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US Military Intervention in Iraq: Causes and Consequences

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Master's
Degree in Literature and Civilization**

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the people who have supported us throughout our education.

I, Abdelkader KERMADI, dedicate this work to my parents who made huge efforts and motivated me during my academic career. May Allah prolong their life.

I, Smail KEDDOUDA, dedicate this paper to the soul of my parents whom I miss a lot. May Allah have mercy on them.

Thanks for making us see this adventure through to the end.

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Abstract

The United States military intervention in Iraq has always been a controversial and debatable subject especially as the American - Iraqi relation was too tumultuous and bad prior to the invasion. The current study aims to reveal the actual causes that led America to invade Iraq and highlights the consequences of the American military operation on Iraq and its people. Regarding research methodology, the historical method was adopted by using description, statistics, and analysis to accurately analyze key drivers that were taken by the decision makers in the United States to intervene in Iraq. As for the main results reached, the causes of the military intervention were to plunder Iraqi oil and to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime. The consequences of this invasion were ruining infrastructure, insecurity, the rise of sectarian and racial disputes among the Iraqis, an increase in the rates of crimes, and the escape of businessmen and brain drain.

Keywords: causes, consequences, Iraq, United States military intervention.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CAP	Center for American Progress
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IS	Islamic State
ISI	Islamic State in Iraq
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
KRG	Kurdish Regional Government
MDW	Mass Destruction Weapons
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSS	National Security Strategy
PRCPP	Pew Research Center for the People and the Press
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Total Cost of the Gulf War	8.
Figure 1.2 Iraq Economic Growth.....	8.
Figure 1.3 Iraq Oil Production 1988-2003.	9.
Figure 1.4 US European Allies' Opposition to the War	17.
Figure 1.5 Middle East Countries' Opposition to the War	18.
Figure 2.1 Iraq Total Petroleum and Other Liquids Production and Consumption 1990-2021.	27.
Figure 2.2 US Troop Levels in Iraq – March 2003 to December 2011	30.
Figure 2.3 Total Air Force.....	31.
Figure 2.4 Iraq Oil Production (1000s of barrels per day)	39.
Figure 2.5 Iraq Oil Production and Consumption 1980-2002 (Est)	43.

Table of Contents

Dedication	I
Acknowledgements	II
Abstract	III
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	IV
List of Figures	V
Table of Contents	VI
General Introduction	1

Chapter One: US Policy toward Iraq (1980-2011)

Introduction	5
1.1 The First Gulf War (1980 – 1988)	5
1.1.1 Causes of the Iran-Iraq war	5
1.1.2 US Involvement in the Iran-Iraq War	6
1.1.3 End of the Iran-Iraq War	6
1.1.4 Post Iran-Iraq War Period	7
1.1.5 The Iraqi Economy after the Iran-Iraq War	8
1.2 The Second Gulf War (1990 – 1991)	10
1.2.1 Causes of the Second Gulf War	10
1.2.2 US Involvement in the Second Gulf War	11
1.2.3 End of the Second Gulf War	12
1.2.4 Post Second Gulf War Period	13
1.3 The Arab-Israeli Conflict and its Impact on US-Iraqi Relations	13
1.4 US National Security Strategies (2002 – 2006)	15
1.5 The American Invasion of Iraq (2003-2011)	17
Conclusion	19

Chapter Two: Causes and Consequences of the US Military Intervention in Iraq

Introduction	21
2.1. Causes of the Intervention	22
2.1.1. Direct Causes	22
2.1.1.1. Mass Destruction Weapons	22
2.1.1.2. 9/11 Attacks	23
2.1.1.3 War on Terror	25
2.1.2. Indirect Causes	26
2.1.2.1. Hegemony in Oil Market	26
2.1.2.2. Israel Security	27
2.1.2.3. Religious Factor	28
2.2. War Development and International Attitudes	29
2.2.1. War Preparations	29
2.2.2. Start of Military Operations	31
2.2.3. International Attitudes	33
2.3. Consequences of the Intervention	35
2.3.1. Repercussions on Local Scale	35
2.3.2. Outcomes on Regional Scale	36
2.3.3. Ramifications on Global Scale	38
2.4. Iraq after 20 Years of the US Intervention	40
2.4.1. Political Influences on Arab Spring	40
2.4.2. Iraq before and after the US Invasion	42
Conclusion	45
General Conclusion	47
References	50
ملخص	

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Iraq has always been an important country in its region due to its strategic geographical position and being the cradle of civilizations, the crossroads of cultures, the center of different faiths and religions (IslamiCity, 2003). Furthermore, being an oil region that occupies the forefront at the Arab and international levels.

One of the negative actions of Iraq is that it plunged itself into two devastating wars the first was the Iraqi-Iranian war during the 1980s, in which Iraq was supported by the United States of America. Hersh (1992) argues: "The American decision to lend crucial help to Baghdad so early in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war came after American intelligence agencies warned that Iraq was on the verge of being overrun by Iran". The second war started when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, which gave the USA the pretext to a direct military intervention in Iraq with a mandate from the United Nations in order to remove the Iraqi forces from Kuwait and protect the American interests in the Gulf, and of course by controlling the huge oil reserves in the region (Khan Academy, n.d).

In addition to Iraq's growing role as a regional force threatening American influence in the region, it forced the USA to adopt a new strategy toward Iraq, imposing an economic blockade and economically weakening it. As a result, it floundered internally, and the social and economic situation deteriorated, resulting in the presence of catastrophic consequences for the Iraqi people. The USA is the global hegemony only forming friendly relations with countries that serve its interests. This is what happened to US-Iraq relations in 2003. US Presidents use foreign policy to maintain and enhance American supremacy over the world.

The background of this study is the great desire to shed light on the real and fabricated reasons for targeting Iraq and studying the invasion dimensions and its effects on Iraq and on the

international community and the most important results of the invasion. Moreover, to reveal the secrets of this invasion and find out the great role played by the media in misleading the global public opinion.

2. Statement of the Problem

The research problem that encountered us is the lack of objectivity in some books, due to the contradiction between Arabic references and foreign ones in the narration of events and the difficulty of reaching the truth because of the conflicting opinions and the nature of the dispute in many minute details of this issue. As an example of the books that tackled the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein is *Saddam Hussein's World* by an author who preferred to take Mahdi Haidar as a pseudonym. Another example from the western writings that narrated about Saddam Hussein as a tyrant is "Saddam Hussein A Legendary Dictator" by the Nigerian-born Felicia Okeke-Ibezim.

3. Research Questions

This study investigates the causes and consequences of the American military intervention in Iraq. In doing that, the following questions are addressed:

- 1- How were the relations between the USA and Iraq before the invasion?
- 2- What were the hidden reasons behind invading Iraq?
- 3- What were the consequences that the invasion left on Iraq?

4. Aims of the Study

The present study aims to:

- Provide an insight into the nature of the US-Iraqi relations before the invasion transpired.
- Examine the causes of the U.S. military intervention in Iraq.
- Investigate the consequences of America's invasion of Iraq.

5. Research Methodology

The study is based on the historical method and employs secondary-data sources as it relates to significant landmark events in contemporary history. Here, it is notable to address the Gulf Wars, the Israeli conflict, and the main issue, which is the invasion of Iraq. The description is adopted for describing those events and relations between the USA and Iraq before the invasion. Also, statistics are used to mention the rates of Iraqi oil production, the total cost of the first Gulf War and civilian and military deaths of Iraq. The analysis has a part in the research. It is used to analyze those events, the direct and indirect reasons of the invasion and its consequences.

6. Significance of the Study

This study contributes to demonstrate the importance that media played in navigating the war. It is essential as it attempts to elucidate a major event in history, which is the invasion Iraq since it chronologically and strategically affiliates to different updates that the world saw. This led researchers and specialists to interest in this issue as we do. The research tries to enlighten the motives of Bush's office to invade and occupy Iraq in 2003 and discusses the main outcomes of the war, dictating the casualties it cost for both sides. In spite of reviewing references that serve the topic, we sought to provide adequate answers to fill in the research gap. The repercussion of this invasion is still terrible until today in any field in Iraq.

7. Structure of the Study

The study is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is titled: *US Policy toward Iraq (1980 – 2011)*. It provides a brief history of US-Iraqi relations, focusing on key landmarks and events that shaped the two countries' ties. It also sheds light on Saddam Hussein's presidency, which witnessed many controversial and decisive decisions that could have far-reaching consequences for future US-Iraqi bilateral relations, such as the Iraq-Iran War, the Gulf War, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Furthermore, this chapter discusses President George W. Bush's

National Security Strategies of 2002 and 2006, which paved the way for his foreign policy agenda, after the 11th September terrorist attacks.

The second chapter, which is the main focus of this study, is entitled *Causes and Consequences of the US Military Intervention in Iraq*. It discusses the direct and indirect causes of the military intervention in Iraq, the developments of the war, the military operations, and international attitudes. Moreover, it shows the consequences of the war at the internal, regional, and international levels, and even the political and economic effects after 20 years of the invasion on the stability of the cradle of civilizations, Mesopotamia.

CHAPTER ONE

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Chapter One: US Policy toward Iraq (1980-2011)

Introduction	5
1.1 The First Gulf War (1980 – 1988)	5
1.1.1 Causes of the Iran-Iraq war	5
1.1.2 US Involvement in the Iran-Iraq War	6
1.1.3 End of the Iran-Iraq War	6
1.1.4 Post-Iran-Iraq War Period	7
1.1.5 The Iraqi Economy after the Iran-Iraq War	8
1.2 The Second Gulf War (1990 – 1991)	10
1.2.1 Causes of the Second Gulf War	10
1.2.2 US Involvement in the Second Gulf War	11
1.2.3 End of the Second Gulf War	12
1.2.4 Post-Second Gulf War Period	13
1.3 The Arab-Israeli Conflict and its Impact on US-Iraqi Relations	13
1.4 US National Security Strategies (2002 – 2006)	15
1.5 The American Invasion of Iraq (2003-2011)	17
Conclusion	19

Introduction

Foreign policy in the United States refers to the methods and primary approaches used in interactions with other countries around the world, such as organizations and corporations. "The suitable purpose of the Americans' foreign policy is to maintain hegemony for longer," as well as "to defend and extend a global order that is consistent with both its interests and its principles" (Onea, 2013, p. 123).

This chapter introduces brief definitions of foreign policy in general, in addition to major historical aspects that have influenced US foreign policy. Furthermore, the chapter provides a brief overview of the successive concepts, doctrines, and political philosophies that aided in the maintenance of security and protection for Americans, besides in shaping foreign policy and presenting America as an available option.

1.1. The First Gulf War (1980-1988)

It was a combat between Iraq and Iran on September 22, 1980. This military conflict commenced once Iraqi soldiers invaded western Iran.

1.1.1. Causes of the Iran-Iraq war

The 1975 Algiers Accord, an agreement between Iran and Iraq to settle conflicts related to their common borders, particularly Shatt Alarab, was broken less than six years after it was signed, due to a series of border clashes between the two countries (Lesch & Haas, 2018, p. 241). In the repercussion of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, President Saddam Hussein took advantage of the opportunity. On his orders, the Iraq-Iran War began in September 1980 with a massive invasion of the newly established Islamic Republic of Iran (Razoux, 2015, p. 55).

Saddam Hussein's decision to invade Iran in 1980 was motivated by strategic considerations. Numerous issues between the two neighboring countries paved the way for the rupture of the 1975

Algiers Accord and the Iraqi military occupation of some Iranian territories. However, two major issues are likely to have fueled the conflict. First, the 1979 Iranian Revolution movement posed a real threat to Saddam Hussein's Sunni-dominated Baathist leadership. The latter attempted to keep Iraq's prominent Shia Muslim population from rallying behind Iran's new radical Shia rulers, including Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who had been expelled from Iraq in 1978. Second, Saddam Hussein's desire to improve his standing in the Sunni-dominated Arab world prompted military action against Iran (Boutz & Williams, 2015, p. 35).

1.1.2. US Involvement in the Iran-Iraq War

At the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988, the United States declared its neutrality the reason is that President Jimmy Carter allowed Iran's deposed Shah to come to the United States for cancer treatment. This was done to gain the Iranian government's sympathy and bring an end to the Hostage Crisis in Tehran. The New York Times reported that President Ronald Reagan allowed covert shipments of American-made weapons and that the US chose to support both sides and not allow any side to control oil in the Gulf region (Hersh, 1992).

