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The 2003 US War On Iraq:

A War On Terrorism Or A War For Oil

A Dissertation Submitted To The Department Of English In Partial Fulfillment Of the Requirement For The Degree Of Master In Civilization And Literature

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Dedication

To my family

You have pushed me hard through one of the most challenging tasks

I have ever undertaken.

Thank you!

Acknowledgements

All praise is due to Allah, who gave me the strength to accomplish this dissertation.

My deepest thanks and appreciations go to my supervisor **Mrs. ZERIGUI Naima**

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Much gratitude to **the members of the jury** who accepted to examine and evaluate my work.

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with heartfelt gratitude and admiration. May Allah grant her soul the highest rank in Jannah.

Abstract

This dissertation takes the 2003 US War on Iraq as a case study to shed light on an essential aspect of the American foreign policy towards the Middle East in the 21st century. This war started with an American military invasion of Iraq and led to the collapse of Saddam's regime. According to the Bush administration's claim, American troops were sent to the Gulf region to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction, fight terrorism, and promote democracy. Utilizing the analytical approach and the historical one, the study sought to uncover a possible hidden agenda behind this war. The work eventually concluded that no WMDs were found to neutralize, and neither democracy nor peace was achieved under post-Saddam governments. Alternatively, the latter allowed American multinational oil firms to access the Iraqi oil sector and returned oil exports to the US dollar system. The US officially declared reasons, therefore, were misleading. In short, the 2003 US War on Iraq was highly an oil war.

Keywords: The US Foreign policy, 2003 War on Iraq, Weapons of Mass Destruction, Terrorism, Democracy, Oil war

ملخص الأطروحة

تتخذ هذه الأطروحة الحرب الأمريكية على العراق عام 2003 حالة دراسة لتسليط الضوء على جانب أساسي يتعلق بالسياسة الخارجية الأمريكية تجاه الشرق الأوسط في القرن الحادي والعشرين.بدأت هذه الحرب بغزو عسكري أمريكي على العراق وأدت إلى سقوط نظام الرئيس صدام.وفقا لرواية إدارة بوش ،تم إرسال القوات الأمريكية إلى منطقة الخليج لنزع أسلحة الدمار الشامل من العراق ومحاربة الإرهاب وتعزيز الديمقراطية على حد سواء.باستخدام منهجين، أحدهما تحليلي و الأخر تاريخي ، سعت الدراسة إلى الكشف عن أجندة خفية محتملة دفعت هذه الإدارة لشن هذه الحرب. في نهاية المطاف، خلص العمل إلى أنه لم يتم العثور على أسلحة الدمار الشامل المزعومة ،كما أن الديمقراطية و السلام لم يتحققا في ظل حكومات ما بعد صدام.في المقابل،مكنت الأخيرة شركات النفط الأمريكية متعددة الجنسيات من الوصول إلى قطاع النفط العراقي و أعادت تسعير صادرات النفط العراقية وفقا لنظام الدولار الأمريكي. مما يعني أن الحجج التي أعلنتها الولايات المتحدة رسميًا كانت مضللة. و عليه، يمكن الجزم بأن الحرب الأمريكية على العراق عام 2003 كانت إلى حد كبير حربا من أجل النفط.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية ،الحرب على العراق عام 2003 ، أسلحة الدمار الشامل ، الإرهاب ، الديمقراطية ،حرب من أجل النفط.

List of Acronyms

AI	Amnesty International
AQI	Al Qaeda in Iraq
BW	Biological Weapons
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IAI	The Islamic Army in Iraq
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IGC	Iraq's Interim Governing Council
INOC	Iraq National Oil Company
IPC	Iraqi Petroleum Company
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISG	Iraq Survey Group
ISI	Islamic State in Iraq
IMIK	Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
ORHA	Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance

OSRSG	UN Office of the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict
PSA	Production Sharing Agreement
SOI	Sons of Iraq
SSCI	Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
The 1920s RB	The 1920s Revolution Brigades
UAVs	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
UNMOVIC	The United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission
UNSCR 661	United Nations Security Council Resolution 661
UNSCR 665	United Nations Security Council Resolution 665
UNSCR 670	United Nations Security Council Resolution 670
UNSCR 687	United Nations Security Council Resolution 687
UNSCR 986	United Nations Security Council Resolution 986
USDOD	United States Department of Defense
USS Cole	A Guided Missile Destroyer of The United States Navy
WHO	World Health Organization
WMDs	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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General Introduction

Background of the Study

The 2003 US War on Iraq is a historical event that was witnessed around the turn of the 21st century. The September 11 attacks committed in 2001 set the stage for the US to justify why it would always have the right to stand up against terrorism and, consequently, any attempt to possess weapons of mass destruction worldwide. On October 7, 2002, the 43rd president of the United States, George W. Bush, warned the world about the Iraqi government's unconventional weapons. He asserted that Iraq had successfully produced chemical and biological weapons and a nuclear bomb, which would result in mass destruction if it was used. Soon after, top Bush administration officials accused Iraq of having operational ties with Al Qaeda. These claims convinced the Congress that protecting America's national security would require passing legislation to allow military operations in Iraq. It, therefore, passed the Authorization for the Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 in October 2002. Many Americans similarly were convinced that American troops would have to move to the Gulf region to neutralize the weapons of mass destruction threat and free the Iraqi people from the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. In March 2003, the US, along with coalition forces, launched Operation Iraqi Freedom and invaded Iraq. Within a few weeks, the Iraqi regime collapsed. Nevertheless, the rebellion against the U.S-led coalition soon started and continued until the withdrawal of troops was complete in late 2011.

Statement of the Problem

An end was brought to the American War on Iraq about 11 eleven years ago; however, there is still an ongoing debate about whether it was a just war on terrorism or an international conflict for controlling Iraq's oil. Consequently, the main question that the study will address is What is the hidden agenda behind the 2003 US War on Iraq?

Sub-questions

In light of the main question, the study will be committed to answer the following sub-questions:

1. What were the reasons given by the Bush administration for invading Iraq in 2003?

2. How did America democratize Iraq after removing Saddam?

3. To what extent did the 2003 US War on Iraq contribute to the emergence of terrorist groups?

4. What role did oil play in the US decision to invade Iraq in 2003?

Objectives of the Study

-The Academic Objective

Given that the United States has always conceived of itself as an advocate for human rights worldwide, the study attempts to investigate its role in defending human rights in Iraq after ousting Saddam Hussein.

- The Personal Objective

When the Iraq war started in 2003, I was a teenager who had discovered a love for politics and political discussion. Watching the fall of Baghdad and US troops hanging an American flag on the head of Saddam Hussein's statue on CNN and other Arab news channels, especially Aljazeera, I wondered about the nature of democracy the Bush administration would grant to Iraq. I thought there was something wrong with the war, but the lack of knowledge did not allow me to objectively analyze and assess the matter. As this study is about the 2003 US War on Iraq, I have the opportunity to feed two birds with one scone, undertaking research in an area of personal interest and answering some of my teen political wonderings academically.

Methodology

The analytical approach was applied to books, journals, reports, documents, articles, and

documentaries for conducting many parts of the dissertation. Therefore, it is essential to identify meanings and present data understandably. In addition, the study uses the historical approach to ensure arranging its content and consequently pave the way for an objective assessment of the 2003 US war on Iraq.

Significance of the Study

It is no secret that the consequences of the American military intervention against Iraq are still felt today. This dissertation critically analyzes the Bush administration's arguments for invading and occupying Iraq in 2003 in light of the war's aftermath and consequently provides evidence of whether the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime has served Iraq or America.

Structure of the Study

The dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter introduces a historical background of the US-Iraqi relations before 2003. Concerning the second chapter, it examines the reasons declared by America to convince its citizens and the national community that its war against Iraq in 2003 was necessary. It also shed s light on the US combat mission in Iraq. The third chapter concludes the dissertation. The latter challenges the Bush administration's arguments for going to war in light of the aftermath of invading the country.

Chapter One: The US-Iraqi Relations in the 20th Century

Introduction

The US formally recognized Iraq as an independent state by signing the Anglo-American-Iraqi convention of 1930. America's interest in modern Iraq increased remarkably due to the Cold War with the Soviet Union. In the 1940s, American leaders sought to secure the interests of American companies related to the Iraqi oil industry and to prevent the spread of communism in the region. In addition, they provided economic and military aid to the Iraqi government to encourage oil production. Following the nationalization of the State's Petroleum Company in 1972, the US had no choice but to adopt an accommodation policy with Baath. This policy gave rise to close strategic and military cooperation throughout the 1980s when Iraq launched a war against Iran, but the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait harmed the American-Iraqi relations. The study's first chapter traces the significant aspects of the American Iraqi ties between the early 1980s and late 1990s.

01. The Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988

1.1 Causes of the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988

Less than 06 six years after signing it, the 1975 Algiers Accord, an agreement between Iran and Iraq to settle conflicts related to their common borders, especially Shatt Alarab, was broken following a series of border clashes between the two countries (Lesch and Haas 241). President Saddam Hussein took advantage of the opportunity in the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. On his orders, the Iraq-Iran War started with a massive invasion of the recently established Islamic Republic of Iran in September 1980 (Razoux 55).

Saddam Hussein's decision to invade Iran in 1980 had strategic motives. Numerous problems between the two neighboring countries paved the way for the break of the 1975 Algiers Accord and the occupation of some Iranian territories by the Iraqi military. However, two significant issues probably inflamed the conflict. First, the 1979 Iranian Revolution movement constituted a real threat to the Sunni-dominated Baathist leadership led by Saddam

Hussein. The latter sought to prevent Iraq's prominent Shia Muslim population from rallying behind the new radical Shia rulers in Iran, including Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who was expelled from Iraq in 1978. Second, Saddam Hussein's desire to strengthen his reputation in the Sunni predominant Arab world also encouraged military action against Iran (Boutz and Williams35).

1.2 The US Involvement in the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988

At the early beginning of the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88, the United States announced its neutrality (Estes).On November 4, 1979, a group of Iranian students attacked the US Embassy in Tehran and took approximately 70 seventy American hostages. The fundamental cause behind this action was President Jimmy Carter's decision to allow Iran's deposed Shah to come to the United States for cancer treatment. The Hostage crisis in Iran impacted the American attitude toward the Iraq-Iran conflict (Razoux75). On September 24, 1980, the United States president Jimmy Carter declared:

> The fighting between Iran and Iraq is causing needless hardship and suffering among the people involved. It represents a danger to the peace and stability of the region.....There should be absolutely no interference by any other nation in this conflict....We have not been and we will not become involved in the conflict between Iran and Iraq (Carter).

Declaring neutrality towards the Iran-Iraq crisis initially reflected the extent to which Carter feared the Iranian revolutionaries' anger. It was probably important to gain the Iranian government's sympathy and bring an end to the Hostage Crisis in Tehran.

The Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988 brought several changes to US relations with Iraq. Although the White House asserted that America would remain neutral in the conflict, it played an essential role in affecting the war course (Razoux 80). The New York Times reported that President Ronald Reagan allowed, after taking office in January 1981, bolstering Iran's army by covert shipments of American-made weapons. The same newspaper claims that

the US chose to support both sides and not allow any side to control oil in the Gulf region (Hersh).

The early 1980s marked the beginning of improvement in US-Iraqi diplomatic relations. In February 1982, the United States removed Iraq from the supporters of terrorism list on which it was placed in 1979 (Lesch and Haas 241). This re-designation allowed direct support to Iraq by authorizing the purchase of US commercial and agricultural goods and the export of so-called dual-use items that could be utilized for civilian or military purposes. In 1983, the American support included weapons sales, military advisors, and satellite intelligence sharing. Iraq was provided, among other things, economic assistance and the aid of the US naval battle group. According to former intelligence and State Department officials, President Reagan's administration secretly provided highly classified intelligence to Iraq in 1982 (Boutz and Williams36).

It also permitted the sale of American weapons to Baghdad in a successful effort to help President Saddam Hussein avoid imminent defeat in the war with Iran when the latter drove back the Iraqi forces and counterattacked across the border in the early 1980s. During this long conflict, the United States feared the possible effects of an Iranian victory which might cause the spread of revolution and instability in the Gulf region and consequently interrupt oil supplies (Boutz and Williams36).

Playing on both sides was one of America's fundamental strategies in the First Gulf War. Between 1985 and1986, US policy unofficially shifted towards Iran. Then, in March 1984, the US State Department condemned Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Iran, which briefly made the improving relations cool. When the revelation of the US Iranian links started threatening its relations with the friendly oil-producing states of the Gulf, the US adopted an openly pro-Iraqi position in the war and started to support Saddam both overtly and covertly (Hersh).

