

Persia Lost:
How the Foreign Policy Hawks of the George W. Bush
Administration Blocked Rapprochement with Iran

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Abstract:

The presidency of George W. Bush was a period of controversy. The foreign policy that the administration implemented would be criticized both inside of the United States and across the world. The purpose of this thesis is to look at how the senior members of the Bush administration's foreign policy team influenced the foreign policy process during President George Walker Bush's first term. It will apply the interaction and bitter opposition between these individuals and the defining events that took place to the foreign policy process in general and, more specifically, with policy implementation towards the Islamic Republic of Iran. This thesis will show that the foreign policy process was severely limited because of the unbalanced influence that favored the foreign policy hawks at the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President over the moderates at the State Department, causing an implementation of foreign policy that would allow the administration to target Iran in the next phase of the war on terrorism.

To Bestemor and Mormor

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Since the establishment of the American republic in 1776, foreign policy has been a hot potato that has caused much debate among the American electorate and their representatives. Within the framework provided by the United States Constitution, both Congress and the President have challenged each other in a power struggle that has caused a constant shift back and forth between the two branches of government as to whom it is that has the most to say when it comes to foreign policy. In the recent decades, the executive branch has established itself as the most influential branch of government when it comes to foreign policy, and the executive bureaucracy has grown tremendously.¹ The executive branch has been divided into several different agencies that each has different areas of responsibility. The State Department, the Department of Defense, and the National Security Council have, since the end of World War II been the leading foreign policy agencies of the American government.²

On January 29, 2002 President George Walker Bush addressed the American people and viewers around the world when holding his first State of the Union Address. In it President Bush defined much of what would become the administration's foreign policy. Four months prior to the speech, the United States had experienced the most lethal attack on American soil since the American Civil War. The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (known there after to Americans as "9/11") would define much of the presidency of George W. Bush and set a new course for American foreign policy. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq would create much controversy around the world and within the United States, and when President Bush left office on January 20, 2009, he would be labeled one of the most unpopular presidents in the history of the United States.³

One of the major challenges the Bush administration would face when it came to foreign policy was not an outside factor that would challenge the administration's implementation of policy, but rather internal fights and interagency quarrels that would severely limit the administration's policy process. It is not uncommon that some people play more important roles than others within an administration, and every President tend to have one or two advisors that are more influential than others.⁴ However, with the Bush administration, the imbalance of influence that would develop between the State Department and the coalition that would form between officials at the Department of

Defense and the Office of the Vice President, would become so pronounced that it blocked a successful policy process that would have provided the President with a more nuanced view of the policy alternatives that were available. Key members of the foreign policy team took different positions on how the administration would conduct its foreign policy, causing a division between realists that advocated an emphasis on multilateral relations and hawkish unilateralists and neoconservatives.

This thesis will use the terms “unilateralists”, “neoconservatives”, “transformationalists”, “hard-liners” and “hawks” to identify the people within the administration that advocated the pursuit of a tougher foreign policy. Unilateralists, neoconservatives and transformationalists will be defined more broadly in the second and third chapter. The other terms: “hard-liners” and “hawks” are common terms that are used to describe the people that advocated a toughening of foreign policy and the use American power. During the second Bush administration these officials were for the most part located at the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President. With regards to the people that wanted to take a softer approach, terms such as “multilateralists”, “realists”, “traditionalists” and “multilateral internationalists” will be used. Multilateralists believe in cooperation between states and organizations to promote the interests of the international actors.⁵ Multilateral internationalists are devoted to the cause of the international community and advocate that states should take an active role in the international community.⁶ The term “traditionalists” will be defined in chapter three.

The realists in the Bush administration, who were for the most part located at the State Department, followed a realism in the tradition of Henry Kissinger and George Herbert Walker Bush that advocated use of multilateralism, diplomacy and rapprochement with adversaries to ensure the national interest of the United States.⁷ These realists were viewed as foreign policy moderates and faced fierce opposition from a coalition of unilateralists that believed the United States should manifest its position as a hegemonic power and that American influence and power had been undermined by a multilateral Clinton administration.⁸ The neoconservatives became a part of this group as it appealed to their foreign policy approach: they were strong believers in American power, and professed a belief that the United States should use its unique position to spread American ideals, such as democracy and freedom across the world.⁹ The unilateralists that aligned themselves with the idealistic neoconservatives saw the advantage of spreading of democracy would have with regards to American

influence across the world and so, officials that did not see themselves as neoconservatives, such as Donald Rumsfeld, were eventually identified as one by many people outside of the administration. Their common belief that liberal democracies are less inclined to challenge other democracies served the goal of increased American power and the belief that the United States should be in an uncontested position as the leading power.¹⁰

The controversial foreign policy the Bush administration would eventually lead caused massive opposition within the United States, and it caused anti-American sentiment to grow across the world. Facing more anti-Americanism as a result of their campaign against terrorism, the Bush administration escalated what President Bush labeled a “crusade”¹¹ in the Middle East, further fueling the anti-Americanism. In the only non-Arabic state in the Persian Gulf region, Iran, there had been a rising reformist movement that had acquired substantial power in the 1997 presidential and parliament elections. The reformers wanted to ease both domestic and foreign policies, and began working on rapprochement with the United States. The Clinton administration had started responding to the reformers during its last years in office, and the chances for improved relations between Iran and the United States were promising. The Bush administration would, however, make a stark turn away from the rapprochement process that the Clinton administration and the reformist Iranian President Mohammad Khatami had begun immediately after it was sworn into office.

1.1. Thesis statement and Theoretical Approach

The purpose of this thesis is to look at how the senior members of the Bush administration’s foreign policy team influenced the foreign policy process during President George Walker Bush’s first term. It will apply the interaction and bitter opposition between these individuals and the defining events that took place to the foreign policy process in general and, more specifically, with policy implementation towards the Islamic Republic of Iran. This thesis will show that the foreign policy process was severely limited because of the unbalanced influence that favored the foreign policy hawks at the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President over the moderates at the State Department, causing an implementation of foreign policy that would allow the administration to target Iran in the next phase of the war on terrorism.

“Foreign policy” is a well-known term that is used in a wide range of contexts: from media outlets to diplomatic negotiations and political debates to discussions at the dinner table between family members. The international goals a state or government has and the way it achieves these goals are the foundations for what kind of foreign policy a country leads.¹² Foreign policy can have direct or indirect influence over the way any single member of a community leads their lives. Having functioning relations with the different actors in the international arena is becoming more and more important as the world grows closer and closer. Each state work as an actor on the international stage and every actor must be prepared for the constant flux and complexity that defines the international community. With the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the international financial crisis and the constant threat of terrorism, there is little doubt that domestic and foreign policy are becoming more and more reliant on each other, and harder and harder to separate. Each actor needs to consider the possible effects any foreign policy can have on domestic issues, and vice versa.

Individual-level analysis is one of several approaches to foreign policy analysis that can help to understand and account for the complex process that is foreign policy making. State-level and system-level analysis are the other two most common perspectives with regards to foreign policy process.¹³ This project will, for reasons of limited space, focus solely on the role certain individuals played with regards to the policy process during the first term of President George Walker Bush. The general assumption in international relations has been that states are the most important actor on the world stage and little emphasis has generally been put on the role of individuals and how people affect the policy process.¹⁴ In an article on foreign policy analysis, Valerie M. Hudson stresses the importance of an individual-level analysis of the foreign policy process: “All that occurs between nationals and across nations is grounded in *human decision makers acting singly or in groups.*”¹⁵ Hudson labels the individual level approach to be the basis of international relations and foreign policy process, but also stresses that it is important to recognize the multileveled nature of process making. Ultimately, it is the people and individuals that participate in the policy process that influence it and that reach the final decision. It is this notion, that the individuals are the final factor that decides the outcome of the process that makes individual-level analysis the core of Foreign Policy Analysis. Individual-level analysis is relevant to this thesis because of the emphasis on the senior foreign policy advisors of the Bush

administration and how their interactions influenced the policy process and the outcome that was implemented by the administration.

The method used in this thesis is a textual analysis of primary and secondary sources. Because of the close proximity in time to the events and policy implementation that will be examined in this paper, there are certain limitations to the access of primary sources. Few documents that would provide inside information on the policy deliberations have yet been released, and so my emphasis on primary sources with regards to the Bush administration's policies will be public statements such as speeches, official records from previous administrations, interviews, and articles and biographies published by members of the Bush and Khatami administrations. Because of the limited access to primary sources, this thesis uses many secondary sources, such as newspaper articles, articles in scholarly journals, and books, for its historic accounts and to support arguments. It will combine and contrast several important secondary sources to support its findings about the conflicts within the administration and the motivations for undermining Iranian attempts to establish diplomatic relations with the United States.

North American Area Studies is an interdisciplinary field that combines several specialized fields such as history, political science, sociology, art history, etc. into the study of North America.¹⁶ Valerie M. Hudson stresses the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to Foreign Policy Analysis¹⁷ and so combining North American Area Studies with Foreign Policy Analysis works well. This thesis will not be able to cover all the aspects of Foreign Policy Analysis and North American Area Studies that are available because of time and space limitations. However, it will use an historical approach in explaining the personal convictions of the foreign policy team of President Bush and because the individuals within the Bush administration were guided by different approaches to International Relations and foreign policy, political science paradigms will be applied in the historical context.

1.3. Structure

Apart from the introductory chapter and the conclusion, this thesis is divided into four main chapters. The first main chapter, chapter two, is an historic account of the previous government experience of the senior members of George W. Bush's foreign policy team and the turbulent relations between the United States and Iran since the end of World War II. The members of Bush's foreign policy team would each play

significant roles in shaping the foreign policy of the Bush administration. Their previous experience was extremely important with regards to how they would interact with the other actors in the administration and would be important in shaping the outcome of the foreign policy process during the second Bush administration. After having been elected President in the controversial 2000 election, George W. Bush began assembling a cabinet with almost unprecedented foreign policy experience. This chapter will account for how their previous experience shaped their outlook on foreign policy and how that experience caused the members to build important relations with each other that would manifest itself in what would become interagency battles during the second Bush administration. In addition, the history between the United States and Iran since the end of World War II will be accounted for. The history between the two countries has been dominated by controversial events and decisions and so it plays an important role in how the two states deal with each other today. It is important to have a basic understanding of their previous history.

Chapter three will continue with the individual policy makers of the foreign policy team. Internal debates and agency turf-wars became one of the biggest challenges of the Bush administration. Individual-level analysis is applied to the chapter to explain how the senior foreign policy officials used their positions and agencies to influence President Bush and the policy process. It shows how the personality of some actors and the personal ties between members of the administration would enhance the influence of some people, while others lost authority as a result of less access to the President. How these members and their agencies struggled to influence the president and the foreign policy agenda would prove to be extremely important in defining the Bush administration's foreign policy and it would develop into a battle between moderate internationalist realists that advocated a traditionalist approach to foreign policy on the one side, and hawkish unilateralists and neoconservatives that wanted a transformational foreign policy on the other side.

Chapter four will include an account of and an analysis of the most influential events of the Bush administration: The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (9/11), the Afghanistan War, and the American led war in Iraq. These were the most defining events in how the Bush foreign policy team conducted its foreign policy in general, and also with regards to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Almost every American administration have had to deal with major events that have been crucial to how the administrations have been defined and how they have implemented policy. To the

second Bush administration, this event was 9/11. 9/11 would be the spark that set in motion the war on terror, causing American engagement in both Afghanistan and Iraq and ensuring an even greater divide in the Bush administration between the foreign policy moderates and the hawks. In addition to these defining events, an event referred to as the *Karine A* incident will be included in this chapter as it would be tremendously important in determining the policy the administration would implement with regards to Iran. The events will not be analyzed in detail with regards to Iran in this chapter, but rather show how the individuals in the administration reacted to them and how they would further the already existing divide over foreign policy in the administration.

Chapter five is the final main chapter, and it deals in detail with the administration's policy against Iran. At first, it gives a short historic summary of the troubled past the two states share, and how U.S. policy towards Iran has evolved since the 1979 Islamist Revolution. Prior to its inauguration, the Bush administration was expected to ease economic sanctions on Iran and advocate integration of the regime into the World Trade Organization. The administration would, however, turn in the opposite direction, treating Iran as a major threat to international security, and impose tougher sanctions. U.S.-Iranian cooperation in the war on terror and the multiple attempts from the reformist Iranian administration to establish a functioning diplomatic channel for the two states to engage in diplomatic talks would, however, be seen by moderates within the Bush administration as a dramatic change in behavior from the Iranian regime, and they were advocating continued rapprochement with the Iranian reformist. The neoconservatives and the unilateralists in the Bush administration were not set on trying to improve American relations with a regime they regarded as a major threat to American national security. The administration would be equally divided over its Iran-policy as it was with its general foreign policy approach. The analysis of the administration's Iran policy concludes that the foreign policy hawks were gaining ground within the administration in advocating regime change in Iran. There is ample evidence to argue that if the American military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq had continued to be successful, the Iranian regime would have been a viable target in the next phase of the war on terror.

The concluding chapter will summarize the major points that have been made throughout the thesis.

Notes, Chapter 1.

- ¹ Joseph A. Pika & John A. Maltese, *The Politics of the Presidency*. (Washington, DC. CQ Press. 2008), 1-3.
- ² James M. McCormick. *American Foreign Policy and Process*. (Toronto, Ontario. Thomson Wadsworth. 2005), 436.
- ³ Frank Newport, "Bush Job Approval at 28%, Lowest of His Administration". *Gallup*. April 8, 2008. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/106426/bush-job-approval-28-lowest-administration.aspx>
- ⁴ David Rothkopf. *Running the World*, (New York, Public Affairs. 2005), 390.
- ⁵ John T. Rourke, *International Politics on the World Stage*. (New York, NY. McGraw-Hill. 2007), 263.
- ⁶ Fred M. Shelley, J. Clark Archer et.al. *Political Geography of the United States*. (New York, NY. The Guilford Press. 1996), 203.
- ⁷ James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*. (New York, NY. Viking Penguin. 2004), xi, 110-111.
- ⁸ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 213-214.
- ⁹ Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, (New Haven, CT. Yale University Press, 2006), 95.
- ¹⁰ Michael Hirsh. "Bush and the World". *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 81, No. 5. (Sept.-Oct. 2005), 22-23.
- ¹¹ George W. Bush. "Remarks on Arrival at the White House and an Exchange With Reporters". September 16, 2001. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/mediaplay.php?id=63346&admin=43>
- ¹² Rourke, *International Politics*, 235
- ¹³ Rourke, *International Politics*, 65.
- ¹⁴ Valerie M. Hudson, "Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations". *Brigham Young University, Blackwell Publishing*. (2005), 2-3.
- ¹⁵ Hudson, "Foreign Policy Analysis", 1.
- ¹⁶ Carl Bode. "The Start of the ASA". *American Quarterly*. Vol. 31, No. 3. (1979), 346-347
- ¹⁷ Hudson, "Foreign Policy Analysis", 2.

Chapter 2. President Bush's War Cabinet: Historical Account and Previous Experience

2.1. Introduction

This chapter gives an historical account of the political experiences of Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice and George W. Bush prior to the formation of Bush's cabinet and of the turbulent relations between the United States and Iran since the end of World War II until the end of the Cold War. The foreign policy team would play a tremendously important role in determining the outcome of the policy process during the first term of the administration. Their track record in Washington can be traced back over three decades, and their experience would play a crucial role when it came to implementing policy during the Bush presidency. These people had formed close bonds and political alliances prior to the 2000 election and having a basic understanding of their previous experiences is important to understand their actions and reactions to people and events that would shape the foreign policy agenda from the inauguration in 2001 to the presidential election in 2004. It is also crucial in mapping the turf wars that took place between the different agencies within the administration that will be further discussed in the next chapter. Foreign Policy Analysis is an actor-specific theory that focuses on the individuals as the most important players in international relations and the policy process. It is the personalities and experiences of the individuals that participate in the policy process that affect the outcome of the policy process the most.¹ The actor-specific theory in policy process will be further developed in the next chapter, but it is important to keep in mind when reading the historical background and experiences of President Bush's senior foreign policy advisors.

As with the background of the individuals of Bush's foreign policy team, it is useful to have a basic understanding of the history of the United States and Iran prior to the more recent policy developments that took place during the presidencies of George H.W. Bush, William J. Clinton and George W. Bush. In the latter part of this thesis, the more recent Iran policies will be covered more extensively, and so it is useful to identify

the previous policies at an early stage so the reader can have it in mind throughout the thesis.

In his book *Rise of the Vulcans*, journalist and author James Mann describes the foreign policy advisors of President George Walker Bush as his “war cabinet”. The foreign policy team consisted of several individuals with tremendous foreign policy experience. During the 2000 presidential campaign, Bush had failed to convince anyone that he would be able to face the challenges in foreign policy that would inevitably materialize during his administration. During the campaign, Bush would often assure the public that his lack of foreign policy experience would be compensated by a handful of tremendously experienced advisors and when he assembled his cabinet, the expectations were set on restoration and continuity of the pragmatic and realist approach to foreign policy that his father, George Herbert Walker Bush had implemented when he served as the 41st President of the United States.² The elder Bush had run a well planned and thought through foreign policy that resonated with his long experience as a diplomat and Washington official.³

As mentioned above, the foreign policy team of President Bush consisted of individuals with massive experience in both foreign policy and government positions. This thesis will focus on the senior advisors to the President in addition to the President himself. The senior advisors that will be included are: Vice President Richard (Dick) Cheney, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and Secretary of State Colin Powell. That is not to say that other members of the foreign policy team did not play important roles within the administration, but the deputies and other advisors all reported to the people mentioned above. However, there will be one exception: Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. The reason for this exception is that many of the policies that were implemented by the cabinet of George W. Bush were based on the strategies and ideas that Wolfowitz had been working on since serving in the Carter administration in the late 1970s and that he would continue work with both during the Reagan administration and the first Bush administration. In his 1977 *Limited Contingency Study*, Wolfowitz identified the Persian Gulf region as the most strategically important region to the United States and that ensuring U.S. access to the vast oil resources would become more and more important in future U.S. defense and security policies.⁴ After the end of the Cold War, the strategies and ideas that Wolfowitz had been the most important proponent of, would become more and

more relevant to the foreign policy of the United States: culminating in the massive focus the second Bush administration would have on the region.

In 1992, Wolfowitz would be responsible for the introduction of *preemptive* warfare as an American defense strategy when he as Under Secretary for Policy at the Defense Department issued the *United States Defense Planning Guidance* (DPG). Wolfowitz' prospects for American foreign policy were that the United States should assert itself as the only super power and that if the United States faced threats from other states, it could strike first to ensue the security of its people and its position. In addition, the DPG voiced the ideas about securing American access to Persian Gulf oil that Wolfowitz had laid out in his Limited Contingency Study fifteen years prior.⁵ He had begun working on these policies when he first established himself as one of Washington's greatest strategic thinkers, and Wolfowitz played a key role in setting up the formal policies of the Defense Department and providing information that would be valuable to President Bush when a policy was determined.

In addition to Paul Wolfowitz, there were other extremely influential advisors within the Bush administration. Vice President Dick Cheney would, after the 9/11 attacks assert himself as the Presidents closest advisor, a role that is not usually filled by the Vice President. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld would lead the Pentagon with a tough hand and implement changes to the Pentagon and the armed forces that were unpopular with the military commanders. Rumsfeld would, because of his close relationship with Vice President Cheney, enjoy important access to the President and be extremely influential in a period dominated by militarization of foreign policy. Cheney and Rumsfeld were known as foreign policy hawks, and would adhere to the strategies that Wolfowitz had developed in the previous years. Secretary of State Colin Powell came into the administration with higher approval ratings than the President elect and was expected to be a massive force in influencing the foreign policy the administration would implement. Powell would be an important player and ensured the presence of diplomacy in several important instances, but met overwhelming opposition with the hard-line alliance that would form between several officials at the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice would also assert herself as one of the most influential advisors the President had. Having daily access to the President and remaining one hundred percent loyal to his decisions, Rice had the President's trust and together with Vice President Cheney, she would often be the last person the President spoke with before reaching a decision. The

chapter is set up chronologically and so the order of which the advisors are mentioned and accounted for does not have anything to do with their sphere of influence in the second Bush administration, but rather when they began their careers in Washington.

2.2.1 Donald Rumsfeld

The 2000 election dispute that would be resolved in the United States Supreme Court on December 12 2000, over a month after the election, caused the transition team of the President elect, George W. Bush to face even greater challenges than usual when setting up the new cabinet. Pressed with time, the transition team scoured for potential candidates for the position of Secretary of Defense. Playing an integral part during the entire campaign period, Vice President elect Dick Cheney suggested the president elect should sit down and have a chat with his former boss, Donald Rumsfeld. Having served as Secretary of Defense during the Ford administration, Rumsfeld had experience and was known for his tough organizational skills. During his presidential campaign, Bush and his policy advisors had called for military reform. The importance of having an experienced and skilled Secretary of Defense that could effectively conduct and oversee the process of transforming the U.S. Military to fit the new political reality was evident. Bush was hesitant to meet with Rumsfeld because the former Defense secretary and Bush's father, George H.W. Bush had a troubled past. They had both been advancing their careers in the 1970s, and going after the same positions in government, the two men had fought several bitter fights within the Ford administration.⁶

Donald Rumsfeld had begun his Washington career in the 1950s by working as a congressional aide. Seeking career advancement within the government, Rumsfeld ran in the 1962 Congressional elections and won one of the Illinois seats in the House of Representatives for the Republican Party. While serving in Congress, Rumsfeld began following foreign policy and used the ruthless combative style he would become well known for, to push his agenda and win bureaucratic battles. It won him several allies, but also sworn enemies in the halls of Washington. During his time as Illinois Congressman Rumsfeld formed a close bond with Michigan Representative, Gerald Ford, the man that would later secure Rumsfeld's political career as one of the most influential persons in the Republican Party.⁷

While at Capitol Hill, Rumsfeld began working for and supporting Republican candidate Richard Nixon in the 1968 presidential election and Rumsfeld sought to get a job in the administration if Nixon won the election. However, Rumsfeld was unpopular

with several of Nixon's close advisors and they did not want Rumsfeld to be a part of the cabinet. White House council, John Ehrlichman, recognized the animosity: "The senior staff grew to realize that the ambitious Rumsfeld would decline every assignment that did not enhance his personal goals".⁸ But a few months out in the first presidential term, Rumsfeld was offered the unpopular job as Director of the Office for Economic Opportunity (OEO). Rumsfeld took the job and ran the agency successfully until he "moved up" by becoming a senior White House advisor two years later. During his time as senior advisor to the President, Rumsfeld began challenging the foreign policy of the administration.⁹ The turn from containment to *détente*¹ had been the work of President Nixon and his close partner, National Security Advisor and later Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger. Working closely with President Nixon in establishing *détente*, Kissinger enjoyed tremendous leverage within the administration. However, the foreign policy that was run by Nixon and Kissinger was dominated by *declinism* – the belief that the United States was losing power to the Soviet Union and had to change its Cold War strategy.¹⁰ Donald Rumsfeld believed *détente* undermined American power and he started sending memos to the president suggesting changes in foreign policy. In addition, Rumsfeld wanted an end to the Vietnam War and for the United States to flex its muscles more against the Soviet Union and other communist forces.¹¹ In his relentless style, Rumsfeld was not afraid to air his thoughts on the issue with President Nixon. Despite challenging the President and Kissinger, Rumsfeld remained on the administration, becoming the U.S. ambassador to NATO during Nixon's second term, acquiring valuable foreign policy experience.¹²

It was, however, the experience he got while serving under President Gerald Ford that made Donald Rumsfeld one of the most influential characters in Washington. President Ford and Rumsfeld knew each other well from serving in Congress together and continued to work closely during the Nixon administration. A sure indicator of their bond came when Ford named Rumsfeld his Chief of Staff shortly after taking over the presidency. Rumsfeld and Ford shared similar views when it came to foreign policy,

¹ The policy of *containment* was established by President Harry Truman in 1947. Containment consisted of the establishing of military alliances and economic and military assistance to limit or halt expansion of communism. Containment continued to be the official policy of the United States against communist states until President Nixon initiated *détente* in 1971. *Détente* was President Nixon's initiative to secure U.S. interests by engaging the Soviet Union and other communist states. By including and having diplomatic relations with the communists, the United States would further its national interests and better its national security. (McCormick, 2005, 46-51, History.com, "Détente". <http://www.history.com/topics/detente> Accessed: 02.17.11)

and despite having Henry Kissinger on the team, Rumsfeld soon took over the role of the most influential foreign policy advisor to the president. This is an example of an unconventional hierarchy of advisors, much like the one that would later appear in the George W. Bush administration. During the Ford administration, Rumsfeld was able to use his political and bureaucratic skills to increase his own influence and diminish the power of Henry Kissinger and others he saw as a threat or who opposed him.¹³ President Ford allowed Rumsfeld to do so, because he wanted to distance himself from anything related to the Nixon presidency and Ford shared more of the foreign policy convictions of Rumsfeld than of Kissinger. The most telling move from President Ford came in what became known as the *Halloween Massacre*. Ford fired several of his top officials, informed his Vice President that he would not be on the ticket for the next election, appointed Rumsfeld to Secretary of Defense and required Kissinger to give up the dual role as both Secretary of State and National Security Advisor.¹⁴ By doing this, Ford took a big step away from the Nixon era and gave Rumsfeld an equally central and important role as that of Kissinger.

During the Reagan administration, Rumsfeld was initially left out of the loop after attempting to land the nomination for Vice President. Rumsfeld returned to private business, until he was welcomed back into the cabinet as Reagan's special envoy to Lebanon after the attacks on the United States Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983.¹⁵ Rumsfeld quickly began shaking things up and attacking the civilian leaders at the Pentagon. Despite not staying on the Reagan team for more than six months, Rumsfeld's brief return would mark the beginning of the animosity between those who would later be serving at the Defense Department and State Department during the second Bush administration.¹⁶ Despite being left out of the inner circle of the Reagan administration for most of its time in office, Rumsfeld would be closely tied to the administration through a clandestine program President Reagan set up in case of nuclear war with the Soviet Union. The program established a separate administration from that in Washington, consisting of people with previous experience in the federal government and close ties to the Reagan administration. They received training in running the federal government in case of nuclear war. Dick Cheney also participated in this program.¹⁷ Because of their participation in this clandestine program, both Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney remained closely linked to the Reagan administration without being a part of the official cabinet or bureaucracy. It also ensured the continued alliance between the two powerful Republican figures.

Donald Rumsfeld had continued to be an integral part of the Republican Party base since serving his short term as special envoy under President Reagan. He returned to corporate business, but would as soon as an opportunity appeared, engage himself in politics. In the 1996 presidential campaign, Rumsfeld was running Republican nominee Bob Dole's campaign. During this campaign, he worked closely with his old friend and protégé Paul Wolfowitz. The two would continue to play important roles within the Republican Party after having lost the 1996 election, and in 1997 Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, would together with other prominent Republican figures, establish a conservative think-tank known as the *Project for the New American Century* (PNAC).

On June 3, 1997 PNAC issued a statement of purpose in which it described its goals for the American foreign and defense policy in the next century. Drawing on the American victory in the Cold War, the Project called for an increase in defense spending, a tightening of bonds with democratic allies, a clear challenge to hostile regimes, promotion of economic, individual and political freedom, and a definition of the United States as the protector of these values across the world.¹⁸ The think-tank has mostly been identified as being a neoconservative project, but Rumsfeld and Cheney (who also was a member), were not identified as neoconservatives, but rather as realist unilateralists that saw the promotion of economic, political and individual freedom as being in the national interest of the United States.¹⁹ In addition to being a part of PNAC, Rumsfeld participated in the conservative initiative Congressional Policy Advisory Board together with among others, Dick Cheney and Condoleezza Rice. When Cheney, Rice and Wolfowitz got on board the Bush campaign in 1998, Rumsfeld soon followed. He did not play an open and integral part, but worked in the background advising Bush issues that were not handled in public.

