

Just war theory and the iraq war



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Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 and ended in Iraq's Defeat by a U. S. lead coalition in the Persian Gulf War. The United Nations implemented economic Sanctions against Iraq in order to hinder the progress of its lethal arms programs, including the development of Nuclear, biological, and Chemical weapons. United Nations inspections during the mid-1990s uncovered a variety of proscribed weapons and prohibited technology throughout Iraq. Iraq's repeated interference with the inspections frustrated the United Nations and led to U. S. President Bill Clinton in 1998 to order the bombing of several Iraqi military installation, the operation was called Operation Desert Fox. After the bombing Iraq refused to allow inspectors to reenter the country, and during the next several years neighboring countries sought to reopen trade with Iraq thus relieving Iraq of the economic sanctions put on them by the United Nations. In 2002 America's new president George W. Bush expressed the vulnerability of the United States following the tragedies of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center. Combined with Iraq's alleged continued possession and manufacture of weapons of mass destruction and its support for terrorist groups, which according to Bush's administration included al-Qaeda the groups allegedly behind the September 11th attacks, made disarming Iraq a renewed priority for the United States. In early 2003 The United nations' prime minister Tony Blair and President Bush declared that Iraq was continuing to hinder the United Nations inspections for weapons and gave Iraqi leader Saddam 48 hours to leave Iraq. When Saddam refused to leave Iraq, U. S. and allied forces launched an attack on the morning of March 20th. The U. S. dropped several precision-guided bombs on a bunker complex in which the Iraqi president was believed to be meeting with senior staff. This was followed by <https://assignbuster.com/just-war-theory-and-the-iraq-war/>

a series of air strikes directed against government and military installations, and within days U. S. forces had invaded Iraq.

A Just war, a theory developed by St Thomas Aquinas, is defined as such. “ The war must have a just cause for example, against invasion, or for self-defense- and not to acquire wealth or power. The war must be declared and controlled by a proper authority, the state or ruler. The war must be fought to promote good or avoid evil, with the aim of restoring peace and justice after the war is over”. Aquinas also stated if the war is justified it should be waged as followed. “ The war must be a last resort when all peaceful solutions have been tried and failed. The war should be fought with proportionality, with just enough force to achieve victory and only against legitimate targets, civilians should be protected. Lastly the good which is achieved by war must be greater than the evil which led to the war”. During the time of the war America was recovering from a national tragedy.

September 11th 's terrorist attacks on the twin towers left the American citizens in fear and cautious from more attacks. Bush's offices were able to use the recent fear of these attacks and convince the citizens that this war was a necessary by claiming they were going to war due to Saddam Hussein possessing weapons of mass destruction and not cooperating with the United Nation's inspectors. These reasons alone do not follow Aquinas' theory of a just war. The nation of Iraq was not threatening any countries with invasion or attack, the United States was not going to war under self-defense due to not having any clear evidence that Iraq possessed any weapons of mass destruction nor could they prove that Iraq had the intentions of using them. The Iraq war also did not follow Aquinas' guidelines on how to wage the war.

Bush did not try all peaceful methods of handling the situation before engaging in the war. In an article written by Peter Singer, "*Crime and No Punishment for the Iraq War*", Singer states, " Bush and Blair sought Security Council authorization for the attack, claiming that Iraq was in violation of its agreement to disarm. But France, China, and other Security Council members refused, arguing that the weapons inspectors then in Iraq should be allowed to continue their work in order to establish whether Saddam possessed weapons of mass destruction. Nevertheless, Bush and Blair went ahead with the attack". This quote from Singer's article shows that the American and United Kingdom leaders did not try all available peaceful methods of dealing with Iraq. The other members of the United Nations disagreed with the proposal from Bush and Blair and wanted the weapons inspectors to continue checking for weapons instead of attacking Iraq without proof of Saddam's weapons. The war also neglected to follow another principle of Aquinas' stating that, " The war must be fought with proportionality, with just enough force to achieve victory". After unjust attacking Iraq and not being able to find any weapons of mass destruction, the reason behind starting the unjust war, Bush continued to keep American troops inside of Iraq in order to supposedly help Iraq develop a stronger democratic government instead of pulling out and putting an end to the unjust war he started. Not only did Bush and Blair deceive their countries into a unjust war they also did so unlawfully and committed a serve crime while doing so. In Singers article he defines the law as the Nuremberg Principles from as early as the 1900's and states, " The document sets out several crimes under international law including ' planning, preparation, initiation, or waging of a war of aggression or a war in violation of

international treaties, agreements or assurances’’. This law shows that anyone involved in creating a war of aggression should be held accountable for the crimes they commit, thus since the Iraq war was started on a claim not proof that Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction and was also unthreatening towards any other nation the Iraq war is classified as a war of aggression. The United States and the United Kingdom were key factors in the Nuremberg Trials which developed the law and should be held accountable for their actions against a law they created.

