

**"Coercive Diplomacy" in David Hare's *Stuff Happens* (2004)**  
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**Abstract**

This paper addresses George Bush the junior's decision to invade Iraq in 2003 on the plea of its weapons of mass destructions (WMD's), as delineated in David Hare's *Stuff Happens* (2004), a docudrama depicting the lead-up to the Iraq war. The paper explains how Bush deals with the opponents (Colin Powell, Tony Blair, and Hans Blix) opposing a decision based on "fabricated" evidence by employing his father's strategy of coercive diplomacy against them, depending on both his faith and his position as President. Drawing on a postcolonial approach, the analysis of Hare's piece has demonstrated two significant aspects: 1) Bush has succeeded in achieving his private agenda in invading Iraq by implementing such a strategy of coercive diplomacy; 2) Hare is possessed of the dramatic dexterity of mixing fiction (the nameless fictional characters as well as the unnamed narrator-actors) with facts (the main figures of politics) for supporting play's different conflicts. The present paper has reached a number of findings. First, the US attacked Iraq, for Bush had to show his people some reaction to the 9/11 attacks. Second, Bush chose Iraq in particular for his personal motives. Third, the US's double standard is stressed through the unresolved Israeli/Palestinian conflict negotiated throughout. Fourth, the coercive-diplomacy strategy has always been the US's means for (il-)legal ends and, thus, this strategy can be considered a postcolonial construct in Hare's *Stuff Happens* .

**Keywords:** coercive diplomacy, conflict, George Bush, invasion, Iraq's WMD's, the UN, the US, Tony Blair, war, 9/11.

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الدبلوماسية القسرية في مسرحية أشياء تحدث (2004) لديفيد هير  
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ملخص

يتناول هذا البحث قرار جورج بوش الابن بغزو العراق في عام 2003 بزعم امتلاك الأخير لأسلحة دمار شامل، كما ورد بمسرحية أشياء تحدث (2004) لديفيد هير، وهي مسرحية تاريخية تُصور التمهيد لحرب العراق. يوضح البحث كيفية تعامل بوش مع معارضيهِ (وزير خارجيته كولن باول، ورئيس وزراء بريطانيا توني بليير، والأمم المتحدة ممثلة في هانز بليكس) في قرار مبني على أدلةٍ "مفبركة" باستخدامه لنفس استراتيجيّة والده—الدبلوماسية القسرية—مستغلاً في ذلك على عقيدته الدينية ونفوذه كرئيس. وابتاعه لمنهج مابعد الكولونيالية، فإن تحليل مسرحية هير يكشف عن جانبين مهمين: (1) نجاح بوش في تحقيق أجدته الخاصة بغزوه العراق باستخدامه للدبلوماسية القسرية؛ (2) مهارة هير الدرامية في مزجه الخيال (بإقحامه لشخصيات إبداعية مجهولة إضافة إلى ممثلين معلقين على الأحداث) بالواقع (ممثلًا في الساسة الحقيقيين) لتدعيم الصراعات المختلفة بالمسرحية. لقد انتهى البحث بعددٍ من النتائج. أولاً: هاجمت الولايات المتحدة العراق لشعور بوش بضرورة القيام برد فعل أمام شعبه إزاء هجمات الحادي عشر من سبتمبر. ثانياً: اختار بوش العراق تحديداً لدوافع شخصية. ثالثاً: تجلت ازدواجية المعايير للولايات المتحدة من خلال الصراع الإسرائيلي الفلسطيني المثار بالمسرحية. رابعاً: الدبلوماسية القسرية هي وسيلة الولايات المتحدة الدائمة في تحقيق أهدافها، المشروعة وغير المشروعة.

**كلمات مفتاحية:** الدبلوماسية القسرية، الصراع، جورج بوش، الغزو، أسلحة الدمار الشامل بالعراق، الأمم المتحدة، الولايات المتحدة، توني بليير، الحرب، 9/11

### Introduction

In the beginning of the 1990's, "coercive diplomacy" has been employed by George Bush the senior against Iraq to both liberate Kuwait from its invasion and remove Saddam Hussein. The failure of this strategy led to the US's gaining support from the UN for war when it has become inevitable. This issue has been tackled by political studies such as Captain William S. Langenheim's "Give Peace a Chance: First, Try Coercive Diplomacy" (2002) and Jon B. Alterman's "Coercive Diplomacy against Iraq, 1990-98" (2003). In the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, George Bush the junior's administration plans to invade Iraq, apparently to crush Hussein's tyrannical rule as well as his weapons of mass destruction (WMD's) under the cover of a preventive war on terror. This is well depicted by David Hare's *Stuff Happens* (2004), a controversial history play which centres "on very recent history" and whose "events have been authenticated from multiple sources" (Author's Note). A foremost British playwright, David Hare belongs to the second new wave of postwar British theatre along with Edward Bond, Howard Brenton, and David Edgar. His play, comprising two acts with twelve scenes each, delineates the staff meetings, public addresses, dissenters, backdoor diplomacy, interviews, and fabricated evidence that lead to the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. The main characters in the play are President George Bush the junior; Dick Cheney, Vice-President; Colin Powell, Secretary of State; Condoleezza Rice, National Security Adviser; Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense; Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense; Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister; Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the UN, and Hans Blix, the UN chief inspector. These are in addition to some nameless fictional characters and unnamed narrator-actors. Hare's piece "combines documentary realism with imaginative reconstruction of the arguments behind the publicly known facts" (Tusa 1).

The studies approaching Hare's *Stuff Happens* often tackle the piece in the context of the 9/11 attacks. Timothy J. Hamilton's thesis, *Terrorism, Government and Post-9/11 Docudrama* (2007), for example, examines it, along with Victoria Brittain and Gillian Slovo's *Guantanamo* and other pieces, in the context of the 9/11 terrorist attacks arguing that such plays have had a positive effect on

political debate. Jay M. Gipson-King's "The *Path to 9/11* vs. *Stuff Happens*: Media and Political Efficacy in the War on Terror" (2010), compares the two title pieces stressing the bombing of the WTC as the cause of the war on Iraq. Karolina Golimowska's "Transatlantic Miscommunication in David Hare's Drama *Stuff Happens*" (2012), tackles the transatlantic relations between the US and Europe, especially Great Britain, in the context of post-9/11 international politics. Thus, the topic of the current study has never been touched upon.