When Donald Rumsfeld was appointed to become President George W. Bush's Secretary of Defense, he had served as congressman and held several top-level positions in former Republican administrations during the past three decades. Having served as Secretary of Defense during the Ford administration, Rumsfeld was the first person to "have another go" at the top-level cabinet position. The second time around he was determined to run a tight ship with a clear chain of command. A New York Times article run shortly after the announcement of Rumsfeld as Bush's nominee for the position as Secretary of Defense, questioned if the notorious style of the experienced government official would become a problem during the newly established cabinet.²⁰ While serving as Secretary of Defense during the Ford administration, Rumsfeld had

been at odds with several of the military leaders at the Pentagon and other cabinet officials. Kissinger named Rumsfeld “the most ruthless man” he had ever met while working in a government position²¹ and Rumsfeld got a reputation for having a confrontational style and that he did not hesitate to let people know if he disagreed with them or they stood in the way of his agenda.²² Having been given a second tour at the Pentagon, Rumsfeld was determined to succeed:

This time he was going to get control... He was going to change the entire U.S. military, transform it into a leaner, more efficient, more agile, more lethal fighting machine. It was not just important to the military, he felt; it was important to the credibility of the United States.²³

Donald Rumsfeld had won an intense power struggle with Henry Kissinger during the 1970s.²⁴ And after the 2001 nomination for Secretary of Defense, people were questioning whether or not a new battle would take place within the newly elected Republican administration. This time the conflict would rage between Rumsfeld and another colossus when it came to American foreign policy: Colin Powell. Former Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci believed the administration would be able to steer clear of intense battles: “Colin has brilliant people skills”.²⁵ However, as the Bush administration faced great foreign policy challenges it would be evident, as Robert Ellsworth, a fellow congressman of Rumsfeld, remarked: “Donald Rumsfeld does not lose”.²⁶

2.2.2 Richard Cheney

Dick Cheney started his career in Washington working for Wisconsin Congressman William Steiger in 1968. He had initially applied for a clerk’s job at the office of Donald Rumsfeld, but Cheney did not make an impressive first appearance and he did not get the job. However, after proving himself highly capable while working for Steiger, Cheney was recruited by Rumsfeld to be his special assistant the following year. He quickly built a reputation for being extremely efficient and the guy to go to if you wanted something done.²⁷ From the very beginning of his Washington career, Dick Cheney advocated very conservative views. Like his boss Donald Rumsfeld, Cheney had a strong belief in American ideals and power and that the United States should not back down to any challenge. He continued to work for Rumsfeld as Rumsfeld began

moving up the ranks in the Nixon and Ford administrations, staying on as his right-hand-man. When Rumsfeld was appointed Secretary of Defense during the Ford administration, Cheney took over the role as President Ford's Chief of Staff. Cheney had been working in the back offices of the West Wing and when he was promoted to Ford's Chief of Staff, hardly anybody knew his name. Cheney's operational style and low-keyed character earned him the Secret Service code name "Backseat".²⁸ Rumsfeld and Cheney continued to work closely together while serving top-level positions in the Ford administration. As one of President Ford's closest advisors, Cheney encouraged Ford to move away from the policies that had been initiated by Nixon and Kissinger when the president was facing a new challenge from the right wing of the Republican Party in the 1976 election. President Ford moved towards a more conservative and hard-line foreign policy. It was a part of a strategy to ensure that President Ford would win the Republican presidential nomination: by pressing on, Cheney was able to enhance his conservative agenda.²⁹

President Ford won the Republican nomination in 1976, but was unable to win the presidential election and left office in 1977. Dick Cheney moved back to his home state of Wyoming, but continued to be engaged in politics, winning election to the House in 1978 as sole Wyoming representative. Cheney would, while serving in Congress, acquire a solidly conservative voting record.² In spite of his conservative record, Cheney was often referred to as a moderate because of his association with former President Ford.³⁰ Cheney believed in a model of government with an extremely powerful executive branch with a president that could assert his powers when necessary. Much like he believed that a strong president that could act quickly without the consent of Congress, Cheney was a strong believer in a foreign policy guided by unilateralism.³¹ While serving the U.S. House of Representatives, Cheney worked his way around Washington in a somewhat unusual way. He was very low-key and did not bring much attention to himself, much like he had while serving as Rumsfeld's assistant and Ford's chief of staff. Cheney took positions in House committees such as the Intelligence Committee. The committees he served on might not have been the most sought out, but they fit Cheney's style and made it easier for him to get his conservative views across.

² Cheney's conservative domestic record includes limits on abortion, favor of death penalty, favor of school prayer, less gun-control, more privatization, strict immigration laws, favor of oil industry, and promotion of free trade. (On the Issues. "Dick Cheney on the Issues". http://www.issues2000.org/Dick_Chene.htm Accessed: 04.28.11.)

Cheney would establish himself as a notable figure in the House leadership during the 1980s, becoming the House Republican whip after the 1988 election.³² However, he would not continue to work in Congress for much longer.

The 1988 election ensured continued Republican control of the White House as George Herbert Walker Bush had secured victory over Democratic candidate Michael Dukakis. Bush's national security advisor, Brent Scowcroft, recruited Cheney to become Bush's Secretary of Defense. Considering the moderate stance of the first Bush administration, Cheney was not the most obvious appointee to the position. But Cheney and Scowcroft had worked together previously and gotten along very well. They both saw eye to eye on foreign policy during the Ford administration, and Scowcroft needed someone that would be easily approved by Congress. "He's not ideological, in my mind. He's been very conservative, but I never had any trouble with him". Scowcroft later stated after being asked about the role of Cheney during the second Bush administration.³³ The first Bush administration would ensure a realist approach to foreign policy that had been set partially aside during Reagan, and in spite of being labeled as "dovish", the administration would involve the United States in military operations, such as the Gulf War. The Gulf War was an example of the traditional realism that dominated the first Bush administration. When the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein launched an offensive against the important oil producer Kuwait, the administration decided to intervene. The Iraqi regime was gaining too much power in the Persian Gulf region, and was becoming a threat against the power balance that had ensured American access to oil. In spite of having the chance to topple Saddam and his regime, the administration withdrew its forces from Iraq when the United States had restored the balance by driving out Iraqi forces of Kuwait and ensuring enough damage to the regime so it no longer posed an instant threat against its neighbors and American interests in the region.

While serving as Secretary of Defense in the first Bush administration, Cheney nominated General Colin Powell to the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Cheney and Powell would work closely together as President Bush would decide to engage U.S. forces in military operations such as overthrowing the Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega and protecting Kuwait from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein. Cheney would establish himself as a tough Secretary of Defense who, much like his former mentor Donald Rumsfeld, gave clear signs to the military leaders that Pentagon was run by civilians. However, with regards to General Powell, Cheney could at times

appear to be humble.³⁴ In public the two would appear like a well-matched team, but an internal split on how to deal with Saddam Hussein would create a lasting divide between the two.³⁵ Cheney and his undersecretary, Paul Wolfowitz, was advocating continued military engagement against Iraq after Saddam's forces had invaded Kuwait and wanted the United States to ensure the fall of the regime. As Secretary of Defense, Cheney was deeply engaged in the policy President Bush decided on. A war plan was set up, and Cheney mobilized his military forces at the Pentagon. The position Cheney played during the Gulf War made him one of the most prominent presidential candidates within the Republican Party.³⁶

After the Bush administration left office in 1992, Dick Cheney found himself at the American Enterprise Institute, a Washington based think tank. Cheney was still considered one of the most important members of the Republican Party, and made an attempt for the party's nominee to the 1996 presidential election. However, like Rumsfeld, Cheney was unable to get enough support and could not raise enough money to run a good campaign. In spite of having held several top positions in Washington, his name was not recognizable enough. Instead, he became the chief executive of one of the major oil field services and construction companies in the world, Halliburton.³⁷ Cheney remained a political figure within the Republican Party in the latter half of the 1990s, and was a key member in both the Project for the New American Century and the Congressional Policy Advisory Board. When his former boss' son, George Walker Bush decided to run for president in the 2000 election, Richard Cheney would become the campaign's most influential character and after forming a close bond with younger Bush, he was asked to join Bush on the ticket as his Vice Presidential candidate.³⁸

2.2.3 Paul Wolfowitz

Paul Wolfowitz was recruited to Washington from the political science department of the University of Chicago, working for Dean Acheson in a Washington based lobby group during the summer of 1969.³⁹ Wolfowitz had been part of a conservative block of students that based their ideas on the philosophy of Leo Strauss that stressed the importance of a moral foundation in politics and the promotion of non-proliferation policies that was led by Albert Wohlstetter.⁴⁰ Wolfowitz, a low-keyed, reflective and cautious person, did not fit the typical stereotype of a Washington professional. However, because of his character and incredible intellect, he soon found himself being accepted by the Washington professionals. The summer job only lasted a

few months, and when Wolfowitz returned to Washington in 1973 to work at the Pentagon for the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, he was able to contribute analytically and strategically without posing as a threat to the people he worked for: “If any public official could be said to be a habitual protégé, it was Wolfowitz”.⁴¹ Wolfowitz remained at the Pentagon throughout the presidencies of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. Under President Ford, Wolfowitz participated in a group called Team B. In 1976 Team B produced a report that concluded there was an imminent threat of a Soviet missile attack on the United States. The report led to the establishment of a missile defense commission that Paul Wolfowitz was an integral part of and it was headed by Donald Rumsfeld.

Wolfowitz had not identified himself as a Republican while serving under Nixon and Ford. The Republican tradition of a realist approach to foreign policy did not appeal to him, and he was at odds with Kissinger’s rejection of values and ideals being an important factor foreign policy.⁴² He had been identifying with the neoconservative wing of the Democratic Party that called for a more hawkish, but idealistic foreign policy.⁴³ While hawkish realists emphasized the use of power, military if necessary, to ensure the basic interest of the state, promoting democracy and ensuring human rights was important to the neoconservatives. When President Carter was elected in 1976 as the Democratic Party candidate, Paul Wolfowitz continued to work in the Pentagon. It was during the Carter administration he began focusing his attention to the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf. Heading the *Limited Contingency Study* (LCS), Wolfowitz began advocating a stronger U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf to ensure strategic control over oil resources and the geopolitical balance in the region. Wolfowitz believed it to be more important than to defend Western Europe from a Soviet invasion, and he began warning about Iraq as a potential regional threat.⁴⁴ In spite of issuing a clear warning of the possibilities for a loss of U.S. interests in the Gulf region, Wolfowitz and his LCS were not taken into consideration until the Iranian revolution in 1979. The United States had lost an important ally in the region, and in compliance with the LCS, the United States began seeking military bases in and around the Persian Gulf region.⁴⁵

The Carter administration had alienated the conservative block of the Democratic Party by leading a passive foreign policy. Wolfowitz had remained at the Pentagon, but when his former boss, Republican Fred Iklé warned him that becoming too closely associated with the Carter administration might damage his future career,

Wolfowitz followed his advice returned to academia and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. In the 1980 presidential election, Wolfowitz and several of his fellow neoconservatives would endorse the Republican candidate, Ronald Reagan.⁴⁶ This marked a partisan transition for the foreign policy hawks that had previously indentified with the Democratic Party. With Reagan in office, the conservative wing of the Republican Party took charge of the West Wing and advocated an approach to the Soviet Union and other possible adversaries of the United States that appealed more to the hawkish neoconservatives. Wolfowitz was brought on with the administration after confirming his conservatism and hawkish stance on foreign policy with Reagan's transition team. For the first time, he would work outside of the Pentagon while serving as a public official as Director of Policy Planning at the State Department.⁴⁷ The job fit Paul Wolfowitz like a glove. He was in charge of working out new policies and improving excising ones. Working under both Alexander Haig and George Schultz, Wolfowitz would rise the ranks at State becoming Assistant Secretary for East Asia and the Pacific, and later U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia.⁴⁸ While on East Asia and the Pacific, Wolfowitz began working closely with the Pentagon representative on the issue, Richard Armitage. The two men would later join the administration of George Walker Bush on reversed sides, causing their friendship to evaporate.⁴⁹

Having met Paul Wolfowitz on several occasions, Dick Cheney was impressed by Wolfowitz' intellectual capabilities and his conservative convictions on foreign policy. When Cheney was affirmed as Secretary of Defense in the first Bush administration, he brought Paul Wolfowitz back from Indonesia to serve as his Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.⁵⁰ With the fall of the Soviet Union, Wolfowitz was in charge of drafting a new political strategy for the U.S. military. In spite of losing its most powerful adversary, Wolfowitz believed in keeping U.S. military power strong and uncontested. The new strategy that was outlined by Wolfowitz and his deputies in a document named the *Defense Planning Guidance* (DPG). The document was labeled classified, but was leaked to the New York Times and published on March 8, 1992. It stated that the United States should manifest its position as the sole super power of the world and ensure that “no rival superpower is allowed to emerge in Western Europe, Asia or the territory of the former Soviet Union”.⁵¹ In a time when most of the world was baffled by the fall of the communist regime in Moscow, Wolfowitz staked out North Korea and the Middle East as the main foci of American foreign policy. The

strategy of preemption was another concept that was introduced by the DPG. The document caused a stir and Secretary of Defense Cheney ordered a new and revised strategy. Behind closed doors at the Pentagon, the strategy was hailed by Cheney, Wolfowitz and less influential officials, all of who would later play important roles in the second Bush administration.⁵²

Taking part in the Gulf War preparations for the first Bush administration, Wolfowitz affirmed his hawkish foreign policy convictions by siding with Cheney in the debates Wolfowitz had warned about a possible shift in the geopolitical balance of the Middle East a decade earlier, and he had not changed his mind in stating that the United States should engage itself with a military presence and he believed that President Bush had ended the war prematurely.⁵³ Having established himself as a Republican, Paul Wolfowitz left the Pentagon when the Clinton administration took office in 1993. He returned to Johns Hopkins University and remained on the job as dean while working for the presidential campaigns of Bob Dole and George W. Bush and participating in both the Project for the New American Century and the Congressional Policy Advisory Board.⁵⁴ During the presidential campaign of George W. Bush, Wolfowitz and Condoleezza Rice served as Bush's primary foreign policy advisors. Wolfowitz did play an important role, but he did not enjoy the close relationship with Bush that Rice did. The two men were inherently different characters: Wolfowitz, a formal intellectual with a toned down behavior contrasted the outgoing and informal younger Bush.⁵⁵

2.2.4. Colin Powell

Colin Powell got his first taste of professional life in Washington through multiple assignments at the Pentagon while serving in the United States Army. After joining the Reserve Officer's Training Corps (ROTC) in college, Colin Powell chose the United States Army as his career path. Powell enjoyed being a reserve in College and being an African American in the late 1950s, Powell believed the military to be the most promising career choice. After serving two tours in Vietnam and getting his MBA at George Washington University in Washington D.C., Powell was recruited to the Pentagon to work in the office of the Army Vice Chief of Staff.⁵⁶ After winning a fellowship to work under Caspar Weinberger and Frank Carlucci at the Office of Management and Budget in the Nixon administration in 1972, Powell got his first experience working with civilians at the Pentagon. Powell got praise for doing an

excellent job and after having returned to Vietnam in 1973, he was recruited to the Carter administration in 1977. Powell was first offered a job on Zbigniew Brzezinski's National Security Council staff, but passed on the position and was later offered a Pentagon job he accepted. Working for the Deputy Secretary of Defense Powell gained further experience with working in the civilian part of the Pentagon. He would soon get the reputation as a skilled mediator between the military commanders and the civilian bureaucrats at the Pentagon and it gave Powell ample knowledge about the massive Pentagon bureaucracy and how Washington worked.⁵⁷ Powell would continue work at the office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense when Frank Carlucci and the Regan administration took over in 1981.⁵⁸ While working at the civilian offices of the Pentagon, Powell continued his service in the United States Army.

Early in the Reagan administration Powell left the Pentagon to serve a military assignment at Fort Carson and Fort Leavenworth. After becoming established in the Washington bureaucracy, Powell had several short-term assignments with the Army. However, because of his political and bureaucratic skills, it did not take long before he was requested back at the Pentagon.⁵⁹ Having brilliant people-skills, Powell continued to serve as a mediator between civilians and the military leaders. He rose the ranks of the civilian offices and soon found himself working as military aide to Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. Serving as another one of Weinberger's aids was Navy officer Richard Armitage. The two men worked closely together and would later form a strong leadership at the State Department during the George W. Bush administration. The two Vietnam veterans would handle most of the daily tasks and got the reputation of "running the building".⁶⁰

When the Iran-Contra Scandal broke in the fall of 1986, President Reagan was forced to make changes to his cabinet. Reagan had to replace several of his senior advisors and cabinet members because of their role in what would become a criminal investigation. The president appointed Frank Carlucci to be his National Security Advisor. Powell had worked closely with Carlucci at the Pentagon for several years and Carlucci brought his right hand man with him to the White House, making Powell the Deputy National Security Advisor.⁶¹ Less than a year later, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger had to resign his position as Secretary of Defense because of the Iran-Contra investigation, passing the job on to his former deputy, Frank Carlucci. Colin Powell moved up the ladder, becoming Reagan's sixth National Security Advisor. Powell stayed on the job until Reagan left office on January 20, 1989.⁶² Powell left

Washington to work for the United States Army again and his excellent military career would be manifested when he was given command of the U.S. Forces Command in Atlanta, making him a four-star general.⁶³

Dick Cheney would make sure that Powell's tour outside of Washington did not last long. After only six months in office, President Bush had to appoint a new Chairman to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Several candidates were suggested, but Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney convinced President Bush that Colin Powell was the man for the job. Cheney had been lobbied by several of the former republican officials in the Reagan administration to ensure the seat of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was handed over to Colin Powell.⁶⁴ The appointment made Powell the first African-American Chairman and the youngest to serve in the position. In addition, Powell was the only Chairman to ever have served in a cabinet-level position prior to being appointed Chairman of the JCS. The two men would work close together during their time in the first Bush administration.⁶⁵ However, Cheney and undersecretary Paul Wolfowitz would take an approach towards the use of military force that did not sit well with Chairman Powell. The three would be engaged in several heated discussions with regards to the Gulf War, and it would be the start of the conflict that would later be continued while the two men served in the George W. Bush cabinet.⁶⁶ Serving as Chairman under George H.W. Bush, Powell became one of the most notable people in the administration. Despite being characterized as foreign policy doves before taking office, President Bush and his foreign policy team would demonstrate tough tactics and realism in practice by using military force on several occasions. Because of the "hands on" military policy of the administration, Powell and Cheney would often appear in press briefings and conferences. The "backseat" personality of Secretary of Defense Cheney, made Powell the most visible figure and he gained extreme popularity because of his ability to reach out to the people and oozing authority: The military interventions in Panama and Iraq would make Colin Powell a national celebrity.⁶⁷ He proved that he was not only a soldier that had gotten ahead because of his hard work and sacrifices, but that he also could handle challenges of a politician. After his term as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff expired in 1993, Powell retired from the United States Army.

During George W. Bush's 2000 presidential campaign Powell became an important contributor. However, unlike the other participants that would become a part of Bush's Senior Foreign Policy team, Powell did not have a role that made him establish a close relationship with Bush. Because of his well-known name and charisma,

Powell dealt with the public and worked to increase political support for the Bush campaign. That is not to say that the role Powell played was any less important than the others, and he did influence policy, but he was distanced from the “detailed deliberations” that were taking place with the presidential candidate.⁶⁸ Enjoying a celebrity status with the public, Powell was good to have on the team. This would prove to be important later during the presidency as well, when Powell continued to have higher approval ratings than his Commander in Chief.⁶⁹

2.2.5 Condoleezza Rice

Condoleezza Rice began her Washington career working for the Joint Chiefs of Staff on nuclear strategic planning during the Reagan administration. Rice was brought to Washington in 1986 to work at the Pentagon on the merits of her professional career at Stanford University. She had initially sought out a career within music, but after being introduced to Professor Josef Korbel at University of Denver, (later Secretary of State Madeleine Albright’s father) Rice changed her major to international relations. Excelling at almost anything she took part of, Rice would at the age of nineteen go on to get her master’s degree in Soviet Studies at Notre Dame. She returned to the University of Denver to obtain her doctorate degree in 1981, and once she finished, she was recruited to the faculty of Stanford University.⁷⁰

Rice identified herself with the realist school of international relations, and as a reaction to the Carter administration’s Soviet policy, she would vote for the Republican candidate, Ronald Reagan in the presidential 1980 election. Prior to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian revolution, Rice had identified herself as a Democrat and much like Colin Powell, it was the Wilsonian inspired foreign policy of President Carter that had alienated the two and turned both Powell and Rice away from the Democratic Party.⁷¹ They both wanted a tougher policy that did not undermine American power. However, Rice was not fully convinced by Reagan’s rhetorical bonanza against the Soviet Union⁷², and she would not define herself as a Reaganite. Rice did, however, admit that the foreign policy of the Reagan administration had affected her view on the role of values in the foreign policy arena: “Like most Americans, I listened with some skepticism to the Cold War claim that America was a *beacon of democracy*.”⁷³ After seeing the fall of the iron curtain in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Rice admitted that the United States had in fact been a beacon of democracy.⁷⁴ After having served on the nuclear strategic planning group at the office

of the JSC, Rice returned to the Stanford campus to teach. Not until after the 1988 election when Brent Scowcroft contacted her for a position on the NSC, did Rice return to Washington.

In the administration of George H.W. Bush, Rice worked on the staff of National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft. She had developed a good reputation with several people in Washington while working in academia, and she would live up to the expectations while establishing herself as Director, and later, Senior Director of Soviet and Eastern European affairs at the NSC-staff: “She was down-to-earth, politically skilled and engaging, but also firm and decisive.”⁷⁵ Working closely with Brent Scowcroft, Rice would learn much from the experienced official. Scowcroft had served in Washington for nearly three decades, and would run the NSC in an efficient and orderly manner. When Rice later became the National Security Advisor to George W. Bush, she would try to adopt the way Scowcroft had run the organization.⁷⁶ Rice formed a close bond, not only with her boss Scowcroft, but also with President George H.W. Bush himself. The bond with the Bush family would later help ensure her a senior position within the second Bush administration.⁷⁷ While serving the NSC in the first Bush administration, Rice would acquire valuable experience working in the federal government. The internal organization of the first Bush cabinet left much of the policy process to the deputy committees, and serving as a deputy in the administration, Rice was very much involved in making policy.⁷⁸ In addition, she would get to know and work with several of the people she would later work closely together with during the George W. Bush administration: Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Armitage, and Colin Powell.

During the time Rice served on the NSC in the first Bush administration, a pivotal transformation was taking place in the field in which Rice was an expert: the Eastern European nations removed the infamous *iron curtain* and the Soviet Union collapsed. The Cold War had played such an important geopolitical role that the United States had to rethink its entire foreign policy strategy. Policy towards the Soviet Union, and later Russia, became the most time consuming issue within the administration, and Rice led the group that handled much of the policy process.⁷⁹ There were some debate within the administration between so-called hawks and doves on how to manage the major transitions that were going on. Another one of Rice’s characteristics that became evident during that time was her remarkable talent for adapting and working with people. She managed to get both sides to believe that she was with them.⁸⁰

After playing a major role in the NSC staff in the first Bush administration, Condoleezza Rice returned to Stanford University in 1991. She left the administration early to become a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. Only two years after returning to Stanford, Rice was offered the job as provost. While serving as the head administrator at Stanford, Rice led the school through numerous reforms, causing much stir. In addition to her formidable work effort, Rice had several other engagements: she served on the board of Chevron, managed to find time to teach an international relations class, serve on a thesis committee and help run a volunteer organization called *The Center for a New Generation*.⁸¹ Being able to manage the numerous roles she had while working outside of Washington as successfully as she did is telling about Rice's abilities as a skilled administrator.

Much of the foreign policy agenda of the Bush campaign was laid out in an article written by Condoleezza Rice in *Foreign Affairs* that was published in the January-February issue of 2000. Rice served as Bush's main foreign policy advisor during the campaign, and in the article she clearly indicates the Bush-team's approach to foreign policy. As presidential candidate, Bush stated that "A campaign platform is not just something you use to get elected. It is a blueprint for what you do in office"⁸². Indicating that the points made by Rice in her article would be the basis of his administration's foreign policy. Rice recognized that the United States was in a position where no single power can challenge the United States, and that the next president should not be hesitant in managing the role as world hegemon. Rice also concluded that the United States should have a military that can respond with force if it proved necessary in order to ensure continued dominance.⁸³ The agenda that was laid out by Rice during the 2000 presidential campaign did not come as a shock to many. On the credentials of his father's foreign policy, it was expected that Bush would lead a traditionalist and realistic foreign policy.⁸⁴ "I would be very careful about using our troops as nation builders. I believe the role of the military is to fight and win war... I don't want to try to put our troops in all the places at all times. I don't want to be the world's policeman."⁸⁵ However, as we will see later in this thesis, events that would occur during Bush's first term would ensure the dominance of a militarized foreign policy that would cause much controversy.

2.2.6 George Walker Bush

As mentioned previously, the foreign policy experience of George W. Bush was miniscule when he was elected president in 2000. Bush did, however, come from a family of vast political experience, and he had served as Governor of Texas for six years when he was elected President. Bush's grandfather, Prescott Bush, had served as a Senator representing Connecticut and his father, George Herbert Walker Bush, had been a U.S. Congressman representing Texas, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., chairman of the Republican National Committee, Chief liaison to China, Director of the CIA and Vice President before being elected the 41st President of the United States in 1988.⁸⁶ His brother, John "Jeb" Bush has also made an impressive career as a civil servant and was elected Governor of Florida in 1998.⁸⁷

Before engaging himself fully in politics, George W. Bush had made a name for himself in the Texas oil and energy industry. After finishing his MBA from Harvard Business School, Bush moved back to his childhood hometown of Midland, Texas. Bush's father had been successful in the Midland oil business and Bush Jr. was working to get his own oil company running. With the credentials the Bush name had, both on a local and national level, Bush was able to attract investors. His oil exploration and development company, Spectrum 7, struggled during the 1980s and was at the verge of collapsing. Working in the Midland oil business proved to be a tough time. However, Bush was able to get his company merged with Harken Oil and Gas, a larger and more successful company, in 1986. Because of his recognizable name, Bush was able to get the investors interested and secured his financial future. Bush stated himself that "I'm all name and no money". He would continue to work in the Texas oil business until 1990 when he sold his stock in Harken Oil and Gas.⁸⁸ The assets Bush would gain from the merge with Harken were used to buy a big share in the Baseball team Texas Rangers in 1989.

In the mean time, while working in the oil business, Bush had gotten some political experience from working on his father's and a few other Republican congressional campaigns. In 1978, Bush had attempted to run for a seat in the U.S. Congress. He was able to get the Republican nomination, beating an established and well-known Republican candidate. However, in the final race, Bush lost to the Democratic candidate.⁸⁹ Not long after the loss, Bush's father announced that he would be running in the Republican primaries to ensure a nomination for the 1980 presidential election and George W. Bush would expand his campaign experience by taking part in

the national campaign. In 1988, George W. and Jeb were invited to take part in the Presidential campaign that won their father the position as the President of the United States. George W. did not have a formal role in the campaign, but his father did take his opinions into consideration.⁹⁰ An important sign of George W's influence and standing with his father came prior the 1992 reelection campaign, when President Bush asked his son to fire John Sununu, the President's Chief of Staff.⁹¹ After the 1988 campaign, Bush returned to Texas to help run the Major League team he had become a co-owner of, the Texas Rangers.⁹²

In 1992, Bush would participate on his father's reelection campaign. Bush's father lost the 1992 election, and the campaign was the last political campaign he would be a part of before he would run again himself in 1994, this time for the seat at Governor of Texas. Bush announced his candidacy for the gubernatorial race in fall of 1993, challenging the Democratic incumbent Ann Richardson. He was elected Governor of Texas on November 8, 1994, beating Richardson with 53 to 45 percent of the votes. Bush was reelected four years later with a staggering 69 percent of the votes.⁹³ While serving as the Governor of Texas, Bush continued many of the reforms that were started by former governor Richards. Focusing on education reform, Bush gets the reputation as a bipartisan player. At the time, Democrats had much leverage in the Texas legislature, and Bush worked with them to get previous policies reformed and new ones passed.⁹⁴ The political experience George Walker Bush got while serving as Governor of Texas was important with regards to his presidency. Serving as a successful governor, Bush was able to oversee policy process and making, and he got valuable executive experience. Bush established himself as an effective decision maker, and he would have good use of the years as Governor of Texas after he was sworn in as the 43rd President of the United States of America on January 20, 2001.

