

THE DECISION TO NOT INVADE BAGHDAD (PERSIAN GULF WAR)

BY

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ABSTRACT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Brief History of the National Security Council.....	2
Bush Administration	4
Decision Makers.....	4
The Bush Presidency.....	9
The Persian Gulf War.....	11
Bush Decision Timeline.....	12
Decision Making Perspectives.....	13
Rational Actor (RAM).....	14
Cognitive.....	17
Domestic Politics.....	19
Groupthink.....	22
The Decision to not Invade Baghdad.....	28
Conclusion.....	33
Recommendation.....	33

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THE DECISION TO NOT INVADE BAGHDAD (PERSIAN GULF WAR)

On December 20, 1989, I was on staff duty at the 82nd DIVARTY headquarters at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. This time when the phone rang, it wasn't business as usual; it was the 2-319th DIVARTY commander calling in a situational report (SITREP) on the airborne assault in to the Republic of Panama. I wrote down three pages of information on legal size sheets of paper and Operation Just Cause had commenced. After I took down the SITREP and reported the information to my superiors, I resumed my duties and thought to myself that I had missed that conflict and that the next major conflict would probably be 10 or maybe even 20 years post Operation Just Cause. I was totally wrong in my analysis!

After taking command of the 21st Chemical Company, 82nd Airborne Division, in Feb 1990, I found myself in route to Saudi Arabia in August 1990, in support of Operation Desert Shield and later Operation Desert Storm; seven months after the invasion of Panama. My entire unit deployed with the exception of my Rear Detachment, of which a small element deployed just before the ground war. Everything started to move so fast that I then understood the importance of "training like you intend to fight" and the importance of command and control and discipline; especially when you're responsible for young soldiers with claymore mines, fragmentary grenades, and small arms ammunition on a C5 flying over the Atlantic Ocean.

This is not about my command experiences during Operations Desert Shield/Storm although some may find them quite interesting. It is about the road to war at the highest levels of US government. The National Security Council (NSC) is the highest level of interagency operations in the US. By being on the receiving end of US foreign policy, I was troubled that we chose not to invade Baghdad and oust Saddam Hussein when we had the momentum and enough forces in country to do the job. Kuwait had been liberated and the coalition held together, but Saddam Hussein remained in power. Why was Saddam left in power? Why didn't we go to Baghdad? Was the decision based upon a decision making model where all the alternatives were weighed and the best

alternative selected, or was it based upon who was most influential or was it, solely, the President's decision to not go any further?

This case study begins with a brief history of the NSC and a summary of how President George H. W. Bush organized his NSC followed by an introduction of the Bush administration decision makers. Next is an overview of the Bush Presidency and the Gulf War. Finally, in an effort to determine why the US decided not to invade Baghdad, the Bush NSC decision to go to war is analyzed against four decision making perspectives (Rational Actor Model (RAM), Cognitive, Domestic Politics and Groupthink) to determine the dominate Bush NSC decision making style (an explanation of each will follow later in the case). As a tyro, an analysis of the decision at the February 27 Bush NSC Cease-Fire meeting, using the most likely used decision perspective, to determine why the US did not invade Baghdad.

Brief History of the National Security Council

Since the end of World War II, each presidential administration has set out to develop and perfect executive institutions to facilitate the management of national security policy. Each President has attempted to benefit from the problems and mistakes of his predecessors' and implement a tailored policy-making and coordination system reflective of his personal management style. The NSC has been at the center of this foreign policy coordination system, but it has changed many times to conform to the needs and inclinations of each succeeding chief executive.

The National Security Act of July 26, 1947, was the most extensive reorganization of US foreign policy in the nation's history; it had three primary components. The Department of War was replaced by the Department of Defense where the Army, Navy, and Air Force came together as one. The NSC was created to coordinate the foreign policy process and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to oversee the collection, analysis, and distribution of information about other countries and international developments relative to the United States [1].

The structure and functioning of the NSC depended in no small degree upon the interpersonal chemistry between the President and his principal advisers and department heads. But despite the relationships between individuals, a satisfactory organizational structure had to be developed, for without it the necessary flow of information and implementation of decisions could not occur. Although a permanent staff gradually began to take shape, the main substantive work occurred in the departments.

On January 30, 1989, President Bush issued National Security Directive 1 (NSD 1), establishing his new NSC system. The formal council was supported by two key NSC subgroups: Principals and Deputies Committees. The Principals Committee consisted of the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Director of the CIA, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the President's Chief of Staff, and the National Security Advisor who chaired it; other officials as needed. This committee was the major organizational change that Bush wanted to make in the operations of the NSC. The Principals Committee was the NSC without the President and the Vice President with the purpose of clarifying issues and positions before meeting with the President.

The Deputies Committee (DC) was chaired by Deputy National Security Advisor and included the second ranking official from each of the agencies represented in the NSC. The mission of the DC, as outlined in NSD1, was to analyze issues, consider views and options, and do risk analysis on all options. Additionally, the DC was given another mission for crisis management in an amendment to the NSD1; the later is how it worked the majority of the time.

The formal structure of the NSC was one thing on paper but another in action. The Bush NSC system was largely personality driven which was a direct reflection of the President's operating style. It consisted of a collegial group of individuals gathered around the President who directed it. It was highly personalized and informal. During the period from 1989 to 1990, the NSC met more frequently than in 1991 (four times) and 1992 (three times). The DC did not have the same informal luxury. The DC was the indispensable part of the NSC system that convened at least 160 times in 1990. It was effective for two reasons: it included a small group of ranking individuals who could

make things happen and the participants had direct access to their principals for policy and guidance.

The final distinguishing characteristic of the Bush NSC was its role as the *honest broker*. Operationally, the honest broker role meant that the secretaries were comfortable with the National Security Advisor as the chair of the Principals Committee, and the Deputy National Security Advisor chairing the DC. The system was designed to allow the departments and agencies a chance to be fairly heard. This impartiality did not mean that the National Security Advisor and staff had no opinion but that their opinions would not affect the process [2].

During the Bush administration the NSC played an effective role during such major developments as the collapse of the Soviet Union, the unification of Germany, and the deployment of American troops to Panama for Operation Just Cause and in Iraq for Operations Desert Shield and Storm [3].

Bush Administration

Decision Makers

Although Bush sometimes made decisions alone or in one-on-one interactions, he also had decision-making groups of the members of the NSC. The group of four was the smallest decision making group, which consisted of the President, Vice President, National Security Advisor (NSA), and the White House Chief of Staff (WHCS). The NSA and WHCS would meet with the President daily, after the early morning CIA briefing and during staff meetings throughout the day, often with the Vice President present. The NSA would focus on security questions and the WHCS on political questions, especially in the domestic arena relating to Congress. The President would use these meetings to prepare the agenda for the group of eight.

