

The Bush Doctrine: Origins, Evolution, Alternatives

by
Mark Gerard Mantho
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The unhappy results of the Bush Administration's go it alone approach to international affairs and stumbling experiment in nation-building have lately dawned on the American people. Less widely understood, even today, are the signal features of a policy that represents the most drastic and sweeping departure from the national security strategy of the United States since the Cold War. The consequences of the so-called Bush Doctrine, an amalgamation of "assertive nationalism" that sanctions military force to ensure security and maintain global preeminence, and "conservative internationalism," which attempts the same aims in like manner but also seeks to export Western values and democracy, will reverberate throughout the century. Where did the policy come from, who are its principal architects, and how did it evolve? Where does Israel fit into the picture? And is there an alternative national security doctrine that effectively meets the challenges posed by a world that suddenly seems increasingly anti-American, volatile, and vastly more dangerous?

In the spring of 1992, both the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* ran front-page excerpts from a document known as a "Defense Planning Guidance." DPGs are military guidelines periodically prepared and circulated among Pentagon officials that set down budgetary and force-level requirements, and if the *Times* or *Post* had published one anytime between 1948 and 1989 (the beginning and end, roughly, of the Cold War) its contents would be unlikely cause for controversy. But this DPG was different. Written by Zalmay Khalilzad, an aide to then Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and current Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul D. Wolfowitz, the synopsis advanced three central arguments:

* "Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival. This is a dominant consideration underlying the new regional defense strategy and requires that we endeavor to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power. ... The U.S. must show the leadership necessary to establish and protect a new order that holds the promise of convincing potential competitors that they need not aspire to a greater role or pursue a more aggressive posture to protect their legitimate interests. ... [In] the non-defense areas, we must account sufficiently for the interests of the advanced industrial nations to discourage them from challenging our leadership or seeking to overturn the established political and economic order. Finally, we must maintain the mechanisms for deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role."

* The United States should "address sources of regional conflict and instability in such a way as to promote increasing respect for international law, limit international violence, and encourage the spread of democratic forms of government and open economic systems."

* "The United States should be postured to act independently when collective action cannot be orchestrated." Coalitions to confront international crises "hold considerable promise for promoting collective action." Even so, the United States "should expect future coalitions to be ad hoc assemblies" and reinforce "the sense that the world order is ultimately backed by the U.S." [No mention is made of the United Nations.]

As noted in a *New Yorker* article by Nicholas Lemann ("The Next World Order," April 1, 2002), this digest was drafted in response to a 1990 request by Dick Cheney, Secretary of

Defense in the first Bush Administration. Among others, Cheney charged Wolfowitz, I. Lewis Libby (now the Vice President's Chief of Staff), Eric Edleman (presently one of Cheney's top foreign policy advisors) and General Colin Powell (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the time) with formulating an American answer to the new realities imposed by communism's fall in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Wolfowitz imparted the essentials of his strategy to the Secretary of Defense on May 21, 1990. Powell was scheduled to offer an opposing alternative, but Cheney was evidently so enthralled by the Wolfowitz pitch he never got the chance, at least that day. The future Vice President, like his former boss Donald Rumsfeld (as director of Richard Nixon's Office of Economic Opportunity, Rumsfeld hired Cheney as a special assistant in 1969; both men later served in the Ford Administration), prides himself on a no-nonsense, assertively "forward-leaning" approach to U.S. security and interests. As Pentagon chief for George Herbert Walker Bush, he favored the plan laid out by Wolfowitz, and that predisposition informed the briefing of the President that ensued. Yet Bush 41, a far more circumspect character than Bush 43, never did much to implement the ideas summarized in the Defense Planning Guidance, especially after its more provocative elements elicited immediate complaints from officials in "industrial nations" throughout Western Europe and Japan. (For a detailed account of the matter, see James Mann's *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, Viking Press, 2004.) The entire business appeared moot regardless, as Bush *père* was ushered from office by Bill Clinton in 1992.

