

## CHAPTER

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# George W. Bush: Policy, Politics, and Personality

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During his time in office, President George W. Bush demonstrated impressive leadership skills.<sup>1</sup> He was able to overcome the lack of a mandate in the 2000 election and convince Congress to pass a large tax cut. He continued to press his policy agenda when the terrorist attacks of 9-11 transformed his presidency and reoriented its focus. The war on terrorism in Afghanistan was prosecuted effectively, with the Taliban being overthrown and Al Qaeda driven out of the country. The broader success of the war was mixed, however; as of the summer of 2003 Osama Bin Laden was not captured, the terrorist threat of Al Qaeda was not eliminated, and Afghanistan remained unstable.

In an impressive display of political leadership in 2002 President Bush was able to overcome the skepticism of the professional military in the United States, the opposition of much of the world, and the lack of support from the UN Security Council and take the United States to war with Iraq in order to depose Saddam Hussein. The war ended within three weeks, though the attempt to install a legitimate successor government was to take much longer. Over this period, President Bush has exhibited several patterns of behavior that provide some insight into his policy choices. He has shown a preference for moral certainty over strategic calculation; a tendency for visceral reaction rather than reflection; a preference for clarity rather than complexity; a bias toward action rather than deliberation; and a preference for the personal over the structural or procedural.<sup>2</sup> Bush exuded confidence and moral certainty and exhibited no evidence of self doubt or ambivalence about major decisions.

Even though many presidential options are constrained by the established structure of the office and by environmental demands on the president, the Bush presidency illustrates the impact of personality on the major policies of a presidency.<sup>3</sup> The first section of this paper will examine President Bush's bias for action

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and impatience with procedural delay. The second section will address his moral certainty and its implications. The third section will look at the consequences of his personal approach to politics and policy formation. The conclusion will note the positive and negative implications of each of the president's tendencies. It must be noted that few inside accounts of the Bush presidency have been made public so far, thus these observations are based on public documents and are therefore necessarily tentative.

The paper will not attempt to analyze President Bush from a psycho-biographical perspective such as that of James David Barber's framework of presidential character.<sup>4</sup> And from evidence so far available, his advisory system does not seem to fit easily into the frameworks developed by Richard Tanner Johnson or Alexander George.<sup>5</sup> Bush's White House does not even seem to fit either the strong chief of staff or the spokes-of-the-wheel models of White House staff organization.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of this paper is merely to point out patterns of presidential behavior and relate these patterns or tendencies to important policies of the administration.

### A BIAS FOR ACTION

As president, George W. Bush demonstrated decisiveness and an impatience for unnecessary delay. In contrast to President Clinton, who wanted to analyze every issue thoroughly and ensure that all angles had been examined, often in long drawn out meetings, President Bush preferred to act decisively and intuitively. In his words, "I just think it's instinctive. I'm not a textbook player. I'm a gut player."<sup>7</sup> He felt that one part of his role as president was "to force decisions, and to make sure it's in everybody's mind where we're headed."<sup>8</sup>

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States of 9-11, President Bush often exhibited impatience in leading his administration and the military to develop and implement the U.S. response. Though he sometimes felt the military's response to his direction was too slow, he understood the instinctive conservatism of military leadership. "It's very important to realize how do you balance the military's desire to cover all contingencies at least once, maybe sometimes twice—they're relatively risk-adverse and they should be, after all they're dealing with people's lives—versus the need to, for whatever reason, to show action."<sup>9</sup> Of course the president was also making decisions of life and death, but he also felt the political need to show the public that he was acting. As he told King Abdullah of Jordan in late September of 2001, "We're steady, clear-eyed and patient, but pretty soon we'll have to start displaying scalps."<sup>10</sup>

In late September, during the planning stages for the war in Afghanistan when, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice explained to the president that the military was not yet ready to insert troops into Afghanistan because the search and rescue (CSAR) capacity was not yet in place, Bush responded, "That's not acceptable." Rice explained the difficulty of establishing bases, getting equipment in place, and coordinating with foreign governments. At a meeting with the principals, Vice President Cheney expressed a different perspective. "The president wants to avoid putting any artificial constraints or timelines on our military action. Let's do it right.

Let's not do something stupid for PR purposes." Later Bush reflected on his impatience and the role of Condoleezza Rice: "Sometimes that's the way I am—fiery. On the other hand [Rice's] job is to bear the brunt of some of the fire, so that it—takes the edge off a little bit. And she's good at that."<sup>11</sup>

Bush's bias for action also reflected his perspective on political capital. He felt that his father had not fully used the tremendous political capital he enjoyed after the Gulf War in 1991 when his public approval was at historic highs; he was determined that he would not make the same mistake.<sup>12</sup> Bush 43 wanted to use his political capital to achieve large goals. "I will seize the opportunity to achieve big goals. There is nothing bigger than to achieve world peace."<sup>13</sup> If he did not use his time wisely, Bush felt that history would not be kind to him. "History will be the judge, but it won't judge well somebody who doesn't act, somebody who just bides time here," he told Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi in the fall of 2001.<sup>14</sup> Impatience and a bias for action do not necessarily mean a lack of determination or perseverance, which Bush demonstrated in pursuit of tax cuts and other administration priorities.

In January of 2003 when other members of the U.N. Security Council wanted to give the inspectors in Iraq more time to search for weapons of mass destruction, President Bush was convinced that inspections would not work and was impatient for U.S. military action to depose Saddam Hussein. "Time is running out on Saddam Hussein. He must disarm. I'm sick and tired of games and deception. And that's my view of timetables."<sup>15</sup> At a news conference, Bush declared, "Any attempt to drag the process on for months will be resisted by the United States. . . . This just needs to be resolved quickly,"<sup>16</sup>

The positive side of a bias for action is that a president has a better chance to get things done in a city where new initiatives can often be delayed until enough opposition develops to stop them entirely. This was one of the problems with President Clinton's health care proposals in 1993 and 1994. The potential downside of a bias for action includes premature decisions, a failure to examine the full implications of decisions, and the use of information before it is fully vetted or examined. The following sections will illustrate some of the positive and negative aspects of a bias for action.

## Early Decisions on War with Iraq

In an interview in the summer of 2002 Bush reflected on the nature of the coalition to fight the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, but his words also foreshadowed his impatience with the process of gaining international approval and the UN Security Council resolution for confronting Iraq.

