

# All Wars are Lies!

## Iraq War Based on Lies: Liberals are Shocked!

Walker Lane (Peter Werbe)

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War! Uh!

What is it good for?

Absolutely nothing!

–Edwin Starr, “War”

The Motown great Edwin Starr asked and answered this question in his 1970 song that became a best-selling record and the anthem of another in a series of long, hot summers.

By then, tens of millions of people around the world had come to a similar conclusion about the U.S. empire's brutal war in Vietnam that already had taken the lives of at least two million Indochinese and tens of thousands of those of the invaders. There was wide-spread realization that not only did America's Asian war have nothing to do with “freedom,” but was about imperial domination of a region far from its shores.

Starr's lyrics, unfortunately, are not entirely accurate. Although they are for the majority of people who want to live simple lives of peace and security, war serves very distinct core functions for the modern, imperial nation state.

The first purpose is key: an external threat, usually contrived, allows the creation of a permanent war state. The economy is rooted in massive transfers by the state of private wealth produced by workers and confiscated through taxation. Rather than returned in services to the populace from which the involuntary tribute was taken, it is used to sustain a massive war preparation system that ultimately drives the economy. It's been that way in the U.S. since the first quarter of 1942, when the nation, having turned its industrial sector completely over to war production, finally left the bad times of the Great Depression behind.

World War II provided an enemy necessitating huge expenditures of public wealth, becoming the first time where such outlays, before or since, were actually required by an authentic threat. Previous perils were manufactured to justify America's wars of expansion and to protect its looting of other regions. Following WWII, it was necessary to create a new enemy, the Soviet Union, which never represented a military threat to the U.S. When it disappeared, the bogeyman of terrorism was elevated to a status of permanent enemy, like 1984's Emmanuel Goldstein, justifying the perpetual war machine.

It is heartening to see Americans catching on a little quicker than usual during this current war. Most people have figured out that it's not about a “War on Terror,” but rather, that it has to do with the decision made years before 9/11 to dominate an area containing great oil reserves and to secure bases where U.S. military power can be quickly extended in the Middle East and to those countries close at hand in Asia.

The neocons who devised this strategy in the late 1990s had an unusually clear vision of what will be developing in the coming decades. Oil production is peaking at a time when competition for increasingly scarce sources from

growing economies like China's is heightening. If the U.S. isn't strategically situated, they reasoned, it risks being at a distinct disadvantage in coming economic and even military conflicts based on the need for fossil fuels.

The official rationale for the Iraq war came unraveled so quickly for two reasons. First, the Bush administration lies about weapons of mass destruction and a 9/11/Iraq connection were so transparently false. Plus, they were peddled by inept and arrogant flacks used to saying anything and neither being challenged nor ever paying the consequences for previous failures, who didn't even bother to do a sophisticated job of salesmanship.

The second reason relates to the first. The liars lied to themselves. They bought their own bullshit about liberating Iraq from a dictator (one who several in the administration had previously supported), fighting a war on the cheap, and being hailed by a grateful population.

Had there been an easy win for the U.S. invaders and occupiers, Bush probably would have been hailed as a great hero. But GI deaths mount as the situation in Iraq deteriorates. The corruption of Cheney's Halliburton no-bid contracts and outright swindling of reconstruction funds with absolutely no results is exposed, increasing the realization that billions are going to another country while the U.S. infrastructure crumbles. That, all combined, has turned the tide of popular opinion against the Bush criminals and their war.

Only a few percentage points above the hard-core fascist third of the population still support the conflict, but these twisted souls would probably remain loyal to Bush even if they saw films of him participating in cannibalism. Over 50 percent of Americans now agree that Bush should be impeached if he lied about WMDs as the basis for invading, and most people agree that he did.

There should be scandal that the murderous gang of politicians in Washington lied to justify a war for oil and geo-political hegemony, but what U.S. war has been any different? Or, for that matter, any war ever fought between nation states?

It's worth going through a few U.S. wars, minus the patriotic cant, as a reminder.

The Mexican War (1846 to 1848) was solely for territorial expansion which gobbled up good portions of Mexico's north territories, including Texas, California, Arizona, and New Mexico. Some still refer to those states as "occupied Mexico."

The Spanish-American war (1898 to 1902) was based on the lie that the Spanish blew up the U.S. battleship Maine in Havana, Cuba harbor. Research done 100 years later shows the ship blew from the inside out, suggesting a munitions explosion. The Hearst papers beat the war drums to arouse a sleepy population into a patriotic frenzy, and soon America had the empire it sought as a way to enrich itself at a time when economic conditions were so bad that the rulers feared revolution. The war booty included the Philippines, Puerto Rico, several Pacific islands, and control of Cuba. The U.S. had to fight guerrilla resistance in the Philippines, committing similar atrocities as it did in Vietnam years later to stop a massive insurgency against the American occupiers. Sound familiar?

From 1902 through to the invasion of Panama in 1989, U.S. Marines intervened over a hundred times in Latin America whenever American corporate interests were threatened. U.S. Marine General Smedley Butler's oft-used quote is enough to make the point: "I helped make Mexico, especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909 to 1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested."

