

The Architecture of Conflict

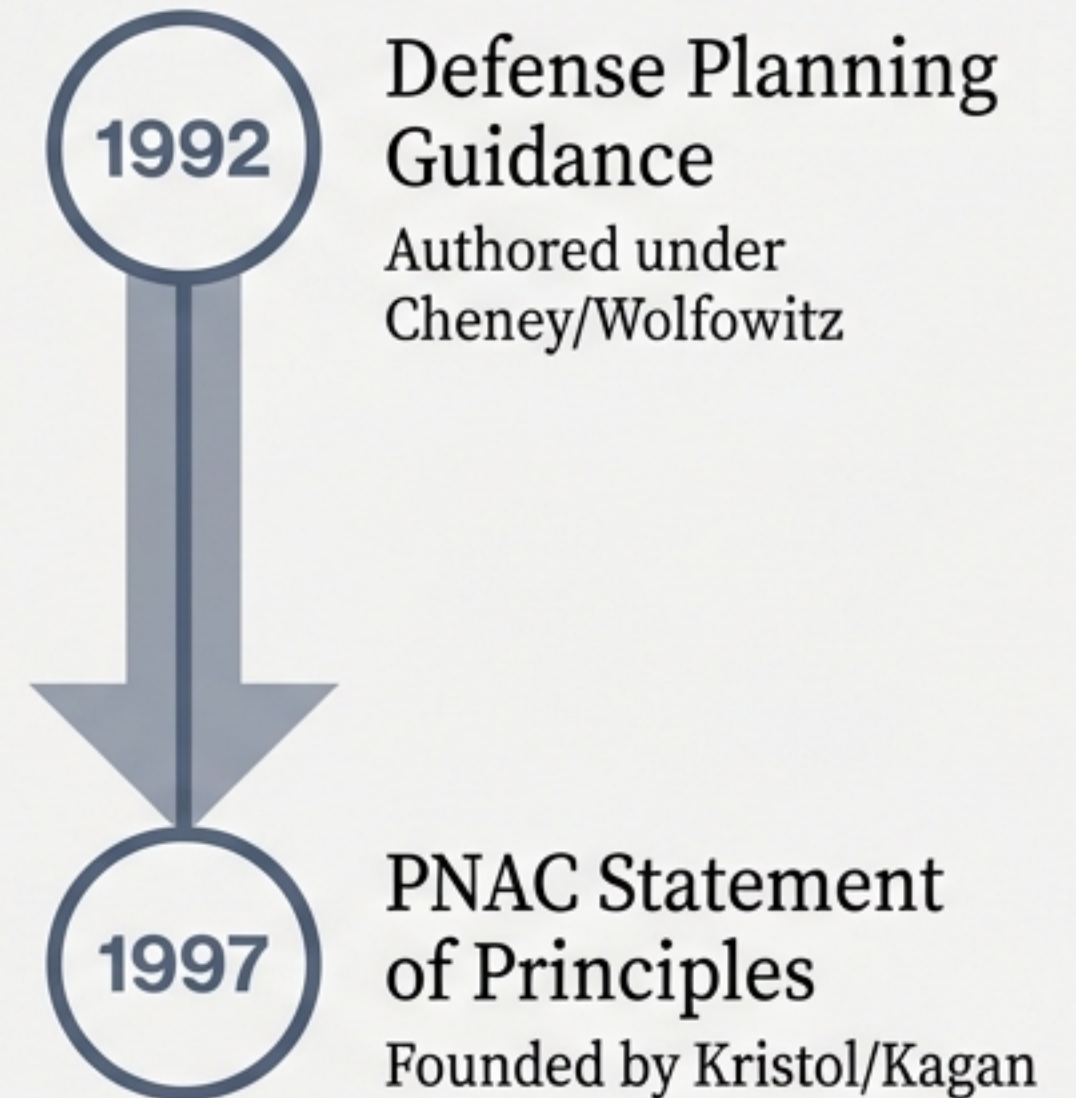
How a Pre-Existing Plan Led America to War



The Ideological Blueprint: A Plan in Search of a Crisis

The Project for the New American Century (PNAC) was established in 1997 by William Kristol and Robert Kagan to counter a perceived “drift” in U.S. foreign policy following the Cold War. Its mission was to promote “American global leadership” through a “Reaganite policy of military strength and moral clarity.”

