George W. Bush, Diplomacy, and Going to War with Iraq, 2001 -2003

Joseph M. Siracusa[1], Laurens J. Visser[2]

[1] Professor of Human Security and International Diplomacy in School of Global, Urban and Social Studies at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology-RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

E-mail: joseph.siracusa@rmit.edu.au

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3363-5841

[2] Research Assistant at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology-RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

E-mail: laurens.visser@rmit.edu.au

Abstract

In 1991, the United Nations Security Council set up a weapons inspection and disarmament regime of Iraq that remained intact for several years before withering under bureaucracy. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the success and failures of this regime were brought into focus as President George W. Bush established leadership at the United Nations and announced an international war on terror. The U. S. deemed these inspections, together with their contemporary incarnation, as less than satisfactory. The result was an obstinate administration, unrestrained by the end of the Cold War, in pursuit of what they deemed an unacceptable threat. The decision to go to War with Iraq ultimately was driven by Bush's belief that Saddam's intentions as Iraqi leader were far more important than his actual capabilities.

Keywords: Iraqi Wars, Weapons of Mass Destruction, George H. W. Bush, George W. Bush and Saddam Hussein

"Iraq is a centerpiece of American foreign policy, influencing how the United States is viewed in the region and around the world…Because events in Iraq have been set in motion by American decisions and actions, the United States has both a national and a moral interest in doing what it can to give Iraqis an opportunity to avert anarchy."

James A. Baker III. And Lee H. Hamilton (2006)

Unlike his father, George W. Bush lacked the diplomatic acumen to rank among the great foreign policy presidents of the United States. However, events would dictate that Bush, just like his father, would face a shift in the international order that demanded an unprecedented diplomatic response. It is with just a twist of irony that Bush's legacy can be best found in the lingering effects of his foreign policy decisions, most evident in Iraq. Central to the shifting international order, as understood by the U.S., was the threat posed by Saddam Hussein, exacerbated by sanctions and weapons inspections that had continued for over a decade. In the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Bush re-evaluated his foreign policy priorities and dramatically altered how the U.S. identified and confronted threats abroad, emphasizing pre-emptive action. Through this new framework, old threats became new again and it was no longer Saddam Hussein's capabilities as Iraq's leader that threatened the U.S., it was a fear of his intentions. Abroad, the international community had an entirely different understanding and evaluation of Saddam Hussein and the threat he posed to international security, thanks to the protracted weapons inspection and disarmament process that had been established by Bush in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War. However, with this mixture of new and old policy combined with fear driven analysis, Bush pursued a foreign policy against Iraq that pandered to his home audience at the expense of U.S. diplomacy.

Introduction

Operation Desert Storm was almost over before it began. The campaign to oust Iraq from Kuwait, which had made extensive use of airstrikes and a ground offensive, was declared a success in only a few days. Although the international coalition led by the U.S. had achieved the United Nations Security Council objective of an Iraqi withdrawal, George H. W. Bush was faced with the decision to pursue the retreating Iraqi army or conclude the military intervention altogether, opting for the latter. Both Scowcroft and Bush later rationalized the decision to halt a march on Baghdad by claiming that it had set a precedent for U.S. benevolence in the post- Cold War era. They wrote, "Our prompt withdrawal helped cement our position with our Arab allies, who now trusted us far more than they ever had. We had come to their assistance in their time of need, asked nothing for ourselves, and left again when the job was done." (Bush & Scowcroft, 1998:490), Bush's decision to stop a march on Baghdad had broad support within his administration. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney argued in a press conference not long after the conclusion of hostilities that the decision to pull back was the correct one, explaining, "If you're going to go in and try to topple Saddam Hussein, you have to go into Baghdad. Once you've got Baghdad, it's not clear what you do with it. It's not clear what kind of government you would put in place of the one that's currently there." (Holsti, 2011:20). With the march of time, a different administration, and a higher post in the White House, Cheney would have change of mind.

The military campaign did succeed in checking Iraqi aggression in the Persian Gulf. However, what remained unchecked was the threat posed by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction safely tucked away within Iraq. The United Nations Security Council unanimously agreed that in order for Iraq to be restrained from future aggression an ongoing monitoring and verification programme would be established that inventoried and destroyed Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and its weapons manufacturing capabilities. To ensure Iraq complied with the international demand for complete disarmament, sanctions that had been imposed on Iraq for the annexation of Kuwait were allowed to continue

and were dependent on Iraq's disarmament status. Overseeing the disarmament process was the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), under the executive chairmanship of Swedish Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, and reporting to the Security Council. The unprecedented range of UNSCOM's new powers allowed inspectors to "designate for inspection any site, facility, activity, material or other item in Iraq." These inspections, according to the Security Council, "would be conducted unannounced and at short notice," (Security Council resolution 687 [SCR-687], 1991) and included overhead surveillance so that inspectors could more aggressively search for weapons. In return, Iraq was expected to support all UNSCOM and IAEA efforts unconditionally, and only after verification of total disarmament would the Security Council drop sanctions (SCR-687, 1991, paragr. 18). UNSCOM worked alongside the International Atomic Energy Agency, the only other programme that had a weapons verification mechanism in the United Nations, and through both the Security Council maintained authority over Iraq.

UNSCOM weapons inspectors dismantled and destroyed more chemical and biological weapons, and manufacturing facilities, than both the ground offensive and airstrikes throughout Operation Desert Storm combined. Judged by their initial reports, UNSCOM was making headway toward verifying Iraq as completely disarmed. Despite these successes, there were concerns that the weapons inspectors were becoming an enforcement arm of the United Nations Security Council. Mohammed el-Baradei, legal head of the IAEA, recalled that while travelling from one location to another, and glancing around at the bus full of predominantly American specialists, he was struck by the attitude of the inspectors, noting, "they were highly qualified technically, but they had no clue about how to conduct international inspections or, for that matter, about the nuances of how to behave in different cultures. From their brash conversation, it was clear they believed that, having come to a defeated country, they had free rein to behave as they pleased." (El-Baradei, 2011:23). Hans Blix, who was head of the IAEA, also noticed the difference in UNSCOM and IAEA inspection methods. Agreeing with el-Baradei, Blix added that in some cases inspections were more like intelligence gathering operations.

In one instance, David Kay, an American inspector, uncovered a cache of documents that concerned Iraq's past nuclear weapons programme. It took a standoff in a car park that lasted several hours, where Kay refused to hand over the documents he had found to Iraqi authorities and the Iraqi authorities refused to allow Kay to leave with the documents, before the matter was resolved. The confrontational, and reckless, nature of Kay's approach, a hallmark of the methods employed by UNSCOM, meant that Blix held reservations over the free-for-all information gathering that was being encouraged. After analyzing Kay's documents, Blix concluded that the document's worth was not equal to the hassle of finding them. Blix's concern was that to find the documents you had to rely on intelligence agencies and, for all the problems that had arose, "the documents did not head to any weapons stores or, for that matter, to any weapons at all." (Blix, 2005:26). Nevertheless, both UNSCOM and the IAEA had turned to intelligence agencies for information that might aid weapons inspectors once leads to weapons began to dry up. Although there were benefits with intelligence agencies sharing what they knew about Iraq's weapons programmes, Blix noted, "Gradually, 'sharing' came to mean that the intelligence partners 'shared' all the UNSCOM information they wanted, while information they obtained through

piggybacking might not have been 'shared' with UNSCOM." (Blix, 2005:37). As the intelligence agencies became more entwined with weapons inspections, and progress on verifying Iraq as completely disarmed stalled, it was only a matter of time before Iraq became frustrated by the lack of progress. After all, the sanctions that had been imposed since 1991 were still in full effect.

By 1998, after seven long years of unrelenting sanctions and continuous inspections, there still remained unanswered questions and doubts over the status of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, despite Iraqi objections. In August, Richard Butler, who had replaced Rolf Ekeus as chairman of UNSCOM in 1997, met with Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, to devise a work schedule that satisfactorily addressed the remaining disarmament questions. According to Butler, there was a lack of documentation that verified the unilateral destruction of missile production facilities, the status of chemical munitions, and the movement of prohibited equipment in Iraq. These concerns were in addition to the unresolved status of missing mustard gas shells (Report of the Special Commission 719 [RSC-719], 1998, Annex). However, it was in regards to biological weapons capabilities that Butler was adamant Iraq was refusing to cooperate with UNSCOM, explaining, "The experts recommended that no further verification and/or assessment of Iraq's biological declaration of full, final and complete disclosure be conducted until Iraq commits itself to provide a new and substantive information." According to these experts, "any other approach would be a waste of time." (RSC-719, 1998, paragraph 27). This prompted Aziz to condemn UNSCOM for the refusal to verify that Iraq was disarmed, and subsequently lifting sanctions. According to Aziz, there were only two remaining questions from the weapons inspections. They were "whether Iraq retained any weapons of mass destruction, including long-range missiles; and whether Iraq retained capabilities for their production." (RSC-719, 1998, paragraph. 34). Aziz's simplification of the remaining weapons inspections objections did not garner support from Butler.

