

# **Plan of Attack Study Guide**

## **Plan of Attack by Bob Woodward**

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# Plot Summary

Plan of Attack examines the 18 months of planning and rhetoric that went into Operation Iraqi Freedom, launched March 19-20 in 2003. Inconclusive data on Saddam Hussein's possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and intention to put them at the disposal of the al-Qaeda terrorist network are used by the Bush Administration to justify the war. They claim that the initiative is their last alternative in removing a Hitler- or Stalin-like menace from the world.

Eleven months into his presidency, George W. Bush orders his Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, to prepare for war with Iraq as phase 2 in his worldwide war on terrorism. Rumsfeld tasks General Tommy Franks, with radically rethinking the existing war plan, essentially unchanged since the 1991 Gulf War, successfully prosecuted by Bush's father, President George H. W. Bush and a U.N.-sanctioned coalition. Removing the unstable and sadistic Saddam Hussein had not been an objective in the earlier conflict, but now is the sole objective.

Rumsfeld's team works feverishly, steadily refining the plan, shortening the length of preparation required and the size of the ground forces involved. The planning is successfully kept quiet, and as the media catch wind of unusual activity in the Pentagon, Bush dodges questions, claiming (truthfully but dishonestly) he has no plan on his desk. Bush wants Saddam out, but is more cautious than his hawkish and persuasive Vice President, Dick Cheney, who serves as Secretary of Defense during the 1991 war. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, who serves as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Gulf War and prepares the war plan, pleads that war be truly a last resort, but not be under-planned, under-manned, or in any way vulnerable if undertaken. Lacking the personal rapport with Bush that the hard-liners enjoy, Powell is at a disadvantage.

As Tim leads a team of CIA operatives in northern Iraq, Bush's war cabinet searches for a *casus belli*, a reason for attacking Iraq that the world community will accept. Saddam is unpopular and feared even in the Muslim world, having massacred minority Kurds and Shiites in Iraq and thumbed his nose at the U.N. by expelling inspectors who verified that he destroyed all weapons of mass destruction (WMD) developed and used in the past. Cheney mentally links Saddam's WMD capability with al-Qaeda's track record for terrorism, and, despite the CIA's evidence, turns it into a fact. Bush buys into the syllogism and elevates his rhetoric, proclaiming an "Axis of Evil" exists among Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. Congress, as it had in 1991, authorizes use of force against Iraq and Bush's conservative base demands swift action. Propriety and international pressure demand the U.S. make an effort at finding a diplomatic solution, however, and Powell is tasked with presenting the case before the Security Council, resulting in Resolution 1441. The two-stage process begins with the return of U.N. inspectors to Iraq to determine if Saddam has complied with previous demands. If he hasn't, there must be debate with the U.N.'s response. Cheney is chagrined and Bush's patience wears out. Tim, meanwhile, has succeeded in penetrating Saddam's security and military organizations, allowing Franks' final plan to be swifter and more effective.



With limited international support (Britain, Australia, Spain, Poland, Bulgaria, and - covertly, Saudi Arabia) and massive opposition (France, Germany, and Russia), Bush gives Saddam an ultimatum to leave Iraq or face war. Tim's resources pinpoint Saddam's location and Bush orders an air strike to decapitate the regime, moving the launch of war up. Saddam survives the attack, but the campaign advances swiftly with Iraqi forces melting away, and he is eventually captured. No WMD are found in Iraq and the postwar insurgency is far more determined than expected. As the reasons for going to war are questioned, Bush "circles the wagons" to prevent the truth from ruining his chances of re-election in 2004.



# Prologue

## Prologue Summary and Analysis

Pres. George W. Bush takes aside Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld on November 21, 2001, 72 days after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and 11 months in office, and tells him to start planning in strict secrecy how to remove Saddam Hussein. On the heels of his invasion of Afghanistan, word of war planning in Iraq will ignite a firestorm. Bush has mentioned this task to National Security Adviser (NSA), Condoleeza Rice, and (probably) Vice President Cheney, who is obsessed with Saddam and Osama bin Laden. The CIA is developing covert contacts in Afghanistan and U.S. Special Operation Forces (SOF) commando teams are directing successful precision bombing. Rumsfeld orders General Tommy Franks to deliver a "commander's estimate" on Iraq within a week. Franks learns the Pentagon is reviewing the massive Iraq war plan through Major General Renuart, his Director of Operations, and cannot believe they would do this while already at war.

Woodward establishes in the Prologue the personalities of and relationships among the major players in preparing the Iraq War. The U.S. military is over-extended in Afghanistan, and the Department of Defense is in new hands, anxious to sweep away predecessors' perceived passivity. Power, obsession, secrecy, and the tug between war and diplomacy are established as the themes of this book.



# Chapter 1

## Chapter 1 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 1 shows a rocky transition to power and immediate, doctrinaire divisions in Bush's inner circle. Clinton officials brief incoming officials on enforcing no-flight zones in Iraq, the 1998 congressional mandate to effect a regime change, and the CIA's identification of three primary threats. These include bin Laden's al-Qaeda network operating out of Afghanistan, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD,) and the rise of the Chinese military. Iraq is scarcely mentioned. Nevertheless, on February 5, 2001, Rice, chairing the Principals Committee (the vice-president, secretaries of State and Defense, and Director of the CIA), focuses on Iraq, particularly the purpose, cost, risks, and benefits of the no-fly zones, because Bush is concerned about downed pilots. Rumsfeld tangles heatedly with Secretary of State Powell about U.N. sanctions on "dual-use" items Powell knows the French and Russians want reconsidered. These are the first shots in a war of words that runs through the rest of the book. Rumsfeld, who had hoped to head the CIA, returns to Defense, which he headed under President Ford. He demands the chain of command be strictly observed and is working on guidelines for determining when military action is necessary, achievable, and worthwhile. Notably in view of what follows, Rumsfeld claims arguments of convenience should be avoided and everything should be done with brutal honesty.

The second-tier Deputies Committee, chaired by workaholic Stephen J. Hadley, discusses support for opposition groups, including the controversial Ahmed Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress (INC) in exile. Rumsfeld's second, Wolfowitz, and Powell's, Armitage, debate how far and how fast to move. No one knows if Saddam might attack the Kurds, Shiites, Israel, Saudi Arabia, or Kuwait. Wolfowitz advocates an "enclave strategy" of capturing the southern oil fields and supporting the opposition, which Powell feels is absurd. He warns Bush about being pushed into anything "easy." The sharpening tensions in the cabinet are clear to Rice, Bush's closest confidant, always available and trained in foreign affairs.



# Chapter 2

## Chapter 2 Summary and Analysis

The September 11, 2001, attacks define the Bush presidency as Pearl Harbor had FDR's. The CIA's Tenet warns Bush about al-Qaeda before 9/11, but, seeing no urgency, Bush concentrates on cutting taxes. Rumsfeld suspects Saddam is in cahoots with bin Laden and suggests using this as an "opportunity" to attack Iraq. Cheney has doubts, and Powell sees "bait-and-switch" wrecking international unity. White House Chief of Staff Card opposes targeting Iraq, Tenet recommends going after Afghanistan, and Wolfowitz sees no need to bog down troops in the mountains when Iraq offers a "brittle" target. Bush authorizes CIA and military operations against terrorists worldwide, with Afghanistan the primary target. Cheney, who has special sway on Bush, assesses the intelligence agencies and examines worst-case scenarios. Sees Clinton's response to the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing, the 1998 East Africa embassy bombings, and the 2000 attack on the U.S.S. *Cole* as weak, Cheney rejects a "smoking gun" standard of proof and insists the U.S. go on the offensive against terrorists. Chapter 2 serves primarily to sketch Cheney as the hard-line conservative pushing for an Iraq war.





# Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 Summary and Analysis

Already burdened with Afghanistan operations, Franks and Renuart comply with Rumsfeld's orders, recognizing his method is to question and reassess continually. Rumsfeld wants to be able to defeat enemies swiftly as a true deterrent. Terrorism, particularly after 9/11, is too slippery to defend against. It must be preempted. All U.S. war plans must be compressed and rethought from basic assumptions rather than merely being tweaked. Rumsfeld can accept the elevated risk of going in with less force if the trade-off in time seems advantageous. He rejects the idea it must be either world peace or World War III.

As Bush makes headlines in demanding that Iraq re-admit U.N. inspectors, Rumsfeld flies to Tampa, Florida to examine massive Op. Plan 1003. Finding it lacks information on current Iraqi troop strengths or deployment, and re-fights the 1990 invasion rather than swiftly toppling Saddam, Rumsfeld gives Franks 30 days (quickly shortened to three) to think outside the box and present a rough-cut plan on removing Saddam, eliminating any WMD threat, and choking support for terrorism. Meanwhile, Armitage denies to the *New York Times* the State Department is dovish and backs Bush's resolve to remove Saddam's threat. He hopes the article will squelch allegations against Powell, while enabling them behind to keep the international coalition intact.

On December 4, Franks and Renuart report cutting 100,000 troops and a month from the plan, point out problems with further tinkering, and question linking al-Qaeda and the Iraqi regime. Disappointed, Rumsfeld wants Franks to take into account the latest high-tech weaponry and the possibility they will have to move swiftly. Franks has available 500 combat troops in Kuwait, equipment to support 1,000 more, 100 land-based and 100 carrier-based planes. Rumsfeld gives him eight days to determine Saddam's current military situation and present a more robust plan, including a budget, launchable by April/May. Bush wants any escalation of the U.S. presence in the region invisible to the world but worrisome to Saddam. Renuart pushes himself to comply, but the third version, presented on December 19, still crumbles under Rumsfeld's probing and pushing. Chapter 3 has deepened the picture of Rumsfeld's mindset and method of working.



# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 4 introduces a false story that Bush will use to sell his war plans and another key figure in the ongoing drama. When British intelligence informs the U.S. about covert efforts to prevent Pakistani nuclear technology from getting in terrorist hands, and the CIA finds indications al-Qaeda wants a crude "dirty bomb" as a "deterrent," Bush sends Tenet to demand the Pakistanis eliminate the threat, but as Tenet flies home, foreign intelligence services buzz with rumors of fissible materials on the loose. Meanwhile, a dignified man with the improbable nickname, "Scooter," works to advance Cheney's agenda. With access to NSC and principals meetings, Libby has a unique big-picture perspective, but is uncomfortable seeing his name in the papers. He confronts Armitage about the *Times* leak and reads in Bush's body language - even before Cheney does - that he has decided to depose Saddam.

# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary and Analysis

On his Crawford, TX, ranch, Bush reads *Theodore Rex*, and finds Roosevelt's "big stick" diplomacy inspiring. On December 28, Bush's top-secret reports include an item resembling al-Qaeda messages just before 9/11. Franks and Renuart are present and the principals linked by video feeds. Franks summarizes success in Afghanistan and then turns to Iraq, outlining his and Rumsfeld's latest thinking on staging a preemptive strike by 400,000 troops requiring a six-month lead. Franks combines seven "lines of operations" with nine "slices" of Iraqi vulnerability to create an action matrix, and uses the "starburst" graphics Bush likes to show useable intersections. The solution is deemed "Robust," if Iraq's four neighbors, the Gulf States, and the British cooperate. It is considered "Reduced," if only the U.K. Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman sign on. It's dubbed "Unilateral," if the U.S. fights alone. Franks needs millions to create a command and control center in Qatar, and lists a dozen tasks to be undertaken prudently and incrementally once Bush gives the go-ahead. This puts the President and NSC on notice the military has expectations and demands. Bush orders Powell and Rumsfeld to develop a strategy for approaching foreign leaders. Rice worries about Saddam making a last stand in Baghdad and Cheney is concerned by use of WMD on the battlefield or elsewhere. Franks ensures them the evolving plan is on top of this. When Bush and Franks face reporters, no one asks about Iraq, and the generals leave, pleased Bush understands the complexity and time constraints. Bush later recalls Franks confirming the war is "absolutely" winnable. They are not yet close to being ready to execute, but clearly, 1) Saddam is a threat, and 2) Bush has an option.

# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary and Analysis

Success in Afghanistan increases CIA Director Tenet's standing with Bush. The only Clinton holdover, Tenet has risen through the ranks. High-strung and focused, he takes time to forge and nourish personal relationships, and bonds well with Bush, whom he briefs at 8 AM most days. Even before 9/11, Tenet sees Iraq's importance to Bush and takes pains to find the right person for Chief, Iraq Operations Group (IOG). Saul (a pseudonym) asks for the job, when he hears no one wants to head the "House of Broken Toys." When the NSC asks how the CIA sees Iraq, Saul "scrubs" (reviews) data since 1991 and finds a tragicomic catalog of too-little-too-late.

Iraq is a Cold War pawn until 1972 when Saddam signs a Friendship Treaty with the Soviets and President Nixon sets up covert operations among the 25 million Kurds spread across the borderlands of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Turkey, and the Soviet Union. Iraqi Kurds receive \$5 million for supplies and weapons, supplemented by Israel, Britain, and Iran. Kissinger views Iraq as financing terrorism and blocking an Arab-Israeli peace. During the Iran-Iraq War, the Kurds tie down Iraqi forces, but afterwards, when the CIA halts arms shipments, Saddam slaughters many Kurds. After the 1991 Gulf War, the U.S. declines to support rebellions and another slaughter results. Clinton's CIA dabbles in covert operations, but Congress in 1998 refuses a bolder plan and diverts funds to Iraqi expatriates. Saul determines Saddam cannot be easily gotten to through his security ring of Special Security Organization (SSO), Presidential Guard, Special Republic Guard, four intelligence services, and dozens of army divisions. Saul considers U.N. economic sanctions and diplomacy "bullshit," and supports an all-out military invasion, with the CIA taking the lead as it had in Afghanistan. After 9/11, with Iraq in the back seat, Saul tells Cheney bluntly Saddam cannot be removed by covert action or coup, the CIA has a "credibility problem," and only serious invasion plans will restore credibility. Cheney is sobered by the briefing, which is given next to Bush, whose body language suggests he understands. Powell sees a lack of CIA assets in Iraq will play into the hands of those wanting to go to war.

Chapter 6 gives perspective on U.S.-Iraq relations and lays out the strategic difficulties of removing Saddam from power. Two characters central to the remainder of the book are introduced in some detail. Woodward suggests U.S. responsibility for creating the situation, more directly than he addresses the U.S. arming of the *mujahaddin* in Afghanistan. Under Saul, the IOG ones up to past failures in ways the government at large will not when the aftermath of the Iraq War go bad, as Woodward discusses in the Epilogue.

# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary and Analysis

After Crawford, Rumsfeld ask Franks a host of questions that overwhelm his staff. Rumsfeld's "iterative planning" is never complete, and Franks core of 15 senior advisors ringed by a group of brainy middle to upper-rank officers adapt to the secretary's style. "Targetters" are tasked with giving answers on what to hit, while the others are ordered to determine how to leverage assets to proceed with half the planned force in half the planned time. No one yet knows the impact of information gathering and propaganda. Franks segregates the various lines of operation so only he and a few others understand the overall state of the plan.

Powell is troubled by what he hears. He remembers how generals in Vietnam would tell the politicians what they wanted to hear. He recalls Robert E. Lee's saying of, "It is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it." The Administration is treating war as an antiseptic game, because Bush and Rumsfeld have served in the military but never seen combat, and Cheney, Rice, and Tenet have not served. Only Powell has fought. While chairing the JCS, he formulates the "Powell Doctrine," which holds the military should use decisive force to achieve political objectives. He accepts the caricature of "Reluctant Warrior," because he sees too much willingness to pull the trigger without determining war is the only option and gaining support from Congress and the people. Powell and Bush are not comfortable together, and the White House has sanctioned - the week before 9/11 - a *Time* magazine cover story suggesting he is out of step with administration hard-liners. With Bush focused on domestic and tax matters, foreign policy is directionless. Watching Bush during the Crawford briefing, Powell is concerned at his failure to probe and takes the risk of voicing his concerns about downsizing Op. Plan 1003 to Franks, whom he does not know. Realism is the strength of any military plan, Powell states, and advises Franks to keep the force as small as practical - but not gut it to 105,000. Franks makes clear he does not intend to lose a war.

Franks' fourth version, presented on January 17, 2002, asserts economic sanctions have slowed the Iraqis from modernizing their army and diluted their defensive capability. Iraqis support Saddam, only because they perceive the U.S. will not help oust him, and the CIA agrees the U.S. military will have to topple Saddam. These factors allow Franks to compress the timeline significantly to 45 days of preparation, 45 days of air operations, 90 days of ground operations, and up to 130 days of regime replacement, using 245,000 troops. Franks want to run war games to test feasibility and coordinate with the State Department, CIA, and others. Rumsfeld asks Franks to brief Bush in three weeks. Wolfowitz believes Saddam's regime can be fractured before ground operations, but Franks and his planners do not see bombing doing something it has earlier failed to achieve. Rumsfeld worries about the likely decline in international support and wants other countries to contribute. Franks suggests second front from Turkey, but Rumsfeld cautions him to concentrate on the south. Franks says 105,000



troops can be ready by mid-February. He returns to Tampa, to work on camouflaging the deployment of divisions, aircraft carriers, and other elements of war, using "spikes" - moving more than needed to catch media attention, and then backing off to make it look like all is normal. Spikes also play with Saddam's head. Southern Watch will become so "kinetic" the Iraqis will "cry wolf."

Chapter 7 introduces the theme of gung-ho civilians going to war without realizing its horrors. Woodward will return to the significance of principals' lack of combat experience later, and the conflict between the experienced "Reluctant Warrior" and doctrinaire hawks will mount steadily.