Less than a year after the landslide reelection for his second consecutive term as Governor of Texas, George W. Bush announced his candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination in June of 1999.⁹⁵ In the Republican primary, Bush would run a tough battle against Republican opponent, John McCain. The Bush campaign gained momentum after launching an effective, but brutal smearing campaign against McCain during the South Carolina primary⁹⁶, and on August 3, 2000 Bush accepted the Republican nomination for the 2000 presidential campaign at the Republican National Convention.⁹⁷ In a close and memorable presidential campaign that would focus on domestic issues, Bush ran against current Vice President Al Gore. George W. Bush was

announced the winner on December 12, 2000 after the election had been disputed for 36 days. It had been going several rounds in the Florida courts system after Bush initially had been announced the winner on eve of election night, November 7, 2000. The debacle went all the way to the United States Supreme Court, where the ruling from the Florida Supreme Court in *Bush v. Gore* to order a manual recount in several counties was overturned and Bush was announced president elect.⁹⁸

During the 2000 election campaign, George Walker Bush had assembled an impressive political team to help run the campaign and be his political advisors. In spite of not having any formal personal experience with the political life in Washington, Bush had gotten contacts through his father and a his long time engagement in the Republican Party had ensured a formidable political network. Every member of Bush's foreign policy team that has been accounted for above participated on some level of the campaign. And even if Bush ran his campaign based on domestic issues, foreign policy was brought up several times during the campaign. Bush did not impress the press or the public when he was caught off guard. Failing to give account for basic knowledge about foreign policy and international relations was ridiculed in the press, and Bush often had to tell the public that a strong foreign policy team would compensate his shortcomings.⁹⁹ This indicated that Bush would be a weak foreign policy president. However, Bush would use his leader capabilities in the policy process and apply his personal convictions to the foreign policy principles when serving as president. The second President Bush might not have had the vast foreign policy experience his father enjoyed when he took office, but he would, according to administration officials be the uncontested leader that made the final decisions.¹⁰⁰

2.3. U.S.-Iranian Relations in the Cold War Era.

During the initial stages of the Cold War, the United States got heavily involved in the Middle East as a part of their anti-communist containment policy. A nationalistic movement was growing across the Arabic world as a response to decades of oppression by the Western empires. Having been subject to the French, British and Russian dominance during the 19th and early 20th century, a nationalistic movement would also establish itself in the only non-Arabic country in the region: Iran. The nationalists wanted the western imperial powers to give up much of their economic engagements in their former colonies and provide their profits to the newly established nations and governments and rightful owners. This nationalism was often conceived as being

communist in the sense that it stood for expropriation of western assets and it wanted to get rid of the capitalist domination of their region. In several attempts to limit the spread of communism, the United States began engaging itself in the internal politics of several of the Middle Eastern countries. In 1953, the United States staged a coup that overthrew the democratically elected nationalist Prime Minister of Iran, Muhammad Mossadeq. Mossadeq had nationalized Iranian oil to ensure the profits would go to the Iranian people and not to the western powers. In fighting the battle with the British oil companies, he had greatly overstretched his powers and his government was appearing more and more autocratic. The United States had been working as mediator between Iran and Britain and was putting pressure on both actors to compromise on a middle ground. However, because of his attempts to increase his own influence and power, Mossadeq was losing support from several of the groups that had stood behind him in the fight against the western powers. In a desperate move to provoke the United States into real action against the British oil companies, Mossadeq eventually aligned himself with the Iranian communists. The move was a poor calculation and caused the United States to overthrow the Iranian Prime Minister in a CIA led operation after President Eisenhower had invoked the central motif of the Cold War era policy approach: you're either with or against the United States in the fight against communism.¹⁰¹

After the successful removal of the nationalist leader, the United States would find a close ally in the authoritarian King, or “Shah” of Iran. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi had been the leader of Iran since the British and Soviet forces had installed him to serve as an ally in 1941. The monarch gained much power from the collapse of the parliament that had supported Prime Minister Mossadeq for several years in his fight for Iranian natural resources and he would develop the monarchy into a dictatorial power with the regent as the sole leader. Being an anti-communist regime with strategic importance, Iran became an important ally for the United States in the region during the reign of the Shah. As a result of the new regime, the Iranian people got less of the proceeds from the natural resources, the wealthy business owners grew even wealthier, the peasants suffered and unemployment rates grew. Attempts for reform failed, and the monarch grew more and more unpopular. Several opposition groups began rising and the regime struck down hard on the opposition. The Iranian monarchy was a secular regime that stirred opposition from the powerful Iranian clergy. The Iranian clergy had much influence with the Iranian people because of their central positions in the local communities, and when the Shah imposed land reforms that took away much of the

wealth of the religious establishments, the clergy began organizing a strong opposition in the vastly religious population.

In the 1970s, conditions for the Iranian people worsened even more in spite of growing oil revenues. Having nurtured strong relations with the United States since the early 1950s, the Shah was seen by the Iranian people and the surrounding Arabic states as an American puppet and the opposition groups gained more and more support with their anti-Shah and anti-American rhetoric.¹⁰² The Iranian people had had enough of the oppression from the Shah and his brutal police force and in the fall of 1977 the people began to rise up against the Shah in the form of massive demonstrations initiated by students. The demonstrations continued in spite of the massive force the security forces of the Shah used against the masses, public unrest grew and the Shah was losing support from his international allies. In January 1979 the Shah resigned and left Iran to find exile. Only two weeks after his departure, the clergy opposition leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who had been living in exile in Turkey and Iraq, returned to Tehran and seized power. The loss of an important ally in the Persian Gulf was devastating to the Carter administration. In spite of having put pressure on the Shah to improve humanitarian conditions in Iran, the Carter administration had not anticipated the overthrow of the regime and the establishment of an Islamic Republic. Anti-Americanism had been a driving force for the Khomeini opposition, and the animosity towards the United States continued after the clergy had formed an Islamic Republic.¹⁰³

The fate of Iranian-American relations, however, was not sealed until students linked with the communist opposition in Iran, seized the American embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979 and held sixty-six Americans hostages for 444 days. The seizure was a response to American involvement in the toppling of Mossadeq in 1953 and continued support for the Shah in the following decades. The trigger was the Carter administration's allowance of the Shah to receive medical treatment in the United States after having troubles finding exile. The students did not adhere to the Khomeini government, but Iranian authorities did not do anything to stop the seizure and would encourage the hostage takers as the crisis unfolded. The hostage crisis got much American publicity and it caused the Carter administration to lose much of its credibility with the American people. Khomeini had used the hostage crisis to unite the Iranian people after the revolution and ensure that there would be no working relations with Iran and the United States.¹⁰⁴

Following the Iranian Revolution, American policy towards the Islamic regime was practically non-existing. In 1980, Republican candidate Ronald Reagan had won a landslide victory over incumbent President Jimmy Carter. The mishandling of the Iranian Revolution had been one of the contributing factors to the loss for the Democratic President, and Reagan had run a campaign focusing on a dramatic turn in American foreign policy. The humiliation of President Carter was complete when Khomeini pressured the students that were holding the hostages at the American embassy, to release them on the inauguration day of President Reagan, January 20, 1981.¹⁰⁵

Reagan promoted a hard-line approach to American involvement with other governments and wanted to include American ideals and values in the administration's foreign policy.¹⁰⁶ Reagan continued to run a public non-involvement policy with Iran, and favored Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in the Iran-Iraq war that lasted from 1980-1988. However, covertly, the Reagan administration attempted engagement with the Iranian moderates.¹⁰⁷ The secret dealings with Iran would climax in a scandal that would cause the Reagan administration to lose credibility and that would result in the criminal convictions of several of the Reagan administration officials. The *Iran-Contra Affair* had been a National Security Council and CIA operation that had been initiated to covertly help Israel sell American weapons to Iran as a way of balancing the increasing power of Saddam Hussein. Iraq was on the verge of winning the war against Iran, and Israeli authorities believed that Saddam would turn his military power against Israel if it won a clear-cut victory over Iran. To secure continued military balance between Iran and Iraq, Israel began providing Iran with weapons. The United States got involved and used the proceeds from the sale of weapons to Iran to finance Nicaraguan opposition groups. When the secret dealings were revealed in November 1986, the Reagan administration took a tough blow as several of its most influential members were charged with felonies and the double standards of the policy against Iran was revealed. The Reagan administration recovered, but U.S.-Iranian relations soured even more.¹⁰⁸ As we will see later in this thesis, U.S.-Iranian relations would continue to be disputed in the administrations that followed the end of the Cold War.

Notes, Chapter 2.

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- ³ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 261,264.
- ⁴ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 79-80
- ⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 210.
- ⁶ Bob Woodward. *State of Denial* (London, UK. Pocket Books. 2007), xi-xiii., George W. Bush. *Decision Points* (United Kingdom, Virgin Books. 2010), 83-84.
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- ⁸ John Ehrlichman, *Witness to Power*. (New York. Simon & Schuster. 1982), 103
- ⁹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 9, 14-20.
- ¹⁰ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 112, 158-160
- ¹¹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 59
- ¹² Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 19.
- ¹³ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 61.
- ¹⁴ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 65-68
- ¹⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 123.
- ¹⁶ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 125.
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- ²⁰ Elaine Sciolino & Eric Schmitt. "Defense Choice Made a Name As an Infighter". *The New York Times*. January 8, 2001.
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- ²³ Woodward, *State of Denial*, 17.
- ²⁴ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 58
- ²⁵ Sciolino and Schmitt, "Defense Choice".
- ²⁶ Robert Ellsworth, quoted in Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 58.
- ²⁷ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 11
- ²⁸ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 59
- ²⁹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 71-73.
- ³⁰ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 97.
- ³¹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 213., PBS Frontline. "Bush's War – Part One". *PBS Frontline Documentary*. Aired: 03.24.08.
- ³² Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 169.
- ³³ Brent Scowcroft quoted in Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 170.
- ³⁴ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 177-178.
- ³⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 181, 184.
- ³⁶ John Broder, "Presidential Timber? Cheney Lets Chips Fall as He Gains Stature," *Los Angeles Times*, October 30, 1990. p. H3.
- ³⁷ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 229.
- ³⁸ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 252
- ³⁹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 31
- ⁴⁰ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 26, 30
- ⁴¹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 34, 22
- ⁴² Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 76.
- ⁴³ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 91
- ⁴⁴ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 80-83
- ⁴⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 88.
- ⁴⁶ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 98-99.
- ⁴⁷ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 109.
- ⁴⁸ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 151
- ⁴⁹ Richard Armitage, "Showdown with Iran", *Frontline*. Aired: 10.23.07.

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- ⁵⁴ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 227, 231-233, 238.
- ⁵⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 251.
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- ⁵⁷ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 100-101.
- ⁵⁸ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 117.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid
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- ⁶² Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 154-158
- ⁶³ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 176
- ⁶⁴ Christopher O'Sullivan. *Colin Powell*. (Maryland. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc. 2009), 76.
- ⁶⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 176-177
- ⁶⁶ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 184
- ⁶⁷ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 181.182
- ⁶⁸ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 254.
- ⁶⁹ Woodward, *State of Denial*, 245.
- ⁷⁰ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 145-147.
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- ⁷⁷ Woodward, *State of Denial*, 5-6.
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- ⁸⁴ Maureen Dowd. "When the Boy King Ruled" *New York Times*, December 31, 2000., Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 315
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<http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/00-949.ZPC.html> Accessed: 02.13.11
- ⁹⁹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 255
- ¹⁰⁰ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, xviii
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Chapter 3. Foreign Policy Infighting: Turf Wars and Interagency Coalitions

I want to remind everyone that it is not organizations that get things done. It's not fancy charts or plans. The only thing that gets everything done is people. And the only thing that counts is the people you select for the jobs you have. ... Because it isn't the process or the system as much as it is the people who form the process or system and who make it work – or who are responsible for its failings.¹

-Colin Powell

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter gave a short summary of the political careers of the most important individuals in the Bush administration's foreign policy team. This chapter will take a closer look at how these individuals and their agencies related to each other and influenced foreign policy during George W. Bush's first presidential term. The policy making process is influenced on several different levels: system-level, state-level, and individual-level.² Each of these levels is tremendously important and plays a distinctive role in shaping and guiding the policy making process. This project examines individual-level influence on foreign policy process under President George Walker Bush, from his inauguration on January 20, 2001 to the 2004 presidential election. During this time-period, the Bush administration faced great challenges with regards to foreign policy. Much of the attention that was paid to the policy process at the time came as a response to the 9/11 attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were parts of the more general policy of a war on terror and would dominate much of the coverage of American foreign policy during Bush's first term. The two wars would, however, also play a crucial role in shaping U.S. policy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran.

It has been stated that during the Bush administration, much of the foreign policy decisions were made by Vice President Dick Cheney and that the role of President George W. Bush in the policy process was limited. President Bush has,

however, been greatly underestimated and there were, according to several of the senior officials, the President that made the final decisions.³ Being the chief executive and commander in chief, President Bush played a crucial and decisive role when it came to shaping the controversial policies the administration would implement. However, even if President Bush was the person giving the final order for how policies would be executed, decision-making have been labeled to be *organizational behavior*. A person in charge of making tough decisions, is greatly influenced by his or her own experience, the experience and opinions of people surrounding them and the level of communication and how it is passed on to and by people.⁴ Debates and disagreements within the administration, combined with the experience of the people involved, are examples of organizational behavior and played crucial roles in shaping the outcome of the foreign policy process of the Bush administration by influencing the President.

In his book *Running the World*, David Rothkopf argues that the administration was shaped by:

the personal and professional relationships – between the president and the vice president, the president and his national security advisor, the vice president and the secretary of defense, and the secretary of defense and the secretary of state – and by one pivotal moment which occurred early on the morning of September 11, 2001.⁵

Quarrels between State Department officials and officials at the Department of Defense would spill out in public, and the failure of President Bush and his national security advisor, Condoleezza Rice, to settle these arguments within the administration would contribute to what many would see as mishandling of foreign policy. This was the case with both the war in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq, and also with regards to the nation set in the middle of the conflict area: Iran.

3.2 A Military Generation: The Vietnam and Cold War Legacy

The Vietnam War can be seen as one of the dark patches of the history of the United States. Engaging the United States in the Vietnam War was a part of containment policy in South East Asia.⁶ Korea had proved to be a tough cookie in the 1950s, and American engagement in Vietnam would contribute further to the questioning of American power. *Declinism* – a belief that was growing exponentially

with the failures of the United States in Vietnam, underscored that the United States had reached its peak and was gradually losing power. It became one of the dominating factors in American foreign policy during the early 1970s and was the basis for President Nixon's *détente* with China and the Soviet Union.⁷ As we have seen in the first chapter, several of the senior advisors of President Bush began their political careers while the United States was engaged in Vietnam. Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, and Paul Wolfowitz were all members of the Nixon administration during the time the administration was working for withdrawal of American troops and the three were strong advocates for ending the Vietnam War. After being involved in Vietnam for almost a decade, the war had been labeled a *quagmire* that undermined American power. Poorly equipped guerrilla fighters held down the powerful American military and the war grew immensely unpopular. President Nixon had run on a promise of getting the United States out of Vietnam during the 1968 election, and when he hesitated, Nixon faced a public uproar.⁸ The declinism of the Nixon administration was rejected by all of the senior members of George W. Bush's foreign policy team. One of the few commonalities all the members had were their strong belief in American power and that the United States remained a viable force against the communist states during the Cold War, and that it took on the role as hegemon after the Cold War.⁹

Donald Rumsfeld was opposed to continued American engagement in Vietnam, but he did not believe that the loss of the United States Military in Vietnam was proof of a waning giant. Rumsfeld and his assistant, Dick Cheney, began working against *détente* because they believed it to be a declinist policy. They believed the United States should not have to engage itself in a policy where the focus was turned away from increasing the power balance against the Soviet Union and they worried about making diplomatic concessions and deals with communist governments the norm of U.S. foreign policy. In spite of not agreeing with the realism of Kissinger and Nixon, Rumsfeld and Cheney are promoting realist principles as the core of their foreign policy. When the United States began withdrawing its troops from Vietnam in 1973, it appeared to be a split in the American people. To many people, the Vietnam War had been a political rather than military failure - it did not prove that American power was diminishing, but that the military had failed because of poor leadership. Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney believed that American power still served as a viable deterrent against the Soviet Union and other communist regimes across the world. Others believed that the United States was losing ground to the Soviet Union and other communist states and

that it should adapt its foreign policy to take into account that the peak of American power had been reached. *The Vietnam Syndrome* that appeared from the humiliation of the United States Military in Vietnam would cause many officials to hesitate or avoid advocating the use of military force for many years.¹⁰ Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Wolfowitz continued to work at the Pentagon in the years following the Vietnam War and the experience of the Vietnam War and its consequences would be important prerequisites for when they later would be outlining the foreign policy of the Bush administration. During the Cold War, the administrations that held power had dealt with state actors that posed different levels of threats against the United States. The realist notion that the state was the most important, and at times the only viable actor, was the general assumption and it would prove to be extremely hard for the officials that had served most of their official careers in Washington during the Cold War to let go of the belief that a state had to be a part of any major plan after the terrorist networks began waging their unconventional warfare against western states after the end of the Cold War.¹¹ This would be evident in the George W. Bush administration and its implementation of the War on Terror.

For Colin Powell, the Vietnam War had profound impact on his view of the civilian leaders at the Pentagon. Powell got involved in the Vietnam War early on by being one of the first U.S. military personnel that would participate in the initial escalation of U.S. military presence in Vietnam in 1962.¹² He served two tours during the war and experienced first hand the apparent mismanagement he believed came from the civilian leaders at the Pentagon. During and after the war, the Pentagon was divided between the civilians and the military brass, and when Rumsfeld became Secretary of Defense, his relentless leadership style would further the divide. Vietnam veteran and journalist Robert Timberg stated in his book *The Nightingale's Song* that "There's a wall ten miles high and fifty miles thick between those of us who went and those who didn't, and that wall is never going to come down".¹³ On the eve of the Cold War, this split would become evident during the first Bush administration when Powell, serving as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and, Secretary of Defense Cheney would clash over the Gulf War: "This man, who had never spent a day in uniform, who, during the Vietnam War, had gotten a student deferment and later a parent deferment had taken instant control of the Pentagon".¹⁴ Powell was not content that the civilian leaders at the Pentagon were risking the lives of U.S. soldiers without having any combat experience themselves.

Colin Powell had initially supported the humanitarian motivations for going to war in Vietnam: to secure the freedom of the South Vietnamese people and limit the spread of communism for the sake of the Vietnamese people. The experience did not turn Powell away from the belief in military power and much of Powell's affiliation with the Republican Party was based on its strong belief in the United States as a strong military power. However, Vietnam would be the crucial factor in outlining what would eventually be known as the *Powell Doctrine*.¹⁵ During the Reagan administration, Powell had worked closely with Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. Weinberger and Powell would draft a clear strategy for the use of military power when pursuing national interest. Military spending was one of the most important policies of the Regan administration, and it laid the ground for a massive build up of the United States Military. While in office, Weinberger and Powell experienced the consequences of the attack on the Marine Barracks in Lebanon. This, combined with the consequences of the Vietnam War furthered their belief in a doctrine of overwhelming force and they would work out what would initially be called the *Weinberger Doctrine*. Later, when applied to military operations and policy deliberations by General Powell during the first Bush administration, it was renamed the *Powell Doctrine*.¹⁶ Inspired by Carl von Clausewitz, the doctrine stated that the United States should only engage itself in military conflict if the vital interests of the United States or its allies were at stake, that overwhelming force would be issued, that clearly stated military and political objectives were at hand and that these objectives could be changed if the situation called for it, the deployment of military force should have popular support, and it should only be used as a last resort.¹⁷

Powell recognized that the United States had lost credibility with the failure of the Vietnam War, and he believed that the costs of another military failure would be too great, not only for the people who served in uniform and their families, but for the United States as a great power.¹⁸ Strategically, the United States could not afford another loss like Vietnam and when faced with opposition in both the first and second Bush administrations, Powell continued to advocate the elements of the Powell Doctrine. Use of the Powell Doctrine during the first Bush administration in Panama, Grenada and Iraq proved the success of overwhelming force, and restored a belief in American military power.¹⁹ James Mann argues that the profound experience of the Vietnam War held such an impact on several of the people that would later play significant roles in "Bush's War Cabinet", that they would continue with a mindset that

“led to the preoccupation with first regaining and then maintaining American military power.”²⁰ This belief was a common denominator for all of President George W. Bush’s most senior advisors.

3.3.1 Nature of Administration

When President George W. Bush was inaugurated on January 20, 2001, many people expected his foreign policy to be a continuation of his father’s realist approach to international affairs. The younger Bush had included many of the people that had staffed his father’s cabinet in his own administration. In spite of this, the foreign policy of the younger Bush would prove to be quite different from that of his father. Several factors played key roles, and one of the most important was the nature of the administration. David Rothkopf stressed the importance of presidential character and experience in shaping the nature of the administration and thus the outcome of policy process.²¹ George W. Bush came to Washington after winning the 2000 presidential election with hardly any foreign policy experience. The only previous experience Bush had with D.C. politics had come though following the vast political career of his father. Bush had followed his father’s foreign policy closely, but had remained on the sidelines, not holding a single federal office during his own political career. However, Bush had gotten leadership experience by learning from his father, though local politics and private corporations. Serving as Governor of Texas and having prior leadership experience in business corporations, Bush had acquired leadership skills that would prove to be important in weighing up for his lack of foreign policy experience. Policy execution is the most revealing component of an administration, and it is when a president is forced to react that the true nature of the administration and the president is revealed. Colin Powell had served during both the elder and younger Bush, and recognized the importance of the presidential character: “Each president is different. Bush 43 is like 41 in that he is ready to act, but for 41 it was a more deliberate process whereas 43 is guided by a more powerful inertial navigation system than by intellect. He knows what he wants to do, and what he wants to hear is how to get it done”.²²

As Powell points out in his statement about the two Bush presidencies, the idiosyncratic traits of President George W. Bush would play an important role in determining how the administration would work. The President wanted debates and opposing arguments, but would most often in the end decide on what he had already concluded prior to hearing the arguments and advices from his officials.²³ A former

Bush insider, John J. DiIulio, confirms the importance of the president as the main decision maker during his presidency. Bush wanted his administration to work as a team, and he would play the role as team leader.²⁴ The way President Bush administrated his cabinet, allowing strong personalities to play equally important opposing roles and advocating discussion and disagreements, would determine the outcome of foreign policy process. Bush also advocated and welcomed the rather unusual and highly influential position of Vice President Cheney.²⁵ Bush has been described as having an active-positive leadership style that meant he took a clear interest in policy, and that he was willing to implement and act when he deemed it necessary.²⁶ Another important trait of the leadership style of President Bush was his approach to decision-making. Bush was not especially fond of the pragmatic intellectual approach to foreign policy, and he would state that he respected an approach to policy process that included gut feeling and heart more than the professional theoretical approach.²⁷ The way President Bush ran his cabinet also influenced the way other members of the administration ran their agencies and how they participated and influenced policy making. Each member of the cabinet was appointed to fill specific roles and the failure of President Bush and Condoleezza Rice to successfully manage their roles and way the cabinet was administrated allowed certain people to take more charge of the policy process than they were initially intended to. The “turf wars” that would split the foreign policy team during Bush’s first term put more pressure on the president to be the final decision maker. If the administration had had a clearly defined hierarchy with the people in charge ensuring that the other players would follow the rules, the foreign policy outcome might have been more successful. By imposing strict rules and direct leadership, the disagreements within the administration might have been channeled into better policy alternatives and a more comprehensive strategy in the war on terror.²⁸ Instead, Bush and Rice let the powerful advisors run their own game and allow interagency quarrels that would spill into the press and undermine the policy process.

The political climate the administration operates within is extremely important in shaping how people react to people or event, respond during the policy process and eventually implement policy. Events and outside influences are very important, and how the Bush administration reacted to defining events will be further explored in the next chapter. However, it is useful to map how the political climate influenced the Bush administration to understand the hierarchy that came to dominate the cabinet. Political

climate can cause tension and turmoil that drastically change the way an administration operate or even how participants within the administration relate to each other. During the first term of the Bush administration, the cabinet would eventually evolve into an untraditional hierarchy that blurred the policy process by preventing an efficient flow of information from agency to agency:

The attacks brought out the president's unilateral and chauvinistic instincts. A cult of personality began to grow up around him. Bush embraced a politically popular, but astonishingly simplistic, interpretation of the event, arguing publicly that America was engaged in a biblical struggle of "good" versus "evil", that others hated America for its freedoms.²⁹

The unusual hierarchy of the second Bush administration stemmed from former alliances that were mapped in the previous chapter. People serving together on previous occasions had formed such close ties that they would circumvent the traditional hierarchy that usually defines every administration. Officials serving at the Pentagon would enjoy closer ties to the West Wing via the Office of the Vice President and because they had closer personal ties with the president become more influential than the State Department officials. After the terrorist attacks on 9/11, President Bush identified more closely with the hawkish unilateralism that was represented by Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz than the multilateral internationalism of Colin Powell and his allies at the State Department. President Bush regarded the international political climate that came into place as a consequence of 9/11 of as being a state of war³⁰ and he would define policy and international relations in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in a dualistic way of good versus evil.³¹ The moral absolutes that would greatly influence the foreign policy President Bush and his team executed during their first term can be closely linked with both the personal convictions of President Bush that were based on idealistic principles linked to his strong faith in a Christian God, and to the ideology that would be "blamed" for the mishandling of the war on terror: neoconservatism.

3.3.2 Neoconservatism

Neoconservatism grew out of a group of largely liberal Jewish intellectuals that had established themselves at City College of New York prior to World War II. The

intellectuals had been identified with the liberal left, some were even communist themselves, but they shared a common distaste for the communists and liberals that did not recognize the tyranny of Stalinism. American intervention in World War II and the success of capitalism in purging Europe of fascism inspired the intellectuals to follow a more conservative path in what would eventually become a cold war. Irving Kristol and Norman Podhoretz have been identified as the two “godfathers of neoconservatism”³² and one of the leading philosophers that have been identified with neoconservative ideology was Leo Strauss. The neoconservative intellectuals identified with the Straussian notion of intertwined domestic and foreign policy and it was one of the most important foundations of neoconservatism during the 1960s and 1970s. According to Strauss, “foreign policy reflects the values of their underlying societies”, and so, domestic issues are key when it comes to shaping foreign policy. Straussian neoconservatives were more concerned about the effect domestic policies such as President Lyndon Johnson’s *The Great Society* had on American society than how the United States related to the Soviet Union and vice versa.³³

However, when the United States began its new approach to the Soviet Union and communism with *détente* at the beginning of the 1970s, several of the neoconservatives began focusing more on international relations and security issues. Albert Wohlstetter and his belief in extended deterrence and critique of Mutual Assured Deterrence (MAD) became the leading agenda for several of the neoconservatives. Wohlstetter and his followers, including Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle, began opposing *détente* and nuclear proliferation treaties between the United States and the Soviet Union. In addition to their focus on increased pressure on the Soviet Union, the neoconservatives that followed Wohlstetter began looking closer at the Middle East and the possible rise of nuclear issues in the region. With regards to military force, Wohlstetter advocated the precision targeting that would become the main strategy of the Pentagon during Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.³⁴ The importance of saving innocent lives rings with most people, and precision targeting was supported from a moral standpoint. However, it appears to be a double-edged sword. Because of the technological advanced that dominated American warfare since the end of the Cold War, military intervention carries less risk of combat fatalities and thus increases the incentives for military intervention. This was the argument from Donald Rumsfeld and it proved to be flawed with regards to both Afghanistan and Iraq.

After the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the end of the Cold War, the world order changed dramatically. The United States was deemed the victor of the Cold War, and a new foreign policy agenda had to be set. Neoconservatives had been promoting American power against the “evil empire” of the Soviet Union during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, and when the Soviet Union fell, neoconservatives soon began outlining a new approach to foreign policy. In 1992, a draft of the Defense Planning Guidance was leaked to the *New York Times*. The draft was ordered by then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and was written by Paul Wolfowitz’ assistant Zalmay Khalilzad under the supervision of Wolfowitz himself. Coming from the office of Paul Wolfowitz, the Defense Planning Guidance has been nicknamed the “Wolfowitz Doctrine” and several of its main components caused a stir in Washington and the first Bush administration. In addition to Khalilzad and Wolfowitz, Richard Perle and Albert Wohlstetter, all-powerful neoconservatives, contributed to outlining several of the policies in the draft. It called for the United States to work globally to ensure that no state would attempt to challenge the unique position the United States found itself in after the end of the Cold War. The goal of the United States is to stop other nations from attempting to establish themselves as regional powers or even to challenge the United States on the global scene. In addition, it drew upon Wolfowitz’ Limited Contingency Study from 1977 and concluded that the Middle East is a region vital to U.S. national interests: Securing access to oil and non-proliferation in the region set the agenda for a strong American presence in the region. If it serves the best interest of the United States, unilateralism and accompanying preemptive military operations was also considered to be a part of the United States’ foreign policy.³⁵ After the leak, the first Bush administration did all it could to bury the discussion and Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney ordered a new plan with less controversy. Privately, Cheney praised the first draft,³⁶ and much of the ideas that were first issued publicly in 1992 would later reemerge during the second Bush administration as what would be known as *The Bush Doctrine*.

Prior to the 1990s, neoconservatives had lacked much credibility with the Washington establishment. Their policies had been regarded as utopian and out of touch with reality. The fall of the Soviet Union had not been anticipated and the collapse caught Washington off guard and neoconservatism gained credibility by the fall of this “evil giant”. It validated the policy of regime change as an integral part of foreign policy.³⁷ The Kristol-Kagan neoconservatism that would later play an important role

during the Presidency of George W. Bush gained grounds from the new world order. In the 1990s, William Kristol³ and Robert Kagan began adding several components to the neoconservative block of the Republican Party that would put them at odds with other influential neoconservatives such as Charles Krauthammer and Jane Kirkpatrick. Kristol and Kagan called for the position of the United States as benevolent hegemony following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The United States should use its new and unique role in the world to promote regime change where it served the interest of the United States, most notably in the Persian Gulf and China. The United States should play an activist role on the international stage to promote democracy and ensure human rights.³⁸ The neoconservative agenda became that of “Wilsonianism on steroids”³⁹, wanting to promote idealistic beliefs unilaterally. Following World War II and during the Cold War, the United States was able to pursue a unilateralist approach to the international community because it was in the interests of several countries. The European nations were devastated both economically and politically, and the support of the United States offered would prove to be indispensable.⁴⁰ In addition to economic support, containment would be tremendously important to the Western European nations in securing political and economic freedom. Once the Cold War ended, American unilateralism could not be excused as easily as it had during the bipolar world structure because the European nations, no longer threatened by the Soviet Union, did not need the shield the United States had provided since the Truman Doctrine was implemented in 1947. However, Kristol-Kagan neoconservatism would uphold a strong belief in the use of unilateral American power.