For his part, the lame duck Secretary of Defense issued denials and retreated, but not before amassing the central theses of the Khalilzad DPG into an official, if markedly less candid dissertation, "Defense Strategy for the 1990s: The Regional Defense Strategy." The imperative of preventing the rise of a counterweight to American dominance remains, but is expanded to include the notion of confronting emerging regional dangers in active, rather than reactive fashion:

"We can take advantage of the Cold War's end and the dissolution of the Soviet Union to shift our planning focus to regional threats and challenges. The future of events in major regions remains uncertain. Regional and local actors may pursue hostile agendas through direct confrontation or through such indirect means as subversion and terrorism. The new defense strategy, with its focus on regional matters, seeks to shape this uncertain future and position us to retain the capabilities needed to protect our interests. With this focus we should work with our friends and allies to preclude the emergence of hostile, non-democratic threats to our critical interests and to shape a more secure international environment conducive to our democratic ideals."

As in the original DPG, the option of unilateral action is preserved while skepticism toward international institutions as a useful method of securing American interests, implicit in the original draft, becomes explicit:

"But while we favor collective action to respond to threats and challenges in this new era, a collective response will not always be timely and, in the absence of U.S. leadership, may not gel. While the United States cannot become the world's policeman and assume responsibility for solving every international security problem, neither can we allow our critical interests to depend solely on international mechanisms that can be blocked by countries whose interests may be very different from our own.

"Where our allies' interests are directly affected, we must expect them to take an appropriate share of the responsibility, and in some cases play the leading role; but we must maintain the capabilities for addressing selectively those security problems that threaten our own interests. Such capabilities are essential to our ability to lead, and should international support prove sluggish or inadequate, to act independently, as necessary, to protect our critical interests. History suggests that effective multilateral action is most likely to come about in response to

U.S. leadership, not as an alternative to it. ... Only a nation that is strong enough to act decisively can provide the leadership needed to encourage others to resist aggression.”

Completed in January 1993, the same month Bill Clinton took office, the ideas proffered above predictably evaporated into the ether. During the Clinton years, the national security posture of the United States continued to be that of containment – the pragmatic and calibrated restraint of expansionist or otherwise hostile regimes, stopping short of outright military confrontation – which had served American interests more or less since George Kennan dreamed up the concept in 1944. (Readers interested in Kennan’s theory of containment may consult *The Wise Men*, by Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, Simon and Schuster, 1986.) Somalia and Haiti aside, the United States employed force in concert with friends and allies; Operation Desert Fox, a bombing campaign launched in 1998 as punishment for Saddam Hussein’s recalcitrance toward U.N. weapons inspections, was carried out jointly with the British after extensive consultation between Western leaders.

