

POLITY

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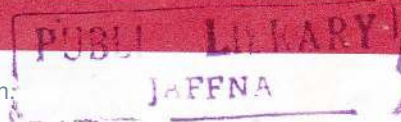
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INVASION OF IRAQ

WAR IN IRAQ: ROAD MAP TO A NEW EMPIRE	02
SRI LANKAN PROTEST ON IRAQ INVASION	03
MESOPOTAMIA, BABYLON, THE TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES	04
<i>Arundhati Roy</i>	
A STUPID WAR	08
<i>Edward Said</i>	
GIVE US BACK OUR DEMOCRACY	10
<i>Edward Said</i>	
BOYCOTT THE DOLLAR !	12
<i>Rohini Hensman</i>	
PRESIDENT'S REAL GOAL IN IRAQ	14
<i>Jay Bookman</i>	
THE SHADOW MEN	17
ONE RULE FOR THEM	20
<i>George Monbiot</i>	
DEMOCRACY FOR IRAQ, WOMEN ARE THE KEY	22
<i>Noeleen Heyzer</i>	
SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION	23
<i>Roger Normand and Jan Goodwin</i>	
THE OFFICIAL WAR GLOSSARY	25
<i>Geov Parrish</i>	
BILL CLINTON'S ADVICE	26
INDEFENSIBLE	27
BLACK HOLE OF TV WAR REPORTING	28
<i>Frank Rich</i>	
IRAQ: A LETTER OF RESIGNATION	29
MY OSCAR BACKLASH— <i>STUPID WHITE MEN</i> BACK AT # 1.	31
WAR IS GOOD, SAID BUSH AS THE THE LOUVRE FELL	33
<i>Simon Jenkins</i>	
NOT IN OUR NAME	35
THE USE OF FORCE IN INTERNATIONAL LAW	36

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WAR IN IRAQ: ROAD MAP TO A NEW EMPIRE

The war in Iraq appears to be over, at least for the moment. However, the consequences of the invasion and occupation of a resource rich country in the crisis-ridden Middle East by the world's economic and military super power are likely to be felt for many years to come. As some commentators have pointed out, global politics has entered a new phase of imperialism. The Republican Right wing of the US has now given a new meaning to the old notion of empire. Such rhetorical slogans as 'war for peace' and 'war for democracy' are not even thin attempts to veil the corporate economic interests of the US that propel the new imperialist agenda into action through military invasion and occupation.

The Iraqi war generated outrage and anger throughout the world. It reactivated the anti-war and peace movements, bringing progressive forces together into alliance and action. The war also resulted in a sharp break in the US-Europe relations. It plunged the UN, the world body whose mandate is to maintain and ensure world peace, into a crisis of legitimacy. The Middle East, with the direct US occupation of Iraq, appears to be ripe for a major period of crisis and instability ahead. The political developments in the occupied Iraq

are far from being in the direction which the Bush and Blair administrations would have liked to map out. They will certainly find a new ruling class in Iraq from among those social forces that had suffered under the Ba'ath Party's long, autocratic rule. Yet, as much as democracy cannot be introduced to Iraq from outside and by military means, Iraqi society is most likely to find resistance to American occupation in religio-nationalist mobilization.

The war of Iraq is perhaps more crucial than September 11, in re-defining the dynamics of global politics. The event of September 11 may be seen as having provided an alibi, an impetus, for the right wing elements of the US corporate world to put in place an agenda that has been evolving since the fall of the Soviet Union in the mid eighties. The Afghan war after September 11 and now the occupation of Iraq, constitute a deliberate imperial policy that combines economic interests, military invasion and global control by direct military means.

The dynamics that led to the Iraq war as well as the profound consequences of the war and its aftermath have given rise to vast corpus of critical political literature.

This issue of *Polity* brings to its readers a selection of major contributions to the understanding of the Iraq war. **P**

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SRI LANKAN PROTEST ON IRAQ INVASION

Signed by 100 University Professors, Lecturers, Professionals, Activists and Leaders of Civil Society

The invasion of Iraq has brought the world to the brink of great uncertainty and instability. The US led invasion, undertaken with the intention of regime change in Baghdad against the international law, wishes of the United Nations and the majority of the people of the world, sets a dangerous precedent. We call upon the US and British governments and their allies to immediately stop their invasion of Iraq, withdraw all their troops from the Gulf region, and work with the United Nations on a negotiated settlement to the original issue of weapons of mass destruction.

Behind the rhetoric of liberating the people of Iraq from Saddam Hussein's regime lie economic as well as global political interests that the Republican establishment in the US has made little attempt to hide. The new US doctrine of preemptive unilateralism is a clear statement of the ruling party's agenda to impose post-Cold-War American domination on the world. In putting the agenda of global domination into action, the Bush Administration and its allies have disregarded the question of the elementary legality of their act of invasion of a sovereign country. Herein lies a great danger to peoples and nations throughout the world: political relations and inter-state relations are increasingly driven by the principle that 'might is right' and international norms, rules and due process are being rendered irrelevant.

The spread of war beyond Iraq will have serious consequences and implications for global order and economic and social development. The poor nations of the world, grappling with uneven development and economic globalization, face increased hardships in an event of protracted and widened conflict in the Gulf region. Another dangerous precedent is that increasingly the production of hi-tech weapons to destroy whole societies and the post-conflict reconstruction industry have become growth sectors in the global economy with serious implications for human security and world development.

The failure of the United Nations to halt the Bush Administration's reckless militarism against Iraq is making powerless the world body's primary mandate of ensuring world peace. The Secretary-General's insistence that the UN would provide humanitarian and post-conflict assistance in Iraq appears to be an admission that the UN has lost sight of its primary mandate to maintain world peace and has thus been willfully ignored by the US government. In the run-up to the planned invasion the UN Secretary-General, instead of continuing the Weapons Inspections process and insisting (as the French, German, Russian and Chinese governments did), that the diplomatic process should continue, withdrew the inspectors from Iraq along with other UN personnel monitoring the food for oil program.

Against this backdrop, we appeal to the people of the world and the leaders of States to rally against the war on Iraq, and for peace. We demand that the US and its allies desist from further aggression against the people of Iraq and let the Iraqi people decide the fate of their government in an atmosphere free of war, external aggression and intimidation. We also appeal to the UN to regain its original mandate and moral authority so that it can once again become the world body that it was meant to be. In order to facilitate that process, the Secretary-General should resume the United Nations' efforts to politically manage and eventually resolve the crisis of Iraq. The issue of the illegality of the invasion of Iraq and its impact on the world should be brought forward to the United Nations General Assembly.

The editors thank friends in Sri Lanka and abroad for sending in material on the Iraq war.

MESOPOTAMIA, BABYLON, THE TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES

Arundhati Roy

How many children, in how many classrooms, over how many centuries, have hang-glied through the past, transported on the wings of these words? And now the bombs are falling, incinerating and humiliating that ancient civilisation.

On the steel torsos of their missiles, adolescent American soldiers scrawl colourful messages in childish handwriting: For Saddam, from the Fat Boy Posse. A building goes down. A marketplace. A home. A girl who loves a boy. A child who only ever wanted to play with his older brother's marbles.

On March 21, the day after American and British troops began their illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq, an "embedded" CNN correspondent interviewed an American soldier. "I wanna get in there and get my nose dirty," Private AJ said. "I wanna take revenge for 9/11."

To be fair to the correspondent, even though he was "embedded" he did sort of weakly suggest that so far there was no real evidence that linked the Iraqi government to the September 11 attacks. Private AJ stuck his teenage tongue out all the way down to the end of his chin. "Yeah, well that stuff's way over my head," he said.

According to a *New York Times*/CBS News survey, 42 per cent of the American public believes that Saddam Hussein is directly responsible for the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. And an ABC news poll says that 55 per cent of Americans believe that Saddam Hussein directly supports al-Qaida. What percentage of America's armed forces believe these fabrications is anybody's guess.

It is unlikely that British and American troops fighting in Iraq are aware that their governments supported Saddam Hussein both politically and financially through his worst excesses.

But why should poor AJ and his fellow soldiers be burdened with these details? It does not matter any more, does it? Hundreds of thousands of men, tanks, ships, choppers, bombs, ammunition, gas masks, high-protein food, whole aircrafts ferrying toilet paper, insect repellent, vitamins and bottled mineral water, are on the move. The phenomenal logistics of Operation Iraqi Freedom make it a universe unto itself. It doesn't need to justify its existence any more. It exists. It is.

President George W. Bush, commander in chief of the US army, navy, airforce and marines has issued clear instructions: "Iraq. Will. Be. Liberated." (Perhaps he means that even if Iraqi people's bodies are killed, their souls will be liberated.) American and British citizens owe it to the supreme commander to forsake thought and rally behind their troops. Their countries are at war. And what a war it is.

After using the "good offices" of UN diplomacy (economic sanctions and weapons inspections) to ensure that Iraq was brought to its knees, its people starved, half a million of its children killed, its infrastructure severely damaged, after making sure that most of its weapons have been destroyed, in an act of cowardice that must surely be unrivalled in history, the "Allies"/"Coalition of the Willing"(better known as the Coalition of the Bullied and Bought) - sent in an invading army!

Operation Iraqi Freedom? I don't think so. It's more like Operation Let's Run a Race, but First Let Me Break Your Knees.

So far the Iraqi army, with its hungry, ill-equipped soldiers, its old guns and ageing tanks, has somehow managed to temporarily confound and occasionally even outmanoeuvre the "Allies". Faced with the richest, best-equipped, most powerful armed forces the world has ever seen, Iraq has shown spectacular courage and has even managed to put up what actually amounts to a defence. A defence which the Bush/Blair Pair have immediately denounced as deceitful and cowardly. (But then deceit is an old tradition with us natives. When we are invaded/ colonised/occupied and stripped of all dignity, we turn to guile and opportunism.)

Even allowing for the fact that Iraq and the "Allies" are at war, the extent to which the "Allies" and their media cohorts are prepared to go is astounding to the point of being counterproductive to their own objectives.

When Saddam Hussein appeared on national TV to address the Iraqi people after the failure of the most elaborate assassination attempt in history - "Operation Decapitation" - we had Geoff Hoon, the British defence secretary, deriding him for not having the courage to stand up and be killed, calling him a coward who hides in trenches. We then had a flurry of Coalition speculation - Was it really Saddam, was it his double? Or was it Osama with a shave? Was it pre-recorded? Was it a speech? Was it black magic? Will it turn into a pumpkin if we really, really want it to?

After dropping not hundreds, but thousands of bombs on Baghdad, when a marketplace was mistakenly blown up and civilians killed a US army spokesman implied that the Iraqis were blowing themselves up! "They're using very old stock. Their missiles go up and come down."

If so, may we ask how this squares with the accusation that the Iraqi regime is a paid-up member of the Axis of Evil and a threat to world peace?

When the Arab TV station al-Jazeera shows civilian casualties it's denounced as "emotive" Arab propaganda aimed at orchestrating hostility towards the "Allies", as though Iraqis are dying only in order to make the "Allies" look bad. Even French television has come in for some stick for similar reasons. But the awed, breathless footage of aircraft carriers, stealth bombers and cruise missiles arcing across the desert sky on American and British TV is described as the "terrible beauty" of war.

When invading American soldiers (from the army "that's only here to help") are taken prisoner and shown on Iraqi TV, George Bush says it violates the Geneva convention and "exposes the evil at the heart of the regime". But it is entirely acceptable for US television stations to show the hundreds of prisoners being held by the US government in Guantanamo Bay, kneeling on the ground with their hands tied behind their backs, blinded with opaque goggles and with earphones clamped on their ears, to ensure complete visual and aural deprivation. When questioned about the treatment of these prisoners, US Government officials don't deny that they're being ill-treated. They deny that they're "prisoners of war"! They call them "unlawful combatants", implying that their ill-treatment is legitimate! (So what's the party line on the massacre of prisoners in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan? Forgive and forget? And what of the prisoner tortured to death by the special forces at the Bagram airforce base? Doctors have formally called it homicide.)

When the "Allies" bombed the Iraqi television station (also, incidentally, a contravention of the Geneva convention), there was vulgar jubilation in the American media. In fact Fox TV had been lobbying for the attack for a while. It was seen as a righteous blow against Arab propaganda. But mainstream American and British TV continue to advertise themselves as "balanced" when their propaganda has achieved hallucinatory levels.

Why should propaganda be the exclusive preserve of the western media? Just because they do it better? Western journalists "embedded" with troops are given the status of heroes reporting from the frontlines of war. Non-"embedded" journalists (such as the BBC's Rageh Omaar, reporting from besieged and bombed Baghdad, witnessing, and clearly affected by the sight of bodies of burned children and wounded people) are undermined even before they begin their reportage: "We have to tell you that he is being monitored by the Iraqi authorities."

Increasingly, on British and American TV, Iraqi soldiers are being referred to as "militia" (ie: rabble). One BBC correspondent portentously referred to them as "quasi-terrorists". Iraqi defence is "resistance" or worse still, "pockets of resistance", Iraqi military strategy is deceit. (The US government bugging the phone lines of UN security council delegates, reported by the *Observer*, is hard-headed pragmatism.) Clearly for the "Allies", the only morally acceptable strategy the Iraqi army can pursue is to march out into the desert and be bombed by B-52s or be mowed down by machine-gun fire. Anything short of that is cheating.

And now we have the siege of Basra. About a million and a half people, 40 per cent of them children. Without clean water, and with very little food. We're still waiting for the legendary Shia "uprising", for the happy hordes to stream out of the city and rain roses and hosannahs on the "liberating" army. Where are the hordes? Don't they know that television productions work to tight schedules? (It may well be that if Saddam's regime falls there will be dancing on the streets of Basra. But then, if the Bush regime were to fall, there would be dancing on the streets the world over.)

After days of enforcing hunger and thirst on the citizens of Basra, the "Allies" have brought in a few trucks of food and water and positioned them tantalisingly on the outskirts of the city. Desperate people flock to the trucks and fight each other for food. (The water we hear, is being sold. To revitalise the dying economy, you understand.) On top of the trucks, desperate photographers fought each other to get pictures of desperate people fighting each other for food. Those pictures will go out through photo agencies to newspapers and glossy magazines that pay extremely well. Their message: The messiahs are at hand, distributing fishes and loaves.

As of July last year the delivery of \$5.4bn worth of supplies to Iraq was blocked by the Bush/Blair Pair. It didn't really make the news. But now under the loving caress of live TV, 450 tonnes of humanitarian aid - a minuscule fraction of what's actually needed (call it a script prop) - arrived on a British ship, the "Sir Galahad". Its arrival in the port of Umm Qasr merited a whole day of live TV broadcasts. Barf bag, anyone?

Nick Guttman, head of emergencies for Christian Aid, writing for the *Independent* on Sunday said that it would take 32 Sir Galahad's a day to match the amount of food Iraq was receiving before the bombing began.

We oughtn't to be surprised though. It's old tactics. They've been at it for years. Consider this moderate proposal by John McNaughton from the Pentagon Papers, published during the Vietnam war: "Strikes at population targets (per se) are likely not only to create a counterproductive wave of revulsion abroad and at home, but greatly to increase the risk of enlarging the war with China or the Soviet Union. Destruction of locks and dams, however - if handled right - might ... offer promise. It should be studied. Such destruction does not kill or drown people. By shallow-flooding the rice, it leads after time to widespread starvation (more than a

million?) unless food is provided - which we could offer to do 'at the conference table'."

Times haven't changed very much. The technique has evolved into a doctrine. It's called "Winning Hearts and Minds".

So, here's the moral maths as it stands: 200,000 Iraqis estimated to have been killed in the first Gulf war. Hundreds of thousands dead because of the economic sanctions. (At least that lot has been saved from Saddam Hussein.) More being killed every day. Tens of thousands of US soldiers who fought the 1991 war officially declared "disabled" by a disease called the Gulf war syndrome, believed in part to be caused by exposure to depleted uranium. It hasn't stopped the "Allies" from continuing to use depleted uranium.

And now this talk of bringing the UN back into the picture. But that old UN girl - it turns out that she just ain't what she was cracked up to be. She's been demoted (although she retains her high salary). Now she's the world's janitor. She's the Philippino cleaning lady, the Indian jamadarni, the postal bride from Thailand, the Mexican household help, the Jamaican au pair. She's employed to clean other peoples' shit. She's used and abused at will.

Despite Blair's earnest submissions, and all his fawning, Bush has made it clear that the UN will play no independent part in the administration of postwar Iraq. The US will decide who gets those juicy "reconstruction" contracts. But Bush has appealed to the international community not to "politicise" the issue of humanitarian aid. On the March 28, after Bush called for the immediate resumption of the UN's oil for food programme, the UN security council voted unanimously for the resolution. This means that everybody agrees that Iraqi money (from the sale of Iraqi oil) should be used to feed Iraqi people who are starving because of US led sanctions and the illegal US-led war.

Contracts for the "reconstruction" of Iraq we're told, in discussions on the business news, could jump-start the world economy. It's funny how the interests of American corporations are so often, so successfully and so deliberately confused with the interests of the world economy. While the American people will end up paying for the war, oil companies, weapons manufacturers, arms dealers, and corporations involved in "reconstruction" work will make direct gains from the war. Many of them are old friends and former employers of the Bush/ Cheney/Rumsfeld/Rice cabal. Bush has already asked Congress for \$75bn. Contracts for "re-construction" are already being negotiated. The news doesn't hit the stands because much of the US corporate media is owned and managed by the same interests.

