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Why did the US and the UK decide to invade Iraq in 2003? A comparative Foreign
Policy Analysis

By

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Abstract

This thesis provides a comparative Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) framework to explain the reasons behind the US and the UK decisions to invade Iraq in 2003. It suggests that groupthink, leadership style, and analogical reasoning account for the degrees in convergence and divergences in the decision-making process in both countries. While international factors contributed to the decision, to truly understand how these two governments made it, it is necessary to examine the individuals who made the decision. This research uses a structured, focused comparison process tracing data analysis method to scrutinise this case, enabling a more comprehensive explanation of the case. As such, this research contributes on a theoretical and empirical level. Theoretically, this research responds to the challenges laid down for FPA: to establish links between theoretical models, to compare national contexts, and to speak to policy practitioners. To make this contribution, this thesis shows the usefulness of the comparative FPA framework used to explain the parallels and deviations in decision-making processes in each country. Empirically, this research contributes a rich analysis of both decision-making processes that led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, using recently declassified documentary materials and interviews with decision-makers involved.

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1. Introduction

How and why did the US and the UK decide to invade Iraq in 2003? These questions form the motivating purpose of this thesis. Answers to these questions will, necessarily, be multi-dimensional – broad and narrow, international and domestic – and may combine both structural and individual factors. This thesis seeks to explain the individual dimension of these questions. To achieve this, this thesis examines the dynamics of the decision-making group, the leadership style, and framing of the decision and how these affected the decisions and attitudes of individuals. Using Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) models, this thesis selects its core research question as follows: How do FPA models explain similarities and differences in the US and the UK decision-making processes leading up to the 2003 Iraq war?

In this thesis, I argue that the US decision to invade Iraq was principally driven by Bush and key decision-makers' unrelenting focus on the threat they regarded Iraq as representing. This focus on Iraq meant that new information was filtered to prevent challenges to their desired approach. As shown in later chapters, Vice President Cheney and Secretary Rumsfeld helped Bush navigate the decision-making process; minimising criticism and reducing the opportunities to explore alternative policy options. The UK decision to invade Iraq was motivated by Prime Minister Tony Blair's fixation on maintaining close alignment with the US on foreign policy. The leadership styles of Bush and Blair established conditions where groupthink and analogical reasoning occurred.

By applying the groupthink, leadership style, and analogical reasoning models comparatively, the interconnectivity between the explanations they provide is evident. Each model covers a different, yet related dimension, important singly, and

crucial to a interconnected account. In doing so, this thesis makes both a theoretical and empirical contribution. Theoretically, it shows the importance of the connections between the models used here to provide a full explanation for the two cases.

Empirically, interviews with high-level decision-makers and an examination of newly declassified documents increases the contribution of this research.

The dynamics of the decision-making groups, the leadership styles of Bush and Blair, and the framing of the decision all contributed to the decision to invade Iraq in 2003. The leadership in the US and the UK were able to circumnavigate the checks and balances in order to pursue their goal of invading Iraq. Crucially, the explanations of each of the FPA models used here are strongly linked. Each model contextualises the explanations of the other models. The combination of groupthink, leadership style approach, and analogical reasoning provides an explanation that is greater than the sum of the individual models.

Empirically, this thesis synthesises different sources of information. Primary data – in the form of interviews with decision-makers involved in this case, and archival documents from the decision-making process – is combined with the well-developed secondary literature on this decision-making process.

To answer the question of how the individual level mattered in this question, methodological rigour and theoretical innovation are combined. The methodological rigour is introduced with the process-tracing method, while the theoretical innovation is introduced through the combination of these three FPA models. This thesis is amongst the first post-Chilcott Inquiry FPA studies, which greatly enhances the empirical contribution that it can make (Porter, 2017). There are two differences between this research and previous FPA examinations of the run-up to the Iraq war.

Firstly, this research examines the US and the UK decision-making process that led to the Iraq war in tandem. Secondly, this thesis analyses these cases comparatively, applying the three models and showing the connections between them. This, added to the process tracing data analysis method, provides the methodological contribution. As such, this research contributes on both a theoretical and empirical basis.

The Iraq War has entered the lexicon as the example of controversial war. It was a point of repeated reference for candidates in both the 2008 and the 2016 US Presidential elections (Broder, 2008; Cooper et al, 2008). In addition, Jeremy Corbyn's public opposition to the Iraq War was a point used to garner support for his leadership of the Labour Party in 2016 (Asthana, 2016; Snowden, 2016).

Exemplifying the extent of scholarship that the Iraq War has attracted, a Google Scholar search of "Iraq War" returns 788,000 results for the years 2003-2020. Similarly, a search of "US Iraq War" returns 840,000 results, while "UK Iraq War" returns 276,000 results. Whilst this is only a snapshot of the scholarship on the Iraq war, it provides an initial indication of the interest and controversy that this case attracted. In comparison, a Google Scholar search of the war in Afghanistan (for the years 2001-2020), the other big military operation of the Bush Presidency, returns ... results. The war in Iraq, then, has become a "textbook example" of a controversial military operation (Phillips, 2005; Ricks, 2007; Clarke, 2007, p605).

The war in Iraq has become a reference point alongside which all subsequent US and UK military operations have been compared. The US and the UK involvement in the NATO intervention in Libya, the US-led intervention in Syria, and the UK parliamentary vote against involvement in Syria have all been debated with

reference to the Iraq War, which is an indication of how its legacy has structured public discourse (Fall, 2020; Cordesman, 2016; Cockburn, 2015).

For the US, the legacy of the Iraq War is a painful one. Whilst the US-led military operations against the regime of Saddam Hussein took only forty-three days, the reconstruction and stabilisation of Iraq in the aftermath of the invasion are arguably continuing to this day. Between 2003 and 2011, a total of 4,490 US troops died in Iraq (Statista, 2020). Similarly, it took nine months for the US search for Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) to determine that there was no evidence of the stockpiles that the US had declared were present in their case for military action. In testimony to Congress, David Kay, formerly the top US weapons inspector, declared “We were almost all wrong”¹. A presidential commission reported that “not one bit” of the pre-war intelligence on Iraqi WMD turned out to be accurate².

The UK has an equally painful legacy with the Iraq War. The premiership of Tony Blair has been forever tainted by it, although he is, arguably, a former prime minister who achieved more than perhaps any Labour prime minister since Atlee (Toynbee, 2007; Dyson, 2008; Grice, 2016). Blair’s successor as PM, Gordon Brown sought to distance himself from Bush in order to separate himself from Blair’s legacy (Dunn, 2008). Yet, this record of achievement is typically recalled only after people remember the war in Iraq. Despite Blair ordering UK involvement in five major military operations (Operation Desert Fox in Iraq, Kosovo, Sierra Leone,

¹ Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee Subject: Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction programs charied by: Senator John Warner (R-VA); Witness: David Kay, Former Head of the Iraq Survey Group. Location: 106 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC. JANUARY 28, 2004

<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEFF/NSAEFF80/kaytestimony.pdf>

² Report of The Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction [henceforth RobbSilberman Report], 31 March 2005, http://www.gpoaccess.gov/wmd/pdf/full_wmd_report.pdf

Afghanistan, and Iraq in 2003), Iraq was the intervention with the broadest impact domestically and internationally. On a human-level, it is estimated 288,000 people died in the violence that emerged after the invasion of Iraq (Iraq Body Count, 2020). The legacy of Iraq has been claimed to be the loss of public trust in the government, in the intelligence services, and to be “still poisoning our national life” (Gaskarth, 2020, Younge, 2018). For Blair, there are claims that the legacy of Iraq is that he is “damned for all time”, or that his legacy is destroyed (Freedland, 2016; Bloom, 2016). It is for this reason that military operations since 2003 have been compared to the invasion of Iraq (Fall, 2020; Wright, 2014). Equally, this made the Iraq War one of the most politicising events of the last twenty years, the infamous “million-man march”³ being the largest political protest of the modern era in the UK (Sculthorpe, 2016).

The legacy of the conflict in Iraq internationally is another aspect that explains why the Iraq War remains controversial and is the subject of so much attention. The destabilisation of the region with the fallout from the war in Iraq continues to pose threats and challenges to this day. The emergence of the Islamic State (ISIS) from Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), and their explosive sweep from Syria into Iraq in 2014, has been linked to the Iraq War in 2003 (Hassan, 2018). The new “regional cold war” in the Middle East, between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the instability that this causes in the region, is equally linked to the 2003 war in Iraq (Fisher, 2016; Santini, 2017). Clearly, the Iraq War has had manifold and complex after-effects.

³ The march was named the “million-man march” by the media at the time.

1.1 Contribution to Foreign Policy Analysis

At a fundamental level, FPA looks at human decision-makers. For IR theory, the decision-making unit is typically seen as a unitary rational actor, and as such is equivalent to the state (Hudson, 2005). This is regardless of whether this unit is a nation-state, an individual or a group of people. This means that for IR scholarship the nation state can be black-boxed, meaning that IR theory is “Actor-general”. As such, states and decision-makers are thought of as equivalent, because both are unitary rational actors. Contrastingly, FPA is actor-specific. This means decision-makers are not unitary rational actors uniform in their approach to decision-making, and as such are not equivalent with states (Hudson, 2005). As George (1993, p9) argues, actor-specific models “grasp the different internal structures and behavioural patterns of each state and leader”,

Allison (1971) outlined the Rational Actor Model of FPA, referring to the model alongside the “theory of international relations”. Within this understanding of the approach of decision-makers, “no matter how actors behave, they are expected-utility maximisers” (Morin and Paquin, 2018, p218). An actor’s behaviour is based on comparative analyses of the options available to them. There are three assumptions contained within this conceptualisation of rationality: Actors consciously make decisions, actors classify their options systematically by their preferences and this list is complete, actors seek to maximise utility in the decisions they make and crucially do not set aside their preferences to align with their moral or ideological preferences (Morin and Paquin, 2018). However, in response to this conceptualisation of rationality, FPA scholarship went through the “cognitive revolution” (Hudson and Vore, 1995). It is from this cognitive perspective that this

thesis draws the FPA models used here. The core concept of this is that human rationality is limited. As Hudson and Vore (1995) assert, “People sacrifice rather than optimise. They neither possess nor seek perfect information. They seem incapable of considering more than two or three alternatives at a given time”. There are so many different interpretations of particular situations, depending on the “historical precedents” used, meaning that studying the character and experiences of those decision-makers interpreting the situation, and their predispositions or tendencies is so crucial to understanding decision-making (Hudson and Vore, 1995).

In cognitive FPA, there is the concept of foreign policy substitutability – that from a set of material and ideational factors there can be a wide variety in the foreign policy decisions that result. With this focus on the human decision-maker, the idea of rational actors in foreign policy decision-making can be challenged. As this thesis argues, neither Bush nor Blair acted in such a rational manner, in line with the three assumptions outlined above. There was no rational systematic examination of options, followed by the selection of the option believed to maximise utility. Rather, the evidence suggests both were fixated on the course of action they wished to pursue, with minimal consideration of alternatives. Treating decision-makers such as President Bush as a rational actor, cannot account for Bush’s comment, “Fuck Saddam, he tried to kill my Dad” (Purdum, 2003, p37; Woodward, 2004) which implies an emotional motivating factor. A remark so personal, and making an issue so personal, appears highly unusual, and not fitting with ideas from a rational actor approach. Allison (1971) defines rationality as “consistent, value-maximising choice within specified constraints”. A decision-maker acting in line with this conception of the rational actor model/theory of international relations, who weighed up the

alternative courses of action, would not be expected to make such a personal remark.

The “actor-specific” focus of FPA also challenges conceptions of agency in IR. States are considered abstractions rather than agents; as such, they cannot have agency (George, 1993, p9). From an FPA perspective, all international politics and changes in foreign policy stem from the specific human beings using their agency and acting individually or in groups. A state is an abstraction, and as such cannot possess agency (Hudson, 2014). In the case of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy and Khrushchev were crucial to the way events played out (Allison and Zelikow, 1999). Substituting other US presidents or Soviet leaders might have entirely changed the resulting foreign policy. Indeed, in the “Able Archer” case, the Soviet colonel who questioned whether the NATO manoeuvres were an act of war was essential to the case unfolding as it did (Aksenov, 2013; Steele, 2017). Without Stanislav Petrov, and his interpretation of the ideational and material factors, would there have been a decision to pause before military confrontation with NATO?

Explanations for foreign policy decision-making in FPA must be multifactorial, which is a feature that fits the purposes of this research. Whilst the human decision-maker is the focus of FPA, there is an inherent assumption within FPA research that approaching the human decision-maker from a singular theoretical model provides a partial explanation. This explanation can then be complemented by those provided by other theoretical models, such as in this research, where each model provides different levels of explanation. In combination groupthink, Leadership Style and Analogical Reasoning scrutinise the immediate situational context of the decision-maker, the style of the leader, and how those involved framed the issues at hand.

They fit together in a natural conceptual symmetry to highlight the role of agency in the decision-making process.

The issuing of challenges for the field of FPA has been a feature of FPA scholarship since the creation of the field (see Rosenau, 1968). This trend has continued ever since (see Hudson and Vore, 1995; Kaarbo, 2003; Hudson, 2007; Hill, 2010; Breuning, 2017; Morin and Paquin, 2018). There have been many challenges posed to the field of FPA, which seek to direct its development. Suggested directions for new research have included calls to consider new actors or arenas (Hill, 2010; Morin and Paquin, 2018), develop better links to International Relations theory (IR) (Houghton, 2007), develop the method by determining where FPA is appropriate (rather than IR theory), and refine the dependent variable (Hudson and Vore, 1995). This thesis contributes to the field of FPA by confronting three key challenges. Firstly, the challenge of establishing links between theoretical models and connecting literatures (Hudson and Vore, 1995; Hudson, 2007; Morin and Paquin, 2018, p342). Secondly, the challenge to compare the applicability of models between different national contexts (Kaarbo, 2003; Breuning, 2017; Morin and Paquin, 2018). The US-centrism of FPA is well-known, and it is necessary to demonstrate the applicability of these models outside the US context. Thirdly, the challenge to demonstrate the usefulness of the research to practitioners (Hudson and Vore, 1995; Hudson, 2005; Morin and Paquin, 2018). In so doing, this thesis contributes to the move to spread the scope of FPA beyond the US context, develop insights into how FPA literatures can be combined, and increase the impact of this research on the policy process. As such, this research challenges the eclecticism that emerged in some research areas of FPA by connecting research programmes attached to each model.

1.2 Argument

This thesis argues that the US decision to invade Iraq was primarily driven by President Bush and key decision-makers', their cognitive biases prevented them from seriously entertaining alternatives. With the assistance of Vice-President Cheney and Secretary Rumsfeld, Bush was able to navigate the decision-making process in a way that reduced criticism and prevented the discussion of alternative courses of action, maintaining this focus on Iraq. Similarly, the UK decision was arguably motivated by Tony Blair's fixation on remaining closely aligned to the US on foreign policy. As was the case with Bush, Blair's leadership style established conditions for groupthink and analogical reasoning to occur in the decision-making process. This meant that Blair was able to reduce criticism and prevent the discussion of alternative courses of action that could be pursued.

Through the comparative application of the three FPA models (groupthink, leadership style approach, and analogical reasoning) this research explains the similarities and differences between the US and the UK decision-making processes. Crucially, by applying these models comparatively, the interconnectivity between the explanations of each model comes to the fore. Each model cannot fully account for these similarities and differences alone, yet, when used together, this thesis offers a more holistic explanation. How these individuals interacted with one another, how the leader shaped these interactions, and how they framed their policy decisions are all crucial components of this explanation. The different national contexts, the different governmental systems, and the different relations to the international arena of the US and the UK were all contributing factors, but, above any of these factors, the individuals who made the decision are the crucial dimension.

As mentioned previously, what becomes evident upon applying these models comparatively is the interconnectedness of the explanations that each model provides. The Leadership style approach contextualises the groupthink explanation. To do this, it shows how the conditions to enable and exacerbate groupthink were created. In turn, groupthink shows how the atmosphere of non-opposition to the leadership's policies was supported and strengthened. This atmosphere then meant that the analogies that were used in the US and the UK decision-making groups were not seriously challenged. As such, the explanation this thesis advances for this decision-making process is greater than that provided by the individual models.

By examining the individual level through three different FPA models, this thesis tests the concept of foreign policy substitutability. This means that this thesis can answer how decision-makers processed the ideational and material factors to decide upon a foreign policy. By highlighting the interconnectivity between the explanations each of the models used here, this thesis is able to account for different dimensions of decision-making. The analogical reasoning model enables this research to explain how the decision-makers framed the issues that they faced in the decision-making. Similarly, the leadership style approach used in this research shows how the leader influenced this process, and groupthink demonstrates how the group dynamics involved affected the way decisions were arrived at.

In the case of the decision to invade Iraq, each dimension is important both on its own and to the combined account. Each model explains different aspects of the decision-making process. As mentioned previously, each model is important in contextualising the explanations that the other two models put forward. Groupthink occurred in both the US and the UK decision-making groups. In the UK, the groupthink model explains how the decision-making group was able to resolve

disagreements or debate over the legality of military action against Iraq. The way in which certain members of the group were able to manipulate legal advice and engender agreement over their own understanding of the legality are all understood through a groupthink lens. In the US group, the way members of the group were able to pressure the established intelligence apparatus and circumnavigate this apparatus when they deemed it necessary, is explained. This manipulation of the intelligence community enabled the adoption and reinforcement of the belief in a link between Iraq and the Al Qaeda terrorist group – a belief the intelligence contradicted.

In the same way that groupthink underlines similarities and differences between the US and the UK decision-making processes, examining the leadership styles of both Bush and Blair underscores key similarities and differences between their leadership styles. The leadership styles of both were significant for how they processed information. This was crucial in establishing the conditions where groupthink could thrive. Despite the differences between the two systems they operated in, Bush and Blair were very similar in how they led through this process. Both processed information in line with their own previously held views. This was a crucial factor in establishing the conditions where groupthink emerged. Those around the two leaders understood they were not interested in opposing views and so acted to keep them from being expressed. This would equally discourage opposition to the use of analogical comparisons in the decision-making process. Blair's management of his advisory system diminished the role of Cabinet, increased reliance on Special Advisers, and promoted informal meetings. These all combined to reduce opportunities for opposition. Equally, when combined with groupthink, it meant that the legal complexities were kept from many in the decision-making group until the Attorney General was pressured to agree with Blair's own view.

These explanations provided by groupthink and leadership style help to contextualise the explanation provided by the analogical reasoning model. In both the US and the UK, analogies were used by decision-makers to sell the invasion of Iraq. In the US, the “Munich analogy” was used to emphasise the consequences of not acting against Iraq. The ‘analysers’ went further, using the analogy to emphasise that it was the US who had to confront Iraq. In the UK, the “Kosovo analogy” was used again to emphasise the need to intervene in Iraq, using the potential consequences of having not intervened in Kosovo to make this case. However, UK decision-makers went further. Indeed, UK decision-makers used the case of the intervention in Kosovo as a guide, helping them to navigate the decision-making process. The opposition to this use of the Kosovo analogy was repressed or ignored. Here, the groupthink that pervaded the UK decision-making group was crucial to preventing the opposition to this analogy from preventing its use. Similarly, Blair’s information processing style, being very black-and-white, made him more prone to using analogical reasoning as a cognitive shortcut to navigate the decision-making process.

In a general sense, it is inherently difficult to resolve questions of the relative importance of the individual level of analysis and structural factors to decision-making processes. However, what can be more confidently assumed is that an explanation without an assessment of the individual level of analysis would be incomplete. This is because the individual decision-makers involved in the process play a crucial role in navigating the process. The task, then, is to examine how this individual level of analysis mattered – how individuals at the centre of decision-making acted and made a difference in the choices made. The conceptual argument here is that the task is best accomplished via a combination of the three FPA

models. After all, they can offer a sensitive and coherent picture of key conditions shaping the role of individual decision-makers within the decision-making process. By examining the 'insiders' looking 'out', this thesis does not deny the relevance of wider factors in the decision to go to war in Iraq; rather, it seeks to better understand the impact of the individuals on the course of the events.

1.3. Gaps in the Literature

Whilst significant amount of literature exists on the Iraq War (see Freedman, 2004; Bluth, 2004; Porter, 2017; Porter, 2018; Deudney and Ikenberry, 2018; Butt, 2019), these accounts are limited in a number of ways. Firstly, many examine either the US or the UK, rather than studying the decisions of both nations alongside one another (e.g. Freedman, 2004; Daddow, 2007; Hinesbusch, 2007; Lucas, 2011; Conway, 2012; Porter, 2017; Porter, 2018; Deudney and Ikenberry, 2018; Butt, 2019). In a case where the decisions of the two nations were so interlinked, this is an overly restricted approach. Secondly, most of these accounts "black-box" the decision-making units involved (e.g. Freedman, 2004; Porter, 2018; Deudney and Ikenberry, 2018; Butt, 2019). In so doing, they are restricted by considering these decision-makers to be substitutable (if they were substituted the same foreign policy would result). Similarly, by black-boxing the decision-making units, these accounts struggle to show how the decision-makers transition from the ideational factors that they highlight, to the foreign policy of military confrontation with Iraq. Borrowing the "Domino analogy" from the process-tracing literature, these accounts provide insight into the first domino falling and the final domino falling off the end of the table. However, they allow the dominos in-between to remain under cover.

A “cottage industry” of literature has emerged in the literature on the Iraq War, the Bush Presidency, and the Blair Premiership (Murray et al, 2017). Even so, studies that combine a focus on the two leaderships in relation to the military intervention are rare. In one of these works, Inderjeet Parmar (2005) characterised Blair’s outlook as that of a “liberal Imperialist”, and argued that this coincided with Bush’s neo-conservative worldview. Both felt a responsibility to remake the world in line with their ideas (Parmar, 2005). While some question the adequacy of current explanations (Butt, 2019), the extant explanations of the causes of the Iraq War are readily identifiable within four different schools of thought addressing the general question: Why did the US invade Iraq in 2003? These include explanations from the realist and liberal schools of International Relations, one from a more materialist position, and, finally, an attempt at combining concepts in an explanation.

The long-standing differences between Liberal and Realist scholars are expressed sharply in the case of Iraq. From International Relations theory, there has been some debate between Realist and Liberal scholars as to which theory provided the intellectual spur for the war in Iraq. Liberals Deudney and Ikenberry (2017) argued that the Iraq War had its intellectual roots in the realist views of three “Hegemonic Realists” in the administration: Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. In a realist response to this attribution of the intellectual backing for the Iraq War, Porter (2018) argued that “[...] both liberals and liberalism were deeply implicated in the decision to strike Iraq”. Rather, Porter argues that liberal ideas, when combined with the superpower capabilities of the US, led to the Iraq War. As with other explanations, this serves to emphasise the need to scrutinise the role of the individuals who made the decision to invade Iraq. Indeed, it requires an examination of the ideas prevalent

in the decision-making process and interactions between decision-makers to assess the influence of liberal notions.

At the time of the Iraq War, some Realist IR theorists were involved in the opposition to the invasion⁴. In Mearsheimer's offensive realism, global hegemony is an unreachable goal and the competition for hegemony is restricted to the region that a great power is located in. As such, the war in Iraq was illogical in the light of such an offensive realist framework. Realist accounts in support of the Iraq war were notable for their relative absence (Schmidt and Williams, 2008).

The popular materialist account of the war uses the pursuit of oil as the motivating factor behind the invasion of Iraq. The 'oil case' is so persuasive that, typically, the requirement for proof is placed on the denier rather than on those making the case (Hinnesbusch, 2007). Kaldor (2012) declared Iraq to be an "oil war". Paul Wolfowitz, infamous for many actions during the lead up to the invasion of Iraq, added to his infamy by explaining that the reason Iraq was the threat selected to be confronted, rather than North Korea, was because Iraq was "swimming in oil" (Hinnesbusch, 2007). However, these arguments are limited in their explanatory capacity, missing certain key elements. Whilst the US has a rapacious appetite for oil, Iraq had a minimal ability to influence the oil markets or threaten oil exporters in the Gulf (Hinnesbusch, 2007). David Dunn (2003) provides another account that sets aside the 'oil argument'. Dunn (2003) outlines that the belief that oil motivated the invasion of Iraq shows misunderstanding of the Bush Administration's attitude. He goes on to outline the prohibitive cost involved in developing the Iraqi oil industry after years of under-development (Dunn, 2003).

⁴ John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, 'An unnecessary war,' *Foreign Policy*, January/February 2003, pp. 50–60.

Others seek to use a mixture of factors to explain the US invasion of Iraq.

Hinnesbusch (2007), for example, uses the US attempt to reassert its hegemony in combination with US global grand strategy under President Bush, the development of US strategic considerations in the Middle East, and the interest of “Bush’s ruling coalition”.Dunn (2005) examines the way the Bush Administration sought to justify the ‘War on Terrorism’, highlighting three justifications for it: Realpolitik, pre-emption and preeminence, and the “democratic imperialist” approach. This thesis adds to Hinnesbusch’s (2007) explanation, showing how the Bush administration navigated the decision-making process. When combined with Dunn’s (2005) work, this thesis (in particular chapter 8) contributes to our understanding of the way the Bush administration sought to “sell” military operations.

As can be seen in the sketch above, explanations for the causes of the Iraq War focus almost exclusively on the US. The UK was the largest of the junior partners in the coalition that invaded Iraq, and yet is rarely mentioned in explanations for the causes of the war. There are also few attempts to link Bush and Blair as leaders. Parmar (2010) argues that Blair was a liberal imperialist, and argues that this linked with Bush’s neo-conservative worldview. Similarly, he asserts that Blair’s references to Christianity had “something of the southern US evangelical protestant” about them, another interesting link. While there are some explanations proposed for the UK involvement in the Iraq War, many consider the UK as a single case. Where this thesis adds is by analysing the US and the UK decision-making alongside on another, and in answering the research question this thesis demonstrates that the same FPA models explain both decision-making processes. This thesis also adds to our understanding of Blair as a leader, examining how he processed information, approached risk, and operated the advisory system in which he worked.

One of the most comprehensive, post-Chilcott explanations for UK involvement in the invasion of Iraq comes from Patrick Porter (2017). For Porter, three ideas explain the UK involvement, which were all dogmatically held. He contends that the notion of an “undeterrable, fanatical rogue state” and the belief that the route to western security was through the breaking and remaking of states were crucial to motivating the invasion. The third idea was that through paying a “blood-price”, the UK could secure its influence with the US in how to approach invading Iraq. This explanation incorporates how UK actions would be received in Washington. However, its coverage says less of how this interaction occurred; rather, the incisive analysis asserts the strength of dogmatic devotion in relative isolation. Porter (2017) focuses on the motivations for war, whereas this research focuses on how the decisions were taken. For Porter, the dogmatic devotion to these ideas was the crucial factor in the UK deciding to invade Iraq alongside the US. The focus of this explanation means that it does not account for the way some decision-makers were able to maintain this focus dogmatically upon each of these three ideas.

Accusations that the war in Iraq was “Blair’s war” have circulated ever since the invasion. Maciejewski (2013) determines that this was, in fact, one of the reasons for the insufficient post-invasion planning. In his argument, this overwhelming association with Blair meant that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department for International Development, and Treasury all sought to have minimal involvement in the processes. They were content to leave the Iraq War to the Ministry of Defence and the succession of Secretaries of State, who struggled with the “toxic” issues of Iraq. Clarke (2004) makes a similar argument, accusing Blair of making a ‘non-decision’ to support the US. This was a non-decision because of the minimal attention provided to the option of not supporting the US in its policy. Whilst this

focus upon Blair individually is similar to the emphasis of this thesis, there remains a need for greater focus on the way this association with him began. Indeed, how Blair managed to steer a policy that was so poorly received by the rest of government is not accounted for in Maciejewski's (2013) argument, and how Blair was allowed to make a non-decision is unaccounted for by Clarke (2004). The research in this thesis, with the focus on Blair and his interactions with the group around him, can extend the insight into the issues Maciejewski and Clarke highlight.

However, not all explanations of why the UK joined in the invasion of Iraq are critical of the decision. For Christoph Bluth, the decision by the UK government was based on an assessment of the threat posed by Iraq and the effectiveness of sanctions in keeping the country in check (2004). This threat assessment was seen as accurate in Bluth's account, although he wrote without the Chilcott inquiry as a resource.

Challenging much of the controversy over the UK involvement in the invasion of Iraq, Bluth asserts that "It is nevertheless striking how accurately and conservatively the Blair government dealt with the intelligence estimates" (Bluth, 2004).

In another challenge to the controversy that surrounds the intelligence case made by the US and the UK governments prior to the invasion of Iraq, Lawrence Freedman distinguishes between the way in which the cases were received in the US and internationally (Freedman, 2004). In the US, the link between the Iraqi regime and international terrorism was well received; internationally, the Iraqi pursuit of WMD in contravention of UN resolutions was more persuasive. Freedman (2004) provides one of the few accounts that includes both the US and the UK. However, as with many of the other accounts, he also 'black-boxes' these two decision-making units. As such, Freedman's (2004) account does not examine the internal decision-making processes that, I argue in this thesis, are so important to understanding this case.

1.4 Structure

The bulk of this thesis is structured into two sections: “The Theoretical Context” and “The Analysis”. The first establishes the groundwork for the thesis. It is within this section that the Research Design, Literature Review, Theoretical Framework, and “Setting the Background: The Road to the Iraq War” chapters are located. The second section comprises the empirical analysis of this thesis. Here, the chapters on groupthink, leadership style analysis, and analogical reasoning in the decision-making process in the US and the UK are found.

In the literature review, I outline the development of the field of Foreign Policy Analysis. The chapter begins with the progression from the first wave of FPA in the 1950s and 1960s, to the fourth wave that is currently still being developed. This clarifies the characteristics of these waves, outlining their thematic rather than their chronological nature. While the first wave of FPA is most strongly associated with the level of organisations, the second wave is focused upon the level of the individual. This wave is typified by a focus on four themes: small group dynamics, small group processes, group framing of foreign policy situations, and comparative foreign policy (CFP) (Hudson, 2005, p18). As can be seen from these themes, the research in this thesis aligns with the theme of the second wave of FPA. This review of the FPA literature provides the context for the challenges that this thesis responds to, as the “Contribution to Foreign Policy Analysis” section outlines (1.1).

The Theoretical Framework expands on the specific FPA models used in this research: groupthink, leadership style approach, and analogical reasoning. These models, drawn from the second wave of FPA, each focus on different yet complimentary levels in a decision-making process. The Theoretical Framework

outlines how these different levels complement each other. Whilst this thesis provides a multilevel analysis, and combines the models to provide a more comprehensive explanation, there is still an opportunity to compare the explanations of each individual model. This chapter outlines the theoretical contribution that this thesis makes by utilising the multi-model theoretical framework, and showing the interconnectivity of the explanations that each model advances.

This thesis proposes a systematic, multi-causal cognitive explanation for the US and the UK decision to invade Iraq. This is achieved by using case study methodology, analysed with a structured, focused comparison case study approach combined with a process tracing data analysis method (George and Bennett, 2005), as the methodological chapter outlines. In this chapter, the use of the combination of case study research design and process tracing is outlined, along with the reasoning behind this. The research question is also outlined in here.

A chapter providing the background to the case comes at the end of the first section of this thesis. With the controversy of the Iraq War comes different emphases in the memories people have of the key events. As such, a concise recap of the events forms a helpful component of the initial framing of the thesis.

The second section of the thesis (The Analysis) contains the empirical chapters. Here, the three models of FPA used in this thesis are applied to the process that led to the US and the UK deciding to invade Iraq in March 2003. Groupthink is the first model applied to this decision-making process. Through this lens, the group dynamics serve to highlight the importance of the role of the leader in each group and the framing of the proposed invasion of Iraq. As such, the analysis of the decision-making process serves to provide the order for the chapters in this section.

The first chapter here is entitled, “Groupthink in the Iraq War Decision-Making Process”. It examines the way in which group dynamics affected the making of the decision.. The themes of mindguarding, a stereotyped view of the enemy, and a collective rationalisation were present in both the US and the UK groups. In the US, the themes of groupthink were more coordinated than was the case in the UK, where they were more disjointed. Within the UK decision-making group, a ‘mindguard’ was, on some occasions, excluded from a conversation between Blair and another mindguard. Overall, it is shown that groupthink provides a coherent explanation of both the US and the UK decision-making processes that led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The internal group relations had a profound impact on the way in which the decision-making process unfolded in both the US and the UK. In arguing this, the groupthink chapter makes an important contribution by establishing the role of the decision-making groups in the US and the UK, and, as such, contextualising the arena in which leadership was exercised and the analogising used to guide and “sell” decisions.

In the second chapter in this section, titled “Leadership Style Analysis: Bush, Blair, and the Decision to Invade Iraq”, the role of the two heads is examined. The Iraq War is inextricably linked to these two leaders, and their role in the decision has received huge attention. Their close relationship has also attracted intense scrutiny, with terms such as “poodle” being applied to Blair, as the junior of the two. The fascination with their relationship is not surprising. A neoconservative, born-again evangelist came to consider the centre-left, progressive Labour leader as his closest confidant among world leaders following the attacks of 9/11. In this chapter, the two leadership styles are characterised through three measures: conceptual complexity, approach to risk, and management of the advisory system. Despite their different

experiences and perspectives, Blair and Bush had remarkably similar leadership styles. Both had low conceptual complexity, and both were willing to take risks, although Blair faced more risks. Further, both operated a low conceptual complexity competitive model of management of the advisory system. This meant that those who were receptive to their point of view were encouraged to express themselves, while those opposed were prevented from doing so. Finally, both were remarkably consistent in their leadership styles, rarely displaying characteristics outside those identified as typical for them here. These two men have been inextricably linked with the decision to invade Iraq, and have received significant blame from many quarters. By establishing their role in the decision-making process, and the impact of this on the others involved in the decision-making process, this thesis places the role of each in a greater context.

The third and final empirical chapter applies the analogical reasoning model to this case. In “Analogical Reasoning: Munich, Kosovo, and the Iraq War Decision-Making Process”, two analogies are identified. Firstly, in the US, the “Munich analogy” was used. This was used as a rhetorical tool to sell the decision to invade Iraq to the American public, more than to guide their own planning. Secondly, in the UK, the analogical comparison was to the humanitarian intervention in Kosovo in 1999. This was an intervention of which the UK government and many of those around Blair had direct experience. They used the “Kosovo analogy” within the decision-making group as a roadmap to help them navigate the path to the invasion of Iraq. In addition, they used the analogy publicly to emphasise the need to intervene in Iraq. By doing so, one of the key differences between the US and the UK is brought to the fore: the UK decision-makers used analogies to guide decision-making and to sell their decision, whereas the US decision-makers only used analogies to sell their decision.

Theoretically, the analogical reasoning model can account for these differences, and explain both the US and the UK decision-making process, despite these differences. Further, the way the public was persuaded to at least partially support the invasion of Iraq has been particularly controversial. By helping to understand how the decision-makers involved decided upon parts of their strategy to sell the decision to invade Iraq, this thesis delves into this controversy, contextualising it.

The conclusion emphasises the utility of using the FPA models in combination to understand how and why the US and the UK decided to invade Iraq in 2003. As such, the conclusion responds to the challenge that Morin and Paquin (2018, p342) set out for FPA research: for it to break down the barriers that have emerged between different search programs in the field. The comparisons between the accounts that each of the FPA models provide are also made, answering the call from Kaarbo (2003) to compare the advantages of using each model to explain this case, and Morin and Paquin's (2018, p342) call to break down barriers between research programs. The conclusion ends with the lessons that this thesis teaches about the points of comparison between the US and the UK, the lessons for the use of FPA models, and a list of recommendations for decision-making in the US and the UK governments.

2. Research Design

This thesis proposes a systematic, multi-level cognitive explanation for the US and the UK decision to invade Iraq in 2003. While there have been some cognitive explanations proposed for these decisions, they are single-model explanations and are not conducted in the systematic manner that can be achieved with process-tracing (see Badie, 2010; Dyson, 2006). This thesis uses a case study methodology, analysed using a structured, focused comparison case study approach and process tracing. The decision-making process is traced from the end of the first Gulf War, until the end of the decision-making process and the invasion of Iraq on the 19th of March, 2003.

The research question of this thesis asks:

How do FPA models explain similarities and differences in the US and the UK decision-making processes leading up to the 2003 Iraq war?

In answering this question, this thesis argues that the explanations each model advances are interconnected. Using the structured, focused comparison case study method in combination with the process tracing data analysis method means that the points where these explanations are interconnected are clear. The use of elite interviews and archival research of documents involved in this decision-making process means a detailed narrative can be analysed to demonstrate the interconnectivity between the explanations each FPA model provides.

After outlining an overview of the research design, this methodology chapter sets out the reasons for the selection of the methods used in this research. The chapter has three sections: Case Study Research, Data Collection, and Data Analysis. This thesis uses the “Structured, Focused Comparison” case study method, and the first part of this chapter outlines the reason for the selection of this approach. The second section

outlines the data collection methods used here. These are elite interviews and archival research, and the related advantages and disadvantages of both methods are drawn out. The third section examines the process tracing data analysis method used in this research and the benefits that come with such a selection.

The aim of this research is to contribute to scholarship by analysing the same decision by two different governments through the comparative application of three FPA models. In doing so, this research responds to the challenges for FPA to compare explanations across different national contexts. This is important: it shows that the focus on the individual level of analysis can explain decision-making across different governmental systems.

In line with this aim, this research uses elite interviews with high-level decision-makers involved in the decision-making processes under examination. Former Cabinet Secretaries, Members of Parliament at the time, Special Advisers, and other high-level officials involved in the decision-making process have all contributed their recollections and insights to this research. These interviews are then triangulated with data from archival research, using newly declassified documents released from the UK's Chilcott Inquiry and the US National Security archive. By triangulating the interview data with the documents that chart the decision-making process, this research can provide empirical insight alongside the conceptual innovation to answer the research question: How do FPA models explain similarities and differences in the US and the UK decision-making processes leading up to the 2003 Iraq war?

For any researcher, bias is a consideration to be recognised, acknowledged, and accepted. "Bias" is defined as "any influence that provides a distortion in the results of a study" (Polit and Beck, 2014). There are some qualitative researchers who regard

attempts to offset bias as incompatible with qualitative research (Galdas, 2017). Others have sought to insert a means to establish validity and reliability in qualitative research (Morse et al, 2002). These attempts to insert validity and reliability involves verification processes. This thesis uses three of these verification processes to combat bias. The process of verification involves checking and confirming. The use of the process tracing data analysis method greatly enables this process of returning to the analysis and confirming the assertions made. Similarly, by applying three models to the same case, the process of rechecking the case is actively required in this research. This form of theoretical confirmation is another of the verification processes encouraged by Morse et al (2002). The third verification process that this research adopts is collecting the different forms of data concurrently, using each to triangulate the other.

Selection bias has been recognised as a danger in case study research (King, Keohane, and Verba, 1994, p116). However, case study research can still make valuable contributions, despite the problems associated with selection biases (Rogowski, 1995). As a British-born and British-educated man, I may be accused of an inherent bias – but this could equally result from either being too critical or too lenient of the UK case. My greater acquaintance with the UK decision-making process prior to starting this research could have impacted my selection of interview targets. Yet, by triangulating this data with documentary evidence, and doing the same in the US, this potential bias can be confronted. Similarly, by using “snowball” sampling, this bias in the selection of interview candidates is offset. The interviewees themselves are helping to steer the selection of further interview targets.

As I outline below, there are three reasons why this case was an appropriate case to select for this research, yet there is another reason that must come prior to this account.

The primary reason for this case being selected for this thesis is that it is a case I have always been fascinated by. It was the first political issue that I can fully remember. As a researcher, this impact upon my political development is a key motivation for this research. So, it is essential that I acknowledge my own bias and consider it whilst conducting the data collection and data analysis. The key is to be aware of the risks and to marshal the evidence diligently, to contribute to the scholarly debate.

2.1. Case Study Research

Case study research has moved in and out of academic fashion for decades (George and Bennett, 2005, p5). It is defined as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2008, p18). The core principle behind case study research is that one or a small number of cases will be scrutinised in detail with whichever methods are selected as appropriate, with the objective being to develop as complete an understanding of the case studies as is possible (Punch, 2005, p144). However, it is the response of the field of case study research to criticisms levelled at the methodology that makes the case for the use of case study research in this thesis. The key critiques which the field has responded to have been on three concepts: validity, reliability, and generalisability.

Critiques of case study research that are levelled at the reliability and validity of the methodology are considered by advocates of case study research to be based upon a misperception of the manner in which a researcher extrapolates from the cases they study (Mitchell, 1983, p207). It is the “cogency of the theoretical reasoning” that the validity of the extrapolation from cases rests upon (Mitchell, 1983, p207). This research will be “using cases as tests of theory” case study research (Kaarbo and Beasley, 1999), as the FPA models being used in this research will be tested to see

whether they can account for decision-making processes in the US and the UK, comparing national contexts is rare in FPA research (Morin and Paquin, 2018, p342). In carrying out theory-testing case study research (Kaarbo and Beasley, 1999), where the theoretical framework constitutes the “cogency of the theoretical reasoning” (Mitchell, 1983, p207), the methodology of this research negates the potential criticisms of the reliability and validity which can be raised. Process tracing, as a method of data analysis, can assist in this theory testing component of this thesis.

Generalisability is another area where case study research attracts significant attention, especially in single case study research. Case study researchers consider that this is another area where there are misconceptions from critics of the methodology (Flyvberg, 2004, p391; Tight, 2010). Flyvberg (2004, p391) anticipates the critique of the possibility to generalise from a single or small number of cases (Yin, 1994, p37), asserting that this is dependent on the case selection, which is an assertion supported by Yin (2003a). Whilst some case study researchers propose that the purpose behind case study methodologies is “particularisation” as opposed to “generalisation” (Stake, 1995), this thesis seeks to make qualified generalisations. These generalisations are based on the theoretical framework and the interconnectivity between the explanations that each model provides. In so doing, the thesis responds to the challenges outlined in the introduction (see section 1.1 Contribution to FPA).

There has been a move to systematise the way in which case study research is conducted (King et al, 1994, p45), as case study research has risen in use since the 1980s. Structured, focused comparison (SFC) (George, 1979; George and Bennett, 2005; George and McKeown, 1985) is a highly-regarded method of comparative case study research (Kaarbo and Beasley, 1999) that attempts to systematise case study

research. The comparison focuses selectively on the specifically relevant aspects in each case study (George and Bennett, 2005, p67). In this research, they will be the independent variables: analogical reasoning, groupthink, and leadership style. This means that the contextual differences (the different governmental systems and the different individuals involved) do not affect these comparisons. The general questions used to guide data collection and analysis give the comparisons the structure in the title (George and Bennett, 2005, p67).

George and Bennett (2005, p69) advise researchers to meet three requirements to counteract criticisms of case study research in foreign policy from Rosenau (1968). Firstly, the researcher must identify the type of event which the cases being studied are examples of. In this research, the case studies are decision-making processes. Secondly, a research objective that is clearly demarcated needs to be written, along with a research strategy to achieve the said objective. In this research, the objective is to test whether the FPA models can explain the decision-making processes in the case studies (the reasons for testing these FPA models are outlined in the Theoretical Framework and Research Contribution sections). The strategy to achieve this is the use of process tracing to analyse the data collected, examine the detailed narrative of each decision-making processes, and make comparisons using SFC outlined above. Thirdly, George and Bennett (2005, p69) advocate for the use of variables which are of interest because of the theoretical explanations they provide. The development of the theoretical framework developed in this thesis, showing the utility of combining FPA models to provide an interconnected explanation of this decision-making process, aligns with such aims.

2.2. Case Selection

There are three reasons for the selection of the case of the Iraq War: this case is a 'most likely case', there are practical considerations making it a good choice, and it gives the researcher the opportunity to speak to policymakers. These incorporate theoretical, practical, and distinguishing features of the case (Bennett and Checkel, 2014).

Firstly, there is the value of selecting a "most likely case" to carry out inductive reasoning. A "most likely" case is one "strongly expected to conform to the prediction of a particular theory" (Brady and Colier, 2004, p339). This is a first step in showing the theoretical relevance and cohesion of the combination of the FPA models: if it offers value here, it can be taken forward for further empirical testing. The value of a combination of FPA models can be tested firstly in a 'most likely case', before further research develops the approach further. By selecting a 'most likely case', in seeking to compare and combine these FPA models, this research takes up the challenges that have been levelled at the field by FPA scholars identified in the introduction (see page 11).

Secondly, there are certain practical considerations that make this decision-making process well-suited to this research. The clear beginning and ending of the case of the decision-making processes in the US and the UK makes this a distinct case to be studied. Further, the culmination of the decision-making process in the invasion of Iraq happened at the same time in the US and the UK. A case such as the US and the UK interventions in Syria provides a clear contrast to this, showing how well-suited this case is for the application of this theoretical framework. The Syria case, for example, has an unclear start and end point for the research. Equally, the Syria example has different points where decisions to act (or not to act) were taken, whereas with the Iraq

case the start and end point is the same in the US and the UK. This means that the decisions are more comparable than would be so with a case such as Syria.

The case has distinguishing features that make it stand out. The controversy around the case means that there are more audiences this research is relevant to and can speak to. The case remains controversial for the public, despite the seventeen years that have elapsed since the invasion. This means that there is an opportunity for this research to inform policymakers. During 2002 and early 2003, the academic community was considered by many to be notably quiet on the question of Iraq. Steve Smith remembers participating in anti-Iraq War protests at the International Studies Association (ISA) conference in 2002, where there was vocal opposition from some attendees to anti-war protests at the conference, therefore bringing politics into the academic arena (Smith, 2003). This dearth of attention prior to the invasion of Iraq has since been compensated for by many studies examining the process that led to the invasion of Iraq. In being amongst the first post-Chilcott inquiry studies, this research can develop the understanding of how the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq unfolded.

The case of the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 is also particularly suited to guiding research to respond to the challenges set out for FPA research. As set out previously in the introduction, there are three challenges that this thesis responds to: the challenge to link FPA models, the challenge to compare national contexts, and the challenge to demonstrate the utility of FPA to practitioners. By responding to the challenges to compare national contexts and linking FPA models, this research agrees with Rosenau (1968, p308), who wrote that it is:

“[...] only by identifying similarities and differences in the external behaviour of more than one national actor can analysis move beyond the particular case to higher levels of generalisation.”

This thesis seeks to inform policymaking by demonstrating both how and why the decision-making process took the route that it did, going further than the current understanding outlined by the Iraq Inquiry in the UK. As such, the utility of FPA to explain aspects of decision-making processes can be demonstrated to a wider audience. As a sub-field of IR, FPA needs to continue to demonstrate its utility to further establish itself.

2.3. Data Collection

This thesis combines interview data with archival data, triangulating between these two forms of data to inform the analysis. This triangulation between interviews with decision-makers, and the documents that chart the progression of the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq, means this research combines personal recollections and contemporary records. Here, the reasons for the selection of these data collection methods being selected for this research are set out. Considerations of the advantages and disadvantages of these methods are then explored.

The interviews in this research are with individuals who were involved in this decision-making process. The interviewees in the UK were in political roles or various senior positions in the civil service. Similarly, the US interviewees were in the heart of the Bush administration, in positions where they had close proximity to decision-makers during this case. Using a “snowballing” sampling technique, I was able to speak to eleven individuals who were deeply immersed in this decision-making process. There were also individuals who held senior political and civil service positions. A number of

these individuals were the authors of many of the documents analysed in the archival research that was used to triangulate with the interview data. As such, interviewees were able to provide insight into the events based upon these documents that recorded outcomes of meetings involved in the decision-making process under scrutiny. Their recollections and memories of the atmosphere, organisation, or structure of the meetings can therefore add individual insight to the archival record of the results of the discussions and the list of attendees. For example, one interviewee told me that the “sofa-style” meetings that Blair held were poorly recorded because of the lack of structure. Attendees cycled in and out based on the topic of discussion, but the meetings returned to topics previously covered, although frequently the relevant advisers had already left the meeting.

The interviews conducted as part of this research form a key empirical contribution of this research. Whilst there have been many interviews with UK decision-makers during the Iraq Inquiry, the interviews in this research have been more focused upon the application of the theoretical models used here. Equally, the transcripts of those interviews carried out as part of the Iraq Inquiry informed the questions asked in the interviews in this thesis. The insight that interviewees have provided is a crucial part of the analysis in this thesis. Some of the interviewees had daily access to Blair as Prime Minister, witnessing and experiencing his decision-making for years. This is important, for this thesis examines the role of the interactions between individuals involved in the decision-making process. As such, speaking to some of them is crucial. In the UK, I approached a range of individuals involved in this decision-making process. The politicians approached were Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, John Prescott, Clare Short, Hilary Armstrong, Jack Straw, and Ben Bradshaw. Of this list, only Ben Bradshaw agreed to participate in this research. The way some of these people

declined to participate gives an indication of the legacy of this decision-making process for those involved. Brown and Short both responded that they had made public comments and published their memoirs, and that these were all the comments that they wished to make on Iraq. Prescott and Armstrong responded that they were too busy to discuss the decision to invade Iraq, and Blair did not respond at all. Each response could indicate a lack of willingness to discuss the topic of the Iraq war generally, in the light of the controversy that surrounds the topic. In this way, the Iraq Inquiry (commonly referred to as the Chilcott Inquiry) was both a help and a hinderance in this research. Some potential interviewees referred to their previous public testimony to the Iraq Inquiry in their response declining to participate in this research. The extensive coverage of the decision to invade Iraq, and the controversy surrounding the decision, may have led to individuals involved in the decision to not wish to speak publicly about it further. Difficulty in finding interviewees may hinder research, yet the witness testimony provided to the inquiry provides an interesting means to triangulate data between the primary documents, interviews, and secondary data.

In the requests for interviews, there were more positive responses from senior civil servants and Special Advisors (SPADS). Those approached for interview were Lord Butler, Lord Boyce, Lord Wilson, Sir David Omand, Tim Dowse, Carne Ross, John Williams, Alastair Campbell, Jonathan Powell, Anji Hunter, Sir Michael Wood, Elizabeth Wilmhurst⁵, Stephen Pattison, Sir David Manning, Tom McKane, and Sir William Ehrman. There were no responses from Campbell, Wood, Wilmhurst, Pattison, and Ehrman. Anji Hunter declined to participate, saying that she did not speak publicly

⁵ Sir Michael Wood and Elizabeth Wilmhurst were Law Officers in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Law Officers have a reputation of not speaking publicly about their work.

on Iraq, potentially indicating a similar approach to that indicated by the politicians above. At first, Ross also said that he had made sufficient public comments and published work, and as such he was not inclined to speak further. Again, indicating that the controversy of Iraq may have led him to not wish to make further comments⁶.

The Iraq Inquiry may have increased the likelihood of civil servants to respond positively to a request for an interview, given they had already publicly spoken about this decision-making process, making them more willing to speak on the topic again.

In the US, there was a far lower response rate to requests for interviews. Those contacted for interview were Colin Powell, Richard Armitage, Andrew Card, Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, John McLaughlin, Richard Clarke, Lewis Libby, Jami Miscik, Kenneth Pollack, Michael Rubin, Stephen Krasner, Michael Doran, Aaron L Friedberg, Kori Schake, and Phillip Mudd. Mudd and Schake agreed to participate in the research, yet most of the other interview targets did not respond to requests. Of those who did respond, Rubin disagreed with the research design (saying that I should wait until the 30-year rule releases primary documents in the US). Friedberg and Pollack both felt that they were not close enough to the decision-making in this case to speak on the case of the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq. In the US, there has been no inquiry into this decision-making process on the same lines as the Iraq Inquiry in the UK. In the UK, this inquiry and the public testimony involved may have made UK interviewees more likely to agree to be interviewed, as they had already given public testimony on the topic.

In both the US and the UK, the responses to requests for interviews may demonstrate the legacy of the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. For

⁶ Later he agreed to speak to me, after I demonstrated my knowledge of these previous comments.

decision-makers in both the US and UK, the controversy of the decision to invade Iraq may lead those involved to not wish to speak publicly on the case. By triangulating the interview data with primary documents, issues of bias or attempts to protect an individual's legacy can be challenged and dealt with.

The archival research conducted is another empirical contribution of this thesis. As one of the first post-Chilcot Inquiry studies of the UK decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq, the access to these documents gives this research more insight than was available to previous studies of the UK decision scrutinised here. In the US, the availability of the archives via the "National Security Archive" hosted by the George Washington University made it possible for this research to accommodate for the fewer interviews conducted with US decision-makers in comparison with the UK interviews. The ability to interview several key authors of the many documents used in the decision-making process means that some can be contextualised with greater accuracy via speaking to their authors.

These data collection methods deliver rich, triangulated data that provides insight into the decision-making processes under examination. This data is then analysed using a process tracing method that this chapter outlines in the next section.

2.4. Data Analysis

This thesis combines qualitative comparative case study research, in the form of Structured, Focused Comparison, with Process Tracing data analysis. Process tracing is a means of generating evidence and analysing it on "causal mechanisms", which are the intervening variables that link generally considered causes to effects (Bennett and George, 1997). The expansion that the literature on Process Tracing has experienced has resulted in a lack of clarity in the definition of Process Tracing, plus

confusion as to what is involved (Bennett and Checkel, 2014, p14; Trampusch and Palier, 2015). There have been almost twenty definitions of Process Tracing identified in the literature by Trampusch and Palier (2015). In essence, Process Tracing seeks to identify the chain of causality between dependent variables and independent variables (Maggetti et al, 2012, p59). The definition given by George and McKeown (1985, p35) provides a more detailed explanation:

“(process tracing) is intended to investigate and explain the decision process by which various initial conditions are translated into outcomes... The process tracing approach attempts to uncover what stimuli the actors attend to; the decision process that makes use of these stimuli to arrive at decisions; the actual behaviour that then occurs; the effect of various institutional arrangements on attention, processing, and behaviour; and the effect of other variables of interest on attention, processing, and behaviour.”

Process tracing as a method originated in the study of psychology, and its introduction to the study of politics is widely attributed to Alexander George (Hay, 2016). Those who use Process Tracing have moved towards establishing “best practice” for those who use the method (Bennett and Checkel, 2014, p14; Trampusch and Palier, 2015). This “best practice” can also be used to make the case for the combination of process tracing and comparative case study analysis. When “best practice” in process tracing has been set out, rigour in justifying the parameters of the case study where process tracing is being applied is emphasised strongly (Bennett and Checkel, 2014, p21). In this way, process tracing and case study research complement one another. There is a requirement to provide clear arguments as to why the parameters of the case study are set out, as they are necessarily strengthening case study research. The process

traced in this thesis is between the end of the first Gulf War in February 1991, until the invasion of Iraq on the 19th of March 2003.

