

HEGEMONY: THEORY AND PRACTICE. THE CASE STUDY OF U.S. POST-COLD WAR HEGEMONY OVER AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a study of U.S. foreign policy in the context of international relations in the post-Cold War era, an era in which the U.S. assumed the role of the world hegemon. It deals with the issue of U.S. 'humanitarian' military interventions in Africa and the Middle East. To this end, U.S. interventions in both Somalia (1992) and Iraq (2003), incarnating Africa and the Middle East respectively, have been chosen as cases in point. More specifically, the study examines the extent to which a 'humanitarian' concern shaped U.S. foreign policy decisions during its military interventions in both countries, as opposed to calculations of hegemony exercise.

The intent of this paper is, then, to prove that U.S. so called 'humanitarian' military interventions in Somalia and Iraq were driven in the first place by realistic geostrategic and geopolitical considerations of primacy, economic interests as well as cultural motivations, not idealistic 'humanitarian' concerns. The latter was but a means of ideological legitimisation of government policies.

For this reason, this work strives to argue that the United States hegemonic calculations of national interests explain better why the nation pursued distinct policies and approaches in both Somalia and Iraq, and that the 'humanitarian' concern was of marginal relevance. In clearer terms, the shift of the U. S. 'humanitarian' military intervention from a multilateral realistic profile in the case of Somalia to a more unilateral idealistic profile in the case of Iraq was a national interest act—for Iraq was, unlike Somalia, a worthy terrain.

Besides, this study elucidates that the main reasons leading Presidents George Bush the father to delay action and then opt for intervention in Somalia and Bill Clinton to urge for withdrawal from it, as well as the reasons pushing George W. Bush the son to wage war on Iraq are all based on the hegemonic game. The latter has its implications politically, economically and geostrategically.

Not only does this work unfold American foreign policy twists and underlying calculations of hegemony in the course of its 'humanitarian' interventions, but it shows how the giant media conglomerates are U.S. foreign policy decision makers' unhumanitarian partners as well. The propagandistic coverage during the build-up to the war on Iraq in comparison to the little coverage Somalia had received earlier reveals the extent to which the media are complicit with U.S. foreign policy decision-makers' calculations in war aims and shifts.

The argumentation and analysis set forth in this study are based on the hegemony theories formulated by Antonio Gramsci and Robert Cox. While the former sets forth the mechanisms of the hegemonic bloc at a national level, the former extends it to the international. Of importance to the present work is that not only do both theories serve the paper's intent but they illustrate perfectly the complex web of U.S. foreign policy decision-makers together with the media's perpetual attempt to create an international climate suitable to their hegemonic supremacy.

The research questions of the study are of paramount importance as well and were formulated as follows:

- Why did the U.S. prefer to shield under the United Nations umbrella during its 'humanitarian' military intervention in Somalia, whereas in Iraq neglecting the total opposition of the UN, it did act unilaterally accepting to take responsibility over what the war may generate?
- Why was media coverage in both 'humanitarian' military interventions so different?
- Why was there in Somalia an immediate withdrawal once feeling that the mission was driving towards failure? And why was there in Iraq, in spite of the difficulty of the mission, a transportation of an enormous army, navy and air force 7000 miles away to destroy a country scarcely known even to the educated American, all in the name of freedom?

In the journey of answering these questions, this work has suggested a couple of hypotheses:

- First, the main reasons leading Presidents George Bush the father to delay action and then opt for intervention in Somalia and Bill Clinton to urge for withdrawal from it, as well as the reasons pushing George W. Bush the son to wage war on Iraq are very close in nature.
- Second, the U. S. foreign policy shifts and twists in the course of its 'humanitarian' missions were motivated in the first place by realistic geostrategic and geopolitical considerations of primacy, economic interests as well as cultural motivations.

In order to achieve the aims of this work and examine the rightness of both hypotheses, the study has been pursued principally from a historicist analytical approach following a chronological order. The historicist approach is required in the first section, while the analytical approach is indispensable to unfold the U. S incentives and finalities pushing it to pursue distinct policies in Somalia and Iraq. Accordingly, the study is divided into three sections.

1. GRAMSCIAN AND COXIAN HEGEMONY THEORIES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS ON U.S. POWER

A key argument of this section is that the development of American hegemony generally, and the distinctive boost that has occurred after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, can best be understood by placing recent events in a theoretical framework. In clearer terms, this section assumes that the key concepts of Gramsci's and Cox's political analysis can serve as a useful guide to the changing dynamics of international relations with respect to the U.S. hegemonic role in international politics.

