

American Foreign Policy & The Muslim World

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Chapter Three

The Neo-Conservatives and American Foreign Policy

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Introduction

Stanley Hoffmann points out that President George W. Bush, first elected in November 2000,¹ by fewer than half the American voters, has an impressive but depressive record in office.² On one hand, his administration's record is impressive, because, according to many Americans, President Bush had reacted in a decisive and quick manner by invading Afghanistan and driving the Taliban - accused of sheltering the men and their leaders responsible for launching the 9/11 attacks, Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders - out of power in November 2001. On the other hand, the Bush administration's record is depressive due to controversies and mistakes committed by the Bush administration in the conduct of America's foreign policy since 9/11 especially the way the president has been conducting the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as part of his "war on terror."

In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, President George W. Bush called for and acquired sweeping powers to deal with threats of terrorism. His administration could now monitor phone calls, e-mail messages and bank transactions, carry out the secret searches of homes and detain aliens believed to pose a threat to national security. The adoption of the Patriot Act, according to various civil liberty groups like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), has curbed civil liberties, the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers, and restricted the access of foreign students to US schools and universities.³ In addition, Washington holds in its custody an unknown number of aliens and some American citizens treated as "enemy combatants," suspected but not indicted, whose access to hearings and lawyers has been denied.

More than five years since the launching of "war on terror"⁴ and driving of the Taliban out of power in Afghanistan, Osama bin Laden - accused of planning and executing the 9/11 attacks - and his Deputy of al-Qaeda, Al-Zawahiri,⁵ still remain at large. The Taliban are on the rise again in Afghanistan, where reconstruction of the nation remains at a slow pace and democracy, at best, remains very fragile. Since the 9/11 attacks, the United States has not experienced any further terrorist attacks on its territory. According to John Mueller, this is so, not because of the success of the Bush administration's counter insurgency efforts but because of the fact that "almost no terrorists exist in the United States and few have the means or the inclination to strike from abroad."⁶ Adding to Washington's foreign policy woes Muslims are not convinced that the aim of



Washington's "war on terror" is to protect the Americans from further terrorist attacks. According to an opinion poll conducted by *WorldPublicOpinion.Org*, only 12% of Egyptians, Pakistanis, Indonesians, and Moroccans polled believe in American claims that the "war on terror" is aimed to provide protection against any future attacks on the United States.⁷ The same poll revealed that more than 70% of Muslims surveyed believe that the aim of the "war on terror" is to weaken and divide the Islamic world.⁸ In spite of American effort, al-Qaeda remains active in Afghanistan, and according to some reports, in neighbouring Pakistan and elsewhere as well. The "war on terror" has not been able to change the mixed feelings of Muslims about al-Qaeda and its leader Osama bin Laden. While on average, only three in ten viewed Osama positively, many respondents expressed mixed feelings about Osama and his followers, and many others declined to answer, according to *WorldPublicOpinion.org*.⁹

Iraq remains gripped deep in violence since the American-led military invasion and occupation in March 2003. The failure to find the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and the lack of any credible evidence to support the alleged links between the regime of President Saddam Hussein and leaders of al-Qaeda, indicate the near-bankruptcy of America's Iraq War policy. The continued violence in Iraq, which so far has seen the deaths of nearly half a million Iraqi civilians and has led to four million of them seeking shelter in other Middle East countries, signals a mockery of Washington's "Operation Iraqi Freedom." By invading Iraq, the Bush administration created a self-fulfilling prophecy: Iraq has now replaced Afghanistan as a magnet, a training ground and an operational base for jihadist terrorists, with plenty of American targets to shoot at.¹⁰

From the end of World War II to the 9/11 attacks, in its conduct of foreign policy, the US has relied heavily on the principle of realism but this had not prevented Washington in the past from relying on multilateralism instead of the current administration's emphasis on a go-it-alone policy and the use of force over the use of diplomacy. How does one explain such shifts in American foreign policy since 9/11? How does anyone account for the recent changes in the foreign policy of the US? Is President Bush himself responsible for all these changes? If he did not act alone, then who else are behind the current foreign policy in Washington? What kind of ideology do they believe in? What are the foreign policy objectives of these decision-makers in the US?

Many scholars believe that the foreign policy of the Bush administration is influenced by the thoughts of a group of intellectuals and activists known as the neo-conservatives. This chapter, first of all, discusses the views of such scholars. Then the main principles of neo-conservatism is analysed. In the third part of this chapter some of the activists of neo-conservatism are identified and their impact on the Bush administration's foreign policy analysed.

Views of Academics on the Role of Neo-Conservatives

It has long been discussed whether the neo-conservatives have influenced Bush administration's foreign policy, in particular, its policy towards the Middle East. Max Boot, a neo-conservative intellectual flatly rejects the suggestion that the Bush administration is pursuing a neo-conservative foreign policy.¹¹ He is also of the opinion that it is too early to say that failure in Iraq has discredited the neo-conservatives. However, as the Iraq War continued and a debate on the conduct of the war erupted inside the American political domain, many intellectuals have found a remarkable relationship between Bush's policy and the policy recommendations of the neo-conservatives.¹² It must be pointed out here that the views of the neo-conservatives are unrepresentative of either the American population or the mainstream foreign policy establishment in Washington. The neo-conservatives readily admit that their enterprise is an elitist one; they have no intention of reaching the vast majority of people directly.¹³ But what they hope to achieve is to create opinions on varieties of issues that reflect the neo-conservatives' point of view. They use journals, newspapers, magazines, radio and TV shows to reach opinion-makers and policy-makers.¹⁴ President Bush inducted some well-known neo-conservatives into his administration. He did not forget Washington think tanks which are part of the neo-conservative group. In 2005 as many as 26 researchers from the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) were part of the Bush administration.

