

Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib Study Guide

**Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib
by Seymour Hersh**

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Plot Summary

Stories of prisoner abuse began to emerge from the U.S. prison in Guantanamo, Cuba, shortly after the war in Afghanistan. The new category of 'enemy combatant' made prisoners exempt from normal Geneva Convention rules. A new method of interrogation spread to Iraq and the prisons there. Much was made of the complete breakdown in command, which allowed such atrocities to occur.

In the aftermath of 9-11, President Bush authorized a Special Action Plan to allow enemy targets to be 'neutralized' anywhere in the world. This government-sanctioned assassination plan worried many, who thought the policy would be used against the U.S. in the future.

Pictures came to light at an Iraqi prison called Abu Ghraib, which documented prisoner abuse. Many attempts were made by the Bush Administration to downplay the abuse as isolated acts. Evidence showed that the prison operated in an atmosphere of minimal authority and no direction on formal interrogations.

In regard to 9-11, the F.B.I. seemed unable to analyze the vast amount of information it had to see that an attack was coming. The U.S. intelligence community had been on the decline since the fall of the Soviet Union. Even when one of the hijackers was captured prior to 9-11, he was not interrogated to find out what might be coming. After the fact, it was clear that there had been no incentive for him to work with the government and speak of what he knew.

The war in Afghanistan started out with many political arguments, and the power of the Taliban was greatly underestimated. Several units took major damage (although, for the most part, this was not reported by the media). Then the Taliban collapsed and the Afghan warlords took over.

Ahmad Chalabi was put forth as the dissident leader of the Iraqis. Even in his role as leader of the Iraqi National Congress, he was not supported by the Pentagon and the Intelligence Services. As the Administration pushed harder for war with Iraq, dissenting opinion was largely quashed. Some in the Administration had much to gain personally by starting an Iraqi war, including the Chairman of the Defense Policy Board, Richard Perle.

A report detailing an attempt by the Iraqis to obtain uranium from Niger for Iraq's nuclear program was hailed by the Administration as proof of Saddam's evil intentions, and another reason to go to war. Shortly after that, it was shown that the report was completely bogus, and it was questioned how such an obvious forgery made it to the President's desk. There were many arguments between the Pentagon, Administration, and the C.I.A. as to the way to proceed with war plans.

Donald Rumsfeld was directing war preparations. He circumvented typical military channels and severely underestimated the troops needed. Rumsfeld was also a large

supporter of covert operations, including Special Operation hit squads. The covert war moved into Iraq, to work against the insurgents.

Another dubious ally in the war on terror was General Pervez Musharraf, the leader of Pakistan. The Administration praised his efforts, although the C.I.A. doubted his resolve. Pakistan was also implicated in efforts to sell their nuclear information to North Korea and Libya. The Administration refused to criticize Musharraf for this.

In the Iraq war aftermath, many regions are still very critical to the region's future. These include such nations as Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran, Israel, and Turkey.

Introduction

Introduction Summary

A young wire reporter named Seymour M. Hersh had his first major story in November, 1969, with an article about a U.S. Army killing spree in Vietnam that came to be known as the My Lai Massacre. As an investigative reporter, he later wrote stories about C.I.A. spying, Henry Kissinger, U.S. foreign coups, and the bombing of Cambodia. He has written investigative stories for The New Yorker since the early 1990s. He has also been highly critical of the U.S. government's activities in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks. Although scornful of military policy, Hersh has great affection for the actual troops on the front line.



Chapter 1, Part 1

Chapter 1, Part 1 Summary

After the September 11th attacks on the United States, the effort of gathering intelligence was considered critical to winning the newly declared 'war on terror.' Prisoners captured in Afghanistan were declared enemy combatants, as opposed to prisoners of war. This difference put them in legal limbo, where they could be detained indefinitely, without legal representation (according to the Bush Administration). The Geneva Convention was deemed not to apply. Many enemy combatants from Afghanistan were sent to the U.S. prison in Guantanamo, Cuba, for detention. Then a C.I.A. analyst came back from Guantanamo with disturbing findings that war crimes were being committed against the detainees. He stated that the prisoners had been selected haphazardly (Guantanamo was supposedly a 'high-target' prison), and that many of the detainees were just low-level fighters with no military intelligence value.

The administration conducted much debate on the legal limits of 'intelligence gathering' (as opposed to torture). President Bush was documented as stating (secretly) that he had the authority to suspend the Geneva Convention if the need arose. The President's authority was determined to override any statutes or treaties against torture. F.B.I. agents began to complain of more wrongdoings in late 2002. A meeting around that same time between Condoleezza Rice and Donald Rumsfeld dealt not with reported abuse but with the disappointing lack of usable intelligence from Guantanamo. Red Cross inspectors were also troubled by conditions they were seeing at Guantanamo. In 2003, Major Geoffrey Miller (who had no prison experience) replaced Generals Dunlavey and Baccus, who were seen as "too soft" by the Pentagon.

Chapter 1, Part 1 Analysis

The President authorized a Special Access Program (or SAP), authorizing Special Forces to grab or assassinate suspected Al Qaeda operatives anywhere in the world, soon after 9-11. This huge increase in governmental authority conveyed the power to basically kill anyone in the world without benefit of a trial. News of this activity did not raise much alarm in the United States, even after being made public. In the atmosphere of post 9-11, the ends did seem to justify the means.

Chapter 1, Part 2

Chapter 1, Part 2 Summary

Abu Ghraib was a huge Iraqi prison on the outskirts of Baghdad, used by Dictator Saddam Hussein. It became a U.S. prison in mid-2003, after the Iraq war. General Janis Karpinski was placed in command of all U.S. military prisons, that same year, making her ultimately responsible for Abu Ghraib. Her background included special intelligence work, but no prison experience. Major criminal abuses were soon noticed, including systematic illegal abuse of detainees. Photographic evidence was successfully withheld until some leaked out and the story broke on the television program 60 Minutes II on April 28, 2004. Seven suspects were implicated in the abuses. Specialist Joseph M. Darby was credited with making the story public after coming across pictures of naked detainees and writing an anonymous letter about it. The photos were given to investigators on January 13, 2004. The United States Central Command (CENTCOM) issued a statement about an investigation into prison mistreatment on January 16. An official inquiry headed up by General Antonio Taguba found that a significant factor was that Army intelligence officers, C.I.A. agents, and independent contractors were working together at Abu Ghraib, with little oversight and no sense of who was in charge. Loosely interpreted statements were made, prior to interrogations, such as "loosen this guy up for us" or "make sure he has a bad night." It was also shown that a common perception in the prison was that the military approved of the abuses. Evidence was found that commanders wanted to "git-mo-ize" the Iraqi prison system (that is, make it more like Guantanamo). Civilian employees, not bound by military justice codes, were using MPs to assist in interrogations. Dogs were commonly used to terrorize inmates.

General Taguba found that General Karpinski had recorded many abuse reports but had not made any significant changes to remedy the problem. The final report, issued February 26, 2004, found that 60% of the civilian inmates were no threat to society but had not been released.

Chapter 1, Part 2 Analysis

The most worrisome aspect of Abu Ghraib was that, when abuses did come to light, the emphasis wasn't on correcting the problem but, rather, on covering it up and generally denying responsibility.

Chapter 1, Part 3

Chapter 1, Part 3 Summary

A large issue was the government overreaction to the original Afghanistan situation where politically correct bureaucratic procedures had allowed several key Taliban members to escape. Pressure was applied to circumvent the regular chain of command to speed up the decision-making process. The President's Special Access Program was created in this atmosphere.

Two Egyptians were seized and spirited out of Sweden while seeking asylum, and flown back to Egypt for torture. The jet used was later traced to Guantanamo and Washington D.C. visits. The SAP was also used in Iraq against the insurgency, but was not effective, so the SAP was brought to the Iraqi prisons. The chain of command there was also very blurred; with civilians of unknown rank giving orders to MPs. It was unclear just who was in charge.

Chapter 1, Part 3 Analysis

The purpose of a chain of command is for persons at different levels to take differing levels of responsibility and delegate accordingly. A mid-level official (manager) should be accountable for explaining to his subordinates what their exact responsibilities are. Failure to properly explain duties is a failure by the managers, not the subordinates.

