

## US breaking the rules, at home and abroad

PAUL KRUGMAN, *New York Times*

What frightens me is the aftermath and I'm not just talking about the problems of post-war occupation. I'm worried about what will happen beyond Iraq in the world at large, and here at home. The members of the Bush team don't seem bothered by the enormous ill will they have generated in the rest of the world. They seem to believe that other countries will change their minds or that what the world thinks doesn't matter. They're wrong on both counts. Victory in Iraq won't end the world's distrust of the United States because the Bush administration has made it clear, over and over again, that it doesn't play by the rules. Remember, this administration told Europe to take a hike on global warming, told Russia to take a hike on missile defence, told developing countries to take a hike on trade in

lifesaving pharmaceuticals, told Mexico to take a hike on immigration, mortally insulted the Turks and pulled out of the International Criminal Court all in just two years. Nor, as we've seen, is military power a substitute for trust. Apparently, the Bush administration thought it could bully the UN Security Council into going along with its plans; it learned otherwise. "What can the Americans do to us?" one African official asked. "Are they going to bomb us? Invade us?" Meanwhile, we need \$400 billion a year of foreign investment to cover our trade deficit, or the dollar will plunge and our surging budget deficit will become much harder to finance and there are already signs that the flow of foreign investment is drying up, just when it seems America may be about to fight a whole series of wars. It's a matter of public record that this war with Iraq is largely the brain-

child of a group of neo-conservative intellectuals who view it as a pilot project. In August, a British official close to the Bush team told Newsweek: "Everyone wants to go to Baghdad. Real men want to go to Tehran." In February, according to the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz, Under-Secretary of State John Bolton told Israeli officials that, after defeating Iraq, the United States would "deal with" Iran, Syria and North Korea. Is Iraq really the first of many? It seems all too likely and not only because the "Bush doctrine" seems to call for a series of wars. Regimes that have been targeted, or think they may have been targeted, aren't likely to sit quietly and wait their turn. They're going to arm themselves to the teeth and perhaps strike first. People who really know what they are talking about have the heebie-jeebies over North Korea's nuclear program and view war on the Korean

peninsula as something that could happen at any moment. And at the rate things are going, it seems we will fight that war, or a war with Iran, or both at once, all by ourselves. What scares me most, however, is the home front. Look at how this war happened. Instead, we got assertions about a nuclear program that turned out to be based on flawed or faked evidence; we got assertions about a link to Al Qaeda that people inside the intelligence services regard as nonsense. Yet those serial embarrassments went almost unreported by our domestic news media. So most Americans have no idea why the rest of the world doesn't trust the Bush administration's motives. And now that the shooting has started, the already loud chorus that denounces any criticism as unpatriotic will become deafening.



A peace activist dressed as Uncle Sam takes part in a protest march in New Delhi on March 31. The protesters demanded an immediate end to the war on Iraq and a boycott of all US-made products.



An Iraqi family huddled in the back of a pick-up truck flees Baghdad as a haze of thick smoke envelops the city from oil burning trenches in Baghdad on March 30.

## US newsman sacked for interview on war

AFP, Washington  
Celebrated news correspondent Peter Arnett, famed for his coverage of the Vietnam War and the first Gulf war, has been sacked by NBC after he suggested on Iraqi television that the US war plan had failed. On its "Today's Show" morning news broadcast, NBC read a statement from network officials announcing that the New Zealand-born Arnett, had been sacked. "It was wrong for Mr. Arnett to grant an interview to state-controlled Iraqi TV, especially at a time of war," the NBC statement said. "And it was wrong for him to discuss personal observations and opinions in that interview. Therefore," the statement concluded, "Peter Arnett will no longer be reporting for NBC News and MSNBC."