1.3 Ending the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988

The destructive Iran-Iraq War lasted for almost eight years. On July 3, 1988, the USS Vincennes shot down an Iranian commercial aircraft, murdering 290 passengers and crew. The accident was added to endless series of Iranian defeats to confirm the weakness of Iran's position. It was clear that Iran would have much more to lose if it continued a war that had turned to its disadvantage. (Cause)On July 18, the Iranian foreign minister sent a letter to the United Nations Security secretary-general formally accepting Resolution 598. Confirming the ceasefire terms, the Iranian government joined direct negotiations and recognized the right of free passage on the Shatt Alarab (Boutz and Williams39).

On the other side, Saddam Hussein finally agreed to accept a ceasefire on August 6 (Razoux 468). The Iraqis gradually withdrew from the Iranian territories. All hostilities between the two countries ended effectively on August 8, 1988. A United Nations peacekeeping force of 350 observers was positioned along the ceasefire line to verify, confirm and supervise the ceasefire. The latter went into effect on August 20, 1988. The withdrawal of The United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group forces in 1991 marked the official end of the Iran–Iraq War (Lesch and Haas 243).

1.4 The Aftermath of the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988

The Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988 considerably damaged Iraq. Saddam Hussein claimed victory in the war, but it did not seem so. Iraq gained no new territory, and several Iraqi cities and oil infrastructures were destroyed. Additionally, this conflict caused a hundred thousand Iraqi casualties and significant human displacement and unemployment. Likewise, the country lost a vast workforce and equipment (Lesch and Haas 244).

In the wake of the war, the Iraqi economic status shifted from prosperity to difficulty. The conflict stripped the government of cash and gave it an enormous debt burden. The nation owed $80 billion to the US, the Gulf States, other governments, and private creditors, which had contributed to its war efforts (Murray and Woods 198). Levels of inflation increased

highly, and brisk black markets in foreign currencies spread that the Iraqi government intervention to resolve bad economic conditions and implement reformations was very tricky. The thereby large-scale economic privatization program, which Baghdad initiated during the Iran-Iraq War, did not meet its objectives (Gause).

02.The Gulf War of 1990-1991

2.1 Causes of the Gulf War of 1990-1991

On August 02, 1990, Iraq initiated another war with a neighboring country, Kuwait. With minimal resistance from the Kuwaiti armed forces, Iraqi troops controlled the country within hours. Kuwait was declared a new Iraqi province .Iraq consequently gained control of a considerable portion of the world's oil supply(Lesch and Haas 245). In the aftermath, the international community demanded the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait. However, Iraq refused and went further, taking the foreigners in Kuwait as hostages (Westermeyer 24).

Iraq had likely a historical cause for occupying Kuwait and attempting to annex it. The neighboring country is a sovereign state in Western Asia located at the head of the Persian Gulf. It attained complete independence on June 19, 1961. In 1963, Iraq formally recognized Kuwait's liberation and its borders. Iraqi rulers after that changed their position. Justifying the military action on Kuwait in the late 1990s, the Iraqi government argued that it was not an occupation because the country was part of Iraq during the Ottoman Empire's rule (Greenwood).

Iraq invaded Kuwait mainly for economic reasons. Given that it financed the war against Iran primarily through loans, the Iraqi government owed some $37 billion to Gulf creditors by 1990. Saddam Hussein argued that those loans should be considered payments to Iraq to protect the Arabian Peninsula from Iran's expansionism. Gulf creditors, including Kuwait, refused to erase Iraq's massive debt despite the vast revenue they had gained by supplying Iraq's oil customers during the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988 (Dee). Additionally, the Iraqi leader criticized Kuwait for overproducing crude oil for export and driving prices to

devastating lows. Kuwait was also accused of depriving Iraq of considerable oil revenues and exploiting the Rumayla field on the shared border (Yant18).

Saddam Hussein legitimized occupying Kuwait as a reaction to several provocative Kuwaiti policies. In January 1990, the Iraqi leader concluded that Kuwait and America aimed to destabilize his regime by overproducing oil to keep prices low. However, the tone of Iraqi foreign policy became directly aggressive in February 1990. Saddam attacked the American military presence in the Gulf region at the founding summit of the Arab Cooperation Council (Boutz and Williams 45). After that, the rhetoric of Iraqi foreign policy continued to be increasingly aggressive towards the US and its allies, especially Israel. In early April 1990, the Iraqi leader asserted that his country would burn half of Israel with chemical weapons if it attacked its lands. At the Arab summit of May 1990, Iraq likened the oil production policies of Kuwait to an act of war against Iraq. The decision to invade Kuwait remarkably reflected the Iraqi regime's fears that circumstances had turned against it and that the negative trend should be reversed quickly (Gause).

2.2 The US Involvement in the Gulf War of 1990-1991

The United States opposed Saddam Hussein in the Gulf crisis of 1990-1991 due to strategic reasons. Its interests shaped its attitude toward the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. Namely, securing the Persian Gulf was considered vital to America's national security. These interests included comfortable access to oil and sufficient stability for the friendly states in the region (Finlan 83). On August 20, 1990, US President George H. W. Bush declared:

> The United States will defend its vital interests in the area, through the use of US military force if necessary and appropriate, against any power with interests inimical to our own.....The United States will encourage the effective expressions of support and the participation of our allies and other friendly states to promote our mutual interests in the Persian Gulf region (Bush).

Saddam's invasion of Kuwait undoubtedly marked a turning point in US-Iraq relations. The strategic friend, Saddam Hussein, suddenly became an enemy. Enhancing American interests in the Gulf region, the US assessed, had to be achieved by all means including military action against Saddam's leadership.

In the wake of Kuwait's occupation in 1990, the US and United Nations warned Saddam to withdraw from Kuwait or military action would be taken, but he refused. George H. W. Bush ordered the US Central Command to reinforce defending Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf states within a few days. The US president also urged other countries to form a multinational coalition to prevent Iraqi forces from advancing south towards Saudi Arabia and expel them from Kuwait. As a result, 35 thirty five countries joined and established Operation Desert Storm (Jones 06).

Led by the US, coalition forces launched the 1990 Gulf War against Iraq after Saddam's occupation of Kuwait. On August 8, 1990, the US aircraft reached Saudi Arabia. It was soon backed by Marine Corps ground units, naval aviation from offshore aircraft carriers and supporting land bases. Within a month, enough troops had been established there (Jones 06).On November 29, 1990, the UN Security Council authorized the use of all necessary means of force against Iraq if Saddam continued refusing to withdraw from Kuwait. The American president urged countries to join in the action to block any Iraqi moves against Saudi Arabia (Westermeyer78,79).

The coalition forces were well-prepared for a military confrontation with Saddam's government by January. They numbered about 750,000, including 540,000 US troops and smaller armed forces from Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Egypt, the Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia, and other nations. Five days following Kuwait's invasion, President George H. W. Bush started Operation Desert Shield. The latter allowed leading the establishment of troops to defend Saudi Arabia (Westermeyer79).

On January 17, 1991, the US-led coalition started Operation Desert Storm. Its initial

targets were disabling Iraqi leadership and demolishing its military capabilities. As such, airstrikes targeted the Iraqi strategic air defense system, military and telecommunication sites, and control centers to isolate Saddam Hussein from his nation and armed forces. This stage was profoundly essential to prevent the reinforcement of Iraqi troops early (Alan).

The strategic air campaign of high sortie rates, estimated at more than 1000 per day, supported neutralizing Iraqi radar-guided Surface to Air Missiles and eliminating long-term Iraqi offensive capabilities. The Desert Storm air campaign disabled Iraqi communications networks and internal control mechanisms. In particular, the Iraqi telephone system and the national television system were taken out in the early days of the war. (Lewis 340) According to some reports, the regime lost its most effective communication with the country's different parts and its deployed troops in Kuwait within about three weeks following the US forces' interventions (Alan).

The rapid gaining of air supremacy enabled favorable conditions for the ground assault phase against Iraqi forces. Namely, the massive paralysis of internal communication mechanisms rendered the Iraqi army helpless before the ground assault started. During the last stage of Desert Storm, the US-led coalition conducted attacks against the Iraqi army divisions, command posts, and ammunition depots. The ground offensive lasted only a few hours. Paralyzed by the destruction of its crucial equipment, the Iraqi army's ground units became ineffective. A successful end was put to the quick military operation on February 28, 1991(Lacquement).

2.3 Ending the Gulf War of 1990-1991

After the four-day ground campaign, by February 28, George H. W. Bush declared a ceasefire leading to the end of the Gulf War. Saddam Hussein's forces thus were ejected from the country they had invaded in August 1990 with minimal combat casualties. Unlike the expected losses, only 300 coalition soldiers were killed (Westermeyer 78). Having fulfilled the restoration of Kuwait's sovereignty, the American president and his fellow coalition leaders

had agreed not to order their forces to march on towards Baghdad. It was clear enough that president Bush had led the formation of the international coalition for removing Iraq from Kuwait, not for the ouster of Saddam Hussein. As a result, Saddam's weakened regime stayed in power. On March 3, US general Norman Schwarzkopf met with an Iraqi military delegation at Safwan airfield in southern Iraq. The Iraqis quickly accepted the various UN demands and agreed to arrange for prisoner exchanges and other military requirements. The UN peacekeeping forces were sent to the Kuwait border. The United Nations Special Commission and International Atomic Energy Agency were sent to the region to control the weapons of mass destruction (Estes).

2.4 The Aftermath of the Gulf War of 1990-1991

The impact of the war seemed grave on the Iraqi side. The military confrontation left an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 Iraqi troops dead. Further, it resulted in enormous damage to Iraq's infrastructure with losses estimated at $170 billion, which would paralyze the nation socially and economically over the coming years. The end of the Gulf War paved the way for a rebellion in the south of Iraq. The ejected soldiers from Kuwait assembled in Basra, and the uprising broke out against the government. The riots spread rapidly across the Shia provinces, including Nasiriya, Najaf, Diwaniya, and Karbala (Matthews 2.43:19'). The rebels attacked the state institutions, Baathist party headquarters, hotels, and malls. George H.W. Bush's administration worried that the Iraqi state would be dissolved if the rebellion succeeded. The United States thus did not support the uprising. The insurgent groups were crashed down by the Republican Guard of Baghdad, and the control was regained eventually (Lesch and Haas 245).

Through its war fight in favor of Kuwait, the United States had succeeded in achieving essential goals in the Gulf region. The Gulf War gave a decisive military victory America had not enjoyed since the Second World War. It also strengthened its position internationally as the only remaining superpower in the post-Cold War world. Financially, the fight against Iraq

represented one of the most effective campaigns in US history because it ensured oil supplies from the Middle East to serve the world's most powerful economy (Lacquement).

03.The US Economic Sanctions against Iraq

3.1 United Nations Security Council Resolution 661

Following the declaration of a ceasefire in February 1991, military operations against Iraq were over. However, the United States shifted to a more devastating war, economic sanctions. The comprehensive trade embargo added a financial catastrophe to Saddam's weak economy. The embargo focused significantly on oil, the largest money-generating commodity in the Iraqi country (Odle). Sanctions targeted the import and export of other items, including weapons and military, production, and delivery systems but did not extend to supplies intended strictly for medical purposes and foodstuffs. Those economic sanctions were subject to scrutiny by the Security Council's Resolution 661 Committee, which was established to monitor the implementation of the economic embargo (Youngs and Oakes).

UN-imposed economic sanctions reflected the type of American-Iraqi relations in the 1990s and early 2000s. Constituting the most wide-ranging regime of economic sanctions ever adopted by the United Nations, they can be divided into 04 four main phases. Soon after Iraq occupied Kuwait, the United States drafted a resolution for the UN Security Council to place the first economic sanctions on Iraq in an attempt to compel Saddam Hussein to withdraw his forces from Kuwait. Further, it demanded full disclosure and destruction of the country's biological, chemical, ballistic, and nuclear weapons programs (Wilusz 184).

On August 6, 1990, the UN Security Council passed the first resolution, UNSCR 661, calling on all countries to cease all economic relations with Iraq and Iraqis. In response to UNSCR 661, the US issued orders to strengthen those UN sanctions (Alnasrawi122). Therefore, UNSCR 661was followed by two other resolutions. UNSCR 665 was adopted on August 25, and then UNSCR 670 was passed on September 25. Both UN resolutions increased the sanctions to include further measures, including a ban on flights to and from Iraq and

naval interdiction (Boutz and Williams 50).

On April 03, 1991, the UN issued UNSCR 687. The latter contained the ceasefire terms as an exit strategy, which would lead to the termination of sanctions in the wake of liberating Kuwait. The UN Security Council imposed a series of obligations on Iraq (Wallensteen, Staibano, and Eriksson 07). It ordered the Iraqi regime to destroy its WMDs program and allow verification by inspectors from the UN Special Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency. It also required paying reparations, restoring plundered items to Kuwait, and resolving prisoner of war issues. Article 22 of the resolution stipulated that the sanctions' s measures would be canceled once UN inspectors assured Iraq had eliminated all of its WMDs. As a result, Iraq initially complied with the provisions. Yet it soon refused to allow access to UN inspectors (Resolution 687, paragraph 22).

