

Preemptive Strikes and the War on Iraq: A Critique of Bush Administration Unilateralism and Militarism

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Bush administration foreign policy has exhibited a marked unilateralism and militarism in which US military power is used to advance US interests and geopolitical hegemony. The policy was first evident in the Afghanistan intervention following the September 11, 2001 terror attacks, and informed the 2003 war against Iraq. In From 9/11 to Terror War (Kellner 2003) I sketched out the genesis and origins of Bush administration foreign policy and its application in Afghanistan and the build-up to the Iraq war. In this study, I will update and develop my critique of the Bush doctrine of preemptive strikes and its application in the 2003 Iraq invasion, concluding with a critique of unilateralism and militarism, and defense of multilateral and global solutions to problems such as terrorism, so-called “weapons of mass destruction,” and “rogue regimes.”¹

The Bush Doctrine and the Road to Iraq

“To initiate a war of aggression is not only an international crime; it is the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulative evil of the whole,”

Judges at the Nuremberg trials of Nazi leadership

In a speech to West Point cadets on June 1, 2002 George W. Bush proclaimed a new “doctrine” that the U.S. would strike first against enemies. It was soon apparent that this was a major shift in U.S. military policy, replacing the Cold War doctrine of containment and deterrence with a new policy of preemptive strikes, one that could be tried out in Iraq. U.S. allies were extremely upset with this shift in U.S. policy and move toward an aggressive U.S. unilateralism. In an article “Bush to Formalize a Defense Policy of Hitting First,” David E. Sanger wrote in the New York Times (June 17, 2002) that: “The process of including America's allies has only just begun, and administration officials concede that it will be difficult at best. Leaders in Berlin, Paris and Beijing, in particular, have often warned against unilateralism. But Mr. Bush's new policy could amount to ultimate unilateralism, because it reserves the right to determine what constitutes a threat to American security and to act even if that threat is not judged imminent.”²

After a summer of debate on the necessity of the U.S. going to war against Iraq to destroy its “weapons of mass destruction,” on August 26, 2002, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney applied the new preemptive strike and unilateralist doctrine to Iraq, arguing: “What we must not do in the face of a mortal threat is to give in to wishful thinking or willful blindness... Deliverable weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a terror network or murderous dictator or the two working together constitutes as grave a threat as

can be imagined. The risks of inaction are far greater than the risks of action.” Cheney was responding to many former generals and high-level members of the earlier Bush administration who had reservations against the sort of unilateralist U.S. attack against Iraq that hawks in the Bush administration were urging.

During the late summer and fall of 2002, former US political and military leaders warned about adverse consequences of an Iraq invasion and occupation that could destabilize the Middle East, create havoc in Iraq, turn significant portions of the world militantly against the U.S., disrupt oil supplies, interfere with the war on terrorism, and drive down an unstable economy. Questions were raised concerning how the Bush administration could pay for a war in Iraq and the “war on terrorism” at the same time, and whether the U.S. military could take on so many challenges. There were worries that a post-Saddam regime in Iraq might be chaos and involve the U.S. in a hazardous and violent period of stabilization and reconstruction that could go catastrophically wrong.

Major figures from Bush senior’s administration, including his National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, Secretary of State James Baker, and Lawrence Eagleburger made strong arguments that it would be a disaster for the U.S. to go it alone in Iraq and that the U.S. would appear to be a rogue state without significant support from allies and the UN. The head of the U.S. NATO force in the Kosovo war, General Wesley Clarke, wrote a long piece on the follies of the Bush administration Iraq plan; Norman Schwarzkopf, head of U.S. forces in the Gulf War came out against an Iraq invasion; and General Anthony Zinni, who had recently served as Bush's top envoy to the Middle East, warned against war with Iraq, “saying it would stretch U.S. forces too thin and make unwanted enemies in the volatile region.” Making a pointed attack against Bush administration officials like Dick Cheney and Richard Perle who were lusting for war and had never served in the military, Zinni remarked: “It's pretty interesting that all the generals see it the same way, and all the others who have never fired a shot and are hot to go to war see it another way.”³

Dick Cheney, however, continued to beat the war drums, making bellicose and saber rattling speeches for war against Iraq in late August. Cheney said that UN weapons inspectors “would provide no assurance whatsoever” of Iraqi compliance with UN disarmament resolutions and would instead increase the danger by providing “false comfort.” Cheney was, in effect, ruling out any political mediation of the Iraq situation at a time when global forces were furiously attempting to get UN weapons inspectors back in Iraq to get a vigorous weapons inspection process under way. Yet in a September 1 interview with the BBC, Colin Powell stated that UN weapon inspectors should be sent back to Iraq as a “first step” to deal with the threats posed by the regime of Saddam Hussein. Commentators noted that the White House had not cleared Cheney’s speech and that there was evident “disarray” in the Bush administration over Iraq policy.⁴

As Cheney was calling for war against Iraq, reports spread on the Internet concerning how when CEO at Halliburton, Cheney’s corporation did more business with Iraq than any other U.S. company. A Washington Post story was re-circulating that Halliburton had signed contracts under Cheney’s leadership worth \$73 million through two subsidiaries that sold Iraq oil production equipment and spare parts when there were restrictions against U.S. corporations doing business with Iraq.⁵ Cheney denied knowledge of these ventures, but an investigation into his Halliburton stewardship could well reveal that he had knowledge about his company’s dealings with Iraq (and if he

didn't have knowledge, what kind of a CEO was he?). Indeed, the current CEO has stated that Cheney "unquestionably" knew about the Iraq dealings, implying that the Vice President was lying. Inquiries into Halliburton under Cheney could also unfold how the company set up dummy companies, much like Enron, to cover business losses and to provide fake profits and other questionable activities that had transpired during Cheney's years as CEO. Cheney was being sued on behalf of stockholders for the collapse of the company's stock value under his leadership and investigation of this explosive issue could put Cheney in the same category and cell as Ken Lay.

But it was not only Cheney who was desperately promoting a war against Iraq, but, as I document below, there were an entire cadre of neoconservatives in the Bush administration who had long been seeking the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, US military bases in Iraq, and control of its oil, a project also shared by George W. Bush.⁶ When Tony Blair arrived in the U.S. for a war summit on Iraq on the weekend of September 8, 2002, the Bush administration released photos of what was presented as new evidence of an Iraqi nuclear facility and Bush waved the picture and a 1998 report that Iraq was 6 months away from nuclear bomb capacity at the media, as Blair stood beside him, with Bush proclaiming that "I don't know what more evidence you need" [to demonstrate that Iraq was producing dangerous nuclear weapons]. But as ABC, NBC, and the Washington Post quickly reported,⁷ these pictures and reports were fraudulent evidence, suggesting that the Bush-Cheney clique was resorting to a web of lies and deception to legitimate their Iraq venture. Needless to say, Fox TV and other US cable networks played stories of Iraqi arms programs and their threat to the US and its allies all day to beat the war drums.

On September 8, 2002, Cheney and the other top warmongers of the Bush administration were all over the Sunday talk shows making their case for war against Iraq. Cheney repeated on Meet the Press all of the well known crimes of Saddam Hussein, insinuated long-discredited ties between Iraq and Al Qaeda, and even tried to pin the anthrax attacks on Iraq, although all evidence pointed to U.S. weapons-grade facilities. Cheney was going to have a war against Iraq no matter what the price and it appeared that George W. Bush was equally gung-ho and set on war (see Suskind 2004; Clarke 2004; and Woodward 2004).

Throughout the Fall of 2002, the Bush administration continued to multiply claims concerning dangers of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. The Bush administration insinuated constantly that Iraq was allied with terrorist groups and despite no evidence of links between the Saddam regime and Al Qaeda, in an October 2002 Pew Research Center poll 66% of the US population believed Saddam Hussein was involved in the 9/11 attacks, while 79% believed that Iraq possessed, or was close to possessing, nuclear weapons (cited in Rampton and Stauber 2003: 78f). Moreover, Bush and others in his circle regularly described the "war against terrorism" as World War Three, while Donald Rumsfeld said that it could last as long as the Cold War and Dick Cheney, speaking like a true militarist, said it could go on for a "long, long time, perhaps indefinitely." Such an Orwellian nightmare could plunge the world into a new millennium of escalating war with unintended consequences and embroil the U.S. in countless wars, normalizing war as conflict resolution and creating countless new enemies for the would-be American hegemon.⁸ Indeed, as Chambers Johnson writes in Blowback (2000), Empire has hidden costs. Becoming hegemon breeds resentment and

hostility and when the Empire carries out aggression it elicits anger and creates enemies, intensifying the dangers of perpetual war (see also Johnson 2004).

