

THE ROADMAP TO IRAQ: HOW 9/11 FACILITATED THE 2003 INVASION

by

Michael L. Shumway

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ABSTRACT

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Michael L. Shumway

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The attacks of 11 September 2001 not only resulted in retaliatory attacks upon the nation of Afghanistan for its harboring of the terror cell al Qaeda but also for the later U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Although initial intelligence connected the terrorist group al Qaeda to the attacks, Bush's administration officials began assembling intelligence on Iraq's weapons capabilities and its possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction. In this 2002 National Security Strategy, Bush announced his administration's position that the United States would react pre-emptively to threats against the United States or its global interests. This pre-emptive position opened the door for the United States to act on the presumed threats that the nation of Iraq posed. The Bush administration manipulated and misrepresented intelligence about the weapons capabilities of President Hussein in support of their argument for the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The Bush administration acted unilaterally, without the approval of military force by the United Nations, but with the support of numerous allied nations across the globe. The war ended with a withdrawal of coalition forces on 15 December 2011 leaving Iraq in a more destabilized position than when the U.S. invaded eight years earlier. This thesis investigates the role that Bush administration officials had in leading the nation to war, the complacency of the mainstream

media in disseminating the rhetoric of the administration, and the reasons that certain allies of the United States had in joining the fight and what led other longtime allies not to participate.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 CHAPTER 1	9
3 CHAPTER 2	62
4 CHAPTER 3	110
5 CONCLUSION	138
REFERENCES	148

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Council on American-Islamic Relations	CAIR
Chemical and Biological Warfare	CBW
U.S. Central Command	CENTCOM
Central Intelligence Agency	CIA
Department of Homeland Security	DHS
Department of Defense	DOD
Department of Transportation	DOT
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	EEOC
Global War on Terror	GWOT
Human Rights Watch	HRW
The International Atomic Energy Agency	IAEA
Intelligence and Research	INR
Middle East Peace Process	MEPP
North Atlantic Treaty Organization	NATO
National Intelligence Estimate	NIE
Non-Proliferation Treaty	NPT
National Security Council	NSC
National Security Strategy	NSS
Operation Enduring Freedom	OEF
Principals Committee	PC
Policy Coordination Committee	PCC
Project for the New American Century	PNAC
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	PTSD
Special Operations Forces	SOF
Transportation Security Administration	TSA
United Nations	UN
Weapons of Mass Destruction	WMD

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This work is dedicated to my wife Cassie Shumway
and my children Nathan Martin, Emmaline Shumway, and Jovie Shumway

“...the decision of one man to launch a wholly unjustified and brutal invasion of Iraq – I mean Ukraine”

President George W. Bush speaking on the Russian invasion of Ukraine accidentally spoke of Iraq.

Julian Borger, “George W Bush Accidentally Admits Iraq War Was 'Unjustified and Brutal' in Gaffe,” *The Guardian* (Guardian News and Media, May 19, 2022), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/may/19/george-bush-iraq-ukraine-speech>.

Thesis Introduction

I was drawn to the topic of the 2003 invasion of Iraq because it was a factor in my enlisting in the U.S. Navy Reserve while in college. I was not aware of much of the manipulated intelligence that the Bush administration used in pushing for the war. Truthfully, I was swayed in favor of the invasion, largely by the speech of Secretary of State Colin Powell before the United Nations on 5 February 2003. However, as more information became known about how President Bush tailored and misrepresented information pertaining to the supposed threat that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein posed to the United States, I felt like the president conned the citizens he was supposed to represent. More so, he had sent troops into harm's way because of this intelligence. This included friends of mine in the military. A close friend was injured by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). Others that I knew were injured or killed in this war. Some came home with the mental challenges of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Because of these reasons, I felt compelled to research this topic for my M.A. Thesis to better understand the truth of the war as best as it can be understood so soon after its beginning and end. I argue that the attacks of 11 September 2001 facilitated foreign policy changes in the U.S. that opened the door for a unilateral invasion of Iraq in 2003 based upon misrepresented intelligence.

I would like to also note that due to the short period of time that has passed since the invasion of Iraq, there are inherent limitations with analyzing this invasion. First, although I found a relatively fair number of sources to compose this thesis, a considerable amount of information remains classified. Even the primary source documents that I did obtain through the Freedom of Information Act have been heavily redacted. The use of autobiographies from key members of the Bush administration and foreign leaders that supported and opposed the military action in Iraq became key texts in this contemporary historical analysis. However, there is the inherent fact that

few persons would admit to all of their faults in an autobiography that was written to portray the author as honorable and not disclosing all questionable foreign policy moves that were made. I do not write this thesis with the aims of answering all of the questions about the invasion of Iraq in 2003 but instead hope that it serves as a steppingstone for future research as more information comes to light. I argue that the war in Iraq in 2003 forever impacted U.S. foreign policy and the impact upon the war on the U.S. hegemon deserves critical analysis from the period of invasion to the present day through interdisciplinary analysis.

My research into a subsection of military history was somewhat difficult as my university has not had a military historian on the faculty for a number of years. Luckily, I did have an advisor who was supportive in my exploration of the topic. In an age where most terrorist threats come from non-state actors, some readers may inquire about why the topic of military history is still relevant. The fact is that the threat of an amorphous War on Terror led the United States to wage war against Afghanistan for harboring the terrorist group al Qaeda that executed the 9/11 attacks and against Iraq for its supposed ties to al Qaeda and possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). However, each of these wars occurred within a geographically bounded nation state. In each situation, the war against a uniformed enemy was brief and the enemies of the U.S. military quickly became non-state actors. Even as the United States faces future threats against terrorists globally, the military works hand-in-hand with the U.S. Department of State in building working relationships with governments where these threats operate. Also, like traditional warfare, the War on Terror prompted the U.S. to seek allied states to partner with to fight the war against non-state actors.

As the United States faces terrorist combatants that do not necessarily represent a nation state, the face of warfare has changed. Traditional warfare has been replaced by irregular or

asymmetric warfare and the threat of “catastrophic” WMDs appear more ominous in the hands of terrorist groups than they did during the Cold War when the U.S.S.R. was the United States’ primary enemy.¹ With the U.S. engaged in a War on Terror the manner in which the separate service branches and the various commands within the branches contributed differently in the fight against terrorism. For example, the U.S. Navy is responsible for the safety of the seas as more than ninety-five per cent of the world’s commerce moves across the oceans. It is predicted that terrorists may hide a WMD in a shipping container aboard one of the commercial vessels. Additionally, the rate of piracy has increased in recent years and it is a method employed by terrorist organizations to threaten seafaring while also using coastal waterways to smuggle drugs, which are used to fund their organizations.² These are just a couple of examples depicting the transformation of the mission of the U.S. military in the twenty-first century.

Historian Brian Brivati, political scientist Julia Buxton, and historian Anthony Seldon argued in their text on contemporary history that the study of this area of history teeters between necessary and essential. Since the mid-1990s, the study of the subject has proven itself to be valuable and quieted detractors that previously questioned its place in academia. Brivati, Buxton, and Seldon describe the contemporary history period as anything that took place after 1945. It should be noted that over two decades have passed since their definition was recorded. A definition that seems more fluid as time progresses defines contemporary history as the period in which there remain living witnesses that can provide an oral history of events that transpired. By either definition of the term, the study of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 fits the definition of contemporary history. Brivati, Buxton, and Seldon stress the value of understanding

¹ James C. Bradford, *A Companion to American Military History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2010), p. 309.

² Bradford, *A Companion to American Military History*, p. 310.

contemporary history and the importance of what has occurred in the modern age. Although we do not have access to the entirety of the historical record of the Iraq War, this is the time to begin evaluating the roots of the war and its effects on nations of the world and the United Nations.³

The end of this introduction to the discussion of the role that the 9/11 attacks played in facilitating the invasion of Iraq in 2003 provides an overview of how the rest of the thesis progresses. The beginning of the first chapter delivers a brief literature review of points not generally agreed upon by all academics regarding the intelligence at play in the invasion of Iraq, the impacts and motivations that U.S. allied countries had in supporting or opposing the war, and the impact of the mass media in the story of Iraq. The first chapter also analyzes the drafting of President George W. Bush's foreign policy that enabled the invasion of Iraq, which was based upon the claim that Iraq was an imminent threat to the United States and worldwide democracy. This chapter examines the significant break in U.S. foreign policy that enabled President George W. Bush to invade Iraq. Security Strategies are developed by each presidential administration that lay out their perception of the role the United States has on the world stage on issues ranging from economics to terrorism for instance. Also significant is how Bush's Iraq policy supported incomplete, faulty, and possibly intentionally distorted intelligence that, the administration argued, demonstrated President Hussein had possession of WMDs. The discussion of removing Hussein was well underway by the early 1990s. Although there was a covert plan to oust Hussein during Desert Storm, it was reportedly not considered a major objective.⁴ There was pressure on

³ Brian Brivati, Julia Buxton, and Anthony Seldon, *The Contemporary History Handbook* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. xv-xxiii, https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Contemporary_History_Handbook/rmO7AAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=contemporary+history+handbook&printsec=frontcover.

⁴ Don Oberdorfer, "U.S. Rejects Calls for Efforts to Oust Hussein," U.S. Rejects Calls for Efforts to Oust Hussein (Los Angeles Times, December 24, 1998), <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1998-dec-24-mn-57258-story.html>.

the Clinton administration by members of the U.S. Congress to oust Hussein by 1998, which was rejected by individuals from the think tank Project for the New American Century (PNAC) in the same year, many of those representing PNAC would later serve in the Bush Administration.⁵ However, it was not until 28 April 2002 that The *New York Times* published an article titled “U.S. envisions blueprint on Iraq including big invasion next year” that publicly signaled the U.S. plans for invading Iraq as a logical follow-up to Afghanistan. It was also a priority for the administration to find the connections that showed Iraq was tied to terrorism and specifically the al Qaeda network.⁶ President George W. Bush and his administration tasked the CIA to compose an up-to-date National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) for Iraq in 2001 to analyze the threat that they posed in the form of terrorism and WMDs. The NIE was interpreted by the administration as the proof that they needed against Iraq despite the NIE’s intelligence agents couching the details with a balanced counternarrative citing the lack of solid current intelligence.⁷ Finally, chapter one will also investigate the soft power of United States hegemony over the years and how soft power influenced nations before the invasion occurred.

The second chapter analyzes the media’s role in building President George W. Bush’s rhetoric and support for the military action in Iraq. While President George W. Bush rallied against terrorists in the Middle East, some U.S. citizens developed a negative, hateful view of Muslims. Discrimination against Muslims was not uncommon before 9/11. However, the rhetoric

⁵ Tyler Marshall, “U.S. Rejects Calls for Efforts to Oust Hussein,” U.S. Rejects Calls for Efforts to Oust Hussein (Los Angeles Times, December 24, 1998), <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1998-dec-24-mn-57258-story.html>.

⁶ Alexander G. Nikolaev and Ernest A. Hakanen, *Leading to the 2003 Iraq War: The Global Media Debate* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 2.

⁷ “The Black Vault,” The Black Vault (2019), <https://www.theblackvault.com/documentarchive/iraqs-continuing-programs-for-weapons-of-mass-destruction-october-2002/>.

against Middle Eastern terrorism amplified discrimination and hate. Subsequently, some Muslim-Americans became victims of hate crimes due to Muslim stereotypes.⁸ The media gave tacit consent for the invasion of Iraq and very little was written in the mainstream media that was critical of the wartime president or pre-emptive war against the Middle Eastern nation. It is worth noting that President George W. Bush experienced extremely favorable approval ratings for his handling of Afghanistan and the plans for Iraq. Between August and November of 2002, polls conducted by *USA Today* measured Bush's public support between fifty-seven and fifty-eight percent. According to Gallup Polling, this support reached eighty-eight per cent by March 2003.⁹ Public backing of the invasion of Iraq emboldened President George W. Bush to act unilaterally in a military sense if he could not get long-standing allied nations to contribute to and legitimize the mission of deposing Hussein. This chapter will also compare the role of the media in telling the story of the Vietnam War and what was similar regarding the treatment of embedded journalists in the Iraq War of 2003.

The third chapter examines how President George W. Bush cobbled together a Coalition of the Willing and investigates the reasons behind Germany and France's official opposition to the pre-emptive war in Iraq. This chapter examines the role the coalition had in unifying the United States and some of its allies and identifies what other longtime allies chose to rebuke militarization of the Iraq-U.S. conflict. I ask, what motivated certain countries to support the war through financial support, access to territories to launch the invasion, and sending troops alongside the U.S. service members? The support for an invasion of Iraq was considerably less than the U.S. experienced in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan. In the case of Afghanistan,

⁸ Mahmoud Eid. "The New Era of Media and Terrorism." *Studies in conflict and terrorism* 36, no. 7 (2013): 609–610.

⁹ Nikolaev and Hakanen, *Leading to the 2003 Iraq War*, 3-37.

the terrorists targeted were intolerable, and the events of 9/11 would not go unanswered. However, the strike against Afghanistan differed from the pre-emptive war planned in Iraq. Although the mission in Iraq was different than Afghanistan, the problem of getting allies to commit troops or funds seemed to stem more from the questionable intelligence and the fact that a pre-emptive war conflicted with the U.N. Charter and international laws that many countries supported. Furthermore, it is worth considering that Britain chose to support the United States in a power play to bolster its previously held hegemonic position.

Although Britain and Australia chose to be significant contributors in the coalition, it is of considerable importance to recognize the United States allies that stood against American military action in Iraq. The long-time U.S. allies, France and Germany, distanced themselves from the Coalition of the Willing and the seemingly unavoidable military action. However, neither country initially took a public stance against the invasion until it became clear that it impacted their domestic politics and the public approval ratings of leaders Chirac and Schröder. President Bush was proactive in attempting to sway these leaders into gaining their support, but these efforts were ineffective. If there can be one thing identified as a matter of support that Germany gave the United States, it was the tip of what turned out to be faulty or manipulated intelligence from an Iraqi defector. Though Germany had doubts about the intelligence source, the U.S. ran with it as more evidence for Bush's call to arms against Iraq.

The three chapters will conclude by examining the causes for the invasion of Iraq from the early years of the administration and why specific key points in the march to war built support for the invasion. Secondly, it is worth looking at the motivations of Bush's creation of the Axis of Evil countries of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea and why the administration chose to attack Iraq and

not take action against the others. Finally, I will examine the current state of U.S. hegemony and look at its utilization post-9/11.

The recent end to the war in Iraq on 15 December 2011 has changed the landscape of international relations and foreign policy between Iraq and the nations that invaded it on 19 March 2003. Finally, the conclusion asks if the doctrine of pre-emptive war has been utilized by other nations since it was put into action by the U.S. in Iraq in 2003. Without the occurrence of another country feeling threatened by an opposing government with ties to WMDs, it is hard to guess how the pre-emption angle might unfold. Should the United States find itself in a similar situation in the future, as it was following 9/11, the multitude of variables makes it impossible to assume how a future president and their international partners may respond. Although the act of pre-emptive war was clearly taken in Iraq in 2003, the difficult relations that the United States had with other nations as a result of the invasion may give future administrations pause before following a similar path of military action instead of pursuing diplomatic measures to a greater degree.

Chapter One: A Drastic Shift in U.S. Foreign Policy

Two critical events occurred that facilitated the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the creation of the 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States. These two events enabled President George W. Bush and his administration to plan an expansion of the War on Terror beyond the territorial boundaries of Afghanistan. The retaliatory strikes of 9/11, against those responsible for the attacks, allowed for talk amongst U.S. officials of targeting Iraq over one year later from the tragic, massive loss of life on U.S. soil. The likes of such an attack had not been seen in the U.S. since the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on 7 December 1941.

The second event that allowed for discussion amongst the Bush administration regarding the potential targeting of Iraq was the 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States that codified the priorities of the U.S. in matters ranging from economics, trade, foreign policy, and military action, just to name a handful. In this particular National Security Strategy (NSS), the Bush administration made it clear that it would take pre-emptive action against terrorists and it would act unilaterally if necessary. These key points from this National Security Strategy represented a critical break from previous National Security Strategies by its explicit intent to act preventatively in Iraq and declare such actions pre-emptive because it faced a potential threat that must be addressed before the threat of a mushroom cloud appeared in the heartland of the United States.

The annual National Security Strategy, that the president is tasked by Congress to release, is important not just for military matters but declares the priorities of the administration both domestically and regarding foreign relations. The relevant points of this National Security Strategy for this thesis were the groundwork for the formation of the Bush Doctrine. Although

the National Security Strategy of 2002 was critical for President George W. Bush's foreign policy agenda following the attacks of 9/11, discussion about an ousting of President Hussein of Iraq existed in policy circles years before President George W. Bush took office on 20 January 2001. When the events of 9/11 occurred, the fear of terrorism altered the psyche of most U.S. citizens and the Bush administration seized upon this to start working on a plan to target President Hussein.

Although the Bush administration did not plan to just march into Iraq and depose Hussein, they utilized the United Nations to submit for a vote on a resolution to the U.N. Security Council for unfettered access by U.N. weapons inspectors to ensure the disarmament of the nation, which was ordered by a previous U.N. Security Council resolution following the Gulf War of 1990-1991. I discuss the motivations that Hussein had for making the weapons inspections process difficult or impossible. I will review evidence that President George W. Bush had additional motivations to strike Iraq and depose Hussein in this chapter as well. The penultimate topic discussed in this chapter is the legality of the invasion of Iraq, using primary and secondary sources, by former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and legal scholars of various backgrounds. The final topic examined is the role of the United States as hegemon and the expectations placed upon it by the international community. I begin by examining the cleavage the 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States and President George W. Bush's foreign policy crafting created as a result of the attacks of 11 September 2001.

Why the National Security Strategy Matters

In the introduction to this thesis, I discussed why the definition of “pre-emption” evolved between Presidents Reagan and George W. Bush. However, the idea of a pre-emptive war against another nation was something unlike the U.S. had participated in or the U.N. had ever dealt with in the past. The wording of the 2002 National Security Strategy is striking as a piece of the groundwork for the war in Iraq. First, however, it is crucial to trace the transformation of U.S. foreign policy in the recent, previous office-holders of the U.S. presidency. The NSS documents that each president since Ronald Reagan has produced is the result of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986. The main objective of the Goldwater-Nichols Act was to reform the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the various military service branches to operate jointly and create clear objectives in military planning. For approximately four decades before Goldwater-Nichols, the different branches of the military experienced mission failure and casualties because of a lack of a defined hierarchy and unified military cohesion. Although some senior military members had attempted to internally reform the broken system in the past (from 1943 through the early 1980s), a retiring chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General David Jones, declared in 1982 that the system was so dysfunctional that it was now time for Congress to intervene and re-structure the different service branches.¹⁰

When Congressman William Nichols (D-AL) joined forces with Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ) in 1985, the two congressmen worked together with Congressman Les Aspin (D-WI) to reform the armed services and review defense reorganization. The overarching goal of the Goldwater-Nichols Act was to achieve success in joint operations while also meeting the

¹⁰ James R. Locher, “Has it Worked?: The Goldwater-Nichols Reorganization Act,” *Naval War College Review* 54, no. 4 (2001): pp. 95-101, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26393873>.

needs of each branch of the military services. However, the means to reach this balance was the requirement that the president submit an annual national security strategy, beginning in 1987, which was used to prioritize and fiscally plan for the most important strategic plans of the administration. The NSS from each administration explicitly stated the priorities of each presidential team, from defense to economic and humanitarian goals.¹¹ Although the NSS documents are considered part of the record of the Executive Branch, they are developed by the National Security Council (NSC), the Principals Committee (PC), the Policy Coordination Committee (PCC), and the Deputies Committee. The Deputies Committee is composed of the National Security Advisor (Chair), the State Department, the Department of Defense, and the Deputy Secretary of Energy, just to name a handful.¹²

President Reagan's first NSS, "National Security Strategy of the United States," was released in January 1987. Although the first NSS covered the specific items proscribed by the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the area that pertains to this thesis is how it addresses responses to terrorist actions against the United States and its interests abroad. The NSS lays out how the U.S. will respond to terrorist actions early on by stating that the U.S. will deal with terrorist threats to the U.S. and its citizens globally in a manner "short of armed conflict."¹³ President Reagan was not oblivious to the danger that terrorism posed, as U.S. citizens and U.S. interests abroad were the victims of state-sponsored terrorist attacks during his presidency.¹⁴ Furthermore, Reagan's

¹¹ Locher, "Has it Worked?," pp. 95-115.

¹² Richard B. Doyle, "The U.S. National Security Strategy: Policy, Process, Problems," *Public Administration Review* 67, no. 4 (2007): pp. 624-629, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2007.00748.x>.

¹³ Ronald Reagan, "National Security Strategy of the United States, 1987," National Security Strategy of the United States, 1987 (1987), p. 4, <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>.

¹⁴ The most significant terrorist attack during the presidency of Ronald Reagan occurred in Beirut, Lebanon on 23 October 1983. The bombing of a U.S. Marine barracks claimed the lives

first NSS states that the U.S. will isolate and build international pressure on states that sponsor terrorism.

Interestingly, near the end of the first Reagan NSS document, the president stated that terrorism may sometimes be part of low-intensity conflict. The administration will deter, and pre-emptively react to trans-national terrorism by addressing subversive attacks. As I have worked to demonstrate thus far in this thesis, the interpretation of the term pre-emption is vital when comparing previous NSS documents to the 2002 NSS of President George W. Bush. President Reagan's definition of pre-emptive attacks was consistently a reaction to terrorism through limited scope airstrikes and never involved the invasion of another country or a full-scale war.¹⁵

While pre-emptive attacks against terrorist targets under previous U.S. presidents were a reactionary measure to attacks on U.S. interests, more importantly they were done to prevent further attacks that were imminent in nature. These pre-emptive attacks were also limited in nature and prior to the administration of President George W. Bush, they never included the large-scale use of military force. After the attacks of 11 September 2001, the 2002 NSS wrote of pre-emptive attacks as measures used to prevent a later threat potentially posed by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. This new definition of pre-emption, based on the 2002 NSS, would be described by the Bush administration as a measure to prevent a possible future attack. This is the

of 241 American service members, fifty-eight French soldiers, and six civilians. However, this was not the first attack in Beirut, as an earlier attack at the U.S. Embassy in April of the same year resulted in seventeen Marines killed and numerous Lebanese civilians. These two significant attacks account for the majority of fatalities of service members during the first four years of the Reagan administration but there were an additional fifty one service members killed from international terrorism in Reagan's first four years in office. For further reading: Michael Stohl, "Terrorism, States, and State Terrorism: The Reagan Administration in the Middle East," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1987): 162–72. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41857905>.

¹⁵ Reagan, "National Security Strategy of the United States, 1987," pp. 1-41.

key difference between pre-emption as described and used by U.S. presidents that served prior to George W. Bush.

In President Reagan's 1988 NSS, how the administration would react to terrorism is essentially-unchanged since the 1987 NSS. However, there is one difference that isn't a change in policy towards terrorism but recognizes the importance of the intelligence community in identifying and reducing threats to the U.S., its citizens, and its interests abroad. A second modification between the 1987 NSS and the 1988 NSS is the inclusion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance as a relationship that will address terrorism beyond the borders of NATO countries. Finally, the 1988 NSS continued the awareness of the 1987 NSS in identifying the threat of terrorism that both Libya and Iran posed towards worldwide democracy. Fascinatingly, the 1988 NSS made no mention of pre-emption in any form, even when the document discusses the U.S. response to terrorism or its prevention.¹⁶

President George H.W. Bush's 1990 NSS was similar to President Reagan's 1987 NSS regarding terrorism and threats to the United States, its citizens, and its interests abroad. The 1990 NSS resurrected the verbiage of the response to terrorism in a manner "short of armed conflict."¹⁷ There is also an interesting comparison between President George H.W. Bush's NSS and his son, President George W. Bush's NSS. The former's NSS stated that weapons of mass destruction and their proliferation are a threat. Still, his response to this threat is that the administration will build international pressure against these programs. President George H.W.

¹⁶ Ronald Reagan, "National Security Strategy of the United States, 1988," National Security Strategy of the United States, 1988 (1988), pp. 1-48, <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>.

¹⁷ George H.W. Bush, "National Security Strategy of the United States 1990," National Security Strategy of the United States 1990 (1990), p. 2, <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>.

Bush clearly stated that the U.S. response to nuclear threats is to use a coalition of nations to utilize diplomacy to deter such actions.¹⁸ His son, President George W. Bush, stated twelve years later that the primary reason the Iraq invasion in 2003 must occur was because of the threat that nuclear weapons posed to the U.S. and the international community. Even setting aside that no WMDs were found in Iraq following the invasion, it is interesting how the threats of WMDs, rogue states, and terrorism were handled differently by President George H.W. Bush than by President George W. Bush in the post-9/11 environment. As an aside, although President George H.W. Bush declared, after the conclusion of the Cold War, that it was time for a New World Order, there is no substantial evidence that future U.S. presidents, his son included, subscribed to this belief.

The 1991 NSS from President George H.W. Bush mirrors the policy of the 1990 NSS on the issues of terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and pre-emption relevant to this thesis. What is important to consider here is that the 1991 NSS was published after the conclusion of Desert Storm, and President Hussein had been repelled from his invasion of Kuwait. President Hussein had proven to the world, and especially to nations like the United States, that he was a threat to the region and the world. Despite all of this, it is interesting that the U.S. hoped to bolster states in the region and secure peace while ensuring that Iraq complied with the U.N. inspectors required by U.N. Security Council Resolution 687. The objective of U.N. Security Council Resolution 687 was the dismantling of all of Iraq's nuclear weapons and the cessation of all of Iraq's nuclear-related activities. Although the containment of the threat that President Hussein

¹⁸ H.W. Bush, "National Security Strategy of the United States 1990," p.13.

posed received an understandable amount of attention in the wake of Desert Storm, a policy of pre-emption does not exist in the 1991 NSS.¹⁹

President George H.W. Bush's final NSS was released in 1993. From the beginning of the document, the NSS still prioritized its goals with the memory of Desert Storm fresh in the administration's mind. President George H.W. Bush stressed the threat that weapons proliferation, WMDs, terrorism, and other issues like narcotics posed. The NSS spelled out the importance that the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) had on the world in encouraging the 150+ signatories to cease the production of nuclear arms by the U.S. pledging to do the same in a manner of good faith. The treaty to draw-down nuclear weapons worldwide is one measure of effective diplomacy that came after recognizing the threat that nuclear arms had in intensifying the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Furthermore, the NSS recognized the significance of terrorism after the hostage crisis in Lebanon and terrorism's ability to destabilize U.S. national security. While this NSS spelled out a policy of non-concession to terrorists, it also clearly indicated that the administration's policy regarding terrorism is to unify the world to isolate and pressure states that sponsor terrorism economically. What is essential once again is that this NSS did not speak of pre-emptive or unilateral policies in addressing terrorism or rogue nations.²⁰

President Bill Clinton's first NSS, released in 1994, discussed the significance of terrorism in the modern era, the importance of the cooperation of the intelligence agencies, and

¹⁹ George H.W. Bush, "National Security Strategy of the United States 1991," National Security Strategy of the United States 1991 (1991), pp. 1-34, <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>.

²⁰ George H.W. Bush, "National Security Strategy of the United States, 1993," National Security Strategy of the United States, 1993 (1993), pp. 1-21, <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>.

international cooperation in combatting terrorism, and pointed out the significant threat of WMDs in the hands of terrorist organizations. There is also a claim in the NSS that Iraq posed a specific threat as a terrorist nation due to the belief that they had planned to assassinate former President George H.W. Bush. However, subsequent intelligence disputed Iraq's role in this plot despite the proclamations of George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, and others.²¹ The 1994 Clinton NSS doubles down on the policy of containment against the nations of Iraq and Iran, targeting the leaders of these nations to induce compliance and change. Despite the belief that Iraq had planned to assassinate a former U.S. president and the history of violence that President Hussein demonstrated, the official U.S. policy did not include invoking a regime change or to launch an invasion of the nation of Iraq.²²

In President Clinton's 1995 NSS, the president stated that perpetrators of terrorism are to be targeted and brought to justice through the cooperation of states and that the U.S. will aid other states in combatting terrorism.²³ President Clinton's 1996 NSS noted how legislation bolstered the federal government's support to law enforcement officers in fighting terrorism within the borders of the United States. The 1996 NSS once again increased funding for

²¹ Bill Clinton, "National Security Strategy of the United States, 1994," National Security Strategy of the United States, 1994 (1994), pp. 1-29, <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>; Knight-Ridder/Tribune, "CIA Says Iraqi Plot to Kill Bush May Be Fiction," CIA Says Iraqi Plot to Kill Bush May be Fiction (Chicago Tribune, May 27, 1993), <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1993-05-27-9305270298-story.html>.; George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York, NY: Crown, 2010), p. 305.; Dick Cheney and Liz Cheney, *In My Time: A Personal and Political Memoir* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2011), p. 381.; Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (New York, NY: Crown, 2011), p. 124.; Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York, NY: Sentinel, 2011), p. 451.

²² Clinton, "National Security Strategy of the United States, 1994," p. 25.

²³ Bill Clinton, "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, 1995," National Security Strategy of the United States, 1995 (1995), pp. 1-32, <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>.

intelligence agencies to combat terrorism. The 1996 NSS boasted that the U.S. brought to justice those responsible for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and that additional nations cooperated in fighting terrorism globally. Notably, military force was not included as a proper tool in responding to terrorist threats in this NSS.²⁴ The 1997 NSS had one significant change regarding terrorism by placing it at the top of the diplomatic agenda.²⁵ The 1998 NSS noted that the U.S. signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings to increase international cooperation in fighting terrorism and bringing terrorists to justice. The 1998 NSS also stated that the U.S. intelligence community was working to bring Osama bin Laden to justice for the U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania that year. As each NSS was published from the beginning of the document's conception in 1986, how the U.S. addressed terror evolved, usually through small, incremental changes.²⁶

The 1999 NSS, developed by the Clinton administration, discussed the limited strikes against an al Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan due to overwhelming intelligence that bin Laden's group was responsible for the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings. The document stated that the U.S. response to the bombing attacks was proportionate and carried out because of the imminent threat the camps and al Qaeda posed to the U.S. and its interests abroad. Also, the

²⁴ Bill Clinton, "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, 1996," A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, 1996 (1996), pp. 1-45, <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>.

