

Prewar Assessments of Iraq's Possession of WMD and its Affiliation with Al-Qaeda and
How They Compare with Post-War Findings

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my family and friends.

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ABSTRACT

PREWAR ASSESMENTS OF IRAQ'S POSSESSION OF WMD AND ITS AFFILIATION WITH AL-QAEDA AND HOW THEY COMPARE WITH POST-WAR FINDINGS

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Since the turn of the millennium the United States has waged war on two eastern fronts. The US's relationship with Iraq has been rocky since the Ba'ath Party assumed power in the 1960s. The US supplied Saddam Hussein with money in weapons to help support a war against Islamic Iran, a perceived threat to both the US and Iraq. After Saddam fought Iran to a standstill, U.S and Iraqi relations began to deteriorate. US and Iraqi ties were completely cut following Saddam's invasion of oil rich Kuwait. George H. W. Bush, the president that supervised the American invasion of Iraq in 1990 refused to remove Saddam from power because he feared a dangerous power vacuum would allow fundamentalists to seize power in Iraq. After the invasion, Bush and his allies continued to distrust the intentions of Saddam Hussein. The election of George H.W. Bush's son, George W. Bush renewed the US and Iraq rivalry.

Shortly after Bush was elected to office, terrorists attacked the US and killed scores of Americans. George Bush assumed a policy of weeding out terrorism worldwide, and eliminating any foreign threats to US peace and security. The US launched an invasion of Afghanistan shortly after the attacks of 9/11. With suspicion looming, US officials began to stack evidence against Iraq exposing links to Al-Qaeda and aspirations to attain weapons of mass destruction. Weeks of deliberation led to the invasion of Iraq and subsequent removal of Saddam Hussein and his regime from power. The search for weapons of mass destruction and evidence tying Saddam Hussein to Al-Qaeda began.

Six years since the start of the invasion, the US has not been able to unlock former Iraqi programs to build weapons of mass, or evidence linking Iraq to Al-Qaeda. Great contrasts exist between pre-war justification for the start of war, and post-war findings that may expose the correlation between Iraq, Al-Qaeda, and weapons of mass destruction. The realities created by the Iraq War may also play a role in shaping public opinion, and increasing international diplomacy to prevent future strife that may lead to death, destruction, and poverty.

1. Introduction

In order to gather a body of work that is unbiased the self-imposed restriction in this study is that no newspaper, magazine or press articles (the normal sources of the historical analyst looking for perspective) are allowed to be used. The hope here is that the volume of information gathered, thus left unfiltered by the opinion of the working journalist will present us with facts that can then be judged in their weight alone. Like other chronicles of history, the events of the Iraq War can be broken down into a simple timeline. In putting this study together this writer has sought to present the accumulated body of evidence in as impartial a manner as possible, allowing the facts, unfiltered to speak for themselves. For the sake of clarity each section of this study has been dated with a year starting from the moment the first plans regarding Iraq were put in motion. This writer has concluded with a summary outlining both the limitations of this study and suggesting avenues for further research.

2. Literature Review

The CIA report entitled *Iraq and Weapons of Mass Destruction* presented the first explicit American critical review of the information that was examined prior to the start of the Iraq invasion. The long-winded report chronicled the US's complicated relationship with Iraq, dating back to Saddam Hussein's ascension to power. The historical background provided in the article is linked to two major factors — WMD's, and Al-Qaeda. Interestingly, a number of unknown facts are revealed about Al-Qaeda in the detailed reports. The location of former sleeper cells and the identity shadowy Al-Qaeda pioneers that no longer hold great importance are discussed. With unique prose, Al-Qaeda's operating capabilities, organizational management skills, and global connections are somewhat personified.

The in-depth chronicle of Al-Qaeda shapes several major conclusions and inferences into place. First, Al-Qaeda is not strictly an Islamic organization. Al-Qaeda is a terrorist entity that will forge ties with any party that is willing to participate in its terrorist aspirations. Second, Al-Qaeda's scope of power runs beyond Osama Bin Laden. Al-Qaeda is an ideological concept that is deeply embedded in Islamic fanaticism. Moreover, the report examines Iraq's weapons arsenal dating back to the Iran-Iraq war. Prior to the report, the US's complicity in Iraq's war with Iran is sometimes ignored by mainstream media in an attempt to deflect attention from unsuccessful efforts of the US to help unseat

the fanatic Shiite regime. Amazingly, the US had up to date reports of Iraq's weapons programs even following the US's fallout with Saddam in the 1980s. Most importantly, the report identifies some logistical errors on the part of US officials prior to the start of the Iraq war. US officials may have overrated Iraq's ability to develop WMD's and seriousness of the link between Al-Qaeda and Iraq. The report opened the floodgates to various anti-war demonstrations.

One month prior to the Iraq invasion, Colin Powell delivered a powerful and emotional speech to the United Nations regarding the US intent to take down Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath regime. With the world watching, Powell presented a number of security threats that the world could face as result of Saddam Hussein's so-called terrorist intentions. In mesmerizing fashion, Powell boldly and eloquently skimmed through the US's laundry list of Iraqi wrong doings. Weeks earlier, the UN released various reports and documents which hinted that Iraq probably did not have the capability to develop WMD's. In order to effectively supersede the claims made by the UN, Powell combined Iraq's weapons and Al-Qaeda threat to personify the embattled nation, still subject to punishing sanctions. Halfway through the speech, Powell had effectively portrayed Iraq as a silent giant waiting to unleash its wrath on the US and the free world.

Three major themes were established by Powell's delivery to UN. First, free and democratic aspirations are at stake as result of the Iraqi threat. Despite a number of shortcomings in the Iraq War, some nations still believe that Western ideas face extinction because of the terrorist threat. Second, hostile leaders cannot develop nor possess weapons of mass destruction. WMD's have become a major reoccurring theme in

mainstream media and international politics. Third, the world must collectively work to eliminate the WMD threat. Nuclear proliferation continues to find its way to the top of political agendas worldwide. The Powell speech was prelude to the US's war efforts in Iraq. The speech put Iraq on short notice that they faced near annihilation.

Archer's publication is one of the first works that examines the correlation that exists between Al-Qaeda, Europe, and the rapid pace of globalization. Since the War on Terror was launched following the attacks of 9/11, the world's focus has been placed on Al-Qaeda's operations within the 50 United States. Reports, interviews, and documentaries have highlighted the lives and activities of Al-Qaeda operatives living in the US. Archer explores Al-Qaeda's appeal to European Muslims, and the ability of the organization to infiltrate European society because of social openness and relative prejudice against outsiders in some areas of Europe. Archer believes that the probability of Al-Qaeda expanding in Europe is far greater than the US because of America's willingness to embrace Islam privately and openly.

In the Netherlands for example, Muslim females are barred from wearing the traditional headscarf, a measure that Muslims view as discriminatory. Al-Qaeda operatives are able to rapidly move throughout the European Union without being detected by authorities, while in the US various intelligence agencies function in every state. Al-Qaeda operatives slip from one nation to another before authorities can sniff them out. Archer also predicts the former Soviet Union may become a hotbed for Al-Qaeda sleeper cells because of their low participation in the War on Terror. Most nations in the former Eastern Bloc have either opposed sending troops to Iraq or recalled their

troops since the start of the war. Archer infers that the War on Terror, the growth of Al-Qaeda in Europe, and the continued Iraq War will lead to the continued growth of Al-Qaeda in Europe.

Some of Archers assertions may be far-fetched or overrated even though Al-Qaeda has already struck in Europe on several occasions. Al-Qaeda's growth has been hindered by Interpol's willingness to track down Al-Qaeda money movement. Moreover, Al-Qaeda Europe's growth is plagued by their inability to camouflage and assimilate. Many Europeans are already weary of the ideologies of mainstream Islamic group.

3. Data and Methodology

Empirical data has been used to test the hypothesis that little correlation exists between pretenses used to invade Iraq and post war findings. Various media outlets and scholarly entities have released polls that reflect the opinion of academic experts and the general public. Moreover, various primary sources have been closely analyzed and dissected in order to understand the role that pre-war information played in the initial invasion of Iraq, post invasion revelations and findings.

