



**How has neoliberalism influenced US foreign
politics?**

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Abstract

This essay discusses the impact of neoliberalism on the US American foreign politics. It addresses the possible strategy of America on a global scale, always focusing on neoliberal forces in America that are behind the official political decisions that are made in Washington. The essay also discusses the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Here, there is more than what the eye can see, or rather what the public is meant to see. Strong economic powers influence the war in the Middle East and try to bring a new world order upon the region, by implanting democracy, neoliberalism and absolute market openness. This discussion is done through a comparison of various sources, including books and scientific articles, dealing with geography, economy and politics. The outcome of this essay includes worrying facts about the future of globalism, neoliberalism and democracy, as power more and more shifts towards private corporations and banks, away from democratic state apparatus.

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Introduction

In times of ever developing globalization, one asks the question what form of social, political and economic future our world is heading towards. How much will globalization shape and change our way of living, what are concepts such as democracy, individual liberty or human rights worth? And just how much will neoliberalism become the new political and social ideology in many countries of the world? Especially the United States of America has been dealing with this new ideology and its global agenda has been shaped into a neoliberal “conquer and rule” reign. By definition, neoliberalism is a label for economic liberalism. According to the Collins English Dictionary, neoliberalism is a modern political-economic theory that favors free-trade, privatization, minimal government intervention in business and reduced public expenditure on social services (Collins English Dictionary 2003). This essay will bring up the effects of neoliberalism and its influence on the American foreign policy strategy of the Bush and Obama administrations. The heavy focus will be put on the issue of Iraq, as neoliberal forces seem to be most obvious in that particular case.

Background

According to Harvey, the concept of neoliberalism is relatively new in the USA; nevertheless it has had large success in influencing American politics, both domestic and foreign, leading it into a certain direction. The first steps of neoliberalism were made during the presidency of Ronald Reagan during the 1980s. His change of political direction gave way to the birth and quick development of neoliberalism in America. At the same time, similar changes of political and economical direction took place around the world, carried out by Margret Thatcher in Britain and Deng Xiaoping in China. Transformations of such scope and depth do not occur by accident (Harvey 2005:1). And this global transformation of how governments, economies and societies were run gave way to the concept of “globalization”. I do not know whether it is the central position of power and attention that the USA fill out in the world, or simply the fact that the USA are, or at least claim to be the leading driving force behind globalization that supported my decision of focusing on America and its foreign politics when writing about the concept of neoliberalism. Perhaps it was also the fact that foreign neoliberal politics are more openly discovered and carried out by the US than in any other country in the

world. This makes it significantly easier to find valid information and facts about this current trend towards a new ideology. In the USA, one can easily see significant and important bridges between the white house's foreign agenda and certain economic powers that thrive behind closed curtains. Especially in the last couple of years, during the presidencies of George W. Bush and now of Barack H. Obama, there have been enormous changes and serious events taking place in the world. If one goes back to the years of the Bush administration, other examples can easily be found. The human and political consequences of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars for example are still torturing the people of the two countries and yet, there have been found no solutions to the conflicts (Smith 2005:11)

Smith states that there is yet another, more hidden part of the US American foreign agenda, namely the spreading of neoliberalism. The forces that lay behind this new ideology are somewhat blurry and not easy to track down, but many claim that these same forces are using political events and power, and here especially the political heads of the USA, in order to carry out their agenda of global neoliberalism. The literature that I am about to use speak of such instrumentalization. In order to ensure the tight economic power grip even in the near and far future, neoliberals have successfully influenced the White House and one of the results of this influence can be seen in the events that took and still take place in Iraq. War was absolutely necessary, but not for the reasons that the Bush and the Obama administration claimed. The main thriving power and will behind the occupation must be found and seen in other fields of interest (Smith 2005:13).

Purpose and questions

The purpose of this essay is to show in what ways and to what extent neoliberalism has influenced, and continues to do so, American foreign politics and economy and how it shaped the face of war and administration in Afghanistan and Iraq. Furthermore, the purpose of this essay is to find valid answers to the following three questions that I will use as the main theme throughout my work:

- What is America's global political-economic ambition and agenda?
- How and why did the war in Afghanistan happen?
- What was the real purpose behind the invasion of Iraq?

The answer to these questions will be based on my chosen literature and various articles and reports of different academic sources. Further information will be presented in the part under the topic "method".

Theoretical framework

The starting point of this essay, the theoretical fundament, can be found in the theory, or rather political ideology called Neoliberalism, or Neoliberalization, defined broadly as the contingent process of putting neoliberal ideology into practice, in and of America. Another definition of neoliberalism states that Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices which propose that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, free markets and free trade (Clark 2006). While the concept of neoliberalism gained prominence as a critical signifier for the "free market" ideological doctrine during the 1980s, which became operationalized by the restructuring strategies of Reagan. In more recent times, to many, neoliberalism has turned into a "master concept", or as a byword for an ideologically drenched form of globalization. It can also be understood as a reflection of realigned hegemonic interests. Divergent interpretations of

neoliberalism – its histories, its geographies, its crisis tendencies and its trajectories – are generating radically divergent diagnoses of the present geoeconomics conjuncture and the possibilities for alternatives to a market-based global order (Dunne 2009).

According to many political economists and scholars, this market-based global order and its geoeconomics originated in America and it is there it can most obviously be found. In short, the theory suggests that neoliberalism was able to influence the American politics and economy, simply because the ‘embedded capitalism’ (in the United States, as well as in other capitalist countries) of the postwar period with its heavy emphasis upon some sort of uneasy contract between capital and labor brokered by an interventionist state that paid great attention to the social (i.e. welfare state) as well as the individual wage, was slowly being replaced by the political-ideological project that was to become neoliberalism (Harvey 2005). “Embedded neoliberalism” was exhausted and some other alternative was obviously needed in order to re-start capital accumulation (Clark 2006). It further argues that neoliberalism influences the American politics and economy in certain ways; the crisis of Keynesianism and the reduction in forms of welfare-state intervention therefore lead less to the state losing powers of regulation and control (in the sense of a zero sum game) and can instead be construed as a reorganization or restructuring of government techniques, shifting the regulatory competence of the state onto ‘responsible’ and ‘rational’ individuals (Perkins 2009).

The extent to which neoliberalism has succeeded to influence and manipulate the American politics and economy, Dunne states, can be seen in the neoliberalization of the labor market, of the class society (restoration of class power), welfare, warfare and defense, as well as tax legislation and social law-making processes, in other words, neoliberalism has influenced a majority of political, economic and social administrations in America (Dunne 2009). Smith states that the neoliberalization of the military and the American foreign politics ultimately led to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, for obvious economic purposes (Smith 2005). Smith’s main argument for this is manifested in the opening of new markets, which I will further discuss in the analysis part of my essay.

Source limitation

All of the books that I used for this essay are critical towards the issue of neoliberalism, which was necessary in order to give the essay the angle it needed. The authors all have their strong point of view and they naturally try to focus on it. All of the sources cover other countries and areas that are influenced by neoliberalism and its agenda and policies. Areas of interest here focus of course on the European Union, the rising powers of Asia, being China and India, and also parts of the less fortunate corners of the world, here mainly in South America. As an essay covering all different areas and regions that deal with neoliberalism would easily exceed the page limit of this task, I will naturally not include those regions in my writing.

