2003 IRAQ WAR: INTELLIGENCE OR POLITICAL FAILURE?

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ABSTRACT

The bold U.S. decision to invade Iraq in 2003 was anchored in intelligence justifications that would later challenge U.S. credibility. Policymakers exhibited unusual bureaucratic and public dependencies on intelligence analysis, so much so that efforts were made to create supporting information. To better understand the amplification of intelligence, the use of data to justify invading Iraq will be explored alongside events leading up to the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. This paper will examine the use of intelligence to invade Iraq as well as broader implications for politicization. It will not examine the justness or ethics of going to war with Iraq but, conclude with the implications of abusing intelligence.

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Thank you God for continued wisdom.
Thank you Dr. Nurnberger for your patience.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Mom and Dad for their continued support.

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CHAPTER 1

INTELLIGENCE: HISTORY, DISCIPLINE, AND MISSION PRE-IRAQ

> …The establishment of trust and co-operation between a leader and a wisely chosen adviser is ultimately the most critical link in the whole intelligence process
> - Michael Handel, *Leaders and Intelligence*

The U.S. gained international influence during World War II[1]. Increased foreign threats to national security surfaced with this global emergence.[2] This history, since the 1940s, has guided military involvement as well as diplomatic relations with U.S. allies. As a result, the role of intelligence has progressed to evoke many responsibilities for the sake of U.S. national security. Likewise, an overview of this complex field is vital to understanding the role intelligence played prior to the 2003 Iraq war.

The National Security Act of 1947 is the genesis of the modern intelligence structure, which is tasked with supporting decision-makers in protecting U.S. interests. This Act established a coordinative effort to engage government "departments and agencies [in] the appropriate dissemination of…intelligence" in order to thwart preventable attacks on the U.S. following the infamous Japanese military ambush on Pearl Harbor in 1941.[3] The mobilization of Japanese military forces and signals communication traffic foretold of imminent attacks but there was no collaborative

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[1] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th. ed. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2009), 12-13.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Donald Steury, *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates: Collected Essays* (Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 1994), 49.

warning mechanism to alert U.S. decision-makers.[4] These associations were made afterwards, revealing bureaucratic disjointedness. Consequently, this event defined the need for intelligence to support U.S. national security.

As global threats continued to emerge against the U.S., former Director of National Security Studies James Motley emphasized that: "First and foremost… the role of…intelligence…within a democratic…government is to provide the impartial information and analysis upon which knowledgeable policy decisions can be made in protection of U.S. national interests."[5] Sherman Kent, considered the founding father of defining the intelligence profession, articulated the value of coordinated intelligence-driven policy over 40 years ago. In his collection of essays, Kent underscored the challenge of this synchronization of intelligence and policy as well as managing "trade secrets."[6] The basis of U.S. national security policy includes the intelligence community and policymakers striving to reduce threats.[7] This chapter will examine some fundamentals of intelligence and support to policymakers.

Mark Lowenthal, former Assistant Director of Central Intelligence for Analysis and Production at Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), explains that intelligence should represent information that has been gathered and processed to meet a policymaker's

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[4] David Kahn, "The Intelligence Failure of Pearl Harbor," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no 5 (1991), 145.

[5] James Motley, "Coping with the Terrorist Threat: The U.S. Intelligence Dilemma," in *Intelligence and Intelligence Policy in a Democratic Society*, ed. Stephen Cimbala (Transnational Publishers, Inc., 1987), 173.

[6] Ibid., 18.

[7] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 13.

information needs.[8] In *The Role of Intelligence in Policy Making*, Amanda Gookins also expands on intelligence as a "subset" of information that meets a stated policy need or request.[9] While policymakers are primary "customers" of intelligence, military components are also major consumers of intelligence, as a part of their defense mission.[10] These descriptions illustrate the significance of providing sound intelligence or estimates to leaders, who await this crucial product in order to make national security decisions.

Intelligence scholars such as Kent, Lowenthal, and Gookins underscore the value of an intelligence–driven policy framework. As a product and a process to enable policymakers' decisions, intelligence is a complex domain that is vital to defending the U.S.[11] This function includes understanding the capabilities and intentions of other governments, as well as potentially hostile non-government entities who "work assiduously to keep secret what the U.S. government hopes to find out."[12] Accordingly, a fundamental part of this process is collecting data on foreign activity using "clandestine

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[8] Ibid., 2.

[9] Amanda Gookins, "The Role of Intelligence in Policy Making," *SAIS Review* 28, no. 1 (2008), http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/sais_review/v028/28.1gookins.html (accessed June 13, 2010), 66.

[10] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 6.

[11] Ibid., 1.

[12] Paul Pillar, "Intelligent Design: The Unending Saga of Intelligence Reform," *Foreign Affairs.com*, March 2008, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63237/paul-r-pillar/intelligent-design (accessed June, 13 2010).

information-gathering" methods.[13] Information collected from humans, imaging, or signal satellites, and open media sources provide the content for processing and producing intelligence.[14]

A key aspect of the intelligence profession includes the skillful, analytic responsibility of interpreting objective data, derived from the aforementioned human and technical sources.[15] It is an intelligence analyst's duty to objectively evaluate collected information fragments before meeting a policymaker's request. Accordingly, intelligence collection and processing are followed by intelligence analysis and production phases.[16] The analytic part of this process involves making sense of collected information and producing an assessment or judgment, for national security decision-makers. Whether assessing human, signals, or imagery intelligence, present-day analytic standards reflect Sherman Kent's philosophy of studying a topic, "communicating…findings dispassionately, objectively, and concisely [presenting these findings] to the people who [need] to act upon [such intelligence]."[17]

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[13] Arthur Hulnick and Daniel Mattausch, "Ethics and Morality in U.S. Secret Intelligence," in *Ethics of Spying: A Reader for the Intelligence Professional*, ed. Jan Goldman (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 40.

[14] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 55 & 60.

[15] Stephen Cimbala, *Intelligence and Intelligence Policy in a Democratic Society*, 2.

[16] Ibid., 65.

[17] Donald Steury, *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates*, xvi.

Intelligence Disciplines

Human, signals, and imagery intelligence analysis represent analytic disciplines that are specific to certain agencies within the intelligence community. A major development in the National Security Act of 1947 was the formation of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), formerly the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).[18] With respect to human intelligence, CIA analysts are largely responsible for clandestine activity such as espionage and "recruiting foreign nationals to spy."[19] Agents in this field are primarily collectors who must protect their cover or "plausible reason for being in a foreign country" while providing analysts unevaluated information for processing and production.[20]

The human intelligence discipline is not without weakness or vulnerability. Lowenthal cautions that while human intelligence is one of several secretive collection methods whereby an individual may have access to information, acquiring such information has varying degrees of reliability.[21] For instance, an individual source may provide CIA with legitimate hidden facts whereas deception is a key vulnerability that Lowenthal associates with human intelligence.[22] As a result of such ambiguity, human intelligence has been associated with questionable practices and controversy. In *The*

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[18] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 12.

[19] Ibid., 97.

[20] Ibid., 98.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 76.

Psychology of Intelligence Analysis, Richard Heuer also warns of these sources' potential "weaknesses…biases, and vulnerability to manipulation."[23] Each of these human intelligence intricacies played a role in analyzing intelligence prior to and during the 2003 Iraq War.

Signals intelligence is yet a separate discipline within intelligence analysis. Analysts at the National Security Agency (NSA) intercept foreign communications for content and warnings of possible threats to the continental U.S., military forces, and U.S. interests abroad.[24] As with human intelligence, analysts may encounter signals intelligence vulnerabilities. For instance, foreign targets may avoid exposure by not using detectable communication devices or deceive analysts with false information if they suspect that U.S. signals intercepts are active.[25] Indeed, denial and deception are a "complex analytical issues" that impacted human and signals intelligence analysis prior to U.S. engagement in Iraq.[26]

A final analytic field involves imagery or geospatial-intelligence. The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) is among the 17 intelligence agencies that provide intense training for the analytic profession. Satellite derived imagery provides a

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[23] Richard Heuer, *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, (Center for the Study of Intelligence, 3rd ed. Central Intelligence Agency: 2003), 115.

[24] Ibid., 91.

[25] Ibid., 79 & 93.

[26] Ibid., 79

visual and geographic depiction of a target on earth.[27] Analysts must place these captured images in context as satellite platforms are limited to capturing still frames, without always accounting for the activity before or after an image is taken. This vulnerability speaks to the significance of context or interpretation as analysts produce imagery-derived products for policymakers, prior to pre-2003 Iraq War analysis.[28]

Analyst-Policymaker Relationship: Objectivity Is Key

International military and political situations are complex. In order for intelligence to support national security, the fact-finding process must present "proximate reality" or the most accurate picture of these foreign events.[29] William Casebeer underscores the significance of accurate intelligence in *Just War Theory and the Purposes of Intelligence* stating that, "if we are to protect our national interests, we must have the truth in order to act effectively."[30] For that reason, analysts scrutinize human, imagery, and signal sources to "report reality about foreign affairs with policy-neutral objectivity."[31] That is, the intelligence community must communicate the most accurate picture of knowns and unknowns to U.S. leaders contemplating international engagement.

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[27] Ibid., 82.

[28] Ibid., 84.

[29] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 6.

[30] William Casebeer, "Just War Theory and the Purposes of Intelligence," in *Defense Intelligence Journal* 16, no. 1 (2007): 50.

[31] Harry Howe Ransom, "The Politicization of Intelligence," in *Intelligence and Intelligence Policy in a Democratic Society*, ed. Stephen Cimbala (New York: Transnational Publishers, Inc.), 25.

To preserve the analytic standard of presenting non-biased intelligence, Sherman Kent's concept of "disinterested objectivity" remains the foundation of intelligence organizations that support "national policy formulation."[32] In *Critical Thinking and Intelligence Analysis*, David Moore stresses the importance of this dutiful mission, stating that, "intelligence analysis is not about preferences" but about formulating the "best answers in ambiguous situations with high-stakes implications and consequences."[33] Likewise, analysts are encouraged to assess and present accumulated "expertise" without bias and avoid personal views or opinions.[34] Indeed, the analytic phase is charged with isolating opinions from assessments. The intelligence community and policymakers were heavily engaged in these phases of finding or establishing "truth" in the preparatory stages of invading Iraq.

In addition to "policy neutrality [which] remains the guiding ethic of central intelligence," finished intelligence analysis should clearly present caveats.[35] These caveats should include certainties and uncertainties derived from human, imagery, or signal sources.[36] Cross-checking or de-conflicting data derived from these sources helps validate this information before decision-makers use this intelligence to formulate policy or initiate military action. Additionally, because this data is incomplete, analysts often

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[32] Donald Steury, *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates*, xvi-xvii.

[33] David Moore, *Critical Thinking and Intelligence Analysis* (Washington, DC: National Defense Intelligence College, 2009), 87.

[34] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 91.

[35] Harry Howe Ransom, "The Politicization of Intelligence," 43.

[36] Richard Heuer, *The Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, 183.

note the possibility or probability of this information being accurate or relevant. Amongst practitioners and most intelligence consumers, the understanding that "intelligence issues involve considerable uncertainty" is an expected risk.[37] Furthermore, the summation of intelligence developed from multiple sources, as opposed to a single source, underscores Amanda Gookins' guidance to synthesize information from "various resources" as being crucial to the intelligence profession.[38] In other words, the framework for assessing intelligence is dependent on trained analytic assessments of various intelligence sources in preparing to address policymakers' national security concerns. The intelligence process fails when these assessments do not provide notice or warning for threats to national security.[39] The Pearl Harbor attacks and attacks against the U.S. on September 11, 2001 are considered intelligence failures.

The goal of the intelligence analysis phase is to disseminate finished products for decision-makers. These analytic findings are provided to policymakers in a number of ways. President Daily Briefings, National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs), and online sources available to the intelligence community all serve as mechanisms for dissemination and satisfying policymakers' requests.[40] Former CIA Director Robert Gates describes the NIE as the intelligence community's coordinated and "corporate

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[37] Ibid., 32.

[38] Amanda Gookins, "The Role of Intelligence in Policy Making," 66.

[39] James Motley, "Coping with the Terrorist Threat: The U.S. Intelligence Dilemma," 168.

[40] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 63.

product."[41] In "Evaluating Intelligence: Answering Questions Asked and Not," Kristan Wheaton examines the National Intelligence Estimate and two Intelligence Community Assessments as evaluated intelligence provided to policymakers prior to invading Iraq. While these estimates are intended to bring together multiple organizations for collaborative and competitive analytic judgments, Wheaton draws attention to evaluation discrepancies as well as the significance of answering questions that policymakers may not consider.[42] National security affairs journalist, John Vest, sums up the ideal application of estimates within the context of the intelligence cycle as follows:

> The appropriate agencies gather the best intelligence in the smartest way, connect the dots and analyze with nuance but succinctness; their independence is respected by the policymaker; the policymaker asks thoughtful questions about process and product and then, edified, makes responsible policy decisions-including perhaps even changing his or her previous positions.[43]

Intelligence analysts and decision-makers alike face conflicting priorities and multiple security threats. As the intelligence phases progress, Gookins' "ongoing dialogue" becomes a crucial means to negate such confusion.[44] For instance, while intelligence products are intended to facilitate planning and direction for policymakers,

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[41] Robert Gates, "G*uarding against Politicization*," in Ethics of Spying: A Reader for the Intelligence Professional, ed. Jan Goldman (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 171-2.

[42] Kristan Wheaton, "Evaluating Intelligence: Answering Questions Asked and Not," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 22 (December 2009): 29, http://gull.georgetown.edu/search~S0?/awheaton/awheaton/ 1%2C11%2C77 %2CB/frameset&FF=awheaton+kristan+j&1%2C1%2C (accessed February 25, 2010).

[43] Jason Vest, "The Recent Past and Future of Intelligence Politicization," *World Politics Review* (April 2009), http://www.scribd.com/doc/18698150/The-Recent-Past-and-Future-of-Intelligence-Politicization (accessed August 27, 2010): 33.

[44] Amanda Gookins, "The Role of Intelligence in Policy Making," 67.

they rarely generate constructive feedback to the intelligence community, which could better guide the analyst's focus areas[45]. These challenges are inherent in the intelligence community. However, there are some practices that misrepresent the intelligence process. The next section will address these distortions.

Intelligence and the Policymaker: Use and Abuse

One of the greatest cautions against mishandling intelligence relates to the concept of politicization. Former CIA Director Robert Gates identifies politicization as "policy-driven bias" that taints aspects of the truth or objectivity in intelligence, be it at the political, management, or analytic level, provoking a "distort[ion] [of] analysis or judgments…irrespective of evidence."[46] Specifically, the analytic practice, which is heavily influenced by Sherman Kent's early observations of intelligence, is intended to function independent of partisan meddling, and objective analytic findings should not be selected or driven to fit political decisions.[47] According to Glenn Hastedt, author of *The New Context of Intelligence Estimating: Politicization or Publicizing*, Kent condemned politicization because of its propensity to "compromise the intelligence effort" and dismiss neutrality.[48] For the purposes of this thesis politicization refers to Amanda Gookins' definition of "partisan, bureaucratic, and personal politics" influencing

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[45] Ibid., 65.

[46] Robert Gates, "G*uarding against Politicization*," 171-2.

[47] Amanda Gookins, "The Role of Intelligence in Policy Making," 71.

[48] Glenn Hastedt, "The New Context of Intelligence Estimating: Politicization or Publicizing?" in *Intelligence and Intelligence Policy in a Democratic Society*, ed. Stephen Cimbala (New York: Transnational Publishers, Inc.), 50.

intelligence analysis.[49] In other words, intelligence is intended to shape policy whereas political influence or advocacy should never drive the intelligence process or analytic products.[50] While Robert Jervis narrowly defines politicization as intelligence professionals yielding to policymaker's influence, Gookins' definition encompasses this aspect as well as broader abuses.[51] Such distortions in this process may result in the "systematic slanting of intelligence collection and analysis…to serve policy interest."[52] This intelligence corruption, however, can manifest in different phases.