1.1. Gramsci's Concept of Hegemony

The Gramscian definition of power is similar to that employed by Machiavelli. Machiavelli, who describes power as a centaur where the centaur is half man, half beast, sees power as half coercion, half consent. In other words, no matter how much force you make use of, if people don't accept your power it is all for naught (Rytter Sørensen, 2010, p.16). In regards to society, Gramsci argues that coercion will always be latent and only used in marginal cases. Rather, it is the consent that gives the upper class power.

The hegemony that the upper classes hold over culture and values is usually enough to legitimise their power over the people of the nation by means of acceptance. This power is purveyed by the upper classes through civil society constituted by the churches, educational institutions, and media among others. Together, they are called the "*historic bloc*"(*ibid*). This concept is of paramount importance to my study for in this and the subsequent sections it will be demonstrated that the media—in our case the U.S. media—are at U.S. government's disposal as a propagandist tool in pursuit of power and influence. A thorough discussion of this will be provided in the last part of this section.

For a better understanding of this concept, historic bloc refers to "*the structure of the society, the economic base of the society, the cultural flows that are current and the political system that exists within it*" (*ibid*). Besides, the historic bloc itself is indeed in a state of constant change because of the dialectic relationship that exists in all of society. The factors that affect the historic bloc are numerous, and include for instance class relations and the structure of the economy (Cox, 1987, p389). In addition to this, the historic bloc is the system of society and not the state itself. It should be noted, though, that it is entirely possible for the society to change without affecting the historic bloc in what is known as "*passive revolution*" (Cox, 1996,p137).

Additionally, while social institutions produce and reproduce the values and ideals of the upper class, they also have another tool at their disposal. In what Gramsci calls Transformismo, hegemonic institutions will incorporate critics into their structure. (*ibid*,p139) Transformismo is defined as the act of incorporating leaders of opposing organisations or parties into the hegemonic system, thus neutralising their revolutionary potential. This mechanism ensures the resilience and longevity of the hegemony since it allows itself to incorporate opposing leaders who might otherwise threaten its dominance. By incorporating the outside opponents into the hegemonic structure, their revolutionary potential is essentially nullified because they are allowed to integrate some of their ideals into the hegemonic structure in a more docile fashion (Rytter Sørensen, *ibid*).

In an influential article called *Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method*, Robert Cox also analyses Gramsci's concept of hegemony and gives some guidelines on how it could be applied to the field of international relations.

1.2. Robert Cox's Hegemony Theory and the International

The aim of Robert Cox is to raise Antonio Gramsci's theory to the international level. To this purpose he shares Gramsci's views of hegemony. He simply states that hegemony on the international sphere is the dominant system at the time. The primary difference between Gramsci and Cox is as such that where Gramsci points to national institutions as the purveyors of hegemonic ideals, Cox points to international institutions as the ones that perform this operation on an international level (Cox, 1996,p135).

Cox posits that the strongest states in the international sphere maintain the status-quo, benefiting themselves, through hegemonic systems. This means, Cox argues, that the hegemonic ideals are transferred from the core countries—those that are strongest and have already adopted the hegemonic ideals—to the periphery, the developing countries that have to adopt these ideals. For this purpose, Robert Cox uses the Gramscian term “*passive revolution*” to describe the process. In other words, Coxian passive revolution is basically where “*periphery countries gradually adapt to the economic, social and political conditions of core countries or in some cases have them thrust upon them* (ibid,p129).

Moreover, in order for an international hegemony to be established, there must be a state strong enough to have global reach in order to create a set of international institutions. The latter must have sufficient power to impose the hegemony of the core states upon the periphery countries. Thus, Cox asserts that “*the international hegemony is effectively the international expression of the national hegemony of the core states*” (ibid, p137).

As specified earlier, Cox mainly deals with a system of international organisations which he describes as the “*process through which the institutions and [the hegemony’s] ideology are developed*” (ibid). He describes five features of the organisation:

The institutions embody the rules which facilitate the expansion of hegemonic world orders. They are themselves the product of a hegemonic world order. They ideologically legitimise the norms of the world order. They also co-opt the elite of the peripheral countries. And finally, they absorb counter hegemonic ideas. (Cox, op.cit, p138)

When the international organisation is established, it will only be at the initiative of core countries, or at least with their consent. The core country will then ensure the peripheral countries consent. This is done in a hierarchical manner. The semi-peripheral countries will be consulted first and more peripheral countries second (ibid). There is furthermore an informal structure reflecting the different levels of real political and economic power. It is these informal power structures which underlie the formal procedures for decisions.