3.2 United Nations Security Council Resolution 986

On April 14, 1995, UNSCR 986 was adopted as a humanitarian exception to the existed sanctions. Concern over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Iraq encouraged the Security Council to grant permission for the Iraqi government to use a specified amount of revenue generated by the sale of its oil every 06 six months to purchase humanitarian supplies. The latter included food and medicine primarily to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people. The UN Security Council and the government of Iraq eventually reached an agreement on implementing the UNSCR 986, the oil-for-food program (Ascensio and Dixneuf).

The US showed commitment to sponsoring the oil-for-food scheme, allowing Iraq to export up to $02 billion worth of oil in 180 days. However, the Iraqi oil sales were under the Security Council's monitoring and management to prevent program manipulation. Likewise, the Iraqi oil profits were allocated as follows:

-30% to cover Gulf War reparations.

-66% to go on medical supplies and foodstuffs for Iraqi civilian needs and different expenses related to the embargo, including United Nations' operating costs.

-the remaining percentage was to pay the cost of the UN supervision of the oil sale and repair of the pipeline (Wallensteen, Staibano, and Eriksson 18).

Under UNSCR 986, the oil for food program resolved some problems regarding food and medicines, but it did not allow all proceeds to go to relieve the population suffering in Iraq. Theoretically, the United Nation's Oil For Food program promised to generate aid income. Nevertheless, it failed to enhance sufficiently the nutrition and health care of Iraqi citizens (Youngs and Oakes).

3.3 The Impact of Sanctions on the Iraqi People and Saddam Hussein's Regime

The humanitarian consequences of the comprehensive international sanctions and the economic embargo against Iraq were considerably grave. A UNICEF survey published in August 1999 documented a substantial rise in mortality of children during the years of sanctions. Estimates suggest that nearly 400,000 children died in Iraq under sanctions (International Committee of the Red Cross). Further, a joint report by WHO, UNICEF, and FAO in 1995, indicated that about 04 four million Iraqi citizens were below the poverty line and dependent on the rations provided by the state, while 01 one million were at risk of starvation. According to UNICEF statistics published in November 1997, 32% of Iraqi children under five were chronically malnourished (FAO).

Due to damaged sewerage systems, which had not received the necessary repairs or maintenance since the imposition of sanctions, the drinking water problem also emerged as another significant threat to the population's health in Iraq. Deterioration of drinking water in terms of quantity and quality led to the rapid spread of infectious diseases (Wallensteen, Staibano, and Eriksson 15). The Iraqi education system, which had led the Arab world since the 1950s, broke down under the weight of the sanctions. As a result, most educated Iraqis left the country, and the population's literacy rate considerably decreased. The economic restrictions also prevented modernizing national infrastructures, which had been destroyed in the air campaign of the 1991War (Wilusz 185).

Although the internationally enforced UN sanctions against Iraq were extremely tough, Saddam Hussein's leadership did not seem considerably affected. In a speech at Harvard University on November,05,1998, Mr. Denis Halliday, a former UN assistant secretary-general and chief UN relief coordinator for Iraq, declared that the sanctions caused a humanitarian crisis to the general population, but Iraqi leadership was unaffected (Odle).

04.The 1998 Bombing of Iraq (Operation Desert Fox)

4.1 Causes of the 1998 Bombing of Iraq

Tensions between Iraq and the UN weapons inspectors continued during the late 1990s.UNSCOM reported to the UNSC that Iraq continued refusing to supply requested information about its biological and chemical weapons programs. Despite the Security Council's condemnation, Iraq declared in late October 1998 that it would stop all cooperation until the sanctions were lifted (Conversino). As an immediate response, the US and Britain again ordered airstrikes against Iraq. By a last-minute decision from Baghdad to comply, the military operation was avoided. UNSCOM team returned in mid-November 1998 (Tarzi).On the other side, Washington outlined the conditions Iraq ought to meet. On November 15, President Bill Clinton declared:

> Iraq must resolve all outstanding issues raised by UNSCOM and the IAEA. Second, it must give inspectors unfettered access to inspect and to monitor all sites they choose with no restrictions or qualifications, consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding Iraq itself signed with Secretary General Annan in February. Third, it must turn over all relevant documents. Fourth, it must destroy all weapons of mass destruction according to UN Security Council resolutions. Fifth, it must not interfere with the independence or the professional expertise of the weapons inspectors (Clinton).

Bill Clinton's administration had reasons to choose a military response to Iraq's continued

refusal to accomplish its obligations under various UN resolutions. In a report to the Security Council in December 1998, UNSCOM chief, Richard Butler, asserted that Iraq did not provide the promised cooperation during inspections. UN staff were evacuated from Iraq within hours (Youngs, Oakes). Therefore, it was essential for the US to use the UNSCOM report as a sufficient justification for the military attack.

The US government knew that Iraq would make much more effort to get the sanctions canceled and renew its WMDs programs. The only way to eliminate this problem seemed to be the removal of Saddam Hussein himself. Still, it was clear to America that it could not bring down Iraqi leadership by eliminating Saddam physically as its law forbids its defense organizations from assassination plots against foreign leaders. Moreover, there was speculation that the decision to implement the operation was also linked to President Clinton's desire to deflect public attention from the Monica Lewinsky affair, a sex scandal in which Clinton was involved in the late 1990s, and improve his distorted image (Alani).

4.2 During the 1998 Bombing of Iraq

On December 16, 1998, Operation Desert Fox was initiated by the United States and the United Kingdom. The bombing campaign lasted 90 hours.200 US Air Force, US Navy carrier-based aircraft, and one dozen British aircraft were employed in the bombing operation (Alani). The chosen targets were air defense systems, airfields, command and control sites, facilities associated with chemical and biological weapons production sites housing the regime's secret police, and elite Republican Guard forces. Further, Basra's oil refinery was attacked (Arkin).

The American government expected the operation to achieve several goals. First, it would degrade Iraq's capability to produce and use WMDs. Second, it would reduce Iraq's ability to launch a war against neighboring countries. Third, the attacks would end Saddam Hussein's violation of international agreements and allow United *Nations* inspectors to access Iraq's WMDs Facilities. However, many political analysts and experts argue that the critical goal of Operation Desert Fox was destabilizing the Iraqi leadership (Conversino).

4.3 The Aftermath of the 1998 Bombing of Iraq

According to the US department of defense statements, Operation Desert Fox successfully achieved its military objective as Saddam's ability to pursue his WMDs programs and threaten his neighbors and international order has been set back significantly. Nevertheless, many experts have agreed on the failure of the operation. Despite the successful military usage of airpower, Saddam Hussein remained firmly in power, and Iraq's WMDs programs remained beyond the scrutiny of the UN (Youngs, Oakes).

At a Pentagon briefing on January 7, 1998, general Anthony Zinni, US central command commander, acknowledged the difficulty of eliminating Iraq's WMDs production capability because chemical or pharmaceutical plants could covertly be used as dual-use facilities. Whether it succeeded or failed, Operation Desert Fox was a turning point in the US policy toward Iraq. In its aftermath, the latter was shifted from containment to regime change. To overthrow Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the US government started sponsoring opposition groups, such as the Kurdish parties, the Iraqi National Congress of Ahmad Chalabi, and the Iraqi National Accord of Ayad Allawi (Conversino).

Conclusion

To sum up, the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988 brought remarkable changes to U.S relations with Iraq. Fearing an Iranian victory that might cause interrupt oil supplies, the United States broke its neutrality and shifted its policy to Baghdad's side against Iran. Eventually, the latter was defeated, and an end was put to the Iran-Iraq War on 8 August 1988. Likewise, the Gulf War of 1990 -1991 marked a turning point in U.S-Iraqi relations. In the wake of Kuwait's occupation on 2 August 1990, the U.S drafted Resolution 661 to place the first economic sanctions on Iraq and led multinational forces to fight against it. The Gulf War came to an end on 28 February 1991. By 1998, the sanctions had significantly damaged the Iraqi society and economy. However, Saddam Hussein continued preventing UNSCOM inspectors from carrying out their mission. As a result, American and British forces initiated Operation Desert

Fox against Iraq on 16 December 1998. In the aftermath, Iraq's WMDs programs remained beyond the scrutiny of the UN.

Chapter Tow: The 2003 US War on Iraq: Rationale and Aspects of Involvement?

Introduction

Since the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990, the UN has commanded Saddam Hussein's regime to respect its international commitments through a considerable number of UNSC resolutions. Primarily, Iraq was required to allow international weapons inspectors to monitor the destruction of its presumed stockpile of WMDs and stop supporting terrorist organizations. However, UNSCRs have been constantly violated by the Iraqi government. In November 2002, Resolution 1441 gave Iraq the last chance to comply with its disarmament obligations. Baghdad unconditionally agreed to deal with the new resolution. As a result, the return of the UN and IAEA inspectors to Iraq became officially permitted. Advancing the notion of preventive war, the Bush administration proposed in February 2003 that the UNSC had to decide on military sanctions against Saddam's regime to ensure that Iraq would no longer pose a threat to international peace and security. The following chapter sheds light on America's primary rationale for invading Iraq and the significant aspects reflecting the US-led coalition's involvement in the country in 2003.

01. The US Justification for Invading Iraq

The Bush administration has repeatedly asserted that the 2003 military involvement in Iraq was a preventive war. On August 14, 2002, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice chaired a meeting that set out US goals in Iraq in a document entitled "Iraq: Goals, Objectives, and Strategy," a draft for a national security presidential directive. Making it official, President Bush signed the executive order on August 29. The presidential directive offered official justifications for that war (Woodward96). Three declared arguments were emphasized. The first was to eliminate the threat of WMDs. The second one was to contain the threat of terrorism. Creating democracy in Iraq was its third objective (Brewer230).

1.1 Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction

The WMDs threat is the first reason America has given for pointing out the importance of military action against Iraq .UNSCOM ended its inspections in 1998. Since then, UN inspectors have gotten no answers to their detailed questions regarding Iraq's WMDs. American suspicions that Saddam's regime could have chemical weapons hidden or enough growth materials to produce tons of new biological weapon agents remained justifiable. Nevertheless, between 2002 and 2003, the Bush administration's statements reflected more concerns about the remarkable development of those WMDs programs (Cirincione, Mathews, Perkovich, Orton18). Most of the official declarations on Iraq's weapon programs were supported by the 2002 NIE on Iraq's continuing programs. The latter was produced over three weeks in September 2002 and then delivered to the Congress to authorize the use of force for compelling Iraqi compliance with UN resolutions (Kessler).

The CIA published an unclassified version of an estimate regarding Iraq's WMDs in October 2002. Given that it continued its WMDs programs and had chemical and biological weapons and missiles with ranges beyond UN restrictions, the national intelligence document reported that Baghdad would probably have a nuclear weapon during the following years (NIE). Likewise, it maintained that Iraq had accumulated chemical and biological weapons and developed delivery platforms such as UAVs for biological and chemical agents (Mathews, Miller). According to the stated report, the Iraqi government had failed to justify fundamental gaps and inconsistencies or give credible evidence that it had wholly eliminated its previous weapons stockpiles and destroyed its production infrastructure (NIE).

The argument Bush used in his invasion of Iraq was based on intelligence reports his administration had received concerning the existence of WMDs possessed by Saddam Hussein. On 28 January 2002, the president gave a State of the Union address. The American president included Iraq in an axis of evil against which preemptive force might have to be used, and he warned the international community of the danger of WMDs(Graham).In

September 2002, he cited a British intelligence report indicating that Iraq was capable of launching a chemical or biological attack just 45 forty-five minutes after the order was given to do so. The alleged Iraqi threat again was stressed in Bush's address on 05 October 2002, which referred to Iraq's alleged WMDs and relations with terrorist organizations and stated that Congress had authorized military force against the Iraqi regime. The president mainly spoke about serious evidence indicating that Iraq was reconstituting its WMDs (Bush). In his words:

> 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 danger is clear: using chemical, biological or, one day, nuclear weapons, obtained with the help of Iraq, the terrorists could fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country or any other. (Bush)

Officials within the Bush administration also clarified whether or not evidence indicated that Iraq had WMDs.Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld provided insight into the relationship between Saddam Hussein and WMDs.In January 2003, he declared that Saddam possessed large unaccounted stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons, including VX, sarin, mustard gas, anthrax, botulism, and possibly smallpox. He additionally had an active program to acquire and develop nuclear weapons(Reuters Staff).In an interview with Steve Croft on Infinity CBS radio in November of 2002, Rumsfeld again emphasized that Saddam Hussein had chemical and biological weapons. According to him, there was no doubt that the Iraqi president had a vast stockpile of chemical weapons and an ongoing production of new weapons (Rumsfeld).