The group of eight met less frequently. It consisted of the group of four, the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), and

the Deputy National Security Advisor (DNSA) who provided the link to the deputies committee [4].

The Group of Four

PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH: COMMANDER IN CHIEF AND CHAIRMAN, NSC

President Bush's election was the completion of a long and broad public career ranging from Republican Chairman of Harris County, Texas; Member, United States House of Representatives; Ambassador to the United Nations; Chairman, Republican National Committee; Envoy to China; Director, Central Intelligence Agency, and Vice President for eight years (Reagan Administration). His extensive career in foreign policy provided the framework for his leadership and his selection of the remaining appointed members [5].

VICE PRESIDENT JAMES DANFORTH QUAYLE

James Danforth Quayle was the 44th Vice President (1989 - 1993). He served two terms in both the US Congress and the Senate. During his tenure in the US Senate, Quayle did legislative work in the areas of defense, arms control, labor, and human resources. He served on the Armed Services Committee, the Budget Committee, and the Labor and Human Resources Committee.

In August 1988, at the 1988 Republican National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, Bush called on Quayle to be his running mate in the general election. This decision was criticized by many who felt that Quayle did not have enough experience to be the President should something happen to Bush [6].

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR GENERAL BRENT SCOWCROFT

Brent Scowcroft was the US National Security Advisor under Presidents Gerald Ford and Bush and a Lieutenant General in the Air Force. He also served as Military Assistant to President Richard Nixon and as Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs in the Nixon and Ford administrations. In the course of his

military career, Scowcroft held positions in the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Headquarters of the Air Force, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. Scowcroft had served in the Kissinger NSC and had been National Security Adviser in the last years of the Ford administration. Finally, he chaired the President's board examining the Iran-Contra scandal. Scowcroft's direction of the NSC was distinguished by the informality but intensity of the relationship with the President [7].

The Gulf Crisis helped to increase Scowcroft's influence in the Bush administration. The need to coordinate both military and diplomatic policy prevented James Baker or Cheney from dominating the stage alone. Scowcroft served as Bush's counselor, sounding board, and very often, speech writer. The evening before Bush gave the speech announcing the dispatch of soldiers to Saudi Arabia, Scowcroft and his Middle East deputy stayed to the early morning hours revising the speech [8].

WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF, JOHN H. SUNUNU

John Henry Sununu, PhD, was a former Governor of New Hampshire (1983 - 1989) before becoming Bush's first White House Chief of Staff (1989 - 1991). He earned a Bachelor of Science in 1961, a Masters in 1963, and a PhD in 1966 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); all degrees were in mechanical engineering. Sununu was known as an enforcer and was very harsh. He made many enemies both within and outside the administration and the Republican Party. From 1963 until 1983, he served as President of JHS Engineering Company and Thermal Research, Inc. and as chairman of the Coalition of Northeastern Governors. From 1968 until 1973, he was Associate Dean of the College of Engineering at Tufts University and Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering. Finally, he served on the Advisory Board of the Technology and Policy Program at MIT from 1984 until 1989. [9].

The Group of Eight

As previously mentioned, the members of the group of four are inclusive in the group of eight. The remaining members of the NSC make up the group of eight:

SECRETARY OF STATE JAMES A. BAKER, III

James Addison Baker III served as the Chief of Staff in President Ronald Reagan's first administration after serving as campaign manager in the 1980 Republican primaries, and Secretary of the Treasury (1985 - 1988) in the second Reagan administration. He served as Undersecretary of Commerce under President Ford in 1975 and ran Ford's unsuccessful re-election campaign in 1976. During the Reagan administration, Baker also served on the Economic Policy Council, where he played an instrumental role in achieving the passage of the administration's tax and budget reform legislation package in 1981. Baker served on Reagan's NSC, and remained Treasury Secretary through 1988, during which year he also served as campaign chairman for Bush's successful presidential bid. Bush appointed Baker Secretary of State in 1989, in which position he continued to serve through 1992, being awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1991. From 1992 to 1993, he served as Bush's White House Chief of Staff [10].

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RICHARD B. CHENEY

Richard Cheney's political career began in 1969 as an intern during the Nixon administration. The intern Cheney then joined the staff of Donald Rumsfeld, who was then Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity (1969 - 1970). He held a number of positions in the years that followed: White House staff assistant in 1971; assistant director of the Cost of Living Council (1971 - 1973); and Deputy Assistant to the President (1974 - 1975). From 1973 to 1974, Cheney also worked in the private sector as vice president of Bradley, Woods, and Company, an investment firm.

Under President Ford, Cheney worked initially as Assistant to the President and then later as Ford's Chief of Staff. Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld successfully pushed for Bush to replace William Colby as the Director of the CIA, forging what would become a long-term relationship with the future president.

In 1978, Cheney was elected to represent Wyoming in the US House of Representatives. He was Chairman of the Republican Policy Committee from 1981 to

1987 when he was elected Chairman of the House Republican Conference. The following year, he was elected House Minority Whip. Cheney was reelected five times, serving until 1989. Bush initially chose former Texas Senator John G. Tower to be his Secretary of Defense however; when the Senate, in March 1989, rejected his nomination, Bush selected Cheney.

Cheney generally focused on external matters and delegated most internal Pentagon management details to Deputy Secretary of Defense Donald J. Atwood, Jr. He worked closely with Pete Williams, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, and Paul Wolfowitz, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. For chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Cheney selected General Colin Powell.

Cheney met regularly with Bush and other top-level members of the administration, including Baker, Scowcroft, Sununu, and Powell. When not at the White House, Cheney was often on Capitol Hill working with Congress. In general, Cheney got along well with Congress and with the Department of Defense's main oversight committees in the House and the Senate [11].

ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT AND DEPUTY NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR ROBERT GATES

While at Indiana University, Robert Gates was recruited to join the CIA. However, the CIA offered no exemption from the draft during the Vietnam War and therefore spent from 1967 to 1969 in the Air Force as an officer in the Strategic Air Command, before joining the CIA full-time as an intelligence analyst. Gates left the CIA in 1974 to serve on the staff of the NSC and returned to the CIA in late 1979. He was named Deputy Director for Intelligence in 1982 and Deputy Director of Central Intelligence from 1986 to 1989. Gates was nominated to become the Director of Central Intelligence in early 1987 but withdrew his name after it became clear the Senate would reject the nomination due to controversy about his role in the Iran-Contra affair. Gates was Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from March until August of 1989, and was Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Adviser

from August 1989 until November 1991. Gates was nominated (for the second time) for the position of Director of the CIA by Bush on May 14, 1991 [12].