Before the war started, political figureheads, representatives and NGOs, and former politicians provided first hand information that was either validated or refuted following the Iraq invasion. Since the war began, the CIA has published a number of documents that chronicle findings in Iraq.

In the final chapters of the research, empirical data is used to reveal the effects of War on Iraq. Some of the statistics highlight the level of suffering which Iraqis have endured since the start of the US military campaign. Civilian life has been lost and much of Iraq's infrastructure has been destroyed. Nonetheless, the main focus on the article is on primary source, and concrete evidence provided by bystanders as opposed to digits and basic empirical data. The study largely rests on strong assertions created as result of the appearance of important published documents

To test the hypothesis, data and information has been methodically examined to increase the likelihood of creating an accurate and logical outcome. The first layer of methodology rests upon reviewing a number of primary sources that existed prior to the beginning of the Iraq War. Scholars, leaders, journalists and other figureheads with firsthand knowledge of Iraq's aspirations to develop weapons of mass destruction and forge ties with Al-Qaeda either published documents or delivered public statements regarding Al-Qaeda and WMDs.

In the second phase, documents and firsthand accounts that appeared following the breakout of war are examined and compared with pre war evidence, documents, and publications. Finally, the results of the Iraq campaign are weighed and analyzed to ascertain an understanding of the US's pre-war goals and aspirations and the post-war realities. Proving the hypothesis is an important step in deciphering what steps can be taken to avoid war and prevent the loss of life and the destruction of infrastructure.

4. The 2001 Bush Doctrine – War on Terror Begins

Terror comes to America

The timeline of the Iraq conflict appears to start on September 11 2001 when terrorists seized control of two planes and deliberately crashed them into the World Trade Center leading to death and carnage. The impact of this action has huge ramifications in terms of the US government's ability to respond aggressively towards perceived threats with the blessings of the people of the United States and the full backing of their elected representatives in Congress.

The attack on the US by Al-Qaeda operatives was used by the Bush Administration to link Iraq to Al-Qaeda and place it on center stage in terms of its level of threat to the West. This is supported by numerous interviews and statements made by Bush Administration officials as well as the President himself and are reiterated by a speech the President gave to the Council on Foreign Relations on December 7, 2005: “yet the terrorists have made it clear that Iraq is the central front in their war against humanity. So we must recognize Iraq as the central front in the war on terror.” (President George W. Bush Addresses the Council on Foreign Relations, 2005).

Finding common ground: linking Al-Qaeda to Iraq

In his address the President, George W. Bush made a clear, reiterated link between Al-Qaeda and Iraq and the 9/11 assault on the US, when he said: “The terrorists in Iraq share the same ideology as the terrorists who struck the United States on September the 11th, blew up commuters in London and Madrid, murdered tourists in Bali, killed workers in Riyadh and slaughtered guests at a wedding in Amman, Jordan.” (President George W. Bush Addresses the Council on Foreign Relations, 2005).

By the time this address was made the Iraq war was in its second year of field operations. The Bush Administration had adopted a hardened stance that sought to link 9/11 and Al-Qaeda with Iraq and reinforce it at every opportunity. This was to be one of two main reasons cited by the Bush Administration as the cause of its invasion of Iraq. The second was the claim that Iraq was in possession of weapons of mass destruction (popularly referred to as WMD) that it could employ against the West at very short notice. The reason there are two main causes used to initiate the war on Iraq lies in the fact that the primary one cited, namely, the attack on US soil by a terrorist organization associated with Iraq was being refuted by the very Commission set up to investigate the attack as we shall see in the subsequent sections of this study.

Plotting for war: seeking the approval of government

The perception that Iraq was a direct threat and intricately linked with the 9/11 attacks is further seen in a signed memo delivered by Congress leaders to President Bush that begins with:

We write to endorse your admirable commitment to “lead the world to victory” in the war against terrorism. We fully support your call for “a broad and sustained campaign” against the “terrorist organizations and those who harbor and support them.” We agree with Secretary of State Powell that the United States must find and punish the perpetrators of the horrific attack of September 11, and we must, as he said, “go after terrorism wherever we find it in the world” and “get it by its branch and root.” We agree with the Secretary of State that US policy must aim not only at finding the people responsible for this incident, but must also target those “other groups out there that mean us no good” and “that have conducted attacks previously against US personnel, US interests and our allies. (<http://www.newamericancentury.org/Bushletter.htm>, 2001).

A new hat for Saddam: America's favorite terrorist

It is notable here that the letter, continues to name Iraq as a potential aggressor:

We agree with Secretary of State Powell's recent statement that Saddam Hussein “is one of the leading terrorists on the face of the Earth ... ” It may be that the Iraqi government provided assistance in some form to the recent attack on the United States.

This is just nine days after the 9/11 attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Center and three years before the Commission specially chartered by President Bush for the purpose of looking into the 9/11 attack released its report. At this point opinion links Iraq with Al-Qaeda and the 9/11 attacks. But within eight weeks there will also be a further link made between Iraq and its acquisition of weapons of mass destruction that will be significant enough for nine leading US senators to draft into an official Congressional

letter that they then sent to President Bush. That letter, dated, December, 6, 2001 says as political commentator William Kristol cites in a memorandum:

Nine leading members of Congress sent a letter to President Bush calling for Saddam Hussein's removal from power. As they note, Saddam "cannot be permanently contained." As long as he is in power, "he will seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction ... We have no doubt that these deadly weapons are intended for use against the United States and its allies.

In recent weeks, the president had made it clear that the "war on terrorism" is made even more urgent by the fact that terrorist states such as Iraq are actively developing nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. The nexus of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction makes the removal of Saddam key to success in the overall war on terrorism, and a matter of considerable urgency. This letter should reassure the Bush Administration that there will be bipartisan political support for the president when he moves on to the next crucial phase of the war.

(<http://www.newamericancentury.org/iraqmideast2001.htm>, 2001)

5. 2002 – Custom-Building Pretense for War

New chums: the executive branch, CIA, and Congress

The tone of the year was set when in his 29 January 2002 State of the Union address, US President George W. Bush put the world on notice that the United States would “not stand aside as the world’s most dangerous regimes develop the world’s most dangerous weapons.” (Indyk M. S., 2002). It posed a clear and present threat to world security would become familiar as the year moved on and a number of U.N. Security Council Resolutions instigated by the US and backed by Britain would push Iraq towards a hard-line, defiant, stance.

In the initial stages of the war on terror, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), under George Tenet, was rising to prominence as the lead agency in the Afghanistan war. But when Tenet insisted in his personal meetings with President Bush that there was no connection between Al-Qaeda and Iraq, Vice-President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld initiated a secret program to re-examine the evidence and marginalize the CIA and Tenet. A major part of this program was a Pentagon unit known as the Office of Special Plans (OSP), which was created by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and headed by Douglas Feith. It was created to supply senior Bush administration officials with raw intelligence pertaining to Iraq, unvented by intelligence analysts, and circumventing traditional intelligence gathering operations by the CIA. The

information acquired by the OSP was “stovepiped” to Cheney and presented to the public. In some cases, Cheney’s office would leak the intelligence to news correspondents, who would in turn cover it in such outlets such as *The New York Times*. Cheney would subsequently appear on the Sunday political television talk shows to discuss the intelligence, referencing the *New York Times* as the source to give it credence (Kirk, 2006).

Exerting pressure on Iraq and butting heads

Spring of that year began with an increasingly aggressive stance by the US towards Iraq both in their home and international arenas. There were continuous high-level meetings as the Bush Administration sought to gain the support of valuable allies and legitimacy for its planned military action. The publication of a Downing Street memo written by Matthew Rycroft, a foreign policy aide to British Prime Minister, Tony Blair reveals that: “Saddam’s regime was tough and based on extreme fear. The only way to overthrow it was likely to be by massive military action. Saddam was worried and expected an attack, probably by air and land, but he was not convinced that it would be immediate or overwhelming. His regime expected their neighbors to line up with the US. Saddam knew that regular army morale was poor. Real support for Saddam among the public was probably narrowly based” (Rycroft, 2002). It continued:

C reported on his recent talks in Washington. There was a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy. The

NSC had no patience with the UN route, and no enthusiasm for publishing material on the Iraqi regime's record. There was little discussion in Washington of the aftermath after military action.

