

DARK MATTER

Like most concerned people, I have spent a large chunk of my waking hours in recent months trying to understand how and why we have arrived on the brink of war. In my quest I have been stimulated and guided by years spent as a historian and analyst of international affairs including four years in one of the most privileged places in the American government. Yet these advantages have not enabled me satisfactorily to resolve the ambiguities. Here I explain why and then offer a different interpretation.

I

First, what is the crisis? In my experience in government and in my reading of history, it was nearly always possible to answer that question “objectively” or logically. In the Cuba Missile Crisis, we felt that the stationing of Russian nuclear-tipped missiles in Cuba not only posed a new threat to the continental United States but would also “destabilize” the world balance of power. We determined not to allow these changes to occur. True, we were reacting in part emotionally and even asymmetrically: we had far more nuclear-armed missiles placed close to the Soviet Union, some right on the frontier in Turkey, than the Russians intended to put in Cuba. But, we argued, ours were already in place and so the balance of power had already adjusted to them whereas the introduction of missiles into Cuba was new and therefore unbalancing. Unsaid, of course, was our assumption that what we did was right and what the Russians were doing was wrong. Yet, overall, there was a logic to our actions and the Russians accepted it. They concluded that Cuba was in our orbit and we recognized that our having missiles in Turkey was provocative. So we struck a deal. We both removed them.

As I have tried to add up the factors in Iraq, in part with the Cuban Missile Crisis in mind, they just do not compute. Compare the two situations: Russia had a sophisticated population of about 250 million living on a vast land mass and led by an experienced government, able to field a huge army equipped with full arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. If Russia threatened, the threat would be real.

In contrast, Iraq is a small country, two-thirds the size of Texas, but with a useable area (that is minus the desert that takes up 3/4ths of the land) about the same size as West Virginia. The population numbers about 23 million, but, like the land, much of it is “unusable” by the government. Roughly a quarter are Kurds who are guided by a different culture, aspire to independence and live in what is virtually an autonomous state. Nearly half the total Iraqi population are Shi’a Muslims who are strongly influenced by Persian culture and who are viewed with suspicion by the Sunni Muslim government. What is left, the “Iraq” now in our gun sights, amounts to less than the population of Massachusetts, roughly five million.

Powered by oil, Iraq had become by 1990 the most progressive and modern state in the Middle East other than Turkey and Israel. Per capita income then reached about \$2,000 which enabled a large and thriving middle class to come into being. Today, after a decade of depression created by the economic sanctions (imposed on August 6, 1990),

gross national product has collapsed and the middle class has been reduced to poverty.

In industry, in the army and even in Baghdad's taxis, the results are evident: to keep some machinery working, old equipment has been cannibalised. Few new pieces of equipment could be imported. The result, obviously, is a rapid run-down of numbers, capacity and performance.

II

While the real power of a nation-state is only superficially a question of the size and modernity of its military force, one must take into account. So what do we get? The army is smaller than in 1990-1991, numbering today about 400,000, but, like the land and population, much of it is of little value. The loyalty or at least the *élan* of about 80% of the troops is questionable; its equipment is both worn and now largely obsolete or at best obsolescent; it does not have the command-and-control capabilities that make armies like ours, the Russians, the Israelis and a few others superior; and, finally, it has no long-range capability: it cannot move men and equipment over distances more than a few hundred miles; it has virtually no air force; the few missiles it still has are short range, able to reach only a hundred miles or so. In short, it has nothing dangerous that can reach anywhere near America.

Moreover, unlike the Soviet Union at the time of the Cuba Missile Crisis, Iraq is not only isolated but is surrounded by countries stronger than it. Iran has a much larger population, is vastly richer and can field a far larger army; Turkey has Europe's second largest army (after Russia) and is equipped and trained to NATO standards; Israel has one of the most powerful armies in the world and has a full arsenal of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons which it has announced that it is willing to use. It nearly did use nuclear weapons against Syria and there is evidence that, at least once, in February and March 2001, it did use the toxic chemical weapons it manufactures at Nes Ziona.¹ Certainly it would use them against Iraq, if it perceived an Iraqi threat.

Does Iraq have an ace in the hole, that is weapons of mass destruction? So much attention has been focused and so much fear generated by this topic that we lose sight of the realities. The realities are not impressive. Everyone agrees that Iraq does not now have, and never had, nuclear weapons. Building nuclear weapons requires not only the money and technical skills that Iraq did have but also both a sizable industrial plant and space for testing.