Defense Secretary provided much more details about the Iraqi WMDs' location in March of 2003. He claimed that they were in an area around Tikrit and Baghdad and west, east,

south, and north somewhat (Corn, Mahanta). Moreover, he went on to say that Saddam also had an active program for developing nuclear weapons. Rumsfeld's assertion concerning nuclear weapons was particularly alarming because if Saddam undoubtedly had those weapons capabilities, that would pose a more significant threat to the US and its allies (Rumsfeld).

Vice President Dick Cheney also made remarks about Iraq's nuclear capabilities. He claimed on several occasions that there were WMDs in Iraq. In August 2002, Cheney expressed his opinion on the subject in a speech in which he maintained that Saddam Hussein was actively amassing WMDs to use against America and its allies (Friedersdorf).On September 8, 2002, the Vice President appeared on Meet the Press TV program and claimed that Iraq had recently attempted to obtain yellowcake, lightly-processed uranium, from Africa. Cheney said that the administration confirmed that Saddam had developed a procurement system to acquire uranium enrichment's necessary equipment and build powerful nuclear weapons (Cheney).

Further, the equipment mentioned by Bush's Vice President consisted of aluminum tubes that Iraq had obtained from another nation. Three days before the US-led coalition forces invaded Iraq, he reiterated that the latter had reconstituted nuclear weapons (Cheney). Cheney's declarations regarding the alleged Iraqi WMDs were crucial. Many critics argue that this man shaped the Bush administration's affirmation concerning the likelihood of the existence of WMDs in Iraq (Johnson).

The Iraqi threat of WMDs was similarly highlighted by the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. In a CNN interview conducted in September 2002, Rice pointed out that Saddam had infrastructures and nuclear scientists to produce a nuclear weapon. She additionally indicated that Iraq retained its extensive nuclear knowledge and experience built up before the Gulf War (Rice).In Tell Me More interview with the journalist Michel Martin, she stressed the subject again emphasizing that war would be the last resort because

continuing to live with Saddam's threat of WMDs seemed impossible (Memmott). Rice reported that the Iraqi president would acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon. Her position was that even if there was some degree of uncertainty regarding how quickly it would take him to gain them, the risk was not worth waiting on (Rice).

Secretary of State Colin Powell also provided information related to the alleged WMDs in Iraq. On 05 February 2003, Colin Powell addressed the UNSC on Iraq and expressed great concern for the United States regarding WMDs. Powell made a solid attempt to justify war, arguing that the US had an obligation to ensure that Iraq complied with the UN. Emphasizing that reliable sources backed up his statements, he informed that Saddam Hussein had never abandoned his nuclear weapons program (Powell).In this speech, he specifically talked about Iraqi attempts to purchase aluminum tubes and high-strength magnets from 11 different countries and acquire high-speed balancing machines for enrichment (Julian).

Likewise, Powel explained why WMDs were not easy to detect. The nuclear facilities, according to him, were kept out of sight by placing them underground or camouflaging them, whereas chemical weapons infrastructures were probably embedded within civilian infrastructures. Therefore, inspections would not be able to halt these activities. Powel affirmed that the inspectors might detect them, yet the Iraqi government would resume them once they left the country (Julian).

Colin Powell's address to the UNSC on Iraq gave more details concerning alleged Iraq's biological and chemical weapons. Shedding light on Iraq's biological capability, the man has made it clear that Saddam could have produced about 25,000 liters of toxic material, anthrax. The UN members knew through the speech that Iraq probably had stocks of between 100 and 500 tons of chemical weapons agents that would fill 16,000 battlefield rockets and cause or be capable of killing millions across more than 100 square miles of territory. Powel affirmed again that Iraq's biological and chemical programs included mobile production and research facilities that would not be possible for the inspectors to find (Powell).

1.2 The War on Terrorism

As a second primary reason, the US assessed a war against Saddam was an integral part of its war on terror. President George W. Bush's 2002 State of the Union address reflected official America's intentions to consistently fight against terrorist organizations and combat any country involved in training, equipping, or financing them. Bush publicly depicted Iraq as part of an axis of evil that would threaten the world's peace (Bush). His administration, on several occasions, expressed concerns that the Iraqi government had terrorist allies and therefore could be supporting terrorist organizations. The assertion each time was that Iraq would give terrorist groups, such as Al Qaeda, weapons of mass destruction to be used against the US or its allies. Furthermore, some top Bush administration officials implied that the Iraqi government had links with the September 11 hijackers. These official American claims meant that overthrowing Saddam was necessary to create an international environment hostile to terrorism worldwide(Glass).

1.2.1The 9/11 Attacks as a Contextual Background

In the wake of the September 11 attacks, the US revised all the threats to its national security to neutralize them quickly. It assessed its overlooked vulnerabilities differently. Whether or not they were directly related to Al Qaeda, all threats were explored (Lesch and Haas309). The Bush administration formed a new conception of how to combat mass terrorism, setting the groundwork for a revived focus on Iraq. Long-term strategies of containment and deterrence seemed inadequate against terrorists. The administration's officials reasoned terrorists operated in territories of state sponsors. Thus, it became more apparent that the war on terror would require fighting terrorist groups and the states that support them alike (Gershkoff, Kushner).

The 9/11 Report included assertions of contacts between Iraqi intelligence officials and lead September 11 hijacker Mohammad Atta. It indicated 04 four meetings between him and Ahmad Samir Alani, Iraq's intelligence chief in Prague. The report confirmed that Alani

agreed with Atta during these visits to provide him with funds. According to the same official document, the October 12, 2000, attack on the USS Cole docked in Yemen was planned in these meetings (The 9/11 Commission). Some critics argued that the chances of Saddam allying with Al Qaeda's leader, Osama Bin Laden, seemed small. However, any potential alliance could probably result in a more catastrophic terrorist attack than 9/11(Bright and Burke).

1.2. 2 Iraq as a State Sponsor of Terrorism

The Defense Department firmly linked military action against Saddam Hussein with the global war on terrorism worldwide. Drafted by Douglas Feith and edited by Rumsfeld, and then sent to President Bush on 30 September 2001, a paper entitled Strategic Thoughts elaborated the concept of the US global war on terrorism. Nevertheless, its chief focus was on state actors as the sources of potential danger to the US national security as they could supply biological and nuclear weapons to terrorist organizations. The document's primary objective was to convince the American president and his administration that a rational action was to attack some rogue states militarily. According to Strategic Thoughts, this step would make other state sponsors stop their policies of supporting terrorism and consequently disrupt terrorist activities in the long term (SecDef).

Two other papers were established within this context, the October 2001 Strategic Guidance for the Defense Department and the June 2002 Political-Military Strategic Plan for Iraq. Both documents underlined that the war on terrorism required a state confrontation with non-state supporters of terrorist groups and the terrorist groups themselves (SecDef). Their shared common purpose was to urge the Bush administration to focus on states that supported terrorism and aspire to deliver WMDs. Paul Wolfowitz, another chief figure of the Defense Department, believed terrorism was no longer a controllable evil after 9/11. Preferably, he argued, dealing with it would need destroying the networks and attacking sponsoring states starting with Saddam's regime and its terrorist allies (Hopkins). From Wolfowitz's perspective,

Saddam had long deserved removal, but 9/11 had only made this necessity clearer. The invasion of Iraq thus would be the right thing to do (Campiotti).

In early 2002, the US remarkably identified Iraq as a WMDs armed-state sponsor of terrorism. The Bush administration formulated a case for war with Iraq based on the alleged nexus between rogue states, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorists. The primary threat of this nexus was that terrorists allied with tyrants, such as Saddam, could gain technologies allowing them to kill on an ever more massive scale. Al Qaeda, the Bush administration considered, could not produce WMDs. Still, it could acquire the types it would need for using them on US targets, leaving no evidence of its act because a small vial of smallpox or anthrax would be capable of killing thousands (Gershkoff, Kushner). The anthrax attacks in October 2001 enhanced the fear that a rogue state like Iraq might give biological or other unconventional weapons to terrorists (Rose, Vulliamy). Moreover, the 2002 NIE noted that Saddam probably would not hesitate to cooperate with Al Qaeda to carry out revenge against the US (NIE). The Bush administration officials consequently agreed that any military action against state sponsors of terrorism would be justified to remove this threat (Brewer230).

One of The Weekly Standard articles provided more details about a piece of intelligence information indicating links between Saddam and Al Qaeda. The latter included excerpts from a memorandum undersecretary of defense for policy Douglas Feith delivered to the chairman and vice-chairman of the SSCI and senators Jay Rockefeller and Pat Roberts on October 27, 2003(Hayes). The memorandum uncovered other information from an Iraq policy planning unit within the USDOD established in early 2002 and then disbanded in late 2002. It pointed out that some Islamist leaders of Sudan helped Iraq's intelligence to develop a relationship with Osama Be Laden before he left Sudan for Afghanistan in 1996. According to the mentioned USDOD memorandum, Al Qaeda agreed not to undermine Saddam's regime, which became isolated in the Arab region after invading Kuwait. In return, the Iraqi government was committed to providing Al Qaeda with weapons, including WMDs, and

logistical support for terrorist attacks (Zick).

The USDOD memorandum gave some names of Iraqi intelligence officers and approximate dates on which they met Ben Laden's camp in Afghanistan and Pakistan for discussions of cooperation in manufacturing explosive devices. Likewise, intelligence reports indicating that Al Qaeda ordered its operatives to travel to Iraq to receive training in the production and usage of chemical weapons were cited (Katzman). The relationship, therefore, was important for both sides. Their cooperation constituted a means of gaining leverage over a common enemy, the United States, even though Saddam was a secular leader while Al Qaeda sought to establish Islamic states (Zick).

Another critical aspect of the Administration's argument had something to do with Ansar Al- Islam, widely regarded as the forerunner of Al Qaeda in Iraq. It emerged in 1998 as a breakaway faction of the IMIK. The US raised concerns about this group following the American victory in Afghanistan in late 2001. Namely, some Al Qaeda activists, including Arabs, fled to Iraq and joined Ansar Al- Islam movement. The Bush administration claimed that Abu Musab Al- Zarqawi, the leader of the Arab contingent within the Ansar Al-Islam group, was an Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist and the chief planner of murdering one of the American diplomats in Jordan in October 2002 (Katzman). According to it, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi sought to smuggle chemical material from northern Iraq into the United States(Gardner).In addition, the US official view was presented in public detail by Secretary of State Powell in his UN presentation on February 05, 2003. The Bush administration official argued that America had no choice but to confront Saddam Hussein's regime through a military action because Baghdad had ties with Ansar Al-Islam movement, which was capable of directing terrorist networks in the Middle East and even beyond (Powell).

1.3 The Promotion of Democracy in Iraq

The US put forward the promotion of democracy in Iraq as another reason before the outbreak of the war. The emphasis on promoting democracy in the Middle East reflected an

essential aspect of US foreign policy in the aftermath of 9/11. The US decision-makers considered that Middle Eastern political and economic conditions created a fertile environment where terrorist groups were likely to thrive. In other words, the absence of democratic structures for political dissent and opportunities for personal economic and social advancement could pave the way for much more disaffected youths in the Middle East to turn to Islamist radicalism and threaten American interests. (Carothers). It perceived that efforts to fight terrorism would require, above all, prioritizing political, social, and economic development in the Islamic world (Alessandri, Hassan, Reinerti).

Bush administration officials did not articulate the promotion of democracy in Iraq as a reason for the war in their initial statements. However, this argument became more pronounced in the lead-up to the war, especially as finding evidence of Iraq's alleged WMDs seemed unlikely (Carothers).In his 28 January 2003 State of the Union address, Bush expressly referred to America's desire to promote democracy in Iraq and create a politically stable nation. On 26 February 2003, he discussed the future of Iraq following the expected disarmament of WMDs that would be either through cooperation with the UN or through force. He maintained that rebuilding and reforming Iraqi institutions and spreading democratic values in the country would firmly reduce opportunities for terrorist recruitment and that a democratic Iraq would possibly facilitate a resolution to the Israel Palestine crisis (Bush).

In his 17 March 2003 address to the nation on war with Iraq, the American president again expressed the US desire to support advancing democracy in Iraq to achieve two primary objectives, bringing an end to terrorism and preventing wars in the region. Within this context, Bush also reiterated the importance of reforming Iraq's political institutions to serve the stated objectives(Bush). After primary combat operations successfully ended in Iraq, he emphasized again that the primary goal of the coalition forces was to ensure the self-government of the Iraqi people through democracy (Malveaux). Multiple analysts and critics, who supported overthrowing Saddam, argued that the US would be capable of encouraging gradual change

and facilitating peaceful political transitions by supporting indigenous democrats morally, politically, and materially (Carothers).

