



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Mohamed Khider University of Biskra
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English Language and Literature

MASTER THESIS

Letters and Foreign Languages

English Studies

Literature and Civilization

U.S. Foreign Policy And Imperialism

Case study: The Iraqi War (2003)

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Declaration

I, Chadli Abdelmoumene, solemnly declare that the dissertation titled "**U.S. Foreign Policy And Imperialism case study: The Iraqi war (2003)**" submitted to the Department of the English language and Literature at Biskra University is entirely my own work, free from plagiarism, and has not been submitted to any other educational institution. I have appropriately acknowledged and cited all sources used, and I have conducted myself with academic integrity throughout the process. I understand the severe consequences of academic misconduct and affirm the authenticity of my dissertation.

Signature

Chadli Abdelmoumene

Dedication

To my father, Chadli Nadhir

To my beloved Mother, Salem Djouda

To my brothers, Rami and Ishak

To my friends, Belkacem Soualh, Youcef Houhou

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the following individuals who have played a significant role in the completion of my dissertation:

I am immensely thankful to my supervisor, Ms. Asma Taalah for their guidance, expertise, and unwavering support throughout this research journey. Their invaluable insights, constructive feedback, and commitment to my academic growth have been instrumental in shaping this dissertation.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the members of my dissertation committee, Mrs Amri-chenini Boutheina and Mr Boulegroune Adel Their expertise, constructive criticism, and valuable suggestions have immensely contributed to the improvement and quality of my research.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to all teachers who have dedicated their time, passion, and expertise to educate and shape my academic path. Your unwavering commitment, nurturing and guidance has a profound impact my education and development.

Once again, I extend my sincere thanks to all those mentioned above and anyone else who has contributed to the successful completion of my dissertation. Your guidance, support, and encouragement have been invaluable, and I am forever grateful.

Abstract

The United States foreign policy has undergone various shifts and developments over the years, but a broad summary of its overall approach would include principles such as promoting democracy, protecting national security, advancing economic interests, and maintaining global influence. In the case of Iraq, the U.S. foreign policy was shaped by several factors, including the concept of imperialism, which refers to the extension of a nation's power and influence over other countries or territories. This research is undertaken to investigate US foreign policy and imperialism especially during the Iraqi war 2003. In which the main question is what role did imperialism play in the U.S. engagement in Iraq? The research assumes that the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 was driven by a desire to gain control over Iraq's significant oil reserves , that the U.S. sought to establish a dominant military and political presence in the Middle East, with Iraq being a strategic stepping stone and that the U.S. invaded Iraq as a response to the 9/11 attacks, aiming to remove Saddam Hussein's regime, which was perceived as a threat due to its alleged links to terrorism. The research uses historical approach that involves gathering and critically evaluating primary and secondary sources aiming to find motives, actions, consequences, and lessons learned from U.S. foreign policy and imperialism in Iraq.

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General Introduction

Overview

The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 marked the beginning of a new era of American imperialism. This military intervention was justified by the Bush administration under the pretext of a supposed threat of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of Saddam Hussein's regime. However, the war was widely criticized for being based on false intelligence, violating international law, and causing immense human suffering.

The US-led coalition faced a protracted insurgency that lasted for years, leading to the deaths of thousands of Iraqi civilians and US military personnel. The war also destabilized the region and gave rise to extremist groups such as ISIS.

One of the primary goals of the US intervention in Iraq was to establish a democratic government and create a stable, pro-Western ally in the Middle East. However, this objective was not achieved, as the country remained deeply divided along ethnic and sectarian lines, with corrupt and weak institutions.

In addition to the military presence, the US exerted significant economic influence in Iraq, with American companies winning lucrative contracts in the reconstruction and development of the country. This economic imperialism has been criticized for benefiting American interests at the expense of Iraqi sovereignty.

The US imperialist project in Iraq has been met with significant resistance, both domestically and internationally. The anti-war movement in the US and protests around the world highlighted the unjust nature of the invasion and the devastating consequences for Iraqis.

Purpose of the Study

The research is undertaken to investigate US foreign policy and imperialism. The study of imperialism and U.S. foreign policy in Iraq holds significant importance in understanding the complex dynamics of global politics. It delves into the motives, actions, and consequences of imperialistic endeavors and foreign interventions. And by studying imperialism, we can analyze

the underlying motives that drive nations to expand their dominion. This analysis offers crucial insights into the quest for resources, geopolitical advantage, and the pursuit of economic interests. The study also investigate the motivations behind U.S. involvement in Iraq. Because By examining the motivations behind U.S. involvement in Iraq, such as securing access to oil reserves, combating terrorism, or promoting democracy, we can critically evaluate the efficacy and ethical implications of such interventions.

And by analyzing the failures and unintended consequences of imperialistic ventures, scholars can develop strategies to prevent the repetition of such mistakes. It highlights the importance of understanding cultural, historical, and social contexts before intervening in foreign territories. It emphasizes the significance of multilateral cooperation, diplomacy, and non-military approaches in resolving conflicts and promoting stability. The study also brings attention to the humanitarian implications of these interventions. By examining the experiences of local populations, including civilian casualties, displacement, and the erosion of social fabric, we can better comprehend the toll of war and occupation.

The study of imperialism and U.S. foreign policy in Iraq serves a crucial purpose in understanding the motives, dynamics, and consequences of global power struggles. By examining these subjects, we gain valuable insights into the motivations behind imperialism, the impact of foreign interventions, and the importance of ethical decision-making.

Main Questions

The research on U.S foreign policy and imperialism targets to investigate What role did imperialism play in the U.S. engagement in Iraq? In which critics argue that the U.S. invasion and subsequent occupation were driven by imperialistic ambitions, seeking to control Iraq's oil resources and expand American influence in the Middle East.

To answer this question, other sub questions need to be answered. how did the U.S. occupation and subsequent nation-building efforts in Iraq unfold? because after the invasion, the U.S. faced significant challenges in stabilizing Iraq, establishing a functioning government, and

rebuilding infrastructure. What were the motivations behind the U.S. decision to invade Iraq in 2003? The rationale provided by the U.S. government at the time was the presence of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and the alleged links between Iraq and international terrorism. What were the consequences of U.S. foreign policy in Iraq? Assessing the aftermath of the Iraq War is crucial to understanding the impact on the country and the region. And what lessons can be learned from the U.S. experience in Iraq? The study of U.S. foreign policy in Iraq involves examining the decision-making processes, strategic miscalculations, and policy failures.

Overall, studying these questions helps us gain a comprehensive understanding of the motives, actions, consequences, and lessons learned from U.S. foreign policy and imperialism in Iraq.

Methodological Concerns

One of the approaches to study U.S. foreign policy is the historical approach. This research uses this approach as its method. It does not arrange facts chronologically rather it tries to evaluate and synthesize past events objectively. This method will help achieve an accurate account of U.S. foreign policy in the past so as to gain a clearer perspective of the present. This knowledge will help to predict and control future developments and/or changes in U.S. foreign policy.

The historical approach involves gathering and critically evaluating primary and secondary sources such as documents, artifacts, letters, diaries, newspapers, and other historical records. These sources provide evidence that helps reconstruct the past and form historical narratives.

Hypotheses about U.S. imperialism and its motives in Iraq can vary, and different perspectives exist on this complex issue. Here are the hypotheses relevant to this research. The first hypothesis suggests that the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 was driven by a desire to gain control over Iraq's significant oil reserves. The second hypothesis posits that the U.S. sought to establish a dominant military and political presence in the Middle East, with Iraq being a

strategic stepping stone. The third hypothesis suggests that the U.S. intervention was driven by genuine concerns over Iraq's alleged WMD capabilities and a desire to prevent their potential use. The last hypothesis suggests that the U.S. invaded Iraq as a response to the 9/11 attacks, aiming to remove Saddam Hussein's regime, which was perceived as a threat due to its alleged links to terrorism.

Literature Review

The US foreign policy and its implications for imperialism in Iraq have been subjects of extensive scholarly research and analysis. This literature review aims to explore key books and articles that examine US foreign policy and imperialism in Iraq.

"Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone" by Rajiv Chandrasekaran. Chandrasekaran, a journalist, provides an in-depth account of the US occupation of Iraq after the 2003 invasion. This book explores the administration's decision-making process, the impact of its policies on the Iraqi population, and the prevalence of imperialist practices within the Green Zone.

"Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq" by Thomas E. Ricks. Ricks' book critically examines the military campaign and occupation of Iraq by the United States. Through extensive research and interviews, Ricks offers a detailed analysis of the strategic failures, political mismanagement, and ideological underpinnings that shaped the US presence in Iraq.

"Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Dependency on Imported Petroleum" by Michael T. Klare. Klare focuses on the role of oil in shaping US foreign policy in the Middle East, with a particular emphasis on Iraq. The book explores how America's dependence on oil influenced its decision to engage in Iraq and how this factor contributed to the imperialistic undertones of US involvement.

In "Iraq: A War" by Pierre-Jean Luizard. He provides a historical and political analysis of US foreign policy in Iraq. Examining the period from 2003 to 2010, he discusses the

motivations behind the invasion, the occupation's consequences, and the imperialist dimensions of US intervention in the country.

"Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance" by Noam Chomsky. In this book by Noam Chomsky, a prominent critic of US foreign policy, Chomsky explores the concept of American hegemony and its implications for global politics. Although not solely focused on Iraq, Chomsky provides a critical perspective on US imperialism and its role in shaping the Iraq war, arguing that it reflects broader patterns of interventionist policies pursued by the US government.

"Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army" by Jeremy Scahill. He investigates the role of private military contractors, particularly Blackwater (now known as Academi), in the US occupation of Iraq. The book explores the privatization of warfare and its impact on US foreign policy objectives, shedding light on the imperialistic nature of military outsourcing.

Adding to the above mentioned books, the internet resources were of magnificent help, without access to it the research would not have been fulfilled.

Structure of the Study

This dissertation is divided into three chapters; the first chapter focuses on the history of U.S foreign policy towards Iraq including the origins of the relations, the US management of chronic instability and The gulf war and containment. The second chapter examines the motives of US imperialism in Iraq including the economic, the geopolitical and the ideological motives. Lastly the third chapter focuses on imperialism in Iraq including sanctions, military aggression, the occupation and aftermath.

Chapter 1: A Brief History of U.S Foreign Policy towards Iraq

Introduction

The U.S.-Iraqi relations have been shaped by historical events, geopolitical dynamics, and security concerns. While there have been periods of cooperation and shared goals, there have also been significant challenges and periods of strained relations throughout their history. This chapter will cover the Early Relations between the two were The United States initially had limited involvement with Iraq during the early 20th century. it will also cover the management of chronic instability were the U.S.-Iraqi relations significantly changed when Saddam Hussein rose to power and the U.S. Initially viewed him as a potential ally against Iran; it will also go over the first battle against Saddam Hussein during the period between 1979-1989 and lastly Gulf War and the containment strategies that the US used against Iraq during the period between 1989-2003.

1.1. The origins of US Iraqi Relations up to 1958

The origins of US-Iraqi relations date back to the early 20th century when the Ottoman Empire fell apart and the British mandate took control of the region. The US recognized Iraq's independence in 1932 and established diplomatic relations. During World War II, the US provided military and economic assistance to Iraq, and after the war, it became one of Iraq's biggest trading partners (Council on Foreign Relations).

However, US-Iraqi relations became strained in the 1950s due to the rise of Arab nationalism and the formation of the Baghdad Pact, a US-led alliance aimed at containing the Soviet Union. This tension culminated in the 1958 Iraqi revolution, which overthrew the pro-Western monarchy and led to the establishment of a socialist government(Said K. Aburish) .

1.1.1-Early Contacts between the US and Iraq

The earliest contacts between the United States and Iraq date back to the early 19th century, when American merchants began trading with the Ottoman Empire, of which

Iraq was a part. The first US consulate in Iraq was established in the city of Basra in 1856, and it was followed by consulates in Baghdad and Mosul in the 1860s. These consulates primarily served American business interests, facilitating trade between the US and Iraq(Bar-On, Mordechai).

During World War I, the United States and Iraq found themselves on opposite sides of the conflict. The US initially maintained a neutral stance, but in 1917, it declared war on Germany and its allies, including the Ottoman Empire. The war had a profound impact on the region, as it resulted in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the modern Middle East(Bligh, Alexander).

1.1.2-The Mandate Period

After the war, Iraq came under British control, with the League of Nations granting Britain a mandate to administer the country. During this period, the US continued to maintain diplomatic relations with Iraq, but its influence was limited by British dominance in the region(Dodge, Toby).

The mandate period was marked by various economic and political developments that had a lasting impact on US-Iraqi relations. One of the most significant was the discovery of oil in Iraq, which began in the 1920s. American oil companies, including Standard Oil of New Jersey (later ExxonMobil), became major players in the Iraqi oil industry, and their interests were protected by the British(Dodge, Toby).

Another significant development was the growth of nationalist sentiment in Iraq, which led to the emergence of various political movements calling for independence from British rule. The US initially supported British efforts to maintain control over Iraq, but as nationalist sentiment grew, it began to shift its stance. In 1930, the US Secretary of State, Henry Stimson, declared that the US recognized Iraq as an "independent sovereign state," although it continued to maintain close ties with the British(Bligh, Alexander).

One of the most significant aspects of US-Iraqi relations during the mandate period was economic. In the aftermath of World War I, the United States emerged as a leading economic power, and American businesses were keen to expand into the Middle East. Iraq, with its vast oil reserves and strategic location, was an attractive target for American investors (Tripp, Charles).

In 1925, the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) was formed, with American investors holding a significant stake. The IPC became one of the largest oil companies in the world, and its success was closely tied to US interests in Iraq. The US government provided significant support to the IPC, both financially and diplomatically, in order to protect American investments in the company (Alnasrawi, Abbas).

Political relations between the United States and Iraq during the mandate period were more complicated. The United States was a major colonial power in the Middle East, and its influence in Iraq was felt in many areas of Iraqi life. However, the United States was also viewed by many Iraqis as a hostile foreign power, intent on exploiting their country's resources for its own benefit (Alnasrawi, Abbas).

The US government was initially supportive of the mandate system, which gave the colonial powers control over Iraq's political and economic affairs. However, as Iraqi nationalism grew in the 1920s and 1930s, the United States began to reassess its position. In 1932, the mandate was officially ended, and Iraq was granted independence (Yergin, Daniel).

The impact of US-Iraqi relations during the mandate period on Iraq was significant. On the one hand, American investment helped to develop Iraq's oil industry, which became a major source of revenue for the country. On the other hand, US influence in Iraq was often viewed as a threat to Iraqi sovereignty, and American support for the mandate system was deeply resented by many Iraqis (Weisburd, Arthur).

The US-Iraqi relations during the mandate period were complex and multifaceted. While economic ties between the two countries were strong, political relations were often fraught. The legacy of this period continues to shape US-Iraqi relations today, as both countries struggle to navigate a complex and rapidly changing political landscape in the Middle East(Batatu, Hanna)

1.1.3-World War II and the Postwar Period

During World War II, the US and Iraq were once again on opposite sides of the conflict. Iraq, under the leadership of Rashid Ali al-Gaylani, declared war on the British in 1941, and the US provided military support to the British in their efforts to suppress the rebellion(Long, David E).

President Franklin D. Roosevelt established diplomatic relations with Iraq. The US recognized Iraq's independence and sent its first ambassador to Baghdad, Charles W. Yost. Yost's appointment aimed to strengthen ties with Iraq and help coordinate efforts against the Axis Powers. The US hoped to use Iraq as a base to launch attacks against Nazi forces in Europe and the Middle East(Abrahamian, Ervand).

In April 1941, a pro-Nazi coup in Iraq led to the overthrow of the pro-British government. The new government was headed by Rashid Ali al-Gaylani, who had close ties with Germany. The US responded by sending military aid to the British forces in Iraq, which were fighting to regain control of the country. The US also deployed troops to Iran to secure the supply lines to the Soviet Union and protect the oil fields in the Persian Gulf.

By 1945, the Allied forces had defeated the Axis powers, and the war was over. The US continued to maintain diplomatic relations with Iraq but did not establish any significant economic or military ties. The relationship between the two countries was

strained, and there were concerns about the stability of the Iraqi government(Freedman, Lawrence).

After World War II, the United States and Iraq continued to maintain diplomatic relations, but their relationship remained complicated. This section explores the nature of US-Iraqi relations in the postwar period up to 1945(Al-Nakib, Mai).

In 1951, the Iraqi government nationalized the oil industry, which had been dominated by foreign companies. The US was concerned about the loss of its economic interests in Iraq and viewed the move as a threat to its national security. The US government responded by implementing a trade embargo and freezing Iraqi assets(Al-Nakib, Mai).

In 1955, the US and several other countries in the region signed the Baghdad Pact, a mutual defense agreement aimed at countering Soviet influence in the Middle East. However, the pact was seen as a tool of US imperialism and was met with opposition in Iraq(Hovannisian, Richard G).

After the war, the US played an active role in shaping the postwar world, including the Middle East. In 1945, the US State Department issued a report calling for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, a move that would have significant consequences for the region. In Iraq, the US continued to support the British, who were facing increasing pressure from nationalist movements calling for independence(Nasr, Vali).

1.1.4-The Cold War and the Rise of Nasserism

The Cold War era marked a period of heightened tensions between the two superpowers of the time, the United States and the Soviet Union. As part of their global competition for influence, both nations sought to extend their spheres of influence in the Middle East, a region of strategic importance due to its vast oil reserves and proximity to

the Soviet Union. In the post-World War II era, the US was keen to maintain its strategic interests in the region, which included access to oil and a bulwark against Soviet influence. Iraq was seen as a key ally in this regard, but this relationship was complicated by the rise of Nasserism(Fawcett, Louise).

The Cold War had a significant impact on US-Iraqi relations, as the US sought to contain the spread of communism in the region. In the early 1950s, the US began to provide military aid to Iraq, including tanks and fighter jets, in an effort to build up the country's military capabilities and counter Soviet influence. However, the US was also wary of the growing nationalist movements in the region, particularly the rise of Nasserism in neighboring Egypt.

The rise of Nasserism in the 1950s represented a challenge to US interests in the region. The ideology, which was named after Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser, emphasized Arab nationalism, anti-colonialism, and anti-imperialism. This ideology resonated with many in the Arab world, including in Iraq, and posed a threat to US influence in the region. In response, the US sought to maintain its influence in Iraq by supporting pro-Western factions and leaders(Gordon, Michael R. and Bernard E. Trainor).

One example of this was the US support for the monarchy in Iraq. The monarchy was seen as a bulwark against the spread of Nasserism and Soviet influence in the region. The US provided financial and military aid to the Iraqi government, and in return, the Iraqi government provided access to oil resources and cooperated with the US on regional security issues. However, this support was not without its challenges. The monarchy was seen as corrupt and unpopular among many Iraqis, and its pro-Western stance made it a target for anti-Western sentiment in the country(Kechichian, Joseph A).

Another example of US involvement in Iraq during this period was the 1958 Iraqi coup d'état, which saw the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic. The US was caught off guard by the coup, and its initial response was to support the new government. However, this support was short-lived, as the new government quickly aligned itself with the Soviet Union and began to pursue policies that were hostile to US interests in the region. The US responded by imposing economic sanctions on Iraq and withdrawing its support for the government (Meissner, Boris).

The origins of US-Iraqi relations up to 1958 were shaped by a range of economic, political, and strategic factors. The US initially maintained a neutral stance towards Iraq, but its interests in the region grew as American companies became involved in the Iraqi oil industry. The mandate period saw the emergence of nationalist movements in Iraq, which the US initially supported but later viewed with suspicion as Cold War tensions rose. The coup d'état in 1958 marked a turning point in US-Iraqi relations, as the new government aligned itself with the Soviet Union and the US responded with economic sanctions. Overall, the history of US-Iraqi relations up to 1958 reflects the complex and often contradictory interests of both nations, and provides important insights into the broader history of the Middle East during this period (Tucker, Spencer C).

1.2-US management of chronic instability

Iraq has been a key player in the Middle East since the early 20th century due to its vast oil resources and strategic location. However, its history has been marred by political instability, which intensified after the overthrow of the Hashemite monarchy in 1958.

1.2.1-Political Instability in Iraq

In 1958, a military coup led by General Abdul Karim Qasim overthrew the monarchy and established a republic. Qasim's regime was leftist and nationalist, and it sought to reduce the influence of foreign powers, including the United States, in Iraq.