The analyst-policymaker relationship is a delicate balance of guidance and information-sharing. In order to guard against politicization, the production and analysis component in the intelligence cycle must sustain neutral assessments because support to national security is vulnerable to subjective, political influence. Therefore, the feedback phase for the intelligence cycle should be limited to policymakers giving analysts an idea of "how well their requirements are [being] met" and discussing process adjustments.[53] Specifically, Gates warns that "the policymaker should not dictate" in the feedback phase

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[49] Ibid., 70.

[50] Paul R. Pillar, "Intelligence, Policy, and the War in Iraq," in *Foreign Affairs*, April 2006.

[51] Robert Jervis, "Reports, Politics, and Intelligence Failures: The Case of Iraq," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 29, no. 1 (February 2006): 34.

[52] Melvin Goodman. *Failure of Intelligence* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2008), 23.

[53] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 56.

of the process.[54] However, because policymakers should provide views and guidance on topics of interest to national security, the interaction between analysts and policymakers in the feedback phase may present an opportunity for deliberate instances of politicization.

This information is not always consistent with the policymaker's agenda, nor is it always well-received. Cherry-picking is one aspect of politicization that involves selecting or rejecting aspects of pertinent intelligence issues to support existing policy decisions. Michael Scheuer, "Anonymous" author of *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror,* warns that: "Substantive selectivity can exclude subjects in which policymakers are uninterested or [exclude] subjects that will stir anger, such as intelligence showing a specific U.S. policy is cocked up."[55] Cherry-picking can also encourage analysts to submit agreeable intelligence. Former CIA analyst Arthur Hulnick and David Mattausch identified this threat to objectivity and maintain that "analysts must never alter intelligence judgments to fit the desires of policymakers who might prefer different conclusions."[56]

Embedded assumptions, or "widely-held strategic assumptions and social norms [that] constrain analysis," can hinder the objective examination of information that may

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[54] Robert Gates, "Guarding against Politicization," in *Ethics of Spying: A Reader for the Intelligence Professional*, ed. Jan Goldman (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 173.

[55] Michael Scheuer, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror*, (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc.: 2004), 238.

[56] Arthur Hulnick and Daniel Mattausch, "Ethics and Morality in U.S. Secret Intelligence," 48.

be pertinent to intelligence production.[57] This politicization factor consists of underlying psychological perceptions. As a part of intelligence training, analysts are encouraged to challenge their cognitive biases in the pursuit of truth. By contrast, policymakers, with partisan agendas, are not always inclined to ignore their partisan mindsets when faced with conflicting or opposing intelligence. Politicization emerges when these "competing ideologies-or preferred values-enter into role definition," impacting intelligence-driven policy decisions.[58]

Beyond cherry-picking and embedded assumptions, Joshua Rovner further examined ranges of politicization and identified several categories that are relevant to the study of intelligence application prior to and during the 2003 Iraq War. In *Pathologies of Intelligence-Policy Relations*, Rovner identified direct manipulation, indirect manipulation, intelligence as a scapegoat, embedded assumptions, and partisan intelligence. Direct politicization, the most blatant, involves manipulating intelligence to fit political goals.[59] The previously-mentioned cherry-picking approach may reflect direct manipulation of the intelligence process. Indirect manipulation, which is more subtle, can take place in different forms[60]. These instances of repeating questions about the same issue or scrutinizing analytic findings may encourage such analysts to create satisfactory

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[57] Ibid., 60.

[58] Harry Ransom Howe, "The Politicization of Intelligence," 26.

[59] Joshua Rovner, "Pathologies of Intelligence-Policy Relations," (Ph.D. diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2005), 39.

[60] Ibid., 46.

intelligence.[61] These indirect cues may influence analysts or analytic agencies to report the desired policy answer as opposed to objective analysis. Consequently, in cases where policy decisions do not succeed, intelligence may become a “scapegoat,” receiving the blame for failed or undesirable outcomes.[62] Recall that intelligence failures occur when intelligence fails to provide warning.[63]

To further understand its sources, Johnson and Wirtz, identified broader conditions that represent politicization. In the first instance, political or policy influence can corrupt finished intelligence.[64] Secondly, decision-makers convey "not so subtle cues" by welcoming or rejecting intelligence reports that may or may not support their political agendas.[65] Lastly, politicization can occur at the analytic or bureaucratic level whereby "careerists" are more concerned with professional advancement than providing an objective assessment.[66]

Richard Heuer examines the psychology of intelligence analysis and builds on the factors that may contribute to politicization. He observes that policymakers’ perceptions and comparisons are limited as they “perceive problems in terms of [historic] analogies,”

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[61] Jason Vest, “The Recent Past and Future of Intelligence Politicization,” 34.

[62] Joshua Rovner, “Pathologies of Intelligence-Policy Relations,” 39.

[63] James Motley, “Coping with the Terrorist Threat: The U.S. Intelligence Dilemma,” 168.

[64] Loch K. Johnson and James J. Wirtz, “The Danger of Intelligence Politicization,” in *Strategic Intelligence: Windows Into a Secret World* (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2004), 168.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., 169.

often concluding with the wrong analytic assumption.[67] If intelligence contradicts these historical references, embedded assumptions can greatly influence a policymaker's decision, exposing this part of the intelligence process to politicization. Indeed, assumptions are powerful fixations and Hastedt warns that some "policymakers cannot accept…fatalistic conclusion[s] and must seek to extract high-quality intelligence from their intelligence bureaucracies."[68] Consequently, cherry-picking may result from these mindsets.

Rovner mentions a final and more blatant aspect of politicization. Partisan intelligence or a "political [party's] use [of] intelligence issues for partisan gain, usually by accusing rivals of mismanaging intelligence," potentially jeopardizes national security. [69] A budding corollary to this form of politicization is what Ransom calls "popularization…which generates public debate."[70] Publicity surrounding the 2003 Iraq War invariably referenced policymaker's use of intelligence. In this capacity, maintaining secrecy is a final category to explore in this chapter on intelligence.

Secrecy

The notion of intelligence has an air of mystery and confidentiality upon which handlers of intelligence rely. This fascination is tied to curiosity, power, and control,

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[67] Richard Heuer, *The Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, 40.

[68] Glenn Hastedt, "The New Context of Intelligence Estimating: Politicization or Publicizing?," 52.

[69] Joshua Rovner, "Pathologies of Intelligence-Policy Relations," 60.

[70] Harry Howe Ransom, "The Politicization of Intelligence," 26.

which intimately link intelligence and policymaking.[71] Shlomo Gazit, author of *Intelligence Estimates and the Decision-maker*, illustrates this intrigue and enchantment with historic leaders, such as royalty and military generals, who relied on "fortune telling," underscoring the decision-makers' dependence on accurate and extraordinary foresight.[72] By contrast, actual information-gathering for intelligence products is methodological and requires security. In *Ethics and Morality in U.S. Secret Intelligence*, Arthur Hulnick and Daniel Mattausch summarize the intelligence function and security as using clandestine methods to provide data needed "to carry out U.S. foreign policy," by collecting and analyzing information relevant to national security.[73] These collection activities include cornerstones of intelligence activities such as "spying, eavesdropping, and covert action."[74]

Accordingly, the secrecy associated with intelligence is intended to hide and protect certain information [and how that information is gathered] from foreign governments.[75] Indeed, the Espionage Act was invoked to prohibit national defense information from being leaked. The intelligence field is thus saturated with classification systems to protect the process of gaining information about foreign governments, to

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[71] Sissela Bok, *Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 34.

[72] Shlomo Gazit, *Intelligence Estimates and the Decision-Maker*, ed. Michael Handel (Oxon: Frank Cass & Company Limited, 2005), 261.

[73] Arthur Hulnick and Daniel Mattausch, "Ethics and Morality in U.S. Secret Intelligence," 39-40.

[74] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 1.

[75] Ibid., 2.

“thwart efforts by hostile” governments from gathering information about the U.S., and to prevent threats to the U.S.[76] Lowenthal highlights levels of SECRET and TOP SECRET classifications applied to intelligence, in order to prevent “grave damage” that may ensue if secret information is compromised.[77] Ultimately, individuals with access are expected to protect this information. At the policymaker level, leaking intelligence for political or partisan gain is a blatant form of abuse, reflective of politicization.[78] The duties of policymakers should exclude attempts to "drive intelligence" or use intelligence to garner public support.[79] Furthermore, Ransom deems the “maintenance of secrecy [as] imperative…to persons exercising responsible political leadership,” and elements of this bureaucracy with classified access must try “vigorously to maintain intelligence secrecy as a requirement of national security.”[80]

Certainly, the onus to protect this information must lie with intelligence professionals as well as the policymakers, who request and act on this sensitive information. In *Intelligence Collection and Analysis: Dilemmas and Decisions*, John Chomeau and Anne Rudolph emphasized the gravity of this responsibility stating that, “intelligence and policy communities [are] charged with the protection of intelligence

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[76] Ibid., 151.

[77] Ibid., 76.

[78] Jason Vest, “The Recent Past and Future of Intelligence Politicization,” 35.

[79] Paul Pillar, “Intelligence, Policy, and the War,” 2006.

[80] Harry Howe Ransom, “The Politicization of Intelligence,” 42.

sources and methods."[81] With national security as an ends to the sensitive intelligence process, policymakers and intelligence professionals alike must carefully manage such classified means because the consequences of mishandling information span from endangering U.S. interests abroad to jeopardizing national security. Sissela Bok warns of the potential for these consequences when "secrecy and political power…are linked" and political assignments surrounding the 2003 Iraq war enabled this bleak opportunity.[82]

Protecting Intelligence

Although there are no penalties for producing inaccurate intelligence, there are restrictions in place to protect classified information. The process involves selecting loyal employees who undergo vetting processes and swear to protect intelligence operators as well as intelligence analysis.[83] Intelligence handlers in this field are especially accountable to nondisclosure agreements, which prohibit illegally sharing classified information. Failing to guard or choosing to disclose such information subjects intelligence handlers to prosecution. Beyond selling secrets to denied foreign agents, as Aldrich Ames and Robert Hanssen did while employed at CIA and FBI, respectively, classified intelligence must be protected from arbitrary public release. "Publicization" bears a resemblance to politicization, in that selected objective analysis is chosen or

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[81] John Chomeau and Anne Rudolph, "Intelligence Collection and Analysis: Dilemmas and Decisions," in *Ethics of Spying: A Reader for the Intelligence Professional*, ed. Jan Goldman (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 123.

[82] Sissela Bok, *Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 160.

[83] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 151.

presented for public support on a preferred policy issue.[84] Arguably, the "intensity… publicity…[and] frequency" surrounding intelligence publicization can corrupt the analyst-policymaker process in a manner similar to politicization.[85] In fact, instances of President Ronald Reagan disclosing classified intelligence to expose communist threats in El Salvador did more harm than good as he sought to garner public and legislative support by compromising secrecy.[86] Publicity surrounding this released information suggests that media coverage can serve as a venue for intelligence abuse. Glenn Hastedt concludes that this Cold War instance had "negative consequences" and he emphasized the continuing need to protect information while avoiding corruption stemming from the analyst-policymaker relationship.[87] While not quite considered politicization, releasing classified information to the public could also inform adversaries about the U.S.'s focus and capabilities.

Intelligence Focus Shifts

Intelligence disciplines and management discussed in the previous sections evolved throughout the course of the Cold War. During this period from the 1940s to the late 1980s, U.S. and Russian military powers vied for global dominance. Accordingly, both sides conducted robust intelligence operations. In 1989, Russia's influence fell as European protesters symbolically separated from Russia by tearing down the Berlin Wall.

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[84] Glenn Hastedt, "The New Context of Intelligence Estimating: Politicization or Publicizing?," 50.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid., 63-4.

[87] Ibid., 65.

The Soviet Union, the greatest adversarial target for U.S. policymakers, lost influence and no longer presented a burgeoning state threat. Robert Art and Patrick Cronin reflect that "with the end of the Cold War and the breakup of the Soviet Union, the nature of conflict changed."[88] Consequently, the intelligence community, which was established for a "singular purpose…to wage war against Soviet communism," refocused on a string of new challenges, to include terrorism, international narcotics trafficking, and nuclear proliferation.[89]

Only one year later, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein emerged as a prominent adversary, blatantly defying U.S. foreign policy objectives. Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait, a U.S. ally, which led to a military response called "Operation Desert Storm." In response to this aggression, the U.S. coordinated with Middle Eastern allies such as Saudi Arabia, and Turkey to liberate Kuwait from Saddam's military and dictatorship.[90] After the U.S. successfully liberated Kuwait from invading troops, Saddam directed his aggression towards Iraqi citizens who rebelled against his regime. These events foreshadowed Iraq's persistent offenses throughout the 1990s. Humanitarian attacks, opposition to the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as well as threats to neighbors in the Middle East underscored Saddam's fervent

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[88] Robert J. Art and Patrick M. Cronin, "Coercive Diplomacy," *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World,* ed. Chester Crocker, Fen Hampson, and Pamela Aall, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 301.

[89] James Risen, *State of War: The Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 5-6.

[90] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2004), 264.

goals of Iraqi nationalism and defiance of the West.[91]

Despite Saddam's flagrant disobedience in the Middle East region, former National Security Council staffers Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon reflect that after Operation Desert Storm, "no serious military analyst believed [Saddam] posed an imminent threat to the [U.S]."[92] Throughout the 1990s, the U.S. believed that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), but neither the intelligence community nor policymakers endorsed the urgency or presence of a "threatening stockpile."[93] In fact, any prospects or suspicions that Saddam would use WMDs were dismissed as the very threat of American military action, was believed to successfully serve as a deterrent.[94] Art and Cronin observed that the U.S. successfully contained Saddam and prevented him from developing Iraq's WMD program.[95] Similarly, Condoleezza Rice, prior to assuming the position of National Security Advisor in 2001, accepted the deterrence approach

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[91] Mark R. Amstutz, *International Ethics: Concepts, Theories, and Cases in Global Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 120.

[92] Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Next Attack*, 149.

[93] Richard Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Simon & Schuster Adult, 2004), 265.

[94] Jeffrey Record, "Bounding the Global War on Terrorism," *Strategic Studies Institute* (December 2003), http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/pubs/2003/bounding/bounding.html (accessed February 2, 2004), 23.

[95] Robert J. Art and Patrick M. Cronin, "Coercive Diplomacy," 305.

observing that, “any use of [WMDs] will bring national obliteration.”[96]

The legitimate national security focus increasingly shifted to the non-traditional threat of terrorism. With the Cold War no longer a U.S. priority and Iraq contained, General Wesley Clark, who served as the Joint Chiefs of Staff’s Director of Strategic Plans and Policy, recalls that U.S. and foreign intelligence agencies “saw a surge in terrorist threat warnings.”[97] For that reason, the intelligence community focused on gathering intelligence against terrorism and emerging fundamentalist Muslim organizations.[98] During the 1990s, the intelligence community and policymakers alike distinguished Saddam’s secularist leadership from non-state radical Islamists such as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Al Qaeda.[99] In fact, an overwhelming number of intelligence reports highlighted Al Qaeda’s separate, growing danger, overshadowing speculative threats of Saddam’s WMD pursuits.[100]

Contemporaneously, U.S. policymakers contained and responded to Iraq’s threats with sanctions, demarches, and no-fly zones. Despite these efforts, to some influential figures in the U.S., Saddam’s defiant acts signaled the need for aggressive U.S. military action. According to these advocates for war against Saddam, the U.S.-led responses to

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[96] Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting the national interest," in *Foreign Affairs* 79, no, 1 (Feb 2000), http://www.mtholyoke.edu/~jwestern/ir319/condoleezza_rice.htm (accessed October 18, 2010).