This ideology was not new. It was a direct intellectual descendant of the **1992 Defense Planning Guidance (DPG)**, a controversial Pentagon document drafted by Paul Wolfowitz under then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney. The DPG’s core objective was to prevent the re-emergence of any rival superpower, creating a blueprint for maintaining U.S. preeminence.



The Operational Plan: “Rebuilding America’s Defenses” (September 2000)

Published in September 2000, this 90-page report was the detailed blueprint for a “Pax Americana.” It moved beyond principles to articulate specific military and strategic requirements.

It called for a massive increase in defence spending to a minimum of 3.5% to 3.8% of GDP.

1. Defend the American Homeland

Including through control of space and cyberspace.

2. Fight and Win Multiple, Simultaneous Major Theatre Wars

To deter any potential peer competitor.

3. Perform “Constabulary” Duties

To shape the security environment in critical regions.

4. Transform U.S. Forces

By exploiting the “revolution in military affairs.”

The Precondition for Transformation

“Further, the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, **absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor.**”

- This sentence, on page 51 of the report, acknowledged the political reality: enacting such a radical and expensive military overhaul would be impossible without the impetus of a major crisis to galvanize public and political will.
- Just nine days after the 9/11 attacks, PNAC sent a public letter to President Bush demanding the removal of Saddam Hussein, “even if evidence does not link Iraq to the September 11 attacks,” confirming the target was pre-selected.

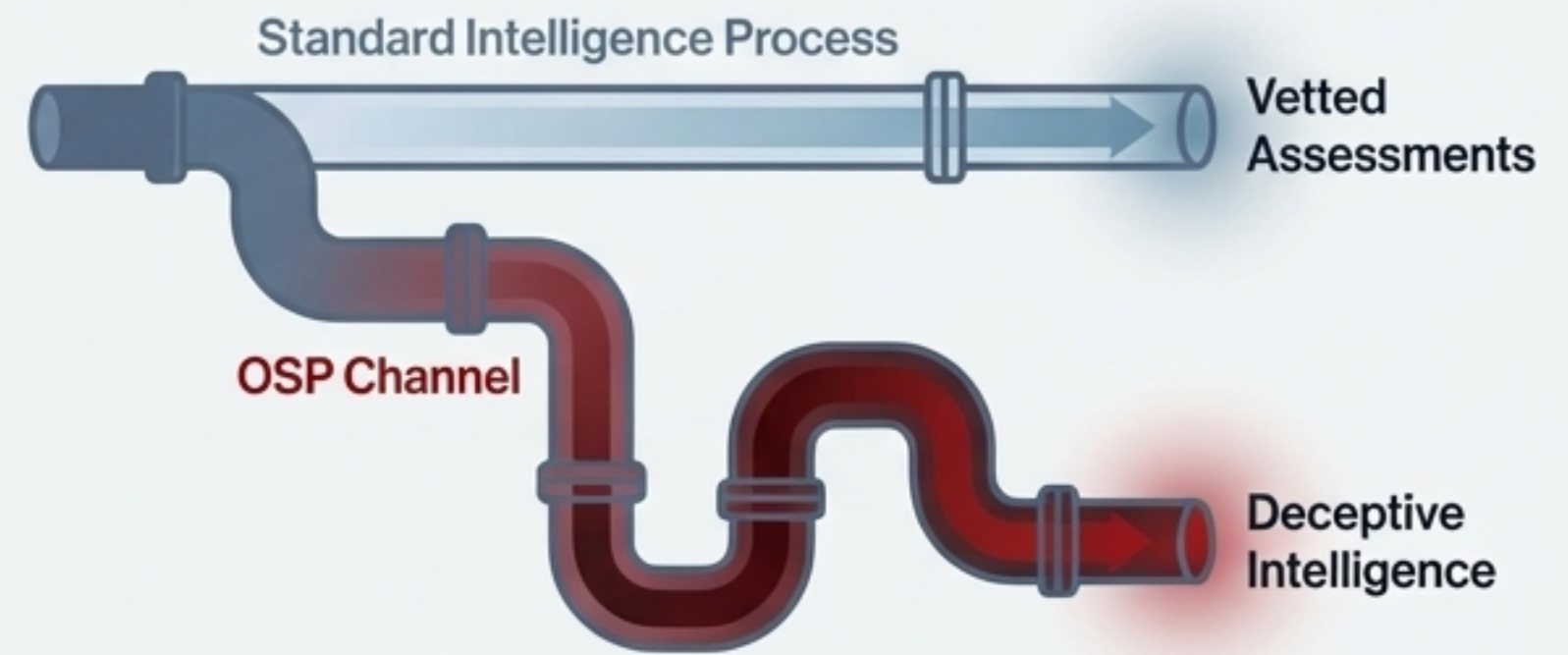
The Architects in Power: From Think Tank to White House