The U.S. entered World War I (1917 to 1918) only toward its end, but ask anyone why America intervened after three years of a European conflict and they usually return a blank stare. The official reason was the Germans had sunk an unarmed English passenger ship with great loss of life including Americans, but as it turned out, the ship was secretly carrying munitions to Britain from the U.S. in violation of the Neutrality Act. That and a few inconsequential other items were the excuse the U.S. used to involve itself in an inter-imperial slaughter on the side of the Allies. The real reasons, beyond the rhetoric of making the world safe for democracy, were to insure war loans made to the Allies, particularly England, were secure and to begin functioning as a new imperial power that could dictate policy on a global basis.

Wars provide the opportunity for governments to police internal threats, as well, so, the U.S. used a conflict virtually no one initially wanted to ruthlessly stamp out the mass-based domestic socialist, anarchist, and radical trade union movements which were challenging the system at that time.

World War II (1941 to 1945) is so mythologized that the real reasons it was fought and the nature of the geopolitical machinations which left 30 million people as victims cannot be easily summarized. Although the conflict is often characterized by some radicals as the one time we fought anyone worse than us, most agree that the U.S. was genuinely at risk. This view certainly has elements of truth to it, but mostly it is portrayed in official memory as the “Good War,” expressed in triumphalist terms of good over evil. This completely ignores the war’s abundant complexity.

WWII was 100 percent about markets, empire, and colonies, and zero percent about democracy and freedom. It was only about ending a threat from imperial rivals, not defeating fascism as an ideology.

Here are just two elements:

“Appeasing Hitler” has persisted as a metaphor into this era as what not to do about aggressive dictators. The British are portrayed as spinelessly giving in to the German dictator at Munich at a time when they should have confronted his demands. Hence, they only forestalled World War II but emboldened Hitler, making the conflict more certain rather than less. Eventually, goes the argument, it took U.S. entry into the war to save the day.

British diplomacy wasn’t based on timidity, but rather predicated upon a cynical strategy of giving Hitler what he wanted in Central Europe by calculating, incorrectly, that his next military move would be against the Soviet Union. The British, no less than the Nazis, saw Russian communism as the main enemy of the West. U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt was in agreement with this policy as was corporate America, the latter which enthusiastically aided the construction of the Nazi war machine and continued surreptitiously trading with the enemy during the war.

Henry Ford received a German Iron Cross medal in 1938 in Detroit from a Nazi emissary. Hitler was a great admirer of the anti-Semitic Ford, an early enthusiast of the Nazi party, and kept a photo of the auto magnate on the walls of his Berlin bunker even in his last days. General Motors, IBM, and the Ethyl Corporation were many among other corporate enthusiasts who built the Nazi war machine during the 1930s.

After the Wehrmacht invasion of Russia in 1941 (essentially fueled by Standard Oil diesel), then-Senator Harry S. Truman expressed a view of many when he said on the U.S. Senate floor that he hoped each of the belligerents would do maximum damage to one another, foreshadowing the internecine Iraq-Iran war that the U.S. encouraged in the 1980s. However, as more and more goods were sold to Britain in 1940 through 1941 under the so-called Lend-Lease program, corporate America, no less than the Roosevelt administration, realized that if their best customer and major debtor were to lose to Germany, it would be a financial disaster for their recovery from the Depression. Suddenly, sentiment changed, particularly among the capitalist elite, from being pro-Nazi to realizing that it was those cheeky Brits who were fighting for Democracy.

The war in Europe was stood on its head, however, with the surprise victory of the Soviet Red Army over the vaunted German Wehrmacht, leaving the Communists in control of Eastern Europe by 1945, the possibility most feared by the West. Essentially, it was the Russians who defeated the Nazis, having responsibility for 90 percent of German battlefield casualties while sustaining 13 million dead of their own. By contrast, American battle deaths in Europe total 100,000, the same figure the Russians suffered in the battle for Berlin alone. The conclusion of the European theatre conflict on the Allies’ part, beginning with the June 1944 Normandy invasion and including war crimes such as the firebombing of Dresden, had little to do with defeating the Nazis, something the Russians were on the way to completing, and almost all about post-war considerations regarding stopping the Soviet Union from being in a geopolitical dominant position.

In the Far East, the U.S., and its imperial ally, Britain, battled Japan for control of China and other Pacific rim European colonies. It ended with the militarily unnecessary war crime of the atom bombing of two defenseless Japanese cities in a country on the verge of surrender. This was seen by the Truman administration as the first shot of World War III—that with the Soviet Union.

After peace prevailed on all fronts in 1945, Soviet successes in Eastern Europe and the upsurge of anti-colonial movements in Africa and Asia, were quickly turned to the advantage of the Western economies which created a Cold War where no conflict existed. Stalin neither planned nor intended “world domination.” However, the U.S.

manufactured a fear of the “march of Communism” creating a seamless segue for the World War II war economy to continue unabated. At the same time, the Red Scare at home was used, as it had been during the first international conflict thirty years before, to stifle internal dissent and labor militancy.