[97] Wesley Clark, *Winning Modern Wars*, 116.

[98] Ibid., 116.

[99] Ibid., 113-5.

[100]National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 345.

managing Iraq were distal in nature as the dictator posed more urgent threats for neighboring Israel. Saddam had already reinforced his menacing footprint following SCUD missile launches into Israel during Operation Desert Storm. To influential pro-Israel supporters, Saddam's intimidating leadership prompted a burgeoning need for U.S. engagement. Ultimately, these activists would seek opportunities to engage U.S. leadership in efforts against Saddam's regime in Iraq.

CHAPTER 2

INFLUENTIAL FIGURES VS. SADDAM HUSSEIN

Intelligence analysts and policymakers commonly reference historic events during the decision-making process. Their perspectives may differ as each group compares national security issues to past events. Typically, intelligence analysts process historic events and other variables whereas policymakers may only compare current events with the past as a "reasoning…shortcut."[1] These disparate approaches to intelligence and Iraq's assessment were common before the military invasion.

In *America Unbound: the Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*, Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay pointed out that Paul Wolfowitz had become familiar with the intelligence process from his days as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy from 1989 to 1993 and also from his participation in the competitive Team B intelligence scenario.[2] During the Cold War, the Team B concept was established because elements of the intelligence community or Team A and "outside experts," called Team B, had opposing views of Soviet threat.[3] Wolfowitz, who was suspicious of CIA analysis, believed that the Soviet threat was imminent.[4] He conveyed his apprehension as part of Team B, which "savaged

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[1] Richard Heuer, *The Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, 38.

[2] Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2003), 26.

[3] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 139.

[4] James Risen, *State of War: The Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration*, 72.

the CIA's estimates of Soviet nuclear threat."[5] Wolfowitz emerged as both a recipient of intelligence and a critic of the intelligence process.[6] In addition to his concerns about the Soviet threat, Wolfowitz also aggressively called for the removal of Saddam Hussein from power.[7] After spending the eight years during the Clinton administration out of government, Wolfowitz became Deputy Defense Secretary in 2001 when George W. Bush became President. As such, he became an influential figure who used the intelligence process to promote the concept of Iraq's global threat.

There were a number of other influential figures, associated with the Bush administration, who shared Wolfowitz's concerns about the threats posed by Saddam's Iraq. Richard Perle served as chairman of the Defense Policy Board.[8] He had previously served in the Reagan Administration. Throughout his career, Perle sought to protect Israeli interests and aggressively engage Saddam Hussein.[9] In *Plan of Attack*, reporter Bob Woodward reflected that, "Perle was the most outspoken advocate for war with Iraq," an objective which directly supported his personal goals to protect Israel from Saddam's threat. [10]

Wolfowitz and Perle shared similar policy goals with Douglas Feith who, in 2001,

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 26.

[7] Ibid.

[8] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 268**.**

[9] Ibid., 264-5**.**

[10] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 281.

was “appointed to the highest policy position in the Pentagon, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy.”[11] Feith brought experience from President Reagan’s administration, where Feith he served as a Middle East expert on the National Security Council beginning in 1981.[12] In the 1990s, he worked to establish the Committee on U.S. Interests in the Middle East, which was organized to pressure President Bush Sr. into defending Israel by deposing of Saddam.[13] His relationship with Perle helped him to secure the Pentagon position to support the Bush Jr. administration in 2001. Feith, who had “no background at all in intelligence,” brought his anti-Saddam agenda to this U.S. policy assignment.[14] Feith’s senior-level placement enabled him to influence policy to align with his political leanings. David Wurmser, another proponent for invading Iraq, worked closely with Perle to lobby Israel to begin “a war to oust Saddam Hussein.”[15] Wurmser also managed to secure a senior level position with colleagues in President Bush Jr.’s executive leadership. Wurmser led the Policy Counterterrorism Evaluation Group (CTEG) at the Pentagon.[16] In addition to their political views, Perle, Feith, and Wurmser shared negative feelings about the inability of intelligence available to decision-makers in the administration.

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[11] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 268.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., 279.

[14] Ibid., 290.

[15] Ibid., 288.

[16] Ibid., 289.

The "homogeneity" among these influential figures marked the beginning of a perceptual intelligence distortion called "group think."[17] Under group think, assumptions are unchallenged and reality is perceptually altered to meet these mental models.[18] Wolfowitz's embedded assumptions were based on historical references. He believed that the intelligence process operated in the same manner as he had perceived during the Cold War and other conflicts. This mindset also reflects an intelligence distortion which Cimbala labeled as "cognitive consistency."[19] This "carrying over" of past perceptions or events would vastly overstate Iraq's supposed association with other unrelated conflicts.[20]

This group had ties to pro-Israel organizations both in Israel and in the U.S. They were able to take advantage of their high-level positions in the new Bush administration and relations with other decision-makers to influence America's strategy in the Middle East.[21] Essentially, Wolfowitz, Perle, Feith, and Wurmser shared a desire to enhance the security of Israel, which they concluded would have to include overthrowing Saddam Hussein. Their goals exceeded U.S. policies in support of Israel as a democratic ally. Their incessant focus on Israel's security was driven by "the fear that Saddam might

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[17] Robert Mandel, "Distortions in the Intelligence Decision-Making Process," in *Intelligence and Intelligence Policy in a Democratic Society*, ed. Stephen Cimbala (New York: Transnational Publishers, Inc., 1987), 70.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 280

acquire weapons of mass destruction."[22] This resembled what General Clark called a "hobby-horse for... national security experts."[23] Their approach to protect U.S. and Israeli interests did not, however, address the real growing terrorist threat that emerged in the 1990s.[24]

Ignoring Their Pleas in The 1990s

In the 1990s, Wolfowitz, Perle, Feith, and Wurmser used their positions in government and outside the administration to further their objective to topple Saddam Hussein. They worked together, formally and informally, to advocate Israel's security and emphasize Saddam's danger the in the Middle East.

Wolfowitz, most familiar with Handel's aforementioned relationship between "a leader and a wisely chosen intelligence adviser," systematically attributed national security threats to Iraq. During Operation Desert Storm in 1991, then Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Wolfowitz denounced President Bush Sr. and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Colin Powell's decision to not pursue Saddam in Baghdad.[25] During this military engagement, which was planned to defend Kuwait, Wolfowitz was "the most senior official" in the administration "urging that more be done" to weaken the Iraqi

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 113.

[24] Wesley Clark, *Winning Modern Wars: Iraq, Terrorism, and the American Empire* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), 116.

[25] Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 11.

dictator.[26] Considering international implications, Bush Sr. and his National Security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft, decided not to continue military actions against Saddam designed to overthrow this regime[27]. Instead the Bush administration decided to enforce "dual containment" with U.S. military aircraft regularly patrolling Iraq's northern and southern no-fly territories.[28] Despite the urging of Wolfowitz, Feith and others, Bush Sr. assessed military implications and decided to rely on the United Nations (UN) to diplomatically tackle Saddam's potential biological, chemical, and nuclear capabilities.[29] Wolfowitz and Feith were upset at Bush Sr.'s decision not to seek Saddam's removal. Feith, who already departed his government position, "having received a chilly reception" from incoming President George Bush Sr., vocally opposed President Bush, Sr.'s pacifistic policy.[30] He was able to have articles published in *The New York Times* and elsewhere to criticize the President's failure to remove Saddam and his "mistreatment" of Israel.[31]

President Bill Clinton maintained his predecessor's policy to contain Saddam, enforcing no-fly zones and refraining from a military invasion of Iraq. Saddam's continued defiance did prompt military strikes in 1998, entitled "Operation Desert

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[26] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 6.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Wesley Clark, *Winning Modern Wars*, 6.

[29] Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II*, 12.

[30] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 279**.**

[31] Ibid.

Fox."[32] These attacks "proved surprisingly effective" by crippling Saddam's intelligence and military infrastructure while mitigating WMD pursuits.[33] Yet, despite the Iraq sanctions and the no-fly zones, Wolfowitz, Feith, Perle, and others continued to lobby the U.S. to invade Iraq and secure Israel.

During Clinton's presidency, Wolfowitz, Perle, Feith, Wurmser and other like-minded political strategists sought to advance their cause through a document entitled: *A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm*. This letter, which was published in 1996, exaggerated Iraq's urgent threat to the U.S.[34] The authors "focus[ed] on removing Saddam Hussein from power."[35] They insisted that engaging Iraq should be "the aim of American foreign policy."[36]

On the other hand, Steven Metz, Chairman of the Regional Strategy and Planning Department and Research Professor of National Security Affairs at the Strategic Studies Institute, concluded that *A Clean Break* was an overstatement of fictitious claims. Metz concludes that these fears were based on concepts of Saddam's "potential and intent

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 19.

[34] Richard Perle, "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm," *The Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies* (July 1996). http://www.why-war.com/files/cleanbreak.pdf (accessed April 2004).

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

rather than capability."[37] Likewise, General Clark observes that this petition was "based not on any specific Iraq-terrorist connections but rather on the fear that Saddam might acquire weapons of mass destruction."[38] James Bamford provides a different analysis of *A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm* in his book, *A Pretext for War*. Bamford maintains that the letter was originally drafted in 1996 as guidance for the Israeli government to combat terrorism.[39]

Despite the efforts of Wolfowitz, Perle, and others, President Clinton's response to Iraq involved strategies to contain and peacefully democratize its government and role in the Middle East. He supported congressional passage of the Iraqi Liberation Act in 1998.[40] The act initiated "formal American policy" that served as an "instrument of regime change," marking the first stages of U.S. diplomatic engagement with Iraq in the late 1990s.[41] These collaborative efforts led by the U.S. did not promote a coalition invasion but instead garnered support from representative Iraqi groups committed to democratization and opposing Saddam.[42] Evidently, Clinton's efforts at engagement with

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[37] Steven Metz, *Decisionmaking in Operation Iraqi Freedom: Removing Saddam Hussein by Force*. Ed 1 OIF Key Decisions Monograph Series (Strategic Studies Institute: February 2010), 17.

[38] Wesley Clark, *Winning Modern Wars*, 113.

[39] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 281.

[40] Editorial, *New York Sun*, August 16, 1998.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Congress, House Committee of House International Relations. *Iraqi Liberation Act of 1998*, 105th Cong., 2nd sess., 1998, H. Rept, 4655. news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/Iraq/libact103198.pdf (accessed 10 February 2010).

Iraq fell short of the urgent response demanded by Wolfowitz, Feith, and Perle.

Indeed, Presidents Bush Sr. and Clinton rejected the extreme strategies towards Iraq. With few intelligence or military indicators that Iraq targeted the U.S., Presidents Bush Sr. and Clinton focused on containing Saddam and stabilizing the Middle East. Instead, these two Presidents sought to balance diplomacy, focus on military deterrence, and rely on intelligence, which collectively dismissed Saddam as a threat to the U.S. They opposed military aggression against Iraq, fearing that such action would "benefit Iran and erode American support to the Arab world."[43]

George W. Bush entered the presidency in 2001 with "little interest in international affairs."[44] He planned to retain the non-aggressive policy towards Iraq, combating Saddam's misdeeds through international efforts.[45] By contrast, Wolfowitz, who returned to government as Deputy to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, continued to tie the preemptive force justification to a series of offenses. Notably, Secretary Rumsfeld, a signatory to *A Clean Break*, shared similar views for aggressively engaging Saddam. Citing supposed threats to the U.S., Wolfowitz's mindset and focus continued to advocate remaking the Middle East into a region that was "friendly to Israel."[46] In addition to Wolfowitz and Rumsfeld, there were a number of other key officials in the Bush Jr. Administration who shared similar strategic views including

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[43] Steven Metz, *Decisionmaking in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 2.

[44] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 265.

[45] Steven Metz, *Decisionmaking in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 13.

[46] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 262.

"pleading for more attention to Iraq."[47] For example, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, the Vice President's Chief of Staff, agreed with them and sought to support these views when implementing national strategy.

While Bush Jr. decoupled Iraq's threats to Israel, he accepted Israel's agenda which, under then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, focused on aggressively opposing Palestinians and dismissing peaceful resolutions for the historic conflict.[48] President Bush had a strategic view of global conflicts, focusing on conventional military issues with China, and non-terror related issues. Metz concluded that President Bush Jr.'s goals centered on "addressing existing threats and…[the] ambitious notion [of] altering the architecture of the global security system."[49] This was demonstrated during Bush Jr.'s early months in office when policy focus had been on "national missile defense system[s], not the likelihood of a terrorist attack on the United States."[50]

In the Meantime: 1990s Intelligence on Iraq

Intelligence reports confirmed the immediate threat of terrorism throughout the Bush Sr., Clinton, and Bush Jr. presidencies. After the end of the Cold War, the intelligence focus transitioned to tactical strikes against the U.S.[51] General Clark stressed that, "active intelligence gathering on terrorist organizations was intensified, through both

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[47] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 28.

[48] Ibid., 265.

[49] Steven Metz, *Decisionmaking in Operation Iraqi Freedom:* 13.

[50] David Moore, *Critical Thinking and Intelligence Analysis* (Washington, DC: National Defense Intelligence College, 2009), 78.

[51] Richard Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 223.

U.S. and foreign intelligence agencies."[52] Signals and human intelligence confirmed that Al Qaeda, a Muslim extremist organization based in the Middle East, planned to launch attacks against Americans. In fact, by 2000, CIA already linked Al Qaeda's leader, Osama Bin Laden, to strikes against American troops in Yemen and Somalia as well as the 1994 Manila airplane bombing.[53]

Then-White House counterterrorism Director of the National Security Council Richard Clarke presented this raw intelligence, specifically phone calls, and emails "filled with talk of jihad attacks" to the top incoming officials in the new the Bush Jr. administration[54]. Unfortunately, Clarke encountered the difficulty of reconciling this raw information and making it useful for policymakers.[55] He briefed National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Vice President Dick Cheney, and Secretary of State Colin Powell on the threats from non-government elements in the Middle East, who openly targeted U.S. interests and national security.[56] The new administration, however, was more focused on the state-sponsored threats rather than potential mass destruction actions by individually organized networks. Neither Clarke's pleadings nor the views of Wolfowitz and others compelled the President to invoke military action against Saddam

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[52] Wesley Clark, *Winning Modern Wars*, 116.

[53] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 109.

[54] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 240.

[55] Sam Sarkesian, John Allen Williams, and Stephen Cimbala, *U.S. National Security: Policymakers, Processes, and Politics*, 3rd ed. (Boulder: Lynn Reinner Publishers, 2002), 169.

[56] Richard Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 227.

or Al Qaeda. It would take a compelling event for the administration to consider such actions.

Prepping the New Administration

A number of key individuals from the Bush Sr. administration secured top positions in the administration of his son. Wolfowitz was named Deputy Secretary of Defense and other associates secured positions that impacted executive-level decisions. Namely, Richard Perle became the chair of Defense Policy Board, an advisory group to the Secretary of Defense.[57] Douglas Feith returned to government in the "highest policy position" in the Pentagon as Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, and David Wurmser was appointed as a senior advisor at the State Department, aligned to preface National Security objectives with engaging Saddam.[58] Their collective mindset enabled "group think" among cabinet-level executives. At the first National Security Council (NSC) meeting in January 2001, NSC Advisor Condoleezza Rice led discussions on how to remove Saddam, a strategy shift that Bamford attributes to strategies outlined in *A Clean Break*.[59] In contrast, CIA Director George Tenet briefed the Bush Administration on minimizing Saddam's involvement with WMD threats, while Richard Clarke continued to echo intelligence community warnings about imminent terrorism.

As the key decision-maker at this initial National Security meeting, President

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[57] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 281.

