

THE HYPOCRISY OF THE U.S. PURSUIT OF HUMAN RIGHTS: A TOOL OF DOMINANCE?

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The research question guiding this dissertation is: ‘How was international human rights law employed as an imperialistic tool of dominance by the U.S. in the Iraq War, by President Bush?’ This dissertation comes to the conclusion that through hypocritical human rights action, where President Bush’s neoimperialistic rhetoric towards human rights did not match his administration’s actions, dominance was exerted over Iraq. This dissertation also argues that the effects of these hypocritical actions have rendered the U.S. increasingly insecure. To come to these conclusions, this dissertation covers theoretical foundations in Chapter One (post-colonialism, critical law theory, and realism); explores the neoimperialism of President Bush in his rhetoric and motivations for the war in Chapter Two; details the human rights abuses perpetrated by the U.S. during the war in Chapter Three; and examines the effects of these hypocritical actions in Chapter Four. This dissertation is informed largely by secondary sources, but also interprets primary sources such as speeches or government documents.

INTRODUCTION

I. THE ISSUE

There is abundant rhetoric in academia highlighting how the United States (U.S.) pursues foreign policy goals without regard for international law, yet enforces and creates international law as part of its role in the United Nations (UN) Security Council and in its unique position of power. However, there is a lack of insight into how ulterior motives and foundational beliefs inform these actions. By looking at the case of the 2003 Iraq War, and international human rights law, it is evident foundational beliefs surrounding the superiority of Western thought guide U.S. actions on behalf of ‘universal’ human rights, when in fact the U.S. acts on behalf of its own values and national interest in a form of neoimperialism. These actions then exert dominance over other states; diminishing their ability to gain power. Therefore, the U.S.’ dominance is fulfilled by its avoidance of following the same norms it enforces on other states; in other words, its human rights hypocrisy. Touting human rights is one small way the U.S. does this, as it almost certainly does this in other capacities of international law, but it is an important avenue for U.S. imperialism and one of the clearest pathways it uses in international law. Although it may seem a ‘radical’ position, it is imperative that scholars both within and outside of the U.S. see the subconscious ulterior motive behind U.S. human rights policy, as it serves to contribute to increasing U.S. insecurity.

II. THESIS

This dissertation argues that the U.S. uses international human rights law as a tool of neoimperialistic dominance. The U.S. does not hold itself accountable

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to human rights norms while acting in the supposed interest of human rights, and this increases its power, since it faces no real consequences. This policy in turn decreases the global power of the states it intervenes in, and increases anti-West sentiment. Chapter One details the theoretical foundations informing this argument; utilizing the scholarship of postcolonialism, critical law theory, and realism. Following this discussion, Chapter Two explores George W. Bush's neoimperialism; by examining his use of religiosity and morality in his discourse, other motivations behind U.S. involvement in Iraq, 'exceptional exceptionalism,' and rhetoric of 'American values' as universal human rights. Next, Chapter Three analyses human rights abuses during the Iraq War to demonstrate hypocrisy in U.S. human rights policy. Chapter Four then critically reflects on the effects of the U.S.' hypocritical human rights approach, both immediately in Iraq, and consequently in the global perspective to argue the U.S. faces growing insecurity.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

The central research question of this dissertation is: How was international human rights law employed as an imperialistic tool of dominance by the U.S. and President Bush in the Iraq War? In order to answer this question, the following supplementary questions are addressed:

1. How was human rights language manipulated to be imperialistic?
2. How did the U.S. under Bush exert power using human rights?
3. How did the U.S. under Bush not hold itself accountable to human rights norms?
4. How did this decrease Iraq's power?
5. What effects did/does this have?

To explore these questions, this dissertation is largely informed through secondary sources, such as works written by political scientists, newspaper articles, other sources found through library research, speeches, and government reports. A critical analysis of these secondary sources will be used to support this dissertation's argument. The speeches, press releases, and other transcripts will be interpreted in light of the research questions; analyzed using the theoretical approaches explained in Chapter One.

CHAPTER ONE: IMPERIALISM AND LAW

This chapter consists of three parts. The first discusses the foundations of post-colonial theory and then defines the term 'neoimperialism.' The second details the basis of critical international law theory, in order to apply this scholarship lens to later arguments. Lastly, the third section explores realism and underscores how the U.S. uses national self-interest, in order to analyze the foundations of George W. Bush's foreign policy during the war in Iraq, and to better understand the international order as 'led' by the U.S. during that time. This chapter builds the literary context of this dissertation referenced throughout Chapters Two, Three, and Four.

I. POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

Postcolonial theory is a critical theory which arose following independence movements that freed communities from colonial rule. The central ideas of this theory were popularized by Said in his 1978 work *Orientalism*, wherein he stated, “ideas, cultures and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied” (Said 1978, 12). If a certain group within a society has greater political, economic, and social power; this group possesses an inequitable amount of decision-making for the structure and culture of that society. This distribution of power also means the group in question decides how and where the minority social groups will live—which is seen in how the U.S. determines through its actions how much power ‘dominated’ states have. This also relates more broadly to global relations, in which Western powers (which were once colonial powers) dictate the global culture, and Eastern states (which were the colonized) are forced to experience it. In global culture, Western powers present the East as illogical, strange, and driven by base human passions; while presenting themselves as the logical and cultured norm (Seth 2011, 167). This constitutes ‘the colonial subject as the other’ (Spivak 1988, 76). By characterizing the colonial subject as ‘the other,’ the colonizer stresses how the colonial subject is different or opposite to them, allowing for marginalization and oppression (Spivak 1988, 76). This constitution of the colonized as the ‘other’ has been embedded in the international system and serves to perpetuate imperialism. As an approach to international relations (IR), postcolonial theory acts to challenge the eurocentrism of what is considered conventional IR, which touts Western Enlightenment thinking as progressive, superior, and universally applicable (Seth 2011, 167).

This dissertation will assess the case of the Iraq War and U.S. human rights hypocrisy by following the first two of Barry’s (1995, 193-195) four characteristics of postcolonial analysis. These two characteristics are: “(1) An awareness of representations of the non-European as exotic or as an immoral other [and] (2) An interest in the role of language supporting or subverting that power dynamic.” By focusing on the first two characteristics, this dissertation aims to draw connections in the discourse used by the U.S. in reference to Iraq, in order to demonstrate the presence of neoimperialism.