Furthermore, as neoliberalism seems to appear and act differently in different countries, developing at different speeds and into different branches and directions, a focus on only one specific country that had to feel the powers of neoliberalism, Iraq in this case, is of the essence, in order to fully focus on the particular development that the United States urge to achieve.

Another limitation is the time scale, as there are no sources that cover the years 2008, 2009 and even more recently 2010. I can therefore only focus on the years and theories and knowledge of the years between 1999 and 2007.

A third limitation was that the authors of the literature I used can be seen as subjective, as this topic automatically demands for a certain stand point, objectivity seems to be harder to achieve when it comes to this topic. This could make the essay appear less credible. Another factor that could make it less acceptable to a wider readership is that the scene of the authors can be described as “free and independent authorship”. This section of the social science is much less known and much less frequently read than other sources of literature. Especially this topic of neoliberalism is very much kept in a darker light in the common mass media. It could be hard for readers to accept this kind of knowledge, as it appears to be less supported.

Method

As this essay is a comparison between different sources, the method ought to be comparative. The method I chose in order to extract information from the sources, which I then would compare and contrast, was to select and extract information of the same kind or focus. The more basic and pre-work methods I used in order to be able to write this essay was to search through the internet to find relevant literature. I also used the help of previous university courses, examples here include Post-colonialism and Neoliberalism (Samhällsgeografi C). Here I found one part of the theory that I would use, namely the books “The Colonial Present” by Gregory, “Endgame of Globalization” by Smith and “A brief history of Neoliberalism” by Harvey. After searching on the internet and having read several reviews about plenty of relevant books, I decided to use several other neoliberalism-critical authors. One of which being Noam Chomsky and his work “Profit over people”. Another author was Naomi Klein and she wrote the book “The Shock Doctrine”. The sixth book I decided to include in my work was written by Samir Amin and goes by the name “Obsolescent Capitalism”. I then read through the literature in order to be able to, based on this primary literature, find other sources of information. In order to complete my list of sources, I then included a variety of academic articles that cover recent events, e.g. “Political Geography”, “Antipode” and “Metaphilosophy”. These journals cover a broad field of interesting material about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and give relevant and plenty of background information. The final step of my method was to extract the relevant information of all the sources, in order to be able to answer my three questions and be able to fulfil the purpose of this essay. The analysis of the literature was the part of the essay that would show that. I decided to divide the analysis part into three categories with several sub-categories in order to create an easy to follow “story line” for the reader.

How has neoliberalism influenced US foreign politics?

What is America's global political-economic ambition and agenda?

Since the 1950, the United States of America have increasingly tried to expand their spheres of influence in the world. Examples from the past cover Korea, Vietnam and the first Gulf War. All of these wars were started and operated for false reasons, which afterwards became clear and obvious to the public eye in the Western world. Neoliberalism, back then, had already started to influence the foreign political affairs of America, and would continue to do so in the future, at an ever growing and more powerful level.

Harvey explains that “Embedded Neoliberalism”, as it was the norm in the in the 1950s and 1960s, meant that market processes and entrepreneurial and corporate activities were surrounded by a web of social and political constraints and a regulatory environment that sometimes restrained but in other instances led the way in economic and industrial strategy. State-led planning and in some instances state ownership of key sectors (coal, steel, automobiles) were not uncommon. The neoliberal project is to disembed from these constraints (Harvey 2005:11). The ideological foundation that would slowly manifest itself in neoliberalism would transform the American politics. By the mid-70s, the political-economic interests of all those who were urging to liberate corporate and business power and re-establish market freedoms came to the fore and won over those who were ranged behind social democracy and central planning. This was mostly due to a series of gyrations and chaotic experiments and the failure of the left and social democrats to come up with long term solutions for meeting the requirements of capital accumulation. The results of the neoliberal take over were to be found in globalization and a so called new world order (Harvey 2005:13). A couple of examples that indicated this new age global capitalism can be found in the redistribution of wealth, in massive and sometimes even forced privatization, growing social inequalities, increasing tax rates, etc (Harvey 2005:16). Harvey shows that the restoration of class power is an undeniable fact. The top 0.1% of income earners in the US increased their share of the national income from 2% in 1978 to over 6% by 1999. Almost

certainly, with the Bush administrations' tax reforms taking effect, the concentration of income and wealth in the upper echelons of society is continuing to grow rapidly because the estate tax (a tax on wealth) is being phased out and taxation on income from investments and capital gains is being diminished, while taxation on wages and salaries is maintained (Harvey 2005:17). Social inequalities are ever rising and have basically doubled between the years of 1960 and 1990. While income gap between the fifth of the world's people living in the richest countries and the fifth living in the poorest countries were 74 to 1 in 1997, up from 60 to 1 in 1990 and 30 to 1 in 1960. While there are exceptions to this trend (a couple of East and South-East Asian countries, as well as France), the evidence strongly suggests that the neoliberal turn is in some way and to some degree associated with the restoration or reconstruction of the power of economic elites. This trend is mostly noticeable in the American political-economic ambitions over the last 30 years (Harvey 2005:19). We can therefore interpret Neoliberalization, and thereby the current trend in American political-economics, either as an utopian project to realize a theoretical design for the reorganization of international capitalism or as a political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites (Harvey 2005:19). Harvey concludes that there undoubtedly was a power shift away from production to the world of finance. For several years, especially during the 1990s, what happened was that when Wall Street did well, the Rest of the US (as well as the rest of the world) did badly. While the slogan was often advanced in the 1960s that what was good for General Motors was good for the US, this had changed by the 1990s into the slogan that what was good for Wall Street was all that matters (Harvey 2005:33). While this disparate group of influential individuals embedded in the corporate, financial, and trading and developer world do not necessarily conspire as a class, the group nonetheless recognizes massive advantages to be derived from Neoliberalization. They also possess means of exchanging ideas and of consorting and consulting with political leaders. They exercise immense influence over global affairs and possess a freedom of action that no ordinary citizen possesses (Harvey 2005:36).

There is a similar way of approach in Gregory's reasoning, as he claims that if one looks into the past, the upper class always either possessed or tried to possess increasing levels of power and influence. America's imperialism has always been there and continues to do so even now. The USA's political-economic ambitions are to restore this class power with the use of economic imperialism (Gregory 2004:49). In the next following part, I will focus more deeply

on the economic downturn in the USA and how the government started to take new economic measures against that.