[58] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 268-9.

[59] Ibid., 267.

Bush assessed proposals from these polarized "decision shapers."[60] Metz observes that such decision shapers had a pivotal role in assisting Bush to formulate Bush's strategic decisions.[61] Metz ascribes "crisis decisionmaking" to the influential elements of the administration advocating Iraq or Al Qaeda.[62] As Clarke informed policymakers of terror threats, Wolfowitz dismissed these intelligence findings, questioning "why we are talking about this one man bin Laden" and he sought to redirect discussions to other, personal objectives such as the "Iraqi threat for example."[63] Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, a signatory to *A Clean Break*, also endorsed the proposed objectives against Saddam, While the President considered each option equally throughout much of 2001, he initially discounted Iraq as a threat.[64]

Despite Clarke's and Tenet's warnings, a number of key figures in the administration began to disregard assessments by the intelligence community. David Moore attributes systematic intelligence failures to high official levels who "fail to heed…intelligence-based warnings."[65] Clarke's final plea to brace for Al Qaeda took place on September 4th, when he sought enhance NSC's position on looming terrorist

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[60] Steven Metz, *Decisionmaking in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 8.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Richard Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 231.

[64] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 31.

[65] David T. Moore, *Critical Thinking and Intelligence Analysis*, 78.

threats.[66] Although this warning might have been too late, just a week before the September 11th attacks, his prior admonitions might have enabled the administration to invoke preemptive measures.

[66] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 343.

CHAPTER 3

9/11 CATALYST

The most spectacular strike against U.S. homeland since the surprise attacks on Pearl Harbor in 1941 took place on September 11th, 2001. Four hijacked airplanes became weapons targeting New York and Washington D.C. Comprehensive intelligence analysis quickly pointed to Al Qaeda based in Afghanistan. In the aftermath of these attacks on American soil, the intelligence community rapidly pieced together its collage of potential targets in Afghanistan.

It was apparent to most policymakers and intelligence figures that U.S. retaliation should target sites and groups in Afghanistan. On September 15th, President Bush convened at Camp David a meeting of the top national security officials in his administration. Secretary of State Colin Powell argued that targets in Afghanistan should be the focus of retribution.[1] In the days following the attack, this policy proposal reflected a logical national security decision to retaliate against those behind the attacks, as well as defend the U.S. from future attacks. In making his presentation, Powell referenced the intelligence community's assessments. His approach, however, contradicted embedded assumptions by Wolfowitz and others, involving Iraq. Ricks revealed that the September 11th attacks "provided the political opening" that Perle, Wolfowitz, and others needed to vilify Saddam and pursue their objectives to strike against Iraq.[2] Wolfowitz raised this at the September 15th meetings, however, Powell "adamantly opposed attacking Iraq as a

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[1] Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II*, 16.

[2] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 30.

response" and sought to separate Saddam from the legitimate threats of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan.[3] CIA Director George Tenet addressed the President and his national security team at the critical executive session held on September 15th. Tenet also refuted Iraq's connection to the terrorist acts surrounding the September 11th attacks.[4] He informed attendees that "there was no confirming intelligence," be it human or signals related, linking Saddam to the attacks.[5]

This analytic assessment was not received well by Rumsfeld or Wolfowitz, who exclusive of intelligence backing, emphatically presented their positions on Iraq. By the time the Camp David session convened on September 15th, Secretary Rumsfeld and Deputy Wolfowitz had already sought to advance their views of Saddam's "connections with [bin Laden]."[6]

During the September 15th meeting, Powell, Clarke, and Tenet informed decision-makers about Afghanistan's state-sponsored participation in the attacks. Despite their efforts to promote intelligence-driven policy regarding Al Qaeda's involvement in the attacks, Iraq's government remained a lingering topic. Clarke welcomed Powell's appreciation for the volume of intelligence that cited "no Iraqi-sponsored terrorism against the United States," especially in connection with the September 11th attacks.[7]

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[3] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 25.

[4] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 267.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 24-5.

[7] Richard Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 30.

Powell's presentation, however, was not sufficient to steer Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz from their view that Iraq should be a focus of U.S. involvement. In his memoirs, Clarke recognized Wolfowitz's and Cheney's determination to focus on Iraq and sensed the early stages of a politicized process. He quickly realized that "Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were going to try to take advantage of this national tragedy to promote their agenda about Iraq."[8]

Clarke encountered another challenge referencing intelligence to debunk Saddam's link to the attacks. The intelligence community lost credibility because it had not projected Al Qaeda's fatal plan, which reflected an intelligence failure. The intelligence process was seen by some as having failed to provide adequate warning for the attacks. To be sure, Richard Clarke provided "volumes of warning," particularly about Al Qaeda.[9] Yet, these warnings were not presented in the cohesive manner that Wolfowitz and others emphasized with Iraq. Thus, warnings by Clarke and others produced only minimal policy decisions to protect the U.S. Those who felt the emphasis should have been on Iraq continued to criticize the intelligence community for failing to prevent September 11th. While the analytic field faced scrutiny for its lack of coordination prior to the strikes, the momentum to activate military force made the intelligence function a more critical policy tool.

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[8] Ibid.

[9] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 345.

Policy-Driven Intelligence?

Evidently, policymakers had conflicting priorities between those who felt the main security concern should be crippling Al Qaeda's terrorist capabilities and those who wished to direct efforts against supposed Iraqi threats. Intelligence became the focal point of these initial meetings, which were saturated with biases and assumptions. These embedded assumptions about faulty intelligence and Saddam's ties to Al Qaeda set the tone for subsequent politicization, inevitably swaying national security emphasis towards Iraq. Heuer reminds us that when "intelligence consumers manifest these biases, they will tend to underrate the value to them of intelligence reporting."[10] The systematic dismissal of intelligence ensued and a subjective process began involving cherry-picking information to support removing Saddam.

As the case evolved to invade Iraq, additional psychological mindsets primed policymakers such as Vice President Cheney and Wolfowitz to disregard sound intelligence from the traditional organizational structures. Such psychological factors became unchallenged norms for these influential policymakers, who readily rejected intelligence that did not support their anti-Iraq policy. Accordingly the reliance on analytic expertise became subjective among goal-oriented war planners.

The administration realized that intelligence was the baseline for influencing the U.S. public to support an invasion of Iraq. Recognizing the weight that intelligence would carry in preparing for war, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Feith imitated analytic functions at the Pentagon. He instructed David Wurmser, who shared Feith's perspective,

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[10] Richard Heuer, *The Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, 166.

to "set up a small and very secret intelligence unit" known as the Policy Counterterrorism Evaluation Group. Bamford states that this new division within the Department of Defense "was designed to produce evidence" justifying war with Iraq.[11] Similar to the Cold War Team B exercise, this group functioned to challenge the CIA's analysis, which consistently found no links between Iraq and Al Qaeda.[12]

Months later, Feith set up the highly classified Office of Special Plans (OSP).[13] Operating with negative assumptions about the intelligence community, the OSP evaluated intelligence loosely associated with Iraq. The OSP's conclusions reflected "the Department of Defense's dissatisfaction with the CIA's conservative estimates of Saddam Hussein's suspected weapons of mass destruction."[14] This make-shift intelligence group simulated analytic functions and supported political aims by researching and then presenting intelligence designed to strengthen the case for war. This practice proved to be an example of Rovner's category of direct manipulation, which involved appointing compliant analysts to produce definite findings in support of policy.[15] Basically, the OSP represented institutionalized cherry-picking, whereby the predetermined results of their analysis were provided to eager decision-makers.

Recalling that "the doctrine of policy neutrality [is] the guiding ethic

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[11] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 288-9.

[12] Ibid., 289.

[13] Ibid., 308.

[14] David Reiff, "Blueprint for a mess," *New York Times*, November 2, 2003.

[15] Joshua Rovner, "Pathologies of Intelligence-Policy Relations," 40.

of…intelligence," the establishment of these pseudo-analytic offices resulted in selected and tailored intelligence findings.[16] Arguably, these groups at the Pentagon might have practiced objective competitive analysis. Lowenthal stresses that the U.S. intelligence community values different points of view on the same issue.[17] The Counterterrorism Evaluation Group and the OSP functions, however, did not compete with intelligence organizations. The standard intelligence practice involves pulling disparate information together, "constructing a coherent picture," and "evaluating a significant body of information to get the whole picture right."[18] By contrast, Bamford assessed that the OSP existed to "selectively cull pieces of raw intelligence in a government-wide [public relations] campaign."[19] Moreover, these Pentagon groups avoided "finding independent means of corroborating the reports," an analytic function that Clarke maintains is required as a key element of intelligence analysis.[20] Rather, the Pentagon groups analyzed information according to policy aims to oust Saddam. This form of politicization was clear when Pentagon findings purposefully reached different conclusions from CIA's research. Thomas E. Ricks observes that this disparity was evident when the supposed intelligence gathered at the Pentagon became redefined and diverged from the rest of the

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[16] Harry Howe Ransom, "The Politicization of Intelligence," 43.

[17] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 139.

[18] Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Next Attack: The Failure of the War on Terror and Strategy for Getting it Right* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 179.

[19] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 315.

[20] Richard Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 269.

community.[21] When such differences became apparent, Perle attacked CIA's analysis, claiming that their competence and past performance was "appalling."[22]

Scrutinizing the Human, Signals and Imagery Intelligence

Human, signals, and imagery intelligence quickly became the sources for verification. Lowenthal informs practitioners of intelligence that while each function can provide valuable information for national security, each can also be manipulated.[23] To political leaders like Wolfowitz and Feith, traditional intelligence became secondary to that of the Pentagon operations. Thus, they placed greater importance on sources that had greater potential to confirm or reveal Saddam's supposed WMD and terrorist involvement.

Human intelligence was the cornerstone of justifications to invade Iraq. As Wolfowitz, Feith, Perle, and Wurmser prepared their case, their close Iraqi friend, expatriate Ahmed Chalabi played an increasingly pivotal role in U.S. foreign policy. Aram Roston, author of *The Man Who Pushed America to War*, describes Ahmed Chalabi's emergence as the "chief intellectual facilitator" for compelling America to take military action against Saddam's regime.[24] As a prominent Iraqi figure, Chalabi had sought to oust Saddam Hussein since the 1960s. His mission was as passionate as that of

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[21] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 54.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 99-101.

[24] Aram Roston, *The Man Who Pushed America to War: The Extraordinary Life, Adventures, and Obsessions of Ahmad Chalabi* (New York: Nation Books, 2008), xii.

the decision-makers in the administration.[25]

Iraq's Human Intelligence Origins: Chalabi

Chalabi, a Shia, was upset that the 1958 Arab nationalist revolution enabled Saddam's Baathist party to take control of Iraq. As a result of this coup, and subsequent Shia marginalization, Chalabi and his family left Iraq.[26] He moved to the U.S. where he received degrees in science and math from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Chicago respectively.[27] In addition to his studies, Chalabi publicly and privately expressed anti-Saddam sentiments. These views helped Chalabi to develop relationships with Wolfowitz, Feith, and Perle as early as 1985.[28] Roston notes that Chalabi also socialized with David Wurmser and his wife, Meyrav, who also actively sought to advance Israel's security by ousting Saddam.[29] To these and other anti-Saddam activists, Chalabi represented the quintessential "freedom fighter," someone who appeared credible and could influence public opinion with his Iraqi origin and amicable U.S. political views.[30] His articles in the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* further appealed to U.S. political figures, especially when he praised democracy and encouraged

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[25] Ibid., 37.

[26] Ibid., 19 & 162.

[27] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 291.

[28] Aram Roston, *The Man Who Pushed America to War*, 134-5.

[29] Ibid., 134-5.

[30] Ibid., 155.

the U.S. to assert democratic ideals in Iraq, following Operation Desert Storm.[31] As such, Chalabi earned credibility among political proponents for war against Saddam as a potential intelligence source. Ironically, Chalabi was in exile from Jordan following charges of embezzlement as a banker in the 1980s but this charge was not a factor for the U.S. government executives.[32] They were enthralled by his supposed experience with Iraqi governance and envisioned his potential leadership ability in a post-Saddam Iraq. Responding to his acclaimed legitimacy, the CIA approached Chalabi in the early 1990s, initially entrusting him to facilitate anti-Saddam propaganda and garner support in Iraq.[33] As an aspect of covert action, propaganda was a method to disseminate information "created with a specific political outcome in mind."[34] The CIA felt that Chalabi could handle this specific role of opposing Saddam's regime in Iraq.

Intelligence Dismisses Chalabi

Chapter one emphasized that policymakers rely on valid human source information when they make decisions that impact national security. In the years leading up to the 2003 Iraq War in Iraq, the information that Chalabi provided to American political leaders impacted the U.S.'s relationship with Iraq and national security. Chalabi continued to develop close personal relationships with top American leaders. Leveraging

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[31] Ibid., 70.

[32] Andrew Cockburn, "Chalabi and the Iranians: The Trail to Tehran," *Counterpunch*, May 20, 2004, http://www.counterpunch.org/chalabi05262004.html (accessed August 11, 2010).

[33] Aram Roston, *The Man Who Pushed America to War*, 87.

[34] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 169.

his role with CIA, Chalabi tried to convince decision-makers that he led a "unified Iraqi opposition."[35] As CIA continued to scrutinize Chalabi's background and assess his legitimacy, in the early 1990s, several instances raised suspicions about Ahmed Chalabi's credibility and his willingness to cooperate with the intelligence community.

As part of the process for validating, maintaining, or terminating foreign nationals who provide intelligence, analysts and operators must factor deception and motivation involved with passing information.[36] As these characteristics are assessed, David Moore's considerations for validating or dismissing human intelligence also bare relevance. He warns that "derived evidence" from questionable information and data yield uncertain and highly suspect inferences.[37] In other words, if a source providing information is untrustworthy or his motivation is questionable, information derived may be invalid.

CIA funded Chalabi to work closely with Iraqis who defected from the government and were willing to launch an anti-Saddam campaign in Iraq.[38] Regarding his motivation, Roston identified "seeds of jealousy" as a factor that drove Chalabi to act independent of CIA's operational control and pursue strong political backing.[39] Chalabi wanted to play a more prominent role in overthrowing Saddam and he rejected other Iraqi

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[35] Aram Roston, *The Man Who Pushed America to War*, 87.

[36] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 99.

[37] David Moore, *Critical Thinking and Intelligence Analysis*, 51.

[38] Aram Roston, *The Man Who Pushed America to War*, 87.

[39] Ibid., 79.

candidates.[40] CIA learned that Chalabi portrayed himself as leader of the newly-formed Iraqi National Congress in the hope of securing a more powerful role to replace Saddam.[41] Chalabi would later use his influence amongst U.S. leaders to legislatively overthrow Saddam. He feigned a unified Iraqi position with the Iraqi National Congress to implement the aforementioned Iraqi Liberation Act, intended to overthrow Saddam with Iraqi support. Yet, according to Roston, Chalabi omitted Kurds and Shiite groups as well as the Iraqi National Accord in order to preserve his influence.[42]

In addition to aspirations for securing a powerful position, Chalabi was suspected of seeking "insights into the intelligence requirements" of the U.S. while "passing information that the [U.S.] wanted to hear."[43] Lowenthal ascribes these traits to what the intelligence community calls a "dangle" or someone who provides specific details in order to gain additional information.[44] As Scott Ritter, former United Nations inspector observes, Chalabi and his team in Iraq "were determined by the CIA to be outright frauds or double-agent 'dangles'."[45] Chalabi furthered the environment of doubt and mistrust in the CIA about Iraqi defectors by fabricating his own 'sources' and inserting them into the

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., 89-92.

[42] Ibid., 153.

[43] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 99-100.

[44] Ibid., 99-100.

