

The 'Rothschild connection' the House of Rothschild and the invasion of Iraq

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Now that the tenth anniversary of 9/11 has been commemorated, Osama bin Laden is officially dead and the last US combat troops have been withdrawn from Iraq (though private military 'contractors' remain), an accounting of the 'Global War on Terror' is surely in order; and timely, given that since 9/11, when 2,973 people were killed in the attacks in New York and Washington DC,¹ the US-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq have massively increased the death toll. As of December 2011, according to iCasualties, since 2001 a total of 1,858 US, and 981 other foreign troops had been killed in Afghanistan;² and at least 40,000 Afghan civilians are estimated to have been killed in the same period (including 8,800 since 2008).³

Though in no way responsible for 9/11, or even a safe haven for al-Qaeda – facts confirmed by the 9/11 Commission Report⁴ – Iraq has borne the brunt of America's 'Global War on Terror'. Estimates vary, but according to figures compiled by the Iraq Body Count project, since March 2003 at least 157,000 Iraqis have been killed by the US-led invasion and the ensuing sectarian violence, including 128,000 civilians.⁵ And

1 *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon The United States*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2004), p.xv.

2 <<http://icasualties.org/OEF/index.aspx>>

3 See 'Civilian casualties caused by ISAF and US Forces in the War in Afghanistan (2001-present)', at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilian_casualties_caused_by_ISAF_and_US_Forces_in_the_War_in_Afghanistan_%282001%E2%80%93present%29>; and 'Parties to Afghan conflict should escalate protection of civilians in 2011', UNAMA Press Release, 9 March 2011.

4 *9/11 Commission Report* (see note 1) p. 66.

5 <www.iraqbodycount.org/analysis/numbers/2011/> ;and James Hilder, 'Iraq war killed 162,000 people, according to final count', *The Times*, 3 January 2012.

this is a conservative estimate. US military casualties, though not as grim as the Iraqi death toll, are still significant with 4,484 killed and 32,300 wounded as of December 2011, according to iCasualties.⁶

For the safely retired architects of this bloody enterprise, there are no regrets. In his self-serving memoir George W. Bush insists that invading Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power was 'the right decision'. According to Bush, 'America is safer without a homicidal dictator pursuing WMD and supporting terror at the heart of the Middle East.'⁷ Tony Blair is equally unrepentant, arguing in his autobiography that 'leaving Saddam in power was a bigger risk to our security than removing him; and that terrible though the aftermath was, the reality of Saddam and his sons in charge of Iraq would at least arguably be much worse.'⁸

A troubling point for both is the failure to find Iraq's 'WMD stockpiles' (Bush) or even an active WMD program, the original rationale for the invasion. The protagonists conveniently blame an 'intelligence failure' (Bush) and 'intelligence....that turned out to be incorrect' (Blair) for this omission;⁹ but then invoke new justifications for the war, including Saddam Hussein's horrendous human rights record, or claim he could not have been contained indefinitely and would have eventually rebuilt his WMD program.¹⁰ Yet despite being a 'threat' to America, the Iraqi regime was easily toppled by the US-led invasion force which took only twenty days to capture Baghdad. Faced with this litany of transparent falsehoods – including the Iraq-al-Qaeda 'link' – many observers have concluded the true reasons for the invasion were kept from the public.¹¹

6 <<http://icasualties.org/Iraq/index.aspx>>

7 George W. Bush, *Decision Points*, (New York: Virgin Books, 2010), p. 267.

8 Tony Blair, *A Journey*, (London: Hutchinson, 2010) p. 380.

9 Bush, *Decision Points*, pp. 262 and 268; Blair, *A Journey*, p. 374.

10 Bush, *Decision Points*, p. 270; Blair, *A Journey*, pp. 376-379.

11 See for example, Christopher Scheer, Robert Scheer & Lakshmi Chaudhry, *The Five Biggest Lies Bush Told Us About Iraq*, (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003); James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2005); and Frank Rich, *The Greatest Story Ever Sold* (New York: Viking, 2006).

Some think the truth will never be known. Richard N. Haass, current President of the Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) and a senior official in the Bush Administration, reportedly claims he will 'go to his grave not knowing the answer.'¹²

The Rothschild's war?

Beyond this mainstream bewilderment, a small group of conspiracy theorists claim to have the answer: the invasion of Iraq was actually carried out at the behest of the House of Rothschild. Writing on his website in 2004, for example, Canadian Henry Makow claimed the US invasion of Iraq was actually 'advancing the Rothschilds program of world dictatorship...'¹³ In a later article, Makow explained:

'The neo conservative intellectuals are agents of the Illuminati Rothschild banking cartel. Its goal is to integrate the Middle East into the "new world order" at the expense of the U.S. soldier and taxpayer. This is the true nature of "imperialism". The Rothschild agents pulling Bush's strings included Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, William Kristol, Eliot Abrams and Charles Krauthammer...'¹⁴

British writer Nicholas Hagger in his book *The Syndicate: The Story of the Coming World Government* (2004), claimed that a 'pro-Israel' US-based 'Rothschildite' subfaction – represented by a pressure group, the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) – supported the invasion 'to bring some respite to Israel.' A British-based 'Rothschildite' faction also played a role, backing the ousting of Saddam Hussein to 'secure a new supply of oil' and 'improve Israel's position'.¹⁵

And in his recent book *Human Race Get off Your Knees:*

¹² George Packer, *The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq*, (London: Faber & Faber, 2006) p. 46.

¹³ Henry Makow, 'Americans are Rothschild Proxies in Iraq', <www.savethemales.ca>, 14 March 2004.

¹⁴ Henry Makow, 'Michael Moore Shills for Illuminati Bankers', <www.savethemales.ca>, 4 July 2004.

¹⁵ Nicholas Hagger, *The Syndicate: The Story of the Coming World Government*, (O Books, 2004) pp. 180, 185, 252-253.

The Lion Sleeps No More (2010), David Icke claims 'the invasion of Iraq in 2003...was ordered (on behalf of their hidden masters) by the Rothschild assets, George W. Bush and Tony Blair.'¹⁶ According to Icke, the Bush Administration was in fact,

'controlled by the so-called "neo-con" or neoconservative network that included *Rothschild Zionist* "think tanks" like the Project for the New American Century and the American Enterprise Institute which, together, orchestrated the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq... At the heart of the *Rothschild-controlled neocon cabal* were Richard Perle (Rothschild Zionist), Paul Wolfowitz (Rothschild Zionist), Dov Zakheim (Rothschild Zionist), Douglas Feith (Rothschild Zionist), John Bolton (Rothschild Zionist), Lewis Libby (Rothschild Zionist), the list goes on and on.'¹⁷

Were the Rothschilds the secret master plotters behind the invasion of Iraq? Given that Icke, Makow and Hagger offer no evidence, we could simply dismiss their claims. Instead, taking them more seriously than they would otherwise deserve, let us see what, if any connections there are between the Rothschilds and the invasion of Iraq.

The Power of the Rothschilds

These claims of a covert Rothschild role in the invasion of Iraq appear to rest on the assumption they are omnipotent yet shadowy megalomaniacs. David Icke, for example, describes the Rothschilds as a 'vicious bunch of interbreeding global criminals and power-crazed genocidal maniacs', and alleges they have 'manipulated governments and worked through the Brotherhood network to create wars and revolutions, often lending money to both sides in the ensuing conflicts.'¹⁸

Hyperbole aside, Icke's claims reflect an uncontested fact that during the 19th century the Rothschilds were, as one

¹⁶ David Icke, *Human Race Get Off Your Knees: The Lion Sleeps No More*, (David Icke Books, 2010), p. 131 (emphases added).

¹⁷ Icke p. 113 (emphases added); see also p. 136.

¹⁸ Icke, *Human Race Get Off Your Knees*, p. 78; and David Icke, *...And The Truth Will Set You Free*, (Bridge of Love, 2004) p. 39.

recent study noted, 'the most powerful force that had ever been known in the world's money markets.'¹⁹ According to British historian Niall Ferguson, 'for most of the century between 1815 and 1914, [the House of Rothschild] was easily the biggest bank in the world.'²⁰ To find a contemporary equivalent, 'one has to imagine a merger between Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, J. P. Morgan and probably Goldman Sachs too — as well, perhaps, as the International Monetary Fund, given the nineteenth-century Rothschilds' role in stabilising the finances of numerous governments.'²¹

The Rothschilds also had a reputation for using their vast wealth, originally accumulated by the dynasty's founder Meyer Amschel Rothschild (1743-1812) and then massively expanded by his five sons, Amschel, Nathan, Salomon, Kalman, and James, to manipulate European politics. Having extended their reach beyond Frankfurt, to establish banking houses in London, Paris, Naples and Vienna, the House of Rothschild managed to be both very powerful yet almost supernaturally discreet. As Derek Wilson observes in his study, *Rothschild: A Story of Wealth and Power* (1988):

'Seldom were [the Rothschilds] to be seen engaging in open public debate on important issues. Never did they seek government office. Even when, in later years, some of them entered parliament, they did not feature prominently in the assembly chambers of London, Paris or Berlin. Yet *all the while they were helping to shape the major events of the day*: by granting or withholding funds; by providing statesmen with an official diplomatic service; by influencing appointments to high office; and by an almost daily intercourse with the great decision makers.'²²

But what was the basis to their power? Why did they have

19 George Ireland, *Plutocrats: A Rothschild Inheritance*, (London: John Murray, 2007), p. 3.

20 Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild: Money's Prophets 1798-1848*, Vol. 1, (London: Penguin Books, 2000), p. 3.