²⁵ Bill Clinton, "A National Security Strategy for a New Century, 1997," A National Security Strategy for a New Century, 1997 (1997), pp. 1-34, <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>.

²⁶ Bill Clinton, "A National Security Strategy for a New Century, 1998," A National Security Strategy for a New Century, 1998 (1998), pp. 1-59, <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>.

administration's policy of containment regarding Iraq continued in this 1999 NSS.²⁷ However, in the 2000 NSS, one sentence regarding the administration's policy for Iraq had changed slightly. Although containment and the U.N. Oil-for-Food Program would continue, President Clinton stated that the U.S. would support Iraqis seeking to replace or remove the government of President Hussein to institute peace in the region.²⁸

The Idea of Ousting Hussein Did Not Begin After 9/11

The most vociferous proponents of removing President Hussein from power would later serve on the Bush administration in 2000. In an Op-Ed piece in *The New York Times* dated 30 January 1998, two members of Project for the New American Century (PNAC), William Kristol and Robert Kagan, wrote that the Clinton administration must remove Saddam Hussein. They argued that Hussein must never again be allowed to possess WMDs and the only way to ensure that doesn't happen is by his forceful removal and the dismantling of his regime from power. The PNAC authors wrote that the planned targeted missile attacks against Iraq would never be sufficient in stifling the threat that Hussein posed. They end their article with a warning that if President Hussein is allowed to remain in power, he will serve as an example that other Middle East nations can ignore threats by the U.S., which would be dire for the region.²⁹

²⁷ Bill Clinton, "A National Security Strategy for a New Century, 1999," A National Security Strategy for a New Century, 1999 (1999), pp. 1-49, <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>.

²⁸ Bill Clinton, "A National Security Strategy for a Global Age, 2000," A National Security Strategy for a Global Age, 2000 (2000), pp. 1-84, <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>.

²⁹ William Kristol and Robert Kagan, "Bombing Iraq Isn't Enough," *The New York Times* (*The New York Times*, January 30, 1998), <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/01/30/opinion/bombing-iraq-isn-t-enough.html>.

The neoconservatives (Robert Kagan and Bill Kristol) that formed the think tank PNAC in 1997 demanded, first under President Bill Clinton and later President George W. Bush, that the U.S. military should oust President Saddam Hussein from power. In PNAC's first letter to President Clinton on 26 January 1998, the group argued that diplomacy had failed, and it was now time for President Hussein to be removed from power by military force and the United States was the nation to perform this mission. The group sent a second letter to Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich. Although the letter to President Clinton didn't gain much traction, the letter to the congressmen was part of the legislative change of the Iraq Liberation Act.³⁰ The neoconservatives Paul Wolfowitz and Zalmay Kalilzad had argued for military action in Iraq to depose President Hussein publicly since 1997 when they published an article in the neoconservative journal the *Weekly Standard*.³¹ The neoconservative's actions significantly contributed to the passage of the Iraq Liberation Act. The act made it official U.S. policy to institute democracy in Iraq.³² Aside from how President Clinton handled terrorism during his administration, it is worth looking at how the "Defense Planning Guidance," developed in 1992 by PNAC contributors Paul Wolfowitz and I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, spelled out how President George W. Bush would launch his War on Terror approximately ten years later.

³⁰ Timothy Lange, "Blast from the Past: PNAC's 1998 Letter to Clinton," Daily Kos, accessed March 30, 2022, <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2008/1/27/444438/>.

³¹ Chris Langille, "Political and Moral Myths in American Foreign Policy: The Neoconservative Question," *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 2, no. 3 (2009): p. 325, https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcis.2.3.321_1.

³² "H.R.4655 - 105th Congress (1997-1998): Iraq Liberation Act," H.R.4655 - Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, accessed March 30, 2022, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/105th-congress/house-bill/4655>.

Once President George W. Bush took power in 2000, the neoconservatives in his administration quickly identified the war on terror as the principal goal of the foreseeable future. At the West Point Military Academy Commencement Ceremony on 1 June 2002, President George W. Bush delivered his National Security Strategy of the United States.³³ It was in this speech that the president made mention of his administration's interpretation of pre-emptive war:

The United States has long maintained the option of preemptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security...the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively.³⁴

The plan for a pre-emptive attack, as mentioned earlier, would not be like those of President George W. Bush's predecessors. Instead, this pre-emptive attack would be akin to preventive measures of military force in Iraq, as discussed by historian Matthew J. Flynn.

However, before President George W. Bush gave his address at West Point in 2002, where he gave clues of pre-emptive action in the War on Terror, PNAC published an open letter to the president on 20 September 2001. In their letter, PNAC starts by commending the president for his charge in leading the nation and the world to victory against terrorism. Given that this letter was published shortly after the 9/11 attacks, these accolades are not surprising. PNAC then spelled out what they believed was necessary for success in the "first war of the 21st century." The authors then spent a brief paragraph explaining that a goal of this War on Terror was to capture or kill bin Laden, but this is far from the only objective necessary in this fight. PNAC then spent more than twice as much space explaining why a key aim of this war is to oust

³³ Vassilis Fouskas and Gökay Bülent, *The New American Imperialism: Bush's War on Terror and Blood for Oil* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2005), pp. 56-63.

³⁴ Fouskas and Bülent, *The New American Imperialism*, p. 64.

Saddam Hussein.³⁵ In a news conference held by Secretary of State Colin Powell on 13 September 2001, which PNAC references, Powell condemned President Hussein's silence on the attacks of 9/11 and declared that President Hussein "is one of the leading terrorists on the face of the Earth," devoid of "human kindness." Secretary of State Powell's response isolated President Hussein as the only member of the seven countries on the State Department's state sponsors of terrorism, who did not speak against the attacks, which was enough to label him as one of the world leaders of terror in his opinion.³⁶ Just as PNAC presented their writings as a solution to a post-Cold War environment, the same treatise was given as the answer to a post-9/11 world and global terrorism.

Interestingly, the authors wrote that although President Hussein may not have been linked to the 9/11 attacks, Hussein must be eradicated. They write that any failure to take such measures in removing Hussein would constitute a surrender in the War on Terror. The PNAC letter concluded the section on Iraq by stating that U.S. military forces must commit to removing all Iraqi opposition to achieve these aims.³⁷ Interestingly, this letter is no longer accessible through the PNAC website but can only be found using a search tied to the WayBack Machine Internet Archive. As influential as this letter may have been for the Bush administration, it seems that it would be important for researchers on this subject to utilize. The deletion of this letter from the PNAC website is curious as the organization had long-standing ties to the Bush administration.

³⁵ William Kristol, et al., "Letter to President George W. Bush," Letter to President George W. Bush (Project for the New American Century, September 20, 2001), <https://web.archive.org/web/20131018052135/http://www.newamericancentury.org/Bushletter.htm>.

³⁶ "Text: U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell," The Washington Post (WP Company), accessed March 30, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/transcripts/powelltext_091301.html.

³⁷ Kristol, et al., "Letter to President George W. Bush."

People have also questioned the degree to which PNAC influenced the foreign policy decisions of President George W. Bush.

Some scholars go so far as to say that the neoconservatives “hijacked” the administration of President George W. Bush, and their saber-rattling ways were appealing to the mainstream media. These same scholars believe that the neoconservatives served as a visible rejection of the traditional U.S. conservatism. Political scientist Inderjeet Parmar believed that the foreseeable future of U.S. foreign policy was already set in place by the end of the Presidency of George W. Bush in 2008. Analysts later discovered that five conservative organizations that had members who later served in the George W. Bush administration were major proponents of war with Iraq. Of those five organizations, PNAC developed strategic planning roles for an invasion of Iraq.³⁸ PNAC’s connections to the U.S. government was not limited to within the George W. Bush administration but also had twenty-seven connections to the Department of Defense, thirteen with the State Department, twelve within the White House, ten with the National Security Council, and a final twenty-three connections with the U.S. Congress, making it the most interconnected agency between a think tank and the United States system of government.³⁹

Some of the Bush administration members that had connections to conservative think tanks, including PNAC, were Elliot Abrams, Richard Cheney, Zalmay Khalilzad, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, and Condoleezza Rice. Despite all of these connections to the Bush administration, declaring that the PNAC or other neoconservative think tanks were controlling government is an argument that is difficult to prove. Instead, Parmar believes that PNAC was a

³⁸ Kenneth Christie, ed., *United States Foreign Policy and National Identity in the 21st Century* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. xxi-44.

³⁹ Christie, ed., *United States Foreign Policy and National Identity in the 21st Century*, p. 46.

tool of the Bush administration and not the other way around.⁴⁰ Although there were many neoconservatives in the administration of President George W. Bush, many in the upper echelon of the administration, including the president himself, were not neoconservatives but “traditional national-interest conservatives.”⁴¹ The definition of neoconservatism evolved from its origins in the 1930s and by the 1990s represented an intermeshed, global economy, a policy of easy immigration, and the exportation of capitalism, by force if necessary, to areas including the Middle East. The neoconservatives viewed President Clinton’s foreign policy of what they considered excessive humanitarianism.⁴² This is opposed to traditional conservatism that promotes existing social structures, lower taxation rates, personal financial responsibility, and a strong national defense, while allowing for gradual change.⁴³

In the time between PNAC’s writings urging for the removal of President Hussein and President George W. Bush taking the oath of office, presidential candidate George W. Bush was the keynote speaker at the Citadel military academy in the fall of 1999. In hindsight, this speech revealed a great deal of how Bush would re-shape U.S. foreign policy after he was elected. Candidate Bush spoke about the importance of counter-terrorism, the defense of the nation, and the need to keep terrorists from acquiring WMDs. In addition, candidate Bush even spoke of the punishment that would be brought upon nations that tolerated or harbored terrorists operating within their boundaries. However, once Bush was elected, domestic policy took the driver's seat until the events of 11 September 2001 re-prioritized foreign policy as the preeminent issue for

⁴⁰ Christie, ed., *United States Foreign Policy and National Identity in the 21st Century*, p. 49.

⁴¹ Max Boot, “Neocons,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 140 (2004): pp. 20-28, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4147516>.

⁴² Brandon High, “The Recent Historiography of American Neoconservatism,” *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 2 (2009): pp. 475-491, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0018246x09007560>.

⁴³ “Conservatism Definition & Meaning,” Merriam-Webster (Merriam-Webster), accessed March 30, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conservatism>.

the presidency.⁴⁴ It is interesting how many of the PNAC's suggestions were carried forward to the Bush administration of 2001.

9/11/2001, Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom, and The Global War on Terror

The beginnings of the plans to invade Iraq are rooted in the first Gulf War of the early 1990s but the retaliatory strikes following 9/11 were not against Iraq. The immediate result of the attacks on 11 September 2001 against the United States was the initiation of a Global War on Terror, which was first referred to as a war on terror that targeted every terror group within global reach by President George W. Bush on 20 September 2001 at a Joint Session of the 107th Congress.⁴⁵ This Global War on Terror initiated Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The first target of the Global War on Terror was the nation of Afghanistan, which harbored the terrorist group al Qaeda, for launching the attacks of 9/11. As delivered at a briefing by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard B. Meyers, the objectives of OEF were six-fold. First, the U.S. wanted to illustrate that the Taliban government of Afghanistan, which supported al Qaeda, would pay a price for harboring the terror network. Second, the U.S. hoped to acquire intelligence to target al Qaeda and the Taliban regime further. Third, to foster relationships with oppositional forces within Afghanistan that may ally with the U.S. to target the Taliban and other foreign terrorists connected with the regime. Fourth, to make Afghanistan a place that terrorists would have difficulty utilizing as a

⁴⁴ Alexander Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush: Values, Strategy and Loyalty* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016).

⁴⁵ George W. Bush, "Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush - Archives," Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush (George W. Bush White House Archives), accessed March 30, 2022, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf.

base to launch further attacks. Fifth, to adjust the military balance in the nation of Afghanistan to deny the Taliban offensive means that may slow down oppositional forces. Sixth, and finally, to provide humanitarian relief to civilian populations in the nation that lived under a repressive regime.⁴⁶

General Tommy R. Franks crafted the planning and execution of OEF while working with competing ideas of how the plan should be executed by the various branches of the U.S. military and why certain branches would be best equipped to handle the attacks. These competing views became challenging for Franks to establish a unified force for the joint operation. Franks expressed his frustrations to Secretary Rumsfeld and reminded him that he worked for the president and Secretary Rumsfeld alone. Franks stressed that this disunity would make an effective strike difficult. Secretary Rumsfeld assured Franks that Franks was in charge of the mission as Commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM).⁴⁷ Ultimately, General Franks unveiled an operation to his superiors of how best to handle the situation in Afghanistan.

Franks developed a four-phase operation for OEF. Phase I involved building forces to provide a credible and robust command authority for military operations. The U.S. coordinated basing and staging for forces with the countries that shared a border with Afghanistan and utilized the CIA and special operations forces (SOF) that had infiltrated Afghanistan. Phase II involved the initial combat operations in the nation and secured follow-up operations. CENTCOM launched missile and air attacks against al Qaeda targets, radar systems in the country, and defense systems. SOF, along with CIA agents, coordinated with Northern Alliance

⁴⁶ David E. Johnson, "Afghanistan, 2001," in *Learning Large Lessons: The Evolving Roles of Ground Power and Air Power in the Post-Cold War Era* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2007), pp. 91-92.

⁴⁷ Johnson, "Afghanistan, 2001," pp. 92-93.

resistance fighters to continue the ground strikes against critical operation points. Phase III involved continued combat operations while also continuing to build the coalition of forces against the Taliban and al Qaeda, specifically targeting pockets of resistance. Phase IV would establish coalition partners to stymie a resurgence of terrorist activity and begin humanitarian assistance. This final phase was estimated to occur over a period of three to five years for rebuilding the nation.⁴⁸

Arguably, the first three phases of OEF went according to plan.⁴⁹ After that, however, the rebuilding of Afghanistan was more difficult. The pockets of resistance that U.S. and coalition forces faced cost 7,057 U.S. service members, 1,145 allied service members, and 3,904 U.S. contractors' lives.⁵⁰ Although the Taliban was quickly removed and al Qaeda and other resistance forces were scattered, to call the mission in Afghanistan successful as a whole is more complicated. Despite all of this, President George W. Bush benefited from al Qaeda's routing in Afghanistan and would later target terrorism worldwide. The Bush administration's foreign policy development as OEF was underway and facilitated the Global War on Terror (GWOT) that would later target Iraq.

It is worth noting that there is an additional piece of the Bush administration's thoughts on foreign policy before President George W. Bush took office. In a 2000 article from the journal *Foreign Affairs*, Condoleezza Rice wrote how future U.S. foreign policy must be crafted. Rice asserted that U.S. interests abroad could be bolstered through strong alliances with other nations, supported by the U.N. and other organizations, in addition to international agreements.

⁴⁸ Johnson, "Afghanistan, 2001," pp. 92-93.

⁴⁹ Johnson, "Afghanistan, 2001," p. 94.

⁵⁰ "U.S. & Allied Killed and Wounded," The Costs of War, accessed March 7, 2022, <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/human/military>.

Interestingly, though Rice found value in utilizing the military in a limited scope to remove President Hussein from Kuwait as part of Operation Desert Storm, Rice warned that a president must evaluate whether decisive military force is likely to be effective. The government must also have a clear exit strategy from an engagement. Rice also argued that U.S. intervention in the case of humanitarian crises should be “exceedingly rare.”⁵¹

In the same *Foreign Affairs* article, Rice argued that the role of a Republican administration in crafting U.S. foreign policy revolves around specific key priorities. A priority for Rice was that the U.S. has the power to deter war, present a show of force, and defend U.S. interests if deterrence fails. The second relevant priority Rice argued is that the U.S. addresses the threat of rogue nations, a term that came about in foreign policy circles after the Cold War, and powers hostile to U.S. interests.⁵² These rogue nations, Rice asserted, are increasingly seeking to use terrorism and develop WMDs. This linkage between terrorism, WMDs, and rogue nations is strikingly similar to what the Bush administration would later argue as some of the reasons that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein needed to be ousted from power. However, there is an interesting contradiction on the acceptable use of military force by Rice. Rice noted that the U.S. military should not be used as the world’s police force, as it will degrade capabilities and cast the United States as a nation that grants narrow notions of sovereignty when humanitarian issues are raised. I argue that Rice’s example of humanitarian issues that demand military force is akin to Hussein’s history of atrocities, such as when he gassed his people. This gassing of the

⁵¹ Condoleezza Rice, “Promoting the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 1 (2000): pp. 47-53, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20049613>.

⁵² “‘Rogue States’ and the United States: A Historical Perspective,” Wilson Center, accessed March 31, 2022, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/rogue-states-and-the-united-states-historical-perspective>. Rogue nations or rogue states was a designation given to states that sponsored terrorism and were believed to be seeking WMDs. The core group of these rogue nations were Iraq, Iran, North Korea, and Libya.

Kurds is an example of an humanitarian issue raised by the Bush administration in its case for war against Iraq. Rice warned that this could lead to a precedent of acceptable military force that the enemies of the U.S. may use to their ends. Perhaps the most shocking foreshadowing of U.S. foreign policy is when Rice stated, plainly, that Iraq was living on borrowed time and the threat of WMDs and chemical or biological weapons could appear in the hands of terrorists in the near future. Although the scope of Rice's article addresses more than the threat that terrorism presents to the U.S., the regular summoning of the threat that President Hussein represented should not be overlooked.⁵³ Given Condoleezza Rice's role in the Bush administration and the explicit foreign policy changes provoked by the 9/11 attacks, it is evident that several people had plans for Iraq waiting in the wings. The crafting of the Bush doctrine and U.S. foreign policies had much of the groundwork already developed by key members of the Bush team.

By using the retaliatory attacks against Afghanistan as a blueprint in its War on Terror, the Bush administration began its public talking points on the need to eliminate President Saddam Hussein in Iraq. By implying links between Hussein and al Qaeda, recalling Hussein's human rights abuses, and announcing intelligence that Hussein was actively pursuing WMDs, President George W. Bush crafted rhetoric and doctrine against the rogue nation of Iraq. However, talk of deposing President Hussein was not novel at that time and had roots going back a number of years. I argue that the Bush administration was looking for ways to oust Hussein rather than diplomatic measures to continue the policy of containment with the goal of complete disarmament of the Iraqi nation.

A Sharp Break in U.S. Foreign Policy

⁵³ Rice, "Promoting the National Interest," pp. 46-62.

A key element examined throughout this thesis is a government publication issued by the Executive Office of The White House, ordered annually by the U.S. Congress, titled the National Security Strategy (NSS). The NSS was instituted in 1987, during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, and aimed to declare the priorities of the presidential administration. These priorities of the administration include economic interests, humanitarian goals, and military defense goals. In President Reagan's first NSS, the manner in which the United States would respond to terrorist threats was a key article of concern. The manner in which the priorities of the NSS documents changed under each administration shows the great contrast from President Reagan to President George W. Bush in 2002. One of the critical arguments of this thesis is that U.S. foreign policy under President George W. Bush underwent a significant change compared to Clinton and Reagan, the previous two presidential administrations.

Political scientist, global affairs specialist, and former U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Ivo Daalder and political scientist, economist, and chair on the Council of Foreign Relations, James M. Lindsay wrote on the interpretation of how the attacks of 9/11 shaped President George W. Bush's foreign policy in a new manner. Daalder and Lindsay argued that 9/11 prompted the Bush administration to focus on foreign policy and the War on Terror as the mission of the Bush presidency. President George W. Bush and his team spent roughly two years after the 9/11 attacks developing and revising the scope and targets going forward.⁵⁴ The critical point that the Bush administration's foreign policy agenda became known for was their interpretation of what a pre-emptive attack would look like in practice. This manner in which how the U.S. would deal with terrorist organizations came directly from President George W. Bush's "The National

⁵⁴ Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), p. 80.

Security Strategy of the United States of America” from September 2002. This document elucidates the opening for an invasion of Iraq:

While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country⁵⁵

This excerpt from the 2002 NSS plainly stated that the Bush administration was more than willing to act pre-emptively to neutralize a perceived threat to the United States. The term pre-emption became the crux of the issue concerning the invasion of Iraq. However, not all scholars are in agreement on the importance of the text of President George W. Bush’s 2002 NSS. An example of this position is historian Melvyn P. Leffler.

Historian Melvyn P. Leffler authored a journal article in 2005 that promoted the position that there was “more continuity than change” in the foreign policy of President George W. Bush. However, Leffler also stated that even if there was a change in the administration’s policies, it was not a revolutionary change.⁵⁶ Leffler referred to the change in policy as a recalibration due to the changing nature of the oppositional forces against the U.S. Leffler recognized that many political scientists and historians cite President George W. Bush’s 2002 National Security Strategy as revolutionary because of the language of pre-emption. However, Leffler argued that the same document continues the foreign policy position of previous presidents, such as stressing economic freedom, human rights, and a value of democracy while adapting to twenty-first-century problems like global terror. In Leffler’s mind, these continuities are evidence that there

⁵⁵ George W. Bush, “Historical Office - The National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” Historical Office - The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (2002), p. 6, <https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy/>.

⁵⁶ Melvyn P. Leffler, “9/11 and American Foreign Policy,” *Diplomatic History* 29, no. 3 (2005): p. 395, <https://doi.org/10.23943/princeton/9780691196510.003.0010>.

was nothing revolutionary about President George W. Bush's foreign policy agenda as laid out in the 2002 NSS.⁵⁷ However, the aspect of a war on terrorism on a global scale was a step outside of the wars that were limited in scope and were cautious in the deployment of military forces. The attacks of 9/11 opened the door for a broad authorization of military force by the United States Congress against al Qaeda but notably did not authorize a broad war on terror.⁵⁸ President George W. Bush's expanded War on Terror into Iraq was enabled after Afghanistan, in large part by the 2002 NSS. Despite Leffler's position that the Bush administration's policies were a continuation of previous administrations' policies, most published work does not stand behind this perspective.

Pentagon official Douglas Feith declared that it was critical to find ties between terrorist networks and their state sponsors as the principal objective in the War on Terror.⁵⁹ I assert that President George W. Bush's 2002 NSS made it clear that the United States will act unilaterally, in a military sense, to act pre-emptively in self-defense to prevent harm to the U.S.⁶⁰ This paragraph of the 2002 NSS made it clear that the Bush administration would act unilaterally and keep other nation's leaders out of the decision-making process if it so desired. With the events of 9/11, foreign policy took priority for the Bush administration. The attacks reminded U.S. citizens and their leadership that the nations that flanked them could no longer provide protection from their enemies. The ignoble terrorists represented was a talking point of President George W.

⁵⁷ Leffler, "9/11 and American Foreign Policy," p. 396.

⁵⁸ Jennifer Daskal and Stephen Vladeck, "After the Authorization for Use of Military Force," Open Society Foundations, accessed March 29, 2022, <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/after-authorization-use-military-force>.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Nicholas Lemann, "After Iraq," *New Yorker*, February 17 and 24, 2003, p. 72. **cited in** Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, p. 85.

⁶⁰ George W. Bush, "Historical Office - The National Security Strategy of the United States of America," Historical Office - The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (2002), p. 6.

Bush during his national address and would morph into the “Axis of Evil.” Former U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO Ivo H. Daalder and Senior Vice President, Director of Studies, and Chair of the Council of Foreign Relations James M. Lindsay argue that President George W. Bush’s codified doctrine of pre-emption was novel because it gave the United States the ability to utilize military force against potential threats that may harm the U.S.⁶¹

Concurring with Daalder and Lindsay’s position on President George W. Bush’s foreign policy, political scientist Alexander Moens argued that the threat of the use of WMDs by terrorists that the president regularly spoke of reinforced the need for pre-emptive military action. President George W. Bush positioned the U.S. to no longer wait for a threat to materialize in the shape of a mushroom cloud on the horizon but take an offensive posture through a pre-emptive war with the hopes of preventing this from happening. Moens declared the position of pre-emptive military action as a revolutionary turn in U.S. foreign policy. Despite the departure of the previous presidential NSS documents that described pre-emptive action as something used in a retaliatory manner President George W. Bush’s pre-emptive action was more preventative. However, U.S. citizens supported the president, giving him a ninety-two per cent approval rating in October 2001. President George W. Bush shaped the image of the enemy in historical terms by declaring Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as the nations composing the “Axis of Evil.” Without stating it, I believe that the Bush administration was alluding to the Axis powers of World War II that included Japan, Nazi Germany, and Fascist Italy, instead of tying the conflict of Iraq to the more recent Vietnam War that haunted the U.S. memory. Although President George W. Bush did not use the phrase regularly after the 2002 State of the Union address, it represented the administration’s new foreign policy agenda in the post-9/11 world that saw all nations against the

⁶¹ Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, pp. 81-88.

U.S. as enemies of the state.⁶² This black-and-white thinking placed the nations of the world as either with the United States or against the United States. This period also marked a change in U.S. foreign policy where terrorists were brought to trial for their crimes and instead were treated as enemy combatants because they were not part of a uniformed military but individual actors performing terrorist attacks. While defining the enemies of the U.S., it would be important for the Bush administration to create a partnership of allied countries willing to support the invasion out of fear that terrorism may strike their citizens. The Coalition of the Willing is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

The definition of pre-emption is also at issue in this thesis. I repeatedly argue that the meaning of the term pre-emption changed in the period from President Reagan through President George W. Bush. However, as Flynn described the story of the 2003 invasion, the war was not pre-emptive but preventative. Flynn's stance, which I agree with, is that the war was preventative as Iraq did not pose an imminent threat. However, to keep the terminology consistent with each of these presidents' official written foreign policy, I will continue to use the labeling of Iraq as a pre-emptive war. Flynn also argued that the labeling of Iraq as a pre-emptive war suggests that military action by the United States would eliminate the threat Iraq posed to the nation. Instead, it made things worse by destabilizing the region further. Flynn also noted, as have other scholars, that the failure to find WMDs in Iraq post-invasion forced President George W. Bush to alter the stated goal of the invasion after the fact. President George W. Bush later argued that Iraq's desire and intent to pursue WMDs gave the U.S. just cause to pre-emptively strike Iraq. Flynn declared that when Condoleezza Rice spoke in April 2007 and stated that an imminent threat is posed if you are in a better position to strike today and address a threat than to wait until tomorrow, it

⁶² Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush*, pp. 124-154.

revealed preventive logic and not a pre-emptive position. By doing this, Flynn argued that the Bush administration lost the “moral high ground.”⁶³ Before diving deeper into the issue of the history of the Iraq invasion in 2003, it is necessary to review the history of the National Security Strategy and its role in declaring the domestic and foreign policy priorities of the United States.

To understand how significant of a break is at issue with the 2002 NSS requires awareness of how the Bush administration’s stance against terrorism was significantly broad. In the post-9/11 era, nations were responsible for terrorist planning or any relevant activities that occurred within their borders. There was no difference between state sponsors of terror and groups like the Taliban in Afghanistan that did not approve of the presence of al Qaeda but tolerated their presence and actions. By expanding military action as a response to activity, the 2002 NSS permitted preventative action, labeled as pre-emption, which would arguably neutralize potential threats before they materialized. The NSS codified what the policy of the wartime presidency of George W. Bush would be after 9/11.

I have made a deliberate effort to show the change in U.S. foreign policy as it relates to terrorism in general, the U.S. policy regarding Iraq, and the threat posed by the al Qaeda network as it became a more significant part of the story for the nation. President George W. Bush did not lay out his policy regarding terrorism until after the attacks of 11 September 2001. In the wake of those attacks, it is not surprising that the issue of terrorism, which became more significant during each presidency, became the primary issue for the president. President George W. Bush had already retaliated against al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan for their roles in carrying out and tolerating terrorism when the 2002 “The National Security Strategy of the United States

⁶³ Matthew J. Flynn, “A Dangerous Simplicity: The American Preemptive War in Iraq, 2003,” in *First Strike: Preemptive Warfare in Modern History* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), pp. 219-220.

of America” was released to the public. As I noted earlier, this 2002 NSS departed from the previous presidents’ policies regarding terrorism and Iraq when it declared that the president will act pre-emptively against terrorists. Although President Clinton, for instance, reported the targeted strikes against the al Qaeda training camp as pre-emptive action, it was still limited in scope. Instead, in the 2002 NSS, pre-emptive action could include the removal of the leader of a sovereign state before a terrorist act could occur. President George W. Bush stressed the threat of a rogue nation acquiring WMDs that could target the U.S. or its interests abroad.⁶⁴ This significant change in U.S. foreign policy opened the door to invade Iraq in 2003 as part of the United States’ War on Terror.

What Happened After the Invasion of Iraq

When the United States invaded Iraq on 19 March 2003 it immediately tasked certain military units to work with weapons inspectors in the hunt for WMDs. It has been nearly twenty years since that event and to this day no WMDs have been found in Iraq. In the months following the invasion, President George W. Bush was forced to acknowledge that the smoking gun of WMDs had not yet been found in Iraq. In a *New York Times* article from 4 October 2003, Bush stated that a report from his chief weapons inspector that preliminary findings indicated that Iraq was attempting to obtain missiles proved that “Saddam Hussein was a danger to the

⁶⁴ George W. Bush, “Historical Office - The National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” (2002), pp. 1-35.

world.”⁶⁵ In the same article from the *Times* President Bush shifted the need for the ousting of President Hussein to one of a humanitarian nature to relieve the suffering endured by Iraqi citizens in extreme interrogations and torture at the hands of the Hussein regime. The shift of the reason for the war in Iraq was not lost on Congressional Democrats who questioned the Bush administration’s reasoning and questioned the truthfulness of Bush and his team.⁶⁶

Even by 26 January 2004, when WMDs had not been found, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw explained that although the failure to find WMDs was “disappointing” President Hussein had these weapons and the ousting of the regime was justified.⁶⁷ Months later, on 7 October 2004, President George W. Bush and Vice President Cheney admitted, in the most straightforward terms up to that point, that President Hussein did not have WMDs. However, they insisted that the war was still justified because Hussein had abused the U.N.’s Oil-for-Food Program. Senator John Kerry, who was a presidential candidate at the time, insisted that it was irrational to come up with reasons for going to war after the invasion had already occurred. President George W. Bush blamed the flaw on his intelligence agencies.⁶⁸ This pivot was drastic as WMDs represented, as the Bush administration had insisted, an imminent threat to the United

⁶⁵ David E. Sanger and James Risen, “President Says Report on Arms Vindicates War,” *The New York Times* (*The New York Times*, October 4, 2003), <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/04/world/struggle-for-iraq-weapons-search-president-says-report-arms-vindicates-war.html?searchResultPosition=1>.