The power and influence of the neo-conservatives in Washington have fluctuated with the American fortunes in Iraq. Fukuyama describes the fortune of the neo-conservatives in the following manner:

As Operation Iraqi freedom degenerated from a triumphant liberation to a grinding occupation and guerrilla war, the neo-conservatives found themselves on the defensive... The neoconservatives regained their position after the January 30, 2005, Iraq elections but lost it again as the insurgency continued.¹⁵

President Bush's rejection of the Iraq Study Group's all 79 policy recommendations, and his acceptance of the AEI's proposal for deployment of extra-troops in Baghdad is perhaps the last hope for the neo-conservatives to stage a comeback.¹⁶ Under this policy additional 22,000 American troops are being deployed in Baghdad as part of new security plan to counter the violence in the country.

A string of experts on American foreign policy, including self-confessed neo-conservatives, admit that the post-9/11 US foreign policy, in particular, Washington's Afghanistan and Iraq policy are influenced by the neo-conservatives. G. Schmitt,¹⁷ Elizabeth Drew,¹⁸ J. Clarke and S. Harper,¹⁹



M. Hirsh²⁰ and L. F. Kaplan and W. Kristol,²¹ have forcefully explained the influence of neo-conservatives on the Bush administration's foreign policy. As Steven Hurst, himself a critic of the paradigm of neo-conservative influence on American foreign policy, admits, even key neo-conservatives such as Richard Perle and William Kristol assert that George W. Bush is following neo-conservative ideas on issue after issue and that Bush's is basically a neo-con foreign policy.²²

Robert Gilpin has no doubt that American foreign policy actions, in particular the 2003 American attack against Iraq were engineered by two powerful groups within the Bush administration - the ultra-nationalists and the neo-conservatives.²³ According to Robert Gilpin the ultra-nationalists' motive was to gain control of the oil reserves in the Middle East and elsewhere in the region in order to gain and sustain American global primacy.²⁴ While the neo-conservatives shared this objective, they also wanted a radical restructuring of geopolitical relations in the area in order to promote the long-term security of Israel.²⁵ Michael T. Klare is in agreement with Gilpin's contention that Washington's Iraq War policy is oil-driven, not only for itself but also for its allies.²⁶ Klare refers to the neoconservatives as the empire builders and accuses them of building a new empire in the 21st century. However, he warns of the price to be paid for such an endeavour:

...there will also be a price to pay [for building an empire]. Empires tend to require the militarization of society, and that will mean increased spending on war and reduced spending on education and other domestic needs. It will also entail more secrecy and government intrusion into the private lives of American citizens. All this has to be entered into the equation. And the answer to this question has to be no: the construction and maintenance of empire are not worth the price.²⁷

Robert Kagan adds another dimension to "oil-for-money" theory. He argues that Americans are martial and are therefore, different from Europeans who according to him are pacifists.²⁸ He contends, therefore, Americans had no qualms about going to war against Iraq in 2003. However, his arguments are not supported by the 2000 presidential election results. In those elections, a majority of the American electorate voted either for the Democratic candidate Al Gore or the consumer crusader Ralph Nader. Were not for the over-representation of sparsely populated, right-wing states, the presidential college and the Senate, the White House and the Senate then would be controlled by Democrats, whose views and values, on everything from war to the welfare state, are very close to those of Western Europeans.²⁹

Principles of Neo-Conservatism

The term “neo-conservative” is applied broadly to a prominent group of largely Jewish and Catholic intellectuals in the United States. These intellectuals, formerly associated either with the left or liberal spectrum of the American polity, have now moved towards a more conservative direction. This group has had a considerable influence upon intellectual debate in America, and made an important contribution to the return of conservative ideas to the realm of intellectual responsibility.³⁰ Though small in number, they include some well-known names in academia and journalism. The central figure of neo-conservatism (often called the godfather) is Irving Kristol. He is joined in varying degree by other prominent intellectuals such as Daniel Bell, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Seymour Martin Lipset, Michael Novak, Walter Lacquer, James Nuechterlein, Ben Wattenburg, Norman Podhoretz, Francis Fukuyama (defected from the group), William Kristol, Charles Krauthammer, Nathan Glazer and James Q. Wilson. Irving Kristol, described Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan as the 20th century “heroes” of the neo-cons.³¹