Much of the efforts leading up to this point were focused on the perceived reluctance of Iraq to disarm its long-range weapons delivery systems and a refusal to allow U.N. inspectors in its facilities to monitor the disarmament effort.

The constant pressure on Iraq on this front appears designed to create a specific response that would then lead to specific actions as suggested by an analysis by Ivo H. Daalder, a Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies:

The Security Council's vote vindicated Bush's decision to change tack and take the Iraq issue to the United Nations. Until his mid-September speech to the UN General Assembly, the administration gave no indication of any interest in doing this. In January, for example, Bush put the world on notice that Iraq and other members of the "axis of evil" posed a "grave and growing danger" — one that seemingly required a swift response. By June, the president had promulgated a new doctrine that justified moving preemptively against terrorists and tyrants.

In August, Vice President Dick Cheney pushed the argument further, essentially saying that the time for diplomacy had passed. Warning that Iraq might acquire nuclear weapons "fairly soon" Cheney criticized proposals to send U.N. inspectors back to Iraq: "Saddam has perfected the game of cheat and retreat, and is very skilled in the art of denial and deception," he said. "A return of inspectors would provide no assurance whatsoever of his compliance with UN resolutions. On the contrary, there is a great danger that it would provide false comfort that Saddam was somehow 'back in his box.'"

Bush's decision to ignore the vice president's advice and return to the United Nations reflected growing unease, both abroad and at home, with US policy toward Baghdad. America's major allies, including Great Britain, all argued that bypassing New York would provoke a backlash around the world against American unilateralism. Several Middle Eastern countries pegged their willingness to aid a US invasion of Iraq to securing the Security Council's blessing (Daalder, 2002).

Backroom politics: pulling strings in North America and Europe

An authenticated, leaked document by David Manning, a Downing Street Foreign Policy Advisor to British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, puts a different spin on things:

We spent a long time at dinner on Iraq. It is clear that Bush is grateful for your (Tony Blair) support and has registered that you are getting flak. I said that you would not budge in your support for regime change but you had to manage a press, a Parliament and a public opinion that was very different than anything in the States. And you would not budge either in your insistence that, if we pursued regime change, it must be very carefully done and produce the right result. Failure was not an option.

Seymour Hersh, a British official discussed goals which Secretary Rice stated the US wanted to achieve prior to the breakout of war:

From what she said, Bush has yet to find the answers to the big questions: how to persuade international opinion that military action against Iraq is necessary and justified; what value to put on the exiled Iraqi opposition; how to coordinate a US/allied military campaign with internal opposition (assuming there is any); what happens on the morning after?

Bush will want to pick your brains. He will also want to hear whether he can expect coalition support. I told Condi that we realized that the Administration could go it alone if it chose. But if it wanted company, it would have to take account of the concerns of its potential coalition partners. In particular: the Un [sic] dimension. The issue of the weapons inspectors must be handled in a way that would persuade European and wider opinion that the US was conscious of the international framework, and the insistence of many countries on the need for a legal base. Renewed refused [sic] by Saddam to accept unfettered inspections would be a powerful argument'; the paramount importance of tackling Israel/Palestine. Unless we did, we could find ourselves bombing Iraq and losing the Gulf. (Manning, 2002)

The suggestion here is that there was a predetermined course of action which the US Administration, under Bush, had already decided upon and that everything which happened after that was made to fit the facts so they could lead to the predetermined course of action. Certainly on September that year the following events took place:

On September 18, 2002, George Tenet briefed Bush that Saddam Hussein did not have weapons of mass destruction. Bush dismissed this top-secret intelligence from Saddam's inner circle that was approved by two senior CIA officers, but it turned out to be completely accurate. The information was never shared with Congress or even CIA agents examining whether Saddam had such weapons. The CIA had contacted Saddam Hussein's foreign minister, Naji Sabri, who was being paid by the French as an agent. Sabri informed them that Saddam had ambitions for a nuclear program but that it was not active, and that no biological weapons were being produced or stockpiled, although research was underway.

Coming together: forging ties and stacking evidence

On September 22, 2002, the British government placed a dossier before Parliament giving its intelligence assessment of Iraq's WMD capability. The document alleged that Iraq possesses chemical weapons and biological weapons, and has restarted its nuclear weapons program. The document also asserted that Iraq has sought "significant quantities of uranium from Africa", and that some of the WMD would be ready within 45 minutes of an order to use them. Claims later leaked in May 2003 that the dossier was "sexed up" under pressure from Downing Street would lead to a media furor, and the apparent suicide of weapons inspector David Kelly.

On September 26, 2002 Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld accused Iraq of harboring Al-Qaeda terrorists and aiding their quest for weapons of mass destruction. The Bush administration says attempts by Iraq to acquire thousands of high-strength aluminum tubes pointed to a clandestine program to make enriched uranium for nuclear bombs. Indeed, Colin Powell, in his address to the U.N. Security Council just prior to the war, made reference to the aluminum tubes. But a report released by the Institute for Science and International Security in 2002 reported that it was highly unlikely that the tubes could be used to enrich uranium. Powell later admitted he had presented an inaccurate case to the United Nations on Iraqi weapons, and that the intelligence presented was in some cases "deliberately misleading."

6. 2003 – Waging War on the Iraqi Front

WMD and Al-Qaeda: major pretenses for war

By 2003 Iraq had become the focus of the West's attempts to gain greater security through disarming what was popularly being presented as a threat. The Al-Qaeda link was being taken at face value but the focus on weapons of mass destruction was drowning out all other reasons. The public was resisting the idea of a war with massive anti-war demonstrations taking place in London, Washington, Canberra, Paris, Rome and Berlin. In Rome alone on February 15, 2003, a month before the invasion, there were many worldwide protests against the Iraq war, including a rally of 3 million people which is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the largest ever anti-war rally (Records, 2003).

The twin focus on Iraq's alleged terrorist connection with Al-Qaeda and the events of 9/11 and its ability to bring into play weapons of mass destruction (WMD) were now coalescing into the latter as the only legitimate cause for which evidence could be accumulated which would lead to war with the Western coalition forces being led by the US

While the outcome, as the evidence here suggests, seems to have been pre-determined the accumulation of the body of evidence which was necessary to legitimize the decision was anything but smooth. The checks and controls which had been put in place by the UN-backed inspections of the Iraqi arsenal were indicating that, as Iraq was publicly

asserting all along, it was in the process of disarming and was not capable of posing a credible threat to the US or, indeed, the rest of the world. However, the US continued to contest the information provided by the UN based on previous reports and findings of US officials and Iraqi exiles.

Back and forth: US and weapons inspectors

On March 7, 2003, for example, Brookings scholars Ivo Daalder and Martin Indyk held a conference with reporters to discuss that week's developments and assess the weapons inspectors' reports. The picture that emerged was at odds with the sense of urgency being generated by the US and the UK over Iraq's WMD capability.

First, of course, we had the third report from the inspectors this morning, and we have seen a trend here where the inspectors continue to say that things are improving as regards to Iraqi cooperation. On January 27th Blix basically said that the glass was half empty and on February 14th he basically said the glass was both half empty and half full. You could say that today he said that the glass was, in fact, half full. As usual, Mohamed El-Baradei, the IAEA head, was more positive still than Mr. Blix was with regard to Iraqi cooperation.

Given that set of reports, not surprising that there was no change really in the opinion that one could hear within the council one way or the other. We still clearly had four countries that wanted a new resolution and to do so quickly, five countries, including three permanent members — France, Russia, and China — that were against a new resolution and wanted to give inspectors more time, and six other countries that remain on the fence (Indyk 2003).

