

The Iraq Invasion

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Arguably, the most controversial political decision in decades, the invasion of Iraq has ignited the criticism of both the American public and the international community. Much of this condemnation has focused on the justification and timing for taking such action. During the past two years, there has been much speculation regarding the United States administration's real motives for invading Iraq. The United States administration's original official case for the invasion of Iraq rested on three main issues: Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, links to international terrorists, and the threat of Saddam's regime. The present day motives for the Iraq invasion rests on the premise of freedom and democracy, and helping the Iraqi people. The United States government repeatedly and persistently tells the American people that this is the major objective of this campaign. On a visit to Iraq, Condoleezza Rice stated "We are so grateful that there are Americans willing to sacrifice so the Middle East will be whole, and free and democratic and at peace." While all of these motives may be true, many Americans today believe that the United States invaded Iraq to gain indirect political and economic control and as a justified form of national security. There is overwhelming evidence that the advantages of gaining political and economic control of Iraq and the security of the United States were the dominant factors in deciding whether to invade Iraq. Dissecting the events leading to the invasion, the allied nation's point of view, political and economic 'declared' and 'unspoken' motives, national security motives, and the effects of the invasion will leave no doubt that the decision to invade Iraq rested on national security and political and economic control.

Momentum for War

In the 1960's, the Iraqi government was under the control of General Abdul Kareem Kassem, who was prone to Soviet influence. The revolutionary movement in Iraq, known as the

Ba'ath Party, enlisted a young Saddam Hussein to assassinate General Kassem. The assassination attempt failed, but Saddam escaped to Cairo where he led the Ba'ath Party's student cell. The CIA became interested in the Ba'ath Party as an ally in removing the communist regime from power in Iraq. Saddam and other Ba'ath Party members reportedly became regular visitors to the American Embassy, cooperating with the United States towards the overthrow of General Kassem.

With CIA assistance, the Ba'ath Party seized control of the government in 1963. General Kassem was killed in the coup and a list of 800 suspected communists (supplied by the CIA) were executed. Saddam Hussein returned to Iraq and assumed the role of interrogator and executioner. Saddam became an indispensable enforcer in the new regime and was named vice president in 1968. Saddam patiently waited for his opportunity and in 1979, he claimed the presidency with a palace coup, supplanting the ill Al-Bakr. He immediately set the tone for his regime by naming a list of traitors and having them executed.

Saddam gambled in 1980 by invading a weakened Iran following the Iranian Revolution overthrow of the shah. The countries immediately became entrenched in warfare along their borders. The U.S. was not particularly concerned. As long as the two nations were engaged in war, their national power and regional influence weakened. By 1982, it appeared as if Saddam might actually lose the war. This was not in America's best interest since Iran was clearly an enemy of the U.S., so the CIA went to Baghdad to provide assistance.

For the next several years, the U.S. aided the Iraqis enough to avoid defeat, but not enough to secure victory. When it was discovered in 1986 that the U.S. secretly sold arms to Iran to secure the release of American hostages, Saddam was outraged. Combined with Saddam's use of chemical weapons against Iran and Kurds in his own country, the U.S. – Iraq

relations quickly dissolved. Iraq's war with Iran ended in a stalemate in 1988 and Saddam's country was nearly bankrupt.

Saddam was nearly as angry with the Arab community, as he was with the United States. He believed that Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were crippling him by driving down oil prices while demanding immediate repayment of the billions of dollars in loans they provided during his war with Iran. Saddam's answer to this predicament came in August 1990 when he sent forces to occupy Kuwait. He assumed that holding Kuwait would give him bargaining power with the United States. His actions were now a direct threat to U.S interests, and Washington was not about to bargain.

The U.S. clearly defined its mission as one to remove the Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Part of the strategy to this end involved encouraging Iraqis, tired of Saddam's rule, to rise up and rebel from within. Many of the Iraqi people did just that with the belief that they would be support by America. Within two weeks, 15 of the country's 18 provinces were in rebel hands (Barker, 8). Saddam was quickly losing control of his country. The U.S. was counting on his own army turning against him as his control waned, but his Republican Guard remained loyal.

