

Historical Security Council

Addressing the coalition invasion of Iraq



Forum	Historical Security Council
Issue:	Addressing the coalition invasion of Iraq
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Introduction

On March 20th, 2003, a coalition consisting of the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Poland invaded Iraq. The purpose of this invasion was to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction, to end Saddam Hussein's support of terrorism and overthrow his regime, and to free the Iraqi people. The coalition forces were successful in toppling Saddam's regime after three weeks of combat.

After the tragic events of 9/11, President Bush and his administration started drawing connections between al-Qaeda, the terrorist organization responsible for 9/11, and Iraq. Claims were made about Iraq and Saddam Hussein that accused them of supporting terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda, which made Iraq, in the eyes of the US, partially responsible for the acts committed on September 11th.

This connection between Iraq and al-Qaeda served as one of the main motivating factors in the invasion. However, despite the US and the UK claiming to have credible sources that confirm this connection, these sources were never revealed to the public. The lack of publicly disposed information caused a lot of outrage after the invasion, and it made many doubt whether the invasion of Iraq should have happened.

Definition of Key Terms

Weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)

Weapon with the capacity to inflict death and destruction on such a massive scale and so indiscriminately that its very presence in the hands of a hostile power can be considered a grievous threat.



War on terror

A term used to describe the American-led global counterterrorism campaign launched in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Framing

The process of expressing something by choosing your words carefully and thereby possibly making a person or organization seem to be guilty of a crime when they are not.

General Overview

War on terror

On September 11th, 2001, four commercial aeroplanes were hijacked by 19 al-Qaeda terrorists. The entire world was in shock as the hijacked aeroplanes were intentionally crashed into the World Trade Center in New York and into the Pentagon. Nearly 3,000 people died because of the terrorist attack that became known as '9/11'.

As a response to the tragic events that took place on September 11th, as well as several other terrorist attacks by al-Qaeda in the preceding years, President George W. Bush launched the global war on terror. The aim of this military campaign is to eliminate the threat that terrorist organizations pose on a global scale. In a speech in which President Bush announced the war on terror, he stated: "Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists and every government that supports them." This referred to al-Qaeda but also to the Taliban as well as the country associated with these terrorist organizations, Afghanistan.

Not long after 9/11, President Bush demanded that the leader of the Taliban, Mullah Omar, would hand over Osama bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaeda. This ultimatum was refused, and as a result, an army of US-led forces invaded Afghanistan on October 7th, 2001. After just two months, the Taliban regime was overthrown, and Osama bin Laden was nearly captured before escaping to Pakistan. The power and influence of the Taliban and al-Qaeda were significantly weakened.



Connection between Iraq and 9/11

Sometime after 9/11, in a meeting with Bush and his top advisors, some advisors started suggesting that there might have been a link between al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, who was the President of Iraq at the time. Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy secretary of defence, was the primary advocate for this doctrine. He argued that the terrorist attack of September 11th was too sophisticated to have been pulled off by a terrorist organization the size of al-Qaeda. Wolfowitz suggested that Saddam Hussein was the one who supported al-Qaeda. He stated: "When it comes to global terrorism, Saddam Hussein is the head of the snake." Other members of the Bush administration initially argued against this doctrine. For example, the head of the Counterterrorism Center, in response to Wolfowitz, stated: "We were attacked on 11 September by Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Saddam Hussein and Iraq have nothing whatsoever to do with this." Despite being initially doubted, the connection between 9/11 and Iraq soon became an accepted fact by politicians. President Bush also started hinting at a connection between Iraq and Saddam Hussein to 9/11 in his speeches to the public. For example, in his State of the Union address, President Bush identified Iraq as one of the countries that is part of the 'axis of evil', further solidifying Iraq as the enemy of American freedom. At the time, people worldwide and especially in the US were still mourning after 9/11, and this unified sense of loss made it so that the Iraq doctrine was met without much question. After all, the American people as well as people worldwide were looking for someone or something to retaliate against. It was clear that Iraq was being connected to the events of 9/11, while it had been proven that al-Qaeda had committed the crime. In truth, it is still unclear, even after the invasion, whether there is really a connection between 9/11 and Iraq. Because Iraq is seemingly linked to terrorism, the continuation of the war on terror was used as a rationale for a possible invasion of Iraq. Consequently, the possible invasion of Iraq was met with the tremendous support of the public.

