

THE ROAD TO THE IRAQ WAR: an annotated bibliography

by Thomas Ayers

The object of this paper is to document as closely as possible, using only official governmental sources, the step by step progression of events leading to the outbreak of the Iraq War on March 19, 2003. The focus will be on the developing argument of the Bush Administration and its allies in favor of going to war. Special attention will be paid in this regard to the claims made regarding Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, which ultimately became the *casus belli* for the war.

My research in attempting to document the chain of events leading to the war began with President George W. Bush's 2002 State of the Union Speech, since this was the beginning of the Bush Administration's campaign of public diplomacy to press for action against Iraq.

In creating this annotated bibliography, the main problem that I faced was an overabundance of repetitive resources to draw upon. The difficulty was to sift through this mass of documents to locate the ones which provided the most insight into the chain of events. This could only be accomplished through a patient reading of the documents in question, aided by memory and occasional Google searches for news reports to identify the rough dates of the events in question to aid searches through official documents. The documents themselves often led to other important documents, as when I was led to locate the Senate's Iraq hearings by a reference to them in the House's report on the Iraq resolution then being considered by Congress.

First, I focused at first on the documents available at official site of the White House (<http://www.whitehouse.gov>). This proved a treasure trove of documents related to President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney's various speeches and press conferences regarding the Iraq crisis. It quickly became clear, however, that there was much redundancy in these documents, as the President and Vice President often repeated the exact same phrases or charges at different times and in different venues following the time-honored political method of the repetitive "stump speech" to get a political message out. I therefore had to look for those speeches which added something new to the debate, such as Vice President Cheney's charge in his speech of August 26, 2002 that Iraq was likely very close to obtaining nuclear weapons. This method allowed me to trim the number of documents to a good extent.

My next step was to try to track down the Congressional actions regarding the resolution President Bush submitted calling for authorization of the use of force against Iraq. This proved easy with THOMAS (<http://thomas.loc.gov>), the Library of Congress' site. I quickly identified the resolution in question and located information pertinent to it. As with the White House site, I had to focus my search on those documents which substantially affected the movement towards war, such as the Senate's hearings on September 25 and 26, 2002, or the House report supporting passage of the resolution; otherwise, I could easily become lost documenting minutia.

Lastly, I needed to document the crucial diplomatic activities in the United Nations Security Council just prior to the outbreak of hostilities. For this I used the official UN site (<http://www.un.org>). This site provided many useful and interesting documents related to the final efforts of the UN to resolve the crisis peacefully.

In reading these documents, it is hard, in retrospect, to avoid a sense of how badly misled was public opinion by the Bush administration, which insisted on emphasizing a threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction which now appears illusory. There is a clear attitude of near-panic in some of the speeches in regard to this threat, as though an attack on the US using Iraqi WMDs could come at any moment. This is partly explicable in light of the 9/11 attacks, which were very recent at the time of these speeches. Whether there was also an element of political calculation in this as well is very difficult to say, in that various speeches by President Bush and Vice President Cheney clearly indicate that they both thought that eliminating Saddam Hussein's regime would bring benefits to the US and the Middle East in general far beyond just the removal of the WMD threat. To this end they may have been emphasizing the worst-case scenario in order to gain public support for war. However, it is impossible to determine this for certain from studying the documents presently available to the public.

Bibliographic citations are constructed according to the Chicago Manual of Style.

Annotated Bibliography

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President Delivers State of the Union Address*. January 29, 2002. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>

In this famous speech, President George W. Bush declared that that the Iraqi government flaunted its hostility to the US, had been seeking to develop weapons of mass destruction for over a decade, had already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens, and refused to allow weapon inspectors into Iraq. Bush described the Iraqi regime as "a grave and growing danger" as it could use weapons of mass destruction to blackmail or attack the US or its allies, or provide these weapons to terrorists. In the speech's most

famous passage, Bush described Iraq along with Iran and North Korea as part of “an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world”; this speech is often referred to as “the Axis of Evil Speech.” Bush declared that “the United States of America will not permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most dangerous weapons.”

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *Vice President Speaks at VFW 103rd National Convention*. August 26, 2002. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/08/20020826.html>

In this important speech, Vice President Dick Cheney stated that “we now know that Saddam has resumed his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons.” He also stated that “many of us are convinced that Saddam will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon,” implying, on the basis of past discoveries by weapons inspectors in Iraq, that Iraq was probably closer to developing nuclear weapons than the US realized. Cheney declared that “containment is not possible when dictators obtain weapons of mass destruction and are prepared to share them with terrorists who intend to inflict catastrophic casualties on the United States.” He stated that “there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction.” Cheney claimed that removing Saddam’s regime would make the streets of Iraq’s cities “erupt in joy.” This alarmist speech has been cited as the start of the crisis with Iraq that ultimately led to war.