The requirement to consider alternative explanations when carrying out process tracing research is another means by which process tracing “best practice” (Bennett and Checkel, 2014, p14; Trampusch and Palier, 2015) can strengthen case study research. By considering alternatives, the “verification bias” critique levelled at case study research – namely, that there is a tendency to confirm the researchers’ preconceived ideas – is negated.

As a method, process tracing has been praised for its contribution to establishing consistencies by comparing and contrasting case studies (Laitin, 2000). In this way, process tracing can assist in the theory-testing aspect to this thesis, as set out in the case study section of this chapter. Process tracing is well-matched to “testing theories... where it is difficult to explain outcomes in terms of two or three independent variables” (Hall, 2000). In fact, process tracing is considered “an indispensable tool for theory testing” by Alexander George (George and Bennett, 2005, p206). By breaking down the processes into stages, it is then possible to identify precise points where indicators for one of the FPA models being examined here occurred. In this way, this research can negate the differences between the case studies (the governmental systems, for example), to enable comparisons to be made between the explanations these FPA models provide for this decision-making process.

Process tracing has been critiqued for being little more than a “good historical explanation”. However, a process tracing explanation requires the historical account to be transformed into an analytical explanation phrased and framed in theoretical variables that are identified in the research design (Bennett and George, 1997). As a

basis from which greater analysis of the efficacy of the FPA models being studied can begin, a good historical explanation would be helpful. From there, this thesis shall use the analytic explanation process tracing method, which allows for some selectiveness that, in this case, is a positive given that certain information on the decision-making process, such as the perceptions of those involved or secret intelligence information, may be unavailable to this research. Using Process Tracing is the logical choice to understand the decision-making processes being studied here. By looking at the stages in the decision-making process, evidence of a process is identified in order to facilitate the proposal of explanations.

After this outlining of the methodological considerations of the research, the literature review of FPA follows. This methods chapter outlined how this research has been carried out. The literature review positions this thesis in the FPA literature, highlighting the themes that the theoretical models used in this thesis draw upon. The theoretical framework chapter then explains how these theoretical models are operationalised in this research.

3. Literature Review

Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is a sub-field of International Relations (IR). As such, “The FPA focus on the foreign policy process, as opposed to foreign policy outcomes, [which] is predicated on the belief that closer scrutiny of the actors, their motivations, the structures of decision-making and the broader context within which foreign policy choices are formulated would provide greater analytical purchase than could be found in utilising an IR approach” (Alden and Aran, 2016, p3). FPA scholars advocate for the creation of “a set of ‘lenses’ that bring some focus to the complex picture that emerges” when the background narratives to foreign policy decisions are complex (Garrison, 2003). As such, FPA is categorised in two ways. Firstly, as an “Actor-Specific Theory” by George (1993, 1994) in that FPA focuses on a specific actor’s behaviour, and can be generalisable given certain scope conditions (Hudson, 2017, p14). The second categorisation is that FPA is “Agent-oriented” in that it places emphasis on the central decision-making group as “funnels for other international and domestic factors” (Kaarbo, 2015).

In this thesis, FPA is used to focus analysis on the roles of individual actors in the decision-making processes under examination: the US and the UK decision to invade Iraq. This research utilises the groupthink model, a leadership style approach, and analogical reasoning model to further focus this analysis, each of which is set out in greater detail in the Theoretical Framework. By combining these models, this thesis contributes to the development of the field of FPA, to establish links between theoretical models (Morin and Paquin, 2018, p342). Additionally, the different models can be compared in a manner that, whilst currently rare in the literature, is a direction that FPA research has been called upon to move in (Kaarbo, 2003).

This Literature Review firstly examines the reasons for choosing the field of FPA for this research. The development of FPA is then set out, briefly examining the stages in this development before exploring the debates in the FPA literature and providing positional context to this research within the said debates.

As previously outlined, FPA is both “agent-oriented” (Kaarbo, 2015; Hudson, 2005) and “actor-specific” (George, 1993; 1994). FPA being “agent-oriented” refers to the conceptualisation of agency in FPA. States cannot exercise agency from an FPA perspective, because a state is an abstraction (Hudson, 2005). The term “actor-specific” refers to the unwillingness of FPA to “black-box” human decision-makers under examination, and is in contrast with IR theory’s “actor-general” focus. “Actor-general” focus refers to IR theory’s treatment of human decision-makers as unitary rational actors (Hudson, 2005).

By opening “the black box of the government to show how the dynamic character of the decision process can shape foreign policy behaviour”, FPA is particularly well-suited to each case in this thesis (Garrison, 2003). This thesis uses FPA to focus

attention on the individual decision-makers, with each model focusing attention on different aspects of the decision-making groups. As Hermann (2001b) sets out, FPA focuses its attention on “how leaders, groups and coalitions of actors can affect the way foreign policy problems are framed, the options that are selected, the choices that are made, and what gets implemented”. Individual decision-makers cannot be substituted with other generic decision-makers, as they are not “rational utility maximisers” (Hudson, 2005, p6). The example of the Cuban Missile Crisis has been used to explain this. Specific information about individual decision-makers in the USA, USSR, and Cuba would be required to appropriately explain the case. Similarly, with the Iraq case, understanding Bush’s focus on Iraq and Saddam Hussein, and the personal nature of that focus, will, I argue, reveal much about the decision-making process. Bush immediately assumed that Iraq was involved in the 9/11 attacks and as a result requested that his counter-terrorism expert Richard Clarke investigate such a link further, despite Clarke’s opinion that there was no link (Clarke, 2004, p334). Meanwhile, Blair was crucial to the management of the legal advice in the UK, writing “I just don’t understand this” on the legal advice he received in January 2003⁷. IR, with its “actor-general” focus, “black-boxing” of the state, and regarding the state as a unitary rational actor (Hudson, 2005), is in contrast to the sub-field of FPA, with the “actor-specific” focus, which moves from this regard for the state as a “rational actor” (Garrison, 2003). As outlined in the debates section of the introduction to this thesis (1.4), this research contributes to the literature on Iraq by examining the roles of individuals, and showing that the specific characters in this story were crucial to how this decision was made. In FPA, it is the role of the human decision-maker that can

⁷ Manuscript comment Blair on Memo Goldsmith to Blair, 30/01/2003. [Untitled]

determine why and how the particular foreign policy results from material and ideational factors.

The field of FPA, with the actor-specific focus, is dominated by a debate between Rational Choice and Cognitive approaches (Beckermann-Boyes, 2013, p49). These approaches form two categories within which FPA models are positioned. FPA scholars within the Rational Choice approach propose that decision-makers seek to maximise utility, selecting the policy option that has the lowest cost and the highest benefit. In contrast, the cognitive approach asserts that this rational, goal-oriented utility maximiser cannot be found in real-world cases, as people are not goal-oriented rational operators. In actuality, people and decision-makers use “mental shortcuts” to navigate the human mind’s incapability to carry out the machine-like decision calculations that are integral to the Rational Choice approach (Rapport, 2017). The cognitive approach focuses upon the role of the perceptions, beliefs, and images of the policymaker (Neack, Hey, and Haney, 1995, p49). Each approach has clear influences, which are particular to each approach. The rational choice approach overtly draws upon economics: “[...] individual economic decision makers want to buy low, sell high, and maximise wealth [...] the rational decision maker chooses from among a set of alternatives, the alternative that maximises utility” (Mintz and DeRouen, 2010, p7). The cognitive approach is equally linked to Psychology, examining the impact of several factors on decision-making, such as beliefs, heuristics, cognitive biases, and information processing. This thesis draws three FPA models from the cognitive approach to FPA, and each model focuses on the related but different means by which cognition can affect decision-making: group dynamics, issue framing, the individual leader’s group management, approach to risk, and conceptual complexity.

In utilising more than one FPA model, this thesis is in keeping with the “Multidimensional” approach, which characterises FPA (Kaarbo, 2003). The advantage of using middle-range theories is that they can be combined to provide more nuanced explanations (Garrison, 2003; Kaarbo, 2003)⁸. Each theoretical model or approach utilised in this research focuses on different yet related areas of decision-making – none are mutually exclusive. The identification of analogical reasoning does not exclude the possibility of groupthink or the leadership style approach being identified. FPA gives this research the potential to combine models to provide a more complete, nuanced explanation for the case studies. As will be expanded upon in the Theoretical Framework, there is a move within FPA to promote comparisons between the explanatory power of FPA models, rather than making comparisons between FPA models and IR theories and speaking to those who recognise the need for FPA models (Kaarbo, 2003). The need in FPA is to compare the explanatory power of FPA models relative to each other, or compare the efficacy of the models as “lenses” (Allison, 1971; Stern, 2003) that highlight different variables when the same case is scrutinised (Kaarbo, 2003).

From an FPA perspective, IR theories, which lack a consideration of individuals, reflect a world where there is “no change, no creativity, no persuasion” (Hudson, 2005, p6). Looking inside the “blackbox” of foreign policy decision-making increases the detail in analysis of IR. By increasing the detail, FPA scholarship can propose more specific explanations on how particular nations are likely to respond in particular cases (Hermann, 2001). Snyder found that the onus placed on national power and interests,

⁸ The concept of middle-range theories was developed by Merton (1948, 1968), who asserts that they “...lie between the minor but necessary working hypotheses that evolve in abundance during day-to-day research and the all-inclusive systematic efforts to develop a unified theory that will explain all the observed uniformities of social behavior, social organization and social change...” (Merton, 1968, 39)

which came to dominate after the Second World War, were unsatisfactory, as they did not assist in providing an explanation of the “whys of governmental behaviour” (Hudson et al, 2002). In the same way, explanations of the US decision to invade Iraq, which see the motivating factor as the wish to project power post-9/11, provide little insight into how the decision was taken and the process navigated.

Calling FPA interdisciplinary is a description which many works on the subject share (McDermott, 2004; Hudson, 2005a, p9; Walker, 2011, p10; Clemens et al, 2016), and can nearly go without the need to be stated. After all, FPA combines approaches from fields from psychology to public policy, or comparative politics to domestic politics. In this thesis, the groupthink model (Janis, 1972) and the Leadership style approach have significant interdisciplinary roots. The list of fields which have been brought into FPA is far more extensive than that given here. It is this extensive list of linked fields that allows FPA to speak to a wider audience than those directly working within the sub-field. FPA has been called a “bridge” between IR and other fields (Hudson, 2005, p9). By increasing the fields which this thesis can speak to, specifically by using FPA, the research’s impact is increased.

3.1. The Development of Foreign Policy Analysis

Foreign Policy Analysis has developed in “waves” (Hudson, 2005, p17; 2016, p17). The models being used in this research have been drawn from the second wave of the development of FPA. However, to properly explain the reasons for the use of these models it is necessary to outline each of the other waves. Whilst the development of these “waves” can be identified, the time period parameters of the “waves” are not concrete. The area of attention of the model is what places the model in its particular wave, rather than the period in which it was composed. This means that these waves

are not mutually exclusive, with many of the developments from one wave to the next being continuity rather than stark change.

A number of works have been cited as being part of the base from which the field of FPA has grown. The work of Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin (1954), Sprout and Sprout (1956, 1965), and Rosenau (1966) constitute this base (Hudson, 2005, p17; 2016, p17), each contributing different aspects to the development of FPA. Sprout and Sprout (1956, 1965) contributed by proposing that there is a need to examine the “psycho-millieu” (1965; 225) of the persons and groups who are making the foreign policy decisions. Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin (1954) made a significant contribution by identifying what they regard as the intersection between the most crucial factors which determine state behaviour, namely material and ideational factors. They claim that this point of intersection is the human decision-maker (Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, 1954; Hudson et al, 2002). Rosenau (1966) contributed the generation of “actor-specific theory” (George, 1993; 1994), which was cited as a reason for the use of FPA in this thesis, and attributed with the development of propositions generalisable from the middle-range theory level (Garrison, 2003; Kaarbo, 2003; Hudson, 2017, 15).

These early works (Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, 1954; Sprout and Sprout, 1956, 1965; Rosenau, 1966) formed the basis for the first “wave” in the development of FPA literature. This first wave was typified by research examining themes of: perception and image, national and societal characteristics, organisational processes, and bureaucratic politics. This first wave was bolstered in the early 1970s (Allison, 1972; Allison and Halperin, 1973; Halperin, 1974) with research that has had a lasting impact (see Marsh, 2014) and ushered in further research into decision-making in foreign policy.

In this first wave of FPA, a significant proportion of the models generated focused analysis above the level of individual decision-makers. Organisational processes, both internal to organisations and the external relations between organisations, were a significant area of focus. The Rational Actor model, a model which Allison utilised to show the necessity of looking below the State-level of analysis, had a lasting impact in FPA. It endeavours to provide an explanation for international events by recounting aims and calculations of nations or governments, meaning the model treats the State as a unitary actor (Allison, 1969; Hudson, 2005, p19; Alden and Aran, 2017, p46). Similarly, Allison's Organisational Behaviour Model (OBM) asserts that foreign policy is the result of the behaviour of organisations, and examines intra-organisational factors in decision-making. Central to OBM is the idea that organisations use standard operating protocols to lessen the impact of any one individual, so that individuals may be replaced without weakening the organisation. Further, this model stresses that the less personalities matter, the better the organisation operates (Hudson, 2005, p83). The level of analysis is below the level of the State, but remains above the level of the individual. This second model from Allison (1972) was considered limited in the explanations it could provide for foreign policy change (Alden and Aran, 2017, p46). The Bureaucratic Politics Model (BPM) examines the actions of the government and holds that they are the result of political bargaining between different actors (Bureaucratic entities) who have different preferences on policy. Therefore, BPM examines inter-organisational factors (Allison, 1969; Allison and Halperin, 1972). As such, government policy is the compromise reached after this bargaining. Individual's policy positions are likely to stem from their role in government and link to their bureaucratic role (Marsh, 2014). The work of Holsti (1970) on National Role Conception formed a departure from prior works in the first wave of FPA due to its

focus on perceptions of the role of a particular nation, but still locates the level of analysis above the individual. Holsti (1970) sought to understand how a nation views itself and how the role that this view of the nation's role could affect that nation's foreign policy. By focusing on elite perceptions of this role, because he believed that elites had more impact upon the output of foreign policy, Holsti (1970) found that national role is influenced by societal character and the way in which the nation's socialisation process functions. The perception of foreign policy issues (Jervis, 1976) and the relationship between "motivations and perceptions" (Cottam, 1977) are also characteristic of First wave FPA, with the level of analysis located above the individual decision-maker.

The levels of analysis which typify the first wave of FPA directly opposes the focus that this research has on the impact of decision-makers. In the models, Allison (1972) proposes (RAM, OBM, BPM) that foreign policy is determined above the level of the individual, and RAM shows the need to look below the State-level of analysis, with OBM and BPM examining internal organisational factors and inter-organisational factors (Hudson, 2005, p19). Individual's policy positions are likely to stem from their role in government and link to their bureaucratic role, rather than the individual's policy position affecting the way in which the organisations operate.

3.2. The Second Wave of Foreign Policy Analysis

As stated above, the models being utilised in this research are drawn from the "second wave" of FPA research. In this section, the models to be used in this thesis are outlined as part of the development of FPA and set out in greater detail in the Theoretical Framework. The other themes in the second wave are then outlined in relation to the models used in this research.

FPA's second wave of research can be placed in the later 1970s and 1980s, although the waves are most associated with themes in research rather than the period at which they emerged. While the first wave of FPA was most strongly associated with levels of analysis above the individual (for example, the nation state), the second wave of FPA was typified by a level of analysis focused on individuals and groups of individuals. As mentioned in the previous section, there is a component of continuity in the developments between each wave, and this move, from a level of analysis above the individual to a level of analysis focused upon the individual, can be regarded as a development and transition. The second wave of FPA is characterised by four thematic areas of research: small group dynamics, small group processes, group framing of Foreign policy situations, and Comparative Foreign Policy (CFP) (Hudson, 2005, p18). It is this focus upon the individual decision-maker that is a reason why the models selected for this thesis are drawn from the second wave of FPA.

Janis (1982) ushered in the second "wave" of Foreign Policy Analysis with his development of the "groupthink" model. Janis' book on small-group dynamics and their effect on decision-making processes, "Victims of Groupthink", "almost single-handedly began this research tradition" (Hudson, 2005). The model is expanded upon later in this chapter, and explanations for its use in this research are outlined. However, it is important to highlight here the impact which this model has had on the development of the field of Foreign Policy Analysis as a whole. The term was devised by Janis to describe "deterioration of mental efficiency, reality testing and moral judgement that results from in-group pressures" (Janis, 1972: 9). Groupthink compels individuals within the group to self-censor their views, or internalise the group view as their own. In order to identify groupthink, Janis outlines eight "symptoms": the illusion of invulnerability, collective rationalisation, belief in the group's inherent morality, a

stereotyped view of the enemy, direct pressure on dissenting members, self-censorship, the illusion of unanimity, and the emergence of self-appointed “mind-guards”(Janis, 1972, p40-41). These, alongside some other features of flawed decision-making processes – such as failure to examine alternatives, a poor information search, information processing bias, and a lack of contingency planning – can be operationalised for this research as part of this model.

Leadership style analysis emerged in FPA literature in the early 1980s, being strongly influenced by the field of political psychology. Indeed, this area of FPA, with its links to psychology, epitomises the interdisciplinary nature of FPA. The reasons for this model’s use in this research, and the advantages its use may bring to this research, are examined later within the Theoretical framework, as with the case for groupthink model being utilised here. However, its origins and prior uses are looked at here. Hermann (1973, 1974, 1977, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988a, 1988b, 2001) is one of the most significant scholars in this area, moving into FPA from psychology. Her work on the theme of leadership, when exercised within decision-making groups, in a number of different contexts forms a significant component of the FPA leadership literature. Work in this theme of research attempts to explore the impact that a leader may have as an individual on the foreign policy of a nation state, such as their personality, psychology, and decision-making style (see: Hermann, 1984, 1987, 1999; Hermann, Preston, and Young, 1996; Hermann and Kaarbo, 1998; Mastors, 2000; Preston, 2001; Taysi and Preston, 2001; Dyson, 2004; 2006).

Second wave FPA scholarship also moved to consider how small groups of decision-makers frame the situation they are confronted with. The Analogical Reasoning model (AR), being used in this research, forms one of the most enduring parts of this development in the literature. AR’s central focus is on “the use of analogies to guide

problem framing by foreign policymakers” (Hudson, 2005, p18). This model looks at how decision-makers compare the situation they are faced with to previous situations that they regard to be similar. These analogical comparisons serve two functions: to guide decision-makers in the making of their decision, and to assist in selling the decision to the public (Khong, 1992, p11; Paris, 2002, p428-429).

There have been critiques of second generation (Neack et al, 1995, p253) FPA models, particularly for their theoretical ambiguity (Turner and Pratkanis, 1998). This ambiguity has led to a number of different interpretations of particular models (Turner and Pratkanis, 1998), which can restrict comparisons between the different applications of different interpretations. However, in the move from the first generation of FPA to the second, there was a call for middle-range theories (Neack et al, 1995, p253). As a consequence of being between micro-theory, with its specificity, and broad all-encompassing theory, is a level of specificity. This ambiguity gives middle-range FPA theory the increased applicability; it can be interpreted and adapted to context.

3.3. Third Wave of Foreign Policy Analysis

The third wave of FPA research emerged in the early 1990s, and can be characterised by consolidation and expansion (Hudson, 2005a). There have been some considerations that FPA has begun to enter its fourth wave. However, this is debated and both waves are considered together here, as the fourth would also be characterised by the themes of consolidation and expansion. Firstly, consolidation in that FPA achieved more acceptance by the wider field of International Relations, due to the reconciliation of methodological issues within FPA and the impact of the end of the Cold War. Secondly, expansion can be linked to three components: (1) expansion after the end of the Cold war, (2) expansion into new areas, and (3) expansion of

existing theories and into new theoretical areas. As set out in the previous section, there is no mutual exclusion between waves. The work of the Second Wave in FPA built upon that of the first wave, rather than abandoning and attempting to replace it. Each “generation” of FPA has built upon the previous work, and examined areas not given attention by the previous one (Neack et al, 1995). However, this is an area where there have been calls for FPA to develop new work, moving from the predominant approach of comparing FPA explanations to those of IR, to comparing explanations provided by different FPA models (Kaarbo, 2003). As with the relationship between the second and third wave, aspects of the transition were a continuation and aspects were changes or new introductions to the field.

The end of the Cold War opened up the field of IR, with more theories expanding at the time. Further, the limitations of the analysis of system-level variables to provide explanations in the changing international politics of the time also increased the receptivity of IR scholarship to FPA work, consolidating FPA’s status as a significant IR sub-field (Hudson, 2005a). The expansion of the sub-field is, in part, due to the end of the Cold War, and the attempts to explain international politics in the post-Cold War world.

Existing areas of study were expanded in the third wave of FPA, altering the focus in order to apply them in new ways, or to new cases. A notable example of this type of expansion of the sub-field would be the “Polythink” model developed as an expansion on the groupthink model that will be used in this research. A group where Polythink occurs “is characterised by varied and multiple views, opinions, and perceptions of the same goals and alternatives among group members” (Mintz and DeRouen, 2010, p49). Polythink should be thought of as the other side of a coin to groupthink: polythink represents “heterogeneity”, while groupthink (as is outlined in the Theoretical

Framework) is characterised by homogeneity (Mintz and DeRouen, 2010, p49). The expansion of existing models within FPA, such as polythink assuming the position as an opposing phenomena to groupthink, did not discredit scholarship which preceded the third wave.

As with each new “wave” in the development of FPA, new models contributed to the development and expansions. A notable model developed in the third wave is the poliheuristic model of decision-making. A “unique” feature of poliheuristic decision-making model is the capacity to account for “simple decision situations” and the complicated “N-person, N-alternative, N-dimension settings that characterise many Foreign Policy decisions” (Mintz, 2003, p6). It has also been used to “forecast” decisions of Foreign policy yet to be taken (Mintz, 2003, p6). The model states that decision-making is a two-part process (Beckermann-Boyes, 2013, p57) of cognitive shortcuts and rational choice (Neack, 2014, p46). The model provides an example of some of the ways models developed in the third wave of FPA expanded the scope of the field.

Challenges have been levelled at FPA scholarship by FPA scholars since the conception of the field. The challenges that this thesis responds to have been set out previously. The first of these challenges is to establish links between FPA models. The second is to compare the applicability of FPA models to different national contexts. The third challenge, to demonstrate the usefulness of FPA explanations to foreign policy practitioners. The contemporary development of FPA, in the still-developing fourth wave, is, in part, responding to both the challenges this thesis responds to and others outside the parameters of the research here. One of the areas considered by some to represent the initiating of the fourth wave of FPA are the new theoretical areas that are being introduced to FPA scholarship. This corresponds to one of the most

contemporary sets of challenges levelled at FPA scholarship by Morin and Paquin (2018, p342). Concepts related to emotions and neuroscience are being introduced to FPA, and studied for their impact on decision-making and foreign policy-making (see: Sucharov, 2011; Hatemi and McDermott, 2012; FPA, 2012; McDermott, 2014; Dolan, 2016; Berejikian, 2016; Moore, 2016).

The second area which some consider to be part of the debated fourth wave of FPA development is the move in FPA scholarship towards exploring links between literatures, both inside FPA and outside, and “seeking ... greater cross-level integration of explanation” (Hudson, 2017, p11). This development in fourth wave FPA literature is similar to how this thesis demonstrates the interconnectivity between the explanations that groupthink, leadership style approach, and analogical reasoning. By combining models from the cognitive side of the rational-cognitive debate, this thesis combines explanations and contributes to an understanding of how these models can be utilised in tandem. By selecting groupthink, with its focus on small-group dynamics (Janis 1982a, p9; Hudson, 2005, p17), Analogical Reasoning, with its focus on how groups of decision-makers frame the situation they are confronted with (Khong, 1992, p6; Record, 2007), and adopting a Leadership style Approach to examine the role of the leadership of Bush and Blair in this case study, this research can propose cross-level explanations (Kaarbo, 2003; Hudson, 2017, p11) from within this cognitive branch of the debate within FPA.

A third theme of current FPA research which has been associated with a fourth wave is the expansion into new areas in terms of the cases where FPA is applied. In the same way that this thesis shows the usefulness of these models for explaining decision-making processes in two different national contexts, this theme of fourth wave FPA seeks to expand the scope of FPA. As a field, FPA has traditionally been highly

US-centric, but the trend in current FPA research is to challenge this. This thesis contributes to the response to the second challenge this thesis confronts (to demonstrate the usefulness of FPA across different national contexts). The literature has begun to assess the penetration of FPA outside of North America (Brummer and Hudson, 2015), and determine the state of the field in the Middle East (Hinnesbusch, 2015), Japan (Miyagi, 2015), and Africa (Adar, 2015), among others. In the past two years, the Foreign Policy Analysis Journal has published articles which have examined more than fifteen national or regional (Middle East, Latin American) case studies (FPA Journal, 2018). By confronting the challenges set out in the introduction (1.1), this thesis can speak to the developing fourth wave of FPA whilst remaining in the second wave.

3.4. Conclusion

The development of FPA, in “waves” (Hudson, 2005, p17) or “generations” (Neack et al, 1995, p2), has led to a relatively clear means of classifying models. It is the level and scope of analysis that distinguishes between the different waves of FPA. The first wave of FPA initiated three streams of research: focusing on the decision making of small/large groups, comparative foreign policy, and psychological/sociological explanations of foreign policy (Hudson, 2016, p13). In contrast, the second wave focuses on the individual level of analysis, scrutinising the roles of individuals, or groups of individuals. The third wave continued the focus on the individual level of analysis, but developed the scope of FPA by confronting methodological challenges and applying some models to new contexts (i.e., different national contexts). The fourth wave of FPA is currently being developed, but one theme that is evident in this

new wave is a continued emphasis on the expansion of the scope of the field of FPA, both empirically and theoretically.

This thesis draws upon the second wave of FPA models, taking three models from this wave, and expanding their scope by comparing their applicability across different national contexts. As outlined previously, this comparison of national contexts is a response to the three challenges drawn from the FPA literature and outlined in the introduction (1.1). In so doing, this thesis speaks to the contemporary developments in FPA, whilst remaining firmly positioned as research drawing upon the second wave of FPA.

By using three models from the second wave of FPA, and utilising them together in a theoretical framework, this thesis also contributes to the theoretical development of these models. The research question of this thesis asks “How do FPA models explain similarities and differences in the US and UK decision-making processes leading up to the 2003 Iraq War?” By using these models alongside one another, each explanation provides context for those of the other models. As such, this thesis speaks to the developments in the contemporary fourth wave of FPA by using these second waves and demonstrating the interconnectivity between their explanations. Whilst this research is solidly second wave FPA work, this thesis, in speaking to other waves, has a greater theoretical impact than would otherwise be the case.

In the following chapter, the models used in this thesis are outlined. This literature review contextualises groupthink, leadership style, and analogical reasoning, showing how each fits into the broader FPA literature. The theoretical framework demonstrates how each model is operationalised in this thesis, showing how each is

taken from the theoretical understanding, to the application and to the two decision-making processes.

4. Theoretical Framework

This section presents in greater detail the three models of FPA that are examined in this thesis. By examining their respective advantages and potential pitfalls, this section demonstrates the suitability of the groupthink, analogical reasoning, and leadership style approach to the case studies.

As outlined in the introduction, this research seeks to respond to two sets of challenges set down for the field of FPA. The first challenge is from Kaarbo (2003) – for FPA to compare the effectiveness of different models, rather than comparing to the explanations that IR explanations provide. The second set of challenges for FPA come from Morin and Paquin (2018, p342): to link theoretical models, to compare national

contexts, and to dialogue with practitioners. This research responds to these challenges. In this chapter, the way these models can be used in combination to respond to these challenges are outlined.

The groupthink model is outlined first, as this is the first model used in this thesis. Whilst each FPA model here helps to contextualise the explanations provided by the other two models, the groupthink in particular highlights the significance of the leadership styles of Bush and Blair, and the conditions in which analogical reasoning occurred.

4.1. Groupthink

Set out by Irving Janis (1972, 1982), groupthink as a phenomenon is not consciously enacted by any member of the group; rather, it is a “social dynamic” that can occur in small groups (Hudson, 2005, p67). Group members want to uphold the consensus of the group, even if the group view is not approximate to the member’s own individual view (Alden and Aran, 2017, p30). This is a crucial area that this research can inform FPA, responding to the challenge to compare national contexts that Morin and Paquin (2018, p342) provided to the field. Groupthink is generally applied to the US-, yet there is no part of the model that excludes its use outside of the US context.

In outlining the groupthink model, Janis set out the reasons it is considered to have a negative effect when identified. The way in which information is processed is a major factor. In a situation of “groupthink”, the inherent belief in the group’s correctness means that information which may contradict the group’s view is not considered or not considered in a proper manner. “Mindguards” are group members who adopt the role of ensuring that the leader is not exposed to information or views that may challenge the group’s consensus view (Janis, 1982, p40-41). Alternative courses of action are

not conceived of, and there is typically no “plan B”. Once a decision is reached, there is such a high regard for the group from within that group that there is no process of checking the decision for problems which may arise (Mintz and DeRouen, 2010; 45).

In his presentation of the groupthink model, Janis applied the theory to four case studies: the Bay of Pigs, the decision to cross the 38th parallel in the Korean War, Pearl Harbour, and the Vietnam War escalation (Janis, 1971; 1972; 1982). In his outline of the theory, Janis set out the eight “symptoms” of groupthink, as markers of the groupthink phenomenon’s presence in a decision-making group. These symptoms are: the illusion of invulnerability, collective rationalisation, the belief the Group is inherently moral, a stereotyped view of the enemy, dissenters being put under direct pressure, individual members self-censoring, the group having the illusion that they are unanimous, and individuals taking on the role of “mindguards” (Janis, 1972, p174). It will be these “symptoms” that are used to determine the presence or absence of groupthink in the case studies in this thesis. There is debate over whether all symptoms of groupthink must be identified in a case for it to be said that groupthink was present, or whether partial identification of the symptoms is sufficient (Turner and Pratkanis, 1998). As will be set out in greater detail in the penultimate page of the groupthink section, this thesis considers the presence of some symptoms of groupthink to be sufficient to assert groupthink’s presence. However, this will be dependent on the points at which groupthink symptoms are found to be present.

Groupthink as a model has had a significant impact within the field of FPA, but has also had an enormous impact on other fields: organisational behaviour studies, business management, and psychology, among others (Turner and Pratkanis, 1998). In the 1990s, it was asserted that examination of the “Social Sciences Citation Index” would show over a hundred references to the groupthink theory Janis (1971; 1972;

1982; 1989; Janis and Mann, 1977) presented, and the model continues to have contemporary applications (See Badie, 2010).

As a model, groupthink received serious criticisms in the years immediately following its introduction. Janis (1982) was considered to have overlooked some methodological questions (Eder, 2019), which he acknowledged himself when he said, “We must be willing to make some inferential leaps from whatever historical clues we can pick up” (Janis, 1982, xi). Others have sought to fill this methodological gap. Tetlock (1979) accused Janis of focussing on evidence that supported his conclusions and ignored any evidence that contradicted them. Tetlock (1979) used content analysis to scrutinise public statements of decision-makers in cases where groupthink was hypothesised to be present. He found that these decision-makers “were characterised by significantly lower levels of integrative complexity” (Tetlock, 1979). Other works have challenged groupthink by drawing on individual characteristics of group members (Stern and Sundelius, 1997; Schafer and Crichlow, 2002; 2010). By using groupthink and the leadership style approach alongside one another, these challenges from the individual characteristics approaches can be offset and incorporated into this research.

The field of FPA is well-known to be US-centric, and the groupthink model is a strong example of this US-centrism. The groupthink model is rarely applied outside the US, although there are some examples (see Walker and Watson, 1989; Valentine, 2011), and a significant contribution of this thesis is to compare the explanations groupthink can provide for the decision-making processes in the US and the UK. As mentioned in the literature review, this means the research can speak to the contemporary fourth wave of FPA research, whilst remaining in the second wave of FPA. Comparing the applicability of the model to the US and the non-US context of the UK can contribute to the fourth wave of FPA. As established in the introduction, FPA has been challenged

to compare the usefulness of FPA in different national contexts (Morin and Paquin, 2018, p342). There are no reasons why groupthink cannot be applied outside of the US.

There is the possibility that the US government in its structure and operating procedures is more suited to the application of FPA models. The National Security Council and its decision-making procedures, as a small group, is organised in a manner to be prone to groupthink. However, a number of these features can also be found within the UK decision-making apparatus. In the UK, at the time of the Iraq war, there was the COBR committee and other cabinet sub-committees, with small group membership, as well as the Cabinet (Fenwick, 2016; Gardiner, 2002). The UK government system is also dominated by single party governments, with only two coalition governments in the last fifty years. The reasons that the US can be considered prone to groupthink in decision-making groups also apply to the UK. Demonstrating that Groupthink can apply outside the UK is a further contribution this thesis can make.

By applying the model using process tracing methods, a more accurate picture of the points at which groupthink occurs or does not occur can be established. Whilst there have been applications of groupthink to the case of the decision to invade Iraq (Badie, 2010; Mintz and Wayne, 2016), these explanations are both limited by focusing singly on the US decision and in the lack of the systematic analysis process tracing enables. By expanding the case to include the UK and using process tracing, a key aspect of the case is incorporated to provide a more complete explanation of the decision to invade Iraq.

As a model with such a significant impact, groupthink has been critiqued from a few perspectives. Notably, t'Hart, Stern, and Sundelius (1997a) in "Beyond Groupthink". The authors query the straightforwardness of the groupthink model, and propose the possibility for several group dynamics to be present within a decision-making group operating in parallel. The potential for several different group dynamics to be in effect at the same time is an interesting addition to the model; however, this is not a direct critique. This interesting contribution increases the complexity of groupthink research, but there is nothing in the groupthink model of Janis (1972, 1982) that excludes the potential for this occurring. This development of the groupthink model has not received the level of application that groupthink has had. As such, this increased complexity has not been tested in research application.

Groupthink research has developed and there have been a few attempts to build upon groupthink using it as a base. Among these models building upon groupthink include the Multiple Advocacy model (George, 1980a), Beyond Groupthink (t'Hart, Stern, and Sundelius, 1997a), and the Polythink model (Mintz, 2005). Polythink constitutes the opposite of groupthink, for it assumes the position at the other end of the spectrum of group dynamics to groupthink. Polythink occurs when there is a wide variety of opinions expressed within a decision-making group. Further, where groupthink represents homogeneity of views, Polythink constitutes heterogeneity in the views and perceptions expressed (Mintz, Mishal, and Morag, 2005, p6). The polythink model has been rarely used by authors other than the original authors and lacks an established literature of cases. The polythink model has been used to explain some of the decisions taken during the processes that led to the Iraq war, such as the intense planning for the air campaign and the less rigorous planning for the Iraq war. However, crucially, the authors of the model themselves do not regard the model as providing

adequate explanations for the decision-making process which led to the invasion of Iraq (Mintz and Wayne, 2016, p92). This, alongside the lesser impact upon the field of polythink when contrasted with groupthink, forms the reasoning behind selecting the original groupthink model over this particular model developed from the base of groupthink.

As stated in the outline of the groupthink model, this thesis uses a revised list of groupthink symptoms, including: group members taking the role of Mindguards, a stereotyped view of the enemy being held in the group, collective rationalisation, and dissenters being placed under pressure (Janis, 1982; McCauley, 1989). Group members are categorised in two sub-categories: Mindguards and Dissenters. Mindguards act to protect the group from information that may contradict the prevailing group view. "Dissenters" is my own term, developed from Janis (1972, 1982) symptom "dissenter's being placed under pressure", and indicates those who were put under pressure to conform to the group view. I further outline individuals who operated as "facilitators" – non-group members who enabled or facilitated the groupthink.

These symptoms of groupthink (group members taking the role of Mindguards, a stereotyped view of the enemy being held in the group, collective rationalisation, and dissenters being placed under pressure) are used as a means to determine the presence of the phenomenon in the case of the decisions to invade Iraq. This decision on how to determine the presence/absence of groupthink does not come without debates and difficulties to be overcome. There is debate within the field of groupthink research as to whether all eight symptoms must be present to enable the case to be described as a case of groupthink (Turner and Pratkanis, 1998). Some (Tetlock, 1979; Janis, 1972; 1982) provide examples of cases where all symptoms can be identified in the cases they analyse. However, the debate comes when considering cases where

only some of the symptoms are identified. Turner and Pratkanis (1998) identify several studies where partial identification of the symptoms exemplify that groupthink can be asserted to be present (Longley and Pruitt, 1980; t'Hart, 1998; Aldag and Fuller, 1993). However, some studies oppose this assertion, declaring that groupthink is not present even in cases where most symptoms are found (Neck, 1992; Moorhead, 1991). This thesis takes a position aligned to that of the former camp – that the presence of some of the symptoms of groupthink can mean that it is present in the case studies. The significance of the point at which the symptoms are identified – if they are identified – will contribute to the determination whether groupthink can be said to be present.

This is not to say that groupthink will either be found present throughout the case or found to be absent throughout either case. One of the great advantages that using Process Tracing methodology gives this thesis is the ability to determine the points in the decision-making process that groupthink could be said to be emerging, plus those points where groupthink was declining. This research examines each case to understand the points at which groupthink may be present in either case. Crucially, this means that groupthink, at parts, can be determined to have affected the decision-making processes, or to not have affected them. For example, groupthink could have been identified as having occurred in early 2002, but not to have had a significant impact until later in 2002 and 2003. This could have led to the conclusion that groupthink affected the initial decision to confront Iraq, but had less effect on the following decision-making process on how to invade and seek support for the said invasion.

There are aspects of the groupthink model that raise problems for a researcher applying the model. Of the eight symptoms that Janis (1982, p40-41) sets out, there are two particular symptoms that are difficult to identify in a case. The identification of

the “Self-Censorship” symptom is complicated by issues of revisionism in the minds of participants in the decision-making process. When interviewed, an individual involved in such a controversial case study may falsely claim that they withheld their concerns at the time. The withholding of views is also a claim difficult to confirm, falsify, or triangulate. Equally, an “illusion of unanimity” is particularly difficult to identify. Interview subjects may refer to their opinion that there was a misconception that the group was unanimous, upon the symptom being explained. However, this is equally difficult to triangulate. By using the refined list of groupthink symptoms, and using both interview and primary documents alongside secondary data, these difficulties are offset in this thesis.

In using groupthink alongside the leadership style approach and the analogical reasoning model, the ways in which this model can influence the others are revealed. The limited opposition and criticism that groupthink develops serves to protect the analogical reasoning that occurred in both the US and the UK. Similarly, groupthink highlights how the group can protect the leader from acquiring information that could challenge their perception, showing the significance of a leader in the decision-making process.

4.2. Leadership Style Approach

Here, the leadership style approach used in this thesis is outlined. This thesis adopts an Approach to Leadership Style that draws three measures of leadership style from the literature, combining them in an approach particularly geared towards this research. These measures, which are Conceptual Complexity, Approach to Risk, and Managing the Advisory system, are combined for three reasons.

Firstly, there is a focus upon the “worldview” of the two leaders in this case, Bush and Blair. Their “conceptual complexity” has been studied by cognitive FPA researchers (Breuning, 2007; Dyson, 2009; 2014; Yang, 2010). Conceptual complexity measures how a leader processes information and receives advice from those around them (Siniver and Featherstone, 2020). However, it has not been studied in the systematic, multicausal method that is conducted in this thesis. This systematic approach means there is a greater capacity to analyse the particular points where these conceptual complexities had greatest impact. Additionally, this thesis can make comparisons between the impacts of each leader’s worldview on the decision-making process. By examining the impact of the two leader’s conceptual complexity on this decision in a systematic way, this thesis can clearly show the role of each leader in this case. The systematic examination also enables the comparisons that are made between the impact of each leader’s information processing on the decision-making process. This is both new and shows how explanations that focus on individual leaders transcend the differences between political systems.

Secondly, in using these three measures, this research examines the way each leader considered the consequences of the decision-making process, and navigated a route through it. For example, both Bush and Blair had to consider the consequences of not continuing to seek a second UNSC resolution in February 2003. Finally, the Managing the Advisory system measure examines the way the leader led those around them in the decision-making process. In a case where “Blair was in the strongest position of a Prime Minister ever. The checks and balances didn’t work” (Rawnsley, 2010, p166), the way the advisory system helped to make this possible must be scrutinised.

As the research area within FPA that has been applied most broadly, this approach already provides insight into how FPA can work in different national contexts. However,

as part of this research, this can be combined with the other models, showing how using a multi-causal explanation can provide a more comprehensive account. Equally, this leadership style approach, when combined with groupthink, reveals how an atmosphere that repressed criticism and objections was established. Similarly, this shows how the leadership style and groupthink protected the analogical reasoning.

Leadership style has received a significant amount of attention in FPA literature. As such, there are many measures that could be used in this thesis. The work of Barber (1977) is seminal in the field, and his “Presidential Leadership” model is potentially useful in this research. However, his “Active-Passive, Positive-Negative” axes are more useful for examining the leadership style of a leader in general, rather than in area- or issue-specific cases such as this thesis contains. Equally, the examination of the leader’s energy levels in a case which would be included in the “Positive-Negative” axis contains a level of arbitrary judgement. Leaders do not necessarily have to be overtly active to be interested or concerned with a situation or issue. Indeed, they have the machinery of government to assist them and be “active” for them.

There could also be an argument made for the use of content analysis leadership style measures to be deployed in this research. The work of Holsti (1962) and Hermann (2003) would be examples of such measures that could be used in this research. However, these measures examine public statements regarding the issue under examination (Dyson, 2006), whereas this research can focus on the internal workings of decision-making meetings, and incorporate more aspects of the decision-making process than would be included using word count analysis.

Conceptual Complexity

After the above review, which focused on more general literature on leadership style, this section now examines the first measure used in the leadership style approach adopted by this thesis. The measure “conceptual complexity” has been used by many studies examining leadership style, and in several ways (see Hermann, 1987; 2003; Preston, 2001; Dyson, 2006). The measure examines the “capability of discerning different dimensions of the environment when describing actors, places, ideas, and situations” (Hermann, 1987; 2003). This measure examines how a leader processes information and receives advice from those around them (Siniver and Featherstone, 2020). Understanding how the leaders involved understood the issues can reveal much about how the decision-making process came to occur in the way it did.

This measure focuses attention upon an aspect of the personality of the leader under examination. The personality of leaders has drawn significant attention (Barber, 1977), and personality is defined in the psychology literature. Indeed, personality refers to “habitual and distinct patterns of physical and mental activity that distinguishes one individual from another” (Caprara and Vecchio, 2013, p23). Similarly, in FPA, personality is considered “the constellation of traits possessed by the leader”, of which conceptual complexity is one (Hudson, 2005, p66). Personality is considered by Barber (1977) as being formed years prior to the leader entering office, and, by determining the personality of a leader, it is possible to determine the type of leader they may be (Hudson, 2005, p54). By examining the leader’s conceptual complexity, as part of a leader’s personality, this research can explore the relationship between the way in which the leader understands the context in which they are operating, and the way this affects their decision-making. As such, the way in which the leader understands the context in which they are operating strongly influences both the leader’s Approach to Risk, and the way they manage the advisory system around them.

Understanding the context in which they are operating is an important consideration for leaders. As such, it is important for leadership style analysis. Leaders do not operate within a vacuum; indeed, they are required to have an awareness of the “Two-level game” (Putnam, 1988), balancing the domestic-level interests with international-level interests. Domestically, the leader is required to seek support for their policy preferences, whilst, on the international level, they must ensure they are not restricted from dealing with domestic pressures, and prevent negative consequences of international developments having too great an impact (Lisowski, 2002). This game has a two-way relationship with the leader: these interests affect the context in which the leader operates, and are affected by the leader’s behaviour (Neack, 2014, p50). This measure is aimed at understanding how the leader understands this “two-level game” and the constraints which this “game” imposes upon this leader. This thesis agrees with Breuning (2007, p32) that leaders should be understood as “agents” who desire to impact the world around them to achieve their objectives. In order to understand how they attempt to impact the world around them, it is necessary to understand how the leader perceives and understands the world that they want to impact.

Typically, in research utilising this measure, a leader is characterised as having a “high conceptual complexity” or a “low conceptual complexity” (Preston, 2001), with particular implications for the manner in which they display their understanding of the particular issue they are confronting. A leader with a “low” conceptual complexity would see the world, and the situation they are confronting, in a very black-and-white manner (Preston, 2001; Foster and Keller, 2014). They will make categorisations such as “good” and “bad” (Dyson, 2006). This type of leader is unlikely to perceive the nuances within the issue being considered and will characteristically see the issue as

a simple choice between X and Y (Foster and Keller, 2014). This form of leader is not likely to be able to see the other point of view in the issue, while being unlikely to consider alternatives thoroughly. This may result in a faster process towards a decision, although not necessarily. Alternatively, a leader with a “high” conceptual complexity will typically perceive the nuances within an issue that a leader with a “low” score on this measure would miss or ignore (Driver, 1977; Hermann and Hermann, 1989; Hermann, 1999; Dyson, 2006). They see that several points of view may be taken in regard to the particular issue and may consider the differences between these in relation to the view they then take. This type of leader would be typified by a “shades-of-grey” worldview, and potentially take a decision in a slower or more deliberated manner than a leader low in conceptual complexity, who would be more prone to taking quick action (Hermann, 1993, p23).

This measure has been used in research to study the conceptual complexity of leaders ranging from US Presidents to Soviet leaders, British Prime Ministers to Sinn Fein leaders, and Iranian Presidents to African leaders (Dyson, 2004; Hermann, 1984, 1987, 1999; Hermann, Preston, and Young, 1996; Mastors, 2000; Taysi and Preston, 2001). Conceptual complexity, as a measure of leadership style, has been used in a number of studies, either as part of a Leadership style model, or as an approach of combined measures, as this thesis has done (Dyson, 2004; Hermann, 1984, 1987, 1999; Hermann, Preston, and Young, 1996; Mastors, 2000; Taysi and Preston, 2001 Hermann, 1977, 1984; Tetlock, 1981a, 1983b; Young and Schafer, 1998). A notable example is Hermann (1980), where particular words are counted, with certain words indicating “high” conceptual complexity and some “low” conceptual complexity (also see Dyson and Preston, 2006).

This thesis, with the qualitative methods selected, must establish the manner in which this measure of Leadership style shall be utilised. This measure is strongly associated with quantitative methods, as stated above, with Hermann (2003, p186), Dyson (2006), and Dyson and Preston (2006) being examples. Rather than coding to count words and establish a numerical score to quantify whether the leaders under examination here have a “high” or a “low” score (see Hermann, 1980), this thesis utilises the rich qualitative data in order to draw out themes within the Leader’s conceptual complexity. These quantitative methods have been questioned as to whether the picture painted by research using these methods truly give an accurate, nuanced understanding (Hoffman, 1959). In the same way that this thesis demonstrates that groupthink need not be as US-centric as has been the case, it demonstrates the ability of this measure to be utilised in qualitative research, as well as quantitative research that is more usual in the literature. An added benefit of this adaptation of the measure is the ability to highlight nuance within a leader’s conceptual complexity within the case studies. For example, Bush came to truly understand the difficult context in which Blair was operating in early 2003. In realising this, Bush offered to Blair that he could withdraw his involvement and join post-invasion (Hinscliff, 2006; Kennedy-Pipe and Vickers, 2007). This adaptation of the measure allows these nuances to come to the fore in analysis.

This measure has been considered as highly dependent on other situational factors (Dyson and Preston, 2006), of which risk may be a component (Wallace and Suedfeld, 1988, p442). This link between the measure of conceptual complexity and the approach to risk serves to highlight the way the measures of this approach interrelate. Conceptual complexity is also closely linked to the third measure of this approach: managing the advisory system. A leader with a “shades of grey” worldview (Foster and

Keller, 2014) may be more likely to seek the opinions of people around them, establishing a management system that promotes the expressing of opinions, and potentially vice-versa with leaders who possess a more “black and white” worldview (Foster and Keller, 2014). Indeed, this thesis unites literatures on conceptual complexity and George’s (1980) management of the advisory system model. In so doing, it confronts the challenge posed by Morin and Paquin (2018, p342): to link theoretical models in FPA scholarship. Leaders with a low conceptual complexity are typically less receptive to advice or input to the decision-making process that does not agree with their own view (Preston, 2001). This thesis argues that both Bush and Blair had low conceptual complexity competitive models for managing their advisory systems.

It is also the measure of conceptual complexity that links most strongly with the Analogical reasoning model set out in the next section of this theoretical framework. The Analogical Reasoning model examines how the use of these analogies affects the decisions taken, whether they are considered poor, or not. It focuses on both the way decision-makers frame the issue to themselves when making the said decision, and on how they then “sell” this decision to the public. A leader’s conceptual complexity is crucial to each of these aspects of Analogical Reasoning. A leader with a higher conceptual complexity and the corresponding “shades of grey” worldview (Foster and Keller, 2014) may be more prone to seeing a number of potential analogical comparisons, and may have a greater understanding of the impact of the use of the analogy publicly (Khong, 1992, p11) when attempting to sell the decision. The Conceptual Complexity measure of this approach has strong links to the Analogical Reasoning model. The links between the models and approaches are another reason for combining them within this thesis. Reviews of the field of FPA have indeed pointed

to this as a direction FPA research needs to confront (Kaarbo, 2003; Stern, 2003). Theoretical comparisons within FPA have tended to compare the explanatory power of FPA models to the explanatory power of International relations theory, which is a tendency described as “preaching to the choir” (Kaarbo, 2003). The need in FPA is to compare the explanatory power of FPA models relative to each other, or compare the efficacy of the models as “lenses” (Allison, 1971; Stern, 2003) that highlight different variables when the same case is scrutinised (Kaarbo, 2003). While the links between the models may be considered a limitation of the research, it is, in fact, a sign that the different “lenses” (Allison, 1971; Stern, 2003) are closely related, and therefore highlight variables closely related to each other.

There are two branches in the conceptual complexity literature. One branch examines conceptual complexity using content analysis methods (Hermann, 1980a; Schafer, 2000; Dille and Young, 2002; Suedfeld, 2010; Foster and Keller, 2014). In this way, researchers can code for particular words or phrases and quantify a leader’s conceptual complexity with a numerical score (Hermann, 1980a). However, as stated above, this thesis is more associated with the second branch that focuses on whether an individual leader’s conceptual complexity affects their approach to the decision-making process, and, by extension, “the political entity’s behaviour” in a broader manner (Hermann, 1977, 1984; Tetlock, 1981a, 1983b; Young and Schafer, 1998). As such, the use of archival research alongside interviews with individuals present in decision-making meetings allows this research to highlight themes and development in the conceptual complexity of leaders in each case study. Equally, the use of qualitative methods allows this thesis to negate the problems associated with the validity debate around “at-a-distance” measures, as highlighted by the Hermann (1980a) and Rasler, Thompson, and Chester (1980) debates.

By combining the measures in this leadership style approach, this thesis develops a greater understanding of the ways that the leader's understanding of the context they were facing, and the consequences of their proposed courses of action, affected the decision-making process under scrutiny. In combining the measures of conceptual complexity and management of the advisory system, this research demonstrates how the leaders established systems for receiving advice. Similarly, both leaders' low conceptual complexities are closely related to how each one approached risk⁹. Each leader processed information that explained the consequences of the decisions that they took, and each had an overwhelming belief in the correctness of their approach to Iraq, meaning they were both willing to proceed in spite of the risks.

Approach to Risk

Where conceptual complexity scrutinises a leader's information processing style, the approach to risk measure scrutinises how a leader considers risk in a decision-making process. This includes examination of how prone the leader is to taking a risk, the way in which they weigh the costs and benefits of different courses of action, and the way they reconsider a decision they have taken – all of these are factors to be considered.

Risk has been an under-scrutinised topic in research into individual-level decision-making. The field of sociology has contributed substantially to understandings of risk (see Giddens, 1990; Luhman, 1993; Beck, 1999). Similarly, risk in strategy studies in international relations has been examined by scholars such as Edmunds (2012) and Rasmussen (2014). Edmunds examines how "risk" is the guiding concept in the UK government's understanding of the contemporary security environment. Rasmussen (2014) draws upon the sociological understandings of a "risk society", arguing that the

⁹ As I argue in the chapter, "Leadership Style Analysis: Bush, Blair and the decision to invade Iraq", both Bush and Blair were low conceptual complexity leaders.

emergence of a “risk-society” is moulding the strategies that western democracies are using to seek security.

This thesis defines two forms of risk: strategic political risk and tactical political risk.

The definition of “political risk” provided by Lamborn (1985) is used in this research:

“The possibility that policy choices will have adverse effects on the power of key members in the decision-making coalition” (Lamborn, 1985).

This research makes two adaptations to this definition. Firstly, in making this definition more purposive and changing the term “power” with the phrase “ability to achieve their long-term/short-term goals and interests”. In so doing, the definition of political is more direct and precise. Secondly, rather than “decision-making coalition”, this thesis uses the term “decision-making group”, as this is more in line with the FPA theoretical framework this thesis uses. As such, the adapted version of Lamborn’s (1985) definition of political risk used here is as follows: the possibility that policy choices will have adverse effects on the power of key members in the decision-making group.

A distinction between strategic and tactical political risk is added to this. Strategic political risk relates to the possibility that policy choices will have adverse effects on the ability of key members of the government to achieve their overall aims and interests. These would typically be longer-term goals. The consequences of strategic political risks could be electoral losses. In contrast, tactical political risk relates to the possibility that policy choices will have adverse effects on the ability of the decision-making group members to achieve more immediate-term goals. The consequences of such tactical political risks could be the inability to secure sufficient support for a particular policy actors wish to implement.

Approach to risk does not, as a measure of leadership, contain an inherent judgement with hindsight as to whether a leader is “good” or “bad”. A leader will have a degree of risk they are willing to accept in a situation that they face, which is their “risk propensity” (Boettcher, 2005, p7). This measure is targeted at understanding what this degree of risk is. Understanding the degree of risk that a leader is willing to accept can reveal much about how that leader approaches decision-making. A leader who has a low tolerance for risk may take longer to make a decision. Or, it may be that a leader with a low tolerance for risk would be more prone to seeking advice from those around them in order to understand how others perceive the issue and their approach to that risk (see Boettcher, 2005), which is necessarily related to the third measure of this approach, the management of the group around the leader. Some in the field of small-group dynamics have asserted that groups have a more accepting approach to risk than any individual in the group would be as an individual (Hudson, 2005, p70). To turn to those around them for advice, the leader would need to have a group that they feel they could turn to, which, in turn, would be affected by their management of the group. How the leader understands the risks in a situation is closely related to their conceptual complexity. If the leader perceives the world as being “black-and-white” (Foster and Keller, 2014), their perception of risk would likely be different to that of a leader that perceives the nuances in a situation. A leader that perceives the world as “black-and-white” (Foster and Keller, 2014) may have a less complex understanding of the potential risks in a situation than a leader that sees the “shades of grey” in that situation.