The early 1980s saw improvement in US-Iraqi diplomatic relations, with President Ronald Reagan allowing covert shipments of American-made weapons and the US removing Iraq from the supporters of terrorism list. In 1983, US support included weapons sales, military advisors, and satellite intelligence sharing. Consequently, the US adopted an openly pro-Iraqi position and supported Saddam both overtly and covertly.

1.1.3. End of the Iran-Iraq War

The devastating Iran-Iraq War lasted nearly eight years. The USS Vincennes, Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser, that served the USA from July 1985 to June 2005 shot down an Iranian commercial plane on July 3rd, 1988, killing 290 passengers and crew. The accident added to

Iran's never-ending string of defeats, confirming the country's vulnerability. Iran would clearly have much more to lose if it continued a war that had turned against it.

On July 18th, 1988, the Iranian Foreign Minister formally accepted Resolution 598 in a letter to the United Secretary-General. Confirming the terms of the cease-fire, the Iranian government entered into direct negotiations and recognized the right of free passage on the Shatt Alarab (Boutz & Williams, 2015, p. 39).

On the other hand, on August 6th, Saddam Hussein agreed to accept a cease-fire.

1.1.4. Post-Iran-Iraq War period

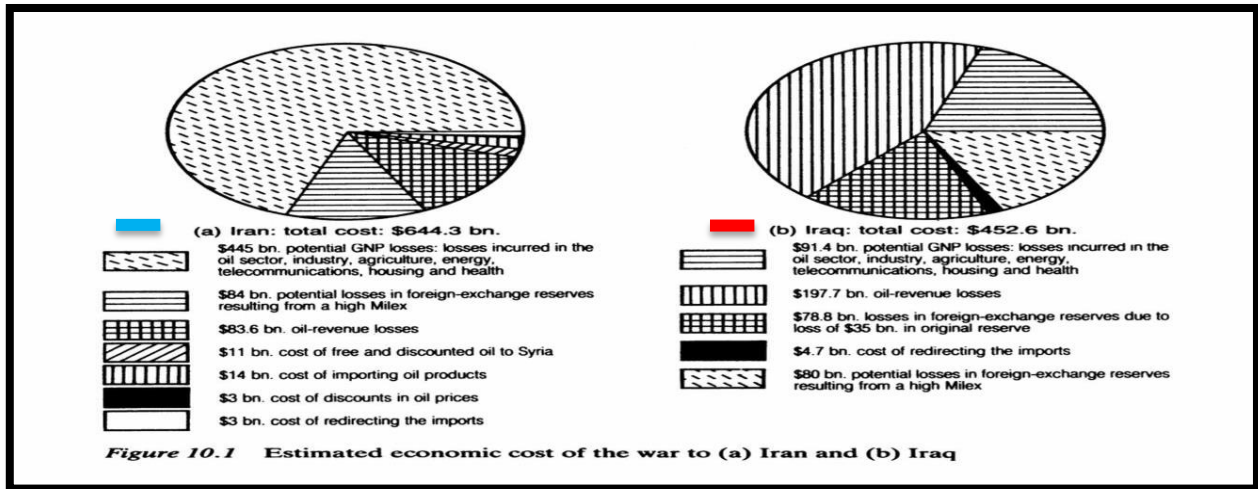
The Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988 caused significant damage to Iraq. Saddam Hussein claimed victory in the war, but this did not appear to be the case. Iraq gained no new territory, and several cities and oil infrastructures in the country were destroyed. Furthermore, this conflict resulted in 100,000 Iraqi casualties, as well as significant human displacement and unemployment. Similarly, the country lost a large number of workers and equipment (Lesch & Haas, 2018, p. 244).

Following the war, Iraq's economic situation shifted from prosperous to difficult. The conflict depleted the government's funds and left it with a massive debt burden. The country owed \$80 billion to the United States, the Gulf States, other governments, and private creditors who had helped fund its war efforts (Murray & Woods, 2014, p. 198). Inflation levels rose dramatically, and brisk black markets in foreign currencies spread, making the Iraqi government's intervention to alleviate bad economic conditions and implement reforms difficult. The large-scale economic privatization program launched by Baghdad during the Iran-Iraq War did not achieve its goals (Gause, 2001).

The Gulf War cost both countries enormously. The following figures demonstrate the overall cost of this conflict for both Iraq and Iran.

Figure 1.1

Total Cost of the First Gulf War.



Note. From *The Economic Consequences of the Gulf War*, by Kamran, M, 1990 (<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4dab/8dd10c1dd1814e366b3133c6ea94f412bc83.pdf>).

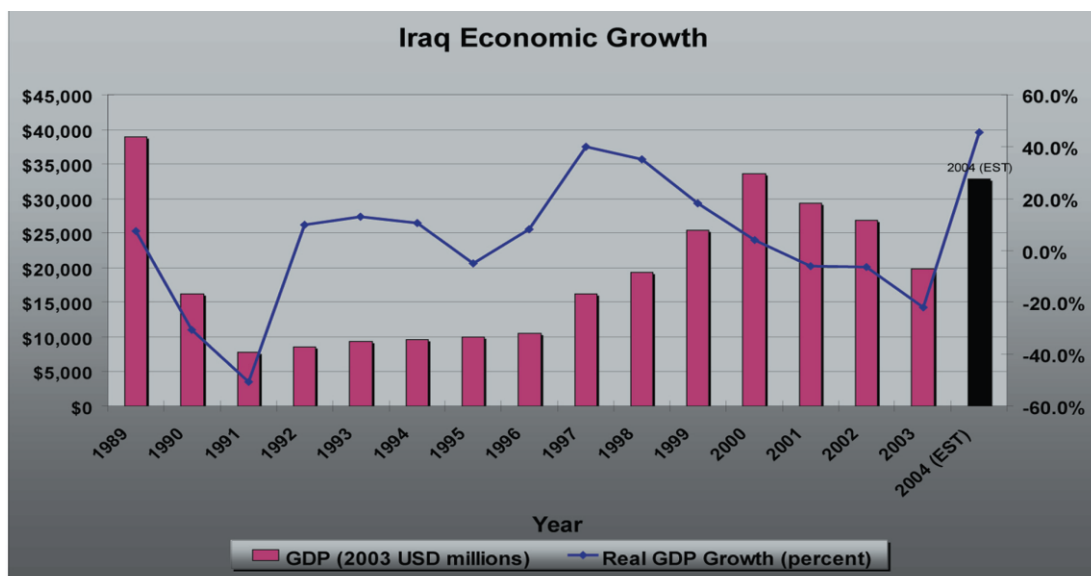
The above figure proved sufficiently that the financial damages for the two participants in the war were terrible. Counting every single factor of loss, Iraq's expenses arrived at \$452.6 billion dollars while Iranian ones at \$644.3 billion dollars (As clarified in figure 1.1).

1.1.5. The Iraqi Economy after the Iran-Iraq War

Here is an overview of the Iraqi economic activity starting from 1989 until 2004 (Estimations):

Figure 1.2

Iraq Economic Growth.



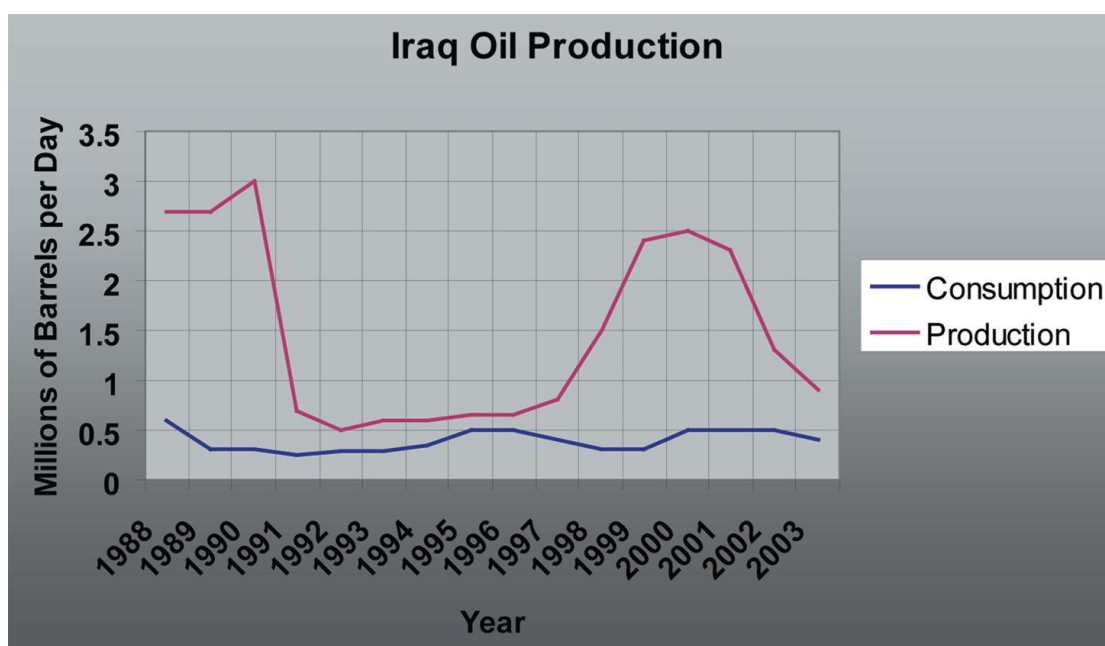
Note. From Annex D Iraq Economic Data (1989-2003), by University of Michigan, 1998, Mai 29, University of Michigan (http://www-personal.umich.edu/~graceyor/govdocs/pdf/duelfer1_eb.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2Car0OnmWDXBHdegELsqS-sbSP6lmW1-wwVBO6lr7-aZcNqDgQGXociQQ).

To decide how quick an economy is growing, it is commonly based on its real Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The real GDP is measurement of an inflation-adjusted reflecting the value of all what is produced from goods and services by an economy in a particular year (Ganti, 2023). In the figure above, the Iraqi economic growth was fine in 1989 just after the Gulf War. However, the two years of 1990 and 1991, it declined. The growth from 1992 to 1997 saw a truly prosperous time in spite of the down in 1994-1995. 1997 was the climax of this growth. After that, the economy decreased till the invasion took place in 2003, but it returned stronger in 2004 (Estimations).

It is widely known that the Iraqi economy relies on the oil to a high degree. The next figure shows the production and consumption of oil in Iraq during the span of 1988 through 2003.

Figure 1.3

Iraq oil production 1988-2003



Note. From Annex D Iraq Economic Data (1989-2003), by University of Michigan, 1998, Mai 29, University of Michigan (http://www-personal.umich.edu/~graceyor/govdocs/pdf/duelfer1_eb.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2Car0OnmWDXBHdegELsqS-sbSP6lmW1-wwVBO6lr7-aZcNqDgQGXociQQ).

In figure 1.3, the process of producing oil was very well from 1988 to 1991. Subsequently, it encountered a sharp fall in 1992 and continued until 1997. Nonetheless, this process started recovering as of 1998 and kept increasing until the middle of 2001, yet it went down up to 2003.

1.2. The Second Gulf War (1990-1991)

It was an armed conflict that took place on August 2nd, 1990 after the order of Iraqi president Saddam Hussein to overrun Kuwait.

1.2.1. Causes of the Second Gulf War

Iraq started another war with a neighboring country, Kuwait, on August 2nd, 1990. Iraqi troops took control of Kuwait within hours, with little resistance from Kuwait's armed forces. Kuwait has been designated as a new Iraqi province. As a result, Iraq gained control of a significant portion of the world's oil supply (Lesch and Haas, 2018, p. 245). Following that, the international community demanded that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait. However, Iraq refused and went even further, kidnapping foreigners in Kuwait (Westermeyer, 2014, p.24).

Iraq invaded Kuwait in the late 1990s for economic reasons, arguing that it was not an occupation because it was part of Iraq during the Ottoman Empire's rule. It owed \$37 billion to Gulf creditors and criticized Kuwait for overproducing crude oil and exploiting the Rumayla field.

Saddam Hussein justified his occupation of Kuwait as a response to several provocative Kuwaiti policies. In January 1990, Iraq's leader concluded that Kuwait and the United States were attempting to destabilize his regime by overproducing oil in order to keep prices low. However, in

February 1990, the tone of Iraqi foreign policy became overtly aggressive. At the Arab Cooperation Council's founding summit, Saddam attacked the American military presence in the Gulf region (Boutz & Williams, 2015, p. 45).