When the U.S. halted its assault as the objective of freeing Kuwait was realized, Saddam sent his Republican Guard to crush the rebel uprisings. Over 50,000 Iraqis were tortured and killed in the aftermath. Video tapes of the executions were circulated throughout the country. Saddam reinforced the high price Iraqi citizens pay for insurrection and recaptured his stranglehold on the nation. To the Iraqi rebels, the Americans had turned their back on them at a critical time and this would not be forgotten.

A significant component in the aggressive U.S. stance towards Iraq came with the election of President George W. Bush in 2000. His administration included several members

from his father's staff that seemed to carry the baton of unfinished business regarding Saddam. This President Bush elected to surround himself with some familiar names, including Chaney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz. Under Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, had written a U.S. foreign policy tenet during the first Bush administration that was quickly dismissed due to its aggressive nature. It called for a preemptive strike posture towards any government or faction that posed a threat to the United States. That position would soon find acceptance with this administration.

It was evident early that this administration was eager to address the situation in Iraq. Saddam had not only managed to survive the 90's, but his control over the nation and regional influence posed a growing threat to U.S. interests. Many believed that the U.S. should have removed Saddam from power in 1991. By 2000, those beliefs had transformed into regret and then to resolve. Saddam would be dealt with; it was just a matter of time. Then, terrorists carried out an attack on the United States that nobody could have imagined before the early morning hours of September 11, 2001. Our journey to depose Saddam and rebuild a war torn nation would soon begin on the premise that Iraq played a role in this appalling event.

Americans and the international community have been debating for some time about the justification used to enter Iraq and forcibly remove their dictator. Given all that we have learned since taking control of the country, it is hard to argue that Iraqi citizens were better off before U.S. intervention. One man bled the country dry for his own benefit and brutalized segments of his constituency. The people of Iraq were conditioned to accept the circumstances of Saddam's rule and we are only beginning to understand the work it will take to reshape the mindset of a nation. There is no doubt that the humanitarian benefit to freeing a nation from tyranny is a meaningful endeavor worth some large-scale risk. The issue at question in this case is the

pretense under which a nation was thrust into war. The evidence here would indicate that some very influential people were committed to finishing the job in Iraq, long before terrorists opened the door in 2001.

Allies Point of View

Throughout 2002, President Bush and the U.S. administration made it clear that removing Saddam Hussein from power was a major goal, although it offered to accept major changes in Iraqi military and foreign policy in lieu of this. Specifically, the stated justification for the invasion included Iraqi production and use of weapons of mass destruction, links with terrorist organizations and human rights violations in Iraq under the Saddam Hussein government (Wikipedia, 2001-2006).

To that end, the stated goals of the invasion, according to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, were to find and eliminate weapons of mass destruction, weapons programs, and terrorists. His comments also stated, as additional goals, an effort to collect intelligence on networks of weapons of mass destruction and terrorists. (In light of humanitarian effort, delete) Rumsfeld's goals also included an end to sanctions and delivery of humanitarian support. According to Madeline Albright, the former Secretary of State, half a million Iraqi children had died because of sanctions. The Secretary of Defense's goals also included the enforcing resolution 1205, made in 1999, and to end the Regime of Saddam Hussein. Finally, Rumsfeld planned to help Iraq's transition to a democratic self-rule government and secure Iraq's oil fields and other resources. By the United States government's own judgment, the evidence did not amount to a "smoking gun." Secretary Rumsfeld argued that if the United States waited for a smoking gun, it would be too late (Wikipedia, 2001-2006).

On February 5, 2003, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell presented a case for military intervention in Iraq to the UN Security Council. Powell presented an array of evidence from satellite images to intercepted military communications and computer-generated images depicting mobile biological weapon production systems. Though most of Powell's presentation focused on Iraq's alleged violations of U.N. requirements that it dismantle its weapons of mass destruction programs, Secretary Powell devoted substantial attention to the alleged Iraq-Al Qaeda linkage. According to Powell, Iraq and terrorism go back decades. The potentially more sinister nexus between Iraq and the Al Qaeda terrorist network combines classic terrorist organizations and modern methods of murder. Powell stated that Iraq harbors a deadly terrorist network headed by Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, an associate and collaborator of Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda lieutenants (Katzman, CRS-2).

