

**The Middle East in the International System**

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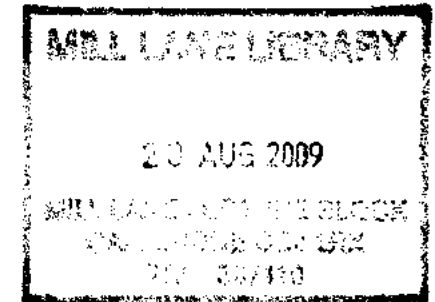
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The  
**Iraq War**  

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Consequences**

edited by  
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## Hegemonic Stability Theory Reconsidered: Implications of the Iraq War

*Raymond Hinnebusch*

**T**he Iraq War was less about some putative threat from a debilitated Iraq than it was about the US determination to “play the world hegemon.”<sup>1</sup> The war sharply underlined the fact and consequences of US hegemony in world politics. The tradition that has most consistently addressed the role of US global leadership is one of the centerpieces of the international relations (IR) and international political economy (IPE) disciplines, namely hegemonic stability theory (HST). The Iraq War is arguably a watershed in America’s global role that calls for a major reconsideration of this body of literature.

### ■ The Role of Hegemony in the Literature

The idea of a hegemon, appearing as it does in all of the three traditional rival schools of IR/IPE,<sup>2</sup> has clearly captured a central reality of world politics. The consensus is that the hegemon is qualitatively different from other states, its function global. For liberals, a hegemon is needed to establish international regimes that permit an open economy and to provide “public goods” such as a common currency. World systems theorists argue that a hegemon is needed to promote the globalization of capitalism against the fragmentation of the states system (i.e., to provide the predictable environment and enforceable property rights needed for global capital accumulation) and, having the largest, most competitive economy, the hegemon has the biggest stake in this process.<sup>3</sup> While HST began as an explanation for the maintenance of free trade, realists like Gilpin argued that the anarchic world system was vulnerable to disorder without the security provided by a hegemon.<sup>4</sup> All agree that, while the hegemon has predominant military power and economic resources, hegemony, being something less than coercive empire, cannot persist without legitimacy: it is accepted by many states

as long as the hegemon defends a world order that benefits more actors than itself.

However, if there is agreement that hegemony is based on a combination of power and consent, there is disagreement on the mix, on how benign, self-interested, or even predatory the hegemon may be, on how indispensable it is to the founding and persistence of international regimes and to global cooperation, and over how equitable the regimes it establishes are likely to be. The weakness of all versions of HST, exposed by the Iraq War, is their failure to appreciate that a "hegemon" may be a source of global disorder.

### ■ The Debates over Hegemonic Stability Theory

#### *Is Hegemony Benign?*

The liberal version of HST, in particular, sees the US hegemon as benign. It abstracts from post-World War II experience, when liberals saw the United States as providing indispensable public goods—security against the USSR and the benefits of free trade—for other states whose free-riding eroded the hegemon's relative position. Thus the United States provided world liquidity by running a balance of payments deficit that undermined confidence in the dollar, exported investment that undermined its own competitiveness, and kept its markets open even when its allies did not.<sup>5</sup>

This benign version of HST, however, has been under sustained attack. The idea of an altruistic hegemon defies the core traditions of realist and Marxist thought, which expect large asymmetries of power to produce large maldistributions of benefits. Classical realism, of course, sees a *balance of power*—seemingly the opposite of hegemony—as the key to avoiding the twin evils of domination and war. For Isabelle Grunberg, liberal HST reflects an ethnocentric myth that the United States is so uniquely virtuous that it uses its power differently than ordinary states.<sup>6</sup> For many critics, liberal HST overly generalized from and gave an excessively benign interpretation to a particular post-World War II episode of US leadership. Thus it ignored the fact that the United States extracted a quid quo pro: the opening of Europe and of dismantled European empires to US capital. Moreover, US leadership soon gave way to self-interested behavior: Susan Strange argued that, once the costs of hegemony rose, the United States tended to become predatory, and David Calleo showed that the disruptions in the Bretton Woods system in the 1970s were caused, not by the free-riding of others, but by the exploitative policy choices of the United States.<sup>7</sup> Jan Pieterse and others observed a creeping militarization and aggressive unilateralism (such as demands for market access) in post-Cold War US foreign policy, and especially under George W. Bush, a celebration of hard over soft power and

a disparagement of allies and of the very rule-based system US hegemony had previously helped construct.<sup>8</sup>

By contrast to liberalism, realist versions of HST always acknowledged that the hegemon pursues its own interest. Thus it structures the world trading system to its own advantage and, while other competitive states will also benefit from free trade, the hegemon is able to "tax" the beneficiaries for its services.<sup>9</sup> A. F. K. Organski's version of realist HST assumes that the hegemonic order almost by definition excludes as well as includes and that there will be dissatisfied states that had no say in the order's creation and get few benefits from it; this is particularly so of the "periphery" states of the third world. He also argues that a strong, dissatisfied, perhaps number-two power will naturally challenge the hegemon for control of the international system by mobilizing the deprived periphery states.<sup>10</sup> This has the advantage of bringing in the role of the Soviet Union under bipolarity, the curiously missing actor in most HST. Arguably, it was the Soviet challenge, seen to threaten the open economy on which US prosperity depended, that was the main incentive for the hegemon to provide benefits—"public goods"—to its own allies and clients. It may be that the condition for benign hegemony is, after all, a sufficient *balance of power* to constrain the hegemon such as existed under bipolarity; but if we are in a "unipolar moment" when the United States no longer feels the need for willing allies or to accept constraints on its actions, there is little to prevent it from becoming predatory.

#### *Is Hegemony Sufficient?*

HST was preoccupied by the unrealistic fear that free-riding by other states would lead to the decline of the hegemon and hence to world disorder. To be sure, there was a relative decline in US power after the 1960s, but Samuel Huntington attributed it not to free-riding by others but overconsumption and undertaxation at home, and Paul Kennedy to "imperial overreach"—concerns that the policy of the Bush Jr. administration has revived.<sup>11</sup> Marxists, free of realism's state-centrism, were better equipped to dispute the extent of hegemonic decline, observing that, while the economic power of the US state, *per se*, appeared to decline relative to Europe and Japan once they recovered from World War II, US hegemony was sustained by its *structural power*: the power to make the rules and to structure the situation owing to the penetration of the economies of other states by US transnational corporations, their need for the massive US market, their reliance on the dollar as the international currency, the ideological hegemony deriving from US media corporations, and so forth—all of which made other states vulnerable to the hegemon. Marxists' disaggregation of the state into classes also allowed them to see that the costs of hegemony need not undermine its durability, since they are disproportionately paid by ordinary taxpayers

while the ruling classes—the military industrial complex and multinational corporations—reap enormous profits and have therefore an incentive to sustain hegemony.<sup>12</sup> Generally, not only was the concern in mainstream HST that *insufficient* hegemonic power would lead to world disorder misplaced, but also, arguably, it led HST to neglect the equally real problem, namely, the possibly malign effects of *excessive* hegemonic power.

### ***Is Hegemony Needed?***

HST, particularly its realist version, is also problematic because of its insistence that a hegemon is essential to international cooperation. Realist HST argues that even if many states would gain from cooperation, most of them, fearing rivals would gain more and pose an enhanced security threat, eschew it; the hegemon, however, is so superior that it can take the risk of providing the public goods that facilitate cooperation. However, liberals have effectively demonstrated that states under conditions of complex interdependence will seek to reap absolute gains by cooperation through international regimes.<sup>13</sup> Marxists argue, moreover, that the collective action problem preoccupying realists has been overcome by the emergence of a trans-state capitalist class that bridges the remaining conflicts of interests between the national capitals of the core states (e.g., over markets) while the core exercises collective hegemony over the periphery, notably through international economic institutions.<sup>14</sup> This is consistent with non-Marxist arguments that the core states constitute a collective hegemon, which has replaced the sole US hegemon.<sup>15</sup> However, this view seems to underrate the possibility that aggressive US unilateralism might disrupt the core's collective hegemony. Indeed, as the hegemon now bypasses and weakens the UN and obstructs or refuses to sign up to the international regimes agreed by other states to resolve global problems—whether global warming, international financial regulation, or human rights abuses—many analysts would agree with Pieterse that “the world leader turns out to be a global bottleneck.”<sup>16</sup> Thus realist HST not only exaggerates the need for hegemonic power to facilitate cooperation, but also ignores the possibility that it may *obstruct* it.

In summary, the central claims of HST that hegemony is both relatively benign and necessary to global order appear to be greatly overstated. Moreover, preoccupied with the supposed deleterious consequences of *insufficient* hegemonic power, HST neglects structural power and the opposing potential problem, the abuse of *excessive* power. Indeed, the theory must make greater allowance for the possibility of *malign* hegemony and be able to distinguish the conditions of benign and malign hegemony. As Duncan Snidel argued, “the common presumption that [hegemony] is widely beneficial rests on such special assumptions that it should be rejected”; the main issue is what factors determine whether “hegemony will be

exploitative” or “will be constrained to operate in the more general interest.”<sup>17</sup> I argue in this chapter that the US hegemon is turning malign, that the single most important driver of this is its policy toward the Middle East, and that the apotheosis of this policy, the war on Iraq, signals a turn toward coercive empire in place of hegemonic leadership by consent. This watershed event confirms and extends accumulated doubts about mainstream HST.

### ■ **Historical Context: US Hegemony, Oil, and Israel**

A key pillar of US post-World War II hegemony, as Simon Bromley shows, has been the domination of the “world” oil resources concentrated in the Middle East by US companies, as well as the US role in containing any threats from either the USSR or local nationalism to the (usually) cheap energy needed by the capitalist world economy.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, US oil companies initially, and thereafter the US alliance with Saudi Arabia, were pivotal to oil price stability, which was crucial to global economic prosperity: cheap oil fueled post-World War II recovery while subsequent price shocks precipitated global recessions. However, whether this can be seen as the provision of a global “public good” is called into question by the increasing exercise of US hegemonic “responsibility” in ways that have stimulated challenges to it, and by periodic Middle Eastern conflicts that put energy security at risk.

The periodic challenges to US oil hegemony, far from being fortuitous, are rooted in the basic contradiction in US policy identified by Sherle Schwenninger: “For more than three decades, American policy has been driven by two at times incompatible goals: the support of Israel and (indirect) control over the world’s oil markets. Managing the tensions between these two goals has been one of the most important and difficult policy challenges of every president since Lyndon Johnson.” Moreover, the increasing breakdown in the US effort to manage this contradiction derives from the fact that, as Schwenninger argues, “US policy-makers have not in practice been able to distinguish between the legitimate defense of Israel and tacit support for its illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and its overly aggressive military policy.”<sup>19</sup>

It is Washington’s indiscriminate support of Israel that politicizes what would otherwise be a normal economic relation between Western oil consumers and the Arab oil producers and that obliges the United States to periodically confront crises that threaten Middle Eastern and global stability. The single most important key to depoliticizing oil is therefore a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict; this is what the international community expects of the hegemon, and there is an internationally accepted formula for

doing so—UN Security Council Resolution 242, the land-for-peace solution, which the United States cosponsored and was formally committed to. As part of an effort to balance between Israel and its Arab clients, the United States has made periodic attempts to arrive at partial solutions, but its leadership of the peace process has been consistently compromised by the pro-Israeli lobby, and the more this lobby has achieved dominance in the policy process of the United States toward the Middle East, the more the United States has moved away from the evenhanded role expected of a global hegemon and toward becoming itself a party to the conflict. The result, Oystein Noreng observes, is that Washington is in a state of permanent hostility with many of the key Middle Eastern oil producers as well as regional public opinion, depriving its hegemony of legitimacy in the region and inviting periodic challenges that spill over into world crises.<sup>20</sup> According to Richard Betts, the United States failed to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict precisely because its hegemonic power allowed its leaders to pay the international costs (from periodic crisis) rather than the domestic costs of confronting the Zionist lobby.<sup>21</sup> But in fact the United States, far from paying the costs of the politicization of oil, has managed to use Middle Eastern crises to reinforce its hegemony while off-loading their main costs onto others.<sup>22</sup>

A brief review of the historical record illustrates both how US policy precipitates oil crises and how it uses them to sustain hegemony at the expense of others. The first challenge to US oil hegemony was stimulated by Washington's rebuff of Egyptian efforts at a diplomatic settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict prior to the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the arms deliveries to Israel in this war that prevented the Arab states from recovering territories occupied by Israel in the previous 1967 war. The oil embargo that this precipitated initially seemed to Keohane to mark a decline of US hegemony, as control of oil appeared forfeited to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) at a time when US oil self-sufficiency was declining.<sup>23</sup>

But the United States managed to turn the oil crisis to its advantage by striking a close alliance with Saudi Arabia in which it provided security in return for the Saudis' use of their position as "swing producer" to moderate oil prices. Given the privileged position of the dollar as the international currency in which oil is sold, the new wealth of the oil producers was disproportionately "recycled" through US banks and via US arms purchases and investments in the United States. The hegemony of the United States is based on the dollar as much as its military; during the oil price boom of the 1970s, oil hegemony reinforced US dollar hegemony, because all states needed dollars to buy oil and needed access to the US market to get them. Michael Hudson and others argue that dollar seignurage allowed the United States to levy a tax on the world's economy to finance massive US military spending and imperial overreach, and to impose economic measures that

hurt its competitors.<sup>24</sup> After the oil price boom, the competitive position of Europe and Japan declined as the price of their energy increased, ushering in the stagflation of the 1970s, followed by the Thatcherist attack on the European welfare state. The more limited damage of the boom on the United States was very disproportionately distributed: if consumers suffered, Texas oil barons got higher oil prices and power shifted to the military/oil industries concentrated in the Sunbelt, crucial in the rise of Ronald Reagan and the Republican right.<sup>25</sup> In the longer term, the US-Saudi alliance had, by the early 1980s, secured the stabilization of oil prices, which was followed thereafter by a precipitous price decline.

