

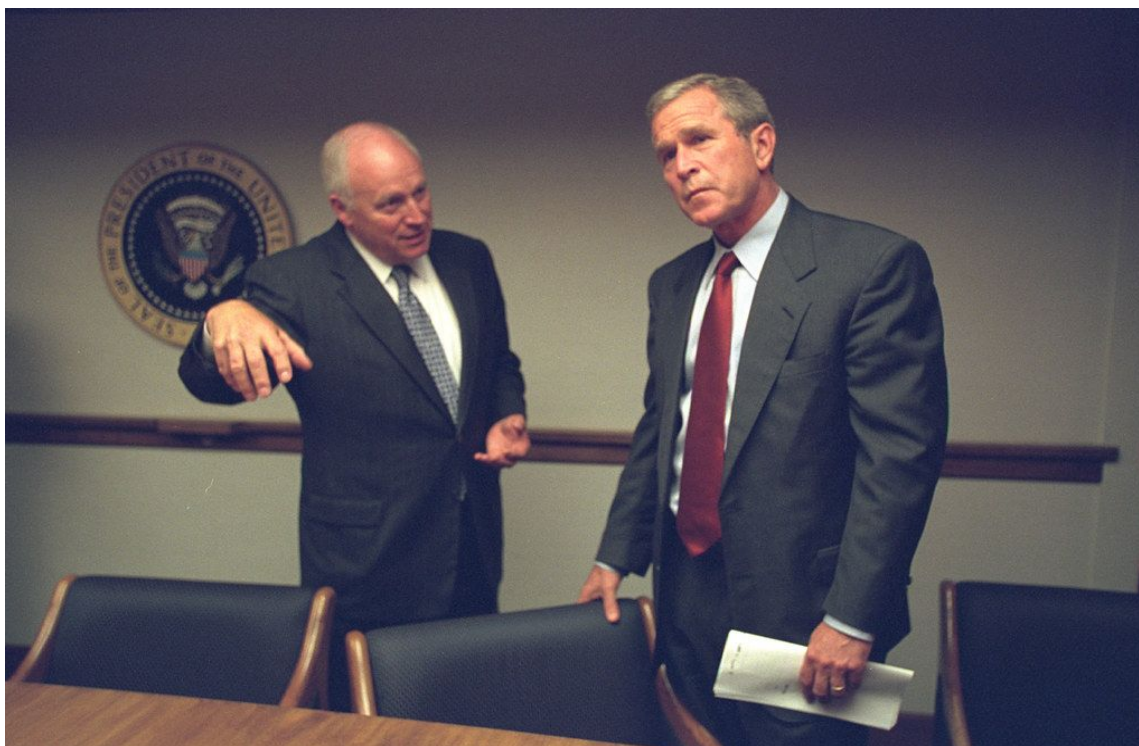
Title Page

Analyzing the primary factors for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, with a focus on the economic motivations

Were economic factors the primary motivation behind the USA's invasion of Iraq in 2003?

Global Politics

Word Count: 3989



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¹"President Bush with Vice President Cheney in the President's Emergency Operations Center (PEOC)." *Flickr*, President (2001-2009 : Bush). Office of Management and Administration. Office of White House Management. Photography Office. 1/20/2001-1/20/2009, 11 Sept. 2001, www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/19909520742/in/photostream/. Collection: Vice Presidential Records of the Photography Office (George W. Bush Administration), 1/20/2001 - 1/20/2009 (Accessed on November First, 2019)

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Introduction

In 2003, the United States commenced with the military invasion of Iraq, removing Saddam Hussein. This invasion did not happen in a vacuum, and the motivations towards it are complex and controversial. While the Bush administration denied this, the desire to control oil production in the Middle East likely played a crucial role in the invasion, especially since several White House officials had direct ties to the oil industry. However, simply stating that economic motivations fueled the invasion may not be entirely accurate, as by 2003, terrorism was a new threat to US security, especially given the recent 9/11 attacks. The desire to counter Iraqi power and influence was also an important motivator, especially considering Iraq's desire to possess nuclear weapons. This begs the question, **were economic factors the primary motivation behind the USA's invasion of Iraq in 2003?** In order to research and properly answer this question, I will analyze and discuss the relationship that the Bush administration had with the oil industry, the extent that the Invasion would have advanced American economic hard power on the world stage, how neo-colonialism and dependency theory can help explain the invasion, as well as how the post-war reality shows that economic motivations played a key role. I will also analyze several other factors which may have led to the invasion, including several realist and liberlist arguments as well as terrorism as a security threat in a post-9/11 paradigm. The consequences of the invasion still impact many lives today, as the invasion can be traced as the source of many of the conflicts that plague the Middle East today, and it is worth analyzing what led to the