Following that, Iraqi foreign policy rhetoric became increasingly hostile toward the US and its allies, particularly Israel. In early April 1990, Iraq's leader declared that if Israel attacked its lands, his country would use chemical weapons to destroy half of it. At the Arab summit in May 1990, Iraq compared Kuwait's oil production policies to an act of war against Iraq. The Iraqi regime's decision to invade Kuwait remarkably reflected its fears that circumstances had turned against it and that the negative trend needed to be reversed quickly (Gause, 2001).

1.2.2. US involvement in the Second Gulf War

Strategically, the United States opposed Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War of 1990-1991. Its interests shaped its reaction to Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. Specifically, securing the Persian Gulf was deemed critical to America's national security. These interests included easy access to oil and sufficient stability for the region's friendly states (Finlan, 2009, p. 83). On August 20th, 1990, American President George Herbert. W. Bush declared that the United States would defend its vital interests in the region, using military force if necessary and appropriate, against any power with interests opposed to their own. The US will encourage its allies and other friendly states to express their support and participate in promoting its mutual interests in the Persian Gulf region. (Federation of American Scientists, 1990).

The invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein in 1990 marked a watershed moment in US-Iraq relations, with the US and UN warning Saddam to withdraw or military action would be taken. George H. W. Bush ordered the US Central Command to reinforce defending Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf States and urged other countries to form a multinational coalition to prevent Iraqi forces from advancing south towards Saudi Arabia.

Coalition forces launched the second Gulf War against Iraq on August 2nd, 1990, after Saddam's occupation of Kuwait, backed by US aircraft, Marine Corps ground units, naval aviation, and land bases (Tucker-Jones, 2014, p. 6).

The US-led coalition prepared for a military confrontation with Saddam Hussein by launching Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm, which targeted the Iraqi strategic air defense system, military and telecommunication sites, and control centers to isolate Saddam Hussein and prevent reinforcement (Taylor, 2016).

The quick acquisition of air superiority created favorable conditions for the ground assault phase against Iraqi forces. The massive paralysis of internal communication mechanisms, in particular, rendered the Iraqi army helpless before the ground assault began. During the final stages of Desert Storm, the coalition led by the United States launched attacks on Iraqi army divisions, command posts, and ammunition depots. The ground offensive only lasted a few hours. The Iraqi army's ground units were rendered ineffective as a result of the destruction of critical equipment. On February 28, 1991, the quick military operation was declared a success (Lacquement, 2020).

1.2.3 End of the Second Gulf War

After a four-day ground campaign, George H. W. Bush declared a cease-fire on February 28th, effectively ending the Second Gulf War. Saddam Hussein's forces were thus driven out of the country they had invaded in August 1990 with few combat casualties. After restoring Kuwait's sovereignty, the American president and the other coalition leaders agreed not to order their forces to march on Baghdad.

It was abundantly clear that President Bush had led the formation of an international coalition to remove Iraq from Kuwait, not to depose Saddam Hussein. As a result, Saddam Hussein's weakened regime remained in power. General Norman Schwarzkopf of the US met with an Iraqi military delegation at Safwan airfield in southern Iraq on March 3rd. The Iraqis quickly agreed to

the various UN demands, including prisoner exchanges and other military requirements. The UN peacekeeping forces were dispatched to the Kuwaiti border. To control the WMD, the UN Special Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency were dispatched to the region (Estes, 2006).

1.2.4 Post-Second Gulf War Period

The end of the Second Gulf War led to a rebellion in the south of Iraq, with 8,000-10,000 Iraqi troops dead and \$170 billion in damage to Iraq's infrastructure. George H.W. Bush's administration did not support the uprising, but the Republican Guard of Baghdad eventually regained control. The US had achieved critical goals in the Gulf region through its war fight in favor of Kuwait. The Gulf War provided a decisive military victory for America, which had not been seen since the Second World War. It also strengthened its position as the world's sole remaining superpower in the post-Cold War era. Financially, the war against Iraq was one of the most effective campaigns in US history because it ensured Middle Eastern oil supplies to the world's most powerful economy (Lacquement, 2020).

1.3. The Arab-Israeli Conflict and its Impact on US-Iraqi Relations

Iraq had a grudge against Zionists long before the establishment of the Israeli state, and Israel had begun its periphery policy to weaken and destroy the Arabs. During the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, Iraq fought alongside other Arab countries against Israel, but did not sign the 1949 Ceasefire agreement. This showed the front of Iraq in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israel responded to the 1958 takeover of Baghdad by nationalistic Abdel Karim Kassim by boosting its covert backing for the Kurdistan minority in Northern Iraq and sending Rafael Eitan to assist them. Iraq was pushed into international isolation as a result of the 1967 war and the Ba'ath Party took power in 1968.

The Ba'athists increased the petroleum price in the 1970s, providing Iraq with a remarkable income of 29 billion dollars per year by 1980. This allowed the Iraqi government to pursue greater expansionist objectives, aided by the race for oil price. Following the signing of the peace accord between Israel and Egypt in 1979, Iraq gained a leadership role in the Arab World.

Iraq was a member of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) 9 and authorized regular atomic energy agency assessments, but Israel viewed it as a symbolic challenge as the region's first Arab reactor. Israel supported Iran in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War due to its dependence on Iranian oil. The US backed Iraq in its war against Iran. When the Arab League opposed Saddam Hussein's invasion, he wanted to restore public opinion to his side by pulling Israel into a war against him, leading to Scud missile strikes against Israel.

The US 2003 military intervention in Iraq had some link to the Arab-Israeli issue, but this connection was debatable. The US administration accused Saddam Hussein of the 9/11 atrocity and of having ties with al-Qaeda, which was based on US intelligence (Katzman, 2008).

The Iraqi President blackmailed the US with terrorist strikes if Washington opposed his invasion of Kuwait. On Tuesday 11 September 2001, organized groups of hijackers captured four planes with their passengers travelling over the eastern United States and used them as guided bombs to slam against New York and Washington major buildings, resulting in roughly 3000 deaths and numerous injuries (Imperial War Museums, n.d). The American government fiercely condemned the attacks and declared a state of emergency, establishing a war council to punish those who bombed the US and those who backed and supported them.

US military intelligence identified Al-Qaeda and The Taliban as the main source of the 9/11 attacks, leading to President George W. Bush declaring a war against Afghanistan and declaring North Korea, Iran and Iraq as "Axis of Evil".

1.4. US National Security Strategies (2002- 2006)

The 9/11 events marked a turning point in US foreign policy, with President Bush declaring that he would punish those who support or sponsor terrorist groups. This marked the shift of American interests toward terrorism and terrorist sponsors and gave the primary landmarks of the Bush Doctrine, which implies the use of force against the Rogue States. The Bush Doctrine consists of four main components: a view of biggest dangers, preventive war, an intention to act unilaterally when needed, and an overarching perception that peace and democracy necessitate the United States asserting its primacy (Goudjil & Aboubou, 2022, p. 322).

The Bush Doctrine emphasizes the need for preemptive action and the establishment of a unilateral global system. However, Bush's predilection for unilateral action was clear before 9/11, as evidenced by his opposition to a range of foreign treaties. This was due to the failure to gain authorization from the UN Council and his belief in the US military's strength. Bush's doctrine of going to war alone was linked to the desire to control the World and spread democracy. The Bush administration argued that the global hegemony of the US would help in spreading democracy and Iraq was a fertile ground to prove its supremacy and military strength. The sustained international primacy of the USA is a major matter for the security and welfare of its citizens and for the future of freedom, democracy, open economies, and international order. Bush's National Security Strategy (NSS) was a codification of the Bush Doctrine and reformulation of US foreign policy, emphasizing preemption to deal with rogue governments and terrorists and using military and economic strength to promote democracy. It was praised and attacked as a logical response to the threats of 9/11 and a radical departure from American foreign policy tradition. It was modeled on Iraq, which was accused of having ties to terrorist groups and improving WMD. Bush saw it as important to eradicate these dangers before they developed. The White House's preemptive war against Iraq was intended to keep the US supremacy over the world for the indefinite future.

The Bush Administration recognized democracy as the best weapon for winning the War on Terror and enhancing its economic interests abroad. Freeing trade and entrepreneurship were rated as universals in the NSS, with a thorough evidence of the US commitment to aid and promote the nations assumed to uphold this independent economy and industry approach (Goudjil & Aboubou, 2022, p. 323). The US launched a full-scale invasion of Iraq in 2003, followed by the release of George W. Bush's new national security strategy in 2006. President Bush proclaimed that the US is at war, and the NSS 2006 was designed to defend US citizens from terrorists (Necas et al., 2011, p. 66). It emphasized the use of arms in Iraq in order to gain the long-term goal of peace. Four measures must be completed in the short term to provide space and time for a long-term solution.

President Bush examined his foreign policy from 2002 to 2006 and realized the need for a multilateral strategy. He closed his introductory remarks by reassuring the audience that while the US' strategic interests were idealistic, the ways to achieve them were pragmatic (Necas et al., 2011). The 2002 NSS was still on progress, with the willingness to launch preemptive attacks against governments seeking to obtain WMD and the tools to employ them, as well as states harboring terrorists. However, the NSS of 2006 failed to provide an embedded vision with feasible objectives to protect American interests, opposed the administrations' existing decisions and measures, and demonstrates a lack of reflection and lessons gained from the first term experiences. The Bush administration sought to legitimize war against Iraq by claiming that Saddam Hussein was tied to al-Qaeda and was actively creating weapons of mass destruction, making him an immediate threat to the US.

President Bush framed the war in Iraq as a continuation of his response to September 11 and the fight on terror, and National Security Advisor Samuel Berger promised to use force if necessary to depose Saddam Hussein (Ramazan Ahmed, 2014, p. 106).

1.5. The American Invasion of Iraq (2003--2011)

As a direct response to the events of September 11, the United States declares war on Iraq on March 19th, 2003, with the assistance of coalition forces led by the United Kingdom. President George W. Bush declared in a televised address that "at this hour, American and coalition forces are in the early stages of military Operations to disarm Iraq, free its people, and defend the world from grave danger" (History, 2003).

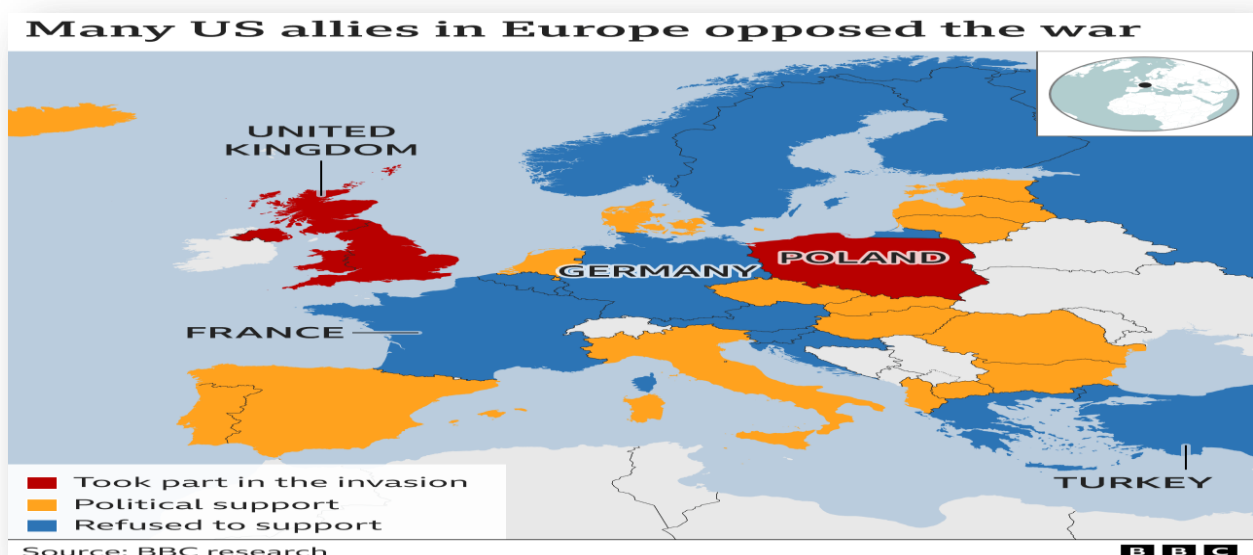
A month before the invasion, the United States and the United Kingdom continued to build conventional forces and military assets in the country in preparation for the invasion.

On March 17th, President Bush threatened Saddam Hussein and his sons by stating "Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours". This statement signaled the start of the American defense movements against Iraq (Pfiffner, n.d).