Discussing "coercive diplomacy" in Hare's play, the paper shows how far Bush succeeds/fails in containing the three parties opposing his view of the war—his own Secretary of State, the UK represented by Blair, and the UN represented by Blix—by manipulating that strategy against them. The paper focuses on the conflict between Bush and Powell, as the most outstanding one, and shows to what extent the four variants of "coercive diplomacy" (discussed by Alexander George in his *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy as an Alternative to War*) are applied by the former to the latter. Like the first one, the other two conflicts Bush has, with Blair and Blix, are dealt with through the same strategy of "coercive diplomacy." In examining Bush's manipulation of it against his opponents, the paper implies answers to a series of questions: What reaction does Bush take to save his face before his people after the 9/11 attacks? Why does he choose Iraq in particular and not North Korea, for example, to attack? What is the significance of Hare's dramatic technique (of injecting fictional characters) to his docudrama? Why does he use "coercive diplomacy" against his opponents for invading Iraq and not against Iraq directly? How can he achieve his personal targets under the umbrella of "a preventive war"? How can Bush utilize both his position as President and his faith for subjugating his people? What is the significance of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict to the play's issue? How can Bush coerce Powell into yielding to his own view? How can Bush and his cabinet coerce Blair into complying? How can Blair, in turn, coerce his people into complying with his/Bush's demands? How can Bush coerce Blix? How does the success of the US's "coercive diplomacy" against its opponents (in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century) to invade Iraq as well as the failure of the same strategy by the same country (in the 1990's) to liberate Kuwait lead

to the same result—invading Iraq? Why does "coercive diplomacy" in *Stuff Happens* have a practical value for political theatre?

### ***Stuff Happens* and "Coercive Diplomacy"**

Belonging to "post-colonial" literature (since the term covers all literatures affected by the imperialist process "from the moment of colonisation to the present day" (Ashcroft *et al* xv)), *Stuff Happens* is to be viewed from a perspective not novel to imperialism, that is "coercive diplomacy," as a postcolonial construct. Although the phrase "stuff happens" and the term "coercive diplomacy" are both uttered by two relatively conflicting American politicians in Hare's play, the employment of the latter has paved the way for the context of the former. At a press conference on 11 April, 2003, approximately five weeks after the United States launches its war on Iraq, Rumsfeld, asked by a journalist about the looting of Baghdad, gives an insouciant response not only providing the title for the play, *Stuff Happens*, but also alluding to America's own understanding of the concept of freedom:

Think what's happened in our cities when we've had riots, and problems, and looting. *Stuff happens!* ... And it's untidy, and freedom's untidy, and free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things. They're also free to live their lives and do wonderful things, and that's what's going to happen here. [My emphasis] (*Stuff Happens* 3-4)

However, "coercive diplomacy," a topic for political discussion for many past years, has been mentioned by Powell to describe the strategy employed by the American administration to get its opponents to the idea of war in Iraq (70).

"Coercive diplomacy" is defined by George as "the attempt to get a target—a state, a group (or groups) within a state, or a nonstate actor—to change its objectionable behavior through either the threat to use force or the actual use of limited force" (George *Forceful Persuasion* 4). It, moreover, offers "an alternative to reliance on military action" and "seeks to *persuade* an opponent to cease his aggression rather than bludgeon him into stopping" (5). George, in addition, argues that "coercive diplomacy" seeks to achieve three objectives: first, it attempts to persuade an adversary to turn away from its goal; second, it seeks to convince an adversary to reverse an

action taken; and, third, it may persuade an adversary to make "fundamental changes in its government" (George "Coercive Diplomacy..." 9). He discusses four methods or variants of "coercive diplomacy" through which these objectives can be achieved. These variants discussed in detail by George are well summarized by Michael Manulak:

The first, labelled the "try and see" approach, refrains from overt threats while seeking to persuade the target state to alter its behaviour. The second variant, called the "gradually turning the screws" approach, is characterized by an incremental intensification of pressure on an adversary. This approach avoids an explicit timeline for compliance. A third variant is the "classic ultimatum," which provides a clear threat, a set of demands, and a timeline for compliance. The final variant, the "tacit ultimatum," is similar to a classic ultimatum but does not make explicit the timeline for compliance or the nature of the coercive threat. (Manulak 353)

George argues that the choice of a particular coercive diplomatic strategy/variant depends crucially on the context of the crisis event. "These contextual factors vary from one case to another so that one must be careful not to assume that because the strategy worked in one case it ought to be successful in other cases as well" (George *Forceful Persuasion* 69).

Owing to the failure of the US's "coercive diplomacy" against Iraq in the 1990's, the former attacked the latter when there were "three options for removing the Ba'thists from power—a military coup, an American-backed insurgency, or an American invasion" (Langenheim 51). Since the "American invasion" liberated Kuwait but could not remove Hussein's regime, Bush the junior plans to invade Iraq in 2003 to achieve what his father could not. Hare's piece shows how Bush manipulates "coercive diplomacy" against his opponents to get a UN resolution for invading Iraq on the plea of its continued pursuit of WMD's and hence against its regime—which represents a threat to its neighbours as well as to the American people. If "coercive diplomacy" was used by the US against Iraq in the 1990's for *liberating* Kuwait, it is now used, as Hare's piece depicts, by the same country against its opponents to gain support for *invading* Iraq more for secret reasons than the (groundless) bases such as its WMD's, past links to terrorism, etc. The play is well "described or celebrated as delivering truths the Bush administration

had long since denied" (Westgate 405).

In the opening page of his book, George argues that "coercive diplomacy" is sometimes employed by policymakers in the hope of securing a peaceful resolution of a serious dispute (*George Forceful Persuasion* xi). This can be pursued in Hare's *Stuff Happens* where Bush finds himself bound to employ this strategy against all people (inside as well as outside his administration) opposing his view of going to war.

Hare bases his play on three types of characters: real politicians, narrator-actors, and fictional characters. The real politicians are the major world figures who, alone, can classify Hare's piece as "verbatim theatre" since the term "involves the use of actual words spoken by real people to create a piece of drama" (qtd by Hayes 86). The narrator-actors are the different unnamed actors who, in a very objective chorus-like form, are used metatheatrically to explain the historical context of events, introduce and sum up the roles of the real politicians throughout the play, and ease the transitions between the different scenes and settings of the play. "These figures regularly intervene in order to provide additional information or an opinion on a discussed issue...These meta-narrators stand between the figures of politicians and the audience (Golimowska 4). The fictional characters are the five nameless characters distributed among the scenes of the play: the angry journalist (scene 5), the Labour Party politician (scene 9), a Palestinian academic (scene 12), a Briton in New York (scene 18), an Iraqi exile (scene 24). This novel dramatic technique of classifying his characters is not haphazardly employed by Hare. Since he cannot change the exact roles done in real life by the real politicians of his own history play, Hare depicts them as accurately as he can (except the very rare cases of the imagined scenes of what happened behind closed doors) and provides whatever information he wants about them through the roles of the narrator-actors introducing them. He further adds nameless fictional characters to his drama just to achieve some sort of equilibrium by presenting different objective views through them. That is to say, the play technically "is not fully based on testimony: it is the partly news-based, partly imagined account of the events that led to the British/US-American invasion into Iraq in 2003" (Boll 82).

**Bush's "Coercive Diplomacy" against His Secretary of State, Colin Powell**

The play opens with an ideological conflict between Powell, who resists the idea of war, and Bush represented by himself as well as the rest of his administration who are depicted as no more than actors entitled to perform predetermined roles of trying to gain public support for invading Iraq—roles written for them by Bush himself. The characters involved in the Bush administration are defined by the narrator-actors as "actors...men and women who will play parts in the opening drama of the century" (8). This comment implies an administration which is following a script towards a determined end, the decision taken in advance by Bush. In this sense, the players in Bush's administration are reminiscent of the Player in Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* who informs Ros and Guil that the troupe members are not free to "decide" what they perform, "for it is written... We're tragedians, you see. We follow directions—there's no choice involved" (Stoppard 80).