21 Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild: The World's Banker, 1849-1998*, Vol. 2, (London: Penguin Books, 2000), p. 479.

22 Derek Wilson, *Rothschild: A Story of Wealth and Power*, (London: Andre Deutsch, 1988), p. 99 (emphasis added).

such good access to the kings, princes and prime ministers of the time? An obvious answer would be their enormous wealth, which rivalled that of Europe's ruling monarchs and princes. The Rothschild fortune rapidly increased from £80,000 in 1810 (equivalent to £2.7 million in 2005) to some £6 million by 1836 (£4.8 billion).²³ When Nathan M. Rothschild died in 1836, his personal fortune amounted to £3.5 million making him 'richer, in terms of net wealth, than anyone else in Britain.'²⁴ Or to put it into perspective: his personal wealth was equal to 0.62% of Britain's Gross Domestic Product.²⁵ The combined wealth of his four sons, estimated at £8.4 million in 1870s (£4.9 billion today), was 'a sum that exceeded the worth of any other family in England of the day.'²⁶ Yet wealth alone does not account for the power of the Rothschilds in the 19th century. Recent academic work suggests their political power was based on four factors:

1. Financial leverage

During the 19th century the Rothschilds dominated the international bond market – the buying and selling of government debts. The London house, for example, was responsible for 38 per cent of the value of loans issued for foreign governments over 1818-1832.²⁷ This enormous financial power enabled the Rothschilds to pressure governments: 'if a regime bent on war asked to borrow money, they could refuse, and conversely they could give financial support to one that was peacefully inclined.'²⁸ Or vice versa.

2. Secret communications

²³ Amos Elon, *The Founder: Meyer Amschel Rothschild and His Time*, (London: HarperCollins, 1996), p. 155; and Niall Ferguson, 'Metternich and the Rothschilds', *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook 2001*, p. 22. Currency conversions through <www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/default0.asp#mid> (2005).

²⁴ Ireland (see note 19) p. 27.

²⁵ Ferguson (see note 20) pp. 481-482. Ferguson estimates that if measured in 1995 values, Nathan's fortune was equivalent of almost £3.7 billion.

²⁶ Ireland (see note 19) p. 354.

²⁷ Ferguson, 'Metternich and the Rothschilds' (see note 23) pp. 22 and 34.

²⁸ Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild*, Vol.1, (see note 20) p. 244.

The Rothschilds gained privileged access to the courts of Europe through their 'uniquely fast communications network', which not only gave them an advantage over competitors, but was also used by European statesmen. Because the Rothschild courier network was 'quicker than the official courier systems' and it enabled informal messages to be sent between governments 'indirectly through the brothers'.²⁹ The Rothschilds naturally exploited their unique access to influence Europe's political leaders.

3. Bribes, loans and gifts

The Rothschilds used a range of financial inducements to cultivate relationships with princes, politicians and officials. For example, the Rothschilds provided the famous Austrian chancellor and foreign minister, Prince Klemens von Metternich, with numerous loans, totaling nearly 2 million gulden. The Rothschilds also lent money to Metternich's son, Victor, and provided cash gifts, cheap loans and eventually a retainer to his secretary, Friedrich Gentz.³⁰ Other recipients included future British prime minister, Benjamin Disraeli, the Duke of Wellington, and his financier, John Charles-Herries.³¹

4. Media manipulation

The Rothschild brothers also sought to influence the markets through the press. Nathan developed relationships with key journalists at the *London Times*; Salomon, through Gentz, was able to exert pressure on the German newspaper, the *Allgemeine Zeitung*; while James, in France, was able to influence the *Moniteur Universel* and the *Journal des Debats*. Indeed, as James later told his nephews in 1837, 'it is good if one can regulate public opinion.'³²

The first half of the 19th century was arguably the pinnacle of Rothschild political and economic power, and the period which established their mystique. A century and a half

²⁹ Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild*, Vol. 1, (see note 20) pp. 232-233, 244; and Ferguson, 'Metternich and the Rothschilds' (see note 23) p. 34.

³⁰ Ferguson, 'Metternich and the Rothschilds' (see note 23) p. 24.

³¹ Ireland (see note 19) p. 176; Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild*, Vol. 1.(see note 20) pp. 154-157.

³² Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild*, Vol. 1 (see note 20) pp. 287-288.

later the Rothschild name still retains its cachet, but there is little evidence they have preserved anywhere near the same level of power. As will be detailed below, the Rothschilds remain very well-connected, but they have lost many of their previous advantages. From its original five branches, only two – the English and French – exist today and these were merged in 2007 to form the Rothschild Group.³³ The House of Rothschild remains fractured with numerous independent offshoots, including the Rothschild Investment Trust (RIT),³⁴ the Edmond de Rothschild Group,³⁵ and Vallares PLC.³⁶ More importantly, the Rothschilds have exited the international bond market and are now confined to the international financial services business.³⁷

While it is rumoured the Rothschild fortune, kept in trusts in Switzerland, is worth £40 billion³⁸ or even 'trillions',³⁹ more conservative estimates suggest a lesser fortune, reflecting the combined impact of heavy financial losses during both world wars, onerous death duties in England, and the forced nationalisation of private banks in France in 1981.⁴⁰ In 2002, *Forbes* calculated the wealth of the eight leading members of the Rothschild family at US \$1.5 billion.⁴¹ The *Sunday Times* in 2008 estimated Sir Evelyn de Rothschild to be worth £527 million; while his cousin, RIT Chairman Lord Jacob Rothschild and his son Nat had a combined fortune of £1.4 billion.⁴² In

33 <<http://www.rothschild.com/>>; 'Rothschild banking group unifies', Agence France Presse, 17 July 2007.

34 <<http://www.ritcap.co.uk/>>

35 <www.edmond-de-rothschild.com/presentation/group/presentation.aspx>

36 Guy Chazan, 'From Klosters to Kurdistan', *Wall Street Journal*, 12 September 2011.

37 Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild*, Vol. 2 (see note 21) p. 479.

38 Tim O'Sullivan, 'The young elite 1-10', *The Observer*, 12 March 2008.

39 Paul Vallely, 'The Rothschild story: A golden era ends for a secretive dynasty', *The Independent*, 16 April 2004.

40 Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild*, Vol. 2 (see note 21) pp. 454-456; Frederic Morton, *The Rothschilds* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961) pp. 209-210; and Wilson, *Rothschild* (see note 22) pp. 430-431.

41 'The Dynasties: Rothschild Family', *Forbes*, 28 February 2002

42 'Lord and Nat Rothschild' & 'Sir Evelyn and Lady de Rothschild', *Sunday Times*, 27 April 2008.

2011, Vallares founder Nat finally made billionaire status in his own right, becoming the 67th richest person in Britain.⁴³ His Swiss relative, Benjamin de Rothschild, Chairman of the Edmond de Rothschild Group, estimated his own fortune at 3 billion euros in 2010.⁴⁴

The other measures of Rothschild power are also somewhat circumscribed, though they retain some media interests. This includes shares in *The Economist* newspaper group.⁴⁵ Sir Evelyn was Chairman of *The Economist* from 1972 to 1989 and his current wife, Lady Lynn Forester de Rothschild became a non-executive Director in 2002.⁴⁶ Sir Evelyn was also a non-executive director for Conrad Black's Telegraph Group;⁴⁷ while his cousin, Lord Jacob Rothschild, was a member of the international advisory board for Hollinger International, of which Black was CEO.⁴⁸ Jacob was Deputy-Chairman of Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB satellite television network from 2003 to 2007.⁴⁹

On a number of measures – specifically their wealth, financial specialisation and connections – the Rothschilds still qualify as members of the global power elite, or that elite group of 5000, the so-called 'Superclass.'⁵⁰ In 1997, for example, Evelyn was among only three Britons in *Vanity Fair's* list of the 65 'most powerful people in the world;' ⁵¹ while Jacob has been lauded as 'the great Establishment fixer'

43 'Nat Rothschild tops hedge fund rich list', Reuters, 6 May 2011.

44 Eyatan Avriel & Guy Rolnik, 'Family Values', *Ha'aretz*, November 5, 2010.

45 <www.economistgroup.com/results_and_governance/ownership.html>

46 <www.economistgroup.com/results_and_governance/ownership.html>

47 'Black's Canadian Conundrum', *The Sunday Times*, 28 March 1993.

48 'Chaim Herzog Joins Hollinger Advisory Board', *Jerusalem Post*, 7 January 1994.

49 'Row as BSkyB picks Murdoch Jr', ITN News, 4 November 2003; and Mark Cobley, 'Meet the most popular man at BSkyB', <efinancialnews.com> 11 November 2011, <www.efinancialnews.com/story/2011-11-11/most-popular-man-at-bskyb?mod=blogheadlines-home>.