Well, you can't talk your way to a solution to a problem. . . . I believe in results. . . . It's like earning capital in many ways. It is a way for us to earn capital in a coalition that can be fragile. And the reason it will be fragile is that there is resentment toward us. . . . Well, we're never going to get people all in agreement about force and the use of force. But action—confident action that will yield positive results provides kind of a slipstream into which reluctant nations and leaders can get behind. . . ."<sup>17</sup>

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According to State Department director of policy and planning, Richard Haas, in the summer of 2002 President Bush had already made up his mind that war with Iraq was inevitable (barring capitulation by Saddam Hussein). "The president made a decision in the summer of 2002. We all saluted at that point. That is the way it works."<sup>18</sup> Haas said that he raised the issue of war with Iraq with Rice, ". . . I raised this issue about were we really sure that we wanted to put Iraq front and center at this point, given the war on terrorism and other issues. And she said, essentially, that that decision's been made, don't waste your breath."<sup>19</sup> The president may have made up his mind even earlier. In March 2002 the president told Condoleezza Rice when she was in a meeting with several senators, "F\_\_\_\_\_ Saddam. We're taking him out."<sup>20</sup>

Though Secretary of State Colin Powell convinced Bush to go to the UN and orchestrated the unanimous UN Security Council passage of Resolution 1441, the president ordered troops to the Gulf region in December 2002, shortly after the resolution was passed.<sup>21</sup>

A bias for action and impatience with large bureaucracies can be a useful trait in a president, as long as the president has an effective advisory system that fully lays out the consequences of immediate action. In the decision making process leading up to the war with Iraq, the president may not have fully considered the arguments against the war that were made by Secretary of State Colin Powell (or potentially others) because he had seemingly already made up his mind. As indicated by State Department official Richard Hass, administration officials did not feel free to present opposing arguments to the president or his immediate aides because they were convinced that the decision had already been made. One former Bush staffer said of the Bush White House, "No one's allowed to second-guess, even when you should."<sup>22</sup> This does not mean that the decision to go to war with Iraq was wrong or that Bush would have made a different decision about war had his aides not perceived that he had already made up his mind; it merely means that he probably did not get the full range of frank advice from his advisers that he might have.

### The Use of Forged Documents in the Arguments for War

Another example of President Bush's tendency to act instinctively and his impatience with details was the use by the United States government of forged documents to bolster the argument for war with Iraq. On September 24, 2002 the government of Britain charged that Iraq had tried to buy significant amounts of nuclear material from Niger. That information was used in a closed hearing of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate to help convince Senators to vote for the resolution giving President Bush the authority to take the United States to war with Iraq. Several months later, in his State of the Union speech on January 28, 2003, President Bush said "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."<sup>23</sup>

The problem was that the documents used as evidence were forged and not authentic. The letter-head of one letter was from the military government that had been replaced before the 1999 date on the letter, and the signature on the letter in-

licated the name of a foreign ministry official who had left the position in 1989. The forgery was made public on March 7, 2003 by Mohamed El Baradei who was director of the International Atomic Energy Agency who reported the findings to the U.N. Security Council.<sup>24</sup>

Why would President Bush use documents of such dubious provenance? The issue was not minor; it was a question of convincing Congress to approve a resolution to let the president make the final decision about going to war. The State of the Union address presented the country with the prospect of war with Iraq, and the assertion that Saddam Hussein was developing nuclear weapons was one of the strongest arguments the administration had that regime change in Baghdad was necessary. Even though there may have been other, more credible evidence that Saddam was developing weapons of mass destruction, the use of forged documents to make the public argument for war with Iraq, if exposed, would undercut U.S. credibility with foreign nations.

There were reports that top CIA officials had serious reservations about the authenticity of the documents that were the basis for Bush's statements.<sup>25</sup> What could explain the president's willingness to use the dubious documents in a public argument for war with Iraq? The president could easily have demanded that the CIA carefully examine the documents before including an account of them in his State of the Union address, but seemingly he did not. Most likely the account fit well with the president's judgments about Iraq, and he did not want to wait for the time it would take to subject the documents to careful scrutiny. It is also possible that the CIA felt pressure (justified or not) not to press arguments that might be interpreted as unfavorable to the administration's arguments about Saddam Hussein.<sup>26</sup>

The president's willingness to use the documents as a basis for his public argument for regime change in Iraq without demanding that they be examined carefully by U.S. intelligence experts illustrated his tendency to act instinctively and quickly rather than after careful deliberation and examination of the evidence.

Another example of the president's use of incorrect information in his arguments without careful examination occurred when President Bush was responding to reporters' questions about the conclusiveness of evidence that regime change in Iraq was necessary. On September 7, 2002, at Camp David Bush said, "... when the inspectors first went into Iraq and were denied, finally denied access, a report came out of the Atomic—the IAEA—that they were six months away from developing a weapon. I don't know what more evidence we need."<sup>27</sup> The IAEA report, however, said that "... the IAEA has found no indication of Iraq having achieved its program goal of producing nuclear weapons or of Iraq having retained a physical capability for the production of weapon-usable nuclear material or having clandestinely obtained such material."<sup>28</sup> The report did say that before the 1991 Gulf War Iraq had been 6 to 24 months away from creating a nuclear capacity.

The downside of President Bush's impatience and self-reported dependence on his instincts, rather than careful analysis, was that at times he might make public statements that later turn out to be not true. This can be damaging to the nation's credibility, especially in making decisions about going to war. Stephen Hess, former Eisenhower White House staffer, scholar, and expert on the Presidency, said,

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“. . . what worries me about some of these [statements in the fall of 2003] is they appear to be with foresight. This is about public policy in its grandest sense, about potential wars and who is our enemy, and a president has a special obligation to getting it right.”<sup>29</sup> A president’s effectiveness can be compromised if a bias for action pushes out the need to ensure the accuracy of important statements.

### The Early Start of the Ground War in Iraq

President Bush’s decisions on the commencement of the ground war in Iraq were criticized by some in the professional military as premature. There had been an ongoing disagreement between some military officers and the civilian leadership in the Department of Defense over the number of troops necessary for a successful military campaign in Iraq. During planning for the war in the fall of 2002 Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld repeatedly overruled military planners and insisted that the number of ground troops planned for the war be reduced.<sup>30</sup>

In the immediate lead-up to the war, U.S. troops were in ships in the Mediterranean Sea waiting for permission from Turkey to use their ports and roads so that the United States could open up a second front in the north of Iraq for the push to Baghdad. When Turkey’s parliament denied access to U.S. troops, a decision had to be made as to whether to delay the onset of the ground war until the troops (and other troops from the United States) were in staging areas in Kuwait or to begin the war shortly after the bombing of Saddam’s bunker on March 19.