This theory proves to be right, to a large extent, when applied to the real world. According to Babones and Alvarez-Rivadulla, the current core countries include: Great Britain, Germany, France, Japan, Russia, to mention only a few, with the U.S. at the forefront (Babones, and M. Alvarez, February 2007, p14). Semi-periphery countries include Chile, South Africa, Turkey, Brazil and Uruguay, among many others. Examples of periphery countries include most of African countries together with Pakistan, the Philippines, India, Indonesia and so on (ibid).

Besides, the economic and political system that has grown out of this globalised climate is commonly known as the Bretton Woods system and includes such institutions as the UN system, the IMF and the World Bank. The U.S. plays a significant role in all these institutions, and as in the case of the IMF commands a veto vote. (Wallerstein, 2008, p213)

Of significance and importance to the present work is the United States’ relation with the UN. Throughout the history of American hegemony, it has used the United Nations as a weapon to contain counter hegemonic ideas. In the post-Cold War era U.S. hegemony has been bolstered in that a set of principles on global governance, preferable to U.S. interests, have been utilised within the UN. This is only to say that the current hegemonic system of international institutions continues to be under the dominance of American ideals and values. In this respect, Esther Brimmer Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of International Organisation Affairs asserts: “*U.S. engagement at the United Nations is an essential means of achieving our foreign policy goals and advancing our values. It is an important forum for burden-sharing in tough financial times. And it clearly benefits Americans*”. (Brimmer, 2011) On her part, Condoleezza Rice in her article *Promoting the National Interest* assures: “*U.S. interests are served by having strong alliances and can be promoted within the U.N. and other multilateral organisations*.” (Rice, January/February 2000, p47)

This reality would be explained thoroughly in the subsequent sections. The second section delves into the real causes lying behind the U.S. 1992 multilateral intervention in Somalia, being primarily under UN auspices, to show that it was obviously in U.S. interest. On the contrary, the third section proves that U.S. interest was to be realised by a unilateral intervention in Iraq in 2003, without a UN approval.

1.3. The history of the establishment of U.S. post-Cold War hegemony

The issue of how important it is for the United States—the world hegemon—to promote democracy abroad has been one of the major questions of twentieth century American foreign policy (Smith, 1994, p60). From debates over Cuba and the Philippines in the late nineteenth century through the debates over the democratisation of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union one hundred years later, Americans have argued the relevance of encouraging democracy for others in relation to their own hegemony. They thought also about the proper means for doing so where it has seemed appropriate. To this end, realism and idealism were given prominence interchangeably.

Wilsonian idealism was an early step towards establishing U.S. post-Cold War hegemony. Wilson believed that the new world order would require the active leadership of the United States. Years later, the Marshall Plan was initiated by the U.S. as another attempt to assert its hegemony over Europe. Then, in the post-Cold War era, both George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton pursued realistic policies in the course of their humanitarian military interventions which were an implicit way to assert U.S. hegemony. However, President George W. Bush, coinciding with the events of 09/11, focused on a renewed idealistic policy based on the War on Terrorism. On the surface, the U. S. declared goal was that of bringing democracy to the entire Middle East. The spread of such claims, and the neglect of others, has most of the time been guaranteed by the U. S.-based media.

1.4. Agenda Setting or Denial: The Role of the Media in Shaping Intervention Policies

The media have an effect on policy and can similarly be affected by it, but this is perhaps stating the obvious. Schattsneider, Cobb and Elder in Parsons, have pointed out that the media policy process may not be as open as we believe, because not all problems are brought to the public attention (Parsons, 1995, p86). The same applies to the international activities of U. S. political actors. The media, because of their vested interests or setting in society, frequently have their own agenda or may serve other vested interests. This means that they can choose to influence the public debate, in accordance with government most of the time, through what Parsons refers to as “*agenda-setting*” (ibid, p112).

Discerning media coverage reveals that it is sometimes illogical in some emergency relief cases, simply because coverage is determined by factors other than humanitarian needs and its policy can in some cases be dictated upon it. This would confirm Gramsci’s hegemony theory, illustrated at the onset of this article, asserting that the media is part of the hegemonic society’s “*historic bloc*”. Sometimes, the tortuous media impact on conflict management is far greater than the direct impact of intervention and withdrawal decisions (Jakobsen, 2000, p131). The media, therefore, by being in the business of ‘manufacturing’ news are also involved in the production of problems. They select what is ‘newsworthy’ and in doing so, include and exclude issues, events and ideas following the executive’s policy, as was exactly the case in Iraq. In clearer terms, in the process of pursuing their own interest, the news media sometimes obediently go along with U.S. foreign-policy initiatives.