Abu Ghraib highlighted a major problem in the 'chain of command' structure, where all sense of authority regarding prisoner interrogation and treatment seemed to break down. Then the cover-up began. No one would take responsibility for the problem, which seemed to be systemic, not isolated as the Administration stated.

Chapter 1, Part 4

Chapter 1, Part 4 Summary

After Abu Ghraib investigative promises, it became evident that the Pentagon and White House wanted the investigations to stop. Congress called for swift justice to halt the abuses, but the congressional outcry soon died out and legislation stalled. The court martial proceedings were conveniently slated for late 2004 (after the presidential elections). The Pentagon claimed that abuses in Afghanistan and Iraq were undertaken by a few individuals and not reflective of policy. They described it as the 'rotten apple syndrome.'

But the Bush Administration's decisions had enormous consequences concerning the United States reputation in the world. Some said that the mistreatment would come back to haunt the U.S. later. Comment was that Rumsfeld had lowered the bar and that it would be used as an excuse to ignore the Geneva Conventions in the future.

Chapter 1, Part 4 Analysis

The 'rotten apple' syndrome is when you find one bad apple in a huge barrel and assume incorrectly that all the apples are bad, when in fact it's just the one. This was used as an excuse to make it sound like some were painting the entire military as bad, when it was actually bad oversight that was the problem.

Chapter 2, Part 1

Chapter 2, Part 1 Summary

Starting with the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late eighties, the C.I.A. faced a troublesome decline of interest and funding, while seeing an increase in bureaucracy. After a time, there were no overseas agents. All possibly 'dirty' agents were scrubbed. Field agent discretionary powers were stripped. This was happening at about the same time that Saudi-backed Islamic fundamentalists were beginning to train in the former fringe Soviet republics. There was also much C.I.A. in-fighting, and resources were diverted to narcotics and anti-nuclear proliferation issues. It took its toll on the organization; the vital 'south group,' with eight stations in central Asia (with close proximity to the Taliban and Bin Laden) had no agents at all by the mid-90s. The late 90s saw the resignation/retirement of many key personnel. Some ex-personnel testified before Congress about the problem, to no avail.

Chapter 2, Part 1 Analysis

Many in Washington were too short-sighted to see that the C.I.A. had an even larger threat to face after the fall of the Soviet Union. There were many voices of warning from within the department, but they were mostly ignored. The specter of Islamic fundamentalism grew, mostly unnoticed, until 9-11.

Chapter 2, Part 2

Chapter 2, Part 2 Summary

President Bush was given his official Presidential Daily Brief on August 6, 2001, with the title "Bin Laden Determined to Strike in U.S." In later investigations, officials would claim that there was no information available that would have predicted an imminent attack. There was also a memo sent to F.B.I. headquarters in July of that year, warning that Middle Eastern students were training at American flight schools. The F.B.I. appeared unable to analyze the intelligence reports it had. In fact, most F.B.I. computers were unable to communicate with those of other agencies.

There was also evidence that many of the terrorists had tested airline security by taking numerous flights around the country. They had spent time working together, which contradicted Administration claims that the cells operated independently with no interaction, which would have made them more vulnerable.

The intelligence community also had significant amounts of information available before September 11 about threats to airlines. Specifically, there were reports of plans to seize airplanes and use them as weapons, going back to the mid-1990s, and yet the Administration continued to claim that there was no way such an event as September 11 could have been predicted.

Chapter 2, Part 2 Analysis

Much has been made of the fact that the government couldn't connect the dots to see how all of the information available to them predicted the 9-11 attacks.



Chapter 2, Part 3

Chapter 2, Part 3 Summary

Moussaoui was arrested near his flight school, three weeks before the September 11th attacks, for making suspicious remarks. His home computer was not given a detailed search, despite the request of the F.B.I. agent who reported him. He was officially charged with overstaying his visa. He had been linked with known Al Qaeda operatives, but the evidence against him was sketchy at best. His condition and attitude deteriorated in prison. Some felt he should have been given a deal in order to entice him to testify. However, the Justice Department would not consider a 'no death' plea. Moussaoui became angrier and sought to represent himself in court. Lawyers had very limited access to him.

By the summer of 2002, Moussaoui had developed strange conspiracy theories. He became confused and was unable to understand the judge's instructions. He was denied access to captured Al Qaeda members. The trial was indefinitely delayed, due to two conflicting court rulings concerning the decision.

Chapter 2, Part 3 Analysis

Moussaoui's value as a terrorism witness was traded away for the sake of his high profile prosecution. It is very possible that, if given a reason to cooperate, he would have assisted efforts to understand how Al Qaeda operated.

Chapter 3, Part 1

Chapter 3, Part 1 Summary

During an operation to get Taliban leader Mullah Omar, U.S. Rangers and Delta Force members met with much more resistance than expected. Members complained about the total lack of planning. Abdul Haq, an Afghan leader supposedly working for the C.I.A., was killed by the Taliban. His death was seen as a major setback. There was much pressure to find Osama Bin Laden.

Chapter 3, Part 1 Analysis

Squabbling between high-level Army planners at CENTCOM and the Special Operations forces created a situation where U.S. forces went into battle unprepared.



Chapter 3, Part 2

Chapter 3, Part 2 Summary

In late 2001, the Northern Alliance (supported by the U.S.) forced a major Taliban retreat to the town of Kunduz. The Bush Administration opposed any surrender negotiations. Rumors persisted after the town was taken that some of the surrounded Taliban included Pakistanis, who were flown to safety. In the end, the numbers of captured didn't add up; many Taliban had disappeared.

The Northern Alliance took the capital city of Kabul in December, 2001. The U.S. Army prepared a major offensive in western Afghanistan, code-named Operation Anaconda. When Special Forces put down in the attack zone, the Taliban was ready and waiting with mortar fire. The troops were attacked as they deployed from the helicopters. There was a total unit failure as casualties were almost immediately taken and soldiers fled down the mountain. The team eventually received assistance from a nearby Australian unit. The media helped put a positive spin on the debacle: "We found the enemy on the first day!" Questions were raised about the amount of training of some of the troops. General Tommy Franks was charged with bad attack planning. Anaconda officially ended sixteen days later and the Al Qaeda positions were overrun two weeks after that. Despite Army commander comments about seven hundred Al Qaeda being killed, evidence showed that most escaped to Pakistan.

There was major squabbling between the Army (CENTCOM), the Pentagon, and the Administration. When the Taliban regime suddenly collapsed, there was no master plan in place to fill the void. Rival Afghan warlords stepped into the power vacuum.

Chapter 3, Part 2 Analysis

There was no master plan for the future of Afghanistan. The military was just fighting to win, with no thought of the aftermath. When the Taliban's power structure collapsed, the U.S. forces had no contingency plan to take over. Worse, nothing appeared to have been learned from that situation, since the same problem later occurred in Iraq, allowing insurgents time to escape and organize.

Chapter 3, Part 3

Chapter 3, Part 3 Summary

More than a year after Don Rumsfeld's pronouncement of Afghanistan's successes, the Taliban was still a presence in that country, and over 10,000 American troops were still on the ground. Warlords controlled the provinces, and heroin production was resuming. Richard Clarke stated that President Bush had considered Afghanistan as a "detour" on the road to Iraq. The U.S. succeeded in stabilizing only the major cities. Also, the borders were not secured early, allowing a majority of Al Qaeda to escape.

From early 2003 to 2004, humanitarian agencies in Kandahar shrank from twenty-six to five, due to the increasing violence. A report was written about the inability of the commanders to adapt and fight an unconventional war conventionally.

The policy of paying warlords turned out only to "rent" their cooperation, and many refused to recognize President Hamid Karzai. Soon thereafter, many U.S. Special Forces units were pulled out and sent to Iraq.

Chapter 3, Part 3 Analysis

Afghanistan is not a success story, by any measure. The country is not stable, and the central government controls only the major cities. Warlords still have great power over their regions, and drug production (which had been nearly eradicated under the Taliban) has resumed.