The conflict ensues as one between the objective (Powell) who works for his nation's welfare and the subjective (Bush) who has a personal plan to achieve. Explaining his experience in Vietnam and comparing its historical problems with the current problems of Iraq, Powell draws attention to the fact that America's involvement in the Vietnam War was a bad step which cost the lives of thousands of troops and blemished America's foreign image, a step the Bush administration is about to repeat in Iraq. Powell's awareness that "Politicians start wars; soldiers fight and die in them" (4) leads him to powerfully argue: "War should be the politics of last resort" (5). He "displays a conscience about the morality of war that is clearly absent from the thinking of Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz" (Ansoerge 93). Aware that the role adopted by his administration will conflict with outside realities and facts, and lacking Powell's strong arguments, Bush utilizes both religion and power (as President) not to explain his decision to anyone. On the one hand, he claims he has taken the decision of war in the name of his Christian faith: "My faith frees me. ... Frees me to make decisions which others might not like. Frees me to enjoy life and not worry about what comes next. ... I am here because of the power of prayer" (8-9). Bush thus misuses (his) Christianity showing it as a religion of vengeance: "This is muscular Christianity with a vengeance, where there is no room for humility,



compassion, or concern for the poor. Its purpose is not to humble you before God, but to elevate you above other people" (Hornby 648). He further feels that God, Who has chosen him as President, wants him now to take the decision of war. In this respect, Hamilton conveniently argues:

Hare employs Bush's Christianity as a lens through which the President sees the world in black-and-white: 'this instinct he's always talking about is this sort of weird, Messianic idea of what he thinks God has told him to do.' With this introduction, Hare sets up an argument that Bush's complete reliance on faith and instinct is what drove the United States into its most dangerous display of military hubris since Vietnam. (18)

On the other hand, he makes use of his authority as President, affirming his role as a commander and stating that he is not entitled to explain himself to anyone and thus showing the basis and ground on which he has taken the decision of war. Bush enjoys being President since no-one can ask him to justify his views; *per contra*, he is the one who can ask others justify their situations to him. His argument entails that he can assume anything unreal and false as real and ask others to believe whatever lies he says: "I'm the commander—see, I don't need to explain. I don't need to explain why I say things. That's the interesting thing about being the President. Maybe somebody needs to explain to me why they say something. But I don't feel like I owe anybody an explanation" (9). In fact, Bush has very strong secret motives for attacking Iraq; but since he can neither convince others of them nor can he even announce them, he appeals to religion as an untouchable area to both cover and defend his motives as a dictator. That is why he is always shown as listening out for his men rather than explaining himself to them.

The connection Hare establishes between Iraq and Israel/Palestine in the fourth and other scenes throughout the play—a connection not often announced in reality—stresses that the conflict between Bush (whose arguments rest on his power) and Powell (whose arguments seem logical and realistic) is based on the latter's opposition not only to the war in Iraq but also to America's prejudice

and double-standard imperialistic policy in the Middle East. Kağan Kaya comments on this connection by saying: "The Arab-Israeli conflict is 'embedded in the Iraqi war planning' within the play, and the play also reveals that the U.S. administration of the period had contrasting ideas about this stormy area" (41). America's bias in achieving its own targets in the Middle East is expressed by Rice, Bush's spokeswoman. She differentiates between the present administration of Bush and Bill Clinton's whose "attempts to broker a deal between the Israelis and the Palestinians not only took up a huge amount of time" but "also left this country looking weak" (10). Bush's administration is thus against setting an agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians (which implies an immediate attack against Democratic President Clinton) and finds that "the time has come to tilt back towards Israel" (10). Powell's warnings against Bush's view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: "If we disengage, the risk is, we unleash Sharon. The consequences of that will be dire for the Palestinians" (11) are ignored by Bush's "a real show of strength by just one side can clarify things" (11). Bush's reply has two implications which are both based on power. The first has to do directly with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Bush supports the stronger, that is, Israel. The second has to do indirectly with Powell's conflict with Bush: Powell's warnings are refused and will be conquered by Bush's power, not logic. In this way, Bush is, in fact, employing the first variant of "coercive diplomacy," the "try-and-see" approach—as put forward by George—against his Secretary of State. In other words, Bush the coercer makes "a specific demand" on Powell, to support his decision of invading Iraq, "with neither a time limit nor a stated threat" (Manulak 353).

Like Powell, George Tenet, the CIA director, seems to have opposed the war in Iraq at first; but, unlike him, he is soon contained by Bush. In Raymond A. Schroth's words,

Mr. Tenet knew that an invasion of Iraq would ruin the counterterrorism program he had in place. It slowly became clear to him that he could fight Cheney, join the cabal, or retire. But he felt he had become Bush's 'friend'... The moral tragedy is that the CIA director's main obligation was to speak the truth to power and Mr. Tenet didn't have the gumption to do it. (Schroth 14)

Furthermore, Tenet, as one of Bush's men, uses an aerial photograph and tries hard to convince his colleagues that Iraq is having "a plant which produces either chemical or biological materials for weapons manufacture" (13). The photograph "becomes a trope for the empirical evidence unacknowledged...that contributed to the marketing of the war to senators, congressmen and women, and their constituents" (Westgate 403-4). Powell counters Tenet's belief on the ground that there is no evidence: "to be frank with you, I've seen an awful lot of factories around the world that look an awful lot like this. What's the evidence, what's the evidence of what this factory's producing?" (13). The ideological conflict between Powell and Bush has become clear now as between one who never submits to belief without having clear evidence and another who feels not bound to give any explanation to anyone just because he is the President. Tenet goes further: "this looks just like the factory from which such weapons would come" (14).

Although he presents Bush a dossier of "up-to-date information on terror organizations," Tenet is aware that their information lack real evidence: "We're asking for a kind of global charge—the right to attack any aspect of a terrorist network without specific case-by-case clearance from the President" (19). Tenet's words directly provide Bush with the ambiguous sentence: "This is a war on terror" (19). The phrase "a war on terror," used more than once in the same scene by Bush and recommended by both Rumsfeld and Cheney, has become the alleged end that justifies their means, war:

**Rumsfeld:** I liked what you said earlier, sir. A war on terror.

That's good. That's vague.

**Cheney:** It's good.

**Rumsfeld:** That way we can do anything. (23-4)

It goes without saying that the phrase, "a war on terror," is generally accepted as a welcome positive principle, but the wily private way Bush and his cabinet employ makes of it a very unwelcome passive phrase with very dangerous implications.

Bush finds no difficulty in convincing the Congress of the war in Iraq: "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists" (26). He tries hard to convince it of how does Iraq "flaunt its hostility towards America and support terror." He further stresses, to his people, that Iraq with its terrorist allies constitute "an axis of evil"

and threaten the peace of the world by "seeking weapons of mass destruction" (32). By virtue of his power and alleged faith, Bush confidently succeeds in getting the Congress to the idea he has without even giving it the chance to negotiate:

All nations should know: America will do whatever is necessary to ensure our nation's security. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer. History has called America and our allies to action. (33)

Bush is so overconfident that he sees all steps possible to be taken for getting others to his own idea. Hare says to Tusa: "I'm afraid the character of George Bush, in *Stuff Happens*, is quite a rich character, and I think people begin to recognise the real George Bush and see the real George Bush a little bit differently when they've seen the play" (Tusa 12).