50 See David Rothkopf, *Superclass: The Global Power Elite and the World They are Making*, (New York: Little, Brown, 2008).

51 'Masters of the World', *Daily Mirror*, 10 October 1997.

(Barber), and credited with 'tremendous dynamism while staying resolutely behind the scenes' (Wullschlager).⁵² But was their power critical to the behind-the-scenes effort to oust Saddam Hussein?

The Eastern Front

Icke, Makow and Hagger suggest the Rothschilds had a number of motives to initiate the war against Iraq. Three in particular stand out: (1) to advance the plot to build world government; (2) to exploit Iraq's oil; and (3) to remove a regional strategic threat to Israel. All three warrant further scrutiny, though only the latter two are plausible.

World Government

Numerous writers have argued the invasion of Iraq was a critical step in the establishment of world government.⁵³ It was, claimed one John Birch Society analyst, 'only the first of many planned wars of assimilation en route to a world effectively controlled by the United Nations.'⁵⁴ But there is no evidence that building world government or empowering the UN was ever a war goal. On the contrary, the neo-conservative architects of the invasion claimed it would actually render global institutions irrelevant and confirm US global dominance. 'President Bush has no hopes for world government, or for a world beyond conflict...' claimed PNAC co-founder William Kristol on the eve of the invasion.⁵⁵ 'What will die in Iraq is the fantasy of the United Nations as the foundation of a new world order', predicted Richard Perle.⁵⁶

52 Lynn Barber, 'Financial genius Lord Rothschild on modern art', *The Sunday Times*, 4 April 2010; Jackie Wullschlager, 'Lunch with FT: Jacob Rothschild', *Financial Times*, 16 April 2010.

53 See for example, Dennis L. Cuddy, 'The Iraq War, Oil and World Government', <NewsWithViews.com> 26 March 2007; and Alan Stang, 'World Government Frenzy: A Century of War', (2002), <www.federalobserver.com/archive.php?aid=3946>.

54 William Norman Grigg, 'Why We Fight', *The New American*, 21 April 2003, p. B15.

55 William Kristol, 'Morality in Foreign Policy', *Weekly Standard*, 10 February 2003.

56 Richard Perle, 'United They Fall', *The Spectator*, 22 March 2003, p. 22.

Indeed, the invasion occurred in defiance of those international rules overseen by the UN: after initially (and reluctantly) lobbying for a UN Security Council authorisation to oust Saddam Hussein, the Bush Administration was quick to abandon that track when it became clear that Russia, France and China would not support such a resolution. Untroubled by a lack of UN authorisation, the US and its allies invaded anyway, an act subsequently declared 'illegal' by then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.⁵⁷ As numerous legal scholars noted, through its invasion of Iraq the US Government had 'behaved as though international law does not matter' (Sands) and had 'gravely delegitimized both cosmopolitan ideals and international law' (Wolin).⁵⁸

Given that the invasion of Iraq appears has done the opposite of advancing the cause of world government, the question of whether or not the Rothschilds supported such an objective seems moot. Yet writers continue to claim the Rothschilds are key players in the alleged plot to build world government,⁵⁹ though the evidence for these allegations is non-existent. Hagger, for example, makes some heavily qualified, but poorly sourced and inaccurate claims that the Rothschilds not only financed Illuminati founder Adam Weishaupt, but from 'early on' were committed to creating a 'Weishauptian world rule'.⁶⁰ The historical record is less convincing. Despite their support for a number of geopolitical

57 'Iraq war illegal, says Annan', BBC News, 16 August 2004.

58 Philippe Sands, *Lawless World: America and the Making and Breaking of Global Rules*, (London: Allen Lane, 2005), p. 203; and Richard Wolin, 'The idea of cosmopolitanism: from Kant to the Iraq war and beyond', *Ethics & Global Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (2010).

59 See for example, Dr K. R. Bolton, 'A Rothschild Plan for World Government', *Foreign Policy Journal*, 24 March 2011; David Allen Rivera, *The New World Order Exposed [Final Warning: A History of the New World Order]*, (Thinkers Library, 2004), pp. 16-21; and Nicholas Hagger, *The Secret History of the West*, (O Books, 2005), pp. 358-403.

60 Hagger, *Secret History* (see note 59), pp. 289 and 359. Hagger writes that between 1770 and 1776 Weishaupt 'seems' to have received Rothschild funds, and there are 'reports' that in 1773 Mayer Amschel Rothschild 'appears' to have 'met Weishaupt to plan world revolution'. Despite his initial caution, Hagger subsequently treats both claims as facts (see pp. 362, 397), yet neither claim is credible. First,

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schemes within Europe, including an Anglo-German alliance,⁶¹ the Rothschilds have balked at world government notions. Cecil Rhodes, for example, removed Lord Nathaniel Rothschild (1840-1915) from his later wills because the banker had proved himself 'absolutely incapable' of understanding his vision of creating a secret society to achieve an Anglo-American world government.⁶²

Oil

A more plausible motive would be to share in the spoils gained

Note 60 continued.

throughout the 1770s Rothschild was no master banker, but a modestly wealthy trader of rare coins, medals, coffee, wool, cotton and rabbit skins, and largely confined to the Jewish ghetto in Frankfurt. His banking business did not emerge until the 1780s (Elon, *The Founder* [see note 23] p. 71). Second, there is no evidence that Rothschild (then only 28 years old) and Weishaupt ever met in 1773 or any other time, let alone plotted 'world revolution' together. Terry Melanson suggests the only connection between the Rothschilds and the Illuminati was indirect: through their banking activities with Illuminati members Baron von Dalberg and Prince Karl, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel (See Melanson, *Perfectibilists: The 18th Century Bavarian Order of the Illuminati*, [Oregon: Trine Day LLC, 2009], pp. 278-79, 334-36). Finally, Hagger's sourcing for these claims is unreliable (*Secret History* [see note 59] pp. 561 n.11, 567 n.2 & 3). His first source, William Guy Carr's *Pawns in the Game* (1958), is an inherently dubious, anti-Jewish tract which does not cite any evidence for the Rothschild funding of Weishaupt. Hagger's second source is Neal Wilgus' *The Illuminoids: Secret Societies and Political Paranoia* (London: New English Library, 1978), which refers to the 'alleged' 1773 Weishaupt-Rothschild meeting (p. 119). Wilgus, in turn, cites Carr's book as one of three making claims about the 1773 meeting, but notes that 'no mention of the Rothschilds is given in any other account of the Weishaupt organisation' (p.51). Wilgus also dismisses Carr's book as both 'extreme' and 'less plausible'; and 'lacking any useful documentation and continually leaping to unlikely conclusions (p. 21). Indeed, elsewhere in *Pawns*, Carr cites only *one* 'document' as a source for the alleged Weishaupt-Rothschild meeting: 'The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion', an infamous anti-Semitic forgery which, incidentally, mentions neither Rothschild nor Weishaupt. Hagger, though, neglects to mention Wilgus' critical views on Carr or his scepticism about the 1773 meeting.

61 Ferguson, *House of Rothschild*, Vol. 2 (see note 21), pp. 389-394; Morton, *The Rothschilds* (see note 40) pp. 200-206.

62 See Will Banyan, *A Short History of the Round Table*, October 2008, pp. 6-7 at <www.bibliotecapleyades.net/sociopolitica/esp_sociopol_roundtable_1.htm#Part%201>

from wresting control of Iraq's substantial oil resources from the Iraqi state, replacing the regime with a more compliant one that would privatise the oil industry and be more reluctant to join with OPEC nations in raising oil prices. Although some senior Bush Administration officials denied that Iraq's substantial oil reserves had any bearing on the decision to invade, and Blair dismissed it as a 'conspiracy theory', it was obvious to many observers that improving access to Iraq's oil was driving the invasion.⁶³ This had long been part of the neo-conservatives plans: PNAC's 1998 letter to Clinton, warned that unless Saddam was removed 'a significant portion of the world's supply of oil will be put at hazard.'⁶⁴ Despite the high-level denials, some Bush Administration officials strayed from the script. In September 2002 White House economic adviser Lawrence Lindsey declared: 'the key issue is oil, and a regime change in Iraq would facilitate an increase in world oil', leading to a drop in prices;⁶⁵ and in 2003 Bush's former speechwriter, David Frum, wrote that the Global War on Terror was intended to bring 'new prosperity to us all, by securing the world's largest pool of oil.'⁶⁶

The Rothschilds have had a long interest in the oil business. In the 1880s the French branch invested heavily in the Russian oilfields of Baku, to the extent that for a time 'around a third of Russian oil output was Rothschild-controlled.' The Rothschilds later became the largest shareholders in Shell and Royal Dutch, facilitating their eventual merger.⁶⁷ Current Rothschild oil interests are less

63 See for example, Paul Roberts, *The End of Oil: The Decline of the Petroleum Economy and the Rise of a New Energy Order*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2004), pp. 111-113, 304; Michael C. Ruppert, *Crossing the Rubicon*, (British Columbia [Canada]: New Society, 2004), pp. 527-537; William R. Clark, *Petrodollar Warfare: Oil, Iraq and the Future of the Dollar*, (British Columbia [Canada], New Society, 2005; (Blair quote) Kevin Philips, 'American Petrocracy', *The American Conservative*, 17 July 2006; and David Strahan, *The Last Oil Shock*, (London: John Murray, 2007), pp. 1-35.

