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War for Peace: Neoconservative Networks, Strategic Issue Framing, and the Making of a War

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When making his case for an invasion of Iraq in 2002-03, President Bush cited intelligence that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that posed a credible threat to US allies and interests in the region. Recent journalistic and academic work has demonstrated that, in fact, the Bush administration sought the deposition of Saddam Hussein before the intelligence community provided its faulty intelligence. Traditional models fail to explain the decision to go to war because they neglect the vital role of the president's advisory circle, in the case of President Bush a circle dominated by two men, Vice President Richard Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. This paper applies Jean Garrison's model of strategic issue framing to the war decision, arguing that the neoconservative movement, acting as a policy advocacy coalition, strategically framed the "Iraq problem" for these two presidential advisors after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 opened an opportunity window. Their domination of the advisory circle effectively preempted the decision making process, leading to only one likely policy outcome: forced regime change in Iraq.

This paper begins by considering various theoretical models that have been or could be applied to presidential decision making on similar issues, identifying the weaknesses that necessitate use of the framing model. Part II describes Garrison's three-component model and highlights its strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis alternatives. The nature of the neoconservative movement is also discussed, and the movement is codified as a policy advocacy coalition. Part III puts the puzzle together, analyzing the consonance of the neoconservative frame with the unique perspectives of Cheney and Rumsfeld, and identifies why alternative frames failed to resonate with (or even reach) these men. The conclusion summarizes the paper's findings and discusses consequences of this cognitive consonance.

I. The Need for a Cognitive Model

How do we understand the decision making process that led to the Iraq War? This question could be addressed using any of several public policy theories developed over the last century. One of the oldest, the pluralist policy model, focuses on the role of institutions that limit government power and force government to be responsive to citizens. Although some support the pluralist view that citizens have a decisive role in policy outcomes, many others have argued that the American system is in fact more elite-driven than the pluralist model acknowledges. Similarly, the power of the iron triangle of legislative committees, executive agencies, and interest groups is neglected by the pluralist model, and is particularly important in the case of defense policy. The pluralist model would suggest that the Iraq War flowed from the desires of the American populace, but evidence suggests that President Bush was interested in such prospects from his first National Security Council (NSC) meetings, and neoconservatives have been fighting for the deposition of Saddam Hussein since the 1990-91 Gulf War. Americans may have agreed to the war, but their decision makers had an invasion in mind long before the public became aware.

The policy sciences approach emerged as an alternative to the pluralist model on the heels of the behavioral revolution. This model assumes that policy making should embrace the scientific method and utilize the best in value-free scientific analysis.⁴ Unfortunately, analysis that is truly value-free is difficult to find, or even imagine. The blind faith that Karl Popper and his positivist followers placed in rationality and the scientific method is noble but misplaced; human behavior is usually neither rational nor scientific, and is guided by subjectivity, perception, and faulty intelligence. It would be a grievous error to assume that the intelligence community, for example, was producing value-free analysis of Iraqi ties to Al-Qaeda in 2001-03.

Unfortunately, the post-modernist and social constructivist models that emerged in response to the positivist policy sciences approach often went too far away from the scientific method. While policy makers are certainly not rational, and do not rely on scientific knowledge alone, they do rely on it in part, and would consider themselves rational if queried. Even if problems and solutions exist only as social constructions, they do exist, and these phenomena can be analyzed scientifically.

Two other models, focusing on organizations and bureaucratic politics, are also worthy of evaluation concerning the Iraq war decision. The organizational process model explains national policy outputs based on patterns of behavior within government organizations.⁵ Antecedent events trigger processes unique within each governmental agency as each conducts its own activity towards formulating an effective response. In response to the terrorist attacks, for example, the Iraq-specific response process could be traced from junior analyst to Secretary of Defense, and the ultimate output (invasion) predicted by the nature of the process. In the Iraq case, for example, the invasion outcome would have been determined by political pressure on analysts and managers to produce damning evidence of Al-Qaeda or WMD in Iraq, or as a result of the organization's informal rules and standard operating procedures. This model fails with the Iraq case because ample evidence exists that, in fact, the decision to invade Iraq was made *before* government organizations began building an intelligence case. The war was the product of decision-making at the very highest levels.

The bureaucratic politics model is related to the organizational process model, but considers the interaction of bureaucratic organizations within government. These theorists argue that bargaining games between government agencies determine policy outcomes. With regard to the Iraq War decision, this model focuses too much on inter-organizational politics at the cost of

the individual decision maker. Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, for example, played a powerful, indeed almost dictatorial role, in creating the Department of Defense (DOD) agenda and developing policy options within the Department. Rumsfeld's "transformation" of the DOD was not, for example, the result of bargaining and in-fighting, but rather a *personal* mission. In this instance, his experience with successful downsizing in the corporate world provided him with a successful model to follow. In terms of decision-making and strategy, Rumsfeld was more than the sum of the defense department's parts, and thus a better unit of analysis than the entire department. Although the bureaucratic politics model can be useful in analyzing organizations with weak leaders, the strong leadership offered by policymakers such as Rumsfeld demands an individualistic approach.

This study is constructed on the assumption that in the Bush administration, the individuals at the top are the more appropriate units of analysis. This does not assume, however, that individuals are rational, objective actors, nor that they enter the policymaking process with clean slates. The socio-cognitive approach, developed since the late 1970s, allows us to analyze individuals with flaws intact. "States (and organizations) are made up of individuals who act on their behalf. Ultimately, human cognition matters." People, unfortunately, suffer from cognitive constraints to rationality; reality is not observed and processed, but perceived and interpreted. These different (and constantly changing) perceptions and interpretations of the policy environment create a dynamic, multifaceted policymaking process.

