan Hoff: Continuing Trends**

Like Cox and Brown, the historian Joan Hoff (2002) is sceptical about the historical importance of 9/11. Hoff argues that 9/11 transformed the presidency of George W. Bush, but not American foreign policy. She emphasizes that President Bush was surrounded by 'Cold Warriors' from the administrations of George H.W. Bush and Ronald Reagan who believed that the United States should act unilaterally whenever possible and cooperate only when necessary. Hoff argues that this strategy characterized American foreign policy for the most part of the twentieth century, especially during and after the end of the Cold War.<sup>28</sup>

### **2.2.11 Christopher Hill: Stronger Unilateralist Policy**

The international relations scholar Christopher Hill (2002) emphasizes that it is too early to decide whether the terrorist attacks of September 11 were of historical significance. However, Hill aims to provide some answers by examining the possible consequences of September 11. He argues that the American reaction to September 11 was carefully considered. The United States gradually mobilized its forces, and launched a wise, long-term strategy. The strategy was very clear: Al-Qaeda and other anti-American terrorist organizations that desire to murder Americans and destroy their property will be abolished, while regimes that harbour and support terrorists will risk a massive force American invasion. Hill points out that some scholars believe that September 11 killed the myth of American invulnerability. However, according to Hill the opposite may turn out to be true.<sup>29</sup>

September 11 strengthened the brave and unilateralist character of American foreign policy. The continuous intervention of the United States in the domestic affairs of other states and the steadily rising American military spending could make the world a much more competitive place. Moreover, the growing gap between American power and the power of the next leading state could unbalance the international system. If that would happen, then America's allies, especially European states, rather than its enemies will experience the greatest changes. Although the United States needs political and technical support from European states to effectively combat terrorism, it now has less interest in acting as Europe's guardian. Furthermore, international terrorism might expose more clearly the

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<sup>27</sup> Brown, 'The fall of the towers', 263-266.

<sup>28</sup> Joan Hoff, '9/11: watershed in U.S. foreign policy?', *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 13 (2002) 9.

<sup>29</sup> Christopher Hill, '11 September 2001: perspectives from international relations', *International Relations* 16:2 (2002) 257-259.

differences between American and European cultures, interests and political systems. As a result, the disagreements within NATO, especially those about power distribution and conflicting forms of capitalism, will become more serious. And if European states are forced to follow a more authoritarian style of American leadership, resentments will grow. This would make a rivalry between the United States and the European Union inevitable. Hill emphasizes that ‘this has been a coming issue for the future of the international system for some time, but the fallout from 11 September seems likely to accelerate its arrival.’<sup>30</sup>

## **2.3 Post-Invasion**

The studies that are analyzed in this section cover the period after the Iraq invasion. The examined articles were published between 2003 and 2010. Most of them date from 2003. In contrast to pre-Iraq invasion scholarly debates, which mainly centered on the impact of the 9/11 attacks on the international system and the foreign policy strategy of the United States, post-invasion debates focused primarily on the international aims of the Bush administration and the foundations of the administration’s ‘war on terrorism.’

### **2.3.1 Melvyn Leffler: Security Considerations**

The historian Melvyn P. Leffler (2003) suggests that it was not the maximization of power, but security considerations that formed the foreign policy strategy of the Bush administration. Leffler emphasizes that American power under the Bush administration was focused on promoting a balance of power that stimulates freedom. Before September 11 the Bush administration feared terrorism, but had little to do with it. A new reality emerged on September 11, a reality that linked terrorists with weapons of mass destruction and aggressive terrorist leaders ruling rogue states. So, because fear shaped strategy, preventive war became the main strategy to combat terrorism. Power was not an end in itself but a means to an end. The Bush administration used power to prevent and oppose threats, to promote peace and to spread freedom.<sup>31</sup> After September 11 Condoleezza Rice stated that ‘there is no longer any doubt that today America faces an existential threat to our security, a threat as great as any we faced during the Civil War, World War II, or the Cold War.’<sup>32</sup>

### **2.3.2 Michael Mazarr: Wilsonian Bush**

The historian Michael J. Mazarr (2003) argues that the foreign policy of the Bush administration cannot be characterized as realist. According to realism ‘the behaviour of collective man naturally has its source in the anatomy of human nature, that nature is one obsessed with power and dominion.’<sup>33</sup> Mazarr describes Bush as an optimist. He emphasizes that Bush’s statements suggest that he believes

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<sup>30</sup> Hill, ‘11 September 2001’, 260-261.

<sup>31</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler, ‘9/11 and the past and future of American foreign policy’, *International Affairs* 79:5 (2003) 1047-1050.

<sup>32</sup> Leffler, ‘American foreign policy’, 1049.

<sup>33</sup> Michael J. Mazarr, ‘George W. Bush, idealist’, *International Affairs* 79:3 (2003) 505.

in the potential of righteous people to get along with each other. Mazarr considers Bush a religious idealist faith. Combined with strong beliefs about freedom and liberalism, this portrays Bush as someone who truly believes that good will prevail over evil. Much like Bush, Paul Wolfowitz is also an optimist. Wolfowitz, for example, is strongly optimistic about America's capability to make the world a better place. The same goes for Colin Powell, who has an optimistic world-view, and has always displayed faith in overcoming human differences. The same is true for other members of the Bush administration, like Condoleezza Rice and Richard Haas. Mazarr stresses that this suggests that the Bush administration was not motivated by realist foreign policy strategies. The aims of the administration, like spreading freedom and democracy, supports this view. Mazarr concludes that the members of the Bush administration pursued a foreign policy based on idealism.<sup>34</sup>

### **2.3.3 David Dunn: Guaranteeing Security**

The international relations scholar David H. Dunn (2003) asserts that the foreign policy of the Bush administration is widely misunderstood. Many critics believe that the Bush administration foreign policy was 'motivated by something other than the war on terrorism, such as oil, revenge for the president's father, support for Israel, hegemonic control of the Middle East, even just the hubris of the macho Texan cowboy.'<sup>35</sup> According to Dunn, these are all misconceptions. Instead, he argues that President Bush's war on terrorism was in continuation with former American security strategies and ideas, such as American exceptionalism.<sup>36</sup> Another misconception is the view that the Bush administration adopted the approach of President George H.W. Bush. Dunn argues that President Bush's foreign policy strategy was much closer to that of the Reagan administration, because it was formed by a concern with traditional security threats, like great powers, rogue states, proliferation.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, Dunn emphasizes that the United States regards itself as the supreme power in the international system and always aims to export the Western government model, liberal democratic market capitalism. For the Bush administration, this was the transformation of the Arab/Islamic world. Moreover, the use of force, which can lead to the achievement of important security objectives, has always been an important aspect of American power. With the war on terrorism, the Bush administration behaved according to this principle.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Mazarr, 'Bush', 505-511.

<sup>35</sup> David H. Dunn, 'Myths, motivations and misunderestimations: the Bush administration and Iraq', *International Affairs* 79:2 (2003) 279-281.

<sup>36</sup> American exceptionalism refers to the view that the America is superior to other nations, because it has exceptional principles, based on freedom, equality, individualism and liberalism. See: Martin S. Lipset, *American exceptionalism: a double-edged sword* (New York 1997) 17-19. Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) was the first writer to describe America as exceptional, he stated: '[...] The position of the Americans is therefore quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no other democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one.' See: Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York 2000) 548.

<sup>37</sup> Dunn, 'The Bush administration and Iraq', 284.

<sup>38</sup> Dunn, 'The Bush administration and Iraq', 290-293.



### **2.3.4 Robert Jervis: Maximizing Power**

The political scientist Robert Jervis (2003) has a different view than Leffler, Dunn, and Mazarr. He emphasizes the offensive character of the Bush doctrine and suggests that the ultimate objective of the Bush administration was not security or spreading democracy and liberalism, but the maximization of power. Jervis views the invasion of Iraq as a manifestation of the Bush doctrine. He points out that before September 11 American leadership, and especially its use of force, focused on defending traditional crucial interests. However, after September 11 the Bush administration developed an extensive program that called 'for something very much like an empire.'<sup>39</sup> Jervis emphasizes that terrorism made it possible for the United States to assert its dominance in the international arena. He identifies three other factors that made American domination under the Bush administration possible. First, there was not a single state that could pose a threat to the United States. Second, the expansion of power led to the expansion of interests, which made it possible for the United States to pursue more than just primary objectives. Third, the increase of American power brought with it new threats, which caused the United States to worry about the future. Therefore the United States waged preventive wars against terrorism. Jervis argues that the United was not a status-quo power under the Bush administration. The combination of power, fear, and opportunity led the administration to focus on reforming world politics. Remarkably, Jervis argues that the Bush administration did not care about the interests of other states in the world. Jervis emphasizes that the administration used its power for its own political, economic, and social interests. According to Jervis, in President Bush's world, besides military allies, there was little place for other states, even democracies.<sup>40</sup>

### **2.3.5 Norman Mailer: Total World Domination**

According to the journalist Norman Mailer (2003), the idea behind the war in Iraq was to have a huge military presence in the Middle East as a base to take over the rest of the world. Mailer argues that it will not take long before America becomes a twenty-first century embodiment of the Roman Empire. He views neoconservatism as the main source of the aggressive behaviour of the Bush administration, and emphasizes that the Bush administration was highly patriotic and ignored international rules to achieve its selfish objectives. According to Mailer, the Bush administration used 'flag-conservatism', meaning the manipulation of the public with patriotism, to convince the American public of the evilness of Saddam and Iraq. When invading Iraq, President Bush ignored evidence which proved that Iraq did not pose a potential threat to the United States. Therefore, the Bush administration itself was a threat to democracy and freedom. Mailer argues that oil was partly the reason why America invaded Iraq, but the underlying motive was empire building.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Robert Jervis, 'Understanding the Bush doctrine', *Political Science Quarterly* 118:3 (2003) 365.

<sup>40</sup> Jervis, 'The Bush doctrine', 366, 380-388.

<sup>41</sup> Norman Mailer, *Why are we at war?* (New York 2003) 52-58.

### **2.3.6 Neta Crawford: Imperial Agenda**

The political scientist Neta C. Crawford (2004) emphasizes that the events of September 11 altered the global environment. For the Bush administration, global empire became the ultimate goal, because changes in technology and the organization of war presented great dangers for American security. This led to a strategy focused on controlling everything, everywhere, all the time. Neta Crawford argues that five elements defined this hegemonic strategy: American military primacy, Rumsfeld's project to transform defense policy and the military, preventive war, assertive counter-proliferation programmes, and democratization a way to consolidate and promote American influence and security.<sup>42</sup> Foreign policy under the Bush administration was characterized by the moral conviction and global mission of the post-Cold War period with a new sense of fear and urgency. Crawford argues that everything has changed, because the United States has to deal with new enemies which use aggressive strategies that are difficult to defend in a world characterized by globalization. Yet nothing has changed, because the United States has long had an expansive view of its national and global interests, and has long pursued economic and military dominance. Crawford states that the Bush administration used September 11 to carry out an imperial agenda; she states that 'the logic of the post-Cold War, post-9/11 world has put the United States on the road to Pax Americana.'<sup>43</sup>

### **2.3.7 Niall Ferguson: An Empire in Denial**

Like Jervis, Mailer, and Crawford, the historian Niall Ferguson (2004) considers the United States an empire. However, Ferguson argues that the United States is not an empire since a certain period or whatsoever, but that it has always been an empire, given the fact that the United States would expand was decided virtually from its foundation. Ferguson asserts that there were no more self-confident imperialists than the Founding Fathers. Furthermore, he argues that the 9/11 attacks were the result of established historical trends, namely the inconsistency of American policy in the Middle East, the increasing dependence of Western economies on oil from the Persian Gulf and the adoption and development of terrorism as a tactic by Arabs hostile to the United States and its allies. 9/11 caused a defensive administration to act offensively. After the terrorist attacks the United States started a military campaign against real, suspected or even potential supporters of terrorism.<sup>44</sup> Ferguson claims that the United States is an empire in denial. He points out that members of the Bush administration have always insisted that the United States does not seek a territorial empire and never has been imperialist. For example, during his first campaign, Bush stated that 'America has never been an empire and it may be the only great power in history that had the chance to become an empire but refused, because it preferred greatness to power, and justice to glory.'<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Neta C. Crawford, 'The road to global empire: the logic of U.S. foreign policy after 9/11', *Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs* 48:4 (2004) 685-686, 693.

<sup>43</sup> Crawford, 'Global empire', 702-703.

<sup>44</sup> Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: the price of America's empire* (New York 2004) 26-27, 33-34.

<sup>45</sup> Ferguson, *Colossus*, 6-7.

### **2.3.8 Jim Lobe: Neoconservative Command**

The journalist Jim Lobe (2005) points out that on September 20, 2001, nine days after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) arranged a general program for President Bush's war on terrorism.<sup>46</sup> In addition to military action against the Taliban in Afghanistan, PNAC called for the political transformation of Iraq 'even if evidence does not link Iraq directly to the attack', and 'appropriate measures of retaliation' against Iran and Syria if they continued to support Hezbollah.<sup>47</sup> Supported by prominent neoconservatives, PNAC also proposed stopping aid for the Palestinian Authority unless it immediately stopped attacks against Israel and a 'large increase' in defense spending in order to triumph in the war against terrorism. PNAC also urged America to accelerate plans to remove Saddam Hussein from power.<sup>48</sup>

Lobe believes that neoconservatives like Richard Perle and David Frum provided the Bush administration with a strategy to transform the Middle East. They pushed the Bush administration to bring down Saddam Hussein and to embrace Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Lobe suggests that when the United States invaded Iraq, it did not act out of security considerations. The Bush administration was more ambitious. It did not only focus on eliminating (potential) enemies but also on increasing power by dominating a complete region. American interference with the politics of several states in the Middle East, including Iran, proves this argument.<sup>49</sup>

### **2.3.9 Daniel Lieberfeld: Combination of Perspectives**

The international relations scholar Daniel Lieberfeld (2005) examines the American invasion of Iraq from different analytic perspectives, namely realism, liberalism, elite interests, ideological influences, and personal and social psychology. He offers a simple description of each perspective. Lieberfeld explains that realism emphasizes motives related to national security, power, and resources. Liberalism stresses that wars are the result of differences between democracies and non-democracies. Perspectives of elite interests emphasize elites' political, bureaucratic and financial motivations for war. Ideological perspectives emphasize that ideologies, beliefs, and worldviews cause war. Theories of personal and social psychology emphasize the attitudes and perspectives of the individuals and groups involved in wars.<sup>50</sup> Lieberfeld explains that from a realist perspective, the invasion of Iraq was as a rational means for America to display its power to allies and enemies, and to avoid the image of post-9/11 decline. Moreover, it was aimed at preventing Iraq from cooperating with anti-American

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<sup>46</sup> The Project for the New American Century (PNAC) was an American policy institute that existed from early 1997 to 2006. It was co-founded as a non-profit educational organization by neoconservatives William Kristol and Robert Kagan. The PNAC's main objective was 'to promote American global leadership and strive to rally support for a vigorous and principled policy of American international involvement and to stimulate useful public debate on foreign and defense policy and America's role in the world', because 'American leadership is good both for America and for the world' and 'such leadership requires military strength, diplomatic energy and commitment to moral principle.' See: <http://www.newamericancentury.org> [Accessed 23-01-2011].

<sup>47</sup> Jim Lobe, 'The Bush Team Reloaded', *Middle East Report* 234:8 (2005) 10.

<sup>48</sup> Lobe, 'The Bush Team', 10-11.

<sup>49</sup> Lobe, 'The Bush Team', 11-14.

<sup>50</sup> Daniel Lieberfeld, 'Theories of conflict and the Iraq war', *International Journal of Peace Studies* 10:2 (2005) 1-2.

terrorist organizations, and from using weapons of mass destruction and oil resources to threaten America. Another realist motive for the attack on Iraq would be to increase the security of Israel.<sup>51</sup> Liberalism assumes that democracy causes more peace, and that democracies become more aggressive when they are threatened by non-democracies. According to this view, the United States invaded Iraq, because bringing democracy and human rights to Iraq would increase American security and that of other democracies. Moreover, the invasion was a result of the Bush administration's fear that Iraq would use weapons of mass destruction against the United States or its allies. From the perspective of elite interests, the Bush administration invaded Iraq to form a good domestic political atmosphere that war stimulated. Moreover, war would deflect public, media, and opposition attention from the Bush administration's wrong analysis of terrorist threats and its failure to prevent the September 11 attacks. War would also divert attention from the high defense budget of the Bush administration, its inability to find Osama Bin Laden, and its inability to prevent the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan.<sup>52</sup>

From the ideological perspective, the American invasion of Iraq was the result of neoconservative views which emphasize the effectiveness of unilateralist action, orientalist ideas about Middle Eastern peoples, and American nationalism. According to personal and social psychology, the invasion of Iraq was about President Bush's endeavour to make his daddy proud, family revenge against Saddam Hussein, Bush's failure to adapt to a non-state enemy, impulsive choice for Cold War strategies, and lack of knowledge about the Middle East. Lieberfeld concludes that each analytic perspective can explain important aspects of the Iraq invasion.<sup>53</sup>

### **2.3.10 Mohammed Nuruzzaman: Neoconservative Realism**

The international relations scholar Mohammed Nuruzzaman (2006) asserts that the Bush administration's security strategy defined threat as the combination of extremism and technology. In the words of President Bush: 'The gravest danger to freedom lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. The spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology, when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations. Our enemies have declared this very intention, and have been caught seeking these terrible weapons.'<sup>54</sup> The new definition of threat was a serious break from the post-war (Second World War) notion of threat that described security as the protection of a state to external threats. Hostile states were the main sources of threats. In contrast, the new definition distinguished three sources of threat agents: (1) terrorist organizations capable of attacking anywhere in the world; (2) weak states that shelter terrorist organizations; and (3) rogue states that are determined to acquire weapons of mass destruction. While the first two threat agents referred to Al-Qaeda and Afghanistan, the third threat

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<sup>51</sup> Lieberfeld, 'Theories of conflict', 3-5.

<sup>52</sup> Lieberfeld, 'Theories of conflict', 6-10.

<sup>53</sup> Lieberfeld, 'Theories of conflict', 12-16.

<sup>54</sup> Mohammed Nuruzzaman, 'Beyond the realist theories: neo-conservative realism and the American invasion of Iraq', *International Studies Perspectives* 7:3 (2006) 244-245.

agent explicitly referred to Iraq. Another characteristic of the Bush administration's security strategy was its rejection of the Cold War concepts of deterrence and containment. The Bush administration emphasized that: 'In the cold war we faced a generally status-quo, risk-averse adversary. But deterrence based only on threat of retaliation is less likely to work against leaders of rogue states more willing to take risks, gambling with the lives of their own people, and the wealth of their nations.'<sup>55</sup>

Nuruzzaman argues that 'neoconservative realism' offers the best explanation for America's war against Al-Qaeda, and the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. He emphasizes that neoconservative realism should be understood as an outgrowth of the Bush administration's foreign policy strategy, rather than a universal theory of state behaviour. While other forms of realism claim to offer general explanations for state behaviour, the framework of neoconservative realism aims to explain the promotion of national interests by a specific state: America. Nuruzzaman explains the five main principles of neoconservative realism, which all apply to the Bush administration. First, neoconservative realism focuses on strengthening American defense in order to support American global leadership. Second, it focuses on increasing military power and the spread of American principles and institutions. Third, it focuses on expanding the empire of independence and freedom, democracy, and liberalism, if necessary by military force. Fourth, it focuses on eliminating regimes or organizations hostile to American values and interests. Fifth, neoconservative realism is driven by unilateralism, and does not promote multilateralism.<sup>56</sup>

### **2.3.11 Carlos Yordan: Offensive Realism**

The political scientist Carlos L. Yordan (2006) argues that the American invasion of Iraq was consistent with John J. Mearsheimer's offensive realism. Yordan emphasizes that offensive realism states that great powers pursue global hegemony as a means to increase security, and argues that American foreign policy after 9/11 was motivated by an ambition to expand American hegemony. According to Yordan, the objective of the war in Iraq was to re-establish American authority and influence in the Middle East, and restructure the world according to American interests and ideals. The Bush administration ignored international rules and the interests of other states to pursue its individual objectives. Furthermore, Yordan argues that although 9/11 influenced the administration's vision of the world, its foreign policy strategy was mainly a reaction to that of the Clinton administration. The administration believed that Clinton's policies had damaged America's international position. Even before 9/11, President Bush's advisors showed their preference for unilateral action, their will to use American power to transform the world according to American interests, and eliminate potential challengers to America. Yordan emphasizes that the Bush administration transformed American foreign policy by abandoning post-Cold War strategies focused on maintaining the status-quo.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Nuruzzaman, 'The American invasion of Iraq', 245.

<sup>56</sup> Nuruzzaman, 'The American invasion of Iraq', 240, 248-252.

<sup>57</sup> Carlos L. Yordan, 'America's quest for global hegemony: offensive realism, the Bush doctrine, and the 2003 Iraq War', *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* 53:2 (2006) 1-3.

The support of the American people, a favourable international situation, and the rapid victory over the Taliban in Afghanistan led the Bush administration to expand its war objectives. The first objective of the war on terrorism was to overthrow the Taliban regime and replace it with a pro-American administration. The second objective was the elimination of al-Qaeda. Although these two objectives served as revenge for September 11, the Bush administration was aiming to increase its influence in the Middle East. President Bush's advisors even advocated the removal of the Saddam Hussein regime from Iraq as a first measure to increase American influence in the Middle East. Yordan points out that some scholars explain this as a quest for global empire. However, he emphasizes that the Bush administration's goals were not imperial, but revisionist. As a revisionist state, the United States wanted to increase security by expanding power to regions where it had only little or no influence. The Bush doctrine provided the model for this strategy of domination.<sup>58</sup>

### **2.3.12 Michael Boyle: Global Anti-Terror Government**

The international relations scholar Michael J. Boyle (2008) argues that the launch of a global war against terrorism after September 11 formed the greatest reorganization of America's foreign policy strategy since the Second World War. Boyle emphasizes that September 11 led to a profound change in American grand strategy, because it reorganized the alliance system that had been the basis of American foreign policy since 1945 and made the elimination of terrorism the primary objective of American power.<sup>59</sup> However, according to Boyle America's war on terrorism has not been very effective. Boyle states that there are two categories of states which make the war against terrorism more difficult. First, rogue states such as Iran, Syria, and North Korea, which occasionally support terrorist organizations as a strategy of resistance. Second, important allies such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Egypt, which do not put full effort in hunting terrorists within their state limits. The strategy of the Bush administration focused on putting heavy pressure on rogue states supporting terrorist organizations, and only soft pressure on ally states to carry out their anti-terror policies. The results were unimpressive. The Bush administration only received little cooperation from allies and pushed Iran and North Korea to pursue aggressive strategies against the United States. Boyle argues that a focus on closer cooperation with states such as Egypt, rather than pressuring rogue states, would have led to better results.<sup>60</sup> Boyle asserts that terrorism is a global problem and therefore requires a global strategy. Boyle proposes the formation of an anti-terror global government, which would greatly decrease terrorism, and points out that there are two ways to do this. First, such a government could be formed by bilateral and multilateral agreements that promote anti-terror cooperation. The United States could base its grand strategy on realizing a kind of international contract against terrorism and connect it to common rules and procedures. Second, a global anti-terror government could be constructed by developing international connections between the American

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<sup>58</sup> Yordan, 'Offensive realism', 18-21.

