

## **Invasion of Iraq: Introspective Analysis of US Long Term Foreign Policy in the Middle East**

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### **Abstract**

A critical analysis of the available accounts given about the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) – Iraq war (*This was actually not a war but deliberate invasion*) reveals a very cleverly calculated and planned strategy. The US and UK knew well in advance that Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction (WMD) (*If Saddam Hussein had WMD then US and UK might have given him during Iran-Iraq war which they deliberately refused to tell the world. This was a possible revelation for their insistence that Saddam Hussein had WMD*). The unilateral decision taken by US and UK to wage this brutal and senseless war against Iraq killing millions of innocent Iraqis, destroying built infrastructure and plunging the country into perpetual absolute chaos is worth an account. In this empirical literature review research paper an analysis of Iraq invasion is provided to inform the world about the pre-meditated intentions of US and UK to unilaterally wage war on Iraq despite UN and worldwide protests.

**Key words:** Consistency, invasion, foreign policy, aggression, unilateral decision, strategy, defence of democracy, promotion of democracy fight against terrorism, infrastructure destruction

### **Introduction**

From the numerous consulted sources related to the invasion of Iraq by the US and UK reveal several indicators which show that the invaders had other intentions of going to war with Iraq; other than the made-belief claim that Iraq had WMD (Doherty, 2004; Harding, 2004). Several accounts indicate that intelligence was not used to make a decision for war as such it was not driven by bad intelligence as previously claimed by the American media; rather it was a war of choice (Doherty, 2004). The then President George Bush changed the rationale to justify the invasion and his lust and determination for war on Iraq (Burbachi & Tarbell, 2004). The clue is that the war had been planned even before the United Nation's (UN) resolution for Iraq's search for WMD and peaceful disarmament. The rationale given by the US's president to justify the war on Iraq rolled from the US's fear that

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Iraq had and was still developing WMD to further claims of Iraq's collaboration with al-Qaeda insurgence and the fear of the possibility of Iraq giving WMD to terrorists and finally of bring democracy to Iraq (Harding, 2004; Doherty, 2004).

Since the invasion of Iraq numerous commissions have shown that the first three rationales proposed by President George Bush were plain lies. However, the impatience that the US and the UK had with the UN's commissioned search for WMD was considered as a waste of time which they thought could buy time for Iraq to build more WMD and increase the danger of providing support to terrorists (Kellner, 2004). The rest of this analysis is based on relevant recorded sources.

### **Main premises for the unilateral Iraq attack by US and UK**

Extensive literature on the Iraq invasion consulted indicate that the US and the UK attacked Iraq, basically, for their economic and political gains influenced by their foreign policy and aided by their military and technological super power advancement, after the collapse of the United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR); which determined their unilateral action to go to war in the name of self defence and spreading genuine democracy in the Middle East (Al-Marashi, 2004). In effect, these factors seemed to be closely interwoven and indispensable. Even though this was the case, all the factors clustered around the two super powers' greater need for securing access to and total control of oil reserves as well as oil production; and taking advantage of their military superiority and advancement in military technology.

Harding (2004) traces the US's and UK's interests in Iraq oil as far back as 1928 when UK's incursion into Iraq failed abysmally. Since then, the two super powers have had a long standing tradition of intervention and invasion in order to take part in oil drilling and establish a complaint based on cheap oil regime in Iraq.

### **Saddam Hussein's rise to power: The role of US and UK**

The US and UK were directly involved in Saddam Hussein's rise to power in Iraq. This can be traced from the time the Shah of Iran was overthrown by the Ayatollahs and US invasion to restore the Shah backfired in the 1980s. When war broke out between Iran and Iraq (*A calculated plan by the US and UK to gain control in the Middle East without their direct involvement but through their aide – Saddam Hussein*) they took full advantage and supported Saddam Hussein and equipped him to the teeth with the most sophisticated military arsenals. After the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the US and UK contemplated that Saddam Hussein would be their "good boy" in the Middle East; which was not to be. Instead the relationship became sour when Saddam Hussein nationalised the Iraq Petroleum Company – a blow to US and UK investments in oil in Iraq. Saddam Hussein became proud of the mass of military arsenals given to him by the US and UK and therefore thought he could control everything in the Middle East and erroneously

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invaded Kuwait in the 1990s (Chomsky, 2004). The truth of this issue is that US and UK never expected that Saddam Hussein would be stubborn to flout their authority militarily.