⁶⁶ Sanger and Risen, “President Says Report on Arms Vindicates War,”

⁶⁷ “Straw Reiterates Justification of Iraqi War, “Disappointed” WMD Not Found,” Straw Reiterates Justification of Iraqi War, “Disappointed” WMD Not Found (Al-Bawaba Reporters, January 26, 2004), <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:4BJJ-RCY0-01MS-C230-00000-00&context=1516831>.

⁶⁸ “Bush, Cheney Concede Iraq Had No WMDs: [RedEye Edition],” Bush, Cheney Concede Iraq had no WMDs: [RedEye Edition] (*Chicago Tribune*, October 8, 2004), <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/newspapers/bush-cheney-concede-iraq-had-no-wmds/docview/419965953/se-2?accountid=15078>.

States and it seems hard to believe that the aforementioned U.N. program represented a similar threat.

When President George W. Bush spoke aboard the aircraft carrier the USS *Abraham Lincoln* and declared that major combat operations had ended on 1 May 2003, he stated that as a result of the Iraqi invasion no other nations could receive WMDs from Iraq. But as journalist Susan Campbell questioned, what did it mean if Iraq didn't have weapons to pass along to begin with? President George W. Bush countered that sort of logic in a speech in Lima, Ohio on 24 April 2003 that the war was just because Saddam Hussein was a despot and that the Iraqi citizens have a better life in his absence, forced as it was.⁶⁹

Why Did the Bush Administration Target Iraq Instead of Another Member of the Axis of Evil?

The development of the Bush doctrine, as codified by *The National Security Strategy of the United States*, released in 2002, was created with the invasion of Iraq in mind. Setting the legality of such actions aside until the end of this chapter, I focus on how the war on terror in Afghanistan soon became a War on Terror in a broader sense and included Iraq due to a perceived threat. The Bush Doctrine changed how the U.S. would target terrorist organizations and their providers of safe haven. President George W. Bush used the fear of nuclear weapons targeting the U.S. to build support for an invasion of Iraq that he claimed possessed said weapons. The threat of nuclear arms resurrects the memory of the Cold War and the fear that many U.S. citizens did not have to go too far back to recall. President George W. Bush

⁶⁹ Susan Campbell, "'WMDs and the Truth: [STATEWIDE EDITION]'", "WMDs and the Truth: [STATEWIDE EDITION]" (Hartford Courant, May 6, 2003), <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/newspapers/wmds-truth/docview/256728276/se-2?accountid=15078>.

repeatedly declared that Iraq either already had WMDs or was actively pursuing them and closing in on achieving those aims.

If the Bush administration knew that the intelligence of WMDs and Iraq was false, that begs the question of what their motivation was. Although President Hussein's regime had been brutal and repressive towards its people in the past, a CIA report indicated that it actively avoided antagonizing the U.S. or its interests abroad.⁷⁰ However, the Bush administration continued in its attempts to tie Iraq to terrorism, including the anthrax scare in the U.S. following the attacks of 9/11. The anthrax attacks scared the nation after a second report to the FBI indicated that an incident affected an aide to NBC News Correspondent Tom Brokaw tested positive two weeks after handling threatening letters to Mr. Brokaw which contained a white powder and a sandy substance.⁷¹ Security expert Paul Rogers believed that one potential motive for a U.S. invasion of Iraq were the significant oil reserves in the Persian Gulf that were important to the United States.⁷² Rogers reinforced this position by arguing that oil would be a factor due to the threat of the rogue regime of Iraq, whose sphere of influence affected U.S. allies, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Rogers concedes that the concept of Iraq holding WMDs would be something that the Bush administration would not accept. However,

⁷⁰ Paul Rogers, *A War on Terror: Afghanistan and After* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p. 86.

⁷¹ David Barstow, "Anthrax Found in NBC News Aide," *The New York Times* (*The New York Times*, October 13, 2001), <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/13/nyregion/a-nation-challenged-the-incidents-anthrax-found-in-nbc-news-aide.html>.

⁷² Foreign affairs researcher Ron Huisken noted that the classified Pentagon's Defense Planning Guidance in the early years of the Bush administration pursued the agenda for the United States to secure the oil in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. Ron Huisken, "Iraq: The Neocon Strategy," *Agenda - A Journal of Policy Analysis and Reform* 13, no. 4 (2006), <https://doi.org/10.22459/ag.13.04.2006.06>.

Rogers believes that toppling the Hussein administration, if it did have WMDs, would be required by any administration in the post-9/11 environment.⁷³

Georgetown University Research Associate Dionysis Markakis is aligned with Rogers in his belief that the region's oil reserves, and the security of Israel were the primary reasons for attempting to stabilize Iraq by removing Hussein. However, Markakis believed the concept of containing Iraq was no longer acceptable after the attacks of 9/11. Markakis believed that instituting a regime favorable to the U.S. in Iraq would pressure Iran and North Korea, the members of the “Axis of Evil,” as well as Syria.⁷⁴ In addition, the prospect of establishing a permanent U.S. base in Iraq would remove the reliance on Saudi Arabia of providing a place to station U.S. troops, as had been done since 1991. This collection of benefits that the U.S. would reap by ousting Hussein reinforced the goals of the neoconservative wing of politics tied to President George W. Bush. Furthermore, the Bush administration touted the benefits of democratizing the nation of Iraq and the introduction of liberal democratic values and free-market capitalism in the hopes that it would spread through the Middle East and further reinforce U.S. hegemony.⁷⁵

However, the Bush administration had considered taking action against Iraq the minute President George W. Bush took office. As much as the administration desired to take action against Iraq, they continued to hesitate in the pre-9/11 environment to strike the regime, which they analogized as a “grumbling appendix” that warranted attention but would be delayed for the

⁷³ Rogers, *A War on Terror*, pp. 87-88.

⁷⁴ The original Axis of Evil was expanded upon by John Bolton in his speech “Beyond the Axis of Evil” in 2002 and Condoleezza Rice in her confirmation hearing as Secretary of State in 2005.

⁷⁵ Dionysis Markakis, *US Democracy Promotion in the Middle East: The Pursuit of Hegemony* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 109-110.

time being.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld expressed his frustrations that the president was not yet willing to act against Iraq at the end of July 2001. Rumsfeld believed that inaction against Iraq would merely prolong the inevitable and allow Hussein to accumulate a more extensive nuclear arsenal. In the winter following 9/11, Bush requested an updated strategy review of Iraq. President George W. Bush and his administration moved closer to war with Iraq as time rolled on.⁷⁷ CIA Director George Tenet acknowledged in his book that “had 9/11 not happened, the argument to go to war in Iraq undoubtedly would have been much harder to make” and “whether the case could have been made at all is uncertain.”⁷⁸

Tenet argued that Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz believed in a connection between Iraq and the attacks of September 11. Tenet recalled that Wolfowitz believed the ousting of Hussein would invoke a significant change in the peace in the Middle East, but Tenet disagreed on the likelihood of that occurring. Tenet also recalled that immediately following 9/11, a National Security Council official met with the White House. The White House team expressed their desire to oust Saddam, at which time the NSC official stated, “If you want to go after that son of a bitch to settle old scores, be my guest. But don’t tell us he is connected to 9/11 or to terrorism because there is no evidence to support that. You will have to have a better reason.”⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro, eds., *In Uncertain Times American Foreign Policy after the Berlin Wall and 9/11* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 110.

⁷⁷ Leffler and Legro, eds., *In Uncertain Times American Foreign Policy after the Berlin Wall and 9/11*, pp. 110-111.

⁷⁸ George Tenet and Bill Harlow, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA* (New York, NY: Perennial, 2008), p. 334.

⁷⁹ Tenet and Harlow, *At the Center of the Storm*, pp. 334-335. Although President George W. Bush stated in a speech on 26 September 2002 that President Hussein tried to kill his father, as part of his rhetoric for war, I believe this was given as a reason for war knowing that the media would seize upon the comment and reinforce the base. The intelligence is clear that it was actually Kuwait that was the more likely culprit in the assassination attempt on President George H.W. Bush. The tie to the earlier Gulf War was given as part of the legitimization of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the plans to oust Saddam Hussein are tied to that period but I don’t believe

In regard to democratizing the Middle East, Tenet recalled that many policymakers believed the U.S. would be viewed as liberators of the Iraqi people. However, intelligence experts thought that if U.S. forces did receive such a response, it would be fleeting unless the troops could secure the area of operations and then said support would likely deteriorate. Although an initial reaction of the Iraqi citizenry may be positive, the area would be in chaos from the military action and if a swift institution of order could not be developed, rioting and unrest would occur. At this point, the citizens would look at the occupying military force as hostile to the peace of their nation and the initial support the people had for the U.S. military would turn into resentment. Shortly after that, the topic at Executive Steering Groups at the White House switched from whether or not to invade Iraq into what needed to occur when the U.S. went to war. Tenet also noted that U.S. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice told American diplomat Richard Haas that the decision to invade Iraq had already been made, although it does not state by whom, by July 2002. Those plans would not change, barring Iraq meeting all the demands of the U.S. The Bush administration was about to expand its war on terrorism to a new front in Iraq.⁸⁰

Supporting Tenet's claims that the U.S. had already decided on an invasion in Iraq as far back as mid-2002, the classified U.K. "Downing Street Memo," dated 23 July 2002 revealed that a British agent noted that military action against Iraq was "now seen as inevitable." The document also revealed that "Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD" and that "intelligence and facts were being fixed

that the assassination plot on his father was any more of a reason for the plans for Iraq than the purported ties to terrorism in the Iraq of 2002-2003. For an article on the media mention of the assassination plot, read: "Bush Calls Saddam 'The Guy Who Tried to Kill My Dad'," CNN (Cable News Network), accessed April 3, 2022,

<https://edition.cnn.com/2002/ALLPOLITICS/09/27/bush.war.talk/>.

⁸⁰ Tenet and Harlow, *At the Center of the Storm*, pp. 336-337.

around the policy.”⁸¹ Unsurprisingly, President George W. Bush’s autobiography failed to mention the decision to attack Iraq in 2002 or the Downing Street Memo. However, the same autobiography recalled the initial debate of whether or not to attack Iraq after the 9/11 attacks, with the cooler heads of Colin Powell and George Tenet swaying the administration from lumping Iraq together with al Qaeda.⁸² Additional evidence supporting the earlier assertion that the Bush administration had essentially decided upon an invasion of Iraq by 2002 comes from the second autobiography of Secretary of State Colin Powell. In Powell’s autobiography, *It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership*, Powell recalled meeting with President George W. Bush on 5 August 2002 to discuss the “pros and cons of the Iraq crisis.” Powell also stated that momentum was building, and a march toward an invasion of Iraq seemed very likely.⁸³ Powell also reminded the President that if the U.S. takes a government by force, “you break it, you own it.”⁸⁴ Despite the questionable decision to invade Iraq and the U.S.’s responsibilities should such action be taken, the president still appeared as a strong leader in the eyes of the U.S. populace.

President George W. Bush benefited from being regarded as a wartime president in the wake of 9/11. By October 2001, President George W. Bush established a ninety-two per cent approval rating and was highly regarded by the U.S. citizenry. However, despite the general public’s view of Bush as a strong leader, it is worth mentioning that the attacks of 9/11 were not a complete surprise to the intelligence community. The classified President’s Daily Briefing dated 6 August 2001 was conspicuously titled “Bin Ladin Determined to Strike in U.S.” The briefing paper, declassified on 10 April 2004, briefly reminded the president of the history of

⁸¹ Rycroft, “The Secret Downing Street Memo - George Washington University.”

⁸² George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York, NY: Crown, 2010), pp. 256-257.

⁸³ Colin Powell and Tony Koltz, *It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2014), p. 209.

⁸⁴ Colin Powell and Tony Koltz, *It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership*, p. 210.

terrorist attacks launched by al Qaeda against the United States and ended with a warning that some intelligence indicated that bin Laden was suspected of planning the hijacking of U.S. aircraft to negotiate the release of the “Blind Shaykh” Omar Abdel-Rahman. The document also warned that further intelligence supports a potential hijacking and surveillance of federal buildings in New York.⁸⁵ This grave intelligence failure was the responsibility of many actors, but the president bears a great deal of responsibility. The response to this intelligence failure may have prompted President George W. Bush to deliver a comprehensive response to terrorism with his new War on Terror.

To support the assertion that Iraq had possession of WMDs and posed an imminent threat to the United States, President George W. Bush requested that the Director of Central Intelligence compile an updated National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iraq. The document, titled “Iraq’s Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction,” addressed various pieces of intelligence on the state. Early in the NIE, the document declared that, although Iraqi inspections ended in 1998, the state continued its chemical weapons program, strengthened its missile program, developed biological weapons; and in the view of most intelligence agencies, President Hussein attempted to revive its nuclear weapons program. The NIE does stop short of declaring that President Hussein currently had a nuclear weapons program or even the material to develop said weapons. However, the NIE depicted Saddam Hussein as focused on acquiring WMDs.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ “President's Daily Briefing: 06 August 2001,” The President's Daily Brief (George Washington University - The National Security Archive, April 8, 2004), <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB116/index.htm>.

⁸⁶ “The Black Vault,” National Intelligence Estimate of Iraq 2002 (2019), <https://www.theblackvault.com/documentarchive/iraqs-continuing-programs-for-weapons-of-mass-destruction-october-2002/>.

Regarding the timeline for Iraq to create a nuclear weapon, the NIE estimated that, in an improbable scenario, the state may be able to develop enough fissile material to create a nuclear weapon between 2005 and 2007 if it can acquire the necessary materials and the state had the scientific knowledge to build uranium enrichment facilities. The document also stated that, hypothetically, President Hussein may turn over chemical and biological weapons to an organization like al Qaeda that was already engaged in a jihad against the United States.

On its face, this document seemed to reinforce everything that President George W. Bush claimed regarding Iraq and its ties to terrorism. However, scattered throughout the document are sections titled “State/INR Alternative View of Iraq’s Nuclear Program.” The first of these call-out boxes stated that The Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research (INR) believed that although Saddam desired nuclear weapons and may have a limited effort to acquire these weapons capabilities, the State/INR declared that the evidence does not give a compelling case that Iraq was in the middle of “an integrated and comprehensive approach to acquire nuclear weapons.”⁸⁷

The NIE explicitly stated that it had low confidence of when President Hussein would use WMDs, whether President Hussein would engage in covert attacks against U.S. soil, and whether President Hussein would pass chemical or biological weapons to al Qaeda or other terrorist networks. A significant point in the document that ties into the imminence of the threat that Iraq posed to the United States is in an INR Alternate View of the intelligence. The INR alternate view stated that, there was “no compelling reason to judge that Iraq has entered the timeframe of ‘at least five to seven years’ [to produce sufficient weapons grade fissile material to construct a nuclear weapon]” and the belief that Iraq could have nuclear weapons capabilities within “three

⁸⁷ “The Black Vault,” National Intelligence Estimate of Iraq 2002 (2019).

to five years [on a shortened timeline]” is highly unlikely.⁸⁸ Also in the document is a note that Niger had planned to send several tons of uranium to Iraq for enrichment, a crucial part of producing nuclear weapons. However, other intelligence sources contradicted this claim. Integral to uranium enrichment are milling facilities, but all known milling facilities were destroyed by Desert Storm, and the construction of a new milling facility would require three to five years of continuous work.⁸⁹ It is details like I have highlighted here that the Bush administration cherry-picked to suit their needs and depict Iraq as in possession of WMDs and an imminent threat to the security of the U.S. and democracy worldwide. However, intelligence reports before the war did not confirm such claims and reports after the invasion proved the claims to be patently false.⁹⁰ Had the administration been honest about the findings of the NIE, the imminent threat that President George W. Bush claimed was present in Iraq would appear highly questionable to any investigators.

George Tenet acknowledged the NIE made clear that President Hussein did not have WMDs and that if he had to create his own fissile material, he would have been unlikely to have enough to create a nuclear weapon until 2007 to 2009. The NIE was filled with best guesses and estimates where the intelligence simply did not exist once the inspections ceased after the end of the first Gulf War.⁹¹ Daalder and Lindsay argue that President George W. Bush’s claims about the imminent threat Iraq posed and the extent of President Hussein’s nuclear weapons capabilities were based on intelligence that analysts did not agree upon. The claims that Hussein had met with someone in Niger to purchase uranium were disproven months before the NIE was

⁸⁸ “The Black Vault,” National Intelligence Estimate of Iraq 2002 (2019).

⁸⁹ “The Black Vault,” National Intelligence Estimate of Iraq 2002 (2019).

⁹⁰ John Rielly, “The Bush Administration's Foreign Policy Legacy,” *Politique Américaine* 12, no. 3 (2008): p. 74, <https://doi.org/10.3917/polam.012.0073>.

⁹¹ George Tenet and Bill Harlow, *At the Center of the Storm*, p. 352.

presented through the appropriate channels to the president. Furthermore, even the basis for the Niger arrangement appeared to have been created with forged documents. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), responsible for inspecting Iraq's weapons, agreed that much of the NIE on Iraq was disputable. Immediately before the invasion of Iraq on 19 March 2003, the IAEA director stated before the U.N. Security Council on 7 March 2003 that inspectors had still come up empty on any evidence or indication that Iraq had revived its nuclear program after Desert Storm.⁹²

Although George Tenet downplayed the significance of the claims of a tie between Iraq and Niger in a supposed sale of yellowcake uranium, others, such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, noted that the intelligence was always flawed and its use, important in President George W. Bush's story of Iraq in the 21st century. The Carnegie Endowment stated that the media had found the intelligence regarding this purported transaction had roots in a British white paper stating that Iraq had sought uranium from Niger despite a lack of a nuclear power program that would require it. From December 2002 into January 2003, Bush administration officials, including Condoleezza Rice and Donald Rumsfeld, repeated the claim publicly, failing to mention the British report from which it originated. The claim was central to President George W. Bush's assertion in the January 2002 State of the Union speech in which he uttered his infamous sixteen words: "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." This claim became part of the U.S. plans for an invasion of Iraq.⁹³

⁹² Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, p. 164.

⁹³ Joseph Cirincione, "Niger Uranium: Still a False Claim," Niger Uranium: Still a False Claim (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, August 28, 2004), <https://carnegieendowment.org/2004/08/28/niger-uranium-still-false-claim-pub-1595>.

Although Iraq had purchased uranium from Niger, Portugal, and Brazil when developing a nuclear program in the 1970s, it ceased the procurement of uranium from other nations within ten years due to producing its own uranium. However, these 500 tons of natural uranium and roughly two tons of lesser grade uranium were known to IAEA inspectors and were kept sealed, by 1993, and assessed annually (after 1998) by the weapons inspectors.⁹⁴ Therefore, the IAEA sealed uranium was essentially inaccessible by the Iraqi regime. Noting the lack of unclassified intelligence before the 2002 NIE on Iraq, my investigation on the subject relies largely on this same NIE for information about the claims of Niger yellowcake released to Iraq.⁹⁵ The INR alternate views that are interspersed throughout the NIE reveal a crucial point near the end of the document. The NIE stated, “the claims of Iraqi pursuit of natural uranium in Africa are, in INR’s assessment, highly dubious.”⁹⁶ In addition, a document from the U.S. Vice President’s Office from 9 June 2003, indicated the significant concern that the CIA had about the purported negotiations between Iraq and Niger in the former procuring uranium from the latter. In the memorandum to the vice president, the document stated that the Iraq-Niger story was included in the 2002 NIE in an effort to report all possible information on the state of weapons proliferation in Iraq at the time. The memorandum also stated that on 3 March 2003, sixteen days before the

⁹⁴ *Iraq’s Nuclear Weapons Capability and IAEA Inspections in Iraq. Congressional Hearing, 1993-06-29, 1993*; Garry Dillon, “The IAEA in Iraq - International Atomic Energy Agency,” *The IAEA in Iraq - International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)*, accessed April 3, 2022, <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/publications/magazines/bulletin/bull44-2/44201251316.pdf>.

⁹⁵ Cirincione, “Niger Uranium: Still a False Claim.”

⁹⁶ “The Black Vault,” *National Intelligence Estimate of Iraq 2002* (2019).

invasion of Iraq, the documents proving the Iraq-Niger uranium deal were proven to be forgeries by the IAEA.⁹⁷

Condoleezza Rice's autobiography acknowledged that the intelligence on the Niger yellowcake was false. A final interesting note on the Niger yellowcake scandal is that Donald Rumsfeld's autobiography makes no mention of the sixteen words or the Niger uranium intelligence.⁹⁸ Dick Cheney's recollection of the sixteen words debacle spins the story in a way that makes it seem that the CIA cleared the president's speech despite George Tenet's reservations about the intelligence. Cheney further supported the sixteen words by stating that The British stood by their intelligence on the matter. Cheney tried to save face while also blaming Rice for her "major mistake" when she later publicly apologized for the inclusion of the intelligence. Cheney also stated that Tenet was "furious" for having to apologize for the inclusion of the Niger reference and presumed ties to Iraq.⁹⁹ It seems that some members of the Bush administration have made an effort to avoid this flawed or manipulated intelligence in creating deceitful legacies.

Rice revealed that George Tenet had requested that the sixteen words uttered in the 2002 State of the Union address be removed from a previous presidential speech. However, Rice stated that because the Central Intelligence Agency did not formally request the same phrase be removed from the State of the Union address, it made it into the speech. Rice stated that even though the sixteen words were included in the State of the Union address, the fact that the intelligence was false was lost in the sea of information that they continued to believe was

⁹⁷ John Hannah, "Memorandum for the Vice President," CIA Paper on Purported Iraq-Niger Uranium Deal (U.S. Justice Department), accessed April 3, 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/archive/osc/exhibits/0207/GX2A.pdf>.

⁹⁸ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir*.

⁹⁹ Cheney and Cheney, *In My Time: A Personal and Political Memoir*, pp. 417-418.

credible and important in making a case for invading Iraq. To give some credence to the Niger uranium story, Rice claimed that the 2002 NIE on Iraq supported it.¹⁰⁰ This claim, as stated earlier, was dismissed by the INR Alternative View within the report. The story of Niger's yellowcake deal is a salient example of how intelligence groups had differing opinions from the Bush administration in what was considered credible in its case for the invasion of Iraq.

Why Didn't Hussein Simply Allow Weapons Inspections?

The question is regularly raised of why President Hussein didn't simply give proof to the United States, the United Nations, and the IAEA that there was a significant difference between his nation's previous weapons capabilities and the bare state that things were in just before the U.S. invasion. I support the theories of Daalder and Lindsay, addressed below, that attempt to answer this question. I also agree with the majority opinion of legal scholars that the invasion of Iraq was illegal based upon the claims of the threat the U.S. argued that Iraq posed. Daalder and Lindsay's beliefs rest upon two points. One belief is that Saddam may have dismantled or destroyed the vast majority of his weapons with the hope that the U.N. inspectors would return to New York City and proclaim that Iraq was meeting the international obligations, removing the case for war. However, even if Hussein had destroyed or dismantled his weapons, it would be to his benefit not to make such news public as Iraq's neighboring countries may have used this information to plan their own attack or invasion of the nation. Alternatively, Hussein may have refused to make this information public because it could threaten his power over the citizens of Iraq. That power would be more valuable than the United States or the United Nations threat. If we accept that Saddam had no nuclear capabilities and the state of his chemical and biological

¹⁰⁰ Rice, *No Higher Honor*, p. 125.

stockpile was aged and questionable, the Bush administration's justification for war rings hollow. President George W. Bush would later claim that removing Hussein was just cause enough for the invasion of Iraq. However, Hussein's removal would have only made sense if the imminent threat that President George W. Bush told the international community had existed was actually present.¹⁰¹ President George W. Bush did not sell intelligence and reasoning. He sold fear to a nation that was still traumatized by 9/11.

Was the Invasion Legal by International Law or the U.N. Perspective?

Finally, the question of the legality of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 has been briefly examined with existing literature. The number of legal scholars that argue that the invasion of Iraq was legal by international law standards is limited. Despite the limited legal writing on this topic, the majority of legal experts that I have reviewed stated that the invasion was illegal and I am persuaded by their arguments into agreeing with them for the reasons illustrated by each subject expert in the majority. Writing of the perspective that the invasion was illegal are sociologist and criminal justice scholar Ronald Kramer, criminal justice scholar Raymond Michalowski, and criminologist and criminal justice scholar Dawn Rothe. These three legal scholars argued four key points regarding the legality of the Iraqi invasion. Their first point was, "The 2003 invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq by the United States and its allies was a violation of international law. Although the three additional points are deserving of attention, the

¹⁰¹ Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, pp. 166-167.

area that this thesis focuses on limits my attention to the first point regarding the legality in the area of international law.¹⁰²

Kramer et al. argued that when the U.S. signed, and the U.S. Senate ratified the U.N. Charter, it embodied international law that “codifies and supersedes all existing international law and customs.”¹⁰³ Kramer et al. presented that the U.N. Charter explicitly opposed the action of war. The authors cited Article 2(4) of the U.N. Charter that stated, “All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or [behave] in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.”¹⁰⁴ Although the authors discussed the resolutions legal scholar John Yoo cited as permissive use of force against Iraq, they do not come to the same conclusions as Yoo. Kramer et al. found that these U.N. resolutions did have a shelf life and had expired after the years had passed. The authors recognized the failure of the Bush administration to obtain a resolution from the U.N. Security Council to invade Iraq as indicative that the previous resolutions were no longer applicable. The evidence that these authors used demonstrated that the legality of the invasion of Iraq is quite questionable.¹⁰⁵ British Prime Minister Tony Blair wrote in his autobiography that the failure to obtain an endorsement from the U.N. to enforce the WMD disarmament resolutions of the Security Council was due in part to the Bush administration’s stance on the issue of unilateralism in pre-emptive enforcement and

¹⁰² Ronald Kramer, Raymond Michalowski, and Dawn Rothe, “‘The Supreme International Crime’: How the U.S. War in Iraq Threatens the Rule of Law,” *Social Justice* 32, no. 2 (2005): pp. 52-53, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/29768307>.

¹⁰³ Kramer, Michalowski, and Rothe, “The Supreme International Crime,” p. 56.

¹⁰⁴ Kramer, Michalowski, and Rothe, “The Supreme International Crime,” p. 56.

¹⁰⁵ Kramer, Michalowski, and Rothe, “The Supreme International Crime,” p. 62.

neutralization of the threat in Iraq.¹⁰⁶ The failure of diplomacy would lead to war. Writing on the legal side favoring President George W. Bush is legal scholar John Yoo.

Yoo's position is one of the most persuasive arguments of the invasion's legality. Yoo built his argument about the legality of the invasion of attack in a rather convincing manner, likely due to his years working as an attorney for the administration of President George W. Bush. Although the journal article did not disclose his years with the Bush administration, it is easily found by anyone who takes the time to look up his curriculum vitae online. The timing of the journal article, published very soon after the invasion of Iraq, raised doubts about the legality of the invasion when a member of the administration was tasked with writing in support of the effort.¹⁰⁷ Yoo argued that a specific U.N. Security Council resolution, Resolution 678, authorized member states to enforce the Iraq cease-fire and restore international peace and security. The U.N. implemented these resolutions after the Gulf War of 1990-1991. As mentioned earlier, other scholars dismissed Yoo's perspective and argued that Resolution 678's enforcement period had expired. The fact that the U.N. Security Council could not agree on military action in Iraq meant the resolution was not supported. Yoo stated that this opinion was not legally correct. Yoo also cited, what he believed, were false statements or omissions by the Iraqi WMD program as demonstrative of a breach of the nation's obligations under Resolutions 1441, 678, and 687. Resolution 1441 authorized a member nation to use military force to ensure Iraq's adherence to the U.N. Security Council Resolutions. The resolutions in question are the aforementioned 678 and 687. Resolution 678 authorized all necessary means to bring Iraq into complying with the

¹⁰⁶ Blair, *A Journey*, p. 383.

¹⁰⁷ John Yoo, "International Law and the War in Iraq," *The American Journal of International Law* 97, no. 3 (July 2003): pp. 563-576, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3109841>.

U.N. Resolutions after Desert Storm. Resolution 687 referred to Iraq's breach of its obligation to fully destroy its WMDs and the affiliated delivery systems.¹⁰⁸

President George W. Bush used the fear of WMDs in the hands of terrorists as a major reason for a pre-emptive invasion of Iraq in 2003. However, the notion of pre-emption related to the invasion of a sovereign nation seemed anathema to world leaders, as well as the U.N. by and large. Addressing the most critical issue was the matter of the pre-emptive invasion of Iraq. Yoo argued that Article 51 of the U.N. Charter reinforced the right for a member state to act in self-defense. However, even Yoo acknowledged that Article 51's self-defense clause was limited to an armed attack. Despite this concession of a differing point of view, Yoo stated that he did not believe that the persons who created the U.N. Charter would intend for Article 51 to be so limited in scope.

U.N. Secretary General during the George W. Bush administration, Kofi Annan, discussed the topic of the legality of the invasion of Iraq in his autobiography. Annan stated that when he gave an interview to the BBC on 15 September 2004, he believed that there should have been a second U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing military action before it took place. But even then, it would have been up to the Security Council to decide what the next step in appropriate action should have been. Ultimately, Annan stated in the interview that the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was illegal and against the U.N. Charter. Although Annan had implied this position before, this was the first time that he expressed such a definitive stance on the matter.¹⁰⁹ Although Annan expressed this position, the fact that it came over a year after the initial invasion

¹⁰⁸ Yoo, "International Law and the War in Iraq," pp. 567-571.

¹⁰⁹ Kofi Atta Annan and Nader Mousavizadeh, *Interventions a Life in War and Peace* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2013), p. 316.

led many in the international community to see the U.N. as lacking credibility and relevance when a member state could target Iraq unilaterally in its War on Terror.¹¹⁰

The Dean of the Swinburne University Law School and Professor of Law, Mirko Bagaric and lawyer James McConvill, wrote on the legality of the invasion of Iraq and what it means now. Bagaric and McConvill agree that the United States' military action, that included bombing the nation of Iraq to the point of neutralization while killing a considerable number of civilians and bringing the infrastructure to a state of ruin, was illegal. However, the U.S. faced no repercussions, let alone sanctions by the U.N. As Iraq did not execute an armed attack against the U.S. the basis of the United States justification for war was entirely absent. Bagaric and McConvill also found fault in using U.N. Resolution 687 (identified as the cease-fire resolution following the Gulf War of 1990-91) as allowing for a member state to enforce the resolution. Even the argument that the U.S. invasion would stop a pre-eminent attack, Bagaric and McConvill note that the U.N. Charter never gave a legal right for a state to use military force in the eyes of a perceived threat. However, they concede that Article 51 of the U.N. Charter recognized the right of self-defense. But the U.N. Charter's Article 2(4) must be considered that states that members must restrain from the use of force. Despite this, it is difficult to agree that the U.S. faced an imminent threat that would justify pre-emptive military force against Iraq.¹¹¹

The United States' main argument for an invasion of Iraq was the reasoning that Hussein possessed WMDs. However, as Bagaric and McConvill asserted, there was no conclusive evidence of that belief even in the days before war. When that argument began to come apart, the

¹¹⁰ Warren Hoge, "Annan Reiterates His Misgivings About Legality of War in Iraq," *New York Times*, September 22, 2004, p. A10.