<sup>59</sup> Michael J. Boyle, 'The war on terror in American grand strategy', *International Affairs* 84:2 (2008) 191.

<sup>60</sup> Boyle, 'The war on terror', 199-200.

Counterterrorist Intelligence Centers (CTICS) and other anti-terror organizations. Boyle argues that a global anti-terror government would have many advantages for the United States. For example, it would make the support of terrorism much more difficult, and it would make it more costly for states such as North Korea to oppose anti-terror cooperation.<sup>61</sup>

### **2.3.13 Benjamin Miller: Offensive Liberalism**

The political scientist Benjamin Miller (2010) offers a model for explaining transformations in American grand strategy, which is based on a distinction between four perspectives on security: defensive and offensive realism, and defensive and offensive liberalism. He argues that although the four perspectives are recurrently present in the American policy community, the combination of two specific conditions, namely the division of power and the balance of threat, determines the dominant strategy. A lack of external threats promotes defensive strategies, while major external threats motivate offensive strategies. According to Lieberfeld, a shift in power after the Cold War led to a transformation from realist to liberal strategies. In the relatively non-violent world of the 1990s the main strategy was defensive liberalism, while the change in the balance of threat after 9/11 made offensive liberalism the dominant strategy.<sup>62</sup>

Miller claims that after 9/11 the increasing danger of terrorism disregarded defensive and offensive realism and defensive liberalism, because they were ineffective against terrorism. The focus of defensive realism on deterrence was ineffective against suicide bombers. Furthermore, the offensive realist strategy of preventive war was complicated by terrorist states' weapons of mass destruction, and even if weapons of mass destruction were destroyed, the terrorist regime would do anything to reproduce or reacquire new weapons of mass destruction. Finally, according to Miller defensive liberalism's promotion of mutual diplomacy to halt the spread of weapons of mass destruction was not effective against regimes that lied about their nuclear programs. So, neoconservatives promoted the strategy of offensive liberalism, which the Bush administration eventually adopted. This strategy focused on eliminating terrorist regimes, namely destroying their weapons of mass destruction, and more importantly, changing their ideology by transforming their political system (forced democratization). According to neoconservatives, the democratic transformation of the Middle East would guarantee American security and energy resources.<sup>63</sup> In short, according to Miller the shift in American grand strategy after 9/11 was the product of a change in the balance of threat. The shift in grand strategy only occurred when a new factor, a major security threat that developed after 9/11, supplemented American supremacy. Thus America's grand strategy was formed by the combination of two specific conditions: American dominance and the growing danger of Islamic terrorism.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Boyle, 'The war on terror', 203-204.

<sup>62</sup> Benjamin Miller, 'Explaining changes in U.S. grand strategy: 9/11, the rise of offensive liberalism, and the war in Iraq', *Security Studies* 19:1 (2010) 26-27.

<sup>63</sup> Miller, 'The rise of offensive liberalism', 52-56.

<sup>64</sup> Miller, 'The rise of offensive liberalism', 61.

## 2.4 Conclusion

The examined studies show that there are conflicting perspectives on key questions about the Bush era. The main issues on which scholars have different views concern the importance of the 9/11 attacks, and the aims of the Bush administration's national security and foreign policy strategy. Many scholars consider 9/11 a defining moment that altered the international order and transformed America's grand strategy. These scholars emphasize that as a result of the 9/11 attacks, America adopted a new foreign policy strategy which was based on unilateralism and pre-emption. America's new strategy ignored international agreements and the preferences and views of other states, and focused on acting against threats before they were fully formed. Hence the decision to launch a 'war on terrorism' was taken unilaterally by the United States, and the key elements of this offensive project were pre-emptive wars waged against terrorists organizations and rogue states, namely Iraq and Afghanistan, which supported and harboured these organizations. This is what the Bush administration claimed anyway. There are also many scholars who are more sceptical about the importance of 9/11. These scholars argue that 9/11 had no significant influence on the international order. Their main argument is that 9/11 did not change the rules and standards of international society, because the international community only combats specific terrorist organizations, such as Al-Qaeda. These organizations are driven by a radical form of Islam which is unappealing to most Muslims and therefore does not form a serious threat to the international order. Furthermore, within the group of scholars who are sceptical about the importance of 9/11, there are many who emphasize trends predating 9/11 which led to the alteration of the international order and America's foreign policy strategy. These scholars argue that America had used the strategy of pre-emption before 9/11 and that the principle of unilateralism had dominated America's foreign policy strategy in the twentieth century, especially during and after the end of the Cold War.

While conflicting views on the importance of the 9/11 attacks largely dominated scholarly debates about the Bush administration before the Iraq war, after the war contradictory perspectives on other subjects became more dominant. Post-Iraq invasion scholarly debates focus primarily on the aims of the Bush administration's foreign policy strategy, whereby some scholars apply international relations theories as a framework to explain the actions of the administration. The examined literature shows that some international relations theories have a higher explanatory power or credibility than others concerning the behaviour of the Bush administration. Most scholars assert that the foreign policy of the administration included realist elements to a large or lesser degree. Concerning the aims of the Bush administration's foreign policy strategy, one group of scholars emphasize security considerations. This group claims that America's the principal aim was to prevent catastrophes such as the 9/11 attacks. However, other scholars do not believe that terrorism formed a serious threat to America's national security. These scholars emphasize selfish reasons behind the Iraq war, such as controlling Iraqi oil and increasing America's influence in the Middle East, and assert that the Bush administration's primary aim was to maximize America's global power.



### **3. An Imminent Threat?**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The principal reason the Bush administration gave for going to war in March 2003 was that Iraq formed an imminent threat to the security of the United States. In fact, it was the only reason given by George W. Bush in his report to Congress on March 19, 2003, the day the war started. President Bush only spoke about protecting America against the terror of Saddam Hussein.<sup>65</sup> There wasn't even a hint or mention of any other motive for war. It was also the only reason given by Congress in its October 2002 joint resolution authorizing war. It was about national security and nothing else. The resolution stated: 'The President is authorized to use the armed forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate in order to defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq.'<sup>66</sup> It is essential to determine whether or not the Iraq war was really about defending the national security of the United States. If it indeed was, it would largely explain why America invaded Iraq. Therefore this chapter examines and evaluates the security argument. The key question is: Did the Bush administration truly believe that Iraq formed an imminent threat to the security of the United States, or did the administration ignore or manipulate the facts and mislead the American people, Congress and the United Nations Security Council? The security argument was based on two interrelated claims. Combined, the implications of these claims constituted an imminent threat to the security of United States. The key claims of the Bush administration were:

- Saddam Hussein had close ties with Al-Qaeda and was involved in the 9/11 attacks;
- He had chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction which he threatened to unleash or supply to terrorist organizations to unleash on America, and he was developing nuclear weapons.

This chapter aims to explain the Iraq war by assessing the principal reason given by the Bush administration for the war rather than uncovering reasons that were not advertised by the administration. The latter will be done in chapter 4. The first part reviews the administration's allegations about Iraq's links with Al-Qaeda and involvement in the 9/11 attacks. The second part analyzes the weapons of mass destruction case.

#### **3.2 The Al-Qaeda Connection**

Early in the morning of September 11, 2001, nineteen hijackers took control of four commercial airplanes headed to San Francisco and Los Angeles from Boston, Newark and Washington D.C. At 08:46, American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the World Trade Center's North Tower, followed by United Airlines Flight 175, which hit the South Tower at 9:03. At 9:37, American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon. A fourth flight, United Airlines Flight 93, crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania at 10:03. Immediately after the attacks the President assumed that Saddam had a hand in

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<sup>65</sup> CNN, 'Bush sends Iraq war letter to Congress', March 19, 2003.

<sup>66</sup> U.S. Congress, 'Resolution 114 authorizing the President of the United States to use the U.S. armed forces against Iraq' <http://usgovinfo.about.com/library/weekly/bliraqreshouse.htm> [Accessed 19-05-2011].

it. He made this assumption because Iraq had been an enemy of America for eleven years, and the only country in the world where America was engaged in ongoing combat operations. As a former pilot, the President was stunned by the apparent complexity of the operation and some of the piloting, especially Airlines Fligh77's high-speed dive into the Pentagon.<sup>67</sup>

Within hours after the attacks, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld directed General Richard Myers (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) to look for evidence to justify attacking both Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>68</sup> He also instructed Jim Haynes (a lawyer at the Pentagon) to talk to Paul Wolfowitz (Deputy Secretary of Defense) to get information establishing a link between Iraq and Al-Qaeda.<sup>69</sup>

In November 2009, Christopher Meyer (British ambassador to Washington from 1997 to 2003) told the committee of the Chilcot inquiry that no one in the Bush administration seemed to be interested in pursuing a strategy of containment against Iraq after the 9/11 attacks. He stated that on the day of the attacks, Condoleezza Rice (National Security Advisor) told him: 'We are just looking to see whether there could possibly be a connection with Saddam Hussein.'<sup>70</sup>

The day after the attacks the President ordered Richard Clarke, the chief counter-terrorism adviser in the National Security Council (NSC), to find Iraqi links to 9/11.<sup>71</sup> In his memoir, *Against All Enemies* (2004), Clarke (who resigned from the Bush administration in March 2003, three days after America invaded Iraq) revealed that President Bush told him: 'I know you have a lot to do and all but I want you, as soon as you can, to go back over everything, everything. See if Saddam did this. See if he's linked in any way.' Clarke responded by saying that 'Al-Qaeda did this.' The President, however, was not convinced and pressed Clarke to search for a link. He wanted to know about any piece of evidence proving Saddam's involvement in the attacks. Clarke assured the President to examine the question again, but added that the intelligence agencies had already repeatedly searched for state sponsorship for Al-Qaeda in the past and did not find any linkages to Iraq.<sup>72</sup>

In an interview for CBS's *60 minutes* in March 2004, Clarke stated that the entire conversation left him in absolutely no doubt that President Bush wanted him to come back with a report that said 'Iraq did this.' The President insisted on 'Iraq, Saddam, find out if there's a connection.' Clarke emphasized

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<sup>67</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission), *9/11 Commission Report* (Washington D.C. 2004) 1-14, 334. Available at: <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/index.htm>. The 9/11 Commission (2002-2004) was an independent commission, consisting of both Democratic and Republican members, created by congressional legislation 'to prepare a full and complete account of the circumstances surrounding the 9/11 attacks, including preparedness for and the immediate response to the attacks.' See: <http://www.9-11commission.gov> [Accessed 05-05-2011].

<sup>68</sup> 9/11 Commission, *Report*, 334.

<sup>69</sup> Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), Archive *The Iraq war: the U.S. prepares for conflict* (1997-2004). Access code: EBB 326 (Electronic Briefing Book no. 326). Document: 7. U.S. Department of Defense: Office of the Under Secretary for Policy, 'Notes from Stephen Cambone (Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy) [Donald Rumsfeld's comments]', September 11, 2001, 1 page.

<sup>70</sup> Julian Borger, 'Chilcot inquiry: Tony Blair decided on Iraq war a year before invasion', *The Guardian*, November 26, 2009. The Chilcot inquiry, also known as the Iraq inquiry, was a British public investigation into the United Kingdom's role in the Iraq war. The inquiry was announced in June 2008 by Prime Minister Gordon Brown. See: Richard Taylor, 'Tony Blair had way out of Iraq invasion', *The Guardian*, January 20, 2011.

<sup>71</sup> 9/11 Commission, *Report*, 334.

<sup>72</sup> Richard N. Clarke, *Against all enemies: inside America's war on terror* (London 2004) 32.

that the President made the point ‘in a very intimidating way.’ He accused the President of ignoring the threat from Al-Qaeda until after 9/11 and linking the terrorist group to Iraq without evidence. Clarke added: ‘I think the way he has responded to Al-Qaeda before 9/11, by doing nothing, and by what he has done after 9/11, has made us less safe.’<sup>73</sup> In another interview, for PBS’s *News Hour*, Clarke was asked whether it was all that surprising that the President wanted him to explore all possible perpetrators of the attacks. Clarke responded: ‘It would have been irresponsible for the President not to come to me and say, Richard, I don’t want you to assume it was Al-Qaeda. I’d like you to look at every possibility to see if maybe it was Al-Qaeda with somebody else, in a very calm way, with all possibilities open. That’s not what happened.’<sup>74</sup>

Amidst all the controversy surrounding his allegations, Clarke testified for twenty hours before the House Senate Joint Inquiry Committee and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission) in closed hearings. In the public hearing, held on March 24, 2004 before the 9/11 Commission, Clarke repeated the points he made in his memoir and the interviews. He sharply criticized the Bush administration’s attitude toward Al-Qaeda and counter-terrorism before the 9/11 attacks, and the decision to invade Iraq. According to Clarke, attacking Iraq was illogical considering the fact that it was not Iraq but Afghanistan that formed the hotbed of terrorism and the home base of Al-Qaeda. He stated: ‘As the Clinton Administration came to an end, three attacks on the U.S. had been definitively tied to Al-Qaeda. [...] On January 24, 2001 I requested in writing an urgent meeting of the NSC to address the Al-Qaeda threat. That meeting took place on September 4, 2001. [...] There were many who found the prospect of significant Al-Qaeda attacks remote. [...] There have been more major Al-Qaeda related attacks globally in the thirty months since 9/11, than there were in the thirty months preceding it. Hostility toward America in the Islamic world has increased since 9/11, largely as a result of the invasion and occupation of Iraq.’<sup>75</sup>

George Tenet (Director of the Central Intelligence Agency from 1997 to 2004) revealed in his memoir, *At the Center of the Storm* (2007), that during a White House meeting a few days after 9/11, a Middle East intelligence expert analyst was pressed for evidence of Iraqi links to Al-Qaeda and 9/11, after being told that the President wanted to remove Saddam. The analyst’s response was: ‘If you want to go after that son of a bitch to settle old scores, be my guest, but don’t tell us he is connected to 9/11 or to terrorism because there is no evidence to support that. You will have to have a better reason.’<sup>76</sup> This claim was fully confirmed by an intelligence update report prepared by Clarke and his staff, titled ‘Survey of Intelligence Information on Any Iraqi Involvement in the September 11 Attacks’, issued on September 18, 2001. The report stated that there was no evidence proving that Saddam ‘had either

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<sup>73</sup> Richard N. Clarke, ‘Clarke’s take on terror’ <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=608083n> (interview for CBS’s *60 minutes*) [Accessed 03-05-2011].

<sup>74</sup> Romesh Ratnesar, ‘Richard Clarke, at war with himself’, *Time*, March 25, 2004.

<sup>75</sup> Richard N. Clarke, ‘Testimony before the 9/11 Commission’ <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/hearings/hearing8/clarkstatement.pdf> [Accessed 05-05-2011].

<sup>76</sup> George Tenet and Bill Harlow, *At the center of the storm: my years at the CIA* (New York 2007) 307.

planned or perpetrated' the 9/11 attacks. The report also stated that the case for links between Iraq and Al-Qaeda was weak. There was no confirmed reporting of Saddam cooperating with Osama Bin Laden on unconventional weapons, and the two were ideologically poles apart, as Bin Laden despised the secularism of Saddam's regime.<sup>77</sup> According to Clarke, the first draft of the report was rejected by the National Security Council Front Office, because it did not find a link between Iraq and Al-Qaeda.<sup>78</sup>

Clarke's findings were verified three days later. On September 21, 2001, the President was told in a top secret briefing (President's Daily Brief, a thirty to forty-five minute national security briefing), that the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) had found no evidence linking Iraq to the 9/11 attacks. There was also no credible evidence of any cooperative links between Iraq and Al-Qaeda.<sup>79</sup> This information was leaked by current and former White House officials with firsthand knowledge of the matter, and confirmed by government records. Currently, the content of the September 21 President's Daily Brief is still highly classified information. The Bush administration refused to provide reports of the briefing to the Senate and House intelligence committees, even on a classified basis, and the only thing the administration has said about the September 21 briefing is that it took place. According to government records and sources, during the briefing President Bush was told that the only credible reports of contacts between Iraq and Al-Qaeda involved efforts by Saddam to spy on the terrorist organization. Saddam considered Al-Qaeda and other radical Islamist terrorist organizations a potential threat to his regime. According to analysts, Saddam had even considered to break into the ranks of Al-Qaeda with Iraqi spies to learn more about its internal structure and functioning. A former high-level official in the Bush administration stated: 'What the President was told on September 21 was consistent with everything he has been told since, that the evidence was just not there.'<sup>80</sup>

One would expect that after being informed about all this information, officials in Washington would have refrained from making any public statements suggesting that Saddam had links with Al-Qaeda or that he had a hand in the 9/11 attacks. Apparently the Bush administration ignored the conclusions of the Clarke Report and the U.S Intelligence Community's assessments. President Bush and his top officials linked Iraq and Al-Qaeda in newspapers, on talk shows, and in speeches. The most detailed case was made by Colin Powell (Secretary of State) in his address to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on February 5, 2003.<sup>81</sup> Dick Cheney (Vice President) frequently made direct links between Iraq and 9/11. In a December 2001 interview for NBC's *Meet the Press*, he stated that it was 'pretty well confirmed' that the main planner of the attack, Mohamed Atta, had met with a high-ranking Iraqi intelligence official in April 2001 in Prague, even though that theory was already largely

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<sup>77</sup> 9/11 Commission, *Report*, 334.

<sup>78</sup> 9/11 Commission, *Report*, 559.

<sup>79</sup> The U.S. Intelligence Community is a coalition of seventeen 'agencies and organizations that work both independently and collaboratively to gather the intelligence necessary to conduct foreign relations and national security activities', including the National Security Agency (NSA) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). See: <http://www.intelligence.gov/about-the-intelligence-community> [Accessed 19-05-2011].

<sup>80</sup> Murray Waas, 'Key Bush intelligence briefing kept from Hill Panel', *National Journal*, November 22, 2005.

<sup>81</sup> Stephen F. Hayes, 'Saddam's Al-Qaeda connection', *The Weekly Standard*, September 1, 2003.

discredited. In March 2002, Cheney took the allegation one step further and stated that Atta ‘in fact’ had met with an Iraqi official. In October 2003 Cheney argued that Iraq was part of ‘the geographic base of the terrorists who have had us under assault for many years, but most especially on 9/11.’<sup>82</sup>

Other officials in Washington made similar allegations. Richard Perle (Chairman of the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee), for instance, firmly argued that Iraq was involved in the 9/11 attacks, calling the evidence ‘overwhelming.’ The majority of the American people actually believed this to be true. A September 2003 *Washington Post* poll showed that sixty-nine percent of Americans believed that Saddam was personally involved in the 9/11 attacks. ‘You couldn’t distinguish between Al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein’, argued the political analyst Donna Brazile. She added: ‘Every member of the administration did the drumbeat. My mother said if you repeat a lie long enough, it becomes a gospel truth. This one became a gospel hit.’<sup>83</sup>

The President himself linked Al-Qaeda to Saddam in almost every speech about Iraq. According to President Bush, there was ‘no question that Saddam had Al-Qaeda ties.’<sup>84</sup> ‘You can’t distinguish between Al-Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror’, the President said on September 25, 2002.<sup>85</sup> He argued that the presence of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, an associate of Bin Laden, in Iraq before the war, was evidence of a link.<sup>86</sup> Although President Bush never directly stated that Saddam was responsible for the 9/11 attacks, he frequently compared Iraq and Al-Qaeda in ways that suggested a connection. In a March 2003 speech about Iraq’s ‘weapons of terror’, the President said: ‘If the world fails to confront the threat posed by the Iraqi regime, refusing to use force, even as a last resort, free nations would assume immense and unacceptable risks. The 9/11 attacks showed what the enemies of America did with four airplanes. We will not wait to see what terrorists or terrorist states could do with weapons of mass destruction.’<sup>87</sup> In a May 2003 speech, announcing the end of major combat operations in Iraq, President Bush stated: ‘The battle of Iraq is one victory in a war on terror that began on September 11, 2001. [...] The liberation of Iraq is a crucial advance in the campaign against terror. We’ve removed an ally of Al-Qaeda, and cut off a source of terrorist funding. [...] We have not forgotten the victims of September 11. [...] With those attacks, the terrorists and their supporters declared war on the United States. And war is what they got.’<sup>88</sup>

Six months after the start of the Iraq war, the President set the record straight. Although still maintaining that Saddam had ties with Al-Qaeda, the President stated on September 18, 2003, that Saddam was not involved in the 9/11 attacks.<sup>89</sup> Soon, the President’s officials followed suit. But for

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<sup>82</sup> Glenn Kessler, ‘Misleading assertions cover Iraq war’, *The Washington Post*, October 6, 2004.

<sup>83</sup> Dana Milbank, ‘Hussein link to 9/11 lingers in many minds’, *The Washington Post*, September 6, 2003.

<sup>84</sup> Oliver Burkeman, ‘Iraq dumped WMD years ago, Blix says’, *The Guardian*, September 18, 2003.

<sup>85</sup> Daniel Benjamin, ‘Saddam Hussein and Al-Qaeda are not allies’, *The New York Times*, September 30, 2002.

<sup>86</sup> CNN, ‘Website links Al-Zarqawi to Iraq oil attacks’, April 26, 2004.

<sup>87</sup> George W. Bush, ‘President George Bush discusses Iraq in national press conference’ <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030306-8.html> [Accessed 07-05-2011].