The voices of the Brookings analysts were not the only ones to emerge suggesting caution in the final assessment of the capability of Iraq to field Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Some opponents of the war also believed that there would be no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and thus there was little reason for an invasion. Prominent among these was Scott Ritter, a former US military intelligence officer and then a United Nations weapons inspector in Iraq, and who in 1998 had been hawkish enough toward Iraq as to be admonished by US Senator Joe Biden, “The decision of whether or not the country should go to war is slightly above your pay grade”.

Biden said:

Investigations after the invasion failed to produce evidence of WMDs in Iraq (apart from a very small number of degraded chemical weapons shells located after the Iran-Iraq War ended in 1988). Generally, however, very few opponents of the Iraq invasion publicly expressed doubt as to whether the Saddam Hussein regime possessed weapons of mass destruction.

And in his report stated:

There’s no doubt Iraq hasn’t fully complied with its disarmament obligations as set forth by the Security Council in its resolution. But on the other hand, since 1998 Iraq has been fundamentally disarmed: 90-95 per cent of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction capacity has been verifiably eliminated ... We have to remember that this missing 5-10 per cent doesn’t necessarily constitute a threat ... It constitutes bits and pieces of a weapons program which in its totality doesn’t amount to much, but which is still prohibited ... We can’t give Iraq a clean bill of health therefore we can’t close the book on their weapons of mass destruction. But simultaneously, we can’t reasonably talk about Iraqi non-compliance as representing a de-facto retention of a prohibited capacity worthy of war. (Page 28)

We eliminated the nuclear program, and for Iraq to have reconstituted it would require undertaking activities that would have been eminently detectable by intelligence services. (Page 32)

If Iraq were producing [chemical] weapons today, we'd have proof, pure and simple. (Page 37)

[A]s of December 1998 we had no evidence Iraq had retained biological weapons, nor that they were working on any. In fact, we had a lot of evidence to suggest Iraq was in compliance. (Page 46, Pitt, 2002).

Efforts to wage war and seek a diplomatic solution were largely fragmented and disorganized. Parties did show any major signs of cohesiveness or teamwork. The voices urging executive action were better orchestrated and came from the top: In his October 7th speech in Ohio, which was the President's first major case on WMD, his comprehensive argument on WMD before the war, the president described this as follows: "The inspectors, however, concluded that Iraq had likely produced two to four times that amount. This is a massive stockpile of biological weapons that has never been accounted for and is capable of killing millions" (Cirincione 2004).

Powell's addresses the UN and the world

In February 2003, US Secretary of State Colin Powell addressed the United Nations General Assembly, continuing US efforts to gain U.N. authorization for an invasion. Powell addressed a plenary session of the United Nations Security Council on February 5, 2003 to argue in favor of military action. Citing numerous anonymous Iraqi defectors,

Powell asserted that: “There can be no doubt that Saddam Hussein has biological weapons and the capability to rapidly produce more, many more” (Powell, 2003).

The collective weight of the voices of the US Administration was beginning to have its effect. Added to by the persuasive voice of British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who was reiterating that to go to war was just and whose presence had made the British Attorney-General, Lord Goldsmith, to do an about turn and issue a 13-page legal document stating that the war on Iraq was legal, it was gaining a momentum which was hard to resist (Bindman, 2005).

On March 20, 2003 a multinational force now led by and composed almost entirely of troops from the United States and the United Kingdom invaded Iraq. The assault led to the rapid occupation of Iraq, the defeat of the Iraqi army and the demolition of most of Iraq’s infrastructure.

The war, swift as it was, was only the opening salvo against the “War on Terror” which the Bush Administration had launched with the pretext of 9/11. The linking of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) had an undermining result in the criteria for assessing the potential threat posed by Iraq which is only possible to examine through the power of hindsight and only through collective tools commanding massive resources in manpower, such as the Carnegie Endowment Committee who issues the report “WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION IN IRAQ: EVIDENCE AND IMPLICATIONS” in which they stated that they could see, after shifting through

mountains of evidence, in both documentary and testimonial form, the emergence of four
distinct patterns:

The first is that up to -- the year 2001 US intelligence was generally correct on nuclear and missile weapons issues, but appears to have been incorrect -- incorrectly overestimate Iraq's chemical and biological weapons capabilities. And we will talk a bit -- we will come back and go into this a bit more in detail.

The second pattern is evidence throughout these four -- all four of the weapons systems, of a dramatic shift between the intelligence views up through 2001 and intelligence views as they emerged in the National Intelligence Estimate, the NIE, that was released shortly before the congressional vote in October of 2002.

The third pattern is that to a degree, to a rather surprising degree --it surprised us as we went through this -- the international inspections effort generally had it right. They were finding what was there, and their assessments, both at the end of the UNSCOM effort in 1998 and the UNMOVIC work in 2003 was quite close to what the postwar investigations have found.

And finally, the representations by senior administration officials show a very systematic misrepresentation of the facts over and above the intelligence failings, with respect to chemical and biological weapons. These misrepresentations fall into four categories.

7. 2004 – Scouring Iraq for WMDs and Al-Qaeda

WMD: slowly becoming a fallacy

While the action of troops on the ground in Iraq was making clear that Iraq may have not possessed any WMDs, evidence was also beginning to accumulate in other quarters that the perceived link between the terrorist activities of 9/11 and Saddam Hussein's regime was weak.

The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (also known as the 9-11 Commission), an independent, bipartisan commission created by congressional legislation and the signature of President George W. Bush in late 2002, is chartered to prepare a full and complete account of the circumstances surrounding the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, including preparedness for and the immediate response to the attacks. The Commission is also mandated to provide recommendations designed to guard against future attacks. On July 22, 2004 the Commission released its public report.

Discrediting the Al-Qaeda Claims

The commission reported that Osama bin Laden met with a top Iraqi official in 1994 but found “no credible evidence” of a link between Iraq and al-Qaida in attacks against the United States.

In a report based on research and interviews by the Commission staff, the panel said that bin Laden made overtures to the toppled Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein for assistance, as he did with leaders in Sudan, Iran, Afghanistan and elsewhere as he sought to build an Islamic army. The report said that bin Laden explored possible cooperation with Saddam at the urging of allies in Sudan eager to protect their own ties to Iraq, even though the al-Qaida leader had previously provided support for “anti-Saddam Islamists in Iraqi Kurdistan” (Commission T. 9., 2004).

Classified Reports Begin to Surface

As voluminous a document as the 1,000 page long report which relays the findings of the Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence on Iraq’s WMDs shows that while the intent and will may have been there as far as Iraq and the program for the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are concerned, the ability to put this into concrete action was lacking:

Throughout its recent history, Iraq has consistently sought to maintain an effective long-range weapons delivery capability, beginning with its acquisition of Scud missiles in the 1970s and 80s and subsequent modifications to increase their range. After expelling the UN inspectors in 1998, the Regime authorized the development of longer-range delivery systems, demonstrating its commitment to acquiring these potential WMD delivery platforms. (CIA, Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor Report to the DCI on Iraq’s WMD, 2004).

The report concluded that as far as biological weapons (BW) were concerned “[...]In spite of exhaustive investigation, ISG found no evidence that Iraq possessed, or was developing BW agent production systems mounted on road vehicles or railway wagons.” (CIA, Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor Report to the DCI on Iraq’s WMD, 2004).

The Media and WMDs

A new study based on a series of seven US polls conducted from January through September of this year reveals that before and after the Iraq war, a majority of Americans have had significant misperceptions and these are highly related to support for the war in Iraq. The polling, conducted by the Program on International Policy (PIPA) at the University of Maryland and Knowledge Networks, also reveals that the frequency of these misperceptions varies significantly according to individuals’ primary source of news. Those who primarily watch Fox News are significantly more likely to have misperceptions, while those who primarily listen to NPR or watch PBS are significantly less likely.