¹¹¹ Mirko Bagaric and James McConvill, "The War in Iraq: The Illusion of International Law? Where to Now?," *Deakin Law Review* 8, no. 1 (2003): pp. 147-157.

U.S. stated that Hussein sought to acquire WMDs. There is a significant difference between possessing WMDs and hoping to acquire them. Even after more than 550 inspections of Iraqi sites believed by some in the intelligence communities as being associated with these WMDs, U.N. weapons inspectors found neither weapons stockpiles nor the necessary capacity to produce such weapons following the invasion. Bagaric and McConvill note that even Iraq's neighbors dismissed the assertion that Iraq had WMDs. Because of the overwhelming lack of evidence, this shows that the U.S.'s main argument for invading the sovereign nation did not satisfy the burden of proof required for the United States to act in self-defense.¹¹²

Writing within months of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and therefore not able to utilize later declassified intelligence and the results of U.N. weapons inspections, law professor Ronli Sifris wrote a detailed analysis on the legality of the unilateral military action. Sifris wrote on whether the war was justified using just what was in the public realm of knowledge in 2003. Sifris reiterated the intelligence by the Iraqi defector known as "Curveball" who was distrusted by most of the world's intelligence communities. Sifris also stated that Iraq had ties to terrorism, which while true in the respect of Hussein funding attacks on Israelis, is not true regarding ties to al Qaeda. Despite both of these significant flaws, Sifris still asserted, like other legal scholars, that the U.S. argument for the invasion of Iraq as self-defense was flawed because of the lack of an imminent threat. Interestingly, when discussing self-defense, Sifris noted that when the United States launched air strikes against Libya for its terrorist strikes against U.S. military members, the U.N. General Assembly condemned the strikes, even though they were launched to pre-empt further attacks. Despite this fact, Sifris argued that anticipatory self-defense was lawful. Sifris argued, like members of the Bush administration, that a state cannot wait for an attack to

¹¹² Bagaric and McConvill, "The War in Iraq," p. 159.

occur to strike back. However, in this legal review, Sifris ultimately conceded that the invasion of Iraq was not lawful as the U.S. did not exhaust all diplomatic measures to combat the perceived threat. Sifris concluded this document with a note that the invasion was not legal because it was not authorized by any U.N. Security Council resolution.¹¹³

Although I am not a lawyer or expert on international law, I found the arguments both for and against the invasion to be rather straightforward based upon my understanding of the U.N. Security Council resolutions as they pertain to Iraq. All legal scholars aside from Yoo agreed that the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was illegal and most refer to the same analysis of the U.N. Charter and the resolutions dating from the Gulf War of 1990-91 through the disarmament of resolution 1441. I found the majority opinion to be the most persuasive, especially when you consider that Yoo was a member of the Bush administration during the period implicated. Therefore, his neutrality on the issue is called into question. What is perhaps most interesting is whether a nation may use the precedence of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 as justification to accomplish their own aims and disregarding the U.N. in keeping the peace among member nations. Furthermore, because the U.N. did not sanction the U.S. for its unilateral attack against a sovereign state, it must be asked what the role of the United Nations is in the current day. These are questions that deserve further attention from future scholars. The final piece of this chapter examines the role of the United States as hegemon and what impact the War on Terror had on the U.S.

¹¹³ Ronli Sifris, "Operation Iraqi Freedom: United States v Iraq - The Legality of War," *Melbourne Journal of International Law* 4, no. 2 (October 1, 2003): pp. 521-560, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A112942888/AONE?u=milwaukee&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=c896254f>.

The Burden of the Hegemon

The desire to assemble a clear picture of how the United States invaded Iraq after 11 September 2001 is relevant as a recent example of how the office holder of the U.S. presidency has the power to shape U.S. foreign policy and lead the hegemon into war. The 1992 American Defense Planning Guidance, created by the Pentagon and National Security Council to plan Department of Defense priorities for current operations and future possibilities, and the 1997 piece by the Project for the New American Century described America's responsibilities as hegemon. The literature aligned with these responsibilities of supporting allies, challenging hostile regimes, promoting freedom, and building an international society of security.¹¹⁴ University of Calgary U.S. foreign policy graduate student Chris Langille argued in 2008 that democracy is the inevitable endpoint to which all societies progress. Though some believe this to be true, they do not think that militaristic force is justified in generating those ends. However, Langille cited sociologist Seymour Lipset in declaring that when obstacles, such as authoritarian leaders, obstruct the progress towards democracy those leaders must be removed by force and their people liberated and such military force is benign.¹¹⁵

By the time of President George W. Bush, those in senior roles had the president's ear and were pushing towards an invasion of Iraq. It is easy to label Vice President Cheney as hawkish for war, but he was but one of many who sought war in Iraq. The explicit goals of the 1992 and 1997 documents were removing Hussein from power, establishing military bases in

¹¹⁴ "Defense Planning Guidance. FY 1994-1992," 1992 Defense Planning Guidance. FY 1994-1992 (U.S. National Archives), accessed April 4, 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/files/declassification/iscap/pdf/2008-003-docs1-12.pdf>; Langille, "Political and Moral Myths in American Foreign Policy," pp. 321-336.

¹¹⁵ Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1996) **cited in** Langille, "Political and Moral Myths," p. 327.

Iraq, and taking control of its oil reserves. U.S. citizens, and citizens of many other places around the world, repeated the rallying cry of no blood for oil. Those opposed to the invasion on this basis were opposed to Vice President Dick Cheney's ties to the energy company Haliburton, with whom he sat as the CEO prior to serving President George W. Bush. During his time as CEO, Haliburton inked contracts with Iraq worth an estimated \$73 million.¹¹⁶ A subsidiary company of Haliburton was subsequently awarded a contract with the Army Corps of Engineers to restore Iraqi Oil following the invasion.¹¹⁷ President George W. Bush was on board with each piece of the plan. Philosophy Professor Douglas Kellner explained how well before the attacks of 11 September, a 2000 report titled "Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategies, Forces, and Resources for a New American Century" made the rounds in policy circles. The report was put together by the think-tank PNAC for the Bush administration officials, including Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz. The report pushed firmly for U.S. hegemony over the world and seizing the Middle East and its oil reserves.¹¹⁸ As hegemon, President George H.W. Bush argued that America had control of the "New World Order," allowing it to exercise military might and act as the world's police force. It does not require much imagination to see how President George W. Bush may have sought to unseat Hussein to tidy up his father's unfinished family business and remove a perceived threat to the United States and its allies.¹¹⁹ One area on U.S. foreign policy where the literature is bountiful is the analysis of President George W. Bush's

¹¹⁶ Douglas Kellner, "Preemptive Strikes and the War on Iraq: A Critique of Bush Administration Unilateralism and Militarism," *New Political Science* 26, no. 3 (September 2004): p. 419. doi:10.1080/0739314042000251342.

¹¹⁷ "Halliburton Subsidiary Wins Follow-On Oil Contract in Iraq," Halliburton Subsidiary Wins Follow-On Oil Contract in Iraq (Halliburton), accessed April 4, 2022, <https://ir.halliburton.com/news-releases/news-release-details/halliburton-subsi-dary-wins-follow-oil-contract-iraq>.

¹¹⁸ Kellner, "Preemptive Strikes and the War on Iraq," pp. 420-422.

¹¹⁹ Kellner, "Preemptive Strikes," p. 424.

stance on the issue. This piece of the Iraq invasion puzzle is vital because it was used to convince other politicians, other nations, and the American people that an attack on the nation of Iraq was justified and necessary.

Political Scientist Ronald R. Krebs and Political Scientist Ph.D. candidate Jennifer K. Lobasz argued that the legitimacy of the invasion of Iraq was made possible by framing the attacks of 9/11 as making the War on Terror necessary. The scholars continued that understanding the discourse of the War on Terror, and its crafting by the administration, shows how it established the U.S. as hegemonic. Furthermore, they argue that the discourse of the War on Terror made it more difficult for Democrats to oppose the war and the invasion of Iraq which followed. The depiction of President Hussein as the next iteration of Adolf Hitler and a terrorist within the War on Terror made it difficult to speak against President George W. Bush in his march towards military action in Iraq. The rhetoric of President George W. Bush and his administration shaped a belief among U.S. citizens that Hussein played a role in the attacks of 11 September and framed his regime as part of an Axis of Evil. The hegemonic position that developed was not a unification of all U.S. policymakers but was propelled forward by the Republican party at the time. Republicans had a better track record in the eyes of the public in handling security issues and their talking points regarding President Hussein and his depiction as a terrorist and the world's next Hitler became the dominant discourse over Democrats who opposed military action.¹²⁰

Krebs and Lobasz suggested that the U.S.' actions as world hegemon called to question what the nation had done in the Middle East and the attacks of 9/11 as a response by extremists.

¹²⁰ Ronald R. Krebs and Jennifer K. Lobasz, "Fixing the Meaning of 9/11: Hegemony, Coercion, and the Road to War in Iraq," *Security Studies* 16, no. 3 (2007): pp. 409-434, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636410701547881>.

The United States had financially and politically supported oppressive dictators in the Middle East. They also noted that the assistance given to Israel caused death and harm to Palestinians for decades. They argued that the U.S. military response towards countries as part of the War on Terror did little more than depict the United States as making an impulsive play for “imperialist expansion.”¹²¹ Although the U.S. did spend considerable time occupying both Afghanistan and Iraq, both conflicts have recently ended. The U.S. arguably left these nations destabilized and their citizens impacted by the United States War on Terror. It does not appear that the U.S. hoped for imperialist expansion, but the United States hoped to establish and expand democratic and capitalist ideals, neither of which bore much fruit.

The U.S. seemed to weaken as the world’s hegemonic power following the War on Terror. Part of this is likely from the pre-emptive invasion of Iraq based upon claims that never materialized (and the forever war that followed). The W. Bush-era generation of U.S. foreign policymakers established the precedent that pre-emptive war may be used by future U.S. presidents or even by other nation-states who choose to launch a war of pre-emption because of a perceived threat that may not exist.

The next chapter examines the mainstream media's role in its implicit support of the invasion of Iraq, its opposition once the war began and the pretexts for war seemed unsubstantiated, and its role in reporting the war as it unfolded.

¹²¹ Krebs and Lobasz, “Fixing the Meaning of 9/11,” p. 424.

Chapter Two: The Media's Reinforcement of Rhetoric

This chapter analyzes the media's tacit role, by uncritically repeating the administration's claims, in building support for President George W. Bush's war rhetoric and military action in Iraq. The second section of the chapter will examine the unintended consequences of the war rhetoric on U.S. citizens of Middle Eastern ancestry. The third section will address how other government agencies were used to bolster support among media outlets in other nations that the U.S. sought to influence. Finally, I compare how field journalists and their parent companies reported on the Vietnam War Conflict as opposed to their coverage of the invasion of Iraq in 2003. First, this chapter reviews the media's role in repeating the rhetoric in favor of armed conflict in Iraq.

More Than Simple Talking Points

English Professor Richard Grusin argued that in the modern era of media, the mission of print and television journalism was to state that news is constantly breaking and foster fear that another important event is on the horizon.¹²² Communications Professor Mahmoud Eid declares that the mainstream media is a ruthless yet profitable business that benefits from opposing views on an issue. It is common for the media machine to sensationalize stories to seize the readers' interests. The attacks of 9/11 served the media and allowed for non-stop coverage of the terrorists and the continued threat that they posed. The media coverage may have inadvertently promoted global terrorism while provoking fear within the U.S. citizenry.¹²³

¹²² Richard A. Grusin, *Premediation: Affect and Mediality after 9/11* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 53.

¹²³ Mahmoud Eid, "The New Era of Media and Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36, no. 7 (2013): pp. 609-610, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610x.2013.793638>.

Professor of Communication and Women and Gender Studies Kimberly Powell argued that when 9/11 occurred it transformed the U.S.'s response to the terrorist threat and legitimized the War on Terror. By framing Iraq as an evil opposite of the freedom-loving U.S., the Bush administration depicted the invasion of Iraq as the morally superior U.S. versus the wicked Middle Eastern, specifically Muslim, “other.” Because terrorist actions are shocking by design, the activities of terrorists quickly capture the media's attention and account for a considerable amount of time in the twenty-four-hour news cycle. The fear invoked by the media in telling the story of terror has the power to reshape public behaviors, such as travel and even in-person attendance at workplaces.¹²⁴ Shortly after the attacks of 11 September, fifty-three per cent of respondents, all of whom were U.S. residents, stated that they had changed their plans and even day-to-day routine.¹²⁵ Roughly ninety per cent of respondents, from a pool of U.S. residents, declared that the possibility of additional terror attacks created fear, which drove people to seek further updates, sometimes even from celebrity talk show hosts like Dave Letterman and Jay Leno. The response to this fear was a supportive populace behind the Bush administration to devote more time and money to the War on Terror.¹²⁶

President George W. Bush's public campaign for the invasion of Iraq began on 12 September 2002 when he started making explicit connections between Iraq, terrorism, and

¹²⁴ Kimberly A. Powell, “Framing Islam: An Analysis of U.S. Media Coverage of Terrorism Since 9/11,” *Communication Studies* 62, no. 1 (2011): pp. 90-112, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2011.533599>.

¹²⁵ Brigitte L. Nacos, *Mass-Mediated Terrorism: Mainstream and Digital Media in Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, 3rd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2016), p. 163.

¹²⁶ Nacos, *Mass-Mediated Terrorism*, p. 122.

WMDs in public speeches.¹²⁷ Political Science Professor Anthony DiMaggio argued that the rhetoric explored the dichotomy of the fear invoked by terrorism and the hope offered by the administration and the other nations who would join the United States in the War on Terror. These messages from the president were spread by an acquiescent and unquestioning mass media to U.S. citizens still impacted by the horrors of terrorism on U.S. soil and recovering from the effects. The Bush administration exerted their power in defining the boundaries of what would be propagated in the mass media's report of the incident and the government's response.¹²⁸ The media and the executive branch regularly work together to simplify complicated issues for easier comprehension by a broad citizenry and both of these agents can determine what is important to the public, how it is discussed, and which facts are relevant.

DiMaggio argued that in 2002-2003, President George W. Bush launched "one of the largest pro-war public relations campaigns in history."¹²⁹ Although it is hard to pin down who led the public relations campaign for the Bush administration's goals in Iraq, it likely involved White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer to a significant degree based upon his shaping of the press' understanding of the goals of President George W. Bush. For example, a 12 October 2002 article in the *New York Times* identified Press Secretary Fleischer as the person who clarified how the U.S. military would act if Iraq was invaded. Fleischer also hypothesized in the article

¹²⁷ Amy Gershkoff and Shana Kushner, "Shaping Public Opinion: The 9/11-Iraq Connection in the Bush Administration's Rhetoric," *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 03 (September 2005): p. 527, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1537592705050334>.

¹²⁸ Anthony R. DiMaggio, *Selling War, Selling Hope: Presidential Rhetoric, the News Media, and U.S. Foreign Policy Since 9/11* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2016), p. 59.

¹²⁹ DiMaggio, *Selling War, Selling Hope*, p. 59.

that the U.S. would not be viewed as occupiers but liberators. This echoed the relations that the United States had with Japan following World War II.¹³⁰

The Bush administration's public relations campaign was a marked success in building support for the anti-terror agenda and Iraq's threat to the nation and worldwide democracy. A repeated talking point by the administration was the legality of pre-emptive action under existing international law and in response to violations of U.N. Security Council Resolutions that were relics of Desert Storm in 1990-1991. The Bush administration used U.N. Resolution 1441 of November 2002 to bolster its case. This resolution gave Iraq's President Saddam Hussein one last chance to comply with earlier disarmament resolutions. President George W. Bush's public speeches continued to hammer on Hussein's failure to comply. Although the 2003 U.N. weapons inspectors, led by Hans Blix, questioned the Bush administration's allegations that Iraq posed a threat, they were not certain. This uncertain possibility allowed the Bush administration to continue asserting that Iraq posed a nuclear threat. It was the obligation of the U.S. to act pre-emptively before that threat materialized.¹³¹

The Bush administration repeatedly used the threats of chemical and biological warfare (CBW) tied to Iraq to provoke fear in U.S. citizens. For example, Bush seized the opportunity to speak at the U.N. on 12 September 2002, where he promoted the significant threat:

In 1991, the Iraqi regime agreed to destroy and stop developing all weapons of mass destruction...Iraq has broken every aspect of this fundamental pledge. The regime [has] admitted to producing tens of thousands of liters of anthrax and other deadly biological agents for use with Scud warheads, aerial bombs, and aircraft spray tanks. U.N. inspectors believe Iraq has produced two to four times

¹³⁰ David E. Sanger, "Bush Says U.S. Won't Force Its Ways on a Beaten Iraq," The New York Times (The New York Times, October 12, 2002), <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/12/world/threats-responses-plan-for-iraq-bush-says-us-won-t-force-its-ways-beaten-iraq.html?searchResultPosition=12>. Note: There are other possible actors that contributed to the public relations campaign, including Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell.

¹³¹ DiMaggio, *Selling War, Selling Hope*, pp. 59-60.

the amount of biological agents it declared...Iraq is expanding and improving facilities that were used for the production of biological weapons.¹³²

It is not clear if the status of the biological agents was correct at the time of the speech but by late 2003 proof of a biological weapons program had not surfaced. Furthermore, experts stated that if Iraq did have a biological weapons program at the time, it did not have the means to deliver the biological weapons.¹³³ Bush argued that the threat Iraq posed was not limited to nuclear weapons, and Hussein's past use of CBWs gave the administration a base to argue that a continued threat from CBWs was plausible. By repeating the numerous violations that Iraq held over from Desert Storm, the Bush administration drove home fear and the hope that the United States offered in providing a more secure world.

The media covered the Bush administration in part by reporting on his public speeches that would stream live on air and excerpts were used in later coverage of the appearances. Following the speech to the U.N., Bush spoke in Cincinnati, Ohio, at one event that was planned to increase Republican voter turnout for the midterm elections in the U.S. In this speech, President George W. Bush gave an example of Hussein's aggressions towards one of Hussein's enemies, Iran. He recalled that Hussein "ordered chemical attacks on Iran, and on more than forty villages in his own country."¹³⁴ These attacks resulted in at least 20,000

¹³² DiMaggio, *Selling War, Selling Hope*, p. 60. It is hard to know if this statement regarding the amount of chemical agents was a misrepresentation of evidence, flawed intelligence, or simply what was accepted as truth when reported on by U.N. weapons experts. See: "Experts: Iraq Has Tons of Chemical Weapons," CNN (Cable News Network, September 4, 2002), <https://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/meast/09/02/iraq.weapons/index.html>.

¹³³ James P. Pfiffner, "Did President Bush Misperceive the Country in His Arguments for War with Iraq?," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2004): p. 26, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5705.2004.00032.x>.

¹³⁴ DiMaggio, *Selling War, Selling Hope*, p. 60. Many of President George W. Bush's speeches are recorded in text form on websites including his presidential library, the White House archives, archives of media outlets like CNN, Fox News, the *New York Times*, and YouTube.

casualties. The efficiency of Hussein's warfare was given by British intelligence, which indicated that once Hussein gave the order to launch a CBW attack, it would only require forty-five minutes to execute. Although this intelligence was based upon spotty weapons inspections up to this point, the threat of a swift attack by Iraq furthered the fear that the Bush administration promoted to the public and perpetuated the habits of most of the U.S. populace to watch the news to learn more about the next threat facing the United States. According to Gallup polling, only ten per cent of respondents said that they felt very satisfied with regard to the nation's security from terrorism in 2002, with forty one per cent saying that they were somewhat satisfied. When polling was conducted again in 2004, after the invasion of Iraq, still only nineteen per cent stated that they were very satisfied with their security from terrorism, and fifty one percent responded that they were somewhat satisfied. Looking at those who were somewhat satisfied, the second highest categorization of safety in this polling, you see a ten point jump following the invasion and I believe this is tied to the idea that President George W. Bush had eliminated the threat supposedly presented by President Hussein.¹³⁵

The Bush administration was doing well in selling the threat of CBW at this point and then ratcheted up the threat by noting in his 2003 State of the Union address, covered by all news networks and broadcast channels in the U.S. in addition to reporting by newspaper reports the next day, that intelligence showed that Hussein had developed mobile weapons labs. Gen. Powell later repeated this threat in his February 2003 U.N. address. The ability to secretly mobilize weapons laboratories implied that finding proof of Iraq's illegal weapons cache would make the

Typically, when President George W. Bush gave a speech after 9/11, it was carried by major networks and reported upon the next day if not the day that the speech occurred.

¹³⁵ Gallup, "Terrorism," Gallup.com (Gallup), accessed April 6, 2022, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/4909/terrorism-united-states.aspx>. Interestingly, these polling numbers drop again in 2005 to the area of the polling results seen in 2003.

job of U.N. weapons inspectors more difficult.¹³⁶ News agencies, such as NPR, reported on the State of the Union with special coverage the same day. While NPR reported on the event, there was no critical analysis by the news agency.¹³⁷ Similarly, a *New York Times* article published the day after the State of the Union did little to challenge President Bush's talking points but instead selectively contrasted the president's speech to other historically significant U.S. presidential speeches.¹³⁸

However, the day after President George W. Bush's 7 October 2002 speech in Cincinnati, Ohio, the CIA publicly released a document that declared that President Hussein was not a current threat to the United States. Still, the CIA document noted that Hussein **could** resort to the use of CBW if he felt threatened. In a matter of days following the release of the CIA's document, the major news outlets *Newsweek* and *MSNBC* declared that the intelligence photos presented by the Bush administration "were not convincing."¹³⁹ The pushback that the CIA gave to President George W. Bush regarding President Hussein and Iraq was confirmed after the invasion of Iraq in a news article by Bob Drogin and Greg Miller titled "CIA Chief Saw No Imminent Threat in Iraq." In the article, the journalists report that CIA Director Tenet never supported the Bush administration's labeling of Hussein as an imminent threat. Not only is it important to recognize that the nation's main intelligence agency did not see the justification of invading Iraq but it is also key that without an imminent threat, there could be no logical pre-

¹³⁶ DiMaggio, *Selling War, Selling Hope*, pp. 60-61.

¹³⁷ "The State of the Union Address - Bush Stands Firm on Iraq, Underlines Domestic Goals," NPR (NPR, January 28, 2003), <https://legacy.npr.org/news/specials/sou/2003/index.html>.

¹³⁸ Todd S. Purdum, "Bush's Twin Challenges," *The New York Times* (The New York Times, January 29, 2003), <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/29/world/state-of-the-union-news-analysis-bush-s-twin-challenges.html>.

¹³⁹ Alexander G. Nikolaev and Ernest A. Hakanen, *Leading to the 2003 Iraq War: The Global Media Debate* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 2.

emption. This once again makes the military action in Iraq a preventative war, as discussed in Chapter One. Furthermore, the threat of Iraq amassing chemical and biological weapons could not be supported by the CIA.¹⁴⁰ However, the Bush administration's public relations campaign regularly worked with the media to bolster support for the Iraqi invasion.

On 28 January 2003, just months before the strike occurred, the *New York Times* ran an article titled "White House Expected to Disclose Evidence of Iraqi Threat." In the article, the *Times* supported the Bush administration's plans by announcing that the White House planned to reveal further information about hidden weapons and Iraqi links to terrorism, while also noting the international opposition to military action in Iraq. The White House spoke on background, where no names were given about the upcoming disclosure, on how Hussein had hidden weapons and further information tying Iraq to al Qaeda were found. The article also disclosed that White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer was ready to act against Iraq without another U.N. resolution. Despite this fight in the media to win support at home and abroad, the *Times* also cited Gallup polling that support for President George W. Bush's foreign policy had dropped to between fifty and fifty-nine per cent.¹⁴¹ Without the support of the media, the president's rhetoric on the issue faltered in some circles. The framing of the president's rhetoric determined how in-depth the ideology permeated the public sphere.

It is interesting to compare the U.S. media's portrayal of the case for the invasion of Iraq with how sound the intelligence seemed in the eyes of the British media. The U.S. article, from

¹⁴⁰ Bob Drogin and Greg Miller, "CIA Chief Saw No Imminent Threat in Iraq," *Los Angeles Times* (*Los Angeles Times*, February 6, 2004), <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2004-feb-06-fg-tenet6-story.html>.

¹⁴¹ Brian Knowlton, "White House Expected to Disclose Evidence of Iraqi Threat," *The New York Times* (*The New York Times*, January 28, 2003), <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/28/international/middleeast/white-house-expected-to-disclose-evidence-of-iraqi.html?searchResultPosition=6>.

the *New York Times*, was titled “With Few Variations, Top Bush Advisers Present their Case Against Iraq.” The article reviews recent public appearances by members of the Bush administration, including Dick Cheney, Colin Powell, and Donald Rumsfeld, and their presentation of evidence supporting an invasion of Iraq for its violations of the U.N. Security Council Resolutions and the threat of their stockpile of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons posed to the U.S. and worldwide democracy. Interestingly, Colin Powell legitimized pre-emption and prevention as strategies that have existed all along but was given a different sort of attention after 9/11. In the article you see talking points on numerous major political news shows and a passive acceptance and regurgitation of all of these talking points in one of the United States’ respected newspapers.¹⁴²

By contrast, a British newspaper, *The Times*, discussed intelligence regarding Iraq’s nuclear capabilities presented in support of the invasion of Iraq in the 14 March 2002 article titled “Iraq’s Nuclear Bomb Ability Still a Mystery.” The article stated that Iraq’s nuclear capabilities remained a mystery to U.S. intelligence agencies just days before the American invasion. The article cited intelligence drawn from the two main British intelligence agencies, MI6 and GCHQ. The article also cited a report from the IAEA that there was no indication that Iraq was successful in acquiring weapons grade uranium on the black market or that it was successful in producing more than a few grams of fissile material on its own. Furthermore, the IAEA never found a blueprint for a nuclear weapon, though they remained convinced that President Hussein must have had one. Comparing these two articles side-by-side, it was easy to

¹⁴² “With Few Variations, Top Bush Advisers Present Their Case Against Iraq,” *The New York Times* (The New York Times, September 9, 2002), <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/09/international/with-few-variations-top-bush-advisers-present-their-case.html?searchResultPosition=3>.

see how readily the U.S. media supported President George W. Bush's rhetoric versus how other news agencies challenged the Bush administration's talking points, despite Britain being a member of the Coalition of the Willing.¹⁴³

The *Toronto Star* published an article on 18 June 2002 titled "War on Terror Little to do with Terror." In the article, the author is quick to remind readers that there is no intelligence linking the present-day Iraq to al Qaeda or 9/11. Although the author noted that the Bush administration stated that Hussein was amassing WMDs, the author cited a former member of the inspections team in declaring that there is no truth in this matter. The author noted the hypocrisy of the United States in taking action against states with WMDs as the U.S. and other leading nations all have WMD stockpiles. In fact, the threat from the recent anthrax attacks were connected back to a U.S. military laboratory.

The author of the *Toronto Star* article noted that the war in Afghanistan did little to prevent terrorism but in fact made terrorism a more significant threat. I concur with the author that the events of 9/11 gave the administration a blank check to act globally in the war on terror, to the extent that it would even permit preventative conflict with Iraq.¹⁴⁴ Although Canada did not participate in the initial invasion of Iraq it did help with the reconstruction efforts and training of the Iraqi police force. Despite the Canadian government's participation in the later

¹⁴³ Michael Evans, "Iraq's Nuclear Bomb Ability Still a Mystery," *Iraq's Nuclear Bomb Ability Still a Mystery* (The Times, March 14, 2002), <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=n5h&AN=7EH3727765856&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁴⁴ Thomas Walkom, "War on Terror Little to Do with Terror," *War on Terror Little to do with Terror* (Toronto Star, June 18, 2002), <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=n5h&AN=6FP1166491658&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

debacle in Iraq, the media in the country did not hold back in its critique of President George W. Bush and his administration in their attempts to legitimize the invasion.

Media and public affairs Professor Robert Entman argued that “media framing” highlights a portion of reality and makes it noteworthy. Because most of the mainstream U.S. media were uncritical of the president's argument for the invasion of Iraq, the framing of all Muslims (including U.S. citizens) in a negative light occurred due to their depiction as the “other.” Kimberly Powell argued that the media coverage of terrorism casts Muslims and Islam in a particularly negative light. The repetition of this framing guides the consumer towards the belief that “Muslims are terrorists.”¹⁴⁵

Islamophobia in the U.K. and U.S.

The “Green Menace,” so named because green is associated with Islam, became the new threat facing America in the shadow of the Cold War. The 9/11 Commission Report by the U.S. Congress, published 22 July 2004, acknowledged that the roots of Muslim extremism and the hate that groups like al Qaeda represented were tied to the religion of Islam and did not separate politics from religion.¹⁴⁶ It is important to note that the 9/11 Commission Report urged that Islam should not have been targeted as the enemy of the U.S. and should not be lumped to identify all Islamic persons as terrorists. The report urged tolerance of Islam while preventing further

¹⁴⁵ R. M. Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a fractured paradigm” in *Journal of Communication*, 43 (4), pp. 51-58, **cited in** Powell, “Framing Islam: An Analysis of U.S. Media Coverage of Terrorism Since 9/11,” pp. 93-94.

¹⁴⁶ Todd H. Green, “9/11, The War on Terror, and the Rise of Political Islamophobia,” in *The Fear of Islam: An Introduction to Islamophobia in the West* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2019), pp. 109-117, <https://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/book/39716>.

terrorist attacks from Islamic extremists.¹⁴⁷ Professor of Religion Todd Green declared that when politicians label Islam as being tied to violent measures like terrorism, they have abandoned reason and have delved into the territory of Islamophobia. Even notable editorialist Thomas Friedman wrote that no Muslim cleric or religious body denounced the terrorist attacks launched by al Qaeda. However, this statement was quickly proved false as his newspaper, the *New York Times*, ran a full-page proclamation by notable Muslim leaders that denounced the attacks.¹⁴⁸ If the stereotypes and fear directed towards Muslims had permeated the minds of politicians and the news media, what was the result on the greater U.K. and U.S. citizenry?