On the other hand, the media can choose to “submerge” some issues—not to talk about them or remain silent about them—with what Parsons refers to as “*agenda-denial*”. The media effectively have the power today to decide whether or not it is scandalous that thousands of people are dying from famine and who, if anyone, should answer for this (Hendreckson, 1998, p9). This is accompanied by the often selective determination by news agencies of which kinds of humanitarian problems become ‘issues’. Consequently, some serious humanitarian crises become seen as peripheral by means of what Mark Bradbury terms the “*normalisation of crisis*” (ibid), only to please U.S. government. This fact was referred to by Gramsci several decades earlier.

The cases explored in this study will shed some light regarding the role of the media in shaping the agenda for intervention, if not how lack of media coverage has accompanied non-intervention policies. If one compares the role of media highlighting human suffering and oppression in Iraq, thus prompting intervention, while the plight of people in Somalia was initially largely ignored, and intervention delayed, one may recognise the paramount important space media occupy in the field of international—and the U. S. in our case—political game.

What comes next in the subsequent section would confirm my argumentation in regard to media, for it delves into the nature of the 1992 U.S. so-called ‘humanitarian’ military intervention in Somalia. Somalia which had been bleeding for several years before U.S. foreign policy decision makers and the U.S. media could recognise the humanitarian necessity to offer it a helping hand. This is to say that the coming section puts into question the intermingling between the U.S. administration’s late decision to take Somalis out of their deepening despair and the launch of an extensive coverage about the tragic situation in Somalia by the U.S. media. This important aspect of this ‘humanitarian’ military intervention, next to a number of other equally important aspects, will be analysed thoroughly within the folds of the second section in the quest for the untold reality.

2. THE 1992 U. S. 'HUMANITARIAN' MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA: HIDDEN AGENDAS OR HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS?

This section deviates from a historical exposition of the case under question, but focuses on the circumstances surrounding this intervention based on a realist multilateral policy. The aim is to discuss this intervention by focusing on who authorised it and why the U. S. chose a specific timing to intervene and withdraw.

2.1. Somalia: the Descent into Anarchy:

One of the most important local circumstances that must always be taken into account while trying to understand the causes for the emergence of Somalia as one of the main battlefields requiring international attention and a U. S. 'humanitarian' aid is the nation's clan-based system as well as its strategic location.

Somalia, officially the Somali Republic and formerly known as the Somali Democratic Republic, is Africa's easternmost Muslim country and occupies the tip of the Horn of Africa. Somalis are split up into many clans and sub-clans. The clan is the most important social unit in Somalia and, thus, clan membership continues to play an important part in Somali culture and politics. Like most of its African counterparts, Somalia is a newly-independent country that is still reaping the results of colonialism. It was not until 1960 that the British and Italian colonies in Somalia gained their independence. Later in 1969, General Muhammad Siad Barre took control of Somalia in a military coup following the assassination of President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke. After a few years, the coup had turned into a military regime. Barre applied scientific socialism to the nation, banning clanism while enhancing literacy and attempting to educate the nation in his vision. Despite some benevolence toward his people, Barre's 21-year reign was marked by a horrific human rights record. (Human Development Report 2001-Somalia, 2001, p42)

Ironically, it was the U.S. which helped exacerbate the situation in Somalia from bad to worse. Actually, the end of the Cold War was accompanied by the end of the U.S. aid to Somali President Siad Barre. As a result, he found himself with no leg to stand on against the opposition movement, and the nation found itself engulfed in civil war. Afterwards, the same warlords who brought down and defeated the dictator Barre continued to fight among themselves for power and control, namely Ali Mahdi and Mohamed Farah Aideed. The dual catastrophes of famine and merciless civil war made humanitarian intervention inevitable. In clearer terms, the severe insecurity of the early 1990s, combined with exceptional drought, led to an extreme humanitarian crisis where up to 500,000 people are estimated to have died and up to two million people forcibly displaced.