Highest-level Bush Administration officers adopted human rights rhetoric to bolster the argument that democracy could replace dictatorship and flourish in Iraq. On multiple occasions, they asserted that the country's democratization would have long-term benefits. Namely, it would lead to the whole stabilization of the Middle East region, which would eventually diminish jihadist recruitment related to Al Qaeda and other terroristic groups. They also argued that a democratic Iraq would pave the way for a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since the new Iraqi government would recognize Israel (Brewer). On April 4, 2003, National Security Advisor Dr. Condoleezza Rice declared:

> Our goals are clear: We will help Iraqis build an Iraq that is whole, free
> and at peace with itself and with its neighbors; an Iraq that is disarmed
> of all WMDs; that no longer supports or harbors terror; that respect the
> rights of Iraqi people and the rule of law; and that is on the path to
> democracy. Ultimately, there will have to be a process of elections and
> all of the things that go with democracy (Rice).

Rice portrayed a strong post-Saddam Iraq that would not only replace Saddam's dictatorship and ensure democracy for all Iraqi but also play a crucial role in the Gulf region. Her argument placed military action against Saddam within a context of humanitarian intervention.

According to Paul Wolfowitz, the undersecretary of defense for policy, after 9/11 spreading democracy in Iraq and the greater Middle East became no longer an ideal notion but a strategic imperative for the administration instead (Wolfowitz). The man argued that democratization would grant Middle Eastern people a chance to participate in their own governance so they would not turn to the extremism out of despair. Regime change in Iraq, Wolfowitz claimed, could empower liberal forces, intimidate other autocratic states like Iran,

and possibly lead to a broad democratic transformation capable of inoculating the Middle East against terrorism (Dobbs).

02.The US-led Combat Mission in Iraq

2.1 Operation Iraqi Freedom

The United States has prepared for the 2003 invasion of Iraq militarily and politically. At first, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and General Tommy Franks, commander of the invasion, chose a combat force of around 150,000 soldiers. They thought it would be relatively easy to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime because the latter lacked popular support. It seemed possible to present the invasion to Iraqis as a war of liberation in which American troops would quickly leave the country once the operations were completed (Metz 139). On March 17, 2003, George W. Bush asked Saddam and his sons to avoid a military confrontation by leaving Baghdad (Borger).

On March 20, 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom was initiated with a short aerial bombardment campaign. The latter lasted 15 fifteen hours before starting the ground operations. On March 21, the Third Infantry Division forces and the First Marine Division moved from Kuwait and attacked Iraq from different directions (Glass). Iraqi forces set a few oil wells on fire and fired a few missiles, most of which Patriot missiles intercepted. Two days later, US-led coalition forces found themselves halfway to Baghdad. The next day, they reached areas defended by Iraqi republican guard divisions south of the capital (Metz140). However, the Iraqi soldiers did not offer the fiercest resistance to the American forces. Saddam Hussein's irregular fighters were the ones who harassed and threatened US supply lines remarkably (Dale). A few days later, Iraqi expatriate oppositionist Ahmed Chalabi contacted US officials with a request to take part in fighting Saddam. Soon after, he received approval. In April 2003, Chalabi and 600 fighters stepped off a military plane at Tallil air base in southern Iraq to join the US-led coalition fight (Ali 92).

About 03 three weeks into the invasion of Iraq, coalition troops captured Baghdad. On

April 3, the Third Infantry Division seized Baghdad International Airport and launched armored raids, termed Thunder Runs, into the capital to test the regime's resistance. The latter collapsed shortly after toppling the statue of Saddam Hussein in downtown Baghdad on April 9 (Al Jazeera 06.58'). This event signaled to many observers that the old Iraqi regime had ended. On May 1, 2003, President Bush announced the end of primary combat operations in Iraq successfully(Bush).On December 13, 2003, the fourth Infantry Division arrested the former Iraqi leader near his hometown of Tikrit (KUSAProducer).

The capture of Hussein was an important victory for US forces, but the war was still far from being over. As soon as it became apparent that the former government had lost control, widely looting spread in the capital and many Iraqi cities. Targets included government buildings, houses of former regime leaders, some private businesses, and cultural institutions, including mainly the Iraqi National Museum in Baghdad. However, the US-led coalition units did not receive orders to act against vandals. Iraqis thus got the impression that Americans had no regard for them and their safety (Ricks149).

2.2 Iraq under the US-led Occupation

In the wake of removing Saddam's power, a temporary governing body was established to run the country's issues. Paul Bremer arrived in Baghdad on May 12, 2003, to head the CPA, which replaced the ORHA. The US government had previously designed the latter to serve as a caretaker administration until Iraq would be stable enough to assume its full sovereignty. Besides, Bremer's first acts included the de-Baathification of Iraqi society primarily according to CPA Order Number 1 and the disbanding of the Iraqi security forces according to CPA Order Number 2 (Woodward196). As a result of that CPA policy, 385000 armed Iraqi soldiers, 285000 men in the Ministry of the Interior, and 50000 Special Republican Guards were freed (Ricks162). These CPA orders practically freed disgruntled officers and soldiers who knew how to fight and gain access to weapons (Jabar).

Having lost their privileges as rulers of Iraq due to disbanding the Iraqi security forces

and the policy of de-Baathification, Iraqi Sunnis saw Americans as allies of the ruling Shiites. Thus, they rebelled against the US-led coalition. Despite President Bush's announcement that the fighting had stopped in Iraq, Baath regime loyalists, Islamist fighters, and prisoners released by Saddam Hussein before the invasion took up arms against the coalition forces seeking to expel them from Iraq and then fight against the Shiite regime (Godfroy, Zais, Rayburn, Sobchak, Powell, Morton102).

According to Thomas Ricks, an American author and journalist, the coalition military purposely avoided some Iraqi cities and provinces because the number of troops committed to the invasion was not huge. The inhabitants in cities like Fallujah and the province of Al Anbar misinterpreted this fact. They eventually did not feel that they had been defeated and wanted to continue the fight (Ricks142).

In August 2003, the Jordanian embassy and the UN headquarters in Iraq were attacked. A few months later, the country witnessed a substantial increase in violence against American troops. President Bush, however, continued to deny the reality of insurgency in Iraq (Woodward 266). The Sunni insurgency arose remarkably with the battle of Fallujah city. On March 31, 2004, Iraqi insurgents attacked a convoy containing four American employees working for Blackwater, an American private security company (Ricks.332).Those Blackwater contractors were dismembered, burned, dragged through the city streets, and then hung from a bridge crossing the Euphrates River (Pleming).

The Iraq war's first major engagements were the Fallujah battles. Marine generals favored more targeted counterattacks, but President Bush, Paul Bremer, and US Force Commander Ricardo Sanchez were so provoked by the attack that they agreed to clear the city (Malkasian 35). The first battle of Fallujah, code-named Operation Vigilant Resolve, took place on 13 April 2004. It was an attempt to apprehend or kill those who had killed the four Blackwater contractors, but it dramatically alienated the Fallujah citizens (McWilliams, Schlosser).

On 1 May 2004, the US withdrew its forces from the city, as Lieutenant General James Conway declared that he had unilaterally decided to turn over any remaining operations to the newly formed Fallujah Brigade, a Sunni security force created by the CIA (Knarr). Between November and December 2004, the Second Battle of Fallujah, code-named Operation AlFajr and Operation Phantom Fury, took place. Led by the US Marines against the Iraqi insurgents in the city, it was the bloodiest battle of the entire Iraq War for American forces. Faced with the Arab world protests, the US ended the military attack and signed a ceasefire with Fallujah insurgents (McWilliams, Schlosser).

On June 28, 2004, the CPA transferred power to Iraqi prime minister Iyad Allawi, but insurgent violence continued(Woodward 336). By 2005, clashes between Shiite and Sunni militias fueled in Baghdad streets. Further, insurgent attacks against the US-led coalition remained high(Ricks 413). Saddam was executed in 2006 by the newly established government. As a reaction, Sunni towns such as Tikrit, Samarra, and Ramadi saw protests. The execution of the former Iraqi president incited further violence (Hamasaeed, Nada).

In August 2010, Obama declared the official end to the seven-year US combat mission in Iraq. The withdrawal of all American troops was complete by the end of 2011 (Jeffrey). Nevertheless, the Obama administration remained engaged in providing political and economic support to the Iraqi authorities. In the summer of 2014, when ISIS emerged as a severe threat to the country, the American president ordered supporting Iraqi forces militarily to protect Baghdad and Erbil. The US and coalition partners also provided considerable air power, intelligence, arms, and training to the local forces, and small units of US forces also engaged in targeted ground raids (Borger et al).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the 9/11 attacks redirected the US foreign policy towards Iraq. Since late 2001, the Bush administration has started providing justifications to convince Americans and the international community that military action for removing Saddam Hussein's regime

would be necessary to prevent terrorist attacks globally. The Bush administration was primarily concerned that Saddam possessed WMDs. Likewise, it claimed that a future war with Saddam would be part of its global war on terror because Iraq had operational links with Al Qaeda. The third declared reason for launching a war against Iraq was replacing Saddam's dictatorship with a democratic regime. On March 20, 2003, US-led coalition forces started Operation Iraqi Freedom, invading Iraq. The government collapsed within a few weeks, and primary military operations ended successfully. Soon after, Iraqi Sunnis rebelled against the US-led coalition, especially in Sunni territories, including mainly Fallujah. Finally, in mid-2004, a new Iraqi government was established. Nevertheless, insurgent attacks continued until the military withdrawal was complete in late 2011.

Chapter Three: Post-Saddam Iraq: The US Actions Speak Loud

Introduction

It does not take so much thought to see that the US did not go to war with Iraq on March 20, 2003, for war's sake. As discussed in the preceding chapter, the Bush administration expressed its primary rationale through some officially declared reasons. First, it accused Saddam of producing destructive weapons to threaten US national security. An added threat, the Bush administration claimed, was the Iraqi government's links to Al Qaeda. The third argument was the US desire to establish a democratic Iraqi government and end Saddam's criminal treatment of the Iraqis. In other words, the Bush administration suggested its war objectives as a mere measure of preemptive defense; therefore, the military involvement in Iraq was unavoidable. Nevertheless, numerous critics and scholars have deemed the 2003 US invasion of Iraq as a war of choice. Above all, accepting the Bush administration's claims without a critical analysis does not allow the war's bigger picture. The study's last chapter, therefore, displays the extent to which the US fulfilled its pre-war promises and then examines the potential American oil interests in Iraq in theory and practice.

01. The Failure to Find the Alleged Iraqi WMDS

After the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the US-led coalition forces failed to uncover any evidence to prove that Iraq possessed WMDs. Accordingly, the principle evidence for Saddam's alleged threat was false or deliberately fabricated (Aljazeera Staff).The ISG group offered a detailed analysis of the state of Iraq's WMDs before the war through its final report released in 2004. It determined that in the years following the Gulf War, Saddam's regime sought sanctions relief through co-operating with UNSCOM and UNMOVIC (ISG 41). Its investigations included examining all potential evidence related to Iraq's past chemical weapons stockpiles (Kerr).

Abandoning its attempts to produce chemical weapons, Baghdad, the ISG confirmed, destroyed all its stockpiled chemical agents in 1991 and did not resume production of

chemical munitions after that. Saddam's potential missile research programs were also assessed in the ISG final report. The latter resolved a long-established question of whether Iraq retained Scud-variant missiles after 1991. As reported by the ISG, Iraq was developing three longer-range missile systems, but none were produced, and only one passed the design phase. The report's results seemed to be consistent with those described in previous UN inspectors' reports from November 2002 until the US-led invasion of Iraq (Kerr).

The ISG asserted that the Intelligence Community's pre-war findings on Iraq's BW capabilities were, to a great extent, wrong .ISG's assessment concluded that there were no indications that Iraq had biological weapons. Instead, the country appeared to have destroyed its undeclared biological weapons stocks between 1991 and 1992. UNSCOM supervised the destruction of BW-related facilities at Al-Hakam in 1996. Additionally, the ISG indicated that Baghdad maintained elements of its BW program after the Gulf War and retained trained scientists who could contribute to small-scale BW-related efforts under the auspices of the Iraqi Intelligence Service. Still, it confirmed that it did not find any direct evidence that Iraq, after 1996, had plans to restart its BW research for military purposes (Kerr).

In practical terms, the destruction of the Al-Hakam facilities, ISG assessed, was highly influential in ending Iraqi large-scale BW ambitions. Iraq, therefore would face a long-term difficulty in re-establishing its BW agent production capability effectively. The ISG final report judged that Iraq had no production systems on railway wagons or road vehicles regarding mobile BW production facilities. The group's exhaustive investigation also uncovered information indicating that the two trailers captured by coalition forces were likely designed to generate hydrogen and could not be part of any BW program (Duelfer).