## 'Boasting about bomb accuracy hindering war'

AFP, Washington  
In editorials Monday the New York Times said allied forces should boast less about precision bombs, while the Wall Street Journal took Washington to task for giving the Iraqi opposition the cold shoulder. "There is a downside to the incessant boasting about the surgical accuracy of the attacks. It raises expectations that every bomb will hit its target and outrage around the world when one doesn't," The New York Times said in an editorial. The admonition came after a bomb demolished a bustling Baghdad market, killing and maiming scores of civilians. "The allies deserve credit for conducting the most surgically precise bombing effort in the history of warfare, and they are surely right to let the world know how much care they are taking," the editorial said.

## IAEA for safeguards to prevent future war

AFP, Kuala Lumpur  
A United Nations nuclear watchdog official Monday said a more effective safeguards regime with more power for its inspectors was needed to prevent a repeat of the ongoing war in Iraq. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) director for external relations and policy coordination, Piet de Klerk, said on the sidelines of a regional meet that the Iraq war and tension over North Korea's nuclear programs "demonstrated the need for a credible international verification regime." But progress has been slow, with only 72 countries having ratified an additional protocol introduced in 1997 which grants the IAEA broader access to their nuclear activities, he said.

"If there was an effective safeguard regime that includes these kind of strengthening measures... more problems can be resolved by peaceful means," he told reporters. He was speaking on the sidelines of a three-day seminar for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on boosting safeguards under the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons treaty (NPT). Only two ASEAN countries, Indonesia and the Philippines, have ratified the additional protocol. Malaysian Science, Technology and Environment Minister Law Hieng Ding said a lack of consultations and transparency in developing the protocol led to the slow adoption by the 182 non-nuclear weapon states that were parties to the NPT.

Law said the list of equipment and non-nuclear materials that need import and export reporting under the protocol was "subjective" in nature and "seemed to go beyond the spirit of the NPT" as it included those used in non-nuclear activities. Implementation was also made more difficult as the protocol was expected to go beyond the traditional areas of jurisdiction of national nuclear regulatory authorities, he said in his opening speech. Governments would have to review their laws to allow more rights of access to facilities for inspection, and many would need help to train frontline law and export control enforcement officers, he said.

## Tens of thousands in Europe say no to war

AFP, Ankara  
Tens of thousands of Europeans across the continent demonstrated Sunday against the US and British invasion of Iraq, with baton-wielding Turkish police dispersing protesters hurling eggs at a British consulate. Tens of thousands mobilised in cities across Spain to protest outside military bases being used as launchpads by US forces in the war on Iraq. Turkish police action came when demonstrators burned British and US flags and hurled eggs at the British consulate in the western city of Izmir, the CNN-Turk news channel reported. News shots showed police lashing out at protesters with batons. There is powerful public opposition in Turkey to the war in neighbouring

Iraq. According to a recent opinion poll, nine out of 10 Turks oppose military action. In Rome, some 200 demonstrated outside the Quirinale Palace -- residence of Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi -- calling on him to respect the country's constitution, whose article 11 repudiates war. They laid on the street clad in T-shirts splashed in blood-red paint symbolising war victims and sang the Italian World War II anti-fascist song "Bella Ciao." In Prague, capital of the Czech Republic, some 700 demonstrators including American and Iraqi expatriates marched to the US embassy with banners reading: "Whose war is it? It's Bush's!" "Don't chuck bombs, chuck Bush!" and "No blood for oil."

## Legal fog shrouds Iraq's oil

AFP, Cairo  
As the US-led coalition lays the ground to resume oil sales from Iraq to fund aid and reconstruction, experts warn that getting the infrastructure ready is not enough, and a legal mandate was needed. "Potential buyers have to bear in mind that from a legal standpoint Iraq's oil is the property of the Iraqi state represented by the Iraqi government," Najj Abi Aad, managing partner of Lebanese firm Econergy, pointed out. "No major company, British and American included, would put its reputation at risk by loading oil without an appropriate contract," he said. According to former Iraqi oil minister Essam Shalabi, the US-British coalition does not even have the right to attempt to resume oil production.