President Bush decided to move quickly with a “rolling start,” counting on the reinforcements to move into Iraq later rather than waiting for all the forces to be ready before beginning the attack. The first two weeks of the war saw U.S. troops successfully drive to Baghdad, but with extended supply lines that were vulnerable to attack and troops who were exhausted from battle who could not be immediately replaced with fresh troops. The willingness of U.S. generals to make their critical views known publicly through recently retired high level military leaders was unusual during war time. Retired General Joseph P. Hoar, commander of the U.S. Central Command (including Iraq) from 1991–1994, wrote “. . . the civilians wanted the war done in a new, leaner way to justify their vision of the ‘transformation force’ expected to be in place by 2010 . . . the concept of risk in a military operation is not solely about winning and losing, it is also about the cost. In this case, the cost will be measured in American lives.”<sup>31</sup>

After another week of combat, however, American troops were successful in occupying Baghdad. With relatively few American deaths (about 100 to that point), the president’s decision to move quickly was seemingly vindicated. Whether the decision was a stroke of brilliance or a tactical error can only be judged definitively in historical perspective. The point is that President Bush had a bias for action and was decisive in his judgments about military strategy.

President Bush’s early decision about war with Iraq, his willingness to accept at face value documents of dubious authenticity to support his arguments for war, and his decision to move ground troops quickly into Iraq, may have been related to his own moral certainty and his judgment about the necessity for regime change in Iraq.

## MORAL CERTAINTY AND UNIVERSAL RHETORIC

President George W. Bush's style of political leadership exhibited a confidence and moral certainty that helped the nation deal with the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon. In such situations, the rhetoric of moral certainty is clearly an asset. Bush's moral certainty reflected his deeply held religious beliefs which were evident in his public and private lives. His moral certainty was also reflected in his conviction that the United States was in the right and did not have to defer to other nations. His ideas about the implications of the uniqueness of U.S. military power and the moral imperatives that led from his values were formally expressed in the National Security Policy of the United States. This section examines these dimensions of President Bush's leadership; it concludes with an evaluation of the positive and negative aspects of each of them.

### President Bush's Religious Beliefs

Ever since his life-altering decision to stop drinking in 1986, George Bush's Christian convictions have played a major role in his life.<sup>32</sup> He regularly participated in Bible study groups and spoke, sometimes publicly, about his faith. In contrast to some other presidents who expressed religious beliefs, Bush clearly was a person who took his faith very seriously in his personal and public life. In 1993, the year before running for governor, Bush said that only those who believed in Jesus could get into heaven.<sup>33</sup> This was in an interview with a Jewish reporter, not a private religious meeting; it thus was intended to have political significance.

According to a Bush friend, Bush told him when he was Governor of Texas, "I believe God wants me to run for president."<sup>34</sup> During his campaign for the presidency George W. Bush often mentioned his Christian religious values, and when asked in a Republican debate in Iowa (December 13, 2000) to name his most admired "political philosopher," (emphasis added) he responded "Christ, because he changed my heart."<sup>35</sup> Bush's faith led him to believe that human history (and presumably politics) are governed by the intentions of God. "Events aren't moved by blind change and chance. Behind all of life and all of history, there's a dedication and purpose, set by the hand of a just and faithful God."<sup>36</sup>

The president's approach to religion was evident in the White House where he opened cabinet meetings with a prayer. The pervasiveness of the president's approach to his Christian faith was reflected when a new speech writer, David Frum (who happened to be Jewish), first entered the West Wing and heard the words, "Missed you at Bible study," directed at his boss, Michael Gerson. Frum said that Bible study in the Bush White House, ". . . was, if not compulsory, not quite *uncompulsory*, either" (emphasis in original) and was "disconcerting to a non-Christian like me."<sup>37</sup> Although this incident might be seen as minor, it illustrated the assumption that at least some White House staffers were expected to share not only the President's religion, but also to conform to the prevailing White House staff religious practices, that is, attending regular prayer breakfasts.

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President Bush's religious convictions were consistent with his lack of ambivalence about war and his willingness to take actions unpopular in much of the world.<sup>38</sup> His religious beliefs may also have led to his moral certainty, his disdain for hesitation, his avoidance of ambiguity, and his lack of self doubt. According to historian Richard Brookhiser, "Practically, Bush's faith means that he does not tolerate, or even recognize, ambiguity: there is an all-knowing God who decrees certain behaviors, and leaders must obey."<sup>39</sup>

Condoleezza Rice commenting on her advisory role, said of Bush "He least likes me to say, 'This is complex.'"<sup>40</sup> Bush's impatience with complexity was accompanied by the firm conviction that the United States was special in the world and that it had a mission to stand up for moral values and confront evil. Other states did not merely have different interests than the United States, some of them pursued evil goals and had to be confronted, militarily if necessary. Bush's faith that history is guided by God and conviction that the United States was fighting for God-given values may have made it easier for him to embrace war as one of the instruments of history.

### Universal Values and "Unilateralism"

During the campaign for the presidency, George W. Bush's tendency was toward disengagement from the rest of the world, compared to the Clinton administration. He felt that China was the strategic competitor of the United States rather than the strategic partner that Clinton sought. He felt that the U.S. was too engaged in the Middle East peace process, and he thought that the U. S. should reconsider its commitment to peacekeeping in the Balkans. He rejected the Clinton administration's attempt to foster a reconciliation between North and South Korea. Bush did not seem to be inclined to an aggressive foreign policy. In commenting on foreign relations during the presidential debates, he said, "It really depends on how our nation conducts itself in foreign policy. If we're an arrogant nation, they'll resent us. If we're a humble nation, but strong, they'll welcome us."<sup>41</sup> With his support of increased military spending and reservations about an active foreign policy, Bush seemed to echo Theodore Roosevelt's advice to "speak softly but carry a big stick."

But the terrorist attacks of 9-11 on the United States ended his reluctance to be assertive in foreign policy, ". . . my vision shifted dramatically after September the 11th because I now realize the stakes. I realize the world has changed."<sup>42</sup> No longer would the United States be a "humble nation," but one chosen by God to lead the world: ". . . our nation is chosen by God and commissioned by history to be a model to the world of justice and inclusion and diversity without division."<sup>43</sup> It would be the mission of the United States to extend the universal values of America to the rest of the world. "As I said in my State of the Union, liberty is not America's gift to the world. Liberty is God's gift to every human being in the world. . . . We're called to extend the promise of this country into the lives of every citizen who lives here."<sup>44</sup> The pursuit of regime change in Iraq was part of President Bush's vision of extending liberty to the rest of the world.

Bush's moral clarity was based on strong convictions. In discussing the war on terrorism, he stated:



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There is a human condition that we must worry about in times of war. There is a value system that cannot be compromised—God-given values. These aren't United States-created values. There are values of freedom and the human condition and mothers loving their children. What's very important as we articulate foreign policy through our diplomacy and military action, is that it never look like we are creating—we are the author of these values.<sup>45</sup>

Bush clearly felt that his foreign policy decisions were always in pursuit of these values. At one level the president was indicating that the United States was subject to God's will; on the other hand, he was implying that the United States knew God's will and was the instrument of God's will.

