

**BELTWAY BATTLES:  
IDEOLOGY AND INFIGHTING IN US FOREIGN  
POLICY TOWARD THE MIDDLE EAST  
2001-2006**

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF  
POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

87,823 WORDS

BY

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OXFORD, UNITED KINGDOM

HILARY TERM 2011



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**BELTWAY BATTLES: IDEOLOGY AND INFIGHTING IN US FOREIGN  
POLICY TOWARD THE MIDDLE EAST 2001-2006**

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**Abstract of thesis submitted for the degree of DPhil in International Relations  
Hilary 2011**

The record of American foreign policy in the Middle East between 2001 and 2006 is marked mostly by failures of the Bush Administration to achieve its stated objectives, including reducing terrorism, stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and spreading liberal democracy. Still, there are a few bright spots, including the case of Libya's disarmament. What is it, then, that accounts for this success in the face of so many other failures where the policy goals were markedly similar? I argue that a partial explanation of this discrepancy can be found in the nature of infighting between ideological realists and neoconservatives within the foreign policy bureaucracy. In doing so, process tracing is used to examine policy development toward four country cases: Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, and Libya, with Libya acting as the control. The object of these case studies is to demonstrate existence of a previously undescribed model of bureaucratic infighting, based on competing ideological differences regarding the fundamental direction and conduct of US foreign policy. I call this the Ideological Infighting, or I2, Model. Whereas previous works of US foreign policy analysis have focused only on the roles of individuals' ideology or on bureaucratic interests, this study unites both. In doing so, it describes the policy effects that result from ideological disagreements within federal agencies, rather than viewing a presidential administration as an ideologically coherent entity. It also refines understandings of how presidential decisionmaking styles affect the bureaucracy. Finally, although this work deals specifically with the Middle East, the model is generalizable to all areas of US foreign policy.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are numerous people to whom I am indebted for helping me complete this work. The first, naturally, is Avi Shlaim, my diligent supervisor of over four years. Avi has seen me through not only my doctorate, but also my master's degree before it, upon which this research emerged. His wisdom, patience, good humor, and most of all kindness have all been essential to this project. Avi was simply instrumental to this work, not only through his academic guidance, but also through his assistance in helping me secure the funding to make my research possible. To those ends, I am also greatly appreciative of the generous financial support provided by the Clarendon Fund, which funded all of my tuition and fees. I also extend additional thanks to the UK Foreign Office and the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission, whose amazing scholarship program brought me to Oxford in the first place as a master's student.

Additionally, I wish to thank all of the other professors along the way, both at Oxford and Brown, who have helped me and challenged me in my thinking. In particular, these include Calvin Goldscheider, my undergraduate advisor, and Yuen Foong Khong, whose seminar on the United States in international relations served as the impetus for this project. Also due for acknowledgement are all of the individuals who directly contributed to the substance of this research through interviews— either on or off the record. Without their generous donations of insight, honesty, and time, this work would never have been feasible.

Thanks also go out to the amazing support staff at St. Antony's College, the Middle East Centre, and the Department of International Relations—especially Mastan Ebtehaj and Marga Lyall. Marga in particular made the bureaucratic element of this process go incredibly smoothly which, as this dissertation's content shows, is an invaluable service!

Finally, I wish to express my deepest thanks to my friends and family, especially Mom and Dad, whose love and support helped me through the more difficult parts of this process. I love them very much and hope that I've made them proud.

There cannot be peaceful coexistence in the ideological realm.

-Jiang Qin



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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Although it is the bane of many people's existence, bureaucracy is a vital and inescapable tool of modern government. Bureaucracy, which encompasses not only the unelected, hierarchical, professional organization of government but also the competitive politics that take place both within and between government agencies and employees, originated to serve an important purpose.<sup>1</sup> Through professionalizing and standardizing routine decisionmaking and everyday matters of policy implementation, bureaucratic structures are intended to conserve the time and resources of high-level government officials so that they can be free to deal with the bigger picture. They are also meant to ensure that diverse input from various standpoints is considered in internal policy debates.

Still, as anyone who has spent time in the queue at the bureau of motor vehicles knows, bureaucracy in action is almost never the efficient, expert organization that its well-intentioned creators envisioned. Modern bureaucracies are burdened with myriad unintended consequences— well-documented in the literature— from turf wars to budget fights to the rigid inertia of standard operating procedures. While Graham Allison points out that “pulling and hauling” within and between government agencies can make a policy stronger by ensuring a diversity of

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<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopedia of Political Theory*, ed. Mark Bevir (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2010), s.vv. “Bureaucracy.”

perspectives are considered in the decisionmaking process, the cacophony of competing voices often looks less like a focus group and more like the symptoms of schizophrenia.<sup>2</sup> Rather than streamlining the policymaking and implementation process, bureaucracy too often complicates and hinders it.

The role of ideology in foreign policymaking cuts with the same double-edged sword, and the effects of ideology on the level of top individuals' decisionmaking process have been examined at length by scholars such as Alexander George and Ole Holsti.<sup>3</sup> Defined by Michael Hunt as "an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduces the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and suggests appropriate ways of dealing with that reality," ideology, like bureaucracy, can be a way of psychologically regimenting and streamlining how a person interprets the world, creating a system that is logical and coherent, at least to those who share a particular ideology.<sup>4</sup> Yet like bureaucracy, too strong an adherence to an ideology can be counterproductive. Rather than using ideology to interpret reality after its perception, ideology can seriously constrain objectivity and, in extreme cases, limit awareness of reality at all. Ideology may become, as Deborah Larson puts it, a "cognitive prison."<sup>5</sup>

In the foreign policy analysis literature, discussions of bureaucracy and ideology in American government have almost always been separate, except for a small number of authors dealing with ideology on a partisan level. Furthermore, most

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<sup>2</sup> Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications," *World Politics* 24, spring (1972).

<sup>3</sup> See Alexander George, "The Operational Code: A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-Making," *International Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (1969). See also Ole Holsti and James Rosenau, "The Structure of Foreign Policy Attitudes among American Leaders," *The Journal of Politics* 52, no. 1 (1990).

<sup>4</sup> Michael H. Hunt, "Ideology," *The Journal of American History* 77, no. 1 (1990).

<sup>5</sup> Deborah Welch Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985).

existing works on ideology in foreign policymaking—such as those by George and Holsti—train their focus only on the very highest-level decisionmakers, neglecting the role that ideology plays further down the decision chain in the bureaucracy. Yet a reading of recent American politics, particularly regarding the George W. Bush Administration’s policies towards the Middle East, suggests that there is an unexplored link between these two previously disparate branches of foreign policy analysis. Up until now, it has been assumed in the literature that, for the most part, ideological conflict does not tend to occur within a single presidential administration, since the president chooses his cabinet and top bureaucrats and presumably fills the positions with like-minded individuals from his own party who broadly share his vision. This is thought to be true even if, as Allison points out, they often disagree on the means due to the effect that bureaucratic positioning can have on policy preferences.<sup>6</sup> Although we have seen deviations from this convention in the past, most notably with Abraham Lincoln’s “Team of Rivals,” this has typically been a calculated, self-consciously unusual choice of the president in question so as to ensure robust policy through the taking into account of strongly dissenting opinions.<sup>7</sup> It hardly characterizes normal cabinet formation today, where cabinet posts are treated as much as political rewards as they are positions for expert counsel.

It is also assumed that the lower levels of bureaucracy— those rungs on the ladder occupied by career professionals, not executive appointees— are typically neutral when it comes to ideology. Although Hunt points out that this type of total objectivity is impossible, it is at least believed that the hallmark of professional

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<sup>6</sup> Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, 1971).

<sup>7</sup> Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005).

bureaucrats is that they do not allow their personal ideologies to influence their work.<sup>8</sup> This is not to say that conflict in government never occurs—we know to the contrary that deadlock is all too common. Yet it is most often associated with partisan stonewalling or built-in checks and balances on the power of different branches of government. Holding aside the type of bureaucratic infighting that thinkers like Allison, Halperin, Huntington, and Hilsman describe—those conflicts based on issues such as organizational well-being, domestic political pressures, and personal interest—the bureaucratic politics literature generally assumes ideological cohesion within an administration. It certainly does not anticipate or explain the extreme fierceness of the policy battles that took place within the Bush Administration between ideological neoconservatives and realists.

These clashes are firstly remarkable for their bitterness. Candid memoirs and extensive interviews detailing the cabinet discussions surrounding the most consequential foreign policy decisions toward the Middle East show distinct contempt between members of the Bush team who fell down on different sides of the debate—a startling disdain usually reserved for obstructionist members of the rival party. Yet even more significant is the fact that, as later chapters demonstrate, administration officials used the hierarchies inherent in bureaucratic structures to actively and consciously marginalize ideological rivals. Hence, this project charts and explores an entirely undocumented aspect of bureaucratic politics: ideological infighting as it relates to foreign policymaking. In doing so, it unites two previously unlinked streams of foreign policy analysis: the roles of bureaucratic politics and individual ideology in the formation of foreign policy.

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<sup>8</sup> Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

## **SAME ADMINISTRATION, DIFFERENT OUTCOMES**

The Bush Administration’s policies toward the Middle East between 2001 and 2006 were largely failures in the sense that they did not achieve their intended goals, as defined by the Administration itself. The three cases of Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon were selected for this study because they highlight this fact so well, as Table 1.1 shows below.

Table 1.1: Bush Administration Policy Objectives and Outcomes, 2001-2006

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>POLICY OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>SUCCESS?</b>
<b>Iraq</b>	1) Prevent from pursuing WMD	<b>X</b>
	2) Prevent use as terrorist base	<b>X</b>
	3) Create liberal democracy	<b>X</b>
<b>Iran</b>	1) Prevent from pursuing WMD	<b>X</b>
	2) Stem support for terrorism	<b>X</b>
	3) Promote liberal democracy	<b>X</b>
<b>Lebanon</b>	1) Prevent use as terrorist base	<b>X</b>
	2) Limit Syrian/Iranian influence	<b>X</b>
	3) Promote liberal democracy	<b>X</b>
<b>Libya</b>	1) Stem support for terrorism	✓
	2) Prevent from pursuing WMD	✓

In many ways, the cases of Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon represent cornerstones of the Bush Administration’s policy toward the Middle East, given that they are closely intertwined with notions of the Bush Doctrine and the Administration’s overarching goal of reducing the threat of Islamist terrorism. Furthermore, these cases are also highly interrelated. The success or failure of policy toward Iran, for example, affected the American policy achievements in Lebanon and Iraq. Additionally, the cases are also related in how they were viewed by members of the Bush Administration themselves. No matter what side of the ideological dividing line an official fell on, he tended to see relations between these three cases, albeit in different ways depending

on his or her worldview. A neoconservative might see Iran supporting Hezbollah in Lebanon or the Mahdi Army in Iraq as evidence of its inherent terroristic nature. A realist, however, might see these same events as an indicator of the Iranian regime's perceptions of its own fundamental insecurity in the face of assertive American military policy.

The case of Libya, on the other hand, was selected for the opposite reason: it represents a rare bright spot in American foreign policy toward the Middle East during the study period, a control-case that stands out as one of the Bush Administration's most significant foreign policy achievements in the region. The success of the Libya case is marked: after years of international pariahdom colored by state-sponsored terrorism and the steady pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, the notorious Moamar Gadhafi seemingly overnight surrendered his unconventional weapons programs and renounced international terrorism as a state tool, both in word and action. Even more remarkable is the fact that all this happened without a shot being fired, and was exactly the type of penance that America had been trying to extract from Iran, Iraq, and Syria, to no avail.

These four cases were also chosen for their media prominence and domestic political significance within the United States—this results in a wealth of resources from which to draw data. The bureaucratic element of the policy making especially drew a high degree of public fascination, as pundits tried to tease out the details of the interpersonal relationships between the massive personalities that made up the Bush Cabinet, attempting to personalize the policies emanating from this most opaque of administrations.

Taken together, these four cases present an intriguing puzzle: how can we account for the largely standalone success of the Libya policy in the face of the

Administration's nearly universal string of failures elsewhere in the region, particularly toward countries like Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon, where the goals were startlingly similar? I argue that the difference lies at least partly in the level of ideological infighting present in the bureaucratic process toward each case. Whereas the policymaking processes toward Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon were marked by concerted internal efforts on the part of ideological neoconservatives to actively marginalize, via bureaucratic structures, individuals and agencies that did not share their worldview, this infighting was nearly totally absent from the Libya dealings, not least because neoconservatives were either preoccupied with other areas, such as Iraq or Iran, or expressly excluded from the process by nature of extreme secrecy, leaving the realists alone to formulate and carry out the policy. The absence of neoconservative influence is also evident in the Libya policy's more limited goals—though we must be careful to point out here that it is not the absence of the neoconservatives per se that resulted in the Libya success—but their absence did necessarily imply a reduction in ideological infighting. After all, it is very likely that even an administration made up entirely of neoconservatives would have been more successful than the Bush Administration, simply because it would have been spared the poisonous effects of ideological infighting.

### **WHAT IS IDEOLOGICAL INFIGHTING (I2)?**

Naturally, the success or failure of a foreign policy is multivariate and depends upon many disparate factors. Some, including the efficacy of decision implementation, are within the control of the policymakers or their broader government. An example of this would be the relative skill and success of the armed forces in carrying out their orders once a plan has been articulated by the

decisionmaking structure. Others, however, are mostly out of the government's control, such as the maneuverings of Iraqi insurgents, the electoral preferences of the Iranian public, or Lebanese popular opinion toward Israel. For these reasons, this study does not attempt to completely explain the policy outcomes in each of the cases. Instead, I focus on broad policy choices that can be directly traced back to the bureaucratic decisionmaking process in general, and in particular to issues that presented high levels of ideological conflict within the various bureaucratic structures of the Bush Administration. An example of this, as we shall see in later chapters, is the failure to adequately secure post-invasion Iraq due to certain policymakers' ideologically driven suppression of key intelligence reports warning about the consequences of speedy regime change.

In order to demonstrate the existence of ideological infighting as a unique phenomenon not recognized by previous models of bureaucratic conflict, I first endeavor to show that the events I recount are wholly distinctive from previously described varieties of bureaucratic political squabbling, as described by Allison and others. By cataloguing and characterizing these types of bureaucratic conflict, I can then demonstrate how they are different in nature from what took place in the Bush Administration case studies, thus outlining this separate type of bureaucratic infighting based upon ideology.

In his outline of the bureaucratic politics model, Allison characterizes four types of "interests" that affect an individual policymaker's behavior within the bureaucratic structure. These include "national security interests, organizational interests, domestic interests, and personal interests."<sup>9</sup> National security interests, according to Allison, are the most broadly shared amongst policymakers, including,

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<sup>9</sup> Allison and Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications."

for example, the common “belief that if the US were to disarm unilaterally, other nations would use military force against it and its allies with very serious adverse consequences.”<sup>10</sup> While it might be feasible to think that ideological infighting might simply be an extreme example of normal bureaucratic conflict over national security interests, Allison’s expounding on the topic clearly shows that this is not what he had in mind in formulating his model. Instead, he sees national security interest conflicts in more narrow terms, highly contextualized in bureaucracy. He cites, for example, the belief of many career bureaucrats that “the health of their organization is vital to the national interest.”<sup>11</sup>

Clearly, then, Allison’s model assumes broad agreement between bureaucrats on the major issues of ideology, with the differences coming mostly in the implementation strategy, especially in reference to agency self-perpetuation. Yet as the next chapter shows, those in the realist and neoconservative ideological camps do not accept this assumption that their ideological counterparts have the same good interests in mind when it comes to national security. Neoconservatives define the concept of “the national interest” much more expansively than do realists. As Brian Schmidt and Michael Williams point out:

Neoconservatives argue that the endless debates and indeterminacy within realism over what the national interest is reflect . . . the logical outcome of an approach to foreign policy severed from values and a deeper understanding of the national interest as a necessary expression of those values. As a result, realism suffers the fate of modern rationalism as a whole. It lacks any view beyond narrowly strategic material calculation, narrowly pragmatic judgment, or pluralist competition . . . It is a symptom of the decline of both intellectual and political life: a mark of decadence masquerading as objectivity that contributes to processes of social erosion, fragmentation, and decadence, and

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

that undermines the maintenance of a viable conception of the public interest and, by extension, the national interest.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, in terms of mutual perceptions, realists and neoconservatives in fact often do not believe that the other has the national interest in mind when it comes to formulating strategy. On the contrary, proponents of each ideology may wholeheartedly believe that following the prescriptions of the other may bring about consequences as serious as the corrosion of the state. Viewed in this light, it is easy to see why the ideological battles within the Bush Administration became so acrid.

Organizational interests are characterized by bureaucrats' preoccupation with the prominence, influence, and resources afforded to their particular agency. Classic examples of infighting based on organizational interests include things like interagency turf wars or bureaucratic maneuvering for a larger share of appropriations. It is an interest most often observed in career bureaucrats, not political appointees, making it unlikely that the infighting displayed by high-level Bush officials was entirely motivated by this aspect of bureaucratic conflict. Furthermore, as examples from the case studies will show, there were even examples of individuals seeking to marginalize their own organizations because of an ideological qualm with that organization or office's purpose. The actions of John Bolton, who served as the US Permanent Representative to the UN between 2005 and 2006, to undermine that organization despite the fact that his personal power was directly tied to the UN's continued relevance in US policy, form a good example of why the Allisonian notion of organizational interests do not do much to illuminate many of the Bush team's foreign policy.

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<sup>12</sup> Brian C. Schmidt and Michael C. Williams, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives versus Realists," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008).

Domestic interests include considerations of how a given foreign policy might affect the domestic political climate—for example, how the war in Iraq might impact the President’s approval rating. This too, seems an unlikely candidate for explaining the bureaucratic infighting that took place within the Bush Administration, as almost all of the key players, such as Donald Rumsfeld and Colin Powell, were unelected and without future electoral ambitions; on the contrary, they planned to retire from government service after their work with Bush. Thus they did not face very much domestic pressure. Many more, such as Doug Feith, were so personally obscure to the general public that they were greatly shielded from the burdens of approval ratings or other measures of public scrutiny. The one person who would be expected to be most conscious of poll ratings, particularly prior to 2004, is President Bush himself. Yet again, there is strong reason to rule out domestic interest as a reason for his foreign policy decisions: Bush repeatedly emphasized that he was unconcerned with having some of the lowest approval ratings in modern history, and always asserted that “history will judge” his legacy.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, reasons of personal interest also seem to be a poor explanation for the infighting displayed by Bush Administration officials in the cases presented in this study. Personal interests are concerned with the individual bureaucrat and his or her position and influence within the bureaucratic structures, including the prospects for future positioning. Yet many of those involved in the most hostile battles, such as Vice-President Dick Cheney and Secretary of State Colin Powell, were at both the pinnacles of their agencies and the twilights of their political careers, openly stating that they did not wish to seek further public offices. They also had extraordinary

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<sup>13</sup> George W. Bush, "Press Conference by the President," Washington, DC, 12 Jan 2009; available from <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2009/01/20090112.htm> (accessed 25 Feb 2009).

access and influence from years of Washington insidership, making the question of personal interests on their own a moot one as well.

In contrast to bureaucratic infighting based on Allison's four interests, the ideological infighting (I2) model is characterized by conflict taking place internally within a multi-agency, hierarchical structure which (1) is based on disagreements that can be traced not to issues of nuance or implementation, but to entirely different ideological worldviews and (2) involves the active exploitation of bureaucratic structures, both horizontal and vertical, to attempt to marginalize ideological opponents within the administration.

## **METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES**

Having now introduced the I2 model and differentiated it from other models of bureaucratic conflict, the next task is to demonstrate its existence within the Bush Administration during the stated timeframe, and show that that existence had any effect on policy outcomes. In doing this, I take a case study approach, choosing examples that, for the purposes of erecting an archetype of the I2 model of bureaucratic infighting, most clearly convey the types of behavior that the model predicts. While other case studies might be found to contradict the model, I leave this task as an invitation to future scholars; given the limited space available here and the primacy of the goal of properly illustrating a detailed and viable new model of bureaucratic politics, it was concluded that a restrained scope in this regard would produce a stronger study. Finally, in contrast with the experimental cases that demonstrate the presence of I2 model behavior amongst the bureaucracy, it is also necessary to show that there is little evidence indicating the presence of ideological

infighting in the Libya example, which is a control case and largely serves as an illustration of ideological harmony within the foreign policy bureaucracy.

To accomplish the above goals, I examine accounts of the policymaking process within the selected Bush Administration cases and then apply process tracing to detect key instances where ideological infighting itself had at least a partial causal effect on the outcome of a given policy. (It is important to note, however, that the approach to the cases is episodic rather than comprehensive. This is done for the sake of parsimony, as an exhaustive account of any of these cases would on its own fill the limited space allotted here—and then some.) A highly appropriate method for this particular study, process tracing is described by Stephen Van Evera as a technique which “explores . . . the decision-making process by which initial case conditions are translated into case outcomes.”<sup>14</sup> Van Evera states that in process tracing, “Evidence that a given stimulus caused a given response can be sought . . . in the testimony of actors explaining why they acted as they did.”<sup>15</sup>

In seeking evidence for this study, therefore, we must examine, among other things, the dialogue and documents surrounding policymaking decisions and find indications of the different ideologies that propelled decision makers, the steps that they took to ensure the dominance of this ideology within policy making channels, and the effects that this had on policy outcomes. Sometimes this is simple, as policymakers often will openly categorize their reasoning, either in memoirs, articles, or interviews. Many State Department officials unabashedly identify as realists, and for their part, certain neoconservatives are hardly shy about letting their ideological leanings be known. Other times, however, individuals are more reticent, and

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<sup>14</sup> Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 64.

<sup>15</sup> Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, 65.

motivating ideologies must be inferred from examining policymakers' statements and writings, then comparing them to a devised set of standard tenets of a particular ideology. Luckily, however, the topic of ideology within the particular context of the Bush Administration has been a subject of such general fascination that many authors have already classified the key players by ideology.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, particularly since Bush left office, many former officials have been willing to write and speak more candidly about their personal ideologies and those of their colleagues, particularly regarding policy clashes.

As mentioned earlier, the political prominence of the cases and their near constant media presence has endowed this study with a wealth of varied resources upon which to draw. Firstly, primary sources include the standard collection of newspaper and magazine articles from the study period, along with original government documents available online via the White House and State Department archival websites; these are supplemented by the THOMAS electronic directory of the US Congressional record. A second major primary source has been the growing number of excellent memoirs of former Administration officials, including those of John Bolton, Douglas Feith, Scott McClellan, George Tenet, Richard Clarke, Donald Rumsfeld, and President Bush himself. These are also supplemented by the shorter written accounts and articles of lower-profile administration bureaucrats, such as Lieutenant Colonel Karen Kwiatkowski, Elliot Abrams, and Ambassador James Dobson. Thirdly, interviews with officials, conducted by both the press and the author directly, also richly supplement the accounts given in published works, as does the testimony presented in the UK's ongoing Iraq War Inquiry. Nearly all author-conducted interviews were done on the record; however, in cases where officials were

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<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Jim Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet* (New York: Viking, 2004).

only authorized to speak anonymously, their wishes were respected. I have tried to keep the use of such information to a minimum, however, and to supplement it with other, open sources wherever possible.

While all effort has been made to cite primary sources where possible, the slow process of releasing previously classified documents makes it necessary to also make use of secondary sources in this study. Another factor affecting the availability of primary sources was the decision by many individuals to decline interview requests. Thus, in these instances, works of investigative journalism, such as those of Seymour Hersh, Bob Woodward, Glenn Kessler, and Russ Hoyle have been indispensable in filling in the details of the internal machinations of the Bush Administration. Woodward's access to officials, in particular, has been both extremely broad and deep, and his *Bush at War* series has come to be regarded as a solid "first draft of history" of the Bush Administration which, along with other similar works of investigative journalism, has been used as an acceptable source in much academic scholarship, particularly on the Iraq War. Additionally, the recent release of President Bush's memoirs, along with primary source interviews, have confirmed many of the accounts recorded in Woodward's and other journalistic accounts, increasing confidence in the accuracy of these sources on the whole.

Secondary accounts are also key sources used in seeking to paint a picture of the inner mechanics of the negotiation process, especially secret negotiations, as was the case in Libya. In these cases, because of the very secretive nature of the diplomacy, primary accounts are simply unavailable. Additionally, a handful of primary officials directly interviewed by the author wished to remain confidential, given that they were legally prohibited from openly discussing certain sensitive topics. They did, however, affirm the accuracy of many of the journalistic accounts.

I tried, therefore, to make as much use of such “approved” secondary sources as possible. Finally, secondary biographic and historic works, such as James Mann’s *The Rise of the Vulcans* were used to supply a number of biographical details about Administration figures, particularly regarding the early development of their respective ideologies and to trace the web of personal connections amongst this group.

Still, although there are a great variety of high-quality primary and secondary sources available, it is important to take into account the limitations of these sources, especially given the secretive nature of some of the issues studied. While the transition of power from Bush to Obama has freed up many documents and increased access to key Bush Administration officials, the Bush White House was notorious for limiting access to information, particularly information that might reflect poorly on individuals within the decisionmaking process. Still, the continued stonewalling of subpoenas by former officials and the maintenance of Administration attorneys that they may continue to keep some Bush records classified indefinitely make it unlikely that the passage of time would greatly increase the scope of available sources. Thus, now is as good a time as any to take up the task of deconstructing the bureaucratic mechanisms of the Bush Administration, since there is already a suitable diversity and quantity of valuable sources that make this project feasible. Furthermore, the timeframe of this study is also strategic—in capping the research period at 2006, we are afforded more historical distance than would otherwise be present if attempting to deal with the entirety of the Bush Administration.

Additionally, the 2001-2006 timeframe also makes sense in terms of policy themes. The 2001 start is obvious—it marks the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and the initiation of the Bush Doctrine. 2006, however, seems to signal the end of this initial

foreign policy robustness. By this time, Iraq strategy had radically changed with the approval of the troop “surge,” the Administration had started a new effort at sanctions for Iran rather than impending military action, the Lebanon war with Israel had forced a reevaluation of policy in the Levant, and finally, diplomatic relations with Libya were fully restored. Thus, 2006 can be seen as a major turning point for Bush’s policies in the Middle East, seemingly marking the declining influence of neoconservatism within Bush’s presidency.

## **CHAPTER SUMMARIES**

Chapter Two provides a necessary theoretical contextualization of the thesis in terms of the two foreign policy ideologies at hand—realism and neoconservatism. This discussion takes care to define these ideologies not simply in positive terms, laying out the principles to which each adheres, but also negatively, illuminating the self-conscious points of contrast between the two and how each perceives itself *vis-à-vis* the other.

Chapter Three moves from matters of ideology to those of bureaucracy, and serves as a literature review of relevant writings on bureaucratic politics. Chapter Three also expounds on the concept of the I2 model and relates it back to the broader body of work on bureaucratic politics.

Chapter Four represents the first of the empirical case studies, and examines the high-level bureaucratic processes that led to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, as well as the aftermath of that invasion, until the surge in 2006. After first outlining the events as the “dataset,” I then use the I2 model, as discussed in the introduction, to highlight instances of ideological bureaucratic conflict. I then use process tracing to show the destructive effects that ideological infighting had on policy outcomes.

The same approach used in Chapter Four is then applied in Chapter Five to US foreign policy toward Iran between 2001 and 2006, emphasizing the trifecta of US foreign policy interests toward the country at the time: nuclear weapons, Iraqi stability, and terrorism.

Chapter Six follows the same model as the previous two chapters but deals with Lebanon. This necessarily also involves some accompanying discussion of the situation between the United States and Syria, due to the closely intertwined nature of politics between the two countries.

Chapter Seven applies our methodology to the case of Libya, which serves as the control. Thus, this chapter is designed to showcase the differences in the bureaucratic processes that led to Libya's renouncement of its WMD programs and its abandonment of state-sponsored international terrorism. Specifically, this includes showing the lack of evidence of widespread ideological infighting, due mainly to apathy on the part of the neoconservatives and to the intense secrecy involved in the negotiations leading up to Libya's renouncement of its WMD programs in December 2003.

Finally, Chapter Eight forms the conclusion, summarizing the results gleaned from the four cases and discussing their implications, significance, and limitations, from both theoretical and practical viewpoints.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**WHY THEY FIGHT: THE IDEOLOGICAL DIVERGENCE OF REALISTS  
AND NEOCONSERVATIVES**

In a study in which the mechanisms of ideological conflict are so central, it is essential to closely examine the ideologies in play. This serves to both contextualize the subsequent infighting and also to demonstrate why conflict arises in the first place. As we shall see, neoconservatism and realism have radically different views about from whence the United States derives its power, and this in turn has a great effect on the ideologies' respective adherents' views on what should be done in foreign policy to preserve, extend, and utilize that power. Thus, this chapter is divided into four main parts. It first deals with terms, defining and differentiating ideology and theory. Secondly, the chapter examines the historical development and fundamental tenets of realist ideology in the United States—particularly in the context of the American bureaucratic community—treating this practical, professionally-oriented American realism as a unique sub-species of the ideology adapted specifically to use in the bureaucratic context.<sup>1</sup> In doing so, we draw the necessary conclusions about what strategies this American realism prescribes for foreign policy. Accordingly, the same critical lens will be applied to neoconservatism as an ideology. Finally, having thusly defined and explored the essentials of both ideologies, the discussion will then turn to

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<sup>1</sup> This use of the phrase “American realism” is descriptive and should not be conflated with the notion of “American Realism” that Condoleezza Rice sets out in her *Foreign Affairs* article, “American Realism for a New World.” See Condoleezza Rice, “American Realism for a New World,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, July/August (2008).

points of major foreign policy contention between the two with the goal of outlining in a theoretical sense why the combination of these two ideologies within a single administration was bound to cause intense conflict.

## **IDEOLOGY VERSUS THEORY**

Before delving into the ideologies themselves, it is prudent to define what an ideology actually is and show how this definition can encompass both neoconservatism and realism, as there are certainly proponents of both who would contend that neither is, in fact, an ideology at all. This is because the word “ideology,” amongst those who self-consciously identify as intellectuals, has a distinctly negative connotation. It implies the privileging of a rigid worldview over observable facts and the tainting of one’s capacity for objectivity. Many, particularly realists, much prefer to describe their favored outlook as an international relations “theory,” which is defined as “a set of propositions which lead to generalizable conclusions regarding the outcomes of state interactions in the international system.”<sup>2</sup> Labeling one’s ideas as a theory thus imparts them with a certain sense of grounding and legitimacy in the social scientific method. Unlike an ideology, a theory must be testable and can, based on the results of these tests, be adjusted, refined, or discarded.<sup>3</sup> Because realism, at least within the academy, makes assumptions about power and

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<sup>2</sup> Aaron Rapport, "Unexpected Affinities? Neoconservatism's Place in IR Theory," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008).

<sup>3</sup> The definition of a “theory” in social science is, like most social scientific concepts, highly contested. For the sake of ease, this work adopts a positivist notion of theory, which is most traditional and widely accepted, and in line with Rapport’s definition cited earlier. See Scott Burchill, *Theories of International Relations*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 8.

seeks to predict state behavior in the anarchic international system through testable claims, its classification as an international relations theory is broadly accepted.<sup>4</sup>

Neoconservatism's claims to theory status are less well established in academia by nature of the fact that it is a much newer concept with fewer pages devoted to it, but they are nevertheless still valid. In fact, theoretical treatments of neoconservatism share striking affinities with constructivism, as Aaron Rapport argues, particularly given neoconservatism's consideration of the power of ideas in international relations. "The core assumptions of neocon theory collectively represent a systemic constructivist account of IR," writes Rapport, and "because neoconservatism offers generalizable explanations of outcomes, researchers may attempt to operationalize the theory's ontological constructs, seek to falsify its hypotheses, and compare its explanatory power to that of other theories of international relations when they seek to explain the same outcomes."<sup>5</sup> Thus, neoconservatism, like realism, is unitary and coherent enough to be both explanatory and predictive, meeting the necessary criteria for consideration as theory.

Hence, there are obviously legitimate scholarly grounds on which to argue that both realism and neoconservatism fit the definition of international relations theories. Nevertheless, there is an equally valid argument for classifying both as ideologies, which is the viewpoint of this thesis. Ideology, according to Michael Hunt's preferred definition, is "an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduces the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and suggests appropriate ways of dealing with that reality."<sup>6</sup> Foreign policy ideologies are

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1st ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

<sup>5</sup> Rapport, "Unexpected Affinities? Neoconservatism's Place in IR Theory."

<sup>6</sup> Michael H. Hunt, "Ideology," *The Journal of American History* 77, no. 1 (1990).

thus, according to Hunt, “sets of beliefs and values, sometimes only poorly and partially articulated, that make international relations intelligible and decision making possible.”<sup>7</sup> The main differentiating feature between an ideology and a theory, therefore, seems to be the presence (or absence) of a self-conscious ambition to make predictions (a theory) rather than interpretations (ideology). Essentially, while both realism and neoconservatism are coherent sets of ideas about how international relations work, whether they are considered to be theories or ideologies depends not so much on what they actually say, *but nearly entirely upon how they are used*. To illustrate this point about the importance of usage in identity, think of an ordinary rubber tire. When attached to a hub, it forms the wheel of a car. Yet if hung from a tree branch with a rope, it is a child’s swing. While it still maintains all its intrinsic characteristics—vulcanized rubber, a hole in the middle— what the tire *is*, a wheel or a swing, depends entirely on how it is used.

Neoconservatism, being particularly value-laden and tied very closely to the interpretive practice of foreign policy, is an excellent fit for the ideology definition, as its strong normative architecture drives its adherents primarily to interpret and prescribe rather than predict. As delineated by Francis Fukuyama, the main principles of neoconservatism are characterized by the nouns *belief*, *distrust*, and *skepticism*.<sup>8</sup> Although we will of course discuss just what these beliefs, distrusts, and skepticisms are about later in this chapter, those qualifying details are actually irrelevant to the determination of neoconservatism as an ideology. Most important is the fact that these nouns, which all fundamentally imply subjectivity, clearly demonstrate the judgmental, interpretive nature of ideology that is present within neoconservative

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *After the Neocons : America at the Crossroads* (London: Profile, 2006), 48-49.

thought at the most fundamental level— rather than the more objective words, such as “assumption,” that would be used to describe the tenets of a theory.

Realism’s status as an ideology, however, is less clear-cut than neoconservatism’s because there is less of a consensus about what “realism” actually means. As pointed out by Michael Joseph Smith, an author can mean any one of three things when he or she discusses “realism.” Firstly and most familiarly is realism as “a general theory explaining the essence of international politics.”<sup>9</sup> The principles of realism can also be a means “to advocate, criticize, or justify policies for a given state;” or realism can be “advanced as a particular solution to the vexed problem of the place of moral considerations in foreign policy.”<sup>10</sup> It is these final two incarnations of realism that this work is concerned with, for not only are these senses of realism the most ideological, but they are also the notions from which the American incarnation of realism, as espoused by policymakers such as George Kennan and Henry Kissinger, is derived. Most critically, however, it is these notions of realism that pass our usage test. Rather than being a predictive tool, the assumptions of realism, understood in this fashion, become a framework for interpreting international relations for the explicit purpose of reactive policy formation, a usage completely in harmony with Hunt’s definition of ideology.

Clearly then, we see how both realism and neoconservatism fit the definition of ideology, depending on how they are used. Within the academy, both are much more likely to take on the theory role, being used to predict and generalize state action. However, in foreign policy decisionmaking, leaders’ interpretations of situations are more critical, as policymaking at the very highest levels is a

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Joseph Smith, *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

fundamentally reactionary, interpretive exercise rather than a deeply analytical one. Thus, within the foreign policy analysis context in which this work is situated, it makes sense to regard both realism and neoconservatism as ideologies rather than theories.

## **REALISM**

While realism's roots can famously be found in the ancient writings of Thucydides, its contemporary incarnation as a foreign policy ideology dates back only to the 1940s. And likewise, although realist statecraft is most closely associated with European settings like the Concert of Europe, its ideological form is distinctly American, even if it was introduced and popularized in the US by scholarly "missionaries" of European extraction, such as Hans Morgenthau and Henry Kissinger.

Realism as an ideology originated as a direct result of the American primacy achieved after World War II. It is important at this juncture, however, to acknowledge the multiple theoretical strains of realism and explain how they contribute to the ideological incarnation of American bureaucratic realism. There are, of course, two main species of realism: classical realism and neo—or structural—realism. In the most basic sense, the two strands of realism diverge in terms of what they view as the primary driver of international relations. Classical realists view a pessimistic, Hobbesian understanding of human nature as the essential element of interstate relations. They perceive people as fundamentally self-interested and motivated by a desire to accumulate power in a zero-sum context. As Scott Burchill puts it, classical realists "believed that they could uncover the patterns and laws of

international politics through a more sophisticated understanding of human nature.”<sup>11</sup> This is in contrast with the structural realists, of whom Kenneth Waltz is the originator, who view the structure of the state system—that is, at the most basic level, the distribution of relative power amongst unitary states in a condition of anarchy—as the determining factor of international relations. As Waltz writes, “International structures are defined, first, by the ordering principle of the system, in our case anarchy, and second, by the distribution of capabilities across units.”<sup>12</sup>

While structural realism has now all but supplanted its classical predecessor, it did not appear in the discourse until 1979, when Kenneth Waltz published his *Theory of International Politics*.<sup>13</sup> Thus, in this historical context of the post-war period, it was classical realism—and particularly the writings of Hans Morgenthau—that primarily influenced the radical reappraisal of American foreign policy ideology following the Second World War. Accordingly, it makes the most sense to engage with Morgenthau’s version of realism for two reasons. Firstly, scholars’ wide acknowledgement of Morgenthau as the patriarch of contemporary realist theory gives his writings the weight of intellectual, almost canonical, authority.<sup>14</sup> That Morgenthau’s writings form an archetype of realism is undeniable. The second reason is that Morgenthau devised his writings specifically for the use of the American foreign policymaking community. In his work, he wrote both from and for the American point of view. As J. Peter Pham notes, “Morgenthau read the writings

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<sup>11</sup> Burchill, *Theories of International Relations*, 71.

<sup>12</sup> Kenneth Waltz, “Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory,” *Journal of International Affairs* 44, no. 1 (1990).

<sup>13</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

<sup>14</sup> Numerous authors refer to Morgenthau as “the father” of realism. For one example, see J. Peter Pham, “What Is in the National Interest? Hans Morgenthau’s Realist Vision and American Foreign Policy,” *American Foreign Policy Interests* 30, no. 5 (2008).

of the founders of America—the Federalists—for an explication of [the concept of the national interest]” and “distilled...precepts underlying the founders’ conception of America’s interest in foreign affairs.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore, given Morgenthau’s profound influence on both realist ideology and how it was a unique product of and for the American policymaking tradition, his writings are most important understanding the ideology of the realist American foreign policymaker.<sup>16</sup>

The position of hegemony that American foreign policy bureaucrats suddenly found themselves in after Europe’s self-destruction was completely alien to them, and as a result, they looked to scholars to recommend the best ideological lens through which to view these uncharted waters, and ultimately to advise how to navigate them. As Stanley Hoffmann explains,

What the scholars offered, the policy-makers wanted. Indeed, there is a remarkable chronological convergence between their needs and the scholars’ performances....What the leaders looked for, once the cold war started, was some intellectual compass which would serve multiple functions: exorcise isolationism, and justify a permanent and global involvement in world affairs; rationalize the accumulation of power, the techniques of intervention, and the methods of containment apparently required by the cold war; explain to a public of idealists why international politics does not leave much leeway for pure good will, and indeed besmirches purity; appease the frustrations of the bellicose by showing why unlimited force or extremism on behalf of liberty was no virtue; and reassure a nation eager for ultimate accommodation about the possibility of both avoiding war and achieving its ideals. “Realism”... precisely provided what was necessary.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, realism as an ideology of foreign policy decisionmaking took hold in the United States as a reaction to the new, post-war order, and was furthermore sought out self-

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<sup>15</sup> Pham, "What Is in the National Interest? Hans Morgenthau's Realist Vision and American Foreign Policy."

<sup>16</sup> While it is important to acknowledge George Kennan, a contemporary of Morgenthau’s whose work will be addressed later in this chapter, Kennan can be considered more of an advocate and practitioner of realism rather than a conceptual author on the scale of Morgenthau.

<sup>17</sup> Stanley Hoffmann, "An American Social Science: International Relations," *Daedalus* 106, no. 3 (1977).

consciously as an antidote to other ideological tendencies (chiefly Wilsonian idealism) that were then popular with the American public and government.

Appropriate to their realpolitik origins, the tenets of American realist ideology all have to do with servicing a rationalist and restrictively defined national interest above all other considerations, particularly moralist ones. As previously mentioned, Hans Morgenthau best outlines the core principles of the realist ideology that would take hold amongst many in the American foreign policy community.<sup>18</sup> Firstly, Morgenthau's realism—like other versions of classical realism—is based on the underlying assumption of man's universal selfishness and *animus dominandi*, the intrinsic yearning of human beings to accumulate power over others. According to Morgenthau, “the desire to dominate is a constituent element of all human associations.”<sup>19</sup> Stepping aside from the predictive power that such an assumption may have for the theory of realism, this belief is important to the ideology of realism in that it colors how realist policymakers interpret the actions of other states, in turn shaping the nature of their responses. And while Morgenthau's explicit emphasis on human nature as a determining element of international relations can be considered somewhat archaic, it points to the simple fact that human beings—and the states that they run—are fundamentally power maximizers, a notion that all realists accept.

The second main premise of Morgenthau's brand of realism is deference to the balance of power as the mechanism by which states align or conflict. Akin to a kind of political osmosis, nations abhor high concentrations of power in a single nation or bloc and will align or repel in an effort to achieve a global power equilibrium.

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<sup>18</sup> Morgenthau is a classical realist, as opposed to the more modern and empirically-minded neorealists. The choice to engage with classical realism is conscious and deliberate, as Morgenthau's understanding of realism (and classical realism in general) is both the genesis of modern American realism and is much more ideological in its nature than is the more positivistic neoconservatism.

<sup>19</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th ed. (New York: Knopf, 1985), 17.

Morgenthau writes that “the balance of power and policies aiming at its preservation are not only inevitable, but an essential stabilizing factor in a society of sovereign nations.”<sup>20</sup> Again we see how such a view of the world has vast implications for the policymakers who subscribe to it. Morgenthau and his fellow American realists share a belief that within an anarchic system ruled by the balance of power, “a skilled and flexible diplomacy in service of a stable balance of power is far more likely to lead to international moderation” and thus, as Smith writes, “the main political lesson imparted by Morgenthau’s theory is to learn how to assess and seek power by means of the balance of power, and statesmen are presumably to be judged according to how well they do this.”<sup>21</sup>

Given American realism’s close co-evolution with the United States’ rising power in the international system and the emphasis it places on skilled statecraft and its elite practitioners, it is wholly unsurprising that this new paradigm quickly gained traction amongst the civil servants and bureaucrats most directly tasked with the day-to-day mechanics of American foreign policymaking. Realism became entrenched in agencies like the State Department, where career diplomats enthusiastically adopted the ideology and many, like George Kennan, became high-profile advocates of it. The logic of the national interest that realism put forward was seductive in its straightforwardness and its eschewing of difficult moral considerations. The national interest of the United States, according to Morgenthau, is the “maintenance of the balance of power” so as to avoid the accumulation of too much strength by a rival nation, which would eventually lead to a direct security threat against the territorial

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<sup>20</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 125.

<sup>21</sup> Smith, *Realist thought from Weber to Kissinger*, 145.

United States.<sup>22</sup> It is clear from this assessment of the national interest that Morgenthau and his other realist contemporaries were much affected by the events of the two world wars, and ideological realism exists in large part as a reaction to Wilsonian liberalism's naïveté toward fascism.

As alluded to earlier, George Kennan, former US ambassador to the Soviet Union and originator of the policy of containment, is perhaps the original American practitioner of realism, adapting many of Morgenthau's sensibilities to the world of cold war diplomacy.<sup>23</sup> Kennan's writings, like Morgenthau's, all show intense devotion to the national interest. In *Realities of American Foreign Policy*, Kennan writes that "our foreign policy, in short, is only a means to an end. And that end must consist in whatever we consider to be the general objects of American society."<sup>24</sup> Kennan goes further to define this national interest as the sparsest of objectives; those interests that he viewed as being the Founders' original foreign policy concerns:

One ought to protect the physical intactness of our national life from any external military or political intrusion—in other words, that one ought to look to the national security...

Secondly, one could see to it that insofar as the activities of our citizens in pursuit of their private interests spilled over beyond our borders and into the outside world, the best possible arrangements were made to promote and protect them.<sup>25</sup>

Although Kennan concedes that postwar America's immense power in the international system demands a bit more involvement in world affairs than it did immediately post independence as a weak agrarian state, that additional increment is very limited.

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<sup>22</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "What Is the National Interest of the United States?" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 282, no. 1 (1952).

<sup>23</sup> X (George Kennan), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25, July (1947).

<sup>24</sup> George F. Kennan, *Realities of American Foreign Policy*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 5.

<sup>25</sup> Kennan, *Realities of American Foreign Policy*, 11.

Yet realism's limited view of the national interest should not be confused with isolationism. Indeed, isolationism is scathingly referenced by Morgenthau as one of the "Three Forms of Utopianism," charging that it "empties of all concrete political content the realistic political principle of isolation and transforms it into the unattainable parochial ideal of automatic separation."<sup>26</sup> In fact, Morgenthau equates isolationism's logical follies with those of Wilsonianism, the second of the three Utopianisms. Although Morgenthau readily admits that Wilsonianism on the surface appears to be the polar opposite of isolationism, the two are really "brothers under the skin."<sup>27</sup> He paints them as complementary falsehoods, twin fallacies of imprudent foreign policy:

Both are one in maintaining that the United States has no interest in any particular political and military configuration outside the Western Hemisphere. While isolationism stops here, Wilsonianism asserts that the American national interest is not somewhere in particular, but everywhere, being identical with the interests of mankind itself. Both refuse to concern themselves with the concrete issues upon which the national interest must be asserted. Isolationism stops short of them, Wilsonianism soars beyond them...both substitute abstract moral principles for the guidance of the national interest.<sup>28</sup>

Morgenthau's final Utopianism is internationalism, which, while similar to Wilsonianism, has a narrower conception of the national interest, yet forms it based upon moral considerations. Because challenges to the national interest are, under internationalism, considered to be "evil," it necessarily follows that only the outcome of enemies' unconditional surrender is acceptable—evil must be destroyed, not contained.<sup>29</sup> Hence, Morgenthau's internationalism may best be understood in terms

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<sup>26</sup> Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy*, 28 and 30.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

of the “legalism-moralism” so maligned by Kennan.<sup>30</sup> By “legalism-moralism,” Kennan refers to America’s tendency to orient its foreign policy in terms of distinctly moralistic principles. It then takes a universalist approach to these principles and attempts to legally enshrine them in the state system via international treaties. Essentially, legalism-moralism perceives the international system as perfectible through law and asserts that the United States, as an exceptionalist power, has both the right and the duty to facilitate this perfection. This type of emotive, crusading attitude is, in the mind of Kennan and fellow realists, responsible for some of the worst blunders in American foreign policy.

On the contrary, realists consider the pursuit of the national interest to be moral in and of itself while, ironically, considering a foreign policy that seeks to be self consciously moral as the true evil. Kennan writes that “the evil of these utopian enthusiasms was not only, or even primarily, the wasted time, the misplaced emphasis, the encouragement of false hopes. The evil lay primarily in the fact that these enthusiasms distracted our gaze from the real things that were happening.”<sup>31</sup> It was the interwar years’ excessive Wilsonian impulse to avoid the humanitarian horrors of war at all costs, even “outlawing” it under the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which in fact led to the prolonged horrors of World War II. Such realities lead to what Morgenthau puts forward as “the moral dignity of the national interest.”<sup>32</sup> In no uncertain terms, he writes:

The equation of political moralizing with morality and of political realism with immorality is itself untenable. The choice is not between moral

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<sup>30</sup>George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, expanded ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 95.

<sup>31</sup> Kennan, *Realities of American Foreign Policy*, 21-22.

<sup>32</sup> Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy*, 33.

principles and the national interest, devoid of moral dignity, but between one set of moral principles divorced from political reality, and another...derived from political reality. The moralistic detractors of the national interest are guilty both of intellectual error and moral perversion.<sup>33</sup>

Morgenthau makes the logical but relativist argument that moralizing yields unsuccessful foreign policy because a nation state's moral code is inseparable from its society; each state has its own moral vision that is necessarily singular, relative, and cannot be reproduced elsewhere. Citing Hobbes, he asserts that "there is neither morality nor law outside the state."<sup>34</sup> Thus, in the process of serving the fallacy of a universal morality, crusader states actually serve to corrode morality itself— which realist logic pits as synonymous with the state— since their actions are at odds with the national interest. This notion of the statist national interest as the fundamental source of morality is perhaps realism's largest point of contention with neoconservatism, as becomes evident in the next section.

## **NEOCONSERVATISM**

Neoconservatism has been lambasted and discredited by many in the press, politics, and the academy, who have, in the wake of the George W. Bush Administration, come to use the term as shorthand for imprudent moral crusaderism in American foreign policy. Yet despite its undeniable connection to the Bush Administration and its failings, particularly in the Middle East, neoconservatism should not be treated as a political caricature. Indeed, it is every bit the fully formed ideology that American realism is and must be engaged with the same rigorousness that is allotted to realism.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 34.

If Irving Kristol— regarded by many as the intellectual godfather of neoconservatism— were alive today he might be surprised to learn that neoconservatism has become a hot-button issue in American politics not for its domestic political implications, but for its foreign policy ones. Indeed, the origins of neoconservatism are found squarely in the context of domestic policy matters. Essentially, neoconservative thinkers were initially occupied with discerning the acceptable degree to which the government could use its power to promote conservative norms within the domestic sphere. This included measures like censorship of pornography, enacting legislation and policies that privileged the traditional structure of the heterosexual nuclear family, and opposing social welfare programs perceived as incentivizing what they saw as socially detrimental behavior like single motherhood or voluntary extended unemployment. Thus, when first articulating the ideology, neoconservatives such as Kristol and Leo Strauss had relatively little to say on matters of international relations, and what they did include, as far as matters of morality are concerned, was mostly incidental to their core domestic policy arguments.

Essentially, these core neoconservative arguments stem from the neoconservative belief that America's moral superiority— endowed to it through its Puritan-derived virtues of strong work ethic and Judeo-Christian piety— was eroding, ironically, due to the United States' increasing success on the material level; the country was becoming a victim of its own achievement. The assertion, as presented by Kristol in *Two Cheers for Capitalism*, is that free market capitalism, precisely because it is so good at creating wealth and privileging the individual as sole master of his own affairs, has created a selfish impulse in modern American society

that threatens to corrode its original morality from the inside out.<sup>35</sup> Capitalism threatened to stain America's virtue. As Kristol puts it, "What makes the situation all the more ominous is that the civic-bourgeois culture is not being overwhelmed from without, but is rather being casually and almost contemptuously subverted from within."<sup>36</sup>

As a remedy to this situation, the neoconservatives propose government intervention to prop up traditional social values—this is what separates them from the traditional conservatives, whose roots in classical liberal philosophy generally find government interventionism categorically abhorrent in nearly all circumstances, both fiscal and social.<sup>37</sup> Thus, for neoconservatives, the nation is strengthened through the state-sponsored cultivation of a virtuous national character based on an objective, Judeo-Christian morality. Whereas for realists, to pursue the national interest is moral; for neoconservatives, to pursue the moral is the national interest. This notion that morality is objective and can (and should) therefore be extended beyond the domestic borders of the American nation state is from whence neoconservatism derives its foreign policy significance.

It is precisely neoconservatism's status as a self-consciously moral foreign policy ideology that led its originators to be, in practice, ardent anti-communists. Ronald Reagan's reference to the Soviet Union as the "Evil Empire" in two words summarizes neoconservatives' beliefs about the USSR and their reluctance to engage with it diplomatically, favoring military competition instead. Political tensions in the cold war periphery also introduced the first modern instances of American

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<sup>35</sup> Irving Kristol, *Two Cheers for Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1978).

<sup>36</sup> Irving Kristol, *On the Democratic Idea in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 23.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives: The Men Who Are Changing America's Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980), 92-93.

neoconservatives' pursuit of regime change policies. As Yuen Foong Khong points out, Elliot Abrams and Paul Wolfowitz, two of the leading neoconservatives within the Bush Administration, first became advocates of regime change policy as early as the 1980s, with the Reagan Administration's active opposition to the Marcos government in the Philippines and the Sandinistas of Nicaragua.<sup>38</sup>

Neoconservatism, because of its strong moralist underpinnings, undeniably thrives upon opposition to a philosophical other, whether that role is fulfilled by communism or radical Islamism. And in congruence with its support of using state power to support moral policies within American domestic borders, neoconservatives also hold up the legitimacy of using military coercion to accomplish their foreign policy goals, since, in the context of neoconservative ideology, the two goals are not really that different. Because morality is objective and transcends the state, the use of force is legitimate even external to sovereign state borders. In this sense, neoconservatism presents a challenge to the very fabric of the Westphalian state system upon which realism bases itself. Ultimately, the core of neoconservative moral ideology is tripartite: 1) A belief in an objective morality; 2) The duty of the American government to use its coercive power to prop up that morality; and 3) the view of the domestic and the international realms as a seamless continuum throughout which that morality should expand.

While the above summarizes the high moral essence of neoconservatism, its practical foreign policy applications, while derived from these principles, are more grounded. Francis Fukuyama, a self-professed former neoconservative, considers the ideology in terms more directly relevant to contemporary international relations

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<sup>38</sup> Yuen Foong Khong, "Neoconservatism and the Domestic Sources of US Foreign Policy," in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, ed. Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Timothy Dunne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 254.

issues.<sup>39</sup> In doing so, he distills four main principles of internationally minded neoconservatism:

- A belief that the internal character of regimes matters and that foreign policy must reflect the deepest values of liberal democratic societies.
- A belief that American power has been and could be used for moral purposes, and that the United States needs to remain engaged in international affairs.
- A distrust of ambitious social engineering projects.<sup>40</sup>
- Skepticism about the legitimacy and effectiveness of international law and institutions to achieve either security or justice.<sup>41</sup>

In these principles we see the unmistakable primordium of the Bush Doctrine, which can be considered a subspecies of neoconservatism.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, neoconservatism, despite its roots reaching back to the 1970s, has become inextricably linked with the foreign policy of George W. Bush. Charles Krauthammer, himself a prominent neoconservative intellectual, has proclaimed that “the Bush doctrine is, essentially, a synonym for neoconservative foreign policy.”<sup>43</sup> And although authors such as John Lewis Gaddis and Mackubin Owens assert that the Bush Doctrine and its moralist impulses, rather than being bound by the relatively new ideology of neoconservatism, actually represents continuity in American foreign

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<sup>39</sup> Francis Fukuyama, "After Neoconservatism," *New York Times Magazine*, 19 February 2006.

<sup>40</sup> This point is less critical to our purposes than the other three, since it deals primarily with the domestic aspects of neoconservatism, particularly its skepticism of the welfare state.

<sup>41</sup> Fukuyama, *After the Neocons : America at the Crossroads*, 48-49.

<sup>42</sup> The Bush Doctrine is notable in that it explicitly identifies the US national interest with unambiguously moral causes and extends the area of this interest to encompass the entire globe. The 2002 National Security Strategy is considered the first official policy elucidation of the Bush Doctrine. See United States National Security Council, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, 3; available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf> (accessed 2 April 2008).

<sup>43</sup> Charles Krauthammer, "The Neoconservative Convergence," *Commentary*, July-August (2005).

policy, this argument is not entirely accurate.<sup>44</sup> While it is true that moralism has long played a role in US foreign policy, being described as far back even as de Tocqueville, this is unrelated to whether or not the Bush Doctrine is also neoconservative.<sup>45</sup> In truth, while neoconservatism most certainly has its roots in the American moralist tradition, it is just as true to claim that the Bush Doctrine is unreservedly neoconservative.

To illustrate this point, one needs look only to the 2002 National Security Strategy, which is considered to be the original elucidation of the Bush Doctrine.<sup>46</sup> As for the neoconservative beliefs “that foreign policy must reflect the deepest values of liberal democratic societies” and “American power...could be used for moral purposes,” the National Security Strategy is of unequivocal accord, reading:

[T]he United States must defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere. No nation owns these aspirations, and no nation is exempt from them. ...

America must stand firmly for the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the absolute power of the state; free speech; freedom of worship; equal justice; respect for women; religious and ethnic tolerance; and respect for private property. ...

We will champion the cause of human dignity and oppose those who resist it.<sup>47</sup>

The Bush Doctrine, and neoconservatism, therefore, perceives the American national interest as linked to the advancement of western notions of liberal morality throughout the international state system. Thus, given the previous discussion on realism, it is

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<sup>44</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004). See also Mackubin Thomas Owens, "The Bush Doctrine: The Foreign Policy of Republican Empire," *Orbis* 53, no. 1 (2009).

<sup>45</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville and J. P. Mayer, *Democracy in America* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969).

<sup>46</sup> United States National Security Council, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

easy to see why neoconservatives and realists came into such bitter conflict over the direction of US foreign policy under George W. Bush.