We can see the importance of the mix of these prerequisites in other situations: Germany could not develop atomic weapons during the Second World War because it

¹ Against the Palestinians. James Brooks on February 13, 2003 provided a summary of the information and sources and the effects of an unidentified toxic gas (www.antiwar.com). Jonathan Cook documented (<http://www.lawsociety.org/Press/Preleases/2002/sep/sep27e.html>) the use of lethal concentrations of tear gas. Such gas was also used by the Egyptians, to considerable governmental anger, in Yemen in the 1960s. As the now open files of the International Committee of the Red Cross show, Israel used biological weapons (based on typhoid) first in the 1948-1949 war. See <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/627/focus.htm> for references. Many countries, including the United States and Russia, have developed and planned the use of chemical and biological weapons. As I have said, when I was in the American government, I was briefed on the American program because of work I was doing on the danger of the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

had no suitable place to make or test them. With the help of France, Israel could do the preliminary work at Dimona in the southern desert, but, in the vital testing period, it had to ally itself with South Africa. France tested in the Algerian desert; similarly, America, India, Pakistan and China used their deserts. Where Korea will test its weapons is not yet evident. But the crucial factor is that Iraq has been steadily, virtually hourly, under observation for the last ten years and could import nothing and certainly could test nothing without us and others learning of it.

I am not, of course, the only one to evaluate these facts. Others have recognized that they do not accord with the fears now driving public opinion. So attempts have been made “by persons unknown” to augment them or simply to manufacture new “evidence.”

A few weeks ago, the fact that Iraq imported special aluminium tubes, thought to be intended for nuclear weapons manufacturing, was taken as the “smoking gun.” Then as that episode was shown not to be meaningful, another was floated.

This fraud was elaborate and highly dangerous. As reported by the head of the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) to the UN Security Council, some organization, presumably a government organization having access to sophisticated techniques, forged a set of documents designed to show that Iraq had sought to import uranium from Niger. The documents were examined by the US and British governments which turned them over to the UN inspectors. When UN experts examined them, they concluded that the documents were bogus.

What is disturbing is that the British and American experts almost certainly knew that the documents were not genuine. Why did they, by turning them over without comment, lend credence to them? Did they know their provenance? Did they have a hand in their manufacture? This classic example of espionage “dirty tricks” fits the American Constitutional definition of a “high crime” since it could have been, and may still be, the trigger that sets off the American invasion of Iraq. As citizens of a democracy, we deserve to have been told both that the story was a fake and also who concocted it.

Turning now to biological weapons, we do not need to be scared into buying duct tape; what we need is a rational evaluation of the danger. I admit to being somewhat out of date, but when I was in our government I was “cleared” for information on these weapons. While a few refinements have been made since I was fully briefed, the basics have not changed. They are the following: biological weapons are more terrifying than lethal. Relative to other weapons, few people have ever been hurt by them and few are likely to be hurt. They are difficult to use, much less “efficient” than comparable quantities of explosives and highly limited in their impact. Given the choice of weapons, a rational enemy would not pick them except, as I say, for their psychological effect. This is why the government should not scare the public, as it has been doing, but should inform it while carrying out such programs as will reduce or eliminate the danger.

Does Iraq have biological weapons? And if it does can it use them? Will it hand them over to independent terrorist organizations? I think the short answer is no.

While it is true that Iraq *did* have them – in fact got seed stocks along with the industrial equipment to “weaponize” them from America and Britain² – biological weapons, like bread on a supermarket shelf, grow stale and lose their effectiveness. What Iraq had was destroyed along with the equipment needed to make new batches.³ Any that was hidden would now be useless. Moreover, we have ample means to ensure that no new stock or equipment has been imported.

Suppose the many inspectors we and others have sent to Iraq are wrong and that Iraq does have some biological weapons left over and miraculously kept fresh, can it use them? Theoretically, yes, but note that when it really did have them, in the 1990-1991 war, it did not use them. Why? Because it knew that if it did, all stops would have been pulled and we (or Israel) would have demolished the whole country. That is to say, Iraq was “contained” by what Albert Wohlstetter (the mentor of Paul Wolfowitz) termed “the delicate balance of terror.” Containment, we learned in half a century of confrontation with the USSR, worked.

Moreover, to be useful, such weapons must be delivered. In delivery systems, considerable technological advances have probably been made since 1991, but to my knowledge, well over 90% of viruses are destroyed if they are dropped from aircraft. So vast quantities must be transported to cause significant results.

