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The Persian Gulf TV War

Chapter 1

The Road to War

On the weekend of July 21, 1990, Iraq moved 30,000 troops, tanks, and artillery to its border with Kuwait. Iraq was angry that Kuwait had been selling its oil below the agreed-upon OPEC figure, thus driving down the price of oil and costing Iraq many billions of dollars. In addition, Kuwait had refused to negotiate a long-standing border dispute with Iraq and had declined to cancel debts incurred by Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988. In that war, Iraq claimed to be fighting for Arab interests against the threats of Iranian Islamic fundamentalism.

During the Iran-Iraq war, the United States entered into a strategic relationship with Iraq, which was perceived as a secular bulwark against the spread of radical Islamic fundamentalist revolution.¹ The United States presented Iraq with military equipment and intelligence, agricultural credits, and "dual use" technology that could be used for building highly destructive weapons systems.² With the sudden end of the Iran-Iraq war in August 1988, Iraq continued buying massive amounts of arms from the West and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein persisted in building up his military machine with Western help. Despite the fact that Iraq brutally suppressed the Kurds who lived in northern Iraq and that his human rights record was atrocious, Hussein continued to receive aid and favored treatment from the Bush administration. The State Department talked of the importance of the U.S. relationship with Iraq and U.S. senators visited Iraq for Saddam Hussein's birthday in 1990, advising him that his image problem was merely a product of the Western media that could be corrected with a better public-relations (PR) policy.³

On July 25, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, met with Saddam Hussein and indicated sympathy for his desire to raise oil prices to rebuild his country after the war with Iran. Glaspie told him that the United States had "no opinion" on the border dispute and other disputes with Kuwait.⁴ On the same day, the U.S. State Department stopped the Voice of America from broadcasting an editorial stating that the United States was "strongly committed to supporting its friends in the Gulf" (*Newsweek*, October 1, 1990, pp. 24-25). On July 31, in a talk on Capitol Hill, John Kelly, the assistant secretary of state for Middle Eastern affairs, stated that the United States had no formal commitment to a defense of Kuwait (in Ridgeway 1991, pp. 57-58). He also stated that the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq was "a hypothetical," which "I can't get into" (Ridgeway 1991, pp. 57-58). Finally, Kelly stated that events since February had "raised new questions about Iraqi intentions in the region," but that "sanctions would decrease the [U.S.] government's ability to act as a restraining influence" (*Economist*, Sept. 29, 1990, pp. 19-21). The scene was set for Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

The question arises as to whether the United States purposively led Iraq to believe that there was no major U.S. objection to invading Kuwait or whether the Bush administration was simply incompetent. On the conspiracy account (suggested by Agee 1990, Emery 1991, Frank 1991, Yousif in Bresheeth and Yuval-Duvis 1991, and Becker in Clark et al. 1992), the United States encouraged Kuwait to lower its oil prices and to refuse to settle its disputes with Iraq in order to provoke Iraq

into military action that would legitimate U.S. military intervention in the Gulf and even the destruction of Iraq. At the same time, in this account, the United States sent signals to Iraq that it would not object to an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and some believed that this was a trap that would enable the U.S. to mobilize a coalition against Iraq. Such an action against Iraq would enable the United States to become a permanent military presence in the Gulf and to assert itself as the number one military superpower. A triumph would help protect the military from budgetary cutbacks and fuel another cycle of arms spending to pick up the failing economy. A successful Gulf intervention and war would also promote the interests of George Bush, whom most interpreters of the complex events leading up to the war depict as the chief promoter of a military option to the crisis.⁵

The conspiracy theory explains why Kuwait would stand up to an extremely belligerent and dangerous Iraq and why Iraq would risk invading Kuwait. For without a prior U.S. pledge of support it is implausible that Kuwait would provoke Iraq and refuse to negotiate what were arguably reasonable issues. The theory that the United States was enticing Iraq to invade Kuwait also helps explain the seeming appeasement of Iraq by the Bush administration, but other accounts are also plausible. Waas (1991) described U.S. diplomacy leading up to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as a result of the "Bush administration's miscalculations" and "sheer incompetence," which he describes as "the worst diplomatic failure by any modern president" (p. 60). Salinger and Laurent (1991, pp. 56-79) do not explicitly advocate the conspiracy theory, though they believe that, inadvertently or not, Glaspie and Kelly gave a "green light" to Saddam Hussein to invade Kuwait. Commenting on Kelly's July 31, 1990, testimony to Congress, where he confirmed that the U.S. had "no treaty, no commitment which would oblige us to use American forces" to drive Iraq out of Kuwait were a hypothetical invasion to take place, Salinger and Laurent claimed:

John Kelly's statements were broadcast on the World Service of the BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] and were heard in Baghdad. At a crucial hour, when war and peace hung in the balance, Kelly had sent Saddam Hussein a signal that could be read as a pledge that the United States would not intervene.

In the recent history of American diplomacy there had been only one other example of such a serious miscalculation, and that was Secretary of State Dean Acheson's statement to Congress in 1950 that "South Korea was not part of the United States' zone of defense." Soon afterwards North Korea had invaded the South. (1991, p. 69)

Because the Bush administration has a record of both incompetence and Machiavellian machinations, it is not possible at this point to know for sure why the United States failed to more vigorously warn Iraq against invading Kuwait, why Kuwait refused to settle its disputes with Iraq, or why Iraq finally decided to invade its neighbor. Mediating the conspiracy theory and incompetency interpretation, Edward Herman argued:

This failure to try to constrain Hussein by diplomatic means, and de facto invitation to invade, reflects either staggering incompetence or a remarkably sophisticated conspiracy to entrap him. The failure

of the U.S. mass media to consider this set of facts and issues as worthy of front page reporting and intense debate is prime evidence of their irresponsibility to the public and service to the state. My own view is that the Bush gang invited Hussein into Kuwait through sheer incompetence, but were not only deeply annoyed, they also saw that he could usefully be set up as a naked aggressor who must be taught a lesson....The banking, oil, pro-Israel, and military-industrial complex constituencies could be mobilized to support this new thrust, but in my view this is a presidential war par excellence with the causes to be found in the parochial and self-serving calculations of Bush and his security state coterie. (Z Magazine, March 1991, p. 16)

Herman's argument is persuasive though it may underestimate the Machiavellian proclivities of Bush and his circle, who might well have engineered the crisis and the war. In any case, the events leading up to the invasion are highly suspicious and require further investigation and scrutiny. Furthermore, it is worth noting that whichever interpretation of the causes of the Gulf crisis one accepts, the Bush administration was largely responsible for both Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the war, as it could easily have warned Iraq that the United States would not tolerate an invasion of Kuwait and could have urged Kuwait to satisfactorily negotiate its problems with Iraq, thus avoiding the Gulf crisis and war. For weeks there were clear signals that Iraq was planning an invasion of Kuwait and despite the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and military intelligence indicating that an invasion was imminent, the United States continued to appease Iraq.

For instance, on August 1, 1990, the day after Kelly's testimony, there were reports that Iraq had amassed 100,000 troops on the Kuwaiti border. Both the CIA and Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) claimed that Saddam Hussein was ready to invade Kuwait, but still the Bush administration took no action.⁶ Representatives of Iraq and Kuwait met on August 1 at the Saudi resort town of Jidda to negotiate their problems and the Saudis and others seemed to believe that these negotiations would resolve the Kuwaiti/Iraqi disputes. They did not, and Time magazine claimed that the failure of the negotiations was due to "the Iraqis, who demanded Kuwait's total capitulation on every count" and who "were determined to see the negotiations break down" (Aug 13, 1991, p. 19).⁷ Other observers, however, blamed the breakdown on the Kuwaitis: "[T]he reportedly contemptuous and dismissive attitude of the Kuwaiti delegation during the first round of meetings prompted the Iraqi team to walk out before a second session could be convened. Iraqi forces crossed the border into Kuwait early the next morning" (Fred Dawson, Middle East Report, Jan.-Feb. 1991, p. 35).⁸

During the night of August 2, Iraqi tanks and troops rumbled unchallenged down the 37 mile superhighway from Iraq to Kuwait City and quickly seized control. Key elements of Kuwait's small army were on vacation and many Kuwaiti troops and the royal family fled immediately. After sporadic fighting, the Iraqis gained control of the whole city, including government buildings, military posts, and radio and television facilities. Suddenly the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait became the number one story on the news agenda and remained so for many months.

Cockburn and Cohen speculate that the United States did not send a stronger warning to Iraq

because of its strategic relationship with Iraq, but that Saddam Hussein went too far in seizing all of Kuwait (1992, p. 17):

Unless one espouses the conspiracy theory that the United States wanted Iraq to invade Kuwait as an excuse to crush Saddam Hussein, then surely the simplest explanation is that the Bush administration was trying to shove Kuwait into a more tractable posture with regard to the price of oil and possibly to the leasing of the two islands so desired by Iraq for the construction of a deep harbor in the Gulf. Iraq, after all, was a U.S. ally and already a serious trading partner. Nor would the Administration, strongly orientated to the oil lobby, have been at all averse to seeing a hike in prices, which had drifted in real terms below their 1973 level. By seizing the whole of Kuwait, Saddam Hussein overplayed the hand allowed by the United States.

In a New York Times interview (September 12, 1990, p. 19), the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, hinted that the United States was surprised that Iraq had seized the entirety of Kuwait, as if they expected Iraq to merely take the off-shore islands and disputed oil field. The question arises, however, why Saddam Hussein believed he could get away with invading Kuwait. The mainstream media never discussed in any detail the complex relations between Iraq, its Arab neighbors, and the West that apparently led Iraq to conclude that it could seize and keep Kuwait, or at least bargain its way out in a manner that would benefit Iraq.

In any case, Saddam Hussein grossly miscalculated the world response to his invasion of Kuwait. During the past decade, the dominant Western powers had beaten a path to his door to give him military information and support during the Iran/Iraq war, to sell him the latest military technology, to enter into economic arrangements with Iraq, and, of course, to buy Iraq's oil. In the light of this attention and support, it is not surprising that Hussein would think that his Western friends would let him get away with his robbery of Kuwait (which might, in the last analysis, merely have been a way to get Kuwaiti attention in order to extort financial and territorial concessions from the greedy Kuwaitis, who simply refused to negotiate what were serious problems). But Iraq miscalculated the effects of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the void that would be filled by the United States. Iraq failed to perceive that the U.S. would neither allow any threat to its two key interests in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia and Israel, nor would it allow an independent country like Iraq to wield political influence and help control oil prices in the region. The Iraqis also failed to see that George Bush and the U.S. military-industrial establishment desperately needed a war to save Bush's failing presidency and to preserve the military budget and U.S. defense industries at the end of the cold war (see 3.1).

The Iraqi seizure of Kuwait was of immediate interest to the western capitalist societies because Iraq and Kuwait together would control approximately 20 percent of the world's known oil reserves. With the potential wealth generated from future oil sales and control over oil prices, Saddam Hussein could play a major role on the world's political and economic stage. Consequently, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait produced a crisis for the world capitalist system, for U.S. and European economic interests, and for the stability of the Middle East. Iraq was not able to get control of

Kuwaiti investments because much of their money had been transferred out of the country. Yet, rather than encouraging a diplomatic solution to the crisis that would return Kuwait's sovereignty and secure the region, George Bush responded with a military intervention, which inexorably led to the Gulf war itself.

1.1 Big Lies, Compliant Media, and Yellow Journalism

Interest in the crisis increased when the U.S. claimed that Iraq might also invade Saudi Arabia, which was said to control 20 percent of the world's known oil reserves and an investment portfolio even larger than Kuwait's.⁹ George Bush, who had initially attacked the invasion as "naked aggression," heated up his rhetoric and declared on August 5 that the invasion "would not stand." Two days later, he sent thousands of troops to Saudi Arabia. The Bush administration had thus set the stage for the Gulf war by failing to warn Iraq of the consequences of invading Kuwait and then by quickly sending troops to Saudi Arabia while, as I shall argue in the next section, undercutting diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis.

Although the United States constantly accused Iraq and Saddam Hussein of lying and compared the Iraqi leader to Hitler, the Bush administration itself systematically disseminated Big Lies to promote its war policy. Suspicious claims by the administration began with reports that the Iraqis had positioned an offensive force on the Saudi Arabian border, poised to invade that country. On August 3, for instance, Forrest Sawyer reported on ABC's Nightline that: "tens of thousands of Iraqi troops are reportedly massed along the Saudi Arabian border, and there is still fear that Saddam Hussein will carry his blitzkrieg across Saudi territory. It would not be much of a fight. Iraq's million-man battle-seasoned army against the nearly 66,000 Saudi troops, 5,500 Iraqi tanks, 10 times as many as Saudi Arabia."