Media culture and communications Professor Amir Saeed argued that Islamophobia was not limited to the U.S. as he dealt with hate directed towards him because of his religious identity within his home, Great Britain. Islamophobia existed prior to 9/11, as proven by the United Nation's recognition that an accord on racism was necessary. The *New York Times* wrote an article on 9 September 2001 (two days before the attack in New York City) about the U.N. accord agreed upon at a conference in Durban, South Africa. The U.N. members recognized that racism and intolerance had a long history of ending in significant violations of human rights and becoming tragedies. The accord recognized the groups repeatedly targeted by intolerance and violence, the Jewish people, those from Islamic countries, and the Palestinians. Those that signed the accord agreed to oppose racism and counter intolerance based on religious or cultural backgrounds. Recognizing historical wrongs, the accord identified the Holocaust and the trans-Atlantic slave trade that must never be permitted to occur again. The necessity to develop a multilateral accord against racism in the United Nations speaks to the existence of these

¹⁴⁷ *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York, NY: Norton, 2004), p. 363.

¹⁴⁸ Green, "9/11, The War on Terror, and the Rise of Political Islamophobia," p. 123-124.

conditions in developed countries like the United States and developing countries worldwide well before the War on Terror.¹⁴⁹

Saeed wrote that the hatred of Islam throughout the Western world manifested in physical confrontations and verbal intimidation. Saeed also mentioned the development of far-right political groups with explicit anti-Muslim political positions and the creation of groups like the English Defense League that takes the hate to street-level, operating within Muslim communities. At the time of Saeed's writing (2011), although Muslims only represented three per cent of the citizenry in the U.K., they accounted for forty-four per cent of all victims of the racial violence within the state. The representation of Islam as a religion of violence in early political rhetoric by President George W. Bush and his close ally, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, calls to question how the selling of the invasion of Iraq by way of the mainstream media's partnership influenced the perspectives of both the U.S. and the U.K. populace.¹⁵⁰

In 2002, the organization Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a report detailing the impact of Islamophobia in the United States following the depiction of Muslims as the enemy in politics and the media. The report stated that one of the side-effects of the 9/11 attacks was the sharp rise in hate crimes.¹⁵¹ The hate crimes ranged from public harassment to assault and even murder. The notable increase in these crimes primarily occurred between 11 September 2001 and December 2001. The increase in these crimes was seventeen-fold compared to pre-9/11 metrics

¹⁴⁹ "Regrets for Past Wrongs and Hopes for Peace," *The New York Times* (*The New York Times*, September 9, 2001), <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/09/world/the-accord-on-racism-the-declaration-regrets-for-past-wrongs-and-hopes-for-peace.html?searchResultPosition=1>.

¹⁵⁰ Amir Saeed, "9/11 And the Increase in Racism and Islamophobia: A Personal Reflection," *Radical History Review* 2011, no. 111 (2011): pp. 210-212, <https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-1268821>.

¹⁵¹ "'We are Not the Enemy' Hate Crimes Against Arabs, Muslims, and Those Perceived to Be Arab or Muslim after September 11," November 2002: pp. 14-15, (Human Rights Watch, November 2002), <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/usahate/usa1102.pdf>.

from the FBI, moving from twenty-eight anti-Muslim crimes in 2000 to over 600, by some agency's records, at the end of 2001. Between 1996-2000, the reports of hate crimes to the FBI had been relatively low from year to year. However, even after its peak year in 2001, the subsequent years from 2002 to 2007 showed that hate crimes remained significantly higher than the numbers in the years leading to 9/11.¹⁵² The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) reported 1,717 anti-Muslim acts of discrimination from 11 September 2001 until the end of February 2002. Even within Chicago alone, there were fifty-one hate crimes in the three months after 9/11. This increase in hate crimes represented a nearly thirteen fold increase. Chicago wasn't alone with record hate-crime numbers in this period. Similar patterns were evident in Los Angeles County and throughout Florida.¹⁵³ The report showed that discrimination and Islamophobic bias were not limited to New York City but experienced by communities nationwide.

The most recent data from the FBI's 2019 Hate Crime Statistics reported 176 incidents of anti-Islamic bias as the single motivation for criminal acts. Thankfully, the number of anti-Islamic bias crimes has decreased significantly since the United States' peak reporting of these incidents in 2001. These incidents represented 13.3 per cent of the religiously motivated hate crimes in 2019. The two most common locations for hate crimes based upon religion to occur were near the victim's residences or homes and closely behind that were offenses near places of worship.¹⁵⁴ The group Muslim Advocates responded to the 2020 release of the FBI's 2019 Hate

¹⁵² Kuang Keng Kuek Ser, "Data: Hate Crimes Against Muslims Increased After 9/11," The World from PRX (PRX, September 12, 2016), <https://theworld.org/stories/2016-09-12/data-hate-crimes-against-muslims-increased-after-911>.

¹⁵³ "We are Not the Enemy," p. 15.

¹⁵⁴ "2019 FBI Hate Crime Statistics," 2019 FBI Hate Crime Statistics (FBI), accessed April 7, 2022, <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2019/hate-crime>.

Crime Statistics by stating that although there were more anti-Islamic hate crimes than any year since 2008, they believed that this did not represent the full scope of the data. Their basis for this claim is that there is no requirement for law enforcement agencies to report hate crimes to the federal government and many victims do not report the offenses themselves. Muslim Advocates encourages the U.S. Congress to pass legislation to improve comprehensive hate crime reporting.¹⁵⁵ They encouraged the passage of the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act. The legislation was introduced in the senate in June 2019 though it failed to gain traction and was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, where it stalled.¹⁵⁶ An additional bill was introduced in the Senate in March 2021 with the aim of making reporting of hate crimes easier and more comprehensive, but it too did not get enough support to progress past the introduction to the legislative body.¹⁵⁷

Discrimination was not only demonstrated through intimidation or violence but also as employment discrimination. By May 2002, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) received 488 grievances of employment discrimination directly tied to Islamophobia and 9/11. Of those groups targeted by Islamophobia, it was not uncommon for them to be stereotyped. Still, the Department of Transportation (DOT) investigated 111 complaints of excessive screening processes due to people's ethnic or religious identity. Some of these complaints resulted in harassment or being refused from boarding an aircraft. The HRW report also contains polling results regarding how Islamophobia resulted in criminal and non-

¹⁵⁵ "2019 FBI Data Undercounts Hate Crimes," Muslim Advocates: 2019 FBI Data Undercounts Hate Crimes (Muslim Advocates, November 17, 2020), <https://muslimadvocates.org/2020/11/muslim-advocates-2019-fbi-data-undercounts-hate-crimes/>.

¹⁵⁶ "S.2043 - 116th Congress (2019-2020): Jabara-Heyer No Hate Act," S.2043 - 116th congress (2019-2020): Jabara-Heyer No Hate Act (U.S. Congress), accessed April 7, 2022, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/2043>.

¹⁵⁷ "S.963 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Domestic Terrorism and Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2021," Domestic terrorism and Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2021 (U.S. Congress), accessed April 7, 2022, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/963>.

criminal incidents within their communities. One polling result in the report stated that 48 per cent of Muslim-Americans polled by CAIR believed that their quality of life had decreased after 9/11. Despite Islamophobia resulting in greater acts of hate directed towards Muslim-Americans by others, the Muslim-American community polled stated that seventy-nine per cent of those surveyed experienced a kind act from friends or co-workers of other faiths. This polling reveals that, although there were numerous instances of kindness directed towards Muslim-Americans after 9/11, the overall phobia and stereotyping negatively affected the Muslim-American communities nationwide.¹⁵⁸ However, the impact on Muslim-American citizens was only a part of the story as the media, to a great extent, repeated much of the president's talking points as the Bush administration sought to convince the U.S. populace of the threat Iraq posed to the United States and democracy as a whole. Although freedom of religion is a pillar defining the aims of the founders of the United States, in practice, the Islamic faith and all Muslim-Americans were redefined as terrorists after 9/11, and the War on Terror highlights the defining of these individuals as the “other,” or non-American on a prima facie basis.¹⁵⁹

An oral history described the circumstances that surrounded those tied to the Islamic faith who lived in the United States following 11 September 2001. A girl named Adama Bah, who lived in East Harlem, New York awoke on 24 March 2005 surrounded by federal agents. In the early morning raid, FBI agents arrested her and her father, Mamadou Bah, and transported them to separate detention facilities. Adama was detained for six weeks before being released. Her father was released, only to immediately be deported to Guinea, Africa. Before Adama’s release, the U.S. threatened her with deportation as well. When 9/11 occurred, Adama attended an

¹⁵⁸ “We are Not the Enemy,” p. 16.

¹⁵⁹ Powell, “Framing Islam,” p. 107.

Islamic boarding school in Buffalo, New York and was shook by the attacks that day and was disturbed when her teacher told her that because of the attacks, there might be hate against Muslims. Adama recalled being disturbed that all Muslims would receive blame for what a small group did, which she had no association with before in her life. By pure coincidence, Adama Osama shared part of her name with the 9/11 mastermind and overshadowed her as an individual.¹⁶⁰

Roughly one month after 9/11, Adama boarded a plane for New York to celebrate Ramadan with her family. She was dressed in conservative Islamic apparel covering most of her body. Adama remembered the pointing, the fear on people's faces, and she had a fear of being attacked. She experienced these reactions without the awareness of the hate crimes towards Muslims, although she was in school after 9/11 when someone threw a rock through the Islamic school's window. Adama felt the intrusiveness of the additional screenings at the airport, and later discovered that her bags were pulled aside for additional screening. Adama described the treatment of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) as especially hostile, which seemed standard treatment from all aspects of the airline travel that day. Racism, hatred, and curse words were slung at her, while also being derided as a member of the Taliban.¹⁶¹

The morning of 24 March 2005 was when things changed from racist remarks from other individuals in public to a personal attack by law enforcement, as mentioned at the beginning of this oral history account. That morning, agents from the FBI, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and local police entered her apartment and corralled the family, while shouting that they were going to deport the entire family as their belongings were turned upside-down in search of

¹⁶⁰ Alia Malek, ed., *Patriot Act: Narratives of Post-9/11 Injustice* (San Francisco, CA: Voice of Witness, 2011), pp. 25-27.

¹⁶¹ Malek, *Patriot Act*, pp. 27-28.

something unknown. Adama and her father were handcuffed and transported in the same car to a detention center in the city. Adama was placed in a cell, though it had glass instead of bars like is traditionally seen in a jail cell. Adama was interrogated, which is when she learned that she was not in the U.S. legally, which disturbed her deeply. However, Adama's father stressed the importance of her avoiding deportation to Guinea because she would be forcibly circumcised. This cultural tradition is not unique to Guinea but was the main reason that Adama's parents left the country for the United States after their daughters were born.¹⁶²

An FBI agent interrogated Adama once again but this time the topic was not regarding immigration but terrorism. The agent claimed that a girl from Adama's mosque, whom she had seen in the detention facility that day, was part of a religious study group tied to someone wanted by the FBI. The FBI agent turned her over to a male Secret Service agent who asked Adama about her feelings towards President George W. Bush. Adama was candid and said that she did not like him. Adama then recalled that the Secret Service agent became aggressive when asking her about her reasons for covering so much of her body when women were trending towards more revealing clothing. Adama stated that it was merely freedom of choice to wear coverings. The Secret Service agent then disclosed that her acquaintance from the mosque had listed her as a potential suicide bomber. Adama was shocked but the interrogations continued off and on. When Adama was handcuffed with the woman who the agents claimed identified her as a terrorist, Adama discovered that they had told this acquaintance that Adama had signed this girl up as a potential suicide bomber. The agents were hoping to play one girl off of the other.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Malek, *Patriot Act*, pp. 29-33.

¹⁶³ Malek, *Patriot Act*, pp. 33-35.

Adama and her acquaintance Tashnuba were then transported to a detention center in Pennsylvania by the FBI. Once the pair arrived at the detention center in Pennsylvania Adama was repeatedly stripped searched, which was very difficult for her to endure because of her religious modesty and a tradition of covering the majority of her body. She was then told to dress in a blue sweatsuit but was initially permitted to take her head scarf with her until a supervisor noticed it and removed it from her possession.¹⁶⁴ Every morning the detainees were supposed to salute the American flag but Adama said, “[Expletive] the American flag. I’m not saluting it,” while keeping her hands to her side during the Pledge of Allegiance.¹⁶⁵ Adama reminded the guards that they had told her that she was not American, so why would she salute the American flag?¹⁶⁶

Adama was detained for four weeks before her first appearance before a magistrate by video conference. After a story was published in the *New York Times* the girls received increased derogatory remarks from the guards who saw them as terrorists, and the pair received increased strip searches and increased racism. At the beginning of the fourth week of Adama’s detention, she was able to see her lawyer and her family. Her father remained detained in New Jersey before his deportation. Adama was eventually released to her family on the condition that she wear an ankle bracelet.¹⁶⁷ Adama was released after six and a half weeks in detention and she recalled that when she was released to federal agents, her guard said to the agents, “Arrest that [expletive] [n-word] terrorist.”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Malek, *Patriot Act*, pp. 36-38.

¹⁶⁵ Malek, *Patriot Act*, p. 39.

¹⁶⁶ Malek, *Patriot Act*, p. 39.

¹⁶⁷ Malek, *Patriot Act*, pp. 39-41.

¹⁶⁸ Malek, *Patriot Act*, p. 41.

The government punished Adama by having her wear an ankle bracelet for three years while also adhering to curfew hours. The ankle bracelet prevented Adama from seeing her father because of the distance she was limited to travel from home. With her father gone, Adama was forced to work to support her family instead of returning to school to continue her education. Adama wore the ankle bracelet until she received asylum because of the forced genital mutilation she faced if she was deported to her home country of Guinea. As a further insult, Adama discovered that her detention at the hands of the government placed her on a no fly list. She was not able to regain her ability to travel by air until she sued Attorney General Eric Holder, FBI Director Robert Mueller, and Director of the Terrorist Screening Center Timothy Healy.¹⁶⁹ The story of the detention of the two girls was carried by the *New York Times* in an article published on 7 May 2005 titled “Elation in Harlem as Girl Held in Terror Inquiry is Released.”

The *New York Times* article recounted some points of Adama’s oral history of the ordeal and also noted that the case was shrouded in secrecy. Despite the efforts of the newspaper, their journalist had difficulty in uncovering information about either Adama or Tashnuba for quite some time. Even after Adama’s case was concluded, her attorney remained under a gag order by the judge and not able to discuss much of what occurred. In the article, the journalist uncovered that though many of her friends from school had tried to send letters of support, they were informed that Adama was not permitted to receive any correspondence. Tashnuba, whose name was not disclosed in the article because of her status as a minor, was negotiating with the government for permission to leave the U.S. for their home country.¹⁷⁰ This oral history is one of

¹⁶⁹ Malek, *Patriot Act*, pp. 42-45.

¹⁷⁰ Nina Bernstein, “Elation in Harlem as Girl Held in Terror Inquiry Is Released,” *The New York Times* (*The New York Times*, May 7, 2005), <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/07/nyregion/elation-in-harlem-as-girl-held-in-terror-inquiry-is-released.html?searchResultPosition=6>.

many from Muslim residents of the United States in the shadow of 9/11. I chose this particular oral history to illustrate that even years after 9/11, Islamic intolerance existed to the point that federal agents were still pursuing leads based on stereotypes of the threat Muslims supposedly posed to the U.S.

More Than Simple Talking Points – Part II

On 12 September 2002, President George W. Bush ratcheted his call for military aggression against Iraq. In a speech just after the first anniversary of the attacks, he stated that "Today, we turn to the urgent duty of protecting other lives."¹⁷¹ President George W. Bush claimed that President Hussein had been and still was providing succor to terrorists, particularly the al Qaeda terror network.¹⁷² Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld reported to the U.S. Senate's Armed Services Committee on 19 September 2002 that Hussein could place " sleeper cells armed with biological weapons to attack us from within—and then deny any knowledge or connection to the attacks."¹⁷³ This is yet another example of the Bush administration's amplification of fear amongst the general population. Bush and his administration regularly asserted connections between Iraq, al Qaeda, and the terror attacks of 9/11. The administration made these claims in speeches time after time because most U.S. citizens were disinterested in politics and needed consistent reminders of the alleged threat Hussein posed, according to DiMaggio.¹⁷⁴ Interestingly, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice claimed that the

¹⁷¹ DiMaggio, *Selling War, Selling Hope*, pp. 61-62.

¹⁷² DiMaggio, *Selling War, Selling Hope*, p. 63.

¹⁷³ "U.S. Policy on Iraq - Committee on Armed Services - U.S. Senate (September 19, 23, 25, 2002)," U.S. Policy on Iraq (U.S. Government Publishing Office), accessed April 26, 2022, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-107shrg84837/html/CHRG-107shrg84837.htm>.

¹⁷⁴ DiMaggio, *Selling War, Selling Hope*, p. 63.

absence of proof of the threat that Iraq posed was evidence of an *imminent* threat. Rice expressed that no firm evidence was needed as there will always remain some level of uncertainty while attempting to determine the current state of Iraq's nuclear program, but the people must not wait for the mushroom cloud to appear on the horizon.¹⁷⁵

As the Bush administration sought an explicit authorization from congress for military action in Iraq, there was a division among some Democrats in the legislature. At the time, the Bush administration continued to utilize the fear of future terrorist attacks to build consent for the invasion of Iraq, which would have been difficult to do in the pre-9/11 political environment. The administration strategically used the mainstream media to bolster its rhetoric with the dichotomy of fear and hope. The positioning of hope as opposite to fear provokes two thoughts for me. First, the Bush administration did little to provide safety to the U.S. people and its allies, even after Operation Enduring Freedom began. The argument that a lack of certainty regarding safety, as given by Condoleezza Rice, seemed to make safety impossible because leaders and U.S. residents would never know of all of the threats posed against the United States. Instead, hope was the next best thing that they could offer. Secondly, hope has theological ties to the Christian faith that many of these U.S. leaders relied heavily upon but also something that they identified was lacking in the Axis of Evil countries of Iraq, for example. The press and its journalist agents relied upon official statements by both the Republicans and Democrats. The reliance upon the official positions of the Republicans and Democrats placed Iraq as the next threat in the War on Terror. The October 2002 congressional resolution in support of military action in Iraq received broad support from a significant number of Democrats in the Senate, though most House Democrats opposed the resolution. As a result, the *New York Times* wrote

¹⁷⁵ DiMaggio, *Selling War, Selling Hope*, p. 63.

that there was a vital split within the Democratic Party about whether there was sufficient evidence to authorize military force, which was a concern voiced by the CIA and its director, George Tenet. As was stated in Chapter One, the release of the Downing Street Memo on 23 July 2003 depicted the debate about whether or not to invade Iraq as having already been decided well before.¹⁷⁶ Though some Democrats were opposed to the war, it seems that they did not put up much of a fight against President George W. Bush's movement towards war. Much of the disagreement amongst Democrats revolved upon how to wage war, the acceptable costs, and what to expect as far as the duration of the war, instead of pushing harder against an invasion of Iraq.¹⁷⁷

DiMaggio argued that the editorials published in the major newspapers framed the discussion of Iraq's threat in other media outlets. However, DiMaggio acknowledged that support amongst the newspapers varied in degree and enthusiasm for the military action. Although I argue that some of the larger newspapers were passive in accepting and distributing the rhetoric of the Bush administration, that was not the case for all media. While the *Washington Post* mostly repeated President George W. Bush's rhetoric and supported the war, the *New York Times* reiterated the talking points of congressional Democrats questioning when it would be the appropriate time to strike the nation. In response to Colin Powell's report to the U.N. (2002), the *Washington Post* stated unequivocally that no one could doubt that Hussein possessed WMDs and even went a step further by declaring that Hussein was deceitful and manipulative in dealings with U.N. weapons inspectors. Even once the war began, the *Washington Post* ran a

¹⁷⁶ Matthew Rycroft, "The Secret Downing Street Memo - George Washington University," The Secret Downing Street Memo (George Washington University - The National Security Archive), accessed November 15, 2022, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB328/II-Doc14.pdf>.

¹⁷⁷ DiMaggio, *Selling War, Selling Hope*, p. 72.

story urging U.S. citizens that there continued to be a need to act in support of peace in the Middle East because of the threat that Iraq posed to its neighbors, the region, and the globe. President Bush stated, and his administration officials reiterated, that Iraq would serve as an example to the rest of the globe that some rogue states have CBWs or WMDs and should be feared.¹⁷⁸ Stories amplifying the president's rhetorical argument on Iraq continued in the *Washington Post* and supplemented the fear of terror that the Bush administration desired the U.S. citizenry to embrace.

Database searches of smaller newspapers, like the *Santa Cruz* [California] *Sentinel*, show that the issue of Iraq received press attention even in smaller cities in the U.S. In a 28 September 2002 article, the “Facts of Iraq” addressed the Bush administration’s talking points. The article, which began on the front page resumed near the end of the pages in section A. The pieces written on Iraq in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* actually originated with the Associated Press wire service and one of their journalists, Calvin Woodward. The article discussed that although the Bush administration had repeated claims that Iraq is tied to al Qaeda, there was no consensus about that claim among intelligence experts. The article poked holes in the Bush administration’s intelligence claims, which persisted in some form leading up to the invasion.¹⁷⁹ This article showed that even though the mass media could have done a better job challenging President George W. Bush and his staff in their run to war, there were occasional pieces published by the Associated Press that ran in various newspapers across the country with small bits of resistance against the official rhetoric of the Bush staff.

¹⁷⁸ DiMaggio, *Selling War, Selling Hope*, pp. 73-74.

¹⁷⁹ Calvin Woodward, “Truth About Iraq Getting Stretched,” Truth About Iraq Getting Stretched (Santa Cruz Sentinel), accessed April 10, 2022, <https://newscomwc-newspapers-com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/image/95096674>.

Former journalist and Chief of Staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Patrick M. Holt wrote an opinion piece for the *Christian Science Monitor* that was published 7 November 2002. In the editorial, Holt revealed that the intelligence was fixed upon the policy of invading Iraq by this point. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld became agitated with the intelligence the CIA had reported to the White House regarding Iraq. As a result, Rumsfeld established his own intelligence analysis unit that would independently review intelligence from the long-established network of military and civilian intelligence sources. However, this fixing the intelligence to match the rhetoric was not new to the White House as the same sort of activities occurred with President Johnson's 1965 intervention in the Dominican Republic. Mr. Holt agrees that President Hussein had previously gassed his own people but there was no proof that Hussein was making chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons. I concur with Holt in that it is disturbing that President George W. Bush claimed that the threat from Hussein was imminent but refused to allow others to review the intelligence gathered that (supposedly) supported the Bush administration's claims.¹⁸⁰

Although Holt conceded that certain intelligence can be sensitive and restricted to protect the informant, there are also times when intelligence isn't disclosed to the public because the intelligence is weak or nonexistent. Holt explained that this treatment of intelligence supporting a claim made by the White House had been very common during the Cold War, but it resulted in an independent agency conducting intelligence review and providing judgement not biased in favor of the Department of Defense (DoD) or the CIA. Holt also stated that part of the problem

¹⁸⁰ Pat M. Holt, "US Intelligence: Seeing What It Wants to See in Iraq," *US Intelligence: Seeing What it Wants to See in Iraq* (Christian Science Monitor, November 7, 2002), <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=n5h&AN=7726073&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

with the DoD and CIA is that they have a longstanding rivalry that is largely due to funding differences. Although the CIA is charged with leading the U.S. intelligence gathering, most of their funding is held by the DoD. Furthermore, the DoD does a great deal of intelligence gathering, including operating and analyzing spy satellites and debriefing military service members after operations.¹⁸¹ This rivalry only serves the interests of the individual intelligence agencies but prevents the fullest picture of sensitive situations like the weapons status of Iraq. While intelligence was reviewed behind closed doors, the constant flow of new information, with sometimes questionable verifiability, continued on the cable news networks such as Fox, CNN, and MSNBC. The legacy of this conflict between intelligence agencies was the responsibility of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), founded on 1 March 2003, in coordinating intelligence sharing with the goal of preventing shortfalls such as occurred with the attacks of 9/11.

The twenty-four-hour cable news networks focused on terrorism for some time after 9/11, and reported the Department of Homeland Security color-coded terrorist threat warnings daily, in the corner of the screen, beginning six months after 9/11.¹⁸² In 2005, *USA Today* ran a story that cited the former head of DHS, Tom Ridge, "periodically" escalated the terror warning based upon "only flimsy evidence" or Fox News purposefully chose to bolster ratings and incite fear. Not all the reporting by the mainstream media focused on terrorist threats from al Qaeda or Iraq. For example, the *Washington Post* argued the benefits of inculcating democracy and

¹⁸¹ Holt, "US Intelligence."

¹⁸² "Terrorism Attacks," The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation (Harvard Kennedy School - Ash Center for Democratic Governance), accessed April 26, 2022, <https://ash.harvard.edu/terrorism-attacks#:~:text=The%20alert%20system%20established%20five,%3D%20high%3B%20red%20%3D%20severe.>

revolutionizing human rights in Iraq.¹⁸³ However, this was not the main argument of the administration or the mainstream media that consistently supported the administration. While many news agencies endorsed the president's agenda regarding Iraq, when the papers ran pieces challenging the president's rhetoric, they were placed in the paper's back pages. The former editor of the *Washington Post*, Howard Kurtz, found the newspaper ran roughly 140 front-page articles supporting the Bush administration's call to war in Iraq between August 2002 and March 2003, and only a handful of stories against the war that opposed the invasion of Iraq or challenged intelligence claims.¹⁸⁴

The role of the twenty-four-seven cable news networks in reporting the terrorists responsible for 9/11 created an opportunity for media professionals to do deep-level analysis of persons like Osama bin Laden. The nascent social media across the globe also played a role in spreading information about the new era of the terrorist threat to the U.S. Political Science Professor Brigitte Nacos declares that, because the public relied on the news for information, even more so television reporting, the administration provided reports that reinforced the president's rhetoric for dissemination. Nacos also argued that the mainstream media had a habit of turning recent terrorists like bin Laden into a kind of outlaw celebrity. The logic behind this is that the media consistently portrays the enemy as the embodiment of evil in the aftermath of the

¹⁸³ Michael Dobbs, "U.S. Had Key Role in Iraq Buildup," *The Washington Post* (WP Company, December 30, 2002), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2002/12/30/us-had-key-role-in-iraq-buildup/133cec74-3816-4652-9bd8-7d118699d6f8/>; David Montgomery, "Hearts Divided," *The Washington Post* (WP Company, March 22, 2003), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/2003/03/22/hearts-divided/1249d3ce-796d-478b-9dc2-0d12e4e65d3b/>.

¹⁸⁴ DiMaggio, *Selling War, Selling Hope*, pp. 74-75.

attacks that shook the U.S. The continuous coverage of the terrorist attacks benefited al Qaeda by the consistent publicity and propaganda for the recruitment of like-minded Muslim extremists.¹⁸⁵

After al Qaeda was repeatedly hit by five years of unmanned aerial vehicle bombs on top of twelve years of fighting following 9/11, the organization was still successful in recruitment. Al Qaeda's propaganda efforts resulted in hundreds to thousands of persons radicalized and willing to carry out terrorist attacks.¹⁸⁶ In a *New York Times* opinion article dated 15 July 2006, the author explained how al Qaeda leaders were attempting to recruit non-radicalized U.S. citizens based upon the public relations nightmares created by U.S. forces by means of rape, harming of innocent Muslims, and incidents at detention centers. The author of the article believes that this new method of recruitment could be quite effective. I concur with the author's conclusion in stating that it was dangerous for the U.S. to remain in Iraq and possibly encourage additional new followers of radicalized groups like al Qaeda.¹⁸⁷

During this period, the growth of social media allowed for the sharing of coverage of terrorist attacks and added another channel to the spread of the president's rhetoric. However, there is a dark side to social media in this story. Once videos of ISIS beheadings of the Western infidels appeared on social media platforms in 2013-2014, the companies removed them. Still, the mainstream media reported the alarming acts depicted in these videos with great detail. The news organizations further reinforced the depiction of these extremists as evil in opposition to the innocent blood that they shed. In a shocking change in acceptable policy in depicting terrorist

¹⁸⁵ Nacos, *Mass-Mediated Terrorism*, pp. x-36.

¹⁸⁶ Paul Kamolnick, *Countering Radicalization and Recruitment to Al-Qaeda: Fighting the War of Deeds* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, 2014).

¹⁸⁷ Jessica Stern, "Al Qaeda, American Style," *The New York Times* (*The New York Times*, July 15, 2006), <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/15/opinion/15stern.html?searchResultPosition=5>.

acts like these beheadings, the Fox News network posted an unedited video of the execution in 2015 of a Jordanian pilot by ISIS. Although it is easy to assume that only those who already were in opposition to the U.S. would join al Qaeda to act in the U.S., the campaign to target vulnerable persons who were disturbed by the human rights violations of innocent Iraqis, those who would not have considered themselves extremists, were susceptible to recruitment propaganda. When news agencies like Fox released tapes, the terrorists achieved their aims to capture the attention of the U.S. citizenry and the global populace now that they were aware that the U.S. mainland was not invulnerable to attack.¹⁸⁸

While the Bush administration fought to utilize the mass media to build support for their mission in Iraq, the terrorist Osama bin Laden strategically used the media to gain followers and achieve a greater status. In this way, the media was critical in promoting the enemy of the state, al Qaeda, and the enemy posed by the Islamic extremists, such as ISIS. The press continued to be used as a tool for manipulation in the days immediately preceding the 2004 presidential election. The traditional bin Laden outfit, camouflaged military drab with a weapon in hand, was eschewed in favor of a soft robe and a calm demeanor displayed on the videotape. Although the full tape was not able to be tracked-down, typical of many of bin Laden's twenty-nine known videos, many of the videos that were partially broadcast and agencies such as ABC published an English language transcript.¹⁸⁹

The transcript of the 2004 video in question has bin Laden discussing how U.S. citizens have abandoned their freedom for a feeling of security. Bin Laden claimed that al Qaeda does not hate freedom but was trying to secure freedom by any means necessary, as he blessed the

¹⁸⁸ Nacos, *Mass-Mediated Terrorism*, pp. x-28.