Critics of the administration argued that Bush's vision of America's place in the world led to a unilateral approach to international relations and undercut multilateral cooperation with other nations. President Bush's tendency to see the United States as unique and uniquely powerful led to the rejection or abandonment of a number of treaties or proposed international agreements by his administration. These included:

- Antiballistic Missile Treaty (signed with the USSR in 1972)
- Kyoto accord on global warming (1997)
- Treaty on Anti-Personnel Mines (1997)
- Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (rejected by the Senate 1999)
- Biological Weapons Control Treaty (Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention) protocol to verify and enforce the 1972 treaty on biological weapons (2001)
- Small-arms Control Agreement (2001)
- UN Conference Against Racism (2001) (U.S. refused to participate)
- Rights of Woman (CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (2002)
- International Criminal Court (2002)
- The "Agreed Framework" with North Korea, negotiated by the Clinton administration

Each of these active or proposed treaties or conventions undoubtedly had problems from the U.S. perspective, and some were also rejected by the Clinton administration. But collectively, from the perspective of other countries, it could easily look like a pattern of contempt for international agreements and an unwillingness of the Bush administration to work with other countries on mutual problems. Often the potential agreements were seemingly dismissed out of hand without efforts by the administration to propose alternative ways to address the intent behind the agreements.

In the buildup to war with Iraq the Bush administration further demonstrated its rejection of multilateral approaches by arguing that the UN would be irrelevant if it did not ratify the U.S. approach to Iraq. And when Germany and France were unwilling to endorse the U.S. decision to go to war with Iraq, they were dubbed the

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“Old Europe” by Donald Rumsfeld. When it was obvious that a second resolution to authorize war with Iraq would not be ratified by the U.N. Security Council, the United States abandoned its efforts for a resolution and went to war against the expressed wishes of most of the members of the Security Council. Bush exhibited impatience with and sometimes a disdain for diplomacy. In response to a question about the Middle East, Bush said: “Look, my job isn’t to try to nuance. My job is to tell people what I think.”<sup>46</sup>

Bush rejected any criticism of his approach as being unilateral. “. . . If you want to hear resentment, just listen to the word unilateralism. I mean, that’s resentment. . . . which I find amusing.”<sup>47</sup> In responding to a European leader’s complaint that the United States did not sufficiently take into account European perspectives, Bush stated his views on coalitions: “Well, that’s very interesting. Because my belief is the best way that we hold this coalition together is to be clear on our objectives and to be clear that we are determined to achieve them. You hold a coalition together by strong leadership and that’s what we intend to provide.”<sup>48</sup>

President Bush’s approach to nations which disagreed with his priorities was often that they were beyond the pale. As he said in January 2003, “Either you’re with us or you’re with the enemy. Either you’re with those who love freedom or you’re with those who hate innocent life.”<sup>49</sup> The President’s approach to other nations was sometimes resented by them. Fareed Zakaria, former editor of *Foreign Affairs*, argued in March 2003 that President Bush was undermining good will for the United States throughout the world. “Having traveled around the world and met with senior government officials in dozens of countries over the past year, I can report that with the exception of Britain and Israel, every country the administration has dealt with feels humiliated by it.”<sup>50</sup>

The president seemed to ignore his observation in the second presidential debate that U.S. arrogance could easily lead to resentment. But others’ opinions may not have bothered the president as foreign opinion about the United States shifted from sympathy and support (immediately after 9-11) to suspicion and hostility (preceding war with Iraq). In dismissing the voices of dissent on the U.N. Security Council, President Bush declared that the United Nations was irrelevant to the U.S. decision to go to war with Iraq, “This is not a question of authority, it is a question of will.”<sup>51</sup>

### National Security Strategy of the United States, the “Bush Doctrine”

Bush’s moral convictions and belief in the special role of the United States was expressed most thoroughly and authoritatively in the 2002 document, “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America.” The document articulated what Henry Kissinger called a “revolutionary” revision of U.S. policy away from the containment and deterrence strategy of the Cold War era and addressed a new emphasis on terrorism and rogue states.<sup>52</sup>

The policy doctrine began with a declaration that the U.S. model of government is universal and has triumphed:

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The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom—and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise. . . . These values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society. . . .<sup>53</sup> (P. 1)

The document also declared that the United States would act preemptively or to prevent any challenge to it, “. . . America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.” (P. 1) And it issued a warning to rival military powers: “Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States.” (P. 22) Thus the declaration was aimed not just at rogue states but at any future “potential adversary” of the United States.

Bush noted the dominant position of the United States in military power, “The United States possesses unprecedented—and unequaled—strength and influence in the world,” (p. 3) and said it would use its power, “. . . the United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe.” (P. 2) America would not wait to be attacked, “the United States cannot remain idle while dangers gather.” (P. 11) But rather “. . . we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary to exercise our right of self defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists. . . .” (P. 6) or “rogue states” determined to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

It is one thing for a nation to argue in an *ad hoc* manner that, as a matter of national security or self interest, that it intends to attack another nation that it believes is threatening. But it is quite another thing to elevate preemptive war to a matter of high principle and formal national security doctrine. A war is considered preemptive when a state attacks another state that is poised to attack it, thus preempting the anticipated attack. But preemptive war easily slides into preventive war when the potential threat is in the future; it is just a matter of how imminent the threat is perceived to be. The warning in the U.S. statements that other nations should not use preemption as an excuse for aggression is not likely to be heeded by other nations and may encourage or legitimate their use of preventive wars. As Brent Scowcroft, national security adviser for Presidents Ford and Bush 41, said:

It is not clear to me what advantage there is in declaring it publicly. It has been common knowledge that under some circumstances the U.S. would pre-empt. As a declaratory policy it tends to leave the door open to others who want to claim the same right. By making it public we also tend to add to the world's perception that we are arrogant and unilateral.<sup>54</sup>

### Positive and Negative Consequences of Moral Certainty

The positive side of President Bush's moralistic and Manichaeian view of the world is the moral clarity it brings to U.S. policy.<sup>55</sup> His certainty and conviction enhanced his leadership during the war on terrorism. But the drawbacks in elevating the

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principles of the war on terrorism (e.g. preemption) to the explicit strategic policy of the United States are that the stated principles do not apply as well to the many nation states in the world and make consistent application of the principles difficult. The drawbacks of such an approach may entail several potential problems:

1. Other states may use the same justification for preemptive wars in their own interests.
2. If the U.S. does not apply the doctrine consistently, it may be seen as bluffing and not serious.
3. Other states might take the U.S. declaration as a serious threat and react militarily.

These drawbacks can be seen in case of North Korea. In 2001 the Bush administration rejected the Clinton administration's "The Agreed Framework" because North Korea was not fully adhering to its side of the agreement to stop nuclear weapons development in exchange for fuel and food aid. In January 2002 President Bush included North Korea in the "axis of evil" that the United States had to oppose. In June at West Point he said that the U.S. would act preemptively against its enemies, and in September he elevated preemption to formal U.S. national security doctrine. And during the same year the Bush administration prepared for war against one of the "axis of evil" states, Iraq.