There are a number of studies that examine approaches to risk. For example, Boettcher (2005) establishes a “risk explanation framework” in examining the manner in which President Truman and President Kennedy approached risk in three cases for each

leader (Bailey, 2005). It was found that both were wary of incomplete information and uncertainty in the situations they faced; however, Truman had a greater inclination to accept the views of his advisers on the situation and adjust his perceptions as a consequence (Boetther, 2005, p169). Truman was willing to be persuaded by his advisers, meaning that, as with the hypothetical example given in the previous paragraph, his management of the group around him affected his approach to risk. Equally, other research examining leaders' approaches to risk has identified the link between this and a leader's conceptual complexity. A leader with a higher conceptual complexity is considered more likely to consider the risks in a situation and deliberate on the alternative courses of actions (Foster and Keller, 2014).

Approach to risk is strongly associated with quantitative methods, as the conceptual complexity measure is, but in this research qualitative methods will be used. In using a process tracing approach, complimented with archival research and high-level interviews, this thesis has a greater ability to chart how each leader's approach to risk developed through the decision-making process. As with the conceptual complexity measure, the development of the leader's approach to risk can be demonstrated as the case progresses. By combining these two measures where 'themes' are drawn out rather than quantified numerical scores, this research contributes to expanding how these measures (conceptual complexity and approach to risk) can be utilised in FPA research. By combining these measures, correlations between a leader's conceptual complexity and their approach to risk can be drawn out. As the leadership style analysis chapter demonstrates, Blair had a low conceptual complexity and was very willing to take risks in this case.

Another area where approach to risk is linked to conceptual complexity as a measure of leadership is in the manner it is measured in the applications of the measure. As

mentioned in the previous section, conceptual complexity is typically applied in research using quantitative data, which is also the case with many studies of risk in leadership style analysis. This thesis uses rich qualitative data collected to draw out themes that the “approach to risk” measure highlights in the two case studies under examination, in the same way it does with the conceptual complexity measure.

The decision-maker’s approach to risk may be strongly linked with the analogical comparisons made by the decision-making group. Should the analogical reasoning be to a case where non-intervention had particularly negative consequences, this may instil caution in decision-makers. The “Munich Analogy” is an example of such a comparison; after all, the consequences of the appeasement of Hitler in 1938 led to decision-makers being wary of risking the consequences of similar appeasement (Khong, 1992, p4; Mintz and DeRouen, 2010, p104). Equally, the analogising decreased the decision-makers’ risk aversion, increasing their likelihood to intervene.

Managing the Advisory System

Leadership style analysis, as a field of study, has given considerable attention to the manner in which leaders operate within their group (George, 1972, 1980; Hermann, 1978; Hermann, 1986; Hermann and Kaarbo, 1998; Hermann et al, 2001; Kille and Scully, 2003; Hermann and Sakiev, 2011; Hermann and Page, 2016). The inclusion of this measure enables this research to understand both how the manner in which the management of the advisory system affected the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq, and how the leader’s conceptual complexity and approach to risk affected how the leader led that advisory system. By virtue of the position of leader, it is reasonable to expect that they may have a significant impact.

By “Managing the Advisory System”, this model refers to the way the leader relates to the people around them. Group decision-making is relied upon to avoid the limitations to be found in individual decision-making, to expand the base of information, and to include alternative opinions, analyses, and different backgrounds (Alden and Aran, 2017, p30). As such, included in this measure of leadership style are considerations of how the leader seeks advice, or does not, from those around them, and the manner in which they obtain new information relevant to the decision which is being considered. The structure (see Preston and t’Hart, 1999), internal dynamics (see Janis, 1972, 1982; Turner and Pratkanis, 1998; Mintz, 2005), and management of the group is held to affect the decisions the group takes (George, 1980, p82; Renshon and Renshon, 2008, p518). Advisory system is used as a broad term to refer to these elements of group management highlighted, examining the means by which a leader is briefed on the relevant information, and the manner in which they encourage those around them to express opinions.

The term “managing” is used here to refer to two aspects of the leader’s relations with advisers. Firstly, it refers to the way the leader selects the individuals who take the government positions and advisor positions. The rationale behind these selections is important: the leader must confront a dilemma of leadership, namely “how to maintain control over policy while still delegating authority... to other actors in the government” (Hermann and Kaarbo, 1998). The leader must decide whether the individuals they appoint would be people they could delegate authority to. As will be elaborated on later in this section, an important consideration is also the level at which foreign policy decision-making is located (George, 1980, p146). These appointments require calculations over the leader’s willingness to delegate authority and control, and whether the role the leader is appointing to has responsibility for an area of policy over

which they would wish to have greater or lesser control. They may decide to include their own supporters, and reward colleagues who helped their rise to the leadership position.

The second aspect of the leader's relations with advisers, which the term "managing" refers to in this thesis, is the way in which the leader operates within the advisory system¹⁰. The work of George (1972, 1980) has strong links to this aspect of the "Managing Advisory System" measure. George (1980) develops three "management models" that provide a means to categorise the style of "group management" which a leader adopts. The "Formalistic" approach to group management, the "Competitive" approach, and the "Collegial" approach are all set out as having advantages for facing situations. These can be operationalised in research, to categorise the group management approach of the leader under examination, although the three categories obviously carry the drawback of being broad categorisations, potentially lacking exactitude. The formalistic model is typified by an ordered policy-making structure that has clearly set-out hierarchies and lines of communication (George, 1980, p148; Mitchell, 2005). Staff operate in a well-structured system, where the rules and hierarchies are rigidly maintained. In the competitive model, the leader seeks to inspire those around the leader to openly express themselves, giving thoughts and opinions on proposed policies. This model is typified by a staff structure that is ambiguous, with jurisdictions not rigidly enforced, and numerous lines of communication directly to the leader (George, 1980). The third model, the collegial model, should be seen as a means of finding a middle ground between the other two models, and attempting to

¹⁰ The first aspect of George's (1980) model examines the decision-making structures as a whole, looking at decision-making across all policy areas. The deployment of individuals in the decision-making structure will not be done in relation to a particular policy area, but in relation to the government's policy program as a whole. As such, this research examines the second aspect of George's (1980) model, the way the leader operates within the advisory system as it has been established.

steer clear of the negatives of each. Leaders create a team to target policy problems by incorporating as many viewpoints as possible (George, 1980, p 148; Porter, 1983; Burke, 2000). President Carter's management style was categorised as a collegial system by George (1980), as Carter organised his system to be at the centre of a "wheel of information and advice" (Garrison, 2001).

It is possible to identify similarities between this measure of leadership style, and the groupthink model also being deployed in this thesis. However, there are important differences. This measure examines the way the leader intentionally establishes the system by which advice is fed to them, whereas groupthink is a phenomenon which unintentionally occurs in a decision-making process. By using this measure, this research can establish an understanding of the way Blair and Bush established the means by which those around them communicated advice to them. The manner in which the leaders establish systems for the flow of advice to themselves may establish conditions where a group could be considered prone to groupthink. For example, in a formalistic model (George, 1980, p148) where there may be a person with the role of gatekeeper to the leader. Such a role could enable the individual to take on a "mindguard" role (Janis, 1982, p174). Where a leader may set up conditions for groupthink to potentially occur, this measure is distinct from the groupthink model.

The three management models George (1980) developed are not without limitations. George (1980, p146) recognised the limitations in the scope of the collegial model, the competitive model, and the formalistic model. The model focuses attention on the individual leader, the decision-making group, and the organisation within which the group operates; however, other factors external to the group are not examined (Fuhrman, 1981), such as public opinion, congress, or other domestic political factors, and the international level considerations from the "two-level game" (Putnam, 1988).

All of this is valid criticism; however, this thesis deploys this measure as part of the leadership style approach with consideration of the limitations. In this way, the contribution of this measure is tempered by the understanding of what is not incorporated in the categorisation of the way leaders manage their advisory system.

As with many models, measures, and concepts from FPA, concerns could be raised as to the applicability of George's (1980) management models outside their acknowledged US-centric focus. George (1980, p113) acknowledges this US focus, as the purpose of the work is to make recommendations to policymakers in the US. However, the management models of George (1980) that are used to categorise the management of the advisory system measure are not restricted to a context. Decisions over the level of involvement a leader, President, or Prime Minister wishes to have in the formulation of foreign policy are not particular to any one government system. By focusing the attention of the management models on the executive branch (George, 1980, p6; Pious, 1980), they are then applicable outside of the US. While George (1980) highlights the necessity for the decision as to the level at which the "control and coordination of policy analysis" is located – "the White House itself or from the NSC", or the state department (George, 1980, p146) – it is possible to remove these US-centric terms. Terms such as Downing Street, Cabinet committees, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office can be used in place of George's (1980, p146) US-centric terminology. Whilst these management models (George, 1980) are designed to characterise US decision-making procedures, by focusing upon the executive branch, the models can be used to characterise the means by which the leaders in the cases in this research manage the advisory systems around them. Limitations of these management models are recognised above; however, they are not necessarily limited to the US in their focus.

It is important to note that the management models overlap to a considerable extent, which is something recognised by George (1980). The collegial model is explicitly a middle ground between the formalistic and competitive models. These links do not necessarily restrict the applicability of the model. A leader's style of managing the advisory system does not remain rigidly within certain parameters to solely fall within one style of managing an advisory system. At points in a decision-making process, a leader's style of managing the advisory system may change, and, through the use of process tracing method, this alteration can be highlighted. For example, in the cabinet meeting in the UK, where Blair allowed open expression of concerns and doubts from ministers, there was a "spasm of anxiety", and then reassured those Cabinet ministers present that the leadership was not racing ahead of them (Rawnsley, 2010, p82; Chilcot, 2016, p427).

The way in which the leader manages the advisory system has important links to the other measures in this approach. The way the leader manages the system by which they receive information can significantly affect their conceptual complexity. The advice and opinions of those around the leader affects the worldview they adopt. The more views they receive may increase the likelihood of the leader having a more complex "shade of grey" worldview (Dyson, 2006). A leader who discourages opinions from being expressed may be more likely to have a "black and white" worldview. Equally, the advice the leader receives from those around them has the potential to affect how they approach risk. As mentioned in the previous section, in his analysis of the leadership styles of Presidents Truman and Kennedy, Boetther (2005, p169) found that both were wary of incomplete information and uncertainty in the situations they faced. However, Truman had a greater inclination to accept the views of his advisers on the situation and, as a consequence, adjust his perceptions (Boetther, 2005, p169).

The advisory system that Truman operated within affected his willingness to accept risk situations.

It is also this measure of the leadership style approach used in this research which has the most direct links to the groupthink model. This measure, by examining the way the leader manages their advisory system, can reveal much about the leader's impact upon the conditions for groupthink. In establishing the advisory system in the manner they wish, the leader has the potential to establish the group around them in a manner that increases the likelihood for groupthink to occur. Through establishing a "formalistic" management model (George, 1980), then, the leader may consciously or unconsciously encourage individuals in the group to take on the role of "Mindguard" (Janis, 1982, p40-41).

The three management models that this research uses to categorise the way the leader manages their advisory system do not come without issues (George, 1972, 1980). There has been an overlap identified between each of the three models: the competitive, the collegial, and the formalistic models (George, 1980). Alexander George, when proposing these management models, recognised this. By using process tracing, this research can examine a leader's management of the advisory system and highlight any areas where it may change or develop. In this way, the proximity of one management model to the others may increase the potential for change in a leader's management of the advisory system to be highlighted and examined. The situation in which this change may occur – the point in the case study – could reveal much about how leaders manage their advisory system contexts.

The two previous measures, conceptual complexity and approach to risk, will have a significant impact upon this measure, and how the leader's management of the

advisory system is categorised. A leader with a low conceptual complexity, or a black and white worldview (Foster and Keller, 2014), may be less likely to seek further information or opinions from advisers. A leader operating in such a manner would be categorised as having a formalistic management style, using the formal rules to restrict the expression of views contrary to their own (George, 1980). Similarly, a leader with a “shades of grey” nuanced worldview, who is more likely to perceive the views of others (Foster and Keller, 2014), may be more prone to seek opinions or information from their advisory system. As such, a leader with a “shades of grey” worldview would be characterised as operating with a collegial management style. With the Approach to risk measure, the way in which the leader relates to their advisory system can have a significant impact on the way they approach risk. As stated previously, President Truman was shown to be more willing to accommodate risk after talking with advisers and hearing their opinions (Boetther, 2005, p169). A leader more prone to relating to their advisory group in such a manner may be expected to be similarly more willing to accommodate risk.

4.3. Analogical Reasoning

In this section, the Analogical Reasoning model is set out, along with the reasons for the model’s applicability/selection. Previous research has shown the importance of analogical reasoning in the decision to intervene in Vietnam (Khong, 1992), the Gulf War (Lakoff 1990; Schuman and Rieger, 1992; Taylor and Rourke, 1995), and the framing of the Iraq war (Kruglanski et al, 2007; Noon, 2004). This thesis contributes originality by examining the analogical reasoning in the US and the UK decision-making processes, and comparing the way analogising affected decision-making in

each government. This section demonstrates the possible means of using analogical reasoning in decision-making, as well as a rhetorical tool.

The Analogical Reasoning model focuses on the way in which decision-makers make comparisons between the situation they are facing and situations that they regard to be similar from the past. These analogical comparisons are used both to assist the decision-makers in making their decision, and to help sell the proposed course of action by being used publicly (Khong, 1992, p11; Paris, 2002, p428-429).

Within this model, the definition of “Analogies” is considered to be “the idea [that] two or more events sharing enough common features can be assumed analogous in other pertinent aspects” (Jeffrey, 2009, p310). The use of analogies is not atypical. Analogising is something which is intrinsic to all people. In cognitive psychology, it is considered a necessary means for people to make sense of the situation around them (Houghton, 1996, p524). The problem when analogising about a situation is the limitations imposed by the “cognitive biases” of the people who use the analogies, which is why they can be linked to so many poor decisions (May, 1973; Khong, 1992; Noon, 2004; Siniver and Collins, 2006). The Analogical Reasoning model examines the way these analogies, based on “cognitive biases”, affect the decisions taken, and whether they are considered poor.

The reasoning for the use of analogies being particularly ineffective in foreign policy decision-making situations falls into two categories. Firstly, the analogies which were chosen may be misleading (Khong, 1992; p12; Siniver and Collins, 2015) in that they lack similarity and are not comparable. Secondly, the analogies can be used in a particularly misleading manner; for example, through oversimplification (Jervis, 1976, p220; Siniver and Collins, 2006). This is not to say that the case is not comparable,

but the way in which the comparisons are deployed in the decision-making process exacerbates the impact of the “cognitive biases” upon the decision-making process (May, 1973; Khong, 1992; Noon, 2004; Siniver and Collins, 2006). Comparisons may be made to simplify the decision-making process, therefore speeding the process and reducing the deliberation. Equally, comparisons may be made to emphasise an emotion – as a means of developing support for a decision (Noon, 2004).

Determining whether the analogies were selected inaccurately in order to deliberately mislead – so that a decision-maker may manipulate the decision-making process, or if the analogies were selected inaccurately due to a lack of understanding of the cases involved – is a particularly complex matter. Interviewing decision-makers may reveal their opinions as to how a colleague selected the comparisons they made. However, there are the anticipated problems as to ulterior motives for an interview subject to mention their opinion as to why a colleague used an analogical comparison. In the UK decision-making process, despite having the inaccuracies of comparisons to Kosovo explained, decision-makers continued to use the analogy.

These reasons for analogical reasoning having a negative impact on foreign policy decision-making are also part of the reason for the use of the model in this thesis. Understanding how the analogies effected decision-making would increase our understanding of both how to negate the negative impacts of analogies, and whether analogies were oversimplified or miss-deployed. In both the US and the UK, the analogies were oversimplified in their public use. The use of oversimplified analogies publicly may be because decision-makers were concerned about how to sell their decision (Khong, 1992, p11; Paris, 2002, p428-429). Should the analogies be considered to have been inappropriately selected, the way they were selected could reveal much about decision-making. The use of the “Munich Analogy” in the US may

have been because it was a well-used analogy in US decision-making. Both groupthink and the leadership styles of Bush and Blair had an impact on the use of these oversimplified and inaccurate analogies. By reducing the opportunities for criticism and discussion, both protected the use of inaccurate and oversimplified analogies.

Analogical reasoning can be used by decision-makers in two particular means: reason and rhetoric (Meierhenrich, 2010). It is this delineation that will be used in this research. In the “reason” aspect of the way in which analogical reasoning can be used by decision-makers, the analogies are used actively in the process of making a decision, encouraging a particular course of action (Meierhenrich, 2010). In contrast, “rhetoric” describes the use of analogies to justify the course of action decided upon (Meierhenrich, 2010), and, by extension, selling the decision publicly (Paris, 2002, p428-429). Apart from the critiques levelled at the analogical reasoning model from political scientists, who prioritise the systemic constraints that act upon decision-makers over the cognitive explanations that analogical reasoning model can propose, notable criticism has been levelled at the analogical reasoning model, focusing on the claim that decision-makers use analogies for guidance in the making of their decision (Schlesinger, 1974; Jervis, 1980; Khong, 1992, p9). To Schlesinger (1974), the difficulty for the researcher is to know whether the decision-maker uses analogies for “rhetoric” rather than “reason” (Meierhenrich, 2010). However, by triangulating primary data in the form of the archival records of documentation used in the decision-making process, with interview data from individuals involved in the decision-making process, these concerns are offset.

This critique of the analogical reasoning model (see Schlesinger, 1974) has been recognised by some who use the model, notably Khong (1992, p9). The response is

a recognition that the trend within the literature is to examine the manner in which decision-makers utilise historical analogies in order to comprehend situations that they face (Hoffman, 1968; May, 1973; Jervis, 1976; Khong, 1992, p9). There has been a limited examination of the use of analogical reasoning: after the selection of the analogy, and the manner in which they then influence the way in which policy options are narrowed down (Khong, 1992, p9). This call to focus attention on the impact of analogical reasoning once the analogy is selected has been responded to by some in the literature. Siniver and Collins (2015), for example, contributed to this development. They identify the use of a “quagmire” analogy by the Israeli government when planning military intervention in Lebanon in 2006, and an analogical comparison to the NATO military intervention in Kosovo (1999), as the means to avoid said “quagmire” (Siniver and Collins, 2015). They highlight the means by which these analogies were used in meetings between the key decision-makers, crucially in deciding upon courses of action to be taken and in considering how to then present the decision to the public.

The rhetoric around the ‘enemy’ in each case means that there is a need to incorporate an understanding of this into the explanation of the decision-making processes. In the case of Iraq, the country under Saddam Hussein was considered as part of an “Axis of Evil” (Bush, 2002), with a number of comparisons between Saddam Hussein and Hitler adding to this representation (Record, 2007). Understanding how the decision-makers in the US and the UK framed the enemy in each case, and how these conceptions were similar or different within the decision-making meetings and when selling the decisions they took to the public, is a considerable contribution of this research.

A key component of the Analogical Reasoning model is that decision-makers use analogical reasoning to “sell” the decisions that they take to the public (Paris, 2002,

p428-429). The case of the decision to invade Iraq is strongly associated with the way in which the governments in the US and the UK sold their decision to their respective publics. In the UK, the “dodgy dossier” (McSmith, 2016) has received significant media attention, examining the claims within the dossier. Similarly, in the US, the Bush administration sold the need for war in Iraq with a focus upon the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), which has received equal scrutiny (Judis and Ackerman, 2003).

By examining the use of analogies in the selling of the decision to invade Iraq, this thesis contributes to the understanding of the use of analogies in the selling of the decision to invade Iraq via two key routes. Firstly, a comparison of the way the US government sold the decision to invade Iraq to the way the UK sold the decision to invade. This increases the understanding of the different approaches in representing their decisions. The UK reliance on Kosovo, a more recent intervention as an analogy than the US “Munich analogy”, leads to interesting insight into the selection of analogies. Secondly, by examining the similarities and differences in their use of analogical reasoning, it can increase understanding of how and why decision-makers rely on analogies. The similarity is that the US and the UK decision-makers both used analogical reasoning in their public case. The difference is that the UK decision-makers alone used their analogy in the making of decisions. By comparing national contexts in this manner, this thesis provides insight into the arenas in which the analogical reasoning model is best used. Despite the difference between the two governmental systems, analogical reasoning occurred in both the US and the UK decision-making processes. Yet, the analogical reasoning served a different purpose in each case, and was relied upon differently in each. As the analogical reasoning chapter argues, in the US, the analogising was used to ‘sell’ the decision to invade

Iraq. In contrast, in the UK, decision-makers relied on the analogising to steer their decision-making as well as 'sell' their decision.

5. Setting the Background: The Road to the Iraq War

The Iraq war was arguably the most controversial foreign policy action of the past forty years. According to Ricks (2007) the Iraq War, “by common consent, has been the most evident US foreign Policy blunder since Vietnam” (Phillips, 2005; Ricks, 2007; Clarke, 2007, p605). The purpose of this chapter is to outline the key junctions and protagonists in the decision-making processes in the US and the UK in the lead-up to the decision to go to war. The origins of the decision to invade Iraq can be traced back to the end of the Gulf War in 1991, and the first section of this chapter tracks the developments from this point until the events of 9/11. There are four points to be highlighted in this first section: the Sanctions and Containment policy, Saddam Hussein’s Post-Gulf war aggression, Blair becoming Prime Minister, and Bush becoming President. The second section recounts the decision-making process from the events of 9/11 until the invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

US and UK in the Middle East

Both the US and the UK have a long legacy of involvement in the Middle East. For the UK, this legacy has its roots in the British Empire’s involvement in the Middle East. In the aftermath of the First World War, the British and French divided the Ottoman Empire’s Middle East territories into sphere’s of interest with the Sykes-Picot Agreement, with Iraq falling within the UK sphere (Barr, 2011). Iraq was then a British Mandate from 1918. While in control of Iraq, the British established a political system that was ‘democratic’ in name only (Fieldhouse, 2006, p100). Whilst the British withdrew from Iraq in 1932, “...British influence (and interference) lingered on until the overthrow of the ancient regime in 1958” (Sluglett, 2014; Fieldhouse, 2006, p107). This lingering influence was closely related to the discovery of oil in the 1930s, and

UK reliance on this oil. This oil caused some tensions between the US and UK in the inter-war years (Samuel, 2014).

This US and UK involvement in the Middle East also has a long legacy of interventionism in the Middle East. For the UK, this legacy of military intervention began with the Suez Crisis (Moeller, 2015) and the Aden (Mawby, 2005). Parmar (2016) argues that the invasion of Iraq in 2003 represents a contemporary example of this historical pattern of interventionism and an imperialist worldview within UK foreign policy.

For the US, this involvement included the 1953 Iranian Coup, the deployment of US troops to Lebanon in the 1980s, and the Gulf War in the 1990s. The presidency of Jimmy Carter escalated US involvement with Iraq in the late 1970s. The Carter administration's policy towards the Middle East explicitly committed the US to defending Gulf oil fields (Brands et al, 2020), demonstrating a link to this legacy of US interventionism in the Middle East. Forsberg (2019) demonstrates the difference in the US-Iraqi perceptions of each other, and how this affected their relationships. Whilst the Carter administration thought that Iraq could be drawn out of the Soviet orbit and into US influence, Saddam Hussein regarded the US to be "intrinsicly" opposed to his regime, based on his perception of US foreign policy in the 1960s and 1970s (Forsberg, 2019). In the 1980s and 1990s, both the US and Iraq's foreign policies exacerbated these misperceptions. Post-Vietnam, the US was more interventionist in their foreign policy, seeking to re-establish the credibility that US foreign policy makers believed had been lost in Vietnam (Morales, 1994). Alongside this, in the wake of the end of the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam Hussein's Iraq was more active in its Middle East foreign policy, such as his support for the Palestinian Intifada in 1987 (Aziz, 2000,

p130). As such, both nation's foreign policies can be seen to have heightened tensions between them (Forsberg, 2019).

5.1. Sanctions and Containment

The literature describes the Western approach to managing the threat posed by Iraq in the region as a "Sanctions Regime" (Gause, 1999; Alnasrawi, 2001; Al-Ali, 2005).

This "Sanctions Regime" consisted of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. UNSC resolution 686 set out the terms for the surrender of Iraq, whereas UNSC resolution 687 established UNSCOM (United Nations Special Commission)¹¹.

To some, this was an extension of the conflict between the US and Iraq, an economic conflict replacing the military conflict of the Gulf War. The "sanctions regime" imposed upon Iraq was unique in the "scope" and duration (Abdullah, 2006, p71). Principal members of the coalition during the Gulf War sought to impose sanctions of a sufficient degree to suppress Iraqi ambitions outside its own borders (Graham-Brown, 1999, p17).

The sanctions regime (Gause, 1999; Alnasrawi, 2001; Al-Ali, 2005) should be seen as the means by which the US chose to maintain pressure on the regime of Saddam Hussein, rather than removing Saddam Hussein in the first Gulf War. On the part of President George H.W. Bush's administration, the "sanctions regime" is best regarded as an alternative to greater involvement in Iraq, such as "regime change". The Clinton Administration followed, announcing its policy towards both Iran and Iraq in May 1993. The policy of "dual containment" for Iraq involved a commitment to the UN sanctions and the "No Fly Zones" (Donnelly, 2004, p10). However, the Clinton regime did not

¹¹ In UNSC Resolution 686, the conditions for Iraq's surrender were set out, which were conditions that Iraq was obligated to accept. UNSC Resolution 686 demanded Iraq enact its acceptance of twelve previous UNSC resolutions pertaining to Iraq (UNSC Resolutions: 660, 661, 662, 664, 665, 666, 667, 669, 670, 674, 677, 678), and "Rescind immediately its actions purporting to annex Kuwait" (UNSC 686, 1991). The US maintained pressure on Iraq through the United Nations (UN) with UNSC Resolution 687, which established UNSCOM (United Nations Special Commission).

seek a confrontation with Iraq (Donnelly, 2004, p10). The sanctions were used as an alternative to military confrontation.

5.2. Saddam Hussein: Post-Gulf War Aggression

The Gulf war had a significant impact upon the standing of Saddam Hussein within Iraq. The defeat that the Iraqi army suffered inspired some of the opposition groups, which had been suppressed by Saddam Hussein for years, to launch the “most serious internal challenge” Saddam Hussein’s regime ever faced (Goldstein, 1992). There were two uprisings against Saddam Hussein’s rule, carried out without coordination. The Shia in southern Iraq held political demonstrations on the 1st of March 1991, which turned into armed clashes between government forces and Shia fighters (HRW, 1992). On the 4th of March, the Kurds in Northern Iraq took the opportunity presented by a weakened Iraqi army and the distraction provided by the southern Shia revolt: they seized control of many cities in Northern Iraq, including the major city of Kirkuk (HRW, 1992).

There were many human rights abuses reported in the Iraqi Army responses to these uprisings (HRW, 1992). The Iraqi army then retook the North by early April, again committing human rights abuses (Benard, 2004). This repression sparked a humanitarian crisis in both southern and northern Iraq, with thousands of Kurds fleeing the retribution of the Iraqi army. Reports were that three million Kurds fled into the northern mountains, living confined within a 16,000 square mile area (HRW, 1992). The rebellion in southern Iraq was put down in the same way, and Saddam Hussein survived the most serious challenges to his authority in the twelve years of his rule.

There were two key components to the containment strategy that the US, UK, and France operated against Iraq in the 1990s: “No-fly zones” (NFZs) and Sanctions.

Whilst the sanctions were established through the UN, the NFZs lacked direct UN authorisation.

After the immediate crisis of the “brutal” suppression of these two attempted uprisings against the regime of Saddam Hussein in 1991, No-Fly zones were imposed (HRW, 1992; Major, 1999, p242-4). The legal basis for the NFZs was a significant point of controversy (Murphy, 1996: 182–197; Silliman, 2002; Chesterman, 2000: 199–206). The justification could not be drawn from a self-defence stance, as there was no threat to the US, UK, or France. They were also not explicitly authorised by a UNSC Resolution. This lack of direct UN authorisation, without controversy, for actions by the US and the UK is regarded by some as establishing precedent for the later interventions in Iraq (Aruri, 2003, p37). These NFZs operated until the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, providing a clear link between the first Gulf War and the Invasion of Iraq in 2003, and showing one reason for this account of the decision-making process being set out from the first Gulf War.

The continuation of the “sanctions regime”, which was imposed upon Iraq throughout the 1990s, had an enormous impact on all areas of everyday life. In the 1990s, the standard of health care in Iraq deteriorated considerably. In response to this deterioration in living standards, the UN implemented the “Oil-for-Food” programme. This programme, established in 1996, permitted the Iraqi government to sell oil and use the money generated to obtain supplies to ameliorate the effects of the sanctions on the Iraqi populace (Christoff, 2004). The reasoning behind the name, “Oil-for-Food”, is that one impact of the sanctions in Iraq was that the average daily calorific intake of Iraqi citizens at the time the programme was implemented was 1,300 calories¹². By

¹² This was well below the daily recommended intake of 2,500 for men and 2,000 for women (NHS, 2017).

2001, the programme had contributed to increasing this intake to 2,300 (Christoff, 2004). However, the UN itself estimates that between 1997 and 2002, the regime of Saddam Hussein managed to obtain 10.1 billion dollars in contravention of the sanctions imposed upon it by the UN (Christoff, 2004).

An attempted assassination of former US President George H.W. Bush, which was orchestrated by the Iraqi Regime (Woodward, 2004, p187), initiated a significant alteration of the Clinton Administration strategy for confronting Iraq (Rubinstein, Shayevich, Zlotnikov, 2000, p204; Aruri, 2003, p37). In response, in late June 1993, the US used cruise missiles to strike the headquarters of the Iraqi intelligence services. However, an alternative explanation of the cruise missile strikes on Iraq in the literature is that President Clinton was keeping Iraq “under the gun” and initiating a precedent for unilateral intervention against Iraq (Aruri, 2003, p37), as referred to above. Whilst Clinton did subsequently intervene militarily in Iraq on other occasions, he did so both unilaterally and multilaterally, and this view of his decision to respond to the attempted assassination of a former President seems overly cynical. The support that multilateral intervention involved means the idea that these interventions were in response to the attempted assassination of former President George H.W. Bush should be strongly challenged. Significantly for this case, President George W. Bush, referred to the attempted assassination when he was seeking congressional approval for military action against Iraq (Woodward, 2004, p187).

Iraqi forces launched an offensive into the Northern No-Fly zone and captured the city of Irbil in August 1996 after they received a call for assistance from the Kurdistan Democratic Party (Katzman, 2009, p2). In response, in September, the US extended the Southern No-Fly zone to the latitude of 33 degrees north, close to Baghdad. This further example of disregard for UN sanctions, on behalf of the Iraqi regime,

contributed to Iraq's poor reputation on the international stage. Whilst having little to do with the 2003 invasion of Iraq, it forms a crucial part of the trend of what advocates for war in Iraq would describe as Iraqi disregard for UN sanctions and UN ineffectiveness (Wolfowitz, 1997).

The continued implementation of the NFZs meant that further missile strikes were more easily achieved than would typically have been the case. In early September 1996, the US carried out missile strikes against strategic targets in Iraq (Aruri, 2003, p37). When considered alongside the "No-Fly zones", these strikes add to a policy of intervention in Iraq.

The ejection of UNSCOM inspectors in October 1997 saw another crisis in the Iraqi weapons inspections. When the Iraqi government accused the US of using UNSCOM to spy on Iraq, it was regarded by many as an Iraqi attempt to hamper the UNSCOM inspections. However, the Washington Post and Boston Globe newspapers broke stories in February 1999, claiming that the US did use American members of the UNSCOM team to spy on Iraq (Aruri, 2003, p38). In hindsight, the accusations Iraq made against the US members of the weapons inspections team have some legitimacy¹³. However, the appearance of hampering had negative implications for the relationship between Iraq and the UN. The Clinton administration responded by threatening the use of force to "punish" this behaviour from Iraq, imposing more sanctions, and ending the "Oil-for-Food" programme (Aruri, 2003, p37).

¹³ Borger, J. 1999. UN 'kept in dark' about US spying in Iraq. The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/mar/03/iraq.julianborger>
Lynch, C. 1999. US used UN to spy on Iraq, Aide says. The Boston Globe. Available at: <https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/190/39252.html>

5.3. Blair becomes Prime Minister

The 1997 General Election in the UK saw Tony Blair become Prime Minister, and the New Labour government come into power. Blair came to earn a name as a foreign policy natural who rose to attain the status of a world leader in his first term as Prime Minister (Clarke, 2007, p593; Foley, 2000, p290). There had been links between the leadership of New Labour and President Clinton's administration. This continued once New Labour entered government (Blair, 2010, p231). The "Third Way" provided Blair with a "Normative Explanation" for intervening in International Crises, without necessarily obtaining the support of the International Community (Wickham-Jones, 2000, p15).

Prior to entering Office in 1997, Blair proposed a principled foreign policy that clearly delineated the Labour policy from that of the previous Conservative Government (Williams). This change in foreign policy approach was most strongly associated with the man who would become New Labour's Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook. This new approach had two dimensions: firstly, the principled approach to foreign policy, and, secondly, a more "internationalist" approach (Coates and Krieger, 2004, p11). Blair's most significant principle of foreign policy was that the UK must uphold its special relationship with the US and function as the bridge between the US and Europe. An example of this can be found when President Clinton and Tony Blair discussed delaying the planned action against Iraq when Iraq withdrew cooperation with UNSCOM in October 1997 (Blair, 2010, p382). The two leaders spoke on the phone multiple times before deciding to delay military action (Blair, 2010, p382).

After becoming Prime Minister in 1997, Blair received intelligence briefings alongside foreign office briefings, which argued that the policy towards Iraq was not working (Kampfner, 2004, p21). This contributed to Blair's agreement to UK involvement in

Operation Desert Fox, and other, more aggressive policies towards Iraq, such as the no-fly zones that lasted until the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Prior to entering government, Blair had made no speeches regarding foreign policy (Dunne, 2004), signalling his inexperience with such matters prior to entering office.

Iraq fully withdrew its cooperation from the UNSCOM in October 1998, only ten months after the previous crisis. The previous crisis had been caused by Saddam Hussein's refusing to admit a US member of the UNSCOM team into Iraq. This added to the trend of non-compliance with UN sanctions from Hussein and contributed to the perception by some in the US that the UN was ineffective in its dealings with the Iraqi leader. Hussein subsequently communicated with both the US and the UK governments, sending letters to Clinton and Blair, claiming he was ready to readmit the weapons inspectors. In response, Clinton and Blair paused the plans they had for airstrikes against Iraq, which had been formulated as a response to Iraq's ejection of UNSCOM. When the readmitted weapons inspectors sent their reports to London and Washington, they were considered "damning" (Blair, 2010, p222). Operation Desert Fox was launched by the US and the UK in December 1998. It was a four-day bombing campaign that targeted Iraq's nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons programmes. This was one of Tony Blair's first experiences of ordering a military operation. He recalls the experience as "nerve-racking", and it involved close cooperation with the US President Bill Clinton (Blair, 2010, p222). The operation, which had been delayed due to Iraq's manoeuvring over UNSCOM, was widely considered to be only a partial success (Ricks, 1998). Blair himself described the operation as a "limited success" in his memoirs and recalls that there was a feeling in the UK government that "Saddam had got away with it again" (Blair, 2010, p222). At this point Blair felt that Iraq had not been forced to return to the UN weapons program, and the extent of Saddam

Hussein's weapons program remained unclear. This theme had a significant role to play in the later US and UK dealings with Iraq.

Throughout the 1990s, the UK was more active in its engagement with the sanctions levelled against Iraq than other nations who had supported establishing the sanctions regime, seeking a route out of a perceivedly failing policy (Hollis, 2006, p37). The UK worked in tandem with the US to justify the "sanctions regime" to other members of the UN Security Council. Indeed, the UK made persistent attempts to diplomatically garner support and stringently implement the "sanctions regime", epitomised by UNSC Resolution 1284, which sank when the US and other UNSC members did not put serious effort into enforcement. When interviewed, Carne Ross, an FCO official involved in the enforcement of the sanctions, revealed that he felt that the sanctions policy was receiving little attention in Number 10 at the time (Ross, 2020). However, Tom McKane, a Cabinet Office official, mentioned in an interview that he considered that some in the Cabinet Office and Number 10 were concerned that the West were losing the propaganda war and that sanctions were hurting the people of Iraq rather than the regime. He also thought that the UK faced real difficulties in obtaining US support for the sanctions regime (McKane, 2020).

5.4 President George W. Bush

The election of President George W. Bush in 2000 is another essential part of the process that led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Blair, who had a close relationship with Clinton, was concerned that Bush would be a "stay-at-home" President (Kampfner, 2004, 84). Bush had tainted his reputation in foreign policy after an interview where he showed he did not know the name of several world leaders (Kampfner, 2004, 84). Blair's first meeting with Bush, in February 2001, exacerbated Blair's fears. Bush had campaigned on a domestic platform, and his priorities expressed in this meeting were

all domestic (Blair, 2010, p343). Blair came to develop a surprisingly good relationship with Bush, despite their ideological differences (Hollis, 2006, p38), but this was in no way a predictable outcome. Later, in February 2001, the US and the UK worked together to carry out strikes on radar and command stations within Iraq (Woodward, 2004, p14). Here, Blair maintained the trend of close cooperation with the US, especially in policy towards Iraq, carrying on where he left off with Clinton.

The attention which Iraq drew from the new Bush administration can be seen in the meeting held seventeen days into the Bush presidency. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice headed a meeting with Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and Deputy CIA director John E McLaughlin, who agreed the UN sanctions were ineffective, but had no answer on further weapons inspections (Woodward, 2004, p13). Those in this meeting reconvened on the 1st of March, giving Powell the task of reinvigorating the sanctions policy (Woodward, 2004, p13).

The events of the 11th of September 2001 (9/11) marked a profound development in the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Rather than providing a chronological account of this decision-making process, this section outlines the key themes and components of the decision-making process from the events of 9/11 until the invasion on the 19th of March 2003. There are five of these key themes: The 9/11 attacks, the US-UK discussions, The UN process, US principals' meetings, and UK Cabinet meetings. This chapter ends with an account of the day before the invasion of Iraq.

5.5 9/11

On the 11th of September 2001, four coordinated terrorist attacks were carried out against the US. Four planes were hijacked by nineteen Al Qaeda terrorists. Two planes were flown into the North and South towers of the World Trade Centre in New York, while another plane was flown into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia¹⁴. The death toll of the attacks came to 2,977 people, from 93 different nations. President Bush was in a school when he was informed of the events unfolding. His Secret Service agent told him, “A second plane hit the second tower. America is under attack” (9/11 Commission Report, 2004, p38).

President Bush described the day as the “Pearl Harbour” of the 21st Century (Woodward, 2004, p24), by no means over-estimating the momentous events. Bush sensed that “the psyche of the nation had been shaken” when he woke on the morning of the 12th of September 2001 (Bush, 2010, p139). Bush’s first call to a foreign leader was to Blair, a conversation that Bush himself credits with helping to solidify “the closest friendship” he formed with any foreign leader (Bush, 2010, p140). From the UK side, it is reported that Blair went over some points discussed in the two COBRA meetings he had held on the 11th and 12th of September (Campbell, 2012, p8), with Bush on their call. Bush’s receptivity to these points serves to highlight the cooperation between the two leaders, even that early in the decision-making process. Blair was no longer worried that his relationship with the new US President, as laid out in the above section, was gone. Despite their differences, the two leaders were close (Hollis, 2006, 38).

¹⁴ A fourth plane crashed into a field in Pennsylvania, after the passengers aboard, hearing of the three other attacks, retook the plane from the hijackers.

The terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 (9/11) marked a change in the attitudes of the US and the UK towards Iraq. Whilst Afghanistan was the initial target in the War on Terror, the threat Iraq posed was reappraised following the 9/11 attacks (Bush, 2010, p232). This was not restricted to the US; Bush asserts his perception that Blair made the same reappraisal: “Like me, Tony considered Saddam a threat the world could not tolerate after 9/11” (Bush, 2010, p232). The events of 9/11, 234 days into President Bush’s first term, did not change the threat that Saddam Hussein and Iraq posed to the US. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 changed the “worldview” of the Bush administration and gave them a “heightened threat perception”, and caused the administration to reappraise all threats (Leffler, 2004; Bush, 2010, p228). Or, 9/11 gave required context that permitted the invasion of Iraq to proceed as a policy option (Master and Alexander, 2008).

On the 15th of September 2001, Bush convened his inner war cabinet at Camp David; Cheney, Rumsfeld, Rice, Wolfowitz, and Powell were key principals in attendance¹⁵. Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz are reported by some as having immediately advocated for striking Iraq as part of the US government response to 9/11 (Dumbrell, 2005, p36). However, other accounts attest that Rumsfeld queried whether the aftermath of terrorist attacks had offered an “opportunity” to deal with Iraq (Woodward, 2004, p 25). Woodward (2004, p25) refers to an “aide” of Rumsfeld’s notes, recounting that Rumsfeld raised the prospect of launching an attack on Iraq in response to 9/11 in a meeting held on 9/11 itself. The meeting debated whether Iraq should be included in the War on Terror at that point, although there was general agreement between many members. Cheney felt that pursuit of Saddam Hussein

¹⁵ “Principals” shall be used here to refer to key personnel within the US government, including the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the Attorney General, among others (White House, 2017).

would lose the US its position as the “good guy” (Woodward, 2004, p25), and that preventing any other attacks had to be the priority (Cheney, 2011, p333). Powell was adamant in his opposition to targeting Iraq as a response to 9/11, given he perceived no link between 9/11 and Iraq. Disagreement between Powell, Rumsfeld, and Cheney was a feature which is consistently evident further along in this process, but, at this meeting, Cheney and Powell agreed. This is remarkable, given Kori Schake recalled in interview that she experienced the tensions between Rumsfeld and Powell on a daily basis (Schake, 2020). Both White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card and CIA Director George Tenet agreed that only Afghanistan should be the target of a response to 9/11, and Iraq should not be included at that point. The final tally of the votes in the meeting came to four against targeting Iraq at that moment, to zero favouring attacking Iraq in the initial stages of the War on Terror, as Rumsfeld abstained from the vote (Woodward, 2004, p25). It is important to recognise that no one in the meeting advocated for not targeting Iraq at all; rather, they agreed this was not the moment to confront Iraq. The agreement was that Afghanistan should be the first target. The American public gave the Bush Administration reassurance that it was in favour of a military response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 when on the 20th of September President Bush’s approval rating rose to an unprecedented 90% after he declared he would respond to 9/11 with force (Johnstone and Laville, 2010, p164). This is another example of the “psyche” change that Bush himself highlighted.

The UK Cabinet met on the 13th of September, but there were essential meetings prior to this. Blair met with Intelligence chiefs, before a COBR meeting actually held

on the 11th of September¹⁶. Here, Blair was informed that Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda were the only group able to carry out the 9/11 attacks (Campbell, 2012, p5). Blair also heard the UK intelligence chief's opinion that it was unlikely there was any link between the attackers and any "rogue states" (Campbell, 2012, p5), and this was confirmed at subsequent meetings in the days after the attacks.

Even in these initial meetings in the UK after the attacks, concerns were voiced about the potential reaction of the US government, in contrast to the US, where little consideration of foreign government reactions was expressed. While the US meeting stressed the need for the US to be unrestrained by allies, at a COBR meeting on the 12th of September, Jack Straw (Foreign Secretary) voiced the view that the UK government should not move beyond the US in their rhetoric (Campbell, 2012, p6).

Blair earned a considerable reputation internationally early in the response to the attacks of 9/11. The opinion of some in the US media that Blair had performed better than Bush in his response was also not missed by those in Number 10 (Campbell, 2012, p10). Blair has been judged as having taken "naturally" to foreign policy and some consider he achieved the position of a "key world leader" in the years before the attacks of 9/11 (Clarke, 2007, p593; Foley, 2000, p290). In meetings in the two days following 9/11, Blair discussed involving the international community. Concerns as to whether the US would do something to have a negative impact on the international cooperation work that was being conducted continued (Campbell, 2012, p5-9). This further highlights the one-directional nature of the concerns as to the actions of their partner by the UK government.

¹⁶ Stephen Lander (Director General of MI5), John Scarlett (Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee), Richard Wilson (Cabinet Secretary), and Alastair Campbell (Director of communications and strategy) were all in attendance.

5.6 US-UK Discussions

The closeness between the US and the UK decision-makers in the case of the decision to invade Iraq is well-known, and there were many discussions between the two sets of decision-makers. The topics and contents of these discussions have attracted interest and controversy in the years since the invasion, particularly in the aftermath of the UK Iraq Inquiry (Boden, 2009; Booth, 2016; McSmith, 2016). Three key interactions between US and UK decision-makers must be included here: the meeting between Bush and Blair at Crawford, the “with you, whatever” memo, and the January 2003 meeting where Blair persuaded Bush to continue with the UN route.

The meeting between Bush and Blair, at Bush’s ranch in Crawford, Texas, in April 2002 has been identified as a key moment in the decision-making process to invade Iraq by a number of authors (Clarke, 2007, p38; Chilcott, 2017, p111). Some authors perceive this as the point at which Bush outlined his strategy to include Iraq in the “War on Terror” to Blair at Crawford in April 2002 (Clarke, 2007, p38). However, this is an overly US-centric view of the event. This meeting was a crucial point where Blair displayed his approach to risk (see section 7.3.1) and a crucial point for the UK analogical reasoning (see section 8.4.3). It was at Crawford that Blair offered Bush a partnership “dealing urgently” with the Iraqi regime and the threat it posed (Chilcott, 2017, p111). On this trip, there were numerous discussions between the two leaders, some attended by aides on each side, others just between Bush and Blair (Rawnsley, 2010, p94). On the plane journey, Campbell recounts a long discussion over what Blair would discuss at the Crawford meeting (Campbell, 2012, p201). Sir Christopher Meyer (UK Ambassador to the US) was interviewed by Rawnsley, and is

quoted supporting this point from Campbell (2012, p201), saying that the Crawford meeting in March 2002 was supposed to be the moment Blair explicitly set out the conditions for the UK military cooperation (Rawnsley, 2010, p95). Indeed, Blair had the conditions worked out before he attended the meeting (Chilcott, 2017, p14). However, Meyer did not think these conditions were ever set out (Rawnsley, 2010, p95), leading to the claim being made that Bush “out-Blaired Blair” (Rawnsley, 2010, p96). This debate over the extent to which Blair iterated the UK conditions for involvement in any military action against Iraq contributes to the controversy over the UK involvement in the Iraq War. The close relationship between the leaders has been highlighted in previous paragraphs. However, if this relationship affected the way in which the UK conditions were set out, then it cannot be considered wholly positive.

The “with you, whatever” memo has become one of the most well-known documents in this decision-making process and in the contemporary relationship between the UK and the US. The sentence with the most significance and importance is the opening line: “I will be with you, whatever” (Chilcott, 2017, p15). This sentence, as a complete commitment to support the US policy has, unsurprisingly, garnered much attention. It is also a very personal way to characterise the commitment. This commitment came months prior to Blair’s public commitment to the war in Iraq on the 28th of July 2002 (Chilcott, 2017, p15). Less attention is paid to the next line, “But this is the moment to assess bluntly the difficulties” (Chilcott, 2017, p15). The note committed to supporting the US and attempted to persuade Bush of the context as Blair saw it. Those around Blair, who potentially doubted that he had made his case forcefully enough to Bush in person, thought that this note was a good decision, because he was more forceful in his notes (Rawnsley, 2010, p100).

Blair met Bush, Cheney, Rice, Powell, and Rumsfeld on the last day of January 2003 (Chilcott, 2016, S5 p58; Woodward, 2004, p296). This meeting was the British PM's "toughest" meeting at the White House in his time in office (Rawnsley, 2010, p144), as he was confronted by an audience who did not want to seek a second resolution from the Security Council. The key points for the meeting included: arguing that the UK strategy should be given more time, persuading the US that a second resolution would both strengthen the position the US was taking, and that a second resolution should be considered a necessity politically for the UK government (FCO, 2003, p1). To outline this political necessity to his US counterpart, Campbell informed Bush's Press Secretary Dan Bartlett of a poll in the Daily Mirror. The poll showed that 2% of those asked thought that war in Iraq would make the world safer (Campbell, 2012, p440). Whilst this example of the UK political context was given, it would take weeks for those in the US to realise the pressure on Blair domestically. However, it is notable that a member of the UK decision-making group was so keen to make a member of the US decision-making group aware of the difficulties that the UK group faced. Typically, it was the UK group who were attentive to what the US group were thinking. On the Bush administration side, there was rare agreement between Colin Powell and Dick Cheney (Woodward, 2004, p296). Both thought that given the sheer amount of effort and time that had been required to pass UNSCR 1441, a second resolution would be even harder (Woodward, 2004, p296). Powell also did not consider it necessary (Woodward, 2004, p296). The Bush administration, and especially the military planners, wanted to invade by March at the latest to avoid the Iraqi summer (Rawnsley, 2010, p144), inserting a time limit on the process. However, Blair had the winning argument. The political necessity was an argument Bush was very receptive to (Woodward, 2004, p297). Bush agreed to seeking a

second resolution, and is quoted by Woodward (2004, p297) as saying, “If that’s what you need, we will go flat out to try and help you get it”. It is telling that Bush is reported as having said “help you get it”, showing how little his administration wanted or needed a second resolution (Woodward, 2004, p297).

Each of these interactions were significant to the decision-making process. Indeed, they show the close links between the US and the UK decision-makers. At Crawford, Bush and Blair had close personal interaction without advisors in attendance. The “with you, whatever” memo shows the level of commitment that Blair was willing to indicate to Bush, and the January 2003 meeting shows the influence that Blair had been able to develop with Bush.

5.7 The UN Process

Understandably, the process of the US and the UK seeking UN approval for military action against Iraq and proceeding with military action without a second United Nations Security Council resolution is one of the most memorable features of this decision-making process.

Adopted on the 8th of November 2002, UNSC resolution 1441 was the culmination of weeks’ worth of negotiation work. The resolution involved time and effort from politicians, including Heads of States, to a degree which was unprecedented in the recall of some involved (Greenstock, 2016, p122). Initially, the US proposed that should Saddam Hussein be found to be in significant violation – or, in UN terminology, “material breach” (Woodward, 2004, p221) – of the proposed resolution it would provide the US with sufficient permission to carry out whatever means they thought necessary to force Iraq to comply (Woodward, 2004, p221). A version of the resolution was leaked to the press, and its extreme nature caused uproar with the

other members of the Security Council (Greenstock, 2016, p122). The effort involved in negotiating this UNSC Resolution would have reverberations further down the line, being used by some in the US to argue against seeking a second Resolution in early 2003.

Saddam Hussein made the declaration required under UNSCR 1441 on December 7th, 2002 (Woodward, 2004, p234). The 11,000-page document led Cheney to suggest that the US consider the declaration as a “material breach”, because it stated Iraq had no WMD (Woodward, 2004, p234). Others in the Administration considered the declaration a “lie” (Bush, 2010, p242), and even Dr. Hans Blix is reported as having described the declaration as “poor on information” (Bush, 2010, p242). This assessment was agreed with on each side of the Atlantic; Cheney remembers Jack Straw describing the Iraqi declaration as an “obvious falsehood” (Cheney, 2011, p394). However, the distance between those in the UK and the hawks of the Bush Administration should be noted. Cheney considering the declaration itself as a “material breach” (Woodward, 2004, p234) shows just how keen some in the US government were on moving on from the UN route – months prior to the UK Cabinet.

Dr. Hans Blix, the weapons inspector who led the UNMOVIC team to Iraq, gave three reports on UNMOVIC’s inspections in Iraq. He declared to the UN Security Council that the cooperation from the Iraqi regime had been good in terms of procedure. He gave his opinion that the 11,000-page document submitted by the Iraqi government was mainly a reprint of previously seen documents, although it did contain several other documents, so there was new information (Blix, 2003). The first full report, on January 27th, was regarded by Number 10 as having changed the atmosphere in the favour of the Blair government and its position (Campbell, 2012,

p435). Blix's second UNMOVIC report to the Security Council was presented on the 14th of February 2003. The report did not contain what the US and the UK would have wished to hear: UNMOVIC had not found any WMD, and Blix said that the items that had not been accounted for may not have existed (Chilcott, 2016, p244). Blair was pleased the report made clear that the Iraqi compliance had been stepped up, as the threat of military action loomed (Blair, 2010, p426), but the report did not ease the context in which the US and the UK operated in within the UN. It did not make clear that Iraq was in "material breach" or not, flooding the UN situation with ambiguity, and having a big impact further down the UN road. Blair argued for a "simple" resolution that highlighted the absence of full cooperation and had a deadline for complete compliance in a communication with Bush (Chilcott, 2016, p24). The US, UK, and Spain tabled a draft resolution on the 24th of February, which stated that Iraq had failed to take its final opportunity it had been offered by UNSC Resolution 1441. However, this did not attract support (Chilcott, 2016, p25).

The UK's UN manoeuvring became near frantic in the first week of March (Keegan, 2004, p120), and the week ended badly for the US and the UK. France, Germany, and Russia made a statement, on March 5th, that they would not permit a resolution authorising the use of force to pass (Chilcott, 2016, p28), and they supported the weapons' inspectors when they requested more time (Rawnsley, 2010, p150). This request confirmed the worst fears of some in the US, who thought the UN process would only delay action. It was exactly what the US did not want.

Between the 5th of March and the 10th of March 2003, the UK decision-makers realised the process of seeking the second UN resolution was over. Blair was told by President Putin that any second resolution would be vetoed in the Security Council by Russia (Blair, 2010, p430). On the 10th of March in a public interview, President

Chirac reiterated that France would also veto any second resolution (Straw, 2012, p388). On the 14th of March, the Chileans (non-permanent members of the Security Council) proposed that Iraq be given thirty days to meet “benchmarks” (Keegan, 2004, p121). These benchmarks stemmed from Blair’s ideas expressed in the note sent to Bush on the 19th of February (Chilcott, 2016, p24). Further, these benchmarks, written by Greenstock, included the surrender of chemical and biological agents, among others (Keegan, 2004, p121). The proposal was quashed by the US ambassador to the UN (Chilcott, 2016, p24); the US were not interested in Iraq being given more time, confirming to UK decision-makers that the UN process was at an end.