The answer to both of Aziz's questions was an emphatic, no. According to Iraq, UNSCOM had deliberately emphasized minor issues with documentation in order to justify the United Nations Security Council continuing sanctions on Iraq. But, Butler argued that he was "not permitted to make disarmament by declaration," and that without credible evidence provided by Iraq "members of the council would challenge his claim that Iraq had no more proscribed weapons or capabilities."(RSC-719, 1998, paragraph. 54). The purpose of the meeting, stressed Butler, was to implement a work schedule that would lead to the suspension of sanctions providing Iraq cooperated with UNSCOM. Aziz dismissed the plan out of hand, stating simply, "There are no more proscribed weapons and materials in Iraq." According to Aziz, if UNSCOM could not report to the Security Council that Iraq was disarmed by now there was no guarantee that UNSCOM would make that report in the future. Therefore, went on Aziz, Iraq would refuse to cooperate with inspections, referring to the proposed work schedule as useless. (RSC-719, 1998, paragraph. 60). The response from the U.S. was shift and, in December, U.S. officials advised UNSCOM and IAEA inspectors to leave Iraqi immediately before the commencement of the airstrike campaign Operation Desert Fox. The operation was a punishment, dealt out by the U.S., for Iraq breaching the Security Council resolutions demanding unconditional cooperation with weapons inspectors. However, the airstrikes only prompted Aziz to officially announce, on December 19, that Iraq would

not comply with UNSCOM's mission in Iraq any further, eliminating weapons inspections in Iraq (Blix, 2005:35). In response, President Bill Clinton announced that U.S. policy was no longer to contain Iraq, but to replace Saddam Hussein's regime (Pollack, 2002:94).

In January 1999, the United Nations Security Council began an inquiry into the situation in Iraq in order to review all the evidence that had been gathered by UNSCOM and the IAEA from weapons inspections. The inquiry comprised of three panels that evaluated the humanitarian impact of sanctions and addressed the concerns that had emerged in the meeting between Butler and Aziz in 1998. Brazil's Ambassador Celso Amorim headed the inquiry. According to the IAEA, inspections had determined that Iraq's nuclear weapons programme "had been very well funded and was aimed at the development and production of a small arsenal of nuclear weapons, but there was no indications that Iraq had achieved its programme's objective." (United Nations Security Council 356 [UNSC-356], 1999, annex 1, paragr. 14). The IAEA had concluded, based upon the information that had been collected and presented to the United Nations Security Council up until weapons inspectors withdrew from Iraq in 1998, that "there is no indication that Iraq possess nuclear weapons or any meaningful amounts of weapon-usable nuclear material or that Iraq has retained any practical capability (facilities or hardware) for the production of such material." (UNSC-356, 1999, annex 1, paragr.14). Although there were remaining concerns over the lack of documentation that covered specific technical aspects of the Iraqi nuclear programme, the Amorim report concluded that Iraq was disarmed of nuclear weapons capability, and that the IAEA was in a position to move to an ongoing monitoring programme. The UNSCOM findings had been more problematic. Although UNSCOM inspectors had disarmed Iraq of its verified ballistic weapons capabilities, concerns remained over the status of over fifty warheads and seven missiles that had been unilaterally destroyed without documentation. Similar concerns were expressed over the status of chemical weapons. Over the course of inspections, UNSCOM inspectors had verified and destroyed a significant amount of chemical munitions and production capacity. However, there were still munitions that the Iraqi's had unilaterally destroyed and without record. UNSCOM were also unable to find evidence that explained the discrepancies in financing for chemical weapons during the 1980s, the status of five hundred and fifty artillery shells that had gone missing during the Gulf War in 1991, and military planning for Iraq's VX programme. However, despite the issues surrounding Iraq's chemical weapons programme, the Amorim report concluded that UNSCOM had destroyed and rendered inoperable all declared biological weapons facilities in Iraq. After reviewing all the available information presented by UNSCOM and the IAEA, the Amorim report concluded, "although important elements still have to be resolved, the bulk of Iraq's proscribed weapons programmes has been eliminated." (UNSC-356, 1999, paragr. 25). The Amorim report did not, however, vouch for the complete disarmament of Iraq.

It was in Amorim's opinion that weapons inspections in Iraq had reached a "point of impasse," where "further investigation of these issues under the current procedures…might correspond to an apparent diminishing return in recent years." (UNSC-356, 1999, paragr. 25). The weapons inspection programme was based on the belief that Iraq could be disarmed beyond any reasonable doubt, something both the IAEA and UNSCOM believed was not possible, and therefore the programme had to shift

priority to an ongoing monitoring and verification programme that would "attempt to determine that proscribed activities are not being carried out." (UNSC-356, 1999, paragr. 32). In order to do this, the core mission for UNSCOM was reinterpreted, and Amorim concluded, "such a reinforced OMV system, which should include intrusive inspections and investigation of relevant elements of past activities, is viable." (UNSC-356, 1999, paragr. 61). Hans Blix, following the report's findings closely, approved of the revised UNSCOM mission. Blix was satisfied that the nature of UNSCOM inspections had been found ineffective, and that Amorim's report had insisted, "inspection should be effective and could be highly intrusive, but should avoid being unnecessarily confrontational." (Blix, 2005:40). For Blix, then, the Amorim report reinforced United Nations authority over the weapons inspection process.

But there still remained questions over the status of sanctions that had been devised around the objective of verified, and complete, Iraqi disarmament. The U.S. refused outright to support dropping sanctions, arguing that Iraq was still in breach of its Security Council requirements. In an effort to compromise with the members of the United Nations Security Council, and regain some consensus on Iraq, the U.S. spent the end of 1999 negotiating a renewed sanctions resolution. The U.S. agreed to loosen economic sanctions, if Iraq made significant progress on a number of outstanding disarmament tasks that would be determined by the newly established United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), the weapons inspection commission that had replaced UNSCOM on the recommendation of the Amorim report (Pollack, 2002:100).. Iraq refused to readmit weapons inspectors under the new conditions, instead, choosing to remain isolated from the international community.

The Evolving United Nations Security Council Consensus

In January 2000, Blix was nominated for the chairmanship of UNMOVIC. Accepting the appointment, Blix reflected on the reasons for leaving retirement to take on another posting in the United Nations explaining that since his tenure as head of the IAEA, and throughout UNSCOM inspections, he believed that the confrontational nature of inspections had become counterproductive and had served only to antagonize Iraq. Blix recalled, "I had heard it many times from inspectors that they thought the IAEA often got more information through a more restrained, professional UN Style." (Blix, 2005:44). Blix had found it difficult to resist applying his preferred style of inspections to UNMOVIC after being asked to take the chairmanship. Alongside Mohamed el-Baradei, who had replaced Blix as head of the IAEA in 1997, the new weapons inspections regime signalled the return of the old United Nations weapons inspectors. And the timing was fortunate. On March 24, Secretary-General Kofi Annan reported to the Security Council that there was a humanitarian crisis in Iraq as a result of the ongoing sanctions, and the United Nations Security Council had to find a solution. Annan reminded the Security Council, "the United Nations has always been on the side of the vulnerable and the weak and has always sought to relieve suffering. Yet here we are accused of causing suffering to an entire population." (United Nations Security Council 4120 [UNSC-4120], 2000:2). With the established of UNMOVIC, the return of Blix, and Annan's assessment that the Security Council was partly responsible for the situation in Iraq, the international consensus turned to reconsider its stance over Iraq.

Annan's report served as cover for the permanent members of the Security Council to express their

dissatisfaction with the current sanctions imposed on Iraq. Russia's Ambassador Sergey Lavrov pointed to a double standard in the application of sanctions and complained that states that were attempting to conduct legitimate business with Iraq had found their efforts blocked by other Security Council members for "artificial pretexts." According to Lavrov, some business contracts were placed on hold, while "requests for deliveries of similar goods from other countries are endorsed without any problem." (UNSC-4120, 2000:6). If the administration of sanctions was so ineffective, went the reasoning, it was assumed that they would not be successfully implemented. Furthermore, the unilaterally imposed no-fly zones that were enforced by the U.S. and United Kingdom were a source of antagonism for Iraq.

Lavrov explained that it was "inadmissible to call upon Iraq to cooperate while at the same [time] continuing to bomb Iraqi territory." (UNSC-4120, 2000:6). France's Ambassador Jean-David Levitte agreed with the Russian appraisal of the situation in Iraq. The inconsistency of the Security Council application of Iraqi sanctions was unacceptable, and they could no longer ignore the developing humanitarian crisis. Levitte explained that as a result of sanctions "in the future, the effectiveness and consequences of broad, indiscriminate sanctions that hurt civilian populations exclusively and whose human cost clearly exceeds any political benefits that the Council could expect of them." (UNSC-4120, 2000:16 – 17).

The U.S. remained apart from Russian and French statements. U.S. Ambassador James Cunningham could not believe that the Security Council was suddenly willing to absolve Iraq of its past indiscretions. Cunningham recited a list of resolutions that Iraq had failed to implement, concluding, "Iraq remains a threat." (UNSC-4120, 2000:7). However, the U.S. assessment of the threat posed by Iraq had already shifted. Cunningham explained that it was not just about Iraqi weapons anymore, and that so long as Saddam Hussein retained leadership in Iraq there would be no cooperation with the Security Council. After all, "Where there has been deprivation in Iraq, the Iraqi regime has been responsible." (UNSC-4120, 2000:8). It was evident that the Security Council had begun to move away from Iraqi sanctions. But, equally, the U.S. had moved closely to considering Saddam Hussein as the source of instability in Iraq, rather than Iraqi capabilities.

Cunningham refused to back down from the commitment to enforce no-fly zones over Iraq, as they were a necessary and successful element of containment. He also dismissed the administrative difficulties some states had raised concerning the application of sanctions. According to Cunningham, it was Iraq that had to change its relationship with the United Nations Security Council, not the other way around. Cunningham insisted that the oil-forfood programme, a sanctions compromise that the U.S. had agreed to when UNMOVIC was created, was a necessary concession. But Cunningham went to great lengths to emphasize that it was the Iraqi government that was failing the Iraqi people, not the international community, explaining, "The United Nations works for the Iraqi people. The Government [of Iraq] does not. Non-governmental organizations work for the Iraqi people. The Government [of Iraq] does not." (UNSC-4120, 2000:10).