The next episode, the Gulf War (1990–1991), was the result of a long chain of events, mixing, to one degree or another, US policy toward the Middle East and oil, but it was unimaginable in a Middle East in which the Arab-Israeli conflict had been resolved; for one thing, it was only the stalemate in the peace process that led Saddam Hussein to think the time was right to seize pan-Arab leadership against Israel and to miscalculate that his invasion would spark an Arab nationalist arousal forcing the Arab states to accept his annexation of Kuwait. The subsequent US war on Iraq headed off a potent challenge to US oil hegemony: were Iraq to have retained Kuwaiti oil fields and remained in a position to intimidate Saudi Arabia, thereby acquiring "control" of over 40 percent of world oil reserves, it might have had the power to shape the oil market in ways inimical to US interests. While the conservative Gulf monarchies, by virtue of their security dependence on the United States and their Western investments, had a shared interest with the West in ensuring stable unpoliticized access to oil at moderate prices, Iraq had no such stake. Iraq was of course in dire need of revenues and had to sell its oil at prices consumers would pay; but Saddam's threat to make the terms of oil sales conditional on a favorable Western policy in the Arab-Israeli conflict caught US politicians between two powerful contradictory domestic demands—cheap gasoline and the advancement of Israel's interests. What was at stake, therefore, was not access to oil but access on *Washington's terms*.<sup>26</sup>

In the end, the war actually enabled Washington to *reinforce* its oil hegemony. The United States used the war to demonstrate its continuing indispensability to protecting the world capitalist core's control of oil against third world challenges; at the same time, in making Gulf clients of the United States, above all Saudi Arabia, more dependent on the United States for their security, the conflict enhanced the US protectorate over global oil resources. The war boosted the relative economic standing of the United States, for while Japanese and European capitalism had become more energy efficient, US capitalism, protected by the special benefits of hegemony, had built its competitiveness on low oil prices; the war ensured that prices would stay low and that Gulf petrodollars would be disproportionately recycled through US banks and firms. In addition, the United

States actually managed to make its imperial policing profitable by inducing its economic competitors (Germany, Japan) and clients (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait) to pay for the war.<sup>27</sup> There followed a decade in which US economic growth, outpacing that of its rivals, reestablished Washington's hitherto declining hegemonic position.

The downside, however, was that the Gulf War was merely a piece with the thrust of a US policy that had locked the world hegemon into a pattern of repeated interventions in the Middle East that, being sharply biased against Arab/Muslim actors, tended to further inflame regional hostility. This, especially when combined with the "blowback" resulting when regional surrogates fostered by the United States were either overthrown or later turned by its biased policies against their patron, repeatedly generated dangerous crises.<sup>28</sup> Thus the CIA overthrow of Iran's Mossadeq government ultimately produced Khomeini's Islamic revolution; Saddam Hussein was then built up by the United States and the West as a counter to Iran, and his oversized army posed a fateful temptation to seize Kuwait. But the most egregious case of blowback, 9/11, illustrates the intimate connection of oil, Israel, and regional violence. Al-Qaida, initially partly sponsored by the United States against the threat that the Soviets in Afghanistan allegedly posed to the Middle Eastern oil fields, was turned against its US patron by US policies growing out of the Gulf War: a heavy postwar US presence in Saudi Arabia, the heartland of Islam and of the region's oil; continued siege of (and semigenocidal sanctions imposed on) a defeated Iraq; and the blatant double standards by which the United States exempted Israel from the kinds of UN resolutions it claimed to be enforcing against Iraq.<sup>29</sup> In Slavoj Žižek's words, "it is as if some invisible hand of destiny repeatedly ensures that U.S. intervention only makes more likely the outcomes the United States sought most to avoid."<sup>30</sup> The result has been that every five to ten years, a Middle Eastern crisis, rooted in the linked struggles over oil and Israel, spills out of the region: 1956, 1967, 1973, 1979, 1982, 1990, 2001, 2003. Moreover, with each crisis, animosity toward the United States has steadily widened from the Arab heartland, to Iran, then Afghanistan, and now to the wider Islamic world, including the Muslim diaspora in the West itself. While Washington's response to these crises *could* have been to pursue more limited goals that accommodated the interests of Middle Eastern peoples, its actual response under George W. Bush was to use its rapidly increasing military power to try to impose its will on them.

### ■ Coercive Hegemony in Action: Explaining Bush's War on Iraq

The George W. Bush administration marks a qualitative escalation in the coercive character of US foreign policy in the Middle East. The administra-

tion saw the region as both the key to and the main threat to its global project to sustain and extend US global hegemony. The Bush government's ambitions were spelled out by the Project for the New American Century and in the Bush Doctrine's assertion of America's exceptionalism and unilateralism, its reach for "full spectrum dominance," and its right to impose a liberal world order—the only model seen as compatible with US security and from which no nation was to be exempted by the claims of sovereignty. The doctrine also invoked the right to deal with the resistance that hegemony inevitably provokes, not simply through traditional containment, but also via "preventive wars."<sup>31</sup> Preventive war on Iraq, advocated by hard-liners within the administration even *before* 9/11, was seen as the key to the hegemonic project.<sup>32</sup>

While the ideology—"war on terrorism," "liberal empire"—used to legitimate the Bush administration's project tends to take on a life of its own (as explicated in Chapter 22), it is incumbent on the analyst to uncover the interests it expresses and disguises and to understand why the project has taken a specific form, war in the Middle East and particularly war on Iraq. Indeed, an analysis of the Iraq War is pivotal to exposing the objective factors behind this new episode in US hegemony. We are in no position to get inside the heads of the policymakers or trace the intricacies of the policy process in order to know exactly what combination of interests and motives produced the decision for a war on Iraq; that must be left to future and ongoing research. But sufficient evidence has already emerged from the words and actions of the actors, uncovered by their critics or available in the public record, to make informed guesses.

First, it is clear that the Bush administration saw 9/11 as an *opportunity* to mobilize support for a "war on terrorism" that could realize their project.<sup>33</sup> But in order to turn the "war on terrorism" against Iraq, Bush had to claim that Saddam Hussein was linked to Al-Qaida and was actively developing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and hence represented an imminent threat to the United States. Not only have these claims been discredited, but additionally there is mounting, almost conclusive, evidence that the war party deliberated exaggerated unreliable claims and knew that its depiction of Iraq as a threat to the United States was false.<sup>34</sup> The unwillingness of the Bush administration to listen to the experts who discounted alarmist claims, or to welcome the return of UN weapons inspectors to Iraq, indicates that the war was no mistake deriving from an intelligence failure: as deputy Pentagon chief Paul Wolfowitz later admitted, WMDs were merely the issue the war party believed would raise the most support—for what it wanted to do on other grounds.<sup>35</sup>

What, then, were the real reasons for the war, and why was Iraq targeted when it represented no particular threat to the United States? The main alternative explanation is oil—energy security, the control of oil supplies, and the stability of the oil price market.<sup>36</sup> As Wolfowitz famously explained

when asked why Iraq and not North Korea was targeted, Iraq was "swimming in oil."<sup>37</sup> Vice President Dick Cheney warned of Saddam's ambition to control world energy supplies: "If Saddam Hussein were ever to control the Persian Gulf oil resources, his past record suggests that he would be willing to cut or even halt oil exports altogether whenever it suited him, in order to force concessions."<sup>38</sup> While, in reality, Saddam posed no such threat, it is clear that oil was on the minds of the oil-men in the administration; indeed, Cheney authored the US national energy policy report (the "Cheney Report"). US oil production was in decline and, with the US economy and lifestyle as energy-wasteful as ever, US import dependence was rising in an ever-tighter oil market; in 2002, just prior to the Iraq War, the United States imported 53 percent of its oil consumption, with a rising proportion of that coming from the Gulf (20 percent in 2004). Moreover, US vulnerability was predicted to increase, especially as exports of the non-Middle Eastern oil producers on which it had hitherto relied were declining, forcing the United States to seek access to other reserves—hence its drive to penetrate Central Asia.<sup>39</sup> Even if the United States were to reduce its dependence on Gulf supplies, any disruption of oil supplies from there would inevitably precipitate an oil shock within the United States, since it was part of a "single, seamless oil market driven by supply and demand."<sup>40</sup> Crucially, oil shocks were associated with global recessions and rises in the cheap gasoline prices Americans expect; presidents whose tenure coincided with such shocks have historically lost reelection (Gerald Ford in 1976, Jimmy Carter in 1980, and George H. W. Bush in 1992). The United States was well aware that almost all available global oil production capacity was being utilized, and that, indeed, this production was possibly peaking, raising the chances of an oil-supply crisis with grave consequences.<sup>41</sup>

Historically, of course, Saudi Arabia had been the key to oil security and price stability, traditionally playing an effective "swing" role in moderating oil prices at the behest of the United States. But although Saudi Arabia remains the only state with substantial surplus production capability, the United States evidently feared that strong growth in global energy demand was eroding this capacity, especially the ability to smooth out disruptions in oil exports.<sup>42</sup> Growing tensions within Saudi Arabia, provoked in part by the US presence there, raised the specter that Saudi instability could put oil market stability at risk; a US diplomatic source told an interviewer that "a rehabilitated Iraq is the only sound long-term strategic alternative to Saudi Arabia."<sup>43</sup>

Yet given that the single most important determinant of oil shocks has been conflict in the Middle East, the Bush administration should have known that a war could jeopardize oil price stability. To be sure, the neo-conservatives and Iraqi exiles downplayed the risks and exaggerated the prospects that Iraqi oil would rapidly start pumping after a quick war (while

also advocating oil privatization);<sup>44</sup> but the administration was certainly warned, and the fact that it nevertheless chose such a high-risk policy suggests that oil price stability was only one consideration and not necessarily the most important one.<sup>45</sup>

Indeed, the war makes little sense unless its aim was to sustain and extend the control of "world oil," on which Washington's hegemony partly rests. Iraq had the potential to be one of the world's largest oil exporters, with enormous, substantially untapped reserves and very low production costs, making it very attractive to international oil companies. It was the only country with the potential to add millions of barrels per day of increased oil production. Yet the US determination to maintain sanctions on Iraq as long as Saddam was in power, and Saddam's record of using oil for political purposes, meant that this potential could not be tapped to the benefit of the United States or US oil companies, and meant keeping Iraq's oil production levels well below capacity at a time of growing supply constraints.<sup>46</sup> Worse, Iraq was selling oil concessions to other countries, notably Russia, China, and France—which US-backed Iraqi exiles promised to cancel if they came to power. The conquest of Iraq, which would give the United States control of the world's second largest oil reserve, would enhance US structural power over Europe, Japan, and the new Asian industrializers, notably India and the main putative global rival to the United States, China; it would also cut out Russia and France (whose quest for a position in Iraq was a constant from the 1920s). As oil-geopolitics expert Michael Klare put it: "Whoever gains possession of [Iraq's] fields will exercise enormous influence over the global energy markets of the twenty-first century."<sup>47</sup> Removing Saddam would also remove any residual threat he might pose to the oil fields of his neighbors, allow Iraqi oil production to be rapidly increased, and, as a former energy secretary said, "make Iraq [America's] new strategic oil reserve."<sup>48</sup>

However, the targeting of Iraq must also be seen in the context of the *threats* to US oil hegemony. This hegemony rested on the Pax Americana that Washington had tried to establish in the region after the Gulf War (1990–1991), based on the peace process, the Saudi alliance, and the "dual containment" of Iran and Iraq, but all of these were unraveling. First, Iraq and Iran were gradually escaping from the isolation that Washington had sought to impose on them, for while US sanctions kept its own companies out of their oil fields and markets, its rivals were poised to enter. Iran, in particular, had rebuilt ties with Europe and its Gulf neighbors. The sanctions on Iraq had increasingly been discredited for the humanitarian damage they did and were opposed by France and Russia, while Saudi Arabia and other Arab states were seeking the normalization of Iraq's position in the region. US hawks claimed that enervation of the sanctions regime would allow Saddam to recover his military power.<sup>49</sup> Of no minor significance was

the fact that Iran and Iraq were demanding payment for oil in euros, thereby threatening the dollarization of the oil market that so favors Washington.<sup>50</sup>

Second, the breakdown of the peace process amid continued Israeli settlement activity in the Palestinian territories, which had sparked the outbreak of the second intifadah, the unleashing of Islamic terrorism, and the rise of the hard-line Sharon government, drove an increasing wedge between the United States and the Arabs who had been promised a peace settlement in reward for their support of the United States in the Gulf War. Worse, George W. Bush's ever more overt support for Sharon's annexation plans and massive anti-Palestinian violence in the Occupied Territories made US and Israeli policies indistinguishable in Arab and Muslim eyes.

Third, there was a growing feeling that Saudi Arabia could no longer be relied upon. Dependence on it placed constraints on US policy toward the Middle East;<sup>51</sup> Saudi Arabia had put restrictions on the use of US forces based there in the "containment" of Iraq and in the US-Afghan war, and hostility to the presence of those forces within Saudi Arabia was making them politically unsustainable.<sup>52</sup> The participation of Saudi citizens in the 9/11 attacks and in funding Al-Qaida gave the neoconservatives the opportunity to demonize the Saudis in US public opinion.<sup>53</sup> For its part, Saudi Arabia, feeling that the United States had ignored its interests—notably in a resolution of the Arab-Israel conflict—began looking for alternative security solutions to ease its total US dependence, by conciliating Iran and Iraq as well as domestic opinion, which required that it decline to moderate rises in oil prices to suit Washington.<sup>54</sup> The oil hegemony of the United States rested on its unique ability to balance special relationships with *both* Israel and Saudi Arabia, but this balance was being destabilized. In conquering Iraq, the United States, in the words of one pundit, "would acquire a [new] compliant swing producer in one blow."<sup>55</sup>

Yet the threat to US hegemony was merely potential, not immediate; there were less risky ways to address it, and the traditional mechanisms of control over the Gulf were largely intact. Rising oil demand, far from putting US oil hegemony at risk, made its unrivaled political and military position in the Gulf more pivotal. Nor did a debilitated Iraq really pose any threat to US dominance in the region; on the contrary, the residual threat Saddam posed to the Gulf states only increased their dependence on US protection.