The ISG concluded that Iraq had no nuclear WMDs. Saddam's government, according to the ISG final report, would not have been able to restart its nuclear weapon research and activities in the wake of the Gulf War. Baghdad practically ended its enrichment activities, including electromagnetic isotope separation, but it hoped to resume them when sanctions

were lifted (Chang, Lueck, Mehan). With the manipulation of the Oil-for-Food Programme and the suspension of cooperation with UNSCOM, Iraqi leadership took steps to support capabilities that might allow a new program for uranium enrichment. However, the ISG noted that the economic crisis made it difficult to retain scientists, most of whom left the country to seek better job opportunities abroad. That is to say that Iraq did not reach the point of producing nuclear (Duelfer).

Concerning Iraqi attempts to obtain high-strength aluminum tubes, the ISG assessed that it was undoubtedly part of efforts to produce effective 81-millimeter rockets. This is to say that the ISG discovered no evidence that those tubes were intended for use in a gas centrifuge. Instead, it commented on their dimensions and suggested that the Iraqi cadre of nuclear engineers and scientists assessed that making a centrifuge with 81-millimeter rotors would not be practical because the UN sanctions would allow importing only a few necessary materials. The ISG investigation eventually clarified that the wide-ranging information it obtained did not show that the Iraqis intended to use them to produce nuclear weapons (Borger).

Shortly after releasing the ISG final report publicly, Charles Duelfer, the CIA's special adviser to the ISG, addressed the Senate Armed Services Committee to give his testimony regarding his group's findings. Duelfer's testimony showed that Iraq had no stocks of WMDs (Duelfer). The head of the ISG maintained that Saddam's weapons capabilities were highly weakened during years of UN sanctions (Mosher and Parachini). Concerning Iraq's nuclear weapons, Duelfer argued that aluminum tubes suspected of being used to enrich uranium and ultimately produce a nuclear bomb were solely for conventional rockets. Iraq, he emphasized, did not try to obtain either uranium or large quantities of precursor chemicals from any other country. The top US arms inspector also testified that Baghdad only produced one type of prohibited missile, but it was destroyed after UN inspectors ordered it to do so. Likewise, he told the committee that the ISG had found no evidence that Iraq possessed mobile biological agent production facilities and noted that it had unmanned aerial vehicles with ranges

exceeding UN limits but were not for delivering WMDs (Kerr).

The US Intelligence agencies have failed to assess the state of Iraqi alleged WMD programs. The Intelligence Community's faults resulted from the flawed analytical process as the latter was based only on assumptions and inferences. Lacking reliable information about Iraq's programs, Intelligence Community analysts made Iraq's concealment of WMDs stockpiles and programs before and after the Gulf War the starting point for investigation. Their primary assumption was that Iraq probably still had hidden chemical and biological weapons and was still seeking to resume its nuclear weapons program. It significantly contributed to their readiness to accept evidence they should have assessed as seriously flawed and ignore any evidence that did not support their presumption (Kessler).

Demanding evidence that Iraq did not have WMDs, Intelligence Community analysts removed the challenging task of proving it did possess them. In short, they evaluated contradictory data not as evidence that their assumptions might be erroneous but as evidence that Iraq was effectively continuing to hide its weapons programs (Commission of the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding WMDs 49).

02.The Unfulfilled American Democratization in Post-Saddam Iraq

2.1 Iraq's Interim Governing Council as an Undemocratic Starting Point

The nation-building model imposed on post-2003 Iraq did not seem consistent with the democratization project the Bush administration had promised to promote after removing Saddam. The starting point was with the Interim Governing Council, a provisional government of Iraq from July 13, 2003,to June 01,2004.It served as a caretaker government to rule the country until the drafting of a democratic constitution. The IGC, according to many analysts and critics, failed to be a representative of Iraqi society and therefore lacked the necessary legitimacy to govern (Alkadiri,Toensing).

One of the most famous examples of Iraqis demanding elections was Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Al-Sistani, one of Iraq's most respected Shia clerics. On June 25, 2003, Al-Sistani issued a

statement declaring that the forces occupying Iraq had no right to choose the members of any constitution-drafting body. Such a body, according to him, had to be chosen democratically through direct elections in which all Iraqi citizens would take part. Nevertheless, the IGC was appointed by the CPA in the same year and led by Iyad Allawi despite polls of Iraqis showing his popularity as ranked very low (Rahimi).

The Americans likely selected the governing council's members randomly, not in a democratic way. That governing council has not changed since 2003. Namely, CPA that was established in July 2003 and then replaced by the Iraqi Interim Government in June 2004, then the Iraqi Transitional Government was formed in May 2005. Finally, 2006 witnessed the formation of the first permanent government. However, despite constantly changing the body's name, its political elites did not change (Hasan).

Jawad Saad, an Iraqi political scientist, argued that the council members had been chosen based on their sect and loyalty to the US and were not representative of Iraqis. Some of the figures had been chosen specifically because the Americans knew that they were corrupt (Jawad). Larry Diamond, who served as senior advisor on governance to the CPA from January to April 2004, also stressed the undemocratic selection of the governing council. Diamond has asserted that the US should have put legitimate Iraqi leaders transparently in governance roles without delay by holding elections to establish a democratic coalition provisional authority (Diamond).

2.2 The Politicization of Sectarian Identities in Post-Saddam Iraq

Identity politics seemed an integral part of the nation-building project of post-2003 Iraq. Yanar Mohammed, the co-founder, and president of the non-government organization Women's Freedom in Iraq, mainly identified the American nation-building process as identity politics that would not ensure democracy and human rights for all Iraqis. Yanar noted that the US had not perceived Iraqi society as one diverse state composed of multiple social, political, and cultural tendencies capable of internal debate and dialogue (Al-Hassani). The nation-

building approach thus has negatively influenced the Iraqi political arena because all kinds of political debate will never be allowed under the umbrella of identity politics. It ultimately thickened the links of the Iraqi individuals with their religious or ethnic groups and resulted in the establishment of religious or ethnic political parties competing for authority (Jawad).

The quota system was the US' perfect tool for manufacturing sectarianism in post-2003 Iraq. Rather than establishing a political environment that would foster national unity, ethno-sectarian discord was enshrined in the political system by the US-led coalition. Under this system, the Iraqi presidency was reserved for a Kurdish leader, the post of prime minister for a Shia Muslim, and that of parliament speaker for a Sunni Muslim (Sattar). Jawad described the problem as related to the whole institutional structure created by the United States, which permanently and systematically fractured the Iraqi polity according to ethnic and sectarian considerations (Jawad).

So even if Iraqi politicians did not want to be sectarian, they had to be so. A democratic Iraq would not be established under the quota system because the latter will invariably led to political and racial division. For many critics, this sectarian system was very beneficial to the exiles but very harmful to Iraqi society (Jawad). Most of the political parties in post-2003 Iraq consisted of exiles who did not have a solid public base. Instead, they played on sectarian sentiments and succeeded in mobilizing their community members. As such, Iraq fell into the trap of politicizing these sectarian identities (Alaaldin).

The politicization of ethnicity and religion in the Iraqi political arena was very dangerous. It created a sectarian state where the faction with the most significant power had a discriminatory government towards the other factions. Within the nation-building's political formula, Iraqis were not considered citizens of an entity called Iraq. Instead, they were categorized by race or sect. The politicization of sectarian identities weakened small communities' political position in the country. Savina Dawood, an Assyrian activist, claimed that the Yazidis, the Assyrians, the indigenous people of Iraq, and other minorities were not

included in the political equation that the Americans formed for Iraq. Due to their status as minorities, they ignored them and only considered those from the majority for positions of power and those whose interests served the US's best interests (Snell) .Moreover, the so-called nation-building in Iraq, according to Mekki, had no relationship with a democratic process. Namely, the freedom of the Iraqi individuals and the rights of the Iraqi minorities were violated in post-2003 Iraq. The texture of society was also destroyed due to the US' deliberate sectarianization of the Iraqi political field (Mekki).

The policies of de-Baathification and disbandment of the Iraqi army were also interlinked with the politicization of sectarian identities. Indeed, these policies seemed synonymous with de-Sunnification in post-Saddam Iraq. Despite the perception that the Sunnis were always the beneficiaries of the Iraqi state, many critical scholars argued that the majority of the state-employed Baathists were but ordinary people. They were forced into Baath membership under duress or for economic reasons and did not commit crimes. The politicization of sectarian identities undoubtedly represented part of Iraq's nation-building project. It emphasized ousting all the Baathists from their jobs and positions. This, therefore, sent a clear message to the Sunni community that they would not participate in formulating major policy decisions. Hence, the Sunnis, who felt the political system would be neither representative nor reflective of their community, revolted against the whole political process (Jawad).

2.3 Human Rights Violations in Post-Saddam Iraq

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the Bush administration justified the 2003 military intervention against Iraq partly on human rights grounds by pointing to Saddam's grave crimes against his own people. Paradoxically, human violations highly increased in the wake of invading Iraq. Amnesty International and other human rights groups argue that US forces created their own legacy of human rights abuse during their presence in the country. In light of several reports, abusing prisoners by US troops emerged in the early days of the occupation. In July 2003, AI documented many cases of torture and mistreatment of prisoners in Iraqi

prisons, which were under the coalition forces' control. Abu Gharib prison was one of them (AI). In April 2004, the international media probably unveiled part of the truth by publishing photographs showing US guards torturing and degrading about five or six Iraqi detainees, who were forced to lie on top of one another naked, at the mentioned prison (Hilal).

Unlawful murder, detention without trial, and detainee violation by US forces continued to be reported throughout their presence in Iraq. In March 2005, for example, American troops used stun guns to inflict electric shocks on prisoners in their custody (AI). According to a Human Rights First report in 2006, there had been about 86 deaths in US prisons in Iraq, some of which resulted from terrible forms of torture (HRW).In 2010, WikiLeaks released thousands of secret US army documents detailing the torture of Iraqi prisoners by US forces (Alrai).

The IGC, to which the CPA handed sovereignty on June 28, 2004, was also accused of using torture and maltreatment. An Human Rights Watch investigation conducted between July and October 2004 determined that about 72 Iraqi detainees had been tortured under Iyad Allawi's provisional government of Iraq (HRW). Likewise, the human rights situation in Iraq remained serious with the other post-Saddam governments, which continued to round up tens of thousands of Iraqis without charge (Alhurra).

Opposition activists, AI has reported, are frequently and systematically violated, beaten, tortured, and killed by the Iraqi government forces (Alhurra). Following the US military withdrawal in December 2011, AI received much more reports of serious human rights abuses related to post Saddam Iraq(AI). Even children have become subject to gross violations committed by the Iraqi authorities. More recently, on January 26, 2022, brutal violations against children were reported by the OSRSG. More than one thousand children, the OSRSG estimated, were detained by Iraqi security forces on national security-related charges in 2019 (OSRSG).

03.The Rise of Terrorism in Post-Saddam Iraq

3.1 The US Failed Policy as a Contributing Factor

Among the Bush administration's reasons for invading Iraq in 2003 was ensuring that it would not become a safe haven for terrorists. Paradoxically, the US military involvement in Iraq in the name of the war on terror has contributed to the emergence of terrorism. In the wake of the invasion, violence became an integral part of the Iraqis' suffering. The number of daily insurgent attacks increased gradually from about 20 per day in late 2003 to about 50 per day in 2004. They estimated about 70 per day in 2005, then about 100 per day in 2006 (CSIS). All types of violent attacks, including car bombs, roadside bombs, and suicide car bombs, remarkably increased in the years that followed as well. Consequently, millions of Iraqi people were displaced across the country, thousands of civilians died, and most of the country's cities and provinces were destroyed (BBC).

The US contributed to the rise of terrorism in Iraq due to its failed policies. During the first few years of the invasion, it made big mistakes in re-establishing the state. Its closeness to Kurds and Shiites influenced Iraqi Sunni's decision to join the violent organizations. Excluding certain Iraqi minorities from the political process also fed Iraq's insurgencies (Fontan70). This answers why the Islamic militancy, which was expected to be weakened through the invasion, increased. The invasion not only provoked violent groups against the coalition forces but also paved the way for ethnic and sectarian conflict in the country (Stern, McBride).

Among the Bush administration's biggest mistakes were implementing the de-Baathification and establishing a new Iraqi military. Due to these policies, about 300,000 Iraqi soldiers were fired from the military, whereas 30,000 high-ranking officials in the Baath party became unemployed (Tripp281). Targeting Saddam era's officials and forces highly fed the recruitment process that violent organizations based on to enrich their capabilities. In the first years of the invasion, dismissed Iraqi soldiers became highly qualified candidates for violent

groups (Dee). Moreover, the circulation of the torture and the American soldiers' humiliating actions against Iraqi prisoners, especially in Abu Ghraib prison, increased revenge-seeking and encouraged local and foreign fighters to join the combat against the US existence in Iraq (Stern, McBride).