2.2. The Reign of Terror in Somalia: an Analysis of the U. S. 'Humanitarian' Military Involvement

In fact, the starvation and the humanitarian disaster in Somalia did not succeed to generate any U.S. attention in 1991 and in the first six months of 1992. This was followed by a sudden shift in U.S. attitude towards the Somali disaster. The sudden shift in policy occurred by August 14, 1992 when the Bush administration had ordered a major airlift of relief supplies – Operation Provide Relief to Somalia. The airlift represented a major intensification in U.S. involvement with the Somali crisis. On the surface, it epitomised George Bush's ostensible political commitment to the country. After a series of interagency meetings, which were called in order to develop policy options for President Bush, three options had been developed. The first was continuing with aid operations and seeking to enhance the UN presence in Somalia. The second involved organising an international coalition of forces under UN command in which U. S. military airlift, sealift and logistical and communications support would be offered but not ground troops. The third option was sending in a division of U.S. troops under U.S. command and control (Maryann, 1995, p10). On November 25 Bush agreed on the third option and proceeded to offer the UN up to 28 000 troops to spearhead an intervention. This suggests that the U. S. participation was not purely built on humanitarian grounds, and confirms that of importance for America was the military commitment.

Meaningful action was to take more time. It was on December 4 that the UN Security Council voted to support intervention, and an announcement was made by Bush that U.S. troops would be sent to Somalia. Meanwhile, famine threatened 1.5 million people in Somalia (Department of Public Information, 1992). So, while the humanitarian crisis was rapidly unfolding in Somalia, the U.S. was trying to operate in an international environment and taking its full time. This delay to take action is very significant in this context. It can be argued that because the

bargains intervention in Somalia would entail were almost insignificant, adopting a realist multilateral approach under the UN auspices was to save America from gambling alone in an unworthy game. At the same time, the newly adopted burden-sharing policy of the UN allowed the U.S. to lead this 'humanitarian' military intervention in Somalia. The first U.S. troops were joined by other forces to create United Task Force (UNITAF), which was charged with restoring security in limited geographic areas to allow the distribution of aid. Taking into account Cox's hegemonic theory, it is apparent that the U.S. has attempted to use the UN as the umbrella that would protect it from gambling alone in an unworthy terrain.

When action was taken, the initial efforts were, to a large extent, driven by an ostensibly 'humanitarian' agenda. However, states do not intervene to prevent human rights violations simply because they are allowed to. Only by considering when and where humanitarian action is prescribed and by examining the interplay of this prescription with the material self-interests of states can we begin to understand why the U. S. did respond to the grave violations of human rights in Somalia and not in other spots. Without doubt, Somalia presented a case where the scope of the tragedy together with other unpopular often unstated stimuli created pressure on America to act militarily under the cover of humanitarian interests. Some of these stimuli, to mention only a few, are outlined below.

Firstly, I dare argue that the U. S. initiative to provide humanitarian relief was partly based on the premise that doing so would be easy and not costly. At a National Security Council meeting in late November, Lawrence Eagleburger argued that *"we could do this...at not too great a cost and, certainly, without any great danger of body bags coming home"* (Nicholas, 2002, p181). It was around this time that Colin Powell agreed to support military intervention. James L. Woods describes this support of the Joint Chiefs as *"the clinching factor"* (ibid) which gave Bush the opportunity to choose to pursue a maximalist course of action.

Furthermore, one may question the U. S. act of launching UNITAF as an act of aiding Somalia or de facto America. The distinction is delicate, yet significant. As a matter of fact, intervening in Somalia was important for another important reason, as U.S. policy-makers felt that they faced a choice between joining an intervention in Bosnia to stop the slaughter of Bosnian Muslims or lead an effort in Somalia. Despite the fact that intervention in Somalia would not yield any benefits, they certainly preferred its problems and location to the violence in Bosnia.

Another factor which also impacted Bush's humanitarian impulse was that he was coming to the end of his term as President. It is widely accepted that concern for his presidential legacy contributed to Bush's decision to intervene. An insight into this concern is provided by a Defence Department official who said at the time, *"I had the feeling that no matter what was said (by his advisors), he would not want to leave office with 50,000 people starving that he could have saved."* (Glanville, 2005, p6)

Likewise, an analysis of the timing of media coverage calling for intervention in Somalia remains crucial and casts doubt on the extent to which a humanitarian concern was the only stimulus. In fact, a thorough analysis of the media behaviour reveals that the latter had followed an agenda-denial policy following that of the U. S. executive neglecting the plight of the Somalis for almost a year after the outbreak of the civil war, and exposing Somalia to public debate afterwards. This coincided with President Bush's decision to deploy troops in Somalia, thus shaping the agenda-setting for intervention.