# Chapter 8

## Chapter 8 Summary and Analysis

Presidential speechwriter Michael Gerson works on the State of the Union speech, believing 9/11 gives Bush an opportunity to tell people times have changed and terrorism will be a threat for 50 years. Bush wants an ambitious speech. Gerson spends enough time with him to gauge his outlook and mood. Gerson has an ear for memorable phrases, keen intellect, and drive. Like Bush, Gerson calls himself an evangelical Christian and "compassionate conservative," and readily includes religious materials in speeches. Conservative author David Frum suggests linking Saddam and 9/11 as an "axis of hatred," evoking World War II. Gerson changes it to "Axis of Evil," a sinister suggestion of the world on the road to Armageddon. It also evokes Reagan's "Evil Empire," which set up the final chapter of the Cold War. Rice finds the phrase clever, but fears singling out Iraq will amount to a declaration of war. Including North Korea and Iran in the axis will mitigate this. Bush figures Iranian students will welcome having their leaders challenged by an honest U.S. President. The U.S. is now *the* beacon of freedom in the world, Bush believes, and he is responsible for protecting U.S. citizens and promoting freedom abroad. That, he tells Woodward, is the essence of his presidency. Freedom is God's gift to humankind, and the U.S. must spread it, militarily if necessarily. Bush is baffled people can hate the U.S. and launch terrorist attacks, because no President before him has been so positive about the Muslim world. Libby wants Syria included in the axis, but Rice and Hadley veto it and struggle for language to differentiate Iran and Iraq and reach out to Iranian reformers. Cocky presidential advisor Karl Rove finds "axis of evil" a signature phrase Bush will bequeath to his successor in 2009. War will complicate getting Bush re-elected, but Rove believes strong leadership always prevails. Powell too finds the phrase clever, a la Kennedy's "*Ich bin ein Berliner*," but worries the speech is too bleak, lacking Reagan's optimism. Gerson adds some uplifting paragraphs near the end. Years later, Rumsfeld claims to have been out of the loop reviewing drafts, particularly when they concern diplomacy.

Some 59 million Americans watch Bush's January 29, 2002, address. That's the most since the height of the Lewinsky scandal. Bush devotes one sentence each to North Korea and Iran and five to Iraq before joining them as a dangerous Axis of Evil. Bush pledges not to wait to be attacked. Bush speaks optimistically about standing firm for "nonnegotiable demands of human dignity," and ends, declaring freedom has a price, which America will pay and see freedom's victory. Rice is sure headlines about the 48-minute speech will concentrate on the unprecedented attention given to the Middle East. Instead, the media seize on "Axis of Evil" and its many possible interpretations. Some take the World War II illusion too literally, and Gerson feels responsible for lack of clarity. Others see an international conspiracy not previously known, or a target list. Tenet reads little in, but perceives a shift in focus. Wolfowitz is surprised and believes Bush has created an unlikely but powerful metaphor. Graphic, biblical, and short enough to fit sound bites, it grabs headlines. Dan Bartlett, White House Communications Director, is delighted. Powell is surprised by the intense focus on the line, which is



already ringing alarm bells worldwide, and warns his staff not to discuss or debate the President's words, which are policy. All three countries issue denials and Bush send Rice out to reiterate the policy the U.S. will deny WMD to the world's dangerous powers.

Chapter 9 traces the evolution of one of Bush's most famous utterances and suggests neither he nor his top advisors foresee its impact. Woodward includes verbatim from a later interview with Bush that shows him struggling to grasp what he is saying, happily injecting religion into the equation while denouncing theocracy overseas, and wondering why Middle Easterners might not be eager to receive the gifts of American values he wants to impose on them as God's gift. The unwillingness to reassess is growing in Bush and his most doctrinaire lieutenants.





# Chapter 9

## Chapter 9 Summary and Analysis

On February 1, Franks delivers "Generated Start Plan," meaning the full force would be generated in the region before fighting starts. The timeline is halved. Rumsfeld wants air and ground assaults to be nearly simultaneous and the initial buildup compressed for a "running start." They discuss "what-ifs" like Scud missile launches at Israel if Saddam detects SOF commandos in the western desert. Rumsfeld and Franks talk daily by secure line, the Secretary peppering him with questions and raising the bar of expectation. "Rumsfeld is like a dentist's drill that never ceased." On February 7, Franks gives Bush and the NSC an actionable plan, "90-45-90." Using the stoplight graphics Bush enjoys, Franks charts "Timings" of when month-by-month events can and should proceed on four levels. These include strategic issues, which Rumsfeld and Powell must address, and Franks' direct concerns for another aircraft carrier, repositioning equipment, and moving his headquarters. It also considers the Iraqi military's traditional training cycles, and weather conditions and normal visibility. After discussing how various factors will impact timing, Franks targets November 2002 through February 2003, but insists he will launch anytime the President orders. Trying to go earlier will be "ugly," take longer and involve more casualties. Going later will invite weather problems. When Rumsfeld suggests they are working on another scenario in which a massive blow fractures the regime quickly, the team gasps. Without acknowledging the source, Franks repeats Powell's position one must go in with a large enough force to handle the unanticipated. Franks also points to the work needed to gather a coalition and plan for stabilizing Iraq. "Phase Zero," lasting 1-3 months, prepares ports, airfields, and supplies, and tweaks Saddam through many spikes. Bush is concerned about Saddam finding a *casus belli* (Latin: "occasion of war") that will demand a U.S. response. Rumsfeld's mention of "shock and awe" to trigger regime change amuses Bush, who is unaware of the military doctrine.

Powell is happy no one had seems trigger-happy, and appearing before the Senate Budget Committee on February 12, says Bush "*has no plan on his desk* right now to begin a war with any nation." Next day, Bush tells the press he reserves his options and will play close to his vest. He will later abandon this caution. Cheney thinks the war plan takes too long to unfold, giving Saddam time to maneuver. Card realizes the generals will picture themselves as Patton in the Iraqi desert. Card has discussed with Bush war and peace parties and his sole responsibility for sending troops into harm's way. He relates watching the elder Bush agonize over Operation Just Cause in 1989, and hearing him acknowledges command is lonely.



# Chapter 10

## Chapter 10 Summary and Analysis

Iraq is in Saul's hands. CIA sources there are limited and peripheral, with few Iraqis willing to spy for even \$5,000-\$10,000 a month when detection means torture for the entire family. On February 16, Bush authorizes the CIA to support the Iraqi opposition, conduct sabotage, coordinate intelligence gathering with third countries, disseminate both information and disinformation, and disrupt financial and WMD operations. Many volunteer, and the first survey team is inserted February 20 to prepare the way for paramilitary teams, the Northern Iraq Liaison Elements (NILE), which will prove pivotal in infiltrating Saddam's most strategic resources.

On February 28, Franks presents data on 4,000 possible targets, a leap forward from abstract planning. Rumsfeld is pleased with the large number, and prioritizes those that most cripple Saddam - command and control, communications, leadership nodes, and crack military units. Franks recommends someone in the White House coordinate all public statements. On March 6, Franks briefs Cheney on what clandestine help is needed from each country on his upcoming Middle East tour. Muslim countries will publicly oppose war but privately want Saddam deposed. Cheney tells the crew of the U.S.S. *John C. Stennis* they are preventing the forces of terror from gaining the "tools of genocide." The trip awakens him to regional concerns about solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but he believes Arafat must go. When they face reporters on March 21, Cheney sticks to his cover story, but Bush declares history has called the U.S. to fight terrorism, and Cheney has assured leaders he is not posturing or listening to polls. That day, Franks gathers his component commanders to tell them unless Saddam and his family leave, Bush is going to war, and outlines the fast, compact 90-45-90 plan. On March 23, the JCS run a tabletop drill to assess plan feasibility, including impact on transportation, Korea, the war on terror, and homeland security. Saul briefs Franks, who claims not to be worried, having served during the Gulf War, but he tells his commanders "this is fucking serious." Chapter 10 shows the planning gain urgency, with Bush and Cheney disoriented not only militarily, but also in terms of Middle Eastern politics. Note the administration's need to find and demonize individuals, like bin Laden, Saddam, and now Arafat. The list will expand.



# Chapter 11

## Chapter 11 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 11 shows the plan developing, Bush beginning to swagger and deceive, and Powell conflicted as a former commanding general. His problems will deepen as diplomacy to head off war heats up. Deception begins in March, when Tenet meets two Kurdish leaders to assure them the U.S. will not let them down again. Franks, meanwhile, briefs the JCS, whose turf wars in Afghanistan he has criticized, and answers questions about troop refreshment and rotation, protection against WMD, logistics of supply, Iraqi and Israeli responses, and taking Baghdad. British Prime Minister Tony Blair visits Crawford April 6-7, and tells the press Saddam must go. Bush bristles when "clever reporters" try to put words in his mouth and escapes without revealing his role in war planning that is technically not on his desk, saying only Saddam will not "blackmail the world" and, when asked what he will do about it, replies, "Wait and see."

Franks updates Rumsfeld on April 11 about specific preparations that can be taken without attracting attention. Rumsfeld suggests they get other countries to foot some of the \$300-\$400 million bill and think more about a Saddam provocation. On April 20, Franks assures Bush the plan is being tested by war games, and takes the "presidential hint" to do this right and quickly. Bush promises anything Franks needs, but reiterates the warning about staying too long (Cheney's advice). Bush later recalls using hints to avoid micromanaging war plans.

On April 24, Franks gives major commanders the go-ahead to spend, with Rumsfeld's blessing, and on May 9 asks them to develop plans for a northern front. Next day, Franks meets with Rumsfeld, who fears the "unknown unknowns." The routine overflights of "Blue Plan" can launch 200 aircraft in 4-6 hours to buy time. "White Level" adds 450 within 7 days, and "Red Plan" tops out at 750-800 within two weeks. Later, when Franks briefs the NSC, Rice wants to lessen the vulnerability of time and Powell questions international support and dependence on a single Kuwaiti seaport. On May 11, Franks goes to Camp David to present the plan as five fronts. These include the Western, neutralizing Scuds, the Southern or main Army/Marine avenue, and "information operations." There is also Baghdad, and the Northern, Turks permitting. Against them stand 13 divisions in the north, 5 in the south, plus Republican Guards and Special Republican Guards around Baghdad.



# Chapter 12

## Chapter 12 Summary and Analysis

On May 11, Bush dismisses Rove's concern about a *New York Times* story on Rove's growing involvement in foreign policy decisions. Powell has dared encroach on Rove's perquisites and questioned his assertion the war in Afghanistan should benefit Bush politically. Rumsfeld favors "hot preemption," which makes Powell nervous. Meanwhile, in Europe for meetings with German Chancellor Schroeder and French President Chirac, Bush claims he has no war plans on his desk. Franks tells the press, misleadingly, his boss has not asked for a war plan. Pentagon reporters know something is afoot and the *New York Times* headlines "U.S. Envisions Blueprint on Iraq Including Big Invasion Next Year. Staying below press radar, Franks gets Op. Plan 1003 to where it can be considered "official," while still juggling force levels.

On June 1, Gerson accompanies Bush to West Point for an important speech continuing the Axis of Evil theme. The war on terrorism becomes offensive, with aggressive language bookending calls for democracy, free markets, and women's rights. As the *Washington Post* warns about unilaterally invading nations to topple regimes, Rumsfeld orders plans for the "Liberation of Baghdad" and postwar stability operations. On June 3, Franks presents "Running Start," using Blue/White/Red air strikes to bridge the movement of ground forces and the taking of Baghdad "from the inside out." On June 19, Franks promises Bush the big war plan can start in 90 days and win, and more flexible "what-if" approaches have been developed. The minimum for invading Iraq is 50,000, but 100,000 can be there in 2-3 weeks. Bush is noncommittal. When Franks meets his commanders June 27-28, Running Start is the plan. Afghanistan provides cover for covert preparations and some funding through "reprogramming." On Jul. 28-29, newspapers reveal details of Iraqi war planning, which Bush denies, and tells his cabinet level-four people are talking about things they do not know. The U.S. is serious about regime change in Iraq, but there are no plans on his desk. A *casus belli* exists, preemption applies, and success means removing Saddam. Rice says media leaks are confusing Saddam. Chapter 12 shows confusion is a general administration goal.



# Chapter 13

## Chapter 13 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 13 provides an *Animal House cum* James Bond interlude. Emboldened by Afghanistan and authorized by the President, Tenet sends two small paramilitary teams into mountainous northern Iraq, knowing they face danger from Turks, Kurds, and Saddam. Tenet has \$189 million to spend and Bush does not penalize mistakes. In July, "Tim" (security nickname) leads a team of seven from Turkey to Sulaymaniyah, halfway to Baghdad. The ex-SEAL, fluent in Arabic, has oral instructions to penetrate Iraqi military, intelligence, and security, and to establish relationships with the Kurds, who form the two rival parties of Jalal Talabani's dominant Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), which makes enough money off Saddam's regime to oppose a change. Distinguishing true and false in the mountains of information is hard, but Tim sorts out the best for Washington. Tim interviews refugees and defectors, two of whom picture an Iraqi air force capable only of kamikaze missions. At the end of August, Tim talks to a disillusioned man, who enjoys connections with a fanatical religious group seeking vengeance on Saddam and hungering for power. Members want guarantees before they will help Tim, who suspects a set-up, but pays for a list of names to verify. Just then, however, the Turks demand the CIA teams be removed, and Tim leaves, scarcely believing he has begun the flow of intelligence that will trigger Bush's launching the Iraq War. The ROCKSTARS, the CIA crypt for Tim's recruits, do not return to the story until Chapter 19.



# Chapter 14

## Chapter 14 Summary and Analysis

On August 5, Franks and Renuart brief Bush and the NSC. The Generated Start Plan is executable, but versatile Running Start's preparations are under way. Franks introduces a new Hybrid concept, whose advantages are improved short-term capabilities and pressure on the regime to respond to the diplomatic front. There are risks, including Scud attacks on Kuwait or Saddam either fleeing or "circling the wagons," which is Bush's prime concern. Powell agrees to discuss Saddam's ability to interrupt oil flow with the Saudis. There is consensus U.S. forces will be needed to stabilize a post-Saddam Iraq, war or no war. Turkey, where elections are pending, will not be approached about troop passage. On Phase Four, they discuss the troop size of 265,000, drawn down gradually to 50,000. However, they don't bring up the strategy or philosophy of occupation. Franks concludes with examples of how bombing targets are evaluated.

Powell is on edge, with military planning dominant and escalating. Armitage pushes him through regular private meetings to build with Bush the kind of relationship Rumsfeld enjoys, and two such meetings convince Powell they are connecting. When the elder Bush's NSA, Brent Scowcroft, declares an attack on Iraq will turn the Middle East into a "cauldron," setting back the war on terrorism, Powell approaches Rice about arranging private time and both are invited to dinner at the White House. Powell describes how war could destabilize Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan, divert energy from everything else, and affect the supply and price of oil. Will the world stand for a MacArthur ruling Baghdad? How will success be defined in this war? Powell is on a roll, proclaiming his Pottery Barn rule of "You break it, you own it." An Iraqi war will define Bush's whole first term. Does he want to risk reelection over it? Iraq has never been a democracy and its geography is formidable. The downsides, Powell says bluntly, have not been brought out in sufficient, gory detail. Saddam is crazy and may unleash WMD, but does the U.S. want to tie down most of its army in a manhunt for Saddam when bin Laden is still at large? Powell wants to internationalize the problem, although a diplomatic solution may not be quite as "clean" and might not work. Powell leaves, satisfied he has left nothing unsaid. In fact, the old soldier is too timid, confining himself to the boss's goals. When Card invites Powell to run through the arguments with him, Powell is sure he hit a home run.

Bush recalls to the author 16 months later he had been sure the Iraqis long for freedom and will seize the moment, and that his job as President is to look strategically about rebuilding Iraq. Tactics are Powell's job. Woodward agrees with Powell's assessment Bush has not grasped the consequences. As Woodward writes, nothing dire has occurred, Iraq dominates Bush's presidency, and it is unclear whether democracy will take root and let the U.S. pull out. Of 2002, Bush acknowledges sharp divisions over the U.N., with Powell advocating using its good offices and Cheney believing it is

powerless. The day after Powell's dinner with Bush, Franks orders the fast option, Hybrid, put in place and Bush for another Crawford vacation.



# Chapter 15

## Chapter 15 Summary and Analysis

On August 14, with Bush in Texas, Rice chairs a line-by-line review of a draft National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD), "Iraq: Goals, Objectives, and Strategy." The goal is to free Iraqis from tyranny and help them form a moderate, pluralistic, democratic, and non-threatening government. Objectives include minimizing WMD threat, regional instability, and oil market disruption. Strategy includes using diplomacy, military, CIA, and economic sanctions. It is preferable to work with other nations, but, if necessary, the U.S. will go it alone. Cheney and Powell differ sharply over what is possible and what is necessary. Bush is scheduled to address the General Assembly on September 12, and Gerson has given him a draft emphasizing the "soft side" of his agenda. With all living ex-secretaries of state and NSAs weighing in on Iraq, Powell says Bush must discuss Iraq at the U.N., while Rice believes this will only increase speculation about secret war plans. Cheney harangues about debate, compromise, and delay - words not action - when the U.N. has failed to enforce earlier resolutions demanding Saddam disarm. Rice likes Cheney's charge the U.N. is becoming irrelevant and a mockery, like the old League of Nations. The President, the principals recommend, should talk about Iraq at the U.N. but not declare war. They cannot agree on what he should say.

