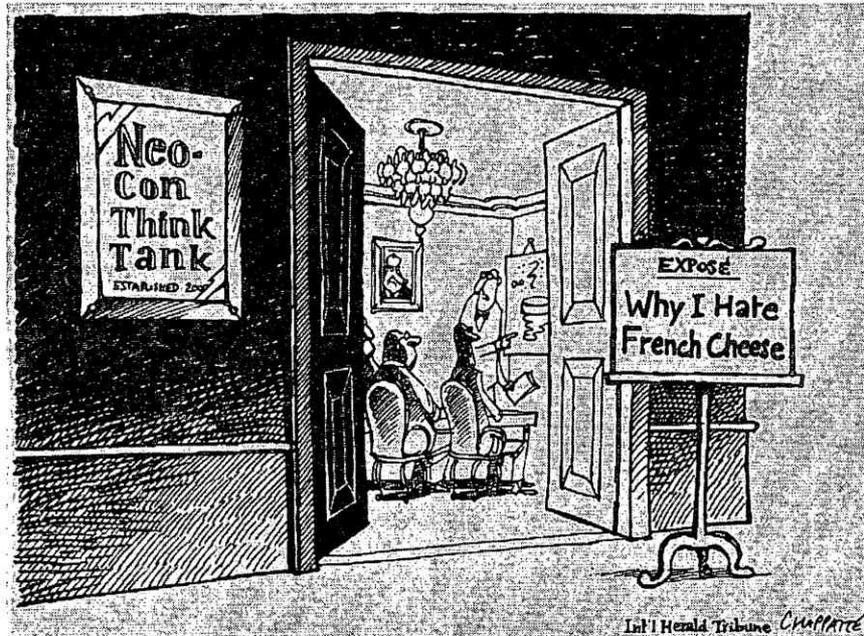


‘We’ll Do It Our Way...’ George W. Bush and Post Cold War US Foreign Policy

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This paper will examine how George W. Bush’s administration has redefined US foreign policy, the intellectual background of its approach and the impact 9/11 has had on policy.

The question of how the United States should engage the rest of the world is a question as old as the nation itself. When Britain went to war with France in 1792 and the country’s founders were confronted with this issue George Washington opted for strict neutrality. Until World War One (with the exception of the Spanish-American War and its consequent dabbling with empire) neutrality and non-engagement was the position of the United States in respect to the European powers. At the end of the First World War US foreign policy split into two camps, strict isolationists and the engagement camp. The engagement camp was not unified in its vision of how the US should work with the world. There were those who wanted the US to use its influence to make the world a better, more democratic place and felt that American power should be used to promote and spread American ideas and standards such as President Wilson and those that wanted the US to actively pursue its own interests in the role of a traditional major power represented by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge.

After World War Two the US emerged as the primary military and economic power of the non-communist world, setting the stage for the Cold War and confrontation with the Soviet Union. From the end of World War Two to the end of the Cold War virtually all major foreign policy decisions were

determined by relations with the Soviet Union. A unified and bipartisan foreign policy approach of containment that relied on multilateral agreements and international institutions to promote and foster US interests and ideals emerged.

After the Vietnam debacle a new policy animal emerged, called the neoconservative or 'neocon'. A very general description of the neocon would be a hawkish Democrat who was generally liberal on domestic issues but was also revolted by the left's opposition to the war in Vietnam. The intellectual descendants of Senator Henry 'Scoop' Jackson such as Jeanne Kirkpatrick have been described as neocons. Many of these Democrats bolted from the party and adopted the Republican party even though their views on domestic issues; civil rights, social spending and taxes, often put them at odds with the prevailing sentiment within their new party, especially the conservative Goldwater wing. Traditional Republican policy thinkers also viewed the Arabs as a more natural regional ally with Israel seen as a necessary annoyance that complicated realpolitics and US interests, the neocons were staunch supporters of Israel as a outpost of democracy in a sea of despotism. However the one sentiment which bound them was a visceral loathing for the Vietnam protestors and everything they represented. The 'San Francisco Democrats' as Kirkpatrick referred to them in a speech at the 1984 Republican Convention: "When the San Francisco Democrats treat foreign affairs as an afterthought, as they did, they behaved less like a dove or a hawk than like an ostrich - convinced it would shut out the world by hiding its head in the sand. ... When the Soviet Union walked out of arms control negotiations, and refused even to discuss the issues, the San Francisco Democrats didn't blame Soviet intransigence. They blamed the United States. But then, they always blame America first."