Although Cunningham made a cursory effort to stress the importance of the United Nations Security Council consensus against Iraq, the ambassador lacked direct support from the Clinton administration. Kenneth Pollack, a CIA analyst specializing in the Middle East, explained that by the end of the Clinton Administration attention had turned away from the

situation in Iraq. Pollack observed, "By the summer of 2000…The Vice President was campaigning full-time, the president was investing ever more of his time in trying to secure a Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement before he left office, and the rest of the government was just trying to prevent its position on Iraq from deteriorating further." (Pollack, 2002:102). Just as the weapons inspections had suffered from institutional fatigue, so too had U.S. attention toward Iraq.

In June, the United Nations Security Council voted unanimously to continue the oil-for-food programme, the backbone of emergency humanitarian aid to Iraq. However, although the programme was continued some of the permanent members began to explore possibilities for loosening sanctions altogether. China's Ambassador Wang Yingfan was not restrained in expressing China's disappointment with the Security Council, arguing that they were not "entirely satisfied with the resolution that the Council had just adopted…because it does not fully reflect an important element favored by most States members of the Council." (United Nations Security Council 4152 [UNSC-4152], 2000:3). Wang Yingfan stressed, "The humanitarian suffering of Iraqi civilians is, principally, a consequence of the 10 years of sanctions against Iraq." (UNSC-4152, 2000:3). Therefore, the Security Council was responsible for the welfare of the Iraqi people and had to act accordingly.

Despite China's efforts to refocus the Security Council on the humanitarian impact of the sanctions, the oil-for-food programme was again reviewed in December and extended into the New Year. The only alteration was to financial provisions that would streamline funds into the reconstruction of Iraq's oil industry. Even this minor change was enough to prompt Cunningham to warn the Security Council against modifying the economic constraints on Iraq, arguing, "during the negotiation of this new phase of the programme we have seen numerous Iraqi attempts to avoid, rather than accept, obligations to the international community." (United Nations Security Council 4241 [UNSC-4241], 2000:4). However, it was also clear that for as long as the U.S. remained preoccupied with presidential elections, the administration was unwilling to compromise or even consider any new approaches to Iraq, and sanctions remained in a suspended state. Lavrov, on Russia's behalf, was adamant, in response to Cunningham's indictment of the Iraqi regime, that "a fundamental resolution of the problem of the humanitarian crisis will be impossible as long as sanctions are maintained." (UNSC-4241, 2000:4). With President George W. Bush winning the U.S. election, there was, at least, an opportunity to pursue an alternate solution.

Bush was inaugurated as the 43rd President of the United States in January 2001. Despite the controversial election results that were, in the end, determined by a Supreme Court decision, Bush ended the Democrat occupation of the White House. This also meant the appointment of a new selection of secretaries, advisers, and policymakers. Kenneth Pollack, in a final memo briefing the incoming administration on the status of Iraq, warned that containment of Saddam had eroded, and that there were two choices that had to be made – "to adopt an aggressive policy of regime change to try to get rid of Saddam quickly or undertake a major revamping of the sanctions to try and choke off the smuggling and prevent Saddam from reconstituting his military, especially his hidden WMD programs." (Pollack, 2002:103). Pollack complained that the second option was more difficult because of the lack of consensus in the United Nations Security Council and the unwillingness of other states to match U.S. intentions to confront Iraq.

Initially, Bush did not seem too preoccupied with the threat posed by Saddam hussein, imagined or otherwise. Prime Minister Tony Blair, in his first meeting with Bush in February 2001, recalled that there was there was no sense of urgency regarding Iraq. Blair reflected, "George was set on building a strong right-wing power base in the US, capable of sustaining him through two terms, and was focused especially on education and tax reform." (Blair, 2010:392-393). The only concerns regarding Iraq involved the possibility of reconfiguring sanctions. Richard Haass, who was now Director of Policy and Planning at the State Department, forwarded a plan to impose "smart" sanctions on Iraq, based on research he had conducted with Meghan O'Sullivan at the Brookings Institution. The plan was simple. Smart sanctions allowed a larger range of non-military goods to be imported by Iraq, in exchange for an increased revenue stream from Iraqi exports going into accounts controlled by the United Nations instead of Iraq. The plan was embraced by Secretary of State Colin Powell, and despite skepticism from the rest of the administration, Bush signed off the initiative (Haass, 2009:174-75). Haass noted that the administration understood from the beginning that Iraq was an important foreign policy concern. However, Haass added that what the administration was focused on "when it came to Iraq was…recasting the sanctions regime. There was a directive to look at existing military plans, but this lacked any real intensity at the time. It was more a dusting off of what was there rather than anything new." (Haass, 2009:175). Bush was not inaugurated with a plan to oust Saddam Hussein. In fact,

Bush's initial plans to cut government expenditure meant the Pentagon did not receive the funding that was required for a new generation of weaponry, indicating the administration was not projecting any urgency in matters of defense. Any advanced plan to confront Iraq included (Mann, 2004:290).

The smart sanctions were put to the test at a United Nations Security Council session in June. Despite receiving support from the U.K. for the revised sanctions, in fact it was the U.K. that tabled the draft resolution, there remained significant opposition from the remaining members of the Security Council. Russia was particularly critical of the proposed changes, and Lavrov argued, "key elements of the United Kingdom draft appear to lead not to easing the very harsh economic situation of Iraq, but rather to tightening the sanctions." (United Nations Security Council 4336 [UNSC-4336], 2001:3). Lavrov explained that by further complicating the list of items that were under sanction, the Security Council was inhibiting, to a greater degree, legitimate trade with Iraq. China agreed with Lavrov's assessment, and Wang Yingfin argued, "Foreign companies should be allowed to invest in Iraq, and countries should be allowed to freely sign service contracts with Iraq." (UNSC-4336, 2001:11). China and Russia agreed that the Security Council was exacerbating and prolonging the humanitarian crisis in Iraq by not relinquishing sanctions.

This time it was the U.K.'s turn to hit back at opposition in the Security Council. Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock argued, "it is our responsibility in the Council to prevent Iraq from posing a threat to its region and, as part of this, to ensure that Iraq is fully and verifiably disarmed of its weapons of mass destruction." (UNSC-4336, 2001:4). Implementing smart sanctions was a step towards streamlining sanctions so that Iraq could not re-arm, and lessening the impact of sanctions on the people of Iraq. Greenstock reminded the Security Council, "we are all aware that Iraq continues to export oil outside the United Nations system to build up illegal revenue with

which it can purchase weapons and other proscribed items." (UNSC-4336, 2001:6). Although Greenstock was reserved in his arguments against Chinese and Russian opposition, Cunningham was not. Cunningham stated simply that smart sanctions were designed to prevent Iraq from acquiring the materials it needed to re-arm. At some point in the future the Security Council might revise those limitations, but only "once there is confidence that they would not be used to rebuild Iraq's weapons of mass destruction or improve its military capabilities." (UNSC-4336, 2001:9). The U.S. remained unconvinced that Iraq was disarmed, and remained committed to imposing sanctions on Iraq until it was. France, however, found itself between the competing interests of the permanent members. Levitte reminded China and Russia that weapon inspectors had been absent from Iraq for two and a half years and their reports were incomplete. However, Levitte argued, "Recovery requires the return of normal economic conditions." (UNSC-4336, 2001:7).

The debate was inconclusive, and as a result the introduction of smart sanctions was delayed. That also meant Bush remained confronted by the lingering problem of Iraq. According to Haass, this was not a bad outcome. Reflecting on the proposed policy initiatives to confront Iraq, including forceful regime change, Haass concluded, "the current and projected situation was not intolerable. Saddam Hussein was a nuisance, not a mortal threat. Trying to oust him, however desirable, did not need to become such a preoccupation that it would come to dominate the administration's foreign policy absent a major new provocation. The United States had more important goals to promote around both the region and the world that would be put in jeopardy were it to get bogged down in Iraq." (Haass, 2009:182). The failure of the U.S. to pressure the United Nations Security Council into embracing revised sanctions only diminished its authority in both the Security Council and over Iraq.

What was unique about the debate over Iraqi sanctions was that it had been opened to nonmembers of the Security Council, and the majority of the non-Security Council members were overwhelming in support of reducing the severity of sanctions and alleviating the humanitarian crisis in Iraq. This support encouraged Iraq's Ambassador al-Qaysi, who complained that Iraq had been antagonised by U.S. airstrikes in early February that destroyed a number of air-defense sites in Iraq (Haass, 2009:173). According to al-Qaysi, Iraq was being unfairly and severely punished. Pointing to the voices both within and outside of the Security Council that sided with abandoning sanctions, al-Qaysi explained, "the faltering of the sanctions regime represents in reality a concrete reflection of the lack of conviction of the majority of the international community." (UNSC-4336, 2001:25). Smart sanctions that had been proposed by the U.S. and U.K. were accused of being a front for Western companies to receive preferential treatment. Al-

Qaysi asked, "Do we have any guarantee that those companies are not going to be fat cats of Western origin and be the only ones allowed to buy Iraqi oil?" (UNSC-4336, 2001:27). However, this was beside the point. Al-Qaysi noted that the Amorim report had concluded that Iraq was disarmed, and warned the U.S. and U.K. that they could not accuse Iraq of reinstating weapons of mass destruction programs without evidence. Even Annan had agreed with Iraq on this point, stating in an earlier report on the situation in Iraqi that it was imperative to "put the burden of proof on any side that alleges that Iraq still has weapons of mass destruction." (UNSC-4336, 2001:28). The result of the open debate within the Security Council was a resounding rejection of the U.S. proposed smart sanctions, and the implemented

oil-for-food program continued without change. Cunningham rued that the Security Council had missed an opportunity to force change in Iraq, declaring that smart sanctions would "have been adopted today save for the threat of a veto" and despite the objections of non-Security Council members. (United Nations Security Council 4344 [UNSC-4344], 2001:3). Although disappointed at the lack of support in the Security Council, Cunningham promised, "We have made considerable progress and have come too close to agreement to concede the field to Baghdad." (UNSC-4344, 2001:3). It would take a greater effort from Washington to force change in the Security Council, let alone Iraq.