On September 20, 2002 it was apparent that the hawks' position in the Bush administration had triumphed, at least on the level of official military doctrine, when the Bush administration released a document signaling some of the most important and far-ranging shifts in U.S. foreign and military policy since the end of the Cold War. Titled "The National Security Strategy of the United States," the 33-page report outlined a new doctrine of U.S. military supremacy, providing justifications for the U.S. to undertake unilateral and preemptive strikes in the name of "counterproliferation." This clumsy Orwellian concept was offered as a replacement for the concept of "nonproliferation" and would legitimate unilateral destruction of a country's presumed weapons of mass destruction. The document, in effect, renounced global security, multilateralism, and rule by international law that had informed U.S. thinking since World War Two and that appeared to be a consensus among Western nations during the era of globalization.

The Bush administration's language of "preemptive strikes," "regime change," and "anticipatory self-defense," is purely Orwellian, presenting euphemisms for raw military aggression. Critics assailed the new "strike first, ask questions later" policy, the belligerent unilateralism, and dangerous legitimization of preemptive strikes.⁹ Israel, Pakistan, Russia, China, and lesser powers had already used the so-called "Bush doctrine" and "war against terrorism" to legitimate attacks on domestic and external foes and there were dangers that it could legitimate a proliferation of war and make the world more unstable and violent. As William Galston states:

A global strategy based on the new Bush doctrine of preemption means the end of the system of international institutions, laws and norms that we have worked to build for more than half a century. What is at stake is nothing less than a fundamental shift in America's place in the world. Rather than continuing to serve as first among equals in the postwar international system, the United States would act as a law unto itself, creating new rules of international engagement without the consent of other nations. In my judgment, this new stance would ill serve the long-term interests of the United States.¹⁰

To be sure, the US itself had engaged in countless military aggressions in the post-World War Two era and often subverted international law and global institutions. Nonetheless, the Bush administration doctrine of preemptive strikes was perceived as a sharp break with previous US and regnant global military doctrine and could unleash a series of wars that would plunge the world into the sort of nightmare militarism and totalitarianism sketched out in George Orwell's 1984. The Bush policy is highly repressive, taking the global community to a social Darwinist battleground where decades of international law were put aside in perhaps the most dangerous foreign policy doctrine that had ever appeared in U.S. history. It portends a militarist future and era of perpetual war in which an escalating militarism could generate a cycle of unending violence and retribution, such as has been evident in the Israel and Palestine conflict.

Around the same time that the Bush administration was pushing its new strategic doctrine and seeking to apply it in a war against Iraq, a 2000 report circulated titled "Rebuilding American Defense: Strategies, Forces and Resources for A New American Century." Drawn up by the neo-conservative think-tank Project for a New American

Century (PNAC) for a group that now comprises the rightwing of the Bush administration, including Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz, the document clearly spelled out a plan for U.S. world hegemony grounded in U.S. military dominance of the world and control of the Persian Gulf region and its oil supplies.¹¹ Its upfront goals were a “Pax Americana” and U.S. domination of the world during the new millennium. The document shows that core members of the Bush administration had longed envisaged taking military control of the Gulf region, with the PNAC text stating: “The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein.”

The PNAC document argues for “maintaining global U.S. pre-eminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival, and shaping the international security order in line with American principles and interests.” The vision is long-range, urging U.S. domination of the Gulf “as far into the future as possible.” It is also highly militarist, calling for the U.S. to “fight and decisively win multiple, simultaneous major theatre wars” as a “core mission.” U.S. American armed forces would serve as “the cavalry on the new American frontier,” with U.S. military power blocking the emergence of other countries challenging U.S. domination. It would enlist key allies such as Britain as “the most effective and efficient means of exercising American global leadership,” and would put the U.S., and not the UN, as leader of military interventions or peacekeeping missions. Moreover, it envisages taking on Iran after Iraq, spotlights China for “regime change,” and calls for the creation of “U.S. Space Forces” to dominate outer space, and positioning the U.S. to totally control cyberspace to prevent “enemies” from “using the Internet against the U.S.”

The architects of the PNAC document were now key members of the Bush administration and in early February 2003, reports circulated that a major U.S. intervention in Iraq leading to regime change was inevitable. Richard Perle, a senior adviser to United States Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, indicated that war with Iraq was likely even if Baghdad backed down and allowed inspectors back in to hunt for weapons of mass destruction, according to an interview in early February at a Munich Security conference:

"I don't think there's anything (Iraqi leader) Saddam Hussein could do that would convince us there's no longer any danger coming from Iraq," said Richard Perle, head of the Defense Policy Board of the US Department of Defense... Perle, quoted in an interview with the German edition of the *Financial Times* at the Munich Security Conference, said the only thing that would convince the US regarding Iraq would be a change of regime. US President George W. Bush was now on "a very clear path" heading toward war with Iraq, said Perle...¹²

Colin Powell’s February 5, 2003 speech to the United Nations clearly indicated that the Bush administration was dead-set on war. Powell opened by declaring: “My colleagues, every statement I make today is backed up by sources, solid sources. These are not assertions. What we are giving you are facts and conclusions based on solid intelligence.” Thirty-two times Powell thundered “**We know**” that Iraq contained this or that weapons program and actual so-called “weapons of mass destruction.” Supported by

graphs, satellite pictures of alleged weapons facilities, blows ups of intercepted Iraqi messages, statistics concerning Iraqi chemical and biological weapons programs, signs of a dangerous nuclear weapons program, and other “evidence,” Powell, with CIA Director George Tenet sitting impassively behind him, made the case for war on Iraq to a global audience.¹³

As the hawks in the Bush administration accelerated their war talk, there were a sustained array of strong criticism of the Bush war plans from throughout the world, gigantic global peace demonstrations, and criticism from the US’s closest allies, like Canada and Germany that usually went along with U.S. military interventions. On February 13, 2003, over eight million people on five continents demonstrated against the planned war against Iraq. This demonstration was, according to Tariq Ali, “unprecedented in size, scope and scale... The turnout in Western Europe broke all records: three million in Rome, two million in Spain, a million and a half in London, half a million in Berlin (2003: 144). There was a fierce debate in Britain over whether the UK should support Bush’s adventure and an indication that Tony Blair might lose support in his own party and possibly the next election if he went along with Bush.

An attempt to produce a compromise resolution in the UN collapsed and it was simply a matter of when the war would begin.¹⁴ Whereas the explicit war aims were to shut down Iraq’s “weapons of mass destruction,” and thus enforce UN resolutions that mandated that Iraq eliminate its offensive weapons, there were many hidden agendas in the Bush administration offensive against Iraq. To be re-elected Bush needed a major victory and symbolic triumph over terrorism in order to deflect from the failings of his regime both domestically and in the realm of foreign policy.

Moreover, ideologues within the Bush administration wanted to legitimate a policy of preemptive strikes and a successful attack on Iraq could inaugurate and normalize this policy. Some of the same militarist unilateralists in the Bush administration envisage U.S. world hegemony, the elder Bush’s “New World Order,” with the U.S. as the reigning military power and world’s policeman (Kellner, 2003b). Increased control of the world’s oil supplies provided a tempting prize for the former oil executives who maintain key roles in the Bush administration. Moreover, key members of the PNAC constituted a neoconservative clique in the Bush administration linked to Israel’s radical Likud party who wanted to destroy Saddam Hussein’s regime because he was seen as a threat to Israel. And, finally, one might note the Oedipus Tex drama, where George W. Bush’s desires to conclude his father’s unfinished business and simultaneously defeat Evil to constitute himself as Good helped drive Bush Junior to war against Iraq with the fervor of a religious Crusade.¹⁵

With all these agendas in play, a war on Iraq appears to have been inevitable. Bush's March 6, 2003 press conference made it evident that he was ready to go to war against Iraq. His handlers told him to speak slowly and keep his big stick and Texas macho out of view, but he constantly threatened Iraq and evoked the rhetoric of “good” and “evil” that he used to justify his crusade against bin Laden and Al Qaeda. Bush repeated the words "Saddam Hussein" and "terrorism" incessantly, mentioning Iraq as a “threat” at least sixteen times, which he attempted to link with the September 11 attacks and terrorism. He used the word "I" as in "I believe" countless times, and talked of "my government" as if he owned it, depicting a man lost in words and self-importance, positioning himself against the “evil” that he was preparing to wage war against. Unable

to make an intelligent and objective case for a war against Iraq, Bush could only invoke fear and a moralistic rhetoric, attempting to present himself as a strong nationalist leader.

Bush's rhetoric, like that of fascism, deploys a mistrust and hatred of language, reducing it to manipulative speechifying, speaking in codes, repeating the same phrases over and over. This is grounded in anti-intellectualism and hatred of democracy and intellectuals. It is clearly evident in Bush's press conferences and snitty responses to questions and general contempt for the whole procedure. It plays to anti-intellectual proclivities and tendencies in the extreme conservative and fundamentalist Christian constituencies who support him.