Iraq does not have delivery capability except in two categories: first, months ago, when we began to threaten to invade and topple his government, Saddam Husain *could have* pre-positioned biological materials abroad, perhaps in ordinary shipping containers. But such materials would have begun to deteriorate from the day they were packed up and months or years later would not work. The government should tell this fact to the public rather than scaring it.

Second, if it has them, Iraq could use biological weapons in its own country. So, if there is a danger of their use, it is to invading troops. Obviously, the best way to avoid this danger is not to invade.

What about turning them over to some terrorist organization? As has frequently been pointed out by senior officials of both the FBI and the CIA, great pressure has been brought to bear on both organizations by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, NSC director Condoleezza Rice, NSC deputy director Stephen J. Hadley and others to prove a link between Iraq and the al-Qaida organization. Despite

² U.S. Government documents, assembled by the National Security Archives at George Washington University, show that “American companies were allowed to sell chemical precursors to the Iraqis. Washington in the 1980s licensed dozens of other firms to ship biologicals to Iraq – eadly viruses and toxins, the sort of stuff Washington is now demanding Iraq destroy.” See Neill MacDonald on CBC News http://www.cbc.ca/news/iraq/issues_analysis/saddam_goodguy_030310.html

³ This has been a principal argument in numerous lectures and two books of Scott Ritter, the former U.S. Marine officer who was in charge of the inspections. Existing stocks of weapons and equipment to make them were almost totally destroyed, he maintains, by the 3,500 specialists who comprised UNSCOM.

attempts to do so, no link has emerged. As one FBI official told *The New York Times* (February 2, 2002), “We’ve been looking at this hard for more than a year and you know what, we just don’t think it’s there.” Attempts have been made “by persons unknown” to manufacture links, but one by one they have fallen apart in the hands of the reporters. The most famous was the alleged meeting in Prague of an Iraqi intelligence agent with Muhammad Atta (one of the men implicated in the World Trade Center attack). This was touted as the “smoking gun” that would justify an attack on Iraq. After investigating it on the spot, President Vaclav Havel called President Bush to warn him that the information was spurious. And CIA Director George Tenet confirmed his message.

As various commentators have remarked, the Bush administration is the most secretive in our history – as one observer said, “its instinct is to release nothing;” Vice President Dick Cheney refused even to allow the Congress access to the records of his energy task force; and even the Department of Agriculture and the Environment Protection Agency, for the first time, were given power to stamp documents secret. In what it reveals, the administration exhibits a frightening habit of playing fast and loose with facts.⁴

Annoyed by the lack of “responsiveness” of the CIA and even of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) to what the administration wants to show, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld decided to set up a new and separate intelligence office under Undersecretary Douglas Feith, who is a strong advocate of attacking Iraq.⁵ Presumably, Rumsfeld thought, an in-house agency would be responsive where independent agencies would not be. This move violates the cardinal rule of intelligence evaluation, that it must be independent if it is to be accurate.

What one learns in evaluating intelligence is that most events have certain logic; sometimes, of course, governments act irrationally or out of character, but analysts are enjoined to exercise extra care and to demand clear proof when they suspect an abnormal act. Such an act would be cooperation between an authoritarian state and a non-governmental group. So we should ask, what is the Iraqi government likely to do with Islamic Fundamentalists (Arabic: *mutasalaḥīn*).

Start with what we know. What we know is that Usama bin Ladin has consistently attacked Saddam Husain as an infidel (Arabic: *kafīr*) which is the strongest

⁴ In a now famous article in *The Washington Post* (October xxx), Dana Milbank commented that for the Bush administration “facts are malleable.” Among other examples he noted the President’s assertion that Iraq “has a growing fleet of unmanned aircraft that could be used for missions targeting the United States.” Bush was referring to crop duster aircraft which are, of course, light, slow aircraft with very short range. He also said that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had reported that Iraq was “six months away from developing a [nuclear] weapon.” No such report existed. Reacting to the article, the White House spokesman said that on occasion the President was “imprecise.” Paul Krugman noted (*The International Herald Tribune*, October 28, 2002) that Milbank “is now the target of a White House smear campaign.”

⁵ Reported in *The New York Times* (October 24, 2002) with the comment that the Pentagon inner group “are intent on politicizing intelligence to fit their hawkish views on Iraq.” Reflecting the frustration of the Administration with the regular intelligence agencies, *The Toronto Sun* reported (October 10, 2002) that it was relying upon the Israeli intelligence Agency Mossad as its “primary source of decision-making information.”

denunciation a Muslim can use and which proclaims that the person can be legally assassinated. Bin Ladin even offered to organize a military unit to attack Iraq in 1990. On his side, Saddam has done all the things that the Fundamentalists hate: he has liberated women, even put them in the army, secularized the state and society and attacked the most conservative Muslim leadership in the country, that of the Shi'is. It would take a major transformation of both men and their teams for them to find common cause.