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) conducted a very recent research about the subject of invasion. Particularly about the stand of countries concerning the US overrun (BBC, 2023). The two neighbors which are Canada and Mexico rejected to support the US military operation. Figures 1.4 and 1.5 display the international position of this invasion.

Figure 1.4

US European Allies' Opposition to the War

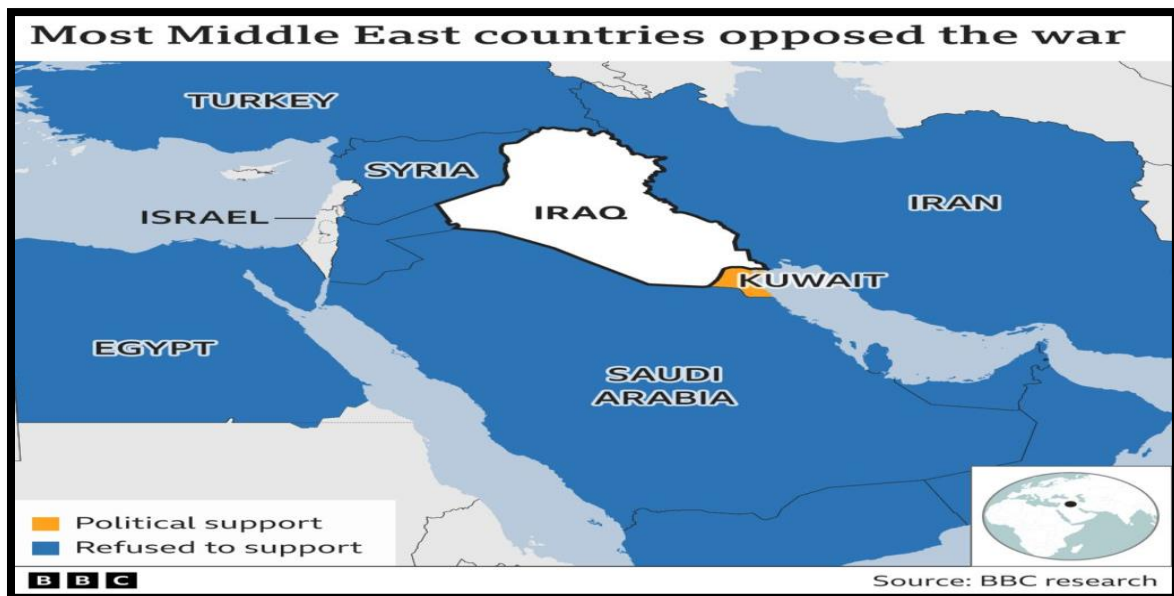


Note. From Why did the US and allies invade Iraq, 20 years ago?, by BBC, 2023, March 20, BBC (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-64980565>).

Here, it is worth noticing that countries for example, the United Kingdom and Poland assisted America to invade Iraq. Those highlighted in yellow provided with a political backup, such as Spain, Portugal, and Denmark. Nonetheless, there were who disagreed to take part in the war. The principal US allies who are Germany and France were against to aid. Additionally, figure 1.5 indicates the position of Arab nations towards the war.

Figure 1.5

Middle East Countries' Opposition to the War.



Note. From Why did the US and allies invade Iraq, 20 years ago?, by BBC, 2023, March 20, BBC (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-64980565>).

Given the inconvenient history that dates back to the Second Gulf War, Kuwait politically welcomed the American defense campaign, yet all Arab nations turned the war down.

In May 2003, the Bush administration was ensuring that the UN had done its job and found no WMDs. As a result, President Bush decided to form a specialized group of approximately 1200 people led by David Kay to conduct more thorough inspections of the country for WMD. The

inspectors, on the other hand, found no evidence of what the US had claimed about weapons of mass destruction, prompting critics to claim that Bush had deceived the country about the existence of WMD in Iraq (Pfiffner, n.d).

There was a period of transition following the war. Thus, US interventionism in Iraq's internal and external affairs has been particularly visible throughout the history of Iraq-US relations. However, the problems that the Iraqi people faced and continue to face are the result of American policy in Iraq, which was aimed at achieving imperialistic goals. The post-9/11 operation in Iraq had nothing to do with Saddam Hussein, WMD, or the so-called "war on terror," implying that such action was motivated by the US's desire for oil.

Conclusion

Following World War II, the United States was regarded as a powerful nation, particularly after a shift to intervention policy, the world order had completely changed, and a new political map of the world was drafted under the leadership of the United States, with a vision of promoting democracy, peace, and security, plus modernizing the world.

Furthermore, in order to conduct its relations with foreign countries, American foreign policy requires instruments by using diplomacy, sanctions, containment, deterrence, collective security, and military force to advance its interests, expose domination, prevent influence, deter a country, provide security, and defeat a threat. As an evidence for that, the US attitude was based only on protecting its interests, the fact that it supported Iraq, against Iran, during the First Gulf war and was against it in the Second Gulf war by protecting Kuwait.

The USA went through several phases, each with its own significant president with a unique political vision. However, the republic and democratic visions are the most prominent in US foreign policy. For example, George W. Bush sought to lead America from a unilateral republican

standpoint, whereas Barack Obama led it from a democratic republican standpoint into a democratic multilateral perspective. As a result, they both served the national interest.

Since the title of the dissertation is the US military intervention in Iraq: causes and consequences, it is considered that it is more appropriate to address analytical details in this first chapter. The primitive premises and the reality of Iraq before the anarchy and the hidden undeclared and declared war waged by Western and even Arab media. Unfortunately, with American funding, to show the dark image of Saddam's regime and that the people of Iraq are in dire need to perpetuate democracy and freedom oppressed by the dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein, according to the malevolent American narratives.

All the indications and signs that preceded the direct military intervention in March 19, 2003, were witnessed with the eyes of the world. They were foreshadowing the occurrence of war. Thus, all that preceded the military intervention that destroyed Iraq whose effects are dreadful until today on the stability and the security of the people and the government of Iraq. Therefore, as much as this chapter has given a historical analysis for all events that preceded the blatant US military intervention in Iraq, it will be directly followed by the second chapter which deals with the causes and consequences of this war.

CHAPTER TWO

Causes and Consequences of the US Military Intervention in Iraq

Chapter Two: Causes and Consequences of the US

Military Intervention in Iraq

Introduction	21
2.1. Causes of the Intervention	22
2.1.1. Direct Causes	22
2.1.1.1. Mass Destruction Weapons	22
2.1.1.2. 9/11 Attacks	23
2.1.1.3 War on Terror	25
2.1.2. Indirect Causes	26
2.1.2.1. Hegemony in Oil Market	26
2.1.2.2. Israel Security	27
2.1.2.3. Religious Factor	28
2.2. War Development and International Attitudes	29
2.2.1. War Preparations	29
2.2.2. Start of Military Operations	31
2.2.3. International Attitudes	33
2.3. Consequences of the Intervention	35
2.3.1. Repercussions on Local Scale	35
2.3.2. Outcomes on Regional Scale	36
2.3.3. Ramifications on Global Scale	38
2.4. Iraq after 20 Years of the US Intervention	40
2.4.1. Political Influences on Arab Spring	40
2.4.2. Iraq before and after the US Invasion	42
Conclusion	45

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the US-Iraqi relations over many years and showed how those relations were positive at times and tense at others until it led to the US invasion of Iraq. In fact, the intervention took place on March 20th, 2003, however; the U.S. prepared for it years before. This chapter will put emphasis on the different causes, direct and indirect, which were behind this invasion. The intervention was supposed to be easy because the U.S. planned to send the most powerful military to Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein, who was strongly believed to be a dictator, from power within days and transform Iraq into a pro-American democratic country.

The Bush administration's decision to invade Iraq came after many justifications that had been manufactured. It is worth mentioning that this war has changed the two countries, the Middle East, and the entire world. The U.S. under Bush had a project which was the reach for hegemony, and after the 9/11 attacks America wanted to have dominance in that region. Iraq was targeted by the U.S. in order to transform the Middle East in a way that suits American interests. The U.S. scenario to attack Iraq was incredibly woven, so as to prove to the world that Saddam Hussein represented a threat to humanity. Consequently, the attack was not led solely by the United States but by the Coalition of the Willing to refer to those countries including the UK, Bulgaria, Colombia, Italy, Japan, etc., which supported the invasion of Iraq politically and even militarily.

Along with the reasons for this war, the chapter will also look at its consequences. The whole world witnessed the heinous attack of the US-led coalition on Iraq. The war left several serious outcomes ranging from death and destruction in Iraq to regional instability and a weakened world economy. These consequences have deep impacts on local scale, regional scale, and global one. It is obvious that the repercussions are mostly on Iraq which paid the heaviest bill with innocent Iraqis dead, a regime removed, infrastructure ruined, and an economy deteriorated.

2.1. Causes of the Intervention

There were several direct and indirect causes that led the US to invade Iraq. The major ones will be discussed in the following points.

2.1.1. Direct Causes

Direct causes referred to those justifications overtly provided by America to make the case for war.

2.1.1.1. Mass Destruction Weapons

To legitimize war against Iraq, the U.S. had to manufacture solid proofs to persuade the American people and the rest of the world that attacking Iraq was imperative because of the threat it represented to humanity. In this regard, Bush declared: “The security of the world requires disarming Saddam Hussein now” and “Axis of evil arming to threaten the peace of the world” (IWM, 2023). That was the way because they could not start the war for no reason, and at the heart of this comes the issue of mass destruction weapons (MDWs) whether chemical, biological, or nuclear. The Bush administration, by introducing MDWs as a threat to the world, had made its invasion of Iraq legitimized. Nevertheless, what America presented as a solid justification to legalize its attacks turned to be completely wrong because Saddam Hussein did not use weapons of mass destruction during the U.S. intervention while he was still in power.

Non-use of MDWs - chemical, biological, and nuclear - by the Iraqi president, did not mean that Iraq did not own them, however; there was no actual evidence of this. Moreover, years after the war, the Americans themselves realized that they were lied to. A top-level official, Ari Fleischer, who was the House press spokesman, at that time, refuted this claim by writing a tweet on March 19, 2019, which was reported by the Washing Post (e-version), and it reads “George W. Bush lied about Iraqi’s alleged weapons of mass destruction to launch the invasion” (Kessler, 2019). In addition to this, and to fully understand “what happened” as Scott McClellan, high-level official, titled his memoir where in a tiny part of it he said: “In the fall of 2002, Bush and

his White House were engaging in a carefully orchestrated campaign to shape and manipulate sources of public approval to our advantage.... Our lack of candor and honesty in making the case for war..." (Kessler, 2019).

Several prominent political figures delivered speeches to endorse Bush's Administration claim about Hussein's amassing of MDWs. One of those speeches was made by Senator Edward Kennedy, in which he declared that no one disputed that America had lasting and important interests in the Persian Gulf, or that Iraq posed a significant challenge to US interests. (Scott, 2012). A simple analysis of this part of Kennedy's 2002 speech to John Hopkins University, demonstrates that no one has the right to argue against or opposes what America decides. The Bush Administration made the soldiers understand that they would be received as liberators, but that was not the case. Accordingly, many Americans questioned the causes of the invasion and grew concerned with mounting military and civilian casualties. The issue of MDWs was only one of several causes that led America to invade Iraq, and the coming point will explain another factor which the U.S. relied much on in commencing war against Iraq.

2.1.1.2. 9/11 Attacks

9/11 refers to the four attacks that shook America on the morning of September 11, 2001. That day is considered to be one of the worst days in the history of the U.S.A. Two planes crashed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre, and a third plane hit the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. A fourth one was ploughed into an empty field in western Pennsylvania. A considerable number of American civilians died; a precise tally states that "the attacks killed 2,977 people from 93 nations", and those attacks were all connected to al Qaeda. (9/11 Memorial & Museum, 2023). Reports about the members, who carried out the attacks, such as their exact number and which countries they came from, were released. According to 9/11 Memorial & Museum (2023), "Fifteen of the 19 terrorists were from Saudi Arabia. Two were from the United Arab Emirates, one was from Lebanon, and one was from Egypt."