Thus when in late 2002 and early 2003 North Korea expelled the UN inspectors who were monitoring its nuclear plants and announced its withdrawal from the nuclear nonproliferation agreement, the United States was put in a difficult position. While it was moving against Iraq, which did not yet have nuclear weapons, it was faced with the reality of North Korea which had several nuclear weapons and threatened to begin to build more of them in the near future. The administration's reaction was that this did not constitute a crisis, and after saying that it would not negotiate with North Korea, it began to move back to the Clinton position of offering aid in exchange for an agreement to stop nuclear weapons development. The actions of North Korea could well have been a rational response to the new U.S. strategic doctrine of preemption along with its inclusion in the "axis of evil" that Bush had declared.

Declarations of universal values in pursuit of U.S. foreign policy goals are sometimes useful, as they were in the war on terrorism. But writing them into policy could cause problems, especially when applied to other nation states. The Bush administration wanted to use the principles to move against Saddam but did not want to use them against North Korea. Nor did it want North Korea to conclude that the United States was serious about its declared principles and likely to attack North Korea. The U.S. also had to deal with other nation states which did not fully adhere to the ideals articulated in its policy pronouncements. For instance Pakistan was an undemocratic, nuclear power, but it was closely allied with the United States and was crucial to the war on terrorism. Saudi Arabia and other Middle East states were also not democratic but nevertheless were important allies of the United States.

## VIEWING THE WORLD IN PERSONAL TERMS

One of the attractive sides of President Bush was his personal approach to people. Many Americans saw him as a “regular guy” in contrast to his father who was often perceived as distant or out of touch (regardless of the validity of such perceptions). The president often gave nicknames to members of his administration or the press and kidded them during breaks in formal appearances. In sharp contrast to his father, the younger Bush clearly enjoyed campaigning, and his active campaigning was seen as one of the reasons for the Republicans’ congressional victories in the 2002 elections. In the White House Bush often used humor to defuse tense situations and put his aides at ease.<sup>56</sup> While his personableness was always an asset, Bush’s tendency to take politics personally was sometimes an asset and sometimes a drawback.

For instance, President Bush held former President Clinton in contempt and seemed to turn away from some policy options merely because they were associated with Clinton.<sup>57</sup> In the campaign he said that China should be considered our strategic competitor rather than our strategic partner, as Clinton had said. Bush quickly rejected the Clinton administration’s “Agreed Framework” attempt to smooth relations between North and South Korea and did not try to amend (by seeking stronger enforcement) and build on them. Most striking was Bush’s contempt for Clinton’s response to terrorist attacks on the U.S. embassies and the U.S.S. Cole. Clinton had launched cruise missiles at an al Qaeda camp in Afghanistan; the missiles arrived too late, and the camp was empty.<sup>58</sup> Bush admitted, however, that he did not attempt any action or serious planning before 9-11.

Bush’s instinctive reaction to events, his decisiveness, and his personal orientation were illustrated in the aftermath of the terrorist bombing in New York City. Senators from states affected by the 9-11 bombings came to visit Bush in the Oval Office on September 13, 2001, and Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) told Bush of his personal experience of the bombings and his fear for his daughter; he then asked the president for \$20 billion in aid for New York. While many presidents might have given a temporizing answer and have it staffed out, President Bush replied, “New York really needs twenty billion? You got it.”<sup>59</sup> Later legislators from New York complained when the funds were not soon forthcoming.

In addition to President Bush’s interpersonal skills, he often saw the world in personal terms. Perhaps the most famous example of this was President Bush’s decision after several meetings that he could trust Russian Premier Putin. After his first meeting with Putin, Bush said, “I looked the man in the eye. . . . I was able to get a sense of his soul.”<sup>60</sup> Later in the summer of 2001, Putin told Bush about a cross of his mother’s that held great sentimental value to him. Bush was very impressed at the religious symbol, and when Putin later showed the cross to Bush, Bush concluded that he could be trusted. “We had a very successful meeting. And I had convinced him that I no longer viewed Russia as an enemy, and I viewed him, on a personal level, as somebody with whom we could deal.”<sup>61</sup>

In reassuring President Musharraf in November 2001 that the United States would not abandon its commitment to Pakistan after the war in Afghanistan was

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over, Bush told him, "Tell the Pakistani people that the president of the United States looked you in the eye and told you we wouldn't do that."<sup>62</sup> U.S. policy in the Middle East seemed to change significantly in the spring of 2002 when Bush decided that Yassar Arafat was personally responsible for the continued suicide bombings and had to go before peace could be seriously pursued. Bush subsequently decided not to continue to press the Israelis about their settlements in the West Bank and called Ariel Sharon a "man of peace." When Premier Schroeder of Germany was running for reelection in the fall of 2002, he criticized U.S. plans for war in Iraq and said that Germany would not participate in an unauthorized attack. President Bush took Schroeder's statements personally and refused to call him with the traditional congratulations after his victory in the elections.

At one point during the fall of 2001 there were warnings of another terrorist attack, possibly targeting the White House, and the question of whether the president should leave the White House came up. Remembering some criticisms of his decision not to return to Washington immediately after the 9/11 attacks, Bush declared: "Those bastards are going to find me exactly here. And if they get me, they're going to get me right here." Vice President Cheney put the issue into less personal terms, "This isn't about you. This is about our Constitution," and the continuity of government. And so Cheney decided to go to a "secure, undisclosed location."<sup>63</sup>

While President Bush was often effective in using personal politics in international relations, for example in getting President Putin to accept the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM treaty, there were also drawbacks. Bush's declaration, "I loathe Kim Jong Il,"<sup>64</sup> may have heightened tensions with North Korea, convinced it that cooperation with the United States was hopeless, and hardened its determination to restart its nuclear program in earnest. Personalizing interstate disputes also may reduce options for compromise and coming into agreement without embarrassment for one leader or the other. During the 1962 Cuban Missile crisis John Kennedy was careful not to push Khrushchev into a corner from which he could not extricate himself without losing face. Don Greg, former ambassador to South Korea was doubtful about U.S. reactions to North Korea's leader. "I believe it is counterproductive to treat Kim in a derisive or disdainful manner. . . . Now we are filled with legitimate doubts, but reasonable certainty about Kim's potential cannot be reached through ridicule."<sup>65</sup>

Early in the war on terrorism President Bush said that he wanted U.S. forces to capture Osama bin Laden "dead or alive." But as time passed and it became likely that Osama had escaped Afghanistan, his name was seldom heard in public statements by the administration.<sup>66</sup> He was soon replaced as the face of terror with Saddam Hussein. In the fall of 2001 Bush said "After all, this is the guy who tried to kill my dad."<sup>67</sup> Personalizing international disputes reduces the range of options available to presidents and may make it more difficult to respond to changing circumstances.