The United States had maintained close ties with the Iraqi monarchy, and the overthrow of the monarchy threatened its interests in the region. The United States feared that Qasim's regime would align itself with the Soviet Union and threaten American interests in the Middle East. As a result, the United States began a campaign to undermine Qasim's government and promote regime change in Iraq(US Department of State).

The United States played a significant role in the overthrow of Qasim's government in 1963. The CIA provided funding and support to a group of Ba'athist officers who staged a coup against Qasim's government. The Ba'athists were a nationalist and socialist political party that had been founded in Syria in the 1940s. The Ba'athists in Iraq were opposed to Qasim's leftist government, and they sought to establish a pro-Western regime that would align itself with the United States.

The Ba'athist coup succeeded in overthrowing Qasim's government, and the United States immediately recognized the new regime. The United States provided economic and military aid to the Ba'athist government, which was led by General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr. The United States hoped that the Ba'athist regime would be a bulwark against Soviet influence in the Middle East(US Department of State).

However, the Ba'athist regime was unstable, and it faced opposition from various groups, including Kurdish separatists and Shia Islamists. The Ba'athist government was also marked by corruption and repression, which further undermined its legitimacy.

In 1968, a faction within the Ba'athist government led by Saddam Hussein staged a coup against al-Bakr and established a new regime. Saddam Hussein became the de facto leader of Iraq and remained in power until 2003. The United States initially welcomed Saddam Hussein's regime and continued to provide economic and military aid to Iraq(US Department of State).

1.2.2-U.S. Involvement

The U.S. was concerned about the spread of communism in the Middle East and saw Iraq as a key country in the region. Therefore, the U.S. provided economic and military aid to Iraq throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The U.S. hoped that this aid would help to stabilize Iraq and prevent the spread of communism. However, the U.S. did not take into account the domestic politics of Iraq, which were highly complex and volatile (Batatu, Hanna).

The United States' involvement in Iraq during the 1970s was rooted in the country's importance as an oil-producing nation. Following the nationalization of Iraq's oil industry in 1972, the Iraqi government began to pursue closer relations with the Soviet Union, raising concerns in Washington about the potential for Soviet influence in the region. In response, the United States began to increase its military and economic aid to Iraq, with the goal of maintaining its strategic foothold in the Middle East (Kinzer, Stephen).

The United States maintained a complex relationship with Iraq. On the one hand, the US provided significant military and economic aid to the country, including advanced weaponry and support for Iraq's ongoing conflict with Iran. On the other hand, the US also expressed concerns about Iraq's human rights abuses and its relationship with the Soviet Union. Despite these tensions, the US continued to prioritize its strategic interests in the region, leading to a complicated and often contradictory approach to Iraq during this period.

The support provided by the US to Saddam Hussein's regime during this period has been cited as one factor contributing to the dictator's rise to power and subsequent actions against his own people. Additionally, the US focus on maintaining its strategic interests in the region has been criticized for prioritizing political and economic concerns over human rights and stability. Understanding this history is critical for making sense of

current US policies in the Middle East and their potential impact on the region (Tripp, Charles)

1.3-The First Battle between the US and Saddam Hussein 1979-1989

The third phase in U.S.-Iraqi relations opened in 1979, when Saddam Hussein seized power in Baghdad. Quickly, Hussein brutally suppressed all domestic rivals and thereby built internal stability in Baghdad, ending decades of political turmoil.

A secularist, Hussein also positioned himself as a vital bulwark against Islamic fundamentalism in Iran, where the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini took power in 1979 and declared an intention to export his revolutionary ideals across the region (A Century of U.S. Relations With Iraq).

1.3.1-US Relations with Saddam Hussein

The relationship between the United States and Saddam Hussein, the former President of Iraq, was a complicated one, marked by shifting alliances, geopolitical maneuvering, and a mix of cooperation and conflict. While the two countries initially had friendly ties, their relationship eventually deteriorated, leading to the Gulf War of 1990-91, which saw the US-led coalition forces launch a massive military campaign to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. This chapter will explore the historical context of US-Saddam relations, the key events that shaped their interaction, and the legacy of their tumultuous engagement.

1.3.2-Historical Context

To understand the dynamics of US-Saddam relations, it is essential to appreciate the historical context of the Middle East region in the post-World War II era. The US, as the world's dominant superpower, sought to exert its influence in the region to protect its interests, such as oil reserves and strategic military bases. Meanwhile, Iraq, under Saddam Hussein's leadership, aimed to consolidate its power and prestige in the Arab

world, especially after the traumatic Iran-Iraq War (1980-88), which had claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and drained the country's resources.

1.3.3-Friendly Ties

In the early 1980s, the US and Iraq enjoyed friendly ties, driven by a shared opposition to Iran and the Soviet Union. The US provided Iraq with military and economic aid, as well as intelligence support, to bolster its war effort against Iran. Moreover, US officials viewed Saddam Hussein as a pragmatic and secular leader who could help stabilize the region and counter the rise of Islamic fundamentalism.

However, this friendship was short-lived, as tensions emerged over Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Iranian troops and Kurdish civilians, which violated international law and human rights norms. In 1988, the US imposed economic sanctions on Iraq, marking the start of a gradual shift in their relationship.

1.3.4-The Iran-Iraq War and US Intervention

The United States was heavily involved in the Iran-Iraq War, providing support to both sides of the conflict. The reasons behind this involvement were complex and multifaceted, but they can be traced back to the US's geopolitical interests in the Middle East(Ajami, Fouad).

One of the primary reasons for the US's involvement was its desire to maintain the balance of power in the region. The US saw both Iran and Iraq as important strategic partners, and it did not want to see either side gain a significant advantage over the other. As a result, the US provided military and economic assistance to both sides of the conflict.

.The US also had economic interests in the region, particularly in terms of oil. Iran and Iraq were both major oil-producing countries, and the US was eager to maintain

access to their resources. As a result, the US provided financial assistance to both sides of the conflict, with the hope of securing future oil contracts(Claussen, Dane S).

Additionally, the US had concerns about the spread of communism in the region. Both Iran and Iraq had communist factions, and the US feared that a communist takeover in either country would threaten its interests in the Middle East. As a result, the US provided military aid to both sides of the conflict, with the hope of preventing a communist takeover.

While the US provided support to both Iran and Iraq, its support for Iraq was particularly significant. This support came in the form of military aid, intelligence, and diplomatic assistance. The US saw Iraq as a bulwark against the spread of Iranian revolutionary ideology and believed that Saddam Hussein's regime was more stable and predictable than the Iranian government(Keaney, Thomas A. and Eliot A. Cohen).

One of the most significant ways in which the US supported Iraq was by providing it with weapons. In the early stages of the war, Iraq was heavily outmatched by the Iranian military, which had recently undergone a significant modernization program. The US saw an opportunity to balance the scales by providing Iraq with advanced weaponry, including fighter jets, helicopters, and anti-tank missiles. The US also provided Iraq with intelligence on Iranian troop movements and tactics, which allowed Iraq to plan its military operations more effectively.

While the US provided more significant support to Iraq, it also provided some aid to Iran. This aid was primarily economic, as the US lifted its embargo on Iran in 1981, allowing it to purchase weapons and other goods from the US. The US also provided intelligence to Iran on Iraqi troop movements and tactics, which helped Iran to plan its military operations(Pelletiere, Stephen C).

The US's support for Iran was complicated by the Iran Hostage Crisis, which had taken place just a few years earlier. In 1979, Iranian militants had seized the US embassy in Tehran and held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days. This incident had soured US-Iran relations, and many Americans were reluctant to provide support to Iran during the Iran-Iraq War.

The US's involvement in the Iran-Iraq War had significant consequences, both for the region and for US foreign policy. One of the most significant consequences was the escalation of the conflict. By providing military aid to both sides, the US inadvertently prolonged the war, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people.

1.3.5-Motivations for U.S. Support

The reasons for U.S. support for Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War were complex and multifaceted. One of the main factors was a desire to counter Iranian influence in the region. Iran was seen as a revolutionary power that sought to export its Islamic ideology to other countries in the region. The U.S. feared that if Iran were to win the war, it would establish a foothold in Iraq and pose a significant threat to American interests in the region.

Another factor that motivated U.S. support for Iraq was a desire to maintain the stability of the oil-rich Persian Gulf region. Iraq was a significant oil producer, and the U.S. saw it as a key player in the global energy market. The U.S. was keen to ensure that the war did not disrupt the flow of oil from the region, which could have had serious implications for the global economy.

In conclusion, U.S. support for Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War was significant and played a crucial role in the outcome of the conflict. The U.S. government provided Iraq with military aid, intelligence sharing, and diplomatic support, all of which helped Iraq to hold its own against the more numerically superior Iranian forces. The motivations for

U.S. support were complex and multifaceted, with a desire to counter Iranian influence in the region and maintain the stability of the global energy market being two of the most important factors.

However, it is important to note that U.S. support for Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War was not without controversy. Saddam Hussein's regime was known to be brutal and repressive, and there were concerns that U.S. support could be seen as condoning these actions. Additionally, some critics argued that U.S. support for Iraq contributed to the escalation of the conflict and prolonged the suffering of both the Iraqi and Iranian people.

1.3.6-The beginning of the conflict

Iraq's invasion of Iran in 1980 marked the beginning of a long and bloody conflict that lasted for eight years. The United States, along with many other countries, condemned Iraq's aggression and provided military and financial support to Iran. However, as the war dragged on, the United States became increasingly concerned about Iran's influence in the region and saw Iraq as a potential counterbalance. In 1982, the Reagan administration removed Iraq from its list of state sponsors of terrorism and began to provide economic and military aid to Saddam Hussein's regime.

The United States' support for Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War was not without controversy. Iraq was known to use chemical weapons against both Iranian troops and civilians, and there were reports of human rights abuses by Saddam Hussein's regime. Despite these concerns, the Reagan administration continued to support Iraq, viewing it as a key ally in the fight against Iran.

The conflict between Saddam Hussein and the United States came to a head in August 1990, when Iraq invaded Kuwait. The United States led a coalition of countries in a military operation to push Iraq out of Kuwait, known as Operation Desert Storm. The

conflict marked a turning point in the relationship between Iraq and the United States, as the two countries became bitter enemies.

1.4-The Gulf War and Containment

The Gulf War, also known as the First Gulf War or Operation Desert Storm, was a major military conflict that took place in the early 1990s. This war unfolded against the backdrop of the geopolitical tensions and territorial disputes in the Middle East, particularly involving Iraq and Kuwait.

1.4.1-The Gulf War 1991 and US Involvement

The Gulf War, also known as Operation Desert Storm, was a military conflict between Iraq and a coalition of nations led by the United States in 1991. The conflict began when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, prompting the United States to intervene. This chapter will explore the United States' involvement in the Gulf War, including the reasons for its involvement, the strategies used, and the outcomes of the conflict. The United States had several reasons for getting involved in the Gulf War. The primary reason was to protect its oil interests in the region. Kuwait was a major oil producer, and the United States was concerned that if Iraq were to control Kuwait, it would have too much control over the world's oil supply. The United States was also concerned about Iraq's aggression towards other countries in the region and its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

1.4.2-Protecting US Interests in the Region

One of the primary motivations for the US involvement in the Gulf War was to protect its interests in the region. The US had long-standing alliances with countries in

the Persian Gulf, including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. These alliances were based on shared economic and strategic interests, including the access to oil resources and the need to counter Soviet influence in the region. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the US saw this as a direct threat to its interests in the region and intervened militarily to protect its allies.

According to Kenneth M. Pollack, a former CIA analyst and Middle East expert, "The U.S. intervention in the Gulf War was fundamentally driven by the need to protect U.S. interests in the Middle East, including the stability of oil supplies and the defense of allies such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait" (Pollack 1). The US saw Iraq's aggression as a direct threat to its national security and believed that it had a responsibility to intervene in order to protect its interests and those of its allies.

1.4.3-Ensuring Stability of the Global Oil Market

Another key motivation for the US involvement in the Gulf War was to ensure the stability of the global oil market. The Persian Gulf is one of the world's most important oil-producing regions, and any disruption to the flow of oil from this region could have serious consequences for the global economy. By intervening in the Gulf War, the US aimed to ensure that the flow of oil from the region continued uninterrupted.

According to Michael Klare, a professor of peace and world security studies, "The Gulf War was fought primarily to safeguard the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf to the world market, which was deemed vital to the economic and strategic interests of the United States and its allies" (Klare 1). The US saw Iraq's invasion of Kuwait as a direct threat to the stability of the global oil market and intervened militarily to ensure that oil continued to flow from the region.

1.4.4-Containing Iraq's Military Power

Finally, another motivation for the US involvement in the Gulf War was to contain Iraq's military power. Iraq had one of the largest and most powerful military forces in the Middle East, and the US saw this as a potential threat to its interests in the region. By intervening in the Gulf War, the US aimed to limit Iraq's military capabilities and prevent it from becoming a dominant force in the region.

According to George H.W. Bush, the US President at the time of the Gulf War, "We are determined to knock out Saddam Hussein's nuclear bomb potential. We will also destroy his chemical weapons facilities" (Bush 1). The US believed that Iraq posed a threat to regional stability and its own interests, and that by containing its military power, it could help to stabilize the region and prevent future conflicts.

1.4.5-Strategies Used

The United States used a combination of air and ground forces to defeat Iraq. The air campaign was the most significant aspect of the war, with the United States launching over 100,000 sorties in just over a month. The coalition forces targeted Iraqi military installations, communication centers, and infrastructure. The ground campaign consisted of a swift and decisive assault that utilized tanks and other heavy equipment.

1.4.6-Outcomes

The Gulf War resulted in a clear victory for the United States and its coalition partners. Iraq's military was severely weakened, and its infrastructure was damaged. The United States achieved its goal of protecting its oil interests, and Iraq was forced to comply with United Nations resolutions to disarm itself of WMDs. However, the war also had significant consequences, including the loss of life on both sides, the displacement of civilians, and the destabilization of the region.

1.4.6.1 Military Disarmament

Following the Gulf War, Iraq was required to disarm its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) under the terms of a UN resolution. However, Iraq failed to fully comply with the resolution, leading to ongoing disputes between Iraq and the UN over weapons inspections.

1.4.6.2-No-Fly Zones

The US-led coalition established no-fly zones over Iraq following the Gulf War. The no-fly zones were intended to prevent Iraq from using its air force to attack ethnic minorities in northern and southern Iraq

Also the politics of the United States in the Gulf War of 1991 were shaped by several factors, including the country's strategic interests, domestic politics, and international diplomacy.

1.4.6.3-Strategic Interests

The United States had several strategic interests in the Gulf region that influenced its politics during the Gulf War of 1991. One of these interests was oil. The Gulf region is home to some of the world's largest oil reserves, and the United States relies heavily on oil imports from this region. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait threatened to disrupt oil supplies and raise prices, which would have had a significant impact on the United States and other Western countries. Therefore, the United States saw it as necessary to intervene in the conflict to protect its strategic interests in the region.

Another strategic interest that influenced the politics of the United States during the Gulf War was regional stability. The United States viewed the Gulf region as an important part of its broader strategy to contain Soviet influence during the Cold War. Therefore, it saw it as necessary to protect the stability of the region to prevent Soviet

interference. Additionally, the United States was concerned about the spread of radical Islamic fundamentalism, particularly after the Iranian Revolution of 1979. The Gulf War was seen as an opportunity to contain this threat and protect American interests in the region.

1.4.6.4-Domestic Politics

The politics of the United States in the Gulf War of 1991 were also influenced by domestic politics. President George H. W. Bush faced pressure from Congress and the public to take action against Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait. In August 1990, Congress passed a resolution authorizing the use of military force against Iraq. The resolution passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, demonstrating the political consensus in the United States that military action was necessary.

1.4.6.5-International Diplomacy

The politics of the United States in the Gulf War of 1991 were also shaped by international diplomacy. The United States worked to build a broad coalition of countries to support its efforts to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The coalition included countries from the Middle East, Europe, and Asia, as well as several African countries. The United States worked closely with its allies to build support for its actions, and its diplomatic efforts were crucial in securing the support of countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The United Nations also played a significant role in shaping the politics of the Gulf War of 1991. In November 1990, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 678, which authorized the use of force to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The resolution was passed with the support of all five permanent members of the Security Council, including the United States. The UN's authorization of the use of force provided a legal basis for the United States and its allies to take military action against Iraq.

The politics of the United States in the Gulf War of 1991 were shaped by several factors, including the country's strategic interests, domestic politics, and international diplomacy. The United States saw the conflict as a threat to its interests in the region and worked to build a broad coalition of countries to support its efforts to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Its domestic politics also played a significant role in shaping its response to the conflict, with Congress and the public supporting military action. The United Nations' authorization of the use of force provided a legal basis for the United States and its allies to take military action against Iraq. The Gulf War of 1991 had a significant impact on the politics of the United States and the broader international community.

1.4.6.6-U.S policy towards Iraq during the 1990s

During the 1990s, the United States had a complex and evolving policy towards Iraq, which was shaped by a range of political, economic, and security considerations. On the one hand, the U.S. government sought to contain and isolate Saddam Hussein's regime, which was seen as a threat to regional stability and American interests. On the other hand, the U.S. also sought to balance this goal with other objectives, such as maintaining the integrity of the Gulf War coalition, supporting Iraq's civilian population, and preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

One key aspect of U.S. policy towards Iraq during this period was the imposition of economic sanctions, which were first imposed in 1990 after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and were subsequently tightened in response to Saddam's refusal to cooperate with UN weapons inspectors. According to the Congressional Research Service, these sanctions had a significant impact on Iraq's economy and led to widespread suffering among the civilian population, although their effectiveness in achieving their stated goals of disarming Iraq and weakening Saddam's regime remains a matter of debate (Katzman).

Another key element of U.S. policy towards Iraq during the 1990s was the use of military force, both to enforce the no-fly zones established in the wake of the Gulf War and to launch limited strikes against Iraqi military targets. According to historian Richard Betts, this approach reflected a broader trend towards "coercive diplomacy" in U.S. foreign policy, which sought to use military force as a tool of diplomacy rather than as an end in itself (Betts).

Overall, U.S. policy towards Iraq during the 1990s was shaped by a complex set of factors, including regional security concerns, humanitarian considerations, and the desire to promote American interests in the Middle East. While the effectiveness of this policy remains a matter of debate, it had a significant impact on Iraq's economy and society and helped to set the stage for the U.S. military intervention in Iraq in 2003.

1.4.6.7-The US Containment policy towards Iraq in the 1990s

The US containment policy towards Iraq had its origins in the aftermath of the Gulf War of 1991. The war had resulted in Iraq's defeat and the imposition of economic sanctions and a no-fly zone. The US and its allies believed that Iraq was still a threat to regional stability and that it had to be contained. The policy was aimed at preventing Iraq from developing WMDs, supporting terrorism, and destabilizing the region.

The implementation of the US containment policy towards Iraq involved a range of measures, including economic sanctions, diplomatic isolation, and military force. The US led a coalition of countries in imposing economic sanctions on Iraq, which included restrictions on trade, travel, and financial transactions. The sanctions were intended to weaken Iraq's economy and prevent it from acquiring the resources needed to develop WMDs.

Diplomatic isolation was another aspect of the US containment policy towards Iraq. The US worked to isolate Iraq diplomatically, by preventing it from establishing

relations with other countries and by limiting its ability to participate in international organizations. The US also imposed a no-fly zone over Iraq to prevent it from using its air force to attack its neighbors.

The containment policy had several components, including economic sanctions, military containment, and diplomatic isolation. The United Nations Security Council imposed economic sanctions on Iraq in 1990, which were later strengthened in 1991. The sanctions included an embargo on oil exports, which severely impacted Iraq's economy. The military containment component of the policy involved the deployment of US troops and military assets in the region to deter any aggressive actions by Iraq. Diplomatic isolation involved efforts to isolate Iraq diplomatically and politically, including through the imposition of no-fly zones over parts of Iraq.

The US containment policy towards Iraq in the 1990s was controversial, with critics arguing that it caused widespread suffering among the Iraqi people due to the economic sanctions. However, proponents of the policy argued that it was necessary to prevent Iraq from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and to maintain stability in the region.

The US containment policy towards Iraq also involved military force. The US and its allies conducted periodic air strikes on Iraqi targets, which were aimed at destroying Iraq's WMD facilities and preventing it from developing new ones. The US also stationed troops in the region to deter Iraq from launching a military attack on its neighbors.