CHAIRMAN, JCS GENERAL COLIN L. POWELL

Colin Powell became President Reagan's last National Security Advisor, from 1987 to 1989. He retained his Army commission as NSA and after his tenure with the NSC was promoted to four stars General under Bush where he served as Commander-in-Chief (CINC) of the US Army's Forces Command (FORSCOM). He was selected by Cheney to serve as the 12th Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. During his tenure, he oversaw 28 crises, including the invasion of Panama in 1989 to remove General Manuel Noriega from power in the invasion of Panama and Operation Desert Storm in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. During these events, Powell earned his nickname, "the reluctant warrior." He rarely advocated military intervention as the first solution to an international dispute, and instead usually prescribed diplomacy and containment [13].

Bush's NSC members had a wide range of experiences ranging from executive, legislative, and state government to military service. Each member not only had very diverse backgrounds but shared a commonality in many of the NCSs' executive positions. This commonality of experiences provided a network of vast knowledge and maneuverability within the government (Figure 1).

The Bush Presidency

The tenure of Bush (1989 - 1993) coincides with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, which represents a transition from one era to another. The ideas and policy issues that dominated the past era were the strategy of containment, the iron curtain, military intervention against revolution, mutual assured destruction, a bipolar global distribution of power and efforts to reduce the danger of nuclear war. President Bush ascended to the presidency bearing the fruits of the successes of policies over the past four decades.

President Bush was criticized and ridiculed for having little or no imagination when it came down to being a visionary. He was a pragmatist who displayed sober judgment in and out of office. His service in Congress before embarking on a notably outstanding career in the executive branch, first as a diplomat then Director of the CIA, and culminating as Vice President, would all serve him in great stead as the President. However, just when the Cold War ended and a new day was on the horizon, Bush was faced with the challenge of determining a new vision for US foreign policy. Bush managed foreign policy well, but failed to establish a new grand strategy. He adopted a no nonsense approach to dealing with problems as they arose, which was more reactive rather than preemptive and pragmatic.

	P	VP	SS	SD	NSA	DNSA	JS	WHCS	CIA	LS	SG	MS
Bush	X	X							X	X	X	X
Quayle		X								X	X	X
Baker			X					X				
Cheney				X				X		X	X	
Powell					X		X					X
Scow				X		X	X					X
Sununu								X			X	
Gates					X	X			X			X

Figure 1. Experience Matrix of the Bush Administration Decision Makers.

Legend:
 President-P
 Vice President-VP
 Secretary of State-SS
 Secretary of Defense-SD
 National Security Advisor-NSA
 Deputy National Security Advisor-DNSA
 Joint Staff-JS

White House Chief of Staff-WHCS
Central Intelligence Agency-CIA
Legislative Service-LS
State Government-SG
Military Service-MS

During the four years of his presidency he was faced with three problems that surfaced as a result of the ending of the Cold War: two humanitarian crises resulting from a descent into anarchy in failed or failing states, and one war triggered by an act of aggression in a region deemed US vital interest.

The Persian Gulf War

The Gulf War (1990 - 1991) was triggered when Saddam Hussein ordered his military to invade Kuwait in August of 1990, two years after the eight year Iran-Iraq war had ended. The war with Iran had nearly bankrupted Iraq and Saddam Hussein's best and only hope for economic recovery was to persuade the organization of oil exporting countries (OPEC) to raise oil prices. OPEC (under Saudi Arabia's lead) refused to do this which frustrated Saddam Hussein and triggered the invasion of Kuwait. This invasion of Kuwait also was a threat against the oil fields of Saudi Arabia, which lie across the Kuwait southern border. This act of aggression against US vital interest caused the Gulf War and drove the inside decision-making dynamics of the Bush NSC [14].

President Bush is best known internationally for leading the United Nation's (UN) coalition in the Gulf War. The broad coalition, in an operation known as Desert Shield, sought to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait and ensure that Iraq did not invade Saudi Arabia. Bush claimed that his position was summed up succinctly when he said, "This act aggression will not stand," and, "This is not a war for oil. This is a war against aggression." On November 29, the UN passed resolution 678 establishing a deadline that authorized the nations allied with Kuwait to use all necessary means if Iraq did not withdraw from Kuwait by January 15, 1991. On January 12, both the Senate (52-47) and the House (250-183) approved the use of force. Desert Shield commenced on August 2 to protect the stability of Saudi Arabia. Desert Storm commenced on January 17 to liberate

Kuwait and to eject Iraq out of Kuwait; and on 27 February, Bush declared victory and the liberation of Kuwait.

Bush achieved his stated objectives of liberating Kuwait and forcing the Iraqi withdrawal, then ordered a cessation of combat operations; allowing Saddam Hussein to stay in power.

Bush Decision Timeline

The following decisions are analyzed using an integrated approach that consists of presenting different perspectives in government behavior, testing them against the record, integrating their resulting insights into better explanations of government behavior, and bridging areas of theory that tend to be treated as separates. The uses of multiple perspectives cover key elements of government behavior and thus offer alternative, and often times competing, explanations. It is through this explanatory tension that one can gain leverage on government behavior and understand perspectives better [15].

The decision to go to war is an aggregate of all of the decisions below because they all contributed to going to war. Disaggregating the decisions provides an understanding of each one in the some context within the four decision perspectives:

- deploy forces to the Persian Gulf (August 3 NSC Meeting);
- reject the option of protecting Saudi Arabia in favor of reversing the invasion of Kuwait (August 5 statement made by Bush to the Press);
- move away from economic sanctions toward the use of force (October 11 NSC Meeting);
- demonize Saddam as Hitler-like, a sporadic decision made by Bush outside of the NSC;
- say that “the sand is running through the hour glass and that Saddam was even more brutal than Hitler” (November 1 statement made by Bush to the press);

- tell congressional leaders that Iraq will not be another Vietnam (November 30 meeting at the White House); and

- declare a cease-fire (February 27 NSC Meeting)

At the August 3 NSC Meeting, the US needed to be ready to use force and overturn Saddam. Baker and Powell had some reservations about using force and thought that the economic sanctions needed more time and that Saddam should be contained; Bush made a comment to Cheney that “lots of people were calling Saddam, Hitler.” On August 5, unbeknownst to advisors, Bush told the press that “the invasion will not stand” and on October 11, at the NSC meeting, it was determined that economic sanctions would not force Saddam to leave Kuwait.

Shortly, thereafter, Bush began to demonize Saddam as Hitler and made a statement to the press that, “the sand is running through the hour glass” and that “Saddam is more brutal than Hitler.” Then at a meeting in the Oval Office, Bush told congressional leaders that, “Iraq will not be another Vietnam” and finally, at the cease-fire, Baker and Scowcroft had some reservations about ending the war so quickly [16].