In March 2003 the US government announced that "diplomacy has failed" and that it would proceed with a "coalition of the willing" to rid Iraq of its alleged "weapons of mass destruction". The 2003 Iraq war officially started a few days later. Prior to this decision, there had been a good deal of diplomacy and debate amongst the members of the UN Security Council over whether there should be a war in Iraq. Prior to 2002, the UN Security Council had passed sixteen resolutions on Iraq. In 2002, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1441 on Iraq unanimously. In 2003, the UK, Spanish governments, and the US proposed another resolution on Iraq, which they called the "eighteenth resolution" and others called the "second resolution". This proposed resolution was subsequently withdrawn because not enough countries supported it. On September 16, 2004, Kofi Annan the Secretary General of the United Nations called the invasion of Iraq illegal. He cited the lack of a Security Council resolution explicitly authorizing the war (Wikipedia, 2001-2006).

The positions of the Security Council members varied, and the United States led the way by maintaining that Iraq was not cooperating with the UN inspectors and had not met its obligations to 17 UN resolutions. The United Kingdom and its Prime Minister, Tony Blair publicly supported American policy on Iraq. French Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin said, "We think that military intervention would be the worst possible solution," although France believed that Iraq may have had an ongoing chemical and nuclear weapons program (Weisman, 2003). Germany claimed it would do what they could to avert war. The Russian Foreign Minister said, "There is no evidence that would justify a war in Iraq. China, Angola, Cameroon, Chile, Guinea, Mexico, and Pakistan supported continued weapons inspections. Finally, Spain and Bulgaria cited with the U.S. in support of invading Iraq without the UN backing (Wikipedia, 2001-2006).

On February 14, UN Chief Inspector Hans Blix presented a report to the UN Security Council on the status of weapons inspections in Iraq. He stated that Iraqis were now more proactive in their cooperation. He also rebutted some of the arguments proposed by Secretary Powell. Mr. Blix questioned the interpretations of the satellite images put forward by Powell. He also stated that the Iraqis have in fact never received early warning of the inspectors visiting any sites. Hans Blix and International Director General Mohammed ElBaradei said that they did not believe the Iraqis have a nuclear weapons program, in disagreement with Mr. Powell (Wikipedia, 2001-2006). UN weapons inspector Blix expressed skepticism over Iraq's claims to have destroyed its stockpiles of anthrax and VX nerve agent in a Time magazine interview. Blix said he found it "a bit odd" that Iraq, with "one of the best-organized regimes in the Arab world," would claim to have no records of the destruction of these illegal substances. "I don't see that they have acquired any credibility," Blix said. "There has to be solid evidence of everything, and

if there is not evidence, or you can't find it, I simply say, 'Sorry, I don't find any evidence,' and I cannot guarantee or recommend any confidence (Weisman, 2003)."

The statements made by the UN Security Council and Chief Weapons Inspector Hans Blix did not sway the Bush Administration from declaring war on Iraq. The United States made the command decision to invade Iraq with or without allied support. Who could the United States count on? The United Kingdom, of course. Who else? Support for the invasion and occupation of Iraq included 49 nations, a group frequently referred to as the “coalition of the willing”. These nations provided combat troops, support troops, and logistical support for the invasion. The nations contributing combat forces included South Korea, Australia, Denmark, and Poland. Ten other countries offered small numbers of non-combat forces, mostly either medical teams and specialists in decontamination. In several of these countries a majority of the public opposed the war (Wikipedia, 2001-2006).

What about France and Germany? France and Germany were nowhere to be found when asked to participate in the war. Claims of oil ties with Iraq surfaced in the media preventing these countries from joining the coalition. After all the United States has done for these countries it goes to show who your allies are.

In reaction to the decision on invading Iraq, the public voiced their opinion worldwide. According to a mid-January 2003 telephone poll, approximately one-third of the U.S. population supported a unilateral invasion by the US and its allies, while two-thirds supported war if directly authorized by the U.N. Global protests expressed opposition to the invasion. In many Middle Eastern and Islamic countries, many protesters supported Saddam Hussein, but protesters in the United States and Europe generally did not (Shawcross, pg 214). On the government level, the war was criticized by Canada, Belgium, Russia, France, The People's Republic of China,

Germany, Switzerland, The Vatican, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brazil, Mexico, the Arab League, the African Union and many others. Though many nations opposed the war, no foreign government openly supported Saddam Hussein, and none volunteered any assistance to the Iraqi side. Leading traditional allies of the U.S. who had supported Security Council Resolution 1441, France, Germany and Russia, emerged as a united front opposed to the U.S.-led invasion, urging that the UN weapons inspectors be given time to complete their work (Wikipedia, 2001-2006).