Studies focusing on the decision-maker in US foreign policy analysis began as an empirical approach, analyzing a particular event or decision-maker. Ole Holsti has credited the powerful role of Kissinger with initializing much of this work in the late 1960s, supported by Allison's seminal work on the Cuban Missile Crisis and various studies of the Korean conflict.⁸

Although these studies laid the foundation for future work in political psychology, much of the early work was scientifically and theoretically light, drawing very little from the psychological discipline. While Holsti had previously advocated a cognitive framework, one of the first works to combine psychological theories with studies of decision-makers was Jervis's 1976 *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. 10

Jervis presented an excellent case for why and how policy-makers develop their perceptions, which in turn determines where and how a "misperception" will occur. In more recent studies based on Jervis's work, Gerber and Green have used misperception to reveal that policymakers often use inappropriate historical precedents to guide their decision, and Khong Yuen Foong's seminal work addressed the role of historical analogies in the cognitive process. Work based on these cognitive approaches has led to a more complete understanding of important historical events, such as the Korean War, the Cold War in general, as well as the decision making processes of individual policymakers, most notably during the Kissinger, Carter, and Reagan years. Another school, led by Jerel Rosati, has emerged that focuses on the psychological process of individual decision-making in order to understand policy decisions. These previous studies serve as examples of cognitive analysis of cases similar to the Iraq War decision, and identify important tools for cognitive research.

John Steinbruner posited a similarly complex understanding of the policymaker psyche with his cognitive theory in 1974.¹⁶ Building on the assumptions of the post-modernists, Steinbruner argued that policymakers perceive and interpret within a "psychological environment," or worldview. Although the initial development of the worldview or frame concept has also been attributed to Erving Goffman, many variations of the frame concept are in current use by social scientists.¹⁸ A frame is akin to the cognitive lenses through which we

observe an event; just as lenses color our world, a person's frame structures their understanding and interpretative processes. These approaches have been built upon by Jean Garrison in her analysis of the effectiveness of "strategic framing" by Vance and Brzezinski on Carter's decision-making. This study uses Garrison's approach, but where Garrison looked at advisors framing a policy for the President, this piece examines how well-placed neoconservatives framed the Iraq War for Cheney and Rumsfeld, who in turn dominated the presidential advisory process.

II. The Three Component Model

Unlike Garrison, I do not assume that foreign policy advisors have pre-determined views on each of the plethora of issues they must deal with on a daily basis. Just as Garrison assumed that Carter was open to framing on the Iranian hostage crisis issue, this paper assumes that Rumsfeld and Cheney were open to framing on the issue of the Iraq war. Although one could argue that these individuals had strong feelings about an invasion of Iraq going into the policymaking process, their own histories suggests otherwise. Cheney supported President George H.W. Bush's decision not to invade Baghdad in the first Gulf War, despite widespread opposition within the neoconservative movement. Indeed, Cheney stated his view quite clearly:

How many additional American casualties is Saddam worth? And the answer is not very damned many. We got it right, both when we decided to expel him from Kuwait, but also when the president made the decision that we'd achieved our objectives and we were not going to go get bogged down in the problems of trying to take over and govern Iraq.²⁰

Furthermore, when other neoconservatives signed the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) letter to President Clinton in 1998 urging regime change in Iraq, Cheney did not do so, despite having signed its original statement of purpose in 1993. Similarly, Rumsfeld worked with Saddam Hussein as President Reagan's presidential envoy, and failed to denounce the dictator

even as evidence of chemical weapons programs began coming out of Iraq. Although his official role doubtlessly kept his normally scathing tongue in check, the absence of any comment is telling. Although he signed the 1998 letter from PNAC directing President Clinton to remove Hussein from power, there is no evidence to suggest that Rumsfeld had an invasion of Iraq as a primary policy goal prior to 2002, and there is certainly room to assume that he was open to framing by his advisors, most of whom were neoconservative colleagues. Just as advisors strategically framed the Iranian hostage crisis rescue mission for Carter, we can thus explore the role that the neoconservative policy advocacy coalition played in framing the "Iraq problem" for Rumsfeld and Cheney in order to convince them that their interpretation and preferred policy outcome was the most appropriate.

Garrison's model dictates that in order to be effective, a strategic framer must utilize three components: (1) referencing a meaningful historical/cultural symbolic policy environment; (2) linking to the beliefs and values of the target; and (3) offering favorable political cost assessments.²¹ To this, I add: (4) access to and legitimacy in the eyes of the framing target.

(1) Symbolic policy environment. Policy advocates strategically frame an issue in the context of a broader social and historical analogy that appeals to the target. We might expect the neoconservative movement to frame the Iraq threat and potential responses in terms of a larger threat akin to that posed by Hitler during WWII, and to describe the US in terms of its position as the "leader of the free world." In particular, neoconservatives may be expected to frame the Iraq threat in the context of a broader conflict, such as communism vs. democracy, warlike vs. peaceful states, or good vs. evil. Similarly, policy options would be framed in terms of liberal vs. conservative policies, drawing a link between American liberals such as the Clinton

administration (a group that both Rumsfeld and Cheney have tried to disassociate themselves with) and alternative frames. Thus, from a neoconservative frame, any option other than invasion and regime change is a sign of weakness and liberal leanings. This framing approach is accomplished through direct and indirect associations, metaphors, and analogies.

(2) Linkages to beliefs and values. Garrison argues that policy advocates must frame their interpretations and policy options in such a way that coincides with the personal beliefs and values of the target. The more broadly a frame correlates with an individual's belief system and life experiences, the more likely they are to accept it. Moreover, a frame that is consistent with an individual's belief system has been shown to be resilient in the face of disconfirming information, making such consistency vital to framing efforts.²³ Equally important under linkages to values is the institutional role played by the individual in the administration.²⁴ While in Garrison's study the President, an official unaffiliated with any particular bureaucratic institution, was the target, this study focuses on individuals with carefully proscribed bureaucratic roles to fulfill. Thus, the values and beliefs of Donald Rumsfeld must reflect the goals and values associated with the office of the secretary of defense. We can expect that the neoconservative policy coalition will frame the "Iraq problem" using arguments that appeal to the beliefs, values, and institutional roles of Rumsfeld and Cheney. With regards to Rumsfeld, for example, the coalition might target his experience under the Ford administration, policy preferences as reflected in his speeches, papers, and affiliations with think tanks, and the role he plays as Secretary of Defense, such as seeking a larger defense budget and being particularly concerned with national defense and security issues. Similarly, Cheney might be targeted for his

experience under the Ford, Reagan, and Bush administrations, his policy preferences, and the role he plays as Vice President and close presidential advisor.