There is no compelling evidence that Iraq did have large numbers of troops on the Saudi border and the same day ABC news reported the Iraqi ambassador's claim that Iraq had no intention whatsoever of invading Saudi Arabia and that it was "just a big lie" that there were Iraqi troops preparing to invade Saudi Arabia. Moreover, as I shall show, there are indications that from the beginning the Pentagon and Bush administration consistently exaggerated the Iraqi threat to Saudi Arabia, or even manufactured it, to justify their intervention. There is also reason to believe that the Bush administration deliberately overestimated the size and competency of the Iraqi army in Kuwait and that the mainstream media uncritically reproduced the Administration's (dubious) figures repeatedly. On August 4, the New York Times headline read: "Iraqis Mass on Saudi Frontier" and the story indicated that: "Pentagon officials said that more than 60,000 Iraqi troops were massing in the southern part of Kuwait, not far from a major oilfield in Saudi Arabia. A State Department spokesman, Richard A. Boucher, said Iraqi troops were within five to ten miles of the frontier. The British foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd, said that Iraqi troops were massing on the border....There were conflicting reports about the size of the Iraqi military force in Kuwait, but one Pentagon official estimated late today that it was approaching 100,000 troops, or more than Iraq needs to pacify and occupy Kuwait" (p. A4).

The television networks dutifully repeated these figures day after day without a modicum of skepticism. There is no reason, however, why one should have accepted these figures or the claim that the Iraqis were gathering on the Saudi Arabia border as if to invade. On the contrary, compelling

evidence suggested that U.S. claims concerning the imminent Iraqi threat to Saudi Arabia were pure disinformation designed to legitimate a U.S. military intervention in the Gulf. In particular, the claim that Iraqis were ready to invade Saudi Arabia served to scare the Saudis into allowing a major U.S. troop deployment on their soil and to convince the U.S. and world public that serious interests (i.e., the flow of oil) were being threatened. The Iraqis claimed repeatedly that they had no designs on Saudi Arabia, no intention of invading, and because there were no independent sources of information in Kuwait, it was impossible to verify if the United States was or was not telling the truth concerning the Iraqi troop formations on the Saudi border that were allegedly poised for invasion.

On August 5, the Pentagon continued to claim that Iraq was threatening Saudi Arabia. The New York Times stated: "Iraqi troops were reported to have gone into what is called the Neutral Zone, an area from which Kuwait and Saudi Arabia share oil earnings. Baghdad denied those reports as 'false news'" (p. A1). In addition, the Times disclosed:

A Pentagon official said that any quick Iraqi attack on Saudi Arabia would have to be without the logistical support usual for a major operation.

"They have not brought a lot down to Kuwait for a large-scale drive into Saudi Arabia," said an official.

"A long-term drive would require more of a logistical tail -- more water, gas, fuel, ammunition, spare parts and all of that," the official said. (p. A10)

Despite this disclaimer, buried in a story on page 10, the Bush administration and mainstream media were sending out signals that an Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia was an imminent and dangerous threat.¹⁰ On August 6, the message of the Bush administration was that the Arab countries were "not serious enough" concerning the Iraqi threat and were prepared to capitulate to Iraqi demands and accept its takeover of Kuwait. The New York Times commented:

Administration officials are increasingly concerned about the unwillingness of Saudi Arabia and the other leading Arab countries to stand up against Mr. Hussein. Officials say they detect a strong tendency in the Arab world to try to appease Baghdad by letting it swallow Kuwait in hopes that this will spare Iraq's neighbors from a similar fate. Privately, American officials are expressing contempt and disgust with most of the Arab leaders.

"The habits of centuries die hard," said a senior Administration official about the seeming instinct of Iraq's oil-rich neighbors to try to buy Baghdad off rather than forcefully confront it." (August 6, 1991, p. A6)

Note how the sources for every sentence of this story are "Administration officials" who are

obviously using the media to put out a propaganda line. Journalists are dependent on official sources to get leads, leaks, and background information that will help them in the highly competitive business of journalism. The system of news production and competition thus forces journalists to rely on official sources who reward journalists who convey the information and line that they wish promoted with further inside information, while punishing journalists who question their positions. Thus, in a crisis situation, without independent sources of information, mainstream journalists tend to rely on official sources who are able to manipulate them.

Precisely such a process of manipulation was evident in the crisis in the Gulf as the Bush administration used the mainstream media to conjure up an Iraqi threat to Saudi Arabia and to legitimate the deployment of U.S. troops in the region. The New York Times headline on August 6 read: "Bush, Hinting Force, Declares Gulf Impasse 'Will Not Stand'" and the subheadline pointed to a mission by Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney to Saudi Arabia to try to persuade the Saudis to let the United States use military installations in their country. There is evidence that, early on, the Bush administration decided on the use of military force to resolve the crisis and chose the road to war. Henceforth, there would be no serious talk within the administration of a negotiated settlement; instead, the administration planned step by step its relentless march to war.¹¹

The media helped the Bush administration by beating the war drums and producing an atmosphere where it was all too likely that military force would be used to resolve the crisis in the Gulf. In particular, the Washington Post not only privileged the Bush administration line during the crucial early days of the crisis, but itself promoted a military option. On August 3, Patrick Tyler, who had previously written an article on Saddam Hussein as a "pragmatic" Arab leader (May 13, 1989, p. A13) suddenly discovered that Hussein was a "brash and brutal leader, whose tactics have terrorized his neighbors, incited the Israelis with threats of chemical retaliation and made the superpowers look like helpless giants" (p. A25). Also on August 3, George Will attacked the "Wolf of Babylon" while two Post Op-Ed (opinion-editorial) page writers discovered Iraq's "Nuclear Specter"; neoconservative Charles Krauthammer deplored the "festival of appeasement" and a Post editorial attacked the "Aggression in the Gulf" and the "dictator Saddam Hussein." A business article noted that Hussein is now "OPEC's Most Important Member," claiming that he now controlled world oil prices.¹²

The August 7 edition of the Washington Post aggressively promoted a military solution, while demonizing the Iraqi leader. Before Bush even announced his decision to send U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia, the Post was calling for a U.S. military response to Iraq's invasion. On p. A2, Mary McGrory, in a column titled "Bush and the Beast of Baghdad," urged Bush to bomb Iraq. She assured Bush that "Americans, faced with the specter of high oil prices and new hostage-grabs, are emotionally involved in getting rid of the beast" and that the "best thing Bush has going for him is the just about unanimous approval to do whatever is necessary." Note that McGrory referred to Saddam Hussein as a "beast"--perhaps the ultimate dehumanizing epithet. Not only did she demonize the Iraqi leader, but she suggested--falsely--that Bush had a mandate from the public to bomb Baghdad and to do "whatever is necessary," thus urging and legitimating ruthless military action. After producing a litany of Hussein's bestial acts, McGrory evoked the Munich analogy, recalling the appeasement of Hitler in the 1930s at the Munich conference, implicitly warning against similar treatment of the Iraqis.¹³

Note, however, the reasons, such as they are, that McGrory recommended bombing "the beast" and how she identifies Iraq with its president as if bombing Iraq were equivalent to bombing Hussein. She claimed that "Saudi Arabia is in imminent danger of being invaded by Saddam" and then asked rhetorically if bombing Baghdad will "move up his timetable on the invasion of Saudi Arabia?" McGrory assumed that Saddam Hussein will invade Saudi Arabia and that therefore he should be bombed to punish him for his transgressions. This absolutely irresponsible call for violent military action disregarded all of the good reasons why it was unlikely that Iraq would invade Saudi Arabia. Indeed, had that been the Iraqi plan, the only rational way to carry it through would have been to do so immediately, although there is not a shred of evidence that Iraq ever had this in mind.

This striking example of yellow journalism was supplemented in the Washington Post's August 7 edition by both an opinion piece and a front-page article which suggest that the Post was being used in a disinformation campaign to legitimate a U.S. intervention in Saudi Arabia and was engaging in "yellow journalism" to promote a military solution.¹⁴ On that day, the Post's associate editor and chief foreign correspondent Jim Hoagland kicked in with a column: "Force Hussein to Withdraw" (p. A19). As certain as McGrory of Iraq's imminent invasion of Saudi Arabia, Hoagland opened by proclaiming that "Saddam Hussein has gone to war to gain control of the oil fields of Kuwait and ultimately of Saudi Arabia. The United States must now use convincing military force against the Iraqi dictator to save the oil fields and to preserve American influence in the Middle East." According to Hoagland, Saddam Hussein "respects only force and will respond to nothing else."

The rest of the article consisted of false analysis, questionable analogies, and bellicose banality. Hoagland claimed that the "Iraqi dictator's base of support is too narrow and too shaky to withstand a sharp, telling blow." Yet some six weeks of the most vicious bombing in history were unable to dislodge Hussein whose support, or staying power, was obviously much stronger than Hoagland could imagine. Hoagland also believed that "he [Hussein] is so hated at home that his defeat, even by foreign forces, will be greeted as deliverance by his own nation and by much of the Arab world." As it turned out, both Iraq and the Arab world were deeply divided over Hussein and the sweeping generalities that Hoagland employed were totally off the mark.

Hoagland bordered on overt racism when he claimed that the Arab nations were too weak to "deliver that blow themselves" (one wonders what blow the hot-penned warrior at the Post had in mind). He also claimed that Ronald Reagan's decision to bomb Libya was the right model for Bush to follow. This example was revealing because Moammar Gadhafi preceded Saddam Hussein as a symbolically constructed Arab enemy upon which national hatred could be projected and thus served as an object lesson for Third World countries that refused to submit to domination by the neoimperialist superpowers.¹⁵ Likewise, it is far from certain that the terrorist incident for which Gadhafi was "punished" (i.e., the bombing of a Berlin disco) was carried out by groups affiliated with Libya.¹⁶ But facts have little relevance for an ideologue's brief for bombing.

In his opinion piece, Hoagland lectured George Bush on why he must take urgent and forceful action to save his presidency and, like McGrory, urged military action against Iraq. Hoagland assumed both that Iraq planned to invade Saudi Arabia and that only a military blow from George Bush could save the day. In fact, as I shall soon discuss, there were important Arab diplomatic initiatives underway, blocked by the United States, but these efforts were ignored by the

war-mongering Hoagland. Letting his reactionary beliefs slip through, Hoagland interpreted Iraq's invasion of Kuwait as a challenge to "the legitimacy of all remaining monarchies in the Arabian Peninsula, where Britain established most existing boundaries and political systems in the colonial era." Hoagland thus defined the principles at stake as the legitimacy of some of the most reactionary monarchies in the world, with borders arbitrarily drawn by British colonialists who deprived Iraq of a viable seaport and robbed national groups like the Palestinians and the Kurds of their homelands.

Indeed, Hoagland's whole article manifests what Edward Said (1978) described as an "Orientalist" mentality in which white Westerners establish their superiority by vacuous generalizations about people in the Arab world. Hoagland characterized Arabs as understanding only force, too weak to respond to aggression, and incapable of defending themselves and solving their own problems. For him, the Gulf crisis is thus the locus of "a rare case where the United States would be unwise not to use force." Analyzing such intellectually bankrupt pleas for a military strike against Iraq would not be worth the time and energy except that administration officials paid close attention to Hoagland's columns. Further, his poorly written, badly argued, and banal punditry was highly acclaimed in political circles; indeed, he was awarded a Pulitzer prize "for searching and prescient columns on events leading up to the Gulf War." In addition, his and McGrory's columns are significant because they were published in the Washington Post, supposedly a bastion of liberal enlightenment, and read by U.S. policymakers and the mainstream media. Further, McGrory's demonization of Hussein was retooled and republished in Newsweek (Sept. 3, 1990), part of the Washington Post Company.

In fact, the Washington Post in their August 7 edition almost seemed to be prodding Bush to send troops to Saudi Arabia and to use force to resolve the crisis. The Post's banner headline across the top of page 1 stated: "Saddam says Seizure of Kuwait Is Permanent" and a lead story by Patrick Tyler¹⁷ claimed:

Saddam called in the ranking U.S. diplomat in Baghdad, and told him categorically that Kuwait now belongs to Iraq and there was no going back, according to Administration officials. "It's a done deal," one U.S. official said, characterizing Saddam's message.

Another official said Saddam appended a specific warning that if Saudi Arabia shuts down the Iraqi crude oil pipelines that cross the Saudi desert to the Red Sea, Iraq will attack the kingdom. The warning further stated that if American forces intervene in the region, Iraq will "embarrass" the United States, the official said.

In retrospect, this story is sheer disinformation and the Washington Post reported once again merely what Bush administration officials told them as if it were fact, making Hussein sound as belligerent and threatening as possible. And although Iraq did in fact keep hold of Kuwait, according to other sources (Salinger and Laurent 1991 and Emery 1991), it was seeking to cut a deal to resolve the crisis, but from the beginning the Bush administration simply refused to negotiate. Other accounts of the meeting of Saddam Hussein with the U.S. chargé d'affaires in Baghdad, Joe Wilson, provide a quite different story. According to Karsh and Rautsi (1991):

During the [August 6] meeting [with Joe Wilson], Hussein was far more affable than in his bellicose encounter with Ms. Glaspie a fortnight earlier. "Iraq is firmly willing to respect the United States' legitimate international interests in the Middle East," he told Mr. Wilson, "and is interested in establishing normal relations with the United States on the basis of mutual respect." Dismissing the reports on Iraqi military deployments along the Saudi border as fabrications, aimed at providing "pretexts to interfere in the region's affairs and to justify an aggression against Iraq," he reassured his interlocutor that Iraq harbored no evil intentions whatsoever against Saudi Arabia, with which it was tied in a bilateral treaty of non-aggression. (P. 220)¹⁸

The authors claim that such conciliatory gestures under duress are typical of Hussein and that he was making every effort possible to assure the world that he had no intention of invading Saudi Arabia:

Even a cursory examination of Saddam's political record would reveal that his instinctive inclination, whenever faced with overwhelming opposition, was to appease rather than to confront, to try to defuse tensions, rather than to escalate. His initial response to the buildup of international pressures following the invasion of Kuwait was no exception. While threatening to turn the Gulf into "a graveyard for those who think of committing aggression," he took great care to emphasize the temporary nature of the Iraqi intervention, reiterating his pledge to withdraw the Iraqi forces "as soon as the situation settles down and the evil grip is loosened on Arab Kuwait."