Did the reasons given by the United States have enough evidence to justify invading Iraq? A positive answer to this question ultimately allows the United States to seek support from allies. The Bush administration claimed that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and violated UN resolutions. The United Nations and several countries opposed the invasion, while a few countries supported the American led invasion. The public appeared to be indecisive in voicing their opinion. Therefore, the fact remains that no matter what the UN, Weapons Inspectors, and public opinion thinks, the United States planned to invade Iraq with or without allied support.

Taking Indirect Political and Economic Control

There seems to be so much confusion regarding the motives of this war in the minds of most people. Looking back, a wide variety of motives and arguments for justifying the Iraq war have been presented by both pro-war and anti-war camps over the past two years. The spread of 'declared' and 'unspoken' motives is certainly interesting. There also seems to be some shift in the relative 'importance' of these motives over time. That shift sometimes presents significant integrity issues. Three political 'declared' and trumpeted motives come to the forefront; The premise that Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction, Saddam's regime was a threat to the United States and world peace, and spreading democracy in the Middle East (Sifry, 9). Ordinary people were, and many still are, confused regarding these issues. A major source of

confusion is the desire by some people to pinpoint a single motive. These issues raise some natural questions: Are these objectives shared by the public, the administration, and the special-interest groups within the United States? Has everybody been honest with the American public regarding these objectives? Has the American public, as a body, been honest with itself regarding these objectives? After so much turmoil and loss of life, is it time for some reassessment? (Mallaby, 2) Perhaps one could start to address the issues through some nagging and unanswered questions concerning the lead-up to the invasion:

- Why was the world and the American public presented such an unconvincing case?
- Why did so many Americans accept that unconvincing case so readily and enthusiastically?
- Why would huge, professional intelligence establishments and powerful governments rely on questionable reports ... to lead their countries to war?
- Why did so many Americans believe that they were avenging 9/11 by attacking Iraq?
- Why was there such an outrage about Saddam's use of chemical weapons against his own people and against a neighboring country... more than 12 years after those events?
- Why was there no similar outrage at the time those atrocities were committed?

(Editorial Staff, 1)

The unanswered questions raised above certainly present a case for the idea that the United States invaded Iraq partly to gain indirect political and economic control. The 'unspoken' motives (discussed later) for invading Iraq provide insight to the unanswered

questions presented above and provide evidence towards this idea. In fact, this idea actually substantiates and justifies any answers provided for those questions. The 'unspoken' political and economic motives include completing the arch of American presence in Asia, keeping a close watch on India and Pakistan (and a few others), sending a warning to Muslim states, securing control over a major oil resource, creating a haven for American investment in a rich country, and controlling China's economic growth. A United States expense in Iraq would be the staging ground for future wars in the region and beyond. The immediate target could be Iraq's oil-rich neighbor, Iran. There is an active campaign within the political establishment for eventual military action against Saudi Arabia. Additionally, Sudan, Yemen, Libya, and Syria are all potential targets (Shearer, 1). American troops and warplanes are already present in nearly every country between the Mediterranean Sea and the Tien Shan Mountains, which mark the border between the former Soviet Central Asia and China. There can be no doubt that within United States military and political circles, the attack on Iraq is seen as the prelude to coming wars against Russia and China, both nuclear-armed powers, with incalculable consequences. By completing the arch of American presence in Asia and thus encircling China, a country that has recently become of great interest to America since its phenomenal economic growth that could make it a contender for the position of superpower, ensures the United States continued dominance as a superpower. The invasion of Iraq enables the United States to keep a close watch on India and Pakistan, which recently became nuclear states, and Iran, which is on its way, all of which negatively affects the military balance in Asia. Another 'unspoken' motive that furthers the political effort of the United States is sending a warning to Muslim states and demanding they rein in extremist religious factions that oppose American presence and the American cultural invasion. The 'unspoken' economic motives are equally insightful. There