64 <www.newamericancentury.org/iraqclintonletter.htm>

65 Lindsey quoted in Philips, 'American Petrocracy' (see note 63).

66 David Frum, *The Right Man: The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2003), p. 282.

67 Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild*, Vol. 2 (see note 21) p. 355.

substantial. Until recently Jacob Rothschild was the biggest family investor in oil, financing oil development in Central Asia, including purchasing stock in Kazakhstan's largest oil company, through his investment company Tau Capital PLC, established in 2007.⁶⁸ Jacob, through RIT, also owns Agora Oil & Gas, which in turn owns 15 per cent of the Catcher oil field in the North Sea.⁶⁹ Jacob has also recently invested in shale oil exploration in Israel.⁷⁰ Given this background, supporting the invasion of Iraq to open up its oil reserves to international oil companies for the first time since 1974 would presumably have found favour with the Rothschilds. Indeed, in September 2011 Vallares Plc, an investment vehicle or 'cash shell', created by Nat Rothschild, merged with a Turkish company, Genel Energy International, to create Genel Energy PLC, picking up Genel's existing exploration and production operation in the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan in northern Iraq. Genel is currently producing a very modest 50,000 barrels per day, but it is sitting in a region in Iraq estimated to have up to 40 billion barrels of oil.⁷¹

Israel

Protecting Israel is by far the most plausible motive for Rothschild support of the invasion. Ever since Israel bombed Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981, ousting Saddam Hussein had been an important Israeli strategic objective. This occasionally found expression in the public domain. Back in 1982, for example, Oded Yinon, a journalist and former Israeli diplomat, had publicly advocated Iraq's 'dissolution', as it was 'Iraqi

⁶⁸ Guy Norton, 'How now, Tau?', *Euromoney*, 24 September 2007; 'Jacob Rothschild', *Vanity Fair*, 2008, <www.vanityfair.com/online/newestablishment/2008/09/jacob-rothschild.html>

⁶⁹ Mike Foster, 'Rothschild's RIT on a roll', *efinancial news*, 11 July 2011; Michael Kavanagh, 'Premier to buy North Sea explorer EnCore', *Financial Times*, 5 October 2011.

⁷⁰ Mike Foster, 'Rothschild's RIT on a roll', *efinancial news*, 11 July 2011; Michael Kavanagh, 'Premier to buy North Sea explorer EnCore', *Financial Times*, 5 October 2011.

⁷¹ Guy Chazan, 'From Klosters to Kurdistan', <www.daylife.com/article/05Drgt11boa7D>; Matt Aitkins, 'Vallares Kurdish Excursion', January 2012, <www.financierworldwide.com/article.php?id=8915>.

power which constitutes the greatest threat to Israel.⁷² Then in 1996, an all-American study group, lead by Perle for an Israeli think-tank, produced the paper, 'A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm', to advise Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. 'A Clean Break' recommended 'removing Saddam Hussein from power', which, it acknowledged, was 'an important Israeli objective in its own right'. Perle, and two other members of the Clean Break study group, David Wurmser and Douglas Feith, later became members of the Bush Administration.⁷³ More blatant were former Israeli Prime Ministers Netanyahu and Ehud Barak, who in September 2002 publicly advocated a 'pre-emptive strike' against Iraq (Netanyahu) and 'putting an end to Saddam Hussein's regime' (Barak), due to the potential danger Iraq posed to Israel.⁷⁴

A number of senior Bush Administration officials also revealed that Israel's security needs had driven the invasion plans. In September 2002, for instance, Philip Zelikow, then on Bush's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, told an audience at the University of Virginia that the 'unstated threat' was not against the US, it was Iraq's 'threat against Israel'; however the US Government did not 'lean too hard on it rhetorically, because it is not a popular sell.'⁷⁵ In May 2003 Deputy Secretary for Defense Paul Wolfowitz told a US Senate Committee that regime-change in Iraq would have a 'positive impact on the Arab-Israeli peace process' as Saddam Hussein had been 'deeply opposed to progress' and was guilty of

72 See Oded Yinon, 'A Strategy for Israel for the Nineteen Eighties', *KIVUNIM (Directions)*, (February 1982) at <<http://cosmos.ucc.ie/cs1064/jabowen/IPSC/articles/article0005345.html>>.

73 See 'A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm', at <www.iasps.org.stra1.htm> and Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, (see note 11) pp. 261-265 and 281.

74 Ehud Barak, 'Taking Apart Iraq's Nuclear Threat', *New York Times*, 4 September 2002 and Benjamin Netanyahu, 'The Case for Toppling Saddam', *Wall Street Journal*, 20 September 2002.

75 Zelikow, quoted in 'Letters: The Israel Lobby', *London Review of Books*, 25 May 2006.

'financing and supporting terrorism among the Palestinians.'⁷⁶

Once Saddam Hussein was gone, it has not been difficult to tally how Israel had benefitted. As US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice noted in 2007, this included the 'removal of an eastern front threat for Israel.'⁷⁷ Other observers credited the invasion with compelling Libya to abandon its WMD program, thus removing another potential strategic threat to Israel. Saddam Hussein's demise also ended Iraqi support 'for one of the Israeli people's most threatening foes' – Palestinian suicide bombers, the families of whom had been receiving payments from Iraq.⁷⁸ Moreover, by 2008-10 it became abundantly clear that US troops in Iraq served Israel's security needs – as a bulwark against Iran – judging by the panicked response from Israel and its US supporters as the US withdrawal loomed.⁷⁹

Given its long history of support for the Jewish state, protecting Israel's security would obviously find favour with the Rothschild dynasty. Rothschild support for Israel can be traced back to 1882 when a young Baron Edmund de Rothschild (1845-1934) embraced the Zionist cause, and began funding Jewish settlements in Palestine.⁸⁰ Perhaps the most significant milestone was in November 1917, when Baron Walter Rothschild received the so-called Balfour Declaration, in which the British Government confirmed its support for the 'establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.'

⁷⁶ 'US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Holds Hearing on Iraq Stabilization and Reconstruction', Federal Document Clearing House, 22 May 2003.

⁷⁷ Secretary Condoleezza Rice, 'Roundtable with Travelling Press', Berlin, Germany, 18 January 2007, at <<http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/B69B10922E9E004C852572680052A414>>.

⁷⁸ Amatzia Baram, 'Who Wins in Iraq? Israel', *Foreign Policy* March/April: 51, 2007, p. 51.

⁷⁹ See 'McCain: Israel would suffer in Iraq pullout', *Jewish Telegraph Agency*, 26 March 2008, <www.jta.org/cgi-bin/iowa/breaking/107735.html>; Yitzhak Benhorin, 'Netanyahu, Gates discuss eastern front against Israel', Ynet News, 7 July 2010 <www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3916691,00.html>; and 'Netanyahu spells out Israeli security concerns to Gates', Agence France Press, 7 July 2010.

⁸⁰ See Simon Schama, *Two Rothschilds and the Land of Israel*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978).

Since then Rothschild support for Israel has been manifest on a number of levels. Most prominent has been Yad Hanadiv, or the Benefactors Foundation, chaired by Jacob, which has over the past few decades funded construction of Israel's Parliament, Supreme Court and in 2011 the National Library buildings.⁸¹ Visiting Israel in 1992 for the opening of the Supreme Court, Jacob told the *Jerusalem Post*:

'I consider myself a Zionist. I have been and always will be. I passionately believe in the State of Israel, as we have as a family.'⁸²

There has also been less obvious strategic support. This includes the Jacob's emergency donation of £1 million to Israel during the Six Day War in 1967.⁸³ Also in the 1960s, Baron Edmond de Rothschild (1926-1997) had been a 'major contributor' to Israel's nuclear weapons program, funding the start up costs for the nuclear reactor at Dimona.⁸⁴ Recent research has also identified the 'British and French branches of the Rothschild family' as secret financial supporters of Israel's nuclear weapons program.⁸⁵

Secret motives?

In *Decision Points*, Bush makes an unconvincing attempt to defend the official rationale behind the invasion, noting there were allegations 'that America's real intent was to control Iraq's oil or to satisfy Israel. Those theories were false. I was sending our troops into combat to protect the American people.'⁸⁶

81 Melanie Lidman, '\$200 million renewal project launched at N'tl Library', *Jerusalem Post*, 28 March 2011.

82 Quoted in Bill Hutman, 'A Magnificent Present From the Rothschilds', *Jerusalem Post*, 11 November 1992.

83 Calv BenDavid, Joseph Finklestone & Nicholas Simon, 'The Immortal Rothschilds', *The Jerusalem Report*, 18 April 1996, p. 36.

Equivalent to £13.7 million in 2009 (conversion through <www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/>).

84 Seymour M. Hersh, *The Samson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy*, (New York: Random House, 1991), pp. 66-67.