But to a vocal and increasingly influential cadre of conservative foreign policy analysts, containment was at best pusillanimous accommodation of the enemy, at worst treasonous abjuration of America’s self-evident obligation to lead the free world, and in the post-Cold War era, hopelessly outdated in any case. This group, famously known as “neoconservatives” – inaccurately, in that most of those presently identified as such were extremely conservative to begin with, accurately in that the movement was inaugurated in the 1950s and ‘60s by former socialists, communists and liberals who embraced conservative ideas, particularly in the area of foreign policy – can also be described as conservative internationalists. (A sample of neoconservative thought can be found in *The Essential Neoconservative Reader*, Mark Gerson, editor, Addison Wesley, 1996; *Present Dangers: Crisis and Opportunity in American Foreign and Defense Policy*, edited by Robert Kagan of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Vice President Dan Quayle’s Chief of Staff, William Kristol, Encounter Press, 2000; Kagan’s own *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, Knopf, 2003; and *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror*, authored by former Bush 43 speechwriter David Frum and Richard N. Perle, Assistant Secretary for International Security Policy from 1981 to 1987 under Ronald Reagan and presently an advisor to the Pentagon, Random House, 2003.) Their ideological roots can be traced back to the vigorously interventionist policies of Presidents McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt and Truman; they sometimes identify FDR and Woodrow Wilson as heroes. Latter-day touchstones include social policy oracle Daniel Patrick Moynihan and preeminent Cold Warrior Henry “Scoop” Jackson, two Senate Democrats often described as visionaries by admiring, thoroughly Republican neocons. Neoconservatives forswear the minimalist propensities of isolationists and realists, who prefer to limit foreign policy objectives to dealing with direct threats to national security and maintenance of U.S. economic interests. Firm believers in America as paragon of democracy and defender of liberty, neoconservatives scorn multilateral institutions like the United Nations and World Court as ineffectual and corrupt while putting forth the U.S. military as paramount enforcer and guarantor of global stability. Some neoconservatives, like those belonging to the Project for the New American Century, aspire to expand “zones of democratic peace” to combat and isolate non-democratic, anti-Western regimes and factions, mostly in the Middle East. Many are fervently devoted to the state of Israel and reflexively supportive of the hard-line Likud and its iron-fisted prime minister, Ariel Sharon (affectionately known as “The Bulldozer”). Though they dispense foreign policy directives and opine on American military might (Reagan-era National Security Council consultant and Iran-Contra figure Michael Ledeen’s enthusiasm for “total war” and former U.N. ambassador Ken Adelman’s prediction of a “cakewalk” victory in Iraq spring to mind), few neoconservatives have served in the armed forces. In government or out, their background tends toward academe, journalism or a combination thereof.

Neoconservatives hold prominent positions at the Defense Department (Wolfowitz and Undersecretary of Defense Douglas J. Feith), State Department (Undersecretary for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton and his senior advisor, David Wurmser) and in the White House (the Vice President's man Lewis "Scooter" Libby, and Elliot Abrams, another Iran-Contra player, who heads up Middle East policy for the National Security Council). Outside government, an army of neoconservatives generate white papers and opinion-editorials at a prodigious clip on behalf of public policy institutes such as the Hudson Institute, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), the Center for Security Policy (CSP), and the Project for the New American Century. Acting as reliable echo and occasional spur are publications ranging from the *American Spectator* to *National Review* to the *Weekly Standard* (this last bankrolled by media titan Rupert Murdoch and founded by William Kristol, son of Irving Kristol, regarded by many as the "intellectual father of neoconservatism"), the editorial board of the *Wall Street Journal*, and a assortment of ultra-conservative columnists and authors such as Charles Krauthammer, William Safire and Ann Coulter. Rounding out the side are Fox News anchor Brit Hume and radio talkmeisters Laura Ingraham, Sean Hannity and Rush Limbaugh, to name but three.

Although they hardly agree on every issue, neoconservatives are inclined to view international relations through a prism of black and white. There is no "moral equivalency" between Palestinian suicide bombing and what they see as Israel's right to defend itself, for example. In their eyes, failure to protect harried Kosovar Albanians from the wrath of murderous Serbs would have been tantamount to devil-take-the-hindmost "moral relativism." The foreign policy stance of the United States toward North Korea, Iran and Iraq (or, for that matter, toward China and Russia) must, in the tidy phrase pervasive among neoconservatives, bespeak "moral clarity." In its "Statement of Principles," issued on June 3, 1997, the newly christened Project for the New American Century allowed, "Of course, the United States must be prudent in how it exercises its power. But we cannot safely avoid the responsibilities of global leadership or the costs that are associated with its exercise. America has a vital role in maintaining peace and security in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. If we shirk our responsibilities, we invite challenges to our fundamental interests. The history of the 20th century should have taught us that it is important to shape circumstances before crises emerge, and to meet threats before they become dire. The history of this century should have taught us to embrace the cause of American leadership. ... Such a Reaganite policy of military strength and moral clarity may not be fashionable today. But it is necessary if the United States is to build on the successes of this past century and to ensure our security and our greatness in the next." More, an important aspect of a neoconservative foreign policy, if not the most important, is the promulgation of U.S.-style economic and political liberalism. In this equation, America the benevolent hegemon actively disseminates said precepts around the world (not least the Middle East), thereby propagating wealth and freedom for all and, presumably, enhanced security for the United States. Given the particulars, it's easy to see how the tenets of neoconservatism/conservative internationalism overlap with those of fundamentalist Christian evangelicals and assertive nationalists like Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld, and how this nexus is now the dominant ideological force of a Republican Party that has moved steadily toward the right over the past thirty-five years. It's easier still to see how such simple but immensely ambitious convictions might resonate with a sharply conservative born-again Christian who believes the calling of his presidency is, as he said on September 16, 2001, to "rid the world of the evil-doers."