US Middle East Policy

In 1968 when the United Kingdom shut down its bases in Aden and 'east of the Suez' it relinquished its security responsibilities for the Middle East, effectively handing them over to the United States. US Middle East policy since then has consistently rested upon three principles: 1) the free and stable flow of oil from the Persian Gulf to the rest of the world 2) opposition to the ascendancy of a hostile regional power or group of powers that could adversely affect the oil supply 3) the security of Israel to live in peace with its immediate neighbors. (Pollack p.15). In the years since 1968 the US has tried to implement these policy objectives in a variety of ways, first by relying on the 'twin pillars' of the friendly regimes in Saudi Arabia and Iran. After the Shah of Iran was overthrown, in order to counter radical Iranian fundamentalism, the US tilted towards the secular but repulsive regime in Iraq during the 1980's, but by 1990 was pursuing a dual containment policy with both Iraq and Iran. These methods met with limited success.

Until the Iranian revolution of 1979 the United States had relatively little to do with Iraq. Iraq was nominally socialist, within the Soviet sphere of influence, vehemently anti-Israel and run by a particularly ruthless and onerous Baathist regime. It was not until the Iran-Iraq war that the US paid much attention to

Iraq. With the aim of recovering territory in the Shat-Al Arab, that President Saddam Hussien had signed away with the Algiers Agreement of 1975 in exchange for Iran ending its support for the Iraqi Kurds, Saddam attacked Iran in 1980. Saddam who had always resented this agreement and felt that he was forced to sign under duress with the Shah took advantage of Iran's preoccupation with its Islamic revolution and the decimation of its officer corps by the Ayatollah Khomeini's purges. The US and the Gulf states supported Saddam against fundamentalist Iran. Saddam's secular but repressive regime was considered the lesser of two evils. The US, along with Europe and the Gulf states supported Saddam financially and militarily while turning a blind eye to his use of mustard gas and other chemical weapons against not only the Iranians but also his own Kurdish population. After seven years of fruitless and exhausting warfare hostilities were ended. The war left Iraq bankrupt and debt-ridden. Most of this debt was owed to the Gulf states, particularly Kuwait, who bankrolled a large part of the war effort against Iran. Saddam feeling, and with some justification, that the Iraq-Iran War was fought by him for the Arab states against Persian and fundamentalist Shia Iran asked the Kuwaitis to write off the loans they held but Kuwait refused. After a series of misreads and miscalculations by both the US and Saddam Hussein, Iraq invaded, occupied and annexed Kuwait in the summer of 1991.

The United States fought the Gulf War because the Bush administration believed that an increasingly bellicose and volatile Iraq that would now control a sizable amount of the world's oil supply directly threatened to undermine two and possibly all three of the US policy tenets. Saddam Hussein now controlled Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil supplies and was positioned to move against the Saudi oilfields. He could in effect become a one-man OPEC able to dominate and manipulate the oil market and achieve whatever price he wanted. He could continue to fund his nuclear, chemical and biological weapons program and attain the ability to strike at Israel, the other regional nuclear power, which on occasion he threatened to do. (Quandt p.395)

The first Bush administration was run by cautious people like National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft and Secretary of State James Baker who came to age during World War Two and whose careers were shaped by their Cold War experience. Bush himself was greatly influenced by his wartime experience and believed that Saddam Hussein's land grab was reminiscent of Hitler's invasion of Poland and that he had to be turned back. (Halberstam p.69) They represented the centrist, internationalist wing of the Republican party that felt that American interests were best served by working through international institutions and arrangements. Bush was determined to oust Saddam from Kuwait and to do so under UN legitimacy. Bush and Baker successfully forged a large coalition of international support, including most of the Arab world. In order to gain credibility and support in the Arab world Saddam tried to link his occupation of Kuwait to the Palestinian issue. Outside of the West Bank and Gaza territories this had little effect on international opinion. Whatever effect Saddam's ploy to link his moves to the plight of the

Palestinians and position himself as their champion was countered by Bush's deft diplomacy.

Once the Gulf War was concluded and Saddam was evicted from Kuwait many idealists within the administration argued that it was a golden opportunity to spread democracy to a region that knew little of it. The United States initially encouraged Iraqis to revolt but then shamefully sat back and watched the subsequent slaughter when it was decided not to intervene (Although a safe haven for the Kurds was eventually established in northern Iraq). Fearing a fragmentation or 'Lebanonization' of Iraq, Bush strongly preferred the status quo, as did Washington's Arab allies. (Indyk) The administration felt that Saddam, now sufficiently neutered, would be of little threat to the region and did nothing to promote democracy and reform in Iraq, or even Kuwait. This sat well with the regional allies who themselves were in no way inclined to promote regional democracy and liberalization. The decision to keep a permanent military presence in Saudi Arabia would have unforeseen repercussions both within the kingdom and outside. It was this infidel defilement of a sacred land that was the home of some of Islam's most important sites that enraged Osama Bin Laden and his followers and started them on their campaign to rid the Middle East of western influence and overthrow the decadent rulers of the kingdom.