An in-depth analysis of a series of polls conducted June through September found 48 per cent incorrectly believed that evidence of links between Iraq and Al-Qaeda have been found, 22 per cent that weapons of mass destruction have been found in Iraq, and 25 per cent that world public opinion favored the US going to war with Iraq. Overall, 60 per cent had at least one of these three misperceptions (WPO, 2003).

The study stated, significantly, that: “ ... among those with none of the misperceptions listed above, only 23 per cent support the war. Among those with one of these misperceptions, 53 per cent support the war, rising to 78 per cent for those who have two of the misperceptions, and to 86 per cent for those with all 3 misperceptions.” (WPO, 2003).

The decision to go to war with Iraq has always been contested in various outlets. It was made possible, as we have seen by the accumulated body of evidence so far by several, highly coordinated linkages which made the “War on Terror” synonymous with the war on Iraq, linked Al-Qaeda with the Iraqi regime and the potential acquisition of weapons of mass destruction which were unspecified and lumped together as a single, plausible, threat with the catastrophic events of 9/11.

The public mind and the perceptions it has held have been of vital importance because without some public support for the war the individual positions of the US and the UK governments would have been unattainable and the likelihood of armed conflict would have been equally smaller.

The feeling that the media were, in turn, to some degree perhaps complicit participants in the pre-war propaganda machine is reinforced by the comments of former White House press secretary, Scott McClellan who in his memoirs wrote: “In the permanent campaign era, it was all about manipulating sources of public opinion to the president’s advantage.”

Several journalists have backed his criticisms. CBS news anchor, Katie Couric, said last month that the lack of media skepticism ahead of the war was “one of the most embarrassing chapters in American journalism.” Couric disclosed that, while working as a host of ‘Today’ on NBC, she had felt pressure from “the corporations who own where we work and from the government itself to really squash any kind of dissent or any kind of questioning of it.” (CNN, 2007)

Howard Kurtz, the host of CNN’s ‘Reliable Sources’ also commented: “Couric has told me that while she was at NBC ... she got what she described as complaints from network executives when she challenged the Bush administration.” (*Ibid*)

The scope of this study is to examine the facts without offering an opinion or any kind of analysis and this writer has worked within these restraints to gather as much information as possible in order to create a multi-layered approach to fact-finding in the Iraq war. When it comes to the behavior of the media and its coverage the issue is perhaps a lot less clear because there is not the same recourse to independent studies and reports as there has been with the case of weapons of mass destruction and the Al-Qaeda and Iraq link.

By the time 2004 got into full swing the media was involved in a different kind of tug-of-war as US and coalition forces casualties mounted and the question of how much to show and how much to tell began to weigh heavily upon them. The year 2004 was marked by a sense that much of what had appeared clear and certain and had led to the decision being taken to go to war with Iraq had been fabricated, taken out of context or artificially augmented and, as a result, there was a loss of integrity and trust in the institutions which we had been expecting to lead us. The year 2004 also paved the way for what was to follow in that sense in 2005 both in terms of weapons of mass destruction and the further findings regarding them and the Al-Qaeda-Iran terrorist link.

8. 2005 – Admissions of Guilt and More Casualties

Iraqi Reports

It is prudent at this stage to begin this section with an examination of the evidence that was found in Iraq concerning weapons of mass destruction and the background that started it all. It was, after all, the fear that Iraq posed a clear and present danger to the safety of the Western world that legitimized the process through which the case for war was made.

On December 7, 2002, Iraq released a 12,000-page document to the United Nations in which it presented its declaration of weapons of mass destruction capabilities to the UN. The United States and other permanent members of the Security Council also received copies of the nearly 12,000-page document, which detailed every element of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. Meanwhile, UN weapons inspectors had been on the ground in Iraq since November 25 that year and Iraq had generally cooperated with their efforts. (Indyk, 2002)

Detailed as it was that document, apparently, failed to satisfy in terms of accounting for all the materials which Iraq had accumulated over the years and which could have been used in the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction. It was the root of what would become an international call for inspections by the UN weapons inspectors and,

later, the UN Security Council Resolutions the interpretation of which would leave the door wide open for military action.

Evidence that may have sparked war

At this point the obvious question is that if the root cause of the war on Iraq, the one which made everything else possible and plausible, the allegation that Al-Qaeda was linked to Iraq and the suggestion that Iraq itself had an active weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program which posed a direct threat to the West, precisely because it also had the means to deliver its payload to Western cities, relies on the fact that Iraq did not disclose all of its weapons capability to the United Nations, then, having taken over the country and having in our possession, intelligence, documents and men who would be in a position to give us information, we should have concrete evidence of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction capability. There were some findings which, considering their paucity, serve to ratify the argument that the war on Iraq should not have happened. Let us go first and see what these are.

With the March 2003 invasion of Iraq US forces moved through the country looking for weapons of mass destruction. There were initial reports that chemical or biological weapons might have been uncovered, but closer examinations produced negative results. In May 2003, the Bush administration decided to establish a specialized group of about 1,500 individuals, the Iraq Survey Group (ISG), to search the country for WMD - replacing the 75th Exploitation Task Force, which had originally been assigned the mission. Appointed to lead the Group, whose motto is "find, exploit, eliminate," was

Maj. Gen. Keith Dayton, the head of the Defense Intelligence Agency's Directorate of Operations. In June, David Kay, who served as a U.N. weapons inspector after Operation Desert Storm, was appointed special advisor and traveled to Iraq to lead the search (CIA, Iraq and Weapons of Mass Destruction, 2004).

The hunt for WMD is over

In his final word, the CIA's top weapons inspector in Iraq eventually announced that the hunt for weapons of mass destruction had "gone as far as feasible" and had found nothing, closing an investigation into the purported programs of Saddam Hussein that were used to justify the 2003 invasion. "After more than 18 months, the WMD investigation and debriefing of the WMD-related detainees have been exhausted," wrote Charles Duelfer, head of the Iraq Survey Group, in an addendum to the final report he issued which went up to 1,000 pages. "As matters now stand, the WMD investigation has gone as far as feasible."

So, an exhaustive six-month long search in Iraq failed to produce the massive stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction that were perceived to be located in Iraq before the invasion.

The Carnegie Endowment Report on the subject aptly puts it: "the public is not made aware of this dissent, but it is in the classified version that's given to Congress." The public becomes aware of this dissent only in July 2003, when the declassified excerpts of the NIE are released. And there we see that the key agencies that knew the most about the nuclear program -- the Department of Energy, the Department of State --disagreed with

the assessment that there, in fact, the tubes were being used for centrifuge, or in the case of the Department of State, they disagreed that the program had been reconstituted. They dissent from the view that Iraq could have a nuclear weapon in as little as a year, because they see no evidence that there's any activity whatsoever under way. But we don't know that at that point.

Admissions of guilt

It would lead to perhaps one of the strongest indictments of the intelligence upon which the war on Iraq was based when the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction would conclude: "With this letter, we transmit the report of the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction. Our unanimous report is based on a lengthy investigation, during which we interviewed hundreds of experts from inside and outside the Intelligence Community and reviewed thousands of documents. Our report offers 74 recommendations for improving the US Intelligence Community (all but a handful of which we believe can be implemented without statutory change). But among these recommendations a few points merit special emphasis.

"We conclude that the Intelligence Community was dead wrong in almost all of its pre-war judgments about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. This was a major intelligence failure. Its principal causes were the Intelligence Community's inability to collect good information about Iraq's WMD programs, serious errors in analyzing what information it could gather, and a failure to make clear just how much of its analysis was

based on assumptions, rather than good evidence. On a matter of this importance, we simply cannot afford failures of this magnitude. After a thorough review, the Commission found no indication that the Intelligence Community distorted the evidence regarding Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. What the intelligence professionals told you about Saddam Hussein's programs was what they believed. They were simply wrong."