If we look in the more recent events of the last decade, we can see the obvious ambitions that the Bush administration set and developed. In 2001, the tech bubble had now officially popped; the administration found itself staring in the face of a serious economic downturn. Naomi Klein's reasoning claims that Bush's solution was for the government to deconstruct itself- hacking off great chunks of the public wealth and feeding them to corporate America (Klein 2007:295). Klein talks about a "disaster capitalism complex"-a full- fledged new economy in home-land security, privatized war and disaster reconstruction tasked with nothing but building and running a privatized security state, both at home and abroad (Klein 2007:299). A market for terrorism was created and the in the USA, the home land security industry was booming. 30 million surveillance cameras were installed, shooting about 4 billion hours of footage a year. In order to scan this footage, "analytic software" emerged from the market. This development created the next one, namely digital image enhancement, which was sold massively to the FBI and other law enforcement agencies. After 9/11, the government had created a market that was fed by fear. In just a few years, the homeland security industry, which barely existed before 9/11, has exploded to a size that is now significantly larger than either Hollywood or the music business (Klein 2007:306). Peter Swire, who served as the US government's privacy counselor during the Clinton administration, describes the convergence of forces behind the war on terror like this: "You have government on a holy mission to ramp up information gathering and you have an information technology industry that is desperate for new markets." In other words, you have corporatism: big business and big government (under the influence of big business) combining their formidable powers to regulate and control the citizenry (Klein 2007:307). And this regulation, control and profit-making do not stop inside the USA. Klein concludes that the corporatists have controlled and directed the government even in foreign political questions. The political-economic ambitions of the American government are to invade countries, under the umbrella of the war on terror, in order to open up new markets for US companies (Klein 2007:308).

Susanne Clark, with her article "Politics of vulnerability", agrees on the marketing of the homeland security, by explaining that the federal government is willing and prepared to fight

the war on terrorism in the USA on several fronts. Not only are governmental functions at risk, but also corporations, airlines, critical infrastructure, educational facilities, and private residences are vulnerable to attacks. Thus far, the federal government has left the market more or less unregulated, hoping that a market for homeland security will develop naturally (Clark 2006).

Robert Spich explains in an article, published in the journal “political geography”, that homeland security (HomSec) is a previously under-emphasized and low threat risk that produced a specific policy/action response of the U.S. Government to the 9/11 systems shock. The outcome of that shock has been to create a series of systemic reactions and responses (political, economic, social, organizational, and technological) by both public and private sectors that attempt to restore equilibrium to internal systems and return to “normal.” Like the Cold War, the 9/11 event is defining an ethos for this early stage of the globalization era (for the new millennium as well) where security concerns are becoming a central organizing principle and policy guideline for international policy and strategy (and economy). Spich further suggests that one major early outcome of the 9/11 event is that security now has a larger meaning with the extension of the national security function to now include a deeper interest and intervention in matters of internal domestic security (Spich 2005).

Putzel states that it was over the war in Iraq that this intervention of international domestic affairs really became obvious and that the US demonstrated its determination to pursue a unilateral course of action not only ignoring, but in defiance of, the United Nations. The Republicans have used the tragedy of September 11 to pursue long-held goals of unilateralism by employing a rhetoric of fear. The NSS-stated goal to ‘rid the world of evil’ merges all threats to the US into one, establishing an unbroken thread between terrorist attacks and states the US deems to be ‘rogues’. Thus, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, the Bush administration sold the Iraq war to the American public suggesting a link between Saddam Hussein and the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden; in this way September 11 became the justification for going to war first in Afghanistan and then in Iraq (Putzel 2006).

Smith states that liberals have traditionally endorsed empire. They have occupied the forefront of imperial ambition, and the current Washington neoliberals, spanning both parties, resemble no one more than their nineteenth-century British predecessors (Neil Smith 2005:42). The American political-economic ambitions are the consummate expression of the liberalism that founded the USA. American globalism from Roosevelt and Wilson to Clinton

and W. Bush is this exact expression. Territorially specific, it aspires endlessly but never successfully not to be. Globalization is the capitalist expression of eighteenth century liberal universalism- “Liberty”, George Bush said, “is universal”. Smith concludes that twenty-first century American globalism, whether by neoliberal or neoconservative means, is the most ambitious fruit of the central antagonism in American politics and economy (Smith 2005:51f). Based on this theory of US globalism, I will in the following discuss the hidden aims behind US foreign politics.

According to Samir Amin, in his book “Obsolescent Capitalism”, the declared aim of the US strategic political economic hegemony is not to tolerate any power capable of resisting its injunctions, which can be seen similar to the aim for empire that Smith expressed. Amin explains that the global political and financial strategy of the United States has five key objectives: 1) to neutralize and subjugate its partners in the Triad (Europe, Japan), reducing to a minimum their capacity to act outside the American fold, 2) to establish military control over NATO, 3) to hold undivided sway over the Middle East and Central Asia and their oil resources, 4) to break up China, subordinate the other large countries (India, Brazil) and prevent the formation of regional blocs capable of bargaining over the terms of globalization, 5) to marginalize regions in the South that are of no strategic interest (Amin 2003:80f).

According to Amin, the third objective seemed to have been the major task for the Bush and now the Obama administration. The focus on the Middle East lays heavy and keeps to bring up a lot of tension, questions and sadness to the world and more importantly, to the people in the affected countries. Amin reasons that the US hegemony rests more upon military aggrandizement than upon any “advantages” of the American economic system. America’s real political advantage is being a single country, unlike the European Union. The USA can thereby project itself as the Triad’s undisputed leader, making its own military strength and a US-dominated NATO the “visible fist” for the imposition of the new imperialist order on anyone who still refuses to knuckle under (Amin 2003:81). This is another factor that promotes the theory of the ambitions of the USA to recreate an empire.

Putzel argues similarly, by stating that there is a growing consensus that the United States has emerged as an imperial power- the world’s single superpower. It appears that the US pursues the ‘imperial’ project as ‘an attempt to permanently order the world of states and markets according to its national interests.’ What some argue from a humanitarian perspective, others

argue from an economic perspective, underlining that the US has emerged as uncontested hegemonic capable of enforcing peace and property rights and presiding over a new 'liberal international economic order', ensuring progress in both developed and developing regions of the world through globalization. The article further states that imperialism has become a precondition for democracy (Putzel 2006). As we have seen, the USA are hegemonic and tries to rank itself as the world's only superpower, and in order to do so, the concept of global democracy and the spreading of such was seen vital for the American government. This attempt to spread democracy globally will be discussed in the next part.

According to Noam Chomsky, the main principle that the USA uses in order to be globally dominant is instead "the spreading of democracy", and he explains that this imperial power is mainly represented by economic and financial grip holds and "liberations" that the US tries to force upon the entire planet. The USA is exporting its free-market values through global commercial agreements ("exporting American values"). The "American values" are most dramatically illustrated by the wave of the future: telecommunications, the Internet, advanced computer technology, and the other wonders created by the exuberant American entrepreneurial spirit unleashed by the market (Chomsky 1999:65f). Chomsky explains that the main political-economic principles and mission of American can be found in the "crusade for democracy", which was first waged during the Reagan years. The results are commonly offered as a prime illustration of how the USA became "the inspiration for the triumph of democracy in our time", to quote the editors of a leading intellectual journal of American liberalism (Chomsky 1999:95). The primary "barriers to implementation" of democracy are efforts to "protect domestic markets"- that is to prevent foreign corporations to gain even more control over the society. We are to understand, then, that democracy is enhanced as significant decision making shifts even more into the hands of unaccountable private tyrannies, mostly foreign-based. Meanwhile the public arena is to shrink still further as the state is minimized in accordance with the neoliberal political and economic principles that have emerged triumphant. Thinking about this, we gain some useful insight into the concepts of democracy and markets, as well as American political-economic strategies, in the operative sense (Chomsky 1999:96). Given the definition of the "barrier to implementation" of democracy, Chomsky further argues, the USA has totally failed to spread democracy globally. However, Washington has a totally different concept and strategy and merely seems to use the

spreading of democracy as a sort of umbrella, in order to “carry out the work”. Chomsky regards Washington’s “impulse to promote democracy” as “sincere”, but largely a failure. Furthermore, the failure was systematic; where Washington’s influence was least; there was real progress toward democracy (South America). Where its influence was greatest, progress was least, and where it occurred, the US role was marginal or negative (Chomsky 1999:96).