was certainly no shortage of legislation introduced almost immediately after the invasion to create a haven for foreign (primarily American) investment in Iraq. Almost unrestricted free trade was encouraged by regulations and a negligible amount of rules to regulate investment, to the extent that *The Economist* described them as "the wish list of foreign investors." No doubt, having priority access to a new market in a rich country in need of almost total renovation (oil drilling, refining infrastructure, power generation, roads, hospitals, schools, houses, etc.) and a long-deprived consumer sector with an enormous appetite for almost everything (from cars to consumables, computers, children's toys etc.) would certainly be quite appealing to numerous American corporations (Editorial Staff, 2). A potential market size of some 50 billion dollars annually is quite a significant trophy even for the larger American multinationals. Another 'unspoken' motive is securing control of Iraqi oil to allow Washington to curtail the strength of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), weaken its power in the international oil market, and terminate its ability to determine global prices. This will in turn strengthen the American oil lobby and provide the country with cheap fuel. Control of Iraqi oil allows American companies to take control of the global crude oil price, which will consequently affect the oil in the Caspian Sea and a strategic reserve that the United States must preserve for its future interests (Sifry, 15). It also gives United States control of economic growth in China, which is heavily reliant (80 percent) on Gulf oil. This would hold back China's growth, thus delaying its rise as a potential world superpower capable of competing with the United States. China is determined to have a mind of its own, is not shy about pursuing military development, space programs and nuclear power. China is the next world super-power. There is every reason to believe that it will not only be a strong competitor but will also be an adversary of the United States.

There seems to be no doubt that America invaded Iraq as a justified form of national security and to gain political and economic control. Taking political and economic control of Iraq has many advantages. There is overwhelming evidence that the advantages of gaining political and economic control of Iraq were an important factor in deciding whether to invade. The 'declared' political motives do not support this theory; however, the 'unspoken' political and economic motives unquestionably provide evidence, justification, and some rationalization as to why America invaded Iraq partly to gain political and economic control.

A Justified Form of National Security

The United States justified its' invasion of Iraq by claiming it was in the best interests of the nation. The critics of the United States who disagreed with invading Iraq are using a tremendous amount of hindsight when looking at the situation. The events leading up to the invasion are spread out over several years and most people have a short memory. As we explore these events it becomes obvious that the United States had the legitimate authority to invade Iraq. The information that was available prior to the invasion substantiated the United States justification to invade Iraq. The mid-east region has had many problems for a very long time. Some of these problems are the fact that it has been a haven for terrorists and a breeding ground for extremists wanting to destroy the United States at any cost. One of the hopes in removing Saddam Hussein was that it would allow the United States to achieve some strategic proportionality in the region.

President Bush had the legitimate authority to go to war with Iraq and was operating with the approval and in accordance with a resolution by the U.S. Congress. The United States was still technically at war with Iraq and had just agreed to cease hostilities for the time being (The Invasion of Iraq Was Justified 10). The President did not come to the conclusion of going back

to war with Iraq lightly. It was more of the Iraqis' unwillingness to comply with the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) since the end of hostilities of the first Gulf War. The UNSCR 687-April 3 1991 addresses the directive from the Security Council to destroy all weapons of mass destruction under international supervision. It further dictates that Iraq is forbidden from using, constructing, or acquiring any weapons of mass destruction. It must also disclose all weapons of mass destruction programs. Iraq must also not commit or support terrorism, or allow terrorist organizations to operate in Iraq (Saddam Hussein's Defiance of United Nations Resolutions 1). These sound like simple directives to follow by a country that had just been defeated by a coalition force. Critics would have you believe that Iraq was complying with U.N. resolutions all the time. If this were truly the case then why in August of 1991 there was another resolution passed UNSCR 707. This resolution "condemns Iraq's serious violation of UNSCR 687" (Saddam Hussein's Defiance of United Nations Resolutions 2). This resolution also addresses the fact that Iraq was not granting inspectors unrestricted access to weapons of mass destruction facilities. It also talks about Iraq's' attempts to hide or conceal prohibited weapons and material. This pattern of deception and noncompliance continued on for eight more years and eleven additional resolutions addressing Iraq's unwillingness to cooperate (Saddam Hussein's Defiance of United Nations Resolutions 2-3). When you have a country with a history of using weapons of mass destruction on both its enemies and its own people, any reasonable person would come to the conclusion that their intentions are not honorable. Since Iraq's weapons of mass destruction facilities and the location of their stockpiles could not be verified it made that country an increased threat to the security of the United States and the world.