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President Bush, Prime Minister Blair Discuss Keeping the Peace*. September 7, 2002. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020907-2.html>

In a joint photo opportunity at Camp David, Maryland, President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair discussed the threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. Blair emphasized that “that threat is real” and declared that “the policy of inaction is not a policy we can responsibly subscribe to.” Bush noted that a new report by the International Atomic Agency said that Iraq was six months away from developing a nuclear weapon. Blair declared that “the UN has got to be the way of dealing with this issue, not the way of avoiding it,” and that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction posed “a threat to the whole of the world.” This announcement by Blair signaled the beginning of the effort by the US and Britain to pressure the UN to act on Iraq.

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President's Remarks at the United Nations General Assembly*. September 12, 2002. Accessed December 4, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020912-1.html>

In this major speech given before the United Nations General Assembly, President George W. Bush accused Iraq of defying the UN's disarmament demands for twelve years, a "decade of defiance." Bush listed the various UN resolutions that Iraq had ignored over the years, and claimed that despite UN efforts to force compliance, Saddam "continues to develop weapons of mass destruction." Bush focused on the threat of nuclear weapons in Saddam's hands. Bush promised to work with the UN on Iraqi compliance in these areas, but declared that "if Iraq's regime defies us again, the world must move deliberately, decisively to hold Iraq to account," claiming that "Saddam Hussein's regime is a grave and gathering danger." This speech was regarded as a great success and began a renewed effort in the UN to ensure Iraqi compliance with Security Council resolutions, culminating in SC 1441 (2002).

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President Bush to Send Iraq Resolution to Congress Today*. September 19, 2002. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020919-1.html>

In this photo opportunity with Secretary of State Colin Powell, President George W. Bush commented that he was sending a resolution to Congress that day that would authorize the use of force against Iraq. He said that he appreciated the strong support he was getting from both Republicans and Democrats on the resolution. Bush also stated that regime change would be a part of the resolution as well, and described the resolution as "a chance for Congress to say, we support the administration's ability to keep the peace." Bush declared that the United Nations Security Council must work with the US, Britain, and others to secure Saddam's disarmament, and added that "if the United Nations Security Council won't deal with the problem, the United States and some of our friends will." This statement indicated that Bush was already determined to act against Iraq no matter what the UN did.

U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. *Next Steps in Iraq: Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate*. 107th Cong., 2nd sess., 25th and 26th September 2002. Accessed on December 4, 2006 at: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=107_senate_hearings&docid=f:83463.wais

In these highly-publicized hearings chaired by Rep. Joseph Biden (D, DE), the Committee on Foreign Relations considered the choices the

US faced in dealing with Iraq, hearing testimony from a number of experts. The most prominent witness was former Secretary of State Madeline Albright, who expressed worries that after Saddam's regime was overthrown, "we could be confronted with a no-win choice" between prolonged occupation, which would fuel Arab terrorism, or quick withdrawal, "plunging the country into factionalism and civil war." Albright declared that "it is naive to think that a peaceful and democratic Iraq will automatically emerge from the ashes of our invasion," and urged the administration to carefully "think through the consequences of all this in advance, which it is not evident to me that they have done." Much of Albright's testimony sounds prophetic in hindsight.

U.S. Congress. House. Public Bills and Resolutions. *Congressional Record*. 107th Cong., 2nd sess., October 2, 2002. Accessed December 6, 2006 at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?r107:4:./temp/~r107FaFqeC::>

Rep. Dennis Hastert (R, Il.) introduced for himself and Rep. Richard Gephardt (D, Mo.) H.J. Resolution 114, the Joint Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq. The resolution had 136 cosponsors in the House. A similar proposal in the Senate, S.J. Res. 46, was introduced by Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D, Ct.), but H.J. Res. 114 became the more important of the Iraq-related measures.

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat*. October 7, 2002. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html>

In this important speech in Cincinnati, Ohio, President George W. Bush argued that, though there were many threats in the world, "the threat from Iraq stands alone." Bush claimed that "we know that Iraq and al Qaeda have had high-level contacts that go back a decade," and that al Qaeda operatives had fled from Afghanistan to Iraq. Bush claimed that intelligence sources had discovered "that Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles" which might potentially be used to attack the US with WMDs. Bush declared that regime change was the only way to be sure of removing the threat posed by Saddam, and promised that "if military action is necessary, the United States and our allies will help the Iraqi people rebuild their economy, and create the institutions of liberty in a unified Iraq at peace with its neighbors." This speech shows that, by this time, Bush had completely adopted Cheney's viewpoint on Iraq.