A 21st Century Threat

At the turn of the twenty-first century, historian Andrew Bacevich observed, "For members of the young Bush administration charged with responsibility for American statecraft, the future looked rosy indeed." (Bacevich, 2002:225). However, the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, irrevocably changed Bush's diplomatic plans. The death of over three thousand American civilians stunned not only the U.S., but reverberated throughout the international community. At the behest of the U.K., the Security Council convened a session on September 12 in order to condemn the terrorist attacks where Greenstock explained, "we all have to understand that this is a global issue, an attack on the whole of modern civilization and an affront to the human spirit. We must all respond globally and show the strength of spirit."(United Nations Security Council 4370 [UNSC-4370], 2001:3). The attacks had renewed solidarity between the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, as Lavrov added that the terrorist attacks reminded every nation of the "the timeliness of the task of joining the efforts of the entire international community in combating terror, this plague of the twenty first century." (UNSC-4370, 2001:5). Levitte, summarising the collective thoughts of the United Nations Security Council, reminded, "We stand with the United States in deciding upon any action to combat those who resort to terrorism, those who aid them and those who protect them." (UNSC-4370, 2001:7). In fact, the offer from the Security Council to confront terrorism abroad supported the new U.S. war footing. Cunningham, proud of the support from the United Nations Security Council, stated, "we look to all those who stand for peace, justice and security in the world to stand together with the United States to win the war against terrorism. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbour them. We will bring those responsible to account." (UNSC-4370, 2001:7-8). Of course, the U.S. had to look no further than the U.K. for unwavering and loyal support (Blair, 2010:401).

In the wake of the attacks, the consensus of U.S. intelligence was that al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden had organised the terrorist attacks. (Hamid& Farrall, 2015). As one of al-Qaeda's main training facilities was located in Afghanistan, and the Taliban leadership in Afghanistan refused to cooperate with the U.S. to hand over Osama bin Laden and destroy the training facility, the U.S. set about achieving those two objectives itself. But, as explained by Phillip Zelikow, the administration "had no plan whatever for ground operations in Afghanistan – none. The plans against Afghanistan, bearing the blustery codename Infinite Resolve, were little different than when the Clinton White House had looked them over after the October 2000 attack on the USS *Cole*.

Central Command (CENTCOM) commander Tommy Franks regarded them as hardly deserving the title 'plan'." (Zelikow, 2011). The administration fell back onto a CIA plan to utilise tribal leaders in a loosely

based Northern Alliance to agitate the Taliban government, and the U.S. pushed forward with its objectives to capture Osama bin Laden, destroy al-Qaeda's base in Afghanistan, and expel the Taliban government.

In November, the Taliban government dissolved and the U.S. military commitment was deemed a success. The lack of multilateral assistance, in a positive reinforcement feedback loop, only confirmed the success of U.S. unilateral action. In fact, Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld had rebuffed an unprecedented offer from NATO for military assistance in combat missions in Afghanistan, determining such a large coalition as tactically prohibitive (Holsti, 2011:26). By March 2002, the U.S. began a larger operation against the remaining al-Qaeda members in Afghanistan that lead to anti-Taliban tribal leaders consolidating their control across Afghanistan. The war in Afghanistan was considered an overall victory when diplomats from several nations negotiated the formation of a new Afghan government under the leadership of Hamid Karzai, a well-educated tribal leader who was the pick of the western governments.

Riding a wave of popularity into 2002 as a decisive wartime president, Bush utilised his State of the Union address to lay the groundwork for the next step in what was regarded as a global war on terror. Referring to Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as an 'axis of evil' that threatened the peace and security of the world, Bush made it clear that the next step was to confront those threats. According to Zelikow, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and speechwriter Michael Gerson believed the diplomatic aspect of the State of the Union would focus on the "nonnegotiable demands of human dignity," in an effort to describe a world "beyond the war on terror." However, it was clear that it was Iraq that had returned as the primary concern for the administration (Zelikow, 2011:109). and leaked military planning from the Department of Defense in February 2002 confirmed it. In briefings, Bush had "overwhelmingly emphasized doable operations to defeat Iraqi forces and topple Saddam." (Zelikow, 2011:112). The reconfiguration of strategies to confront Saddam Hussein was inspired by the success of the operations that had toppled Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan. More obvious, the plans focused on Saddam Hussein's intentions as leader and how best to depose him.

By June, Bush's stance on Iraq was clear. In a graduation speech at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Bush suggested, "deterrence could not be relied upon in an age in which rogue states and terrorist groups could acquire weapons of mass destruction," (Haass, 2009:213) a conclusion that was contrary to the advice of Haass and the State Department. Haass noted that the administration was suffering from diverging advice over plans to confront Saddam Hussein, and "those who worked with me on the Policy Planning Staff began to come back from meetings around the government and report that those of their counterparts known for advocating going to war with Iraq appeared too cocky for comfort." (Haass, 2009:213). With the military success in Afghanistan, the Defense Department had earned a reputation for results, unlike the State Department's efforts to confront Saddam Hussein. As the American media reported that a war was being planned, the administration made sure that there were plans for war, lest they be caught unprepared (Mann, 2004:3356). By August 2002, Blair remarked, "at times we would not be sure whether we were driving the agenda or being driven by it." (Blair, 2010:404). But Bush waited to clarify the U.S. position at the United Nations in September.

On September 12, 2002, Bush addressed the United Nations General Assembly for the first time. Kofi Annan set the agenda by listing threats to international peace and security one year on from the terrorist attacks in the U.S. First, Annan gave priority to the ongoing IsraeliPalestinian conflict. Second, he referred to Iraq's continued defiance of Security Council resolutions and the refusal to readmit inspectors. Annan considered the renewal of weapons inspections as an "indispensable first step towards assuring the world that all Iraq's weapons of mass destruction have indeed been eliminated." Third, he stressed the importance of rebuilding Afghanistan in the wake of major military operations. And, fourth, reconciling differences between India and Pakistan after both had newly acquired nuclear weapons (General Assembly 57 [GA-57], 2002:2-3).

Bush's address, however, ignored to a great extent Annan's list and reinforced the observation that the U.S. had committed to confronting Iraq. Bush stated that the "greatest fear is that terrorists will find a shortcut to their mad ambitions when an outlaw regime supplies them with the technologies enabling them to kill on a massive scale." (GA-57, 2002:7). According to Bush, Iraq was an outlaw state that continued "to shelter and support terrorist organizations that direct violence against Iran, Israel, and Western Governments." (GA-57, 2002:7). By accusing Iraq of supporting terrorism, Bush had stretched the parameters of the global war on terror to legitimate action against Iraq. In support of the claim that Iraq posed an imminent threat to international peace and security, Bush claimed that intelligence suggested Iraq was in the process of rebuilding its weapons of mass destruction capabilities, a claim that remained unverified because of the lack of international weapons inspectors in Iraq. Bush was convinced that "Should Iraq acquire fissile material, it would be able to build a nuclear weapon within a year." (GA-57, 2002:7).

The central purpose of Bush's address was to ignite support for a United Nations sanctioned mission to rectify the situation in Iraq, even suggesting that the United Nations help "build a Government that represents all Iraqis." (GA-57, 2002:8). However, there remained no doubt that the appeal to the United Nations for assistance was a take it or leave it proposition. Finishing his address, Bush promised that "the Security Council resolutions will be enforced, and the just demands of peace and security will be met, or action will be unavoidable, and a regime that has lost its legitimacy will also lose its power." (GA-57, 2002:9). Indeed, Blair had noticed the shift in the U.S. attitude toward Iraq immediately after September 11. Blair recalled:

Saddam had been an unwelcome reminder of battles past, a foe that we had beaten but left in place, to the disgruntlement of many. But he had not been perceived as a threat.

Now it was not so much that the direct threat increased, but he became bound up in the US belief that so shocking had been the attack, so serious had been its implications, that the world had to be remade. Countries whose governments were once disliked but tolerated became, overnight, potential enemies, to be confronted, made to change attitude, or made to change government (Blair, 2010:396).

Having disregarded Annan's list of prominent threats to international peace and security, Bush was clear that there was a strategic shift in the global war on terror, and that it would focus on Iraq (Thompson, 2009:161-62). But, more particular, the strategic shift emphasised Bush's reversal over previous U.S. policy to consider Saddam Hussein's intentions as leader as a higher priority than his capabilities.

On September 17, 2002, the National Security Strategy (NSS) was published, completing the shift to unrestrained U.S. unilateralism. The NSS was clear that the U.S. was prepared to go to great lengths to confront the twenty-first century threat of terrorism. The NSS stressed, "the United States can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past. The inability to deter a potential attacker, the immediacy of today's threats, and the magnitude of potential harm that could be caused by our adversaries' choice of weapons, do not permit that option. We cannot let our enemies strike first." (The National Security Strategy [NSS], 2002, 15). This left the U.S. with the option of 'preemptive actions' and "to forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act pre-emptively." (NSS, 2002:15). The strategy embodied the vision of the world after September 11 that had been encouraged by Condoleezza Rice, a vision that "the end of the Cold War and the 9/11 attack were bookends for a transitional period in world history." Zelikow noted that Rice added, "Before the clay is dry again, America and our friends and our allies must move decisively." (Zelikow, 2011:111).