<sup>88</sup> George W. Bush, ‘President Bush announces major combat operations in Iraq have ended’ <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/05/20030501-15.html> [Accessed 07-05-2011].

<sup>89</sup> Steve Holland, ‘Bush distances from Cheney on Saddam-9/11 link’, *Reuters*, September 18, 2003.

Cheney, it took a while before he admitted that there was no link between Iraq and the 9/11 attacks. 'We've never been able to confirm any connection between Iraq and 9/11', said Cheney in 2006.<sup>90</sup>

The conclusions of three analysis reports on pre-war intelligence are striking. In June 2004, the 9/11 commission concluded the following in its final report: 'Meetings between Iraqi officials and Bin Laden or his aides may have occurred in 1999. [...] But to date we have seen no evidence that these or the earlier contacts ever developed into a collaborative operational relationship. Nor have we seen evidence indicating that Iraq cooperated with Al-Qaeda in developing or carrying out any attacks against the United States.'<sup>91</sup> Regarding the alleged April meeting in Prague, the commission argued that such a meeting never occurred.<sup>92</sup>

In July 2004 the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) released a report on the U.S. Intelligence Community's assessments in the months before the Iraq invasion, titled 'Intelligence and Analysis on Iraq: Issues for the Intelligence Community.' The report was prepared by a group of expert analysts led by Richard Kerr, a former Deputy Director of Central Intelligence. According to the report, intelligence analysts were under constant pressure to find 'links between Saddam and Al-Qaeda', which caused them to take a 'purposely aggressive approach in conducting exhaustive and repetitive searches for such links.' No such links were ever found, however, and 'the Intelligence Community remained firm in its assessment that no operational or collaborative relationship existed.'<sup>93</sup>

A 2006 U.S. Senate report, prepared by the Senate's Intelligence Committee (SIC), concluded that the CIA had no evidence of a formal relationship between Iraqi authorities and Al-Qaeda. According to the report, Iraq 'did not have a relationship, harbor or turn a blind eye' toward Al-Qaeda associates. The report emphasized that the Iraqi regime had repeatedly rejected Al-Qaeda requests for meetings. Moreover, it pointed out that there was an ideological gap between Saddam and Bin Laden, and that 'Saddam Hussein was distrustful of Al-Qaeda and viewed Islamic extremists as a threat to his regime, refusing all requests from Al-Qaeda to provide material or operational support.'<sup>94</sup>

After 9/11, President Bush and his acquaintances deliberately ignored intelligence assessments and repeatedly made public statements in which they linked Iraq to Al-Qaeda and the 9/11 attacks. Whether it was a case of stretching the truth or cherry-picking information, fact is that the President and his officials flat-out lied when they said the things they did.

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<sup>90</sup> Dick Cheney, 'Cheney admits no Iraq-9/11 connection' <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWdq7hg4dLU> (interview for NBC's *Meet the Press*) [Accessed 18-05-2011].

<sup>91</sup> 9/11 Commission, *Report*, 66.

<sup>92</sup> 9/11 Commission, *Report*, 228-229.

<sup>93</sup> Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), Archive *White House ignored CIA warnings on Iraq (2002-2004)*. Access code: none. U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 'CIA report on Iraq', July 29, 2004, page 11.

<sup>94</sup> BBC 'Saddam had no link to Al-Qaeda', September 9, 2006.

### 3.3 Weapons of Mass Destruction

In his speech at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in New York on June 1, 2002, President Bush offered a new definition of threat, and he indicated that America would pursue a different path than before concerning the use of force. He did this with the following words: ‘The gravest danger to freedom lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations. Our enemies have declared this very intention, and have been caught seeking these terrible weapons. They want the capability to blackmail us, or to harm us, or to harm our friends, and we will oppose them with all our power.’<sup>95</sup>

The new American strategy to deal with these threats was explained in detail in the Bush administration’s *National Security Strategy* (NSS), the Bush doctrine, issued in September 2002.<sup>96</sup> The military policy of the strategy was based on four principles: assure, dissuade, deter, defeat. Assure allies and friends, dissuade potential military competition, deter threats, and decisively defeat enemies if deterrence fails.<sup>97</sup> The emphasis was on defeat because the Bush administration believed that the collapse of the Soviet Union had created a fundamentally different international security environment. An environment terrorized by enemies impervious to strategies of deterrence and containment. According to the Bush administration, the only effective strategy to deal with these enemies was preemptive action (acting against emerging threats ‘before they are fully formed’) because of the immediacy of threats in the twenty-first century, the inability to dissuade potential aggressors, and the enormity of damage that America’s enemies could inflict with their destructive weapons.<sup>98</sup> The Bush administration distinguished between three categories of threat agents: terrorist organizations capable of attacking anywhere in the world, weak states that harbor terrorist organizations, and rogue states that have acquired weapons of mass destruction or are determined to do so. According to the Bush administration, North Korea belonged to the third category, while countries like Iraq and Iran belonged not only to the third but also to the second category. As mentioned above, concerning Iraq two key claims were that Saddam had chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, and that he was developing nuclear weapons.<sup>99</sup>

Before proceeding to examine and evaluate the weapons of mass destruction case, it is useful to consider how the security argument would look like if Saddam actually had weapons of mass destruction, in order to test the credibility of the argument. What would be the chances of Saddam using those weapons? Although you can never be sure about the intentions of a brutal tyrant like Saddam, it is not likely that he would have used his weapons against America or even Israel because

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<sup>95</sup> George W. Bush, ‘President Bush delivers graduation speech at West Point’ <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html> [Accessed 10-04-2011].

<sup>96</sup> John L. Gaddis, ‘A grand strategy of transformation’, *Foreign Policy* 133 (2002) 50.

<sup>97</sup> The Bush administration, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington D.C. 2002) 29. Available at: [www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nss/nss\\_sep2002.pdf](http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nss/nss_sep2002.pdf) [Accessed 10-04-2011].

<sup>98</sup> Bush, *NSS 2002*, 13-15.

<sup>99</sup> Bush, *NSS 2002*, 5-7, 14.

that would be suicide.<sup>100</sup> The best chances for him to triumph his feelings of hate would be to supply his destructive weapons to terrorist organizations. But as proven above, there actually was no connection between Iraq and Al-Qaeda (Saddam and Bin Laden were in fact hostile to each other), and Saddam certainly had no hand in the 9/11 attacks. More importantly, the Bush administration was well aware of this. The inexistence of these links makes the security argument hard to grasp and raises many questions. If Saddam had no links with Al-Qaeda, to which terrorist organization or organizations could he possibly supply weapons of mass destruction? Which terrorist organizations did Saddam have links with? Besides Al-Qaeda, how many terrorist organizations are there in the world that could even deploy weapons of mass destruction?

No matter how you look at it, the security argument doesn't quite add up. However, although the fact that Iraq had no links with Al-Qaeda partly discredits the security argument; if the Bush administration truly believed that Iraq had chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction and was developing nuclear weapons, the security argument would still be fairly convincing. So, the question is: Did the Bush administration truly believe that Saddam Hussein had chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, and that he was developing nuclear weapons?

In March 2002 President Bush and National Security Advisor Rice met with three American senators to discuss how to deal with Iraq. The President was neither interested in a United Nations (UN) coalition nor in coalition with America's allies in the Middle East. According to a state official, who was present at the meeting, the President waved his hand in a dismissive way, and summarized his Iraq policy with a short phrase: 'Fuck Saddam. We're taking him out.'<sup>101</sup> This shows how insistent Bush was about attacking Iraq. According to the President and his officials, this insistency stemmed from the imminent threat that Iraq formed to the United States. This is not an argument that blew over after a while. Long after he left office, Bush still maintained that the Iraq war was about national security. The same goes for his former officials. In an interview for CBS's *60 minutes* in 2008, Douglas Feith (Under Secretary of Defense for Policy from 2001 to 2005) defended the decision-making that led to the invasion of Iraq and stated: 'The President decided that the threats from the Saddam regime were so great that if we had left him in power, we would be fighting him down the road at a time and place of his choosing.' Remarkably, in the same interview Feith also claimed that 'nobody in the Bush administration has ever claimed that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction.'<sup>102</sup>

On August 26, 2002, in a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vice President Cheney stated: 'There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us. And there is no doubt that

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<sup>100</sup> Saddam Hussein was the architect of the 1987-1988 Al-Anfal campaign against the Kurds, a massacre that included the use of mustard gas. According to Saddam's prosecutors, the campaign claimed 182,000 victims. See: Amit R. Paley, 'As genocide trial begins, Hussein is again defiant', *The Washington Post*, August 22, 2006.

<sup>101</sup> Mark Thompson, Eric Roston, Mitch Frank, James Carney (et al.), 'First stop, Iraq', *Time*, March 31, 2003.

<sup>102</sup> Douglas Feith, 'The path to war' <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=4235331n> (interview for CBS's *60 minutes*) [Accessed 07-05-2011].



his aggressive regional ambitions will lead him into future confrontations with his neighbours, confrontations that will involve both the weapons he has today, and the ones he will continue to develop with his oil wealth.<sup>103</sup> On September 8, 2002, in an interview for CNN, National Security Advisor Rice said: ‘We do know that he is actively pursuing a nuclear weapon. We do know that there have been shipments of high-quality aluminum tools that are only really suited for nuclear weapons programs. [...] We don’t want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud.’<sup>104</sup> On September 12, 2002, in an address to the United Nations General Assembly, President Bush stated: ‘Saddam Hussein continues to develop weapons of mass destruction. The first time we may be completely certain he has weapons of mass destruction is when, God forbid us, he uses one [...] Iraq presents a grave and gathering danger.’<sup>105</sup> On September 18, 2002, in his testimony before the House Armed Service Committee, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld stated: ‘We do know that the Iraqi regime has chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction.’<sup>106</sup> On September 19, 2002, in his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Rumsfeld argued: ‘No terrorist state poses a greater or more immediate threat to the security of our people than the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq.’<sup>107</sup> On October 7, 2002, from the Union Terminal in Cincinnati, Ohio, President Bush stated: ‘Saddam Hussein is a threat to peace and must disarm. The Iraqi dictator must not be permitted to threaten America and the world with horrible poisons and diseases and atomic weapons. [...] Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disperse chemical or biological weapons across broad areas. [...] Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof, the smoking gun that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.’<sup>108</sup> On January 28, 2003, in his State of the Union address, President Bush stated: ‘Year after year, Saddam Hussein has gone to elaborate lengths, spent enormous sums, taken great risks to build and keep weapons of mass destruction.’<sup>109</sup> On March 6, 2003, in a national press conference, President Bush stated: ‘Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction are a direct threat to this country, to our people, and to all free people. [...] I see a gathering threat. I mean, this is a true, real threat to America.’<sup>110</sup> On March 17, 2003, in his address to the nation two days before the Iraq invasion, President Bush stated:

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<sup>103</sup> Dick Cheney, ‘Vice President speaks at VFW 103<sup>rd</sup> national convention’ <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/08/20020826.html> [Accessed 08-05-2011].

<sup>104</sup> Condoleezza Rice, ‘Interview with Condoleezza Rice’ <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0209/08/le.00.html> (interview for CNN’s *Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer*) [Accessed 08-05-2011].

<sup>105</sup> George W. Bush, ‘President’s remarks at the United Nations General Assembly’ <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020912-1.html> [Accessed 17-05-2011].

<sup>106</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, ‘Testimony of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld before the House Armed Service Committee’ <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=283> [Accessed 24-05-2011].

<sup>107</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, ‘Testimony of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld before the Senate Armed Service Committee’ <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=287> [Accessed 24-05-2011].

<sup>108</sup> George W. Bush ‘President Bush outlines Iraqi threat’ <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html> [Accessed 19-05-2011].

<sup>109</sup> George W. Bush, ‘President delivers State of the Union’ <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html> [Accessed 20-05-2011].

<sup>110</sup> George W. Bush, ‘President George Bush discusses Iraq in national press conference’ <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030306-8.html> [Accessed 20-05-2011].

'Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised. [...] The security of the world requires disarming Saddam Hussein now.'<sup>111</sup> On March 30, 2003, in an interview for ABC, Rumsfeld said: 'The area in the south and the west and the north that coalition forces control is substantial. It happens not to be the area where weapons of mass destruction were dispersed. We know where they are. They're in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad and east, west, south and north somewhat.'<sup>112</sup> On May 1, 2003, from the Nimitz-class supercarrier USS Abraham Lincoln off the coast of San Diego, California, President Bush stated: 'No terrorist network will gain weapons of mass destruction from the Iraqi regime, because the regime is no more.'<sup>113</sup>

Powell arguably made the most decisive contribution to convince the American people and the world that Iraq formed an imminent threat to America and its allies. He laid out the most detailed American case for the invasion of Iraq in an address to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on February 5, 2003. Just about one month later, the American invasion of Iraq was a fact. Powell: 'The gravity of this moment is matched by the gravity of the threat that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction pose to the world. [...] There can be no doubt that Saddam Hussein has biological weapons and the capability to rapidly produce more, many more. And he has the ability to dispense these lethal poisons and diseases in ways that can cause massive death and destruction. If biological weapons seem too terrible to contemplate, chemical weapons are equally chilling. [...] Saddam Hussein has chemical weapons. [...] We have more than a decade of proof that Saddam Hussein remains determined to acquire nuclear weapons. [...] Saddam Hussein and his regime have made no effort, no effort, to disarm. [...] The facts and Iraq's behavior show that Saddam Hussein and his regime are concealing their efforts to produce more weapons of mass destruction.'<sup>114</sup>

After his tenure in the White House, Powell called that infamous presentation a stain on his record because it was based on flawed CIA intelligence.<sup>115</sup> He stated that he would have opposed the decision to invade Iraq, if he had known that the information about Saddam having weapons of mass destruction was exaggerated.<sup>116</sup> Powell also revealed that he, at an earlier stage, actually spent two and a half hours trying to persuade President Bush not to invade Iraq by explaining to him the possible consequences of occupying an Arab country.<sup>117</sup> The President himself and all his high-ranking officials besides Powell, including Rice, Cheney, and Perle, stood firm on the reasoning behind their

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<sup>111</sup> George W. Bush, 'President says Saddam Hussein must leave Iraq within 48 hours' <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030317-7.html> [Accessed 20-05-2011].

<sup>112</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, 'Defense Secretary Rumsfeld on ABC's *This Week*' [http://www.usembassy.it/file2003\\_03/alja/A3032803.htm](http://www.usembassy.it/file2003_03/alja/A3032803.htm) (interview for ABC's *This Week with George Stephanopoulos*) [Accessed 24-05-2011].

<sup>113</sup> George W. Bush, 'President Bush announces major combat operations in Iraq have ended' <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/05/20030501-15.html> [Accessed 07-05-2011].

<sup>114</sup> Colin Powell, 'Secretary of State Colin Powell addresses the United Nations Security Council' <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030205-1.html#> [Accessed 21-05-2011].

<sup>115</sup> Charles Hanley, 'Powell's case for Iraq war falls apart 6 months later', *Associated Press*, August 11, 2003.

<sup>116</sup> Doug Ward, 'Colin Powell slams Bush', *The Vancouver Sun*, June 13, 2008.

<sup>117</sup> Sarah Baxter, 'Powell tried to talk Bush out of war', *The Sunday Times*, July 8, 2007.

decision to invade Iraq. They maintained that it was the right thing to do, even though Saddam had no weapons of mass destruction. Feith, for example, stated in 2008 that ‘the President made the right decision given what he knew and given what we all knew and to tell you the truth, even given what we’ve learned since’, referring to America’s failure to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.<sup>118</sup>

All statements above by top officials of the Bush administration, without exception, have been proven to be completely false. This already suggests that there was something fishy going on in the White House. A failure of this magnitude cannot simply be explained by erroneous intelligence assessments. But in order to make a calculated evaluation and determine definitely whether or not the Bush administration truly believed that Iraq formed an imminent threat to America’s security, it is necessary to determine what the administration precisely knew about Iraq’s nuclear capabilities before the Iraq war. Simply put, what were the facts about Iraq’s nuclear capabilities? To be able to answer this question, it is important to examine analyses made by UNMOVIC (United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission) and IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) of Iraq’s nuclear capabilities.<sup>119</sup> Equally important is to examine Washington’s own assessments of the facts.

On August 6, 1990, four days after Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait with over 100,000 troops and nearly 2,000 tanks, the United Nations Security Council imposed strict economic sanctions on Iraq by adopting Resolution 661.<sup>120</sup> The resolution contained four main sanctions, including prohibitions on all states to sale or supply products, including weapons or other military equipment, to Iraq. As a condition of ending the 1991 Persian Gulf War (1990-1991), Iraq destroyed its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs, as well as its long-range missiles to deliver to such weapons.<sup>121</sup> Moreover, the United Nations Security Council imposed new sanctions on Iraq, by adopting Resolution 687, in order to prevent Iraq from ever again building any kind of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>122</sup> These sanctions proved to be effective. An October 1997 IAEA report stated that Iraq’s nuclear facilities were demolished by American attacks during the Gulf War and hence that Iraq had no nuclear weapons. The report emphasized that ‘all weapon-usable nuclear material has been removed from Iraq’ and that ‘there are no indications that there remains in Iraq any physical capability for the production of amounts of weapon-usable nuclear material of any practical significance.’<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Michelle Singer, ‘Feith: Iraq attack was preemptive’, *CBS News*, April 3, 2008.

<sup>119</sup> UNMOVIC was created by the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1284 in December 1999. It replaced the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and continued its directive to carry out WMD inspections in Iraq. See: <http://www.undemocracy.com/S-RES-1284>. IAEA is an independent international organization, established in June 1957, that seeks to inhibit the use of nuclear energy for military purposes, including nuclear weapons. See: [http://www.iaea.org/About/statute\\_text.html](http://www.iaea.org/About/statute_text.html) [Accessed 22-05-2011].

<sup>120</sup> Alastair Finlan, *The Gulf War of 1991* (New York 2009) 10.

<sup>121</sup> Eric Schmitt and Steven Lee Myers, ‘Bush administration warns Iraq on weapons of mass destruction program’, *The New York Times*, January 23, 2011.

<sup>122</sup> United Nations Security Council, ‘Resolution 661’ <http://www.casi.org.uk/info/undocs/scres/1990/661e.pdf>. And: ‘Resolution 687’ <http://www.casi.org.uk/info/undocs/scres/1991/687e.pdf> [Accessed 10-05-2011].

<sup>123</sup> DNSA, *The U.S. prepares for conflict*, EBB 326, doc. 1. United Nations Security Council, ‘Note by the Secretary-General of the UN Security Council to the members of the Security Council including the fourth report of the International Atomic Energy Agency on Iraq’s nuclear capabilities’, October 9, 1997, page 21.

On January 27, 2003, the Director General of the IAEA, Mohammed El Baradei, released an update report on the status of nuclear inspection in Iraq, which concluded that ‘there is no evidence that Iraq has revived its nuclear weapons program since the elimination of the program in the 1990s.’<sup>124</sup> On February 14, 2003, the Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC and head of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (WMDC), Hans Blix, concluded in his report to the United Nations Security Council that ‘UNMOVIC has not found any weapons of mass destruction, only a small number of chemical munitions which should have been declared and destroyed.’<sup>125</sup> Similarly to Blix, El Baradei stated in his update report of February 14 that ‘we have to date found no evidence of nuclear or nuclear related activities in Iraq.’<sup>126</sup> On June 5, 2003, Blix told the UN Security Council that ‘the commission has not at any time during the inspections in Iraq found evidence of the continuation or resumption of programs of weapons of mass destruction or significant quantities of proscribed items, whether from pre-1991 or later.’<sup>127</sup> The American government made the same conclusion. Sixteen months later. According to an October 2004 CIA report, Saddam did not possess any kind of weapons of mass destruction at the time of the American invasion and had not begun any program to produce them. The 1,500 pages long CIA report concluded that Saddam had ended its chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs shortly after the 1991 Persian Gulf War.<sup>128</sup> As mentioned above, the IAEA had made the same evaluation in 1997. Seven years before the CIA.

In his United Nations speech, Powell had questioned the reliability of UNMOVIC and IAEA inspections by stating that ‘inspectors are inspectors, they are not detectives.’<sup>129</sup> Nonetheless, it is known now that they made a very accurate assessment of Iraq’s nuclear capabilities. Despite Washington’s claims, no weapons of mass destruction (any kind) were ever found in Iraq. 1,625 American and United Nations inspectors worked in Iraq for two years, from November 2002 to September 2004, at a cost of over one billion dollars. They searched nearly 1,700 sites.<sup>130</sup> Inspections in the 1990s had already excluded that Iraq could produce nuclear weapons, and the pre-war reports of Blix and El Baradei indicated that the country did not pose a threat to American security. The evidence was right there or better said, the lack of evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. The Bush administration clearly ignored the facts. But there is more. Early assessments of Iraq’s nuclear capabilities by the Bush administration completely rules out the possibility that the administration really believed that Iraq formed a threat to the United States.

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<sup>124</sup> Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), *Archive Iraq and weapons of mass destruction (1981-2004)*.

Access code: EBB 80 (Electronic Briefing Book no. 80). Document: 24. International Atomic Energy Agency, ‘Mohammed El Baradei’s IAEA update report on the status of WMD inspections in Iraq’, January 27, 2003, page 5.

<sup>125</sup> DNSA, *Iraq and WMD*, EBB 80, doc. 30. United Nations Security Council, ‘Hans Blix’s UNMOVIC update report on the status of WMD inspections in Iraq delivered to the UN Security Council’, February 14, 2003, page 2.

<sup>126</sup> DNSA, *Iraq & WMD*, EBB 80, doc. 31. International Atomic Energy Agency, ‘Mohammed El Baradei’s IAEA update report on the status of nuclear inspections in Iraq’, February 14, 2003, page 5.

<sup>127</sup> CNN, ‘UN inspector: no evidence found before Iraq war’, June 5, 2003.

<sup>128</sup> CNN, ‘No WMD stockpiles in Iraq’ October 6, 2004.

<sup>129</sup> Colin Powell, ‘Secretary of State Colin Powell addresses the United Nations Security Council’ <http://georgewebush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030205-1.html#> [Accessed 21-05-2011].

<sup>130</sup> Julian Borger, ‘There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq’, *The Guardian*, October 7, 2004.