Although all cabinet members are satisfied with Bush's phrase as a ground for the war, Powell is not. At the end of the seventh scene, Bush uses the phrase once again: "You know, Colin, finally this is a war on terror" (24) trying to egg Powell on getting other countries to the idea of coalition, but Powell does not reply. Powell is aware of Bush's unfair motives behind invading Iraq. Likely, it is clear to the public as well as to his own administration that Bush's real motives for invading Iraq are too personal and private to announce. Even the motives he overtly announces as a plea for the war, such as Iraq's continued pursuit of WMD's, are based on fabricated evidence.

Hare's use of the five nameless fictional characters referred to above is not insignificant. In addition to the miscellaneous views they present through their different comments on the war, each one of them serves the play's conflict in its own way. The first of those characters is the angry British journalist who delivers a monologue depicting the conflicting views of the public over the war. He, supporting the US-led war in Iraq, cannot understand why his colleagues, who oppose war in Iraq, do not see the advantages of removing the dictator Hussein:

A country groaning under a dictator, its people oppressed, liberated at last from a twenty-five year tyranny—and freed. Free on the streets, and already... painfully transforming itself into one of the

few potential democracies in the Middle East.... How obscene it is, how decadent, to give your attention not to the now, not to the liberation, not to the people freed, but to the relentless archaic discussion of the *manner* of the liberation. (14)

The journalist raises a number of questions about war, such as "Was it lawful? Was it not? How was it done? What were the details of its doing? Whose views were overridden? Whose views condoned?" (14) and puts some conflicting statements: "'I like Bush'—'I don't'. 'Bush is stupid'—'Bush is clever'" (15) just to summarize the conflicting views he hears about the war. He further sees that "Saddam Hussein attacked every one of his neighbours except Jordan" and ends by arguing: "A people hitherto suffering now suffer less. This is the story" (15). This episode of the journalist supports the main conflict between Powell and Bush by means of reflecting warring views that can well apply to them. Like Hare who reveals the US's plan to invade Iraq and does so verbatim through real politicians but argues throughout (through the fictional ones he invents) against it, the angry journalist reveals the conflicting views about the war and argues throughout for it. Thus, if by adding fictional characters to the real politicians Hare gives balance to his play, he, as an anti-war leftist, shows his own objectivity by presenting a journalist who, though British like himself, does not oppose the war in Iraq. That is why, the play, in Hare's own words to Tusa, has "a metaphorical level as well as a journalistic level" (Tusa 11).

The second nameless fictional character is the New Labour Politician. Influenced by Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz in America, she urges the British to take an action in Iraq against the dictator. Like the angry British journalist whose monologue reflects conflicting views, the Politician's argument includes opposing statements echoing those of Powell and Bush. Although she admits that the "weapons believed to exist turned out not to exist," she argues: "A dictator was removed" (31) assuring that they "have to finish the job" (32). Such dialectical arguments, though supporting the war, show, to use Michael Billington's words, "the dubious premises on which the war was fought" (7) and hence give ground to

the play's conflict.

The Palestinian academic is the most significant one among the play's nameless fictional characters. She reveals Bush's real motives behind the war in Iraq and hence supports the Powell-Bush conflict throughout the play. Although she enumerates many reasons for Bush's war against Saddam's Iraq such as "Arab democracy," "unfinished business," "He tried to kill my dad," "Osama bin Laden had served notice on the dictatorship in Saudi Arabia, and now America needed a new military base," "oil!" (which stresses America's imperialistic ends), the Palestinian academic, who sees "everything in the context of Palestine," argues: "it's about one thing: defending the interests of America's three-billion-dollar-a-year colony in the Middle East" (57)—Israel. Although these are the true and personal reasons Bush cannot announce for invading Iraq, he keeps announcing the (trumped-up) one of the WMD's as the (real) reason.

The Palestinian lady comments satirically on the first motive—"Arab democracy"—by stressing the UN's or, more accurately, the US's duality in dealing with the Middle East:

This is the double standard: a UN resolution which legitimizes war on Iraq has to be enforced. A resolution which demands Israel withdraw to its pre 1967 borders has to be ignored. Justice and freedom are the cause of the West—but never extended to a people expelled from their land and forbidden any right to return. Terror is condemned, but state-sanctioned murder is green-lit. (57)

These words echo those of Edward Said (the father of post-colonialism) who, in a lecture scorning the US's military action in Iraq, sarcastically comments:

Were Iraq the world's largest exporter of apples or oranges, no one would care about its weapons of mass destruction or human rights exploitation. Saddam's regime has violated many human rights, there's no arguing. But everything Powell has accused the Ba'athists of has been the stock in trade of the Israeli government since 1948.

(Said "United States," para 7)

However, the two personal motives, "unfinished business" and "He tried to kill my dad," garner many comments. Lieberfeld, for example, argues that "Bush junior may have felt compelled to prove

himself by surpassing his father and overthrowing Hussein, which his father had rejected doing after the 1991 Gulf war" (14). Elisabeth Bumiller argues that Mr Hussein "tried to assassinate Mr Bush's father in 1993, when he was only a year out of the White House, a payback for the 1991 Persian war, which the first President Bush had waged on Mr Hussein." Bumiller further explains how Hussein's pistol was presented as a gift by the soldiers who captured him to Bush in a visit to the White House and how the latter shows it off to visitors (Bumiller para 4).

The conflict between Powell and Bush echoed and stressed throughout by Hare's fictional characters reaches its climax with the confrontation, at the end of the first act, which reveals the hypocritical nature of the imperialist thought. Powell is aware that his country is acting in a very arrogant way: "I want my country to be less arrogant. ... I want us to go about this in a different way" (53). His being the only person in Bush's cabinet to reject war seeing it a foolish act makes of Powell a protagonist who is defending his views against the antagonist Bush:

Three thousand of our citizens died...*in an unforgivable attack. But that doesn't license us to behave like idiots.* If we reach the point where everyone is secretly hoping that America gets a bloody nose, then we're going to find it very hard indeed to call on friends when we need them. [My emphasis] (53)

Janelle G Reinelt comments: "If there is a sympathetic figure, a spokesperson of reason and insight in the play, it is Powell. Hare embellishes the real general with a bit too much lofty opposition. ..., and he has the best lines, making the case against Bush, Donald Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz" (305). Unlike the pragmatic Bush who seizes power and behaves like idiots in achieving his goals, the idealistic Powell is aware that behaving thus arrogantly will lose America its friends in time of need. As they are radically different from each other in the policy they follow in getting their friends to their views, Powell warns Bush against the counterproductive result of the latter's policy of being high-handed:

**Bush:** I've said before: this isn't a popularity contest, Colin. It isn't about being popular. ...

**Powell:** It's about being effective. And the present policy of being as high-handed as possible with as many countries as possible is profoundly counter-productive. It won't work. (54)

With the same logic, Powell criticizes Bush as a hypocrite in trading with Hussein yesterday and coming to launch war against him today on the (fabricated) plea of *weapons of mass destruction*: "There's an element of hypocrisy, George. We were trading with the guy! Not long ago. People keep asking, how do we know he's got weapons of mass destruction? How do we know? Because we've still got the receipts" (54). Powell's argument implies that Saddam was created yesterday by the country attacking him today. The American hypocrisy articulated through the confrontation between the protagonist and the antagonist reflects Hare's view of the way superpowers follow. Lieberfeld argues that the elder Bush, as both vice-president and president, had provided Hussein with weapons, loans, and military intelligence during his war with Iran. Moreover, members of the junior Bush's administration had also supported Hussein's dictatorship through their positions in previous administrations and as private executives. "These officials may have considered that overthrowing Hussein would erase or compensate for these morally ambiguous and potentially politically damaging histories" (Lieberfeld 8).