Decision Making Perspectives

Why the US didn't invade Baghdad during the Persian Gulf War is the question up for analysis. In an effort to answer this question, the decision to go to war is analyzed against four decision perspectives to determine the Bush NSC decision making style.

Existing approaches often advance just one perspective or model preferred by the analyst. While the model will vary with the analyst, most of us tend to use one model consciously or subconsciously when trying to explain government behavior [17].

The following perspectives are used in the analysis: Rational Action Model (RAM), Cognitive (C), Domestic Politics (DP), and Groupthink (GT). These perspectives were chosen because they are based upon different assumptions about what level of analysis is most crucial, what the direct or indirect goals or results of the central actor are,

and how the actor makes decisions consciously or subconsciously. For the sake of brevity, these perspectives are addressed at a basic level to promote understanding and to spark curiosity for future study or a more indebt analysis (Figure 2) [18].

Rational Actor Model (RAM)

The RAM is the faceless model that collects what occurs in states and treats them as unitary actors that make decisions in terms of rational choice. The rational choice approach is assumed to involve identifying objectives, options, expected consequences, and then making a rational choice. Rational choice assumptions are applied to different actors, including individuals, in what are sometimes referred to rationalist arguments however, in this paper it applies to the unitary state.

Perspective	Level of Analysis	Goal or Result	Decision Making Mode
Rational Actor Model (RAM)	Unitary actor/strategic context	Maximize perceived national interest	cost & benefits analysis
Cognitive	Human Mind/information processing	Simplify reality and decision making process	Schemas/analogies/biases
Domestic Politics	Politicians/domestic politics	Meet domestic objectives/distract public	Constrained by domestic concerns
Groupthink	Group of like minded decision makers	Defective decision making likely	Group dynamics

Figure 2. Decision Making Perspectives.

The strategic objectives of a state are derived from its perceived national interest. The model assumes that a range of plausible options are generated and considered in the effort to meet objectives. These considerations require that the consequences of each option be assessed. These consequences involve benefits and costs, which can be evaluated in terms of meeting objectives. The aspect of choice refers to value-maximizing behavior where the rational agent selects the option that ranks the highest in terms of goals and objectives, based on how it perceives them. In estimating the effects of options, the rational agent does not consider just a single moment, but rather recognizes that the cost and benefits of a single decision may be spread over time [19]. An actor will behave differently as the strategic context changes. If this changing context increases the perceived costs and decreases the perceived benefits of a certain alternative compared to others, that alternative is not pursued.

From the RAM Perspective, states are assumed to respond to perceived threats. The US perceived the following threats: Iraq's brutal attack record and its untrustworthiness; Iraq controlled 19% of oil reserves and by invading Saudi Arabia would control 44%; Iraq could become a regional power and blackmail Arab states to support Iraqi foreign policy; Iraq could threaten Israel; and Iraq could raise global oil prices to facilitate its WMD program.

These are the RAM alternatives: diplomatic pressure through the UN resolutions and broad coalition support; Bush's deliberate signal of US commitment by drawing the line in the sand; US waited five months to bomb Iraq while trying to work different alternatives, and rethinking the effectiveness of economic sanctions.

RAM Perspective Summary:

- Level of Analysis: Strategic Context (United States)
- Goal: Protecting vital national interests in the Persian Gulf (ensure the unimpeded flow of oil and protect Saudi stability)

- Decision Making Mode (Cost & Benefit- time factor):

- Sanctions take time and the US could not afford to wait
- Islamic Holy Month (Ramadan) affected the decision when to invade (Desert Shield)
- Diplomatic/ peaceful options exhausted and the cost of waiting for sanctions to work increased significantly
- Iraq's sizable stockpile WMD were in the area of US forces and each day that passed increased Saddam's WMD capability

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was viewed with trepidation in the US and around the oil dependent world. The invasion threatened longstanding US interest in the Persian Gulf region during a time of global change when US leadership was questionable. Desert Shield was motivated initially to protect Saudi Arabia that controlled 25% of the world's oil. By allowing Iraq to gain influence over Saudi oil would cause global economic instability and make Iraq more influential. The Saudi oil situation drove Operation Desert Shield however; a series of other concerns further explained why the US went to war. Over time, the US was concerned: Kuwait was disappearing as a country; the coalition force would fall apart; troop morale would be adversely affected, and that Ramadan would close the door to an opportunity for war. More importantly, the US believed that economic sanctions would fail, and that would give Iraq enough time to develop its nuclear capability.

The decisions to go to war were gradual after considering alternative options. The US tried diplomacy, economic sanctions and the threat of force; war was perceived to be the best option. The RAM Perspective allows a reconstruction of events on the path to war but it doesn't allow insight as to how the decision makers interpreted the crisis situations that they faced. The RAM Perspective misses very key parts of the picture. It fails to capture the reason for Bush's emotional rhetoric towards Saddam Hussein and his

emotional response in decision making. The Cognitive Perspective looks into the human mind for that missing dimension [20].

Cognitive

The Cognitive Perspective unlike the RAM gets into the mind of the decision maker. It focuses more attention on the individual and the RAM focuses on the behavior of a state as a whole. The Cognitive Perspective assumes that the decision makers are overtaxed, subject to onerous information-processing demands, faced with unreliable information and uncertainty, and under pressure. Instead of weighing the costs and benefits of different options, they consciously or subconsciously use mental shortcuts to make quick and easy decisions which boost their confidence levels. They seek ways to simplify reality to make it more manageable in their own minds and work off a central proposition that others are irrational. Cognitive shortcuts may include motivated biases which are deviations from rationality that stem not from limitations but from psychological pressures and needs. Additionally, they may include things as personal or organizational biases, subconscious preferences and priorities, assumptions about how the world works and systematic or one-time misperceptions; some of these shortcuts overlap and reinforce each other in their effects.

Exploring analogies is a good way to analyze this perspective. Much of cognitive psychology revolves around schemas, scripts and analogies so hence the treatment of the perspective. The Cognitive Perspective focuses on how decision makers create their own images of reality and simplify decision-making through the use of analogies. This is either a conscious or subconscious process that can produce over confidence in decisions.

The Munich and Vietnam analogies affected Bush. For Bush, compromising with Saddam had the same flavor as Britain trying to appease Nazi Germany in 1938. The British Prime Minister yielded Germany the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia at the Munich conference, a borderland area of German speakers that Hitler wanted to reintegrate into German. The Prime Minister believed that this action would appease Hitler and bring about peace to the region. Hitler still invaded Czechoslovakia and

Poland. Bush viewed Saddam through the Munich lens and often referred to Saddam as Hitler-like. Under the Cognitive Perspective, Bush was affected by the Munich analogy. The analogy made Bush more likely to personalize the conflict with Saddam, and push for a war alternative over economic sanctions.