While President Bush often reacted to international relations in personal terms, he also depended on people, rather than structures or processes, in his advisory system. "If I have any genius or smarts, it's the ability to recognize talent, ask them

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to serve and work with them as a team.”<sup>68</sup> Bush administration national security decision making did not seem to resemble any of the three models set out by Richard Tanner Johnson or Alexander George: formalistic, competitive, or collegial.<sup>69</sup>

Bush resisted the formal policy development processes favored by the Eisenhower and Nixon administrations.<sup>70</sup> He did not seem to relish the competitive approach that FDR often used.<sup>71</sup> One might argue that he favored the collegial model because of the high value he put on teamwork. But important aspects of the collegial model as analyzed by George included the creative dimensions of bringing differing perspectives to bear on the major questions facing an administration in a crisis. While President Bush may have welcomed differing perspectives on some aspects of implementation of his policy choices, reports do not seem to indicate that he welcomed vigorous give-and-take about fundamental policy direction.

The fact that some in the professional military in the summer of 2002 went public with their reservations about war with Iraq was one indication that they did not feel he was fully considering the consequences of possible war.<sup>72</sup> That Brent Scowcroft and James Baker of the first Bush presidency wrote op-ed pieces against war with Iraq was an indicator that in their judgment, the case against war had not been fully considered.<sup>73</sup> According to Bush aides, there never was a full-scale debate or discussion in a formal NSC meeting over whether or not to go to war with Iraq.<sup>74</sup> The president did hear the case against war with Iraq in the summer of 2002, but it did not come through a formal process but rather personally from Colin Powell.

Powell's role was particularly important for President Bush. Powell was the only person in the administration with sufficient stature and clout to be able to present an alternative perspective to the hard line point of view of Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. Rice arranged for Powell to see the president to make his case, but she did not see it as her role to make a strong case herself in opposition to the other principals. In a dinner with the president on August 5, 2002, Powell laid out the arguments against war with Iraq but also the arguments for going to the United Nations for a resolution if the president chose war.<sup>75</sup> Although Bush was not persuaded by Powell's reservations about war with Iraq, he did decide to go to the UN for a resolution about Iraq. Whether these presidential decisions were wise or not, it was only Powell who could have made the case credibly to the president.<sup>76</sup>

Thus President Bush's approach to the world and his style of decision making were personalistic in nature rather than procedural or structural. The advantages of his personal approach to international relations were his ability to form personal bonds with some foreign leaders that smoothed relations with their nations. The disadvantage of such a personal approach is that once disagreements become personalized, it is more difficult to reach a reconciliation if changing conditions warrant it. A personal approach to decision making can work well if the right people have the confidence of the president and can present opposing views and alternatives. The disadvantage to depending on individuals for this function is that it is highly dependent on having the right individuals always available.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this paper is that presidential personality makes a difference in an administration's policy priorities and achievements. It is true that presidents are constrained in important ways by the structure and organization of the White House, and they face compelling environmental pressures to act in certain ways. It is also true that new presidents are stepping into a stream of policy development and governmental commitments that they cannot change at will. But the argument of this paper has been that George W. Bush's personality—as exhibited in his bias for action, his moral certainty, and his personalistic approach to politics—has made important differences in his policy choices and thus in the direction of the United States government.

His bias for action led to his early decisions about war in Iraq, his willingness to use suspect documents to argue for it, and his decisions to begin the war with a “rolling start.” His moral certainty, based in part on his religious beliefs, led to his conviction that God had chosen the United States to “extend” universal values throughout the world, sometimes through war. His personalistic approach to politics led to easing relations with Russia and aggravating relations with North Korea.

The consequences of these traits in a president are neither uniformly advantageous nor detrimental. They are, however, problematical. A bias for action can short circuit bureaucratic or political resistance; but it can also lead to premature decisions. Moral certainty can lend rhetorical support and firm leadership when there is unanimity of purpose; but it can shut off a full debate when there is serious doubt about a course of action. A personal approach to politics can facilitate cooperation with others (persons or nations); but it can also narrow options and forestall reconciliation under changed circumstances. Whether these personality traits are harnessed in the service of good policies depends on the wisdom of the president.

## NOTES

For help in developing this paper the author would like to thank Fred Greenstein, Jason Hartke, Hugh Heclo, Don Kash, Bob Karlson, Arnauld Nicogossian, and Colleen Shogan,

1. For treatments of President Bush's leadership skills, see: Bob Woodward, *Bush At War* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 2002); David Frum, *The Right Man* (NY: Random House 2003); Don Kettl, *Team Bush* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 2003); Fred Greenstein, “The Leadership Style of George W. Bush,” paper prepared for delivery at the conference on “The Bush Presidency: An Early Assessment,” Princeton University, 2003); and Michael Kinsley, “The Power of One,” *Time* (21 April 2003), p. 86.
2. See the insightful analysis by Nicholas Lemann, “Without a Doubt,” *New Yorker* (14&26, October 2002), p. 164. David Frum, a former Bush speechwriter, wrote in an admiring book about the president, “He is impatient and quick to anger; sometimes glib, even dogmatic; often uncurious and as a result ill informed; more conventional in his thinking than a leader probably should be. But outweighing the faults are his virtues: decency, honesty, rectitude, courage, and tenacity.” David Frum, *The Right Man* (NY: Random House, 2003), p. 272.



