



# Circle in the Sand: Why We Went Back to Iraq

*Christian Alfonsi*

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**An important, massively researched and revelation-filled work of history that uncovers how decisions made by the first Bush White House preordained the current administration's decision to invade Iraq.**

"Is this a one-time thing, or should we foreshadow more to come?"

This was the prophetic question posed by National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft in a secret April 1991 memorandum about the postwar management of Iraq, two months after the United States had defeated Iraqi forces in Operation Desert Storm—but left Saddam Hussein securely in power. *Circle in the Sand* challenges the widely held notion that Saddam's survival was the result of a spur-of-the-moment decision by the first President Bush and his inner circle (especially the "Reluctant Warrior" Colin Powell) to call off the Desert Storm campaign "one day too soon."

Through interviews with the Bush team's principal decision makers—including President George H.W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Brent Scowcroft, and Paul Wolfowitz—as well as hundreds of never-before-revealed White House documents, Christian Alfonsi shows how Saddam's survival was the result of a calculated decision, albeit one with disastrous consequences, which had settled the issue of how the first Iraq war would end long before it even began. *Circle in the Sand* also provides the definitive account of the collapse of the first Bush administration's Iraq policy after the war.

Unprecedented in its detail about the decision making inside the Bush White House during the first Gulf War, *Circle in the Sand* provides not only a dramatic portrait of history in the making but also a compelling rationale for the United States' mishandling of the current situation in Iraq. Did we invade Iraq in 2003 to ensure that George W. Bush would not suffer an electoral fate in 2004 similar to his father's defeat in 1992? *Circle in the Sand* forces us to consider that disturbing scenario and its larger implications for the American war on terror.

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