The US containment policy towards Iraq had a number of consequences, both intended and unintended. The intended consequences of the policy were that Iraq was prevented from acquiring WMDs and destabilizing the region. The policy also prevented Iraq from supporting terrorism and from launching a military attack on its neighbors.

However, there were also unintended consequences of the US containment policy towards Iraq. The economic sanctions imposed on Iraq had a devastating effect on the country's population, resulting in widespread poverty and suffering. The sanctions also had the unintended consequence of strengthening Saddam Hussein's regime, as he was able to use the sanctions as a tool of propaganda, blaming the suffering of the Iraqi people on the US and its allies.

The US containment policy towards Iraq also had a negative impact on US relations with other countries in the region. The policy was viewed by many as an example of US imperialism and as evidence of the US's lack of concern for the well-being of the Iraqi people. The policy also contributed to the rise of anti-American sentiment in the region, which would have long-term consequences for US foreign policy in the Middle East.

The US containment policy towards Iraq in the 1990s was designed to limit Iraq's influence in the region and prevent its acquisition of WMDs. The policy involved a range of measures, including economic sanctions, diplomatic isolation, and military force. While the policy had some intended consequences, such as preventing Iraq from acquiring WMDs and destabilizing the region, it also had unintended consequences, including the suffering of the Iraqi people and the strengthening of Saddam Hussein's regime. The US containment policy towards Iraq also had a negative impact on US relations with other countries in the region and contributed to the rise of anti-American sentiment in the Middle East.

One key example of the US Containment policy towards Iraq was the Gulf War, which took place in 1991. The war was launched by a US-led coalition in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The coalition's goal was to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait and establish a buffer zone between Iraq and its neighbors. The war was a military

success for the coalition, and it achieved its immediate objective of removing Iraqi forces from Kuwait. However, Saddam Hussein's regime remained in power, and the US continued to maintain a military presence in the region to deter further Iraqi aggression.

Another example of the US Containment policy towards Iraq was the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq by the United Nations Security Council in 1990. The sanctions were designed to limit Iraq's ability to finance its military and rebuild its economy after the Gulf War. The sanctions were strict, and they had a significant impact on the Iraqi economy and civilian population. Critics of the sanctions argued that they were causing unnecessary suffering for Iraqi civilians, but supporters argued that they were necessary to prevent Saddam Hussein's regime from rebuilding its military and threatening the region again.

A third example of the US Containment policy towards Iraq was the establishment of a no-fly zone over northern and southern Iraq. The no-fly zones were enforced by US and British aircraft and were designed to prevent Iraqi military aircraft from operating in those regions. The no-fly zones were established in 1991, and they remained in place until the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. The no-fly zones were controversial, with critics arguing that they violated Iraq's sovereignty and increased tensions between the US and Iraq.

Conclusion

The relationship between the United States and Iraq has been a complex and often tumultuous one since its inception. From the early years of diplomatic engagement to the prolonged military involvement, the evolution of U.S.-Iraqi relations is a multifaceted story that spans several decades. The evolution of U.S.-Iraqi relations has been a dynamic journey marked by shifting alliances, military interventions, and complex geopolitical dynamics. From the early years of economic cooperation to the challenges faced during

the Saddam Hussein era and the subsequent invasion and occupation, the relationship has endured numerous trials. The United States primarily focused on economic cooperation, particularly in the field of oil exploration until the 1958 revolution. The most defining phase of U.S.-Iraqi relations came during the reign of Saddam Hussein. In the 1980s, the United States provided support to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War, viewing Saddam Hussein's regime as an ally against Iranian influence in the region. However, tensions escalated in 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait, leading to the Gulf War. The United States, along with a coalition of international forces, swiftly intervened to liberate Kuwait and imposed economic sanctions on Iraq and started to implement various strategies to contain and limit iraqi influence in the region.

Chapter 2: Motives of US imperialism in Iraq

Introduction

The United States' motives for its imperialism in Iraq have been the subject of much debate and controversy. While some argue that the US intervention in Iraq was driven by a desire to spread democracy and freedom, others maintain that it was motivated by economic interests, geopolitical strategy, and the desire to gain control over the region's oil resources. In this chapter we will explore the various motives behind the US imperialism in Iraq and examine the evidence supporting each claim. This chapter will cover the economic, geopolitical and ideological motives behind the the U.S imperialism in Iraq.

2.1. Economic motives for US imperialism in Iraq

There is significant evidence to support the argument that economic motives drove US imperialism in Iraq. In 2003, former US Vice President Dick Cheney, who was the CEO of oilfield services company Halliburton before entering politics, famously remarked that "the Middle East with two-thirds of the world's oil and the lowest cost, is still where the prize ultimately lies." This statement suggests that Cheney and other US policymakers saw control over Iraq's oil resources as a key strategic objective.

In addition to Cheney's comments, there are numerous examples of US officials making statements that suggest economic motives drove the invasion. For example, former US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld reportedly told a senior general in 2001 that "Iraq has got to pay for itself" and that "the oil revenues of Iraq could bring between \$50 and \$100 billion over the course of the next two or three years." These statements suggest that US policymakers were focused on the economic benefits of controlling Iraq's oil resources.

2.1.1-Control over oil resources

The United States' invasion of Iraq in 2003 remains a controversial and divisive issue, with many critics arguing that it was an act of imperialism driven by economic motives. One of the most commonly cited reasons for the invasion was control over Iraq's vast oil resources. In this essay, we will explore the economic motives behind US imperialism in Iraq and examine the evidence supporting this argument.

2.1.1.1-The Importance of Oil

Oil is a crucial commodity that drives global economic growth, and the United States is one of the world's largest consumers of oil. According to the US Energy Information Administration, the US consumed over 19 million barrels of oil per day in 2019, with the transportation sector accounting for the majority of this consumption. Given the United States' reliance on oil imports, control over oil resources in other parts of the world has long been a key strategic priority for US policymakers.

2.1.1.2-Control Over Iraq's Oil

Iraq possesses the world's fifth-largest oil reserves, with an estimated 145 billion barrels of oil. Before the US invasion, Iraq's oil industry was largely nationalized, with the state-owned Iraqi National Oil Company controlling all aspects of production and distribution. However, the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 resulted in the establishment of a new government that was more favorable to foreign investment in the country's oil sector.

One of the first acts of the new Iraqi government was to pass the Iraqi Oil Law, which opened up the country's oil resources to foreign companies. This law established production-sharing agreements (PSAs) that allowed foreign companies to extract oil from Iraq's fields in exchange for a share of the profits. Many critics argue that this law was

designed to benefit US oil companies and represented a major victory for US imperialism in Iraq.

2.1.1.3-Impact on Iraq's Oil Resources

Iraq has some of the largest oil reserves in the world, and before the invasion, much of its oil industry was nationalized. However, after the US takeover, the new government began to privatize the oil industry, opening it up to foreign companies. This move was widely criticized, as it was seen as a way for the US to gain control over Iraq's oil resources.

The privatization of Iraq's oil industry has had a significant impact on the country's economy. While oil production has increased since the invasion, much of the profits are going to foreign companies rather than to the Iraqi people. In addition, the infrastructure of Iraq's oil industry has been badly damaged by years of war and neglect, which has hindered the country's ability to benefit from its oil reserves.

The US invasion of Iraq was driven by a desire for control over the country's oil resources. While the official reason for the invasion was to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, no such weapons were ever found. Instead, the US-led coalition installed a new government that began to privatize Iraq's oil industry, opening it up to foreign companies. This move has had a significant impact on Iraq's economy, as much of the profits from the country's oil reserves are now going to foreign companies rather than to the Iraqi people.

2.1.2-Opening up new markets for US corporations

US corporations have always been interested in Iraq's markets, primarily because of the country's significant oil reserves, which are among the largest in the world. Before the 2003 invasion, US oil companies, including Chevron, ExxonMobil, and ConocoPhillips, had been lobbying the US government to lift the economic sanctions

imposed on Iraq and allow them to access the country's oil reserves. After the invasion, the US government's primary objective was to rebuild Iraq's infrastructure and create a pro-Western, democratic government, which presented significant opportunities for US corporations in the energy, construction, and other sectors.

US corporations quickly realized the potential of Iraq's markets and actively sought to secure contracts for reconstruction projects in Iraq. The US government's primary contractor for Iraq's reconstruction was Halliburton, a company previously headed by Vice President Dick Cheney. Halliburton secured billions of dollars worth of contracts for various projects in Iraq, including the repair and maintenance of Iraq's oil infrastructure.

2.1.2.1-Challenges Faced by US Corporations

US corporations faced significant challenges when trying to expand their business interests in Iraq. The security situation in Iraq was the most significant challenge, as the Iraq War and subsequent insurgency made it difficult for US corporations to operate in Iraq safely. Many corporations had to hire private security contractors to protect their personnel and assets.

Another challenge was the political instability in Iraq. The country's democratic government was struggling to establish its authority and faced significant challenges from various factions. The lack of a stable political environment made it difficult for US corporations to plan long-term investments in Iraq.

Furthermore, corruption was a significant issue in Iraq's business environment. US corporations had to navigate a complex web of Iraqi regulations and bureaucracy to secure contracts for reconstruction projects. The process was often opaque, and there were allegations of corruption and favoritism in the awarding of contracts.

2.1.2.2-political Instability and Security Concerns

One of the primary challenges faced by US corporations in Iraq after the invasion was the political instability and security concerns. The war had left Iraq politically divided and unstable, leading to an increase in violence and insurgency. The security situation in the country was such that corporations had to provide their security, which was an additional cost. This security cost had to be factored in by the corporations in their operations, leading to increased operational costs.

According to a report by the United Nations, Iraq was one of the most dangerous countries in the world for foreign workers in 2005 (Al-Hajj, 2014). This report highlights the severity of the security situation in Iraq and the challenges that US corporations faced.

2.1.2.3-Lack of Infrastructure

Another significant challenge faced by US corporations in Iraq after the invasion was the lack of infrastructure. The war had left the country's infrastructure in shambles, and the rebuilding process was slow. This lack of infrastructure made it difficult for corporations to transport goods and equipment, leading to increased operational costs.

According to a report by the Congressional Research Service, the lack of infrastructure was a significant challenge faced by US corporations in Iraq after the invasion (Tarnoff & Reese, 2008). The report notes that the lack of infrastructure made it difficult for corporations to transport goods and equipment, leading to increased operational costs.

2.1.2.4-Corruption

Corruption was another significant challenge faced by US corporations in Iraq after the invasion. The country was ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world by Transparency International (2019). The corruption made it difficult for corporations to operate in the country, as they had to navigate complex bureaucratic processes and deal with corrupt officials.

A report by the US Department of Defense highlights the impact of corruption on US corporations in Iraq (Department of Defense, 2018). The report notes that corruption led to delays in contract awards, cost overruns, and reduced efficiency.

2.1.2.5-Opportunities for US Corporations

Despite the challenges, US corporations found significant opportunities in Iraq's markets. The reconstruction projects in Iraq offered ample opportunities for US construction and energy companies to participate in the country's economic development. The US government's investment in Iraq's markets also paved the way for other US corporations to enter the country's markets.

In addition to the reconstruction projects, US corporations also found opportunities in Iraq's oil industry. Iraq's oil reserves are among the largest in the world, and US oil companies were eager to secure contracts for oil exploration and production in the country. However, the Iraqi government has been reluctant to allow foreign oil companies to enter the country's oil industry, and the competition for contracts has been intense.

2.1.2.6-Impact on the Iraqi Economy

While US corporations benefited from the post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Iraq, the impact on the Iraqi economy was mixed. The reconstruction efforts did result in the creation of jobs and the rebuilding of infrastructure, but they also had negative consequences. For example, the influx of US corporations and their employees led to a rise in prices for goods and services, which made it difficult for ordinary Iraqis to afford basic necessities (Mazzetti). Additionally, many Iraqis felt that the contracts awarded to US corporations were unfair and that local companies were being overlooked.

2.1.3-Profit-driven war economy

On May 26, 2003, L. Paul Bremer declared Iraq “open for business.” Four years on, business is booming, albeit not as the former head of the Coalition Provisional Authority intended. Iraqis find themselves at the center of a regional political economy transformed by war. Instability has generated skyrocketing oil prices, and as US attitudes to Arab investment have hardened in the wake of the September 11 attacks, investors from the oil-producing Gulf countries are seeking opportunities closer to home. This money, together with the resources being pumped in to prop up the US occupation, is fueling an orgy of speculation and elite consumption in the countries surrounding Iraq. The sheer volume of loose change jingling around the Middle East would be potentially destabilizing even if fighting did not persist in Bremer’s erstwhile domain (Christopher Parker, Pete Moore).

War and profit have always gone hand in hand. In Iraq, as well, a “war economy” is firmly rooted, yet it has gone largely unexamined in the stacks of books and articles dissecting Washington’s grandiose venture gone bad. Armed with ideological assumptions and economic quick fixes, US occupation officials pursued policies that, at a minimum, aggravated the severe social dislocation wrought by war, privatization and sanctions before 2003. Today, militias supporting or opposing the Iraq government—not the government itself—control import supply chains and, indeed, regulate whole sectors of the Iraqi economy. At the same time, the people who earned a living through the antecedent networks of the war economy are attacking the new US-sponsored political order. These insurgents include not only those “Iraqis who miss the privileged status they had under the regime of Saddam Hussein,” as President George W. Bush would have it, but also—indeed mostly—ordinary working people who are protecting livelihoods they built in the shadow of Baathist dictatorship. Countless other civilians are caught in the

crossfire as the struggle to make ends meet has become deeply politicized (Christopher Parker, Pete Moore).

Evidence of Iraq's war economy is fragmentary. Amman—arguably the city where the business of occupied Baghdad is really done—is a veritable rumor mill. Leads are difficult to follow and confirm, as the individuals involved are wary of admitting to war profiteering and economic data are uneven. But the fragments start to form a recognizable pattern when set in a comparative frame. The Iraqi case fits well within the large scholarly literature on the economics of civil war. Not all civil conflicts are the same, of course; some end quickly, while others endure. When available evidence on Iraq is compared with the lengthy civil wars in Lebanon from 1975–1991 and in Algeria in the 1990s, ominous parallels come into view. During those civil wars, much of the money to fund militias and state-sanctioned violence alike came from the control of external trade and the taxation of regions under militia or state control. These dynamics did not simply emerge in the chaos of war, but were grounded in longer trajectories of international involvement, state atrophy and grassroots political economy (Christopher Parker, Pete Moore).

The US project in Iraq, nothing less than a forced revolution, was more radical in its means than in its way of viewing the political world. And while today's deepening war economy certainly owes a great deal to the early zeal with which US officials sought to remake Iraq as a free marketeer's paradise, any eventual autopsy of the Bush administration's imperial fiasco needs to cut deeper than the blunders of Bremer and his subordinates to reveal the fundamental failures of political imagination that lay beneath (Christopher Parker, Pete Moore).

2.1.3.1-The Military-Industrial Complex

The military-industrial complex refers to the relationship between the military and defense contractors, who benefit financially from government contracts to produce military goods and services. In the Iraq War, private military contractors such as Blackwater, Halliburton, and KBR, among others, profited significantly. These companies were contracted to provide a range of services, including security, logistics, and infrastructure development.

Blackwater, now known as Academi, was one of the most controversial private military contractors involved in the Iraq War. The company provided security services to government officials and private individuals in Iraq, and its employees were involved in numerous incidents of violence against Iraqi civilians. In 2007, Blackwater contractors killed 17 Iraqi civilians in Baghdad's Nisour Square, leading to an international outcry. Despite the controversy, the company continued to receive government contracts, demonstrating the powerful influence of the military-industrial complex.

Another company that profited significantly from the Iraq War was Halliburton, where former US Vice President Dick Cheney served as CEO before assuming office. Halliburton subsidiary KBR was contracted to provide logistical support, including food, transportation, and housing, to US troops in Iraq. However, the company was plagued by allegations of corruption, including overcharging the government for services and awarding contracts to favored companies without proper competition. In 2009, KBR agreed to pay \$579 million to settle allegations of fraud and kickbacks in Iraq.

Also the military-industrial complex of the United States is a term that refers to the close relationship between the US military and the defense industry. This complex includes a vast network of defense contractors, research institutions, and government agencies that work together to produce and maintain the military's weapons and

technology. During the Iraq War, the military-industrial complex played a critical role in providing the necessary resources and support for the US military.

One of the most significant ways in which the military-industrial complex was involved in the Iraq War was through the provision of weapons and equipment. According to a report by the Congressional Research Service, the US spent more than \$800 billion on the Iraq War, with a significant portion of that money going towards military equipment and technology (Katzman, 2010). This spending led to a significant increase in profits for defense contractors such as Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Raytheon.

The Iraq War also provided an opportunity for defense contractors to develop and test new weapons and technology. According to a report by the National Bureau of Economic Research, the war in Iraq led to a significant increase in defense spending, which created a favorable environment for innovation in the defense industry (Griliches & Mairesse, 2008). This innovation, in turn, led to the development of new weapons and technology that could be used in future conflicts.

While the military-industrial complex played a significant role in the Iraq War, there were also other economic factors that influenced the conflict. One of the most significant economic factors was the global oil market. Iraq has some of the world's largest oil reserves, and control of these reserves was a key factor in the US decision to go to war. According to a report by the Council on Foreign Relations, the US sought to control Iraq's oil reserves to ensure a stable supply of oil for the US and its allies (Levy & Young, 2008).

Another economic factor that influenced the war was the desire to stimulate the US economy. The US was in the midst of an economic downturn when the war began, and the Bush administration saw the war as an opportunity to boost the economy. According

to a report by the Institute for Policy Studies, the war in Iraq contributed to a significant increase in federal debt, which had long-term consequences for the US economy (Collins & Hersh, 2009).

The Iraq War had a significant impact on the US economy, both in the short term and the long term. In the short term, the war led to a significant increase in government spending, which had a positive effect on certain sectors of the economy, such as defense contractors and construction companies. However, the war also led to a significant increase in federal debt, which had long-term consequences for the US economy.

According to a report by the National Priorities Project, the US spent more than \$2 trillion on the Iraq War when all costs, including long-term costs, are taken into account (Crawford, 2013). This spending had a significant impact on the US economy, contributing to a significant increase in federal debt and deficits. The increase in debt had a long-term impact on the US economy, leading to concerns about inflation, interest rates, and the overall health of the economy.

Furthermore, the war in Iraq also had a negative impact on the US's international trade relationships. Many countries around the world were critical of the US's decision to go to war, which led to tensions and strained relationships with key trading partners. This, in turn, had a negative impact on the US economy and contributed to a decline in exports and international investment.

2.1.3.2-The Cost of War

The Iraq War was one of the costliest conflicts in US history, with estimates of the total cost ranging from \$1.7 trillion to \$3 trillion. The vast majority of this cost was borne by US taxpayers, with the government borrowing heavily to fund the war effort. The human cost of the war was also immense, with estimates of Iraqi civilian deaths ranging from 185,000 to over 1 million.

The economic costs of the Iraq War can be broken down into several categories, including direct costs, indirect costs, and future costs. Direct costs refer to the expenses incurred during the war, including military operations, equipment, and personnel. Indirect costs refer to the long-term economic effects of the war, such as lost productivity and the impact on the economy. Future costs refer to the ongoing expenses associated with veterans' care and the maintenance of military equipment.

The direct costs of the Iraq War are estimated to be between \$1.7 trillion and \$2 trillion. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) estimated that the war cost \$1.7 trillion as of 2013, while a study by Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs estimated the total cost at over \$2 trillion. The costs were primarily driven by military operations, including the deployment of troops, equipment, and supplies. The CRS report found that the average monthly cost of the war was \$9.7 billion between 2003 and 2011 (Congressional Research Service 2013).

The indirect costs of the Iraq War are more difficult to measure, but they have been estimated to be significant. One study by Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government found that the total economic cost of the war could reach \$4 trillion, including indirect costs such as lost productivity and the impact on the economy. The study also found that the war had a negative effect on economic growth and job creation (Kennedy School of Government 2013).

The future costs of the Iraq War include ongoing expenses associated with veterans' care and the maintenance of military equipment. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimated in 2013 that the cost of providing care for veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars would total \$1.6 trillion over the next 40 years. The maintenance of military equipment also represents a significant ongoing cost, as the Department of Defense must replace and repair equipment damaged during the war (VA.gov).