PNAC functioned as a “government-in-waiting.” The appointment of at least ten signatories of its founding “Statement of Principles” to senior national security positions created a direct pipeline for its ideology to become official U.S. policy.

The PNAC Personnel Pipeline	
PNAC Signatory	Position in George W. Bush Administration
Dick Cheney	Vice President
Donald Rumsfeld	Secretary of Defense
Paul Wolfowitz	Deputy Secretary of Defense
I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby	Chief of Staff to the Vice President
John R. Bolton	Under Secretary of State for Arms Control
Elliott Abrams	Special Assistant to the President, NSC
Zalmay Khalilzad	Ambassador to Afghanistan, Iraq, and UN
Paula Dobriansky	Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs

The Mechanism of Deception: The Office of Special Plans

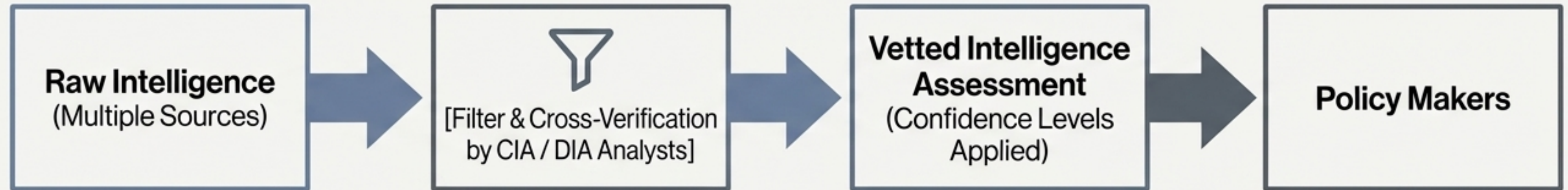
- To justify the pre-determined goal of invading Iraq, senior administration officials required intelligence that aligned with their policy. When the professional Intelligence Community (CIA, DIA) would not provide it, they created a new channel.
- The **Office of Special Plans (OSP)** was a dedicated unit established within the Pentagon under the oversight of Donald Rumsfeld's subordinates, including Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith.
- Its explicit function was to find, filter, and amplify raw, unvetted intelligence that supported the administration's claims—namely, that Iraq possessed WMDs and had ties to al-Qaeda.
- The OSP relied heavily on dubious information from unreliable Iraqi defectors and opposition groups, such as the Iraqi National Congress (INC).



Visualising the Deception: 'Stovepiping' Intelligence

The OSP bypassed the critical vetting processes of the established Intelligence Community, 'stovepiping' its preferred narrative directly to top decision-makers.

Standard Intelligence Vetting



The OSP Stovepipe



Manufacturing a False Narrative for War

- The OSP's stovepiped intelligence allowed administration officials to make public statements with a level of certainty that was not supported by the available evidence.
- Post-war reports from the Senate Intelligence Committee found that senior policymakers "repeatedly characterized Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs in more conclusive and threatening terms than the intelligence substantiated."