What might common cause be? Obviously, hostility to America. So far it has not happened, and it would be unlikely except in extreme circumstances. If Saddam were in imminent danger of losing his life, I can imagine him doing virtually anything including embracing Bin Ladin's organization. And Bin Ladin? For him, as I have been pointing out for months, nothing could be better than a war between Iraq and America since it will almost certainly provide a new source of recruits to al-Qaida and the many similar organizations that will spring up from its ruins. To defend Islam against what he sees as an American crusade, an emotionally-charged word President Bush himself injudiciously used, Bin Ladin would presumably even work with an infidel or, preferably, with the angry fellow-countrymen of a dead infidel.

The two critical points here are that *short of war*, cooperation between Iraq and any terrorist organization is unlikely and so far none has been shown to exist. It follows, obviously, that pushing Saddam and Bin Ladin together in fear of us is not smart. Predictably, wounded, angry and humiliated in a war with us, Iraqis as a whole, not just the government, may come to support activities we will see as terrorism but which they will see as patriotism.

What about chemical weapons? They are easier to store than biological or nuclear weapons. Does Iraq have them? The Bush administration tells us that it has. The proof, it says, has been provided by defectors. The star witness was Lt. General Husain Kamil, a son-in-law of Saddam Husain who was executed for treason after he defected in 1995. While abroad, he was extensively interviewed by the CIA and other security agencies. Both Secretary of State Collin Powell and Deputy NSC Director Stephen Hadley told us that General Kamil said that the Iraqis had hid them. In fact, as recently released U.S. Government documents prove, he said exactly the opposite: he said⁶ "that after the Gulf War, Iraq destroyed all its chemical and biological weapons stocks and the missiles to deliver them."

Secretary Powell was sent to the Security Council with what President Bush called conclusive evidence on how Saddam Husain was hiding prohibited weapons and was working with terrorist organizations. Despite high-tech staging, the evidence fell apart upon examination. Worse and more amateurish, the contribution of the British, supposedly from the famous Secret Intelligence organization, 007 James Bond's MI-6,

⁶ The debriefing, reported by *Newsweek* on February 24, 2003, is available <http://casi.org.uk/info/unscom950822.pdf>. Secretary Powell told the Security Council on February 5, 2003 that Iraq's "admission only came out after inspectors collected documentation as a result of the defection of Hussein Kamel, Saddam Hussein's late son-in-law." Hadley's comment was in *The Chicago Tribune* of February 16, 2003.

actually was plagiarized from old copies of *Jane's* weapons reports and from a paper written by an American of Shi'i Muslim background from Baltimore who had never been in Iraq.⁷ Ibrahim al-Marashi, then a student at the Monterey (California) Institute of International Studies, later published his paper in an Israeli magazine. This pathetic mishmash, apparently the best that could be cobbled together, was characterized by Secretary Powell, who allowed his usual good manners to overcome his good intelligence, as "fine."

As citizens of a free society, we deserve more from our paid civil servants. Without access to the facts, we cannot possibly perform adequately our duties as citizens. If Iraq poses a threat to the United States, it certainly has not been demonstrated.

III

Yet we are being rushed into a war that may --

1. *throw* our society (and much of the rest of the industrial world) into a depression. In the first week of March, the Congressional Budget Office wrote down its estimates for the coming decade from a revenue surplus of \$5.6 trillion to a deficit of \$1.8 trillion; Other estimates predict at least twice that deficit; the shortfall for 2003 is expected to be driven by the war to about \$400 billion;

2. *cause* further hardships for poorer Americans as the unemployment rate rises. Since 2001 nearly 2 million jobs have been lost.

3. *force* a cut-back in social welfare (unemployment benefits, support for schools, etc.). State schools (and even jails) are being forced to cut budgets. In Texas, for example, school financing has already hit a 50 year low and is expected to go lower; some states are even being forced to release prisoners because they cannot afford to keep them in jail;

4. *put further pressure* on public health where 75 million Americans are already without insurance;

5. *jeopardize* retirement safeguards among the middle class through the loss of savings when companies go bankrupt as financing becomes increasingly expensive and consumer spending falls. Fear of the consequences already, before any hostile action has actually taken place, has led to a drastic fall in the index most people regard as the test of the health of the economy, the stock market. The Dow Jones Average has fallen from 11,522 on January 3, 2001 to 7,552 today or down about one third.