(3) Political cost assessments. Any successful strategic framing effort must also make assessments of political and economic costs of their interpretation and policies compared to an alternative. If the policy advocate's interpretation is in the best political and economic interests of the target (considering both short and long term interests), then the probability of the target accepting the frame should increase. Thus, if the neoconservative coalition can successfully persuade Rumsfeld and Cheney that their interpretation and associated policy options are less economically and politically costly than an alternative frame (such as a neoliberal frame), then they should be more effective at achieving frame dominance.

(4) Access and legitimacy. Strategic framing of an issue is only possible if the framer has access to the target and if the target views the framer as a legitimate source of policy advice. Access is demonstrated by shared social networks and institutional affiliations, and can be thought of in terms of degrees of separation. A primary contact links the decision maker target directly to a policy advocate (e.g. Rumsfeld to Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Douglas Feith). A secondary contact links a policy advocate to another individual, who in turn his a primary contact of the decision maker (e.g. Rumsfeld to policy pundit Frank Gaffney, through Douglas Feith). Access, however, is not enough. The target must also trust the framer to provide legitimate policy advice, and (preferably) must view the framer as an expert in the policy field. Framers gain legitimacy by serving as experts in the policy field, such as by providing expert testimony before Congress or by securing political appointments in their policy field.

In order to achieve frame dominance, the framer must first have access and legitimacy, and then frame the issue in such a way as to achieve cognitive consonance. In order to do so strategic framers must: (1) connect with their targets' symbolic policy environment; (2) forge linkages with their targets' beliefs and values; and (3) provide a favorable cost assessment for their preferred policy outcome.

While Garrison's model is fairly parsimonious, the nature of the neoconservative movement is less straightforward. This study uses Sabatier's policy advocacy coalition (PAC) as the unit of analysis for the neoconservative movement. Sabatier defined a PAC as a group of "people from a variety of positions (elected agency officials, interest group leaders, etc.) who share a particular belief system- that is, a set of basic values, causal assumptions and problem perceptions- and who show a non-trivial degree of coordinated activity over time." Sabatier's definition was ground-breaking in interest group studies, but his phrase, "non-trival degree of coordinated activity," is ambiguous. In addition to the shared "particular belief system" identified by Sabatier, I add *shared funding sources* and shared or networked *institutional affiliations* to his definition. When dealing with think tanks, which are research organizations funded by individuals and foundations with particular policy positions and belief systems, it is logical to assume that different institutions with shared donors will have similar policy positions.

Does the neoconservative movement meet these criteria? While the movement is composed of individuals who occasionally disagree on policy preferences, we can identify a shared belief system among neoconservatives. Belief in the righteousness of democracy and the democratic peace hypothesis is common among neoconservatives, as is a belief in the rightful place of morality in foreign policy. America, adherents argue, have a moral duty to spread democracy around the world and a prerogative to eschew multilateralism. Although many point

to the apparent defection of Francis Fukuyama from the neoconservative banner as a sign of the movement's fragility, Fukuyama did not disagree with his former allies on any of these key issues, but rather the feasibility of nation-building in Iraq, a very specific policy issue.

An analysis of funding sources and inter-institutional networks among several prominent think tanks dominated by neoconservatives demonstrates that the neoconservative movement meets the "shared funding sources" and networked "institutional affiliations" aspects of the PAC definition. Table 1 demonstrates these connections.

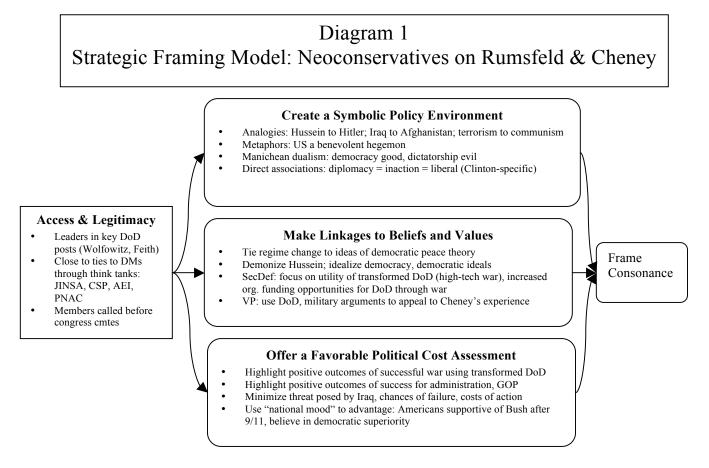
Table 1. Institutional Networks and Shared Sources of Funding