85 Michael Karpin, *The Bomb in the Basement: How Israel Went Nuclear and What That Means for the World*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), p. 137.

86 Bush, *Decision Points* (see note 9), p. 253.

Yet every government that goes to war has motives and aims that it keeps secret from the public and its adversaries. This was certainly the case in the first Gulf War, when, according to the memoir written by Bush Senior and his national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, the key unstated objective of President George H. W. Bush was to 'destroy Saddam's offensive capability', though 'it had not been feasible to list it openly', as achieving it required avoiding a diplomatic solution. In short, as Bush allegedly told his close advisers: 'We have to have a war.'⁸⁷

The 2003 invasion of Iraq was no exception. But defending Israel and seizing Iraq's oil reserves would not have been the only secret objectives. Numerous analysts have identified other unpalatable reasons including: Bush's belief, allegedly expressed in 1999, that invading Iraq would boost his domestic popularity;⁸⁸ and for 'demonstration effect', in the wake of 9/11, the invasion of Iraq was intended to 'send a powerful message' to other potential foes about the costs of defying the US.⁸⁹ But of these unstated motives, defending Israel would have appealed the most to the Rothschild family, and it certainly motivated the neo-conservatives who served in the Bush Administration.

The Silence of the Rothschilds

According to Lord Jacob Rothschild, the 9/11 attacks were 'cataclysmic',⁹⁰ but other than the cancellation of Sir Evelyn's 70th birthday party,⁹¹ there are few clues as to what actions the Rothschilds took or advocated in response. Moreover, unlike David Rockefeller, for example, who controversially

⁸⁷ George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), p. 463; and Bob Woodward, *Shadow: Five Presidents and the Legacy of Watergate*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), pp. 184-185.

⁸⁸ Russ Baker, *Family of Secrets: The Bush Dynasty, The Powerful Forces That Put It In The White House, And What Their Influence Means for America*, (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2009), pp. 423-425

⁸⁹ Barton Gellman, *Angler: The Shadow Presidency of Dick Cheney*, (London: Allen Lane, 2008), p. 231.

⁹⁰ 'Chairman's Statement', in RIT Capital Partners plc, *Annual Report and Accounts* 31 March 2002, p. 4.

⁹¹ 'Rothschilds hit hard', *The Evening Standard*, 24 September 2001.

suggested that US support for Israel may have prompted the attack,⁹² the Rothschilds have not publicly speculated on its causes.

Indeed, despite having plausible motives to support the forcible ouster of Saddam Hussein – an integral part of the US strategic response to 9/11 – the leading members of the Rothschild family have maintained a conspicuous public silence on the issue. This has been the case, even when opportunities have arisen to make their position clear. In September 2002, for example, Jacob hosted a two-day conference of notables, led by billionaire Warren Buffett, at Waddesdon Manor, the Buckinghamshire ancestral home of the Rothschild dynasty. The reported purpose of the ‘private gathering’ was to discuss, among other issues, ‘the implications of the expected war in Iraq.’⁹³ The conference speakers included two ‘well-placed Washington officials’ who reportedly informed the select group that ‘war was now inevitable’ and that ‘regime change’ would not stop with Iraq, but would be extended to Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Pakistan.⁹⁴ There is no record of Jacob’s reaction.

The only exception to this silence has been Lady Lynn Forester de Rothschild, the current wife of Sir Evelyn. In a letter to the *Financial Times* in 2007, she wrote:

‘One can understand the world’s dismay about the US’s decision to elect George W. Bush and allow him to lead the US and Britain to war in Iraq. These two acts will *go down in history as two of the US’s worst decisions and are fair objects of criticism.*’⁹⁵

Whether her husband and his extended family shared this view is unknown. Her sincerity on this matter is also questionable given that during the 2008 US presidential race her political preferences seemed to be firmly aligned with

92 See Bill Marvel, ‘9-11 attack shook Rockefeller’s world of certainty’, *Dallas Morning News*, 8 November 2003.

93 Damian Reece, ‘Buffett to be leading light at elite forum’, *Daily Telegraph*, 4 September 2002.

94 Anatole Kaletsky, ‘So much money but, I still hope, so little sense’, *The Times*, 26 September 2002.

95 *Financial Times*, 6 July 2007 (emphasis added).

those contenders who had supported the invasion. Forester had supported Senator Hilary Clinton, but when Barack Obama had won the Democrat nomination she had switched parties, to back the neo-conservative favourite Senator John McCain.⁹⁶ Forester had justified her rejection of Obama, who had opposed the invasion, with the bizarre argument he was an 'elitist'.⁹⁷ What is clear, though, is that neither her husband, nor her many in-laws have found it necessary to comment on one of the biggest controversies of the past decade.

The Rothschilds and the neo-conservative network

Between them, Icke and Makow name at least nine prominent neo-conservatives as 'Rothschild agents', but provide no evidence of any actual Rothschild connections. In fact there is no evidence of the English Rothschilds directly funding *any* of the US-based neo-conservative organisations, despite donating to other leading US think-tanks such as the Council on Foreign Relations and the Brookings Institute.⁹⁸ To the extent that the Rothschilds can be linked to the neo-conservative network, and ultimately to Bush and Blair, most of these ties were indirect and were through three groups:

1. The plutocrats, the billionaires who helped fund the neo-conservative network, and supported the war through their media empires and political connections.

Bruce Kovner: The billionaire Chairman and founder of Caxton Associates, a New York-based hedge fund, Kovner's main contribution to the network was as Vice-Chairman (2001-2003) and Chairman (2003-2008) of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). Described by some observers as the 'neocons

⁹⁶ Michael Falcone, 'A Democratic Baroness Endorses McCain-Palin Ticket', *New York Times*, 17 September 2008, <<http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/09/17/a-democratic-baroness-endorsesmccain-palin-ticket/>>.

⁹⁷ Lynn Forester de Rothschild, 'Democrats Need to Shake the "Elitist" Tag', *Wall Street Journal*, 11 September 2008.

⁹⁸ See Council on Foreign Relations, *Annual Report 2010*, CFR, 2010, pp. 33 and 52; CFR, *Annual Report 2009*, CFR, 2009, p. 53; and Brookings, *Annual Report 2009*, Brookings Institution, 2009, p. 35.

fortress',⁹⁹ the AEI played a crucial role in the public debate on the invasion; it also provided the 'surge' strategy,¹⁰⁰ and post-administration jobs for key neo-conservatives such as Perle, Wolfowitz and Bush's speechwriter, David Frum. Described by one journalist as a 'right wing George Soros' and 'one of the most powerful people in the country',¹⁰¹ Kovner openly supported the war. The 'liberation of Iraq', he wrote in 2003, was 'critical to the successful prosecution of the war on terror...'¹⁰² Kovner was also close to Vice-President and former AEI Trustee, Dick Cheney, who visited Kovner's estate in Dutchess County, New York, for two days in October 2001.¹⁰³

Kovner's relationship with the Rothschilds is longstanding. According to the *Financial Times*, Kovner launched Caxton in 1983 'with backing from the Rothschild family.'¹⁰⁴ From 1986 through to 1999, Kovner managed an offshore investment fund for Global Asset Management (GAM). GAM, set up by Gilbert de Botton in 1983, had two owners: de Botton, who had worked for Rothschild banks in the US and Switzerland, had a 60% share; and Jacob Rothschild, who had the remaining 40%. GAM consisted of ninety-six hedge funds of which Kovner's, with 12% of assets, was both the largest and 'one of the top performers.'¹⁰⁵ When Kovner scaled back his hedge-fund in 1995 the *Wall Street Journal* noted that he would 'continue to manage money for the wealthy Rothschild family of France.'¹⁰⁶

Rupert Murdoch: As the CEO and dominant shareholder of

99 Jacob Heilbrunn, *They Knew They Were Right: The Rise of the Neocons*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2008) p. 158.

100 American Enterprise Institute, *2007 Annual Report*, AEI, 2007, p. 2.

101 Philip Weiss, 'George Soros's Right-Wing Twin', *New York Magazine*, 8 August 2005.

102 American Enterprise Institute, *2003 Annual Report*, AEI, 2003, p. 2.

103 Weiss (see note 101).

104 Robert Clow, 'Caxton launches fund with LTCM veterans', *Financial Times*, 20 July 2001.

105 Claire Makin, 'GAM's biggest gamble', *Institutional Investor*, September 1994.

106 Laura Jereski, 'Kovner Surprises Wall Street by Announcing His Intention to Return Money to Investors', *Wall Street Journal*, 12 June 1995.