Moreover, within less than 36 hours of the invasion, the Iraqi public learned, through a special announcement of the RCC [Revolutionary Command Council], that their valiant armed forces had completed "their honest national and pan-Arab duties" of defending Kuwait, and were to begin withdrawing from the principality on August 5, "unless something emerges that threatens the security of Kuwait and Iraq"...A special emphasis in Saddam's conciliating campaign was placed on denying any possibility of an impending Iraq act of aggression against Saudi Arabia. "Some news agencies have reported fabricated news about what they called the approach of Iraqi forces toward the Saudi border," read an official Iraqi statement. "Iraq categorically denies these fabricated reports. Causing confusion between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is a fraternal country with which we have normal cordial relations, and Kuwait's case is tendentious." This message was quickly conveyed to the heads of Arab states, Egypt and Saudi Arabia in particular, by high-ranking officials. More importantly, it was directly relayed to President Bush in an oral message from Saddam Hussein, transmitted at a meeting with the U.S. *chargé d'affaires* in Baghdad, Joseph Wilson. (Karsh and Rautsi 1991, pp. 219-220).

The transcript of the conversation on August 6 between Wilson and Hussein (published in

Salinger and Laurent 1991, pp. 137-147 and Sciolino 1991, pp. 284-293) supports the Iraqi version and suggests that the Washington Post version was fabricated by the Bush administration and dutifully transmitted by the Post. The key issues concern: (1) whether Iraq was really planning to invade Saudi Arabia, as it was the threat of such an invasion that Bush used to justify sending U.S. troops to the Gulf on August 7; and (2) whether Iraq was or was not prepared to negotiate a settlement to the crisis. The transcript of the Wilson meeting with Hussein suggests that rather than being aggressive and intransigent, Hussein made it clear from the beginning that he was willing to negotiate a solution to the Gulf crisis and had no intention whatsoever of invading Saudi Arabia. The Post story, by contrast, indicated that Hussein was not prepared to negotiate a settlement. Furthermore, two Post columnists on August 7 insinuated that an Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia was imminent and that only bombing Iraq could deter Iraqi aggression. In a summary article on the invasion, one of the Washington Post's top reporters, Patrick Tyler, wrote: "The initial move to seize Kuwait was relatively painless. But the next step that Saddam reportedly threatened yesterday--a possible invasion of Saudi Arabia--would pose immense difficulties for the Iraqi leader, forcing his army to operate far from home, at the end of long supply lines, in the intense summer heat of the desert" (p. A9).

This passage repeats the claim that Saddam Hussein threatened to invade Saudi Arabia, despite the lack of any compelling evidence. Moreover, Tyler's own text indicated the extreme unlikelihood that Iraq would invade Saudi Arabia right after taking Kuwait because of the logistical difficulties that such an invasion would entail (to say nothing of the political response of the West that obviously would not tolerate such a move). Indeed, during this period, the American Friends Service Committee put out a report that concluded:

Prior to the deployment of the multinational forces to Saudi Arabia many informed analysts believed that Iraq would not continue past Kuwait to the Saudi oil fields, for at least five reasons: (1) Whereas Kuwait had angered Iraq by exceeding its OPEC oil quota, Iraq and Saudi Arabia had been coordinating their oil pricing policies before the invasion, in opposition to Kuwait; (2) It will take some time for Iraq to absorb Kuwait and assess the situation; (3) Saudi Arabia's military forces, while still small compared to Iraq's, are much larger and more capable than Kuwait's were; (4) Supply lines for Iraqi forces would become overstretched and vulnerable to Saudi air attack; and (5) An attack on Saudi Arabia would almost certainly prompt military intervention by the United States and other countries. (August 8, 1990; in PeaceNet mideast.gulf archive)¹⁹

Other informed observers also doubted that Iraq ever had any intention of invading Saudi Arabia. Bulloch and Morris (1991) argue that: "For all the talk of Saddam's plans to attack the kingdom, it never seemed likely. The Iraqi deployment, once Kuwait was taken, was entirely defensive, and the much-cited move towards the Saudi border was merely the pushing out of frontlines and tripwires which any prudent commander would undertake when setting up a defensive line. All the evidence was that suggestions of possible moves into Saudi Arabia by the Iraqis were merely propaganda designed to support the huge build-up of forces by America and its

allies" (pp. 169-170). Martin Yant concluded that, "many analysts now question whether Iraqi tanks were ever poised to roll into Saudi Arabia. Historians may someday compare this claim to the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident, in which a clash between U.S. destroyers and Vietnamese torpedo boats was apparently blown out of proportion by President Johnson in order to gain congressional authority to expand the Vietnam War" (1991, p. 90).

Thus the Bush administration and Washington Post disinformation concerning the Iraqis' readiness to invade Saudi Arabia worked effectively to shape media discourse and public perception of the crisis and to legitimate U.S. policy, as did Tyler's front-page story concerning Hussein's meeting with Joe Wilson and Iraq's alleged refusal to negotiate a solution or leave Kuwait. The same day as the Washington Post article, the Iraqi news service denied the report that Iraq was massing troops on the Saudi/Kuwaiti border and claimed that it had no intention of invading Saudi Arabia; this report was cited in the Japan Economic Newswire, the Xinhua General Overseas News Service, and some Reuters reports on August 7, but was generally disregarded by the U.S. mainstream media. Also, on August 7, State Department spokesperson Margaret Tutweiler described the Iraqi troops massing on the border and presented Joseph Wilson's meeting with Saddam Hussein negatively, building on the Washington Post disinformation campaign to produce an image on the very day that the U.S. was sending troops to Saudi Arabia that Iraq was not going to leave Kuwait, would not negotiate, and was about to invade Saudi Arabia.

This discourse dominated the news coverage for the day. On an August 7, PBS discussion of the proper U.S. response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, co-anchor Judy Woodruff stated: "Iraq's leader Saddam Hussein was quoted today [in the Post story -- D.K.] as saying the invasion of Kuwait was irreversible and permanent." Later on the same show, former national security adviser (and Iran/Contra criminal) Robert McFarlane quoted the story as evidence that Hussein was not going to leave Kuwait and that therefore a U.S. military intervention in Saudi Arabia was necessary. And in a discussion with Arab-American leaders as to whether a U.S. military intervention was justified, Woodruff interjected: "the U.S. chargé in Baghdad did have a two hour meeting with Saddam Hussein yesterday which by all accounts was very unsatisfactory as Saddam Hussein insisted that he was going to stay in Kuwait and made what were reported to be veiled threats against other nations in the area" -- all lies which Bush administration officials fed to the Post which were then disseminated by other mainstream media.²⁰

On the morning of August 8, presidential press secretary Marlin Fitzwater told reporters that in a tense, two-hour session between Hussein and the highest-ranking American official in Iraq, chargé d'affaires Joseph Wilson, the Iraqi president "indicated he had no intention of leaving Kuwait and had every indication of staying and claiming it as his own." This false account of the conversation with Wilson was printed in the Boston Globe, Newsday, the Jerusalem Post, the New York Times, the Daily Telegraph, the Toronto Star, The Times (of London), and the Washington Times. Summaries of the first week of the crisis in the Los Angeles Times (Aug 9, 1990) and the Sunday Times of London (Aug 12, 1990) presented the false Bush administration version of the Hussein/Wilson meeting as the turning point in the crisis which seemingly indicated that Iraq was not going to pull out of Kuwait or negotiate a solution to the crisis.

The U.S. was thus able to produce the impression that Iraq had no intention of leaving Kuwait and negotiating a solution to the crisis by distorting the discussion between Iraq and Joseph

Wilson and the mainstream media served as a compliant conduit for the U.S. disinformation campaign. In his early morning television speech on August 8, which announced and defended sending U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia, Bush claimed that "the Saudi government requested our help, and I responded to that request by ordering U.S. air and ground forces to deploy to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia." This was a lie as accounts of the Saudi-U.S. negotiations later indicated that the United States pressured the Saudis to allow the U.S. military intervention into their country (Woodward 1991, pp. 241ff. and Salinger and Laurent 1991, pp. 110ff.).²¹ Bush repeated the dubious claim that "Iraq has massed an enormous war machine on the Saudi border," and his administration emphasized this theme in discussion with the media, which obediently reproduced the argument. At 9:24 a.m. on August 8, for instance, Bob Zelnick, ABC's Pentagon correspondent, dutifully reported that the Pentagon informed him that Iraqi troop presence had doubled since the invasion of Kuwait, that there were now more than 200,000 Iraqi troops in Kuwait with a large force poised to invade Saudi Arabia.

Yet it is not at all certain how many troops Iraq actually deployed in Kuwait during the first six weeks of the crisis. All preinvasion reports produced by the Bush administration indicated that Iraq had amassed about 100,000 troops on the border of Kuwait. Initial reports during the first few days after the invasion suggested that Iraq actually had between 80,000 and 100,000 troops in Kuwait, more than enough for an occupation, as the Bush administration liked to point out and as the mainstream media diligently reported; once the U.S. forces were on their way to Saudi Arabia, the Iraqi forces suddenly doubled. But these figures invariably came from Bush administration or Pentagon sources, and it was later claimed that Iraqi troops were actually being withdrawn from Kuwait at the very moment when the Bush administration and Pentagon asserted that they were doubling their forces. After the war, Pentagon officials told U.S. News and World Report writers that the divisions positioned furthest south in Kuwait were not the elite Republican Guard forces, which were moved back to Iraq during the first week of the invasion (1992, pp. 97-98). A senior Central Command officer conceded after the war ended that: "We still have no hard evidence that he ever intended to invade Saudi Arabia. We believe that he did. But none of the captured documents or prisoner debriefs has come up with anything hard [indicating an attack on the Saudi oil fields]" (U.S. News and World Report 1992, p. 98).

After the war, it was evident that the U.S. had vastly overestimated the number of Iraqi troops in Kuwait (see 10.3), and there is reason to believe that the U.S. estimates were highly flawed from the beginning. St. Petersburg Times reporter Jean Heller published two stories (Nov. 30 and Jan. 6) suggesting that satellite photos indicated far fewer Iraqi troops in Saudi Arabia than the Bush administration claimed (the Jan. 6 story was republished in In These Times, Feb. 27, 1991, pp. 1-2). Heller's suspicions were roused when she saw a December 3, 1990 Newsweek "Periscope" item that ABC News had never used several satellite photos of Saudi Arabia and southern Kuwait taken in early September. Purchased by ABC from the Soviet commercial satellite agency Soyuz-Karta, the photos were expected to reveal the presence of a massive Iraqi troop deployment in Kuwait, but failed to disclose anything near the number of troops claimed by the Bush administration. ABC declined to use them and Heller got her newspaper to purchase the satellite photos of Kuwait from August 8 and September 13 and of Saudi Arabia from September 11. Two satellite experts who had formerly worked for the U.S. government failed to find evidence of the alleged buildup. "The Pentagon kept saying the bad guys were there, but we don't see anything to indicate an Iraqi force in Kuwait of even 20 percent the size the administration claimed," said Peter Zimmerman, who served

with the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency during the Reagan administration" (Heller, In These Times, Feb. 27, p. 2).

Both satellite photos taken on August 8 and September 13 showed a sand cover on the roads, suggesting that there were few Iraqi troops on the Saudi border where the Bush administration claimed that they were massed, threatening to invade Saudi Arabia. Pictures of the main Kuwaiti airport showed no Iraqi planes in sight, though large numbers of U.S. planes were visible in Saudi Arabia. The Pentagon refused to comment on the satellite photos, but to suggestions advanced by ABC (which refused to show the photos) that the pictures were not high enough quality to detect the Iraqi troops, Heller responded that the photograph of the north of Saudi Arabia showed all the roads swept clean of sand and clearly depicted the U.S. troop buildup in the area. By September, the Pentagon was claiming that there were 265,000 Iraqi troops and 2,200 tanks, which posed a threat to Saudi Arabia, deployed in Kuwait, but the photographs reveal nowhere near this number and, so far, the U.S. government has refused to release its satellite photographs.