Organization	Prominent Neoconservatives ²⁷	Principal Sources of Funding ²⁸	Cheney and/or Rumsfeld ²⁹
Project for the New American Century	Arthur Waldron Douglas Feith (Asst. Dep. Secy for Policy) Eliot Abrams Francis Fukuyama Frank Gaffney James Woolsey John Bolton John Tkacik Midge Decter Newt Gingrich Paul Wolfowitz (Dep. Secy of Defense) Robert Kagan Robert Kagan Scooter Libby (Chief of Staff to Cheney) Richard Perle William Kristol	Bradley Foundation Earhart Foundation Scaife Family Foundations Smith-Richardson Foundation	Cheney* Rumsfeld*
Center for Security Policy	Arthur Waldron Curt Weldon Chris Cox Douglas Feith Elliot Abrams Frank Gaffney John Bolton Jon Kyl Midge Decter Newt Gingrich Paul Wolfowitz Robert Kagan Richard Perle William Bennett	Bradley Foundation Earhart Foundation Coors Family John M. Olin Foundation Scaife Family Foundations	Cheney Rumsfeld^
American Enterprise Institute Freedom House	Irving Kristol James Woolsey Jeanne Kirkpatrick John Bolton Lynne Cheney Michael Novak Newt Gingrich Nicholas Eberstadt Paul Wolfowitz Richard Perle William Kristol Arthur Waldron	Bradley Foundation Earhart Foundation John M. Olin Foundation Scaife Family Foundations Smith-Richardson Foundation	Cheney*^ Rumsfeld*
Freedom House	James Woolsey Jeanne Kirkpatrick	John M. Olin Foundation Scaife Family Foundations Smith-Richardson Foundation	Kumstetu
Jamestown Foundation	Arthur Waldron James Woolsey John Tkacik Nicholas Eberstadt Richard Fisher	Bradley Foundation Coors Family Earhart Foundation John M. Olin Foundation Scaife Family Foundations	Cheney*
Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs	Curt Weldon Douglas Feith James Woolsey Jeanne Kirkpatrick John Bolton Richard Perle	Smith-Richardson Foundation	Cheney*^

In addition to the personal connections Rumsfeld and Cheney share among these think tanks, the shared sources of funding also point to some degree of coordination. Common sources of funding across these prominent think tanks include several Scaife family foundations (including the Sarah Scaife and Carthage Foundations), the Lynde & Harry Bradley Foundation, the Earhart Foundation, and the John M. Olin Foundation. The Scaife family foundations derive their funds from the Scaife family's oil, industrial and banking fortunes, and regularly donate substantial sums of money to "new right" institutions. The Bradley Foundation was the largest conservative foundation in the late 1990s, the leading financier of the John Birch Society and the Reagan era Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), and regularly donates money to many conservative institutions. The Olin Foundation is derived from John M. Olin's chemicals and munitions fortune, and funds conservative institutions such as the American Enterprise Institute. The Center for Security Policy, which is a prominent advocate of defense programming, receives funds from these sources, and has also received substantial funding from defense contractors including Lockheed-Martin, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, and Boeing.

The above analysis demonstrates that neoconservatives share a common belief system, and that their home institutions boast extensively networked personal affiliations both in and outside of government, and shared sources of funding. This allows us to work with the neoconservative movement as a policy advocacy coalition, despite disagreements among its individual members over specific policy issues. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a policy advocacy coalition broad enough to be effective in which all members agree on every issue.

III. Analysis of the Neoconservative PAC Framing Strategy



After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 opened a policy window, the neoconservative PAC, by then well-networked within the DOD, Congress, and White House, initiated their strategic framing campaign. In order for the neoconservative PAC framing campaign to succeed, they had to advocate an understanding of the policy problem and a preferred policy outcome that resonated with the personal perspectives of Cheney and Rumsfeld. To what degree did the frame achieve cognitive consonance with these critical advisors? Diagram I depicts the ways in which the neoconservative strategic framing campaign aligned with the personal perspectives of Cheney and Rumsfeld, beginning with access and legitimacy and working through Garrison's three components.

Access and Legitimacy

Through the ties depicted in Table 1, neoconservative pundits and policymakers had access to their targets, particularly through Douglas Feith, Paul Wolfowitz and VP Chief of Staff Lewis "Scooter" Libby. In addition to direct contacts with these policymakers and indirect (secondary) ties through these men, Cheney and Rumsfeld were also directly tied to neoconservative pundits through shared affiliations in several neoconservative think tanks, particularly the Center for Security Policy (CSP), American Enterprise Institute (AEI), and the Project for the New American Century. How do these connections actually bear out?

Frank Gaffney, founder and president of the Center for Security Policy, is an excellent example of a secondary connection playing a critical role in the framing process, and the importance of access and legitimacy in so doing. Frank Gaffney is one of the leading members of the PAC and arguably the most well-connected of the entire neoconservative movement. In addition to his post at CSP, he was a signatory on the founding principles of PNAC, along with both Rumsfeld and Cheney, and has signed three PNAC letters since that time. Both Rumsfeld (1998) and Gaffney (2000) are former recipients of the CSP's prestigious "Keeper of the Flame," an award given at a ceremony "widely attended by... members of Congress, the military, the executive branch, diplomats, captains of industry and press." Other recipients of this award include conservative and powerful Congressmen James Inhofe (2005), Christopher Cox (1997), Jon Kyl (1994), Floyd Spence (2000), and Newt Gingrich (1996), as well as the late former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger (1990) and former Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz (2003). That the CSP, led by Gaffney, has awarded its most prestigious honor to some of the most powerful and conservative individuals in the legislature and executive branches in

the US is a sign of its influence in both past and present administrations. That he is also a recipient is even more telling.

Indeed, in his remarks honoring James Schlesinger's 'Keeper of the Flame' award in 2001, Rumsfeld described Gaffney, saying: "one thinks of energy, conviction, dedication. Few have done more than you and the Center to inform the national debate; to challenge the fashionable -- and sometimes erroneous -- assumptions; and indeed to fight for a robust U.S. military." Regarding the influence and power of the CSP in the administration, he went on to say that, "If there was any doubt about the power of your ideas, one has only to look at the number of Center associates who now people this Administration -- and particularly the Department of Defense -- to dispel them." Rumsfeld explicitly states that the CSP and Gaffney have influential ties to the administration, and particularly the DOD, where he describes their ideas as powerful.