No one has been able to provide a satisfactory definition of the term neo-conservatism. Seymour Martin Lipset asserts that neo-conservatism is not a set of doctrines to which a given group of adherents subscribed. Rather, as he points out, it was invented as an invidious label to undermine political opponents, most of whom have been unhappy with being so described.³² Neo-conservatives such as Irving Kristol, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Marvin Lasky were exposed to Trotskyism as students at the City College of New York in the late 1930s. With Daniel Bell as their comrade, they operated out of Alcove One of City College cafeteria. Opposed to them were the Stalinists housed in Alcove Two of the cafeteria. It should be mentioned here that the Stalinists outnumbered the Trotskyites on the City College campus. Led by Irving Kristol, even at that early stage, the neo-cons thrived by arguing with the Left. In the early 1940s, the neo-conservatives abandoned socialism. They were convinced that “at the roots of even the most basic issues are interlocking social structures and historically informed moral ideas”³³ and blamed “a timid, naïve, and desiccated liberalism.”³⁴ Therefore, it is not surprising that since the early 1950s neo-conservatives have chastised liberalism for the same failures - ignoring the complexity of human action and the wisdom of human systems, a lack of resolve in confronting evil, a laissez-faire attitude toward human virtue, and an unwillingness to defend the critical ideas of American civilisation from its discontents.³⁵ Mark Gerson points out that in the past several years, the neo-conservatives have perceived a moral decline fuelled by a militant secularism pervading the culture.³⁶ In order



to re-assert public virtue, the neo-conservatives have turned to the source of those values-religion.³⁷ This explains the dovetailing of interests between the neo-conservatives and the fundamentalist Christian groups during both Bush administrations.

Mark Gerson identifies the following as the main principles of neo-conservatism:

1. Life is infinitely complex.
2. Man can be good, but man can also be evil.
3. Man is a social animal.
4. Ideas rule the world.

Although the above-mentioned principles are useful as part of a framework to investigate American society, these are inadequate to be used to explain American foreign policy under the watch of President George W. Bush. However, the principles of neo-conservatism as identified by Francis Fukuyama are directly related to American foreign policy. Fukuyama identifies the following as the principles of neo-conservatism:

1. A concern with democracy, human rights, and more generally the internal politics of states;
2. A belief that US power can be used for moral purposes;
3. A scepticism about the ability of international law and institutions to solve serious security problems; and finally
4. A view that ambitious social engineering often leads to unexpected consequences and undermines its own ends.³⁸

Neo-conservatives are generally disdainful of a long tradition of American foreign policy - overlooking the nature of foreign governments as long as they serve the “national interests” of the United States. This is the result, as has been pointed out earlier in the chapter, of the domination of the “realist school” of international relations on American foreign policy. The realists have long argued that American national interest is best served by not intervening in the internal affairs of “friendly” foreign states. As a result of this policy, Washington long supported military and dictatorial regimes in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and East and Southeast Asia. This policy also explains Washington’s containment policy against the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China. Neo-conservatives’ belief in the importance of the internal characters of regimes led them to support President Reagan when he dubbed the Soviet Union as an “evil empire.” The neo-conservatives also supported Congressmen to oppose President Clinton’s policy of granting China

a permanent Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status in trade because of Beijing's poor record on democratic reforms and human rights. They also opposed President Clinton's scheduled visit to China in July 1998 on grounds that his visit would lend support to China's repressive policies at home

According to Fukuyama the second principle of neo-conservatism is the use of American power for moral purposes. Liberals also believe in the use of American power - that's how the US got trapped in Vietnam. But as the neo-conservatives saw it American power was deployed there simply to stop communist aggression and not to liberate an oppressed people. When the Warsaw Pact countries overthrew their Communist regimes, and the Soviet Union dissolved, many neo-conservatives thought that the realists had been wrong: liberation was a legitimate and attainable goal of foreign policy.³⁹ After 9/11, the new liberationist mission to the US was clear for the neo-conservatives. It was now time to use American power to "liberate" the "oppressed" people of Afghanistan and Iraq and bring about democratic changes in other parts of the Middle East.

Neo-conservatives have long been dismissive of the liberal notion that international law and institutions are good for maintaining security and justice in international relations. In particular, they have been hostile to the United Nations, since as they point out, the organisation is based on wrong principles. According to the neo-conservatives, when everyone is obliged to pretend that all states are equally worthy of respect, moral authority becomes impossible.

Fukuyama identifies the fourth principle of neo-conservatism as a "distrust of ambitious social engineering projects." This is based on their view that there was a connection between Great Society liberalism of the 1960s and the socialist belief in social engineering. Therefore, the neo-conservatives are against the policy of nation-building. But the events in post-invasion Iraq would move too fast and ultimately force the Bush administration towards nation building. Charles Krauthammer justifies this as the policy of "democratic realism" that calls for such actions only in those states considered vital to American strategic interests.

Until 2002, Fukuyama was closely identified with the neo-conservative movement and its related Project for a New American Century (PNAC). He was a signatory to a number of PNAC public statements, including one published in 1998. In it, the signatories accused President Clinton of having capitulated to Saddam Hussein and called on Washington in doing everything necessary to remove him from power.⁴⁰ On 20 September 2001, Fukuyama signed another public PNAC letter declaring, "even if evidence does not link Iraq directly to



the attacks, any strategy aiming at the eradication of terrorism and its sponsors must include a determined effort to remove Saddam Hussein from power.”⁴¹ This statement also called for the “war on terror” to target Hizbullah, and for the US to demand “that Iran and Syria immediately cease all military, financial, and political support for Hizbullah and its operations.” If they refuse, the PNAC letter advised the Bush administration “should consider appropriate measures of retaliation against these known state sponsors of terrorism.”⁴² As Anatol Lieven points out “this document was an early introduction to all the key strategic errors later committed by the Bush administration in the war on terror.”⁴³