Indeed, Woodward (1991) noted that the Saudis had sent scouts across the border into Kuwait after the Iraqi invasion to see if they could detect the Iraqi troops that the United States claimed were massed for a possible invasion of their country. "The scouts had come back reporting nothing. There was no trace of the Iraqi troops heading toward the kingdom" (Woodward 1991, pp. 258-259). Soon after, the U.S. team arrived with photos of the Iraqi troops allegedly massed on the Saudi border and General Norman Schwarzkopf explained to the Saudis that the Iraqis had sent small command-and-control units ahead of the mass of troops, which would explain why the Saudi scouts failed to see them (Woodward 1991, p. 268).²² Former CIA officer Ralph McGehee told journalist Joel Bleifuss: "There has been no hesitation in the past to use doctored satellite photographs to support the policy position that the U.S. wants supported" (In These Times, Sept. 19, 1990, p. 5). Indeed, Emery (1991) reported that King Hussein of Jordan was sent similar pictures of tanks moving along roads near the Saudi/Kuwaiti border and that King Hussein claimed that the Saudis "pressed the panic button" when they saw the photographs (p. 15). King Hussein was skeptical and "argued that if Saddam Hussein had wanted to invade the Saudis, he would have moved immediately, when the only thing between him and the Saudi capital was a tiny and untested--if expensively equipped--Saudi army" (Emery 1991).

This account is supported by Dunnigan and Bay's diagram of Iraqi defenses in August 1990 when U.S. forces arrived in Saudi Arabia (1991, p. 248). Iraqi troops are presented in a defensive posture around Kuwait City and not poised on the border ready to invade. Later diagrams by the authors (1991, pp. 256-257) show Iraqi troops located in defensive positions on the border but there is no evidence that they ever set to invade Saudi Arabia. Thus, there are reasons to believe that the Bush administration exaggerated the number of Iraqi troops in Kuwait and the threat to Saudi Arabia to scare the Saudis into accepting the U.S. troops and to justify its own troop buildup in the region and eventual military action. The mainstream media reproduced the U.S. claims and figures as facts with newspapers like the Washington Post and the television networks serving as conduits for Bush administration disinformation campaign.

Moreover, the Washington Post followed the tradition of yellow journalism by urging Bush to military action on the basis of disinformation. The difference, however, between classical yellow journalism and the promotion by the Post of military action against Iraq was that William Randolph

Hearst's papers had produced the lies themselves to help sell papers and to push a policy line desired by the newspaper publisher, but during the Gulf crisis and war the mainstream media simply reproduced the lies and disinformation of the Bush administration and Pentagon.²³ Yet Post editorial writers and columnists actively promoted a military solution, urging an attack on Baghdad even before Bush announced that he was sending troops to Saudi Arabia.

Crucially, the major newspapers, news magazines, and television networks did not criticize Bush's deployment or debate whether it was wise to send so many U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia in the first place. The alternative press argued against the deployment and for a UN peace-keeping force to be sent to the area, rather than a massive U.S. military force, but this position got almost no hearing in the mainstream media. Furthermore, the leaders of the Democratic party also failed to criticize the U.S. military deployment, which points again to the crisis of liberalism. Yet there were many oppositional voices to the Bush administration's policies that were simply excluded from the mainstream media, thus precluding serious debate over the proper U.S. response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. But the mainstream media only draw on an extremely limited repertoire of voices and privilege the same administration officials and top Democratic Party leaders, thus freezing significant views out of public policy debates--a topic that I return to in Chapter 2 and throughout this book.

1.2 The Subversion of Diplomacy

In addition to disinformation concerning the Iraqi threat to Saudi Arabia, another of the Big Lies was that the United States sought a diplomatic solution to the crisis in the Gulf. Many diplomatic attempts were made throughout the crisis to avoid war and the Bush administration did not actively encourage any of these efforts; in fact, it energetically blocked such efforts or ignored them, as I shall document in this section.

On August 3, for example, it was announced that there would be a meeting between Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia over the weekend in Jidda, Saudi Arabia aimed at resolving the crisis, but nothing came of this. There were rumors that Iraq was willing to withdraw for concessions on the disputed Rumaila oil field, its debt to Kuwait, and access to Kuwaiti islands, which would guarantee clear access to the Gulf. But the August 5 New York Times had the headline "Arab's Summit Meeting Off; Iraqi Units in Kuwait Dig In." The story did not really analyze why the summit was called off, stating merely: "Apparently one reason that the Arab mediation summit meeting...was postponed was that President Hussein was not prepared to attend and the Saudis did not want to meet without him for fear that he would perceive this as an anti-Baghdad initiative" (p. A8). The same story, however, was subheadlined "U.S. Is Seeking to Forestall Any Arab Deal for Kuwait," thus raising the question of whether the U.S. itself was blocking diplomacy from the beginning, perhaps because it already envisaged and desired a military solution to the crisis.

Salinger and Laurent (1991) observed that at precisely this moment the Bush administration was actively subverting an Arab attempt to reach a diplomatic solution to the crisis. These authors claimed that on August 3, King Hussein of Jordan visited Saddam Hussein in Baghdad and that the "Iraqi President gave his guest the impression of a benevolent leader prepared to make major compromises" (p. 108). Saddam told King Hussein that he had signed a nonaggression pact with Saudi Arabia, indicating that he had no intention of invading it, and that he would be at the minisummit the coming weekend. Moreover, he suggested that he would be willing to negotiate a

solution to the crisis that would involve his pulling out of Kuwait. At this juncture, the Bush administration was telling the Saudis that Saddam Hussein was about to invade their country, but King Fahd first refused the U.S. offer of troops, saying that "he still had confidence in King Hussein's efforts to reach a negotiated settlement and to persuade the Iraqi president to withdraw from Kuwait. He reminded Bush that an Arab mini-summit was due to be held the following day, August 4" (Salinger and Laurent 1991, pp. 110-111).

But, according to Salinger and Laurent (1991, p. 112), despite U.S. promises not to intervene until the Arabs had a chance to settle the problem on their own, John Kelly of the State Department sent Egypt a note threatening them with the loss of foreign aid unless they immediately condemned the Iraqi invasion and supported the U.S. line at a meeting of the Arab League which was meeting in Cairo. Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak quickly put out a statement condemning Iraq and engineered an Arab League condemnation of Iraq, thus subverting the planned minisummit. Salinger and Laurent claimed:

Highly placed figures within Iraq told us that during the course of his meetings with King Hussein, the Iraqi President had agreed to go to Jeddah for a mini-summit on August 4 to negotiate with King Fahd and, if the negotiations were successful, to withdraw from Kuwait. Just before the war broke out, when Saddam Hussein was meeting with UN Secretary General Pérez de Cuéllar in Baghdad, he re-emphasized his decision to pull out of Kuwait on August 5 if the mini-summit planned for August 4 in Jeddah were successful (1991, p. 114).

But because Egypt managed to pass a resolution condemning Iraq's invasion at the Arab League meeting in Cairo on August 3, Iraq canceled the minisummit that had been scheduled for the next day (Salinger and Laurent 1991, p. 117). Emery's account (1991), based on an interview with King Hussein of Jordan and other Arab sources, indicated that Saddam Hussein was indeed ready to negotiate a solution to the crisis in the Gulf and was prepared to pull out immediately, but that the United States blocked the early attempt to negotiate the crisis.

On August 5, though bitter about the sabotage of the minisummit, Saddam Hussein reportedly told Yasir Arafat that he should contact the Saudis and tell them that he was ready to talk. Two days later Arafat gave a letter from Hussein to a Palestinian businessman who had contacts in the White House. The letter was addressed to George Bush and confirmed that Iraq was ready to pull out of Kuwait but needed to resolve its problems with Kuwait first. According to Salinger and Laurent: "The businessman called John Sununu, White House chief of staff, and told him he was forwarding the message. 'It's OK, but I don't want anyone to know such a message has been passed on,' Sununu said. When the message got to Washington, there was no reply" (1991, p. 127).

On August 12, Iraq agreed to withdraw from Kuwait if Syria and Israel withdrew from occupied Arab lands in Lebanon and the occupied territories; although this move was clearly an opening to begin a negotiated settlement, the United States derisively dismissed the initiative. As Noam Chomsky (1990) explained: "Television news that day was featuring a well-staged

presentation of George Bush the dynamo, racing his power boat, jogging furiously, playing tennis and golf, and otherwise expending his formidable energies on important pursuits, far too busy 'recreating' (as he put it) to waste much time on the occasional fly in Arab garb that he might have to swat. As the TV news clips were careful to stress, the President's disdain for this irritant was so great that he scarcely even broke his golf stroke to express his contempt for what the anchorperson termed Hussein's 'so-called offer,' not to be regarded as 'serious.' The proposal merited one dismissive sentence in a news story on the blockade in the next day's New York Times" (p. 22).

Chomsky pointed out that in England the Financial Times thought that the Iraqi peace initiative "may yet serve some useful purpose" by offering "a path away from disaster...through negotiation" (1990, p. 22). The Financial Times also conceded that Iraq's demand to link the resolution of the Kuwaiti question to other Middle East issues such as Arab/Israeli relations and Lebanon was also rational. Yet the Bush administration rejected such "linkage," which they tried to make into a dirty word, although any negotiator knows that linkages often provide solutions to crises. The Financial Times concluded: "The 'immediate issue' is for 'Iraq to get out of Kuwait'; but in the light of Iraq's proposal, 'the onus is now on everyone involved, including Middle Eastern and Western powers, to seize the initiative and harness diplomacy to the show of political, military and economic force now on display in the Gulf'" (1990, p. 22).

In addition, investigative reporter Robert Parry later revealed in the Nation (April 15, 1991, pp. 480ff.) that on August 9, the United States received a back-channel offer from Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait in return for settlement of some border disputes. The proposal was considered by the National Security Council on August 10 and rejected as "already moving against policy," according to the retired Army officer who arranged the meeting. Former CIA director Richard Helms attempted to carry the initiative further, with no success. In addition, later efforts by high Iraqi officials and U.S. interlocutors elicited no response. "There was nothing in this {peace initiative} that interested the U.S. government," according to Helms (quoted in Parry, April 15, 1991). A Congressional summary concluded that a diplomatic solution might have been possible at that time.

Further, during a much-heralded visit of King Hussein of Jordan to the United States on August 15 there were rumors that the king was delivering a peace message from Saddam Hussein to Bush at his Kennebunkport summer-vacation home. Suddenly, however, there was no message, no proposed solution, and Bush could return to playing golf and driving his speedboat. Several days later, however, the London-based Mideast Mirror reported that King Hussein had indeed brought Bush a peace proposal from Iraq. As David Armstrong put it, "According to the Mirror, Saddam relayed his willingness to negotiate a withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait, to be followed by the lifting of U.N. sanctions and an end to the U.S. military buildup in Saudi Arabia. The only point on which the Iraqi president was unwilling to negotiate, the Mirror said, was the restoration of the al-Sabah clan in Kuwait" (Random Lengths, Aug. 30, 1990, p. 3). Alexander Cockburn pointed out at the time that "even if the king did not carry such a message, he must have known before his arrival in Kennebunkport that America has no interest in any deals. He was kept waiting 24 hours before getting his audience with Bush, who took good care to let it be known that he was only interested in discussing the blockade of shipments to Iraq through the Jordanian port of Aqaba" (cited in Armstrong, Random Lengths, p. 3).

Consequently, the repeated U.S. claim that its troop deployment was merely a defensive

force was a highly suspicious cover. There is good reason to believe that the U.S. planned an offensive military strike from the beginning, systematically building up its forces until it possessed enough power to easily destroy Iraq. Despite their Big Lie that they constantly "went the extra mile" for a peaceful resolution to the crisis, the U.S. repeatedly blocked all efforts at finding a diplomatic solution, failing to respond to all Iraqi peace efforts as well as initiatives sponsored by other countries.

On August 19, Saddam Hussein proposed that the status of Kuwait be settled by the Arab states alone, without external interference, much as the Syrian occupation of Lebanon and Morocco's attempt to take over the Western Sahara had been dealt with. Once again, Washington refused to countenance such effrontery, even though it had long been U.S. policy not to tolerate outside interference in matters in Latin America or the Caribbean. Consequently, throughout the first month of the crisis, there was plentiful evidence that Iraq sought a negotiated settlement, but this avenue was consistently avoided by the Bush administration.

On August 21 the major network newscasts cited Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz at a news conference in Amman indicating an Iraqi readiness to talk, but the United States refused. On "ABC World News Tonight," Tariq Aziz reported that he told the U.S. chargé d'affaires in Baghdad, Joe Wilson: "Look. If you are ready to talk, we are ready to talk." But ABC noted that Bush wouldn't even bother himself to answer, reporting: "The President, who was golfing, refused to comment. His spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, says it is the same kind of rhetoric that we've heard before in a daily litany." ABC then presented the Yemeni ambassador saying that he did not understand why the U.S. would not talk to its adversary and Tariq Aziz's complaint that the U.S. will not listen to Iraqi proposals. Then, putting the Bush administration spin on the refusal to engage in diplomacy, ABC noted that the State Department answered that they listen to all Iraqi proposals, but dismissed negotiations, declaring that "as long as Iraq is holding thousands of hostages, pretending they are human bargaining chips, it is impossible to take any Iraqi proposals seriously." This is a questionable justification for not negotiating as even after Saddam Hussein agreed to release all hostages some weeks later, the Bush administration still refused to negotiate.