invasion in order to prevent similar events from happening in the future. The increasing hostility by the Trump administration towards Iran is a chilling sign of what might happen in the future. In the US government, there are people who push for war with Iran, most notably John Bolton, who has extensively argued that the US should attack Iran, and up until recently served as the national security advisor for the Trump Administration.² Analyzing events in Iraq serves as a useful comparison to how the Trump administration is acting towards Iran, and hopefully, will help prevent another destabilizing war in the Middle East.

This essay will mainly be a qualitative analysis of the motivations behind the invasion. Because the invasion happened in 2003, all my sources are secondary. For my analysis, I will be using academic sources, including various academic articles, extracts from books, and academic journals. These academic sources provide various theories and perspectives that I can use in the essay, as well as different theoretical analysis. I will also use several news articles and pieces from newspapers and websites, which help provide context and factual information, which I can use for my analysis. Lastly, I will also use statistics in order to provide evidence of certain claims. The main theories that I will be using are realist ideas of governments and individuals acting in their best interests, as well as dependency theory and neo-colonialism.

² "Bolton Was Fired after Disagreeing with Trump on Iran: Report." Trump News | Al Jazeera, Al Jazeera, 12 Sept. 2019, www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/09/bolton-fired-disagreeing-trump-iran-report-190912080326471.html (Accessed on October 13th, 2019)

Main Body

Brief Context

Before diving into the main analysis, we must first establish some context over what happened and when. This section will be brief and is only to establish the events that took place. George W. Bush, was sworn in as president in 2001 after a controversial election against Al Gore, where Bush lost the popular vote but won the Electoral College. On September 11th, terrorists crashed several planes into the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in DC, killing nearly 3000 civilians. This attack shocked the US and the world. Osama Bin Laden, the mastermind behind the attacks, was taking refuge in Afghanistan at this time, and after the Taliban (which ruled Afghanistan in 2001) refused to give up Bin Laden, the US responded with military action against Afghanistan as part of its “War on Terror”. In his state of the union speech, Bush said that Iraq was part of the “axis of evil”. Later that year, Congress passed a bill authorizing Bush to use force against Iraq, which he promptly used, declaring war against Iraq on March 19th of 2003.³ The Bush administration stated that the US went to war because of the fact that Saddam Hussein was stockpiling weapons of mass destruction, even though we have confirmed that Saddam Hussein did not, in fact, possess any such weapons⁴.

³ “George W. Bush - Key Events.” *Miller Center*, University of Virginia , 18 Sept. 2017, millercenter.org/president/george-w-bush/key-events (Accessed on September 21st, 2019)

⁴ Butt, Ahsan I. “Why Did Bush Go to War in Iraq?” *Iraq | Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 20 Mar. 2019, www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/bush-war-iraq-190318150236739.html (Accessed on July 17th, 2019)

Economic Motivations

Influence of Transnational Corporations and Elite Interests

The US had much to gain from the invasion. Assuming that the invasion could be a success, American and western transnational corporations (TNCs) could set up oil drilling operation in Iraq, and this would in turn heavily enrich the oil companies, and expand the economic power of the US. The US has considerable hard power, with hard power being the aggressive use of military and/ or economic means in order to secure influence on the global stage, and the hard power capabilities of the US were (and are) clearly incredibly strong, with the largest GDP in the world, standing at over 11.4 Trillion dollars in 2003 according to the World Bank⁵, as well as one of the largest, if not the largest armies in the world, with over 1.4 Million soldiers in 2003).⁶ The use of hard power was particularly noticeable during the invasion of Iraq, both in terms of the military might which was on display for the world, as well as how American TNCs successfully took advantage of the result of the invasion. Not long after Saddam fell, American petroleum companies, most notably Halliburton (a major American oil conglomerate), began operating within Iraq, earning profits in the billions of dollars. In July of 2003, Halliburton's stock price was \$11.36, and by July of 2006, their stock price had risen to \$37.53, a massive increase from before the war. Furthermore, total profits in 2006 stood at \$10.1 Billion, and rose to over \$15 Billion by 2008 as the war dragged