But Bush's Iraq discourse failed to convince those who were not already true believers in the need to invade Iraq and many of the US's traditional allies were deeply angered by Bush's arrogance and were distanced and not convinced by his rhetoric. Indeed, it appears that Bush's press conference was orchestrated to shore up his base and prepare his supporters for a major political struggle rather than to marshal arguments to convince those opposed to go to war with Iraq that it was a good idea. He displayed, against his will, the complete poverty of his case to go to war against Iraq, he had no convincing arguments, nothing new to communicate, and just repeated the same tired cliches over and over.

Bush's discourse also displayed Orwellian features of Doublespeak where war against Iraq is for peace, the occupation of Iraq is its liberation, bombing its cities and civilian infrastructure enables "humanitarian" action, and where the murder of countless Iraqis and destruction of the country will produce "freedom" and "democracy." In a pre-war summit with Tony Blair in the Azores and in his first talk after the bombing began, Bush went on and on about the "coalition of the willing" and how many countries were supporting and participating in the "allied" effort. In fact, however, it was a Coalition of Two, with the U.S. and UK doing most of the fighting and with many of the countries that Bush claimed supported his war quickly backtracking and expressing reservations about the highly unpopular assault that was strongly opposed by most people and countries in the world.¹⁶

The War on Iraq

"We must make clear to the Germans that the wrong for which their fallen leaders are on trial is not that they lost the war, but that they started it.... No grievances or policies will justify resort to aggressive war. It is utterly renounced and condemned as an instrument of policy."

Robert I. Jackson, US representative to the international Conference on Military Trials at the end of World War II

The 2003 Iraq war was a major global media event constructed very differently by varying broadcasting networks in diverse parts of the world. While the U.S. networks framed the event as "Operation Iraqi Freedom" (the Pentagon concept) or "War in Iraq," the Canadian CBC used the logo "War on Iraq," and various Arab networks presented it as an "invasion" and "occupation." In this section, I provide a critique of the U.S.

broadcasting network construction of the war that I interpret as providing a conduit for Bush administration and Pentagon propaganda, and show how events spinning out of control in Iraq created a spectacle of chaos that undermined Bush administration claims of victory and the liberation of Iraq.¹⁷

On March 19, 2003 the media spectacle of the war against Iraq unfolded with a dramatic attempt to “decapitate” the Iraqi regime. Large numbers of missiles were aimed at targets in Baghdad where Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi leadership were believed to be staying and the tens of thousands of ground troops on the Kuwait-Iraq border poised for invasion entered Iraq in a blitzkrieg toward Baghdad.¹⁸ The media followed the Bush administration and Pentagon slogan of “shock and awe” and presented the war against Iraq as a great military spectacle, while triumphalism marked the opening days of the U.S. bombing of Iraq and invasion.

The Al Jazeera network live coverage of the bombing of a palace belonging to the Hussein family was indeed shocking as loud explosions and blasts jolted viewers throughout the world. Whereas some Western media presented this bombing positively as a powerful assault on “evil,” for Arab audiences it was experienced as an attack on the body of the Arab and Muslim people, just as the September 11 terror attacks were experienced by Americans as assaults on the very body and symbols of the United States. While in Gulf War I, CNN was the only network live in Baghdad and throughout the war framed the images, discourses, and spectacle, there were over twenty broadcasting networks in Baghdad for the 2003 Iraq war, including several Arab networks, and the different TV companies presented the war quite diversely.

Conservative US networks like Fox and the NBC cable networks played patriotic music as the soundtrack to their news reports and all US networks engaged in extremely patriotic discourses and avoided showing casualties or the destructive elements of the Iraq incursion (see the studies in Miller 2004). But Al Jazeera and other Arab networks, as well as some European networks, talked of an “invasion” and an illegal U.S. and British assault on Iraq. While Donald Rumsfeld bragged that the bombings were the most precise in history and were aimed at military and not civilian targets, Arab and various global broadcasting networks focused on civilian casualties and presented painful spectacles of Iraqis suffering. Moreover, to the surprise of many, after a triumphant march across the Kuwaiti border and rush to Baghdad, the U.S. and British forces began to take casualties, and during the weekend of March 22-23, images of their POWs and dead bodies of their soldiers were shown throughout the world. Moreover, the Iraqis began fiercely resisting and rather than cheering for British and U.S. forces to enter the southern city of Basra, there was strong resistance throughout southern Iraq.

Soon after, an immense sandstorm slowed down the march on Baghdad and images of Iraqi civilians maimed or killed by U.S. and British bombing, accounts of mishaps, stalled and overextended supply lines, and unexpected dangers to the invading forces created a tremendously dramatic story. The intensity and immediacy of the spectacle was multiplied by “embedded reporters” who were accompanying the U.S. and British forces and who beamed back live pictures, first of the triumphant march through Iraq and then of the invading forces stalling and subject to perilous counterattack.

A great debate emerged around the embedded reporters and whether journalists who depended on the protection of the U.S. and British military, lived with the troops, and signed papers agreeing to a rigorous set of restrictions on their reporting could be

objective and critical of their protectors (see the studies in Miller 2004). From the beginning, it was clear that the embedded reporters were indeed “in bed with” their military escorts and as the U.S. and Britain stormed into Iraq, the reporters presented exultant and triumphant accounts that trumped any paid propagandist. The embedded U.S. reporters were largely cheerleaders and spinners for the U.S. and UK military and lost any veneer of objectivity. But as the incursion stalled, a sandstorm hit, and U.S. and British forces came under attack, the embedded TV reporters displayed genuine fear, helped capture the chaos of war, provided sometimes vivid accounts of the fighting, and occasionally, as I note below, deflated propaganda lies of the U.S. or U.K. military.

Indeed, U.S. and British military discourse was exceptionally mendacious, as happens so often in recent wars that are as much for public opinion and political agendas as for military goals. British and U.S. sources claimed the first days into Iraq that the border port of Umm Qasar and major southern city of Basra were under coalition control, whereas TV images showed quite the opposite. When things went very bad for U.S. and British forces on March 23, a story originated from an embedded reporter with the Jerusalem Post that a “huge” chemical weapons production facility was found, a story allegedly confirmed by a Pentagon source to the Fox TV military correspondent who quickly spread it through the U.S. media (BBC was skeptical from the beginning).¹⁹

When U.S. officials denied that they were responsible for major civilian atrocities in two Baghdad bombings the week of March 24, reporters on the scene cited witnesses describing planes flying overhead and in one case found pieces of a missile with U.S. markings and numbers on it, shown repeatedly on BBC.²⁰ And after a suicide bombing killed four U.S. troops at a checkpoint in late March, U.S. soldiers fired on a vehicle that ran a checkpoint and killed seven civilians. The U.S. military claimed that it had fired a warning shot, but a Washington Post reporter on the scene noted that a senior U.S. military official had shouted to a younger soldier to fire a warning shot first and then yelled that “you [expletive] killed them” when the soldier failed to do so and fired directly on the civilian vehicle. Embedded newspaper reporters also often provided more vivid accounts of “friendly fire” and other mishaps, getting their information from troops on the ground and on the site, instead of from military spinners who tended to be propagandists.²¹

Hence, the embedded and other reporters on the ground provided documentation of the more raw and brutal aspects of war and telling accounts that often put in question official versions of the events, as well as propaganda and military spin. But since their every posting and broadcast was censored by the U.S. military it was the independent “unilateral” journalists who provided the most accurate account of the horrors of the war and the Coalition of Two military mishaps. Thus, on the whole the embedded journalists were largely propagandists who often outdid the Pentagon and Bush administration in spinning the message of the moment.

Moreover, the U.S. broadcast networks were on the whole more embedded in the Pentagon and Bush administration than the reporters in the field and print journalists. The military commentators on the major US TV networks provided little more than the Pentagon spin of the moment and often repeated gross lies and propaganda, as in the examples mentioned above concerning the U.S. bombing of civilians or the checkpoint shooting of innocents. Entire networks like Fox and the NBC cable networks provided little but propaganda and one-sided patriotism, as did, for the most part CNN. All these

24/7 cable networks, as well as the big three U.S. broadcasting networks, tended to provide highly sanitized views of the war, rarely showing Iraqi casualties, thus producing a view of the war significantly different than that shown in other parts of the world.