As described above, after the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration embarked on a campaign to persuade Congress, the American public and the United Nations that Iraq formed an imminent threat to America. Besides accusing Saddam of maintaining close ties with Al-Qaeda and supporting the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks, the administration claimed that Saddam had chemical and biological weapons, and that he was developing nuclear bombs. The latter issue became a public spectacle, especially between August 2002 and March 2003. In this period members of the administration gave the most speeches and interviews about the issue. The key claim was that Iraq had imported thousands of tubes made of high-strength aluminium; tubes that the Bush administration said were intended for secret uranium centrifuges. The tube story proved to be a decisive factor in the administration's war campaign against Iraq, because the tubes were the only physical evidence of Saddam's alleged nuclear program. But already in April 2001 the President and his high-level officials had been told by the government's leading nuclear experts (four officials at the Central Intelligence Agency and two senior administration officials) that the tubes were not for nuclear weapons. Nonetheless, the White House embraced the disputed theory that the tubes were for nuclear centrifuges.<sup>131</sup>

According to a July 2004 (511-page) report on pre-war intelligence by the Senate Intelligence Committee, in early April 2001 the U.S. Intelligence Community found out that Iraq was seeking to buy 60,000 aluminium tubes. CIA analyst Joe Turner, not a nuclear weapons specialist, assumed that the tubes could only be used in uranium enrichment centrifuges to produce nuclear weapons. Turner's analysis formed the basis of the CIA's first report on the tubes, which went to senior members of the Bush administration on April 10, 2001. The report emphasized that the tubes had 'little use other than for a uranium enrichment program.'<sup>132</sup> Turner's interpretation was immediately challenged by nuclear weapons experts. On April 11, 2001, a team of scientists led by the chief of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory's advanced Technology Division issued a report on the aluminium tubes. According to the report, the diameter of the tubes was half of those used for a gas centrifuge by Iraq in 1990. The Oak Ridge team concluded that the tubes were not intended for centrifuges.<sup>133</sup>

The Department of Energy confirmed the Oak Ridge team's conclusions and issued a report on why the tubes were not suited for centrifuges. In short, according to the Energy Department the tubes were the wrong size (too narrow, too long). Moreover, the report argued that if the tubes were meant for a top-secret nuclear program, then why were the Iraqis negotiating over prices with contractors all around the world? And why weren't they purchasing other tools necessary for centrifuges? But if the tubes were not for centrifuges, then what were they for? On May 9, 2001, Energy Department officials issued a report on the purpose of the tubes. The report explained that 'Iraq had for years used high-

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<sup>131</sup> David Barstow, William Broad and Jeff Gerth, 'How the White House embraced disputed arms intelligence', *The New York Times*, October 3, 2004, page 1.

<sup>132</sup> Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), *Archive CIA whites out controversial estimate on Iraq weapons (2002-2004)*. Access code: none. U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee, 'Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community's prewar assessments on Iraq', July 7, 2004, page 88.

<sup>133</sup> David Corn, *Hubris: the inside story of spin, scandal and the selling of the Iraq war* (New York 2006) 37-39.

strength aluminium tubes to make combustion chambers for slim rockets fired from launcher pods.’ Back in 1996, IAEA inspectors had even examined some of those tubes. According to the IAEA, the rocket tubes were 90 centimeters long, 3.3 millimeters thick and had a diameter of 81 millimeters. The tubes sought by Iraq in April 2001 had exactly the same dimensions.<sup>134</sup>

In June 2001 the CIA intercepted a shipment of the tubes in Jordan. After closely examining the tubes, Turner admitted that the tubes had the wrong size for standard centrifuges, but added that they matched the dimensions of those used for a centrifuge designed in the 1950s by a German scientist, Gernot Zippe. Remarkably, after being informed about the issue by officials of the Energy Department, Zippe told Turner that the dimensions of the tubes were not even close to those he used for his centrifuge.<sup>135</sup> Although UNMOVIC and IAEA inspectors had planned to examine the tubes first and make conclusions afterwards, for the Bush administration the focus was on planning how to integrate the tube story into the war campaign against Iraq. It was all about ‘publicizing the interdiction to our advantage’ and ‘getting the right story out.’ A June 29 (2001) U.S. Department of State information memorandum asserted: ‘With UNMOVIC and IAEA unlikely to inspect before July 3 and with their desire analyze samples before drawing conclusions, we see little prospect for publicizing the interdiction to our advantage before the rollover. Although the July 3 deadline is imminent, it is not necessary for the shipment to become public before then. Getting the right story out in say a week or so will be more important than rushing it out in a day or two.’<sup>136</sup>

Another U.S. Department of State memo shows that on July 2, the Bush administration concluded that Iraq had violated United Nations sanctions by purchasing aluminium tubes. The administration considered it important that an independent international organization like IAEA would verify this analysis. This is quite remarkable. It shows that the administration was not trying to find out what the tubes’ purpose was. It seems that President Bush and his officials had already made up their minds and wanted the IAEA to verify their own analysis. IAEA inspectors, however, were planning to report the results of their analysis to the United Nations Sanctions Committee ‘even if it concludes that the tubes do not meet specifications for a nuclear end use.’ The July 2 memo emphasized that the inspectors needed ‘IAEA Director General El Baradei’s approval to submit such a report.’ The memo also stressed that the American mission in Vienna was following this process closely, and would inform the White House about important developments.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> DNSA, *Controversial estimate on Iraq weapons*. U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee, ‘Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community’s prewar assessments on Iraq’, July 7, 2004, pages 88-90.

<sup>135</sup> Corn, *The selling of the Iraq war*, 39. And: Barstow, Broad and Gerth, ‘Disputed arms intelligence’, page 6.

<sup>136</sup> DNSA, *The U.S. prepares for conflict*, EBB 326, doc. 4. U.S. Department of State, ‘Information memorandum from Robert J. Einhorn (Special Advisor for Non-Proliferation and Arms Control) and James A. Larocco (Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs) to Colin Powell’, June 29, 2001, pages 1-2.

<sup>137</sup> DNSA, *The U.S. prepares for conflict*, EBB 326, doc. 5. U.S. Department of State, ‘Information memorandum from Vann Van Diepen (Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Non-Proliferation) and James A. Kelly (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs) to Colin Powell’, July 2, 2001, pages 1-2.

At the Department of Energy, those analyzing the tubes included scientists who had spent decades designing and analyzing centrifuges, including dr. Jon A. Kreykes (head of Oak Ridge's national security advanced technology group), dr. Duane F. Starr (an expert on nuclear proliferation threats), and dr. Houston G. Wood (professor of engineering at the University of Virginia).<sup>138</sup> On August 17, 2001, the team published another detailed analysis that questioned the suitability of the tubes for centrifuges. In size and material, the tubes were very different from those that Iraq had used in its centrifuge prototypes in the 1980s. In fact, the team could not find centrifuge machines that used such narrow tubes. The team made many more other assessments that excluded the possibility that the tubes were meant for centrifuges.<sup>139</sup> For example, in late 2001 the Energy Department published a classified report that even more firmly rejected the theory that the tubes could work as rotors in a 1950s Zippe centrifuge. Especially Zippe centrifuges, they noted, were not suited for bomb making. To produce enough enriched uranium to make just one nuclear bomb a year, Iraq would need about 16,000 Zippe centrifuges working simultaneously, a challenge for even the most sophisticated centrifuge plants. The United Kingdom's intelligence service and the IAEA made similar assessments. Experts at the IAEA had worked with Zippe centrifuges, and they spent hours with CIA analysts, including Turner, explaining why they believed their analysis was flawed. They pointed out wrong calculations, and noted design differences. Likewise, experts in the United Kingdom emphasized that the tubes would need 'substantial re-engineering' to work in centrifuges, according to Britain's review of its pre-war intelligence.<sup>140</sup>

### **3.4 Conclusion**

During the long build-up to the Iraq invasion the Bush administration disregarded intelligence assessments and selected specific information to build its public case against Iraq. The administration created links that did not exist, namely between Iraq and Al-Qaeda, and between Iraq and the 9/11 attacks. Moreover, the administration was well aware of Iraq's nuclear incapability, long before the Iraq invasion. Evidence clearly shows that the President and his top officials presented false information in speeches and interviews. Saddam Hussein was clearly a tyrannical ruler and certainly must have had the ambition to obtain weapons of mass destruction. The fact of the matter, however, is that he did not have biological or chemical weapons of mass destruction and he was far away from ever developing nuclear weapons. America's security argument was not a reason but an excuse to invade Iraq. Hence that Iraq did not form a threat to the national security of the United States undermines the basis on which the United States went to war in Iraq. But if the Iraq war was not about defending the national security of the United States, then what was it about?

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<sup>138</sup> Barstow, Broad and Gerth, 'Disputed arms intelligence', page 4.

<sup>139</sup> DNSA, *Controversial estimate on Iraq weapons*. U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee, 'Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community's prewar assessments on Iraq', pages 91-92.

<sup>140</sup> Barstow, Broad, and Gerth, 'Disputed arms intelligence', pages 4-5.

## 4. Aims of Attack

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the reasons behind the Iraq war the Bush administration did not advertise. The focus is on answering the first part of the central research question: *Why did America invade Iraq? What were America's aims? And which international relations theories offer an adequate explanation for the invasion?* The idea is that Iraq was the key element of an ambitious grand strategy to transform the entire Middle East. The first part of this chapter explores the origins of American's regime change policy toward Iraq, and examines when exactly the Bush administration started to seriously contemplate war against the country. The first part also offers an introduction to the reasons behind the Iraq war. The second part examines America's behavior in the international arena during Bush's presidency. It argues that the American invasion of Iraq was a case of empire-building. The third part provides deeper insight into the reasons behind the Iraq war by offering a background sketch of each top official in the Bush administration. The final two parts examine the essential elements of America's empire-building project in Iraq.

### 4.2 War Planning

In the 1990s the Clinton administration carried out several small-scale military operations against Iraq. One attack took place in June 1993 when America used twenty-three Tomahawk cruise missiles to destroy an intelligence headquarters in Baghdad. This action was a response to an uncovered assassination plot against George H.W. Bush while he was visiting Kuwait. Two other attacks against Iraq occurred in September 1996 when in total forty-four cruise missiles were fired against Iraqi military targets in two days. These attacks were carried out after Saddam send tanks and artillery into a district in northern Iraq established by the United States to protect the Kurds.<sup>141</sup> After the attacks Bill Clinton stated that America 'must reduce Iraq's ability to strike out at its neighbors' and increase its ability 'to contain Iraq over the long run.'<sup>142</sup> Clinton's policy against Iraq reached a new level when he signed the Iraq Liberation Act (ILA) on October 31, 1998, which made regime change in Iraq official American policy. On October 21, 1998, before signing the Iraq Liberation Act, Clinton had already made eight million dollars available 'for assistance to the Iraqi democratic opposition [...] intended to help the democratic opposition unify, work together more effectively, and articulate the aspirations of the Iraqi people for a pluralistic, participatory system that will include all of Iraq's diverse ethnic and religious groups.' On the basis of the Liberation Act, Clinton provided an additional ninety-eight million dollars to groups committed to bringing down Saddam.<sup>143</sup> It is known that Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz lobbied firmly for the approval of the act. However, even though the act made the

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<sup>141</sup> Louis Fisher, 'Military action against Iraq', *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 28:4 (1998) 793-795.

<sup>142</sup> Alison Mitchell, 'U.S. launches further strike against Iraq', *The New York Times*, September 4, 1996, page 2.

<sup>143</sup> DNSA, *The U.S. prepares for conflict*, EBB 326, doc. 2. U.S. Executive Office of the President: Office of the Press Secretary, 'Statement by Bill Clinton about the Iraq Liberation Act', October 31, 1998, pages 1-4.



political transformation of Iraq an official goal of American foreign policy, Clinton did not do much to implement the act. He did not consider regime change in Iraq an issue of significant importance. Clinton only spent a very small part of the ninety-eight million dollars and he never seriously considered to use force to overthrow Saddam.<sup>144</sup>

There are important debates among scholars about whether or not achieving regime change in Iraq was a priority for the Bush administration before 9/11 and if it indeed was a priority, just how high a priority? This debate emerged right after 9/11 and is still current. Some critics argue that Iraq had high priority; others insist that Iraq was only a focus among some parts of the administration, while others argue that Iraq had no priority at all. The political scientist Stephen M. Walt is a prominent supporter of the last perspective. According to Walt, prior to 9/11 the Bush administration focused on domestic issues and had no plans for new international initiatives.<sup>145</sup> Moreover, Walt claims that the Bush administration was not seriously contemplating war against Iraq before 9/11.<sup>146</sup> There is, however, substantial evidence which shows that the opposite is true.

According to Paul O'Neill, President Bush was not interested in domestic issues and was fixated on Iraq from day one. O'Neill was the Secretary of Treasury under President Bush until he got fired from his job, supposedly because he disagreed too many times with the president's policy on tax cuts. O'Neill's two-year term in the White House is the main story of *The Price of Loyalty* (2004), which provides insight into the events that led to the Iraq war. The book is written by the Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Ron Suskind. It is based on O'Neill's memoirs, stories of numerous senior officials in both domestic and foreign affairs, and 19,000 documents O'Neill retained from office, including memoranda to the President, handwritten notes, 100-page documents, and transcripts of high-level National Security Council (NSC) meetings.<sup>147</sup> In an interview for CBS's *60 minutes* in 2004, before the *Price of Loyalty* was even published, Suskind and O'Neill made interesting revelations about the Bush administration and the Iraq war. Based on his examination of the transcripts of the National Security Council meetings, Suskind argued: 'From the very first instance, it was about Iraq. It was about what we can do to change this regime. [...] Day one, these things were laid and sealed.' And O'Neil, who was a permanent member of the National Security Council because he was the Secretary of Treasury, emphasized that achieving regime change in Iraq was already topic 'A' ten days after Bush's inauguration, eight months before 9/11.<sup>148</sup>

To confirm the validity of the sources mentioned above, Suskind posted many of the original documents that he cites in his book on his official website. He also pointed out on his website that the documents cover a sweeping array of foreign and domestic issues. Furthermore, Suskind explained

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<sup>144</sup> John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel lobby and U.S. foreign policy* (New York 2007) 244.

<sup>145</sup> Stephen Walt, 'Beyond bin Laden: reshaping U.S. foreign policy', *International Security* 26:3 (2002) 56.

<sup>146</sup> Mearsheimer and Walt, *U.S. foreign policy*, 245.

<sup>147</sup> Ron Suskind, *The price of loyalty* (New York 2004) 348.

<sup>148</sup> Paul O'Neill, 'Paul O'Neill speaks out' <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=592691n> (interview for CBS's *60 minutes*) [Accessed 13-04-2011].

that the documents were collected as part of a Treasury Department archiving process in which every item that crossed O'Neill's desk, from every department in government, was copied into a TIF or image file. Moreover, he emphasized that he intentionally refrained from commenting extensively on the documents in the *The Price of Loyalty*, because 'the documents speak, as does all irrefutable evidence, for themselves.'<sup>149</sup>

In early January 2001, before Bush even took office, Dick Cheney send a message to the outgoing defense secretary, William Cohen, to prepare a policy briefing. 'We really need to get the president-elect briefed upon some things', Cheney said, adding that he wanted a serious 'discussion about Iraq and different options' and that 'the president elect should not be given the routine canned, round-the-world tour [...] topic A should be Iraq.'<sup>150</sup> On January 23, three days after Bush's inauguration, Edward Walker (Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs) send a report to Powell emphasizing the main principle of the Iraq Liberation Act, namely that 'it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam from power in Iraq.'<sup>151</sup>

On January 30, 2001, President Bush met with his high-ranking officials of the National Security Council for the first time. In *The Price of Loyalty*, Suskind offers a detailed description of this meeting, based on the official transcript of the meeting provided to him by O'Neill. Present at the meeting were Vice President Dick Cheney, CIA director George Tenet, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Hugh Shelton, White House Chiefs of Staff Andrew Card, and Paul O'Neill. In addition, each high-ranking official had brought a top deputy, whom assumed seats directly behind their bosses.<sup>152</sup> The topic was 'Mideast Policy.' The discussion focused exclusively on how Iraq was 'destabilizing the region' and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Rice started the discussion by emphasizing that Iraq was the key to reshape the entire Middle East. Subsequently, she asked CIA director Tenet to present a briefing on the latest intelligence on Iraq. Tenet unrolled a long scroll and put it on the table. It was a photograph of a factory. Tenet said that the CIA believed that the building might be 'a plant that produces either chemical or biological materials for weapons manufacture.'<sup>153</sup> Soon, everyone was leaning over the photo. 'Here are the railroad tracks coming in. [...] They're bringing it in here and bringing it out there. [...] This is the water cooler', Tenet explained. After a moment, O'Neill interrupted. 'I've seen a lot of factories around the world that look a lot like this one. What makes us suspect that this one is producing chemical or biological weapons for agents?' Tenet mentioned that there were regular shipments in and out of the factory, but said that there was 'no

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<sup>149</sup> Ron Suskind, 'An experiment in transparency' <http://thepriceofloyalty.ronsuskind.com/thebushfiles> [Accessed 02-06-2011]. This link also contains a collection of documents that Suskind cites in his book (The Bush Files).

<sup>150</sup> Bob Woodward, *Plan of attack* (London 2004) 9.

<sup>151</sup> DNSA, *The U.S. prepares for conflict*, EBB 326, doc. 3. U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 'Information memorandum from Edward S. Walker (Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs) to Colin Powell about American regime change policy in Iraq', January 23, 2001, pages 1-2.

<sup>152</sup> Suskind, *The price of loyalty*, 70.

<sup>153</sup> Suskind, *The price of loyalty*, 72.

confirming intelligence' that the factory produced chemical and biological material. Nonetheless, almost everyone, including the President, Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Rice, agreed that American foreign policy should focus on achieving regime change in Iraq. Rumsfeld, Tenet and others called for better intelligence on Iraq, new strategies to pressure Saddam's regime, and the use of military force. The President agreed with these proposals. Near the end of the meeting he gave out assignments. Rumsfeld and Shelton would analyze America's military options against Iraq. That included examining 'how it might look' to deploy American ground forces in north and south Iraq and how these forces could support factions in the country to confront Saddam Hussein. Tenet would report on improving intelligence on Iraq. O'Neill would investigate how to put financial pressure on the country. Of the officials present at the meeting, several had attended National Security Council meetings of the Clinton administration. Remarkably, these officials noticed an important shift in policy. 'In the Clinton administration there was an enormous reluctance to use American forces on the ground; it was almost a prohibition. That prohibition was clearly gone, and that opened options, options that hadn't been opened before', one of them argued.<sup>154</sup>

The next meeting of the National Security Council took place on February 1. The briefing subjects formulated specific goals for Defense, Treasury, and other departments in the new initiative against Saddam. The purpose of the meeting was to review the policy on Iraq and to examine questions on how to proceed. Some of the talking points were: economic possibilities, regime change, war crimes initiatives, dealing with the Kurds, the oil fields, and political-military options. What is striking about this meeting is that besides military intervention, the focus was on planning for a 'post-Saddam Iraq.' However, although there were discussions about what type of person should replace Saddam, nobody at the meeting mentioned any names. Powell stressed that America should make sure not to replace one bad guy with another. But it seems that Powell was not so much in favor of attacking Iraq. He believed that a 'sanctions strategy' would be sufficient. Yet the President, Rumsfeld and others were not interested in such a strategy. 'What we really need to think about is going after Saddam', Rumsfeld said. He offered an assessment of the American goal of eliminating Saddam and installing a pro-American government in Iraq. 'Imagine what the region would look like without Saddam and with a region that's aligned with U.S. interests', Rumsfeld said. 'It would change everything in the region and beyond it. It would demonstrate what U.S. policy is all about.'<sup>155</sup>

Just ten days in office, and the Bush administration was already seriously contemplating war against Iraq. Why exactly is much less clear. What were America's aims? As suggested above, it seems that power and influence were key factors. In this respect, Rumsfeld's quote about toppling Saddam and enhancing America's global power is significant. As will be shown in the following parts, America had an ambitious grand strategy, which consisted of various interrelated elements, to assert its dominance in the world. Iraq had a central role in this plan.

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<sup>154</sup> Suskind, *The price of loyalty*, 73-75.

<sup>155</sup> Suskind, *The price of loyalty*, 82-86.

### 4.3 Empire-Building

Anno 2011 many people are still puzzled about America's decision to invade Iraq. In *The Assassins Gate: America in Iraq*, the journalist George Packer states that 'it still isn't possible to be sure, and this remains the most remarkable thing about the Iraq war.' He quotes Richard N. Haass, the Director of Policy Planning in the State Department during Bush's first term, who stated that he would 'go to his grave not knowing the answer.'<sup>156</sup> These doubts are not incomprehensible, because there is no easy answer to the question why America invaded Iraq. Iraq did not have chemical and biological weapons and no capability to develop nuclear weapons. The country had no links with Al-Qaeda and was not involved in the 9/11 attacks. More importantly, the Bush administration was well aware of all this. Yet instead of focusing on Al-Qaeda, the real threat to American security, the Bush administration decided to invade a country that was strongly weakened, both economically and militarily, by a long decade of United Nations sanctions. Iraq was a country that could not even challenge America in its wildest dreams. From this point of view, the decision to invade Iraq is puzzling indeed.

For America, the war in Afghanistan in the aftermath of 9/11 reinforced an image of military invincibility. America destroyed Al-Qaeda bases, and decisively defeated the Taliban, which provided Bin Laden protection and shelter since 1997.<sup>157</sup> Therefore, in the period before the Iraq war, America was highly confident of its military capability. This motivated the Bush administration to carry out its ambitious plan for the Middle East, which will be analyzed in paragraph 4.5. The administration, as shown in the previous paragraph, had been planning a new Middle East strategy from the moment it took office. Hence the administration embarked on an ambitious plan to reassure America's hegemony in the world. However, in order to fully grasp the significance of America's motives for the Iraq war, one must first have a clear picture of the development of America's global power in the twentieth century and its position in the world in the twenty-first century.

According to the international relations scholar Michael Cox, America developed into a true superpower in the first part of the 1940s, one with no equal in the twentieth century and possibly in history.<sup>158</sup> After the Second World War the United States controlled more than half of the world's economic output, seventy percent of the world's maritime trade, seventy-five percent of all agricultural surpluses, ninety percent of the world's natural gas, and the majority of its financial resources.<sup>159</sup> The United States also had military supremacy, since there was no power that formed a major military threat to its security, not even the Soviet Union. Conversely, the 1960s witnessed a period of American decline. This decline was the result of internal cultural, economic, and political insecurity, and more importantly external developments, like the rise of the Soviet Union. In the 1980s many scholars, lead by the historian Paul Kennedy, were very pessimistic about the future of the United

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<sup>156</sup> George Packer, *The assassins gate: America in Iraq* (New York 2005) 46.