The strong belief in unilateralism may be understood as a clear example of American exceptionalism. According to several neoconservatives, the United States had a unique potential to become a benevolent hegemony because on the merits of its unique history, the United States would not seek to become an imperialist power. The United States would not seek narrow and selfish interest, but would have a utilitarian approach to international order.⁴¹ According to Kristol and Kagan: “American foreign policy is infused with an unusually high degree of morality that other nations find they have less to fear from its otherwise daunting power”.⁴² This also justified the use of military power to achieve regime change where it would serve to improve the situation,

³ Son of Irving Kristol.

not only for the people living in the regime, but also for the national security of the United States.

As mentioned previously, the people that were closely involved in shaping foreign policy during the second Bush administration had spent much of their political careers working in or in close relation with the Pentagon. Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney were not perceived to be neoconservatives, but the neoconservative shift that took place during the 1990s, where unilateralism was advocated as a clear alternative to policy, provided a platform that would appeal to Rumsfeld and Cheney. In addition, the neoconservatives had been critical of Henry Kissinger and the *declinist* belief that had taken a hold of several officials since the Vietnam War.⁴³ The cooperation between the neoconservatives and unilateralists in the Republican Party manifested itself in the spring of 1997 when several leading actors in both camps joined together to establish the *Project for the New American Century* (PNAC). PNAC set out to challenge the foreign and defense policies of the Clinton administration.⁴⁴ Some of its more notable members would play important roles in the second Bush administration⁴, continuing the alliance between unilateralists and neoconservatives and greatly affecting the outcome of foreign policy.

3.3.4 Tradition or transformation?

When the Bush administration began working out its foreign policy agenda, two opposing groups began forming within the administration: the people who wanted a continuance of traditional foreign policy with a multilateral approach and a focus on national interests and the limitation of power to ensure a favorable international balance, and the people who wanted to outline a new approach with a focus on unilateralism and of the promotion of western democratic capitalist principles.⁴⁵ Much of the debate after during and after the Bush administration's time in office has been about the influence of the neoconservatives.

There is little doubt that the neoconservative ideology played an important role when many of the Bush administration's policies were formed; however, with the exception of Paul Wolfowitz, the most influential characters on the foreign policy team were not neoconservatives. Many of the quarrels that would dominate the second Bush

⁴ The PNAC members that would be important in the second Bush administration were: Dick Cheney, Paula Dobriansky, Fred Ikle, Zalmay Khalilzad, I. Lewis Libby, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz.

administration had already been planted during the first Bush administration. Whereas previously, debates about how to manage the first Gulf War were managed internally, these disagreements would resurface and become a part of the public debate when the strategies for the war on terror were made a decade later.⁴⁶ David Rothkopf has identified the internal struggle within the administration as a fight between two groups that he labels as being *traditionalists* and *transformationalists*. In the second Bush administration, most of the traditionalists were found at the State Department, with Colin Powell and Richard Armitage as the most influential actors. Transformationalists, on the other hand, were for the most part linked with the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President. The strong attachment to different agencies would serve to further the distance between the two camps and eventually cause the agencies to serve as strong opponents in the policy process. Another noteworthy difference were the ideological stance of the people who were identified as belonging to opposite camps: transformationalists had been strong followers of the more ideologically driven President Ronald Reagan, while the traditionalists had for the most part gotten their foreign policy inspiration from the pragmatic approach of President George H. W. Bush.⁴⁷ Initially, Condoleezza Rice was located in the middle of the pack, not advocating any side. However, as the debate within the administration would cause havoc and defense policy became the most important component of the Bush foreign policy, Rice and President Bush would eventually align themselves with the transformationalists.

Colin Powell was the second Bush administration's most influential traditionalist. Much of the traditionalist convictions are founded on the realist tradition of promoting national interests and many of the strongest advocates were former members of the George H. W. Bush administration. National interests and foreign policy should be managed with international relations and cooperation with other governments in mind. Many of the traditionalists can thus be labeled internationalists: the United States is a part of a global community, and in order to preserve national interest in the most efficient way, this must be taken into consideration when any policy is outlined.⁴⁸ After the attacks on 9/11, when the debate between traditionalism and transformationalism became more evident inside the administration, former national security advisor Brent Scowcroft would side with, and even surpass Colin Powell in those who argued for exhausting diplomatic alternatives before resorting to war. Scowcroft took the debate public and would become a thorn in the side of the

transformationalists within the administration. Transformationalists claimed that the need act rapidly and with force was important and that the United States did not have the time to wait for international consensus, while Scowcroft publicly stated that at no other time was it more important for the United States to rely on its friends and allies.⁴⁹ With regards to the first part of the war on terror, the United States had pursued multilateral cooperation and had secured a NATO coalition to back up their efforts in Afghanistan. In addition, president Bush took Colin Powell and Tony Blair's advocacy of a UN resolution into consideration and decided to attempt a similar approach when Iraq was on the table. However, transformationalists within the administration had a strong influence on the president, and when diplomacy proved to be time consuming in the case of Iraq, Bush turned his back on the traditionalists.

As mentioned above, ideologically, several of the transformationalists were closely identified by their adherence to the neoconservative block of the Republican Party. The philosophies of Leo Strauss that advocated a moral foundation to political policies can be recognized in both neoconservatism and transformationalism.⁵⁰ However, not all transformationalists were neoconservatives. Both transformationalists and neoconservatives advocated a new way of handling foreign policy and accused the traditionalists for being moral relativists and not standing up for American values on the international scene.⁵¹ The belief in a reformed foreign policy had emerged as a response to the end of the Cold War and the transformationalists argue that a traditionalist approach is founded in Cold War mentality, and thus expired with the fall of the Soviet Union. Identifying with a conservative Christian faith, President Bush related to the moral absolutes and broad focus of the transformationalists.⁵² Donald Rumsfeld, on the other hand has been also been identified as one of the transformationalists in the Bush administration. He departs from the moral absolutes of the transformationalist platform, and can be placed in the transformationalist camp due to his strong beliefs in unilateralism and development of a new foreign policy strategy.

Rumsfeld was not concerned with the moral motivations for transforming American foreign policy and involving the military in nation building, but rather interested in keeping up with developments within military technology and international relations.⁵³ Unilateralism and the strong belief in American power was another important factor of the transformationalist agenda. The United States would be better off and more able to pursue its own interest without having to mind the interests of long time allies: "public goods are often supplied unilaterally by a single actor who is much

stronger than the other and permits free-riding by the other players because the actor has a powerful interest in securing those goods.”⁵⁴ Along with secretary Rumsfeld, Vice President Cheney was the driving force behind the unilateralist policies that became evident when Bush’s patience with the U.N. and other allies had run out. National security advisor Condoleezza Rice is somewhat hard to place in the traditionalist versus transformationalist debate. Rice positioned herself somewhat in the middle, and saw a moral foundation as an important factor in shaping foreign policy. However, Rice had a close connection with her mentor Brent Scowcroft and when she was appointed Secretary of State in 2004, Rice would continue the traditionalist approach that Colin Powell had advocated while serving in the same position. This might suggest that Rice had been overrun and set aside by the strong transformationalist forces within the administration while serving as national security advisor.⁵⁵

One of the major ironies of the transformationalists were the fact that when the Bush administration worked out its initial foreign policy strategy prior to the 9/11 attacks, the complete disregard for including terrorists into their grand strategy suggested the presence of Cold War thinking and a “traditional” way of dealing with their enemies. In spite of getting several warnings about the possibility of major terrorist organizations, such as Al Qaeda representing a viable threat towards the United States and its allies, the Bush administration overlooked the warnings and put terrorism on hold. During a deputy committee meeting in the spring of 2001, Paul Wolfowitz and the Department of Defense outright labeled the terrorist threat as inconceivable: “Well, I just don’t understand why we are beginning by talking about this one man bin Laden... There are others that do as well, at least as much. Iraqi terrorism for example”⁵⁶

Even after 9/11 was a fact and the terrorists had been identified as being a part of the Al Qaeda network, administration officials turned the focus away from Bin Laden and his group and began looking for viable state targets.⁵⁷ Prior to the terrorist attacks, it had been the State Department and the traditionalists Colin Powell and Richard Armitage that had pushed for a clear policy in dealing with the Afghanistan terrorists.⁵⁸ This state-centrism is clearly at odds with the call for a new and transformational approach to foreign policy. It is also contradictory to the military strategy the Department of Defense had begun initiating when the Bush administration came into office. Secretary Rumsfeld had initiated the work of preparing the U.S. military to face such enemies as the Al Qaeda, however it proved difficult for the administration’s top officials to see the terrorist groups as independent actors and not merely as proxies

supported by a ruthless government. Transformationalists had risen during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, and the Reagan Doctrine was obviously still a valuable principle to many officials over a decade after the end of the Cold War.

3.4.1 Turf Wars

Ever since the founding of the United States in 1776, American politics have been dominated by strong personalities and their disagreements over how the United States should be run and the policies it should engage itself in. As the Federal bureaucracy grew, interagency cooperation became an important part of the policy making process. Each agency and their representatives have different responsibilities and different agendas that often can prove to be at odds with each other. Since the beginning of the Cold War, the two most influential and biggest agencies, the State Department and the Defense Department, have fought for attention of and influence over the President of the United States. The severity of these interagency quarrels has differed greatly from administration to administration, and the people who led the bickering have at times been deemed adversaries. During the first term of president George W. Bush, interagency conflicts would prove pivotal in shaping and influencing the outcome of the foreign policy process: “Bureaucratic tribalism exist in all administrations, but it rose to poisonous levels in Bush’s first term”.⁵⁹ Strong personalities with vast experience had been recruited to ensure the continuity and credibility of the administration’s foreign policy. It would, however, also ensure conflict and chaos when the agency set to meddle possible conflicts, the National Security Council, failed to work out a successful interagency policy process. The Department of Defense would prove, in cooperation with the Office of the Vice President, to be a grandiose opponent to the State Department and other foreign policy agencies.

3.4.2 Conspiring Agencies: The Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President

When Donald Rumsfeld was appointed to lead the Pentagon it was a deliberate move by President Bush and his transition team. The president elect had campaigned on reforming the U.S. military, and needed someone with experience and who could lead the massive bureaucracy efficiently through the reforms that would be implemented.⁶⁰ Secretary Rumsfeld would not only dominate the Department of Defense, but he would be a massive force on foreign policy team of president Bush from his appointment to his

resignation in 2006. He was the uncontested leader and administrator of the Pentagon, and his tough, hands-on relentless style would contribute to making the Department of Defense the most influential agency within the administration during its first term.⁶¹ Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz had the role as the strategic thinker and policy visionary.⁶² The strong ties between the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President (both on senior and deputy level) proved to be tremendously important with regards to domination of policy: Working through the Office of the Vice President, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz would have so much influence on the president it would cause many people to believe that the Pentagon was the sole agency dealing with foreign policy. This cooperation would change “the dynamic of the whole interagency process”⁶³ by challenging the traditional hierarchy of the President’s cabinet.

Unlike any previous Vice President, Dick Cheney would play a tremendously important role when it came to influencing and advising the president on foreign affairs. During the Carter administration, vice president Walter Mondale had played an advisory role to President Carter, but this was not common and the influence Mondale had did not come close to the role Cheney would have.⁶⁴ Cheney would, at times be the most dominant foreign policy advisor, a role that was intended for Condoleezza Rice.⁶⁵ The Office of the Vice President was remodeled from previous administrations, and it now had its own foreign policy staff - a staff that worked closely with the civilian leadership at the Pentagon.⁶⁶ Together, the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President would become the center of gravity in the foreign policy process of the second Bush administration.⁶⁷ The Office of the Vice President cannot be considered an agency in itself, but it would contribute greatly to the interagency troubles that would evolve between the Department of Defense on one side and the State Department on the other. An important link between the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President, in addition to the relationship between Cheney and Rumsfeld, was the strong ideological coherence between most of the officials that served important and influential positions. Neoconservatives dominated the deputy and assistant level positions both at the Office of the Vice President and Department of Defense and these officials had also worked closely together during previous administrations. They used their network during the second Bush administration to ensure a foreign policy strategy that matched their ideological convictions. In addition, the strong ties between the neoconservatives would spill over to the NSC and deputy national security advisor Stephen Hadley and Zalmay Khalilzad – who was responsible for Afghanistan and Iraq policy at the NSC.⁶⁸

The tightly knit ideological and political alliances and their cooperation on policy issues would be so important to the officials, that they would leave out important resources and experts on several issues, a decision which would show up in a dramatic lack of expertise on several issues. Professionals within the Washington bureaucracy were speaking out against the decisions of the political appointees, and this would be highly visible during the turf wars that came to dominate much of the public discourse of the administration.⁶⁹ Keeping “their turf” became more important than using the expertise available in several instances.⁷⁰

As mentioned previously, the most influential people at Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President were either neoconservatives or transformationalists. This bulking of people with common beliefs and that worked closely together in these important parts of government, made the bureaucracy the officials led even more powerful than before when it came of policy making. Having a fairly ideologically homogenous Defense Department and Office of the Vice President caused a stronger alliance that would serve as a formidable opponent to the traditionalists at the State Department. However, the quarrel between the State Department and the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President is not all about ideology and personal convictions. When an official is appointed to serve in a government agency, he or she becomes responsible for representing that agency and its interests: “Where you stand depends on where you sit”.⁷¹ As Secretary of Defense, it was Donald Rumsfeld’s job to present the president with the alternatives for foreign policy and guidance from a defense perspective.

Under President John F. Kennedy and President Lyndon B. Johnson, Robert S. McNamara was credited for being the architect of the Vietnam War. Like Rumsfeld, McNamara was serving as Secretary of Defense, and his job was to provide both Kennedy and Johnson with the alternatives the Pentagon came up with. McNamara later regretted not taking other alternatives into consideration, and it can be argued that in spite of serving *a* department and its narrow interest, each individual has a responsibility to do the right thing. However, the NSC was established to ensure that the narrow self-interests of different agencies would not become the dominant force in any administration. The Secretary of Defense and the Department of Defense will both provide foreign policy initiatives and respond to policy initiatives the president lays out. During the Bush administration, Secretary Rumsfeld started out by implementing the initiatives president Bush had laid out for reforming the military and the Pentagon

bureaucracy. However, after 9/11, when the political climate changed and president Bush declared that the United States was at war, the role of the Defense Department and the Secretary changed dramatically. The most important focus of the United States' foreign policy became defense and security policy, and Rumsfeld and the Pentagon would cooperate with Cheney and the Office of the Vice President and serve greatly influence the direction the president would take on these matters.⁷² This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

3.4.3 The State Department – A Waning Giant

In spite of the strong connection between officials at the Defense Department and the Office of the Vice President, the influence of the State Department was by all means not completely diminished during the Bush administration. The tremendous popularity of Colin Powell was important in determining his role at the beginning of the War on Terror. President Bush followed much of Powell's (and Tony Blair's) advice and made attempts at diplomatic solutions. This resulted in the formation of a NATO alliance and diplomatic relations with surrounding countries such as Pakistan and even Iran were successful. When Iraq was introduced as the next step in the war on terror, the administration initially continued to use diplomacy by including the U.N. In spite of President Bush's decision to attempt diplomacy, Powell was constantly working against the pressure from the unilateralists at the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President.⁷³ In addition, diplomacy did not get the same headlines and public attention that the policies that emerged from the Pentagon did. Colin Powell was tremendously good at dealing with public, but Donald Rumsfeld would be the person from the administration that dominated foreign policy publicly. There are several reasons that contributed to this state of affairs. First of all, Powell recognized that his strong position with the American people could undermine the authority of the president, second, on several occasions Powell had made comments to the press that had been rebuked by spokesmen within the administration.⁷⁴ Powell took on a less public approach than what had been the case while he served as Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the first Bush administration. In addition, many of the most important policies were conducted by the Department of Defense. Because of this, it was natural that the officials at the Pentagon dealt with the press regarding those policies.

Former Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Marc Grossman recognizes the importance of a bureaucracy that was able to function during the tough times the

administration faced. The State Department bureaucracy is massive and diplomacy takes time. Being the senior representative for the State Department in the administration, the advice Powell supplied was in accordance with his position as Secretary of State. Running this massive bureaucracy has for many years been argued to be *the* top foreign policy position in the executive branch, but as the world has grown closer and the need for quick action has become more and more apparent, the State Department has lost much influence over foreign policy because of it has not been able to respond as quickly as some of the other agencies.⁷⁵ In spite of being successful in promoting the use of diplomatic options during the initial planning of the War on Terror, administration officials that were already impatient with regards to continuation of the war on terror and who did not want to wait out the diplomatic alternatives, gained influence. As the time consuming negotiations in the UN proved not to turn out in the favor of the mandate to go to war in Iraq as the Bush administration had advocated, president Bush also lost his patience. The Department of Defense offered opportunities for a quick response and soon became the leading bureaucracy in foreign policy because the political climate demanded it. That, in addition to the militarization of policy that became the norm during after 9/11 proved to be hurdles Colin Powell could not overcome.⁷⁶

Colin Powell had worked his way up through the bureaucratic system of Washington in a dramatically different way than Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney had. Cheney and Rumsfeld used their bureaucratic and political skills to elbow their way through different agencies and offices in Washington. Rumsfeld had established a notorious rumor for being a vicious politician that did not shy away from stepping on people's toes to get ahead. Cheney worked in a subtler, but equally tough way as that of Rumsfeld. As it would turn out, several of the anonymous leaks that set out to undermine Colin Powell and the State Department came from the Office of the Vice President. Powell on the other hand had used his people-skills to establish a good reputation and solid relations with powerful people in Washington. Combined with good timing, these mentors had helped Powell move up in the Washington bureaucracy without any dramatic infighting.⁷⁷ The experiences of Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Powell would be evident when the turf wars began dominating the policy process within the administration. The only previous experience Powell had that could resemble the turf wars was with Cheney and Wolfowitz while they worked at the Pentagon a decade earlier during the first Bush administration. However, those quarrels had been across

ranks and within the same agency. When Cheney, Wolfowitz and Powell clashed over policy in the second Bush administration, the men represented different agencies and Wolfowitz and Cheney had Rumsfeld on the team.

Colin Powell and his deputy Richard Armitage were both Vietnam veterans, and much of their experience had come from the United States military. Armitage had, however, worked as a civilian in Washington for many years and would, after the tough battles between the Office of the Vice President and Department of Defense and the State Department began, more often break ranks and use the press to attempt to battle out the opposing agencies like they had started doing against the State Department. Powell on the other hand would prove to be extremely loyal to the president.⁷⁸ Serving as Secretary of State was the first civilian job Powell had held in his long Washington career. This would be evident, as it appeared that he kept ranks and observed the civilian ranks of the executive branch as if it was a military platoon. Powell would, instead of speaking out against the administration, become less and less visible to the public and engaged himself less and less with other states.⁷⁹ A former Pentagon official and Assistant Secretary of Defense during the Reagan administration Lawrence Korb recognized the change in Powell's behavior: "When Powell was a general he was very political, involving himself in matters not usually the domain of the chairman of the joint chiefs. But when he was secretary of state, he behaved more like a general, more or less accepting the decisions of others".⁸⁰ Powell, the man that was often assumed to be the driving force of the Bush administration's foreign policy agenda was neutralized by the tremendous influence of vice president Cheney and his partner at the Department of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld.

3.4.4. National Security Council – Failed Mediator

In the mist of the turf wars that dominated the administration's first term, the national security council and its staff, with National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice in charge, should have stepped up and worked as a buffer between the Department of Defense and the State Department. However, as National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, she attempted to limit the influence the NSC had in the process by cutting staff and not involving it in "operational things and domestic security issues".⁸¹ By focusing on serving President Bush by making sure that all the practical things were in order and by being less operational focusing on coordination, Rice and her NSC-staff were unable to successfully tone down the arguments and agendas of the Department of

Defense and the State Department.⁸² Rice would be criticized for not being able to run the NSC efficiently, and both people within the administration and the 9/11 Commission viewed the NSC under Rice as being “dysfunctional”.⁸³ In his memoirs, Donald Rumsfeld criticizes the way the NSC was run by Rice and Rumsfeld claims that because Rice and her staff was so focused on serving the president and focusing on trivial challenges, the flow of information to the president was intentionally limited by Rice and her staff.⁸⁴ Rumsfeld claims that Rice was so hung up on making sure that none of the agencies “won” a policy battle, that she would only present the president with a middle ground solution that had been worked out by Rice and her NSC staff.⁸⁵

Rumsfeld’s critique is at odds with the assessment David Rothkopf makes in his book *Running the World*. Rothkopf argues that the NSC was unsuccessful in serving its role as the primary filter for foreign policy agenda and that Rice was unable to combine the roles of serving and advising the president with interagency cooperation.⁸⁶ The ties that had been made during previous administrations continued to be strong during the Bush administration and as mentioned previously, the Office of the Vice President would serve as a back channel for people at the Department of Defense when promoting policy strategies. The NSC and the National Security Advisor are supposed to make sure that the president is given concise and limited information from all channels so that he can make a decision from different policy alternatives. With the enormous amount of information each agency generates and the continuous challenges that affects the policy process, there is no way a president can process the all the information available when outlining policy. The NSC is therefore responsible for filtering information and making sure that the other agencies are providing useful recommendations to the president.

As mentioned previously, several of the foreign policy advisors have agendas that are linked to their role and position within the government. It is the role of the Secretary of State to advocate and give advice about the best diplomatic solutions; the same goes for the Secretary of Defense, he or she is in charge of the Department of Defense and their agenda. This is where the NSC and the National Security Advisor comes in. The National Security Advisor has played different roles in different administrations, but being in charge of the Office of the National Security Council, the National Security Advisor has often played the role of mediator and filter when it comes to the flow of advice: “The NSC needs to be the place where all the President’s options come together, and the national security advisor need to be seen as and to be an independent voice, providing the President with independent perspectives.”⁸⁷ Rice was

believed to be the most important advisor to president Bush because of her close proximity to Bush. However, she was unable to use her access to fulfill all the expectations that came with the role of national security advisor.

The failure of Rice and the NSC staff to bridge the gap between the agencies and their representatives caused the entire interagency process to collapse and the quarrels were leaked to the press. The Pentagon gained influence because of their access via the Office of the Vice President and because of the nature of the situation the administration operated within.⁸⁸ According to former NSC official Richard Haas, Rice was so preoccupied with being the person the President could talk to, get continuous advise from, representing him at meetings where he did not participate, and clarifying issues the President did not understand, that it hurt the policy process.⁸⁹ Rice shifted the focus of the NSC to handling the policy initiatives and priorities given by the President and the Office of the Vice President.

When 9/11 struck, Rice had been warned several times by terrorist experts within the administration about the possibilities for an attack on American soil. However, Rice disregarded the warnings and did not inform the rest of NSC-staff and other senior advisors about the warnings that had come from anti-terrorist experts in the NSC. Furthermore, when the terrorist attacks did occur, Rice stepped aside and did not play a major role in the planning of the war on terror. Most of the policy initiatives were left up to the Defense Department. This might indicate that Rice understood that terrorist groups and policy towards alternative actors was not her strength. However, it also shows lack of leadership qualities. An example of Rice giving up her power to other people has been told by former NSC official Richard Clarke: Right after the planes hit the Twin Towers, Rice was the ranking official in the West Wing, but she left the responsibility up to Richard Clarke, a lower ranking official that had to step in for Rice in making decisions at the West Wing of the White House until any of the other senior officials were in place.⁹⁰ The entire NSC process was dominated by the fact that Rice, as the least experienced member of the Bush foreign policy team, was unable to stand up to the more experienced officials and take control over the situations when it was required of her.⁹¹

3.5. Conclusion

Acquiring most of their previous experience in Washington during the Cold War, the people who would later become President George Walker Bush's foreign policy team faced a major challenge when they were appointed to serve during the second Bush administration. When the second president Bush was sworn into office the United States had no viable nemesis and dominated international relations on its own. With the new world order, the declinist belief that had grown strong during the Vietnam War had been left in the dust and the United States proved its willingness to engage itself in military operations in areas that had previously been out of the question because of the bipolar power structure of the Cold War. This shift in political climate was extremely important to the development of the ideas and principles that would become dominant during the reign of George W. Bush.

Unilateralism and a strong belief in American military power would be the guiding principles when the administration faced new challenges. The foreign policy team of the second Bush administration was unable to adapt their approach to new international actors and would linger in a Cold War mindset with an intense focus on state actors and blatant disregard for unconventional enemies. The powerful individuals that would dominate the foreign policy discourse and the battles between the executive agencies would become obstacles in getting a viable foreign policy strategy across. Turf wars and ideological battles spilled into public, and it would cause great limitations on the policies that would be executed. Much attention had to be focused on interagency problems, causing important policy alternatives, such as improving relations with Iran to be left out. At no other time since the Iranian Revolution in 1979 could Iran have played a decisive strategic role in U.S. foreign policy. Political journalist David Rose characterized the foreign policy team in strong language when he published an article in *Vanity Fair* about the Bush administration: "They turned out to be among the most incompetent teams in the postwar era. Not only did each of them, individually, have enormous flaws, but together they were deadly, dysfunctional."⁹² The foreign policy team that was nicknamed *The Vulcans* during the 2000 presidential campaign let individual differences and opposing ideologies overshadow the possibilities for a successful strategy that could ensure the position of the United States as sole hegemon.

Notes, Chapter 3.

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- ² Rourke, *International Politics*, 65.
- ³ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 422., Douglas J. Feith. *War and Decisions*. (New York, N.Y., HarperCollins. 2008), 144
- ⁴ R.C. Snyder, H.W. Bruck, and B. Sapin. "Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics". *Foreign Policy Analysis Project Series No. 3*. (Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press), 1954.
- ⁵ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 392.
- ⁶ O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 10.
- ⁷ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 158-159.
- ⁸ Carolyn Eisenberg. "The Irrationality of War in Vietnam and Peace Through Détente". *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations, Vol. II*. Edt. Dennis Merrill and Thomas Patterson. (Boston, MA. Wadsworth. 2010), 480.
- ⁹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, xii-xvi.
- ¹⁰ Bob Woodward. *The Commanders*. (New York, NY. Simon & Schuster. 1991), 174., Richard A. Clarke. *Against All Enemies*. (London, UK. The Free Press. 2004), 88
- ¹¹ Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 232.
- ¹² Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 38-39.
- ¹³ Robert Timberg. *The Nightingale's Song*. (New York, NY. Touchstone Books. 2005), 91.
- ¹⁴ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 54.
- ¹⁵ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 53.
- ¹⁶ O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 28, 30.
- ¹⁷ O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 31.
- ¹⁸ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 53.
- ¹⁹ Samantha Power. *A Problem From Hell*. (London, UK. Harper Perennial. 2003), 261.
- ²⁰ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 52.
- ²¹ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 261.
- ²² Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 402.
- ²³ Woodward, *State of Denial*, 11.
- ²⁴ John. J. DiIulio. "Inside the Bush Presidency: Reflections of an Academic Interloper". Paper presented at the conference on The Bush Presidency: An Early Assessment, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ. 2003, 2., Richard Brookheiser, "The Mind of George W. Bush". *Atlantic Monthly*, April 2003, 55-69. <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/2003/04/brookhiser.htm> Accessed: 03.10.11.
- ²⁵ Colin Powell in Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 409.
- ²⁶ DiIulio, "Inside the Bush Presidency", 3.
- ²⁷ DiIulio, "Inside the Bush Presidency", 3., Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay. "The Bush Revolution: The Remaking of America's Foreign Policy". Paper presented at the conference on The Bush Presidency: An Early Assessment, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ. 2003, 7
- ²⁸ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 242
- ²⁹ O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 150.
- ³⁰ Bush, *Decision Points*, 137.
- ³¹ George W. Bush, speeches: "Address to the Nation". September 20, 2001., "State of the Union", January 29, 2002., Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 397.
- ³² Fukuyama. *America at the Crossroads*, 14.
- ³³ Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, 17-31.
- ³⁴ Albert Wohlstetter. "Economic and Strategic Considerations in Air Base Location: A Preliminary Review. D-1114." (RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA. December 29, 1951). <http://www.albertwohlstetter.com/writings/R244S/> Accessed: 03.22.11
- ³⁵ New York Times. "Excerpts From Pentagon's New Plan: 'Prevent the Re-Emergence of a New Rival'". *New York Times*. Published: March 8, 1992. <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/08/world/excerpts-from-pentagon-s-plan-prevent-the-re-emergence-of-a-new-rival.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm> Accessed: 02.28.11-03.03.11., Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense. "Draft – Defense Planning Guidance" February 18, 1992. www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nukevault/.../doc03_extract_nytedit.pdf Uploaded: 10.07.10

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- ³⁶ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 211.
- ³⁷ Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, 52, 60.
- ³⁸ Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, 42.
- ³⁹ Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, 40.
- ⁴⁰ Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, 103.
- ⁴¹ Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, 101-102.
- ⁴² William Kristol and Robert Kagan. *Present Dangers*. (San Francisco, CA. Encounter. 2000), 22.
- ⁴³ Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, 34.
- ⁴⁴ Project for the New American Century. "Statement of Principles"
- ⁴⁵ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 397.
- ⁴⁶ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 184
- ⁴⁷ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 390.
- ⁴⁸ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 390.
- ⁴⁹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 428-429.
- ⁵⁰ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 26.
- ⁵¹ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 397.
- ⁵² Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 396.
- ⁵³ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 499-500.
- ⁵⁴ Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, 99-100.
- ⁵⁵ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 439-440.
- ⁵⁶ Paul Wolfowitz quoted in Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 231.
- ⁵⁷ Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 32, 431., Michael Scheuer. *Marching Toward Hell*. (New York NY. Free Press. 2008), 73-75.
- ⁵⁸ Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 232.
- ⁵⁹ Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, 61.
- ⁶⁰ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 270.
- ⁶¹ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 391-392.
- ⁶² Thomas Ricks. "Rumsfeld's War". *Frontline*.
- ⁶³ Anonymous deputy official quoted in Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 408.
- ⁶⁴ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 170.
- ⁶⁵ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 392.
- ⁶⁶ Richard Haas in Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 408.
- ⁶⁷ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 413.
- ⁶⁸ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 273.
- ⁶⁹ Feith, *War and Decision*, 33-34., McCormick, *American Foreign Policy*, 343.
- ⁷⁰ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 420.
- ⁷¹ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 440.
- ⁷² Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 403-404.
- ⁷³ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 411.
- ⁷⁴ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 265.
- ⁷⁵ McCormick, *American Foreign Policy*, 349.
- ⁷⁶ Mark Grossman quoted in Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 410.
- ⁷⁷ O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 194.
- ⁷⁸ O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 187.
- ⁷⁹ Feith, *War and Decision*, 249.
- ⁸⁰ Lawrence Korb quoted in O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 194.
- ⁸¹ Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 229.
- ⁸² Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 405.
- ⁸³ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 406-407, 437
- ⁸⁴ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 324-330.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid.
- ⁸⁶ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 406.
- ⁸⁷ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 441
- ⁸⁸ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 408.
- ⁸⁹ Richard Haas in Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 406.
- ⁹⁰ Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 3-4,
- ⁹¹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 315.