Although this war of aggression was created on false pretenses and misleading information, we have seen some benefits of American involvement in the Iraq nation. An article by Emma Sky, “ *Mission Still Not Accomplished in Iraq: Why the United States Should Not Leave*”, describes the following, “ The liberation of Mosul ended a reign of terror that saw children brainwashed in schools, smokers publicly flogged, Yazidi women reduced to sex slaves and gay men thrown from rooftops. The victory also struck a devastating blow to ISIS, killing thousands of its fighters, shrinking its resources, crushing its organizational capacity, and diminishing its global appeal’’. These examples show how even though we entered the war unjustly we were still able to help end the terrorist group ISIS and preventing them from taking power into a weak and newly developing government and economy. After the second term of president bush and uncovering the false pretenses and intentions of entering Iraq the American society pushed for our solders to depart from Iraq. However, in Emma’s article she elaborates on the importance of American’s involvement of Iraq. Emma explains, “ Instead of making the peaceful transition of power in a new democratic

system, the 2010 election undermined the confidence that change could come about through politics...he labeled Sunni politicians as 'terrorists' driving them out of the political process, and he ordered the security forces to violently crush Sunni dissent. Maliki created conditions that allowed a new group to rise up of the ashes of al Qaeda in Iraq. ISIS, as it came to be known proclaimed itself the defender of Sunnnis against Maliki's regime". This is important lesson to be learn, due to the war against Iraq and the fall of Saddam and his reign left the country weak and vulnerable while they transition to a new form of government. The choice to leave the country to handle the change alone allowed for the election of another corrupted leader and the neighboring countries preying on the Iraq's weakness. This led to a new formed terrorist group ISIS to be developed due to neighboring countries influences upon the new and weak government. This led to yet again the redeployment of the United States and new conflict against Iraq yet again. An article by Karl Zinsmeister, " *15 Years Later, Iraq Is a Modest Success*", which gives us the following examples, " given the series of coups that made Iraq one of the worst-governed places on earth...the country seems to be building a resilient democracy... Iraq's per capita gross domestic product was 51% higher in 2017 than 2002...Iraq's mortality rate fell 18% from 2002-17". Our involvement in the Iraq government helped cure a plague of violence and poverty. Yes, Iraq still has a lot of work to do to become a thriving society but thanks to the guidance from the American government if Iraq's trends continue its economic growth it will attract the surrounding countries to develop alliances. On the same note, even though we've seen benefits from American involvement in the Iraq we still have the causalities and conflicts that we brought with these changes. Emma sky

states, “ Iraq’s counter Terrorism Service, suffered heavy losses as they fought street by street to uproot ISIS fighters who used the local population as human shields. Thousands of civilians were killed, and a million or so were displaced from their homes. Mosul’s historic monuments have been destroyed. And the city’s infrastructure lies in tatters”. Due to us leaving a developing government and allowing ISIS to grow in power forcing us to come back into conflict brought an avoidable amount of casualties and destroyed monuments and a cities in tatters. Will a strong democratic government amount to the numbers of lives and properties destroyed by this conflict? Only years of development will bring us answers.

The vast majority of people rely on social media and different forms of media for their news and coverage of important events. It is easily accessible and convenient for a anyone with the slightest knowledge of technology, millions of individuals trust these outlets to output honest and fast news coverage on important events or the newest events as soon as they happen. However, many of politicians and people of power are aware of the dependency the citizens have on these broadcasts and some of these news outlets can be influenced to put out news that is biased or extorted to match the beliefs of the provider. An article by Steven Kull, Clay Ramsay and Evan Lewis, “ *Misperceptions, the media and the Iraq War*” , the authors state, “ When respondents were asked whether the United States has ‘ found Iraqi weapons of mass destruction’ since the war had ended 22 percent of all respondents mistakenly thought this had happened. Once again, fox viewers were the highest with 33 percent having this belief. A lower 19to 23 percent of viewers who watch ABC, NBC, CBS, and CNN had the perception that the

United states had found WMD. Seventeen percent of those who primarily get their news from print sources had the misperception, while only 11 percent who watch PBS or listen to NPR had it". This example shows us that the individuals that get their news from a news broadcast or print have a higher percent of having a misperception on the facts of the war, while the individuals that get their news from unbiased outlets such as PBS or NPR are less likely to have the misperception. This Shows us how greatly news and media outlet have an influence on the community's voice and thoughts. This is a terrible handicap that politicians use to influence our votes and public opinions on topics

The Iraq war was unjust not only was it started on lies and false pretenses, but it was a war of aggression that went against Aquinas' theories about just wars and how they should be conducted. Although after entering the war were seeing benefits coming from us being in Iraq such as a stronger democratic government and the empowerment of the terrorist group ISIS and the al Qaeda we also seen a plenty of casualties and destruction occur. Bush administration used news outlets and the fears of the recent terrorist attack from 9/11 to gather moral into starting a war with Iraq. We as a country need to be careful upon starting a war we should analyze to make sure the war is just, we need to have proof and not let misleading information force or the intentions of the leaders of the government force us into a war that is not necessary.

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