But what is neoimperialism? During the colonial era, imperialism was used in several ways to validate colonial efforts. Smith (2005, 96-97) argues that imperialism was used in four ways: as economic expansion, or as a system of control to secure markets and capital investments; as a way to subjugate the ‘other’; a complex ideology that had cultural, intellectual, and technical expressions as well as economic, military, and political ones; and a discursive field of knowledge. During the colonial era, converting colonial subjects to Christianity was a common tool, one which could fall under Smith’s (2005, 96-97) complex ideology use of imperialism. Christianity was a way to spread Western cultural values, and is seen in Bush’s neoimperialistic religious rhetoric in Chapter Two. Christian imperialism, and more specifically Bush’s Christian neoimperialism, was used to dictate what America’s role in the world should be (Conroy-Kutz 2015, 9). As more recent postcolonial theorists

such as Loomba and Kaul have pointed out, imperialism is not solely a European activity; there is an American neoimperialism (Loomba et al. 2006, 13). The 2003 invasion of Iraq exemplified this—"the confused oscillating rhetoric of impending threat from and promised liberation for the same region bears chilling similarities to the schizophrenic discourse of [traditional] imperialism" (Desai & Nair 2005, 14). This dissertation adopts the meaning of neoimperialism as traditional imperialism in a modern context. Neoimperialism takes traditional routes of rhetoric and incentive (religiosity, spreading ideology, economics, control, power) but in modern contexts, such as humanitarian intervention. Smith's characterization of the four uses of imperialism are still very much present in modern U.S. foreign policy, specifically in the way imperialism works to subjugate an 'other,' and will be explored with respect to the U.S.' attitude towards human rights in Iraq in Chapter Two.

II. CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL LAW

The use of critical international law scholarship throughout this dissertation will tie in with both postcolonial and realist theories. Singh and Mayer (2014, 1) characterize critical international law as a way to address paradoxes within the discipline of IR, and demonstrate three trends within it: postrealism, postcolonialism, and transnationalism. Postrealist analyses of critical international law show international law as guided by 'rules of diplomacy,' which only serve national interests (Singh & Mayer 2014, 7). The lens postcolonialist theories use to critique international law argues that imperialism is a crucial element of international law (Anghie 2014, 140). Transnationalist analyses of critical international law focus on the hegemonic power used by certain states to ensure the interests of wealthier states and transnational corporations are met over the interests of less powerful states (Singh & Mayer 2014, 20).

While this dissertation will make some reference to postrealist views of critical international law, it will draw mainly from postcolonial critiques. Anghie demonstrates that international law—a system created by European scholars and states—has been complicit in legitimizing imperialism, and is now a way to further enforce the imperialistic tendencies of powerful states (Anghie 2014, 123). Anghie also explores the differences in conventional approaches to the history of international law, in contrast to postcolonial analysis. He shows how conventional world histories, especially of colonial to postcolonial transitions, adopt the view that imperialism ended with decolonization, thereby creating a blind spot rife with paradoxes (Anghie 2014, 136). This 'blind spot' is neoimperialism—if one were to adopt conventional histories or mainstream views, one does not see the effect neoimperialism has on the incentives of the U.S. when they manipulate human rights rhetoric. When questioning the foundations of international law through a postcolonial lens, it is easy to become trapped in a loop which devalues international law as a whole. While international law can be criticized for not being universal in inception nor application, this dissertation takes the view that through understanding its 'blind spots,' international law could be universal in the future. While this is not a part of the main argument, this dissertation is implicitly informed and guided by this assumption.

While critiquing the U.S.' international legal practice, this dissertation's scope is narrowed to focus on international human rights law, while referring to work from scholars such as Kennedy (1985, 2005). In his 1985 work *Spring Break*, Kennedy brings to light the dissonance between reality and expectations, and the impositions that accompany international human rights (Kennedy 1985, 1378). It is also important to examine the tensions surrounding this critique and the values of human rights; as Mégret (2014, 5) explains, it is a willingness to recognize the accomplishments of human rights, but "caution against some of the limitations and even dangers of the discourse." These "dangers" are seen in the effects of the Iraq War in Chapter Four. Critical international law theory is used in this research to recognize the dangers of the use of international human rights law for national interest. This dissertation does not take the view that the concept of international human rights is wrong, but rather takes the position that it is wrong when used as a double standard or as a substitute for national values.

III. REALISM

Finally, the use of realist scholarship throughout this dissertation explores the power of national interest as a driving force behind neoimperialism and dominance through human rights. Realism seeks to explain how constraints on international politics are placed by the faults of human nature, and the absence of an international government; indicating that all states act in self-interest, making the international system anarchic (Donnelly 2009, 9; Mearsheimer 1994, 9). Different disciplines of theory exist under the realist umbrella; however, this dissertation utilizes neorealism, which focuses on the centrality of a struggle for power within anarchy (Donnelly 2009, 12). Neorealism is especially applicable to this research, due to its recognition of a balance of power. This is in contrast to the classical realism popularized by Morgenthau, which focuses on a fixed expression of human nature to explain inter-state relations (Donnelly 2009, 12). In looking at neorealism, this dissertation is informed by the works of thinkers such as Waltz and Mearsheimer.

Waltz (1979) bases his neorealism off of the following: national interest is what drives the action of states; competition between states creates necessities for policy; states will focus on these necessities to create policy that serve their interest; and policy is considered successful when preserving and strengthening the state (Waltz 1979, 117). The assumption that states act in their own national interest is imperative to understand as a premise of this dissertation. While the U.S. may look like it is acting in a liberal internationalist way by purporting universal human rights, it only does so when it serves the state's interest; as seen in Chapter Two. Mearsheimer (1994/95, 9-10) builds the foundation of his realist thought on the premise that the international system is anarchic, and postulates that states are inherently possessive of military power which gives states the resources to hurt or destroy one another. Mearsheimer's neorealism is especially suited to the premise of this dissertation because many of Mearsheimer's academic works in the pre- through post-Iraq War period predicted and rationalized the outcomes. It is also important to note Mearsheimer's conception of the realist balance of power when looking at the case of the Iraq War:

“...When one state puts its fist in another state’s face, the target usually does not throw its hands in the air and surrender. Instead, it looks for ways to defend itself; it balances against the threatening state” (Mearsheimer 2005). Iraq, and the surrounding region, balanced against the U.S.’ intervention in a way that has caused the U.S. to become increasingly disliked among other global actors, and has also increased its insecurity.