Encouraged by Secretary of State Baker and the Arab allies and now backed up by the reality of US preeminence in the region Bush did make a strong effort to negotiate a settlement to the Israel/Palestinian issue resulting in the Madrid Conference in October 1991. On the surface the Bush administration was strongly supportive of Israel and many cabinet members were friendly to Israel, notably Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and chief negotiator Dennis Ross but their sympathies were more with the Labor party and Rabin, rather than with Likud and Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who himself distrusted the United States. The Bush administration was also willing to push Israel to reciprocate whenever the Arabs indicated they were willing to seriously negotiate. (Quandt p.387) In respect to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict the Bush administration was the most even-handed administration since the creation of the state of Israel. In 1991, when Shamir decided to build settlements for 5,500 new colonists on the West Bank, Bush temporarily withheld the \$10 billion the US had promised Israel to help settle Russian immigrants. The Bush administration displayed an admirable degree of political courage and fairness that has been markedly absent in the current Bush administration and was somewhat inconsistent in Clinton's administration.

Clinton

George Bush was neither the education president nor the environment president that he claimed to be, he was first and foremost a foreign policy president. His lack of attention and focus on domestic issues probably cost him the election in 1992. Bill Clinton reflected America's new attitude toward the world and its post Cold War position. Most Americans felt that with the Cold War won it was time to look inward and

concentrate on domestic issues. Clinton himself considered domestic policy and the economy the country's main priorities. With the notable exception of trade, foreign policy was secondary and his cabinet appointments reflected that. In his first administration no one on his national security team seemed to be unified on policy. His Secretary of State Warren Christopher and NSA Anthony Lake were appointed as much for their reputations as cautious team players rather than for any clear cut vision of what the US should do with its post Cold War power. Although he was a quick study on virtually any issue Clinton was inexperienced in foreign policy and not particularly interested in it either. Aside from concentrating on improving US trade policy and a vague commitment towards using US power to promote human rights, his foreign policy was ad hoc and reactive. During the Balkan crisis Mickey Kantor as trade representative had more access to the President than Defense Secretary Les Aspin and NSC Anthony Lake. (Halberstam p.242). However as Robert Kaplan noted in *'Balkan Ghosts'* whether you want it or not 'if you are president of the United States foreign policy is going to find you'.

Like most incoming administrations the Clinton team felt that they knew better than their predecessor. Although he berated Bush during the presidential campaign for ignoring human rights, 'coddling dictators', and using US power solely for promoting selfish national interests Clinton's foreign policy team with people like NSA Anthony Lake and Secretary of State Warren Christopher came from the same bipartisan internationalist school of policy thought as the first Bush administration's people. There was little substantive change in policy goals or means from the previous administration.

Clinton was quickly given an opportunity to back up his campaign promises. He got that opportunity first in Somalia, a problem he inherited from the Bush administration and then in the Balkans, which was already becoming a foreign policy nightmare before Clinton took office. In both cases Clinton's human rights rhetoric seemed loftier than his willingness or capability to act. Somalia, for all of the United States' good intentions was a political and military disaster that would adversely affect the future of any US or UN humanitarian interventions and was the main reason the Clinton administration pointedly declined to intervene in Rwanda, where in all likelihood military intervention would have prevented the genocide that took place there. The Bush administration made the first commitment to Somalia, which was a hopeless, violent and horrifying example of a modern non-state. Partially because of criticism from the Democrats, including candidate Clinton, for doing nothing to alleviate suffering around the globe and partially because it deflected attention from the region they really had to do something about; the Balkans, but also because they truly felt a need to do something about this former sometimes-client state the Bush administration decided to intervene in 1992. The immediate goals of the Somali intervention, to head off a humanitarian disaster and to facilitate the distribution of aid were successful but without a well-defined mission and exit strategy the intervention soon faced difficult issues such as disarming the militias and nation-building that were not adequately addressed as the term 'mission creep' entered the vernacular. A poorly managed

handoff to the UN along with Clinton's initial inattention and his team's subsequent inability to devise a unified plan ensured the ultimate failure of the mission that ended with the humiliating 'Back Hawk Down' incident and the US rushing out the door, reluctant to engage in these type of humanitarian interventions again. Bin Laden was reportedly inspired in part by this incident. He was convinced that the US would be so adverse to taking any casualties that it could be easily driven from Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Middle East and if not for 9/11's dramatically changing the psychological threshold for America's capability for taking casualties he was probably right.