Operation Iraqi Freedom, Tony Blair assures us is about returning Iraqi oil to the Iraqi people. That is, returning Iraqi oil to the Iraqi people via corporate multinationals. Like Shell, like Chevron, like Halliburton. Or are we missing the plot here? Perhaps Halliburton is actually an Iraqi company? Perhaps US vice-president Dick Cheney (who is a former director of Halliburton) is a closet Iraqi?

As the rift between Europe and America deepens, there are signs that the world could be entering a new era of economic boycotts. CNN reported that Americans are emptying French wine into gutters, chanting, "We don't want your stinking wine." We've heard about the re-baptism of French fries. Freedom fries they're called now. There's news trickling in about Americans boycotting German goods. The thing is that if the fallout of the war takes this turn, it is the US who will suffer the most. Its homeland may be defended by border patrols and nuclear weapons, but its economy is strung out across the globe. Its economic outposts are exposed and vulnerable to attack in every direction. Already the internet is buzzing with elaborate lists of American and British government products and companies that should be boycotted. Apart from the usual targets, Coke, Pepsi and McDonald's - government agencies such as USAID, the British department for international development, British and American banks, Arthur Anderson, Merrill Lynch, American Express, corporations such as Bechtel, General Electric, and companies such as Reebok, Nike and Gap - could find themselves under siege. These lists are being honed and refined by activists across the world. They could become a practical guide that directs and channels the amorphous, but growing fury in the world. Suddenly, the "inevitability" of the project of corporate globalisation is beginning to seem more than a little evitable.

It's become clear that the war against terror is not really about terror, and the war on Iraq not only about oil. It's about a superpower's self-destructive impulse towards supremacy, stranglehold, global hegemony. The argument is being made that the people of Argentina and Iraq have both been decimated by the same process. Only the weapons used against them differ: In one case it's an IMF chequebook. In the other, cruise missiles.

Finally, there's the matter of Saddam's arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. (Oops, nearly forgot about those!) In the fog of war - thing's for sure - if Saddam's regime indeed has weapons of mass destruction, it is showing an astonishing degree of responsibility and restraint in the teeth of extreme provocation. Under similar circumstances, (say if Iraqi troops were bombing New York and laying siege to Washington DC) could we expect the same of the Bush regime? Would it keep its thousands of nuclear warheads in their wrapping paper? What about its chemical and biological weapons? Its stocks of anthrax, smallpox and nerve gas? Would it?

Excuse me while I laugh.

In the fog of war we're forced to speculate: Either Saddam is an extremely responsible tyrant. Or - he simply does not possess weapons of mass destruction. Either way, regardless of what happens next, Iraq comes out of the argument smelling sweeter than the US government.

So here's Iraq - rogue state, grave threat to world peace, paid-up member of the Axis of Evil. Here's Iraq, invaded, bombed, besieged, bullied, its sovereignty shat upon, its children killed by cancers, its

people blown up on the streets. And here's all of us watching. CNN-BBC, BBC-CNN late into the night. Here's all of us, enduring the horror of the war, enduring the horror of the propaganda and enduring the slaughter of language as we know and understand it. Freedom now means mass murder (or, in the US, fried potatoes). When someone says "humanitarian aid" we automatically go looking for induced starvation. "Embedded" I have to admit, is a great find. It's what it sounds like. And what about "arsenal of tactics?" Nice!

In most parts of the world, the invasion of Iraq is being seen as a racist war. The real danger of a racist war unleashed by racist regimes is that it engenders racism in everybody - perpetrators, victims, spectators. It sets the parameters for the debate, it lays out a grid for a particular way of thinking. There is a tidal wave of hatred for the US rising from the ancient heart of the world. In Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe, Australia. I encounter it every day. Sometimes it comes from the most unlikely sources. Bankers, businessmen, yuppie students, and they bring to it all the crassness of their conservative, illiberal politics. That absurd inability to separate governments from people: America is a nation of morons, a nation of murderers, they say, (with the same carelessness with which they say, "All Muslims are terrorists"). Even in the grotesque universe of racist insult, the British make their entry as add-ons. Arse-lickers, they're called.

Suddenly, I, who have been vilified for being "anti-American" and "anti-west", find myself in the extraordinary position of defending the people of America. And Britain. Those who descend so easily into the pit of racist abuse would do well to remember the hundreds of thousands of American and British citizens who protested against their country's stockpile of nuclear weapons. And the thousands of American war resisters who forced their government to withdraw from Vietnam. They should know that the most scholarly, scathing, hilarious critiques of the US government and the "American way of life" comes from American citizens. And that the funniest, most bitter condemnation of their prime minister comes from the British media. Finally they should remember that right now, hundreds of thousands of British and American citizens are on the streets protesting the war. The Coalition of the Bullied and Bought consists of governments, not people. More than one third of America's citizens have survived the relentless propaganda they've been subjected to, and many thousands are actively fighting their own government. In the ultra-patriotic climate that prevails in the US, that's as brave as any Iraqi fighting for his or her homeland.

While the "Allies" wait in the desert for an uprising of Shia Muslims on the streets of Basra, the real uprising is taking place in hundreds of cities across the world. It has been the most spectacular display of public morality ever seen.

Most courageous of all, are the hundreds of thousands of American people on the streets of America's great cities - Washington. New York, Chicago, San Francisco. The fact is that the only institution in the world today that is more powerful than the American government, is American civil society. American citizens have a huge responsibility riding on their shoulders. How can we not salute and support those who not only acknowledge but act upon that responsibility? They are our allies, our friends.

At the end of it all, it remains to be said that dictators like Saddam Hussein, and all the other despots in the Middle East, in the central Asian republics, in Africa and Latin America, many of them installed, supported and financed by the US government, are a menace to their own people. Other than strengthening the hand of civil society (instead of weakening it as has been done in the case of Iraq), there is no easy, pristine way of dealing with them. (It's odd how those who dismiss the peace movement as utopian, don't hesitate to proffer the most absurdly dreamy reasons for going to war: to stamp out terrorism, install democracy, eliminate fascism, and most entertainingly, to "rid the world of evil-doers".)

Regardless of what the propaganda machine tells us, these tin-pot dictators are not the greatest threat to the world. The real and pressing danger, the greatest threat of all is the locomotive force that drives the political and economic engine of the US government, currently piloted by George Bush. Bush-bashing is fun, because he makes such an easy, sumptuous target. It's true that he is a dangerous, almost suicidal pilot, but the machine he handles is far more dangerous than the man himself.

Despite the pall of gloom that hangs over us today, I'd like to file a cautious plea for hope: in times of war, one wants one's weakest enemy at the helm of his forces. And President George W Bush is certainly that. Any other even averagely intelligent US president would have probably done the very same things, but would have managed to smoke-up the glass and confuse the opposition.

Perhaps even carry the UN with him. Bush's tactless imprudence and his brazen belief that he can run the world with his riot squad, has done the opposite. He has achieved what writers, activists and scholars have striven to achieve for decades. He has exposed the ducts. He has placed on full public view the working parts, the nuts and bolts of the apocalyptic apparatus of the American empire.

Now that the blueprint (The Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire) has been put into mass circulation, it could be disabled quicker than the pundits predicted.

Bring on the spanners. ■

Arundhati Roy is a writer. She won the Booker Prize for her novel *The God of Small Things*.

A STUPID WAR

Edward Said

Full of contradictions, flat-out lies, groundless affirmations, the clotted media torrent of reporting and commentary on the war against Iraq (which is still being waged by something called “the coalition,” whereas it is still an American war with some British help) has obscured what has been so criminally stupid about its planning, propaganda, and justifying discourse by military and policy experts. For the past two weeks, I have been traveling in Egypt and Lebanon trying to keep up with the unending stream of information and misinformation coming out of Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and Jordan, a lot of it misleadingly upbeat, but some of it horrifyingly dramatic in its import as well of course as its immediacy. The Arab satellite channels, al-Jazeera being by now the most notorious and efficient, have given on the whole a totally opposed view of the war than the standard stuff served up by “embedded” reporters – including speculations about Iraqis being killed for not fighting, mass uprisings in Basra, four or five “falls” of Um Kasr and Fao – who have supplied grimy pictures of themselves as lost as the English-speaking soldiers they have been living with. Al-Jazeera has had reporters inside Mosul, Baghdad, Basra and Nasriya, one of them, the impressible Taysir Aloni, a fluent journalistic veteran of the Afghanistan war, and they have presented a much more detailed, on the spot account of the shattering realities of the heavy bombardment that has devastated Baghdad and Basra, as well as the extraordinary resistance and anger of the Iraqi population which was supposedly to have been only a sullen bunch of people waiting to be liberated and throw flowers at Clint Eastwood look-alikes.

Let’s get straight to what is so unwise and sub-standard about this war, leaving aside for the moment its illegality and vast unpopularity, to say nothing about the way American wars of the past half century have been lumbering, humanly unacceptable and so utterly destructive. In the first place, no one has satisfactorily proved that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction that furnish an imminent threat to the United States. No one. Iraq is a hugely weakened and sub-par Third World state ruled by a hated despotic regime: there is no disagreement about that anywhere, least of all in the Arab and Islamic world. But that it is any kind of threat to anyone in its current state of siege is a laughable notion, one which no journalist of the overpaid legions who swarm around the Pentagon, State Department and White House has ever bothered to pursue.

Yet in theory, Iraq might have been a challenge to Israel sometime in the future, since it is the only Arab country that has the human, natural and infrastructural resources to take on not so much America’s but rather Israel’s arrogant brutality. This is why Begin’s air force bombed Iraq preemptively in 1981. Note therefore the

creeping replication of Israeli assumptions and tactics (all of them, as I shall be showing, remarkably flawed) in what the US has been planning and implementing in its current post 9/11 campaign or preemptive war. How regrettable that the media has been so timorous in not investigating the Likud’s slow taking-over of US military and political thinking about the Arab world. So fearful has everyone been of the charge of anti-semitism bandied about recklessly, even by Harvard’s president, such that the neo-conservative cum Christian Right cum Pentagon civilian hawks stranglehold on American policy has become a sort of reality forcing on the entire country an attitude of total belligerency and free floating hostility. One would have thought that but for America’s global dominance we would have been headed for another Holocaust.

Nor, second, could it have been true by any normal human standard that Iraq’s population would have welcomed the American forces that entered the country after a terrifying aerial bombardment. But that that preposterous notion became one of the lynchpins of US policy is testament to the outright rubbish fed the Administration by the Iraqi opposition (many of whom were out of touch with their country as well as keen on promoting their post-war careers by persuading the Americans of how easy an invasion would be) and the two accredited Orientalist experts identified long ago as having the most influence over American Middle East policy, Bernard Lewis and Fouad Ajami.

Now in his late eighties, Lewis came to the US about thirty-five years or so ago to teach at Princeton where his fervent anti-communism and sarcastic disapproval of everything (except modern Turkey) about the modern Arabs and Islam pushed him to the forefront in the pro-Israel battles of the last years of the twentieth century. An old-fashioned Orientalism, he was quickly bypassed by advances in the social sciences and humanities that formed a new generation of scholars who treated the Arabs and Islam as living subjects rather than as backward natives. For Lewis, vast generalizations about the whole of Islam and the civilizational backwardness of “the Arabs” were viable routes to the truth which was available only to an expert like him. Common sense about human experience was out, whereas resounding pronouncements about the clash of civilizations were in (Huntington found his lucrative concept in one of Lewis’s more strident essays about the “return of Islam”). A generalist and ideologue who resorted to etymology to make his points about Islam and the Arabs, Lewis found a new audience within the American Zionist lobby to whom in journals such as *Commentary* and later *The New York Review of Books* he addressed his tendentious pontifications that basically reinforced the prevailing negative stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims.

What made Lewis's work so appalling in its effects was the fact that without any other views to counter his, American (policy-makers in particular) fell for them. That plus the icy distance and superciliousness of his manner made Lewis an "authority" even though he hadn't entered, much less lived in, the Arab world in decades. His last book *What Went Wrong?* became a post-9/11 bestseller and, I am told, required reading for the US military, despite its vacuousness and unsupported, usually factually incorrect, statement about the Arabs during the past 500 years. Reading the book, you get an idea that the Arabs are a useless bunch of backward primitives, easier to attack and destroy than ever before.

Lewis also formulated the equally fraudulent thesis that there were three concentric circles in the Middle East – countries with pro-American people and governments (Jordan, Egypt and Morocco), those with pro-American people and anti-American governments (Iraq and Iran), and those with anti-American governments and people (Syria and Libya). All of this, it would be seen, gradually crept its way into Pentagon planning, especially as Lewis kept spewing out his simplistic formulae on television and in articles for the right-wing press. Hence, Arabs wouldn't fight, they don't know how, they would welcome us, and above all, they were totally susceptible to whatever power America could bring to bear.

Ajami is a Lebanese Shi'a educated in the US who first made his name as a pro-Palestinian commentator. By the mid-1980s, he had become a professor at Johns Hopkins and a fervent anti-Arab nationalist ideologue, who was quickly adopted by the right-wing Zionist lobby (he now works for people like Martin Peretz and Mort Zuckerman) and groups like the Council of Foreign Relations. He is fond of describing himself as a non-fiction Naipaul and quotes Conrad while actually sounding as hokey as Khalil Gibran. In addition, Ajami has a penchant for catchy one-liners, ideally suited for television, if not for reflective thought. The author of two or three ill-informed and tendentious books, he has become influential because as a "native informant" he can harangue TV viewers with his venom while demoting the Arabs to the status of sub-human creatures whose world and actuality doesn't matter to anyone. Ten years ago, he started deploying "we" as a righteous imperial collectivity that along with Israel never does anything wrong. Arabs are to blame for everything and therefore deserve "our" contempt and hostility.

Iraq has drawn out his special venom. He was an early advocate of the 1991 war and has, I think, deliberately misled the basically ignorant American strategic mind into believing that "our" power can set things straight. Dick Cheney quoted him in a major speech last August as saying that Iraqis would welcome "us" as liberators in "the streets of Basra," which still fights on as I write. Like Lewis, Ajami hasn't been a resident of the Arab world for years, although he is rumored to be close to the Saudis, of whom he has reasonably spoken as models for the Arab world's future governance.

If Ajami and Lewis are the leading intellectual figures in US Middle East planning, one can only wince at how even more banal and weak-minded policy hacks in the Pentagon and White House have spun out such "ideas" into the scenario for a quick romp in a friendly Iraq. The State Department, after a long Zionist campaign against its so-called "Arabists" is purged of any countervailing views, and Colin Powell, it should be remembered, is little more than a dutiful servant of power. So because of its potential for anti-Israel troublemaking, Saddam's Iraq was targeted for military and political termination, quite irrespective of its history, its complicated society, its internal dynamics and contradictions. Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle said exactly that when they were consultants to Benjamin Netanyahu's 1996 election campaign. Saddam Hussein is of course an awful tyrant, but it isn't as if, for instance, most Iraqis haven't suffered terribly due to the US sanctions and were far from willing to accept more punishment on the off chance that they would be "liberated." After such liberation, what forgiveness? After all, look at the war against Afghanistan which also featured bombing and peanut butter sandwiches. Yes, Karzai is now in power of a very iffy kind, but the Taleban, the Pakistani secret services, and the poppy fields are all back, as are the warlords. Hardly a brilliant blueprint to follow in Iraq, which doesn't resemble Afghanistan very much anyway.

The expatriate Iraqi opposition has always been a motley bunch. Its leader Ahmad Chalabi is a brilliant man now wanted for embezzlement in Jordan and without a real constituency beyond Paul Wolfowitz's Pentagon office. He and his helpers (e.g. the thoroughly shabby Kanan Makiya who has said that the merciless high-altitude US bombing of his native land is "music to my ears") plus a few ex-Baathists, Shia clerics and others have also sold the US administration a bill of goods about quick wars, deserting soldiers, cheering crowds, equally unsupported by evidence or lived experience. One can't, of course, fault these people for wanting to rid the world of Saddam Hussein: we'd all be better off without him. The problem has been the falsifying of reality and the creation of either ideological or metaphysical scenarios for basically ignorant and unchecked American policy planners to foist undemocratically on a fundamentalist president and a largely misinformed public. In all, this Iraq might as well have been the moon and the Pentagon and White House Swift's Academy of Lagado.

Other racist premises underlying the campaign in Iraq are such thought-stopping propositions as having the power to redraw the Middle East map, setting in motion a "domino-effect" in bringing democracy there, and holding fast to the assumption that the Iraqi people constitute a kind of tabula rasa on which to inscribe the ideas of William Kristol, Robert Kagan and other far right deep thinkers. As I have said in an earlier article for the LRB, such ideas were first tried out by Ariel Sharon in Lebanon during the 1982 invasion, and then again in Palestine since he took office two years ago. There's been lots of destruction but little else in security and peace and subaltern compliance to show for it. Nevermind: well-trained US special forces have practiced and perfected the storming of civilian homes with Israeli soldiers in Jenin. It is hard

to believe, as the ill-conceived Iraq war advances, that things will be much different than that bloody episode, but with other countries like Syria and Iran involved, shaky regimes shaken more, general Arab outrage inflamed to the boiling point, one cannot imagine that victory in Iraq will resemble any of the simple-minded myths posited by Bush and his little clique.