CHAPTER TWO: THE FOUNDATIONS OF GEORGE BUSH’S IMPERIALISM

This chapter consists of four parts. The first is a brief summary of the historical context of this dissertation. The second part uses speech examples of the religiosity, morality, and democratic ideology of President Bush’s rhetoric and analyses the motivations of the Iraq War to show the presence of neoimperialism. While there are many ways to explore the concept of neoimperialism, this dissertation focuses on religiosity, morality, and democratic ideology; as it directly relates to the use of human rights language. The third section explores the concept of ‘exceptional exceptionalism’ in the presidency of George W. Bush; detailing what American exceptionalism is and how President Bush increased its capacity to become ‘exceptional exceptionalism’ in the lead up to and during the Iraq War. The fourth and final section of this chapter demonstrates how the concept of human rights became equivalent to American values under the Bush administration. This chapter uses the theoretical foundations shown in Chapter One to inform the argument that President Bush exhibited neoimperialism through his rhetoric and motivations, use of exceptional American exceptionalism, and the claiming of American values as universal human rights. This argument then informs Chapter Three—after detailing how President Bush led the world to believe he was interested in furthering human rights through his speech, Chapter Three explains how this was hypocritical, as the actions of his administration did not echo his speech.

I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

President George W. Bush was inaugurated on January 20th, 2001 (Miller Center of Public Affairs). On September 11th, 2001, the deadliest terrorist attack on U.S. soil took place, resulting in 2,996 civilian deaths, and marking the beginning of the U.S.’ War on Terror (Plummer 2013). President Bush addressed a joint session of Congress in 2001: “Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated” (Bush 2001c). Four months later, in January 2002, President Bush stated that Iraq was part of an “axis of evil,” with Iran and North Korea—some believe this was the first hint of an intent to intervene in Iraq militarily (Miller Center of Public Affairs). In the following year, President Bush would address Congress for support in action against Iraq, address the UN Security Council for support in military action against Iraq, gain support from Congress for military intervention, and Congress officially declared war against Iraq in March 2003 (Council on Foreign Relations). President Bush led the toppling of Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship in Iraq, declaring a premature “mission accomplished” in May 2003 (Council on

Foreign Relations). However, the U.S. remained both militarily and politically involved in Iraq until 2011. This dissertation will focus primarily on the involvement of the U.S. in Iraq during the Bush presidency to explore the theme of neoimperialism, from 2003-2008. This section gives historical context in order to inform the controversial topics explored in this dissertation. As will be shown in the ensuing chapters, indicators of malpractice and illegal behavior on behalf of the U.S. came to light during the Iraq War. These included the human rights atrocities committed at the Abu Ghraib prison and Guantanamo Bay, as well as the Torture Memos released in 2004. President Bush's rhetoric and motivations, 'exceptional exceptionalism,' and purporting of 'American values as human rights' bring to light the neoimperialism that is an underlying factor of the motivations and outcome of the Iraq War.

II. RHETORIC & MOTIVATIONS

The foundations of President Bush's use of neoimperialism begin with his rhetoric. In some of the more notable speeches of his presidency, President Bush used religious, moral, and freedom-based rhetoric to garner support for the Iraq War. It is important to realize that he was being imperialistic in the ways he justified this intervention.

The first of these, religious rhetoric, is reminiscent of traditional imperialism. As explained in Chapter One, imperialism could use religious ideology to justify the pursuit of gains - whether economic, social, or political (Smith 2005, 97; Conroy-Kutz 2015, 9). President Bush used God to justify his invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, even going as far as to claim God told him, "George, go and end the tyranny in Iraq" (MacAskill 2005). Bush is a devout Christian of the Protestant Methodist faith, who, like most American presidents, ended most of his speeches with the sentiment "God bless America." Although it is not uncommon in U.S. presidencies to reference God, the justification of moral duty and of policy within Christian scripture was an uncommon characteristic of the Bush presidency (Mertus 2008, 59). Bush purported that liberty was God's gift to humanity, and that freedom is a God-given right all citizens of the world have. Bush's interpretation of a God-given right echoes similar language of universality in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); which can be seen as a manipulation of existing human rights language. Liberty as a God-given right, in turn, emphasized a sense of religious calling in Bush and in the U.S.; a duty to bring freedom to the Iraqi people (Mertus 2008, 60). A quote from President Bush's 2003 State of the Union Address exemplifies this: "Americans are a free people, who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world, it is God's gift to humanity." Bush implied those who opposed U.S. policies in bringing liberty were "rejecting the noblest gift of God to humanity" (Zizek 2009). Bush also references God as the "Author of Liberty" in his 2007 Address on Military Operations in Iraq, stating, "We go forward with trust that the Author of Liberty will guide us through these trying hours." In claiming that he was on a mission from God, and later involving the American people as part of his religious-based moral mission, Bush engaged in a form of neoimperialism. Apart from the commonality with the Christian

colonial movements of the past, Bush's religious rhetoric falls under Barry's (1995) first characteristic of post-colonial analysis, where there is a representation of the 'other' as immoral. By arguing that he was on a mission from God to end the tyranny in Iraq, and by later using moral language, Bush implicitly constructed the Iraqi people as an 'immoral' other, who have previously been unable to receive or unworthy of God's gifts. This is more evident in the discussion of his moral language, where a clear identification of America and its allies as civilized and moral is made.

Although technically a Methodist, many also consider Bush as a pietist, "referring to a tradition in which religion is more a matter of the heart than the intellect"—which can be seen in his religious morality (Keller 2003). Bush used religious rhetoric to renew the faith and will of the American people to rally around the flag, and continue the mission in Iraq long after the war was declared won in May 2003 (Cline 2003). Bush did this by referring to God's will as mysterious yet grounded in morality and justice. For example, in his State of the Union Address in 2004, Bush remarked, "My fellow citizens, we now move forward with confidence and faith... The cause we serve is right, because it is the cause of all mankind." By using the theme of American morality, Bush enhanced his exceptionalism (as seen in section two of this chapter). Bush relied on his religion to help him make his moral decisions; which connects to the concept of neoimperialism, but also to neorealist concepts of power. Spykman (1942, 18) states "The search for power is not made for the achievement of moral values; moral values are used to facilitate the attainment of power," which can be interpreted in light of Bush's religious rhetoric, as well as his more general moral rhetoric. Bush used religious and moral rhetoric to justify intervention in Iraq, using morality as a substitute and supplement to pre-established human rights discourse.