The Balkans

In the Balkans no one really knew what to do and after Somalia the Pentagon and the Clinton administration were extremely reluctant to get involved in any ill-defined mission where US interests were not clearly at stake. Many people in the administration felt that this should be a European mission and no one could really figure out whose side to take. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic's brutal policies of ethnic cleansing soon cleared that up but the problem of what to do about it remained. JCS Colin Powell was adamantly against involvement. Clinton himself, eager to promote his domestic programs without any distractions but hampered by a hostile Congress looking for a fight on any issue was equally squeamish to commit the US to the Balkans. However Vice President Al Gore and Clinton's new Secretary of State Madeline Albright, whose personal history with European fascism made Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic particularly repugnant to her continued to press for US involvement. After images of Serbian artillery strikes in the market place in Sebrenica and the resulting carnage inundated the evening news the administration concluded that military action was necessary.

Israel/Palestine and Iraq

Clinton continued Bush's Middle East peace initiative which was finalized in the Oslo agreement but which ultimately failed with the second intifada. (The Oslo agreement which was made public in early September 1993, was the result of a series of private meetings held in Norway between Israel and the PLO. The agreement involved autonomy for parts of Gaza Strip and the West Bank, gradual Israeli redeployments, and had Palestinian independence as distant goal.) As Clinton was leaving office he embarked on a high profile attempt to broker a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Clinton helped convince Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to make an offer which would reportedly return 90% of the West Bank to an independent Palestinian state with a shared administration over Jerusalem. There were various issues such as water rights, land allocation, Palestinian right of return, which were not adequately addressed and the 90% of the West Bank was by Palestinian accounts a little less. Still Barak's concessions were at the political limits to any agreement that an Israeli prime minister could concede. It was also a deal that Arafat felt that he could not accept. It would have been a deal that West Bank born Palestinians could have found acceptable but one that the refugees would not, who were to

some Arafat's real constituents. Instead of renegotiating or signing on to what many observers thought was the best deal possible for his people Arafat spurned the offer and the intifada began. He must have felt that he could have gotten a better deal by resorting to violence or he had no real intention to accept compromise. Not only did this reverse the small steps that were made towards a peace settlement since Oslo, it marginalized the Israeli peace movement and got Ariel Sharon elected. Sharon continued building settlements on the West Bank and Arafat later commented to the Indonesian President that he had 'never given up his dream of driving the Jews into the sea'.

Since Clinton had nothing new to offer on the perplexing issues with Iraq that he inherited from the Bush administration's he was content to continue its non-policy, feeling that sanctions and the occasional cruise missile strike were enough to keep Saddam out of serious mischief. When Saddam blocked UN weapons inspectors from suspected WMD sites in 1998 Clinton authorized an 84-hour bombing campaign that accomplished little but the exit of UN inspectors who were not to return until the eve of the second Gulf War.

George W. Bush

After George W. Bush was inaugurated president, once again an incoming administration decided that it was much wiser than its predecessor. Bush who was also seemingly fated to be a domestic president was even more of a foreign policy neophyte than Clinton. He often gave the impression that being geographically challenged, uninformed about and incapable of remembering names of countries and other world leaders were actually foreign policy attributes. Remarkably this did seem to resonate with a large segment of the population and reinforced his image as 'just a regular guy like us' unlike that smarmy egghead he was running against who knew everything.

However, Bush did have a worldview and an idea of how foreign policy should be managed. Anyone closely following Bush's campaign and the writings and words of his advisors could discern a policy, however faintly it was articulated. It was uncontroversial and conventional in what it presented: promoting freedom and democratic values, free trade, prosperity and security. What distinguished it from previous administrations was how those goals would be achieved, primarily through the unilateral exercise of American power as opposed to working with and through international organizations and multilateral agreements.