Powell's replies are replete with reason and logic which strengthen his argument against Bush. In their dialogue at the end of the first act, the stage directions swarming with words like "silence" and "wait" as in "*There is an angry silence, Bush shifts again, uncomfortable*" (52), "*Bush and Rice wait for Powell to calm*" (53), "*The other two are silenced by the depth of Powell's feelings*" (54), "*Bush is silent*" (54), "*Bush gets up. The other two follow*" [My emphasis] (54) though supporting Powell's strong argument *vis-à-vis* Bush who has nothing to say, imply coercion on the part of the latter if one takes his former words as President/commander into account. This can be more elucidated through Ikuko Nakane's words: "This silence caused by the interpreter's 'wait' could become coercive, if the interpreter's decision to decide the amount of the suspect's



utterance which 'deserves' a rendition is based on the value of the response in the institutional framework of the interview" (204). Again, such emphasized words in the above-quoted lines as "silence," "uncomfortable," "gets up"...etc accentuate Bush's firmness which is tantamount to "an incremental intensification of pressure" on Powell, which characterizes the second variant of "coercive diplomacy"—"the gradual turning of the screws" (George 8). As a result, Powell has become more compliant to argue that it impossible to "invade Iraq unilaterally" (54) but they need true allies who will convincingly support them get their target through the United Nations:

For that you need allies. ... allies you can actually trust, because they believe in what you're doing and they're signed up to it. We need a coalition. And if that takes time, amen. And the only place to do it is at the UN. With the help of a new UN resolution. (54)

Whereas the British journalist and the New Labour Politician have supportingly depicted conflicting views over war throughout their monologues, they are significantly echoing the different stages of the main conflict represented throughout the play between Bush and Powell, who gives in at last and supports Bush's view of the war. If the Palestinian academic explicitly attacks the war in Iraq revealing Bush's real reasons for it, she is in fact supporting Powell's objective views against war. Moreover, the nature of the clash between Bush and Powell is more accentuated with the monologue of the fourth fictional character invented by Hare, a "Brit in New York," who outspokenly analyses and clarifies America's situation—a situation which stresses that the US's war must be regarded within the context of the 9/11 attacks:

'America changed.'... 'On September 11<sup>th</sup> everything changed.' 'If you're not American, you can't understand.'... *Somebody steals your handbag, so you kill their second cousin, on the grounds they live close.* ... If the principle of international conduct is now to be that you may go against anybody you like on the grounds that *you've been hurt by somebody else*, does that apply to everyone? Or just to America? On September 11<sup>th</sup>, America changed. Yes. It got much stupider.

[My emphasis] (92-3)

The argument here echoes not only Powell's words with Bush concerning their victims in the "unforgivable attack" (53) but also Said's well-known quotation: "You cannot continue to victimize someone else just because you yourself were a victim once. There has to be a limit" (Said "Myth of the Clash" 14). However, Bush's war in Iraq has a double-edged weapon: showing his people any reaction to the 9/11 attacks while he is achieving his personal ends of wreaking vengeance on Hussein for the reasons discussed above. This very fact has been much tackled by critics. Richard Hornby, for instance, argues that "the prevalent feeling (as in so much of the country at large) is that America has suffered a terrible loss of face, both from the 9/11 attacks and from Saddam treating us with contempt, for which something must be done" (648). Again, the "Brit in New York," who shows us that "on September 11<sup>th</sup>," "America changed" (92) and concludes: "It got 'much stupider'" (93), reiterates Powell's "I want my country to be less arrogant" (53) in his angry speech with both Bush and Rice. If the above-quoted lines of the British citizen explain the unfair ground on which America's international conduct is based, Powell's previous words, in the eleventh scene, explain the result of such an unfair conduct and describe its actors as "idiots" (53).

The fifth/last fictional character is that of the "Iraqi Exile" whose monologue in the finale is tantamount to a very objective criticism of the Anglo-American war in Iraq. The Iraqi citizen had been in exile for "twenty-seven years ago" longing "for the fall of the dictator" (119). Although the exile is described as "terrible to experience" as "the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its home...its essential sadness can never be surmounted" (Said, *Reflections*, 137), the Iraqi man exclaims at the satirical situation of those who have led the war on Iraq, Bush and Blair: "They came to save us, but they had no plans" (119). He comments on Rumsfeld's "Stuff happens" as "the most racist remark [he] had ever heard" because "the American dead are counted, their numbers recorded, their coffins draped in flags" (119) while the Iraqi "dead are uncounted" (120). The Iraqi Exile's

monologue summarizes the Iraqis' view of the Anglo-American war on Iraq: "We opposed Saddam Hussein ...because he harmed many people, and anybody who harms innocent Iraqis I feel equally passionately and strongly about, and I will oppose them" (120). This argument presupposes that the Iraqis would strongly oppose the Americans and the British on the same ground. The play thus can be seen as "an extended mourning for the loss of human agency the Iraqi Exile intimates" (Deeney 438). Moreover, the Iraqi Exile argues that "Iraq has been crucified. By Saddam's sins, by ten years of sanctions, by the occupation and now by the insurgency" (120). He sees that Iraq "failed to take charge of itself" because it allowed "the worst person in the country" to take charge and concludes that "a country's leader is the country's own fault" (120). He puts it clearly that since the worst person, Saddam, failed to take charge of his own country, the Iraqis must not "expect America or anybody will do it for" them, simply because the Americans themselves are putting their "faith in the wrong person" (120). The Iraqi Exile "might well be talking about the United States citizens who twice elected George W. Bush, who though a far cry from a crazed, sadistic dictator, was hardly the wisest choice to lead this country at a critical time" (Sommer 4). In fact, the play's epilogue from an Iraqi lamenting the incompetence, ignorance and brutality of the occupation echoes Said, who in a similar situation argues:

Israel is the measure of our failings and our incompetence. We have waited for a great leader for years, but none came; we have waited for a mighty military victory, but we were defeated roundly; we have waited for outside powers (the US or, in its time, the Soviet Union), but none came to our aid. The one thing we have not tried in all seriousness is to rely on ourselves....