Rumsfeld and Cheney are also tied to Gaffney through Gaffney's government service, where he served as an assistant secretary of defense in 1987 (receiving the Distinguished Public Service award and reconstituting the Committee on the Present Danger³⁴), deputy assistant secretary of defense (1983-1987), chairman of a NATO high level group, staffer for the Senate Armed Services Committee (1981-1983), and as an aide to Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson, a conservative and hawkish democrat.³⁵ The CSP, under Gaffney's leadership, was also a pivotal force in the creation of the 1999 Commission to Assess United States National Security, Space Management, and Organization, which was chaired by Rumsfeld. Former Senator Robert Smith (R-NH), who fought for the commission, serves on the CSP's advisory board, and members of the commission included three CSP advisory board members: General Horner, former Senator Malcolm Wallop (also a Heritage Foundation Senior Fellow and 1992 Keeper of the Flame

winner), and the military-industrial insider William Graham, as well as CSP signatory Thomas Moorman. CSP member and Congressman Curt Weldon also fought for the space commission's creation. Other members included General Jay Garner, who had worked on Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative and served as President of SYColeman, an aerospace contractor, prior to overseeing the Iraqi occupation, as well as Admiral David Jeremiah, both of whom were representatives of the conservative Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), of which Cheney and Undersecretary of Defense Richard Feith (also a former Chairman of CSP) are advisory board members.

The complex web linking individual members of the PAC, like Frank Gaffney, to Cheney and Rumsfeld is evidence of the access the PAC has to these men, and their own statements are evidence of the legitimacy many of the PAC members have in their eyes. And, while Gaffney is a particularly notable example, others' connections are almost equally extensive. Arthur Waldron, for example, is a PNAC signatory with both Cheney and Rumsfeld, served as a Distinguished Fellow at CSP, was a former advisory board member for JINSA with Cheney, served under Cheney at AEI, and worked alongside Cheney at the Jamestown Foundation as a board member. Both Waldron and Rumsfeld are board members of Freedom House. Additionally, Waldron is tied to Paul Wolfowitz, former Congressman Jack Kemp (also a JINSA board member), L. Paul Bremer, and Elliot Abrams through the Heritage Foundation.

As both Rumsfeld and Cheney are signatories, members, and leaders of the organizations that are engaged in the PAC's strategic framing campaign, it is reasonable to assume that the neoconservative PAC is generally considered to be composed of legitimate policy advocates, and it is clear that the PAC has substantial access. PAC members have also demonstrated their legitimacy on Iraq policy issues by giving legislative testimony; indeed, the neoconservative

PAC dominated Iraq policy testimony before the House Armed Services Committee during the pre-war period. For example, Gaffney testified on 23 May 2002 before the House Armed Services Committee that Al-Qaeda had ties to Baathists in Iraq.³⁶ Richard Perle, of AEI, gave similar testimony before the same committee on 19 and 26 September 2002, as did R. James Woolsey (JINSA board member, CSP honorary co-chair, and PNAC signatory) on 19 September, and Dr. James R. Schlesinger (a "Keeper of the Flame" winner) on 25 September.³⁷

In comparison, the alternative frame had very little access to these men, and virtually no legitimacy. Anti-intellectualism has run high in the Bush administration, beginning with attempts to portray Al Gore as a "brainiac" in the 2000 election campaign. Karl Rove, another of the President's close advisors prior to Iraq War, did not finish college, and is notoriously antiintellectual. Professor Colleen Shogan of George Mason University has examined Bush's antiintellectual stance extensively, finding it to be both useful and detrimental for his presidency. ³⁸ As evidence of the breadth of these anti-academic views, Lynne Cheney and Sen. Joe Lieberman were cited in an December 2001 American Council of Trustees and Alumni report that developed a "black list" of academics described as anti-American, primarily for putting the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 into historical context.³⁹ In their words, "colleges and university faculty have been the weak link in America's response" to terrorism, and that they "give comfort to its adversaries" by refusing to "defend" American civilization. Although neither Cheney or Lieberman officially endorsed the report, the frequency and content of their quotations throughout the text suggests their agreement with the anti-intellectual theme presented therein: academics are atheistic moral relativists who cannot be trusted to defend the United States. That academics were poorly coordinated and had little access to government channels further limited their ability to frame the Iraq problem for the critical decision makers.

Given the superior access and legitimacy of the neoconservative PAC vis-à-vis their targets, how effectively has the neoconservative PAC strategically framed the Iraq problem? An examination of the framing campaign's alignment with its targets, along the three components of the symbolic policy environment, linkages to beliefs and values, and political cost assessments, allows us to test its effectiveness.

Symbolic Policy Environment

Framing policies successfully requires resonation with historical and cultural analogies and ideas familiar to and meaningful for the target. For example, Garrison found that, in the Carter administration, National Security Advisor Brzezinski framed Soviet involvement in the African Horn in terms of a larger historical pattern of Soviet disregard for U.S. interests, an analogy that resonated with Carter's understanding of historical and cultural events. Similarly, Khong identified the role that the analogy of Vietnam to the Korean Conflict played in Johnson's decision to intervene in Vietnam. How has the neoconservative PAC structured its frame to resonate with the historical and cultural identities of Cheney and Rumsfeld?

Cheney and Rumsfeld were both prominent government officials during the Cold War. Both men served as chief of staff to President Ford, and both would go on to serve as secretary of defense during different periods of the Cold War. Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense from 1975-1977, also served on various presidential commissions during both the Reagan and H.W. Bush administrations (including a now-infamous trip to Iraq). Like Cheney, Rumsfeld was also a congressman, representing the state of Illinois from 1962-1969. Cheney's service began under Rumsfeld, serving as his special assistant from 1969-1971 in the Office of Economic Opportunity. He served as President Ford's deputy assistant, was promoted to chief of staff after Rumsfeld took the helm at the DOD, and would go on to serve as congressman for Wyoming

from 1978-1989. From 1981-1987 he served as chairman of the Republican Policy Committee, and was elected chairman of the House Republic Conference in 1987, before being tapped as Secretary of Defense for President George H.W. Bush from 1989-1993. As their service record indicates, these men are true cold warriors.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the neoconservative PAC used analogy to link the modern fight against transnational terrorism to the Cold War fight against global communism. The analogy was so successful, in fact, that by 2004 the Committee on the Present Danger, which previously sought to mobilize public support for defeating the Soviet Union, had been revived to fight global terror, under the leadership of R. James Woolsey. The committee was promptly packed with neoconservative PAC members, including Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Frank Gaffney, Dov Zackheim (formerly Undersecretary of Defense under Rumsfeld), as well as Midge Decter, who, among other roles, served as Rumsfeld's biographer. To complete the analogy, Sen. Jon Kyl offered this statement in 20 July 2004 Washington Post column,

Too many people are insufficiently aware of our enemy's evil worldwide designs, which include waging jihad against all Americans and reestablishing a totalitarian religious empire in the Middle East... The past struggle against communism was, in some ways, different from the current war against Islamist terrorism, but... the national and international solidarity needed to prevail over both enemies is... the same... is the test of our time.