On one level Bush's overall policy goals were not much different from that of his predecessor's. For the first few months of George W. Bush's presidency, his overall strategic foreign policy was cautious, minimalist, and incited limited opposition but on another level it could have been summed up as ABC; Anything But Clinton. (Daalver pages 36-37) Bush's stances on the two foreign policy issues that would come to define his presidency, terrorism and Iraq, were unremarkable and quite conventional before

September 11th. During the first months of his administration when Bush's foreign policy was evolving, he sought to undo or retreat from many treaties and agreements that limited US sovereignty. He also annoyed important allies by disregarding or trivializing issues that they took seriously such as the Kyoto agreement. When in doubt the best policy appeared to be: Do the opposite of what Clinton did, such as not playing an active and visible role in the Middle East peace process. The Bush administration had no new ideas to inject into the peace process, which was in a shambles but since Clinton played an active and highly visible role in attempting to broker an agreement this had to be the way not to go. Bush took the same approach to North Korea and its nuclear weapons program. Bush felt that the Clinton administration had been much too soft on the North and Bush just was not going to deal with 'a loathsome pygmy who starved his people'. Bush ended the 'Agreed Framework' to disband North Korea's nuclear weapon's program that the Clinton administration had spent eighteen months hammering out with the North and the regional allies.

Initially his major foreign policy initiatives were concentrated on dealing with the old Soviet Union and the ascendancy of China. Bush also began to work on an immigration accord with Mexico utilizing his close ties with President Vincente Fox. Fox and this accord, which was vital to harmonious US/Mexico relations were quickly forgotten after 9/11 (Mexico again became a foreign policy afterthought until its Security Council vote was needed to support military action in Iraq). Despite the trepidations of major allies Bush and his Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld also pushed for building a missile defense system, ostensibly to prevent attacks by 'rogue nations' such as North Korea. However repudiation of the ABM treaty, which they felt was an anachronistic restriction on the United States' right to defend itself, was in itself a goal. International terrorism was given a lower priority. In fact Bush rarely mentioned it during the campaign and the first few months of his presidency. It was looked at as a more or less permanent but for the most part manageable nuisance.

The Clinton administration had felt that Al-Qaeda was a major threat and many Clinton administration officials warned the incoming administration about the potential threat. Samuel Berger, Clinton's outgoing National Security Advisor warned his replacement, Condoleezza Rice in a meeting with her before the Bush team took over about Al-Qaeda, and fundamentalist terrorism. A week before Bush was inaugurated CIA chief George Tenet told Dick Cheney, Rice and Donald Rumsfeld that the CIA believed Al-Qaeda was one of the three major threats facing the United States (the other two being the proliferation of WMD and China's rising power) but according to Richard Clarke, a security specialist holdover from the Clinton administration the threat was placed on the back burner and never seriously addressed until 9/11. To what extent the incoming security team ignored or downplayed the warnings they received from Clinton's people has been a subject of debate and much speculation but in fairness to the Bush administration none of these briefings envisioned an attack of the magnitude that was to come.

The Bush administration and the United States came face to face with fundamentalist terrorism on

September 11th, 2001 when Al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked and then flew planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon killing almost 3,000 people. Overnight Bush became a foreign policy president. Being as Bush himself brought pretty much of an empty plate to the foreign policy dinner he relied on his cabinet and other appointees. Many came from the so called 'neoconservative' movement, represented by Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Defense Secretary Don Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney. This is really a misnomer or a catchall phrase. While the classic neoconservatives, who after the Vietnam conflict became staunch cold warriors and advocates of a strong unilateralist approach to US policy could frequently be found on the opinion pages of conservative publications such as 'Commentary' or 'The Weekly Standard' they were not very representative of the Bush foreign policy team, at least on the upper tiers of policy planning. It was people like Wolfowitz, more accurately called 'democratic imperialists' who gained ascendancy and a degree of credibility in the second Bush administration and were now, after 9/11, given the front and center of US security issues along with the unilateralist camp represented by Cheney, Rumsfeld and Rice and more accurately called 'assertive nationalists'. Many of these people were members of the Reagan and first Bush administrations. The old guard of the Republican foreign policy establishment was wary of them while Bush senior more or less dismissed them as being too grandiose, idealistic and impractical. But September 11 empowered the second Bush administration's unilateral interventionist wing, (the assertive nationalists) and gave more credence to the democratic imperialist camp led by Wolfowitz while marginalizing the multilateralist holdovers from the internationalist/multilateralist wing of the Republican foreign policy establishment, such as Colin Powell and Dick Armitage. The White House began to adopt policies that matched the strategic disposition that such officials as Rumsfeld, Cheney and Rice had had all along: a belief in the necessity of aggressive preventative action abroad, and a conviction that international institutions held values which were at best inconsistent with, and at worst antithetical to American principles and interest. (Corps Voters, Washington Monthly)