There is an obvious similarity in Harvey’s reasoning about freedom when compared to Chomsky’s position on democracy. Harvey states that the idea of freedom (or democracy) degenerates into a mere advocacy of free enterprise. Free enterprise and private ownership are declared to be essentials of democracy and freedom. The justice, liberty and welfare that neoliberal states offer are decried as a camouflage of slavery, hidden under the well meant concept of democracy (Harvey 2005:37).

How and why did the war in Afghanistan happen?

Amin reasons that after only one year after George W Bush was elected president, he already started one of the two wars that would become America’s new nightmare during the first decade of the 21th century. After 9/11, Bush and the American people were convinced that Osama Bin Laden was to be found in Afghanistan, and that it was America’s duty to wage this war in order to catch him and the rest of the Al Qaida bunch. The attacks on the World Trade Center and the announcement of Bin Laden shortly after were the perfect kick start for this “quest against terrorism”. But was this really the reason behind the actions that were taken by America? Westerners are usually convinced that because the USA and the EU are democratic, their governments are incapable of pursuing any “evil purpose”. This kind of behavior is reserved for bloody oriental dictators and terrorists (Amin 2003:82). But, as Amin highlights, there is one immensely important factor that most people overlook, namely the interests of dominant capital. The Middle East and the Gulf region contain most of the world’s oil reserves. Can the close relationship between the Bush family and US oil interest simply be overlooked? Is it not strange that Bush Senior’s first war was to control the Gulf, and that Bush Junior’s first war openly aimed to wrest control over Central Asia- and was also a war for oil? Specialist literature gives abundant proof of the links between Washington’s diplomatic maneuvers to control the Central Asian pipelines and its past military support to the Taliban (Amin 2003:83). If this hidden aim would be achieved, Washington and the

people behind the Administration would directly control a region that, since ancient times, has both divided and linked together Asia, Europe, Russia and Africa. The Afghan war is part of this militarization of the US global hegemony (Amin 2003:83).

Stuart Elden also explains America's reason for a war in Afghanistan to be the chase after Bin Laden and the "absolute evil". Elden argues that there is of course a purpose to portraying al-Qaeda or Islamic terrorist organizations more generally, this way. Seeing them as "an omnipresent terrorist threat as evil as it is widespread—from Bosnia to the Philippines, from Chechnya to Pakistan, from Libya to Yemen" allows the US to legitimate "any punitive action it might take anywhere at any time". Politically, spatially, temporally there are, it seems, no limits to the responses (Antipode 2007:821ff). After having discussed the possible and real reasons for the war, I will now focus on the actual war events that took and still take place in Afghanistan.

Smith explains that the paucity of targets and the failure to hit them made Afghanistan a frustrating war for the pentagon. Yet the real target had long been in the sights of the Bushites, evident when Donald Rumsfeld declared Iraq a preferable alternative: unlike Afghanistan, it was "target-rich" (Smith 2005:152). In 1998, there had been an appeal to "use US and allied military power ...to protect our vital interests in the Gulf region...and if necessary, to help remove Saddam from power". Among the signatories of this appeal were Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz (Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense), as well as Richard Perle (Chair of the President's Defense Policy Board). From the beginning of the Bush Administration, this group had pressed for all-out war against Iraq, but the President was unsure. Smith concludes that September 11th was a gift to their cause and Bush raised the banner (Smith 2005:153). Smith further states that the "war on terror" in Afghanistan became a fiasco. It dislodged a despicable Taliban government that gave bin Laden refuge, but in the process it bombed villages, markets, weddings, and civilians, killing thousands. For the Bush administration, war was necessary in order to "restore American credibility" but it backfired as the most technological army on earth could not find those whom Bush derided as "cave dwellers". The echo of Americans' own plaintiff refrain after 9/11 was chilling, but it passed in virtual silence. As the Taliban regrouped, the new US-sponsored Afghanistan is not so dissimilar from the old- regional military commanders refusing a puppet administration in Kabul. From the vantage point of many Afghans, 9/11 unleashed not a war on terror but a war

of terror. American liberalism, for many, has replaced one form of terror with another (Smith 2005:161).

Tom Rockmore, author of the article “On the so called war on terror”, agrees by arguing that the ongoing war in Afghanistan was and is unjust because it simply lumps together those who may have attacked the U.S. with those who clearly did not do so and hence should not have been attacked in return. There is no reason to think that the U.S. was attacked by Afghanistan (Rockmore 2004:387).

Stuart Elden reasons that the distinction between the actual terrorists and the states the USA invaded, Afghanistan and Iraq in this case, was blurry and for the Bush administration close to non-existing. Bush stated that “we will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them”. As Bush’s speechwriter David Frum suggested, "With those words, Bush upgraded the 'war on terror' from metaphor to fact". What this enabled was the move to target states. As Cheney expressed it, "in some ways the states were easier targets than the shadowy terrorists". A putatively deterritorialised threat—the network of networks of al-Qaeda, or global Islamism- was reterritorialised in the sands of Afghanistan and, later, Iraq (Elden 2007).

Gregory argues that it is extremely vital and necessary to emphasize that the relentless war and destruction of Afghanistan emerged out of a series of intimate engagements with- not estrangements from- modern imperial power. In Britain’s famous newspaper “Independent”, Philip Hencher declared that Afghanistan’s problem was precisely that it had never been colonized. If only its people “had been subjugated as India was”, he sighed (Gregory 2004:44). Gregory states that this modern imperial power is hegemony without colonies, a global sphere of influence without the burden of direct administration and the risks of daily policing. In this way, Gregory lifts up a very important approach that is different to the other sources, namely that the war in Afghanistan was not a failure, as the USA have made themselves responsible not just for waging a war on terrorism and rogue states, but also for spreading “the benefits” of capitalism and neoliberalism and democracy overseas (Gregory 2004:251). Further, Gregory states that the USA is a new empire, but is in an empire in denial. These states of affairs are not only preposterous- how can you not be an empire and maintain 750 military bases in three-quarters of the countries on earth? - but also dangerous (Gregory 2004:251). The road to Iraq, through Afghanistan, was urged for by global capitalism. The background of these two wars must be found in globalization and

neoliberalism. If global capitalism is aggressively de-territorializing, moving ever outwards in a process of ceaseless expansion and furiously tearing down barriers to capital accumulation, then colonial modernity is intrinsically territorializing, forever installing partitions between “us” and “them” (Gregory 2004:253). Leaving this horrific scenery of modern warfare, I now head over to the discussion of the financial reasons of war, which I will discuss in the following part.