Faced with these facts the President had some very difficult choices to make. One course of action was, he could wait for Iraq to develop a means to deliver one of these weapons of mass destruction and inflict thousands or even millions of casualties on the United States and its allies. A second course of action was he could continue to resolve this situation through diplomatic means. The third option was since the United Nations could not verify the status of the weapons of mass destruction he could use military force. The first course of action was obviously not acceptable because it would mean sacrificing Americans when we had the ability to prevent that. The second course of action had actually digressed to the point where it was obvious to the world he was stalling to buy more time for some hidden plan. After long deliberation the President was left with no choice but to use the military to resolve this problem.

Intelligence collection and interpretation played a key role in the decision making process for the President. In most instances, interpreting intelligence is like putting a puzzle together where the manufacturer forgot to put some of the pieces in the box. Unfortunately, you have to make some educated guesses as to what the other party is going to do. The United States was not the only country that came to the same conclusion that Iraq was up to something. All signs pointed to the fact that Iraq was preparing to do something and the longer we waited the more dangerous the possibilities became that Iraq would use weapons of mass destruction against the United States. One of the signs was a defector named Adnan Ihsan Saeed al-Haideri said, “he had visited twenty secret facilities for chemical and nuclear weapons” (Saddam Hussein's Development of Weapons of Mass Destruction 1). He possessed documents supporting his claim that Iraq had purchased equipment with U.N. approval and then used it for their weapons programs. “Iraq could also not account for at least 15,000 artillery rockets that in the past were its preferred vehicle for delivering chemical agents, nor has it accounted for about 550 artillery

shells filled with mustard agent” (Saddam Hussein's Development of Weapons of Mass Destruction 1). These possibilities also made him a destabilizing factor in the region. The goal of the United States was to eliminate Saddam and replace his dictatorship with some form of democracy to bring stability to the region and eliminate Iraq as a threat to the United States.

The impact of removing Saddam Hussein from power and allowing the country to form its' own government has had far reaching strategic implications. Iraq has had its first truly democratically elected government in over thirty years. Yes, there is still unrest in the country but it is moving in a direction that is promoting freedom for its people. The fact that Iraq has become a free country has had a dramatic impact in the region. Lebanon has forced Syria out of the country and is in the process of reestablishing its own government without Syrian influence (The Invasion of Iraq Was Justified 7). Hosni Mubarak is allowing Egypt its' first multi party elections (The Invasion of Iraq Was Justified 8). Helping fuel this desire to change the political structure of the countries in this region is an old ally of the terrorists. That ally is the popularity of the Internet and this has given people access to a large amount of information about the world. People can now verify what their governments are saying and have the ability to form their own opinions now (The Invasion of Iraq Was Justified 8).

The president of the United States is charged with the leadership of the most powerful nation in the world. With that comes an awesome amount of power and responsibility. For any leader the problem is and always has been when to use that power and when not to. That leader must weigh the consequences of his actions or inactions. The ultimate decision to go to war rested on one man who was charged with protecting the country. “Yet no war, no matter how politically advantageous or strategically wise, is justified unless it satisfies the tests of morality” (The Invasion of Iraq Was Justified 9). Aristotle said, “we make war that we may live in peace”

(The Invasion of Iraq Was Justified 9). In this instance this is what President Bush was trying to accomplish. “Saint Aquinas identified three principles of just war. Proper authority: it is lawful for political leaders to have recourse to the sword in defending the commonwealth. Just cause: namely, that those attacked should be attacked because they deserve it on account of some fault. And rightful intention: so that belligerents intend the advancement of good or the avoidance of evil” (The Invasion of Iraq Was Justified 9). This ancient guide to justifying going to war is valid even today. President Bush met all of the criteria and this justified his decision to go to war. Only time will tell if the invasion will be the event that breaks the logjam in the Middle East and allow it to advance towards peace and democracy.