⁵ "GDP (Current US\$) - United States." Data.worldbank , The World Bank, data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2005&locations=US&start=2002 Last Updated in 2018 (Accessed on October 3rd, 2019)

⁶ "U.S. Military Size 1985-2019." MacroTrends, MacroTrends, www.macrotrends.net/countries/USA/united-states/military-army-size. Last Updated in 2018 (Accessed on October 3rd, 2019)

on.⁷ Similarly, profits for BP (British Petroleum) increased from \$245 Billion in early 2006 to over \$285 Billion by September of 2008.⁸ While the data above is exclusive to Halliburton and BP, it clearly shows that large western oil companies profited immensely as the war continued. The influence that these petroleum companies had on the Middle East grew significantly after 2003, and they did not help bring stability to Iraq or the Middle East as a whole.

All of this helps us clearly see that these TNCs took advantage of the invasion to increase their profits, which in turn strengthened American hard power on the world stage and their influence in the Middle East. Simply stating this though would imply that TNCs simply took advantage of the invasion for their own self interest. However, it is unlikely that this is the case. As previously mentioned, many members of the Bush administration had significant connections with the oil industry, most notably Vice-president Dick Cheney, former CEO of Halliburton, as well as Condoleezza Rice, who served as a director for Chevron prior to being national security advisor.⁹ Even Bush himself served as an oil executive prior to being president, and oil executives served as some of Bush's top campaign donors.¹⁰ These connections would mean that many of the senior administration members would personally benefit from a war against Iraq, which creates the very real possibility that the war was fought for control of the oil industry. In fact, it can be confirmed that some members of the administration did

⁷ "Halliburton - 47 Year Stock Price History: HAL." *Macrotrends*, Macrotrends, www.macrotrends.net/stocks/charts/HAL/halliburton/stock-price-history. Last updated 2019 (Accessed on October 3rd, 2019)

⁸ "BP Revenue 2006-2019: BP." *Macrotrends*, www.macrotrends.net/stocks/charts/BP/bp/revenue. Last Updated 2019 (Accessed on October 3rd, 2019)

⁹ Winfrey, Graham. "Bush's Oil Cronies: Where Are They Now?" *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 25 Jan. 2010, www.businessinsider.com/bushs-oil-cronies-where-are-they-now-2010-1#former-secretary-of-state-condoleezza-rice-2. (Accessed on September 25th, 2019)

¹⁰ Pasternak, Judy, and Alan C Miller. "It's a Well-Oiled Machine That Keeps Bush Running." *Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles Times, 23 Sept. 2000, www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2000-sep-23-mn-25320-story.html (Accessed on August 28th, 2019)

personally benefit from the war. In the years following his election as vice president, Dick Cheney had received nearly \$2 million in bonuses and deferred payments from Halliburton in addition to stock options, meanwhile Halliburton rose to be one of the largest military subcontractors in the US, and benefited from military contracts in Iraq valued at over \$5 Billion.¹¹ All of this evidence does appear to indicate that the invasion was, at the very least, partially motivated by oil interests and to benefit major TNCs, and as we discussed in the previous paragraph, many TNCs did benefit from the invasion. Some nations supporting the USA in the war were even more explicit, most notably Poland. In 2003, their foreign minister stated that “*We have never hidden our desire for Polish oil companies to finally have access to sources of commodities*” and that access to the Iraqi oil fields “*(...) is our ultimate objective*”.¹² If it is true that the US was primarily motivated by a desire to increase its access to oil and the personal enrichment of government officials, that would seemingly be corruption at the highest levels of the executive branch, which is something that the judicial and legislative branches did nothing to stop, as Congress voted in favour of the Iraq war.¹³ It is possible to connect the ideas presented above to the theory of elite interests. Elite interests, as presented by Daniel Lieberfeld, states that the war in Iraq served as a way to distract the American public from the failure to prevent the 9/11 attacks, as well as a way for powerful individuals to enrich themselves.¹⁴ We have already observed how entangled