The above explained urge for war by global capitalism brings us to the financial management of the war. Amin reasons that another headache for the government in Washington was the question of who will foot the bill in Afghanistan. One idea was that the money could be extracted from the Gulf States, whose massive investments in the world’s financial system are always open to seizure. Bush’s declaration of “financial war” against terrorism has just come in time for a possible grab at Arab investments in the USA and elsewhere (Amin 2003:90). This need to pay for the immense amount of money that was and still is pumped into the war in Afghanistan goes hand in hand with the globalists’ need and urge to take over the Middle East’s financial system. And Amin concludes that it was the logical step for Washington to invade other countries (Iraq) in the region in order to ensure the fulfillment of these needs (Amin 2003:91).

According to Smith, more than any obsession with terrorism, this larger ambition concerning global geo-economic power underlies the war in Afghanistan, and further in Iraq and the continued saber-rattling in the Middle East, aimed especially at Syria and Iran. Spearheaded by one branch of the US ruling class, and not at all popular with others, US elites are driving an attempt to complete a project of global economic and political power that has not only long dominated its sense of its own destiny, but also coincides with its material interests around the globe. Peaking in two prior moments, that longstanding ambition has been revived since the 1980s under the rubric of “globalization” (Smith 2005:15). Smith agrees that Afghanistan was sort of the gateway to Iraq and the entire Middle East region and mentioned the similar factor of the economic reasons for an economic connection.

What was the real purpose behind the invasion of Iraq?

Also, according to Gregory, Afghanistan was the “gateway war” towards the entire Middle East and towards the USA’s power grip of it. This leads us to America’s next “war on terror”, Iraq. When American and British forces launched a joint invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003, modern types of colonial power and military violence would soon replace the original story that the Bush Administration had set up in order to justify their invasion of Iraq. The invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq are seen as two interlinked fronts of the same unholy project. Each magnifies and clarifies the other (Gregory 2004:145).

There is no doubt that the Saddam Hussein Regime was ruthless and brutal. Gregory states that Human Rights Watches had in 2002 confirmed that the regime “perpetrated widespread and gross human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests of suspected political opponents and their relatives, routine torture and ill-treatment of detainees, summary executions and forced expulsions.” But to demonize Saddam Hussein as absolute Evil is to allow “selective vigilantism” to masquerade as moral principle. When Iraq was an ally of the USA, Saddam’s ruthless suppression of dissent and his use of chemical weapons against the Kurds were well known; yet, far from protesting or proposing military action, the USA supplied Iraq with the materials needed for waging biological and chemical warfare, and protected it from sanction by both Congress and the United Nations. So, the question to ask was: What makes today different from 10, 20 or 30 years ago? Why would America suddenly care about the human rights situation in Iraq? (Gregory 2004:183). Gregory further reasons that because Afghanistan and Iraq had to be linked together, the Bush Administration, from the first day after 9/11, had tried to find numerous factors to link Iraq to the terror attacks on the WTC and Al-Qaeda. There were no clear evidences to be found, but still, in summer of 2002, Bush and his Secretary of Defense were first claiming, and later on insisting that Al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein’s regime were connected and that the two were “already virtually indistinguishable” (Gregory 2004:185). The significance of 9/11 was strategic. It fanned the flames of domestic and international support- even enthusiasm- for military action against Iraq (Gregory 2004:187). Later on however, when “major combat operations” had supposedly ended, Bush admitted that “We’ve had no evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved with 9/11” (Gregory 2004:190). What, then, were the other grounds for war? One was inevitably oil. It could be seen as merely another move in the Great Game for oil, in which Bush’s father had

been a key player in 1990-1991 (Gregory 2004:190). The other reason adduced by critics was the exercise of sovereign power itself.

Putzel agrees with the above mentioned oil as a ground for war, as he states that critics of the war have claimed that it was a 'war for oil' to secure the interests of US energy companies in the oil rich countries of the developing world. Critical voices have suggested that the US led invasion of Iraq in March 2003 was in reality an extension of a war that began in 1991-the Gulf War-which employed illegal weapons against the Iraqi population and was followed over the next decade with a brutal regime of sanctions that, in addition to destroying the infrastructure of development, caused at least 300 000 deaths among children under five years old. Putzel suggests that The Bush administration's invasion of Iraq seemed to be motivated by the confluence of diverse and somewhat mutually contradictory agendas of component parts of the alliance behind the White House. In part, the invasion was motivated by long-held neoconservative views about the political economy of the region and the need to secure the Middle East oil reserve. A strategy paper put together by leading interests within the Republican Party even before Bush came to power made clear that they saw the 'preservation of a favorable balance of power in . . . the Middle East and surrounding energy-producing region' as one of the key bases upon which to secure 'America's global leadership' (Putzel 2006:74). Putzel then argues that by now it is clear that Saddam Hussein's regime harbored no weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The US employed the claim about WMD for two reasons: (1) to establish a legal veneer-to claim it was acting to enforce already existing UN Security Council resolutions related to Iraq's disarmament; and (2) to rally US public opinion by promoting fear. It was clear from successive reports by the UN inspectors that not only had most of Iraq's weapons been destroyed in the 1990s, but there was little evidence that those still not accounted for were any longer in existence (Putzel 2006:73f). This, according to Putzel, is further evidence of the US government's attempt to try the real grounds for war in Iraq. In order to understand the grounds for war that were explained in the chapter above, one has to look closer on the economic reasons behind the invasion of Iraq, which I will now focus on in depth. The liberated economy of Iraq, as the following chapter will show, is benefitting not the Iraqi people.

An Iraq plagued by long-term violence and guerrilla warfare would not ensure the investment climate in oil, desired by neoconservative strategists in the US. However, the US appeared to be playing a 'long game' to transform the geopolitics of this strategic region of the developing world and its next target appeared to be Iran. The invasion of Iraq established its commitment to act pre-emptively, against the United Nations and in disdain for international law. It was a declaration of empire (Putzel 2006:76).

Smith argues that "when oil is involved, no accidents occur." Oil is a central calculation in any war in the Middle East, and the base of the Bush-Cheney administration's social roots- not to mention their individual and family economic interests- lies with that wing of the ruling classes in and around the energy sector. Globalization is a reality for this rarified global elite, which crosses national borders as a way of life and business. The priority accorded oil in Iraq was tragically evident as invading US troops protected oil fields and refineries as the nation's most valuable resource. The system of oil supply includes various interests: governments owning reserves can open or close the spigot, multinational oil corporations have similar power over refining decisions, and governments more generally affect supply via taxation policies and the maintenance of strategic reserves (Smith 2005:182f). Smith states that Paul Bremer, the American Administrator in Iraq, fully defended his tenure by stating that "Iraq has been fundamentally changed for the better". "Among the biggest accomplishments were the lowering of Iraq's tax rate, the liberalization of foreign investment, and the reduction of import duties. These accomplishments will ultimately lead to an open economy". Bremer's choice actually speaks to the larger reasons for war. Washington wanted first and foremost to privatize the Iraqi economy, thinking that security and democracy would follow unproblematically (Smith 2005:178). The Iraqi Constitution forbids the privatization of economic assets and forbids non-Iraqis from owning Iraqi firms. This would frustrate Washington and their new ideology of an "Open Door" for global corporations. To get around these legal provisions would take time. Therefore, in September 2003 the newly formed "Coalition Provisional Authority" overturned the existing laws of Iraqi ownership. The CPA created "a capitalist dream" by implementing the "Order 39", which included the privatization of state owned resources, legalized foreign ownership of Iraqi banks, mines and factories and permitted the complete repatriation of profits from Iraq (Smith 2005:179).