Almost the whole world followed the news about the attacks, and a huge number of questions revolved around 9/11 events. Some have been answered and interpreted in different ways and others remain unanswered. The subject is extremely controversial, and there are as many opinions and views as there are analysts. However, they all fall into two categories i.e. against the invasion or for it. One of the questions is how did America take advantage of 9/11 and make proof of it to start war in Iraq? One question leads to another. Why was Iraq linked to al-Qaeda? Although the reports did not mention any member of the hijackers being of Iraqi nationality, the Bush administration heavily believed that Iraq had a connection with what happened. In this context, Riedel (2021) wrote “Obsessed with Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, the Bush administration misled the American public into believing that Iraq was connected to Sept. 11”. According to the CAP (Center for American Progress) (2004), the Iraqi government had ties with al-Qaeda, and the evidence is that “Iraq paid and harbored a member of the team that bombed the World Trade Centre in 1993..., and supported Palestinian and Islamic Jihad”.

With such statements, the American public and the US allies were convinced that Saddam Hussein was involved in the 9/11 attacks. The U.S. took advantage of this event to reinforce the claim that Iraq possessed MDWs. This was turned into a truth with solid evidence because the threats, the Bush administration kept warning the world from, were reflected in those attacks. Why Iraq? It is known, to the whole world, that al Qaeda was active in Afghanistan. In addition, these two countries have no common borders, and they are miles away from each other, hence; how could a connection be established between Saddam and al Qaeda? As mentioned above, the scenario of invading Iraq was astonishingly orchestrated by the Bush administration which was obsessed by the Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein, and had to find a way to launch war on Iraq at all expenses. This is because America had to keep its superpower and hegemony on that region and protect its interests.

2.1.1.3. War on Terror

Bush administration decided and planned to occupy Iraq to launch a war on terrorism; on the grounds that the 9/11 attacks were qualified terrorist attacks, and al Qaeda was classified as an Islamist extremist terrorist organization. Since the US security is threatened because the terrorists targeted two important sites which are the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, symbolizing America's economic power and military power respectively, America had to attack that terrorist network in Iraq. The US should not wait for other attacks to happen and had to start war on terrorists in their midst, knowing that al Qaeda established itself in Iraq after the invasion, hence; what motives led America to do so? Before the intervention started, it had been widely believed that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein had ties with that Islamist terrorist network, and the reason was that some members of al Qaeda fled to Iraq and were trained there, as a result; the war on terror had to begin in Iraq.

Years after the invasion, the subject, of whether Saddam was linked to al-Qaeda or not, is still hotly debated, and declarations from here and there mainly from high-level American officials are presented every now and then. Even the UK which is the closest ally of the US had "pressed Bush for evidence of Iraq's connection to the 9/11 and to al Qaeda", nevertheless; no links were found. (Riedel, 2021). Again and again, why did Bush go to war in Iraq? After 9/11, the Bush administration was convinced that action had to be taken and a pre-emptive war was necessary because the US could not "wait for the final proof – the smoking gun" which would come in "the form of a mushroom cloud" (The Guardian, 2002 as cited in Solga, 2010). To endorse the claim, several presidential speeches show how two different entities are used as one enemy to the US. In this context, Hodges (2011) argues "Iraq and al Qaeda are discursively positioned as interchangeable adversaries in the war on terror"

2.1.2. Indirect Causes

Along with the direct causes aforementioned, there were also several indirect ones. These included: hegemony in oil market, Israel security, and religious factor.

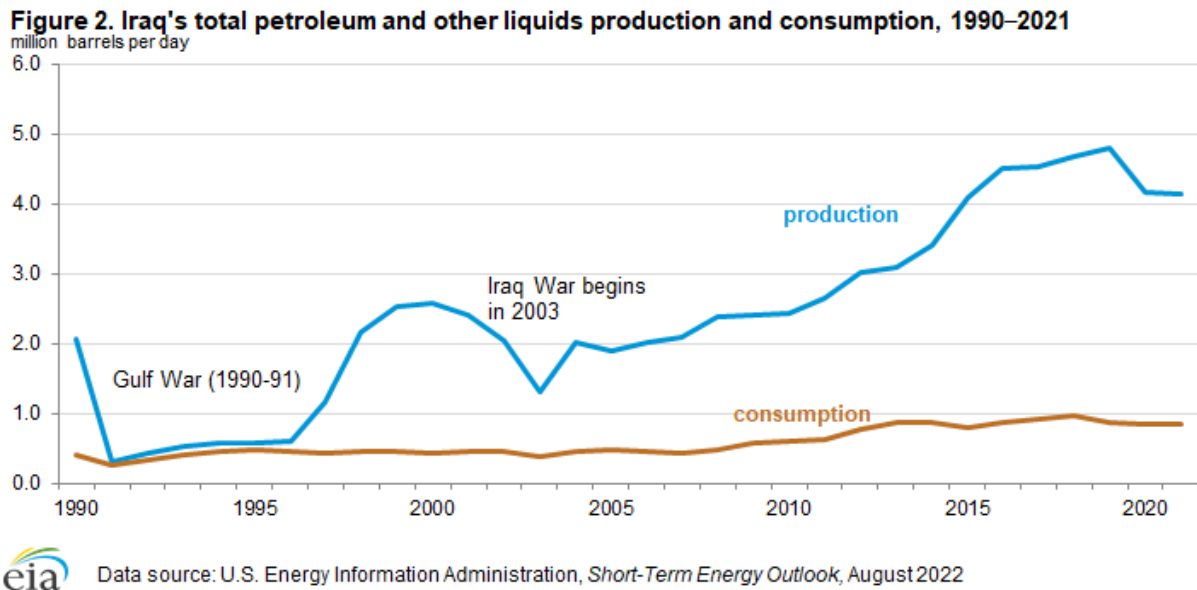
2.1.2.1. Hegemony in Oil Market

The US invasion of Iraq did not happen haphazardly, and the issue of MDWs and 9/11 attacks were not proven to be the real motives for the US to launch war, prepared for years before, against Iraq. Actually, there were hidden reasons which encouraged America to attack Iraq. On top of this comes the economic interest of the US which was motivated to sustain dominance on oil. In his article, Schuber (2018) argued that the American intervention happened “as a result of new US geostrategic calculations and interests in securing energy supply from the Middle East”. Why was America interested in Iraqi oil? The reason was that Iraq had one of the largest fields of oil in the Persian Gulf which the US itself was interested in. Moreover, out of fear that Saddam Hussein would dominate the region after he had invaded two neighboring countries which were Iran and Kuwait in 1980 and 1990 respectively. In addition to this, Hussein’s regime represented the principal threat to the stability of the region, and as a consequence; this would lead to its inability to supply the world with oil.

Before the invasion of Kuwait, Iraq used to produce about 3.5 million barrels a day (Otterman, 2005). But in 2002, and according to the same source the production declined averaging 1.5 million barrels per day. This fall was due to the UN economic sanctions imposed on Iraq, nevertheless, Iraq’s reserves were considerably high, and they represented 10% of the world’s known remaining oil. Figure 2.1 below shows the Iraqi output and consumption of oil and other liquids from 1990 to 2021.

Figure 2.1

Iraq's Total Petroleum and Other Liquids Production and Consumption, 1990-2021.



Note. From Iraq's oil production has nearly doubled over the past decade, by Mobilia, M., Villar, L., 2019, January 11, eia (<https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=37973>).

The vertical axis shows the amount of production by million barrels per day, the horizontal axis represents the years, the blue line illustrates the production and the brown one refers to consumption. It is plain to see that after 1990, production dropped dramatically because of the Kuwait invasion as was mentioned earlier, however; after 1995 output production started climbing to reach the habitual levels, and even went more. This reflected the positive relations between the United States and Iraq at that time, but after 2001 production began to lower and lasted till the war was launched in Iraq.

2.1.2.2. Israel Security

Israel's security was another rationale, and the question that might be asked is how did Israel factor into this war? The answer is that some pro-Israel conservatives widely believed that Israel's security was as important as America's security. Arguments claimed that American and Israeli interests were considerably significant to the Bush administration in making decision about Iraq occupation. "The individuals and groups that pushed for war believed that it would

benefit both Israel and the United States.” (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007 as cited in Waxman, 2009, p.4). Since it was illegitimately implanted in the Middle East, Israel has always been rejected and perceived as a foreign by its neighbors which enormously this disturbed the United States. Regarding Iraq, Israel has never been considered as a sovereign state, and the two countries had no diplomatic ties. Moreover, the Iraqi parliament went beyond that to the point of passing a law which criminalized the normalisation of connections with Israel.

On the whole, the relations between the two countries were significantly tense, therefore; when it came to the decision of striking Iraq, Israel urged the United States to take action. According to the Maariv newspaper poll, “57% of Israelis supported a US attack on Iraq to overthrow Saddam Hussein.” (Steele, 2002). In 2003, the former Palestinian president, Yasser Arafat charged the Israeli government for being “the first inciter for the war against Iraq.” (Gold, 2004). At the same time, Patrick Buchanan charged that a cabal of polemicists sought to lead the United States into war to defend Israel, and he blamed them for concerting with Israel to ignite this war (Gold, 2004). The Iraq war was believed to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, as a result; Israel would obtain peace on reasonable terms.

2.1.2.3. Religious Factors

One other factor behind the US invasion was the Islamic religion, which was manipulated to legitimize war on Iraq. As indicated earlier, 9/11 attacks were classified, of pure religious nature to pave the way to a war on Islam. In the wake of 9/11, George W. Bush used moral and religious language as in “axis of evil” in reference to Saddam Hussein and his regime. What are the American attitudes toward Islam? And what connection do they have with the invasion? Official Americans showed hostile stances after 9/11 as CNN. Com (2001) stated, what William Bennett declared, “We issued a statement today at Empower America, Jack Kemp and Jeanne Kirkpatrick and I, saying that Congress should declare war against militant Islam and that the United States should proceed as if in war, because it is in war....” The Bush administration

maintained that taking the United States to war against Iraq was not actually a war against Islam, nonetheless; five days after 9/11, “Bush referred to the war on terror as a ‘Crusade’.” (Brahimi, 2011).

The religious discourse had become common in Bush’s, as well as, other officials’ language in reference to the Middle East, mainly Iraq, thus; the actors of the attacks were said to be evils, and so was Hussein’s regime. Further, the aforementioned claims, WMD and Saddam-al-Qaeda links, were doubted before the war and disproved after it, hence; spreading democracy and fighting evil were alternative motives, in order to hide a primary driver of the war. 9/11 was the golden opportunity which the Bush administration seized to resort to war on terror which was presumably a war on Islam. However, president W. Bush, on September 17, 2001, declared that, "The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That's not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don't represent peace. They represent evil and war." (The White House, 2001).

2.2. War Development and International Attitudes

After providing the justifications for the war on Iraq, The US military undertook extensive preparations for the invasion, including training troops, mobilizing equipment and supplies, and coordinating logistics. The intervention drew different international reactions.

2.2.1. War Preparations

On the grounds that key figures in the Bush administration were certain about Iraq’s possession of WMDs, resorting to war on Iraq is no more a choice but a necessity. How did the US prepare for this war? A case for war must be made, and the aforementioned reason, WMD, was the mainstream justification. The Bush administration implemented all instruments for the war’s legitimacy, thus; since he had taken office, government officials discussed publically the use of force against Iraq, in order to gain public approval. Congress’ authorisation, in October 2002, was a solid support to continue propaganda for going to war. President George W. Bush declared for months that America was concerned with the welfare of the Iraqi population and the

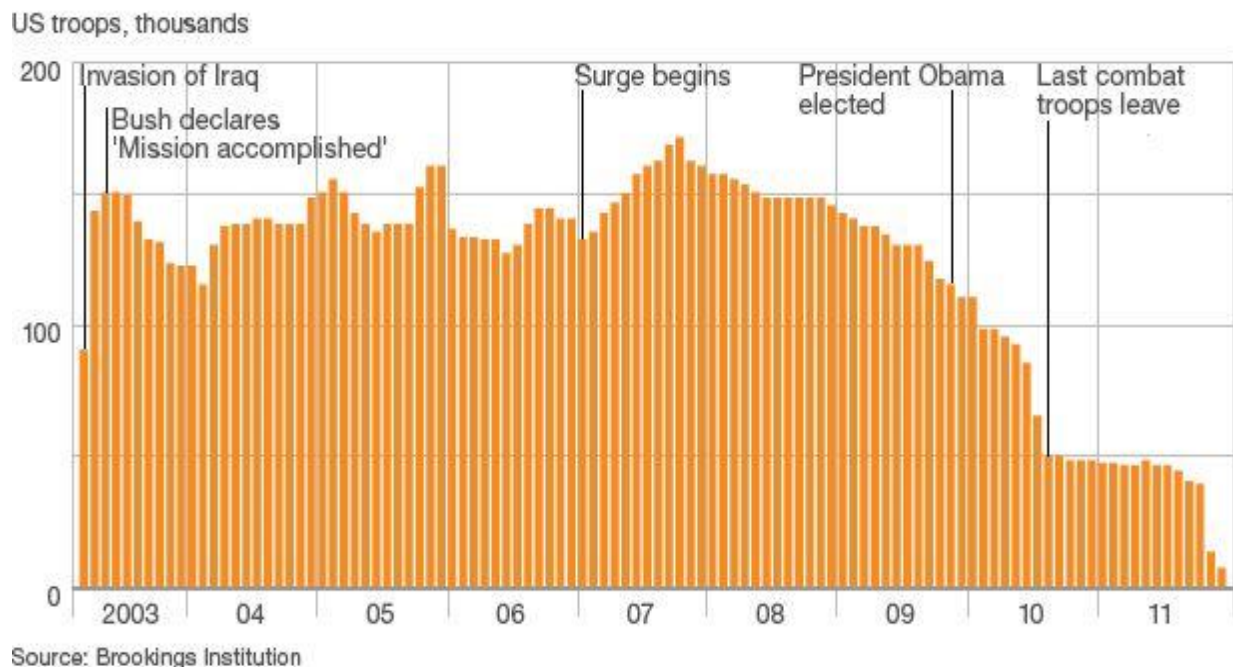
deposition of Saddam Hussein is crucial to the establishment of democracy and freedom of the people. On this basis, the US considered the Iraq war as a humanitarian action and named it Operation Iraqi Freedom.