Through the '90s, the most persistent and vociferous champion of ousting Saddam Hussein – with the arguable exception of Ahmad Chalabi, leader of the Iraqi National Congress, a London-based exile organization founded in 1992 – was Richard Perle, *aka* "The Prince of Darkness." Mr. Perle, disciple of legendary RAND analyst and Cold War

superhawk Albert Wohlstetter, chief sponsor of Chalabi and personal friend to Ariel Sharon, has had an interesting career. According to a May, 1982 *Atlantic Monthly* article by investigative journalist Seymour Hersh and former Illinois congressman Paul Findley's 1989 book *They Dare to Speak Out* (Lawrence Hill, 1985), a 1970 wiretap of the Israeli Embassy by the FBI recorded Perle, then an aide to Scoop Jackson, talking with an unidentified Israeli official about classified information he had obtained from a source within the National Security Council. As noted, Perle later served as President Reagan's Assistant Secretary of Defense (it was during this period that his relentless opposition to arms control agreements with the Soviet Union and pessimistic, sometimes apocalyptic cast of mind earned him the "Prince of Darkness" moniker). Perle's actions came under scrutiny again when the *New York Times* reported in its April 17, 1983 edition that he recommended the Army purchase weapons from Israeli arms dealers Shlomo Zabudowicz and his son, Chaim, a year after accepting a \$50,000 consulting fee from one of their subsidiaries, Tamares Ltd. (Perle denied any conflict of interest, claiming that although he received payment for his efforts after taking the job at Defense, the actual lobbying was done before assuming his post). Perle was a key foreign policy advisor to the Bush campaign in 2000 and thereafter chair of the Defense Policy Board, an unofficial but influential Pentagon advisory group that promoted regime change in Iraq. Though still a member of the board, he resigned as chair on March 27, 2003, when conflict of interest issues arose once more, this time involving Perle's simultaneous status as a special government employee and managing partner for Trireme Partners LP, a venture capital firm that, according to *The New Yorker's* Seymour Hersh ("Lunch with the Chairman," March 17, 2003), invests in projects "of value to homeland security and defense." This development, and the fact that prior to the war Perle received top-secret updates on Iraq and North Korea before briefing Goldman Sachs investors on avenues of profit related to possible hostilities, were enough to merit an investigation by the Defense Department's Inspector General. Though critics contend he had a loophole in the law to thank, Perle was later cleared of ethical wrongdoing. In the summer of 2003, Perle coauthored an opinion article commending a Pentagon plan awarding a contract worth \$17 billion to lease tanker aircraft from Boeing more than a year after the aviation giant pledged to invest \$20 million in Trireme.

Like many of his neoconservative colleagues, when out of government in the 1990s Perle stalked the halls of power at the behest of numerous conservative think tanks. In 1996, as "study group leader" for IASPS, the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Study, Perle presented the incoming Likud government of Binyamin Netanyahu with "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm." Douglas Feith and David Wurmser also contributed. This manifesto is a source of much controversy due to the fact that it contains a salient component of what came to be known as the Bush Doctrine and explicitly argues for regime change in Iraq, and because it calls into question the agenda of top advisors to the President.