<sup>157</sup> Patricia Gossman, 'Afghanistan in the balance', *Middle East Report* 221 (2001) 8.

<sup>158</sup> Michael Cox, 'Whatever happened to American decline? International relations and the new United States hegemony', *New Political Economy* 6:3 (2001) 314.

<sup>159</sup> Cox, 'United States hegemony', 314.

States.<sup>160</sup> However, although the power of the United States certainly was declining in the 1960s and 1970s, the decline proved to be temporary. The United States rapidly recovered in the 1990s and moved far ahead of the rest of the world, especially militarily.<sup>161</sup> As a result it became, once again, the leading power in the world. According to Stephen M. Walt, the end of the Cold War left the United States in a position of power unmatched since the Roman Empire.<sup>162</sup>

Most scholars agree that the America is the world's sole superpower. There are also many scholars who claim that America is an empire. The sociologist George Steinmetz, for example, considers America the ruling center of a large-scale empire, more specifically a non-territorial imperialist empire with military superiority. He argues that the United States, like all other empires in the past, tries to organize social life and dictate foreign societies and cultures.<sup>163</sup> The political scientist David P. Rapkin makes a similar argument. Rapkin claims that America is an empire, because it has similar characteristics as previous empires. He argues that America transformed itself, in the second part of the twentieth century, from a hegemonic power to an empire. According to Rapkin, the collapse of the Soviet Union played an important role in this process, because it gave the United States military supremacy. Moreover, Rapkin explains that America experienced an important transformation at the turn of the twenty-first century. He argues that the choice of the Bush administration to adopt a neoconservative policy gave America an aggressive imperial character.<sup>164</sup>

The historian Niall Ferguson argues that America has always been an empire, given the fact that America would expand was decided virtually from its foundation. He states that America is an empire in denial, because it acts as an empire, but always has refrained from calling itself an imperial power. George W. Bush has stated many times, both before and during the war in Iraq, that America has no imperial ambitions. For example, during his first campaign, he stated: 'America has never been an empire and it may be the only great power in history that had the chance to become an empire but refused, because it preferred greatness to power, and justice to glory.'<sup>165</sup> In fact, the whole Bush administration, including Rumsfeld and Powell, have always insisted that America does not seek a territorial empire and never has been imperialist.<sup>166</sup> The historian Michael Ignatieff confirms the statements of the Bush administration by arguing that America indeed has no imperial designs and no intention of conquest. Ignatieff claims that during the presidency of George W. Bush, America was only an empire in the sense that it structured the global order with military power, diplomatic resources, and economic advantages.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Cox, 'United States hegemony', 316-319, 322-323.

<sup>161</sup> Cox, 'United States hegemony', 327-329.

<sup>162</sup> Stephen M. Walt, 'American primacy: its prospects and pitfalls', *Naval War College Review* 55:2 (2002) 9.

<sup>163</sup> George Steinmetz, 'Return to empire: the new U.S. imperialism in comparative historical perspective', *Sociological Theory* 23:4 (2005) 339-340, 357-358, 362-363.

<sup>164</sup> David P. Rapkin, 'Empire and its discontents', *New Political Economy* 10:3 (2005) 390-393, 406.

<sup>165</sup> Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: the price of America's empire* (New York 2004) 6.

<sup>166</sup> Ferguson, *Colossus*, 7, 33-34.

<sup>167</sup> Michael Ignatieff, 'The challenges of American imperial power', *Naval War College Review* 56:2 (2003) 54.

The sociologist James Petras firmly rejects Ignatieff's interpretation and argues that America has imperial designs. Like Rapkin, Petras argues that America had an aggressive imperial character during the rule of the Bush administration. He explains that the administration blamed international treaties and human rights legislation for the rise of global terrorism, decisively destroyed all restraints on its exercise of power, and launched an empire-building project. Petras stresses that the United States established a New World Order in an effective and systematic way. It abandoned the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABMT), the International Court and numerous other accords.<sup>168</sup> According to Petras, the purpose of these unilateral actions was to create optimal conditions for the United States to engage in wars of conquest and to expand military operations.<sup>169</sup>

The Bush administration's 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) report, a seventy-nine page document, supports the empire-building theory. It set out a comprehensive military strategy that explicated how America could bolster its global power; what it needed to do to reassure its dominance in the world. The QDR is a Congress mandated review, conducted every four years, of defense strategy. It sets a long-term strategy for the United States by assessing international threats and challenges. It reconsiders defense strategies, capabilities, and forces 'to address today's conflicts and tomorrow's threats.'<sup>170</sup> The QDR 2001, published on September 30 by the U.S. Department of Defense, included some additional points to reflect the terrorist attacks of 9/11, but it basically followed an outline of principles Rumsfeld had issued in June and July 2001. It introduced a new force-sizing standard and a new military strategy, which had a much more aggressive character than previous defense strategies.<sup>171</sup> Moreover, it abandoned former Defense Secretary Les Aspin's force-sizing standard from 1993, in which forces were exclusively structured to fight two major regional conflicts, called Major Theater Wars.<sup>172</sup> According to the new standard, the armed forces of the United States were sized to do the following: (1) deter aggression in five critical theaters, including the Middle East; (3) simultaneously defeat aggression in any two theaters; (4) preserve the option for one major counteroffensive to occupy an aggressor's capital or replace his regime; and (5) conduct a limited number of smaller-scale operations.<sup>173</sup> The new standard was significantly more demanding than previous standards. The armed forces still had to battle aggressors in two theaters at the same time. What the new standard got rid of was the tactic of deploying two occupation forces. These two forces were merged to form one massive occupation force. Hence the new focus was on deploying one powerful occupation force.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Rupert Cornwell, 'Bush says missile defence shield will fight terror', *The Independent*, December 12, 2001.

<sup>169</sup> James Petras, '9/11: one year of empire-building', *Economic and Political Weekly* 37:34 (2002) 3504-3505.

<sup>170</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, 'Quadrennial Defense Review' <http://www.defense.gov/qdr> [Accessed 08-06-2011].

<sup>171</sup> John T. Correll, 'The evolution of the Bush doctrine', *Air Force Magazine* 86:2 (2003) 32-33.

<sup>172</sup> John A. Tirpak, 'The QDR goes to war', *Air Force Magazine* 84:12 (2001) 28.

<sup>173</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington D.C. 2001) 17-22. Available at: [www.defense.gov/pubs/qdr2001.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/pubs/qdr2001.pdf) [Accessed 25-04-2011].

<sup>174</sup> Correll, 'The Bush doctrine', 34.

The QDR 2001 fundamentally altered America's international aims. The policy of 'preserve the option for one major counteroffensive to occupy an aggressor's capital or replace his regime' in combination with the formation of one massive occupation force is illuminating. It indisputably shows that the United States was getting prepared to invade a country. Indeed, the focus was on Iraq rather than Afghanistan. The massive invasion force was clearly formed with Iraq in mind. In the period March 2003 to April 2010, the United States had always much more troops in Iraq than Afghanistan. This was the standard under the Bush administration. In 2007 the American troop presence in Iraq reached a high of nearly 170,000 troops. Never did the number of American troops in Afghanistan even come close to this substantial number. In February 2010, the number of American troops in Iraq dropped below 100,000 for the first time since March 2003.<sup>175</sup> It was only in May 2010, under Barack Obama, that the number of American troops in Afghanistan surpassed those in Iraq. According to Pentagon figures, in May 2010 the United States had 94,000 troops in Afghanistan, and 92,000 troops in Iraq. In the second part of 2010, American troops in Afghanistan peaked at about 98,000, the highest number since the start of the Afghanistan war in October 2001.<sup>176</sup>

On December 11, 2001, about two months after the QDR 2001 was published, President Bush gave a speech at the *The Citadel*, the military college of Charleston, South Carolina. The President stated: 'This revolution in our military is only beginning, and it promises to change the face of battle. Afghanistan has been a proving ground for this new approach. These past two months have shown that an innovative doctrine and high-tech weaponry can shape and then dominate an unconventional conflict.'<sup>177</sup> This military revolution suggests an increase in defense spending. That is exactly what happened. In a 2001 information memorandum to the U.S. Department of Treasury, Rumsfeld recommended an increase in defense spending of between \$255 billion and \$842 billion over a period of five years (2002-2007) in order to effectively implement the new defense strategy set out in the QDR 2001.<sup>178</sup> In his speech at the United States Military Academy at West Point in New York on June 1, 2002, President Bush stated: 'America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenge, thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace.'<sup>179</sup> America did exactly that. In 2002, the Bush administration allocated \$325 billion instead of \$310 billion in 2002 to defend the national security of the United States.<sup>180</sup> The actual defense spending in 2002 amounted to more than \$344 billion.<sup>181</sup> Speaking at the

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<sup>175</sup> Lara Jakes, 'U.S. troops at lowest level in Iraq since 2003 invasion', *USA Today*, February 16, 2010.

<sup>176</sup> Ben Farmer, 'U.S. troops in Afghanistan surpass number in Iraq', *The Daily Telegraph*, May 25, 2010.

<sup>177</sup> George W. Bush, 'President speaks on war efforts to Citadel cadets' <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/12/20011211-6.html> [Accessed 12-06-2011].

<sup>178</sup> Suskind, *The price of loyalty*, 76, 81-82.

<sup>179</sup> George W. Bush, 'President Bush delivers graduation speech at West Point' <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html> [Accessed 04-05-2011].

<sup>180</sup> U.S. Department of Treasury: Office of Management and Budget, *U.S. Budget: Fiscal Year 2002* (Washington D.C. 2001) 19. Available at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy02/pdf/budget.pdf> (U.S. Government) [Accessed 14-04-2011].

<sup>181</sup> U.S. Department of Treasury: Office of Management and Budget, *U.S. Budget: Fiscal Year 2004* (Washington D.C. 2003) 90. Available at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy04/pdf/budget.pdf> (U.S. Government) [Accessed 14-04-2011].

Pentagon's National Defense University in Washington D.C. on January 31, 2002, Rumsfeld requested an increase of \$48 billion in defense spending for the year 2003. It was the largest budget increase in two decades.<sup>182</sup> The actual defense spending in 2003 amounted to over \$388 billion.<sup>183</sup> After 2003, the defense spending kept rising. For example, in 2004 the actual defense spending amounted to approximately \$437 billion.<sup>184</sup>

#### 4.4 The Bush Squad

A look at the background of each top official in the Bush administration reveals quite a lot. Most high-ranking officials in President Bush's team were long-standing advocates of invading Iraq. These individuals came to be called 'Iraq war hawks' by the media only after 9/11 but the fact is that they already had a long history (some longer than others) of advocating regime change in Iraq.<sup>185</sup> This was, however, not the only thing that they had in common. The majority of the Bush administration's principals were neoconservatives, who advocated that America had to reassure its dominance in the world, expand its power, and export its values. It cannot be a coincidence that the Bush administration largely consisted of neoconservatives, as Bush's view on the world was essentially neoconservative.

After Bush took office, he appointed the neocon Richard Perle head of the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee of the Department of Defense. Perle was no stranger to Iraq. During his tenure as Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Reagan administration he acquired the nickname 'Prince of Darkness', supposedly because he was a firm supporter of invading Iraq.<sup>186</sup> Under Bush, Perle continued his uncompromising attitude toward Iraq. He was the most outspoken public advocate of toppling Saddam.<sup>187</sup> In *An End to Evil*, Perle argues that invading Iraq was the right thing to do because it was essential to free the world from evil and that America 'had to strike back and hard after 9/11' and 'continue from Afghanistan on to Iraq' in order to 'show confidence and strength.'<sup>188</sup>

Neocon Paul Wolfowitz was also an advocate of regime change in Iraq. Like Perle, Wolfowitz advocated the invasion of Iraq much earlier than 9/11 and long before he became part of the Bush administration, at least as early as November 9, 1997. On that date *The Washington Post* published an article of Wolfowitz in which he urged America to lead the way in deposing Saddam and control Iraq's oil riches, because 'Saddam's attachment to his weapons of mass destruction [...] is further evidence, if any were needed, that he will continue to pose a threat to the security and stability of a large and important part of the world as long as he remains in power.'<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> George Cahlink, 'Rumsfeld makes case for military transformation', *Government Executive*, January 31, 2002.

<sup>183</sup> U.S. Department of Treasury: Office of Management and Budget, *U.S. Budget: Fiscal Year 2005* (Washington D.C. 2004) 102. Available at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy05/pdf/budget.pdf> (U.S. Government) [Accessed 14-04-2011].

<sup>184</sup> U.S. Department of Treasury: Office of Management and Budget, *U.S. Budget: Fiscal Year 2006* (Washington D.C. 2005) 95. Available at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy06/pdf/budget.pdf> (U.S. Government) [Accessed 14-04-2011].

<sup>185</sup> John Donnelly, 'Iraq war hawks have plans to reshape entire Mideast', *Boston Globe*, September 10, 2002.

<sup>186</sup> Mary Dejevsky, 'On the defensive: America's Prince of Darkness', *The Independent*, March 29, 2003.

<sup>187</sup> Woodward, *Plan of attack*, 281.

<sup>188</sup> Richard Perle and David Frum, *An end to evil: how to win the war on terror* (New York 2004) 23.

<sup>189</sup> Paul Wolfowitz, 'We must lead the way in deposing Saddam', *The Washington Post*, November 9, 1997.



On January 26, 1998, Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld and others, including Perle, send a letter to President Bill Clinton urging him to ‘undertake military action against Iraq’ and to remove Saddam and his regime from power, because if ‘Saddam does acquire the capability to deliver weapons of mass destruction [...] a significant portion of the world’s supply of oil will be put at hazard.’<sup>190</sup> The letter, also signed by other future members of the Bush administration, including Zalmay Khalilzad (Ambassador to the United Nations), Robert B. Zoelick (President of the World Bank Group), Richard L. Armitage (Deputy Secretary of State), John Bolton (Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security), Paula Dobriansky (Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs) and Peter W. Rodman (Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs), was written by the signatories on behalf of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), of which they were all founding members.<sup>191</sup>

The PNAC (1997-2006) was a right-wing think-tank, consisting largely of neoconservatives and advocating a policy of military strength focused on increasing defense spending and challenging regimes hostile to American values and interests.<sup>192</sup> The PNAC’s main founders, William Kristol and Robert Kagan, described this policy as ‘conservative’ and ‘neo-Reaganite’ in a 1996 article for *Foreign Affairs*.<sup>193</sup> The organization had great influence on setting American foreign policy during the Bush era, as many of its members occupied important positions in the government. In September 2000, the PNAC published a ninety page report calling for increased military spending, expansion of military bases in the Middle East and Central Asia, promotion of American norms and values, rejection of international treaties, prevention of threats to American security, aggressive action against anti-American organizations and nations, and continued American nuclear strategic superiority.<sup>194</sup> Besides the individuals mentioned above, Dick Cheney (Vice President) was also a founding member of PNAC, a signatory of its 1997 statement of principles and an early supporter of regime change in Iraq. Cheney served as defense secretary under George H. W. Bush, which included the 1991 Gulf War, and according to the widely acclaimed journalist Bob Woodward, he ‘harbored a deep sense of unfinished business about Iraq.’<sup>195</sup> Another long-standing neocon, PNAC member, and Iraq war campaigner in Bush’s crew was Douglas Feith, often called ‘ultra-hawk’ by the media and scholars because of his uncompromising view on regime change in Iraq. In 2008 Feith stated that ‘the President made the right decision given what he knew and given what we all knew and to tell you the truth, even

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<sup>190</sup> Project for the New American Century, ‘Letter to President Clinton on Iraq’ <http://www.newamericancentury.org/iraqclintonletter.htm> [Accessed 24-04-2011].

<sup>191</sup> Neil Mackay, ‘Rumsfeld urged Clinton to attack Iraq’, *The Sunday Herald*, March 16, 2003. See [http://www.publiceye.org/pnac\\_chart/pnac\\_contributors\\_signatories\\_gw\\_bush\\_administration.html](http://www.publiceye.org/pnac_chart/pnac_contributors_signatories_gw_bush_administration.html) (PublicEye.org) for a full list of PNAC contributors and signatories from the Bush administration [Accessed 24-04-2011].

<sup>192</sup> Project for the New American Century, ‘Statement of principles’ <http://www.newamericancentury.org/state-mentofprinciples.htm>. And: Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), ‘Project for the New American Century’ [http://www.rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/Project\\_for\\_the\\_New\\_American\\_Century](http://www.rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/Project_for_the_New_American_Century) [Accessed 25-04-2011].

<sup>193</sup> William Kristol and Robert Kagan, ‘Toward a neo-Reaganite foreign policy’, *Foreign Affairs* 75:4 (1996) 23.

<sup>194</sup> Project for the New American Century, ‘Rebuilding America’s defenses: strategy, forces, and resources for a new century’ <http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf> [Accessed 25-04-2011].

<sup>195</sup> Woodward, *Plan of attack*, 9.

given what we've learned since', referring to America's failure to find WMD in Iraq.<sup>196</sup> In July 1996 Feith teamed up with Perle, David and Meyrav Wurmser (whom both served as Middle East advisers to Cheney) and others to write a paper, entitled 'A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm', for an Israeli think-tank explicating a policy for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The paper advised Netanyahu to abandon the Oslo Accords and permanently take possession of the entire West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The paper also recommended Israel to focus on the removal of Saddam and the reinstatement of the Hashemite monarchy in Baghdad. This would lead to regime change in the rest of the Middle East, including Syria, Lebanon, Iran and Saudi Arabia.<sup>197</sup>

Karl Rove, Bush's chief advisor, closest confidant, and the architect of his two White House election victories, was also an early supporter of regime change in Iraq.<sup>198</sup> Although Rove was not a member of PNAC and much less outspoken about invading Iraq than his future colleagues, he had considerable influence on shaping Bush's foreign policy objectives and his selection of the 'Iraq war hawks' profiled above. This earned him nicknames such as 'Bush's brain' and 'the architect', coined by the political journalists James Moore and Wayne Slater.<sup>199</sup> However, in contrast to other members of the Bush administration, Rove was supposedly much more focused on the domestic advantages of going to war with Iraq. Several scholars consider Rove's support for the Iraq war an essential part of his realist or Machiavellian strategy to ensure a long period of Republican control.<sup>200</sup>

Unlike the Iraq-hardliners Perle, Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld, Feith, and Cheney, Condoleezza Rice had no history of advocating regime change in Iraq when she became part of the Bush administration. She had a much more moderate view on Iraq and the Middle East. In early 2000, Rice wrote an article for *Foreign Affairs* in which she stated that America could actually coexist with a nuclear-armed Iraq. Rice emphasized that Saddam's 'conventional military power' had been 'severely weakened' and that 'there need be no sense of panic' about his regime.<sup>201</sup> During the 2000 presidential campaign Rice stated that American power should not be used for 'second order' results, such as the improvement of global prosperity and freedom.<sup>202</sup> Collin Powell (Secretary of State) too had no history of advocating regime change in Iraq. However, after 9/11 both Rice and Powell made significant contributions to Washington's Iraq war case.

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<sup>196</sup> Michelle Singer, 'Feith: Iraq attack was preemptive', *CBS News*, April 3, 2008.

<sup>197</sup> Pepe Escobar, 'This war is brought to you by', *Asia Times*, March 20, 2003. And: Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies (IASPS), 'Clean break: a new strategy for securing the realm' <http://www.iasps.org/strat1.htm> [Accessed 25-04-2011].

<sup>198</sup> Philip Sherwell, 'Karl Rove launches Bush legacy project', *The Daily Telegraph*, December 6, 2008.

<sup>199</sup> Karl Rove, 'An hour with Karl Rove' <http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/8787> (interview for PBS's *Charlie Rose*) [Accessed 28-04-2011].

<sup>200</sup> Mearsheimer and Walt, *U.S. foreign policy*, 230.

<sup>201</sup> Condoleezza Rice, 'Promoting the national interest', *Foreign Affairs* 79:1 (2000) 60-62.

<sup>202</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler, 'Bush's foreign policy', *Foreign Policy* 144 (2004) 24-25.

#### 4.5 Political Control

Colony, colonialism, empire, and empire-building (imperialism) have been defined in diverse ways in academic and popular literature. They have also often been used without being clearly defined, leading to fruitless debates. This paper uses the definitions of the political scientists David B. Abernethy. According to Abernethy's definition, a 'colony' is a dependent territory within an empire; a penetrated polity. A territory can be considered an imperial possession even if a metropole is unable to effectively govern its entire area. 'Colonialism' is the set of policies and ideologies employed by a metropole to retain control of a colony and to benefit from control. Abernethy defines 'empire' in political terms as a relationship of domination and subordination between one polity (metropole) and one or more territories (colonies). 'Imperialism' or 'empire-building' is the process of constructing an empire; the process of expanding power and wealth by exercising political control and acquiring resources and economic influence. The distinctive core feature is political control. A dominant state is an imperial metropole and a weaker territory a colony when the dominant state: (1) claims the right to make decisions affecting the weaker territory's domestic affairs and external relations; (2) establishes and staffs an administration that extracts or allocates resources from and enforces regulations on some economically or strategically significant portion of the weaker territory.<sup>203</sup>

The 2002 *National Security Strategy* (NSS) report, the Bush doctrine, confirmed the new military strategy formulated in the QDR 2001. It offered a comprehensive strategy for America to transform its major national security institutions, including the military, to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century. Like the QDR 2001, the NSS 2002 proclaimed that the crucial role of the American military had to be reassured, and that America had to keep its military power beyond challenge.<sup>204</sup> The NSS 2002, however, did not only focus on military power and strategies. It formulated a much broader security strategy for America, including non-military initiatives. Moreover, while the QDR 2001 explained *how* America could bolster its global power, the NSS 2002 illuminated *why* this was necessary. It argued that America had to expand its global power in order to effectively defend its national security against terrorist organizations and rogue states.<sup>205</sup> One might think that the NSS 2002 is a piece of American propaganda that does not provide insight into the real reasons behind the Iraq war. However, it actually does contain significant revelations about America's motives, at least if interpreted correctly. It is all up there, the reasons, in the NSS 2002.