Chapter 4, Part 1

Chapter 4, Part 1 Summary

Ahmad Chalabi was the leader of the Iraqi National Congress, a Hussein opposition group. He had presented the Clinton Administration with an overthrow plan in November of 1993. In March 1995, he worked with the C.I.A. to start an insurrection in southern Iraq and seize the oil fields at Basra. The plan failed miserably. After Bush came into office, the Administration gave the impression that Iraq was not a priority, especially when compared to China and Russia. However, the Pentagon's civilian leadership, spearheaded by Paul Wolfowitz, had begun advocating pre-emptive military action against Iraq.

Both Wolfowitz and Richard Perle (chairman of the Defense Policy Board) had close ties to Chalabi. The Pentagon was not in favor of this action. It was also unsure whether to rely on Chalabi's I.N.C., as opposed to other dissident groups. The I.N.C. plan relied on bombing and dropping in limited Special Forces, then assuming an uprising in the North and South would occur. CENTCOM thought it would be unrealistic to invade Iraq without a large ground force. As of late 2001, there had been no decision made, as the administration continued to fund the I.N.C. and other opposition groups.

Chapter 4, Part 1 Analysis

Ahmad Chalabi was not widely regarded as a wise choice as the 'anti-Hussein' alternative. His background was dubious and he hadn't lived in Iraq for forty years. Chalabi had supporters in the Administration who pushed for his Iraq plan, which was more optimistic (and less realistic) than what the Pentagon wanted.



Chapter 4, Part 2

Chapter 4, Part 2 Summary

In spring 2002, the Bush administration was split on what to do about Iraq. It was agreed that Saddam should be overthrown, but how? Bush gave April as a deadline for all to come up with a compromise plan. There were many unknowns: how would the Iraqis respond under attack, how many U.S. troops would be needed, and who would replace Saddam? The National Security Council and Joint Chiefs of Staff preliminary planning was marginal. The rift between the Pentagon and State Department widened. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near East and South Asian Affairs, William Luti, was seen as being obsessed with the overthrow of Saddam. The N.S.C., under Condoleezza Rice, was usually the organization striving to bring these sides together, but it had been wracked by a series of resignations and re-assignments. Those issues left the N.S.C. with very little Iraq experience.

The C.I.A. realized that Chalabi was not popular in Iraq and not credible as someone to "tie our wagon to." (He hadn't lived in Iraq since 1958, when he was a child.) But the Pentagon was adamant about sticking with Chalabi and the I.N.C. The C.I.A. pressed ahead to form an alternate coalition of non-I.N.C. Iraqi opposition groups. One prospect for a leader was Iyad Allawi, an Iraqi dissident who had moved to London in the 1970s and later broke ties with the regime. Allawi had also been tied with the Iraqi Baath Party and many violent episodes. Another C.I.A. prospect was Nizar Khazraji, a former Iraqi Army Chief of Staff. Chalabi mounted a public relations campaign against Khazraji, alleging he was linked to the 1988 gassing of a Kurdish town. The C.I.A. was astounded by the amount of Iraqi infighting.

The first Gulf War put 500,000 American soldiers in the field. CENTCOM estimated at least 150,000 would be needed for a new invasion. A Clinton administration Director of Persian Gulf Affairs estimated that 200,000-300,000 personnel would be needed; with 700-1000 aircraft and 1-5 carrier battle groups, which would take 3-5 months to be readied. He further speculated that these would be necessary to seize oil fields, occupy Iraqi missile sites, and be ready for occupation duties. He estimated a one-month campaign. Bush warhawks, like Wolfowitz and Perle, were pushing the optimistic scenario that any U.S. show of force would immediately trigger an Iraqi revolt. Perle dismissed worries of civil war and chaos following an overthrow. Scott Ritter, who had led the U.S. inspection teams into Iraq in the 1990s, worried the Iraqi army would simply disperse into the countryside if attacked.

The administration, in secret, was also talking with Israel about not retaliating against Iraq if attacked (as in the first Gulf War). Israel refused to agree that it would not defend itself if attacked. Its position was that they did not want the Arab world to perceive them as being weak.



Some administration supporters did not see real long-range thinking taking place. The administration position was that, once Iraq was taken, everything else would work itself out. Most agreed that this would be a positive event, but this view was overly optimistic and far-fetched. Geoffrey Kemp (an N.S.C. near-East expert during the Reagan administration) added that for Bush to succeed everything had to go right, especially the successful installation of a pro-U.S. Iraqi Government.

President Bush delivered his 'Axis of Evil' State of the Union address in January 2002. The feel was that a war with Iraq was inevitable and slowly gaining momentum. An N.S.C. member noted that, although officially no decision had been made, by February of 2002 "the decision to go to war was taken" (In March 2002, a military buildup in Kuwait was in fact already underway with several times more troops stationed "to protect" the country than officially stated). This decision affected the on-going War on Terror drastically. Major resources were redirected to Iraq, operatives were reassigned, and anti-terrorism intelligence programs were ended.

Chapter 4, Part 2 Analysis

An isolated group of individuals in the Bush Administration were pushing policy in the direction of invading Iraq, regardless of the outcome. This decision was made without fully preparing for the consequences. The invasion of Iraq would change the course of the War on Terror drastically.



Chapter 4, Part 3

Chapter 4, Part 3 Summary

Some war advocates in the administration had a personal stake in seeing an Iraq conflict happen. Richard Perle was the Chairman of the Defense Policy Board, but he was also managing partner of a company called Trireme Partnership. Trireme was a homeland security company started two months after 9-11, with the thought that fear of terrorism would fuel demand for its services. The company actively pursued investors like notorious Saudi arms-broker Adnan Khashoggi, who had allegedly been involved in sordid activities since the 1970s—particularly Iran-Contra. The question of ethics was raised because Perle was Chairman of the Board for Trireme and capable of helping himself financially through his federal position under Donald Rumsfeld. Perle also served on a British company under contract with the U.S. federal government for homeland security.

Perle was seen as having the ability to greatly influence government policy. He was a private citizen (unelected), but linked to many high-level administration members like Wolfowitz and Douglas Frith. (Perle had lobbied to get Frith his job.) In fact, Perle had worked closely with Frith since 1989, when he served as an advisor to Frith's lobbying firm.

Perle was also highly critical of the Saudi government, considering it a major element of the terrorism problem. He invited an analyst to deliver a briefing that depicted Saudi Arabia as an enemy of the United States. But this did not stop him from soliciting Saudi investors to fund Trireme.

Khashoggi and Harb Zuhair (a Saudi industrialist) were to meet with Perle to discuss expectations. This lunch took place January 3, 2003, in Marseilles. According to the Saudis, Perle was to pursue alternatives to war with the Bush Administration, while they were to set up other Saudi businessmen to invest ten million dollars each in Trireme. Khashoggi saw Trireme's future linked to the possibility of an Iraqi war. Members of the Saudi royal family got wind of the meeting and decried Perle as a hypocrite. They also felt he was misrepresenting his true beliefs by purporting to work for peace when in fact he intended to do no such thing. The meeting details were published in a Saudi newspaper, embarrassing Perle. He was seen as pushing for war while setting up a company that would profit from the same activity. A Pentagon Inspector General's report later found Perle had not violated government ethics rules. Perle did end up resigning as Chairman of the Defense Policy Board, after several more scandals implicated him in other conflicts of interest.

Chapter 4, Part 3 Analysis

A conflict of interest occurs when an individual or group cannot make an unbiased decision because their well-being may rest on having a particular outcome based on that decision. Many high-ranking and influential members of the Bush Administration had a stake in seeing an Iraqi war happen, regardless of the eventual outcome.

Chapter 5, Part 1

Chapter 5, Part 1 Summary

As opposition to the Administration's preemptive war policy was growing, in the fall of 2002, information came from both the C.I.A. and British Intelligence that the African country of Niger was involved in a plot to supply uranium to Iraq. This information was subsequently used by the Bush administration to pressure congressional holdouts into supporting (by mandate) a military assault on Iraq. The Niger connection was mentioned in a senior intelligence meeting and in the President's Daily Brief (a sensitive document summarizing important events for the President, released daily). A State Department paper publicly mentioned the Niger story in December 2002, and Bush also spoke of the uranium deal in his State of the Union speech, a month later.