After assailing Israel's Labor Party for pursuing a peace process with neighboring Palestinians that "undermine(d) the legitimacy of the nation" while producing "strategic paralysis," the report urged Netanyahu to "work closely with Turkey and Jordan to contain, destabilize, and roll back some its most dangerous threats." Confronting Arab and Muslim enemies like Iran and, above all, Syria and its Lebanese surrogate, Hezbollah, was of paramount importance. As "A Clean Break" would have it, expulsion of the man in Baghdad signified an initial step ideally suited to realizing that goal:

"Israel can shape its strategic environment, in cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, by weakening, containing, and even rolling back Syria. This effort can focus on removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq – an important Israeli strategic objective in its own right – as a means of foiling Syria's regional ambitions. Jordan has challenged Syria's regional ambitions recently by suggesting the restoration of the Hashemites in Iraq." [NB: The Hashemites

administered western Arabia on behalf of the Ottoman Empire prior to World War I. In a series of events too involved to detail here, the British installed the son of the family patriarch, Emir Faisal, as “king” of territories consisting of Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul – present day Iraq – to appease Faisal’s brother, ‘Abdallah, who became ruler of the newly created Transjordan. Descendents of ‘Abdallah have reigned over Jordan ever since.] “This has triggered a Jordanian-Syrian rivalry to which Asad [the infamous Hafez al-Assad, then President of Syria] has responded by stepping up efforts to destabilize the Hashemite Kingdom...”

Coordination with friendly states Turkey and Jordan to purge Hussein and reconstitute Hashemite authority over Iraq would, the authors of “A Clean Break” avouch, essentially quarantine and therefore weaken Syria. Restoration of the Hashemites might also solve the Lebanese problem, for “were the Hashemites to control Iraq, they could use their influence over Najf” (a Shia power base in Iraq historically aligned with the predominantly Shia population of Southern Lebanon) “to help Israel wean the south Lebanese Shia away from Hizballah (sic), Iran, and Syria.”

Suggestions of shaping the strategic environment to Israeli taste pop up elsewhere in the analysis (“Israel’s new strategic agenda can shape the regional environment in ways that grant Israel the room to refocus its energies back to where they are most needed,” i.e. “rebuilding Zionism”), recalling the idea of “shaping” introduced in Dick Cheney’s “Defense Strategy for the 1990s” and anticipating its endorsement four years later by the Project for the New American Century. Richard Perle and his study group also espoused the use of preemptive military force against Israel’s foes and advised adoption of this tactic as state policy:

“Israel’s new agenda can signal a clean break by abandoning a policy which assumed exhaustion and allowed strategic retreat by reestablishing the principle of preemption, rather than retaliation alone and by ceasing to absorb blows to the nation without response.”

“A Clean Break” counsels cultivating U.S. support for preemption (as well as abandonment of the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords, the “*right of hot pursuit* for self defense into all Palestinian areas,” and attempts to isolate Yasser Arafat) by emphasizing a “*shared philosophy* of peace through strength” that “reflect(s) continuity with Western values” such as self-reliance. The new Prime Minister should “highlight his desire to cooperate more closely with the United States on anti-missile defense,” a move that would not only “counter a tangible threat to Israel’s survival, but ... would *broaden Israel’s base of support among many in the United States Congress* who may know little about Israel, but care very much about missile defense.” (All italics original.) Gaining U.S. backing for policies “based on an entirely *new intellectual foundation*” required a selling job finely attuned to American sensibilities: “To anticipate U.S. reactions and plan ways to manage and constrain those reactions, Prime Minister Netanyahu can formulate the policies and stress themes he favors in language familiar to the Americans by tapping into themes of American administrations during the Cold War which apply well to Israel.”