6. *accentuate* or bring about deep and bitter splits and cause profound confusion and fear within our own society;

7. *lead* our government to alter, in some cases radically, traditional American concepts of law (as with imprisonment of resident suspects in harsh conditions without access to counsel⁸ and in some cases torture⁹ or killing of men we are legally required to

⁷ As Kenneth Rapoza revealed in *The Boston Globe* shortly after Powell's speech. The Israeli organization that published his paper is closely associated with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a pro-Israeli organization in which the Pentagon adviser Richard Perle is active.

⁸ The Geneva Convention xxx

⁹ As reported in *The Guardian* of March 7, 2003, U.S. Major Elizabeth Rouse, a pathologist, signed a homicide death certificate for one Afghan prisoner certifying that he died as a result of "blunt force injuries to lower extremities

treat as prisoners of war¹⁰); a draft of to-be-proposed legislation entitled “the Domestic Security Enhancement Act” of January 9, 2003, would allow the Attorney General to strip Americans deemed threats to our “national defense, foreign policy or economic interests” of their citizenship and deport or incarcerate them without review;

8.*separate* America from what President Eisenhower, quoting Thomas Jefferson, called “a decent respect for the opinion of mankind.” As I write, it appears that even America’s closest ally, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, is close to “jumping ship” for fear of losing his party and Parliament. Such allies as the Bush administration can count upon are either bribed with billions of dollars (like Turkey, Jordan, Israel and Egypt) or driven by local agendas which are not necessarily conducive to American national interests (Turkey against the Kurds and Israel against the Palestinians) or subject to irresistible diplomatic or commercial pressures. Some of the new allies are countries the American government hardly noticed in previous times. NATO, so patiently built over decades, is in shambles and the European Community, which many of us sought to help come into being over the last half century, is fractured, perhaps fatally. And even in America’s closest neighbors, Canada and Mexico, both public and government opposition to American policy is now palpable.

9.*fail* to learn from the past. It was Secretary of State, then chief of the U.S. General Staff, Colin Powell who in 1992 in an article in *Foreign Affairs* underlined the lesson America should have learned from the Gulf War. “The Gulf War,” he wrote, “was a limited-objective war. If it had not been, we would be ruling Baghdad today at unpardonable expense in terms of money, lives lost and ruined regional relationships.” Yet, today, the Bush administration has announced plans that will incur all three of these costs.

In short, there must be, somewhere, compelling reasons for a policy that has so many obvious disastrous consequences. The Bush administration’s senior men are certainly not stupid. So we must ask, if not fear of Iraq’s attacking the United States, which as I have shown has no rational basis, what could the motivation for such an obviously costly and perhaps ruinous policy be?

IV

A prominent candidate, one widely discussed, is oil. The American economy now uses a high portion, roughly 30%, of the entire world’s production of about 20 million barrels a day. Even during my time on the Policy Planning Council, “acquisition of oil on acceptable terms” figured as one of the four key objectives of American policy in the Middle East. Since then, American domestic reserves have virtually run out. Because the Bush administration has decided not to implement the standards set of the

complicating coronary artery disease.” Other prisoners told *The New York Times* (March 7, 2003) that they had been “kept naked, hooded and shackled and were deprived of sleep for days on end. Mr. Shah [one prisoner] said that American guards kicked him to stop him falling asleep.” Others were refused medical attention or deprived of food and water for extended periods. Other techniques have already acquired a nickname, “torture light.” Allegedly (*The Guardian* March 5, 2003) some people arrested even in Los Angeles have flown out of the United States and turned over to the governments where torture is routine and unrestricted.

¹⁰ In his State of the Union address, President Bush said that “3,000 suspected terrorists have been arrested in many countries” while “many others have met a different fate” so that they “are no longer a problem to the United States.”

Tokyo Conference on the Environment and has also drastically cut back initiatives to develop alternative energy projects, acquisition of oil is a compelling objective.

It should not be a difficult policy decision: oil is always available on the international market because those lucky enough to have it cannot benefit from it unless they sell it. And, as more and more oil has been discovered, there appears to be no lack of desire to sell. We are unlikely to be without access to oil on regular commercial terms for the near future.

Also, given that it will probably cost more than \$100 billion to seize Iraq (and its oil) and that the chief of the U.S. General Staff believes that upwards of 300,000 American soldiers will be required to hold it for perhaps ten years, seizing Iraqi oil, even if we just steal it, will certainly be far more expensive than buying it.