Why did Fukuyama break away from his neo-conservative friends like Charles Krauthammer, Paul Wolfowitz, Albert Wohlstetter, Alan Bloom, Irving Kristol and William Kristol? Francis Fukuyama himself provides the answer. In 2002, he was asked to participate in a study on terrorism, and it was at that point that he “finally decided the war didn’t make any sense” and the study gave him “an opportunity to think through many of the issues,” as he wrote in *America at the Crossroads*.⁴⁴

On 10 February 2004, Charles Krauthammer gave the annual Irving Kristol address at the AEI in Washington. The Lecture was titled “Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World.” His lecture was aimed at defending the Bush administration’s Iraq policy and he supported Washington’s policies of unilateralism and pre-emption in Iraq. He identified the “Arab/Islamic radicalism” as the new existential threat to the United States. He compared the war that the United States should fight against this entity to the war against Fascist Germany and Japan - a war committed to the eradication of deadly and evil culture.⁴⁵ Fukuyama was among the audience listening to his lecture. He was troubled by not only what Krauthammer said but also the support Krauthammer received from the audience. To Fukuyama it was obvious that the policies of unipolarity and pre-emption did not work quite successfully in Iraq, yet Krauthammer presented Iraq as a unqualified success. Fukuyama’s response to Krauthammer’s speech was published in the form of an article in the summer 2004 issue of the *National Interest*.⁴⁶ In his article Fukuyama announced that neo-conservatism had evolved into a set of views he could no longer support. Krauthammer’s response to Fukuyama’s piece was published in the Fall 2004 issue of the *National Interest*.⁴⁷ Here, he dubbed the Bush-Blair policy as “democratic globalism” and proposed that policies of unilateralism and pre-emption be re-defined by means of the following doctrine:

Democratic realism is targeted, focused, and limited, that intervenes not only where it counts - in those regions where the defence or advancement of freedom is critical to success in the larger war against

the existential enemy... Today it is Arab/Islamic radicalism. Therefore, where it really counts today is that Islamic crescent stretching from North Africa to Afghanistan.⁴⁸

On 11, 12, and 18 April 2005, Fukuyama delivered the Castle Lectures at Yale University. In his lectures, Fukuyama provided detailed counter-response to Krauthammer's response to his *National Interest* article. In his Castle Lectures Fukuyama expanded his criticism of the Bush administration and proposed a new approach to American foreign policy, which he called "realistic Wilsonianism." Those lectures have been expanded and published as *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power and the Neoconservative Legacy*.

According to Anatol Lieven, in the book Fukuyama accurately identified three main areas of biased judgement with regard to Iraq on the part of the administration and its neo-conservative supporters: exaggerated threat assessment; indifference to international public opinion, leading to underestimation of the damage that the global backlash against the war would do to the American interests; and "wild over optimism" concerning America's ability to pacify, reconstruct and reshape Iraq after the initial conquest.⁴⁹ It was all these that led to Fukuyama's break with the neo-conservatives.

The Neo-Conservatives' Views on American Foreign Policy

In this section we identify some key neo-conservative intellectuals and activists who directly or indirectly were part of the Bush presidency and analyse their views on a number of issues affecting American foreign policy. This is needed to establish the linkages between their views and the foreign policy pursued by the Bush administration. An attempt will also be made to examine their views since they left the Bush administration to demonstrate that some of those neo-cons have not changed their minds and in spite of America's quagmire in Iraq and Afghanistan, neo-cons like Richard Perle, David Frum and Joshua Muravchik continue to talk about building democracy by force and support for military action against Iran and sanctions against North Korea. However, before the task is undertaken to scrutinise the individual views of some key neo-conservative intellectuals and activists, it would be useful to describe the neo-conservative vision of world order that is shared by all of them.

G. John Ikenberry describes neo-conservatism as "new fundamentalism" and defines the following four convictions of the kind of world the neo-conservatives aim to build:⁵⁰



First, the United States should increasingly stand aloof from the rest of the world and use its unipolar power - most importantly, its military power - to arbitrate right and wrong and enforce the peace.

Second, the new fundamentalists argue that military power - and the willingness to use it robustly in pursuit of the national interest - must be returned to the centre of American foreign policy.

Third, new fundamentalists are frustrated with the entangling rules and institutions of liberal institutionalism. They advocate pulling back from treaties and international agreements that jeopardise American sovereignty and constrain the exercise of power.

Fourth, the new fundamentalists also incorporate Wilsonian ideas into their vision in urging the spread of democracy.⁵¹

Elizabeth Drew⁵² identifies the following as the neo-conservatives associated, either as officials or some other capacity, with the Bush administration: Richard Perle, who resigned his position as Chairman of the Defence Policy Board as criticism grew in the US as American troops began to receive casualties at the initial stages of the war in Iraq; Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy-Secretary of Defence in the first Bush administration, and currently serving as the President of World Bank, Douglas Feith, the Undersecretary of Defence for Policy in the first Bush administration, I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby, the former Chief of Staff of Vice-President Dick Cheney, Stephen Hadley, who worked as the Deputy National Security Advisor in the first Bush administration and is currently serving as National Security Advisor to President George W. Bush, John Bolton, former Ambassador to the UN and Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control in the first Bush administration. Vice President Dick Cheney and former Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld are well-known for their support of the hawkish views of the neo-conservatives on Iraq.

