**Should the U.S. have invaded Iraq in 2003 for the purpose of democracy promotion?**

*On March 5, 2003, William Kristol of* The Weekly Standard *and Lawrence Kaplan of* The New Republic *gave a talk at Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs on “The War Over Iraq: Why Saddam Must Go…and Why America Must Lead.”* ***The following is an excerpt of Lawrence Kaplan’s remarks and has been modified for the classroom.***

…President [Bush] makes three very strong cases for democracy, all of which, particularly in the past few weeks, he has been making with respect to Iraq.

The **first** is the strategic argument, which is essentially that if there is a truism in international politics, no two democracies, with very obscure exceptions, have waged war against one another. The president speaks very bluntly about this and says there really is the strategic imperative for America to export democracy because it is in our strategic interest; because a world that is more democratic is more likely to be congenial to the U.S.

…[T]here is [also] the argument that repression in the Arab world created the bin Ladens and the hijackers [of 9/11] because they had no other outlet for expression other than siding with their governments or going over to extreme Islam…

The **second** case Bush makes is…that democracy is really America’s particular inheritance and, as well as being universally applicable, it really is the American creed. And so, in a sense, I think there is a small dose of national egoism here. But there is a very real sense in which, if only to mobilize the American public, the president has been saying that this is America’s mission, it’s America’s destiny; promoting democracy is not some wooly-headed notion, and that it’s not only in our strategic interest—it’s in our patriotic interest.

The **final** case Bush makes is actually a classic Wilsonian, classically liberal one. Simply put, it’s a moral case: no people should be governed without their consent. If you listen to the president, particularly in the last few weeks, he really has cast the war as a moral war. Earlier on, I think the Bush administration defined the case for war far too narrowly, purely in terms of Saddam’s arsenal rather than in terms of Saddam himself, but now they have come around and they have committed themselves, in words as well as in deed, to democratizing Iraq and to democratizing the region as a whole.

1. Which (if any) of the arguments about using the idea of democracy promotion to justify the invasion of Iraq do you find to be most compelling? Explain.
2. How do you think history has judged these arguments? Explain.