Moreover, Middle Eastern oil supplies the Far East and Europe rather than America. So why seek to control it? The main reasons are stability of price and assurance of supply. Should any one country dominate that major source, it could, at least theoretically, affect both supply and price. Were America, so the argument goes, so far only *sotto voce*, to control Middle Eastern oil, it could dominate the world market for the foreseeable future. It was for this reason that the US National Energy Policy Report of 2001 (the “Cheney Report”) placed a high priority on control of Middle Eastern oil.

I find it difficult to credit the charge that those who have developed the Bush Doctrine are primarily interested in acquisition of Middle Eastern oil to enrich American companies. That seems too crass an objective. However, I have to admit that it is unfortunately true that some members of the administration have not been diffident in help given themselves, their friends and former companies. Halliburton, from which Vice President Cheney still receives between \$100,000 and \$1 million a year,¹¹ has been given the inside track on coordinating and (if Iraq blows up the facilities)¹² rebuilding the Iraqi oil industry.

Russian sources maintain (*The Guardian* October 6, 2002) that America will declare all previous oil concessions, including those of the Russians void and that “US companies will...take the greatest share of those existing contracts...Yes, if you could say it that way – an oil grab by Washington.” In another context, plans and rumors on the oil industry would almost certainly be categorized as “smoking guns.” Still, in and of itself oil is not sufficient, I believe, to account for the current policy.

It is not only oil, of course, that offers a major new market for American industry. If America launches the attack it has publicly announced, with thousands of missiles and bombs launched in the first days of the attack, the damage to roads, bridges, factories,

¹¹ Obligatory disclosure by all government officials noted in *The Guardian* (March 12, 2003). While Cheney’s “deferred income” is legal, it gives the appearance of a conflict of interest since, obviously, current Halliburton employees will be treated by civil servants with a special deference because of their connection to the White House. Under Cheney’s leadership, Halliburton did about \$2.3 billion worth of business with the Federal Government.

¹² *The [London] Times* reported on March 12, 2003 that the Kirkuk oil field has been mined and set to be detonated in case of American attack. This has been denied by Iraq.

water treatment plants, schools, hospitals, apartment buildings, etc. will be immense. Proposals for bids have been circulating for months among a select group of American companies. Particularly those headed by close supporters of the Administration (Halliburton, Bechtel and Fluor) are already getting ready to bid for contracts that are expected to run into billions of dollars. And, radiating outward, large economic opportunities beckon. Writing in *The New Yorker* (March 17, 2003), Seymour Hersh told¹³ of one bizarre episode involving Richard N. Perle, chairman of the Defense Policy Board, and various American and Saudi financiers including the notorious arms merchant, Adnan Khashoggi, for what is expected to be a hundred million contract in the security field.

If not oil and other economic opportunity, what else?

Much has been said about the ugliness of the Iraqi regime. It has gassed Kurdish dissidents, relocated Shi'a citizens whom it suspected of pro-Iranian feelings and performed ghastly deeds of torture, rape and murder. Even at its least lethal, it is not attractive. As I witnessed in Baghdad recently, people are careful about what they say because they believe that an army of informers and secret police keep watch on them. And the massive public displays of Saddam's personality cult conjures the image of Stalin or Mao and reminds many of East Germany under Ulbricht.

But, we have not let such ugliness interfere with our relations with many other regimes or even, in former times, with Saddam. Donald Rumsfeld was in Baghdad to conclude a deal on the very day in March 1984 when the United Nations issued its report on Iraqi use of poison gas; that was not an unlucky coincidence -- Americans and the British had sold Iraq the means to make it. At the time of the Iraqi attack on the Kurdish village of Halabja, the first Bush administration was giving Iraq hundreds of millions of dollars worth of aid including help to manufacture chemical and biological weapons.¹⁴ Nor was Iraq unique. We helped or looked the other way while other regimes have engaged in similar in similar ugly activities. So, notions of civic decency cannot be a major reason for our displeasure.

If not fear, oil, commercial profit and anger at tyranny, not much remains. So, at last we come to what I have called "dark matter."

V

¹³ Infuriated by the article, in which Hersh quoted Khashoggi accusing Perle and others of "peddling influence," Perle called Hersh of being "the closest thing American journalism has to a terrorist" on a CNN program. (<http://www.cnn.com/Transcripts/0303/09/le.00.html>)

¹⁴ R. Jeffrey Smith in *Washington Post* reprinted in *The International Herald Tribune* (July 23, 1992) reported that the U.S. Commerce Department was investigating 34 cases of high-tech exports to Iraq including "bacteria and fungus cultures, computers and electronic instruments, chemical-process control equipment and missile navigation and communications gear." *The Guardian* (March 6, 2003) reported that at the same time, an English company with British government financing, built a £14 million chlorine plant known as Falluja 2 which was capable of making mustard gas and nerve agents.