Morality was used as a substitute for human rights discourse especially at the beginning of Bush's presidency (Mertus 2008, 59). Much of the discourse around human rights intervention and humanitarian aid, throughout U.S. foreign policy, has based its language in moral duty, obligation, and responsibility; and Bush's approach to the Iraq War was no different (Barnett and Snyder 2008, 160). Bush was imperialistic in how he implied the immorality of the enemy terrorists and leaders, as well as of Iraq's situation, and touted American morality in 'saving' the Iraqi people. This can be seen across a few of his speeches. In his 2002 Remarks at the UN General Assembly, where Bush was seeking action from the UN on Iraq's violations of previous resolutions, Bush stated: "Above all, our principles and our security are challenged today by outlaw groups and regimes that accept no law of morality and have no limit to their violations." This quote not only presents the Americans as saviors, but also demonstrates an explicit characterization of the other as immoral. Bush then identified the duty of the American people as a moral obligation in the same 2002 remarks: "The United States has no quarrel with the Iraqi people; they've suffered too long in silent captivity. Liberty for the Iraqi people is a great moral cause, and a great strategic goal." By later purporting American values as human rights, as seen in the last section of this chapter, Bush took advantage of a trend emerging in international relations for using human rights discourse to validate interventions (Perugini and Gordon 2015, 6). Human

rights discourse, and the justification of intervening actions through moral rhetoric, has become coveted amongst leaders who seek political influence and power (Perugini and Gordon 2015, 5-6). When reading this section's paragraphs on the motivations of the Iraq War, it is important to realize the actions of the Bush administration were taken in the national interest, but are "cloaked in noble language, virtuous principles, and high moral sentiments" in an effort to justify those actions (Kattenberg 1983, 15). Bush used moral language and obligational rhetoric as the vehicle for national interest. Realist scholarship supports this claim, by arguing that moral values are relative—where universal principles are not principles at all, but "unconscious reflections of national policy" based on a current interpretation of national interest (Carr 1946, 87).

The main moral obligation of the Iraq War, as seen through Bush's rhetoric, was to bring freedom, liberty, and democracy to Iraq. Bush purported liberty, or freedom, as a God-given right to replace traditional human rights rhetoric in the beginnings of his presidency; which Evans (1996, 184) argues is an increasingly common use of rhetoric, as the West tends to favor democracy over human rights. In the case of the Bush administration, as will be demonstrated in the ensuing paragraphs, spreading democratic ideology was the main incentive for intervening in Iraq. Working with a democracy would be easier than working with a volatile regime such as Hussein's, and so to achieve democracy Bush sacrificed human rights, as seen in the Bush administration's interpretation of the Convention Against Torture (CAT) in Chapter Three.

To sell democracy as universal in its applicability, Bush drew upon American experiences of freedom to declare a 'right to be free.' "Our commitment to democracy is also tested in the Middle East...In many nations of the Middle East—countries of great strategic importance—democracy has not yet taken root. And the questions arise: Are the peoples of the Middle East somehow beyond the reach of liberty? Are millions of men and women and children condemned by history or culture to live in despotism? Are they alone never to know freedom, and never even to have a choice in the matter? I, for one, do not believe it. I believe every person has the ability and the right to be free" (Bush 2003d). Here Bush declares the 'right to be free' as a pseudo-human right to advance his argument that democracy in Iraq was not only necessary for 'strategic importance' (national interest), but a moral good. Bush's Western conceptions of democracy were seen as a legitimate reason to intervene in Iraq amongst the American people, and President Bush built upon his religion and moral speak to make the spread of democratic ideology the main motivation for the Iraq War. Bush's religious and moral rhetoric gave him the confidence to pursue his mission to make the world safe for democracy (Keller 2003). The spread of an ideology is another core characteristic of imperialism, and the spread of democratic ideology was an important facet of Bush's neoimperialism (Smith 2005, 97).

As a motivation for the Iraq War, Bush's spread of democratic ideology had roots in the neoconservative movement among right-leaning politicians in the U.S., dating back to the administrations of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush (Fisher 2016). The neoconservatism personified by President Bush was a combination of humanitarian impulses, with an "almost messianic" faith in the American military, and a fear of an

“uncivilized” world seen as both threatening and morally compromised (Fisher 2016). This relates back to Barry’s characteristics of post-colonial analysis—when Bush characterized the U.S. and its allies as part of the “civilized world,” he implicitly characterized Iraq as the uncivilized other. He referenced this concept throughout his speeches:

“This is civilization’s fight” (Bush 2001a)

“The civilized world is rallying to America’s side” (Bush 2001a)

“[Iraq is] a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world” (Bush 2002a)

“Remnants of [Hussein’s] regime, joined by foreign terrorists, continue their battle against order and against civilization” (Bush 2003d)

“In every case, we will defeat the threats against our country and the civilized world” (Bush 2004b)

Barry’s second characteristic, where language supports the hierarchical dynamic between the civilized subject and the uncivilized other, is especially evident. By repeatedly characterizing Iraq as the home of an uncivilized government and people, Bush built his moral case for intervention, and also made sure to identify any opponents to his intervention as part of the uncivilized world. This concept plays into his exceptional exceptionalism, as well as the ways in which he manipulated international human rights law to excuse torture.

And so, for the Bush administration, viewing Iraq under this neoconservative lens meant viewing it as both a moral good and a strategic necessity for America to replace Hussein’s government with democracy, and dominate the world as both a moral and military leader (Fisher 2016). This belief will be revisited in the section on Bush’s ‘exceptional exceptionalism’—because not only did the U.S. under Bush believe itself as the world’s indispensable power, but as a model of an exportable and universal democratic government (Dunn 2003, 285). The interest in making Iraq a democracy was not original to the post-9/11 situation; the neoconservative movement among the American Right was frustrated with Iraq beforehand. Throughout the 1990s, Hussein had become increasingly defiant of UN mandates and international concerns, and steadily issued anti-American rhetoric (Fisher 2016). Following 9/11, Bush looked desperately for connections between Iraq and terrorism to permit involvement, ultimately deciding on the argument of the presence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) as a threat to the U.S.; proving involvement in Iraq did not need a requisite issue, but was always about ideological convictions (Fisher 2016). Bush, and his neoconservative advisers, believed that the status quo in the Middle East was unsustainable, and that regime change in Iraq would begin a domino effect to democratize the region (Dunn 2003, 290). The argument put forward for spreading the ideology of democracy was that “while the spread of democracy would not destroy terrorism overnight, it [would provide] the best hope that the world [had] for doing so” (Dunn 2003, 290). This leads us to the most outwardly declared motivation for the Iraq War—national security.