On August 14, Rumsfeld wants to talk about targeting, or the fascinating process of balancing military value with collateral damage to citizens. An air war expert, Renuart takes the lead, running through several for-instances. Rumsfeld wants minimal collateral damage, recalling 1999, when the U.S. destroyed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade using outdated CIA maps. Nearby, Scowcroft, a private consultant, publishes in the *Wall Street Journal* an op-ed piece stating Saddam is not connected with 9/11, the world stands against an attack, and rigorous U.N. monitoring should be restored. Powell phones thanks and Rice a rebuke for writing something people will attribute to the President's father. Scowcroft does not want to break with the administration, realizes both Bushes face problems because of their relationship, and backs off in public, without changing his views.

On August 16, Bush teleconferences with the NSC, hears Powell's pitch for going to the U.N., which even Cheney says is worth giving a shot. Bush wants the speech to be not too shrill or demanding, With Rice on the line, Bush tells Gerson to demand the U.N. either confront Saddam or be irrelevant. Powell leaves the NSC meeting for vacation sure he has the hawks boxed in. He meets with British Foreign Secretary Straw, who shares his concerns. As Bush needs Blair's help, Powell figures this should let him put more pressure on his boss.

On August 20, Woodward interviews Bush about 9/11 and Afghanistan for his book, *Bush at War*. Bush talks sweepingly and grandiosely about remaking the world. Regime change in Iraq will relieve the people's suffering, and Bush may or may not invade. He says nothing about WMD or Saddam's threat to the U.S. Bush doubts an coalition or





U.N. action can solve the problem of a rogue state, but once confident action is taken, the reluctant will fall into the "slipstream" and move towards peace. While disclaiming knowledge of secret military planning, Bush says they discuss the importance of patience, and next day tells reporters he is a "patient man."

Cheney sees he is losing ground, with old colleagues speaking out against war and Kissinger wanting to build support. Policy abhors a vacuum, so Cheney proposes giving a speech, which Bush asks only not get him into trouble. Cheney tells the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) weapons inspections are futile and give false comfort to Saddam, who has WMD and intends to use them - contradicting Bush's latest position. The risk of inaction is greater than the risk of removing a "murderous dictator." Adelman writes a blistering op-ed piece claiming Saddam is more dangerous than al-Qaeda, because he controls a country, army, oil revenues, and the means for producing WMD. U.N. inspectors can be useless, and every day Bush puts off liberating Iraq, America is endangered. Cheney implicitly approves, and on August 29, delivers to the Veterans of the Korean War a slightly softened version of his VFW speech. A year later, Bush recalls August as a "miserable month," when the principals are scattered and every word is picked apart. He cannot understand why the VFW speech upsets everyone, including Powell, and claims ignorance, because he is in Texas. Chapter 15 shows Bush very little in control of the fateful march to war and Powell being outmaneuvered by the man who most wants the battle engaged.



# Chapter 16

## Chapter 16 Summary and Analysis

Bush comes home on September 1, has Powell (and Rice) to lunch, and reaffirms his commitment to trying the U.N. Bush wants Congress to pass a resolution supporting military force against Saddam, although White House lawyers doubt he needs it. In 1991, the senior Bush gets the U.N. to authorize force 12-2 before asking Congress for a resolution, but Cheney suggests reversing the order, to get legislators on the record before the upcoming election. Rice agrees. Domestic unanimity will help convince the U.N. to act. On September 3, Card chairs the "White House Iraq Coordination Meeting" (later institutionalized as the "White House Iraq Group" - WHIG), including Nick Calio, the President's personal lobbyist. Calio has already researched votes on Iraq issues back to 1991. He's been told by Bush to "get the votes."

On September 4, Bush invites 18 key legislators to the White House to remind them of Saddam's threat and of Congress's overwhelming support in 1998 for regime change. They warn Bush he must become aggressively engaged for a resolution to pass. That afternoon, Rumsfeld is ill prepared and secretive with senators behind closed doors, antagonizing several, and WHIG begins reinforcing the President's themes and arguments with statements and media appearances, because Card sees "selling and marketing" as a key responsibility. Speaking to a journalist about the August disarray in terms of marketing brings a flurry of criticism the White House is treating war like soap flakes and using national security threats for partisan political gain.

Briefing Bush and the NSC on Scuds on September 6, Franks implies recent assertions about WMD are overblown. He has ordered protective chemical-biological suits for the troops and wants to target suspected WMD sites, but separates suspicion from knowledge. That evening, the principals (without Bush) go over U.N. issues, Cheney arguing a new resolution will land the U.S. in "hopeless soup," so Bush should state Saddam is bad and reserve the right to act unilaterally. Detecting a fever in Cheney that prevents him from being the steady rock of 1991, Powell replies this is not salable and lists the consequences of unilateral action. Cheney demands Saddam's clear threat is the *only* issue, and a tough, barely civil debate ensues, with Powell showing deep-seated anger over always being beneath Cheney in the pecking order. The argument continues the next morning, with Bush present. Powell says U.S. credibility demands reengaging with the U.N., and Cheney lists how this will mire them in a "tar pit." Trusting foreign lawyers will issue inconclusive reports that make taking Saddam out harder. Bush promises to think about it.

Blair pays a whirlwind six-hour visit. Having warned about Saddam's threat before 9/11, Blair is glad Bush is serious, but believes Iraq poses less WMD threat than North Korea or Iran. Blair's pacifist Labour Party and public opinion in the U.K. demand he go the U.N. route. Talking to the press afterwards, Bush states unequivocally Saddam has WMD and both nations are committed to ending his threat. Cheney joins them, and as



Bush probes and pushes, Blair commits forces if necessary. Bush complements Blair's valor to his assistant using a colloquialism, and thereafter calls this "the cojones meeting."

On September 8, the *New York Times* first reports the administration is charging Iraq with buying aluminum tubes to use in enriching uranium for a bomb, and spokespeople blanket the Sunday morning television shows to proclaim Saddam's danger. Rice tells CNN, "We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud." Rove tells Bush his conservative base does not like the U.N., but agrees he must appear not to be willy-nilly rushing to war, because this will affect the economy adversely. Business people are scared to death about war. Chapter 16 has shown concern building worldwide and Cheney standing as defender of American autonomy in the face of world opinion. He appears to have lost the author's admiration, as he has Powell's. Pandering for businessmen's votes now pushes Bush to try the U.N.



# Chapter 17

## Chapter 17 Summary and Analysis

Bush shares neither Cheney's cynicism nor Powell's comfort with the U.N. He just wants an outcome, the end of Saddam and WMD, which he impresses on Gerson for his speech. Rice explains how South Africa can serve as a model for nuclear disarmament, and Cheney and Rumsfeld both play on Bush's abhorrence of process solutions by showing how Saddam can use the U.N. Rice favors giving Saddam 30 days to disarm or face attack, but Bush leans away from a virtual declaration of war. Powell says they must ask the U.N. to *do* something, knowing an appeal to action will resonate with Bush. The principals debate what to ask for and settle for a request the Security Council "act." When Draft 21 reaches Powell's desk on September 10, the call for action is gone and the principals resume the debate. What if the council refuses a new resolution or Saddam uses WMD, while they are involved in semantic debates? Bush tells Powell and Rice he will ask for new resolutions, as Britain, Australia, and Spain desire. Reading along with Draft 24 during the speech, however, Powell hears the call for the Security Council to "meet our common challenge" omitted and Bush ad lib the U.S. wants "necessary resolutions." Bush enjoys laying down the challenge, knowing war planning make possible giving diplomacy a try. Hard- and soft-liners can both identify with the speech. Powell stays in New York to prevent a veto.

Rove reminds Bush war talk is drowning out matters of greater political value. Republicans can gain by Democratic filibustering of Bush's Homeland Security bill and delaying votes on nominees to federal judgeships. Calio arranges for CIA briefings in effective small-group selling forums several times a week. On September 19, Bush tells eleven congressmen that al-Qaeda is being hunted down successfully, so Saddam and his WMDs are the greatest threat. He can blow up Israel and trigger an international conflict. Bush reveals part of the war plan to take the oil fields early to mitigate oil shock. Bush recalls, "he tried to kill my Dad," in 1993, and worries intrusive inspections may put Iraqis off. Calio calls for bipartisanship and optimism. Hours later, Bush releases the proposed language of a resolution, and the *Washington Post* declares Bush has virtually routed the Democrats. Powell testifies before the House International Relations Committee, proposing the threat of massive retaliation that contained the Soviets during the Cold War serve as a model for avoiding war now. Bush wants support to threaten war, not necessarily to go to war. This is Rice's version of "coercive diplomacy."

The *New York Times* on September 21 reports Bush has highly detailed war plans, and Franks in Kuwait says they are prepared but the President has not yet decided to go to war. Spokesman Ari Fleischer drops the fiction there is no plan on Bush's desk. When on September 26, 18 congressmen come to the Cabinet Room, Bush says he does not relish hugging widows before launching into his usual indictment of Saddam and maintains it is his duty to be fierce and swift if force is needed. He has a good plan, which the generals, face-to-face, say gives them no problems. He spins tales of torture in Iraq and warns they will have nukes in six months. A Democrat asks if he has given



up on the U.N. and observes the economy is unraveling, to which Bush replies he understands diplomacy. They adjourn to the Rose Garden for a show of bipartisan solidarity, where Bush ups the rhetoric. Saddam has weapons, and the British report that he can launch them in 45 minutes. Tenet and the CIA have warned this claim is dubious and if true means battlefield weapons, not those that could hit the U.S. or neighboring countries. Bush and Cheney continue talking tough, when they meet October 1 with a dozen members of the House International Relations Committee. Saddam is a liar, playing the world for a fool. The U.S. has allies the press does not write about. People claim the U.S. cannot fight in Afghanistan and win in Iraq, but they will.



# Chapter 18

## Chapter 18 Summary and Analysis

On May 9, 2002, Woodward has dinner with Sen. Bob Graham (D-FL) for the second time since 9/11. Due to Graham's connections to the *Post*, Woodward's employer, they talk on-the-record and for this book only. Graham is troubled about Iraq after briefings on the covert plan in Cheney's office. Graham believes Iraq will swamp the greater goal of pursuing the first-tier terrorists involved in 9/11 or harboring those involved. There is no evidence Saddam has done either. Most analyses put Iraq's WMD threat five years away, which merits close monitoring. Cheney glosses over terrorism and unites it with WMD in the nexus of Iraq. This is a new definition of the war on terrorism.

The CIA never declares categorically Saddam has WMD. The formal 2000 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) concludes he retains CW agents (not warheads) and is working towards BW, but has none. Iraq is buried in Tenet's assessment of worldwide threats in 2002 testimony before Congress. Graham presses for a comprehensive reappraisal, but Tenet agrees only to rush a new NIE. Drawing analysts from all U.S. data gatherers, the National Intelligence Council (NIC) spends three weeks sifting through massive amounts of raw materials, much of it outdated, before submitting their findings to the National Foreign Intelligence Board (NFIB) for delivery and certification. NIEs give busy policy makers a bottom-line answer upfront, in an executive summary, "Key Judgments." Their 92-page document released October 1 states unequivocally, Iraq has chemical and biological weapons, but then telegraphs immense doubts that come close to contradicting the flat assertion. A desperate Saddam might assist Islamic terrorists if that were his last chance for vengeance, but Iraq cannot be shown to have attacked any U.S. territory and will not have nuclear weapons before 2007-2009. The State Department's intelligence bureau files an 11-page annex further downplaying the NIE's conclusions on nuclear weapons.

On October 2, some members of the Senate Intelligence Committee focus on matters not addressed in the document, including covert CIA actions related to military planning, diplomacy, and possible reactions to a U.S. attack on Iraq. The senators cannot frame an effective critique of Bush's request for a blank check. Calio challenges them to act now, or Bush will act without them. Rove says their support will give the President added leverage to resolve the crisis peacefully. Dozens of lawmakers join Bush in the Rose Garden to announce a bipartisan resolution. Bush equates Saddam with Stalin and suggests all Americans will be watching their representatives. To rally support, Bush plans a prime-time speech on October 7, and Gerson incorporates several CIA suggestions for cutting back or omitting statements in early drafts. Draft 6 talks about Iraq being caught trying to buy uranium oxide in Africa, a British story investigated and discredited. The 26-minute speech is not carried by the broadcast networks but reaches 17 million viewers on cable. Bush argues that Iraq "gathers the most serious dangers of our age in one place" and evokes JFK's response to Soviet missiles in Cuba in 1962. On October 8, 47 senators see the entire NIE and Powell's warning the U.N. will



sidestep the issue unless Congress authorizes force is leaked to the press. Calio has gotten 71 senators and 161 representatives to White House briefings by October 10, when the House authorizes use of force. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) gives argues passionately they have seen no proof of imminent threat to national security or any estimate of the "cost in blood and treasure." Bush's preemptive doctrine is imperialism no nation should accept. John F. Kerry (D-MA), soon to run for President, sees a threat and will vote yea, but expects Bush to keep his promise to work with the U.N. and/or U.S. allies. The Senate gives Bush a blank check on October 11, voting 77-23.



# Chapter 19

## Chapter 19 Summary and Analysis

Bush and Rumsfeld ask the JCS for honest opinions. The Air Force worries about jamming, stretching the air transport system, and shortage of smart bombs. The Navy worries about short munitions and the effect on efforts in Afghanistan. The Army worries about the small attacking force and supplying such a rapid advance. The Marines worry about the effect of WMD use on Iraqi civilians and the uncertainty of urban warfare (not having seen the plans for Baghdad.) However, all support Frank's plan. On October 29, Franks briefs Bush on responses to the use of WMD.

Saul sends a delighted Tim back into Iraq with a crack NILE team to recruit agents, push weak spots, and prepare for sabotage. They head for Kalachualan carrying \$1 million in \$100 bills - 44 lbs. worth. In his lime green headquarters, "Pistachio," Tim hooks up with the PUK man he met in August, who introduces him to two brothers and their important father, nicknamed "The Pope." The Kurds and Tim both want proof of the others' sincerity. The brothers smuggle in the Brigadier General who heads the aviation staff, the head of an anti-aircraft battery, and an officer bearing 103 pages of Republican Guard war plans. The Kurds receive \$135,000 a month - and the promise of a seat in a post-Saddam government. Saul is dumbfounded Tim has penetrated the heart of an apparatus heretofore impregnable.





# Chapter 20

## Chapter 20 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 20 reinforces how vital Tim's efforts are and shows one member of the intelligence community able to read Bush's signals he intends to go to war. Michael V. Hayden, Director of the National Security Agency (NSA), heads a staff of 32,000 struggling to keep ahead of evolving technology in gathering signals intelligence (SIGINT). After admitting to Congress NSA realized only in hindsight some foreign-language intercepts are crucial, Hayden is determined not to let America down again. Flash messages go out within 30 minutes of detecting a threat. A "Rock Drill" run after Bush's Axis of Evil speech, determines SIGINT on Iraq is negligible. Hayden foresees a knowledge-based war that will strain the NSA severely. Ground commanders will know their foes better than they know themselves by accessing the secure "Zircon Chat." Hayden still downplays Iraqi WMD as "inferential."



# Chapter 21

## Chapter 21 Summary and Analysis

Powell sees a fork in the road of either a new U.N. resolution and renewed inspections or war. NSC colleagues want to broaden the scope of the indictment, but only WMD has "legs." They can also point to Saddam's record of ignoring the U.N. Cheney and Rumsfeld lobby for a single resolution that will tighten demands and stipulate a "material breach," triggering a 1991-style war. Powell presents this "maximalist" approach to the Security Council, where opposition is unanimous, and then a softened version that makes violations trigger vague "reconsideration" rather than war. France, Russian, and China have commercial ties with Iraq and are on record opposing the U.S. removing Saddam. Cheney is sure demanding Saddam submit full WMD accounting within 30 days will show he has been lying for 12 years. The French accept the demand but insist on a second resolution to authorize war, which Bush and Cheney know will be more difficult to get. The debate comes down to how to link a false declaration and a general failure to cooperate - by "and" or "or" - one test or two?

On November 1, Powell brings the U.N. weapons inspectors to see Bush, Cheney, Rice, and Wolfowitz. They are Hans Blix, a cheery, 74-year-old Swedish lawyer and diplomat, and Mohamed ElBaradei, 60, the Egyptian Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The hard-liners challenge the Swede's ability to stand up to Saddam. Realizing the headline about a new resolution is more important than either its obscure language or the interpretations each nation will give to it, Powell sees he can get at least 14 votes by accepting the French "and." The principals stand firm on "or," and Bush wants action by Election Day. Powell phones the French and the Russians, who agree. On November 8, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 passes unanimously, including Syria, a sign of Arab displeasure with Saddam. Praised in the Rose Garden, Powell is glad to have bought time and hopes the press will quit saying he is on the way out. Thinking he has hoodwinked the French, Powell will see he has made war more likely, as the final chapters will show.



## Chapter 22

### Chapter 22 Summary and Analysis

On November 15, Saudi ambassador Prince Bandar bin Sultan, 53, exercises the special entry to the Oval Office he enjoys since the senior Bush's days. Knowing his nation holds the key to minimizing the impact of war on oil prices, Bandar delivers a private letter from Crown Prince Abdullah and reminds Bush they have tried since 1994 to get the U.S. serious about ousting Saddam. Saudi interests demand a presidential clarification. Bush talks blandly about regime change after the inspectors finish their task and pledges to inform Abdullah before making a final decision. Bush also intends to follow up on Israeli/Palestinian peace, despite Arafat and Sharon, and believes changing Iraq will also change Iran. Bandar wants everything kept secret but needs the same details on U.S. war planning as he received in 1991.