U.S. Congress. House. Committee on International Relations. *Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002* (to accompany

H.J. Res. 114). 107th Cong., 2nd sess., October 7, 2002. H. Rpt. 107-721. Accessed December 3, 2006 at: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/useftp.cgi?IPAddress=162.140.64.21&filename=hr721.107&directory=/disk3/wais/data/107_cong_reports

This House report was published in response to H.J. Res. 114. The report concluded that "Iraq poses a continuing threat to the national security of the United States." The report noted Iraq's attempt to assassinate former President George Bush in 1993 and its firing on many thousands of occasions at US aircraft enforcing the no-fly zones in Iraq during the past decade. The report also stated that Iraq had a "demonstrated capability and willingness to use weapons of mass destruction," continued to harbor members of terrorist organizations hostile to the United States, and potentially could provide terrorists such as al Qaeda with weapons of mass destruction to use in a surprise attack on the United States. In light of these considerations, the Committee on International Relations recommended that H.J. Res. 114 be passed. The resolution moved easily through Congress, passing the House 296-133 on October 10, 2002 and passing the Senate without amendment 77-23 on October 11, 2002.

Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002. U.S. Code. Vol. 5 Supplement 3, sec. 1541. Washington DC.: Government Printing Office, 2005.

H.J. Res. 114 became Public Law 107-243 with the president's signature on October 16, 2002. It noted Iraq's non-compliance with a long series of Security Council resolutions regarding weapons of mass destruction and authorized the President to "strictly enforce through the United Nations Security Council" all Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq. It also provided him with the authority to use US military forces "as he determines to be necessary and appropriate" to enforce those resolutions. The resolution stated that this law was consistent with the continuing US actions against international terrorist organizations, including those who were involved in the 9/11 attacks. This last part of the resolution shows the success of the Bush Administration's public efforts to tie action against Iraq to the War on Terror.

U.N. Security Council. *Resolution 1441* (2002). November 8, 2002. Accessed on December 3, 2006 at: <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/682/26/PDF/N0268226.pdf?OpenElement>

This Security Council Resolution recognized the threat of Iraq's non-compliance with Council Resolutions regarding weapons of mass

destruction and long-range missiles. It deplored Iraq's lack of full, final, and complete disclosure of its weapons programs as called for by resolution 687 (1991) and Iraq's repeated obstruction of UN and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) weapons inspectors. The resolution declared Iraq in material breach of its obligations, and gave Iraq "a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations" by allowing weapons inspectors unrestricted access to the entire country within 45 days. It also called for Iraq to provide a "full and complete declaration of all aspects of its programmes to develop chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons," and recalled "that the Council has repeatedly warned Iraq that it will face serious consequences as a result of its continued violations of its obligations."

U.N. Security Council. *Letter Dated 13 November 2002 From the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council*. November 13, 2002. Accessed December 2, 2006 at: <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/690/99/PDF/N0269099.pdf?OpenElement>

In this letter, Secretary General Kofi Annan conveyed to the President of the Security Council an attached letter from Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs Naji Sabri. In the attached letter, Sabri announced Iraq's acceptance of UN Resolution 1441 (2002), but denounced the resolution's "iniquitous contents," claiming that the American and British assertions about Iraq's production and possession of weapons of mass destruction are "utterly unfounded." Much of the letter consists of vituperative denunciations of the United States and Britain as pawns of "Zionism." The letter frequently used religious language to assert Iraq's righteousness, and the letter began and ended with quotes from the *Quran*.

U.S. Department of State. *Secretary of State Colin L. Powell to the United Nations Security Council*. February 5, 2003. Accessed on December 2, 2006 at: <http://www.un.int/usa/03clp0205.htm>

In this dramatic speech before the UN Security Council, US Secretary of State Colin Powell laid out in previously unequalled detail the photographic and recorded evidence that the US and Britain claimed proved that Iraq had a large stockpile of weapons of mass destruction. Powell claimed that Saddam had made no effort to disarm and was continuing to hide its weapons stockpiles from UN inspectors. Powell stated that "there can be no doubt that Saddam Hussein has biological weapons," and that "Iraq today has a stockpile of between 100 and 500 tons of chemical weapons agent." He also claimed that the Iraqi regime was harboring and aiding numerous al Qaeda agents in Iraq. Powell urged the Security Council to ensure that Council resolutions were complied with.

Powell has since publicly expressed serious regret over his testimony, as it shortly became clear that the intelligence information that he based his speech on was deeply flawed.

U.N. Security Council. *Letter Dated 24 February 2003 From the Permanent Representatives of France, Germany and the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council*. February 24, 2003. Accessed at: <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N03/257/43/PDF/N0325743.pdf?OpenElement>

In this letter, France, Germany, and the Russian Federation announced a joint memorandum on the Iraq situation; the memorandum was provided as an annex to this letter. The memorandum stated that, while continuing to support full disarmament of Iraq, the three nations emphasized that disarmament should be achieved “peacefully through the inspection regime,” and that the “military option should only be a last resort.” While “suspicions remain” that Iraq still possessed weapons of mass destruction, “no evidence has been given” proving this. The inspections under way “have already produced results” and Iraqi cooperation was described as “improving.” The three nations called for “reinforced inspections” and enough time for them to succeed. This memorandum shows the growing opposition in the Security Council to resorting to force in the Iraq crisis.

