



War Made Easy
HOW PRESIDENTS & PUNDITS KEEP SPINNING US TO DEATH

FEATURING NORMAN SOLOMON
NARRATED BY SEAN PENN

AUDIO FILES
TRANSCRIPT

(TRACK 1)

SEAN PENN: The use of propaganda to arouse public support for war is not new. Leaders throughout history have turned to propaganda to transform populations understandably wary of the costs of war into war's most ardent supporters – invoking images of nationalism, and channeling fear and anger towards perceived enemies and threats.

And in the United States since World War II, government attempts to win public support for military actions have followed a similar pattern.

FIFTIES PROPAGANDA FILM: We are living in an era marked by the growth of socialism. It's basic godless philosophy --

Lying, dirty ...

It's goal of world conquest --

Shrewd, godless ...

Its insidious tactics --

Murderous, determined ...

And its cunning strategy --

It's an international criminal conspiracy.

NORMAN SOLOMON: It's the same sort of message that's utilized today in often identical techniques.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH (MONTAGE): States like these and their terrorist allies constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world.

These are barbaric people.

Servants of evil.

The cult of evil.

A monumental struggle of good versus evil. But good will prevail.

NORMAN SOLOMON: Whether it's the Soviet Union or Al Qaeda, it provides a way to legitimize US plans for war.

You have the comparison between the enemy leader and Hitler.

PETER JENNINGS, ABC: President Bush called Saddam Hussein a little Hitler again today.

PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH: We are dealing with Hitler revisited.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: Bin Laden and his terrorist allies have made their intentions as clear as Lenin and Hitler before them.

NORMAN SOLOMON: We don't get information that would help us put the images in perspective

PRESIDENT REAGAN: This mad dog of the Middle East ...

I find that he's not only a barbarian, but he's flakey.

PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH: The drug indicted, drug related, indicted dictator of Panama ...

NEWS REPORTER (UNIDENTIFIED): And to support their claim that Noriega was out of control, ghoulish evidence of Satanic practices with dead animals that one official called "kinky."

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: Saddam Hussein is a homicidal dictator who is addicted to Weapons of mass destruction.

NORMAN SOLOMON: And as Aldous Huxley said long ago – it's more powerful to often leave things out than it is to tell lies. For instance, quite often the US government directly helped the dictators that we're now being told must be overthrown. And it's that selectivity of history that's a very effective form of propaganda.

(TRACK 2)

NORMAN SOLOMON: Whether we're talking about President Johnson or President Nixon or the president today, you have one chief executive after another in the White House saying how much they love peace and hate war.

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN: We maintain our strength in order to deter and defend against aggression, to preserve freedom and peace.

PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH: No one, friend or foe, should doubt our desire for peace.

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON: The United States wants peace.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: We seek peace. We strive for peace.

NORMAN SOLOMON: Every president of the last half-century has gone out of his way to say that he wanted peace and wanted to avoid war.

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON: I pledged in my campaign for the presidency to end the war in a way that we could win the peace.

NORMAN SOLOMON: Even while ordering military action.

(TRACK 3)

NORMAN SOLOMON: As Americans, we like to think that we're not subjected to propaganda from our own government, certainly that we're not subjected to propaganda that's trying to drag the country into war, as in the case of setting the stage for the invasion of Iraq.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.

VICE PRESIDENT DICK CHENEY: There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction.

DONALD RUMSFELD: Weapons of mass destruction.

ARI FLEISCHER: Botulin, VX, Sarin, nerve agent.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: Iraq and al-Qaeda.

RICHARD ARMITAGE: Al-Qaeda.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: Iraq and al-Qaeda.

UNIDENTIFIED: Terrorism.

DONALD RUMSFELD: Cyber-attacks.

ARI FLEISCHER: Nuclear program.

COLIN POWELL: Biological weapons.

DONALD RUMSFELD: Cruise missiles, ballistic missiles.

ARI FLEISCHER: Chemical and biological weapons.