Further rationale for the invasion of Iraq

Despite being a large reason for the invasion, the war on terror was not the leading incentive for the invasion of Iraq. Above everything else, the US primarily aimed to disarm Iraq of WMDs.

After the Gulf War ended in 1991, the United Nations started inspecting Iraq with the intent of finding WMDs. After the United Nations and the Government of Iraq combined forces to find and



destroy Iraqi chemical weapons, Iraq was clear of any chemical and nuclear weapons, and the country ceased its nuclear weapon programs. Despite seemingly being rid of all WMDs, the US, the UK, and some other countries accused Iraq of still having access to biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons in 2002. Throughout this year, the Bush administration started actively pushing for military intervention in Iraq because of them possibly posing a global nuclear threat. Furthermore, he feared that Iraq could possibly hand their WMDs over to terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda, which would make terrorist organizations increasingly dangerous on an international level.

In September 2002, in a United Nations General Assembly meeting, President Bush threatened to undertake military action against Iraq if it did not cooperate with the disarmament resolutions passed by the UN (resolution 687 in particular). President Bush had been granted the power to launch a military operation against Iraq by Congress in October 2002.

Later in September, the UK published a dossier in which they claimed to have evidence which pointed to the fact that Saddam Hussein had WMDs and could deploy them within 45 minutes if he wanted to. While announcing the dossier, Tony Blair, the Prime Minister of the UK, stated: "In recent months, I have been increasingly alarmed by the evidence from inside Iraq that despite sanctions, despite the damage done to his capability in the past, despite the UN Security Council Resolutions expressly outlawing it, and despite his denials, Saddam Hussein is continuing to develop WMD, and with them the ability to inflict real damage upon the region, and the stability of the world." He also stated that the sources, although credible, could not be revealed to the public.

In November 2002, the UN Security Council passed resolution 1441, which gave Iraq a final chance to cooperate with disarmament. If the country were not to comply, then "serious consequences" would follow. As a result of this resolution, Saddam Hussein allowed UN weapon inspectors into Iraq. After more than 700 weapon inspections were conducted, the inspectors found no sign of WMDs in Iraq. Despite the extensive research conducted by the UN, President Bush and Prime Minister Blair still claimed to have credible sources that led them to believe that Iraq did indeed still have WMDs in their possession. To this day, it still remains somewhat unclear whether Iraq actually possessed WMDs or not, but it is irrefutable that it was used as a means to convince the public as well as politicians to view the invasion more favorably.



Months leading up to the invasion

As aforementioned, the UN conducted over 700 weapons inspections and concluded that Iraq does not possess WMDs. Despite this, the US and the UK submitted a draft resolution to the UN in March of 2003 in which it was stated that Iraq had failed to disarm and had missed their final opportunity. They were essentially asking the UN to grant permission to invade Iraq. This draft resolution, however, was met with a lot of opposition. Many nations believed that Iraq had already cooperated and disarmed successfully, and others wanted to give Iraq more time to disarm because of increased Iraqi cooperation. The US and UK, however, still believed that Iraq tampered with the UN inspections. Ultimately, because the draft resolution was met with lots of criticism, the US, the UK decided that they would neglect further UN diplomacy. On March 17, 2003, President Bush presented an ultimatum to Saddam Hussein, giving him 48 hours to leave Iraq. The following day, Tony Blair was granted the ability to send UK forces into Iraq in a House of Commons session. After the ultimatum had passed, and Saddam Hussein had refused to leave Iraq, the invasion was ready to begin. The invasion was unauthorized by the UN and objected by, among others, the leaders of Germany, France, and Russia.