News Corp, which owns the Fox News network and some 175 newspapers worldwide, billionaire Rupert Murdoch is a powerful and controversial figure in his own right. In the wake of the phone-hacking scandal, his ability to influence and even bully politicians has come under closer scrutiny. According to one commentator: '[Murdoch] dominated British public life. Politicians – including prime ministers – treated him with deference and fear. Time and again the Murdoch press – using techniques of which we have only just become aware – destroyed political careers.'¹⁰⁷

Murdoch also provided crucial support to the neo-conservative network, bankrolling the *Weekly Standard*, the political magazine run by PNAC co-founders William Kristol and Robert Kagan.¹⁰⁸ Not surprisingly Murdoch was an enthusiastic supporter of the invasion of Iraq, declaring in February 2003 that Bush was 'acting very morally and very correctly' in seeking to oust Saddam Hussein – a view reflected in all 175 of his newspapers.¹⁰⁹ Four years later, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, he admitted to having 'tried', though unsuccessfully, to use his media empire to shape public opinion in favour of the conflict.¹¹⁰ Perhaps more troubling were revelations of his access to Tony Blair, whom Murdoch called and spoke to three times in the days leading up to the invasion.¹¹¹

Murdoch and Jacob Rothschild have a long-standing friendship that dates back to the 1960s.¹¹² In 2003, for instance, Jacob was appointed to the board of Murdoch's BSkyB; in 2008 Jacob and his wife hosted the 40th birthday

107 Peter Osborne, 'Phone hacking: David Cameron is not out of the sewer yet', *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 July 2011.

108 Richard H. Curtiss, 'Rupert Murdoch and William Kristol: Using the Press to Advance Israel's Interests', *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, June 2003.

109 Quoted in Roy Greenslade, 'Their Master's Voice', *The Guardian*, 17 February 2003.

110 'Murdoch Confesses to Propaganda On Iraq', February 3, 2007, <www.newscorpse.com/ncWP/?p=341>.

111 Andrew Grice, 'How Murdoch had a hotline to the PM in the run-up to Iraq war', *The Independent*, 19 July 2007.

112 'The FN Profile: Rothschild Steps Into the Light', *Financial News*, 9 November 2003.

party for one of Murdoch's daughters at their holiday home on the Greek island of Corfu;¹¹³ and in 2010 Jacob and Murdoch jointly purchased a 5.5% stake in Genie Oil & Gas Inc, which owns 89% of Israeli Energy Initiatives, a company conducting shale gas and oil exploration in Israel.¹¹⁴

Ted Forstmann: Though little known amongst students of parapolitics, Theodore Forstmann, who died in November 2011 from brain cancer,¹¹⁵ was an intriguing figure. An article in *The Telegraph* in 2004, for example, noted his achievements included being 'a close friend of the late Diana, Princess of Wales, Wall Street Master of the Universe, financial backer of Afghan guerrillas fighting the Russians in the 1980s, Republican donor, legendary deal-maker, philanthropist, pal of Donald Rumsfeld...'¹¹⁶ At the time of his death, Forstmann was CEO and Chairman of IMG, an international talent agency, but he had made his fortune as a co-founder of Forstmann, Little & Co, which specialised in leveraged buyouts. Forstmann's connections to the neo-conservative network are less obvious yet still important. Rumsfeld joined Forstmann, Little & Co's advisory board in 1989 and went on to run one of its acquisitions, General Instruments Company, for three years.¹¹⁷

In 1993 Forstmann was the co-founder and generous funder of Empower America (EA), a pressure group that

113 Peter Mandelson, *The Third Man*, (London: HarperPress, 2011), p. 26.

114 'Business and Financial Leaders Lord Rothschild and Rupert Murdoch Invest in Genie Oil & Gas', *Business Wire*, 15 November 2010; Taflin Laylin, 'Is Israel's Oil Shale Pie Big Enough To Shift Oil Politics', 28 November 2010, <www.greenprophet.com/2010/11/israel-jordan-oil-shale/>.

115 Andrew Ross Sorkin, 'Theodore J. Forstmann, a Takeover Pioneer, Dies at 71', *New York Times*, 20 November 2011; and Steve Forbes, 'Remembering Ted Forstmann (1940-2011)', *Forbes*, November 22, 2011, <www.forbes.com/sites/steveforbes/2011/11/22/remembering-ted-forstmann-1940-2011/>.

116 Guy Dennis, 'Forstmann's Warning', *The Daily Telegraph*, 17 October 2004.

117 Daniel Cuff, 'Rumsfeld Becomes Chief at General Instrument', *New York Times*, 5 October 1990; Frederick H. Lowe, 'Rumsfeld Resigns at General Instrument', *Chicago Sun-Times*, 12 August 1993.

advocated an aggressive and pro-Israel foreign policy.¹¹⁸ Another EA co-founder, Congressman Jack Kemp, was Senator Bob Dole's running mate in the 1996 presidential election. Rumsfeld, an EA board member, was policy director for Dole's campaign.¹¹⁹ Following 9/11, Kemp and another EA founder, William Bennett, were implicated in a campaign by the neo-conservative network to 'make Palestinian leader Yassir Arafat a target of.....Bush's War on Terrorism.'¹²⁰

Information on Forstmann's connections to the Rothschilds are sketchy but notable. It begins in 1978 with US businessman Derald Ruttenberg, 'a friend and associate of.....banker Lord Rothschild' and board-member of J. Rothschild International, who played a 'key role' in the creation of Forstmann, Little & Co.¹²¹ Jacob and Forstmann later became friends. In fact Forstmann credits his brief relationship with Princess Diana to Jacob's personal intervention, meeting her in 1994 at a dinner hosted by Jacob. 'I think Jacob thought it would be a good idea for the two of us to meet and it was', Forstmann told the *Telegraph*.¹²² Then in 2004, after taking control of IMG, Forstmann appointed Sir Evelyn de Rothschild to IMG's board of directors. In addition Rothschild North America provided banking services to IMG.¹²³

Conrad Black: Before his imprisonment for mail fraud in 2007 (he was reimprisoned in 2011), Canadian-born Lord Black of Crossharbour was Chairman of Hollinger International and the owner of a number of newspapers and magazines including: the *Daily Telegraph*, *Sunday Telegraph*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *The*

118 See 'Empower America Releases Fact Sheet About Israel and the Middle East', *US Newswire*, 25 April 25, 2002.

119 Douglas Frantz, 'Influential Group Brought Into Campaign by Kemp', *New York Times*, 1 September 1996.

120 Jim Lobe, 'Pro-Israel Hawks Take To The Airwaves', *Inter Press Service*, 26 April 2002.

121 'Derald H. Ruttenberg', *The Times*, 1 October 2004.

122 Guy Dennis, 'Forstmann's Warning', *Daily Telegraph*, Saturday 7 January 2012 and Catherine Ostler, 'The billionaire who beguiled Diana and who could have saved her life', *Daily Mail*, 22 November 2011.

123 Patrick Hosking, 'Forstmann on winning streak with IMG', *The Times*, 29 September 2006; Art Spander, 'New man at the top of IMG', *Daily Telegraph*, 5 October 2004.

Spectator, the *Jerusalem Post* and *The National Interest*. Most of these publications promoted the neo-conservative and pro-Israel line. Black was close to a couple of the key neo-conservatives, among them the aforementioned Perle, whom he first met at Bilderberg and later put on Hollinger's International Advisory Board,¹²⁴ and Bush's future speechwriter David Frum, who attended a number of Bilderberg meetings as Black's guest.¹²⁵ Black was a vociferous supporter of the invasion of Iraq and made a number of outrageous claims in favour of the war. Writing in *The Spectator* in 2003, Black described Iraq as 'an international terrorist supporting state' and Saddam Hussein the 'standard-bearer of all the Arab world's militant Muslims.' Iraq, he claimed, could only be disarmed through 'regime change'.¹²⁶

Black's links to the both branches of the English Rothschilds are extensive. He first met Sir Evelyn at Bilderberg, and it was through N. M. Rothschild that Black later acquired the *Daily Telegraph*.¹²⁷ Jacob was a member of the Hollinger Advisory Board and a guest at Black's wedding to Barbara Amiel in 1992; and he had Black and Amiel as his guests when he travelled to Israel to open the Rothschild-funded Supreme Court building later that year.¹²⁸ Jacob was among the guests to the exclusive annual Hollinger dinner in 1998, alongside Margaret Thatcher, Henry Kissinger, former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, and former British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington.¹²⁹ Despite Black's legal troubles he retained his contacts with the Rothschilds: Jacob deigning to dine with him in public in 2005 not long before his indictment; and in

124 Conrad Black, *A Life in Progress*, (London: Random House, 1993), p. 263

125 David Frum, 'Inside the Secret Bilderberg Group', 7 June 2010, <www.frumforum.com/insidethe-secret-bilderberg-conference>.

126 Conrad Black, 'Britain Is Right to Stick By America', *The Spectator*, 15 February 2003, pp. 12-13

127 Black, *A Life in Progress* (see note 124), p. 312.

128 Black, *A Life in Progress* (see note 124) pp. 411 and 471; Steve Pearlstein, 'Black Ink: Canada's Media Baron is Basking in His Success', *The Washington Post*, 1 December 1998; and Chaim Bermant, 'Prodigal Son returns to Israel in a plane that was a hijacker's dream', *The Observer*, 15 November 1992.

129 Taki, 'Dinner Dates', *The Spectator*, 5 December 1998.

2007, Forester claimed that she and her husband remained in contact with the Blacks.¹³⁰

2. The politicians: This small group includes one of the key decision-makers behind the war and two key contenders from the 2008 US presidential elections.