On the eve of the Iraq war on March 7th, the International Atomic Energy Agency released information showing the Niger-Iraq connection was fraudulent. It concluded that documents supplied to substantiate the story were not authentic. An official stated that he didn't understand how such unrealistic documents had been substantiated and not shown as blatantly false earlier. One document was dated October 10, 2000, supposedly signed by a Niger Minister of Foreign Affairs—but he, in fact, had been out of office since 1989. The administration's credibility was questioned for endorsing an obvious forgery for its own ends.

Chapter 5, Part 1 Analysis

This section asks the important question: Did the Bush administration create a false story about Niger selling uranium to Iraq to further its desires to attack Iraq or did it just take the dubious information at face value without verifying it because it wanted the story to be true?



Chapter 5, Part 2

Chapter 5, Part 2 Summary

A small group of advisers and analysts were put into action after 9-11 and helped manage the perception of Iraq with both the public and the intelligence community. This operation was conceived by Paul Wolfowitz and quickly grew to compete with the C.I.A. as President Bush's main source of intelligence. The so-called Office of Special Plans was headed by Abram Shulsky and William Luti. The group worked to find evidence that Saddam Hussein had links to Al Qaeda and was a real threat in terms of armaments. Hussein had used chemical weapons in the past, so it was no real stretch to assume he still had those weapons. A majority of Americans believed that Hussein was linked to September 11, even though no tangible evidence of a connection existed. The existence of this operation was made public in October 2002 in a New York Times article that reported on Rumsfeld's new intelligence operation to search for information the C.I.A. might have overlooked. Discrediting the C.I.A. became standard for the Special Plans team. The team used Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress for intelligence, even though there were suspicions that the I.N.C. manipulated information to further their own agenda (overthrowing Hussein). Information from Iraqi defectors was also heavily used. Again, there was evidence showing many defectors told interviewers what the interviewers wanted to hear, to further their own situation.

Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz put pressure on the administration to release funds to the I.N.C. for its intelligence. In return, the IRC worked to publicize more stories involving weapons of mass destruction and terrorist ties. Many of these stories were disputed as being inaccurate by the C.I.A. Much information was traveling from the Pentagon directly to the Vice President and on to the President, with little or no corroboration from the intelligence community. There was much skepticism about Chalabi's sources. Nevertheless, the information was still routed directly to the President. In 2002, a classified report of a defector describing terrorist training camps in Iraq was leaked to the London Times. The C.I.A. followed up by interviewing the defector a month later. He declared that the released story was completely incorrect, and the C.I.A. stated as much in their classified report. But the C.I.A. report was not leaked. This became a pattern. Classified reports of defectors were being leaked to the press, but the intelligence reports discounting them were being kept secret.

The C.I.A. was becoming more and more demoralized. Its good intelligence was being questioned aggressively by the administration, to the point where the Agency didn't have the resources to question bad intelligence. The Special Plans group had helped to dismantle the system of filters that had helped keep bad information from the President in the past.

A professional intelligence officer from the State Department assigned to attend administration staff meetings soon found himself shut out from those meetings when he presented information the group didn't want to hear. He also realized that the



Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security had requested direct access to intelligence. He worried that this created a situation where people could be misled by seeing raw intelligence (such as foreign-agent reports and electronic intercepts) that had not been analyzed or verified.

Chapter 5, Part 2 Analysis

The Bush Administration was 'cherry picking' evidence to justify going to war with Iraq. They were relying on bad or questionable information to make their case while downplaying good information that questioned their course of action. It was also a case of 'shooting the messenger,' where the C.I.A. was taking much abuse for not telling the Administration what it wanted to hear.



Chapter 5, Part 3

Chapter 5, Part 3 Summary

The Bush administration worked hard to build a case against Iraq, sometimes downplaying factual information. Secretary of State Colin Powell was presented with a review in December 2001 which stated that it was not likely the Iraqis were reconstituting their nuclear program. The last definitive evidence showing no nuclear weapons had been under the last group of UN weapons inspectors in 1997. Since then, there had been no first-hand intelligence contradicting this—that was, until the Niger-Iraq connection. The Italian Military Intelligence and Security Service (SISMI) made a report available to the C.I.A., claiming Iraq had attempted to purchase uranium ore (yellowcake) from Niger. But the report offered no corroborating documentation and was dismissed as "amateurish" by the C.I.A. The C.I.A. considered it a dead story, but Cheney did not like this response and asked the C.I.A. to review the information again.

By early 2002, the still-unverified SISMI report was being used by the Administration to make the case that the Iraqis were pursuing a nuclear program. The attacks on the C.I.A. were beginning to take their toll. It was perceived that the C.I.A. director, George Tenet, was caving in to political pressure and beginning to cooperate by slanting Iraqi weapons issues to the "worst case" side. The C.I.A. had retired-ambassador Joseph Wilson investigate the supposed uranium sale in Niger, but he found no evidence to support it. Immediately after this, the White House increased the ferocity of the anti-Iraq campaign. Both Cheney and Powell made public comments, stating that Iraq was pursuing nuclear weapons. On September 8th, 2002, Cheney told a TV interviewer that, "We do know, with absolute certainty, that he [Saddam] is using his procurement system to acquire the equipment he needs in order to enrich uranium to build a nuclear weapon." Both President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair made similar public statements later in the month. The British based their conclusions on the unsubstantiated SISMI report. Several members of the Administration, including the President, stated that they didn't want to wait long enough to see final proof of Iraqi aspirations in the form of a mushroom cloud.

Then another set of documents purporting to show an Iraqi uranium purchase appeared. The Italian reporter who had first learned of their existence flew to Niger to investigate. Although official in appearance, the documents again could not be corroborated by evidence in Nigerian customs or actual mine records. The reporter concluded that there was no evidence of a uranium sale to Iraq. Nevertheless, the Americans now had copies of the report. The C.I.A. stated that the documents weren't reliable, but the Pentagon had what they were looking for, and high administration officials began using "facts" from the report in their public statements. The Italian reporter was shocked to see "evidence" from her defrocked story being used in the President's State of the Union Address. In fact, much of the investigation as to why the blatantly false information was given to the President was delayed until after the election. There were many theories concerning where the false report came from: the



Nigerians, the French, British MI6, even disgruntled C.I.A. operators. The debate over this bad intelligence ended with the start of the Iraq war and the declared U.S. victory a few weeks later.

Joseph Wilson brought up what he thought was the White House's Niger dishonesty in several media accounts, where he questioned how such bad information could have ended up in a Presidential speech. White House officials retaliated by exposing Wilson's wife as a C.I.A. operative (which led to a C.I.A. investigation).

Chapter 5, Part 3 Analysis

The Bush Administration played on public emotion by warning that a mushroom cloud (that is, a nuclear attack) could be the end result of not taking care of Saddam as they wanted. The fact that they used obviously false information to base their claims called into question what really was happening behind the scenes.



Chapter 6, Part 1

Chapter 6, Part 1 Summary

The Pentagon's first reaction was anger when there were supply-line and reinforcement issues during the first week of the Iraq war in mid-March, 2003. Donald Rumsfeld had supposedly taken over the day-to-day running of the war, to the point where he overruled the military repeatedly. He also reduced ground troops numerous times, to where the forces' effectiveness was severely curtailed. Pentagon officials were shocked when Rumsfeld refused to use the Pentagon's centralized planning tool, the 'time-phased forces deployment list.' The military is a very inefficient organization—redundancies are necessary for its proper function. Rumsfeld wanted to streamline the operation, based on the first Gulf War. When TPFDL recommended a minimum of four army divisions, Rumsfeld rejected it as "too big." He felt one division plus air power could do the job. Several Joint Staff members who disagreed were replaced by officers more friendly to Rumsfeld. In the pre-war months, many in the military voiced their concern that the war plan was far too light on both troops and material. Many of the high-level generals (including Tommy Franks and Air Force General Richard Myers) supported Rumsfeld.

It was inevitable that supply lines quickly became overextended upon the outbreak of the war. The attack on Baghdad stalled, the first week, as Marines waited for needed reinforcements. The Army's most modern division would not be available for almost a month. It was also noted that the vaunted air attack had little effect on the Iraqis; in fact, it freed up some Republican Guard troops who had been guarding palaces that were subsequently bombed. Rumsfeld was being compared to Robert McNamara, who had similarly intimidated his military staff during Vietnam, to disastrous effect.