## **THE REPUBLICAN SCHISM**

Although the structural mechanisms for these ideological conflicts between realists and neoconservatives will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter, it is worth noting here the seeming appearance of a special prevalence of this dispute within the Republican Party in particular. This is due to the fact that, at their heart, both neoconservatism and realism are fundamentally conservative ideologies. On the one hand, realism emphasizes stability, the maximization of American power, and a focus on preserving the prevailing world order. Its most famous practitioners, from Kissinger to Scowcroft, have almost all been Republicans. On the other hand, neoconservatism is also conservative in that it is rooted, as discussed in great detail earlier in this chapter, in traditional values stemming from a concrete notion of morality and a sense of America's exceptionalism amongst nations. Both realism and neoconservatism also maintain their intense skepticism of international institutions, which is another firm conservative value in the American domestic political sense. This quality is in fact what can be chiefly seen to differentiate Republican from Democratic foreign policy, which has been, at least since the 1990s, much more coherently rooted in liberal institutionalism and multilateralism—broadly, what Morgenthau deems internationalism. Because this liberal notion of order flowing from institutions can be seen as a logical extension of the core Democratic philosophy, which is based on the ability and duty of government to take an activist approach to improving the lives of its citizens, there has typically been much less ideological

infighting in foreign policy formation within the Democratic Party.<sup>48</sup> It is for these reasons that one can conclude from writings such as Kennan's that the major foreign policy divides in the United States are not *between* the political parties, but cross-cutting differences between realists and idealists that are not represented well by the current American two-party system. Dov Zakheim reiterates this point in *The National Interest*, writing that the chief foreign policy chasm in contemporary America is not in fact partisan, but between what he dubs "conservatives," whom he considers realists, and "interventionists," into which he lumps both neoconservatives and liberal interventionists.<sup>49</sup>

This idea of a special foreign policy battle within the Republican Party is not a new one, and in fact it is documented as far back as the Nixon Administration, which saw huge bureaucratic rows between the realists and the neoconservatives, led respectively by Kissinger and Rumsfeld.<sup>50</sup> In their book, *The Forty Years War*, Len Colodny and Tom Shachtman trace this history of the realist/neocon divide through five Republican presidential administrations, recounting the political blows exchanged over watershed Republican foreign policy moments like establishing diplomatic relations with Beijing or the negotiated end to the Vietnam War.<sup>51</sup> But while it is important to look at the history of this Republican foreign policy divide, the fact that it is a long one does not suggest that it is any closer to resolution now than it was during Nixon's presidency. Quite the opposite, as intra-Republican foreign

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<sup>48</sup> This is not to say, however, that the Democratic Party has always been immune to such schisms. During the Kennedy Administration, for example, there was similar tension amongst Democrats regarding how to deal with the Soviet Union.

<sup>49</sup> Dov Zakheim, "Kipling Redux," *The National Interest* 91, no. 5 (2007).

<sup>50</sup> Of course it is important to note that the term "neoconservative" was not yet used to describe foreign policy ideologues during this period.

<sup>51</sup> Len Colodny and Tom Shachtman, *The Forty Years War* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009).

policy disputes again came to the forefront during the 2008 election. As Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier point out:

Conservative thinking on foreign policy has always been less unified than many think. While most conservatives often look back to the Reagan years as a kind of nirvana of GOP consensus, the foreign-policy debates inside Reagan's administration were marked by intense and often well-publicized battles between pragmatists...and hard-liners...Moreover, these fights are now playing out under the hot lights of the presidential campaign, where political journalists and policy pundits are puzzling over which advisors have the candidate's ear on foreign policy. Whether McCain wins or loses in November, these divisions will make it difficult for the Republicans.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, while the election of Obama in 2008 has pushed the realist/neoconservative divide back to the sidelines of Washington, there is no reason to expect that it will not re-emerge with the advent of the competitive field of the 2012 Republican primary. In fact, because the Republican field is so broad, one can expect that the foreign policy differences between them will be touted as loudly as ever, since this split gives each a real opportunity to distinguish oneself from his or her co-partisan opponents. Hence, the ideological divide that we have explored in this chapter can be predicted to maintain its relevance to US foreign policymaking for years to come.

## **INCOMPATIBLE IDEOLOGIES**

Having examined in detail the moral and philosophical foundations of both realism and neoconservatism as they appear in the modern American foreign policy discourse, it is not an exaggeration to conclude that the two ideologies are fundamentally incompatible. To summarize, realism and neoconservatism come into major and irreconcilable philosophical conflict over three core issues. They are:

- The source of morality (either a relativist creation of each unique nation state or objective and universal);
- The extent to which these notions of morality inform the national interest; and

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<sup>52</sup> Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier, "McCain's Choice," *The National Interest*, no. 96 (2008).

- The role of moral considerations in foreign policy.

Upon comparing the ideologies' most elemental tenets, crystallized in the three points above, it is clear that their political proponents must logically conclude that following the prescriptions of the other will result in repercussions no less serious than the demise of the United States as we know it. While it is true that both share a common skepticism (and indeed disdain) for international law, that is where the similarities end. The point of divergence from which all other philosophical differences depart is each ideology's respective conception of the place of morality in foreign policy— central or irrelevant. This in turn informs each one's notion of the national interest—upon which foreign policy is necessarily based— and the acceptable conditions for the exertion of military force.

Based on these differences, it is readily apparent why realists and neoconservatives came into such fierce ideological conflict over so many of the Bush Administration's foreign policy decisions regarding the Middle East, which, as seen in later chapters, were heavily doused in neoconservative moralism. Indeed, it is as if Morgenthau were seeing through the ages to describe the neoconservatives of the Bush Administration when he archetyped the foreign policy moralist:

[H]e abhors consideration of the other side's interests and point of view, the precondition for conciliatory and accommodating diplomacy, as akin to, if not identical with, treason. For he assumes his country is good and strong enough to do as it pleases. To him, negotiations are tantamount to submission to evil forces, to contamination with vice, which establishes one's guilt by association; compromise is a synonym for appeasement....The omnipotent crusader can envisage no other outcome of the conflict but unconditional surrender, and no other way of reaching it but the use of overwhelming force.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy*, 133.

While Morgenthau's prescience is startling and even a bit eerie, it perfectly illustrates the authenticity and endurance of the ideological clash that US foreign policy toward the Middle East encapsulates between 2001 and 2006.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**HOW THEY FIGHT: MODELS AND MECHANISMS OF BUREAUCRATIC  
INFIGHTING**

To understand the contribution that this work makes to the literature on bureaucratic politics and foreign policymaking, it is necessary to first review the current state of research in this subfield of foreign policy analysis. Indeed, the first thing one notices when examining the field of foreign policymaking and the bureaucratic process in the United States is how very dated it is. A review of the biggest names in the field reads like a 1960s Harvard department roster—Samuel Huntington, Graham Allison, Mort Halperin. This is certainly not to belittle these men’s fine contributions to the scholarly discourse. However, it does draw attention to the fact that so little work of this type has been done lately—a reality quite curious, given that bureaucratic politics in the US have only grown more heated in the past decade or so as ideological divisions within America on the country’s place in the world have resurged once again in the years after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. What one finds upon reviewing this existing literature are two themes: exploring bureaucratic politics based on (1) the divisions inherent in the existence of different bureaucratic agencies themselves (exemplified by Allison’s “organizational behavior” and “governmental politics” paradigms) and (2) the

convergence of partisan politics and bureaucratic phenomena. While both of these themes are useful, they fail to fully account for sources of bureaucratic infighting, particularly in post- September 11<sup>th</sup> America, because they neglect foreign policy ideological differences that cross-cut party affiliations and occur *within* a single party or administration. This neglect is exactly why this presentation of an alternative paradigm of bureaucratic politics—ideological infighting—is so important to the broader discourse on bureaucratic politics and foreign policy analysis.

## **THE FIRST WAVE**

Until roughly the 1960s, most analyses of foreign policy followed what Graham Allison termed “Model I,” the rational actor model.<sup>1</sup> This way of thinking about foreign policy is quite in line with realist views that see the state as the basic unit of international relations. Such views consider the effects of intrastate structures on foreign policy to be negligible, and thus analysts adhering to the rational actor model interpret foreign policy decisions as the product of a unified leadership force. As important as the unitary nature of policymaking in the rational actor model is the concurrent belief that any state policy is consciously formulated to be in the best interest of the state itself; we know from the previous chapter that for realists, this means preserving and extending the power of a state in the international system. This approach may have made sense before the advent of democracy, when many foreign policy decisions were indeed made by a sovereign with near limitless power. But in the modern world of democracies and the bureaucracies

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<sup>1</sup> Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, 1971).

charged with organizing them, decisionmaking is much more decentralized. It is this reality that the so-called “First Wave” theorists seized upon.<sup>2</sup>

First Wave theorists such as Roger Hilsman, Warner Schilling, and Samuel Huntington were the first to recognize and explore the fact that foreign policy is as much a result of the policymaking process itself as it is of the particular circumstance it is meant to address. Hilsman sums up this reality when he writes that “Policy faces inward as much as outward, seeking to reconcile conflicting goals, to adjust aspirations to available means, and to accommodate the different advocates of these competing goals and aspirations to one another. It is here that the essence of policy making seems to lie, in a process that is in its deepest sense political.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, the First Wave theorists rightfully excoriate the rational actor model. Yet in doing so they render the task of foreign policy analysis infinitely more complex, as now bureaucratic agencies, competing interests, and budgetary rivalries are recognized to be equally important as events in policymaking.

Essentially, First Wavers recognize the multivariate nature of policymaking and the many groups at work in the task. Unsurprisingly, then, they sought to map out those players and interests in order to better conceptualize the process. Hilsman views the bureaucracy as a series of concentric circles. At the center is the president, and immediately surrounding him are his immediate deputies—White House staffers, agency heads, and his cabinet secretaries—those “who must carry out the decision,” Hilsman says.<sup>4</sup> Outside this circle are the executive departments, such as State and Defense, and

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<sup>2</sup> Robert J. Art, “Bureaucratic Politics and American Foreign Policy: A Critique,” *Policy Sciences* 4, no. 4 (1973); Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 468.

<sup>3</sup> Roger Hilsman, *The Politics of Policy Making in Defense and Foreign Affairs*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

all their layers of hierarchy. Finally outside this we find what Hilsman terms “the public arena,” consisting first of Congress, then interest groups, then at last the general public. This illustration clearly shows the many actors involved in policymaking, yet Hilsman is also quick to point out that not all decisions include total systemic participation. The Cuban Missile Crisis, for example, was handled exclusively by Kennedy’s ExComm, Hilsman’s first two circles, despite the fact that the crisis became public knowledge.

Samuel Huntington’s mapping of bureaucratic policymaking channels is significantly more complex than Hilsman’s. To Huntington, the American bureaucracy is less rigidly hierarchical and self-contained and more like an elaborate web. Rather than being a series of neat rings arranged in order of power and centered upon the president, Huntington’s bureaucracy is a much less tidy affair. According to Huntington, there are three core groups involved in making foreign or defense policy. The first group is the administration, which is made up of “the elected and politically appointed leaders of the executive branch: President, Vice President, agency heads, secretaries, [and] under-secretaries.”<sup>5</sup> The second is termed bureaucratic groups, which for Huntington include “the Foreign Service, the military services, [and] the civil servants in all bureaus and agencies.”<sup>6</sup> The final category is Congress, with an emphasis on the particular committees charged with matters relating to foreign and defense affairs, such as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House International Relations Committee. The most unique thing about Huntington’s view of the foreign policymaking bureaucracy, however, is that it allows for lateral communication as well as vertical,

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<sup>5</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Common Defense: Strategic Programs in National Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 123.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

hierarchical communication. This is accomplished through the superimposition of the “conciliar structure” upon the executive hierarchy. As Huntington explains:

Within the executive branch the groups are arranged in two overlapping structures. In the hierarchical structure, all officials and agencies are in theory arranged in superior-subordinate relationships in the classic pyramid culminating in the President. Superimposed upon the executive hierarchy is a second, conciliar structure. It includes many interdepartmental and interagency boards and committees....The hierarchical structure of the executive provides a vehicle for vertical communication between superiors and subordinates; the conciliar structure supplements this and also provides a formal means for lateral communication among agencies or officials at similar levels in difference hierarchies.<sup>7</sup>

It is this possibility for lateral communication, through the conciliar structure, that most distinguishes Huntington’s model from Hilsman’s. Regardless of the particulars, however, what makes the mapping of bureaucratic structures important is that it allows visualization of the channels for communication and decisionmaking in a complex organization. What both these models of bureaucracy have in common is a high level of stratification. On the one hand, this ensures that top individuals’ time is not wasted on small decisions. On the other, it introduces the risk that some necessary information will also be filtered out. Thus, understanding how these channels are supposed to optimally function is critical to understanding exactly what happens when something goes wrong, as we shall see with the empirical cases in later chapters.

## **THE SECOND WAVE**

As noted above, the First Wave thinkers were the first to accord bureaucratic structures their due attention in the process of making foreign policy in the United States. Yet as expected in academia, a new crop of scholars emerged to refine and criticize the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

First Wave. The scholars of the Second Wave took the earlier work further. Rather than simply acknowledging that foreign policy was as much a result of individual and domestic level politics as it was of system level conditions, Second Wavers sought to explain the how and the why. As Graham Allison wrote, Second Wave scholarship is guided by three organizing questions: “(1) Who plays? (2) What determines each player’s stand? [and] (3) How are players’ stands aggregated to yield government decisions and actions?”<sup>8</sup> Scholars of the Second Wave worked under the postulation that rather than simply being a part of the policymaking process, bureaucratic considerations were in many ways a deciding element in the policy outcome and asserted that one’s placement in the bureaucracy directly affected how he or she viewed a particular national security challenge, giving way to the famous Miles’s Law: “Where you stand depends upon where you sit”—a sort of theory of relativity for organizational politics.

The most prominent Second Wave scholar is, of course, Graham Allison. In *Essence of Decision*, Allison seeks to demonstrate how bureaucratic elements can in fact be decisive in shaping a policy critical to the very survival of the state itself. In doing so, he also offers two alternatives to the rational actor model—the governmental politics model and the organizational behavior model—and through them contributes detailed explanations of how bureaucracies function within a government setting. In contrast to Model I, the rational actor model, Allison’s Model III is known as the governmental politics model; it emphasizes the role of individual actors in government and their personal relationships to one another both as individuals and as groups that form

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<sup>8</sup> Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications," *World Politics* 24, spring (1972).

agencies. Any particular policy, then, can be understood as the result of a complex set of interaction amongst individual players. As Allison puts it,

What a government does in any particular instance can be understood largely as a result of bargaining among players positioned hierarchically in the government .... Players choose in terms of no consistent set of strategic objectives, but rather according to various conceptions of national security, organizational, domestic, and personal interests. Players make governmental decisions not by a single rational choice, but by pulling and hauling.<sup>9</sup>

This “pulling and hauling” that Allison mentions is over a variety of matters that breaks down into two categories: the personal and the organizational. The personal matters are fairly straightforward: they essentially have to do with the direct selfish interests of an individual player. This can be over anything from job security to future political aspirations. For example, if the President is considering eliminating an executive agency, the chief of that agency would necessarily argue against the closure, as it would eliminate his job. Additionally, personal relationships between players, simply by their very existence, can have a profound impact on a person’s policymaking influence. Allison cites as an example the close fraternal relationship between President John F. Kennedy and Attorney-General Robert F. Kennedy. Traditionally, the position of Attorney-General is not associated with foreign policy. Yet Bobby, because of the special trust between him and his brother the President, played a pivotal role on ExComm during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Organizational interests involve a somewhat wider range of concerns than personal interests. One of the foremost is funding. Government agencies must compete for finite budgetary resources in an almost Darwinian struggle. Funding, however, relates to a less tangible, though in some ways more important area of bureaucratic

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

contention—prestige. The more value that is seen in a particular agency’s work, the likelier Congress is to appropriate funds to it. This generates power for the agency, which is critical because, as Allison puts it, “Power equals impact on outcome.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, just as personal interests drive individuals to compete for status amongst their peers, department heads also wrangle to present their agency as critical to a solution. “Members of an organization, particularly career officials,” Allison writes, may even “come to believe that the health of their organization is vital to the national interest.”<sup>11</sup> This can and does often lead to “turf wars” between agencies as each competes to situate itself at the center of the web of departments involved in making foreign policy. The field of intelligence gathering is a classic example of such turf wars. The United States has upwards of two dozen separate agencies charged with gathering foreign intelligence, from the well known CIA and National Security Agency to the more obscure, like the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research or the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. In rational decisionmaking, information is power, and thus the agency that provides critical information necessarily gets more prestige and access to power centers like the Office of the President. As a result, intelligence hoarding within a single agency is endemic, as was well documented in the 9/11 Commission Report.<sup>12</sup> Although the subsequent creation of the position of National Intelligence Director was intended to address such types of intelligence turf wars, the problem is one that, as

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<sup>10</sup> Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1999), 260.

<sup>11</sup> Allison and Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications," 48.

<sup>12</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*, 1st ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004). See especially Chapter 8.

Allison recognizes, is embedded in the very nature of bureaucracy and goes far beyond the intelligence community. Rivalries between the State Department and the National Security Council, as discussed by Miroslav Nincic, tend to be particularly pitched given their overlapping mandates.<sup>13</sup> This trend continued in magnified form in the Bush Administration, as discussed in subsequent chapters.

Aside from the interagency competitive element that the governmental politics model illuminates, Allison also highlights how an individual's placement in a particular agency affects how he or she views a given situation. Each agency specializes in a particular aspect of policy creation and implementation, and thus individuals within those agencies tend to see the world through the lens of their bureaucratic mandate. In short, mission shapes outlook. As we shall see in the next chapter, the run up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq presents a good example. Colin Powell and Richard Armitage, coming from the State Department, emphasized the importance of working with allies and the United Nations to use relationships and institutions to insure against the possibility of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. On the other hand, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld pushed hard for a military strike, eager to show off the leaner, reorganized form of the US armed forces—something that would undoubtedly bring personal praise to him and more money for the DoD from Congress.

One of the most important things about Allison's governmental politics model, however, is how he recognizes the congruence between agencies and individuals—he acknowledges that while they may be made up of individual bureaucrats, agencies can also act unitarily, almost as an individual. As he puts it,

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<sup>13</sup> Miroslav Nincic, *United States Foreign Policy: Choices and Tradeoffs* (Washington: CQ Press, 1988), 124-25.

Organizations and groups can for some purposes be treated as players, for example, when (1) the official papers that emerge from an organization can be summarized as coherent calculated moves of a unitary actor; (2) the actions of a head of an organization, whose goals are determined largely by that organization, can be treated as actions of that organization; and (3) the various behaviors of different individual members of an organization can be regarded as coherent strategies and tactics in a single plan.<sup>14</sup>

This recognition that an organization can act as both a collection of individuals and a coherent whole is important, since the concept of ideological infighting is partially reliant upon an agency to act as an individual in that it may harbor an ideology. Allison's governmental politics paradigm also reinforces the ability of an agency to have ideology by recognizing that departments each have their own unique institutional cultures; departmental ideology, then, can be seen as an element of this culture.

In addition to using the governmental politics model to explain how individuals' and agencies' preferences are formed and then ultimately aggregated into a policy, Allison also explains the mechanism for how that policy is carried out. One primary mechanism is what he terms the "action channel." According to Allison, action channels are "regularized sets of procedures for producing particular classes of actions."<sup>15</sup> All the steps of an action channel must fall into place before an action is taken, something like a bureaucratic Rube Goldberg mechanism. For example, Allison notes that the decision to attack a particular country involves an action channel that consists of everything from the ambassador to said country making a recommendation for military intervention all the way to the President giving final approval. The important thing to note about action channels, however, is that they bridge multiple individuals and organizations.

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<sup>14</sup> Allison and Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications," 47.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

In contrast to the action channel—which Allison presents as a part of a “bureaucratic politics” synthesis of his Models II and III—is Model II itself: the organizational behavior model. This model focuses on activities within individual agencies. As discussed above, each agency has a certain bureaucratic culture that separates it from others. With this culture comes a regulated way of doing things, known as a standard operating procedure. Standard operating procedures divide and standardize labor within a department and are meant to increase organization efficiency. However, standard operating procedures also constrain an agency’s flexibility by forcing it to deal with a unique challenge in a generic way that, while on the whole may be more efficient, may also be inappropriate to a particular circumstance. Both action channels and standard operating procedures emphasize the regularized, hierarchical nature of foreign policymaking. In later chapters, however, we see how these regularized channels were disrupted through ideological infighting, affecting the eventual policy outcome.

It is true that Graham Allison’s work, though groundbreaking at the time, has more than its share of critics. Most challenge Allison’s ascribing such power to the bureaucracy, which, in their view, implies a weak president nearly incapable of controlling his subordinates. One of the main proponents of this line of criticism is Stephen Krasner. Krasner asserts that Allison makes too much of the bureaucratic process’s detrimental effects on US foreign policymaking, as the final decision rests with the manager. If a bureaucracy is out of hand, it should not be attributed to the inadequacy of the bureaucratic structures themselves, but to the president’s poor managerial skills. “In foreign policy,” Krasner writes, “the choices—and the responsibility—rest squarely

with the President.”<sup>16</sup> Instead, Krasner argues, critically, that failures of policy are not the result of a lack of managerial skill in the face of an unwieldy bureaucracy, but indicative of a broader national failure to agree on the direction that policies should take. “Conflicts exist over what the objectives of the nation should be and what its capacities are,” Krasner writes.<sup>17</sup> *The problem then, is ideology.* This is the single most important aspect that Krasner brings to the discussion. Yet while it is true that perhaps Allison ascribes too much importance to bureaucracies at the expense of other factors, Krasner commits the opposite sin and ascribes not nearly enough. The I2 model presented here thus finds the medium, uniting the importance of bureaucracy with that of ideological differences in foreign policymaking.

## **THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGY IN BUREAUCRATIC DISPUTES**

It would be inaccurate to argue that the intermingling of ideology and bureaucratic politics and its effects on policy outcomes has never been examined before. Yet previous studies on this topic restrict their view of ideology to party affiliation. Much of this existing literature on the interface between foreign policy bureaucracy and ideology in the partisan sense comes out of the Nixon era, unsurprising given the legendary partisanship that emanated from the Nixon White House and was fueled by Nixon’s own personal paranoia. In this context, Joel Aberbach and Bert Rockman discuss the prevalence of ideological conflicts between career bureaucrats and a presidential administration and its political appointees. Aberbach and Rockman note that

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<sup>16</sup> Stephen Krasner, "Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland)," *Foreign Policy*, no. 7 (1972): 179.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

these difficulties are particularly acute when a change in administration is accompanied by a change in party, especially when the transition goes from a Democratic administration to a Republican one. This is due to generally high Republican suspicions that most career bureaucrats are Democrats, who will, so the thinking goes, seek to undermine a Republican president's agenda. While Nixon's paranoia on this front may have been excessive, Aberbach and Rockman note that "The suspicion that the career bureaucracy may be disinclined toward the objectives of Republican administrations has substantial grounding in fact."<sup>18</sup> Survey data show that career bureaucrats do tend to be disproportionately Democratic, perhaps because Democrats tend to have more faith in government as an institution and so gravitate toward it for a career. This is especially true in the Foreign Service, where according to one sampling, only 5% of employees identified themselves as Republicans.<sup>19</sup> Yet despite this, party affiliation alone was found to be a poor indicator of how responsive the bureaucracy was to a president's agenda. This led the samplers to conclude that ideology had little bearing on bureaucratic politics in foreign policy. This conclusion is, however, deeply flawed, because it considers only partisan ideology. Instead, the cases presented here in subsequent chapters show that while party ideology may not necessarily create infighting when it comes to matters of foreign policymaking, international relations ideology does.

The restriction of studies to ideology only as it relates to party affiliation is problematic for a number of reasons, but chiefly because it is almost totally inappropriate

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<sup>18</sup> Joel Aberbach and Bert Rockman, "Clashing Beliefs Within the Executive Branch: The Nixon Administration Bureaucracy," *The American Political Science Review* 70, no. 2 (1976): 458.

<sup>19</sup> Bernard Mennis, *American Foreign Policy Officials: Who They Are and What They Believe Regarding International Politics* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1971), 121. Cited in Aberbach and Rockman, 458.

to considerations of foreign policy. America's two national political parties, the Republicans and the Democrats, have platforms primarily based on domestic concerns, many of them economic. The details of foreign policy are largely treated in a piecemeal fashion by the parties and tend to be well attuned to public opinion, election cycles, and the health of the national coffers. In cases of American wars abroad, for example, the party responsible for troop withdrawal is almost always different from the party that initiated the deployment, and tends to be the opposition party in an election year—witness the Nixon or Obama campaigns. The truth is that America's broadest foreign policy ideals tend to transcend party politics and derive more from a universal American political culture rooted in Kennanist notions of legalism-moralism, as discussed in the previous chapter. The fact of the matter is that when we dig down a level and look at the day-to-day decisions of global strategy, foreign policy ideologies cross-cut traditional party lines. This was particularly true during the Bush Administration, when it was possible to find Republican realists like Colin Powell or Brent Scowcroft and Democrat neoconservatives like Joseph Lieberman. Indeed, the phenomenon of Democratic neocons became so prominent that it was chronicled by Jacob Heilbrunn in a notable 2006 *Los Angeles Times* op-ed piece.<sup>20</sup> Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson, whom many consider to be the first Congressional neocon, was himself a Democrat; while in federal office from 1941 to 1983, Jackson at various times employed neoconservatives Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Elliot Abrams, and Douglas Feith as staffers.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Jacob Heilbrunn, "Return of the Liberal Hawks," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 May 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Alex Fryer, "Scoop Jackson's Proteges Shaping Bush's Foreign Policy," *Seattle Times* 12 January 2004.

## **THE MECHANICS OF I2**

Having now examined both the literatures on bureaucratic politics themselves and on how ideology fits into them, it is now time to explain further the concept of ideological infighting, or the I2 model. As already noted, bureaucratic infighting is nothing new—even the idea of ideological battles within the bureaucracy has been discussed. Yet what makes I2 different, aside from willingness to conceive of ideology in broader terms than party politics, is the fact that its fights tend to be much more pitched. As noted in Chapter One, I2 is intra-governmental conflict which (1) is based on disagreements that can be traced not to issues of nuance or implementation, but to entirely different ideological worldviews and (2) involves the active exploitation of bureaucratic structures, both horizontal and vertical, to marginalize ideological opponents within the administration.

Thus I2 in foreign policymaking is twofold. It is firstly a result of the ideological differences discussed in the previous chapter. Unlike many of the mundane matters of domestic politics that form the bulk of the Republican and Democratic platforms, such as income tax policy or food safety regulation, foreign policy deals with existential matters of the state, matters that were brought into sharp relief by events during the Bush Administration. As shown in the last chapter, neoconservatives and realists viewed these events through such disparate ideological lenses as to be wholly convinced that following the other's recommended course would lead to nothing short of the destruction of the nation.

The second aspect of I2 is distinctive in that it has a compounding nature, aggregating all other types of bureaucratic hurdles because of the intensifying

characteristic of the ideological aspect. Dysfunction flows both vertically within agencies and horizontally across them. To understand how I2 poisons the vertical hierarchy of an agency, it is helpful to understand its institutional design as intended. As Hilsman notes, the political appointees that occupy the senior-most positions in any of the executive agencies serve a dual purpose: for one, they are “the President’s men, the representatives of the administration.”<sup>22</sup> Yet on the other hand, these appointees must also represent and relay the expert opinions of agency employees. As Hilsman writes,

The Presidential appointee...should also be the careerists’ man with the President. He should represent the specialists’ view to the President and his Cabinet officers and be the vehicle for their expertise. He must be the judge of whether what they have to say should be laid before the highest councils, but when he does decide that their views should be heard, he ought to be their unrelenting champion...Otherwise, in a political process of decision making, their expertise will go unheard.<sup>23</sup>

The important two-way function of the agency head underscores the position’s importance to smooth bureaucratic functioning and shows how vulnerable the position of career experts really is—if their agency head does not agree with their analyses, he or she may simply prevent them from being heard or present them in a less than convincing way. This is in fact what happened with intelligence casting doubt on Iraqi WMD, as is shown in later chapters.

To make matters worse, political appointees and career bureaucrats are often predisposed to ideological clashes, since, according to Morton Halperin, these two groups are the likeliest to hold strong ideology. Halperin refers to political appointees as “in-and-outers” because of their tendency to bounce back and forth between government and

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<sup>22</sup> Hilsman, *The Politics of Policy Making in Defense and Foreign Affairs*, 32.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

the private sector based on the political winds.<sup>24</sup> “Ideological thinking,” he writes, “generally characterizes in-and-outers who enter the government with strong commitments in a particular area.”<sup>25</sup> Indeed, most political appointees do come in with strong commitments in a particular area, otherwise the low pay and hot public scrutiny would never be bearable. Yet Halperin also recognizes the ideological tendencies of career bureaucrats as well, noting that “Ideological thinking also tends to characterize staff men who have had a long period of involvement in a particular area and become committed to a doctrine.”<sup>26</sup> Again, this level of career intimacy with a particular topic is likely for most any member of the career bureaucracy. What really causes fireworks between these two groups that are known to be highly ideological is the fact that in terms of foreign policy, their different experiences likely lead to divergent ideologies, as Halperin notes that it is early experiences with an issue that have the most impact on an individual’s ideology regarding it. This was indeed the case with a number of ideological neoconservatives in the Bush Administration, many of whose views were shaped jointly by the 1991 Gulf War and by September 11. On the other hand, most career bureaucrats’ realist ideologies tended to stem from years of measured negotiations on issues like the Palestinian problem, which resulted in small but steady diplomatic gains.

The upshot of this is that ideological differences on foreign policy issues are predisposed in the bureaucracy, interrupting the vertical functions of the agency hierarchy. The results of this are myriad and damaging to forming and implementing

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<sup>24</sup> Morton H. Halperin, Priscilla Clapp, and Arnold Kanter, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1974), 89.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

successful policy. For one, professional bureaucrats may take advantage of the little power they hold and be insubordinate to the administration in many ways, which Halperin lists. They may leak selected information to the press in an effort to stymie an agenda with which they disagree. They may threaten to resign or actually do so. They may seek to mobilize the outside support of Congress or lobbying groups with more political clout. They may sabotage the implementation of a policy with which they disagree. Or they may attempt to subvert the hierarchy by seeking to go around or over the head of their official superior. The internal politics of the Bush Administration's foreign policy apparatus showcased all these bureaucratic resistance techniques.

Top administration officials, of course, also have the power to fight back. They may simply usurp the power of certain bureaucrats to make them redundant, as Dick Cheney did when he steadily expanded his vice-presidential powers. They may also try to bully or intimidate lower officials, something that was seen often from John Bolton in the State Department. They can also, of course attempt to fire troublesome underlings, though laws make it difficult to terminate career bureaucrats without just cause. One of the most effective ways, then, in which agency heads may battle with their own employees is by restricting their (or their ideas') access to the President and other top decisionmakers, thus rendering them professionally irrelevant. This is the ultimate in vertical infighting.

Department heads also tend to be the chief agents for horizontal I2 as well, through their jockeying for influence with the President. Acquiring bureaucratic power is a zero-sum game. In many cases, the President must choose a single course of action from amongst several mutually exclusive options. This is illustrated well by Graham

Allison's deconstruction of the President's choices in the Cuban Missile Crisis— Kennedy could not, for example, choose to both invade Cuba and make secret overtures to Castro, at least not at the same time. Thus, heads of agencies will, under normal circumstances, often try to one-up their counterparts as a typical function of bureaucratic turf wars. Yet as with vertical I2, horizontal I2 tends as well to be more severe than usual bureaucratic infighting derived from traditional models of the Second Wave. This is a result of ideological pigeonholing of entire departments and their heads. Alexander George, in his *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy*, explains the details of how differences in belief systems translate to the structural bureaucratic conflicts that are important to horizontal I2. He does this through the language of cognitive decisionmaking theory in general and the special dynamics of small groups in particular. George notes that presidents tend to make the most serious decisions in the context of a small group of trusted advisers, such as the NSC principals. This was, as we shall see, the case in the 2003 decision to invade Iraq and in formulating US strategy on Iran. While small groups are useful because of their streamlining and cohesive characteristics, they can also be problematic for these very same reasons and can bring out and compound the problems posed by differences in ideology. George writes:

Most policymaking groups are composed of individuals with somewhat different value systems and beliefs. Foreign-policy problems often activate the conflicting as well as the shared values and beliefs within the group.... Therefore, some kind of bargaining process is likely to operate within the group.... Typically, this bargaining process works in the direction of conformity, with group members interacting to reduce variances in behavior and to crystallize attitudes and beliefs. The individual who deviates from the emerging consensus or dominant view of the group becomes the center of attention as members address themselves to him in efforts to force him to conform. If these efforts fail, the dissident individual may

be isolated by the group.... In extreme cases the deviant member may be rejected altogether by the group.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, ideologically based cohesion is particularly damaging to the small group decisions that often form critical foreign policy because it leads to the exclusion of ideologically dissenting agency heads, and therefore marginalizes the information and viewpoints of the sum of the entire agency. This prevents necessary debates from occurring, leaving the president with an incomplete view of the situation. This typology is certainly descriptive of Colin Powell's tenure at the State Department, when individuals close to President Bush, particularly the Vice-President, actively sought to restrict Powell's access to the President. Neoconservatives in the NSC and the White House believed that Powell's (and therefore the State Department's) realism was too slow and ineffectual, and in fact presented an existential threat in the face of possible Iraqi WMD. As Condoleezza Rice famously remarked, "We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud."<sup>28</sup> Still, while it is clear that ideology plays a very important role in small group dynamics, George never explicitly addresses this matter, talking instead about differences in "beliefs" and not taking this reality to its logical conclusion, which is that ideology deeply affects the nature and process of bureaucratic infighting. The I2 paradigm, in contrast, does make that leap.

As has been emphasized throughout this chapter, there are serious and special consequences to I2. Many are internal and affect the policymaking process directly through means such as limiting a decisionmaker's information, as discussed above. Yet

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<sup>27</sup> Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1980), 89-90.

<sup>28</sup> Todd Purdum, "Bush Officials Say the Time Has Come for Action on Iraq," *New York Times*, 9 September 2002.

this work explicitly argues that I2 can contribute to the failure of a policy itself by preventing an administration from achieving its foreign policy goals. In order to demonstrate the reality of these consequences in later chapters, it is necessary to examine the ways in which this can happen. Warner Schilling has been instrumental in collecting what Alexander George calls the six “‘distorted’ policies that can emerge from such a policymaking system.”<sup>29</sup> They are:

- 1) “No policy at all” – i.e., stalemate.
- 2) “Compromised policy” – when the direction that policy should take is left unclear; or the means for achieving a well-enough-defined objective are left unclear or unfocused.
- 3) “Unstable” or “blind policy” – when the internal struggle over policy is not really resolved ... with the result that there may be continuing shifts in the power and influence of rival policy coalitions.
- 4) “Contradictory” or “leaderless policy” – when different parts of the executive branch pursue conflicting courses.
- 5) “Paper policy” – when a policy is officially promulgated but lacks support within the executive branch needed for effective implementation.
- 6) “Slow policy” – when continuing competition and conflict among the policy actors delay the development of sufficient consensus and cooperation among them.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, Schilling provides the direct link from process to outcome, conclusively showing that dysfunction in the bureaucracy can and does have tangible negative consequences for policy outcomes. Furthermore, as becomes clear in the case studies of later chapters,

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<sup>29</sup> George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*, 114.

<sup>30</sup> Compiled in George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*, 114; from Warner Roller Schilling, Paul Y. Hammond, and Glenn H. Snyder, *Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962).

many of the conditions described by Schilling became reality as a result of I2 model infighting taking place within the Bush Administration.

## **WHITHER THE PRESIDENT?**

Those familiar with the literature on US foreign policy analysis may be wondering what the role of the president is in all this. Even if one accepts the logic of the I2 model, it stands to reason that the president can manage such internal divisions—in fact it is his job. This is exactly the charge that Stephen Krasner levies at Allison in his “Allison Wonderland” article, as discussed earlier in the chapter.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, there is an entire other body of literature on presidential decisionmaking in particular. The bedrock of this literature is formed by both Richard Tanner Johnson and Alexander George. Johnson, in his 1974 work, *Managing the White House*, is the first to attempt to create archetypes of presidential decisionmaking.<sup>32</sup> Johnson develops three main types of presidential models: the formalistic, the collegial, and the competitive. In the formalistic model, the president is at the top of the decision hierarchy, the process is orderly, and conflict between his advisors is minimized. Like its name, it is formal and executive based—the president has his own expertise and does not reach down into the bureaucracy for information. This is in contrast to the collegial model, where the president and his advisors have shared responsibility and decisionmaking is more discursive. Debates happen right in front of the president rather than having information filter up to him. The competitive model works in a similar way, though in it the president seeks to stay a bit more above the fray and exercise more control over his advisers. In this way, the

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<sup>31</sup> Krasner, "Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland)."

<sup>32</sup> Richard Tanner Johnson, *Managing the White House* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).

competitive model can be seen as a sort of halfway point between the formalistic and the collegial.<sup>33</sup>

Although Johnson's typologies were groundbreaking, like most academic concepts, they could stand improvement. Alexander George thus refined Johnson's model.<sup>34</sup> While George broadly accepts Johnson's typologies, he enhances them by taking into consideration the influence that an individual president's personal cognition and psychology have upon his management style. While such psychological models make sense, however, they are difficult to verify, given that most individuals themselves—let alone researchers who have never met them—often can't articulate why they think and feel a certain way. Still, George is helpful in at least pointing out the different layers present in any decision.

Other scholars, too, built upon the framework laid by Johnson and George. Notably, David Mitchell introduces into the Johnson-George typology the notion of centralization (while at the same time combining the collegial and the competitive models into one). Within this framework, there are four presidential archetypes: 1) formal and centralized, 2) collegial and centralized, 3) formal and decentralized, and 4) collegial and decentralized. In terms of this study, it is the fourth Mitchell typology—collegial and decentralized—which is most applicable to the administration of George W. Bush. According to Mitchell:

A collegial system that has low centralization means that the president delegates authority to adviser(s) who have a particular expertise and these advisers are influential in guiding the process, since the president does not require

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<sup>33</sup> For a good overview of Johnson's typologies see David Mitchell, "Centralizing Advisory Systems: Presidential Influence and the US Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1, no. 2 (2005).

<sup>34</sup> George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*.

a high level of control. Accordingly, coordination does not require regularity or that the president is at the nexus of decision making, resulting in more bilateral and ad hoc meetings between the president and advisers. This kind of interaction supports an advisory system where there is bargaining and conflict and less consensus among the president's advisers.<sup>35</sup>

This is in contrast to 1) the formal and centralized model, which shows the president-as-executive evaluating different options on equal footing, 2) the collegial and centralized model, which shows the president taking an active part in the core policy formation debates with all his advisers present, and 3) the formal and decentralized model, which has the president also choosing amongst options but reducing the distance between him and his advisers by relaxing formal meetings structures. In this model, there is still bargaining and conflict at the adviser level, but it is mitigated by an "honest broker" gatekeeper to the president who is meant to ensure that all information travels up to him due to the lack of structured group meetings. Thus, it is clear that the collegial, decentralized model best describes the decisionmaking style of George W. Bush, as will be evidenced in the case studies presented in the following chapters. This particular typology is also fitting in that it relies much more heavily on the president's advisers to come up with policy options and removes the president somewhat from the more granular aspect of this process; given that George W. Bush had, at the outset of his term, very little foreign policy experience and zero Middle East experience, it is logical that he would choose a decentralized style that relied heavily on expert advisers. Furthermore, given what we know of his personality, the collegial style is also fitting, as he was fond of one-on-one meetings with his advisers, as again becomes evident in the following case studies.

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<sup>35</sup> Mitchell, "Centralizing Advisory Systems: Presidential Influence and the US Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process."

Thus, having briefly examined this strand of presidential decisionmaking literature, it is also evident why it is appropriate in the case of George W. Bush to focus on the bureaucratic level much more than the presidential level. Given his management style, it is at the bureaucratic level where most of the core decisionmaking and conflict took place—by the time options reached the president, the advisers themselves had already bloodied each other so much that the choices presented to the president were already reduced. Furthermore, as we shall see in later chapters, some of the decisions that had quite large effects on policy outcomes—such as hiring decisions within the second and third tiers of the Pentagon and State Department—were so far down in the bureaucracy that no president would have ever taken part in them, no matter what his decisionmaking style. Thus, while the presidential decisionmaking literature is surely a fascinating one that deserves acknowledgement, it is not the core focus of this study—except in how presidential style impacts the level of autonomy that bureaucrats have in both developing and carrying out policy; in this regard, important judgments are made in Chapter Eight. Hence, while it is true that the president has ultimate authority over foreign policy, in some circumstances his managerial style inevitably forfeits much of this authority to the bureaucracy. Subsequent chapters show that this was especially the case within the Bush Administration between 2001 and 2006.

## **CONCLUSION**

Therefore, having examined the literature on bureaucratic infighting and ideology, it becomes clear that the two need to be linked—bureaucrats, no matter how professional, are affected by their own beliefs as well as those of both their underlings and superiors. Furthermore, because foreign policy exists in a space that is largely separate from the

traditional party politics of Democrats versus Republicans, it makes sense to examine the interplay between ideology and bureaucratic infighting in the context of foreign policy ideologies, not partisan ones. The phenomenon of I2, as described in this chapter, fits this analytical hole in the discipline and in doing so unites the literature and opens avenues for enhanced foreign policy analysis. The following chapters provide empirical support for this enhanced analysis as they explore the making of American foreign policy toward Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, and Libya between 2001 and 2006 in the context of the ideological battles that took place between officials in the Bush Administration. Using the concept of I2 will thus provide a more scholarly, dispassionate way of accounting for the often sensationalized clashes that occurred in the Administration's foreign policy apparatus during this timeframe.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CASE STUDY I: INVADING IRAQ**

The Iraq case represents a logical starting point not only from a temporal point of view, but also a practical one. The Iraq War became the centerpiece of the foreign policy of George W. Bush, and our subsequent cases regarding Iran, Lebanon, and Libya all emerge from its core in different ways. Furthermore, in seeking out empirical examples of ideological infighting, few cases offer a richer illustration of the I2 model in action than the planning and implementation of the 2003 American-led invasion of Iraq. Analysis of the war planning process shows a marked departure from typical American military planning procedures. Ideological differences within the Bush Administration seem clearly to be the origins of these deviations, with the bureaucracy split firmly into two camps: the neoconservative and the realist. Accounts of what happened show that this divide was essentially ideological and transcended rank and agency. As a result of this transcendence, the bureaucratic conflict that ensued cannot be a result of Allisonian models of infighting alone; the I2 model provides a more accurate description of the forces at work in this series of events.

This chapter demonstrates the saliency of the I2 model through a logical reckoning with the simple facts of the case. First, key players are identified and

classified by ideology. Next, the stated goals of the Administration regarding Iraq are catalogued so as to create a benchmark for determining the Administration's success or failure against its own stated aims. Then, the demonstration of the presence of I2 begins in earnest by pinpointing cases of both its horizontal and vertical elements. These examples are then compared to traditional party politics and Allisonian models of bureaucratic conflict and shown to be unique from those paradigms. Finally, process tracing and counterfactual examinations are employed to demonstrate how the presence of ideological infighting can be directly linked to policy outcomes that were failures in terms of the Bush Administration's own stated goals.

## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

Although this initial list is not exhaustive, it represents an ideological mapping of the most central players in the run-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq— the inner circle of top advisors to President Bush who took to calling themselves “The Vulcans,” recalling the strength and toughness of the Roman god of fire.<sup>1</sup> The key figures within this group, according to James Mann, were Vice-President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Colin Powell, National Security Advisor (and, after 2004, Secretary of State) Condoleezza Rice, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz.<sup>2</sup> To Mann's list of the Vulcans, I add Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith, whose intelligence analysis activities as the head of the Pentagon Office of Special Plans proved critical to providing

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<sup>1</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, ix-x.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

the information-based justification necessary to gain Congressional and public support for the war. In justifying the selection of these seven individuals for special analysis, I concede it is true that others played important roles in many critical episodes in the decisionmaking process preceding the war. However, these others lacked the same degree of sustained participation in the most comprehensive aspects of the war planning. Therefore, these “supporting” players will be ideologically classified as they arise.

### **NEOCONSERVATIVES: THE TRUE BELIEVERS**

Placing ideological labels on people is always a difficult exercise subject to challenges, not least from the subject of the labeling him or herself. People are understandably loath to be pigeonholed, reluctant to be simplified and boxed into a classification. The “neoconservative” label exemplifies all these concerns, particularly in that the term has become so bastardized in the media and popular imagination since Operation Iraqi Freedom. It became a catch-all shorthand for anyone who supported the invasion. Yet it is clear from the discussion in Chapter Two that this is simply not true; neoconservatism is, as John Dumbrell puts it, “a diverse intellectual movement” that demands analytical respect.<sup>3</sup> Still, the negative connotations that the term carries has made many shy away from it. Thus, it is necessary to refer to an objective definition of neoconservatism that is rooted in scholarship, and then compare the individual to that rubric.

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<sup>3</sup> John Dumbrell, “The Neoconservative Roots of the War in Iraq,” in *Intelligence and National Security Policymaking on Iraq: British and American Perspectives*, ed. James Pfiffner and Mark Phythian (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 20.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Francis Fukuyama's definition of a neoconservative is most helpful because of both its conciseness and its focus on the foreign policy aspect of ideology, which is most relevant to this study. To recall, Fukuyama defines a neoconservative as one adhering to the following four points:

- A belief that the internal character of regimes matters and that foreign policy must reflect the deepest values of liberal democratic societies.
- A belief that American power has been and could be used for moral purposes, and that the United States needs to remain engaged in international affairs.
- A distrust of ambitious social engineering projects.
- Skepticism about the legitimacy and effectiveness of international law and institutions to achieve either security or justice.<sup>4</sup>

This definition thus provides a measurement for defining who amongst the Bush Administration officials is a true neoconservative. However, it is additionally important to note that such a definition is not simply helpful in positively identifying neoconservatives; it is also essential in showing who is *not* a neoconservative, something that becomes important later in this chapter. For now, however, let us identify the neoconservative “true believers” amongst Bush's Iraq war planning team.

### *Paul Wolfowitz*

There is perhaps no more unabashed neoconservative within the Bush Administration than Paul Wolfowitz, who served as Deputy Secretary of Defense from 2001 to 2005. Wolfowitz's rare ideological consistency belies the difficulty of defining policymakers by ideology; although he has been hesitant to publicly self-identify as a neoconservative, stating “I don't like labels all that much,” and preferring to call himself

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<sup>4</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *After the Neocons: America at the Crossroads* (London: Profile, 2006), 48-49.

a “Scoop Jackson Republican,” Wolfowitz’s writings and statements are archetypically representative of neoconservatism.<sup>5</sup> His personal intellectual formation points to this. While a doctoral student at the University of Chicago, Wolfowitz was supervised by Albert Wohlstetter, a strategic theorist who is considered by many to be an academic midwife to neoconservatism.<sup>6</sup> Wohlstetter, who in addition to Wolfowitz also taught Richard Perle and Zalmay Khalilzad, was himself a disciple of Leo Strauss, a political philosopher of German extraction whom Craig Unger points to as the true “intellectual godfather of neoconservatism.”<sup>7</sup> Wolfowitz found Strauss a greatly intriguing figure and in fact turned down a place at Harvard in favor of Chicago in large part because he wanted a chance to work with Wohlstetter and Strauss.<sup>8</sup>

Although not all neoconservatives can be considered Straussian, there is an undeniable link between Strauss’s ideas and the principles of neoconservatism as elaborated by Fukuyama, including “the conviction among his ex-students and followers that they have access to fundamental truths about the modern world and its peoples,” and that these truths indicate the inherent superiority of democracy and the duty of the United States to spread democracy, both unilaterally and with force if necessary.<sup>9</sup> To wit, Irving Kristol himself readily acknowledged the “strategic debt” that neoconservatism owed

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<sup>5</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, 29. See also Paul Wolfowitz, "Speech for the Henry M. 'Scoop' Jackson Distinguished Service Award," Pentagon City, VA, 18 November 2002; available from <http://www.jinsa.org/node/715> (accessed 24 Feb 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Craig Unger, *The Fall of the House of Bush* (New York: Scribner, 2007), 44.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 42. See also Richard Perle, interview by Ben Wattenberg, "Richard Perle: The Making of a Neoconservative," *Think Tank with Ben Wattenberg*, PBS, originally aired 14 November 2002; available from <http://www.pbs.org/thinktank/transcript1017.html> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, 26.

<sup>9</sup> Jim George, "Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy: Esoteric Nihilism and the Bush Doctrine," *International Politics* 42, no. 2 (2005): 182.

Strauss.<sup>10</sup> Strauss's ideas, self-consciously esoteric, were interpreted in a practical sense regarding nuclear weapons by Wohlstetter, who was one of the first to challenge notions of nuclear security based on the doctrine of mutually assured destruction (MAD).<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Wohlstetter adapted Strauss for the practical policymaker, and from his writings drew conclusions about the inherent nature of the Soviet Union. He paired these conclusions with observations from his own game theoretical work on nuclear security to determine the deterrability of the USSR, which he construed as low. Accordingly, Wohlstetter and his protégés concluded that "the Soviet Union was simply too evil to be treated as a rational actor," and therefore, dangerously, was not subject to the logic of MAD.<sup>12</sup> Wohlstetter argues that MAD explicitly puts the United States at risk, benefitting the Soviets by taking advantage of western leaders' value-laden reluctance to initiate the end of the world. According to Wohlstetter, MAD "is really a policy which resists any *Western* improvements in precision and discriminateness and any *Western* attempts to keep destruction within less than suicidal bounds. Its proponents would force us to apocalyptic extremes."<sup>13</sup>

Naturally, mere association with a thinker by no means implies one is a disciple of his ideas. But the nature of Wohlstetter's personality and accounts of his friends indicate that he surrounded himself almost exclusively with those who shared his ideological persuasions. According to Unger, "To join Team Wohlstetter, apparently,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>11</sup> Unger, *The Fall of the House of Bush*, 43-44.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>13</sup> Albert Wohlstetter, "Between an Unfree World and None: Increasing Our Choices," *Foreign Affairs* 63, no. 5 (1985).

one had to embrace unquestioningly his worldviews.”<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, Wolfowitz’s actions many years out of graduate school, when he was serving as Undersecretary of Defense for Policy in the early 1990s, point to an affinity for Wohlstetter’s point of view. According to Defense Intelligence Agency analyst Col. Patrick Lang, Wolfowitz sent Wohlstetter and his wife into the Pentagon, unannounced, to try and both ideologically evaluate and influence him. According to Lang, “They [the Wohlstetters] just said that Paul [Wolfowitz] wanted them to talk to me.”<sup>15</sup> Hardly the behavior of someone who was not seriously influenced by Wohlstetter, this incident sums up the continuous influence that proto-neocon theorists such as Wohlstetter and Strauss have had on Wolfowitz and how their ideas have shaped his personal strand of neoconservatism. Another critical lesson from the Lang story is how Wolfowitz openly brought these ideas to the office with him and sought to influence his employees with them, not only in terms of their personal worldviews but in terms of how they performed their jobs, particularly intelligence analysis, a subject that will come up in greater detail in later discussions.

Even beyond the Wohlstetter link, which can be criticized as circumstantial, there is ample evidence in Wolfowitz’s own writings and statements to be able to comfortably classify him as a neoconservative according to Fukuyama’s principles. In an interview with American National Public Radio in 2009, Wolfowitz unambiguously lays out a neoconservative worldview:

There is a school of thought — and it's a fairly influential one — that says American interests should concern themselves only between the external conduct of countries and the external relations between states, and that we have no business getting involved with their internal affairs and in fact that's interference

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<sup>14</sup> Unger, *The Fall of the House of Bush*, 45.

<sup>15</sup> Patrick Lang, quoted in Unger, *The Fall of the House of Bush*, 45.

and it's beyond our capacity. And my basic point is that, first of all, it *is* our business: The internal affairs of other countries has a big impact on American interests. To me, the evidence on that is dramatic, and we have an ability to influence it.<sup>16</sup>

In this statement, Wolfowitz clearly demonstrates intellectual compliance with Fukuyama's first two principles of neoconservatism-- belief that the internal character of regimes matters and belief that American power can and should be used for moral purposes.

Regarding Wolfowitz's skepticism of international institutions, evidence is found in an internal policy memo he authored in 1992. The (rejected) first draft of the Defense Planning Guidance document, colloquially known as the "Wolfowitz Doctrine," emphasizes the role of "ad hoc assemblies, often not lasting beyond the crisis being confronted," rather than security structures reinforced in international law or the UN.<sup>17</sup> As noted by the *New York Times*, to whom the internal draft was leaked, "The document is conspicuously devoid of references to collective action through the United Nations... What is most important, it says, is 'the sense that the world order is ultimately backed by the U.S.'"<sup>18</sup> Although the draft was ultimately discarded, it clearly and candidly demonstrates Wolfowitz's thinking on the poor reliability of international institutions in keeping world peace, clearly putting him in harmony with the neoconservative view on this point.

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<sup>16</sup> Paul Wolfowitz, interview by Guy Raz, "Wolfowitz on US Role in Other Nations' Affairs," *All Things Considered*, National Public Radio, originally aired 5 September 2009; available from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=112591394> (accessed 24 Feb 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Patrick Tyler, "US Strategy Plan Calls for Ensuring No Rivals Develop," *New York Times*, 8 March 1992.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

Thus, having demonstrated Paul Wolfowitz's ideological neoconservatism, it is also important to note, before moving on, that Wolfowitz's ideology is not simply a positive one in regards to neoconservatism; on the contrary, Wolfowitz also negatively identifies, clearly stating his opposition to realism. He makes this opposition to realism crystal clear in a *Foreign Policy* article entitled, simply, "Realism." In it, Wolfowitz runs down what he finds to be myths of realism, pointing out its flaws. Identifying himself as a "critic of realism," Wolfowitz excoriates the basic principles of realist ideology, stating that "ignoring the nature of states is to ignore a fundamental reality that has a huge bearing on the U.S. national interest. To do so is not realistic. It is dogmatic or even ideological."<sup>19</sup> Thus, Wolfowitz, due not only to his personal neoconservatism but his active disdain for realism, sets himself up for a pitched ideological battle with others in the Bush Administration.

### *Douglas Feith*

Douglas Feith served directly under Wolfowitz in the Defense Department as Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, a post which he held from 2001 to 2005. According to Russ Hoyle, Feith "was recognized by his superiors as a smart and uncompromising neoconservative."<sup>20</sup> Unlike Wolfowitz, Feith does not shy from the neoconservative label, and in fact in his days since leaving government has taken it upon himself to rebut accusations leveled at neoconservatives as a group, playing down their influence on the origins of the Iraq invasion. "Almost everything that is believed about

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<sup>19</sup> Paul Wolfowitz, "Realism," *Foreign Policy*, Sept/Oct 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Russ Hoyle, *Going to War* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2008), 242.

us [neoconservatives] is wrong,” Feith contends on behalf of the neoconservatives within the Bush Administration, notably accepting the ideological classification.<sup>21</sup>

Feith also provides a considerably detailed description of his personal worldview in his memoir, *War and Decision*, which perfectly elaborates a philosophy of neoconservatism that is skeptical of international institutions, showing a strong sense of bedrock morality, convinced of the inherent and unique probity of the United States, and unafraid to advocate for the use of force over diplomacy:

As an undergraduate at Harvard College from 1971 to 1975, I studied international relations. Among the hot issues at that time were the US government’s attempts to achieve détente with the Soviet Union, and to promote peace through diplomacy between Israel and its Arab neighbors. I came to distrust the conventional wisdom, with its optimistic assumption that negotiations and treaty relations could produce peace and stability between deadly enemies. The failures of appeasement in the 1930s made me skeptical about the promises of demonstrably bad actors...I believed that history and common sense both warned against relying on international legal agreements to moderate the behavior of totalitarian rulers...As I saw it...détente suffered from a fatal deficiency: the inaccurate assumption that the two nations had common goals in their dialogue. Americans by and large hoped to achieve peace and stability; Soviet leaders wanted to mislead and exploit the United States to improve their image, restrict our defense programs, obtain trade credits, and otherwise exploit the very “marginal advantage” they claimed to have renounced. Détente, I concluded, was more likely to embolden the Soviet leaders than to moderate their ambitions.<sup>22</sup>

Within Feith’s explanation of his political outlook, strains of Wohlstetter and Strauss are clearly visible, particularly in the ascribing of irrational malice to the Soviet Union. Feith’s Straussian brand of neoconservatism comes into even sharper relief in terms of his philosophy on intelligence analysis. According to Jim George, “The process by which the intelligence was gathered concerning the decision to go to war

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<sup>21</sup> Doug Feith, quoted in Nathan Guttman, "No Longer in Power, Free to Talk, Neocons Seek to Rewrite History," *The Forward*, 2 January 2009.