⁹² David Rose. "Now They Tell Us: Neo Culpa". *Vanity Fair*. November 3, 2006.
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Chapter 4. The War on Terror and its Defining Events

4.1. Introduction

September 11, 2001 would be a defining date for the presidency of George Walker Bush. The terrorist attacks that took place that day were extremely important with regards to how the Bush administration would outline and execute its foreign policy agenda. “Important events bring out the true character of an administration.”¹ and in the case of the second Bush administration, the fatal attacks on 9/11 would be *the* event that would define the 43rd President of the United States. The attacks were decisive as to how the United States would react to the rest of the world. Immediately after the attacks, President Bush and his advisors began looking into how the United States would respond. According to the president himself, the need for a wide campaign to ensure that all parties that were involved in the attacks would meet justice was necessary. The *War on Terror* would be a broad campaign to tear apart terrorist network across the world and to ensure that no state would allow such networks or individuals that operated by the use of terror to be safe in their territory.² The campaign would include, not only deliberate pursuit of terrorists and their organizations, but also involved the strategy of going after any state actor that allowed such organizations to exist. The initial military response, “Operation Enduring Freedom”, would be a massive campaign in Afghanistan to ensure the end of the al-Qaeda organization, capture Osama Bin Laden, and purge the country of the Taliban – the Islamic fundamentalist Afghan government that had allowed al-Qaeda to operate within its borders. The Taliban refused to cooperate with the United States and international authorities to bring the terrorist network that operated within their borders to justice, and so it became the first state actor to be target by the broad campaign.

After Operation Enduring Freedom was deemed a success, the Bush administration began focusing on a new operation that had been advocated by several officials since the 9/11 attacks. During the initial policy deliberations after the 9/11 attacks, Iraq had been brought up as a possible target in the broad campaign that would be initiated. Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, had been engaged in working out a possible strategy for ensuring U.S. national interests in the Middle East

since the end of the 1970s. Iraq had been the prime target in Wolfowitz' studies and previous policy suggestions, and when the Bush administration launched its war on terror, an opportunity for further American engagement in Iraq manifested itself. The 9/11 attacks would be used by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz, and Vice President Dick Cheney to advocate the targeting of Saddam Hussein and his Iraqi regime.

Shortly after 9/11, the Bush administration began promoting the idea that Saddam Hussein and his regime had linkage to the al-Qaeda terrorist network. However, the intelligence community and the administration were unable to present evidence that Saddam and his coconspirators had cooperated with the terrorist network of Osama Bin Laden. The administration would, however, in spite of the lack of evidence present the targeting of Iraq as a part of the strategy for a successful outcome of the war on terror.³ The U.S. military operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq would be extremely important to how the United States and Iran would relate to each other. Iran was situated in the middle of the two disputes, and for the first time since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the regime attempted to get involved in serious diplomatic relations with the United States. However, the Bush administration did not consider the Iranian approach as genuine, and when another defining event, the Israeli interception of the vessel *Karine A* took place in January of 2002, the hard-liners within the Bush administration that had been critical of Iranian rapprochement all along, seized on this event to affirm their position that Iran was not to be trusted. This chapter will account for how the stated events would influence the senior foreign policy advisors of the Bush administration and how these events played into defining the foreign policy that the Bush administration conducted during its first term in office. It will also touch upon how these events influenced the approach the United States and Iran took towards each other during the term. However, the argument over the influence the policy advisors and the events played with regards to Iran will be further discussed in the next chapter.

4.2.1. 9/11 – A New World Order

On September 11, 2001 the world stood still as dramatic events were evolving in New York City, Arlington, Virginia and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Nineteen men connected to the al-Qaeda terrorist network hijacked four commercial airplanes and executed the deadliest attack on American soil since the Civil War. Approximately 3,000 people were killed by the multiple terrorist attacks that, according to the leader of

the al-Qaeda network Osama Bin Laden, came as a response to increased American presence in the Middle East and Islamic countries and the tradition of American support to Arabic dictators that executed terrible atrocities against their own peoples.⁴ The attacks would serve as the defining moment of the Bush presidency and virtually every foreign policy decision that followed the attacks would have the mark of 9/11.⁵ It caused the President to declare a *War on Terrorism* and it was the spark that ignited the officials to work out plans to target state actors like Afghanistan and Iraq. The attacks fueled sympathy and cooperation from all corners of the world, and the momentum the attacks created for the United States could have ensured a final confirmation of the role as hegemon. Around the world, leaders were speaking out against the attacks and showing support for the American people and the Bush administration. One of the most surprising reactions came from Iran. Immediately after the attacks, Iranians took to the streets and began protesting against the terrorists. The Iranian people showed massive support for the United States and the President Mohammad Khatami and the Supreme Leader Seyyed Ali Khamenei renounced the attacks.⁶ However, the foreign policy initiatives of preemption and the invasion of Iraq met resistance across the world and in the end, the foreign policy of the Bush administration would alienate a substantial number of nations.⁷

Prior to the terrorist attacks on 9/11, President Bush's foreign policy agenda had not raised many eyebrows. During the election campaign in 2000, Bush had voiced a pragmatic stance on how foreign policy should be conducted, and the emphasis on securing national interests would be the Administration's guiding foreign policy principle.⁸ Bush ran a campaign that emphasized a move away from the liberal internationalist policies of President Clinton and when sworn into office, the administration began working on purging everything that could be related to the Clinton era. During its first eight months in office, the Bush administration took a pragmatic and almost realist approach to foreign policy: dealing with nation-state actors and seeking to enhance the relative power of the United States without involving itself in nation building and over doing the use of "soft power."⁹ The United States would limit its use of power and involvement across the world, and concentrate on their relations with other important powers such as China and Russia – much like the Nixon-Kissinger strategy of classic realism. The administration had not anticipated the challenges that would be cast upon them the morning of September 11, 2001.

When the terrorist attacks stunned the world, President Bush's immediate reaction was rage and a lust for revenge.¹⁰ The initial response of the administration mirrored those feelings: The United States was going to get the people who committed these atrocities and take action against those who harbored such groups. 9/11 gave President Bush the mandate to implement changes that he had lacked earlier in his presidency.¹¹ Because of the close call of the 2000 presidential election, President Bush knew that he was in charge of a country that did not elect him with a popular vote. A president that struggles to gain the confidence of the people lacks political capital. However, after the attacks Bush's popularity soared to a ninety percent approval rate.¹² This gave President Bush a political capital that hardly any other president had previously enjoyed. According to Richard Armitage, who served as Deputy Secretary of State during the first term of President Bush, the President truly believed that the 9/11 attacks were a sign that he was meant to change the world. It was no coincident that the attacks had happened while he was in office, and he would prove that he was up to the challenge.¹³ However, when the Administration began working out its strategy for the use of preemptive strikes and unilateralism, combined with tough rhetoric that alienated most of the United States' allies, and eventually a the failure of the initial policies in both Afghanistan and Iraq, his political capital began to dwindle rapidly.

In spite of warnings from people within the administration, none of the senior officials had anticipated a massive attack on American soil and there was no strategy at hand to deal with initial response.¹⁴ President Bush was determined not to leave any doubt that such an attack would lead to consequences and in his address to the people on the evening of September 11, he made it clear that the United States would not make any distinction between the terrorist networks and the states that allowed them to operate within their borders. The language used in his speech served a stark contrast to the pragmatic approach he had argued during his presidential campaign and his first months in office. Concerned with the values and freedom of the American people, the President's rhetoric would reveal much of what would drive the foreign policy process after the terrorist attacks. His attention was now focused on the drafting of a new foreign policy strategy that would not only ensure the capture and fall of al-Qaeda and its conspirators, but that would secure American values and freedoms.¹⁵ A strategy of preemption was being worked out with the intent to target possible state sponsors. The President would turn to American exceptionalism and neoconservative ideology to fulfill his new foreign policy agenda and the attacks on 9/11 served to enhance the

position of the neoconservatives on the foreign policy team. President Bush also responded to the attacks by implementing a more hawkish stance on international relations. He now saw his presidency as being a calling to secure American ideals and the rigid ideology of the neoconservatives now appealed to the President's black and white interpretation of the situation. The attacks had validated much of the neoconservative ideology and it was time for the administration to turn to establish a new foreign policy agenda that emphasized democratic values and restoring and spreading freedom across the world. These neoconservative principles would become the most important components of the war on terror.¹⁶

With regards to the rest of the foreign policy team, 9/11 would greatly influence the role of the people that represented the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President. The attacks had created a new political climate that would further militarize the administration. Congress opened its wallet to finance the war on terror and gave the President the authority to execute the policies he deemed necessary.¹⁷ Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld advised that thinking ahead and devising a strategy for not allowing such events to happen again was more important than efficiently taking out the people responsible for the attacks. The administration would begin to work under a strategy that deemed the best defense against similar attacks would be a strong offense.¹⁸ Secretary Rumsfeld shared the President's view that the United States should do anything in its power to protect the American ideals by going after the terrorists they viewed to be the staunch opponents of the United States and the American way of life.¹⁹

Rumsfeld's standing at the Pentagon improved significantly as a response to the leadership qualities he possessed: On the day of the attack, he joined the initial rescue of injured at the scene, and showing a strong personality at grips with a crisis and bathed in light of respect of his military officers.²⁰ Vice President Cheney would, like Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, become more influential as a result of the atrocities of 9/11. From the outset of the administration, Cheney had played a nontraditional role as one of the closest advisors to the President and when the attacks were going on, Vice President Cheney took the lead in organizing the government and prepared for a possible attack on the White House and other installations in Washington. Cheney had been trained on handling a threat to the succession of government in the 1980s and early 1990s, and he got to use this training while the United States was under attack.²¹ After 9/11, this role got more pronounced and his influence with the president grew. The two took a hard line approach to the post-9/11 strategy and they wanted to tackle the new challenges

with a massive retaliatory response.²² Cheney grew closer to the President and got more direct access to the President. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this opened up a “back channel” for the officials of the Department of Defense and the rest of the Office of the Vice President.

Secretary of State Colin Powell had served a lifetime in the United States Army, and recognized that during a time of crisis, there is nothing more important than to remain loyal to his commander-in-chief. After the attacks, there had been a massive outreach from states and governments across the world to show their support for the United States. The State Department did not get the massive attention the Pentagon did, because there was hardly any need to push for diplomatic solutions. Even governments that could have posed as formidable challenges to a diplomatic process, such as Pakistan, gave the responses the United States wanted without much debate.²³

During the first phase of the war on terror, Powell sided with the rest of the administration that the United States had to act in response to the terrorists. Powell knew that military strategy was not his job any more, and so it was left to Rumsfeld and the military brass at the Pentagon to work out. Questions were raised about Powell’s role in the administration and the quarrels that would emerge between the representatives of the State Department and the Department of Defense would become more and more intense as the strategy for an operation in Iraq was initiated. Initially it had been expected that Secretary Powell would play an important role in shaping the foreign policy agenda, but after the attacks, Powell did not go against his commander-in-chief and he stayed on the foreign policy team in spite of having doubts about the strategy the team was pursuing.²⁴ The same loyalty was evident in the National Security Council staff. National security advisor, Condoleezza Rice and her staff at the NSC would respond to the events by leaving much of the responsibilities over to the other agencies. The NSC had failed as an agency in taking the terrorist threats towards the United States seriously, and the failure of the NSC would continue as the agency were unable to execute their role as the mediator between other agencies in the period that followed the 9/11 attacks. Rice let the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President dominate the inner circle of the President and she did not serve as decisive a role as the Vice President or the Secretary of Defense would: She was overrun by the foreign policy heavyweights in the administration.²⁵

4.2.2. Operation Enduring Freedom

While the terrorist attacks on American civilian and federal targets were still going on, officials at the White House, the Pentagon, the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) began planning a response to the attacks. Several experts on international terrorism within the administration immediately recognized the attacks as being the works of al-Qaeda and the agencies' plans for a response evolved around how to target the terrorist organization.²⁶ The Pentagon did not have a plan ready for an operation in Afghanistan, and a massive military operation would take months to get in place. During a meeting on the evening of 9/11, the President and his foreign policy team began working out a response strategy. Secretary of State Colin Powell advocated a UN alliance that would deliver a broad campaign that targeted al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and Vice President Cheney began talking about including Saddam Hussein in an even broader campaign that would implement the warnings that the President had given in his speech earlier in the evening: targeting state actors that served as and that could become potential harbors for terrorist networks. The President decided to use the diplomatic momentum the attacks had given the United States and began calling possible allies to assemble a functioning military alliance that would focus on Afghanistan the following morning.²⁷

Assembling an alliance would take time, and the administration wanted a quick response. The CIA had been working with warlords in Afghanistan since the Soviet Union attempted to take on the tribal militias, known as the mujahedin, and turn Afghanistan into their proxy in the early 1980s. CIA had contacts in place and had been working for years on a plan to take out Osama Bin Laden's terrorist network. They would use their contacts to establish a presence and coalition with anti-Taliban warlords as their allies.²⁸ The CIA plan was available to the President almost immediately. However, Cheney did not have confidence in the CIA and wanted Rumsfeld at the steering wheel. During Cheney's career in Washington, the CIA had erred numerous times, and the agency's bad reputation from the end of the Cold War and the first Gulf War lingered with both him and Rumsfeld. The CIA had failed in the case of the Iranian Revolution, the Iran-Contra Affair had been a devastating ordeal and the agency did not anticipate the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nor did the CIA know about the advanced nuclear program of Saddam Hussein's regime or foresee the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991. In consequence of these perceived failures, Cheney and Rumsfeld did not want the CIA to have an important position in the war on terror.²⁹ Powell did not advocate a

swift response and wanted a well-planned operation with the use of massive force in accordance with his own doctrine. The CIA option was not popular with any of the President's foreign policy advisors.³⁰

Rumsfeld and the Pentagon commanders began planning for a quick response with limited force to ensure that the Pentagon took the lead on Afghanistan. The massive machine that is the U.S. Army was not prepared to respond as quickly as the Secretary of Defense and the President wanted. The elite forces of the U.S. military, the only companies that had the training and preparations for a massive operation on such short notice, would therefore head the strategy that was outlined by the Pentagon after the CIA had put their plan on the table.³¹ However, because of the initial lack of a plan from the Pentagon to take on Afghanistan and despite opposition from key quarters, the CIA would lead the first response operation and the mission was under CIA command. This was a massive blow to Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and Cheney.³² The unconventional warfare that Secretary Rumsfeld had advocated since the first Gulf War was applied to the clandestine operation that would be named "Operation Jawbreaker" that started with CIA operatives on the 26th of September 2001.

In Operation Jawbreaker, the U.S. military forces would provide back up for the CIA operatives when they had established an alliance with the local warlords that were willing to take on the Taliban. Within a week the CIA had done what they needed to do, but the Pentagon was not ready to send military forces for another month.³³ CIA director George Tenet and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld would be at odds with each other during meetings, and the President eventually put Rumsfeld in charge of the CIA operations in Afghanistan.³⁴ It was an important victory of the Secretary of Defense, and he would not let the CIA or any other agency get the upper hand again and it proves the political skills of Secretary Rumsfeld: In the middle of a CIA operation, he was able to convince the President that he was more capable of leading the operation than the CIA director was. When the CIA forces finally got back up from the U.S. Army Special Forces on October 7, 2001, Operation Enduring Freedom was initiated and the *Rumsfeld Doctrine* that emphasized limited, but specialized forces was set in motion.³⁵ Exactly two months after the first military strike on the Taliban regime, on December 7, American and British forces have successfully driven out the regime that harbored the al-Qaeda terrorist network. The new way of waging war with limited ground forces and precision air strikes had succeeded.³⁶

Iranian response to the 9/11 attacks had come as a great surprise to many people both within and outside of the United States. The leaders of the Islamic republic had denounced the attacks, and President Khatami hinted at an approach to the Bush administration when he announced that he hoped the atrocities “could be replaced by coexistence, empathy, logic, and dialogue.”³⁷ Afghanistan under the Taliban regime was seen as a threat to Iranian national security, and so when the United States declared war on Afghanistan, Iranian officials saw an opportunity to work with the United States in removing a vicious enemy that was located on Iran’s doorstep.³⁸ During the 1990s, Iran had played an important role in assisting the Afghani Northern Alliance, a compilation of different tribal warlords, in their fight against the Taliban. When the United States began its operations in Afghanistan in 2001, the Northern Alliance would be one of the most important local allies that would help the American and British effort to rid Afghanistan of the Taliban regime. Iran played an important role in convincing the Northern Alliance to work with the British and American troops. In addition, it allowed the United States to use Iranian airspace, to send supplies via their territory into Afghanistan and to use Iranian air force bases and territory in case of emergencies.³⁹ Iran participated in diplomatic talks about the situation in Afghanistan, and became a diplomatic team player while Operation Enduring Freedom was under way. In December of 2001, Iran would be tremendously important in securing an agreement for an interim government in Afghanistan at the U.N. Bonn Conference. The conference consisted of four delegations from different Afghani factions and states that had been involved in the military and diplomatic operations after the 9/11 attacks. Iran impressed the American delegation and ensured that the Afghani factions agreed to the U.S. backed candidate, Hamid Karzai, to be Chairman of the interim government.⁴⁰ The war against the Taliban regime and the al-Qaeda network had opened up opportunities for a renewed approach to one of the states the Bush administration had regarded to be one of the toughest opponents in the same war: Iran.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld experienced a tremendous increase in popularity as a result of the initial operations in Afghanistan. As the leader of the Pentagon and the person in charge of the military operations in Afghanistan, Rumsfeld used the publicity that came with the engagement in the Taliban controlled country to convince the public that it was a well planned and executed strategy. Rumsfeld had been in the spotlight previously as one of the most important characters of the Republican Party for over the last three decades, and he spellbound the press and the public.⁴¹ After

the CIA and U.S. Special Operations forces had successfully driven out the Taliban from the major cities and strategic locations in Afghanistan, Secretary Rumsfeld had sky-high approval ratings and enjoyed a massive increase in political capital.⁴² The initial success of the limited forces that executed Operation Enduring Freedom would give credibility to the strategy that Rumsfeld and his transformationalist colleagues advocated. It would be repeated eighteen months later when the Bush administration continued its war on terror by invading Iraq.

Secretary of State Colin Powell and the traditionalists also enjoyed an important victory when it came to the operation in Afghanistan. In spite of the mission being at odds with the Powell Doctrine, NATO became a part of the operation and a multilateral agreement with an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) came into place as a result of the Bonn Conference in December of 2001.⁴³ At first the American initiative in Afghanistan proved to be a balanced response of military operation and diplomacy, both the Pentagon officials and the State Department officials were able to influence the President enough to make a decision to combine the agendas of the two agencies. When the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan failed after the focus had shifted from the Taliban and al-Qaeda to Iraq and the U.S. forces began having troubles with an insurgent al-Qaeda and Taliban in 2005, the administration voiced that it was not something they had anticipated or been warned about. However, several experts and officials had been critical of the strategy that had been launched by the Department of Defense and CIA experts had in fact warned about the possibility of retaliation and a stronger emergence of Taliban and al-Qaeda forces.⁴⁴

4.2.3 Karine A

On January 3 2002, an incident that came to play in the Red Sea would cause U.S.-Iranian relations to take a turn for the worse: The Israeli Navy boarded a ship in international waters that contained an arsenal of weapons produced in Iran. When the United States began its counter terrorism operations in Afghanistan, Iran and the United States started opening up diplomatic channels to cooperate on the war on terror. Iran had a reformist president who, when it came to foreign affairs, had some support from the conservative clerics and their supreme leader, Seyyed Ali Khamenei. The widely understood “moderate and reformist” administration of the Islamic republic that had been in power since 1997, but had to fight a constant uphill battle with the powerful conservative forces within Iran and were losing ground. Representatives for the Iranian

administration reached out to the Western coalition that were planning the war on terror, and proved to a valuable ally in the fight against the Taliban regime and al-Qaeda. At the same time, conservative forces in Iran did all in their power to undermine the moderates and reformists. Their fear was that if an internationally approved conciliatory approach to the United States succeeded, the reformers would gain credibility with the people and enjoy more backing from the supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei.

When the Israeli navy boarded the ship that was led by a Palestinian navy officer in the Red Sea and found Iranian weapons, the Israeli government quickly claimed the ship was headed for Gaza was intended to supply the Palestinian security services.⁴⁵ The incident was a tremendous blow to the attempts of the Iranian leaders to involve the republic in western politics again. Following the incident, there were disputes over the claim Israel made that Iran was supplying Palestinian authorities, and many believed the weapons were intended for Hezbollah in Syria rather than the Palestinian authorities. Several of Israel's Western allies believed the seizure could be a propaganda tool used by Israel to effectively stop continued rapprochement between the United States and Iran. Some U.S. officials who shared this view have gone so far as to question the validity of the episode.⁴⁶

In addition to Israel, the conservatives and hard liners in Iran stood to gain from the cooling of U.S.-Iranian relations again. The Qods forces, the Iranian international clandestine force that had a reputation for executing regime opponents in exile, were linked to the shipment and in spite of the convenient timing the event had for the Israeli government to prove their argument that the United States needed to focus on Iran, the operation could clearly have been planned by members of the Qods force. The Qods are a part of the Iranian Special Forces that are linked with the hard line conservative block of the regime.⁴⁷ These hard liners are known for leading a fierce battle against the moderate and reformist forces that were dominating the Iranian government at the time. The point is that whether it was the Israelis or the Iranians that staged the Karine A incident, it appears to have been an attempt to sabotage the Iranian government's growing rapprochement to the United States.

The incident turned Washington's attention once again to the relations between the Islamic regime and their allied terrorist networks.⁴⁸ Israel was able to put pressure on the Bush administration to ensure their interests were kept secure: the Israelis used the incident to push for the Bush administration to take action against Iran rather than Iraq and it tipped the scale in the favor of the hard-line approach to Iran.⁴⁹ No matter if

the weaponry were headed for Gaza or Hezbollah, the administration was reminded that the Iranian regime had great challenges to deal with before they could become a dependable ally. Iranian authorities denied having anything to do with the shipment, and even requested evidence Israel and the United States possessed so it could prosecute the people involved. The United States did not provide the Iranian government with the evidence, but continued to claim that there was “compelling” evidence that the arms had been shipped from Iran. Refusing to provide such evidence alarmed even the reformists within the Iranian government, and a notion that Israel and the United States were knowingly undermining the so-called Geneva Channel that had been established as a response to American presence in Afghanistan became evident.⁵⁰ State Department officials continued to advocate American and Iranian talks within the Bush administration, but like the Iranian administration, they were losing credibility.

4.2.4 Operation “Iraqi Freedom”

The next phase in the War on Terror would be the targeting of the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein. The United States had been partly involved in military operations concerning Iraq since after the end of the Gulf War in 1992. After American forces withdrew from Iraq, it had continued to be a major issue for American foreign policy strategists. The regime that was controlled by Saddam Hussein continued to pose considerable geopolitical and strategic challenges to the global community and UN sanctions and numerous mandates required the attention of the United States and other governments. In the 1990s the United States was engaged in a policy of “dual containment” towards Iran and Iraq that involved economic sanctions and a policy of non-diplomatic relations with both governments. The two regimes were fierce opponents and served to appease each other by retaining a balance of power where they each served as viable opposition to each other. This caused a bipolar structure between the two states, much like the United States and the Soviet Union had been during the Cold War. In addition to economic sanctions and not having diplomatic relations with the two, the United States was a part of the force that were responsible for upholding the UN mandate of two no-fly zones over parts of the Iraqi territory to secure surrounding nations from missile attacks by the erratic Iraqi dictator.⁵¹ Saddam did not respect the no-fly zones and frequently ordered his military to fire at fighter planes that patrolled the area. Former President Bill Clinton had responded to the attacks by launching a bombing campaign against Iraqi forces, but it had not been a massive retaliatory attack.

Consequently, President Clinton was accused of being running a weak foreign policy that did not correspond with the tremendous power the United States had acquired since the end of the Cold War. He was criticized for being too soft and not responding forcefully enough to threats against U.S. interests and targets.

Prior to the 9/11 attacks, President Bush had continued the strategy of patrolling of the no-fly zones and in addition, engaging the American fighters in strategic attacks on military installations in Iraq. The administration wanted to prove that unlike the Clinton administration, it would use the uncontested position and power the United States enjoyed to secure American interests. Part from manifesting U.S. power with strategic attacks against Saddam's regime, policy towards Iraq did not make much progress prior to the 9/11 attacks.⁵² Iraq had not been left in the dust, however, and the process of developing new strategies towards the regime was well in place by the fall of 2001. Internal debates and discussions about the possibilities for regime change were ongoing, and the State Department had worked with the CIA in establishing alternatives for a new policy outline for Iraq.⁵³

When al-Qaeda executed its attacks against American targets on 9/11, it only took some administration officials a few hours before they began to plan how to make these horrific events a rationale for a new policy against Iraq. During an NSC meeting on the same evening the planes had hit New York, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld brought up Iraq as a possible target.⁵⁴ It was brushed off, but Rumsfeld's deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, brought it up only four days later when the entire foreign policy staff had gathered at Camp David to work out a policy strategy in the aftermath of the attacks. Wolfowitz had been pushing Colin Powell and the officials at the State Department on Iraq policy, and he had been talking to the President about changing policy towards Iraq prior to the attacks.⁵⁵ When at Camp David, President Bush believed that the argument for going after Iraq could be a viable alternative in a broad campaign, but it was put on hold because the President believed that the most urgent response had to be against the al-Qaeda network and Osama Bin Laden. Several officials, such as Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, held strong beliefs that an independent organization like al-Qaeda could not have managed such a massive strike on its own and that there had to be a state sponsor involved. Prior to the 9/11 attacks, Wolfowitz had voiced skepticism about al-Qaeda and rebuffed the warnings that an independent strike on the United States could be in the making. Apparently, it was unconceivable for Defense Department officials that any non-state organization could

have the means to execute such an attack. The administration ordered the CIA to start working on intelligence that could prove that there was a link between the Iraqi regime and organized terrorism.⁵⁶

After the United States had established a full blown successful war against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, Donald Rumsfeld and his policy team began working out a plan to target Iraq. President Bush had ordered Rumsfeld to go ahead with the planning of a military offensive against Iraq at the end of November 2001. The President and the officials at the Pentagon that had established the *Office of Special Plans* (OSP) to oversee the planning of the Iraq strategy, wanted it to be kept under the rug and so several of the other foreign policy officials that belonged to different agencies did not know what was going on. The OSP were using the discredited theory of Laurie Mylroie that Saddam Hussein and the al-Qaeda network had tight bonds to search for plausible connections that could be used against the Iraqi regime to justify a military operation.⁵⁷ Wolfowitz and several of his fellow neoconservatives at the Pentagon were collecting and interpreting their own intelligence, disregarding the CIA and other intelligence agencies' findings that there was no link between the two.⁵⁸ In July of 2002, more than six months after work on a strategy to target Iraq had started, Colin Powell and his staff at the State Department was still left out of the loop. Richard Haas, then director of the State Department Policy Planning Staff confronted Condoleezza Rice with the rumors that people at the Pentagon, the Office of the Vice President and the NSC were planning a military operation against Iraq. Rice told him that the decision had already been made: the President wanted to go after Saddam. Secretary of State Colin Powell had not been briefed or consulted on the issue prior to Haas' inquiry about the plans.⁵⁹

While Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz were pushing for a broad response to the attacks and began advocating operations in Iraq during the first week of policy planning after 9/11, Colin Powell, along with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, voiced doubts about such a plan. Opposition against a military operation in Iraq was evident at the State Department. Initially, the President sided with Powell on the importance of getting a functioning strategy for Afghanistan in place before considering taking the war on terror further. However, as the effort in Afghanistan proved to be an immediate success, the President began looking into the arguments about going after Iraq that had been made by the Secretary of Defense on the eve of 9/11.⁶⁰ The United States military had proved in Afghanistan that American power was to be counted as a massive force,

and the belief that the United States could manifest this other places than Afghanistan grew.