What’s striking about “A Clean Break,” a set of prescriptions to “secure the realm” of Israel envisioned and authored by citizens of the United States, is the emphatically nationalistic tenor it sustains throughout:

“We in Israel cannot play innocents abroad in a world that is not innocent. Peace depends on the character and behavior of our foes. We live in a dangerous neighborhood, with fragile states and bitter rivalries. Displaying *moral ambivalence* between the effort to build a Jewish state and the desire to annihilate it by trading ‘*land for peace*’ will not secure ‘*peace now.*’ Our claim to the land – to which we have clung for hope for 2000 years – is legitimate and noble. ... [All italics original.]

"We must distinguish soberly and clearly friend from foe. We must make sure that our friends across the Middle East never doubt the solidity or value of our friendship. ... As a senior Iraqi opposition leader said recently: 'Israel must rejuvenate and revitalize its moral and intellectual leadership. It is an important – if not the most important – element in the history of the Middle East.' Israel – proud, wealthy, solid, and strong – would be the basis of a truly new and peaceful Middle East."

In view of the Bush Administration's acceptance of preemption as a valid foreign policy posture and implementation of same in Iraq, such sentiments (along with exhortations to "stress themes in language familiar to the Americans" that "will be well received in the United States") invite speculation about the motives of men like Perle, Feith, and Wurmser. Douglas Feith has received an award by the Zionist Organization of America lauding his efforts as a "pro-Israel activist" and in a September 1997 *Commentary* article titled "A Strategy for Israel," he called for reoccupation of "areas under Palestinian Authority control," acknowledging, "the price in blood would be high." It was Feith, along with David Wurmser (at least initially) who created the Pentagon's "Office of Special Plans," an outfit now alleged to have collected selective, consistently alarmist prewar intelligence about Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction program and delivered it, absent CIA (or NSA, or DIA) review, to the Vice President's office. According to an article by *American Conservative* editor Pat Buchanan ("Whose War?" March 24, 2003):

"Wurmser, as a resident scholar at AEI (American Enterprise Institute), drafted joint war plans for Israel and the United States 'to fatally strike the centers of radicalism in the Middle East. Israel and the United States should ... broaden the conflict to strike fatally, not merely disarm, the centers of radicalism in the region – the regimes of Damascus, Baghdad, Tripoli, Tehran, and Gaza. That would establish the recognition that fighting either the United States or Israel is suicidal.' He urged both nations to be on the lookout for a crisis, for as he wrote, 'Crises can be opportunities.' Wurmser published his U.S.-Israeli war plan on January 1, 2001, *nine months before 9/11.*"

Wurmser and Feith hold key positions within the national security apparatus of the United States and have been variously aligned with public policy institutes that hew closely to the Likud line and regard American and Israeli foreign policy aims as interchangeable. Before returning to the Pentagon in 2000, Feith served on the board of both the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) and the strongly pro-Likud Center for Security Policy (CSP); Wurmser was a resident fellow in Middle Eastern Affairs at the American Enterprise Institute, another Likud supporter. JINSA's mission statement reads, in part, "U.S.-Israel strategic cooperation is a vital component in the global security equation for the United States, and has been at the heart of JINSA's mission since its inception in 1976. The Middle East remains the focal point of American security policy because of the confluence of energy, money, weapons and ideology. The inherent instability in the region caused primarily by inter-Arab rivalries and the secular/religious split in many Muslim societies leaves the future of the region in doubt. Israel, with its technological capabilities and shared system of values, has a key role to play as a U.S. ally in the region." The mission statement continues, "Israel is threatened by both the military capabilities of the Arab world and Iran, and the increasingly internationalized funding and arming of terrorists in the West Bank, Gaza and in Lebanon. Israel's need for secure, recognized and defensible borders is unquestioned," and unless and until Arab countries recognize the legitimacy of an Israeli state, "the U.S. must remain committed to helping maintain Israel's technological capabilities and must be cognizant of its and Israel's security needs when selling advanced weapons to the Arab world..." Similar views are held by Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz (after Donald Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and subordinate Feith are the highest ranking civilian Pentagon administrators), Wurmser's boss John Bolton (number five at State) and the Vice President's Chief of Staff Lewis Libby, not to speak of JINSA, CSP advisor Richard

Perle. As *The Nation's* Jason Vest indicates in a September 2, 2002 article, "The Men from JINSA and CSP," the hawkish Defense Policy Board which Feith assembled and Perle once chaired is "stacked" with JINSA and CSP members, prominent among them former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, former CIA Director James Woolsey, Fred Iklé, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy in the Reagan Administration, and retired Navy Admiral David Jeremiah.