<sup>22</sup> Douglas J. Feith, *War and Decision* (New York, NY: Harper, 2008), 24.

is...an exemplary case of Straussian-induced strategic deception on the part of major actors within the policy hierarchy of the Bush Administration.”<sup>23</sup> Indeed, Strauss’s influence on intelligence gathering and how it applied to the Iraq war are related to the Platonic concept of the “Noble Lie” or “Magnificent Myth,” the idea that some information realities are simply too disruptive to be disseminated to the public at large, who must be kept unaware through deception in order to preserve social harmony.<sup>24</sup> Religion is a key example, and its importance as a Noble Lie to the neoconservative project has been directly referenced by Irving Kristol, with deference to Strauss.<sup>25</sup>

Neoconservatives, therefore, have been accused of applying the logic of the Noble Lie to intelligence analysis, especially as related to Iraq. Neoconservatives have a robust practical history of seeking out alternative viewpoints to the American intelligence community consensus, which both neocons and classic foreign policy hawks have oftentimes viewed as being too lackadaisical.<sup>26</sup> The origins of such neocon alternative assessments are found in the Team B exercise of 1976, which Wohlstetter helped to organize and in which Paul Wolfowitz took part.<sup>27</sup> Team B was called together as an external assessment of outside experts to give a second opinion on Soviet nuclear posturing and congruent American preparedness. Originally convened by then-CIA

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<sup>23</sup> George, "Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy: Esoteric Nihilism and the Bush Doctrine," 176.

<sup>24</sup> Plato, "The Republic," ed. Desmond Lee (London: Penguin, 2003), 115-16.

<sup>25</sup> Ronald Bailey, "The Voice of Neoconservatism," *Reason*, 17 October 2001, available from <http://reason.com/archives/2001/10/17/the-voice-of-neoconservatism> (accessed 24 Feb 2011).

<sup>26</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, 73-74.

<sup>27</sup> Gordon Mitchell and Robert Newman, "By 'Any Measures' Necessary: NSC-68 and Cold War Roots of the 2002 National Security Strategy," in *The Ridgeway Working Group on Preemptive and Preventive Military Intervention*, ed. Gordon Mitchell (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2006).

Director George H.W. Bush to attempt to show the critics that outside analysts would confirm CIA conclusions, Team B in fact returned a much more alarmist reading of the intelligence, coming to a strident supposition that the United States was vastly underprepared for a nuclear attack. This conclusion was highly politicized and by all accounts based more on ideology than fact. Writes Unger, “Team B’s objective was completely different [from that of the CIA]...facts didn’t matter...Because Team B had already concluded that the Soviets wanted to wipe out America, getting an accurate assessment of Soviet strength was irrelevant. Its purpose was to politicize the intelligence so the United States could prepare for an imminent global nuclear war. That meant creating a report showing a Soviet Union hell-bent on world domination.”<sup>28</sup>

Such manipulation of intelligence for the purposes of engineering foreign policy toward an ideological goal is at the core of the Straussian brand of neoconservatism. According to George, “Strauss’s message, more generally, is that...the telling of ‘noble lies’ becomes something of an imperative, justified by the need to effectively engage those outside of the elite inner circle and to enhance the prospects of a reframed social structure more aligned with natural right. This is why the reiteration of esoteric principles is regarded as crucial to the modern good life, even if one acknowledges the illusory nature of the positions taken.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, distorting intelligence and serving ideological conclusions rather than fact-based analysis is instrumental for the neoconservative foreign policy project, so much as it is necessary to steer policy toward a particular end. This point of philosophy was essential to the purposes of Team B, and is

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<sup>28</sup> Unger, *The Fall of the House of Bush*, 56.

<sup>29</sup> George, "Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and US Foreign Policy: Esoteric Nihilism and the Bush Doctrine," 181.

again salient to the run-up to the 2003 Iraq invasion, particularly as far as Feith is concerned. Feith, who holds a “direct Straussian pedigree,” directly oversaw the Pentagon Office of Special Plans (OSP) between 2002 and 2003.<sup>30</sup>

The OSP, which was the brainchild of both Wolfowitz and Feith and immediately directed by fellow neoconservative Abram Shulsky, bears striking resemblance in mission and purpose to the Team B exercises of the 1970s. Shulsky himself was critical to OSP’s tone and mission. A former roommate of Wolfowitz’s at both Cornell and the University of Chicago, Shulsky completed his PhD under the supervision of Leo Strauss himself.<sup>31</sup> Shulsky was thus steeped in Straussian theory—particularly as it pertained to the intelligence community— and in fact authored essays outlining his view of the flaws of the CIA’s non-ideological method of intelligence analysis. In *Silent Warfare*, an academic work on intelligence theory co-authored by Shulsky, he writes that “truth is not the goal [of intelligence], but only a means towards victory.”<sup>32</sup> Ultimately, according to Shulsky, intelligence should serve the policy goals of the president rather than seek objectivity.

Serving the policy goals of the president was exactly what OSP was designed to do. According to Feith, the rationale for creating the intelligence assessment segment within the OSP was to generate a product that “was from the start a criticism of the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>31</sup> David Dudley, “Paul’s Choice,” *Cornell Alumni Magazine* 107, no. 1 2004. See also Laura Rozen, “Con Tract: The Theory behind Neocon Self-Deception,” *Washington Monthly*, October 2003.

<sup>32</sup> Gary Schmitt and Abram Shulsky, *Silent Warfare: Understanding the World of Intelligence* (Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books, 2002), 176.

consensus of the intelligence community.”<sup>33</sup> According to a Pentagon official interviewed by investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, “Special Plans was created in order to find evidence of what Wolfowitz...believed to be true—that Saddam Hussein had close ties to Al Qaeda, and that Iraq had an enormous arsenal of chemical, biological, and possibly even nuclear weapons that threatened the region and, potentially, the United States.”<sup>34</sup>

Given the fact that it was an operation in which assumptions drove data rather than the other way around, the OSP was thus highly ideological, “enforcing a strict adherence to the neoconservative line among staffers and expelling those who wavered ideologically.”<sup>35</sup> The neoconservative origins of Feith and the OSP are abundantly clear, and, as shown later in the chapter, both are crucial to the story of intelligence and decisionmaking regarding the Iraq war. Furthermore, evidence will show that Feith’s OSP was also an essential vehicle for ideological infighting.

## **THE REALISTS: PRACTICING PRAGMATISTS**

### *Colin Powell*

As discussed in Chapter Two, realism can be treated as an ideology rather than a theory in the context of this study because its assumptions form a framework for interpreting international relations for the explicit purpose of reactive policy formation, a usage concurrent with Hunt’s definition of ideology. In this sense, realism is seen as an

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<sup>33</sup> Douglas Feith, quoted in Walter Pincus and R. Jeffrey Smith, “Official’s Key Report on Iraq Is Faulted,” *Washington Post*, 9 February 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Seymour Hersh, “Selective Intelligence,” *The New Yorker*, 12 May 2003.

<sup>35</sup> Hoyle, *Going to War*, 243.

ideology of cool, rationalist pragmatism in service of a narrowly defined, materialist national interest. Accordingly, the chief figure that stands out as the epitome of realist ideology in the events leading up to the Iraq invasion is Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Much of the origins of Powell's practical realism can be traced to his military history. Aside from the general sense of practicality that service in the armed forces imbues in terms of what types of goals are and are not best accomplished through military means, Powell's experiences as a young soldier in Vietnam were particularly instructive to the development of his ideological worldview, which Powell sums up himself in a list of force-use criteria that has come to be known as The Powell Doctrine. Not at all averse to the use of force, the Powell Doctrine instead advocates military engagement as a true last result, in coordination with diplomatic and economic measures, and in overwhelming form when deemed necessary. Powell also advocates the use of force only in the service of a clear and narrow political objective. In a 1992 *Foreign Affairs* article, Powell elaborates:

When a "fire" starts that might require committing armed forces, we need to evaluate the circumstances. Relevant questions include: Is the political objective we seek to achieve important, clearly defined and understood? Have all other nonviolent policy means failed? Will military force achieve the objective? At what cost? Have the gains and risks been analyzed? How might the situation that we seek to alter, once it is altered by force, develop further and what might be the consequences? .... When the political objective is important, clearly defined and understood, when the risks are acceptable, and when the use of force can be effectively combined with diplomatic and economic policies, then clear and unambiguous objectives must be given to the armed forces. These objectives must be firmly linked with the political objectives... When force is used deftly—in smooth coordination with diplomatic and economic policy—bullets may never have to fly. Pulling triggers should always be toward the end of the plan, and when those triggers are pulled all of the sound analysis I have just described should back them up.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Colin Powell, "US Forces: Challenges Ahead," *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 5 (1992): 38-39.

It is hard to find a more concise manifestation of realist ideology in the contemporary American foreign policymaking context, and Powell's principled doctrine, with its emphasis on multilateralism and a use of force based on a dispassionate reading of the facts in light of national interest sets him up for conflict with neoconservatives, whose Straussian ideas about selective readings of intelligence and the use of unilateral force in service of ideals rather than interests is clearly anathema to the dispassionate realism of Powell and his Doctrine. Indeed, Powell foreshadows this conflict in his discussion of why Saddam was not overthrown during Operation Desert Storm:

As an example of this logical process, we can examine the assertions of those who have asked why President Bush did not order our forces on to Baghdad after we had driven the Iraqi army out of Kuwait. We must assume that the political objective of such an order would have been capturing Saddam Hussein. Even if Hussein had waited for us to enter Baghdad, and even if we had been able to capture him, what purpose would it have served? And would serving that purpose have been worth the many more casualties that would have occurred? Would it have been worth the inevitable follow-up: major occupation forces in Iraq for years to come and a very expensive and complex American proconsulship in Baghdad? Fortunately for America, reasonable people at the time thought not.<sup>37</sup>

Clearly, Powell's later conflict with the neoconservatives of the George W. Bush Administration was almost predestined, and serves as the classic example of the type of ideological head-butting that manifested itself prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

### *Richard Armitage*

Richard Armitage served as Deputy Secretary of State from 2001 to 2005. Like Powell, he had a record of distinguished military service in Vietnam and was personally and professionally very close to Powell during their tenure at State. According to Bob Woodward, Armitage "is Powell's best friend, adviser, and most outspoken

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

advocate...The two talk on the phone so many times each day that aides think of them as teenagers joined at the hip, committed to sharing absolutely everything.”<sup>38</sup>

The conventional view of Armitage as another realist voice within the Bush Administration largely holds true, though his classification as a realist ideologically demands slightly more explanation than the congruent discussion of Powell. This is chiefly due to Armitage’s status as a signatory to a 1998 open letter to President Clinton calling for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. The letter originated from the Project for a New American Century (PNAC). Regarded as “the political arm of the neoconservative movement,” PNAC was a think tank created to serve as an intellectual home for neoconservatives while they rode out the term of the politically unfriendly Clinton Administration.<sup>39</sup> The PNAC letter was redolent with neoconservative ideology, particularly in its complete repudiation of realist policies of containing Saddam and its insistence that “American policy cannot continue to be crippled by a misguided insistence on unanimity in the UN Security Council.”<sup>40</sup> Indeed, of the eighteen signatories, Armitage is arguably the only one without serious neoconservative credentials.

It seems though, that despite his signing on to the PNAC letter, Armitage remains a realist in terms of ideology, and his actions and statements since the PNAC letter confirm this. Of the letter, Armitage says, “The only difference in my thinking from the time I signed the letter and today is a matter of timing, not of end result...But after 9/11 when we were already involved in Afghanistan, the better part of wisdom would have

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<sup>38</sup> Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York and London: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 20.

<sup>39</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, 238.

<sup>40</sup> Elliott Abrams et al., "Letter to President Clinton on Iraq," Project for a New American Century, 26 January 1998, <http://www.newamericancentury.org/iraqlintonletter.htm> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

been to delay our attack on Iraq until we were more consolidated and had more troops available.”<sup>41</sup> Indeed, Armitage’s practical concerns about the invasion seem to have trumped any desire to see Saddam removed from power for the sake of ideological goals, differentiating him from the neoconservatives in the Administration. Also discrediting those who would paint Armitage a neoconservative because of his support for the PNAC letter are his statements on democracy, which are by all accounts hedged and nuanced in a very realist manner. Armitage states, “Democracy, in and of itself is insufficient to allow a nation to flourish...Democracy can’t be eaten. The enthusiasm that democracy brings can’t be taken as drink. And democracy will lie somewhat fallow.”<sup>42</sup> Armitage thus espouses a typical, realist view of democracy—that it is desirable when it makes sense in terms of a country’s internal political development, but that absent fairly robust state and civil structures, the most desirable government is a stable government, even if that means antidemocratic rule.

Finally, Armitage’s ideas about when it is appropriate to use American military resources also put him squarely in conflict with neoconservatism, stating that “using the military to bring about political change...absent a *casus belli* would be inappropriate.”<sup>43</sup> This is in complete contrast to the tenets of neoconservatism as delineated by Fukuyama, particularly beliefs about the duty of the United States to use force for moral purposes in the context of concern about the internal character of regimes.

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<sup>41</sup> "Interview with Richard L. Armitage," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 7, no. 1 (2006): 163-64.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

Hence, despite his signing onto the PNAC letter advocating the removal of Saddam, Armitage is best classified as a realist in terms of ideology, a conclusion that both his words in interviews and his actions as Colin Powell's deputy support. Armitage's occasional tendencies toward sympathy with some aspects of the neoconservative project can best be attributed to the particular nature of American realism, which, as discussed in the previous chapter, is more idealistic than its European originator.

### **THE HAWKS: CALCULATING COUNTERWEIGHTS**

The remainder of the principal players in the lead-up to the Iraq invasion—Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, and Dick Cheney—form an interesting group. None of them has scholarly or professional records that link them formally to neoconservatism. Rumsfeld and Cheney can be most accurately described as traditional Republican foreign policy hawks, whereas Condoleezza Rice has a long academic record as a realist. Yet in the practical matter of whether or not to invade Iraq, all three came squarely down on the side of the neoconservatives, acting collectively in the manner of a decisive counterweight, tipping the balance in favor of war. And although their reasons for supporting the war are not as uniformly ideological as those of the neoconservatives, in a pragmatic sense they formed a unified bureaucratic bloc with them. They accepted and espoused many aspects of the neoconservative logic for war, and often actively collaborated with them in service of common ends to marginalize realist colleagues through I2 mechanisms.

## *Condoleezza Rice*

Condoleezza Rice served as Bush's National Security Advisor from 2001 to 2005, and then replaced Colin Powell as Secretary of State from 2005 to 2009. Rice had a history as an academic and a professional practitioner of foreign policy, and during her formative years as a Sovietologist, she "regularly identified herself as a realist."<sup>44</sup>

Although a Republican, Rice was uncomfortable with the wing of the party that, under Reagan, shifted the rhetoric of the Cold War to one of strong ideology. Said Rice, "I listened with some skepticism to the Cold War claim that America was a 'beacon of democracy... When American presidents said that, I chalked it up to bad speechwriting and hyperbole."<sup>45</sup> Rice was trained in and much more comfortable with the cool calculations of realism, untainted by ideology. She struck up an especially good relationship with arch-realist Brent Scowcroft, who, after being highly impressed with her at an arms control conference at Stanford in 1985, took her on as a sort of protégé.<sup>46</sup> According to Mann, in the days of the George H.W. Bush Administration, "Brent Scowcroft had already been working for more than a decade to advance Condoleezza Rice's career, mostly by bringing her to the attention of Bush's [George W. Bush] father [George H.W. Bush]. His endeavors on behalf of Rice continued even after she and the Bush administration had left Washington."<sup>47</sup> Scowcroft's efforts paid off, and through

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<sup>44</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, 147.

<sup>45</sup> Condoleezza Rice, "Small Steps, Giant Leaps," in *A Voice of Our Own*, ed. Nancy M. Newman (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 226.

<sup>46</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, 146.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 249-50.

her relationship with his father, Rice was introduced to George W. Bush and eventually brought on to be, with Wolfowitz, his campaign's primary foreign policy advisor.

Despite her realist pedigree, it seems that as Rice developed personally and professionally, idealism began to creep more and more into her realist sensibilities, to the point where, even though she still was an unabashed realist, she had distinct sympathies to the neoconservative program. In a 2008 *Foreign Affairs* essay, Rice characterized her views as “a uniquely American Realism,” a realism that tries “to marry power and principle—realism and idealism.”<sup>48</sup> The most dramatic change in Rice's thinking outlined in this essay is her feelings toward democracy. Rather than cringing at democratic idealism, as she did during the Reagan Administration, Rice seems to have come to embrace it. Furthermore, she takes the very un-realist point of view that it is acceptable to use force to do this. Rice writes that “our ability to enhance the peaceful political and economic development of weak and poorly governed states can be considerable. We must be willing to use our power for this purpose--not only because it is necessary but also because it is right.”<sup>49</sup> This advocacy of the use of force for moralistic goals, even outside the service of a strict materialist notion of the national interest is much more in line with neoconservatism than realism. Indeed, after 9/11, in an attempt to reach across to the neocon branch of the Republican Party, Rice invited Bill Kristol to a conversation in which “Rice told him that during a visit to Poland she had been

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<sup>48</sup> Condoleezza Rice, "Rethinking the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 4 (2008).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

personally moved by the importance and power of democracy there. She had become, she suggested to Kristol, a bit less of a believer in realpolitik.”<sup>50</sup>

While there is little reason to doubt Rice’s sincerity in her beliefs about the importance of democracy, it is also probable that, at least prior to 9/11, Rice incorporated neoconservative ideas into her thinking for practical reasons of quelling internal Republican backbiting between the realist and neoconservative wings of the party. According to Mann, during the Bush campaign in 2000, “Rice had taken care to avoid alienating the conservatives, who bitterly opposed Kissinger-style realism...Rice sought to avoid being swept up in the factional disputes among Republicans that had badly damaged Bush’s father...She made sure that the younger Bush, during his presidential campaign, called for ‘realism in the service of ideals,’ a slogan that sought to straddle the old Republican divide.”<sup>51</sup>

In her position as NSA, Rice was very close to Bush. According to Woodward, “it seemed she was on call for the president 24 hours a day in her West Wing office, with him on trips abroad, at Camp David on weekends or at his Texas ranch. She was the connective tissue with the principals. Tending to the president and his priorities was her primary goal.”<sup>52</sup> Clearly, then, during her term as National Security Advisor in Bush’s first term, Rice’s main role was as a pragmatic enforcer of sorts of the President’s foreign policy agenda. Once Bush had decided to largely follow the prescriptions of the neoconservative members of his foreign policy team, Rice went along in service of this

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<sup>50</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, 316.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 23.

decision. Thus, despite her strong record of predilection toward realism (at least prior to 9/11), for all practical intents and purposes Rice comes down on the side of the neoconservatives in the case of the Iraq War. Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, Powell's chief of staff at the State Department, put Rice's choice in even starker terms: "Dr. Rice made a decision that she would side with the president to build her intimacy with the president."<sup>53</sup>

### *Donald Rumsfeld*

Donald Rumsfeld, Bush's Secretary of Defense from 2001 to 2006, is perhaps most simply described ideologically as a classic right-wing defense hawk, and on first glance it is challenging to justify grouping him with the neoconservatives, a label he has often rejected. A man who made his career in the revolving door between government bureaucracy and business, Rumsfeld lacks the academic credentials that tend to accompany the most archetypical neoconservatives—the Wolfowitzes and Shulskys of the world.<sup>54</sup> He also points out that, as a lifelong Republican, there is nothing "neo" about his personal conservatism.<sup>55</sup> Still, while lacking the orthodoxy of a true neoconservative, Rumsfeld shared important qualities with neoconservatives in the Bush Administration—including his low threshold for using American military force and his

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<sup>53</sup> Lawrence Wilkerson, speech given to the New America Foundation, Washington, DC, 19 October 2005; available from [http://www.newamerica.net/events/2005/col\\_lawrence\\_wilkerson\\_on\\_the\\_bush\\_administrations\\_national\\_security\\_decision\\_making\\_process](http://www.newamerica.net/events/2005/col_lawrence_wilkerson_on_the_bush_administrations_national_security_decision_making_process) (accessed 24 Feb 2011).

<sup>54</sup> This is not to say that Rumsfeld is an intellectual lightweight—indeed he received his undergraduate education at Princeton on partial academic scholarship—but he holds no advanced degrees and has not been engaged in academia and theoretical debates in the way that tends to define the most clear-cut neoconservatives. Neoconservatism as an ideology is, after all, self-consciously intellectual and grounded in high academics.

<sup>55</sup> Len Colodny and Tom Shachtman, *The Forty Years War* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 231.

disdain for the realist branch of the Republican Party, as epitomized by Kissinger and the cadre of career diplomats at the State Department. These commonalities thus created a natural point of cooperation for Rumsfeld and the neoconservatives, who undoubtedly played on the same team during the most heated bureaucratic battles.

By the time he was appointed Defense Secretary by Bush in 2001, Rumsfeld already had a decades-long government career, including a previous engagement as Defense Secretary under Gerald Ford from 1975 to 1977. His history of public service shows a highly skilled operator who was not afraid of—and perhaps relished in—bureaucratic fights. Rumsfeld is almost universally described by his colleagues in the Ford Administration as a cold but brilliant bureaucratic operator. Though he himself protests that his bureaucratic wiliness is grossly exaggerated (“[The] mythology,” Rumsfeld writes, “became one of the building blocks of my image in some quarters as a master behind-the-scenes operator”), the facts of Rumsfeld’s career tell a different story.<sup>56</sup> Rumsfeld is in fact very forthcoming about his professional and ideological rivalry with Henry Kissinger over détente and arms control, both of which Rumsfeld feverishly opposed. There was open professional hostility between the two men. According to James Mann, Rumsfeld “did more than anyone else to block détente and to stiffen American foreign policy toward the Soviet Union.”<sup>57</sup> Kissinger notes his professional frustrations with Rumsfeld plainly in his memoirs:

Rumsfeld afforded me a close-up look at a special Washington phenomenon: the skilled full-time politician-bureaucrat in whom ambition, ability, and substance fuse seamlessly....As Secretary of Defense, he thwarted new diplomatic

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<sup>56</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir*, Kindle ed. (New York: Sentinel, 2011), Kindle location 3648.

<sup>57</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, 68.

initiatives or military moves by a rigorous insistence on bureaucratic procedures and playing the devil's advocate with respect to every new proposal...Rumsfeld was skillful at deflecting every controversial issue into some bureaucratic bog or other.<sup>58</sup>

Mann puts it more plainly: "When it comes to bureaucratic skirmishes...rarely has anyone bested Rumsfeld in a power struggle or a test of wills inside the government."<sup>59</sup>

Rumsfeld himself calls dealing with Kissinger a "nettlesome" challenge and admits in his memoirs even to resorting to what is best described as tattling on Kissinger to the president to try and curb his influence.<sup>60</sup> "After Kissinger failed to arrive at the scheduled time three days in a row, I raised the matter with Ford," he writes.<sup>61</sup>

Rumsfeld so reveled in the inner guts of the bureaucracy that over his career, he compiled his own guide to operating in the bureaucratic space and distributed it internally within the Pentagon. Titled *Rumsfeld's Rules*, the collected aphorisms and tidbits provide insight into Rumsfeld's management style and philosophy. "Don't necessarily avoid sharp edges," reads one telling line. "Occasionally they are necessary to leadership."<sup>62</sup>

Rumsfeld was thus well suited to the bare-knuckled fights that happened in Washington's policy corridors, and it is not surprising that he would have taken this skilled, combative bureaucratic attitude back to Washington for the intra-governmental run-up to the Iraq War. Yet does Rumsfeld actually have enough commitment to

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<sup>58</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal* (New York: Touchstone, 1999), 175-76.

<sup>59</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, 58.

<sup>60</sup> Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir*, Kindle location 3374.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, Kindle location 3379.

<sup>62</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, *Rumsfeld's Rules*, (Washington, DC: 1974); available from <http://www.cornerbarpr.com/images/home/rumsfeldrules.pdf> (accessed 4 Feb 2011).

ideological principles to identify his infighting as ideologically based rather than simply typical DC backroom wrangling? Sources seem to indicate yes.

Rumsfeld's hawkishness vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, and later regarding Iraq, can certainly be read as a story of traditional Allisonian infighting of the "Where you stand depends upon where you sit" variety. As Secretary of Defense in both cases, Rumsfeld was advocating for positions—an arms buildup and a war, respectively—that would showcase the Defense Department and put him and his agency at the forefront of policy, prestige, and payroll. Still, in both cases, Rumsfeld aligned himself firmly with highly ideological neoconservative elements of his party in order to accomplish this, and seemed to take an interest in the issues that was driven more by ideology than by bureaucracy. In discussing his opposition to proposed defense cuts during the Ford Administration, Rumsfeld cites as a key reason for his resistance his belief in "the profound truth that weakness is provocative," one of Rumsfeld's Rules and a recurring refrain throughout his memoirs.<sup>63</sup>

While Rumsfeld's core ideological beliefs about the provocations of weakness are persuasive in making the case for the role of personal ideology in his decisionmaking, some may still argue that Rumsfeld's ingratiating himself to the hawkish, neocon wing of the party in opposition to the realist, pro-détente, Kissingerian wing may have simply been good politics from a skillful practitioner. His slide to the right was notable in its relative rapidity. Rumsfeld had in fact been dovish on Vietnam, to the incredible annoyance of Nixon and Kissinger. Of Rumsfeld and his ilk within the Nixon Administration, Nixon colorfully carped, "They don't know a god-damn thing about

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<sup>63</sup> Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir*, Kindle location 749.

foreign policy!... They're only concerned about, frankly, peace at any price, really. Because all they're concerned with is, well, revenue-sharing and the environment and all that crap.”<sup>64</sup> Despite Nixon’s protestations at Rumsfeld’s early liberalism, his rightward shift became clear. According to William Hyland, Ford’s Deputy National Security Adviser, “the more Rumsfeld took hold, the more he turned hard right.”<sup>65</sup> As Rumsfeld himself points out, he went from calling it “a tall order to... try to convince [the American people] that it was worth fighting a long, costly war in a small country so many thousands of miles away” in Vietnam to resolving that “The way to successfully deal with terrorists is... to take the battle to them; to go after them where they live, where they plan, where they hide... and even to go after nations that harbor and assist them.”<sup>66</sup> Thus, given its starkness, Rumsfeld’s about-face was noticeable. Many chalked it up to his presidential ambitions, the seriousness of which Rumsfeld acknowledges.<sup>67</sup> According to Brent Scowcroft, “I think he was positioning himself. He wanted to be on the conservative side. To me, it was a tactical and political shift, not an ideological shift.”<sup>68</sup>

While Rumsfeld’s newfound affinity for the neoconservative wing of the Republican Party may have made sense in terms of his personal political aspirations, historian James Mann, who has covered Rumsfeld extensively, doubts this explanation, believing the shift “reflected a broader, more enduring change in outlook,” a view more

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<sup>64</sup> Richard Nixon, quoted in James Mann, "Young Rumsfeld," *The Atlantic*, November 2003.

<sup>65</sup> William G. Hyland, quoted in Elaine Sciolino and Eric Schmitt, "Defense Choice Made a Name As an Infighter," *New York Times*, 8 January 2001.

<sup>66</sup> Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir*, Kindle location 1398 and 748.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, Kindle location 4865.

<sup>68</sup> Brent Scowcroft, quoted in Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, 68.

strongly supported by Rumsfeld's writing than Scowcroft's is.<sup>69</sup> As evidence, Mann cites the fact that when outside of government and making his career in the private sector, Rumsfeld would often come to Washington to testify against arms control and détente, even when he, as a private citizen, had no bureaucratic motive to do so.<sup>70</sup> He also, in 1997, signed on to the Statement of Principles of the Project for the New American Century, alongside staunch neoconservatives like Wolfowitz and Eliot Abrams.<sup>71</sup> If his signature can be taken to indicate concurrence with the Statement's text, then it is strong evidence for classifying Rumsfeld as a neoconservative as according to the Fukuyama principles. The Statement includes affirmations of bedrock principles of neoconservative foreign policy, advocating a "policy of military strength and moral clarity," and highlights America's "need to strengthen our ties to democratic allies and to challenge regimes hostile to our interests and values... promote the cause of political and economic freedom abroad... [and] accept responsibility for America's unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity, and our principles."<sup>72</sup> Lest one think that Rumsfeld's association with PNAC was superficial or passing, he also was a signatory onto the group's letter to President Clinton urging regime change in Iraq in 1998.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Katie Bacon, "Rumsfeld's Roots," *The Atlantic Online*, October 2003; available from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2003/10/rumsfeld-apos-s-roots/3102/> (accessed 24 Feb 2011).

<sup>71</sup> Project for the New American Century, "Statement of Principles," 3 June 1997, <http://www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm>; (accessed 25 Feb 2011).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Abrams et al., "Letter to President Clinton on Iraq."

Furthermore, after Bob Dole lost the 1996 presidential election, Rumsfeld gave up on his political ambitions. “After the disappointment of the Dole campaign, politics didn’t tug on me as it once had,” he writes.<sup>74</sup> In fact, in 2000, Rumsfeld and his wife planned to retire, or “move into our rural period,” as they put it, confirming that “at sixty-eight years old I thought at most I might help out on a part-time basis if asked.”<sup>75</sup> Thus, by the time he was reluctantly convinced to join, at age 68, the new Bush Administration in a second stint as Defense Secretary, Rumsfeld was certainly in the last government position of his career. Speaking in 2003, Mann says:

Rumsfeld gave up his presidential ambitions a good fifteen years ago, and he's a wealthy man too, and so...the standard personal interests, meaning political ambitions or financial ones, don't apply to him...On the other hand, the fact that he doesn't have political ambitions can make him even more tenaciously committed to getting the policy goals that he wants. If you're someone Rumsfeld is challenging within the bureaucracy... he could be tougher now than before. He's not worried about you going to the Republican Party chairman in New Hampshire or South Carolina. He really doesn't care.<sup>76</sup>

One can thus reasonably assert that with personal ambitions no longer a factor, a bureaucrat will advocate for policies more true to his own convictions at the end of his career, when chances for political repercussions are minimized. In the case of Rumsfeld, therefore, we see that he gravitates toward a strong ideology even when the pressures of his political future are removed. And had his goals simply been to showcase the power of his new military focus on lean airpower, the war in Afghanistan gave him ample opportunity for this. Yet Rumsfeld, as we shall see later in this chapter, was, beyond all others, most responsible for entrenching a fierce neoconservatism in the bureaucratic

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<sup>74</sup> Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir*, Kindle location 5042.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, Kindle location 5081 and 74.

<sup>76</sup> James Mann, quoted in Bacon, "Rumsfeld's Roots."

architecture of the Pentagon. Had his concerns been simply Allisonian, then traditional, pragmatic infighters—career bureaucrats who knew the ins and outs of interagency fighting, much like Rumsfeld himself—would have formed a more than sufficient senior staff. Instead, Rumsfeld acquiesced in the total transformation of the Pentagon into Washington’s primary bastion of neoconservatism through hiring ideologically committed individuals whose beliefs largely shaped the direction of the Pentagon as an organization—with Rumsfeld’s explicit approval. Thus, although Rumsfeld is not a pure neoconservative in the same sense that Wolfowitz is, his decisionmaking is clearly influenced by a robust and deeply held ideology that shared many affinities with neoconservatism. Hence a valid argument can be made to explain his actions at least partly through ideological—rather than just bureaucratic—reasons.

### *Dick Cheney*

Vice President Dick Cheney was amongst the most influential decisionmakers on the 2003 Iraq War. Cheney’s role was simply instrumental—unusually so for a vice president. Like Rumsfeld, Cheney resists the neoconservative label and lacks the credentials of a full-fledged neocon; he is more appropriately characterized with the standard nationalist defense hawk description. Nevertheless, like Rumsfeld, Cheney holds highly ideological views on international relations that share much in common with neoconservatism. Skeptical of international institutions and a fierce unilateral militarist, Cheney was one of the Iraq war’s strongest advocates. Speaking on *Meet the Press* just days before the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Cheney advocated for unilateral American action, bluntly arguing that “the United Nations...has proven incapable of dealing with the threat

that Saddam Hussein represents, incapable of enforcing its own resolutions, incapable of meeting the challenge we face in the 21st century of rogue states armed with deadly weapons, possibly sharing them with terrorists.”<sup>77</sup> This is just one example of how, as Kurth puts it, Cheney “held views which overlapped with those of neoconservatives, and therefore...could form an alliance of mutual interest, a coalition of the willing, with them.”<sup>78</sup>

Cheney’s outlook vis-à-vis American foreign relations and Iraq is incredibly similar to that of Rumsfeld’s. According to Kurth, the two men’s worldviews are “almost identical.”<sup>79</sup> This is not surprising, given that for the better part of three decades, Rumsfeld was Cheney’s primary mentor in government, beginning in 1969 when Rumsfeld first hired him as his special assistant at the Office of Economic Opportunity.<sup>80</sup> Cheney speaks fondly of Rumsfeld and his strong impact on his personal development, calling him one of those people “who keep an eye on you, and reward your efforts, and help bring out your strengths.”<sup>81</sup> Rumsfeld concurs that the two formed a very close partnership and worked well together—so much so that they became *the* bureaucratic duo to reckon with in the Ford Administration, and set themselves in stark opposition to the

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<sup>77</sup> Dick Cheney, interview by Tim Russert, *Meet the Press*, NBC, originally aired 16 March 2003; available from <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/bush/cheneymeetthepress.htm> (accessed 25 Feb 2011).

<sup>78</sup> James Kurth, "The Neocons Are History," *Orbis* 50, no. 4 (2006).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, interview by John McWethy, *Primetime*, ABC, originally aired 25 March 2004; available from <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2369> (accessed 4 Feb 2011).

<sup>81</sup> Dick Cheney, commencement address, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA, 19 May 2006; Available from <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060519-1.html> (accessed 11 Feb 2011).

realist Kissinger and his allies.<sup>82</sup> According to Mann, “In these intra-administration battles, Rumsfeld never lost, and Cheney was regularly at his side.”<sup>83</sup> Cheney thus learned his bureaucratic skill from the master. As former Ford counsel Robert Hartmann wrote, “Cheney’s adult life had been devoted to the study of political science and the service of Donald Rumsfeld.”<sup>84</sup>

Like his mentor, Cheney is fiercely hawkish on defense policy. However, as early as the Ford years, his conservatism was marked, even amongst the company of Rumsfeld. As Hartmann writes, “Whenever his [Cheney’s] private ideology was exposed, he appeared somewhat to the right of Ford, Rumsfeld or, for that matter, Genghis Khan.”<sup>85</sup> In his memoirs, Rumsfeld recalls relying on Cheney to do anything that required a cold, political expediency that was unconcerned with maintaining friendships. “Cheney,” Rumsfeld writes, “was focused more on the need to elect Republicans than on my friendship[s].”<sup>86</sup>

Still, Cheney’s personal domestic conservatism, his intense hawkishness, and his utter distaste for the détente realism of the Kissingerian branch of the Republican Party get one only part of the way there in demonstrating his proclivity for an anti-realist, ideologically driven foreign policy. What of Cheney’s thoughts on the big question of neoconservatism, the idea that morality in foreign policy matters, that not all regimes are

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<sup>82</sup> Sciolino and Schmitt, “Defense Choice Made a Name As an Infighter.” See also Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir*, Kindle location 2401.

<sup>83</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush’s War Cabinet*, 59. See also David Sanger, “Cheney Fondly Recalls Rumsfeld’s Early Aid,” *New York Times*, 20 May 2006.

<sup>84</sup> Robert Hartmann, *Palace Politics: An Inside Account of the Ford Years* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980), 283.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir*, Kindle location 1501.

created equal, and that the United States should use its power in the service of democratic ideology? A compelling answer can be found in Cheney's counseling of Ford in the lead-up to the 1976 Republican primary. In a Republican primary challenge against Ford, Reagan had based a major part of his platform on directly opposing détente and Republican realism, and on the first day of the Republican National Convention, the Reaganites mustered their forces enough to insert a clause supporting "Morality in Foreign Policy" into the national party platform statement.<sup>87</sup>

According to Mann, "Ford later claimed he was furious. Kissinger, Scowcroft, and Vice President Rockefeller were even angrier; they insisted that Ford should fight to defeat the morality plank as a matter of principle because it amounted to a condemnation of the administration. At first Ford served notice he intended to do just that."<sup>88</sup>

However, Ford eventually agreed to accept the morality plank, and it was Cheney who was personally responsible for convincing him. He made his case on the basis of political expediency, arguing that adopting the platform was the only way to stave off Reagan's conservative primary challenge.<sup>89</sup> Yet there is reason to read into Cheney's urging beyond matters of simple political maneuvering. Mann convincingly argues that "another interpretation also suggests itself: it seems likely that the conservative Cheney quietly agreed with the Reagan foreign policy plank far more than did Ford, Kissinger, or Scowcroft...When it came to abstract principles of foreign policy...[Cheney] seems to

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<sup>87</sup> Republican National Committee, *1976 Republican Party Platform*, Kansas City, MO, 1976; available from <http://www.ford.utexas.edu/library/document/platform/morality.htm> (accessed 11 Feb 2011).

<sup>88</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, 72.

<sup>89</sup> United States Senate, "Richard B. Cheney," 2009; available from [http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/Cheney\\_Richard.pdf](http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/Cheney_Richard.pdf) (accessed 10 Feb 2011).

have been closer to Reagan, the Republican challenger, than to Ford and Kissinger.”<sup>90</sup>

This would be consistent with the assessment of Cheney’s personal politics delivered by former colleagues like Hartmann.

Still, lest one reject Mann’s assessment and see Cheney’s action on the morality plank as only a matter of intraparty politics, Cheney’s ideological view of foreign policy can be confirmed in other ways. For example, in 1997, Cheney, along with figures including Wolfowitz, Abrams, Fukuyama, Kagan, and his mentor, Rumsfeld, signed onto the Statement of Principles of the neoconservative PNAC.<sup>91</sup> At the time, Cheney was making his career in the private sector and would have had little reason for political gamesmanship. It is thus difficult to take Cheney as anything but sincere in his PNAC signatory. Even if one argues that he was setting himself up for his vice presidential nomination in the 2000 election, it is difficult to see how neoconservative credentials would have been important to this goal, particularly since during the campaign cycle, George W. Bush was a semi-isolationist foreign policy lightweight who outright rejected the democratic nation building programs of the sort prescribed by neoconservatism, famously stating in a debate with Al Gore that “I’m not sure the role of the United States is to go around the world and say this is the way it’s got to be... I just don’t think it’s the role of the United States to walk into a country and say, we do it this way, so should you.”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, 73.

<sup>91</sup>Project for the New American Century, "Statement of Principles."

<sup>92</sup> George W. Bush, remarks during presidential debate, Wake Forest University, North Carolina, 11 October 2000; available from <http://www.debates.org/index.php?page=october-11-2000-debate-transcript> (accessed 25 Feb 2011).

Finally, it is difficult to see Cheney's position as political posturing given that by the late 1990s, Cheney himself seems to have had no personal ambitions to reenter public life, and in fact did his best to convince Bush of all the ways he was wrong for the job of vice president. Cheney's own Senate biography states:

Dick Cheney had been an unusual choice for a running mate. Besides his heart problems, he had been out of elective politics for over a decade, was not particularly photogenic nor a stirring orator, resided in the same state as Bush, and matched his ideological leanings so closely that he provided little balance for the ticket...he claimed no presidential ambitions and would make no effort to campaign for the highest office in his own right.<sup>93</sup>

Thus, the evidence shows that Cheney, like Rumsfeld, can most accurately be said to have strong neoconservative sympathies rather than being an actual neoconservative.

As David Margolick writes, "Some to whom the [neoconservative] label has been casually affixed, like Dick Cheney, seem ill suited to it religiously, intellectually, ideologically, stylistically, or culturally."<sup>94</sup> Still, Margolick goes on to say that "there is no doubt that [Cheney has] become the most compelling spokesman for neocon points of view."<sup>95</sup>

Hence Margolick sums up the paradox of figures like Cheney and Rumsfeld: in the pure sense, they are not neoconservatives. And yet when it comes to policy battles, they are the neocons' strongest and most public advocates, who had a clear interest in teaming up to promote a militarist agenda in the Middle East.

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<sup>93</sup> United States Senate, "Richard B. Cheney."

<sup>94</sup> David Margolick, "The Return of the Neocons," *Newsweek*, 1 February 2010.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

### *Last Word on the Characters*

This brief survey of the ideological views of the main cast of characters responsible for planning the 2003 invasion of Iraq shows the strongly divergent ideological viewpoints in play within the Bush Administration. This divergence is notable in that it occurs amongst people not only of the same party but of the same administration; clearly then, this ideological difference cannot be explained by the existing literature on bureaucratic infighting stemming from inter-party disagreements. Indeed, this short history of the war for control of Republican foreign policy shows that there is truly an ideological rift within the Republican foreign policy bureaucracy, and that this rift has existed at least since the Nixon Administration. It also has had-- and continues to have-- profound consequences on the functioning of bureaucracies and the success of their foreign policy outcomes, as the next part of this chapter will show.

Still, as we have just seen, not every figure can be neatly boxed into either the “realist” or “neocon” camps. Players like Rice, Rumsfeld, and Cheney have more nuanced ideological outlooks and are, for a number of reasons, more apt to play traditional bureaucratic politics in accordance with the Allisonian paradigm. However, there is no denying that, for one reason or another, they threw their force behind the neoconservative camp. As we shall see, the organizational power that came with having figures like Rumsfeld and Cheney in their corner gave second-tier neoconservative bureaucrats like Wolfowitz and Feith the means and opportunity to greatly marginalize their realist ideological opponents, which they did quite handily, to direct and disastrous policy results.

## IDEOLOGICAL INFIGHTING IN ACTION

Operation Iraqi Freedom was the defining item of the Bush Administration's two terms in office. Wracked with controversy from the very beginning, the invasion's primary stated purpose was preventive in nature: in a jittery post- 9/11 America, the idea that Saddam Hussein could be amassing a stockpile of weapons of mass destruction was a scenario that was perceived simultaneously as plausible and unacceptable to many Americans. In the aftermath of the attacks, retired Reagan Secretary of State George P. Shultz speculated in public remarks in Seattle that he "would be surprised if Saddam Hussein's fingerprints were not in some way on this...An Iraq ruled by Saddam Hussein is basically a K-Mart for terrorist weapons."<sup>96</sup>

Figures within the Bush Administration, particularly ideological neoconservatives, were not content to simply speculate. Since the new President-elect Bush's first Pentagon briefings in January 2001, both neoconservative and defense hawk members of his administration displayed a unique focus on potential war with Iraq, which many of them had been agitating for with PNAC since the Clinton Administration. The Iraqi situation was indeed the first topic that the President's advisors had him brought up to speed on during his earliest national security briefings, even before his actual inauguration in January 2001.<sup>97</sup> The eventual war that ensued two years later was, in its early years, prior to the 2006 troop "surge," an astounding failure of planning and policy. A war that had been intended to guard Americans against terrorist attacks from Islamist fanatics had become a national security liability by sinking America's popularity in the

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<sup>96</sup> George P. Shultz, quoted in Hoyle, *Going to War*, 83.

<sup>97</sup> Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 9.

Muslim world to new lows and turning the previously contained— if distastefully run— country into a hotbed of ideological and sectarian chaos in the heart of the Middle East. Former US Ambassador Peter Galbraith provides one of the most comprehensive enumerations of the ways in which Operation Iraqi Freedom was, under its pre-surge initial strategy, a dismal failure. In *Unintended Consequences*, Galbraith writes:

A war intended to eliminate the threat from Saddam Hussein's nonexistent weapons of mass destruction ended up with Iran and North Korea much closer to having deployable nuclear weapons. A war intended to fight terror has helped the terrorists. A war intended to bring freedom and democracy to Iraq now has US troops fighting for pro-Iranian Shiite theocrats and alongside unreformed Baathists... A war intended to promote democracy in the Middle East has set it back.<sup>98</sup>

While a policy failure of these proportions cannot be attributed to any one thing, there is a strong case to be made for the contributing role of ideological bureaucratic infighting in the war's failure to achieve its stated goals. This infighting occurred most prominently in policy machinations regarding two specific areas: intelligence processing in the run-up to the war and personnel decisions regarding the Office of Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in immediate post-Saddam Iraq. Ideological infighting along the I2 model in both these areas led directly to the adoption of sub-optimal policy strategies that resulted in failures to achieve stated war aims.

### *War Aims*

In order to identify failure in Bush's Iraq War policy, we must identify what success looks like, and then demonstrate that this was not achieved. In the case of the Bush Administration's Iraq war aims, this is a simple exercise. Because the

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<sup>98</sup> Peter Galbraith, *Unintended Consequences: How War in Iraq Strengthened America's Enemies* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 1.

Administration and its allies spent months trying to build their case for war with the UN, the international community, and the American public, motives are well documented; as discussed in the previous section, many of these arguments date back to the 1990s, in the context of public criticisms of the Clinton Administration's handling of the Iraq situation.

The first goal of the 2003 Iraq invasion was to disarm Saddam Hussein of any weapons of mass destruction he might have. President Bush was unambiguous about this purpose. In a press conference days before the initial invasion in 2003, the President clearly stated, "Should we have to go in [to Iraq], our mission is very clear: disarmament."<sup>99</sup> Relieving Iraq of its potential weapons of mass destruction was thus the primary stated war aim. It was, however, tied very closely to the Administration's second stated war aim, which was to protect American citizens from terrorist attacks emanating from Iraqi soil. The potential WMD stockpiles of the Baathist regime added a particular urgency to this goal in a post- 9/11 America. Bush is again explicit in his justification for war:

Saddam Hussein has a long history of reckless aggression and terrible crimes. He possesses weapons of terror. He provides funding and training and safe haven to terrorists -- terrorists who would willingly use weapons of mass destruction against America...Saddam Hussein and his weapons are a direct threat to this country, to our people, and to all free people...The attacks of September the 11th, 2001 showed what the enemies of America did with four airplanes. We will not wait to see what terrorists or terrorist states could do with weapons of mass destruction...I will not leave the American people at the mercy of the Iraqi dictator and his weapons.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> George W. Bush, "President George Bush Discusses Iraq in National Press Conference," Washington, DC, 6 March 2003; available from <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030306-8.html> (accessed 25 Feb 2011).

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

The third and final main war aim in Iraq was “regime change”—namely, to remove Saddam Hussein’s Baathist regime from power and replace it with a democratic government. The preferred specific characteristics of this new Iraqi government were delineated in an unclassified memo drafted by Condoleezza Rice and distributed to other Administration principals, including Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Powell. These goals for a new Iraqi regime included “An Iraq that:

- No longer oppresses or tyrannizes its people;
- Respects the basic rights of all Iraqis—including women and minorities;
- Adheres to the rule of law and respects fundamental human rights, including freedom of speech and worship; and
- Encourages the building of democratic institutions.”<sup>101</sup>

Thus, US war aims in Iraq can be condensed to three simple points:

1. Prevent Iraq from pursuing weapons of mass destruction;
2. Prevent Iraq from being a base for terrorist attacks against US interests;
3. Create a liberal democracy.

It is true that there are subtexts to these goals—increasing the security of Israel is a good example. The personal affinity that many of the Bush Administration’s most prominent neoconservative advisors held for Israel is well documented. As John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt write, “there is considerable evidence that Israel and pro-Israel groups—especially the neoconservatives—played important roles in the decision to invade.”<sup>102</sup> Yet aims like these that went officially unstated by the Administration as rationale for the war are difficult to prove-- precisely because they are unstated. Thus,

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<sup>101</sup> Condoleezza Rice, “Iraq: Goals, Objectives, Strategy,” memorandum to the principals’ committee, 29 October 2002; available from [http://www.waranddecision.com/docLib/20080402\\_IraqGoalsStrategy.pdf](http://www.waranddecision.com/docLib/20080402_IraqGoalsStrategy.pdf) (accessed 25 Feb 2011).

<sup>102</sup> John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2007), 231.

for the purposes of this investigation, we take the Administration at its word and judge it strictly on its own terms: an active choice has been made to deal only with the three official war aims already listed. The openness of the Administration about these goals and their discreteness makes them useful for this exercise in that they can be easily shown to have been accomplished or not; they are undeniable as official aims, their outcomes are falsifiable, and they rely in no way on speculation or conspiracy theory.

## **HORIZONTAL I2: MARGINALIZING INTELLIGENCE STRUCTURES**

### *New Intel Offices at the Pentagon*

Although it has been plagued by some high-profile gaffes in its history, the United States intelligence apparatus is a remarkably professional and effective collection of organizations, despite flaws inherent in any government bureaucracy of its size and shape. The strength of the American intelligence community comes from its strong positivist methodology and its emphasis on vetting, ensuring that every piece of information gathered is properly analyzed for reliability. This is crucial for guaranteeing that only the highest quality, most reliable information is used in top decisionmaking, as the international spy world is a murky one. With millions of dollars in play for defectors and informants of sometimes dubious motives, it is critical to make accurate assessments about what information is legitimate, and what information is simply someone telling what a CIA officer wants to hear in exchange for vast amounts of cash or favors. In order to be passed onto someone in a decisionmaking role, each piece of information must be corroborated and verified, often painstakingly. The point of this exercise is to prevent what is known in the intelligence community as “stovepiping,” or sending a raw piece of

intelligence directly to the top, where it is likely to be misinterpreted by someone who, although undoubtedly very intelligent, is not formally trained in analysis.<sup>103</sup>

This careful intelligence vetting structure was one of the first and most significant targets of pro-war members of the Bush Administration, particularly Strauss-inspired neoconservatives. It was one of the primary structures usurped in the service of horizontal I2. Specifically, the objective was to fully marginalize realist agencies, such as the CIA and the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, whose professionalism barred them from compromising positivist vetting in service of ideological or political goals. According to Kenneth Pollack, what the neoconservatives did was "dismantle the existing filtering process that for fifty years had been preventing the policymakers from getting bad information. They created stovepipes to get the information they wanted directly to the top leadership. Their position is that the professional bureaucracy is deliberately and maliciously keeping information from them."<sup>104</sup>

The mechanism for this stovepiping was chiefly the establishment of two impromptu, parallel intelligence offices totally outside the realm of the normal intelligence community. The first of these was the Policy Counterterrorism Evaluation Group (CEG), under the leadership of David Wurmser and Michael Maloof. This group was later rolled into the Pentagon Office of Special Plans (OSP), under Doug Feith's leadership.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Seymour Hersh, "The Stovepipe," *The New Yorker*, 27 October 2003.

<sup>104</sup> Kenneth Pollack, quoted in Hersh, "The Stovepipe."

<sup>105</sup> Hoyle, *Going to War*, 238-39.

The CEG first came into being only eight days after the September 11 attacks. It was the result of an emergency meeting of the Defense Policy Board, chaired by Richard Perle. One outcome of the meeting was a consensus on the need to create a specialized intelligence office to look for connections between Iraq and the 9/11 attacks. The purpose of this intelligence would be to justify an invasion of Iraq, which former Counterterrorism Coordinator Richard Clarke says was a main topic of discussion in the White House mere hours after the attacks. Clarke writes that on September 12<sup>th</sup>, he “walked into a series of discussions about Iraq... Then I realized with almost a sharp physical pain that Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were going to try to take advantage of this national tragedy to promote their agenda about Iraq. Since the beginning of the administration, indeed well before, they had been pressing for a war with Iraq.”<sup>106</sup>

Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Feith, and Perle turned to neoconservatives David Wurmser and Michael Maloof to head the CEG, reporting directly to Feith.<sup>107</sup> According to journalist James Bamford, “the primary purpose of the unit was to come up with some basis to counter the CIA, whose analysts had consistently found no credible links between Al Qaeda and Hussein.”<sup>108</sup> Feith was very open about the purpose of the CEG and its intelligence mission. “It was from the start a criticism of the consensus of the intelligence community.”<sup>109</sup> This is significant in that Feith’s mandate was one of intelligence polemicism. In essence, it was a thought experiment gone wild: the CEG

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<sup>106</sup> Richard Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 30.

<sup>107</sup> James Bamford, *A Pretext for War* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 287.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

<sup>109</sup> Doug Feith, quoted in Pincus and Smith, "Official's Key Report on Iraq Is Faulted."

was charged with providing alternatives to the accepted CIA narratives; the fact that these alternatives were in many cases outlandish and ignored the internal reliability checks built into the professional intelligence community's standard operating procedures mattered little. The object was simply to provide a revisionist viewpoint so that higher up decisionmakers would have a diversity of interpretations to choose amongst, each a narrative tailored to a certain ideology. As Wolfowitz himself says of the CEG, "People who are pursuing a certain hypothesis will see certain facts that others won't, and not see other facts that others will. The lens through which you're looking for facts affects what you look for."<sup>110</sup>

Given this mandate, the parallels between the CEG apparatus and the neoconservatives' former Team B exercises are uncanny, as the explicit purpose of both groups was to reevaluate intelligence through an ideological lens to serve a preconceived hypothesis. There was not an attempt to judge between these narratives objectively on their merits in the process of presenting them to decisionmakers (ultimately the President), but instead they were offered side-by-side on ostensibly equal footing, largely discounting the judgments of the professional intelligence agencies. In this way, the President would more likely choose to act upon the 'alternative' interpretation presented by the neoconservatives, as it was undoubtedly more alarmist and stripped of any caveats about its overall credibility. A president seeking to best protect the United States would thus reasonably choose this worst-case-scenario interpretation, since he would not be aware of critical dissent and would be most propelled by a fear of the potential consequences of inaction. Viewed game theoretically, the political cost of wrongly

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<sup>110</sup> Paul Wolfowitz, quoted in Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker, "Pentagon Sets Up Intelligence Unit," *New York Times*, 24 October 2002.

accepting the less alarmist narrative is conceivably much higher than that of wrongly accepting the more alarmist narrative. Hence, it is true that President Bush may have been more susceptible to this type of manipulation than others, chiefly because of his foreign policy inexperience and his personal management style, which put a great (perhaps naïve) amount of trust in his deputies, particularly Cheney. Still, given the potential outcomes of the game, it is hard to see any other president, if presented with the same level of information Bush had, making a different decision. The difference is that a president more experienced in foreign policy and intelligence matters would probably have been more curious about the reasons for the vast differences in conclusions from the same intelligence sources.

Considering all this, although it was highly unorthodox, it was not unheard of for the intelligence community to seek out a dissenting opinion for the sake of an analytical exercise. After all, Team B was in fact convened under the authority of the very realist George H.W. Bush during his tenure as CIA director. However, the important difference between previous alternative intelligence exercises such as Team B and the CEG was that the CEG was not under the formal authority of the official intelligence community—it was instead an independent Pentagon unit fully unaccountable to intelligence authorities. Feith counters this criticism by asserting that his intelligence operations were fully legal because they did not actually gather their own information, and instead sifted through raw material obtained from other agencies. As Feith says, “Neither the Office of Special Plans nor any other part of the Pentagon's Policy organization collected intelligence. We were consumers of intelligence, not producers.”<sup>111</sup> Feith is correct in his assertion that

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<sup>111</sup> Douglas Feith, "Media Myths vs. Facts," [http://www.dougfeith.com/facts\\_2.html](http://www.dougfeith.com/facts_2.html) (accessed 25 Feb 2011).

his office did not produce intelligence through spy work the way that legitimate intelligence agencies do. Yet still, because the office was engaging in intelligence assessment, it should legally have been under the authority of the Director of Central Intelligence. Richard Clarke points out that although the CEG was doing intelligence analysis, “they weren't an intelligence office. They were not subject to oversight by the intelligence committees; they were not subject to oversight by the director of CIA. And they had already decided on the conclusion, and what they were doing was trying to find the evidence to support it.”<sup>112</sup>

Because of the potential legal difficulties that the CEG might encounter, in August 2002 it was incorporated into a new Pentagon Office under Feith’s management, the Office of Special Plans (OSP).<sup>113</sup> In order to get around the oversight problem, the OSP operated as “an expanded Iraq desk” within the normal DoD architecture.<sup>114</sup> It was rolled into the Near East South Asia office (NESA), under the purview of Undersecretary of Defense William Luti, and given its bland name so as not to draw the kind of unwanted attention that CEG had encountered.<sup>115</sup> The core mission of OSP, however, was essentially the same as that of CEG. As Donald Rumsfeld put it, OSP’s goal was “to put the data under the microscope to reveal what the intelligence community can’t see.”<sup>116</sup> Thus, OSP represents an extension and refocus of exactly the type of work that

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<sup>112</sup> "Interview with Richard Clarke," *Frontline: The Dark Side*, PBS, 20 June 2006, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/darkside/interviews/clarke.html> (accessed 25 Feb 2011).

<sup>113</sup> Hoyle, *Going to War*, 242.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Jeffrey Goldberg, "A Little Learning," *The New Yorker*, 9 May 2005.

<sup>116</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, quoted in Hersh, "Selective Intelligence."