It is therefore probably less useful to seek an explanation of the war in an analysis of US *national* interests (assuming hegemony to be one of them) than in the *particular* interests of the very distinctive ruling coalition in George W. Bush's Washington. First, Bush represented a power shift from the Treasury, Commerce, Wall Street, and mainstream corporate power, to a much narrower military-oil complex of interests.<sup>56</sup> Second, it embodied a convergence of the Zionist (neoconservative) and the arms/oil lobbies—or

more precisely, their extremist/militarist wings—that were traditionally opposed over Middle East policy. The result was that the latter dropped its traditional concern to appease the Arab regimes and embraced the Zionist agenda.

What drove this convergence? Their shared interests in arms spending date back to their collaboration in driving the Reagan administration's arms race against the Soviet Union, and they continued to share an advocacy of increased military spending, which was threatened by the major cutbacks at the end of the Cold War. They came together in the 1990s in the Project for the New American Century, whose main platform was global US hegemony; military supremacy; "full support to Israel," whose "fight against terrorism is our fight"; and—the centerpiece of their project—regime change in Iraq, "even if evidence does not link Iraq directly to the [9/11] attack."<sup>57</sup>

However, it is not self-evident why the oil-men in the administration would consider a war on Iraq in their interest. Some in the US oil industry saw the chance to restore the direct ownership of oil curtailed by the rise of OPEC (and the increased profits this would allow) through privatization of Iraqi oil.<sup>58</sup> As Pieterse points out, energy companies are the most territorial and geo-political of all corporations.<sup>59</sup> Another consideration may have been awareness of the association of conflict in the Middle East with high oil prices—especially needed for high-cost Texas producers—and high oil company profits. Shimshon Bichler and Jonathan Nitzan show that relative performance of oil companies is associated with high oil prices; that every Middle Eastern crisis of the past fifty years has been followed by periods in which the oil majors outperform the Fortune 500 average; that during the oil price boom of the early 1980s, oil company profits reached nearly 19 percent of total corporate profits, only to fall back to 3 percent in the late 1990s as oil prices fell.<sup>60</sup> A boom for armaments firms paralleled the oil boom, only to suffer decline with the oil price slump experienced by Middle Eastern purchasers. War in the Middle East was expected to—and in fact did—drive up oil prices, oil company shares of relative corporate profits, and renewed arms spending.

Yet given the risks to the overall economy of an oil shock, this scenario implies an extremely reckless sacrifice of broader capitalist class interests to the narrow interests of one, albeit pivotal, fraction of capital; moreover, it leaves unexplained the lack of any broad opposition to the war from the wider business community, which presumably needed moderate stable oil prices. As Pieterse observes, not only is there no "capitalist necessity" in preventive war, but corporations cannot afford to be risk-takers on this scale and deterritorialized high-tech capitalism does not have the same need for territorial control that is typical of energy companies.<sup>61</sup> However, Bichler and Nitzan argue that the interest of the arms/oil coalition coincided with the wider need of "dominant capital." The US boom of the 1990s, which



had been driven by mergers, acquisitions, and the globalization of investment, was exhausted by 2000, and US capital faced a crisis of overproduction and deflation. To get out of this, an alternative strategy of inflation, which historically leads to a redistribution of wealth from labor to capital and small to larger firms enjoying price power, was on the agenda; the main driver of inflation is booming oil prices, and the single most important driver of oil prices is Middle Eastern conflict. What the George W. Bush administration may have wanted was oil prices at a level that would suit their particular oil/arms interests and would induce an inflationary burst serving the interests of the overall ruling class without jeopardizing the national economy or Bush's political electability.

The other essential ingredient of war, however, was the exceptional influence of the neoconservatives that enabled them to put forward *their* favored solution to the US conundrum of reconciling oil hegemony with the interests of Israel—resulting in what has been called the “Israelization of American foreign policy.”<sup>62</sup> Their solution cannot be understood apart from the priority they gave to the protection of Israel's regional hegemony and the consolidation of its expansion into the Palestinian-populated territories. Closely associated with the Israeli Likud Party, the neoconservatives conflated a US interest in global hegemony with the project of “Greater Israel” and had long worked systematically to harness US power to Israeli interests.<sup>63</sup> Their nightmare was that the United States would subordinate Israeli ambitions to appeasement of the Arab oil producers, especially Saudi Arabia (as George H. W. Bush had done);<sup>64</sup> it was this that explains neoconservative pundits' use of 9/11 to demonize Riyadh, a move that appears foolish from the viewpoint of US interests. Since Israeli expansion was incompatible with resumed US brokerage of a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, essential to appeasing Arab opinion, the neoconservatives needed an alternative solution: the seizure of Iraq would allow the US to secure access to Arab oil without Arab alliances and consent. Control of Iraq could be used to drive down oil prices, break OPEC, and destabilize Arab oil producers unfriendly to the pro-Israeli policy of the United States.<sup>65</sup> While this project risked stimulating further anti-US terrorism, dominance in Iraq would position the United States to directly threaten the two main nationalist states that had hitherto provided some safe haven for militant groups and that stood in the way of a peace settlement on Israeli terms, Syria and Iran. No one doubts that the Sharon government was also keen for a US war on Iraq and used its influence in Washington to promote one (there are allegations that Israeli intelligence misled the US and British governments about Saddam's WMD, and that Israeli spooks were closely linked with the special intelligence bureau set up by neoconservatives in the Pentagon that tailored intelligence to promote the war).<sup>66</sup>

What was crucial, however, is that the oil/arms faction led by Dick

Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld accepted the neoconservative solution; we can only surmise that they saw no other way to solve the contradiction between promoting Israel's ambitions and protecting US oil hegemony in the Middle East. More than that, the war on Iraq was expected to decisively *advance* this hegemony. In Noam Chomsky's view, the Bush administration sought to establish a new norm, the US right to attack countries it deemed threats, and Iraq, being both weak and easily demonized, was an exemplary case to establish the precedent.<sup>67</sup> Smashing Saddam Hussein, who had famously defied US power, would send the message that the limits of US global power had been overcome and finish the job left undone in 1991; it would also, in intimidating the Muslim world, burst the “bubble of terrorism.” Marc Lynch observes that the Arab/Muslim worlds were the main centers of rejection of US hegemony, and that an easy victory in Iraq followed by images of Iraqis welcoming US troops as liberators would demoralize US opponents.<sup>68</sup> The United States had long sought permanent bases in the Gulf, and conquering Iraq would allow their establishment.<sup>69</sup> As Patrick Seale put it, Iraq was a “strategic stronghold at the heart of the Middle East and astride its oil fields.” Invading Iraq would allow the imposition of liberalism there and, in a domino effect, spread it in the rest of the Middle East.<sup>70</sup>

Finally, the private interests of both wings of the ruling coalition stood to gain from a war. Bush's main political adviser, Karl Rove, evidently saw war as a way of winning elections; indeed, each time Bush's poll ratings started to fall, they were rescued by the invocation of some new external threat.<sup>71</sup> The representatives of the international oil, construction, security, and armaments industries expected to (and did) reap huge profits from noncompetitive contracts after the conquest of Iraq, but the neoconservatives were also positioned to profit. Thus, on the eve of the invasion, neoconservatives in the Pentagon were already collaborating with Bush and Cheney to funnel reconstruction contracts to firms in which they both had stakes. The evidence is strong that the ruling group anticipated—and got—lucrative pickings in Iraq. And, of course, Bush was indeed reelected as a war president.<sup>72</sup>

In summary, the Middle East is the center of the world's most strategic resource, oil, on which US global hegemony greatly depends; the Middle Eastern oil and arms trades have long been the sources of private superprofit for the right-wing of the US establishment; but the Middle East is, at the same time, the center of the main ideological resistance to US hegemony—Arab nationalism and especially Islam—and the location of the main irritant in Western-Islamic relations, Israel, which stimulates this resistance. The conquest of Iraq was seen as the key to cutting through these conundrums and vanquishing resistance to US dominance over the region. As neoconservative guru William Kristol put it, toppling Saddam Hussein aimed at

changing the dynamics in the Middle East and reconstructing a new Pax-Americana in place of the old one.

### ■ The Neoconization of US Foreign Policy

Translating this project into reality, however, required harnessing the whole US political system, against its built-in checks and balances, for a war that, up to this point, had been merely the pet project of a faction of extreme right-wingers by no means representative of US establishment opinion. The election of Bush and Cheney and the appointment of Rumsfeld to the Pentagon were of course decisive. Bush, a man convinced of his divinely appointed mission but woefully ignorant of international affairs, was uniquely vulnerable to the advice of the hawks, particularly Paul Wolfowitz, the most consistent advocate of war, whom Bush appears to have found especially persuasive.<sup>73</sup> Also central, however, was the capture of the wider executive branch by the alliance of the “corporate militarists” (Cheney and Rumsfeld) and the neoconservatives, the ideological core of the Bush administration and the main lobby group for war. The neoconservatives acted as a solidarity movement, getting their members systematically appointed across the national security bureaucracy; there they worked to impose their agenda against the opposition of the career civil servants, senior military officers, diplomats, and intelligence analysts who were unconvinced Saddam was a major threat. Believing that they alone had the truth, they viewed deception (and force) as legitimate means to their ends<sup>74</sup> and, as one insider put it, “behaved as though they had seized control of the government in a silent coup.”<sup>75</sup> They set up a “shadow government,” with the neoconservatives staffing ad hoc “special offices” that bypassed normal bureaucratic procedures meant to ensure objectivity and balance, and were pivotal in promoting the case for war.<sup>76</sup>

Crucial to winning the struggle for war outside the executive branch was the alliance between the neoconservatives, the wider Zionist lobby, and the right-wing “Christian Zionists,” a mass movement whose literal reading of the Bible convinced them that Christ would reappear only after the Jews repossessed the whole promised land and who viewed Islam as “a very wicked and evil religion.”<sup>77</sup> Congress, under the influence of these lobbies and a flawed national intelligence estimate that no congressperson questioned, was brought to abdicate its war-deciding responsibilities.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, public opinion was systematically softened up by a concerted propaganda campaign led by administration officials, right-wing think tanks,<sup>79</sup> advertising agencies,<sup>80</sup> and media pundits, largely uncontested by a critical or even an objective press.<sup>81</sup> The “politics of fear” was institutionalized: according to Zbigniew Brzezinski, the government propagated “a fear

that periodically verges on blind panic . . . fueled by a demagogy that emphasize[d] worst-case scenarios [and] induce[d] a dichotomous view of world reality.”<sup>82</sup> The public was misled to believe that Saddam had a hand in 9/11 and had WMDs, that the invasion would be welcomed by Iraqis, that Iraqi oil would pay the costs of war, that US troops would be quickly in and out, and that Iraq would be readily transformed into a democracy.<sup>83</sup> According to Pieterse, US public opinion was peculiarly vulnerable to propaganda because of the US culture of exceptionalism: Americans’ collective narcissism, ignorance of world affairs, glorification of the military, and lack of any (common ethnic) identity save that of a supposedly uniquely virtuous “American way” that must be exported to save the world.<sup>84</sup>

The convergence of these factors upset the system of checks and balances that normally restrains US foreign policy behavior. In a wider sense, Louis Fisher argues that the war resulted from *institutional failures*; indeed, the ease with which the political establishment was harnessed by what George Soros called an “extremist cabal”<sup>85</sup> suggests that the system has profound built-in flaws: the vulnerability of the fragmented policy process to moneyed single-issue interests; the politicization of the senior ranks of the bureaucracy; the foreign policy subordination of Congress to an imperial presidency; the enervation of the electoral system by campaign financing abuses, sound-bite political debate, mass absenteeism, and voting irregularities; and the ready manipulation of an ill-informed public by a corporate-controlled partisan media—all spell a “decayed condition of American democracy.”

### ■ Consequences of the Iraq War for US Hegemony

Will the Iraq War advance or set back the US reach for muscular hegemony? This will depend on whether the war demonstrates the utility of “preventive war” and sustains or undermines the global legitimacy of US leadership.

#### *The Utility of “Preventive War”*

The Iraq War is a test case of the doctrine of preventive war and of the neo-conservatives’ belief that overwhelming military superiority can be translated into unchallenged hegemony in the Middle East, but the play has not gone according to script.