¹⁸⁹ "Full Transcript of Bin Laden Video," ABC News (ABC News Network, November 1, 2004), <https://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=215913&page=1>.

memory of the 9/11 hijackers. Bin Laden attacked President George W. Bush's practice of distortion and misleading of the U.S. citizenry and claimed that the dictatorship of President George W. Bush had continued with the passage of the Patriot Act in the name of fighting terror. Bin Laden posed another political argument when he claimed that election rigging occurred in Florida in the 2000 election and claimed that Bush could not lead the nation when the towers fell but chose to talk to children about a story in their classroom after being informed of the 9/11 attacks. bin Laden concluded this tape by claiming that U.S. citizens need to secure freedom for themselves and not rely on political leaders, be them Democrat or Republican.¹⁹⁰

This deliberate change in the attire that bin Laden wore and the manner in which he spoke prompted intelligence experts to conclude that the tape aimed to depict bin Laden as a statesman of status generally reserved for leaders of nations like the United States. This press release by bin Laden received considerable mass media attention, but the leading presidential candidates refused to discuss the terrorist leader's message.¹⁹¹ Although the Bush administration received considerable support from the media, they did not want to share the spotlight with bin Laden across the media spectrum. When President George W. Bush responded to the airing of the bin Laden video, he was departing Toledo, Ohio on 29 October 2004 at just before 6 p.m. local time. Bush stated that the United States would not be intimidated or influenced by an enemy of the U.S and reminded U.S. citizens that they are at war with terrorism in a struggle which the United States would prevail. The Bush administration's calm, yet dismissive, response

¹⁹⁰ "Middle East | Excerpts: Bin Laden Video," BBC News (BBC, October 29, 2004), http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3966817.stm.

¹⁹¹ Nacos, *Mass-Mediated Terrorism*, p. 41.

to the bin Laden videotape was likely done to remove bin Laden from the political conversation in the United States with a presidential election only days away.¹⁹²

While the Bush administration was dealing with a war in Afghanistan, the frustration at having failed to capture Osama bin Laden who continued to taunt the U.S. by video, and a relatively close presidential reelection campaign, the mainstream media remained a useful tool. The Bush administration benefitted greatly from the repetition of the threat that Iraq posed in speeches, interviews with the press, and the papers' journalism on the subject of President Hussein, WMDs, and 9/11. The opportunity of the Bush administration to control much of the narrative built support for the invasion among the average U.S. citizens. Three polls, with a total of 3,334 respondents, were conducted between August and September 2003 that revealed three beliefs that were false but continued to be accepted by a considerable portion of the U.S. populace. The first false belief was that there was irrefutable proof that President Hussein was currently cooperating with the terror network al Qaeda. The second false belief was that WMDs had already been discovered in Iraq before the invasion on 19 March 2003. The third false belief was that many nations of the world were supportive of a U.S. invasion of Iraq. Such a striking number of respondents with false perceptions prompted scholars to investigate these individuals' sources for news information.

Of the 3,334 respondents, only nineteen per cent stated that print media was their source for news, while eighty per cent stated that they received their news electronically. Of those respondents who held all three of these significant misperceptions about Iraq, the per cent of those who received their information from Fox News was greater than those who received their

¹⁹² "WCPD Volume 40 - Number 45," WCPD Volume 40 - Number 45 (2004), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/WCPD-2004-11-08/pdf/WCPD-2004-11-08.pdf>.

news from all other major U.S. carriers of news. The same trend was demonstrated for persons who held one or two of these misperceptions. They obtained most of their news from Fox News.¹⁹³ The fact that Fox News viewers and consumers of its digital content held these significant misperceptions at a greater rate than consumers of other media outlets strongly suggests that there was no challenge to the talking points of the administration in their reporting. The constant threat of terrorism was a main talking point of Fox News at the time.

Professor of Government William A. Dorman argued that the media failed to truly challenge the Bush administration on its evidence against Iraq and its case for an invasion of the nation. Dorman stated that in a review of history in the modern era, there has never been such a rapid collection of evidence supporting the war, and the assumptions of the intelligence have never been so questionable. As has been stated repeatedly, the failure to discover WMDs in Iraq after the invasion was a black eye for President George W. Bush and his administration. The missing WMDs were not the only intelligence failure of the war. However, the multiple reasons for the invasion of Iraq proved faulty and led many to question if the administration purposefully manipulated information or propagated claims known to be false. The mainstream media's role in the invasion is essential because, as it did little to challenge the administration, the Fourth Estate did not provide reliable information to the citizenry. The result was that the citizens of the U.S. did not give informed consent for the invasion. Instead, the media framed the support for the war as “common sense” and led its consumers to make ill-informed decisions about whether to go to war against Iraq or if other threats to the U.S. were more significant at the time.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Steven Kull, Clay Ramsay, and Evan Lewis, “Misperceptions, the Media, and the Iraq War,” *Political Science Quarterly* 118, no. 4 (2003): pp. 569-598, <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1538-165x.2003.tb00406.x>.

¹⁹⁴ Nikolaev and Hakanen, *Leading to the 2003 Iraq War*, pp.12-13.

The survey findings discussed by Political Psychologist Steven Kull et al. illustrated that the press contributed to shaping the argument for the invasion of Iraq by failing to challenge the declarations of the Bush administration and other hawks in Congress, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. For those that argue that the president never encouraged false beliefs about Iraq, Dorman argued that a content analysis of each presidential speech on the subject of terrorism and Iraq from 11 September 2001 to 1 May 2003 showed the public responded positively to presidential rhetoric. The results from this analysis were that, while some debate continued on the policy for the invasion of Iraq within the president's inner circle, very little occurred in the pages of the *New York Times*. Because the media framed the invasion in support of the government's stance, support for President George W. Bush was never lower than fifty-five per cent and climbed higher than seventy per cent, despite the public's awareness that the invasion could result in a significant number of casualties, a damaged economy, and the possibility that terrorist acts could increase on U.S. soil.¹⁹⁵

Like many others, when the argument of the need to invade Iraq was repeated by President George W. Bush and his staff at the time, I was not convinced personally. However, when former U.S. Army General Colin Powell, then the Secretary of State, argued that Iraq could not go unchecked, I believed in Colin Powell and trusted him as an established leader. I was not alone in that feeling. For instance, there is an opinion piece published after Colin Powell's death on 19 October 2021 that concurs that the United States trusted Colin Powell more than many others in the Bush administration and his speech before the U.N. converted many opposed to the invasion into supporters.¹⁹⁶ According to scholars such as Communications

¹⁹⁵ Nikolaev and Hakanen, *Leading to the 2003 Iraq War*, pp.15-16.

¹⁹⁶ Kathleen Parker, "Opinion | Americans Trust No One Today as They Trusted Colin Powell," *The Washington Post* (WP Company, October 19, 2021),

Professor Alexander Nikolaev and Communications Professor Ernest Hakanen, Secretary of State Colin Powell's speech to the U.N. on 5 February 2003 bolstered the case for the invasion of Iraq in the media. Powell made explicit ties between Iraq and al Qaeda in this speech, and there was a 30-point increase in the public's confidence that President Hussein posed a severe threat. After the speech, several editorialists across the U.S. declared the evidence as indisputable, and Hussein was concealing a threat to the U.S. Although some journalists questioned or challenged assertions in Powell's U.N. speech, they were typically opinion or editorial pieces instead of journalistic articles. The number of these pieces was still small.¹⁹⁷ With little challenge posed by the mainstream media, the Bush administration was able to buttress their argument of the supposed threat that Iraq posed and deliver multiple reasons why pre-emptive military action in Iraq was warranted.

The Journalists Who Challenged the Bush Narrative

As much as the mainstream media did little to challenge the narrative of the Bush administration and its rhetoric in supporting the invasion of Iraq, it is important to pay attention to those who continually opposed the majority view. Because of the framing that journalists provide to the citizens to understand their political circumstances, news reporting is rarely more important than when a nation is considering military action. According to the study conducted by Communication and Women's Studies Professor Dustin Harp et al., *Time* allowed for voices of dissension against the Bush administration from the beginning. This point is vital because *Time*

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/10/19/americans-trust-no-one-today-they-trusted-colin-powell/>.

¹⁹⁷ Nikolaev and Hakanen, *Leading to the 2003 Iraq War*, pp.16-17.

had a circulation of 3.3 million and is the widest-read news publication in the nation.¹⁹⁸

However, *Time* was not alone in its challenging of the administration. The newspaper reporting agency, also known as a wire service, Knight Ridder was persistent in trying to report the truth on the invasion to the best of their abilities, even when it was a dissenting voice to the mainstream narrative. One of Knight Ridder's stalwart reporters was Jonathan S. Landay. Landay's articles that pushed for further clarification on the argument for invading Iraq were published in papers such as the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Star Tribune*, *The Washington Post*, the *Toronto Star*, and twenty-seven others. The Knight Ridder agency provided wire service to approximately 350 newspapers.¹⁹⁹

Landay's article from 12 September 2002, titled "Iraq has been unable to get materials for a nuclear bomb, experts say," stated that although President George W. Bush claimed the previous day that Iraq was equipped to produce WMDs within a year, President Hussein has been unable to acquire that fuel for more than ten years. The article also disputed the notion that Iraq could obtain enriched uranium or plutonium on the black market due to the number of safeguards in place to prevent that from happening. Furthermore, the article stated that the IAEA had destroyed all of Iraq's nuclear weapons facilities in 1998. Therefore, instead of supporting an invasion of Iraq, Landay argued that it is more important to resume weapons inspections.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Dustin Harp, Jaime Loke, and Ingrid Bachmann, "Voices of Dissent in the Iraq War: Moving from Deviance to Legitimacy?," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 87, no. 3-4 (2010): pp. 467-477, <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769901008700302>.

¹⁹⁹ Jonathan Landay, Knight Ridder: Media's Countdown to War in Iraq, *Jonathan Landay, Knight Ridder: Media's Countdown to War in Iraq* (YouTube, February 15, 2012), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NYhr_rXc7U&ab_channel=KentBye.

²⁰⁰ Jonathan S. Landay. "Iraq Has Been Unable to Get Fuel for Nuclear Bomb, Experts Say." *Knight Ridder Tribune Business News*, Sep 13, 2002. <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/wire-feeds/iraq-has-been-unable-get-fuel-nuclear-bomb/docview/464526685/se-2?accountid=15078>.

Approximately one month later, on 4 October 2002, Landay wrote another article challenging the claims of the Bush administration that the threat of Iraqi weapons, and in particular its nuclear threat, was universally supported by intelligence experts. A central argument from the Bush administration was that the only purpose of the high-strength aluminum tubes Hussein allegedly obtained from foreign nations was to create enriched uranium.²⁰¹ However, these claims were disputed by some intelligence agencies and even a former U.N. weapons inspector that claimed that it was more likely that the tubes were intended to be used in conventional weapons systems. The article cited anonymous intelligence and administration officials that stated that the administration was tailoring intelligence to fit its argument that Iraq must be invaded, and the regime of President Hussein overthrown. In this same article, Landay notes that some intelligence and military leaders were not convinced that Iraq's supposed ties to WMDs presented an imminent threat to the U.S. that warranted a pre-emptive attack. The article closed with one scientist noting that the administration expected to make any claims that it desired and not have the facts to back those claims. At the same time, the Bush White House demanded complacency from the scientific community.²⁰² This is similar to how the Bush

²⁰¹ These aluminum tubes were cited by the Bush administration as irrefutable proof that President Hussein possessed the capabilities to enrich uranium in centrifuges. Although the administration claimed that these tubes were only suitable for enriching uranium, numerous scientists and other experts dispelled this as false and that these tubes were only suitable for missiles. For more information on this controversy and the manipulated intelligence on the matter, see: David Barstow, William J. Broad, and Jeff Gerth, "The Nuclear Card: The Aluminum Tube Story -- a Special Report.; How White House Embraced Suspect Iraq Arms Intelligence," *The New York Times* (*The New York Times*, October 3, 2004), <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/03/washington/us/the-nuclear-card-the-aluminum-tube-story-a-special-report-how.html>.

²⁰² Jonathan S. Landay, "CIA Report Reveals Analysts' Split Over Extent of Iraqi Nuclear Threat." *Knight Ridder Tribune News Service*, Oct 04, 2002. <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/wire-feeds/cia-report-reveals-analysts-split-over-extent/docview/457244031/se-2?accountid=15078>.

administration cherry picked intelligence from the CIA's 2002 National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq to support their call for an invasion of Iraq while ignoring the alternative views published in the report that depicted Iraq as a nation incapable of presenting a viable nuclear threat to the U.S.

One of the many articles written by the Knight Ridder Newspapers agency on the questionable intelligence surrounding the Iraqi invasion of 2003 discussed a leaked British intelligence report. Although the article was released on 5 May 2005, the report was so scathing that it embarrassed British and U.S. officials.²⁰³ The Secret Downing Street Memo of 23 July 2002 was a confidential document that summarized a meeting between named and code-named officials. The document declared that because President George W. Bush desired to remove Hussein from power through military force and the intelligence and facts were "fixed around the policy."²⁰⁴ The memo continued that there were no serious plans by the National Security Council, led by Condoleezza Rice, to utilize the U.N. to achieve the president's goals. No plans had been discussed on what to do in Iraq after President Hussein was removed. At this same meeting in 2002, military planners were drafting the military movement options for the invasion. The intelligence in the memo acknowledged that Iraq posed a WMD threat lesser than Libya, North Korea, or Iran.²⁰⁵

In the Warren Strobel and John Walcott article on the secret memorandum, the authors reminded readers that the Bush administration has vehemently denied that there had been any manipulation of intelligence in the development of the public case against Iraq. The article

²⁰³ Warren P. Strobel and John Walcott. "British Memo Indicates Bush made Intelligence Fit Iraq Policy." *Knight Ridder Tribune News Service*, May 05, 2005. <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/wire-feeds/british-memo-indicates-bush-made-intelligence-fit/docview/457060740/se-2?accountid=15078>.

²⁰⁴ Rycroft, "The Secret Downing Street Memo - George Washington University."

²⁰⁵ Rycroft, "The Secret Downing Street Memo - George Washington University."

concluded with a remark that the leading Democrat of the House Judiciary Committee, John Conyers, pushed the Bush administration to explain the assertions in this concerning memo.²⁰⁶ It is interesting that a member of the minority party in the House, which had a considerable number of members that opposed the congressional resolution for war, spoke out in favor of the Bush administration. The first troubling part about this memo is that it shows that by mid-2002, the Bush administration was already committed to using military force in Iraq before the avenues of diplomacy had closed. The second concerning issue of the memo is the statement that by this point, President George W. Bush and his team were fixing intelligence to support the need for ousting President Hussein.

Years after the invasion of Iraq, the team from Knight Ridder Newspapers and McClatchy are remembered for taking a stance against the complacent majority of the mainstream media that did little more than repeat the talking points of the Bush administration. The Knight Ridder team was an outlier of the mainstream media in the period leading up to and including the invasion and the years following. Journalists from Knight Ridder wrote exposing pieces on the talking points the Bush administration used to legitimize the invasion.²⁰⁷ The Knight Ridder reporters did concede that they had access to information from sources, including mid-level and senior-level officials that questioned the intelligence that the Bush administration used, that wouldn't speak with other agencies, though Landay did not disclose who these people were.²⁰⁸ The Knight Ridder team used these sources to look behind the veil and discover alternative views on the intelligence that the Bush team presented as evidence. Because the

²⁰⁶ Strobel and Walcott. "British Memo Indicates Bush made Intelligence Fit Iraq Policy."

²⁰⁷ Max Follmer, "The Reporting Team That Got Iraq Right," HuffPost (HuffPost, May 25, 2011), https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-reporting-team-that-g_n_91981.

²⁰⁸ Landay, Knight Ridder: Media's Countdown to War in Iraq.

Knight Ridder agency was relatively small at the time, the journalists fought a massive misinformation campaign unknowingly and uncritically carried out by most media outlets. An interesting tactic that Knight Ridder employed in covering the mission in Iraq was that the agency challenged every allegation or claim made by the Bush administration and spoke out when the intelligence did not match the claims of these officials. This type of journalism was not easy but prompted respect for the journalistic integrity of the agency after other news agencies discovered the flaws in their earlier reporting on the subject of the invasion of Iraq in 2003.²⁰⁹ The media is also a tool used by the U.S. State Department.

The role of the mainstream media in the U.S. painted a picture of implicit support, for the most part, of the Bush administration and plans for Iraq. Additionally, the U.S. State Department and its agents influenced the media in other nations and monitored media reports from multiple nations as part of its roadmap to Iraq. The U.S. State Department also paid attention to the pulse of the citizens in other nations regarding its plans for Iraq. For example, on 16 September 2002, the State Department cabled the U.S. Secretary of State that polls taken on 14 and 15 September 2002 showed that Australian citizens strongly supported, by sixty-eight per cent, a U.N.-backed military invasion of Iraq. The poll also indicated that sixty-seven per cent opposed unilateral action by the United States. The cable continued that although the Australian media remained critical of unilateral U.S. action, they begrudgingly approved of the speech that President George W. Bush gave to the U.N. The cable contains multiple references to news reports and a debate on

²⁰⁹ Max Follmer, “The Reporting Team That Got Iraq Right,” HuffPost (HuffPost, May 25, 2011), https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-reporting-team-that-g_n_91981. Note: When Jonathan Landay was interviewed in 2012, he stated that Knight Ridder had a special responsibility to inform the communities of cities where the military ground troops heavily drew from to support the War on Terror and Knight Ridder happened to own newspapers. The interview may be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NYhr_rXc7U&ab_channel=KentBye.

local media on the issues surrounding Iraq and the influence of the U.S. president's speech to the U.N.²¹⁰

I was able to collect ten U.S. State Department cables released under the Freedom of Information Act related to the issue of shaping foreign policy regarding Iraq. I have used these selected cables to illustrate the different manners that the State Department used regarding monitoring or influencing foreign policy for the U.S. through government channels and interviews with local media outlets. By reviewing these cables, I noticed how U.S. Ambassadors and other State Department officials repeated the rhetoric of President George W. Bush in various countries globally to bolster support for what appears to be the foregone conclusion that military force in Iraq was the only option the administration was considering by late 2002.

In certain nations, the U.S. State Department utilized its embassy staff members to educate and influence its citizens regarding the official stance on Iraq and why they should support such efforts. One example that summarized these efforts is a U.S. Embassy cable from Kyiv, Ukraine, to the U.S. Secretary of State in Washington, D.C. At the beginning of the cable, the U.S. Embassy explains that the situation in Iraq on 20 September 2002 was viewed through Ukraine's domestic political challenges. Therefore, the U.S. Embassy stated that it was the responsibility of the State Department to educate the citizens of Ukraine about the facts, as propagated by the Bush administration and explain the threat that Iraq posed to global security.²¹¹

²¹⁰ American Embassy Canberra to U.S. Secretary of State, Document No. C05319454, September 16, 2002, U.S. State Department FOIA (accessed November 15, 2021).

²¹¹ American Embassy Kiev to U.S. Secretary of State, Case No. F-2011-03091, September 20, 2002, U.S. State Department FOIA (accessed November 15, 2021). Note: During my deployment to the U.S. Embassy in Tanzania in 2011, I have first-hand experience in the soft approach that the United States uses to disseminate information to the civilian populace and the

Notably, the second page of the cable stated that the more that the U.S. Embassy and the State Department as a whole educated the Ukrainian citizens, the better odds they had at preventing purposeful, negative changes to the perspective of the official U.S. government's position. However, the cable warned that there was a general opposition towards military action by the Ukrainian populace. Also, the nation of Ukraine conducted trade and business with Iraq as part of the U.N.'s Oil-for-Food Program that would likely be disturbed by military action and regime change. Finally, the cable concluded that in every media interview conducted with the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, the interviewer raised the issue of military action in Iraq. The questions were typically regarding the questionable threat posed by President Hussein, the lack of universal support by long-standing U.S. allies, and the failure to secure a U.N. Security Council Resolution authorizing military force in Iraq. The cable noted that the best tool to secure the road to action in Iraq is the U.S. Ambassadors that can make a case for invasion with the media.²¹²

A second cable examined here is between the U.S. Embassy in Rome and the U.S. Secretary of State on 13 September 2002. This cable reported that the government of Italy, a NATO ally, was moving more in line with the official U.S. position on Iraq. Although the Italian government preferred that war be avoided, Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi was priming the citizenry for the possibility of military action in Baghdad through strategic public outreach. The Italian government stepped-up their public relations strategies to continue to develop support for military action in Iraq. The cable discussed Italian President Carlo A. Ciampi's position,

work in these countries to improve the image of the United States in allied states across the globe.

²¹² American Embassy Kiev to U.S. Secretary of State, Case No. F-2011-03091, September 20, 2002.

delivered at a 9/11 anniversary ceremony in Italy, that it is not enough to simply fight terror but that it must be eradicated from the public's mind and remove WMDs from rogue nations. The cable mentioned that the nation of Italy will be a useful ally when President George W. Bush visited the state in roughly two months from the date of the cable. The cable stated that a telephone call between the U.S. Ambassador to Italy, the Deputy Chief of Mission, and Italian President Ciampi in the days leading to the first anniversary of the 11 September 2001 attacks reinforced U.S. talking points that terrorism must be eradicated from extremists' hearts and minds. The cable concluded that the State Department should continue to pursue the aims of a classified and redacted reference telegram, as has been done in Italy.²¹³

Journalism from the Front Lines: Vietnam and Iraq

Although decades passed between the Vietnam War and the invasion of Iraq on 19 March 2003, very little changed in how the U.S. government controlled the media reporting of journalists serving in country in each conflict. After the Vietnam War, many veterans and U.S. citizens believed that the press was responsible for the American defeat by depicting casualties, lost battles, and the war crimes of My Lai. Some media critics argued that the media in Vietnam purposefully spread a left-wing, antiwar position in its reporting.²¹⁴ This was not the reality of journalism in Vietnam as the U.S. controlled the stories and talking points that the press was fed by the U.S. Information Bureau. The journalists were a tool of the U.S. Executive Branch in Vietnam as they would be some forty years later in Iraq.

²¹³ American Embassy Rome to U.S. Secretary of State, Case No. F-2012-30126, Doc No. C05319442, September 13, 2002, U.S. State Department FOIA (accessed November 15, 2021).

²¹⁴ Cullen Murphy, "The Press at War, from Vietnam to Iraq," *The Atlantic* (Atlantic Media Company, March 22, 2018), <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/03/iraq-war-anniversary/555989/>.

In the case of the Vietnam War, most journalists were stationed at military bases in-country (typically Saigon), with a handful temporarily attached as accredited journalists reporting from the front lines.²¹⁵ Journalist and former editor of *The Atlantic*, Cullen Murphy argued that journalists and U.S. service members in Vietnam had different roles and distinct cultures, which typically made them suspicious of one another. Furthermore, the U.S. government did not trust either the media or the military, and the distrust was mutual by these parties.²¹⁶ When the Battle of Ap Bac occurred in 1963, journalists were based in Saigon, and the distance between the military event impacted the reporting negatively by limiting what was disclosed about the event. The White House and the military expected that the journalists in Vietnam focus on the positive aspects of the battle and stick with the team.²¹⁷

At that time, newsreels from Vietnam would take at least a day before it was received and broadcast on network news. Reporters were impacted by the fact that they had to chase down the stories, because of the sparse information they were given by the military's public affairs officers in charge of the journalists, and rarely had a chance to conduct investigative reporting. Korean War veteran and *The Post's* Saigon Bureau Chief, Peter Braestrup, noted that journalists could never know the whole story of a conflict in Vietnam as the war was ever-evolving.²¹⁸ In fact, it is impossible for journalists to report on the whole story of a war that they are covering due to the countless variables and actors at play in war at any given time. However, I use the Vietnam War

²¹⁵ Joel Achenbach, "Did the News Media, Led by Walter Cronkite, Lose the War in Vietnam?," *The Washington Post* (WP Company, July 19, 2018), https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/did-the-news-media-led-by-walter-cronkite-lose-the-war-in-vietnam/2018/05/25/a5b3e098-495e-11e8-827e-190efaf1f1ee_story.html.

²¹⁶ Murphy, "The Press at War, from Vietnam to Iraq."

²¹⁷ Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York, NY: Penguin, 1997), pp. 276-279.

²¹⁸ Murphy, "The Press at War, from Vietnam to Iraq." Braestrup served as the Saigon Bureau Chief for *The Post* since the Tet Offensive of 1968.

as a point of comparison with Iraq because in both war zones the media became an agent to be controlled. Although information for reporting in other conflicts that the U.S. was involved in, such as World War II, Vietnam represented a period where a considerable number of journalists were working in country during the conflict. The White House and the U.S. Information Agency regularly moved journalists away from stories that could be reported upon and cast the U.S. in a negative light.²¹⁹ This is not the case with the Iraq War of 2003 where most journalists in-country were attached to military units and reported on what they saw or heard daily. The subject of attached or embedded reporters is important because I will show that the opportunity to serve as an embedded journalist was not as useful for news agencies as it was for the Bush administration in controlling the narrative in the field and at home.

To illustrate the contrast between the Vietnam War with the invasion of Iraq in 2003 I highlight that certain events, such as the Battle of Ap Bac in December 1963, happened quickly. In contrast, there was over one year of buildup to the military offensive in Iraq on 19 March 2003. The diplomatic process of building support for the actions in Iraq both within the United States and abroad was slow. Still, it seemed more and more likely during 2002 that the U.S. would attack Iraq and oust President Hussein based upon the threat of WMDs than exhaust all diplomatic options, such as permitting the U.N. weapons inspectors to have additional time to verify Iraqi arms. One similarity between the Vietnam War and the invasion of Iraq was that the

²¹⁹ Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*, p. 312. Note: During WWII, roughly 1,800 Allied correspondents reported on the events they witnessed, though everything was filtered by the military. For further reading on WWII Correspondents see Ray Moseley, *Reporting War: How Foreign Correspondents Risked Capture, Torture and Death to Cover World War II* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018). There were 501 U.S. war correspondents in Vietnam. For further information on Vietnam War Correspondents, see William M. Hammond, "Who Were the Saigon Correspondents and Does It Matter?," Shorenstein Center (Harvard, November 19, 2015), <https://shorensteincenter.org/who-were-the-saigon-correspondents-and-does-it-matter/>.

Bush administration never backed down on their version of the facts of the case for war. However, the press corps had grown and become splintered since the Vietnam War. Also, the news moved at lightning speed compared to the journalistic process of the Vietnam era. Gone were the days when newsreels were loaded onto planes to be broadcast in the United States from offices in Tokyo. Instead, the news was broadcast live from Iraq. Print journalism could be uploaded within minutes. The cable news networks operated twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and served viewers globally.²²⁰

The downside to this rapid-fire journalism was that as the war in Iraq continued for years, the consensus of U.S. citizens was that the media took too long to scrutinize the Bush administration's rhetoric because the press' goal was rapid reporting and breaking news instead of deliberate investigation and had given credence to the Bush administration's claims about Iraq.²²¹ The most damning evidence of the failure of the Bush administration's invasion of Iraq was that those tasked with tracking down the WMDs continued to come up empty-handed. According to Iraq Security Group's David Kay testimony before Congress on 28 January 2004, no WMDs were found, which began to switch how the legitimacy of the war was reported on.²²² The factors that influenced journalism in the Vietnam War, such as "ignorance, confusion, inexperience, deadlines, excitement, competition," and the reliance on questionable sources, continued to be present in Iraq.²²³ As the war dragged on in Iraq, the coverage by embedded journalists continued but to a lesser degree. Pew polling revealed that the amount of reporting on Iraq that made it into the mainstream media declined considerably as the occupation of Iraq

²²⁰ Murphy, "The Press at War, from Vietnam to Iraq."

²²¹ Murphy, "The Press at War, from Vietnam to Iraq."

²²² "Text of David Kay's Unclassified Statement," CNN (Cable News Network, October 2, 2003), <https://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/10/02/kay.report/>.

²²³ Murphy, "The Press at War, from Vietnam to Iraq."

continued for years.²²⁴ This was not because the journalism was questionable but because the U.S. populace had lost its attention span regarding the War on Terror. Less screen time on cable news and smaller print areas in newspapers were given to covering the slough.

Professor Greg McLaughlin is a specialist in media and journalism who argued that the benefit of embedded reporting, though presented as a manner to provide the best in-depth coverage of the war, was not in providing the truth about the war. Those who benefitted the most, in fact, were the members of the Bush administration. The Bush administration's manner of handling the media by embedding them with specific military units and the biased media briefings that had the administration's desired spin on stories and information restricted the journalists' working parameters. This spin on the news supported President George W. Bush and would later become reasons for professional derision because the majority of journalists rarely challenged the story given them.²²⁵

The embedded journalists in Iraq attended daily briefings, typically conducted by high-ranking officers or political agents, to obtain more information to report. Still, there were explicit rules that applied to the journalists. In these briefings, "questions were rationed out, follow-ups were discouraged, and the briefers rarely provided full answers to questions."²²⁶ When journalist Michael Wolff challenged the quality of the information disseminated in 2003, he was quickly told that he could not ask further questions. The working conditions at these briefings were so hostile that many journalists questioned their reason for working as embedded journalists. The

²²⁴ Murphy, "The Press at War, from Vietnam to Iraq."

²²⁵ Greg McLaughlin, "Goodbye Vietnam Syndrome: The Embed System in Afghanistan and Iraq," in *The War Correspondent: Fully Updated Second Edition* (London: Pluto Press, 2016), p. 143.

²²⁶ McLaughlin, "Goodbye Vietnam Syndrome: The Embed System in Afghanistan and Iraq," p. 147.

embedded journalists were not naïve about their reasons for being there as agents of the Bush administration. However, it is unlikely that they would assume that they would be used in the same manner that the journalists covering Vietnam from Saigon had been four decades earlier. McLaughlin argued that the system of embedded journalists was essential to the Bush administration not just because their information could be controlled but also because journalists readily conform to situations, live with restrictions placed upon them, and hesitate to ask unauthorized questions while they were surrounded by the restrictive situations of military life during combat operations.²²⁷

Although the role of the media during the planning and execution of the invasion of Iraq was more an agent of President George W. Bush's administration than an examiner of its rhetoric, it is important to recognize its successes and failures. The newspaper agency Knight Ridder demonstrated that not every media source acquiesced or simply repeated the U.S. government's talking points. In the legacy of journalism and the Iraq War, the agencies that challenged the administration are remembered as fighters, seeking to frame the intelligence properly. Although embedded journalism would appear to provide a closer look at the war as it unfolded, research shows that the government heavily filtered their reporting. The role that the U.S. State Department played in selling the invasion of Iraq to foreign states and laying the groundwork for developing a Coalition of the Willing was more extensive than what many news audiences would likely have considered.