The dramatic story of “Saving Private Lynch” was one of the more spectacular human interest stories of the war that revealed the constructed nature of the Iraq media spectacle and the ways that the Pentagon produced mythologies that were replicated by the TV networks. Private Jessica Lynch was one of the first American POWs shown on Iraqi TV and since she was young, female, and attractive her fate became a topic of intense interest. Stories circulated that she was shot and stabbed and was tortured by Iraqis holding her in captivity.²² Eight days after her capture, the U.S. media broadcast footage of her dramatic rescue, obviously staged like a reality TV spectacle. Soldiers stormed the hospital, found Lynch, and claimed a dramatic rescue under fire from Iraqis. In fact, several media institutions interviewed the doctors in the hospital who claimed that Iraqi troops had left the hospital two days before, that the hospital staff had tried to take Jessica to the Americans but they fired on them, and that in the “rescue” the U.S. troops shot through the doors, terrorized doctors and patients, and created a dangerous scene that could have resulted in deaths, simply to get some dramatic rescue footage for TV audiences.²³

The Fox network was especially brutally militarist and chauvinistic, yet Fox footage shown on April 5-6 of the daring U.S. incursion into Baghdad displayed a road strewn with destroyed Iraqi vehicles, burning buildings, and Iraqi corpses. This live footage, replayed for days, caught something of the carnage of the hi-tech slaughter and destruction of Iraq that the U.S. networks tended to neglect or downplay. And an Oliver North commentary to footage of a U.S. warplane blasting away one Iraqi tank and armored vehicle after another put on display the hi-tech massacre of a completely asymmetrical war in which the Iraqi military had no chance whatsoever against the U.S. war machine.

U.S. military commanders claimed that in the initial foray into Baghdad 2,000-3,000 Iraqis were killed suggesting that the broadcasting networks were not really showing the brutality and carnage of the war. Indeed, most of the bombing of Iraqi military forces was invisible and dead Iraqis were rarely shown. An embedded CNN reporter, Walter Rogers, later recounted that the one time his report showed a dead Iraqi the CNN switchboard “lit up like a Christmas tree” with angry viewers demanding that CNN not show any dead bodies, as if the U.S. audience wanted to be in denial concerning the human costs of the war.²⁴

An April 6 interview on Fox with Forbes magazine publisher and former presidential candidate Steve Forbes made it clear that the U.S. intended to get all the contracts on rebuilding Iraq for American firms, that Iraqi debts held by French and Russians should be cancelled, and that to the victors would go all the spoils of war. Such discourse put on display the arrogance and greed that drove the U.S. effort and subverted all idealistic rhetoric about democracy and freedom for the Iraqis. The very brutality of Fox war pornography graphically displayed the horrors of war and the militarist, gloating, and aggressive discourse that accompanied the slaughter of Iraqis and destruction of the country showed the New Barbarism that characterized the Bush era.²⁵

Comparing American broadcasting networks with the BBC, Canadian, and other outlets as I did during the war against Iraq, showed vastly different wars being presented.

The U.S. networks tended to ignore Iraqi casualties, Arab outrage about the war, global antiwar and anti-U.S. protests, and the negative features of the war, while the BBC and Canadian CBC often featured these more critical themes.²⁶ As noted, the war was framed very differently by various countries and networks, while analysts noted that in most Arab media, the war was presented as an invasion of Iraq, slaughter of its peoples, and destruction of the country.

On the whole, U.S. broadcasting networks tended to present a sanitized view of the war while Canadian, British and other European, and Arab broadcasting presented copious images of civilian casualties and the horrors of war. U.S. television coverage tended toward pro-military patriotism, propaganda, and technological fetishism, celebrating the weapons of war and military humanism, highlighting the achievements and heroism of the U.S. troops. Other global broadcasting networks, however, were highly critical of the U.S. and U.K. military and often presented negative spectacles of the assault on Iraq and the shock and awe hi-tech massacre.

In a sense, the U.S. and UK war on Iraq found itself in a double bind. The more thoroughly they annihilated Iraqi troops and conquered the country, the more aggressive, bullying, and imperialist they would appear to the rest of the world. Yet the dramatic pictures of civilian casualties and harrowing images of U.S. bombing and destruction of Iraq made it imperative to end the war as soon as possible. An apparently failed attempt to kill Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi leadership on April 7th, destroyed a civilian area and killed a number of people, followed by the death of journalists in two separate episodes by the U.S. military on April 8, producing an extremely negative media spectacle of the war on Iraq. But the seeming collapse of the Iraqi regime on April 9, where for the first time there were significant images of Iraqis celebrating the demise of Hussein, provided the material for a spectacle of victory.

Indeed, the destruction of a statue of Saddam Hussein on live global television provided precisely the images desired by the Pentagon and Bush administration. Closer analysis of this spectacle revealed, however, that rather than displaying a mass uprising of Iraqis against the Baath regime, there were relatively few people assaulting the Hussein statue. Analysis of the pictures in the square revealed that there was only a relatively small crowd around the statue of Saddam Hussein while most of the square was empty. Those attacking the statue were largely members of the U.S.-supported Iraqi National Congress, including aides of its infamous leader Ahmed Chalabi. Moreover, the few Iraqis in the square were unable to destroy the statue until some U.S. soldiers on the scene used their tank and cable to pull it down. In a semiotic slip, one soldier briefly put a U.S. flag on top of Hussein's head, providing an iconic image for Arab networks and others of a U.S. occupation and take-over of Iraq.

Subsequent images of looting, anarchy and chaos throughout Iraq, however, including the plundering of the National Museum, the National Archive that contained rare books and historical documents, and the Ministry for Religious Affairs, which contained rare religious material, created extremely negative impressions.²⁷ Likewise, growing Iraqi demonstrations over the U.S. occupation and continued violence throughout the country put on view a highly uncertain situation in which the spectacle of victory and the triumph of Bush administration and Pentagon policy might be put into question, domestically as well as globally.

Unintended Consequences and Contradictions of the Spectacle

“It is the photographs that gives one the vivid realization of what actually took place. Words don’t do it... You see the photographs, and you get a sense of it, and you cannot help but be outraged.”

Donald Rumsfeld, US Secretary of Defense

For weeks after the fall of the Iraqi regime negative images continued to circulate of clashes between Iraqis and the U.S. forces, gigantic Shia demonstrations and celebrations that produced the specter of the growing of radical Islamic power in the region, and the continued failure to produce security and stability. The spectacle of the Shia on the march and taking over power in many regions of the country created worries that “democracy” in Iraq could produce religious fundamentalist regimes. This negative spectacle suggests the limitations of a politics of the spectacle that can backfire, spiral out of control, and generate unintended consequences.

In Gulf War I, the Iraqi flight from its occupation of Kuwait and apparent military defeat of the Iraqi regime was followed by images of Shi’ite and Kurdish uprisings and their violent suppression by the Saddam Hussein regime, ultimately coding the Gulf War as ambiguous and contributing to George H.W. Bush’s defeat in 1992. Likewise, while the September 11 terror attacks on the U.S. by the Al Qaeda network appeared to be a triumph of the Islamic radicals, worldwide revulsion against the attacks and the global and multilateral attempts to close down its networks appear to have seriously weakened the Al Qaeda forces. Yet the brutal spectacle of US military unilaterally attacking Afghanistan and then invading Iraq may have helped revive Al Qaeda, or inspire recruits to similar Jihadist groups.²⁸

Politics of the spectacle are thus highly ambiguous and unstable, subject to multiple interpretations, and often generate unanticipated effects, as when the Republican attempts to use Bill Clinton’s sexual escapades to promote his impeachment backfired and created sympathy and support for him (Kellner 2003b). Media spectacles can backfire and are subject to dialectical reversal as positive images give way to negative ones. Spectacles of war are difficult to control and manage, and can be subject to different framings and interpretations, as when non-U.S. broadcasting networks focus on civilian casualties, looting and chaos, and U.S. military crimes against Iraqis rather than the U.S. victory and the evils of Saddam Hussein. It is obviously too soon to determine the long-term effects of Bush Junior’s 2003 Iraq war, but the consequences are likely to be complex and unforeseen, thus rendering claims that the reckless venture represents a great victory premature and possibly quite erroneous.

Attempting to counter the negative spectacle, the Bush administration attempted on May 1, 2003, to organize a positive presentation of Bush piloting a naval aircraft onto the USS Abraham Lincoln. In this carefully orchestrated media event, Bush emerged in full Top Gun regalia from a jet plane with “Navy One” and “George W. Bush, Commander-in-Chief” logos. Strutting out of the aircraft helmet in hand, Bush crossed the flight deck accompanied by a cheering crowd and with full TV coverage that had been anticipating the big event for hours. Delivering a canned speech from a podium with a giant banner “Mission Accomplished” behind him Bush declared that the “major

combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed.”²⁹

Following Bush’s attempt at a triumphant spectacle of “Mission Accomplished,” intensification of an anti-US occupation insurgency and the spectacle of guerilla warfare and terrorism proliferated. During the summer of 2003, Iraqi attacks mounted on US troops rose from about 15 a day to 35 a day. Starting in August 2003, attacks multiplied against the UN, other foreign troops and reconstruction teams aiding the Americans, and Iraqi police and military forces that were being trained to stabilize the chaotic country.³⁰ The attacks were violent political spectacle aimed at the global media that quickly broadcast each assault, circulating images of death and chaos throughout the global village.