[45] Scott Ritter, Seymour Hersh, *Iraq Confidential: The Untold Story of the Intelligence Conspiracy to Undermine the UN and Overthrow Saddam Hussein* (New York: Avalon Publishing Group, 2005), 259.

stream of defectors being processed by the CIA. Chalabi would prepare his 'defectors' carefully, giving them cover stories and information that would make them look both attractive and credible to CIA. But the CIA was quickly alerted to Chalabi's games and the Iraqi opposition leader quickly fell out of grace."[46] Interacting with different U.S. organizations, Chalabi readily provided information and sources. He even told one United Nations inspector, "I can get you any information you need. Just tell me what you want."[47] His engagement with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard also raised suspicions. Chalabi praised the intelligence he received from Iran, another entity adamant about removing Saddam from Iraq, however, one unconcerned with U.S. interests.[48]

Operating under his own agenda, Chalabi's political and intelligence actions were subjective, self serving, and questionable. In addition to CIA's growing concerns about the reliability of Chalabi's information, the Department of State's Intelligence and Research office also questioned his validity.[49] By the late 1990s, both intelligence organizations shunned Chalabi as well as his supporters in the Iraqi National Congress, considering them con men, scheming to "wrangle" funds from the U.S., start a war with Iraq, and install Chalabi as President.[50] Ultimately, the funding provided by CIA was not

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[46] Ibid., 259.

[47] Ibid., 268.

[48] Andrew Cockburn, "The Truth about Ahmed Chalabi," *Counterpunch.com*, May, 2004, http://www.counterpunch.org/chalabi05202004.html (accessed August 11, 2010).

[49] Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II*, 18.

[50] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 294.

used for the intended propaganda campaign, underscoring Chalabi's lack of authenticity and reliability.[51]

The culmination of factors such as Chalabi's relationship with Iran, Jordanian fraud charges stemming from his tenure as a banker[52], mis-appropriating U.S. government funds[53], and readily providing information objectively suggested that information provided by such a source should be dismissed. As a result of these damning stages in the developmental human intelligence relationship, Chalabi's dubious character led CIA to terminate the relationship in the mid-1990s.[54] Still, his policy agenda to remove Saddam by force matched some U.S. policymakers' plans too closely for these elements of the U.S. government to sever ties with the persuasive Iraqi defector.

September 11th Revives Chalabi's "Intelligence" On Iraq

While intelligence professionals in the 1990s assessed and discredited Chalabi's sources, information, and evidence, his fabricated leadership role continued to have influence amongst Wolfowitz, Perle, and Feith. Wolfowitz was satisfied that CIA and Chalabi worked together for propaganda operations and this collaboration reinforced the agenda to remove Saddam from power.[55] As a result, Chalabi continued to drive policy, regardless of the accuracy of his intelligence. He also continued to leverage U.S. funding

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[51] David Moore, *Critical Thinking and Intelligence Analysis*, 52.

[52] George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 397.

[53] Aram Roston, *The Man Who Pushed America to War*, 117.

[54] Ibid., 120.

[55] Ibid., 79.

and policy mechanisms to advance his agenda amongst influential decision-makers. Chalabi's position and information also satisfied Feith and others at the Pentagon, who expressed no interest in scrutinizing politically acceptable sources.[56] It was certain that any scrutiny from the intelligence community was rejected while Chalabi managed to bypass the vetting process. Summing up Chalabi's ability to fail intelligence expectations while maintaining political trust, Melvin Goodman writes that, "Although Chalabi was a known fabricator, the [Office of Special Plans] took his reports directly to the offices of the President and Vice President without any vetting from the intelligence community."[57] Still, to his and his colleagues' dismay, in the 1990s Chalabi failed to convince top U.S. political figures that Saddam posed an imminent threat to national security. September 11th served as a catalyst for Chalabi's direct access to policymakers who sought retribution for the attacks.

Chalabi Answers Iraq's Unknowns

The intelligence community focused on the Al Qaeda's threat to U.S. national security but the September 11th attacks provided justification for some policymakers to search for additional information about Iraq's terrorist and WMD threats. In response to policymakers' emerging questions about Iraq, following the September 11th strikes, intelligence analysts lacked a comprehensive understanding of Iraq's potential WMD capabilities. The intelligence community struggled to make sense of the attacks while

[56] Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Next Attack*, 191.

[57] Melvin Goodman, *The Failure of Intelligence*, 231.

preparing for an unexpected focus on Iraq.[58] This focus provided a way to reinvigorate Chalabi's information. In fact, despite his record, Chalabi was able to persuasively engage members of the Bush administration after September 11th. While intelligence offices prepared reports for policymakers to defeat Al Qaeda days after September 11th, Chalabi was invited to brief Defense Policy Board officials on Iraq.[59] The event revitalized Chalabi's claims and fed Wolfowitz's, Perle's, Feith's, and Wurmser's drive to attack Saddam. Roston observes this "fortuitous convergence" of pro-war advocates as aligning in the wake of the terrorist attacks to gradually refocus on Iraq's looming threat.[60] These policymakers already exhibited opposition to the intelligence community and they were not open to seeking or accepting intelligence expertise regarding Chalabi's validity. Accordingly, embedded assumptions became reinforced and objections to Chalabi's information were not readily welcome.

The September 11th attacks and Chalabi's political alliances greatly enhanced anti-Iraq positions of people like Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Perle, and Feith. In fact, Chalabi's ability to provide information to policymakers resembled his fabrications with CIA, State Department, and United Nations. Still, his ready access was convenient at a time when intelligence analysts had little information available for policymakers. Lowenthal identifies this reliance on a single human informant as "incredibly risky" but Chalabi's relationship with influential policymakers undoubtedly bolstered their

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[58] George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, 342.

[59] James Bamford, *Plan of Attack*, 287.

[60] Aram Roston, *The Man Who Pushed America to War*, 183.

confidence in believing that their assumptions were correct. Continuing to exaggerate his influence, Chalabi eagerly touted his access to "a large network of spies inside Iraq."[61] His services yielded sub-sources and human intelligence from his source, codenamed "Curveball," whom Ricks identified as Chalabi's brother-in-law.[62] This source, an Iraqi expatriate, was controlled by German intelligence sources. Curveball was able to fill intelligence-gaps that CIA and other intelligence community members researched in Iraq.[63] Ironically, the U.S. intelligence community was not able to examine Curveball's validity, as he was controlled by the Germans, who warned that the information was not reliable.[64] Irrespective of the intelligence expertise on these sources, the political tone was set to support accusations about Iraq's suspected WMD activity. Accordingly, Curveball's information about Iraqi scientists using mobile laboratories to hide biological weapons re-affirmed the administration's goal to decisively invade Iraq.[65]

Over-Reliance Human Intelligence

The CIA and the Department of State continued to doubt Chalabi's information and intentions after September 11th, but he already fit the political mold of his pro-war supporters.[66] Former United Nations weapons inspector Scott Ritter observes that, from

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[61] Scott Ritter and Seymour Hersh, *Iraq Confidential*, 268.

[62] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 91.

[63] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 313.

[64] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 91.

[65] George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, 375.

[66] Aram Roston, *The Man Who Pushed America to War*, 152.

an intelligence-collection perspective, the fact that Chalabi was a discredited source, with happenstance access, and questionable sub-sources "should have sent alarm bells sounding."[67] Still, politicization after September 11th continued to manifest itself in Chalabi's favor as "the White House pushed the CIA to drop its long-standing opposition to Chalabi…sending that message a thousand times in a thousand different ways," according to a former CIA official.[68] Referencing the continued intelligence challenge of mindsets, former CIA Director George Tenet recalls that these policymakers "didn't seem to want [CIA] dealing with anyone who wasn't politically acceptable," and this subjectivity restricted analytic input.[69] While analysts struggled to exploit each form of intelligence, key officials in the Bush administration welcomed information from Chalabi and Curveball. This practice of cherry-picking undermined the intelligence community. Policymakers dismissed analytic reports from traditional intelligence agencies in order to focus on Chalabi and Curveball, whom Tenet attributes "the most notorious example of bad information."[70] Andrew Cockburn summarizes the analysts' predicament because they were "unable to counter [Chalabi's] influence and favour with…the Pentagon and Vice President."[71]

Still, intelligence officials continued to challenge intelligence provided to

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[67] Scott Ritter and Seymour Hersh, *Iraq Confidential*, 268.

[68] James Risen, *State of War: The Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration*, 72.

[69] George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, 431.

[70] Ibid., 328.

[71] Andrew Cockburn, "The Truth about Ahmed Chalabi," 2004.

decision-makers. One analyst blatantly objected to Curveball's suspicious information about biological weapons, but the climate during the preparation for war led a senior official to dismiss objective analysis, making the following comment: "Let's keep in mind the fact that this war's going to happen regardless of what Curve Ball said or didn't say, and that the Powers that Be probably aren't terribly interested in whether Curve Ball knows what he's talking about."[72] Despite Chalabi's and Curveball's ongoing fabrication, this phase of pre-war Iraq was already politicized with what Rovner calls indirect politicization, whereby analysts were predicting and catering to decision-makers' policies.[73] This practice of providing "intelligence to please" was evident as analysts gradually stopped reporting intelligence contrary to Iraqi sources.[74] While the bulk of presentations to policymakers fit their growing policy focus on Iraq, it is noteworthy that analysts did not alter their reports to match policymakers' WMD claims.

When the intelligence community expressed its level of uncertainty regarding human intelligence, they were dismissed or faced opposition. Confidence in Chalabi and his references demonstrated a leadership decision to place emphasis on his set of human resources, whose views already appealed to these U.S. leaders. Several analysts have commented on this distinct example of politicization. Australian intelligence analyst Andrew Wilkie attributed his resignation from Australia's Office of National Assessments to several aspects of politicization leading up to the 2003 Iraq War. In his

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[72] Michael Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II*, 134.

[73] Joshua Rovner, "Pathologies of Intelligence-Policy Relations," 46.

[74] Ibid., 55.

memoirs, *Axis of Deceit*, he illustrated the policymakers' excessive reliance on Chalabi and his justifications, which were crafted to overthrow Saddam.[75] Wilkie identified cherry-picking as the method to extract low-grade intelligence that policymakers accepted from Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress "as long as it accorded with [political leaders'] pre-conceptions."[76] To underscore blatant cherry-picking of human intelligence, Bamford further highlights Chalabi's chosen intelligence as a "key source" for Wolfowitz, Feith, Perle, and Cheney.[77] With such associations, Wilkie condemns Chalabi's exemption from the "established and proven intelligence vetting process" as the Office of Special Plans conducted and provided intelligence to awaiting policymakers.[78] Indeed, human information collected before the war faced scrutiny from the intelligence community while gaining acceptance amongst U.S. political leaders prepared to target Iraq. Despite these bureaucratic contradictions, President Bush judged that Afghanistan should be the U.S.'s security focus, initially considering Iraq to be a non-urgent and unrelated priority.[79]

Signals and Imagery Intelligence Origins

Policymakers valued the impact of corroborating intelligence. In the same manner

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[75] Andrew Wilkie, *Axis of Deceit: The Story of the Intelligence Officer Who Risked All To Tell the Truth About WMD and Iraq* (Australia: Black Inc. Agenda, 2004), 154.

[76] Ibid.

[77] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 291.

[78] Andrew Wilkie, *Axis of Deceit*, 154.

[79] Steven Metz, *Decisionmaking in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 14.

that human intelligence was exploited, advocates for war also examined signals intelligence that potentially implicated Iraq as a target for the growing War on Terror. Chapter one attributed foreign intercepts and content for warning purposes to this intelligence discipline.[80] Like human information presented to the policymakers, these forms of communication were cherry-picked by some policymakers, particularly through the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans, to emphasize WMD threats in Iraq. Specifically, one signals intercept suggested possible terrorists "laughing about the use of ricin, a WMD chemical, to kill livestock."[81] This unevaluated intelligence lacked context, a necessary consideration for intercepted telephone communications. In fact, CIA assessed and dismissed this intercept's relevance to Iraq's potential WMD programs.[82] Despite this intelligence assessment, the Vice President's chief of staff, Scooter Libby interfaced with the Office of Special Plans and presented this raw piece of unevaluated intelligence to the National Security Council and cabinet members in January 2002.[83] This briefing to leadership did not represent a coordinated intelligence community view, but stemmed from the direct manipulation or tailored findings that Pentagon analysts were assigned to produce.[84]

While human intelligence provided much of the faulty support sought to justify

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[80] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 91.

[81] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 289.

[82] Ibid., 289.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Joshua Rovner, "Pathologies of Intelligence-Policy Relations," 39.

invading Iraq, signals intelligence, as a technical means to support the policymaker, became a tool of policy-driven bias. As a function of politicization, decision-makers in the Bush administration inferred that a signal intercepts indicated WMD in Iraq, strengthening the case against Saddam. The National Security Agency (NSA), responsible for signals interpretation, prepared itself for political inquiries. NSA Director General Michael Hayden observed intelligence gaps in signals collection.[85] In response, he accelerated the organization's method of collaboration, prepared the network to monitor Iraq, and positioned signals intelligence to meet the impending needs of pro-Iraq war advocates.[86] After relying on linguists, who translated Iraqi dialogue from the wealth of information collected, the NSA Director concluded that there were no certainties about Iraq's WMD capabilities prior to the 2003 war.[87]

Still, as policymakers involved themselves with conducting intelligence analysis, signal intercepts became additional tools for manipulation. Woodward writes that this practice frustrated Secretary of State Powell, who believed that Vice President Cheney took intelligence and "converted uncertainty and ambiguity into fact."[88] Specifically, "Cheney would take an intercept and say it shows something was happening" with certainty, while not applying the uncertainties that should be considered when producing

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[85] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 217.

[86] Ibid., 217.

[87] Ibid., 218.

[88] Ibid., 292.

valid intelligence analysis[89]. Such linkages evolved to reinforce claims that Iraq intended to use WMD as a form of terrorism. These sweeping conclusions, however, contradicted objective analysis as it lacked the "source, context and reliability," which Wilkie obligated to signals and overall intelligence analysis.[90]

Imagery intelligence was also used to support the case to remove Saddam Hussein by force. Using satellite images, this visual depiction provided a glimpse of Iraqi activity. Imagery did not confirm Iraq's capabilities, but this source of intelligence was use to corroborate ambiguous signals and human information.

Intelligence Breakdowns and Misuse

Human, signals, and imagery categories of intelligence became increasingly subject to politicization, prior to the U.S. decision to engage Iraq. After September 11th, the intelligence resources used to target Iraq negated the focus on the concurrent war on terror against Al Qaeda. Proponents for war with Iraq successfully created an intelligence apparatus that enabled faulty human intelligence from Chalabi and his group to gain senior policymakers' trust. Along that vein, General Clark contrasts the national security focus, assessing that intelligence collection systems, such as imagery, signals intercepts, and agent networks would have been better used in Afghanistan if they were not "focused on collecting…tactical and targeting information against Saddam."[91]

Certainly, each discipline endured direct manipulation, which involved deliberate

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[89] Ibid.

[90] Andrew Wilkie, *Axis of Deceit*, 157.

[91] Wesley Clark, *Winning Modern Wars*, 120.

efforts to shape intelligence assessments to correspond with policy.[92] While signals and imagery information appeared to be the least politicized intelligence, human intelligence provided shallow evidence of Iraq's supposed WMD and terrorist inclinations.[93] Raw intelligence from these sources fit the Iraq War outlook amongst Bush's national security inner circle, but a comprehensive assessment was needed to convince the broader U.S. government.

[92] Joshua Rovner, "Pathologies of Intelligence-Policy Relations," 39.

[93] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 214-9.