Tony Blair: The Rothschilds are not mentioned in Blair's autobiography, but their connections are extensive. These range from the seemingly benign, such as Jacob and his wife, Serena, attending a dinner at Chequers on 13 March 1999,¹³¹ through to the more significant, such as Sir Evelyn's donation in 2002 of £250,000 to Policy Review, a 'super think-tank', comprising some of Blair's top advisers.¹³² In fact, Evelyn and his wife became 'crucial figures' in Policy Review, helping to organise and host a conference in June 2002 that was attended by Blair and Bill Clinton.¹³³

Forester was a big fan of Blair, telling the *Sunday Times* in 2003 that Blair was 'the only world leader who can seriously influence Bush.' Blair, she claimed, had 'a higher agenda', one which apparently included 'peace in the Middle East.'¹³⁴ Towards the end of Blair's prime ministership, Forester reportedly arranged a reception at 10 Downing Street for mostly American billionaires. The ostensible reason for the £13,000 per head event was to support the Tate Gallery, though some suspected Blair was using the event to 'set up his future career.'¹³⁵

The Clintons: In 1998, then President Bill Clinton changed US policy towards Iraq from containment to regime change, though he stopped short of supporting an actual invasion. This

¹³⁰ Conrad Black, *A Matter of Principle*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stuart, 2011), p. 283; 'Lynn Forester de Rothschild', *Portfolio*, 7 October 2007, <www.portfolio.com/views/columns/the-world-accordingto/2007/10/05/An-interview-with-Lady-de-Rothschild>.

¹³¹ 'The Full List: Blair's Dinner Guests', *Daily Mail*, 19 June 2005.

¹³² Jonathon Carr-Brown, 'Rothschild bankrolls Mandelson think-tank', *Sunday Times*, 22 September 2002.

¹³³ Joe Murphy, 'Peter's (new) friends', *Evening Standard*, 27 September 2002.

¹³⁴ 'Interview: Jasper Gerard meets Lynn de Rothschild', *Sunday Times*, 27 July 2003.

¹³⁵ 'Blair invites billionaires to exclusive No.10 party', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2007.

fact was noted by his wife Senator Hillary Clinton, in her speech to the US Senate in 2002 in support of the so-called Iraq War Resolution. She described her vote for the resolution as saying 'clearly to Saddam Hussein: This is your last chance; disarm or be disarmed.'¹³⁶ Hillary ran unsuccessfully for the Democrat presidential nomination in 2008 and is now Obama's Secretary of State.

The Rothschild connection to the Clintons appears to be entirely through Sir Evelyn's American wife, Lynn Forester, a long-time Democrat supporter. They spent the night of their wedding dinner in 2000 in the Lincoln bedroom in the White House during the final year of Bill Clinton's presidency.¹³⁷ The Clintons were to be among the guests for Evelyn's aborted 70th birthday party in 2001.¹³⁸ There was no such interruption for Evelyn's 80th birthday, which was celebrated jointly with Bill Clinton's 65th and the 76th for Clinton's confidant Vernon Jordan, at Martha's Vineyard on September 4, 2011.¹³⁹

Senator John McCain: A member of the US Senate since 1987, McCain rather than Bush was the neo-conservatives preferred candidate in the 2000 election.¹⁴⁰ Bush, of course, secured the Republican nomination and, through a fortuitous court decision, the presidency. McCain already had form as strong supporter of ousting Saddam, having sponsored the 1998 Iraq Liberation Act. Following 9/11 McCain emerged as a strong supporter of what he called the 'second phase' or the 'next front' in the GWOT: 'regime change in Iraq';¹⁴¹ and subsequently became a 'leading figure' in the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq. Though critical of some aspects of the

¹³⁶ *Congressional Record – Senate*, 10 October 2002, p.S10290.

¹³⁷ Sarah Baxter, 'Hillary's rich friend Lady de Rothschild ambushes Barack Obama', *Sunday Times*, 17 August 2008.

¹³⁸ See William Davis, 'Rothschilds hit hard', *The Evening Standard* 24 September 2001.

¹³⁹ Gayle Fee & Laura Raposa, 'Dems set to rock at Bill Clinton's birthday bash', *Boston Herald*, 1 September 2011; 'Bill Clinton friends gather for bash', UPI, 5 September 2011.

¹⁴⁰ Heilbrunn, *They Knew They Were Right*, (see note 99) p. 230.

¹⁴¹ Quoted in 'McCain's Record on Iraq: Eager to Attack', *Politifact*, 21 August 2008, <www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2008/aug/21/barack-obama/mccains-record-on-iraqeager-to-attack/>

occupation, McCain has remained not only an unrepentant supporter of the war,¹⁴² but an opponent of the large-scale withdrawal of US troops from Iraq.¹⁴³

McCain has numerous connections to the Rothschilds. One of his key corporate supporters was Wilbur Ross Jr, the so-called 'Bankruptcy King', who worked for Rothschild USA Inc. for nearly 25 years before he quit in 2000 to set up his own firm, W.L. Ross & Co. (which managed the Rothschild Recovery Fund).¹⁴⁴ Ross was at the launch of McCain's memoir, *Faith of My Fathers*, in 1999.¹⁴⁵ Rothschild support was more overt during the 2008 presidential elections. In March 2008 Jacob and Nat Rothschild hosted a McCain fundraiser in London.¹⁴⁶ And in September 2008 Lynn Forester de Rothschild, a prominent Democrat, announced she would be supporting McCain over Obama.¹⁴⁷

3. The Powerbrokers, the well-connected confidantes of both the Rothschilds and the politicians who made the decision to invade.

Peter Mandelson: A member of Blair's Government from 1997 through to 2004, including two ministerial appointments that were cut short by corruption allegations, Mandelson is noteworthy for his long and close association with Tony Blair. According to Blair biographer Philip Stevens, Mandelson was Blair's 'friend and confidant' and to whom the Prime Minister 'turned to in moments of crisis.'¹⁴⁸ Anthony Seldon's *Blair*

142 Matt Bai, 'The McCain Doctrines', *New York Times Magazine*, 18 May 2008.

143 See John McCain, Joseph Lieberman, & Lindsey O. Graham, '3,000 Isn't Enough', *Washington Post*, 18 September 2011.

144 'Ross Quits Rothschild, Has Plan To Start Own Investment Firm', *Wall Street Journal*, 14 March 2000.

145 Diana B. Henriques, 'Private Sector; Hail to the...Author', *New York Times*, 12 September 1999.

146 Matthew Mosk, 'Senator's Supporters Are Invited To Lunch With A Lord', *Washington Post*, 15 March 2008.

147 'Obama elitist, says Lady Rothschild', *Los Angeles Times*, 18 September 2008; Matthew Mosk, 'Aristocrat Who Favored Clinton Endorses McCain', *Washington Post*, 17 September 2008, <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/the-trail/2008/09/17/aristocrat_who_favored_clinton.html>

148 Philip Stephens, *Tony Blair: The Making of a World Leader*, (London: Viking, 2004), p. 89.

Unbound (2007), also confirms that Mandelson was 'a constant figure who Blair consulted by telephone.'¹⁴⁹ Such contacts become critical given Mandelson's boast in 2002 that he was playing an 'integral role behind the scenes' by advising Blair on Iraq.¹⁵⁰ Only snippets of that private advice – querying the occupation planning¹⁵¹ have been revealed; but in the main, Mandelson supported the invasion.¹⁵² In 2010 he commented that 'the further we travel from the intervention in Iraq, the more people are able to see the sense of it.'¹⁵³

Mandelson's relationship with the Rothschilds dates back to the 1990s when he first met Jacob and later his son Nat, with whom a 'firm bond was established.'¹⁵⁴ In 1999 Mandelson spent three days at the Rothschild villa on Corfu, and later went to Albania, all paid for by Jacob.¹⁵⁵ He also became close to Evelyn and his wife, counting them as his 'new best friends'; he attended their wedding in 2000 and reportedly convinced Evelyn to fund Policy Review, which Mandelson chaired.¹⁵⁶ Mandelson remains close to Jacob and Nat, holidaying with them in recent years in Corfu, Switzerland

149 Anthony Seldon with Peter Snowdon & Daniel Collings, *Blair Unbound*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), p. 40. Seldon *et al* make a number of references the closeness of the Blair-Mandelson relationship and to the regularity of their telephone contacts (*ibid.*, pp. 111 and 487), but they suggest the main topic of their conversations was usually trade issues (*ibid.* pp. 574-575).

150 Julia Hartley-Brewer, 'Mandy boast sparks row', *The Express on Sunday*, 17 November 2002.

151 See Mandelson, *The Third Man* (see note 113), pp. 353, 359-360.

152 See Peter Mandelson, 'The lonely road that faces Blair', *Financial Times*, 19 March 2003.

153 Quoted in Jane Merrick, 'Mandelson uncut: Election rift with PM', *Independent*, 3 January 2010.

154 Louise Armistead, 'Art, politics and money: Peter Mandelson and Nat Rothschild's long-lasting friendship', *The Telegraph*, 25 October 2008.