But what is truly puzzling is that the regnant American ideology is still undergirded by the view that US power is fundamentally benign and altruistic. This surely accounts for the outrage expressed by US pundits and officials that Iraqis had the gall to undertake resistance at all, or that when captured, US soldiers are exhibited on Iraqi TV. The practice is much worse a) than bombing markets and whole cities and b) than showing rows of Iraqi prisoners made to kneel or lie spread-eagled face down in the sand. All of a sudden, the Geneva Conventions are invoked not for Camp X-Ray but for Saddam, and when his forces hide inside cities, that is cheating, whereas carpet bombing from 30,000 feet is playing fair.

This is the stupidest and most recklessly undertaken war in modern times. It is all about imperial arrogance unschooled in worldliness, unfettered either by competence or experience, undeterred by history or human complexity, unrepentant in brutal violence and cruel electronic gadgetry. To call it "faith-based" is to give faith an even worse name that it already has. With its too-long and vulnerable supply lines, its lurching from illiterate glibness to blind military pounding, its poorly planned logistical inadequacy and its slick wordy self-explanations, the US war against Iraq is almost perfectly embodied by poor George Bush's groping to stay on cue and on top of the texts they've prepared for him and which he can scarcely read, and Rummy Rumsfeld's wordy petulance, sending out lots of young soldiers either to die or to kill as many people as possible. What winning, or for that matter losing, such a war will ultimately entail is almost literally unthinkable. But pity the Iraqi civilians who must still suffer a great deal more before they are finally "liberated." ■

GIVE US BACK OUR DEMOCRACY

Edward Said

In a speech in the Senate on 19 March, the first day of war against Iraq, Robert Byrd, the Democrat Senator from West Virginia, asked: 'What is happening to this country? When did we become a nation which ignores and berates our friends? When did we decide to risk undermining international order by adopting a radical and doctrinaire approach to using our awesome military might? How can we abandon diplomacy when the turmoil in the world cries out for diplomacy?'

No one bothered to answer, but as the American military machine currently in Iraq stirs restlessly in other directions, these questions give urgency to the failure, if not the corruption, of democracy.

Let us examine what the US's Middle East policy has wrought since George W. Bush came to power. Even before the atrocities of 11 September, Bush's team had given Ariel Sharon's government freedom to colonise the West Bank and Gaza, kill and detain people at will, demolish their homes, expropriate their land and imprison them by curfew and military blockades. After 9/11, Sharon simply hitched his wagon to 'the war on terrorism' and intensified his unilateral depredations against a defenceless civilian population under occupation, despite UN Security Council Resolutions enjoining Israel to withdraw and desist from its war crimes and human-rights abuses.

In October 2001, Bush launched the invasion of Afghanistan, which opened with concentrated, high-altitude bombing (an 'anti-terrorist' military tactic, which resembles ordinary terrorism in its effects and structure) and by December had installed a client regime with no effective power beyond Kabul. There has been no significant US effort at reconstruction, and it seems the country has returned to its former abjection.

Since the summer of 2002, the Bush administration has conducted a propaganda campaign against the despotic government of Iraq and with the UK, having unsuccessfully tried to push the Security Council into compliance, started the war. Since last November, dissent disappeared from the mainstream media swollen with a surfeit of ex-generals sprinkled with recent terrorism experts drawn from Washington right-wing think-tanks.

Anyone who was critical was labelled anti-American by failed academics, listed on websites as an 'enemy' scholar who didn't toe the line. Those few public figures who were critical had their emails swamped, their lives threatened, their ideas trashed by media commentators who had become sentinels of America's war.

A torrent of material appeared equating Saddam Hussein's tyranny not only with evil, but with every known crime. Some of this was factually correct but neglected the role of the US and Europe in

fostering Saddam's rise and maintaining his power. In fact, the egregious Donald Rumsfeld visited Saddam in the early 80s, assuring him of US approval for his catastrophic war against Iran. US corporations supplied nuclear, chemical and biological materials for the supposed weapons of mass destruction and then were brazenly erased from public record.

All this was deliberately obscured by government and media in manufacturing the case for destroying Iraq. Either without proof or with fraudulent information, Saddam was accused of harbouring weapons of mass destruction seen as a direct threat to the US. The appalling consequences of the US and British intervention in Iraq are beginning to unfold, with the calculated destruction of the country's modern infrastructure, the looting of one of the world's richest civilisations, the attempt to engage motley 'exiles' plus large corporations in rebuilding the country, and the appropriation of its oil and its modern destiny. It's been suggested that Ahmad Chalabi, for example, will sign a peace treaty with Israel, hardly an Iraqi idea. Bechtel has already been awarded a huge contract.

This is an almost total failure in democracy - ours, not Iraq's: 70 per cent of the American people are supposed to support this, but nothing is more manipulative than polls asking 465 Americans whether they 'support our President and troops in time of war'. As Senator Byrd said: 'There is a pervasive sense of rush and risk and too many questions unanswered ... a pall has fallen over the Senate Chamber. We avoid our solemn duty to debate the one topic on the minds of all Americans, even while scores of our sons and daughters faithfully do their duty in Iraq.'

I am convinced this was a rigged, unnecessary and unpopular war. The reactionary Washington institutions that spawned Wolfowitz, Perle, Abrams and Feith provide an unhealthy intellectual and moral atmosphere. Policy papers circulate without real peer review, adopted by a government requiring justification for illicit policy. The doctrine of military pre-emption was never voted on by the American people or their representatives. How can citizens stand up against the blandishments offered to the government by companies like Halliburton and Boeing? Charting a strategic course for the most lavishly endowed military establishment in history is

left to ideologically based pressure groups (eg fundamentalist Christian leaders), wealthy private foundations and lobbies like AIPAC, the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee. It seems so monumentally criminal that important words like democracy and freedom have been hijacked, used as a mask for pillage, taking over territory and settling scores. The US programme for the Arab world has become the same as Israel's. Along with Syria, Iraq once represented the only serious military threat to Israel and, therefore, it had to be smashed.

Besides, what does it mean to liberate and democratise a country when no one asked you to do it and when, in the process, you occupy it militarily while failing to preserve law and order? What a travesty of strategic planning when you assume 'natives' will welcome your presence after you've bombed and quarantined them for 13 years.

A preposterous mindset about American beneficence has infiltrated the minutest levels of the media. In writing about a 70-year-old Baghdad widow who ran a cultural centre in her home that was wrecked by US raids and who is now beside herself with rage, *New York Times* reporter Dexter Filkins implicitly chastises her for her 'comfortable life under Saddam Hussein' and piously disapproves of her tirade against the Americans, 'and this from a graduate of London University'.

Adding to the fraudulence of the weapons not found, the Stalingrads that didn't occur, the artillery defences that never happened, I wouldn't be surprised if Saddam disappeared suddenly because a deal was made in Moscow to let him, his family, and his money leave in return for the country. The war had gone badly for the US in the south, and Bush couldn't risk the same in Baghdad. On 6 April, a Russian convoy leaving Iraq was bombed; Condi Rice appeared in Russia on 7 April; Baghdad fell 9 April.

Nevertheless, Americans have been cheated, Iraqis have suffered impossibly and Bush looks like a cowboy. On matters of the gravest importance, constitutional principles have been violated and the electorate lied to. We are the ones who must have our democracy back. ■

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“The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) condemns the illegal invasion of Iraq in the clear absence of Security Council authority. This contributes a great leap backward in the international rule of law.”

BOYCOTT THE DOLLAR !

Rohini Hensman

What we are witnessing could be the beginning of World War III. A coalition of states headed by the USA is engaged in an act of aggression, in violation of international law, in opposition to the United Nations, and in defiance of world public opinion. The leaders of the coalition have already warned that their strikes will kill 10,000 innocent civilians, and the actual death toll will no doubt be much higher; it couldn't possibly be otherwise, given the terrible blitzkrieg that is being visited upon the helpless people of Iraq and the disruption of their food and water supplies. In other words, they announced in advance that this is a terrorist war in which they will knowingly be committing War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity. The Bush administration has also made it clear that after Iraq, there will be attacks on a large number of other countries. There are striking similarities with the situation in the late 1930s. The attack, now as then, is not just on one country or a few countries but on the international community as a whole. And the price of appeasement, now as then, will be a world war much more ghastly than its predecessor.

A major difference, however, is that there is no military solution to this war. The attack can be, and to some extent has been, weakened by lack of assistance from most states, and anti-war activists must continue to put pressure on governments not to provide any form of support to the aggressors. But this has not prevented the war. Criticisms of the UN for failing to stop the war are misplaced. How can the UN pose a military challenge to a state whose stockpiles of nuclear weapons can blow up the earth several times over, a state which has demonstrated its readiness to use weapons of mass destruction in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Vietnam and indeed Iraq itself, where 40 tons of depleted uranium left after the first Gulf War caused an epidemic of cancer and birth defects? In order to confront the US militarily, the UN would need to have similar weapons, but this is certainly not desirable: one of its most important tasks is to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction, not to amass them on its own account! The importance of the UN lies in its moral authority, and it is crucially important that this should be strengthened by consistent opposition to a war that violates its most fundamental principles. Kofi Annan made a timid step in this direction when he said that if the US and UK start a war without UN backing, this will delegitimise not the UN, as Bush and Co. were claiming, but the war itself.

This challenge to US domination of the UN would never have been achieved without the massive worldwide anti-war campaign. That is why it is so immensely important to keep up the pressure on the UN, both through demonstrations and through the appeal for an emergency session of the UN General Assembly (envisaged by **Uniting for Peace Resolution 377 of 1950**), to order a ceasefire,

the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq, and a resumption of weapons inspections, for an online global petition to this effect, and for addresses of UN Ambassadors who can be petitioned individually. The UN should also be asked to withdraw the sanctions against Iraq that have killed an estimated one-and-a-half million civilians, more than half of them children, and strengthened the dictatorial power of Saddam Hussein over the Iraqi population by giving him control over food supplies.

Let be realistic, however, none of this is going to deter Bush and his associates, who have so far shown as little regard for the UN and world opinion as Hitler and his associates showed for the League of Nations and world opinion. Those of us who are old enough to have been part of the Vietnam solidarity movement will remember that ultimately it was public opinion that brought the war to a halt, and what turned US public opinion against the war was the escalating number of troops coming back in body bags. But such a development is not likely today, even though US and UK troops, taken in by the lies of their leaders, did not expect as much resistance as they got. (Note the crude macho assumption that brute force will inspire shock and awe rather than anger and contempt. How typical!)

The problem is neatly summed up by the statistic that some 42 per cent of the US public apparently believes that Saddam Hussein was linked to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. A cartoon shows Bush circling the Q in IRAQ and the Q in AL-QAEDA drawing a line between them to demonstrate proof of a link, but even this is less illogical than the actual evidence he offered, which was Osama bin Laden's speech in which he denounced Saddam as a heretic and infidel! If 42 per cent of the US public sees this as proof of a link, and many more support the US invasion even if it means killing thousands or millions of Iraqis in their own country, what can we do? Clearly, systematic brainwashing has deprived these people of the power of logical thought and moral behaviour, and therefore appeals to reason or ethics will not work unless a deeper change takes place.

The longer the war goes on, the more innocent victims there will be, and the more there will be a terrorist and fundamentalist backlash worldwide. Moreover, other states may be tempted to follow the example of the Bush axis, and invade territory they wish to annexe or colonise. (Israel, of course, has done it already.) The entire world could descend into chaos. So it is in the interests of everyone (except for relations and associates of Bush who have oil and armaments interests) to end the war as soon as possible. However, the war will not end if Iraq is conquered: it will merely move elsewhere, just as it moved to Iraq once Afghanistan was

conquered. A likely next candidate is Iran, which is just feeling its way back to democracy after the US overthrew Mossadeq half a century ago, since a democratic Iran is as much of a threat to US hegemony now as it was then.

The only way to put a definitive end to the war is to force the Bush coalition to withdraw their troops back to their own countries and keep them there. But how can this be done? How is it possible to control a rogue state with huge stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction which is on a megalomaniac mission to conquer the world? In particular, what can those of us in developing countries do? Some of our governments have spoken out courageously against the war while a few like Gloria Arroyo and Roh Moo-hyun have distinguished themselves by backing it, but most have evaded the issue by saying, in effect, 'We are helpless, there nothing we can do.' But this is not true; we can and must play our part in ending the war.

This is a situation where we need to adopt the tactics of guerrilla warfare and hit at the enemy where it is weakest. The weak point of the Bush state is its economy: its in a mess, with a foreign debt so massive that any developing country in a similar state would have the IMF and World Bank breathing down its neck to implement austerity measures. Bush, on the contrary, is splurging an estimated billion dollars a day on this war. How can he do it? By using US control over international financial institutions and interest rates, of course. But this would not work if the rest of the world didn't support the dollar by recognising and using it as the de facto world currency. If that support is withdrawn, the dollar will crash.

Individuals can withdraw support by refusing to accept dollars and asking for Euro or other hard currencies of countries opposed to the war when they need foreign exchange to travel abroad, or are being paid for work done abroad. But it would make a much bigger impact if Third World governments convert their dollar foreign exchange reserves into Euro and/or other hard currencies of countries opposing the war. Governments who oppose the US-led war can see this as one way to help stop it, by undermining the ability of the US to pay for the war and bribe or blackmail other

states into supporting it. But even for the rest, it makes sense, and the anti-war movements in those countries should make them see that: the dollar is already falling, and it is in their interest not to allow their own economies to be pulled down with it. Simultaneously, governments of countries to which the US is indebted should stop extending the line of credit if they wish to oppose the war in a practical manner.

Disengaging the world economy from the dollar may involve some immediate sacrifices, but we should surely be willing to make those, if they result in saving the lives of innocents. An added bonus is that it will help to resolve the Palestine-Israel conflict: without billions of dollars of US financial support, Israel will be forced to recognise Palestine and live in peace with it. Overall, in the long run, the result will be a healthier world economy.

People living in the US will of course have to continue using the dollar, and that is absolutely fine. The objection is not to the use of the dollar as the national currency of the US, but to its use as world currency, which thereby gives the US state the power to wage genocidal wars all over the globe. Opponents of the war in the US and allied countries have done a magnificent job mobilising protest within those countries and channelling worldwide protest to put pressure on the UN, and there is now more need than ever for them to continue doing this task. It could be supplemented with a strategy of satyagraha, non-violent civil disobedience, since this is indeed a worldwide struggle for truth and freedom. In fact, there have already been examples of this, with schoolchildren playing a significant role. The answer to those who object that such actions endanger the lives of troops in Iraq is that the only honourable way to safeguard their lives (especially given the high rate of self-inflicted casualties!!) is to bring them back immediately. It should also be pointed out that while a few corporations are profiting from the war, millions of ordinary people in the US, UK, and other coalition countries are among those who are paying the price.

We, the people of the world, may appear to be helpless, but we are not. Together we can stop the attack on Iraq from developing into World War III. But we need to be decisive, and act quickly! ■

Rohini Hensman of Sri Lanka is a free-lance writer living in Bombay.

The country music station KKCS in Colorado Springs has suspended two disc jockeys for playing the **Dixie Chicks**, violating a ban the station imposed in March after the group criticized **President George Bush**. "We pulled their music two months ago, and it's been a difficult decision because how can you ignore the hottest group in country music?" the station's manager, **Jerry Grant**, told *The Gazette* newspaper. He said the DJs **Dave Moore** and **Jeff Singer** would be out a couple of days. "I gave them an alternative: Stop it now and they'll be on suspension, or they can continue playing them and when they come out of the studio they won't have a job."

THE PRESIDENT'S REAL GOAL IN IRAQ

Jay Bookman

The official story on Iraq has never made sense. The connection that the Bush administration has tried to draw between Iraq and al-Qaida has always seemed contrived and artificial. In fact, it was hard to believe that smart people in the Bush administration would start a major war based on such flimsy evidence.

The pieces just didn't fit. Something else had to be going on; something was missing.

In recent days, those missing pieces have finally begun to fall into place. As it turns out, this is not really about Iraq. It is not about weapons of mass destruction, or terrorism, or Saddam, or U.N. resolutions.

This war, should it come, is intended to mark the official emergence of the United States as a full-fledged global empire, seizing sole responsibility and authority as planetary policeman. It would be the culmination of a plan 10 years or more in the making, carried out by those who believe the United States must seize the opportunity for global domination, even if it means becoming the "American imperialists" that our enemies always claimed we were.

Once that is understood, other mysteries solve themselves. For example, why does the administration seem unconcerned about an exit strategy from Iraq once Saddam is toppled?

Because we won't be leaving. Having conquered Iraq, the United States will create permanent military bases in that country from which to dominate the Middle East, including neighboring Iran.

In an interview Friday, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld brushed aside that suggestion, noting that the United States does not covet other nations' territory. That may be true, but 57 years after World War II ended, we still have major bases in Germany and Japan. We will do the same in Iraq.