"Any attempts to restart Iraq oil operations now are illegal while the oil fields (in southern Iraq) are under an occupying force," he told the New York-based Energy Intelligence Group of publications. "The government in Baghdad is still the only legal power in the country... no one should touch Iraq's oil until a legal body takes on the responsibility of running the country, assuming the regime is toppled," he said. The UN Security Council voted a new resolution Friday to resume the "oil for food" program that was suspended on March 17, three days before the start of the war, when UN Secretary General Kofi Annan ordered international staff out of Iraq.



A herd of camels walk in front of an oil well fire on March 30 in Rumaila, Iraq. US commanders have said that only a handful of the estimated 500 wells in the Iraqi south had been set alight by Iraqi troops and that efforts are now under way to bring them under control.



## Off to war with the armchair division

THE GUARDIAN, London  
Three decades have passed since American television networks were famously said to have brought war into a nation's living rooms. But it's only in the last three days that this idea has become reality. Those reports from Vietnam were shaped, taped and commented. Even during the first Gulf war - when images were first flashed back directly from battle - the scenes were usually mediated and delayed. This is the first time that death has gone live, 24 hours a day, with a continuous feed of pictures as if the whole shooting match were a football match. This time, digital satellite viewers can even use their red interactive buttons to call the shots of the shots: zapping between battle zones and international capitals like a James Bond baddie watching the world come down on 30 TV

screens in his underground bunker. And so, lolling with a coffee on a sofa in Middle England on a Sunday morning, you're suddenly caught in the wind-kicked yellow mist of a sand-bank somewhere near Basra. Another cloud - too thick and white to be sand - rises on the horizon and an American voice yells: "Gas! Gas! Gas!" As masks are slapped on, a soldier, ducking under a dune, crackles into his hand: "Roger - request ammo resupply." But you can't stay because, in Qatar, a loud explosion has been heard at the gates of General Tommy Franks's command centre. A reporter, sounding high on caffeine and low on facts, speculates that this might be a terrible breach of security. An info-ribbon ripping across the bottom of the screen reminds us that a US soldier seems to have gone crazy with grenades at an army camp the night before. We belong to a generation which has

largely ceased to be surprised by television, but think about this: those who wanted to be able to watch an enemy operation live from the banks of the Tigris. This weekend's pictures have widened the eyes like nothing since the moon landings, though with rather greater moral complications. The essential problem is that in seeming to know everything, we know nothing. There are wise old journalists who will tell you that the word "raw" is usually a warning. It is unwise to eat raw meat or smell raw sewage and it may be equally foolish to consume raw news coverage. In the triptych of examples given above, what had vividly seemed to be an assassination attempt on General Franks was down-graded later to a gas canister exploding at a car plant over the road. During the Tigris reed-shoot, the western rolling news shows all reported in good faith that the coalition claimed to have no planes missing until defence

secretary Donald Rumsfeld murmured on NBC that, in fact, the count was short. Because we must always doubt the meaning of the scenes we're seeing, following this war on television is like walking around an art gallery in which the pictures dissolve and the captions scramble shortly after you've been admiring them for 20 minutes. On Saturday morning, Jeremy Thompson of Sky News was able to bring pictures direct by satellite as coalition troops secured an Iraqi village. An English-speaking local - "Mr Mubarak" - showed the reporter a car on which the arriving army had supposedly fired. A British soldier leaned across the screen and insisted that the vehicle had been caught by shrapnel. The officer told Thompson that medical help would arrive within a day but was then overheard telling the Iraqis that it would be "within a day or two." But another villager, who gave

Saddam the thumbs down, also blew a raspberry for the American president. Someone once said that journalism is the rough first draft of history. The problem with rolling news is that it gives you the notebook and the crossings-out on the way to the first draft as well. Congratulating themselves on not screening Arab television's footage of alleged American prisoners of war, some western networks might usefully have sat on some of their own cans of film. Over the first weekend of conflict - perhaps because of a decision by some Pentagon movie director viewing the rushes - more events took place in daylight. But their meaning remained largely dark. The viewer frequently feels that you can't quite believe you're being allowed to see these things. Rather more problematic is you don't know what to believe about them either.