According to Ivo Daalver and James Lindsay in *'America Unbound'* many of Bush's foreign policy tutors and advisors such as Paul Wolfowitz, should be labeled 'democratic imperialists'. The democratic imperialists felt that the US had the obligation to force democracy on troublesome nations and regions that had no experience with it. Dick Cheney, Condoleeza Rice and Donald Rumsfeld could be called 'assertive nationalists', people who felt that international treaties and multilateral commitments often encumbered and worked against US interests. The assertive nationalists felt that the US had not only the right but the obligation to unilaterally act to protect its interests. US primacy and moral rectitude would determine when to act, not international laws and institutions. Bush himself would probably be more or less an assertive nationalist. While he has never been able to articulate them as succinctly, his foreign policy views reflect those of Rice. The earliest intellectual beginnings of these movements can be traced to 'The Committee on

the Present Danger' which was originally founded in 1950. Believing that the CIA had been drastically understating the strength of the USSR, the CPD was established to alert the nation to the Soviet threat. Partially through its efforts the Cold War was escalated and interventionist policies were adopted. After Vietnam, anti-intervention sentiment prevailed and a more conciliatory attitude towards the USSR was adopted, this was anathema to the CPD. In 1972 the CPD was revitalized to do battle again, with détente and rapprochement with the Soviet Union the newest present dangers. One of the signatories to the 1972 CPD II charter was Paul Wolfowitz. Then in 1997 'The Project For A New American Century' was established to 'accept responsibility for America's unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity, and our principles. The Project For a New American Century stated that the US has not only the right to intervene but the moral obligation to do so to ensure the security of the US and like-minded democracies. Vice President Dick Cheney was a charter member. While they often disagreed on when to intervene militarily both the democratic imperialists and the assertive nationalists, (along with the traditional neocons) shared a deep skepticism of international institutions and believed that the US' security relied more on power than diplomacy and international agreements. They strongly felt that the Clinton administration was dangerously naïve by putting too much faith in international agreements and multilateral institutions.

In his *'Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace'* Gore Vidal accuses the 'Bush/Cheney junta' of using the 9/11 catastrophe to initiate its scheme for a new perpetual war to replace the Cold War, similar to the machinations of the original Committee on the Present Danger. However far-fetched these and other left-wing ruminations are, 'The War on Terror' was now birthed and proved to be a political godsend for the administration and its conservative base. It allowed Bush to distract the public from his limited mandate and to push through a hard right political agenda that would not have held up under normal circumstances. The wording for this campaign was strongly argued against in a brief by both Brent Scowcroft and Zbigniew Brzezinski who thought 'war on terror' was confusing, inaccurate and unrealistic and that it should be more accurately labeled a 'prolonged campaign against terror'. A cynic like Vidal might say that 'The Prolonged Campaign Against Terror' was not jingoistic enough and wouldn't fit on the FOX news trailers as nicely so we got the new and never ending 'War on Terror'. Regardless, this new war has been difficult to define let alone make much sense out of. If it is a true war against terror should it not include Basque separatist terrorists, Terry Adams as well as Arafat, Columbian narco-terrorists, and Syria, who supports Hesbollah and other Israeli-targeting terror organizations but has been instrumental in combating Al-Queda (to the point of providing torture facilities for our Queda suspects)? Do we include Philippine bandits in the mix because they are easy to strike and unpopular in Manila even though whatever connection they have had in the past to Al-Queda is very weak? And why not Saudi Arabia when it funds and promotes fundamentalist terror and most of the 9/11 culprits were Saudis? Or is it simply a campaign

against a shadowy organization that hates the US and its influence and presence in the Middle East and relies on radical fundamentalist Islam for support?

Afghanistan

The United States enjoyed a large degree of international support for its campaign to remove the Taliban from power. For the first time in its history NATO immediately invoked Article V of its charter which declared that an attack on one was an attack on all. Key NATO nations offered military support which was politely (dismissively?) declined. The US established bases and security agreements with some of the former Soviet republics, China and Russia warily accepted the US military presence in the region while also using the American war on terror to bolster arguments for their own wars on terror in Chechnya and Sinkiang. Even in the Muslim world there was little sympathy for the Taliban regime and only muted criticism to what the US was doing.