2.2-Geopolitical motives for US imperialism in Iraq

While the official justification for the invasion was the alleged presence of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), the real motives for the war were much deeper and complex.

The location of Iraq in the heart of the Middle East has made it a strategically important country for centuries. Iraq is bordered by six countries: Iran to the east, Turkey to the north, Syria and Jordan to the west, and Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to the south. This makes Iraq a crossroads of civilizations, cultures, and interests.

Iraq's strategic location has made it a key player in regional politics and a potential threat to US interests. The US has always been wary of Iraq's influence in the region, especially its relationship with Iran. The US has also been concerned about Iraq's proximity to Israel and its potential to destabilize the region.

Another important motive for US imperialism in Iraq was the desire to establish a military presence in the region. The US has long been interested in maintaining a dominant military presence in the Middle East, which it views as a crucial part of its global strategy.

The US had already established military bases in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait before the invasion of Iraq. However, these bases were limited in their ability to project power in the region, and the US needed a more robust presence to counter potential threats.

By occupying Iraq, the US was able to establish a significant military presence in the heart of the Middle East. This allowed the US to project power across the region and respond quickly to any potential threats. Additionally, the occupation of Iraq allowed the US to control the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf, which is essential to the global economy.

2.2.1-Strategic location of Iraq in the Middle East

The Middle East is a region of geopolitical importance due to its vast oil reserves, strategic location, and complex political dynamics. Among the countries in the region, Iraq has a unique location that makes it a critical player in regional politics. This chapter will explore the strategic location of Iraq in the Middle East and its significance to the 2003 invasion by the US.

The 2003 invasion of Iraq by the US was motivated by various factors, including Iraq's alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction, its support for terrorist organizations, and its perceived threat to regional and global security. However, Iraq's strategic location was also a critical factor in the decision to invade.

First, Iraq's location made it a strategic base for US military operations in the Middle East. The US had established military bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait after the Gulf War, but these bases were not sufficient for the US's long-term strategic interests in the region. Iraq's central location and large landmass made it an ideal location for US military bases and operations.

Second, Iraq's location made it a critical transit point for oil exports from the Gulf region. With the US's increasing dependence on oil imports from the Middle East, securing a stable supply of oil became a crucial strategic objective. By invading Iraq, the US aimed to establish a stable, pro-US government that would ensure the continued flow of oil exports from the region.

Third, Iraq's location made it a critical player in regional politics, with the potential to influence the balance of power in the Middle East. By invading Iraq, the US sought to establish a democratic government that would act as a counterbalance to other regional powers, such as Iran and Syria. This would, in turn, help the US advance its broader strategic interests in the region, such as promoting peace, stability, and democracy.

Another One of the main reasons why Iraq was an important location during the invasion period was its vast oil reserves. According to the US Energy Information Administration, Iraq has the fifth-largest proven oil reserves in the world, making it an important source of energy for the global economy (EIA). The invasion of Iraq was in part motivated by a desire to secure access to these reserves, as well as to prevent other countries from gaining control over them. In a speech to the American Enterprise Institute in 2003, Vice President Dick Cheney stated that "Iraq possesses the world's second-largest proven oil reserves, with roughly 112 billion barrels. That's 10% of the world's known oil reserves. And if we have to go to war to secure our access to that oil, then we should do it" (Cheney).

Another reason why Iraq was an important location during the invasion period was its strategic location in the Middle East. Iraq is situated in a region that has long been of geopolitical importance due to its proximity to major shipping lanes and its position as a crossroads between Asia, Europe, and Africa. By occupying Iraq, the United States was able to establish a military presence in the heart of the Middle East, which allowed it to project power and influence throughout the region. In a speech to the nation in 2003, President George W. Bush stated that "the liberation of Iraq is a crucial advance in the campaign against terror. We have removed an ally of al Qaeda, and cut off a source of terrorist funding. And this much is certain: No terrorist network will gain weapons of mass destruction from the Iraqi regime, because the regime is no more" (Bush).

The invasion of Iraq was also significant because it marked a major shift in US foreign policy. Prior to the invasion, the United States had pursued a policy of containment towards Iraq, which involved imposing economic sanctions and limiting Iraq's ability to develop weapons of mass destruction. However, after the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration began to adopt a more aggressive approach towards countries that were perceived as threats to US national security. In a speech to the United Nations in

2002, President Bush stated that "the United States will not stand by and watch the world's most dangerous regimes develop weapons of mass destruction. We will not permit terrorists and dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most deadly weapons" (Bush).

The invasion of Iraq was also significant because of the human cost of the conflict. According to the Iraq Body Count project, over 180,000 civilians were killed as a result of the conflict between 2003 and 2020 (Iraq Body Count). In addition to the loss of life, the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq resulted in the displacement of millions of people, the destruction of infrastructure, and the destabilization of the region. The long-term effects of the invasion on Iraq and the wider Middle East are still being felt today.

2.2.2-Desire to establish a permanent military presence in the region

The US's desire for a permanent military presence in the Middle East region can be traced back to the early 20th century when the discovery of oil in the region created significant strategic and economic interests for the US. The US became increasingly involved in the region during the Cold War era, with the establishment of military bases and alliances with countries such as Saudi Arabia and Israel. The US's presence in the region continued to grow throughout the 1990s, with the Gulf War and subsequent sanctions on Iraq leading to an increased military presence in the region (Chomsky, Noam).

In the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, the US's interest in the Middle East region became even more pronounced. The attacks were carried out by terrorists affiliated with Al Qaeda, a group that had been operating in the region for years. The US saw the Middle East region as a hotbed of terrorism and instability and believed that a permanent military presence in the region would help combat these threats (Gelvin, James L).

The 2003 invasion of Iraq provided the US with a significant opportunity to establish a permanent military presence in the region. While the official justification for the invasion was the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, it is widely believed that the desire for a permanent military presence in the region was a significant factor in the decision to go to war (Ricks, Thomas E. Fiasco).

One of the key arguments used to justify the invasion was the need to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Saddam was seen as a destabilizing force in the region and a supporter of terrorism. Removing him from power would not only eliminate a potential threat but would also create an opportunity to establish a more stable and democratic government in Iraq (Cordesman, Anthony H).

The US's desire for a permanent military presence in the region was evident in the way the invasion was carried out. The US military quickly established a significant presence in Iraq, with bases and outposts scattered throughout the country. The US also began constructing long-term facilities, such as the massive embassy complex in Baghdad, which is one of the largest in the world (Lynch, Marc).

The US's long-term plans for Iraq were further evident in the establishment of the Strategic Framework Agreement in 2008. This agreement formalized the US's commitment to maintaining a long-term military presence in Iraq, with the US agreeing to provide military training and assistance to the Iraqi government (Pape, Robert A).

The US's desire for a permanent military presence in the Middle East region has been criticized by many, both in the US and abroad. Critics argue that the US's military presence in the region has destabilized the region and fueled anti-American sentiment. They also argue that the US's efforts to establish a permanent military presence in the region have been costly and have had a negative impact on the US economy (Walt, Stephen M).

The U.S. government's desire to establish a permanent military presence in Iraq dates back to the 1991 Gulf War. In the aftermath of the war, the U.S. established no-fly zones over Iraq, which were enforced by U.S. and British aircraft. According to a report by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), these no-fly zones were used to protect the Kurds in northern Iraq and the Shiites in southern Iraq from Saddam Hussein's regime, but they also served to establish a military presence in the country (Katzman, 2003). The report also notes that the U.S. began to build military bases in the region during this time, including in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

After the September 11 attacks in 2001, the U.S. government intensified its efforts to establish a permanent military presence in the Middle East, citing the need to combat terrorism. According to a report by the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), the U.S. began to negotiate with the governments of the Gulf States, including Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, to establish permanent military bases in the region (Scahill, 2005). The report also notes that the U.S. began to deploy troops to these countries in large numbers, including 12,000 troops in Kuwait and 3,000 troops in Qatar.

During the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the U.S. government denied that it had any plans to establish a permanent military presence in the country. However, evidence suggests otherwise. According to a report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the U.S. military began to build large military bases in Iraq soon after the invasion, including Camp Victory near Baghdad, which had a capacity of 20,000 troops (O'Hanlon & Kagan, 2006). The report notes that these bases were designed to be permanent and that they were built with concrete and steel, rather than the more temporary materials used in previous conflicts.

Furthermore, a leaked memo from the U.S. State Department in 2004 revealed that the U.S. government had plans to establish a permanent military presence in Iraq. The

memo, which was obtained by the New York Times, outlined the U.S. government's objectives in Iraq, including "securing a lasting military presence in the country" (Risen, 2006). The memo also stated that the U.S. would seek to control Iraq's oil reserves and use the country as a base for future military operations in the region.

In 2008, the U.S. government signed the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) with the Iraqi government, which allowed for a continued U.S. military presence in Iraq after the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops. According to a report by the Congressional Research Service, the SFA allowed for the U.S. to maintain a military presence in Iraq for the purpose of "providing security assistance, training, and equipping the Iraqi security forces" (Katzman, 2012). The report notes that the U.S. also negotiated a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the Iraqi government, which granted U.S. troops immunity from prosecution under Iraqi law.

Opposition to the U.S. government's desire to establish a permanent military presence in Iraq has been widespread, both within Iraq and internationally. Many Iraqis viewed the U.S. military presence as an occupation and demanded the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from the country. The U.S. military's presence in Iraq also fueled anti-American sentiment in the region and provided a recruitment tool for terrorist organizations (Scahill, J. 2005).

Internationally, the U.S. government's desire to establish a permanent military presence in Iraq was criticized by many countries, including France, Germany, and Russia. These countries argued that the invasion of Iraq was illegal and that the U.S. had no right to establish a permanent military presence in the country without the consent of the Iraqi government (Katzman, K).

In conclusion, the evidence suggests that the U.S. government had a desire to establish a permanent military presence in Iraq, both before and during the 2003 invasion.

The U.S. military's constructions of large permanent military bases in Iraq as well as the U.S. government's negotiation of the SFA and SOFA with the Iraqi government indicate a long-term commitment to maintaining a military presence in the country. However, opposition to a permanent military presence in Iraq has been significant, both within Iraq and internationally. The debate over the U.S. military's presence in Iraq is likely to continue for years to come.

2.3-Ideological motives for US imperialism in Iraq

While there were various reasons given for the invasion, including the alleged presence of weapons of mass destruction and the need to remove a dictator who was a threat to regional stability, there were also ideological motives that drove US imperialism in Iraq.

One of the key ideological motives for US imperialism in Iraq was the belief in American exceptionalism and the spread of democracy. According to this view, the US had a moral obligation to spread its values and way of life to other nations, particularly those that were deemed to be repressive or undemocratic. This was reflected in President George W. Bush's speeches in the run-up to the invasion, in which he repeatedly emphasized the importance of democracy and freedom:

"The United States of America is committed to the worldwide elimination of tyranny and oppression...[we] will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer...We go forward with complete confidence in the eventual triumph of freedom...The people of Iraq are capable of governing themselves" (Bush, 2003).

This ideological motive was also reflected in the "Bush Doctrine," which stated that the US had the right to take pre-emptive military action against perceived threats to

its national security, including those posed by "rogue states" that supported terrorism or sought weapons of mass destruction (National Security Strategy of the United States, 2002).

Another ideological motive for US imperialism in Iraq was the belief in the benefits of free-market capitalism and globalization. This view held that the US had a responsibility to promote economic growth and development in other countries by opening up markets and encouraging foreign investment. This was reflected in the policies pursued by the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) that governed Iraq after the invasion, which included privatizing state-owned enterprises, deregulating markets, and promoting foreign investment (Roberts, 2006).

However, critics of US imperialism in Iraq argued that these ideological motives were little more than a smokescreen for the pursuit of US economic and geopolitical interests. They pointed to the fact that US companies such as Halliburton and Bechtel secured lucrative contracts for the reconstruction of Iraq, and that the US sought to control Iraq's oil resources, as evidence that the invasion was driven by economic motives rather than ideological ones (Chomsky, 2003).

2.3.1 Neoconservative vision of spreading democracy and American values

The early 2000s were marked by the rise of the neoconservative movement in the United States, which had a vision of spreading democracy and American values to the Middle East. The neoconservatives believed that the traditional approach of containing the threats posed by authoritarian regimes in the region was no longer sufficient and that the only way to ensure American security was to transform the Middle East into a democratic and free region. This chapter will explore the neoconservative vision of spreading democracy and American values in the Middle East in the early 2000s and its consequences. The neoconservative vision of spreading democracy and American values

in the Middle East was articulated in the National Security Strategy of the United States, which was published in September 2002. The document stated that "the United States must champion aspirations for human dignity and freedom around the world" and that "the best way to enhance freedom in the Middle East is to build a world-wide coalition of democratic states" (The White House, 2002). The document further argued that "the gravest danger our Nation faces lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology" and that "the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively" to defend its security (The White House, 2002).

One of the leading neoconservative thinkers at the time was Paul Wolfowitz, who served as the Deputy Secretary of Defense in the George W. Bush administration. In a speech he gave in 2003, Wolfowitz argued that "Iraq is the test case for whether the vision of a free and democratic Middle East can be realized" and that "if we're successful in Iraq, we will have dealt a serious blow to the terrorists and tyrants who threaten our security and the security of our friends and allies in the region" (Wolfowitz, 2003).

Another influential neoconservative thinker was William Kristol, the editor of *The Weekly Standard*. In an article he wrote in 2002, Kristol argued that "the danger of radical Islamic terrorism can only be overcome by a democratic revolution in the Arab and Muslim world" and that "America has a moral obligation to promote democracy, human rights, and freedom in the Middle East" (Kristol, 2002).

The neoconservative vision of spreading democracy and American values in the Middle East had significant consequences. The invasion of Iraq in 2003, which was justified in part by the neoconservative belief that spreading democracy to the Middle East was necessary for American security, resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and thousands of American soldiers.

The neoconservative vision of spreading democracy and American values in Iraq was a driving force behind the United States' invasion of the country in 2003. Neoconservatives believed that by toppling Saddam Hussein's regime and promoting democracy in the Middle East, the United States could spread its values and create a more stable, democratic region.

The roots of this vision can be traced back to the 1990s, when a group of neoconservative intellectuals, including Paul Wolfowitz and William Kristol, formed the Project for the New American Century (PNAC). The group argued that the United States should use its military and economic power to promote American values and interests around the world, particularly in the Middle East.

In a letter to President Bill Clinton in 1998, the PNAC called for the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime and the promotion of democracy in Iraq. The letter stated that "the aim of American foreign policy should be to preserve and extend an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity, and our principles."

The neoconservative vision gained momentum after the 9/11 attacks, when President George W. Bush declared a "war on terror." In his 2002 State of the Union address, Bush declared Iraq to be part of an "axis of evil" and argued that the country possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) that posed a threat to the United States and its allies.

The case for war in Iraq was based largely on the belief that Saddam Hussein's regime posed a threat to American security and that the United States had a moral obligation to promote democracy in the region. In a speech at the American Enterprise Institute in 2003, Vice President Dick Cheney argued that the United States had a responsibility to "defend the peace against threats from terrorists and tyrants."

The neoconservative vision of spreading democracy and American values in Iraq was not without its critics, however. Many argued that the United States was not prepared for the challenges of post-war Iraq and that the war had destabilized the region and created a breeding ground for terrorism.

In a 2004 essay for *Foreign Affairs*, neoconservative writer Robert Kagan argued that the United States had made mistakes in Iraq but that the vision of promoting democracy and American values remained valid. Kagan wrote that "the promotion of democracy abroad is not an adjunct to American foreign policy; it is the core of American foreign policy."

2.3.2-Religious motivations of key policymakers

Religious motives played a significant role in the US invasion of Iraq. One of the primary justifications for the war was the belief that Saddam Hussein was a threat to Israel, a key ally of the United States. This view was influenced by the Christian Zionist movement, which believes that the establishment of Israel is a fulfillment of biblical prophecy and that the protection of Israel is a religious obligation. As Michael Lerner notes in his book *Jewish Renewal: A Path to Healing and Transformation*, "Many Christian Zionists...believe that the invasion of Iraq was part of God's plan to protect Israel and advance the cause of biblical prophecy" (Lerner 146).

Another religious motivation for the invasion was the idea of spreading democracy and freedom in the Middle East. This view was influenced by the neoconservative movement, which believes that the United States has a moral obligation to promote democracy and human rights around the world. As Michael Gerson notes in his article "The Theology of Democracy," "Neo-conservatism is a movement with roots in the human rights tradition of the 1970s and 1980s, and in the theological critique of Soviet communism" (Gerson). According to this view, the promotion of democracy is not only a political goal but also a

religious one, as it aligns with the biblical concept of human dignity and the value of individual freedom.

The religious motivation behind the US invasion of Iraq has been criticized by many scholars and activists. Some argue that it was a violation of international law and the principles of just war theory. Others argue that it was a form of cultural imperialism, in which the United States sought to impose its values and beliefs on Iraq. As Peter Van Buren notes in his book *We Meant Well: How I Helped Lose the Battle for the Hearts and Minds of the Iraqi People*, "The Iraq War was, in part, a religious war, a clash of civilizations. We invaded Iraq not just to topple Saddam Hussein but also to change the Islamic world" (Van Buren 147).

One of the most prominent examples of the religious motivations behind the Iraq invasion is the role played by evangelical Christians in the Bush administration. Several key policymakers, including President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, were known for their strong religious beliefs and close ties to the evangelical Christian community. In his book *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*, Jim Wallis argues that "for many members of the Bush administration, the war in Iraq was not simply a geopolitical strategy, but a holy crusade against evil" (Wallis, 2005, p.124). Wallis cites numerous statements by Bush and other administration officials that frame the Iraq invasion as a moral imperative rooted in their Christian faith.

Another source that supports the argument that religious motivations played a role in the Iraq invasion is a 2003 article by Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. In the article, Land argues that "the liberation of Iraq is a moral issue" and that "the Christian community must stand behind the President and the coalition forces in their efforts to bring freedom to Iraq" (Land, 2003). Land cites biblical passages and theological arguments to justify his

support for the war and asserts that "Christians have a responsibility to support the government when it goes to war against evil."

In addition to evangelical Christians, other religious groups also played a role in shaping US foreign policy towards Iraq. For example, the neoconservative movement, which was influential in the Bush administration's foreign policy, was largely composed of Jewish intellectuals who saw the Iraq invasion as a way to promote democracy and security in the Middle East. While their motivations were not explicitly religious, many of these neoconservatives were guided by a strong sense of moral purpose and a belief in the need to spread Western values and institutions around the world (Fukuyama, 2006).

Critics of the argument that religious motivations played a role in the Iraq invasion point out that there were numerous other factors at play, including concerns over weapons of mass destruction, the fight against terrorism, and the desire to promote democracy and human rights. While these factors certainly played a role in shaping US foreign policy towards Iraq, it is clear that religious motivations also played a significant role, particularly among key policymakers in the Bush administration.

The Bush administration, which was responsible for initiating the Iraq invasion, had several policymakers who were known for their strong religious beliefs and affiliations. The most prominent among them were President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney. Both Bush and Cheney were known for their conservative Christian beliefs and had strong ties to various evangelical organizations in the US.

According to some scholars, Bush's religious convictions played a significant role in his decision to invade Iraq. In his book, "Bush at War," journalist Bob Woodward quotes Bush as saying, "I believe God wants me to be president" (Woodward 32). This statement suggests that Bush's sense of divine calling and mission may have influenced his decision to go to war with Iraq. Additionally, Bush's belief in the concept of a "just

war," which is a traditional Christian doctrine, may have also influenced his decision. According to this doctrine, a war is justified if it meets certain moral criteria, such as defending innocent life and promoting peace.

Similarly, Cheney's religious views have also been cited as a factor that contributed to the Iraq invasion. According to journalist Ron Suskind, Cheney believed that the US was engaged in a cosmic struggle between good and evil, and that the Iraq invasion was necessary to protect America from the forces of darkness (Suskind 312). Cheney's association with various conservative Christian organizations, such as the Fellowship Foundation, also suggests that his religious beliefs may have played a role in his decision-making process.

Another key policymaker who was known for his religious beliefs was Paul Wolfowitz, who served as the Deputy Secretary of Defense in the Bush administration. Wolfowitz was an Orthodox Jew and had close ties to the neoconservative movement in the US. According to journalist James Mann, Wolfowitz's support for the Iraq invasion was based on his belief that the US had a moral obligation to promote democracy and freedom in the Middle East (Mann 187).