In brief, the invasion of Iraq by the two super powers revolved around their imperialistic lusty objectives rather than the fear of Iraq possessing WMD and its link to terrorism as presented in the succeeding discussion. It also makes sense to support the fact raised by Doherty (2004) that the action taken by US and UK to invade Iraq really converged on two major elements – necessity and opportunity. The necessity being created by the need for oil and unique opportunities provided by the invasion of Kuwait and the September 11 Trade Centre disaster as well as other terrorists attacks that led to the overwhelming surge for patriotism by the US and UK.

### **The main reason for the invasion: The lust for oil and control in the Middle East**

In geographical and economic terms, Iraq is believed to have over 10% of the world's total oil reserve and also known to have the second largest conventional oil reserve of the world (Doherty, 2004; Harding, 2004). Harding (2004) has shown that the US economy is increasingly becoming dependent and vulnerable to oil imports and estimated that by 2020 the US will have to import two-thirds of its oil, making it highly dependent on Oil and Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

With the growing demand for oil in the international oil market and the financial and engineering incapacity of producing countries, the US and other developed countries suggested the need for OPEC countries to open their fields to foreign investment which they resisted; leading to oil price hikes worldwide. (*Consider the rise in oil prices immediately after 9/11 attack*). This entailed greater need for the US being one of the most oil consuming and oil profiting countries to secure access to oil reserves or cheaper oil sources. In the light of this analysis the US Vice President's Task Force on Energy Policy recommended that the then President George Bush made energy security a priority to the US's trade and foreign policy. Prior to this time, according to Doherty (2004), the US has had an explicit policy about the security of global oil supplies for the last 24 years as laid down in the "Carter Doctrine" which stipulates that: "*any attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault in the vital interest of the United States of America and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary including military force*" (Paragraph 7 of Carter Doctrine). The implication in this statement is that the US has had a long time intention of taking control of oil producing regions, especially in the Middle East and even made commitment to go to war for the sake of oil. Therefore Saddam Hussein presented the most vital path for the US's entry into the oil producing Middle East. Secondly, achieving geo-political super power supremacy had been US's goal and controlling oil security for the US had proved to be inextricably linked especially in the phase of rising Chinese influence and high pricing power of OPEC (Harding, 2004).

Furthermore the Iraq invasion had also been ascribed to US's intention to have an indirect but politically critical leverage on the European and Asian economies that are also highly dependent on energy exports from the Middle East. Chomsky (2005: 12) reiterates that *"...if the US can maintain its control over Iraq with the world's second largest known oil reserves and at the heart of the world's major energy supplies, that will enhance significantly its strategic power and influence over its major rivals in the tri-polar world that has been taking shape for the past 30 years among US dominated North America, Europe and the North East plus South East Asia economies"*. Having such neo-colonialist imperial ambitions, the US had shown to be a new colonising power of the new millennium and the Iraq invasion can be interpreted to be a result of US's global domination, a domination that is fuelled by oil and the great need to have energy security (Rowell, 2004). In the case of Iraq, the option was to seize and privatise Iraq oil as revealed in the former treasury secretary Paulo O'Neill's memoir which states that *"...in February 2001 the national Security Council was already drafting a document detailing how the US Government would divide Iraq oil fields among the major Western Oil Companies after the US's invasion"* (Harding, 2004).

### **Promotion of US's global leadership**

The US's global leadership, after the demise of USSR, originates from the belief that Americans have a responsibility to change the world by making it more consistent with their values. According to McCartney (2004), this had always been an implicit component of US's nationalism. It is believed to be based on the assumption that the US is not only a Western but also an African and Asian power aiming to change the world with strength and military forces to ensure that no other nation can threaten it and its interests (Schultz, 1983). The meaning of this is that empire building, imperialism and hegemony encapsulated in the US foreign policy had been instrumental in the reconstruction and reproduction of the current global capitalist order that led to the invasion of Iraq (O'Meara, 2006).