When astronomers similarly found that all they knew about the universe did not add up to the total they believed had to exist, they were driven to posit a new form of matter. It seemed on the very edge of scientific knowledge or even of logic: it was what they termed “dark matter.” And dark matter, they have come to believe, is far more significant than all that we had previously observed. So, I have been driven to conclude, beyond what we all have been reading about and discussing there is a hidden agenda, the political equivalent to dark matter, that dominates American policy toward Iraq.

In this hidden agenda, I find three elements that seem of particular importance: 1) a new strategic vision of American world dominance; 2) a messianic thrust of Christian Fundamentalism and (3) a relationship between Christian Fundamentalism and Israeli Zionism. I begin with the new vision of American world dominance.

1) The administration’s National Security Strategy¹⁵ or as it is becoming known, “The Bush Doctrine,” sets out a vision, as previous papers have done, of a generally hostile world to be made safe for democracy. Since America has “unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence,” so goes the statement, it has “the duty of protecting those values against their enemies...” These enemies are different from those of the past: “Enemies in the past needed great armies and great industrial capabilities to endanger America...Now shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores [because] Terrorists are organized to penetrate open societies and to turn the power of modern technologies against us.” Everywhere we look, we find enemies and we must attack them wherever they are and deny them sanctuary anywhere before they can harm us. “America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.” That is, America will shift from its long-time policy of containment to preëemptive attack wherever it deems a threat to exist or be likely to emerge.¹⁶

This vision of America is very different from any previous concept. For most of its history, America regarded itself as a nation apart from the world, protected by its oceans from foreign turmoil. Between the British attack in 1812 and the Japanese attack in 1941, it had comfortably assumed that it did not need be to a fortress because enemies could not reach it. During the Second World War, little attention was paid to defense of the mainland; the battle was taken to Europe and the Far East. During the Cold War, America built its major defenses abroad and sought to contain any threat far from its shores. It was this almost total inexperience with threats to its home territory that made the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon so stunning to the American public. Unlike most other peoples, Americans had never seen the hideous face of war.

It was to this perception that the Bush doctrine spoke and it was this experience that gave the Bush administration its popularity. Since few living Americans remembered the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor 60 years before, the terrorist attack on

¹⁵ Published in *The New York Times* (September 20, 2002)

¹⁶ Offensive action, “the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state” was treated as a war crime in the Nuremberg trials and is banned in Article 2 ¶ 4 of the UN Charter which, since it was ratified by the U.S. Senate, has the force of law in the United States. The sole permissible exception (Article 51) was response to a prior armed attack and then only under the authority of the Security Council.

New York and Washington on September 11, 2001 was a major turning point in American history.

In haste and panic, the Congress passed the USA Patriot Act. That act gave the government unprecedented powers of arrest and detention. In most cases the courts backed up the new assumption of authority. Abroad, the government also immediately attacked the principal haven of the terrorists, Afghanistan, capturing or killing not only them but also members of the Afghan government and army. Then it shifted its aim from terrorists to a country that, as recounted above, had no discernible links to terrorism or to the attack on America, Iraq. The doctrine makes clear that Iraq need not be, and probably will not be, unique: other nations such as Iran (which is thought to be developing a nuclear capability) and North Korea (which already has a nuclear weapons program) have been categorized as “the axis of evil.” Still others are thought to be far more likely than Iraq to have terrorist affiliations. These certainly include Pakistan, now considered an ally but known to contain hundreds of schools, like those that turned out the Taliban soldiers, where thousands of young men aspire to be like the Taliban and al-Qaida guerrillas. Similar groups operate in the Philippines. Already in the Philippines at least 3,000 American soldiers are engaged. Nothing seems likely to prevent the implementation of a strategy, spelled out in the Bush Doctrine, that will take American troops all over the globe.

As I have spelled out in detail elsewhere, under the single rubric of “terrorist” are a variety of movements. Some are motivated by a thwarted desire for what America itself has long regarded as legitimate, the “self determination of peoples.” Where such movements are repressed, governments have a vested interest in categorizing them as terrorist and so in winning our approval for repression. These include the Chinese in Tibet and Turkistan; the Russians in Chechnya; the Indians in Kashmir and the Israelis in Palestine. If Americans accept the definitions of regimes that seek to repress their minorities, there can be almost no end to the “war on terrorism.”