The Spectacle of Insurgency was temporarily displaced in December 2003 with the capture of Saddam Hussein, hiding in a “spiderhole,” appearing dazed, beaten, and looking like a tramp or homeless person with a long flowing beard, uncut hair, and dirty clothes. The spectacle of an American doctor going through his hair for lice and examining his mouth was played over and over producing images of the great leader fallen to the depths of degradation.³¹

Yet Saddam’s capture did not lead to the end of the Iraqi insurgency and through spring and into summer 2004 US troops continued to be attacked and there have been intensified killing of Iraqis who work with the US forces. By early 2004, reports questioned whether Iraq ever had the “weapons of mass destruction” attributed to it and debates intensified as to whether the Iraq adventure was a positive or negative event.³² Indeed, the eruption of violence in April 2004, weeks before the US had planned to hand power over to the Iraqis, raised serious issues concerning whether democracy could be constructed in Iraq and what role the US would have in Iraq’s future.

In particular, on March 28 the US occupation forces closed the newspaper al-Hawza run by supporters of Shiite radical Muqtada al-Sadr and shortly thereafter arrested Mustafa Yaqubi, his deputy in Najaf. Around the same time, US forces killed civilians in Fallujah and insurgents in the town captured four US contractors who were brutally murdered, had their corpses dragged through the street, and bodies hung on a bridge, to the accompaniment of cheering townspeople and global media coverage. The US retaliated with fierce firepower, bombing a mosque and killing over 800 Iraqis. As this drama played out, al-Sadr forces took over police stations in Baghdad and cities in southern Iraq and in the fights against insurgent Iraqi forces throughout the country the death toll of US troops and Iraqis rose dramatically, leading to comparisons with the Vietnam debacle.³³

The battle of Fallujah was fought to a standstill and with negative publicity and growing anger of Iraqis over US violence in Iraq, US military forces withdrew from the city, rather than engaging in an expected all-out attack. Moreover, signaling a desperate reversal in policy, the US occupation forces agreed to let former members of Saddam Hussein’s military control Iraqi forces who would supposedly patrol Fallujah. The Fallujah debacle was accompanied by the first photos of US coffins, a topic hitherto taboo and forbidden. After a Kuwait contractor sent pictures to her home newspaper, the website Memory Hole released hundreds of pictures of coffins that quickly circulated through the Internet, broadcasting media, and press. On the one-year anniversary of George W. Bush declaring that “major combat operations” had ended, accompanied by a

large poster “Mission Accomplished,” ABC’s Nightline broadcast photos, when available, of the 721 soldiers who have died in Iraq.

To complicate the US occupation, in late April pictures were released of US soldiers torturing and humiliating Iraqi prisoners in Saddam Hussein’s notorious military fortress Abu Ghraib and the entire world was appalled by US behavior, undermining what little legitimacy the US occupying forces had and creating immense public relations problems for the Bush administration and Pentagon. Indeed, the repetitive stream of images of Iraqi prisoner abuse by US soldiers and the quest to pin responsibility on the soldiers themselves and/or higher US military and political authorities produced one of the most intense media spectacles of contemporary journalism. Evoking universal disgust and repugnance, the images of young American soldiers humiliating Iraqis circulated with satellite-driven speed through broadcasting channels, the Internet, and print media and may stand as some of the most viewed and influential images of all time.

While the photos put on display the ubiquity of media spectacle and the powerful impact of images, their digital origins and circulation also require consideration. Upon obtaining over 1,000 digital photos shortly after the initial cycle of images was released by CBS and The New Yorker, the Washington Post commented in a display of photos on May 7, 2004 that while many of the images revealed shocking poses of prisoner abuse and torture, many more were of mundane scenes of daily life in Iraq. Moreover, the digital archive was not the work of professional photojournalists but of young US soldiers. It was as if a generation raised on the media and in possession of digital cameras and camcorders naturally documented its own life, as if one was a participant in a reality TV show or political documentary.

Although there were reports that the images were intended for use to intimidate new Iraqi prisoners and to “soften them up” for interrogation,³⁴ the pictures also emerged from fascination with taking pictures and the digital documentation of everyday life. They also revealed how quickly such images could leave a foreign country under US military control by way of the Internet and circulate quickly around the world. The Pentagon indicated in the Senate and House Hearings on the Iraq scandal on May 6 that many, many more photos and video were in play and would probably be circulated in the days ahead.

Whereas the US censored every image and word in the pool system concocted for the 1991 Gulf war and had strict guidelines and control mechanisms for the embedded reporters in the 2003 Iraq intervention, the digital age has made it ultimately impossible to hide the dark sides of the current Iraq occupation. The widespread use of digital cameras and the ease with which images can be shot and disseminated, including direct transmission through wireless connections, demonstrated how media spectacle could trump US military control and circulate highly damaging representations of US abuse of Iraqis. As Donald Rumsfeld exclaimed during the Iraq prisoner abuse hearings on May 7: “people are running around with digital cameras and taking these unbelievable photographs and then passing them off, against the law, to the media, to our surprise, when they had not even arrived in the Pentagon.”

The role of media images in warfare and new role of digital spectacle was dramatized further on May 11, 2004 when gruesome imagery of American Nick Berg’s beheading was released to the global media. The horrifying shots quickly circulated and made it clear that digital technology was an asymmetric tool of war that any side could

use to sway public opinion and to uncover the awful horrors of war. It was also becoming clear that Bush's Iraq intervention was a Horror Show that would continue to shock and awe global audiences in the foreseeable future.

Yet revelations during the same week that photos of alleged Iraqi prisoner abuse by British soldiers were counterfeit, and subsequent admission that they were, also reveals the fragile nature of digital imagery, that it can be altered and faked, and that it is hard to differentiate between real images and digital simulacra. Yet the sheer volume and ugliness of the images of US prisoner abuse and torture trumped epistemological reflections upon the image and instead focused attention on the catastrophe of the Iraqi war itself and what it was doing to both the Iraqis and US occupation forces.

Deeply rooted racism stands behind and fuels the Iraqi prisoner abuse as soldiers and the US public have widely viewed Iraqis and Arabs as less than human since the Gulf war of 1991. Arabs and Iraqis have been villains of countless Hollywood films and US TV shows, while racism toward all Arabs and Moslems intensified after the 9/11 attacks. In the first Gulf war, US soldiers went on a "turkey shoot," slaughtering hundreds of Iraqis escaping from Kuwait City near the end of the war. During the current Iraq war, US snipers talk of "rats nests" of Iraqi troops and cheer when they take out the "vermin." US architect for the failed Iraq invasion, Paul Wolfowitz, speaks of "snakes" and "draining the swamps" in "uncivilized parts of the world."

Such racist and dehumanizing perceptions facilitate reducing Iraqi prisoners to animals and less-than-human brutes as when the now notorious woman MP Lyndee England tied a leash around a naked Iraqi prisoner as if he was a dog, or US soldiers perversely constructed stacks of naked Iraqi bodies into sexually humiliating positions as if they were a horde of animals. The image of Lyndee England pointing to an Iraqi male prisoner masturbating with one thumb up and another pointing to the Iraqi's genitals, accompanied by a grotesque leer, again points to the pornographic nature of the prisoner abuse. In another shocking image, a hooded Iraqi prisoner standing atop a box has his arms stretched out and wires attached to his fingers connected to electrical lines. The hood evokes the Ku Klux Klan and their notorious lynching, while the pose of the Iraqi with his arms spread out evokes Christ on the cross, and the monstrous and grotesque figure as a whole reminds art-sensitive viewers of Goya's sketches of the horrors of war.

Only a deeply racist mentality could imagine and engage in such systematic brutality that put on display an unmastered racist pathology that wars seem to unleash. The pictures also elicit a brutal colonial mentality. The Washington Post noted that the cache of more than 1000 digital pictures revealed that the young troops took pictures of camels, exotic vistas of Iraq, and scenes of ordinary people, as well as the copious prisoner abuse and disgusting prison pictures. Many of the quasi-pornographic images released of the Iraqi male prisoners depicted a feminization of them, naked or in women's undergarments, and passively humiliated and emasculated. There is, of course, a long tradition of taking exotic pictures of faraway places, just as there is a tradition of documenting bloody atrocity scenes in wartime. In a digital age, these genres and impulses merged together, producing a panorama of horror that may end military careers and deflate American imperial ambitions in the Middle East for a generation.