The Downing Street Memo (July 2002)

"...the intelligence and facts were being **fixed around the policy.**"

The Catalyst and The Payoff: War, Profit, and Elite Networks

- The 9/11 attacks provided the "catastrophic and catalyzing event" that PNAC's blueprint had anticipated, creating the political will for war.
- This push for war was inextricably linked to powerful financial interests and elite networks with deep ties to the administration's key architects.
- The resulting surge in defence and reconstruction spending directly enriched a select group of politically-connected corporations.

**Halliburton
KBR**

THE CARLYLE GROUP

September 11, 2001



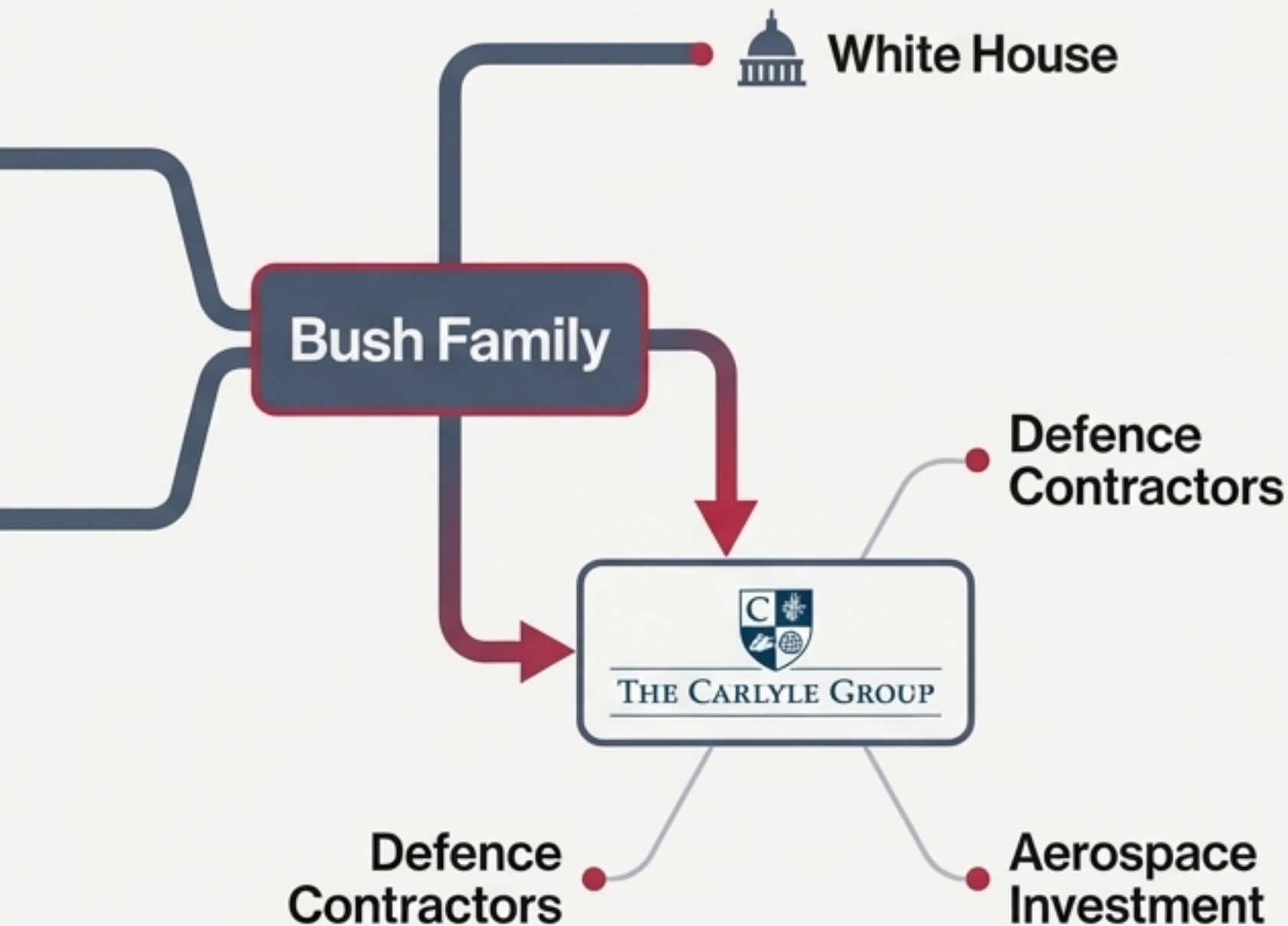
Conflict of Interest: Vice President Cheney and Halliburton