CHAPTER 4

ESTIMATES PRODUCED

In September 2002, Congress requested a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE).[1] Remarkably, this request for objective analysis did not come from neutral policymakers, who neither requested an estimate nor sought competitive analysis from the intelligence community.[2] Rather, Congress sought confirmation of a threat that the executive branch unconditionally espoused in 2002. Despite the lengthy process that Lowenthal ascribes to drafting National Intelligence Estimates, the intelligence community produced a report in only two weeks.[3] Systematically, the estimates are drafted to meet Sherman Kent's requirement for capturing unknowns while striving for "useful approximations."[4] Additionally, the Iraq estimate should have reflected credibility and relevance, regardless of the "policymakers' discomfort" or disdain.[5] The insistence and urgency for a comprehensive assessment, however, levied unusual demands for the intelligence community, given two weeks to produce a thorough and objective estimate. Indeed, following Al Qaeda's attacks, requests for such a document in lieu of a clear threat from Iraq seemed to have caught analysts off guard.

The intelligence community prefaced the document with the fact that analysts

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[1] Paul Pillar, "Intelligence, Policy, and the War," 2006.

[2] Melvin Goodman, *Failure of Intelligence*, 226-7.

[3] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 63.

[4] Donald Steury, *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates*, 35-6.

[5] Ibid., 34.

lacked details on several aspects of Saddam's weapons programs.[6] As such, after summarizing and scrutinizing related intelligence, the State Department considered "available evidence inadequate to support" claims that Iraq pursued nuclear weapons.[7] Likewise, the Air Force disagreed with weak assessments that suggested Iraq intended to use unmanned aerial vehicles to deliver chemical and biological weapons.[8] The Department of Energy further rejected Saddam's nuclear intentions, claiming that aluminum tubes, which he supposedly pursued, were intended for uranium enrichment.[9]

By contrast, there were also observations that placated suspicions of terrorist and nuclear threats from Iraq. For instance, the content of the NIE projected Iraqi-sponsored terrorism in the U.S., although it did not implicate Saddam's involvement in the September 11th strikes.[10] It also stated that Saddam maintained tons of chemical weapons, but not nuclear capabilities.[11] Chapter four will address the impact of simultaneous public statements from the administration, which bolstered awareness of these WMD threats. Amongst Congress, these judgments raised the most awareness as they mirrored decision-makers' growing tendency towards invading Iraq. Thus, while the NIE presented

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[6] Key Judgments from October 2002 NIE-Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction. http://www.fas.org/irp/cia/product/iraq-wmd.pdf (accessed 22 January, 2011).

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

competitive views of Iraq's threat, the overwhelming tone provided confirmation about Saddam's nefarious WMD pursuits.

The NIE contained definitive messages, which accommodated pre-emptive war petitions. Its conclusive tone went beyond previous estimates such as a 2001 intelligence community assessment, which incorporated cautionary language such as "probably" and "maybe."[12] For example, one key judgment in the NIE assessed that "Iraq has some lethal and incapacitating [biological weapon] agents and is capable of quickly producing… weaponizing…[and delivering]" these devices by missiles or bombs.[13] Such alarming assessments in the NIE reflected minimal intelligence accuracy, particularly in light of limited human, signals, and imagery sources.

Kristen Wheaton studied the accuracy of two other intelligence community assessments which were compiled prior to the 2003 Iraq War. She observes that the findings in "Regional Consequences of Regime Change in Iraq" and "Principal Changes in Post-Saddam Iraq," more accurately captured Iraq's capabilities just prior to the invasion.[14] These intelligence community assessments averaged 70 percent more accurate statements than the NIE, which contained 28 false conclusions and only five accurate judgments.[15] Still, the NIE took precedence over these assessments. The next section

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[12] Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 154.

[13] Key Judgments from October 2002 NIE-Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction, 2002.

[14] Kristan Wheaton, "Evaluating Intelligence: Answering Questions Asked and Not," 29.

[15] Ibid.

explores several possible explanations for such discrepancies with the 2002 Iraq NIE.

Policy-Driven Intelligence

The intelligence community's analytic mission was confounded by the short timeline to produce the NIE and its irrelevance to the September 11th attacks. In addition to pressure to bolster pro-war analysis, the CIA appeared to have had unusually close interactions with policymakers seeking justifications to invade Iraq. Prior to conducting the estimate, the executive level visits to CIA headquarters and CIA Director Tenet's frequent engagement with these policymakers resulted in the reverse order of intelligence influencing policy. Former CIA Counterterrorism Chief Vince Cannistraro would later testify that Vice President Cheney and his aide, Scooter Libby "went to CIA headquarters to provide" supporting intelligence and this conduct "…exerted unprecedented pressure" on the CIA and other agencies to come up with evidence linking Iraq to Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda.[16] Libby and the Vice President lobbied analysts to support Iraq's connection to Al Qaeda, stifling dialogue from analysts who felt that they could not compete with the policymakers' presentations.[17]

Policymakers did not directly alter intelligence but systematic approaches to cherry-picking analysis and emphasizing preferred policy culturally impacted CIA's contributions to the NIE. Amanda Gookins underscores this occurrence whereby "knowledge of the policymaker's desired outcome" can indirectly prompt politicization.[18]

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[16] James Bamford, *Plan of Attack*, 335-6.

[17] George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, 343.

[18] Amanda Gookins, "The Role of Intelligence in Policy Making," 71.

She also observes that "political, bureaucratic, and partisan politics can lead to politicization of intelligence from both directions."[19] Policymakers throughout the Bush administration established this foundation by being vocal about removing Saddam from power. Furthermore, the heightened intelligence bias after September 11th that stifled candid intelligence production and politicization, spread to the analytic levels. As such, the politicization that began with embedded assumptions amongst policymakers, such as Wolfowitz and Cheney, bolstered "the intelligence community's enthusiasm to see what was not there."[20]

Paul Pillar, then-national intelligence officer for the Middle East at CIA, provided first-hand accounts of the "cumulative effect of such pressure" to address an established policy decision.[21] Pillar revealed that policymakers who supported the war "frown[ed] on or ignore[d]" analysis that did not support the war.[22] This behavior during the estimate's preparation mirrored the policymakers' approach in other pre-war conditions, such as unconditionally accepting Chalabi's information. In *State of War*, James Risen reiterates the "pressure…transmitted directly" from influential anti-Saddam policymakers into "the ranks of the nation's intelligence community."[23] This persistent influence began with determined planners, now positioned to manipulate and pressure opposing factions.

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 155.

[21] Paul R. Pillar, "Intelligence, Policy, and the War in Iraq," 2006.

[22] Ibid.

[23] James Risen, *State of War: The Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration*, 76.

Politicizing the NIE

The NIE should have served policymakers by addressing stated and unstated questions about Iraq.[24] Additionally, the estimate was intended to help leaders decide if military action is necessary. Before U.S. policymakers could mull options for military force, Daalder and Lindsay charged these leaders with exploring disagreements within the intelligence community.[25] The findings in pre-Iraq War assessments, however, had little bearing on the resolution to invade Iraq, for the policy decision existed well before the relevant decision-makers had policy power. Therefore, while the NIE appeared to confirm the administration's belief that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction and terrorist connections, its content can be traced back to pre-determined policy.

Indeed, policymakers were not passive in the politicization process. They neglected to weigh and study competing analyses, choosing to "seize on to what support[ed] their preconceived notions."[26] Notably, policymakers did not ask about the existence of Iraq's WMD program or involvement with Al Qaeda. Rather, the intelligence community responded to implicit demands from policymakers to provide intelligence in support of these assertions. This bias was subtle but inherent in the politicization process. The preference for supporting intelligence subsequently compelled

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[24] Kristan Wheaton, "Evaluating Intelligence: Answering Questions Asked and Not," 29.

[25] Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 157.

[26] "Iraq Intelligence Findings Provide Crucial Lessons," *USA Today.com*, June 6, 2008 http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20080606/edtwo06.art.htm (accessed June 13, 2010).

analysts to “bend” to policy pressure.[27]

The culmination of unprecedented involvements, including cabinet-level visits to CIA Headquarters, something no other President or Vice President initiated before, created an unchallenged environment to support the war. Wolfowitz’s and Cheney’s mindsets directly influenced executive-level officials, and this persistence with the intelligence community was equally effective. Consequently, the NIE essentially “pulled together in one place the core data of the Bush administration’s argument for going to war.”[28] It was the result of the "systematic slanting of intelligence collection and analysis…to serve policy interest" or an example of Melvin Goodman’s interpretation of politicized intelligence.[29] Group think was a powerful force in skewing the Bush administration, the intelligence community, and eventually Congress to endorse the 2003 Iraq War.

When Analysts Held Their Ground

One of the major assertions used to justify war originated from Iraqi defectors claiming that Saddam Hussein imported uranium in order to fortify his suspected nuclear program. This unsubstantiated report from British counterparts introduced intelligence about Iraq seeking uranium oxide or “yellowcake” from Niger.[30] Intelligence analysts “questioned the credibility” of discredited claims about Saddam’s purchases and omitted

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[27] Paul R. Pillar, "Intelligence, Policy, and the War in Iraq," 2006.

[28] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 52.

[29] Melvin Goodman, *Failure of Intelligence*, 23.

[30] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 202.

such falsities in their reports.[31] This omission did not stop the administration from accepting and promulgating the British report. The intelligence community required corroborative research and analysis about such an international transfer before confirming U.S. leadership. At the behest of CIA, the State Department's African Affairs Bureau, and the U.S. Ambassador to Niger, Joseph Wilson traveled to Africa to investigate the means by which Saddam could smuggle uranium from mines in Niger. As the former Ambassador to Gabon, Joseph Wilson was able to coordinate with Niger's government officials and companies associated with the highly-protected mines, where "French, Spanish, Japanese, German, and Nigerian businesses" could only transfer uranium with the International Atomic Energy Agency's approval.[32] This logistic discovery negated claims that Iraq purchased uranium from Africa. Upon his return in 2002, Wilson reported these findings to intelligence organizations.

Analysts concluded that Niger did not cooperate with the Iraqi government to export uranium, but this summation did not support anti-Iraq policy. The intelligence community ultimately advised the administration to reject these baseless claims, which were weak and exaggerated in British intelligence.[33] Additionally, CIA noted that Iraq already had uranium in its inventory and informed policymakers that there was

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[31] Paul R. Pillar, "Intelligence, Policy, and the War in Iraq," 2006.

[32] Joseph Wilson, "What I Didn't Find in Africa," *New York Times*, July 6, 2003. http://www.commondreams.org/views03/0706-02.htm (accessed April 3, 2004).

[33] George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, 450.

disagreement with this British intelligence.[34] In correspondence between CIA and the White House, analysts consistently denied this linkage, even after the NIE was submitted to Congress in the fall of 2002. Specifically, the NIE warned that the U.S. intelligence community could not "confirm whether Iraq succeeded in acquiring" these materials from Africa.[35] Still, decision-makers in the administration were determined to use these accusations in strengthening the case to attack Saddam.

In addition to embellished nuclear pursuits, the intelligence community sought to refute policymaker claims that Saddam was involved with Al Qaeda's terrorism plots. Richard Clarke had long investigated this connection when he warned colleagues in the National Security Council of Al Qaeda's danger in the 1990s.[36] As chair of the Counterterrorism Security Group, Clarke asked his staff to investigate the terrorist organization's involvement with Saddam.[37] The group reviewed a large amount of intelligence and "they too endorsed the intelligence community's verdict," which separated Saddam mission from Al Qaeda's.[38] The attacks on September 11th, did not change this consensus but some policymakers viewed this terrorist event as an opportunity to energize references to Saddam's suspected terrorist involvement.

In keeping with previous attempts, policymakers determined to use military force

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Key Judgments from October 2002 NIE-Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction, 2002.

[36] Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Next Attack*, 153.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

in Iraq, endorsed unfounded statements about Iraq's link to Al Qaeda and stifled contradictory intelligence. Along that vein, neither Wolfowitz nor Perle sought intelligence community assessments about Saddam's alleged connection to Al Qaeda. In fact, without metrics or intelligence to support this linkage, Wolfowitz insisted that there was a 10 to 50 percent chance that Saddam was involved in September 11th.[39] Bamford reveals that Perle crafted a letter to the President less than one week after the September 11th attacks suggesting that the Iraqi government may have "provided assistance" to the strikes and "even if Iraq wasn't involved…any strategy… to eradicate terrorism… must…include a determined effort to remove Saddam Hussein from power."[40] This agenda to implicate Saddam Hussein, just days after the strikes, was a prelude to how intelligence contributions would be used to support such policy. Characteristic of politicization, these decision-makers were averse to considering "all available intelligence" as doing so would "subvert [their] predetermined policy outcome."[41] Some analysts recall "being asked incessantly to reexamine the relationship between al Qaeda and Iraq."[42] The Office of Special Plans met this requirement by circulating politicized information amongst the White house and National Security Council. Richard Perle spearheaded this Al Qaeda connection by presenting briefings and supplemental

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[39] Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 103.

[40] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 288-9.

[41] Amanda Gookins, "The Role of Intelligence in Policy Making," 71.

[42] Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Next Attack*, 167.

documents entitled "Iraq and al-Qaida: Making the Case."[43] Policymakers were the target audience for advancing pro-war agendas and Goodman likens the Pentagon's efforts to the "systematic politicization of intelligence to make a phony case for war."[44]

Groupthink dominated the growing policy to invade Iraq, using select intelligence, and this practice "warp[ed] the standards of objectivity."[45] The intelligence community resisted such instances of political intimidation and disassociated Saddam's connection to Al Qaeda. This divergence from determined policymakers was particularly challenging as Cheney, Wolfowitz, Perle, and Feith persistently meddled in the analytic field. Benjamin and Simon go on to describe the "relentless barrage of questions" as obsessive.[46] Cheney, Wolfowitz, Perle, and Feith successfully convinced President Bush that Saddam pursued uranium and engaged with Al Qaeda but analysts maintained their stance against Iraqi-sponsored terrorism, demonstrating analytic confidence in the face of political pressure.

Wrapping Up the Intelligence Process

Although the intelligence community succumbed to overconfidence in linking Saddam to an extensive WMD arsenal in the 2002 NIE, they consistently rejected terrorist associations as well as Saddam's uranium ventures. As such, contrary to Jervis's narrow, definition of politicization, assessments were not the result of intelligence altered

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[43] Melvin Goodman, *The Failure of Intelligence*, 232.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

to reflect policymakers' demands.[47] Remarkably, analysts held their ground, resisting pressure to produce justifications for attacking Iraq. Objective analytic views remained consistent, despite mounting pressure to generate information. This victory against political influence exempted analysts from accusations of politicizing intelligence. Furthermore, the analysts did so unaware of internal opposition from the OSP's fabricated intelligence presentations.

Still, political pressure had a negative impact on the assessments produced during war preparation. As the analytic community rushed to coordinate and fill intelligence gaps for Congress under a short deadline, Chalabi's and Curveball's politically-favored reporting about WMD seemed to answer unknowns. Saddam's history of evading weapons inspectors seemed to confirm these stories.[48] These factors led analysts to believe that WMD was a possible threat from Iraq. The availability of this reporting combined with political pressure to respond to executive requirements precipitated overstatements in the NIE.

Specific to 2003 Iraq War preparation, the intelligence cycle came to a close as policymakers implemented policy based on fluid analytic judgments. The dissemination phase of the intelligence process concluded when calculated decision-makers in the administration used sufficient intelligence justifications to inform authoritative forums such as Congress and UN about Saddam's immediate danger. With Congress's approval, President Bush was prepared to address the nation by presenting Iraq's "threat to global

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[47] Robert Jervis, "Reports, Politics, and Intelligence Failures: The Case of Iraq," 34.

[48] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 13.

security" as a "combination of WMD and terrorism."[49] Pro-war advocates welcomed this decisive action to uncover Saddam's arsenals by force and confirm the OSP's fabricated intelligence and, on March 20th, 2003, U.S. military forces began the assault on Baghdad.[50]

[49] Steven Metz, *Decisionmaking in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 26.