Prior to the 9/11 attacks, Colin Powell and the State Department had been in charge of Iraqi policy, and they had concentrated on renewing economic sanctions and continuing dual containment. This had not been a popular strategy with the foreign policy hawks at the Office of the Vice President and Department of Defense.⁶¹ When it became clear to Secretary Powell that the administration had begun working on a decisive strategy for including a military operation against Iraq in the broad effort of the war on terror, he warned the President about the effects it would have on the international community and the role of the United States globally. Powell believed several of the U.S. allies would not accept it as a justifiable response to the 9/11 attacks.⁶² The Secretary of State was again at odds with the foreign policy hawks.

The intelligence community would work hard under the pressure of the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President to come up with evidence that would initially prove that Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi regime posed a great threat to the United States and its allies across the world.⁶³ While the intelligence community was working on gathering information that would fit the assumption that Saddam Hussein had a well functioning WMD program, President Bush decided to Powell and Blair's advice and ask for a UN resolution to send weapon inspectors into Iraq.⁶⁴ It appeared to be a major victory for Powell and the State Department, but in the end it would only serve as a legitimization for the war plans that had been advocated by the officials at the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President.⁶⁵ In what now appears as a great irony, it would be Secretary of State Colin Powell that served as the administrations lead man in "selling" the strategy he and his Department had opposed internally to the international community.

In spite of fierce protests from the international community and officials within the administration, President Bush ordered air strikes against Iraq the evening of March 19, 2003 - after telling the world that the brutal dictator was a dangerous aggressor that worked with terrorist networks and who threaded the world with weapons of mass destruction.⁶⁶ The following day, American troops began its ground force operations inside of Iraq. Diplomatic efforts had failed, and President Bush had engaged the United States in a second war, merely twenty-six months into his first term in office. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz had been the two main architects of the strategy that the U.S. armed forces would execute against Saddam

Hussein and his regime. There had been fierce battles within the Pentagon between the civilians at the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the military commanders over strategy. Secretary Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz wanted a limited force much like the one that had initially succeeded to drive out the Taliban in Afghanistan, but they met great opposition with the Army Generals. Rumsfeld found, with the help of former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, an army colonel by the name of MacGregor that was willing to do the planning on limited troops with General Franks at CENTCOM. MacGregor's plan suggested a force of 50,000 troops and a massive attack that would center on getting to Baghdad as soon as possible. U.S. Army General Eric Shinseki publicly contested the plan, and General Franks went several rounds with the Secretary over a limited force strategy. Rumsfeld would play an important role in the detailed planning of the strategy, cutting troops and going over the heads of his own generals. Eventually the operation would consist of a force of 140,000 troops that would be deployed from Kuwait and that would advance on Baghdad immediately. Rumsfeld chose a middle ground between the alternative of 50,000 troops offered by MacGregor and the alternative of an overwhelming force of several hundred thousand troops that had been advocated by the Army generals.⁶⁷ The American led coalition that swept across the Iraqi territory would gain control of the most important strategic sites within a matter of weeks, and on May 1, 2003 President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq were over: the United States had succeeded in overthrowing the regime.⁶⁸

When it became clear that a U.S. military operation in Iraq was under way, the Iranian government again reached out to American officials to offer a helping hand.⁶⁹ Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi regime had been, much like the Taliban in Afghanistan had since the mid 1990s, a threat to the national interest and security of Iran for decades. Saddam had launched a brutal and costly war against Iran during the 1980s, and the animosity between the two regimes was highly explosive. The cultural and religious ties between the two nations, however, are strong and the Iranian regime had a lot to gain from the removal of the Sunni dominated Iraqi regime and an installment of a Shi'a dominated administration. Geopolitically, the two nations had served as fierce opponents that neutralized each other's powers in the region. It was believed that secular Iraq served as a buffer against the spread of the Shi'a Islamic Revolution in the region, while Iran served as a buffer against Saddam's aggressive and expansive behavior. Much like the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, the

two regimes had established a bipolar structure in the Middle Eastern region. Getting rid of Saddam could enhance Iranian influence in the region, and the Shi'a regime would gain an important ally in a Shi'a dominated Iraq.⁷⁰ When the Iranian administration reached out to offer its help to the United States in planning both the military invasion and the strategy for post-war construction, the regime was turned down. In spite of proving it could be valuable ally in the case of Afghanistan, hard liners within the Bush administration had gained momentum and their belief in a unilateral U.S. action overlooked the possible advantages that could come with cooperating with Iran. The President and his neoconservative officials were anticipating the fall of the Iranian regime, either by the hand of the United States or by internal revolution as a response to American installment of democracy in Iraq.⁷¹ Having turned their backs on the Iranian regime yet again, the Bush administration would eventually find itself fighting the Iranian regime within Iraq after its initial success in getting rid of the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein.

When the President declared victory in Iraq on May 1 2003, the operation in Iraq entered a new phase. One of the major components and challenges of a strategy in Iraq was how to manage the situation after the U.S. military had removed the regime and its military forces. The State Department had been working with a number of Iraqi exile groups to set up a comprehensive plan to ensure the stability of post-war Iraq. Making sure that the infrastructure was rebuilt as soon as possible and that people were able to get food, water and a roof over their heads were initially the responsibility of the State Department. However, the Department of Defense would challenge the plans the State Department had worked out, and sought to take over the post-war planning. Wolfowitz and several of the officials at the Pentagon wanted an Iraqi organization named Iraqi National Congress (INC) to go in and take control as an interim government immediately after combat operations had ended, leaving the responsibility to the Iraqis right away.⁷² By doing that, the United States did not have to engage itself in a massive nation-building plan. The State Department did not have confidence in the INC and did not believe such a plan would work. Both Secretary of State Colin Powell and his Deputy Richard Armitage strongly opposed the plans for the INC to take control over Iraq immediately after Saddam had been removed, and there would be fierce battles between the two agencies and their representatives over how Iraq should be managed in the aftermath of the war.⁷³ The President settled the arguments by handing the responsibility for post-war planning over to the Department of Defense.⁷⁴ The

Department of Defense publicly discredited the army experts that had recommended a major force for stabilization in post war Iraq and during the planning process, removed the people within the Pentagon that were disputing the strategy Rumsfeld were setting into motion. In addition, it willingly kept experts with links to the State Department out of the process, because they believed they would not be loyal to the process decided by the Department of Defense.⁷⁵ Within hours of the combat victory in Baghdad and other cities, civil unrest commenced. The U.S. military personnel did not have instructions on how to respond, and it created a security issue that would eventually evolve into massive retaliation against U.S. and British forces during the post-war period – a situation that would be used by the Iranian hard-liners to keep the United States locked down in Iraq to make sure Iran was kept out of the equation. Lack of a comprehensive plan from the Department of Defense resulted in situation of instability, insurgency, and the establishment of terrorist networks across Iraq.⁷⁶

4.3. Conclusion

The link the hardliners within the administration claimed had existed between al-Qaeda and Iraq proved to carry little credibility. After the invasion of Iraq and the toppling of the regime, it became all the more clear that Saddam and his secular regime did not have much in common with, and would not have been a state sponsor to al-Qaeda or other fundamentalist Islamist terrorists. Saddam Hussein and his secular regime was a mortal enemy in the eyes of the Islamist terrorist groups because of the massive atrocities he let the Iraqi people endure for decades.⁷⁷ The WMD claim could have carried some relevance to an intervention, had it not been fabricated to fit the goal of targeting the regime. Before the United States began its attack in March of 2003, there had been several attempts to deal with the Iraqi regime through both UN resolutions and demands made by the United States and its western allies. Many of these attempts sought to reason with the dictator and have him turn himself over to face criminal court. However, the demands were given with the assumption that he would be able to weigh the alternatives and see that the best outcome he could hope for was to strike a deal and cooperate with the United States. Taking into consideration that Saddam was the prime target because he was a dictator that was deemed to be so unpredictable that he could supply terrorist networks with WMD's and that he had to be targeted in the war against terrorism, there is little that suggests that Saddam Hussein would make a decision based on reason. Because of the iron grip Saddam and his forces

had kept on the Iraqi people, it had been impossible for terrorist networks to establish themselves inside of the Iraqi borders. The targeting of Iraq proved to be a tremendous service to the al-Qaeda network and other Islamist terrorist networks. It caused massive recruitment and as the U.S. forces failed in securing peace and stability in Iraq, it opened up a massive territory for the terrorist networks to establish themselves.⁷⁸ It also removed the only true buffer against the Islamist regime in Iran. Causing instability and chaos in Iraq would now serve as one of the major goals of the Iranian regime, as it would keep the United States occupied so it would not turn on them, and it ensured that Iran grew to become the most powerful actor in the region.

The 9/11 attacks had caused the foreign policy team to work together and overlook much of the animosity that had existed from day one for a short period of time.⁷⁹ The individuals understood that they were all working to secure the best interest of the United States. However, it would not last long. When the administration began looking away from the initial policy of taking on al-Qaeda and the Taliban and began planning action against Saddam Hussein and his regime in Iraq, tensions began growing and the two opposing groups of the team began fighting each other again. Interagency quarrels and fights between the powerful advisors of the administration had been present from day one of the administration. The traditionalists at the State Department and the transformationalists at the Department of Defense and the Office of the Vice President would clash again over the strategy and policy that were developing towards Iraq in the months after the successful invasion of Afghanistan. These quarrels would take much of the focus away from the policy deliberations and stand in the way of the development of a well functioning process that might have produced a better and well planned strategy for the war on terror. It also removed much of the focus away from other important policy strategies that could have gotten more attention and who later would serve as crippling mistakes for the policies that were implemented in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

Notes, Chapter 4.

- ¹ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 31.
- ² Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 367-368.
- ³ Richard Haas. *War of Necessity – War of Choice*. (Simon & Schuster. New York, NY. 2009), 168-169.
- ⁴ Scheuer. *Marching Toward Hell*, 98.
- ⁵ Rothkopf, 2004, 31-32.
- ⁶ “Showdown with Iran”. *Frontline*.
- ⁷ Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, 1-2.
- ⁸ Rice, “National Interests”, 46.
- ⁹ McCormick, *American Foreign Policy*, 210-212.
- ¹⁰ Bush, *Decision Points*, 127., Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 341-342.
- ¹¹ Haas, *War of Necessity*, 168.
- ¹² McCormick, *American Foreign Policy*, 214.
- ¹³ Richard Armitage quoted in Woodward, *State of Denial*, 100.
- ¹⁴ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 352.
- ¹⁵ George W. Bush. “Address to the Nation”. September 11, 2001. http://articles.cnn.com/2001-09-11/us/bush.speech.text_1_attacks-deadly-terrorist-acts-despicable-acts?_s=PM:US Accessed: 03.28.11.
- ¹⁶ Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, 44,46., Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 446
- ¹⁷ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 344-345, 350.
- ¹⁸ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 342.
- ¹⁹ Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 362.
- ²⁰ “Rumsfeld’s War”. *Frontline*.
- ²¹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 296.
- ²² Colin Powell quoted in Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 409., Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 341-342
- ²³ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 298-299.
- ²⁴ Robin Wright. “Rumsfeld’s War”. *Frontline*.
- ²⁵ Rothkopf, *Running the World*, 407-409.
- ²⁶ Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 2., Bush, *Decision Points*, 134.
- ²⁷ “Bush’s War – Part one”. *Frontline*.
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- ²⁹ David Kay, Richard Clarke. “Bush’s War – Part one.” *Frontline*.
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- ³⁷ Khatami quoted in Slavin, *Bitter Friends*, 194.
- ³⁸ Slavin, *Bitter Friends*, 197.
- ³⁹ Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 122-123.
- ⁴⁰ Slavin, *Bitter Friends*, 198.
- ⁴¹ “Rumsfeld’s War” *Frontline*.
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- ⁴⁴ Scheuer, *Marching Toward Hell*, 100-101.
- ⁴⁵ Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 350-351.
- ⁴⁶ Ansari, *Confronting Iran*, 186., Trita Parsi. *Treacherous Alliance*. (Yale University Press. New Haven, CT. 2007), 234.
- ⁴⁷ Slavin, *Bitter Friends*, 87.
- ⁴⁸ Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 128.
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- ⁵⁵ Bob Woodward. "Rumsfeld's War". *Frontline*.
- ⁵⁶ Haas, *War of Necessity*, 192., Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 231-232, 237-238.
- ⁵⁷ Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 95.
- ⁵⁸ Seymour M. Hersh, "Selective Intelligence". *The New Yorker*. May 12, 2003. http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2003/05/12/030512fa_fact Accessed: 05.01.11
- ⁵⁹ Haas, *War of Necessity*, 4-6.
- ⁶⁰ "Bush's War – Part one." *Frontline*.
- ⁶¹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 300-301.
- ⁶² Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 302.
- ⁶³ Feith, *War and Decision*, 221-222
- ⁶⁴ Paul Pillar & Vincent Cannistraro. "Bush's War – Part one." *Frontline*.
- ⁶⁵ William Kristol. "Bush's War – Part one." *Frontline*.
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Chapter 5. Preparing for Regime Change: The Bush Administration and the Islamic Republic of Iran

5.1. Introduction

On the evening of 9/11, Iranian president Mohammad Khatami publicly condemned the terrorist attacks against the United States.¹ In a dramatic turn from the commonly known anti-American rhetoric, the hard-line conservative Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei also condemned the attacks and suspended the use of anti-American slogans during the Friday prayers.² The 9/11 attacks served to be the defining moment for the administration of President George W. Bush. It would initiate the “War on Terror” and shift the focus on the Bush administration away from domestic reform to foreign policy reform. The reformist Iranian President Khatami saw the attacks a golden opportunity for the two countries to approach each other after over two decades of non-diplomatic relations. For the Khatami administration the Bush White House would prove to be unapproachable and long lasting feelings of distrust between the United States and Iran would re-emerge scuttling the possibility of new and improved relations between the two countries.

This chapter will apply the factors of how the foreign policy hawks influenced the President and how events contributed to enhance the influence of these people that have been accounted for in the third and fourth chapter to the approach the Bush administration took towards the Islamic Republic of Iran during its first term. It will show how the combination of people and events that dominated the policy agenda in general also played key roles in determining the outcome of policy towards Iran. The interagency quarrels and lack of common ground that would limit the discourse in the policy process in general would also halt the promise for a new and more nuanced approach towards Iran. Experts that were capable of working out a comprehensive strategy towards Iran were left out as a result of a non-functioning interagency process. In spite of several attempts from the Iranian authorities, the lack of expertise and the dominance of a strategy that had Iran as a possible target in the War on Terror caused the Bush administration to form a confusing and misguided policy towards Iran that

would fuel the hard-liners of the regime and shatter the last hope of the reform movement. In the end, the agency the neoconservatives and foreign policy hawks of the administration promoted and incorporated in the Bush administration's Iranian policy caused the momentum of the Iranian reform movement and the feelings of sympathy for the United States after the 9/11 attacks in Iran to dwindle. The subsequent Iranian administration would implement a staunchly anti-American foreign policy that has contributed to the chaos in Iraq and, in the last few years, a more decisive Iranian nuclear build-up. The strategies the Bush administration implemented proved to be self-defeating for the United States. The historical account that is presented in this chapter begins where the account in the second chapter ended: with the end of the Cold War. It is included in this chapter because the policies that were developed in the 1990s, predominantly during the Clinton administration, were key in shaping the policies of the second Bush administration.

5.2. Dual Containment and Rapprochement – the Rollercoaster Policies of the 1990s.

The policy of *dual containment* came to life with the Clinton administration in 1993. After the Gulf War in 1991, the first Bush administration had taken a pragmatic approach towards Iran and attempted to establish new relations with the Islamic Republic. American companies were investing in Iranian oil and there were attempts to open up the Iranian markets to additional American investment.³ The Iranians had, however, turned the attempts away because they feared the United States could use the momentum of their victory in Iraq and the establishment of additional U.S. military bases in the region to go after Iran. The result was a foreign policy dominated by hard-liners who viewed the United States as an imperialist power attempting world dominance. Iran lashed out at the Arabic nations that cooperated with the United States after the Gulf War, and actively used covert operations and support for terrorist groups to undermine American influence in the Middle East.⁴ The response from the United States to the new and more militarized foreign policy of Iran was the introduction of the policy of dual containment - which it imposed towards both Iraq and Iran.

In addition to responding to the hard-line foreign policy Iran was practicing, the notion that containing Iran was crucial in securing a peaceful outcome in the ongoing negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel became important to the Clinton administration. In order for Israel to agree to peace with the Palestinian Liberation

Organization (PLO), Israel would have to feel secure about not being attacked by either Iraq or Iran. The United States wanted to weaken the power and influence of both regimes to ensure continued presence of the United States in region and to help the ongoing peace process that included one of the United States' strongest allies: Israel. Because of the overwhelming military power the United States had acquired, the Clinton administration determined that there was no longer a need for the two adversaries to balance each other's powers, the United States was fit to do so on its own.⁵ Two of Clinton's key foreign policy advisors during the administration's first term, Warren Christopher and Anthony Lake, had served under President Jimmy Carter and had negative experiences with Iran. The two would characterize the regime in harsh and negative terms, and during the first term, the Clinton administration would avoid direct diplomatic engagement with Iran.⁶

Within Iran, dual containment only made resentment towards the United States grow. In spite of a difference in the policy towards Iraq and Iran, the term that lumped the two adversaries together ensured an Iranian belief that there was only a matter of time before the United States would pursue a more aggressive approach, like it had with Iraq, against Iran. Many of the European governments had implemented a policy of *critical dialogue* with the regime and had opened up trade with the regime under certain guidelines. The willingness of the European governments to engage Iran in spite of its increased militaristic foreign policy stood in stark contrast with the American policy. Many Iranians perceived dual containment as an offensive strategy that attempted to undermine Iranian interests in the region. By doing so, the United States kept their options open to ensure more dominance in the region and get their hands on the resources that were available. Iran, on the other hand, wanted the United States out of the region so it could increase its own influence and manifest itself as a powerful regional player.⁷

At first, containment towards Iran did not implement major change in American policy. However, the symbolism of dual containment only made Iranian policy towards the United States more extreme and the initial phases of dual containment made relations between the two countries spiral downward: Iran implemented more anti-American policies and the United States responded by enforcing tougher sanctions that would spur even more anti-Americanism in the Islamic republic.⁸ Iran mounted their support to terrorist proxies in the Middle Eastern region, causing a surge in attacks from militant Islamist groups such as Hezbollah on American allies and American targets.

Israel was the number one target, and the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians were severely damaged because of increased extremism on both sides. Israelis were losing hope in the peace process, and voted for a tougher and a more hard-line administration that did not want to concede anything in the peace process and who put more pressure on the United States to be tougher against Israel's regional opponents.⁹

The name *dual containment* implied a common strategy towards the two neighboring regimes of Iran and Iraq. In reality, this was not the case. The Clinton administration recognized the vast differences between the two countries and had very different strategies in dealing with the two. With regards to Iraq, the United States imposed tough economic sanctions and a strong military presence on the borders of Saddam Hussein's regime. The UN was conducting weapons inspections, and British and American military aircrafts were patrolling no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraqi territory. The containment of Iraq consisted of military actions that sometimes led to bombing raids of military installations and increased U.S. military presence on strategic bases in the region.¹⁰ Containing Iraq was a way of ensuring that the regime did not rebuild its military force so that it could pose a viable threat to the surrounding states again, much like the United States and its European allies had done with Germany after both the first and second World Wars. By contrast, Iran was contained economically by invoking strict sanctions and halting all trade with the regime. The purpose was to make sure Iran did not gain greater regional influence, interfere in regional conflicts, continue its support for terrorist networks or acquire nuclear technology.¹¹

In addition to halting all economic relations between the United States and Iran and issuing a number of executive orders that limited investment in Iran for American companies, U.S. Congress would further limit trade and economic relations between Iran and other countries by adopting the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) in 1996. Under ILSA, the United States would punish states and NGOs with sanctions for investing more than \$ 20 million in the Iranian market. There was some opposition to the bill within the Clinton administration as President Clinton's foreign policy advisors generally saw free trade and economic cooperation as being an essential component in securing good relations with other countries.¹² However, the administration would also contributed to influence relations Iran had to other states by pressuring other states to sustain from supplying Iran with means to build a functioning nuclear program and a

better military.¹³ By passing ILSA, U.S. Congress attempted to further isolate the regime. ILSA did have an effect by halting most investments in Iran; it also contributed to a worsening of the domestic situation to the already economically challenged country. But the dual containment policy the United States executed in the 1990s was not a crippling policy that would challenge or change the Islamic regime in any forceful way.¹⁴ The regime improved its relations with some of the European governments and secured some trade and economic relations with international companies in spite of ILSA and other measures that had been taken by Congress and the Clinton administration, but it was not until 1998 that international actors began returning to Iran for investments when the United States began giving waivers to some European companies.¹⁵

After a terrorist attack on American targets in Saudi Arabia in 1996 at the Khobar Towers, the United States and Iran were at the brink of war. Iran had escalated its covert and proxy operations in the region, and as a response to the targeting of the residencies of American soldiers in Saudi Arabia by a terrorist organization supported by Iran, President Clinton ordered the Pentagon to come up with a functioning strategy for a military response against the regime. The President wanted a severe response that did not leave any doubt with the Iranian clergy that the United States meant serious business. However, the United States had a hard time getting the support and cooperation of their Arab allies in the region for an attack against Iran: the Arab leaders wanted the regional problems to be solved by regional powers, not outsiders like the United States.¹⁶ President Clinton also received opposition from the Pentagon, which was laying out a strategy based on the principles of overwhelming force. They believed that an invasion of Iran would be such a costly and risky affair that it would not have the support of the American people and the consequences could be dramatic.¹⁷ Saddam Hussein was also contributing to making the situation more complex, as he had started launching brutal military operations against the civilian Kurdish populace of Iraq. President Clinton was harshly criticized by the conservative hard-liners in Congress because he decided not to target Iran for the bombing at the Khobar Towers, but instead concentrated on limiting Saddam Hussein's offenses against the Iraqi Kurds and because he had begun working on improving relations with the newly elected reformist President, Mohammad Khatami.¹⁸

Because of the challenges the Islamic republic faced as a result of economic sanctions imposed by the western world, threats of American military retaliation for

Iranian involvement in terrorist attacks and poorly managed domestic policies, the supreme leader Seyyed Ali Khamenei began opening up for a slight departure from the strict conservative foreign policies that had been implemented since the Islamic revolution. The moderate President Hashemi Rafsanjani had attempted to tone down the hard-line foreign policy the regime had implemented in the mid-1990s without success and the Iranian economy suffered from the sanctions that had been implemented as a response to the radicalization of Iranian foreign policy. Rising popularity of the moderates and the reform movement in Iran in the late 1990s also put pressure on the conservatives that had dominated the Iranian government since the Islamic revolution and the supreme leader saw the need for the republic to open up and engage itself more globally to secure the growth of the republic and to keep popular support for the conservative clergy. The Iranian people recognized the damage the hard-line policies were causing the Iranian economy, and responded by limiting the hard-liners influence in the 1997 election. Reformist presidential candidate Mohammad Khatami won an overwhelming victory, and the reformist movement gained many seats in the Iranian government. Supreme Leader Khamenei did not interfere with the reformist influence on foreign policy, and allowed much of the liberalization of the social laws the reformers began implementing.¹⁹

One of the major changes that occurred after Khatami's election was a departure from the use of terrorist operations by the international clandestine groups of the Iranian Republican Guard against the states and individuals Iran considered being their opponents.²⁰ Khatami also began implementing a foreign policy that focused on international engagement and rapprochement with powerful Arabic states, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt. He wanted to improve domestic conditions by allowing more personal freedom for the Iranian people, allowing more outside influence and securing economic growth by increased international trade. Initially, the policy worked to improve the Iranian economy and secure an increase in job availability.²¹ The United States on the other hand proved to be a challenge for Khatami and his more internationalist approach. Unwilling to engage Iran, the Clinton administration continued to actively pursue a containment policy towards the regime, and the President and his foreign policy team did not appear to take the bait from the new reformist administration until the end of its second term. Conservative forces inside Iran continued to use harsh rhetoric against the United States and the West, giving the Iranian administration less credibility in dealing with international actors.²² It was hard

to tell whether or not it was the unelected conservatives or the majority of moderates that were running Iran.

Despite all these obstacles, a critical change in diplomatic policy toward Iran began with the accession of a new foreign policy team in President Clinton's second term. Consequently we can consider the possibility that a new conciliatory path could have developed. Since the Iranian hostage crisis at the American embassy in Tehran in 1979-1981, the United States and Iran had cut all diplomatic ties. The Clinton administration was uncertain about the real influence the reformist movement had acquired, and so the first steps towards rapprochement were small and largely symbolic. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright publicly apologized for American involvement in the overthrow of Mossadeq in 1953 and the administration began lifting some of the economic sanctions it had previously imposed.²³ President Khatami began voicing his ideas for cultural exchange between the two nations, and the Clinton administration agreed to an increased exchange of non-official representatives, such as scholars, journalists, athletes and other people that could serve as symbols to a moderate approach between the two adversaries.²⁴ However, many Iranians complained that the Americans were stalling and Khatami and his reformist colleagues did not achieve much of an improvement with regards to increased trade and economic growth.²⁵ When the 43rd President of the United States was inaugurated on January 20, 2001, Iranians hoped that the Bush administration would take a more pragmatic approach to Iran and broaden the small steps the Clinton administration had started taking.

5.3.1 Policy of the Second Bush Administration: Initial Setbacks

With the return of a Republican president in the White House, optimism and hope for a more pragmatic approach towards Iran from the newly elected administration could be spotted among reformists and moderates in Iran. Historically, Republican presidents had run a foreign policy that suited the Iranians better than the idealistic approach Democratic presidents often had and most of the officials in the second Bush administration had held important positions in the oil industry, an industry that advocated economic approach with Iran. The Senior President Bush was well known for his pragmatic and realist approach to international relations and his administration had made attempts to initiate talks with Iran after the first Gulf War. The timing, however, was not right and Iran turned down the attempts for rapprochement. When his son, George Walker Bush was elected President a decade later, there were expectations both

inside the United States, internationally and within Iran that George W. Bush would follow in the steps of his father. Little did Khatami and his reformist companions know about the *All But Clinton* approach Bush and the hard-line foreign policy agency some of the President's advisors would promote.

Many leading Republicans had criticized the Clinton administration's dual containment, both for being too weak and too tough on Iran. Newt Gingrich and other Republican hawks called for a toughening of policy that would lead to major change within Iran and cause the regime to lose control over its people. Moderate Republicans, however, were more focused on the use of economic sanctions to get the Iranians to loosening up. Dick Cheney, then CEO of the American energy company Halliburton and a conservative force within the Republican Party, opposed his fellow conservatives on the matter and publicly criticized economic sanctions on Iran, stating that economic sanctions was not a tool that should be applied to pressure regimes to change their behavior.²⁶ Cheney advocated free trade and easing of economic sanctions as means of integration. The expectations that pragmatism would dominate the second Bush administration was founded on statements like these made by several of the people that were chosen to hold important positions in the second Bush administration. However, the political climate had changed dramatically since the initial stages of the post-Cold War era, and as it would turn out, the younger Bush would distinguish himself greatly from his father and align himself with the ideologically motivated foreign policy hawks of Republican Party, known as the neoconservatives.

Condoleezza Rice's article in *Foreign Affairs* in January of 2000 indicated the foreign policy priorities the administration would have once it had taken office. In her article, Rice lists a number of points that would be the basis for a new foreign policy approach in a Republican administration if the 2000 election yielded the results she hoped for.⁵ The final point Rice lists calls for a decisive policy to deal with "rogue regimes" and "hostile powers". To experts that anticipated a more lenient approach to

⁵ These points were: "to ensure that America's military can deter war, project power, and fight in defense of its interest if deterrence fails; to promote economic growth and political openness by extending free trade and a stable international monetary system to all committed to these principles, including in the western hemisphere, which has often been neglected as a vital area of U.S. national interests; to renew strong and intimate relationships with allies who share American values and can thus share the burden of promoting peace, prosperity, and freedom; to focus U.S. energies on comprehensive relationships with the big powers, particularly Russia and China, that can and will mold the character of the international political system; and to deal decisively with the threat of rogue regimes and hostile powers, which is increasingly taking the forms of potential for terrorism and the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)." Rice, 2000. p. 46-47.