The pursuit of national security was an important motivator for the Bush administration to intervene in Iraq. Following 9/11, the U.S. was incredibly insecure (Plummer 2013). Eliminating security threats was the primary focus of President Bush, to reassure the American people following such a violent loss of life (Dunn 2003, 295). In his remarks at the Warsaw Conference on Combating Terrorism in 2001, Bush declared: “We will not wait for the authors of mass murder to gain the weapons of destruction. We act now because we must lift this dark threat from our age and save generations to come.” Bush’s security motivations moved him to pre-emptively eliminate “Iraq’s potential capability to build WMD and its potential to supply them to terrorists” and justify this course of action using human rights discourse (Dunn 2003, 295). Bush manipulated human rights discourse as a way to ensure national security by using sovereign responsibility. The UN charter “specifies that no country can interfere in the affairs of another state unless it is an act of self-defense” (Cushman 2005, 550). Bush circumvented this in the case of the Iraq War by using ‘sovereignty as responsibility,’ where “all human beings have rights by virtue of their humanity which transcend state borders,” giving sovereigns the right to protect citizens of another sovereign state (Birdsall 2010, 684). The presence of WMD, to the U.S., is a direct military threat. The U.S. initially asked the UN for permission to intervene because of Hussein’s violations of UN resolutions combined with intelligence purporting him as a threat (Cushman 2005, 567). When his plea to the UN failed, it was imperative for Bush to find a different reason to intervene; justifiable not only under international law, but also to the American people. Bush manipulated international human rights law, using it as a political tool to advance the U.S.’ national security agenda (Birdsall 2010, 683). Bush ultimately challenged human rights discourse by “pitting it against national security concerns,” not only by justifying intervention under human rights pretenses, but by later justifying his administration’s non-compliance with the Convention Against Torture (CAT), which will be seen in Chapter Three (Perugini & Gordon 2015, 54).

III. EXCEPTIONAL EXCEPTIONALISM

American exceptionalism, or the idea that the U.S. has a distinct and special ‘destiny’ different to that of other states, is a term that is used when examining U.S. foreign policy across many historical periods, and was shaped by the ideals of the European Enlightenment (Pease 2009). American exceptionalism is optimistic and associated with progress, a sort of “sense of divine providence” (Dunn 2003, 285). This providence gives presidential administrations “moral certainty” and confidence that leaves the administrations impervious to other influences (Dunn 2003, 285). American exceptionalism led Bush to state during his 2001 Address to the Nation on the Terrorist Attacks that “America was targeted for attack because we’re the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in this world.” American exceptionalism is especially interesting when examining the case of the Iraq War, as President Bush took traditional American exceptionalism and made it even more exceptional—called ‘exceptional exceptionalism’ by Mertus (2008). President Bush inherited a State Depart-

ment and an American population with “a greater capacity for and an enhanced interest in human rights issues” following the presidency of Bill Clinton (Mertus 2008, 53). This encouraged the use of rhetoric explored above, and the promoting of human rights as American values explored in the following section. The Bush administration used this to build upon exceptionalism: by picking and choosing which international treaties to take part in; by defending the human rights records of allies and attacking the human rights records of states they did not like; and by engaging in human rights abuses (Mertus 2008, 64-65). The abuses are explored in more detail in Chapter Four.

Ultimately, out of the tragedy of 9/11, President Bush found an opportunity to reform the Arab and Muslim world and fulfill the American destiny to bring democracy and freedom to the people of Iraq (Dunn 2003, 290). Bush stated during the 2001 Address on the U.S. Response to the Attacks of September 11, “Tonight we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom.” It was America’s duty; it was Bush’s destiny; it was exceptional exceptionalism. The Bush administration believed in an inalienable goodness of American power, specifically American military power, and believed in the divine goodness of its values (Dunn 2003, 285). These values became the basis of President Bush’s human rights rhetoric.

IV. HUMAN RIGHTS ARE AMERICAN VALUES

As explored in the section on rhetoric, President Bush relied on the concept of liberty as a universal right. Freedom can be interpreted as a traditional American value, as seen in the Bill of Rights. But this was not the only American value Bush proposed as a human right—his administration explicitly stated that the human rights and democracy being pursued were only those that reflected a refined set of American values and interests (Mertus 2008, 60). Bush drew on a conflation of “human dignity” with American values and interests in his speeches—in his 2003 State of the Union Address, he asserted that the obligation of human dignity was at the center of his policy: “The American flag stands for more than our power and our interests. Our founders dedicated this country to the cause of human dignity, the rights of every person, and the possibilities of every life. This conviction leads us to help the afflicted, and defend the peace, and confound the designs of evil men.” Bush used the concept of human dignity as a replacement for human rights—in the 2002 National Security Strategy, a set of “non-negotiable demands of human dignity” were defined (Mertus 2008, 61). These demands consisted of “the rule of law; limits on the absolute power of the state; free speech; freedom of worship; equal justice; respect for women; religious and ethnic tolerance; and respect for private property” (The U.S. Department of State 2002). While this list evokes some similarity to international human rights law, it is different. There is no mention of ‘respect for private property’ in the UDHR and no use of the term ‘respect for women’, nor is there any language about how much power a state may have (Universal Declaration of Human Rights). However, Bush still purported this language as his pursuit of human rights in Iraq (Mertus 2008, 61). Evans (1996, 172) makes the point that

governments have been encouraged since World War II to use the image of protecting human rights as a rationale for engaging in war—and Bush did this by twisting human rights language to reflect American values and interests. Bush’s administration made sure to purport that “American values are universal” to supplement his campaign for the spread of democracy to ensure national security for the U.S. (Birdsall 2010, 685). However, American values are not universal, and are not the basis for international human rights law. Although Bush used human rights discourse to advance his case for intervention in the Iraq War, he also attempted to use human rights discourse to justify human rights abuses—demonstrating U.S.’ human rights hypocrisy.