First, the exposure of intelligence failures and its manipulation for political ends undermined the credibility of the doctrine of preemption. Thus, even David Kay, Bush’s weapons inspector in Iraq, said of the failure to find Iraqi WMDs after the war: “If you cannot rely on good, accurate intelligence, that is credible to the American people and others abroad, you can’t have a policy of pre-emption.”<sup>86</sup>

The neoconservatives argued that military force against Saddam Hussein would be welcomed by Iraqis and a pro-US "democracy" readily imposed. But this was never likely, since Iraqis combined national pride with a profound mistrust of the United States and Britain rooted in the colonial experience, the near-total support of the United States for Israel, and the near-genocidal sanctions the United States had imposed on Iraq.<sup>87</sup> But the breakdown of security, infrastructure, and public health; the mass unemployment inflicted by the dissolution of the army, purge of the bureaucracy, and public sector layoffs;<sup>88</sup> the death of perhaps 100,000 people, mostly civilians, in the first year of war and occupation;<sup>89</sup> the halving of gross national product per capita compared to 2001; the imposition of a puppet government of mostly exiles without popular bases in Iraq;<sup>90</sup> the flooding of the country with foreign mercenaries and contractors; the open avowal of the intention to occupy Iraq for at least three years and to acquire permanent basing rights; and the attempt, in violation of the Geneva Conventions, to privatize and sell off Iraq's oil assets to Western buyers<sup>91</sup>—all ensured that Iraqis would view the foreign armies as occupiers, not liberators. And the self-defeating conduct of the United States in Iraq, far from being a mere "mistake," owes everything to the influence of Rumsfeld's Pentagon and the neoconservatives.<sup>92</sup>

The United States responded to the growing resistance it encountered with tactics pioneered by Israel in occupied Palestine: bombing and firing on densely populated urban areas, demolishing homes, collective punishment of villages, herding of thousands into detention camps,<sup>93</sup> and food blockades of suspected insurgent areas,<sup>94</sup> not to mention the "daily humiliations and occasional brutalities that come with the presence of an occupying army."<sup>95</sup> Western polls in the year after the invasion showed that 82 percent of Iraqis opposed the occupation and 57 percent wanted foreign troops to leave immediately; US troops were widely seen as "lacking in respect for the country's people, religion and traditions" and "indiscriminate in their use of force when civilians are nearby." Five percent or fewer of Iraqis believed the United States invaded "to assist the Iraqi people," destroy WMDs, or establish democracy, while 43 percent said the aim was "to rob Iraq's oil." More than 50 percent said attacks on US troops were "justified" or "sometimes justified."<sup>96</sup> A US commander infamously declared: "With a heavy dose of fear and violence, and a lot of money for projects, I think we can convince these people that we are here to help them."<sup>97</sup> However, this approach only inflamed resistance, which mushroomed from about "5,000 Hussein loyalists using leftover Iraqi army equipment, into a disparate yet potent force of up to 20,000 equipped with explosives capable of knocking out even heavily armored military vehicles."<sup>98</sup> The inability of the United States to pacify the country shattered its aura of military invincibility, showing that asymmetric warfare can delay and possibly checkmate the strongest

military power in the world.<sup>99</sup> Over two years of occupation, Iraqi opinion only hardened against the occupation.<sup>100</sup>

But the United States has no intention of giving up its prize, and seeks to use techniques borrowed from the earlier British occupation to ensconce itself in permanent military bases and an enormous fortified embassy—comparable to the former British High Commission—from which the occupier hopes to pull the strings of any future Iraqi government from behind the scenes. These techniques include exploitation, hence exacerbation of Iraq's built-in communal cleavages, notably in the reliance on the Kurds against the Arabs; the near-imposition under US pressure of a constitution that locks in provisions guaranteeing US privileges in the country and institutionalizes the sectarian divisions among Iraqis;<sup>101</sup> the holding of elections, at least partly manipulated, in which the main issues, above all the occupation and the measures it imposes by fiat, are off the agenda; the use of such elections to co-opt a pliant leadership that has some legitimacy but that, being caught between the occupier and the populace, is likely to become increasingly dependent on the former against the latter; and the reconstruction of a security force prepared to back the occupier and its clients against the populace. Finally, the deconstruction of the Iraqi state into a loose confederation deprives Iraq of collective purpose or identity, ensuring that it cannot be resurrected as a champion of Arab nationalism.<sup>102</sup>

However, it is uncertain whether this strategy will work. Constructing a reliable Iraqi army willing and able to suppress the insurgency has proved elusive, although the United States has been more effective in arming (or allowing the arming of) Kurdish and Shia militias that use violence to counter that of Sunni insurgents.<sup>103</sup> It could also have unintended consequences, for were post-Saddam Iraq actually to be democratized, popular anti-US sentiment would find more outlets and the country would be more open to Iranian influence. Alternatively, permanent sectarian instability, even the civil war and the breakup of the country, may already be entrained (an outcome by no means incompatible with neoconservative aims of debilitating a potential Arab power but fraught with risks for regional stability).<sup>104</sup> As Edward Rhodes argues, a liberal order cannot be imposed at gunpoint, since it depends on consent and the internalization of liberal values. The outcome has, so far, validated Robert Jervis's warning that while the United States has the military power to overthrow weak regimes, sustaining replacement client states is likely to prove costly and enmesh it in continuing intervention.<sup>105</sup>

It remained to be seen whether the Iraq War was the beginning of "imperial overreach." The neoconservatives promised that the cost of the war would be carried by Iraq itself, but Iraqi oil exports came nowhere near doing so.<sup>106</sup> Rather, the war cost the US Treasury an estimated \$160 billion in fiscal year 2003–2004, and reached \$204.4 billion by 2005, with only \$2

billion of that going for reconstruction of the country as late as 2005.<sup>107</sup> Bush's combination of tax cuts and military adventures turned the \$127 billion budget surplus he inherited in 2001 into a \$374 billion deficit in 2003.

By 2005, over 2,000 US troops had been killed and total casualties (including injured) numbered over 17,000.<sup>108</sup> Half of US units in Iraq suffered low morale and the military was badly overstretched. Revelations of the deception practiced by the neoconservatives in their drive to war threw into doubt the triumphalist discourse on US empire encouraged by the initial military victory. Moreover, Americans increasingly agreed with influential members of the national security elite who were claiming that the war on Iraq, far from making Americans more secure, was a new generator of terrorism.<sup>109</sup> The fear that empire abroad was incompatible with liberal democracy at home was reinforced by the erosion of civil liberties, the most egregious of which was the government's claim that it could keep a US citizen designated an "enemy combatant" imprisoned indefinitely without charges.<sup>110</sup> The media, which had almost uniformly propagandized in favor of war, began to criticize it as the costs mounted. Americans, Jervis argues, have no record of willingness to sacrifice significantly for the sake of imperium.<sup>111</sup> Indeed, as the costs rose and the administration's deceptions were exposed, public opinion turned against Bush's war.<sup>112</sup> The US expectation that it would direct the remaking of the Middle East while Europe, Asia, and the Gulf Arab states would pay for it, no doubt encouraged by the Gulf War, proved hollow.<sup>113</sup> Pieterse argues that the United States is a "deficit empire" that, instead of exporting capital, drains the world of resources on a massive scale, with its current account deficit needing an annual inflow of \$500 billion to keep it going.<sup>114</sup> While seignurage arguably allows the United States to evade the full immediate costs of military hegemony, the combination of excessive military spending with high domestic consumption and low taxes may still bring the Bush juggernaut to a halt.

### **Soft Power at Risk?**

Has the Iraq War put the soft power, the legitimacy on which US hegemony has rested, at risk? Iraq was a test case both of Bush's strategy of constructing ad hoc "coalitions of the willing" that would unquestioningly follow US leadership, and of whether his declared right of "preventive war" would be accepted by allies and rivals alike.

There is normally a powerful incentive to bandwagon with rather than balance against the hegemon. But the United States had to expend considerable political capital in its effort to legitimize the war. Iraq is extraordinary in that even core allies, France and Germany, resisted, while Washington was unable to get the UN Security Council votes of even weak states like Guinea and Cameroon and otherwise friendly neighbors like Mexico. On 18 February 2003, when the Council allowed member states to speak on the

impending war, all of sixty-four speakers over three days opposed war.<sup>115</sup> Even many of those states that bandwagoned with the United States in Iraq did so less out of belief in the rightness of the invasion than for reasons of self-interest, inducement, intimidation, or attempts to minimize the damage that a unilateralist hegemon could inflict on the wider global order. Jervis argues that certain European countries supported the United States because "the dominance they fear most is not American, but Franco-German or Russian."<sup>116</sup> According to one insider analysis, Blair took Britain into war for fear that, if left alone, the paranoid hyperpower would prove dangerous and destabilizing, and in the vain hope that, in return, the United States would revive the Arab-Israeli peace process and thus address the main source of regional instability.<sup>117</sup> Japan may have encouraged the United States in Iraq to divert it from stirring up trouble with North Korea.<sup>118</sup> In the Middle Eastern region, weak states, enjoying little legitimacy at home, could not afford to balance against their protector (the Gulf states) or paymaster (Jordan, Egypt) and, despite fearing that it would destabilize the region, accommodated themselves to the invasion (with the exception of Syria, which alone expressed widespread regional opinion in its opposition).

Washington's use of the expression "coalition of the willing" conveys the illusion that the war was an international venture; but the vast majority of states in this "coalition" provided only token support and many actually sought aid packages in return for it. Moreover, US-aligned governments were opposed by large majorities of their own populations, among whom support for a war carried out "unilaterally by America and its allies" and widely seen to be about oil, did not rise above 11 percent in any European country, including in Eastern Europe.<sup>119</sup> Even if, in the short term, bandwagoning leaders defied home opinion, their alignment with Washington was based on calculations that are likely to be reversible, rather than a societal-rooted belief in the legitimacy of US leadership; in Spain, Prime Minister José María Aznar defied 90 percent of his public and paid the electoral price for what most Spaniards considered an illegitimate occupation of another county in violation of international law.<sup>120</sup>

The war was a test of how far overwhelming military power can impose fait accomplis that reshape international norms. The United States succeeded in getting post facto partial UN legitimation of the occupation and it had some success in inducing other states to assume small parts of its burdens. The main reason was that few states believed it to be in their interest that Iraq become an epicenter of instability in the Gulf; hence, through its fait accompli, the United States coerced Security Council members into postwar acquiescence in policies they opposed. Still, other states proved quite unwilling to contribute significant funding or troops to rescue the US project as long as Washington refused to turn over its authority to the UN.<sup>121</sup>

The longer-term costs of the war for US hegemony appear to be significant. Others states are beginning to perceive a hegemon that declares it will not be constrained by international institutions or the opinions of allies to be a threat to, rather than a guarantor, of global stability. Arguably, Bush has seriously eroded the alliance system upon which the hegemonic leadership of the United States rests. Europe's main security fear was no longer, as in the Cold War, that Washington would abandon it, but that Washington would destabilize the Middle East and stir up Western-Islamic tensions. Complained one European official: "many of us who will be deeply affected [by US policy in the Middle East] have no opportunity even to make our voice heard, let alone to influence anything."<sup>122</sup> Europe is also acutely aware that the Iraq War has considerably worsened the threat of terrorism.<sup>123</sup> According to Brzezinski, trust, an essential ingredient of power, had been sacrificed by the neoconservatives' preoccupation with "reshaping the Middle East at the expense of maintaining America's ability to lead globally."<sup>124</sup> As for US rivals, Bush weakened what was after 9/11 a budding cordial relationship with Russia, based partly on a perception of a shared interest in countering the Islamist threat; thereafter a Russian leader spoke for many in declaring that, "if someone tries to wage war on their own account . . . without an international mandate, it means all the world is . . . a wild jungle."<sup>125</sup> Evidence that in 2005 China, Russia, and India were banding together to block sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program, while China and South Korea were trying to restrain US actions against North Korea, were indicative that the world no longer trusted the hegemon to deliver stability, and feared the opposite.

Another major cost of the war has been the loss of respect suffered by Washington in global public opinion. Arthur Schlesinger wrote that "the global wave of sympathy that engulfed the US after 9/11 has given way to a global wave of hatred of American arrogance and militarism" and the belief that Bush was "a greater threat to peace than Saddam Hussein";<sup>126</sup> the proportion of people around the world who had a favorable view of the United States dropped precipitously as a result of the war.<sup>127</sup> In a *Time* magazine poll just before the war, 84 percent of Europeans identified the United States as the main threat to world peace.<sup>128</sup> In the Arab and Muslim worlds, the United States was even more widely disliked, and what is most striking is how Bush had managed to alienate the publics of allied states in which the United States had invested over decades: Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.<sup>129</sup> The Iraq War undermined the authority of the hegemon to lay down the law to other countries in the name of universal standards.<sup>130</sup> For Jurgen Habermas, "the moral authority of the United States lies in ruins."<sup>131</sup> As the Japanese daily *Asahi Shinbun* observed, Bush's policies were highly divisive: dividing publics that are against its wars from governments that support it, setting the Western alliance at odds and dividing the West from Islam.<sup>132</sup>

US soft power had hitherto substantially been exercised *through, not against*, international law and institutions, but "at no time in the last 50 years," David Hendrickson argues, "has the US stood in such antagonism to both the primary norms and the central institutions of international society," namely sovereignty and the presumptive judgment against the first use of force, a norm established because of "disastrous experience with the contrary practice."<sup>133</sup> The war, which the UN Secretary-General declared illegal,<sup>134</sup> was launched in defiance of the UN, while the Geneva Conventions and the laws of war were disregarded in the treatment of prisoners and the occupation of Iraq.<sup>135</sup> The message from Washington was that it was exempt from the rules that applied to others. The root of the problem was arguably, as Samuel Huntington has observed, the failure of Washington to adjust to a world in which "the rest" must take their equal places; as Huntington put it: "The widespread parochial conceit that the . . . civilization of the West is now the universal civilization of the world" and the US attempt to impose a single model, rife with "hypocrisy and double standards," are "probably the single most important source of instability and potential global conflict."<sup>136</sup> The very rationale of a hegemon, of course, is to deliver *stability*.

#### ■ Implications of the Iraq War for Hegemonic Stability Theory

The Iraq War exposes major weaknesses in all forms of HST. Liberal claims of a benign hegemon appear most in need of revision, but the realist view of the hegemon as a unitary rational actor pursuing the national interest also seems wide of the mark. The big weakness shared by all versions of HST is that they do not convincingly explain why the hegemon should use its preponderant power in a *stabilizing* way, whether this be interpreted as serving global, national, or ruling-class interests. The Iraq case provides new evidence on these issues.