[50] Wesley Clark, *Winning Modern Wars*, 1.

CHAPTER 5

CONVINCING THEMSELVES . . . CONVINCING OTHERS

Politicization originated from executive leadership and this pressure arguably influenced analytic outcomes. Policymakers successfully influenced intelligence by employing tactics such as cherry-picking intelligence, repeating loaded questions, and rejecting analysis. With equal persistence, they also planned to influence the public using this contrived information. By exploiting intelligence to publicize a partisan policy, decision-makers continued a feature of politicization that Howe identifies as popularization.[1] This form of intelligence abuse prevailed during planning for the 2003 Iraq War and in the months that followed the U.S. invasion. Consequently, intelligence became the grounds on which the U.S. began its pre-emptive invasion while policymakers continued to exert efforts to advertise justifications and goals for the 2003 Iraq War.

The Bush administration understood the impact of domestic support, as they redirected the national security focus from Afghanistan and built the case for targeting Iraq. Images and videos of the September 11th attacks shaped U.S. public opinion and this event warranted immediate retaliation against Afghanistan. The American people seemed to embrace the military response in Afghanistan, but comparable public opinion would be harder to perpetuate with Saddam. The administration reasoned that a compelling case had to be made to the American public and international community, in an effort to expose Iraq as a global threat.

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[1] Harry Howe Ransom, "The Politicization of Intelligence," 26.

Launching the Pro-Iraq War Campaign

The President's 2002 State of the Union address set the stage for America's next military objective. Drawing from World War II adversarial language, President Bush ascribed "Axis" terminology to Iraq, North Korea, and Iran. He declared that these rogue states constituted the "Axis of Evil" that participated in illicit weapons pursuits and humanitarian violations following the Cold War. As the primary target of anti-Saddam advisors, Iraq finally became part of the U.S. strategy causing senior U.S. observers such as Representative Ike Skelton (D-MO) of the House Armed Services Committee to characterize the speech as a declaration of war.[2] Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan appeared to be succeeding and Iraq was next. Without the spectacular images of terrorist attacks, intelligence would have to serve as the most compelling means to publicize Iraq's threat. In the summer of 2002, members of the administration decided that media outlets would become a mechanism to rally public support for ousting Saddam.

As the U.S. continued military operations against Al Qaeda in response to September 11th, Goodman characterizes August and September of 2002 as the "crucial period for making the case to go to war" with Iraq.[3] By presenting intelligence-based arguments, the intelligence community would become the focal point for supporting the pre-existing policy decision to remove Saddam by force. Accordingly, the White House

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[2] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, 35.

[3] Melvin Goodman, *The Failure of Intelligence*, 232.

Iraq Group (WHIG) convened in 2002 to "market the war."[4] The group, which consisted of Rice, Cheney, Libby, President Bush's chief of staff Andrew Card, and presidential advisor Karl Rove, relied heavily on the media to promote Iraq as a threat.[5]

As analysts hastily completed the NIE in the fall of 2002, WHIG appearances and rhetoric publicly placed the onus to supply corroborating reports on the intelligence community. WHIG members saturated the media with pretentious interviews repeating information previously discounted by intelligence organizations. Capitalizing on the startling images from September 11th, policymakers continued to associate Saddam with Al Qaeda and nuclear warfare. Beginning with television appearances in September, Cheney and Rice initiated the public campaign to reference intelligence. During a September 2002 airing of *Meet the Press*, Cheney declared "with absolute certainty" that Saddam sought uranium.[6] In a coordinated effort on CNN, Rice foretold of the "mushroom cloud" that would result from Saddam's nuclear aspirations.[7] In October 2002, President Bush followed suit, preparing a speech for crowds in Cincinnati. This carefully strategized speech, along with a September message constructed by the White House, both included "galvanizing" references to "Saddam getting his hands on nuclear

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[4] Marcy Wheeler, *Anatomy of Deceit: How the Bush Administration Used the Media to Sell the Iraq War and Out a Spy* (California: Vaster Books, 2007), 26.

[5] Ibid., 26.

[6] Melvin Goodman, *The Failure of Intelligence*, 228.

[7] Ibid.

Weapons."[8]

To the administration's chagrin, there was no validity to these alarming claims. The CIA reviewed the content and strongly objected to the White House's persistent references to Iraq purchasing uranium from Africa.[9] Analysts continued to hold their ground, rejecting additional WHIG claims that referenced terrorism. These tactics to "sell the war to the general public, largely through televised addresses and selectively leaking the intelligence to the media" continued independent of intelligence community corrections and ground truth.[10]

Soliciting Allied Support

Libby continued to play a role in the marketing campaign as he briefed the Director of Britain's central intelligence equivalent, called MI-6. The Vice President's chief of staff tried unsuccessfully to convince Sir Richard Dearlove that Iraq was involved with Al Qaeda, but the underlying goals were transparent.[11] The senior British counterpart articulated his suspicions about the administration "playing fast and loose with the evidence" and using intelligence in an "undisciplined manner."[12] Still, the United Kingdom (UK) allied itself with the US's anti-Saddam endeavors. In Australia, another U.S. ally, Wilkie perceived that the timing of U.S. announcements, which

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[8] George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, 451.

[9] Marcy Wheeler, *Anatomy of Deceit*, 18.

[10] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 318.

[11] George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, 310.

[12] Ibid.

habitually referenced September 11th, were used to make Americans to feel more "vulnerable" and "exposed" overnight; yet Australia chose to support the U.S. as well.[13] Thus, the WHIG's persistence and influence, which pressured the U.S. intelligence community, impacted U.S. allies as well. Wilkie draws the parallel, writing that "UK and Australian intelligence assessments agencies…are strongly pro-US, so much so that they are sometimes incapable of providing scrupulous, disinterested advice about affairs in Washington."[14]

Relentless Promotion

The determination to promote Saddam's uranium pursuits was one of the most controversial topics between the U.S. intelligence community and the Bush administration. The Bush administration seemed to test the intelligence community by repeatedly including false statements about the link between Iraq and Niger. The WHIG's drive to exaggerate Iraq's involvement with Niger occurred while the intelligence community attempted to corroborate these statements in the fall of 2002. Despite intelligence warnings, President Bush and others included language about uranium pursuits in Niger.

In *Framing the Iraq War Endgame: War's Denouement in an Age of Terror*, Erika King and Robert Wells assess that these "political actors" in the Bush administration assumed the role of "continually produc[ing], publiciz[ing], maintain[ing],

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[13] Andrew Wilkie, *Axis of Deceit*, 68.

[14] Ibid., 145.

and, when necessary, remak[ing] and reaffirm[ing] their versions of political truth."[15] CIA spoke against these statements even as the WHIG continued public intelligence-related announcements through the President's 2003 State of the Union address. Vice President Cheney elevated this link when he "insisted that the President use the Niger report in his January address to the nation, although the CIA had been telling the [National Security Council] that the Niger story could not be linked to CIA intelligence."[16] Ignoring CIA's two previous disclaimers to omit references to Africa in September and October of 2002, speechwriters determined to mention intelligence, attributed this claim to British information. So, to continue referencing intelligence, despite CIA's lack of endorsement, the President's 2003 State of the Union address stated that "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa," defying U.S. analytic assessments and demonstrating the administration's determination to attribute alarmist statements to intelligence.[17]

After the 2003 presidential address, the administration viewed the United Nations (UN) as a forum to further publicize intelligence before the global community. Powell was chosen to convey Iraq's imminent threat to the international organization. Selected for his trustworthiness, Powell researched and prepared himself to address the UN but

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[15] Erika G. King and Robert A. Wells, *Framing the Iraq War Endgame: War's Denouement in an Age of Terror* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 9.

[16] Melvin Goodman, *The Failure of Intelligence*, 260.

[17] Ibid.

often found himself at odds with the "WHIG's spurious claims against Iraq."[18] In fact, as Powell dug deeper into the intelligence "script" he often "threw material out" because of its inaccuracies.[19] Refusing to succumb to the WHIG's groupthink, he planned to present the least contentious issues, which the intelligence community still viewed as weak justifications.[20] Gordon and Trainor recall that Powell's address omitted the most inflammatory topics -"the nuclear argument and [attempts] to buy uranium"- as they lacked solid intelligence support.[21] Political leadership in the Bush Administration routinely linked the urgency of terrorist attacks to Iraq and Powell refused to represent this exaggerated connection as well.[22] He reasoned that having CIA Director Tenet present at the UN address would increase the legitimacy of his speech. In February 2003, Powell addressed the UN with the least confrontational topic. Goodman surmises that "the American fear of Iraqi WMD was the only justification for the use of force…that the U.S. public would accept" and this was the theme of the UN address.[23] Gordon and Trainor observed that, "the most compelling evidence was the photographs and signals intelligence that indicated Iraqis were rushing to sanitize suspected weapons sites."[24]

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[18] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 367.

[19] Ibid., 370.

[20] Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Next Attack*, 172.

[21] Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II*, 134-5.

[22] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 370.

[23] Melvin Goodman, *The Failure of Intelligence*, 226.

[24] Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II*, 134.

Although Powell raised serious doubts about the WHIG's propaganda campaign, his presentation to the UN resulted in the most persuasive use of intelligence to make the case for invading Iraq.

Propagandizing Intelligence

Intelligence is often referenced by decision-makers to support policy. Recalling the media tactics used during President Reagan's interactions with the media, intelligence can publicly serve a policymaker's interest. In extreme publicization cases, Hastedt identifies Reagan's sensitive information leaks and redirected anti-communist U.S. foreign policy as aggressive and corrupt.[25] Similarly, the Bush administration engaged in excessive attempts to publicize Iraq. There is a major distinction with the methods used by the Bush administration in that they tainted the analytic process and used select intelligence as part of an information campaign. These efforts resembled propaganda tactics, which include "disseminating information that has been created with a specific political outcome in mind."[26] Propaganda techniques were common during previous wars such as World War II, when American news reels, posters, and radio announcements lobbied support against Axis powers. After September 11th, policymakers hoped to reinvigorate support for a war in Iraq using modern media. The global scenarios, however, were vastly different in 2001 because there were no imminent military threats from the Axis of Evil.

Former CIA Counterterrorism Chief Vince Cannistraro equated WHIG

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[25] Glenn Hastedt, "The New Context of Intelligence Estimating: Politicization or Publicizing?," 60.

[26] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 169.

intelligence advertisements to propaganda, claiming that the OSP made "no distinction between intelligence and propaganda…using cooked intelligence…[for] presidential and vice presidential speeches."[27] During the preparatory stages of the 2003 Iraq War, these policymakers deliberately ignored valid intelligence and repeatedly provided classified information to the media to raise awareness about Saddam's terror and nuclear connections. The President's and Vice President's chiefs of staff played active roles in relaying faulty intelligence to the media, within the National Security Council, and amongst foreign allies. Retired Air Force Lt.Col. Karen Kwiatkowski reflected that OSP "developed…sophisticated propaganda lines…[which] politically manipulated…bits of intelligence…created to propagandize."[28] Ironically, intelligence, which can incorporate propaganda in covert missions, became a tool of propaganda, lobbied by the WHIG.

Policymakers Give Away Intelligence

Marcy Wheeler, author of *Anatomy of Deceit: How the Bush Administration Used the Media to Sell the Iraq War and Out a Spy*, details the methodology by which the administration's WHIG used intelligence to publicly set their agenda. Wheeler observes that reporters served as the "cutouts for the dissemination of classified information," precluding the Bush administration from "having to declassify it" or reveal dissent from within the intelligence community.[29] Therefore, in addition to media appearances, pro-Iraq war advocates used journalists, such as *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller, to

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[27] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 294.

[28] Ibid., 316.

[29] Marcy Wheeler, *Anatomy of Deceit*, 28.

publicize fabrications from Chalabi and his sources, leaving the "impression of imminent danger."[30] A journalist and friend of Chalabi, Judith Miller received exclusive access to intelligence meant to gain the public's support by publicizing Iraq's weapons and terror pursuits in the *New York Times*. She served as a cutout for Cheney's *Meet The Press* appearance by publishing leaked classified information prior to the interview.[31] This tactic enabled Cheney to "feign caution in speaking about [intelligence], then conced[ing] it was okay to do so since the *Times* had made it public."[32] Bamford quips that these leaks were the "perfect scheme-leak secrets the night before so you can talk about them the next morning."[33] The leaks were anonymous, but it signaled intensifying politicization and impending policy failures.[34] Continuing with media leaks and frequently referencing intelligence, the marketing campaign persisted into spring 2003. By March, the administration believed that intelligence backing and anti-Saddam sentiment justified mobilizing U.S. military forces to invade Iraq and remove Saddam from power.

Ultimate Leak

Joseph Wilson observed the media blitz with interest as the uranium claims took on greater significance. He was disturbed to learn that this "intelligence" was incorporated into the 2003 State of the Union address despite his investigative research in

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[30] Aram Roston, *The Man Who Pushed America to War*, 220.

[31] Marcy Wheeler, *Anatomy of Deceit*, 28.

[32] Ibid.

[33] James Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 324.

[34] Marcy Wheeler, *Anatomy of Deceit*, 28.

Niger nearly one year prior.[35] Recalling his submission to the intelligence agencies following his investigative trip to Niger, Wilson openly opposed the mis-information campaign in an article to the *New York Times*. In his aptly entitled submission, "What I Didn't Find in Africa," Wilson suggested that his "information was ignored because it did not fit certain preconceptions about Iraq" and that the U.S. may have "went to war under false pretenses."[36] Also responding to the administration's media campaign, he wrote that "America's foreign policy depends on the sanctity of its information [and] questioning the selective use of intelligence to justify the war in Iraq" is an obligation.[37]

Wilson's public objection to the intelligence-driven media campaign resulted in a retaliatory action by Cheney and his staff. Goodman writes that the Vice President authorized Libby to meet with Judith Miller and "provide classified information" that would smear CIA for sending Joseph Wilson to Africa.[38] Libby and Rove also leaked sensitive details to other reporters.[39] This leaked information included the affiliation of Joseph Wilson's wife, who worked undercover with CIA's WMD Division.[40] Although reporter Robert Novak eventually published this information, it represented the White House's determination to use the media to diminish Wilson's objections, regardless of the

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[35] Joseph Wilson, "What I Didn't Find in Africa," 2003.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Melvin Goodman, *The Failure of Intelligence*, 237.

[39] Marcy Wheeler, *Anatomy of Deceit*, 18.

[40] Ibid., 236.

risks to national security. These violations exceeded politicization abuses because they defied regulations for protecting classified information. Policymakers are not exempt from handling such intelligence in a confidential manner and this breach further discredited pro-war publicity. The administration learned that its claims would soon be challenged and their leaks to the media -anonymous or intentional- positioned the intelligence community to become the victim of public relations manipulation.[41] This portrayal caused intelligence to become a scapegoat or source of blame for impending U.S. policy failures in Iraq.[42]

[41] Melvin Goodman, *The Failure of Intelligence*, 229.

[42] Joshua Rovner, "Pathologies of Intelligence-Policy Relations," 62.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Intelligence disciplines remained consistent since Sherman Kent defined the process and function over 60 years ago. In a support role to policymakers and broader national security, intelligence analysis was always expected to represent objectivity. This standard remained as a given, even through the onslaught of Cold War threats and the varied U.S. strategies implemented by each administration. The role and function of intelligence changed after the unprecedented terrorist strikes on September 11th. This dynamic is attributed to biased policymakers who deflected the U.S. security focus from legitimate threats to their preoccupations with Iraq's posture in the Middle East. Their policy goals to focus on Iraq saturated the National Security policy, broader government bureaucracy, and the U.S. public. This environment fostered politicization at various stages of war planning and military operations. As a result, there were several interrelated dynamics that exemplified intelligence abuse and damaged U.S. credibility.