(Said, "Challenge of Israel" para 6)

However, ending *Stuff Happens* with its conflicting views over war in Iraq, the "Iraqi Exile" scene implies that the Bush-Powell conflict, though coming to an end here due to "coercive diplomacy," is resumed in the companion piece *The Vertical Hour* (2006) in the form of political discussions between Nadia Blye, a professor at Yale University, and Oliver Lucas, a physician and the father of Nadia's

English boyfriend Philip. Unlike Nadia who is “in favour of the invasion” calling it “liberation” (VH 30), Oliver argues: “The West's been using Islam as a useful enemy for as long as anyone can remember” (65.)

Powell is still not fully convinced of Bush's decision; he just works under coercion. So, waiting restlessly for the president's promise to work through a new UN resolution (66), he adopts the same strategy practiced on him by Bush to convince France's Dominique De Villepin of the US's decision. When De Villepin faces Powell of the US's unclear purpose: “you've decided to go through a process, but you haven't quite decided what the purpose of the process is” (69), the latter replies: “Kofi welcomes our presence... He sees it as a way of exerting pressure to enforce the will of the UN... It's *coercive diplomacy*” [My emphasis] (70). De Villepin focuses on the US's ambiguity describing it as not “playing fair” (72). But when he expresses France's readiness to help the US if its purpose is disarmament and it will not if its purpose is attack or invasion (74), Powell cuts it short with him: “America's a great power” and they “have to work together” (76), and that working together means going for two resolutions: disarmament and war.” Powell further threatens De Villepin: “I warn you now, don't vote for the first unless one day you're going to be ready to vote for a second. We'd take that very badly” (76). By uttering these words to De Villepin and directly opening the door for lunch, Powell not only has the last word by forcing his opponent to reply “We'll work together” (76), but also is accentuating the three components of the third variant of “coercive diplomacy”—the “classic ultimatum”—being practiced on him by Bush and by him now on De Villepin: a specific demand, a time limit for compliance, and a credible threat of punishment for noncompliance.

When Powell reveals the difficulty of negotiations over the second resolution to Rice, Bush practices the fourth and last variant of “coercive diplomacy”—“the tacit ultimatum”—wherein the coercer omits either the time limit or the nature of the coercive threat. He puts it clearly to Powell and threatens him in the encounter that “lasted twelve minutes” only:

I have made a decision. If you have a problem with that

decision, best thing is you should speak. You should say something now. I've invited you in. I'm giving you the chance to say something now. It would be a big thing. It would be a big thing if you disagreed. Well? (91)

Powell is so completely coerced that he, without hesitating a bit, replies: "I don't disagree" (91) and, further, says to Rumsfeld: "We believe" Saddam is "coming at us"... But we've got to persuade everyone else" (99). Thus, Powell, who has been always opposing Bush's view of the war, comes now to capitulate and side with him. This final capitulation to Bush represents Powell's tragic flaw as a tragic hero, a fact emphasized by many critics. Brian Clover argues that "Hare tries to turn Powell into something like a Shakespearean tragic hero: the battle-hardened man of experience and integrity who stands alone in Bush's cabinet, but who later, and unaccountably, buckles under and joins the rest of the gang" (Clover para 5). Similarly, Bushra Juhi emphasizes that "there is no doubt that Powell is portrayed as a tragic hero" (12). Although he is the only one aware of the stupidity of war, he comes to be the one left out on a limb to defend, not *unaccountably*, as Clover has just argued, but due to "coercive diplomacy." Bush, not unexpectedly, after having successfully coerced Powell, says: "I didn't need his permission"(91).

### **Bush's "Coercive Diplomacy" against the UK**

The second party against which Bush employs "coercive diplomacy" for the same objective is Blair and his people. So, the play "interprets the Iraq war as mainly a power struggle between the United States and Great Britain in which the attacked country appears secondary" (Golimowska 7). The difficulty lies not in Blair himself but in his people; he is not opposing Bush in attacking Iraq: "You and I want the same things" (37). Like Bush who has addressed the Congress to get its support against terror, Blair, rather smoothly, paves the way for the Labour Party by addressing it: "The state of Africa is a scar on the conscience of the world. But if the world as a community focused on it, we could heal it. And if we don't, it will become deeper and angrier" (27). He reveals his position with the British

people clearly to Bush by arguing:

A hundred and forty-six MPs have already signed what we call an early-day motion. It's a kind of warning. And a hundred and thirty of them are in my own party. They're expressing their opposition to British support for a US-led war on Iraq. The phrase they are using is 'deep ease.' (37)

Blair enjoys being obedient to Bush because "he has a kind of grandiose desire to be a great leader" (Reinelt 305), but he has to convince his people. He informs Bush that "the British Parliament won't go along without UN support" and "that any invasion of Iraq without UN support is going to be in breach of international law" (38). He stresses this fact later to Bush when he argues: "To the British, a unilateral attack is going to seem like an act of unprovoked aggression against a sovereign power. But a multilateral force, sanctioned by the UN, well, that's a different thing. ... That's a force for justice" (41). This is reminiscent of Powell's argument with Bush since they are aware that "coercive diplomacy always has worked better when it has had multilateral support" (Jentleson 8).

Although both Blair and Powell ask for a UN permission for war in Iraq, they regard the UN differently. Blair does not oppose Bush's decision of war in Iraq but he wants to legitimize it through the UN which is "an American-built institution" (40), for he once tells Bush: "The only way we're going to make progress is not just by being fair, but by being *seen* to be fair" (36). Powell, on the contrary, who objectively opposes Bush's decision of war in Iraq, asks for a UN permission because he knows that it will never allow a war on fabricated evidence, especially he is aware of the bad consequences of war on the Americans. Blair further argues that "even with UN support, any invasion may still be illegal unless we can demonstrate that the threat to British national security from Iraq is... 'real and imminent'" (39). He adopts his master's policy of trumped-up accusations: "If Britain is involved, we will need evidence that Iraq can and will launch a nuclear, biological or chemical attack in a Western country. We can't go to war because of what we fear. Only because of what we know" (39).

Blair has been so completely contained by Bush that when asked by a journalist: "Prime Minister Blair, has Bush convinced you

on the need for a military action against Iraq?," it is Bush who replies on behalf of him: "the Prime Minister and I, of course, talked about Iraq. We both recognize the danger of a man who's willing to kill his own people harbouring and developing weapons of mass destruction. This guy, Saddam Hussein, is a leader who gasses his own people" (43). Thus, Blair is accurately described by Nigel Reynolds as a puppet of Mr Bush., who repeatedly misleads the Prime Minister during the war's build-up" (Reynolds para 6). Moreover, in reply to another journalist's question concerning their policies in Iraq, both Blair and Bush, though giving false reasons, express their policies in relatively different ways. While Blair focuses on the welfare of Iraq: "it has always been *our* policy that Iraq would be a better place without Saddam Hussein," Bush stresses overthrowing Saddam as his own preoccupation: "The policy of *my* government is the removal of Saddam" [My emphasis] (44).