(Silberman, 2005)

David Kay appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee shortly after he resigned as special advisor to the Iraq Survey Group. Kay states, referring to the expectation that there would be substantial stocks of, and production lines for, chemical and biological weapons in Iraq, that "we were almost all wrong, and I certainly include myself here." He also notes that other foreign intelligence agencies, including the French and the German, also had believed that Iraq possessed such stocks and production lines. In addition, he discusses the issue of whether political pressure had any impact on the content of the October 2002 national intelligence estimate. Kay also notes that "based on the work of the Iraq Survey Group ... Iraq was in clear violation of the terms of [UN] Resolution 1441. He goes on to note the discovery of hundreds of instances of activities prohibited by UN Resolution 687. (Committee, 2004)

9. 2006 – Al-Qaeda Afghanistan Infiltrates Iraq

9/11 memories overwhelmed by the Iraq War and WMDs

As the year 2006 came the informational landscape upon which justifications for the war on Iraq could be based upon had begun to change. The tragic events of 9/11 were now a distant memory. The reason that Iraq posed a direct threat to the West through its program of development of weapons of mass destruction was now highly contested in different arenas. Ironically two themes that in the first instance had little substance were now of vital importance again in relation to Iraq: Al-Qaeda and Weapons of Mass destruction. Both of these bore a third which was the need for security in the West from this perceived, and possibly combined, threat.

How was this possible? “The stated reason for invading Iraq was its alleged clandestine pursuit of weapons of mass destruction in defiance of UN resolutions. Even though the allegation was never proven completely accurate, the international community remains preoccupied with the threat of the proliferation and use of such terrible weapons. This has three interlinked components: non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. Some countries, from within the shelter of the NPT, could either develop a full-fledged weapons capability, covertly and illegally, or else acquire all the materials and expertise needed for a weapons program and withdraw from the treaty when they are ready to proceed with weaponization.

There is good reason to fear the erosion and possible collapse of the whole NPT regime over the longer term: treaties already negotiated and signed could unravel through non-ratification or breakouts; the testing of nuclear weapons could be resumed; and there is a lengthening list of proliferation-sensitive countries of concern. Both the 2004 NPT Review Conference and the UN World Summit in 2005 failed to address the urgent challenge of arms control. (Thakur and Sidhu, 2006).

Al-Qaeda Iraq: a force to be reckoned with

The fact that those working or intended to work in Iraq's WMD program were now out of work released a potential labor force of lethal expertise that could be hired by the highest bidder. Al-Qaeda that had no role to play in Iraq prior to the US-led invasion in March 2003 suddenly became part of the Iraqi insurgence. "Al-Qaeda in Iraq is part of the global Al-Qaeda movement. AQI, as the US military calls it, is around 90 percent Iraqi. Foreign fighters, however, predominate in the leadership and among the suicide bombers, of whom they comprise up to 90 percent, US commanders say. The leader of AQI is Abu Ayyub Al-Masri, an Egyptian. His predecessor, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, was a Jordanian.

Because the members of AQI are overwhelmingly Iraqis — often thugs and misfits recruited or dragooned into the organization (along with some clerics and more educated leaders) — it is argued that AQI is not really part of the global Al-Qaeda movement. Therefore, it is said, the war in Iraq is not part of the global war on terror: The "real" Al-Qaeda — Osama bin Laden's band, off in its safe havens in the Pakistani tribal areas of Waziristan and Baluchistan — is the group to fight. Furthermore, argue critics of this

persuasion, we should be doing this fighting through precise, intelligence-driven airstrikes or Special Forces attacks on key leaders, not the deployment of large conventional forces, which only stirs resentment in Muslim countries and creates more terrorists.

“Over the past four years, the war in Iraq has provided abundant evidence to dispute these assertions.” (Department S, 2007)

The irony that the war in Iraq may have actually accomplished the opposite of what it set out to do has not been lost: “nonresident Senior Fellow Daniel Byman argues that al-Qaeda was on the ropes after the United States counterattacked in the wake of 9/11. The organization has, however, been rejuvenated by the Iraq war.” (Byman, 2007).

EU joining the chorus of Iraq War boos

The risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction which, given the talent and expertise released by the war in Iraq could be manufactured through the acquisition of ‘dual use’ goods led to the EU report on the subject:

The Action Plan against Proliferation of WMD adopted by the European Council in June 2003 and the EU Strategy against the proliferation of WMD adopted by the European Council in December 2003 include a commitment to reinforce the effectiveness of export controls on dual-use goods in an enlarged Europe. Accordingly a Peer Review of Member States’ export controls was carried out to identify and to disseminate best practice. The Peer Review produced a number of recommendations for further action both at national and EU level. On 13 December 2004 the Council issued a statement to the effect that the

recommendations of the Peer Review, identified in nine broad areas, should be acted upon at EU level without delay. The implementation of these recommendations was taken forward in 2005 by the Council Working Party on Dual-Use Goods under the leadership of the Luxembourg and United Kingdom Presidencies, (cf. doc. 15826/05 - Report on progress made in 2005 noted by the Council on 12 December 2005), and in 2006 under the Austrian and Finnish Presidencies. (Union, 2006).

The Report led to the implementation of stricter controls and the measures listed:

The establishment of an electronic database recording denial notices made by Member States under the Regulation and in the international export control regimes. The pilot project data base is up and running and contains a growing number of the valid denials issued by Member States denials exchanged under Article 9.2 of the Regulation (EC)1334/2000, together with the denials of non EU origin exchanged in the Australia Group and some of those exchanged in the Nuclear Suppliers' Group; systematic and timely notification of information by Member States to the Commission on national legislation and contact points to ensure transparency and facilitate cooperation; progress by Member States on the implementation of recommendations for enforcement at national level. (Union, 2006).

Efforts to deter future terrorists

The level of threat following the Iraq war was high enough to require in December 2008 a special briefing of the President, George W. Bush by a Committee set up to specifically study the issue:

Today, President Bush was briefed on the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Proliferation and Terrorism report on US progress against the threat of WMD proliferation and terrorism. President Bush welcomes the Commission's report and findings on the greatest threat to our national security and notes their affirmation of past and current Administration efforts, which provide the foundation on which the next Administration can build. The Administration worked closely with the Commission during the course of its review and agrees that the threat of global terrorist organizations acquiring or developing WMD and using them against our homeland and interests abroad remains dangerously real. (Commission W. H., 2008).

10. 2007 – Themes of the Iraq War

Weapons of mass destruction

The themes of 2007 seem to have come full circle to those of the pre-Iraq war concerns. On the subject of Weapons of Mass Destruction for example we have: “Why is the threat of weapons of mass destruction so important today?” After all, the United States faced the potential of massive destruction from nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union for nearly half a century during the Cold War. The principle answer lies in the uniqueness of the security environment today. The growing spread of weapons of mass destruction provides small groups of individuals with the ability to deliver devastating harm to the United States. Such power, in the past, could only be delivered by nation-states with large economic, political, industrial military and social resources. Furthermore these resources were valued by nation-states and could readily be held at risk — making such policies as ‘mutually assured destruction’ effective in dealing with the threat.

“In contrast, a loose band of terrorists, with few assets and no permanent geographic base, has the potential to deliver massive damage. With few tangible physical assets at risk and a willingness to ‘die in the pursuit of their cause’ conventional measures of deterrence are at best elusive.” (Department S. R., 2007).

The results are that in order to control technologies which may be used in the creation of weapons of mass destruction the US and its partners are keen to take a more co-operative role as evidenced by the EU report on Iran and its nuclear program: “The

Council discussed the situation concerning Iran's nuclear program. The Council reaffirmed its support for efforts to find a negotiated long-term solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. The Council gave its full backing to the efforts of the High Representative on behalf of the EU and the international community to encourage Iran to return to talks on long-term arrangements." (EU, EU Council Conclusions on Iran, 2007)

Al-Qaeda and the global threat

Similarly the Al-Qaeda threat is once more global: "The most carefully nurtured Al-Qaeda cells are those in Europe. Media savvy Al-Qaeda operatives know that one blast in Paris or London is equal to 10 in Riyadh or Delhi. They are targeting estranged Muslim youth, who are the product of three decades of failed integrationist policies by European governments. If Europe denies them the chance of realizing their aspirations, these disillusioned young Muslims will be increasingly inclined to attempt the creation of an alternate global community, one connected to Al-Qaeda.