In 1997, Project for New American Century (PNAC) became a consolidation layout plan of US's global leadership influence with strong elements of militarism (Abrams, 1997). The goal of PNAC was to promote American global leadership which required the following needs as outlined by the architects of the project namely to:

- *"Increase defence spending and modernise armed forces for the future if global responsibilities are to be carried out.*
- *Strengthen ties with democratic allies and to challenge regimes hostile to America's interests and values.*
- *Promote the cause of political and economic freedom abroad.*

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- *Accept responsibility for America's role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to America's security, prosperity and principles" (Abrams et al: 6).*

The aims of PNAC were to maintain global US pre-eminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival like China and shaping the international security order in line with American principles and interests. The PNAC document further projected a long range vision urging the US domination of strategic places such as the Gulf Region as far into the future as possible (Kellner, 2004). In effect President George Bush's administration showed a considerable skill in pursuing its imperial agenda under the guise of a global war on terror (Harding, 2004). The invasion of Iraq, according to Chomsky (2005) was meant to be a global projection of US's power not only on Iraq but also over the entire Middle East and even the rest of the World.

### **The PNAC militarism and unilateralism: Pre-conceived action in abstention**

The objectives of PNAC indicate that the US, though not widely recognised after the demise of USSR, constituted a global power heavily reliant on its military to control a world perceived as unruly and increasingly unwilling to accept US domination even long before the 9/11 attack (Burbach & Tarbell, 2004). Barely a year after the 9/11 attack President Bush responded by laying a National Security Strategy (NSS). The NSS document described as a re-write of the one that was rejected by his father after the 1991 Gulf War became junior Bush's policy which justified the use of unilateral, pre-emptive force to change the world in the interests and image of the American super power. War on terrorism was deliberately added to justify the policy (Harding, 2004, Daniel et al, 2004; Leverett, 2005).

Generally, the foreign policy of President George Bush's administration exhibited a marked unilateralism and militarism in which the US military power has been used to advance US interests and geo-political hegemony worldwide. With the demise of USSR there had been a shift from the Cold War doctrine of containment and deterrence to new military policies of pre-emptive and unilateral strike because there is no power block to challenge the US and the UK (Kellner, 2004).

### **US's new military supremacy**

The new US doctrine of Military Supremacy which PNAC and the NSS 2002 document revealed as the origin or source provided justification for the US to undertake unilateral and pre-emptive strikes in the name of counter-proliferation and created new rules of international engagement without the consent of other nations (Kellner, 2004). And one of the reasons of Iraq invasion was to expedite the military transformation and putting into practice the doctrines of unilateral and pre-emptive strikes (Doherty, 2004).

The invasion of Iraq was further advanced by President George Bush's administration whose key members composed of a cadre of neo-conservatives who were architects of the PNAC and had long been seeking the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, instituting US military bases in Iraq and controlling Iraq oil (Kellner, 2004). The final decision making members in this action were Dick Cheney, who was then the Vice President, Daniel Rumsfeld, the then Secretary of Defence, Paul Wolfowitz, the then Deputy Defence Secretary, Richard Perle, the then Defence Board Chair and Elliot Abrams, the then Security Council Director (Harding, 2004). As soon as they got into government they began the implementation of PNAC aims and objectives and their long term intentions over Iraq (Conte, 2005).

### **Spreading and promoting liberal democracy worldwide: A concocted premise**

The Iraq invasion has been shown to be consistent with the longer term US policies of supporting the growth and spread of democracy in foreign countries. In earnest, President George Bush advanced the importance of democracy as a value in itself and as institutional arrangement to such an extent that open aggression, to him, was even necessary to install it in Iraq. Thus, for Bush and the US, regime change became the justification for war in order to topple Saddam Hussein's oligarchic control and replacing him with a competitive party representative democracy (Scott, 2005). This was meant to fulfil one of the responsibilities of the US as super power and also being a leader in defending freedom and democracy around the globe.

Although the promotion of virtues of liberal democracy has also been a central component of the PNAC and NSS, the forcible regime change element has been widely criticized (Daniel et al, 2004). Democracy is about peace, justice, respect for human rights, sovereignty of nations and freedom. These virtues were not recognised and respected by the US and the UK administration in terms of their action against Iraq. Gandhi had reiterated that "*there is no way to peace and that peace is the way*" (Harding, 2004: 25). This is honest truth and a critical analysis of the situation in Iraq bears testimony. The US led coalition after occupying Iraq attempted to establish a new democratic government. This has failed to restore order and had caused unrest leading to absolute asymmetric warfare with the Iraq insurgents with civil war between the Sunni and the Shiad Iraqis and the proliferation of al-Qaeda operations are testimonies to Gandhi's reiteration (Harding, 2004).