The Effects of the Invasion

The Iraqi Invasion was a clear tactical victory for the United States military. “In a campaign that lasted barely three weeks, U.S. and Coalition military forces erased the evil regime of Saddam Hussein” (Murray 233). A strategy that was designed to deliver a carefully focused attack on the regime ensured the rapid defeat of Iraqi Forces and prevented many of the problems pre-war planners feared would arise. The regime failed to mobilize any significant portion of the population to resist the coalition advance. The supporters of Saddam were prevented from destroying Iraq’s oil production and export facilities. The precise use of force with a decided view of preventing collateral damage left most Iraqi cities intact. As a result a huge humanitarian relief problem, which many in the international community feared would happen, with an “internal displacement of 2 million people” (Yordon 6), didn’t materialize.

After defeating Saddam Hussein’s regime militarily the U. S. had no clear strategy for winning the peace. The resulting civil disorder increased Iraqi civilian dissatisfaction with the invasion and made it more difficult to achieve a lasting political solution. Our current problems

in Iraq result not from a failure in combat operations but a failure to properly plan for nation building. Why didn't the U.S. have a clear, well defined strategy for conflict termination, and the transition to stabilization operations? What were the problems that resulted or were compounded because of this?

U.S. agencies started planning for a post Saddam Iraq during the spring and summer of 2002. The State Department had attempted to coordinate nation building planning between Government agencies during the course of 2002. State formed "interagency consulting bodies that never had clear authority or unified cabinet-level policy support." (Cordesman 504) It wasn't until January 20, 2003 that President Bush formalized planning for a post Saddam Iraq by putting the Office of the Secretary of Defense in charge of nation building through the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Affairs (ORHA). There were "deep divisions between the State Department and Department of Defense (DOD) over how to plan for peacemaking and nation building." (Cordesman 498) The Department of Defense staffed its post conflict planning group with members who had "strong ideological beliefs but limited practical experience and serious area expertise." (Cordesman 498) Leaders at the Department of Defense and the White House believed that the coalition would have strong popular support from the Iraqis and would be viewed as liberators, not occupiers. They believed that existing government agencies and Iraqi civil servants could be used to quickly stabilize Iraq, and the regular army could be used to help in the reconstruction efforts. They supported the idea that large construction projects directed at the long term improvement of infrastructure would gain them the support of the Iraqi people. The DOD believed that a provisional government could be quickly formed using Iraqi exiles. The tasks of nation building and governing could then be quickly turned over to the Iraqis and that the U.S. and its allies would be able to rapidly withdraw. The DOD seems to

have ignored the fact in its planning that in the past the “collapses of authoritarian regimes ended in looting and sectarian or ethnic divisions and violence.” (Cordesman 505) The DOD believed the mission in Iraq would be accomplished in a short time frame. Jay Garner, who as head of ORHA, directed the initial planning and execution of post-war reconstruction efforts “described the mission as three months up an out.” (Yordan 1)

The State Department and interagency working bodies developing post-conflict strategies took a different view of what conditions in Iraq would be. They recognized that a transition to an Iraqi government would not be accomplished quickly or easily. They considered the real danger that the removal of Saddam’s regime could result in the collapse of government agencies. This would create a power vacuum with widespread looting, violence and chaos. The State Department warned that “smaller, more focused reconstruction projects had worked in other worn torn countries and might be more suitable for Iraq” (Sanger). The State Department was also skeptical that exiles, many who had lived outside of Iraq for years, would be accepted by the Iraqi people and able to form a provisional government and effectively lead the country. The State Department viewed the U.S. mission in Iraq in a longer time frame than the DOD. Marc Grossman, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, in testimony before Congress stated “that it could take up to two years for the total transfer of power.” (Yordan 8)