The invasion

On March 20th, US-led coalition forces, consisting of US, UK, Australian, and Polish troops, initiated the invasion of Iraq. More than 175.000 troops were sent into Iraq for the invasion. After the invasion began, President Bush addressed his nation on television and said: “At this hour, American and coalition forces are in the early stages of military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger.” Saddam Hussein soon went into hiding.

After nearly three weeks of combat, on April 9th, Saddam Hussein’s regime was overthrown by the coalition forces. Nearly all major cities were secured, and the coalition forces suffered a relatively low number of casualties in the process.

Public opposition towards the invasion

Once the possibility of an invasion of Iraq was first mentioned, the public outrage against it began. Public figures such as Nelson Mandela started speaking out against the invasion. Mandela said that the US was “undermining the United Nations” and that President Bush is now “wanting to plunge the world into a holocaust”. Additionally, international protests were held against the



invasion. On February 15th, 2003, the largest anti-war protest ever took place, with people in over 600 cities worldwide condemning the military action against Iraq.

Current situation

Post invasion

On May 1st, 2003, President Bush considered the “mission accomplished” and declared the invasion of Iraq to be concluded. However, he emphasized that al-Qaeda was “wounded, not destroyed”. His goal of destroying al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations through the war on terror remains. Although most major cities have been secured, and although Saddam Hussein's regime has been taken down, the US currently still has and is expected to continue to have a military presence in Iraq until the threat of al-Qaeda is fully neutralized.

On April 9th, the Iraqi regime was overthrown. However, even after the major combat operations in Iraq were declared to be over by President Bush, a new government still hasn't been put in place. Consequently, many worry for the state of Iraq in the near future.

Framing and the media

Although the main reason for the invasion was Iraq's possession of WMDs, whether the country really possessed these at all is still a mystery. Furthermore, the suggested connection between Iraq and al-Qaeda has still not been confirmed. Critics accuse President Bush of falsely accusing Iraq for these crimes by using framing in his speeches. After all, none of these claims made by President Bush have been proven to be correct to this day. After the invasion was completed, both the public and politicians started looking more critically at the rationale for the military intervention in Iraq. Whereas at first no one doubted the claims made by the US and UK, the media are now starting to look at the reasons for the invasion more critically.

Major Parties Involved

United States of America

The United States of America is the lead initiator in the action against Iraq. In 1998, US Congress passed the Iraq Liberation Act, which prioritized “removing the regime headed by Saddam



Hussein from power in Iraq". President Bush pushed for a more active implementation of the Iraq Liberation Act upon his election into office in 2002. After the events of 9/11. The Bush administration claimed to have discovered a connection between Iraq and al-Qaeda. These claims were later used by the US as a rationale to invade Iraq and to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime. However, these claims have not been confirmed to the public yet.

Iraq

A country in the Middle East that was ruled by the dictator Saddam Hussein from July 16th, 1979, until April 9th, 2003. Before the Gulf War, Iraq reportedly possessed biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons. After the war, Iraq abandoned their nuclear weapons program, and the UN helped the country get rid of all WMDs. In 2002, despite being seemingly rid of all WMDs, the US and UK claimed that Iraq did still have them and did not fully comply with the UN. Saddam Hussein denied these claims.

al-Qaeda

The terrorist organization responsible for many terrorist acts against the US, including 9/11. The organization is based in Afghanistan and led by known terrorist Osama Bin Laden.