To be sure, the pornographic overtones and participation by men and women, along with the gloating and smirking faces of the US prison guards, made the particular Abu Ghraib prison images especially toxic and explosive. Yet any number of other

images of dead Iraqi civilians, US bombing errors, brutal treatment by the US forces of Iraqis, and the like could be easily documented and distributed through the world media. Part of the shock and distress of the images resulted from the sanitized view of the Iraq intervention in the US corporate media. Wars are often defined in the public mind by negative images of atrocity, such as the naked young girl fleeing in Vietnam, with her body scarred by napalm, or the image of a young US soldier lighting a peasant hut on fire with his cigarette lighter. Iraq, too, may be remembered by horrific images, in this case taken by the US troops themselves.

Previously, it has been largely Arab media which have focused upon the unsavory aspects of the US Iraq invasion and occupation, showing many bloody images of Iraqi civilian victims of US military action and unflattering images of US military forces and politicians. With the Pandora's Box of Iraqi Evils now opened, with the media's tendency toward pack journalism and the feeding frenzy of the moment, and with genuine fear and concerns about the direction of the Bush administration's Iraq invasion and occupation among broad segments of the public, there are certain to be many, many more disturbing images of the growing global media spectacle of US misadventures in Iraq and outrage concerning the entire failed enterprise.

In a media age, images are impossible to control and a media spectacle concocted to be a triumphal display of US military power can easily reverse into a spectacle of US arrogance, brutality, and malfeasance. Yet if the images display the errors of US policy and can be used globally to demonstrate the abuse and torture of prisoners, and if they eventually force the US to reverse its disastrous Iraq policies, they will prove to be examples of media images that changed the world in a positive way.

Moreover, their widespread distribution and the impassioned debate around them could send the message that abuse and torture of prisoners is unacceptable, thus forcing governments and the military to cease and desist with actions that many people see as a violation of human rights and form of barbaric atavism. The impact of media spectacles are highly unpredictable and it is possible that the distressing circulation of images of Iraqi prisoner abuse could eventually have lasting, positive effects on international law and the treatment of prisoners. In any case, the issue of Iraq would be a major focus of the 2004 Presidential campaign and the future of the Bush administration intervention in Iraq remains subject to the vicissitudes of unpredictable history. At this point, however, certain conclusions can be drawn.

Cosmopolitan Multilateralism

“There is no worse mistake in public leadership than to hold out false hopes soon to be swept away. The British people can face peril or misfortune with fortitude and buoyancy, but they bitterly resent being deceived or finding that those responsible for their affairs are themselves dwelling in a fool's paradise.”

Winston Churchill

As a response to the September 11 terror attacks, the Bush administration answered with an intensified militarism that threatens to generate an era of perpetual war, a new arms race, accelerated military violence, destabilizing U.S. military interventions, a global assault on human rights, constant threats to democracy, and undermining of the

world economy. Domestically, the Bush administration “Patriot Act” constitutes a major assault on civil liberties in the US and severe threats to American democracy (see Kellner 2003a and Cole 2003). The Bush regime provides political favors to its largest corporate and other supporters, unleashing unrestrained Wild West capitalism, exemplified in the Enron scandals, and a form of capitalist cronyism whereby Bush administration family and friends are provided with government favors, while social welfare programs, environmental legislation, and protection of rights and freedoms are curtailed (Phillips 2004 and Dean 2004).

The largely unilateralist and militarist Iraq intervention clearly shows the dangers and destructive effects of the Bush administration preemptive strike doctrine, and the need for strong multilateralism and genuinely global solutions to problems like terrorism, dangerous weapons, and rogue regimes. As the quotations from the Nuremberg war crimes tribunal which were used as epigrams in earlier sections of the paper suggested, the Bush administration doctrine of preventive wars and preemptive strikes embedded in the Iraq invasion contravenes international law. In particular, the Bush administration invasion of Iraq and use of military force to overthrow the Iraqi regime violated sections three and four of Article 2 of the United Nations Charter which stipulates that: “All members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered [and shall] refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.”³⁵

In addition, the so-called “Bush doctrine” has alienated the US from many of its key allies and large segments of the world who increasingly oppose US policy.³⁶ Bush administration and Pentagon ideologues believed that with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US was the regnant military power and should use US military power to enforce its will and interests. Bush’s Iraq fiasco clearly demonstrates the limitations of this position, making evident the follies of preventive wars, preemptive strikes, and unilateralism.

The fiasco in Iraq discloses the fallacious assumptions upon which the Bush doctrine of preventive war was predicated. For preventive war to work, there must be solid intelligence upon which military action can be taken and the Iraq case revealed deep flaws in US intelligence capabilities. Secondly, launching preventive war requires that US military power is sufficiently superior to guarantee victory and minimal losses, while the Iraq debacle shows that US military power does not ensure victory and that military power alone does not guarantee successful resolutions to difficult political problems.³⁷

The Iraq case suggests that multilateral solutions are needed for global problems and that as with Bosnia, Kosovo, Haiti, and other recent political crises, global and multilateral alliances and forces were necessary. With Immanuel Wallerstein (2004), I would agree that this should not be taken as an endorsement of “weak multilateralism,” defined as a US-dominated system of alliances whereby the US dictates to allies, controls the UN and global institutions, and imposes its will on the world. Such a form of “weak multilateralism” is top-down and not really multilateral, but conceals control and hegemony of the US and global corporate domination.

This form of what I would call “neoliberal globalization” should be opposed to a strong or genuine multilateralism that is multipolar, involves autonomous partners and alliances, and is radically democratic. Such a democratic and global multilateralism

would include NGOs, social movements, and popular institutions, as well as global institutions like the UN. A democratic and multipolar globalization would be grounded philosophically in Enlightenment cosmopolitanism, democracy, human rights and ecology, drawing on notions of a cosmos, global citizenship, and genuine democracy.³⁸

The need for cosmopolitan multilateralism shows the limitations of one-sided antiglobalization positions that dismiss globalization out of hand as a form of capitalist or US domination. Taking this position is admitting defeat before you've started, conceding globalization to corporate capitalism and not articulating contradictions, forms of resistance, and possibilities of democracy grounded in globalization itself. [CUT=Such and ADD= Rather, an US-dominated or corporate globalization represents a form of neoliberal globalization which, interestingly, Wallerstein claims is "just about passé" (2004: 18). The argument would be that Bush administration unilateralism has united the world against US policies, so that the US can no longer push through whatever trade, economic, or military policies that they wish without serious opposition. Wallerstein points to the widely perceived failures of IMF and WTO policies, the collapse of recent Cancun and Miami trade meetings that ended with no agreement as strongly united so-called southern countries opposed US trade policy, and, finally, global opposition to the Bush administration Iraq intervention. He also points to the rise of the World Social Forum as a highly influential counterpoint to the Davos World Economic Forum, which has stood as an organizing site for a worldwide anti-neoliberal globalization movement.

Cosmopolitan multilateralism thus overcomes the one-sided of a nation-state and national interest dominant politics and recognizes that in a global world the nation is part of a multilateral, multipolar, multicultural, and transnational system. A cosmopolitan globalization driven by issues of multipolar multilateralism, democratization and globalization from below, would embrace women's, workers', and minority rights, as well as strong ecological perspectives. Such cosmopolitan globalization thus provides a worthy way to confront challenges of the contemporary era ranging from terrorism to global warming.

The Bush administration intervention in Iraq showed the limitations of militarist unilateralism and that in a complex world it is impossible, despite awesome military power, for one country to rule in a multipolar globe. The failures of Bush administration policy in Iraq suggest that unilateralist militarism is not the way to fight international terrorism, or to deal with issues such as "weapons of mass destruction," but is rather the road to an Orwellian nightmare and era of perpetual war in which democracy and freedom will be in dire peril and the future of the human species will be in question.

At this moment of history, the US is confronted with the question of whether it wants to preserve its democratic Republic or attempt to expand its imperial Empire, a project likely to create new enemies and alienate old allies.³⁹ Global problems require global solutions and Bush administration unilateralism and its quest for Empire has arguably created new enemies, overextended US military power, and weakened international alliances. These are frightening times and it is essential that all citizens become informed about the fateful conflicts of the present, gain clear understanding of what is at stake, and realize that they must oppose at once international terrorism, Bushian militarism, and an Orwellian police-state in order to preserve democracy and make possible a life worthy of a human being.

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Notes

¹ This study updates Kellner 2001, 2003a and 2003b. Thanks to Rhonda Hammer, Carl Boggs, Richard Kahn, and the anonymous reviewers of New Political Science for comments on earlier versions of this text. I am putting "weapons of mass destruction" in quotes at this point because, strictly speaking, many of the weapons programs that the Bush administration alleged Iraq was developing were really not weapons of "mass destruction." The term primarily refers to nuclear weapons or mass delivery of biological and chemical weapons, a capacity that the US continues to develop despite international treaties and global demands for more arms control. Many contend that the Bush administration is undermining global arms control that should be vigorously developed to prevent the spread and use of admittedly noxious and monstrous weapons.