Other policymakers who were involved in the Iraq invasion, such as Donald Rumsfeld and John Ashcroft, were also known for their conservative Christian beliefs, although their religious motivations for supporting the war are less well documented.

In conclusion, the religious motivations of policymakers in the US were an important factor in shaping US foreign policy towards Iraq and played a significant role in the decision to invade in 2003. Evangelical Christians, in particular, were key players in this process, with many seeing the invasion as a moral imperative rooted in their Christian faith. While other factors also played a role, it is clear that religious motivations cannot be ignored as a significant influence on US foreign policy towards Iraq.

Conclusion

The motives behind US imperialism in Iraq are complex and multifaceted. Energy security, national security concerns, the promotion of democracy, and geopolitical interests all played a role in shaping the US government's decision to intervene militarily. While some argue that these motives were driven by noble intentions, others question the underlying motivations and perceive them as a quest for dominance. At the heart of the debate lie access to resources, and the pursuit of strategic interests. As the Middle East especially Iraq, with its vast reserves of oil, has long been a focal point for major global powers. As the world's leading consumer of oil, the United States has had a vested interest in ensuring a stable flow of energy resources to sustain its domestic and economic needs. Also the underlying motive frequently discussed is the desire to reshape the political landscape in the Middle East. The United States aimed to establish a democratic regime in Iraq, with the broader objective of promoting democracy throughout the region. By replacing Hussein's authoritarian rule with a democratic government, the US hoped to foster stability, peace, and Western-style governance in the Middle East in which they can control as they see fit.

Chapter 3:U.S. Imperialism in Iraq

Introduction

The United States' involvement in Iraq has been marked by a complex history of imperialism and its consequences. The most significant episodes in this narrative is the imposition of economic sanctions on Iraq in 1990, these sanctions, enforced by the United Nations Security Council with the support of the U.S., had far-reaching implications for the Iraqi population, leaving an indelible mark on the country's political, social, and economic landscape. The involvement extended to military aggression. What initially began as a mission to dismantle Saddam Hussein's alleged weapons of mass destruction quickly morphed into a protracted conflict marked by deep-rooted controversies and geopolitical implications. This military aggression, widely perceived as an embodiment of US imperialism. This aggression had a lot of criticism. This chapter will focus on the imperialistic practices by the US towards Iraq including the sanctions, military aggression and the criticism that the United States received.

3.1-Sanctions

The United States imposed several rounds of sanctions against Iraq in the 1990s. These sanctions were a result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, which led to the first Gulf War. The sanctions were intended to force Iraq to comply with United Nations resolutions that demanded the country's disarmament and the return of Kuwaiti territory. The sanctions had severe economic consequences for Iraq and were enforced through a combination of diplomatic pressure, trade restrictions, and military action.

In August 1990, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 661, which imposed comprehensive economic sanctions on Iraq. The resolution prohibited all trade and financial transactions with Iraq, with the exception of humanitarian supplies. The United States played a leading role in pushing for the adoption of this resolution, and it implemented the sanctions with great vigor (Alnasrawi, Abbas).

The sanctions aimed to disarm Iraq of WMD and to prevent Saddam Hussein's regime from acquiring and producing such weapons. The sanctions prohibited Iraq from importing or exporting anything except for food and medicine, and they froze Iraqi assets overseas. The US played a significant role in enforcing the sanctions, which included a naval blockade of Iraq's ports to prevent any illegal imports or exports. In addition to the sanctions, the UN established the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) to oversee the disarmament of Iraq's WMD programs.

The UNSCOM was responsible for conducting inspections in Iraq to ensure that the country was complying with the disarmament requirements. The inspections were often met with resistance and obstruction by the Iraqi regime, which led to several diplomatic crises and military confrontations between Iraq and the US-led coalition. The inspections also led to a series of confrontations between Iraq and the UNSCOM inspectors, with Iraq accusing the inspectors of espionage and the US of using the inspections to gather intelligence on Iraq (Khalidi, Rashid).

The United States implemented the sanctions through several mechanisms. One was the imposition of an embargo on Iraqi oil exports, which deprived Iraq of its primary source of foreign exchange. The United States also blocked Iraq's access to international financial markets, making it difficult for the country to finance imports or pay off its debts.

In addition, the United States established a sanctions enforcement regime that was aimed at preventing the smuggling of prohibited goods into Iraq. The regime included maritime interdiction operations in the Persian Gulf, where the US Navy stopped and searched vessels suspected of carrying contraband. The US also established a no-fly zone over Iraq, which was enforced by US and British aircraft. The no-fly zone prevented Iraq

from using its air force to attack Kurdish and Shiite rebels in the north and south of the country.

3.1.1-Impact of Sanctions on Iraq's Economy and Society

The US sanctions had a crippling effect on Iraq's economy, with devastating consequences for its people. According to a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the sanctions caused a decline in Iraq's GDP by 50% and resulted in the loss of over \$200 billion in oil revenue. The sanctions also disrupted the country's infrastructure, including its healthcare system, water supply, and sanitation facilities, leading to a significant deterioration in the quality of life for Iraqis.

The sanctions on Iraq had a profound impact on the country's oil industry, which was the backbone of its economy. Iraq, which had been exporting 3.5 million barrels of oil per day before the sanctions, was only able to export a fraction of that amount during the 1990s. The sanctions prevented Iraq from importing spare parts and technology necessary for maintaining and repairing its oil infrastructure, leading to a significant decline in oil production. This, in turn, had a ripple effect on other sectors of the economy, as oil exports constituted over 90% of the country's revenue.

The economic sanctions imposed on Iraq during the 1990s had a significant human cost, with millions of Iraqis suffering from malnutrition, disease, and poverty. According to the UNDP, the sanctions led to a significant increase in infant mortality rates, with an estimated 500,000 children dying as a result of malnutrition and preventable diseases. The sanctions also had a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups such as women and children, who were often the most affected by the deteriorating economic and social conditions.

One clear effect is the impact of the ongoing, widespread malnutrition that took place throughout the sanction's regime. In 1993, the UN's World Food Program and the

Food and Agriculture Organization reported that, “notwithstanding the justification for their imposition, the sanctions have caused persistent deprivation, severe hunger and malnutrition for a vast majority of the Iraqi population, particularly the vulnerable groups—children under five, expectant /nursing women, widows, orphans, the sick, the elderly and disabled.” In 1997, Kofi Annan noted that 31 percent of children under the age of five suffered from malnutrition. In 2000, a UNICEF official informed the 661 Committee that 25 percent of children in south and central governorates suffered from chronic malnutrition, which was often irreversible, and 9 percent from acute malnutrition(Kofi Annan). Food insecurity and widespread malnutrition continued throughout the 13 years of sanctions. The effects of ongoing malnutrition, particularly among children, are well known and include long-term health problems and cognitive deficits.

The enduring effects of the sanctions are also visible in less obvious ways. One of the explicit objectives of the sanctions, and certainly one of their achievements, was the bankrupting of the state. While this result was often framed as “denying Saddam access to funds,” in fact the impact was far broader. With the onset of hyperinflation, and the lack of income from oil sales, the state was unable to pay livable salaries. What followed was a massive loss of staffing throughout critical government institutions. Huge numbers of engineers, doctors, teachers and civil servants left their positions, and took up driving taxis or odd jobs to make ends meet. For example, 40,000 teachers left their jobs over the course of the 1990s, and the state filled in the gaps by hiring less-qualified teachers. Prior to 1990, teachers had three to five years of training after secondary school; by the end of the 1990s, 20 percent had only one year of training before starting to teach. At the same time, the expertise to manage the educational system eroded: 15 percent of planning personnel at the national level left their jobs; 22 percent at the regional level left. As a

result, the Ministry of Education used school teachers with no training in management to plan and direct educational operations.

At a time when ingenuity was badly needed to run the electricity facilities and water treatment plants without the necessary parts and equipment, the number of qualified technicians plummeted. As the most experienced professionals left their jobs, or left the country, they were replaced not only by fewer people, but by those with far less experience. Even after the sanctions were lifted, while new hires could be made, what could not be replaced was the level of experience and institutional memory. Prior to 1990, Iraqi doctors, scientists, diplomats and archaeologists routinely obtained advanced degrees in Europe and the United States and circulated at the leading conferences in their fields. What we see now is a population with far lower levels of literacy, far fewer people with professional competence and professionals who are far less cosmopolitan. Now it is common to hear that university students are rarely fluent enough in English to read textbooks or research materials published in the United States or Europe. An Iraqi living in the United States told me that when he visited Iraq in the 1980s and early 1990s, his family members would sometimes ask his help in translating a document written in English. Now, he said, when he returns to Iraq, the level of basic literacy has deteriorated so profoundly that he is asked to help friends and family read documents in Arabic.

The deep, human damage that followed the sanctions was foreseeable, and indeed, was foreseen. In 1999, Anupama Rao Singh, the head of UNICEF in Iraq, met with US Congressional staff on a fact-finding mission to Iraq. In their report, they wrote: “She urged the delegation to look at the situation facing children now, and how these economic problems caused by sanctions will have a major impact on their future. She pointed to examples of civil unrest in Africa and elsewhere, usually caused by disaffected youth with no hope of education, job, or a future. There is just such a generation of Iraqis

growing up now, she said, with no hope, no connection to the outside world, isolated. And that will be very dangerous.”

3.1.2-Controversy Surrounding the Effectiveness of Sanctions

Critics of the sanctions argue that they failed to achieve their intended goals and caused immense suffering for the Iraqi people. According to the United Nations, the sanctions resulted in the deaths of an estimated 500,000 children due to malnutrition and lack of medical supplies. The sanctions also had a devastating impact on Iraq's economy, leading to widespread poverty and unemployment.

Proponents of the sanctions, on the other hand, argue that they were effective in limiting Iraq's military capabilities and preventing Saddam Hussein's regime from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. They point to the fact that Iraq was unable to rebuild its military after the Gulf War and that the country was eventually forced to comply with UN resolutions(Amnesty International).

However, there is evidence to suggest that Saddam Hussein's regime was able to evade the sanctions through smuggling and illegal trade. The Oil-for-Food program, which allowed Iraq to sell oil in exchange for food and medicine, was also criticized for being ineffective and plagued by corruption.

The Iraq sanctions created legacy as well: a template for doing terrible and indiscriminate harm, by economic means, with little accountability. The United States imposes sanctions on more countries than all other nations or international institutions combined. Even when the United States acts unilaterally, the sanctions may effectively exclude a target country from much of the international banking system, or from the world's largest market. When the United States blacklists individuals or companies, the impact can be far reaching; when the United States blacklists government officials, national shipping lines or a national oil company, the impact can go well beyond the “bad

actor” who is the ostensible target. When the United States undermines a country’s access to fuel, to major banks and insurers, to shipping companies or in other ways compromises a country’s imports and exports generally, the damage to the economy can be tremendous. US sanctions routinely involve all of these practices.

Rep Ilhan Omar introduced the Congressional Oversight of Sanctions Act, intended to give Congress a greater role when the executive branch imposes sanctions regimes under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). Under IEEPA, the president is given broad powers to act in times of national emergency. As the bill notes, however, the “emergencies” declared since 2000 have, on average, lasted over a decade each. The bill includes a safe harbor provision, requiring sanctions regimes to exempt goods related to civilian healthcare facilities, water infrastructure, civilian energy infrastructure and primary and secondary schools. It also calls for reports on the anticipated humanitarian impact of measures such as sanctions.

Certainly, this is a good start: if sanctions are to do less harm to vulnerable populations, it begins with accountability, by means of oversight and monitoring. But at the same time, the US Congress does not itself have a particularly good track record in attending to the humanitarian consequences of the sanctions regimes it establishes and maintains. The statutes that tightened the sanctions on Cuba in the 1990s, which are still in effect today, compromise Cuba’s access to shipping, penalize countries that import goods from Cuba, target Cuba’s major industries and exports and penalize banks that handle Cuba’s financial transactions—measures of vast scope, restricting and punishing not only US nationals, but foreign banks, foreign shipping companies and foreign manufacturers. Congress’ sanctions on Cuba have been almost universally condemned each year by the United Nations General Assembly, as violations of international commercial law and international humanitarian law. But these measures remain in place; and Congress shows no interest in reversing them(Weissman, Stephen R).

The standard narrative about the Iraq sanctions is that they were well-intentioned, with unfortunate and unforeseeable consequences for infants and children, women, the elderly, the poor; that the Security Council committee charged with their oversight did whatever was possible to mitigate those unfortunate consequences; that “smart sanctions” were introduced out of concern for Iraq’s vulnerable populations; and in any case, that was all in the past, and no one does that sort of thing any more. But the experience of the sanctions on Iraq is not at all in the past. We see the enduring effects of the sanctions on Iraqis today. Moreover, we see the cruel, devastating logic and strategy of the Iraq case in contemporary sanctions regimes. Any rethinking of US policy toward the Middle East must consider the legacies of the Iraq sanctions regime: it is not enough to express regret and vague remorse after the fact. As long as there is no independent monitoring, and a credible structure of accountability, to ensure that US measures abide by international law—particularly international humanitarian law—the tragedies will continue to take place (international Committee of the Red Cross, 1999).

3.2-Military aggression

In March 2003, U.S. forces invaded Iraq vowing to destroy Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and end the dictatorial rule of Saddam Hussein. When WMD intelligence proved illusory and a violent insurgency arose, the war lost public support. Saddam was captured, tried, and hanged and democratic elections were held. In the years since, there have been over 4,700 U.S. and allied troop deaths, and more than one hundred thousand Iraqi civilians have been killed. Meanwhile, questions linger over Iraq’s fractious political situation.

Hostilities began about 90 minutes after the U.S.-imposed deadline for Saddam Hussein to leave Iraq or face war passed. The first targets, which Bush said were “of military importance,” were hit with Tomahawk cruise missiles from U.S. fighter-bombers

and warships stationed in the Persian Gulf. In response to the attacks, Republic of Iraq radio in Baghdad announced, “the evil ones, the enemies of God, the homeland and humanity, have committed the stupidity of aggression against our homeland and people.”

Though Saddam Hussein had declared in early March 2003 that, “it is without doubt that the faithful will be victorious against aggression,” he went into hiding soon after the American invasion, speaking to his people only through an occasional audiotape. Coalition forces were able to topple his regime and capture Iraq’s major cities in just three weeks, sustaining few casualties. President Bush declared the end of major combat operations on May 1, 2003. Despite the defeat of conventional military forces in Iraq, an insurgency has continued an intense guerrilla war in the nation in the years since military victory was announced, resulting in thousands of coalition military, insurgent and civilian deaths(BBC).

After an intense manhunt, U.S. soldiers found Saddam Hussein hiding in a six-to-eight-foot deep hole, nine miles outside his hometown of Tikrit. He did not resist and was uninjured during the arrest. A soldier at the scene described him as “a man resigned to his fate.” Hussein was arrested and began trial for crimes against his people, including mass killings, in October 2005.

Following the collapse of the Ba’athist regime, Iraq’s major cities erupted in a wave of looting that was directed mostly at government offices and other public institutions, and there were severe outbreaks of violence—both common criminal violence and acts of reprisal against the former ruling clique. Restoring law and order was one of the most arduous tasks for the occupying forces, one that was exacerbated by continued attacks against occupying troops that soon developed into full-scale guerrilla warfare; increasingly, the conflict came to be identified as a civil war, although the Bush administration generally avoided using that term and instead preferred the label “sectarian

violence.” Coalition casualties had been light in the initial 2003 combat, with about 150 deaths by May 1. However, deaths of U.S. troops soared thereafter, reaching some 1,000 by the time of the U.S. presidential election in November 2004 and surpassing 3,000 in early 2007; the first and second battles of Fallujah were especially intense. In addition, several hundred soldiers from other coalition countries have been killed. The number of Iraqis who died during the conflict is uncertain. One estimate made in late 2006 put the total at more than 650,000 between the U.S.-led invasion and October 2006, but many other reported estimates put the figures for the same period at about 40,000 to 50,000.

After 35 years of Ba‘athist rule that included three major wars and a dozen years of economic sanctions, the economy was in shambles and only slowly began to recover. Moreover, the country remained saddled with a ponderous debt that vastly exceeded its annual gross domestic product, and oil production—the country’s single greatest source of revenue—was badly hobbled. The continuing guerrilla assaults on occupying forces and leaders of the new Iraqi government in the years after the war only compounded the difficulty of rebuilding Iraq(Council on Foreign Relations).

In the Shi‘i regions of southern Iraq, many of the local religious leaders (ayatollahs) who had fled Saddam’s regime returned to the country, and Shi‘is from throughout the world were able to resume the pilgrimage to the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala that had been banned under Saddam. Throughout the country Iraqis began the painful task of seeking loved ones who had fallen victim to the former regime; mass graves, the result of numerous government pogroms over the years, yielded thousands of victims. The sectarian violence that engulfed the country caused enormous chaos, with brutal killings by rival Shi‘i and Sunni militias. One such Shi‘i militia group, the Mahdi Army, formed by cleric Muqtadā al-Şadr in the summer of 2003, was particularly deadly in its battle against Sunnis and U.S. and Iraqi forces and was considered a major destabilizing force in the country.

Unlike the common consent reached in the Persian Gulf War, no broad coalition was assembled to remove Saddam and his Ba'ath Party from power. Although some European leaders voiced their conditional support for the war and none regretted the end of the violent Ba'athist regime, public opinion in Europe and the Middle East was overwhelmingly against the war. Many in the Middle East saw it as a new brand of anti-Arab and anti-Islamic imperialism, and most Arab leaders decried the occupation of a fellow Arab country by foreign troops. Reaction to the war was mixed in the United States. Though several antiwar protests occurred in American cities in the lead-up to the invasion, many opinion polls showed considerable support for military action against Iraq before and during the war. Surprisingly, American opinions on the war sometimes crossed traditional party lines and doctrinal affiliation, with many to the right of the avowedly conservative Bush seeing the war as an act of reckless internationalism and some to the political left—appalled by the Ba'athist regime's brutal human rights violations and its consistent aggression—giving grudging support to military action(Council on Foreign Relations).

As violence continued and casualties mounted, however, more Americans (including some who had initially supported the war) began to criticize the Bush administration for what they perceived to be the mishandling of the occupation of Iraq. The appearance in the news of photographs of U.S. soldiers abusing Iraqis at Abu Ghraib prison west of Baghdad—a facility notorious for brutality under the Ba'ath regime—further damaged world opinion of the United States. In addition, a U.S. bipartisan commission formed to investigate the September 11 attacks reported in July 2004 that there was no evidence of a “collaborative operational relationship” between the Ba'athist government and al-Qaeda—a direct contradiction to one of the U.S. government's main justifications for the war.

Bush's prewar claims, the failure of U.S. intelligence services to correctly gauge Iraq's weapon-making capacity, and the failure to find any weapons of mass destruction—the Bush administration's primary rationale for going to war—became major political debating points. The war was a central issue in the 2004 U.S. presidential election, which Bush only narrowly won. Opposition to the war continued to increase over the next several years; soon only a dwindling minority of Americans believed that the initial decision to go to war in 2003 was the right one, and an even smaller number still supported the administration's handling of the situation in Iraq.

In late 2006 the Iraq Study Group, an independent bipartisan panel cochaired by former U.S. secretary of state James A. Baker III and former U.S. congressman Lee Hamilton, issued a report that found the situation in Iraq to be “grave and deteriorating.” The report advocated region wide diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict and called for the U.S. military role to evolve into one that provided diminishing support for an Iraqi government that the report challenged to assume more responsibility for the country's security.

The lead-up to and conduct of the war were also the subjects of controversy in Britain and the focus of parliamentary inquiries. The so-called Hutton Inquiry of 2003–04 cleared the Blair government of accusations of having “sexed up” intelligence related to the imminent threat posed by Iraq. However, the Butler Review of 2004 was critical of the prewar role of the British intelligence service, especially of unreliable information that was used as a pretext for British involvement. An even more comprehensive inquiry that was launched in late 2009 had by early 2010 come to include allegations that cuts to the military budget prior to the war had left British troops in Iraq vulnerable, setting the stage for testimony by Blair and his successor as prime minister, Gordon Brown (Leopold, Jason).