#### *Malign or Benign Hegemony?*

For John Ikenberry, US hegemony is benign because US power is not threatening, since the United States is content to be an "off-shore balancer" and eschews territorial aggrandizement; because, being democratic, its policy is predictable and self-restraining, not arbitrary; and because it is exercised through multinational institutions where its power is constrained by mutually agreed rules.<sup>137</sup> The Iraq War suggests that predictability, self-restraint, and multilateralism no longer hold. The war denotes, too, that in the Middle East the United States has become a partisan player, not a balancer, and that it does seek some territorial control, even if indirect. Ikenberry claims that US hegemony provides security and economic bene-

fits, but coercive hegemony has made the Middle East the cockpit of global instability, putting global energy security at risk, encouraging terrorism, and inflicting many of the costs on the global and regional allies of the United States. Arguably, also, the Iraq War shattered the assumption in HST that because the hegemon created and benefits most from the status quo, it has a natural interest in stabilizing it; in fact, the hegemon may be basically satisfied with the configuration of world power, yet so dissatisfied with certain aspects of it that it is prepared to risk global stability to get its way.<sup>138</sup>

### **The Conditions of Benign Hegemony**

The Iraq case suggests that at least two conditions must be met if the hegemon is to be benign. One is systemic, that is, as A. F. K. Organski points out,<sup>139</sup> the existence of a challenger state that could check or make unilateral power projection by the hegemon risky. Without such a state, Washington had little incentive to maximize its coalition at the cost of restraining its ambitions, relying instead on ad hoc "coalitions of the willing." According to Robert Jervis, "it is the exception rather than the rule for states to stay on the path of moderation when others do not force them to do so."<sup>140</sup> Without actually acknowledging it, HST *assumes* the countervailing power of a bi- or multipolar world, but Iraq suggests that under *unipolarity* the problem of hegemony is not the traditional fear that the hegemon lacks *enough* power to lead but that *excessive* power may make it malign.<sup>141</sup> As Kenneth Waltz observed, "unchecked power is a threat, no matter who wields it."<sup>142</sup>

A second condition is the realist assumption that the hegemon can be treated as a unitary actor defending the national interest that it presumably possesses in a stable world order or alternatively, as Marxist versions see it, the similar interests of world capitalism. This is perhaps compatible with the dominance of US foreign policy by an experienced mainstream globalist establishment. But, as Stephen Krasner recognized, the US policy process appears particularly vulnerable to colonization by narrow special interests.<sup>143</sup> Such interests, as Marxists would anticipate, may take the form of the oil/arms fraction of US capital; certainly the latter have benefited handsomely from the Iraq War, while ordinary taxpayers/consumers and soldiers have carried the burdens. However, as no version of HST would have expected and as Iraq exposes, special interests may take the form of religious-based identity movements—fundamentalist Christianity, Likudist Zionism—with trans-state reach and messianic agendas that may threaten both national and ruling-class interests in stability.

### **The World Order and Hegemonic Stability**

What does the war tell us about the hegemonic capacity of the United States and its importance for world order? Kenneth Waltz believes that, eventually, hegemon overextends themselves, and their misuse of power provokes *bal-*

*ancing* against them,<sup>144</sup> while Birthe Hansen sees *bandwagoning* (and *free-riding*) with the hegemon as the natural behavior under unipolarity.<sup>145</sup> What the war precipitated from other states was, in fact, differentiated and ambivalent behavior, with various mixes of semicooperation and semiresistance to the hegemon.

Bandwagoning was quite limited (especially by comparison with the Gulf War); in only a few cases did states seem to cooperate with the hegemon because they thought the war legitimate or likely to deliver "public goods." As Stephen Walt argues, even Washington's close allies are now looking for ways to tame US might, while the many other countries that fear it have devised numerous strategies to manage and limit it.<sup>146</sup> Yet despite the widespread fear of the potential threat to world order from US unilateralism, and although some powers, perhaps France, China, and Russia, thought the hegemon was seeking "relative gains" at their expense, there was remarkably little anti-US balancing either. William Wohlforth argued that US state-to-state power was so immense that no countervailing coalition was possible.<sup>147</sup> Nor, perhaps, were the vital interests of other great powers sufficiently threatened to provoke such power-balancing. But the relative lack of balancing against the hegemon cannot be fully understood without appreciation of the structural (economic) power the United States enjoys over other states in the world capitalist market, and—especially in the core capitalist states—the reluctance of elites to damage the trans-state capitalist networks that tie their dominant groups to those in the United States.

Despite this, Thomas Volgy and Alison Bailin show convincingly that the United States lacks sufficient structural and state power for global rule except *through* the collective hegemony of the core powers, and that this, in turn, depends on the legitimacy of US leadership.<sup>148</sup> Nor can the US fight the "war on terrorism" without international cooperation, as the US security elite has started to realize.<sup>149</sup> Yet, far from facilitating cooperation, US unilateralism in Iraq, at the expense of the UN and the cohesion of the core's collective hegemony, is of a piece with its increasing obstruction of global cooperation; its insistence on unilateral control over Iraq and rebuff of UN authority there obstructs a multilateral solution to the conflict and, indeed, makes the country—and the region—a generator of terrorism. Jan Pieterse argues that Iraq produced hegemony-in-reverse: "Never has so much soft power been squandered in so short a time."<sup>150</sup>

Whether US authority can be restored depends on whether there is wide acceptance of the US claim that new threats—pariah states, terrorism, Islam itself—make US military hegemony indispensable to world order or whether other states will come to fear that Washington is itself part of the problem in helping to construct a "clash of civilizations" that threatens this order.<sup>151</sup> This, in turn, will depend, in part, on the outcome in Iraq. The case

already highlights the difficulty and the high costs of translating even unprecedented military power into political victory over deep-rooted societal resistance. It seems likely that, far from resolving the problem, US intervention is only intensifying the reaction from the Islamic world, which, as it is neutered by US power at the state level, increasingly takes trans- and sub-state forms (Al-Qaida) amid the chaos unleashed by Washington's policy of "regime change."

## ■ Notes

1. The expression is from Michael Hudson, "To Play the Hegemon."
2. Namely realism, liberalism, and structuralism.
3. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Politics of the World Economy*.
4. Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*.
5. Charles Kindleberger, "Dominance and Leadership in the International Economy," pp. 242–254; Robert Keohane, "The Theory of Hegemonic Stability and Changes in International Economic Regimes," pp. 131–162.
6. Isabelle Grunberg, "Exploring the 'Myth' of Hegemonic Stability," pp. 431–477.
7. Susan Strange, *States and Markets*; David P. Calleo, *Beyond American Hegemony*, pp. 82–108, 138.
8. Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization or Empire?* pp. 17–29, 33, 43.
9. Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, pp. 153–156, 217–219; Stephen Krasner, "State Power and the Structure of International Trade."
10. A. F. K. Organski, *World Politics*.
11. Samuel Huntington, "The US," pp. 76–96; Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*.
12. Stephen Gill, *Power and Resistance in the New World Order*, pp. 41–65, 73–115.
13. Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony*; Duncan Snidal argues that states will cooperate if they stand to gain, since the danger of cheating by others, at least in the capitalist core states, is seldom high enough to nullify such benefits. Duncan Snidal, "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory."
14. Kees van der Pijl, *Transnational Classes and International Relations*; William I. Robinson, "Capitalist Globalization and the Transnationalization of the State."
15. Thomas J. Volgy and Alison Bailin, *International Politics and State Strength*.
16. Pieterse, *Globalization or Empire?* p. 122.
17. Snidel, "Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory," pp. 613–614.
18. Simon Bromley, *American Hegemony and World Oil*; Atif Kubursi and Salim Mansur, "Oil and the Gulf War."
19. Sherle R. Schwenninger, "Revamping American Grand Strategy."
20. Oystein Noreng, *Crude Power*, p. 51.
21. Richard Betts, "The Soft Underbelly of American Primacy," p. 23.
22. For more detailed argument, see Chapter 20.
23. Keohane, *After Hegemony*, pp. 139–141, 190–194.
24. Michael Hudson, *Super Imperialism*, argues, for example, that US dollar

hegemony allowed it to impose the Plaza and Louve accords that made Japan artificially lower its interest rates and triggered the bubble economy that broke the "Japanese challenge" to the United States.

25. Bromley, *American Hegemony and World Oil*, pp. 205–244. See also Kubursi's argument in Chapter 20.

26. Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, pp. 214–218.

27. Kubursi and Mansur, "Oil and the Gulf War"; Paul Aarts, "The New Oil Order"; Cyrus Bina, "The Rhetoric of Oil and the Dilemma of War and American Hegemony."

28. Chalmers Johnson, "Blowback," *The Nation*, 15 October 2001.

29. Julie Kosterlitz, "America's Track Record in the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan Suggests that Today's Solutions Can Lead to Tomorrow's Problems," *National Journal*, March 2003.

30. Slavoj Zizek, "Iraq's False Promises," *Foreign Policy* (January–February 2004), <http://www.foreignpolicy.com>. Similarly Zbigniew Brzezinski, critiquing Bush's attempt to deflect blame for Muslim animosity toward the United States, writes: "It is as if terrorism is suspended in outer space as an abstract phenomenon, with ruthless terrorists acting under some Satanic inspiration unrelated to any specific motivation. American involvement in the Middle East is clearly the main impulse of the hatred that has been directed at America. They do not simply hate freedom, [they hate specific policies of the US]." Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Confronting Anti-American Grievances," *New York Times*, 9 January 2002.

31. Robert Jervis, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine"; Edward Rhodes, "The Imperial Logic of Bush's Liberal Agenda."

32. Cabinet-level insiders, notably Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neil and terrorism adviser Richard Clarke, revealed that an attack on Iraq was broached at the first National Security Council meeting of the Bush administration and that, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Rumsfeld advocated an attack on Iraq. Bush sought to hold Iraq responsible in defiance of the advice of senior intelligence aides that it was not involved. Ron Suskind, *The Price of Loyalty*; Richard Clarke, *Against All Enemies*; *Sunday Herald*, 11 January 2004; *The Independent*, 22 March 2004; *New York Times Review of Books* 50, no. 19.

33. After 9/11 Bush gushed, "this is a great opportunity," while Rumsfeld told the *New York Times* that it was a great opportunity to refashion the world. Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*, pp. 32–37.

34. The report of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *WMD in Iraq* (by Joseph Cirincione, Jessica Mathews, and George Perkovich) concluded that Iraqi WMD capabilities were not a threat, since Iraq's nuclear program had been suspended for many years and large-scale chemical weapon production capabilities destroyed or dismantled. International constraints, sanctions, and weapons inspections had been effective. On 6 October 2004, the Duelfer report by the special adviser to the CIA on fifteen months of work by 1,200 CIA inspectors concluded that Iraq had destroyed its WMDs right after the 1991 war, the last factory capable of producing them in 1996, and that it was not working to restart its programs. Dilip Hiro, *Secrets and Lies*, p. 507. Moreover, the Carnegie report affirmed that there was no solid evidence of a cooperative relationship between Saddam's government and Al-Qaida. As John S. Duffield, "Oil and the Iraq War," noted, Saddam would hardly have supplied WMDs to Al-Qaida, since, if used, they might well have been traced back to their source, prompting devastating retaliation—even if no direct link could have been found. The Kean report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks

also reported no evidence of collaboration of Iraq and Al-Qaida. Hiro, *Secrets and Lies*, p. 505.

Evidence that the Bush administration knew its claims were false or misleading is copious. The Carnegie report concluded that the absence of any imminent nuclear or chemical threat was knowable before the war, that the CIA's national intelligence estimates had been deliberately misrepresented by administration officials, and that none of Secretary of State Colin Powell's claims at the UN stood up to verification. Weapons inspector Scott Ritter observed that plenty of experts and former Iraq weapons inspectors had discounted the threat before the war. *International Herald Tribune*, 6 February 2004, <http://www.ihf.com>. CIA director George Tenet testified before Congress in February 2001 that Iraq posed no immediate threat to the United States or to other countries in the Middle East and that the CIA had no evidence Iraq was stockpiling WMDs or developing nuclear weapons; yet in October 2002 the CIA changed its stand with a national intelligence estimate that was decisive in the congressional vote to authorize Bush to go to war. Jason Leopold, "CIA Intelligence Reports Seven Months Before 9/11 Said Iraq Posed No Threat to U.S.," *Countercurrents.org*, 21 September 2005. In July 2004 the US Senate Intelligence Committee concluded that unqualified claims that Saddam was reconstituting nuclear weapons should not have been included in the intelligence estimate. Hiro, *Secrets and Lies*, p. 504. US Special Forces units had been sent into Iraq before the start of the war to investigate sites suspected of being missile or chemical and biological weapon storage depots and came up with nothing; similarly, the UN inspectors were finding nothing. According to Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, *Weapons of Mass Deception*, pp. 79–99, specific deceptions by the Bush administration included the claim that Iraqi aluminum tubes were for uranium enrichment, that Iraq had drones able to reach the United States, and that it tried to buy uranium from Niger. The claim that 9/11 hijacker Atta had met Iraqi agents in Prague (when he was actually in the United States) continued to be repeated by the neoconservatives even after it was discredited. Bush cited a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency, which did not exist, that Saddam could go nuclear in six months. Tenet implied that the Anthrax scare of 17 October 2002 was attributable to Iraq, while the most likely suspect was a disaffected US expert on germ warfare. Hiro, *Secrets and Lies*, pp. 13–15, 426–427. Congressman Henry Waxman compiled a list of 237 misleading prewar statements by top administration officials from the president on down. Compelling evidence that the administration was deliberately misleading Americans about WMDs, Iraq, and Al-Qaida can be found in the following: David Sarota and Christy Harvey, "They Knew," *In These Times*, 4 August 2004; Colonel Karen Kwiatkowski, "The New Pentagon Papers," <http://www.salon.com/opinion/feature/2004/03/10>; David Corn, "Willful Ignorance," *TomPaine.com*; Robert Dreyfuss and Jason Vest, "The Lie Factory," *Mother Jones*, January–February 2004; John B. Judis and Spencer Ackerman, "The Selling of the Iraq War," *New Republic*, 30 June 2003; Seymour Hersh, "Who Lied to Whom?" *New Yorker*, 31 March 2003; Seymour Hersh, "Selective Intelligence," *New Yorker*, 12 May 2003; Julian Borger, "The Spies Who Pushed for War," *The Guardian*, 17 July 2003; Jason Leopold, "CIA Probe Finds Secret Pentagon Group Manipulated Intelligence on Iraqi Threat," <http://www.antiwar.com>, 25 July 2003; Peter Canellos and Bryan Bender, "Questions Grow over Iraq Links to Al-Qaida," *Boston Globe*, 3 August 2003; Robert Dreyfuss, "More Missing Intelligence," *The Nation*, 7 July 2003; Scott Ritter, *Iraq Confidential*.