Even before the publication of the National Security Strategy, and Bush's United Nations General Assembly address, it was already understood through diplomatic channels that the U.S. was moving into a militant posture. In July, Sir Richard Dearlove, the head of Britain's Foreign Intelligence Service (MI6), had met with senior U.S. officials in Washington. In a memo from Downing Street on July 23, 2002, Dearlove recorded "a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD." (Haass, 2009:215). And Iraq understood the message clear enough, pre-empting even the publication of the NSS and readmitting weapons inspectors on September 16, 2002.

The United Nations Security Council spent October negotiating the conditions of the resumed weapons inspections in Iraq. In an effort to promote consensus, the Security Council session was an open debate. Kofi Annan set the agenda by admitting, although the readmission of inspectors to Iraq was welcome, "Iraq has to comply…If Iraq fails to make use of this last chance, and if defiance continues, the Council will have to face its responsibilities."(United Nations Security Council 4625 [UNSC-4625], 2002:4). However, Annan also warned the permanent members of the Security Council, "if you allow yourselves to be divided, the authority and credibility of the organization will undoubtedly suffer." (UNSC-4625, 2002:4). It was hoped that by opening the debate over two days, a broader consensus, and cross section of views, might emerge. A good example was South African Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo who related the mission to disarm Iraq to the same process of disarming South Africa of nuclear weapons in the late 1990s, warning that the 'pre-emptive' position of the U.S. might affect the work of the weapons inspections. Kumalo warned, "it would be tragic if the Council were to prejudge the work of inspectors before they set foot in Iraq." (UNSC-4625, 2002:5). Kumalo reminded the permanent members, "The Security Council represents our collective security concerns and should ultimately be accountable to the entire United Nations." (UNSC-4625, 2002:5).

Contrastingly, Australia's Ambassador John Dauth added his support to the hard-line stance taken by Bush. Dauth agreed with the U.S., "Iraq today poses a clear danger to international security because it has sought to acquire weapons of mass destruction and has a well-established record of using them against its neighbours, and, indeed, against its own people."

(Security Council 4625 [SC-4625], 2002:9). Australia remained convinced that Saddam Hussein maintained his ambitions to acquire weapons of mass destruction and "in the aftermath of 11 September and, I say with great sadness, the events of 12 October in Bali, the international community must be scrupulous in addressing threats to international security, or face the disastrous consequences." (SC-4625, 2002:10). Australia's support had additional strategic value for Bush. Thanks to the ANZUS treaty, already invoked by Prime Minister John Howard for Australia's contribution of troops to Afghanistan, both the U.K. and now Australia had their interests aligned with the U.S. and were committed to action (Siracusa, 2006:48).

Blix and el-Baradei had also spent October in meetings with U.S. officials in order to detail a proposal for suitable objectives for weapons inspections. Expectations for the inspections varied greatly depending on whom Blix and el-Baradei met in the administration. Cheney was upfront and short with the inspectors. Blix reflected that Cheney told them both that he "in talking about the world at large [always] took the security interests of the United States as his starting point." (Blix, 2005:86). However, Cheney warned that the inspections could not continue indefinitely, and that the U.S. was "ready to discredit inspections in favour of disarmament." (Blix, 2005:86). 90 Cheney's attitude was juxtaposed with Bush, who greeted Blix and el-Baradei warmly and said that the

U.S. had full confidence in the weapons inspectors, promising that the U.S. would "throw its support behind us." (Blix, 2005:86). These bipolar attitudes were not just restricted to the halls of the White House. In the open Security Council debate, it was the U.K that first cast doubt over the weapons inspections process.

Greenstock stressed the importance of an open debate and welcomed the input from nonSecurity Council members. However, "The United Kingdom analysis, backed up by reliable intelligence, indicates that Iraq still possesses chemical and biological materials, has continued to produce them, has sought to weaponize them and has active military plans for the deployment of such weapons." (UNSC-4625, 2002:8). Quoting Prime Minister Tony Blair, Greenstock agreed with the U.S., "the policy of containment isn't any longer working…we know from 11 September that it is sensible to deal with these problems before, not after." (UNSC-4625, 2002:8). United States Ambassador John Negroponte, who had replaced Ambassador John Cunningham, struck a harder line, warning that the United Nations was at risk of becoming irrelevant. Bringing the domestic debate over going to war with Iraq into the United Nations, Negroponte referred to successful legislation just passed through the U.S. Congress that "expressed support for the Administration's diplomatic efforts in the Security Council to ensure that 'Iraq abandons its strategy of delay, evasion and non-compliance' and authorized the use of United States armed forces should diplomatic efforts fails." (UNSC-4625, 2002:12). Although Blix and el-Baradei had received the impression of some support for the weapons inspection process when they were in Washington, it was clear from the U.S. stance at the United Nations that that was not the case. Negroponte added a quote from Bush declaring, "Either the Iraqi regime will give up its weapons of mass destruction, or, for the sake of peace, the United States will lead a global coalition to disarm that regime." (UNSC-4625, 2002:12).

Opposing the U.S. and U.K. were the remaining permanent members of the Security Council. Levitte stressed that the "objective is the disarmament of Iraq. This implies the return of the inspectors and the

resumption of monitoring on the ground." (UNSC-4625, 2002:12-13). Both the U.K. and U.S. were presumptuous in assuming that Iraq was a threat that required immediate military action, reminding the two states that "any kind of 'automaticity' in the use of force will profoundly divide us." (UNSC-4625, 2002:13). The Security Council was beginning to understand that the opportunity to restrain the U.S. had long since passed. For the U.K., Blair had decided to back the U.S. to the hilt. Blair later recalled:

I was well aware that ultimately the US would take its own decision in its own interests. But I was also aware that in the new world taking shape around us, Britain and Europe were going to face a much more uncertain future without America…So when they had need of us, were we really going to refuse; or, even worse, hope they succeeded but could do it without us? I reflected and felt the weight of an alliance and its history, not oppressively but insistently, a call to duty, a call to act, a call to be at their side, not distant from it, when they felt imperilled (Blair, 2010:401).

Blair's 'call to duty' ensured Bush was not alone in confronting Iraq.

Weapons inspections resumed after the unanimous approval of resolution 1441 in November, setting a mandate for UNMOVIC and IAEA weapons inspectors. Although the resolution did not include any approval for the use of force, Negroponte was adamant that should Iraq breach any conditions of the resolution there would be no restraining "any Member State from acting to defend itself against the threat posed by Iraq or to enforce relevant United Nations resolutions and protect world peace and security."(United Nations Security Council 4644 [UNSC-4644], 2002:3). Greenstock was more measured, reassuring the rest of the Security Council that "there is no 'automaticity' in this resolution. If there is a further Iraqi breach of its disarmament obligations, the matter will return to the Council for discussion as required by paragraph 12."(UNSC-4644, 2002:5). Such was the attempt by Greenstock to add a layer of moderation to the U.S.'s hard line stance on inspections.

Although France and Russia voted in favour of the resolution, they reiterated that there was no authority under which any member state could act unilaterally to enforce the resolutions. Wang Yangfin confirmed, "the text no longer includes automaticity for authorizing the use of force." (UNSC-4644, 2002:13). But, it was apparent that the permanent members had greatly different interpretations of the very same resolution. Despite this, Blix noted, "the differences in interpretation faded into the background in the general delight that the Council had come together and had come out strong."(Blix, 2005:89). Although there had been compromise, there was no doubt that the resumption of weapons inspections was an important step in ending the stalemate with Iraq. However, it was a minor victory. There was no doubt that the resolution would not have been accepted by Iraq without the threat of armed intervention by the U.S. (Blix, 2005:89). By November 13, Iraq accepted all the conditions of resolution 1441.

Inspecting Iraq

On January 20, 2003, the Security Council held a ministerial level meeting to discuss international terrorism. But the meeting, influenced to a great extent by French opposition to a military attack on Iraq, was later described as an ambush. Powell went into the meeting expecting a discussion concerning terrorism, and instead received a rebuff of U.S. efforts to confront Iraq. (Mann, 2004:350). Germany's Minister for Foreign Affairs Joschka Fischer explained that he was "greatly concerned that a military strike against

the regime in Baghdad would involve considerable and unpredictable risks for the global fight against terrorism." (United Nations Security Council 4688 [UNSC-4688], 2003:5). The U.S. had made clear that it was prepared to go to war with Iraq as part of the global war on terror, and it was only the U.K. that stood beside the U.S.'s clearly militant posture. Foreign Minister Jack Straw explained the U.K. support for the U.S, adding, "it is the leaders of rogue States who set the example, brutalize their people, celebrate violence, and – worse than that – through their chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, provide a tempting arsenal for terrorists to use." (UNSC-4688, 2003:8). According to Straw, there was no doubt that Iraq threatened the international community and, thus, should be confronted in the war on terror.

Despite the unanimity of the Security Council when it had offered to support the U.S. in a campaign to combat terrorists in Afghanistan, there was little enthusiasm to repeat the endeavour against Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Russia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov summed up the general feeling within the Security Council when he warned, "we must be careful not to take unilateral steps that might threaten the unity of the anti-terrorist coalition." (UNSC-4688, 2003:15). However, the U.S. interpreted the mixed response from the ministers at the Security Council as a general underestimation and misinterpretation of the threat the Saddam Hussein posed the international community, something the U.S. could set straight with its intelligence reports. Powell could only add, "we cannot shrink from the responsibilities of dealing with a regime that has gone about the development, the acquiring and the stocking of weapons of mass destruction, that has committed terrorist attacks against its neighbours and against its own people and that has trampled the human rights of its own people and its neighbours." (UNSC-4688, 2003:18). According to Powell, there was no doubt that Iraq presented a threat to international peace and security under the aegis of the global war on terror, and the U.S. was prepared to confront that threat.