On August 21, CBS also presented Tariq Aziz's offer to begin negotiations, stating: "The Iraqi's offer to talk brought only scorn and Marlin Fitzwater says that there is nothing to negotiate; 'there is very little to talk about when we get only negative responses.'" The next day on CBS News, Dan Rather explained that President Bush in Maine was determined, even confrontational, about the showdown with Iraq, giving the back of his hand to any diplomacy with Saddam Hussein. "I don't rule in or rule out the use of military force," Bush stated. CBS reported that the United States would defy Iraq's order to shut down the U.S. embassy in Kuwait and might fire on ships even without a UN resolution allowing this action, which the Soviets were blocking. According to CBS, President Bush held the strongest hand he would ever hold and saw no need to give Saddam Hussein any hope that the crisis could be peacefully settled. In this way, CBS justified Bush's refusal to negotiate and his bellicose militarist gestures.

On August 22, Thomas Friedman published a column in the New York Times outlining State Department reasoning on the need to block the diplomatic track because Arab states might be tempted to "defuse the crisis" with "a few token gains" for Iraq, such as the islands of Warba and Bubiyan, which would give them secure access to the Gulf, or adjustment of the borders on the

Rumaila oil field. The Times's best source on State Department thinking thus revealed once again that the Bush administration was uninterested in diplomatic solutions and was actually blocking those that were circulating

On August 23, a former high-ranking U.S. official reportedly delivered another Iraqi offer to Bush's national security adviser Brent Scowcroft; the proposal was confirmed by the emissary and accompanying memoranda, and published by Knut Royce in Newsday on August 29. In this peace offer, Iraq agreed to withdraw from Kuwait and to allow foreigners to leave in return for the lifting of the economic sanctions, guaranteed access to the Gulf, and control of the Rumaila oil field. There were also proposals for the United States and Iraq to negotiate an oil agreement "satisfactory to both nations," to jointly work to secure stability of the Gulf, and to develop a plan "to alleviate Iraq's economic and financial problems." Royce quoted a Bush administration official as saying that the "terms of the proposal are serious" and "negotiable." Yet despite the fact that the proposal did not even demand that the United States withdraw from Saudi Arabia, or have any preconditions, the Bush administration ridiculed the Iraqi peace feeler, stating that "there was nothing in this particular proposal that merited its pursuit" (reported by Royce in Newsday, August 30, p. 6).

The New York Times also received a copy of the Iraqi message, but declined to take it seriously, following the lead of the Bush administration in dismissing all attempts at a negotiated settlement. As Chomsky pointed out:

"the New York Times noted the offer briefly on page 14, the continuation page of an article on another topic, citing government spokespeople who dismissed the Newsday report as 'baloney.' After framing the matter properly, the Times report concedes that the story was accurate, quotes White House sources who said the proposal 'had not been taken seriously because Mr. Bush demands the unconditional withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait.' The report also noted quietly that 'a well-connected Middle Eastern diplomat told the New York Times a week ago {August 23} of a similar offer, but it too was dismissed by the Administration.' That news had not been published. (1990, pp. 22-23)

And so, during the first month of the crisis, the mainstream corporate media either ignored the Iraqi peace overtures or explained them away, taking the U.S. position that negotiation with Iraq was unacceptable. The mainstream media only began taking negotiations seriously when the Bush administration began leaking hints that they were ready to negotiate a settlement. For instance, the three major U.S. news magazines--Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Report--either failed completely to report on Iraqi efforts at negotiation, or briefly dismissed them, during the first weeks of the crisis. On September 10, however, these weeklies began to discuss the possibility of a diplomatic solution but did not discuss the actual Iraqi initiatives that were on the table. A story in U.S. News and World Report opened by stating that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the National Security Council had concluded that "a full-scale war against Iraq, with its almost certain use of chemical weapons, could cost 20,000 to 30,000 American combat casualties." For this reason, the article suggested, Bush was trying diplomacy. Interestingly, the article intimated as well that Bush's current pose could be a smoke screen to give him time to marshal his forces for a deadly strike, a

suggestion which, in retrospect, appears likely. Apparently, the Pentagon discerned that it needed more time to put together overwhelming military force to minimize casualties and the Bush administration periodically sent out rumors that they were preparing diplomatic initiatives. Such rumors of peace assured a naive antiwar Congress and public that war might be avoided, while at the same time the administration hinted that if diplomatic efforts failed, a military solution would be necessary. The September 10 U.S. News and World Report stated, for instance: "Privately, one senior administration official predicts that if diplomacy has borne no fruit in a month, Bush will review his military options."

In October, the plans were reportedly finalized for a January air war against Iraq (see Friedman and Tyler, New York Times, March 3, 1991, p. A12 and Woodward 1991, pp. 300ff). Meanwhile, the Bush administration was relentlessly orchestrating the eventual war by doubling the number of U.S. forces sent to Saudi Arabia after the November 7 election and then mobilizing UN resolutions against Iraq, including one on November 29 that authorized the use of force to eject Iraq from Kuwait. Shortly after, Bush proposed talks with Iraq, and Iraq ordered all foreign hostages to be released on December 6. Yet no date could be arranged for talks until January 9, and by then it was clear that the Bush administration had no intention whatsoever of seeking a diplomatic settlement.

As late as January 2, 1991, U.S. officials revealed an Iraqi offer "to withdraw from Kuwait if the United States pledges not to attack as its soldiers are pulled out, if foreign troops leave the region, and if there is agreement on the Palestinian problem and on the banning of all weapons of mass destruction in the region" (in Knut Royce, Newsday, Jan. 3). Some administration officials indicated that the offer was "interesting" because Iraq renounced all territorial claims here and signaled "interest in a negotiated settlement." Chomsky noted: "A State Department Mideast expert described the proposal as a 'serious prenegotiation position.' The U.S. 'immediately dismissed the proposal,' Royce continues. It passed without mention in the Times, and was barely noted elsewhere" (1991, p. 50).

Thus, two weeks before the deadline for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait there were strong signs that the Iraqis were ready to negotiate a settlement, but the United States did not respond at all positively and, in fact, blocked a negotiated solution by delivering the Iraqis a blunt ultimatum during the Geneva meeting between James Baker and Tariq Aziz on January 9, 1991. Although it was clear that the Iraqis were making reasonable offers for negotiation, it appears in retrospect that the Bush administration wanted war and did everything possible to block a negotiated diplomatic settlement.

Consequently, throughout the crisis in the Gulf, there was a series of viable proposals for negotiation. From the beginning of the crisis, King Hussein of Jordan made a number of diplomatic initiatives, which were all undercut by the United States (Salinger and Laurent 1991 and Emery 1991). The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) campaigned hard for a diplomatic resolution and floated a series of peace initiatives. The Algerians made a serious attempt at negotiation and some observers believed that they were in a particularly good position to resolve the crisis as they had done so in previous situations and were not seen as allied closely with either Iraq or Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.²⁴ And both François Mitterand and the French and Gorbachev and the Soviets proposed diplomatic initiatives that were ignored by the Bush administration. In George Bush's

New World Order, it would thus be the military power of the mighty that would settle disputes and not reason or diplomacy.

1.3 Hidden Agendas and the Logics of War

There was no single reason why the United States relentlessly pursued the military option in the crisis of the Gulf. Dissection of the underlying forces that led the Bush administration to pursue the war option reveals a complex web of political, economic, and military considerations. The Gulf war was not solely a war for oil, for the greater glory of George Bush and the Pentagon, or for the promotion of U.S. geopolitical supremacy in order to bolster a faltering U.S. economy, although all of these factors played a role in producing the war. Instead, the Gulf war was "overdetermined" (see Althusser 1969) and requires a multicausal analysis.²⁵

Although the Gulf war was arguably overdetermined in its origins and causes, there was a remarkable coincidence between the interests of the Bush administration, the Pentagon, and powerful economic forces. This convergence is itself no accident. George Bush is the first U.S. president in recent years who is himself part of both the corporate economic establishment and the National Security State.²⁶ Bush was an oilman and his family continues to have important oil interests.²⁷ In addition, Bush was also a director of the CIA and has consistently supported the use of military force and covert operations to promote U.S. foreign policy and U.S. interests--as perceived by those in power who actually had interests to promote. The Gulf war is therefore correctly perceived as Bush's war and analysis of the causes of the war can legitimately begin with him.

In 1990, Bush's presidency was facing severe domestic economic and political problems, including: a sky-rocketing deficit caused by Reagan's and Bush's astronomical defense-spending; a severe S&L, banking, and insurance crisis caused by Republican deregulation policies; and proliferating public squalor marked by growing homelessness, unemployment, economic deprivation, deteriorating cities with epidemics of crime and drugs, health problems such as AIDS, cancer, and the absence of a national health insurance program. These and many other problems were in part caused, or aggravated, by the policies of George Bush and his predecessor Ronald Reagan.

{Figure 1.1: full page of pictures of headlines and covers of newsmagazines pointing to failing Bush Presidency: S&L crisis; deficit; failures with Congress; declining polls; wimp factor}

Consequently, it was in George Bush's interest to divert attention from current crises and the potentially deteriorating economy with a scapegoat for the economic imbroglio produced by Republican economics. That is, Bush could claim that the economic problems were caused by Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and the ensuing crisis that drove up oil prices. This response diverted inquiry from seeking the origins of the crisis in Reagan-Bush economic policies. Not surprisingly, in mid-November Bush actually interpreted the current recession as a function of rising oil prices from the Gulf crisis (a position repeated by Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan; see New York Times, Nov. 29, 1990, p. 1).

In fact, questions concerning the S&L crisis were already haunting Bush, whose son Neil and

other associates were deeply involved in the scandal. Indeed, Bush himself and other top Republicans had been friendly for many years with S&L criminal extraordinaire Charles Keating, whose collapsed financial empire bankrupted many investors. The S&L crisis dramatized the economic disaster of the Reagan-Bush years in an especially striking fashion. It indicated the fallacies of the free-market deregulation strategy and of the unleashing of free-wheeling entrepreneurialism upon which the Reagan-Bush economic strategy was based. The Gulf crisis not only put this story off of the front pages for months, but also short-circuited the debate over economic policy that intensified during the U.S. budget crisis in July and August before the Iraqi invasion.

The Gulf war also diverted attention from the failures and potential collapse of Bush's domestic policies. Time magazine named Bush their Man of the Year in 1990 and, in a cover story on the "two George Bushes," claimed that Bush was a whiz in foreign policy and uninterested and incompetent in domestic policy. During the fall congressional budget debates that raged while Bush was playing his Gulf war games, he lost his budget battle with the Democrats and led his party to an embarrassing defeat in the mid-term 1990 elections. Indeed, Bush was seen as such a liability that many Republicans would not allow him to campaign for them and many sharply criticized him. Weiner (1991) argued that Bush was suffering a "domestic political collapse of historic proportions" and needed a war to reverse his political fortunes. Gathering together an impressive number of mainstream media quotes indicating that Bush's presidency was in serious trouble, Weiner suggested that a successful war was a necessary step to save his presidency.

Bob Woodward's book The Commanders (1991) suggested that it was George Bush himself who was the most aggressive promoter of the military solution to the crisis in the gulf. During the crisis, many speculated that Bush's peculiar psychology might also be part of the reason for the U.S. military action: Arm-chair psychologists speculated that he was highly obsessed with overcoming his "wimp" image, that he was deeply insecure about his manhood, and that these insecurities drove him to prove that he was tough and manly.²⁸ Perhaps other factors in Bush's biography, however, might be more significant in motivating him to choose the military option, such as the fact that his father, former Senator Prescott Bush, was a strong supporter of the military and the use of military power to advance U.S. interests.²⁹ George had a moment of early heroism in World War II, headed the CIA in 1976, and always strongly identified with the National Security State, U.S. military power, covert operations, and the use of force to achieve U.S. policy goals. During the Reagan administration, Bush was a strong supporter of the sometimes illegal contra war against the democratically elected Nicaraguan government, and there were even speculations that an illegal contra supply operation was run out of his office by his close associates.

Bush, therefore, had long been a part of the National Security State and his role in the Gulf war was arguably an extension of a life spent serving the interests of the military, the intelligence apparatus, and an aggressive U.S. foreign policy. Likewise, his national security adviser Brent Scowcroft pushed hard for the military option.³⁰ Scowcroft had been a lieutenant general in the Air Force, a deputy to Henry Kissinger, Gerald Ford's national security adviser, and a member of Kissinger Associates. It was alleged that Scowcroft "owns stock in forty companies that took advantage of the let's-trade with Iraq policy backed by the N.S.C. [National Security Council, which Scowcroft headed]. Several of these firms are also clients of Kissinger Associates" (David Corn, The Nation, May 27, 1991, p. 692). Kissinger Associates has been connected with Saudi Arabian,

Kuwaiti, and other Middle East forces that had a deep interest in destroying Iraq's regime which they perceived as a threat to their interests. Corn also reported that Henry B. Gonzalez (D-Tex.), head of the House Banking Committee, was "deeply concerned" about "the influence Kissinger may exert over his former lieutenants" and was "especially troubled" by "Scowcroft's ability to set policy that affects his portfolio" (p. 692).