5.8 US Principals’ Meetings

In the US, there were three key features that need to be highlighted in this account of the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq. These are: the position of Secretary of State, Colin Powell; the seeking of Congressional approval for military action against Iraq; and the development of the case Colin Powell presented to the UN in February 2003.

The poor relationship between Bush and Colin Powell became evident in the early months of 2002. In his first year as Secretary of State, Powell had not developed a “personal relationship” with Bush (Woodward, 2004, p79). In the meetings in the aftermath of 9/11, Powell was adamant in his opposition to including Iraq in the War on Terror. Cheney felt that the “watershed” in the relationship was after the trip Powell made to the Middle East in 2002 (Cheney, 2011, p381). The White House retreated from the announcement from Powell regarding a Middle East peace

conference, which he received badly (Cheney, 2011, p381). This may not have had a direct impact upon the decision-making process which led to the invasion of Iraq, yet it affected the relationship between the key members of the administration.

Cheney refers to Powell and his deputy Richard Armitage developing a reputation for not being private in their criticism of President Bush's policies (Cheney, 2011, p381).

Powell was the target of much attention from the US mindguards during this decision-making process, and, as will be shown in the groupthink chapter, he was pressured to rationalise the collective view.

Despite this poor relationship with the President, Powell met with Bush in an attempt to ensure that he understood the impact of the war with Iraq. Powell had sensed the momentum within the administration was mainly towards war and was concerned (Powell, 2012, p209). It was in this meeting that Bush asked for Powell's opinion on how the administration should proceed. Powell said that they should take the problem to the UN, and posed the question: if the UN satisfactorily ascertained that Iraq had no WMD, but Saddam was left in power, was it worth war (Powell, 2012, p211)? Bush agreed to the plan to go to the UN (Greenstock, 2016, p105), and was influenced by both Blair (Bush, 2010, p232) and Powell (Powell, 2012, 211).

In a meeting of principals', Bush declared he wanted Congressional Authority for military action in Iraq (Woodward, 2004, p167). He had been informed by White House Lawyers that his authority as Commander in Chief was sufficient (Woodward, 2004, p167), but he still wanted Congressional authority. Cheney proposed that they should go to Congress before seeking a UNSCR, and Rice concurred. Rice made the point that even Democrats were keen (Woodward, 2004, p167). Unfortunately for the administration, when Rumsfeld briefed Senators on Iraq, the meeting did not go well (Woodward, 2004, p167). Rumsfeld refused to disclose any intelligence to the

Senators, both countering the goodwill the President developed in a small meeting prior to the briefing (Woodward, 2004, p167) and leading Senators to request a National Intelligence Estimate from intelligence agencies (Cheney, 2011, p391). The resolution authorised the President to defend the US from the “continuing threat” constituted by Iraq (H.J.Res.114, 2002), and was passed first in the House of Representatives (296-133) and later by the Senate (77-33) (Cheney, 2011, p392). Each passed the resolution with larger majorities than the resolution authorising the Gulf War more than a decade before (Cheney, 2011, p392). It should be noted that in the process that led to the passage of the congressional resolution, links were once again made between the Iraq and the perpetrators of 9/11, Al Qaeda. This link was still being made in the US, whilst across the Atlantic the UK government had discounted such a link in the immediate aftermath of the September 11th attacks. In contrast to the UK, the approval from Congress (as opposed to Parliament) was considered an additional bonus, not a necessity. The route through legality for the UK, which will be outlined below, was far more nuanced. The US had a smooth road, whereas the UK had a bumpy one.

Bush had, along with Rice, requested that CIA director Tenet present a “slam dunk” case against Iraq regarding the WMD program (Woodward, 2004, p288). The assumption the case would be “slam dunk” reveals the level of conviction in the correctness of their own view. This case was intended to serve a similar purpose as the “dodgy Dossier” in the UK, although it was aimed at the international community, rather than the domestic audience of the dossier in the UK. The process of writing the case against the Iraqi regime is a crucial component of the groupthink chapter, which scrutinises the process in detail. It was decided that Powell was the person to make the case the US wanted made, given that it should be made to the UN. The

White House, and the UK government, hoped Powell would have a “Adlai-Stevenson” moment, as in the case of the Cuban Missile Crisis (Woodward, 2004, p290; Rawnsley, 2010, p146). After receiving the Libby case and the WMD case from the CIA, Powell reviewed it with his staff. This was a key point when Powell was brought to rationalise the groupthink in the US group. Powell refused to include intelligence that Cheney suggested, linking Iraq and 9/11, which Cheney and Libby still wanted to emphasise (Woodward, 2004, p300), and had been generally rejected earlier (Powell, 2012, p220).

The judgement after Powell made his case was mixed. He did not achieve the “Adlai-Stevenson” moment wished for by the US and the UK governments. Sir Christopher Meyer gave a clear opinion of the “evidence” used by Powell: “Bollocks” (Rawnsley, 2010, p146). Greenstock and Straw attended the speech and considered it a “compelling performance” and a “powerful case” (Greenstock, 2016, p175; Straw, 2012, p384). Powell was, however, forced to acknowledge that the WMD in the case were only shown through inference and not direct evidence, somewhat weakening the case (Greenstock, 2016, p175). A telling judgement from Greenstock, which perhaps exemplifies the limitations of Powell’s speech, was that “for the converted it was impressive” (Greenstock, 2016, p 175). This potentially explains the reaction of Robin Cook, the former Foreign Secretary and at that time the Leader of the House of Commons, to Straw when he attended a Cabinet meeting the day after Powell’s speech to the UN. Cook, who would later resign on the issue of Iraq, wrote that Straw was very satisfied at the “relative success” of the Powell speech (Cook, 2003, p286). These differences in the perception of the case from those in the US and those in the UK provide further examples of how each government perceived the case for military action, and the reaction from the international community.

As outlined at the beginning of this section, a key feature of the US decision-making process was the position that Colin Powell held, and this is analysed in greater detail in the Groupthink chapter. Another feature to highlight is that US decision-makers sought to persuade others of their case, domestically in Congress and internationally in the UN. Apart from Powell, there was less of a need in the US decision-making group to persuade members of the group of the case. These attempts to make their case are also analysed in the groupthink analysis and in the Analogical Reasoning chapter.

5.9 UK Cabinet

In the UK, the decision-making process was dominated by a focus on achieving support for military action against Iraq, within the UK Cabinet, within Parliament, with the British public, and internationally. In contrast to the US, there was greater scepticism and opposition to military action against Iraq, and, as the subsequent chapters argue, this made the task of achieving support for military action more complex. A particular feature of this was the development of the legal opinion in the UK, which is scrutinised in greater detail in the Groupthink chapter. There are six key points to be examined here: the March 2002 “spasm of anxiety” Cabinet meeting, the development of the “Dodgy Dossier”, the “Million Man March”, the decision by Lord Goldsmith that military action would be legal, the Cabinet meeting after Robin Cook’s resignation, and the House of Commons vote in March 2003.

March 2002 was a significant month in the decision-making process which led to the War in Iraq. At a Cabinet Meeting on the 7th of March 2002, Blair attempted to reassure his Cabinet colleagues regarding his attitude towards Iraq. A “Spasm of Anxiety” followed from Cabinet ministers (Rawnsley, 2010, p82), and not just those

who were typically troublesome to the PM. Geoff Hoon and Charles Clarke (the Labour Party chairman) were the only Cabinet Ministers to show firm support for the PM. David Blunkett, typically an ally of Blair's, expressed concerns over heightening tensions between Muslim and Non-Muslim communities (Chilcot, 2016, p427). Robin Cook condemned Saddam, but then raised concerns over the UK being the only European Nation to support the US in a military venture in Iraq at this point (Rawnsley, 2010, p82). On the 18th of March, Sir David Manning (Foreign Policy Adviser to Tony Blair) informed the PM that he had passed on Blair's unswerving support for Regime Change to President Bush's National Security Adviser, Condoleeza Rice. Manning met with Rice, and found that she remained as keen on "regime change" as ever. However, it was Manning's perception that Rice was more understanding of the complexities of carrying international opinion (Rawnsley, 2010, p85; Chilcot, 2016, p452).

The now infamous "Dodgy Dossier", written by Blair and Alastair Campbell, had a significant impact on the road to war in Iraq when it was published in September 2002. Published under the title "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government", the document was the government's presentation of the intelligence available to them from the JIC (Joint Intelligence Committee) to make their case to the public for military action. The JIC is a body responsible for providing intelligence assessments on matters that may need some form of "policy action" (Gov.UK, 2017). Blair's own foreword in the dossier is revealing in the emphasis it places on the intelligence and threat posed by Iraq. Blair wrote that "I am in no doubt that the threat is serious and current" and highlights the source of the intelligence as being from the JIC (Blair, 2002, p3). As is laid out in the Leadership style chapter (Chapter 7), this is indicative of Blair's low conceptual

complexity. The context in which this document was published is key. At this point in the decision-making process to go to war in Iraq, Blair had already committed to supporting the US in whatever military action became necessary, as seen in the July “with you, whatever” note (Chilcott, 2017, p15) examined previously. As such, this document is an advocacy piece, presenting the evidence in favour of invading Iraq, as those who wanted the UK to join the US in the operation wished it to be perceived. The reasoning for the dossier’s composition given within the government was that “London had perceived the need to deepen the public’s understanding of the Iraqi threat in case a decision to start military action.” (Greenstock, 2016, p111). However, this does not discount the idea of the dossier being advocacy in favour of a position already taken. Blair and Campbell reportedly believed that “secret intelligence” might have a persuasive impact on the public and backbench MPs. Blair told Campbell that the Dossier had to answer two questions: “Why Iraq?” and “Why now?” (Rawnsley, 2010, p108). These questions would also be raised months later before Colin Powell made the US case to the UN in February 2003. Campbell, as Director of Communications, judged the impact of the dossier as improving the government position (Campbell, 2012, p308). Blair was judged to have made the case for war in Iraq well, using the dossier he “met every argument hard, head on” (Mullins, 2009, p311). The dossier achieved what it had intended to, but the way it did so carried controversy with it and was subject to an inquiry itself (HC 898, 2004).

Ten days after Powell’s UN speech, the most famous or infamous example of opposition to the move towards military action in Iraq was evident in the streets of several capital cities around the world (Keegan, 2004, p115). Some estimates say that 100 million people, in 600 cities, protested (Keegan, 2004, p115). Many of those who marched in London were middle-class, not those who would typically be

expected to protest, but those whose votes were sought by Blair (Keegan, 2004, p115). These protests, unlike anything seen in the world before, affected Blair (Rawnsley, 2010, p147). He had aimed his spring party conference speech at those who he knew were to march on the 15th of February 2003 (Rawnsley, 2010, p146). This was a vocal, highly visible expression of the context in which Blair was operating, and demonstrated the international community feeling. It also exacerbated the feeling of pressure that was felt by weapons inspector Dr. Hans Blix, who told Blair he felt he held the balance over war or peace (Blair, 2010, p411).

In the UK, the 27th of February saw Lord Goldsmith express the opinion that he thought a “reasonable case” could be constructed, arguing that Resolution 1441 contained the ability to authorise the use of force (Chilcott, 2016, S5 p81). As such, the need to persuade the international community of the case against Iraq was lessened, given this advice meant a second resolution would be useful rather than being required. This was a key development, and, as the groupthink chapter shows, it was Goldsmith who maintained that the UK should still seek a second resolution. Goldsmith also argued the UK should not signal that the UK government had moved to regard a second resolution as not necessary to legally authorise military action, yet they would continue to seek a second resolution. (Chilcott, 2016, S5 p81).

The 17th of March was a very significant day to this decision-making process, especially in the UK. Robin Cook – a vocal member of the New Labour government, who disagreed with Blair’s support for military action against Iraq – met privately with Blair before a specially arranged Cabinet meeting. Cook informed Blair that he would resign because there was not going to be a second resolution (Blair, 2010, p433). Cook wrote that he got the impression that Blair had decided it was not worth attempting to persuade Cook from resigning (Cook, 2003, p324). Immediately

following Cook's resignation, the Cabinet met. Blair commenced the meeting, introducing Lord Goldsmith, and making only a single reference to Cook's resignation (Campbell, 2012, p507). The other member of the Cabinet who had been anticipated to oppose the government move to military action was Clare Short. She herself felt the frustration of her Cabinet colleagues when she tried to discuss the legal advice that Goldsmith presented (Short, 2005, p186). Blair's testimony would agree: "Apart from Clare Short, the Cabinet were supportive. All my most loyal people weighed in" (Blair, 2010, p436). Short's credibility had suffered with both the Cabinet and Labour rebels, specifically after a "reckless" interview with the journalist Andrew Rawnsley (Rawnsley, 2010, p166). A persuasive opinion on this Cabinet meeting was voiced by Rawnsley: "Many of the Cabinet were convinced because they wanted to be convinced" (Rawnsley, 2010, p166). The meeting concluded that the government would seek parliamentary approval for military action against Iraq the following day.

The debate in the House of Commons the next day followed the Bush Ultimatum, a speech made on the 17th of March, in which President Bush declared: "The security of the world requires disarming Saddam Hussein now" (CNN, 2005; Guardian, 2017). The debate lasted for almost ten hours (HC Deb, 2002-03, vol 401, col 907), and involved impassioned contributions from all sides. Blair began his speech by recalling previous Commons decisions relating to the Iraq crisis, and then reiterated Iraq's history of WMD possession (HC Deb, 2002-03, vol 401, col 760-4). Leader of the Opposition, Iain Duncan Smith, reminded the House of the indecisiveness of the International Community for twelve years on Iraq (HC Deb, 2002-03, vol 401, col 774), showing the support Blair received from the opposition, even if he was not wholly backed by his own party. To Blair, the debate went well, and he described the

vote in favour the government of 412 to 149 against as a handsome victory (Blair, 2010, p439).

The need to persuade the domestic and international audience was greater in the UK than in the US. As shown in this section, this process was difficult. Domestic opposition was greater in the UK than in the US. In the next three chapters, this thesis shows how both decision-making groups made their decision to invade Iraq and made their cases for this military action.

5.10 Conclusion: The Invasion

Blair received a call from Bush on the morning of the 19th of March 2003. Bush congratulated Blair on the vote the previous night in the House of Commons (Woodward, 2004, p377). The significance of this day to the process which led to the Iraq War came in the final minutes of the 19th and first minutes of the 20th of March. Blair received another phone call when he was in the flat above Number 10 and was informed by his Foreign Policy advisor, David Manning, that the invasion had started (Rawnsley, 2010, p172). Manning had been called by Rice from Washington, who had almost apologetically informed him that the US military were moving ahead of the previously agreed upon military timetable (Rawnsley, 2010, p172). The events of the previous twelve years had led to this conflict that would have a huge impact on the Middle East, and on US and UK foreign policy. Two US Presidents, and two UK Prime Ministers had travelled this bumpy road which had led to war in Iraq. The road had turned sharply at points, perhaps the sharpest being near the end of the road when the UN Security Council route had to be abandoned.

This thesis shows that to understand how and why the US and the UK navigated this “road”, it is necessary to examine the individual level of analysis. As will be shown in

subsequent chapters, the decision-making groups in the US and the UK fell victim to groupthink. The mindguards in the US and the UK were crucial, steering their decision-making groups to circumnavigate obstacles to the decision they wished to take. In the US, this was the issue of whether intelligence supported military action against Iraq, and, in the UK, this was the issue of whether military action against Iraq was legal. Similarly, the leadership styles of Bush and Blair were crucial to the decision-making process. Both processed information in line with preconceived views, filtering information in line with these views, and this dictated the way they managed their advisory system. Both typically proceeded despite the risks involved. Finally, both decision-making groups used analogies to steer their decision-making. In the UK, this was the “Kosovo Analogy”. Here, they compared military action against Iraq to the military operation against Kosovo, comparing the potential of the consequences of not intervening in Iraq to the potential of what could have happened should NATO not have intervened in Kosovo. In the US, they used the “Munich Analogy” to sell the need to military act against Iraq. However, in the US, this analogy was only used publicly, not to make decisions.

6. Groupthink in the Decision-Making Process that Led to the Iraq War

6.1. Introduction

This chapter makes two key arguments: firstly, that three themes of groupthink significantly affected both the US and the UK decisions to go to war with Iraq in 2003. Secondly, that while groupthink manifested itself in both the US and the UK decision-making processes, groupthink functioned differently in each case. There are three themes that emerge from the analysis of the groupthink that occurred in the US and the UK. Firstly, the role of mindguards in the US and the UK decision-making groups was crucial. However, the mindguards in the US and the UK decision-making groups placed emphasis on different aspects of the decision-making process. In the US, the focus was on intelligence – on the link between Iraq and Al Qaeda – whereas in the UK, the mindguards focused on the question of the legality of the war. Secondly, the stereotyped view of the enemy held in both the US and the UK was that Saddam Hussein's Iraq was particularly skilled at escaping the consequences of its actions, while the second stereotyped view, held only in the US, was that there was a link between Iraq and Al Qaeda. Thirdly, collective rationalisation occurred in both the US and the UK decision-making groups, but, once again, on different aspects of the decision-making process. The following sections of this chapter follow these themes as the structure. Despite the different emphases of the groupthink that occurred in the US and the UK, these themes run throughout the decision-making processes in the US and the UK, and affected both decision-making groups.

The greater power of the US President within the US system, when compared to the Prime Minister in the UK system, means that more options are available to them in

steering a decision-making process. The groupthink that occurred in both the US and the UK decision-making groups reduced objections to the exercising of leadership and the analogical reasoning that both decision-making groups used. In this way, groupthink established conditions in which the leadership styles and analogical reasoning had a greater impact on the decision-making process than would typically be the case.

Figure 1.

	UK Decision-Making Group	US Decision-Making Group
Group Members	Tony Blair, Jack Straw, Robin Cook, Clare Short, Geoff Hoon, Jonathan Powell, Alastair Campbell.	George Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Paul Wolfowitz.
Mindguards	Blair, Straw, Powell (J)	Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz.
Facilitators	Sir David Manning	Douglas Feith
Dissenters	Short, Cook	Powell (C), Tenet. ¹⁷

The US and the UK decision-making groups are set out above in Figure 1, and had two different groupings within the decision-making groups: Mindguards and Dissenters.

¹⁷ Report of the Iraq Inquiry: Executive Summary. Page 16. Available at: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20171123123237/http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/>; Minute Manning to Prime Minister, 11 December 2002, 'Iraq'; Letter Manning to Rice, 24 January 2003, [untitled], attaching Note [Blair to Bush], [undated], 'Note'; Letter Manning to Rice, 19 February 2003, 'Iraq' attaching Note [Blair to Bush], [undated], 'Note'.

The categorisation of group members as mindguards fits with the original work of Janis (1972, 1982), and whilst the “dissenters” categorisation is not Janis’ terminology, it does fit with his groupthink model. Dissenters, my own categorisation, draws from Janis’ groupthink symptom of “dissenters being placed under pressure” (Janis, 1982). In this case, in both the US and the UK decision-making groups, the dissenters were placed under pressure and either exited the group (Cook), or came to collectively rationalise the group view (Colin Powell, Tenet, Short). This analysis goes further by inserting the categorisation of “facilitators”, individuals who facilitated the occurrence of groupthink in the decision-making group without being group members. Feith was able to “stovepipe” intelligence supportive of the view that the US mindguards took (Hartnett and Stengrim, 2004; Pollack, 2004), because the OSP (Office for Special Plans) reported to him (Feith, 2008, p116).

As stated in the Theoretical Framework, this chapter uses a refined list of groupthink symptoms based on the work of McCauley (1989)¹⁸. There were four symptoms of groupthink identified in this case: mindguards, dissenters placed under pressure, a stereotyped view of the enemy, and collective rationalisation. The three sections in this chapter are based upon these symptoms, combining the mindguarding symptom and the dissenters under pressure symptom, as the pressure on dissenters came from the mindguards. In the US decision-making group, mindguards had a greater overall impact on the decision-making process: these mindguards took on this role more frequently and over a longer period of the decision-making process than the mindguards in the UK. The US mindguard’s impact was also more readily identifiable, given the creation of the PCTEG (Policy Counter Terrorism Evaluation Group) and its

¹⁸ These being: group members taking the role of Mindguards, a stereotyped view of the enemy being held in the group, collective rationalisation, and dissenters being placed under pressure (Janis, 1982; McCauley, 1989).

successor, the OSP (Office for Special Plans), which was described by some as an “alternative intelligence network” (Lucas, 2011). This is also the point at which the non-member of the US decision-making group, Douglas Feith, facilitated the mindguards as the creator of the OSP. The mindguards in the UK decision-making group focused on the legal advice provided by the attorney general and over a shorter period in the decision-making process.

The first section outlines how mindguards operated in each decision-making group, whilst examining the different manner in which they operated in the US and the UK decision-making groups. This is followed by an examination of the stereotyped views of Iraq held in the US and the UK decision-making groups. The UK decision-making group held a stereotyped view of Saddam Hussein as being adept at wriggling out of international pressure, or, as Blair put it, they feared he would “get away with it” (Blair, 2010, p). The US decision-making group shared this stereotyped view of Saddam Hussein, but, crucially, this group also held an additional stereotyped view of Iraq as linked to Al Qaeda, thus conflating two perceived threats. In so doing, the manner in which the shared stereotyped view of Iraq was operationalised in each decision-making group, and distinguished from the manner in which the stereotyped view of Iraq was held only in the US decision-making group, was used only within that group. In contrast to the previous two themes, collective rationalisation in the UK decision-making group was actually dissimilar to that which occurred in the US decision-making group. In the UK decision-making group, collective rationalisation was that there was no need for a second resolution from the UN Security Council. In the US decision-making group, collective rationalisation had a close link to the actions of the mindguards, focusing upon maintaining the link between Iraq and Al Qaeda. Collective rationalisation was exhibited in both decision-making groups. However, the clear

difference in the manner this happened is significant, especially considering the similarities between the occurrences of the other two themes in both decision-making groups. This combination of similarities and differences in the occurrence of the three themes of groupthink that manifested in the US and the UK decision-making groups serves to highlight the nuances in the groupthink explanation of the decision-making processes in the US and the UK governments that led to the Iraq war.

In terms of the research question of this thesis, the groupthink model shows that agency dynamics provides a coherent explanation of the US and the UK decision-making processes that led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The divisions between the individuals in the decision-making group, the perception of Saddam Hussein in both decision-making groups, and the way in which the group came to agreement after initial divisions are all explained through the application of groupthink.

6.2. Mindguarding

“If the mindguard were to transmit the potentially distressing information, he and the others might become discouraged by the apparent defects in their cherished policy and find themselves impelled to initiate a painful re-evaluation in an unpleasant state of emotional tension.” (Janis, 1982, p258)

When functioning as a mindguard, a member of the decision-making group would focus on protecting the decision-making group from, as Janis sets out in the quote above, “distressing information” (Janis, 1982, p258). In so doing, the group has protection from the consideration of potential negative outcomes brought about by their decisions (Janis, 1982, p41)¹⁹. As such, “a mindguard protects them [the leader

¹⁹ Janis identifies Robert Kennedy as a mindguard in the case of the Bay of Pigs, pointing to a conversation between Robert Kennedy and Arthur Schlesinger. Robert Kennedy said, “You may be right or you may be wrong, but the President has made his mind up. Don’t push it any further”. Janis interpreted this comment

and decision-making group] from thoughts that might damage their confidence in the soundness of the policies to which they are committed.” (Janis, 1982, p41-42). Those who functioned as mindguards in the US had a readily identifiable impact, with the creation of the PCTEG and OSP to form an “alternative intelligence network” (Lucas, 2011). Those functioning as mindguards in the US had a close relation in their work to the other themes of groupthink identified in the decision-making process; their actions as mindguards had a close relation to the two stereotyped views held of Iraq in the US decision-making group, and the collective rationalisation within the US decision-making group. In the UK, those who operated as mindguards operated for a shorter period within the decision-making process. Their actions focused upon the legal advice of the attorney general, assessing the legality of the invasion of Iraq. Equally, in the UK decision-making group, the mindguards were less influential on the stereotyped view held than the US mindguards were in the US decision-making group. For the US decision-making group, distressing information would be information such as there being no link between Iraq and Al Qaeda. In meetings immediately following the 9/11 attacks, Bush made repeated requests of his terrorism expert Richard Clarke to investigate links between Saddam Hussein and the 9/11 attacks, despite Clarke informing him earlier in the same meeting that the intelligence community’s view was that Al-Qaeda was responsible for the attacks (Clarke, 2004, p32). In the UK decision-making group, the distressing information would be, for example, the debate over whether the UK involvement in the invasion of Iraq would be legal, a consideration that was crucial to senior military officials (Boyce, 2018).

from Kennedy as saying that Schlesinger should not sound “any discordant notes that would interfere with the harmonious support he should have”.

In the US decision-making group, Cheney and other mindguards formed a “praetorian guard” around Bush, according to the former Economic advisor to Bush, Paul O’Neill (O’Neill, cited by Suskind, 2004, p293). Significantly, whilst Cheney was willing to exclude non-members of the decision-making group who brought “distressing information” in Janis’ terminology, he did not exclude members of the decision-making group deciding on the invasion of Iraq (Gellman, 2009). Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz also participated in the exclusion of a dissenting voice, the economic advisor Lawrence Lindsey. Lindsey provided an estimate of the cost of invading Iraq, placing the cost at 1-2% of US GDP, or \$200bn in an interview with the Wall Street Journal (Davis, 2002). Rumsfeld responded to this estimate angrily and succinctly, branding it “baloney” (Gellman, 2009). A former member of the National Security Council, following this estimate, declared the following: “It is unimaginable that the US would have to contribute hundreds of billions of dollars,” and how he did not consider it likely that it would even cost tens of billions (Pollack, 2002, p397). A month following these responses to Lindsey’s estimate of the cost of an invasion of Iraq, another economic advisor, Glenn Hubbard, stated, “The costs of any intervention would be very small” (Navsky and Cerf, 2008), indicating an acknowledgement of the pressure from mindguards and displeasure at the previous estimate. Only weeks following this disagreement over the cost of war with Iraq, Cheney removed Lindsey from his post (Gellman, 2009, p266).

When interviewed for this thesis, Kori Schake recalled another example of this mindguarding from Rumsfeld. Prior to the final meeting before the invasion of Iraq, she noted in a memo to the President that the Department of Defense had concerns regarding the unacknowledged risk in the warplans, and the Rumsfeld was not acknowledging these risks for ideological reasons. Rumsfeld reportedly “blew a

gasket”, and Schake was surprised that Rice sent the memo to Bush despite Rumsfeld’s anger. Rumsfeld then flattered Bush in the briefing prior to the final meeting before the invasion, asking him for his support because the generals were “dinosaurs”. Bush then began the meeting with the generals by praising the great work Rumsfeld had done on the warplans, and asking the generals if they had any concerns (Schake, 2020). In so doing, Rumsfeld had asked for Bush’s support and established an atmosphere where opposition to the warplans would involve a personal risk for the generals. Whilst this is a single occurrence, it is a classic example of a mindguard establishing an atmosphere where the raising of objections involves more personal risk for group members.

The US mindguards had a pre-established view of the CIA as having underestimated and downplayed the threat presented by Iraq with political motivation (Mitchell, 2006; Conway, 2012). This contributed to pressure being placed on the intelligence community to reassess both the possible links between the group behind the 9/11 attacks, Al Qaeda, and the Iraqi regime, and to find evidence of WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) in Iraq. The actions of the mindguards in the US decision-making group had a close relation to the other themes of groupthink in this process in this area. The link between Iraq and Al Qaeda was one of the stereotyped views held in the US decision-making group. By pressuring the intelligence community to find evidence of a link between Iraq and Al Qaeda, mindguards were able to reject information that could contradict this stereotyped view, and seek information in support of it. In addition, seeking intelligence of WMD development in Iraq, they were also supporting the shared stereotyped view of Saddam Hussein as being adept at avoiding the sanctions regime and containment strategy. If there was evidence of WMD development during the period when the sanctions and containment strategy were in place, this would

necessarily mean Saddam Hussein and Iraq were avoiding the intent of the sanctions. The pressure on the CIA manifested over months; as one Desk Officer at the CIA at the time described it, the administration made repeated requests of the intelligence community to “uncover more material that would contribute to the case for war.” (Pillar, 2006). It is not simply the repeated requests that are relevant here, however. The focus of these calls for more intelligence supporting their view of Iraq is crucial; they called on analysts “not only to turn over additional Iraqi rocks, but also turn over ones already examined and to scratch the dirt to see if there might be something there after all.” (Pillar, 2006). This pressure, then, permeated all levels of the CIA. Jami Miscik, the Director of Intelligence at the CIA at the time, said, “What became apparent is that some questions kept getting asked over and over again... as if somehow the answer would change, even without any good reason for it to change – like any new information coming in” (Miscik, 2006)²⁰. The mindguards were not only imposing pressure at-a-distance in meetings or memos. Cheney “visited CIA headquarters on several occasions in summer 2002 in what some in the Agency interpreted as pressure on low-level analysts”. A former CIA official recalled, “[Cheney’s appearances] would freak people out. [This] is supposed to be an ivory tower. And that kind of pressure would be enormous on these young guys” (Lucas, 2011)²¹. In an interview for this research, Philip Mudd recalled that the questioning of CIA officials by Cheney and his staff was relentless, “The questioning was aggressive, and persistent over months and months it got debilitating” (Mudd, 2020). This pressure – in meetings with

²⁰ Similarly, former National Security Council member Kenneth Pollack (2004) speaks of contacts in the intelligence community informing him that members of the administration reacted “strongly, negatively, and aggressively” when presented with intelligence or analysis that contradicted their established view of Iraq (Pollack, 2004). They told Pollack that in meetings analysts were required to provide justifications for their work “sentence by sentence” (Pollack, 2004).

²¹ Equally, the imposition of pressure on the intelligence community had visibility to those outside the administration and outside the CIA. Both Senators and an official inquiry noted this “intense pressure” (Burrough et al, 2006²¹; The New York Times, 2004).

administration officials, when senior administration officials visited low-level analysts, and from seeing senior administration figures making claims in the media for which they would seek greater backing from the intelligence community – was exhibited over months. The atmosphere between Cheney and Rumsfeld and the CIA “was not collegial” (Mudd, 2020). This was not only the prevention of intelligence not conducive to the group view reaching the decision-making group. Whilst the repeated requests to look again did limit the flow of this intelligence to the group, it also put increased pressure on the intelligence community to provide intelligence acceptable to the mindguards. Pressure was exerted to produce intelligence that would be permitted to get to the decision-making group by the mindguards body-guarding the group view – of Iraq being linked to Al Qaeda, and of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq being adept at avoiding the impact of the sanctions regime and containment policy.

Alongside the pressure exerted upon the intelligence community to support the view of the mindguards in the US decision-making group, the mindguards established an “Alternative Network” (Lucas, 2011) for intelligence analysis. The “alternative network”, consisting of the PCTEG and its successor the OSP, is considered to have been charged with establishing the “basis for war” by re-examining the raw intelligence that had been examined by the intelligence community (Lucas, 2011; Bar-Joseph, 2013). When interviewed for this research, Kori Schake (director for Defense Strategy and Requirements on the National Security Council) described the OSP as “the perfect example of the Rumsfeld Pentagon, circumventing the interagency process when it wasn’t producing the answers he wanted.”(Schake 2020).

Douglas Feith established both the PCTEG and the OSP²², and he justifies this creation of the OSP, saying that “Policy organisation” in the Pentagon had two people working on Iraq, which he considered under-staffing. To remedy this, the OSP hired neoconservatives, who were tasked with collecting evidence supportive of the view held by the mindguards (Ryan, 2006). There was a perception from some in the OSP that “The agency [CIA] was out to disprove linkage between Iraq and Terrorism” (Hersh, 2003), and that consequently they were opposing this bias from the CIA²³. Philip Mudd, a CIA official in 2002, recalled in interview that staff in the CIA did not regard the work of OSP analysts positively, regarding it as “cherry-picking” (Mudd, 2020). Lt Col. Karen Kwiatkowski worked in the OSP at this time, and her perceptions from working within the OSP were that “concerns were only that some policymakers still had to come on board with this agenda”, revealing the focus and targeting of the OSP. Kwiatkowski goes on, “Colin Powell, for example. There was a lot of frustration with Powell” (Cooper, 2004). This atmosphere of bringing those members of the decision-making group who were not convinced by the group view – or potential sources of “distressing information” (Janis, 1982, p258), who needed bringing round to hold the stereotyped views of Iraq held in the US decision-making group – reflects the impact of the mindguards. The OSP focused upon establishing the view of the mindguards as the prevailing viewpoint in the decision-making group. The purpose of

²² Feith-O’Beirne. Memo. Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Special Plans and Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (SP/NESA). 23/08/2002. Feith-Wolfowitz. Memo. Candidate Approval Position Adjustment – Luti. 13/09/2002.

²³ The very name of the OSP was chosen with a purpose relevant to this groupthink analysis of this decision-making process. The innocuous name was selected “to hide the fact that although the administration was publicly emphasising diplomacy at the United Nations, the Pentagon was actively engaged in war planning” (Priest, 2004; Feith, 2008, p293-294).

this body was to bring those outside the group view promoted by the mindguards into holding that view²⁴.

Part of the way in which the OSP opposed the established intelligence apparatus was through using an alternative analysis method. The OSP used inductive, rather than deductive, reasoning in the “hypothesis-based analysis” it utilised (Cahn, 1993; Ryan, 2006). This analysis method involved starting with an assumption, and finding data to support this hypothesis (Ryan, 2006)²⁵. It was through this “hypothesis-based analysis” that the OSP were able to justify re-examining intelligence that was previously discounted by the established intelligence apparatus (Slater and Moore, 2006; Bar-Joseph, 2013). The OSP commenced their intelligence analysis with the hypothesis that Saddam Hussein had a relationship with Al Qaeda (Prados, 2004). Feith took two members of the OSP, Tina Shelton and Chris Carney, to the CIA to give a presentation on this relationship, and the presentation declared that this relationship existed (Goldberg, 2003; Tenet, 2007, p525). At the meeting, the hypothesis-based analysis became apparent. George Tenet attended the meeting and perceived this analysis method in the presentation: “Feith and company would find little nuggets that supported their beliefs and seize upon them” (Tenet, 2007, p525). Shelton and Carney presented to the room, with Shelton declaring that there was “no more debate” over the link between Iraq and Al Qaeda, and that the relationship was “mature, symbiotic” (Tenet, 2007, p526). This meeting reveals another example of the pressuring of the

²⁴ This can be seen through the focus on maintaining close communication with mindguards; head of the OSP William Luti, according to Kwiatkowski, was “permanently locked into the idea that he was an aide to Cheney” (Slater and Moore, 2006).

²⁵ Hypothesis-based analysis was a method the US mindguards had used previously: Rumsfeld in a “Team B” exercise in the 1970s, and the 1998 Rumsfeld Commission where Wolfowitz also worked (Cahn, 1993; Mitchell, 2012; Ryan, 2006). The Rumsfeld Commission, staffed by Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, reassessed the threat that Iraq posed in 1998, again giving a more alarmist assessment (Mitchell, 2012; Ryan, 2006). This experience on the Rumsfeld Commission established the mindguard view of the CIA as downplaying the threat posed by Iraq, and established a precedence for the use of “hypothesis-based” analysis to challenge the established intelligence apparatus’ assessments (Mitchell, 2012).

established intelligence apparatus, the circumnavigation of the intelligence community, and their analyses replaced in order to protect the view held by the decision-making group. The view held by the US decision-making group was protected from intelligence that would contradict it, in part because of this “alternative network” of intelligence (Lucas, 2011).

The OSP did not only put pressure on the intelligence community, but also “stovepiped” raw intelligence to the US decision-making group, circumnavigating the established routes for such intelligence. “Stovepiping” refers to the raising of raw intelligence from the “kitchen of intelligence gathering” to “higher regions of policy-making”. Typically, the conventional processes would filter this intelligence. Members of the Bush administration who were involved in or with the OSP gave the reports from the OSP to those in the decision-making group (Pollack, 2004, p88-90; Hersh, 2004, p203-204; Benjamin and Simon, 2006, p167-174; Lang, 2004, p49-53). Kwiatkowski, a member of the OSP team, reports a meeting where Luti finished a meeting by saying that he had to “get this over to Scooter right away”, in reference to Scooter Libby, Cheney’s Chief of Staff (Dreyfuss and Vest, 2004)²⁶. Those in the meeting assumed that Cheney was referring to the intelligence reports Feith was showing him. This stovepiping of intelligence, from Feith to Cheney, then assisted the mindguards in pressuring the intelligence community to provide intelligence supportive of the group view²⁷. In the report, Kerr asserts that the decision-making group were amenable to intelligence that

²⁶ In a similar vein, Mel Goodman, a twenty-four-year veteran of the CIA, reports a meeting where Cheney “was holding forth on what he thought the situation was and why doesn’t your intelligence show what we know is out there?” (Goodman).

²⁷ The Kerr report, into the politicisation of intelligence in the process that led to the invasion of Iraq, concurs. See: Intelligence and Analysis on Iraq: Issues for the Intelligence Community. 29/07/2004. Available at: https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0001245667.pdf

was supportive of their view, despite it turning out to be wrong, but were not receptive to intelligence that contradicted their view in spite of it being accurate²⁸.

A critical example of the reaction of the mindguards to challenges to their approach came after a private dinner between Powell and Bush in August 2002 (Burrough et al, 2006). In this one-on-one meeting, Powell recommended that Bush take the issue to the UN; the ignored resolutions were the UN's (Powell, 2013). In response to Bush's decision to take the UN route, Cheney made a number of comments in a speech to the "Veterans of Foreign Wars" (VFW) group, regarding the efficacy of the UN route. In this speech, Cheney declared, "A person would be right to question any suggestion that we should just get inspectors back into Iraq, and all our worries will be over. Saddam has perfected the game of cheat and retreat, and is very skilled in the art of denial and deception." (Cheney, 2002). This speech "effectively shot down" the proposal of going to the UN in Powell's opinion, and Bush reportedly felt the speech was pushing him towards a particular option (Powell, 2013; Straw, 2012, p374; Rice, 2011, p181). This disagreement over the appropriate route to take in the confrontation with Iraq was highly visible at the time²⁹. This reaction to the decision from Bush to go to the UN, from Cheney the mindguard, shows an attempt to steer the decision-making group away from a path that the mindguards feared would lead the group to become bogged down (Cheney, 2013; Woodward, 2004, 148-153), and potentially exposed to alternative solutions. To protect against this alternative solution, the mindguards

²⁸ Intelligence and Analysis on Iraq: Issues for the Intelligence Community. 29/07/2004. Available at: https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0001245667.pdf

²⁹ A *The New York Times* article published a week after Cheney's VFW speech commented on the evident split between Powell and Rumsfeld, and Cheney and Rice, and went on to quote Bush's spokesman Scott McClellan effectively reiterating Cheney's sentiment: "Inspections are not enough" and "They may still be hiding something" (Dao, 2002).

disparaged the UN route, raising doubts of the possibility of inspections achieving the goal of disarming Iraq of WMD, as Cheney did in his VFW speech.

In an important example of dissenting voices being pressured, Bush asked Tenet to compose a legal-like case against Iraq, placing the emphasis on WMD, to present to the UN to make the US decision-making group's case for invading Iraq (Woodward, 2004, p288). When Tenet gave Bush the evidence they had composed on the 21st of December 2002, Bush was less than impressed (Pfiffner, 2007). Bush told Tenet, "Nice try. I don't think this is quite – it's not something Joe public would understand or would gain a lot of confidence from." (Woodward, 2004, p247-250). Those in the meeting decided that Scooter Libby, Chief of Staff to Cheney, would work on the intelligence in Tenet's case to write a more legal-like case with this intelligence (Woodward, 2004, p289). The reaction to the presentation that Libby brought to a meeting on the 25th of January 2003 reveals the differences between those convinced of the stereotyped view of Iraq as linked to Al Qaeda held in the US decision-making group, and those with doubts. Libby spoke for an hour, commencing each new section with "blunt" conclusions. There were a number of expressions of doubt or concern at the case. For example, Karen Hughes and Richard Armitage³⁰. Wolfowitz, however, as a mindguard and proponent of this stereotyped view and of the need to invade Iraq, thought it was a good case (Woodward, 2004, p289)³¹. Steve Hadley proposed that Powell make the presentation to the UN given his credibility there, which Bush concurred with, viewing Powell's known opposition to be relevant, too (Woodward,

³⁰ Karen Hughes (former Counsellor to the President) considered the presentation to have not fulfilled its purpose as a communication exercise; her consideration was that the presentation needed to be just the facts (Woodward, 2004, p289). Richard Armitage, deputy to Powell at the State Department, felt Libby had overreached in the argument (Woodward, 2004, p290).

³¹ This may have been because he also subscribed to the view Rumsfeld vocalised – a lack of evidence not meaning there was nothing there (Woodward, 2004, p290).

2004, p290; Bush, 2010, p245). Powell reviewed the dossier passed to him from Libby privately, with his chief of staff in his private office (Burrough et al, 2007). Powell decided to vet the intelligence in the dossier personally, taking it to the CIA to be close to the analysts, and receiving help from Rice and Tenet among other CIA officials (Rice, 2011, p200; Tenet, 2007, p563). In short, the process of compiling Powell's UNSC presentation can be seen to be replete with examples of pressure being placed on the dissenting voice in the group, Powell, and pressure to publicly align with the dominant group view³². This process occurred via the authoring of the legal-like case by Libby, an acolyte of Cheney the mindguard, who wrote a case that fitted with the position of the mindguards, emphasising both stereotyped views. After he received the dossier, Powell also received pressure from the mindguards. When Powell was given the brief, Cheney called him to recommend the dossier that Libby had written. When interviewed afterwards, Cheney was defensive about the call: "We weren't trying to say this is what you have to use; we were trying to be helpful" (Cheney, 2013). Powell's intelligence vetting process emphasises the differences between the mindguards and the "holdovers"³³. Powell referred to the process as "trimming the garbage" (DeYoung, 2006, p445). He wanted to be able to declare "What you are about to see is an accumulation of facts", as he did in his speech on the 5th of February (Powell, 2003). When working on the brief together, Powell told Tenet that his perception was that there had been close coordination with the intelligence community in its composition (Tenet, 2007, p563). Tenet informed him that this was not the case; the CIA had not cleared a large quantity of what was within the dossier (Tenet, 2007, p563), revealing

³² Some around Bush called the speech Powell's "buy-in" (Woodward, 2004, p315), indicating their wish to have an outlier to the mindguard view be tied to the mindguard-promoted group view.

³³ Kwiatkowski

the extent of the OSP's influence³⁴. This vetting was not entirely successful, and there was controversy over the inclusion of intelligence from a source codenamed "Curveball", whose allegations were included, despite his reported unreliability (Drumheller, 2006, p247; Silbermann and Robb, 2005, p96-103). Powell's intelligence vetting process was conducted with an emphasis on discrediting the information in the brief (Prados, 2007, p201), precisely the opposite of the "hypothesis-based" analysis of the OSP, who had provided much of the intelligence in the Libby dossier (Ryan, 2006; Tenet, 2007, p525).

There was a distinct split in the response to Powell's presentation of the US case for invading Iraq.³⁵ Some around Bush called the speech Powell's "buy-in" (Woodward, 2004, p315), indicating their wish to have an outlier to the mindguard view be tied to the mindguard-promoted group view. After Powell's case to the UN general assembly on the 5th of February, in which he had responded to Blix's 27th January report, Blix made a second report on the 14th of February, a report that made a number of responses to Powell's case (Woodward, 2004, p315). In this 14th of February report, Blix dismissed Powell's concerns regarding trucks in which US analysts described the Iraqi regime as using to deal with chemical contaminations, saying that it was a declared site, which the Iraqi regime would have expected Blix's teams to investigate (Powell, 2003; Blix, 2003). Powell had declared that the Iraqis knew where the

³⁴ The repeated requests to find intelligence supportive of the views of the mindguards allowed this intelligence from "Curveball" to be passed to the State department officials working on Powell's speech to the UN, and was included on the dramatic fourth slide of Powell's PowerPoint presentation (Powell, 2003; Drumheller, 2006, p247; Drogin, 2008, p181-190; Prados, 2007, p284).

³⁵ A telling judgement from Sir Jeremy Greenstock (British Ambassador to the UN), exemplifying the limitations of Powell's speech, was that "for the converted it was impressive" (Greenstock, 2016, p 175). He and Straw considered the speech "powerful" and "compelling" (Greenstock, 2016, p175; Straw, 2012, p384). A UN official is reported as having said of the speech, "Everyone felt uncomfortable, to see a man saying these lies. You knew it was bullshit" (Burrough et al, 2007). The speech did persuade some of the US audience of the case made by the US decision-making group. For instance, a renowned Bush critic wrote, "I can only say that he persuaded me, and I was as tough as France to convince" (McGrory, 2002).

inspectors intended to investigate in advance. Again, Blix and ElBaradei shot this idea down (Powell, 2003; Blix, 2003; Burrough et al, 2007). This added to an already tense relationship between the US decision-making group and the UN inspectors. At a meeting in the State Department, a frustrated Wolfowitz leant across the table to ask Blix belligerently, “Mr. Blix, you do know that the Iraqis have Weapons of Mass Destruction?” (ElBaradei, 2011), reflecting mindguard Wolfowitz’s inability to understand a view other than that of the US decision-making group. Weeks after this, in a short, blunt meeting, mindguard Cheney informed Blix and ElBaradei that the US decision-making group was willing to act against the inspectors if they did not agree with the US decision-making group’s position³⁶. Here, Cheney was building on the groundwork that he had put in place when Bush first decided to go down the UN route in September 2002, where, in his VFW speech, he had discredited the viability of weapons inspections (Cheney, 2002)³⁷.

The US mindguards had a crucial impact on two aspects of the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003: the production and use of intelligence, and the UN process. Their refusal to accept the intelligence assessments provided by the established intelligence apparatus led to the mindguards both pressuring the established intelligence apparatus, and creating an “alternative intelligence network” (Lucas, 2011). This alternative network consisted of the OSP, which then assisted the

³⁶ The Vice President told Blix and ElBaradei that “The US is ready to work with the United Nations inspectors, but we are ready to discredit the inspections in order to disarm Iraq” (ElBaradei, 2011).

³⁷ There was a similar interaction between Blix and a member of the Bush Administration following Blix’s second report. John Wolf (Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Non-proliferation) met Blix at the end of February. Wolf walked into Blix’s office at the UN and dramatically tossed a dossier with surveillance pictures on Blix’s desk, demanding to know why the inspectors had not referred to the discovery of a UAV drone and cluster bombs that had been adapted to distribute chemical weapons to evidence Iraqi non-compliance (Burrough et al, 2007). In response, Blix calmly pointed out that the UAV drone was not illegal, and that the cluster bombs were old scrap (Burrough et al, 2007). Writing of his interactions with Wolf, Blix described the disdain displayed by Wolf as shocking, which Blix interpreted as having roots in the US decision-making group (Blix, 2011, p201).

mindguards in placing further pressure on the established intelligence network, assisted the mindguards in maintaining both stereotyped views of Iraq held in the US decision-making group, and provided much of the intelligence in the case Powell made to the UN. The mindguarding component of this groupthink explanation provides insight into the manipulation of the intelligence process, and the means of bringing dissenting voices into the group view. As is shown in the following paragraphs, in the UK, mindguards placed the emphasis on the question of whether UK involvement in the invasion of Iraq was legal, seeking to ensure that the UK government's legal opinion would be that it was legal. Again, this explanation elucidates upon how the splits within the decision-making group were resolved in the UK group as they were in the US group.

In the UK decision-making group, those who operated as mindguards operated for a shorter period within the decision-making process. The actions of mindguards focused upon the legal advice of the attorney general, assessing the legality of the invasion of Iraq. Jonathan Powell, Jack Straw, and Tony Blair were all mindguards in the UK, as outlined in Figure 1. Jonathan Powell's position as Blair's Chief of Staff means that his position as a mindguard is unsurprising. In an interview, Sir David Manning's description of Jonathan Powell as the "presiding genius over the Blair organisation" supports this characterisation (Manning, 2020). Jonathan Powell, when interviewed as part of this thesis, described his role as "a buffer or shock-absorber between Tony Blair and the other people who were trying to get his attention" (Powell, 2020), matching well with the definition of the function of a mindguard.

The UK mindguards operated between September 2002 and March 2003. Necessarily, this focus on the question of legality meant that the mindguards focused attention on the Attorney General Lord Peter Goldsmith, the person who would provide the legal

opinion that would inform the government's actions, and determine whether the UK could become involved in the invasion of Iraq. As Janis sets out, were a mindguard to impart the "distressing information", forcing the decision-making group to reconsider the position they had taken, this could slow the progress of the group in making the decision the leader wants to make (Janis, 1982, p258). In the UK decision-making group, the distressing information was the debate over whether the UK involvement in the invasion of Iraq would be legal. The question of whether military action against Iraq would be legal was crucial to senior military and civil service officials interviewed in this research³⁸ (Boyce, 2018; Turnbull, 2018), and senior civil service members³⁹. To do this, the mindguards in the UK decision-making process placed pressure on Lord Goldsmith, the Attorney General, and delayed requesting a formal legal opinion until the opinion would be favourable to their position. Using this delay to persuade the attorney general round to their view, the delaying actions enabled the other aspects of their mindguarding.

The topic of the delay in the request for the Attorney General's Legal Advice was the target of comment in the years after the Iraq war. Goldsmith and Sir Michael Wood, the principal Legal Adviser to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) during this decision-making process, testified that they felt that "there were various stages where he [Attorney General Lord Goldsmith] was not asked" for his legal opinion (Wood, 2010; Goldsmith, 2010, p68)⁴⁰. Goldsmith repeatedly received instruction that his advice was not required yet. On the 11th of November (2002), 9th of December, and 19th of

³⁸ Brummel-Hemming. Iraq – Position of the CDS. 14/03/2003. Rycroft-McDonald. Iraq: Legal and Military Aspects. 11/03/2003.

³⁹ Rycroft-McDonald. Iraq: Legal and Military Aspects. 11/03/2003.

⁴⁰ In fact, when people queried when the appropriate juncture for Goldsmith to offer his legal Advice was, the response was that there "was a danger of getting ahead of" themselves, delaying the legal opinion being formally received. Manuscript comment Powell on Memo McKane to Manning. 18/06/2002.

December, Goldsmith was informed that his advice was not required yet⁴¹ (IraqInquiry, 2010, s5 p21). In a meeting with Jonathan Powell, Blair's Chief of Staff suggested to Goldsmith that he send a draft of his legal advice to Blair before he published the formal legal advice, a suggestion with which Goldsmith acquiesced readily. Goldsmith sent this draft on the 14th of January (2003), and, on the 16th of January (2003), a Cabinet meeting was organised to discuss this draft advice (IraqInquiry, 2011, S5, p48). There was no discussion of the advice at this Cabinet meeting; indeed, Blair did not refer to the legal advice at all in the meeting⁴². Both Blair and Straw mentioned the possibility of needing to act without UN approval⁴³. Here, Blair was restricting the access to the legal opinion that he was well aware would cause problems within Cabinet and the government as a whole. He knew, as Short said in the 16th of January Cabinet meeting, that UN approval was crucial to maintaining support for confronting Iraq militarily⁴⁴. Later that month, Goldsmith's staff communicated with Number 10, asking whether Blair would like the Attorney General to give him a considered legal opinion prior to the Prime Minister's meetings in the US⁴⁵. The response from Number 10 was that the legal opinion was not required before the coming weekend⁴⁶, yet again delaying the opinion⁴⁷. This restriction in access to the legal opinion represents the

⁴¹ Minute, Brummel. 11/11/2002. "Iraq: Note of telephone conversation between the Attorney General and Jonathan Powell". Minute, Brummel. 19/12/2002. "Iraq: Note of Meeting at No. 10 Downing Street – 4.00pm, 19 December 2002".

⁴² Cabinet Conclusions. 16/01/2003.

⁴³ This was despite Blair being aware that such an action would be illegal under international law in the Attorney General's opinion (IraqInquiry, 2011, S5, p48)

⁴⁴ Cabinet Conclusions. 16/01/2003.

⁴⁵ Letter Adams to Manning. 28/01/2003. "Iraq".

⁴⁶ Manuscript comment Morgan on Letter Adams to Manning. 28/01/2003. "Iraq".

⁴⁷ Tellingly, Goldsmith still felt it necessary to express his current view of the legality, despite Number 10 informing Goldsmith that it was not necessary. He sent Blair a memo, outlining his provisional view of the legal position, the third time he felt it necessary to give Blair his view of the legal position without this being requested (IraqInquiry, 2011, s5, p56). Memo Goldsmith to Blair. 30/01/2003. "Iraq".

most enduring aspect of the mindguarding that occurred in the UK decision-making group.

For months, from July 2002 until January 2003, there were repeated opportunities to introduce the legal opinion to the decision-making process in the UK, and repeated points where the instruction to Attorney General Lord Goldsmith was to not give an opinion. Whilst this delaying was occurring, the UK government was proceeding under the assumption that the UK would be involved militarily in any military operation against Iraq, an assumption that commenced seven months prior to the confirmation of a legal basis existing for UK involvement without a further UNSC decision⁴⁸. This delaying action gave the mindguards in the UK decision-making group greater opportunity to change Goldsmith's opinion. If he had given his formal legal advice, then changing his position on the legality would have constituted a greater shift than if they were persuading him to alter his legal opinion, prior to formally expressing the position. The delaying of Goldsmith expressing his formal legal position serves to highlight how specific the focus of the UK mindguards was, solely upon this legal opinion. The delay in expressing the formal legal position also allowed the decision-making group to proceed through the decision-making process, becoming more involved in the confrontation with Iraq and planning for a military confrontation, without the question of the legality slowing this progress.

Indeed, on the 30th of July 2002, Goldsmith sent a memo to Blair and circulated it to the MoD and FCO, outlining his legal opinion at that point, emphasising the need for a UNSC resolution to justify military action against Iraq⁴⁹. Jonathan Powell described the event in an interview: "Tony got very cross and got me to get it [the memo] back

⁴⁸ Minute, Rycroft to Manning. 23/07/2002. "Iraq: Prime Minister's meeting 23/07/2002".

⁴⁹ Minute Goldsmith to Prime Minister, 30 July 2002, 'Iraq'.

from these two ministries” (Powell, 2020). The official record that Jonathan Powell made of this at the time notes, “I phoned Private Offices in FCO and MOD on 30/7, at the request of the AG [Attorney General] (and in his presence) to ask them to destroy their copies to avoid further leaks”⁵⁰. This demonstrates the response of the Mindguards to Goldsmith seeking to circumnavigate them, which was to destroy the copies of the memos. Those memos represented information that the mindguards did not want to be widely known – that resolution military action would not be legal without a further UNSC.