How did we embark on this road? While it is clear that the Bush Doctrine was given its legitimacy in American politics by the events of September 11, 2001, it did not spring fully blown from those events: rather, it was an adaptation of strategic planning that some of the key figures in the current Bush administration began to set out at least a decade earlier.

Already in 1992, Paul Wolfowitz (then and today a senior official of the Department of Defense) and Zalmay Khalilzad (who has played the key role in Afghanistan) drafted a “Defense Planning Guidance” document. Already in that document, they set out the notion that America’s task was to prevent to any rival superpower from rising in any part of the world. Included in the list of potential dangerous powers were Russia, China, Japan and Germany.

In a statement of principles dated June 3, 1997, Wolfowitz and Khalilzad were joined by Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Jeb Bush and Elliott Abrams among others in

urging a new strategy, based on American military power, to remake the world in line with American “global responsibilities.”

The group kept in being and in September 2000 emphasized its goal of “maintaining global US pre-eminence” against all possible rivals. This theme was picked up by George W. Bush when, as a candidate, he identified China as a “strategic competitor” and “espionage threat to our country.” The program laid out a twenty-year plan to acquire what Bush termed “full spectrum dominance.”

What Bush’s team had in mind, however, represented such a radical departure from American tradition that only in the atmosphere generated by the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 could they have convinced Americans to implement it.

2) Who are the Americans who have so quickly become the political army led by the Bush administration and what motivates them? It is difficult for me to comprehend this hidden element because it falls completely outside of the parameters in which most Americans, and certainly I, have been trained to analyze international relations. For the first time in American affairs, our policies are being formed by a small but determined group of leaders working with a highly developed ideological movement. Exactly how George Bush joined this group is still not completely clear. What is clear that it offered him a program to implement what he had already come to believe while still governor of Texas, that he has been “called” by God. As he told a friend,¹⁷ “I believe God wants me to run for president.”

Belief in a divine mission to reorder the world dates back in America to the early Puritan movement and is, of course, far older. It caused Pope Urban II to preach the Crusades, King Louis VIII to attack the flourishing but heretical civilization of Provence and St. Dominique to initiate the Inquisition. Ironically, as viewed by Christians, it was also the inspiration for Muhammad’s proclamation of Islam.

Today, large numbers of Americans share a belief in the absolute rightness of their cause and therefore in the evil of the intent and actions of those who do not march to the same drum beat. Above all, this seems to typify the millions of Americans who belong to the Southern Baptist Convention, but it is by no means limited to them. Nearly half of all Americans, some 46%, described themselves in a recent Gallup poll¹⁸ as evangelical or born-again Christians. Throughout the poorer parts of the world, movements like the Pentacostalists are among the most widely and rapidly growing. Nor is the influence of this group limited to foreign affairs. It finds expression also in such domestic issues as the teaching of science in schools, birth control, and the criminal justice system. These and other issues have provided a strong core group in American politics at the head of which President Bush has placed himself.

3) Motivated by a literal interpretation of the Bible, particularly of the Old Testament, this group has also reached out to embrace its birthplace, Israel. As former

¹⁷ Quoted in Jackson Lears’s “How a War Became a Crusade,” *The New York Times* (March 11, 2003).

¹⁸ Quoted in Nicholas D. Kristof in *The New York Times* (March 5, 2003).

President Jimmy Carter pointed out,¹⁹ such people “are greatly influenced by their commitment to Israel based on eschatological, or final days, theology.”

The suggestion that Israel and its American Christian and Jewish supporters are in any way involved in the administration’s policy making has drawn much-feared and sometimes-lethal charges of anti-Semitism.²⁰

As Patrick J. Buchanan pointed out in *The American Conservative* (March 24, 2003) “a passionate attachment to Israel is a ‘key tenet of neoconservatism.’”²¹

In conclusion, it is important to note that Iraq is only the beginning.

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¹⁹ “Just War – or a Just War” printed in *The New York Times* (March 9, 2003).

²⁰ Most recently in the attack on Congressman

²¹ He goes on to decry the use of the charge of anti-Semitism “to nullify public discourse by smearing and intimidating foes and censoring and blacklisting them and any who would publish them. Neocoms say we attack them because they are Jewish. We do not. We attack them because their warmongering threatens our country, even as it finds a reliable echo in [Israeli Prime Minister] Ariel Sharon.”