35. *The Guardian*, 4 June 2003.

36. Duffield, "Oil And The Iraq War"; Mark Almond, "It's All About Control,

Not the Price of Petrol," *New Statesman*, 7 April 2003; Linda Diebel, "Oil War: 23 Years in the Making," *Toronto Star*, 9 March 2003; Michael T. Klare, "For Oil and Empire?" Dave Lindorff, "Crude History Lesson: Is the War All About Oil After All?" *In These Times*, 27 March 2003, [http://www.inthesetimes.com/site/main/article/crude\\_history\\_lesson](http://www.inthesetimes.com/site/main/article/crude_history_lesson); Arundhati Roy, "The New American Century," *The Nation*, 9 February 2004; *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 26 May 2004; *The Guardian*, 2 December 2003.

37. *The Guardian*, 4 June 2003.

38. Eric Schmitt, "Cheney Lashes Out," *New York Times*, 11 October 2003; see also Cheney's 2002 speech, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/08/20020826.html>.

39. The US Energy Information Agency predicted net oil imports by the United States nearly doubling to 19.8 million barrels per day by 2025, and that the share of all oil exports coming from the Persian Gulf would exceed 67 percent by 2020. Energy Information Administration, *Annual Energy Outlook 2002* (Washington, DC: US Department of Energy, December 2001), pp. 59–60; Energy Information Administration, *United States Country Analysis Brief*, January 2005, <http://www.eia.doe.gov>; Joe Barnes, Amy Jaffe, and Edward L. Morse, "The New Geopolitics of Oil," <http://www.nationalinterest.org>.

40. Shibley Telhami et al., "Does Saudi Arabia Still Matter?"

41. "Strategic Energy Policy Challenges for the 21st Century," report of an independent task force sponsored by the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University and the Council on Foreign Relations, 2001, p. 4. See also Colin Campbell, *The Coming Oil Crisis*.

42. Jeff Gerth, "Forecast of Rising Oil Demand Challenges Tired Saudi Fields," *New York Times*, 24 February 2004; Jeff Gerth, "Saudis Debate Expert in U.S. on Outlook for Their Oil," *New York Times*, 25 February 2004.

43. Trevor Royle, "The World's Petrol Station: Iraq's Past Is Steeped in Oil . . . and Blood," *Sunday Herald*, 6 October 2002, <http://www.sundayherald.com/print28226>.

44. Before the war began, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz estimated that Iraqi oil revenues could bring in between \$50 and \$100 billion over the next two to three years. Gal Luft, "Iraq's Oil Sector One Year After Liberation," *Saban Center Middle East Memo* no. 4 (17 June 2004). Marie Cocco, *Washington Post*, August 9, 2005, concluded that "the rash predictions about Iraqi oil paying for the American conquest of Iraq were always suspicious, part of the marketing campaign that sold the war."

45. Neela Banerjee, "Stable World Oil Prices Are Likely to Become a War Casualty, Experts Say," *New York Times*, 2 October 2002.

46. Duffield, "Oil and the Iraq War"; "Guiding Principles for U.S. Post-Conflict Policy in Iraq," report of an independent working group cosponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations and the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University, December 2002, p. 18, [http://www.cfr.org/pdf/post-war\\_iraq.pdf](http://www.cfr.org/pdf/post-war_iraq.pdf).

47. Michael T. Klare, "Oiling the Wheels of War," *The Nation*, 7 October 2002; Michael T. Klare, "Washington's Oilpolitik," *Salon.com*, 18 July 2002.

48. *Los Angeles Times*, 23 March 2003.

49. Duffield, "Oil and the Iraq War," pp. 10–13; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Threatening Storm*, p. 167.

50. See the review and critique of this argument in Robert Looney, "Petrodollars: A Threat to US Interests in the Gulf?" *Middle East Policy* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2004).



51. Michael Dobbs, "Oil Reserve Is 'First Line of Defense' for U.S.," *Washington Post*, 18 February 2003, wrote: "The Bush administration does not want to be held hostage by an Arab country rife with anti-Americanism that has previously used oil as a weapon against the United States."

52. Gregory Gause, "The Approaching Turning Point: The Future of U.S. Relations with the Gulf States," Brookings Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World, Analysis Paper no. 2, May 2003, p. 2.

53. A controversial July 2002 briefing by a neoconservative analyst for Richard Perle's Defense Advisory Board described Saudi Arabia as the "kernel of evil" in the Middle East and concluded that a pro-Western Iraq could reduce US dependence on Saudi energy exports and enable the United States to force the monarchy to crack down on financing and support for terrorism within its boundaries. Dan Morgan and David B. Ottaway, "War-Wary Saudis Move to Increase Oil Market Clout," *Washington Post*, 30 November 2002.

54. Noreng, *Crude Power*, pp. 3–5, 50–53, 70–82, 94–102.

55. Jay R. Mandle, "A War for Oil."

56. Pieterse, *Globalization or Empire?* pp. 22–25.

57. Jim Lobe, "Uncertain Anniversary for Iraq War Champions," September 2005, <http://www.lewrockwell.com/ips/lobe243.html>.

58. Roger Burbach and Jim Tarbell, *Imperial Overstretch*, pp. 155–157.

59. Pieterse, *Globalization or Empire?* p. 20.

60. Shimshon Bichler and Jonathan Nitzan, "Dominant Capital and the New Wars."

61. Pieterse, *Globalization or Empire?* p. 27.

62. The expression is cited in Pieterse, *Globalization or Empire?* p. 23. Only a sampling of the mountain of evidence accumulating on the role of the neoconservative-Likud association in the Iraq War can be indicated here. Their close association was suggesting by Thomas Neuman of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, who exalted at the rise of the neoconservatives: "The Likudniks are really in charge now." Laurence A. Toenjes, "US Policy Toward Iraq: Unraveling the Web," June 2003, <http://www.opednews.com>. Neoconservatives famously authored a report to the Likudist Netanyahu government advocating a policy of aggressive confrontation with Israel's neighbors, advice even the Israeli prime minister rejected as too risky and extreme; many of the same neoconservatives later followed up in sponsoring a famous letter to President Bill Clinton urging the removal of Saddam Hussein. In his magisterial account, George Packer, *The Assassin's Gate*, concludes that the one thing the neoconservatives had in common was "an obsession with Israel" and a belief that the removal of Saddam Hussein would be very good for Israel and enable it to annex the Palestinian territories. A neoconservative reaction to 9/11 was to exclaim, "We are all Israelis now," implying an identity of interests between the United States and Israel in confronting the Arab-Islamic world. According to Joe Klein, *Time*, 5 February 2003: "Israel is very much embedded in the rationale for war with Iraq. It is part of the argument that dare not speak its name, a fantasy quietly cherished by the neo-conservative faction in the Bush administration and by many leaders of the American Jewish Community." According to General Anthony Zinni, a former commander of US forces in the Middle East, the neoconservatives' role in pushing the war on Israel's behalf was "the worst-kept secret in Washington." Ori Nir and Ami Eden, "Zinni Charges Neocons Pushed Iraq War to Benefit Israel," *Forward*, 28 May 2004. According to Philip Zelikow, a neoconservative member of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board at the time of the attack on Iraq, the "real threat" of Saddam's WMDs was not to the United States: "I'll tell you what

I think the real threat (is) and actually has been since 1990—it's the threat against Israel." *The Guardian*, 30 November 2003; *Daily Star*, 10 April 2004. For exhaustive documentation of the neoconservative role, see James Bamford, *Pretext for War*. The fact that several of the key players most aggressively pushing the Iraq War had originally proposed it for the benefit of another country (Israel) raises, Bamford observes, "the most troubling conflict of interest questions." Uri Avnery argues that "the small group that initiated this war—an alliance of Christian fundamentalists and Jewish neo-conservatives . . . constitutes a danger to the world, and especially to the Middle East, the Arab peoples and the future of Israel. . . . It does not dream only about an American empire, . . . but also of an Israeli mini-empire, under the control of the extreme right and the settlers. It wants to change the regimes in all Arab countries. It will cause permanent chaos in the region, the consequences of which it is impossible to foresee." "Israeli Journalist Uri Avnery Exposes Israel's Role in 'The Night After,'" <http://www.counterpunch.org/avnery04102003.htm>. See also Burbach and Tarbell, *Imperial Overstretch*, pp. 96–100; Michael Lind, "The Israeli Lobby"; Joel Beinin, "Pro-Israeli Hawks and the Second Gulf War."

63. According to Stephen Green, Wolfowitz was blocked from transferring technology to Israel while several neoconservatives were investigated for or suspected of passing secrets to Israel covertly. Stephen Green, "Serving Two Flags: Neo-Cons, Israel and the Bush Administration," *Counterpunch*, 28–29 February 2004. Richard Perle, a leading figure in the Jewish Institute of National Security, which led the team that produced the report to Netanyahu advising a belligerent policy toward the Arabs, was investigated by the *New York Times* over allegations that he received a commission for recommending purchase of an Israel weapon. Hiro, *Secrets and Lies*, pp. 17–20.

64. Noreng, *Crude Power*, pp. 3–4; Seymour Hersh, "The Iraq Hawks: Can Their War Plan Work?" *New Yorker*, 24 December 2001.

65. Joe Barnes, Amy Jaffe, and Edward L. Morse, "The New Geopolitics of Oil."

66. See Chapter 15, on Israel. See also *Daily Star*, 10 April 2004.

67. Noam Chomsky, "Preventive War: 'The Supreme Crime,'" *Z Net Interactive*, 11 August 2003, <http://www.zmag.org>. Thus, neoconservative Michael Ledeen famously declared: "Every 10 years or so, the US needs to pick up some small crappy little country and throw it against the wall, just to show the world we mean business." Burbach and Tarbell, *Imperial Overstretch*, p. 149.

68. Marc Lynch, "Taking Arabs Seriously."

69. Joseph Cirincione, "Origins of Regime Change in Iraq."

70. Quoted in James Chase, "Quixotic America."

71. Frank Rich, "Karl and Scooter's Excellent Adventure," 23 October 2005, <http://select.nytimes.com/2005/10/23/opinion>.

72. Pieterse, *Globalization or Empire?* pp. 47–54, observes that companies linked to the ruling group cashed in on Iraq: the Carlyle Group, Halliburton, Dyna Corp International, and Bechtel in particular, which operated in Iraq under a no-risk government guarantee against losses and immunity for any wrongdoing. US and UK firms received the lion's share of contracts and Iraqis a mere 2 percent. There are an estimated 20,000 foreign security contractors currently in Iraq, with some being paid more than \$1,000 a day, while funds for reconstruction are scarce.

Ellen Pringle has most thoroughly exposed what she considers the war-profiteering engaged in by top administration officials. She examines Richard Perle's Defense Policy Board, a group of thirty people, for the most part chosen by Rumsfeld and Feith, who are literally making a fortune off a war that they had been

promoting for years. Other administrative officials and Republican lobbyists have also been assiduous in seeking to cash in on the war by brokering contracts in Iraq or from their stake in companies getting contracts. Halliburton, the firm formerly headed by Vice President Cheney (and from which he received "deferred pay" while in office) was awarded controversial no-bid contracts in Iraq by the Pentagon on the eve of the invasion and has earned more than \$9 billion. According to Pringle and a June 2004 article in *Time* magazine ("The Paper Trail: Did Cheney Okay a Deal?"), Douglas Feith, whose dubious intelligence data was used to create a sense of threat from Iraq, approved the no-bid contract for Halliburton. Also, Feith was a partner in a law firm that teamed up with Ahmad Chalabi's nephew to facilitate business in Iraq by investors and contractors. Former CIA chief James Woolsey, a founding member of the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq who accused Iraq of aiding Al-Qaida's 9/11 attack, worked for or was a partner in private companies doing security business in Iraq after the invasion and was a featured speaker at a May 2003 conference for corporate executives on business opportunities in Iraq. There was, in Pringle's words, "a web-like profiteering network, that was specifically set up to funnel tax dollars through Iraq and back into the pockets of the Bush gang." She details the reports by government auditors and inspectors of the circumvention of federal contracting procedures and shabby accounting practices that opened the door to monumental fraud and waste as the US occupation authorities failed to account for the disposal of Iraqi money and US tax dollars. Pentagon audits showed \$1.03 billion in "questioned" costs and \$422 million in "unsupported" costs claimed by Halliburton. See <http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20050910>. A United Nations sanctioned audit concluded that about half of the \$5 billion in Iraq reconstruction funds could not be accounted for. See Evelyn Pringle, "Top War Profiteer Douglas Feith Retires Wealthy," <http://www.sierratimes.com/05/09/07/24>; Evelyn Pringle, "Iraqis to Bush—Where Did All Our Money Go?" *Media Monitors Network*, 12 September 2005; Chris Floyd, "How the WMD Scam Put Money in the Bush Family's Pockets," *Counterpunch*, 5 March 2004. Bunnatine Greenhouse, the highest-ranked civilian employee in the Army Corps of Engineers, responsible for signing off on Iraq contracts, testified that her superiors forced her to sign no-bid contracts for Halliburton on the eve of the invasion of Iraq—"the most blatant and improper contract abuse I have witnessed during the course of my professional career." In retaliation, she was demoted. *Boston Globe*, 15 July 2005.