The neo-conservative intellectuals and their allies, in their years out of power before the 2000 election, had proposed a foreign policy agenda involving concepts like regime change, benevolent hegemony, unipolarity, pre-emption, and American exceptionalism that came to be hallmarks of the Bush administration’s foreign policy.⁵³ A number of works have been published by neo-conservative intellectuals that provide a fascinating view of the kind of foreign policy they would like to see the United States follow.

In 1991 an important element in what would become neo-conservative foreign policy was laid down in a book by Joshua Muravchik.⁵⁴ Muravchik argued that democracy should be brought to other countries. Such an approach had worked in post-war Germany and Japan, and both because it would improve people’s lives and because it would make America safer, a new world order was needed, made over in America’s own image.⁵⁵



The goal of pre-eminence was made clear as early as in 1992, when a document written by Paul Wolfowitz, the Under-Secretary of Defence for Policy in President George H. W. Bush's administration was leaked. In this document Wolfowitz argued that the first objective of American foreign policy was to prevent the dominance of a region by a hostile power. Though Bush Sr. administration's foreign policy was far less ambitious, the basis of such a policy was laid down by him.

William Kristol and Robert Kagan provide a vision of neo-conservative foreign policy in an article published in *Foreign Affairs*,⁵⁶ which will be briefly discussed later in this section; Robert Kagan offers a spirited defence of American hegemony in an article published in *Foreign Policy*,⁵⁷ Donald Kagan and Frederick Kagan in a book published in 2000 warned of major dangers abroad for the US;⁵⁸ and John Lewis Gaddis analysed the Bush administration's 2002 National Security Strategy in a *Foreign Policy* article.⁵⁹

Francis Fukuyama points out that the interventionist, democracy-promoting position that has come to be seen as the essence of neo-conservatism is the product of William Kristol and Robert Kagan.⁶⁰ In a 1996 *Foreign Affairs* (later expanded into a book *Present Dangers*, published in 2000)⁶¹ article they called for "benevolent hegemony" under American leadership. Under this policy Washington should aim at "...resisting, and where possible undermining, rising dictators and hostile ideologies; ... supporting American interests and liberal democratic principles; and... providing assistance to those struggling against the more extreme manifestations of human evil."⁶²

This was supposed to be at the core of a neo-Reaganite foreign policy based on Wilsonian principles. But as Fukuyama rightly points out it was Wilsonianism minus international institutions.⁶³ In place of international institutions, Kristol and Kagan emphasized three tools for projecting US influence: overwhelming military superiority; a renewed dedication to US alliances, and missile defence as a means of protecting the American homeland from counterattack.⁶⁴ Kristol and Kagan explicitly called for regime change as part of a neo-Reaganite foreign policy. They called for regime change not only in Iraq, North Korea and Iran but also for China. According to them it was a mistake for the American troops not to remove Saddam Hussein from power during the 1991 Gulf War.

Before the 2000 elections, some non-neo-con intellectuals, some of whom would later play important roles in a future Bush administration, took positions on foreign policy issues that closely resembled those of the neo-cons. One of them was Condoleezza Rice. Following George W. Bush's controversial elections in 2000, she was appointed the National Security Advisor to the president. She



took over as the Secretary of State in George Bush's second administration following his re-election in 2004.

In a 2000 *Foreign Affairs* article she laid down the main principles of a Republican President's foreign policy.⁶⁵ In her article, she emphasised that a change in US foreign policy had to begin with a clear realisation that the United States was in a remarkable position both economically and militarily. She argued that Washington would need to use this unique position to protect not only America's national interests and but also those of its allies.

Condoleezza Rice identified the following as priorities of a future Republican administration following the 2000 elections:

- To ensure that America's military can deter war, project power, and fight in defence of its interests if deterrence fails.
- To promote economic growth and political openness by extending free trade and a stable international monetary system to all committed to those principles, including to the western hemisphere, which has too often been neglected as a vital area of US national interest.
- To renew strong and intimate relationships with allies who share American values and can thus share the burden of promoting peace, prosperity, and freedom.
- To focus US energies on comprehensive relationships with the big powers, particularly Russia and China, that can and will mould the character of the international political system.
- To deal decisively with the threat of rogue regimes and hostile powers, which is increasingly taking the forms of the potential for terrorism and the WMD.⁶⁶

The above quotation provides a unique peek into the kind of policy Rice preferred for the Republican administration. First of all, Rice did not leave any doubt about the unilateral use of American military power to protect its national interests. Second, although she indicated her willingness to continue with Clinton administration's policy of world-wide expansion of free trade, she made it very clear that it needed to be done carefully and certainly not at the cost of American national interest. Third, she recognised the importance of strategic cooperation with Russia and China but echoing the views of the neo-conservatives the newly elected Bush administration replaced Clinton administration's policy of "strategic cooperation" with that of "strategic competition." The Chinese leadership did not hide their displeasure at Washington's new "China policy." Fourth, Rice, just like the neo-conservative intellectuals, called for regime change by using

military force. She explicitly called for the removal of President Saddam Hussein from power. Rice justified his removal from power in the following way:

Nothing will change until Saddam is gone,
so the United States must mobilize whatever
resources it can, including support from his
opposition, to remove him.⁶⁷

The Bush administration would later make it as one of the central features of Washington's foreign policy and with the help of exiled Iraqi leaders in Washington; Saddam Hussein was removed from power in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq.