Shiite groups in southern Iraq did not support the American/British invasion as expected. In fact, there were soon reports of Shiites crossing into Iraq to fight against the Americans, as well as fighters from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Algeria. Even the Iranians who had been fighting Iraq for decades declined to back the Americans.

Then the rumors and accusations of being unprepared seemed to subside as the U.S. Army dashed to the outskirts of Baghdad and the city 'fell.' The statue of Hussein being pulled down was shown all over the world, and the military was elated. Suddenly, however, widespread looting began, and there were nowhere near enough troops to stop it.

Later evidence showed that the sudden 'fall' of Baghdad was planned by Saddam in advance. Troops simply went home to start the resistance. Organized cells were set up to work independently. Huge amounts of small arms had already been dispersed throughout the country.



Chapter 6, Part 1 Analysis

Robert McNamara was charged with letting politicians run the Vietnam War, as opposed to just letting his generals use their experience to do their jobs (their job being to win the war). Vietnam via McNamara ended up being an ugly conflict where polls and political opinions dictated war policy. This proved disastrous when the military's recommendations on how to succeed were not taken seriously. Rumsfeld's shortsightedness in Iraq was ominously similar.



Chapter 6, Part 2

Chapter 6, Part 2 Summary

On November 3, 2002, an American unmanned aircraft called a Predator fired a missile that destroyed an automobile in Yemen. The target was believed to be an Al Qaeda operative. All five persons in the vehicle were killed. The operation was hailed as a success by the Bush Administration. This action also opened up a Pandora's box on state-sponsored assassination, which had been closed by presidential order since 1976. In the wake of September 11, the killing of Al Qaeda members without judicial process was seen as acceptable, but the wisdom and ethics of this program were questioned, especially by the Special Forces themselves.

Rumsfeld had been unhappy with the lack of speed in the months after September 11 in taking immediate action against targets. The term "actionable intelligence" became the buzz phrase to describe the level of confidence that an attack would occur. Many members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were not pleased that Rumsfeld wanted to turn Special Forces Units into "hit squads." Rumsfeld and his team complained, "Actionable intelligence had paralyzed us." A Predator attack had already killed three local men scavenging for scrap metal in the Afghan countryside. Popular opinion did not have an issue with the attacks, and legal experts were not necessarily questioning the legal aspects of assassination, but the wisdom of such a policy. It was felt that this policy would eventually turn against the United States. Rumsfeld commented about the discomfort of staff members with this 'new style' of war, and stated that he needed more "fighting generals." He wanted a new, reconstructed Special Operations group under his command.

The military's previous experience with assassination programs in Vietnam was reviewed. The Special Forces and C.I.A. had worked with the South Vietnamese in the late 60s/early 70s to assassinate tens of thousands of pre-selected victims, many of whom had been targeted for personal reasons. Members of the C.I.A. described it as really getting out of control.

Chapter 6, Part 2 Analysis

The United States was involved in many coups and assassinations throughout the world in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, usually via the C.I.A. Many of these activities brought unintended results and resulted in the suffering and death of many innocents. Public distaste with these policies became so strong after Vietnam that the Ford Administration sharply curtailed the C.I.A.'s abilities to run covert activities—specifically banning the act of assassination. This policy remained largely in affect until the Bush Administration's War on Terror.



Chapter 6, Part 3

Chapter 6, Part 3 Summary

An escalation of the covert war in Iraq using the Special Forces was underway by late 2003. The group consisted of the Army Delta Force, Navy Seals, and C.I.A. Paramilitary Operatives. Their mission was to "neutralize," that is capture or kill, Iraqi insurgents. The thought was to use "U.S. shooters and Iraqi intelligence." Prevailing opinion was that Baathist insurgents could only be dealt with by using these unconventional methods. The Pentagon knew that just killing the insurgent leaders would not stop the insurgency, because it ran at a 'cell' level, from the bottom up. Intelligence was the key. Insurgents had learned to reject easily traced cell phones and radios in favor of face-to-face communications. The Baathists in Iraq soon organized and were leading attacks against Americans. Insurgents learned to sway public support by acting in previously unaffected small towns to bring in American attacks and raise the chance of making more American casualties.

Rumsfeld saw using secret Special Forces as an advantage because they were not counted in the ever-increasing troop totals. The 2004 Special Forces budget was increased 34% over 2003 levels. His Special Forces team consisted of Stephen Cambone (Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence) and Lieutenant General Boykin (Cambone's Military Assistant). Boykin had equated the Muslim world with Satan, and was very involved in the escalation plan. He also had links to the Army's disastrous 1993 mission in Somalia (made famous by 'Blackhawk Down') and the assassination of notorious drug dealer Pablo Escobar in Columbia. The task force saw the guerilla war spreading from large, army-style units to small tribal groups. It was suggested that Shiites in Iran's government were aiding the Sunni insurgency in Iran.

Israel also secretly advised the U.S. on how to run a 'targeted killing' campaign. They had much experience taking on terrorist cells in the West Bank and Gaza.

Chapter 6, Part 3 Analysis

In another example of Rumsfeld's shortsightedness, he used only the most optimistic planning scenarios to base troop expectations. "Realistic" scenarios (where everything did not go perfectly—as in real life) were thrown out so as to end up with lower troop levels. When troop reinforcements were needed, he complained about his generals.



Chapter 7, Part 1

Chapter 7, Part 1 Summary

The Bush Administration considers General Pervez Musharraf as a critical ally in the War on Terror. He has presided over Pakistan since 1999, when he seized power from Pakistan's elected government. The Administration's reliance on Musharraf is considered short-sighted, since his hold on power is tenuous at best. He runs the country like a near-despot. The U.S. war in Afghanistan put Musharraf in a very precarious position, since there were many pro-Taliban members in his military. Many in his own intelligence agency (the ISI) were also Taliban supporters, as well as some of his nuclear researchers.

The fear that Pakistan's nuclear weapons might fall into the wrong hands was a large issue. Sanctions that had been raised against Pakistan for developing nuclear weapons were dropped two weeks after September 11, in return for cooperation in fighting terrorists. In fact, the Administration had a plan in place to 'secure' Pakistan's nuclear weapons if the need arose. Even using Israel's Special Operations Unit 262, the location of all Pakistan's weapons could not be assured. Due to this fact, there was a great degree of uncertainty about whether a successful operation could even be carried out. One of the worse scenarios in weapons proliferation is that of a nuclear-armed fundamentalist government coming to power.

Ongoing tensions between the two neighboring enemies, Pakistan and India, also came into play. Both had nuclear weapons aimed at the other. In fact, Pakistan had "panicked" and readied its nuclear arsenal after India moved large numbers of troops along the border to see if it could 'bluff' Pakistan. American diplomats were required to calm the situation. The disputed Kashmir region had been the flashpoint since Britain withdrew its forces in 1947; leaving the rival countries to fight over the area. (They have had two major wars over Kashmir since then.) India, a close American ally, felt betrayed when the Bush administration chose Pakistan as its main ally in the War on Terror. The ISI has long been believed to support Kashmir terrorist organizations.

Chapter 7, Part 1 Analysis

General Pervez Musharraf is a very dubious figure to count on for assistance in the United States War on Terror. At best, he is a 'fair-weather friend' who is only doing the minimum possible to make it look as though he is tough on terrorists, while looking out for his own interests. At worst, he is a very deceptive figure who is making a mockery out of countries that actually play by the rules when it comes to nuclear arms proliferation.



Chapter 7, Part 2

Chapter 7, Part 2 Summary

In 2002, the C.I.A. presented President Bush with information that Pakistan was sharing nuclear information with North Korea. This was supposedly done in exchange for North Korean missile technology. The C.I.A. presentation stated the Pakistan had sent prototype high-speed centrifuges (to enrich uranium) to North Korea. Pakistan also shared information on how to hide nuclear research from American satellites.

Bush had previously described North Korea as part of the "Axis of Evil," but he did not publicize the C.I.A. report showing a link between North Korea and his new ally, Pakistan. A Third World country proliferating nuclear weapons was considered a worst-case scenario by the arms community. The military assurance on MAD (mutual assured destruction), which had served in the cold war, simply did not apply to a fundamentalist nation. The U.S. challenged North Korea diplomatically about stopping all nuclear operations in October 2002, with no positive results.