The Munich analogy shaped the road to war and the Vietnam analogy affected the preparation and conduct of the war. Bush was emphatic about not making the same mistakes of Vietnam. The Vietnam analogy brought about at least four general lessons which helped leaders assess the costs and benefits of different decisions. The first lesson was to keep the public informed; the second was that soldiers, not politicians, should run a war; the third dealt with adequate military force, and finally, conflict resolution. The Vietnam War also served as an added impetus for a strong armed approach to dealing with Saddam in another way. This afforded Bush an opportunity to try to reverse one of the worst legacies in all American History.

Cognitive Perspective Summary:

- Level of Analysis: Human Mind (Bush)
- Goal or Result: Decision makers create their own images of reality and simplify the decision making style through the use of analogies
- Decision Making Mode (analogies):
 - Munich Germany Analogy (appeasement not an option)
 - Saddam more brutal than Hitler
 - Iraq not another Vietnam

The crisis and threats they generate are interpreted by human beings through the lens of their own biases. Analogies are ways individuals use to try to interpret and frame

events. Munich and Vietnam were two analogies that played a role in the crisis. Drawing on the Cognitive Perspective, it ruled out negotiations with Saddam or any other option to allow Saddam to back down graciously, and it helped to frame Saddam as a significant threat. It also made economic sanctions appear senseless and helped to make war preferable to Saddam's withdrawal. It was very evident that Bush had a personal reference to the Munich experience that caused him to take a far stronger stand than many others, and that options short of war were not given any consideration [21].

Domestic Politics

Through the RAM Perspective, Iraq is a major threat to US and global interest with the US as an actor that tried to choose the best alternative. Through the Cognitive Perspective our attention was drawn from the unitary actor to the individual with other motivating factors that emphasized the impact of analogies. These perspectives are useful however they can not address the possibility that the Bush dramatized the Iraqi threat for political effect or to meet personal and domestic goals.

The Domestic Politics Perspective (DPM) illuminates government behavior in the following ways: it explains how domestic political concerns can affect the plausibility of decision alternatives; it underscores the political motivations for some of the government behaviors that are observed; it highlights the potential for non-consideration of alternatives at any point in the decision making process, and it emphasizes that prior decisions and actions have lagged effect that influence how future decisions are made.

The DPM has four assumptions. The first assumption is that decision makers place a high premium on domestic level goals, and in particular on two types of goals. Type 1 refers to personal goals such as image enhancement and elect ability; to institutional goals involving party politics or benefits to the military industrial complex. Type 2 goals are more promotional. They revolve around preparing for or promoting a potentially favored alternative.

The second assumption is that decision makers see construction of international issues as useful in achieving both Type 1 and 2 goals. Decision-makers consciously try to

construct the reality they want others to see. They believe that hostile foreign policies adopted by their own country will create the perception of a foreign enemy that will produce internal cohesion, reduce political conflict and bolster support. The use of force is used to divert attention from domestic issues like a weak economy, high unemployment rate or public disapproval.

The third assumption is that efforts to construct an event to meet either Type 1 or 2 goals. These efforts can purposely or inadvertently indicate a leader's commitment to a certain alternative or to the avoidance of others; alter how advisers view the leader's position, thus less likely to recommend alternatives; foster an action-reaction cycle of construction that polarizes the atmosphere of interaction among nations, and make the adversary less likely to meet expressed demands for a peaceful course of action.

Finally, the fourth assumption explains how decisions are made. This assumption is that domestic considerations may influence how decisions are made at any time. If a certain alternative is unacceptable to the decision maker because it fails to meet one goal, then it is eliminated, even if it met a range of other goals. Being able to meet a range of other goals can't save that alternative or compensate for its failure to meet the domestic consideration.

The Cognitive perspective focuses on how an analogy can affect decision-making; the DPM goes much further in analysis. By constructing Saddam as Hitler-like and Iraq as a great threat served several Type 1 and 2 goals, each of which can directly or indirectly support why the US went to war.

After the Cold War ended there was a need to identify a new threat; Saddam Hussein would be that new threat. Institutionally, the armed forces and military industrial complex saw Saddam as justifying their continued existence and a passport for producing and selling more military weaponry, respectively. Personally, by taking a strong stand against the aggression would surely help Bush's image (wimp and lacked vision) and legacy which suffered during his Vice Presidency and were further exacerbated with his

selection of Quayle as a running mate, and finally by his inability keep his pledge to not raise taxes during the 1990 budget negotiations.

His one attempt at a vision was as a presidential candidate with a repackaging of the Republican brand of politics under the motto of “A Thousand Points of Light.” After he attained the presidency, he continued to try to create a vision but the world was in transformation with the ending of the Cold War Era. By reversing the Iraqi invasion and promoting a new world order could help to address the two major criticisms that surrounded Bush (non-visionary and wimpy).

The Bush administration was faced with a time consuming and politically damaging budget impasse with congress. On October 5, after months of negotiations, the House rejected a bipartisan agreement to trim the budget deficit over a five-year period. On October 24, the budget impasse ended in a compromise and President Bush could not uphold his pledge to “no new taxes.” On November 1, President Bush noted that Saddam was more brutal than Hitler which was viewed by both reporters and his advisors as an elevation of rhetoric against Iraq. From the DPM Perspective, the timeline raised questions, because the elevated rhetoric against Saddam seemed to coincide with budget problems which may have been an intentional diversion from a domestic problem.

DPM Perspective Summary:

- Level of Analysis: Domestic politics
- Goal or Result: Meet domestic objectives and distract the public
- Decision Making Mode (domestic concerns):
 - End of Cold War (new threat)
 - Justify existence of military industrial complex
 - Improve Presidential Image (lack vision & wimp)

- Bush's inability to keep pledge to not raise taxes

The DPM yields a different perspective of US behavior in the Gulf War Crisis. By late October the group of eight preferred war to Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. Bush was always prepared to go to war but had not committed to doing it. Bush's political interest and domestic politics made the alternative negotiated approach less favorable than it had been earlier in the crisis. "The negotiated alternative became all but a chimera later on, partly because of the feedback effects of Bush's own effort to construct Saddam; that made Bush more inclined to prefer war" [22]. This conclusion infers that if Bush's inclination was to go war, was this questioned by the group of eight? This question draws on the next perspective groupthink [23].

Groupthink

Groupthink is a concurrence seeking tendency that develops early in the decision making stage. Groupthink is most likely to occur in groups that are cohesive and amiable with a high degree of spirit de corps amongst its members. While group cohesion is a prerequisite other conditions must exist for sufficiency. These four conditions are: group insulation from outside sources of information that could challenge group beliefs; lack of tradition from impartial leadership; lack of norms requiring methodical decision making procedures for considering evidence and alternative options, and homogeneity of the members' social background and ideology.