Also Klein talks about these economic implementations in Iraq and she agrees that these new economic laws were quickly established and some more specific and in-detail examples

included the lowering of Iraq's corporate tax rate from 45% to a flat 15% (copied from the Milton Friedman strategies). Another allowed foreign companies to own 100% of Iraqi assets. Even further steps were taken here, as investors could take 100% of the profits they made in Iraq out of the country; they would not be required to reinvest, and they would not be taxed (Klein 2007:345).

Klein further states that Iraq, Bremer declared, was "open for business". Overnight, Iraq went from being one of the most isolated countries in the world, sealed off from the most basic trade by strict UN sanctions, to becoming the widest-open market anywhere (Klein 2007:339). Bremer's mission never was to win Iraqi hearts and minds; rather it was to get the country ready for the launch of "Iraq Inc". Bremer spent his first four months in Iraq almost exclusively focused on economic transformation. Before the Invasion, Iraq's economy had been anchored by its national oil company and by two hundred state owned companies, which produced the staples of the Iraqi diet and the raw materials of its industry. Bremer announced that the two hundred firms were going to be privatized immediately. "Getting inefficient state enterprises into private hands", he said, "is essential for Iraq's economic recovery". (Klein 2007:345). Klein explains that while this so called "economic recovery" took place in Iraq, the public economic situation at home in the USA, and in Iraq, got worse. Partly, this was caused by the fact that this new free market was created with a huge pot of public money. For reconstruction alone, the boom was kicked off with 38 billion dollars from US Congress, 15 billion dollars from other countries and 20 billion dollars of Iraq's own oil money (Klein 2007:346). In reality, the reconstruction of Iraq, as it was printed on paper, never actually took place. None of the money went to Iraqi factories so that they could reopen and form the foundation of a sustainable economy, create local jobs and fund a social safety net (Klein 2007:347).

Naomi Klein further writes about the "Model Theory". Many intellectuals have discussed this matter and many agreed with it. As America and the neoliberalism could not invade the whole Arab region all at once, a single country needed to serve as a catalyst. The USA would invade that country and turned into "a different model in the heart of the Arab-Muslim world", one that in turn would set off a series of democratic/neoliberal waves throughout the entire region. Michael Ledeen, an adviser to the Bush Administration, described the goal as "a war to remake the world" (Klein 2007:328). To remake Iraq was the exact plan of Washington: shock and terrorize the entire country, deliberately ruin its infrastructure, do nothing while its

culture and history are ransacked, then make it all ok with an unlimited supply of cheap household appliances and imported junk food. In Iraq, this culture erasing and culture replacing was not theoretical, it all unfolded in a matter of weeks. Just as one culture was being burned and stripped for parts, another was pouring in, prepackaged, to replace it (Klein 2007:339). One of the US businesses ready and waiting to be the gateway to this experiment in frontier capitalism was New Bridge Strategies, started by Joe Allbaugh, Bush's ex-head of FEMA. It promised to use its top-level political connections to help US multinationals land a piece of the action in Iraq. "Getting the right to distribute Procter and Gamble products would be a gold mine". "One well-stocked 7-Eleven could knock out 30 Iraqi stores; a Wal-Mart could take over the country. Iraq was going to be bought off with Pringles and pop culture-that, at least, was the Bush administration's idea of a postwar plan (Klein 2007:339f).

According to another article, Iraq, for Bush, is not just the "central front in the war on terror", but a place which is supposed to act as a beacon of democracy for the rest of the Middle East. It further claims that There was another sort of messianic tone to the Bush National Security Strategy and this was directed squarely at the developing world as it proclaimed US objectives 'to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets and free trade to every corner of the world' (Journal for international development 2006:76). This is clearly supporting the idea of Klein's model theory. This brings the discussion to a final point of interest, being the choosing of the country of Iraq. The next part will discuss why Iraq was seen by the American government as a preferable location.

Klein states that the Middle East would be "cleaned out" of terrorists and a giant free-trade zone would be created, or as Bush put it: "spreading freedom in a troubled region" (Klein 2007:328). Iraq had a great deal to be recommended as this model state. In addition to its vast oil reserves, it also made a good central location for military bases now that Saudi Arabia looked less dependable, and Saddam's use of chemical weapons on his own people made him easy to hate. Another factor, often overlooked, was that Iraq had the advantage of familiarity. The first Gulf War in 1991 was America's latest major battle operation, and the pentagon had used the battle as a template in workshops, training and elaborates war games ever since (Klein 2007:329). Iraq had another advantage; its military capacities had been hurtling backward, eroding by sanctions and virtually disassembled by the UN's administered

weapons inspection program. Klein concludes that this meant that compared with Iran or Syria, Iraq seemed the site for the most winnable war (Klein 2007:330).

But, as Smith reasons, it turned out that it was anything but easy “to win this war”. The US military flailed in search of social and military order, but the purported peace was more contested and more violent than the actual war. As markets, villages, weddings, and civilians were again (as in Afghanistan) subject to carnage, Baghdad did not turn out with flowers and chocolate for the US troops. Any dream of “normalization” dissolved into the predictable prospect of an American-made civil war as hearts and minds deserted the cause by the thousands (Smith 2005:162). The Department of Defense (DOD) was flummoxed by its own propaganda, unable to comprehend the fusillade of opposition firepower that greeted the occupiers instead of the flowers at their feet that they expected. This was no mere intelligence failure, but potentially a total operation failure and the administration knew that (Smith 2005:163). Smith asks how the war crimes and the larger war on Iraq in total represent a failure of liberalism. Smith then argues that despite the horrific events, the torture, the killing, the attacks; the justification of the American behavior goes to the heart of democratic liberalism. Supposedly intended to depose a dictator, the war quickly turned into a vendetta against the very people victimized by that dictator, and the consequent abrogation of human rights posed the naked power at work. As such, the American wars of the early twenty-first century highlight much about the contradictions of post eighteenth century liberalism (Smith 2005:164).

Globalism might work well in fields such as climate, energy, loss of biodiversity through habitat destruction and the like. But its results in the human rights field are more problematic, given the diversity of political-economic circumstances and cultural practices to be found in the world. So called “liberal hawks” in the USA for example, have appealed to justify imperialist interventions in above all Afghanistan and Iraq (Harvey 2005:178). They justify military humanism “in the name of protecting freedom, human rights and democracy even when it is pursued unilaterally by a self-appointed imperialist power” such as the USA. Smith concludes that the critical connection forged between neoliberalism as a particular set of political-economic practices and the increasing appeal to universal rights of a certain sort as an ethical foundation for moral and political legitimacy should alert us. The Bremer decrees impose a certain conception of rights upon Iraq. At the same time they violate the Iraqi right of self-determination. (Smith 2005:179f).

