Time to ask:

WHAT WAS REAL REASON FOR INVASION?¹

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Now that the Bush and Blair administrations are being investigated for hyperbolic pre-war claims, it is imperative to focus on the fundamental question this raises.

The anti-war movement, which massively took to the streets before the war, was largely motivated by a perception that Washington and London were merely scrambling for excuses to invade Iraq. Its critiques of the pre-war "evidence" are well known—as are those that were given to the Security Council by UN and IAEA chief inspectors Hans Blix and Mohamed El Baradei.

The present investigations are, of course, precisely what the anti-war movement has demanded. But, as proof of lies and intelligence manipulation accumulate, there is a rather obvious question not being asked in Congress, Parliament and the mainstream press: If not for "WMDs" and Al Qaeda "links", then what was the real reason they invaded?

Recall that the French and Russian, and even the German governments, did not say "never" right off to the use of force. But Bush and Blair were in a big hurry to do it on their own terms. Why? The first UN resolution was unanimous. After that Bush and Blair likely could have had an invasion approved if, rather than crying wolf about WMDs and terrorist links, they proposed a UN-backed, multilateral mission against a murderous dictator. They could have proposed Hussein be indicted, that a broad UN force be empowered to go in to, if possible, arrest him and the other Baathists guilty of crimes against humanity, and to take them all to The Hague for trial. And, to allay the strong suspicions of their motivations, they could have asked the UN to manage Iraq’s oil, renouncing major roles for their own corporations.

¹Submitted title was: “If they lied, then what was the real reason for war?”
Finally, the UN, with especially Arab and Islamic nations’ participation, could have organized democratic elections.

Why not this high-minded, multinational approach? On this too the anti-war movement was quite correct. Its predominant slogan was: "No Blood for Oil!"

This is not the simplistic explanation it may at first seem. And, of course, saying that oil is the main reason doesn’t preclude other motivations. But oil is indeed the central issue.

Control of Iraqi oil is not an end in itself. Today, oil is a very special commodity—40% of transportation. It so happens that Saudi Arabia pumps about 1/10th of this total, but it has a unique spare capacity to increase its output by 30% of their maximum capacity, the royal’s variable capacity largely determines the global price of oil. And, the US, via its pervasive economic, financial, technical and military penetration of Saudi society, forces the royals to pump enough to keep oil artificially cheap and plentiful.

This US cheap-oil “arrangement” with the “oil price swing states” of Saudi Arabia, and with Kuwait and the UAE (though of less impact than the Saudis), keeps oil addictive. Addiction makes the pusher indispensable, and the US today is quite simply the cheap-oil pusher to the globe. This gives the US superpower enormous leverage over every nation addicted to oil, especially Western Europe, Japan, and developing China and India, all of which increasingly lack sufficient domestic oil. The US Energy Information Agency projects that in 2007 China alone will need half as much oil as the US now uses, and fully as much by 2030. And, increasingly, the world’s oil must come from the Middle East oil-price swing states, including a new one the US and Britain want to bring online soon, Iraq—and perhaps later Iran too.

It is no wonder the US is everywhere the main opponent of a determined fight against global warming, in spite of the scientific consensus of its dangers, and is the main proponent of the unsustainable and antiquated ”American” model of auto- and oil-centric economies. Artificially cheap oil and natural gas also means nuclear and alternative energies in Europe, China and elsewhere, remain too expensive to displace fossil fuels.

But 9/11 revealed Saudi Arabia (not Iraq) as the real center of ”global terrorism”. Fifteen of the 19 hijackers and Bin Laden came from Saudi Arabia. The particular urgency of a risky Iraqi invasion derived from US-British alarm at fundamentalist unrest in Saudi Arabia upsetting their global oil-hegemony system.
Paul Wolfowitz admitted to VANITY FAIR magazine that the really “best” reason for the war was to remove the 5,000 US troops from Saudi Arabia, as demanded by Wahabi fundamentalists there. So, Saudi royal stability trumped a real fight against terror, which would mean a democratic and sovereign Arabia. Such an Arabia would never obey US oil-pumping demands. And so, the US did withdraw, but only AFTER occupying Iraq’s oil fields to hedge their reliance on Saudi Arabia. Its no accident that Iraq’s oil fields—second only to Saudi Arabia’s—and it’s oil ministry, were alone protected by US-British troops. The occupiers are now investing $40 billion to expand Iraq’s pumping capacity and have erased previous Iraqi contracts with French, Russian, Chinese and Italian oil companies.

The Bush and Blair ruling groups dared not tell the people what these REAL reasons for war were. Convenient lies trumped admission of the awful truth: hegemonic, imperialist self-interests drive their policy. To Washington and London, oil-supply hegemony was and is a prize worth lying for. These people are decidedly not MERELY liars.

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