Just like the neo-conservatives, Rice was critical of Clinton administration's attachment to international agreements and described the pursuit of norms of international behaviour as "symbolic" and "illusory."⁶⁸ She did not believe that the United States needed to sign up to what she termed as "every convention and agreement that someone thinks to propose."⁶⁹ Given her comments, it is, therefore understandable that President Bush withdrew the US from the Kyoto Protocol, refused to sign the agreement setting up the International Criminal Court, although Washington was one of its prime movers. She was emphatic in pointing out that it was a disaster for America to engage in a debate between being a realist and conforming to norms and values.⁷⁰ Echoing the views of many neo-conservatives, she decided that American national values are in fact, universal values.⁷¹ Rice also shares the neo-con concern over America's role in nation building. She believes that American military is "most certainly not designed to build a civilian society."⁷² In a major reversal, that's exactly what the American military forces are trying to do in Iraq.

Richard Perle once served as an Assistant Secretary of Defence during the Reagan administration. In spite of the fact that this was his only government position he ever held, Elizabeth Drew notes, Perle has had tremendous influence over the Bush administration's Iraq policy.⁷³ Perhaps, this can be explained by the fact that he was part of a closely-related group of neo-conservatives within the Bush administration. Although Max Boot summarily rejects the idea of existence of a well-funded, well-organised neo-conservative cabal,⁷⁴ Drew meticulously maps the existence of a well-knit group of neo-conservatives within the Bush administration.⁷⁵ For example, Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defence and his Deputy Paul Wolfowitz set up an intelligence group under Abram Schulsky and Douglas Feith, the Under-Secretary of Defence, both old friends of Wolfowitz. The public face of this group is the Defence Policy Board, on which Perle was invited to serve as its Chairman. As early 1987, when he was no longer with the Pentagon, Perle had openly called for the overthrow



of President Saddam Hussein. He continued to harp this tune and played an important role in shaping the Bush administration's Iraq policy.

Known as the "Prince of Darkness" because of his opposition to arms control agreement during his tenure as Assistant Secretary of Defence, Richard Perle is a strong supporter of the right-wing Israeli leaders, and serves on the board of the company that owns the pro-Likud *Jerusalem Post*. He along with Douglas Feith wrote a paper for Binyamin Netanyahu, the then leader of Israel's Likud Bloc. Titled a "Clean Break," in this paper they recommended that Israel break away from the Oslo peace process. They described Israel's claim to the occupied lands as legitimate and noble, and claimed that only the unconditional acceptance by Arabs of Israeli rights can be a basis for the future.

Unrepentant for the failed Iraq policy, Richard Perle continues to push his neo-conservative agenda. In 2003 Richard Perle and David Frum (he coined the term "the axis of evil"), the former speech writer of President George W. Bush, published *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror*.⁷⁶ They described the invasion of Iraq as an "enormous risk"⁷⁷ but they expressed no regrets whatsoever for the invasion of Iraq. On the contrary, according to them, America's invasion of Iraq taught a convincing lesson to the enemies of the US. They strongly insist on the nuclear disarmament of North Korea and Iran. They have harsh words for Iran's government. According to them, the Iranian government is not to be regarded as legitimate, and echoing their Iraq policy, they suggest Washington support Iranian dissidents ostensibly to oust the Iranian government from power.

Perle and Frum say they are not against a Palestinian mini-state, but it has to be disarmed and neutralised and headed by a non-extremist president.⁷⁸ They call for the "crushing" of terrorism before such a state is allowed to come into being because they do not believe that a Palestinian mini-state could end terrorism. They emphasise that force can still be used to build democracy in the Middle East. They continue to show their disdain for the United Nations and argue that America should not accept its jurisdiction unless the Charter is amended.

Conclusion

The question may now be raised as to the future viability of the neo-conservative movement after the American debacle in Iraq and the public humiliation of key neo-conservatives and their allies in the Bush administration. Neo-cons are hated in Washington for their destabilising foreign policy. The situation in Iraq confirms that their embrace of military power as a policy has been a disaster. Their rationale for going to war against Iraq - the presence of WMD, and Baghdad's links with al-Qaeda - turned out to be wrong. The policy of "surge" is nothing but a desperate response to the failed policy of building democracy by power. *The Economist*, lists the failure of the neo-cons in the following way:

...neo-cons have been discredited for ideological reasons. Most of the recent mistakes can be traced back not just to flawed execution but to flawed thinking. The neo-cons argued that democracy might be an antidote to the Middle East problems: but democracy proved too delicate a plant. They claimed that the assertion of American power might wipe out "Vietnam syndrome": but it has ended up America more reluctant to intervene abroad. They talked about linking American power with American ideals: but it turned out, at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, that power can corrupt those ideals.⁷⁹

There can be no doubt that the neo-conservative movement has lost its shine after public humiliation of key neo-cons and their allies. Donald Rumsfeld was forced to leave the Pentagon after he was accused of the responsibility for the defeat of the Republicans in the 2006 Congressional elections. Paul Wolfowitz, a key architect of the Iraq War is hanging on to his job as the World Bank president by tethers; Lewis "Scooter" Libby, the one time powerful chief of staff of Vice President Dick Cheney is facing prison term; Douglas Feith, who worked with Wolfowitz at the Pentagon, is now what *The Economist* describes as "floating around the margins of academia."⁸⁰ It may be too early to predict the "death" of neo-conservatism. But it seems very clear that its future role in shaping American foreign policy would be restricted.



