The war in Iraq is an emotional issue for everyone. There is not one American who is untouched by this conflict. In fact, among the many issues in politics, no other affair has polarized our nation more than our recent military actions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the generalized War on Terror. Personally, I oppose the war in Iraq for many reasons. However, the fact remains that we are occupying Iraq now and I want to offer a possible solution. Yet, we must examine the events that led to the current war to understand why my proposed solution is necessary.

"*U.S. involvement with Saddam Hussein dates back to 1959 when he was part of a CIA-authored six-man squad tasked with assassinating then Iraqi Prime Minister Gen. Abd al-Karim Qasim*. (Sale, 2003)". Although Qasim survived many assassination attempts, he was finally killed in a CIA backed coup that installed the Baath Party in 1963. Saddam Hussein maneuvered himself into the Iraq Presidency in 1979. "*Donald Rumsfeld, whose December 1983 meeting with Hussein, as a special presidential envoy, paved the way for normalization of U.S.-Iraqi relations. Declassified documents show that Rumsfeld traveled to Baghdad at a time when Iraq was using chemical weapons on an "almost daily" basis in defiance of international conventions.* (Dobbs, 2002)".

During the Iran/Iraq War in the 1980s, the US Government covertly sold arms to Iran to release American hostages and fund contras in Nicaragua, as evidenced by the Iran Contra scandal. These actions were counter-balanced by "*U.S. involvement with Saddam Hussein, which included large-scale intelligence sharing, supply of cluster bombs through a Chilean front company, and facilitating Iraq's acquisition of chemical and biological precursors, and is a topical example of the underside of U.S. foreign policy.* (Dobbs, 2002)"

The political landscape during George H. W. Bush's presidency prior to Operation Desert Storm was marred with scandal. The emerging details of Bush's involvement with the Iran Contra scandal and the buildup of Saddam Hussein, the indictment of Neil Bush for his entanglement in the Savings and Loans scandal, and allegations of George W. Bush's insider trading of Harken Energy stock all loomed over his failing administration. Whether Saddam was truly a threat or if the danger was a smokescreen, President Bush went to several lengths to demonize his previous ally.

When Saddam Hussein announced his intentions to invade Kuwait because of border disagreements, Margaret Tutwiler, the US State Department spokesperson announced "*We do not have any defense treatise with Kuwait, and there are no special defense or security commitments to Kuwait.* (Phillips 2004)" In fact, the US ambassador to Iraq delivered the message to Saddam the very next day. President George H. W. Bush was maintaining a distance from the invasion until Margaret Thatcher compelled him to consider the British stance. Let me just point out that the "*British Petroleum Company and Gulf Oil Corporation jointly owned the Kuwait Oil Company since 1934.* (State of Kuwait, 2005)".

Following this meeting, Bush, without consulting his Joint Chiefs of Staff, contacted King Fahd and claimed that Iraq would invade Saudi Arabia next.

"*In October of 1990, a fifteen-year-old Kuwaiti girl named 'Nayirah' testified before the US House of Representatives that Iraqi soldiers tore hundreds of babies from hospital incubators to*

kill them. (Phillips 2004)". Investigations by Amnesty International proved this to be a lie and that Nayirah was, in fact, the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the United States and a relative of the ruling family.

However, this did not stop Bush from quoting her and likening Saddam Hussein to Hitler every chance he got.

After the cease-fire agreement in 1991, political think tanks and conservative movements contended that Saddam was still a threat to National Security because control of the world's oil supplies was viewed as the catalyst for supremacy. The epitome of the ultra-conservative think tanks was the Project for the New American Century, the PNAC. "*When George W. Bush assumed the presidency, the men who had created and nurtured the imperial dreams of PNAC became the men who now run the Pentagon, the US Defense Department and the White House. The ideological father of PNAC is Paul Wolfowitz, Bush's first term deputy defense secretary. Other members were, vice-president Dick Cheney, defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the president's brother Jeb, convicted perjurer and Iran-Contra veteran Eliot Abrams, and first term Defense Policy Board chairman Richard Perle. One notable addition to this list is PNAC director Bruce Jackson, who served as a Pentagon official for Ronald Reagan before leaving government service to take a leading position with the weapons manufacturer Lockheed Martin.* (Pitt, 2003)"

Among several references seeking conflict with Iraq, the PNAC's September 2000 report, entitled "*Rebuilding America's Defenses*," states "*While the unresolved conflict with Iraq*

provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein. (Donnelly 2000)". Thus, with reports penned by the PNAC, and approved by the signatories within the Bush administration, the attempt to cherry-pick intelligence reports to fit pre-determined policies was pursued.