² See also Thomas E. Ricks and Vernon Loeb, "Bush Developing Military Policy of Striking First," Washington Post, June 10, 2002: A1. For a sharp critique of Bush's new preemptive strike policy, see Ritter 2004 and Johnson 2004.

³ See Mike Salinero, "Gen. Zinni Says War With Iraq Is Unwise," Tampa Tribune (Aug 24, 2002). Zinni later published a book with Tom Clancy Battle Ready (New York: Putnam, 2004) that fiercely critiques Bush administration Iraq policy.

⁴ Julian Borger, "White House in disarray over Cheney Speech," The Guardian (Sept. 2, 2002); Andrew Gumbel and Marie Woolf, "U.S. in disarray over Iraq as Powell backs call for weapons inspectors," The Independent (Sept. 2, 2002); and Howard Fineman and Tamara Lipper, "Same as He Ever Was," Newsweek (Sept. 9, 2002); the latter contains the claim that Cheney had not cleared all the details of his speech with the Bush administration. In his fly-on-the-wall history of Bush administration Afghanistan and Iraq military policy Bush at War, Bob Woodward writes: "Cheney was beyond hell-bent for action against Saddam. It was as if nothing else existed" (2002: 346). In his 2004 book Plan of Attack, Bob Woodward records Cheney's "war fever" and "obsession" with an Iraq invasion, but also makes clear that George W. Bush was also strongly behind the Iraq invasion from the beginning of his administration, points also made in the memoirs by Richard Clarke (2004) and Ron Suskind's Paul O'Neil memoir (2003).

⁵ Colum Lynch, "Firm's Iraq Deals Greater Than Cheney Has Said; Affiliates Had \$73 Million in Contracts," Washington Post, June 23, 2001.

⁶ On Bush's early and strong support for an Iraq war, see Clarke 2004 and Suskind 2003. On the neoconservatives in the Bush administration pushing for an Iraq war, see the analysis below and sources in Note 12.

⁷ See Karen DeYoung, "Bush, Blair Decry Hussein," Washington Post (Sept. 8, 2002).

⁸ In Kellner 2003a, I suggest how Bush administration policy could lead to an Orwellian nightmare future; see Orwell 1961 and the analysis of Orwell's 1984 in Kellner 1990.

⁹ See William Saletan, "Shoot First. Bush's whitewashed national security manifesto," Slate (Sept. 20, 2002); Peter Slevin, "Analysts: New Strategy Courts Unseen Dangers. First Strike Could Be Precedent for Other Nations," Washington Post (Sept 22, 2002); and Paul Krugman, "White Man's Burden," New York Times (Sept. 24, 2002).

¹⁰ William Galston, "Perils of Preemptive War," The American Prospect (Vol. 13, Issue 17, Sept. 23, 2002).

¹¹ An article by Neil Mackay, "Bush planned Iraq 'regime change' before becoming president" (The Sunday Herald, Sept. 15, 2002), widely circulated through the Internet, called attention to the militarist and unilateralist global strategic vision that informed Bush administration policy. The 2000 PNAC plan is available at <http://www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf>. The PNAC plan for regime change in Iraq goes back to a 1992 report prepared for then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney by Paul Wolfowitz that called for developments of a plan to overthrow Saddam Hussein and use US military power to secure Middle East oil supplies; see Wilson 2004.

¹²See "Attack on Iraq is unavoidable: US official's warning," Dawn, February 5, 2002. For a telling portrait of Perle, known as the "Prince of Darkness," see Chris Suellentrop, "Richard Perle -- Washington's faceful bureaucrat" in slate.com, August 23, 2002. Jude Wanniski once described Perle as "the world's No. 1 hawk... who has been the chief architect of our policy toward the Arab/Islamic world. There is no single American more responsible for inciting outrage among Muslims globally than Richard, whose maniacal prescriptions led inexorably to last week's cataclysm." See "The Prince of Darkness" at <http://polyconomics.com/showarticle.asp?articleid=1634>. And Eric Boehlert provides a useful overview that documents how many times Perle has been dead wrong on Iraq and other Middle East issues that he presents himself as an expert on. For Boehlert, Perle can consistently be seen as one of "Israel's strongest, most ardent right-wing allies in Washington," who always pushes Israeli interests. See "The Armchair General," Salon (September 5, 2002) at <http://archive.salon.com/news/feature/2002/09/05/perle/index.html>. Former US ambassador and diplomat Joseph Wilson (2004) described Perle and his neoconservative colleagues as a "cult" who had take over whose US foreign policy in the Bush administration. Wilson's wife had been "outed" as a CIA agent by Bush administration officials as retaliation for Wilson's going to the media and contesting Bush administration claims concerning Iraqi nuclear programs, a story that Wilson recounts in his book The Politics of Truth. Yet it would be a mistake to blame the Iraq debacle on a few misguided neocon ideologues, for clearly George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Rumsfeld and others in the Bush administration and Pentagon had their agendas for supporting the war that often went beyond the neocon agenda.

¹³ A 2003 documentary Uncovered by Robert Greenberg featured Powell's UN speech and other allegations from members of the Bush administration concerning Iraqi "weapons of mass destruction." The documentary presented systematic refutation of Bush administration claims by former US intelligent officers, members of the US

government, and academic specialists. Powell's claims were critically dissected and he was judged a particularly poor reader of intelligence and interpreter of satellite pictures. Powell's UN presentation was perhaps the low-point of US public diplomacy and in retrospect completely discredits the Bush administration, CIA, and Colin Powell. Tenet resigned as head of the CIA in June 2004.

¹⁴ Information has surfaced which alleges that both the US and UK were spying on its UN allies who were attempting to find a compromise resolution that might prevent war and that evidence of the spying led to the collapse of final peace measures and suggested that the US and UK were illegally undermining UN operations; see Peter Beaumont, Martin Bright and Jo Tuckman "Spying games on the road to war" and "British spy op wrecked peace move," The Observer (February 15, 2004).

¹⁵ Several recent books make it clear the George W. Bush was highly interested in the overthrow of Saddam Hussein from the very beginning of his administration and that while Cheney, Rumsfeld, and neocon hawks pushed hard for the Iraq war, Bush Junior was a key part of the militarist forces from the beginning. See Philips 2004; Suskind 2004; Clarke 2004; and Woodward 2004. Kevin Phillips' history of the Bush dynasty situates George W. Bush as a third-generation of a family dedicated to militarism, the national security state, extreme secrecy, and shady business dealings ranging from banking and managing businesses for Hitler's Germany, global oil and arms industry, and involvement with corrupt forces in the Middle East and elsewhere. Suskind's book, written from the point of view of Bush's fired Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, presents Bush as a dangerous and uninformed ideologue who has made disastrous choices on the economy and Iraq, driven by extreme rightwing ideology. Clarke's memoir depicts Bush as obsessed with Saddam Hussein from the beginning of his administration, a point confirmed by the 2004 Woodward book that also cites Bush's religious fundamentalism and belief that he was doing God's will in invading Iraq.

¹⁶ On the phoniness of the Bush administration discourse of the "coalition of the willing," see Rampton and Stauber 2003: 116-118.

¹⁷ For my previous studies of war, media, and propaganda, see Kellner 1992 and 2003a. For my daily Internet commentary on the media, Bush administration, Iraq, and other topics, see blogleft at <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed253a/blogger.php>.

¹⁸ On May 29, 2003, CBS News reported that no bunker, bodies, or evidence that Saddam Hussein or his family was at the site bombed the opening night of the war was found. Woodward's "insider" account describes the Iraqi agents who presented this (mis)information and how their reports led to the Iraq invasion getting off to a bad start.

¹⁹ Soon after, British and then U.S. military sources affirmed that the site was not a chemical weapons production or storage facility. For a critique of a series of "smoking gun" discoveries of weapons of mass destruction facilities and their subsequent debunking, see Jake Tapper, "WMD, MIA?" Salon (April 16, 2003) and "Angry Allies" Salon (May 30, 2003).

²⁰ Eyewitness accounts to the US bombing of civilian neighborhoods in Baghdad and description of finding US missile parts are found in the reporting of Robert Fisk in the London Independent during the last week of March 2003, including Robert Fiske, "In Baghdad, blood and bandages for the innocent." The Independent, March 30, 2003 at

<http://argument.independent.co.uk/commentators/story.jsp?story=392161>. For documents and commentary confirming that it was indeed a US missile that killed Iraqis in Baghdad in late March, when the US military authorities were denying the claims, see the documents and detailed analysis at <http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2003/03/60676.html>.

²¹ For the story that questioned official U.S. military accounts of the checking shootings of a civilian family, see William Branigin, "A Gruesome Scene on Highway 9," Washington Post (April 1, 2003): A01.