Furthermore, Scowcroft had served on the board of directors of Santa Fe International, a Kuwaiti corporation that controlled several U.S. corporations, including the company that was accused of slant-drilling into the Iraqi Rumalia oil field.³¹ Scowcroft was thus thoroughly compromised by apparently using U.S. foreign policy to push a Gulf policy that would advance his and his associates economic and political interests. It might also be noted that Brent Scowcroft was one of three individuals on the Tower Commission, which looked into the scandals of the Iran/Contra affair and exonerated George Bush. If, as many believe, Bush was deeply involved in the scandal, Tower and Scowcroft would know and it probably was no accident that Bush immediately named John Tower his Secretary of Defense, despite the fact that Tower had been the subject of constant rumors concerning his alcoholism and sexual improprieties.³² Nor was it a coincidence that Bush named Brent Scowcroft his national security adviser. Better to have someone with possibly damaging knowledge on your team rather than outside where he might cause some problems. In any case, Scowcroft has not been thoroughly investigated, and his possible role in covering up the Iran/Contra scandal should be looked into, as well as the ways that his economic and military interests may have influenced his action in the Gulf War.

Brent Scowcroft was thus a flagrant representative of the military-industrial complex who had served in the military, served on boards of corporations active in the defense industry, and had investments in oil and defense companies whose interests were involved in the Gulf. Scowcroft had also lobbied hard to have Dick Cheney appointed as Secretary of Defense, as he had worked with Cheney in the Ford administration and "wanted a known commodity in the Pentagon" (Woodward 1991, p. 62). As Bush's national security adviser, Scowcroft pushed hard to replace General Frederick Woerner as CINCSOUTH (i.e. Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Southern Command) because Woerner was opposed to aggressive U.S. military intervention in Latin America (Woodward 1991, p. 83); Cheney later blamed the decision to remove Woerner in "its suddenness and finality" on Scowcroft (p. 97). Woerner was replaced by gung-ho General Maxwell Thurman, thus paving the way for the Panama invasion that Thurman and the Pentagon enthusiastically pushed and participated in.

Indeed, the U.S. military establishment, as well as the Bush administration, had compelling reasons for wanting to fight a Gulf war. The Panama invasion attempted to demonstrate the need for effective U.S. military forces to enforce U.S. interests,³³ but it was a small-scale operation against a small country with little military force. In general, the military in a high-tech weapons environment needs a major war every twenty years or so to test their new weapons systems, to gain prestige to justify the vast amount of resources that go into military spending, and to produce a situation in which its officers can gain promotion and honor through military action. It had been more than fifteen years since the military had been engaged in Vietnam in its last major war. In that war, the military lost a tremendous amount of prestige from its inability to defeat a Third World peasant-guerrilla army and from the intense conflict over the war that tore apart the country. In addition, there had been a massive military buildup during the Reagan administration, which helped double the

national deficit. This buildup had created heated controversy over alleged waste, cost overruns, ineffective high-tech weapons, and resentment over the phenomenal amount of the U.S. federal budget that the military controlled, while domestic programs were being slashed or underfunded. The Pentagon wanted to prove that its weapons systems were indeed useful, even essential, to national security, and that the gigantic investment in the military was justified.

{Figure 1.2: page of newspaper headings and newsmagazine covers denoting Vietnam debacle; contested military spending under Reagan; talk of cutting military spending after end of cold war; and peace dividend talk}

In addition, important segments of the U.S. military wanted to fight a war in which the country was behind it, in which their prestige would be restored, and this was the war. From the beginning of the crisis in the Gulf, the Bush administration and Pentagon managed a skillful public relations campaign and the compliant media produced a positive image of U.S. military troops, weapons systems, and policy. Indeed, with the collapse of the Soviet empire and end of the cold war it was not certain that such tremendous investment of resources in the military was justified, and there was much talk of scaling down the military and producing a "peace dividend" by reordering U.S. priorities. As Barbara Ehrenreich put it, "The current war was ostensibly triggered by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the apparent threat of further invasions throughout the region. But the real threat may well have been the potential redundancy of the vast U.S. military enterprise, which had been fattening, throughout the 1980s, on unprecedented levels of peacetime military spending, only to find itself, in 1990, without a credible enemy to confront" (*Z Magazine*, March 1991, pp. 24-25).

There was a variety of other political rationales for the U.S. intervention in the Gulf and eventual war. Members of the Bush administration wanted to assert the United States as the number one superpower after the collapse of the Soviet empire. This assertion required a demonstration of the use of U.S. military power to effectively defend "national interests." As Gabriel Kolko (1991) pointed out, since the end of World War II, the U.S. military was deeply concerned with its "credibility." The United States apparently wanted its "enemies" to believe that it would use military power when U.S. interests were at stake and was afraid that its defeat in Vietnam had created the impression that the United States was a paper tiger, unable to use its military power effectively. The goal of restoring Pentagon credibility was coded as "overcoming the Vietnam syndrome." This goal was interpreted by members of the Bush administration and their conservative supporters as overcoming the reluctance to use U.S. military power after the humiliation of Vietnam, in which there was no decisive victory after years of heavy investment and troop deployment. In fact, the "Vietnam syndrome," interpreted literally, points to a propensity for U.S. policymakers to use military force to solve problems all over the world and to assert its military might as the policeman of the world. In this sense, the Gulf war was merely another expression of the Vietnam syndrome. Genuinely overcoming this pathological syndrome in U.S. policy would require seeking diplomatic and political solutions to problems, not military ones.

From another perspective (Klare 1990), reestablishing U.S. military supremacy was the goal of a group of individuals tied to the military-industrial complex who envisaged the nation's future as the number one military superpower. Individuals who urged this military "geostrategic" policy were opposed, according to Klare, by those who sought cuts in the U.S. military establishment and "a

greater investment in science, technology, education and trade development. If we are to compete successfully in world markets, this position holds, we must become more like Germany and Japan-- that is, we must spend less on military forces and more on domestic industrial revitalization" (p. 416). Proponents of these positions had been debating America's future since the first evidence of the collapse of the Soviet empire in 1989, and the Persian Gulf crisis gave those seeking a stronger military a splendid opportunity to push their agenda by pointing to the need for expansion of the military in a dangerous world.

Obviously, there were also powerful economic interests involved in the Gulf region that influenced U.S. policy. Many policymakers and their corporate allies were concerned with the flow and control of Middle East oil and many believed that U.S. military presence in the region would allow the United States to help dictate energy prices, production quotas, and distribution. There were many in the foreign policy establishment who for years wanted a U.S. military presence in the Gulf.³⁴ Since the 1970s, there were attempts to build a "rapid deployment force" that would be able to intervene in the Middle East, and after the Iranian revolution of 1979 President Jimmy Carter issued in his 1980 State of the Union address what was to be known as the Carter Doctrine: "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

The Carter administration attempted to convince the Gulf states to allow the United States to build up naval and air bases in the region, but only Oman agreed to a permanent U.S. military presence. During the Reagan administration, the Central Command was established to facilitate a U.S. intervention in the Middle East and the United States gained access to a large number of bases in the region, in exchange for military and/or economic aid. Norman Schwarzkopf became the head of Central Command in 1987, and in 1989 Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Colin Powell directed Central Command and the Joint Chiefs to revise the plan, which had assumed that a Soviet invasion of the Gulf would be the major threat to U.S. interests. The new plan assumed that Iraq would be the primary threat to the region, and on the eve of the Iraqi invasion Schwarzkopf was engaged in war games rehearsing U.S. military response to an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (Blackwell 1991, pp. 84ff).³⁵

Thus, the military itself had long been preparing for a Gulf war to reestablish its prestige and this area was precisely where the Bush administration wanted the war to be fought. Bob Woodward reported that Central Command had a top-secret contingency plan, Operations Plan 90-1002, ready "for moving about 100,000 ground troops to the region over three to four months" (1991, p. 220), and this is indeed the plan that was eventually used. The United States also had a military infrastructure in place. Although Saudi Arabia would not allow U.S. troops to be stationed on their soil prior to the crisis in the Gulf, the U.S. helped build a massive military infrastructure in the country. Scott Armstrong (1991, pp. 30ff.) contended that protection and justification for a \$200 billion military infrastructure in the Middle East was one of the underlying causes of the Gulf war.

Another economic and military motivation for the war was to promote U.S. arms sales to the region. One of Cheney's first acts during his initial meeting with the Saudis was to secure a multibillion dollar arms contract and shortly thereafter new arms deals were secured with Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Bahrain, and other countries in the region. A 1991 congressional report asserted that

U.S. weapons sales to the Third World more than doubled in 1990, reaching \$18.5 billion, which included \$14.5 billion in sales to Saudi Arabia; another multi-billion dollar arms package to Saudi Arabia was held up in November 1991 because of the Mideast peace conference. In fact, perhaps one of the reasons that Saddam Hussein was allowed by the U.S. to remain in power after the war was because his presence created a climate to secure further U.S. arms sales and military intervention in the region (see 10.5).³⁶

There were also other economic reasons for a U.S. military intervention in the Gulf connected with the control and pricing of oil, although obviously the politics of oil was important. For those who think in terms of world global-power struggles, an intervention and successful war would perhaps give the United States increased power over Japan and Germany, whose economies were doing much better than that of the United States, and would thus reverse the U.S. economic decline. A U.S. military presence in the Middle East would allow the United States to influence the pricing of oil and it would therefore have increased leverage over its Japanese and European competitors who were more dependent on Middle East oil.

There was also concern over the flow of petro dollars, those Middle East oil dollars derived from immense oil profits. It was estimated that Kuwait had invested between \$100 and \$250 billion in the economies of Britain and the United States alone.³⁷ The tremendous federal deficit needed to be funded, and the Middle East oil states purchased a substantial portion of U.S. government treasury bonds, thus providing a crucial economic contribution. But although Saudi Arabia and Kuwait invested heavily in the U.S. and Western economies, Iraq invested its wealth in other projects and areas; taking Kuwaiti petrodollars out of the U.S. bond market would threaten U.S. economic stability, and if Saudi Arabia was also taken over by Iraq and its petrodollars were spent elsewhere, catastrophe could ensue. Indeed, in a speech at a meeting of the Arab Cooperation Council in Amman, Jordan, on February 24, 1990, Saddam Hussein told his Arab brethren not to invest money anymore in the United States and to invest instead in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.³⁸

There were, then, a large number of economic, political, and military motivations for the United States to intervene in the Middle East, though most of the major reasons were not discussed in the mainstream media. Moreover, as Thomas Ferguson noted (*The Nation*, Jan. 28, 1991, pp. 1ff), the Bush administration did not have an unlimited amount of time to force Iraq out of the Gulf through sanctions because of the tremendous costs of Operation Desert Shield, which were overburdening an already strained economy. Consequently, the rush to war was hastened by a declining economy, from which a successful war would deflect immediate attention. Indeed, some economists were claiming that a successful war could pull the United States out of recession, as well as improve the country's economic position in comparison to Japan and Western Europe.

In the light of the complex economic, political, and military logics of war, most of Bush's official rationale, which vacillated from week to week, was mere ideological camouflage for the real reasons for the military deployment, which had to do with the economic and political interests of a small group of people who planned and would benefit from the war and had little to do with the lofty principles in the name of which the war was executed. The Gulf war was thus a media propaganda war in which the Bush administration managed to cover over the key reasons for the U.S. intervention. In the remainder of this book, I shall continue developing the argument that

instead of assuming its responsibilities for furthering democracy by debating issues of public concern, the mainstream media uncritically promoted the policies of the Bush administration and military, thus strengthening the power of the National Security State. I argue that during the Gulf war, the nation fell prey to one of the best-managed media propaganda campaigns in history. The military had learned its lessons from Vietnam and studied techniques to manage the press and the flow of information based on the British experience in the Falkland Islands and their own experiences in Grenada and Panama (see 2.2).

Notes

1. On the Iran/Iraq war see Hilop 1990 and Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett (1990). The latter wrote: "The human and economic costs of the war were staggering. Diro Hilop cites Western estimates of nearly 400,000 dead, roughly a quarter Iraqi and three-quarters Iranian, and perhaps 750,000 wounded. Kamran Mofid has calculated the total cost of the war as \$452.6 billion to Iraq and \$644.3 billion to Iran, based on a combination of 'damage to the infrastructure; estimated oil revenue losses; and the estimated GNP losses.' He notes that this total exceeds by \$678.5 billion the entire oil revenues of Iran and Iraq since they started to sell their oil on the world market, in 1919 and 1931 respectively" (p. 20).

2. On the U.S. role in building up the Iraqi military machine, see Klare 1990; Waas 1990; Darwish and Alexander 1991; Henderson 1991; Karsh and Rautski 1991; and Timmerman 1991. As it turned out, the Reagan administration was also secretly supplying Iran with military parts and weapons and, according to some accounts, had been providing weapons to Iran since 1981. Persistent stories have circulated that in a trade-off for holding the U.S. diplomats hostage in 2.Tehran during the 1980 election campaign, the Reagan election team promised the Iranians arms and spare parts for their war against Iraq, which they began delivering, via Israel, upon assuming office. The Reagan team feared an "October Surprise" from the Carter administration, that is, a release of the U.S. hostages, which would help to reelect Carter; see Sick 1991. Whatever the truth of this story, it is documented that U.S. arms and spare parts began arriving in Iran immediately after Reagan's inauguration and secret arms deals continued to be made with Iran throughout the decade until their exposure in the Iran/Contra affair, which only scratched the surface of the incredible secret policies of the Reagan administration. On the exposure of early arms deliveries to Iran via Israel, which was serving as intermediary, see the report concerning the Israeli chartered plane with U.S. arms bound to Iran that crashed in Turkey (The Nation, June 20, 1988, p. X). In addition, the Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran/Contra Affair notes that Oliver North told the Iranians that "the United States would help promote the overthrow of the Iraqi head of government" and that in Reagan's view "Saddam Hussein is a [expletive]" (Government Printing Office: Washington D.C., 1987, pp. 12f). On Iran/Contra and allegations of Bush's involvement in this scandal, see Kellner 1990.