CHAPTER THREE: THE HYPOCRISY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

This chapter explores human rights abuses committed by the U.S. during the Iraq War. The international community was justifiably concerned about human rights abuses perpetrated in Iraq prior to the war. Saddam Hussein’s government engaged in campaigns to repress the Shi’a, Kurdish, and Marsh Arab populations, which included mass executions, targeted killings according to ethnicity or political affiliation, rape, and torture; and resulted in the disappearance of between 250,000 and 290,000 people (Mufti & Stover 2004, 22; Cushman 2005, 556). However, this concern does not justify human rights abuses committed at the hand of the U.S. when intervening. By looking at the human rights abuses of the U.S. in this chapter, specifically the cases of the Abu Ghraib prison, Guantanamo Bay, and the Torture Memos, this chapter draws the conclusion that the human rights rhetoric of Chapter Two as compared to these abuses result in hypocrisy. President Bush’s rhetoric, as shown in Chapter Two, is not backed up by his administration’s actions, which are shown in this chapter. The Bush administration only respected international human rights law as far as it chose to, for its own benefit (Mertus 2008, 73). This also leads to a double standard of human rights: one for the U.S., and one for the rest of the world. This informs Chapter Four’s section on how the U.S. increases its insecurity through its human rights hypocrisy. All of these arguments are supported by the theoretical foundations laid out in Chapter One.

I. DETAINEE ABUSE AMOUNTING TO TORTURE, COMMITTED BY THE U.S. DURING THE IRAQ WAR

The U.S., like other countries, has used the UDHR as a “code of conduct and as a yardstick to measure...compliance with the international standard of human rights” (Sohn & Buergenthal 1973, 182). However, while the U.S. has not ratified the UDHR into its national law, it holds other states accountable to it—an indicator of its human rights hypocrisy. Although the U.S. has ratified the CAT, it has acted outside the legal norms set by the treaty. Terrorism and armed insurrection can be fought with multiple state tools, including force, but “under no circumstance can a government use torture, murder, disappearance, or indefinite imprisonment without charge” under these treaties (Sikkink 2004, 214). Although it was clear to the international community that human rights abuses were being committed in Iraq

and that they were a motivation for the U.S. intervention, it soon came to light the U.S. also engaged in human rights abuses. This furthered the hypocritical stance of the U.S. in terms of its human rights agenda. International human rights law and language was only invoked when it served U.S. national interest, while also being flagrantly disobeyed when it served those interests. The U.S. has used an ends-justify-the-means approach, despite this not correlating with the human rights agenda (Kattenburg 1983, 24). The Bush administration argued that 9/11 was indicative of a crisis situation which enabled them to suspend fundamental human rights to combat terrorism (Birdsall 2016, 180). The main three examples of this phenomenon in the Iraq War are the cases of detainee abuse in the Abu Ghraib prison and in Guantanamo Bay, coupled with the interpretive denial used in the 2004 Torture Memos. By dismissing Army perpetrators of abuse as ‘bad apples’ in the case of Abu Ghraib, and administering terms like ‘unlawful combatant’ and ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’ to rhetoric surrounding Guantanamo Bay and the Torture Memos, the Bush administration embraced human rights hypocrisy to pursue national interest.

Both Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib were prisons: Abu Ghraib was a prison used specifically for Iraqis; and Guantanamo Bay has been a detention center for those accused of terrorism, with detainees from many countries included in the ‘war on terror’ rather than just the war in Iraq. Both prisons have been sites of detainee abuse that amount to torture.

Abu Ghraib prison, located about 20 miles west of Baghdad, was a U.S. Army detention center for captured Iraqi militants from 2003-2006 (CNN Library 2019). After a discovery of photos depicting guards abusing detainees in 2003, an investigation was launched, culminating in a report by Major General Antonio Taguba (released April 2004), detailing the abuse and outcomes of the investigation; and the Fay-Jones Report (released August 2004), which found 44 instances of abuse, some amounting to torture (CNN Library 2019). The Fay-Jones Report defined abuse as “treatment of detainees that violated U.S. criminal law or international law or treatment that was inhumane or coercive without lawful justification.” The Taguba Report found intentional abuse which included this list of acts:

1. “Punching, slapping, and kicking detainees; jumping on their naked feet
2. Videotaping and photographing naked male and female detainees
3. Forcibly arranging detainees in various sexually explicit positions for photographing
4. Forcing detainees to remove their clothing and keeping them naked for several days at a time
5. Forcing naked male detainees to wear women’s underwear
6. Forcing groups of male detainees to masturbate themselves while being photographed and videotaped
7. Arranging naked male detainees in a pile and then jumping on them
8. Positioning a naked detainee on a MRE Box, with a sandbag on his head, and attaching wires to his fingers, toes, and penis to simulate electric torture

9. Writing “I am a Rapest” (*sic*) on the leg of a detainee alleged to have forcibly raped a 15-year old fellow detainee, and then photographing him naked
10. Placing a dog chain or strap around a naked detainee’s neck and having a female Soldier pose for a picture
11. A male MP guard having sex with a female detainee
12. Using military working dogs (without muzzles) to intimidate and frighten detainees, and in at least one case biting and severely injuring a detainee
13. Taking photographs of dead Iraqi detainees.”

These acts go directly against the CAT. The definition of torture in the CAT is as follows: “...Any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.” The physical actions as listed in the Taguba Report—such as kicking, slapping, and using military working dogs—caused severe pain and suffering, and in some cases led to death. The actions of posing detainees naked, depicting sexual acts, or forcing detainees to commit sexual acts in front of each other fall under the mental suffering component of the CAT. All of these acts were inflicted by persons of the state acting in their official capacity, which also indicates torture. The Fay-Jones Report asserted that while senior level officers did not directly cause the abuse; their lack of oversight, failure to respond immediately to reports, and their issuing of unclear policy memoranda contributed to the outcomes (Fay & Jones 2004, 989).

President Bush reacted in “disgust” following the reports of these actions becoming international news, and asserted that this behavior was the result of a few ‘bad apples’ (Brody 2004). However, this assertion does not correlate with further administration-driven actions in Guantanamo Bay, and the language in the Torture Memos.