And why has the administration dismissed the option of containing and deterring Iraq, as we had the Soviet Union for 45 years? Because even if it worked, containment and deterrence would not allow the expansion of American power. Besides, they are beneath us as an empire. Rome did not stoop to containment; it conquered. And so should we.

Among the architects of this would-be American Empire are a group of brilliant and powerful people who now hold key positions in the Bush administration: They envision the creation and enforcement

of what they call a worldwide "Pax Americana," or American peace. But so far, the American people have not appreciated the true extent of that ambition.

Part of it's laid out in the National Security Strategy, a document in which each administration outlines its approach to defending the country. The Bush administration plan, released Sept. 20, marks a significant departure from previous approaches, a change that it attributes largely to the attacks of Sept. 11.

To address the terrorism threat, the president's report lays out a newly aggressive military and foreign policy, embracing preemptive attack against perceived enemies. It speaks in blunt terms of what it calls "American internationalism," of ignoring international opinion if that suits U.S. interests.

"The best defense is a good offense," the document asserts.

It dismisses deterrence as a Cold War relic and instead talks of "convincing or compelling states to accept their sovereign responsibilities."

In essence, it lays out a plan for permanent U.S. military and economic domination of every region on the globe, unfettered by international treaty or concern. And to make that plan a reality, it envisions a stark expansion of our global military presence.

"The United States will require bases and stations within and beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia," the document warns, "as well as temporary access arrangements for the long-distance deployment of U.S. troops."

The report's repeated references to terrorism are misleading, however, because the approach of the new National Security Strategy was clearly not inspired by the events of Sept. 11. They can be found in much the same language in a report issued in September 2000 by the Project for the New American Century, a group of conservative interventionists outraged by the thought that the United States might be forfeiting its chance at a global empire.

"At no time in history has the international security order been as conducive to American interests and ideals," the report. stated two years ago. "The challenge of this coming century is to preserve and enhance this 'American peace.'"

Familiar Themes

Overall, that 2000 report reads like a blueprint for current Bush defense policy. Most of what it advocates, the Bush administration has tried to accomplish. For example, the project report urged the repudiation of the anti-ballistic missile treaty and a commitment to a global missile defense system. The administration has taken that course.

It recommended that to project sufficient power worldwide to enforce Pax Americana, the United States would have to increase defense spending from 3 percent of gross domestic product to as much as 3.8 percent. For next year, the Bush administration has requested a defense budget of \$379 billion, almost exactly 3.8 percent of GDP.

It advocates the "transformation" of the U.S. military to meet its expanded obligations, including the cancellation of such outmoded defense programs as the Crusader artillery system. That's exactly the message being preached by Rumsfeld and others.

It urges the development of small nuclear warheads "required in targeting the very deep, underground hardened bunkers that are being built by many of our potential adversaries." This year the GOP-led U.S. House gave the Pentagon the green light to develop such a weapon, called the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, while the Senate has so far balked.

That close tracking of recommendation with current policy is hardly surprising, given the current positions of the people who contributed to the 2000 report.

Paul Wolfowitz is now deputy defense secretary. John Bolton is undersecretary of state. Stephen Cambone is head of the Pentagon's Office of Program, Analysis and Evaluation. Eliot Cohen and Devon Cross are members of the Defense Policy Board, which advises Rumsfeld. I. Lewis Libby is chief of staff to Vice President Dick Cheney. Dov Zakheim is comptroller for the Defense Department.

'Constabulary duties'

Because they were still just private citizens in 2000, the authors of the project report could be more frank and less diplomatic than they were in drafting the National Security Strategy. Back in 2000, they clearly identified Iran, Iraq and North Korea as primary short-term targets, well before President Bush tagged them as the Axis of Evil.

In their report, they criticize the fact that in war planning against North Korea and Iraq, "past Pentagon wargames have given little or no consideration to the force requirements necessary not only to defeat an attack but to remove these regimes from power."

To preserve the Pax Americana, the report says U.S. forces will be required to perform "constabulary duties"—the United States

acting as policeman of the world—and says that such actions "demand American political leadership rather than that of the United Nations."

To meet those responsibilities, and to ensure that no country dares to challenge the United States, the report advocates a much larger military presence spread over more of the globe, in addition to the roughly 130 nations in which U.S. troops are already deployed.

More specifically, they argue that we need permanent military bases in the Middle East, in Southeast Europe, in Latin America and in Southeast Asia, where no such bases now exist. That helps to explain another of the mysteries of our post-Sept. 11 reaction, in which the Bush administration rushed to install U.S. troops in Georgia and the Philippines, as well as our eagerness to send military advisers to assist in the civil war in Colombia.

The 2000 report directly acknowledges its debt to a still earlier document, drafted in 1992 by the Defense Department. That document had also envisioned the United States as a colossus astride the world, imposing its will and keeping world peace through military and economic power. When leaked in final draft form, however, the proposal drew so much criticism that it was hastily withdrawn and repudiated by the first President Bush.

Effect on Allies

The defense secretary in 1992 was Richard Cheney; the document was drafted by Wolfowitz, who at the time was defense undersecretary for policy.

The potential implications of a Pax Americana are immense.

One is the effect on our allies. Once we assert the unilateral right to act as the world's policeman, our allies will quickly recede into the background. Eventually, we will be forced to spend American wealth and American blood protecting the peace while other nations redirect their wealth to such things as health care for their citizenry.

Donald Kagan, a professor of classical Greek history at Yale and an influential advocate of a more aggressive foreign policy—he served as co-chairman of the 2000 New Century project—acknowledges that likelihood.

"If [our allies] want a free ride, and they probably will, we can't stop that," he says. But he also argues that the United States, given its unique position, has no choice but to act anyway.

"You saw the movie 'High Noon'?" he asks. "We're Gary Cooper."

Accepting the Cooper role would be an historic change in who we are as a nation, and in how we operate in the international arena. Candidate Bush certainly did not campaign on such a change. It is not something that he or others have dared to discuss honestly with the American people. To the contrary, in his foreign policy

debate with Al Gore, Bush pointedly advocated a more humble foreign policy, a position calculated to appeal to voters leery of military intervention.

For the same reason, Kagan and others shy away from terms such as empire, understanding its connotations. But they also argue that it would be native and dangerous to reject the role that history has thrust upon us. Kagan, for example, willingly embraces the idea that the United States would establish permanent military bases in a post-war Iraq. "I think that's highly possible," he says. "We will probably need a major concentration of forces in the Middle East over a long period of time. That will come at a price, but think of the price of not having it. When we have economic problems, it's been caused by disruptions in our oil supply. If we have a force in Iraq, there will be no disruption in oil supplies."

Costly global commitment Rumsfeld and Kagan believe that a successful war against Iraq will produce other benefits, such as serving an object lesson for nations such as Iran and Syria. Rumsfeld, as befits his sensitive position, puts it rather gently. If a regime change were to take place in Iraq, other nations pursuing weapons of mass destruction "would get the message that having them . . . is attracting attention that is not favorable and is not helpful," he says.

Kagan is more blunt.

"People worry a lot about how the Arab street is going to react," he notes. "Well, I see that the Arab street has gotten very, very quiet since we started blowing things up."

The cost of such a global commitment would be enormous. In 2000, we spent \$281 billion on our military, which was more than the next 11 nations combined. By 2003, our expenditures will have risen to \$378 billion. In other words, the increase in our defense budget from 1999-2003 will be more than the total amount spent annually by China, our next largest competitor.

The lure of empire is ancient and powerful, and over the millennia it has driven men to commit terrible crimes on its behalf. But with the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet Union, a global empire was essentially laid at the feet of the United States.

To the chagrin of some, we did not seize it at the time, in large part because the American people have never been comfortable with themselves as a New Rome. Now, more than a decade later, the events of Sept. 11 have given those advocates of empire a new opportunity to press their case with a new president. So in debating whether to invade Iraq, we are really debating the role that the United States will play in the years and decades to come.

Are peace and security best achieved by seeking strong alliances and international consensus, led by the United States? Or is it necessary to take a more unilateral approach, accepting and enhancing the global dominance that, according to some, history

has thrust upon us? If we do decide to seize empire, we should make that decision knowingly, as a democracy. The price of maintaining an empire is always high. Kagan and others argue that the price of rejecting it would be higher still.

CONTRIBUTORS TO 2000 REPORT

"Rebuilding America's Defenses," a 2000 report by the Project for the New American Century, listed 27 people as having attended meetings or contributed papers in preparation of the report. Among them are six who have since assumed key defense and foreign policy positions in the Bush administration. And the report seems to have become a blueprint for Bush's foreign and defense policy.

Paul Wolfowitz

Political science doctorate from University of Chicago and Dean of the international relations program at Johns Hopkins University during the 1990s. Served in the Reagan State Department, moved to the Pentagon during the first Bush administration as undersecretary of defense for policy. Sworn in as deputy defense secretary in March 2001.

John Bolton

Yale Law graduate who worked in the Reagan administration as an assistant attorney general. Switched to the State Department in the first Bush administration as assistant secretary for international organization affairs. Sworn in as undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, May 2001.

Eliot Cohen

Harvard doctorate in government who taught at Harvard and at the Naval War College. Now directs strategic studies at Johns Hopkins and is the author of several books on military strategy. Was on the Defense Department's policy planning staff in the first Bush administration and is now on Donald Rumsfeld's Defense Policy Board.

I. Lewis Libby

Law degree from Columbia (Yale undergraduate). Held advisory positions in the Reagan State Department. Was a partner in a Washington law firm in the late '80s before becoming deputy undersecretary of defense for policy in the first Bush administration (under Dick Cheney). Now is the vice president's chief of staff.

Dov Zakheim

Doctorate in economics and politics from Oxford University. Worked on policy issues in the Reagan Defense Department and went into private defense consulting during the 1990s. Was foreign policy adviser to the 2000 Bush campaign. Sworn in as undersecretary of defense (comptroller) and chief financial officer for the Pentagon, May 2001.

Stephen Cambone

Political science doctorate from Claremont Graduate School. Was in charge of strategic defense policy at the Defense Department in the first Bush administration. Now heads the Office of Program, Analysis and Evaluation at the Defense Department. ■

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

THE SHADOW MEN

War in Iraq has helped to create a new American foreign-policy establishment. Neo-conservatives are only part of it

In 2000, a close-knit group of about 20 people took their places in the Bush administration, hoping to overthrow Saddam Hussein and spread American ideas of democracy throughout the Middle East. They called themselves "neo-conservatives" and, for two years, no one paid them much notice.

Now the tyrant has gone, and governments around the world are nervously wondering what this much suspected group of men mean to do next. With Baghdad still burning, the neo-cons' most senior official, Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy secretary of defence, popped up to say that "there has got to be change in Syria". That comment ushered in two weeks of harsh diplomatic pressure from the Bush administration about the other Baath regime, though Mr Wolfowitz quickly added that "change" did not, in this case, mean regime change.

Such talk rattles chancelleries round the world. Those in power try to be diplomatic about their concerns. But Lord Jopling, a former British cabinet minister, spoke for many when he told the House of Lords on March 18th that "neo-conservatives...now have a stranglehold on the Pentagon and seem, as well, to have a compliant armlock on the president himself."

Robert Kagan, a neo-conservative writer living in Brussels, says "One finds Britain's finest minds propounding...conspiracy theories concerning the 'neo-conservative' (read: Jewish) hijacking of American foreign policy. In Paris, all the talk is of oil and 'imperialism'—and Jews." A member of the French parliament quoted his country's foreign minister, Dominique de Villepin, saying "the hawks in the US administration [are] in the hands of [Ariel] Sharon"—a comment seen in some circles as a coded message about undue pro-Israeli influence exercised by neo-cons, most of whom are Jewish, at the heart of the administration.

So has a cabal taken over the foreign policy of the most powerful country in the world? Is a tiny group of ideologues using undue power to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries, create an empire, trash international law—and damn the consequences?

Not really. To argue that an intellectual clique has usurped American foreign policy is to give them both too much credit, and too little. American foreign policy has not been captured by a tiny, ideological clique that has imposed its narrow views on others. Rather, the neo-cons are part of a broader movement endorsed by the president, and espoused, to different degrees, by almost all the principals

involved, from Vice-President Dick Cheney down (Colin Powell, the secretary of state, is a notable exception). Strands of neo-conservatism can even be found among some Democrats, which is why it makes sense to think that a new foreign-policy establishment may be emerging.

For the same reason, the criticism neglects the role of others. Near-consensus is found around the notion that America should use its power vigorously to reshape the world. Yet because parts of the neo-con agenda have been adopted by a president who is a mostly pragmatic decision-maker, and because the neo-cons themselves are politically astute, the neo-cons do not have things all their own way. They are powerful in so far as the president listens to them, rather than in their own right. The result is that American foreign policy is becoming a mixture of neo-conservative ideas, the president's instincts—and the realities of power.

How They Grew

To see how this came about, start with who the neo-cons are. It is understandable that they are seen as a clique, because, to begin with, they were. The group started in the 1960s as a breakaway faction from the Democratic Party. This first generation emerged as critics of the liberal establishment of their day; paradoxically, considering their reputation as ideologues, their main complaint was that Democrats had lost touch with the practical results of their policies. The term "neo" (new) was an insult thrown at them by the left, but it distinguished them from "real" conservatives; one of their founders, Irving Kristol, joked that a neo-conservative was a liberal "mugged by reality". Foreign policy was only part of the original neo-con agenda: social policy was at least as important.

The second generation of neo-cons is different. Few are Democrats or former Democrats. They are unapologetic Republicans. And while they retain distinctive views on domestic matters (for example, neo-cons were among the fiercest critics of the former Republican Senate leader Trent Lott, who was obliged to step down for making racist remarks), foreign policy is their focus—partly because their main social-policy proposals, such as welfare reform and the dismantling of affirmative action, have become mainstream.

The second generation forms a clique intellectually and socially, but not politically. Most come from similar backgrounds, whether professors (like Mr Wolfowitz and Steve Cambone, also at the Pentagon) or lawyers (like Doug Feith, the Pentagon's number three, Scooter Libby, Mr Cheney's chief of staff, and the State

Department's John Bolton). They join the same think-tanks, such as the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) where Richard Perle, perhaps their most flamboyant spokesman, is a fellow. They write for and read the same magazine, the *WEEKLY STANDARD*, edited by Bill Kristol, son of one of the neo-cons' founders. They co-author the same studies (five of the 27 authors of "Rebuilding America's Defences", a highly influential report published in 2000, are in the administration). They are, in short, Washington talkers and intellectuals.

In most other countries, where foreign policy is made by permanent bureaucracies, it would be unthinkable for a small group of professors and lawyers to take any sort of policymaking role, let alone a dominant one. In America, with its traditions of entrepreneurial policy advocacy and political appointees, it is not so odd.

What is unusual is that the neo-cons are so different from the Texan business establishment gathered around George Bush. They also differ from the corporate chieftains the president hired for top jobs, such as Mr Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld (both former CEOs). Many neo-cons backed John McCain, Mr Bush's Republican rival, in the campaign; a few had even supported Al Gore.

So it was hardly surprising that, at the start, neo-cons were merely one among several groups vying for foreign-policy influence—and without much success. On the campaign trail, Mr Bush talked about a "humble, but strong" policy and was critical of "nation-building"—very un-neo-con stances. The dominant foreign-policy voice in the president's early days was that of Condoleezza Rice, the national security adviser. Ms Rice's main concern was to improve America's ties with other great powers—a policy that, while part of the neo-con agenda, was hardly uppermost in it.

Even Mr Cheney, who was to become the neo-cons' most powerful backer, seemed to differ from them early on. As defence secretary under the first President Bush, he had supported the decision not to overthrow Saddam in 1991 (to Mr Wolfowitz's dismay). And he was on record as being critical of Israel and its settlement policies—anathema to the most pro-Israeli neo-cons. Even in the aftermath of September 11th 2001, when Mr Wolfowitz went to the president to argue his case that the terrorist attacks showed America needed urgently to address the threat of Saddam Hussein, he was fobbed off.

Intellect Vs Chaos

So how did the neo-cons go from being one group among several to the positions of influence they now occupy? By articulating views that came to seem more important after September 11th 2001—but which many conservatives agreed with even before that.

Neo-cons start with the notion that America faces the challenge of managing a "unipolar world" (a phrase coined by a neo-conservative

commentator, Charles Krauthammer, in 1991). They see the world in terms of good and evil. They think America should be willing to use military power to defeat the forces of chaos. Admittedly, they go on to advocate democratic transformation in the Middle East, a view that is not shared throughout the administration. (This is an extremely radical policy, so not only are neo-cons not 'neo', they are not, in the normal sense of the term, conservative either.) But that apart, their views are not so different from others in the administration.

Neo-cons are also energetic in style, preferring moral clarity to diplomatic finesse, and confrontation to the pursuit of incremental advantage. They are sceptical of multilateral institutions that limit American power and effectiveness; they prefer to focus on new threats and opportunities, rather than old alliances.