These conditions promote the likelihood of Groupthink because they predispose group members to believe that before alternatives have been carefully evaluated, they should support the prevailing one. In addition, to the cohesiveness and four structural conditions there must also be a stressful situational environment because in Groupthink the stress in part tends to make members more cohesive. These conditions produce three types and seven defective decision-making symptoms which all lead to a very low probability of a successful outcome or non-negative results.

The symptoms by type are: Type I (Overestimation of the Group) - illusion of invulnerability, and belief of inherent morality of the group; Type II (Closed-mindedness)

- collective rationalization and stereotypes of out-groups, and Type III (Pressures Toward Uniformity) - self-censorship, illusion of unanimity, direct pressure on dissenters, and self appointed mind guards.

The seven defective decision-making symptoms are: incomplete survey of alternatives; incomplete survey of objectives; failure to examine risks of preferred choice; failure to reappraise initially rejected alternatives; poor information search; selective bias in processing information at hand, and failure to work out contingency plans.

The previous perspectives failed to look into the decision-making and group dynamics of the Bush's inner circle. The lack of this perspective is a blind spot as to how decisions were made and why the US went to war. President Bush's inner circle had a tendency to agree with each other without carefully considering the cost and benefits of various alternatives. Bush faced little to no opposition in the inner circle. Group cohesiveness was created by Bush who selected his friends to join his presidential cabinet. Cheney, Gates, Scowcroft and Bush had worked together during the Ford administration, and Baker was a very good friend and confidant. Scowcroft had known Bush since the Nixon Administration. The inner circle was composed of old friends who would periodically enjoy fishing and golfing together, and when the group would meet it was informal with feet kicked up and laughs rather than a sober formal review of options.

The first structural condition (Group Insulation) addresses insulation from the foreign policy community. The groups of four and eight were insulated from outside sources of information and opinions because they were structurally exclusive. The groups were insulated by design in order to avoid leaks to press. Bush's ability to press the war option was related to exclusive decision-making with the bureaucracy shut out.

The second structural condition (Lack of a Tradition of Impartial Leadership) exists when a leader does not feel restricted by any organization tradition to avoid pushing a preferred agenda. Under this condition, a leader is more likely to be partial and can be exercised through open pressures or through subtle constraints on open expression from other members of the group. So when a determined leader sets a course or direction

others are likely to follow with a reluctance to express, overtly, their doubts or consideration for other alternatives. From the beginning, Bush led others toward his unyielding view that Iraq would face a war if it did not withdraw from Kuwait. This posture took any other alternative off the table. Although, at times, Bush would encourage open discussions and debate, his approach did not require that each member do so; he never would assign a devils advocate to ensure the careful consideration of other alternatives.

The third structural condition (Lack of Norms Requiring Methodical Procedures) was evident in how the group of eight would conduct business. The group lacked procedures for evaluating alternatives. Powell described Bush as “in his early days as cautious and an information gatherer but in the Gulf Crisis impetuous.” This is reflected in Bush’s emotional statement that “the invasion would not stand” and his repeated use of the Munich analogy. Bush always knew what he wanted in advance of the group of eight meetings, either through independent or other smaller groups of inner circle members. Sununu stated that “a lot of opinion development took place on a one-on-one basis and then was firmed in the group of four meetings, before impacting the group of eight as a whole.” Scowcroft understood Bush better than any of the other group members and encouraged Bush to develop his views privately. He would spend much time meeting with Bush during which times Bush would test ideas and concerns. Scowcroft had access to Bush without appointment, regardless of the issue. Quayle stated that “if the president did not decide an issue immediately, that usually meant that Brent Scowcroft was going to get his way, and you could pretty much count on whatever position you’d just heard him argue being the one that would prevail.” This type of decision making increased Bush’s power. It decreased the unpredictability of group meetings and put the group on a course for consensus.

The fourth and final structural condition (Homogeneity of Members’ Social Background and Ideology) existed and contributed to group insulation. Bush and Baker were old Texas friends and Gates, Scowcroft, Cheney were all old government servants; all of whom had shared governmental experiences that covered two or more decades.

Finally, the stressful environment precondition from external threats existed but was not constant. The group was stressed with the possible invasion of Saudi Arabia during the arrival of the first arriving US forces. Also, the fear of whether the Saudis would grant access and maintain that access to U S forces and whether the US could develop and maintain a coalition caused stress. Scowcroft would stay up all night in the White House to the point he became ill with the flu. Bush would agonize over the potential casualties and knew that there were negative implications for all the members of the group of eight.

The second aspect of this stressful environment is a temporary lack of self esteem which may be rooted in recent failures, excessive difficulties in decision making that adversely affect self-efficacy, and moral dilemmas that violate ethics. These factors all contributed to Groupthink because they brought the group together to cope with the challenge. Bush's alleged wimp and no vision reputation and the budget debacle that caused him to renege on his pledge to not raise taxes affected Bush directly but how it affected the group's efficacy is unknown (accept that by Bush being the leader of the group, it undoubtedly provided the environment in which decisions were made). The group did face a moral decision to go to war but not to the point where they felt the option was unethical.

The group of eight was highly cohesive and the four structural conditions existed with a stressful environment. There were no votes or notes taken at meetings and few members challenged the consensus that developed on the decision to go to war. These conditions existed and generated Groupthink and its key symptoms of overestimation, closed mindedness, and pressures toward uniformity. An aspect of overestimation is a belief in the inherent morality of the group that its motives and actions were just. While there were some differences, the group of eight believed Saddam to be a transgressor who needed to be checked and punished. The closed mindedness of the group can best be reflected in the stereotyped view that Saddam was too evil to negotiate with.

The pressures toward uniformity are manifested in self censorship, an illusion of unanimity, direct pressure to any member who disagrees with the group, and the

emergence self appointed “mind guards” who protect the group from adverse ideas or information that can affect the consensus. Self-censorship or group pressure is indicated by the fact the members agreed with Bush despite their own reservations outside the group. Bush hated confrontation and preferred to generate consensus. Scowcroft and other members would screen the debated issue before it reached the President. This would inject direct pressure on group members putting them on the consensus building course. Bush would encourage debate on domestic issues but would avoid it on foreign affairs especially the Persian Gulf. Bush’s inherent inclination combined with his strong views and general mood of harmony and loyalty made members less likely to question him and created a peer pressure that made deviance from the norm very difficult. As Cheney put it, “while some disagreements arose, by and large the mood of the crisis was one of cooperation and moving in sync and agreeing 90% of the time.” At the second NSC meeting on August 3, Powell questioned whether it was worth going to war to liberate Kuwait, later admitting that the question was inappropriate. This is a clear example of the peer pressure associated with deviation from the consensus.