A review of the coverage of the news stories from Somalia would confirm this stand. Jonathan Mermin's analysis of television coverage of ABC, CBS, and NBC points to very low coverage of Somalia from January through June, an increase in July, and extensive coverage in August and September, a sharp drop off in October, and a recovery in November (Mermin, 1997, p391). Only three full stories occurred on the first six months of 1992—January 5th, February 27th, and March 2nd—with scary predictions of numbers who would starve without relief. In July and August, however, three full stories ran on the networks—July 22 by ABC, July 31 by CBS, and August 13 by ABC— all containing videos of starving children (ibid).

By superimposing events in Washington onto the timetable of stories, it can be demonstrated that it was Washington which set the context in which the media responded. In late June, U.S. Ambassador to Kenya Smith Hempstone Jr. travelled to refugee camps on the Somali-Kenyan border for the first time. He reported his trip in a cable entitled *A Day in Hell*, which presented a vivid report of the humanitarian suffering. The cable resonated with many liberal humanitarianists in the State Department who believed that the Bush administration needed to do more in Somalia, and the cable was immediately leaked to the press (ibid). Afterwards, on July 22nd, the day the ABC story aired, the House Select Committee on Hunger held hearings on Somalia. Senator Nancy Kassebaum, the senior Republican of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's sub-committee on Africa, who had just returned from a fact-finding mission, declared: *"I strongly support sending a United Nation security force to Somalia"* (ibid,

p392). Senator Paul Simon, chair of the subcommittee on Africa, also urged the administration to act after witnessing the horrific conditions in Somalia, saying: *“I don’t want to wait to have a Democratic administration before we respond more adequately. I want to do it now”* (ibid, p393). The timing suggests the importance of both Kassebaum and Simon and the House Committee on Hunger in getting Somalia on the media’s agenda. In this regard, Strobel notes, *“Television did not lead but followed policy action or proposals”* (ibid).

Additionally, the August 13 story on ABC followed two weeks of debate and action in Washington. Chief among which, the Senate Resolution on Somalia urging deployment of UN forces on August 3rd; Senator Rockefeller’s criticism of Bush’s inaction on Somalia on August 9th; the House resolution on Somalia On August 10th; the UN’s announcement to send 500 troops to guard relief supplies on August 12th; and candidate Clinton’s citation of Somalia as an important foreign policy issue on August 13th (Graybill, 2004, p172). On the same day, Bush decided —before ABC framed a story—in meetings with James Baker, Secretary of Defence Richard Cheney, and National Security Advisor Brent Snowcroft to authorise the airlift (ibid). The day following the ABC story, the White House announced it would airlift emergency aid in what it called *“Operation Provide Relief”* (Mermin, op.cit.,p396).

Interestingly, the media framed the Somalia story as actors in Washington were framing it – that Somalia was a situation that the U.S. should and could do something about. Mermin argues: *“It is noteworthy that the framing of the crisis in Somalia as a humanitarian disaster that the United States could do something about does not appear on television until it has appeared in Washington first”* (ibid, p397).

Between November 26th—when the decision to launch *“Operation Restore Hope”* was announced—until December 9th—the day the U.S. troops landed near Mogadishu—there were ninety-five news reports, and coverage remained relatively high through year’s end (Strobel, 1997, p136-7).The images broadcast on CNN and the three networks helped Bush explain why the mission was necessary. Thus, the media, being part of the government’s *“historic bloc”*, became an instrument of policy.

The subsequent U. S. President, Bill Clinton, proved to be no exception to the rule of American national interests, and both his deep military involvement in the Somali conflict as well as his sudden withdrawal deserved particular mention. Actually, UNOSOM II mandate reflected a deeper military commitment of humanitarian assistance. In fact, when the U.S. made the arrest of Aideed its highest priority, this marked the transformation of the mission from a humanitarian to military intervention. Furthermore, after the death of eighteen American soldiers on October 3rd and 4th, 1993, it became apparent to U.S. policymakers that establishing a functioning society in Somalia was more costly than they had thought and this fell into contradiction with their perceived national-interests. The result was giving up this unworthy game, leaving Somalia to reap the full costs and aftermaths of this ‘humanitarian’ military intervention. Following this shameful withdrawal, a shift in U.S. policy occurred from multilateralism to unilateralism. The third section discusses this shift epitomised in the 2003 War on Iraq.