CEG was doing, rather than a halting of it. It was simply brought under a different structure to try and avoid legal and bureaucratic difficulties. Feith appointed Abram Shulsky as OSP's director.<sup>117</sup>

The lack of oversight and coordination between Feith's intelligence analysis offices and the greater intelligence community that Clarke points out seems to have been entirely intentional. Indeed, in practice, CEG and OSP's secondary major purpose was to challenge the formal intelligence community at every opportunity. A former Pentagon official who worked with some members of the CEG said that they were concerned not only with "how to fight Saddam Hussein but also how to fight the NSC, the State Department and the intelligence community."<sup>118</sup> Considering the mission, staffing, and structure of Feith's CEG and OSP operations, it is hard to envision a more clear-cut example of horizontal I2. In the offices, Wolfowitz and Feith had deliberately assembled a parallel intelligence unit of like-minded ideologues whose core purpose was to directly challenge and compete with professional intelligence agencies whose assessments they found to have a "bias," as stated in an internal Pentagon memo.<sup>119</sup> Feith's offices were incredibly successful in their battles against the conventional intelligence community, chiefly by horizontally marginalizing them through intelligence stovepiping.

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<sup>117</sup> Seymour Hersh, *Chain of Command* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 208.

<sup>118</sup> Dana Priest, "Pentagon Shadow Loses Some Mystique," *Washington Post*, 13 March 2004.

<sup>119</sup> Hersh, "Selective Intelligence."

*Up the Stovepipe: Defector Intelligence from the Iraqi National Congress*

As Feith has always been careful to point out, the CEG and OSP never collected their own intelligence, and instead re-analyzed information that had already been looked at— and in many cases discounted— by the CIA, DIA, INR, and other such institutional intelligence agencies. The CEG and OSP, like Team B before them, were less concerned with the reliability of their estimates than they were with the possibility of certain doomsday contingencies. The refusal of the American intelligence community “to make estimates that extended beyond the hard evidence” had been one of Rumsfeld’s biggest complaints since the 1990s.<sup>120</sup> As a result of such discontent amongst the neoconservatives and sympathizers such as Rumsfeld, CEG and OSP were more interested in presenting worst-case scenarios than hedging the actual likelihood of such events based on facts; reality became significantly less constraining. As then-CIA Director George Tenet writes:

[W]hile they [the OSP] seemed to like playing the role of analysts, they showed none of the professional skills or discipline required. Feith and company would find little nuggets that supported their beliefs and seize upon them, never understanding that there might be a larger picture they were missing. Isolated data points became so important to them that they would never look at the thousands of other data points that might convey an opposite story.<sup>121</sup>

In the post 9/11 threat environment, one such worst-case scenario on the minds of senior Administration officials was the possibility of an unconventional terrorist attack, which, they reasoned, couldn’t happen without the acquiescence of a state, purely for technical reasons. This dovetailed conveniently into many Bush Administration officials’

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<sup>120</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, "Intelligence Side Letter to the Rumsfeld Commission Report," Washington, DC, 18 March 1999; available from <http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/missile/sideletter.htm> (accessed 25 Feb 2011).

<sup>121</sup> George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 347.

years-long focus on Iraq, which had been evidenced by public statements such as the PNAC open letters.<sup>122</sup> Thus, the main focus of CEG and OSP became “to find evidence of what Wolfowitz and...Donald Rumsfeld believed to be true—that Saddam Hussein had close ties to Al Qaeda, and that Iraq had an enormous arsenal of chemical, biological, and possibly even nuclear weapons.”<sup>123</sup> In this endeavor, Feith’s offices found information provided by Ahmed Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress (INC) to be extremely helpful. The INC was an Iraqi dissident group based in Iraq’s Kurdish north that was solely focused on removing the Saddam regime. Chalabi was a Shiite Iraqi exile whose family had moved to England in 1958.<sup>124</sup> Chalabi received his doctorate in mathematics studying at the University of Chicago under Wohlstetter, who later introduced Chalabi to Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz in 1985.<sup>125</sup> Chalabi’s connections in Washington amongst the neoconservative establishment helped secure him millions of dollars in American funding for the INC under his leadership.<sup>126</sup> This funding was halted in the mid-1990s after Chalabi spearheaded a disastrous insurrection that led to the execution of hundreds of INC members by Saddam.<sup>127</sup> Chalabi subsequently fell out of favor with the Clinton Administration and the professional intelligence bureaucracy. However, he was soon brought back into the fold with the

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<sup>122</sup> Abrams et al., "Letter to President Clinton on Iraq."

<sup>123</sup> Hersh, *Chain of Command*, 209.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>125</sup> Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 292.

<sup>126</sup> Hersh, *Chain of Command*, 166.

<sup>127</sup> Hoyle, *Going to War*, 167.

influx of Iraq-focused, neoconservative leadership under George W. Bush, especially after 9/11.

Chalabi's longstanding relationship with Paul Wolfowitz, dating back to their student days, granted him and the intelligence he provided high-level access to the CEG and OSP. This is not to say that CEG and OSP had any information that was not also provided to the CIA and other traditional intelligence agencies. In rebutting criticism of OSP, Cheney Chief of Staff Scooter Libby counters that "All of Chalabi's information went to the CIA. They could use it or not as they saw fit."<sup>128</sup> But career intelligence analysts, particularly those at the CIA, had written off Chalabi as unreliable since the failed coup attempt, citing both the ham-handedness of the rebellion and the questionable nature of his information given Chalabi's sharp personal interest in overthrowing Saddam's regime.<sup>129</sup> While a darling of the neocons, "the CIA never trusted the intelligence Chalabi was providing, believing it was largely self-serving and unverifiable," writes James Bamford.<sup>130</sup> Former CIA officials confirm Bamford's assessment. As Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet writes, "[The] CIA found him [Chalabi] to be a most unreliable partner. Although CIA came to take everything we heard from Chalabi with a healthy dose of skepticism, others, such as the vice president, Paul Wolfowitz, and Doug Feith, welcomed his views."<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, according to former CIA counterterrorism official Vincent Cannistraro, "The [INC's] intelligence isn't

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<sup>128</sup> Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 289.

<sup>129</sup> Senate Select Committee of Intelligence, *The Use of the Intelligence Community of Information Provided by the Iraqi National Congress*, 8 September 2006, 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, 25; available from <http://intelligence.senate.gov/phaseiinc.pdf> (accessed 24 Feb 2011).

<sup>130</sup> Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 292.

<sup>131</sup> Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, Kindle location 6254.

reliable at all...Much of it is propaganda. Much of it is telling the Defense Department what they want to hear. And much of it is used to support Chalabi's own presidential ambitions. They make no distinction between intelligence and propaganda, using alleged informants and defectors who say what Chalabi wants them to say."<sup>132</sup> Indeed, in a prominent *Foreign Affairs* article in 1999, the Middle East Institute's Andrew Parasiliti cynically remarked that "the INC has more support along than Potomac than the Euphrates."<sup>133</sup>

What is clear from these reports is that Chalabi was obviously a highly controversial figure within the Washington intelligence community, and one's opinion of him and the information he provided tended to be determined by ideological lines. Those with neoconservative ideological underpinnings generally found his information much more useful than those who took a realist approach to Iraq, who tended to be more skeptical. This reality wreaked havoc on normal bureaucratic procedures and led to some of the most contentious bureaucratic conflicts in the entire war planning process. The best example of this is the now infamous claim that Saddam had developed mobile biological weapons laboratories.

The claim about mobile weapons labs was one of the most alarming and high-profile points of the Bush Administration on Saddam's relative dangerousness, and it was highlighted in Secretary Powell's speech to the UN Security Council. "One of the most worrisome things that emerges from the thick intelligence file we have on Iraq's

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<sup>132</sup> Vincent Cannistraro, quoted in Andrew Buncombe, "US Paid \$1m for 'Useless Intelligence' from Chalabi," *The Independent*, 30 September 2003.

<sup>133</sup> Andrew Parasiliti, quoted in Daniel Byman, Kenneth Pollack, and Gideon Rose, "The Rollback Fantasy," *Foreign Affairs*, 78 no. 1 (1999).

biological weapons is the existence of mobile production facilities used to make biological agents... We have firsthand descriptions of biological weapons factories on wheels and on rails,” Powell said.<sup>134</sup> He went on to assert that this intelligence had been backed by four separate sources. Yet an exploration of the bureaucratic politics that went into assembling Powell’s speech demonstrates that these sources, linked to Chalabi and the INC, were not credible, and that the assertion of the mobile weapons labs was inserted into Powell’s speech largely through OSP insistence and in spite of strong protest from the State Department and the professional intelligence agencies.

Powell’s speech was the result of a highly contentious draft preparation process between the State Department, CIA officials, the OSP, and the Office of the Vice President. A few days before the scheduled speech, Powell was provided with a draft presentation script that had been authored explicitly by William Luti, part of the leadership of the OSP, and by John Hannah, a top aide to Cheney Chief of Staff Scooter Libby.<sup>135</sup> Officials who were present at Powell’s first review of the draft report that he was furious at some of the dubious intelligence claims he saw in the speech. One person in the room said that on “one occasion the Secretary actually threw the paper down on the table and said, ‘I’m not saying that.’”<sup>136</sup> As Tenet recalls, Powell specifically told Scooter Libby “What are you guys thinking, giving me a draft like that?”<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> "Transcript of Speech by Secretary Powell to the UN," *The Washington Post*, 5 February 2003.

<sup>135</sup> Michael Isikoff and David Corn, *Hubris* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2006), 176.

<sup>136</sup> Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 370.

<sup>137</sup> Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, Kindle location 5886.

According to Hoyle, Powell also explicitly “ordered the team to throw out any WMD intelligence from Chalabi or the Iraqi National Congress.”<sup>138</sup> Fulfilling this request took hours of meticulous work. By the account of one official who assisted with the process,

“We went through that for about six hours—item by item, page by page...and about halfway through the day I realized this is idiocy, we cannot possibly do this, because it was all bullshit—it was unsourced, a lot of it was just out of newspapers, it was—and I look back in retrospect—it was a Feith product, it was a Scooter Libby product, it was a Vice President’s office product. It was a product of collusion between that group. And it had no way of standing up, anywhere.”<sup>139</sup>

Yet despite Powell’s orders to remove all INC related intelligence, the claim about the mobile weapons labs remained in the text. Of the four sources from which the mobile labs information was culled, at least three of them—alias “Curveball” and two other unnamed sources—“had demonstrable connections with Chalabi.”<sup>140</sup> Furthermore in February 2011, Curveball himself—later revealed as Iraqi defector Rafid Ahmed Alwan al-Janabi— admitted to the press that he had totally invented all the information he passed to American intelligence—including the stories about the mobile weapons labs—in an effort to build the case for war with Iraq. “I had a problem with the Saddam regime...I wanted to get rid of him and now I had this chance...I had the chance to fabricate something to topple the regime,” Janabi told reporters.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Hoyle, *Going to War*, 324.

<sup>139</sup> Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 368.

<sup>140</sup> Hoyle, *Going to War*, 325.

<sup>141</sup> Rafid Ahmed Alwan al-Janabi, quoted in Martin Chulov and Helen Pidd, "Curveball: How US Was Duped by Iraqi Fantasist Looking to Topple Saddam," *The Guardian*, 15 February 2011.

Additionally, although the identities of the other sources on Iraqi WMD programs have not been disclosed, at least one more of them, known as “Source Two,” was also shown to have been decisively discredited in a 2006 Senate Select Intelligence Committee report.<sup>142</sup> According to the report:

[The DIA issued in regard to Source Two] a ‘fabrication notice’ which said ‘we have determined that [Source Two] is a fabricator/provocateur’ and advised consumers that ‘his information is assessed as unreliable and, in some instances, pure fabrication. We have determined that he has also been coached by the Iraqi National Congress prior to his meeting with western intelligence services.’ DIA disseminated the fabrication notice to all of the analytic agencies that received the original intelligence reports on Source Two, including CIA, DIA, and State INR, and cited the source identification numbers, reference numbers, and titles of both original intelligence reports.<sup>143</sup>

Furthermore, these questionable defector sources were not telling their stories exclusively to American intelligence—they were approaching anyone who would listen, including Britain’s MI-6 and the United Nations weapons inspectors themselves. As the CIA had done before them, these other professional intelligence agencies also found the defectors’ credibility lacking and discounted their information. In his statements to the UK’s Chilcot Inquiry, former chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix suggested that one of the hardest lessons learned from the experience of the 2003 Iraq War was the damage that failing to properly vet intelligence can do. He claims a major redemption for the UN inspectors, saying that they, in contrast with some in the American bureaucracy, “had the fortune of not being taken in by defectors and people who came with their stories.”<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *The Use of the Intelligence Community of Information Provided by the Iraqi National Congress*, 63.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-62.

<sup>144</sup> Hans Blix, "Oral Testimony to the Chilcot Inquiry," *The Iraq Inquiry*, London, 27 July 2010, 107; available from <http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/media/48849/20100727pm-blix.pdf> (accessed 30 July 2010).

Under the circumstances, it is clear that no CIA, DIA, or INR analyst would have included the assertion of the mobile weapons labs in Powell's speech. The intelligence credibility was simply lacking. Furthermore, all the discredited intelligence reports would have been clearly marked and separated from the archives of reliable intelligence contained within the traditional analytical agencies; no professional intelligence officer would have included such discredited information in such a high-profile speech. This conclusion also corresponds with the previously stated opinion of Powell's aides, who saw the questionable intelligence included in the speech to have been directly inserted by either individuals at the OSP or the Office of the Vice President.

Additionally, the faulty intelligence on the mobile labs was clearly written into the speech by individuals who were directly associated with OSP, such as Luti, or those who were receiving alternative intelligence assessments directly from them through "the stovepipe," such as Libby in the Vice President's Office. It was a well known fact, confirmed by those working within the OSP, that "Cheney had a direct, if highly unorthodox, pipeline through Luti into OSP...Vice President Cheney and his chief of staff, Lewis Libby...regularly received the OSP's intelligence products."<sup>145</sup> Tenet's account confirms this, and reveals the professional intelligence community's frustration with the situation. "'Team Feith' had been going around briefing officials at the White House, the NSC, and the Office of the Vice President," Tenet complained.<sup>146</sup> "Raw, unevaluated documents that painted a more nefarious picture of Iraq...continued to show up in the hands of senior administration officials without having gone through normal

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<sup>145</sup> Hoyle, *Going to War*, 245.

<sup>146</sup> Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, Kindle location 5526.

intelligence channels.”<sup>147</sup> In fact, at one point when Tenet previewed a CIA document to Feith to ask if he had any objections to its contents, “Feith’s staffers said they did ‘but would make their views known through other channels.’ In retrospect, this was a pretty clear warning that we were being second-guessed and undermined,” recalls Tenet.<sup>148</sup>

The outcome is clear: despite loud discontent emanating from the ideologically realist State Department and professional intelligence agencies, the inclusion of flawed intelligence in Powell’s speech was insisted upon by those who were ideologically inclined to its conclusions regardless of its credibility. New, alternative bureaucratic structures, specifically the CEG/OSP apparatus established within the Defense Department, were created and used for the explicit purpose of directly competing with peer agencies, specifically the State Department and the CIA. This peer agency structure is what makes the infighting horizontal. Furthermore, the evidence cited above in the justification for the CEG and OSP demonstrate that there was an overt ideological bent to these new agencies and the way they carried out their work, especially in the manner in which they approached the concept of intelligence analysis. The statements of the agencies’ purposes given by Feith and Rumsfeld show this decisively to be the case. Thus, the new analysis agencies were not simply offering competing intelligence viewpoints—this is in fact what the CIA, INR, and DIA do amongst each other on a day-to-day basis. Instead, the CEG and OSP were offering a radically different analysis that by their own admission was more intended toward speculation than hedging. This very approach itself is ideological—rather than emerging from the positivist tradition of realist

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., Kindle location 5655.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., Kindle location 5543.

ideology, these alternative intelligence assessments were grounded in a neoconservative ideology highly influenced by the Straussian philosophy of the Noble Lie.

## **VERTICAL I2: PURGING THE REGIONALISTS**

While the above case shows the clear presence of I2 on a horizontal plane between peer agencies, the definition of I2 also demands it be shown in its vertical form as well, with superiors using their positions of bureaucratic authority against lower ranking officials explicitly over ideological disputes. Once again, the run-up to the 2003 Iraq invasion provides ample evidence of this type of infighting as well. The best examples can be found in staffing decisions.

The State Department had been compiling what was known as the Future of Iraq Project since the early days of the Bush Administration.<sup>149</sup> The project was aimed at anticipating key issues—such as public service failures or a breakdown in law and order—that might arise from any regime change in Iraq. According to Woodward, the project “compiled thousands of pages of reports and recommendations from a range of experts on government, oil, criminal justice, and agriculture in Iraq.”<sup>150</sup> Thirteen volumes in all, the project’s recommendations represented the best opinions of the most expert regionalists that the State Department had— an authoritative report on the fabric of the social, economic, and political situation in Iraq. The report was unflinchingly professional in its analysis and did not shy away from cautioning against potential difficulties that might arise from a rapid regime change in Iraq; in many ways the

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<sup>149</sup>*The Future of Iraq Project Report*, Department of State, 2003; available from <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB198/index.htm> (accessed 25 Feb 2011).

<sup>150</sup> Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 282.

exercise provided a self-conscious “reality check” on what deposing Saddam would actually mean in terms of reconstruction logistics.<sup>151</sup>

Still, despite the expertise at the State Department and its traditional adeptness at the tasks that an interim post-Saddam occupying government would need to accomplish, a decision was made to put the Department of Defense in charge of running Iraq after regime change. Despite the unconventionality of this, Powell was convinced to go along with the plan. According to Woodward:

“Powell thought it was logical. In the immediate aftermath of the war, only Defense would have the thousands of people, the money and the resources. He certainly had nothing like that at State, though he had some real experts. Defense and the military would be the liberating, conquering, occupying force. With a huge American army running around the battlefield, just for the purposes of unity of command, the job had to go to Defense, he thought. It didn’t cross his mind that this was out of the ordinary. It was exactly what had happened after World War II in Germany and Japan.”<sup>152</sup>

Thus, the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) was established under the auspices of the Pentagon by National Security Presidential Directive #24, on 20 January 2003, giving Defense full authority over post-war Iraq.<sup>153</sup> The Department of State, unpopular amongst ideological neoconservatives, was marginalized to a supporting role.

Yet as Powell reasoned, this would not have been an unreasonable state of affairs provided that the State Department experts were brought over to ORHA to advise on country-specific issues. Accordingly, Powell sent to Jay Garner, the appointed head of the ORHA, a copy of the Future of Iraq Project report and the names of 75 Iraq

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<sup>151</sup> "Public Health and Humanitarian Needs," in *The Future of Iraq Project Report*, 54.

<sup>152</sup> Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 282.

<sup>153</sup> President, National Security Presidential Directive 24, “Post-War Iraq Reconstruction,” 20 January 2003. The actual text of NSPD 24 has not yet been declassified for the public.

specialists he recommended Garner hire, many of whom had been involved in producing the report. Powell intended them to form a leadership team for ORHA in the early reconstruction phase. Powell further recommended that Thomas Warrick, the head of the Future of Iraq Project, and sanctions specialist Megan O’Sullivan, be in charge of the ORHA team.<sup>154</sup>

Powell soon learned, however, that his staffing recommendations had been handily rejected. Colonel Paul Hughes, who worked for Garner under ORHA and was supportive of Powell’s staffing recommendations, recalls that “I tried to bring in people from the Department of State. We did get the director of that study [Thomas Warrick] tasked over to us. He remained for four days, and then Secretary Rumsfeld told Jay that he had to fire him, send him back.”<sup>155</sup> Woodward’s sources corroborate this account, asserting that “Powell got word that Rumsfeld had kicked Warrick and O’Sullivan out of the Pentagon, ordering them to leave by sundown.”<sup>156</sup> Upon placing a call to Rumsfeld for an explanation, he received an answer laden in ideological undertones. Woodward writes that “Rumsfeld said that as they got into postwar planning, the work had to be done by those who were truly committed to this and supporters of the change and not those who have written or said things that were not supportive.”<sup>157</sup>

After the incident, Powell recommended a further seven expert staffers whom he thought would be useful to Garner in the ORHA. These staffers too, were rejected, this

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<sup>154</sup> Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 283. Warrick and O’Sullivan declined to be interviewed.

<sup>155</sup> Paul Hughes, interview by David Brancaccio, “No End in Sight,” episode 316, *NOW*, PBS, originally aired 20 April 2007; available from <http://www.pbs.org/now/transcript/316.html> (accessed 30 June 2010).

<sup>156</sup> Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 283.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 283-84.

time by Feith, who said that “he wanted outsiders...[and] sometimes criticized the State Department in private as dovish, calling it ‘The Department of Nice.’”<sup>158</sup> Evidence points to Cheney also being reluctant to approve the relocation of too many State Department employees to Garner’s service. Woodward asserts that “Cheney thought there were too many in the State Department, the secretary included, who were neither sympathetic nor supportive of the president’s goal of democracy in Iraq and trying to transform the region.”<sup>159</sup> Clearly, then, staff decisions were being made for unambiguous ideological purposes, with superiors like Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Feith vetoing sound personnel recommendations for reasons purely based on ideology rather than considerations of skill or experience. They did not want realists raising doubts about a neoconservative agenda.

There were also accounts of ideological purges at other places in the Administration, particularly the NESAs under Feith. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Karen Kwiatkowski was transferred to the NESAs under Feith in 2002 as the North Africa desk officer, at the same time that the OSP was being administered from the office. Kwiatkowski, a “lifelong conservative,” was disturbed by the staffing decisions she saw being made in the NESAs.<sup>160</sup> Kwiatkowski wrote that “something deliberate and manipulative was happening to NESAs...Expertise on Middle East policy was not only being removed, but was also being exchanged for that from various agenda-bearing think tanks, including the Middle East Media Research Institute, the Washington Institute for

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 284.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Marc Cooper, “Soldier for the Truth,” *LA Weekly*, 19 February 2004.

Near East Policy, and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs...I learned that there was indeed a preferred ideology for NESAs.”<sup>161</sup> This “hiring bias,” as DIA analyst Colonel Patrick Lang calls it, permeated the Administration’s Middle East offices. Lang writes:

It is one thing to have traveled to the area [the Middle East] as a senior government official. It is another to have lived there and worked with the people of the region for long periods of time. People with that kind of experience in the Muslim world are strangely absent from Team Bush. In the game plan for the Arab and Islamic world, most of the government’s veteran Middle East experts were largely shut out. The Pentagon civilian bureaucracy of the Bush administration, dominated by an inner circle of think-tankers, lawyers and former Senate staffers, virtually hung out a sign, “Arabic Speakers Need Not Apply.” They effectively purged the process of Americans who might have inadvertently developed sympathies for the people of the region.<sup>162</sup>

Kwiatkowski also notes that ideological control was also exerted not only in the staffing decisions made, but also in the staffing decisions that *weren’t* made. She asserts that certain key positions meant to provide impartial regionalist expertise were deliberately left vacant so as not to pose a challenge to ideologically led ideas that didn’t pass regional reality tests. Specifically, Kwiatkowski cites the long-term vacancy left in the NESAs office directorship, a critical bureaucratic post that was meant to “ensure office continuity, act as a resource relating to regional histories and policies, and help identify the best ways to maintain course or to implement change.”<sup>163</sup> The extended absence of such a figure in the NESAs office resulted in a considerable lack of expert regionalist oversight in NESAs and also removed a critical figure who could be used to channel policy grievances from the analysts to the management. Kwiatkowski writes:

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<sup>161</sup> Karen Kwiatkowski, "The New Pentagon Papers," 10 March 2004; available from [http://www.salon.com/news/opinion/feature/2004/03/10/osp\\_moveon](http://www.salon.com/news/opinion/feature/2004/03/10/osp_moveon). (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>162</sup> W. Patrick Lang, "Drinking the Kool-Aid," *Middle East Policy* 11, no. 2 (2004).

<sup>163</sup> Kwiatkowski, "The New Pentagon Papers."

The office director billet stayed vacant the whole time I was there. That vacancy and the long-term absence of real regional understanding to inform defense policymakers in the Pentagon explains a great deal about the neoconservative approach on the Middle East and the disastrous mistakes made in Washington and in Iraq in the past two years. I saw the modus operandi of ‘instant policy’ unhampered by debate or experience.<sup>164</sup>

As Kwiatkowski makes clear, not only were realist regional experts being moved out of positions of influence, but ideologically neoconservative non-experts were being moved in. In many cases, the lack of expertise was completely shocking. The documentary film *No End in Sight* highlights the case of how a Georgetown alumna, just out of undergrad, was placed in charge of reorganizing the traffic plan for Baghdad, despite the fact that she had no qualifications as a civil engineer and was simply the child of a particularly generous campaign donor.<sup>165</sup>

## **WHY CURRENT MODELS DON'T FIT**

Although the above instances of intelligence agency conflicts and questionable staffing choices clearly represent both horizontal and vertical bureaucratic infighting, the burden is still on us to show that these cases are *ideological* in their nature; that is, that they are unique from previously described models of bureaucratic infighting: the party politics model and the Allisonian model.

The party politics model is the easiest to dismiss in this case, since the infighting took place within a single Republican administration. All of the key players involved were members of the same party. Furthermore, while party disputes may be more present in the faceless ranks of the career civil service, where individuals stay regardless of the turn of administrations, some of the most heated conflicts described in this chapter took

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Charles Ferguson, *No End in Sight*, (United States: Magnolia Pictures, 2007).

place amongst well known political appointees—people like Powell, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz, who were hand-picked by the President. None of their party credentials are at all questionable. Even much lower ranking officials involved in these episodes all described themselves as Republicans. Kwiatkowski, who offers some of the most visceral criticism of the bureaucratic activities that took place within the administration, is readily described as a “lifelong conservative.”<sup>166</sup>

Furthermore, even the Nixon Administration, from which this model emerges, does not fit. It is certainly true that Watergate represented the worst of interparty disputes amongst the federal bureaucracy. Yet the Watergate scandal dealt almost exclusively with domestic issues of reelection. In this setting, one would expect the infighting to be based on partisan politics, mirroring the electoral system. However, from Kissinger, Colodny, and the many other memoirists and scholars who studied the process of policymaking within the Nixon (and later, Ford), Administration, foreign policy fights were often most intense *within* the Republican Party itself, between its realist and neoconservative ideological wings.

The dismissal of the party politics model leaves Allisonian paradigms II and III to reckon with. As recalled from Chapter Three, Allison’s Model II represents the organizational behavior model, which stipulates that the actions of government are due, to a certain extent, to rigid standard operating procedures that constrain the actions of both individuals and agencies.<sup>167</sup> In fact, the writings on standard operating procedures are quite applicable to the normal way of doing things in the professional intelligence

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<sup>166</sup> Cooper, "Soldier for the Truth."

<sup>167</sup> Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications," *World Politics* 24, spring (1972).

agencies, particularly the CIA. As the above case of horizontal I2 shows, these intelligence agency standard operating procedures were completely upended by the new competitive agencies of the CEG and the OSP. Because they were upstarts, these agencies had no entrenched standard operating procedures of their own, and in fact their essential goal was to undermine the procedures of the traditional intelligence community. In light of this fact, it is difficult to see the conflict within the intelligence community as a result of inflexible operating procedures. In fact, the fighting resulted from the near total breakdown of these very systems. Furthermore, evidence from Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz's own statements on the purpose of the CEG/OSP operations show that their goals were explicitly ideological in purpose, resulting from a distinct distaste for the positivist methodologies of the ideologically realist intelligence community. Clearly, then, Model II is not a good match for the reality of what actually went on in the lead-up to the Iraq invasion. Whereas Model II seeks to explain government outputs as a function of bureaucratic operating procedures, the Iraq case is antithetical in that it resulted from a conscious and complete disregard for standard operating procedures at the highest levels of the bureaucracy. Simply put, differences in standard operating procedures across agencies cannot be a cause of conflict when they are undermined to the point of practical nonexistence. Thus, to put it in Allisonian terms, our examples of bureaucratic conflict surrounding Operation Iraqi Freedom are clearly not the "result of routine behavior of organizations."<sup>168</sup> Indeed, the opposite is true.

Allison's Model III is found to be similarly lacking. Model III, or the governmental politics model, is more complex than Model II. It recognizes the

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<sup>168</sup> Allison and Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications," 52.

competitive roles that both individual bureaucrats and entire agencies occupy. At the unitary level, individual policymakers' egos and personal ambitions, particularly vis-à-vis other policymakers, are seen as instrumental. On the surface, this model may seem at first persuasive in the case of Iraq, especially given the large personalities in play and the well documented history of infighting that people such as Rumsfeld brought to the table. Yet the evidence from the Iraq decisionmaking process shows that again, this model isn't quite descriptive of what actually happened. Firstly, Model III specifically deals with individual competition as a function of placement and favor within the government, with individuals competing especially for prestige and resources. According to this model,

“Organizations with missions seek influence to promote the missions. Those that also have large operational capabilities...seek influence on decisions in part to maintain the capability necessary to perform their mission. Some organizations...have neither large capabilities nor stable, organizationally defined missions. Hence their only organizational interest is in enhancing influence for its own sake.”<sup>169</sup>

According to this model, then, Colin Powell's relatively easy agreement to hand over all postwar Iraqi administration to the Pentagon makes no sense—he was marginalizing his own department in an area that was an essential part of its core mission. In this case, Powell was certainly not hewing to the Model III paradigm.

The ORHA staffing issues further draw Model III into question in other ways. Firstly, by offering to hand over 75 of his best people to Defense, Powell would have been putting State at a huge disadvantage had he been calculating according to the logic of Model III. But additionally, the Pentagon's rejection of Powell's people is also illogical. Bringing the country's best Iraq experts under the DoD umbrella would surely have given added credibility to that agency, particularly vis-à-vis State, which was giving

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<sup>169</sup> Morton Halperin, “Why Bureaucrats Play Games,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 2 (1971): 74-75.

them up. In this staffing consideration, the game was zero sum— one agency would lose excellent people whose skills were critical to the mission at hand, and another would gain them. Furthermore, by increasing the number of employees and areas of expertise under its mandate, it would have made Defense a more powerful and persuasive agency—it had the opportunity to usurp some of the best talent that the State Department—its arch-rival—had to offer and strengthened its hand in the post-invasion policy planning phase. Yet despite the resources and prestige that these experts would bring to DoD, they were rejected. It is clear from accounts of those involved in the matter that these rejections were, once again, for ideological purposes. Rumsfeld and Feith were overt in their statements to Powell that they only wanted their own people who were sure to be loyal to the neoconservative program. This emphasis on ideology, even at the expense of department prestige and authority, is a contingency that Model III simply doesn't account for.

Thus, the Iraq case conclusively demonstrates the presence of fierce bureaucratic infighting, and that this infighting was driven strongly by ideology above all other considerations, including party politics, organizational politics, and governmental organization. Accordingly, the I2 model, while not sufficient on its own to totally explain the decisionmaking processes that led to Operation Iraqi Freedom, it is still the most attractive lens available through which to analyze the foreign policy emerging out of these episodes.

## THE LINKS TO FAILED POLICY

Having established and described the infighting that was taking place in the run-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom, the final task of this chapter is to demonstrate how this infighting contributed to policy failures. Although it is difficult to prove direct causality, it is possible to show via process tracing and counterfactual exercises at least a strong degree of contribution. Recalling from earlier, the Administration's foreign policy goals for the Iraq war are in the chart below.

COUNTRY	POLICY OBJECTIVE	SUCCESS?
Iraq	1) Prevent from pursuing WMD	X
	2) Prevent use as terrorist base	X
	3) Create liberal democracy	X

The first, preventing Iraq from pursuing weapons of mass destruction, is interesting, since we now know that Iraq had in fact halted its pursuit of WMD some years before the 2003 invasion.<sup>170</sup> Logically, one can't stop something that is not in fact happening. Thus, while this policy objective perhaps didn't outright fail, it certainly wasn't a success.

Furthermore, this WMD rationale was one of the primary justifications for the invasion in the first place, and it is something that has been shown conclusively to have been linked to ideological infighting, particularly in terms of the activities of OSP and CEG, which provided top decisionmakers with analyses that backed the idea that Saddam was in fact pursuing WMD. Given the intelligence debates that were detailed earlier in the chapter, including the case of the flawed intelligence on mobile weapons labs, it is

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<sup>170</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction*, 30 September 2004; available from [https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq\\_wmd\\_2004/index.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq_wmd_2004/index.html) (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

difficult to envision a counterfactual situation in which the invasion would have been able to go ahead without such analyses being provided from CEG and OSP. Yuen Foong Khong argues just this point, that without the influence of the neoconservatives and their activism within American foreign policymaking structures, there would not have been sufficient political will for Operation Iraqi Freedom. According to Khong, “Neoconservative foreign policy thought has been examined as a necessary but insufficient condition for the initiation of Operation Iraqi Freedom.”<sup>171</sup> Thus, although neoconservative ideology and the bureaucratic infighting that it wrought cannot fully account for the American decision to go to war, an at least partially causal relationship is accepted.

The second goal, as elaborated by the Administration, was to prevent Iraq from being used as a terrorist base. The supposed link between Iraq and Al-Qaeda was something that the CEG and OSP were shown to have been specifically looking to prove in their alternative intelligence analysis. Likewise, this link was almost entirely disproven and rejected by the traditional intelligence community.<sup>172</sup> The ideological conflict on this issue between the neoconservative and realist communities within the bureaucracy was shown to be another great source of I2. Yet while the CIA analysts were correct in their assertion that Al-Qaeda did not have a base in Iraq prior to the 2003 war, they certainly gained one in the years afterward.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Yuen Foong Khong, “Neoconservatism and the Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy,” in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Cases, Actors*, ed. Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, & Timothy Dunne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 264.

<sup>172</sup> Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *The Use of the Intelligence Community of Information Provided by the Iraqi National Congress*, 25.

<sup>173</sup> Greg Bruno, “Profile: Al-Qaeda in Iraq,” *Washington Post*, 19 November 2007.

The ability of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) to form a legitimate franchise in Iraq after the 2003 invasion was largely a result of the lack of focus on law and order from the occupation administrators at the Pentagon, particularly Rumsfeld's emphasis on lean ground troop numbers.<sup>174</sup> It was also largely a function of the complete and immediate disbandment of the Iraqi regular army, which once de-Baathified at only its top levels, would have been able to provide significant security assistance. The dissolution of the army, in particular, left thousands of men with military training unemployed, a dangerous state of affairs.<sup>175</sup>

The tragic irony, however, is that all of these issues were anticipated by the Future of Iraq Project.<sup>176</sup> Had Rumsfeld and Feith accepted Colin Powell's staffing recommendations for ORHA, which included the leader of the Future of Iraq Project leader, it is much more likely that the key recommendations of the Project would have been implemented. At the very least, one would expect at least that some of the most disastrous decisions, such as the immediate army disbanding, would have been implemented more gradually so as to mitigate their effects. Yet the refusal to accept Powell's staffing recommendations, on purely ideological grounds, represents another case in which the counterfactual shows that the infighting that took place contributed directly to a failure to achieve a stated policy goal.

The final stated goal of the Administration was to promote democracy in Iraq. This is an objective that is much more difficult to verify or falsify, given that

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<sup>174</sup> Ferguson, "*No End in Sight*."

<sup>175</sup> Senate Intelligence Committee, *Report of the Senate Intelligence Committee on Prewar Intelligence Assessments about Postwar Iraq*, 25 May 2007, 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, 57; available from <http://intelligence.senate.gov/prewar.pdf> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>176</sup> "Working Group Recommendations," in Iraq Study Group, *The Future of Iraq Project*.

“democracy” itself is a fairly nebulous term. At its most basic level, it simply implies rule by the people, ostensibly through elections.<sup>177</sup> Thus, in its simplest form, democracy is process oriented. Yet when Bush spoke of bringing democracy to Iraq, it was much more comprehensive in concept, and linked to ideas of freedom, particularly the freedom from physical violence. In his address to the nation on 7 September 2003, President Bush laid this concept of democracy out in clear terms, stating, “In Iraq, we are helping the long-suffering people of that country to build a decent and democratic society at the center of the Middle East. Together we are transforming a place of torture chambers and mass graves into a nation of laws and free institutions.”<sup>178</sup>

Since this goal of democracy was intrinsically linked to freeing the Iraqi people from violence and terror in their everyday lives, the policy that the United States took, within the 2001-2006 timeframe of this study, was clearly a failure. With the American failure to provide basic security in Iraq after the invasion, looting abounded and discontent spread.<sup>179</sup> Prisons were sprung and border security became lax, allowing an influx of both common street criminals and fanatical foreign fighters into Iraqi society. The result was a vast surge in violence that resulted in 3,000 Iraqi civilian deaths per month at its height in 2006.<sup>180</sup> The Iraq Study Group concluded in 2006 that “Violence is increasing in scope, complexity, and lethality.”<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, ed. Iain McLean and Alistair McMillan, s.v. “Democracy,” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>178</sup> George W. Bush, address to the Nation, Washington, DC, 7 September 2003; available from <http://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=90276&page=1> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>179</sup> Ferguson, “*No End in Sight*.”

<sup>180</sup> *The Iraq Study Group Report*, (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, 2006), 10.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

Under the circumstances, it is difficult to see this outcome as a success for democracy, particularly the secure, liberal democracy that the Bush Administration envisioned for Iraq. Furthermore, as with the terrorism goal discussed above, this failure was largely a result of simple policing failures. As with the counterterrorist goal, much of this violence could likely have been avoided through limiting the I2, particularly that which prevented Future of Iraq Project experts from being staffed on the ORHA. Again, while the relationship can't be shown to be completely causal, it is difficult to envision a counterfactual situation—eliminating the ideological infighting—that results in an equally negative policy outcome.

## **CONCLUSION**

The case of the Bush Administration's planning and preparations for 2003's Operation Iraqi Freedom demonstrates clear cut instances of ideologically based bureaucratic infighting in the I2 model. These instances of I2 have been shown to be wholly different in character from previously described models of bureaucratic infighting under the party politics or Allisonian paradigms. Furthermore, this infighting has been shown to have been at least partially responsible for the failure of the United States to achieve its core war aims in Iraq. The reality is that this infighting prevented the full resources of the United States government from being directed toward the war. As Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs William Burns states, "Sometimes it seemed like we were spending more time fighting with each other in DC than with people in the Middle East."<sup>182</sup> Without such intense levels of infighting within the foreign policy

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<sup>182</sup> William Burns, Cyril Foster Lecture, University of Oxford, 26 November 2009.

community, it is likely that the Bush Administration's Iraq policies would have been met with at least marginally more success.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CASE STUDY II: IRAN REBUFFED

In the jubilant spring days following the quick toppling of Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime, the mood in Washington was buoyant, especially amongst those who supported the war. Democracy was thought to be on the march in the Middle East, and early military successes in Iraq left neoconservative strategists and their partners in policy feeling optimistic about their transformative plans for the region and looking for the next target. "Hey, Jay, you want to do Iran?" Bush asked General Garner, gamely slapping him on the back, in June 2003 after a briefing by Garner on the status of reconstruction activities in Iraq.<sup>1</sup>

"Sir, the boys and I talked about that and we want to hold out for Cuba. We think the rum and the cigars are a little better," Garner replied.<sup>2</sup>

Although this exchange was made in jest, it shows that the neoconservative agenda of creating security through regime change had more ambitious plans than just Iraq, and that Iran was a candidate high on the list. Given the decades-long history of political enmity between Washington and Tehran, this is not surprising. The post-1979 Iranian-American relationship is one of the most difficult in all of diplomacy, and on the

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<sup>1</sup> Bob Woodward, *State of Denial* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 224.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

surface, the country fit the bill for regime change— a radical, human rights abusing, undemocratic country that suppressed dissent and seemed to be much farther along the path to developing deliverable nuclear weapons than Saddam ever was.

Yet while the American relationship with Iran is one of the most acrid in international relations, it is also among the most complex. The two countries have a history of quietly working behind closed doors to accomplish things of mutual interest on the rare occasion when the two states' priorities align. The most infamous of these, of course, is represented by the Iran-Contra scandal, in which the Reagan Administration funneled arms to Iran via Israel in exchange for assistance with the release of American hostages held by Shia militants in Lebanon.<sup>3</sup> A more recent and less sordid example of Iranian-American cooperation, however, occurred in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, after which Iran offered historically unprecedented levels of material assistance to the United States for its war against the Afghan Taliban. This cooperation, the bulk of which took place between 2001 and 2003, was swathed in realist pragmatism and may have been the closest that the two countries have ever come to normalizing their relations; it certainly represents the most intimate working relationship between the US and Iran since the Islamic Revolution. Yet as the evidence shows, ideological qualms stemming from the neoconservative camp led to the shutting down of these contacts and a rapid shift away from cooperating with Tehran and toward threatening it with Iraqi-style regime change. This shift ultimately contributed not only to an erosion in any gains that had been made in the direct US-Iran relationship, but also to the American failure to achieve other major policy goals, including discouraging Iran

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<sup>3</sup> John Tower, *The Tower Commission Report* (New York: Bantam, 1987).

from pursuing nuclear weapons, encouraging liberal democracy in the country, and stemming Tehran's support for terrorism.

## **KEY PLAYERS**

While the central cast of characters discussed at length in the previous chapter continues to play a large role in the case of US policy toward Iran, there are also some additional individuals, including realists, neoconservatives, and defense hawks, who were key players in the bureaucratic conflict that broke out over this issue. It is thus necessary to introduce them and their ideological outlooks here.

## **NEOCONSERVATIVES**

### *Michael Ledeen*

Michael Ledeen is an interesting character to study regarding infighting within the foreign policy bureaucracy because, strictly speaking, he was not actually a government official between the years of 2001 and 2006. Instead, Ledeen held the Freedom Scholar chair at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), a Washington think tank that has long been hospitable to neoconservative scholars, including Irving Kristol and Paul Wolfowitz.<sup>4</sup> Ledeen, having received his PhD in European history from the University of Wisconsin—not known as a hotbed of neoconservative thought—does not have as

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<sup>4</sup> Foundation for Defense of Democracies, "Foundation for Defense of Democracies Welcomes Michael Ledeen," 22 September 2008, [http://www.defenddemocracy.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=11782313&Itemid=351](http://www.defenddemocracy.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=11782313&Itemid=351) (accessed 26 Feb 2011). See also American Enterprise Institute, "Contact List of AEI Scholars and Fellows," <http://www.aei.org/scholars#K> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

clear a neoconservative academic pedigree as individuals like Wolfowitz do.<sup>5</sup> Although he is readily described in the media as a “leading neocon theoretician,” it was already determined in the previous chapter that that is not on its own enough to justify the neoconservative label.<sup>6</sup> To classify Ledeen, we must return to Fukuyama’s tenets of neoconservatism, to which, as we shall see, Ledeen’s views hew closely.

As recalled from Chapter Two, Fukuyama’s four tenets of neoconservatism include:

- A belief that the internal character of regimes matters and that foreign policy must reflect the deepest values of liberal democratic societies.
- A belief that American power has been and could be used for moral purposes, and that the United States needs to remain engaged in international affairs.
- A distrust of ambitious social engineering projects.
- Skepticism about the legitimacy and effectiveness of international law and institutions to achieve either security or justice.<sup>7</sup>

As noted previously, the distrust of social engineering projects can be discounted for this exercise, since it refers to domestic concerns of neoconservatives regarding the welfare state. The remaining three points, however, are hugely well represented by Ledeen in his writing, particularly those writings regarding Iran. The first, the belief in the importance of the internal character of regimes and that foreign policy must reflect liberal democratic values, is at the core of much of Ledeen’s work. He has consistently

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<sup>5</sup> Foundation for Defense of Democracies, "Foundation for Defense of Democracies Welcomes Michael Ledeen."

<sup>6</sup> John Laughland, "Flirting with Fascism," *The American Conservative*, 30 June 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Fukuyama, *After the Neocons : America at the Crossroads*, (London: Profile, 2006), 48-49.

criticized the Iranian regime—a “mullahcracy,” as he dubs it— for its human rights abuses, calling it both “hollow” and “evil” and its leaders “torture masters.”<sup>8</sup>

Following from this condemnation of the internal character of the Iranian regime come Ledeen’s persistent calls upon the United States to take an active role in changing that regime.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, he has been one of the loudest advocates of intervention in Iran on behalf of anti-government forces, calling for US foreign policy to set as a primary goal the instigation of a new revolution in Tehran. Ledeen states his case bluntly, declaring that “It’s both morally right and strategically sound to support revolution in Iran.”<sup>10</sup>

Ledeen also unequivocally disdains any US policy toward Iran that stops short of effecting regime change, lamenting that “Our miserable policy, which is to chant ‘we don’t want regime change, we want a change in behavior,’ is doomed, as the whole world has known from the get-go.”<sup>11</sup> Such statements represent Ledeen throwing down a proverbial gauntlet at realism, which focuses entirely on state actions, not state character. Even the act of negotiation, no matter how hard-nosed, is seen by Ledeen as repulsive and inadequate. In a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, Ledeen thoroughly disparaged further talks with Iran, arguing that “Washington diplomats have steadfastly refused to see the Iranian regime for what it is: a relentless enemy that seeks to dominate or destroy us. This

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Ledeen, “The Hollow Regime,” *National Review Online*, 29 July 2008, <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/225154/hollow-regime/michael-ledeen> (accessed 26 Feb 2011). See also Michael Ledeen, “Iran and the Problem of Evil,” (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 2008); Michael Ledeen, *The Iranian Time Bomb: The Mullah Zealots’ Quest for Destruction* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Ledeen does not, however, advocate for military regime change, preferring the US instead to provide material support for anti-regime Iranian activists. See Ledeen, *The Iranian Time Bomb: The Mullah Zealots’ Quest for Destruction*, 206-07.

<sup>10</sup> The Atlantic Council, “The Iran Debate: Transcript,” Washington, DC, 3 March 2010; available from <http://www.acus.org/event/iran-engagement-or-regime-change/transcript> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Michael Ledeen, “The Hollow Regime.”

blindness afflicted the first American negotiators shortly after the 1979 revolution, and has been chronic ever since, even though Iran declared war on us in that year and has waged it ever since.”<sup>12</sup>

The final point at issue is skepticism about the ability of international law and institutions to achieve security, something that Ledeen’s writings on Iran display in spades. This is particularly well illustrated by his frustration with the Western world’s insistence upon working through the IAEA and the United Nations Security Council to counter Iran’s nuclear program. In an editorial piece for the *National Review Online*, Ledeen compares the Iran situation with the process leading up to the Iraq War. “Twice in the past, the president slid into a similar funk, first permitting himself to be gulled by the Saudis into believing he had to make a deal with Arafat before he was entitled to liberate Iraq, then permitting the British to drag out the run-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom with endless votes in the Security Council.”<sup>13</sup> The clear implication is that waiting for institutions to move through their formal processes is slow and insufficient. This point is further underscored by Ledeen’s tendency to end a great deal of his articles on Iran with the imploration of “Faster, please,” referring to undertaking regime change operations in Iran.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, Ledeen’s neoconservative credentials are clearly apparent in his public writings for anyone to see—he does not shy away from his advocacy of regime change for the sake of righteousness as well as for creating security. Yet having shown Ledeen

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<sup>12</sup> Michael Ledeen, "Talking to Iran," *Wall Street Journal*, 18 August 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Ledeen, "Drifting," *National Review Online*, 31 May 2005, <http://old.nationalreview.com/ledeen/ledeen200505310823.asp> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>14</sup> Laura Rozen, "The Revolution Next Time," *Boston Globe*, 10 October 2004.

to be neoconservative, there is still the matter of connecting him to the foreign policy bureaucracy, given that he was not a government official during the timeframe of this study. Ledeen had, however, worked in very high echelons of the US government before, especially dealing with Iran. In particular, Ledeen was an instrumental figure in the Iran-Contra Scandal that embroiled the Reagan Administration. As a hired personal consultant to National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane, Ledeen conducted a good deal of the legwork involving both Israeli and Iranian contacts. As documented in the Final Report of the Independent Counsel for Iran/Contra Affairs:

McFarlane dispatched Michael Ledeen, an NSC consultant, in the spring of 1985 to sound out Israeli officials about the possibility of establishing contacts inside Iran, in hopes of building ties with more moderate factions there. During the 1985 arms shipments, Ledeen acted as a conduit for information between Israeli officials, Israeli and Iranian arms brokers, and the NSC staff. By using Ledeen as a private intermediary, McFarlane pretended not to have official NSC involvement in these overtures. Ledeen said he “had an understanding with Mr. McFarlane that neither of us would keep anything in writing regarding this initiative.”<sup>15</sup>

Clearly Ledeen had much experience influencing the foreign policy apparatus from the outside. After Iran-Contra, Ledeen preserved his contacts throughout the Clinton years through his continued work in the Washington think tank world, and was well placed to once again be influential with the ascendance of the George W. Bush Administration. Specifically, Ledeen had regular meetings with chief Bush political advisor Karl Rove, whom he met after Bush’s election. According to Ledeen, “He [Rove] said, ‘Anytime you have a good idea, tell me.’”<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, “Every month or

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<sup>15</sup> US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, "Final Report of the Independent Counsel for Iran/Contra Affairs," by Lawrence Walsh, Washington, DC, 1993, 79; available from [http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/walsh/chap\\_01.htm](http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/walsh/chap_01.htm) (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Edsall and Dana Milbank, "White House's Roving Eye for Politics," *Washington Post*, 10 March 2003.

six weeks, Ledeen [would] offer Rove ‘something you should be thinking about.’ More than once, Ledeen has seen his ideas, faxed to Rove, become official policy or rhetoric.”<sup>17</sup> While the potential to overestimate one’s own personal influence for the sake of ego is ever present, Ledeen’s account of his persuasive effects regarding thought toward Iran amongst neoconservative circles within the Bush Administration bureaucracy is corroborated by others. According to William Beeman, “If the United States ends up in an extended shooting war throughout the Middle East, it will be largely due to his [Ledeen’s] inspiration...Ledeen’s ideas are quoted daily by such figures as Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz. His views virtually define the stark departure from American foreign policy philosophy that has characterized United States actions since Sept. 11, 2001.”<sup>18</sup>

Fulfilling a similar role to that which he had had during his involvement in Iran-Contra, Ledeen, in addition to his personal meetings with Rove, was formally retained as consultant at the Pentagon by Undersecretary Feith.<sup>19</sup> In this capacity he again handled special—secret—meetings with foreign agents regarding Iran. As will be discussed in further detail below, Ledeen’s meetings, most notably a series that occurred in Italy in late 2001 and early 2002, were a key means of ideological infighting that neoconservatives, particularly Feith and Wolfowitz, used to undermine what were at the time very productive breakthroughs with Iran regarding Afghanistan. In this way, Ledeen is shown to be a critical instrument of the I2 model regarding Iran despite the fact

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> William Beeman, "Michael Ledeen: Neoconservative Guru," *The Daily Star*, 9 May 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Joshua Michah Marshall, Laura Rozen, and Paul Glastris, "Iran-Contra II?" *Washington Monthly*, October 2004.

that he was not an appointed or career member of the Bush Administration. His ad hoc employment and the particular status that he held make him a critical player in the bureaucratic infighting that played out over American foreign policy toward Iran.

## REALISTS

### *James Dobbins*

James Dobbins, who was appointed by President Bush to be the first US Special Envoy to Afghanistan, has the academic and professional pedigree of a consummate international relations realist. Dobbins received a bachelor's degree in international affairs from Georgetown's Walsh School of Foreign Service, known for being an institution that takes an unsentimental, practitioner's view of international relations.<sup>20</sup> Following graduation, Dobbins served three years in the US Navy, which included deployment to Vietnam.<sup>21</sup> After leaving the military, Dobbins began his work as a career foreign service officer. In this capacity, he spent over twenty years representing both Republican and Democratic presidents on a number of challenging issues, including the American military interventions in Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo.<sup>22</sup> Following the September 11 attacks in 2001, Dobbins was appointed by Bush to be the American representative to anti-Taliban Afghan opposition groups.<sup>23</sup> After the success of the NATO invasion in toppling the Taliban regime, Dobbins then served as the American

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<sup>20</sup> Department of State, "James F. Dobbins Biography," [http://www.state.gov/www/about\\_state/biography/dobbins\\_james.html](http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/biography/dobbins_james.html) (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> RAND Corporation, "James Dobbins Biography," [http://www.rand.org/about/people/d/dobbins\\_james.html](http://www.rand.org/about/people/d/dobbins_james.html) (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

representative to the Bonn talks that designed and installed a new Afghan government, to which he subsequently presented his credentials as Special Envoy.

In the course of his Afghan work, Dobbins became perhaps the single American with the most intimate, direct dealings with Iranian diplomats since 1979. The Bonn negotiations, in particular, afforded him daily interactions, both personal and professional, with the Iranian negotiating team.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, these interactions led to significant American strategic gains in Afghanistan, as will be discussed in more detail below. These negotiated successes have contributed to Dobbins's realist ethos regard Iran, something that his writings on the subject exemplify. Analytical in style, they focus on the American strategic advantage that can be gained by opening up regular channels of communication with Iran. Dobbins writes:

Engagement may not always produce accommodation, but it always yields information, which helps to create better policy. Thus, even failed negotiations are better than no negotiation at all...Sanctions and negotiations are not alternatives, and there is no reason for the United States to deny itself one means of influencing Iran because it is employing another...US officials will be in a far better position to assess and act on...opportunities-- when and if they occur-- if they have developed better information on Iran's intentions and some ongoing insight into its internal policy debates. Clandestine intelligence may provide occasional insights on such matters, but the simplest approach to gathering such information is to simply ask, and this often also produces the best results.<sup>25</sup>

Dobbins's take on negotiation as a useful tool for means beyond merely achieving a settled result strongly echoes the pragmatic realism of Morgenthau, who emphasizes the usefulness of employing "a skilled and flexible diplomacy."<sup>26</sup> Dobbins is clearly and

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<sup>24</sup> James Dobbins, "Negotiating with Iran: Reflections from Personal Experience," *Washington Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (2010).

<sup>25</sup> Dobbins, "Negotiating with Iran: Reflections from Personal Experience."

<sup>26</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th ed. (New York: Knopf, 1985), 17.

narrowly focused on ascertaining and serving the national interest of the United States as a player in the international system of states. Dobbins in fact readily identifies himself as a “Realist...which means a focus on what works based on experience.”<sup>27</sup>

His emphasis on diplomacy, however, does leave room for the possibility that military action may come to be in America’s national interest. Dobbins acknowledges that “There can be an honest debate over whether war with Iran-- instigated by either the United States or Israel-- is preferable to living with an Iranian nuclear capability and acting to deter its use. If [the President] becomes convinced that war is the better option, then threatening a preemptive attack is a reasonable prelude to launching one-- a gesture designed both to give fair warning and secure domestic and international support.”<sup>28</sup>

Despite this openness to the use of force if deemed necessary, what separates Dobbins from his neoconservative counterparts is his relative unconcern with the internal nature of the Iranian regime; he refrains from demonizing the Iranian leadership or harping on their supposed fanaticism or irrationality as Ledeen does. Yet again, however, this does not mean that Dobbins is opposed to attempts to liberalize Iranian political culture. With his RAND Corporation colleagues, Dobbins recommends taking steps to encourage reform within Iran:

The United States can foster Iranian tendencies and policies that favor greater personal freedoms by communicating with the Iranian government; encouraging more discussion among Iranians about social, political, and economic issues; and sponsoring more contacts and interactions between Iranians and Americans. The U.S. government should fund educational and diplomatic exchanges more generously, encourage U.S. officials to speak to Iranian media,

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<sup>27</sup> James Dobbins, interview by author, 13 September 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Dobbins, "Negotiating with Iran: Reflections from Personal Experience."

and expand U.S.-supported broadcasts in local languages as a forum for discussion of major social issues.

The United States can also promote changes to liberalize the Iranian economy, potentially strengthening the private sector and weakening the sway of the religious establishment. To this end, the United States should not oppose Iran's accession to the World Trade Organization and should support efforts by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to encourage better economic management in the country.<sup>29</sup>

Critical to note, however, is the fact that Dobbins does not recommend encouraging liberalization for its own sake or because the Iranian regime is "evil," as neoconservatives argue. He advocates these steps because they are in the long-term American national interest in achieving its strategic objectives with Iran and in the context of the broader politics of the Gulf region as a whole. Above all, Dobbins's take on Iran resonates with patience, in sharp contrast to Ledeen's "faster, please" rhetoric that characterizes the neoconservatives. Comparing the two ideologies side-by-side as embodied by Ledeen and Dobbins, especially regarding the question of Iran, makes it starkly apparent why proponents of these two ways of thought would fall into serious and severe conflict with each other inside the bureaucracy.