On January 27, Blix and el-Baradei tabled their first reports of the preliminary UNMOVIC and IAEA weapons inspections. Blix began by clarifying that the Amorim report from 1999 was the foundation for the resumption of weapons inspections. After analysing the report, it was clear that its findings did not "contend that weapons of mass destruction remain in Iraq, nor do they exclude that possibility. They point to a lack of evidence and to inconsistencies, which raise question marks and which must be straightened out if weapons dossiers are to be closed and confidence is to arise." (United Nations Security Council 4692 [UNSC-4692], 2003:5). Therefore, the primary objective of UNMOVIC had been to determine the location of documentation that confirmed the unilateral destruction of weapons. Although Blix admitted that a recent discovery by inspectors of chemical weapon warheads said, by the Iraqi's, to have been overlooked in 1991, could "be the tip of a submerged iceberg," (United Nations Security Council 4692 [UNSC-4692], 2003:5). Iraqi cooperation had been adequate and unobtrusive. However, Blix worried that the Iraqi authorities had not taken the inspections as seriously as they should have, treating the inspectors with a casualness that suggested ignorance toward the situation in the Security Council. Blix's report produced a balanced appraisal of the situation in Iraq from UNMOVIC's perspective. Blix later reflected that it was not up to him to suggest what the Security Council should do in regards to Iraq, as his task was "to render an accurate report. That was what we were asked to provide and could contribute. It was for the Council to assess the

situation and draw conclusions whether there should be continued inspections or war." (Blix, 2005:142). Although he privately hoped that the presentation would shock Iraq into cooperation, and out of "petty bargaining", he did not expect to see "the hawks in Washington and elsewhere would be delighted with the rather harsh balance they found in my update." (Blix, 2005:141-142).

El-Baradei, however, was far more precise with the IAEA's recommendations, bolstered by the Amorim report's findings that the Iraqi nuclear weapons programme was fully decommissioned by 1999. El-Baradei stated that after sixty days of inspections "no prohibited nuclear activities have been identified." (UNSC-4692, 2003:10). Turning to intelligence that suggested Iraq had attempted to import aluminium tubes machined to standards that were suitable for use in uranium enrichment, el- Baradei explained, "from our analysis to date, it appears that the aluminium tubes would be consistent with the purpose stated by Iraq and, unless modified, would not be suitable for manufacturing centrifuges." (UNSC-4692, 2003:10). More information had to be provided by Security Council members before any other conclusion could be reached. However, where Blix was insistent that he could not tell the Security Council how long inspections would take, el-Baradei was adamant that although inspections would be time-consuming, "we should be able within the next few months to provide credible assurance that Iraq has no nuclear weapons programme." (UNSC-4692, 2003:12). Later, el-Baradei reflected that the U.S. response to his report was surprising, especially with regards to the aluminium tubes that had been flagged by U.S. intelligence.

Despite the IAEA reporting that inspectors had found the aluminium tubes to be for use in Iraq's rocket research, Bush went on to state in his State of the Union address on January 28, only one day after the weapons inspectors gave their reports, that the aluminium tubes were suitable for nuclear weapons production. ElBaradei noted, "There was no mention of the IAEA's contradictory conclusion based on direct verification of the facts in Iraq. Nor did Bush note the differing analysis of the U.S. Department of Energy." (El-Baradei, 2011:61). For all appearances, Bush had made it clear that U.S. intelligence was considered more reliable and accurate than weapons inspections.

As the preliminary reports from weapons inspectors did not produce the immediate results that the U.S. desired, Powell convened a ministerial-level Security Council session in order to present the dossier of intelligence that the U.S. was using as basis for its claims against Iraq. As was apparent from the presentation, the U.S. was adamant Saddam Hussein was involved in terrorism and had concealed his efforts to produce weapons of mass destruction from inspectors. Through intercepted audio from phone calls between Iraqi military officers, reference to satellite images that showed unusual vehicle movement at sites that had been visited by inspectors, and consultation with human intelligence sources, Powell argued that the accusations levelled at Iraq by the U.S. "are not assertions, these are facts." (United Nations Security Council 4701 [UNSC-4701], 2003:7). Further adding to the dossier of U.S. evidence were eye-witness accounts of mobile biological weapons facilities, rendered in illustrations produced by the U.S., that confirmed the belief that Iraq was capable of producing anthrax and botulium toxin. Powell emphasised the lengths Saddam Hussein had gone to hide these technologies from inspectors, claiming, "Call it ingenious or evil genius but the Iraqis deliberately designed their chemical weapons to be inspected. It is infrastructure with a built-in alibi."

(UNSC-4701, 2003:10). Ignoring el-Baradei's report that the aluminium tubes were not part of an Iraqi nuclear weapons programme, Powell, instead, stressed that U.S. experts had been certified their use in centrifuge design, and the tubes meant that there was "no indication that Saddam Hussain (sic) has ever abandoned his nuclear weapons programme." (UNSC-4701, 2003:13). However, it was the link to terrorism that Powell believed would dispel scepticism within the Security Council. According to intelligence sources, Iraq was accused of harbouring al-Qaeda member Abu Masab al-Zarqawi in the Northeastern Kurdish regions of Iraq. Although those regions were outside of Baghdad's control, Powell insisted that Saddam Hussein was involved. (UNSC-4701, 2003:15).

Warning the Security Council that they could not ignore the presence of terrorists in Iraq,Powell explained, "Ambition and hatred are enough to bring Iraq and Al Qaeda together – enough so that Al Qaeda could learn how to build more sophisticated bombs and learn how to forge documents, and enough so that Al Qaeda could turn to Iraq for help in acquiring expertise on weapons of mass destruction." (UNSC-4701, 2003:16).

There was no doubt that the U.S. believed that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and that Saddam Hussein was determined to use them. It was Saddam Hussein's intentions, as construed by the array of intelligence on Iraq, which seemed to imply his capabilities. Issuing a final warning, Powell stated, "The United States will not, and cannot, run that risk to the American people. Leaving Saddam Hussain (sic) in possession of weapons of mass destruction for a few more months or years is not an option – not in a post 11-september world." (UNSC-4701, 2003:17). Rice was satisfied that the presentation was the accumulation of intelligence that had been personally vetted by Secretary Powell, and had best presented the U.S. case against Iraq. It was, for the U.S. at least, a "tour de force."(Rice, 2011:200). Despite Powell's efforts, the general consensus throughout the Security Council did not change. For the already persuaded, such as Straw, Powell's presentation was an unnecessary repeat of already established facts, and he chastised the lack of support in the Security Council, arguing, "the international community owes [Powell] its thanks for laying bare the deceit practised by the regime of Saddam Hussain (sic) – and worse, the very great danger which that regime represents." (UNSC-4701, 2003:18). According to Straw, no matter how powerful the inspectors might be, or how good they were, because of the size of Iraq it was impossible to guarantee that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction. Resorting to the pre-emptive reasoning of the U.S., Straw reminded the Security Council of the international community's past failures at confronting threats, reminded, "at each stage, good men said, 'Wait. The evil is not big enough to challenge.' Then, before their eyes, the evil became too big to challenge…We owe it to our history, as well as to our future, not to make the same mistake." (UNSC-4701, 2003:20).

For the unpersuaded, however, Powell's presentation did not offer any solid proof. In fact, it was in the opinion of the rest of the Security Council that Powell hand over all his information to the weapons inspectors for verification. Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan was convinced that the best way forward would be if "various parties will hand over their information and evidence to (UNMOVIC) and the (IAEA)…through their on-the-spot inspections, that information and evidence can also be evaluated." (UNSC-4701, 2003:18). Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov sided with China's assessment and appealed to the Security Council to immediately "hand over to the

international inspectors any information that can help them discharge their responsible mandate…they alone can say to what extent Iraq is complying with the demands of the Security Council." (UNSC-4701, 2003:21). Foreign Minister Dominque De Villepin suggested that a third solution to the crisis could be found if the Security Council could agree on a permanent structure for the ongoing surveillance of Iraq. De Villepin explained that a coordinated "information processing centre…would supply Mr. Blix and Mr ElBaradei, in real time and in a coordinated way, with all the intelligence resources they might need." (UNSC-4701, 2003:25). Explaining the severity of the dilemma confronting the Security Council, De Villepin added, "with the choice between military intervention and an inspections regime that is inadequate for lack of cooperation on Iraq's part, we must choose to strengthen decisively the means of inspection." (UNSC-4701, 2003:24).

Stuck in the shadow cast by the debate among the permanent members was Iraq's Ambassador Mohammed Aldouri, who kept his rebuttal short. Aldouri promised the Security Council, "if we had a relationship with Al Qaeda and we believed in that relationship, we would not be ashamed to admit it. We have no relationship with Al Qaeda," (UNSC-4701, 2003:38). and that Powell's presentation was made "to sell the idea of war and aggression against my country, Iraq, without providing any legal, moral or political justification." (UNSC-4701, 2003:38). Aldouri's observation that Powell's presentation was more show than substance was confirmed, albeit at a later date, by Rice, who explained that the U.S. was orchestrating a sense of urgency for operational purposes. Rice went on:

Our sense of urgency was driven by two factors. First, our military forces were approaching levels of mobilization that could not be sustained for very long…it wasn't possible to stand still, since doing so would leave our forces vulnerable in-theater without sufficient logistical support…Second, the President believed that the only way to avoid war was to put maximum and unified pressure on Saddam. That argued for continued mobilization, not pulling back. (Rice, 2011:201).

Despite the weapons inspections, and despite disagreement within the Security

Council, the U.S. was prepared to confront Iraq.