McLeavy agrees in her article in *Antipode* with Smith's opinion on neoliberalism, but spins the wheel even further, as she states that the Bush and Obama administration used and uses a more wide-spread form of neoliberal geopolitics that was implicated in the war-making in Afghanistan and Iraq. This geopolitical world vision is closely connected to neoliberal idealism about the virtues of free markets, openness and global economic integration (*Antipode* 2005:886). America's war-making has been undertaken in an open, systematic, globally ambitious, and quasi-corporate economic style. The Iraq war was, in some respects, a traditional national, imperial war aimed at the monopolization of resources. McLeavy further argues that in the neoliberal approach, the geopolitics of interimperial rivalry and the idea about hemispheric control is eclipsed by a new global vision of almost infinite openness and interdependency. Danger is no longer something that should be contained at a disconnected distance. Now, danger is itself being defined as disconnection from the global system. McLeavy concludes that in turn, the neoliberal geopolitics response, it seems, is to insist on enforcing reconnection- or, "aggressive engagement" (McLeavy 2009:888).

Personal reflections

I will now discuss in what ways my three main questions were answered. To what extent has neoliberalism influenced the American foreign politics, especially the economic-based one? Based on this essay and all the studying and reading I have done, I would say that the American foreign politics can undoubtedly be called neoliberal. Starting with question number one; *America's global political-economic ambition and agenda*, the literature produced interesting information about the background of neoliberalism in America, how it appeared, how it was shaped and how it slowly but surely crept into every facet of the American political and economic scene. "Embedded neoliberalism", during the 1950s and 1960s appeared to me as a very attractive political-economic ideology in America. The country was thriving and welfare was growing, on a more or less equal level. But in 1970s, neoliberalism took over and the government slowly lost its touch, or better put its control over it. Privatization of more or less everything followed, resulting inevitably in what we now know as globalization (Harvey 2005:14). The government has less and less control and influence over the economy, but plays a major puppet-figure role, as the economic elite behind the White House uses the president and his administration in order to carry out their agenda. This economic elite has risen from the grave, as they now try to exterminate

democracy, human rights and social equality. This goal has been partly achieved already and can be found in the fact of the reappearance of an American class society. So, the political-economic ambitions and agenda of the American government can, and must be related to the interests of this economic elite behind the white house. To what extent the elites influence the political-economic directions of the American government, is nonetheless unclear. Are the shadowy elites really that powerful? Why would they, in that case, allow America to become a modern empire? Why would they not simply step forward and openly act as the force of globalization and neoliberalism, without the puppet government between them and the world? On the other hand, the concept of any -ism is related to politics and society, and so is neoliberalism. The driving forces of Neoliberalization probably need the government, as it is the only legal and constitutional way, at least in theory, to create new laws and rules. Examples here include the spreading of free markets around the world, new tax systems, surveillance technologies and the implementation of it, etc. As the Western countries are embedded in the sense of democracy, such changes can also only take place with the help of, or through the concept of political democracy. This is a clear paradox, as neoliberalism is highly suspicious of democracy (Harvey 2005:11).

Klein's "Disaster capitalism complex" theory made me think a lot and I must say that I agree with her reasoning. The disaster of 9/11, the upcoming homeland security market and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are all correlated. 9/11 was a gift for the Bush administration (Smith 2005:153), and the government knew exactly how to use this tragedy and play the American people, in order to create and run this huge profit market. The effects can be seen in our present time, with as an example 30 million surveillance cameras in the USA alone, with modern screening software, or with an example that happened only a couple of weeks back, around Christmas, the introduction of costly "naked body scanners" in international airports. All these implementations were brought on under the umbrella of security and the threat of terrorism, but they also created an enormous market and enormous profits for certain people.

When it comes to the second topic of my essay; *The road to Iraq, drive by in Afghanistan*, I tried to show how the war in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq are interlinked, how Iraq never would have been possible without Afghanistan and even how and why Afghanistan was a complete failure, at least from a military, and humanitarian point of view. It is the middle topic between the political-economic ambitions of America and "Operation Iraq" and from there, it will most certainly move on to Iran and Saudi Arabia. Every step is a piece in the

neoliberal puzzle that America so desperately tries to put together right now. As much as Iraq never would have been possible without Afghanistan, as much would Afghanistan never have happened without 9/11. The possibility that the White House was actually involved in the terrorist attacks of 9/11 remains. This is a very serious accusation, which many nonetheless have uttered, and if the truth is ever going to be revealed, the horrors of the actual event will be shadowed by the realization that democratic and modern governments are actually able to make use of such inhuman methods in order to create reasons for war. However, there is no hard evidence that would support that fact, so all that remains is observation and the actual events. True is that the Bush administration found its devil in Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda. It is also true that Bush used this terror group as a justification in order to legitimize the attack on Afghanistan. The results of that war, as my research has proven, were devastating and not positive at all. Bin Laden was never found and still haunts the “free world” with occasional video clips of threat and hatred. The Taliban is on the return in Afghanistan, as America created an enormous so called “power vacuum” and the new president of the United States, Barack Obama, suddenly has no intention to leave Afghanistan. One would argue that this is of course the plan, to establish a permanent military presence in Afghanistan, but why would America then like the Taliban in the country? Mayhap it is the urge of the American administration to keep a certain level of disturbance and violence in the country; a possible hidden cooperation between Washington and Bin Laden is not that farfetched, given the USA’s past military support to the Taliban (Amin 2003:83), mainly to ensure the necessity of their military presence. Or perhaps Washington’s plan simply was not that perfect and they did not take into account the strength and stubbornness of the Taliban in the region. Already during the actual war, the military had hard times to find those “cave dwellers” and “primitive horse riders” (Smith 2005:160). Whatever the reason, Washington is not willing to give up Afghanistan. I personally was not convinced by the oil argument, as Iraq and Iran deliver much better reasons for that particular matter. But I do strongly believe that Afghanistan was the first step in the militarization of the USA’s global hegemony (Amin 2003:83). There had to be a starting point, and Afghanistan, in combination with its dreadful Taliban-regime and the events of 9/11, was the perfect first step. Under the umbrella of the “spreading of freedom and democracy”, America has a very well thought of motive, or excuse one might say, to stay in the country. And for the UN and the rest of the world, it seems to be hard to counter-argue the ways of Washington.

Moving on to the last question; *The liberation of Iraq- America's "open door" towards new markets*, which was the center of my essay. Everything that happened before seems to have been put there on purpose, everything that happened before seems to have led to Iraq (Jones, 2008). From my point of view, the main goal of the Bush administration was the "Operation Iraq". The obscurity of this operation is that it had very little to do with the actual protection of the American people or country. As Bush admitted, there simply were no links whatsoever between the terror attacks of 9/11 and the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein (Gregory 2004:190). This is indeed a very crucial point, as Washington did draw tight links between Hussein and the terrorist activities that had caused 9/11. "Those terrorists", as Bush claimed before the war in Iraq started, "do not only dwell in Afghanistan, but they also operate in Iraq, we therefore must act now, before it once again will be too late". Bush lured the people and made them believe that the search for Al-Qaeda and Bin Laden could not stop in Afghanistan, but must continue in Iraq. In fact, Hussein himself was one of the biggest terror threats to the American nation, as Bush claimed that Iraq was in the possession of weapons of mass destruction, WMDs. First of all, Bush had seemed to forgotten the fact that the USA itself possesses a huge arsenal of WMDs. Secondly, it should not be forgotten either that the only state, throughout history, that ever used WMDs is the USA itself (the Bush administration's disdain for international law and international conventions makes this of more than minor significance). Thirdly, the weapons inspections that were made showed no hard evidence of any WMS in Iraq. This was reason enough to doubt the fact that Iraq would pose an imminent military terrorist threat to the US (Gregory 2004:181f). I find this extremely important, as it shows how desperate the Bush administration really was to get into Iraq. Once they had arrived, things moved fast in the country in the Gulf region. As my research has shown, the economic "recovery" and "development" of the country was the primary concern of the American administration. But it did not focus on the economic recovery of Iraq itself, but on the global economic grip and development in Iraq. Paul Bremer basically sold the entire Iraqi economy to international corporations. It is with great sadness that I look on the ongoing events in Iraq and feel sorry for all the Iraqis who had hoped for so much and got so little.