The military campaign in Afghanistan was successful against what many thought would be daunting odds and was continuously contrasted with the disastrous Soviet invasion and Britain's unsuccessful forays in the 19th century. The US toppled the Taliban with minimal casualties and relative ease by using air power, special forces and proxy soldiers from the Northern Alliance. It could be said that the US military was a victim of its own success, the feeling that wars could be won with few casualties and without putting large numbers of ground troops at risk contributed to the biggest tactical blunder of the campaign, Tora Bora, where the Al-Qaeda leadership was allowed to escape to Pakistan. Instead of deploying US infantry the US continued to rely on Afghan militias, whose motivations were different from those of the US and subsequently were bribed by Al-Qaeda, and on Pakistani troops who were less than ideally motivated to hunt down the Queda fighters in the mountains during the winter and were often sympathetic to the fighters they were charged with capturing or killing. (Daalver pp. 110-111)

After the Taliban regime was removed Bush publicly committed his administration to get Afghanistan on its feet again 'We know true peace will only be achieved when we give back the Afghan people the means to achieve their own aspirations' he declared in a speech honoring George C. Marshall's contributions rebuilding Europe in April 2002. But Afghanistan would receive very little in the aid needed to rebuild and more importantly little of the security needed to do so. The administration's aversion to nation- building and its reluctance not only to involve its own troops but its discouragement of other countries' offers to contribute again led to a breakdown of security and subsequent rule by warlords and militias. These groups had political goals that were quite different from the US and that of the US supported Karsai government that was installed after the removal of the Taliban. Many critics such as former NATO commander and presidential candidate Wes Clark charge that soon after the Taliban regime fell valuable resources and planning that could have been put to use building a secure Afghanistan and continuing to hunt Al-Qaeda were diverted from Afghanistan for the upcoming invasion of Iraq, where the

connection to Al-Queda and Islamic terror was tenuous at best.

Iraq

The September 11th attacks generated enormous sympathy for the US and the subsequent campaign to seek out Osama Bin Laden and remove his protector regime, the Taliban, from power in Afghanistan was met with close to universal approval throughout the world. Incredibly the Bush administration managed to turn this wellspring of sympathy into resentment. It employed a unique inability to compromise on any issue that would even hint at a trace of limited US sovereignty or preeminence; from the International Criminal Court to population planning, along with a doggedly determined refusal to see anything in terms other than in black and white to accomplish this. Policy that was articulated by statements such as 'you're either with us or against us' and a continuing disdain for multilateral institutions and agreements except when convenient and only then with a 'we lead, you follow along quietly approach' continued to sap much of that sympathy and helped earn the US a newfound disdain.

It was the Bush administration's decision to remove Saddam Hussien's regime that did the most damage to the US' image throughout the world. The Bush administration had set its sights on the regime in Iraq immediately after September 11th. Wesley Clark has said that a standard joke making the Pentagon rounds in the period following the attacks was that 'if Saddam didn't do it he should've because we're going to get him for it anyway'. By February 2002 it seems that the decision to remove Saddam's regime had already been finalized, soon afterwards Bush was reported to have interrupted a meeting between Rice and three stunned senators by popping in and proclaiming, "Fuck Saddam. We're taking him out." (The New Republic). Unlike the run up to the first Gulf War this administration's attempt to assemble a 'coalition of the willing' prior to the invasion was marked by a complete lack of diplomatic adroitness. Nations that were critical such as longtime friend and ally Germany were treated disdainfully and nations that attempted to stay out of the fray like Mexico were delivered veiled threats to get with the program. Most nations sat on the sidelines and many allies actively opposed the war. With the notable exception of Great Britain this coalition of the willing consisted mainly of the coerced and the bribed, it included military powers such as the Solomon Islands and bastions of democracy like Uzbekistan; new NATO member Hungary contributed 133 truck drivers.

As predicted by many analysts the military campaign against the Iraqi army was the mismatch anticipated, Iraqi resistance was minimal and the Baathist regime disappeared after less than two weeks. George W. Bush declared an end to hostilities aboard the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln a few weeks later. Apparently the Baathist regime and some of its supporters were not informed about the end of hostilities as a guerilla campaign and bombings continue to kill Americans and Iraqis. Reconstruction has proven to be as difficult as anticipated. It has apparently been as ill-planned as feared not only by critics but by some supporters of the war as well. Allies and partners are reluctant to contribute, due to concerns

about security but also by needless and counterproductive hubris and arrogance by the Bush administration. Every time Donald Rumsfeld trashes 'old Europe' it costs us another billion dollars Tom Friedman, who supported the war, commented in the New York Times shortly before the campaign began. Months after the occupation in an astonishing display of stupidity the Bush administration denied access to reconstruction contracts to countries that opposed the war. This during the same week that the US asked that the very same countries, France, Germany and Russia among them, to contribute peace-keepers and reconstruction funds, and to write off some of the \$30 billion debt that Iraq owed them. Germany had just agreed to increase its number of peacekeepers in Afghanistan instead of sending troops to Iraq. Russia responded by saying there is no way they would even consider debt relief now.