Groupthink can generate seven types of defective decision-making; all are not necessary to make a case. The most important symptom is that the group does not effectively discuss alternatives or options. This is problematic if a leader pushes his agenda on the group early in the decision making process. As noted by Scowcroft, “while the President and I talked about the crisis frequently and was on the same wavelength, no fait accompli was presented to the group, where alternatives were carefully evaluated on key decisions.” At the first NSC (August 2) meeting, some questioned the seriousness of the invasion and the necessity of a strong response. Although Powell argued that the US should defend Saudi Arabia but not to save Kuwait which caused US Ambassador Thomas Pickering to note that the US would lose credibility with allies and friends. At the second NSC (August 3) meeting, Scowcroft asserted that the invasion was a critical threat to US and global interest, “one that could not be tolerated and that accommodating Iraq should not be a policy option.” Lawrence Eagleburger and Cheney immediately signed on with Powell who set quietly and who preferred to protect Saudi Arabia rather than reverse the invasion.

On August 5, Bush asserted that “the invasion would not stand” thus eliminating the alternative that the US would allow Iraq to stay in Kuwait. This statement was made outside of the group setting further shaping the groups dynamics. Scowcroft was not consulted before Bush made the statement and was surprised at how early he had made the statement. Powell viewed Bush’s statement as altering US options from protecting Saudi Arabia to evicting Iraq out of Kuwait. This was a sudden change because the meeting at Camp David the weekend before focused on defending Saudi Arabia rather than evicting Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

From the beginning, Powell believed that the President should have looked at more than one option; he presented his case to the President on September 24 only to be rebuffed. Baker, like Powell, was concerned with the path to war. Baker had informed Powell that the State Department was working on a report that addressed the advantages of economic sanctions. Although these two members of the group had reservations about the road to war, other members of the group noted that their reservations were presented to members of the group on a one-on-one basis but never presented before the entire group.

Groupthink Summary:

- Level of Analysis: Bush NSC (like minded decision makers)
- Result: Defective decision making
- Decision Making Mode: Group Dynamics

The exclusive nature of the group of eight and the lack of decision-making procedures both contributed immensely to groupthink and the advancement of the go to war alternative. Although members in Bush’s inner circle wanted to consider other options, it was the Groupthink mindset that handcuffed them to remain with the group norm. The fact that the group of eight was all old friends created a culture of consensus and loyalty to Bush. This made the group extremely cohesive with insulated decision-making with no possibility of external appraisal. The combination of all the facets of

groupthink with no external appraisal tool created a low probability of successful outcomes or nonnegative results [24].

The Decision to not Invade Baghdad

Although there is some evidence that some aspects of the RAM, Cognitive, and DPM Perspectives were used during the decision to go to war, the dominate decision perspective used by the Bush NSC was Groupthink. The NSC decisions during the prelude to war used the Groupthink Perspective which infers that it was used to end the war.

The first structural condition (Group Insulation) addresses insulation from the foreign policy community. The group of four and eight were insulated from outside sources of information and opinions because they were structurally exclusive. The groups were insulated by design in order to avoid leaks to the press. Bush's ability to press the cease-fire option due to the media coverage of the decimation of the Iraqi convoy on the "Highway of Death" and the fear of losing coalition support caused exclusive decision-making with the bureaucracy shut out.

The second structural condition (Lack of a Tradition of Impartial Leadership) exists when a leader does not feel restricted by any organization tradition to avoid pushing a preferred agenda. Bush led others toward his unyielding view for a cease-fire as demonstrated by the slight uneasiness from Baker and Scowcroft to address the group of eight with other options

The third structural condition (Lack of Norms Requiring Methodical Procedures) was evident in how the group of eight would conduct their business. The group lacked procedures for evaluating alternatives.

The fourth and final structural condition (Homogeneity of Members' Social Background and Ideology) existed and contributed to group insulation. Bush and Baker were old Texas friends and Gates, Scowcroft, Cheney were all old government servants; all of whom had shared governmental experiences that covered two or more decades.

Finally, the stressful environment precondition from external threats existed. The group was stressed with the media coverage of the decimation of the Iraqi convoy on the “Highway of Death.” The second aspect did not change.

Groupthink Perspective Summary:

- Level of Analysis: Bush Feb 27 NSC (like minded decision makers)
- Result: Defective decision making
- Decision Making Mode: Group Dynamics

The three key symptoms existed along with the seven defective decision-making symptoms. Bush’s inherent inclination combined with his strong views and general mood of harmony and loyalty made members less likely to question him. The exclusive nature of group of eight and the lack of decision-making procedures both contributed immensely to Groupthink and the advancement of the only alternative (cease-fire).

Why was Saddam Hussein left in power?

Saddam Hussein was left in power because he survived the war. The objective was to target his communication command post and not to target Saddam Hussein. Had he been forward in one of his communication command post, he may not have been so lucky to survive.

Why didn’t the US invade Baghdad?

The decision to not invade Baghdad during the Persian Gulf War was never part of the grand scheme of the war. The UN only authorized the ejection of Iraq out of Kuwait and to inflict damage on Iraqi troops. Had the US gone to Baghdad, the coalition would have fallen apart because the Arab Coalition forces only agreed to go into Kuwait. It may have only been the United States and the United Kingdom left of the coalition for invasion of Baghdad.

Schwarzkopf: “If you remember the Vietnam War, we had no international legitimacy for what we did. As a result we, first of all, lost the battle of world

public opinion and eventually we lost the battle at home. In the Gulf War we had great international legitimacy in the form of eight United Nations Resolutions, every one of which said "Kick Iraq out of Kuwait", did not say one word about going into Iraq, taking Baghdad, conquering the whole country and hanging Saddam Hussein. That's point number one. Point number two, had we gone on to Baghdad, I don't believe the French would have gone and I'm quite sure that the Arab coalition would not have gone, the coalition would have ruptured and the only people that would have gone would have been the United Kingdom and the United States of America. And, oh by the way, I think we'd still be there, we'd be like a dinosaur in a tar pit, we could not have gotten out and we'd still be the occupying power and we'd be paying one hundred percent of all the costs to administer all of Iraq. Thirdly, I don't think we could have found Saddam Hussein if we'd done that. We forget the lessons of Panama. We had ten thousand Americans on the ground in Panama before we went into that very small country, we still couldn't find a fellow named Noriega, so what makes you think that we would go into a nation the size of Iraq and be able to find one person who has all the ability in the world to escape and hide and fly out of the country. But I think, more importantly, there's a strategic consideration. Saddam Hussein portrayed that war from the very beginning as "This is not a war against Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. This is the Western colonial lackey friends of Israel coming in to destroy the only nation that dare stand up to Israel that is Iraq". Had we proceeded to go on into Iraq and take all of Iraq, I think that you would have millions of people in that part of the world who would say Saddam was right, that that was the objective. Instead we went in, we did what the United Nations mandate asked us to do and we left and we didn't ask for anything. We didn't leave permanent military forces over there, we didn't demand territory, we didn't demand bases, and the Arabs became convinced that the West was willing to deal with them evenhandedly which has led directly, in my mind, to the progress that's going on at the peace table and between Israel and the Arabs and the Palestinians. It never would have happened if Desert Storm hadn't occurred. So the bottom line, as far as I'm concerned, is that sure, emotionally I would have loved to have gone to Baghdad and grabbed Saddam Hussein, but this was not an emotional decision, it was a strategic decision, and strategically we were smart enough to win the war and win the peace" [25].