A consensus was reached locally and internationally, and it had been high time for logistic preparations. From where to attack and what weapons to use? Although The Turkish bases were the preferred option to strike Iraq from the north through Kurdish territory, the decision was made to attack from the south i.e. Kuwait. Consequently, a number of camps such as: Virginia, Spearhead, Doha, Buehring, Ali Al Salam, and Arifjan, were installed in Kuwait, to host the US and the coalition troops (Global Security .org, 2015). The different types of planes used, and troops are illustrated in the figures below.

Figure 2.2

US Troop Levels in Iraq – March 2003 to December 2011.

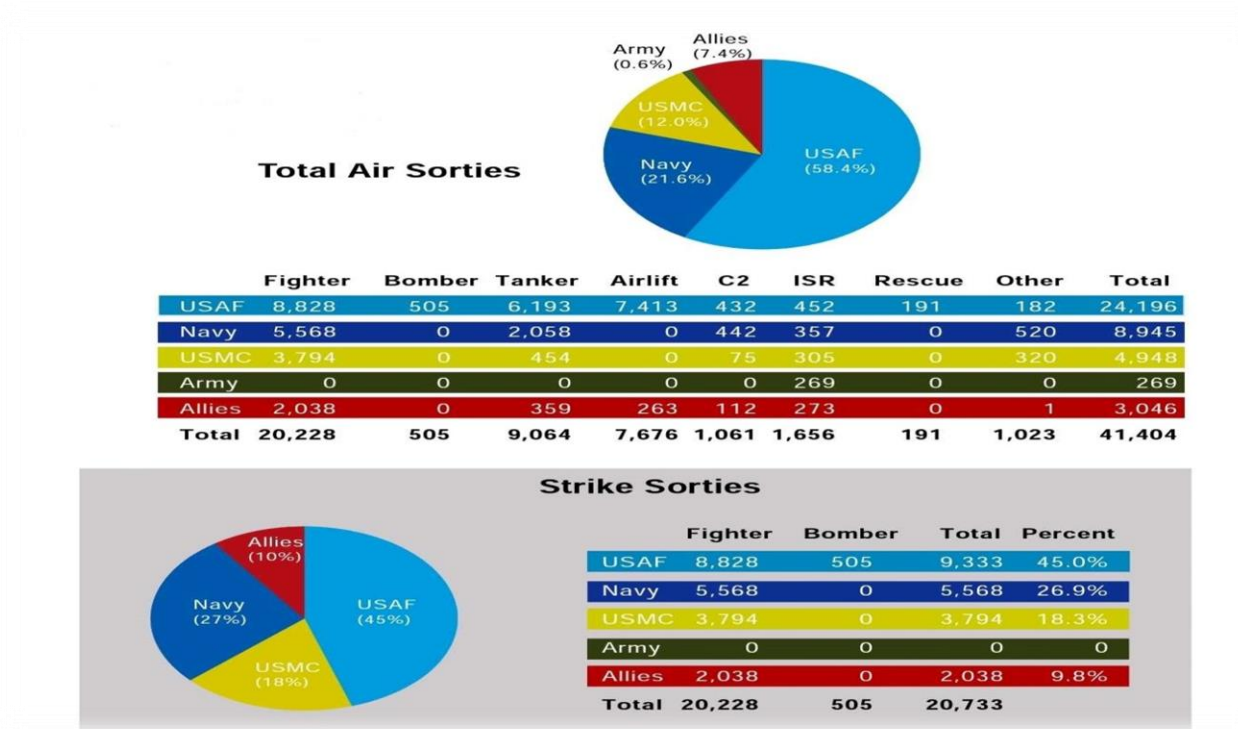
US troop levels in Iraq - March 2003 to December 2011



Note. From Iraq war in figures, by BBC, 2011, December 14, BBC (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-11107739>).

Figure 2.3

Total Air Force



Note. From The US Air Force led the way in every aspect of the air effort.

The Gulf War II Air Campaign, by the Numbers, by Dudney, R, S, July 2003, Air Force Magazine, (<https://www.airandspaceforces.com/PDF/MagazineArchive/Magazine%20Documents/2003/July%202003/0703Numbers.pdf>).

2.2.2. Start of Military Operations

After the expiration of the two-day ultimatum given to Saddam Hussein to leave Iraq, the US and its allies launched a full-scale invasion On March 20th, 2003, adopting a ‘Shock and Awe’ strategy. It was a military strategy that used massive weapons and force to destroy and paralyze the enemy and it weakened their will to fight. Obviously, Bush announced the beginning of the war with these words: "These are opening stages of what will be a broad and concerted campaign" (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.).

Against the US expectations, the air strikes failed to overthrow the Iraqi leadership, however; as a consequence; the raids cleared the way for a ground invasion. Three weeks after

the invasion, Iraqi civilians and U.S. soldiers pulled down the statue of Saddam Hussein at Firdos Square in Baghdad. This action marked the collapse of the Iraqi regime on April 9th, 2003. Several days later and exactly on May 1st, 2003, President Bush rushed to declare the end of the major combat operations because the US main objective was the deposition of the Iraqi President (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.). Nevertheless, the war which was supposed to be ended in days had lasted for years.

A considerable number of events marked the eight-year war. By the end of the year 2003 exactly on December 14th, Saddam was captured by U.S. troops in Tikrit, situated 140 kilometres northwest of Baghdad. It was believed that his capture would abate violence, however; that was not the case. The prewar and mainstream argument, the issue of WMD, which led America to invade Iraq, was surrendered by the Bush administration, and on January 24th, 2004, the former top U.S. weapons inspector, David Kay, told Congress: “We were almost all wrong” (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.).

The same year witnessed a series of suicide bombings committed by Al-Qaeda against the Shiite Muslim holy sites in Baghdad and Karbala killing hundreds of people (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.). The year 2005 was characterized by the election which was held on October 15th, 2005, despite the violent outbursts, and it resulted in Shiites majority control of parliament (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.). Sectarian violence between Sunnis and Shiites increased in 2006, and the Samarra strike is considered as the start of sectarian bloodletting.

Al Qaeda leader in Iraq, Al-Zarqawi, linked to the bombing, kidnapping, and decapitating was killed on June, 7th 2006 (U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.). The paramount event of the year 2006 was the trial of Saddam who was sentenced to death by hanging, and later he was executed on December 30th, 2006. Al-Qaeda rebranded itself as the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI), in addition; the political transition observed the outbreak of sectarian tensions. After being dominated by Sunnis for centuries, power shifted dramatically to Shia majority as it was planned

by the U.S who sought democracy and security in this shift of power. Although the U.S. appointed itself responsible for national security, the cost was enormous and was at lives expenses. According to Hamasaeed and Nada (2020), “at least 100,000 people died during its eight-year intervention” some estimates were as high as half a million. 2007 is known for being the year of U.S. military surge with 30,000 troops added to the 130,000 already established in Iraq for the aim of bringing stability. On the American side, the year was the deadliest with a total of nine hundred deaths (Hamasaeed & Nada, 2020).

The American military turned over security responsibilities to the Iraqis in Anbar, formerly the region with the highest level of unrest in the nation. The action is viewed as the first symbolic step in the eventual U.S. exit. In the middle of the year 2009, American troops began to withdraw from Iraqi cities, and bases and outposts were closed according to a Status of force Agreement between Iraq and the United States. In August 2010, the United States officially ended its military operation in Iraq after more than seven years of fighting, with a toll of 4,400 American deaths, and tens of thousands of Iraqi civilian deaths (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.). By the end of 2011, the remaining U.S. troops returned from Iraq as announced by President Barak Obama in accordance with prior security agreements. The Baghdad government agreed to integrate Sunni tribes into the Iraqi security forces in order to limit the sectarian rift, while the United States decided to withdraw from Iraq.

2.2.3. International Attitudes

It is common knowledge that the US began to campaign for the military intervention in Iraq namely for the deposition of the Iraqi president years before it happened. In 2002, the Bush administration asserted that Saddam Hussein was a threat to the world’s peace and a sponsor of international terrorism. Attitudes on the war incredibly diverged between countries, ranging from being for or against it. On one hand, some countries believed that America was not able to prove the war motives, and some others saw the war as an act of imperialism, by which the United

States sought to assure its domination on Iraq's oil. On the other hand, other countries were in favor of the invasion and claimed that Saddam Hussein was one of the prevailing dictators of the 20th century and his withdrawal from power was a necessity, and some others widely believed that he possessed WMDs, moreover; he had ties with terrorist networks. According to "International reactions to the prelude to the Iraq War" (2023), and shortly before the war started, the US government declared: "49 countries were joined in a "coalition of the willing" in favor of forcibly removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq, with some number of other countries expressing their support in private".

Among the supporting countries of the U.S. position militarily or politically, there were Australia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Kuwait. As for the opposing states of the U.S. position, one finds France, Germany and Russia, Turkey, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Greece, Austria, Mexico, Argentina, the African Union, with all of its 52 members, and the Arab League unanimously condemned the war, with the exception of Kuwait as aforementioned. In addition to these attitudes, some other countries remained neutral or unclear such as Ireland, the Republic of China (Taiwan), which was supportive of the war, but later it retreated in response to the opposition leaders and the public, and Iran ("International reactions to the prelude to the Iraq War", 2023).

During and after the war, global mistrust had deepened toward the United States, its foreign policy, and President Bush, with even military allies expressing rising dissatisfaction or suspicion. Marquis (2003) states that:

The war has widened the rift between Americans and Western Europeans, further inflamed the Muslim world, softened support for the war on terrorism, and significantly weakened global public support for the pillars of the post-World War II era -- the U.N. and the North Atlantic alliance.

In a survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (PRCPP), a poll has found that the world's view of the U.S. has become less favorable in almost every nation and stated that majorities in only 7 of 20 foreign nations surveyed had a favorable view of the United States, Israel, Britain, Kuwait, Canada, Nigeria, Australia and Italy. But even in most of these nations, support for the United States has slipped (Marquis, 2003).

2.3. Consequences of the Intervention

The US intervention in Iraq had a considerable number of repercussions on local, regional, and global scales. In other words, the war had a deep impact on Iraq, the Middle East, and the whole world.

2.3.1. Repercussions on Local Scale

Undoubtedly, Iraq was the biggest loser in this war because it was fought on Iraqi territory. Iraq was deconstructed by the United States which aimed at regime change to establish a legitimate, stable, and US-friendly government. Nevertheless, the outcome appears to be a failing state with a protracted insurgency that is on the verge of civil war, with pro-Iranian Shia militias as its principal beneficiaries. This was projected and foresaw by Iraqi experts. Without having or even planning for a credible alternative, the US effectively dismantled Iraq. "According to Anthony Cordesman, the foremost American expert on Gulf security, the US made multiple "strategic mistakes". It only planned the war it wanted to fight against the debilitated Iraq army, not against a prolonged insurgency". (Hinnebusch, 2007, p. 17). In the same vain, Hinnebusch (2007) asserts: "Washington expected a quick painless war: As George Packer put it, the US went in "undermanned and underresourced, [expecting to] skim off the top layer of leadership, take control of a functioning state, install imported pro-Western exiles, be out by six weeks and get the oil funds to pay for it."