Guantanamo Bay is a detention facility on a U.S. naval base, located on land rented by the U.S. from Cuba (CNN Library 2018). Further detainee abuse has been perpetrated by the U.S. military here; but in this case, it was legitimized and rationalized by the Bush Administration. In January 2002, leading up to the war in Iraq, photos were released of detainees held in sensory deprivation; their faces were covered with masks, their ears with earmuffs, their heads with wool caps; and their hands and feet were bound and covered (Mertus 2008, 73). Sensory deprivation is a method of inflicting mental suffering, which goes directly against the CAT, and, when combined with other torture techniques such as exposure to extreme cold, resulted in the death of detainees (Siems 2017). There were also accusations of waterboarding among other forms of detainee abuse. This caused global backlash, but President Bush responded by asserting that he had the authority to suspend the Geneva Conventions for the detain-

ees (Mertus 2008, 73). The Bush administration labeled the detainees at Guantanamo Bay as ‘unlawful combatants,’ and cited the threat they posed to U.S. national security as justification for suspending the Geneva Conventions (Birdsall 2016, 180). This shows that “international human rights standards came increasingly second place” to national security, as the human rights of detainees were suspended in order to interrogate them for intelligence of threats to U.S. national security (Birdsall 2010, 680). This again demonstrates a use of Bush’s neoimperialism, in that his categorization of detainees as ‘unlawful combatants’ stripped them of human rights, making them an ‘other.’ The term ‘unlawful combatants’ legitimized the illegal conduct perpetuated by the U.S. (Perugini & Gordon 2015, 18). The perception of accused terrorists as ‘unlawful combatants’ ultimately played into the Bush administration’s justifications for new or ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’—because the ‘war on terror’ was a new kind of war, that created a necessity for contemporary mechanisms (Birdsall 2016, 180).

These ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’ also amounted to torture. The 2004 Torture Memos were a shock to the American people and to the global community. Only a few months before, President Bush had spoken at the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, stating that although the U.S. would continue seriously questioning terrorists believed to have pertinent intelligence, the U.S. would not compromise the rule of law or its values; due to the fact that “torture is wrong no matter where it occurs” (Bush 2004c). He had also, in the same remarks, clearly stated that the actions in Abu Ghraib were “wrong” and “inconsistent with our policies and values as a Nation” (Bush 2004c). However, after increasing evidence, the Bush administration could no longer deny that torture was happening systematically, and changed its rhetoric to a form of ‘interpretive denial’ (Birdsall 2016, 181). The Torture Memos were an exchange of internal memoranda among administration officials and advisers that postulated (and likely implemented) torture as a necessary interrogation measure, and attempted to rationalize its legality through loopholes in international law (Mertus 2008, 71). The first memo, a 52-page document by the Justice Department’s Office of Legal Counsel, reached three main conclusions:

1. “That President Bush could authorize torture even though [U.S.] laws and treaties prohibit it;
2. The interrogators could cause substantial pain without crossing the torture threshold;
3. That even if those interrogators were later prosecuted for engaging in torture, there were legal defenses they could use to avoid accountability” (Mertus 2008, 73)

The Bush Administration used the Torture Memos to attempt to rationalize the treatment of detainees being interrogated under international law by specifically referencing the human right not to be tortured and the CAT. By using ‘enhanced interrogation techniques,’ the U.S. knowingly broke international human rights law. Although Article 2 of the CAT states: “no exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a

threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture,” the U.S. used the ‘war on terror’ as a “framework in which it could justify its conduct based on emergency exception arguments” (Birdsall 2016, 179).

Emergency exception arguments, and interpretive denial using international legal language are another example of the exceptional exceptionalism of Bush’s approach to the Iraq War. The U.S. was ultimately asserting a legal right to engage in illegal torture, a double standard used to exert dominance over an enemy state. By excusing its own illegal actions under the same pretenses it used to vilify Iraq’s illegal behavior, in short, being hypocritical in its pursuit of human rights; the Bush administration’s imperialistic rhetoric informed and performed an intervention that ultimately exerted dominance over Iraq. This led to multiple negative effects—some of which are explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE EFFECTS OF HYPOCRISY

This chapter’s first section discusses the lasting effects of human rights hypocrisy in Iraq; including an unstable democracy and increased ethno-religious conflict in order to demonstrate how Iraq lost global power and how human rights hypocrisy was a tool of dominance. This chapter concludes with a discussion on how human rights hypocrisy leads to increased insecurity; not only because pre-emptive force baits retaliation, but because these actions create bad precedents in the practice of international human rights law by other states. This chapter uses the themes explored in Chapters Two and Three to inform how human rights hypocrisy leads to these effects, and is informed by the theoretical foundations discussed in Chapter One.

I. THE LASTING EFFECTS IN IRAQ

There are lasting negative effects in Iraq. Like other attempts to transplant democracy to a post-conflict area, former combatants in Iraq have aggressively pursued pre-existing interests (Barnett & Snyder 2008, 151). When states emerge from war, especially one drawn out as long as the Iraq War, there is a lack of institutional structure or social culture to address the pressures that come with democratic transition (Barnett & Snyder 2008, 151). The U.S.-driven pressure to democratize in Iraq has also directly contributed to rising ethnic tension (Barnett & Snyder 2008, 151). In the effort to democratize quickly, the U.S. and the UN proposed an electoral law based on national proportional representation, which “inflamed ethno-religious agendas and consolidated identity politics” (Kubba 2011, 37). Ensuing mismanagement on the part of the U.S., as well as the reactions of former Hussein loyalists and Al-Qaeda, also contributed to the lasting effects in Iraq (Kubba 2011, 36, 40). And it was not just the campaign to democratize on its own that contributed to this effect—lack of security in Baghdad led to looting of government buildings, which contributed to retaliatory violence and vengeance killings, as government archives identified thousands of security agents and informers (Mufti and Stover 2004, 8).

Regional effects included Iran exploiting openings created by the Iraqi invasion and the resulting ‘shake-up’ in the regional order to gain control (Wehrey

et al. 2010, xii). The distrust in U.S. intentions has also increased the receptivity of states in the region to seek assistance from China and Russia; and Arab publics have increasingly tolerated or supported unpopular rulers who are seen as preferable to possible issues resulting from their overthrow (Wehrey et al. 2010, xiii-xv).

The U.S. used the invasion of Iraq, under the pretenses of human rights, to ultimately exert dominance and diminish the power of Iraq. The primary motivations were to create a democracy and to ensure U.S. national security; and this alone would have diminished Iraqi power if it had worked, putting it effectively under U.S. control. However, the U.S. diminished Iraqi power even further through its failure; by ensuring that it was no longer capable of balancing Iran's power, and by strengthening anti-American sentiment in the region.