This analogy meshes perfectly with Cheney and Rumsfeld's historical understanding of the communist threat. Indeed, as Secretary of Defense under George H. W. Bush, Cheney was strongly opposed to any negotiated arms control with the Soviets, bearing an "ingrained distrust", of Communists that he holds to this day. Similar arguments were made linking terrorism to modern socialist movements: "the election this weekend of a radical socialist as President of Brazil may further catalyze trends with the potential to transform a region we have

generally taken for granted as comprised almost entirely of democratic friends of the United States into one hostile toward us and hospitable to our international terrorist foes."

Similarly, PAC members analogized Hussein to Hitler, suggesting that any decision not resulting in an invasion is tantamount to appeasement. In Richard Perle's words, "We can, of course, choose to defer action, to wait—and hope for the best. That is what Tony Blair's predecessors did in the 1930's." As Rumsfeld has described World War II as one of the most formative experiences in his life, comparing Iraq to pre-World War II Germany is a most effective historical analogy. 46

Culturally, the neoconservative PAC has played the democracy and human rights cards extensively in framing the Iraq threat. Cheney and Rumsfeld are both leaders of prodemocratization institutions Freedom House, AEI, and Committee for the Free World. In framing the Iraq-threat as part of a conflict between totalitarianism or Islamic extremism and "the free world," "democracy," or "freedom" resonated with their sense of a broader cultural conflict between democracy and authoritarianism, good and evil, developed during their youth in World War II, and their government service during the Cold War. The PAC has also struggled to associate supporters of engagement and diplomatic solutions with the Clinton administration, whose policies both Rumsfeld and Cheney have publicly derided.

While the neoconservative PAC has made historical and cultural analogies that resonate with the personal lives and experiences of Rumsfeld and Cheney a key part of their framing strategy, advocates of the alternative cooperative frame were less likely to do so. The academics that advocated a less militaristic interpretation of Chinese modernization argued that Iraq was not related to transnational terrorist organizations and that Hussein was not akin to Stalin. Unfortunately for this argument, the era of global communism may have passed, but it would

seem that the conflict with communism continues in the minds of the administration, as evidenced by the continued strong opposition to socialist movements in Latin America. Given Cheney's House voting record, including support of President Reagan's "anti-communist" contra operations in Nicaragua, any link between communism and terrorism (however weak) is worthy of notice.

Linkages to Beliefs and Values

Where the use of analogies can help to introduce a frame to a target, linkages to policymakers' beliefs, values, and role as a bureaucratic leader allow policy advocates to secure the target's acceptance of their frame. The degree to which a PAC's interpretation of the problem and its preferred policy outcome links with the beliefs, values, and bureaucratic responsibilities of the target determines whether or not the frame is accepted, and will allow the frame to remain in the face of disconfirming information (cognitive dissonance). How do the neoconservative arguments align with the beliefs, values, and bureaucratic roles of Rumsfeld and Cheney?

Cheney has been described as a "rigid ideologue" in his belief in the righteousness of democracy and his willingness to support democratic movements elsewhere. A student of political science, Cheney found Hobbes and Locke particularly influential on his personal philosophy: that "individuals can be trusted to pursue their best interests with government interference and the conviction that the United States is a blessed and unique nation whose concerns and values must be promoted vigorously around the world." In a 2004 address at the World Economic Forum, Cheney noted one object that should guide the actions of "civilized people": the promotion of democracy, through cooperation and military action if necessary. In his words, promoting the spread of democracy "is the right thing to do." He points to values of "freedom, justice, and democracy," as the most important determinants of security and

prosperity, and claims that "true sources of conflict" are "despotic and anti-democratic regimes." ⁵¹

By framing the Iraq invasion as a morally righteous action against a totalitarian government with a history of militarism, the PAC appeals directly to Cheney's belief that "despotic and anti-democratic regimes" are inherently militaristic, indeed the world's "true sources of conflict." For an individual with an ingrained distrust of communism and a deep belief in the righteousness of democracy, this argument should be quite strong. Similarly, framing the Iraq problem in terms of its threats to democratic nations in the region, particularly Israel, is also a powerful linkage. Appealing to Cheney's sense of authoritarian and communist governments as militaristic and threatening allows even the weakest form of their argument, that Iraq *might* be a threat, to supersede any competing interpretations, which cannot rule out the possibility of a threat. If there is a possibility that Iraq could threaten the "civilized" democratic world, and it is led by a totalitarian leader akin to Hitler or Stalin, then the Iraq-as-threat interpretation is, from Cheney's perspective, the most prudent to accept.

Framing the Iraq problem with regard to Cheney's institutional role is more difficult to trace because Cheney's role in the administration remains somewhat unclear. Although accepted as one of our most powerful vice presidents, and widely considered active as a key presidential advisor and policymaker, Cheney's institutional role is open to speculation. However, Cheney's past experience and professional contacts in the Department of Defense suggest that an interpretation focusing on potential military threat may bear more weight than neo-liberal arguments focused on cooperation and diplomacy.