The third chapter examines how President George W. Bush cobbled together a Coalition of the Willing and investigates the reasons behind Germany and France's official opposition to

²²⁷ McLaughlin, "Goodbye Vietnam Syndrome: The Embed System in Afghanistan and Iraq," pp. 147-158.

the pre-emptive war in Iraq. This chapter examines the coalition's role in unifying the United States and some of its allies and identifying what other longtime allies chose to rebuke militarization of the Iraq-U.S. conflict. Although the mission in Iraq was different than Afghanistan, the problem of getting allies to commit troops or funds seemed to stem more from the questionable intelligence and the fact that a pre-emptive war conflicted with the U.N. Charter and international laws that many countries supported. The reasons for these nations to stand with or against the United States, and the effect that it had on U.S. foreign policy and the Bush administration, is examined in the following chapter.

Chapter Three: Building a Coalition of the Willing

Although many scholars consider the invasion of Iraq in 2003 to be a unilateral military mission on the part of the U.S., there was a considerable effort in the Bush administration to build a “Coalition of the Willing.” Despite President George W. Bush’s assertion that the U.S. would act alone if necessary, regarding Iraq, from a public relations standpoint, it was easier to legitimize the invasion of Iraq if the Bush administration could demonstrate the support of partner nations. This coalition of partner nations would operate under the command of the U.S. military with the primary goal of ousting President Saddam Hussein. To gain the support of partner nations, President George W. Bush engaged diplomatically with various longstanding U.S. allies. The most vital partnership developed by the Bush administration was with Great Britain’s Prime Minister Tony Blair. However, the Bush administration was not universally successful in bringing all its ally nations on board. Two particular nations, France and Germany, were strong allies of the United States for decades and assisted in the war in Afghanistan but were not willing to support an invasion of Iraq. The separation of these allies from Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 is notable and will be reviewed in this chapter. Before detailing the formation of the coalition, I answer a common question of why the U.S. did not simply assassinate Hussein. Following that explanation, I identify the steps the Bush administration took in developing commitments from its allied nations. I conclude the chapter with the motivations France and Germany had in staying away from the Coalition of the Willing.

Why Not Simply Assassinate Hussein?

With the complications involved in invading Iraq, such as building a coalition of partner nations and the risk of U.S. and allied service members' lives, scholars such as former CIA intelligence analyst and Middle East policy expert Kenneth Pollack posed the question of why the United States did not simply assassinate President Hussein. Pollack argued that an assassination or a palace coup of Hussein would possibly make Iraq a more tolerable nation in the eyes of the U.S., and the leader to replace Hussein would likely try to establish a more acceptable relationship with western powers. Pollack also stated that the legal hurdles posed by an assassination are not as challenging to overcome as there is no law preventing assassinations of foreign officials but merely a U.S. executive order. Executive order 11905 (1976) resulted from the Church Committee revelations that the CIA had been involved in numerous assassination attempts after World War II, all initiated by the Executive Branch. President Gerald Ford implemented Executive Order 11905, prohibiting assassinations by U.S. government agents. The order has been carried over to each subsequent presidential administration. However, Pollack stated, executive orders can be altered or rescinded by a subsequent executive order, which is not a complicated process. Furthermore, the executive order prohibiting assassinations of foreign leaders has been ignored in the past. Post-1976 examples of U.S. attempts to kill foreign leaders include Muammar Qadhafi in 1986, Mohammed Farah Aidid in 1993, Osama bin Laden in 1998, and even a plan to kill Hussein during the Gulf War of 1990-1991.²²⁸ These examples indicate that although there was an executive order in place prohibiting assassinations, the sitting president could, and did, authorize assassination attempts on multiple enemies of the

²²⁸ Kenneth Pollack, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* (New York, NY: Random House, 2003), pp. 179-180.

United States.²²⁹ Interestingly, the U.S. government argued that these attacks were not assassination attempts prohibited by the executive order because they were acts of self-defense against threats to the United States. Under this logic, a pre-emptive assassination of Hussein could seem to be legal in the eyes of U.S. leaders.

Pollack noted that there is also no international law prohibiting assassinations. The U.N. Charter states that political agents or individuals are granted immunity from violence by persons and military members of another state during peacetime. But, in war, international law permits the targeted executions of enemy state leaders or members of its chain of command. However, Pollack stated that not all wars are officially declared in the modern era, making the international law in question here outdated. The United States could have argued that because Iraq was not in adherence to the U.N. Security Council Resolutions after the Gulf War of 1990-1991, the assassination may have been legal by those guidelines.

This begs the question of why the U.S. didn't simply assassinate Hussein instead of launching a costly war in 2003. The short answer is that it would have been complicated to reach Hussein in Iraq by covert means because of his extensive military force and close network of those in his immediate circle, the Murafiqin, that would likely prevent an assassination attempt. President John F. Kennedy's 1963 Bay of Pigs fiasco serves as a cautionary example of failed attempts to assassinate a foreign leader. Despite careful planning of the overthrow of Fidel Castro in Cuba, the result was a political disaster for the Kennedy administration and the CIA. Although an assassination attempt of Hussein may have been possible, it would have been extremely difficult for a foreign agency to succeed.²³⁰

²²⁹ Pollack, *The Threatening Storm*, p. 180.

²³⁰ Pollack, *The Threatening Storm*, pp. 180-181.

Another reason that the U.S. may have refrained from an assassination attempt on Hussein is that, if the only fatality from the mission was President Hussein, it is likely that one of Hussein's two sons, Uday or Qusay, would have seized power and the remaining network of security and military forces in Iraq would remain untouched. Moreover, President Hussein's sons were known to be as ruthless and cunning as their father. Removing Saddam and instituting a brief power vacuum for one of his sons to lead the nation could result in Iraq continuing to threaten the United States. Finally, by launching a mission to assassinate Hussein, the U.S. might have established a precedent unfavorable to its own interests in the future.²³¹ A closing note on the benefits of assassinations comes from historian Franklin L. Ford. Ford, who observed that "the history of countless assassinations, examined to compare apparent motives with actual outcomes, contains almost none that produced results consonant with the aims of the doer, assuming those aims to have extended at all beyond the miserable taking of a life."²³² Thus, even assuming that a group could assassinate President Hussein, there is no guarantee that the desired outcomes in Iraq would have occurred, other than likely removing one dictator to create space for the installation of another, possibly more ruthless, leader. For these reasons and the others presented, there was not a solid plan created to assassinate Hussein in the period following 9/11. Or, if there was such a plan, it is possible that it is still classified.

²³¹ Pollack, *The Threatening Storm*, p. 182.

²³² Franklin L. Ford, *Political Murder: From Tyrannicide to Terrorism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 387. **quoted in** Kenneth Pollack, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* (New York, NY: Random House, 2003), p. 182.

Identifying the Willing Allies and Fostering Partnership

Although the development of a coalition of partner nations to join in the war against al Qaeda and the Taliban within Afghanistan did not require a great deal of time, I argue that building that same coalition for invading Iraq proved much more difficult. Building a coalition of partner nations for the war in Afghanistan, dubbed Operation Enduring Freedom, in response to the 9/11 attacks was executed quickly by Secretary of State Colin Powell. Great Britain and Australia committed forces to deploy alongside U.S. service members. Japan and South Korea offered humanitarian assistance and logistical support (and later, they sent troops). Also, Arab nation partners like Jordan and Saudi Arabia passed along valuable intelligence relating to the activity of the al Qaeda network of terrorists. President George W. Bush declared that the essential partner in the war in Afghanistan was the nation of Pakistan. The president stated in his autobiography that no other country wielded as much power over Afghanistan as Pakistan. Although in the past, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates had acknowledged the Taliban as the legitimate leadership within Afghanistan, Pakistan had made that move strategically to prevent India from growing more influential and threatening to Pakistan itself. Pakistan was not a traditional ally of the U.S. The state had operated a secret nuclear weapons program and the U.S. had ceased cooperation with the nation and ended Congressional aid in 2001.²³³

The focus of this section is the gathering of support from partner nations. The discussion of what motivated those allied nations to oppose the Coalition of the Willing is discussed later. A good deal of attention is paid to identifying the reasons that other allied nations chose to distance themselves from military action in Iraq. Most of the international community indeed desired for

²³³ Bush, *Decision Points*, pp. 254-255.

President Hussein to be disarmed. However, the execution of a military operation and the use of force to oust the president were not widely supported.²³⁴ Bush's strongest ally on the issue of Iraq was Prime Minister Tony Blair. On the night of the 9/11 attacks, Prime Minister Blair delivered a statement from his Downing Street residence on the threat of terrorism. The fight against terror would not be fought alone by the U.S. Britain would stand "shoulder to shoulder with our American friends."²³⁵ Blair stated in his autobiography that the attacks were an atrocity and an attack on the U.S., the leader of the free world, was also an attack on Britain. PM Blair also identified the importance of Britain's contribution to shaping the war, which required that Britain be a part of the Bush administration's coalition from the beginning. Furthermore, many British lost their lives in the 9/11 attacks, which made terrorism a key point of national interest and must be eradicated. Blair believed that support of the U.S. must be unequivocal, and the U.K. would ally with the United States fully.²³⁶

Both Prime Minister Blair and President George W. Bush agreed that, despite reservations by the U.S. in involving the U.N. in obtaining authorization for war in Iraq, the pair would not be restrained from acting if the international community did not support the War on Terror. Blair and Bush agreed that pursuing U.N. support for the Iraq invasion might be easier if there was a coalition of partner nations supporting the United States. Blair expressed concern about the U.S. acting unilaterally in Iraq, even if the U.K. supported the matter, and promoted building a coalition of partner nations as a smart move. Bush and Blair were able to build support for the upcoming military action in Iraq from a network of thirteen of the twenty-five countries

²³⁴ Wali Aslam, *United States and Great Power Responsibility in International Society: Drones, Rendition and Invasion* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), p. 53.

²³⁵ Tony Blair, *A Journey* (London: Random House, 2010), p. 335.

²³⁶ Blair, *A Journey*, p. 335.

of the European Union and an overall total of over thirty nations worldwide. Notably, very few of these willing countries would send troops. Instead, they agreed to provide financial support, intelligence support, and physical locations where U.S. troops and their equipment were to be staged before moving on into Iraq.²³⁷ The United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia committed troops to Iraq. Some of the major players providing other forms of support were Spain, Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands, Portugal, and the entirety of the Eastern European countries. In a NATO vote on the issue of Iraq, fifteen of the thirty member states were in favor of military action. At the same time, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, and France stood against military action by the United States.²³⁸ Although the Coalition of the Willing was somewhat broad, Israel was never officially named as one of those partner nations.²³⁹ The U.S. was purposefully careful not to broaden its War on Terror during the period that it sought to increase the number of partner countries in the Coalition of the Willing.

The U.S. chose not to launch a military strike against Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a terrorist linked to al Qaeda who had experience with chemical and biological warfare, though he was purportedly experimenting with poisons and toxins in a lab in northeastern Iraq in the summer of 2002. al-Zarqawi had been connected to attacks on both U.S. and Israeli interests. The current intelligence suggested that he may be planning to bring chemical materials from his lab in Iraq

²³⁷ Blair, *A Journey*, pp. 383-388.

²³⁸ Bush, *Decision Points*, p. 327.

²³⁹ Dana Milbank, "For Israel Lobby Group, War Is Topic A, Quietly," *The Washington Post* (WP Company, April 1, 2003), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2003/04/01/for-israel-lobby-group-war-is-topic-a-quietly/1b569681-d27f-4345-bd72-89b52b725eff/>. Although there were forty-nine countries that were officially named as part of the Coalition of the Willing, Israel was not explicitly tied to the group. However, at an American Israel Public Affairs Committee meeting in 2003, the group published photos on its website showing Israeli drones used by Coalition forces during the invasion.

into the U.S. However, intelligence could not state with high confidence that President Hussein knew that this al Qaeda terrorist was operating within Iraq. The CIA requested that President Hussein extradite al-Zarqawi to the United States, but Hussein refused and claimed that he could not be found. Although there was a high-ranking terrorist that may have been operating within Iraq, the decision to bomb or not to bomb the laboratory in Iraq in 2002 was not agreed upon by key members of the Bush administration. Specifically, Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice were against such action. These two key officials worried that military action against a lab in Iraq could make building the coalition of partner countries standing behind the U.S. more difficult. In particular, the U.S. had concerns regarding how an attack on these labs might influence Turkey, a prospective member of the Coalition of the Willing. The Bush administration worried that an attack on the mobile weapons labs could be construed as the first unilateral strike against Iraq. Ultimately, President George W. Bush took a diplomatic stance on this issue and told the intelligence community to keep abreast of the al-Zarqawi problem.²⁴⁰ This was one of several times when the Bush administration pursued diplomatic action before launching the invasion of Iraq.

Even as late as 24 February 2003, President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair continued to pursue a U.N. Security Council Resolution authorizing the use of force in Iraq. At the U.N. meeting that day, the U.S./U.K. alliance worked to obtain enough yes votes to pass the measure. They hoped to convince France and Russia to abstain from voting on the measure rather than vetoing the resolution authorizing military force. There were also political undertones in the U.K. regarding the measure. Prime Minister Blair was facing a revolt by the British Labour Party over the Iraq issue should the prime minister fail to obtain this second resolution

²⁴⁰ Bush, *Decision Points*, pp. 315-316.

from the U.N. authorizing military force. Within a week of this vote, it wasn't clear if his government could survive the popular sentiment by a growing number of U.K. citizens that military action against Iraq by the U.S. and Britain was the right decision. However, despite dissent among the general British populace, Blair was committed to his alliance with the U.S. and prepared to go down with the ship if the British populace revolted. President George W. Bush continued to try and win votes and influence Mexico and Chile to stand with the U.S. on the Iraq issue but was unable to sway either leader into supporting the U.S. mission against Iraq.²⁴¹

The partnership between Prime Minister Tony Blair and U.S. President George W. Bush would influence the design of the Coalition of the Willing. Blair told Bush that he would stand by the U.S. in whatever manner was needed, but he asked for some things in return for being a partner to military action in Iraq. On 28 July 2002, Blair urged Bush to gain traction on the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP), obtain U.N. authorization for the military action in Iraq, and assist in shifting the public's perception in the U.K., Europe, as well as the Arabian nations before the U.K. could commit to coalition action. On 8 November 2002, the U.N. Security Council unanimously passed resolution 1441. The resolution served as a final warning for Hussein to disarm or suffer the repercussions. The U.N. weapons inspectors returned to Iraq later the same month.²⁴²

When the U.N. Security Council failed to pass a resolution stating that Iraq had not complied with resolution 1441 by December 2002, the U.S. and U.K. leaders, British civil servant Sir John Chilcot argued, were "undermining the Security Council's authority" by acting

²⁴¹ Bush, *Decision Points*, pp. 327-328.

²⁴² Tony Blair, *A Journey*, pp. 381-386.

without the U.N.'s consent.²⁴³ The Chilcot Report, released in 2016, was responsible for investigating Britain's role in the invasion of Iraq. The U.N. represented the sole international body that could authorize preventative military action on the basis of a failure to disarm completely.²⁴⁴ Jonathan Powell, PM Blair's Chief of Staff, told the British Chilcot Inquiry that Blair wanted to partner with Bush to create a broad coalition of nations while encouraging the U.S. to move in the direction the U.K. desired. With Blair's influence, the Bush administration did seek the second U.N. Security Council resolution, but Blair ultimately was not able to influence the Washington decision-making apparatus to prevent unilateral military action in Iraq.²⁴⁵ While the Bush administration tried to gain essential support in Europe, most European citizens were strongly opposed to military action. When Blair approached Spain's Prime Minister José María Aznar about joining the coalition, Aznar stated that only four per cent of Spaniards supported military action in Iraq. Despite this, Aznar declared that he would support Blair and Bush because the threat of WMDs in Hussein's hands was too severe to ignore.²⁴⁶ The Chilcot Report found that by December 2002, Bush had given up on weapons inspections to yield the desired results, military action was the new plan going forward.²⁴⁷ A more significant bolstering to the coalition would come from Australia.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard wrote in his autobiography, *Lazarus Rising*, that Australia's partnership in the Coalition of the Willing, and committing ground troops to the

²⁴³ Sir John Chilcot, "The Report of the Iraq Inquiry, Statement by Sir John Chilcot: 6 July 2016," The Report of the Iraq Inquiry (2016), p. 3-4, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-iraq-inquiry>.

²⁴⁴ Chilcot, "The Report of the Iraq Inquiry, Statement by Sir John Chilcot: 6 July 2016," The Report of the Iraq Inquiry, p. 4.

²⁴⁵ Chilcot, "The Report of the Iraq Inquiry, Statement by Sir John Chilcot: 6 July 2016," The Report of the Iraq Inquiry, p. 54.

²⁴⁶ Blair, *A Journey*, p. 400.

²⁴⁷ Chilcot, "The Report of the Iraq Inquiry, Statement by Sir John Chilcot: 6 July 2016," p. 3.

invading force, was “the most controversial foreign affairs action of [his] Government.”²⁴⁸ Australia committed three ships, a clearance diving team, and 500 special forces members with three Chinook helicopters as part of the operation.²⁴⁹ Howard raised the concern of the war critics in his nation that the threat of terrorist retaliation against Australia would increase by participating in the Iraqi invasion. Howard discards this criticism by noting that, seven years after the invasion, intelligence reports showed that the nation of Australia had been a target of terrorism by the al Qaeda terror network well before Howard authorized the support of the U.S. mission as a member of the Coalition of the Willing. In addition, Australian citizens were killed in a terrorist attack in Bali in October 2002, because of the nation’s prolonged involvement in East Timor, in retaliation for the threat of Australians in separating Timor from the Islamic world. The attack in Bali, which occurred five months before the invasion of Iraq, may have operated as an event that further unified the nations of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia as states threatened by terrorism in the modern era.²⁵⁰

In his autobiography Howard declared that the Australian support for the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq were executed as a unified response to the fight against global terrorism. Howard conceded that Iraq did not have ties to al Qaeda or 11 September 2001, but the nation was listed as a state sponsor of terror due to Hussein’s support for other terrorist groups during his time in office. An example of how President Hussein supported terrorism was the reward payment of \$25,000 to the Palestinian families of suicide bombers who launched attacks in

²⁴⁸ John Howard, *Lazarus Rising: A Personal and Political Autobiography* (Sydney, N.S.W: PointBreak Press, 2014), pp. 582-583.

²⁴⁹ Mark Corcoran, “A Look at Australia's Involvement in Iraq,” ABC News Australia (ABC News Australia, September 15, 2014), <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-09-15/mark-corcoran27s-iraq-background/5743020>.

²⁵⁰ Howard, *Lazarus Rising*, pp. 583-584.

Israel. Howard maintains that the invasion of Iraq on 19 March 2003 was the right thing to do. The U.S. was forced to act because of Iraq's disregard for the U.N. resolutions.²⁵¹ Although Iraq had repeatedly violated U.N. Security Council Resolutions, the permanent members of the security council had threatened to veto a resolution that called for military force for the state's failed disarmament ordered under U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441. Two permanent members of the security council, Russia and France, let it be known that they would veto this measure if it came to a vote.²⁵² Howard also believed that the intelligence presented at the time did indicate that Hussein possessed WMDs that constituted a threat to the nations of the world. Finally, Howard noted that the invasion could have been promoted as "anticipatory self-defense" due to the threat of future terrorist partnerships with the rogue nation of Iraq, which had an established history of regional aggression.²⁵³ While Kuwait committed to staging troops for the invasion of Iraq and the U.K. and Australia committed ground forces, other nations were not as supportive of a military strike, typically due to the belief that diplomacy had not been given the proper amount of time to solve the threat of perceived WMDs in Iraq.

Long-Term Allies that Opposed Invading Iraq: France

President George W. Bush put forth a yeoman's effort in crafting the Coalition of the Willing to support dethroning Hussein in Iraq. During this period of friendly influence, Bush traveled extensively and sent members of his administration to nations that had friendly diplomatic relationships with the U.S. and were key votes on the U.N. Security Council. French President Jacques Chirac recalled one of these visits in his autobiography, *My Life in Politics*.

²⁵¹ Howard, *Lazarus Rising*, p. 584.

²⁵² Jacques Chirac, *My Life in Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 311.

²⁵³ Howard, *Lazarus Rising*, p. 584.

The visit occurred on 27 May 2002, U.S. Memorial Day, and Chirac considered it an exceptional visit as President Bush chose to celebrate the day on French soil. The visit was special because the president held a ceremony on the beaches of Normandy to honor the memory of the thousands of U.S. soldiers lost on that fateful beach landing in World War II. Bush's speech that day was not merely commemorative but also a political discourse as he referred to terrorism and the need for nations to stand against those who "hate freedom". President Chirac spoke afterward and stated that terrorism would not be tolerated but that all forms of prejudice must be eliminated. Bush had just declared, in a private meeting with Chirac the previous day, that he had no stronger ally than Chirac, and he considered him a close friend.²⁵⁴

Despite Bush's declaration of close friendship, Chirac warned Bush against launching a military attack against Iraq, even though Chirac agreed that Hussein posed a threat to global security. Chirac warned that although the initial strikes against Baghdad and Hussein would be successful, as time wore on, there would be civil conflict among the Shi'ites, Kurds, and Sunnis that call Iraq their homeland. Chirac's concern regarding the possible invasion of Iraq grew when his private chief of staff passed Chirac a note on 5 August 2002 reporting that a U.S. military action against Iraq could occur before the year's end. President Hussein was not oblivious that an attack might occur and intelligence indicated that he was preparing defenses for a strike against his nation. However, Bush's plans for Iraq were not yet settled. The Pentagon had not decided upon the strategy for the invasion or even how many members of the coalition forces would be involved in the initial strike force. While the potential attack on Iraq seemed more and more likely, world leaders like Chirac and Nelson Mandela expressed the grave concern that they

²⁵⁴ Chirac, *My Life in Politics*, pp. 299-300.

shared.²⁵⁵ Mandela and Chirac agreed that the matter of Iraq was an issue of worry, and Mandela physically grabbed Chirac, looked him in the eyes, and said: “You should do all you can to stop Bush going into Iraq!”²⁵⁶

After meeting with Mandela in Johannesburg, Chirac warned that the weapons inspectors needed to return to Iraq immediately. If Iraq opposed the weapons inspectors, then the only legitimate agent to decide the repercussions was the U.N. Security Council, and the U.S. should not act unilaterally. Because of France’s oppositional position, Prime Minister Blair telephoned Chirac and discussed the issue of Iraq on 6 September 2002. Chirac reinforced his position that the reintroduction of weapons inspectors was the priority. If there was resistance, the appropriate pathway, in the eyes of France, was legitimate international action, and the stability of the region must be a consideration. In this conversation between the leaders of France and the U.K., Blair admitted to Chirac that he was in complete support of the U.S. perspective on Iraq and the most effective way to stabilize the region was to remove Hussein from power. However, Blair also told Chirac that he wanted to operate within the bounds of the U.N. and that it would have been preferred that a second U.N. Security Council resolution to force Hussein to disarm was in hand.²⁵⁷ U.S. House Republicans mocked the French status of opposition by naming French fries “Freedom Fries” and French toast “Freedom Toast” in the House cafeterias. There doesn’t seem to be much in the way of U.S. media opposition to French policy currently identified.²⁵⁸ Blair

²⁵⁵ Chirac, *My Life in Politics*, pp. 303-304.

²⁵⁶ Chirac, *My Life in Politics*, p. 304.

²⁵⁷ Chirac, *My Life in Politics*, p. 305.

²⁵⁸ Sean Loughlin, “House Cafeterias Change Names for 'French' Fries and 'French' Toast,” CNN (Cable News Network, March 12, 2003), <https://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/03/11/sprj.irq.fries/>.

was not the only one to reach out to Chirac to push the French leader to align with the U.S. position.

The same day as the conversation between Blair and Chirac occurred, Bush telephoned Chirac. Chirac recalled that the Bush administration decided to inform several close allied leaders about the current state of the plans for Iraq. Chirac noted in that conversation Bush spoke as if he wasn't committed to a "preemptive war" as was sought by Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and was tempered by the Secretary of State Colin Powell's reservations about the invasion.²⁵⁹ The French Embassy in Washington, D.C. reported to Chirac's administration that Bush indeed had not decided on how best to approach the issue of Iraq, despite the bellicose speech the president made to the West Point Military Academy's cadets three months prior. The next day would bring together two significant parties opposed to the military action in Iraq.²⁶⁰

The day after Chirac spoke with President Bush by telephone, Chirac met with German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in Hanover, Germany. Naturally, the topic of Iraq came up in a discussion between the two leaders. Chirac recalled that the two agreed on numerous points and four of these points were subsequently disclosed at a joint press conference. First, the two were definitively opposed to any unilateral action in Iraq. Second, the two asserted that U.N. weapons inspectors needed to return immediately to Iraq. Third, the pair made it clear that the U.N. should play a pivotal role regarding Iraq. Finally, the U.N. objectives should not be changed and that the weapons inspectors return without resorting to military action against Hussein and the nation. Before the press conference concluded, Chancellor Schröder made it clear that Germany would

²⁵⁹ Chirac, *My Life in Politics*, p. 306. Interestingly, this phone call doesn't appear in President George W. Bush's autobiography *Decision Points*.

²⁶⁰ Chirac, *My Life in Politics*, p. 306.

play no part in an armed attack on Iraq. This was the only part in which the French and German leaders differed because Chirac was not ready to make that claim.²⁶¹

However, it wouldn't be long before Chirac clarified France's position on the matter. Chirac granted an interview to the *New York Times*, published on 9 September 2002. In the interview, the topic of pre-emptive war and President Bush's position on the matter arose. Chirac dismissed the concept of pre-emption, stating:

From the moment a nation gives itself the right to act preemptively, other nations will naturally do the same. That is, I believe, an extraordinarily dangerous doctrine and one that could have dramatic consequences. A preemptive action could be undertaken if it seems necessary, but only by the international community, which is today the Security Council of the United Nations.²⁶²

With this statement, France stood alongside Germany in firm opposition to a pre-emptive, unilateral attack by the United States. Despite decades of these two key U.S. allies siding with the United States on critical issues and military conflicts in the latter portion of the twentieth century, their opposition to the Bush administration's goals for Iraq was a significant departure from their relations with the hegemonic U.S.

In response to a question following this statement, Chirac stated that there was no irrefutable proof that Hussein possessed WMDs at the time. Although he desired to see a change in the Iraqi regime, there must be order in world affairs. Chirac also feared that should the Bush administration launch a military invasion against Iraq, it may undermine any other international coalition taking a stand against terrorism. Chirac used this engagement to urge other coalitions to form against poverty and against climate change and to address other world issues. Chirac's plan for Iraq was to combine firmness and respect of current laws as an alternative to plans that Bush

²⁶¹ Chirac, *My Life in Politics*, p. 306-307.

²⁶² Chirac, *My Life in Politics*, p. 307.

had proposed. This was three days before the Bush administration spoke of protecting lives while seeking support from the U.N. Security Council in the form of a second resolution that PM Blair had urged.²⁶³ Bush posed the question: “Are Security Council resolutions to be honored and enforced or cast aside without consequence? Will the United Nations serve the purpose of its founding or will it be irrelevant?”²⁶⁴ Interestingly, Bush questioned the purpose of the U.N. in urging for the second resolution but then chose to undermine the institution by launching a unilateral invasion of Iraq months later when the results of the U.N. weapons inspectors did not definitively prove that Iraq had fully disarmed. However, France and Germany were not the only key nations that the United States sought support from in the form of a second U.N. resolution.

President Chirac spoke with both Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji by phone after his phone conversation in October of 2002 with President Bush. President Putin stated that the U.S. was putting extensive pressure on the Russian Federation to support the U.S. and the U.K. in their aims for Iraq. President Putin asked for President Chirac’s opinion on the text of the proposed resolution (the initial draft of resolution 1441). Putin had decided that the verbiage of immediate intervention in Iraq was not acceptable. If France stood beside Putin on the issue, he was ready to veto the motion should the U.S. submit the proposal. Chinese Prime Minister Rongji informed Chirac that he was willing to stand alongside Putin and Chirac in the veto on the proposed motion in front of the Security Council.²⁶⁵ The role of France in counterbalancing the United States’ urging for military action is an integral part of understanding the foreign relations behind the Coalition of the Willing.

²⁶³ Chirac, *My Life in Politics*, pp. 307-308.

²⁶⁴ Chirac, *My Life in Politics*, p. 308.

²⁶⁵ Chirac, *My Life in Politics*, p. 311.