 Halliburton

- While serving as Vice President, Dick Cheney retained a significant financial interest in his former company, Halliburton, including deferred compensation and hundreds of thousands of stock options.
- Following the invasion, Halliburton subsidiary KBR was awarded massive, largely non-bid government contracts for reconstruction, logistics, and military support in Iraq. This included contracts for facilities at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp.
- A formal investigation by the non-partisan Congressional Research Service (CRS) concluded that Cheney's financial arrangement legally constituted a continuing "financial interest" in the company while he was in office, establishing a clear conflict of interest.

Elite Networks: The Bush Family and The Carlyle Group



- The Bush family held deep ties to The Carlyle Group, a global private equity firm specializing in defence and aerospace investment.
- Former President George H.W. Bush served as a senior advisor to Carlyle's Asia board.
- The firm's business model involved acquiring and controlling major defence contractors. Carlyle amassed billions by benefiting directly from the post-9/11 surge in military spending that its political associates championed.
- Carlyle's international ties fueled public suspicion, as the Bin Laden family were investors in the firm until shortly after the 9/11 attacks.

The Enabler: A System Shielded from Scrutiny

- The transfer of vast public wealth to private contractors was enabled by a systemic lack of financial accountability at the Department of Defense (DoD).
- The Pentagon is the only major federal agency that has **never passed a full financial audit**. As of 2024, it has failed seven consecutive annual audits.
- The FY2023 audit found that auditors could not properly account for **63% of the DoD's approximately £3.0 trillion in assets**.
- This financial opacity creates an environment where conflicts of interest, overpayments, and war profiteering can remain obscure and insulated from forensic review.

September 10, 2001

> *“The adversary is closer to home. It’s the Pentagon bureaucracy... According to some estimates, we estimates, we cannot track £1.8 trillion in transactions.”*

The Verdict: An Architecture of Deception

The Iraq War was not the result of an intelligence failure. It was the culmination of a deliberate, multi-year project, executed by its authors once they were in power. The evidence shows:

Blueprint



A pre-existing plan for U.S. primacy and regime change in Iraq. (PNAC's Rebuilding America's Defenses)

Architects



The authors of the blueprint positioned in the highest levels of government. (Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz)

Mechanism



A dedicated tool created to bypass intelligence protocols and manufacture a false justification. (Office of Special Plans)

Catalyst



A national tragedy used as the trigger to execute the plan. (The 9/11 Attacks)

Profit



A clear nexus of ideology and financial gain, benefiting politically-connected elite networks. (Halliburton, The Carlyle Group)

A Legacy of Conflict

The implementation of this pre-existing agenda resulted in catastrophic and enduring consequences:

Human Cost

The invasion and subsequent occupation led to hundreds of thousands of violent Iraqi civilian deaths and the displacement of millions, destabilising an entire region.

Erosion of International Law

The invasion, launched without a specific UN Security Council resolution and on a false pretext, was deemed by many legal experts, including then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, to be a violation of the UN Charter—a “Crime of Aggression.”

Financial Cost

Trillions of pounds were spent on a conflict funded primarily by debt, creating massive long-term fiscal obligations.

Systemic Impunity

The architects of the war and the corporations that profited from it have faced no meaningful accountability, revealing a profound weakness in the systems of national and international justice.