3.2 The Emergence of Violent Organizations

Post-Saddam Iraq became a field in which many violent organizations, regardless of their ethnicity, sect, and affiliation, combated each other and the coalition forces. The first struggle against the latter came from the Baath regime's former officials. A group of Baathists formed organizations to conduct attacks against the US and the UK soldiers. In this respect, Al-Awda, the Return Group, is regarded as the first violent organization combating the occupiers. Soon after, Jaish Mouhammed, Mouhammed's Army organization, emerged. It contained Baathist insurgents, but it became more inclined to Islamic values during the Fallujah battles of 2004; its Baathist notion was lost gradually (Yusuf).

The invasion activated fronts of Islamic resistance against non-Muslim occupiers. As the Arabic version of the Kurdish Islamist Insurgent Movement, Ansar Al Sunna organization succeeded in conducting terrorist attacks against the Kurdistan Democratic Party and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Iraqi Kurdistan political parties. Likewise, its targets were mainly Iraqi government officials, Iraqi security forces, sectarian Shiite groups, US-led coalition troops, Western individuals, and interests based in the country. In addition to conventional military attacks, Ansar Al Sunna's terrorist activities included suicide attacks, emplaced improvised explosive devices, car bombs, kidnappings, assassinations, and executions (Gregory).

Formed just after the invasion, the 1920s Revolution Brigades was an anti-American Sunni Arab insurgent group in Iraq. Among its militias were former members of the disbanded Iraqi army. This insurgent group's primary goal seemed clear, freeing the country of foreign occupation by attacking US soldiers and bases. Between 2003 and 2007, the 1920s RB claimed responsibility for killing scores of American soldiers due to planted roadside bombs.

The group also performed many successful operations against foreign targets, such as the kidnapping of a Sudanese interpreter working for an American company and the explosion of a car bomb outside the Baghdad office of Al-Arabiya Channel in 2004 (FSI).

The Islamic Army in Iraq emerged in 2003 as a Sunni Islamist militant group intended to expel the US-led coalition troops from Iraq. Although most of its members were Sunni, it merged various ideologies under one umbrella. The group had Baathists, Saddam's regime supporters, patriots, domestic and foreign Islamists, and Shiite members. Moreover, IAI succeeded in cooperating with other violent organizations such as Jaysh Al-Rashidin, The Army of Rightly Guided, and Jaysh Mouhammed, The Army of Mouhammed, to enhance the efficiency of attacks against American occupiers and the Iraqi government (FSI).

Following the withdrawal of American forces from Iraq in late 2011, its members chose to end their armed opposition to start political activism by creating the Sunni Popular Movement.Nevertheless, the IAI was reactivated in December 2013 to form an armed alliance with other Sunni insurgent groups and then contribute more efforts to the fight against the Almaliki government. In 2014, the organization became more active in anti-government violence in Northern Iraq and Al Anbar. Capturing Mosul on June 10, 2014, was one of the successful operations it took part in (FSI).

Regarded as one of the most violent groups in Iraq, Jaysh Al-Mahdi, Mahdi Army, emerged after the overthrow of Saddam. The Shiite leader Moqtada Al-Sadr founded this Shiite militia to throw away American troops and target the Sunni community in Iraq. It became prominent when it fought against US soldiers in Sadr City and Najaf. The first confrontation ended in late May 2004, but another one broke out in Najaf in August of the same year after Al-Sadr's fighters attacked a US Marine patrol in the mentioned city (Basu).On April 4, 2004, Mahdi Army performed simultaneous attacks in Baghdad, Kufa, and Amara, targeting American, Salvadoran, Spanish, and Iraqi coalition forces (Cochrane).

In 2006, at the height of sectarian violence in the country, the organization also engaged

in a dreadful sectarian cleansing campaign against Sunni Iraqis. Its capability significantly decreased due to an offensive by the Iraqi security forces and coalition troops against its fighters in Basra in 2008. Still, it was not the end of sectarian tensions in Iraq. Al-Sadr revived his armed group under another nomenclature, Saraya Al Salam, in 2014 (Cochrane).

Sons of Iraq are among the violent organizations that emerged in post-Saddam Iraq. In late 2006, the coalition assessed that cooperating with some Iraqi tribal groups would improve its counter-insurgency strategy. Therefore, it supported the establishment of Sons of Iraq in 2006. It was an exceptional Sunni armed group in Al-Anbar province because it was backed by the US and local security forces. Namely, its members were paid by the American military and the Iraqi government to fight against the other insurgent and violent groups(ISW). The US sought to integrate this group into the Iraqi military or police, but Nouri Al Maliki's government viewed the integration process with concern. The ISF eventually employed only a few SOI members. With the withdrawal of the US-led coalition from Iraq, many former SOI fighters joined ISIS (Ahmed).

3.3 Al Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq

Following Saddam's fall, Al Qaeda also fought the coalition. It did so primarily through the groups that had pledged allegiance to it. In the first years of the US invasion of Iraq, Al Qaeda in Iraq, led by Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, emerged as a Sunni Islamist organization to participate in the insurgency against the American and Iraqi authorities as well as Mahdi Army. In 2006, AQI declared its merger with five groups, Jaysh Al Taifa Al Mansoura, Saraya Anssar Al-Tawhid, Saraya Al Jihad Al Islami, Saraya Al Ghuraba, and Kataib Al Ahwal, to form a Council of Mujahadeen Shura. The latter was a coalition for coordinating Iraq's jihadist efforts against Shiite and foreign targets in Iraq (Lister).

A few months after the murder of Zarqawi, however, it was disbanded. In mid-October of 2006, it was replaced by the Islamic State in Iraq headed by Abu Omar Al Baghdadi. Due to the surge of US troops to Iraq in 2007, it faded for several years; then, it reemerged in 2011

after recruiting most of the Sons of Iraq's members, who had lost the American support and became unemployed gradually (Abu Haniyeh).

The invasion had a remarkable impact on Al Qaeda, yet it seemed contradictory to the war's objective, the termination of terrorist organizations threatening the US national security. The prolonged occupation of Iraq highly benefited Al Qaeda fighters. In a serious attempt to evaluate the war's success on global jihadism, Thomas Hegghammer, a Norwegian academic and author, suggested that the Iraq war had paved the way for reorganizing the Al Qaeda as a universal jihadist movement. Therefore, the organization's top leaders considered Iraq a central jihad battlefield. He also concluded that the 2003 Iraq war was an important opportunity for revitalizing Al Qaeda jihadist ideology because moderate Muslims worldwide condemned the September 11attacks (Hegghammer).

The presence of US troops in the country served as a powerful tool for enhancing Al Qaeda's jihad abilities under a new umbrella, the ISI. The invasion represented an opportunity for Al Qaeda not only to fight its supreme enemy, the US, face to face but also to recruit more fighters against it. Probably, recruitment efforts were not in vain. The number of foreign fighters who joined Al Qaeda in Iraq overtook the number estimated in the Afghan war (Pollack).AQI and its affiliated operatives, the ISI groups, acquired practical experience in Iraq. Indeed, they trained against the most powerful military in the world, the US military, and they perfected the use of improvised explosive devices, bomb-making, and other new terrorist tactics. Their expertise included counter-intelligence, gun-running, forgery, and smuggling as well. Moreover, it undoubtedly allowed fighters and supplies to flow into neighboring countries. New fronts in the global jihad consequently emerged (Byman).

After the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq, brutal ISI attacks were carried out, especially in Mosul and Tikrit. The political vacuum in Iraq and Syria's civil war soon allowed the ISI to spread out through the region. Capturing many Syrian territories, the terrorist group was too close to achieving its ISIS project. On August 7, 2014, the US-led coalition started an airstrike

campaign against it. Due to this tactical strike, its capability was highly damaged (BBC). In practical terms, its activities have significantly decreased since 2017, but it still has active fighters across Iraq and Syria and attempts to reorganize its ranks (Williams). According to a recent report issued by the Institute for Economics and Peace, Iraq recorded 833 terrorist attacks, most of which were linked to ISI, in 2021(Institute for Economics and Peace). The following figure displays ISI-related incidents for the period 2007 to 2021.

Figure 01: A graphic depiction of ISI-related incidents for the period 2007 to 2021.

(**Source:** Institute for Economics & Peace ,Global Terrorism Index 2022,March 01,2022)
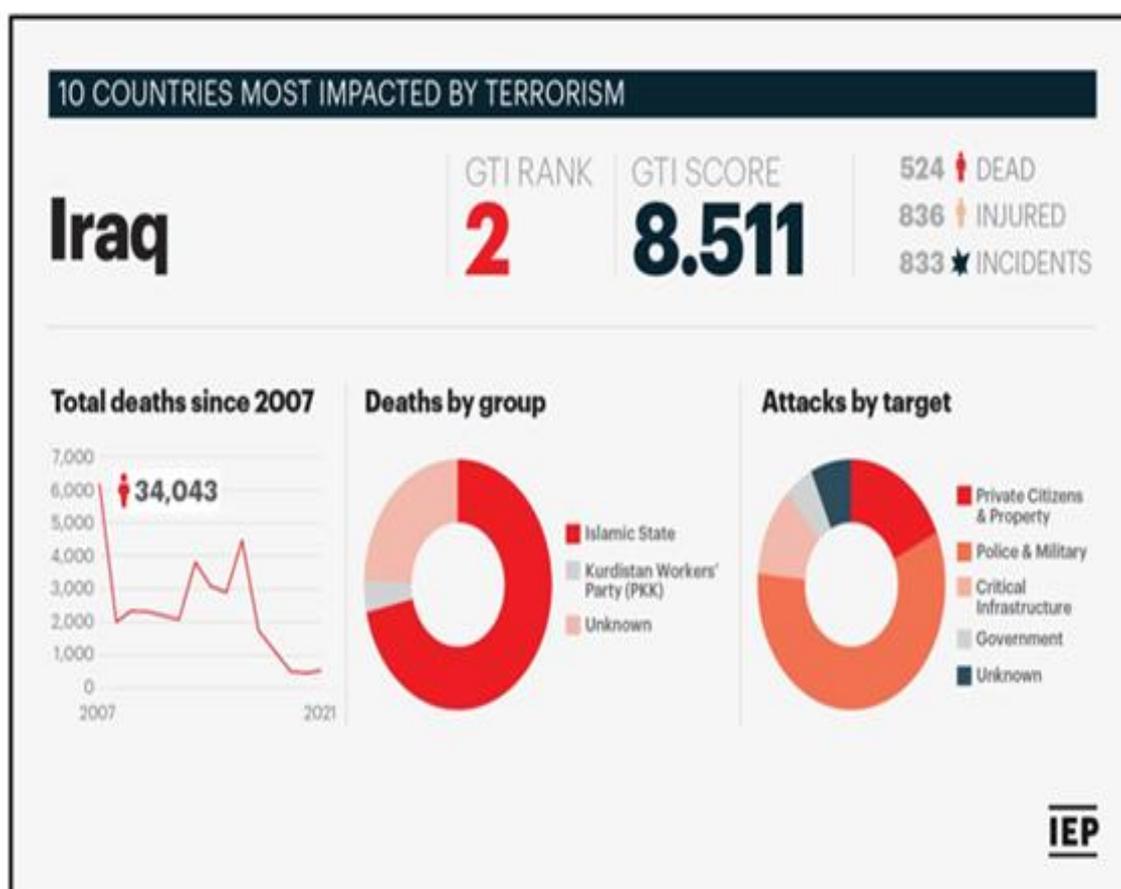
4. The US Oil Interests in Iraq as Potential Reasons for the War

4.1The American Control over Post-Saddam Iraq's Oil

The US extracts a tremendous amount of oil each day. Although it is the first in world oil production, it depends on foreign oil as its domestic production is insufficient to keep its industrial and military capabilities functioning (Reuters). The largest oil-consuming country in

the world approximately uses 20 million barrels of oil per day, of which 10 million barrels of oil are imported (EIA).These details probably explain why America is always looking for additional oil reserves. Within this context, many analysts argue that oil had something to do with its decision to invade the country with the second-largest oil reserves in the world in 2003 (Kaldor, Lynn, Karl, and Yahia15).The following map shows Iraq's known oilfields colored green.