When Bush realized that the idea of a second U.N. resolution was reaching the level of crisis within 150 days of the passage of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441, it frustrated the U.S. plans for invasion, but only temporarily. When the Bush administration recognized the threat of a veto by France and Russia, both permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, Bush chose to invade Iraq without the security council's support. However, the conflict within the U.N. regarding the Iraq invasion concerned U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who worried about the future and relevance of the organization when faced with these current difficulties. During the international conflict over Iraq and the proposed second resolution, President Chirac attempted to secure the support of several non-permanent security council members, such as Mexico, to support the weapons inspectors and disarmament instead of unilateral military action in Iraq by the U.S. Despite the United States' ability to obtain NATO support for the disarmament of Iraq, the approval was largely symbolic because the U.N. is the organization for unified responses to conflict and disturbance within the international society and the arbiter of conflict. By the end of January 2003, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin revealed that France was ready to veto a second U.N. Security Council Resolution calling for immediate military interventions in the failed disarmament of Iraq. Bush stated that should the second U.N. resolution fail, it would be due to France's illegitimate blockage, but the nations opposed to the military action viewed the U.S. as warmongers.²⁶⁶

When U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix delivered his report to the U.N. on 15 February 2003 stating that the weapons inspectors were making progress in verifying to what degree Iraq had been disarmed, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin declared that military action

²⁶⁶ B. Gregory Marfleet and Colleen Miller, "Failure after 1441: Bush and Chirac in the UN Security Council," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1, no. 3 (November 2005): pp. 333-338, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-8594.2005.00015.x>.

in Iraq was not necessary and that the inspections were working. The declaration by de Villepin was welcomed with applause by the attendees of the Security Council and inspired hope of a peaceful resolution by the French, Russian, Chinese, and British governments. U.K. Foreign Minister Jack Straw agreed with many when he stated that the weapons inspectors should be given additional time to verify Iraq's status of its purported CBW and WMD possession.²⁶⁷

Blix's presentation and the response of the Security Council resulted in large-scale antiwar protests within 48 hours in Britain, Spain, and Italy. Each of these countries had supported the U.S. plans for Iraq, but many – if not the majority – of their citizens were against military action. It seemed like the second U.N. Security Council resolution was very unlikely to pass. Furthermore, France, Russia, and Germany worked together to craft a detailed disarmament plan for Iraq that did not involve war. This alternative plan for Iraq was introduced to the U.N. Security Council under the belief that the U.S. would not act against the council but there was no further action taken on this proposal. When the U.K. and Spain demanded a twenty-four-hour deadline for a U.N. Security Council Resolution authorizing force in Iraq, France stood defiantly against the proposed timeline, and the proposal was effectively killed. The result was an ultimatum issued by Bush that President Hussein had forty-eight hours to leave Iraq or the U.S. would launch an invasion.²⁶⁸ The story of France's opposition to the U.S. is a major part of the story of the Coalition of the Willing. Another longstanding United States ally, Germany, opposed the military action in Iraq as well. The fact that Germany stood alongside France in the matter

²⁶⁷ Marfleet and Miller, "Failure after 1441: Bush and Chirac in the UN Security Council," p. 339.

²⁶⁸ Marfleet and Miller, "Failure after 1441: Bush and Chirac in the UN Security Council," pp. 340-341.

illustrates the difficulty they had in accepting the claims of the imminent threat that Iraq posed, as well as their condemnation of war as a resolution to international conflicts.

Decades-Long Alliances that Opposed Invading Iraq: Germany

When German Foreign Minister Joseph Martin “Joschka” Fischer visited Washington, D.C. on 18-19 September 2001, he learned that that the US considered Iraq a target against terrorism from 11 September 2001—even before Germany had sent forces to Afghanistan in response to the attacks of 9/11. Foreign Minister Fischer wrote for a German lecture on Kosovo and Iraq that was later reprinted for the journal *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* in 2007, of his concern that military action in Iraq at the time could result in a “new world war.”²⁶⁹ Germany’s opposition to what would become a U.S. unilateral attack on the sovereign nation of Iraq and the deposing of President Hussein from power marked a distinct departure from the longstanding alliance between Germany and the United States. The opposition to the plans of the Bush administration dominated the public debate throughout large parts of Europe (including Germany) on the matter. On 22 January 2003, at the 40th-anniversary celebration of the Franco-German Treaty at Versailles, the leaders of France and Germany declared a unified opposition to the use of any military force in Iraq.²⁷⁰ The Bush administration declared that opposition to their plans was “confrontational” and noted that Germany and France chose interesting allies with Cuba and Libya as nations opposed to the U.S. pre-emptive action.²⁷¹ France and Germany were

²⁶⁹ Dieter Dettke, *Germany Says "No": The Iraq War and the Future of German Foreign and Security Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2009), p.129.

²⁷⁰ Dieter Dettke, “The 2003 Iraq War as a Turning Point in German–American Relations: Political Leadership and Alliance Cohesion,” *German Politics* 27, no. 2 (2018): pp. 158-159, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2018.1446082>.

²⁷¹ Dettke, “The 2003 Iraq War as a Turning Point in German–American Relations,” p. 159.

ridiculed for their opposition to military action in Iraq by those nations that supported the operation.²⁷²

While Germany contributed a considerable number of forces to the war in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, including 3,900 service members, they had defined the limits of the area of responsibility that their troops could operate within. This area would not include Iraq without the explicit consent of the German state. German Chancellor Schröder asserted that many German citizens feared that unrestrained actions against Iraq would transform into widespread violence between Islam and the collective West: “Germany is prepared to take risks, including military risks, but not to engage in adventures.”²⁷³ With this statement, Schröder set the boundaries of what Germany would accept in order to participate in as part of the War on Terror. Schröder’s memoirs recorded that when he spoke to Bush on 31 January 2002, the German leader warned that the global fight against terrorism must follow the U.N. Security Council’s guidelines of holding states accountable for harboring or protecting terrorist groups. Germany would only support the United States when it operated within these guidelines.²⁷⁴

Although Germany typically had fruitful relationships with U.S. presidents over several decades, the country’s interactions turned cold rather quickly with the election of President George W. Bush. At their first meeting on 29 March 2001, Schröder recalled that there were unreconcilable differences in state policies and agendas from the beginning regarding the Kyoto Protocol. The Bush administration was against the Kyoto Protocol because they believed it would harm the U.S. economy. The state of affairs in Germany did not favor the use of military force in general, and there was a feeling that German forces were already overextended by their

²⁷² Dettke, “The 2003 Iraq War as a Turning Point in German–American Relations,” p. 159.

²⁷³ Dettke, *Germany Says “No,”* pp. 131-136.

²⁷⁴ Dettke, *Germany Says “No,”* p. 132.

deployments to Kosovo and Afghanistan. Notably, the German populace did not support German troops deployed to Afghanistan. The division between Germany and the United States grew when the Bush administration changed their National Security Strategy posture to allow for pre-emptive strikes against other nations if they posed an imminent threat to the U.S.²⁷⁵

Germany and other European nations were unnerved by the new U.S. foreign policy of pre-emption. They wondered how the United States would distinguish between acting in self-defense versus outright aggressive attacks against other states. Schröder also identified the precedent that a pre-emptive strike against Iraq would establish. He saw the possibility of China striking against Taiwan based upon a declared pre-emptive threat. Schröder felt confident that the narrow vote in the German Bundestag in favor of sending German troops to Afghanistan would prevent a commitment of additional forces for military action in Iraq. When Bush visited Berlin in May 2002, the U.S. president spoke to the Bundestag. He did not broach the subject of a new war in Iraq, but there was a sizeable anti-Bush rally that required sealing-off half of the city to protect the President. Schröder declared that he was committed to a close working relationship and solidarity against terrorist threats. Bush and his staff left Germany believing that Schröder and Germany were on their side regarding Iraq, because Schröder and Bush agreed to continue to consult about Iraq and Germany agreed not to stand in the way of the invasion, so long as it didn't interfere in Germany's elections. However, Schröder's memoirs indicated that Germany would side with the U.S. if it turned out that Iraq was harboring terrorists, but at this time, there was no substantive proof to confirm such an assertion.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ Dettke, *Germany Says "No,"* pp. 148-158.

²⁷⁶ Dettke, *Germany Says "No,"* pp. 158-159.

It would not take long before the issue of Iraq entered the conversation during the German election season, and Schröder was forced to distance Germany from the looming conflict, which left Bush feeling betrayed. Schröder was committed to the War on Terror but was antipathetic towards including Iraq in this grouping without proof. This positioning by the German administration had much to do with the feeling of the majority of the German populace. A poll conducted by *Der Spiegel* in August 2002 revealed that fifty-one per cent of those polled believed that Germany should not be involved in an Iraq invasion in any way. Public opinion experts asserted, based upon other polling data within Germany, that approximately eighty per cent of Germans were against the U.S.-led Iraqi invasion. Chancellor Schröder and Foreign Minister Fischer decided that to continue as political leaders, they had to declare that Germany would not play a part in Iraq.²⁷⁷

Schröder cited four specific reasons Germany was against military action in Iraq, which he revealed in a *New York Times* interview on 5 September 2002. First, Schröder believed that the isolation and containment of President Hussein in Iraq was already successful. The proper diplomatic and economic policies would get Iraq to open the doors once again to U.N. weapons inspectors to facilitate disarmament. However, Schröder felt that the U.S. was willing to go to war against Iraq, regardless of what the weapons inspectors found, and because of this, he felt that U.S. allies' concerns were being ignored. Second, Schröder was concerned about the region's stability if the U.S. invaded Iraq and did not have a solid plan to establish security as part of the ousting of Hussein. Third, Schröder felt that the economic repercussions of such an invasion had not been considered thoroughly. Finally, Schröder argued that without more significant progress in the war in Afghanistan, a military invasion in Iraq might spur the growth

²⁷⁷ Dettke, *Germany Says "No,"* pp. 159-162.

of terrorist networks and encourage further terrorist attacks, which seemed counterproductive in a War on Terror.²⁷⁸

Because of the reasons given in the *New York Times* article and the clear desire to preserve his elected position, Germany said “No” to partnering with the U.S. in its efforts in Iraq in 2003. The political aspect was important to Schröder, who was aware that an additional vote by the governing coalition in favor of military action in Iraq was impossible. Schröder was also aware that the Party of Democratic Socialism that opposed him would benefit greatly should Schröder support the United States. Further splintering within the German political parties would have been likely had Schröder and Fischer signed on with the Coalition of the Willing. Despite the political reasons for standing against the war in Iraq, Germany’s intelligence community passed on information from an Iraqi defector.²⁷⁹

The Iraqi defector that provided intelligence to Germany was Rafid Ahmed Alwan al-Janabi codenamed “Curveball” for some unknown reason. Curveball sought to deliver damning information about President Hussein and WMDs to the West in exchange for asylum in Germany. German intelligence found the information very dubious and questioned why the defector seemed to be pushing for war against Iraq. Curveball’s information was the main source of the claim that Iraq had mobile weapons laboratories to develop nuclear weapons and WMDs. When the German intelligence services shared the information with the United States, they did warn that the source was questionable and required further verification. Despite the warnings of the German intelligence services about Curveball and the information that he presented, the

²⁷⁸ Steven Erlanger, “German Leader’s Warning: War Plan Is a Huge Mistake,” *The New York Times* (*The New York Times*, September 5, 2002), <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/05/world/traces-of-terror-perspectives-german-leader-s-warning-war-plan-is-a-huge-mistake.html>.

²⁷⁹ Dettke, *Germany Says “No,”* p. 163.

intelligence was reported to international communities as reliable in the eyes of the U.S. Colin Powell's 5 February 2003 address to the U.N. Security Council cited this intelligence as further justification of the need to remove Hussein from power through an invasion of Iraq.²⁸⁰

This was not the end of the involvement of Germany in the discussion of an invasion of Iraq. When U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney spoke before the Veterans of Foreign Wars on 27 August 2002 in Nashville, Tennessee, he delivered an ominous line. VP Cheney stated that, regarding Iraq, "the risks of inaction are far greater than the risks of action."²⁸¹ Approximately one month before VP Cheney's speech, leaders at a French-German summit in Schwerin, Germany (the small group included French President Chirac, German Chancellor Schröder, Joschka Fischer, and Dieter Kastrup) decided unanimously that France and Germany must make a public, forcible stance against the United States and Bush's plan to invade Iraq. According to German policy expert, Professor Dieter Dettke, this meant that Germany was the leader of the opposition coalition in Europe, and France must consider this in further foreign policy issues. As a result of this agreement between the French and German leaders, both Chirac and Schröder made public statements. Schröder stated that the U.S. government had failed to consult with Germany before a decision on an invasion of Iraq. Chirac urged the Iraqi government to accept the U.N. secretary-general's proposals of removing the embargo of Iraq in exchange for the reintroduction of U.N. weapons inspectors. Schröder indicated that he was aware of the impact

²⁸⁰ Dettke, *Germany Says "No,"* p. 163; Martin Chulov and Helen Pidd, "Curveball: How US Was Duped by Iraqi Fantasist Looking to Topple Saddam," *The Guardian* (Guardian News and Media, February 15, 2011), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/feb/15/curveball-iraqi-fantasist-cia-saddam>.

²⁸¹ Dettke, *Germany Says "No,"* p. 164.

Germany's "No" against the U.S. would have on future international relations and foreign policy. Still, the stakes were too high to ignore the threat to all nations.²⁸²

Conclusion

Although it might seem that it would have been simpler to assassinate President Hussein and institute a democratic system in Iraq than launching the invasion that transpired in 2003, there were many reasons the U.S. did not pursue a regime change in this manner. Dismissing an assassination attempt against President Hussein, the planning for a military attack against the nation of Iraq required coordination and cooperation among states. Though the U.S. quickly developed a coalition to target Afghanistan as a nation that harbored the terror network al Qaeda, responsible for the attacks on 9/11, coordinating a second Coalition of the Willing that supported an invasion of Iraq was not as easy. Although most of the international community desired to see President Hussein disarmed, they were not all supportive of military action to achieve those ends. As President George W. Bush approached U.S. allies about the possible military action, he found that U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair would become his strongest ally in the mission in Iraq. I speculate that the partnership by Blair may have been done to show the British strength in the worldwide arena and posture to regain some of its lost hegemonic power after World War II. Unfortunately for Blair, the legacy of Iraq and the black eye from misrepresented intelligence led to a failure in President Bush's goals for the country. Iraq did more harm than good for Blair and the U.K.'s power and prestige on the global stage.

However, having Blair as a stalwart ally likely resulted in Australia signing on to the Bush administration's new war. Although Australia committed significantly fewer troops to the

²⁸² Dettke, *Germany Says "No,"* pp. 164-165.

invasion compared to the United States and the United Kingdom, its participation represented a broader international coalition aimed at ousting Hussein and gave further support to a transnational partnership in the new front in the War on Terror. Although President Bush gained the alliance of PM Blair and PM Howard for the invasion of Iraq on 19 March 2003, the invasion did not occur without considerable opposition by two longstanding U.S. allies, France and Germany. French President Chirac was not in favor of military action in Iraq and instead urged for weapons inspectors to return to Iraq to enable proper disarmament of Hussein. Chirac coordinated with German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, and the two decided that they were both against a pre-emptive, or more accurately a preventative, war in Iraq and stood as pillars against Bush. Chirac stated unequivocally that the lack of irrefutable evidence proving that President Hussein had WMDs was disquieting.

Further research into the members of the Coalition of the Willing would reveal all of the members that supported the invasion of Iraq through their commitments of military members, arms, intelligence, financing, and military staging. It would be interesting to know the reasons why some nations that did commit to supporting the effort asked not to have their support disclosed. In the case of Israel, their overt support may have not occurred out of a fear of reprisals of further terror attacks against Israelis by Palestinians or Muslim extremists from other nations. Further investigation into how the participation in the Coalition of the Willing, or its opposition, affected long-term foreign relations between the United States and the nations of Britain, Australia, France, and Germany is needed. Beyond military alliances, what other types of support, such as support in the international community and other treaties, were altered? Analysis on the domestic politics of coalition supporters and those in opposition may reveal interesting repercussions for their stance regarding the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Also, it would be

interesting to see how world leader's legacies were impacted, positively or negatively, for their position on the Iraq War.

Thesis Conclusion

The information in this thesis supports my argument that the attacks of 11 September 2001 facilitated foreign policy changes in the U.S. that opened the door for a unilateral invasion of Iraq in 2003 based upon misrepresented intelligence. By not presenting the complete picture of the intelligence regarding Iraq, U.S. citizens and those abroad only received talking points supporting President Bush's assertion of the imminent threat posed by President Hussein, which the facts did not support. The roadmap to the invasion of Iraq has been addressed in this thesis, beginning with the background of other past presidents' use of "pre-emption" and how they responded to terrorist attacks against the U.S. and its interests worldwide.

Chapter One detailed the important publication of the 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States. The relevant section of this government publication stated that the U.S. would take pre-emptive action against terrorists and that the Bush administration would act unilaterally if necessary. Although the publication stated that the nation would take pre-emptive action in the face of an imminent threat, realistically, the U.S. was preparing for a preventative attack against any perceived threat. Specifically, the target that they had in mind was the sovereign nation of Iraq, which the Bush administration contended held WMDs. In the aftermath of 9/11 President Bush actively sought to connect Iraq to the terrorist attacks so that the government could update and validate a prior plan to oust Hussein. When the Bush administration refused to exhaust all diplomatic measures to assure the complete disarmament of Iraq by utilizing U.N. weapons inspectors, they made it clear that they would no longer wait for a threat to materialize in the form of a mushroom cloud on the horizon.²⁸³

²⁸³ This is a combination of statements made by President George W. Bush and Condoleezza Rice. President Bush's statement comes from Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution

With the failure of the U.S. and Britain to obtain a second security council resolution authorizing war in Iraq the legality of the invasion was called to question by legal scholars. An examination on the limited scholarly writing on this matter points to the largely agreed upon conclusion that the invasion was illegal in the eyes of international law. The outlier of this group is legal scholar John Yoo who contended that, based upon precedent and his interpretation of the U.N Charter and selected resolutions, the invasion was legal. However, as was noted in the chapter, it is important to recognize Yoo's bias as a former member of the Bush administration at the heart of the matter. Furthermore, Yoo's article was published shortly after the invasion of Iraq, which indicates that his opinion was likely largely shaped by his position on President Bush's staff. Notably, the U.N. Secretary General at the time, Kofi Annan, later repeatedly stressed that the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was illegal. The invasion undermined the authority and credibility of the U.N. as although the invasion was labeled as illegal, the U.S. faced no sanctions or tangible repercussions for the military action.

A final piece worth reiterating from the first chapter is the role of the United States as world hegemon. The U.S. became the unipolar hegemon following the end of the Cold War. Its hegemonic position was reinforced by the 9/11 attacks and led to the U.S. declaring a War on Terror. By instituting this War on Terror, the Bush administration built upon the fear in U.S. citizens that another attack was likely, and all sources of terrorism needed to be addressed to maintain national safety. By implicitly linking Hussein to the 9/11 attacks, Bush argued that Iraq was the next target after launching a war with Afghanistan to deal with al Qaeda and the Taliban government that allowed them to operate within its borders. Interestingly, the position of the U.S.

Press, 2003), p. 157; Rice's statement comes from her autobiography Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (New York, NY: Crown, 2011), p. 125.

as hegemon at that time was not carried forth by most Democrats but was largely a Republican party endeavor. Although the hegemon carried out wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, they left both countries largely destabilized.

Chapter Two examined the role of the mainstream media in uncritically repeating the claims of the Bush administration in building support for the invasion of Iraq. The terrorist attacks on 9/11 provided the mainstream media with countless hours of coverage of the attacks, the perpetrators, and the planned U.S. response. In hindsight, their nonstop coverage may have promoted terrorism and fostered greater fear in the U.S. citizenry. The coverage of President Bush's speeches as early as 12 September 2001 reinforced his talking points as Iraq being connected to terrorism and WMDs.²⁸⁴

Also, in this chapter, I showed how other government agencies, namely the Department of State, were used to bolster support in other nations for the U.S. plan for war. This was done to try and sway countries into joining President Bush's Coalition of the Willing as well as build support among citizens of other nations. Proof of these objectives was revealed in declassified cables between the U.S. government and its embassies not readily available or written upon to the best of my knowledge. Although sections of these cables remain redacted, like all other documents that I obtained through the Freedom of Information Act and government portals, they depict a complex network within the U.S. government looking to build support for the invasion of Iraq.

Chapter Three detailed the complications that President Bush had in assembling his Coalition of the Willing. As important as his partnership with Britain was in the execution of the

²⁸⁴ Amy Gershkoff and Shana Kushner, "Shaping Public Opinion: The 9/11-Iraq Connection in the Bush Administration's Rhetoric," *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 03 (September 2005): p. 527, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1537592705050334>.

invasion, the two long-standing allied countries of France and Germany chose not to participate. The fact that these two allies opposed the invasion is important in understanding that the invasion was not supported by all U.S. partners and their distancing from the action in Iraq represented the potential difficulties that the Bush administration would face in attempting to obtain a second U.N. resolution authorizing war. Because of this, the U.S. chose unilateral action in Iraq. However, all through this march to war, it should not be forgotten that the U.S. was cherry-picking and misconstruing intelligence reports to push the nation towards war and the ousting of President Hussein.

Further investigation of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 would be beneficial for the study of this contemporary event. Oral histories along the timeline of discussing the ousting of Hussein would be useful if other members of the Bush administration or military leaders on the Joint Chiefs of Staff were willing to go on the record with their understanding of the unfolding of the event. I requested interviews with different government leaders (e.g., President Bush) and military officials that were part of the planning process (e.g. Admiral Michael Franken), but all requests went unanswered. Hopefully, as time progresses further information will become available from government agencies in the form of less redacted documents or new documents not previously released. However, it could be decades before those records become available. A detailed analysis of the IAEA records could prove useful in revealing what exactly was known about Iraq's weapons program and when it was discovered. A detailed analysis of the differences of intelligence reports between the U.S., U.K., and other nations such as Germany could provide a better picture of the disparity between what was believed to be true and what was presented by President Bush in support of the invasion.

I believe that one thing that the invasion of Iraq demonstrates is that some government leaders have agendas going into office that might skew their perception of facts. Regarding President Bush and Iraq, the president and many in the U.S. government viewed Iraq as a threat and unfortunately the events of 9/11 provided Bush an opening to oust Hussein. However, it is important to note that this is not simply because he was a Republican. Democrats as a whole are no more of a pacifist than a Republican leader. Proof of this is how previous and subsequent presidents have responded to terrorist threats against U.S. interests as well as their declared foreign policies laid out in their National Security Strategies. The events in Iraq and Afghanistan resulted in a transformation of the military post-9/11 in dealing with terrorism and insurgencies in military planning within areas of operation. Some examples of this transformation have been documented in essays by senior military leadership at the military war colleges.

U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Thomas C. Graves wrote that after Operation Desert Storm in the 1990s, most nations of the world did not possess a military force that could defeat the U.S. in conventional warfare. While the traditional U.S. military was considered by some military scholars, like Senior Defense Analyst Stephen Biddle, to be a “heavy, slow-moving, Cold War relic into a leaner, faster, higher-technology force that exploits the connectivity of networked information to outmaneuver, outrange, and demoralize enemy forces without requiring their piecemeal destruction in close combat,” changes were made to make it more flexible and quicker to react.²⁸⁵ After 9/11 the terrorist group al Qaeda demonstrated that they did

²⁸⁵ Stephen Biddle, “Iraq, Afghanistan, and American Military Transformation,” *Strategy in the Contemporary World: An Introduction to Strategic Studies*, 2nd Ed., John Baylis, James J. Wirtz, Eliot A. Cohen, and Colin S. Gray, eds., New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 275. **as Cited in** Thomas C. Graves, “Al-Qaeda, The Revolution in Military Affairs, and the Future of Warfare,” in *Short of General War: Perspectives on the Use of Military Power in the 21st Century*, ed. Harry R. Yarger (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2010), p. 24.

not need to meet the U.S. coalition military forces on the battlefield but were able to utilize information technology to stay ahead of the enemy. When the U.S. faced this revolution of military combat it instigated Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, in 2002, to change military capabilities and how the U.S. thought about war beyond evolutionary warfighting technology.²⁸⁶

As a reaction to the terrorist groups like al Qaeda, the U.S. military restructured the armed forces to be more flexible and adaptable to varying threats. The U.S. Army changed the structure of its force to have faster deployment at the tactical level with bolstered intelligence capabilities. Beyond the military response to terrorist groups, the U.S. government developed the Department of Homeland Security and consolidated other agencies such as the Coast Guard and the Federal Emergency Management Agency with the aim of preventing future attacks by weaving together the strengths and skills of each agency. This reflected a realization that civilians in the private sector are a critical tool in shaping the future response to terrorism.²⁸⁷ Similarly, the U.S. Army Field Manual 3-37.2 *Terrorism* explains that counterterrorism actions executed by the U.S. military includes strikes and raids by special operations forces, to which the greater Army forces may contribute support. The same Army Field Manual details the measures that Antiterrorism Officers and Commanders are to use against terrorism through Security Cooperation, Limited Operation, Peace Operations, Irregular Warfare, and Major Combat Operations. At each level, the Army explains how each of these categories is supported through

²⁸⁶ Donald Rumsfeld, "Secretary Rumsfeld Speaks on 21st Century Transformation of U.S. Armed Forces," Speech delivered at the National Defense University on January 31, 2002, available from www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=183. **as Cited in** Thomas C. Graves, "Al-Qaeda, The Revolution in Military Affairs, and the Future of Warfare," in *Short of General War: Perspectives on the Use of Military Power in the 21st Century*, ed. Harry R. Yarger (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2010), p. 26.

²⁸⁷ Thomas C. Graves, "Al-Qaeda, The Revolution in Military Affairs, and the Future of Warfare," in *Short of General War: Perspectives on the Use of Military Power in the 21st Century*, ed. Harry R. Yarger (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2010), pp. 31-33.

joint military involvement, civil military operations, and the development of stable governments recognized by the local populace. This field manual, released in 2011, demonstrated lessons learned from failed experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq in combatting terrorism.²⁸⁸

In addition to terrorism, the U.S. military regularly encountered insurgency efforts in the wars of Afghanistan and Iraq. U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel James F. Glynn argued that the adaptability of insurgencies resulted in armed forces failing to effectively fight them, leading to an increase in the popularity of this type of warfare. However, it should be noted that insurgent warfare is not new as it existed since the U.S. Colonial Army and abroad in the wars against Napoleon from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century. Political power is the key factor that insurgencies and counterinsurgencies vie for to build support from the populace as the legitimate authority to govern.²⁸⁹ The U.S. Army FM 3-24 *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies* argued that all branches of the U.S. military are necessary in executing counterinsurgency efforts. U.S. counterinsurgency missions operate a shape-clear-hold-build-transition framework with the goal of empowering host-nation capabilities for the transition of responsibilities. The shape phase clears the way by altering the environment to allow for the clearing phase to remove insurgents from an area. The hold phase builds security within the geographic area and making the return of insurgents difficult. The build phase increases security in the area to allow for local control. The transition phase occurs when the security of the area is transferred to local and governmental forces. The execution of the U.S. Army and U.S. Marines in fighting insurgent forces relies upon traditional large-scale U.S. forces that are flexible and

²⁸⁸ *FM 3-37.2 Antiterrorism* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2011), pp. 13-50, <https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/fm3-37-2.pdf>.

²⁸⁹ James F. Glynn, "El Salvador, Iraq, and Strategic Considerations for Counterinsurgency," in *Short of General War: Perspectives on the Use of Military Power in the 21st Century*, ed. Harry R. Yarger (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2010), pp. 159-163.

allow for the shape-clear-hold-build-transition to occur in a responsive manner that may result in moving backwards a step to combat insurgencies.²⁹⁰

The adaptation to encountering terrorism and insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan did not mean that traditional warfighting by the U.S. military was irrelevant. Military leaders recognized that in addition to their traditional operations, they needed written guidance in fighting terrorists and insurgents. The two field manuals referenced above, and used to train military officers, do not depict strict guidance on how to react to these threats with general guidance from senior military leadership. The manner in which the U.S. military fights terrorism in the modern age recognizes the importance of other governmental agencies and the “winning of hearts and minds” through capacity building and deterrence from terrorist actions by providing for the basic needs of people that may be susceptible to terrorist recruiting. The manner in which U.S. military civil affairs operators work to win this fight is through the building of schools, clinics, and hospitals in disadvantaged areas. These activities are conducted not just in the Middle East but also throughout nations on the African continent where terrorist networks have a known presence. According to the U.S. Army, civil affairs specialists regularly demonstrate their value in the grander scheme of military campaigns in the modern era, including in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. In Iraq, civil affairs specialists were credited with the understanding of Sunni grievances that were part of the Sunni Awakening of 2006 that resulted in the defeat of al Qaeda in the country thereafter. Civil affairs specialists in the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy contribute to the commander’s understanding of the operational

²⁹⁰ “Direct Methods for Countering Insurgencies,” in *FM 3-24 MCWP 3-33.5 Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army; Headquarters, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Department of the Navy, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, 2014), pp. 115-117.

environment and gain the knowledge of critical infrastructure in the area of operations. This knowledge is also provided to interagency partners and other stakeholders to meet the U.S. military objectives without risking damage to protected targets (e.g. places of worship, schools, and medical facilities).²⁹¹

Regarding the issue of precedent setting in Iraq with the U.S. launching a pre-emptive strike, there happens to have been a war recently launched by Russia against Ukraine on 24 February 2022. On 9 May 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared that the invasion of Ukraine was a pre-emptive move against potential aggression.²⁹² Interestingly, the fact that Putin cited potential aggression by Ukraine is more correctly described as a preventive attack, identical to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Although Putin would likely give a justification for the invasion that might ameliorate the criticism of the action by other nations, it is notable that Putin used the same reasoning as President Bush used decades earlier. Putin claimed that the military development of adjacent nations posed an inevitable threat to Russia.²⁹³ While the U.S. has contributed financially and with the transfer of arms, they were careful, at the time of this writing, to keep from being directly involved with the war by steering clear of establishing a no-fly zone which would make them an official enemy of Russia. While President Joe Biden has not spoken about Putin's pre-emption explanation for the war it is likely that it prompted others to recall the use of the term in justifying the Iraqi invasion. Further study of the Russia-Ukraine

²⁹¹ Assad A. Raza, "Order from Chaos Inside U.S. Army Civil Affairs Activities," Army University Press (U.S. Army, 2019), <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/November-December-2019/Raza-Order-from-Chaos/>.

²⁹² "Putin Says Ukraine War Response to 'Unacceptable Threat'," Russia-Ukraine war News | Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera, May 9, 2022), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/9/putin-marks-russias-victory-day-as-war-continues-in-ukraine>.

²⁹³ "Putin Says Ukraine War Response to 'Unacceptable Threat'."

War by future scholars may provide a more detailed analysis of the pre-emption explanation and parallels to the Iraq War.

The study of the contemporary events in the lead-up to and execution to the Iraq War remains unfinished but this thesis provides a groundwork for future study. President Bush's adventures in Iraq marred his legacy but may not be an anomaly in 21st century warfare as the previously mentioned Russian-Ukraine War indicates. The excuse of launching a pre-emptive attack to hinder a future attack seems to no longer require that a threat be imminent but merely be explained as preventing a future threat. The fact that the U.S. faced no sanctions by the U.N. nor economic difficulties with other nations following the Iraq War shows that nations that hold a veto on the U.N. Security Council may operate with seeming impunity. The study of contemporary events like Iraq provides a lens with which to view other contemporary events as they develop and allows for comparison and contrasting views of other significant events in the modern era. This thesis only examined the early parts of the Iraqi invasion but further study and evaluation of the rest of the war and the manner in which the nation was left after the U.S. withdrawal would give greater understanding to a significant period of conflict involving the United States.

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