## DEFENSE HAWKS

### *John Bolton*

It is in the bureaucratic machinations surrounding the debate on the appropriate posture to take toward Iran that John Bolton makes his first important appearance for this study. From 2001 to 2005, Bolton served in the State Department as Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, then as US Permanent Representative

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<sup>29</sup> Keith Crane, James Dobbins, and Clifford Grammich, "A Better Deal: 12 Suggestions for the US President-- Iran," *RAND Review* 32, no. 3 (2008).

to the UN from 2005 to 2006.<sup>30</sup> Bolton, however, is a difficult person to classify ideologically. Although an examination of his professional statements and actions indicates a high degree of correlation with parts of Fukuyama's definition of a neoconservative, Bolton himself rejects the neocon label. For example, in comments to Conservative Party delegates in London, Bolton flatly stated that he "was not and had never been a neoconservative."<sup>31</sup> As his chief qualm with the ideology, Bolton states its idealistic belief in the benefits of democracy to moderate state behavior. As Bolton puts it, "They [neocons] have somewhat - I would say excessively - Wilsonian views about the benefits of democracy."<sup>32</sup> Bolton echoes these sentiments again in an exchange on the current affairs show *Hardball* with Chris Matthews. When Matthews asserts that "It is the [George W. Bush] Administration's position that elections are magic," Bolton counters, saying that "Indeed that is the Administration's position, but it's not mine."<sup>33</sup> Thus, Bolton rejects Fukuyama's first tenet of neoconservatism, "A belief that the internal character of regimes matters and that foreign policy must reflect the deepest values of liberal democratic societies."<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, Bolton, like fellow nationalistic defense hawks Cheney and Rumsfeld, has shown himself to be extremely ideologically sympathetic to the neoconservatives' Middle East foreign policy goals, if not all of the reasoning behind

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<sup>30</sup> American Enterprise Institute, "AEI Scholars and Fellows: John E. Bolton," <http://www.aei.org/scholar/121> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Ros Taylor, "Bolton Calls for Bombing of Iran," *The Guardian Online*, 30 September 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2007/sep/30/conservatives.iran> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> John Bolton, interview by Chris Matthews, *Hardball with Chris Matthews*, NBC, originally aired 14 November 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Fukuyama, *After the Neocons : America at the Crossroads*, 48.

them. Bolton was a member of the neoconservative Project for the New American Century and was a signatory of the group's open letter to President Clinton on Iraq.<sup>35</sup> Most concretely, Bolton is known as a fierce unilateralist and near-rabid skeptic of international law and institutions-- the United Nations in particular. One especially infamous quote that came to light during Bolton's confirmation process as Undersecretary of State was his belief that "If the U.N. Secretariat building in New York lost 10 stories, it wouldn't make a bit of difference."<sup>36</sup>

Bolton, too, is extremely skeptical of negotiated solutions to arms control issues, especially as regarding Iran and North Korea.<sup>37</sup> At times, this opposition appeared almost hostile. He once slammed supporters of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty as "misguided individuals following a timid and neo-pacifist line of thought."<sup>38</sup> This position on international law and institutions is strongly aligned with Fukuyama's fourth neoconservative tenet, "Skepticism about the legitimacy and effectiveness of international law and institutions to achieve either security or justice."<sup>39</sup> Hence, during his tenure first as Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and then as US Permanent Representative to the UN, Bolton's ideology regarding the main mandates of those positions lined up very closely with neoconservative thinking. Thus, like Cheney and

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<sup>35</sup> Elliott Abrams et al., "Letter to President Clinton on Iraq," Project for a New American Century, 26 January 1998, <http://www.newamericancentury.org/iraqlintonletter.htm> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>36</sup> John Bolton, quoted in Jane Perlez, "Arms Control Nominee Defends Shifting View," *New York Times*, 30 March 2001.

<sup>37</sup> Adam Zagorin, "John Bolton: The Angriest Neocon," *Time Online*, 16 November 2007, <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1685063,00.html> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>38</sup> John Bolton, quoted in Perlez, "Arms Control Nominee Defends Shifting View."

<sup>39</sup> Fukuyama, *After the Neocons: America at the Crossroads*, 48-49.

Rumsfeld, Bolton co-opted himself to the neoconservative project for ideological reasons, though not necessarily pure neoconservative ones.

Finally, it is important here to make a note of Bolton's acerbic bureaucratic style, information about which came into harsh light during his confirmation hearings for the UN post. Bolton is widely known as a ferocious infighter who has been documented as being extremely unpleasant when working amongst equals and allegedly abusive with his subordinates.<sup>40</sup> According to a letter sent to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by former USAID contractor Melody Townsel, Bolton "once threw a file folder and a tape dispenser at an American businesswoman in Moscow, disparaged her weight and alleged she was gay in an attempt to get her to withdraw criticism of a foreign-aid project."<sup>41</sup> Bolton is also alleged to have attempted, on more than one occasion, to fire subordinates who did not agree with him.<sup>42</sup> These harsh tendencies of Bolton's were well known within the Administration and, partly because of them, he was later sought out to be a bureaucratic enforcer of the neoconservative point of view within the more-realist State Department. As Bolton writes in his memoirs, when it came to issues of internal conflict between "[The Department of] State's bureaucracy" of "High-Minded accommodationists" and the coalition of neoconservatives and defense hawks, "I saw no alternative to incessant bureaucratic combat."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Lawrence Wilkerson, interview by author, 9 September 2010. See also Barbara Slavin, "UN Nominee Faces New Allegations of Verbal Abuse," *USA Today*, 24 April 2005.

<sup>41</sup> Barbara Slavin, "Woman Accuses Bolton of Harassment," *USA Today* 20 April 2005.

<sup>42</sup> Sonni Efron and Richard Serrano, "UN Nominee Faces New Bullying Accusations," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 April 2005.

<sup>43</sup> John Bolton, *Surrender Is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2007), 118.

## POLICY OBJECTIVES

As with the previous case study, it is important to enumerate the Bush Administration's specific policy objectives regarding Iran in order to determine whether or not these were successfully achieved. Once again, although there is a valid case to be made for the role that considerations of Israel played in developing the Administration's Iran policy—particularly from the side of the neoconservatives—the focus of this chapter will remain on publicly stated aims.<sup>44</sup> In this way, documentation is much more straightforward and less subject to interpretation and politically motivated criticism. Still, this is not to say that Israel was completely absent from the public rhetoric regarding Iran. However, as demonstrated in detail below, these mentions were contextualized into broader concerns about the Iranian government's support for terrorism generally, and so for these purposes can be folded into that goal.

In this exercise of itemizing American policy aims in Iran, a 2006 State Department policy document is instrumental. Entitled "The Iranian Regime: A Challenge to the World," the one-page policy paper clearly and concisely illuminates the policy concerns of the Bush Administration regarding Iran.<sup>45</sup> First, the document expresses respect and support for "the Iranian people," and that "The United States hopes one day soon to be the closest of friends with a free, sovereign, and democratic Iran."<sup>46</sup> The call for democracy is clear, as the paper goes on to further state support for "efforts to

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<sup>44</sup> See, for example, "Iran in the Crosshairs" in Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2007).

<sup>45</sup> Bureau of Public Affairs, "The Iranian Regime: A Challenge to the World," Department of State, 2006; available from <http://2001-2009.state.gov/documents/organization/65664.pdf> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

promote positive political change, economic prosperity, and freedom.”<sup>47</sup> One could be forgiven for not being completely clear on what, exactly, “freedom” as a standalone term means. In this case, the document goes on further to elaborate the types of liberal social reforms that “freedom” entails. Chiefly, the qualms lie with the Iranian government’s human rights record, which the paper accurately condemns as “abysmal.”<sup>48</sup> By tying human rights issues into democracy concerns, the paper is at once able to call for an Iranian democracy and reject Tehran’s assertions that the Islamic Republic is in fact democratic in its own way.

The second policy issue that the paper highlights is Iran’s “nuclear non-compliance.”<sup>49</sup> While acknowledging that Iran has a right to pursue peaceful nuclear technology under the terms of the Nonproliferation Treaty, the document asserts that “Iran has abused its Nonproliferation Treaty privileges for years in its pursuit of nuclear weapons” and “Pursued a clandestine nuclear program for 18 years.”<sup>50</sup> Thus, the policy paper makes it clear that preventing a nuclear-armed Iran is a top American priority.

The last issue that the policy paper emphasizes is intolerance for Iran’s “support of terrorism.”<sup>51</sup> This issue is further broken down into three sub-issues. These complaints assert that Iran has:

- Refused to start judicial proceedings against, render to countries of origin, or identify publicly senior al-Qa'ida members.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

- Played a high profile role in encouraging anti-Israeli terrorist activity, including public threats to wipe Israel off the map as well as provision of financial and military assistance to Hizbullah and Palestinian extremists, enabling them to launch terrorist attacks.
- Provided financial and lethal support, including explosives-related components, to Iraqi Shia militants who have attacked Coalition forces.<sup>52</sup>

The extremely interesting thing about this terrorism qualm, in particular, is that the first and the third sub-points hearken to issues that the United States was directly dealing with in talks with the Iranians over Afghanistan. As the evidence below will demonstrate, Ambassador Dobbins discussed specific al-Qaeda militants with his Iranian counterparts, and the obstinacy that the paper refers to developed primarily *after* talks with Iran were restricted and the country was cited as a member of the “Axis of Evil.” Furthermore, the difficulties regarding the Shia militias in Iran can, as we shall see, also be traced back to the breakdown in communication after Bonn and serve as evidence of policy failure resulting from infighting concurrent with the I2 model.

Thus, American policy goals regarding Iran can be distilled to three simple points:

1. Prevent Iran from pursuing weapons of mass destruction (especially nuclear weapons);
2. Stem Iranian state support for terrorism; and
3. Promote liberal democracy.

What is immediately apparent from this list is how nearly identical these policy goals are to the goals regarding Iraq that were discussed in the previous chapter. Through this similarity, we see that these two cases are good bases of comparison from a methodological viewpoint, as they are directly congruent. Furthermore, as discussed

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

below, the means of pursuing these goals, unfortunately, were no less riddled with ideological infighting in this case than with Iraq; as a result, the policy outcomes were also no more successful.

## **SABOTAGING STATE: HORIZONTAL I2**

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks in 2001, Osama bin Laden and the al-Qaeda network became public enemy number one for the United States. Having endured the deadliest attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor, the United States was looking to exact swift and devastating revenge on the perpetrators, and was willing to accept help in doing so from almost any quarter. The attacks had, after all, emanated from the lawless mountains of Afghanistan, an area far outside the traditional American sphere of influence, necessitating the intelligence and operational assistance of countries that had more experience operating in the region. As Ambassador Dobbins writes, “There is a popular perception that the United States spent that fall [2001] forming a broad international coalition and overthrowing the Taliban. It would be more accurate to state that, prompted by the attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., the United States moved to join an existing coalition that had been trying to overthrow the Taliban since the mid-1990s.”<sup>53</sup> Some in this existing coalition, like India, were American allies. Others, however, like Russia, were traditional rivals. And still others, like Iran, were avowed enemies.

The sympathy that Iran expressed toward the United States after 9/11 was quite remarkable. Iranian President Khatami personally condemned the attacks and expressed condolences for the American people; his actions were later mirrored by both the mayor

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<sup>53</sup> Dobbins, "Negotiating with Iran: Reflections from Personal Experience."

of Tehran and numerous solidarity protestors who took to the streets to demonstrate against terrorism in general.<sup>54</sup> This uncharacteristic and very open display of empathy for the United States was all the more impressive given its juxtaposition to the reaction of others in the region—some Palestinians, for example, were seen celebrating the attacks in the streets and Saddam Hussein said that the attacks were the result of America’s “evil policy” and theorized they were carried out by the CIA.<sup>55</sup>

It is true, however, that while stunning, this outpouring of Iranian sympathy for the United States was not borne entirely of altruism. The Iranian government had, for years, been struggling against terrorist attacks emanating from the Mujahedin e-Khalq (MEK), a cultish opposition group that based its operations in Iraq and also had a history of cooperation with the Taliban.<sup>56</sup> The United States also listed the MEK as a terrorist organization and had in fact been the victim of its attacks in the past.<sup>57</sup> Iranian leaders thus realized that the United States would turn the 9/11 attacks into a major international action against terrorism and saw the potential for, at the very least, tactical synergy. Still, despite the mutual interests that the Iranians perceived in the young American war on terror, these in no way indicate that their overtures to the United States were anything less than sincere.

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<sup>54</sup> Azadeh Moaveni, "Sympathy for the Devil," *Time*, 24 September 2001.

<sup>55</sup> Fox News Online, "Arafat Horrified by Attacks, but Thousands of Palestinians Celebrate; Rest of World Outraged," 12 September 2001, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,34187,00.html>. See also Nazila Fathi, "After the Attacks; Reaction from around the World," *New York Times*, 13 September 2001.

<sup>56</sup> Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism*, Department of State, 2006; available from <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2006/82738.htm> (accessed 26 Feb 2011). See also Paul Hastert, "Al Qaeda and Iran: Friends or Foes, or Somewhere in Between?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 4 (2007).

<sup>57</sup> Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism*.

This aligning of interests was not lost on American officials with expertise on Iran. As the United States scrambled for capable allies in its fight against al-Qaeda and the Taliban government that sheltered it, it became clear that Iranian cooperation could be a major asset. As Dobbins asserts, aside from concerns about MEK, the Iranians had been engaged in a low-grade conflict with al-Qaeda and the Taliban for years, not least because of the radical Sunni group's ideological antipathy to Iran's Shia theology.<sup>58</sup> As Bruce Riedel points out, "The clash between Sunni jihadist and Shia thus forces al Qaeda into an antagonistic posture toward the one prominent Shia power on earth today, the Islamic Republic of Iran."<sup>59</sup> This antagonism blossomed into a tangible military hostility between Iran and al-Qaeda through proxy warfare in Afghanistan. As Trita Parsi notes, "Throughout the 1990s, Iran had been the primary sponsor of the Northern Alliance, a group of anti-Taliban forces...Iran had armed and funded the Northern Alliance at a time when the United States was turning a blind eye to the Taliban's human rights violations and its support for terror."<sup>60</sup>

Because of the official diplomatic antagonism that existed between the United States and Iran, their cooperation on Afghanistan had to be quiet so as to avoid angering hardliners in both countries. Still, the collaboration between the two countries proved to be productive and fruitful. The Iranians "provided considerable assistance to Operation Enduring Freedom. Tehran offered to allow American transport aircraft to stage from

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<sup>58</sup> Dobbins, "Negotiating with Iran: Reflections from Personal Experience." See also Bruce Riedel, *The Search for Al Qaeda: Its Leadership, Ideology, and Future* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, 2010), 13.

<sup>59</sup> Riedel, *The Search for Al Qaeda: Its Leadership, Ideology, and Future*, 13.

<sup>60</sup> Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 226.

airfields in eastern Iran to assist operations in western Afghanistan. It agreed to perform search-and-rescue missions for downed American airmen who bailed out over Iran. The Iranians allowed an American freighter packed with humanitarian supplies to off-load its cargo at their port of Chah Bahar.”<sup>61</sup> Iran was also instrumental in convincing the Northern Alliance to cooperate with the United States, and was further helpful in apprehending a Qaeda official who had attempted to flee into Iran.<sup>62</sup>

## THE GENEVA CHANNEL

The intense coordination that such close strategic cooperation demanded necessarily entailed a high level of face-to-face talks between American and Iranian representatives. Starting in October 2001, the respective diplomats from Tehran and Washington began a series of secret meetings in France and Switzerland known as the Geneva Channel; these talks were convened under the auspices of Lakhdar Brahimi of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.<sup>63</sup> Given the political sensitivities involved in this endeavor, however, other measures besides secrecy had to be enacted to give political cover through plausible deniability. Among these measures was the inclusion of German and Italian delegates to minimize the appearance of bilateral negotiations between Iran and the United States.<sup>64</sup> These delegates were essentially, however, window dressing. The real show was between the US and Iran. As Trita Parsi notes and

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<sup>61</sup> Kenneth Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle* (New York: Random House, 2004), 346.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 347.

<sup>63</sup> Dobbins, "Negotiating with Iran: Reflections from Personal Experience."

<sup>64</sup> Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, 227-28.

Dobbins confirms, “In reality...the discussions were bilateral and the highest-level contacts between officials of the two countries since the Iran-Contra scandal.”<sup>65</sup>

The Geneva Channel itself was in fact instigated by the United States when James Dobbins reached out to Iran via Brahimi and offered himself for meetings, which the Iranians quickly accepted. In doing so, Dobbins had the full support of Powell and the realist elements of the State Department, who saw cooperation on Afghanistan as a rare strategic opening to permanently improving relations with Iran through expanded anti-Qaeda coordination that included improved US relations in return for Tehran’s distancing itself from anti-Israeli militia groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.<sup>66</sup>

The Iranian-American cooperation that came out of the Geneva Channel was hugely productive and helped contribute to the quick defeat of the Taliban, which culminated in the Bonn Conference of December 2001, the meeting that established Afghanistan’s new governing structure. According to Dobbins, it was the Iranians who insisted upon making sure that the new Afghan government would be democratic.<sup>67</sup> Dobbins recalls, almost with warmth, the productivity of his meetings with the Iranian diplomats, with whom he shared a German government guest house during the negotiations, often eating breakfast with his Iranian counterparts—something unheard of in the diplomatic history of Iranian-American relations since 1979.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 228; Dobbins, interview by author.

<sup>66</sup> Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, 228. See also Dobbins, "Negotiating with Iran: Reflections from Personal Experience."

<sup>67</sup> Dobbins, "Negotiating with Iran: Reflections from Personal Experience."

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

Indeed, the experience of the autumn of 2001 convinced those at State who had worked with the Iranians that they were sincere in their efforts and that there might be an opening to expand contacts to encompass discussions of a broader range of American-Iranian issues.<sup>69</sup> After all, what the American negotiating team had accomplished was really quite remarkable. As Kenneth Pollack writes, “without really trying, the Bush administration had achieved what the Clinton administration had spent nearly four fruitless years pursuing: it had face-to-face talks with Iranian officials, who were willing to discuss a variety of issues, and there were hints of a willingness to normalize relations on the part of the Iranian government.”<sup>70</sup> Sensing this willingness, the American negotiating team quietly started putting together talking points in the anticipation of expanded discussions with the Iranians—without official approval from Department authorities.<sup>71</sup>

## WHEN IN ROME

Neoconservatives, however, grew increasingly unsettled as word spread around Washington of the newfound working relationship between the Iranian and American diplomats in Europe. Neoconservatives had hoped that the war in Afghanistan, as the first battle of the War on Terror, would be just the first step in the so-called “creative destruction” that they sought in reforming the Middle East into a series of democracies.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Dobbins, interview by author.

<sup>70</sup> Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 350.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Michael Ledeen, “Creative Destruction,” *National Review Online*, 20 September 2001, <http://old.nationalreview.com/contributors/ledeen092001.shtml> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

They outlined as much in an open letter from PNAC to President Bush in the days after 9/11, pegging—in addition to Afghanistan— Iraq, Iran, Syria, and the Palestinian Authority all as potential targets in the War on Terror.<sup>73</sup> The engagement with Iran that was secretly happening in Europe was thus anathema to these plans, as it was aimed at working with the existing regime rather than overthrowing it. Thus, a “small, tight-knit group of neoconservative hard-liners on Iran favoring regime change in Tehran were determined to put an end to Powell’s diplomacy.”<sup>74</sup> This was, however, easier said than done, since the cooperation had the support of the State Department at the very highest levels. The only way to shut it down would be to get another one of the principals—likely Cheney or Rumsfeld—to convince the President to shut it down. This was unlikely, however, as the cooperation was yielding useful policy results in Afghanistan. Thus, since it was determined that they wouldn’t be able to get Washington to call off the talks, the next best option would be to provoke Tehran into cutting them off.

In an attempt to undermine the Geneva Channel, prominent neoconservative Michael Ledeen, who was serving as a consultant to Defense Undersecretary Doug Feith, arranged a series of meetings in Rome in December 2001 between American officials and a number of Iranian exiles.<sup>75</sup> The meetings were organized with the knowledge and support of Feith, but kept secret from both the Department of State and the CIA—the people who were actually working with the Iranians via Geneva. According to Dobbins, he was at the time completely unaware that certain members of the administration were

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<sup>73</sup> William Kristol et al., "Letter to President Bush on the War on Terrorism," Project for the New American Century, 20 September 2001; available from <http://www.newamericancentury.org/Bushletter.htm> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>74</sup> Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, 232.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

seeking to “actively undermine” his efforts with Iran.<sup>76</sup> Dobbins writes that “It was only several years later, on reading the memoirs of...George Tenet, that I learned that two Department of Defense (DOD) members of my team in Bonn had left in the midst of our negotiations to attend a clandestine meeting in Rome with people whom Tenet characterized as ‘violent’ opponents of the Iranian regime.”<sup>77</sup> Dobbins speculates that these unnamed exiled Iranians were members of the Mujahedin e-Khalq, the terrorist group that had in the past been implicated in the deaths of American citizens and which was dedicated to overthrowing the Islamic Republic.<sup>78</sup> The two staff members that Dobbins is referring to were later revealed by Tenet to be Harold Rhode—like Ledeen, a key figure in Iran-Contra—and Larry Franklin, a Defense Intelligence Agency Iran analyst.<sup>79</sup> Both worked directly for Feith.<sup>80</sup> Rounding out the group of attendees were the head of the Italian intelligence service, SISMI, and Manuchehr Ghorbanifar, infamous from his role in Iran-Contra.<sup>81</sup> Italian Defense Minister Antonio Martini, popular with neoconservatives in Washington, was also there.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Dobbins, interview by author.

<sup>77</sup> Dobbins, "Negotiating with Iran: Reflections from Personal Experience."

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Franklin later pleaded guilty to spying for Israel and is currently serving thirteen years in federal prison. See Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, 232. See also Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, 311.

<sup>80</sup> Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, 311.

<sup>81</sup> The meetings were in fact held in Rome because Ghorbanifar could not get a visa to the United States because of his scandalous past. Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, 232.

<sup>82</sup> Marshall, Rozen, and Glastris, "Iran-Contra II?"

According to Tenet and confirmed by Dobbins, the Rome meetings were aimed at trying to secure \$25 million in Defense Department funding to support their goal of overthrowing the Iranian government.<sup>83</sup> Tenet, who would normally as CIA director have to approve of any such covert coup efforts or contacts with foreign intelligence agents, was puzzled when he heard of the meeting, writing that it sounded like a probably illegal, “off-the-books covert-action program...[which] started to give the appearance of being ‘Son of Iran-Contra.’”<sup>84</sup> When Tenet sought clarification of the initiative from Deputy National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, he learned that Wolfowitz, too, was in on the secret Rome meetings, and had deliberately kept Tenet out of the loop.<sup>85</sup> After learning the full extent of how they had been played for fools by Ledeen, Feith, and Wolfowitz, Tenet and Powell-- who had also been informed about the suspicious meetings-- were furious and ordered that they be shut down, or they would take the matter up with President Bush directly.<sup>86</sup>

Although the meetings temporarily stopped, Tehran was not amused.<sup>87</sup> Once the Defense Department’s shenanigans had come to light, Iranian officials inevitably found out about them and “were infuriated that high-level U.S. officials would meet with Ghorbanifar and other Iranian exiles who...had turned against the clerical regime.”<sup>88</sup> The

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<sup>83</sup> Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, 311. See also Dobbins, "Negotiating with Iran: Reflections from Personal Experience."

<sup>84</sup> Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, 311-12.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 312.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 312-13.

<sup>87</sup> Even after Tenet and Powell’s intervention, Ledeen held several other meetings throughout 2002 and 2003, until he finally ceased under threat of a Congressional investigation and potential espionage charges. Marshall, Rozen, and Glastris, "Iran-Contra II?"

<sup>88</sup> Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, 233.

episode represented an enormous embarrassment to those at the State Department who had been working very hard on the Geneva Channel, and was a slap in the face to the Iranians, sending them a message that despite their cooperation and goodwill after 9/11, the Bush Administration was ungrateful and still committed to overthrowing the clerical regime. Especially given the unhappy history between Iran and the United States highlighted by 1953's CIA coup deposing Mossadeq, the idea of another shadowy overthrow attempt was exceptionally stinging. The Defense Department's ideological spy games had done their job—not only did they serve the neoconservative purpose of chipping away at Iranian-American cooperation, but they also represent a classic example of horizontal bureaucratic infighting, with the Department of Defense completely undermining realist forces at both the State Department and the CIA.

#### AXIS OF EVIL

This undermining of the State Department in Rome, however, was not the final nail in the coffin for American-Iranian cooperation, which continued, if haltingly, throughout the meetings, mostly because it was secret and so did not create much public outcry and thus demand a major political show-response. This was not the case, however, with the next major blow to Iranian-American relations, which came in the most public of all forums: the presidential state of the union address. During his remarks in 2002, Bush infamously referred to Iran, along with Iraq and North Korea, as “an axis of evil,” seeming to call these states out as next on the regime change list.<sup>89</sup> The grouping of Iran under this term came as a shock to everyone in the State Department

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<sup>89</sup> "Text of President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address," *Washington Post*, 29 January 2002.

who had been productively working with Iran for several months. According to Powell Chief of Staff Colonel Wilkerson, this was because State Department officials were deliberately not consulted on the text of the speech, which was written within the White House, under the watchful supervision of Vice-President Cheney. “Cheney directed that State never saw this [the text of the speech],” Wilkerson said.<sup>90</sup>

Still, the speech was not entirely without vetting, and both Condoleezza Rice and Stephen Hadley recommended that Iran be excluded from the grouping.<sup>91</sup> It was President Bush himself who insisted that the phrase be kept in. “It is very important for the American president at this point in history to speak very clearly about the evils the world faces...No question about it, North Korea, Iraq, and Iran are the biggest threats to peace at the time,” Bush said.<sup>92</sup> The phrase was attractive because it was bold and rang well with an American audience. Yet its possible effects on foreign relations were not, without State Department input, properly understood. “No one thought about the impact of those words,” Wilkerson said. “The speechwriters were so interested in rivaling other speechwriters, like those in the Reagan administration with the ‘Evil Empire’ and all that.”<sup>93</sup>

The impact of the phrase was swift and negative. As Rice and Hadley had warned, the line was hugely insulting to the Iranians and a major embarrassment to the country’s moderate establishment that had been driving the ongoing cooperation with the United States. According to Mohammad Ali Abtahi, who served as President Khatami’s

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<sup>90</sup> Lawrence Wilkerson, interview by author, 9 September 2010.

<sup>91</sup> Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 88.

<sup>92</sup> George W. Bush, quoted in Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 88.

<sup>93</sup> Wilkerson, interview by author.

vice-president for parliamentary and legal affairs from 2001 to 2004, “The very least expectation we had, at the height of our struggles for real reform, was not to be branded like this. Politically, it was an odd thing to do. We helped overthrow the Taliban— instead of opening a path for even greater cooperation, they turned to this slogan— the ‘Axis of Evil.’ That was Mr. Bush's biggest strategic and political blunder.”<sup>94</sup> President Khatami himself put it even blunter: “The axis of evil damaged relations. During our revolution, relations with America were bad. Now they were worse.”<sup>95</sup> The Iranians shortly after suspended their participation in the Geneva Channel for several months, their trust in the United States’ good faith badly bruised.<sup>96</sup>

This episode shows once again that the marginalization of the State Department was a reality, and primarily driven by ideologically minded forces within the White House and the Defense Department who had an interest in shutting down the Iranian relationship. As will be explored in further detail later in this chapter, their tactics, while representing successful bureaucratic infighting strategies, would prove toxic to the achievement of America’s policy goals.

## **A FOX IN THE HENHOUSE: BOLTON AT STATE AND VERTICAL I2**

The above cases of the undermining of the State Department’s diplomatic work underscore the severe tension that existed horizontally between agencies, especially between the State Department and the Department of Defense. Officials at State,

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<sup>94</sup> "Interview with Mohammad Ali Abtahi," *Frontline: Showdown with Iran*, PBS, 23 October 2007, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/showdown/interviews/abtahi.html>; (accessed 11 Feb 2011).

<sup>95</sup> Mohammad Khatami, quoted in Norma Percy, "Programme Three: Nuclear Confrontation," in *Iran & the West*, BBC, originally aired 4 July 2009.

<sup>96</sup> Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 353.

motivated by a realist ideology that drove them to conduct a results-oriented foreign policy that deemphasized concern with the nature of a regime and accepted that concessions were sometimes necessary for valuable breakthroughs, inevitably ran afoul of their counterparts in Defense, whose neocons and hawks were focused on the repugnance of the Iranian regime's ruling style and on extracting punishments for transgressions rather than just their cessation.

According to several former administration officials, one of the most deliberate in his attempts to frustrate the State Department was Vice President Cheney. Although, as already noted, Cheney "was not a neoconservative and would not subscribe to some of their more irrational beliefs," he did, according to Colonel Wilkerson, "form an unholy alliance with the neocons."<sup>97</sup> According to Parsi, Cheney and other "hard-liners in the White House worked strenuously to prevent Bush from going along with it [cooperation with Iran]."<sup>98</sup> Wilkerson concurs, saying that "Cheney and Rumsfeld were always there to sabotage our cooperation in Afghanistan if it got too far."<sup>99</sup> The reasons for this obstructionism are complex, since, as noted earlier, many of the chief proponents of the infighting in this case were conservative defense hawks and not true neoconservatives. Neoconservatives were generally concerned ideologically about the internal nature of the Iranian regime and the moral duty of the United States to seek its reform or change; defense hawks, on the other hand, were motivated by an intense national security focus that emphasized militarism and unilateralism. Both were skeptical of the ability of

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<sup>97</sup> Wilkerson, interview by author.

<sup>98</sup> Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, 228.

<sup>99</sup> Lawrence Wilkerson, quoted in Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, 228.

international law and institutions to alleviate Iran's perceived threat. Thus, they banded together to form an ideologically motivated bloc, even if the ideologies motivating the cooperation were not completely congruent. The similarities were, as the saying goes, good enough for government work.

These efforts by Cheney, Rumsfeld, and the neoconservative bloc to obstruct cooperation with Iran took on the typical form of vertical infighting. Chiefly, access to the main decisionmaking channels—in this case, the President—were blocked as often as possible to ensure that Cheney and, to an extent, Rumsfeld, could concentrate their personal influence over the President. According to Wilkerson, special roadblocks were put up in attempts to isolate Powell. “It was obvious that those two [Cheney and Rumsfeld] composed the power structure and skirted the statutory decision process.”<sup>100</sup> To these ends, “The link between Rumsfeld and Cheney was so solid that reporters would come to me saying, ‘You don’t know who is Vice President and who is Defense Secretary. They are so bonded.’”<sup>101</sup>

The vertical infighting artifice that Cheney and Rumsfeld established, however, was limited to the White House and the Pentagon, respectively. They had little recourse at the Department of State, which was, to them, a problem, as State held most of the cards on Iran. It housed nearly all the government's expertise on the country, and because the Iran problem was as yet still a diplomatic one and not a military one, it had more clout than the Defense Department. In order to try and extend the neocon/hawk reach into State and obstruct diplomacy with Iran, Cheney designated Undersecretary John Bolton

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<sup>100</sup> Wilkerson, interview by author.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

as his point person within the Department. “State Department officials had pegged him [Bolton] as an adversary, sent by hawkish Vice President Dick Cheney to keep an eye on the more moderate Powell.”<sup>102</sup> As discussed earlier, Bolton was a defense hawk with some strong neoconservative tendencies, and he had a reputation as a bureaucratic infighter and a humorless enforcer. According to Deputy Secretary Armitage, “Bolton was placed at the State Department by the vice-president... Unfortunately, if he [Bolton] wasn’t on your side... you couldn’t have a worse enemy.”<sup>103</sup>

Placing Bolton in the State Department in his particular undersecretary post put him in a bottleneck position on the organizational chart. Iran was chiefly a proliferation issue, and so fell under Bolton’s mandate. Therefore, almost all issues pertaining to Iran’s nuclear program emanating from the lower levels of the State Department bureaucracy would have to go through Bolton before they could get to Powell and out of State to places like the White House or the Pentagon. Thus, Bolton was a valve. He could decide what issues on Iran got priority and effectively muzzle those below him who disagreed with the neoconservative or hawkish viewpoint on Iran. Bolton was apparently very effective in this role. According to Wilkerson, Bolton made sure that “Every time Iran is passing through the process, it gets punted. The outcome is that you don’t get anything [accomplished] in [Bush’s] first term on Iran.”<sup>104</sup>

Bolton’s position on the State organizational chart also afforded him access to arms control intelligence data pertaining to Iran’s nuclear program. According to media

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<sup>102</sup> Sonni Efron, "Bolton's A Tough Guy with a Cause," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 May 2005. See also Wilkerson, interview by author.

<sup>103</sup> Richard Armitage, quoted in Percy, "Programme Three: Nuclear Confrontation."

<sup>104</sup> Wilkerson, interview by author.

accounts, Bolton was often in the office as early as 5:30 in the morning looking over intelligence reports, “including the sort of raw intelligence that critics say was not vetted and therefore unreliable.”<sup>105</sup> Bolton’s passion for intelligence appears to have been coupled with a disdain for traditional intelligence agencies in an attitude markedly similar to that of Wolfowitz and Feith. Bolton chose Frederick Fleitz, a CIA employee seconded to State, as his chief of staff to help him digest this raw intelligence, and “to ensure that he was not dependent for intelligence information solely on the State Department's own intelligence arm, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research...[because] Bolton and Fleitz mistrusted the bureau.”<sup>106</sup>

A tangible example of how Bolton’s vertical infighting—referred to by Armitage as “freelancing,” came to a head and directly impacted Iran policy comes from 2003.<sup>107</sup> Bolton, in his capacity as Undersecretary for Arms Control, was representing the United States at a meeting of the IAEA in Vienna. Bolton’s mandate from Powell for the meeting was to secure a vote to refer Iran to the Security Council for NPT noncompliance. This task necessarily involved a certain level of finesse and compromise to bring allies—already worn thin by the year’s experiences regarding Iraq—on board. Yet “Bolton instructed the U.S. mission at the agency not to compromise on any of the changes sought by other countries to a draft resolution.”<sup>108</sup> This is confirmed by Bolton himself, who writes in his memoirs that he sought a “tough” IAEA resolution on Iran, but was frustrated by Ken Brill, the American ambassador to the IAEA, who took his orders

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<sup>105</sup> Efron, “Bolton's A Tough Guy with a Cause.”

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

from Powell and refused to sacrifice relations with the IAEA member states in service of Bolton's hard line.<sup>109</sup> Brill, however, ultimately went over Bolton's head to either Powell or Armitage, who agreed that Bolton was being destructive to American policy goals and overruled him.<sup>110</sup> Bolton laments that he "still preferred to squeeze Iran harder...but the EU-3 had outmaneuvered us, with Powell's at least tacit support."<sup>111</sup>

The result of this episode of infighting was the worst of both worlds. The European allies were left wary about whether they could trust the United States to help them present a unified Western front on Iran, and were also confused about who actually represented the Administration—would their dealings with Brill be ultimately useless if he and realist colleagues at the State Department fell out of favor with the neocon-defense hawk alliance that held most of the strings in Washington? And for his part, Bolton is right when he complains that the IAEA, because of its internal divisions, was not especially persuasive with Iran, whose diplomats could exploit these divisions. Thus, the vertical infighting problems that Bolton's appointment within the State Department represent had concrete spillover effects to America's nonproliferation policy goals as pertaining to Iran.

## **WHY CURRENT MODELS DON'T FIT**

As in the previous chapter, having now outlined in detail cases of both vertical and horizontal bureaucratic infighting, it is now necessary to demonstrate that this

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<sup>109</sup> Bolton, *Surrender Is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations*, 141.

<sup>110</sup> Efron, "Bolton's A Tough Guy with a Cause."

<sup>111</sup> Bolton, *Surrender Is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations*, 146.

infighting was motivated by reasons different from the currently existing party politics and Allisonian models of bureaucratic conflict.

Once again, it is easiest to rule out the party politics model first, as nearly all of the key players involved in these episodes were Republicans. The only possible exception to this is Ambassador Dobbins who, as a career member of the bureaucracy, has been quiet about his personal party affiliations. He has worked successfully at very high levels in both Democratic and Republican administrations, however, which leads to the reasonable conclusion that Dobbins did not let his party politics, whatever they may be, get in the way of his professionalism.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, during the time period of this study, Dobbins was technically working not as a member of the career bureaucracy, but as a direct political appointee of President Bush.<sup>113</sup> Thus, while it is logically impossible to prove that Dobbins *wasn't* acting on behalf of his own party interests, whatever they are, it is a highly improbable event. Furthermore, given the intensely critical national security importance of the position that Dobbins undertook regarding Afghanistan, it is extremely unlikely that Bush and his vetting staff would have cleared Dobbins's appointment had there been even the slightest question about his motivations or loyalty to the President and his agenda.

Disregarding Dobbins, all of the other figures in these episodes readily acknowledge their Republican affiliations, including Bolton, Powell, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Ledeen. Furthermore, given the established history of strong intra-party disagreements amongst Republicans in particular over matters of foreign policy ideology,

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<sup>112</sup> RAND Corporation, "James Dobbins Biography."

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

the reasonable conclusion is that something other than party politics was driving the bureaucratic infighting seen regarding post-9/11 cooperation with Iran.<sup>114</sup>

This insufficiency of the party politics model thus leads naturally to examining next the Allisonian models of infighting as a possible explanation. First let us recall Allison's Model II, the organizational behavior model.<sup>115</sup> Recalling once again from Chapter Three, the organizational behavior model stipulates that bureaucratic conflict is chiefly the result of rigidities in different agencies' standard operating procedures that lock them into certain decision outputs that may not represent a rational actor's best assessment of an optimal choice. While this model is certainly plausible in analyzing other, less ideologically laden foreign policy decisions in US history, it proves wanting in the case of the American choice whether or not to cooperate with Iran on Afghan issues.

As with bureaucratic conflict regarding Iraq, Model II is most discredited in this chapter's particular case by the fact that perhaps at no other time in recent American history had the bureaucratic procedures been so loose and fluid. It is important to remember that the autumn of 2001 was an unprecedented time for the United States, representing the aftermath of the first foreign attack on US soil since Pearl Harbor, and standard operating procedures were fast falling by the wayside in order to achieve efficient results. Case in point is the State Department's strong support for face-to-face negotiations with the Iranians, first in dealing with the war in Afghanistan and then extending to Iranian-American relations themselves. All of this was in blatant and direct contravention of more than two decades of State Department standard operating

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<sup>114</sup> See Chollet and Goldgeier, "McCain's Choice."

<sup>115</sup> Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*.

procedures, which completely ruled out negotiations with Iran based on the formal severance of diplomatic relations in 1979. In recognizing the magnitude of the decision to cooperate with Iran, it is important to note what is actually entailed in cutting off diplomatic relations: at its core, it is a repudiation of relations framed under the 1961 Vienna Convention.<sup>116</sup> Thus, keeping in mind that relations between countries are governed by international treaty, it becomes starkly apparent what a remarkable breach of organizational procedure State's cooperation with Iran actually was.

Regarding the vertical infighting that was exemplified by Bolton's behavior at the State Department, it is again apparent that normal organizational procedures were not being followed. This is sharply pointed out by the language that Richard Armitage uses to describe Bolton's behavior—"freelancing"—which draws attention to the lack of decorum that Bolton exhibited.<sup>117</sup> Bolton's difficulty in following typical State Department protocol was indicated by the unusual measures that his superiors had to take to manage him. These included the special vetting of all his speeches by a member of Powell or Armitage's personal staff as well as a special "minder" being assigned to Bolton to ensure that he carried out—rather than made—policy.<sup>118</sup> Likewise, Bolton sought to have his personal assistant, Fleitz, travel to Vienna in turn to keep tabs on the American ambassador to the IAEA, something that was overruled by Bolton's superiors as "highly inappropriate."<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> *Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations*, (Vienna: United Nations Treaty Series, 1961).

<sup>117</sup> Efron, "Bolton's A Tough Guy with a Cause."

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

Thus, it is readily apparent that in the confusing months following the September 11 attacks, much of typical operating protocol was thrown out the window in the US government by those on both sides of the ideological aisle, realist and neoconservative. Clearly, then, Allison's Model II, which focuses on bureaucratic decision outputs as a result of standard operating procedures does not apply in this case.

This refutation of Model II leaves Allison's Model III as the only possible existing explanation for the bureaucratic infighting seen regarding Iran policy. Yet this model, too, is found wanting. Recalling once again from Chapter Three, Model III, the governmental politics model, sees government decisions as a result of competition between individuals and agencies of differing power levels, aspirations and priorities within the bureaucratic structure. Individual bureaucrats compete with each other to serve personal interests—for example, to increase their individual power or prestige or to set themselves up for career advancement—or to position their particular office or agency in a strong place vis a vis intragovernmental fights over things like budgetary appropriations.

Considering the episodes described in this chapter, there might be some reason to believe that Model III type considerations did play a part in the infighting that took place, particularly on the individual level. Sources have noted especially the feelings of rivalry exhibited toward Powell by Cheney, who was jealous of the Secretary of State's enormous popularity. According to Colonel Wilkerson, Cheney had never gotten over the fact that he would never be president, and the "lack of adult supervision" over Cheney by Bush presented the Vice President with "the opportunity to do what he always wanted

to do— be president.”<sup>120</sup> The fact that many groups had practically begged Powell to run for President throughout the 1990s particularly embittered Cheney, who once told Powell that he could “afford to lose a few polling points.”<sup>121</sup> Rumsfeld too, seemed to be driven at least in part by a desire to consolidate his own personal power. According to Wilkerson, “The only thing Rumsfeld cares about is personal power within the bureaucratic structure.”<sup>122</sup>

Still, there is strong reason to believe that while such individual power concerns under Model III were playing a role in the infighting, there is also a compelling case to be made that it was not the only motivator. As described by Allison, competition between bureaucrats—both individuals and agencies—is zero sum. If a player is not actively winning influence, he is actively losing it. Thus, logic dictates that while cooperation might exist between players if they are seeking to marginalize and eliminate others, eventually the game will reduce itself to two players that will inevitably turn on each other if accumulating power is indeed their underlying goal. Applied to the case of Iran negotiations, we would expect to see cracks emerging in the Cheney-Rumsfeld alliance after they had successfully marginalized Colin Powell, their mutual rival. The evidence, however, does not show this. Cheney and Rumsfeld remained cooperative, which leads to the conclusion that their cooperation must have been motivated by something other than Model III concerns with influence gathering.

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<sup>120</sup> Wilkerson, interview by author.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

The evidence seems to bear that this unseen motivating force was in fact a shared ideology. Rumsfeld and Cheney both believed, fundamentally, that concerns with the Iranian regime outweighed the concrete strategic benefits that could be gained through talking to it, and thus that negotiations should be shut down. As Wilkerson recalls, when the prospect of opening comprehensive talks with Iran presented itself in 2003, the Vice President's office nixed the idea, with the explanation that "We don't talk to evil."<sup>123</sup> It is hard to imagine a more ideological response. This categorical dismissal of talking to the Iranians, even after their helpfulness in Afghanistan, is all the more remarkable considering that it was the response given internally in confidential government communications, not media grandstanding designed to rile up the public. In this light, it is difficult to view Cheney and his allies' view in this regard as anything less than sincere expressions of underlying ideology.

Rumsfeld, too appears to have been spurred on by ideology. Although he used less overtly ideological language in the press, his proposed war plans hewed to a strategy that would appear to be ideologically inspired. According to a classified document quoted by Feith, Rumsfeld actively sought regime change not just in Iraq, but throughout the Middle East. In his recommendation to Bush, Rumsfeld wrote that the US should seek, as a goal, "New regimes in Afghanistan and [some other states] that support terrorism (to strengthen political and military efforts to change the policies elsewhere)."<sup>124</sup> Although Feith redacts the other countries Rumsfeld listed, according to

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<sup>123</sup> BBC News Online, "Washington Snubbed Iran Offer," 18 January 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/6274147.stm> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>124</sup> Feith, *War and Decision*, 82. Brackets and their content inserted by Feith himself.

General Wesley Clark, Iran was among them.<sup>125</sup> Given that the list of countries also allegedly included Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, and Somalia, and was proposed as a 5-year plan—a very short time span in which to militarily subdue seven nations—it is difficult to see the plan as the product of a calculating military rationale. Clark himself, a highly decorated four-star general, finds it militarily preposterous.<sup>126</sup> Once again, given the seeming tactical irrationality of Rumsfeld's plans regarding Iran, the evidence points to a strong ideological motivator acting in conjunction with his well noted strivings to increase his personal authority.

It is important to recall, however, that Allison's Model III does not simply deal with individuals' concerns with their own power, but also the relative power of their respective departments. State Department officials should, by Allison's logic, seek to expand the prestige of State, and Defense Department officials would seek to strengthen the Pentagon. The idea is logical and certainly has evidence to back it. For example, Rumsfeld's aspirations for restoring the Defense Department's prestige were well known.<sup>127</sup> However, some of the individuals in these episodes display behavior that not only does not seek to expand their agencies' power, but in fact actively undermines it.

The best example of this behavior, inexplicable under the Allisonian model, is John Bolton. All the evidence points to the fact that Bolton actively reviled the State Department. In his own memoirs, Bolton recalls Rumsfeld joking with him at a dinner

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<sup>125</sup> Wesley Clark, *Winning Modern Wars: Iraq, Terrorism, and the American Empire* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2003), 130.

<sup>126</sup> Clark, *Winning Modern Wars: Iraq, Terrorism, and the American Empire*, 130.

<sup>127</sup> Thomas Ricks, "Rumsfeld on High Wire of Defense Reform," *Washington Post*, 20 May 2001.

(hosted by Cheney) about “how you survive over there [at the State Department].”<sup>128</sup> State Department officials have also sensed that Bolton felt “some degree of alienation” in Foggy Bottom.<sup>129</sup> Bolton also had open hostility for the State Department structures intended to support him, highlighted by his resentment of INR, State’s in-house intelligence bureau.<sup>130</sup> Given this, it is extremely difficult to construe Bolton’s infighting as attempts to promote the State Department in terms of Allison’s Model III. In fact, the exact opposite seems to be true. If anything, Bolton’s tight cooperation with Rumsfeld and his open resentment of Powell—whom he derides as obsessed with cultivating a “George C. Marshall legacy project”—makes it seem more plausible that his infighting was actually an effort to diminish State.<sup>131</sup>

Hence, after examining the evidence, it becomes clear that existing models of bureaucratic infighting again fail to account for what actually went on within the Bush Administration regarding the decision to slow cooperation with Iran over Afghanistan. While a few models—namely the Allisonian Models II and III—can partially explain some of the actors’ infighting actions, there are many instances in which they simply do not make sense. In these cases, the ideologically based I2 model of bureaucratic infighting proves superior at explaining actors’ behavior by seeing it as motivated in part by ideological considerations.

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<sup>128</sup> Bolton, *Surrender Is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations*, 141.

<sup>129</sup> Efron, “Bolton’s A Tough Guy with a Cause.”

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Bolton, *Surrender Is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations*, 159.

## THE LINKS TO POLICY FAILURE

After tracing several episodes of horizontal and vertical ideological infighting that took place within the American bureaucracy regarding policy toward Iran, the final step in this chapter is to use process tracing to demonstrate how this infighting contributed to policy failure. Recalling from earlier, the three main American policy goals and their outcomes are found in the table below.

COUNTRY	POLICY OBJECTIVE	SUCCESS?
Iran	1) Prevent from pursuing WMD	X
	2) Stem support for terrorism	X
	3) Promote liberal democracy	X

It is easy to find evidence for the failure of the first goal, preventing Iran from pursuing WMD. This can most clearly be seen in the results of Bolton's infighting in his role as Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. In this capacity, he was the State Department's top officer regarding nuclear non-proliferation. Thus, policy goal #1 fell directly into his area of responsibility. However, it was clear that unlike with Iraq, the Bush Administration was going to be more patient with the diplomatic track for Iran, and thus its non-proliferation strategy relied heavily on allies, particularly within the structure of the IAEA. It is abundantly clear from Bolton's memoirs and public statements, however, that as a unilateralist defense hawk, he had an ideological distaste for international institutions and their deliberate, methodical approach to security issues. He shared this distaste with the neoconservatives and made common cause with them on the Iran issue, refusing to deviate from a very hard line or consider offers of additional incentives for Iranian compliance. At one meeting in Washington with British and French allies, Bolton simply read off a paper what the Iran policy was to

be, neglecting the earlier debates that had been had amongst the European allies.<sup>132</sup> As French negotiator Stanislas de Laboulaye put it scornfully, Bolton behaved “like a Soviet bureaucrat...[reading from] one text, one paper, that closed all doors.”<sup>133</sup> Having Bolton as the American point person for the negotiations clearly frustrated the Europeans, which Bolton himself knew. “You could see the evident dissatisfaction on [British negotiator] John Sawers’s face because I was still there,” Bolton recalls.<sup>134</sup>

Bolton’s difficult interpersonal nature and his ideologically driven hard line put up real roadblocks to achieving a solution on Iran. Most critically, Bolton’s behavior caused noticeable fissures in the western nations’ negotiating front, which the Iranians picked up on and were able to exploit. Essentially, they were able to call the west’s bluff: they knew that Bolton and his neoconservative backers were pressing a hard line at the UN that would never be agreed to by allies like Britain, France, and Germany, let alone the Security Council veto powers of Russia and China. It was precisely this lack of unity between the US and the EU-3, as France, Britain, and Germany were known collectively, that contributed to the fact that Iran could not be convinced to halt its nuclear program. Bolton himself acknowledges this, writing that the EU-3 diplomatic plan (in contrast to the stiff, punitive plan favored by Bolton and the neoconservatives) “derail[ed] our efforts on Iran for the next three and a half years.”<sup>135</sup>

This break between the US and Europe spelled disaster for the negotiations.

Those who study the Iranian negotiating style know that splitting the allies is a favorite

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<sup>132</sup> Percy, "Programme Three: Nuclear Confrontation."

<sup>133</sup> Stanislas de Laboulaye, quoted in Percy, "Programme Three: Nuclear Confrontation."

<sup>134</sup> John Bolton, quoted in Percy, "Programme Three: Nuclear Confrontation."

<sup>135</sup> Bolton, *Surrender Is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations*, 139.

tactic—indeed, this is a textbook strategy for all multiparty negotiations. Scholar James Phillips, in a policy recommendation on Iranian nuclear negotiations in 2006, acknowledged this, cautioning the American team that “Washington also must reach an agreement with its allies on the incentives and disincentives to be presented to Iran. Otherwise, Iran will seek to ... exploit differences between the allies and focus blame on the United States if the talks fail.”<sup>136</sup>

Thus, it is clear to see that Bolton and his rough, ideological negotiating style were fiercely at odds with America’s European allies, and that these disagreements contributed to a serious rift in the western negotiating team. Still, it is important to consider the counterfactual. What might the situation have looked like had the American negotiators been led by someone who was more ideologically in sync with his or her State Department superiors and European allies? We cannot conclude with certainty that the Iranians would have made any more concessions—they could have remained as obstinate as ever. Still, it is unlikely that the negotiations would have been frustrated as soon as they were. It is also highly likely that Iran’s negotiating stance would not have been nearly as bold if faced with a unified western front without exploitable divisions. Hence, while certainly not the only factor in the failure of diplomacy to curb Iranian nuclear ambitions, Bolton’s attitude and infighting certainly contributed to elements that helped set up the negotiations for failure. In this way, ideological infighting can be linked to, as both Bolton and his realist opponents admit, a failure to achieve any real progress on limiting Iran’s nuclear program, leaving the problem still unresolved to this day.

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<sup>136</sup> James Phillips, "Giving Iran One Last Chance," Heritage Foundation, 31 May 2006, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2006/05/giving-iran-one-last-chance> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

The second American policy goal of stemming Iran's support for terrorism has also been hampered by the results of ideological infighting within the Bush Administration. This is equally entwined with both the infighting surrounding the halting of the Geneva Channel and that which led to the "Axis of Evil" quip. Both of these instances, taken in combination with each other, were interpreted by the Iranians as indications of the lack of power that the realist faction held within the Bush Administration. They were also perceived, in no uncertain terms, as a signal that no matter how cooperative Iran had been in Afghanistan, it was still potentially a target of American military intervention. Vice-President Abtahi crystallizes these sentiments and acknowledges Iran's support for insurgent groups in Iraq, stating:

One of the big mistakes by the United States was that, if not directly, at least indirectly it implied that the Iraq dossier would not be the last one [to be tackled] in the region; there are other dossiers to put on the table. So it was natural that all the countries in the region did their best to see that the Iraqi case was never resolved, to keep the Iraqi dossier open. This led to the effort of all the countries in the region to interfere in Iraq, to resist the attempts to occupy Iraq... For example, the Iranian nuclear issue and other issues [between Iran and the U.S.] transformed Iraq into a good venue for Iran to try to use Iraq to solve its problems with the United States in general.<sup>137</sup>

The devastating effect that the Iranian aid to insurgents had on the American mission in Iraq is no secret. A 2008 Congressional Research Service report highlighted how Iran's help to insurgents had not only complicated the American political position in Iraq, but also resulted in the channeling of weapons—mostly explosives and armor

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<sup>137</sup> "Interview with Mohammad Ali Abtahi," *Frontline: Showdown with Iran*.

piercing projectiles—that directly resulted in the deaths of over 200 American soldiers between 2003 and 2007.<sup>138</sup>

A finer grained, even more directly causal example of how policies borne of American infighting undermined anti-terror goals regarding Iran can be seen in the “Axis of Evil” aftermath. According to former National Security Council Senior Director of Middle East Affairs Flynt Leverett and former Geneva Channel diplomat Hillary Mann, Iran retaliated directly for the State of the Union speech.<sup>139</sup> Leverett and Mann assert that after the speech, Iran released Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, an al-Qaeda aligned warlord that they had been detaining, as retribution.<sup>140</sup> Hekmatyar returned to Afghanistan to rejoin the fight against American troops as leader of the jihadist Hezb e-Islami militia.<sup>141</sup>

Once again, the counterfactual is instructive in assessing what impact ideological infighting actually had on this failure of US policy. The case of Iranian support for the Iraqi insurgency is complex. It is certainly possible that, despite what was happening in Washington, the Iranians would have seen a strategic reason to intervene on behalf of Shia militias in Iraq. They may have had an interest in marginalizing Sunni insurgents, for example. Still the logic of the situation and the remarks of people like Vice-President Abtahi make this seem unlikely, at least in terms of the degree of aid given. It was, after all, in the American interest to limit the power of Sunni militias as well, and cooperation

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<sup>138</sup> Congressional Research Service, *Iran's Activities and Influence in Iraq*, by Kenneth Katzman, Washington DC, Library of Congress, 2008, 3; available from <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/104275.pdf> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>139</sup> Mann is now married to Leverett and publishes as Hillary Mann Leverett.

<sup>140</sup> Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann, "Redacted Version of Original Op-Ed," *New York Times*, 22 December 2006. This view is echoed by other Bush Administration officials. See Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, 353.

<sup>141</sup> BBC News Online, "Profile: Gulbuddin Hekmatyar," 23 March 2010, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/2701547.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/2701547.stm) (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

with Iran could have achieved this with much less chaos and loss of American life than actually occurred. The case of Hekmatyar, however, is much more clean cut. Given the intense ideological opposition of the Taliban and al-Qaeda to Iran, and Iranian officials' firm stated interest in neutralizing Taliban power in Afghanistan, it seems extremely unlikely that Iran would have released Hekmatyar if not for an intense desire to get back at the United States.

This leads us finally to the third American policy goal, that of encouraging liberal democracy within Iran, the golden goal for American neoconservatives. The failure to achieve this objective is apparent just by looking at the state of Iranian politics today; they are much more dominated by hardliners than they were during the study period. Yet this process happened organically and gradually. Iranian municipal elections in 2003 can be considered a turning point. Amid low turnout, especially in urban areas, conservatives swept to power in a majority of municipalities.<sup>142</sup> What makes this reformist defeat so striking is that, in contrast to the following year's parliamentary elections, where nearly half of the candidates were disqualified by the Council of Guardians, clerical vetting was not a major factor in 2003.<sup>143</sup> In fact, Siamak Namazi writes in *Middle East Report Online* that "local council elections in February 2003 were described as the 'freest ever' nationwide vote in Iran."<sup>144</sup>

Hence, the results of the 2003 election can therefore be seen as a legitimate, widespread voter repudiation of the reformists' performance in office, including their

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<sup>142</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Free Liberty Online, "Iran Report," 31 March 2003, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1342727.html> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>143</sup> Nazila Fathi, "Iranian Officials Resign in Protest," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 January 2004.

<sup>144</sup> Siamak Namazi, "Iran's Forthcoming Parliamentary Elections Up for Grabs," *Middle East Report Online*, 23 November 2003, <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero112303.html> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

dealings with the West. To be sure, matters of international diplomacy were not the only issues at stake—Iranians had, and continue to have—pressing economic complaints. Still, it did not help reformists to be seen cooperating with the West only to be continuously threatened and browbeaten in the press by outspoken American neoconservatives. Once again, while electoral politics are complicated and there were certainly other factors at work, it is plausible and tantalizing to consider how the electoral outcome might have been different had the United States not put on such a confusing front toward Iran, with figures like Dobbins saying one thing while people like Ledeen did another. And, had the reformists not started being voted out in 2003, there is good reason to think that the Iranian government would not have taken such sharp conservative turns in the 2004 parliamentary and 2005 presidential elections, whose heavy-handed candidate vetting was partially enabled by the mandate of the 2003 sweep. Thus, we see once again how a stated American policy goal—in this case encouraging liberal democracy—was at least partially undone by the result of the I2 model of bureaucratic infighting.

## **CONCLUSION**

The case of Iran shows again, in stark relief, how ideological infighting within the Bush Administration tangibly and concretely contributed to failures of American policy. The Iranian case is particularly disheartening in considering the question of “what if?” The aftermath of the 9/11 attacks created a singular moment for Iranian-American relations, and while many in the American government recognized this opportunity and tried to capitalize on it, others were equally willing to squander attempts at diplomatic

gains in service of a neoconservative ideological experiment. The intra-bureaucratic sabotage that played out over Iran was unfortunately not confined, however, to narrow issues of Iran. Like regional problems of the Middle East often do, the conflicts involving Iran—both the bureaucratic ones and the real-world ones—soon bled over into tiny, hapless Lebanon.