On February 14, the weapon inspectors gave their second report to the Security Council. Blix remained sceptical that UNMOVIC had had enough time to comprehensively understand the situation in Iraq, contrary to Powell's presentation in early February. But there was considerable progress, the inspectors had managed to cover over four hundred inspections at more than three hundred sites in Iraq, and Blix was adamant that at no point "have we seen convincing evidence that the Iraqi side knew in advance that the inspectors were coming." (United Nations Security Council 4707 [UNSC-4707], 2003:2). Blix explained that UNMOVIC had an adequate idea of the condition of Iraq's industrial and scientific capacity, and besides the small number of empty chemical munitions that had been found during the initial declaration there had been no further discoveries. However, Blix was hesitant to state that Iraq did not possess weapons of mass destruction, admitting, "One must not jump to the conclusion that they exist. However, that possibility is also not excluded." (UNSC-4707, 2003:3). Although, on one hand, UNMOVIC had made progress in destroying ballistic missile systems that breached sanctions, on the other hand, inspectors were unable to verify the status of unilaterally destroyed chemical and biological weapons that were outstanding in the Amorim report. Some experts

suggested that soil tests might help determine possible destruction sites, but Blix insisted more evidence would be required to assess Iraqi compliance. Blix stressed the good relationship between UNMOVIC and intelligence agencies around the world, and he was satisfied to see an increased amount of information passed on to the inspectors. But, Blix warned, "we must recognize that there are limitations and misinterpretations can occur." (UNSC-4707, 2003:5). Referring directly to intelligence in Powell's presentation, Blix noted that some intelligence had led to sites where there were no weapons, or any activity indicating otherwise. In these cases intelligence had been useful for "proving the absence of such items and in some cases the presence of other items – conventional munitions. It showed that conventional arms are being moved around the country and that movements are not necessarily related to weapons of mass destruction." (UNSC-4707, 2003:6).

Overall, Blix remained unconvinced by Powell's presentation. In his report, Blix had subtly questioned the intelligence that was fundamental to U.S. allegations against Iraq. There was no doubting the importance of Blix's report. Reflecting on the situation as he arrived at the United Nations Security Council chamber, Blix described that he was often mobbed by the media and was smuggled, more often than not, into the building in a car through a garage. According to Blix, "it was as if the decision whether there would be a war in Iraq was to be taken in the next hour in the Council, and as if the inspectors' reports on Iraq's cooperation were like a signal of red or green. Although neither was the case, it was a very important meeting." (Blix, 2005:176). El-Baradei, however, was under no such illusion as to the importance of his report as he detailed IAEA progress in Iraq. Since January, the IAEA had been preoccupied with evaluating U.S. intelligence that suggested Iraq had attempted to procure uranium from a source in Niger, and in Iraq the inspectors had uncovered a cache of documents concerning past Iraqi nuclear activities at an Iraqi scientist's house. El-Baradei noted, however, that the documents offered no new insight into previous conclusions that had been stated by the IAEA. The documents had been useful in clarifying aspects of Iraq's previous nuclear weapons programme that were already known to inspectors. El-Baradei's conclusion was concise, stating, "we have to date found no evidence of ongoing prohibited nuclear or nuclear-related activities in Iraq." (UNSC-4707, 2003:9).

In the wake of the weapons inspector's reports, the Security Council once against erupted into disagreement. Blix observed that the debate within the chamber was remarkable because it "seemed like a pitched battle in which the participants had only seven minutes each to send their words and arguments like colourful tracer bullets through the room." (Blix, 2005:178-179). Once again, a ministerial meeting had been convened to consider the reports. Foreign Minister Jack Straw was adamant that UNMOVIC and the IAEA reports were clear that Iraq was in material breach of Security Council resolutions, as there was evidence Iraq was not cooperating with inspectors. The only response that would suffice was for the Security Council to "back a diplomatic process with a credible threat of force and also, if necessary, to be ready to use that threat of force." (UNSC-4707, 2003:18). Powell added to Straw's remarks by arguing that no amount of inspections would diminish the threat posed by Iraq, and that "what we need is immediate, active, unconditional, full cooperation on the part of Iraq. What we need is for Iraq to disarm." (UNSC-4707, 2003:18). To the U.S. it was clear that it was unacceptable for the Security Council to wait for inspections to conclude. Powell went on that

because of the threat of terrorism, the Security Council could not wait "for one of these terrible weapons to show up in one of our cities and wonder where it came from after it has been detonated by Al-Qaeda or somebody else. This is the time to go after this source of this kind of weaponry." (UNSC-4707, 2003:20). This meeting would prove to be Powell's final attempt at securing support in the Security Council, not that Bush believed it was necessary. The final pitch was largely to appease Blair, who was facing his own domestic criticism for supporting the U.S. unconditionally. As he had promised his own party that he would seek United Nations approval before going to war, Powell was doing Blair a favour by patiently waiting around. (Mann, 2004:355).

But, the remaining permanent members of the Security Council were unconvinced. Foreign Minister Tang Jianxuan explained, "China believes that the inspection process is working and that the inspectors should continue to be given the time they need so as to implement resolution 1441 (2002)." (UNSC-4707, 2003:15). Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov agreed, adding, "we should be guided not by feelings, emotions, sympathies or antipathy with respect to any particular regime. Rather, we should be guided by the actual facts and, on the basis of those facts, should draw our conclusions." (UNSC-4707, 2003:21). However, it was Foreign Minister Dominique De Villepin who objected outright to the use of force. De Villepin argued, "The option of war might seem, on the face of it, to be the swifter but let us not forget that, after the war is won, the peace must be built. And let us not delude ourselves: that will be long and difficult, because it will be necessary to preserve Iraq's unity and to restore stability in a lasting way in a country and region harshly affected by the intrusion of force." (UNSC-4707, 2003:12). There were no guarantees that a military confrontation with Iraq would produce a safer world, nor a more stable Iraq, nor even guarantee that Saddam Hussein would no longer be a threat. Accusing the U.S. of acting rashly, De Villepin concluded "that nothing will be done in the Security Council, at any time, in haste, out of a lack of understanding, out of suspicion or out of fear." (UNSC-4707, 2003:13). The accusation only added to earlier criticism from De Villepin to Powell at the Secretary-General's private luncheon after Powell's presentation in February. It was there that De Villepin chided Powell, saying, "You Americans…do not understand Iraq. This is the land of Haroun al-Rashid. You may be able to destroy it in a month, but it will take you a generation to build peace." (El-Baradei, 2011:61-62).

Resorting to War

On March 7, Blix and el-Baradei gave their final reports to the Security Council, hoping to stress the progress of inspections. The reports would come in the wake of yet another open debate that had been held in the Security Council concerning the situation in Iraq. (United Nations Security Council 4709 [UNSC-4709], 2003, resumption 1). Blix reported that UNMOVIC had been able to satisfactorily perform inspections without notice across Iraq and was being assisted by increased aerial surveillance, both improvements on UNMOVIC's previous inspection capacity. If the Security Council were to give UNMOVIC enough time, even the outstanding issues regarding additional Iraqi documentation and an interviewing process that was not inhibited by the Iraqi security apparatus, could be resolved. Blix, instead, turned his criticism toward intelligence that had served to underpin allegations that Iraq had reconstituted a weapon of mass destruction programme, noting, "intelligence authorities have claimed that weapons of mass destruction are moved around Iraq by trucks and, in particular, that there are mobile production units for

biological weapons." (United Nations Security Council 4714 [UNSC-4714], 2003:3). Indeed, Powell had been adamant that Iraq was hiding biological and chemical weapons manufacturing equipment in trucks. Blix reported, "several inspections have taken place at declared and undeclared sites in relation to mobile production facilities. Food-testing mobile laboratories and mobile workshops have been seen, as well as large containers of seed-processing equipment. No evidence of proscribed activities has so far been found." (UNSC-4714, 2003:3). Blix also responded to intelligence claims that Iraq was storing weapons underground, adding, "no underground facilities for chemical or biological production or storage have been found so far." (UNSC-4714, 2003:4).

In order to emphasise the progress UNMOVIC had made, Blix reported that Iraq had taken steps to destroy ballistic missiles that had been deemed in breach of Security Council resolutions. He explained, "we are not watching the breaking of toothpicks. Lethal weapons are being destroyed." (UNSC-4714, 2003:4). The remaining tasks for UNMOVIC were difficult to finalise but not impossible, and Blix concluded, "It would not take years, nor weeks, but months" to conduct the necessary analysis on the remaining unresolved disarmament tasks. (UNSC-4714, 2003:6). Blix maintained that he was in no position to judge whether Iraq was in material breach of Security Council resolutions. However, he had his own definition of his role as weapons inspector. Recalling a conversation with an American colleague, Blix wrote, "it would have been presumptuous of me to pass such judgment, and he commented 'Hans, they wanted you to be presumptuous.' Well, yes, if it went their way, but not if it had gone the other way!" (Blix, 2005:210). Blix's ambiguity did not provide solace for those opposing armed intervention in the Security Council.

On the other hand, el-Baradei was more direct with the IAEA report. Restating that the IAEA's task was to determine whether Iraq had revived, or attempted to revive, its nuclear weapon programme since inspectors had left, el-Baradei stressed the degradation of Iraq's industrial capacity since the 1980s, when Iraq was known to have a strong industrial base and a fledgling nuclear program. The overall deterioration of Iraq's industrial capacity was "of direct relevance to Iraq's capability for resuming a nuclear weapons programme." (UNSC-4714, 2003:6). Much like Blix, el-Baradei was critical of some intelligence claims, reporting that the IAEA had conducted tests on the aluminium tubes that the U.S. had insisted were for use in centrifuges, concluding, "extensive field investigation and document analysis have failed to uncover any evidence that Iraq intended to use those 81mm tubes for any project other than the reverse-engineering of rockets." (UNSC-4714, 2003:7). Referring to other claims that Iraq had attempted to import high-strength magnets, el-Baradei explained that IAEA experts concluded that the magnets would be unsuitable for use in centrifuge enrichment facilities. Returning to his earlier report that the IAEA was evaluating claims that Iraq had attempted to import uranium from Niger, he concluded that "with the concurrence of outside experts…these documents – which formed the basis for the reports of recent uranium transactions between Iraq and the Niger – are, in fact, not authentic." (UNSC-4714, 2003:8). Blix remarked later that the U.S. "in its uncontrolled eagerness to nail Iraq to a continued nuclear weapons program [would] now have to live with Mohamed's revelation and suffer from its own poor quality control of information." (Blix, 2005:211). ElBaradei, however, justified his findings by explaining that "because many of the IAEA inspectors were returning to well trodden ground and familiar faces, the Agency

was correspondingly more confident in its judgments." (El-Baradei, 2011:70). El-Baradei, unlike Blix, was confident that Iraq did not possess nuclear weapons, nor had to capacity to reconstitute its nuclear weapons programme.