The mindguards did more than solely delay the legal opinion multiple times; once Goldsmith expressed a legal position that he saw a “reasonable case” for invading Iraq without the need for another resolution on the 27th of February (2003), they kept this change in his view to those within Number 10. It was not until the formal advice that Goldsmith submitted to Blair on the 7th of March that other relevant Cabinet ministers were able to see that Goldsmith had altered his opinion (IraqInquiry, 2011, s5, p106). Straw, Hoon, John Reid (Minister without Portfolio), and the Chiefs of Defence Staff all saw this formal legal opinion. However, Gordon Brown (Chancellor of the Exchequer), Clare Short, and the senior officials within their departments did not have the opportunity to see the legal opinion at this point (IraqInquiry, 2011, s5, p106). The restriction of Short from discovering the change in the UK legal position, which would downplay the reliance on a second UNSC Resolution, is not surprising. Her strong emphasis of the importance of the UN approval for military action in the Cabinet meeting on the 16th of January⁵¹, and her position as a dissenting voice later in the decision-making process, made the mindguard’s prevention of her seeing the legal

⁵⁰ Note (handwritten) Powell, 31 July 2002, ‘File’.

⁵¹ Cabinet Conclusions. 16/01/2003.

opinion to be expected. Less expected from a groupthink analytical stance is the prevention of Straw from seeing the change in Goldsmith's legal opinion until the 7th of March. He saw the change of opinion prior to the Cabinet at large, but his position as a mindguard leads to the expectation that he would be made aware of this change earlier still, as opposed to ten days later. This suggests an interesting component of the groupthink explanation of this case. The UK mindguards, or at least Blair, restricted information not just to other mindguards, but to the mindguards already in the loop. This reflects that they were not aware that they were operating as mindguards: in line with Janis (1982), they acted in this way unintentionally. Whilst this is not in line with the cases of groupthink that Janis identifies, it is in line with the theoretical assertions he makes.

While the mindguards delayed the legal advice from Goldsmith, the Attorney General was the target of a number of attempts to persuade him to change his mind to agree with the mindguard position. A number of face-to-face meetings occurred, with those convinced of the mindguard's understanding of the legal position being the primary form of this pressure. When Goldsmith gave his understanding of the UK legal position after the negotiation and passing of UNSC Resolution 1441, expressing the view that it was not sufficient to authorise military action without a further second resolution, Jonathan Powell sent Blair a memo recommending that Sir Jeremy Greenstock speak with Goldsmith⁵². The intention being that because Greenstock was aware of the details of the negotiations within the Security Council, he could break down the intention behind the wording of the Resolution. When Goldsmith met with Greenstock, Goldsmith felt that the meeting had been informative. However, he made it very clear in a memo that the discussion had not altered his position. There were further attempts

⁵² Note, Powell to Blair [Undated][Untitled].

to persuade Goldsmith to change his view. One of the means used by the mindguards to achieve this was to target other legal advisors around the Attorney General. Straw sent a memo to Sir Michael Wood, challenging the legal advice that Wood had sent him in a letter, clarifying the legal position in relation to comments that Straw had made publicly⁵³. Straw had made some comments, such as “we do not regard [the existing SCR] as an inadequate basis...”, which Wood pointed out was in disagreement with the advice of Law officers, whose past advice had been “to the effect that the revival of the authorisation to use force in SCR 678 requires a further decision from the Council”⁵⁴. This initiated an exchange of memos between Straw and Goldsmith that represents significant pressure from the mindguard Straw, and a reaction against this pressure by Goldsmith⁵⁵. At the same time as mindguards exerted pressure on Wood by Straw, Goldsmith was placed under pressure himself. His unsolicited legal advice from the 30th of January was not well received in Number 10. Blair’s annotation, “I just don’t understand this”⁵⁶, reflected the difference between those within the decision-making group who thought a second resolution would be required (Goldsmith), and those who did not (Straw, Blair, Powell)⁵⁷. Straw sent another letter to Goldsmith, telling him that he would be “very grateful if you would carefully consider my comments below before coming to a final conclusion and I would appreciate a conversation with

⁵³ Letter, Wood to Straw. 04/10/2002. “Iraq: International Law”.

⁵⁴ Ibid. Later in the decision-making process, Wood sent another letter to Straw in the same vein, once again providing some clarifying statements in reference to comments from Straw. In his memo responding to the second letter from Wood, Straw wrote that he did not “accept” these points of clarification. Straw wrote of his experience as Home Secretary, where he recalled regularly seeing legal advice with more than one view of the legal situation Straw used this experience of domestic legality advice to challenge the advice given by Wood, responding to his Legal officer by challenging his specialist understanding of international law with no expertise on Straw’s behalf. Letter, Wood to Straw. 24/01/03. “Iraq: The Legal Basis for Use of Force”.

⁵⁵ Letter, Goldsmith to Straw. 03/03/2003. [Untitled]. Memo, Straw to Goldsmith. 20/02/2003. [Untitled].

⁵⁶ Manuscript comment Blair on Memo Goldsmith to Blair, 30/01/2003. [Untitled]

⁵⁷ In the same vein, the PM’s private secretary for Foreign Affairs, Matthew Rycroft, annotated the memo as follows: “I specifically said that we did not need further advice this week”. Manuscript comment Rycroft on Memo Goldsmith to Blair, 30/01/2003. [Untitled]

you as well”⁵⁸. Here, Straw both challenged the position that Goldsmith had held throughout the decision-making process, and attempted to persuade him once again of the position that the mindguards held. These attempts to persuade and marginalise Goldsmith came from all three UK mindguards: Jonathan Powell, Straw, and Blair. Powell directed Goldsmith as a dissenting voice within the decision-making group to speak with Greenstock, who held the same view of the legal arguments as the mindguards. Straw placed pressure on those expressing the legal opinion that the mindguards disagreed with, challenging these opinions in an atypical manner (in the case of Wood), and attempting to persuade them of the view held by the mindguards in the decision-making group (Goldsmith and Wood). Blair expressed confusion at the legal advice received from Goldsmith, clearly challenging the assessment of Manning that Goldsmith’s advice was “Clear”, nurturing a belief that the legal advice from the attorney general was not correct, or was based on a misunderstanding⁵⁹.

Direct challenges to Goldsmith’s legal advice were only one aspect of the pressure from the mindguards. They also misrepresented Goldsmith’s position. When asked about these “Chinese whispers”, Goldsmith said that he felt that “there is a view taken of what your opinion is, which actually isn’t it” (Goldsmith, 2010, p53). He said that at the time he felt it necessary to confront this misunderstanding or misrepresentation of his view, before it became too late⁶⁰. These concerns over misrepresentations of his own position reveals only one of the means by which the mindguards in the UK decision-making group were able to pressure Goldsmith through misrepresenting his position, and diminish his position in the same way that Blair did so in his comment on

⁵⁸ Letter, Straw to Goldsmith, 06/02/2003. “Iraq: Second Resolution”.

⁵⁹ Manuscript comment Blair on Memo Goldsmith to Blair, 30/01/2003. [Untitled]

⁶⁰ He also felt that “there is also a problem that sometimes the qualifications to what you have said don’t seem to be heard as clearly as you intended them to be” (Goldsmith, 2010, p54).

Goldsmith's memo of the 30th of January⁶¹. There were two episodes where Goldsmith felt legal positions were stated by cabinet members, placing him in a difficult position. Hoon gave an interview that stated a legal position Goldsmith was not happy with, and Straw wrote a series of letters that challenged government legal advisors⁶². Goldsmith had a strong response each time, but felt the pressure⁶³. Months later, Straw actually went further, presenting his own legal understanding to the Cabinet, rather than the legal position of Goldsmith that was notably different⁶⁴, and rejecting the advice of FCO legal adviser Sir Michael Wood (IraqInquiry, 2011, s5 p11). Straw also made a public assertion on the legal position that Wood considered required challenge⁶⁵. This consistent pressure, misrepresentation, and challenging of opinion formed a significant component of the UK mindguard operations.

Some of those involved in this decision-making process have expressed views on the way some members were excluded from certain discussions. Clare Short has repeatedly asserted that exclusion from discussions occurred during this decision-making process. When seen through a groupthink lens, these excluding actions appear to be mindguarding actions. Short (2010) revealed that she had been forbidden by Blair from discussing the legal advice in Cabinet on the 17th of March 2003, and that when she had questioned the legal advice in Cabinet she had been "jeered" at to

⁶¹ Manuscript comment Blair on Memo Goldsmith to Blair, 30/01/2003. [Untitled]

⁶² Hoon gave an interview in March 2002 that Goldsmith considered misrepresented the UK legal position. Hoon thought he gave the view that should Iraq have attacked UK military forces, and the UK would be able to respond under a self-defence argument (Hoon, 2010, p64). Goldsmith read the transcript of the interview at the time, and believed that Hoon had declared in the interview that, at that point in March 2002, "there was a clear basis for military action at that stage, without any further authority" (Goldsmith, 2010, p18). In a letter to Hoon following this interview, Goldsmith described the difficulty of the position that he felt Hoon had placed him in, because he had not provided his legal advice yet. In a letter responding to Goldsmith, Hoon played down Goldsmith's concerns and again advised delaying the legal opinion. Letter, Hoon to Goldsmith, 14/04/2002. [Untitled].

⁶³ Letter, Goldsmith to Hoon, 28/03/2002. [Untitled].

⁶⁴ Cabinet Conclusions 14/11/2002.

⁶⁵ Letter, Wood to Straw. 04/10/2002. "Iraq: International Law"

stand down. In an example of the position Short was in at this time, an interviewee recounted a joke in Number 10/the Cabinet office at the time: What's Clare Short's favourite record? Should I stay or should I go? (Interview with author, 2018). Contrastingly, Robin Cook wrote in his memoir that he felt that the Cabinet had discussed the issue of Iraq (Cook, 2004), appearing to contradict this accusation of mindguarding.

As this section has argued, the mindguarding in the UK decision-making group focused on the question of the legality of military action against Iraq. Whilst the legal advice was presented to the Cabinet, the actions of the mindguards meant that the uncertainty over the legal advice was kept from Cabinet ministers. An interview with Lord Turnbull, the Cabinet Secretary between 2002 and 2005, supports this. "Cabinet discussed – Iraq was on the agenda every week". The problem as Lord Turnbull saw it was that "They didn't discuss the relevant issues" (Turnbull, 2018). As the Iraq Inquiry Executive report puts it:

"[The] Cabinet was not provided with written advice which set out, as the advice of 7 March had done, the conflicting arguments regarding the legal effect of resolution 1441 and whether, in particular, it authorised military action without a further resolution of the Security Council." (Iraq Inquiry, 2016, p70)

This explains the two contradictory perceptions of the Cabinet discussions from two figures who were not supportive of the decision-making process. It is the type of discussion of the legal advice that each wished for that differentiates between Cook and Short. For Short, a discussion of the issues surrounding the legality of military action against Iraq was absent. As the Iraq Inquiry asserts, most other Cabinet ministers were more interested in being told "whether or not there was a legal basis

for military action.” (Iraq Inquiry, 2016, p71). However, as this section argues, the crucial point for the mindguarding was prior to the legal opinion reaching the Cabinet. Jonathan Powell, Jack Straw, and Tony Blair all acted as mindguards within the UK decision-making group, operating as mindguards between September 2002 and March 2003, and focusing very specifically on the question of the legality of UK involvement in a military confrontation with Iraq. Each mindguard pressured legal advisors, either delaying the legal opinion⁶⁶ (IraqInquiry, 2010, s5 p21), misrepresenting the legal opinions in “Chinese whispers” within the government⁶⁷ (Goldsmith, 2010, p55), misrepresenting publicly (Hoon, 2010, p64), or directly challenging and disagreeing with the opinions⁶⁸. This process of determining the UK legal position was not typical, both for the public role that Goldsmith came to have in presenting this legal position and because of the pressure placed upon him to acquiesce to accepting the legal position that the mindguards took⁶⁹. The need to have a favourable legal opinion was present throughout the decision-making process; the UK military was direct in its wish to have legal approval for the action⁷⁰ (Boyce, 2018). There was also a concern expressed by some in the UK government that Blair would break international law if he did not have legal basis for invading Iraq⁷¹. The UK

⁶⁶ Minute, Brummel. 11/11/2002. “Iraq: Note of telephone conversation between the Attorney General and Jonathan Powell”. Minute, Brummel. 19/12/2002. “Iraq: Note of Meeting at No. 10 Downing Street – 4.00pm, 19 December 2002”.

⁶⁷ Minute, Brummel. 11/11/2002. “Iraq: Note of telephone conversation between the Attorney General and Jonathan Powell”.

⁶⁸ Letter, Wood to Straw. 04/10/2002. “Iraq: International Law”. Memo, Straw to Wood. 29/01/2003. “Iraq: The Legal Basis for Use of Force”. Memo, Straw to Goldsmith. 20/02/2003. [Untitled]. Manuscript comment Blair on Memo Goldsmith to Blair, 30/01/2003. [Untitled]. Letter, Straw to Goldsmith, 06/02/2003. “Iraq: Second Resolution”.

⁶⁹ Former Legal Advisor to the FCO Sir Frank Berman attested that openness was crucial to the relationship between the legal adviser and the client. Written Statement to the Iraq Inquiry, Sir Frank Berman. 07/03/2011. “The Processes for giving and Receiving Legal Advice”.

⁷⁰ Letter, Brummel to Hemming. 14/03/2003. “Iraq – Position of the CDS”. Letter, Rycroft to McDonald. 11/03.2003, “Iraq: Legal and Military aspects”.

⁷¹ Letter, Chaplin to Ricketts. 13/02/2003. “Iraq: The Endgame”.

decision-making group proceeded as if the UK would be involved in any military action against Iraq, an assumption made seven months prior to this legal basis emerging⁷². They could not have known the legal opinion would permit this until the 27th of February.

6.3. Stereotyped View of the Enemy

“One of the Symptoms of Groupthink is the members’ persistence in conveying to each other the clichés and oversimplified images of political enemies embodied in long-standing ideological stereotypes.” (Janis, 1972, p37).

In this section, the conceptualisations of the enemy held in the US and the UK decision-making groups are scrutinised. Crucial to understanding the theme of a “stereotyped view” held in a decision-making group is the term “stereotyped”. Oversimplifications and “clichés typify a stereotyped view. These views are “fixed”; they would not be altered by new information” (Janis, 1972, p37; Stevenson and Waite, 2011). It is important, therefore, that the decision-making groups held and maintained the stereotyped views throughout the decision-making process. The way the members of each respective decision-making group present the position of the decision-making group to the public is an important means to understanding the role of stereotypes in this decision-making process. This conceptualisation of the enemy by the decision-

⁷² Letter, Rycroft to Manning. 23/07/2002. “Iraq: Prime Minister’s Meeting, 23rd July”.

making groups in the US and the UK was closely linked to the analogical reasoning in both governments. The “Munich analogy” in the US, and the “Kosovo Analogy” in the UK, both relied on emphasising the consequences of inaction against Iraq, and both stereotyped views were closely linked to these analogies.

In the case of the decision-making groups in the US and the UK, there was one stereotyped view held by both decision-making groups, and one stereotyped view held in the US decision-making group alone. The stereotyped view of Saddam Hussein held by both the US and the UK decision-making groups was that the Iraqi dictator had “perfected the game of cheat and retreat”, and in the past had “gotten away with it”, as Blair put it when he described his feelings in the aftermath of the Desert Fox operation (Cheney, 2002; Blair, 2010, p222). This stereotype was a representation of Saddam Hussein made both internally, in both the US and the UK decision-making groups, and externally, when the decision-making groups were explaining and seeking support for their policies. The stereotyped view of Saddam Hussein held solely in the US decision-making group was that there was an operational relationship between the Iraqi regime and Al Qaeda. In the US decision-making group, this link continued. Bush asked his terrorism expert Richard Clarke to investigate the links between Iraq and Al Qaeda, despite Clarke telling Bush that there was no credible link earlier in that very meeting (Clarke, 2004, p32).

In the UK decision-making group, they immediately discounted this second stereotyped view of there being a link between Iraq and Al Qaeda. In the first meeting that Blair held after the attacks of 9/11, this view was discounted by Sir John Scarlett, Chair of the Cabinet Office Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), and his view was

accepted by those present (Campbell, 2012, p5)⁷³. They described the idea of there being practical cooperation between Iraq and Al Qaeda as “unlikely”, going on to declare that there was no “credible evidence of covert transfers of WMD related technology and expertise to terrorist groups”, and future assessments continued to discount the possibility of any link between Iraq and Al Qaeda throughout the decision-making process⁷⁴. The stereotyped view of Saddam Hussein as accomplished at avoiding the attempts of the international community to restrict his actions permeated the UK decision-making process, enduring from pre-9/11 to the invasion of Iraq. The UK decision-making group fixedly held to this stereotype throughout the decision-making process, unaltered by new, contradictory evidence, therefore showing the simplification in the view.

The origins of the stereotyped view of Iraq as being adept at avoiding the reach of the sanctions that the international community imposed to restrict its actions, particularly the development of WMD, are traceable to prior the events of 9/11. As outlined in the background chapter, following the first Gulf War, the US and the UK governments were very close in formulating the policy of sanctions and containment in confronting Iraq (IraqInquiry, 2011, S1.1, p23/4). Throughout the 1990s until 9/11, and arguably a short period afterwards, the UK government policy was that whilst the sanctions policy was not without problems, it was relatively effective (Ross, 2010, p5/6)⁷⁵. However, the UK decision-making group came to hold a view in late 2001 that the sanctions of the containment policy were ineffective, and no longer served their function (Blair, 2010b,

⁷³ The FCO requested an intelligence assessment from the JIC following the 9/11 attacks, and these JIC reports confirmed Scarlett’s view.

⁷⁴ November 2001 JIC Assessment (28/01/2001).

⁷⁵ Goulty to McKane. 20/10/2000. [Untitled]. McDonald to Manning. 03/12/2001. [Untitled].

p6; Powell, 2010, p21; Straw, 2010, p4; Hoon, 2010, p28)⁷⁶. The perception of Saddam Hussein as being adept at avoiding the international community's attempts to restrict and punish his actions was identifiable in the UK government in general, and the UK decision-making group, even at this early point in the decision-making process⁷⁷. Here, this stereotyped view is evidently both "fixed" and oversimplified. The sanctions regime that was such a crucial component of the containment policy deployed against Iraq was still having the desired effect in the view of the civil servants working on the policy, despite imperfections. However, a number of those in the UK decision-making group determined that the containment policy was no longer functional in late 2001 and early 2002 (Blair, 2010b, p6; Powell, 2010, p21; Straw, 2010, p4; Hoon, 2010, p28), in spite of this assessment of the UK government.

The UK decision-making group spoke of Iraq as a threat increasingly following the 9/11 attacks⁷⁸ (Murphy, 2002). There was a distinct difference between how the UK spoke of the threat posed by Iraq, and the US framing of the threat, with the Iraq-Al Qaeda link a key component in the US decision-making group. In the UK decision-making group, however, the risk of WMD proliferation was spoken of as the threat, with Saddam Hussein's character and potential terrorist acquisition of WMD also important. In the two months following 9/11, the containment policy was still pursued by the UK government, resulting in UNSCR 1382 being adopted in late November 2001, but the end of the containment policy came at the end of 2001 and the beginning

⁷⁶ This view was epitomised by Jonathan Powell's description of it in his Chilcot testimony, specifically when he described the containment policy regarding Iraq as "dying" (Powell, 2010, p21).

⁷⁷ JIC

McKane to Sawers. 15/02/2001. "Iraq".

Sedwill to Sawers. 20/02/2001. "Iraq: Policy Review".

McKane to Sawers. 06/04/2001. "Iraq".

JIC Assessment. 01/11/2000. "Iraq: Prospects f

⁷⁸ Blair to Bush. 04/12/2001. [Untitled]

Press Conference. Bush and Blair. 06/04/2002.

of 2002⁷⁹. In early 2002, Blair sent a note to Bush advocating for a policy that would slowly build to “regime change”, removing emphasis for the containment policy in the UK government⁸⁰. However, regardless of the policy for dealing with Iraq, the perception that Saddam Hussein was avoiding the restraints flowed through the post-Gulf war period until the 2003 Iraq war⁸¹.

Following adoption of UNSC resolution 1441, in November 2002, the stereotype of Saddam Hussein as being adept at avoiding the international community’s efforts to restrict their action again came to the fore. Hours after Iraq declared that it would comply with 1441, and declared the WMD and WMD-related materials it still held, Straw gave a lecture in which he welcomed this declaration “so far as it goes”. Heavy scepticism of the declaration, without the chance to study the said declaration in any detail, reveals this stereotype’s endurance and the disregard of new information it inculcated. Both Blair and Hoon added to Straw’s scepticism, with the former implying the declaration was dishonest, and Hoon compounded these statements when he spoke in the House of Commons: “All our experience shows that Saddam Hussein has only ever complied with the will of the international community when diplomacy has been backed by the credible threat of force”⁸². Blair again put forward this stereotyped view to Bush in a phone call with Bush, saying that he assumed that the UNMOVIC inspectors would find hidden WMD, which could be used to justify a form of military

⁷⁹ Letter. Dearlove to Manning. 26/02/2002. “US policy on Iraq”.

⁸⁰ Blair to Bush. 04/12/2001. [Untitled]

⁸¹ McKane to Sawers. 15/02/2001. “Iraq”.

Sedwill to Sawers. 20/02/2001. “Iraq: Policy Review”.

McKane to Sawers. 06/04/2001. “Iraq”.

⁸² Both Blair and Hoon added to Straw’s scepticism, with Blair implying the declaration was dishonest, and Hoon compounded these statements when he spoke in the House of Commons: “All our experience shows that Saddam Hussein has only ever complied with the will of the international community when diplomacy has been backed by the credible threat of force”. House of Commons, Official Report, 25 November 2002, columns 122-129.

action⁸³. Each of these comments, public and private, from the UK mindguards signalled an assumption that Iraq was in contravention of the UNSC resolutions, despite there being no report to confirm as such at this point⁸⁴.

The stereotype held in the UK decision-making group was unchanged in early 2003, and unchanged by the three reports that Dr. Blix, Head of UNMOVIC inspectors, made to the UNSC in January, February, and March 2003. The new information challenged the stereotyped view; however, they maintained their view. Upon entering Iraq for the first time since Saddam Hussein expelled inspectors, Blix did report experiencing a lack of proactive cooperation (Blix, 2010, p47-48). Despite reporting some obstruction in the first report, Blix and El Baradei did report visiting all suspicious sites⁸⁵, and reported no obstruction in the subsequent two presentations⁸⁶. In his 14th of February 2003 report, Blix also responded to the presentation by Powell nine days prior, highlighting the other interpretations that could be made of Powell's evidence⁸⁷. These challenges to the stereotype had little impact. Scarlett sent Blair a note to help him prepare for a TV interview, and the basis for two of four points on intelligence was that Saddam Hussein was/would conceal WMD or try to avoid detection⁸⁸. Blair maintained this position when he met Blix, telling Blix that Saddam "would try some trick to divide

⁸³ Letter Rycroft to McDonald, 26 November 2002, 'Prime Minister's Conversation with Bush, 26 November

⁸⁴ In this period, individuals in the wider UK government took on this stereotyped view in addition to the UK decision-making group. In JIC (Joint Intelligence Committee) assessments and letters between officials, they anticipated that Saddam Hussein would make a misleading declaration. JIC Assessment 14/11/2002. Letter, Gray to Bowen. 20/11/2002. "Iraq: Obfuscation under UNSCR 1441".

⁸⁵ Foreign Affairs Select Committee Examination of Witnesses. Minutes of evidence 27 June 2003. William Ehrman.

⁸⁶ UNSC "4707th Meeting Friday 14th February 2003" (S/PV. 4707).

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Note. Scarlett to Rycroft. 24/01/2003. "Iraq WMD: Intelligence points for the Prime Minister".

In a different TV interview, Blair reiterated the stereotyped view numerous times, declaring, "What we know is that he has this material..." and "We know... that there is an elaborate process... of concealment". BBC, 26 January 2003, Breakfast with Frost.

the Security Council”⁸⁹. Mindguards in the UK decision-making group continued to make these stereotyped views known publicly⁹⁰, and in private meetings⁹¹. In his own response to Powell’s presentation to the UNSC, Straw described the case as “powerful and authoritative”, which was the opposite view to Blix’s. Straw compounded this by thanking Powell for “laying bare the deceit practised by the regime of Saddam Hussein...”⁹². Despite all these challenges to the stereotyped view, the UK decision-making group maintained the stereotype publicly and privately.

The UK decision-making group held this stereotyped view of Saddam Hussein throughout the decision-making process. The stereotyped view resisted the introduction of new evidence, and framed the decision-making group’s perception throughout the decision-making process. Before Iraq took action, the assumption in the UK decision-making group was that this action would be concealing non-compliance or misleading the international community in some manner.

In contrast to the UK decision-making group, the US decision-making group held two stereotyped views of Saddam Hussein. The first was the stereotyped view shared by the UK decision-making group: that Saddam Hussein was skilled at avoiding the international community’s attempts to restrict his actions in relation to developing WMD. The US and the UK decision-making groups both held this view well prior to the events of 9/11, and this stereotyped view endured through the decision-making process until the invasion. The US decision-making group held an additional

⁸⁹ Letter Rycroft to Owen, 6 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s Meetings with Blix and El-Baradei, 6 February’.

⁹⁰ UN Security Council, ‘4701st Meeting Wednesday 5 February 2003’ (S/PV.4701). BBC, 26 January 2003, Breakfast with Frost.

The National Archives, 11 March 2003, Press Conference: PM Blair and Portuguese PM Barroso.

⁹¹ Letter Rycroft to Owen, 6 February 2003, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s Meetings with Blix and El-Baradei, 6 February’.

⁹² UN Security Council, ‘4701st Meeting Wednesday 5 February 2003’ (S/PV.4701).

stereotyped view that was not held in the UK decision-making group. This second stereotyped view emerged in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, and stated that there was a link between the regime of Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda. This second stereotyped view was an oversimplification – a conflation of enemies. It was also in contravention of intelligence presented to the US decision-making group (Clarke, 2004, p32; Woodward, 2004; Murphy and Purdum, 2009).

Members of the US decision-making group had a history of the stereotyped view shared by the UK decision-making group. Wolfowitz had written Op-ed pieces (Khalilzad and Wolfowitz, 1997), and signed a think-tank declaration from the Neoconservative “Project for a New American Century” (PNAC) stating this view⁹³. Cheney and Rumsfeld were also PNAC members, and PNAC was significant in advocating for military confrontation with Iraq throughout the 1990s (Altheide and Grimes, 2005)⁹⁴. The 1998 Rumsfeld Commission used the same “hypothesis-based analysis” that would be used by the OSP in 2002/2003 (Ryan, 2006), asking of Iraq “what would be required in the 1990s to have a program to acquire long-range missiles of ICBMs and what supported or negated such a hypothesis”, according to a Commission member (Garwin, 1998). The Rumsfeld Commission conclusions came to influence Neoconservative mistrust of the CIA, and accentuate the threat of Iraq.

Seventeen days into the new Bush administration, Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Powell attended a meeting chaired by Rice (Woodward, 2004, p13). The meeting did not develop a new approach to dealing with Iraq, but they did discuss the failure of the

⁹³ Statement of Principles. Project for a New American Century. 03/06/1997.

⁹⁴ In its “Rebuilding America’s Defences: Strategy, forces and resources for a new century” report, PNAC declared that should Bush win the presidency, Iraq should be a military target, and iterated the first stereotyped view of Iraq: “Saddam Hussein has been very effective in pulling our chain...”. Report, PNAC. “Rebuilding America’s Defences: Strategy, forces and resources for a new century”. September 2000.

sanctions regime, with an assumption that Iraq had managed to avoid the attempts by the international community to prevent them developing WMD⁹⁵. Rumsfeld went on to say, “Within a few years the US will undoubtedly have to confront a Saddam armed with nuclear weapons”, which was a claim based on Rumsfeld’s own opinion. Philip Mudd, the Director for Gulf Affairs on the White House National Security Council in early 2001, when interviewed for this research recalled Colin Powell having a focus on the sanctions regime during the transition and the early months of 2001 (Mudd, 2020). The difference between Powell and Rumsfeld over the sanctions regime were also evident to Mudd in February 2001. He recalled difficult negotiations within the Bush administration over how to improve the sanctions regime. Powell wanted the sanctions to be relaxed, focusing on the products that the US did not want Iraq to have, whereas Rumsfeld wanted to maintain the level of strictness (Mudd, 2020). The impact of this stereotyped view was seen in the summer of 2001 by a career Pentagon official. When he tried to review the DoD strategy for the removal of Saddam Hussein, he learned that the Pentagon was more focused upon the areas that could go well, rather than the potential pitfalls (Prados, 2007b).

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks of 9/11, the second stereotyped view emerged in the US decision-making group. It did not replace the initial stereotyped view held prior to the seismic impact of the 9/11 attacks, but added to that first stereotyped view. The combination of these two stereotyped views formed a significant part of the case for inclusion of Iraq in the War on Terror (Woodward, 2004). In the meetings held immediately after 9/11, Bush immediately assumed that Saddam

⁹⁵ In June 2001, a memo from Rumsfeld to Rice expressed a similar view. Rumsfeld wrote that the administration should consider stopping “the pretence of having a policy that is keeping Saddam ‘in the box’; when we know he has crawled a good distance out of the box”.

Hussein was involved in the terrorist attacks⁹⁶. Rumsfeld acted similarly, requesting that a lawyer in the DoD find “support” for there being a link between Iraq and Osama bin Laden from Wolfowitz hours after the 9/11 attacks, again expressing an assumption that such a link existed without question⁹⁷. When Clarke reported back to the President, once again saying that there was weak evidence of a link and ideological disagreement, the initial draft of this advice was rejected because Condoleezza Rice and Steve Hadley did not like this conclusion⁹⁸. This continued through 2001, with memos and notes used by members of the administration containing mentions of these stereotypes.⁹⁹

Both these stereotyped views continued into 2002. When Blix visited the White House in early 2002, a number of voices from the Bush Administration expressing both stereotyped views met him. Rice expressed concern that Saddam Hussein would use WMD, or give them to terrorists. Feith was concerned UN inspectors would learn how to conceal WMD in their own nations (Blix, 2004, p58). Wolfowitz questioned whether Blix was a security threat, and requested a CIA investigation (Pincus, 2002). These reactions to those opposing their stereotyped view reveals the strength of their conviction. Bush expressed both stereotyped views in his “Axis of Evil” State of the Union speech. He declared, “Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility towards America and to support terror” and “This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilised world” (Bush, 2001). These stereotyped views were spoken of publicly and privately

⁹⁶ “Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States”. 22/07/2004. Bush asked his terrorism expert Richard Clarke if there was a link between Al Qaeda and Iraq, despite Clarke telling Bush there was no link earlier in that very meeting (Clarke, 2004, p32; Woodward, 2004; Murphy and Purdum, 2009).

⁹⁷ Policy Note. “US Department of Defense, Office of the Undersecretary for Policy Notes from Stephen Cambone”. 11/09/2001.

⁹⁸ 9/11 Commission Report. Page 334.

⁹⁹ Rumsfeld Notes for meeting with Franks. 27/11/2001.

through the summer of 2002. The administration commissioned a CIA white paper on the intelligence on Iraq in May 2002. The CIA officer in charge of authoring the white paper criticised the intelligence used, criticism that was ignored, and the paper being circulated (Prados, 2007b). The Bush administration published this dossier on the 7th of September 2002, putting forward these stereotyped views, despite the reservations of the drafters of the white paper. The following day, The New York Times published an article based on leaks from the decision-making group, attesting that Iraq was seeking aluminium tubing for the development of a centrifuge, but ignoring intelligence community concerns, representing another oversimplification¹⁰⁰. Bush's speech to the UN on September 12th 2002 reinforced the first stereotyped view, even whilst accepting the UN route advocated for by Blair, and seeking UN weapons inspections to establish whether Iraq possessed WMD. Bush declared that within a year, Iraq might produce a nuclear bomb if Saddam Hussein obtained fissile material (Bush, 2002). Bush oversimplified the issue: the view of the US intelligence community had serious doubts whether Iraq had even attempted to obtain fissile material (Prados, 2007b). The fixed, enduring nature of these stereotypes are evident here, continuing despite the lack of evidence for these claims fulfilling the other criteria for a groupthink stereotyped view: oversimplification.

The US decision-making group maintained both stereotyped views through late 2002 and into 2003. In October 2002, Tenet sent Senator Bob Graham a letter explaining some intelligence, and repeating Bush's point that Saddam Hussein might assist terrorists in developing or obtaining WMD¹⁰¹ The State Department published a

¹⁰⁰ Gordon, MR. Miller, J. 2002. Threats and Responses: The Iraqis; US says Hussein intensifies quest for A-Bomb parts. The New York Times. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/08/world/threats-responses-iraqis-us-says-hussein-intensifies-quest-for-bomb-parts.html>

¹⁰¹ Letter. Tenet to Graham. 07/10/2002. [Untitled].

response to the Iraqi declaration required by UNSC Resolution 1441, outlining the “omissions” in the opinion of the US decision-making group, which concluded “None of these holes and gaps... are mere accidents, editing oversights or technical mistakes: they are material omissions”, reaffirming the initial stereotyped view¹⁰². The very title of Powell’s presentation to the UN Security Council on the 5th of February (2003) provides another visible declaration of the first stereotyped view of Iraq held by the US decision-making group: “Iraqi Denial and Deception for Weapons of Mass Destruction and Ballistic Missile Programmes” (Powell, 2003). Within the presentation, Powell set out the manner in which the Iraqi regime sought to deceive the international community – and precisely what they were denying they possessed – in the US decision-making group’s view. In the interactions between members of the US decision-making group and Blix and ElBaradei examined earlier, the stereotypes were in conversation. Wolfowitz’s comment, “Mr. Blix, you do know that the Iraqis have weapons of Mass Destruction?” (ElBaradei, 2011), is reflective of this.

The stereotyped views of Iraq held in the US decision-making process endured throughout the decision-making process. The first they shared with the UK decision-making group. The UK decision-making group did not share the second, which was the link between the Iraqi regime and Al Qaeda. In both decision-making groups, the internal use of the stereotyped view was significant to the path of the decision-making process. The close relationship between the actions of the mindguards in the US decision-making group and the two stereotyped views held within the decision-making group may be an explanation as to why this decision-making group maintained two stereotyped views. It does explain how the second stereotyped view, of the Iraqi-Al

¹⁰² Memo. US State Department. “Illustrative Examples of Omissions From the Iraqi Declaration to the United Nations Security Council”. 19/12/2002.

Qaeda link, endured throughout the decision-making process in spite of the evidence directly contradicting this stereotyped view.

6.4. Collective Rationalisation

“Collective efforts to rationalise in order to discount warnings or other information that might lead the members to reconsider their assumptions before they recommit themselves to their past policy decisions.” (Janis, 1982, p258).

Collective rationalisation is categorised by Janis as a form of “closed-mindedness” in a decision-making group (Janis, 1982, p174)¹⁰³. As such, collective rationalisation can assist group members in building confidence in the policy decisions they take, by merging their intellectual capital (Janis, 1982, p257). However, by ignoring warnings about the policy choices taken, not taking opportunities to review the alternatives, collective rationalisation can lead to poor decision-making. Collective rationalisation – the agreement with the group view to the exclusion of considerations of warnings and opportunities to reconsider the policy decision – occurred in the US and the UK decision-making groups.

In the US decision-making group, the collective rationalisation focused on the link between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda. As such, this theme of groupthink occurred in close relation to the other two themes of groupthink that occurred in the US decision-making group. The stereotyped view held only in the US was the focus of both the US mindguards and this collective rationalisation. The mindguards developed the

¹⁰³ As with some other aspects of Groupthink, this symptom is not necessarily always negative in a decision-making group. Collective rationalisation can “alleviate incipient fears of failure and prevent unnerving feelings of personal inadequacy, especially during a crisis” (Janis, 1982, p256).

stereotyped view, and promulgated it, leading to the stereotyped view being either upheld or unchallenged by all in the US decision-making group. In the UK decision-making group, collective rationalisation was that there was no need for a second resolution from the UN Security Council. Collective Rationalisation in the UK decision-making group and the mindguarding theme had links. Goldsmith, the target of the mindguard's persuasive efforts, came to change his understanding of the legal requirements of the UNSC resolution 1441. Collective rationalisation was broader than this, however, with Clare Short and Robin Cook being particularly significant figures, one of whom was persuaded and one who was not, respectively. Once Goldsmith had come to share the mindguard view, his expressions of agreement were important factors in persuading other group members. The close link between the mindguarding in the UK decision-making group and the collective rationalisation may explain how this theme occurred for a short period of time. The mindguarding occurred for a short period, dictating the period the collective rationalisation could occur in. As with the theme of mindguarding, collective rationalisation is closely related to the leadership styles of Bush and Blair and protected the analogical reasoning in both governments. Both leaders did not welcome information that contradicted their previously held views, meaning they did not encourage different views to be expressed. This both encouraged group members not to challenge the group view, and not to challenge the analogies used in the US or UK governments.

Some members of the US decision-making group held this view from the immediate aftermath of 9/11, despite the CIA finding with consistency "no credible link between Al Qaeda and Hussein" (Bamford, 2004, p289; Tenet, 2007; Packer, 2006, Woodward, 2006). Wolfowitz, a mindguard, expressed the view that he was 10% to 50% sure that Saddam Hussein was involved in the 9/11 attacks, going further than the stereotyped

views (Woodward, 2006)¹⁰⁴. Powell and Tenet, however, needed bringing round to either holding this view, or not opposing it. The reduction in expressing opposition to the collective rationalisation of the group view is both a crucial aspect of understanding the collective rationalisation that occurred in the US decision-making group, and a complex aspect of the decision-making process to study. Studying an absence of an expression of objection to the group view is difficult. However, in this decision-making process it is possible to scrutinise this absence. In the same meeting where Wolfowitz expressed his view that Saddam Hussein was involved in 9/11, Powell passionately argued against including Iraq in the War on Terror and declared that he saw no link between Saddam Hussein and the 9/11 attackers (Woodward, 2004, p25). Powell did not repeat this crucial expression of objection to the group view in subsequent crucial meetings.

In the first half of 2002, as the mindguards increased pressure on the established intelligence apparatus, there was little measurable change in those group members who did and did not hold the second stereotyped view. As the mindguard efforts increased, and OSP intelligence assessments began to challenge the intelligence agency assessments, public declarations of this stereotyped view started to emerge from the decision-making group. It is at this point in the decision-making group that the shorter period of occurrence of the collective rationalisation in the US decision-making process is evident. Bush made declarations of this view, saying that there were “longstanding ties” between Iraq and Al Qaeda, and that Al Qaeda members had received medical treatment in Iraq in speeches given in September and October

¹⁰⁴ Bush asked his counter-terrorism expert Richard Clarke whether there was a link between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda. He received an on-the-spot judgment and a more detailed follow-up report that negated the possibility of a link.

2002¹⁰⁵. Rice, Rumsfeld, and Cheney all referred to this view in speeches in autumn 2002 and early 2003¹⁰⁶. Tenet and Powell, however, did not make public declarations of this view, but also did not make public statements to contradict it¹⁰⁷. The CIA's view was that there was no link between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda. The NIE in October 2002, and a later report "Iraq and Al Qaeda: Interpreting a murky relationship", reaffirmed that view, going on to say that they could not find evidence of Saddam Hussein providing WMD to Al Qaeda. The "Iraq and Al Qaeda: Interpreting a murky relationship" report went on to be reported to the CIA politicisation ombudsman for raising the possibility of "limited offers of cooperation"¹⁰⁸. Tenet accepted the group view earlier than Powell did, because the intense mindguard pressure was on the intelligence apparatus.

Powell's rationalisation of the collective view came a few months after Tenet's, specifically in the first weeks of 2003. Powell's process of rewriting the speech that he made at the UN focused on ensuring that the intelligence that he would use in the speech was accurate and reliable¹⁰⁹. Tenet's reassurances focused on a particular source's reliability, ignoring the doubts expressed within the CIA as to this source¹¹⁰. Powell's presentation represents the extent to which he engaged in the collective

¹⁰⁵ Rose Garden. 28/09/2002

Radio Address. 07/10/02

Cincinnati. 14/10/02.

¹⁰⁶ Rice. 15/11/2002. NATO Speech

Rice. 09/03/2003. Face the Nation.

Rumsfeld. 25/09/2002. Warsaw Press Conference.

Cheney. 16/03/2003.

¹⁰⁷ In fact, Powell garnered significant attention from the OSP in this period for his perceived opposition to the view. As Col. Kwiatkowski said, "Colin Powell, for example. There was a lot of frustration with Powell" (Cooper, 2004). Tenet acquiesced to the group view before Powell.

¹⁰⁸ CIA, 2002. "Iraq and Al Qaeda: Interpreting a murky relationship".

¹⁰⁹ Powell had been so frustrated at the draft he received he had almost thrown it away, until Tenet had reassured him about the intelligence it contained (Mayer, 2002, p136).

¹¹⁰ Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Report. 08/09/2006. "Postwar findings about Iraq's WMD programs and links to Terrorism and how they compare with Prewar assessments".

rationalisation. The title of one of the slides was “Iraq is harbouring terrorists, including Al Qaida”, a statement he was strongly opposed to only eighteen months previously. Richard Armitage, Powell’s close confidant and deputy at the State Department, gave an interview in late 2001 where he represented the view held by Powell at this point. “A lot of folks out of the administration have spent a lot of time and energy in trying to tie Iraq and Al Qaeda together, but this far it hasn’t been able to be done. My view is, we’ve got enough problems with Iraq with its Weapons of Mass Destruction” (Mann, 2004, p). The collective rationalisation of the group view by Tenet then enabled the collective rationalisation of that view by Powell. Both Tenet and Powell publicly declared their collective rationalisation, and both made public declarations at the direction of other members of the decision-making group. The decision-making group assigned the speech to the UN to Powell, and Rice ordered Tenet to provide clarity on the NIE to quell rumours that the NIE contradicted the administration’s case on Iraq.

The collective rationalisation in the UK decision-making group was that a second UNSC Resolution to provide legal permission for an invasion of Iraq was only a requirement if it was possible to acquire. As with the US decision-making group, the work of the mindguards in the UK decision-making group complimented the collective rationalisation. The mindguards focused on the question of the legality of the invasion of Iraq, and managed how the government reached the legal opinion, and how this was discussed. The collective rationalisation occurred during the last stages of the mindguard’s actions, and focused on the belief that a second UNSC resolution was not required to justify invading Iraq. The collective rationalisation occurred over a short period, relative to the decision-making process as a whole. The alteration in view of Goldsmith took less than four months. The “closed-mindedness” which typifies collective rationalisation in a decision-making process came in two key aspects. Firstly,

it excluded arguments that a second resolution would be required to justify military action against Iraq, even when for a period the Attorney General was expressing these arguments. Secondly, the “closed-mindedness” prevented discussion of concerns about whether the extent of the non-compliance from Iraq was sufficient to justify military action. Interviewee John Williams, Chief Media Advisor in the FCO during this period, encapsulated this closed-mindedness when he gave his view of why groupthink occurred in this process, “Because the quality [of decision-making] was so much driven by Number 10, which did not have a culture of challenging” (Williams, 2018).

The UK decision-making group collectively rationalised that they did not legally require a second UNSC resolution to permit the invasion of Iraq. However, they continued to pursue a second UNSC resolution until the week before the invasion, because they considered that, politically, it would be better to have a second resolution if possible. Following the passing of Resolution 1441, Goldsmith gave the official UK legal position that a second UNSC resolution would be required. However, by this point in the decision-making process, Goldsmith had collectively rationalised the mindguard view that no second resolution was necessary. Blair and Straw held this view that a second resolution, following resolution 1441, may not be required to justify military action against Iraq in the autumn of 2002, despite Goldsmith dispensing with that view in October 2002¹¹¹. When Goldsmith gave Blair the draft of his legal advice on the 14th of January 2003, he again said that resolution 1441 was not sufficient to authorise the use of military force¹¹². At the following Cabinet meeting, Straw expressed optimism

¹¹¹ Note Adams, 21 October 2002, ‘Iraq: Record of Attorney General’s Telephone Conversation with the Foreign Secretary, 18 October’.

¹¹² Minute [Draft] [Goldsmith to Prime Minister], 14 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Interpretation of Resolution 1441’.

at getting a second resolution passed in the UNSC, but this was also the point at which the idea that it may not be required to have a second resolution was first expressed to the UK decision-making group¹¹³ and on which Blair placed particular emphasis, with Goldsmith in attendance. The unwillingness of the mindguards in the UK decision-making group to accept this legal advice was crucial to maintaining this view that would come to be collectively rationalised.

Throughout early 2003, the narrative was that a second resolution would be helpful to justifying military action, but not essential or required¹¹⁴. This was incompatible with Goldsmith's legal advice and was a crucial step in the collective rationalisation (IraqInquiry, 2016, p66-68). This was a crucial alteration in the narrative, altering the position from there being an absolute requirement for a second resolution to the second resolution being the best approach, but not essential. In late February 2003, the UK co-sponsored a draft resolution at the UN that Blair called Saddam Hussein's "final opportunity" from UNSCR 1441¹¹⁵. In response to this draft resolution, Russia, France, and Germany issued a memo, stating that in their opinion the case for military action had not been met at that point¹¹⁶. At the same time, there was a government motion voted on in the House of Commons reaffirming support for UNSC resolution 1441, and supporting the government in seeking to disarm Iraq¹¹⁷. The government motion passed; however, an opposing amendment was made to the motion, inviting

Days later, Blair wrote in a memo to Jonathan Powell that he thought a second resolution may not be required. However, Blair was not convinced at this point that resolution 1441 was enough to justify an invasion of Iraq. Note. [Handwritten]. Blair to Powell 14/01/03. [Untitled].

¹¹³ Cabinet Conclusions. 16/01/2003.

¹¹⁴ Blair publicly declared the view in front of a Liaison Committee in January in a TV interview, and reiterated it in a note to Bush in January, saying that a second resolution was "the best protection" rather than legally required as Goldsmith had told him ten days previously. Further, Blair said he would be willing to proceed without a second resolution (Liaison Committee and Blair note to Bush; BBC Newsnight interview).

¹¹⁵ 185 Telegram 288 UKMIS New York to FCO London, 20 February 2003, 'Iraq: 19 February: Draft Resolution'.

¹¹⁶ This built upon a statement with the same message made on the 10th of February.

¹¹⁷ House of Commons report, 26/02/2003, Column 265.

the House of Commons to “find the case for military action against Iraq as yet unproven”¹¹⁸, which was supported by 199 MPs. The atmosphere domestically, and in the UNSC, was in opposition to the view of the US and the UK decision-making groups that Iraq was in breach of 1441, and to the two groups’ approach that the level of breach was sufficient to obtain a second resolution justifying military action. It took until the 27th of February for Goldsmith’s legal advice to change: to agree with the position that Blair had initially expressed at the start of the month. Goldsmith informed the meeting that a “reasonable case” could be made for 1441 being used to revive authorisation for the use of force that resolution 678 had provided previously. Goldsmith reinforced this, stating that, to make this case, the UK government needed to avoid giving the impression that it regarded it as necessary that a second resolution be passed in order to justify military action. This legal advice represents the internalisation of the Collective rationalisation. The advice enabled the collective rationalisation, adding to the perception a second resolution might not be necessary. By saying that the decision-making group should not signal a belief that they needed to obtain a second resolution, it also enforced within the decision-making group that they could not express opposition to the approach taken by the decision-making group for the legal reasons, legitimating collective rationalisation.

In early March 2003, despite uncertainty in the approach¹¹⁹, Straw told the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) that resolution 1441 provided legal authority sufficient to justify military action against Iraq¹²⁰. Short showed the veracity of Blair’s view that a

¹¹⁸ House of Commons report, 26/02/2003, Column 367-371.

¹¹⁹ Letter Straw to Manning, 11 March 2003, ‘Conversation with US Secretary of State, 10 March’.

¹²⁰ Minutes, 4 March 2003, Foreign Affairs Committee (House of Commons), [Evidence Session], Q 147-151. 199 Minutes.

This preparation of the ground by Straw did not mean that the UK decision-making group had abandoned seeking a second resolution. Days after Russia, France, and Germany had declared that they would stop a resolution authorising the use of force passing, Blair sought support for a second resolution with specific

second resolution would help to bring UK domestic political support for military action against Iraq when she gave an interview on BBC Radio 4, threatening to resign should military action be taken without UN authority. Blair's expressed fury at Short's opposition to the newly established group view that resolution 1441 provided enough legal justification for military action reveals much about the delicacy of this newly imposed position (Short, 2010). Whilst the UK decision-making group were still seeking a second resolution, they had an awareness that there was significant opposition to a resolution authorising military action against Iraq in the UNSC, and they may not have them. Short's comments were particularly threatening to the collective rationalisation, because the decision-makers were seeking not to signal that the UK government considered that a second UNSC resolution was not required to legally authorise military action.

The full engagement with the collective rationalisation in the UK decision-making group was achieved only eight days prior to the invasion of Iraq. Straw described the use of resolution 1441 to justify military action against Iraq in the House of Commons and in a minute to Blair. This minute provided a practical means to achieve what the group had collectively rationalised – a UNSC resolution further to 1441 was not required. Straw did not send the minute to Hoon or Goldsmith. This restriction of information is similar to that which happened to Straw (see Mindguard section) earlier in the decision-making process. Straw and Blair decided that the UK would continue

testing mechanisms to gauge cooperation from Saddam Hussein¹²⁰. Blair emphasised his pragmatic need for a second resolution in garnering support for military action against Iraq in the House of Commons to Bush on a conference call on the 9th of March. Letter Rycroft to McDonald, 'Iraq: Prime Minister's Conversation with Bush, 5 March'. Letter, Rycroft to McDonald, 09/03/2003, "Iraq: Prime Minister's conversation with Bush, 9 March".

to support the US in military action against Iraq, after having being told a second resolution had “no chance of adoption”¹²¹.

Despite this decision, on the 13th of March, the Cabinet were informed the UK government was working towards a second resolution still, and Straw set out the legal position relying on resolution 1441. The mindguards had managed dissent prior to the Cabinet meeting¹²². This determination of what conditions needed to be met for dissenting voices to buy into the collective rationalisation indicates the concerns of mindguards at opposition, and their perception that the collective rationalisation was fragile. An interesting analysis from Sir Stephen Wall, Head of the Cabinet Office European Secretariat 2000 to 2004, gave an insight into how the collective rationalisation was set up from the very beginning of this Cabinet meeting. “As Tony Blair came into the room John Prescott stood up and saluted. It was a sort of funny moment but in I think in a rather characteristic way John Prescott was doing something quite clever. He was saying, ‘You are the Commander in Chief and this is the time to rally to the flag’. People laughed but interestingly the atmosphere changed. Sitting at the back I had thought to myself ‘This is going to be a difficult Cabinet’, and it wasn’t.” (Wall, 2011, p25). Prescott set up the meeting to have an assumption that they were progressing towards military conflict. As much as this was done in a light-hearted manner, the feeling in the room was altered, and some “distressing information” was not mentioned (Janis, 1982). Different positions and critiques of the UK government position were not raised, protecting the collective rationalisation from these factors that challenged it ¹²³(Iraq Inquiry, 2016, p472). The “TB-GBs”, the infamous tempestuous

¹²¹ Telegram 417 UKMIS New York to FCO London, 12 March 2003, “Personal Iraq: Statement and End Game options”.

¹²² Short recorded: “Briefing from No.10 I had not raised these issues before. Shocking! Raised at every Cabinet and at a series of private meetings with TB.” (Short, 2004).

¹²³ Cabinet Conclusions. 13/03/2003.

relationship between Blair and Brown, would be in the back of Cabinet minister's memories as Brown made a passionate case supporting Blair (Guardian, 2001; Hennessy, 2010; Cook, 2003). Brown, as the major player in Cabinet other than Blair (Kavanaugh, 2001, p14; Heywood, 2008, p273), coming out in support of the collective rationalisation alongside both Blunkett and Straw would have had significant pull on other Cabinet ministers, drawing them into the collective rationalisation as well¹²⁴.

In an indication of the extent of the collective rationalisation, an FCO paper which included an entirely one-sided outline of Iraqi non-compliance was circulated a week after this Cabinet meeting. No examination of the "seriousness" of the points of non-compliance was included. Here, the "closed-mindedness" that so comprises collective rationalisation can be seen to be at play, and non-compliance was the important consideration. The 17th saw a concerted effort to sell the collective rationalisation publicly, with Goldsmith answering a written question on the legality of action against Iraq, with the answer being further circulated to MPs by Straw with an FCO background piece¹²⁵. Later, at the Cabinet, Straw and John Prescott (Deputy PM) spoke to reinforce Blair's comments that the UK had done all it could to follow the UN route and bring the US along the route with them, expressing a closed-minded view that disregarded the concerns expressed by others in the UNSC¹²⁶. Goldsmith then again set out the legal position that resolution 1441 justified military action. Importantly, the Cabinet saw Goldsmith's written advice, but this did not present counterarguments like the document Blair received on the 7th of March had. The advice to the Cabinet gave a one-sided view completely in support of the collectively rationalised view. These

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ House of Lords, Official Report, 17 March 2003, column 2WA.
Letter Watkins to Manning, 17 March 2003, 'JIC Paper: 'Saddam's Plan for Baghdad'.

¹²⁶ Cabinet Conclusions, 17 March 2003.

senior voices supporting the collective rationalisation, the absence of the dissenting voice of Cook, and legal counterarguments all reinforced the collective rationalisation, as seen by the acceptance of this by the Cabinet.

6.5 Conclusion

Groupthink occurred in both the US and the UK decision-making groups, significantly limiting discussion of the decisions taken, and reducing scrutiny of the basis for these decisions. While the same three themes of groupthink are evident, these manifested differently in the US and the UK decision-making groups. In response to the research question of this thesis, groupthink provides a coherent explanation of both the US and the UK decision-making processes that led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, accounting for both similarities and differences.

The pressure placed on Powell to conform to the group view, and the disagreements between Short and Blair in the UK, are examples of this. The differences between the perceptions of Saddam Hussein in the US decision-making group and the UK decision-making group are explained through the stereotyped view theme. The first stereotyped view shared by both groups explains the US and the UK decision-making group's push for military confrontation with Iraq. The stereotyped view held solely in the US decision-making group is also explained by the difference in the manifestation of groupthink in each decision-making group. Finally, the means by which the two groups came to share the group view – how dissent was managed so that it could not derail the progress towards the goal of military action against Iraq – is explained by the collective rationalisation theme.