On November 26, Franks sends Rumsfeld the MODEPS, "the Mother of All Deployment Orders," for 300,000 troops. Realizing it will upset people (especially with the holidays approaching), shut down diplomacy, and cripple the inspectors, Rumsfeld changes the "on/off" approach to a "dimmer switch" deploying units gradually and less noticeably. When Rumsfeld issues the first orders December 6, some generals grumble the normal 30-day notice period is cut short. Meanwhile, the White House says Saddam is boxed in and they know what he has, but U.N. inspectors find nothing in surprise searches, and on December 7, Iraq submits an 11,807-page declaration showing no WMD. Saying this is clearly false, Cheney wants Bush to declare it a material breach. He mocks diplomats, including Powell and U.N. Secretary-General Annan for 12 years of red tape. None of the other principals agrees the declaration should be ignored, however, particularly because Saddam appears to be cooperating and a second debate on consequences must begin.



# Chapter 23

## Chapter 23 Summary and Analysis

Rumsfeld's "hide in plain sight," dribbling deployment works, and he holds off big call-ups of reservists until after Christmas. By early December, Franks' Qatar headquarters is operational and he tells reporters "Internal Look" is a routine war game like 1990, 1996, and 2000, when, in fact, it is a test of the Hybrid Plan. Franks sees the southern blitzkrieg must be faster and be more flexible. Cheney calls for a "medical NASA" to research and produce vaccines against WMD and convinces Bush, on December 13, to order military personnel and high-risk essential civilians inoculated for smallpox as a precaution against an attack. However, he conceals 20 million doses are set aside to treat coalition allies, if Saddam seeks retribution. Health officials are perplexed by Bush's policy and worry about side effects and liability, but no one can resist Cheney.

Wanting to keep inspections non-confrontational, Blix turns down CIA help in pointing out likely WMD locales that will improve the chances of finding violations. The CIA finds Blix insufficiently aggressive and some principals brand him a liar, doomed to fail. On December 18, Bush and the NSC hear about problems recruiting and maintaining sources and agents inside Iraq caused by the mixed message of both pursuing diplomatic solutions and rattling swords. Bush acknowledges the difficulties of a two-track policy but says they are stuck with it. That evening, at a White House Christmas party, Bush remarks Woodward's *Bush at War* is selling well and considers writing another book about Iraq. Laura Bush dislikes "More Bush at War." A year later, Bush tells the author that Laura agonizes over battlefield deaths and the domestic protests his orders might cause. Bush believes her comments to Woodward had been subtle advice to him, but maintains she trusts his judgment. Neither wants war.

On December 19, Franks briefs Bush on the "Internal Look" exercise and some of Rumsfeld's "what-ifs." Franks believes Bush is close to launching the war. Concerned something is missing from the October NIE, Rice asks Tenet and McLaughlin how strong the case for WMD is and what can be said publicly. Even Wolfowitz has doubts. U.N. inspectors in 1991-98 find more WMD than anticipated, and the 1995 defection of Saddam's son-in-law, Hussein Kamel, chief of the secret WMD programs, triggers an outpouring of hard data, and the inspectors destroy vast quantities of WMD and equipment. Since their expulsion in 1998, the CIA has had to infer the situation. Preparing for the briefing, McLaughlin finds two files too improbable to present. First, there's a "weird" intercept of two men with al-Qaeda ties discussing how fast the toxin ricin kills a donkey. Next, he discovers an Iraqi exile in Australia, who claims to have topographic information for guiding Iraqi Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) to U.S. targets. However, the person refuses to cooperate, unless his extended family is relocated. Wolfowitz cannot believe this is not given to Blix for follow-up.

On December 21, Tenet and McLaughlin present "The Case" for WMD to Bush, Cheney, Rice and Card. A flipchart shows components for BW and shells unaccounted for, a



rocket stand for engines exceeding the 150-km. range permitted by the U.N., and scarring of the earth suggesting a clean up after a chemical spill. It also reveals UAV flying a racetrack pattern for 500 km, which is a clear and ominous violation, but intent can only be inferred. In addition, it demonstrates mobile trailers said by human sources to house BW production facilities that can evade inspectors, a dramatic radio conversation between two Republican Guard officers about removing nerve agents, and officers discussing a modified vehicle at the al-Kindi company, a known WMD facility. When McLaughlin finishes, Bush says "Joe Public" will gain little confidence from this information, and Card sees little marketing value in the presentation. Tenet, however, declares, "It's a slam dunk case!" This is good enough for Cheney. However, Bush is concerned about stretching their case and orders Card and Rice to bring in lawyers to clean the argument up before they go public.

Bush grows frustrated at briefings that show Blix less aggressive than he expects, and for the first time pressures Rice for advice on whether war is necessary. She feels American credibility demands "this gangster" not beat the international system again. Bush does not respond, but a year later tells Woodward it makes him want to deal with Saddam's elusiveness more than his danger or deception. Rice updates him on Blix's progress throughout the stressful holiday season. When Bush seeks former aid Karen Hughes' views, she advises exhaust all opportunities to remove Saddam peacefully before considering war. Chapter 23 portrays a vacillating President being fed insufficient data, with only Powell -not to be a true Bush intimate - opposed to war.



# Chapter 24

## Chapter 24 Summary and Analysis

After Christmas with her aunt, Rice joins the Bushes in Crawford, where after New Year's he says Saddam is outsmarting Blix and the international consensus is fraying. Media reporting no WMD are being found infuriate Bush, when intelligence reports show the Iraqis are moving and concealing things. Antiwar protests in Europe and the U.S. will convince Saddam he is safe. Blix has told Rice U.S. military pressure is positive, but Bush cannot keep it up forever. Rice advises Bush to follow through on his threat and, in her mind, this marks the moment Bush reaches his point of no return. Rove also flies to Crawford, to talk about the 2004 election, wanting to avoid the senior Bush's fatal late start in 1992. Rove presents a PowerPoint deck on strategy, themes, timetable, and overview, stress Bush's persona (strong, bold, caring), values, and issues (primarily the war on terrorism, homeland defense, and the economy). The U.S. is as narrowly divided as in 2000 and Rove wants to begin raising money in February-April. Bush flatly refuses while war is coming. Note, the indecision of Chapter 23 is gone.

On January 6, 2003, Bush conceals his decision from his cabinet and continues in public to act conciliatory about Saddam. Two days later, Bush promises bipartisan congressional leaders he will inform Congress and the people of why "muscle" must be used to secure good diplomacy, but is more candid with Republican leaders alone. On January 9, Franks rules out Turkey allowing a second front and worries about waning support in Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Franks assures Bush he can launch air and ground attacks almost immediately to repulse Saddam if he does anything provocative. Once Bush authorizes Special Forces to protect against Scuds and to guard the oil fields, the die will be cast. Franks can proceed in three weeks but would like to target March 1.

On January 10, Bush and Cheney meet with leading Iraqi expatriates, whom Bush tells bluntly Saddam has a heart of stone, will not disarm, and must be removed. This is close to a declaration of war. Bush asks to hear the Iraqis' personal stories. He hears all Iraqis want Saddam gone but fear what will happen after him. Iraqis are too self-absorbed to hate Israel. Iraqis can assimilate democracy and will greet U.S. forces with flowers and sweets. They will also bring Saddam to justice. Currency, medical facilities, and humanitarian relief will be crucial, but the Sunni-Shiite rift will lessen once Saddam's divide and conquer policy ends. The Diaspora will flood back, bringing first-hand understanding of how democracy works. The group cannot suggest how a U.S.-backed leader will fare. Iraqis get their news from the BBC and *Voice of America* rather than government-controlled Internet services. Bush claims not to have decided on a military solution, but asks the dissidents to rally Iraqi hearts as he rallies the hearts of the world. Bush believes the Israeli/Palestinian conflict will be resolved this year.

Rumsfeld rues the day Bush will proclaim, "today is the day," and tries to keep him from reaching a point of no return. At the same time, he does not want Bush to step back and keeps him abreast of the growing risks to covert allies in the region. Unless Saddam

capitulates or flees, the U.S. will have to go to war. When Bush confides in early January Saddam is "diddling" with him and likely will not comply, Rumsfeld realizes the decision is made and asks to bring in key foreign players, to tell them eye-to-eye it is time for war.



# Chapter 25

## Chapter 25 Summary and Analysis

Cheney, too, realizes Bush has decided and agrees other nations must be convinced he means business before they will fall in line. The U.S. has too often stirred things up and walked away. The U.S. can least afford to lose Saudi Arabia, home of the two holy mosques fundamentalists insist the King polluted by allowing infidels in during the Gulf War. Remembering the 1990 scenario when he, as Secretary of Defense, had briefed Bandar on war plans and heard Powell, then chairman of the JCS, fear Bandar is "blowing smoke" in promising Saudi cooperation, Cheney invites Bandar to a briefing. The U.S. needs access to the 500-mile Saudi-Iraqi border to launch its attack, as shown on a "TOP SECRET NOFORN" (no foreign eyes) map. Already briefed on covert CIA operations in Iraq, Bandar devises a plausible cover for the arrival of SFO. Rumsfeld balks at giving Bandar a copy of the map but allows him to study it long enough that he is later able to reproduce it from memory. The Saudis will lose big if they stand with the U.S. and Saddam does not fall. Cheney declares, "Saddam is toast," and laughs when Bandar hopes there will be no smoke. As Bandar will recommend nothing to Abdullah until he talks directly with Bush, they meet on January 13. Bandar maintains Arabs will shed no tears over Saddam's fall, but his survival will make him invincible. He has to be toast. Bush assures Bandar it is *his* plan Bandar will carry home. Card believes Bush can still pull back after committing to Bandar, and manage the consequences. While Bush and Bandar talk, Hayden at NSA headquarters announces to top officials the "Statement of Director's Intent" for a war with Iraq. SIGINT will meet the needs of both field commanders and policy makers. Sharing and collaboration will supplant the "traditional hierarchy" that plagued 9/11.

Bush summons Powell on January 13, without Cheney or Rice hovering, complements him on his hard work, but is so frustrated with Blix he feels the U.S. must go to war. Powell reminds Bush of the dangers of taking down the regime, including total ownership of Iraq and the ripple effect in the region, but Bush is not discussing - he is announcing a decision. Powell the soldier cannot contemplate disloyalty when asked point-blank, "Are you with me?" Powell knows Bush will never second-guess himself, but still hopes he can keep diplomacy alive. In playing out the diplomatic hand, Powell will go not against Bush's wishes but only his instincts that diplomacy cannot work. This is a dangerous game for someone never asked directly for advice. Both, perhaps, fear such an exchange. Powell sees Saddam as isolated and friendless and believes he will wither. He wants Saddam gone as much as anyone but is despondent Bush is committed to war. Not having been ordered to halt diplomacy, Powell hopes to pull a rabbit out of the hat. When Bush tells Card about the meeting, Card suspects Powell will continue trying diplomacy, and may become more creative and energetic about it. Card sees Bush as a circus rider formerly standing astride two horses - Diplomacy and War - and now riding only the latter.





# Chapter 26

## Chapter 26 Summary and Analysis

On January 14, Bush's anger flares, telling reporters time is running out on Saddam. Next day he will meet his firmest friend in Europe, Polish Pres. Kwasniewski, who is suffering politically for his support. Bush is confident success in freeing and feeding Iraqis will play well in Poland and blames Saddam for not following the South African precedent for disarming. Bush will move sooner rather than later, but not precipitously. Like Powell, Kwasniewski wonders what will happen if international support collapses. Bush sidesteps to say Islam like Christianity can thrive in a democracy. He only wants Poland to support him and supply troops.

Jan. 15, Bush and his war cabinet hear about humanitarian efforts planned by NSC Middle East Affairs Director, Elliott Abrams, a hard-line conservative indicted in the Iran-contra affair but pardoned by the senior Bush in 1992. He has already directed relief work in Afghanistan. Iraq is suffering food shortages and has 800,00 internally displaced persons and 740,000 refugees. Some 60% of Iraqis are being fed through the U.N. Oil-for-Food Program, which bypasses the oil embargo legally, and war will add another 2 million mouths. The U.S., U.N., and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are stockpiling and planning. Everything will be in place by February, and once war begins, Rumsfeld will present a supplemental budget request to Congress and begin contracting out work. Oil-for-Food must continue, despite consternation over its performance. Hospitals, water and sewage plants, and the electrical grid must be protected, and key installations are fed into Franks' no-strike database. Bush is sure humanitarian aid will change the U.S. image, and orders food and relief ships loaded and put on stand-by, ere things go wrong for lack of planning.

On January 17, the Bushes visits Walter Reed Army Medical Center to visit soldiers wounded in Afghanistan, and this is as close as he comes to the "ugly nitty-gritty of war." After five awkward conversations, Bush tells reporters about their nobility, the quality of care they are receiving, and then heads to Camp David to avoid the largest antiwar protest in Washington since the Vietnam era. A year later, Bush tells Woodward that it is his duty to visit the troops, not to remind himself about the consequences of war, but to make sure they know they are getting good care. Bush does not need to steel himself with grief after 9/11 and the Afghanistan War.

Since November 2002, Hadley has been working through the deputies committee to plan bringing democracy to Iraq. He is visited by Douglas Feith, Undersecretary for policy in the Pentagon. He's a Rumsfeld favorite and protygy of Richard Perle. The latter is the most public advocate for war with Iraq and approves of Rumsfeld's "toolbox approach" to problems. This suggests that one looks at them all as nails and, therefore, requires us to only use a hammer to solve them. The uniformed military dislike Feith, and Franks tries to avoid his stupidities. Feith proposes to Hadley setting up an interagency planning cell in Defense that will enter Iraq as soon as possible to



implement its plans. Although State has been working on the "Future of Iraq" project for a year, Powell sees logic, good order, and precedents in the plan. Bush signs National Security Presidential Directive #24 on January 20, setting up the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). Retired Army Lt.-Gen. Jay M. Garner is named head. Powell forwards the "Future of Iraq" and nominates 75 Arab experts for the ORHA team, including Thomas Warrick and Meghan O'Sullivan. Rumsfeld rejects them and seven senior officials nominated to assist Garner, because Feith insists on outsiders, who are not "dovish," Rumsfeld and Powell fight for a week before five are assigned. Cheney believes Powell and his department are not firmly behind Bush's vision of democracy in Iraq and transforming the region.

Cheney's and Rumsfeld's will, Powell on January 20 attends a Security Council meeting discussing terrorism. When de Villepin tells the press nothing justifies war, Powell is furious, but Blair sees it as a liberating moment the U.S., which can say it tried the U.N. route but had been thwarted by France. On January 21, Bush boils over, saying he will lead a "coalition of willing nations" to disarm Saddam, but declines to state when this will happen. Chapter 26 shows both the determination to make good in Iraq, and the infighting that dooms ORHA to failure.



# Chapter 27

## Chapter 27 Summary and Analysis

The White House Communication Office prepares a 33-page document, "Apparatus of Lies," about Saddam's propaganda and wants Armitage to unveil it as part of a WHIG effort to counter growing antiwar sentiment. Armitage finds in the old stories no rationale for war in 2003, calls the report "bullshit," and initially refuses to touch it. When he gives in to pressure, Armitage refuses to submit a draft for "niggling and stupid suggestions," and on January 21, tells the U.S. Institute of Peace he hopes war can be avoided but is not optimistic in view of Saddam's past actions, as described in the "Apparatus of Lies."

On January 24, Franks delivers to Rumsfeld and Myers his final war plan, the 5-11-16-125 Hybrid Plan. Rumsfeld prepares a timeline for Bush on January 29. "N-Day," or Notification Day, when Bush must decide, is February 22. "C-Day," when forces flow, follows immediately. They have already built up much of the force needed. On January 22, the White House receives dry, clinical back up for Tenet's "slam dunk" that cannot serve as a marketing tool, so Bush sends it to lawyers Hadley and Libby. Already convinced, Libby dismisses Feith's intelligence memos and the notion that Chalaby has a direct channel to the Pentagon or Cheney. On January 25, Libby gives a lengthy presentation incorporating the donkey incident McLaughlin had deemed unreliable and suggests 9/11 leader, Mohammed Atta, met an Iraqi intelligence officer at least four times in Prague. Armitage is appalled by the hour of hyperbole and "silky threads," while Wolfowitz thinks it is a solid case, subscribing as he does to Rumsfeld's notion lack of evidence does not mean something does not exist. He notes al-Qaeda, which might be trained by ex-KGB, Mossad, or the East Germans, has become active again only after Bush threatens Iraq, striking in Bali, Kuwait, and Yemen. Karen Hughes says the conclusions are too sweeping. Bush wants a *Dragnet*-style "just the facts," so people can draw their own conclusions. Rove finds Libby's presentation strong, compelling, and scary, particularly the possibility Saddam has used billions of dollars from illicit oil revenue to buy WMD. Scientists with know-how and a dictator with money is the ultimate danger. He backs Hughes on it being a communication problem rather than a legal one.

Powell is the logical choice for presenting the case to the U.N., as chief U.S. diplomat, a known softliner, a man jealous of his credibility and reputation, and a very persuasive speaker when prepared. Rice and Hughes want him to speak for three days, recreating the drama of Adlai Stevenson's Cuban Missile Crisis speech in 1962. Powell says the delegates will fall asleep. Cheney calls while Powell is preparing, suggesting he look carefully at Libby's case against terrorism. After reading the Prague tale, Powell throws the paper away. He believes Cheney has fixated on linking Saddam and al-Qaeda as fact, whereas ambiguity exists. When Woodward later asks Bush if Cheney is feverish, Bush contends he is low-key, controlled, and convinced.