3. For analyses of environmental constraints on presidents, see Hugh Hecló, "The Changing Presidential Office," in James P. Pfiffner, ed. *The Managerial Presidency* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), pp. 23–36; Terry Moe, "The Politicized Presidency," in John Chubb and Paul E. Peterson, eds. *The New Direction in American Politics* (Washington: Brookings, 1985); Karen Hult and Charles Walcott, *Governing from the White House: From Hoover to Johnson* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1997). For analyses of the importance of personality in politics, see Fred I. Greenstein, *Personality and Politics* (Chicago: Markham, 1969); Fred I. Greenstein, *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to Clinton* (NY: Free Press, 2000).
4. James David Barber, *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992).
5. Richard Tanner Johnson, *Managing the White House* (NY: Harper and Row, 1974). Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980); Alexander L. George and Juliette L. George, *Presidential Personality and Performance* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998).
6. See *The Modern Presidency*, 3rd ed. (New York: Bedford St. Martin's Press, 2000), pp. 44–84; "The President's Chief of Staff: Lessons Learned," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (Winter 1993), pp. 77–102.
7. Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 137.
8. Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 144.
9. Woodward, *Bush at War*, pp. 144–145.
10. Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 168.
11. Woodward, *Bush at War*, pp. 157–158.
12. For an analysis of Bush's first year in office and his perspective on political capital see James P. Pfiffner, "The Transformation of the Bush Presidency," in James P. Pfiffner and Roger H. Davidson, *Understanding the Presidency*, 3rd ed. (NY: Longman, 2003), pp. 453–471.
13. Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 339.
14. Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 282.
15. White House news release (14 January 2003), "President Bush Discusses Iraq," White House web site.
16. Karen DeYoung, "Bush: U.N. Must Act Fast," *Washington Post* (1 February 2003), p. 1.
17. Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 341. The interview took place in the summer of 2002 in the context of a discussion about attacking Iraq. Bush was reflecting about the coalition against al Qaeda, but also seemed to be referring to potential war with Iraq.
18. Richard Wolffe and Tamara Lipper, "Powell in the Bunker," *Newsweek* (24 March 2003), p. 31. See also Jim Hoagland, "How He Got Here," *Washington Post* (21 March 2003), p. A37. See also Nicholas Lemann, "How It Came to War," *New Yorker* (31 March 2003), p. 36, Haas said: "The moment was the first week of July [2002] when I had a meeting with Condi [Condoleezza Rice]."
19. Nicholas Lemann, "How It Came to War," *New Yorker* (31 March 2003), p. 36.
20. Michael Elliot and James Carney, "First Stop Iraq," *Time* (31 March 2003), p. 173.
21. President Bush's intentions for war in Iraq were also reflected by Vice President Cheney's statement in August that UN inspections would be useless. "A return of inspectors would provide no assurance whatsoever of his compliance with UN resolutions. . . . On the contrary, there is a great danger that it would provide false comfort that Saddam was somehow

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- 'back in his box'." Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (NY: Simon and Schuster 2002), p. 344. For an analysis of the Bush administration's decision to go to war in Iraq, see James P. Pfiffner, "Assessing the Bush Presidency," in Mark J. Rozell and Gary L. Gregg, eds. *Considering the Bush Presidency* (NY: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).
22. Howard Fineman, "Bush and God," *Newsweek* (3/10/03), p. 22.
  23. See Dana Priest and Kaaren DeYoung, "CIA Questioned Documents Linking Iraq, Uranium Ore," *Washington Post* (22 March 2003), p. A30; and Seymour M. Hersh, "Who Lied to Whom?" *New Yorker* (31 March 2003), pp. 41–43.
  24. Dana Priest and Kaaren DeYoung, "CIA Questioned Documents Linking Iraq, Uranium Ore," *Washington Post* (22 March 2003), p. A30; and Seymour M. Hersh, "Who Lied to Whom?" *New Yorker* (31 March 2003), pp. 41–43. It is hard to understand how mere incompetence could have allowed the reference to forged documents get into the president's State of the Union speech. One former intelligence official said, "Someone set someone up." (Hersh, p. 43).
  25. Walter Pincus and Dana Milbank, "Bush Clings to Dubious Allegations About Iraq," *Washington Post* (18 March 2003), p. A13.
  26. See James Risén, "C.I.A. Aides Feel Pressure In Preparing Iraqi Reports," *New York Times* (23 March 2003), p. B10.
  27. Dana Milbank, "For Bush, Facts Are Malleable," *Washington Post* (22 October 2002), p. 1, A22.
  28. Milbak, "For Bush, Acts Are Malleable," p. A22.
  29. Dana Milbank, "For Bush, Facts Are Malleable," *Washington Post* (22 October 2002), p. A22.
  30. According to Seymour M. Hersh, "On at least six occasions . . . he [Rumsfeld] insisted that the number of ground troops be sharply reduced." "Offense and Defense," *The New Yorker* (7 April 2003), p. 43. See also Joseph P. Hoar, "Why Aren't There Enough Troops in Iraq?" *The New York Times* (2 April 2003), p. A29; Bernard Weinraub with Thom Shanker, "Rumsfeld's Design for War Criticized on the Battlefield," *The New York Times* (1 April 2003), p. 1; Jonathan Weisman, "Rumsfeld and Myers Defend War Plan," *Washington Post* (2 April 2003), p. A19.
  31. Joseph P. Hoar, "Why Aren't There Enough Troops in Iraq?" *The New York Times* (2 April 2003), p. A29.
  32. See Richard Brookhiser, "The Mind of George W. Bush," *Atlantic Monthly* (April 2003), p. 63.
  33. Howard Fineman, "Bush and God" *Newsweek* (10 March 2003), p. 27.
  34. Jackson Lears, "How a War Became a Crusade," *New York Times* (11 March 2003), p. A29.
  35. Bob Allen, "Faith formed a wedge in primary politics, observers say," *Baptist Standard* (24 April 2000), accessed at [www.baptiststandard.com/2000/](http://www.baptiststandard.com/2000/). When he was asked to explain his answer further, Bush said that it would be hard to explain to someone who was not Christian. "When you turn your heart and your life over to Christ, when you accept Christ as the Savior, it changes your heart and changes your life."
  36. Laurie Goodstein, "A President Puts his Faith in Providence," *The New York Times* (9 February 2003), p. wk4.
  37. David Frum, *The Right Man* (NY: Random House, 2003), pp. 3–4.
  38. Garry Wills, a scholar of American politics as well as religion, observed: "His [Bush's] calm assurance that most of the world and much of his nation is wrong comes from an apparent certainty that is hard to justify in terms of geopolitical calculus. It helps, in making that