Donald Rumsfeld, who once described himself as "interchangeable" with Cheney,⁵² shares many of the beliefs and values of his long-time friend and colleague. Although Pat

Buchanan once called him a "party pragmatist of vast ambition and no settled political philosophy," two recurring themes can be identified that underlie his beliefs and values. First, he "approaches hawk purity," in his belief in a strong, technologically advanced defense program. As a congressman, as well as White House chief of staff and Secretary of Defense under Ford, Rumsfeld was against détente and fought Kissinger against SALT II. Indeed, in his 1975 Annual Posture Statement, Rumsfeld called for a massive military buildup of new "blockbuster ICBMs, strategic bombers, and a fleet of warships." In pursuit of his enlarged defense budget, he would even pilot the controversial B-1 Bomber himself to demonstrate its capabilities as a technologically advanced warship in the face of opposition to high-technology defense spending. In his words, "the greatest threat to the United States and the Soviet Union is not... belligerency...weakness can be just as provocative." His support for and interest in high-technology defense programs would later earn him the chairmanship of both the 1998 Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, and the 1999 space commission.

Secondly, like Cheney, Rumsfeld is a rigid supporter of democratic ideals and democratization. Rumsfeld is a board member of Freedom House and serves as chairman of Committee for the Free World (CFW); both organizations promote and identify threats to democracy, particularly those posed by totalitarian and communist regimes. The strategic framing campaign that resonated so well with Cheney works just as well with his "interchangeable" colleague Rumsfeld. The two men share an ideological passion for promoting democracy around the globe. The neoconservative PAC therefore developed a framing strategy of making Iraq a threat not just to America and its democratic allies in the region, but to democracy in general and the entire "free" or "civilized" world. Instead of a localized strike to

wipe out an alleged WMD program, solving the Iraq problem was described as drawing a line in the sand to stop the advance of transnational terrorism. The policy outcome associated with this interpretation also appeals to Rumsfeld's institutional role, giving him fodder in his institutional fight for funding and access. An Iraq war also promised the first test of his transformed defense department, with a focus on high technology and non-traditional power he had been fighting for his entire career.⁵⁷

In contrast, the competing frame focused on room for diplomacy and the lack of certainty that Iraq posed a threat. Rumsfeld, however, had vehemently opposed engagement with previous enemies, particularly on military issues and wherever technology could be transferred. In the 1970s Rumsfeld fought Kissinger to stop SALT II from going forward. Then, in early 2001, Rumsfeld went head-to-head with then-Secretary of State Colin Powell to end all military contacts with Beijing. Moreover, in terms of bureaucratic politics, focusing on the cooperative opportunities offered by Iraq would give the Iraq issue over to diplomatic solutions and the State Department, and remove the Iraq-threat from Rumsfeld's list of reasons to develop the defense program. Given the bureaucratic loss associated with such an interpretation, the cooperative frame does not resonate well. That Iraq *might not* pose a threat is hardly a convincing argument for the man responsible for America's defense.

Political Cost Assessments

Every politician, when considering a particular policy outcome, must weight the costs and benefits of such an outcome in light of its alternatives. Garrison notes that "if an option can be shown to be appropriate (given its consistency with current policy objectives) and in the best short- or long-term political interests of the target, the possibility of its selection should be increased." In other words, the degree to which the neoconservative frame stood to improve the

political and financial positions of Rumsfeld and Cheney should improve its cognitive consonance.

Although long-term interests for a vice president and cabinet secretary normally involve campaigns for public office, these concerns are not relevant for either man. Cheney has given a "Sherman statement," ⁵⁹ explicitly stating that this political job will be his last, ⁶⁰ and Rumsfeld was then well over seventy and had expressed no desire to continue on the national political scene. Although this makes their interests somewhat difficult to define, they share two clearly identifiable interests.

First, both men are dedicated to defending the United States from external threats and, indeed, their job security depended on their ability to do this well. Were a threat to sneak by their attention, these men, as the President's closest advisors and leaders of the defense apparatus, would be the most to blame. Second, both men have a substantial financial stake in the defense industry, through direct corporate ties and leadership in institutions funded by the defense industry. The PAC's framing of Iraq as a threat to the United States and Israel appeals to both of these interests. By identifying Iraq early, both men escaped any potential future blame should Iraq have actually become menacing, and aside from alienating a diffuse group of academics and liberal pundits (for the most part already alienated), the outcomes associated with the PAC frame looked to bear few costs. Indeed, most in the administration believed that the invasion would be swift and the occupation short-lived.

Indeed, the policy outcomes associated with this frame may actually be a boon for both men. The high-tech transformation driven by Rumsfeld has been one of his career-spanning goals, and a conflict in Iraq stood to offer substantial contracts to groups such as RAND Corporation, of which Rumsfeld is a board member, and to CSP donors and aerospace

contractors Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, and Northrup-Grumman. Compared to its competing frame, which suggests faith in Iraq's peaceful intentions and offers an outcome much more focused on diplomatic ties than military modernization, the neoconservative PAC offered a political and financial cost assessment much more favorable to its targets.

In sum, the neoconservative PAC used historical and cultural symbolism and analogies to appeal to the Cold War and WWII experience of Cheney and Rumsfeld. Hussein was compared to Stalin and Hitler, and alleged Iraqi WMD and terrorist ties was framed as part of part of a battle in a larger war between freedom and tyranny. Linkages to the beliefs and values of both men increased the probability of the frame's adoption. In particular, the PAC used the beliefs of both men in the righteousness of democracy, and its rightful place in foreign policy, as well as Rumsfeld's belief in a large, high-tech defense program. Finally, favorable political and financial cost assessments further increased the probability that Cheney and Rumsfeld would accept the neoconservative interpretation and preferred policy outcome. In contrast, the competing frame failed to resonate with the historical/cultural symbolism, beliefs and values, or favorable cost assessments for either policymaker, and lacked the critical access and legitimacy needed to advance a strategic framing campaign.