¹¹ Rosenbaum, David E. “A Closer Look at Cheney and Halliburton.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 28 Sept. 2004, www.nytimes.com/2004/09/28/us/a-closer-look-at-cheney-and-halliburton.html (Accessed on August 7th, 2019)

¹² “Europe | Poland Seeks Iraqi Oil Stake.” *BBC News*, BBC, 3 July 2003, news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3043330.stm (Accessed on September 28th, 2019)

¹³ Collins, Dan. “Congress Says Yes To Iraq Resolution.” *CBS News*, CBS Interactive, 16 Oct. 2002, www.cbsnews.com/news/congress-says-yes-to-iraq-resolution/ (Accessed on September 25th, 2019)

¹⁴ Lieberfeld, Daniel. “THEORIES OF CONFLICT AND THE IRAQ WAR.” *International Journal of Peace Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2005, pp. 1–21. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41852927.

administration officials were with various oil corporations, including Bush himself. Considering the fact that, as previously mentioned, many of the donors to the Bush campaign came from the oil sector, it could be argued that the invasion of Iraq could have served the purpose of enriching Bush's biggest campaign donors, which in turn could help the Bush administration guarantee reelection. While this is a very radical analysis, it does help explain the decisions of the administration considering Lieberfelds analysis.

It is also worth looking at how TNCs were involved in the post-conflict reconstruction. In an article by Sarah Meharg, it is argued that reconstruction in Iraq was largely driven by profit, and that this represented a shift in how post-war reconstruction was historically handled.¹⁵ According to Meharg, many US companies from a variety of sectors were very eager to receive government contracts for reconstruction because these contracts would have been particularly lucrative. Additionally, while the US had initially promised to not use Iraqi oil to fund reconstruction, they later did so anyways.¹⁶ Reconstruction in Iraq was largely led by the military, which gave out lucrative contracts to many American TNCs to carry out reconstruction, with the article specifically mentioning Motorola, Lucent and Halliburton.¹⁷ The article notes that Halliburton was specifically "invited" by the US government, and were given large, no bid contracts.¹⁸ The article further suggests that specific targets may have been destroyed because of the fact that it would be profitable to reconstruct

¹⁵ Meharg, Sarah Jane. "POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION: HUMANITARIAN AID OR PROFIT-DRIVEN ACTIVITY?" *Peace Research*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2003, pp. 65–74. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/23607946.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, Page 68

¹⁷ *Ibid*, Page 68, Page 70

¹⁸ *Ibid*, Page 69

them in the future.¹⁹ The main point of Meharg's article is that reconstruction was driven by profit instead of any humanitarian concerns, and that many TNCs profited immensely from these contracts. It is worth mentioning that while many of these government contracts were up for bid, there were also quite a few no bid contracts, most notably in the previously mentioned case of Halliburton.²⁰

Analysis through Neo-Colonialism and Dependency Theory

The invasion and the subsequent war can be analyzed through a lense of neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism is when a less developed country is essentially controlled by a foreign entity, with the primary purpose of this foreign control being resource extraction. The foreign entity can take effective control of a country through foreign investments, which will in turn give the foreign entity significant influence. The foreign entity in question can be another state or a TNC.²¹ Several theorists have argued that the invasion itself was a continuation of western imperialist attitudes towards the Middle East. In an academic article by Emmitt B. Evans, Evans argues that western powers had historically used "divide and rule" in order to keep Middle Eastern nations in check, however throughout the 1970s and beyond, Middle Eastern states began to act with more autonomy and it became more difficult for the west to control them.²² Evans argues that the invasion of Iraq was the abandonment of "divide and rule", with the United States deciding to control Iraq and its resources directly.²³ Evans

¹⁹ Ibid, Page 69

²⁰ Rosenbaum, David E. "A Closer Look at Cheney and Halliburton." The New York Times, The New York Times, 28 Sept. 2004, www.nytimes.com/2004/09/28/us/a-closer-look-at-cheney-and-halliburton.html (Accessed on August 7th, 2019)

²¹ Heywood, Andrew. "Poverty and Development" Global Politics, Second Edition ed., Palgrave Foundations, 2014, pp. 364.