Again, these views are not unique to neo-cons. The trends have been visible in American policy since the end of the cold war. Indeed, as Walter Russell Mead of the Council on Foreign Relations points out, opinion in the Republican Party has been shifting for longer than that. The movement away from Euro-centric east-coasters towards Sunbelt conservatives more concerned about Asia, Latin America and the Middle East began with Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan in the 1970s.

These common intellectual roots made it possible for neo-cons to maintain close ties with traditional conservative politicians such as Messrs Rumsfeld and Cheney. Though neither really counts as a neo-con, Mr Rumsfeld signed a letter to President Bill Clinton in 1998 urging him to make removing Saddam Hussein and his regime "the aim of American foreign policy", and the founding document of neo-con policy was the Defence Planning Guidance drafted for Mr Cheney in 1992 during his stint as defence secretary. Written by Mr Wolfowitz and Mr Libby, it raised the notion of pre-emptive attacks and called on America to increase military spending to the point where it could not be challenged. Ten years later, both ideas have been enshrined as official policy in the 2002 National Security Strategy.

The event that turned general like-mindedness into specific influence was the terrorist assault of September 11th 2001. "Night fell on a different world," Mr Bush said. Neo-cons had long been obsessed with the Middle East and with "undeterrable" threats, such as nuclear weapons in the hands of terrorists. Traditional Republican internationalists, who had less to say on either count, offered little intellectual alternative. As the old rule of politics says, "You can't fight something with nothing." Mr Bush therefore embraced large parts of the neo-con agenda.

But not immediately. The decision to take on Saddam by force seems to have been made sometime between September 2001 and March 2002. In January 2002, in his state-of-the-union address, Mr Bush invoked the infamous "axis of evil"—which could have been lifted from a neo-con handbook. This February, he gave a speech to the AEI about building democracy in Iraq and encouraging political reform in the Middle East.

How Much to Blame?

Some Europeans seem to think the neo-cons' influence is a direct result of Mr Bush's inability to grasp basic foreign-policy ideas. The recent evolution of American policy does not bear out this patronising view. The new policy was adopted in response to a cataclysmic event. It enjoys support at almost every level of government, including Congress (the main exceptions are the State Department and serving officers in the armed forces). Above all, the new policy is defined by the president himself. The neo-con clique depends on Mr Bush, not the other way around.

Fine, you might argue, but this just shifts the focus of concern from the cabal to the consensus. Whoever formulates policy, it is still, say critics, inimical to the interests of (some) Europeans, international law, multilateral institutions and traditional alliances. Moreover, if policy is run by a coalition of people, of whom neo-cons are just the first among equals, then that raises questions about the stability of the coalition, and whether there are internal tensions waiting to erupt between neo-cons and others.

The worries about America's foreign policy are mostly about means and costs, not ends. Neo-cons want to liberate Iraq, spread democracy through the Middle East and improve counter-proliferation measures. Critics can hardly object to any of these, even if they do not care to focus on the aims as relentlessly as neo-cons do.

Europeans often attribute everything they dislike in American policy to the influence of this cabal. Yet to do so is obviously wrong: the administration's—indeed, America's—disengagement from certain international treaties long predated the neo-cons' ascendancy. It is true that neo-cons are more unsparing than most in their disdain for multilateral bodies that they think act against American interests. But their attitude to "entangling alliances" is pragmatic, rather than hostile across the board. Many, though not all, like NATO because of its role in uniting eastern and western Europe after the collapse of communism. When France and Germany held up a Turkish request to NATO for supplies of defensive equipment before the Iraq war, the administration found a way round the obstacle within the organisation, rather than acting outside it. The neo-cons' main ire is reserved for the United Nations and, sometimes, the European Union.

Clearly there have been big diplomatic ructions in the past year, notably in the Security Council over the second Iraq resolution. But it is hard to blame the neo-cons entirely, or even at all. The French and Russians were responsible for much of the bad blood, while the department largely responsible for American diplomacy in that unhappy hour was the very un-neo-con State.

The one area where neo-conservative influence may really prove inimical to the interests of others is Israel. Neo-cons are among Ariel Sharon's staunchest defenders. Most fear the "road map" will

endanger Israel's security, and will do everything they can to stop it.

On the other hand, the map is itself an indication of the limits of their influence. If neo-cons really ran the show, as they are said to, there would almost certainly be no such map. That there is testifies to the other forces acting on Mr Bush: the State Department, the National Security Council, even Tony Blair.

These forces will continue to influence the president and moderate the neo-cons' power. This could be good or bad. Good in that the wildest flights of neo-con fancy will be grounded; bad if the result is policy incoherence. At the moment, the good outcome seems the more likely.

The Limits of Influence

Iraq is the neo-cons' test case. Military victory has increased the group's influence hugely; a serious reversal could undo it. But successful post-war reconstruction would embolden them to press the president to adopt other bits of their agenda. This does not mean sending troops to Damascus (the neo-cons write what they mean: they have always singled out Iraq, and no other country, for military action). Rather, it means putting pressure on Syria to stop supporting Hizbullah and on the Saudis to stop exporting Wahhabi extremism; and it means backing the internal opposition in Iran to the clerical regime.

But there will be constraints on getting this wish-list through. The neo-cons have waited more than ten years to reform Iraq. They will not lose interest in it, as happened in Afghanistan. But they could be distracted by, say, a crisis in North Korea or on the Indian subcontinent. They could be defeated in Congress over the cost of their plans, especially if the economy falters. Or fault lines could re-emerge with mainstream conservatives over how long to keep troops abroad, with the mainstream, backed by the cautious realists in the armed forces, demanding that troops return home as soon as possible.

Lastly, there is Mr Bush himself. His main concern is re-election, and he has already started to switch his attention back to the economy to avoid his father's fate. That may do more than anything to temper the neo-cons' influence.

European and other governments could add their weight to these countervailing trends if they chose. But, with the exception of Britain, they have not, preferring to demonise the neo-cons as a cabal. This is almost certainly a mistake. The neo-cons are not a marginal group. They are providing much of the intellectual framework for America's foreign policy. Barring a serious reversal abroad, that will continue—and demonising them will merely marginalise their critics. ■

Courtesy, *The Economist*, 26 April 2003

ONE RULE FOR THEM

George Monbiot

Suddenly, the government of the United States has discovered the virtues of international law. It may be waging an illegal war against a sovereign state; it may be seeking to destroy every treaty which impedes its attempts to run the world, but when five of its captured soldiers were paraded in front of the Iraqi television cameras on Sunday, Donald Rumsfeld, the US defence secretary, immediately complained that "it is against the Geneva convention to show photographs of prisoners of war in a manner that is humiliating for them".

He is, of course, quite right. Article 13 of the third convention, concerning the treatment of prisoners, insists that they "must at all times be protected... against insults and public curiosity". This may number among the less heinous of the possible infringements of the laws of war, but the conventions, ratified by Iraq in 1956, are non-negotiable. If you break them, you should expect to be prosecuted for war crimes.

This being so, Rumsfeld had better watch his back. For this enthusiastic convert to the cause of legal warfare is, as head of the defence department, responsible for a series of crimes sufficient, were he ever to be tried, to put him away for the rest of his natural life.

His prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, in Cuba, where 641 men (nine of whom are British citizens) are held, breaches no fewer than 15 articles of the third convention. The US government broke the first of these (article 13) as soon as the prisoners arrived, by displaying them, just as the Iraqis have done, on television. In this case, however, they were not encouraged to address the cameras. They were kneeling on the ground, hands tied behind their backs, wearing blacked-out goggles and earphones. In breach of article 18, they had been stripped of their own clothes and deprived of their possessions. They were then interned in a penitentiary (against article 22), where they were denied proper mess facilities (26), canteens (28), religious premises (34), opportunities for physical exercise (38), access to the text of the convention (41), freedom to write to their families (70 and 71) and parcels of food and books (72).

They were not "released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities" (118), because, the US authorities say, their interrogation might, one day, reveal interesting information about al-Qaida. Article 17 rules that captives are obliged to give only their name, rank, number and date of birth. No "coercion may be inflicted on prisoners of war to secure from them information of any kind whatever". In the hope of breaking them, however, the authorities have confined them to solitary cells

and subjected them to what is now known as "torture lite": sleep deprivation and constant exposure to bright light. Unsurprisingly, several of the prisoners have sought to kill themselves, by smashing their heads against the walls or trying to slash their wrists with plastic cutlery.

The US government claims that these men are not subject to the Geneva conventions, as they are not "prisoners of war", but "unlawful combatants". The same claim could be made, with rather more justice, by the Iraqis holding the US soldiers who illegally invaded their country. But this redefinition is itself a breach of article 4 of the third convention, under which people detained as suspected members of a militia (the Taliban) or a volunteer corps (al-Qaida) must be regarded as prisoners of war.

Even if there is doubt about how such people should be classified, article 5 insists that they "shall enjoy the protection of the present convention until such time as their status has been determined by a competent tribunal". But when, earlier this month, lawyers representing 16 of them demanded a court hearing, the US court of appeals ruled that as Guantanamo Bay is not sovereign US territory, the men have no constitutional rights. Many of these prisoners appear to have been working in Afghanistan as teachers, engineers or aid workers. If the US government either tried or released them, its embarrassing lack of evidence would be brought to light.

You would hesitate to describe these prisoners as lucky, unless you knew what had happened to some of the other men captured by the Americans and their allies in Afghanistan. On November 21 2001, around 8,000 Taliban soldiers and Pashtun civilians surrendered at Konduz to the Northern Alliance commander, General Abdul Rashid Dostum. Many of them have never been seen again.

As Jamie Doran's film *Afghan Massacre: Convoy of Death* records, some hundreds, possibly thousands, of them were loaded into container lorries at Qala-i-Zeini, near the town of Mazar-i-Sharif, on November 26 and 27. The doors were sealed and the lorries were left to stand in the sun for several days. At length, they departed for Sheberghan prison, 80 miles away. The prisoners, many of whom were dying of thirst and asphyxiation, started banging on the sides of the trucks. Dostum's men stopped the convoy and machine-gunned the containers. When they arrived at Sheberghan, most of the captives were dead.

The US special forces running the prison watched the bodies being unloaded. They instructed Dostum's men to "get rid of them before

satellite pictures can be taken". Doran interviewed a Northern Alliance soldier guarding the prison. "I was a witness when an American soldier broke one prisoner's neck. The Americans did whatever they wanted. We had no power to stop them." Another soldier alleged: "They took the prisoners outside and beat them up, and then returned them to the prison. But sometimes they were never returned, and they disappeared."

Many of the survivors were loaded back in the containers with the corpses, then driven to a place in the desert called Dasht-i-Leili. In the presence of up to 40 US special forces, the living and the dead were dumped into ditches. Anyone who moved was shot. The German newspaper *Die Zeit* investigated the claims and concluded that: "No one doubted that the Americans had taken part. Even at higher levels there are no doubts on this issue." The US group Physicians for Human Rights visited the places identified

by Doran's witnesses and found they "all... contained human remains consistent with their designation as possible grave sites". It should not be necessary to point out that hospitality of this kind also contravenes the third Geneva convention, which prohibits "violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture", as well as extra-judicial execution. Donald Rumsfeld's department, assisted by a pliant media, has done all it can to suppress Jamie Doran's film, while General Dostum has begun to assassinate his witnesses.

It is not hard, therefore, to see why the US government fought first to prevent the establishment of the international criminal court, and then to ensure that its own citizens are not subject to its jurisdiction. The five soldiers dragged in front of the cameras yesterday should thank their lucky stars that they are prisoners not of the American forces fighting for civilisation, but of the "barbaric and inhuman" Iraqis. ■

Courtesy, *The Guardian*, 24 March 2003

SRI LANKAN WOMEN PROTEST IRAQ WAR

We deplore the invasion of Iraq by the US-led coalition forces and express our deep concern about the humanitarian crisis that is unfolding. The invasion is in clear violation of international law, and without any justification, ignoring the United Nations and world opinion, with grave economic, social and political implications for all countries. We are particularly concerned at the devastation unleashed in the Middle East, the effects of the war on the Sri Lankan economy and the threat to the livelihood and safety of Middle East migrant workers – the vast majority of whom are women. We call upon the Government of Sri Lanka to vigorously oppose the war, and urge all concerned parties to commit themselves to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR)
Women's NGO Forum
Women's Education and Research Centre (WERC)
Voice of Women
Kantha Shakhti
Gender Centre – SSA
Muslim Women's Research and Action Forum
Women and Media
Mothers and Daughters of Lanka
Rural Women's Front
Women's Coalition for Peace
Women's Development Foundation (Kurunegala)
Women's Development Centre (Kandy)
Sooriya Women's Development Centre (Batticaloa)
Action Network for Migrant Women (ACTFORM)
Women's Alliance for Peace and Democracy
Ruhunu Rural Women's Organization
Uda Walawe Rural Women's Organization

TOWARD DEMOCRACY FOR IRAQ, WOMEN ARE THE KEY

Noeleen Heyzer

As Iraqis meet to talk about creating an interim authority to govern their country, they will need to overcome divisive ethnic, religious, tribal and political barriers. Experience elsewhere shows that one sure way to achieve the necessary consensus and compromise is to involve women extensively. Women have the collaborative outlook needed to deal with Iraqi society's complexities and the pragmatic organizing expertise needed to cut through the current chaos.

Iraqi women are among the most educated in the Middle East and are capable of assuming strong leadership roles. Yet we have not seen clear evidence of a concerted effort to involve women in discussions to establish a pathway to a democratic society. Simply put, it will be more difficult to unite Iraq if women are excluded from this process.

The United Nations Development Fund for Women, known as Unifem, commissioned an independent study last year to examine the impact of war on women and women's role in peace-building in 14 locations in Europe, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. The report highlights numerous examples of women charting new ways to reconstruct their communities in such diverse places as the Balkans, Cambodia, East Timor, and Rwanda.

Women often have informal social service systems already in place that can serve as a foundation for reconstruction. During Taliban rule in Afghanistan, for example, women ran clandestine schools for girls, provided health care for women and set up home-based work to support their families. These experiences supported the delivery of aid and resources effectively and fairly.

Such efforts can be replicated and adapted to the challenges in Iraq. First, women must be given space to come together and speak openly about their needs and priorities. A primary requirement is typically personal and family safety and security, followed by access to water, food, health services and education as well as a voice in rebuilding their country. It is through these meetings that women will emerge who can play a leadership role in planning for an interim government.

Second, the international community must ensure women's participation in the planning and distribution of aid, as well as sustained resources for the needs identified by women. At this critical juncture, when the needs for basic services are so overwhelming, it will be easy to overlook funds targeted specifically for women. But it is the women who can ensure that these basic services are handled effectively, fairly and efficiently.

After the genocide in Rwanda, when the country was in shambles and the international community remained paralysed in inaction, 50 women, both Hutu and Tutsi, organized widows to support each other and the war's orphans, regardless of ethnicity. Today the group they formed, the Avega Association, numbers more than 10,000 widows and provides social and health services and sustainable economic support for its families. This model of reconciliation not only strengthened the women involved, it has bolstered the rebuilding of Rwandan society.

Third, support is necessary to help women translate their pragmatic expertise into participation in national governments. This may consist of equipping women with the skills to gain seats in Parliament, which Unifem helped to do in East Timor, or training women in drafting a constitution, which the agency did in Rwanda and is supporting in Afghanistan.

Iraq has signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, as well as the Convention of the Rights of the Child. If women's leadership and civil society organizations are supported, these mechanisms and others will not be discarded along with the regime, but will give meaning to the term "rule of law."

From humanitarian relief through reconstruction of public services to the building of a democratic foundation in postwar Iraq, women's skills and perspectives can bridge divisions and provide models for rebuilding based on their ingenuity in caring for their families amid repression and conflict. If a truly democratic government is to be built in Iraq, women need to be integrated into every step of the process. ■

Courtesy, *International Herald Tribune* 19/20 April 2003.

Noeleen Heyzer is executive director of UNIFEM the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

THE SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Roger Normand and Jan Goodwin

We are in the midst of a new American revolution. The task at hand according to the Pentagon's own official documents, is nothing less than establishing "full spectrum dominance" of a "unipolar" world.

To accomplish this goal requires a radical transformation not just of American foreign policy but of domestic policy as well—by loosening the constraints of well-established laws at home and abroad. Dick Cheney has told us that "we can no longer operate under 20th century standards" given that the war against terrorism "may never end, at least not in our lifetime."

The revolution is already well underway. War in Iraq marks the next phase in this process of transformation.

Under the new Bush Doctrine, a bold military strategy of so-called preemptive attack including the possibility of unilateral nuclear first strike—is intended to prevent any state or group of states from challenging our preeminent role in the world. As President Bush told the graduating class at West Point Military Academy last year: "America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenges."

Preemptive attack, however, is an Orwellian term for illegal invasion. As far back as 1946, the Nuremberg Tribunal rejected Germany's argument of the necessity for preemptive war against Norway and Denmark, judging it: "the supreme international crime differing only from other warcrimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."

This prohibition was incorporated into the United Nations Charter as the basis for a new system of collective security in which no state retained the unilateral right to attack another—with two specified exceptions: self defense and Security Council authorization.