3. THE 2003 WAR ON IRAQ: A U. S. ‘HUMANITARIAN’ WAR ON TERRORISM

The third section, as stated earlier, flies from Africa and perches on the Middle East to further delve for unstated realities into American ‘humanitarian’ military interventions in the region in the post-Cold War era, specifically in the post-September 11, 2001 era, in the quest for the U. S. real aim, taking the case of Iraq. Within the space of this section I will not explain the different phases through which America has taken control of Iraq in 2003. My emphasis is rather to explore the circumstances under which a declaration of war against Iraq based on an idealistic approach and a media propaganda became possible, illuminate the significant events and examine the extent to which a ‘humanitarian’ concern was one of its major incentives, comparing it to Somalia and building the study’s argumentation on facts. Unlike the 1992 multilateral intervention in Somalia, American intervention in Iraq was initially unilateral for it was not authorised by the UN.

3.1. Fake’ Objectives for the War Justification

The table below states some of the stated objectives of war by Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld. However, facts and events prior to, during and following the war have proved that reality was quite different and does not meet the stated objectives. That’s why some counter arguments have been outlined.

U.S. administration’s claims	Counter Arguments
1 st : connection between Iraq & terrorists claiming that Saddam’s secret police most certainly knew of al-Zarqawi’s presence in a Baghdad hospital,	- However, there were credible reports that al-Zarqawi had left Iraq; that he was not part of al-Qaeda at the time; and that Iraq had no control over

thus establishing that Iraq was harbouring terrorists.	or relationship with him.
2 nd : finding the hidden cache of WMD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After the war's closure, initial coalition efforts to search for such weapons proved unsuccessful. - Christian Westermann, who served as an intelligence officer in U.S. Foreign Affairs Ministry, confessed that he was subjected to intense pressure by the undersecretary of state for arms control and international security John R. Bolton to maximise the risk of Iraq's arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. He was obliged to modify his reports to comply with the administration's perception of the Iraqi threat before the war. - The United Nations sanctions can be taken as a proof that Iraq was void of weapons of mass destruction when American feet trampled Iraq. In fact, sanctions blocked the import of vital materials and technologies for producing weapons of mass destruction
3 rd : U.S. administration talked up the humanitarian spread of democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This intervention is illegal for it is unilateral. - The coalition forces under U. S. leadership have violated all jus in bello rules and made use of internationally prohibited weapons, that it was clear would result in a large number of casualties. This would raise serious questions about whether the requirement of impartiality has been met. - Aftermaths of the war include primarily a large number of civilian casualties, looting, crime, disorder and serious health problems from which civilians still suffer (due to the destroy of potable water and irrigation systems).

It is clearly noticeable from the table that each claim by the U.S. administration has its own counter arguments that refute it, proving that they are no more than fake objectives. Rather, the underlying unhumanitarian aims of the war are outlined below.

3.2. The Underlying Unhumanitarian Aims of the War

The oil factor is primarily an important geoeconomic factor in U.S. foreign policy and in the 2003 War on Iraq in particular. In this respect, the American journalist Thomas Friedman wrote an article, that was published in *Herald Tribune* in mid April 2003, in which he assures: *"Oil is one of the reasons for preparing for war against Iraq and if anyone tries to convince us otherwise, he certainly does not respect our minds"* (Mansour, 2004, p72). Andrew Bacevich on his part argues that the main reason to dominate the region's oil reserves is to guarantee an ever-increasing American affluence, which requires *"access to cheap oil and lots of it"* (Bacevich, 2005, p182).

Likewise, the geopolitical factor has played a significant role in the U.S. war on Iraq. To understand its significance, the 2003 invasion needs to be interpreted as the latest phase in a war on Iraq begun with the first Gulf War. After this war, which quickly pushed Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, extremely harsh sanctions were imposed on Iraq. Such policies have much to do with the geopolitical logics of maintaining American credibility in the world (ibid, p333). A clear message needs to be sent to potential challengers that pursuing development independent of American hegemony or disobeying Washington's guidelines will not be tolerated. This often has little to do with direct American economic interests in the defiant country.

Furthermore, the Americans' aims behind this war are not only geopolitical and geoeconomic, but geostrategic as well. Americans wanted to serve the Jews' petty state and divert attention from its occupation of Palestine and murder of Muslims there (Sorabji, 2006, p90). The best proof of this is their eagerness to destroy Iraq, the strongest neighbouring Arab state, and their endeavour to fragment all the states of the region such as Syria, Saudi Arabia,

and Sudan into paper statelets. And through their disunion and weakness to guarantee Israel's survival and the continuation of the brutal crusade occupation of the Peninsula.

