Women, Words and War: Explaining 9/11 and Justifying U.S. Military Action in Afghanistan and Iraq

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Abstract

Texts and images in the print media, outdoor advertisements, and on the Internet form the primary source material for this article. The Bush administration and the American media, drawing upon well-worn traditions of representation, contrasted American women and Muslim/Middle Eastern women, American and Middle Eastern male sexuality, and the moral qualities (good versus evil) of American and Middle Eastern people. They used those contrasts to explain 9/11 and legitimize war in Afghanistan and Iraq. 9/11 was simply explained through a contrast between American innocence and Muslim savagery. For Afghanistan, the predominant trope was liberating Afghan women from the Taliban, or white men rescuing brown women from brown men, a story at least as old as the British Raj. The Iraq representations were more complex; both pro-war and anti-war proponents used the same images of suffering Iraqi women and girls, but to different ends: Saddam Hussein was a demon who must be destroyed, or the suffering was caused by sanctions and Western military action. Saddam himself was conflated with Iraq, and images of deviant sexuality were employed. Throughout, American women and girls were portrayed as the right kind of woman: usually white and innocent, or heroic soldiers. In any case, they were free, not oppressed.

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Recommended Citation


The US just wanted a war, finding Bin Laden was an intelligence operation primarily and we knew that from day one. If every country went to war to get a single man who hurt them then it would be World War 3 perpetually. Even in Afghanistan that the objective keeps changing, first it was Bin Laden, then Al Qaeda... now the Taliban... The US is a hegemony, the wars were intended to further that hegemony and help the government where the terrorists came from... removing Iraq from the picture supported the country where most of the terrorists came from Saudi Arabia. We were certainly justified in going into Afghanistan in pursuit of Bin Laden and in defeating the Taliban who sheltered him. Nat Security Strategy, 20 Sept 2002 Slide 15 Neocon agenda Moral certitude Military primacy Middle East democracy Slide 16 Iraq: the road to war Post 9/11: worse-case analysis gained a new credibility Bush orders war plans (21 Nov 2001) Framing the threat: Axis of Evil (2002 State of the Union) Selling the threat: Iraq, Al Qaeda and WMD Slide 17 Iraq Women Words and War Explaining 9 11 and Justifying US Military Action in Afghanistan and Iraq. History of Kings College London - docs.media. ? History of Kings College London Creating. Journalism 9/11 & afghanistan war.

Remedies Prof. Tanya Aplin Kings College London tanya.aplin@kcl.ac.uk. War Surgery Afghanistan & Iraq Atlas. chap7. War Surgery Afghanistan & Iraq Atlas. chap5.