On January 27, Blix gives a tough but balanced report to the Security Council covering the first two months of work. The Iraqis do not appear to genuinely accept disarmament, but they are cooperating. Blix believes Iraq has more BW than declared, but in such an accounting nightmare neither quantity nor intent can be proved. ElBaradei finds no evidence of a nuclear weapons program since the 1990s. Rice believes Saddam is on the run and likely to crack soon, but Cheney and others insist Blix is lying to keep his report from causing war. Hearing Powell intends to rebut Blix's report, Woodward writes in the *Washington Post* there is no "smoking gun." That evening, Bush devotes the last third of his State of the Union address to unaccounted for WMD, and then claims Saddam has "sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa" - innocuous accusation, ascribed properly to British sources, which Tenet had deemed shaky, but Tenet does not see the draft and Hadley forgets the warning.



# Chapter 28

## Chapter 28 Summary and Analysis

On January 30, after meeting Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi, Bush issues his standard disclaimer, but then slips and says Saddam will not be allowed to stay in power. A "lethal military" will "kick his ass." Leaders must form public opinion, not follow it. On January 31, Blair visits Camp David to ask for a second U.N. resolution, for political purposes. Bush, Cheney, and Powell all oppose seven more weeks and a hard sell, holding 1441 is sufficient grounds for proceeding. As a favor to Blair, however, Bush will "go flat out" to help, to avoid the danger of going it alone.

Powell is dissatisfied with the 60-page paper Libby expects him to use as a "Chinese menu" for his speech. Powell trusts his ability to interrogate people more than his ability to interpret photos, but human resources in Iraq are scarce. Some believe Powell is a victim of the "rational man syndrome." Public expectation grows about what Powell will say on February 5, and he worries about underselling the case. He opens his and the U.S.'s flank to an Iraqi counterattack. On February 1, Powell visits CIA headquarters and spends the day sifting through intelligence, easily discarding the flimsy stuff, and returns the next day with a skeptical Armitage to dig deeper than the White House had. They incorporate the intercept about the al-Kindi vehicle, another just in about "forbidden ammo," and a third mentioning removing "nerve agents." Powell does not accept the Cheney/Libby vision of an Iraqi conspiracy behind 9/11, and Tenet worries about stretching the terrorism case. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's receiving medical treatment in Baghdad and paying for the assassination of Laurence Foley, both in 2002, does not establish a link to Saddam. Bush, however, considers any nation harboring a terrorist to be a terrorist, so Powell decides to mention Zarqawi as a sinister link to terrorists across Europe.

After months of work, Saul finds a volunteer who files 130 reports on matters the U.S. military had not known about. One cooperative SSO officer hands Tim a CD-ROM containing 6,000 personnel files, while another gives him Tariq Aziz's mobile phone, and cracking its encryption key opens SSO communications to NSA snooping. Tim is spending \$1 million a month for ROCKSTAR intelligence and paying off PUK leaders, creating a dangerous rivalry and hyperinflation. The Pope bullies another SSO officer to cooperate with Tim, allowing him to track Saddam's whereabouts during his frequent movements. GPS coordinates allow Northern Watch/Southern Watch to take out hidden air defenses. By late February, Tim has 90 agents, whom NSA supplies with satellite telephones to call in real-time intelligence. PUK establishes direct connection to Wolfowitz and sends data Tim cannot verify or challenge. ROCKSTARS distribute SIGINT transmitters around Baghdad, ending the dearth of information, but Saul is concerned it can be discovered and cut off. Turkey could close the border at any time.



# Chapter 29

## Chapter 29 Summary and Analysis

On February 5, Rice briefs 20 key congressional leaders on Powell's message. He is also grilled on Saddam's direct threat to the U.S., global policy on terrorism and WMD, and whether or not war is the best approach. Rice's bottom line is war is the active option. She cannot predict how long the U.S. will remain in Iraq or guarantee they will find a "smoking gun." Legislators argue among themselves about U.S. prestige if no WMD are found, but Rice is certain Saddam is hiding a lot and it will be found. Tenet believes Powell's case is ironclad and neither the President nor Powell can be hurt by what he says. Powell wants the CIA Director behind him at the U.N., visible to the cameras, backing up his words. Powell has audiovisuals and a teaspoon of simulated anthrax in a vial to wave around. Millions watch live television as Powell states he can reveal only part of what the U.S. knows. Playing the intercepts, he interprets them with heavy spin. He asks rhetorically why Saddam would move equipment if he has nothing to hide? Powell shows sketches of mobile labs and UAVs that pose a worldwide threat. Links to al-Qaeda are potentially more sinister and the idea secular and religious tyranny cannot coexist is wrong. Saddam is determined to keep his WMD, the world dares not allow him to choose when and if to use them, and the U.S. will not run that risk. The dramatic 76-minute presentation lists over 100 specifics, mixing overstatement, understatement, and personal passion. Liberal, anti-Bush columnist Mary McGrory writes that the cumulative effect of Powell's "*J'Accuse*" speech convinces her. However, she does not believe war is the only way to stop this fiend.

Abdullah sends Bandar to Paris and then to Cairo, where Mubarak reveals Saddam is seeking refuge for his family, other people to be named later, and huge safes holding \$2 billion in cash and gold. Mubarak all but women and children must deal with the U.S. and the treasures should be wired to Swiss banks. Bandar tells Rice the French may support war, but when Chirac phones Bush on February 7, he holds morality requires exhausting all alternatives to war and is confident Saddam will accept exile. France will contribute to Iraqi reconstruction. Chirac appreciates the U.S. moral position differs from his own and respects it, and Bush hangs up optimistic. Later that day, Mubarak's pro-American son Gamal visits the White House secretly and confirms Bandar's intelligence. Bush contradicts public statements by his chief aids, when he refuses to guarantee Saddam's protection in exile. On February 10, Bush tells Australian Prime Minister Howard there is a slim chance Saddam will leave Iraq, but they will then have to decide how to treat whatever country harbors this war criminal. He believes France will abstain in the next U.N. vote, but Chirac, Putin and Schroeder call jointly for extended weapons inspections.

The NSC discusses making Blix's inspections more effective as it appears his second report, due February 14, will be wishy-washy. Bush is briefed on plans for dealing with an improbable coup, because it cannot stop the military invasion. Come what may, the U.S. must deal with democracy, WMD, and terrorist links in Iraq. Blix's presentation to



the Security Council contrasts sharply with Powell's. His team has inspected 300 of the 400 suspected WMD sites without notice. They have analyzed 75% of the chemical and biological samples they collect and find nothing prohibited. Iraqi documentation is so poor, however, that Blix cannot conclude no violations are occurring. He laments the U.S. has not fully revealed what it knows and criticizes Powell's assertion sites have been cleaned up before inspectors arrive. If Iraq would cooperate more fully, Blix is certain disarmament can be swiftly verified. Powell watches Blix on television angrily and his buy-in to war grows complete.



# Chapter 30

## Chapter 30 Summary and Analysis

Feb. 15, the target date for war passes with Bush's allies in Britain, Australia, and Spain facing political challenges, and U.S. troop build-ups are slowed, to Cheney's dismay. On February 22, Aznar visits Crawford and they teleconference with Blair and Berlusconi about Saddam's failure to comply. Elie Wiesel, Auschwitz survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winner, encourages Bush not to repeat the mistake of 1938, appeasing a dictator, and inviting war and holocaust. Bush says Saddam is a threat to Israel directly by attack and indirectly by drawing it into war, which would polarize the Arab world. Bush begins routinely quoting Wiesel's view that neutrality and indecision are morally wrong.

Frank Miller, who heads the Executive Steering Group (ESG) responsible for interagency cooperation, is astonished the Pentagon is many independent fiefdoms filled with paper pushers rather than managers. He calls the various heads together and holds meetings three times a week, forcing them to chart solutions to 21 central issues anticipated in the wartime and postwar periods. The chaos is so bad Miller meets weekly with the deputies committee to blow whistles and get them to nudge Rumsfeld. Civilians and military leaders in Defense do not talk and the JCS is too afraid of Rumsfeld and Feith to meddle in Franks' war plan or carry out the training of Iraqi dissidents to fight as part of the coalition.

On February 24, Bush and the NSC are briefed on the Iraqi petroleum industry reentering the world market once freed of U.N. sanctions. Economist Pamela Qaunrud explains how the Oil-for-Food Program operates and predicts the U.S. will need \$7-\$8 billion to rebuild the infrastructure if Saddam blows it up. Even if he does not, revenue will be no more than \$12 billion the first year and \$22 billion the second. The U.S. should not meddle in Iraq's relations with OPEC, but return oil administration to Iraqi hands as quickly as possible. Bush agrees and says early revenues should go to the Iraqi people rather than international debt repayment. He worries about the ripple effect on the U.S. economy of another Middle Eastern war, but Bandar has pledged the Saudis will fine-tune prices in time to be useful during the presidential election.

Powell has long worried a single seaport and airport in Kuwait leaves U.S. forces vulnerable to WMD but cannot imagine a new Islamic government permitting 80,000 troops to invade another Muslim country from its territory, as Rumsfeld wants. Powell foresees no opposition to overflights and does not want to risk that by pushing too far. On Mar 1, the Turkish Parliament rejects the U.S. request. Rumsfeld asks his inner circle to estimate how long regime change will take, but having so often heard him denounce "guesstimates," they do not take him seriously. Pressed, they suggest 7-30 days. Bush later says Rumsfeld is too cautious and smart to bring estimates to him, but suspects it will take weeks rather than months. He is prepared for the worst. Franks expects only a few hundred U.S. casualties, but Bush worries about Saddam using WMD on his people - and him being blamed for the human catastrophe. There will be





no demoralizing "body counts" as in Vietnam, because the purpose is not to kill but to remove a regime.

On March 4, Feith briefs the NSC on "U.S. and Coalition Objectives," but Bush shows little interest in abstract principles and organization charts. Next day, Rumsfeld and Franks bring a top-secret "Pre-Decisional Draft" of the war plan, so labeled to avoid legal requirements of disclosure to Congress. U.S. forces total 208,000, including 137,000 on the ground, with the last 50,000 due within two weeks. Coalition forces, mostly British, number 44,000. Rumsfeld wants to give Saddam a 48-72-hour warning to step down. The CIA believes Saddam can be kept from sabotaging bridges and oil wells, but Rumsfeld is skeptical. When Franks presents satellite photos of 24 high-collateral damage targets, Bush declines to pick targets as Johnson had in Vietnam. Card sees Vietnam lurking behind the military's "cover-your-ass" need for a political scapegoat. When Pope John Paul II's personal envoy declares Iraq will not be a just war and will not make anything better, Bush is certain it will. At a prime-time news conference on March 8, Bush reiterates the standard charges and says they have reached the "final stages of diplomacy." Pressure is building from conservatives and on Capitol Hill to quit frittering time away.



# Chapter 31

## Chapter 31 Summary and Analysis

Saul tells Tim enthusiastically war is near. Tim at "Pistachio" base in the foothills and his team at "Jonestown," on the mountaintop, feel stranded. Reports flow in too fast to evaluate and transmit but Saul demands ever more detail and verification. The brothers and the Pope worry about detection and PUK adversaries are harassing them. One day, a ROCKSTAR is captured during a call and appears days later on television, clearly tortured, to confess his treason. Owning a *Thuraya* phone becomes a capital crime, and 30 of the 87 owners are never heard from again.

On March 8, Rice learns from David Manning, Blair's NSA, the British press is calling the Prime Minister "Bush's poodle," and Blair makes it worse by comparing himself to Churchill standing up to Hitler. Blair's Labour Party holds 413 seats in Parliament to the pro-war Tories' 166. They might be tempted to ally with Labour defectors to bring a vote of no confidence. Bush cannot afford to lose the man with the "cojones," because this will bolster Saddam and he will be blamed, so he calls Blair to see how best to push through a second resolution. Bush releases Blair from the coalition to keep him in office, but Blair refuses, appreciating the offer and the concern.

On March 10, Miller briefs the NSC on post-Saddam planning. Twenty-five thousand top Baath officials must be removed, but this is just 1% of all government employees. Records must be preserved to prosecute war criminals, and the rule of law must be preserved for relief and rebuilding to succeed. Justice and police personnel can provide a temporary government. Bush worries about resentment of Iraqi expatriates - Chalabi in particular - being installed by the U.S. Treasury Secretary Snow outlines plans for establishing a new currency purged of Saddam's image, and Bush approves propping up pensioners with U.S. dollars. That afternoon, Bush gathers his closest advisors to devise a reaction to the still uncertain U.N. vote. Bush can either tell Saddam to "get out of Dodge" or announce the start of military operations, because he has violated 1441. Gerson is told to prepare two speeches. Next day, Rumsfeld suggests to the press Britain may back out, and the British Embassy immediately protests, forcing a Rumsfeld clarification. On March 11, Rice issues a secret summary of conclusions to the principals and asks them to request revisions if anything does not match their recollections. The path towards democracy followed in Afghanistan will be implemented in Iraq.

On March 12, Bush and Gerson review the draft speeches. Bush is fed up with the U.N. Rice favors a simple, unambiguous announcement action is started. Cheney and Rove are told to contact the Tories to drum up support for Blair and war. At that day's NSC meeting, Feith talks about purging the Iraqi foreign ministry and intelligence service of Baath members and getting foreign nations to expel Iraqi diplomats and freeze assets. Powell volunteers to handle this. Saddam's special forces and militias must be disbanded, but the regular army can be depoliticized to serve as a reconstruction force.



Furloughing hundreds of thousands of soldiers will otherwise swamp the jobs market. Blair asks Bush to intercede with Mexico's Fox and Chile's Lagos. Rather than get back to Bush, Fox enters the hospital for back surgery, and Lagos refuses to vote for war. Bush phones Blair to report diplomacy is over.



# Chapter 32

## Chapter 32 Summary and Analysis

On March 13, Bush discusses the American backlash against France with Irish Prime Minister Ahern, and then tells his advisers he wants a summit with Blair, who fears ouster like Margaret Thatcher in 1980 and does not want a Bush ultimatum. On March 14, Bush announces agreement on a "road map" for Middle Eastern peace, another concession to Blair, and the White House says Bush will fly to the Azores to meet Blair and Aznar. Hadley gives Gerson bullet points for an ultimatum speech, influenced by Rumsfeld, and Bandar tells Bush the "U.N. dancing" is worse than war and attempts to rescue Blair are hurting friends, particularly Jordan's King Abdullah. Bandar wears an unkempt beard, which he vows not to shave until war starts. He hopes it comes soon, because he dislikes resembling bin Laden. Bush bristles at the taunt, and refuses to say why March 3 and 10 deadlines have passed. Bandar goes next to see Rumsfeld, who worries Saddam will do something the Russians and French can deem reasonable.

On March 15, a sleep-deprived Saul hears that after holding off sabotage for months while Franks completes his plan, CIA-trained and armed Kurds have blown up the Mosul to Baghdad rail line, but failed to warn the company to suspend trains. There are civilian casualties, contrary to Bush's command. Saul recalls how CIA operations during the 1980s in Nicaragua set off a firestorm in Congress, and prepares for an appearance. DDO Pavitt simply says, "Things happen in wartime." Several dozen other actions are launched, including bombings, vandalism, drive-by shootings, and pamphleteering. The sabotage is intended to focus the regime inward and create the illusion of insurgency, which Saul and others know is untrue. ROCKSTARS continue their deep penetration, providing useful data on anti-aircraft positions, the rigging of wells with explosives, the mining and defenses of the port of Umm Qasr, the intention of six Iraqi military divisions to stay out of the fighting, and the identity of Iraqi operatives planning attacks on U.S. interests in six countries. Double agents in the SSO have been fed false information on when and where war is coming, forcing Saddam to move resources accordingly. A double agent in the Special Republican Guard sets up false evidence of disloyalty in this key organization. Foreign bank accounts are frozen. Efforts to sabotage suspected WMD operations are less successful. They instead interrupt Baghdad telephones.

Woodward is troubled to hear from three sources CIA and administration intelligence on WMD is inconclusive, and consults colleague Walter Pincus, an expert on Iraq, who has heard the same. Woodward, therefore, prepares five paragraphs for a possible news story saying there is no "probable cause," no "smoking gun." Woodward agrees with Pincus and the *Washington Post's* national security editor his language is a bit strong but the sources are sound. Pincus writes a story published March 16, "U.S. Lacks Specifics on Banned Arms." Woodward still cannot reveal his sources' identities and has no reason to think their reservations reach Bush directly.



# Chapter 33

## Chapter 33 Summary and Analysis

The Azores, Portuguese islands in the North Atlantic, are chosen as a meeting place rather than Bermuda or London. Pro-war Portuguese Prime Minister Barroso hosts the closed-door session on March 16. Bush says war will start within days, lest public opinion worsen. They examine a summary of Chirac's pre-taped *60 Minutes* interview, calling for 30 days more of inspections. Bush rejects the delaying tactic and all agree, barring an unlikely breakthrough, to call down the second resolution at 10 AM ET next morning. Bush informs them he will give Saddam and his sons 48 hours to get out. They discuss how to react to a counter-resolution, which Bush promises to gladly veto, and postwar planning, including U.N. participation in the operation. Blair is given a draft of Gerson's ultimatum speech. At a news conference, but Bush then gets ahead of himself, describing a post-Saddam Iraq. Blair says the coalition is designating itself the enforcement arm of the Security Council for 1441. Bush throws in it is Saddam's decision whether there is to be war, France is keeping the world from holding Saddam accountable. After his fall, the U.N. can get "legs of responsibility back." Before nervously heading home, Blair returns Gerson's draft with requests it be phrased more conditionally. Rice worries British participation is touch-and-go. En route home, Gerson incorporates the British suggestions in a speech that recalls 12 years of diplomatic good will not reciprocated and insists every measure has been taken to avoid war. Invoking 9/11, it pledges to meet the threat now rather than later and to turn this age of terror into an age of liberty. Bush phones Howard, who pledges 2,000 Australian troops, and informs him if Powell's overnight lobbying fails, he will pull down the resolution in the morning and that night issue an ultimatum. Worried about domestic public opinion, Howard asks for one last official word. Bush promises to call.