## CHAPTER SIX

### CASE STUDY III: LEBANON EXPLODES

Little Lebanon, perched on the shores of the eastern Mediterranean, has always attracted much more attention than its diminutive area and population ought to garner on their own merits. Lebanon is striking because it is so very different from its neighbors. Democratic since its independence in 1943, Lebanon's consociational government guarantees cabinet and parliamentary representation for all of the country's numerous religious sects, who coexist in neighborhoods throughout the country.<sup>1</sup> Much of Lebanon's free-wheeling culture has been shaped by its large Christian population, estimated at 39%, whose electoral power prevents Islamism from being a dominant political movement in the country.<sup>2</sup> And while these prominent religious divisions have been repeatedly exacerbated by external powers seeking to exploit its weak state structure and strategic border with Israel, Lebanon's periods of relative calm and prosperity between wars have been marked by an outward appearance of tolerance and liberalism that many in the United States have held up as a model for what other countries in the

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<sup>1</sup> The relative levels of this representation, however, has been a cause of great strife throughout Lebanon's history, and was a major grievance during the 1975-90 civil war. There has been no national census since 1932 because of the contentious nature of demography in a consociational system.

<sup>2</sup> *CIA World Factbook*, (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2010).

region should seek to emulate. The objective, President Bush said, “is for this Lebanese democracy to survive, thrive and serve as an example for others.”<sup>3</sup>

Lebanon’s political and ethnic web makes it a microcosm of the politics of the region. It represents all of America’s challenges in the Middle East, from democracy to terrorism to the influence of Iran, in one tiny package. Because of this, American policy goals regarding Lebanon are remarkably similar to those in the previous Iraq and Iran case studies, and are in fact directly related to objectives regarding those two countries. For, as we shall see in this chapter, American policy toward Lebanon was not so much about the country itself as it was about Iran and Syria, both on their own terms and in relation to their respective influences over the security situation in Iraq.

Neoconservatives, in particular saw Lebanon as a point of opportunity for reshaping the Middle East, even before the so-called “Cedar Revolution” of 2005 thrust the country’s complex politics onto the international stage. The showdown between the realist forces within the State Department and the neoconservatives in the White House overflowed onto Capitol Hill with the debate surrounding 2003’s Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, and marks how bureaucrats can manipulate Congress to assist in their infighting. These Washington skirmishes, however, were all a prelude to the real clash that would break out over how to address Israel’s war in Lebanon in the summer of 2006. Described by Colonel Wilkerson as “a battle royale between Condi and the Vice President over Lebanon,” the backroom wrangling surrounding the 2006 war marks Condoleezza Rice’s shift back toward the realists within

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<sup>3</sup> George W. Bush, "President Bush Participates in Joint Press Availability with President Sarkozy of France," Mount Vernon, VA 7 November 2007, available from [http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/11/images/20071107-5\\_d-0219-2-515h.html](http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/11/images/20071107-5_d-0219-2-515h.html) (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

the Administration, a change which would bring her into direct bureaucratic conflict with ideological opponents and former allies.<sup>4</sup>

## **KEY PLAYERS**

### **CONDOLLEEZZA RICE**

Although Condoleezza Rice's personal ideology was already examined at length in Chapter Four, her centrality to the events of this case study, particularly the 2006 Lebanon war, render it necessary to take a second look. This is especially true because her ideological motivations appear at this time to have changed. Whereas Chapter Four previously documented how it appeared that Rice, though a lifelong realist, was convinced of some neoconservative ideas after 9/11, and further suppressed her own beliefs to consolidate her influence within the Bush Administration and smooth over intra-Republican conflicts over Iraq, regarding Lebanon she appears to have returned to realism with renewed vigor.<sup>5</sup> When it became apparent midway through the 2006 war that Israel's pummeling of Lebanon was not going to achieve its strategic aim of destroying Hezbollah, Rice began seeking a resolution to end the fighting, something that put her at direct odds with the Administration's neoconservative wing.

The strongest indicator of Rice's return to realism is not the statements that Rice herself gave during the war—indeed, as a loyal employee of the Administration she did not let slip her discontent with the prevailing American policy in public, and continued to

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<sup>4</sup> Wilkerson, interview by author, 9 September 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Fred Kaplan, "Why Her Dreams Crashed," *Washington Post*, 4 November 2007.

toe the official line in press conferences.<sup>6</sup> Instead, it is from behind-the-scenes accounts from her associates—both advisors and adversaries—that we learn just how much Rice broke with the neoconservative bloc during the Lebanon war. Neoconservative grumblings about Rice’s perceived shift in thinking spilled over into the press. “Dump Condi,” read the headline of *Insight*, a newsmagazine published by the conservative *Washington Times*.<sup>7</sup> Fascinating however, is how Rice’s neoconservative opponents seemed even more suspicious of her orthodoxy simply because she was at the State Department. Richard Perle, the neoconservative former head of the Defense Policy Board who was an instrumental figure in the push for war with Iraq, drew attention to this suspicion in a scathing *Washington Post* op-ed.<sup>8</sup> Perle writes:

Proximity is critical in politics and policy. And the geography of this administration has changed. Condoleezza Rice has moved from the White House to Foggy Bottom, a mere mile or so away. What matters is not that she is further removed from the Oval Office; Rice's influence on the president is undiminished. It is, rather, that she is now in the midst of -- and increasingly represents -- a diplomatic establishment that is driven to accommodate its allies even when (or, it seems, especially when) such allies counsel the appeasement of our adversaries.<sup>9</sup>

The inherent ideological disdain that neoconservatives harbor for the State Department in particular and the diplomatic process in general cuts through in Perle’s writing, and

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<sup>6</sup> For example see CQ Newswire, "Transcript: Secretary Rice Holds a News Conference," Washington, DC, 21 July 2006; available from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/21/AR2006072100889.html> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>7</sup> "Dump Condi: Foreign Policy Conservatives Charge State Department has Hijacked Bush Agenda," *Insight*, 26 July 2006.

<sup>8</sup> American Enterprise Institute, "Biography: Richard Perle," <http://www.aei.org/scholar/49> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>9</sup> Richard Perle, "Why Did Bush Blink on Iran? (Ask Condi)," *Washington Post*, 25 June 2006.

echoes what scholar Steven Hook calls “The US government’s disregard for its own foreign service.”<sup>10</sup>

Press accounts even seem to indicate what might be considered the “Powell-ization” of Rice, or the aligning of forces in the Defense Department and the White House—especially the office of the Vice President—to undermine her push for a ceasefire in Lebanon. According to *Insight*, “Ms. Rice believes the United States should engage Iran and Syria to pressure Hezbollah to end the war with Israel. Ms. Rice has argued that such an effort would result in a U.S. dialogue with Damascus and Tehran on Middle East stability,” while Cheney and Rumsfeld “have urged the president to hold off international pressure and give Israel more time to cause strategic damage to Hezbollah as well as Iranian and Syrian interests in Lebanon.”<sup>11</sup>

The sheer intensity of these policy disputes between Washington’s ideological camps comes across in accounts from the time, which underscore that Rice “found herself trying to be not only a peacemaker abroad but also a mediator among contending parties at home.”<sup>12</sup> As Middle East scholar Aaron David Miller put Rice’s bureaucratic predicament: “She’s being hammered by those who believe that this crisis will only be resolved by a strategic victory by Israel, backed by the United States.”<sup>13</sup> Such accounts make it clear that Rice, while ever the loyal advisor in public, had fundamental ideological issues with the neoconservatives over Israel’s conduct and underlying

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<sup>10</sup> Steven W. Hook, “Domestic Obstacles to International Affairs: The State Department under Fire at Home,” *Political Science and Politics* 36, no. 1 (2003).

<sup>11</sup> “Bush and Condi Clash over Israel; President Overrules her for the First Time,” *Insight*, 11 August 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Helene Cooper, “Rice’s Hurdles on Middle East Begin at Home,” *Washington Post*, 10 August 2006.

<sup>13</sup> Aaron David Miller, quoted in Cooper, “Rice’s Hurdles on Middle East Begin at Home.”

strategy in the Lebanon war. These issues, as we shall see, inevitably manifested themselves in the form of intense ideological infighting between Rice and her State Department and the usual neoconservative suspects in the White House and Defense Department.

## NEOCONSERVATIVES

### *Elliott Abrams*

Elliott Abrams served as Deputy National Security Advisor for Global Democracy Strategy from 2005 to 2009, and before that as Senior Director of the National Security Council for Near East and North African Affairs between 2002 and 2005.<sup>14</sup> Abrams was an instrumental figure on the American side in the negotiations surrounding the Lebanese-Israeli war in 2006. Along with realist C. David Welch, who was at the time the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Abrams was one of two senior advisors traveling with Secretary Rice during her Middle Eastern shuttle diplomacy. Abrams served specifically as the neoconservative counterpart to Welch's realism, to ensure that Rice had a reminder at all times of what the preferred policy action was from the neoconservative point of view that prevailed in the Pentagon and the Office of the Vice President, with whom he was in constant contact.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike some of the more reticent among neoconservatism's ideological ranks, Abrams fully embraces the neoconservative label and espouses in his writings many neoconservative themes. In the January 2000 issue of the neoconservative *Commentary*

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<sup>14</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, "Biography: Elliott Abrams," [http://www.cfr.org/bios/1567/elliott\\_abrams.html](http://www.cfr.org/bios/1567/elliott_abrams.html) (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>15</sup> Cooper, "Rice's Hurdles on Middle East Begin at Home."

magazine, for example, Abrams cites his neoconservatism in introducing his vision of what American policy should look like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Abrams writes:

As a neoconservative and a neo-Reaganite, labels Norman Podhoretz places on me that I accept, my own answer [on the proper direction of US foreign policy] is obvious: preserving our dominance will not only advance our own national interests but will preserve peace and promote the cause of democracy and human rights. Since America's emergence as a world power roughly a century ago, we have made many errors, but we have been the greatest force for good among the nations of the earth. A diminution in American power or influence bodes ill for our country, our friends, and our principles.<sup>16</sup>

Clearly within this single paragraph, Abrams ticks the first two boxes of Fukuyama's definition of a neoconservative, the beliefs that "The internal character of regimes matters and that foreign policy must reflect the deepest values of liberal democratic societies" and that "American power has been and could be used for moral purposes, and that the United States needs to remain engaged in international affairs."<sup>17</sup>

Abrams also clearly espouses the other two neoconservative tenets, particularly his skepticism of international institutions and their ability "to achieve either security or justice."<sup>18</sup> This comes across in the level of vitriol that Abrams aims at the United Nations, particularly regarding Israel. Rather than the United Nations being a fair and discursive arbiter of justice, Abrams instead characterizes it as a pack of "jackals" and a "lynch mob," hardly language that espouses a high degree of faith in the UN's abilities or judiciousness.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Elliott Abrams, "American Power-- For What?," *Commentary*, January 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Fukuyama, *After the Neocons: America at the Crossroads*, 48-49.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Elliott Abrams, "Joining the Jackals," *The Weekly Standard*, 2 June 2010.

Abrams also rounds out the official neocon credentials with his views on domestic policy which, unlike many of his colleagues, are well defined. Abrams's views of how a society should operate are highly informed by his Jewish religion. Given the tragic history of the Jews in terms of being legally victimized by cruel and overbearing government policies, it is logical that his personal faith could lead Abrams to what Fukuyama calls "a distrust of ambitious social engineering projects."<sup>20</sup> Abrams writes that "Outside the land of Israel, there can be no doubt that Jews... are to stand apart from the nation in which they live. It is the very nature of being Jewish to be apart—except in Israel—from the rest of the population."<sup>21</sup> While Abrams perhaps takes this to the extreme with his recommendation that Jews, for example, not intermarry or attend school with non-Jews, his advocacy of Jewish self-segregation indicates a belief that it is better to be cut off from a society than to risk engagement with its social engineering programs that stem from a dubious government source.

Even beyond his complete concordance with all of Fukuyama's foundational points of neoconservatism, Abrams also checks several other neoconservative boxes that put him in good company with other Bush Administration neocons. Like many other leading neoconservatives, including Paul Wolfowitz, Doug Feith, and Richard Perle, Abrams spent time working as an aide to Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson, a Democrat, who was one of the first politicians to popularize neoconservative ideas.<sup>22</sup> Abrams was also one of the founding signatories of the Project for the New American Century, once

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<sup>20</sup> Fukuyama, *After the Neocons: America at the Crossroads*, 48-49.

<sup>21</sup> Elliott Abrams, *Faith or Fear: How Jews Can Survive in a Christian America* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 181.

<sup>22</sup> Julian Borger, "Democrat Hawk Whose Ghost Guides Bush," *The Guardian*, 6 December 2002.

again putting him in good professional company with other neoconservatives.<sup>23</sup> Finally, Abrams's personal life is also closely intertwined with neoconservatism. He is the son-in-law of Norman Podhoretz, one of the founding fathers of neoconservatism.<sup>24</sup> And while personal association does not on its own imply an affiliation for the ideology of one's friends or relatives, in Abrams's case, it can be seen, in context with his own personal writings and statements, as a further indicator of his ideological commitment to neoconservative ideals.

## REALISTS

### *C. David Welch*

C. David Welch has a long and decorated career in the State Department. Born in Germany to parents who were also US Foreign Service officers, he was raised abroad and has been embedded in realist diplomatic culture his entire life.<sup>25</sup> From 2005 to 2008, Welch served as Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, the highest ranking American diplomat dedicated specifically to the Middle East.<sup>26</sup> Prior to that posting, Welch served in various capacities, including as US Ambassador to Egypt from 2001 to 2005, and as Deputy Chief of Mission at the American embassy in Saudi Arabia from

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<sup>23</sup> Project for the New American Century, "Statement of Principles," 3 June 1997, <http://www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm>; (accessed 25 Feb 2011).

<sup>24</sup> Elliott Abrams, *Undue Process* (New York: Free Press, 1993).

<sup>25</sup> Department of State, "Biography: C. David Welch," <http://web.archive.org/web/20080708223947/http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/43834.htm> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

1992 to 1995, among many other postings relating to the Middle East.<sup>27</sup> In addition to his family and career pedigrees that fit in well with realist persuasions, Welch also has an educational record at institutions known for their realist points of view and status as prestigious training grounds for future diplomats. These include the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown, where Welch earned a bachelor's degree, and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts, where he attained his master's.<sup>28</sup>

Aside from these incidentals, which support but do not prove Welch's realist ideology, one can look to Welch's own statements to deduce his beliefs. He readily accepts the realist ideological label, and contrasts his beliefs with those of neoconservatives: "I look at the world differently. I don't really expect to remake it in my image, nor would I want to try. For me, the standard is, essentially, what works? And that is the standard to which I would measure foreign policy options."<sup>29</sup>

Welch's realist credentials are further put on display when discussing the issues of human rights and democracy in Libya. The exchange between Welch and the journalist is telling:

QUESTION: ...What does this say more broadly about U.S. policy regarding democracy promotion, given that Muammar Qadhafi is still the leader of that country and the last time I checked it was no more democratic than it was five or six or seven years ago?

AMBASSADOR WELCH: ...[W]e do believe that this decision actually strengthens our ability to press our freedom agenda in Libya. Our desire to do so is fully known to the Libyan Government. We don't think that they should be inhibited by trying to work with us on these kinds of issues and we certainly will have no inhibition in trying to press that agenda... I continue to do so in every

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> C. David Welch, interview by author, 4 November 2010.

meeting that I have with their representatives and with the leader of Libya himself. We believe that two serious countries can sit face to face and have a conversation about issues like that that are sensitive to both sides.<sup>30</sup>

Welch's response to the journalist is a classic example of a realist ideology that emphasizes the utility of engagement and bargaining to change state behavior in a way that directly services the national interest. Furthermore, the statements on democracy and human rights are particularly interesting in that they emphasize a uniquely American realism—already discussed— which, contrary to its sterner classical European counterpart, sees the promotion of liberal values as within the national interest of the United States. Where it differs from neoconservatism or Wilsonianism, however, is that Welch's realism is not willing to expend blood and treasure in service of expanding liberal values for their own sake. Additionally, Welch's realism, in stark contrast to neoconservatism, sees no issue with restoring diplomatic relations with a country even before it has met all ideal criteria. Unlike neoconservatives, realists like Welch do not see diplomatic relations as a reward for good behavior, but as one of many tools that can be used to extract good behavior. Engagement is a means, not an end.

Welch's realist ideology, elucidated here, is put on bright display in his involvement in the negotiations to end the Lebanon war in 2006. Traveling with Rice, he was a direct counterpart to Elliott Abrams, intended to be the antidote to his hardline neoconservative views.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, as we shall see, this structure of dual advisors created a great deal of ideological infighting at a time when the stakes were at their very highest.

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<sup>30</sup> C. David Welch, "Briefing on Issues Related to United States Relations with Libya," Washington, DC, 15 May 2006; available from <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rm/2006/66268.htm> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Cooper, "Rice's Hurdles on Middle East Begin at Home."

## **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

As stated earlier in this chapter, American foreign policy toward Lebanon is extremely interesting in that the policy is as much about Syria and Iran as it is about Lebanon itself. This fact is summed up in US Public Law 108-175, better known as the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003 (SALSRA).<sup>32</sup> While the actionable items of the law focus on increasing sanctions on Syria, these sanctions are justified within the text in terms of Syria's actions toward Lebanon. Thus, in itemizing the complaints of Congress regarding Syria's conduct toward Lebanon, the law paints a clear picture of what the United States would like to see Lebanon look like.

The first of these policy objectives that can be distilled from the SALSRA is the United States' desire to prevent Lebanon's use a terrorist base, especially one that can be used to attack Israel. Items 5, 13, and 14 of the preambulatory clauses of the law state findings of fact that support this desire.<sup>33</sup>

(5) Terrorist groups, including Hizballah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine...operate in areas of Lebanon occupied by the Syrian armed forces and receive supplies from Iran through Syria....

(13) Syria will not allow Lebanon—a sovereign country—to fulfill its obligation in accordance with Security Council Resolution 425 to deploy its troops to southern Lebanon.

(14) As a result, the Israeli-Lebanese border and much of southern Lebanon is under the control of Hizballah, which continues to attack Israeli positions, allows Iranian Revolutionary Guards and other militant groups to

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<sup>32</sup> *Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003*, US Code 22, sec. 2151 (2003).

<sup>33</sup> Despite being referred to as “findings” within the law itself, these statements are the subjective statements of the Congress and do not indicate the clauses' universal acceptance as fact within the wider US government.

operate freely in the area, and maintains thousands of rockets along Israel's northern border, destabilizing the entire region.<sup>34</sup>

This goal of preventing Lebanon from serving as a base for militants is also very closely entwined with the second major objective of US foreign policy for the country, which is limiting the influence of Syria and Iran within it. The Iran-Syria link to Lebanon is specifically highlighted in the preambulatory finding clauses above, drawing attention to what is perceived to be a direct enabling factor of Syria and Iran toward terrorist groups in Lebanon, particularly Hezbollah.

Finally, this second goal of limiting Syrian and Iranian influence in Lebanon also leads directly to the third American policy objective for Lebanon, a desire to encourage liberal democracy. While the text of the law implies recognition of Lebanon's democratic system of governance and protected freedom of political expression, it asserts that the country's freedom is hindered by the (at the time) continued presence of Syrian troops within its borders. The preambulatory finding clauses state:

(7) Approximately 20,000 Syrian troops and security personnel occupy much of the sovereign territory of Lebanon exerting undue influence upon its government and undermining its political independence....

(9) On March 3, 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell declared that it is the objective of the United States to "let Lebanon be ruled by the Lebanese people without the presence of [the Syrian] occupation army".

(10) Large and increasing numbers of the Lebanese people from across the political spectrum in Lebanon have mounted peaceful and democratic calls for the withdrawal of the Syrian Army from Lebanese soil.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003*, US Code 22, sec. 2151 (2003).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

The Act goes on further to declare that “the full restoration of Lebanon’s sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity is in the national security interest of the United States.”<sup>36</sup>

Thus, the SALSRA is highly useful in identifying the broad contours of US foreign policy toward Lebanon. It is particularly helpful to this study because, in addition to serving as an example of bureaucratic infighting, to be explored later in this chapter, its passage in 2003 predates the major Lebanon-oriented policy exercises demanded by events such as the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri or the 2006 war with Israel. It can therefore be viewed as a foundation work for building the American (and especially the neoconservative) response to both of these issues.

Still, despite its convenience for outlining the overall shape of US policy toward Lebanon, using the SALSRA as a way to define formal American policy does have its caveats that need to be addressed. The chief problematic element of the SALSRA for this purpose is the fact that most constitutional scholars believe that Congress does not have the authority to actually make foreign policy; these duties are the specific purview of the President.<sup>37</sup> Thus, taking a Congressional act as an official statement of US foreign policy on its own is not cogent. President Bush himself noted this in his signing statement regarding the SALSRA. Bush asserts:

My approval of the Act does not constitute my adoption of the various statements of policy in the Act as U.S. foreign policy. Given the Constitution's commitment to the Presidency of the authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs, the executive branch shall construe such policy statements as advisory,

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> This was confirmed by the 1936 US Supreme Court decision *United States v. Curtiss-Wright Export Co.* 299 U.S. 304 (1936).

giving them the due weight that comity between the legislative and executive branches should require, to the extent consistent with U.S. foreign policy.<sup>38</sup>

Given this, it would be unwise to deduct specific aspects of US foreign policy from the Act, which goes into some great detail on how the United States ought to respond to specific provocations from Syria. Following the Act to the letter would therefore constrain the constitutional authority of the President. It is on these constitutional grounds that Bush's caveat is based, not his opposition to the broad policy sentiments of the law, per se. This is deduced from the fact that Bush actually signed the bill into law. If the President were strongly opposed to the SALSRA, he could have vetoed it. Furthermore, even David Satterfield, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs—a realist who testified against the SALSRA in the House of Representatives, stated in his remarks that “we [the State Department] are in full agreement with the goals underlying this bill.”<sup>39</sup> These facts, taken in context with the actions taken by the Administration, detailed later in the chapter, indicate that it is acceptable to view the preambulatory clauses of the SALSRA as indicators of the main principles of US foreign policy toward Lebanon during the given timeframe.

Thus, the objectives of the United States in terms of Lebanon can be condensed to three main points:

1. Prevent Lebanon's use as a terrorist base;
2. Limit Syrian and Iranian influence in the country; and

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<sup>38</sup> George W. Bush, "Statement by the President on H.R. 1828," 12 December 2003; available from <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/12/20031212-3.html> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>39</sup> David Satterfield, "Prepared Statement on the Syria Accountability Act to the Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, H.R. 4483," 107th Cong., 2nd sess., 18 September 2002.

### 3. Promote liberal democracy.

Once again, we see how similar these goals are to the previous objectives applied to both Iran and Iraq, and how these principles directly relate to them, especially regarding Iran. And indeed, once again, the evidence laid out below will show how ideological infighting along the I2 model hindered the actualization of these policy aims.

## **VERTICAL I2 AND THE SALSRA: GOING OVER EVERYONE'S HEAD**

After President Bush declared the War on Terror following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and demonstrated with the American-led invasion of Afghanistan that the United States was willing to spill blood to modify the internal character of states, many neoconservative thinkers sensed a moment of opportunity.<sup>40</sup> As indicated by initiatives such as the Project for the New American Century, neoconservatives had spent years refining an aggressive international agenda whose influence can be seen in the Bush Doctrine, and the geopolitical realities that 9/11 drove home presented an opportunity to turn theory into policy.<sup>41</sup> Lebanon was one state that was high on the agenda, not so much for its own sake but because of its entanglements with Israel, Syria, and Iran. In their September 20, 2001 letter to President Bush in response to the 9/11 attacks, dozens of prominent PNAC supporters, including Norman Podhoretz and Richard Perle, specifically advocated for marking Lebanon a central battlefield in the war on terror by calling for aggressive targeting of Hezbollah:

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<sup>40</sup> William Kristol et al., "Letter to President Bush on the War on Terrorism," Project for the New American Century, 20 September 2001; available from <http://www.newamericancentury.org/Bushletter.htm> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>41</sup>United States National Security Council, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002; available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf> (accessed 2 April 2008).

Any war against terrorism must target Hezbollah. We believe the administration should demand that Iran and Syria immediately cease all military, financial, and political support for Hezbollah and its operations. Should Iran and Syria refuse to comply, the administration should consider appropriate measures of retaliation against these known state sponsors of terrorism.<sup>42</sup>

As the letter's authors note, making Hezbollah a priority would necessarily demand a policy that dealt with the group's regional context. In the era of the War on Terror, this would require dealing with Syria and Lebanon.

Syria has long been a key player in the Middle East, and its political history has been something of a bellwether for the region—Syria has indulged in every major political movement in the modern Arab world, from Arab nationalism to Baathism to Islamism. Its strategic location and control of Lebanon also render it a *sine qua non* in any final settlement of the Palestinian issue. The huge importance of Syria to the politics of the Middle East was recognized as fact by both realists and neoconservatives. Where followers of the two ideologies differed, however, was on what to do about it. Realists, predictably, favoured a policy of engagement that sought to gain, through quiet diplomacy, the Syrian government's cooperation on issues of critical importance to US national security. At the top of this list of issues was Sunni fundamentalist terrorism against American interests at home and abroad. The Syrians were therefore well placed to help; the Assad regime is secular and Assad himself is a member of the Alawi sect of Shia Islam, reviled by al-Qaeda as apostates. For both these reasons, the ruling Syrian regime viewed radical Sunni Islamists as a common enemy with the United States and was inclined to share intelligence on this front.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Kristol et al., "Letter to President Bush on the War on Terrorism."

<sup>43</sup> James Risen and Tim Weiner, "CIA Is Said to Have Sought Help from Syria," *New York Times*, 30 October 2001.

In the days immediately following the September 11 attacks, the State Department and CIA set to work seeking out any intelligence they could find about the perpetrators. As detailed in the previous chapter on Iran, this outreach effort included seeking intelligence that was held by historic American adversaries, including Syria. A series of *New York Times* articles from the time cite this new realism on the intelligence gathering front, noting that “As a secular regime that has been in conflict with Islamic fundamentalist terrorists since...the early 1980's, the Syrian government was quick to offer Washington intelligence help [and the] Bush administration was quick to accept,” and that an “effort to reach out to Syria is being made as the United States has begun to acknowledge that the traditional patterns of Middle East terrorism are rapidly evolving and that many of the traditional state sponsors of terrorism do not support what is widely seen as the main terrorist threat to the United States -- Mr. bin Laden and Al Qaeda.”<sup>44</sup> Syria was seen by the realist-dominated CIA and State Department as a fundamentally “pragmatic” regime which, while it had its own interests, could be counted on to react rationally and, therefore, predictably, to political situations.<sup>45</sup>

Like the intelligence help that the United States was simultaneously getting from Iran, Syrian assistance in the war on terror proved to be extremely valuable, not just a fig leaf to shield the Assad regime from American ire. This helpfulness was acknowledged by figures in the US government and noted in the press. According to a 2002 *New York Times* report, a “United States official, who spoke this week on condition of anonymity, complimented Syria's ‘extremely productive cooperation’ against Al Qaeda, ‘the result of

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<sup>44</sup> Clifford Krauss, "US Welcomes Thaw in Relations with 'Pragmatic' Syria," *New York Times*, 2 January 2003. See also Risen and Weiner, "CIA Is Said to Have Sought Help from Syria."

<sup>45</sup> Krauss, "US Welcomes Thaw in Relations with 'Pragmatic' Syria."

which has been that American lives have been saved.”<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, the al-Qaeda operatives that Syria took into custody on behalf of the United States were not small fish—they included Muhammed Haydar Zammar, a Syrian-born German citizen who allegedly helped recruit the 9/11 hijackers in Hamburg.<sup>47</sup>

Still, while extremely helpful, the flow of Syrian intelligence was somewhat delicate, as it was provided not out of altruism, but because of Assad’s calculation that assisting the United States in its fight against al-Qaeda was in the Syrian regime’s interest. As Assad himself once said, Syria is “a state, not a charity. If it is going to give something up, it must know what it will get in return.”<sup>48</sup> Thus, the second that cooperation put Assad’s interests at risk, he could become markedly less helpful to the American cause. This is what eventually happened once the neoconservatives in the Bush Administration caught wind of the American engagement with Syria, which alarmed them to such a degree that they sought, as they had in the case of Iran, to shut down all cooperation with Damascus.

The neoconservatives, in contrast to the realists, had a much different view of how Syria ought to be dealt with to serve American interests in the Middle East. Rather than seek concessions through quiet diplomacy, neoconservatives sought to modify Syrian behavior through force. According to Flynt Leverett, a former CIA analyst and the National Security Council Senior Director of Middle East Affairs from March 2002 to March 2003,

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Bashar al-Assad, quoted in Flynt Leverett, *Inheriting Syria: Bashar's Trial by Fire* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2005), 145.

Neoconservatives in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Office of the Vice President opposed accepting Syrian help, arguing that it might create a sense of indebtedness to Damascus and inhibit an appropriate American response to a state sponsor of terrorism. Defense Department officials, in fact, argued that any form of engagement with a state sponsor was a concession that threatened the integrity of the administration's global war on terror.<sup>49</sup>

Additionally, the ideological elements in the Administration that sought a more punitive relationship with Syria had a notably firm desire to link the country to Lebanon, to use Lebanon "as a pressure point" and to let Lebanon displace Syria in the public narrative of the policy debate.<sup>50</sup> As Leverett recalls:

[Neoconservatives were focused on] using Lebanese sovereignty as a way of threatening what Syrian leaders perceive as vital interests. Hard-line elements in the administration, including Secretary Rumsfeld and younger neoconservative advocates in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Office of the Vice President, were intrigued by the idea of using Lebanon as a pressure point against Damascus from the beginning of Bush's tenure.<sup>51</sup>

This hardline stance favored by the neoconservatives was, however, an uphill battle within the Administration, primarily because the Syrian engagement was producing such demonstrably good results. In his testimony to the House International Relations Committee, Deputy Assistant Secretary Satterfield stated that "Syria's cooperation in our struggle against al-Qaida... has been substantial and has helped save American lives. Such cooperation is very much in the U.S. interest and requires high-level, sustained engagement with the Syrian government."<sup>52</sup> In addition to this cooperation on al-Qaeda, Syria was demonstrating limited but tangible assistance at the UN, voting in favor of

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<sup>49</sup> Leverett, *Inheriting Syria: Bashar's Trial by Fire*, 142.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Satterfield, "Prepared Statement on the Syria Accountability Act."

Security Council Resolution 1441, which gave Iraq a final, unanimous ultimatum to fulfill its obligations to UN weapons inspectors.<sup>53</sup>

With the decision to go into Iraq already largely decided within the Administration at this time, many of that war's supporters, including President Bush, were reluctant to distract focus from that endeavor, particularly since Syrian cooperation would be crucial to the American military success there. According to Mearsheimer and Walt:

Targeting the Assad regime would jeopardize these valuable [intelligence] connections and undermine the campaign against international terrorism in general and al Qaeda in particular. The president recognized that a confrontational policy toward Syria could put America at risk.

Bush also understood that...putting Syria on the American hit list would give Damascus compelling reasons to cause trouble in Iraq and keep the US military pinned down there, so that it could not strike Syria. Even if the president wanted to pressure Syria, it made good sense to finish the job in Iraq first.<sup>54</sup>

Flynt Leverett confirms this, recalling that there was “a sense at the State Department and at upper levels of the National Security Council throughout 2002 that US reaction to Syrian activities contravening UN sanctions against Iraq should be subordinated to the broader pursuit of regime change in Iraq.”<sup>55</sup> Leverett further notes President Bush's delicate handling of Syria in the days after 9/11 but before the Iraq war, writing that Bush, “in his communications with [Syrian President] Bashar, whether by letter or by phone, always acknowledged Syria's cooperation with the United States against al-Qaeda.”<sup>56</sup> Remarkably, at one point, when Bush found out that Rumsfeld had instructed

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<sup>53</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441, 8 November 2002.

<sup>54</sup> Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 277.

<sup>55</sup> Leverett, *Inheriting Syria: Bashar's Trial by Fire*, 135.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

Douglas Feith and his Office of Special Plans to draw up a war plan for Syria, Bush firmly ordered a halt to the project.<sup>57</sup>

It was therefore clear that in this instance, the realists at State and CIA had the ear of the President, and if the neoconservatives wanted a more assertive policy toward Syria, they would have to compel Bush to it. This presented the interesting question of how someone can compel an American president, the nation's chief foreign policymaker, to do something, especially since Bush appeared to be putting his foot down and agreeing with the realists in opposing military action in Syria. The answer that the neoconservatives found was through Congress. When they realized that they had failed through the typical avenues of interagency horizontal infighting, the neocons took their battle to an entirely different branch of government with the hopes of going to the very top: getting an aggressive bill on Syria and Lebanon passed through Congress to push the issue into the public eye and give President Bush no choice but to sign it, thus vertically marginalizing their realist opponents.

The bill that the neoconservatives, along with their supporters in Congress, came up with was the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003, a law that would increase unilateral American sanctions on Syria unless it met very specific and ambitious targets regarding a withdrawal from Lebanon, along with dropping its support for terrorism and modifying its stance toward Israel.<sup>58</sup> The bill was introduced in the House by Representative Eliot Engel, a Democrat from New York, propelled by substantial backing from neoconservatives within the Bush Administration who were

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<sup>57</sup> Julian Borger et al., "Bush Vetoes Syria War Plan," *The Guardian*, 15 April 2003.

<sup>58</sup> *Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003*, *US Code* 22, sec. 2151 (2003).

frustrated with the lack of forceful action on Syria. Leading these efforts in support of the bill was Elliott Abrams, an “avid proponent” of the bill who, at the time of its introduction in 2002, was actively serving on the National Security Council.<sup>59</sup>

The SALSRA was strongly backed by a lobbying group known as the US Committee for a Free Lebanon (USCFL).<sup>60</sup> Founded by Ziad Abdelnour, a prominent Lebanese-American, USCFL counts Engel among its supporters, along with a number of neoconservatives who were in high-level positions during the time of the SALSRA’s legislative processing.<sup>61</sup> These include Elliott Abrams, Douglas Feith, Richard Perle, and David Wurmser, all of whom, along with Engel, appeared as contributing signatories of a 2000 report co-authored by Abdelnour that advocated, among other measures, the possible use of American military force to extract Syrian troops from Lebanon.<sup>62</sup> Perle even personally and publically advocated for passage of the SALSRA in remarks given at the American Enterprise Institute during his tenure as Chairman of the Defense Policy Board.<sup>63</sup> Clearly then, the SALSRA had strong supporters amongst the neoconservatives within the Bush Administration, who were actively working to raise the bill’s public profile and get it passed into law.

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<sup>59</sup> Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 274.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>61</sup> US Committee for a Free Lebanon, "USCFL History," [http://www.freelebanon.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=17&Itemid=41](http://www.freelebanon.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=17&Itemid=41) (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>62</sup> Daniel Pipes and Ziad Abdelnour, *Ending Syria's Occupation of Lebanon: The US Role* (Philadelphia: The Middle East Forum, 2000), 45. Representative Engel’s support of the report, along with the marked textual and thematic similarities between it and the original SALSRA bill create a case for seeing the genesis of the SALSRA in this publication.

<sup>63</sup> David Sands, "Hawks Recycle Arguments for Iraq War in Case against Syria," *Washington Times*, 16 April 2003.

The SALSRA did not progress without strong opposition from realists within the Administration, however. Officials in the State Department were wary of antagonizing Syria at a time when intelligence cooperation on al-Qaeda was proving so productive. They were afraid that the bill, with its battery of new economic sanctions, would not only shut down this cooperation, but also constrain diplomatic flexibility in dealing with Syria. Deputy Assistant Secretary Satterfield said as much in his submitted testimony on the bill to the House of Representatives, stating his official opinion that:

[W]e do not believe this is the right time for legislative initiatives that could complicate or even undermine our efforts. The imposition of new sanctions on Syria would severely limit our ability to address a range of important issues directly with the highest levels of the Syrian government. It would also render more difficult our efforts to change Syrian behavior....

[W]e believe that carefully calibrated engagement with Syria, combined with the very tough sanctions already in place, will be more effective to advance our dealing with the threat from Iraq. While we are in full agreement with the underlying goals of HR 4483, we do not believe that the proposed bill provides the best mechanism for achieving these goals...[T]he Syria Accountability Act would limit our options and restrict our ability to deal with a difficult and dangerous regional situation at a particularly critical time. For this reason, we ask that your Committee...not move forward on this bill.<sup>64</sup>

The sentiments that Satterfield expressed in his testimony were further emphasized in the State Department's statement of the "Official Administration Position" on the legislation, submitted by Paul Kelly, the Assistant Secretary of State for Legislation Affairs, at the request of Representative Nick Rahall (who is coincidentally of Lebanese heritage).<sup>65</sup> Such official position statements are often sought by Congress to use as evidence in the record of the White House's support or opposition to a particular

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<sup>64</sup> Satterfield, "Prepared Statement on the Syria Accountability Act."

<sup>65</sup> Paul Kelly, "Official Administration Position on H.R. 4483," submitted to the Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, 107th Cong., 2nd Sess., 18 September 2002.

bill. Furthermore, Congressman Darrell Issa, a California Republican (also of Lebanese heritage), stated his strong opposition to the bill.<sup>66</sup> Issa reiterated and deferred to the official State Department opinion, declaring:

I oppose this sanctions act, not because Syria is a good actor; not because Syria is in compliance with the U.N. resolutions, but because Syria is, in fact, a nation we do have diplomatic relations with; and one in which our State Department—my President, my Secretary of State—have said they are getting movement in a direction they want to get. The last time I checked, none of us has the status of Ambassador, nor the training as Ambassadors. So I oppose this sanction based on it tying the President's hands.<sup>67</sup>

Still, despite the well reasoned testimony that the realist opposition to the SALSRA offered, it was a losing battle. The neoconservatives displayed excellent maneuvering on this issue. Simply by virtue of getting the item onto the legislative agenda and moving it from the realm of diplomatic back rooms at the State Department to the political theater of the Congressional floor, they won. While the neoconservatives knew that they would not be able to win the policy argument on the merits of the dubious wisdom of a punitive approach to Syria, they rightly surmised that any legislation that involved sanctioning a known sponsor of terror in support of a weak and struggling Arab democracy would pass through Congress overwhelmingly and override bureaucratic opposition with the full force of the legislative branch. Their strategy was spectacularly successful. The SALSRA passed the Senate with a vote of 89 in favor and 4 against.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Mark Leibovich, "Republican Emerges as Obama's Annoyer-in-Chief," *New York Times*, 6 July 2010.

<sup>67</sup> Darrell Issa, "Remarks Regarding the Syria Accountability Act to the Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, 107th Cong., 2nd Sess.," (18 September 2002). Issa did, however, vote in favor of the bill in its final form. See "Final Vote Results for Roll Call 654," (US House of Representatives, Office of the Clerk, 20 November 2003).

<sup>68</sup> US Senate Bill Clerk, "Roll Call Vote on the Passage of HR 1828 as Ammended," 11 November 2003; available from [http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll\\_call\\_lists/roll\\_call\\_vote\\_cfm.cfm?congress=108&session=1&vote=00445](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=108&session=1&vote=00445) (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

The House vote was even more lopsided, with 408 for and 8 against.<sup>69</sup> The Act was signed into law by President Bush on December 12, 2003, despite his continuing reservations.<sup>70</sup> The neoconservatives thus scored a major vertical victory against the realists.

## **HORIZONTAL I2: SHOWDOWN OVER LEBANON**

After the neoconservative bureaucrats' unusual foray into legislative activism in a successful attempt to best their realist counterparts, a return to more traditional horizontal infighting became apparent the next time a policy dispute erupted over Lebanon. That occasion was the Israeli war with Hezbollah in the summer of 2006. Immediately before the outbreak of the war, things were generally looking good in Lebanon. The Syrian troop presence was gone and things seemed to be holding together despite their absence. The spate of bombing assassinations that marred 2005 had mostly ceased, and the country's pro-western governing coalition was having success in rebuilding the war torn country. In mid-July, hotel occupancy rates were at very high levels and the country was on track for a record-breaking summer tourism season.<sup>71</sup> The conditions were very satisfying to the realist point of view. Lebanon was stable and its notoriously difficult politics were ostensibly hanging together despite the absence of a Syrian pacifying force, which had unilaterally withdrawn in April 2005 after the public uprisings of the Cedar Revolution.

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<sup>69</sup> Clerk of the US House of Representatives, "Final Vote Results for Roll Call 654," 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 20 November 2003; available from <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2003/roll654.xml> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>70</sup> Bush, "Statement by the President on H.R. 1828."

<sup>71</sup> Zeina Karam, "Lebanon Tourism Suffers as Travelers Flee," *USA Today*, 19 July 2006.

Neoconservatives, however, were dissatisfied with the state of affairs. This was chiefly because of the continuing and active participation of Hezbollah in Lebanese public life and electoral politics. In the absence of a strong state structure, Hezbollah had created a loyal constituency by efficiently providing social services to poorer segments of society.<sup>72</sup> They also enjoyed popularity for their role in forcing the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000 via a decade of guerilla conflict.<sup>73</sup> At the time of the war, Hezbollah (together with its coalition partner, Amal) held 35 seats in Lebanon's 128 member parliament.<sup>74</sup> They also maintained their highly skilled and heavily armed militia wing, which enjoys a close relationship with the Syrian and Iranian ruling regimes and periodically skirmished with Israel along the border.<sup>75</sup>

Following the completion of the Syrian troop withdrawal, the ongoing influence of Hezbollah in Lebanese society became the chief cause of consternation amongst the neoconservatives. It is notable to recall the neoconservatives' emphasis on Hezbollah as a target in the earliest days of the Bush Administration. Fighting Hezbollah was the number three priority listed in PNAC's post 9/11 letter to the President, after capturing Osama bin Laden and regime change in Iraq (and ahead of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian issue and maintaining a robust defense budget).<sup>76</sup> Thus, when Israel unleashed a startlingly fierce aerial bombing campaign against Lebanon in retaliation

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<sup>72</sup> Jennifer Ching and Michal Toiba, "Backgrounder: Hezbollah," Council on Foreign Relations, 15 July 2010, [http://www.cfr.org/publication/9155/hezbollah\\_aka\\_hizbollah\\_hizbullah.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/9155/hezbollah_aka_hizbollah_hizbullah.html) (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Esther Pan, "Lebanon: Election Results," Council on Foreign Relations, 20 June 2005, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/8195/lebanon.html> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>75</sup> Ching and Toiba, "Backgrounder: Hezbollah."

<sup>76</sup> Kristol et al., "Letter to President Bush on the War on Terrorism."

against Hezbollah for a cross-border ambush, neoconservatives saw the open military conflict as a major opportunity to eliminate Hezbollah once and for all, while simultaneously battling Iran and Syria in the process. Michael Rubin, a neoconservative scholar at AEI who held advisory positions within the Pentagon and the Iraq Coalition Provisional Authority between 2002 and 2004, articulates this point in an article for the *National Review Online* entitled, tellingly, "Eradication First."<sup>77</sup> "Not only is vengeance against terrorism sometimes necessary," Rubin writes, "but it is more likely to bring peace if it is disproportionate... There will be a role for diplomacy in the Middle East, but it will only be successful if it commences both after the eradication of Hezbollah... and after their paymasters pay a terrible cost for their support."<sup>78</sup>

Evidence points to attitudes like Rubin's being held amongst the neoconservatives and their ideological allies actively serving in government at the time of the war as well. Elliott Abrams, for example, is characterized as believing that there was "no reason to end the war without a fundamental change in the Lebanon reality" and that Israel was doing significant damage to Hezbollah.<sup>79</sup> In their response to the Lebanon war, the neoconservatives seemed to believe that the conflict was a viable example of spreading liberal values by force, that Israel would be able to militarily defeat Hezbollah, and that

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<sup>77</sup> American Enterprise Institute, "Biography: Michael Rubin," <http://www.aei.org/scholar/83> (Accessed 26 Feb 2011). For evidence of Rubin's neoconservatism, see Michael Rubin, "Why Neoconservatism Was and Is Right," <http://www.michaelrubin.org/7112/why-neoconservatism-was-and-is-right> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>78</sup> Michael Rubin, "Eradication First," *National Review Online*, 17 July 2006, <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/218207/eradication-first/michael-rubin> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>79</sup> Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff, *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah, and the War in Lebanon* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 167. See also Glenn Kessler, *The Confidante: Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 217. David Welch has said that Kessler's account of the events surrounding the Lebanon war is particularly accurate.

the United States therefore needed to conduct its diplomacy in a way that gave them the necessary time to do so.

Realists in the Administration, however, were more skeptical of the ability of the Israeli military operations to achieve their objectives. According to Assistant Secretary C. David Welch, this was partially due to the fact that it was clear early on that the Israelis themselves were not certain of exactly what their objectives were, a reality that was later confirmed by Israel's Winograd Commission Report.<sup>80</sup> As Welch recalls, the view amongst realists in the State Department was that the United States needed to identify Israel's war aims in order to be able to resolve the conflict: "I didn't think he [Abrams] was right about what was happening and I didn't think buying time for Israel to accomplish its objectives would work... We had to figure out why that war started, and what they [the Israelis] expected to achieve with military force."<sup>81</sup>

There was also much more concern with issues of regional stability amongst the realists, particularly regarding the possibility that Israel might expand the war to Syria. As Welch recalls, "I didn't know what Olmert would do. We were very concerned that Israel would expand the conflict to Syria, and if that happened you'd have a state-on-state conflict."<sup>82</sup> Rice shared Welch's concerns, and it seems that their worries were well founded.<sup>83</sup> According to senior Israeli sources, there was direct pressure from neoconservatives within the Bush Administration to extend the war to Syria. As Israeli

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<sup>80</sup> Welch, interview by author. See also "English Summary of the Winograd Commission Report," *The New York Times*, 30 January 2008.

<sup>81</sup> Welch, interview by author.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah, and the War in Lebanon*, 105. See also "Bush and Condi Clash over Israel; President Overrides her for the First Time," *Insight*.

journalists Amos Harel and Avi Issachoroff put it, certain elements within the Bush Administration were “hunting for Assad’s head.”<sup>84</sup>

On several occasions, the Americans told the Israeli Ambassador in Washington, Dani Ayalon, and the Israeli military attaché, Major General Dan Harel, that the problem was Syria. “‘Why aren’t you thinking about Syria? The trail leads to Syria.’ This mantra was repeated in several talks,” recalls a senior Israeli official. “Every time Israel issued a mollifying statement to the effect that it had no intention of attacking Syria, Washington was in an uproar. ‘Bashar will think you’re scared of him,’” they said.<sup>85</sup>

This account of senior Administration officials pushing for an expansion of the war into Syria is confirmed by Meyrav Wurmser, a neoconservative scholar herself and the wife of neoconservative Cheney advisor David Wurmser. In an interview with Ynet News, Meyrav Wurmser confirms that “many parts of the American administration believe that Israel should have fought against the real enemy, which is Syria.”<sup>86</sup>

According to Wurmser, there was hope that an Israeli attack on Syria would slow the Iraqi insurgency, which was at its bloody height at the time of the Lebanon war. “If Syria had been defeated, the rebellion in Iraq would have ended,” Wurmser said.<sup>87</sup> That this opinion was held by others within the Administration is borne out by additional accounts of senior officials, which allege that “Everyone hoped that Israel would do their work for them.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah, and the War in Lebanon*, 104.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-05.

<sup>86</sup> Meyrav Wurmser, quoted in Yitzhak Benhorin, “Neocons: We Expected Israel to Attack Syria,” *Ynet News Online*, 16 December 2006, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3340750,00.html> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah, and the War in Lebanon*, 105.

Accounts of Israeli officials reported to the press indicate that Abrams was one of those pushing for the extension of the war, unbeknownst and in direct opposition to David Welch, with whom he was jointly traveling in the Middle East. According to the Inter Press News Service, "In a meeting with a very senior Israeli official, Abrams indicated that Washington would have no objection if Israel chose to extend the war beyond Lebanon to its other northern neighbor, leaving the interlocutor in no doubt that the intended target was Syria."<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, it seems that Abrams actively created a secret intelligence channel between the NSA and the Israelis to give them information that might coax them into expanding the war. According to former Clinton aide Sidney Blumenthal:

Neoconservatives on Vice President Dick Cheney's national security staff and Elliott Abrams, the neoconservative senior director for the Near East on the National Security Council, are prime movers behind sharing NSA intelligence with Israel, and they have discussed Syrian and Iranian supply activities as a potential pretext for Israeli bombing of both countries, the source privy to conversations about the program says... The neoconservatives are described as enthusiastic about the possibility of using NSA intelligence as a lever to widen the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah and Israel and Hamas into a four-front war.<sup>90</sup>

Blumenthal further alleges that the fact that the program was first initiated without the input or assistance of the State Department "appears to be an aspect of an internal struggle to intimidate and marginalize [Rice]."<sup>91</sup>

Thus, we can see bright lines of divergence between the opinions held by the realists at the State Department and the neoconservatives who were, in this case,

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<sup>89</sup> Jim Lobe, "How Syria Dodged a Neo-con Bullet," *Asia Times Online*, 20 December 2006, [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle\\_East/HL20Ak06.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/HL20Ak06.html) (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>90</sup> Sidney Blumenthal, "The Neocons' Next War," *Salon*, 3 August 2006, <http://www.salon.com/news/opinion/blumenthal/2006/08/03/mideast/> (accessed 26 Feb 2011)

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

primarily associated with the National Security Council and the Vice-President's office. The evidence seems to bear that it is not an exaggeration to say that these two camps within the Administration in fact had totally opposite views on what direction American policy should take, with the realists advocating a quick and contained war to achieve defined, limited objectives, and the neoconservatives contrarily working for a war whose scope, objectives, and length were all robustly expanded.

Rice, when presented with this choice, opted to return to her realist roots and advocate against the expansion of the war.<sup>92</sup> She expended a great deal of personal diplomatic capital to secure its resolution, particularly after the Qana incident, when an Israeli bombing operation resulted in dozens of Lebanese civilian casualties, including sixteen children.<sup>93</sup> Rice also seems to have been effective in convincing Bush of the urgency of resolving the war, especially when it started to create a major humanitarian crisis in Lebanon that began to threaten the democratic Siniora government. As Welch puts it, "The President liked [Lebanese Prime Minister] Siniora and was not willing to let a democratic Lebanon go down the tubes."<sup>94</sup> Bush himself says as much in his book, *Decision Points*, writing that with the bombing of Qana, "Israel made matters worse."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah, and the War in Lebanon*, 105.

<sup>93</sup> Kessler, *The Confidante: Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy*, 225.

<sup>94</sup> Welch, interview by author.

<sup>95</sup> George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Crown, 2010), 414.

As the situation in Lebanon deteriorated, Rice began to push for the Israelis to wrap up the operation and make more effort to alleviate the humanitarian emergency through a pause in bombings.<sup>96</sup> An account from the *Washington Post* alleges:

When Mr. Olmert responded to her request to suspend airstrikes for 48 hours by saying that Israel had warned residents to evacuate, Ms. Rice shook her head, according to two American officials.

“Look, we’ve had this experience, with [Hurricane] Katrina, and we thought we were doing it right,” she reportedly said. “But we learned that many people who want to leave can’t leave.”<sup>97</sup>

While Rice eventually got the Israelis to slow their bombings, it was not without a great deal of pain along the way. For one, she had thought that they had agreed to a total two-day moratorium on bombings, and was furious to learn that bombings, though limited, had resumed almost immediately after her plane left.<sup>98</sup> It seems that this may partially have been because the Israelis were receiving mixed signals from the Americans. With dueling ideological camps in Washington, the message conveyed was not always consistent. Furthermore, it seems that Rice and the realists were also being undermined at home by John Bolton, who was the American representative to the UN at the time. Although high administration sources say that Rice “wouldn’t let him near anything important,” Bolton was still charged with doing the Administration’s legwork at the UN and could slow things through that role.<sup>99</sup> Bolton indeed does seem to have been dragging his feet at the UN, particularly over the humanitarian issue, concern about which he belittles in his memoir, complaining to Abrams about “all of the flapping

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<sup>96</sup> Steven Erlanger and Helene Cooper, "Praising Lebanon for Backing Peace Bid, Rice Returns to Israel to Press for Cease-Fire," *New York Times*, 30 July 2006.

<sup>97</sup> Cooper, "Rice's Hurdles on Middle East Begin at Home."

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> Confidential source, interview by author.

around at State” and criticizing Welch for being what Bolton calls “‘nearly hysterical’ . . . about getting humanitarian relief into Lebanon.”<sup>100</sup>

Bolton was also unhelpful in other ways, and at times is reported to have actively worked against Rice. According to one account, when he was displeased with a draft resolution to end the war, he took it upon himself to call his Israeli counterpart in a huff:

Bolton himself called [Israeli Ambassador to the UN] Gillerman, and according to reports claimed “Condi has sold you guys out to the French,” he announced. “You better speak with Olmert and Livni; things have changed for the worse—and State’s agreed to this.” Gillerman was impressed by the gesture. The American, he told his staff, “called for fire on his troops. He got us involved in order to block his superior’s initiative.”<sup>101</sup>

Gillerman’s war metaphor in this case is an apt one, as it underscores how the fighting amongst bureaucrats in Washington almost rivaled that on the ground in Lebanon. Bush himself also confirms the high ideological tensions amongst his advisors over a ceasefire resolution at the UN, recalling:

The disagreement within the team was heated. “We need to let the Israelis finish off Hezbollah,” Dick Cheney said. “If you do that,” Condi replied, “America will be dead in the Middle East.” She recommended we seek a UN resolution calling for a ceasefire and deploying a multinational peacekeeping force.

Neither choice was ideal [but] . . . If America continued to back the Israeli offensive, we would have to veto one UN resolution after the next. Ultimately, instead of isolating Iran and Syria, we would isolate ourselves.

I decided that the long-run benefits of keeping the pressure on Syria and Iran outweighed the short-run gains of striking further blows against Hezbollah. I sent Condi to the UN, where she negotiated Resolution 1701, which called for an immediate end to the violence.”<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Bolton, *Surrender Is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations*, 395-96.

<sup>101</sup> Harel and Issacharoff, *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah, and the War in Lebanon*, 208. See also Barak Ravid, “Israeli Official: Bolton Said Rice Caved on Truce Terms to End 2006 Lebanon War,” *Haaretz*, 28 January 2008.

<sup>102</sup> Bush, *Decision Points*, 414.

Although Security Council Resolution 1701, passed unanimously, finally ended the Lebanon war, it brought no such end to the ideological war amongst the American bureaucracy.<sup>103</sup> “It’s a pile of crap,” Bolton reportedly told his aides and, according to Kessler, he also “refused a request from Rice’s office to go on television to defend the resolution.”<sup>104</sup> The others in the neocon camp, once they realized that global public opinion and conditions on the ground had convinced Bush to side with the realists and push for an end to the hostilities, simply deserted others to do work they didn’t want to see happen. “Abrams simply left to go on vacation, while Cheney’s office was content to complain about the overall direction but rarely intervened.”<sup>105</sup> As Colonel Wilkerson bluntly puts it, “I think the war was one of the learning experiences for Bush and got him to get the neocons to stop doing stupid things.”<sup>106</sup>

## **WHY CURRENT MODELS DON’T FIT**

As with the previous two case studies, the next essential task is to demonstrate how the infighting that took place in these instances regarding US foreign policymaking toward Lebanon is not adequately explained by current models. And once again, starting with the party politics model makes sense because it is the simplest to debunk. As we’ve come to see three times now, the fiercest of the infighting in this case took place between individuals who are all known to be committed Republicans. The way that neoconservatives very publicly took on Condoleezza Rice in the press is quite illustrative.

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<sup>103</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, 11 August 2006.

<sup>104</sup> Kessler, *The Confidante: Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy*, 230.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>106</sup> Wilkerson, interview by author.

Criticism came from all corners of the neoconservative Republican branch, including, allegedly, from colleagues also serving in the Administration at large. According to the conservative *Insight* magazine, which ran the following at the height of the Lebanon war as part of a feature unsubtly headlined “Dump Condi,”

The criticism of Miss Rice has been intense and comes from a range of Republican loyalists, including current and former aides in the Defense Department and the office of Vice President Dick Cheney. They have warned that Iran has been exploiting Miss Rice's inexperience and incompetence to accelerate its nuclear weapons program. They expect a collapse of her policy over the next few months.

"We are sending signals today that no matter how much you provoke us, no matter how viciously you describe things in public, no matter how many things you're doing with missiles and nuclear weapons, the most you'll get out of us is talk," former House Speaker Newt Gingrich said.<sup>107</sup>

Gingrich's statement, in particular, is notably instructive of the unique ideological nature of the neoconservative opposition to Rice's handling of Lebanon policy. It is clear from his quotation that Gingrich and other neoconservative critics do not simply oppose defined points of Rice's handling of the war. Instead, they are flatly against any American policy in the Middle East that prioritizes negotiation. This stance is also iterated by Richard Perle, who attacks Rice in a *Washington Post* op-ed, ridiculing her and the State Department's focus on diplomacy.<sup>108</sup>

The deliberations surrounding the passage of the SALSRA, too, reveal very high levels of ideological motivations that do not fit in with traditional partisan politics. The near unanimity with which the Act passed (along with the equal mix of parties amongst the few who voted against it) demonstrates that the deliberation over this Act was not

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<sup>107</sup> "Dump Condi: Foreign Policy Conservatives Charge State Department has Hijacked Bush Agenda," *Insight*.