In self-defense, states may retaliate against an armed attack or the imminent threat of one. But only if, in the words of Daniel Webster, an earlier Secretary of State, the threat is "instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means and no moment for deliberation." The Bush Administration never provided a shred of substantiated evidence that Iraq either participated in the attacks of 9/11, or had the means and intention to launch an imminent attack against the U.S.

The Security Council may, as a last resort, authorize force outside of self-defense when necessary to maintain international peace and security. But only after all peaceful alternatives have been

exhausted—clearly not the case in Iraq with the UNMOVIC weapons inspectors literally begging for more time.

U.S. double standards were exposed for the world to see during the bungled effort to squeeze a second resolution out of the Security Council. Having first derided the U.N. as "irrelevant" and then failed to sway even Guinea and Angola to the cause of war, the White House has now been forced into the ironic position of justifying the legality of a war opposed by the Security Council as a whole by invoking a 12-year old Security Council resolution.

The untenable contradiction between U.S. policy and international law arises because the revolutionaries in Washington are more concerned with the unrestrained projection of American military power than with disarmament, democracy or human rights.

This agenda is often misunderstood as a direct response to 9/11. But Bush strategists have been writing for more than a decade about the need to remove Saddam Hussein—despite the U.S. having armed and supported him for years. Their openly articulated goal is to reshape the Middle East to better serve American geopolitical interests.

Even Americans unconcerned by naked imperialism should consider whether this radical new strategy is good for our country. In a world bristling with fearsome weapons, what is the likely outcome of dismantling the legal framework designed half a century ago to protect humanity from the carnage of unlimited force? Can pure military might really defend us from evil and secure our freedom at the same time?

While loudly predicting swift military victory, our own leaders are also quietly preparing us to lose the peace. We have been told by the White House and the CIA itself to prepare for increased anti-American terrorism at home and abroad, as war in Iraq incites extremist reactions around the globe, not just in the Arab world. This can only mean one thing: we will be even less safe after the war than we are now.

Consider, too, how other countries will exploit the U.S. example. Repressive governments the world over have already increased human rights abuses against their own brand of home-grown "terrorists"—usually anyone opposing their policies. Simmering tensions in nuclear flashpoints like India-Pakistan, Israel-Palestine, and China-Taiwan could easily and quickly escalate beyond control. Taken to its logical—though never inevitable—conclusion, the absence of law will lead to the absence of peace and human rights altogether.

The revolution is underway at home as well. In just two years the Bush Administration has turned a \$400 billion plus surplus into a \$300 billion plus deficit—without yet allocating a penny to war and occupation in Iraq or to reconstruction in Afghanistan (remember that country we were repeatedly told would never again be forgotten and abandoned?). Americans are suffering through a painful recession, buffeted by waves of corporate crime and mass lay-offs, facing increased poverty and unemployment. In the face of these dire economic conditions, the White House has rammed tax “reform” legislation and increased military-security budget allocations through a compliant Congress to achieve a massive upwards redistribution of wealth undreamed of even in the Reagan years.

Our Constitution is also under attack. Since 9/11 our civil liberties have been significantly eroded in the name of protecting our freedom. At some point after the invasion of Iraq, John Ashcroft’s Justice Department will present to Congress secretly-drafted legislation, the Patriot Act II, which further limits fundamental and long-cherished American principles of free speech and due process. Mr. Ashcroft has even condemned lawful dissent as “aiding and abetting terrorism”—raising the specter of criminalizing opposition to government policy.

The practice of racial profiling—generally abhorred in American society—has become institutionalized through mass detentions and special registration procedures. American citizens can now be subject to indefinite detention without trial. Our government has

gone so far as to justify and even practice torture for God and Democracy, or course.

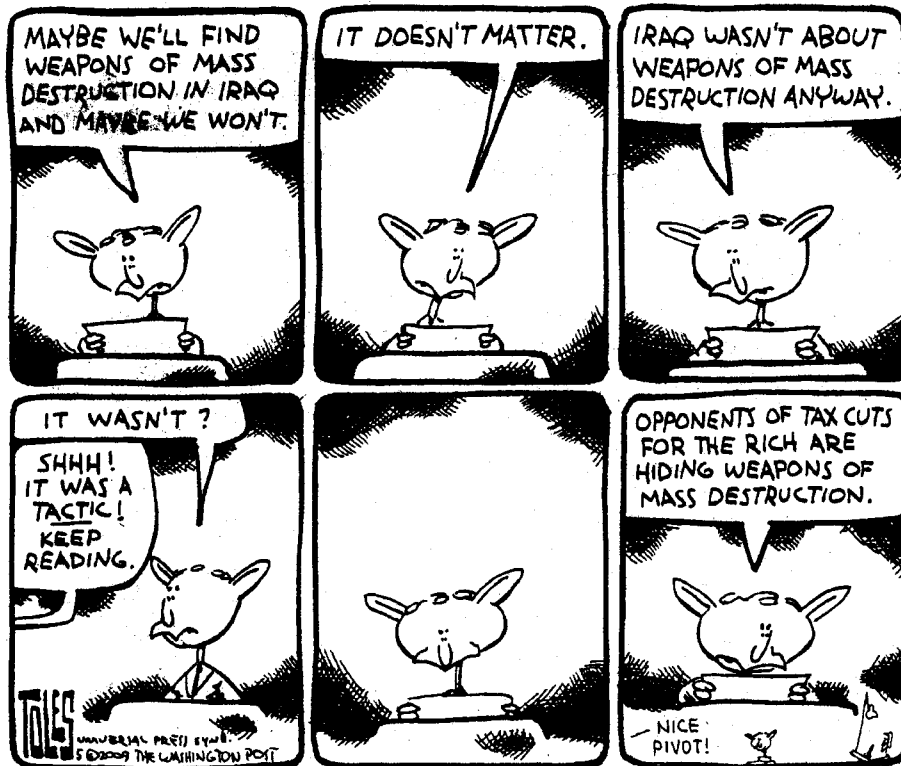
The bottom line is this: we face a carefully planned preemptive attack against our most basic rights—Constitutional rights and human rights. There is a pitiless logic at play that must at some point be confronted: imposing American Empire abroad requires building Fortress America at home. The two cannot be separated.

What lies ahead in the unfolding revolution? When and where will this “endless war” finally end?

With U.S. troops engaged in battle, Americans will pray for their safety and—for a time—also rally round the government. But before it is too late, we would do well to heed Sir Thomas More’s advice to Will Roper, his protégè turned vigilante, in the play “A Man for All Seasons”:

And when the last law was cut down and the devil turned around on you, where would you hide, the laws all being flat? Do you really think that you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then?

Americans of all political opinion have the right to speak and act freely in opposition to Washington’s revolutionary program—without being treated as terrorists by our own government. This is, after all, still our country. And if we truly love our homeland, we must take it back. ■



Courtesy, *International Herald Tribune*, 6 May 2003

THE OFFICIAL WAR GLOSSARY

Geov Parrish

As in all military actions (can we really call this one-sided massacre a "war"?), government and media advocacy for the planned U.S. invasion of Iraq has introduced a number of new words and phrases, or new usages of existing ones, to the English language. Since many of these are directly opposite of their intuitive meanings, we present here, for your reference, a guide to some of these new linguistic developments. Keep this handy guide by your TV for the next time Bush, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Franks, or any of their minions appear on your screen.

allies n: Tony Blair

collateral damage obs: The hapless schmucks that happen to be in the way when the U.S. bombs civilian facilities or residential neighborhoods. No longer in common usage since civilian deaths are now ignored entirely.

Other obsolete words and phrases include: Osama bin Laden, Afghanistan, budget surplus, economy, environment, corporate scandals, education, civil liberties, Constitution, Guantanamo Bay, and "the end of the war."

democracy n: The ideal form of a political system—now used interchangeably with the economic system called capitalism—in which a handful of wealthy people with occasional minor policy differences take turns enriching their patrons and being elected by a citizenry that is allowed no other choices; e.g., "We intend to turn Iraq into a democracy, just like the United States."

deterrent n: A category of military weapons that includes massive nuclear arsenals, space-based nuclear and laser weapons, and chemical and biological weapons research. Only applies when possessed by the United States. See weapons of mass destruction

disarm v.: To blow to smithereens; e.g., "Saddam Hussein's destruction of missiles is an impediment to U.S. plans to disarm Saddam Hussein."

embedded v: To engage in an act of prostitution; e.g., "Hundreds of U.S. media outlets have elected to cover the war by having their reporters embedded in an American military unit."

empire abbr: A shortened form of the phrase American empire. A state in which 196 countries are eternally grateful, or should be, for being plundered by the 197th. See democracy.

homeland n: That portion of empire that got ignored because the Department of Defense is no longer used for defending.

oil n: Booty.

Old Europe n: Formerly "allies." A collection of countries too stuck in the mud or jealous to welcome empire. See world.

peace n: The mythical state achieved when the United States has a complete global monopoly on the use of military force. Not to be confused with "democracy," "freedom," or "justice." See empire.

people of Iraq n: See Saddam Hussein.

precision bombing n: Replaces smart bombs. What a morally enlightened country like the United States does. Involves using MOABs, daisy cutters, or up to 3,000 cruise missiles to create firestorms that convert oxygen to carbon monoxide and asphyxiate anyone within range of the miles-wide inferno, and then pretending that the resulting fatalities do not exist. See civilian casualties.

pre-emptive attack n: Replaces blitzkrieg. Unprovoked invasion of a country that poses no threat, esp. if that country is defenseless and has extensive reserves of oil.

proof n: Sales receipts, usually from before or just after the Gulf War; e.g., "We have extensive proof for the existence of Iraq's biological and chemical weapons."

reconstruction n: The lucrative process undertaken during the occupation of an invaded country, involving replacing buildings, bridges, and utility systems. There is nothing you can do to rebuild the people—fortunately, they never existed. See Saddam Hussein.
regime change n : Coup d'État.

Saddam Hussein n: The nation of Iraq, pop. 24,002,000 (2002 est.); area 172,476 sq. mi. (slightly larger than California), centered on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Southwest Asia, previously known as Persia and Mesopotamia; one of the oldest continuously civilized regions in the world. "Iraq" and "Saddam Hussein" are generally used interchangeably; e.g., "We're going to bomb the hell out of Saddam Hussein."

shock and awe n: War crime.

terrorism n: What they do.

terrorist n: Anybody who dislikes George Bush's policies. See unlawful combatant.

unlawful combatant n: Any opponent of George Bush's policies whom the U.S. government would prefer to have held indefinitely without trial. See Constitution.

war on terror n: A comprehensive marketing strategy to ensure the reelection of George W. Bush in 2004 by embroiling the United States in war for decades to come. Replaces these previous campaigns: "compassionate conservative," "fiscally responsible," "education president," and "he's really not as dumb as he looks."

weapons of mass destruction n: What they have. See deterrent. **world** n: The collection of nations and peoples that thinks George Bush is out of his freakin' mind. ■

Courtesy, *Seattle Weekly*

BILL CLINTON'S ADVICE

Former US president Bill Clinton's scathing attack on current US foreign policy, we hope, would make President George Bush and his advisers realise that even among the American establishment there is very strong resentment against the decision to war with Iraq as well as to the post—war pronouncements.

The former president had at a seminar held in New York on Tuesday said: 'if you got an interdependent world, you cannot kill, jail and occupy all your adversaries. Sooner or later you will have to make a deal'. He had said that the American paradigm after September 11 has been that the event had given America the right to interpret all future events in a way that everyone else in the world must agree with America. If they don't they can go to hell'.

The fact that such remarks have been made by a former American president in public should make President Bush realise that even though a war has been won, hearts and minds of Americans were not with him. Usually nations back their leaders in war – be it right or wrong – but as the dust settles and miseries, crimes and injustices come to the open, much of that national pride and bravado dissipates away. If the economy suffers, national leaders are dead ducks at the polls as what happened to the incumbent president's father.

There is a widespread belief that a prime reason why President Bush was determined to war against Iraq was his sagging popularity at home. Following the greatest American disaster in living memory on September 11, his War Against Global Terrorism has not been spectacular and failed to catch the imagination of the people. It is believed that President Bush's thinking was that eliminating Saddam Hussein and his dictatorship would send his popularity rate soaring in the US. Even if it did happen, the suffering of the Iraqis, the human tragedies and the inability of the invading forces

to do very much for the Iraqi people that are brought on TV screens into American homes, will over a period of time, be disastrous to those responsible for the war. Besides, though few, American soldiers are still being killed.

Unlike any other national leaders, American leaders have striven to be acceptable to the world at large. Their international image does count very much in pursuing global American interests. But right now there are no regions in the world that could be identified as being supportive of the American president or his foreign policy. Even in Europe, the traditional allies of the Americans, there is no pronounced support. After the military victory, European leaders such as the French and the Germans are reported to be attempting to build bridges to White House for the Spoils of War but these are the leaders who in turn will be subjected to the backlash of public suspicion.

The best option appears to be the United Nations controlling Iraq till an Iraqi regime comes into being. But that does not appear to go with the belligerent mood of President Bush who has already expended 75 billion dollars on the Iraqi war but with no Saddam Hussein to show as captive and no Weapons of Mass Destruction for which purpose the war was waged.

Irrespective of the future vacillation of the popularity rates of President Bush in the US, American popularity internationally is apparently hitting a universal low.

This is a nation that has spent billions – much more than on the war with Iraq – since the last war, in building up its image as a democratic, law abiding nation to win hearts and minds of the people around the world. ■

Courtesy, *The Island*, 18 April 2003, Editorial.

The well-known novelist Margaret Drabble on the USA

I detest Disneyfication, I detest Coca-Cola, I detest burgers, I detest sentimental and violent Hollywood movies that tell lies about history.

I detest American imperialism, American infantilism and American triumphalism about victories it didn't even win...

I hate feeling this hatred. I have to keep reminding myself that if Bush hadn't been (so narrowly) elected, we wouldn't be here, and none of this would have happened. There is another America. Long live the other America, and may this one pass away soon.

From *The Daily Telegraph*, London

INDEFENSIBLE

This century's first major war has entered its most dangerous, nightmarish phase and, despite initial American claims, is causing a humanitarian tragedy of massive proportions. The April 3 rocket strike in the neighbourhood of Baghdad in which dozens were killed and more than 120 injured climaxes a series of such vicious assaults on the civilian population by the invading forces. But more outrageous has been the acknowledgement by the American military that it has resorted to the use of the deadly cluster bombs, which are known to cause indiscriminate damage on a wide area. The forced admission, while giving the lie to the Iraqi people, invites the charge that the American and British forces had violated international rules of war. It should also alert the international community to the enormity of the suffering being inflicted on the civilian population by the so-called coalition forces. Even before the admission by the American and British military that they had used cluster bombs, there were overwhelming humanitarian arguments of calling a halt to the bombing campaign which had uprooted civilian life in the major cities of Iraq. Claims over the precision bombing had been proved hollow, with misdirected missiles falling across the border in Iran and causing also the downing of coalition aircraft in "friendly fire."

Cluster bombs, however, belong to a completely different category. Designed to destroy large concentrations of heavy armour and infantry, these weapons can cause damage on a mass scale. Each cluster scatters around 150 bomblets over a wide area. More than this potential for damage, critics have in particular raised the dangers flowing from the bomb's lack of precision guidance. Dropped from a height, the bomblets can wander off target and also remain unexploded. Rather like landmines, they litter the

ground with the potential to explode months or years later. Their use during the U.S.-led campaign in Kosovo raised worldwide protests, with thousands of unexploded bombs still remaining embedded in the ground. The use of the clusters in Afghanistan again invited protests. It was for the first time on April 3 that the American and British military admitted to the use of cluster bombs in the campaign in Iraq. The admission, after an Iraqi doctor in Baghdad hospital confirmed that 33 civilians had been killed in a cluster bomb attack, came under bizarre circumstances of admission, denial and admission that were a testimony to the strength of the opposition to their use.

As the American war machine rolls on, what is also clear is that the shock and completely justifiable anger expressed by some sections of the international community over the use of the cluster bombs is only matched by the silence in the rest of the world. In two weeks since the launch of the U.S. campaign, the anti-war movement seems to have lost its steam except for sporadic acts of protest. A desensitised world, introduced to the war games during the 1991 conflict in the Gulf, has apparently become immunised to the poignant and heart-rending scenes of human tragedy being brought forcefully home by a plethora of independent media organisations. There is a fatalistic mood of resignation in the capitals around the world. The war, which inflicted huge collateral damage even before it began by undermining the United Nations and the trans-Atlantic alliance, is taking a heavy toll on international conventions. If and when this war is concluded, the U.N. will have much repairing to do. Topping the list is its own credibility, badly eroded by the U.S.' unilateral act of aggression. ■

Courtesy, *The Hindu*, 12 April 2003, Editorial

London Mayor blasts Bush, compares him to Saddam

The mayor of London has launched a blistering attack on US President George W. Bush, comparing the White House administration to the government of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussain.

In comments broadcast on BBC television news on Thursday night, Mayor Ken Livingstone said Bush was "not the legitimate president" of the United States. "This really is a completely unsupportable government and I look forward to it being overthrown as much as I looked forward to Saddam Hussain being overthrown," he told a meeting at his City Hall head-quarters. His comments were roundly condemned by political opponents, who said they would discourage US tourists visiting London and could trigger an American popular boycott of British exports.