Chapter 7, Part 2 Analysis

Because Bush had allied himself with Pakistan, he looked the other way when it was brought to his attention that Pakistan was illegally selling nuclear technology to North Korea.



Chapter 7, Part 3

Chapter 7, Part 3 Summary

In February 2004, a Pakistani scientist named Dr. A. Q. Khan confessed on Pakistani television that he alone had setup an international black market in nuclear weapons materials, dealing primarily to Iran and Libya. Musharraf claimed to be surprised and subsequently pardoned Khan. Diplomats dismissed this media event as a farce. A Bush administration intelligence officer said that Dr. Khan simply could not have distributed materials without high-level Pakistani military assistance. Publicly, the Bush Administration praised the confession and considered the matter over. Musharraf suddenly offered the U.S. permission to search for Bin Laden in vast areas of the Pakistan border to which he had previously denied the U.S. access. "The worst nuclear-arms proliferator in the world" had been pardoned, and the U.S. had no negative comment about it.

In December 2003, Bush and Tony Blair announced that Libya would allow nuclear inspections and abandon their nuclear program. Inspectors found plans for a half-ton nuclear weapon that would fit in a small car and be considered a "terrorist's dream." The details behind the scene showed a different story than the rosy Bush/Blair announcement. Libya had actually exposed the Pakistanis intentionally, to curry favor with the United States. Musharraf delivered a nationwide speech (not officially translated out of the native Urdu language) that decried Pakistan's betrayal by its "Muslim brothers."

The I.A.E.A. was dismayed by the Khan pardon, which made him inaccessible to them for questioning. The I.A.E.A.'s power to inspect was basically limited to governments allowing voluntary access. A Vienna-based diplomat explained the Bush policy of pursuing Iraq at the expense of real nuclear proliferation (like Pakistan) as laughable.

In 2004, Musharraf again insisted that American troops would not be permitted to operate in Pakistan for any reason. But it was widely known that American Special Forces had been in Pakistan since 2001. It was widely suspected that high-level Al Qaeda and Taliban forces had been hiding in the remote northwestern area of Pakistan known as the Hindu Kush. The hunt for Osama Bin Laden was focused in this area. In spring of 2004, Musharraf announced his military was pursuing a "high-value target" in the Hindu Kush. Several battles were fought against militants, but no senior Al Qaeda were captured.

Chapter 7, Part 3 Analysis

The issue of nuclear proliferation can be demonstrated to be of much great importance than the single issue of the United States invading Iraq. The future threat to the world will not be nations facing each other with nuclear weapons, as in the Cold War between

the United States and the Soviet Union. Instead, it will be the specter of some fundamentalist group obtaining the resources to build a small nuclear bomb, and having the will to detonate it in a populated area. The technology threat will not come in the form of ICBM missiles, but rather in a small suitcase bomb, which could conceivably kill millions.



Chapter 8, Part 1

Chapter 8, Part 1 Summary

The Saudi Royal family has long been linked to money supporting fundamentalist groups, including Al Qaeda. The ruling family is viewed as corrupt and out of touch with the Saudi people. This makes the regime, and therefore the Saudi oil supply, unstable. With the decline of King Faud, a power struggle is erupting over who will succeed him. The Saudis refused to cooperate with the F.B.I. and C.I.A. to run traces on the nineteen men who were involved in the September 11 attacks. Fifteen of these men were believed to have been Saudis.

The royal family presides over a country where there is rampant unemployment and strict religious adherence to Islam, known as Wahhabism. In fact, the policy of using religious police to enforce the national religion is similar to that of the Taliban. Religious leaders control the press and the educational system. Two-thirds of Saudi Ph.D.s are in Islamic studies, and yet the Saudi Princes were always being shown by the media partying and drinking while spending billions of dollars of state money. The Saudis have also spent huge amounts of money lobbying Washington and gaining access to American policy. In 1994, a high-level Saudi defector attempted to hand over thousands of documents detailing corruption, human rights abuses, and money sent to terrorists. F.B.I. agents met with the defector but refused to accept the documents.

Investigations into Saudi terrorism links were initially refused assistance by the Bush Administration. A C.I.A. study stated that terrorists could take out Saudi oil fields for years with only a small amount of explosives. This report was considered sensitive enough that it was not put into the agency's computer to control who saw it. A prominent Middle Eastern oilman stated, "The United States is hostage to the stability of the Saudi system."

Chapter 8, Part 1 Analysis

Saudi Arabia has an oppressed population that goes mostly overlooked by the West because of that country's huge oil reserves. While most of the masses live in squalor, the elite royal family leads one of the most privileged existences in the world. This situation is not viewed as stable, which is a great worry to the world economy.

Chapter 8, Part 2

Chapter 8, Part 2 Summary

A chance to develop an ally in Syria was thwarted when the Bush Administration refused to entertain the notion of giving the Syrian government "back-channel" access to Washington via the C.I.A. The Syrians had been cooperating by assisting the C.I.A. with anti-terrorism operations, and the C.I.A. wanted to reward Syria by removing them from the list of state sponsors of terrorism. The Bush Administration wanted no part of it, and accused Syria of possibly hiding Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. Negotiations with Syria broke down, and a possible key ally was lost, in the C.I.A.'s view.

Chapter 8, Part 2 Analysis

Syria is in a unique position, in that it supports the 'struggle' against Israel by the Palestinians (which is viewed as overt terrorism by most of the world) but opposes other international terror organizations such as Al Qaeda. This made it very difficult for the Bush Administration to reduce sanctions against the nation.



Chapter 8, Part 3

Chapter 8, Part 3 Summary

In late 2001, the Bush Administration was in a dilemma over how to treat the nation of Iran. Long having been considered hostile to the United States, and an active sponsor of state terrorism, Iran had been assisting the U.S. in their Afghanistan operations and was leaning towards supporting a U.S.-led invasion to topple Saddam Hussein in Iraq. The Taliban had seized power in Afghanistan in 1998 and had also assassinated nearly a dozen Iranian diplomats at the time. This led to an uneasy cooperation between the U.S. and the Iranian government, led by Mohammad Khatami. But Israel wanted the U.S. to get tough with Iran because they believed the government was rapidly pursuing an atomic-bomb project.

The original atomic program was abandoned after the Shah of Iran was overthrown in 1979, and the country spent nearly ten years battling Iraq. Then the Iranians signed an arms and trade agreement with the Soviets in 1995 which included assistance with "peaceful uses of atomic energy." After 2001, the Iranian nuclear program supposedly went 'underground' to conceal its true nature, much like the previous Pakistani program.

While Iran's political reforms are seen as promising, it is widely viewed in the intelligence community as the likeliest next country to acquire nuclear capability. The Iranians admitted that they had produced small quantities of plutonium and uranium in October 2003. The Israelis also claimed to have monitored communications between Iran and Pakistan, describing Iran's nuclear-weapons capabilities. By late 2004, the Iranians were expected to have a huge facility completed and covered with sand, which would make it unobservable by satellite.

Chapter 8, Part 3 Analysis

The issue of 'the nuclear club' is odd, in that the countries with nuclear capabilities tell non-nuclear nations to "do what I say, not what I do." The non-nuclear nations see the authority, which comes from having nuclear weapons. As a result, many nations decide to pursue nuclear power in secret.

Chapter 8, Part 4

Chapter 8, Part 4 Summary

Israel urged the United States to seal the 900-mile border between Iraq and Iran in mid-2003, to keep out Iranian-backed insurgents planning to heighten attacks against Americans and the Iraqi coalition government. The Administration made the decision not to close the border, and the Israelis were discouraged by the decision. Ehud Barak, the ex-Israeli prime minister, told Dick Cheney that the U.S. could not win the occupation in Iraq, and that it was only a matter of "choosing the size of your humiliation." Israel decided to salvage its situation in the area by establishing its own ground forces in Iraqi Kurdistan. This also allowed Israel to run covert operations inside Iran and Syria. The Turkish government had always been at odds with the concept of a Kurdish state that would threaten Kurdish areas inside Turkey. It was concerned with the new Israeli activities that encouraged the Kurds to create such a state. A breakdown in Iraq would create pressure for the Kurds to declare independence, which would probably destabilize the entire region.