# Chapter 34

## Chapter 34 Summary and Analysis

In Washington on March 17, Rice politely declines India's offer to mediate while Bush concentrates on heading off a counter-resolution that could gum up the works. He asks Aznar to push Lagos to reconsider, because maintaining the stalemate in the Security Council is critical now. Aznar in return asks Bush to call the popular King Juan Carlos I. Bush phones Blair, who is more optimistic about surviving the parliamentary vote. When, at the NSC meeting, Powell reports the French will not budge, Bush tells Franks Op. Plan 1003 V should be ready to go in 72 hours -- although this is not yet the go order. Bush orders Press Secretary Fleischer to announce the resolution is withdrawn, and when he does, the press corps stampedes to report. Bush calls the Spanish King, and the Bulgarian Prime Minister Gotha, who is concerned about appearing on the public list of coalition members. Bulgaria will permit overflight rights and WMD experts, but covertly. Rice informs Russian Defense Minister Ivanov of the 48-hour ultimatum and argues against elevating the next Security Council meeting to the ministerial level, opening Powell to attacks or being the only one absent. Rice also asks about reports that Iraq has critical Russian military technology. He is assured that it is out-of-date. Rice phones Secretary-General Annan to assure him the U.N. will have a *vital* role to play in postwar Iraq, "vital" being a thoroughly ambiguous term. Finally that morning, Rice calls Putin's Chief of Staff, Voloshin, to reinforce the argument against sending the foreign minister to the U.N. Bush runs through his speech three times, to experience the emotions the word will evoke, get to where he can drive through them, and finally control them and himself. Gerson gets chills hearing what he has written. In the afternoon, Bush calls Howard and Sharon, as Israel already knows about war. After rereading his speech, he playfully slaps Gerson over the head with it.

Bush schedules a meeting with congressional leaders, as promised. The French, he claims, have made a second resolution impossible and the time has come to move on. He will give Saddam 48 hours to leave or be removed, as authorized by Congress in 1998. He believes Saddam will remain defiant. Bush adds the new twist that, because the Iraqi generals are war criminals, the U.S. must invade, even if Saddam leaves. Ethnic cleansing must be prevented, WMD must be eliminated, and the Baath leadership must be dealt with. He predicts Turkey will eventually join them, but they can win without the Turks - and must keep them out of northern Iraq. When Bush excuses himself to finish preparing, Cheney and Rice field (or duck) questions. Bush holds a conference call with top officials responsible for dealing with domestic terrorism and the terror alert is raised to Orange/High. Senator Byrd (D-WV) reads a prepared text to Cheney and Rice opposing Bush's actions. He will support appropriations for the troops but not write a blank check. The administration has not been engaging Congress enough, Byrd concludes. Bush fumes about news tapes of him relaxing in the back yard with his dogs, as a violation of the rules of privacy and hardly the message he wants to send. Gerson tries to defuse Bush's nervousness, knowing the speech is anticlimactic.



Bush begins it awkwardly, as people now expect, but ends better than usual. One critic hails Bush's "funereal solemnity" and lack of bravado.

On March 18, Bush congratulates the new Chinese President, Hu Jintao, and thanks him for help dealing with North Korea. He phones Putin to tell him about Americans' anti-French sentiments and thanks him for not provoking anti-Russianism. Putin, who has troubles of his own, pledges Ivanov will not try to score propaganda points at the U.N. They agree the U.N. should be involved in postwar Iraq, and Putin hopes Bush can attend St. Petersburg's 300th anniversary celebration. At a senior staff meeting, it is announced public tours of the White House are suspended and medical teams are on hand for stress management. Budget Director Daniels tells Bush they need \$73.3 billion in supplemental appropriation for fighting and homeland security. Bush wants other projects put off to keep things "lean." Rice hears from her counterpart in Canada they cannot be part of a war but will keep rhetoric low. Blair delivers a one-hour speech in Parliament, which Bush deems tremendous. Blair's vote counters assure him he will win.

In Northern Iraq, a ROCKSTAR in the SSO claims they have located Saddam, but he will likely be gone within an hour. The agent, named ROKAN, runs security at Dora Farm, code named *Umidza* ("slaughterhouse"/"house of butchery" in Arabic), used by Saddam's wife. ROKAN's phone has geolocation, which is forwarded to Tim. Backed by the self-important brothers, Tim orders ROKAN to stay on the line while he reports to Saul. Saul has Pavitt alert all stations to an effort to take Saddam out. Tenet briefs Bush and Rice at 4 PM, but Bush is preoccupied with the British elections. At 5:15, Bush learns Blair has won. At 6:15, former Secretary of State Kissinger tells Bush one cannot cock the gun and not pull the trigger. Rice agrees. Bandar resents not getting a heads-up about Bush's speech and requests an audience. Bush promises Bandar will be the first to know and asks for his continued trust. A frantic Bandar asks him not to back off.



# Chapter 35

## Chapter 35 Summary and Analysis

On March 19, Bush calls Blair in high spirits and talks about how people follow the "slipstreams" of true leaders. Even on secure phones, they talk in code. At the morning briefing, Tenet reveals the ROCKSTAR information, but Bush is preoccupied with the order he is about to issue. When the NSC has nothing more to say, a link is opened to Franks and nine senior commanders. All proclaim they are ready to go. Bush invokes God's blessing on Operation Iraqi Freedom, commencing with stealth operations at 9 AM ET/5 PM Iraqi. Tears well in Bush's eyes, and he leaves. He later recalls the emotion of the moment as he walks alone in the Rose Garden, praying for the troops and his own strength to do the Lord's will. He returns to phone coalition leaders to say, "We're launching!" Adrenaline rushing, Bush tells Rove the order is given.

Tim receives added information about Dora Farm. A significant security detail, food, and supplies suggest a family gathering. Saul confirms the report on overhead imagery and concludes Saddam may be there. Bush advises Home Security Secretary Ridge and New York City Mayor Bloomberg of the coming war, praises their preparedness, and suggests they keep an eye on tunnels, bridges, and the Jewish community. At 11:30 AM, as SFO teams launch into Iraq from Saudi Arabia, Bush discusses oil with top energy advisors. The Saudis have promised to stabilize the crude market, which now is awash, driving prices down. No one knows how many Iraqi wells are wired to explode, and ex-oil man Bush points out the big difference it makes whether explosives are set high or low in determining how long a fire will take to control. Word comes after 12:30 PM Rokan has seen Saddam leave for meetings and expects him back to spend the night with his sons. Saul cuts the 100% guarantee back to 99%, allowing for murkiness. By 1 PM at least 31 SOF are in Iraq and the White House watches if news agencies will detect the movement. An hour later, nothing has been broadcast. Poles seize a key oil platform in the south and Australians move into the west. Denmark pledges a submarine and naval escort. Bush tips all of these leaders a change in pace is coming and he will keep them informed.

Top CIA officials go to the Pentagon to discuss Tim's data with Rumsfeld, who believes Dora Farm is a good target. Bush is dining as Tent lays out the story and shows photographs. Saul puts the chances of getting Saddam at 75%. Meyers proposes using 15-17 Tomahawk cruise missiles, but Bush is skeptical. Tim gets out of the frantic Rokan Saddam is due back at 2:30-3:00 AM Iraqi time. There is a *manzul* in the bunker. Tim interprets the word as "bunker," and sends a flash message to Washington. Bush worries about messing up Franks' plan or exposing the SFO teams. They phone Franks, who orders the Navy to program missiles on Dora Farm, but insists they not fire them during the 48-hour ultimatum period. That could cost the U.S. the moral high ground. Hours later, Franks reports the Tomahawks are ready. After 4 PM, the latest ROCKSTAR data reach the Oval Office, Hadley and McLaughlin sketch the farm's layout, and Bush thinks to have Powell summoned. At first, Powell hangs back, but





begins offering pros and cons, and concludes it is worth taking a chance to decapitate the regime. Rumsfeld and Cheney concur. Bush has questions about killing women and children being used, as in 1991, as a propaganda coup. Rumsfeld and Meyer assure him Iraqi propaganda will make hay, no matter what the U.S. does. Meyer worries cruise missiles will not penetrate a bunker, so Franks is told to use 2,000-lb. Bombs. The group considers the downsides of Israeli preparedness and the security of the oil wells. The air campaign is not scheduled for two days. Fearing a set-up, Cheney calls in Libby. Everyone in the room favors an attack.

Meyers objects his F-117 aircraft cannot carry two EGBU-27 bombs and, even if they could, chances of success are only 50%. Franks orders two bombers fitted out and requests permission come by 7:15 PM ET, to get them in and out of Iraqi air space before dawn. The White House meeting discusses various mission considerations and Cheney says they do not have to announce it - any more than the covert operations currently in progress. Powell raises the "CNN effect" - the attack will be reported instantly. Bush feels compelled to announce an action that will claim lives. Hughes argues against it but Powell feels it is imperative. Cheney is displeased when Bush declares he will declare the war has begun. Gerson is called for the war speech at 6 PM. Bush kicks everyone out but Cheney, who believes unequivocally they should try to get Saddam. At the least, the attack will rattle him and perhaps disrupt the chain of command. The others return and Bush announces his decision, three minutes before Frank's deadline.

Gerson is baffled, when Bush explains that he is going after Saddam and his sons. Rumsfeld has "butchered" Gerson's speech to emphasize that they are in the "early stages" or war. Gerson adds an emotional reference to 9/11 emergency workers. Rice calls Israel, where Netanyahu already knows and hopes it will be "bloodless." She has Manning wake Blair and tell him about the change in plans. Bush claims to be comfortable and ready for the speech. As the F-117s near Iraqi airspace, radio silence begins. Bush is subdued and pale, when he receives the final text and reads it. Rice phones Bandar to come to the White House at 7:45, which is abnormally late. When a photographer meets him in the West Wing, Bandar guesses the war has begun. Rice conceals the Israelis know as she assures Bandar he is the first foreigner to hear. All hell will break loose at 9 PM, she says. Bandar promises his prayers before departing. He figures this time Saddam knows they want his head and worries he will use WMD on his neighbors. History is changing. At home, he sends a prearranged code to Abdullah and advises him to watch television.

Bush later recalls that long day and sleepless night. Rice updates him on eyewitness reports of a convoy entering the complex and the plan for the bombers' work to be followed by 36 cruise missiles programmed so they cannot be recalled. An hour later, with his "game face" on, Bush prepares to speak. Fleischer is suspicious about the day's extraordinary activity and wonders what he should do with the press. Card tells him, say a target of operations has come up and the war is beginning. At 9:30, cable news reports air raid sirens and antiaircraft fire, and Rice sends Fleischer to the podium at 9:45 to say the disarming of the Iraqi regime is begun and Bush will speak at 10:15. Meyer reports the F-117s have dropped their bombs but are not yet out of hostile



territory as Bush is being made up. Bush prays for the pilots. At 10:16, Bush announces the U.S. is leading 35 countries into times of peril. The forces will come home soon, but the campaign will not use half-measures. Rice assures Bush it is a good speech and tells him the pilots are safe. Bush again thanks God. Around midnight, Tim reports Saddam and his sons are at Dora Farm when it is hit, but their status is not known. Around dawn, Tim says Rokan and another ROCKSTAR are dead. Both of Saddam's sons are seen alive, and Saddam appears blue or gray, when he is dug out of the rubble and loaded into an ambulance. At 4:30 AM Tenet sends word to Bush they "got the son of a bitch," but Bush is not awakened. By 6:30 AM on March 20, it appears Saddam has survived. Bush calls Blair, whose prospects look good and who looks forward to shaping the world's agenda.



# Epilogue

## Epilogue Summary and Analysis

Mar. 20 is the first full day of the Iraq War. SFO have prevented Scud attacks and oil field fires. The Hybrid Plan condenses 16 days of bombing to just nine hours of "shock and awe" on March 21, after ground troops enter. Precise ROCKSTAR intelligence makes this possible. Wolfowitz is delighted, because it will counter the image of Americans making war from the safety of the sky. Cheney wants there to be no ambiguity about victory (as in the World War I armistice). On March 21, the Army's 3rd Infantry Division pushes 60 miles into Iraq against light resistance, and Bush crowds to Blair and Aznar. On March 22, Franks reports Iraqis are just melting away, but he worries his forces may be converging so rapidly on Baghdad they are open to WMD attack and rapidly adjust. On March 24, Putin commiserates with Bush's responsibility for massive human suffering, assuming the campaign resembles Russia's bloody war in Chechnya, which torments him. No one realizes the U.S. can wage war without the carpet- and fire-bombing of yesteryear.

Over the next week, unconventional militias and sandstorms slow the drive, casualty and POW numbers mount, and the media are negative. On March 28, Bush tells the NSC only winning matters. Powell recommends staying focused on the big picture and not letting the press draw them out on every battlefield development. On April 3, Rumsfeld tells the NSC they have shot off half the Tomahawk inventory, but gotten within ten miles of Baghdad and opened a small northern front. Two Republican Guard divisions can no longer fight, but mobile vans are keeping Iraqi television on the air. Bush becomes morale officer to the world leaders, telling them he knows when fellow Texan Franks is telling the truth. They are prying Saddam's fingers off Iraq's throat. Lawyers warn Bush not to talk about terrorism, lest this prejudice war crimes trials. On April 9, Franks reports moral is high, the locals remarkable, enemy formations crumbling, and the regular army battered. Franks omits mention of Fortress Baghdad, a refugee crisis, and finding no WMD. Mention of 30,000 Iraqi casualties worries Rumsfeld, because numbers stick in people's minds and raise questions.

On April 9, the Iraqi government collapses as Army and Marine forces enter Baghdad and help civilians topple a statue of Saddam. Television captures it live, but Bush worries the crowds are small. Bush tells Aznar it is too early for victory dances, because the northern third is in enemy hands, and believes they have killed Saddam and a look-alike, but they are searching the tunnels and caves. It will take a while to sort things out. On April 10, Adelman gloats in an op-ed piece Iraq has been a "cakewalk," as he had predicted and admonishes naysayers like Scowcroft. Cheney is so pleased he invites the Adelmans to a dinner party with Libby and Wolfowitz on April 13, and they hurry home from Paris. Wolfowitz laments not taking Saddam out in 1991, and Cheney remarks the trauma the Shiites underwent when the U.S. abandoned them leaves Iraqis worried it will happen again. Adelman lauds Cheney as the Cadillac of presidential advisors. Cheney says after 9/11 Bush had to concentrate on Afghanistan but knew



immediately he would soon turn to Iraq. Adelman recalls how JFK put off major initiatives to a second term because of his narrow electoral victory, but Bush has the guts to push forward. Bush is different - focused - Cheney insists. Libby is amazed anti-war forces have been bested. All chuckle when Powell's name comes up, and they talk about how he likes publicity. Wolfowitz admits Powell's speech had been effective and he had signed onto the team. Cheney, however, insists Powell remains a problem. Rumsfeld, they agree, is a true brother, and Adelman recalls how difficult it is to write speeches for him. Rumsfeld once revised a Pericles quote and insisted that is what the Athenian general ought to have said. Cheney says bringing democracy to the Middle East is driving Bush, and Wolfowitz and Cheney are certain WMD will be found.

On May 1, Bush dismisses his own advice about avoiding victory dances, dons a flight suit, and lands on the USS *Abraham Lincoln* to announce, "major combat operations in Iraq have ended." A large banner appears behind him, reading, "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED." Gerson pulls out the stops, linking Bush to D-Day, FDR's Four Freedoms, the Truman Doctrine, and Reagan's challenge to the evil empire. They have turned the tide on terrorism. In May, L. Paul "Jerry" Bremer, III, becomes head of the Coalition Provisional Authority. An exhausted Franks retires after being criticized by some subordinate generals and Jay Garner is given equal status with him as head of the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance. Franks turns down a post on the JCS and signs a book contract, vowing not to produce a gossipy exposé of his buddy Rumsfeld. Powell spends months on the defensive for failing to oppose war more forcefully. Visiting Iraq and seeing Saddam's mass graves, Powell is delighted the rotten regime is gone. Armitage too is dispirited by Rice's making foreign policy dysfunctional, but Powell urges him to "soldier on." He spills his complaints face-to-face to Rice who, in October, receives new authority and responsibility for rebuilding Iraq, and is angered when Armitage's criticisms surface in the *Washington Post*. Powell defends him, feeling Rice spends more time finding someone to blame than fixing problems. Relations between Cheney and Powell deteriorate to where they cannot speak. Powell sees the Bush Administration dangerously protective of its bad decisions in Iraq. Powell never perceives a Cheney-like fever in Rumsfeld, and Franks sees detachment in Rumsfeld's drive. In a 2003 interview, Rumsfeld tells Woodward no one with sense would want war, he had agreed with Bush's approach and decision, but cannot recall if Bush asked him formally should he go to war. Bush later says he had instead asked Rumsfeld about his confidence in Franks, the war plan, and the various technical pieces. Rumsfeld believes Bush is a superb executive, like Reagan, carrying the burden of decision-making well, not worrying about decisions after making them, because he invests the time up-front.