The Bush doctrine had four elements. The first element was a strong confidence in a state's domestic regime in forming its foreign policy and transforming international politics. This belief led America to promote democracy in the Middle East by the use of force. Bush tried to bring democracy to countries ruled by tyrannical regimes, just like Woodrow Wilson tried to teach Latin American

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<sup>203</sup> David B. Abernethy, *The dynamics of global dominance: European overseas empires 1415-1980* (London 2000) 18-22.

<sup>204</sup> Bush, *NSS 2002*, 29-31.

<sup>205</sup> Bush, *NSS 2002*, 13-16.

nations to elect good leaders.<sup>206</sup> The second element was the view that great threats, posed mainly by terrorist organizations, like Al-Qaeda, and rogue states, such as Iraq, could only be overcome by new dynamic and forceful policies. According to the Bush administration, Cold War strategies such as deterrence and containment would not work in the twenty-first century. The administration alleged that the solution was to wage preventive wars. This point is very important. As explained in chapter 3, Iraq did not form a threat to the security of the United States. After the Iraq invasion, President Bush and his officials actually acknowledged this. For example, in a May 2003 interview for *Vanity Fair*, Wolfowitz stated: ‘The truth is that for reasons that have a lot to do with the U.S. government bureaucracy, we settled on the one issue that everyone could agree on, which was weapons of mass destruction as the core reason.’<sup>207</sup> The point is that America invaded Iraq to *prevent* threats; to act against threats before they were fully formed. America’s notion of threats was very broad. America’s focus was not only on Iraq, and the Iraq war was not only about Iraq. America had a grand strategy.

The third element of the Bush doctrine was the will to act unilaterally.<sup>208</sup> To reach its aims and objectives, the Bush administration ignored world public opinion, international law, international agreements, and undermined the authority of the United Nations by refusing to compromise. The administration claimed that the need for preventive wars necessitated unilateral action by America. These preventive wars, in Iraq and Afghanistan, should not be mistaken for joint ventures, as America did not alter its security strategy to meet the preferences of other states.<sup>209</sup> The final element of the Bush doctrine, which brings everything together, was the conviction that America had to assert its dominance in the world. The Bush administration claimed that world peace and stability required this. Dominance referred to the establishment of American hegemony, primacy, or empire. According to the doctrine, only America had the capacity and power to guarantee peace, security, and stability in the world. The central element here was America’s confidence in its domestic regime in forming its foreign policy. The idea was that the democratization (read: Americanization) of Iraq would promote democracy in the rest of the Middle East.<sup>210</sup>

President Bush and his officials often suggested in speeches and interviews, that establishing democracy in Iraq was an end in itself. America should free the Iraqi people from Saddam’s despotic rule, because it was the right thing to do. Many scholars, journalists and others argue, however, that this never could have been a sufficient reason for America to invade Iraq. In *The Prosecution of George W. Bush for Murder* (2008), former prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi argues that if it was, during the past seventy or eighty years alone, America would have been fighting wars in all corners of the world, every day of every year. America would have been fighting in Russia, China, North Korea,

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<sup>206</sup> Robert Jervis, ‘Understanding the Bush doctrine’, *Political Science Quarterly* 118:3 (2003) 366.

<sup>207</sup> Paul Wolfowitz, ‘Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz interview with Karen De Young (interview for *Vanity Fair*) <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2676> [Accessed 23-05-2011].

<sup>208</sup> Bush, *NSS 2002*, 1-7, 13-16

<sup>209</sup> Jervis, ‘The Bush doctrine’, 373-374.

<sup>210</sup> Bush, *NSS 2002*, 17-31.

Darfur, and Cambodia, among other places. Bugliosi emphasizes that it is insane to think that the America would fight other peoples' wars and sacrifice American lives to give freedom to the people of other nations. He points out that even Paul Wolfowitz acknowledged, to *Vanity Fair*, that helping the Iraqis to achieve freedom was 'not a reason to put American kids' lives at risk, certainly not on the scale that we did.'<sup>211</sup> So then, what was a sufficient reason for America to sacrifice the lives of its own people? Why would America want to democratize the entire Middle East?

America's first step was to acquire political control in Iraq. As explained above, according to Abernethy's definition political control is the distinctive core feature of empire-building. After invading Iraq, America made decisions for the country which affected the country's domestic affairs and external relations. By claiming the right to make decisions for Iraq and extracting oil from the country, America created a relationship of domination and subordination between itself (metropole) and Iraq (colony). The dynamics, characteristics, and aims of the oil factor will be explained in paragraph 4.6. At this point, it is sufficient to mention that controlling Iraqi oil was a way for America to solve its energy problem and improve its power position in the Middle East.

America's long-term objective was to use Iraq as a base to promote democracy in the Middle East. The ultimate aim of this strategy was to enhance the security of America; to secure its future and guarantee its survival. The idea was that a Middle East populated by democracies would be advantageous for America. The Bush administration believed that these democracies would be pro-American, or at least not hostile to America. Hence the Iraq war should be seen as the first step of an ambitious plan to reorder the Middle East in ways that would benefit America. This was the Bush administration's grand strategy. This strategy should be understood as a combination of empire-building in Iraq and a policy of democratization toward the rest of the Middle East. In order to democratize the entire Middle East, it was necessary for America to have a strong base in the region. America was motivated by long-term security considerations. The Bush doctrine was all about acting against threats before they were fully formed. Furthermore, although Iraq did not form an imminent threat to the national security of the United States, the Bush administration's concern was the 'bigger picture', the Middle East as a whole. Nations in the region, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, were becoming more and more anti-American and militaristic. Moreover, many countries in the region harbor terrorist organizations.

Why did America choose Iraq as a base? In other words, why did America decide to invade Iraq rather than a country like Iran or Syria? In one sense, invading Iran or Syria would have been a more rational decision since these countries actually have links with terrorist organizations, such as Hezbollah.<sup>212</sup> But America's decision is not hard to understand. Besides that Iraq was the most doable option, other factors were also important. First of all, Iraq was a right choice from a militarily

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<sup>211</sup> Vincent Bugliosi, *The prosecution of George W. Bush for murder* (London 2008) 16-17.

<sup>212</sup> Nathan Guttman, 'Jordan's king: Syria, Hezbollah encourage terrorism in Israel', *Haaretz*, March 25, 2005. And: Dahr Jamail, 'Hezbollah's transformation', *Asia Times*, October 23, 2007.

perspective. As explained in chapter 3, Iraq was strongly destabilized, both economically and militarily, by sanctions which the United Nations imposed on the country in the 1990s. This made Iraq an easy target. Moreover, the country had been defeated before (in the Gulf War) by America. Second, some critics argue that Bush was fixated on Iraq because Saddam once tried to kill his father. This is not exactly a logical reason to invade a country, but perceptions and emotions can be a powerful force behind an individual's decision. Third, Saddam was a dictator with a long history of carrying out atrocities against his own people. Hence it would be easy for the Bush administration to demonize Saddam and sell the war to the American people and the international community. Besides, toppling a tyrant like Saddam would improve America's image in the world. That's what the Bush administration believed anyway. Finally, Iraq has huge oilfields. The same goes for Iran, but this point should be considered in combination with the first three points.

The Bush administration linked utopian notions of spreading democracy, with American security. The NSS 2002 asserted that America would bring the hope of democracy to every corner of the world. These kind of utopian notions are often repeated in the NSS 2002. For example: 'The U.S. national security strategy will be based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the fusion of our values and our national interests. The aim of this strategy is to help make the world not just safer but better.'<sup>213</sup> Besides several other statements in the NSS 2002, there are many other examples that show how the Bush administration linked utopian notions with American security. For example, in a speech at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut on May 21, 2003 President Bush stated: 'We find our greatest security in the advance of human freedom. [...] Because America loves peace; America will always work and sacrifice for the expansion of freedom. [...] Addressing the problems of disease, hunger and poverty in the developing world will make the United States more secure.'<sup>214</sup> The Bush administration was not fooling around, that is for sure. The administration had ambitious aims which it tried to achieve with a step-by-step plan. People who claim that the Bush squad consisted of a bunch of clueless individuals, who were just messing around, are wrong. Sure, whether or not the strategy of the administration was the right strategy to transform the Middle East and make America more secure is debatable.

So, the Bush administration's plan was to improve America's position in the Middle East by acquiring political control in Iraq. The administration's desire was to maximize the security of America by using Iraq as a base to transform the entire Middle East. A July 27, 2001 U.S. Department of Defense information memorandum from Rumsfeld to Rice supports this analysis. In the memo, Rumsfeld recommended a 'Principals Committee meeting on Iraq, followed by a National Security Council meeting.' He proposed several different military operations against Iraq. One of his proposals was to 'undertake a fairly significant U.S. strike against Iraq's fiber optic links, radars, and SAM

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<sup>213</sup> Bush, *NSS 2002*, 1.

<sup>214</sup> George W. Bush, 'President delivers Commencement Address at Coast Guard' <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/05/20030521-2.html> [Accessed 10-05-2011].

(surface-to-air-missile) sites' near Baghdad. After outlining a range of policy options, Rumsfeld argued: 'The particularly unfortunate circumstances of Iraq being governed by Saddam and Iran being governed by the clerics have suspended the standard rule that my enemy's enemy is my friend.' He concluded: 'If Saddam's regime was ousted, we would have a much-improved position in the region and elsewhere. [...] A major success in Iraq would enhance U.S. credibility and influence throughout the region.' As a closing remark, Rumsfeld suggested: 'Why don't we get some smart people to take this memo, rip it apart and refashion it into an appropriate paper for discussion at an early Principals Committee meetings?'<sup>215</sup>

Washington started early to make plans about gaining political control in Iraq. In October 2001, the Department of State began systematically planning for a 'post-Saddam Iraq.' In early 2002 the Department launched the 'Future of Iraq Project.' It was a comprehensive effort to transform Iraq. Over two-hundred engineers, business people, and other experts were organized into seventeen working groups to prepare strategies on various topics, including oil and energy, defense policy, economy, infrastructure, government, and democratic principles and procedures. In total, thirty-three meetings were held from July 2002 to April 2003. The result of the project was a 13-volume, 1,200-page, report, containing many facts, strategies, predictions, and warnings about all kinds of different issues. Eventually, after an internal bureaucratic conflict for control over Iraq policy within the Bush administration, in May 2003 the Department of Defense took over the task of post-war planning.<sup>216</sup>

America used different policies and ideologies, including the political ideology of democracy and the principles of freedom and peace, to retain political control in Iraq. Abernethy defines such a strategy as colonialism, which is the set of policies and ideologies employed by a metropole to retain control of a colony and to benefit from control.<sup>217</sup> America acquired political control in Iraq by establishing an American government in the country. Subsequently, it established a non-democratic pro-American government in Iraq, and finally a democratically chosen pro-American government. This was a multifaceted process. Shortly after the Iraq invasion, in early May 2003, the Bush administration established the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Iraq, and appointed the American diplomat Paul Bremer head of this government. Bremer reported primarily to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld.<sup>218</sup> Rumsfeld directed Bremer to follow 'the twenty-six principles for Iraq', which he had explained in a May 13, 2003 information memorandum to Bremer. The memo said nothing about transferring power to the Iraqi's. To the contrary, Rumsfeld's instructions endorsed a top-down approach. The Coalition Provisional Authority should 'assert authority over the country', Rumsfeld

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<sup>215</sup> DNSA, *The U.S. prepares for conflict*, EBB 326, doc. 6. U.S. Department of Defense, 'Information memorandum from Donald Rumsfeld to Condoleezza Rice about Iraq', July 27, 2001, pages 1-4.

<sup>216</sup> Farrah Hassen, 'New State Department releases on Future of Iraq Project' <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB198/index.htm> (Digital National Security Archive) [Accessed 11-06-2011].

<sup>217</sup> Abernethy, *The dynamics of global dominance*, 22.

<sup>218</sup> George W. Bush, 'Letter from George W. Bush to Paul Bremer', *The New York Times*, May 23, 2003. And: Carl Sprock (U.S. Army Major General), 'Coalition Provisional Authority live briefing from Iraq' <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2812> (U.S. Department of Defense) [Accessed 15-06-2011].

wrote, and should ‘not accept or tolerate self-appointed Iraqi leaders.’ Rumsfeld emphasized that there should be ‘clarity that the Coalition is in charge’, and directed Bremer to take a ‘hands-on’ approach. In addition, Rumsfeld stressed that the Coalition should ‘actively oppose the old regimes enforcers, the Baath Party’, and make sure to ‘eliminate the remnants of Saddam’s regime.’<sup>219</sup> In accordance with Rumsfeld’s directions, Bremer issued Coalition Provisional Authority Order 1 on May 16, 2003, which entirely eliminated the Baath Party’s structures and removed former members from positions of power in the new Iraq. Subsequently, as a part of the ‘de-Baathification’ issue, the Coalition Provisional Authority issued Order 2 on May 23, 2003, which dissolved the Iraqi military, which consisted of 400,000 members.<sup>220</sup>

In July 2003 America established the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) to serve under the Coalition Provisional Authority. The Council consisted of twenty-five Iraqi political, religious, and tribal leaders. These leaders had two things in common: they were all long-standing opponents of Saddam’s regime and they were all pro-American. For example, the religious scholar Mohammed Bahr Al-Ulloum, who was named President of the Council, was a famous hawkish rival of Saddam’s regime. He had fled Iraq in 1991 after several members of his family were killed by Saddam’s soldiers. Another member of the Council, the Kurd Jalal Talabani (the sixth and current President of Iraq), was also a member of the Council.<sup>221</sup> Like Al-Ulloum, Talabani was a radical opponent of Saddam’s regime and a long-standing supporter of America. Massoud Barzani, who is the current President of the Iraqi Kurdistan region and the leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), was also a member of the Council. Barzani led his party through decades of conflict with Saddam’s regime. He commanded tens of thousands of armed militia fighters, known as *peshmerga*, against Saddam. He currently controls a large area of north-western Iraq.<sup>222</sup>

The Coalition Provisional Authority led Iraq until it transferred sovereignty to the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) in June 2004, of which Ayyad Alawi was named Prime Minister. All of the top officials in this government were pro-American and most had long-standing connections with America. Prime Minister Alawi had connections with the U.S. military and the CIA. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hoshiyar Zebari, was a Kurdish guerrilla fighter against Saddam’s regime, who were supported by the United States. The Minister of Defense, Hazem Shaalan, led oppositions against Saddam’s regime in the early 1980s and was forced to leave Iraq in 1985. The Minister of Oil, Thamir Ghadban, was imprisoned by Saddam for supporting democratic reforms. The Minister of Justice,

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<sup>219</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, ‘Information memorandum from Donald Rumsfeld to Paul Bremer [Principles for Iraq: policy guidelines]’, May 13, 2003, pages 1-4. Available at: <http://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/331/2003-05-13%20re%20Principles%20for%20Iraq-Policy%20Guidelines.pdf#search=> (Rumsfeld Library) [Accessed 27-05-2011]. And: Roman Martinez, ‘Donald Rumsfeld’s Iraq revisionism’, *The Washington Post*, February 15, 2011.

<sup>220</sup> Farrah Hassen, ‘Future of Iraq Project’ <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB198/index.htm> (Digital National Security Archive) [Accessed 12-06-2011].

<sup>221</sup> Uğur Ergun, ‘Talabani başkan seçildi, Saddam hücresinden izledi’ (‘Talabani got elected President, while Saddam was watching from his cell’), *Hurriyet*, April 7, 2004.

<sup>222</sup> BBC, ‘Iraq Governing Council members’, July 14, 2003.



Malik Al-Hassan, had been a political prisoner under Saddam as well.<sup>223</sup> In May 2005, the Iraqi Interim Government was replaced by the Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG), which was replaced in 2006 by the first permanent government, of which Talabani is President since its establishment.<sup>224</sup>

Besides utilizing the ideology of democracy and the principles of freedom and peace, eliminating adversaries, and promoting pro-American leaders to positions of power, America also used an alternative strategy to consolidate its political control in Iraq. This was the 'Rapid Reaction Media Team' plan, which was recommended by the U.S. Department of Defense in January 2003 to portray a 'new Iraq' offering 'hopes for a prosperous and democratic future.' In line with Abernethy's definition of colonialism, this media campaign can be categorized as part of an ideological policy to influence and manipulate the Iraqi people. America's strategic 'information campaign' would be 'a component of a long-term civil-military transition of the new Iraq.' According to the Defense Department, the media campaign would have a 'profound psychological and political impact on the Iraqi people.' Moreover, it would 'serve as a model for the Middle East.' The U.S. government would establish an information system that would serve 'as a model for free media in the Arab world.' To ensure that the message would be pro-American, Iraq was to be provided with an American 'Temporary Media Commissioner' to regulate against 'Arab hate media.' American, British, and Iraqi media experts would be 'hand-picked' to provide U.S. 'approved information' to the Iraqi public. In order to effectively implement the media plan, the defense department planned to have 'professional U.S.-trained Iraqi media teams immediately in place' after the invasion.<sup>225</sup> The themes of the 'strategic information campaign' were to be atrocities of Saddam's regime, and a new promising future. The topics included 'U.S. approved democracy series', 're-starting the oil', 'political prisoners and atrocity interviews', 'Saddam's bomb-maker', and 'Saddam's palaces and opulence.'<sup>226</sup>

Unfortunately for the Bush administration, uncontrolled media gave a different picture of Iraq's post-invasion reality: improvised explosive devices, Abu Ghraib, chlorine bombs, sabotage, disappearances, torture, executions, a dysfunctional legal system, a collapsed civil infrastructure, massive casualties, and a mass departure of two million refugees, for whom American humanitarian aid had been fully absent. The influence of alternative media, freelancers, cell phones, bloggers, satellite news outlets, and video uploads in the twenty-first century world were obviously not anticipated by the U.S. Department of Defense.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Editorial Staff, 'Profiles: key figures in Iraq's interim government', *The Guardian*, June 28, 2004.

<sup>224</sup> BBC, 'Guide to political groups in Iraq', November 11, 2010.

<sup>225</sup> Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), *Archive Iraq: the media war plan (2003-2007)*. Access code: EBB 219 (Electronic Briefing Book no. 219). Document: 1. U.S. Department of Defense, 'Paper on media information campaign in Iraq [Rapid Reaction Media Team]', January 16, 2003, page 1.

<sup>226</sup> DNSA, *Archive Iraq: the media war plan*, EBB 219, doc. 1. U.S. Department of Defense, 'Paper on media information campaign in Iraq [Rapid Reaction Media Team]', January 16, 2003, pages 2-3.

<sup>227</sup> Joyce Battle, 'Iraq: the media war plan' <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB219/index.htm> (Digital National Security Archive) [Accessed 27-05-2011].

#### 4.6 Black Gold

Much has been written about the theory that America invaded Iraq for oil. In a 2008 article for *Foreign Affairs*, the political scientist Michael L. Ross noted that oil-producing nations form an increasing part of the world's conflict-ridden countries. He emphasized that oil-rich countries now host roughly one third of the world's civil wars, compared to one fifth in 1992. Ross argued that the American invasion of Iraq proved that oil is so important that a desire to control it can lead to conflict between nations. He predicted that conflicts about oil would increase in the near future as the extremely high prices of oil would push more countries in the developing world to produce oil and gas. Ross stated that oil is not unique, because diamonds and other minerals produce conflicts too, but because more countries depend on oil than on gold, copper, or any other resource, oil breeds bigger conflicts.<sup>228</sup>

According to a 2003 Pew Research Center opinion poll, 76% of the Russians, 75% of the French, 54% of the Germans and 44% of the British believed that America invaded Iraq for oil.<sup>229</sup> According to Mo Mowlam (a British Labour Party politician and Minister for the Cabinet Office in the period 1999-2001), the 'war on terrorism was all about 'securing oil supplies.'<sup>230</sup> In a 2002 article for *The Guardian*, Mowlam wrote: 'This whole affair has nothing to do with a threat from Iraq, there isn't one. It has nothing to do with the war against terrorism or with morality. Saddam Hussein is obviously an evil man, but when we were selling arms to him to keep the Iranians in check he was the same evil man he is today. [...] In the same way he served western interests then, he is now the distraction for the sleight of hand to protect the west's supply of oil.'<sup>231</sup> In a 2003 article for the academic think-tank Foreign Policy in Focus (FPiF) the sociologist Paul Rogers asserted: 'If Iraq produced rice or oranges instead of oil, there would be no great concern. [...] The bottom line with Iraq is oil. [...] Consolidated and substantial military presence in Iraq ensures the security of Iraqi oil for the long term, it limits dependence on a potentially unstable Saudi Arabia.'<sup>232</sup>

As explained in paragraph 4.5, one of the two essential elements of empire-building, according to Abernethy, is the acquisition or allocation of resources by the dominant state from the weaker territory. Evidence shows that this was indeed a driving force behind the Iraq war. Controlling Iraqi oil was a way for America to increase its power and influence in the Middle East, and at the same time a way to solve its energy problem. As will be shown in the following sections, the interest of oil-producing nations in the Middle East, principally Saudi Arabia, had become increasingly at odds with American interests since the turn of the twenty-first century. This alteration was largely the result of the Arab-Israeli conflict. What bothered the Bush administration, was that Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich countries were using oil as a political weapon against America. Hence America tried to reverse this situation by acquiring Iraqi oil, which would solve America's energy problem, expand America's

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<sup>228</sup> Michael L. Ross, 'Blood barrels: why oil wealth fuels conflict', *Foreign Affairs* 87:3 (2008) 2.

<sup>229</sup> J.F.O. McAllister, 'Mad at America', *Time*, January 20, 2003.

<sup>230</sup> Martin Yant, 'Big Oil's war on Iraq', *The Free Press*, November 13, 2002.

<sup>231</sup> Mo Mowlam, 'The real goal is the seizure of Saudi oil', *The Guardian*, September 5, 2002.

<sup>232</sup> Paul Rogers, 'Iran: the next target?', *Foreign Policy in Focus*, January 31, 2003.

economic and political influence in the Middle East, and hence make America less dependent on oil-rich countries in the region. The ultimate aim was to shift the balance of power in the Middle East in America's favor.