Chapter 8, Part 4 Analysis

Although always a close ally of the United States, Israel has at times scorned the U.S. for following world opinion, and gone its own way. Israel's situation is that it must be more pragmatic, because it is surrounded by hostile nations.



Epilogue

Epilogue Summary

Top Administration officials worked as a team to do 'damage control' over Abu Ghraib, including Cheney and Rumsfeld. However, much about the Bush presidency will never be known. For instance, how did a small group of conservatives (convinced that an Iraq war was the solution to international terrorism) manage to direct government policies and change long-standing priorities to get their way? The Administration used misleading intelligence to link Iraq with Al Qaeda to make the war happen. Democrats did not raise much of a challenge when Congress signed the Intelligence Committee Report which was not critical of the White House but, rather, of the C.I.A. As of 2004, Iraqi insurgents have gained strength and continue to strike at will, causing continued instability. The Bush Administration continues to refuse to negotiate with neighboring Syria and Iran to assist with the insurgent situation. In addition, in Afghanistan, the news does not report most stories of the Taliban making resurgence in some areas and of American soldiers dying in greater numbers.



Characters

George W. Bush

George W. Bush is the 43rd president of the United States. He was sworn into office on January 20, 2001, and won re-election in 2004. He previously served for six years as Governor of Texas.

George W. Bush was born on July 6, 1946, in New Haven, Connecticut but was raised in Midland and Houston, Texas. He received a bachelor's degree in history from Yale University in 1968, and then served as an F-102 fighter pilot in the Texas Air National Guard. He received a Masters degree in Business Administration from Harvard Business School in 1975. Bush moved back to Midland following his graduation and began working in the energy business. He became involved in a group who purchased the Texas Rangers baseball franchise in 1989. On November 8, 1994, Bush was elected Governor of Texas and was re-elected on November 3, 1998.

George W. Bush described himself as having a strong record of limited government, local control, and personal responsibility. He also used the phrase 'compassionate conservative' to describe himself. He coined the term "war on terror" after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. He has been highly instrumental in directing the policy to stop terrorism. (The White House, President George Bush, 2005)

Donald Rumsfeld

Mr. Rumsfeld is the current U.S. Secretary of Defense. He was sworn in on January 20, 2001, and is responsible for managing the Defense Department of the United States; he has been a "center stage" figure since the September 11 terrorist attacks. He also has taken much criticism for the manner in which he has chosen to run the War on Terror.

He is a graduate of Princeton University and has served in both the U.S. Navy (as an aviator and flight instructor) and the U.S. House of Representatives. He also worked in both the Nixon and Ford Administrations before pursuing a career in the private sector.

Richard Cheney

Richard Cheney is the current Vice President of the United States. He served as Secretary of Defense during the elder President Bush's Administration and has been a valuable asset to the second Bush Administration. As Secretary of Defense, he was instrumental in the first Iraqi war (Operation Desert Storm).

He also worked for both the Nixon and Ford Administrations before serving in the U.S. House of Representatives. (He was elected Chairman of the House Republican



Conference in 1987 and House Minority Whip in 1988.) He also served as Secretary of Defense from 1989-1993. (The White House, Vice President Richard Cheney, 2005)

Condoleezza Rice

Condoleezza Rice was sworn into office as the United States Secretary of State on January 26, 2005. She served as Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (the National Security Advisor) from 2001-2005 (the scope of this book).

Ms. Rice also served as Special Assistant to the Director of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1986 and in Bush Senior's Administration as Director, then Senior Director of Soviet and East European Affairs in the National Security Council, and a Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from 1989-1991. (The White House, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, 2005)

Robert Mueller

Robert Mueller was sworn in on September 4, 2001, as Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Mr. Mueller graduated from Princeton University in 1966 and received a Master's degree in International Relations at New York University in 1967. In 1973, he received a law degree from the University of Virginia Law School, and served on the Law Review.

He then worked as a litigator in San Francisco and served for twelve years in the United States Attorney's Offices, before joining the United States Department of Justice in 1989 and taking charge of its Criminal Division. He became Acting Deputy Attorney General of the United States Department of Justice in 2001. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, Director Robert Mueller, 2005)

Richard Myers

General Richard B. Myers previously served as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff before becoming the fifteenth Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on October 1, 2001. He currently serves as the principal military advisor to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council.

General Myers was born in Kansas City, Missouri, and graduated from Kansas State University in 1965. (He also holds a Masters Degree in Business Administration from Auburn University.) (U.S. Defense Technical Information Center, General Richard Meyers, 2005).



Pervez Musharraf

Musharraf is head of government of Pakistan. As Chief of Staff of the Pakistani army, he led a bloodless military coup to overthrow Nawaz Sharif in 1999.

Tommy Franks

General Franks was Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Central Command from 2000-2003, and also was Commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Osama Bin Laden

Bin Laden is an Afghan-Sudanese (Saudi-born) businessman and terrorist leader. He was a supporter of mujahedeen resistance fighters against the Soviet-installed regime in Afghanistan. As leader of the Al Qaeda terrorist group, he is believed to be the instigator of the terrorist bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the attack on the U.S.S. Cole in 2000, and the devastating attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in 2001.

He was placed on the F.B.I.'s Ten Most Wanted list in 1999. His current whereabouts are unknown. (The Biographical Dictionary, 2005)

William Jefferson (Bill) Clinton

Forty-second President of the United States, he served from 1993-2001.

Dennis Hastert

United States Speaker of the House of Representatives, serving from 1999 to present.

Saddam (al-Tikriti) Hussein

Saddam was an Iraqi dictator and Baath politician. He joined the Baath Socialist Party in 1957. He was Acting Vice-President of Iraq from 1968-1969, before becoming Vice-President of Iraq in 1969. He was President of Iraq from 1979-2003.

Saddam declared war on Iran in 1980 and initiated the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Subsequently, he was defeated in the Gulf War and forced to withdraw from Kuwait in 1991.

He was defeated during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, and later found and arrested by Coalition forces. (The Biographical Dictionary, 2005)



Ahmad Chalabi

Leader of the Iraqi National Congress, a dissident Iraqi group with the goal of overthrowing Saddam Hussein.

Hamid Karzai

Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister in 1992-1994. He was provisional head of government of Afghanistan from 2001-2002 and became President of Afghanistan in 2002. (The Biographical Dictionary, 2005)

Richard Norman Perle

Chairman of U.S. Defense Policy Board from 2001-2003. He also was Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy from 1981-1987.

Paul Dundes Wolfowitz

Wolfowitz held positions as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs from 1982-1986, U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia from 1986-1989, and Under-Secretary of Defense for Policy from 1989-1993. He currently holds the position of Deputy Secretary of Defense.

George John Tenet

Director of the C.I.A. from 1997-2004.

Adnan Khashoggi

Notorious arms broker between U.S. firms and the Saudi government during the 1970s. In addition, Khashoggi was implicated during the Iran-Contra affair as a key middleman in the arms-for-hostages exchange.



Objects/Places

Guantanamo

U.S. military base/prison in Cuba. Site of first 'enemy combatant' detentions. Slang: "gitmo."

Geneva Convention

A set of standards for minimum treatment of prisoners of war.

C.I.A.

Central Intelligence Agency. Foreign intelligence-gathering arm of the United States government.

D.O.

C.I.A. Directorate of Operations. In charge of clandestine actions.

C.T.C.

Counter-Terrorism Center. C.I.A. think-tank to specifically combat terrorism. Not shown to be effective.

F.B.I.

Federal Bureau of Investigation. Domestic intelligence-gathering arm of the United States Government.

S.A.P.

Special Access Program.

Abu Ghraib

Notorious Iraqi prison later taken over and used by Americans.



Baghdad

Capital city of Iraq.

CENTCOM

U.S. Central Command.

Northern Alliance

Group of anti-Taliban fighters in Afghanistan used by the United States to seize Afghanistan in 2001.

Taliban

Afghanistan-based religious leadership. Were deposed by the United States (via the Northern Alliance) in 2001.

I.N.C.

Iraqi National Congress. Dissident Iraqi group with the purpose of overthrowing Saddam Hussein and returning to Iraq. Led by Ahmad Chalabi.

N.S.C.

National Security Council.

Axis of Evil

Term that President George Bush used to describe terrorist-backing nations such as Iraq, Iran and North Korea.