Consulted literature on US Iraq invasion portrays that the US and its allies declared war on Iraq with an objective of establishing a democratic government to act as a model and have transformative effect across the Middle East region. The Bush administration articulated a vision of democratic and market oriented reform for the Arab and Muslim worlds ascribing a higher priority to promoting positive internal change in the Middle East (Leverett, 2005). All these were meant to be part of building a new

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world order dominated by the US values and advancement of free trade agreements to their advantage

### **Self defence: A plethora of US's excuse for the invasion**

Terrorism has increasingly be seen as one of the most serious, disturbing, challenging and damaging problems of life of our time and had been identified as one of the most serious threats to world peace and security by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council (Conte, 2005). President Bush claimed that Iraq stood clearly as a place where terrorists could acquire WMD and used this as a justification for the invasion. Therefore the US and the UK governments thought that invading Iraq would help to stop terrorists from carrying on further attacks and control them from gaining Iraq's WMD. The implication in this perspective is that invasion of Iraq was one of the wars against terrorism by the two super powers pre-emptively done for self defence reason.

### **Why US and UK did not attack Saudi Arabia**

The commonly asked question by most critics is "Why did the US and the UK not invade Saudi Arabia instead of Iraq when the 15 of the 19 hijackers of the 9/11 planes were from Saudi Arabia?" Goodman and Goodman (2004) provide an explanation that efforts to investigate Saudi Arabia's links to terror were stymied by the Bush administration because the US's oil corporate interests and role played by Saudi Arabia in it could not be sacrificed. Harding (2004) reveals that the US had no plans for the 9/11 war on terrorism to be declared on Saudi Arabia because it is its major oil client.

It can, therefore be concluded in this instance that the US and UK invasion was not a retaliatory action for 9/11 but rather positioning themselves for larger geo-political pursuits as revealed in the discussions in some of the preceding sections of the US policy documents (Harding, 2004). Scott (2007) clearly specified this by indicating that the Bush-Cheney administration cynically exploited the 9/11 attack to promote US's imperial designs. In all earnest, no evidence had been found, up to date, to prove that Iraq, a battered and weak country, ever posed to be a major threat to the US or the UK for them to invade it for their self defence.

### **History of US and UK hatred of Iraq**

There is evidence in history that there had been hidden costs of empiricism and imperialism about Iraq's resistance to invasion by the UK in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Kellner (2004) contends that hegemony breeds resentment and hostility and when an empire carries out aggression it elicits anger, creates enemies and intensifies the dangers of perpetual war. Terrorism has been shown to be motivated by super powers imperialistic policies (Kagan et al, 2005). These authors claim in their study that there is active armed race between the developed and less-developed countries in which the inability of less-developed countries to compete financially as well as technologically

with developed countries may be forcing them to acquire terror weapons to be used in times of aggression and oppression.

It has been noted that the willingness of the Iraq invasion top planners to visualize an increase in the risk of terrorism was not a high priority because they were preoccupied with objectives such as controlling the world's major energy sources and occupying all strategic positions worldwide (Harding, 2004; Chomsky, 2005). Further to this, Al-Marashi (2004) predicted a high probability of other Middle East countries developing dangerous weapons that could aid them to fight the technologically advanced super military powers in times of confrontation for resistance against domination – which Iran has been a standing example.

## **Conclusion**

From the detailed analysis provided it can be concluded that the US and the UK with the support of their allies invaded Iraq despite knowing very well that it had no WMD. They only wanted to secure access and control the world's second largest oil reserve which would aid them in ascertaining their-geopolitical position in the oil producing region and counteracting the rising trade competition and powers of emerging industrial countries like China and India. Heavily reliant on their technologically advanced military arsenal and defying UN resolutions and turning deaf ears to worldwide protest marches invaded Iraq in the disguised reasons of war for self defence, the spread of democracy and fight against terrorism while employing their imperialistic ambitions and designs to dominate world trade in oil production and supply. The prompting of the then Secretary General of the UN, Mr. Kofi Anan, in his final speech to the US and UK not to lose direction in the war against terrorism clearly pointed out that *“no nation by any means can make itself secure by seeking supremacy over other and clarified that the responsibility of the great states is to serve and not dominate the peoples of the world”* (Truman on BBC News, Tuesday, December 12, 2006). This closes the analysis.

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### **End Notes**

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