155 Anthony Barnett, 'Revealed – Mandelson's £20,000 of junkets', *The Observer*, 26 December 1999.

156 Jonathon Carr-Brown, 'Rothschild bankrolls Mandelson think-tank', *Sunday Times*, 22 September 2002; and Joe Murphy, 'Peter's (new) friends', *Evening Standard*, 27 September 2002.

and the Caribbean.¹⁵⁷

Henry Kissinger: National Security Advisor and later Secretary of State in the Nixon and Ford Administrations, until 9/11 Kissinger had been in conflict with the neo-conservatives, who derided him as the architect of an amoral foreign policy that appeased the Soviet Union and undermined Israel.¹⁵⁸ Following 9/11, though, Kissinger seemed to drop his enmity to the neo-conservative cause, publicly backing the invasion of Iraq.¹⁵⁹ In 2006 Bob Woodward revealed that Kissinger had a 'powerful, largely invisible influence on the foreign policy of the Bush Administration.' Kissinger was meeting with Cheney at least once a month,¹⁶⁰ and also with Bush, to discuss Iraq; Rumsfeld boasted that he had helped set up the Bush-Kissinger meetings. Kissinger's message was hardline: the Iraqi resistance had to be defeated before the US withdrew.¹⁶¹

Kissinger's closeness to the Rockefellers is well-documented. Less attention, however, has been paid to his links to the Rothschilds. He was a friend of Baron Edmond de Rothschild,¹⁶² served with Baron Eric de Rothschild on the international board of governors of the Peres Peace

157 Jon Ungoed-Thomas, 'The secret world of Lord Freebie', *Sunday Times*, 19 October 19, 2008; Nicholas Watt, 'Unlikely friendship that transcends wealth and politics', *Guardian*, 23 October 2008; John Follain, 'Lord Mandelson takes up office - in Corfu', *Sunday Times*, 9 August 2009; and Tim Walker, 'Nat Rothschild helps Lord Mandelson lick his wounds', *Telegraph*, 19 May 2010.

158 See Heilbrunn, *The Knew They Were Right*, (see note 99) pp. 125-132; and Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), pp. 243-26

159 See Henry A. Kissinger, 'Iraq Is Becoming Bush's Most Difficult Challenge', *Washington Post*, 11 August 2002; Kissinger, 'Consult And Control: Bywords For Battling The New Enemy', *Washington Post*, 16 September 2002; and Kissinger, 'Role Reversal And Alliance Realities', *Washington Post*, 10 February 2003.

160 See Dick Cheney with Liz Cheney, *In My Time: A Personal and Political Memoir*, (New York: Threshold Editions, 2011). Cheney notes that Kissinger had been visiting him at the White House 'with some regularity since I had become vice president' (p. 438).

161 Bob Woodward, *State of Denial: Bush At War, Part III*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), pp. 406-410.

162 Wilson, *Rothschild* (see note 22) p. 447

Center,¹⁶³ and is also credited with introducing Lynn Forester to Sir Evelyn in 1998.¹⁶⁴ Kissinger was also a member of the board of the now defunct Open Russia Foundation, a British-based think-tank funded by the now imprisoned Russian oil oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Kissinger reportedly joined the Foundation 'at the invitation of Lord [Jacob] Rothschild, another board member.'¹⁶⁵

Richard Perle: Of all the neo-conservatives figures linked to the decision to invade Iraq, Richard Perle arguably stands out as the 'impresario' of that venture, 'with one degree of separation from everyone that mattered.'¹⁶⁶ Perle had long been an advocate of forcibly ousting Saddam: he led the *Clean Break* study group in 1996, was a signatory to both PNAC letters calling for Saddam's removal and was instrumental in promoting the alleged benefits of the invasion in various forums.¹⁶⁷

Shortly after 9/11 Perle argued that the 'destruction of [Saddam's] regime' was 'essential to the war on terrorism.'¹⁶⁸ In the Bush Administration his official position as Chair of the Defense Policy Board was seemingly peripheral, yet he played a critical role advocating the war, both publicly and allegedly utilising his network of fellow neo-conservatives scattered throughout the administration to fix intelligence assessments so they exaggerated Iraq's WMD capability.¹⁶⁹

Perle also stands out as the *only* one of the nine neo-conservatives identified by Icke and Makow as 'Rothschild

163 Michael Yudelman, 'New Peres Peace Center to focus on economic projects', *Jerusalem Post*, 22 September 1997.

164 Jasper Gerard, 'Queen of the limousine liberals', *The Sunday Times*, 27 July 2003; and 'Weddings; Lynn Forester, Evelyn de Rothschild', *New York Times*, 3 December 2000.

165 Timothy L. O'Brien, 'How Russian Oil Tycoon Courted Friends in the West', *New York Times*, 5 November 2003.

166 George Packer, *Assassin's Gate* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux), p. 29.

167 Packer, *Assassin's Gate* (see note 166), p. 30; and Janine R. Wedel, *Shadow Elite: How the World's New Power Brokers Undermine Democracy, Government and the Free Market*, (New York: Basic Books, 2009), p. 176.

168 See Richard Perle, 'The U.S. Must Strike at Saddam Hussein', *New York Times*, 28 December 2001.

169 Wedel, *Shadow Elite* (see note 167) pp. 179-182, 184-185.

agents' to have had any documented contact with the Rothschilds. The principal venue for this contact was the Hollinger International Advisory Board, with both Perle and Lord Jacob Rothschild identified as members in 1994.¹⁷⁰ The purpose of this board, chaired by the vainglorious Conrad Black, was to 'dine and discuss world affairs',¹⁷¹ an arrangement dubbed by some as a 'faux Bilderberg', paid for by Black's companies.¹⁷² They also brushed shoulders at other events, such as Black's 1992 wedding and his parties.¹⁷³ If they had any more interactions outside of Black's vanity events, it is not on the public record.

All the Right People

The crimes of the Bush Administration, as blogger Glenn Greenwald observed, are 'grave, of historic proportion, and it's simply impossible for anyone who believes in the Nuremberg Principles to deny that.' Having launched 'an illegal, aggressive war' that caused the deaths of least 100,000 people, Greenwald notes, Bush has 'extraordinary amounts of Iraqi blood....on his hands.'¹⁷⁴ The unresolved question, which this article has tried to answer, is whether any of that blood belongs on the hands of the Rothschilds. On the basis of the evidence reviewed above it is indisputable that leading members of the English branch of the Rothschild family knew many of the key advocates of the invasion. The Rothschilds had long-standing and sometimes quite close personal and business relationships with a number of media, oil and hedge

170 See 'Chaim Herzog Joins Hollinger Advisory Board', *Jerusalem Post*, 7 January 1994.

171 Maureen Orth, 'Black Misc hief', *Vanity Fair*, 1 February 2007.

172 Colin Challen, review of H. Paul Jeffers, *The Bilderberg Conspiracy: Inside the world's most powerful secret society*, in *Lobster 61*, Summer 2011, p. 92; <<http://lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster61/lobster61.pdf>>

173 Perle and Jacob Rothschild were among a select group of 20 friends who attended Black's postwedding dinner. See 'Black weds Murdoch star in Chelsea ceremony', *Daily Telegraph*, 22 July 1992; Black, *A Life in Progress* (see note 124), p. 447.

174 Glenn Greenwald, 'The quaint and obsolete Nuremberg principles', *Salon*, 13 May 13, 2011, <www.salon.com/news/opinion/glenn_greenwald/2011/05/13/nuremberg/index.html>.

fund owners, technocrats and political fixers who were either part of the neo-conservative network, or were heavily involved in supporting that clique and in promoting the war. They even had access, albeit indirect, to the key decision-makers in the White House and Downing Street.

But despite the evidence that Rothschilds knew some of the leading advocates of the invasion, not only have they remained silent about where they stood on the enterprise, *nothing* concrete has emerged confirming Rothschild input into the decision to invade. To be sure, as Donald Rumsfeld memorably said, 'Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.' But as yet, despite their associations, there is *no evidence* of the Rothschilds colluding with their myriad pro-war associates, friends, business partners, and acquaintances to push the case for war.

One could easily dismiss the much of the above as 'salacious gossip masquerading as investigative journalism', as one wit sought to describe – and denigrate – press reporting of Rupert Murdoch's numerous private dinners with British politicians.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, sometimes that level of access does mean something; sometimes the conspiracies are real.¹⁷⁶ While the allegation that they were the master plotters behind the invasion is entirely unsubstantiated and highly implausible, it seems possible that certain leading members of the Rothschild dynasty were more than just well-connected bystanders. They were among the 'networks of the super-powerful, who sweetly allow politicians the illusion of being allowed to run things, and even to start the odd war, so long as they think it will bring down the price of oil.'¹⁷⁷ By merely knowing all the right people and having a plausible motive, the Rothschilds are open to the very charges of complicity, and even conspiracy, that they would no doubt

175 Brendan O'Neill, 'During the Murdoch scandal, journalists have given us too many conspiracy theories and not enough analysis', *Telegraph*, 25 July 2011.

176 See 'Sometimes conspiracies are real: Follow the trail through the Murdoch empire and some very curious connections emerge', *Bangkok Post*, 24 July 2011.

177 Marina Hyde, 'Even a Bullingdon baronet can struggle in the rarefied air above democracy', *The Guardian*, 25 October 2008.

prefer to avoid.

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