Iran-Contra

Reagan Administration secret operation where arms were sold to Iran (while at war to Iraq), with the proceeds going to Contra rebels to overthrow Sandinista communist rebels.

Niger

African country where Iraq allegedly attempted to buy uranium for its nuclear program.



Uranium

Raw material used in the production of atomic (nuclear) weapons.

SISMI

Italian Intelligence Agency

MI6

British Intelligence Agency

TPFDL

Time-based forces deployment list. A Pentagon war-planning document used to inventory services needed for a given battle scenario.

Pandora's Box

Term for a box of troubles that can't easily be closed once opened. Based on a Greek fable.

Actionable intelligence

Term for the minimum amount of information needed before action can be taken.

MAD

Mutually assured destruction. When one attacks one's enemies to destroy them, knowing that the enemy will also destroy them in return. Pertained to the nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Baath Party

Iraqi religious/political party of Saddam Hussein.

I.S.I.

Pakistani Intelligence Agency. Rumored to have many members loyal to the Taliban.

I.A.E.A.



International Atomic Energy Agency. Organization charged with monitoring nuclear capabilities throughout the world.

Hindu Kush

Remote area of Pakistan where elements of the Taliban and Al Qaeda (including Osama Bin Laden) supposedly went into hiding.



Themes

Chain of Command

Working in a chain of command means you take responsibility for your actions and you expect your superior to take responsibility for his. There is accountability at all levels. Mistakes caused by lack of direction by a commander should be reason to question the ability of the commander, not the subordinate. Harry Truman used the phrase "the buck stops here" to describe his ultimate responsibility as President. Issues arise when commanders of low ethics ask subordinates to assume blame when given no proper direction.

In this book, the break in the chain of command occurred regarding the interrogation systems at both Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib prisons. Chapter 1 delved into the issues of how detainee abuse occurred at both locations (and how the Abu Ghraib system was modeled after Guantanamo, even after problems were known). Nothing was done to fix the problem and, after the scandal broke, no one would take responsibility for what had occurred. This was a classic example of a breakdown in the chain of command.

Another issue in the chain of command deals with intelligence gathering. The time-honored method was to have incoming (that is, raw) and therefore questionable intelligence verified at several levels before being taken as factual and passed up to higher levels of authority. Although somewhat time-consuming, this acted as a safeguard so that bad information did not get used by high-level officials. Members of the Bush Administration circumvented this process in order to use unverified information that fit their agenda. These actions culminated in the fraudulent Iraq-Niger connection being cited in President Bush's State of the Union Address as a reason to overthrow Saddam. Chapter 5 documented this event from start to finish.

Ethics, Rivalries, and Corruption

Working for the government supposedly involves a 'public trust,' where you work for the greatest good for all—particularly since you are working with other people's money. Lack of oversight and the sheer amount of power and money involved make it very tempting to use this to one's advantage. Richard Perle was cited as the main example of an individual violating public trust with several conflicts of interest, in Chapter 4, Part Three.

Rivalries between departments, each trying to justify their existence, can overshadow the real purpose of a division of government—like national security. Sometimes; especially at the federal level, petty rivalries can result in not sharing information and can have drastic consequences (like September 11)

Throughout the book, there were examples of rivalries that got in the way of unbiased decision-making: Rumsfeld / C.I.A., Pentagon / White House, F.B.I / C.I.A.



Political Orthodoxy

Individuals and groups working in the government generally have political views in which they strongly believe. These views (conservative, liberal, hawkish, progressive, etc.) occasionally are so strong as to make these individuals blind to other points of view, even when they make more sense. Like-minded groups of people tend to cluster together, sometimes resulting in a group with little difference in opinion and therefore difficulty in objectively analyzing information.

Hersh makes the claim that a small group of individuals, motivated by their political beliefs, were directly responsible for driving the nation's policy towards a war in Iraq. His specific targets are Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz. Personalities like Donald Rumsfeld were also used to show how orthodoxy could cause one to doubt time-honored methods of doing business (like using military advice when it was needed).

Mutually Assured Destruction

The policy of MAD evolved from the nuclear stalemate that existed between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Both countries had enough nuclear weapons pointed at each other to destroy each other many times over. The thought was that any country trying to attack the other would assure the destruction of both, and therefore it was an incentive not to fight.

The positive side of MAD (as mentioned in Chapter 7, Part 2) was that it had always been relied on to show that rational people with the power to initiate a nuclear war would not do so because they (and their families) would also die as a result. This seemed to work with the large military establishments of the United States and the Soviets. However, the idea that a radical fundamentalist group (or individual) could obtain a nuclear weapon undercuts the MAD argument. Why would an individual who was willing to die in a suicide bombing worry about aftereffects? Also, if a rogue group detonated a suitcase bomb in New York City, who would the United States attack?

Style

Point of View

Hersh's *Chain of Command* is told in the second person. As a left-leaning investigative journalist, Hersh analyses and then rips into the Bush Administration's policies, propaganda and aftereffects of the War on Terror. Although some would say Hersh is ideological, he documents his sources well in making his points. He uses facts, figures, and interviews to assail many popular Bush Administration decisions.

Setting

The main setting of the story is with members of the Bush Administration in Washington, D.C. It also specifically follows world events in Cuba, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Niger, and Libya.

Language and Meaning

The world of U.S. and world politics is examined, where sound bites, speeches and press releases must be analyzed for what they really mean by examining the actions that follow. The subject of 'spin' is delved into as the Administration puts a positive spin on their actions on the War on Terror, which do not necessarily reflect reality. Statements from politicians range from exaggerations and omissions to outright deception.

Structure

Chain of Command is divided into an introduction, eight chapters, and an epilogue. The book also has an excellent index. The introduction describes the life of the author, Seymour Hersh. Chapter 1 starts out with abuses at Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib, and then details administration attempts to downplay the abuses. Chapter 4 documents the early Iraq war preparation (and the lack thereof). The disputes between the White House and the Pentagon grow more heated, and the Administration tries to make the media case for war in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6, the Iraq war commences and quickly turns from conventional to an insurgent situation. Chapter 7 details the unsteady U.S / Pakistan alliance and also examines the issue of nuclear proliferation. Chapter 8 summarizes the aftereffects of the war in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran and Israel/Turkey.

Quotes

"These guys were not superhuman, but they were playing in a system that was more inept than they were." Chapter 2, pg. 101

"The last thing we want to do is hit Baghdad and have Al Qaeda hit Chicago. We'd look real bad." Chapter 4, pg. 184

"There was considerable skepticism throughout the intelligence community about the reliability of Chalabi's sources, but the defector reports were coming all the time. Knock one down and another comes along. Meanwhile, the garbage was being shoved straight to the President." Chapter 5, pg. 217/8

"They always had information to back up their public claims, but it was often very bad information. They were forcing the intelligence community to defend its good information and good analysis so aggressively that the intelligence analysts didn't have the time or the energy to go after the bad information." Chapter 5, pg. 224

"There are five hundred guys out there you have to kill. There's no way to sugarcoat it—you just have to kill them. And you can't always be 100 percent sure of the intelligence. Sometimes you have to settle for 95 percent." Chapter 6, pg. 272

"We've got this large conventional force sitting there and getting their ass shot off, and what we're doing is counterproductive. We're sending mixed signals. We've got no intelligence, and we're too squeamish to operate in this part of the world." Chapter 6, pg. 275

"It's technically not assassination—it's normal combat operations." Chapter 6, pg. 285

"Our fear was, first, that a Third World country would develop nuclear weapons indigenously; and, second, that it would then provide the technology to other countries. This is profound. It changes the world." Chapter 7, pg. 306



Topics for Discussion

Explain reasons for why questionable intelligence reports (such as the Niger-Iraq uranium connection) were able to reach President Bush.

How did the Bush Administration's decision to pursue a war with Iraq change the direction of the War on Terror and the world's perception of the United States?

Explain moral and ethical considerations as they relate to a possible policy of "legal" political assassination.

Did Richard Perle have a conflict of interest while working for the government and heading a related company on the side? Explain your answer.

Describe the relationship between the nations of Pakistan and India.

What caused the C.I.A. to decline in power throughout the 1990s?

Why was Donald Rumsfeld compared to Robert McNamara?

What is the purpose of the I.A.E.A.? Is it an American organization?