DONALD RUMSFELD: Iraq has weapons of mass destruction.

ARI FLEISCHER: President Bush has said Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. Tony Blair has said Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. Donald Rumsfeld has said Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. Richard Butler has said they do. The United Nations has said they do. The experts have said they do. Iraq says they don't. You can choose who you want to believe.

NORMAN SOLOMON: The war propaganda function in the United States is finely tuned, it's sophisticated, and most of all, it blends into the media terrain.

SHEPARD SMITH: The White House says it can prove that Saddam Hussein does have weapons of mass destruction, claiming it has solid evidence.

DAN RATHER: The White House insisted again today it does have solid evidence that Saddam Hussein is hiding an arsenal of prohibited weapons.

NORMAN SOLOMON: It's necessary to provide a drumbeat media echo effect.

JOHN GIBSON: They might fight dirty, using weapons of mass destruction -- chemical, biological or radioactive.

WILLIAM SCHNEIDER: There are ties between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda --

BILL O'REILLY: Anthrax, smallpox.

TOM BROKAW: Dirty bomb.

BRIAN WILLIAMS: Dirty bomb.

BRIT HUME: Iraq-al-Qaeda connection.

WILLIAM SCHNEIDER: Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda share the same goal: they want to see -- both of them -- both of them want to see Americans dead.

NORMAN SOLOMON: And I was very struck by the acceptance, the tone of most of the media coverage, as the sabers was rattled, as the invasion of Iraq gradually went from possible to probable to almost certain.

DAVID LEE MILLER: The President essentially giving Saddam forty-eight hours to get out of dodge. War now seems all but inevitable.

GREGG JARRETT: Short of a bullet to the back of his head or he leaves the country, war is inexorable.

UNIDENTIFIED: Well, I think that's exactly right. War is inevitable, and it is approaching inexorably.

WOLF BLITZER: Is war with Iraq inevitable right now?

LAWRENCE EAGLEBURGER: I think it's 95% inevitable.

CHRIS BURY: You, at this point, right now tonight, don't see any other option but war.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE: Do you?

CHRIS BURY: I'm asking you, Ambassador.

WESLEY CLARK: I agree. I don't think there's a viable option for the administration at this point. We're way too far out front in this.

MAJOR BOB BEVELACQUA: Send us over there, guys. Let's get on with it. Let's get it over with.

MSNBC AD: Showdown Iraq. If America goes to war, turn to MSNBC and "The Experts."

NORMAN SOLOMON: And in many ways, the US news media were equal partners with the officials in Washington and on Capitol Hill in setting the agenda for war.

MSNBC AD: We'll take you there.

NORMAN SOLOMON: And although it's called the liberal media, one has a great deal of difficulty finding an example of major media outlets, in their reporting, challenging the way in which the agenda setting for war is well underway. And when that reporting is so much a hostage of official sources, that's when you have a problem.

CNN: US officials tell CNN --

CNN REPORTER: Bush official says --

CNN REPORTER: Analysts say --

AARON BROWN: Pentagon officials tell us --

DAVID MARTIN: According to US intelligence --

NORMAN SOLOMON: Often, we're encouraged to believe that officials are the ones who make news.

JOHN KING: US officials say --

US officials say that --

US officials here say --

Officials here at the White House tell us --

NORMAN SOLOMON: They are the ones who should be consulted to understand the situation.

COLIN POWELL: I just pull these two things out -- I've laundered them, so you can't really tell what I'm talking about, because I don't want the Iraqis to know what I'm talking about, but trust me. Trust me.

NORMAN SOLOMON: If history is any guide, the opposite is the case: the officials blow smoke and cloud reality, rather than clarify.

VICE PRESIDENT DICK CHENEY: We will, in fact, be greeted as liberators.

PAUL WOLFOWITZ: The notion that it will take several hundred thousand US troops to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq are wildly off the mark.