3. In August 1984, Peter Galbraith, Senator Claiborne Pell's (D-R.I.) Foreign Relations Committee aide, submitted a staff report warning that Saddam Hussein was running a neo-Stalinist state. The Reagan administration ordered this report to be watered down; see The New Republic (Nov. 5, 1990, p. 13). By 1990, the State Department had compiled a human rights abuse report on Iraq, but this report did not seem to have much influence on State Department

policy toward Hussein and Iraq. On Hussein's birthday party visit by U.S. senators, see the documents in Ridgeway 1991, pp. 35ff. According to articles published in the Los Angeles Times, George Bush himself intervened as Vice-President during the Reagan administration to secure controversial loans to Iraq which totalled over \$5 billion and pushed hard to allow the export of dual use technology to Iraq that had military uses. Moreover, the Times reported that "in October, 1989, nine months before Iraq invaded Kuwait, Bush signed a top-secret directive ordering closer ties with Baghdad and opening the way for \$1 billion in loan guarantees to finance the purchase of U.S. agricultural products by Iraq. Officials in the Agriculture Department and other agencies objected to granting Iraq the loan guarantees but were overruled after Secretary of State James A. Baker III telephoned Clayton K. Yeutter, then secretary of agriculture, and asked for the aid 'on foreign policy grounds,' according to classified documents." Iraq has already defaulted on over \$2 billion and the Bush administration attempted to block Congressional inquiry into their earlier relations with Iraq (Douglas Frantz and Murray Waas, "Attempted cover-up of aid to Iraq to be probed," March 8, 1992; see also the stories of February 26, 1992; February 25, 1992, February 24, 1992, and February 23, 1992).

4. For the transcript of Glaspie's conversation with Hussein, see Ridgeway 1991; Sciolino 1991; and especially The New Combat 1 (Summer/Autumn 1991), which has detailed annotations and articles on both Glaspie's July 1990 testimony and postwar March 1991 testimony. In this latter testimony, Glaspie claimed that she had taken a very tough approach with Hussein and that passages in which she spoke of a "vital" U.S. relationship with Kuwait and warned Hussein that "we can never excuse settlement of disputes by other than peaceful means" were omitted from the publication of the transcripts of her talk. Later, when some Senators saw the cable that she had sent to Washington after her talk, they claimed that Glaspie had misled them in her March testimony, with Senator Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) charging that, "April Glaspie deliberately misled the Congress about her role in the Persian Gulf tragedy." (New York Times, July 13, 1991, pp. 1 and 4, which contain excerpts from her cable).

5. See Graubard 1992 and Smith 1992. Woodward's The Commanders (1991) suggests that Bush was the main force pushing for war, supported by his national security adviser Brent Scowcroft, his chief of staff John Sununu, and his secretary of defense Dick Cheney. Woodward's account makes it appear as if the Pentagon sought peaceful solutions and had severe reservations about going to war. Joint Chief of Staff Colin Powell was presented by Woodward as the "reluctant warrior" who had serious doubts about seeking a military solution to the crisis in the Gulf; on Woodward's account, General Norman Schwarzkopf was also shown to have reservations about the rush to war favored by Bush and his inner circle. This interpretation appears somewhat naive, for obviously it was in the Pentagon's interest to fight a successful war and many top military officials must have been pushing this option, though one would not glean this information from Woodward's book. A book published during the same period suggests that Woodward has always been promilitary, since Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) training at Yale and an early internship in the Pentagon in the 1960s, and that he has systematically covered over his close connection with the military and his conservative views (Colodny and Gettlin 1991).

6. Both Salinger and Laurent 1991 and Woodward 1991 document the CIA and defense intelligence analyses claiming that by August 1 an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was imminent. The International Herald Tribune reported that on July 31, 1990, "a Defense Intelligence Agency analyst, Pat Lang bluntly warned in a memo that Saddam Hussein intended to invade. Mr. Lang intended his memo as a 'thunderclap' to top policy makers...but it drew virtually no reaction" (May 3, 1991). The New York Times reported that CIA analyst Charles Eugene Allen, whose job is to warn the government when crises are emerging, had urgently warned the U.S. government that Iraq was about to invade Kuwait (Jan. 24, 1991, p. A9). Allen reportedly walked into the offices of the National Security Council's Middle East staff and told them: "This is your final warning" and that by day's end, Kuwait would be invaded by Iraq. Allen had also reportedly crossed over bureaucratic lines previous to August 1, warning a senior State Department official and two National Security Council experts that an invasion was imminent. He was rewarded for his vigilance by having his biweekly reports on trouble spots suspended and his staff cut. Finally, Woodward claims that General Colin Powell concluded that Iraq was not bluffing and was about to invade Kuwait and that Powell told Cheney to warn the president. Nothing was done, however, and as "far as Powell could tell, either the White House had another idea about how to handle the problem, or the suggestion just fell through the cracks" (1991, p. 221). Thus, Bush could have easily prevented the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, either by directly contacting Iraq or making a public statement warning Iraq of the consequences of invading its neighbor.

7. Throughout this study, we shall note how time and again the mainstream media uncritically presented Bush administration positions as "facts" while independent journalists and scholars offer different and usually more compelling versions. I might also note that various sources spell Middle Eastern sites like "Jidda" differently and I am following the standard U.S. usage, while Salinger and Laurent 1991 in the passages cited use the British spelling "Jeddah."

8. Independent investigative sources tend to blame the Kuwaitis for subverting the Jidda summit (Salinger and Laurent 1991, pp. 64-77; Emery 1991, pp. 6ff; and Simpson 1991, pp. 107-109. Emery cited a hand-scrawled note from the emir of Kuwait to the crown prince, who would be representing Kuwait at the meeting, which advised him not to listen to requests of Arab solidarity from the Saudis or the Iraqis, nor to submit to Iraqi threats; this was the advice of "our friends in Washington, London and Egypt." The Emir closed by stating that: "We are stronger than they think." According to Emery, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia told King Hussein of Jordan that the failure of the conference was "all the Kuwaitis fault" and that King Hussein believed that indeed the Kuwaitis sabotaged the summit and that the note was authentic (Emery 1991, pp. 9-12).

9. See The Economist which claimed that with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait it controlled twenty percent of the "world's known oil reserves" and would rival Saudi Arabia as OPEC's "swing" producer (Aug 4, 1990, p. 13). Time magazine asserted that Iraq doubled the oil under its control to some twenty percent of the world's known reserve and that only Saudi Arabia, with twenty-five percent, had more (Aug 13, 1990, p. 16). In fact, there were arguments that the claims concerning the amount of oil controlled by Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq were greatly

exaggerated and that the phrase "known oil reserves" was misleading because there are vast oil resources that have not been developed in the United States, Soviet Union, and off the Falkland islands. Vials (1991) claimed that the undeveloped oil reserves off the Falkland Islands are much larger than the Saudi Arabia oil reserves, but the cost of developing the off-shore oil resources, far from refineries and distribution, would require a much higher per-barrel oil price than the market is current yielding. He suggested that the Gulf war might have been in part a cynical ploy to help exhaust Saudi, Kuwaiti, and Iraqi oil supplies so that oil prices could go up enough to make it pay to develop the Falkland off-shore oil resources, thus producing a bonanza for the U.S. and Britain which would control these oil resources.

10. The Washington Post also reported on August 4, 1990, that "U.S. intelligence yesterday monitored a new buildup of 100,000 Iraqi troops in Kuwait south of the capital and near the border with Saudi Arabia." On August 5, the Post published a story by Charles Babcock on the possibility of an Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia and the inability of the Saudis to defend themselves; editorial writer Jim Hoagland contributed an article on "Stopping Saddam's Drive for Dominance," arguing against "appeasement" of Iraq. Thus, the Post consistently disseminated the disinformation of an imminent Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia.

11. A New York Times summary of the genesis of the war by Thomas Friedman and Patrick Tyler on March 3, 1991, claimed that the Bush administration had decided on the path to war in September; the Times's analysis, however, suggested that Bush and Scowcroft were pushing the military option from the beginning (p. A12). Emery (1991, p. 19) wrote that King Hussein told him that Margaret Thatcher blurted out on August 3 that "troops were halfway to their destination" before the official request came for them to go to the Middle East. In addition, I met a soldier on an airplane in December 1990 who told me that he had been sent to the Gulf some days before the official U.S. deployment had been announced.

12. The New York Times also began attacking Iraq and Saddam Hussein, publishing stories and columns on August 5, 1990, with headlines: "Arab of Vast Ambition--Saddam Hussein," "Iraq Makes Its Bid to Run the Show in the Middle East," "Stopping Saddam's Drive for Dominance," and "Stop Hussein with Force if Necessary." For a comparative analysis of New York Times and Washington Post coverage of the crisis in the Gulf, see Malek and Leidig 1991.

13. On the Saddam-as-Hitler theme, see 2.1.

14. "Yellow journalism" is a term associated with the sensation-mongering journalism that began in the late 19th century with Joseph Pulitzer's World and William Randolph Hearst's San Francisco Examiner and New York Journal. Hearst and other "yellow journalists" produced a war hysteria and campaigned for a war against Spain in Cuba, often trumping up false threats against the United States. See the chapter on "The Age of Yellow Journalism" in Emery and Emery 1992, pp. 226ff.

15. On August 6, 1954, the New York Times published an editorial celebrating the overthrow of the Mossadegh government in Iran and the restoration of the shah, accompanied by

a takeover of 40% of the Iranian oil by U.S. corporations, breaking a British monopoly. The editors wrote: "Underdeveloped countries with rich resources now have an object lesson in the heavy cost that must be paid by one of their number which goes berserk with fanatical nationalism. It is perhaps too much to hope that Iran's experience will prevent the rise of Mossadeghs in other countries, but that experience may at least strengthen the hands of more reasonable and more far-seeing leaders." Namely, those who will have a clear-eyed understanding of the U.S.'s overriding priorities (thanks to Noam Chomsky for this reference). In this context, the U.S. military intervention and Gulf war was an object lesson to Third World leaders who do not follow U.S. priorities and policies.

16. Some West German government reports indicated that it was really Syrian connections and not Libyan ones who were responsible for the bombing. On Oct. 29, 1986, John Laurence on ABC News quoted top German officials as attributing the disco bombing to Syria. See also the article by Elaine Sciolino, New York Times, Nov. 20, 1986, who reported that a number of administration officials said privately that the disco bombing was carried out by the same organization responsible for the bombing of an Arab social club in West Berlin, and that pretrial testimony linked Syria, not Libya, to that attack. A few days later, Der Spiegel reported suspicions that the perpetrators were actually double agents working for the Israeli secret services (Dec. 1, 1986), a story reproduced in the Boston Globe, Dec. 1, 1986; see the discussion in Chomsky 1987, pp. 113ff. A report, broadcast Sept. 14, 1990, on Radio Deutsche Welle, suggested that the CIA knew that a terrorist bombing of the disco was in the works, but failed to maintain proper security, perhaps to give the Reagan administration a pretext for bombing Libya; see the discussion in Joel Bleifuss, "The First Stone," In These Times, Sept. 26, 1990, p. 5.

17. This same Patrick Tyler in the same Washington Post had published a puff piece on Saddam Hussein on May 13, 1989 (p. A13) describing how Hussein was pursuing the "politics of pragmatism," moderating Iraq's previous radical tradition "in favor of friendly overtures to Arab moderates and the West." Christopher Hitchens noted that the New York Times also characterized Iraq as "pragmatic" and "cooperative," attributing these virtues to Hussein's "personal strength" (Harper's, Jan. 1991, p. 72). Yet the same Hussein had suddenly become the Post's "beast of Baghdad" and the previously bestial Hafez al-Assad of Syria had become "pragmatic." Obviously, bestiality is in the eyes of the beholder and the policies of the current administration, which opportunistic journalists are only too eager to serve.

18. Karsh and Rautsi (1991) has been received in the scholarly community as the most reliable book on Saddam Hussein and Iraq yet to appear; see the review in Middle East International, August 30, 1991, p. 22.

19. James Atkins, Nixon's former ambassador to Saudi Arabia and a career diplomat, told In These Times: "The U.S. deployment is totally unnecessary. There is going to be no invasion. Saddam Hussein is a rational person; an invasion of Saudi Arabia would have been an irrational act." Atkins explained that since the Carter Doctrine was a major tenet of U.S. foreign policy, Hussein would know that any attack on Saudi Arabia would have brought a swift U.S. military response (Aug 29, 1991, p. 5). In addition, after the war, Los Angeles Times reporter Jack

Nelson stated in a symposium sponsored by the Gannett Foundation: "The reports of Iraqi troops massed at the Saudi border were certainly intended to tell the American people that there was a threat of invasion, when in fact there weren't that many [Iraqi] troops at all. I think today most government people will tell you that nobody really thought that Saddam Hussein was going to go into Saudi Arabia; but the story helped marshal public opinion behind the war effort" (in LaMay et al. 1991, pp. 73-74). In fact, the mainstream media were saying that there was a threat that Iraq was going to invade Saudi Arabia and that the U.S. military deployment was thus necessary; see the clips from editorials from the major U.S. newspaper in LaMay, et al., 1991, pp. 54-55.