Tim realizes he has lived every operation officer's dream. He reaches Dora Farm on March 24 to find it picked clean and cratered. The suspected bunker is a food pantry. Tim tracks down some ROCKSTARS, who tell of savage retributions. Reassigned to CIA headquarters, Tim is asked to write down the sequence of events on March 19-20, but cannot make full sense of it. Tenet's handpicked weapons expert and 1,400 inspectors fail to find WMD, claiming sabotage hinders their work. Rice downplays WMD for an outcome Bush likens to postwar Japan. Violence and insurgency, however, are claiming hundreds of U.S. and Iraqi lives.



Woodward interviews Bush for this book twice over December 10-11, 2003, submitting in advance a 21-page chronology of meetings and decision points he wants to explore. Woodward asks first about the decision to go to war. Cheney, Bush insists, is neither hero nor villain, just a loyal Vice President, thoughtful but not talkative. On Saddam's threat, Cheney is a rock. Unlike Blair, hate letters from survivors of the war dead raise no doubts in Bush. He cannot recall receiving any specific help from his father, because this is a different war. Bush appeals for strength to God the Father rather than his earthly father. Bush concedes it would be a poignant moment in history, presidential father-and-son discussing war, but he cannot recall one. They simply share love and confidence. When Woodward brings up WMD, Bush claims he had been misled by neither intelligence agencies nor the country. Had Kay's revelations in October 2003 been available, it would have sufficed to get a U.N. resolution like in 1998, but history must some day judge. Saddam could have produced weapons very quickly using what has been found. Woodward suggests Bush's lack of candor about not finding WMD is harming his post-9/11 claim to be spreading a "voice of realism" about a long, difficult war on terrorism, but Bush responds they travel in different circles and no one has suggested this to him. Bush cannot understand why Woodward wants to discuss WMD in this book and elicits a promise his views will not appear in the *Washington Post* before the election. Bush claims he is prepared for a long haul stabilizing Iraq and cites success in areas planned for. Violence is the work of thugs, a mere 5%-10% of the Iraqi population, whose mentality is changing towards democracy. The media are not capturing this, however. This war and its aftermath is the "story of the 21st century." Bush has seen success during his Thanksgiving visit to the troops. Minorities know their rights will be respected. The record will show the war plan carefully targeted Saddam and his cronies and spared civilians. Bush says he agreed to this interview - and instructed Rumsfeld and others to do likewise - to get story told that America has changed how wars are fought and won and peace kept in the long run. Bush keeps a brick from Afghanistan to remind him casualties are inevitable in war, but he believes freeing a nation is worth the sacrifice.

On December 13, Saddam is captured, unshaven and disoriented, and next day Bush tells America a "dark and painful era is over," but cautions the violence will continue in Iraq. The ongoing fighting troubles Wolfowitz and missing WMD, but he hails Bush's courage in doing something long overdue. In three visits to Iraq, Wolfowitz finds troops morale as high as in World War II and Korea, and believes the Nazi-like, thuggish, and sadistic Baath Party needed to fall. The military campaign has been brilliant. Healing will be slow, as will be penetration of personal freedom throughout the Middle East, but Wolfowitz is certain it will occur, as it has in Eastern Europe. By contrast, Graham believes the war in Iraq is a serious error, because it takes the focus off al-Qaeda and Hezbollah, the real threats, backed by Iran, and gives them time to regenerate. The U.S. is at greater risk than before the war. Tenet should be removed for bungling the WMD intelligence, the CIA should be reformed, and Bush, who manipulates and hypes the data, must take responsibility for the errors, and be voted out of office in 2004.

Cheney begins 2004 confident and unrepentant about his WMD assertions, because the administration has connected the dots. Bush, he believes, does not waste time on trivia and his questions during the war planning had trickled down through the ranks to



build confidence in "The Man." Bush's faith in freedom and democracy will transform the Middle East. History, which deals in outcomes, will treat Bush well. Rove has come to love Cheney for his loyalty - greater even than the senior Bush, who breaks with Reagan when it is politically expedient. Having no further political ambitions, Cheney has no need to "cover his own ass," and can give pure advice. His depth of knowledge is unmatched and he knows how to work Washington. Rove agrees with Powell, however, Cheney suffers a "real fever" over al-Qaeda. Cheney is nervous being in the same place as Bush, feeling it gives al-Qaeda an opportunity to decapitate the government, so he absents himself to undisclosed locations. Rove says Bush laughs off suggestions Cheney pulls his strings, while he sees it being a political asset. In February 2004, Rove realizes ongoing violence in Iraq and acknowledgments by Bush and Tenet the intelligence might have been wrong are turning into a political negative. Still, the prospects of facing wishy-washy John Kerry rather than resolute anti-war Howard Dean makes Rove salivate. The Republicans have a trove of Kerry quotes contradicting one another and allowing them to claim if Bush is deceiving America about Iraq, so is Kerry, who had access to the same data. Rove believes he can inoculate Bush on the Iraq War and intends to try.

Powell and Armitage worry about Chalabi, who pretends to have Bush's support but is considered by most Iraqis a knucklehead. Chalabi may have hyped the WMD intelligence, and word is the CIA and Congress plan to investigate. Powell and Armitage work to soften the appearance - and reality - of unilateralism and arrogance in Bush foreign policy, but Armitage is wearying in the "mind-numbing" atmosphere. A friend suggests they are enablers for Cheney and Rumsfeld. While he believes Iraq will be pacified, Armitage sees the U.S. military stretched too thin and worries the Democrats will rebound in the 2004 elections.

With 85% of the work complete, Kay confesses to Congress prewar WMD intelligence is wrong, stockpiles will not be found, and public confidence must be restored by coming clean. Bush initially opposes bipartisan calls for an independent inquiry, but later seizes the opportunity to broaden it to include Iran, North Korea, and Libya, and keeps its report from being published before the election. Cheney lobbies to keep intelligence issues out of the campaign season and Bush ducks reporters' questions about the report's timing. Powell is surprised when Kay bolts from the CIA and examines his congressional testimony, which shows the U.S. has gone to war based on a set of facts entirely different from what he had believed. When Powell is interviewed by *Washington Post* editors, he defends Bush's war decision but wavers on whether he would have recommend the invasion had he known there was no real and present danger from WMD stockpiles. Powell knows Rice and Bush will be "mad" about the resulting story and stunning headlines, and the message from the White House is clear indeed: "Get in line," which he does. Powell knows Bush will not throw him or Tenet overboard and expects no one beside Kay to jump ship. Bush is circling the wagons.

It takes Tenet a long time to come to grips with the enormity of his problem, but by November 2003, looting and destruction make finding an answer on WMD impossible. Kay's defection puts Tenet in a bind. Afghanistan has taught him the press can go after the CIA with impunity, and someone has to be held accountable. The agency is trying to



determine how mistakes have been made. On February 5, 2004, Tenet gives a rare public speech, disputing Kay's statement and calling for there to be no penalty for being wrong - for freedom to warn at any cost. al-Qaeda will attack again, massively. Powell's reaction to the speech is "Holy shit!" and feels let down. Tenet backs away on the bases for the "slam dunk." Bush congratulates Tenet on the speech. Rice is more troubled by the failure to find WMD than by the process of going to war. Given her closeness with Bush, Rice could have warned him to moderate his categorical statements, but Bush after the August 26 "no doubt" statement had followed Cheney's line. In 2004, Bush explains to Rice his concerns the WMD controversy can 1) lead to a demoralizing witch-hunt like in 1975-76 and leave the CIA risk-averse, and 2) hamper future Presidents faced with preemption. On February 6, Bush tells the press he is appointing a nine-member commission to find out why prewar intelligence has not been confirmed on the ground. He praises the "dedicated professionals" working to defend America against secretive, ruthless, resourceful enemies. The report is due March 31, 2005.

Woodward identifies Bush's conviction he decided correctly on Iraq as the theme that emerges from all his interviews. Bush relates he had once told Rice he is willing to risk losing a second term over Iraq. The upcoming election will be a judgment on the war, but history will judge its true impact. Woodward reminds Bush of Rove's view history is measured by outcomes. Bush smiles and says, "We won't know. We'll all be dead."



## **Characters**

**George W. Bush**

**Dick Cheney**

**Colin Powell**

**Donald H. Rumsfeld**

**Gen. Tommy Franks**

**Saddam Hussein**

**Ken Adelman**

**Richard L. Arrmitage**

**Prince Bandar bin Sultan**

**Osama bin Laden**

**Tony Blair**

**Hans Blix**

**George H. W. Bush**

**Andrew H. Card**

**Ahmed Chalaby**

**Douglas Feith**

**Michael Gerson**





**Stephen J. Hadley**

**Michael V. Hayden**

**I. Lewis Libby, Jr. ("Scooter")**

**John McLaughlin**

**Major Gen. Victor E. Renuart, Jr. ("Gene")**

**Condoleeza Rice**

**Karl Rove**

**Saul**

**George Tenet**

**Tim**

**Paul Wolfowitz**



# Objects/Places

## Afghanistan

The mountainous country between the former Soviet Union and Pakistan, where al-Qaeda terrorists establish training camps, hosted by the fundamentalist Muslim Taliban, which finally evicts the Russians after a long war, using sophisticated U.S. arms. Clinton attacks al-Qaeda sites using cruise missiles in response to attacks on U.S. interests, but after the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington, Bush orders in ground troops. CIA paramilitary units are first on the scene, passing targeting information for air strikes. CENTCOM commander Gen. Franks bases Iraq War strategy on the apparent success in Afghanistan.

## al-Qaeda

An ultra-fundamentalist Muslim organization founded by Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda forms training bases in Afghanistan, which U.S. President Clinton attacks using cruise missiles in retribution for attacks on U.S. interests, including 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing, the 1998 East Africa embassy bombings, and the 2000 attack on the U.S.S. *Cole*. Following the September 11, 2001, attacks on New York and the Pentagon, President Bush orders ground forces into Afghanistan to capture the culprits behind them, and while the military and CIA interrupt al-Qaeda's operations there, they fail to capture bin Laden.

## Axis of Evil

The pithy phrase in Bush's January 29, 2002, State of the Union address, "Axis of Evil" is first suggested by conservative author David Frum as a means of linking Saddam and 9/11 as an "axis of hatred." Speechwriter Michael Gerson changes it to "axis of evil" to make it more sinister, suggest the world is on the road to Armageddon, and evoke Reagan's "empire of evil" speech. Adding North Korea and Iran by name helps mask war planning and covert operations in Iraq. It suggests many things to journalists, including a hit list, but for most it evokes, as the principals hope, America's three World War II enemies, and Reagan's standing on the moral high ground labeling the USSR an "evil empire."

## Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

Unlike diplomats and military officials, the CIA is authorized to pay people off, and Tenet has tens of millions of dollars available for securing support from the Kurds. Tim recruits informants high up in the regime, code named ROCKSTARS, who raise the level of information to heights previously unimagined, but Tenet's assertion intelligence makes the case against Saddam a "slam dunk" creates doubt about the agency's veracity as in



1975-76, and an independent inquiry is ordered, to be reported out after the presidential election.

## **Crawford Ranch**

The 1,600-acre Texas home to which Bush frequently retreats, the ranch features a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) equipped for secure video links. A critical briefing with CENTCOM commander Franks in person and the principals remote take place over Christmas vacation in 2001, and all the internal fights and airing of opinions by former U.S. statesmen - culminating in Cheney's virtual declaration of war before the VFW - occurs while Bush is vacationing in August 2002.

## **Deputies Committee**

The second-tier policy makers, the deputies consider and offer suggestions to the Cabinet-level Principals Committee chaired by Rice. The group, chaired by Rice's assistant, Stephen J. Hadley, includes Rumsfeld's deputy Paul D. Wolfowitz and Powell's, Richard L. Armitage. It is marked by passionate debate over how far and how fast to proceed against Iraq. They produce the August 14, 2002, draft National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD), "Iraq: Goals, Objectives, and Strategy."

## **Fortress Baghdad**

The ancient capital of Iraq, Baghdad is feared by some destined to be Saddam Hussein's final battle stand, and considerable planning goes into preventing this or mitigating civilian casualties among the 5 million people should "Fortress Baghdad" unfold. Much of the city is destroyed in the bombings that launch the 1991 Gulf War and as retribution for attacks against American interests in the decade before the 2002 Iraq War. Plans call for Army and Marine troops to drop in close to the city to prevent defenders from rallying there and fighting both outward and into the city center.

## **Gulf War**

George H. W. Bush's 1991 campaign to oust Saddam from Kuwait, the massive, broadly international war has no mandate to topple Saddam, and his violations of provisions for the cease-fire rankle for twelve years before George W. Bush determines to finish the job.

## **Kurds**

Some 150,000 divided into 40 tribes live along the common borders of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Turkey, and the former Soviet Union. No one is willing to allow them independence or nationhood. The Turks have been known to persecute them, while Saddam Hussein



massacres them, using poison gas, twice in retribution for supporting the U.S., which fails to defend them. Their support of a new Iraq War brings CIA paramilitary and case officers into Kurdish areas, promising rival leaders Massoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani things are different this time and distributing tens of millions of dollars among them.

## **National Foreign Intelligence Board (NFIB)**

A body made up of the heads of all U.S. intelligence-gathering agencies, the NFIB releases and certifies NIEs. CIA Director Tenet chairs the NFIB.

## **National Intelligence Council (NIC)**

A body representing the CIA, NSA, intelligence arms of the departments of Defense, State, Energy, and the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, the NIC researches National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) and sends them to the NFIB for certification and release, before they reach the President's desk. In 2002, Stu Cohen is the acting chairman of the NIC.

## **National Intelligence Estimate (NIE)**

Documents produced by the NIC and certified by the NFIB, NIEs give the President and his national security team an overall assessment of the capability and intentions of world threats. Evolving as strategic tools during the Cold War and later applied in Libya, the Balkans, Africa, Korea, and the Indian Peninsula, NIEs are structured to give busy policy makers a bottom-line answer upfront, in a 50-100-page executive summary, "Key Judgments." Authors often hedge and qualify their statements maddeningly. In preparing the NIE on Iraq's WMD, acting NIC chairman, Stu Cohen, is determined to avoid equivocation. Circumstantial evidence and history suggest to some analysts Saddam must have WMD, while to others a lack of solid evidence demands a negative verdict. McLaughlin and others favor daring to be wrong in giving clear assessments, and Tenet, who chairs the NFIB has faith in the analysts. They release a 92-page document on October 1, stating unequivocally in the Key Judgments, "Baghdad has chemical and biological weapons," but then telegraph immense doubts that come close to contradicting the flat assertion. It grows more tentative the deeper into the text one goes, but suggests a desperate Saddam might assist Islamic terrorists if that were to become his last chance for vengeance. Immediately, the NIE states, Iraq cannot be shown to have attacked any U.S. territory and lacks nuclear weapons or the ability to get one before 2007-2009. The State Department's intelligence bureau files an 11-page annex further downplaying the NIE's conclusions on nuclear weapons.



## **National Security Agency (NSA)**

The U.S. spy organization charged with tapping electronic communications - signals intelligence (SIGINT) on a \$6 billion annual budget, the highly compartmentalized NSA is directed by Lt. Gen. Michael V. Hayden, USAF.

## **Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA)**

National Security Presidential Directive #24 on January 20, 2003 establishes the nucleus for post-Saddam administration of Iraq, ORHA. Retired Army Lt.-Gen. Jay M. Garner is named head. Hadley has for months worked through the deputies committee to realize Bush's broad view of achieving democracy in Iraq. Douglas Feith envisions a cell that will enter Iraq as soon as possible to implement plans. Powell sees logic in having the Defense Department take the lead, forwards the "Future of Iraq" plan his department has been working on in parallel, and nominates Arab experts for the ORHA team. When Rumsfeld rejects them, the two secretaries resume their heated feud, but Meghan O'Sullivan and five colleagues are assigned to assist Garner.

## **Op. Plan 1003**

The Pentagon's massive, outdated war plans for Iraq, largely consistent with the strategy of the 1991 Gulf War, Op. Plan 1003 is deigned inadequate by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld for responding to the 9/11 attack, and CENTCOM commander, Gen. Franks, is ordered to make it smaller and faster. It becomes known as the "Generated Start Plan," meaning the full force is to be generated in the region before the fighting starts, at the fifth iteration. At an August 5 briefing, Franks introduces a new Hybrid concept, shrinking the front-end, dramatically. It has four phases, including establishing an air bridge in 5 days, drafting all necessary commercial U.S. aircraft, and 11 days delivering the initial force. It also calls for 16 days of air attacks and SFO operations, 125 days of decisive combat by two divisions, and stability operations of unknown duration. The Hybrid advantages are improved short-term capabilities and pressure on the regime to respond to the diplomatic front. Bush approves. The final plan is sufficiently pliant to allow a targeted strike intended to kill Saddam and his sons and to move ground troops forward before air strikes, which are shortened to a matter of hours rather than days.

## **Principals Committee**

On August 14, with Bush vacationing in Texas, Rice chairs a principals meeting to review line-by-line a draft National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD), "Iraq: Goals, Objectives, and Strategy."