All walks of life have been impacted by the war, for instance; the health sector witnessed a dramatic increase in the toll of infectious diseases. Millions of residents were deprived of access

to safe drinking water in different regions of Iraq, and this posed a threat to the right to water of the population. In addition, the military forces planted blockades to disrupt several urban centers in southern and central Iraq from water and power. Water, in Iraq, is under siege. The agricultural sector which constitutes a small but vital role in Iraq's economy has been heavily influenced by the previous armed conflicts, and this war has worsened it (Reliefweb, 2003). Unemployment was mass because it was inflicted by the dissolution of the army, the purge of bureaucracy, and public sector dismissals. The oil sector inevitably was no exception, and it was heavily affected by the war.

2.3.2. Outcomes on Regional Scale

The invasion has had profound effects on the Middle East because it was the most intense US intervention in the region. Middle East leaders and experts warned the US that the war would have unanticipated, and terrible repercussions for the territory.

President Mubarak feared it would "open the gates of hell" and Bashar al-Asad predicted the US would not be able to control Iraq. They proved to be right, with the actual consequence of the US invasion being largely the opposite of those intended (Hinnebusch, 2007, p. 20).

They proved to be right, as the actual fallouts, of the conquest, were to a large extent contrary to what was expected. America intended to transfigure the Middle East, the way it fits its interests, by strengthening pro-US currents while weakening radical groups and reinforcing the power of Israel. Iran, a neighboring country, with which Iraq had conflicts seemed to be a loser and even the next target, at the beginning of the war but turned out to be a winner with the rise of Shia in Iraq. Furthermore, Tehran has gained new confidence, as a result of the war-related increase in oil prices.

Syria likewise appeared to be a potential loser in the Iraq War, owing to the fact that the United States demonized it for opposing the intervention. The US attempted to destabilize and

isolate Bashar al-Asad's reformist government in order to slow down the Syrian domestic reform. Otherwise, Syria would probably have joined the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, putting it well on the path to economic reform and entanglement with the West. In the summer of 2006, Israel attempted to smash Hizbollah instead destroyed Lebanon's economic recovery and augmented the struggle for power between pro-Syrian and pro-Iranian forces and a Lebanese government that had become reliant on US/French patrons for survival might have brought about the return of civil war (Hinnebusch, 2007). Invading Iraq was believed by the Bush administration that it would be possible to forge a peace agreement between the US and Israel without having to mediate a peace process in Palestine (Hinnebusch, 2007). In fact, the US effort in Iraq to destroy its opponents was a page taken from the Israeli playbook of using force to eliminate opposition to its occupation of Palestine. A major error was to believe that the invasion of Iraq would offer Palestine autocracy.

The consequences of the intervention in the Middle East have been intense, and evidently not as planned by the architects of the 2003 U.S.-led invasion. It allowed the Shiite Arab majority, for the first time in the contemporary Middle East, to seize power in an Arab nation. This historic event energized Shiites throughout the area which drew the mistrust and animosity of Sunni regimes. Consequently, the new Shiite-dominated administration and foreign soldiers were the targets of an armed uprising by some Iraqi Sunnis. Manfreda (2019) wrote: "The spiralling violence grew into a bloody and destructive civil war between Sunni and Shiite militias, which strained sectarian relations in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries with a mixed Sunni-Shiite population". Another main beneficiary of the Iraqi war was the Kurds. The Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), has been de facto autonomous since the 1991 Gulf War and has been protected by a UN-mandated no-fly zone. Iraqi Kurdistan, which is rich in oil resources and is governed by its own security forces, has developed into the most prosperous and stable area in the nation (Manfreda, 2019).

2.3.3. Ramifications on Global Scale

Did the US intervention in Iraq advance or impede its efforts to firmly establish global hegemony? It would depend on whether US global leadership is maintained or undermined. For this reason, this war was a test case of "preventive war" ideology and the neo-cons' conviction that unanimous hegemony in the Middle East, and the world can be reached by overwhelming military power. America widely believed that the war would end within a few weeks, and the cost would be paid by Iraq or other Gulf countries as was the case in the First Iraq War. As Leaver (2004, as cited in Hinnebusch, 2007) stated:

The neo-cons promised that the cost of the war would be carried by Iraq itself, or that Europe, Asia and the Gulf Arab states would pay for it, an expectation encouraged by the first Iraq war which in this case proved hollow, instead; the war cost to the US treasury reached \$204.4 billion by 2005. Bush's combination of tax cuts and military adventures turned the \$127 billion budget surplus he inherited in 2001 into a \$374 billion deficit in 2003 (p. 24).

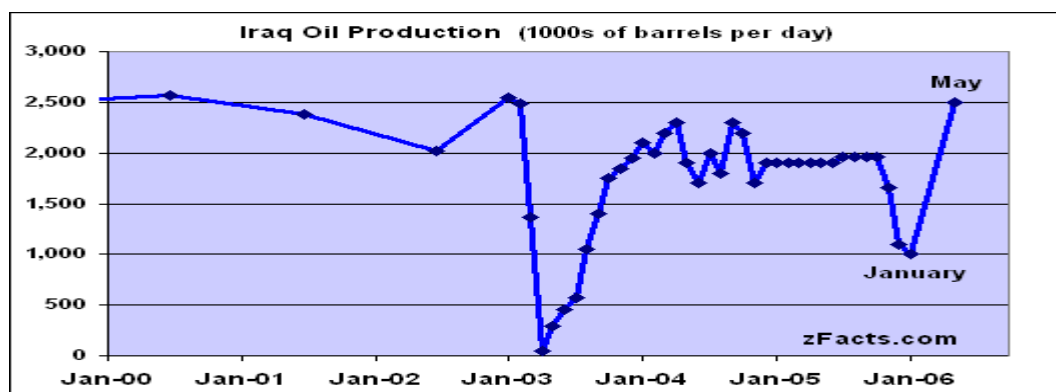
The invasion had an impact on international security. It is worth mentioning that the war began without UN authorization, however; America succeeded in obtaining partial but unprecedented post-facto UN legitimacy of the occupation. Additionally, it succeeded in persuading other governments to partially bear some of its burdens in Iraq. In spite of that other nations showed a strong reluctance to provide substantial financial or military support to save the American initiative as long as Washington resisted surrendering control to the UN. European pro-American governments' support was largely opposed by their own population for a war unilaterally launched by America and its allies and was widely believed to be about oil did not exceed 11 per cent; including Eastern European countries where the regimes were US-friendly. In the Middle East, weak states with little domestic support could not afford to stand up to their protectors (in the case of the Gulf states) or paymasters (Jordan, Egypt), thus; they

accommodated the invasion. On the other side, Syria was the only country to express widespread regional opposition by submitting its authority to the UN despite their fears that it would destabilize the region (Hinnebusch, 2007).

It is known that Iraq is one of the world's largest oil producers, as a consequence; the war must have had a negative impact on the field. Many countries which are oil-dependent to Iraq have had their economic activities being influenced by the repercussions of the war. Oil Prices started to decline as soon as the invasion was launched, but not to the same extent as on January 17, 1991, after they fluctuated, and then they were back to where they started. The Iraq war made oil prices higher; all the oil experts talked about Iraq pushing the price up, but no one knew by how much. Hall (2006) asserted "Cheney predicted Iraqi output would return to 3 million barrels per day by the end of 2003. It never made it back to pre-war levels and was below 1.5M barrels/day in January according to the Wall Street Journal and the Associated Press." According to McKay (2006), crude oil output remained stable instead of increasing in 2006 compared to 2005 along with non-OPEC supply to keep up with demand growth. In 2006, a rise in non-OPEC supply of 0.8 million bbl/d was expected. The figure below illustrates the fluctuation of oil prices during the war

Figure 2.4

Iraq Oil Production (1000s of barrels per day).



Note. From Iraq war makes oil prices higher, 2006, April 8, by Zfacts, (<https://zfacts.com/zfacts.com/p/361.html>).

2.4. Iraq after 20 Years of the US Intervention

The Iraq war, which lasted for eight years, still has repercussions mainly on Iraqis, moreover; it drastically changed Iraq. 20 years after the invasion, all the US promises failed and Iraqis are left to their own fate.

2.4.1. Political Influences on Arab Spring

One of the mainstream justifications for the US invasion of Iraq was that it would help establish democracy in Middle Eastern states, however; the outcome was actually the opposite. It severely damaged both America's credibility in supporting democracy and the reputation of democracy in the region by igniting a deadly sectarian conflict in Iraq. Notwithstanding, the discords between the rulers and the people, which led to the US invasion of Iraq, still exist. Citizens in the area have become more educated and linked to the rest of the world, and they have ambitions for modern politics. Yet they remain governed by nineteenth-century-style autocrats, and without a change, these conflicts will continue to influence political developments in the area over the coming years, frequently in devastating ways. On February 15, 2003, protesters demonstrated against George W. Bush and his plan to invade Iraq in cities all around the world. This event was universally organized by social movements. In 2011, Arab nations saw a wave of protests that led to the overthrow of despots in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, but in other nations, protests failed to end autocracy.

Those protests were termed “Arab Spring”, and for Alca (2016) they were an allusion to the 1848 revolutions, which were known as the Spring of Nations. In regards to the connection between the Iraq war and the Arab Spring, Makiya (2013) argued that the Arab Spring started in Iraq, in addition; the invasion paved the way for the popular uprising across the Arab world. Makiya (2013) asked the question:

But why, in the course of the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen, and now Syria, has Iraq never been mentioned by any of the revolutionaries as a model to emulate or as an inspiration for their own cries for freedom?

Kanan Makiya dug deeper into this issue, and for him, a full understanding of the Arab Spring does not return to the 2003 US invasion but to the 1991 Persian Gulf War. In order to support their own autocracies and later those of other nations in the region, Gulf monarchs were able to pour money into the problem. The democratic experiment in Egypt was short-lived, whereas in Tunisia it lasted much longer with some chaotic periods along the way. In Libya and Yemen, the situation was disastrous, even though their rulers were overthrown and their presidents were killed. In Lebanon, democracy reverted under the influence of the Arab Spring. Syria was no exception, and it was swept by the wave, however, the Al-Asad regime resisted and continued.

Could the so-called autonomous revolt against authoritarian regimes in the Arab World be a proxy war which was sponsored by international actors? The open debate of some major topics by Western governments, such as the direct infringement of the sovereignty rights of "sovereign states", through the provision of weapons to insurrections, can be considered as a sign for such a covert agenda. The people who were determined to begin a revolution and overthrow the oppressive leaders in their countries decamped to Europe. What has changed and what was the rationale behind the revolutionists' failure to maintain the lines? This process is either a Global Civil War, which appears implausible given the sustainable existence of nation states and the protection provided by international law, or more likely a Proxy War, which allows the conduct of hostilities in another nation without a formal declaration of war. The gap is hugely dramatic between what citizens, of Arab countries swept by the Arab Spring, want from their governments and what they receive from them. Political leaders need to close that chasm to prevent further Arab Spring-like protests or probably a social revolution.