United Kingdom

The nation that supported the US in the invasion of Iraq. The country, led by Prime Minister Tony Blair, published a document in late 2002 in which Iraq was accused of still having WMDs in their possession.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of event
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January 17 th , 1990	Iraq and a US-led coalition consisting of 34 countries were at war for a brief period of time. The Gulf War spanned from August 1990 to February 1991. The conflict ended with a ceasefire.
October 31 st , 1998	Iraq Liberation Act was passed in US Congress.
September 11 th , 2001	Four commercial airplanes were hijacked by 19 al-Qaeda terrorists and intentionally crashed into the World Trade Center in New York and into the Pentagon.
October 7 th , 2001	Invasion of Afghanistan begins.
January 29 th , 2002	President Bush declares Iraq part of the “axis of evil” in a State of the Union Address.
September 12 th , 2002	President Bush threatens Iraq with military action if it refuses to copy to the UN resolutions on disarmament.
September 24 th , 2002	The UK makes the claim that Saddam Hussein has WMDs and can use them within 45 minutes.
November 8 th , 2002	Resolution 1441 is passed in the UN Security Council. The UN’s weapons inspectors start conducting research in Iraq.
February 15 th , 2003	Worldwide protests are held against military action in Iraq. These protests are considered the largest anti-war protests ever held.
February 25 th , 2003	A draft resolution is submitted by the US and UK in which Iraq is given a final opportunity to comply with disarmament, but the resolution is met with much criticism.
March 17 th , 2003	President Bush gives Saddam an ultimatum: leave Iraq or face military action.
March 18 th , 2003	Tony Blair gets permission to send UK troops into war in Iraq in a House of Commons session.
March 20 th , 2003	The invasion of Iraq begins.
April 9 th , 2003	The coalition forces successfully secure major Iraq cities and overthrow Saddam Hussein’s regime.
March 1 st , 2003	President Bush declares the “mission accomplished” in a victory speech.



UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- Restoration of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Kuwait, 3 April 1991 (S/RES/687)
- Iraq Liberation Act, 5 October 1998
- Decision to set up an enhanced inspection regime to ensure Iraq's compliance of its disarmament obligations, 8 November 2002 (S/RES/1441)

Possible Solutions

The largest issue by far to come out of the invasion of Iraq is the current absence of any government. Since April 9th, the day that Saddam Hussein got overthrown, the Iraqi people have been living without a government. Although the United States prioritizes turning Iraq into a democratic state, they have not yet undertaken action to do so. The longer the country stays without a real government, the more likely it will be that this will ultimately lead to the destabilization of Iraq. It should be a top priority to prevent this.

A possible solution would be to have the UN assist Iraq in forming a new democratic government. The UN could look for ways to work together with the Iraqi people in order to form the best suited government for the country. In this case, however, the various religious groups in Iraq should be considered. If one religious group were to gain the majority of the votes, it could result in discrimination against other religious groups. Cooperation between these groups, even if slight, will be crucial in securing the stability of Iraq.

Another obvious problem is the fact that the coalition led by the US invaded Iraq without permission from the UN. Some people argue that the Security Council Resolutions should be taken as guidelines to determine the legality of military action. The draft resolution submitted by the US and UK in which they suggested the possibility of military action against Iraq was rejected, so according to this argument the invasion would have been illegal. Others argue that the individual nations should be able to determine whether they do or do not enforce a resolution themselves. Judging off this argument, the invasion would have been legal. After all, President Bush did get granted the power to undertake military action in US Congress in 2002. Whether or not the invasion was legal, the Security



Council should prioritize making it clearer what the rules are surrounding their resolutions, especially when it comes to topics that involve non-diplomatic action.

To do this, a resolution could be made in which the rules of legality surrounding the disobedience of Security Council resolutions are clarified. Furthermore, the degree to which these resolutions should be binding should also be named. Also, the punishment for ignoring a resolution is a factor that might be necessary to mention in such a resolution. The case could also be made, in very few cases, for the right of individual countries to override decisions made by the Security Council. However, it shouldn't be arranged in a way that allows countries to simply do whatever they want without consequence, especially when military action or any other non-diplomatic means is involved.

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