Iran than the Clinton administration had taken, the article should have indicated otherwise. Iran was labeled a rogue regime and Rice states that the regime poses a threat against American interests and allies in the Middle Eastern region.²⁷ According to Rice, the United States needed to be prepared to use military force against these regimes.²⁸ These statements do not indicate a more open and pragmatic policy towards Iran, or any other rogue regime for that matter. However, during its first nine months in office the Bush administration struggled to find a comprehensive approach towards Iran and it did not invoke a policy towards Iran that complied with the statements made by Rice in 2000 about having a decisive policy towards Iran. Instead, the administration tightened economic sanctions and ignored Iranian attempts to engage in talks with the new administration while it began looking into the possibilities for a different approach to Iran. The administration did all it could to distance itself from the steps the Clinton administration had begun taking in a more cooperative direction with Iran.

While identifying Iraq, North Korea and Iran as a rogue regimes, Rice also mentioned the importance of economic integration to the international market as a part of a Republican foreign policy strategy.²⁹ The Iranian reformists were hopeful that the Bush administration would recognize the elements within the regime that wanted to contribute to international trade and become a part of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and include the regime in its plans for including more states in the open trade market. This would have been in accordance with the statements Vice President Cheney had advocated while he was CEO of Halliburton, and would have been an extension of the policies Clinton had begun at the end of his presidency. However, the departure from the Clinton administration's policies and the distrust of the Iranian regime overshadowed rapprochement and the Iranian reformists concluded that the Bush administration had taken a negative turn against Iran.³⁰ There were disagreements within the administration as to how it would conduct Iran policy. Secretary of State Colin Powell was advocating a pragmatic and proactive approach that would be a continuation of the policies the Clinton administration had implemented, but Powell was met with opposition from the officials at the Pentagon and the Office of the Vice President.³¹ Not seeing the reformist government in Iran as a credible player, the foreign policy hawks in the Bush administration worked against approach with Iran for its first nine months in office and while the State Department was handed the task of working out a new strategy, it did not receive much attention.³²

5.4.2. Diplomatic Cooperation: Chasing Down a Mutual Enemy

After the 9/11 attacks, the United States began working with the states surrounding Afghanistan to secure their support for a military response against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. American diplomats made it clear to Iranian officials that they did not want to use the effort in Afghanistan against Iran in any way and that the United States wanted Iranian cooperation if a state of emergency would take place.³³ Iran agreed to cooperate with the United States and sent diplomats to New York to engage in a diplomatic constellation known as the “Six-plus-two group”. The “Six-plus-two group” was named because of the participants at the meeting consisted of Afghanistan’ neighboring six states, in addition to Russia and the United States.⁶ The group had initially been a diplomatic forum established by the U.N. in the late 1990s for the prevention of drug trafficking and to improve civilian conditions in Afghanistan.³⁴ However, after the 9/11 attacks the states assembled to discuss the future of the Taliban regime.³⁵ The Iranian delegation contributed extensively to the talks and wanted to bring in President Khatami and Iranian experts on the Taliban. The United States, however, refused top-level diplomatic talks with the Iranians and did not want experts from the Iranian Republican Guard to attend the talks.³⁶

In spite of American reluctance against the Iranian delegation, the talks were deemed successful by the UN and the participants and continued while the military operation in Afghanistan was conducted. Iran allowed the United States to use Iranian airspace while conducting military operations in Afghanistan, to use Iranian territory to ship supplies to their troops, and in case of emergencies, Iran would assist the coalition by allowing use of Iranian air force bases.³⁷ Iran’s most important contribution, on the other hand, would be in assembling their long time ally in Afghanistan behind the coalition forces. The Northern Alliance proved to be one of the most valuable assets the United States could have against the Taliban forces and to secure stability in Afghanistan. After being urged by Iranian authorities to support the American forces, the Northern Alliance began fighting along American and coalition soldiers.³⁸ The Iranian administration hoped their contribution to the American led operation against the Taliban would not only remove an important enemy from the borders of Iran, but that it would lead to improved relations between the two governments. On December 5, 2001 at a conference in Bonn, Germany the “six-plus-two group” reached an agreement

⁶ The six neighboring countries were: China, Iran, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

on how Afghanistan would be managed after the war against the Taliban and al-Qaeda was over. The Bonn Agreement established an interim government, a judicial system was set in place, and the participants agreed to the presence of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under a UN mandate.³⁹

The Bonn Agreement was a huge victory for both the Iranian and American administrations. The United States had successfully purged the Afghani government of the Taliban and Iran had one less hostile government lurking on their doorstep. The two nations had successfully cooperated, and moderates within both administration saw the experience as a chance for continued advancement in setting up functioning diplomatic relations between the two governments for the first time in over twenty years. However, hard-liners within both administrations had already begun working against rapprochement and prospects for continued cooperation dwindled. Both the United States and Iran eyed each other with skepticism and during the “Six-plus-two” talks, the United States had refused to accept Iranian cooperation outside of what it deemed completely necessary to secure victory in Afghanistan. In her book *Bitter Friend, Bosome Enemies*, journalist and diplomatic correspondent Barbra Slavin calls some of the refusals from the United States to allow Iranian experts, top officials, and President Khatami himself come to the UN to participate in these talks and to visit Ground Zero to pay his respects to the victims as “a series of missed opportunities”.⁴⁰ The openness the reformist administration allowed itself to show towards the Americans was met with denial and failure to recognize the potential risks Khatami were running when attempting such an approach. Instead of rewarding the Iranian administration for its cooperation, the United States continued to demand full acquiescence to its demands: cooperation between the two adversaries was challenged when the United States wanted Iran to turn over al-Qaeda prisoners that they had in their custody. The Iranian government did not comply with the American demand to turn over all al-Qaeda prisoners.⁴¹ The United States perceived that the Iranian regime allowed people fighting for the Taliban and al-Qaeda to seek refuge in Iranian territory, failing to recognize that the terrain that dominated the border of Afghanistan and Iran made it impossible for Iran to control the entire border and that Iran did not, much like Pakistan, have control over the population that inhabits those areas.⁴²

On November 20, 2001 Eliot A. Cohen, one of the leading neoconservatives in the Republican Party, published an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* calling for the overthrow of the Iranian regime as a part of the war on terror that the Bush

administration had launched. Cohen, a political scientist that had worked for Dick Cheney for a short time during the first Bush administration, had been a part of the Project for a New American Century together with Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and other important members of the Bush administration. In 2001, he was a member of the Defense Policy Advisory Board – a civilian advisory board to the Secretary of Defense.⁴³ In his article, Cohen demanded that the United States launched a broad campaign against “militant Islam”.⁴⁴

In the midst of the American military operation in Afghanistan, Cohen was the first neoconservative that publicly called for a broad plan to expand the war on terror to other nations than Afghanistan. Like several members of the Bush administration had done in private meetings, Cohen targeted Iraq and made specific allegations about the link between Saddam’s regime and al-Qaeda. A notable difference was that Cohen wanted the United States to first and foremost target Iran.⁴⁵ Cohen voiced the neoconservative belief that the United States had a duty to help the Iranian people overthrow their oppressors and ensure the development of a functioning democracy.⁴⁶ The neoconservatives within the Bush administration shared Cohen’s view that the United States should use its influence and power to promote regime change in Iran.⁴⁷ The promotion of neoconservative ideology that called for expansion of American ideals across the Middle East by people that held important positions in the administration in the midst of the Afghan war is telling about how the neoconservatives had a great influence on the policies that were being developed with regards to the war on terror. Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, “Scooter” Libby, John Bolton, and other, lower level officials, that identified with the neoconservative ideology of democratization used their influence on the President to sell their ideas about American exceptionalism and the spread of what they believed to be American values across the world.

Allowing Iran to take part in the planning of the Afghan war and the post-war situation appeared to be a step in the direction of rapprochement from the American side. Iran responded by giving the United States what it wanted and the reformist government believed it would be rewarded by the United States for its cooperation. However, when the United States began giving the Iranian government demands it could not fulfill, the United States saw it as an act of defiance. The reformists did not have much influence over the Republican Guard forces and it was unsuccessful in having the full cooperation of the hard-liners that did command the forces that had

taken al-Qaeda prisoners and that guarded the border between Afghanistan and Iran. Supreme Leader Khamenei did not interfere with the situation, allowing the conservatives to slowly get the upper hand. The United States either failed to recognize this, or it did not care if the sitting government that was willing to cooperate did not command the full loyalty of its police and military forces. Because of the issue of credibility, Khatami and his officials could not admit to the rest of the world that it did not have the authority to fulfill the demands, and so the response was that Iran did not know the whereabouts of these escaped al-Qaeda members.⁴⁸ This was a major blow to Khatami, and a confirmation for the people within the Bush administration that had claimed the Iranian authorities lacked credibility.

5.4.3. Karine A and the Axis of Evil

On January 29, 2002, President Bush held his first State of the Union Address since the 9/11 attacks. Across the world, expectations were high and the President delivered a speech that would spark as much enthusiasm as it provoked reactions. The Bush administration had been using tough rhetoric to sell their War on Terror, and the 2002 State of the Union would be a hallmark speech that took the rhetorical part of the campaign to a new level. By introducing the term “axis of evil”, President Bush lit a chord that pleased the neoconservatives, but the had Europeans shaking their heads while calling the administration “simplistic”. Arabs and Muslims generally became even more outraged than before.⁴⁹ Listing North Korea, Iraq and Iran as major threats to the United States and the world in general, President Bush concluded that “states like these and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world.”⁵⁰ President Bush did not leave any doubt that the War on Terror would be taken to a next level, and that the United States would use all means necessary to ensure that these threats would be neutralized. Iran was again, like it had been during the dual containment period in the 1990s, been identified in the same terms as its adversary: Iraq.

The speech was a massive blow to President Khatami and the Iranian reformist movement. Having advocated Iranian approach to the United States and running on a platform of easing anti-Western rhetoric and policy, the reformists lost face when President Bush lumped Iran in to the same category as North Korea and Iraq.⁵¹ Iranian hard-liners got their allegations about the ignorance of the United States confirmed and it served to boost their opposition to President Khatami. Prior to the speech, the foreign

policy officials of the Bush administration did not recognize the implications the *axis of evil* term would have in Iran. According to some sources, Iran had been included in the speech for esthetical reasons.⁵² Wanting to target Iraq and North Korea, the speechwriters included Iran in order to be able to use the term *axis*. Some of the foreign policy advisors had raised a flag that the term could be damaging to the improved situation between Iran and the United States. But President Bush wanted to use the term, as he believed that Iran was suited to be included as one of the United States' most important adversaries and that it would encourage the reformist movement in Iran.⁵³

The State of the Union Speech and the controversial term “axis of evil” came at a time where the reformist movement in Iran struggled tremendously with keeping influence and credibility in the Iranian government. Iranian hard-liners had just poked the bee’s nest with the unsuccessful shipping of weaponry to Palestinian resistance groups on the *Karine A* vessel and by launching a covert presence in Afghanistan. The United States was reminded that Iran had conflicting interests by cooperating with American officials and the hard-liners that were advocating an American operation to ensure democratic revolution in the Persian Gulf region saw the internal controversy in Iran as a manifestation for the need for a broader American campaign against terror. Prior to the speech, Pentagon officials and the President himself had demanded that Iran contribute to the War on Terror.⁵⁴ The role Tehran had played in the Afghan effort was not official, and it clearly showed that the Bush administration was not intending to praise Iran publicly for helping the United States and its allies in securing an initial victory in Afghanistan.

After the speech, the administration continued its hardening rhetoric against the Iranian regime and both Vice President Cheney and other officials were calling for regime change.⁵⁵ Looking at the rhetoric used by the administration prior to the State of the Union and the convictions of the Bush administration officials, the harsh words used against Iran does not strike as a departure from the general approach to what was known as rogue regimes. On the other hand, the administration started to focus its public statements on state sponsors and the challenge the United States faced with regards to regimes that were in possession or wanted to develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD).⁵⁶ Seeing how Iran had cooperated with the United States and the reformist trend that was ongoing inside of Iran should have caused the Bush administration to pause and consider how it would affect chances for continued reconciliation with Iran.

Publicly, neither the United States nor Iran wanted their Geneva Group cooperation to be known. It would have been damaging for the Bush administration's stated declaration of War on Terror and the states campaign against the "axis of evil" associated with specific states that allegedly sponsored terrorism: with regards to Iran, the animosity against the United States was still an important tool in keeping the Iranian people supportive of the regime. Having initial success in Afghanistan, the hard-liners and neoconservatives in the administration that had been advocating a response that would include other state sponsors of terrorism in the war on terror, were able to expand their influence with regards to the Middle Eastern rogue regimes. By toughening rhetoric against both Iran and Iraq, the Bush administration kept their options open for a widening of the War on Terror. Iraq was already on the table, and the Iranian government worried that the United States would target their regime if the campaign in Iraq was successful.⁵⁷ After having been humiliated by the United States following their crucial cooperation in Afghanistan, Iran would prove persistent in its attempts to improve relations with the United States, and Iranian officials began reaching out to the United States again after a short break following the State of the Union.

5.4.4. Preparing for War – Operation Iraqi Freedom

In March and April of 2002, the Bush administration began targeting Iraq with increasingly tough rhetoric in the press. Iraq was labeled as a possible target in the next phase of the war on terror campaign and the administration was grooming the public – making its case for the next move in the war on terror.⁵⁸ The ongoing quarrels within the Bush administration surfaced in a number of statements about whether or not the administration would include Iran. Secretary of State Colin Powell publicly denied that the administration were working on strategies for going after North Korea or Iran,⁵⁹ while Vice President Cheney and the neoconservatives within the administration were calling for regime change. It was becoming more and more evident to the public that the officials that represented the State Department were losing interagency battles, and so the attempts from several State Department officials to broker deals with Iranian officials and arrange for better diplomatic channels fell apart.⁶⁰ These public disagreements also ensured a loss of credibility from the State Department in dealing with Iran. Iranian officials understood that there was a divide within the administration on how to deal with their initiatives, and it left them more reluctant as the risks of the negotiations being revealed to the public were higher.⁶¹

The administration's war plans for Iraq had been well under way for several months, and in spite of not having informed all the members of the administration that a plan for Iraq was being drafted, President Bush and Defense Department officials were publicly stating that Saddam Hussein and his regime posed a major threat against the peace and stability across the world. Iranian government officials were paying close attention to the rhetoric that was used against Iraq and after having suspended the Geneva Group and all cooperation with the United States on the effort in Afghanistan after the State of the Union in January, Iran re-initiated talks and the Geneva Group was reassembled.⁶² The officials that would attend the second round of the Geneva Group were higher ranking Iranian and American officials than those who had participated in the first round. The Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations, Mohammad Javad Zarif, had meetings with Zalmay Khalilzad of the United States National Security Council, a political appointee that was identified as a part of the neoconservative block of the administration and that was closely involved in the planning of American engagement with Iraq.⁶³

As they had with regards to the Afghanistan operation, the Iranian officials offered their help with the planning for a successful campaign in Iraq. Having previously fought the Iraqi regime and because of their first hand knowledge about ethnic and religious tension in the region, the Iranian delegation represented a government that expected the United States to agree on cooperation. Zarif told Khalilzad that if the United States included Iran in the pre-war planning, they would have Iran's full cooperation when American troops entered Iraq. However, if the United States should decide not to include Iran in the planning, Iran would not be at the disposition of the United States at a later time. The Iranian delegation had orders to tell the American representatives that either we are with you from the beginning – or you are on your own.⁶⁴ The American response was negative, and in spite of continuing talks after the rejection of Iranian cooperation in Iraq from the American officials, second rounds of the Geneva Group failed to achieve continued cooperation. Within the Bush administration, the hard-liners who lacked confidence in rapprochement with Iran had prevailed and the confidence the military operation in Afghanistan had installed in Washington made the case for a unilateral operation against Iraq easier to make.

On June 1, 2002, in a speech to the graduating students at the United States Military Academy at West Point, President Bush introduced another important foreign policy precept into its foreign policy strategy: the right to use preemptive strikes. The

strategy of preemptive warfare had been developed by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz in his *Defense Planning Guidance* from 1992, but at the time the notion of striking before being attacked did not sit well with the officials in the first Bush administration or the American people, and it was rejected. Wolfowitz had developed the tactic of preemptive attacks on the heels of the fall of the Soviet Union and it was intended primarily for the former states of the Soviet Union and the Persian Gulf region. The United States found itself in an unassailable position with no viable opposing international power. The neoconservatives began to interpret this position as an opportunity for the United States to increase its power while spreading American ideals and values across the world.⁶⁵ To secure the role of the United States as sole hegemon, Wolfowitz drafted the strategy of preemption that would allow the American leaders to strike first if there was a chance that another state would challenge the interests of the United States.⁶⁶ In many ways ahead of his time, Wolfowitz' draft proposals was turned down. He and his assistants had to write a new draft deleting tactics like preemption that could be labeled "aggressive".

A decade later, the strategy of preemption was dusted off and implemented as a part of the new foreign policy in the second Bush administration. In the West Point speech, President Bush implied that the preemptive strategy would be used to "confront regimes that sponsor terror" and that military force would be implemented.⁶⁷ Having identified these regimes as being North Korea, Iraq and Iran in his State of the Union Address five months earlier, the Iranian government recognized that a preemptive strike against their regime could be in the making. The United States was continuously turning down their attempts for better diplomatic relations, and President Bush had stated in the West Point address that the United States would use either diplomacy or military power where and when it believed necessary.⁶⁸ The neoconservatives both within and outside of the Bush administration were calling for regime change in Tehran and it was becoming more and more evident that they had real influence in the decision making process. The Iranian delegation to the Geneva Group continued to press the United States on allowing Iran to take part in the effort to topple the Iraqi regime as it saw cooperation on Iraq would be their best way of steering the Bush administration away from expanding the war on terror to include their own government.⁶⁹ When the *National Security Strategy of the United States* was issued on September 20 of that same year, the Iranian regime got another confirmation that the Bush administration was set on promoting American ideals and values in accordance with the neoconservative belief

that the United States was a benevolent hegemon that would aim to “make the world not just safer but better” by all means necessary, including preemption.⁷⁰

In the fall of 2002, the United States began increasing its troop levels in the Persian Gulf region.⁷¹ The administration was preparing to launch an operation against the regime of Saddam Hussein if he did not comply with the demands the United Nations and the United States provided. The scenario that was unfolding divided the Iranian regime even further. Strategically, the Iraqi regime had posed as a buffer for increased Iranian influence in the region and many Iranians welcomed a plan to topple the brutal dictator. Saddam Hussein had posed a grave threat to Iran since he gained power in 1979, and getting rid of the aggressive dictator would improve the security of the Iranian people. However, the regime did not welcome an increased American presence in the region and as American troop levels grew steadily, the anxiety of the Iranian leaders increased. When President Bush stated that he hoped that a mission in Iraq would ensure the spread of democracy throughout the region in February 2003, it was a sure sign to the Iranians that the administration was advocating regime change in Tehran as well as Baghdad and that the neoconservatives had been successful in influencing the policies the administration implemented.⁷²

The United States began its military campaign against the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein on March 19, 2003. Successfully defeating the Iraqi armed forces and claiming victory within six weeks, the combat operations proved even more impressive than “Operation Enduring Freedom” had been in Afghanistan. Iranian officials were certain that their country was next, and on May 4, 2003 it issued a letter via the Swiss Ambassador in Tehran, the official diplomatic channel the countries had used since the beginning of the 1990s, intended for the United States State Department. The letter was, according to Iranian officials, a response to an American draft that had been issued in a previous administration for *a grand bargain* between the two countries and the Iranian government saw it as a last resort to establish a functioning diplomatic channel with the United States before itself became a target in the war on terror.⁷³ Both President Khatami and the Supreme Leader Khamenei had approved the proposal before it was passed on to the Swiss Ambassador; the Iranians meant business.

Because of the doubts the Iranians had about the influence of the State Department within the Bush administration, they arranged for the document to be

delivered to House Representative Bob Ney⁷, who passed the document on to President Bush's senior policy advisor Karl Rove. According to Ney, Rove delivered the document to President Bush himself.⁷⁴ In the proposal, the Iranian government offered to suspend its support and sponsoring of terrorist proxies, recognize Israel, to sign off on all non-proliferation treaties and open up their nuclear facilities to inspectors and cooperate with the United States to secure a secular democracy in Iraq. In return, Iran wanted to be removed from the axis of evil, for economic sanctions to be lifted, American recognition of Iranian security interests, and for the United States to cooperate with Iran to ensure the end of the terrorist organization Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK).⁷⁵ The offer was discussed in a meeting by the senior foreign policy advisors and the President. Colin Powell's chief of staff, Larry Wilkerson later stated that Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Vice President Cheney had opposed any response to the proposal, saying: "We don't speak to evil".⁷⁶ The great confidence in American power that had been growing since the end of the Cold War was at its peak, and the Bush administration saw the proposal from the Iranian regime as a clear sign that they were afraid that they were next and that because of their weakness, their only hope for continued governance was to strike a deal with the United States.⁷⁷

Hard-liners that had been calling for regime change in Tehran, as well as in Baghdad, did not see the use in accommodating with the Iranians when the United States had proven itself to be a force of uncontested power. The United States could take out Iran as easily as it had Iraq and the proposal did not receive a reply from the Bush administration. Instead, the administration told the Swiss Ambassador in Tehran that he had no mandate in broking a deal between the United States and Iran and that as a last diplomatic message, he should tell the Iranians that the Geneva Group was dissolved. Several experts within the Bush administration could not believe the negligence the Bush administration had just showed by refusing to answer such an important approach by the Iranian regime. Richard Haas, the leader of policy planning at the State Department and former Special Assistant to President George. H. W. Bush believed the rejection was a missed opportunity and Senior Director of Middle-East Affairs at the National Security Council at the time, Flynt Leverett, has stated that the time the proposal was issued, was just the time the United States should have taken the

⁷ Ney had been working to improve relations between the United States and Iran since the election of Mohammad Khatami in 1997, and recognized as being influential enough to ensure the document reached the top levels of the Bush administration. (Parsi, 2007. p. 247.)

offer and participated in diplomatic talks with Iran. The Iranian regime was at its weakest, it was surrounded by American troops and it had a government that was willing to talk. In addition, the United States had yet to meet tough opposition in Afghanistan and Iraq and its military power was uncontested. Agreeing to talk about the proposal would have given the Iranian reform movement leverage, it would have spurred continued cooperation between the Supreme Leader and the reformist President Khatami and the outcome of the 2005 election might have been different.⁷⁸ As a result of the final rejection of Iranian approach, the Iranian hard-liners got the upper hand in the foreign policy debate in Tehran.⁷⁹ The Bush administration let the greatest chance for renewed relations with the most important strategic player in the Persian Gulf region slip away.

At the end of 2007, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued its National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iran's nuclear program and intentions. It concluded that in the fall of 2003, Iran had suspended its nuclear program and that it had not been restarted when the NIE was published.⁸⁰ Considering the timing of the halt, it is fair to speculate that the suspension was initiated as a result of both international and U.S. pressure on Iran following the war in Iraq. After the Bush administration had turned down the Iranian proposal for negotiations in May of that same year, the pressure on the Iranian regime was tremendous. There were great speculations as to if Iran would be the next target for the Bush administration and much evidence pointed in that direction. Several American officials, including President Bush himself had stated that unless Iran showed a dramatic change in behavior, it should be considered an opponent in the campaign against terror. By suspending its nuclear program, the Iranian regime made another dramatic turn to ensure that the United States understood that it was serious about improving relations with the West. However, the internal struggle for influence and power in Iran had shifted in the favor of the hard-liners. President Khatami had lost much of the support he had enjoyed both in parliament and with the Supreme Leader. The United States had proved that it was incapable of negotiating and considering Iranian interests, and so the mild approach President Khatami had attempted had been proven, in the eyes of many Iranians, to be a strategic blunder and the belief in the hard-line approach of tough rhetoric and a staunch pro-Persian foreign policy grew. According to Iranian hard-liner, Hamid Reza Hajibabaei, the only language the Americans understand is that of force and it was the language of force that would be implemented under the Presidency of the right wing

conservative Presidential elect Mahmoud Ahmadinejad after the 2005 election.⁸¹ Iran began working against the United States in the region, and it continued its support for proxies in the Arab-Israeli conflict and helped spur an insurgency in Iraq that would ensure the lasting presence of American troops.

5.5. Conclusion

Following the successful toppling of the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein and the rejection of the Iranian proposal for a grand bargain, Iranian and American relations froze. After the 9/11 attacks, the two governments had made some progress in attempting to reestablish a functioning diplomatic channel between the two. Iranian officials had put their careers on the line and in spite of continued struggles with Iranian hard-liners, the Khatami government had won the support from the Supreme Leader to attempt a pragmatic approach to American involvement in their neighboring countries of Afghanistan and Iraq. An internal struggle within the Bush administration between hard-liners and neoconservatives on the one side, and pragmatists and internationalists on the other side dominated the policy process after the 9/11 attacks. Both groups were representing different approaches to foreign policy and had opposing agencies to consider. There had been some disagreements between the two sides prior to the fateful event, but when foreign policy became the dominant focus of the administration, the fights became more pronounced and it would eventually shift the balance of influence in the Bush administration to favor the hard-liners and neoconservatives following the successful operation in Afghanistan.

Typical of organizational behavior, President Bush had taken the side of the people that appealed more to his own convictions. As a result, the short-lived prospects for renewed diplomatic relations with Iran dwindled and when the United States manifested its military force in Iraq, the American hard-line argument that there was no need for rapprochement with Iran triumphed. President Bush believed that American power and influence in the region would either ensure a popular uprising against the Iranian regime, or the United States possessed enough power to remove the clerics and install democracy as it intended to do in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is impossible to tell whether or not there would have been a successful reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Iran if the Bush administration had considered a different approach towards the reformist government of Mohammad Khatami. Experts, including former Bush administration officials, Flynt and Hillary Leverett believe that

the influence of the neoconservatives with the decision-making in the Bush administration was aimed ultimately at the toppling of the Islamic Regime.⁸² Iran had to secure its own security, and effectively halted the prospects for American invasion by doing what it has done with Israel and its other opponents since its revolution in 1979: support insurgents that worked as Iranian proxy groups, effectively managing to keep the attention of the American military and political elite away from Iran itself.

Notes, Chapter 5.

- ¹ Mohammad Ali Abtahi. "Showdown With Iran". *Frontline*
- ² Ali Khamene'i. "Showdown With Iran". *Frontline*.
- ³ Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 263.
- ⁴ Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 253-259.
- ⁵ Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 261-262.
- ⁶ Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 113.
- ⁷ Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 265-266.
- ⁸ Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 266, 278.
- ⁹ Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 278-280.
- ¹⁰ Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 262.
- ¹¹ Slavin, *Bitter Friends*, 181.
- ¹² Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 188., Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 287-288.
- ¹³ Martin Indyk. "The Clinton Administration's Approach to the Middle East," Soref Symposium, Washington Institute, 18 May 1993.
- ¹⁴ Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 264, 270-274.
- ¹⁵ Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 288-289.
- ¹⁶ Malcolm Byrne. "Secret U.S. Overture to Iran in 1999 Broke Down Over Terrorism Allegations" *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 318*. Posted: 05.30.10.
<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB318/index.htm> Accessed: 04.14.11., Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 280-283.
- ¹⁷ Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 284-285.
- ¹⁸ Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 289, Slavin, *Bitter Friends*, 188-189.
- ¹⁹ "Showdown With Iran". *Frontline*.
- ²⁰ Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 112.
- ²¹ Slavin, *Bitter Friends*, 107-108, Ansari, *Confronting Iran*, 148-153.
- ²² Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 112-113.
- ²³ Ansari, *Confronting Iran*, 177.
- ²⁴ Slavin, *Bitter Friends*, 184-185.
- ²⁵ Slavin, *Bitter Friends*, 187-191., Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 115-116.
- ²⁶ Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 223-224.
- ²⁷ Rice, "National Interests", 61-62.
- ²⁸ Rice, "National Interests", 51-52.
- ²⁹ Rice, "National Interests", 47
- ³⁰ Slavin, *Bitter Friends*, 194.
- ³¹ Slavin, *Bitter Friends*, 196.
- ³² Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 344, Ned Walker, in Slavin, *Bitter Friends*, 196.
- ³³ Richard Armitage. "Showdown With Iran". *Frontline*.
- ³⁴ The United Nations Security Council. "Security Council, In Presidential Statement, Condemns Afghanistan's Taliban for July Military Offensive, Sheltering Terrorists." *U.N. Security Council Press Release*. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/1999/19991022.sc6743.doc.html> Accessed: 04.19.11.
- ³⁵ Frontline PBS. "Chronology. Campaign Against Terror." *Frontline PBS*.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/campaign/etc/cron.html> Accessed: 04.19.11.
- ³⁶ Slavin, *Bitter Friends*, 194.
- ³⁷ Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 122-123.
- ³⁸ PBS Frontline. "Showdown With Iran". *Frontline*.
- ³⁹ The Bonn Agreement. "Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions."
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- ⁴⁰ Slavin, *Bitter Friends*, 194.
- ⁴¹ Richard Armitage. "Showdown With Iran". *Frontline*.
- ⁴² Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 201.