After 9/11 there was an enormous outpouring of sympathy and empathy for the US throughout the world, often from countries and people to whom terror has become routine but remarkably the US is now held in less regard because of 9/11. How did this happen? Instead of acting as if the US now finally realized how most people in Columbia, Palestine/Israel, Russia, Chechnya, the Balkans and other places familiar with violence and terror have been living the administration responded with another version of American exceptionalism and uniqueness. It was as if this were the first terrorist attack in history. The administration constantly paints the world in black and white while everyone else sees shades of grey. You are either 'evil' or 'good', 'with us or against us', you either 'love freedom or hate freedom' according to Bush. The perception is that there is no middle ground and no room for disagreement, even among friends. The administration dismisses the concerns of other nations and frequently expresses its contempt for opinions different from their own (Daalver p. 189). Much of this is style rather than substance. It is possible that the first Bush administration or even a Gore administration would have initiated regime change in Iraq but hard to believe that it would have been handled so clumsily. It would be hard to imagine James Baker or Richard Holbrooke dismissing 'old Europe' as contemptuously as Donald Rumsfeld has. The Bush administration has been unwilling or unable to see the plight of the Palestinians for what it is; the overriding concern among Arabs and Moslems today and an issue of major importance in Europe. A more even-handed approach would be very welcome and might have countered much of the rage that the Iraq invasion engendered in the Moslem world and the animosity in Europe. In his book '*A Threatening Storm*' while reluctantly advocating an invasion of Iraq, Kenneth Polack points out that any invasion of an Arab land would have to be preceded by at the very least a perception of even-handed brokering by the US in the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. How did Bush do this? After ignoring the situation for months he called Ariel Sharon 'a man of peace'. He then refused to deal with Arafat because he is a terrorist, which he often is, but ignored the fact that he also is the only democratically elected leader in the Arab world and the living symbol of a people with legitimate national aspirations.

The world also has other issues to deal with, terror is just one of them but not everything. Eighty per

cent of sub-Saharan Africa survives on 2 dollars a day and in some countries 1/2 of the adult population is infected by the AIDS virus. Is it a wonder that George W. Bush's war on terror is not the most pressing issue for Africa and that Africans might appreciate a little assistance and aid from the richest country on earth before being harped at about fighting terror. When George W. Bush went to Asia in November 2003 all he could talk about was 'The War on Terror' and was greeted with tired nods of agreement. On the other hand Chinese Premier Hu was much more warmly received because, according to the Thai foreign minister, he addressed their concerns, such as economic recovery, opening Chinese markets, controlling SARS. (Zakaria, Washington Post). Later in the same trip Hu was given an ovation by the Australian Parliament while Bush was heckled. How does that happen? In Australia? Zakaria wonders. 'If we're an arrogant nation they'll resent us' candidate Bush observed during the second debate with Al Gore.

Throughout the cold war period international institutions helped bind the world to a US run order. These institutions were so effective in serving US interests that *The Economist* labeled them 'America's secret empire'. Bush has seemed to dispense with the need for multilateral agreements and these same institutions. Instead of leading through agreement, compromise and consent he has opted to lead through and rely solely on American primacy and moral right. If it were as simple as removing Talibans and Saddams here and there that might be proper and sufficient but the long-term challenges facing US policy; promoting economic prosperity, reversing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, fighting disease and yes, defeating terrorism are much more complicated and require cooperation. They can not be achieved solely by US military primacy. While often shortsighted and sometimes selfishly hypocritical US interests are usually conducive for the good of the world-but this does not translate into moral rectitude. The US has the moral right to lead when others agree to be led. Leading requires more than power, it requires an open ear and a legitimate concern for what is important to the rest of the world. Building a basis for lasting peace and prosperity is better served through a blend of compromise, cooperation and power.

At the end of World War II when America emerged as the predominate power on earth, Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman knew that the best way to ensure lasting peace and to promote US interests was through cooperation with other liberal democracies and by working through international institutions governed by the rule of law. This policy had been consistently followed by every administration until now. In George W. Bush's worldview and that of his assertive nationalist advisors there is no real need for cooperation and compromise. US primacy and rectitude will be sufficient to lead. The Republican party now firmly controls both Congress and the executive branch. The power center in the party has moved distinctly to the right, and sits comfortably with this more aggressive and unencumbered approach to foreign affairs. Will this approach that eschews cooperative arrangements for unilateral action and preemptive wars be a four-year anomaly or will this be a permanent shift in US foreign policy?

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