Endnotes

- ¹ George W. Bush was re-elected in the 2004 presidential election for a second four year term.
- ² Stanley Hoffmann, "America Goes Back," *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 50, No. 10 (12 June 2002): 1.
- ³ For an excellent discussion on the impact of 9/11 on civil liberties in the US and calls for military action abroad see: Martin Durham, "The American Right and the Framing of 9/11," *The Political Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 75, No. 1 (January 2004): 17-25.
- ⁴ Much used by President Bush, the term "war on terror" is viewed by many Muslims as "war on Islam." In spite of Bush's continued use of this term Britain, America's chief ally, is rapidly backpedaling on the use of "war on terror" because the British establishment now views this term as ill-defined, over simplistic and excessively martial and Manichaeian. Hilary Benn, the Blair government's international development secretary told a New York think tank, "In [Britain], we do not use the phrase 'war on terror' because we can't win by military means alone and because this isn't us against one organized enemy with a clear identity and a coherent set of objectives." For details see: Mark Rice-Oxley, "British Shed 'War on Terror' Language," *The Christian Science Monitor Newspaper* (18 April 2007). <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0418/p04s01-woeu.htm>. Initially, the "war on terror" was not considered a war by the Bush administration. Jonathan Raban points out that in the immediate aftermath of September 11, the attacks were spoken of, like the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre, or the bombing of the Alfred T. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995, as acts of criminal atrocity for which those who were responsible could, the President said, "be brought to justice." However, within nine days after 9/11 the war on terror was under way. At the joint session of Congress on 20 September 2001, Bush described it as a new brand of war, "unlike any other we have ever known." The US accused the Taliban government in Afghanistan for sheltering the al-Qaeda leaders and demanded the Taliban hand over Osama bin Laden and other leaders of al-Qaeda. The Taliban refused. In November 2001, the US invaded Afghanistan, and forced the Taliban government out of power. However, Afghanistan in 2007 remains further away from the kind of peace that everybody had hoped for. The continuous deaths and destruction and the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan raise questions about the reliability of the whole American strategy in that country. For details see: Jonathan Raban, "The Truth About Terrorism," *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (13 January 2005). Timothy J. Lynch argues that presently only American neo-conservatism, despite its variations, and despite some obvious flaws, offers tenable prescriptions for regime destabilisation and an attendant political liberalisation of Arab politics. For details see: Timothy J. Lynch, "Kristol Balls: Neoconservative Visions of Islam and the Middle East," *International Politics Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (March 2008): 182-211.
- ⁵ For a good analysis of Al Zawahir's life see: Montasser Al-Zayyat (translated by Ahmed Fekry), *The Road to Al-Qaeda: The Story of Bin Laden's Right-Hand Man* (London: Pluto Press, 2004).
- ⁶ John Mueller, "Is There Still A Terrorist Threat? The Myth of Omnipresent Enemy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 5 (September/October 2006): 2.
- ⁷ *New Straits Times Newspaper* (25 April 2007): 35.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ Francis Fukuyama, "After Neoconservatism," *The New York Times Newspaper* (19 February 2006).
- ¹¹ Max Boot, "Think Again: The Neocons," *Foreign Policy* (January/February 2004): 20-28. For a history of neo-conservatism see: John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism: Intellectuals and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1994* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1995); and Gary Dorrien, *The Neoconservative Mind: Politics, Culture, and the War of Ideology* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1993).

- ¹² Joshua Muravchik, a self-confessed neo-conservative, points out, "... it is true that our ideas have influenced the policies of President George W. Bush, as they did those of President Ronald Reagan. That does feel good." Joshua Muravchik, "Urgent: Operation Comeback," *Foreign Policy* (November/December 2006): 64.
- ¹³ Mark Gerson, *The Neoconservative Vision: From the Cold War to Culture Wars* (Lanham, Maryland: Madison Books, 1997): 5.
- ¹⁴ This is based on Mark Gerson's description of the neo-conservatives' methods of reaching the American public, see: *Ibid.*: 5-6.
- ¹⁵ Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2006): 8.
- ¹⁶ The bipartisan Iraq Study Group formed by President George W. Bush to advise him warned the President against the introduction of any more American troops in Iraq. The group had forty-nine recommendations for the President none of which was accepted by him. For details see: *The Iraq Study Group Report: the Way Forward - a New Approach* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006).
- ¹⁷ G. Schmitt, "A Case of Continuity: One Year On: Power, Purpose and Strategy in American Foreign Policy," *The National Interest Journal*, Vol. 69 (2002): 11-13.
- ¹⁸ Elizabeth Drew, "The Neocons in Power," *The New York Review of Books* (12 June 2003): 20-23.
- ¹⁹ J. Clarke and S. Harper, *America Alone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- ²⁰ M. Hirsh, "Neocons on the Line: Welcome to the Real World," *Newsweek* (23 June 2003): 28-31.
- ²¹ Lawrence Kaplan and William Kristol, *The War Over Iraq: Saddam's Tyranny and America's Mission* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2003).
- ²² Steven Hurst, "Myths of Neoconservatism: George W. Bush's 'Neo-Conservative' Foreign Policy revisited," *International Politics*, Vol. 42 (2005): 75-76.
- ²³ Robert Gilpin, "War Is Too Important to Be Left to Ideological Amateurs," *International Relations Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2005): 5-18.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ Michael T. Klare, "For Oil and Empire? Rethinking War with Iraq," *Current History Journal*, Vol. 102, No. 662 (March 2003): 129-135.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*: 135.
- ²⁸ For details see: Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004).
- ²⁹ Michael Lind, "How Neo-Conservatives Conquered Washington and Launched a War," in: www.salon.com (accessed on 31 July 2003).
- ³⁰ Nigel Ashford, *New Conservatism and the New Class: A Critical Evaluation* (London: Libertarian Alliance, 1986): 2.
- ³¹ Irving Kristol, *The New Conservative Persuasion: 2* (available on www.aei.org, posted on 20 August 2003).
- ³² Seymour Martin Lipset, "Neoconservatism: Myth and Reality," *Society* (July/August 1988): 29.
- ³³ Mark Gerson, *op. cit.*: 22.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*: 23.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸ Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*: 4-5. These principles were mentioned by Fukuyama in his "After Neoconservatism," *The New York Times* (19 February 2006).