2.4.2. Iraq before and after the US Invasion

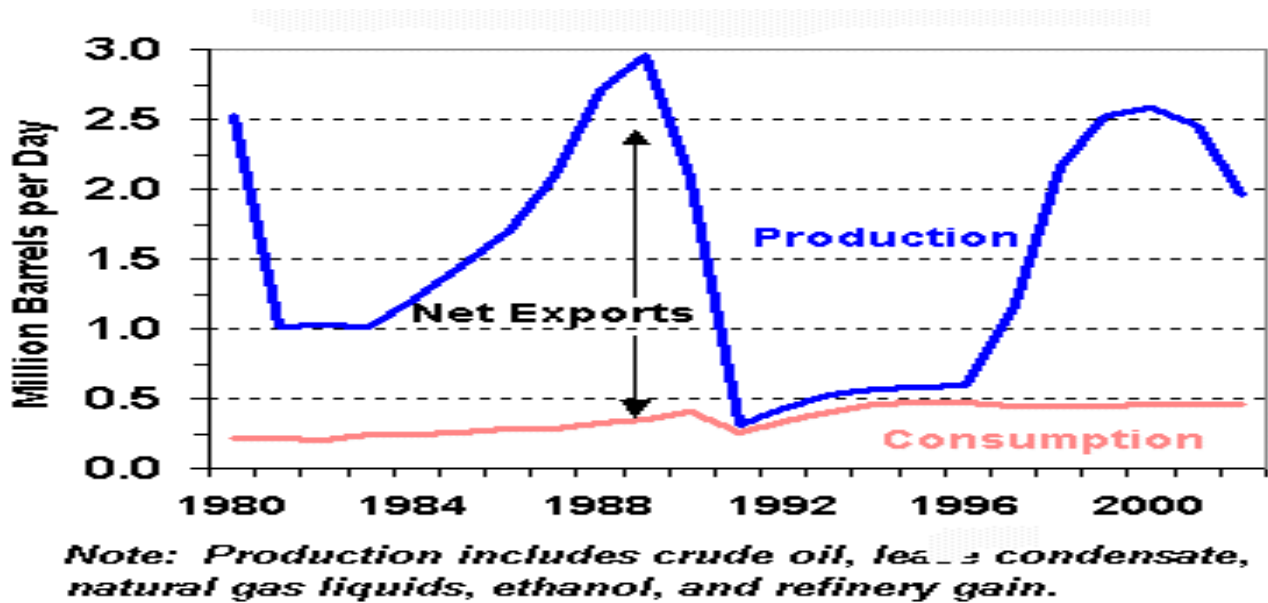
Iraq is often referred to as the cradle of civilizations on account of its rich natural resources and cultural heritage. Its frontiers were initially traced in 1920, and it was rapidly established as a semi-autonomous monarchy under the rule of the United Kingdom. Iraq is home to Iraqi Kurds, Shia and Sunni Muslims. These two Muslim sects have long been politicized, and this had a negative impact on the Iraq war.

Iraq secured independence in 1932 and, under the headship of Abd Al-Karim Qasim, it established itself as a republic in 1968. That was only temporary as the Ba'ath Party deposed Qasim and assumed Iraq's rule. Under the notorious Baathist, Saddam Hussein, the party dominated national politics, until 2003, when he was toppled by the US-led forces. The rich historical record of Iraq as an early center of civilization, trade, and cultural exchange —largely due to its strategic location in the Fertile Crescent, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers — was enhanced by its commitment to education and literacy on a national level.

Before the 1950s, the majority of Iraq's economy was dependent on agriculture, but after the revolution of 1958, there was significant economic growth. The economy grew to be sophisticated, centrally planned, and dominated by the state by 1980, making it the third-largest in the Middle East and the second largest in the Arab world, after Saudi Arabia (Blake et al., 2023). It was negatively impacted by the Iran-Iraq War, particularly oil exports, GDP actually decreased in some years after the invasion of Kuwait. The financial sector was significantly more damaged by the UN embargo, which began in 1990. Iraq's GDP continued to decline until the government effectuated the UN's oil-for-food program in 1997 which was ended in the initial phase of the invasion. In an effort to promote private investment, particularly in small industrial and commercial firms, and to privatize unproductive public assets, the economy witnessed a minor degree of liberalization after 1987.

Figure 2.5

Iraq's Oil Production and Consumption, 1980-2002



Note. From Iraq's Economy: Past, Present, Future, by Sanford, J, E, 2003, June 03, Congressional Research Service The Library of Congress, (https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20030603_RL31944_bb17eeea67b1350555fedea3732d5da5e9b4af26.pdf).

This year, 2023, is an important turning point in the US-led intervention in Iraq. It has been 20 years since top officials in the Bush administration such as Donald Rumsfeld, the Former Secretary of Defense, made declarations that Saddam Hussein had an active program to acquire and develop nuclear weapons and that the Iraqi people were well on their way to freedom (Asi, 2023). In the same context, and in reference to the same source, former Vice President, Dick Cheney told NBC News that he believed that they would be greeted as liberators. Besides, George W. Bush declared the beginning and the end of the intervention proudly uttering Mission Accomplished (Asi, 2023). The wide majority recognize that those statements were incorrect because they were proven wrong. Did the architects of the invasion consider its outcomes? After the war, did the US examine any alternatives to aid Iraq as was planned?

Iraq today is still residing in a post-conflict situation, and it can be considered frail yet stable to some extent. Though the war and the IS threat came to an end, the country continues to endure serious challenges in politics as well as the economy. There are several ethnic and religious minorities which are unable to fully participate in political debate and policymaking because of the sectarian fragmentation which was somewhat nourished by the US invasion. The outbreaks of late 2019 (known as the Tishreen uprising), which eventually ousted the Adel Abdel-Mahdi government, resulted in a considerable number of deaths and injuries (Asi, 2023). Iraq's dependence on oil continues with exports approximating 95% of the country's revenue. Socially, there are still multiple indicators of Iraq's internally displaced persons (IDPs), as Duggal and AJLabs (2023) confirm: "We are still displaced 20 years after the Iraq war". The IDPs face difficulties in obtaining services and returning to their homes, and they remain dependent on humanitarian aids. Consequently, the rate of poverty remains high with "A quarter of Iraq's population lives below the poverty line" (Al-Namshi, 2023).

The health sector which was highly affected by the war because of the bombings continues to suffer to provide adequate health services to the Iraqis mainly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Millions of people, in Iraq, require acute food and livelihood assistance, in addition; Iraqis strongly link all that has happened and is still happening to them - displacement, not having the life they deserve, and not having normal ordinary family lives – to the 2003 war? As was mentioned previously, the population has obstacles to access to safe water due to climate changes, poor water infrastructure which was deteriorated by the occupation. Furthermore, foreign oil companies, investing in Iraq, and in order to increase oil prices in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, use large quantities of the little water available for oil extraction. "It is estimated that one plant used by BP and ExxonMobil consumes a quarter of the daily water available in its operating region" (Asi, 2023). Although government officials suggest that Iraq uses water pumped from the sea as it is practised in oil-producing countries, however; no action

has been taken concerning this issue, and the claim is that the government cannot support such a project.

Conclusion

The U.S. intervention in Iraq in 2003 was a complex and controversial event with both causes and consequences that remain hotly debated. Some key points include the major causes such as the issue of WMDs, which was the primary stated reason for the invasion and the belief that Iraq possessed them. According to the US government, this would pose a threat to regional stability; however, no substantial evidence of WMDs was found. Regime Change was another reason to the war, in order to promote democracy, including the desire to reshape the Middle East and address regional conflicts, with the claim that Saddam Hussein was a despot, and his removal would change the country and the whole region. The post-9/11 atmosphere of heightened security concerns contributed to a willingness to take preemptive military action to prevent potential threats. Along with the previously stated causes the geopolitical interests of America to secure access to Iraq's oil reserves and influence the Middle East's strategic balance were geopolitical considerations.

Regarding the consequences, the destabilization of the country is one of the major repercussions of the invasion, resulting in sectarian violence and insurgency that persisted for years and contributed to the rise of extremist groups like ISIS. The invasion had profound humanitarian consequences. Thousands of Iraqis and coalition troops lost their lives and many more were displaced or injured. The invasion had ripple effects across the Middle East, exacerbating existing tensions and contributing to regional instability. Besides it strained U.S. relations with some allies and generated global opposition, impacting American foreign policy for years. Furthermore, the weakness of WMD evidence damaged the credibility of U.S. intelligence and raised questions about the decision-making process, leading to lasting mistrust.

Overall, the U.S. intervention in Iraq had profound and enduring outcomes, including destabilization of the region, loss of life, and a legacy of mistrust.

General Conclusion

This study was an attempt to unlock the long-lasting hidden issues relating to the U.S. intervention in Iraq. This matter has been and remains controversial because of the instability and fragility of opinions, from one side or the other, revolving around it. The updates resulting from the war and its repercussions are the reason that makes this historical event a current issue or News topic where a considerable number of inquiries come, now and then, to the surface. The American conquest of Iraq changed several things in the world, mainly on the political scale. Furthermore, it profoundly affected the two countries, Iraq as well as the United States. This paper aimed to dig into the nature of the relations between the two nations over the years and how they were in large described. Additionally, the research tackles the explicit and implicit causes of the war, and more importantly, what consequences it culminated in.

For several decades, the US policy toward Iraq has been a critical aspect, with a complex history, of its foreign relations and global strategy. It is important to note that diplomatic and geopolitical situations can change over time. The United States' policies changed drastically from being a supporter to Iraq in its eight-year war with Iran to being militarily involved against it when Saddam invaded Kuwait in 1990. Since then, the US-Iraqi relations were characterized by tension over the years following the conquest, however; the diplomatic relations between the two countries maintained. In addition to this, the diplomatic efforts have played a crucial role in shaping US policy towards Iraq. Furthermore, navigating the American relation with Iraq requires careful consideration of various factors. Those relations did not remain tense and stained, but they turned into a devastating war that lasted for eight years.

The American intervention in Iraq was a significant event that continues to be researched and discussed. There were several causes that led to this controversial military action, each of which contributed to the decision-making process. Understanding these factors is essential to understanding the invasion's intricacies. Some causes were overtly declared by the United States

and made the subject of propaganda of war. One key factor was the belief held by the US government, particularly during the administration of President George W. Bush, that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Another cause was linked to the 9/11 attacks in 2001 with the belief that then-president Saddam Hussein and his regime were involved in the assaults on the World Trade Center. Thus, there was a heightened focus on combating terrorist networks operating within Iraq to weaken their ability to threaten regional stability. Additionally, it was believed that establishing a democratic government in Iraq could serve as a catalyst for political reform throughout the Middle East.

On the other side, some other causes that led to the intervention, also called indirect causes which most opinions strongly believe were the actual factors of the invasion, were not openly cited or made part of the war propaganda. For instance, economic factors played a role in shaping the US decision to invade Iraq because America wanted to have hegemony on Iraq's vast oil reserves which were seen as an important strategic resource. Another reason was the protection of Israel in that region because Israel is under threat from neighboring countries mainly Iraq, furthermore; Israel's security is as important as is America's because of the several interests the United States have in that region. Besides, some other views saw the conquest as a war on Islam because the September 11th attacks were linked to Islamist terrorist networks.

The US invasion of Iraq has had profound and multifaceted consequences, with long-lasting impacts on the region and the whole world. The war resulted in a significant loss of life, both among US military personnel and Iraqi civilians along with millions of displaced people from their homes. The conflict had devastating effects on the Iraqi population causing immense suffering. Besides the humanitarian crisis, Iraq was destabilized after the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime, and this led to sectarian violence, insurgency, and the rise of extremist groups like Al-Qaeda in Iraq (later becoming ISIS). The instability in Iraq spread into neighboring countries, contributing to regional instability, furthermore; it exacerbated sectarian tensions in

the broader Middle East and contributed to conflicts in Syria and Yemen. The US diplomatic ties were strained with many countries particularly those who were against the war, in addition; an anti-American sentiment was heightened in various parts of the world. The invasion altered the regional balance of power, with Iran gaining influence in Iraq and the larger Middle East and further complicating regional politics. The issue of WMDs, which is a key factor of the war turned out to be largely unfounded, eroded confidence in intelligence services and their assessments, impacting subsequent international decision-making.

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ملخص

لطالما كان التدخل العسكري الأمريكي في العراق موضوعا مثيرا للجدل و محل نقاش خصوصا و أن العلاقات الأمريكية العراقية كانت مضطربة وسيئة للغاية قبل الغزو. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى كشف الأسباب الفعلية التي دفعت أمريكا لغزو العراق و تلخص النتائج للعملية العسكرية الأمريكية على العراق وشعبه. بخصوص منهجية البحث، فقد تم اعتماد المنهج التاريخي باستخدام الوصف، الاحصائيات، و التحليل للبحث بدقة عن العوامل الرئيسية التي اتخذها صناع القرار في الولايات المتحدة للتدخل العسكري في العراق. أما فيما يتعلق بالنتائج التي تم التوصل إليها، فقد كانت أسباب الحرب هي نهب النفط العراقي و الإطاحة بنظام صدام حسين. وكانت عواقب هذا الغزو تدمير البنية التحتية، انعدام الأمن، زيادة الصراعات الطائفية و العرقية بين العراقيين، ارتفاع معدلات الجرائم، و هروب رجال الأعمال وهجرة الأدمغة.

كلمات مفتاحية: الأسباب، النتائج، التدخل العسكري الأمريكي، العراق.