Figure 02: A map of proven oil reserves in Iraq (Source: Petroleum Economist)
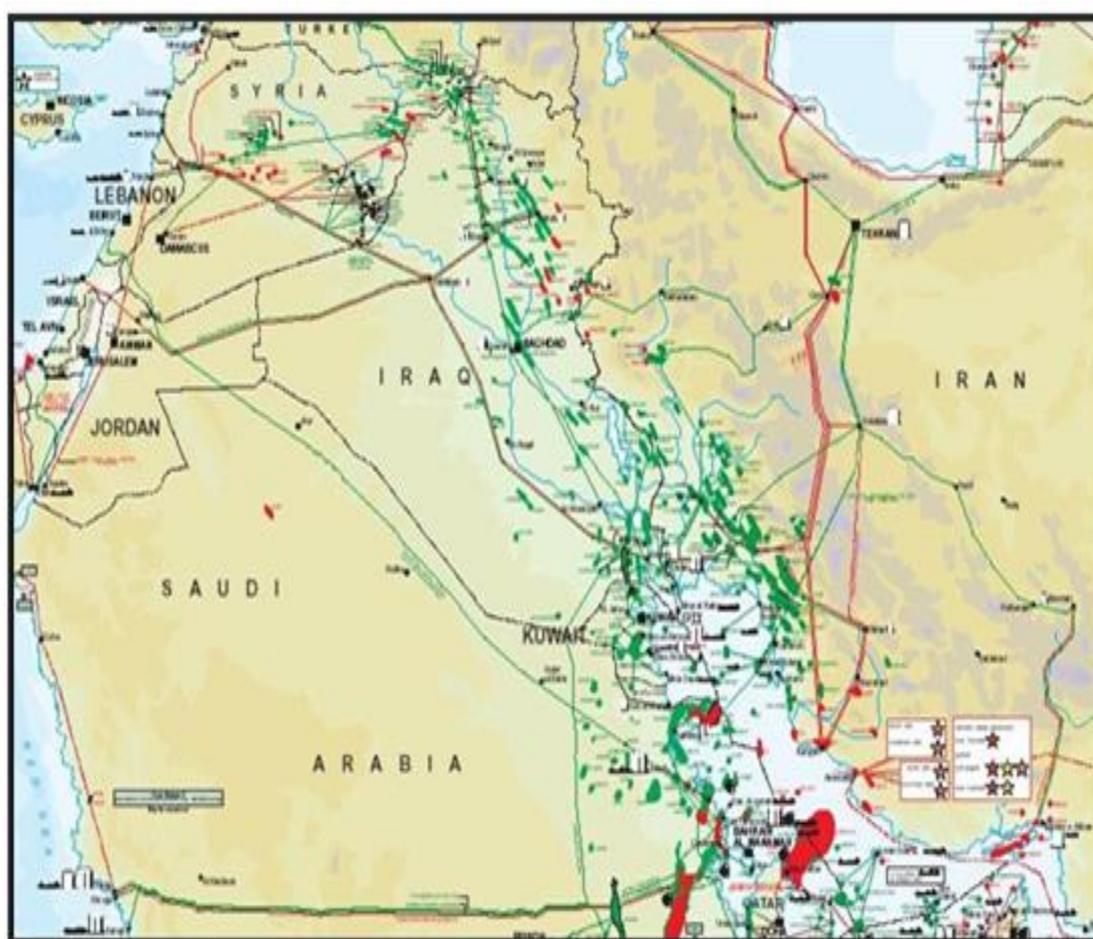
Numerous critics suggested that the US sought to control Iraq's oil before the war, but the Bush administration's justifications distracted attention away from this claim (Aljazeera Staff). After ousting Saddam, however, important indicators emerged to confirm the Energy Task Force's report, also referred to as Cheney's report, as strategic planning for the 2003 US military involvement against Iraq(Juhasz). Cheney group's report, issued in May 2001, warned

that the US would face an energy shortage in 2020 and cited concerns that Saddam would decide to remove Iraqi oil from the global market for a highly long time. Without a solution, the report evaluated, the US would face an energy crisis and price volatility. Its recommendations emphasized that America would have to proactively protect its oil interests in the Gulf region (NEPDG). A careful analysis of the document in light of the US -Post Saddam Iraq oil ties shows that Iraq's oil was a motivating factor for the invasion (Hebert).

Immediately after capturing Iraq, the Iraqi oil ministry was the only government office building US troops secured (Chron). Protecting the country's vast oil fields from massive fires also seemed a high priority. On April 14, 2003, the US declared that its forces secured all Iraqi oil fields (US Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division). Similarly, several economic reforms were taken to implement an economic model preferred by the Bush Administration. In June 2004, the CPA issued Order 17 to grant foreign contractors and private security firms complete immunity from Iraqi laws (CPA). The CPA's Order 39 of December 20, 2003, also authorized foreign companies to invest in Iraq on terms favorable to those applicable to Iraqi companies. In addition, it specified that Iraq would be tied to long-term contracts with foreign firms for 40 years (CPA). These economic policies significantly impacted the Iraqi oil sector as they were the cornerstone of privatizing Iraq's petroleum (Azhar).

Moreover, Iraqi provisional authorities allowed the US to extend its influence at the highest level of the Iraqi oil sector. The US government, Iraqi politicians in exile, and the US firms agreed to run Iraq's oil sector through a new oil law. In 2004, Bearing Point, a leading global business consulting firm, was hired by the Bush administration to help formulate the law draft. The US-backed Iraqi cabinet approved the latter in August 2009. The Iraq Oil Law also referred to as the Iraq Hydrocarbon Law, encouraged the decentralization of the oil sector by granting Iraq's provinces the right to draw up contracts with foreign oil companies (Juhasz). However, concerning the exploration and production operations in new areas, this law did not give Iraq National Oil Company any priority, even in case of equal competitive

standing with foreign firms. Above all, it authorized Production Sharing Agreements (Azhar).

Under a PSA, the Iraqi government engages foreign oil companies to undertake exploration and development operations. Although they will own neither the oilfields nor oil reserves, these regulations will grant them a significant share of the oil produced as a reward for their services. Many Iraqi experts have highly criticized PSAs. Iraq, as they have specified, can obtain the monies necessary to develop its oil resources through international loans without the need for such deals, which give much influence to foreign oil firms at the expense of INOC (Azhar).

4.2 The US' Significant Gains from Post-Saddam Iraq's Oil

By ousting Hussein and installing a new Iraqi government, the US secured access to Iraq's oil production and exports and consequently succeeded in achieving some strategic gains. It is a well-known fact that the US dollar, which has been the world's reserve currency since the end of World War II, gets its power from the oil system. In the late 1990s, Saddam switched the payment for Iraqi oil exports from US dollars to Euros to resist the economic sanctions and started efforts to convince OPEC to change the oil currency (Baker, Clark).

Considering that OPEC countries would profit from the higher parity rate of the euro against the US dollar, there was a possibility that they would collectively decide to convert the oil transaction currency to the euro (Chapman). This transaction, if it happened, would entail trading oil in euros; oil-consuming countries would have to withdraw their dollars from US stock markets and banks to replace them with euros. This is to say that Saddam's pricing of Iraqi oil in the euro was highly grave because it would cause the US dollar's collapse. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 prevented the pricing of oil in the euro currency as it returned Iraq's oil exports to the dollar system (Clark).

A case can be made that the US major oil companies have benefited from overthrowing Saddam's regime. Before the invasion, the US was concerned over Saddam's oil contracts with some European and Asian oil firms to develop new oil fields. There was a possibility that Iraq

would comply with the UN resolutions, and then sanctions would be lifted to allow America's competitors access to oil reserves(Vivoda 09). After the invasion, however, rival multinational corporations, such as Russia's Lukoil, were highly prevented from benefiting from Iraqi oil production, and Iraq's door became wide open for Anglo-American multinational oil corporations (Weaver). According to Dr. Abdulhay Yahya Zalloum, an international oil expert, the latter has successfully acquired the lion's share of Iraq's oil (Jamail and Azhar).

In 2009, the Iraqi government awarded important oil contracts to Anglo-American oil firms, including mainly Exxon Mobil, British Petroleum, and Royal Dutch Shell, that were partners of the IPC before its nationalization in 1972 and listed on the New York Stock Exchange (Jamail and Azhar).Many experts have assessed those deals as apparent exploitation since the Iraqi parliament had not approved them and many non-Anglo-American competitors were qualified to offer similar services at lower costs as well (Aljazeera Staff).

The 2003 US War on Iraq allowed many American companies that had close ties to the Bush administration to profit from Iraqi oil. In October 2003, the Centre for Public Integrity pointed out that most US oil companies, which won postwar Iraq contracts, financed George W. Bush's political campaigns(Aljazeera Staff). Most importantly, many observers made the connection between Halliburton, the leading American oil firm that earned close $39.5 billion through no-bid contracts mainly to protect Iraqi oilfields following the Iraq war, and Dick Cheney, who was its CEO between 1995 and 2000(Young, Halliburton Company).

In March 2003, The Time Magazine, according to an acquired Pentagon email showing Cheney's involvement in the Iraqi government's non-competitive bidding process, reported that the American vice president used his position to promote Halliburton's interests, which represented his interests (Goldenberg). In September 2004, John Kerry confirmed Time Magazine's claim. The senator expressly accused Dick Cheney of continuing to receive compensation from Halliburton (Kerry).

Conclusion

To sum up, America's claims about Saddam's WMDs were refuted by the ISG's final report of 2004. The latter confirmed that Iraq was free of WMDs. Further, the promised democratic Iraq did not manifest after overthrowing Saddam's regime. Under the US nation-building project, the Iraqi polity was reorganized according to sectarian considerations rather than democratic standards. According to several reports, the US troops perpetrated human rights violations during their presence in Iraq. Post Saddam's governments similarly continued using torture, maltreatment, and other human rights abuses against many Iraqis. Moreover, securing peace in Iraq was not accomplished in the wake of the 2003 military involvement. Indeed, the US policies provoked sectarian conflicts in the country and allowed the rise of terrorist organizations, including ISIS. Nevertheless, Iraq's oil proved to be a good reason behind the decision to invade the country as post-Saddam governments allowed Anglo-American multinational oil firms to extend their influence at the highest level of the Iraqi oil sector. Post-Saddam Iraq, therefore, enhanced the US dollar's position as a global oil currency.

General Conclusion

The present study highlights one of the most controversial events in recent memory, the 2003 US War on Iraq. The latter was initiated with an invasion of Iraq in March 2003 by the United States and its allies, and it resulted in the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime. During the run-up to the war, the Bush Administration gave several justifications to convince its citizens and the international community that military action would be unavoidable. As a primary legal argument, it claimed that Saddam Hussein had developed weapons of mass destruction that could be used directly or passed on to terrorist organizations. The Bush administration's top officials also emphasized that the Iraqi regime had operational links with Al Qaeda, the global terror network. In simple terms, the US depicted a war against Saddam as an essential step to protect its national security and strengthen international counter-terrorism efforts. The Bush administration's third argument was to liberate citizens of Iraq from Saddam Hussein's dictatorship and pave the way for a democratic Iraq that would bring peace to the Middle East region as a whole.

However, the research's findings show that the Bush Administration's justifications had no basis. Following the invasion, it became clear that the US gave spurious information to the world concerning the Iraqi government's WMDs. The ISG's final report of 2004 undoubtedly confirmed that Iraq was free of them. Furthermore, the American promise of bringing democracy to Iraq was not accomplished. Instead, the CPA reorganized the Iraqi polity according to sectarianism, which would not protect the rights of all Iraqis. Its policies soon inflamed sectarian conflicts in the country and enabled the rise of terrorist organizations, including ISIS. The work contends that the human rights situation continued to deteriorate under the new Iraqi authorities. Worse still, the US forces also committed many documented cases of abuse during their presence in Iraq.

This work argues that the US provided wrong arguments to cover up for its real goal, controlling Iraq's oil resources. Removing Saddam protected the US dollar's position as the

world's reserve currency by pricing Iraq's oil in dollars instead of euros. In addition, many Anglo-American multinational oil corporations benefited from the conflict. They were granted significant contracts to exploit Iraq's oilfields without accountability. That is to say that the 2003 US War on Iraq was fought for oil.

Ultimately, it is difficult to avoid concluding that the US put all the international laws aside and committed aggression against a country that was not attacking or threatening to attack it. Likewise, the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and other Iraqi prisons under US supervision represented gross violations of humanitarian principles. Yet, paradoxically, the UN council has taken no measures to hold America accountable for its abuses during its 2003 war on Iraq. So is the US above the law? A natural question arises at this point. It sets up questioning the credibility of the UN council and raises global fears of future foreign military interventions on the pretext of maintaining peace and spreading democracy all over the world.

This study suggests that all United Nations member states must take concrete steps to reform the Security Council and maintain international peace and security. It equally recommends that the US cooperate with the International Criminal Court to investigate on the potential war crimes committed by its troops during the 2003 Invasion Of Iraq and pay war reparations for all the destruction it left in the country.

Considering that the 2003 US War on Iraq war has academically been discussed by numerous students and researchers worldwide, I have toughly challenged myself to conduct a study that is different from what is expected and worthwhile. Therefore, I have focused on analyzing the Bush administration's arguments and providing counterarguments for each in light of the war's aftermath. Given that the 2022 Russian Invasion of Ukraine echoes the 2003 US Invasion Of Iraq, I encourage future researchers to discuss the American role in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. A comparison between Bush's War on Iraq and Putin's War on Ukraine is similarly recommended. To end, I hope there will be a day wherein peace, democracy and development spread all over the globe.

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