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer dismissed the comments during a news conference in Washington. "First of all, I've never heard of the fellow. Second of all, I wouldn't dignify it with a comment," he said. Livingstone, widely known in Britain as "Red Ken", was an outspoken opponent of British involvement in the US led invasion of Iraq to topple Saddam.

A former maverick member of Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labour Party, he was suspended from the party, years ago and stood against Labour's official candidate in the mayoral election.

Daily News 9.5.2003

THE BLACK HOLE OF TV WAR REPORTING

Frank Rich

Should we never have watched at all? So Barbara Bush had instructed us in an interview the day before the Iraq war began. The president's mother said she would watch "none" of TV's war coverage because "90 percent" of it would be speculative. She continued: "Why should we hear about body bags and deaths and how many, what day it's gonna happen? ... It's not relevant. So why should I waste my beautiful mind on something like that?"

A beautiful mind is indeed a terrible thing to waste, but not having one, I took Mrs. Bush's words as the see-no-evil musing of a mom spinning for her son. But now I realize she was prescient. A survey by the *Los Angeles Times* last weekend found that 69 percent of Americans turned to the three cable news networks first for war coverage—with newspapers, local TV news, regular network news and the Internet trailing far behind. But to what end? If cable has taught us anything during "War in Iraq," it is this: Battalions of anchors and high-tech correspondents can cover a war 24 hours a day and still tell us less about what is going on than the mere 27 predigital news hounds who accompanied the American troops landing in Normandy on D-Day.

Speculation, while rampant, has in some ways been the least of the coverage's ills. By this point we instinctively know that whenever a rent-a-general walks over to a map, it's time to take a latrine break. What has most defined this TV war on cable is the networks' insistence on letting their own scorched-earth campaigns for brand supremacy run roughshod over the real action. The conveying of actual news often seems subsidiary to their mission to out-flag-wave one another and to make their own personnel the leading players in the drama.

For anchors like Brian Williams and Wolf Blitzer, Kuwait City is a backdrop that lends a certain amount of gravitas (though not as much as it would have in the last Gulf War), but couldn't they anchor just as well from New York? It's not as if they're vying to interview the locals. While a study by the Project for Excellence in Journalism found that reports from "embedded" journalists were 94 percent accurate, it also determined that in only 20 percent of those reports did the correspondents share the screen with anyone else.

There's almost nothing in the war, it seems, that cannot be exploited as a network promo. Fox's anchors trumpeted an idle remark by General Richard Myers that "reporters just have to be fair and balanced, that's all" as an official endorsement of the network's "fair and balanced" advertising slogan. At CNN, a noble effort by Sanjay Gupta, an embedded medical reporter, to rescue an injured 2-year-old Iraqi boy performing on-the-scene brain surgery was

milmed for live reports. Gupta himself declared that "it was a heroic attempt to try to save the child's life after the child had died.

As for MSNBC—last in war, last in peace, last in the Nielsens with or without "Donahue"—the battles for Basra and Baghdad were more bagatelles compared with its take-no-prisoners battle with Fox to emerge as the most patriotic news channel in the land. Who was the most "treasonous" villain in the war? MSNBC says it was Fox's Geraldo Rivera, who revealed U.S. troop movements on camera. Fox says it was MSNBC's Peter Arnett, who gave an interview to Iraqi TV. As the two networks stoked the flames of this bonfire of the vanities, neither took time out from their proxy war to devote much (if any) coverage to an actual treason. That would be Sergeant Asan Akbar of the 101st Airborne, who was arrested (then charged with murder) in the fragging incidents that led to the deaths of two soldiers and the wounding of at least 14 others. How fleeting was his infamy.

But it's not only that story that has vanished from view. Whatever happened to Afghanistan, Al Qaeda, the Israelis and the Palestinians? TV viewers in America are now on more intimate terms with Aaron Brown and Shep Smith's perceptions of the war than with the collective thoughts of all those soon-to-be liberated "Iraqi people" they keep apotheosising.

Iraqis are the better-seen-than-heard dress extras in this drama, alternately pictured as sobbing, snarling or cheering. Even Saddam Hussein remains a villain from stock, since the specific history of his reign of terror gets far less airtime than the tacky décor of his palaces and the circular information-free debates about whether he's dead or alive. When Victoria Clarke at the Pentagon says Saddam is responsible for "decades and decades of torture and oppression the likes of which I think the world has not ever seen before," no one on Fox or MSNBC is going to gainsay her by bringing up Hitler and Stalin. To so much as suggest that the world may have seen thugs even more evil than Saddam is to engage in moral relativism—which, in the prevailing Foxspeak of the moment, is itself tantamount to treason.

The most violent images have been kept off American television. "It's a news judgment where we would of course be mindful of the sensibilities of our viewers," a CNN spokeswoman told *The Wall Street Journal*, explaining her network's decision to minimize the savagery and blood of warfare.

All the American networks and much of print journalism have made a similar decision—even though some on-air correspondents, notably ABC's Ted Koppel, have questioned it. Of course, no reader

or viewer should be inundated with gore. But when movies like "Saving Private Ryan" and "Black Hawk Down" arrived, they were widely applauded for the innovative realism of their battle scenes. Wouldn't it make sense that media depictions of an actual war at least occasionally adhere to the same standard? Is the decision to sanitize "War in Iraq" really a matter of "news judgment" or is it driven by business? Certainly, horrific images would make it tough, if not impossible, to sell commercials—which returned with accelerating frequency to the cable networks after the altruistic first few days of the war.

As a result, the pre-war joke, that this war would be the ultimate reality show, has come true. Its life-and-death perils are airbrushed whenever possible in the same soothing style as the artificial perils of "Survivor."

BBC, which is commercial-free, refused to turn away when blood splashed on its camera lens late last Sunday night during its first-hand report on the friendly fire incident that killed 19 Kurds. Then again, the unsparing first-hand written accounts of battle in the major newspapers—Dexter Filkins of *The New York Times*

described literal eye-for-eye combat near Baghdad last weekend—are not replicated by the verbal story—telling of many TV correspondents either.

Appearing recently on Jon Stewart's "Daily Show," Anthony Swofford, the former marine who wrote the best-selling *Jarhead* about his experience in the 1991 Gulf War, said he had shut off his TV after three or four days and "stayed with the print." For all the TV pictures, he noted, "the actual experience of combat doesn't make it to the other side of the screen."

He and Mrs. Bush are not alone in tuning out. By late March, cable-news ratings had fallen roughly 20 percent from their early highs. A war presented with minimal battlefield realism, canned jingoism and scant debate is going to pall as television no less than it does as journalism. At this rate, it may be only days before SARS sends Iraq into the same memory hole now occupied by the rest of the Middle East, assuming a resurgence of child abductions doesn't come along to trump them both. ■

Courtesy *International Herald Tribune*, April 12-13, 2003

IRAQ: A LETTER OF RESIGNATION

The following is the text of John Brady Kiesling's letter of resignation to Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. Mr. Kiesling is a career diplomat who has served in United States embassies from Tel Aviv to Casablanca to Yerevan.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing you to submit my resignation from the Foreign Service of the United States and from my position as Political Counselor in U.S. Embassy Athens, effective March 7. I do so with a heavy heart. The baggage of my upbringing included a felt obligation to give something back to my country. Service as a U.S. diplomat was a dream job. I was paid to understand foreign languages and cultures, to seek out diplomats, politicians, scholars and journalists, and to persuade them that U.S. interests and theirs fundamentally coincided. My faith in my country and its values was the most powerful weapon in my diplomatic arsenal.

It is inevitable that during twenty years with the State Department I would become more sophisticated and cynical about the narrow and selfish bureaucratic motives that sometimes shaped our policies. Human nature is what it is, and I was rewarded and promoted for understanding human nature. But until this Administration it had been possible to believe that by upholding the policies of my

president I was also upholding the interests of the American people and the world. I believe it no longer.

The policies we are now asked to advance are incompatible not only with American values but also with American interests. Our fervent pursuit of war with Iraq is driving us to squander the international legitimacy that has been America's most potent weapon of both offense and defense since the days of Woodrow Wilson. We have begun to dismantle the largest and most effective web of international relationships the world has ever known. Our current course will bring instability and danger, not security.

The sacrifice of global interests to domestic politics and to bureaucratic self-interest is nothing new, and it is certainly not a uniquely American problem. Still, we have not seen such systematic distortion of intelligence, such systematic manipulation of American opinion, since the war in Vietnam. The September 11 tragedy left us stronger than before, rallying around us a vast international coalition to cooperate for the first time in a systematic way against the threat of terrorism. But rather than take credit for those successes and build on them, this Administration has chosen to make terrorism a domestic political tool, enlisting a scattered and largely defeated Al Qaeda as its bureaucratic ally. We spread disproportionate terror and confusion in the public mind, arbitrarily

linking the unrelated problems of terrorism and Iraq. The result, and perhaps the motive, is to justify a vast misallocation of shrinking public wealth to the military and to weaken the safeguards that protect American citizens from the heavy hand of government. September 11 did not do as much damage to the fabric of American society as we seem determined to do to ourselves. Is the Russia of the late Romanovs really our model, a selfish, superstitious empire thrashing toward self-destruction in the name of a doomed status quo?

We should ask ourselves why we have failed to persuade more of the world that a war with Iraq is necessary. We have over the past two years done too much to assert to our world partners that narrow and mercenary U.S. interests override the cherished values of our partners. Even where our aims were not in question, our consistency is at issue. The model of Afghanistan is little comfort to allies wondering on what basis we plan to rebuild the Middle East, and in whose image and interests. Have we indeed become blind, as Russia is blind in Chechnya, as Israel is blind in the Occupied Territories, to our own advice, that overwhelming military power is not the answer to terrorism? After the shambles of post-war Iraq joins the shambles in Grozny and Ramallah, it will be a brave foreigner who forms ranks with Micronesia to follow where we lead.

We have a coalition still, a good one. The loyalty of many of our friends is impressive, a tribute to American moral capital built up over a century. But our closest allies are persuaded less that war is justified than that it would be perilous to allow the U.S. to drift into complete solipsism. Loyalty should be reciprocal. Why does our President condone the swaggering and contemptuous approach to our friends and allies this Administration is fostering, including

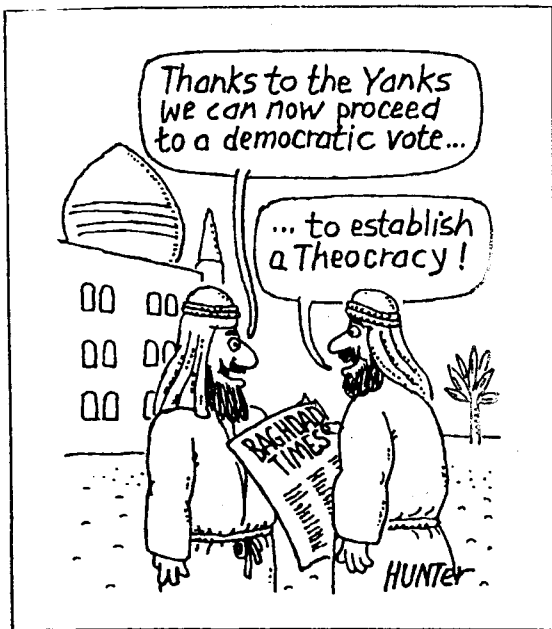
among its most senior officials?. Has “oderint dum metuantreally”? become our motto?

I urge you to listen to Americas friends around the world. Even here in Greece, purported hotbed of European anti-Americanism, we have more and closer friends than the American newspaper reader can possibly imagine. Even when they complain about American arrogance, Greeks know that the world is a difficult and dangerous place, and they want a strong international system, with the U.S. and EU in close partnership. When our friends are afraid of us rather than for us, it is time to worry. And now they are afraid. Who will tell them convincingly that the United States is as it was, a beacon of liberty, security, and justice for the planet?

Mr. Secretary, I have enormous respect for your character and ability. You have preserved more international credibility for us than our policy deserves, and salvaged something positive from the excesses of an ideological and self-serving Administration. But your loyalty to the President goes too far. We are straining beyond its limits an international system we built with such toil and treasure, a web of laws, treaties, organizations, and shared values that sets limits on our foes far more effectively than it ever constrained America’s ability to defend its interests.

I am resigning because I have tried and failed to reconcile my conscience with my ability to represent the current U.S. Administration. I have confidence that our democratic process is ultimately self-correcting, and hope that in a small way I can contribute from outside to shaping policies that better serve the security and prosperity of the American people and the world we share. ■

Courtesy *New York Review of Books* April 10th 2003.



Courtesy, *Private Eye*, April 2003

MY OSCAR BACKLASH—*STUPID WHITE MEN* BACK AT # 1.

Dear friends,

It appears that the Bush administration will have succeeded in colonizing Iraq sometime in the next few days. This is a blunder of such magnitude—and we will pay for it for years to come. It was not worth the life of one single American kid in uniform, let alone the thousands of Iraqis who have died, and my condolences and prayers go out to all of them.

So, where are all those weapons of mass destruction that were the pretense for this war? Ha! There is so much to say about all this, but I will save it for later.

What I am most concerned about right now is that all of you—the majority of Americans who did not support this war in the first place—not go silent or be intimidated by what will be touted as some great military victory.

Now, more than ever, the voices of peace and truth must be heard. I have received a lot of mail from people who are feeling a profound sense of despair and believe that their voices have been drowned out by the drums and bombs of false patriotism.

Some are afraid of retaliation at work or at school or in their neighborhoods because they have been vocal proponents of peace. They have been told over and over that it is not "appropriate" to protest once the country is at war, and that your only duty now is to "support the troops."

Can I share with you what it's been like for me since I used my time on the Oscar stage two weeks ago to speak out against Bush and this war? I hope that, in reading what I'm about to tell you, you'll feel a bit more emboldened to make your voice heard in whatever way or forum that is open to you.

When "Bowling for Columbine" was announced as the Oscar winner for Best Documentary at the Academy Awards, the audience rose to its feet. It was a great moment, one that I will always cherish.

They were standing and cheering for a film that says we Americans are a uniquely violent people, using our massive stash of guns to kill each other and to use them against many countries around the world. They were applauding a film that shows George W. Bush using fictitious fears to frighten the public into giving him whatever he wants. And they were honoring a film that states the following:

The first Gulf War was an attempt to reinstall the dictator of Kuwait; Saddam Hussein was armed with weapons from the United States; and, the American government is responsible for the deaths of a half-million children in Iraq over the past decade through its sanctions and bombing.

That was the movie they were cheering, that was the movie they voted for, and so I decided that is what I should acknowledge in my speech. And, thus, I said the following from the Oscar stage:

"On behalf of our producers Kathleen Glynn and Michael Donovan (from Canada), I would like to thank the Academy for this award. I have invited the other Documentary nominees on stage with me. They are here in solidarity because we like non-fiction. We like non-fiction because we live in fictitious times. We live in a time where fictitious election results give us a fictitious president. We are now fighting a war for fictitious reasons.

Whether it's the fiction of duct tape or the fictitious 'Orange Alerts,' we are against this war, Mr. Bush. Shame on you, Mr. Bush, shame on you. And, whenever you've got the Pope and the Dixie Chicks against you, your time is up."

Halfway through my remarks, some in the audience started to cheer, that immediately set off a group of people in the balcony who started to boo. Then those supporting my remarks started to shout down the boos. The *L. A. Times* reported that the director of the show started screaming at the orchestra "Music! Music!" in order to cut me off, so the band dutifully struck up a tune and my time was up. (For more on why I said what I said, you can read the op-ed I wrote for the *L.A. Times*, plus other reaction from around the country at my website www.michaelmoore.com)

The next day—and in the two weeks since—the right-wing pundits and radio shock jocks have been calling for my head. So, has all this ruckus hurt me? Have they succeeded in "silencing" me?

Well, take a look at my Oscar "backlash":

On the day after I criticized Bush and the war at the Academy Awards, attendance at "Bowling for Columbine" in theaters around the country went up 110% (source: *Daily Variety/BoxOfficeMojo.com*)—The following weekend, the box office gross was up a whopping 73% (*Variety*). It is now the longest-running consecutive commercial release in America, 26 weeks in a row and still thriving. The number of theaters showing the film since the Oscars has INCREASED, and it has now bested the previous box office record for a documentary by nearly 300%.

Yesterday (April 6), "Stupid White Men" shot back to #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list.

This is my book's 50th week on the list, 8 of them at number one, and this marks its fourth return to the top position, something that virtually never happens. In the week after the Oscars, my website was getting 10-20 million hits A DAY (one day we even got more hits than the White House.

My mail has been overwhelmingly positive and supportive (and the hate mail has been hilarious !).

In the two days following the Oscars, more people pre-ordered the video for "Bowling for Columbine" on Amazon.com than the video for the Oscar winner for Best Picture, "Chicago". In the past week, I have obtained funding for my next documentary, and I have been offered a slot back on television to do an updated version of "TV Nation"/"The Awful Truth."

I tell you all of this because I want to counteract a message that is told to us all the time—that, if you take a chance to speak out politically, you will live to regret it. It will hurt you in some way, usually financially. You could lose your job. Others may not hire you. You will lose friends. And on and on and on.