²² Evans, Emmitt B. "Iraq and the New American Colonialism." Digital Commons Cal Poly , California Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo , 1 Apr. 2003, digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1037&context=moebius

²³ Ibid, Page 2

does, however, argue that “new American colonialism” is ultimately illegitimate in the eyes of the international community.²⁴ Evan’s argumentation explicitly says that the US invasion of Iraq was to aid American imperialist efforts in the Middle East, and since they could no longer control Saddam Hussein, direct intervention was needed to keep Iraq as a country friendly to US interests.

Dependency theory can further illustrate how neo-colonialism explains the invasion. Dependency theory states that the world is divided into 2 types of nations: the core and the periphery. The core countries are those which are very powerful and wealthy, and they are often reliant on the periphery to sustain themselves and grow.²⁵ Iraq, along with much of the Middle East, has always been part of the global political periphery, and has historically been ruled by other larger empires, whether it be the Ottomans or the British. The Sykes and Picot agreement split Ottoman lands between Britain and France, and it was Britain who gained control over Iraq, treating it like any other colony.²⁶ We can also observe dependency within Iraq after the invasion. Following the fall of Saddam Hussein, the process for rebuilding Iraq fell mostly to the Americans instead of the Iraqis. In 1995, the United Nations established the “Oil for Food” program, where Iraqi civilians could trade oil in exchange for food from the World Food Program, and by the time of the invasion in 2003, around 60% of Iraqis were dependent on the international community for food.²⁷ In a piece published by the Wilson Center, it is predicted that post war reconstruction would be hampered by Iraqi

²⁴ Ibid, Page 3

²⁵ Heywood, Andrew. “Theories of Global Politics.” *Global Politics*, Second Edition ed., Palgrave Foundations, 2014, pp. 73.

²⁶ Evans, Emmet B. “Iraq and the New American Colonialism.” *Digital Commons Cal Poly*, California Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo, 1 Apr. 2003, digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1037&context=moebius (Page 1)

²⁷ “UN Office of the Iraq Program - Oil-for-Food.” United Nations, United Nations Office of the Iraq Programme, www.un.org/Depts/oip/sector-food.html (Accessed on 4th of December, 2019)

dependency on foreign nations, most notably through the aforementioned Oil for Food program.²⁸ After the war, Iraq largely became dependent on the US for its reconstruction efforts, which delayed the implementation of a democratically elected civilian government (as the US was largely running the country), which many theorists and think tanks predicted that a democratic government was necessary to ensure a smooth transition of power.²⁹ Combining the analysis of Evans' with our understanding of dependency theory, we can notice that Iraq has spent much of the 20th century as part of the periphery, and its natural resources have mostly benefited the west. According to Jeremy Scahill, Iraq has largely been ruled by western powers since the 1960s, and successive American administrations worked to keep Iraq under their control,³⁰ contributing to the neo-colonialist relationship which Iraq currently has with the west. Under Saddam's rule, Iraq acted mostly independently from western interests, and again using our knowledge of dependency theory, we can determine that the west would have perceived this as a threat, which is something that Evans also alludes to. With all of this in mind, it was somewhat inevitable that western countries attempted to restore control over Iraq because of the Core's dependency on the Periphery. With the US being the main superpower of the 21st century, it makes sense that the US invaded Iraq. According to Benjamin Blackstone, the invasion would guarantee that Iraq would become dependent on the US, and that would make it very easy for the US to exploit

²⁸ "Challenges of Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Iraq." *Wilson Center*, Wilson Center, 10 Mar. 2003, www.wilsoncenter.org/event/challenges-post-conflict-reconstruction-iraq (Accessed on October 25th, 2019)

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Scahill, Jeremy. "A Brief History of U.S. Intervention in Iraq Over the Past Half Century." *The Intercept*, The Intercept, 9 Apr. 2018, theintercept.com/2018/04/09/video-a-brief-history-of-u-s-intervention-in-iraq-over-the-past-half-century/ (Accessed on December 4th, 2019)

Iraqi resources,³¹ which as we have seen, did happen, as western petroleum companies significantly enriched themselves as the war dragged on.