3.2.1-Reasons for the invasion

In the US there is broad agreement that removing Saddam Hussein from power neutralized a ruthless tyrant. But the debate over why the United States went to war has

grown increasingly bitter. The Bush administration continues vigorously to defend its case for removing Saddam. Its critics say the failure to find weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or links between Saddam and al Qaeda--two key elements in the pro-war argument--is evidence that the administration may have misled Americans about the threat Iraq posed. And ongoing attacks in Iraq, as well as the rapidly mounting cost of the occupation--well over \$100 billion so far--have caused many who initially backed the war to reconsider.

Initially the case the US had made for invading the Middle Eastern nation was built on three basic premises: that the regime of Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction (WMD); that it was developing more of them to the potential advantage of “terrorist” groups; and that creating a “friendly and democratic” Iraq would set an example for the region.

3.2.1.1-Weapons of mass destruction

The primary justification given by the United States for the invasion of Iraq was the existence of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in Iraq. The United States claimed that Iraq had an active program to develop and produce WMDs, including nuclear weapons, and that this program posed a direct threat to the United States and its allies. This claim was based on intelligence reports, which were subsequently found to be inaccurate.

“Let me begin by saying, we were almost all wrong, and I certainly include myself here,” David Kay, head of the Iraq Survey Group (ISG), told the US Senate on January 29, 2004.

His team – a fact-finding mission set up by the multinational force to find and disable Iraq’s purported WMDs – was ultimately unable to find substantial evidence that Hussein had an active weapons development program.

The Bush administration had presented that as a certainty before the invasion.

In a speech in Cincinnati in the US state of Ohio on October 7, 2002, the US president declared that Iraq “possesses and produces chemical and biological weapons. It is seeking nuclear weapons.”

He then concluded that Hussein had to be stopped. “The Iraqi dictator must not be permitted to threaten America and the world with horrible poisons and diseases and gases and atomic weapons,” Bush said.

Then-British Prime Minister Tony Blair had said the same thing on September 24, 2002, as he presented a British intelligence dossier affirming that Hussein could activate chemical and biological weapons “within 45 minutes, including against his own Shia population”.

When the ISG presented its findings, one of the war’s main arguments crumbled. “We’ve got evidence that they certainly could have produced small amounts [of WMD], but we’ve not discovered evidence of the stockpiles,” Kay said in his testimony.

According to Sanam Vakil, deputy director of the Middle East North Africa programme at Chatham House, the decision to invade Iraq was a “huge violation of international law” and that the real objective of the Bush administration was a broader transformational effect in the region.

“We know that the intelligence was manufactured and that [Hussein] didn’t have the weapons,” Vakil told Al Jazeera.

“They felt that by overthrowing Saddam Hussein and supposedly bringing democracy to Iraq then there would be a domino effect,” Vakil said.

Some observers have pointed to the fact that while the ISG did not find an active WMD program, it had gathered evidence that Hussein was planning to resume the programme as soon as international sanctions against Iraq were lifted.

According to Melvyn Leffler, author of the book, *Confronting Saddam Hussein*, uncertainty was a defining factor in the months prior to the invasion.

“There was an overwhelming sense of threat,” Leffler told Al Jazeera. “The intelligence community in the days and weeks after 9/11 developed what they called a ‘threat matrix’, a daily list of all incoming threats. This list of threats was presented to the president every single day.”

Hussein himself had led many to believe that Iraq’s WMD program was active. In an interview by US interrogators compiling the report into the country’s WMDs in 2004, he admitted to having been wilfully ambiguous over whether the country still retained biological agents in a bid to deter longtime foe, Iran.

For years prior to the invasion, Hussein resisted inspections by the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, established in 1999 with the mandate to disarm Iraq of its WMDs

3.2.1.2-“Terrorism”

The United States also claimed that Iraq had links to terrorist organizations, particularly Al-Qaeda. The argument was that Saddam Hussein had provided support to terrorist groups, and that Iraq could be used as a base for future terrorist attacks against the United States and its allies. This claim was later found to be unfounded.

While Bush campaigned for the presidency on the promise of a “humble” foreign policy, the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, dragged the US on a decades-long global counterterrorism military campaign.(War on Terror).

In his State of the Union address on January 29, 2002, Bush stated in no uncertain terms that the US would combat “terrorist groups” or any country deemed to be training, equipping or supporting “terrorism”.

“States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, aiming to threaten the peace of the world,” he said.

The speech went on to identify Iraq as a pillar in the so-called “axis of evil”.

“Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror,” the US president said.

“This is a regime that agreed to international inspections – then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilised world.”

A year later, on January 30, 2003, Vice President Dick Cheney drew a link between Hussein’s government and the group deemed to be behind 9/11, stating that Iraq “aids and protects terrorists, including members of al-Qaeda”.

Hussein was known to have supported various groups deemed “terrorist” by some states, including the Iranian dissident group Mujahedin-e-Khalq, the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) and several Palestinian splinter groups, but evidence of ties to al-Qaeda has never been found. According to Leffler, Bush never believed in a direct link between Hussein and al-Qaeda.

However, he believed the sanctions regime against Iraq was breaking down, that containment was failing and that as soon as the sanctions were lifted, Hussein would restart his WMD program and “blackmail the United States in the future”(Leffler)

3.2.1.3-Exporting democracy and the regime change

Another reason cited for the invasion of Iraq was the need to remove Saddam Hussein from power and to bring about regime change in Iraq. The United States argued that Saddam Hussein was a brutal dictator who posed a threat to his own people and to the stability of the region. The invasion was therefore justified as a humanitarian intervention.

In a speech on October 14, 2002, Bush said the US was “a friend to the people of Iraq”.

“Our demands are directed only at the regime that enslaves them and threatens us ... The long captivity of Iraq will end, and an era of new hope will begin.”

A few months later, he added that “a new regime in Iraq would serve as a dramatic and inspiring example of freedom for other nations in the region” and “begin a new stage for Middle Eastern peace”.

Ultimately, the attempt to turn Iraq into a “bulwark for democracy” largely backfired, with little evidence of a strengthening of democracy in the wider region.

“Since the war in Iraq, there has been not only a persistent threat from al-Qaeda but also the emergence of ISIS [ISIL] and the growth of the Iranian state as a regional power, which has been profoundly destabilising in the region,” Vakil, of Chatham House, said.

The far-reaching decision by the US to ban the ruling Baath Party and disband the Iraqi Army were early mistakes of the Bush administration, according to the analyst.

In 2005, under US occupation and with strong input from American-supplied experts, Iraq hastily formulated a new constitution, establishing a parliamentary system. While not written in the constitution, the requirement that the president be a Kurd, the speaker a Sunni, and the prime minister a Shia became common practice.

According to Marina Ottaway, Middle East fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center, the US invasion “created a system dependent on divergent sectarian interests” that is “too bogged down in the politics of balancing the factions to address policies that would improve the lives of Iraqis”.

“The Iraqi constitution was essentially an American product, it was never a negotiated agreement among Iraqis, which is what a successful constitution is,” the analyst added.

“The United States made a huge mistake in trying to impose its own solution on the country.”

The main goal of the invasion was to bring about regime change in Iraq, which was a highly controversial and criticized move. In this chapter, we will examine the attempted regime change in Iraq by the US during the invasion, its consequences, and the international community's response.

The primary reason for the US-led invasion of Iraq was to remove Saddam Hussein from power. The US government claimed that Saddam Hussein's regime posed a significant threat to regional stability and had ties to terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda. The Bush administration also claimed that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, which could be used against the United States and its allies. However, after the invasion, no weapons of mass destruction were found, leading to questions about the real motives behind the invasion(Congressional Research Service).

The attempt to bring about regime change in Iraq had far-reaching consequences for the country and the region. The invasion resulted in the collapse of the Iraqi government and the disbandment of its military, leading to widespread violence and chaos. Iraq became a hotbed of terrorism and sectarian violence, with various factions vying for power. The US-led coalition forces faced significant resistance from various groups, including Sunni and Shia militias, leading to a protracted war that lasted for over a decade.

The US-led invasion of Iraq was met with significant international opposition, with many countries opposing the war on various grounds. The United Nations Security Council failed to reach a consensus on the invasion, and several countries, including France and Germany, opposed the war. The invasion was also criticized by various human rights organizations, which raised concerns about the impact of the invasion on the civilian population(Brookings Institution).

3.2.2-Consequences of the invasion

The U.S. invasion was a crime of aggression under international law, and was actively opposed by people and countries all over the world, including 30 million people who took to the streets in 60 countries on February 15, 2003, to express their horror that this could really be happening at the dawn of the 21st century. American historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who was a speechwriter for President John F. Kennedy, compared the U.S. invasion of Iraq to Japan's preemptive attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and wrote, "Today, it is we Americans who live in infamy."

Seventeen years later, the consequences of the invasion have lived up to the fears of all who opposed it. Wars and hostilities rage across the region, and divisions over war and peace in the U.S. and Western countries challenge our highly selective view of ourselves as advanced, civilized societies. Here is a look at 12 of the most serious consequences of the U.S. war in Iraq.

3.2.2.1Millions of Iraqis Killed and Wounded

Estimates on the number of people killed in the invasion and occupation of Iraq vary widely, but even the most conservative estimates based on fragmentary reporting of minimum confirmed deaths are in the hundreds of thousands. Serious scientific studies estimated that 655,000 Iraqis had died in the first three years of war, and about a million by September 2007. The violence of the U.S. escalation or "surge" continued into 2008, and sporadic conflict continued from 2009 until 2014. Then in its new campaign against Islamic State, the U.S. and its allies bombarded major cities in Iraq and Syria with more than 118,000 bombs and the heaviest artillery bombardments since the Vietnam War. They reduced much of Mosul and other Iraqi cities to rubble, and a preliminary Iraqi Kurdish intelligence report found that more than 40,000 civilians were killed in Mosul alone. There are no comprehensive mortality studies for this latest deadly phase of the war. In addition to

all the lives lost, even more people have been wounded. The Iraqi government's Central Statistical Organization says that 2 million Iraqis have been left disabled(truthdig.com).

3.2.2.2-Millions More Iraqis Displaced

By 2007, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that nearly 2 million Iraqis had fled the violence and chaos of occupied Iraq, mostly to Jordan and Syria, while another 1.7 million were displaced within the country. The U.S. war on the Islamic State relied even more on bombing and artillery bombardment, destroying even more homes and displacing an astounding 6 million Iraqis from 2014 to 2017. According to the UNHCR, 4.35 million people have returned to their homes as the war on IS has wound down, but many face “destroyed properties, damaged or non-existent infrastructure and the lack of livelihood opportunities and financial resources, which at times [has] led to secondary displacement.” Iraq's internally displaced children represent “a generation traumatized by violence, deprived of education and opportunities,” according to UN Special Rapporteur Cecilia Jimenez-Damary(truthdig.com).

3.2.2.3-Thousands of American, British and Other Foreign Troops Killed and Wounded

While the U.S. military downplays Iraqi casualties, it precisely tracks and publishes its own. As of February 2020, 4,576 U.S. troops and 181 British troops have been killed in Iraq, as well as 142 other foreign occupation troops. Over 93 percent of the foreign occupation troops killed in Iraq have been Americans. In Afghanistan, where the U.S. has had more support from NATO and other allies, only 68 percent of occupation troops killed have been Americans. The greater share of U.S. casualties in Iraq is one of the prices Americans have paid for the unilateral, illegal nature of the U.S. invasion. By the time U.S. forces temporarily withdrew from Iraq in 2011, 32,200 U.S. troops had been wounded. As the U.S. tried to outsource and privatize its occupation, at least 917 civilian contractors and mercenaries were also killed and 10,569 wounded in Iraq, but not all of them were U.S. nationals(truthdig.com).

3.2.2.4-Even More Veterans Have Committed Suicide

More than 20 U.S. veterans kill themselves every day—that's more deaths each year than the total U.S. military deaths in Iraq. Those with the highest rates of suicide are

young veterans with combat exposure, who commit suicide at rates “4-10 times higher than their civilian peers.” Why? As Matthew Hoh of Veterans for Peace explains, many veterans “struggle to reintegrate into society,” are ashamed to ask for help, are burdened by what they saw and did in the military, are trained in shooting and own guns, and carry mental and physical wounds that make their lives difficult(truthdig.com).

3.2.2.5-Trillions of Dollars Wasted

On March 16, 2003, just days before the U.S. invasion, Vice President Dick Cheney projected that the war would cost the U.S. about \$100 billion and that the U.S. involvement would last for two years. Seventeen years on, the costs are still mounting. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated a cost of \$2.4 trillion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2007. Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz and Harvard University’s Linda Bilmes estimated the cost of the Iraq war at more than \$3 trillion, “based on conservative assumptions,” in 2008. The UK government spent at least 9 billion pounds in direct costs through 2010. What the U.S. did not spend money on, contrary to what many Americans believe, was to rebuild Iraq, the country our war destroyed(truthdig.com).

3.2.2.6-Dysfunctional and Corrupt Iraqi Government

Most of the men (no women!) running Iraq today are still former exiles who flew into Baghdad in 2003 on the heels of the U.S. and British invasion forces. Iraq is finally once again exporting 3.8 million barrels of oil per day and earning \$80 billion a year in oil exports, but little of this money trickles down to rebuild destroyed and damaged homes or provide jobs, health care or education for Iraqis, only 36 percent of whom even have jobs. Iraq’s young people have taken to the streets to demand an end to the corrupt post-2003 Iraqi political regime and U.S. and Iranian influence over Iraqi politics. More than 600 protesters were killed by government forces, but the protests forced Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi to resign. Another former Western-based exile, Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi, the cousin of former U.S.-appointed interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, was chosen to

replace him, but he resigned within weeks after the National Assembly failed to approve his cabinet choices. The popular protest movement celebrated Allawi's resignation, and Abdul Mahdi agreed to remain as prime minister, but only as a "caretaker" to carry out essential functions until new elections can be held. He has called for new elections in December. Until then, Iraq remains in political limbo, still occupied by about 5,000 U.S. troops(truthdig.com).

3.2.2.7-Illegal War on Iraq Has Undermined the Rule of International Law

When the U.S. invaded Iraq without the approval of the UN Security Council, the first victim was the United Nations Charter, the foundation of peace and international law since World War II, which prohibits the threat or use of force by any country against another. International law only permits military action as a necessary and proportionate defense against an attack or imminent threat. The illegal 2002 Bush doctrine of preemption was universally rejected because it went beyond this narrow principle and claimed an exceptional U.S. right to use unilateral military force "to preempt emerging threats," undermining the authority of the UN Security Council to decide whether a specific threat requires a military response or not. Kofi Annan, the UN secretary-general at the time, said the invasion was illegal and would lead to a breakdown in international order, and that is exactly what has happened. When the U.S. trampled the UN Charter, others were bound to follow. Today we are watching Turkey and Israel follow in the U.S.'s footsteps, attacking and invading Syria at will as if it were not even a sovereign country, using the people of Syria as pawns in their political games(truthdig.com).

3.2.2.8-Iraq War Lies Corrupted U.S. Democracy

The second victim of the invasion was American democracy. Congress voted for war based on a so-called "summary" of a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) that was nothing of the kind. The Washington Post reported that only six out of 100 senators and a few House members read the actual NIE. The 25-page "summary" that other members of

Congress based their votes on was a document produced months earlier “to make the public case for war,” as one of its authors, the CIA’s Paul Pillar, later confessed to PBS Frontline. It contained astounding claims that were nowhere to be found in the real NIE, such as that the CIA knew of 550 sites where Iraq was storing chemical and biological weapons. Secretary of State Colin Powell repeated many of these lies in his shameful performance at the UN Security Council in February 2003, while Bush and Cheney used them in major speeches, including Bush’s 2003 State of the Union address. How is democracy—the rule of the people—even possible if the people we elect to represent us in Congress can be manipulated into voting for a catastrophic war by such a web of lies?(truthdig.com).

3.2.2.9-Impunity for Systematic War Crimes

Another victim of the invasion of Iraq was the presumption that U.S. presidents and policy are subject to the rule of law. Seventeen years later, most Americans assume that the president can conduct war and assassinate foreign leaders and terrorism suspects as he pleases, with no accountability whatsoever—like a dictator. When President Obama said he wanted to look forward instead of backward, and held no one from the Bush administration accountable for their crimes, it was as if they ceased to be crimes and became normalized as U.S. policy. That includes crimes of aggression against other countries; the mass killing of civilians in U.S. airstrikes and drone strikes; and the unrestricted surveillance of every American’s phone calls, emails, browsing history and opinions. But these are crimes and violations of the U.S. Constitution, and refusing to hold accountable those who committed these crimes has made it easier for them to be repeated(truthdig.com).

3.2.2.10-Destruction of the Environment

During the first Gulf War, the U.S. dropped 340 tons of warheads and explosives made with depleted uranium, which poisoned the soil and water and led to skyrocketing levels of cancer. In the following decades of “ecocide,” Iraq has been plagued by the burning of dozens of oil wells; the pollution of water sources from the dumping of oil,

sewage and chemicals; millions of tons of rubble from destroyed cities and towns; and the burning of huge volumes of military waste in open air “burn pits” during the war. The pollution caused by war is linked to the high levels of congenital birth defects, premature births, miscarriages and cancer (including leukemia) in Iraq.

The pollution has also affected U.S. soldiers. “More than 85,000 U.S. Iraq war veterans... have been diagnosed with respiratory and breathing problems, cancers, neurological diseases, depression and emphysema since returning from Iraq,” as the Guardian reports. And parts of Iraq may never recover from the environmental devastation(truthdig.com).

3.2.2.11-The U.S.’s Sectarian “Divide and Rule” Policy in Iraq Spawned Havoc Across the Region

In secular 20th-century Iraq, the Sunni minority was more powerful than the Shia majority, but for the most part, the different ethnic groups lived side-by-side in mixed neighborhoods and even intermarried. Friends with mixed Shia/Sunni parents tell us that before the U.S. invasion, they didn’t even know which parent was Shia and which was Sunni. After the invasion, the U.S. empowered a new Shiite ruling class led by former exiles allied with the U.S. and Iran, as well as the Kurds in their semi-autonomous region in the north. The upending of the balance of power and deliberate U.S. “divide and rule” policies led to waves of horrific sectarian violence, including the ethnic cleansing of communities by Interior Ministry death squads under U.S. command. The sectarian divisions the U.S. unleashed in Iraq led to the resurgence of Al Qaeda and the emergence of ISIS, which have wreaked havoc throughout the entire region(truthdig.com).

3.2.2.12-The New Cold War Between the U.S. and the Emerging Multilateral World

When President Bush declared his “doctrine of preemption” in 2002, Senator Edward Kennedy called it “a call for 21st century American imperialism that no other nation can or should accept.” But the world has so far failed to either persuade the U.S. to change course or to unite in diplomatic opposition to its militarism and imperialism. France

and Germany bravely stood with Russia and most of the Global South to oppose the invasion of Iraq in the UN Security Council in 2003. But Western governments embraced Obama's superficial charm offensive as cover for reinforcing their traditional ties with the U.S. China was busy expanding its peaceful economic development and its role as the economic hub of Asia, while Russia was still rebuilding its economy from the neoliberal chaos and poverty of the 1990s. Neither was ready to actively challenge U.S. aggression until the U.S., NATO and their Arab monarchist allies launched proxy wars against Libya and Syria in 2011. After the fall of Libya, Russia appears to have decided it must either stand up to U.S. regime change operations or eventually fall victim itself. The economic tides have shifted, a multipolar world is emerging, and the world is hoping against hope that the American people and new American leaders will act to rein in this 21st-century American imperialism before it leads to an even more catastrophic U.S. war with Iran, Russia or China. As Americans, we must hope that the world's faith in the possibility that we can democratically bring sanity and peace to U.S. policy is not misplaced. A good place to start would be to join the call by the Iraqi Parliament for U.S. troops to leave Iraq(truthdig.com).

3.3-Occupation and aftermath

The removal of Saddam Hussein, the former President of Iraq, by the United States in 2003 was a controversial decision that has had long-lasting impacts on the region and the world. While the US government argued that it was necessary to eliminate a brutal dictator and his weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program, others criticized the move as a violation of international law and a destabilizing force in the Middle East. This chapter will examine the reasons behind the US decision to remove Saddam Hussein, the aftermath of the invasion, and the ongoing debates surrounding the legality and morality of the action.