On February 1, 2001, President Bush established the Energy Task Force, officially the National Energy Policy Development Group (NEPDG), directing it to develop 'a national energy policy designed to help the private sector [...] state and local governments' and promote 'dependable, affordable and environmentally sound production and distribution of energy for the future.'<sup>233</sup> Dick Cheney was named chairman of the task force. A previously undisclosed top-secret National Security Council document, dated February 3, 2001, shows that President Bush directed the National Security Council personnel to cooperate closely with the Energy Task Force. The document focused on connecting two areas of policy: 'The review of operational policies towards rogue states' (such as Iraq) and 'actions regarding the capture of new and existing oil and gas fields.'<sup>234</sup>

In early April 2001, the Energy Task Force released its first report, titled 'Strategic Energy Policy Challenges for the 21st Century.' The report contains striking revelations about America's desire to control Iraq's oil riches. The report starts with explaining that America has an energy problem: 'The world is currently precariously close to utilizing all of its available global oil production capacity, raising the chances of an oil-supply crisis with more substantial consequences than seen in three decades. [...] It is not strategically and politically desirable to remedy our present tenuous situation by simply increasing dependence on a few foreign sources. [...] The American people continue to demand plentiful and cheap energy without sacrifice or inconvenience, but emerging technologies are not yet commercially viable to fill shortages and will not be for some time. Nor is surplus energy capacity available at this time to meet such demands.'<sup>235</sup>

Subsequently, the report focuses on America's dependency on oil producing countries in the Middle East and explains that Iraq forms a problem to American interests: 'U.S. international oil policy has relied on maintenance of free access to Middle East Gulf oil and free access for Gulf exports to world markets. [...] But recently, things have changed. These Gulf allies are finding their domestic and foreign policy interests increasingly at odds with U.S. strategic considerations, especially as Arab-Israeli tensions flare. [...] The resulting tight markets have increased U.S. and global vulnerability to disruption and provided adversaries undue potential influence over the price of oil. Iraq has become a key producer, posing a difficult situation for the U.S. government.'<sup>236</sup>

Consequently, the report puts the emphasis on Saddam: '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

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<sup>233</sup> Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for International Studies (MITCIS), 'Energy and climate change' [http://web.mit.edu/cis/fpi\\_environmental\\_protection.html](http://web.mit.edu/cis/fpi_environmental_protection.html) [Accessed 15-04-2011].

<sup>234</sup> Jane Meyer, 'What did the Vice President do for Halliburton?', *The New Yorker*, February 16, 2004, page 5.

<sup>235</sup> U.S. National Energy Policy Development Group (NEPDG), *Strategic energy policy challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (2001) 3-4. Available at: [www.bakerinstitute.org/publications/strategic-energy-policy-challenges-for-the-21st-century-complete-text-of-the-report-by-the-independent-task-force](http://www.bakerinstitute.org/publications/strategic-energy-policy-challenges-for-the-21st-century-complete-text-of-the-report-by-the-independent-task-force) (The Baker Institute) [Accessed 17-05-2011].

<sup>236</sup> NEPDG, *Strategic energy policy*, 15-16.

international markets from the Middle East. Saddam Hussein has demonstrated a willingness to threaten to use the oil weapon and to use his own export program to manipulate oil markets. This would display his personal power, enhance his image as a Pan-Arab leader supporting the Palestinians against Israel, and pressure others for a lifting of economic sanctions against his regime.<sup>237</sup> The report's final recommendation is that America 'should conduct an immediate policy review toward Iraq, including military, energy, economic, and political/diplomatic assessments' and seriously consider a 'military intervention.'<sup>238</sup>

In July 2003, Judicial Watch, a public interest group that investigates and prosecutes government corruption and abuse, managed to obtain documents of the Energy Task Force as a result of a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit. After examining the documents Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton stated: 'These documents show the importance of the Energy Task Force and why its operations should be open to the public.'<sup>239</sup> One of the documents contains a map of Iraqi oilfields, pipelines, refineries and terminals.<sup>240</sup> Another document, entitled 'Foreign Suitors for Iraqi Oilfield Contracts', includes charts detailing Iraqi oil and gas projects. The document offers an in depth analysis of countries and firms that have or are negotiating oilfield contracts in Iraq. It offers a detailed outline of which country or firm is controlling (or negotiating to control) what part of Iraqi oilfields. For example, the document points out that the Russian firm *Lukoil* signed contracts with Iraq in March 1997 for the oilfields Qurnah and Rumaylah, and that the Russian firm *Mashinoimport* is discussing contracts for the oilfields Luhais and Subba. Another example, the document states that the South Korean firm *Sangyong* paid the Iraqi government \$4 billion in June 1997 for the oilfield Halfaya, and that 'Seoul invited Iraq Oil Minister to South Korea for signing ceremony.'<sup>241</sup>

Two other Energy Task Force documents focus on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Similarly to the Iraq documents, these documents contain a map of each country's oilfields, pipelines, refineries and tanker terminals.<sup>242</sup> There are supporting charts with details of the major oil and gas development projects in each country that provide information on the projects, costs, capacity, oil company, status, and completion date.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> NEPDG, *Strategic energy policy*, 40.

<sup>238</sup> NEPDG, *Strategic energy policy*, 32, 40.

<sup>239</sup> Judicial Watch, 'Cheney Energy Task Force documents feature map of Iraqi oilfields' <http://www.judicialwatch.org/oldsite/iraqi-oilfield-pr.shtm> [Accessed 25-05-2011].

<sup>240</sup> National Energy Policy Development Group (NEPDG), 'Iraqi oilfields and exploration blocks', March 5, 2003. Available at: <http://www.judicialwatch.org/oldsite/IraqOilMap.pdf>. (Judicial Watch) [Accessed 25-05-2011].

<sup>241</sup> NEPDG, 'Foreign suitors for Iraqi oilfield contracts (part 1)', March 5, 2003. Available at: <http://www.judicialwatch.org/oldsite/IraqOilFrngnSuitors.pdf>. And: 'Foreign suitors for Iraqi oilfield contracts (part 2)' <http://www.judicialwatch.org/oldsite/IraqOilGasProj.pdf> (Judicial Watch) [Accessed 25-05-2011].

<sup>242</sup> NEPDG, 'Selected oil facilities of the United Arab Emirates', March 5, 2003. Available at: <http://www.judicialwatch.org/oldsite/UAEOilMap.pdf>. And: 'Selected oil facilities in Saudi Arabia' <http://www.judicialwatch.org/oldsite/SAOilMap.pdf> (Judicial Watch) [Accessed 25-05-2011].

<sup>243</sup> NEPDG, 'United Arab Emirates: major oil and gas development projects', March 5, 2003. Available at: <http://www.judicialwatch.org/oldsite/UAEOilProj.pdf>. And: 'Saudi Arabia: major oil and natural gas development projects' <http://www.judicialwatch.org/oldsite/SAOilProj.pdf> (Judicial Watch) [Accessed 25-05-2011].

Why would America establish a task force to review its energy policy and subsequently go on to invade an oil-rich country? Why would the Energy Task Force assemble detailed maps of Iraqi oilfields, pipelines, refineries and terminals? And why was America so interested in Iraqi oil and gas projects? For what other purpose could America have done these things than controlling Iraq's oil riches? The documents of the Energy Task Force show that oil was a crucial motivation for America to invade Iraq. The idea was that the control of Iraqi oil would solve America's energy problem. Moreover, it would increase America's political and economic influence in the Middle East, thereby reinforcing its power position in the region. Hence by invading Iraq, America expanded its power in the Middle East and added to its overall global power.

Controlling Iraqi oil was a key element in America's Iraq war plan. The 'Tampa conversation' illuminates this point. On November 27, 2001 Rumsfeld flew to Tampa Bay, Florida to meet with General Tommy Franks to discuss a new plan for war with Iraq.<sup>244</sup> The notes (prepared in consultation with Wolfowitz and Feith) used by Rumsfeld in this meeting to brief Franks list steps that Defense Department officials believed could lead to the collapse of the Iraqi government. The notes contain strategies that the Bush administration was planning to use to initiate war, including Iraqi military actions against Kurds in northern Iraq protected by America, discovery of links between Saddam Hussein and 9/11, and disputes over United Nations weapons of mass destruction inspections ('start now thinking about inspection demands'). The notes show that Rumsfeld wanted Franks to get ready to initiate military action before deploying a large U.S. military force in Iraq. Moreover, the notes include the following statement by Feith: 'Unlike in Afghanistan, important to have ideas in advance about who would rule afterwards.' The notes also contain information about an 'influence campaign' against Iraq. Last but not least, the notes reflect elements of a plan to seize Iraq's oil fields and transfer its revenues to a new U.S.-controlled Iraqi government.<sup>245</sup>

The Bush administration has always maintained that the Iraq war was not about oil. For example, in a press briefing in Pretoria, South-Africa, on July 10, 2003, Colin Powell stated: 'The oil of the Iraqi people belongs to the Iraqi people; it is their wealth, it will be used for their benefit. So we did not do it for oil.'<sup>246</sup> In a press conference on June 14, 2006, at the White House Rose Garden, President Bush said: 'Oil belongs to the Iraqi people, and the government has the responsibility to be good stewards of that valuable asset and valuable resource.'<sup>247</sup> These statements might sound sincere, but they do not reflect the Bush administration's actual view on Iraqi oil. It is explained in chapter 4 that in the build-up to the Iraq war, President Bush and his officials misinformed the public about a

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<sup>244</sup> Donald Rumsfeld and Tommy Franks, 'DoD news briefing: Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Franks' <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2465> (U.S. Department of Defense) [Accessed 17-06-2011].

<sup>245</sup> DNSA, *The U.S. prepares for conflict*, EBB 326, doc. 8. U.S. Department of Defense, 'Notes prepared by Donald Rumsfeld, Douglas Feith, and Paul Wolfowitz [Iraq War Planning]', November 27, 2001, pages 1-3.

<sup>246</sup> Colin Powell, 'Secretary of State Colin Powell discusses President's trip to Africa' <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/07/20030710-5.html> [Accessed 13-06-2011].

<sup>247</sup> George W. Bush, 'Press conference of the President' <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/06/20060614.html> [Accessed 13-06-2011].

variety of issues, including Iraqi links with Al-Qaeda and Saddam's alleged nuclear weapons program. Hence it is not surprising that the administration did not publicize its actual plans and intentions concerning Iraqi oil.

In late January 2004, the U.S.-controlled Iraqi government set out the legal framework to sign production-sharing agreement (PSA) contracts with international oil companies in order to remove Iraq's most precious commodity from national control.<sup>248</sup> This method of privatization had already been recommended by the U.S. Department of State's Oil and Energy Working Group in meetings between December 2002 and April 2003. The legislation was prepared with the assistance of Bearing Point, an American consultancy firm hired by the U.S. government. Production-sharing agreements are favored by oil companies. All major oil-producing states in the Middle East, however, reject such agreements because they give oil companies more power and revenues than the governments.<sup>249</sup> The agreements allow a country to manage its oil, but give a large share of profits to companies that invest in exploration, infrastructure-building, drilling, and operation of the pipelines and refineries.<sup>250</sup>

In 1999 Dick Cheney, then the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Halliburton, the world's second largest oilfield services corporation, stated: 'By 2010 we will need a further 50 million barrels a day. The Middle East, with two-thirds of the oil and the lowest cost, is still where the prize lies.'<sup>251</sup> Shortly after the invasion of Iraq, the U.S. Department of Defense gave out contracts to Halliburton, which included 'operation of facilities and distribution of products.' This was revealed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Previously, the Corps had described the contract given to Halliburton as 'putting out fires at oil wells during the conflict.' The emergency contract for fire fighting and capping Iraqi oil wells was awarded to Halliburton without a bidding process. In May 2003 Henry Waxman, head of the U.S. House of Representative's Government Reform Committee, stated: 'Only now, over five weeks after the contract was first disclosed, are members of Congress and the public learning that Halliburton may be asked to pump and distribute Iraqi oil under the contract.' This statement was confirmed by the U.S. Army. Several American oil companies criticized the U.S. government, because it only invited a select number of companies to make bids for oil contracts.<sup>252</sup> Iraq's oil reserves are obviously a precious asset worth having. According to 2008 estimates, Iraq oil reserves were the third largest in the world, with an estimated capacity of 115 billion barrels. In October 2010 Iraq's Oil Minister Hussain Al-Shahristani announced that Iraq's oil reserves had increased by 25% to 143.1 billion barrels. This increase made the country's oil reserves the second largest in the world.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Kamil Mahdi, 'Iraqis will never accept this sellout to the oil corporations', *The Guardian*, January 16, 2007.

<sup>249</sup> Antonia Juhasz, 'It's still about oil in Iraq', *The Los Angeles Times*, December 8, 2006.

<sup>250</sup> Kevin Zeese, 'The corporate-U.S. takeover of the Iraq economy', *American Chronicle*, May 9, 2006. And: Editorial Staff, 'Blood and oil: how the West will profit from Iraq's most precious commodity', *The Independent*, January 7, 2007.

<sup>251</sup> Pepe Escobar, 'U.S. Iraq oil grab is a done deal', *Asia Times*, February 28, 2007.

<sup>252</sup> BBC, 'Halliburton's Iraq role expands', May 7, 2003.

<sup>253</sup> Daily Mail Reporter, 'Iraq now the second biggest oil producer: oil reserves increase by 25% to 143.1 billion barrels', *The Daily Mail*, October 5, 2010.

## 4.7 Conclusion

The decision to invade Iraq was carefully considered by the Bush administration. The administration devised a comprehensive plan which included strategies, policies, and tactics of how to initiate war; how to sell the war to the American public and the international community; how to acquire political control in Iraq; how to manage and utilize Iraq's oil riches; and how to acquire economic influence. The development of America's ambitious plan was a process, which started the moment George W. Bush took office. Most members in the Bush administration were long-standing neoconservatives, who had a long history of advocating war against Iraq and the expansion of American hegemony.

By invading Iraq the United States guaranteed long-term oil supplies for itself. The control of oil was driven by two factors. The first was about securing the energy future of the United States. The second factor was about power. By controlling Iraq's oil riches the United States decreased its dependency on oil-producing nations such as Saudi-Arabia, and in doing so it improved its power position in the Middle East.

The Iraq war was about expanding power and wealth. It was a typical case of empire-building. The Bush administration had ambitious plans. Its empire-building project in Iraq was part of a grand strategy to transform the Middle East in ways that would benefit America. The administration chose Iraq as its command center to carry out this strategy. The idea was to promote democracy in the Middle East. The ultimate end was to enhance the security of the United State in order to secure a prosperous future for the nation; to make sure that the twenty-first century would be just as American as the twentieth. America was aiming for a new American century indeed! This desire does not make America unique. The country followed the tradition of past empires. All great empires in history have tried to dominate and shape the international system. Great empires used power to achieve hegemony in order to guarantee their survival. The Bush era was certainly not a period of moderation, but it seems that the Bush administration was ultimately aiming for a Pax Americana, a period of peace and stability. To reach this grand objective, the administration pursued a highly offensive strategy.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> The concept of 'Pax' was made famous by the English historian Edward Gibbon in *The decline and fall of the Roman Empire* (1776). In the first chapter of the book, Gibbon writes about the Pax Romana: 'The seven first centuries were filled with a rapid succession of triumphs; but it was reserved for Augustus to relinquish the ambitious design of subduing the whole earth, and to introduce a spirit of moderation.' See: Edward Gibbon, *The rise and fall of the Roman empire* (Hertfordshire 1998) 4.

## 5. International Relations Theory

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter answers the final part of the central research question: *Why did American invade Iraq? What were America's aims? And which international relations theories offer the most adequate explanation for the invasion?* The focus is on examining and evaluating the explanatory capacity of each of the three international relations theories that this paper uses to explain the reasons behind the Iraq war. The reality of the Bush administration has been perceived as realist, liberalist, and constructivist, among others, as all scholars use persuasive arguments to prove their thesis. This does not mean that some are right and others are wrong. International relations theory is not about proving right or wrong, but about providing adequate frameworks to explain developments and actions. In the study of international relations theories or paradigms provide a good guide for understanding behavior and interpreting trends and changing conditions in international politics. However, one theory of international relations can never provide a complete or an irrefutable reconstruction of reality; that is state behavior and policy decisions. Therefore, the purpose of a theory of international relations is not simply to give a reconstruction of reality, but to provide an interpretive framework for understanding and explaining reality. This reality can be interpreted in different ways. However, this does not mean that all interpretations are also equally credible. The question is: *To what extent does a theory match the facts of reality?* The theory that is most consistent with reality is also the most credible. In other words, some theories prove more credible than others because the data that is being examined is more complete and consistent with reality.<sup>255</sup>

### 5.2 Constructivism

In the 1980s, social movements worried about the possibility of nuclear war emerged in both North America and Europe. They had more or less the same objective, to end the nuclear arms race. American movements often formulated their ideas in a measured way in order to get the support of a larger public. In Europe, the critique was more unrestrained and diverse. Against this background scholars started to criticize the traditional theories and scientific methods of international relations. This eventually led to the emergence of constructivism, which started as a reaction against the failure of international relations scholars to predict or initially explain the end of the Cold War on the basis of the dominant international relations theories.<sup>256</sup>

The main assumption of constructivism is that there is no objective reality because international politics is a 'world of our making.' Constructivism uses a different methodology than neorealist and neoliberalist theory to explain state behavior, conflict, and cooperation. Neorealists and neoliberalists assume that there is a social reality, about which objective universal statements can be made.

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<sup>255</sup> Torbjørn L. Knutsen, *A history of international relations theory* (Manchester 1997) 1-7.

<sup>256</sup> K.M. Fierke, 'Constructivism', in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith (eds.), *International relations theories: discipline and diversity* (Oxford 2010) 178-179, 186.



Constructivists, however, claim that reality is a construction which is formed by state behavior, and hence that state behavior can change reality. Therefore, according to constructivists, it is not possible to make objective universal statements about neither state behavior nor reality.<sup>257</sup> Constructivists emphasize the importance of processes of interaction. Actors make choices in the process of interacting with others, and as a result create historically, culturally, and politically distinct realities. In this respect, the international system is a social construction. It does not exist independently of human meaning and action. States and other actors do not just act rationally but interact in a social world. Hence interaction rather than rational behavior forms the interests and behavior states. The idea of social construction also emphasizes difference on the basis of context rather than a single objective reality. Constructivists focus on explaining change at the international level. This is in contrast to realism and liberalism, which assume that states are the same across time and space. Realists and liberalists focus on identifying objective principles for the purpose of generalization and theory construction, while constructivists emphasize the social dimensions of international relations, and the importance of norms, rules, and language at this level.<sup>258</sup>

The most prominent constructivists are Alexander Wendt, Ted Hopf, and Robert Jervis. These scholars reject the notion that states always seek to maximize their power and wealth. They do not claim that states have no interests, but that interests have no meaning and direction without the identity of the state.<sup>259</sup> Identity explains a state's behavior and policy in relation to other states. Because identities are socially constructed, they can change. Hopf emphasizes that this alteration can occur because of changing ideational considerations.<sup>260</sup> In this context, constructivists refer to developments in a state's domestic politics. According to Wendt, the foreign policy and international security considerations of a state are formed by its domestic politics. This means that state interests and ideational considerations are not fixed. One national regime may have a different identity and hence a different perspective on the international environment than the other. Therefore different national regimes pursue different policies and react differently to (potential) security threats.<sup>261</sup>

Constructivists also emphasize the importance of psychological and emotional factors concerning the development of state behavior in the international arena. These factors shape the perceptions that states have of each other and the relationship between prominent state representatives. Jervis emphasizes that 'an important aspect of an actor's reasons for behaving as he does lies in his image of other actors.'<sup>262</sup> Depending on the character of the perceptions, the relationship between states can be friendly or hostile. Constructivists argue that positive or negative perceptions that states or political

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<sup>257</sup> Fierke, 'Constructivism', 178-180.

<sup>258</sup> Fierke, 'Constructivism', 179-185.

<sup>259</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Social theory of international politics* (Cambridge 1999) 231.

<sup>260</sup> Ted Hopf, 'The promise of constructivism in international relations theory', *International Security* 23:1 (1998) 172-177.

<sup>261</sup> Wendt, *Social theory*, 2.

<sup>262</sup> Robert Jervis, *The logic of images in international relations* (New Jersey 1970) 204.

elites have of each other is an important factor that that shape state behavior. Constructivists emphasize the importance of perceptions of uncertainty and threat, which can have two results. On the one hand, a state can highlight or increase its military capacity and pursue an aggressive policy against other states (or a specific state). On the other hand, a state can form an alliance or intensify its cooperation with states that have the same perceptions about another state (or other states).<sup>263</sup>

Because the core constructivist assumption is that the international system is a social construction rather than a system with a fixed character, whereby the idea is that the international system is formed by state behavior, the constructivist explanation of the Iraq war would be that America's aggressive policy toward Iraq was the result of a changed international system. So, in order to be able to use constructivism to explain the Iraq war, it is essential to determine the character of the international system in the twenty-first century or during the Bush era.

According to constructivists, processes of interaction, perception, and domestic politics form state behavior in the international arena. Concerning processes of interaction, the constructivist argument would be that America's experience and interaction with Saddam in the 1991 Gulf War, and after the war via United Nations economic and military sanctions, formed its negative perception of the country. Furthermore, constructivists emphasize the importance of psychological and emotional factors concerning the development of perceptions that states have of each other. The constructivist claim would be then that Saddam's tyrannical methods and his foreign policy, which the Bush administration viewed as anti-American, reinforced the administration's negative perception of Iraq. Hence this explains why the Bush administration focused on Iraq the moment it took office. The other crucial factor in constructivism that shapes state behavior is domestic politics. Constructivists argue that one national regime may have a different identity and hence a different perspective on the international environment than the other. Therefore different national regimes pursue different policies and react differently to (potential) security threats. Here, the constructivist view would be that the Bush administration's national security strategy, which was based on pro-active and offensive principles like 'dissuade' and 'defeat', changed America's character. Hence processes of interaction, perception, and domestic factors were the driving forces behind America's invasion of Iraq.