73. "I glance at the headlines but rarely read the stories," Bush admitted, in acknowledging his heavy dependence on advisers for his information. Hiro, *Secrets and Lies*, p. 417. Wolfowitz, whom Hiro says can rightly be considered the author of the war, impressed Bush with the idea that overthrowing Saddam would bring peace and democracy to the Middle East and allow abundant oil to flow to the US. Hiro, *Secrets and Lies*, pp. 385.

74. Shadia B. Drury, *Leo Strauss and the American Right*, the definitive history of the neoconservatives, points to their Machiavellianism and cabal-like organization. See also Jim Lobe, "The Strong Must Rule the Weak: A Philosopher for an Empire," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 12 May 2003; A. Atlas, "A Classicist's Legacy: New Empire Builders," *New York Times*, 4 May 2003; Gregory Bruce Smith, "Leo Strauss and the Straussians: An Anti-democratic Cult?" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 30, no. 2 (June 1997).

75. W. Patrick Lang, "Drinking the Cool-Aid," *Middle East Policy* 11, no. 2 (Summer 2004), pp. 42–46. Joseph Cirincione, director of the Non-Proliferation Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, observed that the neo-conservatives are "a textbook case of how a small, organized group can determine

policy in a large nation, even when the majority of officials and experts originally scorned their views." Secretary of State Colin Powell and the Joint Chiefs of Staff opposed them. "Powell's view was that Wolfowitz was fixated on Iraq, that they were looking for any excuse to bring Iraq into this [9/11]." Cirincione, "Origins of Regime Change in Iraq." See also <http://news.ft.com/cms/s/afdb7b0c-40f3-11da-b3f9-00000e2511e8.html> for the charge of General Colin Powell's chief of staff, Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, that a "Cheney 'cabal' hijacked US foreign policy."

76. Douglas Feith's Office of Special Plans (OSP) was specifically created by Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz to bypass the usual bureaucratic channels in charge of analysis and collation. It used raw intelligence and disinformation, often from a single source, combining the most inflammatory claims, taken out of context, to promote the war. Cheney made a series of highly unorthodox visits to CIA headquarters in which he is said to have badgered low-level analysts to come up with information to substantiate claims of an Iraqi threat. Greg Thielman, director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research until September 2002, testified: "This [the Bush] administration has had a faith-based attitude. . . . 'We know the answers—give us the intelligence to support those answers.'" The Carnegie Endowment report *WMD in Iraq* concluded that the intelligence community, being unduly influenced by policymakers' views, overestimated the threat while the latter misrepresented it to the public. For further documentation on the abuse of the policy process by the neoconservatives, see the exposé by former CIA counterterrorism analyst Michael Scheuer, *Imperial Hubris*; James Bamford, *Pretext for War*; Chapter 2 in this volume.

77. The words are those of Reverend Franklin Graham, chosen by George Bush to deliver the prayers at his presidential inauguration. *The Guardian*, 10 November 2003. On the Christian Zionists, see Norman Madarasz, "A Christian Fundamentalist and Rational Secularist United Front," *Counterpunch*, 12 January 2004; Godfrey Hodgson, "From Frontiersman to Neo-Con," *openDemocracy.net*, 24 April 2003.

78. Louis Fisher, "Deciding on War Against Iraq."

79. The role in selling the war of right-wing-funded advocacy think tanks, which masquerade as objective research groups but which actually exist to promote a policy line in government and the media, is documented in Burbach and Tarbell, *Imperial Overstretch*, pp. 76–124, 149–171.

80. For example, the Rendon Group public relations firm (responsible for inventing the fantasy of Iraqi soldiers ripping Kuwaiti babies out of their incubators that was pivotal in legitimizing the Gulf War) was literally responsible for the invention of the Iraqi National Congress, which lobbied for the Iraq War. "Saving Private Lynch" was another Rendon product. See Pieterse, *Globalization or Empire?* p. 51.

81. Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber document the abuse of and failures of the media in *Weapons of Mass Deception*, pp. 176–188. They expose why Americans were so ill informed: 70 percent got their information about the war from the likes of Rupert Murdoch's Fox Network, which, together with his 140 sensationalist tabloids, peddled a common jingoism in the English speaking world. Fox won the ratings war with belligerent hyperpatriotism, which its competitors then tried to imitate. Clear Channel Communications, owning 1,200 radio stations, also propagandized for war. All the news media reported on Iraq under the government's label: "Operation Iraqi Freedom." "Embedded" reporters openly identified with the military while any critical reporting evoked an orchestrated avalanche of protest mail. This promoted pervasive media self-censorship: the *Donahue* show was axed by NBC for the perceived antiwar stance of many guests, antiwar rallies were given lit-

the press coverage, peace groups were refused the right to buy air time by the major networks, CIA testimony to Congress on the low probability of Iraq using WMDs was hardly reported, and Americans received a sanitized version of the war's violence. A study at the University of Massachusetts showed that the more television people watched, the less they knew about Iraq, while greater knowledge was correlated with opposition to the war. That the major media are corporate owned and that oil companies, in particular, have major stakes in the media giants goes a long way toward explaining the lack of major dissenting views.

82. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Another American Casualty: Credibility," *Washington Post*, 9 November 2003, p. B01.

83. By the start of the war, 66 percent of Americans thought Saddam Hussein was behind 9/11 and 79 percent thought he was close to having a nuclear weapon. Polling data released in October 2004 by the University of Maryland's Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) (<http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0203>) showed that "even after the final report of Charles Duelfer to Congress saying that Iraq did not have a significant WMD program, 72% of Bush supporters continue to believe that Iraq had actual WMD (47%) or a major program for developing them (25%)." Similarly, 75 percent of Bush supporters continued to believe that Iraq was providing substantial support to Al-Qaida. Asked whether the United States should have gone to war with Iraq if US intelligence had concluded that Iraq was not making WMDs or providing support to Al-Qaida, 58 percent of Bush supporters said the United States should not have, and 61 percent assumed that in this case the president would not have. PIPA, 21 October 2004.

84. Pieterse, "Hyperpower Exceptionalism" in *Globalization or Empire?* pp. 121-141; see also Andrew Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War*.

85. Fisher, "Deciding on War Against Iraq." According to George Soros, US foreign policy was in the hands of a "group of extremists" under whom "the abnormal, the radical, and the extreme have been redefined as normal." "The Bubble of American Supremacy," *Atlantic Monthly*, December 2003. For Michael Lind, *Made in Texas*, Bush II marks a takeover by an extreme right-wing cabal. Similarly, Seymour Hersh of the *New Yorker* mused in a speech on 8 October 2004 at the University of California, Berkeley: "How could eight or nine neo-conservatives come and take charge of this government? . . . They overran the bureaucracy, they overran the Congress, they overran the press, and they overran the military! So you say to yourself—How fragile is this democracy?" Quoted in Patrick Seale, "George W. Bush and the 'Politics of Fear,'" *Mafhoum*, 30 October 2004. Former ambassador Chas Freeman lamented that checks on the war party failed because patriotism was confused with silent acquiescence by those who knew better in policies that led the country into disaster. "The opposition party does not only not oppose, it does not propose alternatives. . . . This is . . . a systemic breakdown in the American democracy." Speech to the fourteenth annual Policymakers Conference of the National Council on US-Arab Relations, September 2005, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/762/op8.htm>. See also the analysis of the policy process that led to war by Michael C. Hudson, "The United States in the Middle East," especially pp. 295-303.

86. See <http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0203>.

87. Anthony Shadid, *Night Draws Near*.

88. "Continuing Collateral Damage: The Health and Environmental Costs of War on Iraq—Iraq Faces Severe Health Crisis," <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, 11 November 2003; <http://news.independent.co.uk>, 20 January 2004.

89. The British medical journal *Lancet* of October 2004 reported a Johns

Hopkins Medical School estimate, based on projections from household surveys, of 100,000 Iraqi deaths. Iraq Body Count's public database, based on actual reported deaths compiled by the Geneva-based Graduate Institute of International Studies, counted 39,000 Iraqis killed as a direct result of combat or armed violence since March 2003. An Iraqi humanitarian organization, *Iraqiyun*, reported 128,000 Iraqis killed since the US invasion began in March 2003 based on data from relatives and families of the deceased and from Iraqi hospitals. Fifty-five percent of those killed were women and children. Since deaths are usually undercounted in war situations, the 100,000 figure seems plausible. *World Peace Herald*, 7 December 2005; <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, 11 November 2003; <http://news.independent.co.uk>, 8 February 2004.

90. The *Philadelphia Inquirer's* 13 November 2003 report on a top-secret CIA report from Iraq.

91. Anthony Cordesman, *Iraq's Evolving Insurgency*. Falah Aljibury contends that it was the plan to sell off Iraq's oil that ultimately led to the insurgency and attacks on US occupying forces. "We saw an increase in the bombing of oil facilities, pipelines, built on the premise that privatization is coming," he reported. See Evelyn Pringle, "Iraqis to Bush—Where Did All Our Money Go?" *Media Monitors Network*, 12 September 2005; Tariq Ali, "The Same Old Racket in Iraq: To the Victors, the Spoils," *Counterpunch*, 13-14 December 2003; Phyllis Bennis, "Bush on Middle East 'Democracy' and also 'Ending Occupation in Iraq,'" *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 21 November 2003, 7 June 2004, <http://www.fpi.org>; Naomi Klein, "Bring Halliburton Home," *The Nation*, 24 November 2003.

92. According to Anthony Cordesman, the most prominent expert on Gulf security, US decisions were so flawed because they bypassed the interagency process and ignored the experts in favor of neoconservative ideologues and exile groups and because of Rumsfeld's pressure on the military to underman the invasion and the Pentagon's failure to plan for nation building. Cordesman, *Iraq's Evolving Insurgency*. George Packer, in *Assassins Gate*, reveals that the war party eschewed postwar planning because, in exposing the difficulties the United States would face, such planning might have obstructed the drive to war. He writes: "The arrogance phase [of the US war] was going in undermanned, under-resourced, [expecting to] skim off the top layer of leadership, take control of a functioning state, and be out by six weeks and get the oil funds to pay for it." See <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/06>. One could also argue that for the neoconservatives, chaos in Iraq was perhaps no bad thing in that it would keep a potential major Arab power debilitated; they speak approvingly of unleashing "creative destruction" to remake the Middle East on Israel's behalf. Moreover, as long as the chaos in Iraq persists, the Iraqi government will need a US presence, a key Washington goal. Mark LeVine, "Where Chaos Is King," <http://tomdispatch.com/index.mhtml?pid=30881>.

93. Tony Karon, "Learning the Art of Occupation from Israel," *Time* magazine, 8 December 2003; "Israel Trains US Assassination Squads in Iraq," *Time* magazine, 9 December 2003; Julian Borger, *The Guardian*, 12 September 2003; *Christian Science Monitor*, 11 December 2003.

94. See [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4344136.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4344136.stm).

95. Mark Danner, "Delusions in Baghdad," *New York Review of Books* 50, no. 20 (18 December 2003).

96. *Washington Post*, 13 May 2004; *Christian Science Monitor*, 29 April 2004; Thomas Melia and Brian Katulis, "Iraqis Discuss Their Country's Future: Post-War Perspectives from the Iraqi Street," National Democratic Institute, 28 July 2003.

<http://www.ndi.org>; "Most Iraqis Mistrustful of US-Led Coalition, Poll Finds," *Agence-France Presse*, 12 January 2003, <http://www.middle-east-online.com>.

97. *Christian Science Monitor*, 11 December 2003.

98. *Los Angeles Times*, 7 October 2005.

99. Anthony Cordesman, *The Eroding US Position on Iraq*.

100. In 2004 polls, only 7–10 percent of Iraqi Arabs had a positive view of the United States; 92 percent saw the United States as an occupier and 2 percent as a liberator, while 55 percent would feel safer if the United States left compared to 29 percent less safe. Hiro, *Secrets and Lies*, pp. 486–488. A secret 2005 poll, undertaken for the UK Ministry of Defence, showed that up to 45 percent of Iraqi citizens supported attacks on the US/UK occupation forces, fewer than 1 percent thought allied military involvement was helping to improve security in the country, 82 percent were "strongly opposed" to the presence of occupation troops, and 67 percent of Iraqis felt less secure because of the occupation; 71 percent of people rarely got safe, clean water and 47 percent never had enough electricity. See <http://telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;jsessionid=ehkikxoylvooovqfiqmfncagavcbqjvc?xml=/news/2005/10/23>.