³¹ Blackstone, Benjamin. "The US Invasion of Iraq: Marxist and Defensive Realist Perspectives." E-International Relations Students , E-International Relations Students , 30 May 2016, www.e-ir.info/2016/05/30/the-us-invasion-of-iraq-marxist-and-defensive-realist-perspectives/ (Accessed on October 29th, 2019)

Alternative Motivations

While analyzing the invasion by looking at the economic motivations gives us a good idea of the rationale behind the war, it is not the only factor. It is impossible to negate the context that preceded the invasion of Iraq, that being the 9/11 attacks and the new, prominent threat posed by international Islamist terrorism. The war on terror, as well as the ideology surrounding it, presents another possible reason for the American decision to invade. Additionally, certain liberal and realist theories can also help provide a rationale for the invasion, and this chapter will be exploring these other factors.

Installing Democracy and humanitarian concerns from a liberal lense: Eliminating global threats and increasing hard power from realist and offensive realist lenses.

Several liberal and realist theories can also help explain the war. In a journal article, Daniel Lieberfeld outlines several realist explanations for the war.³² Iraq was a long time enemy of the US, who were highly motivated to acquire nuclear weapons. Eliminating Iraq as a threat could go a long way in nuclear proliferation.³³ Lieberfeld further outlines how Iraq posed less of a threat than Iran or North Korea, which were both members of the “Axis of Evil”. Iran and North Korea had more developed armies and nuclear programs, so invading them would have been much more challenging. With this in mind, Iraq can be seen as a target of convenience.³⁴ Offensive realism offers an

³² Lieberfeld, Daniel. “THEORIES OF CONFLICT AND THE IRAQ WAR.” *International Journal of Peace Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2005, pp. 1–21. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41852927.

³³ *Ibid*, Page 3

³⁴ *Ibid*, Page 3

additional perspective. Offensive realism, originally envisioned by John Mearshimer, states that nation states will behave aggressively towards each other in order to gain power on the world stage, and that this is often the reason for conflict.³⁵ It is clear that invading Iraq would have increased the hard power capabilities of the US, and this justification for the war fits with Mearshimer's theory. It is worth mentioning, however, that in 2002, many realist theorists took out an op-ed in the New York Times encouraging the US to not get involved in Iraq, and Mearshimer himself was among the signatories.³⁶ This op-ed states that war with Iraq was not in the best interests of the US due to the high costs, both in terms of lives and money, as well as the fact that Al Qaeda had no ties to the Iraqi Government. The fact that John Mearsheimer, the main theorist behind the idea of offensive realism, said that invading Iraq was not in the best interests of the US heavily implies that offensive realist ideas of spreading US hegemony and control over the Middle East was likely not something considered by the Bush administration.

³⁵Heywood, Andrew. "Power and Twenty-First-Century World Order." *Global Politics, Second Edition ed.*, Palgrave Foundations, 2014, pp. 240–241.

³⁶"WAR WITH IRAQ IS NOT IN AMERICA'S NATIONAL INTEREST." 26 September 2002 New York Times Advertisement, The New York Times, 2002, www.bear-left.com/archive/2002/0926oped.html. (Accessed on July 17th, 2019)

WAR WITH IRAQ IS NOT IN AMERICA'S NATIONAL INTEREST

As scholars of international security affairs, we recognize that war is sometimes necessary to ensure our national security or other vital interests. We also recognize that Saddam Hussein is a tyrant and that Iraq has defied a number of U.N. resolutions. But military force should be used only when it advances U.S. national interests. War with Iraq does not meet this standard.