In order to make such foreign policy behaviours justifiable, the media serve as the suitable intermediate. In fact, unlike media behaviour vis-à-vis the Somali crisis, in the lead-up to the war on Iraq, there was a significant unprecedented media propaganda.

3.3. Significant Unprecedented Media Propaganda

In order to demonstrate that, Hayes and Guardino's systematic content analysis of network TV coverage in the months before the start of the Iraq War has been chosen. They analysed coverage on the ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news programs from August 1, 2002, through March 19, 2003, the day the invasion began.

Over the 8 months of coverage, stories about the UN arms inspection efforts and Iraq's alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction were the most prominent themes. But the stories that focused on the arguments for and against an invasion were much less common than stories about military planning or the allegations about weapons in Iraq (Hayes, 2010, p70), proving that the humanitarian aspect of the war was of marginal importance.

Besides, one of the most common criticisms of media coverage in the months before the war is that reporters were overly willing to accept the Bush administration's rationale for the invasion. Before the start of the Iraq war, CNN set up a system of "*script approval*" where reporters had to send their stories to unnamed officials in Atlanta before they could be run. This would ensure that if the military made any errors, CNN monitors would act as the second layer of filtering (Kumar, 2006, p59). Rupert Murdoch of News Corporation, for instance, took an active role in setting the tone of his news media outlets. So that, not coincidentally, all 175 editors of Murdoch's worldwide newspaper empire took a position in support of the war.

A systematic analysis of quotes from every source on the network news during the pre-war period is of prime importance as well, as it confirms Gramsci's hegemony theory. Administration officials comprised 28% of the networks' source quotes—a total of 1 718 in all. Bush himself accounted for 15% of all statements in the pre-war period, more than any other single source. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of the quotes attributed to Bush and other administration officials—78%—were supportive of military action. Twenty-one percent were neutral, and 1% opposed it. (Hayes, op.cit, p72) This confirms that actors across the entire political spectrum were not given equal opportunity to air their divergent views about the war.

In sum, these findings support the view that the media's performance did not live up to the democratic standards most journalists hold themselves to, and that they were no more than the government's "watchdogs".

CONCLUSION

A chief inference from an analysis of both narratives in Somalia and Iraq suggests that the so-called U.S. 'humanitarian' military interventions in both countries were classic acts of power politics, not an act of idealism in the case of Iraq. Hence, these interventions can conveniently be termed U.S. military imperialistic hegemonic interventions, that are falsely claimed to be 'humanitarian'.

Besides, the term "war on terrorism" was merely a propagandistic and rhetorical device for establishing U.S. military power while destroying the power of daring leaders— both of which would advance U.S. interests and hegemony.

Therefore, a prime inference suggests that Americans intervene 'humanitarianly' for their interests in the first place. Their ideals are introduced to give these interventions, sometimes invasions, a sense of legitimacy. Accordingly, the main reasons leading Presidents George Bush the father to delay action and then opt for intervention in Somalia and Bill Clinton to urge for withdrawal from it, as well as the reasons pushing George W. Bush the son to wage war on Iraq are very close in nature for they all serve the national interest's based hegemonic game.

Additionally, the shift in U.S. foreign policy from realism to idealism during its war on Iraq stemmed from four main motivating factors: to affirm America's hegemony over Europe and its position as the world's sole superpower; to restore the credibility of America as its leader especially after 09/11; to protect its national security; and to secure its economic interests in the Middle East. This would prove the rightness of the second hypothesis suggested in the introduction.

Moreover, the U.S. shields under the United Nations umbrella only when it assures that doing so would save the nation from dispatching its troops alone—thereby risking casualties—to help unworthy inhabitants of areas of little significance to the U.S. As a result, Robert Cox was to a large extent right.

Finally, the propagandistic coverage during the build-up to the war on Iraq in comparison to the little coverage Somalia had received earlier reveals the extent to which the media are complicit with U.S. foreign policy decision-makers' calculations in war aims and shifts. In clearer terms, media coverage to both interventions has resulted from a self-interests' based hegemonic cooperation between media and political elites.

All in all, the U.S. ostensibly laudable goal did not set its 'humanitarian' military interventions in Africa and the Middle East free from doubt over the real unpopular intentions. Thereby, a thorough examination of them has been required, a task this article has to some extent attempted to delve into.

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