Factor 1: Intelligence distortions

The first damaging engagement with intelligence began with Wolfowitz's, Perle's, and Feith's collective fixation to target Iraq. They then exploited any opportunity to initiate a U.S. invasion. The group carried embedded assumptions based on Cold War legacies of challenging CIA and targeting state-sponsored regional threats. Specifically, they brought mindsets about focusing U.S. policy on Saddam Hussein. Upon securing powerful positions in President Bush's executive office, they actively sought to develop policy with these objectives in mind. These resolute decision-makers pursued intelligence

to actualize predetermined policy, compromising the intelligence mission.

Initially, the President's mindset differed from that of Wolfowitz, Perle, and Feith. Metz observes that the executive decision-making process enabled these advisors to influence the President by elevating Iraq's profile.[1] Accordingly, the pro-Iraq War advocates focused on convincing the President that Saddam posed an immediate danger and "group think" developed within the executive policy structure. Mandel identifies group think as the most common distortion in decision-making.[2]

Some administration officials had a limited perspective about Saddam's engagement. They refused to consider the possibility that Saddam's threats were regionally and temporally limited. September 11th served as the catalyst to tie intelligence to the pro-war strategists' anti-Iraq policy. The group's position, mutual strategic interests, and persistence gained momentum and they crossed the line into intelligence analysis. This move brought special interest practices that contradicted analytic objectivity.

Assuming independent analytic roles, the executive group systematically relied on historic analogy to justify invading Iraq.[3] Heuer warns that this fixation precludes additional research and such constricted analysis was detrimental to pre-war planning. This movement within the National Security Council is attributed to psychological distortions. Heuer explains that "intelligence consumers [who] manifest…biases…tend to

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[1] Steven Metz, *Decisionmaking in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 52.

[2] Robert Mandel, "Distortions in the Intelligence Decision-Making Process," 70.

[3] Richard Heuer, *The Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, 40.

underrate the value…of intelligence reporting."[4] This bias manifested itself when officials refused to accept reports that negated Saddam's engagement with WMD, Al Qaeda, or terror. Essentially, policymakers tainted the process from the onset, rejecting the possibility that their presumptions were wrong.

Factor 2: Direct attempts to manipulate

The intelligence process became politicized when policymakers attempted to directly influence analysis.[5] Jervis restricts politicization to analysts altering intelligence to please policymakers.[6] Desperate to have supporting intelligence, Wolfowitz, Perle, and Feith established the Office of Special Plans (OSP) to magnify and circulate raw intelligence that could justify war with Saddam. These policymakers injected themselves into the analytic process, which signaled immediate mismanagement of the intelligence process. Establishing the OSP was one of the first analytic violations of the Bush administration-an abuse that Hulnick foreshadowed when he warned that eager "policy officials [who] take action on the basis of raw reports…may be heading for trouble."[7]

In addition to generating intelligence, the act of repeatedly addressing the same issue at CIA and repeatedly inserting uranium phrases in a surreptitious manner

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[4] Ibid., 166.

[5] Joshua Rovner, "Pathologies of Intelligence-Policy Relations," 39.

[6] Robert Jervis, "Reports, Politics, and Intelligence Failures: The Case of Iraq," 34.

[7] Arthur Hulnick, "Relations Between Intelligence Producers and Policy Consumers: A New Way of Looking at an Old Problem," in *Intelligence and Intelligence Policy in a Democratic Society*, ed. Stephen Cimbala (Transnational Publishers, Inc., 1987), 142.

constitutes additional abuse by the policymakers. When the Vice President and his staff visited CIA to "garner the intelligence justification for a preemptive war" and did not receive satisfactory reports, they deliberately pressured intelligence to report their preferred findings.[8] These forceful measures "directly pressured [analysts] to emphasize findings," and this source of politicization is attributed to the President's advisors.[9]

Factor 3: Cherry-picking enables politicization

In addition to suppressing contrary views, decision-makers played a critical role in selecting faulty information prior to invading Iraq. Embedded assumptions enabled policymakers to cherry-pick critical intelligence issues. This violation was especially problematic for Iraq war planning because discriminate policymakers honed in on weak reports because the substance appealed to their preferred strategy.

Of the intelligence disciplines, human information intrigued policymakers the most. The intelligence community's quality control could not suppress Chalabi's and Curveball's lies, which the administration and OSP never challenged. Unfortunately, these Iraqi sources later confirmed what the intelligence community suspected. In a 2011 interview with a British news source, Curveball expressed pride in working with Chalabi to persuade U.S. government officials to start the war. Curveball, whose real name is Rafid Ahmed Alwan al-Janabi, also wanted regime change and he revealed that he "had

[8] Melvin Goodman, *The Failure of Intelligence*, 228.

[9] Loch K. Johnson and James J. Wirtz, "The Danger of Intelligence Politicization," 168.

the chance to fabricate something to topple the regime."[10] This statement underscores the danger of excessive dependence on weak, cherry-picked information.

Additional cherry-picking was evident when decision-makers welcomed intelligence that confirmed Saddam's pursuit of uranium for WMD from Niger. Joseph Wilson's reporting negated this perceived threat but his information was subsequently rejected by proponents manipulating intelligence as a means to justify war with Iraq. This perceived WMD threat was at the root of the policymaker's reasons for preemptive Iraq involvement and overshadowed objective analysis.

Cherry-picking reports to elevate Iraq's terrorism and nuclear pursuits corrupted the manner in which intelligence supported policy. Objective leaders did not "cultivate a reputation for demanding the unvarnished truth…," as Johnson and Wirtz recommend.[11] Rather, the intelligence mission was subjected to failed policy and altered to meet a narrow focus with the creation of the OSP.

Factor 4: Intelligence and the media campaign

Cherry-picked information became the key talking points for convincing the public that Saddam Hussein posed an imminent threat. The implementation of these propaganda techniques is attributed to biased policymakers seeking to aggressively gain U.S. and international backing. The intelligence functions- obtained from human, signals, and imagery information- were publicly referenced to strengthen the justification for

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[10] Martin Chulov and Helen Pidd, "Defector admits to WMD lies that triggered Iraq war," *The Guardian.com* (February 15, 2011) http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/ 2011/feb/ 15/defector-admits-wmd-lies-iraq-war/print (accessed March 20, 2011).

[11] Loch K. Johnson and James J. Wirtz, "The Danger of Intelligence Politicization," 168.

finally going to war with Iraq. Fabricated human information appeared to fill most of the gaps and this source was a driving factor for the WHIG's publicity campaign. When "key members of the Bush administration regularly used information provided by Chalabi and Feith in their statements to the Congress and to the public," it demonstrated the WHIG's inclination to ignore CIA's specific cautions before the war.[12] The administration's excessive popularization of intelligence underscored the magnitude of executive-level politicization, which included convincing the executive branch to foster group think, pressuring the intelligence community, and saturating the public.

Intelligence Community Responsibilities

Each factor contributed to the intelligence community becoming major victim of policy decisions. Intelligence distortions, direct manipulation attempts, cherry-picking, and propaganda techniques went beyond the executive branch's decision process, of which intelligence is a part. Risen captures the initial power of direct manipulation in the following summary:

> Championed by Cheney and enabled by Rumsfeld, led by outside advisor Richard Perle and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, [this group] had an agenda that was ready made for the world of September 12. They pushed for preemptive war with Iraq and espoused the remaking of the Middle East through the force of American arms. During Bush's first term, they easily swept aside the doubters at the State Department and the CIA, and burned the Pentagon into their policy sanctuary.[13]

Despite these political powers working against analytic practices in preparation for the 2003 Iraq war, analysts adhered to the professional expectation of presenting the truth to

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[12] Melvin Goodman, *The Failure of Intelligence*, 229.

[13] James Risen, *State of War: The Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration*, 221.

those in powerful positions. Lowenthal calls this doctrine a "common description of intelligence" but "speaking truth to power" also carries "ethical implementations."[14] Throughout the course of war planning and after the March 2003 U.S. invasion, analysts continued to present their non-biased assessments. To its credit, the intelligence community adhered to the ethical guidance "never alter[ing] intelligence judgments" when those in powerful positions dismissed the truth.[15]

Former CIA Director Bob Gates encourages analysts to guard against politicization by holding policymakers accountable.[16] His successor, George Tenet, applied this ethic to intelligence practices during the 2003 Iraq War preparation. He holds to assessments about Iraq's WMD "because [CIA] believed it…and [CIA] did not bend to pressure" when it came to a possible Iraq-Al Qaeda connection.[17] Thus, as intelligence politicization is ascribed to the 2003 Iraq War, it is significant that the intelligence community did not initiate or endorse this abuse. Jervis's commendation to CIA for resisting the administration's strong and illegitimate pressure underscores the analytic integrity that prevailed.[18]

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[14] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 290.

[15] Arthur Hulnick and Daniel Mattausch, "Ethics and Morality in U.S. Secret Intelligence," 48.

[16] Robert Gates, "G*uarding against Politicization*," 171.

[17] Ibid., 342.

[18] Ibid., 35.

Policymaker Consequences

Politicization is not an intelligence offense limited to analysts output. Greater blame must be ascribed to policymakers, particularly when they assumed an analytic role, for which they were unqualified. In 2002, policymakers who planned the Iraq invasion were culpable in this regard. They achieved the invasion but as the war unfolded, accusations of mass quantities of WMD were not confirmed. Recognizing that some form of intelligence abuse occurred, Congress's Senate Select Committee on Intelligence investigated intelligence assessments in 2004. The partisan committee primarily examined the analytic inconsistencies, which were already identified in the NIE. As projected in the NIE, mention of "low confidence" and uncertainties corresponded to the U.S. not finding WMD after the invasion. It was therefore problematic when assessments were presented as certainties by the administration.

The WHIG's ambitions were unquestionably boundless. Pro-war supporters condemned dissenters, such as Wilkie and others analysts. The administration resorted to illegal measures by leaking Wilson's spouse's name to the media, resulted in a violation of the 1982 Intelligence Identities Protection Act.[19] Although controversy ensued regarding Karl Rove's complicity in leaking Valerie Wilson's affiliation with CIA to Judith Miller, Libby was found guilty of obstructing justice and served a 30-month prison sentence.[20] Still, the ease with which this executive group abused intelligence through

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[19] McNeil, Phyllis Provost, "The Evolution of the U.S. Intelligence Community-An Historic Overview," in *Strategic Intelligence: Windows Into a Secret World* (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2004), 16.

[20] Ibid., 35.

smearing campaigns and compromising national security warrants additional scrutiny.[21]

The 2004 Senate Select Committee on Intelligence did not investigate the level of pressure or politicization that factored into the production or use of intelligence reports. Jervis attributes this slant to the partisan make up of the committee, which decisively wrote that they were not concerned with overall "evidence of a high pressure work environment… but rather evidence of pressure to change or alter judgments."[22] Follow-on comments from Vice Chairman John D. Rockefeller IV (D-WV), Senator Carl Levin (D-MI), and Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) ridicule the 2004 conclusions, which did not find evidence of politicization. They reported that CIA's Ombudsman told the Committee that he felt the "'hammering' by the Bush administration on Iraq intelligence was harder than he had previously witnessed in his 32-year career with the agency."[23] Additionally, the senators call attention to the OSP's "clear evidence of politicization" when the OSP subverted the intelligence community and abused the analytic process.[24] In sum, analysts were not "protected from the meddlesome reach of policy officials" but the committee recognized the need for more accountability.[25]

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[21] Robert Jervis, "Reports, Politics, and Intelligence Failures: The Case of Iraq," 23.

[22] Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq*, 108th Cong., 2004, http://web.mit.edu/simsong/www/iraqreport2-textunder.pdf (accessed March 22, 2011), 445.

[23] Ibid., 456.

[24] Ibid., 458.

[25] Ibid.

The 2004 investigation largely held the intelligence community liable for instigating the 2003 Iraq War, and the follow-up to these findings was intended to focus on the policymakers' role. The subsequent 2008 Senate Select Committee on Intelligence investigation attempted to address these violations. In contrast to the 2004 findings, which delved into the inaccuracies of the NIE's Key Judgments, the follow-up deemed that the President and Vice President issued statements that "were contradicted by available intelligence information."[26] Furthermore, the executive's statements, which referenced intelligence in declarations about Iraq, failed to "reflect the intelligence community's uncertainties," which clearly stated that analysts could not confirm Saddam's chemical weapon capabilities.[27] Indeed, contemporaneous political tones suggesting immediate threats and independent analysis from the Office of Special Plans weighed heavily on how several analytic judgments were presented, "incorrectly imply[ing] the backing of the intelligence community."[28] Policymakers were being held accountable for overstating and misrepresenting intelligence to justify the war.

The message of politicization is clear in conclusion 16 of the 2008 findings, which assessed that "statements by President Bush and Vice President Cheney regarding the situation in Iraq…did not reflect the concerns and uncertainties expressed in the

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[26] Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *Report on Whether Public Statements Regarding Iraq By U.S. Officials Were Substantiated by Intelligence*, 110th Cong., 2008, http://intelligence.senate.gov/080605/phase2a.pdf (accessed March 22 2011), 82.

[27] Ibid., 38

[28] Robert Jervis, "Reports, Politics, and Intelligence Failures: The Case of Iraq," 34.

intelligence products."[29] Senator Rockefeller IV (D-WV) also provided additional views to this finding. He expands on the "rogue actions" of the Pentagon's policy group or OSP and identifies administration officials as complicit in "repeatedly [speaking] in declarative and unequivocal terms" about Iraq to "push to rally public support for the invasion."[30] Compared to the 2004 findings, the 2008 report probed into the administration's "reckless[ness] in conducting its campaign to support the decision to go to war," held the policymakers accountable for politicizing intelligence.[31]

Lanes in the Road: Policymakers and Intelligence Officials

Policymakers must be held accountable for abusing intelligence and pressuring the intelligence community to comply with established policy. The executive branch habitually disregarded the validity of the intelligence process and brought attention to the deliberate intelligence abuse, when accountability is not considered. These acts confirmed that over confidence and excessive reliance by the executive branch can present opportunities for government officials to "gain political advantage" by using intelligence.[32] Likewise, an examination of the discipline and its application to pre-war planning confirms that "blaming intelligence would inappropriately excuse the political leadership," particularly since assuming intelligence roles became a political mission in

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[29] Ibid., 88.

[30] Ibid., 90-1.

[31] Melvin Goodman, *Failure of Intelligence*, 237.

[32] Mark Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 4th ed., 26.

2002.[33] These leaders were not open to understanding the analytic process and consistently "manipulate[ed] and pressur[ed] [analysts] into policy compliance."[34] Consequently, their biases skewed the objective process for intelligence officials, who are sworn to ethically and professionally maintain an "honest-broker role" when presenting analysis to decision-makers.[35] A clear message should be sent to analysts to sustain analytic integrity despite the abuses witnessed firsthand and officially captured in the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence findings.

With such an overwhelming amount of information to discount pre-emptive war, a researcher must consider alternative reasons for pursuing the 2003 invasion. From an international perspective, U.S. credibility will suffer if policymakers are not held accountable for subverting and mishandling intelligence to serve political agendas. The probable justifications for invading Iraq range from politics and resources to controversial motives outlined in *A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm.* Regardless of the reasons for the 2003 U.S. invasion, intelligence did not play an informative role for this decision; rather, the compelling nature of intelligence was an exploited tool for biased political means. U.S. credibility will be further diminished if policymakers are not held accountable for subverting and mishandling intelligence. The lessons of pre-2003 Iraq War teach us that speaking the truth to power may be futile if those in power choose to disregard or fabricate intelligence.

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[33] Robert Jervis, "Reports, Politics, and Intelligence Failures: The Case of Iraq," 13.

[34] Andrew Wilkie, *Axis of Deceit*, 135.

[35] Ibid.

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