²² A Washington Post April 3 story by Susan Schmidt and Vernon Loeb headlined "She was fighting to her death," based on unnamed military sources, claimed that Lynch "continued firing at the Iraqis even after she sustained multiple gunshot wounds," and that she was also stabbed by Iraqis who captured her. In fact, Lynch's vehicle took a wrong turn, overturned, and she was hurt in the accident and not by fighting Iraqis.

²³ See Mitch Potter, "The real 'Saving Pte. Lynch,'" Toronto Star (May 5, 2003); the Associated Press also confirmed this story, as did the BBC on May 15 and CBS News on May 29.

²⁴ Rogers was interviewed on Howard Kurtz's poorly named CNN media review "Reliable Sources" on April 27, 2003. On the UK broadcasting networks attitude toward showing images of dead or injured civilians and soldiers, see Julian Petley, "Let the Atrocious Images Haunt Us," in Miller 2004: 164-175. The US and UK avoided providing Iraqi casualty figures for the war although various Web-sites attempt to compile figures; see <http://www.iraqbodycount.net/> which as of May 4, 2004 estimated a minimum 9018 and possible 10873 Iraqi dead from the war and its aftermath.

²⁵ For systematic analysis of the New Barbarism accompanying and in part generated by the Bush administration and their hardright supporters, see Kellner, 2003b. See also Jim Rutenberg, "Cable's War Coverage Suggests a New 'Fox Effect' on Television" (New York Times, April 16, 2003). Rutenberg provides examples of Fox's aggressively opinionated and biased discourse, as when anchor Neil Cavuto said of those who oppose the war on Iraq: "You were sickening then, you are sickening now." Fox's high ratings during the war influenced CNN and the NBC networks to be more patriotic and dismissive of those who criticized the war and its aftermath.

²⁶ On bias and distortion in US network presentation of the Iraq war, see Rampton and Strauber 2003 and Norman Solomon, "'Look, I'm an American,'" in Miller 2004: 157-163. On UK broadcasting presentation of the war, see Justin Lewis and Rod Brooks, "Reporting the war on British television," in Miller 2004: 132-143.

²⁷ Evidently, the museum community thought it had an understanding with the US military of the need to preserve Iraqi national treasures which were allowed by the US military to be looted and destroyed while they protected the Petroleum Ministry; see <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/16/international/worldspecial/16MUSE.html?pagewanted=print&position=>. On the looting of the Ministry for Religious Affairs, see <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/16/international/worldspecial/16BAGH.html?pagewanted=print&position=>. Later reports indicated that some of the museum artifacts believed destroyed were hidden, but there were also reports of continued looting of Iraqi archaeological sites throughout the country that were not protected by the U.S.; see Edmund L. Andrews, "Iraqi Looters Tearing Up Archaeological Sites," New York Times (May 23, 2003). Joseph Wilson (2004) claims that Rumsfeld associate Douglas Freith

was given a list of the important cultural sites to defend, but no action was taken to defend any major Baghdad site except the oil ministry.

²⁸ Several studies indicated that Bush's Iraq policy had made the world much more dangerous and unstable and had strengthened Al Qaeda and other terrorist group recruiting, including a report by Amnesty international. See Ashleigh Collins, "U.S. War on Terror Leads to Violations, Group Says." *Los Angeles Times*, May 27, 2004: A12.

²⁹ When Bush was asked whether the mission in Iraq had indeed been accomplished as the banner proclaimed at an October 28, 2003 press conference, Bush snippily remarked, "The 'Mission Accomplished' sign, of course, was put up by the members of the USS Abraham Lincoln saying that their mission was accomplished. I know it was attributed somehow to some ingenious advance man from staff." In fact, the Bush administration had orchestrated every detail of the spectacle; see Elisabeth Bumiller, "Keepers of Bush image lift stagecraft to new heights," *New York Times*, Friday, May 16. When questions were raised in early 2004 concerning whether Bush had fulfilled his National Guard duty in 1972-3, the Top Gun pictures were replayed in a context that reflected negatively on him, providing another example of how media spectacles are difficult to control and may have unintended effects (see Kellner 2003c).

³⁰ See the first-hand account and detailed analysis by Mark Danner, "Delusions in Baghdad," *The New York Review of Books* (December 18, 2003): 92-97. On the history of Iraqi resistance against foreign invaders and analysis of reasons why an Iraqi insurgency will continue, see Ali 2003.

³¹ There were widespread reports that the Kurds had actually captured Saddam and held him for some time before giving him up to US forces; while Bush undeniably got a boost in popularity through Hussein's capture, it is not clear what ultimate effects a capture and trial of the Iraqi dictator, long supported by Bush senior, will have; on how Bush was point man for getting the Iraqi regime aide and support in the 1980s, see Friedman 1992 and Phillips 2004.

³² See the revealing set of reflections by Kenneth Pollack who was a major defender of the necessity for a war against Iraq, "Spies, Lies and Weapons: What Went Wrong," *The Atlantic* (Jan/Febr 2004). Pollock dissects how Western intelligence went wrong in appraising reports on Iraqi "weapons of mass destruction" and criticizes the Bush administration for systematically distorting intelligence, not having a postwar plan of reconstruction, and going in largely alone and without significant support from allies, NATO, or the UN. See also Ritter 2003. On how mainstream newspapers, including the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, fell prey to Bush administration propaganda concerning alleged Iraqi weapons of mass destruction before the war, see Michael Massing, "Now They Tells Us," *New York Review of Books*, February 26, 2004 and "Unfit to Print," June 24, 2004.

³³ For a vivid overview of the events of April 2004, see the first-person reportage by Jon Lee Anderson, "The Uprising," *The New Yorker* (May 5, 2004).

³⁴ This was indeed the defense that the soldiers who took the pictures gave, claiming that they were ordered by superiors to take the photos; see, for example, Terence Neilan, "7 Charges Filed Against a Central Figure in Iraq Prison Abuse," *New York Times* (May 14, 2004). Subsequent stories revealed, however, that orders that enabled the systematic prisoner abuse in Iraq came from the top of the Pentagon and Bush administration; see

Seymour Hersh, "The Grey Zone," The New Yorker, posted May 15, 2004 at http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040524fa_fact and John Barry, Michael Hirsh and Michael Isikoff, "The Roots of Torture," Newsweek, May 24, 2004. In retrospect, it is now clear that the Iraqi/Afghanistan prisoner abuse and torture scandal was a direct result of US policy since Afghanistan and the detainment of supposed Al Qaeda terrorists in that country and then the prisoner of war camp at Guantanamo Cuba, in which policies developed in Afghanistan and Cuba were applied in Iraq. For a systematic depiction of torture in Iraq and how the practices derived from US policy, see Mark Danner, "Torture and Truth," The New York Review of Books, Vol. 51, Nr. 10, June 10, 2004, and "The Logic of Torture," The New York Review of Books, Vol. 51, Nr. 11, June 24, 2004. Finally, in June 2004, a UN Report claims that US prisoner rights' violations in Iraq could constitute war crimes; see Maggie Farley, "U.N. Report Alleges U.S. Rights Violations in Iraq," Los Angeles Times, June 5, 2004: A7.

³⁵ Cited in Cox 2004: 153. Author and former Justice Department prosecutor William J. Cox lays out in detail the ways that the Bush administration Iraq invasion contravenes several articles of the United Nations Charter and has no legal justification, thus constituting an "illegal use of force" (2004: 153ff). Cox also documents Bush administration "illegal detention of prisoners" (154ff) and how by violating the norms of international law Bush could be subject to impeachment (157ff).

³⁶ PEW Institute Global attitude reports over the last several years document dramatically increasing antiAmericanism and disgust with Bush administration policies; see <http://people-press.org/pgap/>.

³⁷ This argument is made by Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, "Shooting First. The preemptive-war doctrine has met an early death in Iraq" (Los Angeles Times, May 30, 2004: M1 and M6. The authors also argue that: "Bush's conception of preemption far exceeded responding to an imminent danger of attack. He instead advocated preventive wars of regime change. The United States claimed the right to use force to oust leaders it disliked long before they could threaten its security."

³⁸ On cosmopolitanism, see Cheah and Robbins (1998) Cosmopolitics and special issue of Theory, Culture & Society on cosmopolis, Vol. 19, Nrs. 1-2 (February-April 2002).

³⁹ On the dangers of perpetual war and threats to the US democratic republic in the expansion of Empire, see Vidal 2002 and 2003 and Mann 2004. On the dangers of Bush administration unilateralist militarism and the need for global solutions to global problems, see Kellner 2003a, Barber 2003, and Clark 2003. Clark warns that the Bush administration has planned a series of wars against the "axis of evil" to promote US hegemony and to use US military power to further a neoconservative agenda of control of the Middle East.