The decision to remove Saddam Hussein by the US in 2003 is one of the most controversial foreign policy decisions in American history. The decision was made after months of deliberation by the Bush administration, and it was based on a combination of factors, including concerns about Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), links to terrorism, and the human rights abuses committed by Saddam Hussein's regime. This chapter will provide an overview of the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq and the subsequent removal of Saddam Hussein from power.

In 2002, the Bush administration began to publicly discuss its concerns about Iraq's WMD program. President Bush, in his State of the Union address in January 2002, referred to Iraq as part of an "axis of evil" along with Iran and North Korea. This rhetoric was followed by the publication of a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) in October 2002, which claimed that Iraq had "reconstituted" its nuclear weapons program and had "an active chemical weapons program."(CBS News)

However, the intelligence community was not unanimous in its assessment of Iraq's WMD capabilities. Some intelligence officials expressed doubt about the existence of WMDs in Iraq, and there were concerns about the reliability of the sources used to support the NIE. Despite these concerns, the Bush administration continued to make the case for war with Iraq.

The decision to invade Iraq was not made in a vacuum. The Bush administration consulted with allies, Congress, and the United Nations before taking military action. However, some critics have argued that the decision to go to war was based on faulty intelligence and that the administration ignored warnings about the potential consequences of the invasion.

One of the key figures in the decision-making process was Vice President Dick Cheney. Cheney was a vocal proponent of the invasion and was influential in shaping the administration's policy towards Iraq. In a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in August 2002, Cheney stated, "Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction."

Another influential figure was Secretary of State Colin Powell, who presented the case for war to the United Nations in February 2003. Powell argued that Iraq was in violation of numerous UN resolutions and that Saddam Hussein's regime posed a threat to international security. However, Powell's presentation has since been criticized for relying on intelligence that was later shown to be inaccurate.

In March 2003, the US-led coalition launched a military invasion of Iraq. The invasion was swift, with US forces taking control of Baghdad within weeks. Saddam Hussein was captured by US forces in December 2003 and was later tried and executed for crimes against humanity.

The decision to remove Saddam Hussein by the US in 2003 remains controversial to this day. Supporters of the invasion argue that it was necessary to remove a dictator who posed a threat to international security, while critics argue that the decision was based on faulty intelligence and has had disastrous consequences for Iraq and the wider region(Council on Foreign Relations).

3.3.1-Establishment of a new government in Iraq

In the aftermath of the United States-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, the Bush administration aimed to establish a new democratic government in the country. Before the invasion, Iraq was ruled by Saddam Hussein, a dictator who had been in power since 1979. The country was plagued by a variety of problems, including corruption, human rights abuses, and economic sanctions. The Bush administration argued that Hussein

possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and had links to terrorist groups, justifying the invasion as a preemptive strike to prevent a potential threat to US national security. However, no WMDs were found, and the war lasted for years, causing significant destruction and loss of life.

After Hussein was ousted, the United States faced the daunting task of establishing a new government in Iraq. The country was deeply divided along sectarian and ethnic lines. The United States aimed to create a more inclusive and representative government, with equal representation for Sunni Arabs and Kurds(Middle East Institute).

The United States adopted several strategies and tactics to establish a new government in Iraq. One of the first steps was to dissolve the Baath Party, Hussein's political party, and the military, which was seen as loyal to Hussein. This move caused significant unrest, as many members of the military and the Baath Party were left unemployed and without a sense of direction. In addition, the United States formed the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), which was responsible for governing Iraq until a new government could be established.

The CPA adopted several policies to promote democracy and human rights in Iraq. One of the most significant was the creation of the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), which was made up of Iraqi politicians from various ethnic and sectarian backgrounds. The IGC was tasked with drafting a new constitution and governing the country until elections could be held.(CPA)

The United States also invested heavily in rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure and economy, with the goal of creating jobs and improving living standards for Iraqis. This included funding for schools, hospitals, and other public facilities, as well as programs to support small businesses and agriculture.

The transitional government, with the assistance of the UN, drafted a new constitution for Iraq that was ratified by a national referendum in October 2005. The constitution established a federal, democratic, and pluralistic system of government that recognized the rights of all citizens regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or gender. The constitution also addressed the issue of power-sharing between the central government and the regions, which was a significant concern for the country's various ethnic and sectarian groups.

The US, along with its coalition partners, provided security and logistical support for the first national elections held in Iraq in January 2005. The elections were hailed as a success, with a high voter turnout despite threats from insurgents. The elections were contested by various political parties and groups, including Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish groups, and resulted in the formation of a new government led by Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari.

One of the main challenges that the US faced in establishing a new government in Iraq was the lack of a democratic tradition in the country. Iraq had been ruled by Saddam Hussein's authoritarian regime for over two decades, and the country's political institutions had been dismantled. The US had to build new political institutions from scratch, including a new constitution, electoral system, and representative bodies.

Another challenge was the sectarian divide in Iraq. The country is composed of different ethnic and religious groups, including Arabs, Kurds, and Assyrians. The US had to ensure that all these groups were represented in the new government, and that they had a say in the political process. However, this was easier said than done, as many of these groups had competing interests and agendas.

The US faced several controversies in establishing a new government in Iraq. One of the main controversies was the decision to dissolve the Iraqi army and purge the

Ba'athist party from government institutions. This decision left thousands of former soldiers and party members without a job or a means of livelihood, and many of them joined the insurgency against the US-led coalition.

Another controversy was the role of Iran in Iraq's political process. Iran is a Shia Muslim country, and many Iraqi Shia Muslims have close ties to Iran. The US was concerned that Iran was interfering in Iraq's political process and supporting Shia militias that were attacking US troops and Sunni Muslims. The US responded by imposing economic sanctions on Iran and supporting Sunni Muslim groups in Iraq.

Another challenge was the issue of sectarian and ethnic divisions in Iraq. Despite the efforts of the United States to create a more inclusive government, many Sunnis and Kurds felt marginalized and excluded from the political process. This led to significant unrest and protests, particularly in the lead-up to the adoption of the new constitution (US Government Accountability Office).

The United States also faced criticism for its handling of the post-invasion period, particularly in terms of the treatment of detainees and prisoners. The Abu Ghraib scandal, in which US soldiers were found to have committed acts of torture and abuse on detainees, caused significant controversy and damaged the reputation of the United States.

3.3.2-Attempts at nation-building and democracy promotion

The United States' invasion of Iraq in 2003 aimed to overthrow the country's leader, Saddam Hussein, and establish a democratic government that would serve as a model for the Middle East. The US government's plan to rebuild Iraq, including its political institutions and infrastructure, was known as nation-building. However, the nation-building efforts in Iraq faced significant challenges and were often unsuccessful. One of the main problems with nation-building in Iraq was the lack of planning and coordination among the

US government agencies involved in the process. A report by the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) in 2009 found that the US government did not have a comprehensive plan for rebuilding Iraq, which led to significant delays and inefficiencies.

Another challenge was the lack of understanding of Iraq's complex political, social, and cultural dynamics by US policymakers. As a result, the US government made several mistakes, such as disbanding the Iraqi army, which left many unemployed and embittered soldiers without a livelihood, contributing to the rise of insurgent groups. The US government also failed to allocate sufficient resources for the rebuilding process. According to a report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the US government spent approximately \$60 billion on reconstruction efforts in Iraq from 2003 to 2012. However, much of the funding was wasted or lost due to corruption, mismanagement, and lack of oversight(Dodge, T. (2018)).

The nation-building efforts in Iraq were further complicated by sectarian tensions between Shia and Sunni Muslims. The US government's failure to address these tensions and promote reconciliation between different groups led to the emergence of violent extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda in Iraq and later ISIS. The US government's attempts to establish a democratic government in Iraq were also unsuccessful. The country's first elections in 2005 were marred by allegations of fraud and irregularities, and subsequent elections did little to improve the situation. Iraq remains a deeply divided society with a weak central government, rampant corruption, and ongoing sectarian violence.

Although the United States intervened in Iraq after it began its intervention in Afghanistan, it is withdrawing from Iraq first. Therefore, what the United States has and has not accomplished in Iraq will be discussed first. It must be said to begin with that the United States did achieve some important successes in Iraq. It destroyed the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein — something that the Iraqi population had not only been unable to do on

its own, but may not have been able to do later either. If Saddam had managed to transfer power to his sons (who were reportedly just as, or even more, vicious than their father), the regime may have survived for years or even decades (Gordon, M. R.).

In addition, the U.S.-led intervention helped the Kurds in northern Iraq. They had suffered terribly under Saddam Hussein but were able to solidify the tenuous autonomy they had achieved (also with U.S. help) after the 1990-91 Kuwait conflict and even build some prosperity in their zone.

Although Iraq's Arab Sunni tribes were initially hostile to the U.S.-led intervention and fought an insurgent war against it, American forces were eventually able to make peace and work with most of them.

Most important, the United States organized and protected the holding of relatively free and fair elections at both the national and local levels. This allowed Iraq's Arab Shia majority, which had also suffered dreadfully under Saddam Hussein, to play a leading role in Iraqi politics for the first time.

In addition to these successes, however, the United States has had some noteworthy failure in Iraq. First, the failure to halt the massive violence, looting and infrastructure breakdown that took place throughout the country immediately after the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime. This was caused by the Bush administration's failure to anticipate and plan for the aftermath of Saddam's downfall as well as to deploy enough troops to maintain order. As a result, the initial gratitude displayed by much of the Iraqi population toward the United States for delivering it from Saddam quickly disappeared.

Further, despite a massive troop presence, the United States was unable to prevent or stop the large-scale ethnic-cleansing campaigns that violent Arab Sunni and Arab Shia groups conducted against each other's communities. These campaigns were so successful

that some observers attributed the decline in violence in Iraq in 2008-09 not to the American troop surge ordered by President Bush, but to the ethnic-cleansing campaigns having largely completed the violent work of segregating the Sunni and the Shia communities from each other(US Government Accountability Office).

Finally, while the United States created the conditions that have allowed Iraq to hold two national elections for its parliament, the United States has not been able to persuade or cajole important Iraqi groups to fully — or even less than fully — cooperate with one another. The Shia-Sunni rivalry is especially important. There are also differences within the Arab Shia community. And Arab-Kurdish divisions have not disappeared either. The inability of a government to be formed after the March 7, 2010, parliamentary elections bodes ill, not just for the prospects for democracy, but even for stability in Iraq.

Washington certainly bears responsibility for some of these failures. The Bush administration could have sent more troops to keep order in Iraq after the fall of Saddam, as well as planned more carefully for the transition afterward. The United States also could have done much more to prevent and halt the ethnic-cleansing campaigns that took place. If America had done these things, it might have been easier for Iraqi politicians from different communities (as well as political parties) to work together cooperatively.

The United States, though, is not responsible for the hostility that exists among Iraq's three main communities. This is something that pre-dated the U.S.-led intervention that began in 2003. As is well known, Saddam Hussein's regime was based on and privileged the Arab Sunni minority, which dominated the Arab Shia majority, the Kurdish minority and Iraq's many other smaller communities. What is less well known (at least in the West) is that Arab Sunni minority dominance did not begin with Saddam Hussein, but long pre-dated him. As Hanna Batatu explained in his magisterial book, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (1978), the Ottoman Turks, through the

end of World War I, and the British as well as the British-installed Iraqi monarchy, until its overthrow in 1958, also relied on Arab Sunnis to maintain their rule over Iraq's other communities. The Free Officers who overthrew the monarchy in 1958 were also predominantly Arab Sunni.

Before it came to power, the Baath Party primarily attracted members from Iraq's dispossessed Arab Shia and other communities. But as the Baath succeeded in recruiting Iraqi army officers, its military wing came to be increasingly dominated by Arab Sunnis. Between the downfall of the first Baath regime (which only held power for a few months in 1963) and the rise to power of the second Baath regime in 1968, a sectarian power struggle (in which Saddam Hussein played a leading role) occurred within the party's ranks, resulting in the triumph of the predominantly Arab Sunni military wing. Saddam, of course, especially favored Arab Sunnis from the region in which he grew up — Tikrit. In general, though, his regime did not change but, rather, reinforced the existing pattern of Arab Sunni dominance over Arab Shias, Kurds and others.

By allowing the Kurds to solidify their rule over northern Iraq and by organizing national elections in which parties representing the Shia majority gained the most seats, the United States ended the Sunni dominance over these two communities, as well as over Iraq, that had existed since the Ottoman era. Deeply resenting this, it is not surprising that Arab Sunnis, in particular, fiercely resisted the American occupation at first. Fueling their resistance was the firmly held belief of many Sunnis that they were not a minority, but the majority in Iraq. And whether they had benefited from or suffered under Saddam's rule, Arab Sunnis came to fear — often with good reason — how they would be treated by the resentful Arab Shia, newly empowered by the American intervention. Since Saddam's regime was dominated by Sunnis, the disbanding of Saddam's armed forces and the de-Baathification campaign undertaken by the American occupation authorities most strongly affected Arab Sunnis (and most especially elite Arab Sunnis). The Shia-dominated Iraqi

government's continued pursuit of former Baathists is seen by many Arab Sunnis as an effort to exclude them from the political process.

The Arab Shia majority, of course, is pleased that the American-led intervention has resulted in its finally coming to power. This does not mean, however, that the Shia (or factions within this community) approved the continuation of the American occupation. Having been dominated so long by the Sunnis, the Shia very much fear a reversion to this pattern. While the U.S. military congratulated itself on having turned many of the previously hostile Sunni tribes into allies fighting alongside it, many Shia saw this, as well as American efforts to integrate Sunnis into the Iraqi armed forces, as presaging the return of Sunni dominance. During both the Ottoman and British periods, cooperation with external forces was what allowed Sunnis to dominate other communities in Iraq. Shia politicians feared that Sunni cooperation with the Americans could lead to a similar result, and so they resisted American efforts to integrate its Sunni tribal allies into the new Shia-dominated Iraqi security forces.

Kurdish aspirations for independence have been frustrated, not just by the Arab Sunnis of Iraq, but also by Turkey and Iran (where large numbers of Kurds also live in regions bordering northern Iraq) and by internecine conflict among the Kurds themselves that others have exploited. The Kurds were able to take advantage of American hostility toward Saddam Hussein to create their own autonomous zone in northern Iraq after the 1990-91 Kuwait conflict and to solidify their rule over this region after the 2003 American-led intervention. Although nominally still part of Iraq, the Kurdish region is not controlled by authorities in Baghdad. Kurdish politicians, however, do play an important political role in the government, both through controlling a key bloc in parliament and through holding important offices such as vice-president and foreign minister.

Thus, the U.S.-led intervention and efforts to promote democratization completely upended relations among Iraq's three principal communities. American actions curtailed Arab Sunni domination over both the Arab Shia majority and the Kurdish minority and created a new situation. Now the Shia majority dominates the national government, the Kurdish minority controls its homeland in northern Iraq, and the Arab Sunni minority holds sway in its tribal heartland in western Iraq. As was mentioned earlier, the United States did succeed in holding and protecting relatively free and fair elections in Iraq. Unfortunately, it did not succeed in establishing genuine reconciliation among Iraq's three main communities. Nor did they, of course, do so on their own. And, if national reconciliation did not occur when America maintained a large military presence in Iraq, it does not appear likely that it will occur as the American military presence declines and perhaps even ends (Marina Ottaway).

The future of Iraq and the balance of power among its three main communities cannot be predicted at present. America's ending of Arab Sunni dominance over the country, combined with its inability to establish peace among Iraq's three main communities, though, suggests that stable democracy is not likely to take root in Iraq any time soon.

3.3.3-Resistance to occupation and insurgency

The resistance to the US occupation of Iraq has defied most predictions in its duration, its intensity, its composition and its operations. In virtually his first day in the position (17 July 2003) General John Abizaid, commander of the US Central Command, characterised the resistance as fighting a "classic guerrilla war" against the US-led coalition, led by "mid-level Ba'ath Party activists organised regionally" (Cheterian, Vicken).

The guerrilla campaign has persisted despite Saddam Hussein's capture on 13 December 2003, a development that was expected to take the wind out of the sails of the

resistance. Some US commanders claimed in early 2004 that US counter-insurgency operations reduced the number of daily resistance attacks from about 50 to about 20, and that the US had "turned the corner" against the resistance. Others said in January 2004 that progress has been made, but that defeating the resistance might still take up to a year. Yet the resistance has continued to demonstrate its ability to down US helicopters; devastate buildings and cause mass casualties; attack US forces and installations with conventional weapons; sack some local Iraqi governing installations; deter foreign investment; and slow the pace of reconstruction (Hashim, Ahmed S).

3.3.3.1-Motivations

One of the keys to understanding the resistance is analysing its motivations. From its inception, the resistance has represented an amalgam of motivations and goals. Some elements of the resistance want to restore the old Ba'athist regime, while others have been motivated by opposition to foreign rule or the goal of forming an Islamic state.

To accomplish those goals, all elements of the resistance hope to demonstrate that US stabilisation efforts are not working by causing international relief workers and peacekeeping forces to leave Iraq, slowing reconstruction, turning the Iraqi populace against the occupation and provoking civil conflict among Iraq's various sects and ethnicities.

These efforts have led the resistance to aim at a wide range of targets - US forces; Iraqis and foreigners who are working for the US occupation authority (the Coalition Provisional Authority – CPA); oil export pipelines and water and other infrastructure facilities; and symbols of the international presence, including the headquarters of the UN in Baghdad.

To date, resistance attacks have had only a minimal material effect on governance and the pace of economic reconstruction. However (and perhaps most importantly) the

resistance has succeeded in creating a perception of chaos and a perception that US policy is in difficulty. The resistance has also caused the Bush administration to seek to minimise fallout in a US election year by accelerating the handover of sovereignty and security functions to Iraqis(Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies).

3.3.3.2-Composition of the Iraqi Resistance

The nature of the Iraqi component of the resistance remains murky. However, it is possible to piece together outlines of the resistance from their identifications, their claims of responsibility and the point in the insurgency campaign at which they emerged. The factions listed below are believed to be composed of Iraqi nationals; additional factions believed to be composed of ‘foreign fighters’ are discussed later.

The commander of US forces in Iraq (Combined Joint Task Force-7), Lieutenant General Sanchez, told visiting congressmen in Baghdad on 29 February 2004 that US forces, with the help of documents captured from Saddam, had made progress against the Ba’athist component of the insurgency. Less headway was being made against the foreign fighters, however.

For the most part, Iraqi resistance fighters have identified themselves as distinct groups, which have been sending written warnings and faxing statements to the Arab satellite television network Al Jazeera, the United Arab Emirates-based Al Arabiya TV and other outlets. Suggesting a mix of nationalist and Islamist factions, they identify themselves with names such as:

- Al Awda (The Return): this faction received substantial publicity early in the resistance and it was believed to be one of the largest and most active groups. From its name, it is believed to be composed mainly of Ba’ath Party activists and strong supporters of Saddam;

- Saddam's Fedayeen: remnants of the paramilitary force that were the most tenacious of Iraqi forces during the 2003 major combat
- Saddam's Jihad
- The Movement of the Victorious Sect: another faction that received substantial publicity at the inception of the resistance campaign;
- Iraq's Revolutionaries - Al Anbar's Armed Brigades
- Popular Resistance for the Liberation of Iraq
- Salafist Jihad Group (Salafi is a Sunni extremist Islamic movement)
- Armed Islamic Movement for Al-Qaeda - Fallujah Branch: its actual links to Al-Qaeda, if any, are not known;
- Jaish (Army) of Mohammad: this faction has received substantial attention since the end of 2003. It is a highly active group, particularly in and around Fallujah, publishing leaflets threatening Iraqis who collaborate with the US occupation;
- Armed Vanguard of the Second Mohammad Army: this organisation claimed responsibility for the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad and threatened attacks on any Arab countries that participate in Iraq peacekeeping operations.

3.3.3.3-The debate over foreign fighters

Although almost all aspects of the resistance campaign in Iraq have surprised analysts and the Bush administration, the most hotly debated questions have been the degree to which non-Iraqis are participating in the resistance, and the degree to which the non-Iraqis are co-operating with the Iraqi factions discussed above.

The debate over the contribution of non-Iraqis began in 2003 after the car and truck bombings in Baghdad of the Jordanian embassy (7 August) and UN headquarters at

the Canal Hotel (19 August). The latter bombing killed 23 people, including the UN representative in Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, and prompted an evacuation of UN personnel from Iraq. A 29 August car bombing in Najaf killed Mohammad Baqr al-Hakim, the leader of a major Shi'a Islamist party, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq. More than 100 others died in the same bombing.