"The Al-Qaeda attack on London's underground in 2005 and the Heathrow plane plot last year had their origins in Pakistan. MI5 Director General Eliza Manningham-Buller says that of the 1,600 militants and 200 networks it is monitoring, a "substantial" number have connections to Pakistan.

"Al-Qaeda's revival is also related to the inability of the United States to provide for stability in either Afghanistan or Iraq in the aftermath of the invasions of those two countries. US policy failures in the Middle East have likewise fueled rage against Washington across the Muslim world." (Rashid, 2008).

Globalization

Globalization has played its part in terms of helping Al-Qaeda spread its message: “theological attacks on al-Qaeda from its former allies may well have an impact on the organization’s support across the Muslim world, it is unlikely to have a direct or rapid effect on extremism in Europe. Globalization does not just mean the spread of an idea from one part of the world to another, but rather it means the rapid adaptation of transnational ideas to various local specificities. Undermining the theological arguments for Jihad terror is of course a good thing, but its effects will be limited because theology is only part of the cause of that terrorism in Europe.” (Archer, 2008).

Bin Laden’s multi-national Al-Qaeda was a function of the acceleration of global transportation, communications, and immigration that together led to a ‘post-modern’ terrorist network. September 11 was a clear statement of the effectiveness of the newly globalized jihad. It used the Internet, as it used globalization, to transmit its messages and move its money, people, propaganda and terror. In a similar vein, those who study it argues that the techniques and infrastructure on which al-Qaeda depends are the gifts of the new global institutions. Just as globalization came to affect many countries throughout the world, Al-Qaeda’s followers and cells are now established in more than 60 countries. Moreover, the new form of globalized Islam is undeniably threatening since it satisfies a hunger for membership that globalization itself has created.

Global terrorism and terror events were made possible due to the availability of new powerful and sometimes lethal technology to groups and individuals that previously had no or restricted access to. Conventional instruments of mass transport or communication have been, and can be at any time converted into weapons of mass destruction, or at least of mass terror producing a situation of asymmetrical war where weaker individuals and groups can attack superpowers. This led to a general increase in fear and anxiety and September 11 was probably the most powerful alarm towards the danger that globalization carries within: new technologies empower angry disempowered people with technologies of mass destruction (Najjar, 2005).

11. 2008-2009 – The West vs. Islam and the Arab World

Cultural, ideological, and religious barriers

The 9/11 Al-Qaeda attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre changed the global landscape in more ways than could have been imaginable. The effect of globalization among the Arab states has been a negative or a defensive one. The key reason for the rejection may be the lack of previous cultural penetration of the Islamic Middle East by Western culture, institutions and ideas. In this context globalization was seen as a form of surrender to a dominant, non-indigenous standpoint. Islam, a religion governed by its own set of laws, developed an alternate worldview with many of the elements of globalization contradicting it. It has a powerful and cohesive community that at times acts like a cultural defense wall against the Western influence and, as a result, limits the use of European languages in the Middle East.

The rejection of globalization also appeared due to the political systems that governed the Middle East. Mostly autocratic, the Middle Eastern regimes have learned how to survive and mobilize mass support against globalization. Repression and demagoguery were some of the tools used to convince the masses that anti-globalization was the only way of defending the Arab nation and Islam. People were thus discouraged from supporting elements of globalization like democracy, free enterprise, civil and human rights.

In his book *The West and the Rest: Globalization and the Terrorist Threat*, Roger Scruton contests that by imposing itself and its values on the entire world through the globalization process, the West is creating the conditions for conflict to occur between other cultures. It has made itself impossible to ignore and was at the very cause of an anti-Western movement and an international Jihad. Globalization brought face-to-face two very confident and incompatible ideas and the battle for dominance has been transformed into what is known as terrorism or “the dark side of globalization”. (Scruton, 2008).

West’s ideals inevitably will circulate throughout the world and as Rubin argues “even the most extreme rejection of globalization does not mean that it fails to infiltrate into society. A good example of this is Iran, where attempts to block foreign influences have often not succeeded.” (Rubin, 2008). Still, given the incompatibility that characterizes the two views neither Islamic terrorists nor the West can come to an intellectual compromise. (Walton, 2004). Moreover, the Anglo-American invasion and occupation of Iraq have inhibited the chance for gradual change to occur in the region. The war polarized regimes and Islamist oppositions not only in Saudi Arabia but also in Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia, countries where the freedom scores diminished the most in the last couple of years. It is thus probable that the American “War on Terrorism” following the attacks of 11 September 2001 will lead to further polarization.

The terrorists who believe that the very existence of the West is a threat will continue to use violence to fight a foe that cannot be ignored. Their understanding of the concept of globalization will continue to be affected by negative factors like high illiteracy rates,

marginalization of women, disparities between rich and poor, corrupt authoritarian regimes and the absence of democracy and human rights. It may be the case that the next generation will be even more closed after experiencing much more intense and systematic indoctrination on both the Islamist and nationalist fronts. The idea is sustained by the fact that students who have studied in the West often return home to reinforce even further a rejection of the society they have experienced. They may focus on the shortcomings of the Western system and fear the effects of such ideas or institutions in their own countries.

It would seem that in the aftermath of the Iraq war the War on Terror has produced fresh challenges that are not much different to those perceived in the aftermath of 9/11. The 9/11 Commission has an important role to play in fighting terrorism by supporting capacity building in third countries such as Pakistan and in the Sahel region,” said External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner. She explained that: “commission development programs must pay close attention to security issues linked with terrorism, organized crime and trafficking.”

The program also includes a significant component to tackle the threat of piracy to critical maritime routes, in particular in the Gulf of Aden, by enhancing the capacity of coastal states to patrol their own territorial waters and exchange information.” (EU, EU Commission adopts new program to fight terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, 2009).

Effects of the Iraq War

The effect of the Iraq war has had repercussions that had the opposite effect. We are losing the battle for hearts and minds in the Muslim world. As Harvard professor Joseph Nye notes, there has been “so much emphasis on ‘hard power’ that we have helped create more recruits for Osama bin Laden.” Colin Powell said, “we have seen an increase in anti-Americanism in the Muslim world ... ”

Indeed, a recent survey done by the Pew Research Center for People and the Press revealed that Osama bin Laden enjoys a 65 per cent favorability rating among Pakistanis and a 55 per cent positive rating among Jordanians, both of whom are US allies. President Bush is viewed positively by just seven per cent and three per cent, respectively.

Furthermore, 78 per cent of Jordanians and 60 per cent of Pakistanis oppose the “War on Terror.” Despite such desperate numbers, however, the State Department has added only 34 public diplomacy officers since 9/11, and the position of Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs has not been permanently filled. Currently, the Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs occupies the position in an “acting” capacity. Lastly, the budget for public diplomacy is a mere \$1.45 billion, or less than 14 per cent of what is being spent on missile defense programs.

The effort to dry up terrorist financing, while important, is insufficient. The United Nations recently determined that the sanctions regime imposed on Al-Qaeda and the Taliban has had a “limited impact.” The March 11 attacks in Madrid, the bombing of the

USS Cole and the 1998 embassy bombings each cost between \$10,000 and \$50,000. Only 9/11's budget was in the six-figure range. As Al-Qaeda "franchise" groups continue to spring up it will become nearly impossible to freeze all of their assets and uniformly impose sanctions. Thus, even if efforts to keep money out of the hands of terrorists are relatively successful, it is no guarantee against major attacks. The terrorists seem to be adapting more quickly and effectively than we are (Cirincione 2004).

In the face of such adversity the question is what is there which can be done? Terrorism was a constant companion to war and ideological struggle in the 20th century, and at the start of the 21st, Al-Qaeda represents the most virulent form of the phenomenon yet faced. Unlike most terrorist organizations whose efforts are linked to a specific territorial or ideological struggle, Al-Qaeda has defined its relationship to terrorism quite differently. Terrorism is not merely a tactic of Al-Qaeda, it is essential to the organization's identity, purpose and strategy. Al-Qaeda's targets — the United States, US interests, US allies, the UN and the basic structures of global order — are strategic, and not limited. (Brookings, 2008).