- Saddam Hussein is a murderous despot, but no one has provided credible evidence that Iraq is cooperating with al Qaeda.
- Even if Saddam Hussein acquired nuclear weapons, he could not use them without suffering massive U.S. or Israeli retaliation.
- The first Bush Administration did not try to conquer Iraq in 1991 because it understood that doing so could spread instability in the Middle East, threatening U.S. interests. This remains a valid concern today.
- The United States would win a war against Iraq, but Iraq has military options—chemical and biological weapons, urban combat—that might impose significant costs on the invading forces and neighboring states.
- Even if we win easily, we have no plausible exit strategy. Iraq is a deeply divided society that the United States would have to occupy and police for many years to create a viable state.
- Al Qaeda poses a greater threat to the U.S. than does Iraq. War with Iraq will jeopardize the campaign against al Qaeda by diverting resources and attention from that campaign and by increasing anti-Americanism around the globe.

The United States should maintain vigilant containment of Iraq—using its own assets and the resources of the United Nations—and be prepared to invade Iraq if it threatens to attack America or its allies. That is not the case today. We should concentrate instead on defeating al Qaeda.

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Figure 1: New York Times Op Ed³⁷

Liberal theories also help explain the invasion to a certain extent. Saddam's Iraq was an incredibly repressive regime, which committed extreme human rights abuses in order to keep power. Saddam's government even committed crimes against humanity,

³⁷ "Picture of the New York Times Op-Ed." Mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/, The University of Chicago, 2002, mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/P0012.pdf. (Accessed on October the 18th, 2019)

as he was later charged with committing genocide against the Kurds.³⁸ The idea of humanitarian intervention is strongly tied to liberalism, and thus, can help explain the decision to invade. Lieberfeld argues that the US would probably not have invaded if Iraq was a democracy.³⁹ However, Lieberfeld also points out that the actions of the US after the invasion largely cast doubt over a liberal interpretation of the invasion.⁴⁰

The War on Terror and the Bush Doctrine

9/11 represented a paradigm shift in American foreign policy. While terrorism was not new to the US, never before had such a devastating attack occurred on American soil by a foreign entity. The US needed a way to respond, and thus entered the Bush Doctrine. The Bush Doctrine guided US foreign policy, and it stated that the US would go to war against terrorism, including attacking nations which harbored terrorists, making no distinction between the two. The Bush Doctrine treated the world as a dichotomy, with terrorists on one side and nations which stood for “freedom” on the other.⁴¹ Another important principle of the Bush Doctrine was the idea of preemptive wars to combat terrorism, where military action would be used against nations which represented terrorist threats, even if these nations had not committed any terrorist attacks.⁴² The Bush doctrine helps explain the decision to invade Iraq as a preemptive move to keep the US safe. In his state of the union address in 2002, George Bush stated that Iraq,

³⁸ Wong, Edward. “Saddam Charged with Genocide of Kurds.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 5 Apr. 2006, www.nytimes.com/2006/04/05/world/05iht-saddam.html?mtref=www.google.com&qwh=869F0A746F1B56DECD84FAE05D304FEE&gwt=pay&assetType=REGIWAL. (Accessed on October 15th, 2019)

³⁹ Lieberfeld, Daniel. “THEORIES OF CONFLICT AND THE IRAQ WAR.” *International Journal of Peace Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2005, pp. 1–21. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41852927. (Page 6)

⁴⁰ Ibid, Page 7

⁴¹ Meyer, Raoul. “Terrorism, War, and Bush 43: Crash Course US History #46.” *YouTube*, Crash Course, 30 Jan. 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlsnnhn3VWE&t=607s. (Accessed on October 18th, 2019)