<sup>108</sup> Perle, "Why Did Bush Blink on Iran? (Ask Condi)."

motivated by party lines, but by ideological beliefs about how foreign affairs should be conducted, which transcended party politics. The legislation was proposed by Engel, a Democrat, though as we've seen, some of its greatest supporters, like Abrams and Feith, were Republicans. Some of the bill's starkest opponents were also Republicans, like Senator Lincoln Chafee and Representative Darrell Issa, whose dissent focused on the realist, practical measures surrounding concerns about how the bill would affect the State Department's diplomatic flexibility.<sup>109</sup> Party was truly irrelevant in the deliberations surrounding the SALSRA.<sup>110</sup> As scholar Stephen Zunes writes in the journal *Middle East Policy*, "The bill and other statements out of Washington reveal that, despite some growing dissent over the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the neoconservative unilateralist world view now dominates the Middle East policies of both Republicans and Democrats."<sup>111</sup> In other words, policy toward Lebanon (by way of Syria) was ideological, not partisan, in nature.

The dismissal of the party politics model of infighting leaves just Graham Allison's models to reckon with, and they prove little more accurate. Starting with Model II, the organizational behavior model, arguments put forth in the previous chapter regarding Iran continue to hold in this situation, particularly regarding attitudes toward

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<sup>109</sup> Issa, "Remarks Regarding the Syria Accountability Act to the Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia," 107th Cong., 2nd Sess., 18 Sept 2002. See also "US Senate Roll Call Vote on the Passage of HR 1828 As Amended" and "Final Vote Results for Roll Call 654."

<sup>110</sup> While it is true that the SALSRA was generally popular amongst Americans at large, scholars point out that this was unlikely to be the reason for its popularity in Congress, as such a vote would have been deeply unpopular in a number of districts around the country, and there is also little evidence to show that members of Congress, with their sharp focus on reelection, vote on foreign policy issues, which tend to be obscure to the electorate. See Stephen Zunes, "US Policy Towards Syria and the Triumph of Neoconservatism," *Middle East Policy* 11, no. 1 (2004). See also James M. Lindsay, *Congress and the Politics of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 4.

<sup>111</sup> Zunes, "US Policy Towards Syria and the Triumph of Neoconservatism."

Syria. Like Iran, Syria showed itself to be willing to engage with the United States in a joint effort to marginalize a common enemy—al-Qaeda—and the two branches of the US government that most directly came into contact with Syria, Defense and State, largely took advantage of the decreased rigidity of operating procedures that followed the 9/11 attacks. Aside from the intelligence sharing with Syria that was already noted earlier, Flynt Leverett recounts that American commanders on the ground used the increased practical flexibility afforded them to extract useful cooperation from the Syrian military. According to Leverett,

Local US commanders, for example, made noteworthy efforts to engage Syria on the [Iraqi] border issue. During the summer and fall of 2003, US military commanders in the field took issue with claims by civilian officials in the Office of the Secretary of Defense that Syria was continuing to help foreign fighters cross into Iraq. One US commander, General David Petraeus of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, who had responsibility for a large portion of northern Iraq, worked out his own arrangement with Syrian authorities. In return for allowing Syrian businessmen to reestablish trade routes into Iraq, local Syrian officials coordinated border control efforts with officers of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne and provided the division's sector of northern Iraq with daily electricity.<sup>112</sup>

Clearly, as this and previous instances show, the standard operating procedures of the type upon which Model II is based were being disregarded to marked success; Petraeus's individual, direct negotiations with Syrian military authorities would never, ever have occurred had standard Defense Department procedures been followed.

Model II also breaks down upon examination of the legislative process surrounding the SALSRA. According to Allison's models, bureaucrats restrict their fighting to within their departments in the executive branch, since that is all that they are mandated to do. However, as the SALSRA case clearly shows, bureaucrats have a political life outside of their delineated job descriptions. Had the neoconservatives within

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<sup>112</sup> Leverett, *Inheriting Syria: Bashar's Trial by Fire*, 139.

the Administration rigidly followed their standard operating procedures, they would have been very unlikely take their conflict to the Congress, an entirely separate branch of the federal government, and the question of US policy toward Lebanon and Syria would have been settled, with the State Department point of view prevailing and most infighting over the policy put to an end. Instead, the conflict was extended out, both horizontally and vertically, eventually resulting in even the President having to abide by the neoconservative principles espoused by the Act, which became the definitive legislative statement on American Lebanon policy. The sheer unorthodoxy of these events is in fact noted in President Bush's signing statement regarding the Act, which implies how unusual the SALSRA is in terms of how US foreign policy is made.<sup>113</sup>

Clearly then, once again in this case we see evidence of ideological concerns amongst the bureaucracy trumping any desires to follow standard operating procedures. This is true both for the realists, who disregarded normal regulations in order to achieve strategic cooperation with adversaries, and the neoconservatives, who took their infighting to governmental domains normally alien to the professional bureaucracy. Model II thus fails to adequately explain the events that took place regarding US foreign policy formation toward Lebanon. This leaves Allison's Model III, the governmental politics model, as the last remaining existing alternative to the I2 model. And while this model is somewhat more successful than others, it still does not show as much explanatory power as I2 does.

As recalled from previous chapters, the governmental politics model is based on the idea that bureaucrats fight with each other to secure zero-sum gains, either for

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<sup>113</sup> Bush, "Statement by the President on H.R. 1828."

themselves individually, in terms of power or prestige, or for their departments, which stand to benefit from increased appropriations and political domains. These concerns do seem to be the motivating factors in some cases. John Bolton, for example, seems from his memoirs and from the accounts of those who worked with him to have been particularly concerned with his own personal influence.<sup>114</sup> Nevertheless, many of his actions also appear as illogical under Model III, since, through his noted animosity toward the UN and his skepticism of its value as an institution of international relations, he seemed to be undermining his own personal power as the American representative to that institution.

The neoconservatives who were working to pass the SALSRA, too, were working against their own influence, by sending a major item of strategic Middle East policy to the Congress, an extremely inexpert body—as far as foreign policy is concerned—whose Constitutional mandate to make foreign policy is seriously limited.<sup>115</sup> Outsourcing such issues of professional turf to Congress is irrational according to the typically expected bureaucratic behavior which, naturally, emphasizes the power of the professional foreign policy bureaucracy over that of Congress.<sup>116</sup>

Rice's behavior, too, indicates a marked disregard for her own personal standing within the Administration in favor of carrying out diplomacy that she thought would be effective. Especially regarding events surrounding the Lebanon war, Rice's position is notable because it represents a departure from her way of doing things as National

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<sup>114</sup> Bolton, *Surrender Is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations*.

<sup>115</sup> *United States v. Curtiss-Wright Export Co.* 299 U.S. 304 (1936).

<sup>116</sup> Lindsay, *Congress and the Politics of U.S. Foreign Policy*, 3.

Security Advisor in Bush's first term. In that role, she largely sided with the neoconservative wing of the Administration, despite what may have been quiet reservations about the neocon ideology, in what appears to have been an early effort to consolidate her influence.<sup>117</sup> These actions are very much in line with Allison's Model III. However, many noted Rice's return to realism upon becoming Secretary of State, and the evidence seems to show that her personal power may have suffered as a result, as her emphasis on containing the war through diplomacy clearly cost her allies.<sup>118</sup> This strongly indicates that had Rice been motivated primarily by Model III self-interest, she would not have pushed back as hard against the neoconservative drive to expand the war to Syria, for example, as she did. Instead, her realist academic training led her to seek a practical solution to the Lebanon war, even if it meant emptying her political capital. Hence, once again Model III fails to predict Rice's actual behavior as satisfactorily as an explanation based on ideology does. Furthermore, this contingency appears to be generally true for the other episodes detailed in this chapter, leading once more to the conclusion that the bureaucratic infighting described here was primarily motivated by ideological concerns, and as such, I2 is a better explanatory model of bureaucratic behavior than either the party politics or the Allisonian models.

## **THE LINKS TO POLICY FAILURE**

Having conclusively shown that ideological infighting occurred in the case of US foreign policy toward Lebanon, it is now necessary to show how this infighting directly

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<sup>117</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, 316.

<sup>118</sup> "Dump Condi: Foreign Policy Conservatives Charge State Department has Hijacked Bush Agenda," *Insight*. See also Kaplan, "Why Her Dreams Crashed."

contributed to the American failure to achieve its Lebanese policy objectives. Recalling from earlier, these objectives and their outcomes are enumerated in the table below.

COUNTRY	POLICY OBJECTIVE	SUCCESS?
<b>Lebanon</b>	1) Prevent use as a terrorist base	<b>X</b>
	2) Limit Syrian and Iranian influence	<b>X</b>
	3) Promote liberal democracy	<b>X</b>

Regarding the first goal of preventing Lebanon’s use as a base for terrorist groups, particularly Hezbollah, the Bush Administration was wildly unsuccessful. Despite UN Resolution 1701’s mandated deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and UN peacekeepers (UNIFIL) to southern Lebanon, Hezbollah’s hold over the region has not been significantly diminished.<sup>119</sup> According to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon’s October 2010 semi-annual report on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1559,

Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias continue to operate in the country outside the Government’s control, in serious violation of resolution 1559 (2004). While several groups across the political spectrum in Lebanon possess weapons outside Government control...the armed component of Hizbullah remains the most significant and most heavily armed Lebanese militia in the country.<sup>120</sup>

Welch concurs with Ban’s assessment of the lack of practical success that the Israeli war, and US policy surrounding it, had on striking a strategic blow to Hezbollah. “I think it was by all accounts a failure. You had a very high number of casualties without changing the military or political situation one bit.”<sup>121</sup> Israeli investigations, too, accept the failure of the war to reduce Hezbollah in any serious way, as noted in the Winograd

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<sup>119</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441.

<sup>120</sup> Office of the Secretary-General, *Twelfth Semi-Annual Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1559*, United Nations, 18 October 2010.

<sup>121</sup> Welch, interview by author.

Commission Report.<sup>122</sup> Finally, neoconservatives within the Bush Administration acknowledged their displeasure at the lack of achievement of policy aims. Aside from Bolton's calling the ceasefire "crap," others within his ideological bloc expressed discontent.<sup>123</sup> Neoconservative Meyrav Wurmser laments in the press that "Hizbullah defeated Israel in the war. This is the first war Israel lost," and goes on to say that such feelings of loss were widespread amongst neoconservatives within the Administration.<sup>124</sup>

It is thus clear that there was no disagreement amongst the ideological blocs that the Lebanon policy objective of preventing the country from being used as a base for terrorism had failed miserably. Aside from failing to weaken Hezbollah militarily, the American policy, especially in its allowing the Israelis to carry on with the war for so long, created a huge surge in Hezbollah's popularity. What's more, this popularity was not limited to the group's traditional power base of relatively poor Shias. Public opinion polls taken at the time show huge support for Hezbollah. One poll conducted by the Beirut Center for Research and Information shows 86 percent of Lebanese overall supporting Hezbollah's fight against Israel, a figure which is broken down to reveal a stunning support level of 80.3% amongst even Christians.<sup>125</sup> Other press reports document Sunnis converting to Shiism in Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah's honor.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> "English Summary of the Winograd Commission Report."

<sup>123</sup> Kessler, *The Confidante: Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy*, 230.

<sup>124</sup> Benhorin, "Neocons: We Expected Israel to Attack Syria."

<sup>125</sup> Although this poll has been criticized for biased wording, its results are largely in line with several other polls also taken at the time, so there is little reason to doubt its accuracy. See "Lebanese Public Opinion," *Mideast Monitor* 1, no. 3 (2006).

<sup>126</sup> Roe Nahmias, "Syria: Sunnis Convert to Shiite in Homage to Nasrallah," *Ynetnews.com*, 10 August 2006 10 August 2006, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3312256,00.html> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

Perhaps most damning for US policy, however, is the fact that polling showed that immediately after the war, 69% of all Lebanese considered the United States an “enemy of Lebanon.”<sup>127</sup>

Clearly, when it comes to the American policy objective of preventing Lebanon from being a base for terrorism, the Bush Administration failed. What’s more, it is not difficult to trace how ideological infighting contributed to this failure. As was shown earlier in the chapter, the neoconservatives and the realists were starkly split on how to deal with Lebanon, with an emphasis on Syria as well. Realists favored engagement, whereas neoconservatives wanted confrontation, via the SALSRA and a total-war effort on the part of the Israelis against Hezbollah (and, as many preferred, Syria and Iran as well). This served to lengthen the war itself by undermining the State Department’s efforts at achieving a ceasefire once it became clear that the Israelis were not going to be able to neutralize Hezbollah and were instead strengthening its popular support. It is this lengthening of the war and its civilian toll in particular that have been tied to the drastic shift in Lebanese public opinion in favor of Hezbollah and against the United States.<sup>128</sup> As Welch rightly recognized in the early days of the conflict, once the Israelis started bombing, the clock started ticking, and it was only a matter of time until “something awful would happen... [and] the political ground would shift out from under us.”<sup>129</sup> The inevitable result was that the United States would come out losing on one of its core objectives.

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<sup>127</sup> The percentage rises to a stunning 97% when considering Israel. "Lebanese Public Opinion."

<sup>128</sup> Rami Khouri, "New Massacre at Qana Propels Region into Uncharted Diplomatic Terrain," *Daily Star*, 31 July 2006.

<sup>129</sup> Welch, interview by author.

The second core objective that the United States sought to achieve with its Lebanon policy was the reduction of influence of Syria and Iran. Again, it failed in this goal, with I2 directly contributing to this failure. Both cases are remarkably clear-cut. In the instance of Syria, it is plain from Assad's statements that he was only interested in cooperating with the United States as long as he could achieve demonstrable positive results in return.<sup>130</sup> He needed to be able to have something to show for his cooperation in order to preserve his own power. Yet despite the well documented cases, detailed earlier, of Syrian military and intelligence cooperation, neoconservatives within the Bush Administration continued to antagonize Syria in both their public rhetoric and through moves like supporting the SALSRA, despite the strong efforts of realists in the State Department to block them.

The Syrians seem also to have taken particular offense at the fact that the neoconservative public bludgeoning continued even after their military withdrawal from Lebanon was verified by the UN in the spring of 2005.<sup>131</sup> This was, apparently, the last straw, and seems to have led the Syrians to the same conclusions that the Iranians reached in the last chapter: cooperating with the United States resulted in no tangible benefit and did not reduce the likelihood of being targeted for regime change. Therefore, the soundest policy for self-preservation was to ensure that the Americans stayed as bogged down with the Iraqi insurgency as possible. This way, the US would not be able to move onto the next dossier. This was confirmed to the press by Imad Moustapha, the Syrian Ambassador to Washington. As reported in the *New York Times*,

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<sup>130</sup> Leverett, *Inheriting Syria: Bashar's Trial by Fire*, 145.

<sup>131</sup> Douglas Jehl and Thom Shanker, "Syria Stops Cooperating with US Forces and CIA," *New York Times*, 23 May 2005.

Mr. Moustapha said he believed that the Bush administration had decided "to escalate the situation with Syria" despite steps the Syrians have taken against the insurgents in Iraq, and despite the withdrawal in recent weeks of Syrian troops from Lebanon, in response to international demands.

He said American complaints had been renewed since February, when a half-brother of Saddam Hussein, who was once the widely feared head of Iraq's two most powerful security agencies, was handed over to the Iraqi authorities after being captured in Syria along with several lieutenants. The renewal of complaints caused Syria to abandon the idea of providing further help, he said.

"We thought, why should we continue to cooperate?" he said.<sup>132</sup>

Indeed, the lack of Syrian engagement has been damaging to American interests, and Syria, despite its troop withdrawal from Lebanon, continues to be as influential as ever in the country.<sup>133</sup> Leverett attributes this failure to the infighting and lack of coordination within the Bush Administration, asserting, "In the absence of an overarching strategic framework for cooperation, it has proven difficult to sustain tactical engagement" with Syria.<sup>134</sup>

The situation with Iran is similarly grim. After the 2006 war, Iran cleverly capitalized on prevalent Lebanese public opinion and the weakness of the Lebanese state to directly insert itself into the humanitarian mission of rebuilding Lebanon. In the year after the war, Iran budgeted £60 million to Lebanese reconstruction.<sup>135</sup> Furthermore, rebuilding aid was given regardless of sect, with Iran supervising the reconstruction of Christian churches and Sunni mosques as well as the homes and mosques of Hezbollah's traditional Shiite constituency.<sup>136</sup> This aid provided by Iran eclipsed America's

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<sup>132</sup> Jehl and Shanker, "Syria Stops Cooperating with US Forces and CIA."

<sup>133</sup> Zeina Karam, "Syrian Influence in Lebanon on the Rise Again," *Associated Press*, 8 September 2010.

<sup>134</sup> Leverett, *Inheriting Syria: Bashar's Trial by Fire*, 138-39.

<sup>135</sup> Kitty Logan, "Iran Rebuilds Lebanon to Boost Hizbollah," *The Telegraph*, 30 July 2007.

<sup>136</sup> Hugh Macleod, "Reconstruction's Strange Bedfellows," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8 April 2007.

contribution in visibility (if not amount), and served to further tip public opinion amongst many toward Tehran and away from Washington.<sup>137</sup> Additionally, Iran's patronage in the post-war reconstruction has not been lost amongst many Lebanese, especially Shias, more than four years after the conflict. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was given "an ecstatic welcome" by thousands of Lebanese upon making a state visit to Beirut in October 2010.<sup>138</sup> Many directly cited Iran's help in rebuilding after the war. One onlooker reportedly said that she admired Ahmadinejad because "He rebuilt Lebanon, [and] we welcome him here in his second country."<sup>139</sup>

It is clear to see that the United States was sorely mistaken at thinking that allowing the Lebanon war to go on as long and as destructively as it did would help to limit the influence of Iran in the country. On the contrary, it strengthened it to the point where Iran now appears to be much more influential in Lebanon than it was prior to the war. As was shown throughout this chapter, infighting within the American bureaucracy expressly contributed to the length and intense level of destruction of the war, which weakened the Lebanese state and provided an opportunity for Iran to insert itself more solidly in the Lebanese political scene.

Before moving on, however, it is prudent to acknowledge the argument put forth by Meyrav Wurmser and other neoconservatives that the reason for the American (and Israeli) failure regarding this objective was not because of ideological infighting, but because the Israelis were too restrained in their fighting, both in terms of deference to

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Robert Worth, "Iran's Leader Cements Ties on State Visit to Lebanon," *New York Times*, 13 October 2010.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

humanitarian concerns in Lebanon and in not expanding the war to Syria and possibly Iran.<sup>140</sup> If Israel had truly been given free reign for the war, it would have succeeded in both destroying Hezbollah and beating back Syria and Iran. While persuasive to some, this argument is relatively simple to refute without even having to engage with an analysis of the counterfactual (which, nonetheless, it seems would turn up a refutation in itself, given that Israel was trying to achieve what was at its core a political goal through military means, a difficult if not impossible prospect). Essentially, with this argument, the neoconservatives are lamenting that their point of view did not become US policy—that it was blocked by those in the State Department who wished not to see the war expanded to multiple fronts. In other words, they are complaining of ideological infighting—that they were marginalized by the realists, who succeeded in persuading President Bush that the war needed to be short and limit Lebanese civilian casualties so as not to put the democratic Siniora government at risk.

This finally brings us to the third American objective, the desire to strengthen liberal democracy within Lebanon. Once again, chiefly because of the nature of the 2006 war, this objective failed. As detailed earlier, Hezbollah emerged from the war not only militarily intact, but with renewed political capital, which it put to destructive use in 2007 and 2008, when for 18 months it blocked the formation of a new Lebanese coalition government, demanding a veto power in the cabinet that it was not entitled to based on performance in the last election.<sup>141</sup> When the Hariri government pushed back against the demand, Hezbollah flexed its military muscle and took over a large swath of West Beirut,

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<sup>140</sup> Benhorin, "Neocons: We Expected Israel to Attack Syria." See also Charles Krauthammer, "Israel's Lost Moment," *Washington Post*, 4 August 2006.

<sup>141</sup> Tom Perry, "Lebanese Parliament Elects Suleiman as President," *Reuters*, 25 May 2008.

a traditional base of Sunni power; the move was deemed “essentially a coup” by analysts.<sup>142</sup> The end result was that Hezbollah was successful in militarily forcing the government to grant it political influence that it had not won legitimately through elections.<sup>143</sup> It is difficult to see this end result as being in any way encouraging to liberal democracy in Lebanon. Further, it is hard to make a case that Hezbollah would have had the political clout to even attempt such a risky maneuver, which bordered on plunging the country into another civil war, had its political fortunes not been raised by the 2006 war and its rebuilding aftermath. Thus, once again, an abysmal failure of US policy can be traced back to the ideological infighting that surrounded America’s Lebanon policy in general, and policy toward the 2006 war in particular, which ended up inadvertently strengthening Hezbollah, Syria, and Iran and defeating America’s policy purposes.

## CONCLUSION

Thus, we have now seen in gory detail three cases that demonstrate the existence of the I2 model as a mechanism of bureaucratic conflict within the American foreign policymaking apparatus, and how the presence of this particular model of infighting has contributed to spectacular failures of US foreign policy in a number of arenas. Yet for all the losses that the Bush Administration endured regarding its Middle East policy, there is one case that stands out for its success: Libya. But what separates Libya from the debacles that have been described in Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon? This is the question the next chapter seeks to answer.

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<sup>142</sup> Robert Worth and Nada Bakri, "Hezbollah Seizes Swath of Beirut from US-Backed Lebanon Government," *New York Times*, 10 May 2008.

<sup>143</sup> Perry, "Lebanese Parliament Elects Suleiman as President."



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CASE STUDY IV: LIBYA BREAKS THE MOLD

The case of Libya's successful disarmament stands out as one of the greatest diplomatic achievements of the United States during the given study timeframe. Not only did American diplomats succeed in winning closure for the families of the victims of the Pan Am 103 bombing, but they also gained something even more important: the verified WMD disarmament of Libya and a tangible cessation of its state-sponsored international terrorism activities. As a result of years of patient yet persistent diplomacy, the Libyan state, on 19 December 2003, formally renounced support for terrorism and gave up its entire WMD program. "Libya will now play its international role in building a new world free from weapons of mass destruction and all kinds of terrorism," announced Colonel Gadhafi<sup>1</sup> through official state media.<sup>2</sup> The decision to give up its WMD programs and refrain from sponsoring terrorism, mere months after having finally resolved the Lockerbie case, set Libya on a path to the normalization of relations with the

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<sup>1</sup> There is no universally accepted English spelling of the Colonel's name, the Arabic version of which contains several letters and sounds that do not exist in the English alphabet. This spelling has been chosen because it is one of the simpler and more common renditions available. I have, however, left variant spellings faithfully as they appear in original source material to make it easier for researchers to find the consulted documents. This is also true of renderings of the name of Saif al-Islam, Gadhafi's son.

<sup>2</sup> Moamar Gadhafi, quoted in Neil MacFarquhar, "Libya's 'Brother Leader' Pulls Yet Another Rabbit Out of His Hat," *New York Times*, 21 December 2003.

United States; bilateral diplomatic relations were finally restored in May 2006 when the US formally reopened its embassy in Tripoli for the first time since 1979.<sup>3</sup>

While Libya's surprise announcement certainly represented a shocking about-face for a country—and its leader—that prides itself on being a leading player in violent “anti-imperialist” movements throughout the world, the United States' turnaround is just as remarkable, especially in the context of the Bush Doctrine and the War on Terror. The American dealings with Libya thus marked a notable departure from the strategies employed with other so-called rogue nations, including those like Iraq, Iran, and Syria, chronicled in previous chapters.

Yet in a professional environment as toxically political as the first term of the Bush Administration, how was such a negotiated achievement—clearly at odds with the prevailing neoconservative attitudes abhorring diplomatic engagement with adversaries—realized? The answer can be summed up in two words: apathy and secrecy. As this chapter details, the road to Libya's disarmament was a long one that stretched back through the Clinton and George H.W. Bush Administrations to the early 1990s. Because it had taken so long and produced, seemingly, no results, many neoconservative would-be infighters viewed the negotiated path as a futile, if harmless, dead-end. The on-again, off-again talks would keep the meddling realists at State occupied and minimize their interference in more high-profile matters like Iraq and Iran; when the time was right, the failed diplomacy would then be held up as a public example of the pointlessness of engagement versus the certainty of force. Thus, preliminary talks with Libya on things like al-Qaeda were left alone by the neoconservatives, in contrast to the shutting down of

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<sup>3</sup> John O'Neil, "US Restores Diplomatic Ties to Libya," *New York Times*, 15 May 2006.

similar talks with Iran and Syria, because they weren't seen as consequential enough to fight against.

This chapter also reveals, however, that there was an entirely separate, highly secretive track of negotiations occurring at the highest levels of the American, Libyan, and British governments of which the neoconservatives were completely unaware. Handled primarily by the CIA—with invaluable MI6 cooperation—these were the negotiations that led directly to Libya's announcement in 2003. Because they were conducted under such intensely secretive circumstances, only a handful of the very highest American officials knew that the track even existed. As a result, those neoconservatives who would have been ideologically opposed to them were not afforded the opportunity to combat the talks with the usual infighting tools—indeed, it is likely that they were as shocked as the rest of the world at Libya's surprising decision.

Hence, the case of Libya demonstrates an important contrast with the previous country case studies analyzed in other chapters: ideological infighting was simply not a major factor in the bureaucratic processes that surrounded US foreign policy toward Libya between 2001 and 2006. As a consequence, the resulting policy was much more successful in achieving its objectives than in the other cases, and it can serve as a model for how the foreign policy bureaucracy can work very well when not saddled with ideological conflicts.

## KEY PLAYERS

### REALISTS

The Libya case is notable because of the ideological homogeneity of its key players, who were, almost without exception, ideological realists. This is a function of the fact that, in contrast to the previous cases, where the Pentagon, NSC, and Vice-President's Office (and their constituent neoconservatives) played large roles in the foreign policymaking process, matters of Libya were managed nearly exclusively by the State Department and the CIA, the ranks of which preceding cases have shown to have been dominated by ideological realists. Accounts from those who worked on the case say that this was essentially the result of self-selection. Neoconservatives were preoccupied with what might be considered the "first tier" of the Axis of Evil in the Middle East—Iraq and Iran—and weren't inclined to deal with Libya. They were highly skeptical that the bumpy diplomacy with the Gadhafi regime would lead anywhere, and figured that the country would still be ripe for eventual forced regime-change, if necessary, after the principal troublemakers were taken care of first. As David Welch put it, the neoconservatives "didn't much care about it [Libya]. Their hands were already full. They didn't know what to do about it other than wish the poor guys in the State Department good luck as they clicked their heels on down the hall. They kind of left us alone."<sup>4</sup> Another official who was deeply involved in the negotiations concurred with Welch, recalling that "Everyone else kept pretty clear because they didn't think it would work."<sup>5</sup> Thus, evidence points to the fact that when it came to Libya, potential

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<sup>4</sup> Welch, interview by author.

<sup>5</sup> Confidential source, interview by author, 17 November 2010.

neoconservative infighters displayed a marked apathy, and as a result kept themselves out of the process.

Still, not all of this ideological homogeneity was a result of self-segregation. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the second track of the negotiations—those that took place from March to December 2003 and led directly to Libya’s disarmament announcement—were held in extremely tight secrecy. Sources close to this track say that it was done this way primarily so as not to scare the Libyans away, who were highly sensitive to the neoconservative rhetoric with which many Bush Administration officials were saturating the media. It was worried that if the talks became public, it would refocus neoconservative calls for regime change on Gadhafi. Furthermore, the Lockerbie settlement was still not concluded when the secret talks commenced, and the families of the victims represented a particular political liability. As journalist Ron Suskind writes, “Families of the Lockerbie victims had long since organized into a fierce, somewhat unruly advocacy group, lobbying for arrests, sanctions, and anything that would amount to a facsimile of justice. Notice of a dialogue with the monsters from Tripoli would have summoned a righteous explosion.”<sup>6</sup> Other officials concur with this assessment. Said one, “Had we had to do it with the lights on, with any commentary, the Libyans probably would have bolted.”<sup>7</sup>

As a result of this secrecy, extremely few people in the Administration knew that the track existed at all—only those at the very highest levels of the agencies directly responsible for the talks were privy to them. On the American side, these included the

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<sup>6</sup> Ron Suskind, "The Tyrant Who Came in from the Cold," *Washington Monthly*, October 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Confidential source, interview by author.

President, Colin Powell, George Tenet, and the small handful of CIA officials who actually went to Libya (with their British MI6 counterparts) to conduct the negotiations.<sup>8</sup> By deliberate design, very few people knew. “Libya was done in micro—in nano,” recalls an official close to the negotiations.<sup>9</sup>

### *William Burns*

William Burns served as the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs from 2001 to 2005, and in this capacity he was responsible for taking the lead negotiating role with the Libyans in the first, more open track regarding the Lockerbie settlement demands and on counterterror cooperation. Burns, a career member of the Foreign Service, has the strong realist credentials typical of someone in his position. Burns’s graduate studies, which culminated with a doctorate in international relations, were completed as a Marshall Scholar at Oxford, not an institution known for manufacturing neoconservative ideologues.<sup>10</sup> On the contrary, the Oxford program, in typical European tradition, tends to emphasize realism as the core theory of international relations.

Burns has, in his distinguished career, worked for both Democratic and Republican presidents, and he has been an active realist player in some of the most fundamental ideological debates about the direction of US foreign policy as a whole. The best example of this comes from 1992, immediately after the fall of the Soviet Union,

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<sup>8</sup> Gordon Corera, *Shopping for Bombs* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 188. Also Confidential source, interview by author. There is a slight disparity between the information provided by Corera’s open-source account and that of my confidential source. In this instance I have erred with the confidential source, judging his/her information to be more accurate.

<sup>9</sup> Confidential source, interview by author.

<sup>10</sup> Department of State, "Biography: William J. Burns," <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/105574.htm> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

when the American foreign policy establishment was debating the broad swaths of US policy in a newly unipolar world. One report, commissioned by then-Defense Secretary Cheney, proposed a stance based more on a robust ideology that was aimed at finding and marginalizing the next potential ideological threat after the demise of global communism.<sup>11</sup> “Drafted principally by Undersecretary Paul Wolfowitz's aide Zalmay Khalilzad, the document reflected the collective thinking of Wolfowitz and his staff, including I. Lewis ‘Scooter’ Libby,” write Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier in the conservative *National Interest*—which is to say that the draft represented the neoconservative side of the decades-old internal Republican Party foreign policy debates.<sup>12</sup>

As it turned out, the report proved to be controversial within the realist-dominated upper ranks of the Bush 41 foreign policy bureaucracy. As arch-realist and then-National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft recalls, “That was just nutty. I read a draft of it. I thought, Cheney, this is just kooky. It didn't go anywhere further. It was never formally reviewed.”<sup>13</sup> The State Department, under the leadership of Lawrence Eagleburger, thus set to drafting its own policy memo. This effort, in contrast to the Cheney document, emphasized the realist point of view, aiming to maximize American global power through strategic alliance-building rather than unilateralism, seeing the United States as the “architect of new security arrangements . . . [and] a builder and leader of coalitions to deal with problems in the chaotic post-Cold War world.”<sup>14</sup> A lead author of this realist

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<sup>11</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, "McCain's Choice."

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Brent Scowcroft, quoted in Chollet and Goldgeier, "McCain's Choice."

<sup>14</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, "McCain's Choice."

vision for America was none other than William Burns, who at the time was acting Director of Policy Planning at the State Department, thus putting his realist ideology on full display.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike others, such as Condoleezza Rice, Burn's realism has been consistent and unwavering throughout his career, and is seen both in his words and actions surrounding America's policy toward Libya. With Libya, Burns pushed a policy that was, "hard-nosed and realistic," yet also focused on behavior change rather than regime change.<sup>16</sup> The policy sought to extract concessions from Libya through a range of persuasive techniques that included (but were not strictly limited to) the use of force. Most critically, regime nature—specifically regarding issues of morality—was not, under Burns, a limiting factor for diplomatic engagement, a hallmark of realism. While issues of human rights and political reform within Libya are important to Burns—as they are to most Americans, even realist ones—they were not the critical issues upon which the restoration of diplomatic relations depended. As Burns put in his February 2004 remarks to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the familiar criteria on WMD, terrorism, and Lockerbie were the critical issues upon which the reestablishment of Libyan-American diplomatic relations "would depend."<sup>17</sup> By contrast, "Libyan actions to reform its political and economic system, to institute and respect human rights, and to play a constructive role in the region" would only "be important factors in shaping a more

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> William Burns, "Challenges and Opportunities for the United States in the Middle East and North Africa," Washington, DC, 30 January 2002; available from <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rm/2002/7776.htm> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>17</sup> William Burns, "Remarks to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Developments in Libya," Washington, DC, 26 February 2004; available from <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rm/30004.htm> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

normal relationship,” a relationship that would presumably still exist, at least in some form, even without such desired reforms.<sup>18</sup> This crucial factor is, at its essence, what sets Burns and his realism apart from neoconservatives, who fundamentally refuse to engage diplomatically with distasteful regimes, even if it would result in an immediate net gain.

*Stephen Kappes*

Because of the secrecy involved and the high level of familiarity with Libya that existed within its career ranks, the CIA was authorized to take the lead on the Libya talks. And while it was also heavily involved with the less covert first-track talks regarding security and terrorism cooperation, the CIA was the unquestioned leading agency when it came to the extremely sensitive second track of talks leading to Libya’s disarmament. At the helm of this project was an intriguing man named Stephen Kappes. A former Marine turned lifelong clandestine officer, Kappes has been described in the press as “legendary” and by his colleagues as possibly “the best spy to emerge from the CIA in a generation.”<sup>19</sup> Although Kappes’s career with the CIA saw him eventually rise to the level of Deputy Director—number two in the entire agency—Kappes is critical to this case in his role as Assistant Director of the Clandestine Services, where he was charged with being the lead American negotiator with Libya.<sup>20</sup>

It is extremely difficult to conclusively ascertain the ideological leanings of someone who has spent more than 25 years as a clandestine intelligence officer. By

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<sup>18</sup> Burns, "Remarks to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Developments in Libya."

<sup>19</sup> Walter Pincus, "Kappes is Expected to Boost CIA Morale," *Washington Post*, 19 June 2006. See also Mary Louise Kelly, CIA Hopes Kappes' Return Helps Settle Agency, *All Things Considered*, NPR, 2 June 2006; available from <http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=5448332> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Mark Mazzetti, "Deputy Director of CIA is Stepping Down," *New York Times*, 14 April 2010.

definition, one's job in this capacity is to be invisible. CIA agents don't write articles, and they certainly don't give interviews on the record. In this sense, it can be very difficult to piece together one's views with confidence. Still, there has been enough written about Kappes in the open press to justify our labeling him as a realist. For one, Kappes's professional pedigree lends itself to realism. As we have seen in the previous case studies, the traditional intelligence agencies tended to display a definite culture of pragmatic realism. Time after time, from Iraq to Iran to Lebanon, the evidence has shown realist intelligence officials pushing back against political appointees in the Defense Department and the NSC, whose intelligence analyses were distorted by neoconservative ideological motivations. Thus, the fact that Kappes not only survived, but thrived in this professional culture seems to be a good indicator of a realist point of view.

Turmoil in the later part of Kappes's career, however, is an even stronger indicator of his realist outlook, particularly juxtaposed with the zealous neoconservatism of the early Bush years. Congressional Democrats came to be particular fans of Kappes, because he reportedly was helpful to them in their work of the loyal opposition, which involved challenging elements of the Bush Administration's foreign policy— particularly those, like the war in Iraq, which shared both a neoconservative impetus and were growing in political unpopularity. According to Kenneth Timmerman, an expert on the role of the intelligence agencies in the War on Terror, "Behind the scenes, Mr. Kappes won support from congressional Democrats, who loved him because he fed them information they could use against Mr. Bush."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Kenneth Timmerman, "A Shadow Warrior Falls," *Washington Times*, 17 April 2010.

It appears that, as a career clandestine officer, Mr. Kappes took exception to the Bush Administration's intelligence reforms under Porter Goss—tapped by Bush “to tame the ‘liberal’ CIA”— and the increasing politicization of analysis by political appointees, both of which were felt to be diluting to the professional intelligence service.<sup>22</sup> The discontent apparently came to a head in 2004 with Kappes's sudden resignation. Reportedly, Kappes chose to resign over firing his deputy on Goss's orders. “Rather than fire a deputy who had clashed with one of the ‘Gosslings,’ as Goss's conservative aides were dubbed by the dark-side crowd, Kappes loudly quit,” writes Jeff Stein.<sup>23</sup> Reports indicate that Kappes's departure “began an exodus of seasoned case officers... who were unhappy with the new Goss team,” similarly frustrated with the new political pressure being applied to the intelligence community by the hands of political appointees.<sup>24</sup> Recalls Tyler Drumheller, the former head of CIA European operations who followed Kappes out the door, “When Steve left, I looked very carefully at the whole situation and felt, at the age of 52, I didn't have two or three or four years to sit by while these sort of gifted amateurs tried to figure out how to run things.”<sup>25</sup> Contrastingly, when Kappes was called back as the Agency's Deputy Director in 2006 after Goss's ouster, the move was “celebrated” within the CIA rank and file.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, while it is difficult to try and parse the personal ideology of anyone, especially a CIA officer who has spent his life taking great care to remain off the public

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<sup>22</sup> Jeff Stein, "Inside Man," *The Washingtonian*, April 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Pincus, "Kappes is Expected to Boost CIA Morale."

<sup>25</sup> Kelly, "CIA Hopes Kappes' Return Helps Settle Agency."

<sup>26</sup> Mark Mazzetti, "A Storied Operative Returns to the CIA," *New York Times*, 30 May 2006.

record, strong evidence points to Kappes being guided by a realist point of view, like the majority of his CIA colleagues, as a long history neoconservative griping about the Agency would seem to indicate. If nothing else, given what we know about differing ideologies and their beliefs, it seems a sure bet that, at any rate, only a realist would have enough faith in the diplomatic process to believe a negotiated settlement with Libya was possible, along with the dispassionate calculation of the national interest to find it agreeable.

## **POLICY OBJECTIVES**

American policy objectives toward Libya after 2001 are very interesting because they are both markedly similar, yet also markedly different from congruent goals regarding other countries, such as Iraq and Iran. As we shall see, the core objectives of the policy at this time were to stop Libya's sponsorship of terrorism and to coax it to give up its WMD programs. Noticeably absent, however, is a clear goal regarding the creation of liberal democracy in Libya, which would necessarily entail deposing Gadhafi, presumably by force. This is what makes the Libya case so intriguing. Yet the policy did not arrive at this realist form overnight—it was in fact the result of a long evolution in the works since the Reagan Administration.

Bruce Jentleson and Christopher Whytock have persuasively divided American policy toward the Gadhafi regime into three phases: 1) a primarily unilateral policy based on sanctions and military strikes under Reagan; 2) a multilateral, mostly sanctions-based policy under George H.W. Bush and Clinton; and 3) a policy of carrot-and-stick direct diplomatic engagement started in the late days of the Clinton Administration and carried

on by George W. Bush.<sup>27</sup> This policy development is fascinating because it appears to be a slow transition from neoconservatism to realism; it is particularly intriguing because we have already noted in Chapter Two how much personnel and ideological overlap there was between the Reagan and George W. Bush Administrations. In fact, it appears that regime change in Libya was a primary aim of Reagan, evidenced by the nature of the military attacks he launched against the state. The most notable of these occurred in 1986, when Operation El Dorado Canyon culminated in the bombing of several sites around Libya, including Gadhafi's personal compound, in an attempt to decapitate the regime. Reagan's statements on the attack are stunning in how eerily similar they are to George W. Bush's statements after 9/11:

We believe that this pre-emptive action against his terrorist installations will not only diminish Colonel Qaddafi's capacity to export terror, it will provide him with incentives and reasons to alter his criminal behavior...[T]here should be no place on earth where terrorists can rest and train and practice their deadly skills...[W]e should act with others, if possible, and alone, if necessary, to insure that terrorists have no sanctuary anywhere.<sup>28</sup>

Indeed, in his speech Reagan, astonishingly, nearly elucidates the Bush Doctrine word-for-word fifteen years before its genesis, underscoring the neoconservative influences in both presidents' administrations. And although Reagan, in this public statement, calls for behavior change rather than total regime change, there is consensus that regime change, and the cessation of terrorist and WMD activities that the Reaganites hoped it would bring, was indeed the goal. According to Woodward, former Reagan CIA Director William Casey became "increasingly aware that the President wanted a regime

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<sup>27</sup> Bruce Jentleson and Christopher Whytock, "Who 'Won' Libya?" *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2006).

<sup>28</sup> Bernard Weinraub, "US Jets Hit 'Terrorist Centers' in Libya; Reagan Warns of New Attacks if Needed," *New York Times*, 15 April 1986.

change, nothing less.”<sup>29</sup> Further compelling is a 1984 assessment compiled by the CIA, asserting that “no course of action short of stimulating Gaddafi's fall will bring any significant and enduring change in Libyan policies.”<sup>30</sup> To this end, the CIA under Reagan carried out a string of operations designed to unseat Gadhafi.<sup>31</sup>

Needless to say, Reagan’s efforts at regime change were not successful, and, from a propaganda perspective, even counterproductive. Such operations were thus discontinued by the realist-dominated George H.W. Bush Administration, which instead focused on multilateral sanctions, a strategy that was continued through most of the Clinton Administration.<sup>32</sup> As Jentleson and Whytock write:

The US objective shifted from regime change to the more limited ends of policy change...When in November 1991 the United States and Britain formally indicted two Libyan intelligence agents in connection with the Pan Am 103 bombing, they made a set of...demands regarding Libya’s policy on the bombing and terrorism in general which, though stiff, did not challenge the Qaddafi regime’s continued survival.<sup>33</sup>

These demands, as elaborated jointly by George H.W. Bush and his British counterparts, were two-pronged. Firstly, they set out three specific steps that the Libyan government must take to rectify the Lockerbie situation. These included requirements that Libya:

-surrender for trial all those charged with the crime; and accept responsibility for the actions of Libyan officials;

-disclose all it knows of this crime, including the names of all those responsible, and allow full access to all witnesses, documents and other material evidence, including all the remaining timers;

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<sup>29</sup> Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 444.

<sup>30</sup> Tim Zimmerman, "The American Bombing of Libya: A Success for Coercive Diplomacy?" *Survival* 29, no. 3 (1987).

<sup>31</sup> Seymour Hersh, "Target Qaddafi," *New York Times Magazine*, 22 February 1987.

<sup>32</sup> Jentleson and Whytock, "Who 'Won' Libya?"

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

-pay appropriate compensation.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to these specific measures, the United States also demanded that Libya formally and verifiably break off its terrorist connections and activities, calling for the country to “commit itself concretely and definitively to cease all forms of terrorist action and all assistance to terrorist groups. Libya must promptly, by concrete actions, prove its renunciation of terrorism.”<sup>35</sup> Thus, in this short statement, the United States radically reformed its Libya policy, putting behavior change front and center and, more importantly, giving Gadhafi himself the ability to make the necessary policy adjustments, something that is by definition not possible within a regime change policy, where the current rogue leader is disabled and disincentivized from meeting American demands. The United States also placed the resolution of the Lockerbie case as the highest priority in demonstrating this commitment against terrorism, bringing a legalist characteristic to the policy. Finally, the statement’s close coordination with the British marked the multilateralization of America’s policy toward Libya.

George H.W. Bush, in contrast to Reagan, also established informal, back-channel negotiations with Libya in the hopes that personal diplomacy could nudge Gadhafi in the right direction. This spurred a series of unofficial visits by various people—both mid-level administration representatives as well as those who had no formal government employment ties—to Libya, with the effect of reinforcing and underscoring Bush’s stated

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<sup>34</sup> George H.W. Bush, "Statement Announcing Joint Declarations on the Libyan Indictments," Washington, DC, 27 November 1991; available from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=20281> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

policy.<sup>36</sup> The idea was to make the policy crystal clear to Gadhafi, emphasizing its consistency. In addition to the demands on Lockerbie and terrorism that were elaborated by Bush in his 1991 policy statement, through the back channels Gadhafi was also informed of requirements surrounding WMD. According to former Undersecretary of State William Rogers, he traveled to Libya in 1992 and personally met with Gadhafi to discuss the American demands.<sup>37</sup> According to press reports, “Rogers told Gadhafi that Libya should turn over the Pan Am suspects to a neutral foreign inquiry, ‘demonstrate its abstention from terrorism’ by offering to share intelligence information, end interference in African nations and ‘offer full inspection of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons facilities.’”<sup>38</sup>

Thus, by the end of the George H.W. Bush Administration, the policy that would be carried through for the next ten years, to the time of his son’s presidency, was established, consisting of two main points:

1. Stopping Libya’s support for terrorism, and
2. Halting its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction.

This two-point policy was pursued with an emphasis on multilateralism and legalism, resting on an international sanctions regime that focused on resolving the Lockerbie issue before moving forward on other matters. Finally and most notably, the policy did not seek overt regime change in Libya, thus structuring the demands in such a way as to make it feasible for the extant Libyan government to carry them out.

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<sup>36</sup> Barbara Slavin, "Libya's Rehabilitation in the Works Since Early 90's," *USA Today*, 26 April 2004.

<sup>37</sup> At the time of the meeting, however, Rogers was retired from government and was working privately as a lawyer. See Slavin, "Libya's Rehabilitation in the Works Since Early 90's."

<sup>38</sup> Slavin, "Libya's Rehabilitation in the Works Since Early 90's."

As mentioned, this policy was continued, essentially unaltered, by both the Clinton and the George W. Bush Administrations. The consistent message was repeated in both private meetings and public speeches, such as the one given in 1999 to the Middle East Institute by Ronald Neumann, the then-Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs:

The chief, current goal of the U.S. government with respect to Libya is full compliance with the remaining U.N. Security Council requirements. These requirements are payment of appropriate compensation, cooperation with the Pan Am 103 investigation and trial, acceptance of responsibility for the actions of its officials, and a renunciation and end to support of terrorism and terrorist groups...

While U.S. sanctions were imposed because of concerns about Libyan support for terrorism, there have been other sources of contention in U.S.-Libya relations over the past three decades, including Libyan efforts to obtain missiles and weapons of mass destruction (WMD)... We continue to want Libya to find a way to address these concerns...

That said, Libya is not Iraq. We do not seek to maintain sanctions until there is a change of regime in Tripoli. We have seen definite changes in Libya's behavior.<sup>39</sup>

Flynt Leverett, who at the time was a member of the State Department's policy planning staff, confirms that this is the policy that was also adopted by the George W. Bush

Administration:

[I]n the spring of 2001... the Bush administration... induced the Libyans to meet their remaining Lockerbie obligations. With our British colleagues, we presented the Libyans with a "script" indicating what they needed to do and say to satisfy our requirements on compensating the families of the Pan Am 103 victims and accepting responsibility for the actions of the Libyan intelligence officers implicated in the case...

But during these... talks, American negotiators consistently told the Libyans that resolving the Lockerbie situation would lead to no more than elimination of United Nations sanctions. To get out from under the separate United States sanctions, Libya would have to address other concerns, particularly regarding its programs in weapons of mass destruction.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ronald Neumann, "Libya: A US Policy Perspective," *Middle East Policy* 7, no. 2 (2000).

<sup>40</sup> Flynt Leverett, "Why Libya Gave Up on the Bomb," *New York Times*, 23 January 2004.

Thus, the longstanding policy of the United States on Libya was unambiguous and consistent, and its two core objectives came with clear steps, repeatedly communicated to the Libyans, that were necessary for full rehabilitation. As we've seen, the Pan Am case was step number one, and it was a non-negotiable American point that this needed to be resolved before any other movement on Libya could take place. Since this was a matter for the courts, and so was both lengthy and not hugely responsive to potential American cajoling, Libya policy thus became a second-tier priority for a succession of American administrations. And with Libya on the back burner, the neoconservatives, who would have demanded a more proactive, punitive policy toward Libya, were occupied with other demons, particularly those in Iraq, Iran, and the Levant, as evidenced by PNAC writings from the time.<sup>41</sup> Libya policy was therefore mostly left to the realists, with generally very little bureaucratic interference from neoconservative ideologues.

### **TRACK ONE: LIMITED ENGAGEMENT**

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the Bush Administration's dealings with Libya occurred on two tracks, both of which were guided by a well-established, consistent policy of realist-influenced, limited diplomatic engagements that made use of both carrots and sticks. The first of these tracks represented a direct continuation of longstanding strategy focused on working with Libya to pull it along the path to a final Lockerbie settlement, which was a *sine qua non* for any further progress. On 31 January 2001, less than two weeks after Bush came into office, the American Libya wranglers

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<sup>41</sup> Abrams et al., "Letter to President Clinton on Iraq."

won a modicum of new flexibility: the special court in the Netherlands had at last reached a conviction in the Lockerbie case.<sup>42</sup> The official response, delivered in the form of a joint statement by both President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, was welcoming of the verdict, calling it “a victory for an international effort,” yet stern on Libya’s fulfillment of its outstanding obligations:

The United States and the United Kingdom have made clear to the Government of Libya that the delivery of a verdict against the suspects in the Pan Am 103 trial does not in itself signify an end to UN sanctions against Libya. UN Security Council Resolutions call on Libya to satisfy certain requirements, including compensation to the victims’ families and the acceptance of responsibility for this act of terrorism, before UN sanctions will be removed. The Government of Libya has not yet satisfied these requirements. The United States and the United Kingdom will consult closely and then approach the Government of Libya in the near future to discuss the remaining steps Libya must take under the UN Resolutions.<sup>43</sup>

This joint statement, while underscoring yet again the clear path that Libya needed to take to satisfy the American policy, also created a significant amount of increased political maneuverability for the Administration, as it boded well for the ultimate fulfillment of American demands regarding Lockerbie.

Still, the young Bush Administration was not prepared at first to jump right into negotiations with the Libyans where the Clinton Administration had left off—there appears to have been a significant lag time during the transitional months early in the Administration’s tenure. Edward Walker, as the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs in Clinton’s second term, stayed on in that position during the initial months of the Bush Administration in order to smooth the transition. Under Clinton,

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<sup>42</sup> *Her Majesty's Advocate v Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed Al Megrahi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah*, The High Court of Justiciary at Camp Zeist, Netherlands, 31 January 2001.

<sup>43</sup> "Statement by the Press Secretary on Guilty Verdict in Pan Am Flight 103 Bombing Trial," Washington, DC, 31 January 2001; available from <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/20010131-4.html> (accessed 22 November 2010).

Walker had, along with Martin Indyk, spearheaded a series of secret meetings with the Libyans in 1999 and 2000, and he briefed his new bosses on their progress.<sup>44</sup> According to Walker, “[Bush] Administration officials ‘were somewhat stunned these negotiations had been held and nervous about it’... they were worried that families of Pan Am 103 victims would find out and be angry that U.S. officials were discussing rehabilitating Gadhafi before the Pan Am case had been resolved.”<sup>45</sup> The Administration, not seeking to risk such a loaded political battle so early in its tenure, thus opted not to immediately continue the talks, and once again put Libya on the back burner, focusing instead on Iraq which, as seen in Chapter Four, was already a target in the sights of several Bush officials.

Still, as with other so-called rogue states like Iran and Syria, the Libyan-American relationship was hastily reevaluated by both parties in the wake of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Gadhafi quickly and, in quite passionate terms, condemned the attacks, saying that he was “terrified by the incident which took place in the USA and we express our sympathy to the American people who were the subject of an unexpected catastrophe which is comparable to a new world war.”<sup>46</sup> He also, remarkably, strongly affirmed the right of the United States to retaliate (though urged prudence in doing so), stating that “America can hit back, retaliate and do everything. It has the right to retaliate. A country was hit in

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<sup>44</sup> Slavin, "Libya's Rehabilitation in the Works Since Early 90's."

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> BBC Monitoring International Reports, "Libya: Al-Qadhafi Urges USA to Exercise Restraint in Responding to Attacks," 18 September 2001.

this manner, destroyed in this manner and taken by surprise. It has the right to hit back and take revenge.”<sup>47</sup>

The Libyans were, understandably, terrified of erasing a decade of diplomatic progress by being wrongfully swept up in the dragnet of the War on Terror. Reports from the time show that Gadhafi was in a state of near panic after 9/11. Details of leaked diplomatic cables from the US embassy in Cairo to Washington, dated 20 September 2001, are particularly informative:

Concerned that the U.S. would attack Libya...Qadhafi began to “call every Arab leader on his Rolodex” to lobby for an Arab summit, the cable says. U.S. diplomats had learned, from sources whose identity appears to be blacked out, that “Qadhafi was concerned that he had no direct communications with the [U.S. government] other than through his speeches,” according to the cable. U.S. embassy officials were told “that Qadhafi had sounded hysterical in his telephone call to [Jordan's] King Abdullah, as if only the King's personal intervention would prevent U.S. action.”<sup>48</sup>

Although Gadhafi “was doubtless afraid for his hide” after 9/11, there was more than self-preservation at work in his newfound urgency for cooperation.<sup>49</sup> Gadhafi had, for years, been engaged in his own struggle against al-Qaeda, long before Osama bin Laden was the most wanted man in the world. According to Libya expert Lisa Anderson, Gadhafi, from as far back as the 1980s, faced real challenges to his rule from “what we would later come to call an early ‘Qaeda-type network’...he began to face opposition from people who were motivated by the international Islamist sentiment, who felt he was...too un-Islamic...therefore he was regarded by the al-Qaeda types as...no better

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Timothy Burger, "Qadhafi's 9/11 Fears," *Time*, 4 April 2006.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

than any of these other governments that they hate.”<sup>50</sup> It was, in fact, Libya that issued the first INTERPOL international arrest warrant for Osama bin Laden in 1998, even before the al-Qaeda bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania later that year.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, in 1996, Gadhafi escaped an assassination bid at the hands of the al-Qaeda aligned Libyan Islamic Fighting Group.<sup>52</sup> It was thus a happy confluence for Gadhafi when that very group was added, by executive order, to the American list of terrorist groups on 23 September 2001.<sup>53</sup> Thus, the post-9/11 with-us-or-against-us rhetoric of the Bush Doctrine presented a singular opportunity for Gadhafi to kill two birds with one stone: by cooperating with the United States on counterterrorism, he could both marginalize his enemies at home and perhaps nudge along the diplomatic reintegration he so sorely desired.

The Americans, for their part, were desperate for leads on bin Laden and his network. Given this remarkable convergence of American and Libyan interests, it is unsurprising that almost immediately, with some accounts dating it as early as September 12<sup>th</sup>, American and Libyan officials began to discuss intelligence sharing.<sup>54</sup> The best documented meetings of this nature took place in London on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>55</sup> Representing the United States was William Burns, the Assistant Secretary of State for Near East

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<sup>50</sup> Bernard Gwertzman, "Libyan Expert: Qaddafi, Desperate to End Libya's Isolation, Sends a 'Gift' to President Bush," Council on Foreign Relations, 22 December 2003, [http://www.cfr.org/publication/6617/libyan\\_expert.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/6617/libyan_expert.html) (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>51</sup> Martin Bright, "MI6 'Halted Bid to Arrest bin Laden'," *The Observer*, 10 November 2002.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> George W. Bush, Executive Order no. 13224, *Code of Federal Regulations*, title 3, 23 September 2001.

<sup>54</sup> Gwertzman, "Libyan Expert: Qaddafi, Desperate to End Libya's Isolation, Sends a 'Gift' to President Bush."

<sup>55</sup> Barbara Slavin, "In Terrorism Fight, US Consults Pan Am 103 Suspect," *USA Today*, 12 October 2001.

Affairs. On the Libyan side was Musa Kusa, the notorious yet enigmatic head of Libyan external intelligence services. Educated in the United States at Michigan State University, Kusa spoke fluent English and was a great college basketball fan.<sup>56</sup> Although the families of the Lockerbie victims had, somewhat unusually, been informed that engagement with Libyan officials was being planned, Kusa's name was conspicuously not mentioned due to political sensitivities, as many considered him the ultimate mastermind of the Pan Am bombing; when the families did find out about Kusa's involvement in the talks, they protested loudly.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, Burns's meeting went on as planned. Discussions were centered upon the now very-familiar American policy of seeking closure on the Lockerbie dossier first before moving to other areas of engagement.

The afternoon session, however, represented more of a divergence from the traditional meetings of the type Burns had just sat. The afternoon set of meetings was much more intimate, held at the private Regent's Park flat of Prince Bandar of Saudi Arabia.<sup>58</sup> While it is unclear as to whether Burns attended this meeting or not, what is certain is that it was spearheaded by the CIA, represented by a career operative named Ben Bonk.<sup>59</sup> Bonk, who had coincidentally also attended Michigan State at the same time as Kusa (though they had not known each other), was a good choice for the meeting, as he was not only a skilled intelligence officer, but he also had the important, intangible

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<sup>56</sup> Suskind, "The Tyrant Who Came in from the Cold."