The murky origins of the Korean War (1950 to 1953), only five years after the end of a horrific inter-imperial slaughter is still the subject of debate. Suffice it to say, the first war to “stop communism” wound up with one million dead civilians at the hands of the U.S. in a war that was driven by a pathological ideology connected to a mad economy.

Vietnam (1960 to 1975), America’s longest war, began as an effort to support the French colonial masters who had been re-installed in Indochina by the U.S. after Japan’s defeat and ended with the complete destruction of the country, three million civilian deaths, and almost 60,000 of the invaders.

The slaughter commenced in mass proportions following a contrived 1964 incident in the Gulf of Tonkin off the Vietnam coast where it was alleged that two U.S. destroyers were attacked by small North Vietnamese boats. No damage was done and no one ever asked, what were American warships doing 8,000 miles from home so provocatively and belligerently close to another nation’s coastline? Can one imagine if the situation were reversed and North Vietnamese destroyers were just several miles off the coast of New York City?

Although left critics of U.S. war policy protested at the time that the attacks were a contrivance, all of the media and Congress dutifully bought the story, allowing the enormous escalation of a war that the U.S. rightfully lost. Forty-one years later, the National Security Agency released hundreds of pages of secret documents showing, indeed, the evidence of the Tonkin attack had been “deliberately skewed.” A little too late for the mountain of corpses that the lie produced.

The taste of defeat in the mouths of Americans was strong enough during the 1970s that it looked like perhaps the era of U.S. overseas adventures would be curtailed. However, the Reagan administration found a couple of easy to win wars that were used to roll back the public distaste for continuing conflicts. The reversal of the so-called Vietnam Syndrome and the unchallenged ability of the U.S. to extend military force anywhere in the world was more at issue during the invasions of Grenada and Panama than the manufactured excuses.

Both were in violation of international law and both based on lies. The first, that American citizens were endangered by the chaos following the meltdown of a leftist government on the left-ruled island, and the second, that U.S. forces were only enforcing an arrest warrant on a former client state dictator. The latter is particularly egregious since the invasion of Panama and apprehension of CIA-asset President Manuel Noriega took upwards of 4,000 civilians lives in the poor districts surrounding the presidential palace. This would be like the cops coming to your community to arrest a dope dealer, and in the process, burning the area to the ground and killing your family along with hundreds of your neighbors.

The intervention in Central America during the 1980s produced a bloody decade with the U.S. backing death squad governments, torture states, and paid mercenaries resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians. The slaughter was based on numerous lies about communist subversion, destabilizing regimes, Cuban infiltration, etc. The perpetrators of them populate the current Bush regime.

The 1991 Gulf War was just what the imperialists were seeking. Another U.S. client, Saddam Hussein, seemingly went bad. His invasion of Kuwait sparked a U.S. response that dashed the Vietnam Syndrome with an easy win, but included the unnecessary slaughter of thousands of retreating Iraqi conscripts. This nasty little Crusader incursion was the start of long-range plans to directly control Middle East oil reserves rather than allow a series of unstable surrogates to do so. Reagan had supported Saddam throughout the 1980s, but Bush I saw a golden opportunity to improve his sagging poll numbers and increase U.S. Middle East presence when the Iraqi dictator fell into a brilliantly conceived trap.

In July 1990, a meeting between the U.S. ambassador and Saddam occurred that was reasonably interpreted by the Iraqi dictator as a go-ahead for his invasion plans. Middle East national borders were almost exclusively drawn by retreating European powers to facilitate neo-colonialism irrespective of what ethnic tensions they increased or arbitrary boundaries were established. Saddam never would have invaded Kuwait had he not seen it as being consistent with the support he had received from his U.S. benefactors during the 1980s.

Iraq War (2003-????). The lies surrounding this invasion and occupation have been thoroughly exposed in the same media that so compliantly repeated all the Bush administration inventions during the run-up to the war. They

don't need repeating here. Suffice it to say, a gullible and frightened public, whipped up by mendacious politicians through an uncritical media initially gave high approval ratings to the invasion, sold as a hedge against the threat of post-9/11 terrorism.

It's shocking that Americans are shocked that this administration lied about the reasons for the Iraq war since it is consistent with each of this nation's previous ones. One wonders why no lessons are learned and why each generation, and in some cases the same one, are able to be fooled each time the reigning politicians discover the next grave threat to the nation.

This is partly due to an infantilized mass character structure created by living within authoritarian nation states (even ones which feature ostensible democratic facades) that create an inability to think independently, and a fear of contradicting Big Father surrogates. Perhaps, most importantly, is the creation of a spectacularized collective consciousness in which the socially atomized individual is submerged into the state and believes he shares in its prowess and glory. This substitute isn't much, but it attempts to compensate for being stripped of any real sense of authentic worthiness and localized sense of community.

All of it, the economic necessity for war, the imperial drive for markets and hegemony, the mass psychology of submission to the leader, are intricate components of the political state and have been since its origin. So, peace is not patriotic; opposing war is a struggle against the grotesque institution that generates both wars and homage to itself.

**Highly recommended:**

*The Myth of the Good War: America in the Second World War*, by Jacques R. Pauwels, Lorimer Publishers, lorimer.ca.  
Also, all Howard Zinn history.

# fifth Estate

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