A March 31, 2004 *Asia Times* article reported the Inter Press Service unearthed comments made by Philip Zelikow, a personal friend of National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, executive director of the 9/11 Commission and member of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, which reports directly to the President, from 2001 to 2003. Speaking on a panel of foreign policy analysts discoursing on 9/11 and the al Qaeda threat, Zelikow told a University of Virginia audience on September 10, 2002,

"Why would Iraq attack America or use nuclear weapons against us? I'll tell you what I think the real threat [is] and actually has been since 1990 – it's the threat against Israel. ... And this is the threat that dare not speak its name, because the Europeans don't care deeply about that threat, I will tell you frankly. And the American government doesn't want to lean too hard on it rhetorically, because it's not a popular sell."

Zelikow said Saddam Hussein was set to spend vast sums of "scarce hard currency" to avert communications disruptions related to a nuclear explosion, "a perfectly absurd expenditure unless you were going to ride out a nuclear exchange." The Iraqi regime was "not preparing to ride out a nuclear exchange with us," Zelikow asserted. "Those were preparations to ride out a nuclear exchange with the Israelis." Zelikow added that if chemical and biological weapons fell into the hands of Hamas, such weapons would threaten Israel, not the United States:

"Play out those scenarios, and I will tell you, people have thought about that, but they are just not talking very much about it. ... Don't look at the links between Iraq and al Qaeda, but then ask yourself the question, 'Gee, is Iraq tied to Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the people who are carrying out suicide bombings in Israel?' Easy question to answer; the evidence is abundant."

While it is impossible to know for sure, it's a legitimate question to ask what part a prior and presumably continuing allegiance to the ultra-nationalist, nakedly militaristic policies associated with Likud played in the guidance these advisors gave the President in the run up to Operation Iraqi Freedom. It is likewise reasonable to ask whether what is good for Israel is, *ipso facto*, good for the United States. America today is more feared, more hated, and more isolated than at any time in history. One reason why is the perception and inarguable reality that Administration support for the tactics and stratagems of Ariel Sharon amount to a blank check. In November 2003, the European Union Executive Commission surveyed opinion regarding Iraq and world peace. The poll found that 59% of Europeans saw Israel as the number one threat to peace. The United States, Iran and North Korea tied for second place, at 53% each; and Iraq was third, with 52%. Overwhelmingly, Arabs and Muslims presuppose American bias in favor of Israel's handling of the second Palestinian *infitada* (sparked by then-Likud Party leader Sharon's September 28, 2000 visit to an East Jerusalem holy site revered by Israelis as the Temple Mount and Arabs as the al Aqsa Mosque). The fact that Israel deploys American-made F-16 fighter jets and Apache attack helicopters to root out terror groups, killing innumerable innocents along the way, does little to dispel this appraisal. As Iraq war critic Michael Lind, a senior fellow at the New America Foundation and author of "Made in Texas: George W. Bush and the Southern Takeover of American Politics," wrote in April of last year:

"It is not clear that George W. fully understands the grand strategy that Wolfowitz and other aides are unfolding. He seems genuinely to believe that there was an imminent threat to the

U.S. from Saddam Hussein's 'weapons of mass destruction,' something the leading Neocons say in public but are far too intelligent to believe themselves. The Project for the New American Century urged an invasion of Iraq throughout the Clinton years, for reasons that had nothing to do with possible links between Saddam and Osama Bin Laden.