<sup>57</sup> Slavin, "In Terrorism Fight, US Consults Pan Am 103 Suspect."

<sup>58</sup> Suskind, "The Tyrant Who Came in from the Cold."

<sup>59</sup> Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, 263.

qualities that made him trustworthy to Kusa— essential when the mainstay of the meeting came up: cooperation against al-Qaeda.<sup>60</sup>

“Everything has changed after 9/11,” he [Bonk] said. “Two things. We’re going to need you to give up your destructive weapons. And, most importantly, we’ll need assistance to fight the terrorists.” Kousa said he understood, and, that evening, he gave Bonk key names, including that of Ibn al-Sheikh al-Libi, a Libyan operative who would soon be the first major U.S. capture in the so-called “war on terror,” and several others that would help the U.S. government unwind a Pakistani group involved in the spreading of nuclear-weapons technology to other Muslim countries.<sup>61</sup>

The productivity of the information that Kusa provided to the CIA was unquestionable, leading to the apprehension of several key individuals. The State Department officials who worked with the Libyans on this front made sure to openly recognize the level of Libyan cooperation. In the State Department’s 2002 annual *Patterns of Global Terrorism* report, State noted that “Libya appears to have curtailed its support for international terrorism,” detailing that:

In 2002, Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi continued the efforts he undertook following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks to identify Libya with the war on terrorism and the struggle against Islamic extremism. In August, Qadhafi told visiting British officials that he regards Usama Bin Ladin and his Libyan followers a threat to Libya. In his 1 September speech, he declared that Libya would combat members of al-Qaida and “heretics”—a likely reference to Libyan extremists allied with al-Qaida and opposed to his regime—as doggedly as the United States did.<sup>62</sup>

Assistant Secretary Burns also echoed the sentiments expressed in the report in a public speech to the Hannibal Club, a Washington society focused on US-Maghreb relations,

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<sup>60</sup> Suskind, “The Tyrant Who Came in from the Cold.”

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Office of the Coordinator of Counterterrorism, *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, Department of State, 2002, 80; available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/20177.pdf> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

noting that “We have seen signs in recent years that the government of Libya seeks to put its terrorist past behind it.”<sup>63</sup>

As these examples show, the US was digging a gold mine of counterterrorism intelligence from Libya as a result of the realignment of security priorities in the Middle East, while still keeping solid pressure on the Libyans to resolve Lockerbie, renounce terror, and disarm. Yet in contrast to similar, concurrent cases like Iran and Syria, the Libyan intelligence sharing channel was not shut down at the behest of neoconservatives uncomfortable with dealing with verifiably despicable regimes. This is not to say, however, that the decision to continue engagement with the Libyans was a popular one in all corners of the Administration. There reportedly was “resistance” to the core Libya policy amongst the usual Defense Department suspects.<sup>64</sup> According to Administration sources:

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld reportedly sent a memo to President Bush, cc'd to National Security Adviser Rice and Secretary of State Powell, arguing that democratization and human rights, not ‘just’ terrorism and WMD, should be on the negotiating agenda, and that UN sanctions should not be lifted just for a Lockerbie settlement.<sup>65</sup>

John Bolton, too, agitated against the realist premise of America’s longstanding Libya policy, and lobbied—unsuccessfully—to get Libya included in the “Axis of Evil” speech, a proposition that was allegedly nixed by Rice and Powell, at the behest of the British.<sup>66</sup> Bolton also took his case to the public, continuing to rail against Libya in the

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<sup>63</sup> Burns, "Challenges and Opportunities for the United States in the Middle East and North Africa."

<sup>64</sup> Jentleson and Whytock, "Who 'Won' Libya?"

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

Washington think tank circuit “with what would later prove to be mostly inaccurate charges.”<sup>67</sup>

Still, while these sporadic anti-realist agitations were an annoyance, they were nothing like the concerted ideological infighting that was shown in other cases, since most of the Administration’s core neoconservative base (remembering that Rumsfeld and Bolton are not true neocons) either didn’t much care about Libya or were waiting until after Iraq to deal with it. Flynt Leverett explains that with this absence of focused infighting and coordinated lobbying of the President by the Pentagon and the Vice President’s office, the neoconservatives were “sidelined...when crucial decisions were made. The initial approach on the Lockerbie case was approved by an informal coalition made up of Condoleezza Rice, the national security adviser, and Secretary of State Colin Powell.”<sup>68</sup> Powell Chief of Staff Wilkerson assesses the situation even more frankly: “They [neoconservatives] didn’t make attempts to stymie the work on Libya. They hated the CIA, but they still understood that they could only go so far in beating their own government to death.”<sup>69</sup>

Thus, the intelligence sharing channel with Libya stayed open, with the effect of building trust and familiarity between the Libyans and the Americans—and their British allies. All the while this was going on, the Americans kept firm and constant pressure on the Libyans to work through the Lockerbie settlement, assuring them that doing so would lead to follow-through on lifting UN sanctions, the first step to formally repairing

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<sup>67</sup> Ronald Bruce St. John, "Libya Is Not Iraq: Preemptive Strikes, WMD and Diplomacy," *Middle East Journal* 58, no. 3 (2004). See also John Bolton, "Beyond the Axis of Evil: Additional Threats from Weapons of Mass Destruction," The Heritage Foundation, 6 May 2002, <http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/beyond-the-axis-of-evil> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>68</sup> Leverett, "Why Libya Gave Up on the Bomb."

<sup>69</sup> Wilkerson, interview by author.

relations. And although the neoconservatives were not particularly fond of this engagement with a country they considered a member of the Axis of Evil, in nature if not in name, they were too engrossed in their top priority of planning the Iraq war to bother with Libya or, more importantly for this study, their realist colleagues who were dawdling with it.

## **TRACK TWO: SECRET WMD TALKS**

While the first-track negotiations between the US and Libya on the Lockerbie settlement and counterterror intelligence sharing were largely kept under wraps from the American public, most officials within the foreign policy bureaucracy knew that they were going on—this set of talks was no more or less secret than any other confidential and delicate negotiations. Furthermore, they might therefore have been subject to the same types of ideological infighting as other policies, if not for the fact that the neoconservative would-be opponents of the talks seemed not to care much about them. In contrast, the second track of negotiations, although it emerged from the first and involved some of the same personalities, was carried out in near-total secrecy, with only a handful of the very highest government officials even aware that they were going on at all. It is this fierce confidentiality that sources involved with the negotiations credit with their success.<sup>70</sup>

The WMD negotiating track began in earnest in March 2003, amidst a time when the first track negotiations were continuing. By now the Americans had established contacts—though sporadic— with various Libyan officials, and the greater diplomatic

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<sup>70</sup> Confidential source, interview by author.

flexibility of the British was helping to move things along. Indeed, cooperation on Libya showcased the best cooperative aspects of the “special relationship” between the US and the UK. According to journalist Gordon Corera, whose account has been verified as accurate by individuals close to the events, the initial decision to at last open the WMD file was the Libyans’, who broached the idea through contact with MI6 via a Palestinian intermediary.<sup>71</sup> “The message from Colonel Gadhafi of Libya was short and simple,” Corera writes. “The issue of weapons of mass destruction was on the table. And the leader’s son, Saif al-Islam Gadhafi, wanted a meeting.”<sup>72</sup> The British took the meeting, during which Saif reiterated what the intermediary had said.

The British were, understandably, skeptical of the veracity of the offer, given the Libyan regime’s history of intransigence and the fact that in reality, it was only Moamar Gadhafi himself who had the power to make such a decision. If the British were going to engage, and bring the Americans on board, they told Saif that they would have to hear the offer directly from his father’s mouth.<sup>73</sup> This, as it turned out, was quickly arranged. Three days later, on 19 March 2003 (coincidentally the same day of the start of the war in Iraq), MI6 officials flew to Libya to meet with Gadhafi himself.<sup>74</sup> Once there, the message that they received from the Colonel in person was consistent with the other overtures: Libya’s WMD programs were on the negotiating table. Gadhafi also took this opportunity to make explicit the fact that he wanted the United States involved with the talks; he had made offers to them earlier but was repeatedly rebuffed, and he was hopeful

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<sup>71</sup> Corera, *Shopping for Bombs*, 174.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.. See also Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, 288.

that the British could be more persuasive with their close ally.<sup>75</sup> At this point, Gadhafi also designated Musa Kusa as his representative with whom the negotiators should work.

The British, while still wary of the Libyan offer, seemed after their initial meeting with Gadhafi to be satisfied enough in his sincerity to present the proposal to the United States, which was done by Tony Blair to Bush himself on Blair's official visit to Washington on March 26 and 27.<sup>76</sup> The United States was understandably skeptical. It had heard such offers from the Libyans before, most notably an attempt made in 1992 to use former senator and presidential candidate Gary Hart as an intermediary.<sup>77</sup> Yet despite these supposedly genuine proposals, Libya had continued to proliferate throughout the 1990s. Still, the opinion of the British that the Libyans were sincere was taken seriously in the White House, which ultimately authorized its intelligence officials to take part in the effort. Critical to this decision was the fact that the Lockerbie book had nearly closed. After the Megrahi conviction in January 2001, upheld by an appeals court, the Libyans had by now accepted formal responsibility for the bombing and had begun working out the details for the final settlement payment structure to the victims' families.<sup>78</sup>

In agreeing to engage with the Libyans, however, the White House demanded near-total secrecy, even within the very highest of its own ranks. According to former CIA Director George Tenet, the only individuals, aside from himself, the President,

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<sup>75</sup> Corera, *Shopping for Bombs*, 183.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Gary Hart, "My Secret Talks with Libya, and Why They Went Nowhere," *Washington Post*, 18 January 2004.

<sup>78</sup> Jonathan Schwartz, "Dealing with a 'Rogue State': The Libya Precedent," *The American Journal of International Law* 101, no. 3 (2007).

Kappes, and Kappes's deputy who were aware of the talks at all were Powell, Armitage, and William Burns.<sup>79</sup> John Bolton, acting then as Undersecretary of State for Arms Control, and the Pentagon were explicitly left "out of the loop" because, riding high on the nascent Iraq invasion, they could not be counted on not to threaten regime change or demand other, secondary concessions from Libya beyond those that had already been agreed to in longstanding US policy.<sup>80</sup> Thus, after the meeting with Blair (and MI6 head Sir Richard Dearlove), Bush authorized the CIA to explore the negotiations, after which Tenet pegged Kappes to represent the United States in the secret dealings.<sup>81</sup>

Kappes thus flew to Geneva with his British counterpart shortly thereafter for his first meeting with the Libyan representatives to test the water.<sup>82</sup> The meeting got off to a shaky start when, as irony would have it, Ehud Barak and his security detail walked unexpectedly into the same restaurant.<sup>83</sup> Worried their cover would be blown as soon as the Israelis recognized Kusa, the officials swiftly moved to the more discreet location of a hotel room, where things got productive. Once the discussions were able to begin in privacy, Musa Kusa's line stayed the same with the Americans as it had with the British. "Musa Kusa essentially admitted that his country had violated just about every

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<sup>79</sup> Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, 293.

<sup>80</sup> Michael Hirsh, "Bolton's British Problem," *Newsweek*, 2 May 2005. See also Leverett, "Why Libya Gave Up on the Bomb."

<sup>81</sup> Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, 288-89.

<sup>82</sup> Corera, *Shopping for Bombs*, 184.

<sup>83</sup> Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, 290.

international arms control treaty it had ever signed. Then he said they wanted to relinquish their weapons programs,” writes Tenet.<sup>84</sup>

Although the Libyans expected their word to be enough, the Americans and the British insisted on the “trust but verify” model, and were resolute that while they were welcoming of Libya’s decision, they would have to send in weapons inspectors in order to move forward.<sup>85</sup> According to Tenet, “President Bush instructed us to make no promises until we saw solid proof of Libyan intentions and evidence that their decision was irreversible.”<sup>86</sup> Although the Libyans were not enthusiastic about this idea, the British and the Americans were adamant, and the Libyans eventually acquiesced to the demand. A team of WMD experts was thus assembled.

Although the inspections were essential, from the Western point of view, to concluding any deal, they also, ironically, are what threatened to derail a deal many times. It was at the inspections, Tenet says, that “the Libyans started dragging their feet. They weren’t ready for foreigners to go poking around their weapons programs, it seemed.”<sup>87</sup> The Libyans were justifiably nervous that the Americans and the British would take advantage of them, using the visits to gain intelligence, and then back out of a deal at the last minute and use the sensitive information against them in an Iraq-style operation. It was not an entirely unfounded fear, given the current climate in the Pentagon and the omnipresence of the Iraq war. At one point, Saif al-Islam, in a meeting with Kappes and his MI6 counterpart, started making demands for things like non-

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 290.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 291.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid..

aggression guarantees.<sup>88</sup> Kappes's response to the Libyan demands was firm. "Look, you need to understand that none of that is going to happen. We aren't going to make any concessions until we get our people on the ground and confirm that everything you are telling us about your stockpiles and your intentions is true. Please go back and tell your father that."<sup>89</sup>

Despite Libyan wariness, the inspections were crucial not only as a means for the Americans to discern the sincerity of the Libyan claims, but also as a way of demonstrating to the Libyans that the western intelligence agencies knew much more than they thought about the secret programs, and as such, it would only be counterproductive to attempt to hide anything. Still, it took a chance event to get the Libyans to finally submit to full inspections. Because of ongoing American infiltrations into the AQ Khan network, US intelligence received word that a ship, the *BBC China*, was headed to Libya with a full cargo of Malaysian-manufactured centrifuges for uranium enrichment.<sup>90</sup> The ship was seized on 4 October and redirected to Italy, where inspections yielded its damning cargo. Before releasing the information to the press, however, the Americans were sure to have the British inform the Libyans of the seizure to make sure that they knew that the West did not intend to leave negotiations flapping in the wind over the incident, however serious. "According to Seif al Islam, MI6 officers immediately flew from London to Tripoli to assure the Libyans that the incident need not

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<sup>88</sup> Corera, *Shopping for Bombs*, 184. See also Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, 291.

<sup>89</sup> Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, 291.

<sup>90</sup> Inspector-General of Police of Malaysia, "Press Release by Inspector-General of Police in Relations to Investigation on the Alleged Production of Components for Libya's Uranium Enrichment Programme," Kuala Lumpur, 20 February 2004; available from [http://isis-online.org/uploads/iaea-reports/documents/Malaysian\\_Police\\_Report.pdf](http://isis-online.org/uploads/iaea-reports/documents/Malaysian_Police_Report.pdf) (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

affect the secret disarmament plans,” journalist Scott Macleod writes.<sup>91</sup> Musa Kusa explained to MI6 that the centrifuges had been ordered such a long time ago and concurrent with so many other orders that they had genuinely been forgotten about, an explanation that satisfied the western intelligence teams.<sup>92</sup>

The Americans, for their part, were extremely careful not to gloat about the discovery, fearing it would put off the Libyans. “We were concerned that if US officials launched into the typical and well-deserved Libya-bashing language, Gadhafi might cancel the whole deal out of embarrassment,” recalls Tenet.<sup>93</sup> They were so serious, in fact, about helping the Libyans save face, that when Kappes found out that John Bolton planned to use the incident as a stick with which to beat Libya over the head in the press, Tenet and Kappes had Dick Armitage pull rank on Bolton and force him to back down.<sup>94</sup> Bolton, who had no idea about the secret negotiations, was both puzzled and furious at the order, resulting in his characteristically lashing out, “chewing out” Kappes over the phone for sending Armitage as his henchman.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, Bolton complied with the order despite his displeasure at it.

While the BBC China incident could, if inappropriately handled, easily have sunk the entire negotiation process, it actually had the opposite effect, moving the talks forward. Because of the firm yet understated way in which British and American intelligence dealt with disclosure of the interception, it convinced the Libyans that they

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<sup>91</sup> Scott Macleod, "Behind Gaddafi's Diplomatic Turnaround," *Time*, 18 May 2006.

<sup>92</sup> Corera, *Shopping for Bombs*, 187.

<sup>93</sup> Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, 294.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

may as well let the inspectors in, since western intelligence seemed to know everything about their program anyway. It also went far to convince the Libyans that, although tough, CIA and MI6 were also being fair. As Saif al-Islam recalls, “We realized that we were dealing with friends and sincere people.”<sup>96</sup>

Inspectors were thus finally let into Libya two weeks later, on 19 October.<sup>97</sup> Still, after decades of mistrust of the United States, the Libyans still moved slowly, and the inspections were a bit like pulling teeth. “In many cases, the Libyans tried to conceal parts of their programs, not knowing how much we already knew. They’d show us their Scud B missiles, and we would say, ‘Fine, now where are your Scud Cs?’” remarks Tenet.<sup>98</sup> At one point, the frustrated officers even threatened to pack up and leave Libya.

Still, despite all the speedbumps along the way, the inspections progressed—aided heavily by the fact that the Libyans soon came to know that the United States knew about almost everything already—and by mid-December arrangements started to be put in place to publicly announce the deal, the final terms and logistics of which were decided at a meeting in London on 16 December at the Traveller’s Club.<sup>99</sup> Libyan state television would announce the developments first, followed by coordinated responses by Bush and Blair. Despite some tense final moments waiting for the Libyan announcement to come through (Gadhafi at the last minute delayed the broadcast, as a soccer match had run over and he did not want to interrupt the game), in the end it all went off on 19 December without a hitch, apart from each side being rather amazed that the other had

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<sup>96</sup> Saif al-Islam, quoted in Macleod, “Behind Gaddafi’s Diplomatic Turnaround.”

<sup>97</sup> Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, 294.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

<sup>99</sup> Corera, *Shopping for Bombs*, 190-91.

kept its word.<sup>100</sup> After decades as a pariah state, Libya had formally disarmed and now, having fulfilled all the American requirements of settling Lockerbie, renouncing terrorism, and giving up its WMD, the country was well on its way to restoring relations with the United States.

### **A CONSPICUOUS LACK OF INFIGHTING**

From these accounts of both the more open and the more secretive tracks of diplomacy relating to Libya, it is clear that ideological infighting simply was not a major feature of the negotiations. As mentioned earlier, this lack of infighting was the result of a combination of two factors: in the case of the first track regarding intelligence sharing and Lockerbie, the neoconservatives were either convinced the talks were futile and would break down on their own without any help, or they were too busy launching the Iraq war to put in much effort fighting what they saw to be the Sisyphean endeavors of the realists. In the case of the more protracted second track negotiations regarding Libya's WMD disarmament, too few individuals even knew about their existence for them to put up any kind of bureaucratic fight.

Hence, within the Libya case there was little infighting of any kind, either I2 or Allisonian. In fact, David Welch, who took over as Assistant Secretary of Near East Affairs for Bill Burns in 2005 and oversaw the final restoration of US-Libyan relations, remarks that the Libya case demonstrated the best of bureaucratic cooperation, with agencies acting generously both within and between each other rather than showing typical Allisonian Model II jealousies over agency turf or influence. "We did it through

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 193-94. See also George W. Bush, "Libya Pledges to Dismantle WMD Programs," Washington, DC, 19 December 2003; available from <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rm/27459.htm> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

the established bureaucratic process. We brought in the Department of Justice, for example,” Welch recalls.<sup>101</sup> The procedural flexibility that the CIA showed was also uncharacteristic of what traditional Model II interpretations of infighting would predict. Rather than getting hung up in bureaucratic standard operating procedures, Kappes and his team were afforded the independence of action that they needed to get the job done. This is credited by those directly involved with the negotiations as having been absolutely crucial to the successful outcome of the deal. As one person involved in the talks said, “If I had been under the cosh of busy bureaucrats who wanted to tick boxes, I don’t think it would have worked.”<sup>102</sup>

Still, the fact that both Allisonian and ideological infighting were conspicuously absent in the Libya case after 2001 leads to the problem of determining which variable was most responsible for the policy outcome, since neither one is isolated in this timeframe. Logically, it might seem that the absence of either one of these forms of destructive infighting might create the kind of successful policy outcome seen in this case. In order to resolve this question, it is necessary to examine an instance in the case where Allisonian infighting is present but ideological infighting is absent. Luckily, given that the diplomatic process on Libya lasted for so long and was so complex, we can find a useful “sub-case” within the Libya portfolio.

This sub-case is best represented by the diplomacy leading up to the resolution of the Lockerbie case, which was handled almost entirely through international institutions, especially the special court tribunal and the UN system. Those institutions, of course,

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<sup>101</sup> Welch, interview by author.

<sup>102</sup> Confidential source, interview by author.

have their own, well-documented problems with Allisonian-style infighting and roadblocks. There was reluctance from the United States at first to let the matter go to trial at all, given that the entire process of a just hearing can take years, not to mention the length of the appeals procedure (verily, the Lockerbie trial did take years).<sup>103</sup> Indeed, elements within the US government—particularly those beholden to the electorate—began to express impatience with the process and take it out on the State Department, which was, according to traditional stereotype, viewed as too effete and aloof to extract justice from the Libyans.

The most notable of these Model II attempts to subvert the foreign policymaking turf of the State Department were made by the Congress in the mid-1990s. For example, even after instituting unilateral American sanctions against Libya via the Iran-Libya sanctions Act of 1996, Congress sought to influence American relations with third-party countries in an attempt to curtail their relations with Libya as well.<sup>104</sup> This included threatening to withhold military aid to countries selling military equipment to Libya.<sup>105</sup> Congress also extended the threat out to a wider circle of countries by additionally threatening cutting off foreign aid to those countries that in turn provided assistance to the set of countries directly selling to Libya.<sup>106</sup> This second move, targeting indirect suppliers, represented an especially strong advance by Congress into the traditional policymaking realm of the State Department, as it very negatively affected relations with

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<sup>103</sup> Schwartz, "Dealing with a 'Rogue State': The Libya Precedent."

<sup>104</sup> *The Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996*, US Code, public law 104-172 (2006).

<sup>105</sup> Schwartz, "Dealing with a 'Rogue State': The Libya Precedent."

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

a whole host of countries—including allies— whose dealings with Libya were indirect at best.<sup>107</sup>

Still, although highly intrusive upon the State Department and the executive branch as a whole, these moves by Congress can't be seen as ideological infighting in terms of the I2 model because, in sharp contrast with the Syrian Accountability Act incident detailed in Chapter Six, individuals from within the executive branch bureaucracy were not a primary force behind the Act's passage. On the contrary, in the Libya case, Congress's actions on the sanctions bill more accurately demonstrated the expected behavior of a legislative body with known populist tendencies, beholden to the electorate. Unlike the Syrian Accountability Act, the passage of sanctions against Libya was driven by the lobbying of core constituents—the Lockerbie victims' families—rather than Defense Department officials seeking to use a Congressional resolution as a trump card against the State Department. Thus, one can interpret Congress's moves on Libya sanctions simply as a direct reaction to the institutional foot-dragging of the Lockerbie trial situation, driven by the loud and constant pressure that the Pan Am victims' families, considered to be the “major force” behind the legislation, placed on their representatives in Washington.<sup>108</sup> Hence the behavior that Congress exhibited, while disruptive, is exactly the type that would be predicted by both Allison and scholars of Congressional foreign policy behavior, such as Lindsay.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Grey, Jerry, "Foreigners Investing in Libya or Iran Face US Sanctions," *New York Times*, 24 July 1996.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. See also Lindsay, *Congress and the Politics of U.S. Foreign Policy*.

Yet the most significant point revealed from this brief foray into legislative-executive branch tensions over Libya policy in the 1990s is not that such strains existed—as mentioned, these conflicts are predicted by existing theories of bureaucratic behavior and as such, it would have been more surprising if such clashes *hadn't* arisen. On the contrary, the most interesting and significant part of this episode is the fact that, despite the wealth of non-ideological, Allisonian infighting that took place during this period, the Lockerbie aspect of US foreign policy toward Libya still managed to reach a positive outcome for the United States. Indeed, the indictment, handover, trial, and conviction of the Libyan intelligence officer responsible for the bombing all were, for the most part, concluded before George W. Bush even came into office. Thus, despite the fierce Allisonian infighting present on this aspect of the Libya case, the United States won a clear success. The results of this Lockerbie sub-case therefore contribute to the conclusion that Allisonian infighting, while certainly destructive and effective in delaying outcomes, does not seem to have the same level of disastrous effects on policy outcomes that ideological infighting in the I2 model does. In other words, unlike ideological infighting, Allisonian infighting does not seem to be enough, on its own, to cause total policy failure in most cases.

## **EVALUATING SUCCESS**

Determining the link between the lack of I2 and policy success in the Libya case is not particularly difficult to do, given that the political achievement was so discrete, verifiable, and clearly the result of diplomacy conducted at the bureaucratic level. First, it is prudent to recall these policy goals and outcomes in the table below.

COUNTRY	POLICY OBJECTIVE	SUCCESS?
Libya	1) Stop state terrorism sponsorship 2) Prevent from pursuing WMD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Beginning with the first goal of stopping Libya’s state sponsorship of terrorism, it is clear from the relevant historical documents that this was achieved practically, if not formally, fairly early on, even before the 2001-2006 time period of this study. As early as 2002, the State Department, in its annual *Patterns of Global Terrorism* report, noted Libya’s turnaround. While keeping Libya on the official list of state sponsors of terror, the report documented the country’s stark change in behavior, writing that the Libyans “have continually indicated that they wish to aid the United States in the conflict against terrorism and have curtailed their sponsorship activities.”<sup>110</sup> These positive developments regarding Libya’s discontinued sponsorship of terrorism were formally recognized in July 2006, when Libya was formally removed from the State Department’s list of state sponsors of terror.<sup>111</sup> This removal, along with the full restoration of American diplomatic relations, paved the way for the final, full compensatory payment of \$10 million each to the families of the Lockerbie victims.<sup>112</sup>

Far from being content to leave his diplomatic rehabilitation as a quiet backroom deal, Gadhafi was enthusiastic about his international political renaissance. His rambling refrains about how “terrorism is evil” became commonplace in the press, and he implored

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<sup>110</sup> Office of Counterterrorism, *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, 76.

<sup>111</sup> Matthew Wald, "US Drops Libya from List of Terrorist Countries," *International Herald Tribune*, 7 July 2006.

<sup>112</sup> O’Neil, "US Restores Diplomatic Ties to Libya."

nations “to agree to eliminate it so that we will live in a world without terrorism, a world of peace and cooperation, a human world.”<sup>113</sup> Such messages were reiterated, albeit more eloquently, by Saif al-Islam as well.<sup>114</sup>

It is similarly easy to justify claiming success on the second policy goal of getting Libya to give up its WMD programs. Not only was the Bush Administration able to extract from Libya a public pledge to do so, but it was also able to verify the reality of that pledge’s good intentions by establishing a rigorous inspection regime, first secretly via the CIA and MI6, and then through the established practice attached to various weapons conventions to which Libya finally acceded.<sup>115</sup> As President Bush makes clear, these successes all “came about through quiet diplomacy” and, together with the previously mentioned advances in the US-Libya relationship, culminated in the full restoration of diplomatic relations in May 2006.<sup>116</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the fact that the United States clearly and fully achieved its own stated policy objectives regarding Libya, there are those who might argue that given the bloody crackdown against his own people that Gadhafi undertook in early 2011, the United States really didn’t achieve much success at all. It is important to remember, in this case, that while changing Gadhafi’s internal governance methods was desirable, it was not a core American policy aim. Additionally, while the war crimes that Gadhafi

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<sup>113</sup> BBC Monitoring International Reports, "Libya: Al-Qadhafi Urges USA to Exercise Restraint in Responding to Attacks."

<sup>114</sup> Saif Aleslam al-Qadhafi, "Libyan-American Relations," *Middle East Policy* 10, no. 1 (2003).

<sup>115</sup> Bush, "Libya Pledges to Dismantle WMD Programs." See also International Atomic Energy Agency, "Nuclear Non-Proliferation Fact Sheet: Chronology of Key Events," 2010, [http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Factsheets/English/npt\\_chrono.html](http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Factsheets/English/npt_chrono.html) (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

<sup>116</sup> Bush, "Libya Pledges to Dismantle WMD Programs." See also O'Neil, "US Restores Diplomatic Ties to Libya."

undertook even after his supposed rehabilitation are regrettable, the argument that they represent an American policy failure is flawed. This is chiefly due to the fact that although Gadhafi's actions have been bloody and ruthless, they could have been infinitely moreso had disarmament not taken place in 2003. Without such an agreement, it is not difficult to envision a desperate Gadhafi unleashing chemical attacks on his own people in a similar way to Saddam Hussein during the Halabja massacre of 1988. Hence, while tragic, the violence of Gadhafi against his own people does not in itself represent a policy failure for the United States, especially since the immediate precipitating factor for the violence was regional Arab uprisings, a phenomenon that was much more a result of regional Arab politics than of the diplomacy of 2003. Furthermore, the events of 2011 are well beyond the timeframe of this study, and thus many years of intervening factors make it difficult to show Gadhafi's more recent actions as a direct consequence of American bureaucratic activity in the same way that his disarmament decision was.

Thus, the contrast that the Libya case exhibits in comparison to the previous three cases examined in this study is indeed remarkable, and the justification for attributing this uncharacteristic success at least partially to the lack of ideological infighting is strong. Still, before doing so, it is necessary to engage with the main competing hypothesis as to Libya's diplomatic rehabilitation. This, of course, is the neoconservative argument that the example of the Iraq war was the main impetus for Gadhafi's seemingly sudden acquiescence to American disarmament demands. Neoconservative columnist Charles Krauthammer, in a *Washington Post* op-ed in the week following Libya's WMD announcement, was adamant that Gadhafi's actions were "not triumphs of diplomacy...[but] the aftershocks of war," citing the Libyan move as one of the Iraq

war's "most blindingly obvious collateral benefits."<sup>117</sup> "What are the odds?"

Krauthammer goes on, writing, "The nine months of negotiations with Libya perfectly frame the war on Iraq and the fall of Saddam Hussein. How is it possible to ignore?"<sup>118</sup>

While the temporal coincidence of Libya's proclamation with the Iraq war does seem persuasive, by making this argument, Krauthammer conflates correlation with causation. He is also writing from a position of ignorance, given that at the time of his publication, so soon after the announcement, the full details of the process leading up to Libya's disarmament were still secret and largely unknown. A review of the facts available now, on the contrary, shows that the Iraq war probably threatened to unravel the agreement more than it prompted it.

Firstly, the neoconservative timeline point doesn't work out. Although it is certainly true that the Libyans sought out negotiations only days before the start of the Iraq war in March 2003, this was not the first time they had made such a move. Indeed, we know that Musa Kusa reached out to the US through Gary Hart as early as 1992 with the same offer, and it was the State Department that decided not to pursue it.<sup>119</sup>

Furthermore, it seemed that rather than terrifying the Libyans into disarming, developments in the Iraq war almost completely stymied the secret talks since, as realist theory predicts, the sense of insecurity that the war created in the Libyans spurred the natural instinct to want to cling to arms. Indeed, in the final days before the December 19 announcement, there was intense worry amongst the western negotiators that Gadhafi

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<sup>117</sup> Charles Krauthammer, "The Doggedness of War," *Washington Post*, 26 December 2003.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> Hart, "My Secret Talks with Libya, and Why They Went Nowhere."

would call the whole thing off, particularly after the degrading capture of Saddam Hussein from a hole in the ground. Gadhafi worried that it all might be a ploy, and that the Americans had the same fate in mind for him. Gordon Corera writes:

Suspicious remained right to the end. The Libyans feared that they could be double-crossed. What if they went public with an admission of a nuclear weapons program and the White House and Downing Street failed to congratulate the Libyan leader or even worse condemned him? There were high stakes for the Libyans and to the end trust was not overflowing on either side... The capture of Saddam Hussein three days earlier raised fears that the US and UK were planning a similar humiliation for Gadhafi.<sup>120</sup>

Saddam's capture, in fact, so unsettled Gadhafi that he at the last minute sought to delay his announcement in order to distance comparisons between his decision and Saddam's arrest. According to a report in *Time*:

The actual capture of the Iraqi leader almost delayed the first public sign of the historic rapprochement between Libya and the West... on Dec. 14, only a few days before an official announcement was to be made in Washington, Hussein was pulled out of a spider hole and Gaddafi had last-minute jitters. Worried that the humiliating capture of Saddam would be viewed as the driving force behind his voluntary disarmament, Gaddafi suddenly proposed a postponement. According to his son Seif al Islam, British Prime Minister Tony Blair pleaded with Gaddafi, "Please, we are in a hurry. It is a big success for all of us."<sup>121</sup>

This account further underscores how very skittish the Libyans were, and shows how the ongoing example of the Iraq war actually served in many ways to hamper progress. This is confirmed by those directly involved with the negotiations, one of whom compared trying to get a deal out of the Libyans like trying to coax birds to land on one's hand—the slightest air of danger would send them flying off.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Corera, *Shopping for Bombs*, 193.

<sup>121</sup> Macleod, "Behind Gaddafi's Diplomatic Turnaround."

<sup>122</sup> Confidential source, interview by author.

Still, some maintain that the credible threat of force is crucial to any negotiation, and that the Iraq war was effective in convincing Gadhafi of the American resolve to use military means if necessary. It is certainly true that a credible coercive contingency plan is necessary to most any negotiation involving national security issues—even realist ideology acknowledges this. “Diplomacy without power is just naked pleading,” wrote Colin Powell in the State Department’s internal magazine.<sup>123</sup> Yet even before the Iraq war in 2003, there was little reason to doubt the seriousness of the American resolve. The US had, of course, previously used force against Gadhafi in 1986.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, plenty of other examples, from the 1998 bombing of Sudan and Afghanistan to Operation Desert Fox in Iraq, reinforced the message that the United States would respond militarily if it felt sufficiently threatened.<sup>125</sup> Thus, rather than underscoring American threat credibility, the war in Iraq served instead as counterproductive overkill in the eyes of the Libyans, presenting them with a frightening reason to want to keep their weapons, an instinct that was, thankfully, overcome through the professionalism and trustworthiness conveyed by the CIA and MI6. As a *Guardian* editorial eloquently put it, “To this delicate process, Washington's bellicosity formed a worrying backdrop, not a spur. As Libya has indicated, the Iraq war actually made agreement more difficult; it was eventually reached despite, not because of, Iraq.”<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Colin Powell, "Diplomacy Properly Understood," *State*, May 2004.

<sup>124</sup> Weinraub, "US Jets Hit 'Terrorist Centers' in Libya; Reagan Warns of New Attacks if Needed."

<sup>125</sup> James Bennet, "US Cruise Missiles Strike Sudan and Afghan Targets Tied to Terrorist Network," *New York Times*, 21 August 1998. See also Francis Clines and Steven Lee Myers, "Attack on Iraq: Impeachment Vote in House Delayed as Clinton Launches Iraq Air Strike, Citing Military Need to Move Swiftly," *New York Times*, 17 December 1998.

<sup>126</sup> "A Very British Coup," *The Guardian*, 22 December 2003.

Another powerful argument against the “Iraq made Libya disarm” hypothesis comes from those individuals who were involved in the negotiation process themselves. People who were privy to the talks are adamant that the neoconservative argument is inaccurate. Former Assistant Secretary of State David Welch is diplomatic but clear: “Anything is possible, but I do not believe that [the Iraq hypothesis] is anywhere near the most probable explanation.”<sup>127</sup> Colonel Wilkerson concurs with Welch’s assessment, stating that “From my perspective, it looked like the British and Gadhafi’s son had more to do with the decision,” calling the development a consequence of “fine, sophisticated British diplomacy.”<sup>128</sup> Colin Powell also takes aim at the neocon hypothesis, writing:

Some have argued that the impressive use of military force by the United States and its Coalition partners in Iraq is what persuaded the Libyan leadership to change its ways. Force and not diplomacy, they have said, got results. But the truth is more complex than that. Operation Iraqi Freedom may have advanced Libyan thinking to come to its wise conclusion... But the Libyan government has been edging slowly away from its destructive and futile past policies for some time. No one factor, and no single isolated event, suffices to explain Libya’s recent judgments.<sup>129</sup>

Most importantly, Gadhafi himself also rejects the Iraq hypothesis; he says so point-blank in a televised interview with Australian journalist George Negus:

GEORGE NEGUS: Some cynical commentators have said that one of the reasons you got rid of your weapons of mass destruction program is because you feared the same fate as Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

COLONEL MUAMMAR AL-GADDAFI (Translation): No, we started to deal with abandoning this program and negotiating with superpowers before the Iraq War.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Welch, interview by author.

<sup>128</sup> Wilkerson, interview by author.

<sup>129</sup> Powell, "Diplomacy Properly Understood."

<sup>130</sup> Moamar Gadhafi, interview by George Negus, *Dateline* SBS (Australia), originally aired 21 February 2010; available from <http://www.sbs.com.au/dateline/story/transcript/id/600321/n/The-Gaddafi-Interview> (accessed 26 Feb 2011).

Although Gadhafi is prone to rambling and delusion, his comments in this instance must count for at least something.

A final blow to the Iraq hypothesis comes from examining the conditions in Iraq in December 2003. As scholar Randall Newnham persuasively points out, by that time “It was becoming clear that the initial success of the March 2003 invasion was transitory,” as the Iraqi insurgency began to take shape and American public mood began to turn against the war.<sup>131</sup> “It was also becoming clear,” Newnham writes, “that the US military was stretched thin and would not easily be able to attack other high priority targets such as North Korea, Iran, and Syria. Why, then, would Libya — seemingly lower on any potential target list — be so afraid of attack in December?”<sup>132</sup> This logic is quite convincing. Indeed, if Libya had backed out of its WMD decision at the last minute, the most likely outcome would have been a continuation of the status quo. American sanctions would have remained in place, but there is simply no evidence to support the possibility that the United States would have launched a military strike. Thus, if viewed in a certain light, this argument in fact erodes not only the Iraq hypothesis, but also the strength of the force credibility that the Iraq war might have otherwise conveyed.

Thus, the large majority of evidence seems to discount the Iraq hypothesis, and it is sound to conclude that the Iraq war was not the main contributing factor in Libya’s behavior change. On the contrary, the evidence shows that the positive outcome of the Libya case is much more attributable to sound realist strategies of coercive diplomacy

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<sup>131</sup> Randall Newnham, “Carrots, Sticks, and Bombs: The End of Libya’s WMD Program,” *Mediterranean Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (2009).

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

which were limited in their aims and emphasized carrots more than sticks. Of course, foreign policy analysis is an imperfect science given that international relations as a discipline does not afford the luxury of laboratory controlled experiments. Given this reality, it is impossible to conclusively say which variable-- either realist policy or the lack of ideological infighting—was more responsible for the success of the Libya case. In truth, it is likely the combination of both that led to the success. However, the evidence is undeniable that the lack of ideological infighting was at least a significant contributing factor to the policy outcomes. Furthermore, it is also near certain that, had ideological infighting been present, it is unlikely that the Bush Administration would have been able to pursue such a purely realist policy toward Libya, and a happy outcome may have proved elusive. As one person involved in the secret WMD negotiations put it, “Having the freedom of secrecy protected us from our own internal conflicts, adversarial positions, and debates, which could have gone the wrong way.”<sup>133</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The case of Libya’s disarmament therefore serves as a powerful confirmation of the unique destructiveness of ideological infighting by demonstrating how comparatively smoothly even the trickiest negotiations progressed once that infighting was removed, either through apathy or secrecy. The contrasting success achieved in the Libyan case is in stark opposition to the flailing, counterproductive policies pursued toward Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon, which were more the results of ideologically-driven foreign policy insiders seeking to discredit those who disagreed with them, even if those efforts resulted in the

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<sup>133</sup> Confidential source, interview by author.

overall expense of the American national interest. Service to an ideological view of what was best for America supplanted what was objectively best for America. Dealings with Libya, on the other hand, showcased the resounding successes that could be attained when the American bureaucracy was focused on combating actual security threats rather than itself. As journalist Ron Suskind aptly sums up, “the disarming of Gadhafi wasn’t due to the Bush administration following its ‘new rules’ for angrily confronting rogue states. It was due to the Bush administration setting them, for once, aside.”<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Suskind, "The Tyrant Who Came in from the Cold."



## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **CONCLUSION**

It is true that the story of the Bush Administration's foreign policy in the Middle East during the study period is one marked mostly by spectacular failures to achieve the Administration's own stated objectives. Yet despite the insistence of President Bush's political critics, these years were not entirely characterized by diplomatic breakdown. To assert so would be both politically and intellectually dishonest. On the contrary, the Administration is due a great deal of credit for the successful disarmament of Libya, which demonstrated diplomatic calculation and skill. In fact, the differences in approaches and outcomes between Libya and the other case studies are so stark that one almost wonders if the same individuals were at work. Although we know the answer is yes, the behind-the-scenes interactions that happened between those individuals were actually the critical variable that caused the drastic disparity in outcomes. This study has now shown that it was the lack of ideological infighting amongst the Bush Administration's foreign policy bureaucrats that accounted for at least part of the achievements of the Libya policy and, congruently, the failures of policy in the other cases.

## 12 VS OTHER MODELS OF BUREAUCRATIC INFIGHTING

Although the policy effects of both ideological and bureaucratic infighting had been addressed before by scholars of US foreign policy analysis, their models proved to be inadequate for explaining the reality of what actually occurred during the Bush Administration. Other ideological models, for example, only assumed differences of ideology occurring between, not within parties—something that clearly was not the case in the Bush Administration (and several other administrations before it). And scholarship which dealt in a more nuanced way with individuals' ideological viewpoints, such as Alexander George's work on operational codes, focused too much on immediate decisionmakers, like presidents, rather than the middling levels of the bureaucracy where the intermediate steps of policymaking take place.<sup>1</sup>

Whereas the scholars of ideology focused too much on the individual in policymaking, the best work on bureaucratic politics, such as that presented by Graham Allison, didn't focus on it nearly enough. While Allison's models are enlightening in revealing that bureaucrats have rigid interests in terms of securing resources for their careers and their agencies, his work's fatal flaw is that it fails to consider that these individual bureaucrats may also care very deeply about the substance of the issues that they are working on, and thus seek to use these techniques of bureaucratic conflict for reasons of purely ideological interest, even if that interest is to the detriment of their offices or career paths, as we saw, for example, with John Bolton at the State Department.

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander George, "The Operational Code: A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-Making," *International Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (1969).

Contrastingly, the Ideological Infighting, or I2, Model proposed here does a better job of integrating matters of both ideology and bureaucratic competition in US foreign policymaking, particularly as applied to the sharply ideologically-divided Bush Administration. Of course, this does not mean that we should entirely throw out any of these previous models. Although I2 seems to be a better fit for the cases studied here, it does not mean that it is the only one. It is important to remember that none of these models is mutually exclusive—the fact that I2 took place regarding certain critical decisions does not mean that Allisonian infighting, for example, didn't take place. An Allisonian scholar could likely examine the Bush Administration and find ample evidence to support his point of view. After all, this study doesn't assert that I2 model infighting is the *only* reason for policy failure—but that it is a significant contributing factor. On the other hand, the cases examined here do show that there are certain events that are not well explained by Allisonian models, and demand further explication. These are the cases where an I2 analysis adds value, by volunteering another conceptual framework to the debate on foreign policy analysis. It is this unique framework that is this work's key academic contribution. Thus, I2 supplements, not supplants, previous foreign policy analysis models.

That being said, it seems clear from these case studies that while Allisonian infighting is a fairly constant feature of any bureaucracy, ideological infighting is less prevalent but more destructive. The Libyan control case shows, for example, that under normal circumstances of Allisonian infighting, effective policies still manage to be made, albeit more slowly. However, when the ideological dimension is brought into the equation, the stakes get much higher, as groups on either side of the ideological dividing

line no longer think that their counterparts have the same good interests of the state in mind. On the contrary, ideological fault lines are much more rigid because individuals begin to think that compromise will result in the decline of the state; this belief is particularly pronounced amongst foreign policy neoconservatives. As a result, ideological fights in the bureaucracy are much more damaging than other types of fights, because the stakes are perceived to be higher.

Still, while the case studies showed that I2 infighting conclusively occurs and is definitely destructive, this work also demonstrated that it is important to acknowledge that it is sometimes difficult to tease out the effects of the infighting versus the effects of what were simply poor policy choices. The neoconservatives, for example, made many uniquely bad judgments— such as the decision to invade Iraq in the first place—and as they tended to be more dedicated and effective infighters, the neoconservative point of view was often the one that was carried out in policy. Still, as the analysis in the case studies showed, the counterfactual is instructive in helping to determine the results of I2 as opposed to poor judgment. Had the invasion of Iraq gone forward, for example, but without having purged all Iraq area specialists from the Defense Department team tasked with the country's occupation and reconstruction, the outcome of events could have been quite different, especially given that it was these exiled experts who anticipated in the Future of Iraq Project Report many of the key problems that led to the development and prolonging of the Iraqi insurgency. The case of Libya, too, shows that in contrast, a realist foreign policy is not always a silver bullet for success. Indeed, throughout the 1990s a realist policy toward Gadhafi followed by both the George H.W. Bush and Clinton Administrations yielded little fruit and demonstrates that bilateral policy is a two-

way street in which the United States is only one player. Thus, the important conclusion is that the wisdom of a policy alone does not account for its success or failure. Outcomes are multivariate, and ideological infighting is just one of the many factors that should be considered in seeking to explain a poor policy result.

## **THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT AND HIS PARTY**

Although the focus of this work is decidedly upon the bureaucracy, it does raise the question of what role is left for the president. Indeed, this is a question that is common to all studies of the foreign policy bureaucracy, and is the basis for one of the most robust critiques of Allison's work—Krasner's "Allison Wonderland."<sup>2</sup> As discussed in Chapter Three, it was determined that George W. Bush had a leadership style that was, at least with regard to foreign policy, decentralized according to the Johnson-George typology.<sup>3</sup> While Bush still very much held final authority, his inexperience in foreign policy, particularly at the beginning of his term, meant that most of the foreign policy decisionmaking was concluded at lower levels in the bureaucracy, and he would only make the very highest level judgments. Thus, by the time Bush weighed in on anything, multiple other mid-step decisions had already been settled by bureaucrats. This in turn created much more opportunity for I2 infighting to manifest itself in policymaking, since the president knew little about what was going on at lower levels. Still, as often occurs with individuals, the reality of what happened does not always align perfectly with the theory. Some examples from the case studies do in fact show Bush

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Krasner, "Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland)," *Foreign Policy*, no. 7 (1972): 179.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Tanner Johnson, *Managing the White House* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).

taking a more confident stance toward assessing a situation and making an independent foreign policy decision at a high level, as with the decision to enter secret negotiations with the Libyans or the refusal to expand the 2006 Lebanon war to Syria. These episodes show Bush drifting more toward a centralized Johnson-George executive style and exercising more executive authority. The bureaucratic result of such moves—essentially, widespread compliance with Bush’s orders— demonstrates the crucial role of the executive in fostering a disciplined bureaucratic environment. Ultimately, the president does have authority when he chooses to exercise it, but he must have the confidence, personality, and expertise to do so. Furthermore, presidents may be inconsistent in their styles, due simply to human nature. Just as Bush typically had a decentralized decisionmaking style that was occasionally centralized, a typically centralized decisionmaker may have moments that tend toward the decentralized, and in these cases it is important to anticipate the consequences of such normal human variation.

These observations about the bureaucratic consequences of a decentralized Johnson-George decisionmaking process regarding foreign policy yield interesting questions about whether I2 infighting would be as prominent in other administrations with contrasting executive styles. George H.W. Bush, for example, had deep expertise in foreign policy matters from his previous experiences as the US envoy to Beijing and the Director of the CIA. As a result, he had a more centralized style of foreign policymaking than his son. It would therefore be an interesting avenue for future research to, for example, use the I2 model developed here to assess the George H.W. Bush Administration—along with other administrations that display differing Johnson-George decisionmaking typologies—for evidence of ideological infighting and the effects of its

outcomes on foreign policy. The results of such research could be a useful tool for newly elected presidents seeking to build their cabinets and develop their management styles in an effective way. At the very least, it could be used for self-assessment, as a means to suggest the types of problems likely to emerge in a particular administration so that leaders can be on the lookout and prepared to make adjustments if necessary.

Further considering the lines of additional research that this study opens up, the issue of party politics and the Republican schism particularly comes to the fore. Recalling from Chapter Two, Republican presidencies seem to be particularly vulnerable to ideological infighting along the I2 model. This is because the Republican Party's doctrine on foreign policy exhibits an unresolved tension between on the one hand a strongly unilateral, ideological streak that lends itself to neoconservatism, and on the other a calculating realism that seeks to maximize American power. As shown in this study, the ideological conflicts examined here have deep roots that reach back to the Reagan, Ford, and Nixon Administrations.

But are Democrats really immune to the destructive I2 forces? While a first glance at the Obama, Clinton, and Carter Administrations may make it appear that they are, it would be instructive to go back further in history to the darkest days of the Cold War—during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, for example. The issues of the arms race and the domino theory, for example, lend themselves to highly ideological interpretations, and it would be useful to see if in this case I2 could be found to manifest itself strongly within a Democratic administration. Such further research would also be useful in demonstrating the generalizability of the I2 model. Although the cases

presented in this thesis deal exclusively with the Middle East, the model is designed to be applicable to US foreign policy toward any region.

## **HOW TO COMBAT I2**

Given the unique destructiveness that ideological infighting creates within an administration, it is clearly in the national interest to find ways to minimize its occurrence. The simplest way to diminish it, of course, is for a president to be exacting in his cabinet selections, ensuring that his top advisers are all roughly on the same ideological page when it comes to foreign policy. However, this is not always practical. For one, human beings are messy. It is rare to find someone who would exhibit consistently orthodox views according to a single ideology on every single issue. Opinions are bound to be diverse, and this is a good thing from a policymaking point of view. For even if a president could assemble a totally orthodox cabinet, this would limit the scope of debate and testing that goes into making foreign policy. The fact is that diversity of thought creates more robust and defensible policy. Finally, even if the president could totally control his cabinet's ideological makeup, he inherits the career bureaucracy, whose members, as this study shows, hold their own views about the best direction for US foreign policy. Furthermore, it is at this bureaucratic middle level where some of the most consequential decisions are made. It is therefore in the interest of the president to make sure that all thoughts reach the debate at the top, and that none are drowned in a bureaucratic bloodbath before they are able to make their way to top decisionmakers.

In minimizing I2, it is essential to recall its fundamental features: that it occurs both horizontally and vertically. Measures to combat it, therefore, must confront both these dimensions. At its core, I2 is primarily about information: having it, hoarding it, blocking it, and passing it, both up-and-down and side-to-side. Horizontal I2, therefore, might be effectively addressed by instituting cross-staffing programs wherein employees of different agencies are exchanged for set terms on a structured secondment basis. This would make it more difficult for agencies and departments to undermine each other through secretive means, as occurred between the Office of Special Plans and the CIA, for example. Had, for instance, a CIA liaison been placed into the OSP's intelligence analysis operations by mandate, it would have been much more difficult for the CIA to be marginalized in the way it was, since it would have been aware of all of OSP's activities—who it was getting information from, how it was interpreting it, and who it was passing it up to. Furthermore, in this scenario, it is also unlikely that elements in OSP would have been able to push flawed intelligence that nevertheless supported their ideology. Thus, not only would this type of cross-staffing have averted some of the ideological infighting, but it would also have pre-empted its negative policy effects—in this case, launching a major war on faulty intelligence.

Further underscoring the potential benefits of cross-staffing for preventing horizontal ideological infighting is the example of Future of Iraq Project members from the State Department being forced out of their appointments with the Pentagon's Iraq reconstruction team, as detailed in Chapter Four. This incident demonstrates that there are some in the bureaucracy who are aware of the way that cross-staffing makes it harder for government agencies to fight each other—this is part of the reason that Study Group

members like Meghan O'Sullivan were to be sent to the Pentagon in the first place, and certainly part of the reason why their appointments there were swiftly rejected.

Similarly, mandated intelligence sharing between government agencies could also prevent ideological infighting by making it more difficult for agencies to keep information from each other. If all agencies have equal access to information, then none can create an advantage for itself by hoarding intelligence. Perhaps if the CIA, for example, were more open with its analyses, other agencies would feel less competitive and hostile toward it and actively seek to undercut its influence. Of course, it is important to remember that there are very obvious and real practical reasons why the CIA is very secretive. However, there are ways that information sharing could take place that don't compromise the sensitivities of the US intelligence community—for example, harmonizing access to information for holders of various levels of security clearances throughout the government. This would entail, for instance, ensuring that a holder of a Top Secret clearance permission in the State Department would be able to access Top Secret designated materials from the Defense Department and CIA, and vice versa. Still, in the age of Wikileaks, there might be notable resistance to such an idea. Indeed, such post-9/11 intelligence sharing initiatives have been cited as the reason that the Wikileaker had such broad access to documents in general.<sup>4</sup> Still, it is also important to point out that basic hardware security issues were the much more direct cause of the breach, and these can be addressed with simple policy updates, such as forbidding removable media

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<sup>4</sup> Dan Murphy, "How Wikileaks Could Undo Post-9/11 Intelligence Reforms," *Christian Science Monitor*, 30 November 2010.

in government offices.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately, the risks of intelligence sharing can be contained through smart information security policies, and the benefits to be gained from having a more informed and effective foreign policy bureaucracy outweigh them.

Bureaucratic adjustments are also required to minimize the vertical elements of I2 infighting, which entails using the hierarchical nature of a bureaucracy against itself, preventing good ideas that emerge from lower rungs on the department ladders from working their way up to key decisionmakers because of an ideological roadblock with a supervisor along the way. Because this is fundamentally a structural problem of a direct hierarchy, it demands a structural solution—in this case, one that makes the hierarchy slightly less direct. It could be effective to create a system of dual supervision, so that each employee has two direct superiors. One would be the normal supervisor in line with typical department structures. For example, analysts on the Iraq desk in the State Department would naturally still report to their desk director. However, they should also have a second institutional supervisor *outside* of their direct department and one level above their direct supervisor, who has explicit responsibility for hearing infighting or marginalization complaints. Taking this second supervisor from outside the immediate desk or office would make it less likely for the person to be an ideological road block to a particular complaint, since it would likely not be about his or her direct issue area. Furthermore, having this person a rank above the direct supervisor ensures that they have the authority to take appropriate action against the vertical infighter, if necessary. Furthermore, it is important that periodic performance evaluations occur in multiple directions. This means that employees should—anonously, to a third party—be able

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<sup>5</sup> Leslie Horn, "Report: After WikiLeaks, Pentagon Bans Removable Devices," *PC Magazine*, 10 December 2010.

to evaluate their supervisor's performance just as he or she evaluates theirs. Vertical structural adjustments like these, for example, could have helped control John Bolton's antagonism against his own State Department staff.

Ultimately these simple changes amount to paying more attention to management issues within the foreign policymaking apparatus. While straightforward, such adjustments could have a significant positive impact on the coordination and efficacy of US foreign policy purely through ensuring a more efficient use of available resources. Simply put, when bureaucrats spend less time fighting each other, they spend more time addressing actual policy questions. Indeed, such small structural alterations could not only reduce I2, but also Allisonian infighting as well which, although generally less damaging than I2, is much more prevalent and occurs regardless of presidential style.

## **THE LAST WORD**

Bureaucrats are the backbone of American foreign policy, and given the sheer scope of work involved in conducting a superpower's foreign policy, they always will be. Furthermore, they will always be guided to a certain extent by their own ideological beliefs, personal interests, departmental modes of operation, and institutional pursuits. This is both normal and unavoidable. However, it becomes very damaging when the bureaucratic system enables agency staff to autonomously act on these interests to the detriment of the key foreign policy interests of the state as articulated by the administration. As the cases examined here indicate, this is when the policy consequences become severe. This is especially true when the chief motivating factor is ideology, since ideological conflicts are almost always irreconcilable and, as seen here,

internally confuse the matter of just what exactly the policy goals of the United States *are*. Disagreement on foreign policy interests within an administration is a recipe for failure, as became so clear in the case of the US foreign policy in the Middle East between 2001 and 2006.

Of course, the news is not all dire. While bureaucratic conflict is to a certain extent unavoidable, its scope and scale can be contained, particularly through vigilance and effective management techniques. Being aware of the likely bureaucratic pitfalls makes it easier to keep alert against them and put into place techniques designed to ensure that bureaucrats are accountable both to their staff and to their superiors. These techniques must be present even at the very lowest rungs of the bureaucratic ladder, since it is here where some of the most important information is gathered, filtered, and passed up. Yet all channels of responsibility lead to the president, whose role as a manager is equally important as his role as the chief foreign policymaker. When the president executes his authority skillfully, then questions of bureaucratic infighting become moot. However, as the events examined here show, this is not always the case. Furthermore, even individuals who generally exhibit good managerial skills can have episodic lapses that could create big consequences. Thus, even though it is true that the president has absolute authority over his bureaucracy, from a practical point of view he cannot oversee every step of the policymaking process. As a consequence, a solid comprehension of the politics of the bureaucracy and how ideological concerns shape its officials' actions is crucial to deepening understandings of how and why certain policies are made. I2 analysis is therefore a way to refine this comprehension.



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