Conclusion

Unlike traditional models of policy making, the cognitive framing model allows us to examine the role that policy advocacy coalitions play in structuring critical players' understanding of policy problems and policy solutions. In this case, Garrison's model is an effective predictor of the outcome, regime change in Iraq, given the strategic framing campaign they initiated following the opening of the policy window in September 2001.

The framing campaign, however, was not enough to bring about the invasion of Iraq. President Bush was still responsible for making the decision to seek the invasion, and it was his responsibility to see that the war was justified. In practice, however, President Bush allowed his Vice President and Secretary of Defense, who were veteran colleagues and long-time allies in policy battles, to dominate his advisory circle. Secretary of State Colin Powell was effectively cut out of the policy process, and Condoleezza Rice (then National Security Advisor) had neither the will nor the strength to keep the National Security Council balanced in the face of Rumsfeld and Cheney.

President Bush thus created a perfect opportunity for the neoconservative PAC to dominate the policy advisory process. After the events of 11 September 2001 opened the policy window, the neoconservative PAC was able to use its unprecedented access to Cheney and Rumsfeld to wage a strategic framing battle. Their opponents, a largely disorganized band of intellectuals, diplomats, and former military leaders, were outmatched not because of the quality of their analysis, but because their frame was cognitively dissonant with the experience and perspective of these presidential advisors. In contrast, the neoconservative frame was a perfect fit for two cold warriors with deeply held beliefs in the righteousness of democracy and the evils of totalitarianism. Combined with their domination of the presidential advisory circle, this frame consonance led to the president's decision to seek war with Iraq.

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² C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956); Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," *American Political Science Review* 56 (1961): 947-52; John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980); John Manley, "Neopluralism: A Class Analysis of Pluralism I and Pluralism II," *American Political Science Review* 77 (1983): 370-89.

³ Ron Suskind, *The Price of Loyalty* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004): 74-76; cited in James Pfiffner, "Intelligence and Decision Making Before the War in Iraq," in *The Polarized Presidency*, ed. George C. Edwards and Desmond King (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2-3.

⁸ Ole Holsti, "Foreign Policy Formation Viewed Cognitively," in *Structure of Decision: The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites*, ed. Robert Axelrod (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976): 22.

- ⁹ Some examples of this early work: Graham T. Allison, *The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971); Alexander George, "The `Operational Code': A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-making," *International Studies Quarterly* 13 (June 1969): 190-222; Ole Holsti, "Theories of Crisis Decision-making," in *Diplomacy*, ed. Paul Larson (New York: Free Press, 1979); Richard Snyder, *Foreign Policy Decision-Making* (New York: Macmillan, 1962); George W. Breslauer and P. Tetlock, *Learning in US and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991).
- ¹⁰ Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976).
- ¹¹ Gerber and Green, "Misperceptions About Perceptual Bias," 189-211; Khong Yuen Foong, *Analogies at War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
- ¹² Khong, *Analogies at War*. For other examples, there exists an entire body of work on cognitive processes on both sides during the Cold War, and particularly during the Cuban Missile Crisis.
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- ¹⁵ Jerel Rosati, "A Cognitive Approach to the Study of Foreign Policy," in *Foreign Policy Analysis: Continuity and Change in its Second Generation*, ed. Laura Neack, et. al (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), 49-70.
- ¹⁶ John Steinbruner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974).
- ¹⁷ This term was coined and used extensively in: Harold and Margaret Sprout, *The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965).
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- ¹⁹ Garrison, "Framing Foreign Policy Alternatives in the Inner Circle: President Carter, His Advisors, and the Struggle for the Arms Control Agenda," 784-789.
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- ²⁴ Garrison, "Framing Foreign Policy Alternatives in the Inner Circle," 782
- ²⁵ Ibid, 783

⁴ See, in particular, Karl Popper's seminal work, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

⁵ One of the first international relations theoretical structures to incorporate organizational process theory was the decision-making approach: Richard Snyder, R. Bruck, and B. Sapin, ed., *Foreign Policy Decision-Making* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962).

⁶ Thomas Barnett, "Old Man in a Hurry," Esquire 144 (July 2005): 81-142.

⁷ Jerel Rosati, "The Power of Human Cognition in the Study of World Politics," *International Studies Review* 2 (2000): 47.

²⁶ Paul Sabatier, "An Advocacy Coalition Framework of Policy Change and the Role of Policy-Oriented Learning Therein," *Policy Sciences* 21 (1988): 139.

²⁷ Inclusion in this list designates membership, status as a signatory of at least one organizational letter, status as an organizational award recipient, and sometimes leadership status. For a single comprehensive source, see: Right Web International Research Center, "Profiles," [online] available at http://www.rightweb.irc-online.org. ²⁸ Right Web International Research Center, "Profiles." ²⁹ * indicates leadership position held; ^ indicators recipient of organizational award ³⁰For detailed funding information, consult the online database at Media Transparency, "Grant Recipients," [database online] available at http://www.mediatransparency.org/recipients.php; accessed 10 March 2006.

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⁴⁷ Walsh, et.al., "The Cheney Factor,"

⁴⁹ Dick Cheney, "Special Address by Dick Cheney, Vice President of the United States of America," given at the Annual Meeting 2004 of the World Economic Forum, Geneva, Switzerland, 24 January 2004. ⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

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⁵³ Michael Crowley, "The New Boss," *New Republic*, 15 July 1996.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

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⁵⁶ Ibid, 73-74

⁵⁷ Eliot Cohen, "A Tale of Two Secretaries," Foreign Affairs 81 (May/June 2002).

⁵⁸ Garrison, "Framing Foreign Policy Alternatives in the Inner Circle," 783.

⁵⁹ A "Sherman statement" is a statement by a politician publicly stating that his/her political career is over and he/she will reject all political nominations or elections; named after William Tecumseh Sherman, who made such a statement after rumors circulated that he would seek candidacy for the presidency in 1884.

⁶⁰ Tamara Lipper, et. al., "Cheney Family Values," *Newsweek*, 26 July 2004; Walsh, "The Cheney Factor."