DONALD RUMSFELD: So the money's going to come from Iraqi oil revenue, as everyone has said. They think it's going to be something like \$2 billion this year. They think it might be something like \$15, \$12 [billion] next year.

PAUL WOLFOWITZ: A country that can really finance its own reconstruction and relatively soon.

TOM BROKAW: National Security Advisors Ken Adelman and Richard Perle, early advocates of the war, said the war would be a cakewalk.

NORMAN SOLOMON: The sources that have deceived us so constantly don't deserve our trust, and to the extent that we give them our trust, we set ourselves up to be scammed again and again.

REPORTER: There are reports that there is no evidence of a direct link between Baghdad and some of these terrorist organizations.

DONALD RUMSFELD: There are known knowns. There are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns. That is to say, we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns, the ones we don't know we don't know.

REPORTER: Excuse me, but is this an "unknown unknown"?

DONALD RUMSFELD: I'm not --

REPORTER: Just several unknowns, and I'm wondering if this is an unknown unknown.

DONALD RUMSFELD: I'm not going to say which it is.

REPORTER: But, Mr. Secretary, do you believe --

DONALD RUMSFELD: I'm right here.

REPORTER: If you believe something --

(TRACK 4)

PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON: My fellow Americans --

SEAN PENN: In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson falsely claimed that an attack on US gun ships by North Vietnamese forces in the Gulf of Tonkin gave him no choice but to escalate the war in Vietnam.

PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON: ...that renewed hostile actions against United States ships on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin have today required me to order the military forces of the United States to take action and reply.

NORMAN SOLOMON: Routinely, the official story is a lie or a deception or a partial bit of information that leaves out key facts.

US NAVY FILM, 1964: In international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin, destroyers of the United States Navy are assigned routine patrols from time to time. Sunday, August the 2nd, 1964, the destroyer Maddox was on such a patrol. Shortly after noon, the calm of the day is broken as general quarters sound. In a deliberate and unprovoked action, three North Vietnam PT boats unleash a torpedo attack against the Maddox.

NORMAN SOLOMON: The official story about the Gulf of Tonkin was a lie.

DEFENSE SECRETARY ROBERT MCNAMARA: The destroyer was carrying out a mission of patrol in those waters, in international waters, when it was attacked.

NORMAN SOLOMON: But it quickly became accepted as the absolute truth by the news media, and because of the press's refusal to challenge that story, it was much easier for Congress to quickly pass the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which was pivotal, because it opened the floodgates to the Vietnam War.

SEN. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT: I think it's a very clear demonstration of the unity of the country behind the policies that are being followed by the President in South Vietnam and, more specifically, of the action that was taken in response to the attack upon our destroyers.

NORMAN SOLOMON: At that point, the facts were secondary. In the case of the Washington Post reporting, I asked more than three decades later whether there had ever been a Post retraction of its reporting on the Gulf of Tonkin events, and I called the newspaper and eventually reached the man who had been the chief diplomatic correspondent for the paper at the time, Murrey Marder, and I said, "Mr. Marder, has there ever been a retraction by the Washington Post of its fallacious reporting on the Gulf of Tonkin?" And he said, "I can assure you it never happened. There was never any retraction." And I asked why. And he said, "Well, if the news media were going to retract its reporting on the Gulf of Tonkin, it would have to retract its reporting on virtually the entire Vietnam War."

Fast forward a few decades, you have President George W. Bush saying that to an absolute certainty there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and that intelligence sources told him that clearly, which was not at all the case.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: Secretary of State Powell will present information and intelligence about Iraq's illegal weapons programs, its attempts to hide those weapons from inspectors and its links to terrorist groups.

SEAN PENN: The failure of American news media to check government distortion reached new heights when, on the eve of war, the highly respected Secretary of State Colin Powell appeared before the United Nations to make the case that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

COLIN POWELL: Saddam Hussein's intentions have never changed. He is not developing the missiles for self-defense. These are missiles that Iraq wants in order to project power, to threaten and to deliver chemical, biological and, if we let him, nuclear warheads.