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President Discusses the Future of Iraq*. February 26, 2003. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030226-11.html>

In this speech in Washington before the American Enterprise Institute, a major neoconservative foundation, President George W. Bush asserted that America would not ignore the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. He argued that a “liberated Iraq can show the power of freedom to transform that vital region,” and that American security interests required a free and peaceful Iraq. Bush claimed that like Germany and Japan after World War Two, “Iraq – with its proud heritage, abundant resources and skilled and educated people – is fully capable of moving towards democracy and freedom.” He also claimed that regime change in Iraq could also aid in bringing about peace between Israel and the Palestinians by depriving terrorists of a powerful patron, and that Palestinians working for democratic reform would thus be strengthened. The Bush Administration’s view of the overthrow of Saddam’s regime as a kind of cure-all for the Middle East’s problems is very clearly expressed in this speech.

U.S. Department of Defense. *Secretary Rumsfeld Media Availability With Afghan President Karzai*. February 27, 2003. Accessed December

4, 2006 at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/Transcripts/transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=1957>

In this media availability, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld answered a question from a reporter in regard to anticipated occupation force size in post-war Iraq. The reporter noted that General Eric Shinseki had recently voiced the opinion that several hundred thousand ground troops would be required to achieve stability. Rumsfeld replied that that number was “far from the mark” and “simply not the case,” and that “it’s not logical to me that it would take as many forces to win the war – following the conflict as it would to win the war.” Rumsfeld’s opinion of the low number of troops needed for post-war Iraq appears very ironic when read today. Rumsfeld’s opinion also supported going to war since he depicted the military commitment required as relatively small.

U.N. Security Council. *Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America: Draft Resolution*. March 7, 2003. Accessed December 3, 2006 at: <http://www.un.org/News/dh/iraq/res-iraq-07mar03-en-rev.pdf>

In this draft resolution tabled at the UN Security Council, Spain, Britain, and the United States called for the Security Council to reaffirm the need for full implementation of Resolution 1441. The resolution would have decided that Iraq had failed to “take the final opportunity afforded by resolution 1441 (2002)” unless Iraq cooperated fully with 1441 by March 17, 2003. This resolution was withdrawn by Britain on March 17, 2003 in the face of a near-certain veto by France, signaling the end of the US and British-led efforts to convince the Security Council to authorize force against Iraq.

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President Bush: Monday “Moment of Truth” for World on Iraq*. March 16, 2003. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030316-3.html>

In a press availability in the Azores, Portugal with British Prime Minister Blair, Spanish President Jose Maria Aznar, and Portuguese Prime Minister Jose Barroso, President George W. Bush stated that the following day would determine whether or not the Iraq crisis could be solved by diplomacy, and urged the nations of the world to support “the immediate and unconditional disarmament of Saddam Hussein.” Bush accused France of planning “to veto anything that held Saddam to account.” Blair accused Saddam of playing games with the UN for the past 12 years instead of disarming. The four leaders agreed that their gathering was intended to show solidarity between their countries and the importance of transatlantic

relations. Bush and Blair agreed that after Saddam's overthrow, the US and Britain would rebuild Iraq and, in Blair's words, "support representative government that unites Iraq on the democratic basis of human rights and the rule of law."

U.S. Executive Office of the President. *President Says Saddam Hussein Must Leave Iraq Within 48 Hours*. March 17, 2003. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030317-7.html>

In a televised address from the White House, President George W. Bush declared that the United States "has the sovereign authority to use force in assuring its own national security." He demanded that "Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours," and threatened that "refusal to do so will result in military conflict, commenced at a time of our choosing." In a message aimed at the people of Iraq, Bush promised that "we will help you to build a new Iraq that is prosperous and free," and that "the day of your liberation is near." Bush reiterated that "Saddam Hussein and his terrorist allies" would not be allowed to "choose the moment of deadly conflict when they are strongest," and declared that "we choose to meet that threat now, where it arises, before it can appear suddenly in our skies and cities." The reference to 9/11 is quite obvious in this speech.

U.S. Executive Office of the United States. *President Bush Addresses the Nation*. March 19, 2003. Accessed November 20, 2006 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030319-17.html>

In this televised speech from the Oval Office, President George W. Bush announced the beginning of "military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger." He noted that a "campaign on the harsh terrain of a nation as large as California could be longer and more difficult than some predict," and that "helping Iraqis achieve a united, stable and free country will require our sustained commitment." Bush promised that "this will not be a campaign of half measures, and we will accept no outcome but victory."