⁴² Jones, Steve. “Understanding the Bush Doctrine.” *ThoughtCo*, ThoughtCo, 2 July 2019, www.thoughtco.com/the-bush-doctrine-3310291 (Accessed on October 25th, 2019)

alongside Iran and North Korea, were part of an “Axis of Evil”, that being nations which sponsored terrorism and held weapons of mass destruction.⁴³ The Bush administration stated that it was impossible to wage a defensive war against terrorism, which was part of the rationale for the invasion.⁴⁴ The extent to which this rationale applies to Iraq is a debatable point. Regardless, it is clearly observable that this doctrine of preemptive war did not last beyond Afghanistan and Iraq, and analysts at the Brookings Institute agree that Iraq would be the last time that the Bush administration attempted to use the idea of preemptive war in the fight against terrorism, casting doubts over the legitimacy of Bush’s claims.⁴⁵ It is worth mentioning that according to an article from *The World Politics Review*, the Bush Doctrine forced terrorist groups to take a defensive stance, preventing large attacks on the US mainland⁴⁶, although the invasion of Iraq largely strengthened Al Qaeda and turned Iraq to a haven for islamist terrorism.⁴⁷ While the Bush doctrine helps explain the actions of the US as an attempt to keep the US safe, it can also be argued that it was simply a way for the US to justify its invasion, as the Bush doctrine was not applied to any other countries of the “Axis of Evil”, and while it may have prevented other large terrorists attacks on the US mainland, it emboldened the influence and power of islamists terrorist groups in the Middle East.

⁴³ Bush, George W. “State of the Union Address, 2002.” 29 Jan. 2002, Washington DC, United States.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3Z3RpRYL8o> (Accessed on November First, 2019)

⁴⁴Daalder, Ivo H., and James Lindsay. “The Preemptive-War Doctrine Has Met an Early Death in Iraq.” *Brookings*, Brookings Institute , 28 July 2016, www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-preemptive-war-doctrine-has-met-an-early-death-in-iraq/ (accessed on October 4th, 2019)

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Dowd, Alan W. “Elements of the Bush Doctrine Will Outlive the Bush Presidency.” *World Politics Review*, 5 May 2008, www.worldpoliticsreview.com/insights/2060/elements-of-the-bush-doctrine-will-outlive-the-bush-presidency (Accessed on October 26th, 2019)

⁴⁷ Meyer , Raoul. “Terrorism, War, and Bush 43: Crash Course US History #46.” YouTube, Crash Course , 30 Jan. 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlsnnhn3VWE&t=607s (Accessed on October 18th, 2019)

Conclusion

To conclude, it is abundantly clear that economic factors played a major role in deciding to invade. Gaining access to Iraqi oil would have increased the hard power capabilities of the US as it would have significantly increased their economic power, which happened as many western TNCs saw huge increases in profits and stock prices. It is also unquestionably observable how elite interests played a role, as many executives in the oil industry, including members of the Bush administration, stood to personally gain large amounts of wealth from the war, considering how deeply connected the Bush administration was with the oil industry. Additionally, the post-war reconstruction process was also heavily profit driven. Theories of neo-colonialism and dependency also help explain the invasion from a more critical viewpoint. Non-economic motivations also played an important role, especially in regards to the war on terror and seeing the Iraq war as part of a post 9/11 paradigm. An important part of the Bush doctrine is the idea of preemptive warfare, which undoubtedly applies to the invasion of Iraq, especially since Iraq was part of the "Axis of Evil". Additionally, realist ideas of eliminating Iraq as a global threat as well as liberal ideas of spreading democracy and human rights also provide explanations for the invasion. It is worth mentioning that all of the theories mentioned, as well as all of my research in general has its limitations. For example, I use company profits and stock prices to determine that Halliburton benefited from the war, however it is unclear how much of their increase in profits was a result of the war and it is impossible to infer from that data that it was because of the war that they saw increases in profits and stock prices. It is also worth

mentioning that neo-colonialism and dependency are neo-marxist theories, and thus, are somewhat controversial, and far from universally accepted since they mainly focus on economic factors. The validity of the Bush doctrine and the war on terror are also called into question, as we now know that there were no ties between Al Qaeda and Iraq, and we can also confirm the fact that Iraq did not possess any WMDs at the time. Realist theories also have their flaws in explaining the war, especially considering the fact that many prominent realist theorists publicly spoke out against the invasion. With all of this in mind, ***were economic factors the primary motivation behind the USA's invasion of Iraq in 2003?*** I believe that it is possible to confirm to a certain degree of confidence that economic factors were the main motivation behind the decision to invade Iraq.

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