AARON BROWN: Today, Secretary of State Powell brought the United Nations Security Council, the administration's best evidence so far.

NORMAN SOLOMON: After Colin Powell's speech to the UN, immediately the US press applauded with great enthusiasm.

AARON BROWN: Did Colin Powell close the deal today, in your mind, for anyone who has yet objectively to make up their mind?

HENRY KISSINGER: I think for anybody who analyzes the situation, he has closed the deal.

SEAN HANNITY (MONTAGE): This irrefutable, undeniable, incontrovertible evidence today ...

Colin Powell brilliantly delivered that smoking gun today ...

Colin Powell was outstanding today ...

I mean, it was lockstep -- it was so compelling, I don't see how anybody, at this point, cannot support this effort.

ALAN COLMES: He made a wonderful presentation. I thought he made a great case for the purpose of disarmament.

MORT KONDRACKE (MONTAGE): It was devastating, I mean, and overwhelming ...

Overwhelming abundance of the evidence. Point after point after point with -- he just flooded the terrain with data.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: It's the end of the argument phase. America has made its case.

FRED BARNES: The Powell speech has moved the ball.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: I think the case is closed.

NORMAN SOLOMON: But at the time, it was quite possible to analyze and debunk what he was saying.

SEAN PENN: Whereas the British press and other international news sources immediately raised legitimate questions about the accuracy of Powell's presentation. the major US news media were virtually silent about the factual basis of his claims and near unanimous in their praise.

NORMAN SOLOMON: Even the purportedly antiwar New York Times editorialized the next day that Colin Powell had made a sober case, a factual case. One of the great myths and part of the war propaganda cycle is, way after the fact, to claim that it couldn't have been known at the time that US officials were lying us into war. And in point of fact, it was known at the time and said by many people who were not allowed on the networks, by and large.

(TRACK 5)

SEAN PENN: Free flows of information have been further blocked by a more general atmosphere of contempt for antiwar voices.

MICHELLE MALKIN: Among them are a group called CODEPINK, which is headed by Medea Benjamin, who's a terrorist sympathizer, dictator-worshipping propagandist.

BILL O'REILLY: The far-left element in America is a destructive force that must be confronted.

RUSH LIMBAUGH: Some Americans, sadly, not interested in victory, and yet they want us to believe that their behavior is patriotic. Well, it's not.

STEVE MALZBERG: To call the president stupid, he doesn't know much about anything, that's just great. Go with Danny Glover and Susan Sarandon. You fit in perfect.

NEWT GINGRICH: To in any way be defending a torturer, a killer, a dictator -- he used chemical weapons against his own people -- is pretty remarkable, but it's a very long tradition in the Democratic Party.

JOE SCARBOROUGH: Pay no heed to the peaceniks and the left-wing rock stars. They've had their fifteen minutes of fame.

JONAH GOLDBERG: These people are essentially useless. They are reflexively opposed to war. It's a principled position, but it's the wrong position, and you can't take them seriously as a strategic voice.

WOLF BLITZER: Millions and millions of useful people out there?

NORMAN SOLOMON: If you want to have democracy, you've got to have the free flow of information through the body politic. You can't have these blockages. You can't have the manipulation.

SEAN PENN: While mainstream journalists have rarely called attention in real time to failure of news media to provide necessary information and real debate, they have repeatedly pointed to their own failures well after wars have been launched.

CHRIS MATTHEWS: During the course of this war, there was a lot of snap-to in press coverage: we're at war, the world's changed, we have to root for the country to some extent. And yet, it seems something missing from this debate was a critical analysis of where it was taking us.

JIM LEHRER: Those of us in journalism never even looked at the issue of occupation.

CHRIS MATTHEWS: Because?

JIM LEHRER: Because it just didn't occur to us. We weren't smart enough. You'd have had to gone against the grain.