Leaders in the DOD believed that other agencies were exaggerating the risks in Iraq. As a result, when they were given the lead in planning for a post Saddam Iraq, State Department and other interagency conflict termination and nation-building efforts were dropped, ignored, or given low priority. What effects did this have on the invasion plans? In keeping with his vision of a short rapid conflict Defense Secretary Rumsfeld “demanded that the invasion force be kept as small as possible, prompting his commanders to build an attack plan based on speed and

surprise.” (Brinkley). In the debate over the number of troops that would be required in Iraq after the war “U.S. Army Chief of Staff General Shinseki told members of congress that based on his military experience over several hundred thousands would be needed.” (Yordon 11) Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz “dismissed the figures stating that these were clearly way off the mark.” (Yordon 11) The number of troops the U.S. had in Kuwait at the start of the conflict numbered over 127,000. This troop level created a problem of force ratios; “the strategy designed to deliver a carefully focused attack on the regime did not provide enough manpower to simultaneously occupy and secure the areas that the coalition liberated.” (Cordesman 494) As a result following the collapse of Saddam’s regime widespread looting of government ministries and institutions broke out. Looters gutted seventeen of twenty-three ministries, stealing or destroying their records, while ministry personnel went home or disappeared. Criminal and terrorist activity rose as people used the confusion to settle old scores and launch attacks against coalition forces. The forward combat troops, while well trained in combat operations, were not well trained or sized to deal with “activities like looting and the problems in distinguishing between hostile and nonviolent civilians and irregular forces.” (Cordesman 499)

In May 2003 the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) was formed under the direction of Ambassador Bremer. The CPA replaced the ORHA as the lead agency in charge of nation building. Ambassador Bremer started the policy of De-Baathification by ordering the firing of all Baath Party members above the lowest rank and file level from all civil service jobs. He also ordered the dismissal of the army. These orders effected upwards of 85,000 civil servants and 400,000 members of the armed forces. These orders had a crippling effect on the DOD’s original plan of conflict termination and nation building. The loss of these upper level civil servants in conjunction with the earlier looting of government ministries effectively crippled the

Iraqi bureaucracy and prevented the U.S. from using it to help quickly stabilize Iraq. The DOD in its original planning to stabilize Iraq had intended to use the Iraqi army to help guarantee the country's territorial integrity and to provide security to reconstruction efforts. The disbanding of the army forced the coalition to use its armed forces to fill these roles. Besides the effect of creating a power vacuum with no suitable force to take its place, it also had the effect of creating half a million angry and unemployed people. This was just the condition that many Iraq experts and exiled leaders had warned would lead to widespread dissatisfaction, looting, and violence.

An inadequate economic reconstruction policy also added to civilian discontent. The early focus was on large electricity, water and fuel projects. The major contracts were awarded to large American construction companies, and did not flow to Iraqi companies. The new projects became targets for terrorist. The average Iraqi was seeing no immediate benefit from these projects. Many local communities saw the break down of municipal services with the disruption of electricity and gas supplies. An earlier focus on smaller projects would have started benefits flowing into communities with people being able to see more immediate results.

The U.S. lack of a clear post war strategy is clearly shown by its failure in moving its military force from a combat to a peace keeping role. By not providing adequate replacements for the authorities it removed the policy of De-Baathification failed to provide a framework for civil control. The U.S. by concentrating its reconstruction policies on long term projects failed to improve the daily life of the Iraqi people in a visible way. The lack of a clear strategy for winning the peace in Iraq after the military victory directly contributed to the civil unrest that followed. The U.S. Military quickly moved from being viewed as an army of liberation to one of occupation. This helped to feed a growing insurgency and caused a widespread civilian dissatisfaction with the interim civilian government. These factors undermined the public's

confidence in the political process and increased the difficulty of achieving a stable lasting political solution.

Conclusion

Americans and the international community have been debating for some time about the justification used to enter Iraq and forcibly remove its dictator. Given all that we have learned since taking control of the country, it is hard to argue that Iraqi citizens were better off before U.S. intervention. One man bled the country dry for his own benefit and brutalized segments of his constituency. Saddam conditioned the people of Iraq to accept the circumstances of his rule and we are only beginning to understand the work it will take to reshape the mindset of a nation. There is no doubt that the humanitarian benefit to freeing a nation from tyranny is a meaningful endeavor worth some large-scale risk. The real issue is the pretense under which America went to war. There seems to be no doubt that America invaded Iraq as a justified form of national security and to gain political and economic control. There is overwhelming evidence that the advantages of gaining political and economic control of Iraq were an important factor in deciding whether to invade. The 'declared' political motives support invading Iraq as a justified form of national security while the 'unspoken' political and economic motives unquestionably provide evidence, justification, and some rationalization as to why America invaded Iraq partly to gain political and economic control.

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