Constructivists do not believe that states always seek to maximize their power and wealth. Constructivists consider processes of interaction, perception, and domestic politics as the driving forces behind conflicts. Expanding power and wealth is, however, exactly what America tried to by invading Iraq. However, constructivism does offer a satisfactory explanation for other aspects of the Iraq war. The constructivist argument about the importance of domestic politics in changing a state's behavior is fully in accordance with the Bush era and the Iraq war. After all, regime change in America and Bush's rise to power led to a comprehensive alteration of America's foreign policy strategy. Furthermore, the processes of interaction and perception described above did have quite a

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<sup>263</sup> Neta C. Crawford, 'The passion of world politics: propositions on emotion and emotional relationships', *International Security* 24:4 (2000) 125-127.

high level of influence on America's decision to invade Iraq. America had bad experiences of interaction with Iraq and therefore the Bush administration viewed Saddam as a tyrant and anti-American leader. It is beyond question that this negative perception motivated America to invade Iraq, but it was certainly not the only driving force behind the invasion. America was motivated by the desire to control Iraqi oil and acquire political control in Iraq in order to use the country as a base to transform the Middle East. Constructivists put special emphasis on the importance of perceptions of uncertainty and threat. They argue that such perceptions can make a state increase its military capacity to pursue an aggressive policy against other states (or a specific state). America, however, did not invade Iraq because the country formed a threat to America. America did not perceive Iraq as a threat to its national security. Moreover, America's grand strategy of transforming the Middle East by using Iraq as a command center was about long-term security considerations. This grand strategy was essentially about preventing threats. Hence there were certainly no fully formed threats present at the time America invaded Iraq. In sum, perceptions did propel America to invade Iraq, but these perceptions were not perceptions of threat and uncertainty.

### 5.3 Liberalism

The liberal tradition has its roots in the Enlightenment. In eighteenth-century Europe intellectuals and political leaders developed a powerful logic focused on the use of reason to improve the world. Hence liberals are inclined to be optimistic about making the world safer and more peaceful. Liberal theories are often labelled 'utopian' or 'idealist', because most liberals believe in the possibility to decrease or even abolish armed conflicts in the world and to increase international prosperity. Liberals do not claim that conflicts in the world can be abolished all together. They do believe, however, that states can decrease or put an end to conflict resolution by hostile means, such as weapons or war. The optimistic view of liberalism on international politics is based on two core beliefs, which are common to virtually all liberal theories.<sup>264</sup> First, liberals emphasize that the internal characteristics of states differ significantly, and that these differences strongly influence state behavior. Liberal theorists stress that some political systems, such as democracy, are superior to others, like dictatorship. Therefore liberalism makes distinctions between 'good' and 'bad' states. Good states pursue cooperative policies, while bad states pursue aggressive policies and often use force to reach their goals. According to liberals the key to peace and security is to increase the number of good states in the world. Second, liberals believe that power considerations do not matter much for explaining the behavior of good states. They argue that other forms of political and economic considerations are more important. Bad states might seek to gain power at the expense of other states, but according to liberals that is only because bad states act irrationally.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The tragedy of great power politics* (New York 2003) 15.

<sup>265</sup> Mearsheimer, *Great power politics*, 15-16.

So then, what kind of political and economic considerations do matter, according to liberals, for explaining the behavior of good states? In liberalism, the form of these considerations varies from theory to theory. Of the various liberal theories, three are dominant. The first theory, interdependence liberalism, argues that high economic interdependence between states decreases the chance of war. According to this theory, international stability depends on the formation and preservation of a liberal economic order that allows free economic trade between states. The argument is that such an order is advantageous for the citizens of states, because citizens benefit from (free) trade. Therefore this system of self-interest reduces conflicts. It increases world peace, because states and their people become wealthier. The idea is that the wealthy states and people are economically more content and therefore more peaceful. Liberals emphasize that many wars are about gaining or preserving wealth, but that states have much less reason to start a war if they are already wealthy. Furthermore, liberals stress that wealthy states with strong economic ties become less wealthy if they fight each other, because the success of their economies depend on each other. The emphasis here is on people that become economically interdependent. Once people become economically interdependent, they avoid war and can focus on increasing wealth.<sup>266</sup>

The second theory, democratic peace theory, claims that democracies do not fight or even threaten each other. Thus, a world with only democratic states would be a harmonious world. The argument here is not that democracies are less aggressive than non-democracies, but rather that democracies do not fight each other.<sup>267</sup> The third theory, neoliberalism or neoliberal institutionalism, argues that international institutions have positive effects on state behavior. Neoliberals claim that institutions increase cooperation between states and thus significantly decrease the possibility of war. They emphasize that institutions promote rules that make clear how states should cooperate and compete with each other. These rules explain which forms of state behavior are tolerable and which forms are unacceptable. The rules are created in a multilateral way, and states agree to stick to the rules because it is in their interest to do so. Hence neoliberals argue that institutions or rules hold states back from focusing exclusively on self-interest and relative power, and ultimately push states away from war and promote peace.<sup>268</sup>

America's aim was not to establish democracy in Iraq. The plan was to build a new Iraq, one that was pro-American. America did this by establishing one after another pro-American government in Iraq. Democratic elections were held in Iraq but the remarkable thing was that all political candidates and parties were pro-American. The Bush administration's plan to transform the Middle was driven by selfish motivations. It was not so much about increasing international prosperity, but guaranteeing a bright future for America. The Bush administration tried to establish a Pax America by the use of

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<sup>266</sup> Bruce Russett, 'Liberalism', in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith (eds.), *International relations theories: discipline and diversity* (Oxford 2010) 103. And: Mearsheimer, *Great power politics*, 16.

<sup>267</sup> Russett, 'Liberalism', 102. And: Mearsheimer, *Great power politics*, 16.

<sup>268</sup> Jennifer Sterling-Folker, 'Neoliberalism', in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith (eds.), *International relations theories: discipline and diversity* (Oxford 2010) 116-118. And: Mearsheimer, *Great power politics*, 17.

force, which is not a typical liberal way of making the world better and more peaceful. Liberals claim that good states pursue cooperative policies, while bad states pursue aggressive policies. Liberals emphasize that bad states often use force to reach their goals. So then, it seems that liberals would consider America under the Bush administration an example of a bad state.

Liberals argue that power considerations do not matter much for explaining the behavior of democracies. They argue that other forms of political and economic considerations are more important, including preservation of a liberal economic order (interdependence liberalism), promotion of democracy (democratic peace theory), and promotion of international institutions, rules, and laws (neoliberalism). Interdependence liberalism cannot explain the Iraq war; because there is little evidence that America was seeking to integrate Iraq into the existing liberal order. The same is true for neoliberalism. America decided unilaterally to invade Iraq on the basis of a strategy of pre-emption. By doing this, America undermined international treaties and laws, thereby demoting rather than promoting international institutions. Therefore America's behavior, both before, during, and after the Iraq invasion, cannot be explained with neoliberalism. In contrast to interdependence liberalism and neoliberalism, the democratic peace theory is relevant for the Iraq war. This theory asserts that democracies do not wage war against each other, and therefore spreading democracy would make the world more peaceful. As explained in chapter 4, America's aim was to promote democracy in the Middle East by using Iraq as a base. The idea was that transforming countries in the region into democracies would serve American interests and make America more secure.

#### **5.4 Realism**

In contrast to liberals, realists have a pessimistic view on international politics. Realists acknowledge that world peace would be advantageous for all states, but they believe that it is not possible to escape the ruthless world of security competition and war. This bleak view on international politics is based on three core beliefs. First, realists consider states the primary actors in world politics, but realists focus primarily on great powers, because great powers dominate and shape international politics. They also initiate the most destructive wars. Second, realists believe that the behavior of great powers is influenced mainly by their external environment, not by their internal characteristics. According to realists, the structure of the international system largely shapes the foreign policies of great powers. Realists do not distinguish between good and bad states, because they claim that all great powers act according to the same logic regardless of their culture or political system. Third, realists argue that power considerations dominate the thinking of states, and that states struggle for power among themselves. Sometimes that struggle forces states to wage war against each other. Therefore realists argue that war is a continuation of politics by other means, an idea first championed by the nineteenth-century military strategist Carl von Clausewitz.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Mearsheimer, *Great power politics*, 17-18.

Realism has different subdivisions. The field of international relations now has at least two forms of neorealism, three kinds of offensive realism, and several types of defensive realism, in addition to neoclassical, contingent, specific, and generalist realism.<sup>270</sup> There are essential differences between the realist sub-schools. These differences show realism's diversity, the intellectual connections among realist scholars, and how various arguments are related. Because of the word limitations on the scope of this paper, this section focuses on the main differences between the four dominant subdivisions within the realist tradition: classical realism, neorealism, defensive realism, and offensive realism.

Classical realism emerged in the 1930s and developed in the next two decades. It was a reaction to utopian liberalism that had dominated the discipline of international relations since its birth around 1918. Early realists such as Reinhold Niebuhr and Edward N. Carr argued that the world liberalism depicted was inaccurate, emphasizing that the world should be depicted as it is rather than as it should be. They advocated a realistic analysis of international politics, based on the ideas of thinkers such as Thucydides, Niccolo Machiavelli, and Thomas Hobbes.<sup>271</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* (1948) drew out the international relations implications of Niebuhr's and Carr's ideas.<sup>272</sup> In *Politics Among Nations*, Morgenthau offers six principles of political realism. Morgenthau argues that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature, which is unchanging. The main principle of realism is the concept of interest defined in terms of power; the control of man over man, which is universally valid but not with a meaning that is fixed once and for all. According to Morgenthau, this concept sets politics as an autonomous sphere of action and understanding apart from other spheres, such as economics, ethics, and religion. He emphasizes that realism stresses the rational, objective and unemotional.<sup>273</sup>

Neorealism (or structural realism) owes its development mainly to Kenneth N. Waltz's *Man, the State, and War* (1959) and *Theory of International Politics* (1979). Waltz agrees with the classical realist analysis of international politics as an area of egoism and conflict, but he rejects the pessimistic view of human nature on which this analysis was based. Waltz offers an alternative interpretation of the state of nature in which man is neither good nor bad, but just rational.<sup>274</sup> Why do states want power? The answer to this question divides classical realists and neorealists. For classical realists like Morgenthau the answer is human nature. The desire for power is deeply rooted in human nature, which is why leaders of great nations always try to dominate their rivals. Human nature cannot be changed, and therefore the endless struggle for power cannot be overcome. In contrast, neorealists

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<sup>270</sup> Glenn H. Snyder, 'Mearsheimer's world-offensive realism and the struggle for security', *International Security* 27:1 (2002) 149.

<sup>271</sup> Russett, 'Liberalism', 96.

<sup>272</sup> Knutsen, *International relations*, 241. Other classical realist works include Nicholas Spykman's *America's strategy in world politics: the United States and the balance of power* (1942) and Edward H. Carr's *The twenty years crisis* (1946). See: Snyder, 'World-offensive realism', 149.

<sup>273</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among nations: the struggle for power and peace* (Boston 2005) 4-18.

<sup>274</sup> Pier D. Tortola, 'Realism and neorealism', in George T. Kurian, James E. Alt, Margaret Levi, Paula D. McClain and Geoffrey Garrett (eds.), *The encyclopedia of political science* (Washington 2011) 1428.

argue that it is the structure of the international system that forces states to pursue power.<sup>275</sup> In a system where there is no higher authority than states, there are no security guarantees. States can only protect themselves by pursuing power. This gives the international system an anarchic character, and it is this anarchy that is the main source of conflict.<sup>276</sup> Furthermore, classical realists argue that power and domination is the definite goal of a state. No matter what the interests of a state are, the acquisition of power is always a direct or indirect objective.<sup>277</sup> In contrast, Waltz argues that in an anarchic system states are primarily concerned with survival and security, because anarchism stimulates states to act defensively, so that the existing balance of power can be maintained. The first concern of states is not to maximize power, but to preserve the status-quo.<sup>278</sup>

The emergence of neorealism led to new realist views which developed in the 1990s into subdivisions within the realist tradition, such as defensive and offensive realism.<sup>279</sup> How much power is enough? The answer to this question divides defensive and offensive realists. In *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001), John J. Mearsheimer presents his offensive realism as a reaction against Waltz's neorealism.<sup>280</sup> Mearsheimer explains that defensive realists believe that it is dangerous for states to maximize their power, because the international system will punish them if they try to gain too much power. According to defensive realists, a limited amount of power is sufficient to survive. Waltz calls this 'an appropriate amount of power.'<sup>281</sup> Defensive realists argue that if a great power becomes too dominant, 'balancing' will take place. Other great powers will increase their military capacity and form an alliance. This will cause security problems for the aspiring hegemon.<sup>282</sup> Defensive realists also argue that there is an 'offense-defense balance', which shows what the chances are for conquering territory or defeating a defending side in battle. Defensive realists believe that the offense-defense balance is generally greatly in favor of the defender.<sup>283</sup>

In contrast to defensive realists, offensive realists believe that it is strategically wise for states to increase their power as much as possible, and to pursue hegemony under favourable conditions. Mearsheimer emphasizes that domination significantly increases the chances of survival. Although he

<sup>275</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, 'Structural realism', in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith (eds.), *International relations theories: discipline and diversity* (Oxford 2010) 78-81.

<sup>276</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, 'The anarchic structure of world politics', in Robert J. Art and Robert Jervis (eds.), *International politics: enduring concepts and contemporary issues* (New York 2009) 47.

<sup>277</sup> Oliver Ramsbotham, *Transforming violent conflict* (New York 2010) 38.

<sup>278</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of international politics* (Long Grove 2010) 126.

<sup>279</sup> Peter Toft, 'John J. Mearsheimer: an offensive realist between geopolitics and power', *Journal of International Relations and Development* 8:4 (2005) 388-389. And: William C. Wohlforth, 'Realism', in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of international relations* (Oxford 2008) 138-139.

<sup>280</sup> Other examples of offensive realism include Robert G. Gilpin's *War and change in world politics* (1981) and Fareed Zakaria's *From wealth to power: the unusual origins of America's world role* (1998). Examples of defensive realism: Barry R. Posen's *The Sources of Military Doctrine* (1984) and Stephen M. Walt's *The origins of alliances* (1991). See: Snyder, 'World-offensive realism', 149-150.

<sup>281</sup> Mearsheimer, 'Structural realism', 81.

<sup>282</sup> Toft, 'Geopolitics and power', 390. And: Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, 'Security seeking under anarchy: defensive realism revisited', *International Security* 25:3 (2001) 144-145.

<sup>283</sup> Mearsheimer, 'Structural realism', 81-82.

recognizes that threatened states generally balance against dangerous rivals, he points out that balancing is often ineffective. This ineffectiveness provides opportunities for offensive states to take advantage of its enemies. Moreover, threatened states sometimes prefer 'buck-passing' rather than balancing. Buck-passing refers to backing down and taking no action, with the aim of shifting the burden of battle to an ally or some other state. This kind of behaviour, which is usual among great powers, creates opportunities for aggression.<sup>284</sup>

Realism sufficiently explains America's reasons behind the Iraq war. As explained in chapter 4, America took over Iraqi oil to expand its power position in the Middle East. Acquiring political control in Iraq was the first step in reforming the Middle East in ways that would be beneficial for America. The Bush administration was motivated by selfish reasons. Realists do not believe in the liberal assumption of good and bad states. In realism, all great powers are the same because they act according to the same logic. The culture, ideology or political characteristics of states have no importance. Realists argue that all great powers are motivated by power considerations. Because of this, the framework of realism is very useful for explaining America's reasons behind the Iraq war. But which of the three realist theories (classical, defensive, and offensive realism) offer the most adequate explanation for America's motivations?

Classical realists argue that the desire for power is deeply rooted in human nature, which is why leaders of great nations always try to gain an advantage over other states. Neorealists argue that it is not human nature but the structure of the international system that pushes states to increase their power. In a system where there is no government over governments, there are no security guarantees. The only way for a state to protect itself is to pursue power. This gives the international system an anarchic character, which is the primary source of conflict between states. Furthermore, classical realists believe that power is the ultimate aim of a state. In classical realism power is an end in itself. Neorealists, however, claim that power is a means to an end. The end is always security or survival. Hence it is neorealism rather than classical realism that offers a correct explanation for the Iraq war. America's ultimate end was to enhance its security, to guarantee its future and survival. Power was merely a means to achieve this end. So then, which form of neorealism has more explanatory power concerning America's empire-building project in Iraq?

Defensive realists argue that in order to ensure security, great powers act defensively. According to defensive realism, pursuing a limited amount of power is enough for a great power to ensure its position in the international system. For this reason, defensive realism does not offer a correct explanation for America's foreign policy approach. America did not pursue a limited amount of power but hegemony. The Bush doctrine was all about expanding power and establishing American primacy or empire. Offensive realism offers the most adequate explanation for America's reasons for going to war in Iraq. In contrast to defensive realists, offensive realists believe that great powers always try to

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<sup>284</sup> Mearsheimer, *Great power politics*, 13.



maximize their power, and to pursue hegemony if the conditions are right. Mearsheimer argues: 'Given the difficulty of determining how much power is enough for today and tomorrow, great powers recognize that the best way to ensure their security is to achieve hegemony now, thus eliminating any possibility of a challenge by another great power.'<sup>285</sup> The Bush administration's strategy of pre-emption was all about eliminating potential challenges. The plan was to expand power by controlling Iraq and to use the country to transform the Middle East. This plan was essentially driven by security considerations. Hence by conquering Iraq, America behaved like a good offensive realist power. Whether or not the Bush administration's empire-building project in Iraq increased America's chances of survival, it certainly was the aim of the administration to do so.

## 5.5 Conclusion

According to realism, states are selfish and constantly competing with each other. Neorealism stresses that because the international system is anarchic, conflicts are more the rule than the exception. According to defensive realism, in such an anarchic system states pursue a limited amount of power to survive. Offensive realism argues that great power always try to maximize their power and dominate the international system. Liberal theories claim that the combination of economic interdependence, the spread of democracy, and international institutions, decreases the possibility of war. Constructivists emphasize that interaction and perceptions, play an important role in the outbreak of conflicts.

Interdependence liberalism and neoliberalism fall short in explaining the Iraq war. Going to war against Saddam Hussein was not about integrating Iraq into the existing liberal order. Moreover, America acted unilaterally and undermined international rules and treaties. Another liberal theory, the democratic peace theory, does have some level of explanatory capacity concerning the Iraq war. The Bush administration's aim was to use Iraq as a base to transform and restructure the entire Middle East in ways that would serve American interests. Promoting democracy in the region was one way of doing this. Constructivism offers a sufficient explanation for certain aspects of the Iraq war. The constructivist notion that domestic politics can change a state's behavior in the international arena, explains why America pursued a moderate foreign policy strategy under the Clinton administration, and went on to implement a strategy based on principals such as pre-emption and unilateralism under the Bush administration. Moreover, processes of interaction and perception also influenced America's decision to invade Iraq. Realism, however, is where one must look in order to understand and fully grasp the significance of America's reasons behind the Iraq war. Offensive realism offers the most adequate explanation for the Iraq war. It maintains that great powers pursue hegemony in order to guarantee their future and survival. America was essentially motivated by this ambition.

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<sup>285</sup> Mearsheimer, *Great power politics*, 35.

## 6. Conclusion

America did not invade Iraq because the country formed a threat to American security. The Bush administration did claim that Iraq, under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, formed an imminent threat to the security of the American people as the country was actively seeking to destroy the United States through the use of weapons of mass destruction. In its rhetoric for justifying the Iraq invasion, the administration also repeatedly declared that Saddam was cooperating with Al-Qaeda. Nonetheless, these were deceitful claims. Threat requires intent and capability. The reality was that Iraq was an economically, technologically and militarily weak and disadvantaged country. The country had no capacity to fight a small war, let alone a major one against the superpower of the world, the United States. Saddam had no chemical and biological weapons and was not developing a nuclear weapons program. He did not have the capacity, means or knowledge to do so. Moreover, the suggested links between Al-Qaeda and Iraq were practically non-existent. There was actually never a logical reason presented by the Bush administration for the so-called intent of Iraq to strike the United States or, following the rhetoric of the Bush establishment, to strike the free world.

What in fact did happen was a carefully prepared and considered case against Iraq, a push for war based on mass fallacies and deception. During the long march to the Iraq invasion, Bush and his principals publicly demonized Saddam in speeches and interviews by making, and frequently repeating, allegations about Iraq. Demonizing Saddam was not a hard thing to do, as it was widely known that the Arab leader was an uncompromising dictator who had repeatedly committed atrocities against his own people. The claims against Saddam's regime were made by the Bush administration to win the support of the American people and the international community. The United States repeatedly stated that going to war in Iraq would benefit not only America but all the free nations in the world. Hence the administration presented the American army as liberators of Iraq who would bring democracy to the country, because it was the right thing to do.

The truth is that the United States invaded Iraq for reasons that were never publicly stated by the Bush administration. One of the main reasons was oil. The presence of an immense amount of oil in a weak, easy to strike county, was seen by the United States as a quick-win strategy to solve the energy problem of the American nation. Moreover, striking Iraq would improve America's power position against major oil-producing nations in the Middle East, who were relatively stronger than Iraq. Another unmentioned reason by the Bush establishment for striking Iraq was empire-building. The empire-building project was part of a grand strategy to use Iraq as a base to reform the Middle East in ways that would serve American interests. This strategy was essentially driven by security considerations, and is part of the long-term strategy of the United States to secure a long and prosperous future for the American empire. Considering the above – and the fact that the United States executed a pro-active, or preemptive, forceful strategy as presented in this paper – offensive realism as an international relations theory offers the most adequate framework for explaining the American

invasion of Iraq. Constructivism provides a sufficient explanation for additional forces behind the Iraq war, such as the role of regime change in the United States and the influence of perceptions, which illuminate why the Bush administration was fixated on Iraq from the moment it took office. The democratic peace theory, a liberal theory, is relevant for explaining why America wanted to democratize the Middle East. Democratizing the region would make America more secure. The theory, however, only explains this security argument. It does not offer an explanation for the Bush administration's aim to guarantee America's future by expanding America's global power.

Understanding why the United States invaded Iraq is not only interesting and relevant from a historical perspective. By and large, it is essential for understanding current events and contemporary foreign policy decisions made by the United States. Furthermore, the current, for many people unexpected, wave of demands for political reformation in the Middle East and the Arab world, in countries such as Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, and Libya, raises the question whether or not, and if so, to what extent, America's empire-building project in Iraq fueled or inspired these demands. Many scholars, journalist, and representatives of international non-governmental organizations, are already claiming that the transformation of Iraq caused a domino effect in the region. Whether this is true, is not the topic of this paper. From a political point of view, however, a look into these claims would be exceptionally interesting for which this study can be used as a framework. Moreover, analyzing Iraq in relation to current events and policies of the United States might give us a sneak peek into future decisions of the United States. No matter what, it seems that the Colossus is well on its path to make sure that the twenty-first century will be just as American as the twentieth century was.

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