- ³⁹ Louis Menand, "Breaking Away: Francis Fukuyama and the Neoconservatives," *The New Yorker Magazine* (27 March 2006), available at: http://newyorker.com/archive/2006/03/27/060327crbo_books?printable=true, accessed on 27/4/2007.
- ⁴⁰ "An Open Letter to President Clinton: Remove Saddam Hussein from Power," in Micah L. Sifry and Christopher Cerf (eds.), *The Iraq War Reader: History, Documents, Opinions* (New York: Touchstone Books, 2003): 199-201.
- ⁴¹ "An Open Letter to President Bush: Lead the World to Victory," in Micah L. Sifry and Christopher Cerf (eds.), *The Iraq War Reader: History, Documents, Opinions* (New York: Touchstone Books, 2003): 223.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ Anatol Lieven, "Two Fukuyamas," *The National Interest*, No. 84 (Summer 2006): 124.
- ⁴⁴ Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads*: X.
- ⁴⁵ Louis Menand, *op. cit.*
- ⁴⁶ Francis Fukuyama, "The Neo-conservative Moment," *The National Interest*, No. 76 (Summer 2004): 57-68.
- ⁴⁷ Charles Krauthammer, "In Defence of Democratic Realism," *The National Interest*, No. 78 (Fall 2004): 15-25.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: 16.
- ⁴⁹ Anatol Lieven, *op. cit.*: 124.
- ⁵⁰ G. John Ikenberry, "The End of Neo-Conservative Moment," *Survival*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Spring 2004): 8-10.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵² Elizabeth Drew, *op. cit.*: 21.
- ⁵³ Francis Fukuyama, *America At the Crossroads*: 3.
- ⁵⁴ Joshua Muravchik, *Exporting Democracy: Fulfilling America's Destiny* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1991).
- ⁵⁵ Martin Durham, "The American Right and the Iraq War," *The Political Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 3 (July 2004): 258.
- ⁵⁶ William Kristol and Robert Kagan, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (July/August 1996): 18-32.
- ⁵⁷ Robert Kagan, "The Benevolent Empire," *Foreign Policy*, No. 111 (Summer 1998): 24-36.
- ⁵⁸ Donald Kagan and Frederick Kagan, *While America Sleeps: Self Delusion, Military Weakness, and the Threat to Peace Today* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).
- ⁵⁹ John Lewis Gaddis, "A Grand Strategy of Transformation," *Foreign Policy* (November/December 2002).
- ⁶⁰ Francis Fukuyama, *America At the Crossroads*: 40.
- ⁶¹ William Kristol and Robert Kagan, *Present Dangers: Crisis and Opportunity in the American Foreign and Defence Policy* (San Francisco: Encounter, 2000).
- ⁶² William Kristol and Robert Kagan, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," 18-32.
- ⁶³ Francis Fukuyama, *America At the Crossroads*: 41.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁵ Condoleezza Rice, *op. cit.*: 45-62.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*: 46-47.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*: 60.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*: 49.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*: 49.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*: 53.

⁷³ Elizabeth Drew, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ Max Boot, "Think Again: The Neocons," 22.

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Drew, *op. cit.*

⁷⁶ Richard Perle and David Frum, *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror* (New York: Random House, 2003).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*: 36.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*: 182.

⁷⁹ "Lexington: Sidelined by Reality," *The Economist* (21 April 2007): 38.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*



This book takes an academic, well-documented and comprehensive approach in its analysis. With contributions from scholars based in Lebanon, Malaysia, the UAE, the UK, and the US, the primary objective of this book is to explain the domestic setting of American foreign policy-making and analyse its impact on issues that are considered vital to the Muslim world. The first part of this book explains the complex foreign-policy making system in the United States and assesses the role of Christian evangelicalism, neo-conservatism, the media, the pro-Israel lobby and the role of Muslim groups. The second part is devoted to a detailed analysis of the major characteristics of American foreign policy. The third part of the book provides an in-depth analysis of Americas' policy toward Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Palestine. Barack H. Obama's foreign policy is also discussed. It is a must read book for those interested in understanding American foreign policy toward the Muslim world, and specialists, and students of Political Science, and International Relations.

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