Once again, it was ministers who responded to the inspection reports within the Security Council. Powell dismissed the reports outright, claiming, "If Iraq genuinely wanted to disarm, we would not have to be worrying about setting up means of looking for mobile biological units or any units of the kind – they would be presented to us. We would not need an extensive programme to search for underground facilities that we know exist." (UNSC-4714, 2003:14). Powell warned the Security Council that the IAEA had been wrong once before about Iraq's nuclear weapon capabilities, therefore, "we have to be very cautious." (UNSC-4714, 2003:15). Referring to the unresolved disarmament issues prepared by UNMOVIC, Powell remarked that the report still indicated Iraq was a threat. Straw was as dismissive of the inspectors as Powell. The inspections had made no substantial progress since November, and "It defies experience that continuing inspections with no firm end date…will achieve complete disarmament if…Iraq's full and active cooperation is not forthcoming." (UNSC-4714, 2003:26). The only option that remained in order to see the disarmament of Iraq, reminded Straw, was "by backing our diplomacy with the credible use of force." (UNSC-4714, 2003:27). Straw assured the Security Council that a new resolution, co-sponsored by the

U.S. and offered as a diplomatic pause, asked for a deadline for Iraq to comply with Security Council demands. However, there was no indication that a resolution justifying the use of force against Iraq would be supported within the Security Council. Foreign Minister Ivanov and Foreign Minister Tang openly led the opposition to any resolution that included the use of force to resolve the crisis. According to Russia, weapons inspections were working for the first time in years, and by prematurely ending the inspector's mission the Security Council lost its authority.

The opposition to Bush's unilateral stance toward Iraq was made more tangible when Ivanov asked "What is really in the genuine interest of the world community – continuing the albeit difficult but clearly fruitful results of the inspectors work or resorting to the use of force, which will inevitably result in enormous loss of life and which is fraught with serious and unpredictable consequences for regional and international stability?" (UNSC-4714, 2003:18). Adding to the chorus of opposition, De Villepin added that the weapons inspectors had concluded that Iraq represented less of a threat to the international community than it did in 1991, and, therefore, Iraq was effectively disarmed. The obsession with Saddam Hussein's intentions had clouded the U.S.'s strategic vision. De Villepin addressed Powell directly, and asked, "Is it a question of regime change? Is it a question of fighting terrorism? Is it a question of reshaping the political landscape of the Middle East?" (UNSC-4714, 2003:20). Although France had sympathy for the U.S. and its insecurity in the wake of September 11, on a practical level Iraq had no link to the attacks and there were no guarantees that the world would be a safer place after a military confrontation with Iraq. Under the circumstances, France was left with no choice. De Villepin stated, "As a permanent member of the Security Council France will not allow a resolution to be adopted that authorizes the automatic use of force." (UNSC-4714, 2003:19).

At the conclusion of the meeting, El-Baradei was scathing in his appraisal of the U.S. and U.K. treatment of the weapons inspector's reports.

Referring to the IAEA, el-Baradei explained that they had spent "years in Iraq with sweeping 'anytime, anywhere' authority. We had crisscrossed the country. We had interviewed every nuclear scientist available. We had destroyed equipment, confiscated records, put the remaining nuclear material under IAEA seal, and blown up the nuclear production facilities at Al Atheer. To liken 2003 to 1991 was an act of deliberate distortion." El-Baradei, 2011:73). In fact, Iraq's ambassador Mohamed Aldouri could only warn the Security Council in his concluding remarks that "war against Iraq will wreak destruction, but it will not unearth any weapons of mass destruction, for one very simple reason: there are no such weapons, except in the imagination of some." (UNSC-4714, 2003:36).

Despite U.S. and U.K. pressure on the weapons inspectors, there was no further support for the U.S. and U.K. position since the failed attempt in late February to secure a resolution that authorized the use of force. For a second time in only a few weeks, the Security Council held another open debate across two days, showing the widespread opposition of United Nations members to a war with Iraq, other than as a last resort. (United Nations Security Council 4717 [UNSC-4717], 2003, resumption 1). As the Security Council approached March 17, the presumed deadline for the beginning of a ground war in Iraq, members in the Security Council attempted to negotiate a resolution that would place conditions on Iraq and suspend the beginning of conflict. The compromise resolution required Iraq to complete a series of tasks that amounted to an ultimatum for the use of force, should any tasks be outstanding. However, by March 14, the negotiations were over. An informal Security Council session had heard the concessions, but had produced no consensus as "the draft prepared by Chile and five other elected members was withdrawn, the European Union ambassadors met without any convergence, and a meeting of the five permanent members was cancelled. There was no traction except under the tanks in Kuwait." (Blix, 2005:248).

In the wake of the failure of the Security Council to support the U.S., and in an effort to create a minor coalition despite United Nations opposition, the U.S. and U.K. convened a meeting in Azores, Portugal for allies that did support the use of force, namely the U.S., U.K., and Spain. It was in Azores, as Rice recalled, "we sat rather glumly, realizing that a united international community would not materialize. We would take on Saddam either with a coalition of the willing or not at all." (Rice, 2011:203). Not that this bothered Bush one bit. The statement issued from the meeting was in no way peaceful. Blix noted, as he watched the conference live from New York, that the blame was placed squarely on Saddam Hussein. The leaders "referred to Saddam's defying UN resolutions for twelve years. The responsibility was his. If conflict were to occur, the U.S. and its allies would seek the affirmation of the territorial integrity of Iraq. Any 'military presence' would be temporary." (Blix, 2005:252). The statement from Azores would amount to the final declaration of war against Iraq. On Monday 17, United Nations weapons inspectors were told to withdraw from Iraq ahead of possible armed action.(Kreps, 2011:148).

This was not the first time, nor would it be the last, that the U.S. would act forcefully without express United Nations approval. Rice explained, "From the 1948 Berlin airlift under Truman to the 1999 NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, the coalitions involved were acting without that specific authority." Rice stated, "We believed that both Resolution 1441 and the sixteen before it were more than adequate to express the international community's view that Saddam Hussein was a threat to international peace and security. And, in our view, 'serious consequences' had

to mean something." (Rice, 2011:204). Indeed, even George H. W. Bush had expressed some intention to go to war with Iraq in 1991 without the support of the United Nations. However, in 2003, as the U.S. split from the United Nations with very few allies, Kofi Annan expressed his disappointment at the disunity of the Security Council. Instead of preventing the humanitarian crisis that had developed in Iraq, "the conflict that is clearly about to start can make things worse – perhaps much worse." (United Nations Security Council 4721 [UNSC-4721], 2003:22). The United Nations had to ensure there were provisions in place for responding to the post-conflict conditions that would engulf Iraq.

However, Annan stressed, "under international law, the responsibility for protecting civilians in conflict falls on the belligerents. In any area under military occupation, responsibility for the welfare of the population falls on the occupying Power." (UNSC-4721, 2003:23). Not that the lack of international support mattered for Bush. For Blair, the matter was entirely different, and the wait of the U.S. diplomatic commitment had taken a toll on his domestic support. Blair recalled:

I was about as isolated as it is possible to be in politics. On the one hand, the US were chafing at the bit and essentially I agreed with their basic thrust: Saddam was a threat, he would never cooperate fully with the international community, and the world, not to say Iraq, would be better off with him out of power. My instinct was with them. Our alliance was with them. I had made a commitment after September 11 to be 'shoulder to shoulder'. I was determined to fulfil it. (Blair, 2010:412).

With U.K. support, and amidst United Nations warnings, Bush approved the airstrikes that preceded the invasion of Iraq in March, 2003.

Conclusion

Bush did not so much as decide to go to war with Iraq as allow it to unfold as a consequence of his domestic and diplomatic circumstances. Similar to George H. W. Bush in 1989, from the outset of George W. Bush's administration U.S. foreign policy toward the Persian Gulf remained largely unchanged and a low priority. More important, U.S. foreign policy maintained a degree of support for the status quo. Unlike 1989, this did not include a measured tolerance of Saddam Hussein, but instead focused on his intentions as Iraq's leader. The September 11 terrorist attacks forced Bush into a reactive foreign policy position that led to the early military successes in Afghanistan. But this blend of reactive foreign policy, highlighted threat profiles, and lingering doubts about Saddam Hussein's intentions, led to a conflated and ultimately incorrect conclusion that Saddam Hussein posed a threat to U.S. national security. This diplomatic stance was compounded by Bush's relative inexperience in foreign affairs, relying to a great extent on the dispersal of intelligence across his advisors, to whom he deferred for judgment. The result, as can be seen in the United Nations Security Council, was an obstinate U.S. that was not restrained by the international community in its pursuit of anything considered an unacceptable threat. Bush's belief that Saddam Hussein's *intentions* led to tangible *capabilities* was proof enough for the administration of an unacceptable risk to the U.S. national security.

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