101. The occupation authorities attempted to lock in what *The Economist* described as "the wish-list of international investors." "Let's All Go to the Yard Sale: Iraq's Economic Liberalization," *The Economist*, 27 September 2003. US decrees gave foreign investors equal rights with Iraqis; permitted the full repatriation of profits; abolished tariffs; and authorized the sale of state-owned companies, reductions in food and fuel subsidies, and privatization of social services. By contrast, under an original draft of the constitution drawn up by Iraqi representatives, all of Iraq's natural resources would be owned collectively by the Iraqi people and the state would be legally bound to provide employment opportunities to everyone. However, all these provisions disappeared as US officials constantly intervened in the writing of the permanent constitution. US ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad, a member of the Project for the New American Century who had called for invading Iraq, was described by *Reuters* as being a "ubiquitous presence" in the process and by the *Financial Times* as playing a "big role in the negotiations" over the constitution. Complained one Kurdish member of the constitutional committee: "The Americans say they don't intervene, but they have intervened deep. They gave us a detailed proposal, almost a full version of a constitution." Notably, the provision affirming the Iraqi people's collective ownership of Iraq's oil was replaced by a provision that Herbert Docena believes lays the legal ground for selling off Iraq's oil. He argues that the Shia and Kurdish parties seem to have accepted the neoliberal economic provisions in the constitution in return for US acquiescence in their plans to balkanize the country—against the wishes of most Iraqis. According to a July 2005 survey conducted by the International Republican Institute, 69 percent of Iraqis wanted the constitution to establish "a strong central government" and only 22 percent wanted it to give "significant powers to regional governments." Even in Shia-majority areas in the south, only 25 percent wanted federalism while 66 percent rejected it. Jonathan Finer and Omar Fekeiki, "U.S. Steps Up Role in Iraq Charter Talks," *Washington Post*, 13 August 2005; Michael Georgy, "Iraq Parliament May Back Charter, Sunnis Opposed," *Reuters*, 28 August 2005; Steve Negus and Dhiya Rasan, "Iraqi Parliament Delays Constitution Vote," *Financial Times*, 23 August 2005; Herbert Docena, "Iraq's Neoliberal Constitution," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 2 September 2005, <http://www.fpiif.org>; International Crisis Group, "Unmaking Iraq: A Constitutional Process Gone Awry," *Middle East Briefing* no. 19 (26 September 2005).

102. Pieterse, *Globalization or Empire?* p. 55.

103. General John Abizaid of Central Command told Congress in early October 2005 that the Iraqi army had only one fully independent battalion—about 500 men. In the vacuum, the insurgents—numbering perhaps 20,000—and sectarian militias, proliferated. *Newsweek*, 10 October 2005. One reason the Iraqi army is so ill equipped in the face of well-armed insurgents is because its procurement budget of over \$1 billion had been siphoned out of the country; weapons either were never supplied or were discovered to be useless on delivery. The Iraqi government was expected to issue a warrant for the arrest of Hazem al-Shaalani, the former defense minister and formerly a London businessman, in connection with the disappearance of more than \$1 billion. Patrick Cockburn, *Independent on Line*, 20 September 2005, <http://news.independent.co.uk>.

104. According to *Newsweek*, 10 October 2005, there is an undeclared civil war in Iraq, with rival Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish militias and death squads precipitating ethnic cleansing. A UN report called the new constitution a formula for territorial breakup, with the Kurds and Shia creating mini-states, the latter linked to Iran. This is precisely the scenario about which Arab leaders repeatedly warned Washington before the war.

105. Rhodes, "Imperial Logic," p. 142; Jervis, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine."

106. Owing to the dilapidated oil infrastructure and sabotage by insurgents, oil export revenues totaled only \$5 billion in 2003 and just over \$17 billion in 2004, while a sabotage campaign created an inhospitable investment climate for foreign oil companies.

107. See <http://news.independent.co.uk>, 20 January 2004; Erik Leaver, "The Costs of Quagmire," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 14 September 2005, <http://www.ips-dc.org/iraq/quagmire>.

108. *Reuters*, 13 November 2003.

109. The book *Imperial Hubris*, by Michael Scheuer, formerly the top CIA official responsible for the fight against Al-Qaida, accuses Bush of diverting energies from the real security threat by invading Iraq. Lieutenant-General William Odom, director of the National Security Agency under Ronald Reagan, declared Bush's invasion of Iraq to be the "greatest strategic disaster in United States history." Paul Craig Roberts, "The Greatest Strategic Disaster in US History," <http://counterpunch.com/roberts10032005.html>.

110. *New York Times*, 8 May 2004. According to Paul Craig Roberts, a former assistant secretary of the Treasury in the Reagan administration: "In the US today nothing stands in the way of the arbitrary exercise of power by government. Federal courts have acquiesced in unconstitutional detention policies. There is no opposition party, and there is no media, merely huge conglomerates or collections of federal broadcasting licenses, the owners of which are afraid to displease the government." Paul Craig Roberts, "Government by Star Chamber," *Counterpunch*, 16 September 2005.

111. Jervis, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine."

112. In March 2004, 65 percent of Americans supported the decision to wage war in Iraq. A year later, support had sagged to 44 percent, with 53 percent thinking the war a mistake and 57 percent of Americans believing that they were "less safe" than before the war. Only 40 percent of Americans approved of and 59 percent disapproved of Bush's handling of Iraq. *Reuters*, 16 August 2005.

113. Schwenninger, "Revamping American Grand Strategy."

114. Pieterse, *Globalization or Empire?* p. 44.

115. Hiro, *Secrets and Lies*, p. 150.
116. Jervis, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine."
117. David Marquand, "Why Blair Dressed Up War Realpolitik in Dodgy Moralistic Rhetoric," *The Guardian*, 21 February 2004.
118. See Chapter 8.
119. According to a Pew Research Center poll conducted shortly before the war began, a majority of respondents in France (75 percent), Germany (54 percent), and Russia (76 percent) agreed with the statement that "the United States wanted to control Iraqi oil." But opposition to the war in states nominally supporting the United States ran at least as high: 73 percent in Italy, 79 percent in Denmark, 67 percent in the Czech Republic, 82 percent in Hungary, and 63 percent in Poland. *Reuters*, 30 January 2003; Noam Chomsky, "Invasion as Marketing Problem: The Iraq War and Contempt for Democracy," *Counterpunch*, 14 November 2003; Anatol Lieven, "The Hinge to Europe: Don't Make Britain Choose Between the U.S. and the E.U.," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, policy brief, 25 August 2003.
120. See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/2004/03/15>.
121. Countries assembled at a conference to aid the reconstruction of Iraq pledged \$8 billion, against an overall estimate of \$55 billion in reconstruction needs between 2004 and 2007, and actually paid out much less. Duffield, "Oil and the Iraq War."
122. Clyde Prestowitz, "America the Arrogant: Why Don't We Listen Anymore?" *WashingtonPost.com*, 7 July 2002, p. B01.
123. The director of intelligence coordination for the German government, Ernst Uhrlau, declared that the Iraq War had become the single most important motivating factor for terrorist activities in contemporary Europe. European security agencies were bracing themselves for the possible return from Iraq of Arab fighters to western Europe and worried about the growing radicalization of the diaspora Muslims in Europe. See [http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story\\_page/0,5744,16608035%255e2703,00.html](http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,16608035%255e2703,00.html). The National Intelligence Council, a CIA think tank, reported in January 2005 that Iraq was providing a training and recruitment ground for a new generation of Islamic militants, just as Afghanistan had done for Al-Qaida. Hiro, *Secrets and Lies*, p. 523. Dilip Hiro notes that the flypaper theory that terrorists are attracted to Iraq, where they can be killed so they don't harm the United States itself, assumes there is a finite number of them; but the pool of possible disaffected dramatically grew because of the war. Even 1 percent of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims is 1.3 million people. Hiro, *Secrets and Lies*, p. 387.
124. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "Another American Casualty: Credibility," *WashingtonPost.com*, 9 November 2003, p. B01.
125. Gabriel Kolko, "The Coming Elections and the Future of American Global Power," *Counterpunch*, 12–14 March 2004.
126. Arthur Schlesinger, *Los Angeles Times*, 23 March 2003.
127. Those with a favorable view of the United States decreased in France from 63 to 31 percent, in Italy from 70 to 34 percent, in Russia from 61 to 28 percent, in the UK from 75 to 48 percent. Rampton and Stauber, *Weapons of Mass Deception*, p. 6.
128. Cited in *International Herald Tribune*, 1–2 February 2003.
129. A congressionally mandated advisory panel warned that "America's image and reputation abroad could hardly be worse." A fact-finding mission to the Middle East had found that "there is deep and abiding anger toward U.S. policies

and actions." Large majorities in Egypt, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia "view George W. Bush as a greater threat to the world order than Osama bin Laden" and the United States is viewed as "less a beacon of hope than a dangerous force to be countered." See <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/23>. Only 7 percent of Saudis, 15 percent of Turks, and 6 percent of Egyptians had a favorable view of the United States. See <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/05>. One percent of Jordanians and Palestinians, 17 percent of Indonesians, and 19 percent of Pakistanis had a favorable view of the United States in summer 2002. Hiro, *Secrets and Lies*, pp. 352–353. More remarkably, in Kuwait, a country the United States had recently liberated from Iraq, only 28 percent had a favorable view. Rampton and Stauber, *Weapons of Mass Deception*, pp. 30, 34.

130. According to Alain Gresh, the scandals of Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib and the erosion of civil liberties in the United States undermined Washington's claims that it alone was capable of defining universal values of human rights and democracy and had the sole authority to decide whether regimes were acceptable or not. Alain Gresh, "Just Saying No," <http://mondediplo.com/2005/09/01>.

131. Quoted in Pieterse, *Globalization or Empire?* p. 29.

132. *Asahi Shinbun*, 18 February 2003.

133. David Hendrickson, "Toward Universal Empire."

134. In September 2003, Kofi Annan said that "if this doctrine [of preventive war] were to be adopted, it could set precedents that resulted in a proliferation of the unilateral and lawless use of force, with or without credible justification. This logic represents a fundamental challenge to the principles on which, however imperfectly, world peace and stability have rested." *New York Times*, 24 September 2003. Eight out of ten international lawyers would agree, said the dean of Princeton School of International Affairs. Robert Black, Edinburgh University professor of law, said the real legal test of US justifications for the war would be whether the International Court of Justice would accept the argument, the odds against which were, he thought, ten to one. Hiro, *Secrets and Lies*, p. 167.

135. Kenneth Roth, "The Law of War in the War on Terror."

136. Quoted in Glenn Perry, "Huntington and His Critics."

137. John Ikenberry, "American Power and the Empire of Capitalist Democracy."

138. Thus, Anatol Lieven observed that while the United States should have acted like a satisfied power, it was behaving as a revisionist one, "kicking to pieces the hill of which it is king." "The Empire Strikes Back," *The Nation*, 7 July 2003.

139. Organski, *World Politics*.

140. Jervis, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine," p. 380.

141. As Kenneth Waltz argues, "The vice to which great powers easily succumb in a multipolar world is inattention; in a bi-polar world, overreaction, in a unipolar world, overextension." Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism After the Cold War," p. 12.

142. Waltz, "Structural Realism After the Cold War," pp. 12, 27.

143. Stephen Krasner, *Defending the National Interest*.

144. Waltz, "Structural Realism After the Cold War," pp. 12, 27.

145. Birthe Hansen, *Unipolarity and the Middle East*. Actually Hansen uses the term "flocking" to denote deference to the hegemon, rather than "bandwagoning"; certainly it is true that for most states, following the hegemon is not usually the traditional form of bandwagoning in which a state heads off an attack on itself by joining (rather than balancing against) a threatening state. Rather, as she points out,

most states are threatened by regional rivals, not the distant hegemon, and seek the latter's support against the former. But this may be changing as the United States goes beyond offshore balancing.

146. Stephen Walt, "Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy," *Foreign Affairs* (September–October 2005).

147. William Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World."

148. Volgy and Bailin, *International Politics and State Strength*.

149. The New America Foundation, a grouping of foreign policy and security elites, argues (in an oblique criticism of the Bush government) that the war on terrorism requires "strong partnerships with allies based on mutual respect" and "living up to traditional U.S. principles, such as the rule of law, in conducting the war, at home as well as overseas." Jim Lobe, "Four Years After 9/11, Anti-Terror Strategy in Doubt," 9 September 2005, <http://www.antiwar.com/lobe/?articleid=7207>.

150. Pieterse, *Globalization or Empire?* pp. 26, 29.

151. Symptomatic of this, Control Risk, a UK security consultancy, identifies aggressive US unilateralism as the most important single factor driving up global risk. *Financial Times*, 11 November 2003.

## 24

# Lessons of the Iraq War

*Raymond Hinnebusch and Rick Fawn*

What are the lessons of the Iraq War for our understanding of foreign policy making and international relations? Does the war revalidate the once dominant paradigm, realism, which since the end of the Cold War has been under increasing attack by liberal, constructivist, and international society alternatives? Does it revalidate Marxist theories of imperialism after Marxism's post-Cold War decline?

### ■ The Iraq War and Theories of Foreign Policy Making

The Iraq case reveals some interesting anomalies in the foreign policy process, at least in the US and UK cases. In both cases, war was driven from the top by an ideological-minded leader. What is more remarkable, however, is how much of the permanent bureaucracy, believed by the bureaucratic politics approaches to shape outcomes, was systematically ignored, bypassed, or pressured by politicians or political appointees to support a policy that did not enjoy much support among foreign policy "experts." Another remarkable phenomenon that some analysts believe was exposed by the war was the intimate links between the US neoconservatives and the Israeli Likud Party, suggesting a role of transnational networks in the policy process. While Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye see a role for such networks under conditions of complex interdependence,<sup>1</sup> it is specifically thought to be characteristic of low politics—material interests subject to compromise; in this case, however, such networks were operating within the domain of peace and war and involved identity movements with messianic agendas. The importance of the neoconservative-Likud connection is, of course, highly contested and might best be taken as a hypothesis deserving of further research. Finally, however, certain stereotypic aspects of bureaucratic-politics behavior were in evidence, such as the accusations of