- leap, to be assured that God is on your side. One of the psychological benefits of this is that it makes one oppose with an easy conscience those who are not with us, therefore not on God's side. They are not mistaken, miscalculating, misguided or even just malevolent. They are evil." Garry Wills, "With God on His Side," *New York Times Magazine* (30 March 2003), p. 29.
39. Richard Brookhiser, "The Mind of George W. Bush," *The Atlantic Monthly* (April 2003), p. 63.
  40. Nicholas Lemann, "Without a Doubt," *New Yorker* (Oct 14&26, 2002), p. 177.
  41. "The Second 2000 Gore-Bush Presidential Debate: October 11, 2000," Commission on Presidential Debates, p. 2 of transcript downloaded from [www.debates.org](http://www.debates.org). Bush also said ". . . I'm going to be judicious as to how to use the military. It needs to be in our vital interest, the mission needs to be clear, and the extra [sic] strategy obvious. (By "extra strategy" he probably meant "exit strategy." Or the transcript may have had a typographical error.)
  42. Quoted in Karen DeYoung, "Bush: U.N. Must Act Fast," *Washington Post* (1 February 2003), p. 1.
  43. Speech to B'nai B'rith, 28 August 2002. Quoted in Martin E. Marty, "The Sin of Pride," *Newsweek* (10 March 2003), p. 32–33. See also, "God and Country Home Search Page Science Site Index Main Start Page, <http://www.geocities.com/petroroberts.geo/Relig-Politics/GGGWBusyh.html>.
  44. White House Website, "Presidential Remarks 2/10/03", news release at Opryland Hotel in Nashville, TN (3/11/03).
  45. Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 131.
  46. Quoted in George Will, "When 'nuance' excuses terror," *Jewish World Review* (11 April 2002), accessed at [www.jewishworld.com](http://www.jewishworld.com).
  47. Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 341.
  48. Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 281.
  49. Bill Sammon, "Bush defends 'different strategies.'" *The Washington Times* (4 January 2003), (accessed at: <http://dynamic.washtimes.com/twt-print.cfm?ArticleID=20030104-67215576>). See also, Remarks at the New Jersey Army National Guard Aviation Support Facility "I had made it clear to the world that either you're with us or you're with the enemy, and that doctrine still stands." Kryn P. Westhoven, Public Affairs Staff, "Bush: 'We're in it for the long haul'" ([www.dix.army.mil/PAO/post092702/bush.htm](http://www.dix.army.mil/PAO/post092702/bush.htm)).
  50. Fareed Zakaria, "The Arrogant Empire," *Newsweek* (24 March 2003), p. 29.
  51. "President Says Saddam Hussein Must Leave Iraq Within 48 Hours: Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation," (17 March 2003), transcript posted on White House website (accessed 15 April 2003). Punctuation of the sentence is as it appears on the White House transcript.
  52. Henry Kissinger, "Our Intervention In Iraq," *Washington Post* (12 August 2002), p. A15.
  53. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, ([www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/print/nssall.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/print/nssall.html)). The page numbers in the text refer to the pages in the downloaded document.
  54. Michael R. Gordon, "Serving Notice of a New U.S., Poised to Hit First and Alone," *New York Times* (27 January 2003), p. 1, A11.
  55. A counter example to Bush's penchant for moral clarity and disdain for nuance was his response to stem-cell research. After consulting a team of advisers, his policy resolution called for a compromise among his important constituencies. The religious right wanted a complete

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- ban on stem-cell research, while several prominent Republicans, including Senators Orrin Hatch and Bill Frist and Nancy Reagan, favored scientific and medical research using stem-cells. Bush compromised by allowing research on already existing stem-cell lines. See the discussion in Richard Brookhiser, "The Mind of George W. Bush," *Atlantic Monthly* (April 2003), p. 62.
56. See Richard Brookhiser, "The Mind of George W. Bush," *The Atlantic Monthly* (April 2003), p. 60.
  57. See David Frum, *The Right Man* (NY: Random House, 2003), Chapter 2, "The Un-Clinton," pp. 12–30.
  58. President Bush derisively called such actions "pounding sand." ( Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 123) "The antiseptic notion of launching a cruise missile into some guy's, you know, tent, really is a joke," Bush told Bob Woodward. "I mean, people viewed that as the impotent America. . . . a flaccid, you know, kind of technology competent but not very tough country that was willing to launch a cruise missile out of a submarine and that'd be it." ( Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 38) On the other hand, Bush admitted that before the terrorist attacks on New York and the Pentagon, that he had done little to avenge previous attacks or prevent new ones. "There was a significant difference in my attitude after September 11. . . . [before 9/11] I was prepared to look at a plan that would be a thoughtful plan that would bring him [Osama bin Laden] to justice, and would have given the order to do that. . . . But I didn't feel that sense of urgency, and my blood was not nearly as boiling." (Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 39).
  59. Richard Brookhiser, "The Mind of George W. Bush," *The Atlantic Monthly* (April 2003), p. 68.
  60. Nicholas Lemann, "Without a Doubt," *The New Yorker* (Oct. 14&21, 2002), p. 173.
  61. Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 120).
  62. Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 303.
  63. Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 270.
  64. (Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 340.
  65. Don Gregg, "Kim Jong Il: The Truth Behind the Caricature," *Newsweek* (3 February 2003), p. 13.
  66. Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 100.
  67. John King, "Bush calls Saddam 'the guy who tried to kill my dad'," CNN.com (27 September 2002).
  68. Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 74.
  69. Richard Tanner Johnson, *Managing the White House* (NY: Harper and Row, 1974). Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980); Alexander L. George and Juliette L. George, *Presidential Personality and Performance* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998).
  70. Eisenhower said: "I know of only one way in which you can be sure you've done your best to make a wise decision. That is to get all of the people who have partial and definable responsibility in this particular field, whatever it may be. Get them with their different viewpoints in front of you, and listen to them debate. I do not believe in bringing them in one at a time, and therefore being more impressed by the most recent one you hear than the earlier ones." Quoted in John P. Burke and Fred I. Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality* (NY: Russell Sage, 1991), p. 54.

71. President Bush conducted NSC meetings in the wake of the terrorist attacks to deliberate about the U.S. response and strategy. Contrasting views would be presented, but Bush did not encourage spirited debate over important issues. For instance, recalling one meeting when Rumsfeld became upset about the CIA seeming to dominate war planning, Bush said "That's the kind of discussion that frustrates me, because I like clarity." He did not pursue the disagreement and settle it; he told Rice, "Get this mess straightened out." Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 244.
72. See James P. Pfiffner, "National Security Decision Making and the War with Iraq," Paper prepared for presentation at the conference on "The Presidency, Congress, and the War on Terrorism: Scholarly Perspectives." University of Florida (February 7, 2003).
73. Baker, III, James A. 2002. "The Right Way to Change a Regime." *The New York Times*, 8/25/02, p. wk9; Scowcroft, Brent. 2002. "Don't Attack Saddam." *The Wall Street Journal*, 8/15/02, p. A12.
74. Jim Hoagland, "How We Got Here," *Washington Post* (21 March 2003), p. A37.
75. Woodward, *Bush at War*, pp. 333–334.
76. Strictly speaking, Powell was not playing the role of "devil's advocate" because he really believed the arguments he was making. (See Alexander George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), pp. 169–174. Despite his ability to persuade the president, or probably because of it, Powell was resented by many White House staffers, whose leaks undercut Powell's efforts and conservative pundits who called for his resignation. (Woodward, *Bush at War*, pp. 14, 223–225, 345.) President Bush seemed to recognize Powell's efforts and was willing to be persuaded by some of his arguments, but he was condescending in his praise for Powell. When asked about Powell's contribution to the administration, President Bush admitted that Powell was a "diplomatic person who has war experience." Then he said, "Let me think about Powell. I got one. He was very good with Musharraf. He single-handedly got Musharraf on Board." (Woodward, *Bush at War*, p. 342.) Bush's faint praise for Powell was reminiscent of President Eisenhower's response to a reporter's question about Vice President Nixon's contributions to his administration, "If you give me a week, I might think of one. I don't remember." Quoted in Tom Wicker, *One of Us: Richard Nixon and the American Dream* (NY: Random House, 1991), p. 224.