20. Reuters transmitted the Washington Post version of the Hussein/Wilson meeting and it was published in newspapers such as the Toronto Star, USA Today, and Newsday. ABC and the other TV networks also bought into the Washington Post version of the meeting between Saddam Hussein and Joe Wilson. In explaining why the Bush administration was sending troops to Saudi Arabia, ABC White House correspondent Brit Hume noted on the August 7 edition of "ABC World News Tonight: "of course, there was a meeting yesterday in Baghdad in which the United States chargé d'affaires was told in no uncertain terms by Saddam Hussein that not only did he not intend to leave Kuwait, he intended to claim it as his own. Finally, intelligence reports overnight indicated what the White House is calling an 'imminent threat to Saudi Arabia' from the very positioning of the Iraqi forces in Kuwait." That evening on ABC's Nightline, host Ted Koppel informed the audience that he'd just received information "from my colleague Bob Zelnick over at the Pentagon, who quotes sources over there as saying that there is strong evidence that the Iraqis are now massing along the border with Saudi Arabia and that there is some fear that they may launch an invasion even before U.S. troops get there." This disinformation was obviously to legitimate the U.S. deployment and to create anxiety that could be utilized to mobilize consent to the Bush administration policy.

21. The Washington Post cheerleader for the war, Jim Hoagland, dutifully attacked "Saddam's Big Lie" (that dispossessed Arabs would supposedly profit from his seizure of Kuwait's oil) in the August 9 edition, failing to note that it was Bush who was producing a really Big Lie concerning Iraq's alleged threat to Saudi Arabia--a lie reproduced by Hoagland. Hoagland also attacked CBS for interviewing Jordanians who were sympathetic towards Saddam Hussein and who opposed the U.S. military intervention and war, as if it was the duty of journalists simply to parrot the line of the administration rather than providing a range of viewpoints on controversial and important issues.

22. Interestingly, there was a report that the Soviets launched a new photo reconnaissance spy satellite within 48 hours of the invasion of Kuwait whose orbit was identical to the U.S. satellite (PeaceNet, mideast.gulf, Aug. 15, 1990). But there have been no release of pictures or information from the Soviet government, so we have only the visual evidence of the Soviet commercial satellite pictures against the claims of the U.S. government.

23. For the record, I might note that the New York Times slavishly followed the Bush administration line through the early days of the crisis rather than actively promoting the military

solution à la the Washington Post. When, on the day of the invasion of Kuwait, Bush attacked Iraq's "naked aggression" of Kuwait but did not call for a military intervention, the Times R.W. Apple, titled his front-page story "Naked Aggression" and the Times's editorialist opined: "The U.S. has no treaty obligation to come to Kuwait's aid. But the gulf states and most nations still look to Washington for leadership and help in organizing action. President Bush has responded with the right lead--a strong national stand and a strong push for collective diplomacy" (Aug 3, 1990). When, shortly thereafter, Bush sent U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia, the Times quickly got on board, writing in an August 9 editorial appropriately titled "The U.S. Stands Up. Who Else?": "President Bush has drawn a line in the sand, committing U.S. forces to face down Saddam Hussein...On balance, he has made the right choice in the right way."

24. United Press International reported that Algerian President Chadli Benjedid was "one of the few Arab leaders still on speaking terms with both Saddam and the Saudi Arabian leadership," noting that he was "known for successful mediations, including the release of U.S. hostages in Iran in 1980" (Dec. 13, 1990, from clarinews). In a Dec. 18, 1990 UPI report, it was claimed: "Diplomatic sources said Benjedid has tried to arrange a meeting between Saddam and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. But the [Saudi] kingdom put a damper on his efforts when it failed to invite him to Riyadh." On the Algerian initiative, see also Salinger and Laurent 1991.

25. "Overdetermination" signifies a coexistence of multiple causes operating together on different levels to explain complex historical events. Althusser (1969) introduced the concept of overdetermination to avoid reductionistic readings of Marxism as a form of economic determinism in which economics was taken to be the sole important causal factor in history. The relevance of this concept for interpreting the causes of the Gulf war is to avoid interpreting it solely as a war for oil, as did many in the antiwar movement, or on economic or narrowly political grounds alone. Obviously, economics were important, but so were a variety of other political, military, cultural, and psychological factors; thus a multicausal model is necessary to explicate the causes and aims of the Gulf war.

26. By "National Security State" I mean the set of political, military, and intelligence institutions that promote an aggressive foreign policy, including covert operations, military intervention, and war as an instrument of state policy. These institutions include the Pentagon, the CIA and other intelligence agencies. During the Reagan and Bush Administrations the White House itself became an instrument of the National Security State which carried out covert operations, military actions, and war, sometimes secretly and sometimes with the complicity of Congress. A National Security State sees the promotion of "national security," as defined by those in power, as the primary goal of the state and advocates the use of military action when the interests of dominant political and economic groups are at stake. To justify and maintain its existence, it produces enemies, promotes tensions, and carries out covert and overt wars to legitimize the vast amount of wealth and resources it commands. During the forty-plus years of the cold war, the war against communism was used by the National Security State to justify its aggressive actions. Since the demise of the communist threat, new enemies have had to be found, such as drugs, terrorism, or governments alleged to be hostile to the United States such as Libya or Iraq. With the end of the Cold War, serious debates began to arise as to whether the National

Security State was really necessary and the Gulf war was arguably undertaken to justify continuing its existence. Finally, the National Security State is aligned with what has been called the military-industrial complex that produces the weapons and products which it commands.

27. During the war, the Village Voice published an article (Feb. 5, 1991) on George Bush, Jr.'s oil interests in Bahrain and there were also indications that Brent Scowcroft, Bush's national security adviser who pushed hard for the military option, also had oil interests. Houston Post investigative reporter Pete Brewton discovered, in the course of Savings and Loan (S&L) scandal research, that George Bush Jr., the president's son, had interests in Harken oil, which had an exclusive contract to drill for oil in Bahrain. Moreover, Brewton learned that George, Jr., sold his stock in the company some weeks before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Furthermore, he failed to report the transaction until March 1991, nearly eight months after the federal deadline for disclosing such transactions. This episode raises the question of whether George, Jr., was guilty of "insider trading" and whether his father was planning for a war in the Gulf in the summer of 1990 when George, Jr., conveniently sold his stock. One week after the invasion of Kuwait, Harken traded for just \$3.03 per share, down nearly 24% from the price that George Bush, Jr., received for his shares seven weeks earlier. So far, there has been no SEC investigation of this transaction; see the discussion in David Armstrong, "Oil in the Family," The Texas Observer, July 12, 1991, p. 12.

28. For years, there had been media presentations of Bush as a "wimp"; see, for example, the Oct. 19, 1987 Newsweek cover story "Bush Battles the 'Wimp Factor,'" (pp. 28ff); and Eleanor Clift, "The 'Carterization' of Bush," Newsweek (Oct. 22, 1990, p. 28). Many speculated that Bush's insecurities might have helped drive him to war. It may be worth mentioning that after the Panama invasion, "President Bush exulted that no one could call him 'timid'; he was at last a 'macho man.' The press, in even more primal language, hailed him for succeeding in an 'initiation rite' by demonstrating his 'willingness to shed blood.'" (Barbara Ehrenreich in Bennis and Moushabeck 1991, p. 130). Later, after Bush's fluttering heart condition and diagnosis of a hyperthyroid condition in May 1991, pundits speculated that Bush's overactive thyroid might have driven him to pursue military action; see William Safire's column in the New York Times Op-Ed page on May 18. Actually, such complex decisions are always overdetermined and no doubt there were a complex set of psychological, physiological, political, economic, and other factors which explain why Bush undertook his second major military action in the second year of his presidency.

29. An accurate and complete biography of Bush remains to be written. It would trace his background in an Establishment family with deep roots in big business, government, and military intelligence; his own career in the military and CIA; his possible involvement in the October Surprise, perhaps the crime of the century; his longtime involvement with Manuel Noriega and other unsavory dictators around the world; his involvement in the Iran/Contra affair and other scandals of the Reagan era; and his role in promoting the Gulf war. These episodes should make for an interesting project. See the pieces about Bush's life collected from mainstream and alternative news sources in Kellner 1990, especially the appendixes.

30. Andrew Rosenthal quoted an unnamed White House official, who stated, "It was Brent's presentation at one of the meetings on August 3, that Friday after the invasion, that made clear what the stakes were, crystallized people's thinking and galvanized support for a very strong response" (New York Times, Feb. 21, 1991; see also Elizabeth Drew, The New Yorker, Dec. 3, 1990, p. 178, and Woodward 1991, pp. 300-301, passim).

31. See Bob Feldman's article in Downtown, Jan. 23, 1991. When Andrew Rosenthal profiled Scowcroft in the New York Times on February 21, 1991, he skipped over his economic connections and years in the private sector, even though the Standard and Poor's Register of Corporations listed Scowcroft in 1984, 1985, and 1986 as a member of the board of directors of Santa Fe International, a subsidiary of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation. Furthermore, I checked several data bases encompassing mainstream media sources and none of them had articles connecting Scowcroft with Santa Fe International, which highlighted his economic relationship with the Kuwaiti government whose interests he pushed throughout the crisis in the Gulf and the Gulf war.

32. John Tower mysteriously died in a plane crash after the Gulf war and the media never investigated why Bush would nominate so thoroughly discredited an individual as secretary of defense. During a television interview that I did with University of Texas history professor Tom Philpott on boy prostitution, shown on Alternative Views, Philpott mentioned that Tower's name often came up as a client of young boy prostitutes and claimed that he had filled out a deposition to this effect with the FBI. Despite all of the sexual scandals and alcohol abuse stories concerning Tower, well-known in Washington circles, Bush nominated him, after Tower had chaired an important committee that had white-washed and probably covered over Bush's involvement in the Iran/Contra scandals. Despite all of the media wallowing in the Tower scandal during his failed confirmation hearing, I heard no official media commentator make this connection, symptomatic of the mainstream media failure to investigate George Bush's motivations, background, and character.

33. When responding to a reporter's question after the Panama invasion concerning the impact of the operation on the debate on the cuts in the defense budget, Powell answered: "Thank you for the question. I hope it has a great effect. I hope it has enormous effect....And as we start to go down in dollars and as we see the world changing, don't bust this apart...Don't think that this is the time to demobilize the armed force of the United States because it isn't. There are still dangers in the world" (Woodward 1991, p. 194). Thus the Panama invasion was obviously in part an attempt on behalf of the Bush administration and Pentagon to save the military from extensive budget cuts and to demonstrate the usefulness of U.S. military force. The Gulf war, from this perspective, was a more spectacular venture to advance the interests of the U.S. military and the National Security State.

34. See Stork and Wenger in Sifry and Cerf 1991, pp. 34ff.; Scott Henson, "Entangling Alliances," The Texas Observer, Jan. 25, 1991, pp. 5ff.; and Sheila Ryan, "Countdown for a Decade: The U.S. Build Up for War in the Gulf" in Bennis and Moushabeck 1991, pp. 91-102. Actually, the United States had ten bases in Oman before the war even started and had the

infrastructure for about sixteen bases in place in Saudi Arabia; Armstrong argued (1991) that altogether \$200 billion had been invested in Saudi military bases. So the U.S. was definitely ready for its Gulf war with policy and military infrastructure already at hand.

35. In addition, a National Security Council White Paper was prepared in May 1990 that asserted: "Iraq and Saddam Hussein are described as 'the optimum contenders to replace the Warsaw Pact' as the rationale for continuing cold war military spending and for putting an end to the 'peace dividend'" (John Pilger, The New Statesman, Feb. 8, 1991). In July 1990, Schwarzkopf played a computer war game under the code name "Exercise External Look 1990" (J. Der Derian, "War Games May Prove Deadly," Newsday, Dec. 9, 1990). In an October 8, 1990, interview with USA Today, Schwarzkopf revealed that the U.S. military was ready for war in the Gulf because two years earlier they had learned that Iraq "had run computer simulations and war games for the invasion of Kuwait." Schwarzkopf noted in the same interview that he programs "possible conflicts with Iraq on computers almost daily." These examples suggest that the United States had been planning for a war with Iraq for some time.

36. The Toronto Star reported on August 12, 1991 (p. A3) that "U.S. weapons sales to the Third World more than doubled last year, making America the world's top arms supplier." The growth in U.S. arms sales from nearly \$8 billion in 1989 to \$18.5 billion in 1990 was attributed to the Iraqi threat in the Gulf. It was the first time since 1983 that the United States ranked at the top of the list of arms suppliers to Third World nations.

37. See Peter Dale Scott, "U.S. Needs Kuwaiti Petrodollars-- Not Just Oil," San Francisco Chronicle, Jan. 2, 1991, pp. C1-2.

38. See The Economist, Sept. 29, 1990, p. 20, and April Glaspie's congressional testimony, March 20-21, 1991, broadcast on C-SPAN; see also the account in Waas 1991, pp. 60ff and, Ridgeway 1991, pp. 25ff.