II. HYPOCRISY MEANS AN INCREASE IN INSECURITY

A clear way in which the human rights hypocrisy of the U.S. has increased its insecurity is how it has continuously founded more hatred among radical Muslim communities, rather than culled radicalism and terrorism. "What emerge[d] as a result of the U.S. occupation in Iraq is precisely a fundamentalist Muslim anti-American movement, directly linked to such movements in other Arab countries or countries with a Muslim presence." (Zizek 2009). This relates to the realist assertion of a balance of power—when one state pre-emptively projects force onto another, the other state will react equally in an effort to create a balance of power (Mearsheimer 2005). While many anti-American and Muslim extremist groups are non-state actors, such as ISIS; states such as Iran have Islamist governments that are poised against the U.S.—and when these states and actors see the U.S. acting against established norms in unapologetic self-interest, it invites them to do the same. In this international environment that is both anarchic and interdependent, "the single-minded pursuit of self-interest often leads to suboptimal outcomes" (Evans 1996, 177). The U.S.' hypocrisy created insecurity by intensifying hatred and simultaneously diminishing world-wide support for their actions and the war on terror. The Iraq War served ultimately to widen a rift between Western Europeans and Americans, anger and provoke fear in the Muslim world, reduce support for the war on terrorism, and weaken the UN and other global alliances (Marquis 2003).

The U.S. is also rendered insecure by its hypocrisy because of the bad precedents it sets for other states. Truly accepted and established universal human rights do not exist as yet, due in part to cultural differences; but the norms in place are agreed upon to guide human rights practice—and when states such as the U.S. twist these guidelines to their interests using rhetoric that makes them 'universal,' it is potentially dangerous when applied to interactions among states (Kattenburg 1983, 19). At the revelations of abuse against the prisoners in Abu Ghraib, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan believed that exempting the U.S. would be hypocritical and impose double standards, and he was correct (Birdsall 2010, 460). The U.S. had violated universal standards of justice—and had invited others to do so (Birdsall 2010, 460).

“When the U.S. government holds people incommunicado without access to lawyers, it flaunts the rule of law and invites similar detentions elsewhere. When members of the U.S. military torture and humiliate prisoners, as they did in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, they signal that such behavior is acceptable, and they destroy U.S. credibility to protest torture anywhere in the world” (Sikkink 2004, 219). The double standards also ultimately go back to imperialism, in the way that they reinforce the idea of an ‘other.’ Attacks against terrorists during the Iraq War have been legitimized under international law; targeting certain areas in a way that sees the ‘other’ with “mathematic precision” (Singh & Mayer 2014, 13-14). As Anghie (2014, 123) argues in Chapter One, international law has been complicit in legitimizing imperialism in the past; and through the U.S.’ hypocritical actions, could continue to do so in the future. If the U.S. has shown that abusing and suspending the human rights of an ‘other,’ an enemy of the state, is justifiable under international law, it is then justifiable for other states to do the same, in similar or increasing extremes. International human rights law continues “to carry a brief for the civilized against the uncivilized,” especially when manipulated in ways such as the Bush administration did for the Iraq War (Kennedy 2004, 308).

It is important to caution against the limitations and dangers of human rights discourse (Mégret 2014, 5). Using postrealist critical law theory, it is evident that using rhetoric to serve national interests was a tactic used by the U.S., that has backfired and ultimately made them more insecure (Singh & Mayer 2014, 7). The Iraq War has made the U.S., international human rights law, and the UN susceptible to insecurity by setting bad precedents, as there is now a lack of public trust that they represent “virtue,” or the just path to guide international relations (Kennedy 2004, 283).

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has shown that the U.S. has used human rights rhetoric as a tool of dominance, driven by underlying neoimperialism. Chapter One illustrated the theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation’s findings: postcolonialism, critical law theory, and realism. Chapter Two demonstrated how President Bush used his piety, his moral-speak, and democratic ideology imperialistically to inform his actions—and how the spread of democracy, national security, and economic interests were at the heart of U.S. motivations for the Iraq War. Chapter Three demonstrated that although there was just cause for international concern about human rights abuses in Iraq, they were not justifiably resolved by the U.S.’ human rights hypocrisy. Chapter Four then went on to show that human rights hypocrisy has made Iraq weaker, but has also increased U.S. insecurity. Neoimperialism is important to tackle in research, because it has a “continuing and bloody ambition” (Loomba et al. 2006, 13). Imperialism is not solely a historical interest of international relations—it is an ontological interest, because how crucial of an element it is in international law (Singh & Mayer 2014, 16). This dissertation does not assert that the U.S.’ neoimperialism is rooted in evil; but rather, national interest. Just as a parent would do anything for their child, the leaders of the U.S. will do whatever it takes to protect the American people

and protect American power. If that means sacrificing human rights for security, and transgressing international human rights law to protect national interest, so be it.

Further research is most certainly needed in this area. This dissertation, while making use of a breadth of theory and research, is not without its bias or shortcomings. This dissertation is biased in believing that the U.S., like many Western states, still has a ways to go before truly being ‘post’ colonial and being rid of imperialistic tendencies. In further research, it would be compelling to compare this view to views that interventionist U.S. foreign policy do not carry imperialistic undertones. This dissertation’s shortcomings include a lack of other critical theoretical lenses, such as feminism; and other approaches, such as constructivism or foreign policy analysis; which could bring out different facets of the event of the Iraq War. It is crucial to assert that this research is imperative—not only to prevent further human rights abuses by the U.S.; but to avoid setting bad precedent in international law, and to decrease the overall insecurity of the U.S..

All in all, this dissertation has embraced a more positive aspect of the human rights movement; where the human rights practices of states such as the U.S. are subjected to scrutiny (Sikkink 2004, 208). The U.S. has the capacity, as a global power, to be a leader of the human rights agenda; but only if it were to stop human rights hypocrisy and using human rights as a tool of dominance. While this would go against neorealist perceptions of state interactions; it is imperative to do so to prevent insecurity, to become less imperialistic, and to encourage power in other states. It would seem to go against U.S. national interest at first—but ultimately, becoming less hypocritical in human rights would serve U.S. national interest, and make for a less war-torn international system.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAT—Convention Against Torture

CEDAW—Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CERD—Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

CRPD—Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

ICCPR—International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

UDHR—Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN—United Nations

U.S.—United States

WMD—Weapons of Mass Destruction

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