Blair is convinced that "legally the Americans can go to war to effect regime change" and "legally" the British "can't," and argues that he has "to prove there is an immediate threat to our security" (61). He is soon informed by "Sir Richard Dearlove, Head of M16," that "the Iraqi military are able to deploy chemical or biological weapons within twenty to forty-five minutes of an order to do so" (62). He wishes Dearlove's words are true so he can find no difficulty in defending his position as PM before his people: "If the weapons inspectors go back in, and—God forbid—any of these weapons are found not to exist, then my life as Prime Minister will become very difficult indeed" (63). Despite the fact that Dearlove's information is merely "a piece of raw intelligence," Blair documents them in his "dossier" as facts (64). Blair, in this way, has put himself into a difficult situation for no clear reason. He is so completely contained by Bush that Steven Fielding states: "the real prime minister was widely viewed as President Bush's 'poodle'—an impression Hare's *Stuff Happens* largely endorsed" (373). Although both men have taken a premeditated decision of going to war, all they wish now is to find WMD's just to be apparently justified. Moreover, Bush insists Saddam has WMD's and argues that they must not wait any more because "the first time [they] may be

completely certain he has a nuclear weapon is when, God forbids, he uses one" (65).

Blair argues that "It isn't Blix's job to find the weapons—it's Saddam's job to prove they've been destroyed" (87). In the light of this argument, he points out the Americans' as well as the British's intentions for going to war. On the one hand, the Americans will say: "Saddam can't be serious...because he's pretending to have no weapons... So now we've the perfect excuse to go to the war!" (87). On the other hand, the British people are saying: "Well you haven't found the weapons, so you can't be going to war" (88). Hence, the British attitude represents a dilemma for Blair, for he himself "promised the British people: no war without the UN" (88). (This is reminiscent of Bush's early promise to Powell (66).) At this particular moment, Blair seems to be opposing the war, for he "*bursts out again at the injustice*" (88). But since the employment of "the strategy of coercive diplomacy successfully...necessitates finding a combination of carrot and stick that will suffice to overcome the opponent's disinclination to yield" (George and Simons 135), this "carrot and stick" policy is well used by Bush and one of his cabinet, Rumsfeld, against Blair. When Rumsfeld uses the "stick" with Blair by declaring: "Oh don't worry, we don't need the British anyway" (109), Blair "flies into a rage, calling Bush directly":

**Blair:** I can't believe this! Here I am, staking my entire political existence, we're on the verge of committing British troops. I've worked—I've worked now for over eighteen months to help you on this, George, I've risked everything, I've been at your side from beginning to end, and your Secretary of Defense, George, your Secretary of Defense goes on television and says:

**Bush:** I know. I heard. I heard what he said. (109)

Bush soon pleases him using the "carrot" by looking "*deadpan at Cheney and Rumsfeld*" (109). As a result, Blair yields by urging Bush against destroying the coalition: "If you set out deliberately to destroy the coalition, I can't think of anything more disastrous and damaging" (109). He "is dragged to war like a pedestrian whose jacket is caught in a bus door and who hammers on the panelling,



unheard, as the vehicle pulls out onto the highway" (Letts 8).

Blair echoes Polonius, the Lord Chamberlain of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, who has no say and is used by everyone in the play for the sake of the king. He is torn between his loyalty to Bush and his own government which opposes going to the war. A few minutes after yielding to Bush, Blair is lectured by his press Secretary, Alastair Campbell:

Tony, what the hell is this? Do you really not get it? We went into a coalition with the Americans, for influence. For *influence*, you said. What influence? We couldn't get them to change the colour of their fucking bathroom curtains! Have you really not worked it out?... Bush has used you. ... Everyone's used you. Bush doesn't want your fucking views, he wants your name on the notepaper, that's all. (111)

David Manning, his foreign policy advisor, too opposes his views: "Power doesn't make deals, Prime Minister" (111). Therefore, Blair comes to have it out with Bush "*on phones in their separate offices*" (111). Here, Blair's dialogue with Bush is similar to Powell's with the latter:

**Blair:** I've to explain to you, I'm facing the most difficult occasion of my life.

**Bush:** We're following it closely.

**Blair:** I'm facing a full-scale rebellion in Parliament. I have to be clear—my government can't survive, I have no chance of survival, I can't even go into that debate, unless you offer a cast-iron commitment to work for peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

*There's a charged silence.*

George, I can't be clearer.

*There is a silence. Bush and Powell walked out together.*  
(111-12)

Undoubtedly, Bush's silence succeeds not only in putting an end to their dialogue but also in coercing Blair into compliance.

The confrontation between Robin Cook, the leader of the House of Commons, representing reason, and Blair, representing power, at the end of the 22<sup>nd</sup> scene is based on the same grounds of that one between Powell and Bush at the end of the first act. Cook opposes Blair's attitude by revealing the prevailing mood of the

British people:

I cannot support a war without international agreement or domestic support. On Iraq, I believe that the prevailing mood of the British people is sound. They do not doubt that Saddam is a brutal dictator, but they are not persuaded he is a clear and present danger to Britain. They want inspections to be given a chance, and they suspect they are being pushed too quickly into conflict by a US administration with an agenda of its own.... *Cook is cheered as he sits.* (112)

Blair has no other way to get his people to his own view than adopting his master's evasive discourse of power:

If this house now demands that at this moment, faced with this threat from this regime, that British troops are pulled back, that we turn away at the point of reckoning—what then? What will Saddam feel? What will the other states who tyrannise their people, the terrorists who threaten our existence, what will they take from that? Who will celebrate and who will weep? ... *The House of Commons disappears*(113)

Although Cook's logic conquers Blair's, as the stage directions indicate, Blair coerces his people into yielding because he has no other choice, for he himself has been coerced into yielding by Bush. This episode too evokes that of Bush with Powell—episodes implying Bush as representing fate for the British as well as for the Americans. Hare rightly comments on the play: "It's about power. And there's one man who understands power, and that's George Bush" (qtd by Jaffe 2).

### **Bush's "Coercive Diplomacy" against the UN**

The third party against which the US employs "coercive diplomacy" to get support for its war against Iraq is the United Nations. It is Blair, the thinking mind of Bush, who makes the first reference to the UN (38) advising Bush to seize the opportunity of getting its support since it is "an American-built institution" (40). Powell once expressed the US's attitude towards the UN: "At this table we hold the future of the UN in our hands" (68) explaining their way to exert "pressure to enforce" its will: "It's coercive diplomacy" (70).

Bush's failure at first to use Powell as a willing tool in convincing the UN of his message against Saddam has led him to use Cheney who does state that Saddam has WMS and, further,

"make a direct connection between" him "and the attack on the Twin Towers" (60). Therefore, employing "coercive diplomacy" against the UN begins with Cheney's threatening Hans Blix and his colleague Mohamed ElBaradei, who both work for the UN by representing the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA): "You know, we're sure there are weapons there. I don't think you're going to have any trouble finding them. And if you do have any trouble, understand, we're ready to discredit you. ... *Everyone gets up*" (78). The "carrot and stick" policy is now being followed with Blix by Cheney and Bush. Namely, while Cheney threatens "to discredit" the IAEA man, Bush welcomes and supports him: "We have confidence in you...you can be assured, Mr Blix, you've got the force of the United States behind you" (79). Thus, this policy is a compromise of "force and diplomacy," which "reinforce one another much more than single-minded advocates of one or the other maintain" (Jentleson 6).