In the US decision-making group, the themes of the groupthink that occurred were more interlinked than was the case in the UK decision-making group. The work of the mindguards was crucial to the maintenance of the two stereotyped views in the US decision-making group, and crucial to the collective rationalisation of the second stereotyped view that was not shared in the UK decision-making group. Mindguards in the US decision-making group maintained the stereotyped view that Iraq had links to Al Qaeda, despite intelligence from the CIA that this link did not exist. They were then able to have the decision-making group collectively rationalise this position. The groupthink that occurred in the US decision-making group was more impactful, given that it resulted in the creation of the OSP in order to challenge the intelligence analysis provided by the CIA, and occurred for a longer period than in the UK decision-making group.

In the UK decision-making group, the stereotyped view that Saddam Hussein had links with Al Qaeda was not held. Similarly, the mindguards in the UK decision-making group did not focus on the stereotyped view in order to have the position collectively rationalised. In the UK decision-making group, the themes of groupthink that occurred were less intertwined than in the US decision-making group. Notably, whereas in the US decision-making group there were close relationships between the mindguards and concerted effort, in the UK decision-making group there were a number of occasions where a mindguard was excluded from a discussion between another mindguard and Blair, until the position or approach to a particular issue was decided upon.

The individuals within the UK decision-making group likely to challenge the closed-minds of those collectively rationalising the position of the group were Short and Cook. Short felt the Cabinet shouted her down in meetings and Cook left as a protest against

the collectively rationalised position of the group. Both were typically excluded from informal meetings where decisions were made (Turnbull, 2018). Equally, at crucial moments the documents presented were not impartial. In the final cabinet meeting, when the legal position was set out, there were no counter arguments expressed. The Chilcott inquiry commented on this removal of the other side to the legal argument at such a crucial point. There was little review of policy decisions once taken, even in the light of opposition from within the government, from domestic audiences, and internationally within the UNSC. In the US decision-making process, Powell attempted to scrutinise the intelligence being introduced into the decision-making group's case being made to the UN, but struggled with the intelligence analysis provided by the OSP and the mindguards. This analysis of intelligence from the OSP and mindguards was presented to the US decision-making group, with doubts and concerns about the intelligence removed from the assessments. As with the UK decision-making group, this crucial information was not presented in an impartial manner, and there was no review of policy in the US decision-making group.

The groupthink that occurred in the US and the UK decision-making groups encouraged and protected the analogical reasoning that occurred in both the US and the UK governments. The leadership styles of both Bush and Blair exacerbated the impact of the groupthink that occurred in the US and the UK. As is outlined in the subsequent chapter, the leadership styles of both Bush and Blair had a profound effect on the decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

7. Leadership Style Analysis: Bush, Blair, and the Decision to Invade Iraq

7.1. Introduction

The Iraq War, more than perhaps any other conflict in the 21st Century, has been associated with the individual leaders who ordered their respective nation's involvement (Dyson, 2006). As such, to truly understand the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, an examination of the operations of these leaders is crucial.

Despite the differences in the systems in which they operated, both Bush and Blair's leadership styles were very influential in this decision-making process. The Cabinet government system that Blair operated in meant that he faced greater restrictions on his actions than Bush faced. As shown in the previous chapter, the greater freedom

for action on behalf of the US President exacerbated the impact of groupthink, meaning that the Groupthink was more pervasive and more unified than in the UK. Despite this, both leaders' leadership styles significantly influenced the decision-making process.

Conceptually, the Chapter combines literatures on the conceptual complexity with which a leader approaches a policy agenda with that on how a leader manages the flow of advice coming to him/her. In doing so, the explanation provides insight into three key areas: how the leaders approached information, how they proceeded in the face of opposition, and how they maintained focus on Iraq. As set out previously, groupthink unintentionally influenced each of these by filtering information entering the decision-making group and reducing opportunities to oppose the group view. This chapter argues that Blair and Bush had similar leadership styles with respect to their conceptual clarity and their management of advisory systems. Despite the differences between the institutional systems in which they operated, both leaders displayed similar approaches to the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq.

These similarities were found firstly in their black-and-white worldview, which stemmed from their low conceptual complexity. This worldview, as outlined below, affected their processing of information. Both leaders processed incoming information in line with previously held views, meaning they ignored or dismissed information that did not agree with this previously held view. Similarly, both did not perceive nuances in the decision-making process because of this black-and-white worldview. Secondly, both leaders typically proceeded in spite of the risks that they perceived in the decision-making process, with little change in the manner in which they proceeded. They typically understood them to be risks, and proceeded with their course of action in spite of this. Thirdly, both leaders managed their advisory systems in a manner

dictated by their low conceptual complexity. This, in particular, is closely linked to the occurrence of groupthink and analogical reasoning.

The Chapter is structured across five main sections. It begins with an outline of the conceptual frame and its empirical application. The Chapter then proceeds to examine the empirical evidence in more depth. It does so by discussing the relevance of the leaders' conceptual understandings of the issues at stake, their approach to risk-taking, and their management of their advisory systems. Under each heading, both Blair and Bush are assessed and compared. The Conclusion highlights the key points for the thesis.

7.1.1. Leadership Style Approach

Leadership style is understood as “the ways in which leaders relate to those around them – whether constituents, advisers, or other leaders – and how they structure interactions and the norms, rules and principles they use to guide such interactions” (Hermann, 2005, p181). This definition will be operationalised in a number of ways, drawing upon the leadership style literature. Firstly, in terms of the manner in which they processed information and opinions from their advisers. Secondly, in terms of the way in which each leader dealt with opposition to their planned course of action. Thirdly, how the two leaders structured the groups of advisers around them.

In light of this operationalised definition, this chapter uses three measures to examine the leadership styles of Bush and Blair. These measures are:

1. Conceptual Complexity
2. Approach to Risk
3. Management of the Advisory System

The measure of conceptual complexity was developed by Hermann (1983), and examines a leader's ability to determine different dimensions in information, and view information from different perspectives (Coren and Suedfield, 1992). With this measure, leaders can be classified as either displaying high or low conceptual complexity (Hermann, 1983; Hermann, 2005; Preston, 2006; Yang, 2010). A high conceptual complexity leader is attuned to the policy environment, likely to perceive and evaluate multiple dimensions of information or policy, and likely to perform a wide search for information (Preston, 2001). In contrast, low conceptual complexity leaders are likely to operate in line with previously established beliefs. New information that affirms these previously held beliefs is accepted, but low conceptual complexity leaders typically do not seek more information to inform their decisions (Preston, 2001; Dyson, 2008). It must be noted from the outset that these categorisations (high and low conceptual complexity) are ideal types: no leader conforms to either of these categorisations completely. They should be considered a spectrum, with leaders positioned between the two extremes. However, Bush and Blair are notable for the extent and consistency of their low conceptual complexity. This affected their processing of information and their management of their advisory systems. As such, both leaders are notable for how close their conceptual complexity is to the ideal type of "low conceptual complexity". New information rarely derailed the two leaders from proceeding in the manner they had decided upon. Information that was not in line with their preconceived ideas was ignored or dismissed.

The measure "Approach to Risk" examines the leader's willingness to accept risk in a decision-making process. Their "risk propensity", or comfort with levels of risk in a situation (Boettcher, 2005, p7), affected how both leaders approached the decision-making process. This chapter examines political risk, which is defined as "the

possibility that policy choices will have adverse effects on the power of key members in the decision-making coalition” (Lamborn, 1985). This risk is split into two categorisations: strategic political risk and tactical political risk. Strategic political risk relates to the possibility that policy choices will have adverse effects on the power of the leader to achieve their overall aims and leaders. In contrast, tactical political risk relates to the possibility that policy choices will have adverse effects on the ability of the leader to achieve more immediate-term goals that occur in the decision-making process. In the face of strategic political risk, both leaders proceeded in spite of the risk.

Blair confronted two strategic political risks in this decision-making process: on the legality of military action and over seeking a second resolution from the UNSC. The risk involved excluding decision-makers (Cabinet ministers, for example) from the knowledge that it was only at the end of February 2003 that the UK legal position developed to permit military action against Iraq without a second UNSC. If other decision-makers (such as Cook or Short) became aware of this, the opposition to military action in Iraq may have been able to prevent UK involvement. The risk in seeking a second UNSCR in February and March 2003 was that this may have increased international opposition in the form of a veto in the UNSC. Similarly, the push for a second UNSCR may have led the domestic audience to believe a second UNSCR was required for military action, therefore increasing the risk in invading Iraq without a second UNSCR. The tactical political risks Blair faced were more frequent, but of less consequence individually. The public presentation of the case against Iraq, ignoring and dismissing advice and warnings from those around him, and excluding people from crucial information in the decision-making process, were all aspects of the tactical political risks Blair took on.

Both the strategic and tactical risks that Bush had to confront were fewer than those Blair confronted. Bush took one strategic political risk in this decision-making process, which was the dismissing of intelligence from less supportive sources. In a similar way to Blair, Bush's tactical risks were related to managing potential opposition and who was in the know about plans for confronting Iraq. Bush's approach to risk was closely related to his low conceptual complexity. Like Blair, Bush's exclusion of information from the decision-making process was a strategic political risk, and this exclusion stemmed from a low conceptual complexity. Whereas Blair restricted who was aware of the attorney general's opinion on the legality of military action until Blair agreed with it, Bush kept his plans for confronting Iraq to a very select group until the process had developed significantly into 2002.

The final measure, management of the advisory system, focuses firstly on how the leader selects individuals in the advisory system. Secondly, it scrutinises the manner in which the leader conducts themselves within this advisory system. The measure examines the intentional establishing of the decision-making group around the leader. In contrast to the groupthink model used in the previous chapter, which is not an actively coordinated phenomenon, this measure of leadership style examines the choices that a leader makes in placing and interacting with those around them.

In this measure, as proposed by George (1980), there are three categorisations: formalistic, collegial, and competitive. George (1980) applied respectively the cases of Nixon, Kennedy, and Eisenhower as classic types of these three models, but they may also be used to place leaders along a spectrum: displaying greater or lesser of these attributes. Within the formalistic model, the leaders position themselves on top of the hierarchy. There is specialist information and advice, but the leader does not seek further information. Policy-making is ordered, while conflict between members of

the advisory system is discouraged (George, 1980). In the collegial model, the leader would occupy a central position in the process, actively seeking information from the advisory system. The leader actively attempts to build consensus, while advisers share responsibilities. Competitive model leaders seek to manage conflict, and encourage lines of communication, while maintaining control (Mitchell, 2019).

This thesis places George's model in the context of the literature on conceptual complexity. Leaders with a low conceptual complexity are typically less receptive to advice or input to the decision-making process that does not agree with their own view (Preston, 2001). As already indicated, this chapter identifies both Bush and Blair as low conceptual complexity leaders. This, in turn, meant that the competitive model advisory system each leader established was modified, so that only those contributing advice or information the leader agreed with were encouraged to contribute.

Blair's management of the advisory system had three notable features: sofa-style meetings, a reliance on Special Advisers (SPADs), and diminishing the role of cabinet. Blair's preference for small, intimate, informal meetings is a well-known feature of his premiership. This style of meeting was seen as an advantageous manner to impart advice from experts (Boyce, 2018). However, the informality linked to a disorganised format for these meetings, where the topic under discussion would change frequently. Relevant advisers would rotate in and out of the room depending on the topic, meaning that the relevant advisers could be absent if the topic were to be returned to (Williams, 2018). Equally, the increased use of SPADs is strongly associated with the Blair government (Butler, 2019; Davis, 2019). SPADs, as political advisers, have an ill-defined role in the non-political civil service system. In the Blair government, they held unprecedented power and greatly assisted Blair in throwing his weight around (Watt, 2001; Murphy 2003; Rutter, 2019). The diminishing role of cabinet was a trend that

started well before the Blair government. However, by combining the diminished role of cabinet with his increased reliance on SPADs and sofa-style meetings, Blair exacerbated the effect.

The manner in which Bush managed his advisory system was strongly linked to his low conceptual complexity and his approach to risk. He encouraged those who supported his own positions to feel able to openly express their views. Those expressing views that contradicted or questioned his position were not encouraged to speak up. Rather, they were warned against doing so, so much so in some cases that they then discouraged others from expressing their doubts, too. For example, Condoleeza Rice was 'gut-checked' by Bush, discouraging her from expressing concerns, and she proceeded to discourage others from expressing similar concerns (Woodward, 2002, p; Lehman, 2003, p36).

7.2. Low Conceptual Complexity

The measure conceptual complexity examines a leader's capacity to discern differing levels in the environment when relating to "actors, places, ideas and situations" (Hermann, 1987; 2003). As set out in the Theoretical Framework (Chapter 3), conceptual complexity examines the leader's ability to differentiate the environment, describing or discussing other people, places, policies, and ideas (Hermann, 1983).

When categorising leaders using this measure, the leader must be located between two ideal types on a spectrum. At one end of this spectrum is the categorisation "high conceptual complexity". A leader categorised as such would be attuned to the policy environment, and would recognise the shades of grey in a situation (Hermann, 1980; Nydegger, 1975; Preston, 2001; Schroder et al., 1967; Tetlock, 1985; Ziller et al., 1977). They are likely to perform a wide information search, and perceive multiple

levels within this information. At the other end of this spectrum, the ideal type is “low conceptual complexity”. A low conceptual complexity leader can be identified by examining three key features:

1. They will typically perceive the world in a black-and-white manner, using dichotomising framing such as “us and them” or “good and evil” (Hermann, 1980; Tetlock, 1985; Preston 2001; Dyson, 2009).
2. Secondly, in line with the black-and-white view, the leader does not recognise the nuances in a situation.
3. Thirdly, information is processed in line with a limited number of principles or beliefs, which are then imposed on new information as a filter (Glad, 1983; Nydegger, 1975; Vertzberger, 1990; Ziller et al., 1977; Dyson, 2009).

In line with the three identifiers of low conceptual complexity outlined above, both Bush and Blair had a dichotomous worldview: neither saw nuances in situations, and performed limited information searches. Notably, in the case of the process of making the decision to invade Iraq in 2003, both leaders were remarkably consistent in their low conceptual complexity. High and low conceptual complexity are the ends on a spectrum of conceptual complexity, and, typically, leaders will be positioned along this spectrum. Leaders usually display some characteristics of both high and low conceptual complexity, but display more of one. Both Blair and Bush displayed low conceptual complexity with remarkable consistency.

In order to exemplify the impact of these low conceptual complexities upon the decision-making process, the manner in which both leaders spoke publicly and privately, and the manner in which they are reported to have used information, are all scrutinised in this chapter. Firstly, this section examines Blair’s low conceptual complexity. This affected the decision-making process in three areas: the framing of

Iraq and the decision-making process, in the informing of key decisions, and when he ignored the context he was operating in. Later, Bush's low conceptual complexity is outlined.

7.2.1. Blair's Low Conceptual Complexity

Blair displayed all three of the identifiers of low conceptual complexity outlined in the introduction to this section. He framed the issue of Iraq in a dichotomous manner. This involved a very black-and-white view that meant he did not perceive nuances, and filtered incoming information in line with previously held views. This, in turn, impacted on how he utilised information in the decision-making process, leading him to dismiss or ignore information that was not in line with his previously conceived ideas. Similarly, it led him to ignore the advice offered by those who did not perceive situations in the same way. It also gave him the surety and confidence in his position that enabled him to ignore public opposition domestically, from what were considered as "his" people (Morgan, 2013). When describing Blair's style, one interviewee described Blair as having an "instinctive, really gifted style" (Williams, 2018).

In response to the 9/11 attacks, Blair displayed his low conceptual complexity. In his impromptu speech to the Trades Union Congress (TUC), Blair spoke in emotive and binary terms. He declared that the UK would stand "shoulder-to-shoulder" with the US, describing terrorism as "evil", therefore using highly moralistic language and making clear dichotomous divisions. His comments that democratic nations should "eradicate" terrorism added to this clear distinction between the US and its allies and the terrorists, and were almost a precursor to Bush's sentiments of "you are either with us or with the terrorists" in his "Axis of Evil" speech. Similarly, Blair made clear, stark distinctions, presenting the issue at hand with no nuances. Given that he saw the situation as one

of a paradigm-shifting terrorist attack, his rhetoric was effective for the argument he was intent on making. Similarly, in the following COBRA meetings¹²⁷, support for the US appeared complete to both Downing Street insiders and outsiders (Campbell, 2012, p5; Mullins, 2010, p221). Backbench MP Chris Mullins recorded in his diary that Blair appeared to be “writing blank cheques placing us four square behind whatever degree of retribution that George Bush sees fit to organise” (Mullins, 2010, p221). Whilst this may not be surprising in the aftermath of a terrorist attack, it is an example of low conceptual complexity. Alongside the emotive and wholehearted commitment to support the US, Blair also ignored warnings and advice from those around him. When Blair discussed the position of the UK in supporting the US in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Straw mentioned the danger of the UK rhetoric advancing faster than the US, but Blair ignored the concern (Campbell, 2012, p8).

In Blair’s case, this emotive low conceptual complexity continued throughout the decision-making process. George Joffe, an Iraq Expert tasked with briefing Blair on post-war difficulties, reports that Blair was not interested in the difficulties and focused on Saddam Hussein, saying “The man’s uniquely evil, isn’t he?” (Steele, 2008, p14-15). Similarly, Blair and his inner circle spoke of war with Iraq in terms that assumed the accuracy of their view, and minimised the opposition to their view. They described Iraq as a public persuasion issue, implying that, at this point, Blair and his circle presumed the UK would be involved in an invasion¹²⁸. In this view, others had to be brought around to their position, dismissing opposition and the idea of reconsidering

¹²⁷ COBRA refers to the UK government emergency response held within the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms. For more see:

<https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/the-cabinet-office-briefing-rooms-cobra-a-short-introduction/>.

¹²⁸ Paper No.10, 4 October 2001, ‘Responsibility for the Terrorist Atrocities in the United States, 11 September 2001’.

the position. This is something that Blair compounded in March, writing in a memo that the case against Saddam Hussein should be “obvious”¹²⁹, indicating the limited consideration of alternative points of view and approaches, and dismissing any scrutiny of the case or any questioning of the evidence. By focusing on the case against Iraq, Blair was ignoring the concerns some expressed about the legal grounds that would be used to justify military action. Following this, Blair wrote a note to Bush, which is now infamous (Rayner and Dominiczak, 2016): “with you, whatever”¹³⁰. Here, he wrote of the best means to achieve *Casus Belli*¹³¹. Blair’s approach was that he had to convince those who disagreed rather than reconsider his position or listen to concerns.

The now infamous “with you, whatever” memo, was a key moment when Blair paid little attention to the decision-making context (Rayner and Dominiczak, 2016). In the note, Blair wrote of the best means to achieve *Casus Belli*¹³². The note reinforced Blair’s lack of engagement with opposing views, and showed a lack of awareness of the context. In the weeks prior to Blair sending this note to Bush, Blair received two expressions of concern at the way the government was proceeding towards confronting Iraq. Firstly, after a warning from Colin Powell that the process in the US was escalating in seriousness, Straw wrote of his concerns to Blair¹³³. Straw told Blair that the case against Iraq was not strong, and that this could cause problems for the UK government later. Blair responded to the letter, saying that the only way around the concerns Straw expressed would be not confronting Iraq, and he thought it was right to confront Iraq, so he would proceed. Secondly, the FCO sent a letter with advice

¹²⁹ Minute Blair to Powell, 17 March 2002, ‘Iraq’.

¹³⁰ Note Blair[to Bush], 28th July 2002, “Note on Iraq”.

¹³¹ “An act or situation that provokes or justifies a war.” (Stevens and Waite, 2011).

¹³² “An act or situation that provokes or justifies a war.” (Stevens and Waite, 2011).

¹³³ Letter (handwritten) Straw to Blair, 26th July 2002, “Iraq”.

on “how to get the Security Council to issue some sort of ultimatum ahead of any military action”¹³⁴ to Number 10 days prior to Blair’s note to Bush. The letter advised Blair of the “formidable obstacles” of going down the UN route, and having the US support this. Both warnings informed Blair that there was concern at the level of commitment he had given, and the pace they were proceeding towards confronting Iraq. This was the decision-making context that Blair was operating in when he sent a note to Bush informing him of the UK’s unwavering support – a note that disregarded this context.

Those who worked with Blair noted his style of receiving information. Tom McKane felt that Blair was “extremely confident” when running his meetings. He went on, saying that by 2002/03 Blair had developed strong views of his own: “He would be looking for advice that would help to promote and pursue his particular policy agenda” (McKane, 2020). Jonathan Powell concurred, describing Blair as a “conviction politician” (Powell, 2020). Indeed, the interview with John Williams supported this. Williams said that he felt the reason that the culture of Number 10 (of limited challenging of views) had such an influence on the decision-making process was “Because Tony Blair was so talented, so energetic, so sure, confident” (Williams, 2018). Yet, this confidence was both a strength and weakness to Williams (2018): “It was a great strength that we had this Prime Minister, but it was a weakness when it meant that he was very sure where he was going with a policy”. My interview with McKane appeared to show how this surety had an impact on Blair’s information processing and conceptual complexity. McKane said that when Blair received advice he did not agree with, he questioned it closely (McKane, 2020). Lord Turnbull recalled in our interview that Blair “didn’t read

¹³⁴ Letter McDonald to Rycroft, 26 July 2002, “Iraq: Ultimatum” attaching paper “Elements which might be incorporated in an SCR embodying an Ultimatum to Iraq”.

a lot of papers before a meeting, he would just wait and see how the discussion went” (Turnbull, 2018).

Blair’s disregard for the concern at the way the UK decision-making group was proceeding towards confrontation with Iraq continued through the summer of 2002. In communication with Number 10 staff and Cabinet meetings, Blair dismissed or ignored opposition into the autumn of 2002 (Campbell, 2012)¹³⁵. This led to another point when Blair’s low conceptual complexity was displayed in his disregard for the context he operated in, specifically when he did not accept the difficulties in achieving a second UNSC resolution. Blair’s conviction that they would be able to get a second resolution flowed through late 2002. Blair responded to the Iraqi declaration in December 2002, by describing it as “patently false” prior to the UN inspections assessing this. Similarly, in January 2003, he stated that the “likelihood was war”, despite having no legal justification for military action from the UN or his own legal advisor¹³⁶.

Blair maintained his dismissive attitude to critics in 2003 by speaking of his puzzlement at people supporting the “continuation of one of the most repressive... regimes in the world”¹³⁷. In doing so, Blair was mischaracterising opposition to invasion as support for Saddam Hussein, rather than objection to war without UN sanction. Privately, he continued to speak of those who disagreed with his position in a dismissive manner. When French President Jacques Chirac told the media that he would veto any second UNSC resolution that permitted military action on the 11th March 2003, Blair described this as “unreasonable”, ignoring the concerns that Chirac raised (BBC, 2007). Importantly, Chirac was reiterating the French position that disarmament by

¹³⁵ 30th August 2002 note from Blair. House of Commons, Official Report, 24 September 2002, columns 1-23.

¹³⁶ Note Blair [to No.10 officials], 4 January 2003, [extract ‘Iraq’].

¹³⁷ House of Commons, Official Report, 15th January 2003, Columns 673-682.

inspections should continue until it no longer could¹³⁸. There is some evidence that Blair sought to blame Chirac for the end of the UN route, and deliberately misled Parliament when he referred to Chirac's interview in Parliament (Wall, 2015).

At this time in February and March 2003, it was evident to those around Blair that he was apparently confident in getting a majority in the UNSC, which he thought would pressure the French to abstain, therefore allowing the second resolution to pass¹³⁹ (Cook, 2004; Campbell, 2012). He continued to dismiss critics and opposition to his course of action. In early February 2003, Blair met privately with Blix, and disagreed with his optimistic judgement for cooperation from Saddam Hussein, despite Blix being the lead inspector in Iraq with direct experience of Saddam Hussein's cooperation¹⁴⁰. It was evident to those around Blair that he was apparently confident about reaching a majority in the UNSC in February 2003. He thought this would pressure the French to abstain, allowing the second resolution to pass¹⁴¹ (Cook, 2004; Campbell, 2012). This did not happen. Indeed, Blair appeared to be mystified when it became evident a second resolution would not be achieved. Cook regarded Blair's early confidence as having restricted his options so that he had no other options available (Cook, 2004, p320-324). In private communication, he continued to speak of those who disagreed with his position in a dismissive manner, ignoring the context of significant concern at the direction he was taking. Blair dismissed the concerns of those around him, and those internationally, proceeding despite the decision-making context.

¹³⁸ The Élysée, Interview télévisée de Jacques Chirac, le 10 mars 2003. A translation for HMG was produced in a Note, [unattributed and undated], 'Iraq – Interview given by M. Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic, to French TV (10 March 2003)'.

¹³⁹ House of Commons, Official Report, 3 February 2003, columns 21-38.

¹⁴⁰ Letter, Rycroft to Owen, 6 February 2003, "Iraq: Prime Minister's meetings with Blix and El Baradei, 6 February".

¹⁴¹ House of Commons, Official Report, 3 February 2003, columns 21-38.

The decision-making context that Blair was operating in was generally supportive of his choices. However, there was concern at the pace of the decision-making process, and at the difficulties of getting a second UNSCR. The strength of his conviction in the direction he was taking, stemming from his low conceptual complexity, meant that Blair ignored this context of concern. This shows the progress that a low conceptual complexity leader can make by not paying attention to the difficulties and critiques, as Blair was able to proceed towards his goal. Blair did seem mystified when it became evident a second resolution would not be achieved, but he had already been trapped by his own earlier over-confidence and his options became few (Cook, 2004, p320-324).

7.2.2. Bush's Conceptual Complexity

The low conceptual complexity that Bush displayed had some similarities to that of Blair. As with Blair, Bush's low conceptual complexity was emotive and remarkably consistent, giving him surety in his approach. Equally, it pervaded his public comments and in private communications and meetings, as did Blair's. Bush's low conceptual complexity manifested in line with the three themes of low conceptual complexity set out in the introduction: a black-and-white worldview, lack of recognition of nuances, and filtering information in line with previously held views. His low conceptual complexity led Bush to restrict the evaluation of alternative views of the issues as they arose, and curtailed examination of alternative policies.

Bush displayed his low conceptual complexity in his early foreign-policy related comments. The comments he made imposed a binary division, establishing those he considered the US' opponents and casting them in the 'bad guy' role. Emotive comments such as "the Empire has passed, but evil remains", and, in response to a question on Saddam Hussein saying he wanted "to get him out of there", exemplify

this low conceptual complexity (Keller, 2003)¹⁴². This kind of emotive language falls precisely within the classification of a low conceptual complexity leader (Dyson, 2006; 2018; Yang, 2010; Siniver and Featherstone, 2020). He further reinforced this with emotive language, using terms such as “evildoer” about Iraq and that the “wonder-working power” of America stood out among many other terms (Lincoln, 2004). As Kellner (2004) argues, this “one-dimensional militarism” had the potential to exacerbate the crisis Bush was faced with.

This low conceptual complexity continued in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. For Bush, this framed the way in which he processed the information he received about the 9/11 attacks. Bush performed limited information searches from early in the decision-making process, and information was filtered through the prism of his previously held views. In a meeting held on 9/11, he provided two examples of this. Tenet briefed him with near certainty that Al Qaeda were responsible for the 9/11 attacks; however, Bush still requested that his counter-terrorism expert Richard Clarke look into a link between the Iraqi regime and the 9/11 attacks on multiple occasions (Woodward, 2004; Clarke, 2004). Bush’s low conceptual complexity meant that he did not accept the advice from Clarke that there was no link between Iraq and Al Qaeda. Similarly, Bush focused on the need to get air travel functioning again within 24 hours of the attacks, and when Tenet raised concerns about security, Bush ignored him, telling Tenet, “I’ll announce more security measures, but we won’t be held hostage. We’ll fly at noon tomorrow.” (Woodward, 2004). In both cases, and within the same meeting, Bush was willing to

¹⁴² “Debate Manuscript: The Second Bush-Gore Presidential debate”. 11 October 2000. Online: www.debates.org/index.php?page=october-11-2000-debate-transcript. Governor George W. Bush, “A distinctly American Internationalism”, Ronald Reagan Library, November 19, 1999.

reject or dismiss information that contradicted his perception of the issue, and act based on his own views, uninformed by expert advice.

Bush's emotive framing of the response to 9/11, establishing this "good vs. evil" dichotomy, gave him great confidence in his own position. This was so much the case that when Rice reported the doubts of some principals (heads of government agencies), Bush responded belligerently, performing a check on Rice herself and pushing her to provide him a list of the doubters in the decision-making group (Woodward, 2002, p255-258). In this way, his low conceptual complexity influenced the way he managed his advisory system – he had such little doubt himself he did not tolerate this in others. This was the impression that Tenet received, too. He told Woodward that as a member of the administration, the greatest price was paid by those who expressed doubt (Woodward, 2003, p139). The impression within the Bush administration that Bush had already made the decision to invade Iraq was reinforced over the summer of 2002. When Rice met a State Department official, she told him that the decision was already made (Lehman, 2003, p36), implying that further consideration of alternative interpretations of the information was not encouraged by Bush. This agrees with the assessment from Kori Schake, "[Rice] was aware often than not an impediment to [information that the President did not want to hear] getting to [Bush]" (Schake, 2020). The impression that Bush had already taken a decision was also held in the UK government, as had been the case earlier in 2002¹⁴³. The impression was so strong that Rice felt it necessary to inform others that further discussion would not be welcomed. Bush's limited information

¹⁴³ Rycroft to Manning. 2002. "Re: Iraq: Prime Minister's meeting, 23rd July".

search had the impact of urging others to not seek to introduce more information for him to consider.

The famous “Axis of Evil” speech Bush gave as his 2002 State of the Union Address was another speech filled with indications of his low conceptual complexity. Not only did he use very emotive language to describe Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as an “Axis of Evil”, he also described the regime as one that “leaves the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children” and again publicly linked Iraq with terrorist “allies”, despite the lack of evidence (Bush, 2002). This binary framing of the confrontation between the US and Iraq cast Iraq as “evil”, thus helping to frame the US as the ‘good’ actor for confronting this “evil”.

Further, Bush displayed his low conceptual complexity in speeches following the decision to go down the UN route, conflating the threat from Iraq and Al Qaeda, at one point saying, “You can’t distinguish between al Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror”, and later he referred to a link between Iraq and Al Qaeda¹⁴⁴. The basis for a link, made in a second speech in October 2002, used intelligence of a meeting held between Al Qaeda and an Iraqi diplomat. However, this was intelligence the CIA and FBI had already roundly discredited before the speech was given (Waas, 2003).

This rejection of intelligence that did not agree with Bush’s own view was not only prevalent in his public statements; he also rejected intelligence presented to him in a private meeting with Tenet and his deputy at the CIA in late December 2002. When they made their presentation of the case against Iraq, Bush responded “Nice try. I don’t think this is quite – it’s not something that Joe Public would understand or

¹⁴⁴ President George W. Bush, Remarks In A Photo Opportunity With Colombian President Uribe, Washington, DC, 9/25/02).

would gain a lot of confidence from this” (Woodward, 2004, p247). He was underwhelmed: “I’ve been told all this intelligence about having WMD and this is the best we’ve got?” (Rice, 2011, p200; Woodward, 2004, p247), thereby both challenging the presenters to provide a stronger case and indicating his view of what was and was not reliable intelligence. In this way, his low conceptual complexity influenced the manner in which he managed his advisory system. His information processing style meant that he clearly indicated the kind of intelligence case he would be receptive to in such a meeting. Equally, he was willing to take the risk of presenting “questionable” intelligence that the FBI and CIA had warned was not reputable, in order to make the case for war in Iraq (Rice, 2011, p200; Waas, 2003).

Like Blair, Bush’s low conceptual complexity meant that he imposed a dichotomous frame on the decision-making process, did not recognise nuance in the case, and processed or filtered information in relation to a limited number of principles. The impact of this was to reduce reconsideration of policy decisions, lessen the evaluation of newly introduced information, and maintain their focus on the goal of militarily confronting Iraq. These features strongly influenced the approach of both Bush and Blair to risk, giving them a surety in their approach and their willingness to discount risk.

7.3. Approach to Risk

This measure examines both how a leader understands risk, as well as the manner in which they may take a decision in spite of risk. Using Lamborn’s (1985) definition of political risk, this thesis makes a delineation between strategic and political risk. Strategic political risk relates to the possibility that policy choices will adversely affect key decision-maker’s ability to achieve their overall aims and interests. In contrast,

tactical political risk relates to the possibility that policy choices will have adverse effects on the ability of government members to achieve more immediate-term goals.

While their low conceptual complexity was remarkably similar, each leader faced different levels of risk. Blair faced more risk in the decision-making process than his US counter-part for two reasons. Firstly, the difference in the domestic context. Blair faced more domestic opposition than Bush, both inside and outside the government. Secondly, the UK has a different interpretation of international law in comparison to the US, placing greater emphasis on the UK's need for a second UNSCR. For both leaders, the risk entered the decision-making process after 9/11. This was the point when the impetus to confront Iraq militarily increased, and momentum gathered for this confrontation.

Despite the differences between the levels of risk they faced, both leaders approached risk in a similar manner – a feature stemming from the low conceptual complexity they held in common – proceeding in spite of the varying risks they faced. This section examines how their understanding of risk affected how they made their decisions.

7.3.1. Blair's Approach to Risk

With both strategic and tactical political risks, Blair's approach was to continue despite the risks that he acknowledged in the decision-making process. Blair faced more risk in the decision-making process than Bush did, given the different international and domestic contexts in which each leader operated. After scrutinising the strategic political risks that Blair faced and took, this section examines tactical political risks that Blair faced. By scrutinising the way in which Blair confronted these risks there are two key lessons to be learned. Firstly, that Blair was very willing to take risks, because he was convinced of the correctness of his view, due to his low

conceptual complexity. Secondly, Blair was so sure in this approach that he did not explain his approach to risk or to offset the risks by telling advisers and colleagues why he was taking the course of action he had chosen. Blair used his management of the advisory system to keep advisers from understanding of the extent of the risks that he was taking. Blair faced two strategic political risks in this decision-making process: the question of the legality of military action against Iraq and the need for a second UNSCR.

These strategic political risks that Blair faced in his decision-making process came to the forefront in 2002. Blair delayed the legal advice from Lord Goldsmith, waiting until the advice was in line with his own wishes before formalising the advice. The question of the legality of military action against Iraq constituted a strategic political risk because of the potential for the legal advice from Goldsmith preventing the UK being involved in military action. Again, not being able to achieve a second UNSCR had a similar potential. Blair downplayed both the strategic and tactical political risks equally, using his management of the advisory system to prevent his Cabinet from understanding the full extent of the risk of not achieving a resolution. Initial discussions covered the risks of the Bush Administration balking at the potential need for two UNSC Resolutions. Blair, Straw, and Greenstock were all aware of the difficulties in achieving a tough UNSCR, and aware that a second UNSCR may be required following the first.

The first strategic political risk that Blair faced, on the matter of the legality of military action against Iraq, arose in the early summer of 2002. When the Cabinet Office circulated a paper in mid-July 2002, it outlined the policy options and a draft legal opinion. Blair's response when presented with this paper displayed both his low conceptual complexity and his approach to risk. Blair annotated the paper, "The legal

advice is, as ever, far too narrow”, revealing that he saw the issue in “black-and-white” terms¹⁴⁵. This annotation also shows his willingness to proceed with the decision-making process while dismissing the legal advice that invasion on prevailing conditions would not be legal. Blair reinforced this willingness to proceed. At a meeting of Cabinet ministers and advisers on July 23rd, 2002, Goldsmith advised the Cabinet that “Regime Change” was not a legal justification for military action against Iraq. Blair’s dismissal of this announcement displays both low conceptual complexity and his willingness to proceed, despite the strategic political risk. He told the meeting that “Regime Change” and WMD were linked, because it was the regime that produced the WMD, indicating his black and white view of the issue and how willing he was to reject or dismiss the legal advice. When Straw suggested not going in with the Americans, Blair quickly rejected the idea, saying, “It’s worse than you think, I actually believe in this” (Campbell, 2012; BBC). As the quote demonstrates, Blair’s conviction meant that he was willing to take the risk, despite his advisers’ concerns. This conviction in the approach he had taken stemmed from Blair’s low conceptual complexity. His willingness to proceed, despite the strategic risk he faced, was strongly linked to his low conceptual complexity.

This strategic political risk of the question of the legality of military action against Iraq continued into late 2002. The legal advice from Attorney General Lord Goldsmith was delayed three times in November and December 2002 (Iraq Inquiry, 2010, s5 p21). Senior legal officers in the government at the time felt there were several points in the decision-making process where Goldsmith was actively not asked for his legal advice. The strategic risk was twofold: not only might it block government

¹⁴⁵ Manuscript comment Blair on Note Manning to Prime Minister, 19 July 2002, [untitled].

preparations for war with Iraq, but it also had the potential to exacerbate the opposition to military action Blair had to deal with.

The strategic risk in the UN process began later in the decision-making process than the legality issue, but it had a crucial impact on the development of that legal advice. In seeking a UNSC Resolution in the autumn of 2002, Blair displayed an appreciation of the challenges his strategy faced. Yet, while Blair, Straw, and Greenstock were each aware of the difficulties they faced in achieving a tough UNSCR and aware that a second UNSCR may be required, Blair did not inform the Cabinet of these difficulties when it met six days after on the 17th October 2002. As outlined in the introduction, Blair's conviction in the correctness of his approach to the decision-making process meant that he was very willing to take risks. Similarly, Blair felt no need to talk to Cabinet colleagues about them. Blair presented the UK position on the proposed resolution, and he persuaded a generally supportive Cabinet in what was perceived as a strong performance (Campbell, 2012; Cook, 2003; Turnbull, 2010, p49). Blair did not mention the warnings he had received about how difficult it would be for the UK and US to have their preferred wording in the resolution and he was thought to have prioritised the US more than the UN in his comments (Cook, 2003). The Cabinet meeting of 14 November 2002 took the decision that, in the event of a breach of Resolution 1441, action would be taken, even if there were no second resolution. Blair led the meeting to take this decision some months prior to legal confirmation that this was permissible. Indeed, Blair was taking a tactical political risk.

He continued to dismiss concerns about opposition to the UK resolution proposal in October 2002 (Campbell, 2012; Straw, 2011). Similarly, Blair disregarded a warning from Manning that he should be clear that a second UNSCR may be required when

talking to Bush, and he ignored Straw's warnings of French and Russian opposition. Instead, Blair talked to Bush of the need for a tough inspections regime. In so doing, Blair was sensitive to the strategic political risk of losing the US participation in the UN process, and acted to offset this risk.

Blair showed his recognition of the strategic political risk involved here, despite dismissing warnings about opposition in the UNSC earlier in October 2002. Later that month, Blair showed his concern in a discussion with Goldsmith (22nd October). They discussed what would happen were there to be a clear violation by the Iraqi regime and if a Permanent UNSC member unreasonably used their veto. In his questioning of Goldsmith, Blair displayed an awareness that opposition in the UNSC may mean a second resolution would be required to justify military action and that this would be difficult to achieve. In asking whether an "unreasonable" veto would mean the UK and US could act without UN approval, Blair was again attempting to determine how he could proceed, despite the opposition.

Blair demonstrated this again in "fiery exchanges" with Chirac, telling him that the US was going to invade Iraq, and the question at hand was simply whether France wanted to be in the equation (Campbell, 2012). In so doing, Blair displayed his low conceptual complexity, perceiving the matter in a black-and-white manner, as a question of being involved in a decision already taken, or not. In seeking Chirac's support, Blair displayed an awareness of the risk that French opposition would represent later in the decision-making process. Equally, in ignoring the potential opposition that Chirac may have had, Blair risked furthering the distance between France and the US and the UK.

The tactical political risks that Blair faced affected his ability to achieve his immediate-term goals, more so than affect his ability to achieve his long-term goal of military confrontation with Iraq. These risks were threefold: ignoring warnings from advisers, excluding people from key information, and on the presentation of the case against Iraq. As can be seen, these tactical political risks are closely related to the lessons that are drawn from examination of Blair's approach to risk. Each of these were tactical components of the strategic political risk involved in the question of the legality of invasion. Equally, the warnings about the difficulties in securing support in the UNSC, the rejection of information regarding the necessity to attain a second resolution, and the presentation of the implications of the failure to receive a second UNSCR were all key tactical components of the strategic political risk involved in the UK's experience of the UN process.

The disregarding of warnings from advisers and Cabinet colleagues was a tactical political risk Blair took throughout this decision-making process. This was the typical manner in which he approached risk; his conviction meant that he was willing to take risks. The consequence of this tactical political risk was on his ability to engender support inside and outside the government. Proceeding with the decision-making process – whilst ignoring these warnings or expressions of concern, rather than confronting or answering them – risked increasing this opposition or these concerns. In preparation for the Crawford meeting, Blair felt that the UK did not have a clear policy towards Iraq. To remedy this, he called a meeting at Chequers. This meeting displayed his approach to risk and his management of the advisory system. The meeting was attended by Admiral Michael Boyce (Chief of Defence Staff), Sir Kevin Tebbit (Permanent Secretary MoD), Lieutenant General Anthony Piggott (Deputy CDS), Lieutenant General Cedric Delves (UK liaison officer at CENTCOM), Sir

Richard Dearlove, Jonathan Powell, Sir David Manning, and John Scarlett. Indeed, Blair was the only Cabinet member – indeed, the only politician in attendance. Equally, there was no formal record of these discussions. In not bringing Cabinet colleagues into the discussions, Blair risked alienating himself and having more objections later on once Cabinet colleagues were made aware of the policy he had decided on privately with officials and advisors. This was another point when Blair's typical approach to risk was evident. His low conceptual complexity meant that Blair was convinced of the correctness of his policy. He also felt no need to inform those around him of the risks that he was taking.

Indeed, Blair has been strongly criticised for having a decision-making style that led to a number of meetings with no records, and some of these meetings were crucial to the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq (Butler, 2004). In these meetings, Blair's management of the advisory system was crucial to managing the risk involved in preparing for Crawford. In personal interviews for this research, Jonathan Powell and Lord Butler both raised the difficulties in properly minuting these informal meetings (Butler, 2018; Powell, 2020). Lord Butler, a Cabinet Secretary during Blair's premiership, when leading the Butler Review in 2005 also criticised the informality of the decision-making procedures and the difficulty this presented for the formal records of government (Butler, 2004; 2018; Lords Hansard, 2007). Lord Turnbull concurred, saying that briefing documents were rarely used in informal meetings, and that attendance at the informal meetings was determined by who the PM wanted there (Turnbull, 2018). As such, in his opinion it was less likely that oppositions would be raised, because those in attendance were supportive of Blair (Turnbull, 2018). These opinions from Butler and Turnbull are unsurprising, given both were lifelong civil servants who believed in the traditional system.

However, these critiques remain valid when raised against Blair's inner circle: the exclusion of critical voices and lack of briefing papers could negatively effect decision-making. This alienation of both Cabinet ministers and senior civil servants constituted a tactical political risk. By alienating those around him, Blair was establishing an atmosphere that was not helpful to him.

In a similar vein, Blair's exclusion of some individuals from access to key information was a tactical political risk. Given the potential to increase opposition when or if this restricted information became known to those Blair wished to keep it from, the risk was significant. Equally, if Blair's attempt to exclude people from certain information were made public, opposition would also likely increase. A key example came in the summer of 2002. At Blair's direction, Manning wrote to Hoon, asking what would be required for UK forces to be organised to strike Iraq within six months. Hoon's response to Manning was a request for a meeting on the potential speed with which a strike could be carried out. Powell annotated the Manning to Blair Memo, with Powell proposing that Brown and Wilson not be invited, and Admiral Boyce and Lt Gen. Piggott attend instead. Blair agreed, showing his willingness to take the tactical risk, excluding the Cabinet from this information, despite its concerns at the lack of discussion and the speed of preparations expressed just days prior to these memos (Campbell, 2012; Wilson, 2011).

The third tactical political risk Blair took was in the public presentation of the case against Iraq. The September 2002 dossier represents an awareness of the strategic political risk of public opposition from Blair. It is therefore interesting that Blair proceeded in spite of the tactical political risks that arose in the creation and presentation of the Dossier. In choosing to use intelligence in a manner that invited repeated concerns of over-reaching, Blair risked inviting opposition and criticism.

Equally, having Campbell so prominent in composing their case invited accusations that Blair was once again excluding those outside an inner circle. The draft of Blair's foreword to the Dossier was sent to Manning and Powell for comment in mid-September 2002. Powell warned that the foreword required clarity on the threat from Iraq, and that it was a future risk rather than immediate. Scarlett was concerned at the way the draft foreword referred to the JIC and Intelligence community role in the dossier. In both cases, the risk involved was in statements over-reaching what was reasonable to state.

In sum, Blair faced several strategic and tactical political risks. These tactical political risks, with their more immediate term nature, influenced the strategic political risks that were more long-term and endured throughout the decision-making process. These strategic and tactical political risks combined to create an atmosphere of significant risk for Blair to confront. His approach to risk, in most cases, was to proceed despite the risk that he recognised in the decision-making process. Blair considered that the "best course was to keep our nerve and persevere". In other words, continuing with the chosen course of action was the best means of approaching the opposition to the potential military confrontation with Iraq.

7.3.2. Bush's Approach to Risk

As stated previously, Bush faced less risk overall in the decision-making process. Where Blair faced two strategic political risks, Bush faced one. This was in the dismissal of intelligence that was not supportive of his view that there was a link between Iraq and Al Qaeda. Similarly, he faced two tactical political risks in contrast to Blair's three. The most significant difference being in the recognition of risks: strategic and political. Bush was less aware of the risks that he faced in the decision-making process than was Blair. However, despite these differences, there were

similarities between these. As Blair excluded some individuals from key information, the secrecy that surrounded the planning process in the US was a tactical political risk Bush also chose to take. The second tactical political risk Bush faced was in the process of seeking congressional support. Again, this involved the management of the advisory system and as such was similar to the tactical risk Blair faced in his ignoring warnings from advisers and colleagues.

Bush's attempt to link Iraq and Al Qaeda, and the dismissal of intelligence that this involved, constituted a strategic political risk that endured from the aftermath of 9/11 to the early months of 2003. As such, it was the most long-enduring strategic political risk in this decision-making process. It constituted a strategic political risk, because the consequences of failure to make this link would almost certainly prevent Bush achieving his goal of military action against Iraq. Public knowledge of the falseness of this attempted link between Iraq and Al Qaeda, and that the attempt to link Iraq and Al Qaeda was based on intelligence discounted by intelligence agencies, would have significantly complicated the context Bush was operating within.

Attempting to link Iraq to 9/11 risked opposition within and outside of Bush's administration (Mann, 2004, p341, 363). If it had become publicly known that there was no evidence of a link between Iraq and Al Qaeda, as was established by Bush's counter-terrorism expert Richard Clarke (Clarke, 2004, p334), it would have been near-impossible to use this as a basis for confronting Iraq militarily. However, the lack of significant opposition within his administration, especially in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, reduced the risk of this attempted link being discounted publicly (Woodward, 2004; Prados, 2007a). In his 2002 State of the Union speech, Bush again referred to links between Iraq and Al Qaeda (Bush, 2002; Woodward, 2004, p87). This was despite his repeatedly being informed by the CIA of

“no credible link between Al Qaeda and Hussein” (Bamford, 2004, p289; Tenet, 2007; Packer, 2006, Woodward, 2006). In the autumn of 2002, Bush continued to link Iraq and Al Qaeda, continuing to dismiss the warnings that there was no evidence for the link.

Bush faced two tactical political risks in his decision-making process – in the secrecy of the planning for the Iraq war, and in the seeking of congressional support – but neither of these strongly influenced the strategic risk that Bush took in dismissing intelligence that he did not agree with, and in linking Iraq and Al Qaeda. In the immediate term, both the secrecy in planning and the meetings Bush held to seek congressional support had the potential to increase the opposition that Bush faced and make achieving his goal of military action against Iraq more complex.

The secrecy in the planning for military action against Iraq began when Bush first requested Rumsfeld start reviewing the plans. Bush first referred to contingency planning for conflict in Iraq on the 17th of September 2001, days following the decision in the NSC not to include Iraq in the War on Terror response to the 9/11 attacks. Twice more, in November 2001, Bush requested war plans to be developed, asking the Defense Department “to be ready to deal with Iraq if Baghdad acted against US interests”, and later asking Rumsfeld to look at the war plans “quietly” (Woodward, 2004). After a meeting, Bush pulled aside Rumsfeld for a one-on-one chat, asking him not to mention the request to anyone else. As such, Bush risked excluding others in the administration from this process in a manner that would increase their opposition to this development of military preparations. Equally, the privacy of the development of the war planning contained the tactical risk of those who were unaware of it making inaccurate claims. In February 2002, more detailed plans were presented, initially to Rumsfeld and then to Bush. Days after these

briefings, Powell made a public comment that there were no war plans on Bush's desk, a statement that was true only because the war plans were not physically on Bush's desk, because Franks was developing the plans after the second presentation to Bush. By keeping these war plan developments to a very small group within the administration, Bush risked misleading members of his administration, and as such he risked misleading the public, potentially heightening the opposition to war. Whilst it is not atypical to keep the planning of military action to a small group, the secrecy had the potential to restrict the ability of the Bush administration to achieve its immediate term goals, meaning it was a tactical political risk.

A tactical political risk with similar implications arose when Bush sought the approval of Congress for military action against Iraq in the autumn of 2002. Bush sought support from members of Congress, making both emotive appeals and claims with questioned intelligence. In one of these meetings, Bush stuck his head into the room, telling them, "Fuck Saddam, he tried to kill my Dad". In another meeting, Bush made the claim that Saddam Hussein could launch an attack in 45 minutes. This "45 minute" claim originated in the UK's September dossier, but Tenet and the CIA had refused to authenticate the claim. Tenet was profuse in his objection to the claim, frequently referring to the claim as that "they-can-attack-in-45-minutes shit" (Woodward, 2004, p190). In making these emotive points to seek support for military action, Bush risked fuelling opposition or decreasing the credibility of the case he sought to make against Iraq by relying on emotive, personal points. Likewise, by using intelligence that his own intelligence apparatus did not fully support, Bush took a tactical risk to the credibility of his case against Iraq. He took the tactical risk of the CIA publicly discrediting this intelligence, or the Congress members recoiling from

these emotive claims. This could have derailed the process of progressing towards military action against Iraq.

Bush's approach to risk was marked by the lesser degree of risk that he faced (when compared to Blair), and his limited recognition of these risks. As such, calling him a "risk taker" over-emphasises his willingness to take risks. Bush did not have the same approach to risk as Blair, despite the similarities between other aspects of their leadership styles. Instead, Bush is best characterised as a leader comfortable with risk, but who was not entirely cognisant of the risk that he faced. In line with the research question of this thesis, the Leadership style approach used here accounts for the similarities and differences between Bush and Blair's approach to risk.

7.4. Managing the Advisory System

This measure focuses on the intentional choices that a leader makes in establishing and operating within their advisory system. Whereas groupthink, used in the previous Chapter, is not an actively coordinated phenomenon that affects a decision-making group, this measure focuses on the intended decisions taken by the leader about their advisory group. As such, this broadens the term "selection" to include the selection of those members of the advisory system who are in the loop on particular issues, rather than simply who was selected for the particular role they occupied. Three advisory system models proposed by George (1980) are used to assess the manner in which Bush and Blair established their advisory systems, and these are set out in the table below (Figure 2).

7.4.1. Overview

Established by George (1980), the Management of the Advisory system proposes three classifications of management styles: the formalistic model, the competitive

model, and the collegial model. The formalistic model typically has an orderly, structured policy-making atmosphere, following clear procedures. In contrast, the competitive model places emphasis on encouraging a decision-making atmosphere that was more open and with more diverse opinions expressed. Finally, the collegial model constitutes an attempt to avoid the negatives of both, and unify the benefits of each other model. As such, while structures are relied upon, the open expression of views is also encouraged. The differences between these are set out in Figure 2 below. It is unlikely that a leader’s advisory system would entirely typify one of these models. For example, even in the competitive model, there would still be an identifiable hierarchy given the nature of government positions. Each of these models should be considered ideal types, which the management styles of individual real-world leaders should be considered most similar to. Leaders do not wholly subscribe to these ideal types.

Figure 2

Formalistic Model	Ordered, hierarchical policy-making structure, which is rigidly adhered to.
Competitive Model	Open expression of views of policies, with a structure that was not rigidly adhered to.
Collegial Model	A middle-ground position between the two, expression of views within the hierarchical structure.

This thesis combines literature on conceptual complexity and George’s (1980) management of the advisory system model. Leaders with a low conceptual complexity are typically less receptive to advice or input to the decision-making process that does

not agree with their own view (Preston, 2001). As set out in the first section, this Chapter identifies both Bush and Blair as having low conceptual complexity competitive models for managing their advisory systems. Both Blair and Bush were selective in which members of their advisory systems were made to feel able to openly express their opinions.

7.4.2. Blair's Establishing of the Advisory System

When New Labour entered office, it promised to modernise the operations of government. Blair reformed the organisation of government, strengthening Number 10 (Richards, 2011, p34). This he did through three key aspects of his management of his advisory system: the increased use of special advisers ("SPADs"), a diminished role of Cabinet, and an informal meeting style. Through these three components of his advisory system, Blair established an advisory system in the "competitive model" mould. Blair's low conceptual complexity was also closely related to his style of managing the advisory system around him.

Blair had indicated his New Labour government's approach to reforming government early on in his government. In March 1997, in a speech prior to taking office, he declared, "That we will run from the centre and govern from the centre" (Richards, 2008, p105). New Labour had entered office with a perception that there was a need to follow a strategy of "joined-up government", reinforcing the government's central coordination units: Number 10 and the Cabinet Office (Richards, 2011, p34). Lord Butler noted in our interview that "From the outset Blair surrounded himself with quite a small circle who were the real decision-makers", and that "the decisions tended to be pre-cooked. He would take them [decisions] with a group of people sympathetic to him" (Butler, 2018). Indeed, when Sir Richard Wilson replaced Sir Robin Butler as the Cabinet Secretary, he was asked for recommendations on how to strengthen the

central government machinery almost as soon as he took the role (Barberis, 2000, p33). Lord Turnbull recalled in an interview that he considered the New Labour style of government “was not a bad habit they slipped into, it was something they set out from the start, wanting to work in a different way” (Turnbull, 2018). Jonathan Powell concurred to an extent with this when interviewed. Given his position within the Blair inner circle as the “presiding genius” over Number 10 organisation (Manning, 2020), this would seem to mean this was a reasonably fair assessment. He said that the ad hoc meetings were in his opinion more efficient and speedier than Ad Hoc Cabinet sub-committee meetings, and this meant that there were more of these meetings. However, he did recognise that the keeping and circulation of minutes may have been insufficient (Powell, 2020), which was a critique that Lord Butler raised when interviewed for this research.