When the other superpowers displayed their objection to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, President Bush insisted that the US would move forward regardless of United Nations decisions.

No weapons of mass destruction were found, there is no evidence that Saddam sponsored global terrorism or al Qaeda activities, and leaving the borders to Iraq open has turned that country into a terrorist training camp with live targets. The two most important factors are that the US was complicit when Saddam committed his worst atrocities and that democracy must come from within. I sympathize with any oppressed people but uprooting a society and thrusting an ideology upon its people with disregard for cultural ramifications does not qualify as a humanitarian effort.

Nevertheless, Saddam Hussein has been removed from power and stands trial for crimes against humanity. The three main factions in Iraq, Sunni, Shiite, and Kurd, may come together in peace or may split that country into regional states vying for the lucrative resources of oil and natural gas. Our continued occupancy of Iraq and exploitation by companies like Haliburton's "*Kellogg, Brown & Root*" fuels an insurgency. The Bush administration has used the influx of Muslim jihadists to label the insurgency as terrorists and justify their invasion as a continuation of the

war on terror. However, in order to fight an enemy, one needs to understand who he or she is fighting. Misrepresenting who the enemy is will lead to unnecessary death and destruction.

These facts leave little room for ethical or moral resolution. However, we can begin the process of truthfully rebuilding Iraq for the Iraqi people, reversing the damage of aggressive foreign policies, re-establishing America's moral standing in the world, and maybe, just maybe, even lowering terrorist recruitment.

Whenever I had a dispute with family or friends, my mother always told me to be the bigger person. There are times when we all must swallow our pride to settle grievances. To back off of hostilities is not a sign of weakness, but intelligence. To re-evaluate a situation shows understanding. To express sympathy or regret shows compassion. These things are lacking in the current machismo of White House and Pentagon sentiment.

However, America, as a nation, should express regret and atone for decades of hegemony and exploitative foreign policy. More importantly, we need a leader who will apologize to the Iraqi people, the Muslim community, and the entire world for the invasion of Iraq and US policies surrounding the war on terror. The best way to send that message would be the impeachment of George W. Bush and his entire cabinet, including Alberto Gonzalez for designing the most destructive of those presidential powers.

Barring that possibility, President Bush could express regret to the United Nations for the misguided war in Iraq. He could prove his sincerity by removing all coalition military presence and American based corporations that profit from the rebuilding of Iraq with stipulations.

First, all nations that opposed the war in Iraq should commit peacekeeping troops to train and enhance Iraqi security. Second, those same nations should be allowed to develop construction and engineer contracts with the new Iraqi government. Third, the United Nations must dispatch teams of nation-building emissaries and ambassadors to encourage the peace process and guide Iraq into its own state. Finally, the United Nations must ensure that the profits from the oil fields would foster the Iraqi economy and, to some extent, be used to elevate the people of Iraq with healthcare, education, food, shelter, clean water, and a healthy job market. It would be a travesty to allow the profits from Iraq's resources and its government to be overrun with corruption.

These steps would all send a very clear message to the world that America is not trying to exploit Iraq's oil fields. Rather than showing weakness to our enemies, we would be showing intelligence and understanding. Rather than abandoning the Iraqi people, we would be stepping aside to allow other nations to help as well as quelling the insurgency. Our troops would still be involved in nearby Afghanistan, and our intelligence agencies would continue to hunt actual terrorist threats, instead of creating them.

There are many changes in foreign policy that must be made to lower the terrorist threat and ending the war in Iraq should be the first step.

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Reserved Reading

America Dynasty: Aristocracy, Fortune, and the Politics of Deceit in the House of Bush
        Kevin Phillips

Project for the New American Century
http://www.newamericancentury.org/ Web site:

House of Bush House of Saud
        Craig Unger

A Charge to Keep
        George W. Bush and Karen Hughes

Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet
        Invasion to September 10, 2001
        Steve Coll

The Reckoning: Iraq and the Legacy of Saddam Hussein
Sandra MacKey

Lost History: Contras, Cocaine, the Press & 'Project Truth'
Robert Parry

Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance
(The American Empire Project)
Noam Chomsky

Middle East Illusions : Including Chomsky's Peace in the Middle East? Reflections on Justice
        and Nationhood
Noam Chomsky

Profit Over People: Neoliberalism & Global Order
Noam Chomsky