

'U.S. power is always potentially a source for good in the world,' Perle believes. 'The contrast is with those who fear U.S. power.'

haps the key pro-war agitator is Richard Perle, known as the prince of darkness during the Reagan era for his harsh stand against arms control, who heads the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board, an influential advisory panel. Perle and Rumsfeld consult regularly and "have been very close on most of these issues over this rather long period of time," Perle told NEWSWEEK.

Last week, as Iraq stayed on the front burner, Bush complained about "a churning" in the media—a "frenzy," Rumsfeld interjected, stepping to the mike—over when an attack might take place. (The latest CW: not until next year.) The president's spokesman, Ari Fleischer, declared that the

media had "reached an absurd point of self-inflicted silliness." But the complaints were about a problem largely of their own making. Perle and Wolfowitz have pushed hard for an Iraq war almost since September 11, and Bush has said flatly several times in recent months that his policy is to remove Saddam. Rumsfeld told reporters earlier last week that Al Qaeda was being given harbor in Iraq, though that may have been hyped: intelligence officials tell NEWSWEEK that high-ranking operatives have not, in fact, turned Iraq into "a new sanctuary."

In truth, the "frenzy" of the moment is less over Iraq alone than the internecine war in the Republican Party, which is

reigniting old issues about U.S. engagement in the world that have simmered for 50 years. Some Republicans are eager to cast the debate over Iraq as a larger battle both for Bush's soul and for that of his party. "We haven't yet had a debate about America's role in the world. Maybe what Iraq is doing is bringing that all into sharp focus," says Susan Eisenhower, Ike's granddaughter and president of the Eisenhower Institute. She likens the emerging debate to the one the nation failed to have before Vietnam. "If we learned anything from Vietnam, it's that you'd better have the American people behind you if you send troops into harm's way."

Eisenhower says the Iraq debate has also reopened a very old rift in the GOP. She notes that this year is the 50th anniversary of her grandfather's election, which marked the end of the GOP's traditional isolationist stance. The Bush hawks, who declared their desire to scale down U.S. commitments to peacekeeping and nation-building during the 2000 campaign, have brought isolationism back "in a different form," she says. True, post-9-11 they are more globally minded, but their mixed message of forceful engagement, *si*, diplomacy, *no*, is a way of eating their cake and having it too—exercising global leadership, as America's dominant position demands, but remaining a nation apart, as old-style American conservatives have always sought. In terms of Iraq, she and other GOP moderates say, that means the Bush team has neglected to build an allied consensus for action—as Bush suggested he would do last week in Crawford more forcefully than he has in the past.

Bush's conciliatory comments—"Not only will we consult with friends and allies, we'll consult with members of Congress"—were the surest sign that the comments of Scowcroft and others had wounded him. And they marked a minor defeat for the "chicken hawks," as some of the moderates call those like Perle who've never served in uniform. "It is interesting to me that many of those who want to rush this country into war and think it would be so quick and easy don't know anything about war," said Sen. Chuck Hagel (a longtime Powell friend and fellow Vietnam vet). "They come at it from an intellectual perspective versus having sat in jungles or foxholes and watched their friends get their heads blown off. I try to speak for those ghosts of the past a little bit." Cheney, Wolfowitz and Perle all avoided Vietnam—Rums-

Bush's Ear

The Hawks

They've argued for more than a decade that Bush I and Clinton erred by not taking out Saddam, and are anxious to finish the job.

DONALD RUMSFELD

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

■ Rummy insists that now is the time to oust Saddam, and recently cited the yet-to-be confirmed presence of Al Qaeda in Iraq.



DICK CHENEY

VICE PRESIDENT

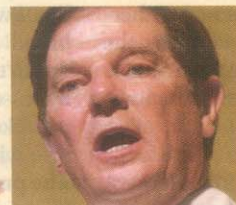
■ As Defense chief during the gulf war, the veep clashed with Powell's more cautious style. He's chomping at the bit to make up for lost time.



ELIOT COHEN

AUTHOR-PROFESSOR

■ The president revealed he was reading "Supreme Command"—which argues that war can't be left to the generals—by conservative academic Cohen.



REP. TOM DELAY

HOUSE MAJORITY WHIP

■ The Texas congressman slapped his Republican colleagues for criticizing military action in Iraq. Such naysayers, he said, are "dead wrong."



RICHARD PERLE

PENTAGON ADVISORY PANEL

■ The chair of the Pentagon Defense Policy Board (and an ex-Dem) is believed to be the most vociferous proponent of invading Iraq.



PAUL WOLFOWITZ

DEPUTY SEC. OF DEFENSE

■ Rumsfeld's No. 2 was the first senior Bush official after September 11 to begin beating the war drum on Iraq.

—KAREN YOURISH