These reforming efforts accentuated Blair’s style of government: a close inner circle taking decisions with limited broader consultation, according to a number of senior cabinet officials and senior civil servants (Mowlam, 2002; Wilson, 2002; Cook, 2003; Short, 2004; Butler, 2004; Quinlan, 2004). This close inner circle contained a number of Number 10 personnel, with “SPADs” or Special Advisers, such as Blair’s Chief of Staff Jonathan Powell and Director of Communications Alastair Campbell amongst them. The role of a SPAD is ill-defined. In the Blair government, they came to be regarded as “developing an alternative civil service that engendered sofa government” (Smith, 2012). Indeed, drawing on his years of experience in Number 10, Tom McKane described these advisors as Blair’s “gate-keepers” (McKane, 2020). These “SPADs” appointed by Blair had unprecedented power within his Number 10¹⁴⁶, and helped

¹⁴⁶ Both Powell and Campbell were frequently referred to as among the most powerful advisers in recent times (Rutter, 2019; Murphy, 2003; Watt, 2001).

strengthen the position of the PM (Rutter, 2019). The scale of involvement of politically-appointed advisers was a crucial component of Blair's management of his advisory system. Blair established a "quasi-Department of the Prime Minister", increasing the size of both the Cabinet Office and Number 10 staff: in 1998, there were 650 personnel between these departments, which increased to 2,020 in 2002 (Jones and Blick, 2010). Reinforcing the centre of government could be seen as part of a respect for the formal systems and hierarchies of government. However, rather than reinforcing the hierarchies and order that would typify a "formalistic" model of advisory system, it actually enabled Blair to establish an inner circle within Number 10 with few select ministers included, and a large number of "politically motivated" SPADs, to create a more "competitive" model. The people in the inner circle were those likely to agree with Blair and advise him in a way he would be receptive to. Lord Turnbull's perception was that Blair and Jonathan Powell felt that it did not necessarily matter whether a meeting was a formal Ad Hoc Cabinet sub-committee or an informal ad hoc meeting, provided the correct people were in the room (Turnbull, 2018). Turnbull's response to such thinking was that in an informal ad hoc meeting attendees are selected by the Prime Minister, whereas with the Ad Hoc meetings attendees were determined by the topic under discussion¹⁴⁷. Lord Butler was even more critical of the ad hoc meetings when interviewed: "Attendance of these meetings was pretty haphazard, and often formal minutes weren't taken, so it was difficult to know exactly what had been decided" (Butler, 2018). This is perhaps too harsh. Jonathan Powell felt that decisions were typically clear from these meetings; rather, it was the implementation that was a little unclear (Powell, 2020). Whilst the point about whether

¹⁴⁷ As Lord Turnbull explained, there are formal processes determining who attends formal a Cabinet sub-committee, whereas with informal ad hoc meetings the attendees are determined by the Prime Minister (Turnbull, 2018).

decisions were clear may have been overly harsh from Butler, the selectiveness in attendees appears to be well supported. Blair's low conceptual complexity led him to filter advice and sources of advice, ignoring that which he disagreed with and listening to that which agreed with him. As such, his low conceptual complexity influenced the composition of his inner circle and advisory system generally.

Allied to this reinforcing of the centre of UK government and reliance on an inner circle of decision-makers, Blair was also accused of "eroding the principles of Cabinet government", diminishing the Cabinet's role (Wilson, 2002; Short, 2004; Butler, 2004; Quinlan, 2004). This was part of a trend started four decades before Blair entered office – a trend of reducing the decision-making role of Cabinet (Weir and Beetham, 1999). Blair did follow a PM who had re-empowered Cabinet: John Major had regularly consulted his Cabinet. John Major was anomalous to the trend. However, the more typical role of Cabinet, in the decades preceding Major, has been to approve decisions taken elsewhere and consider major political crises the government may be facing (Weir and Beetham, 1999, p127). As such, Blair was perhaps not revolutionary in his approach to Cabinet, but his increased use of "SPADs" and his "sofa-style" accentuated the impact of this moving away from Cabinet government. The increased number of senior SPADs, such as Alastair Campbell and Jonathan Powell, enabled Blair's preferred decision-making style – small meetings of an inner circle discussing informally. These meetings were very informal; McKane recalls that it was not unusual for there to be side conversations within meetings where Blair was being briefed, for example (McKane, 2020). While at face value the difference between Cabinet committee meetings and these small meetings of Blair's inner circle may seem insignificant, given the similar numbers of people in attendance and that both can be held in a more informal setting, there are crucial differences. In the traditional decision-

making processes – such as Cabinet committee meetings, where official minutes must be taken – there is better representation of Cabinet ministers in comparison to SPADs, and there is a mechanism for formal advice documents to be provided (Wilson, 2011). Sir David Manning mentioned in an interview that he attempted to minute as many of these meetings as he could, but this was not always easy (Manning, 2020). Jonathan Powell concurred, saying that he felt these informal meetings were more efficient and speedier, but that this did mean it was difficult to minute them (Powell, 2020). Blair's management of the advisory system conforms to the competitive model, with a highly managed selection of personnel in the inner circle. Blair managed this with an increase in the prominence of SPADs – for example, Campbell and Powell holding key positions within his inner circle, and in their position in the “sofa government” inner circle meetings.

The informality within the meetings themselves was also a crucial aspect of Blair's management of the advisory system. Often the manner in which Blair and this inner circle interacted with the conventional elements of the civil service was at the root of some of the limitations in the format of these meetings. For some, the meetings were an efficacious means for conveying a briefing. Admiral Boyce, the Chief of Defence Staff, preferred to brief the PM in this type of meeting. He felt that the lack of questions from ministers with responsibilities far removed from the matter he was discussing meant he could provide more information, and answer questions more related to the point (Boyce, 2018). His position as a civil servant, an expert imparting the military options, meant he was less interested in discussion and debate. Lord Turnbull was less convinced about the informal meetings. When interviewed, he spoke of formal Ad Hoc meetings having a process for determining who would attend. In contrast, in the informal meetings, Blair did not operate within these meetings in a clear, linear manner,

and would move back to policy areas previously covered. At some points, the relevant advisers were travelling back to Whitehall and could not participate in these discussions. This is another area where the informal process adopted by Blair came with limitations. The informality meant that the discussion progressed without the relevant advisers in place to inform the meeting.

7.4.3. Blair's Management of the Advisory System and the Question of Legality

This management of the advisory system had a significant impact on two key areas of the decision-making process: the issue of the question of the legality of the potential invasion of Iraq, and the presentation of the government case against Iraq. Blair's management of his advisory system – with the reliance on SPADs, a diminished role for the Cabinet, and an informal style of meeting – affected how decisions were taken on the legality of military action against Iraq. It affected both the timing of the legal advice and how Blair received the legal advice. The way in which Blair operated his advisory system meant that he could delay Lord Goldsmith from formally providing his legal advice on the invasion of Iraq. When the advice was drafted, the organisation of the advisory system meant that Blair could direct advisers to speak to Goldsmith, in an attempt to bring Goldsmith's opinion more in line with his own view.

There was a long delay in the formal legal advice from the Attorney General Lord Goldsmith. In the later stages of 2002, there were three points when Goldsmith was actively informed his advice was not needed¹⁴⁸. Goldsmith and Sir Michael Wood (the

¹⁴⁸ Minute, Brummel. 11/11/2002. "Iraq: Note of telephone conversation between the Attorney General and Jonathan Powell". Minute, Brummel. 19/12/2002. "Iraq: Note of Meeting at No. 10 Downing Street – 4.00pm, 19 December 2002".

FCO principal legal adviser) both attested that “there were various stages where he [Attorney General Lord Goldsmith] was not asked” when he could have been (Wood, 2010; Goldsmith, 2010, p68). When people questioned whether the Attorney General should be consulted, the response was that they were at risk of “getting ahead” of themselves¹⁴⁹ (Iraq Inquiry, 2010, s5 p21).

Once Blair requested the legal advice, the organisation of the advisory system inserted a delay once again. Powell, Manning, and Sally Morgan (Director of Political and Governmental Relations) met Goldsmith again, telling him that at that point they were not asking him to provide an opinion. The SPADs used the informal meeting to update Goldsmith on Number 10’s position. As such, they were able to emphasise their position without Goldsmith in turn presenting his. Jonathan Powell asked Goldsmith to send a draft of his legal advice to Blair prior to publishing it. By doing so, he ensured Blair could decide whether to discuss the advice and that he had an opportunity to persuade Goldsmith of his position. This advice was due to be discussed at Cabinet. However, Blair decided against this, making no reference to the advice in Cabinet. Instead, at the suggestion of Powell, he requested that Sir Jeremy Greenstock meet Goldsmith to discuss the formulation of UNSCR 1441 and the interpretation of the intention behind the resolution. Rather than discussing the legal advice in the Cabinet, Blair discussed the advice in a small meeting of advisers prior to this. In so doing, Blair displayed his use of SPADs and the diminished role of the Cabinet. His low conceptual complexity meant that he did not want to discuss the nuances of the legal opinion. Rather than discuss the legal advice Goldsmith had provided him in Cabinet, Blair

¹⁴⁹ Manuscript comment. Powell on Memo McKane to Manning. 18/06/2002.

instead discussed the advice with SPADs and composed a response to the advice Goldsmith had provided in an effort to persuade him to his own view.

Blair also established conditions for members of the advisory system to pressure Goldsmith. This pressure went alongside the persuasion attempts Blair himself made, which are outlined above. Straw sent a memo to Sir Michael Wood, challenging a legal opinion Wood had sent to Straw, declaring that, “I note your advice, but I do not accept it”¹⁵⁰. Wood had considered it necessary to clarify the legal position of the UK government, after comments Straw had made¹⁵¹. Goldsmith felt strongly enough about the need to defend Wood that he sent Straw a strongly worded memo in rebuke, declaring “...if a Government legal adviser genuinely believes that a course of action would be unlawful, then it is his or her right and duty to say so. I support this right regardless of whether I agree with the substance of the advice which has been given”¹⁵². Similarly, Goldsmith recalled “Chinese Whispers” misrepresenting his legal advice (Goldsmith, 2010, p53). Again, Hoon represented a legal opinion Goldsmith was dissatisfied with in an interview, to which Goldsmith responded¹⁵³ (Hoon, 2010, p64). These challenges to Goldsmith all represent the manner in which the competitive model enabled Blair and his close advisers to target persuasion attempts at Goldsmith.

7.4.4. Blair’s Management of the Advisory System and Presentation

Each of the three components of the competitive model of advisory system management that Blair operated affected the formulation of the case for confronting

¹⁵⁰ Minute Straw to Wood. 29/01/2003. “Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force”.

¹⁵¹ Letter, Wood to Straw. 04/10/2002. “Iraq: International Law”. Minute Wood to Straw [FCO], 22 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Legal Position’. Minute Wood to Straw [FCO], 24 January 2003, ‘Iraq: Legal Basis for Use of Force’.

¹⁵² Minute Goldsmith to Foreign Secretary, 3 February 2003, [untitled].

¹⁵³ Letter, Goldsmith to Hoon, 28/03/2002. [Untitled].

Iraq that he presented: the prevalence of SPADs, the reduced role of Cabinet, and the informality of the meetings.

Late August 2002 saw Blair set out his wish for his government to make the case for confronting Iraq. Days later, through a letter from Campbell, Blair made his concerns about leaks of government policy clear to key members of his inner circle. The level of anger Blair expressed stemmed from his concern at the “uncoordinated” and “undisciplined” way information on the planning on Iraq was being presented to the media, and “what the US Administration must think”¹⁵⁴. Campbell recorded that he had left it to Manning and Powell to decide what to do (Campbell, 2012). Manning decided to discuss the matter with Rice. Here, Blair used the SPADs in his inner circle (Manning, Powell, Campbell) to both informally warn people in the government to not speak “loosely”¹⁵⁵, and reassure his US ally of his usefulness. The informality, in turn, meant there was less likelihood of press comment on Blair’s concerns, which would have exacerbated the impact of the ill-disciplined presentation.

The production of the “September Dossier” the UK government used to make their case against Iraq in September 2002 also reflected the significant role of SPADs and the impact of the informal meetings. In the initial stages of the production of documents for making the government case against Iraq, Campbell was given the lead role in their formulation, and the timing of publication¹⁵⁶. Blair saw this group as having great importance¹⁵⁷, and Campbell’s role in the lead indicates the significance of SPADs in the process.

¹⁵⁴ Minute Campbell to Manning, 2 September 2002, [untitled].

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Minute McKane to Campbell, 4th September 2002, “Iraq: Public Dossier”.
Email McKane to Blackshaw, 5th September 2002, “Meeting with Alastair Campbell”.

¹⁵⁷ Note Blair [to No. 10 Officials], 30 August 2002. [Extract Iraq].
The National Archives. 3rd September 2002. PM Press Conference. [at Sedgefield].

Two of the most important SPADs in Number 10, Campbell and Manning, took other key roles in the formulation of the government case in the summer of 2002. Manning was an important conduit for Blair: he enforced the need to have no publicity of the government case in advance of publishing the September dossier, and it was Manning who Blair requested intelligence from when composing a speech making the initial case against Iraq¹⁵⁸. The differing roles of SPADs and civil servants came in early September 2002 when they confirmed that Scarlett and his team would write the dossier, and Campbell and his team would then work on the document from a “presentational point of view”¹⁵⁹. Indeed, after an informal meeting that Campbell chaired in early September 2002, another SPAD, John Williams, made edits to a draft of the dossier they had discussed in the meeting¹⁶⁰. In a demonstration of this role of SPADs in the formulation of the dossier, he added the description of Iraq as “uniquely dangerous”. Accusations of the Blair government having “sexed up” the intelligence in the dossier have followed those involved for decades afterwards (Day, 2003; Ames and Norton-Taylor, 2010; McSmith, 2016). The likelihood is these accusations stem from the split role of civil servants and SPADs, and the significance of the dossier to persuading the public of the need to confront Iraq. By using SPADs to improve the presentation of the case, Blair politicised the process, and the divergence from official advice would later be heavily criticised.

Blair’s reliance on SPADs in the management of the advisory system, the informality of the meetings, and the reinforced Number 10 all created a competitive model of advisory system management. This affected the formulation of the legal opinion of the

¹⁵⁸ Minute Drummond to McKane, 8th August 2002, “Iraq: Public Dossier”. Minute, Blair to Manning, 1st September 2002. [Untitled].

¹⁵⁹ Minute Campbell to Scarlett, 9 September 2002, [untitled].

¹⁶⁰ Minute McKane to Campbell, 4th September 2002, “Iraq: Public Dossier”. Email McKane to Blackshaw, 5th September 2002, “Meeting with Alastair Campbell”.

UK government and the composition of the case against Iraq. This was not a typical competitive model, however. After all, Blair's low conceptual complexity meant that only his inner circle were able to openly express views.

7.4.5. Bush's Management of the Advisory System

Bush organised his advisory system in a competitive model manner, with his low conceptual complexity filtering which members of the advisory system were encouraged to express their views. Like-minded members of the advisory group were welcomed and encouraged by Bush. Those who expressed views contrary to Bush's view, however, were discouraged from doing so. The process by which Bush came to his decision to go to war with Iraq exemplifies this. When considering the decision, Bush asked for opinions from Rice and Karen Hughes, two advisers who were supportive to his own view, and did not consult Powell (Pfiffner, 2009). Powell had not achieved a personal relationship with Bush: the two men continued to be uncomfortable with one another (Woodward, 2004, p79). This was reflected when Bush was making his decision to invade Iraq: indeed, he not only did not consult Powell, he also did not inform him immediately. In fact, he informed the Saudi Arabian ambassador before informing his Secretary of State (Woodward, 2004, p151-152, 165). When Bush did inform Powell, it was in a twelve-minute conversation, and Bush later said that he did not need to seek Powell's permission (Woodward, 2004, p269-274). The lines were drawn: those who were likely to be receptive to Bush's own position were actively asked for their opinion (Hughes and Rice), while those who opposed his view were not consulted or informed (Powell).

Members of the advisory group who were typically supportive of Bush's view felt able to express opinions in opposition to Bush's view as necessary. In response to Bush's decision to go down the UN route, Cheney gave a speech at the Veterans of Foreign

Wars (VFW), strongly criticising this decision (Cheney, 2002). In the speech, Cheney expressed views that Powell himself described as precisely those that a member of the administration should not express after the President had made a decision (Powell, 2013). Cheney had checked that Bush did not disapprove of him giving a speech on the subject before Bush had made his own speech on the matter. Crucially, however, Bush did not check what Cheney was going to say in his speech (Woodward, 2004, p163). Cheney's position as a trusted member of the inner circle around Bush, who was routinely supportive of Bush, meant that Bush enabled Cheney to express openly a view that contradicted his own. Cheney was confirmed as a member of the groupthink who was not expected to oppose the group view.

In a mirror to this enabling of open expression by trusted members of the advisory group, those who disagreed with Bush found their views questioned. As already mentioned, Bush's counter-terrorism expert Richard Clarke had dismissed the possibility of a link between Iraq and Al Qaeda in meetings held immediately following 9/11 (Clarke, 2004). Bush did not accept this, and asked him to investigate further. The dismissal of a link between Al Qaeda and Iraq was not in line with Bush's view and therefore the competitive model that Bush had established did not apply to Clarke. Similarly, when Tenet composed the "legal-like" case requested by Bush, it did not make the case against Iraq strongly enough for Bush. Bush's solution was to give the task of writing the case against Iraq to "Scooter" Libby, a member of Rumsfeld's staff who was more pro-invasion (Woodward, 2004, p288). Bush managed the advisory system in such a way that others replaced those who expressed views he was not receptive to.

The competitive model advisory system that Bush operated meant that hierarchies did not prevent individuals in meetings from expressing opinions or advice. For example,

in the meetings immediately after 9/11, Paul Wolfowitz was able to express his case for including Iraq in the response to 9/11 (Woodward, 2004, p25; Dumbrell, 2005, p36). Whilst the group were not fully receptive to the case, as the Deputy Secretary of Defense, he was one of the most junior people present. Similarly, when the case that Bush requested Tenet to compose to build support for military action against Iraq was first presented to Bush, there were relatively open discussions. After the case was presented, and Bush told Tenet that it was not what he had hoped for (Woodward, 2004, p247-250), the rewriting of the case after the meeting was given to 'Scooter' Libby. Libby was amongst the most junior individuals in the meeting (Dreyfuss and Vest, 2004), yet Bush was willing to rely on them to rewrite the case. The lack of emphasis on hierarchies in these meetings, and the encouragement of the expression of views, confirms that Bush operated a competitive model of advisory system. Bush's low conceptual complexity meant that the expression of views that contradicted Bush's views was not encouraged, as can be seen in Bush's response to Tenet's case.

Bush's low conceptual complexity also affected this competitive model of advisory system. The low conceptual complexity meant that those who were supportive of Bush's own view were actively encouraged to express their views. Those who were less supportive of Bush's views were not encouraged in the same manner. When interviewed by Bob Woodward, Tenet said that he thought that those in the Bush administration who expressed doubt paid the greatest price. Similarly, when Rice expressed concern that some principals had expressed doubts, Bush's response was to perform a "gut-check" on her. The expression of doubt in the view that Bush held was not tolerated, and not part of the competitive model advisory system. This was also evident in the writing of the case against Iraq in the previous paragraph. The case was given to Libby to rewrite. Libby was Cheney's Chief of Staff (Dreyfuss and Vest,

2004), and was more receptive to Bush's view of the case than Tenet had been. Bush's low conceptual complexity meant that he assigned the task of rewriting the case against Iraq to those who were more receptive to his own view. When Libby presented his version of the case, there was again an open expression of views. Karen Hughes (former member of the administration at that point) and Richard Armitage (Powell's deputy at the State Department) were both concerned at the points made, but Wolfowitz was convinced by Libby's case (Woodward, 2004, p288-291). The ability of people from various ranks or positions to express their views emphasises that Bush operated a competitive model of advisory system. The presence of a former member of the administration also speaks to this. The hierarchy and precise positions held were not overly prioritised by Bush.

In sum, the advisory system that Bush established was consistent with his low conceptual complexity. He managed this in a manner that meant it was not the standard competitive model, as did Blair with his own advisory system; there was a qualification of who felt able to express openly their views. People who were supportive of Bush's approach to Iraq were enabled to express their views openly, even if they contradicted Bush's own expressed views. Those who were receptive to Bush's view were consulted in the decision-making process, contrastingly, those who were not were not consulted.

7.5. Conclusion

This Chapter assessed the cases of US and UK leadership styles in the decision to embark on the Iraq War. The leadership style Bush displayed featured a low conceptual complexity, a willingness to take strategic and tactical political risks, and a low conceptual complexity competitive model of managing his advisory system. His

low conceptual complexity gave Bush a black-and-white view of Iraq and it meant that he rejected warnings on the veracity of some intelligence he referred to publicly. Bush frequently employed very emotive language when referring to Iraq, with terms such as “evildoer” occurring a number of times in speeches (Lincoln, 2004). Bush’s advisory system management meant that he encouraged those who agreed with him to express openly their views. Those who were not receptive to his point of view were not consulted and at points not kept in the loop (as happened with Secretary of State Powell). Bush regarded the issue of Iraq in a black-and-white manner, and, as such, he did not wish for those who did not support his view to introduce ‘shades of grey’.

Blair had a similar low conceptual complexity that he displayed in how he perceived the issue of Iraq and in the way he presented the issue publicly. Blair faced more risk in the decision-making process than his US counterpart did. As with Bush, when Blair recognised the risk, typically he sought to proceed with his decision in spite of the risk. As with Bush, Blair’s low conceptual complexity influenced how he managed his advisory system. Those who did not share his view were not encouraged to express their views. The manner in which Blair managed his advisory system was largely in response to the risks that he faced, specifically the risk of opposition within the Cabinet. As the interviews have shown, the attendance at key informal meetings was intentionally highly selective, meaning the meetings were very sympathetic and less likely to challenge decisions. Indeed, this may explain why one interviewee claimed that Blair’s Number 10 “did not have a culture of challenging” (Williams, 2018). By managing the flow of information, when and in what context decisions were taken, this opposition was reduced. The supportive inner circle, and the restriction of information, reduced the potential impact of this opposition. Equally, the low conceptual complexity Blair displayed influenced his approach to risk: the strength of his conviction in his

perception of dealing with Iraq meant that he was willing to accept significant risk in the decision-making process and proceed anyway.

Both Blair and Bush displayed a consistency in their low conceptual complexity. Further, this was the predominant facet of their leadership styles, affecting both their approaches to risk and management of their advisory systems. Typically, leaders who are identified as low or high conceptual complexity do display some characteristics from the other end of the spectrum of conceptual complexity. However, both leaders were remarkably consistent in this regard. This low conceptual complexity then affected the way both leaders approached strategic and tactical risks. Finally, both leaders operated their advisory systems in a manner dictated by their low conceptual complexity. As with the groupthink model, the leadership style approach used here accounts for similarities and differences in the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The explanation that the leadership style approach provides here is also contextualised by the explanation the groupthink model provided.

The Cabinet government system that Blair operated in meant that he faced greater restrictions on his actions than Bush faced in his system. Despite this, both leaders' styles were similar and significantly influenced the decision-making process. The fact that such similar leadership styles could overcome system differences raises wider questions of the veracity of the 'checks-and-balances' typically assumed in their respective constitutional systems. Clearly, both Bush and Blair were essentially able to get their way, despite these impediments, and they did so on the basis of a determination strengthened by their low conceptual complexity and their management of their inner circles. Such singularity of purpose and closed management highlights risks to constitutional systems in the climate of an international crisis.

When combined with the conclusions of the groupthink chapter, the conclusions of the application of this leadership style approach shows how crucial the individual level of analysis is to explaining this case. Further, the combination of the explanations that each individual model provides shows the utility of applying these FPA models in combination. In both systems, the leadership styles of both Bush and Blair exacerbated the groupthink that occurred in the decision-making groups. By typically rejecting information that contradicted their previously held views, they encouraged the restriction of such information being introduced into discussions by mindguards.

Conceptually, the combination of the measures in the approach to leadership style used in this thesis was crucial to determining the impact of their respective leadership styles. In linking the conceptual complexity with the management of the advisory system, key conditions of how both leaders made the decision to go to war are much clearer. Despite the different governmental systems they operated in, both leaders were able to manage their advisory systems to reduce opposition within their respective decision-making groups. Blair in particular did this in response to his recognition of the tactical political risk that vociferous opposition within the Cabinet would have constituted.

Equally, in examining the low conceptual complexity of both Bush and Blair alongside their approach to risk, the impact of the low conceptual complexity on their approach to both tactical and strategic risk is evident. For both leaders, their low conceptual complexity was the predominant facet of their leadership style. The black-and-white worldview that came from their low conceptual complexity meant that they did not consider the nuances in the situations they faced. In paying little attention to the potential complexities in the issues they faced, Blair and Bush were able to proceed, despite the perceived strategic or political risks.

8. Analogical Reasoning: World War Two, Kosovo, and the Iraq War Decision-Making Process

8.1. Introduction

This chapter argues that analogical reasoning was used by the US and the UK decision-making groups. The US group used analogical reasoning rhetorically, to present the case to militarily intervene against Iraq. In the UK, analogical reasoning was used to both present this case for military action publicly and provided a “roadmap” for the decision-making group on how to approach military action against Iraq.

This chapter firstly outlines the analogical reasoning model, defining analogies and outlining the way analogical comparisons can negatively impact decision-making. Secondly, this chapter analyses the use of World War Two (WW2) analogical comparisons by the Bush administration to make their case for military action against Iraq. References to WW2 pervaded much of the public discourse and focused on three points related to WW2: Munich, Pearl Harbour, and the WW2 generation. Thirdly, this chapter outlines the impact of the comparisons between the situation the UK decision-makers faced with Iraq and their experiences with regard to intervention in Kosovo. This public analogising was similar to that in the US, despite the different points of comparison (Kosovo rather than WW2). In both the US and the UK, the consequences of non-intervention were used to motivate support for military action. However, the UK decision-makers making the comparisons had a more direct impact upon the UK decision-making process. UK decision-makers used the Kosovo analogy as a policy guide, and this chapter outlines the way this comparison to the decision-makers’ experience in the humanitarian intervention against Kosovo affected the way these decision-makers approached the Iraq military operation.

The groupthink that occurred in the decision-making groups in both the US and the UK reduced objections and opposition being expressed. As such, it helped to protect the analogical reasoning that was used by both groups. The leadership styles of both Bush and Blair, remarkably similar as they were despite the differences in the governmental systems, also protected this analogising. Their low conceptual complexity meant that they did not perceive nuances in a situation, and as such did not perceive the differences between the cases compared. Similarly, their low conceptual complexity management of the advisory system discouraged the expression of objections to the comparisons and conclusions based on these comparisons.

In the US, the WW2 analogies were misleading. Three points were referred to as part of this WW2 analogising: Munich, Pearl Harbour, and the WW2 generation. The Munich analogy was that the consequences of not acting against Saddam Hussein would be the same as the consequences of not acting against Hitler in 1938, and, as such, the International Community led by the US should intervene in Iraq. This analogy was misleading: there were significant points of difference between the case of Hitler in the 1930s and Saddam Hussein in 2003. After all, there was no evidence that Saddam Hussein was seeking to carry out military actions against neighbouring Middle Eastern nations in 2002/2003. Therefore, comparing Iraq in 2003 to Nazi Germany prior to significant military action was misrepresenting the threat. Similarly, the international atmosphere was very different in 2003 compared to the 1930s. There had been several humanitarian interventions in the ten years prior to this case, and the international community was far more likely to intervene to prevent genocide in Iraq than it had been in the 1930s. Indeed, the international community had intervened in Iraq twice in the previous decade.

The references to Pearl Harbour and the WW2 generation were used by US decision-makers to emphasise the US role in confronting Iraq. While the Munich analogy was used to emphasise the need to act against Iraq (Dyer, 2002), the references to Pearl Harbour and the WW2 generation were used to emphasise the need for the US to take the lead in confronting Iraq (Woodward, 2004, p90-91; Jespersen, 2005).

In the UK, the Kosovo analogy was both oversimplified and misleading. The comparison between the consequences of not intervening against Iraq and the potential consequences should NATO have not intervened in Kosovo was similarly misleading as the Munich analogy was in the US. The immediate humanitarian crisis in Kosovo was not present in Iraq in 2003. This changed the diplomatic situation in the UN, and meant that the UK's legal position was very different in the cases of Kosovo and Iraq. This rhetorical use of analogical reasoning is not atypical. Many public messages from politicians are simplistic. For example, Blair's "education, education, education", or "Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime". However, the oversimplified comparison between Iraq and Kosovo did contribute to building a small majority of support for military action against Iraq (Dahlgreen, 2003). The use of the case of intervention in Kosovo as a 'roadmap' was an oversimplification of the two cases. There were some superficial similarities between the two cases: in the cases of Iraq and Kosovo, both were in the midst of humanitarian crises (although the humanitarian crisis in Iraq was not as immediate as it had been in Kosovo). In both cases, the UNSC process was fraught with difficulties. However, the crucial legal and diplomatic differences between the two cases were made clear to UK decision-makers repeatedly.

8.2. Analogical Reasoning

As a model, analogical reasoning examines the comparisons decision-makers make between the situation they are facing and similar situations from the past. According to Jeffrey (2009, p310), analogical reasoning is “the idea two or more events sharing enough common features can be assumed analogous in other pertinent aspects”. Decision-makers use these comparisons both in the making of the decision, and in the selling of this decision publicly (Khong, 1992, p11; Paris, 2002, p428-429; Burrige, 2013, p4).

Analogising is not unusual; the making of these comparisons is inherent to all people. It is considered an important means for people to understand the context they are in (Houghton, 1996, p524). Humans seek to simplify situations they face, and analogies provide a mental shortcut, enabling the transformation of ill-structured issues into ones with greater certainty (Voss et al, 1991). Analogising causes problems because of the mental shortcuts or “cognitive biases” of the individuals using the analogies, explaining why so many poor decisions have been linked to the use of analogies (May, 1973; Khong, 1992; Noon, 2004; Siniver and Collins, 2006). Decision-makers may also have psychological motivation for the selection of particular analogical comparisons, because they agree with their ideological beliefs or suit their emotional needs (Kaarbo and Kenealy, 2017). This model examines how these analogies, with their basis on “cognitive biases”, affect decisions taken, whether those decisions are considered poor, or not.

Cognitive biases are inherent to the manner in which humans process information, and can subsequently lead to flawed reasoning (Hallihan and Cheong, 2012). In situations of complexity, stress, and crisis, humans rely on “knowledge structures”, such as cognitive biases to simplify the situation the decision-maker faces (Khong,

1992, p13). Whilst these analogical comparisons can provide a “useful shortcut” (Mintz and Derouen, 2012, p103), the danger of a shortcut is that it misses key aspects of a situation. Some analogies, such as the Munich or Vietnam analogies, have a long-lasting impact. The shared collective understanding of these two cases, and the shared understanding of the lessons from these cases, mean that these lessons are applied similarly (Record and Terrill, 2004).

There are two key reasons for the reliance on analogising in foreign policy decision-making being potentially ineffective. The first being that the analogy selected can mislead, because the two situations are not comparable (Khong, 1992; p12; Siniver and Collins, 2015). As Khong (1992, p10) outlines, the assumption is that because case ‘A’ and case ‘B’ are similar in one aspect, they must be similar in more aspects. The cognitive bias means that decision-makers miss the differences between the cases. Historical cases are each a mixture of “factors, people or chronology” that “offers no clear blueprint” (Macmillan, 2010, p153). The lessons that can be drawn from an analogy is dependent on the subjective understanding of the historical case being drawn upon, whether the outcome was positive or negative, and the cause of this outcome (Kaarbo and Kenealy, 2017). The “Munich Analogy” that was prevalent in this case has been used as an analogy in a number of US decisions on military action. Military action in Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq (in 1991) were all compared to the appeasement of Hitler at the Munich conference in 1938 by the US decision-makers (Truman, 1956; Kearns, 1976; Clinton, 1999). Secretary of State John Kerry also used the “Munich Analogy” in an attempt to persuade US Senators of the need to intervene in Syria in 2013 (Shachtman, 2013; Thornton, 2014). In each case, the negative impact of not standing up to aggression informed the decision-making process. As with many cases of Analogical Reasoning, the application of this analogy was misleading. For

example, the potential negative consequences of not confronting aggression was emphasised, with the potential negative consequences of intervention therefore given less attention.

Secondly, the way in which the analogy is used could be deceptive: for example, through oversimplification (Jervis, 1976, p220; Siniver and Collins, 2006). Comparisons could be made in order to speed up the decision-making process, reduce the deliberation, or to engender support for the decision that they wish to make (Khong, 1992; Noon, 2004). The appeal of an analogy is in its ability to offer a “shortcut” to rationality. As such, there is no compulsion to research the case in greater depth. This is not to say that all reliance on analogies in decision-making makes a decision-making process flawed. This depends on the “cognitive biases” of those making the comparisons. For instance, President Kennedy’s First World War analogy during the Cuban Missile Crisis (a sequence of events could lead to unintended consequences) is considered good practice (Breuning 2003; Winter 2003; Tierney 2007; MacMillan 2010; Siniver and Collins, 2015).

The role of a leader in the use of analogies in decision-making is crucial. A leader with a low conceptual complexity is more prone to employing simplistic analogical reasoning (Dyson and Preston, 2006, p282). This thesis shows the impact of Bush and Blair’s low conceptual complexities upon decision-making in the US and the UK. Both leader’s low conceptual complexities meant that the analogies used in the US and the UK were simple, shallow comparisons between cases.

The purpose behind the use of analogical reasoning is a crucial component of this research. Khong (1992, p12) identifies the debate as to whether analogical reasoning is used in the making of a decision, or to justify a decision already made. This thesis

adopts this delineation set out by Khong (1992, p12) and Meierhenrich (2010), using the terminology that Meierhenrich (2010) identifies to refer to these two forms of analogical reasoning: reason and rhetoric.

Firstly, in the case of reason, the analogies are actively used in the process to encourage a particular course of action (Meierhenrich, 2010). This chapter argues that this form of analogical reasoning affected the UK decision-making process when decision-makers used the example of Kosovo as a “roadmap” for approaching action against Iraq. In the UK decision-making group, their analogising was to a military operation the decision-makers had personal experience of, potentially explaining why their use of analogy affected the making of their decision. Humans utilise “knowledge structures” to simplify the situation they are faced with (Khong, 1992, p10). Analogies help outline the nature of the situation, assess the potential outcomes, provide recommendations, assess likelihoods of success, determine the morality of the situation, and warn about dangers (Khong, 1992, p13). The direct experience the UK decision-makers had of the intervention in Kosovo meant that they drew on these memories to analogise, guiding their reasoning within the decision-making group and their rhetorical portrayal of the decision to confront Iraq (Maoz, 1990). For the Bush administration, there was less opposition to military action against Iraq within the decision-making group. As such, there was less reliance on analogical reasoning to ensure internal support for confrontation with Iraq.

Secondly, for rhetoric, the analogies are used to justify the decision that was taken, and to help the decision-makers sell their decision (Meierhenrich, 2010; Paris, 2002, p428-429). In both the US and the UK decision-making groups, the analogical reasoning was used for these rhetorical means. In the US, the analogy the decision-makers used was a historical example of which the decision-makers did not have

direct experience. Both the US and the UK used their analogies to sell military action against Iraq: in the US, the “Munich” analogy was used; in the UK, the Kosovo example was used to emphasise the need to act in Iraq¹⁶¹.

8.3. The US Analogy

The US decision-making group used the WW2 analogies to make the case for military action against Iraq. There were three components to this analogy. Firstly, the Munich analogy was used to emphasise the need to act militarily against Iraq by highlighting the potential consequences of not acting against Iraq. Secondly, the group used analogical comparisons to the Pearl Harbour attacks to emphasise the need for the US to take the lead in confronting Iraq, comparing the Pearl Harbour attacks to the 9/11 attacks. Thirdly, comparisons between the contemporary generation and the WW2 generation were also used to emphasise the US role in confronting Iraq. These comparisons were between the contemporary generation and the “Greatest Generation” (Brokaw, 1998) – the generation of Americans born in the Depression and who fought in the Second World War.

The “Vietnam Analogy” had been used in many decision-making processes in the US¹⁶². As such, it is noteworthy that the Vietnam analogy was not used in this case. The Vietnam analogy was actually used during the decision-making process that led to the US invading Afghanistan (Miller, 2016). Colin Powell was reportedly concerned at the war plans for Afghanistan when he saw them, because they appeared to be so

¹⁶¹ There were some limited references to the Munich analogy in the UK, but these did not form a consistent part of the case for military action.

¹⁶² The Vietnam Analogy, sometimes referred to as the “Quagmire Theory”, refers to the idea that the US slowly became entangled in the Vietnam War, gradually becoming trapped in the conflict.

similar to the Vietnam war plans (Miller, 2016; Woodward, 2002)¹⁶³. Where it did enter discussions within the administration, it was in terms of military strategy rather than comparisons at a policy level (Woodward, 2004, p49,88). Bush's Chief of Staff Andrew Card advised Bush, "Don't be a General, be a President" – both had the same memory of Vietnam (Woodward, 2004, p176). Indeed, both remembered the close involvement of presidents in the decision-making during the conflict, and the blame that was attached to those Presidents consequently (Laird, 2005).

There were also few references to Vietnam in rhetoric used in Congress, and these typically did not wholly oppose the war in Iraq¹⁶⁴. Rather, they called for greater transparency in the decision-making process, or emphasised the need for public support¹⁶⁵. The Vietnam war was referred to in discourse around the Iraq war, but was not used to make a consistent case for or against military action. Whilst the Vietnam war was used as a point of analogical comparison in previous decision-making processes, President George H.W. Bush said that the Gulf war had ended the legacy of this Vietnam analogy (Houghton, 1996; Jespersen, 2005). This would have influenced the administration of Bush Junior, given how many had been in the senior Bush's administration. Bush Junior dismissed a journalist's attempt to compare Iraq and Vietnam when he responded that he refused to acknowledge any comparison¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶³ As outlined previously, this case study stops at the point of the invasion of Iraq on the 19th/20th of March 2003. The Vietnam Analogy may have come into use later in the invasion/occupation of Iraq. However, it was not used in this case study.

¹⁶⁴ Whilst this is not a relevant decision-making unit of analysis in this research, as an arena for public discussion it is a relevant arena for examination.

¹⁶⁵ Representative Jackson-Lee, House of Representatives. 2002. 107th Congress, 2nd Session. Volume 148, no. 89.

Senator Byrd, US Senate. 2002. 107th Congress, 2nd Session. Volume 148, no. 89.

¹⁶⁶ Bush, G. 2004. President Addresses the Nation in Prime Time Press Conference. Available at: <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2004/04/20040413-20.html>.

The President declared, “I think the analogy is false”, and that this kind of comparison sent the wrong message to the troops.

The Gulf War appears to be another obvious point of comparison for US decision-makers to use in this case, like the Vietnam analogy. However, again, like the Vietnam analogy, this previous example of US military action against Iraq was not used as an analogical comparison consistently in the US. Comparisons to the Gulf War were a motivating factor for some members of the US decision-making group. The idea that the US had “unfinished business” with Iraq was also perceived by journalists examining the Bush administration (Cockburn, 2002; Sydney Morning Herald, 2004).

Both Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz saw leaving Saddam Hussein in power in Iraq after the Gulf War as a mistake. Throughout the 1990s, both had been involved in pressuring the Clinton administration into a more confrontational stance towards Iraq. This pressure on the Clinton administration came from a think tank called “Project for the New American Century”, of which both Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were members. The group sent an open letter to President Clinton, calling for the removal of Saddam Hussein¹⁶⁷. PNAC were able to pressure President Clinton into signing the “Iraq Liberation Act”, which declares “... that it should be the policy of the United States to seek to remove the Saddam Hussein regime from power in Iraq and to replace it with a democratic government”.

The Gulf war was not referred to in a consistent enough manner for it to be considered a part of the rhetorical analogising in making the public case for military action against Iraq. Equally, it was not considered by the decision-making group as a whole, but was limited to a small number of decision-makers (Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz).

¹⁶⁷ Statement of Principles. Project for a New American Century. 03/06/1997.

8.3.1. The Munich Analogy

The Munich analogy that US decision-makers used to prepare the ground for military action against Iraq has a long history of use in US decision-making on military action (Truman, 1956; Kearns, 1976; Levy, 1994; Anderson, 2007). President Truman used the analogy when deciding to go to war in Korea: “Communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler... had acted ten, fifteen, twenty years earlier” (Truman, 1956, p1956). President Johnson also used the Munich analogy when deciding to escalate US involvement in Vietnam: “...everything I knew about history told me that if I got out of Vietnam and let Ho Chi Minh run through the streets of Saigon, then I’d be doing exactly what Chamberlain did... I’d be giving a fat reward for aggression.” (Kearns, 1976, p252).

The first component of the WW2 analogising that was used in the US to be examined here is the “Munich Analogy”. The point of analogical comparison in the Munich analogy is the Munich conference between the UK, France, and Nazi Germany in 1938. At this conference, the UK and France accepted Hitler’s demand to annex the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia, enacting the policy of “appeasement” (Weinberg, 2002; Connolly-Smith, 2009; Caquet, 2018). Whilst the Munich conference was not part of World War Two, it was a crucial part of the developments that led to the conflict, which is why it is included in the WW2 analogising here. Those who use the analogy of Munich disagree with the idea of appeasement, and argue that thousands of lives could have been saved by confronting Hitler in 1938 rather than appeasing him and delaying conflict until 1939. Importantly, this analogy disregards some of the complexities in the case of the Munich conference. The delay in commencing war with Nazi Germany gave the UK more time to prepare for the conflict (Mearsheimer, 2001;

Ripsman and Levy, 2008). As such, the analogy is used as an example of the consequences of inaction, and the need to confront dictatorial military aggression. President Kennedy presented a succinct representation of this analogy: “[The] 1930s taught us a clear lesson: aggressive conduct, if allowed to go unchecked, ultimately leads to war” (Sorenson, 1965, p703).

Bush’s second State of the Union address made reference to the “Munich Analogy”. In this “Axis of Evil” speech, Bush declared that “I will not wait on events while dangers gather. I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most dangerous weapons.”¹⁶⁸ The reference to not waiting for danger to grow made the same case as the Munich analogy, emphasising the need to confront Iraq. Here, Bush was making the case that military action was necessary to prevent Saddam Hussein from carrying out an attack. He used the possibility of a delay in such a confrontation potentially resulting in greater harm, should Saddam Hussein carry out an attack. Others continued these sentiments through 2002. Both people close to the administration – journalists and members of President George Bush (Snr) administration, and members of the administration – made this public case using the “Munich Analogy”. In a sign of how widely this analogising pervaded, the prominent Chairman of the Defense Policy Board, Richard Perle, made direct reference to this analogy in August 2002: “[An] action to remove Saddam could precipitate the very thing we are most anxious to prevent: his use of chemical and biological weapons. But the danger that springs from his capabilities will only grow as he expands his arsenal. A pre-emptive strike against Hitler at the time of Munich would have meant an

¹⁶⁸ Bush, G. 2002. State of the Union Address. Available at: <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>

immediate war, as opposed to the one that came later. Later was much worse.” (Washington Post, 2002). Rumsfeld made this case whilst also referring to the debated lack of evidence that Saddam Hussein constituted a threat, saying, “Think of all the countries that said, ‘well, we don’t have enough evidence’. Mein Kampf had been written. Hitler had indicated what he intended to do. Maybe he won’t attack us... Well, there are millions of dead because of miscalculations.” (Dyer, 2002). Here, Rumsfeld used the “Munich analogy” to downplay concerns over a lack of evidence in the case against Iraq, thereby strengthening the administration’s own case, whilst also prioritising action and subjugating considerations of evidence to a secondary concern.

The Bush administration used these WW2 analogies in “selling” their case for military action against Iraq in the international arena, as well as the domestic arena. When visiting Lithuania in November 2002, Bush compared Saddam Hussein with Hitler, and related this to the Lithuanian experience of the Second World War, in a bid to increase international support for military confrontation with Iraq (NYT, 2002a). Bush proclaimed, “Like the Nazis and the Communists before them, the terrorists seek to end lives and control all life. Like the Nazis and Communists before them, they will be opposed by free nations, and the terrorists will be defeated”¹⁶⁹. Indeed, in Prague that same month, Bush again called on shared WW2 experiences in making the case for military action against Iraq. He told university students, “Czechs and Slovaks learned through the harsh experience of 1938 that when great democracies fail to confront danger, greater dangers follow...” (NYT, 2002b). In this speech, Bush went further by rhetorically attacking the European nations whom he regarded as appeasing Saddam

¹⁶⁹ Bush, G. 2002. Address in Lithuania. Available at: <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/11/text/20021123-7.html>.

Hussein, saying, “Ignoring dangers or excusing aggression may temporarily avert the conflict, but they don’t bring true peace” (NYT, 2002b).

In early 2003, this form of direct analogising between the contemporary situation and the WW2 analogies continued. These analogies both emphasised the need to confront Iraq, and attempted to reassure the domestic audience of the consequences of military action against Iraq. Cheney told the American public that he really did “believe that we will be greeted as liberators” (Combs, 2012, p455), in an attempt to lessen fears of the consequences of military action. Bush added to these efforts on the day prior to the invasion, again linking Saddam Hussein and Iraq with Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany, stating, “In the twentieth century, some chose to appease murderous dictators, whose threats were allowed to grow into genocide and global war.”¹⁷⁰.

The other two components of the WW2 analogy (the references to Pearl Harbour and to the WW2 generation) built upon the Munich analogy, emphasising that the US was the one to confront the threat from Iraq. These World War Two analogies linked the Pearl Harbour and 9/11 attacks, and linked the generation of Americans who served in WW2 and the generation of Americans in 2002/2003. While the Munich analogy made the case that Iraq needed to be confronted, the Second World War analogies made the case for the US to be the one to confront Iraq. Bush’s comment to Karl Rove (his political strategist) on the day of 9/11 showed that another generation of Americans were being called upon to go to war, just as his father’s generation had been called upon in the Second World War (Woodward, 2004, p90-91; Jespersen, 2005).

¹⁷⁰ Bush, G. 2003. Presidential Address. 17th March 2003. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030319-17.html>.

US decision-makers began their analogising in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Bush equated 9/11 to Pearl Harbour in his diary on 9/11 itself (Woodward, 2004, p33)¹⁷¹. This indicated the scale of the impact of 9/11 on his own thinking. However, it went further than this. Some in the US saw Pearl Harbour to have been the moment that shook the US from their isolationism, and the US took the role of “defender of most of humanity, democracy, Liberty” (Tierney, 2015). This was an early indication that Bush would use these analogies from the Second World War to emphasise the need for action.

Throughout his election campaign and beyond, Bush used the generation who served in the Second World War as a point of comparison. This trend of comparisons serves to demonstrate a predisposition on Bush’s behalf to make such analogical comparisons. This generation held a special status in the US, being referred to as “the greatest generation that any society has ever produced” (Brokaw, 1998). Bush himself used that generation as a reference point in defining US identity when campaigning in 1999. Bush told his audience that during the Second World War there was no debate over what it meant to be an American – that it meant humility in victory¹⁷². In further comments, Bush suggested that the US entered World War Two on behalf of European Jews. To some, this Americanised the Holocaust, with Bush using it to further develop an American identity drawn from the Second World War (Cole, 1999; Novick, 1999; Erenhaus, 2001). This reference to the “greatest generation” was then used to support military action against Iraq. The contemporaneous generation were being compared to the “greatest generation”, and, in being compared to a generation

¹⁷¹ Bush’s Speechwriter, David Frum, declared this sentiment explicitly: “On December 8, 1941, Roosevelt had exactly the same problem we had” (Frum, 2003, p233).

¹⁷² George W. Bush, “A Distinctly American Internationalism,” November 19, 1999, <http://www.fas.org/news/usa/1999/11/991119-bush-foreignpolicy.htm>.

who stood up to the threat of Nazi Germany, they were being asked to stand up to the threat the Bush administration identified in Iraq.

Bush repeatedly conflated the threats from Iraq and Al Qaeda, describing that Iraq was an ally of terrorists and a source of their funding¹⁷³. This conflation enabled the analogical comparison between military action against Iraq and the fighting of the Second World War. In his speech of September 20th 2001, Bush declared, “They are the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the twentieth century”¹⁷⁴. In making this generalised comparison, linking the enemy the US faced in the Second World War with their current enemy, Bush was also linking the contemporary US generation and the “greatest generation” who fought in World War Two. In the US, the veneration of World War II, “rather than assisting analysis, has become a substitute for it. It demands unquestioning faith in a past golden age since which our culture has been steadily declining. Proponents of the myth at times come close to ancestor worship” (Adams, 1998). If questioning the rightness or goodness of World War Two was considered disrespectful by many in the US, these questions could also be confused with a disregard for the “national values” that Bush linked with both the “greatest generation” and the coming conflict with Iraq¹⁷⁵.

In making the Bush administration’s case for military action against Iraq to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in late January 2003, Powell again drew upon the legacy of the Second World War. Powell declared, “More than a half a century ago, the United

¹⁷³ George W. Bush, “Address to the Nation on Iraq from the USS Abraham Lincoln, May 1, 2003,” Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents 39 (May 5, 2003): 517.

¹⁷⁴ George W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the United States Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, September 20, 2001,” Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents 37 (September 24, 2001): 1347, 1349.

¹⁷⁵ George W. Bush, “A Distinctly American Internationalism,” November 19, 1999, <http://www.fas.org/news/usa/1999/11/991119-bush-foreignpolicy.htm>.

Bush, “Remarks at Ceremony Commemorating the 60th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor in Norfolk, Virginia, December 7, 2001”.

States helped to rescue Europe from the tyranny of fascism that had led to World War II”¹⁷⁶. He built on this in his speech to the UN on the 5th of February 2003, speaking about the threat posed by Iraq, “The United States will not and cannot run that risk to the American people. Leaving Saddam Hussein in possession of weapons of mass destruction for a few more months or years is not an option, not in a post-September 11th world.”¹⁷⁷ This took the use of World War Two analogies internationally. The analogy was used in the same manner internationally as it had been domestically within the US, again emphasising that the US was the one to confront the threat from Iraq. This also shows the difference between the WW2 analogies and the Gulf war analogy that provided some of the motivation to confront Iraq for Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz. The WW2 analogy was used by the group as a whole, rather than a select group within the US decision-making group.

Throughout the process of making the public case for military action against Iraq, the Bush administration made repeated references to the 1938 Munich conference, Pearl Harbour, and the WW2 generation. Both of these analogical comparisons served similar purposes in making the case for military action against Iraq. The Munich analogy made the case that Iraq needed to be confronted, emphasising the potential consequences of not confronting Iraq. Building on this, the other Second World War analogies made the case for the US to be the one to confront Iraq. Whilst analogical reasoning had little impact internally within the decision-making group in the US, it was a crucial aspect of the making of the case for this military action to the US public. US decision-makers did not require convincing of the need to intervene in Iraq. As shown in the groupthink and Leadership Style chapters, decision-makers in the US were

¹⁷⁶ Remarks at the World Economic Forum Secretary Colin L. Powell Davos, Switzerland January 26, 2003.

¹⁷⁷ Powell, C. 2003. Secretary Powell at the UN: Iraq's Failure to Disarm. 05/02/03. Available at: <https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/disarm//index.htm>.

convinced of the need to invade Iraq, meaning that analogical reasoning to steer decision-makers towards intervention in Iraq was unnecessary. The level of support for military confrontation with Iraq within the US decision-making group meant that there was little need to analogise within the group to build support for conflict with Iraq. The “rhetoric” aspect of analogical reasoning was much more significant to the US decision-making group than the “reason” aspect of analogical reasoning in Meierhenrich’s (2010) categorisation. Using the Munich analogy, links to the “greatest generation” (Brokaw, 1998), and the legacy of the Second World War, the US decision-makers sold the military confrontation with Iraq to the US public and international community. The groupthink that pervaded the US decision-making group meant that analogical reasoning was not required to ensure support for the Iraq policy within the group.

8.4. The UK Analogy

In the UK, decision-makers made analogical comparisons between the intervention in Kosovo in 1999 and their proposed action against Iraq. This was both external, selling their proposed action against Iraq, and internal within the decision-making group. Within the decision-making group, the UK decision-makers used comparisons with the process that led to the intervention in Kosovo as a ‘roadmap’, particularly Blair, Powell and Straw. This ‘roadmap’ gave the decision-makers a guide for approaching some key issues that arose, such as the issue of the legality of intervention and the UN process. As such, whereas in the US decision-making group the analogy was primarily an external process of selling their proposed military action against Iraq, for the UK decision-making group the analogical reasoning was both internal and external. This meant that the UK analogising had a “reason” and “rhetoric” purpose, and had a more extensive impact on the UK decision-making than was the case in the US. Blair made

two references to the Munich analogy in March 2003. As such, they did not form part of a consistent public case relying upon analogies.

In terms of the external use of the Kosovo analogy, the UK decision-making group made links between the humanitarian case against Saddam Hussein in Iraq and the Humanitarian crisis in the case of the Kosovo intervention. The public use of the Kosovo analogy was therefore an extension of the Munich analogy that the US and the UK decision-making groups used in making their case for military action against Iraq. Kosovo was an example of which UK decision-makers had direct experience. When people referred to the legal process over intervention in Kosovo, key individuals, such as Blair, Brown, and Straw, would have been able to recall their own experience of the process. The UK public also had direct memory of those same UK decision-makers deciding to carry out the intervention in Kosovo, and the perceived success of this intervention. Analogies, when used to “reason” (Meierhenrich, 2010), have greater impact when those using them have personal recollection (Maoz, 1990).