CHRIS MATTHEWS: Right. You'd also come off as kind of a pointy head trying to figure out some obscure issue here --

JIM LEHRER: Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

CHRIS MATTHEWS: -- when it's good guys and bad guys.

JIM LEHRER: Yeah, negative. Negativism.

NORMAN SOLOMON: News media, down the road, will point out that there were lies about the Gulf of Tonkin or about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR: I'm sorry to say, but certainly television, and perhaps to an extent my station, was intimidated by the administration and its foot soldiers at FOX News.

WOLF BLITZER: We should have been more skeptical.

NORMAN SOLOMON: But that doesn't bring back any of the people who have died, who were killed in their own country or sent over by the President of the United States to kill in that country. So, after the fact, it's all well and good to say, "Well, the system worked" or "The truth comes out." But when it comes to life and death, the truth comes out too late.

(TRACK 6)

SEAN PENN: Once public support is in place and war is finally under way, the news media necessarily turned from covering the rationales for war to covering war itself.

NORMAN SOLOMON: When the President decides he wants the US to go to war, then the war becomes the product.

Particularly in the early stages, news coverage of war is much more like PR about war.

SEAN PENN: Influencing the nature of this war coverage has been a priority of one administration after another since Vietnam, when conventional wisdom held that it was negative media coverage that turned the American people against the war and forced US withdrawal. Since that time, and beginning with new urgency during the 1991 Gulf War, the Pentagon has worked with increasing sophistication to shape media coverage of war.

As then-Defense Secretary Dick Cheney noted about the importance of public perceptions during the first Iraq War, “Frankly, I looked on it as a problem to be managed. The information function was extraordinarily important. I did not have a lot of confidence that I could leave it to the press.”

NORMAN SOLOMON: So for the invasion of Grenada and invasion of Panama in '83 and '89, then the Gulf War in early 1991, it was like a produced TV show, and the main producers were at the Pentagon. They decided, in the case of the Gulf War, exactly what footage would be made available to the TV stations. They did nonstop briefings, utilizing the increasing importance of cable television. They named it Operation Desert Storm.

DAN RATHER: Breaking news of what's now officially called Operation Desert Storm.

TOM BROKAW: Good evening. Operation Desert Storm rages on.

NORMAN SOLOMON: All that sort of stuff was very calculated, so you could look at that as an era of media war manipulation from the standpoint of the US government. Then you had a different era. You had the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

DAN RATHER: Scores of American reporters have now joined US military units in Kuwait as part of the Pentagon's effort to make any war with Iraq what the Pentagon calls a media-friendly campaign. Another part that effort is on display at the US Military Command Center in Qatar. A Hollywood set designer was brought in to create a \$200,000 backdrop for official war briefings.

NORMAN SOLOMON: And tied in with that is the worship of Pentagon technology.

HANSON HOSEIN: I've fallen almost in love with the F/A-18 Super Hornet, because it's quite a versatile plane.

BRIAN WILSON: I've got to tell you, my favorite aircraft, the A-10 Wart Hog, I love the Wart Hogs.

JOHN ELLIOTT: This morning, around 4:00 a.m. local time, the first three took off. And when you're 300 feet away from them, when they do it, you hear it in your shoes and feel it in your gut.

SEAN PENN: The Pentagon's influence on war coverage has also been evident in the news media's tendency to focus on the technical sophistication of the latest weaponry.

GREGG JARRETT: Should they have used more? Should they, you know, use a MOAB, the mother of all bombs, and new daisy cutters? And, you know, let's not just stop at a couple of cruise missiles.

JAMIE McINTYRE: The newest, biggest, baddest US bomb --

GENERAL BARRY MCCAFFREY: We'll pound them with 2,000-pound bombs and then go in --

PAT BUCHANAN: 2000-pound bombs in urban areas?

GENERAL BARRY MCCAFFREY: Oh, sure.

LESTER HOLT: I'm holding in my hand here the F-117 Stealth Fighter, was used in these attacks significantly --

GRETA VAN SUSTERN: How do you steer this thing? I mean, there's no -- you have a stick, is that right?

