

present in the form of neural circuitry. When the facts don't fit the frames, the frames are kept and the facts ignored.

It is a common folk theory of progressives that "the facts will set you free." If only you can get all the facts out there in the public eye, then every rational person will reach the right conclusion. It is a vain hope. Human brains just don't work that way. Framing matters. Frames once entrenched are hard to dispel.

In the Gulf War, Colin Powell began the testimony before Congress. He explained the rational actor model to Congress and gave a brief exposition of the views on war of Clausewitz, the Prussian general: War is business and politics carried out by other means. Nations naturally seek their self-interest, and when necessary they use military force in the service of their self-interest. This is both natural and legitimate.

To the Bush administration, this war furthers our self-interest in controlling the flow of oil from the world's second-largest known reserve, and in being in the position to control the flow of oil from central Asia. This would guarantee energy domination over a significant part of the world. The United States could control oil sales around the world. And in the absence of alternative fuel development, whoever controls the worldwide distribution of oil controls politics and economics.

My 1990 paper did not stop the Gulf War. This paper will not stop the Iraq War. So why bother?

I think it is crucially important to understand the cognitive dimensions of politics—especially when most of our conceptual framing is unconscious and we may not be aware of our own metaphorical thought. I have been referred to as a "cognitive activist," and I think the label fits me well. As a professor I do analyses of linguistic and conceptual issues in politics, and I do them as accurately as I can. But that analytic act is a political act. Awareness matters. Being able to articulate what is going on can change what is going on—at least in the long run.