When Rice asks for a "signed agreement" from Blix about what he is going to do, he refuses: "I don't think I can do that, Dr Rice. I work for the UN" (80). For this matchless courage, Markus Wessendorf regards the UN weapons inspector Blix rightly as "the most sympathetic of the nine protagonists" who "appears unintimidated by power" (13). As a result of not complying, "Wolfowitz," as a narrator-actor puts it, "has ordered a secret CIA investigation to discredit Hans Blix" (80). Like Wolfowitz who undermines Blix now by saying: "It's not your knowledge, it's your position I'm interested in" (81), Rums undermines the UN as having no power and achieving nothing (100). Thus, Powell, who has completely yielded to Bush, "goes to the UN to demonstrate the US government's case for 'imminent threat'" and makes a presentation about the existence of the Iraqi WMD's arguing that these "are facts and conclusions based on solid intelligence" (105). Powell is undoubtedly lying and Hare himself emphasizes this fact to John Kampfner: "I now believe that Powell knew he was lying when he presented the evidence [on Iraq] to the UN" (Kampfner 12). *Per contra*, Blix, the one who is entitled to speak frankly and realistically, says the truth: "Since we have arrived in Iraq we have

conducted more than four hundred inspections, covering more than three hundred sites. The inspectors have not found any weapons of mass destruction” (106). The US, in fact, does not allow the UN inspectors to continue their work in Iraq although the latter “agreed to admit international inspectors in 2002” (Lieberfeld 3). This contradiction on the part of Bush, who has promised to support Blix and his men, is easier for him than the counter-productive result he would have got had he co-operated with the UN inspectors’ for more time. Furthermore, in 2007 and in reply to *Russia Today*’s “we saw clearly in the run-up to the Iraq war, governments do act on their own, like the U.S. and British governments,” Blix emphasizes:

The Security Council did absolutely the right thing—they were the ones who didn't authorise the war that should not have taken place. And I think more and more Americans, probably the majority of Americans by now, think this was a war that should not have taken place. (Blix para 5)

Thus, as a result of not complying with Bush's demands, Blix has been relieved of his position and the US launches its premeditated war against Iraq—war that has both been based on false charges and proved a foolish step taken by a stupid leader.

Thus, it is not the issue of the (fabricated) WMD’s that lead to the war in Iraq; it is the issue of what Bush's government wants. Why then, one may ask, the US’s attitude towards North Korea (which has been more dangerous than Iraq) is different? In his paper, “Why the United States’ Coercive Diplomacy against North Korea Failed” (2007), Erik Brattstrom argues that “since the end of the 1980s North Korea has regularly been accused by the United States and the rest of the international community of pursuing a clandestine plutonium nuclear programme and confrontation has ever since, been imminent” and expresses the US’s puzzling situation of not taking any reaction towards North Korea after the failure of "coercive diplomacy" against it (1). In a similar and more recent study, *The Failure of U.S. Coercive Diplomacy Towards North Korea* (2013), Arielle Shorr reveals that "North Korea refused to allow the special inspections...and therefore did not fall under the jurisdiction of the IAEA" (45). Moreover, "in February of 1993, the IAEA for the first time in its history demanded to investigate areas not offered for

inspection...[and] North Korea continued to refuse the special inspections" (45). Despite all this, the US, unable to hit Korea, attacks Iraq.

The penultimate scene reveals the reactions of Powell, Blair, and Bush after invading Iraq. After resigning "from the administration at the next election" (117), Powell talks of the incorrect information he has been coerced to announce as "facts and conclusions as they existed at that time, based on what the intelligence community said to us. We subsequently discovered that was wrong. We were wrong" (117). In spite of this fact, he does not "apologize for misleading the world" (118) arguing "I didn't mislead the world. You can't mislead somebody when you are presenting what you believe to be the facts" (118). Blair, commenting on the "hundred thousand innocent Iraqis who have died as a result of the invasion," argues: "I've seen that figure and it's wrong. I couldn't sleep at night if a hundred thousand people had died" (119). When asked by the dinner guest: "But you can sleep if fifty thousand have died?," "Blair," as a narrator-actor puts it, "does not reply" (119). Bush, instead of admitting his mistakes in Iraq after hitting it, eludes and comes back again to his unquestioned faith: "God told me to strike at Al Qaeda and I struck them, and He instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did" (118). This is how Bush achieves his targets and this is why Hare rightly describes *Stuff Happens* "as a play about how a supposedly stupid man, George W. Bush, gets everything he wants—and a supposedly clever man, Tony Blair, ends up with nothing he wants"(qtd by Jaffe 2).

### Conclusion

To sum up, the paper has shown that the US, led by Bush the junior, invaded Iraq in 2003 not because of the latter's WMD's, as it had been unjustly argued, but because of the former's private agenda. Despite the fact that "North Korea has been regularly accused by the United States" as well as "the rest of the international community" of pursuing such WMD's "since the end of 1980s," Bush, unable to hit it, attacked Iraq instead for showing his people some reaction to the 9/11 attacks on the one hand and for his secret motives against Saddam Hussein on the other—not to add oil and domination. This substantiates why Bush could not attempt "coercive diplomacy" directly against Iraq (as his father has done in the 1990's), since he was sure it never possessed such weapons. Instead, he manipulated that strategy against his opponents (Powell, Blair, and Blix) to use them as willing tools in convincing the world of Iraq's WMD's as real and hence achieve his private targets by hitting it under the umbrella of "a preventive war." Moreover, it has been elucidated how Bush utilized both religion and his position as President for coercing his opponents into complying with his demands.

The paper has also pointed out that Hare's political docudrama has been based on two styles of theatrical playwriting: first, theatre based on "recent history" which combines verbatim elements with fictional ones; second, "verbatim theatre" which depends on staff meetings, public addresses, interviews, etc as its text. Moreover, it has been made clear throughout that Hare has with exceptional dexterity dealt with the play's conflicts objectively by means of his dramatic technique of injecting five nameless fictional characters (arguing for and/or against the war) as well as the chorus-like narrator-actors (introducing and commenting on the real politicians) to his docudrama. In so doing, Hare, as one of the most powerful playwrights of the state-of-the world theatre, never went beyond the Israeli/Palestinian conflict to stress America's double standard policy of imperialism in the Middle East. The core findings of the paper imply that "coercive diplomacy" has been always the US's strategy for legal as well as illegal ends—for liberating Kuwait in 1991 and for invading Iraq in 2003. Moreover, reflecting such a political issue as "coercive diplomacy" through his *Stuff Happens* heralds Hare as a

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prominently established political playwright.

The paper recommends that the coercive-diplomacy concept can be further applied to other works of art which tell how people are affected by their governments, such as Stoppard's *Professional Foul* (1977), Victoria Brittain and Gillian Slovo's *Guantanamo: Honour Bound to Defend Freedom* (2004), Richard Norton-Taylor's *Bloody Sunday: Scenes from the Saville Inquiry* (2005), etc.

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