12. Discussion and Conclusions

In the interests in presenting facts rather than opinion this study focused on those reports which came from trusted sources, were original material or were themselves an undistilled compilation of facts created by think tanks or Commissions which had been put together with the specific charge to look into just such a situation. While the body of evidence gathered here is sufficient for certain conclusions to be reached there are still limitations. The Iraq war is a modern war where the media as well as the military play a part. This study, by focusing away from media coverage per se has left a large part of the way the war was conducted and the way public perception was shaped, unchallenged.

Some theses may struggle to escape the inherent bias of its researcher. By focusing on sources and citing reports this writer has attempted to shield himself from just such a charge. Where a bias has existed it will most likely lie in the fact that no research can be so complete that it has not left itself open to the charge of not carrying all the facts. There are areas of the conduct of the war in Iraq that bear greater scrutiny. The media coverage, for example, was bi-lateral with Arab media focusing on elements that the Western press simply ignored. There have been areas of the causes of the Iraq war which bear closer scrutiny but which are difficult to avoid a certain bias in, such as the personalities and characters of the two principle players involved: Saddam Hussein and George W. Bush. Both of these are integral, this writer feels, to the turn which the events took, yet to

attempt to examine their characters, histories and personalities would introduce just the kind of bias which this writer has sought so hard to avoid.

The polarization of feeling and attitude that the war caused in the West found resonance within the workings of the Bush Administration machine. Many and aide or former staffer broke ranks and wrote tell-all accounts of the days of the war, when sound bites apparently became reality. Equally polarized was public opinion. There were rallies, protests and demonstrations and it is interesting to see just how deep sentiment ran in the different levels of Western society. Let's not forget that in December 2002 a group of dedicated anti-war activists gathered in London and set out a plan to launch a new form of non-violent direct action.

Frustrated that traditional forms of protest were ineffective, they developed the concept of the Human Shield Movement and on January 25, 2003 a group of 50 volunteers left London and headed for Baghdad with the intention of acting as human shields. The convoy traveled through Europe and Turkey by bus to pick up like-minded people along the way, totaling roughly 75 people. It has been estimated that 200 to 500 people eventually made their way into Iraq before the US invasion in March.

As the buses crossed Europe picking up more shields en route, efforts were made to capitalize on the publicity and ensure that the human shield project was broadened. An office was set up in Amman and two more groups of shields flew from London to Iraq via Jordan. The week after the convoy's departure there were over 60,000 hits on the human shield website and over 1,000 enquiries about becoming shields. Human shield

organizations sprouted around the world in France, Italy, Spain, Slovenia, the United States, Australia, India, South Africa, Mexico, Argentina, New Zealand, Korea, and Japan.

Upon reaching Baghdad, a strategy was formed on the assumption that there would not be enough human shields to avert an invasion. This was to involve the voluntary deployment of activists to strategic locations throughout Baghdad, and possibly Basra, in an effort to avert the bombing of those locations. There was much internal debate about which locations were to be chosen. These are all unique phenomena worthy of their own study but not within the exact scope of this paper. Similarly the conduct of the press both before the Iraq war and afterwards bears close examination and further study.

One of the cornerstones of our democracy is the fact that we have an independent press. Yet the coverage of the Iraq war has succeeded in throwing open the question as to just how unbiased the press really is in any country, even a democracy. The media itself may have personified some of the pre-war actions that were taking place on the ground. The media did not provide extensive coverage of bilateral diplomacy that may have influenced Iraqis and Americans to accept cooperation and understanding. The 2003 invasion of Iraq involved unprecedented media coverage. The coverage itself became a source of controversy, as media outlets were accused of bias, reporters were casualties of both Iraqi and American gunfire, and claims of censorship and propaganda became widespread.

The rifts that the Iraq war started ran deeper and wider than anything that may have happened in any other conflict before. Artists and writers, intellectuals and liberals seemed to take part in unexpected camps. Again this study has ignored much of that. In its totality all of this forms a phenomenon that is part of the unique legacy of the Iraq war. There are also two, much deeper element that this study has not touched. The first one is the shift in the social and political landscape in the West that occurred with the realization that some of the most trusted officials in the land had lied to a public that they had been charged to serve.

Some commoners who may have initially supported the Iraq War grew distrustful of the Bush administration because the major pretenses for war were never fully validated. Some believe that distrust played a role in the election of the first black president. The second aspect, equally important and equally overlooked is the shift which occurred in the demographics of Europe as the displaced populations from the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts made their way to EU nations in search of a better life.

Iraq has constantly been on the receiving end of agony and suffering, ultimately linked to its complex relationship with the US. In 1979, the US pressured Iraq to confront the growing Iranian threat. When the war ended with no victor, the US did not embrace Saddam with open arms. Iraq endured the Gulf War of 1991 and 13 years of punishing sanctions. Now, Iraq is doomed with ongoing occupation which has resulted in the death of thousands, destroyed infrastructure, unemployment, and a number of other social, political, and economic problems which may take decades to repair. Oil-rich Iraq now

suffers from some of the region's highest rates of unemployment and child malnutrition and debilitating problems with electric power, sewage systems and other public services.

Among the indices of social misery contained in the report are the following:

- Nearly a quarter of Iraq's children suffer from chronic malnutrition.
- The probability of dying before 40 for Iraqi children born between 2000 and 2004 is approximately three times the level in neighboring countries.
- Three out of four Iraqi families report an unstable supply of electricity.
- 40 percent of families in urban areas live in neighborhoods where sewage can be seen in the streets.
- More than 722,000 Iraqi families have no access to either safe or stable drinking water.
- The jobless rate for young men with secondary or higher education stands at 37 percent. (Agency, 2004).

An interesting question that some Arabs pose is, "Why did America not invade North Korea since they have declared their intent to create weapons of mass destruction?" Some believe that America fears that North Korea will indeed target the US if they are attacked. Others suggest that the Bush administration may have wanted to settle a political score with Saddam Hussein. A final theory rests upon the riches that Iraq possesses. The US could apparently be looking to capitalize on the oil wealth that Iraq has.

It may seem that what has not been covered is a lot but there has been a specific reason for the omissions and no study can ever be complete if it is to contain some meaning. The Iraq war, by 2008 was costing the US \$12 billion a month. That's triple the 'burn rate' of its early years. It would be ideal to examine the impact this drain on the economy had on the financial straits that later developed and the US government's inability to react quickly enough to deal with it. Similarly, the human costs of the Iraq war have not been accounted for. Both sides, in this conflict, suffered 'firsts' in terms of the type of casualties and their numbers. The US military became embroiled in charges of torture and contravening the Geneva Convention and here were more than one instance of reported attacks on civilians by soldiers. All of this also falls outside the scope of this study. Following the Iraq War many countries experienced domestic terrorism: Qatar, Australia, Spain and Britain were targeted precisely because they were in the Coalition Forces.

Here is a simple but fundamental question that was at the heart of the Iraq war controversy: how is the global village to be governed? It's the hidden basis of the political conflicts in the UN over Iraq and similar issues. The inescapable fact is that we are moving further every day to a one-world economy without a one-world government or legal structure. Last-century thinking describes a world of nation states, where national sovereignty is absolute and cannot be violated under international law except to resist aggression and in self-defense. That was the French and German position on the war with Iraq and it has very powerful historical precedent.

But life has moved on. We will need a new model altogether if we are to live in prosperity and peace during the third millennium. That's because at least 4 billion people are already living in towns, cities or rural areas that are profoundly affected by globalization and the techno-communication revolution. They are already citizens of the global village, or the global nation of all nations. This study looked at just one aspect of the Iraq war and compiled the facts surrounding it. The truth, one aspect of it at least is definitely in there. At some point future historians will have to put together their version of it and try to understand exactly what happened and, most importantly, why it happened.

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