

# Media mogul Rupert Murdoch explains why he backs war vs. Iraq

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The publications of Rupert Murdoch's media empire—including the *New York Post* in the US, Britain's *The Sun* and *News of the World*, *The Australian*, and various newspapers and satellite TV channels around the world—number amongst the most vociferous supporters of a US-led war against Iraq.

Screaming banner headlines, editorials and op-ed columns justify this stand with high-sounding invocations of the threat posed by Iraq's supposed possession of weapons of mass destruction, Saddam Hussein's alleged backing for Al Qaeda and the uncritical regurgitation of whatever propaganda is currently being disseminated by Washington, London and Sydney.

An interview with the great man himself, conducted by Australia's *The Bulletin*, a sister publication of *Newsweek* magazine, provides a more prosaic glimpse into why the chairman and CEO of News Corp., who is personally worth an estimated \$7 billion and heads a corporation expected to generate \$18 billion plus in revenue this year, is such an enthusiastic advocate of war.

Murdoch begins his reply to interviewer Max Walsh with a standard reference to the threat posed to peace by Saddam Hussein—in the process demonstrating his lack of understanding of such alien concepts as morality and courage.

“Well, we can't back down now, where you hand over the whole of the Middle East to Saddam, and I think Bush is acting very morally, very correctly,” says Murdoch.

Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair is later praised for being “extraordinarily courageous and strong on what his stance is in the Middle East. It's not easy to do that living in a party which is largely composed of people that have a knee-jerk anti-Americanism and are

sort of pacifist.”

Murdoch then describes the possible economic impact of a war in the Gulf. In the short term, strong US growth was unlikely, he predicts: “I think that while there is any doubt about Iraq, people are going to withhold investment decisions and, because of the uncertainty, I doubt if you will see much growth this quarter.”

In the event of a US victory, however, new vistas will open up: “The greatest thing to come out of this for the world economy, if you could put it that way, would be \$20 a barrel for oil. That's bigger than any tax cut in any country.”

If Bush delivers this bonanza, then this will assure him a second term, at least if Murdoch has anything to do with it. “He will either go down in history as a very great president or he'll crash and burn,” he comments. “I'm optimistic it will be the former by a ratio of 2 to 1.... Bush has surprised everyone. Even his opponents have a great deal more respect for him than they did when he was elected. One senses he is a man of great character and deep humility.”

And there you have the explanation of why the former Australian media magnate is now the US citizen and patriot par-excellence. He backs the Bush administration's plans to slaughter tens and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi, men, women and children because he believes that American military might will facilitate the ever more brutal exploitation of the world's people and resources, to the direct benefit of himself and his ilk.

“The fact is, a lot of the world can't accept the idea that America is uniquely the one superpower in the world,” he complains. For Mr. Murdoch, acceptance of this fact is not a problem.



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