Who was most influential?

Presidents Bush's most influential advisor was Brent Scowcroft. "He was also the person most clearly on the president's wavelength. He briefed the Bush daily, coordinated the administrations response on the Persian Gulf, and spoke for the president. He also had Bush's ear. Scowcroft's conservatism, his military background, and his previous national security experience oriented him toward a tougher posture in dealing

with Saddam Hussein than some of the president's other advisors, especially Secretary of State James Baker"[26].

Was a decision model used where all the alternatives were considered and the best alternative selected?

Strategically, the Bush NSC did use a decision making model on its decisions to go to war and to not invade Baghdad. The NSC decisions during the prelude to war used the Groupthink Perspective which infers that the Groupthink Perspective was used to decide to not invade Baghdad during the Gulf War. Although there is evidence that the RAM, Cognitive, and DPM Perspectives were used by Bush and some of his principals on a one-on-one basis however, when the NSC met, it used Groupthink.

Further evidence of the use of this perspective during the February 27 Bush NSC meeting was the slight uneasiness from Baker and Scowcroft of the quick decision to end the war. This suggests that peer pressure caused them to go along with the decision without looking at other options or alternatives.

Baker: "We have done the job. We can stop. We have achieved our aims. We have gotten them out of Kuwait;" but there was "unfinished business" about the future of Saddam Hussein's government and the embargo [27].

Scowcroft: "Deep down ... I wondered if we really had done quite enough, but I did not dissent from the decision, and did not argue that we should go another day" [28].

Finally, the cease-fire at Safwan was a direct product of Groupthink. The conditions of the cease-fire were drawn up by the field commander with very little input from the NSC. The guidance to the General Norman Schwarzkopf (field commander) was to write it. The field commander's focus was on military objectives and when it was sent to Washington for input, it came back with minor changes.

Schwarzkopf: "I talked about the objectives that we thought we wanted to accomplish there. Because I didn't have any terms of reference, I wrote my own. I sent them back to Washington and basically got them back unchanged" [29].

This undoubtedly caused some mistakes because the conditions of the cease-fire were not carefully worked out by the NSC. The decision to not force Saddam to Safwan for the cease-fire and the agreement to allow Iraq to fly their armed aircraft in an administrative mode were decisions that helped Saddam to regain his control of Iraq and to quell any rebellious attempts of having him overthrown as noted by Schwarzkopf and Scowcroft.

Schwarzkopf: "I went to Safwan and the President announced that we were going to discuss the terms of the ceasefire and so therefore, I went to Safwan with my own instructions which, basically, number one was to get our POWs back, and then number two to make sure that we had very clear lines drawn so that we didn't have any inadvertent battles after that" [30].

Scowcroft: "In retrospect, I think what we should have insisted upon is Saddam Hussein come to Safwan, that was our mistake, because that allowed him to blame his generals for the defeat, and not he himself. I don't know because history doesn't reveal its alternatives but I think it enabled him, or enhanced his ability, to proclaim he was betrayed and that he didn't really, he was not responsible for this defeat. Again in retrospect I think we probably left too much of the details of the armistice and those negotiations to the Field Commanders. In retrospect, it was probably a mistake. There's not a very deep reason because it was basically a military armistice and what they were concerned with was the disposition of troops, of contacts, the kinds of things one has to do to unravel a military situation, the kinds of things that crept through, if you will, which is not insisting on who would represent Iraq on a decision to let them fly their helicopters and so on, turned out to be mistakes. Well, it was a decision that came to General Schwarzkopf and they said, "Whole roads have been destroyed. We have to administer the country and therefore we'd like to be able to fly helicopters" and he said "Okay." I thought it was a mistake because I didn't care whether the country was administered that way or not and it gave him a great loophole because we would never know what a particular helicopter was doing in the air. But that decision was not reversed. I think it's probably supporting the commander in the field and his judgment" [31].

Groupthink is a concurrence seeking propensity that develops early in decision making. It is most likely to occur in groups that are cohesive and amiable with a high degree of esprit de corps amongst its members. As previously stated, Groupthink is a faulty decision making perspective because it fails to evaluate alternative solutions.

The decision to end the war was apparently made more quickly than the decision to go to war. It occurred in the Oval Office in which Bush and his principal advisors all agreed that the military objectives of war had been achieved. According to Brent Scowcroft, a critical factor that affected the decision was how the world would react to continued hostilities. The picture that would have come of the carnage on the road (highway to death) and fighter planes and tanks and artillery blasting people who were simply trying to get away would have left a bad taste on what was otherwise a brilliant operation [32].

Bush: “We don’t want to lose anything now with charges of brutalization, but we are very concerned with the issue of prisoners. The issue is how to find a clean end” [33].

The quick decision to end the war without addressing the conditions of the cease-fire and seeking additional courses of action were mistakes made by our government at the highest level.

Conclusion

The decision to invade Baghdad was never an alternative nor was it ever a part of the grand scheme of the war. The media coverage of the decimation of the Iraqi convoy on the “Highway of Death” didn’t help and the fear of losing coalition support drove the cease-fire.

The cease-fire at Safwan was problematic and a direct product of Groupthink. The conditions of the cease-fire were drawn up by the field commander with very little input from the NSC which undoubtedly caused some major problems. Saddam should have been forced to Safwan for the cease-fire and the Iraqis should not have been allowed to fly their armed aircraft. This allowed Saddam Hussein to regain control of Iraq and to quell any possible overthrows.

Recommendation

The US should have anticipated possible scenarios and established courses of action (COA) which would have facilitated the Iraqi people overthrowing Saddam

Hussein. The US along with the UN should have considered the future of the Iraqi people in the absence of Saddam and should have anticipated the second and third order effects of a regime change.

I recommend that a decision making perspective be used by each agency represented at the NSC. Each agency should use a decision making model to provide a recommended COA, to the NSC, based upon internal or presidential criteria.

The NSC should evaluate each recommended COA, against weighted criteria, established by the group, for final selection. This will ensure that the selected COA is the best option based upon the established criteria for the specific crisis and should, undoubtedly, eliminate any potential for Groupthink.

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