Speaking from another perspective, things do not seem that hopeless for the people in Iraq. I am divided on this question and will try to explain it. Given our economic geography that surrounds us in the Western world; it appears difficult for me to judge the situation in Iraq. There is absolutely no doubt about the wrongness and cruelty of the American methods and war strategies, but there is a doubt in whether or, and to what extent the Iraqi people might

suffer from the American invasion in the future. As I “enjoy” the social and economic benefits that globalization, capitalism and even neoliberalism seem to give me, how can I then judge and feel sorry for the Iraqi people, who might be able to “enjoy” the same standard of living and democratic society as I do? Bremer’s “open economy” (Smith 2005:184) was brought by false claims and false pretence, and the reasons behind the economic “opening up” of Iraq is certainly to be questioned and benefit large multinational corporations and banks, but one must consider the fact that there is a certain level of public benefit that this Neoliberalization of Iraq carries along. The liberalization of Iraq must be considered economic, and the development of the country will certainly wonder off into wrong directions, as it seems to be in the hand of profit-hungry globalists and corporatists, but is not that the same scenario we nowadays face in our Western countries? And do we not simultaneously have the highest standard of living in the world, despite these factors of influence? I do not approve of the events that led, took, take and will take place in Iraq and in the entire Middle East region, but from a humane, from a social point of view, it seems to be a slight improvement, compared to the ruthless dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, in the case of Iraq. As globalization and neoliberalism seem to need the presence of democracy, as I already discovered earlier in this discussion, this fact could mayhap be to the people’s advantage in Iraq, even though it is far from perfection. But once again, we do not have this luxury ourselves, and I find it therefore difficult to judge. Harvey on the other hand strongly argues that neoliberalism is anything but democratic, but instead an elite-controlled system, which would leave no brighter future for the people of Iraq (Harvey 2005).

If I now turn around my perspective once again, I continue to utter concern when it comes to the threat of the “total privatization of Iraq”, which can be called the primary reason for the invasion (Smith 2005:178). As we know from the recent history in the Western countries, privatization always leads to negative aspects in a society. The basic rules for neoliberalism appear to be to liberate trade and finance, and to then privatize. The government should get out of the way- hence the population too, insofar as the government is democratic (Chomsky 1999:20). To fully privatize Iraq hence means to fully economically exclude a possible democratic government, which the USA now so desperately tries to set up in Iraq, and the people of the country. In other words, the right of the people to be part of their nation’s economy and development would be taken away from the Iraqis, and corporatists and globalists would instead handle the economy, social control and law-making. The “liberalization of Iraq in order to bring freedom, human rights and democracy to the country”

would turn in yet another dictatorship, but this time on a more economic level. It also frightens me to see Iraq as a kind of “model”, as described in Klein’s book. If Iraq serves as a type of raw model (Klein 2007:328), a first experiment for the Middle East region, then there will be more violence, more wars and more “economic liberalization” in the near future to be seen. And if Iraq was “a war that would change the world” (Klein 2007:328), how will this changed world look like? Will Neoliberalization soon strike against Western nations as well, with the same kind of brutal force and natural self-evidence as was used to invade and “turn” Iraq? When the cover fall, and what will be revealed beneath it?

Conclusion

Now that I have finally reached the end of the path of this essay, my conclusion will be stated as follows. Throughout this work, I have learned new facts, opinions, thoughts and theories and they all confirmed my state of mind on the topic of neoliberalism. The USA has a special role in the system of neoliberalism. The “principal architects” of the neoliberal “Washington consensus” are the masters of the private economy, mainly huge corporations that control much of the international economy and have the means to dominate policy formation as well as structuring of thought and opinion (Chomsky 1999:20). The USA is the self-proclaimed beacon of neoliberalism, and that says a lot about their position and ambitions. Washington really is more or less fully controlled by economists, bankers, corporatists and economic elites. The ruthlessness, the brutality, the greed and anti-human attitude of this control grip revealed itself in the wars of Afghanistan, and more obviously in Iraq. The terror that took place in the Middle East those last 10 years is indescribable and casts a shadow over the supposedly “war on terrorism”, which turned into a war of terrorism. But this is only half of the ugly truth, as the other one, the less obvious, hidden agenda of the forces behind the Bush and Obama administration, concerns the economic ambitions in that region. They appear far more important than the political agenda and were the primary reason for the two wars. We look into a dark future, the age of globalization, post-industrialization and a new ideology called corporatism. This ideology has its cornerstones within the financial elites of the world and where money is the first and most important issue of once philosophy and acting, no good comes out. Governments have less and less influence over the economy; the world just suffered a devastating financial crisis and only one year later, no one seems to remember its dangers and vast losses and unemployment rates anymore. The billions that were given to the

big banks, the tens of thousands that lost their jobs, everything starts from zero now and everything can be re-done. In the mean time, Iraqis are happy over the popping up of McDonalds and Wal-Mart in their country, not knowing that their national identity, economy and culture was taken away from them and is by now already sold out to the international corporations. Mayhap in the future, Western countries and the Middle East region will share the same happy consumer society, non- questioning and ever consuming, as this is the final goal of globalization and neoliberalism.

Summary

In my essay I discuss the impact and influence of neoliberalism on America's foreign politics, with focus on the Middle East. The essay is divided into three parts, where the first part brings up a historical perspective and explanation of the rise of neoliberalism in the USA. It also discusses the global objectives on America. The second part is focused on the war in Afghanistan. Here, I bring up several different factors that led to the war and I also focus on the outcome for the country and its people, where the failure of the war and the destruction of Afghanistan stand in the center. The third part is dedicated to the war in Iraq. In this chapter, I discuss the motives for the Iraq invasion, and the economic motives that stand behind the official reasons for war. This chapter also indicates possible future moves by the USA towards other countries in the Middle East, in order to "spread democracy and open markets" in the Arab world. In the discussion part, I fully reveal the economic elite theory that stands behind the forces of neoliberalism and how they influence and control the American government. I also try to link the present American government to these approaches. In conclude with the reasoning that we might stand before an era of global economic control, where large corporations control and direct markets, societies and money (corporatism). The USA will find new reasons to invade countries and unleash their democracy and neoliberal economy upon them, and the wheel of globalism and fascism will spin on in the future.

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