PILOT: Sure. Both of us have a matching silver stick with left throttles. You can do every --

NORMAN SOLOMON: Every war, we have US news media that have praised the latest in the state-of-the-art killing technology, from the present moment to the war in Vietnam.

WALTER CRONKITE: B-57s -- the British call them Cambra jets -- we're using them very effectively here in this war in Vietnam to dive-bomb the Vietcong in these jungles beyond Da Nang here. Colonel, what's our mission we're about to embark on?

AIR FORCE COLONEL: Well, our mission today, sir, is to report down to the site of the ambush seventy miles south of here and attempt to kill the VC.

WALTER CRONKITE: The colonel has just advised me that that is our target area right over there. One, two, three, four, we dropped our bomb, but now a tremendous G-load as we pull out of that dive. Oh, I know something of what those astronauts must go through.

Well, colonel.

AIR FORCE COLONEL: Yes, sir.

WALTER CRONKITE: It's a great way to go to war.

NORMAN SOLOMON: And there's a kind of idolatry there. Some might see it as worship of the gods of metal.

AIR FORCE COLONEL: Yes, sir.

UNIDENTIFIED: That's the JDAM. It is a 2,000-pound bomb that is deadly accurate, and that is the thing that is allowing us -- allowed us in Afghanistan and will allow us in this next conflict to be terribly accurate, terribly precise and terribly destructive.

SEAN PENN: In fact, even as US military technology has become increasingly sophisticated with the development of so-called smart bombs and other forms of precision-guided weaponry, civilian casualties now greatly outnumber military deaths, a grim toll that has steadily increased since World War I.

(TRACK 7)

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN: I know that this is a great concern, I think it's part of the Vietnam syndrome.

WALTER CRONKITE: The Vietnam Syndrome that President Reagan mentioned was a reference to America's attempt to forget its most unpopular war.

PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH: This will not be another Vietnam. Our troops will have the best possible support in the entire world and they will not be asked to fight with one hand tied behind their back.

SEAN PENN: Like President Reagan before him, President George H.W. Bush explicitly set out during the first Gulf War to rid the national psyche of the so-called Vietnam Syndrome, the common belief after the bloody and protracted conflict in Vietnam that the American public no longer had the stomach for war unless guaranteed swift, easy and decisive victory.

DOCUMENTARY NARRATOR FROM TV SPECIAL "INSIDE THE PENTAGON": Precision weapons and the strategic use of air power helped make the Gulf War an

enormous operational victory for the Pentagon, helping it move past the legacy of Vietnam.

PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH: It's a proud day for America, and by God we've kicked Vietnam Syndrome once and for all. Thank you very, very much.

NORMAN SOLOMON: The idea is that supposedly the public is not willing to back strong military action because people have become too skittish about US casualties. In fact, if you look at the actual course of public opinion there's been a real willingness to support wars without exception at the beginning.

Public support FOR the Second World War never fell below 77%, according to opinion polls. But during the Vietnam War, public support fell to about 30%, and within a couple of years of the US occupation of Iraq public support was down to almost 30% among the US population.

So what's the difference? In one case, WWII, the US public never felt that the war was fundamentally based on deception. But if it emerges that the war can't be won quickly, and that the war was based on deceptions, then people have turned against the war.

So, first, the public has to be sold on the need to attack. Then, after the war's under way, withdrawal needs to be put forward as an unacceptable option.

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON: Withdrawal of all American forces from Vietnam would be a disaster.

PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON: Let no one think for a moment that retreat from Vietnam would bring an end to conflict.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: We're not leaving, so long as I'm the President. That would be a huge mistake.

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON: Our allies would lose confidence in America.

PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON: To yield to force in Vietnam would weaken that confidence.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: Any sign that says we're going to leave before the job is done simply emboldens terrorists.

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON: A retreat of the United States from Vietnam would be a communist victory, a victory of massive proportions and would lead to World War III.

PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON: If this little nation goes down the drain and can't maintain independence, ask yourself what's going to happen to all the other little nations.

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON: It would not bring peace. It would bring more war.

(TRACK 8)

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: The party of FDR and the party of Harry Truman has become the party of “cut and run.”

REP. J.D. HAYWORTH: The American people will not stand for surrender.

REP. JEAN SCHMIDT: Cowards cut and run.

REP. PATRICK MCHENRY: They're advocating a policy called “cut and run.”

KARL ROVE: That party's old pattern of cutting and running.

REP. CHARLIE NORWOOD: If we high-tailed it and cut and run --

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH (MONTAGE): We won't cut and run.

Cut and run.

Cut and run.

We will not cut and run.

Cut and run.

ANDERSON COOPER: Cut and run. Cut and run. How do you respond?

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH (MONTAGE): We will stay the course.

We must stay the course.

We stay the course.

We will stay the course.

And we're not going to cut and run, if I'm in the Oval Office.

NORMAN SOLOMON: All a president has to do is start a war, and these arguments kick in that you can't stop it. So it's a real incentive for a president to lie, to deceive, to manipulate sufficiently to get the war started. And then they've got a long way to go without any sort of substantive challenge that says, hey, this war has to end.

NEWS ANCHOR: Then appealing for public support for his peace policy, Mr. Nixon said, “The enemy cannot defeat or humiliate the United States. Only Americans,” he said, “can do that.”

PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON: The peacemakers are out there in the field. The soldier and the statesman need and welcome the sincere and the responsible assistance of concerned Americans. But they need reason much more than they need emotion. They must have a practical solution and not a concoction of wishful thinking and false hopes, however well-intentioned and well-meaning they may be. It must be a solution that does not call for surrender or for cutting and running now. Those fantasies hold the nightmare of World War III and a much larger war tomorrow.

(TRACK 9)

SEAN PENN: And even when calls for withdrawal have eventually become too loud to ignore, officials have put forward strategies for ending war that have had the effect of prolonging it – in some cases, as with the Nixon administration’s strategy of Vietnamization, actually escalating war in the name of ending it.

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON: In the previous administration, we Americanized the war in Vietnam. In this administration, we are Vietnamizing the search for peace.

NORMAN SOLOMON: It’s the idea that, OK, the war has become unpopular in the United States, so let’s pull out some US troops and have the military burden fall on the allies inside that country.

NEWS REPORTER: White House officials say it is obvious that the South Vietnamese are going to have to hack it on their own.

NORMAN SOLOMON: The model is to use air power while pulling out US troops and training Vietnamese to kill other Vietnamese people. And several decades later, in effect, that is a goal of George W. Bush’s administration.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH: Our strategy can be summed up this way: As the Iraqi’s stand up, we will stand down.

NORMAN SOLOMON: The rhetoric about shifting the burden of fighting the insurgency onto the shoulders of Iraqi people themselves is very enticing for a president because it’s a way of saying to people in the United States, “Hey, we’re going to be out of there, it’s just a matter of time.”

DONALD RUMSFELD: There isn’t a person at this table that agrees with you that we’re in a quagmire and that there’s no end in sight.

NORMAN SOLOMON: The media and political focus on the word quagmire is a good example of how an issue can be framed very narrowly.

JAMIE MCINTYRE, CNN: The criticism would be that you're in a situation from which there's no good way to extricate yourself.

DONALD RUMSFELD: Then the word clearly would not be a good one.

NORMAN SOLOMON: Talking about a quagmire seems to be a positive way of fomenting debate because then we can argue about whether the war is actually working out well.

SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY: We are now in a seemingly intractable quagmire.

SENATOR CHUCK HAGEL: That terrible word quagmire.

ROBERT DALLEK, PRESIDENTIAL HISTORIAN: This could be or seems to be a kind of quagmire.