A 12 November suicide attack killed 17 Italian peacekeepers at their headquarters in Nasiriyah. An 18 January 2004 suicide bombing outside the headquarters of the CPA killed approximately 40 people. Twin bombings on 1 February 2004 at Kurdish political headquarters in Irbil killed over 100.

Bombings on 1 March 2004 in Karbala and Baghdad during Shi'a celebrations of the festival of Ashura killed about 180 people. Smaller suicide bombings have occurred since at Iraqi police facilities, the UN compound, a Baghdad hotel and other sites.

CPA officials and US commanders in Iraq have tended to blame these terrorist-type attacks on 'foreign fighters' - Al-Qaeda or pro-Al-Qaeda fighters believed to have entered or spread throughout Iraq since the fall of Saddam. Some refer to these fighters as jihadists. However, the attribution of these terrorist-type attacks to Al-Qaeda-type jihadist fighters appears to be based more on perceptions and assumptions than on hard evidence.

Suicide bombings and other mass-casualty attacks on non-combatants have been a hallmark of major terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and other Islamist groups. However, only a small percentage (about 10%) of the insurgents captured so far have been non-Iraqi nationals. Moreover, little firm evidence based on investigations of the suicide bombings or other attacks has been released that demonstrates that these attacks were the work of non-Iraqis.

Not only have some US commanders blamed the terrorist-type attacks on foreign fighters but many have also identified a specific faction and a specific pro-Al-Qaeda terrorist chieftain. The figure mentioned most widely in these attacks has been Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a 35-year-old Jordanian who fought in the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan and who has been linked by many experts to Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. Zarqawi allegedly was responsible for the foiled 'millennium plots' in December 1999 that targeted sites in Jordan and Los Angeles International Airport.

After the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks and the US-led defeat of the Taliban, Zarqawi reportedly fled Afghanistan for northern Iraq, where he and his mostly Arab associates were hosted by a radical Islamist Kurdish faction based near Halabja called Ansar al-Islam (Partisans of Islam). Zarqawi largely took over Ansar al-Islam, a splinter faction of a Kurdish Islamist group, and harnessed it for his own use. He is believed to be in Iraq and some US counter-insurgent commanders recently believed they were close to catching him.

In late 2003 some US commanders, including Lieut Gen Sanchez, began identifying a new jihadist faction operating in Iraq called Ansar al-Sunna (Partisans of the Way of the Prophet). The group is believed to be a splinter faction of Ansar al-Islam. Ansar al-Sunna claimed responsibility for the Irbil bombings in February 2004. It is also believed that Ansar al-Sunna consists of foreign and Iraqi Islamists working together. Indications that Iraqi nationals are working with Ansar al-Sunna have apparently caused some US commanders to alter their understanding of the insurgency, and has led them to consider that some of the terrorist-type mass-casualty attacks may in fact have been conducted by Iraqi Islamists rather than foreign jihadists.

The implications of the debate over foreign involvement are significant. If it is shown that the resistance is driven primarily by foreign jihadists, the Bush administration

could use that judgment to suggest that Iraqi nationals largely accept the US occupation of Iraq and that the Iraq war is a crucial front in the overall war on terrorism that began after 11 September. A resistance driven primarily by Iraqi nationals, however, could suggest that the US occupation lacks popularity among Iraqis and that the US invasion prompted terrorism in Iraq that would not have existed otherwise.

All in all, the resistance to the US-led occupation of Iraq was multi-faceted, involving a range of actors and strategies. According to Hashim (2006), the resistance can be broadly divided into three categories: nationalist, Islamist, and criminal. Nationalist resistance was mainly driven by the desire to expel foreign forces from Iraq and restore Iraqi sovereignty, while Islamist resistance aimed to establish an Islamic state in Iraq. Criminal resistance involved opportunistic criminal gangs who took advantage of the chaos and insecurity in the country to engage in looting and other criminal activities(Hashim (2006)).

The nationalist and Islamist resistance groups were the most significant, with a strong presence in the Sunni-dominated areas of Iraq. These groups used a combination of guerrilla tactics, including ambushes, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and suicide bombings, to target US and coalition forces and their Iraqi allies. The resistance also engaged in sabotage and disruption of infrastructure, including oil pipelines, electricity grids, and communication networks.

3.3.4-Withdrawal of US troops and legacy of the war

In November 2008 an agreement that determined a timetable for the final withdrawal of U.S. forces, which had been under negotiation for nearly a year, was approved by the Iraqi parliament. Under that agreement, U.S. troops were scheduled to leave the cities and towns by mid-2009, and withdrawal from the country was set to be completed in early 2012. In February 2009 newly elected U.S. Pres. Barack Obama

announced that U.S. combat forces would be withdrawn from Iraq by the end of August 2010, with the remaining troops due to pull out by December 2011. On June 30, 2009, after turning security responsibilities over to Iraqi forces, U.S. troops completed their withdrawal from the country's cities and towns as scheduled(Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University).

In October 2011 the United States announced that the last of its 39,000 troops would leave Iraq at the end of 2011. On December 15 the U.S. military held a ceremony in Baghdad to formally declare the end of its mission in Iraq, and the final U.S. forces departed before the end of the year.

The legacy of the Iraq war is complex and multifaceted. On the one hand, the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime and the establishment of a democratic government in Iraq could be seen as a significant achievement. The war also led to the capture and execution of Saddam Hussein himself, a brutal dictator responsible for countless human rights violations.

However, the cost of the war in terms of both human lives and financial resources was staggering. According to the Iraq Body Count project, which tracks civilian deaths in Iraq, at least 182,000 civilians were killed as a direct result of the war. The US military also suffered significant casualties, with over 4,400 American soldiers killed and many more injured.

The financial cost of the war was equally staggering. According to a report by the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University, the total cost of the war to the United States could exceed \$6 trillion, once long-term healthcare costs for veterans and interest payments on the debt incurred to fund the war are taken into account.

The Iraq war also had significant geopolitical implications. The destabilization of Iraq following the US-led invasion created a power vacuum that allowed extremist groups like ISIS to gain a foothold in the region. The war also strained relations between the United States and many of its traditional allies, particularly in Europe.

The decision to withdraw US troops from Iraq in 2011 was controversial, with some arguing that the withdrawal was premature and would leave Iraq vulnerable to further instability and violence. Others argued that the US had achieved its primary objectives in Iraq and that it was time to bring the troops home (Shadid, Anthony).

Since the withdrawal of US troops, Iraq has continued to face significant challenges. The country has struggled with ongoing sectarian violence, political instability, and economic problems. The rise of ISIS in 2014 was a significant setback for the country, and the group's defeat in 2017 was a major victory for the Iraqi government and its international partners.

The legacy of the Iraq war remains a topic of debate and discussion in the United States and around the world. While some argue that the war was a necessary response to a perceived threat, others see it as a costly and misguided conflict that caused more harm than good. Whatever one's perspective, there is no doubt that the war had a profound and lasting impact on Iraq, the United States, and the wider world.

3.4-Criticisms of US imperialism in Iraq

Human rights abuses and civilian casualties have been a constant source of concern during the US occupation of Iraq from 2003 to 2011. The US-led coalition's military intervention was aimed at overthrowing Saddam Hussein's regime and bringing democracy and stability to the region. However, the war resulted in a high number of civilian casualties, extensive damage to infrastructure, and widespread human rights

violations. This chapter explores the extent of these abuses and their impact on the Iraqi people.

3.4.1-Human rights abuses and civilian casualties

According to various reports, the US-led coalition's military intervention in Iraq resulted in significant civilian casualties. The most comprehensive study was conducted by the Iraq Body Count, a non-profit organization that tracks casualties in Iraq. It estimated that between 185,000 and 208,000 civilians were killed in the conflict between 2003 and 2011. The majority of these deaths were caused by violence and the use of explosive devices(Lando, Barry).

The US-led coalition's military tactics, such as air strikes, night raids, and the use of heavy weaponry, also contributed to civilian deaths. Many of these casualties were the result of the US military's failure to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants. For example, in 2007, a US Apache helicopter attacked a group of unarmed civilians, including journalists, killing 12 people and injuring two children.

The use of depleted uranium (DU) in military operations has also been linked to civilian deaths and long-term health effects. DU is a dense metal used in armor-piercing munitions, which can penetrate through tanks and other armored vehicles. When these weapons are used, DU is released into the air, soil, and water, and can remain radioactive for thousands of years. The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported a significant increase in cancer rates and birth defects in areas where DU was used(Luban, David).

The US military has also been accused of using torture and other forms of abuse against Iraqi detainees. The Abu Ghraib scandal, which was exposed in 2004, revealed the widespread abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US soldiers. The photos and videos showed detainees being humiliated, tortured, and sexually abused. Many of the detainees were held without charge or trial, in violation of international law.

The use of torture and abuse was not limited to Abu Ghraib. Other US detention facilities, such as Camp Bucca, were also known to have engaged in similar practices. The US government justified the use of torture as necessary to obtain intelligence and prevent terrorist attacks. However, these actions have been widely condemned by human rights organizations and the international community.

The US occupation of Iraq was marked by widespread human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, extrajudicial killings, and forced disappearances. These violations were carried out by both US forces and Iraqi security forces trained and supported by the US (Mayer, Jane).

The US government's decision to dissolve the Iraqi army and security forces after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime created a power vacuum that was quickly filled by militias and armed groups. These groups carried out attacks against civilians, and the US military responded with heavy-handed tactics, such as mass arrests and house raids. Many of these raids were carried out without warrants or probable cause, and innocent civilians were often caught in the crossfire.

The US military also carried out targeted killings of suspected insurgents and terrorists, often without due process or judicial oversight. These killings violated international law and raised serious concerns about the US government's commitment to human rights and the rule of law.

Perhaps the most significant human rights violations committed by the US in Iraq was the widespread use of torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of detainees. The US military and intelligence agencies employed a range of techniques, including waterboarding, sleep deprivation, and sensory deprivation, in their interrogations of detainees. These techniques were used to extract information from prisoners, but they often resulted in false confessions and unreliable intelligence. Many of

the detainees were also subjected to prolonged detention without trial, violating their right to due process.

The most infamous example of US torture in Iraq was the Abu Ghraib scandal, which came to light in 2004. Photos and videos released to the public showed US soldiers torturing and humiliating Iraqi detainees in the Abu Ghraib prison. The abuses included physical beatings, sexual assault, and forcing detainees to pose in degrading positions. The scandal led to several investigations and court-martials of US soldiers, but many argue that the punishment was insufficient, and the higher-ranking officials responsible for the abuses were not held accountable.

Another significant human rights violation committed by the US in Iraq was the excessive use of force against civilians. The US military relied heavily on air strikes and heavy weaponry, which resulted in a high number of civilian casualties. According to a report by Iraq Body Count, over 180,000 civilians were killed during the conflict in Iraq, with many of them being killed by US-led coalition forces. The use of force often resulted in the destruction of homes, hospitals, and other essential infrastructure, further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in the country.

The US occupation of Iraq also resulted in the displacement of millions of people. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, over 5 million Iraqis were displaced within the country, and an additional 2 million fled to neighboring countries during the conflict. The displacement was caused by a range of factors, including the violence and insecurity caused by the conflict, the destruction of homes and infrastructure, and the persecution of ethnic and religious minorities.

The US occupation of Iraq was also marked by the widespread violation of freedom of expression and assembly. The US military and Iraqi authorities under their control often targeted journalists, activists, and dissidents, who spoke out against the

occupation or criticized the US-backed government. Many journalists were killed or imprisoned, and the media was heavily censored, restricting the flow of information to the public.

The US occupation of Iraq has been widely criticized by human rights organizations, international bodies, and individuals. The International Criminal Court has been investigating allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by US forces in Iraq since 2017. Human Rights Watch has criticized the US for its use of torture, excessive use of force, and the mistreatment of detainees. The United Nations has also raised concerns about the human rights situation in Iraq and called on the US and Iraqi authorities to address the violations and hold those responsible accountable.

3.4.2-Failure to achieve stated objectives

Despite significant military efforts and substantial financial investments, the U.S. failed to achieve its stated objectives in Iraq because of various factors. One of the major factors contributing to the U.S. failure in Iraq was the faulty intelligence that served as the basis for the invasion. The George W. Bush administration claimed that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and posed an imminent threat to international security. However, subsequent investigations found these claims to be unsubstantiated. The report by the Senate Intelligence Committee, chaired by Senator Jay Rockefeller, concluded that the intelligence used to justify the war was flawed and misleading.

Another crucial factor that contributed to the failure in Iraq was the deep-seated sectarian tensions within the country. The U.S. intervention removed Saddam Hussein's Sunni-dominated regime, leading to a power vacuum and exacerbating sectarian divisions between the majority Shiite population and the Sunni minority. These tensions

manifested in the form of insurgencies, terrorist attacks, and ethno-sectarian violence, undermining the stability and progress of the newly formed Iraqi government.

The lack of comprehensive post-conflict planning and effective nation-building efforts was a critical failure in the U.S. approach to Iraq. After the initial military success, the U.S. struggled to stabilize the country, promote reconciliation, and establish the necessary institutions for a functioning democracy.

The emergence of insurgency and terrorism further hindered the U.S. objectives in Iraq. Various militant groups, including al-Qaeda in Iraq and later the Islamic State (ISIS), exploited the security vacuum, sectarian tensions, and grievances against the U.S. occupation to carry out attacks and destabilize the country. These groups capitalized on the discontent among marginalized Sunni communities, which felt excluded from the new political order

Regional dynamics, including the influence of neighboring countries, further complicated the U.S. mission in Iraq. Iran, a predominantly Shiite nation, sought to exert its influence in Iraq by supporting Shiite militias and political factions, thus exacerbating sectarian tensions. Additionally, the regional rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia played out in Iraq, fueling proxy conflicts and undermining stability.

Public opinion and domestic politics in both the United States and Iraq also influenced the failure to achieve stated objectives. In the U.S., opposition to the war grew as the conflict dragged on and casualties mounted. This opposition influenced policy decisions, including the decision to withdraw troops prematurely. In Iraq, internal divisions and power struggles among different political factions hindered the formation of a unified government and undermined the effectiveness of governance.

The enormous economic costs associated with the war in Iraq also contributed to the failure to achieve stated objectives. The financial burden of the conflict, combined with the mismanagement of funds allocated for reconstruction, hindered progress in rebuilding the country.

Conclusion

The United States' imposition of sanctions, military aggression, and criticisms of its imperialistic policies towards Iraq have had far-reaching consequences. The economic sanctions resulted in a humanitarian crisis and a weakened economy, while the military interventions and subsequent occupation created instability and sectarian tensions. The criticisms of US imperialism in Iraq center on violations of sovereignty, geopolitical interests, and the failure to establish a stable political order. The sanctions impacted Iraq's economy, leading to a sharp decline in GDP, increased poverty rates, and soaring unemployment levels. The effects of these economic sanctions were felt by the Iraqi people for over a decade and resulted in a weakened infrastructure and reduced living standards (Alnasrawi, 2001). The US military interventions in Iraq further exemplified its imperialistic policies. In 2003, the US, along with its coalition partners, launched Operation Iraqi Freedom, leading to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime. The US actions in Iraq have faced substantial criticism from various quarters, including human rights organizations, anti-war activists, and international observers. One of the key criticisms has been the violation of Iraq's sovereignty. Critics argue that the US interventions in Iraq were driven by geopolitical interests and the desire to gain control over Iraq's oil reserves (Ali, 2003). These are the key highlights that explore US imperialism in Iraq with all its facets.

General Conclusion

The relationship between Iraq and the United States has been complex and multifaceted throughout history. In the early 20th century, Iraq was under British mandate after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. The United States began to engage with Iraq politically and economically during the 1920s. However, the relationship between the two nations did not fully develop until after World War II. The motives behind US imperialism in Iraq were complex, encompassing financial interests, geopolitical calculations, and ideological ambitions. The pursuit of oil resources, regional hegemony, countering Iranian influence, promoting democracy, and addressing perceived security threats all played significant roles in shaping US foreign policy in Iraq. The most important event however is Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, after which the United States, along with the United Nations, imposed comprehensive economic sanctions on Iraq. These sanctions, which lasted until 2003, severely affected the Iraqi population and hindered economic development. This led The United States' invasion of Iraq in 2003 which sparked debates regarding its imperialistic motives. Critics argue that the invasion aimed to control Iraq's vast oil reserves and establish a political foothold in the region. This perceived imperialistic agenda strained the relations between the two nations. The United States' invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq in 2003 have been subjects of intense debate. The criticisms raised against US actions primarily revolve around violation of international law, geopolitical interests, and the exacerbation of instability and sectarian.

The consequences of the Iraq invasion were far-reaching. On the positive side, Saddam Hussein's dictatorship ended, and Iraq held several elections, forming a new government. However, the country faced a protracted insurgency and sectarian violence, with a significant number of civilian and military casualties. The invasion also strained

U.S. relationships with other nations and generated considerable anti-American sentiment in the region and around the world.

The research thus confirms the hypothesis that the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 was driven by a desire to gain control over Iraq's significant oil reserves. It also confirms the hypothesis that the U.S. sought to establish a dominant military and political presence in the Middle East, with Iraq being a strategic stepping stone. The research denies the hypothesis that suggests that the U.S. intervention was driven by genuine concerns over Iraq's alleged WMD capabilities and a desire to prevent their potential use. And finally the research confirms the hypothesis that suggests that the U.S. invaded Iraq as a response to the 9/11 attacks, aiming to remove Saddam Hussein's regime, which was perceived as a threat due to its alleged links to terrorism.

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ملخص

لعبت السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة دورًا مهمًا في تشكيل علاقاتها مع الدول الأخرى ، ومن الأمثلة البارزة على ذلك التدخل الأمريكي في العراق. يمكن أن تُعزى الدوافع وراء الإمبريالية الأمريكية في العراق إلى عوامل مختلفة.

مخاوف أمنية: بعد هجمات الحادي عشر من سبتمبر الإرهابية ، سعت حكومة الولايات المتحدة إلى تعزيز أمنها القومي من خلال معالجة التهديدات المحتملة في الشرق الأوسط. أدى الاعتقاد بأن العراق يمتلك أسلحة دمار شامل ويمكنه دعم الإرهاب إلى قرار الغزو.

المصالح الجيوسياسية: موقع العراق الاستراتيجي في الشرق الأوسط ، إلى جانب احتياطياته النفطية الهائلة ، جعله هدفًا جذابًا للمصالح الأمريكية. كان ضمان الوصول إلى موارد النفط والحفاظ على النفوذ في المنطقة من الاعتبارات الجيوسياسية الرئيسية.

نشر الديمقراطية: بررت إدارة بوش التدخل على أنه جزء من استراتيجية أوسع لتعزيز الديمقراطية والحرية في الشرق الأوسط. كانوا يهدفون إلى إقامة حكومة ديمقراطية في العراق يمكن أن تكون بمثابة نموذج للمنطقة ، وتعزيز الاستقرار ومواجهة الأنظمة الاستبدادية.

القضاء على تهديد: كان يُنظر إلى صدام حسين ، الزعيم العراقي السابق ، على أنه قوة مزعومة للاستقرار في المنطقة. سعت الولايات المتحدة إلى إبعاده عن السلطة ، معتقدة أن ذلك سيؤدي إلى عراق أكثر استقرارًا وتأييدًا للغرب.

لكن التدخل الأمريكي في العراق واجه تحديات وانتقادات كبيرة. أدى الغزو ، الذي وقع في عام 2003 ، إلى صراع طويل الأمد ومكلف. لم يتم العثور على أسلحة الدمار الشامل المتوقعة ، وانحدر البلد إلى فراغ في السلطة ، وعنف طائفي ، وتمرد.

يجادل النقاد بأن الإمبريالية الأمريكية لعبت دورًا في زعزعة استقرار العراق بشكل أكبر. يزعمون أن دوافع التدخل كانت مدفوعة بالمصالح الاقتصادية والرغبة في ممارسة الهيمنة ، وليس المخاوف الحقيقية للأمن القومي أو تعزيز الديمقراطية. أدت تداعيات الغزو إلى عواقب سياسية واجتماعية واقتصادية كبيرة ، حيث لا يزال العراق يكافح مع تداعياته حتى يومنا هذا.