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- ⁴³ Q&A. C-SPAN. "Q&A – Interesting People, Informative Conversations. Eliot Cohen." Aired: 07.31.05 <http://www.qanda.org/Transcript/?ProgramID=1034> Accessed: 04.20.11
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- ⁴⁵ Ibid
- ⁴⁶ Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, 42.
- ⁴⁷ Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 344.
- ⁴⁸ Richard Armitage. "Showdown With Iran". *Frontline*.
- ⁴⁹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 320-321.
- ⁵⁰ George W. Bush. "State of the Union". January 29, 2002.
- ⁵¹ Mohammad Ali Abtahi. "Showdown With Iran". *Frontline*.
- ⁵² Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 352
- ⁵³ Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 87-88.
- ⁵⁴ Eric Schmitt. "A Nation Challenged: Diplomacy; Bush Tells Iran Not To Undercut Afghan Leaders." *The New York Times*. January 11, 2002. <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/01/11/world/a-nation-challenged-diplomacy-bush-tells-iran-not-to-undercut-afghan-leaders.html?scp=1&sq=pentagon%20Iran%20january%2011%202002&st=cse>. Accessed: 24.04.11.
- ⁵⁵ Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 128-129.
- ⁵⁶ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 317.
- ⁵⁷ Hooshang Amirahmadi. "Showdown With Iran". *Frontline*.
- ⁵⁸ Juan Cole. *Engaging the Muslim World*. (New York, NY. Palgrave MacMillan. 2009), 141.
- ⁵⁹ Michael R. Gordon and David L. Sanger. "Powell Says U.S. Is Weighing Ways to Topple Hussein". *New York Times*, February 13, 2002. <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/13/world/a-nation-challenged-iraq-powell-says-us-is-weighing-ways-to-topple-hussein.html> Accessed: 24.04.11.
- ⁶⁰ Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 131., "Showdown with Iran" *Frontline*.
- ⁶¹ Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 246-247.
- ⁶² Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 353.
- ⁶³ Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, 31, Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, 353.
- ⁶⁴ "Showdown With Iran". *Frontline*.
- ⁶⁵ Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*, 42
- ⁶⁶ Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense. "Draft – Defense Planning Guidance" February 18, 1992.
- ⁶⁷ George W. Bush. "Commencement Address at the United States Military Academy at West Point". West Point, New York. June 1, 2002.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ "Showdown With Iran". *Frontline*.
- ⁷⁰ George W. Bush. "The National Security Strategy of the United States". *New York Times*. September 20, 2002. www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/bush/doctrine.htm Accessed: 10.25.10.
- ⁷¹ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 349.
- ⁷² George W. Bush. "Speech to the American Enterprise Institute." February 26, 2003., Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 351-352.
- ⁷³ Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 243, 247.
- ⁷⁴ Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 246-247.
- ⁷⁵ Iran's May 2003 Negotiation Proposal. See Appendix A
- ⁷⁶ Larry Wilkerson quoted in Gordon Corera. "Iran's Gulf of Misunderstanding with U.S.". *BBC News*. September 25, 2006. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5377914.stm
- ⁷⁷ Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 248.
- ⁷⁸ Flynt Leverett. "Showdown With Iran". *Frontline*.
- ⁷⁹ Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, 256.
- ⁸⁰ National Intelligence Estimate. "Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities". *Office of the Director of National Intelligence*. November 2007. See Appendix B.
- ⁸¹ Hamid Reza Hajibabaei. "Showdown With Iran". *Frontline*.
- ⁸² Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett. "Showdown With Iran". *Frontline*.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

When President George Walker Bush was sworn into office on January 20, 2001, he had assembled one of the most experienced foreign policy teams a president could have. In spite of having people with over a lifetime of foreign policy experience combined at his disposal, the presidency of George W. Bush became a turbulent period in the history of American foreign policy. Starting from the initiation of the War on Terror following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, continuing on to his final years in office, President Bush had to deal with much criticism from both the American people and the rest of the world for the decisions he made following the policy process within his cabinet. Much of the criticism that was made against the President was that he let some of his advisors run the show and that he became their puppet. This thesis has been focusing on the process of decision-making and how certain individuals affected it during the first term of President George W. Bush. By applying individual-level analysis to the policy process of the Bush administration, one can find that President Bush, with his active-positive leadership-style allowed his advisors to combat each other over policy. Because of this, it appeared as though the President had been overrun by his advisors when he simply allowed them to have a confrontational style that gave outsiders the impression that the President had lost control.

In a situation like the one that developed after the 9/11 attacks, people that appealed to the President's own convictions got more influence than what would be the case in a less chaotic situation. 9/11 marked a change with the foreign policy hawks as well. They would be brought closer together in a tight coalition because the unilateralists within the administration, which did not initially identify with the more ideological motivations of the neoconservatives, perceived the attacks as being an attack on American values: they began using rhetoric similar to the neoconservatives and caused the hawks to unite behind a common goal to take out the terrorists and a similar approach to how it would be done: by inducing democracy and freedom for peoples that had been oppressed by so-called rogue regimes.

Individual-level analysis accounts for some of the factors that became decisive for the President as to what advisors he would listen to: problem recognition, goal prioritization, option assessment and perception. When it came to these factors, the President identified with the foreign policy hawks – and in particular the

neoconservatives. The idiosyncratic traits of President Bush made the tilt towards the foreign policy hawks even more pronounced: the President was not a big fan of the analytical process and expert opinions. He trusted his gut feeling, and was impressed by officials that were hands-on and made things happen. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld appealed more than anyone else to the President's preference for certain personalities. The frames the administration worked within that had been established by the President's leadership style, allowed the people the president identified with to gain access and influence. When their strategy in Afghanistan proved to be initial success, their influence increased even more as the President gained confidence in their tactics: unconventional force against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan proved to be successful and diplomacy time consuming and less efficient. Executing organizational behavior, President Bush would use the advisors he identified the most with more and more, and based on his own and their experience combined with the officials' opinions, their level of communication, and how the information flowed within the administration, he made the policy decisions the administration would implement. Lacking valuable knowledge about the region the United States would involve itself in with the War on Terror, President Bush was unable to see the risks the policies he decided on would include:

Ultimately the President establishes both the rhetoric and the strategy of his administration's foreign policy. A president with an inadequate understanding of the complexities of regional politics and a propensity to view events in black-and-white terms spearheaded a foreign policy that was often self-defeating.¹

By limiting the access of competent experts and allowing the foreign policy hawks that advocated unilateralism and a neoconservative ideology to dominate, President Bush was ultimately the person responsible for the failures of the policy strategies the administration executed.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Vice President Dick Cheney were the senior representatives of the foreign policy hawks that would respond to the terrorist attacks on 9/11 by demanding a massive response based on unilateralism and extension of American military power in a broad military campaign. The United States had been struck in an unexpected way by an unconventional force and the al-Qaeda terrorist network challenged the administrations

perceptions about viable threats against the United States. President Bush's foreign policy advisors had gotten most of their previous experience during the Cold War and their perception of viable threats to the United States lingered in a Cold War-mindset with continued focus on states as the only actor that could pose severe threats to the United States and the rest of the world. In spite of preparing the United States Military for unconventional warfare, the officials were unable to accept the notion that terrorist networks could work on their own. The result was a campaign against terror that was launched by using unconventional warfare, like special operations and a limited number of troops, against conventional enemies like the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein.

Keeping in mind the history between the United States and Iran prior to the 1990s, it is not surprising that the Iranian officials that dealt with the diplomatic rapprochement attempts from President Khatami were cautious and became more and more suspicious about the way the Bush administration behaved. The United States had a history of intrusive behavior to secure its own interests following World War II. When Iran approached the Bush administration and volunteered its help in the War on Terror, the Iranian reformist administration believed the administration would recognize the change in behavior from the Islamic regime and reward it by allowing a rapprochement process to develop. It would soon become evident that this was not the case. Because of the dominance of the ideologically driven neoconservative approach to foreign policy within the administration, American officials were driven by the belief in regime change in Iran. The Bush administration did not want to establish functioning diplomatic relations with Iran because it did not trust the regime and it was looking to expand its War on Terror to Iran if the military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq proved successful.

9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the Karine A episode all served to enhance the promotion of regime change in Iran within the Bush administration. In spite of Iran showing promising tendencies with regards to the War on Terror, the administration effectively overlooked or ignored viable attempts from the Iranian government. Iran was showing a change in behavior because it believed it served the interests of the Islamic Republic: Iran would enjoy improved domestic conditions by increased trade and access to new markets (such as the United States) and it was facing the possible devastation of an American military operation. Attempting rapprochement without losing credibility with the Iranian people was a complicated matter for the reformist government, but it had the secret backing of the Supreme Leader and there

had been no better occasion in the previous twenty-five years for the United States and Iran to reinstate official diplomatic relations. Because the Iranian reformists failed to establish successful relations with the United States, it would eventually lose the support of the Supreme Leader and the Iranian hard-liners used the momentum of the failure to reinstate a conservative hold of the Iranian government. The reformist movement and its leader Mohammad Khatami had lost much of its credibility and most of the Iranian people lost their hope for a new and improved Iran with ties to the Western Hegemon.

The conservatives that had dominated Iran since the Islamist Revolution in 1979 reinstated a militarized foreign policy that would lead to active opposition of American forces via proxies in the Iraqi territory. Iran and the United States was back to square one at the end of President Bush's first term as a result of the self-defeating Iranian policy the administration had implemented. It is hard, if not even impossible, to predict the results if the United States and Iran would have reestablished diplomatic ties during the Bush administration. The Iranian domestic situation with opposing forces struggling for power makes it even harder to tell if the outcome would have been any different. However, one can speculate about the situation that could have developed if everything had worked out the way the Iranian reformists wanted it to and there has been some evidence that suggests that Iran could have been at a point where diplomatic negotiations would have caused real change.

As mentioned above, Khatami had the support of the Supreme Leader for negotiating with the United States. In addition, the *Grand Bargain* of March 2003 implies a desperate Iran that is convinced that the United States will target them next. The 2007 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) shows that Iran halted its nuclear program after the issuing of the Grand Bargain in 2003. This suggests that Iran wanted to send a covert message to the United States that it was in fact willing to make dramatic changes to ensure that the United States did not launch the War on Terror on Iranian territory. Even after these failures and the reinvigoration of the conservatives in Iran, it did not take long before the Iranian people began protesting the hard-liners again. When the reformists were elected and reelected in 1997 and 2001, it was with overwhelming support from the Iranian people. The protests against the conservative regime that began after the 2009 reelection of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and which have continued since, suggests that the Iranian people was and is ready for real change as it was when it overthrew the Shah in 1979. Neoconservative advocacy of American

imposed regime change in Iran ensured that this would not be an alternative. Much like it had with the support of the Shah after toppling Mohammad Mossadeq in 1953, the United States ensured with its policy towards Iran in the War on Terror, a domestic situation within Iran that would effectively block successful relations with the Islamic Republic.

¹ Takeyh, *Hidden Iran*, 127-128.

Appendix

Appendix A:

IRAN'S MAY 2003 NEGOTIATION PROPOSAL TO THE UNITED STATES

The Iranian authorities sent the following negotiation proposal to the United States via the Swiss Ambassador to Tehran in May 2003.

Iranian Aims:

(The United States accepts a dialogue “**in mutual respect**” and agrees that Iran puts the following aims on the agenda)

- **Halt in US hostile behavior and rectification of status of Iran in the US:** (interference in internal or external relations, “axis of evil”, terrorism list.)
- **Abolishment of all sanctions:** commercial sanctions, frozen assets, judgments (FSIA), impediments in international trade and financial institutions.
- **Iraq:** democratic and fully representative government in Iraq, support of Iranian claims for Iraqi reparations, respect for Iranian national interests in Iraq and religious links to Najaf/Karbal.
- **Full access to peaceful nuclear technology, biotechnology and chemical technology.**
- Recognition of **Iran's legitimate security interests** in the region with according defense capacity.
- **Terrorism:** pursuit of anti-Iranian terrorists, above all MKO and support for repatriation of their members in Iraq, decisive action against anti-Iranian terrorists, above all MKO and affiliated organizations in the US.

US aims: (Iran accepts a dialogue “**in mutual respect**” and agrees that the US puts the following aims on the agenda)

- **WMD:** full transparency for security that there are no Iranian endeavors to develop or possess WMD, full cooperation with the IAEA based on Iranian adoption of all relevant instruments (93+2 and all further IAEA protocols)
- **Terrorism:** decisive action against any terrorists (above all Al Qaeda) on Iranian territory, full cooperation and exchange of all relevant information.
- **Iraq:** coordination of Iranian influence for activity supporting political stabilization and the establishment of democratic institutions and a non-religious government.
- **Middle East:**

- 1) stop any material support to Palestinian opposition groups (Hamas, Jihad etc.) from Iranian territory, pressure these organizations to stop violent action against civilians within borders of 1967.
- 2) action on Hizbollah to become a mere political organization within Lebanon.
- 3) acceptance of the Arab League Beirut declaration (Saudi initiative, two-states-approach)

Steps:

- I. communication of **mutual agreement on the following procedure.**
- II. **mutual simultaneous statements** “We have always been ready for direct and authoritative talks with the US/with Iran in good faith and with the aim of discussing – in mutual respect – our common interests and our mutual concerns based on merits and objective realities, but we have always made it clear that, such talks can only be held, if genuine progress for a solution of our own concerns can be achieved.”
- III. **a first direct meeting** on the appropriate level (for instance in Paris) will be held **with the previously agreed aims**
 - a. of a **decision on the first mutual steps**
 - **Iraq:** establishment of a common group, active Iranian support for Iraqi stabilization, US-commitment to actively support Iranian reparation claims within the discussion of Iraq foreign debts.
 - **Terrorism:** US-commitment to disarm and remove MKO from Iraq and take action in accordance with SCR1373 against its leadership, Iranian commitment for enhanced action against Al Qaida members in Iran, agreement on cooperation and information exchange
 - Iranian general statement “to support a peaceful solution in the **Middle East** involving the parties concerned”
 - US general statement that “Iran did not belong in the ‘axis of evil’”
 - US acceptance to halt its impediments against Iran in international financial and trade institutions
 - b. **of the establishment of three parallel working groups** on disarmament, regional security and economic cooperation. Their **aim is an agreement on three parallel road maps**, for the discussion of these working groups, each side accepts that the other side’s aims (see above) are put on the agenda
 - 1) **Disarmament:** road map, which combines the mutual aims of, on the one side, full transparency by international commitments and guarantees to abstain from WMD with, on the other side, full access to western technology (in the three areas)
 - 2) **Terrorism and regional security:** road map for the abolishment of the sanctions, rescinding of judgments, and un-freezing of assets
 - c. of agreement in a time-table for implementation
 - d. and of a **public statement after this meeting on the achieved agreements**

Copied from the May 4, 2003 fax from the Swiss Ambassador to the U.S. State Department.

Appendix B:

Excerpt from the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate: Iran

Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities

November 2007

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The Director of National Intelligence serves as the head of the Intelligence Community (IC), overseeing and directing the implementation of the National Intelligence Program and acting as the principal advisor to the President, the National Security Council, and the Homeland Security Council for intelligence matters.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence is charged with:

- ! Integrating the domestic and foreign dimensions of US intelligence so that there are no gaps in our understanding of threats to our national security;
- ! Bringing more depth and accuracy to intelligence analysis; and
- ! Ensuring that US intelligence resources generate future capabilities as well as present results.

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE COUNCIL

Since its formation in 1973, the National Intelligence Council (NIC) has served as a bridge between the intelligence and policy communities, a source of deep substantive expertise on critical national security issues, and as a focal point for Intelligence Community collaboration. The NIC's key goal is to provide policymakers with the best, unvarnished, and unbiased information—regardless of whether analytic

judgments conform to US policy. Its primary functions are to:

! Support the DNI in his role as Principal Intelligence Advisor to the President and other senior policymakers.

! Lead the Intelligence Community's effort to produce National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) and other NIC products that address key national security concerns.

! Provide a focal point for policymakers, warfighters, and Congressional leaders to task the Intelligence Community for answers to important questions.

! Reach out to nongovernment experts in academia and the private sector—and use alternative analyses and new analytic tools—to broaden and deepen the Intelligence Community's perspective.

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES AND THE NIE PROCESS

National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) are the Intelligence Community's (IC) most authoritative written judgments on national security issues and designed to help US civilian and military leaders develop policies to protect US national security interests. NIEs usually provide information on the current state of play but are primarily “estimative”—that is, they make judgments about the likely course of future events and identify the implications for US policy.

The NIEs are typically requested by senior civilian and military policymakers, Congressional leaders and at times are initiated by the National Intelligence Council (NIC). Before a NIE is drafted, the relevant NIO is responsible for producing a concept paper or terms of reference (TOR) and circulates it throughout the Intelligence Community for comment. The TOR defines the key estimative questions, determines drafting responsibilities, and sets the drafting and publication schedule. One or more IC analysts are usually assigned to produce the initial text. The NIC then meets to critique the draft before it is circulated to the broader IC. Representatives from the relevant IC agencies meet to hone and coordinate line-by-line the full text of the NIE. Working with their Agencies, reps also assign the level of confidence they have in each key judgment. IC reps discuss the quality of sources

with collectors, and the National Clandestine Service vets the sources used to ensure the draft does not include any that have been recalled or otherwise seriously questioned.

All NIEs are reviewed by National Intelligence Board, which is chaired by the DNI and is composed of the heads of relevant IC agencies. Once approved by the NIB, NIEs are briefed to the President and senior policymakers. The whole process of producing NIEs normally takes at least several months.

The NIC has undertaken a number of steps to improve the NIE process under the DNI. These steps are in accordance with the goals and recommendations set out in the SSCI and WMD Commission reports and the 2004 Intelligence Reform and Prevention of Terrorism Act. Most notably, over the last year and a half, the IC has:

! Created new procedures to integrate formal reviews of source reporting and technical judgments. The Directors of the National Clandestine Service, NSA, NGA, and DIA and the Assistant Secretary/INR are now required to submit formal assessments that highlight the strengths, weaknesses, and overall credibility of their sources used in developing the critical judgments of the NIE.

! Applied more rigorous standards. A textbox is incorporated into all NIEs that explains what we mean by such terms as “we judge” and that clarifies the difference between judgments of likelihood and confidence levels. We have made a concerted effort to not only highlight differences among agencies but to explain the reasons for such differences and to prominently display them in the Key Judgments.

Scope Note

This National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) assesses the status of Iran’s nuclear program, and the program’s outlook over the next 10 years. This time frame is more appropriate for estimating capabilities than intentions and foreign reactions, which are more difficult to estimate over a decade. In presenting the Intelligence Community’s assessment of Iranian nuclear intentions and capabilities, the NIE thoroughly reviews all available information on these questions, examines the range of reasonable

scenarios consistent with this information, and describes the key factors we judge would drive or impede nuclear progress in Iran. This NIE is an extensive reexamination of the issues in the May 2005 assessment.

This Estimate focuses on the following key questions:

! What are Iran's intentions toward developing nuclear weapons?

! What domestic factors affect Iran's decisionmaking on whether to develop nuclear weapons?

! What external factors affect Iran's decisionmaking on whether to develop nuclear weapons?

! What is the range of potential Iranian actions concerning the development of nuclear weapons, and the decisive factors that would lead Iran to choose one course of action over another?

! What is Iran's current and projected capability to develop nuclear weapons? What are our key assumptions, and Iran's key chokepoints/vulnerabilities?

This NIE does *not* assume that Iran intends to acquire nuclear weapons. Rather, it examines the intelligence to assess Iran's capability and intent (or lack thereof) to acquire nuclear weapons, taking full account of Iran's dual-use uranium fuel cycle and those nuclear activities that are at least partly civil in nature.

This Estimate does assume that the strategic goals and basic structure of Iran's senior leadership and government will remain similar to those that have endured since the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989. We acknowledge the potential for these to change during the time frame of the Estimate, but are unable to confidently predict such changes or their implications. This Estimate does not assess how Iran may conduct future negotiations with the West on the nuclear issue.

This Estimate incorporates intelligence reporting available as of 31 October 2007.

What We Mean When We Say: An Explanation of Estimative Language

We use phrases such as *we judge*, *we assess*, and *we estimate*—and probabilistic terms such as *probably* and *likely*—to convey analytical assessments and judgments.

Such statements are not facts, proof, or knowledge. These assessments and judgments generally are based on collected information, which often is incomplete or fragmentary. Some assessments are built on previous judgments. In all cases, assessments and judgments are not intended to imply that we have “proof” that shows something to be a fact or that definitively links two items or issues.

In addition to conveying judgments rather than certainty, our estimative language also often conveys 1) our assessed likelihood or probability of an event; and 2) the level of confidence we ascribe to the judgment.

Estimates of Likelihood. Because analytical judgments are not certain, we use probabilistic language to reflect the Community’s estimates of the likelihood of developments or events.

Terms such as *probably*, *likely*, *very likely*, or *almost certainly* indicate a greater than even chance. The terms *unlikely* and *remote* indicate a less than even chance that an event will occur; they do not imply that an event will not occur. Terms such as *might* or *may* reflect situations in which we are unable to assess the likelihood, generally because relevant information is unavailable, sketchy, or fragmented. Terms such as *we cannot dismiss*, *we cannot rule out*, or *we cannot discount* reflect an unlikely, improbable, or remote event whose consequences are such that it warrants mentioning. The chart provides a rough idea of the relationship of some of these terms to each other.

Remote	Very		Even	Probably/	Very
Almost					
	unlikely	Unlikely	chance	Likely	likely
certainly					

Confidence in Assessments. Our assessments and estimates are supported by information that varies in scope, quality and sourcing. Consequently, we ascribe *high*, *moderate*, or *low* levels of confidence to our assessments, as follows:

! *High confidence* generally indicates that our judgments are based on high-quality

information, and/or that the nature of the issue makes it possible to render a solid judgment. A “high confidence” judgment is not a fact or a certainty, however, and such judgments still carry a risk of being wrong.

! *Moderate confidence* generally means that the information is credibly sourced and plausible but not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence.

! *Low confidence* generally means that the information’s credibility and/or plausibility is questionable, or that the information is too fragmented or poorly corroborated to make solid analytic inferences, or that we have significant concerns or problems with the sources.

Key Judgments

A. We judge with high confidence that in fall 2003, Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program; we also assess with moderate-to-high confidence that Tehran at a minimum is keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons. We judge with high confidence that the halt, and Tehran’s announcement of its decision to suspend its declared uranium enrichment program and sign an Additional Protocol to its Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement, was directed primarily in response to increasing international scrutiny and pressure resulting from exposure of Iran’s previously undeclared nuclear work.

! We assess with high confidence that until fall 2003, Iranian military entities were working under government direction to develop nuclear weapons.

! We judge with high confidence that the halt lasted at least several years. (Because of intelligence gaps discussed elsewhere in this Estimate, however, DOE and the NIC assess with only moderate confidence that the halt to those activities represents a halt to Iran's entire nuclear weapons program.)

! We assess with moderate confidence Tehran had not restarted its nuclear weapons program as of mid-2007, but we do not know whether it currently intends to develop nuclear weapons.

! We continue to assess with moderate-to-high confidence that Iran does not currently have a nuclear weapon.

! Tehran's decision to halt its nuclear weapons program suggests it is less determined to develop nuclear weapons than we have been judging since 2005. Our assessment that the program probably was halted primarily in response to international pressure suggests Iran may be more vulnerable to influence on the issue than we judged previously.

B. We continue to assess with low confidence that Iran probably has imported at least some weapons-usable fissile material, but still judge with moderate-to-high confidence it has not obtained enough for a nuclear weapon. We cannot rule out that Iran has acquired from abroad—or will acquire in the future—a nuclear weapon or enough fissile material for a weapon. Barring such acquisitions, if Iran wants to have nuclear weapons it would need to produce sufficient amounts of fissile material indigenously—which we judge with high confidence it has not yet done.

C. We assess centrifuge enrichment is how Iran probably could first produce enough fissile material for a weapon, if it decides to do so. Iran resumed its declared centrifuge enrichment activities in January 2006, despite the continued halt in the nuclear weapons program. Iran made significant progress in 2007 installing centrifuges at Natanz, but we judge with moderate confidence it still faces significant technical problems operating them.

1

For the purposes of this Estimate, by “nuclear weapons program” we mean Iran's nuclear weapon design and weaponization work and covert uranium conversion-related and uranium enrichment-related work; we do not mean Iran's declared civil work related to uranium conversion and enrichment.

! We judge with moderate confidence that the earliest possible date Iran would be technically capable of producing enough HEU for a weapon is late 2009, but that this is very unlikely.

! We judge with moderate confidence Iran probably would be technically capable of producing enough HEU for a weapon sometime during the 2010-2015 time frame. (INR judges Iran is unlikely to achieve this capability before 2013 because of foreseeable technical and programmatic problems.) All agencies recognize the possibility that this capability may not be attained until *after* 2015.

D. Iranian entities are continuing to develop a range of technical capabilities that could be applied to producing nuclear weapons, if a decision is made to do so. For example, Iran's civilian uranium enrichment program is continuing. We also assess with high confidence that since fall 2003, Iran has been conducting research and development projects with commercial and conventional military applications—some of which would also be of limited use for nuclear weapons.

E. We do not have sufficient intelligence to judge confidently whether Tehran is willing to maintain the halt of its nuclear weapons program indefinitely while it weighs its options, or whether it will or already has set specific deadlines or criteria that will prompt it to restart the program.

! Our assessment that Iran halted the program in 2003 primarily in response to international pressure indicates Tehran's decisions are guided by a cost-benefit approach rather than a rush to a weapon irrespective of the political, economic, and military costs. This, in turn, suggests that some combination of threats of intensified international scrutiny and pressures, along with opportunities for Iran to achieve its security, prestige, and goals for regional influence in other ways, might—if perceived by Iran's leaders as credible—prompt Tehran to extend the current halt to its nuclear weapons program. It is difficult to specify what such a combination might be.

! We assess with moderate confidence that convincing the Iranian leadership to forgo

the eventual development of nuclear weapons will be difficult given the linkage many within the leadership probably see between nuclear weapons development and Iran's key national security and foreign policy objectives, and given Iran's considerable effort from at least the late 1980s to 2003 to develop such weapons. In our judgment, only an Iranian political decision to abandon a nuclear weapons objective would plausibly keep Iran from eventually producing nuclear weapons—and such a decision is inherently reversible.

F. We assess with moderate confidence that Iran probably would use covert facilities— rather than its declared nuclear sites—for the production of highly enriched uranium for a weapon. A growing amount of intelligence indicates Iran was engaged in covert uranium conversion and uranium enrichment activity, but we judge that these efforts probably were halted in response to the fall 2003 halt, and that these efforts probably had not been restarted through at least mid-2007.

G. We judge with high confidence that Iran will not be technically capable of producing and reprocessing enough plutonium for a weapon before about 2015.

H. We assess with high confidence that Iran has the scientific, technical and industrial capacity eventually to produce nuclear weapons if it decides to do so.

Key Differences Between the Key Judgments of This Estimate on Iran’s Nuclear Program and the May 2005 Assessment

2005 IC Estimate	2007 National Intelligence Estimate
<p>Assess with high confidence that Iran currently is determined to develop nuclear weapons despite its international obligations and international pressure, but we do not assess that Iran is immovable.</p>	<p>Judge with high confidence that in fall 2003, Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program. Judge with high confidence that the halt lasted at least several years. (DOE and the NIC have moderate confidence that the halt to those activities represents a halt to Iran's entire nuclear weapons program.) Assess with moderate confidence Tehran had not restarted its nuclear weapons program as of mid-2007, but we do not know whether it currently intends to develop nuclear weapons. Judge with high confidence that the halt was directed primarily in response to increasing international scrutiny and pressure resulting from exposure of Iran’s previously undeclared nuclear work. Assess with moderate-to-high confidence that Tehran at a minimum is keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons.</p>
<p>We have moderate confidence in projecting when Iran is likely to make a nuclear weapon; we assess that it is unlikely before early-to-mid next decade.</p>	<p>We judge with moderate confidence that the earliest possible date Iran would be technically capable of producing enough highly enriched uranium (HEU) for a weapon is late 2009, but that this is very unlikely. We judge with moderate confidence Iran probably would be technically capable of producing enough HEU for a weapon sometime during the 2010-2015 time frame. (INR judges that Iran is unlikely to achieve this capability before 2013 because of foreseeable technical and programmatic problems.)</p>
<p>Iran could produce enough fissile material for a weapon by the end of this decade if it were to make more rapid and successful progress than we have seen to date.</p>	<p>We judge with moderate confidence that the earliest possible date Iran would be technically capable of producing enough highly enriched uranium (HEU) for a weapon is late 2009, but that this is very unlikely.</p>

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