NORMAN SOLOMON: Quagmire is really a false sort of a critique because it says really the problem here is what the war is doing to the United States. Are we able to win.

ANDERSON COOPER: Are we winning in Iraq?

BILL O'REILLY: Do you want the United States to win in Iraq?

DAVID GERGEN, CNN: I can't tell who's winning and who's losing.

SENATOR CARL LEVIN: Do you believe that we are currently winning in Iraq?

DEFENSE SECRETARY ROBERT GATES: We are not winning but we are not losing.

SECRETARY COLIN POWELL: We are losing.

GENERAL GEORGE CASEY: We're winning it.

NEWS REPORTER TO SOLDIER: You're winning this war?

SOLDIER: I couldn't tell you.

NORMAN SOLOMON: And a big problem with the media focus is that it sees the war through the eyes of the Americans, through the eyes of the occupiers, rather than those who are bearing the brunt of the war in human terms.

WALTER CRONKITE: We have been too often disappointed by the optimism of the American leaders both in Vietnam and Washington to have faith any longer in the silver linings they find in the darkest clouds.

NORMAN SOLOMON: In early 1968, Walter Cronkite told CBS viewers that the war couldn't be won.

WALTER CRONKITE: It seems now more certain than ever that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a stalemate.

NORMAN SOLOMON: And that was instantly, and through time even more so, heralded as the tide has turned. As Lyndon Johnson is reputed to have said when he saw Cronkite give that report, "I've lost middle America." And it was presented as not only a turning point, quite often, but also as sort of a moral statement by the journalistic establishment.

Well, I would say yes and no. It was an acknowledgement that the United States, contrary to official Washington claims, was not winning the war in Vietnam, and could not win. But it was not a statement that the war was wrong. A problem there is that if the critique says this war is bad because it's not winnable, then the response is, "Oh yeah, we'll show you it can be winnable, or the next war will be winnable."

AMERICAN TROOPS AT IRAQI HOME: Open the door, open the door.

NORMAN SOLOMON: So that critique doesn't challenge the prerogatives of military expansion or aggression, if you will, or empire. And a deeper critique says, "Whether you can win or not, either way, empire enforced at the point – not of a bayonet but of the cruise missile -- that's not acceptable."

(TRACK 10)

SENATOR WAYNE MORSE: We've got to back our President? Since when do we have to back our President, or should we, when the President is proposing an unconstitutional act?

NORMAN SOLOMON: The best example is Wayne Morse, the senior Senator from Oregon who, beginning in 1964, was a voice in the Congressional wilderness. Senator Morse was unusual in that he challenged the very prerogative of the US government to go to war against Vietnam. He said it's up to the American people to formulate foreign policy.

PETER LISAGOR, FACE THE NATION: Senator, the Constitution of the United States gives to the President of the United States the sole responsibility for the conduct of foreign policy.

SENATOR WAYNE MORSE: Couldn't be more wrong, you couldn't make a more unsound legal statement than the one you have just made. This is the promulgation of an old fallacy that foreign policy belongs to the President of the United States.

PETER LISAGOR: Then to whom does it belong, then, Senator?

SENATOR WAYNE MORSE: It belongs to the American people, and the Constitutional fathers made it very clear --

PETER LISAGOR: Where does the President fit into this in the responsibility scale?

SENATOR WAYNE MORSE: What I'm saying is under our constitution all the President is, is the administrator of the people's foreign policy, those are his prerogatives, and I'm pleading that the American people be given the facts about foreign policy --

PETER LISAGOR: You know, Senator, that the American people cannot formulate and institute foreign policy --

SENATOR WAYNE MORSE: Why you're a man of little faith in democracy if you make that kind of comment. I have complete faith in the ability of the American people to follow the facts if you give them to them, and my charge against my government is that we're not giving the American people the facts.

NORMAN SOLOMON: And that's the kind of faith in democracy that's not in fashion among the Washington press corps or the power elite in the nation's capital. But it's a good reading of the Constitution, and it's a good definition of democracy.