Take the Dixie Chicks. I'm sure you've all heard by now that, because their lead singer mentioned how she was ashamed that Bush was from her home state of Texas, their record sales have "plummeted" and country stations are boycotting their music. The truth is that their sales are NOT down. This week, after all the attacks, their album is still at #1 on the Billboard country charts and, according to *Entertainment Weekly*, on the pop charts during all the brouhaha, they ROSE from #6 to #4.

In the *New York Times*, Frank Rich reports that he tried to find tickets to ANY of the Dixie Chicks' upcoming concerts but he couldn't because they were all sold out.

The Dixie Chicks' song, "Travelin' Soldier" (a beautiful anti-war ballad) was the most requested song on the internet last week. They have not been hurt at all—but that is not what the media would have you believe.

Why is that ? Because there is nothing more important now than to keep the voices of dissent—and those who would dare to ask a question—SILENT.

And what better way than to try and take a few well-known entertainers down with a pack of lies so that the average Joe or Jane gets the message loud and clear : "Wow, if they would do that to the Dixie Chicks or Michael Moore, what would they do to little ol' me ?" In other words, shut the f--- up. And that, my friends, is the real point of this film that I just got an Oscar for—how those in charge use FEAR to manipulate the public into doing whatever they are told.

Well, the good news —if there can be any good news this week— is that not only have neither I nor others been silenced, we have been joined by millions of Americans who think the same way we do.

Don't let the false patriots intimidate you by setting the agenda or the terms of the debate. Don't be defeated by polls that show 70% of the public in favor of the war. Remember that these Americans being polled are the same Americans whose kids (or neighbor's kids) have been sent over to Iraq.

They are scared for the troops and they are being cowed into supporting a war they did not want—and they want even less to see their friends, family, and neighbors come home dead.

Everyone supports the troops returning home alive and all of us need to reach out and let their families know that. Unfortunately, Bush and Co. are not through yet.

This invasion and conquest will encourage them to do it again elsewhere. The real purpose of this war was to say to the rest of the world, "Don't Mess with Texas - If You Got What We Want, We're Coming to Get It !"

This is not the time for the majority of us who believe in a peaceful America to be quiet. Make your voices heard. Despite what they have pulled soff, it is still our country. ■

Michael Moore who won an Oscar for his documentary *Bowling for Columbine* is the author of *Stupid White Men*.

"To engage in war is always to pick a wild card. And war must always be a last resort, not a first choice. I truly must question the judgement of any President who can say that a massive unprovoked military attack on a nation which is over 50% children is 'in the highest moral traditions of our country.'"

US Senator Robert Byrd, 12th February 2003

WAR IS GOOD, SAID BUSH AS THE THE LOUVRE FELL TO LOOTERS

Simon Jenkins

The fall of France was astonishingly swift. After regime change in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, it was only a matter of time before Tony Blair and George W. Bush said that they had "no plans" to attack France. The detested Jacques Chirac had long been a thorn in their sides. He was a past friend of Saddam Hussein, welcomed Arab exiles and had a suspiciously large Muslim population. Above all, he refused point-blank to disband his *force de frappe* weapons of mass destruction. As Donald Rumsfeld had said back in 2003: "Things mean consequences." France posed a clear and immediate threat. The coalition acted in pre-emptive self-defence. It was a pity about the Louvre. Coalition forces again fought "battle-lite". The application of shock-and-awe to Caen and Rouen and the blasting of infrastructure targets round Paris devastated French morale. A re-enactment of Operation Overlord saw the 21st Army Group reform in Hampshire and storm ashore at Normandy's Omaha and Utah beaches. Veteran units of the 101st Airborne were allowed to seize Pegasus Bridge, again. The Marine Corps had Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks "embedded".

The A13 to Paris was quickly secured. Predictions of a last stand in the capital's streets by Gaullist Resistance irregulars on barricades proved groundless. GPS-guided missiles took out regime buildings on the Ile de la Cité, Quai d'Orsay and Les Invalides. The Elysée presidential palace "complex" was soon a 50ft crater. The looting of the Louvre was regretted, but not stopped. Wild scenes greeted the arrival of the *Mona Lisa* at the Metropolitan, in New York. A shadow government was soon established in a town called Vichy.

By general agreement, France had it coming. There was no lack of support in Britain for Mr Blair joining America in this one. The British public had grown used to being "at war". It stopped schools and hospitals from hogging the news. Long-standing Francophobia had been fuelled in the 1990s by French boycotts of British farm produce and refusal to obey European laws. Fury was increased by French companies buying up British water and rail utilities and sending prices rocketing.

In an episode of the popular series *Yes, Prime Minister* in the 1980s, Sir Humphrey explained the Defence Ministry's missile-targeting strategy to his bemused Prime Minister, Jim Hacker. Intercontinental missiles were not aimed at Russia or America, he said. That would be reckless. They had always been aimed, of course, at France. All Britain's air and naval power was concentrated in the South East. From Henrician forts through Martello towers to 20th-century airfields and gun batteries, everything pointed at France. It was France that could not be trusted. By the time of

Baghdad, satire had become reality and a British prime minister needed no persuading. BSE, foot-and-mouth and M. Chirac's denial of a resolution before the Second Gulf War had left Mr Blair enraged. Historians later wondered why he had tolerated so long the mind-numbing Euro-summits and bilaterals with the duplicitous M. Chirac.

Mr Blair would never again have to shake that man by the hand. When push came to shove and the RAF eagle once more swooped over the Channel, everything felt right. As Geoff Hoon's cluster bombs fell on Paris, Despite the anarchy of post-conquest Afghanistan and Iraq, Washington's hawks never lost the initiative after April 2003. Kenneth Adelman, Mr Rumsfeld's alter ego, told *The Washington Post* in April that year "not to argue with success". Iraq had, as he predicted, been a cakewalk. Victory was real. In future, Mr Adelman went on, "I hope it emboldens leaders to drastic, not measured, approaches."

American strategists became convinced that, with communism out of the way, America's global duty was to take a leaf from its book. In future foreign relations would be as of old, essentially about war. As Mr Bush said after Baghdad, it was "just a question of one thing at a time". His Pentagon adviser, Richard Perle, added his weight to the domino strategy. Interviewed by the *International Herald Tribune* on the fall of Baghdad, he declared: "If the question is who poses a threat that the United States deal with, then the list is well known. It's Iran. It's North Korea. It's Syria. It's Libya, and I could go on."

Go on he did. He went on to France. That country's overwhelming support for Saddam was too much for America to bear. Small wonder Washington had renamed French fries "freedom fries". Mr Perle doubted whether there could ever be constructive relations between America and France again. "I am afraid this is not something that is easily patched up and cannot be dealt with simply in the normal diplomatic way, because feeling runs too deep," he said ominously. "It's gone way beyond the diplomats." France could hardly complain it was not warned.

The turn in American foreign policy at the start of the 21st century saw its final liberation from Cold War inhibition over the use of force. It was a reprise of the Wall Street maxim, "Greed is good". War was good. The ease with which regimes fell to the bombardier and the tank seemed to render archaic the niceties of 20th-century collective security. In apparently eternal trauma over "9/11", America expected understanding, support and obedience as it

thrashed about the world in its rage and saw terrorists under every bed. Why bother with the old constraints? War worked.

Key to this new strategy was that it could be implemented, thanks to the revolution brought by Mr Rumsfeld to the Pentagon in 2002-04. His "fight light, fight fast and bomb heavy" strategy terrorised and subdued enemies whose armies simply declined to fight. Mr Rumsfeld calculated, as had the German Army in 1938-39, that future wars had above all to move fast: They had to disorientate the enemy, economise on resources and keep an attendant media interested and supportive. They had to be short-burst.

Mr Rumsfeld swept aside the costly Colin Powell doctrine of overwhelming force. He cancelled helicopters, heavy tanks and artillery. He sold the State Department to Holiday Inns. Saddam had been toppled with half the troops used in Kuwait. Even so, the Second Gulf War had almost lost momentum after two weeks outside Baghdad, suggesting that even two weeks was a risk. If American forces could only hit fast and hard enough and not care about consequences, Mr Rumsfeld could topple any rogue state on Earth. Given the domestic popularity they could deliver to the White House, why stop?

In these circumstances, the new Washington elite argued that America need not bother with ambassadors, treaties, international law, Nato or the United Nations. Why sign up to landmine conventions, war crimes tribunals and non-proliferation treaties?

Of America's friends abroad, only the British cared about these things, and after a bit of schmoozing they always did what they were told. By definition, nobody can guard the last guardian. Ultimate power can only legitimise itself. Why should America care about some snivelling European wielding a two-bit UN veto?

The toppling of the Chirac regime was the inevitable application of this ideology. It was not imperialism. Washington had no desire to stick around when the cameras had already been directed to a new rogue. It was rather adventurism. American foreign policy did mergers and acquisitions, not management. They could topple but, as they found in Kabul and Baghdad, they had no clue about rebuilding. They just wanted to make a point. Upset Uncle Sam and you will lose your power, your palace, your art treasures and bring death and destruction to your cities.

Tony Blair cheered the fall of France. He, too, had his reasons. He had longed to see M Chirac with a bloody nose. Since 2002 he had supported America's new coercive diplomacy and grown hugely popular as a result. Not since Palmerston had nations quaked when a British leader said he had "no plans" to attack them. Now Mr Blair might be America's chosen candidate for president of Europe. Anyway, Britain was in bed with America and could hardly climb out now. Washington would not like that. Mr Blair would not want a nasty hole at the end of The Mall, would he? ■

Judge C.G. Weeramantry (former Vice President of the ICJ) on Military Intervention in Iraq

Dealing with the legal aspects, I should start by pointing out that the current hostilities run totally counter to the Charter of the United Nations, the basic organization of the United Nations, and at least a dozen basic principles of international law.

I. War runs counter to the preamble to the UN Charter which speaks of the scourge of war which twice in our generation has afflicted humanity. The UN Charter, therefore, enshrines principles of peaceful resolution of disputes and the outlawing of force, except under the strictest limitations. The general principles of international law which are violated are the following:

1. The outlawing of force
2. The outlawing of unilateral action
3. The limitation of self defence to actual armed attack
4. The principle of equality of nations
5. The outlawing of aggression
6. The outlawing of pre-emptive strikes
7. The imperative nature of exhausting all avenues to the peaceful settlement of disputes under Article 33 of UN Charter
8. The outlawing of weapons of mass destruction, an offence of which the nations attacking Iraq are themselves guilty
9. The principle of consistency for one cannot apply one rule to oneself and another rule to others

Regime change is not an objective of international law and stringing a few states together as a coalition of the willing does not give legitimacy to the illegal acts which the "willing" states are prepared to commit.

Extracts from a talk at BMICH Colombo, 25 April 2003

NOT IN OUR NAME

Women Oppose War Machismo

Women have always been at the forefront not only of peace movements, but also of campaigns to highlight war-time atrocities, publicize incidents of rape, organize movements on the 'disappeared' and to take the lead in humanitarian efforts in a post-conflict situation. It has often been noted that women oppose war, as they are the victims – losing their family members, becoming widows and single parents and forced by the circumstances of war into leaving their homes. They form the vast majority of 'displaced persons.' Women in wartime also undergo numerous types of sexual and other harassments. But women are also forced by war to assume leadership and responsibilities which have been placed upon them by events.

Women oppose war because they are enlightened members of civil society who understand the havoc that can be caused by macho-aggression and militaristic war-mongering conducted by men – irrespective of the consequences on the lives of people. The present war in Iraq is an example of such a worst-case scenario. The New York Times noted recently that there are two superpowers in the world – the USA and world public opinion. Certainly there is a non-stop expression of public anger.

Women all around the world have spoken out against the ghastly events of the past weeks, not because they are women and soft-hearted, but because they are responsible citizens who can see the war for what it is – an illegal invasion of a sovereign country, going against the UN Charter and against the tide of world opinion, endangering world peace, and probably begetting more religious fundamentalism and terrorism.

Global Protest

In the world-wide demonstrations against the war, women have figured prominently. Today, thanks to the internet and e-mail there is immediate communication and contact between women's groups opposed to war. Perhaps the most important peace demonstrations have been in the countries euphemistically called the 'allies' – the USA, UK and Australia – where women are in the forefront of the 'Not-in-our-Name' campaign. In Britain women have led the protests at the R.A.F. airbases from which the U.S. planes set off to bomb Iraq. One such recent demonstration in Britain has been in Fairford where US troops stormed the peace camp and ripped the protestors' banners off the fence. Even before the war, women were active in protesting the Bush-Blair policies at mass rallies held around the world. In the USA, many prominent feminist leaders and authors have opposed the war, among them Gloria Steinem, Robin Morgan, Alice Walker, Angela Davis and bell hooks. Last weekend massive rallies were held in New York

and other cities. The banners from the New York rally included "Thou Shalt Not Kill Children," "Almost 50% of Iraq's population is under 15 years old," and "How did our Oil get under their Sand?"

Celebrities Against War

In the film, theatre and music worlds of the USA opposition to war has been openly expressed. Many celebrities have joined the peace marchers. Some film stars kept away from the recent Oscars awards, while others who participated protested the war by wearing peace brooches of the Picasso dove, and by making anti-war acceptance speeches. Among singers, the famous award-winning group the Dixie Chicks also bravely spoke out – one of them saying she was ashamed that George Bush was from her home state of Texas.

Michael Moore, author of the best-seller *Stupid White Men* and winner of an Academy award this year for his anti-gun documentary *Batting Against Columbine*, made an anti-war statement at the Oscars. Also in a letter to George Bush he stated: "The Pope has said this war is wrong, that it is a Sin. The Pope! But even worse, the Dixie Chicks have now come out against you! How bad does it have to get before you realize that you are an army of one in this war?" In his letter Moore also wrote that: "Of the 535 members of Congress, only one (Sen. Johnson of South Dakota) has an enlisted son or daughter in the armed forces! If you really want to stand up for America, please send your twin daughters over to Kuwait right now and let them don their chemical warfare suits. And let's see every member of Congress with a child of military age also sacrifice their kids for this war effort."

South Asian Women Protest

In Sri Lanka over 15 women's organizations have joined to strongly condemn the war as illegal and to express concern for the people of Iraq. The protest is endorsed by the leading women's organizations – Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR), Women's Education and Research Centre (WERC), the Women's NGO Forum, Women and Media, Voice of Women, Kantha Shakti, the Women's Development Foundation (Kurunegala) and the Women's Development Centre (Kandy).

Similarly women's groups in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have denounced the war and are participating in street demonstrations protesting the holocaust being inflicted on the Iraqi people. Last Sunday, masses of women joined the protest in Calcutta on the war.

Picasso's Guernica

The e-mails from around the world are flooding in. One particularly revealing one is the following:
"The reproduction of Picasso's famous anti-war mural, Guernica, hanging at the entrance to the United Nations Security Council... has been censored. Considered to be Modern Art's greatest statement against the horrors of war, officials at the U.N. had the mural covered with a curtain so as to prevent embarrassment for United States Secretary of State, Colin Powell, as he gave a speech that advocated the bombing and invasion of Iraq."
As Maureen Dowd, in the New York Times, wrote:

"Mr. Powell can't very well seduce the world into bombing Iraq surrounded on camera by shrieking and mutilated women, men, children, bulls and horses."

Well said Maureen Dowd and all the other women dissidents who have opposed the war and whose voices are mounting in protest.

"So what did you do during the Iraq war, mummy?" should be our banner (in imitation of the famous line on the First World War which said "What did you in the war, daddy?") The answer this time is "We got on to the streets and protested, and protested in many other ways too!" ■

Courtesy, *Cat's Eye* 2 APRIL 2003

THE USE OF FORCE IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

As military operations in Iraq wind down and the dust settles on bombed out Baghdad, the international community has to take stock of not only the destruction in Iraq but also ascertain whether coalition action has undermined the status and legitimacy of international law and the United Nations. It cannot be denied that the coalition's use of force in Iraq has put in question the status of the United Nations and the legitimacy and force of the international legal framework that has been in existence since post World War II. U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell in his address to the UN Security Council on 5th February 2003 warned that the UN placed itself in danger of becoming irrelevant if it allowed Iraq to "continue to defy its will without responding effectively and immediately". Paradoxically, it appears that it is the "effective and immediate" use of force by coalition forces that has placed the UN in danger of becoming irrelevant.

Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter prohibits the use of force. There are however two exceptions- use of force for individual or collective self-defence (article 51) or for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security (Chapter VII). Iraq evidently does not fall into either category, as neither the United States nor the United Kingdom or any other state was attacked by Iraq. It should however be noted that the definition of self-defence has evolved over the years to include the right to use force when an attack is "imminent". This is said to be justifiable when the need for action is "instant, overwhelming and leaving no choice of means and no moment of deliberation". Once again however, it clearly is inapplicable in the case of Iraq. It is important to note that even Article 51, which allows for the use of force in self-defence, does so only until "the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security". This clearly suggests that the use of force is not justified if there is time to bring the matter to the attention of the Security Council, which was so in the case of Iraq. In addition, all members of the United Nations are bound to exhaust all possible means set out in Article 33 of the UN Charter to resolve a conflict, which was not done in the present case.

Courtesy, *Cat's Eye* 23rd April 2003