The use of the Kosovo analogy within the decision-making group in the UK was a guide dictating the next steps for how to proceed. Rather than comparing the humanitarian crises and emphasising the need to confront Iraq, as was the public case, the analogical reasoning within the decision-making group was more direct. John Sawers, Blair’s former Parliamentary Private Secretary, wrote that, “We can look for the legal basis once we have decided what to do, as we did in Kosovo”¹⁷⁸. This use of the Kosovo analogy was typical: using the decision-making process that led to the intervention in Kosovo as a plan for how to proceed regarding Iraq. This was the first use of this analogical comparison. As such, it can be seen to have set the trend. As

¹⁷⁸ Teleletter Sawers to Jay, 21 February 2002, ‘Iraq: Policy’.

outlined below, the use of Kosovo as a point of analogical reasoning continued even when relevant officials set out the reasons why this comparison was not accurate or actively misleading. Indeed, some of those decision-makers who used Kosovo as an analogy acknowledged publicly how Kosovo was not an accurate point of comparison. This acknowledgement of the inaccuracy of the analogical comparison by those decision-makers who used it was particularly targeted at the US. UK decision-makers emphasised the difference between Kosovo and Iraq to explain the difference in the legal situation for the UK to their US allies. It explained why the UN route was so important to the UK decision-makers. It was used as a warning that the UK involvement in military action against Iraq involved a more complicated legal process than was the case for the US.

8.4.1. Analogising and the UK Public Case

This analogy functioned in a similar manner to the Munich analogy in the US. Indeed, there were some references to the Munich analogy in the UK, but these were sporadic and did not form part of a consistent case. When using the Kosovo analogy, those making the UK public case for military action were emphasising the misguided or unreasonable nature of opposition to military action, and making the case for military action on the basis of the potential consequences of inaction. The UK decision-makers used these analogies publicly from early 2002, until the invasion of Iraq in early 2003 and beyond.

The Kosovo analogy first entered parliamentary discourse in early 2002. The Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Ben Bradshaw sought to prepare the ground for confronting Iraq, whilst also insisting that there were “no proposals, just speculation” about military action against Iraq. However, Bradshaw

used Kosovo as an example of previous misguided opposition to military action¹⁷⁹, emphasising that this opposition was subsequently considered wrong¹⁸⁰. Blair used a speech in Texas that served a similar function, declaring that there was a risk of forgetting the lessons of 9/11, and that the costs of not confronting Iraq now were greater than confronting Iraq¹⁸¹. To Blair, the lessons of 9/11 were to respond to threats, confronting them directly¹⁸². As such, when the analogy was later used it was as a means to reduce the validity of opposition to military action, whilst also making the case for the need for military action.

The publication of the September dossier formed a continuation of this public analogising. When Blair presented this dossier to Parliament, he referred to Kosovo. After saying that in the case of intervention in Kosovo, his government had proceeded steadily and had been consistent when approaching the situation, Blair was more direct in the analogy. Declaring that, “We faced difficult choices over Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Sierra Leone, but does anyone now say that we should not have taken action in respect of those countries?” Blair built upon the comments Bradshaw made months earlier. Again, there is this comparison between the misguided opposition and the opposition to the potential invasion of Iraq, where Blair sought his audience to draw the conclusion that such opposition was similarly misguided.

Later in 2002, the analogising in public continued to link the proposed action against Iraq to Kosovo. However, it came to incorporate an attempt to prepare the UK public for the UN not completely supporting military action against Iraq. Blair referred to “unreasonable” blockages or vetos of a resolution that could explicitly permit military

¹⁷⁹ House of Commons, Official Report, 4 March 2002, column 128.

¹⁸⁰ House of Commons, Official Report, 4 March 2002, column 128.

¹⁸¹ The National Archives, 7 April 2002, Prime Minister’s Speech at the George Bush Senior Presidential Library.

¹⁸² House of Commons Official Report. 4 Oct 2001, Column 673.

action against Iraq¹⁸³. This was another link to the case of the Kosovo intervention, where the Russian veto in the UNSC was deemed unreasonable by Blair¹⁸⁴. Blair linked the “unreasonable” veto in the case of intervention in Kosovo, with the “unreasonable” opposition that the US and the UK faced in the UN in seeking legitimation for military action against Iraq. In so doing, Blair was preparing the ground domestically for the possibility that military action without UN approval may be necessary. When asked whether military action against Iraq without explicit UN authority would lack international political legitimacy, Blair declared that the circumstances would determine this, using Kosovo as an example. Kosovo, as a ‘legitimate’ intervention which was blocked, was contrasted with the US and the UK case against Iraq in the UN contemporaneously. Blair prepared the ground for the UNSC to be split over military action against Iraq, and was emphasising that this was the fault of the other party, who were “unreasonable”.

The Munich analogy was not as prevalent in the UK public analogising as it was in the US. There were two references to the Munich analogy in March 2003, rather than a consistent case made, as was the case with the Kosovo analogy. The analogy of Munich was used by Blair to warn of the consequences of not confronting Iraq, and so served the same function as the Kosovo analogy in the final weeks prior to the invasion of Iraq. In March 2003, Blair warned Labour Party activists of the “living nightmare” that they would have to face if they appeased Saddam Hussein the way Hitler was appeased (Baldwin et al, 2003). Later that month, Blair again used the Munich analogy

¹⁸³ House of Commons, Official report, 25 November 2002, Columns 36-44.
Financial Times, 9 December 2002, Tony Blair on the Iraq crisis and the Middle East.

¹⁸⁴ House of Commons, Official Report, 25 November 2002, columns 36-44.

in the House of Commons when responding to questions about UNSCR 1441. Blair's use of the analogy was explicit:

“Now, of course, should Hitler again appear in the same form, we would know what to do. But the point is that history does not declare the future to us plainly. Each time is different and the present must be judged without the benefit of hindsight. So, let me explain to the House why I believe that the threat that we face today is so serious and why we must tackle it.”¹⁸⁵

This comparison between the decision to not militarily confront Hitler in 1938, and the coming military confrontation with Iraq, was made just the day before the US and the UK invaded Iraq. By declaring this, Blair was firstly using the Munich analogy to emphasise the need to invade Iraq to confront the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. Secondly, the analogy was used by Blair as a means to outweigh the concerns about military action against Iraq, with the potential of the consequences for not confronting Iraq. As such, the potential consequences were emphasised and prioritised over concerns, in the same way the Kosovo analogy was used to achieve the same ends.

8.4.2. Analogising in the UK Decision-Making Group

The analogising in the UK decision-making group also used the case of the military intervention in Kosovo as its basis. This analogy was used in a much more direct manner within the decision-making group than it was in the public case. The Kosovo analogy functioned more as a “roadmap” or guide for how to proceed with the decision-making process towards military action against Iraq. Jonathan Powell referred to the experience of decision-makers in the case of Kosovo as creating a pattern through

¹⁸⁵ House of Commons, Official Report, 18 March 2003, columns 760-858.

“lived experience” (Powell, 2020). The different purposes of the analogy explains this difference between the public case and the internal use of the Kosovo analogy. Within the decision-making group, the analogy was a guide for those already persuaded of the need, whereas the public analogising was an effort to persuade others of this need to act against Iraq. The use of the Kosovo analogy within the UK decision-making group was, predominantly, to navigate the legal process, developing the legal advice that would influence their approach to the UN process. A number of comparisons were made between the intervention in Kosovo and the potential invasion of Iraq, questioning whether a second UNSCR was necessary to permit military action against Iraq. Comparisons between their experiences with Kosovo and their intended confrontation with Iraq also informed their thinking on the scale of the task of public persuasion. Decision-makers’ comparisons between the UN process over Kosovo and the process they were going through over Iraq were directly challenged with little effect – so profound was the impact of the analogical reasoning.

The use of the Kosovo analogy internally by the UK decision-making group began early in the decision-making process, while the focus on the legality was present from the start. The UK decision-makers began to discuss how to make their case for military action against Iraq to the public in early 2002. This shows just how interlinked the ‘rhetorical’ and the ‘reason’ uses of analogical reasoning are. The idea to use the Kosovo analogy in making the public case for action against Iraq came early in the decision-making process. Jonathan Powell wrote a note to Blair suggesting that publicly they should make comparisons between the intervention in Kosovo and confronting Iraq, making a humanitarian case on the basis that “the international community cannot stand by and watch genocide”¹⁸⁶. The use of the Kosovo analogy

¹⁸⁶ Note Powell, [undated], ‘Iraq: Change of Heart or Change of Regime’.

as a guide for how the UK government could proceed towards military confrontation with Iraq began in early 2002. John Sawers, Blair's former foreign affairs adviser, wrote from his position as British Ambassador in Egypt, advising on the negative reception that UK government legal opinions had received in past operations in the US government, and that instead, "We can look for the legal basis once we have decided what to do, as we did in Kosovo"¹⁸⁷. Here, Kosovo was serving as a guide for how the UK government could proceed. Intervention in Kosovo served as a cognitive shortcut: decision-makers used Kosovo as a precedent for proceeding towards a military confrontation without clear legal basis for such an action.

In developing the case for military action against Iraq in early 2002, decision-makers relied on the "Kosovo analogy". Blair noted in a minute that the task of persuading the public of the case for military action against Iraq was "tough", but thought that the centre-left case was obvious to him. In outlining the case, Blair used Kosovo as an example, indicating that he had taken Jonathan Powell's advice to use Kosovo as an example in the case. The formulation of this case continued in the summer of 2002, with Lord Williams of Baglin contextualising the comparison between Iraq and the intervention in Kosovo¹⁸⁸. Similarly, in discussion with advisers in September 2002, Blair decided to use the example of Kosovo in the public case for military action against Iraq. Manning suggested, and Blair agreed, to remind the public what could have happened in Kosovo if the NATO intervention had not occurred¹⁸⁹.

During the process of developing the UNSC resolution 1441 in autumn 2002, UK decision-makers used the "Kosovo analogy" to develop what they came to term the

¹⁸⁷ Teleletter Sawers to Jay, 21 February 2002, 'Iraq: Policy'.

¹⁸⁸ Minute Williams to Secretary of State [FCO], 19 August, 2002. "The United States and Iraq: Historical Parallels".

¹⁸⁹ Minute Manning to Prime Minister, 8 September 2002. "Your visit to Camp David, 7 September Conversation with President Bush".

“Kosovo Model” or “option”. This referred to the comparisons between the potential action against Iraq, and aspects of the legal case for action against Kosovo that they considered comparable. The “Kosovo Model/Option” came to refer to the UK decision-makers’ belief that the UK and the US could militarily act against Iraq, even if the UNSC were to veto action against Iraq. In discussions of the proposed UNSCR, UK ministers were positive in their regard for the proposed text, for it “didn’t rule out the ‘Kosovo Option’”¹⁹⁰. Indeed, when discussing the potential wording of a second UNSCR, Straw sought to insert the “usual Kosovo caveats” in the text of any proposed second UNSCR. Those who used the term “Kosovo Model/option” regarded the potential opposition within the UNSC as “unreasonable”¹⁹¹. The opposition to military action against Iraq in the UNSC being “unreasonable” meant it could therefore be ignored¹⁹². In this manner, the analogy of Kosovo enabled decision-makers to both ignore the opposition to their proposed military action against Iraq within the UNSC, and the causes of this opposition.

The extent of the impact of this analogising about Kosovo is important. Interviewee John Williams gave an apt description of the impact of the analogy when he said, “Why would I question the judgement of this man who played a very big role in that?” Williams recalled perceiving the intervention in Kosovo positively at the time of the Iraq decision-making process, and that Blair’s success in that intervention contributed to

¹⁹⁰ Letter Manning to McDonald, 3 October 2002, ‘Iraq: Conversation with Condi Rice’.

¹⁹¹ Minute Manning to Prime Minister, 14 October 2002, ‘Bush Call’.

Letter Rycroft to Sedwill, 14 October 2002, ‘Iraq: Prime Minister’s Phone Call with Bush’.

Telegram 223 FCO London to Paris and Washington, 17 October 2002, ‘Iraq: Foreign Secretary’s Conversation with French Foreign Minister, 17 October’.

Financial Times, 9 December 2002, Tony Blair on the Iraq crisis and the Middle East.

Letter McDonald to Manning, 19 December 2002, ‘Iraq: Conversation with Colin Powell, 19 December’.

¹⁹² House of Commons, Official Report, 25 November 2002, column 47.

Letter Straw to Manning, 24 December 2002, ‘Conversation with Powell: Iraq’.

Letter McDonald to Manning, 12 March 2003, ‘Foreign Secretary’s Conversation with US Secretary of State, 11 March’.

the support for Blair in confronting Iraq. He also noted that the reason the experience of intervention in Kosovo had a greater impact than other military interventions, such as Sierra Leone, was that the Kosovo case lasted longer (Williams, 2018). Similarly, Lord Turnbull noted in an interview that he thought the impact of experiences in the Kosovo case was “a kind of over-confidence” (Turnbull, 2018). This seemingly concurs with Jonathan Powell’s recollection of the impact of experiences from the Kosovo case on the Iraq decision-making process, which he characterised as “lived experience” (Powell, 2020). Tom McKane remembers that whilst drafting the September dossier, there was almost as much interest in making the human rights case against Iraq as the Weapons of Mass Destruction case. This suggested to McKane that, in some minds, there was an idea to make a case on human rights in a similar way to Kosovo (McKane, 2020).

There was opposition to the use of Kosovo as an analogy even in the initial months as the analogy was first introduced in the public case, and internally within the decision-making group. It is remarkable that some of those who detailed how the analogical comparison between Kosovo and Iraq was inaccurate made the analogy at other points in the decision-making process. As part of the preparation for Blair’s trip to Crawford in April 2002, Jonathan Powell sent a note that advised Blair to highlight to Bush that “This is not Kosovo”¹⁹³. Straw also highlighted that there was not a worthwhile comparison between intervention in Iraq and Kosovo when in discussion with Colin Powell¹⁹⁴. These two had at other points in the decision-making process made direct comparisons between Iraq and Kosovo.

¹⁹³ Jonathan Powell Public hearing, 18 January 2010, pages 19-20.
Minute Powell to Prime Minister, 28 March 2002, ‘Crawford’.

¹⁹⁴ Telegram 521 FCO London to Washington, 4 October 2002, ‘Iraq: Foreign Secretary’s Conversation with US Secretary of State, 4 October’.

Opposition to the “Kosovo Analogy” falls into two categories. Firstly, opposition to the use of the analogical comparison or opposition to the policy towards Iraq. This form of opposition to the use of the Kosovo analogy was expressed by those who did not use the analogy themselves. It was also this form of analogising that was subject to the attention of mindguards, and the groupthink in the decision-making group prevented challenges to the analogising having significant impact. Secondly, opposition to the use of the Kosovo analogy that was expressed by members of the decision-making group who themselves used the Kosovo analogy in some contexts. Their opposition to the analogy was intended as a warning to the US administration that the UK involvement was restricted by the question of whether military action against Iraq would be legal under UNSCR 1441. Whilst those who used the Kosovo analogy sought to increase support for military action against Iraq in the UK, they denied the analogical comparison in order to prevent the US decision-makers from assuming that UK involvement in military action against Iraq would be guaranteed.

The references to the “Kosovo Model/option” came despite opposition to the use of such a comparison. Sir Michael Wood, the principal Legal Adviser to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at the time issued advice explicitly opposing the analogical comparison between the legal advice on Kosovo and the situation on Iraq. Sir Michael Wood responded to reports of a conversation between Blair and Bush, in which Blair stated:

“... the Kosovo model would allow a return to the Security Council for a further discussion in the event of a further breach by Iraq; but if there

were UN inaction (i.e., no second UN resolution authorising the use of force) we would take action”¹⁹⁵.

Motivated by concern that Blair’s conversation did not “take full account of legal advice”, Wood outlined the differences between Iraq and Kosovo. He explicitly argued that the “Kosovo Model” was “no authority for a proposition that action would be legally justified if authority from the Security Council had been sought but without success”¹⁹⁶. In this minute in October 2002, Wood explicitly nullified the validity of the analogical reasoning that was informing UK decision-maker thinking on the UNSC. This advice had minimal impact on the UK decision-making group, for references to the “Kosovo model/option” continued to be made by UK decision-makers. The strength of the UK group’s groupthink meant that access to legal advice was rigidly controlled by the UK mindguards. As outlined in Chapter Six, the UK decision-making group’s mindguards pressured Wood into following this memo, with Straw directly challenging the legal interpretation. In the case of this opposition to the use of the Kosovo analogy, groupthink protected the analogy and analogising.

Goldsmith furthered this opposition to the use of the Kosovo analogy, speaking to Jonathan Powell and expressing the same concerns that Wood had expressed in his minute¹⁹⁷. However, Goldsmith then diminished these challenges to the analogical reasoning of the “Kosovo Analogy” when he accepted that he was “...not concerned about what Ministers said externally, up to a point”¹⁹⁸. As such, he reduced the impact of his critique on the Analogical Reasoning. As shown in Chapter Six, Goldsmith was the target of attention from the UK mindguards. Goldsmith qualified and limited the

¹⁹⁵ Minute Wood to Chaplin, 17 October 2002, “Prime Minister’s Phone call with Bush, 14 October”.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Note Adams, 21 October 2002, “Iraq: Record of Attorney General’s Telephone Conversation with the Foreign Secretary, 18 October”.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

statements he had made against the analogical reasoning, because of the groupthink in the UK group. The extent of the difference between the situation in the UNSC in the case of the intervention in Kosovo and the potential invasion of Iraq was therefore diminished by this acceptance of the public use of the analogy. The strength of this analogical reasoning, the combination of the public, and the internal analogising meant that even when challenging the analogical reasoning, Goldsmith inserted a caveat. Indeed, Straw and Blair decided that they would continue to speak of the Kosovo comparison in the same manner that they had prior to receiving the warning of the inaccuracy of such a comparison¹⁹⁹. These two mindguards were so committed to the Groupthink that they decided to ignore the legal advice from their Attorney General. Straw went further, mindguarding the analogical reasoning by challenging Goldsmith on his dismissal of the “Kosovo model”. He queried whether there could be circumstances where the US and the UK could carry out action against Iraq without a further UNSC resolution. He gave the example of if Russia were to veto a further resolution, despite clearly known breaches from the Iraqis. Again, Goldsmith accepted the challenge, buckling under the pressure of the groupthink that protected the analogical reasoning. The analogy of Kosovo provided decision-makers with a guide for how to proceed towards military action against Iraq, acting as a cognitive short-cut to navigate the legal process. Groupthink protected this analogical reasoning, preventing opposition to the analogy and information that contradicted it from stopping the use of this analogising.

Challenges to the analogical reasoning continued into 2003, yet they did not cause decision-makers to review their decisions. Again, the groupthink in the decision-

¹⁹⁹ Report of the Iraq Inquiry, Section 3.5 Development of UK Strategy and Options, September to November 2002. The Negotiation of Resolution 1441. Page 312.

making group meant that decision-makers did not review their decisions or consider information that contradicted the analogical reasoning. In February 2003, Greenstock wrote to Manning, also explaining the differences between Kosovo and Iraq in terms of the UN process. In so doing, Greenstock was highlighting that Wood and Goldsmith's advice had not had their desired impact. Were it to have had their desired impact, Greenstock would not have felt it necessary to give his advice in the manner he had. Two more challenges came on the day of the House of Commons vote. Lord Hannay compared the proposed military action against Iraq to the intervention in Kosovo, declaring that military action against Iraq "does not herald either a new doctrine bypassing the system laid down in the UN Charter, nor the flouting of international law. In fact, it is far less daring than was the decision by NATO to use force against Yugoslavia in the case of Kosovo..."²⁰⁰ Robin Cook dismissed comparisons to Kosovo in his own resignation speech the same day. Referring to the differences in the processes of achieving UNSC support for military action for confronting Iraq compared to Kosovo, Cook stated, "Our difficulty in getting support this time is that neither the international community nor the British Public is persuaded that there is an urgent and compelling reason for this military action in Iraq"²⁰¹. Cook's speech was highly commended at the time, yet had little impact on the decision-making group. Exemplifying the limited impact of Cook's speech, John Prescott wrote in his memoir, "Apart from Clare and Robin, everyone understood and accepted what was happening. Although we all had worries, we tended to go along with the feeling that we were stuck with Bush" (Prescott, 2009).

²⁰⁰ House of Lords, Official Report, 17 March 2003, columns 80-83.

²⁰¹ House of Commons, Official report, 17 March 2003, Columns 726-728.

The second form of opposition to the Kosovo analogy came from those individuals who themselves used the analogy. As mentioned previously, Jonathan Powell advised that Blair highlight to Bush that “This is not Kosovo”²⁰² when he was preparing for the Crawford summit. In so doing, Powell was seeking that Blair emphasise to Bush that UK involvement in military confrontation with Iraq was not guaranteed. He was advising Blair to highlight that the UK legal position was still being developed, and that, without UN approval, it would be very difficult for military action to be undertaken. Powell was one of the first members of the UK decision-making group to use the Kosovo analogy when advising Blair on making the case for military action to the UK public. Straw also highlighted that there was not a worthwhile comparison between intervention in Iraq and Kosovo when in discussion with Colin Powell²⁰³. As such, Straw was attempting to make the same point that Jonathan Powell was advising that Blair make to Bush. However, Straw also used the Kosovo option, underlining the advantages of the wording of the draft of UNSCR 1441. In this form of opposition to the Kosovo analogy, it is interesting that groupthink did not affect it. In fact, Straw was one of the UK mindguards.

Throughout the decision-making process, the impact of the analogical reasoning on the UK decision-makers is evident. They used comparisons to Kosovo as a roadmap, guiding the manner in which they proceeded towards military confrontation with Iraq. These comparisons explain why the UK decision-makers proceeded without confirmation that such military action would be legal for a significant period of the decision-making process. The groupthink in the UK decision-making group meant that

²⁰² Jonathan Powell Public hearing, 18 January 2010, pages 19-20.
Minute Powell to Prime Minister, 28 March 2002, ‘Crawford’.

²⁰³ Telegram 521 FCO London to Washington, 4 October 2002, ‘Iraq: Foreign Secretary’s Conversation with US Secretary of State, 4 October’.

the analogies could be protected, with challenges dismissed and information contradicting the Kosovo analogy restricted from the decision-making group. Equally, UK decision-makers compared their difficulties in getting a second UNSCR to legitimate action against Iraq to their inability to get a UNSCR permitting intervention in Kosovo. This then increased their willingness to accept their inability to get a second UNSCR for military action against Iraq, despite the warnings against such comparisons. The UK decision-making group's analogical reasoning guided their progress towards military action in Iraq, and reduced the reviewing of options or opposition along this process.

8.5. Conclusion

In the US, the decision-makers deployed analogical reasoning rhetorically to make their case for military action against Iraq (Meierhenrich, 2010). They deployed the "Munich analogy", a well-used and misleading rhetorical analogy in the US. This analogy compares the potential military action decision-makers are facing with the potential to have gone to war with Nazi Germany in 1938 rather than in 1939, and as such minimising the death and destruction caused by World War Two. Similarly, they also used analogical comparisons to the Second World War in order to emphasise the need for the US to be the one to confront Iraq. In the UK, decision-makers used analogical reasoning in both the rhetorical and reason categorisation established by Meierhenrich (2010). Publicly, the UK decision-makers used comparisons to Kosovo, emphasising the potential consequences of not acting against Saddam Hussein, and comparing them to the potential consequences of not acting to prevent genocide in Kosovo. Internally, within the decision-making group, the decision-makers used the example of the intervention in Kosovo as a guide or roadmap to steer their process through the decision-making process that would lead to the invasion of Iraq. As the

interviews have shown, the “lived experience” of Kosovo (Powell, 2020) built a willingness to accept Blair’s chosen path towards confrontation with Iraq, given his previous successes.

Analogical reasoning had a more extensive impact upon the UK decision-making group’s progress through the decision-making process than on their US counterparts. UK decision-makers assumed that the process that led to the intervention in Kosovo was more generally comparable than was the case. In actuality, the cases were not comparable: the UN process that led to the intervention in Kosovo was significantly dissimilar to the process that UK decision-makers negotiated to the invasion of Iraq. However, because there was no consistent opposition to the analogical reasoning within the decision-making group, this analogising was able to continue. Opposition to the analogical comparison within the decision-making group was suppressed by the groupthink that occurred in the UK group. The mindguards in the UK decision-making group pressured the opposition to the Kosovo analogy, such as that presented by Goldsmith, and prevented this opposition gaining any consistency.

In the UK, decision-makers had a more direct experience of the case they used as an analogy, and therefore it was easier to operationalise as a guide for how they should proceed (Maoz, 1990). The US decision-makers used a historical reference point that was relatable for the public, to whom they were making their case for military action against Iraq. Whilst this helped them to make their case, it did mean that the point of comparison was of less use in determining how to proceed practically. Equally, in the US, the analogy was to the appeasement at the Munich conference in 1938, a case where action was not taken and the consequences were the cautionary tale against which the decision-makers were warning. In the UK, decision-makers made their comparison to the intervention in Kosovo, where they acted militarily to prevent the

negative consequences, which they sought to persuade the public to support them to do in the case of Iraq. As such, the analogical comparison was an analogy of difference in the US, whereas in the UK an analogy of similarity was used. The Second World War analogy in the US was also an analogy of similarity, meaning both groups of decision-makers were able to make their case based on an argument that revolved around 'we did it before, and we must do it again' grounds.

As shown in the groupthink and Leadership style chapters, in the UK there was greater opposition to the proposed military action against Iraq. As such, there was more of a need to persuade decision-makers of the need to intervene, and of the support for military action publicly and internationally. The conviction of the need to militarily confront Iraq that US decision-makers held, meant that the focus was on persuading the US public and the international community of this need. In the UK, groupthink occurred and enabled the UK decision-makers to manage opposition to the invasion of Iraq, managing access to concerns over the legality of the invasion. The groupthink in the UK decision-making group protected the analogy of Kosovo, suppressing opposition or criticism of the comparison. This is a crucial area where the multi-level analysis in this thesis adds to the explanation of the decision to invade Iraq. Equally, the manner in which Blair's leadership style manifested in the decision-making process was strongly influenced by the need to react to opposition to the proposed invasion of Iraq.

In the US, analogical reasoning had a less extensive impact on the making of the decision to invade than it did on the UK decision-makers. Correspondingly, the US group's groupthink was more interlinked than in the UK. Each of the themes of groupthink in the US decision-making group was strongly linked to the other themes of groupthink. As such, analogical reasoning was not required to settle the nerves of

the decision-makers when making decisions in this process. In the UK, the groupthink was more disjointed, suppressing opposition, but each theme acted more independently from each other than was the case in the US group.

In the UK, analogical reasoning affected how decision-makers sold the war publicly, and led to decision-makers assuming the process would be easier to navigate than it turned out to be. This contributed to their delaying of the legal opinion on an invasion of Iraq. The groupthink chapter shows how this delay was managed, whereas the analogical reasoning was the root of the delay. The UK decision-making group's mindguards managed opposition and restricted access to information about the concerns of Goldsmith about the legality of any invasion. Decision-makers in the UK followed the suggestion of Sir John Sawers to follow the example of the Kosovo intervention, delaying seeking legal advice until it was more likely to be in favour of military action.

Analogical reasoning in the UK, in combination with groupthink, tested the checks and balances in the UK system. When warnings of the inaccuracies of the analogical comparison between the intervention in Kosovo and the proposed military action against Iraq were made, they were either ignored or confronted. The mindguards confronted the checks that were presented by Goldsmith, the UK attorney general, and from Sir Michael Wood, principal Legal Adviser to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The extent of the pressure on these two, who were functioning as 'checks', meant that once they were confronted, they both drew back from their opposition to the analogical reasoning. In both cases, Wood and Goldsmith were seeking to 'check' the UK decision-maker's use of the Kosovo analogy as a 'roadmap' dictating the path they sought to take through the decision-making process. The combination of groupthink and analogical reasoning meant that

the checks and balances in the UK system were effectively circumnavigated by the UK decision-making group.

The leadership styles of Bush and Blair were also crucial in protecting the analogies used in both the US and the UK. Both had a low conceptual complexity, and perceived issues in a black-and-white manner. This meant that Bush and Blair ignored nuances in the situation, and this reduced their likelihood of objecting to the analogies that were drawn in the US and the UK. The composition and management of their advisory system was also dominated by their low conceptual complexity, meaning that those around the two leaders were not encouraged to raise thoughts or objections that they could be anticipated to object to.

The research question of this thesis asks: How do FPA models explain similarities and differences in the US and the UK decision-making processes leading up to the 2003 Iraq war? The analogical reasoning model distinguishes the differences between the US and the UK decision-making process, as is the case with the groupthink model and leadership style approach. Similarly, Analogical reasoning, groupthink, and leadership style approach all account for the similarities in the decision-making process as well. A key feature of these explanations of the decision-making process is that each model contextualises the explanation of the other models.

9. Conclusion

This thesis has sought to answer the question, How do FPA models explain similarities and differences in the US and the UK decision-making processes leading up to the 2003 Iraq war? To do this, three Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) models were applied to scrutinise the individual level of analysis. The group dynamics, the leader's style and arrangement of advisory system, and the framing of the decision all contributed to the decision to invade Iraq in 2003. The individuals who led the US and the UK were the crucial component to understand why and how the decision to invade Iraq in 2003 took place. The decision-making group, the leadership that Bush and Blair exercised, and the way they framed the proposed military action are all crucial to understanding this decision-making process.

The research here advances beyond those understandings of the decision to invade Iraq that have previously been provided both conceptually and empirically.

Conceptually, this thesis demonstrates how the leadership in both the US and the UK were able to overcome checks and balances in order to pursue their goal of military confrontation with Iraq. The decision-making processes in both the US and the UK were both significantly impacted by the dynamics of the decision-making groups, the styles of leadership from Bush and Blair, and the framing of the proposed military action against Iraq. Crucially, each of these factors were strongly linked, and it is this that is the most significant conceptual contribution. When used in combination, the explanation that they provide is greater than the sum of its individual parts.

As can be seen in each of the previous chapters, the combination of these models provides a more comprehensive explanation of this decision-making process.

Groupthink and the leadership style approach assist in explaining how the analogising in the UK and US decision-making process was protected from objections or explanations of the inapplicability of the analogy. In turn, the analogical reasoning model provides an understanding of how these decision-making groups externalised their group view and sold their decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

Empirically, this thesis synthesises different sources of information, combining data from interviews with decision-makers involved with the primary documents used in the decision-making process. Some characterisations of this decision-making process have declared that it is hard to determine the precise point at which the decision to invade Iraq was taken. Whilst this may be a simplistic characterisation, it does demonstrate how the focus upon military confrontation with Iraq was maintained so thoroughly. Decision-makers advanced to the how questions so quickly that the question of whether military action should take place appeared to some to have been skipped.

9.1. Contribution to the Literature

As outlined in the Introduction (Section 1.3), much of the literature that examines the Iraq War focuses on the US or the UK, analysing each government singly e.g. Freedman, 2004; Daddow, 2007; Hinesbusch, 2007; Lucas, 2011; Conway, 2012; Porter, 2017; Porter, 2018; Deudney and Ikenberry, 2018; Butt, 2019). This thesis has demonstrated how important it is to examine both the US and the UK decision-making processes in tandem to have a complete picture. To understand why the US decided to go to the UN in September 2002, one must examine the influence of Blair and the UK decision-making group on Bush and the US decision-making group. In the same vein, Whilst others have examined the world-views of Bush and Blair

together (see Parmar, 2005), this thesis shows the similarities and differences in how each leader sought to navigate this decision-making process.

Similarly, this thesis challenges the literature that “black-boxes” the Iraq War decision-making process (Freedman, 2004; Porter, 2018; Deudney and Ikenberry, 2018; Butt, 2019). This research outlines why it is important to look inside the “black-box” of decision-making and examining the processes of decision-making. The leadership style of Bush and Blair, the internal dynamics of their decision-making groups, and the way the decisions were framed are all crucial to understanding how decision-makers navigated the process. Examining these features of the decision-making process shows the decision-makers involved were not rational utility maximisers. They did not examine each possible course of action and weigh them whilst setting aside their preferences to align with their moral or ideological preferences, as a classic rational utility maximiser would (Morin and Paquin, 2018). For example, in early 2003 when he was facing significant opposition domestically (Rawnsley, 2010, p147), Blair was offered the chance to not accompany the US in invading Iraq by Bush, with the possibility of assisting with the reconstruction afterwards (Hinscliff, 2006; Kennedy-Pipe and Vickers, 2007). Blair’s response was to say that he would rather risk losing office than to back out, demonstrating the strength of his conviction and indicating that he was not maximising utility. Borrowing the “Domino Analogy”, this thesis reveals all the dominos lined up, demonstrating how each domino fell into the next.

The research in this thesis challenges the Liberal and Realist explanations of the Iraq war proposed by Deudney and Ikenberry (2017) and Porter (2018). Liberals Deudney and Ikenberry (2017) argued that the views of three “Hegemonic Realists” in the administration (Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald

Rumsfeld, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz) were the intellectual root of the Iraq War. Porter (2018) argued in a realist response that “[...] both liberals and liberalism were deeply implicated in the decision to strike Iraq”. Rather, Porter argues that liberal ideas, when combined with the superpower capabilities of the US, led to the Iraq War. This thesis confirms the centrality of the roles that Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz played whilst also asserting the crucial impact of Bush. However, this thesis also challenges aspects of these Liberal and Realist arguments. As this thesis argues, the US decision to invade Iraq was principally driven by Bush and key decision-makers’ unrelenting focus on the threat they regarded Iraq as representing, rather than Liberal or Realist ideological roots. This focus on Iraq meant that new information was filtered to prevent challenges to their desired approach. This is not to say that Liberal or Realist ideas were not important in this case, but this research challenges whether these ideas were the key driver in this decision-making process.

This thesis also contributes to the literature on the UK involvement in the Iraq war. Where Porter (2017) seeks to explain three motivating factors behind the UK involvement in the Iraq war (see section 1.3; p22), this thesis explains how the UK decision-making group navigated the decision-making process. Another argument in the literature on the UK involvement in the Iraq war is that the war in Iraq was “Blair’s war”, and that this caused some UK government departments to take less of a role in post-invasion planning (Clarke, 2004; Maciejewski, 2013) (see section 1.3; p23). In this thesis, I show how the invasion of Iraq became “Blair’s war”, demonstrating how Blair navigated the decision-making process. This thesis contributes to both the arguments made by Porter (2017) and Clarke (2004) and Maciejewski (2013),

adding the crucial understanding of how the UK made the decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

9.2. The Combination of FPA models

As can be seen in each of the previous chapters, the combination of these models provides a more comprehensive explanation of this decision-making process.

Groupthink and the leadership style approach assist in explaining how the analogising in the UK and US decision-making process was protected from objections or explanations of the inapplicability of the analogy. In turn, the analogical reasoning model provides an understanding of how these decision-making groups externalised their group view and sold their decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

The decision-making groups in both the US and the UK fell victim to groupthink.

Three themes of groupthink plagued both the US and the UK groups. Mindguarding in the UK meant that concerns about the legality of the proposed military action were prevented from being discussed and slowed the progress of the planning for military action. Further UK mindguards pressured the attorney general Lord Goldsmith into changing his opinion on the legality of military action. In the US, mindguarding enabled decision-makers to prevent concerns about the intelligence from being raised in discussions. It also enabled the mindguards to reintroduce intelligence that was discounted by the intelligence community, so the mindguards could use it to support their view. As such, groupthink enabled US decision-makers to maintain the Al Qaeda-Iraq link, and pressure others into sharing this view.

The groupthink model provides an explanation that accounts for the most controversial aspects of the decision-making process in each group. In the US, this

was the intelligence; in the UK, this was the legality. This may be why this account appears so convincing. It explains the points that are quickest to recall. The groupthink explanation accounts for the relations within the group. In so doing, it provides some insight into the actions of the leaders, but not all of their actions. Blair operated as a mindguard at some key points. As such, some of his actions are accounted for in the groupthink explanations. The same cannot be said of Bush's actions. Groupthink cannot provide a complete understanding of how Bush operated in this decision-making process. The explanation that groupthink provides of the controversies in the decision to invade Iraq could serve to distract from the areas groupthink cannot be accounted for.

The role that Bush and Blair's leadership styles played in this case is vital to understanding how this decision was taken, and particularly why it was taken in this manner. Despite differences in the systems they operated within, both leaders established advisory systems that exacerbated the impact of groupthink. Additionally, both were likely to take risks when they arose in the process. The two leaders were remarkably similar in their leadership styles. Blair diminished the role of Cabinet, accentuated the role of SPADs (Special Advisors), and typically preferred an informal style of meeting – the so-called “sofa-style” of meeting. Bush encouraged those who agreed with his view to express their views freely and sought to repress the expression of contrary views.

The Leadership style approach used in this research contributes in two key areas where the other models are lacking, revealing just how crucial the two men in charge were in leading their respective countries to war. Firstly, it explains how the conditions for groupthink were established, with a focus on how the information was used in the decision-making process. With the focus on Bush and Blair, the

explanation that this approach provides works to fill those gaps left by the groupthink model explanation. Secondly, whereas groupthink is not an actively coordinated phenomenon, the leadership style approach examines the intended composition and design of the decision-making units. The way in which Blair diminished the role of Cabinet, reducing opportunities for opposition to be expressed, and promoting SPADs who were loyal to him, established a system that did not encourage the expression of disagreement. Similarly, Bush operated a system where the expression of views that he disagreed with was discouraged, as can be seen in his response to being presented with an intelligence case against Iraq that he did not regard as powerful enough. Indeed, Bush simply reassigned the task of writing the case to people who agreed with his own interpretation rather than leaving the task with experienced intelligence officials. This approach provides insight into how the conditions for groupthink to flourish were established, and reveals just how crucial the two men in charge were in leading their respective countries to war.

In both the US and the UK, the invasion of Iraq was framed in a particular way, using comparisons in order to emphasise the consequences of inaction. In the US, they used the “Munich Analogy”. This was used many times in the US through the decades. This analogy was used to emphasise the potential consequences of inaction and using this to make the case for military action. This emphasised the consequences for inaction, rather than making the case to act at that point. In the UK, the analogy was to the intervention in Kosovo. This was a case the UK decision-makers had direct personal experience of, and this explains why they used this analogy to guide their decision-making, as well as to make their case for war to the public.

The analogical reasoning model's explanation focuses on the way the decision-makers framed the issues during the decision-making process. As such, it incorporates a crucial component of the decision-making process: how decision-makers framed their policy towards Iraq publicly. It is also in the explanation provided by the analogical reasoning model that the explanations of the US and the UK decision-making processes distinctly differ. UK decision-makers used the analogy of Kosovo to guide their decision-making, whereas in the US it was simply used publicly. Quite apart from the interesting empirical differences that led to this, it shows the adaptivity of the model to the two different contexts.

The use of analogical reasoning in the UK also shows how these analogies, when used publicly, can be used in a very purposive manner. When using the Kosovo analogy for rhetoric rather than reason, UK decision-makers adopted and dropped the analogy depending on which they considered to best suit the situation or audience. This explains how UK decision-makers, such as Straw or Jonathan Powell, were able to both adopt the analogy and deny the analogy within the decision-making process. This could serve as an interesting route for further research, delineating between the different forms the use of analogical reasoning can take. Is the rhetorical or public use of analogical reasoning more purposive, whereas the private or internal use of analogising is more fixed and consistent?

In the US, whilst the analogical reasoning was not used within the decision-making group's reasoning, this should not be seen as a sign that the US system is less prone to analogical reasoning than the UK system. Rather, the groupthink in the US system, coupled with the focus of the US group on confronting Iraq, meant that analogical reasoning was not necessary to steer the US group towards confronting Iraq. Decision-makers seek to simplify a situation to provide them greater certainty,

and analogising provides the mental-shortcut to do so (Voss et al, 1991). The certainty in the US decision-making group that they should confront Iraq militarily meant that they did not feel the need to confront uncertainty with analogical reasoning. Rather, they sought to use analogical comparisons to make the case to the American public, helping them to confront uncertainty in the situation and lead them to supporting the administration's policy towards Iraq.

Crucially, when used in combination, these models provide a more comprehensive explanation. The leadership style approach provides context for the groupthink explanation by showing how the conditions to accentuate the groupthink were established and operated. Groupthink, in turn, shows how the atmosphere of not challenging the assumptions and policies of the leadership was maintained and reinforced. The analogies that were relied upon in both the US and the UK were then protected by the leadership styles of Bush and Blair, and the groupthink in the US and the UK decision-making groups. The explanation this thesis proposes for the Iraq War decision-making process is greater than the component models and the explanation they provide in isolation.

In so doing, this research answers the challenges identified in the introduction to this thesis. These challenges being: to make connections between literatures in FPA, and to challenge the US centrism of FPA by comparing national contexts (Hudson and Vore, 1995; Hudson, 2007; Kaarbo, 2003; Breuning, 2017; Morin and Paquin, 2018, p342). These challenges provide the structure to the next two sections of this conclusion.

9.3. Comparative Lessons: US and UK.

This research has exemplified that the field of FPA can be used to explain decision-making across the different contexts of the US and the UK governmental systems. Both Cabinet and Presidential government systems can be understood through FPA models. However, there are empirical differences highlighted through this research. There are four key differences between the US and the UK that are highlighted through this research.

Firstly, the greater power of the President within a Presidential system allowed for the leadership style of President Bush and the groupthink in the US to be more coordinated than was the case in the UK decision-making process. In comparison, Blair was more constrained within the UK's Cabinet government system. Bush was able to create the OSP (Office for Special Plans), and to staff the body with Republican party loyalists in order to reassess intelligence, so intelligence that could be used to support Bush's own view could be reintroduced into the process. Blair had to operate in a far more subtle manner to achieve his goal of steering the decision-making unit towards military action against Iraq. The greater opposition to military action against Iraq in the UK government meant that Blair had to subtly delay Goldsmith in presenting his legal advice to the Cabinet and prevent it from knowing that there was a debate over what UNSCR 1441 permitted.

Secondly, in the US decision-making group there was less opposition than was the case in the UK. As such, the US decision-makers were able to focus pressure externally to a greater extent. They pressured the established Intelligence community, and combined this with the creation of the OSP (Office for Special Plans). This could lead to research into whether a lack of significant internal opposition could exacerbate the impact of these phenomena.

Thirdly, the same flaws plagued both the US and the UK decision-making processes. However, only the UK has formally acknowledged some of the flaws in the problems in the “Report of the Iraq Inquiry”, more commonly referred to as the Chilcott Report. The Chilcot report has been described as “the most damaging critique of a prime minister and their government by an official inquiry for decades” (Gaskarth, 2016). The report found that, “We have, however, concluded that the circumstances in which it was decided that there was a legal basis for UK military action were far from satisfactory”, choosing not to go further in its condemnation of the legality of the decision (Norton-Taylor, 2016). The same could definitely be said of the US in the manipulation of the intelligence in making the case for war against Iraq in 2003. It may be that, as with the first point of comparison, the greater power of the US President within their system and the greater support for the Iraq war in the US have diminished or drowned out the criticism of the decision-making process in the US.

Fourthly, it may have been expected that the decision-makers with greater experience with military operations would have been more confident in their decision-making on the invasion of Iraq, and therefore did not require cognitive shortcuts, such as analogical reasoning. However, despite this being their fifth military operation, they relied upon Analogical comparisons to inform and guide their decision-making, displaying their confidence in the Kosovo analogy. The US decision-makers had been in office for roughly half the time than their UK counterparts, and had been involved in a single military operation (Afghanistan). This could lead to the interesting insight that ideological fixation of the US decision-makers was more useful and reassuring than the UK decision-making group’s greater experience. This could be an interesting direction for future research into the reliance upon cognitive shortcuts in foreign policy decision-making.

For the UK, this work can develop the insight offered by the Iraq Inquiry. After years of investigation, the Chilcot report has provided significant insight into the processes of the decision. There is relative consensus on the four key aspects of the report. Firstly, that the invasion was not the last resort (O'Neill and Elliot, 2016). Secondly, the UK's legal basis for military action was flawed (The Guardian, 2016). Thirdly, peaceful options were not exhausted prior to action. Finally, the threat from Iraq was not of the level Blair described, meaning he exaggerated the threat. This thesis extends this understanding by explaining how and why these aspects happened. For example, when the Chilcott report says of the decision on the legal basis for war, "no formal record was made of that decision, and the precise grounds on which it was made remains unclear", the report offers no explanation as to why this occurred. This thesis, through the groupthink analysis, explains how the decision on the legality was made, and therefore the grounds for the decision.

In the US, the Robb-Silbermann report provided insight into the intelligence in the US decision. This thesis develops and explains one of the key points of that report. The report asserts that:

"We conclude that the Intelligence Community was dead wrong in almost all of its pre-war judgments about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. This was a major intelligence failure. Its principal causes were the Intelligence Community's inability to collect good information about Iraq's WMD programs, serious errors in analyzing what information it could gather, and a failure to make clear just how much of its analysis was based on assumptions, rather than good evidence."

The research in this thesis provides insight into why the intelligence community were not able to make clear the limitations of the intelligence they presented to decision-makers. As is outlined in the groupthink chapter, mindguards in the US decision-making group were able to manipulate the intelligence processes and reintroduce intelligence that the intelligence establishment considered suspect.

As can be seen in this research, there are several key comparisons between the US and the UK decision-making contexts. Despite these differences highlighted here, the combination of FPA models used in this research explains this decision-making process in the two different national contexts. This ability to account for the two contexts, despite differences, serves to evidence the utility of FPA for research. However, there are lessons to be drawn from the use of FPA in combination in this research.

9.4. Lessons for the Utility for FPA

As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, the field of FPA faces a number of challenges. One of the foremost challenges is to determine how models may be utilised together. The field of FPA can achieve theoretical regeneration by answering four challenges outlined by Morin and Paquin (2018, p342). These are: (1) establishing links between the theoretical models in the field, (2) highlighting the comparison between different national contexts, (3) incorporating new actors into FPA research, and (4) developing a dialogue between the field and practitioners. In this section, the ways in which this thesis speaks to some of these challenges (1,2,4) are outlined.

Firstly, a significant conclusion of this research is that there is no reason these models cannot be applied to the US and the UK. The overwhelming US-centrism of FPA is being challenged, and this research informs this move to challenge the US

predominance. Whilst there have been some previous applications of Leadership style models to the UK (notably Kaarbo, 1997, 2018; Dyson, 2009), they are rarities and have not been conducted in comparison with a US case. By conducting an examination of the Leadership style of Bush alongside the leadership style of Blair, a comparison of the effectiveness of the explanation provided for the actions of each leader is possible. In this research, the explanation provided by the leadership style approach is equally effective for the UK and the US decision-making process. Another important component of this point is that the explanations of these decision-making processes have both similarities and differences. Whilst there are remarkable similarities between the US and the UK when seen through a groupthink and a leadership style lens, when scrutinised from an analogical reasoning chapter, there is a distinct difference, yet some similarities. Crucially, this nuance indicates that these FPA models can adapt to different contexts and accounts for these differences.

Secondly, by combining the different models, a more comprehensive explanation can be reached. The Leadership style approach explains how the conditions to accentuate the groupthink were established and operated. Both groupthink and the leadership styles of Bush and Blair explain how the analogical reasoning in both the US and the UK received limited opposition, because opposition was discouraged by the leadership style of Bush and Blair, plus the groupthink, in each decision-making group. As such, the explanation this thesis proposes for the decision-making process that led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 is greater than the sum of the individual models and their explanations. In light of this, this research is able to answer the challenge that Morin and Paquin (2018, p342) set down for contemporary FPA: to establish links between the theoretical models in the field. The regrettable insularity that has arisen since the 1970s between different research areas within FPA is something that researchers are

seeking to reverse, and this research contributes to this (Morin and Paquin, 2018, p342). Not only can leadership style approaches be used alongside groupthink, the use of these two models together improves the explanation provided.

Thirdly, and similarly, the combination of the different levels that are combined in this research is crucial to explaining what occurred in this case. Whilst this particular combination of models (groupthink, leadership style, and analogical reasoning) is a useful combination in providing a comprehensive explanation of this decision-making process, the combination of the levels of analysis is more transferrable to other cases. The combination of the focus upon the individual leader, the decision-making group, and the way decision-makers framed the issues is a more generalisable approach than the specific models used here. As such, this research's answer to the challenge that Morin and Paquin (2018, p342), Kaarbo (2003), and Rosenau set out – for FPA to have more comparisons between models and research programs – is one of the most important points of generalisability. Future research could move along these lines, developing our understanding of how other models from these levels may be useful when utilised in combination. For example, could the Polythink model that is the antithesis of the groupthink model be used in combination with leadership style models, or can other models scrutinising leadership styles be combined with groupthink or analogical reasoning? Whilst Polythink is not a useful prism through which to examine this case, its use in combination with other models could be interesting in other cases. It would also show that this approach of combining FPA models that examine different aspects of decision-making is useful.

There are also lessons drawn from this research for the use of the groupthink model. Research using the groupthink model that Janis (1972,1982) developed has commented a number of times upon the difficulties of identifying all of the symptoms

he set out. The symptom of self-censorship that Janis proposed is the most difficult to identify. In conducting a case study analysis of a historical case, the problems of attempts by interviewees to retrospectively improve their image are significant. In this research, by using those symptoms that were most evident (the three themes: mindguarding, stereotyped view of the enemy, and collective rationalisation) as a prism through which to identify other symptoms of groupthink in the case, the complexity in applying the groupthink model can be assuaged.

9.5. Future Research

Research continuing from the conclusions of this thesis can contribute both empirically and theoretically to the field of FPA. Empirically and theoretically, research can build upon the response of this thesis to the tests it confronts (to connect theoretical models and to compare national contexts). Future research can build upon this thesis, continuing to compare national contexts, link theoretical models, and increase a dialogue with the practitioner community.

Firstly, further comparative research on these two national contexts is necessary. These three models show that the government of Tony Blair and the Bush administration fell victim to groupthink and analogical reasoning, and the leadership styles of both men had negative impacts on the decision-making in this case. These models, separately and in combination, explain decision-making in both contexts in the same case. This raises questions regarding how prone these two governments are to these decision-making phenomena. Research into whether other decision-making processes these two governments were involved in also fell prey to the flaws identified here would reveal much about the predisposition of these two governments. It would also exemplify how the two different types of systems of government are predisposed to these flaws in the decision-making process. Some interviewees

proposed that Blair's strengths came to be weaknesses in this decision-making process (Williams, 2018; Turnbull, 2018). Further research into whether this continued to be the case later in Blair's premiership, or later in the war in Iraq, would be very interesting and greatly develop our understanding of the development or progression of Blair's time in Number 10.

David Cameron, the British Prime Minister during the Syria decision-making process, described the Iraq decision-making process as being affected by groupthink (Cameron, 2016), and there were comparisons between the decision not to intervene in Syria and the Iraq case study by others in the UK decision (see White, 2016). The impact of this analogical comparison between the case study of Iraq, and subsequent current cases, can reveal much about the impact of the Iraq decision-making process, and whatever lessons may have been learned on US and UK decision-making in subsequent military decision-making situations. Examining the legacy of the Iraq decision-making process on subsequent decision-making processes must form part of future research.

Secondly, another empirical contribution would be to further examination of the war in Iraq. This thesis ceases to examine at the point when the invasion commences. Further research can develop our understanding on this long-lasting conflict, answering the question of whether these three models explain the conduct of the invasion, occupation, and reconstruction of Iraq. The Iraq war is one of the longest military conflicts of the modern era, and its aftermath continues to involve US military action. This can be a crucial arena in which the previous paragraph's direction can be taken, and, as an extremely controversial episode, it is an opportunity to speak to the practitioner community in a manner that could increase uptake. Did the discovery that there were no WMD in Iraq shake decision-makers from the effects of these flaws?

Or, were the effects of these flaws so strong that decision-makers were not shaken from their convictions? This can also develop the understanding of whether these flaws continued through the changes in personnel and changes in governments. Was the Brown government (2007-2010) prey to the same issues, given the similarity in the personnel? Similarly, was the Bush administration of 2000-2004 more prone to groupthink, analogical reasoning, and the effects of the leadership style of the President than the Bush administration of 2004-2008?

For a theoretical contribution, future research could further develop the concept of using FPA models in combination. The first challenge that this thesis responds to is the challenge to combine theoretical literatures within FPA (Hudson and Vore, 1995; Hudson, 2007; Morin and Paquin, 2018, p342). Whilst the field of FPA has been challenged to compare the efficacy of different models by the prominent scholars Kaarbo (2003) and Morin and Paquin (2018, p342), this does not prohibit research from also seeking to combine models to provide more comprehensive explanations. As this thesis has demonstrated, the combination of models examining differing levels in a decision-making process can provide a more coherent account and is greater than the sum of the individual models used. Here, models examining the individual, the group, and the framing/reasoning levels have been used in combination. Further research combining these levels can develop our understanding of how these levels are best combined. This can compare other combinations of models with the combination used here, determining how explanations differ.

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, the field of FPA has been heavily focused upon the US throughout its history. As such, future research based upon the findings of this thesis would be into the applicability of these models, singly or in combination, to other decisions in the history of UK foreign policy. This can assist the field in

determining what accommodations are required for FPA research by the differences between governmental systems. This thesis shows that these models are applicable to both the US and the UK governmental systems, individually and in combination. Should future research apply other models to other UK decisions, this can assist in determining what differences may be sufficient to prevent the application of particular FPA models to the UK governmental system.

Whilst future research in the field of FPA is not likely to follow each of the lines of research outlined above, research along some of these lines are an inevitability. Research in FPA has been moving to lessen its obsession with US foreign policy and scrutinise other nations and other governmental systems. As such, the fifth route for future research outlined above is almost inevitable. Similarly, as the archives become accessible in the next fifteen to twenty years, the Blair government will inevitably come under greater scrutiny given the practical considerations for research are eased. Research into the potential combination of other FPA models must accompany the move to comparisons between the effectiveness of different models. Without the comparisons, FPA risks becoming a field driven by divisions. By advancing research with both comparative and contrasting emphasises, a more comprehensive theoretical progression can be achieved, whilst also offsetting the potential downsides of proceeding with an emphasis placed on one or other of these approaches.

The decision to invade Iraq in 2003 was one of the most controversial foreign policy decisions of the 21st Century. It was the most controversial policy choice the Blair government took. The Blair government was arguably the most successful Labour government since the 1950s, and the invasion of Iraq tainted all accounts of their time in office. For the Bush administration, it was also hugely controversial and is one of the policies first recalled when looking at their time in government. The Iraq war formed

part of Bush's transition from being the "stay-at-home" president that was expected when he was elected, to being amongst the most foreign policy-oriented Presidents in history. The knock-on effects are a long list. President Trump, easily one of the most controversial Presidents since the Second World War, used the Iraq War to refute the CIA's assertion that Russia "hacked" the 2016 Presidential election. The Iraq War has been frequently cited as a contributing factor as to why the Labour Party has been out of government for ten years. The importance of understanding the decision to start a war that even seventeen years after it began has a fiercely debated death toll cannot be overstated. This thesis explains how this controversial decision was made and furthers our understanding of how to prevent these flaws from occurring again.

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