## ROCKSTARS

The 90 Iraqi intelligence sources recruited by Tim, the ROCKSTARS include SSO officers providing personnel files encryption keys, and other hard data previously unthinkable in Saddam's closely monitored regime. Tim is pays out \$1 million a month for ROCKSTAR intelligence. NSA sends Tim 100 satellite telephones to call in real-time intelligence and ROCKSTARS distribute SIGINT transmitters around Baghdad, constantly facing the danger of discovery and liquidation. On March 18, 2003, a ROCKSTAR named Rokan, who runs security at Dora Farm, code named *Umidza* ("slaughterhouse"/"house of butchery" in Arabic), says Saddam is there. Rokan's phone has geolocation, which is reported to Saul, who has Pavitt alert all stations to an effort to take Saddam out. When it grows certain Saddam and his sons are on the property, Bush authorizes bombing and missile strikes ahead of schedule to decapitate the regime. Rokan dies in the onslaught and one of Saddam's sons kills another ROCKSTAR whom he declares a traitor.

## Saudi Arabia

Iraq's southern neighbor, Saudi Arabia is home to the two holiest mosques and the world's pivotal provider of petroleum. Bin Laden and most of the 9/11 terrorists are Saudis, but al-Qaeda is banned in the kingdom, presided over by King Fahd but administered in fact by Crown Prince Abdullah. In 1991, Saudi Arabia provided bases and staging points for the Gulf War to liberate Kuwait, and in 2002, worried about what will happen if the U.S. does not follow through and remove Saddam, cooperates again. Islamic fundamentalists continually criticize the Kingdom's dealings with the West, but Fahd balances this by pushing regularly for the West to reengage in settling the Israeli/Palestinian controversy.

## September 11 Attacks

Four coordinated airline hijackings by al-Qaeda operatives, two strike and demolish the World Trade Center in New York, another strikes and damages the Pentagon, and the fourth crashes in Pennsylvania, 9/11 gives a wake-up call to the new Bush Administration and leads to the Iraq War that topples Saddam Hussein. No proof is found that al-Qaeda is linked with Saddam, but Cheney demands he be eliminated before he can produce WMD and provide it to terrorists that will make 9/11 a footnote in history.

## Special Republican Guard

The Iraqi forces responsible for guarding the Presidential Palace and government buildings in Baghdad.



## Special Security Organization (SSO)

The Iraqi forces directly responsible for protecting Saddam Hussein.

## Turkey

The only Muslim member of NATO, Turkey takes part in the 1991 Gulf War but balks at allowing the U.S. to establish a northern front in 2002. Like Saddam Hussein, the Turks hate, fear, and to a lesser extent persecute the Kurds, whose dream is to establish an independent nation. The newly elected Islamic government in Turkey turns down Bush's request to let U.S. forces stage an invasion from their border.

## United Nations

The international body created after World War II as a stronger version of the body formed after World War I, the U.N. consists of two bodies, the General Assembly, in which all nations are represented, and the Security Council, which in theory enforces the U.N.'s decisions. The five great powers of the U.S., Britain, France, Russia and China are permanent members and enjoy veto rights on any resolution. The remaining members are elected on a rotational basis. Bush tells the General Assembly the U.S. expects the international body to act on Saddam, but specifies nothing. In October, Powell is directed to present strong demands that no member will support, and is gradually allowed to negotiate with the Franco-Russian clique that favors a two-step approach. First, they'll see if Saddam is hiding anything or not cooperating. If so, they'll decide whether war is justified. The original U.S. position is for a single resolution defining the situation and automatically triggering steps to enforce it. Wanting results before the midterm elections, Bush allows Powell to accept the French version, and On November 8, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 passes unanimously, including Syria, which is seen as a sign of Arab displeasure with Saddam.

## Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

The proliferation of chemical (CW), biological (BW), and nuclear weapons, or ability to weaponize peaceful components on short-notice is recognized by the CIA as a major threat to the U.S. under the Clinton Administration and passed on to the incoming Bush Administration. Egged on by Cheney and Rumsfeld, Bush long talks about Saddam wanting WMD, but does not claim he has them until Cheney's August 2002 speech before the VFW, offering a virtual declaration of war against Iraq. Franks believes Saddam has WMD and will use them on invading troops, so he procures protective suits and wants to improve intelligence for targeting WMD facilities. He is able, however, to differentiate suspicion from knowledge, in ways the obsessed Cheney cannot. Bush, too, is now talking about Saddam's WMD as fact. In the wake of the rapid military advance, no WMD are found.



# Themes

## Terrorism

George W. Bush declares formal war on terrorism after four al-Qaeda teams coordinate airline hijackings on September 11, 2001, two strike and demolish the World Trade Center in New York, another strikes and damages the Pentagon, and the fourth crashes in Pennsylvania, but under his predecessor, retribution has been meted out for individual acts of terror. Bush begins by searching out and destroying al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan using conventional ground troops and precision air and missile strikes guided by U.S. Special Operations Forces, who themselves are trained in and employ methods of terrorism, including random bombings, drive-by shootings, kidnappings, assassinations, and other acts intended to unbalance regimes. From the start Bush - and more so Cheney - want to topple Saddam from power, but find no proof of any link between the Iraqi regime and the 9/11 attack to justify invasion. Cheney pushes the line that the U.S. can and must preempt further - and worse - terrorism by keeping weapons of mass destruction out of terrorists' hands. Bush puts teeth in the Reagan-era doctrine that any country harboring or aiding terrorists is a terrorist state subject to retribution. Rhetorical terrorism by the U.S. leads to physical attacks by al-Qaeda in Bali, Kuwait, and Yemen. Operation Iraqi Freedom, the result of 18 months of planning for a "shock and awe" attack - a conventional military term for instilling terror by the sheer massiveness and speed of attack - begins by blowing up a railroad line and covert paramilitary actions intended to destabilize - terrorize - the regime.

## Religion

George W. Bush and his chief speechwriter, Michael Gerson, call themselves evangelical Christians and readily include religious materials in speeches. The phrase "Axis of Evil" is intended to suggest the world is on the road to Armageddon, the epic end-of-times battle between God and Satan before Jesus Christ's Second Coming. These fundamentalists face off against Islamic fundamentalists who accept Jesus as a prophet, but not The Prophet, and who see the presence of "infidel" Western troops in Saudi Arabia, home to the two holiest mosques, as sacrilege, a resurrection of the medieval Crusades. The 9/11 terrorists and al-Qaeda terrorist-trainees in Afghanistan believe they die as martyrs for the same God whose blessings Bush invokes on the U.S. forces he orders into Iraq. Michael V. Hayden, Director of the National Security Agency (NSA), believes Roman Catholicism blesses "just wars," but Pope John Paul II's personal emissary tells Bush this is not a just war. *Plan of Attack* deals only inferentially with both sides treating the conflict as *jihad* (holy war) and depicts Bush as maintaining he respects Islam, while wishing to rid the Middle East of such sociological phenomena as women's inequality remade in the image of 21st-century America (overlooking the U.S.'s earlier history). Religion is never in focus in the book but never out of sight.





## Honesty

*Plan of Attack* is rife with dishonesty, deceit, and disinformation. Clearly, Bush takes office determined to finish his father's work by toppling Saddam, but initially bides his time, pushing through the massive tax breaks he had promised his followers in the narrow 2000 election, and then attacking al-Qaeda's training camps in Afghanistan. While this honest engagement in the war of terror is under way and succeeding, Bush, Rumsfeld, and Franks covertly produce a war plan for Iraq. Cheney becomes obsessed with proving an improvable link between al-Qaeda and Saddam. He puts forth the conditional syllogism that terrorists armed with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) will be far more deadly than the 9/11 terrorists. He also says that Saddam has in the past used WMD on his own people and not lived up to U.N. demands to disarm and submit to on-site inspections. Therefore, Saddam is a terrorist, who must be taken out. The top men in the CIA know this is dishonest, but essentially say nothing. Administration rhetoric becomes more dire and bellicose, but the extensive covert planning goes on, reaching the point of implementation, which the Saudis and Kuwaitis dare cooperate with only under deep cover, lest fellow Muslims condemn them. Powell tries to be honest throughout, pointing out the dangers of breaking Iraq and thereby owning it, destroying America's international image, and inviting further attacks. The other principals are, as he fears, trigger happy - but vigorously and piously deny it. When, after the initial military success, insurgency boils and no WMD are found, Bush "circles the wagons" rather than admitting their deceit and postpone the release of a report by independent investigators they cannot avoid until after the presidential election, removing the facts from the debate, which Rove plans to center on proving Democratic opponent a waffler and dishonest.

# Style

## Perspective

*Plan of Attack* is a veteran investigative reporter's of how George W. Bush and his key advisors decided on and planned the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Author Bob Woodward has been a reporter at the *Washington Post*, where with colleague Carl Bernstein, he followed the trail from the Watergate burglars to Richard Nixon's Oval Office taping system. Having finished a book on America's invasion of Afghanistan in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, *Bush at War*, Woodward looks at the next step in the President's global war on terror. Bush is eager to get across to the American people - particularly in the 2004 election year, when the book appears - why he is right about going to war. He grants several extended interviews to the author and directs his advisors to cooperate. Woodward pulls this all together in the third person past tense as a detailed record of meetings, briefings, and conversations. On several occasions, most notably in the Epilog, Woodward writes in the first person, recalling specific interviews. The books is intended for rather sophisticated readers, probably with an interest in politics and/or current events.

## Tone

In *Plan of Attack* author Bob Woodward tries to keep journalistic objectivity, but it is clear he does not approve of the decision to go to war in Iraq in 2003, at least not based on the faulty intelligence the administration has received concerning weapons of mass destruction (WMD). He admits it several times, describing contemporary writing assignments for the *Washington Post*. Woodward describes eighteen months of interaction between intense type-A personalities, and does his best to find the good and the bad in each, including habits, predilections, blind spots, strengths, and weaknesses. He lets his characters talk about each other, which both boils the pot and allows him to remain neutral. Partisans and opponents of George W. Bush doubtless respond to this account quite differently, but Woodward does his job admirably. He collects a vast amount of information, collating and arranging it, and presenting it in a brisk and understandable manner.

## Structure

*Plan of Attack* consists of a Prologue, 35 numbered but untitled chapters, and an Epilogue. The body of the text is very much a journalist's chronicle of events, dated and even time-stamped in vast detail. Events in the White House (often offset to Camp David or Crawford, TX) alternate with the military buildup in the Gulf and covert CIA operations in the mountains of northern Iraq, showing the growing momentum towards war in clearly delimited, interwoven sections. Whenever applicable, Woodward quotes interviews with Bush and the principals to explain how they were thinking at various



points in the action. Much of the narrative, however, presents an amalgam of sources, assembled, evaluated, digested, and presented in clear language influenced by the outcome - continuing insurrection and the failure to find any WMD - but not overtly colored by it. Woodward is a professional journalist, informing readers how a situation plays out over some 18 months. Woodward writes so soon after the events he apparently thinks more background information need not be incorporated and assumes readers will know how the Middle East has become the caldron it is in 2001-2002. He deals at length with Saddam's mistreatment of the Kurds, but only alludes to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, the Iran/Iraq war, Iranian Revolution, and other key events. Some readers may find themselves needing to look up topics on the Internet to get the full effect, but the story is told clearly, forcefully, and fascinatingly.



## Quotes

"The Bush-Rumsfeld-Franks work remained secret for months and when partial disclosures made their way into the media the next year, the president, Rumsfeld and others in the administration, attempting to defuse any sense of immediacy, spoke of contingency planning and insisted that war plans were not on the president's desk." Prologue, pg. 3

"Rumsfeld argued for being clear-eyed. One passage foreshadowed problems to come: 'In fashioning a clear statement of the underpinning for the action, avoid arguments of convenience. They can be useful at the outset to gain support, but they will be deadly later.' He also had written, 'U.S. leadership must be brutally honest with itself, the Congress, the public and coalition partners.' And he added, 'It is a great deal easier to get into something than it is to get out of it!'" Chapter 1, pg. 19

"Rumsfeld was going to tune up the war machine everywhere 'What I did was I went to literally all of the area-of-responsibility geographic combatant commanders and said, 'Pull 'em out, let's look at them, let's put a priority order and we're going to compress this cycle so that they get done in a much shorter period.'" That meant starting with the assumptions, which most people don't,' he noted, 'and most people start with a plan that's there and then tweak it.'" Chapter 3, pg. 34

"Gerson remembered that when Cheney had joined the ticket in the summer of 2000, he had raised the connection between weapons of mass destruction and terrorism in internal campaign discussions. That was the real axis, Gerson believed. So he changed Frum's phrase 'axis of hatred' to 'axis of evil,' broadening the notion, making it more sinister, even wicked. It was almost as if Saddam was an agent of the devil. The connection between his regime with weapons of mass destruction and international terrorism could put the world on the road to Armageddon." Chapter 8, pg. 87

"So whether he allows the inspectors in or not, he is on the list to be attacked?' McDonald asked. 'He's the next target?' 'You keep trying to put - ' Bush said, then restarted his sentence. 'You're one of these clever reporters that keeps trying to put words in my mouth.' 'Far from that, Mr. President.' 'Well, I'm afraid you do, sir. But nevertheless, you've had my answer on this subject.' The prodding took Bush into dangerous territory as he added, 'And I have no plans to attack on my desk.' Though technically true, it obscured the direct and personal nature of his involvement in the war planning." Chapter 11, pg. 120

"At the same time, Franks was improving his position below the radar, approaching the point where he would soon have two brigades on the ground in Kuwait and pre-positioned equipment for four brigades. Unknown to the reporters, Franks had already told the president that the big plan, Op Plan 1003, could be executed at any time, probably making it the 'official' plan, though he was still trying new ideas, juggling with a wide range of force levels, and in no way asking or recommending that it be approved or used." Chapter 13, pg. 130



"Powell detected a kind of fever in Cheney. He was not the steady, unemotional rock that he had witnessed a dozen years earlier during the run-up to the Gulf War. The vice president was beyond hell-bent for action against Saddam. It was as if nothing else existed." Chapter 17, pg. 175

"Asked about his position on the U.N. more than a year later, Rumsfeld said, 'We don't vote' in the NSC and added an insight about how he viewed the internal administration debates. 'What happens is discussion takes place, pros and cons are considered and we participate in those. The president then begins leaning in a direction. [Then] people say, well, if that's the direction, you need to understand that the alternative direction has these advantages and disadvantages and the one you're leaning toward has this advantage and disadvantage and begin anticipating the problems that can accrue.'" Chapter 17, pg. 181

"Saul was dumbfounded as he read it over. Not only were there many more in significant military positions, Republican Guard and elsewhere, but the group said they had guys in the Fedayeen Saddam, the thuggish paramilitary group led by Saddam's son Uday, and the Iraqi Intelligence Service and Special Security Organization - all right at the heart of the apparatus that made Saddam's rule possible and until now impregnable. "'Holy shit!' Saul muttered. 'If it is 50 percent bullshit, we've still hit a gold mine.'" Chapter 19, pg. 212

"Hayden directed the NSA staff to prepare a stoplight chart on the quality of SIGINT on the various categories of targets. Green was good, yellow mediocre and red nothing. What had the U.S. military been doing in the last decade? Northern Watch and Southern Watch. So it was green SIGINT on Iraqi air operations, air defense and air command and control. It was yellow, but not a very good yellow, on the Republican Guard and the regular Iraqi army. On Saddam and the political leadership it was red. It was also red on the special Security Organization and Special Republican Guard. "The bottom line: SIGINT quality and quantity out of Iraq was negligible." Chapter 21, pg. 217

"The agency's October national estimate that had concluded that Saddam has chemical and biological weapons had been out for more than two months; the congressional resolutions supporting war had passed by a nearly 3 to 1 margin; and the United Nations Security Council, where a weapons inspection resolution had passed 15 to 0, was engaged in active inspections inside Iraq. Still something was missing." Chapter 24, pgs. 244-245

"It was an extraordinary moment. The president was asking, almost imploring his secretary of state, his most senior cabinet officer and the most visible administration figure other than himself. There was no salesmanship, just a question: yes or no, up or down. "I'll do the best I can," Powell answered. 'Yes, sir, I will support you. I'm without you, Mr. President.' "'Time to put your war uniform on,' the president said to the former general. He could wear his diplomatic hat, that was fine, but things had changed." Chapter 25, pg. 271



"In the days after, Bush routinely repeated Wiesel's comments. 'That was a meaningful moment for me,' he recalled later, 'because it was a confirming moment. I said to myself, Gosh, if Elie Wiesel feels that way, who knows the pain and suffering and agony of tyranny, then others feel that way too. And so I am not alone.'" Chapter 30, pgs. 320-321

"Democratic Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia then read from prepared remarks, basically opposing bush and what he was about to do. 'I stand four square behind our military. I will support appropriations for our troops. People need to know costs and reconstruction plans, but there are unanswered questions. I don't support a blank check with grandiose plans.' He warned of mission creep and threats here at home. Finally, he chastised the president and vice president for not engaging enough with the Congress." Chapter 34, pg. 370



## Topics for Discussion

In light of the "build-up" toward war, discuss Rumsfeld's view at the start of the Bush Administration, when he says, "It is a great deal easier to get into something than it is to get out of it!"

Can "God" bless both sides of a conflict like Operation Iraqi Freedom, as their leaders ask?

Discuss the effectiveness of Colin Powell in the role of the "Reluctant Warrior."

Discuss the effect of Dick Cheney's "obsession" on the path to war.

Discuss Hans Blix image in the book. Does the Administration deal with him fairly?

Discuss whether Congress and/or individual legislators live up to its constitutional responsibilities in this book.

How does marketing control the buildup to Operation Iraqi Freedom?

What makes the phrase "Axis of Evil" effective?