"Public letters signed by Wolfowitz and others called on the U.S. to invade and occupy Iraq, to bomb Hezbollah bases in Lebanon and to threaten states such as Syria and Iran with U.S. attacks if they continued to sponsor terrorism. Claims that the purpose is not to protect the American people but to make the Middle East safe for Israel are dismissed by the Neocons as vicious anti-Semitism. Yet Syria, Iran and Iraq are bitter enemies, with their weapons pointed at each other, and the terrorists they sponsor target Israel rather than the U.S. The Neocons urge war with Iran next, though by any rational measurement North Korea's new nuclear arsenal is, for the U.S., a far greater problem." ("The Weird Men Behind George W. Bush's War," *The New Statesman*, April 7, 2003.)

The letters to which Lind refers, or rather the one that garnered the most attention at the time, was sent to President Clinton and published in major newspapers on January 26, 1998. (A representative sampling: "We urge you ... to enunciate a new strategy that would secure the interests of the U.S. and our friends and allies around the world. That strategy should aim, above all, at the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime from power. ... It hardly needs to be added that if Saddam does acquire the capability to deliver weapons of mass destruction, as he is almost certain to do if we continue along the present course, the safety of American troops in the region, of our friends and allies like Israel and the moderate Arab states, and a significant portion of the world's supply of oil will all be put at hazard. ... The only acceptable strategy is one that eliminates the possibility that Iraq will be able to use or threaten to use weapons of mass destruction. In the near term, this means a willingness to undertake military action as diplomacy is clearly failing. In the long term, it means removing Saddam Hussein and his regime from power. That now needs to become the aim of American foreign policy. ... American policy cannot continue to be crippled by a misguided insistence on unanimity in the UN Security Council. ... We urge you to act decisively. ... If we accept a course of weakness and drift, we put our interests and our future at risk.") The letter's leading signatories included Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Armitage (now Deputy Secretary of State), John Bolton, Elliot Abrams, James Woolsey, and William Kristol, all members of The Project for the New American Century.

Two years later, this alliance (plus "Scooter" Libby, minus Rumsfeld and Abrams) manufactured "Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century," a treatise that sounds the by now familiar themes of sustaining American economic and military preeminence, "shaping" regional events rather than reacting to them and creating "zones of peace." It also includes proposals that became major policy objectives of the second Bush Administration, such as increased defense spending, transformation of the military and expansion of its international reach, development of tactical nuclear weapons and – an aspiration near and dear to neoconservative hearts – construction of a global missile defense system. "Rebuilding America's Defenses" is notable as well in its appeal for an enduring U.S. hand in the Persian Gulf:

"... [The] United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein. ... From an American perspective, the value of [U.S. military bases in Saudi Arabia] would endure even should Saddam pass from the scene. Over the long term, Iran may well prove as large a threat to U.S. interests in the Gulf than Iraq has. And even should U.S.-Iranian relations improve, retaining forward-based forces in the region would still be an

essential element in U.S. security strategy given the longstanding American interests in the region.”

For the first time, precise mention is made of a malevolent troika that threatens international security and, the authors caution (using a synonym destined to enter the popular lexicon), the U.S. itself:

“The current American peace will be short-lived if the United States becomes vulnerable to rogue powers with small, inexpensive arsenals of ballistic missiles and nuclear warheads or other weapons of mass destruction. We cannot allow North Korea, Iran, Iraq or similar states to undermine American leadership, intimidate American allies or threaten the American homeland ...”

While there is no overt reference to a policy of preemption, the option is at least implicit in “Rebuilding America’s Defenses” closing proclamation:

“Keeping the American peace requires the U.S. military to undertake a broad array of missions today and rise to very different challenges tomorrow, but there can be no retreat from these missions without compromising American leadership and the benevolent order it secures. This is the choice we face. It is not a choice between preeminence today and preeminence tomorrow. Global leadership is not something exercised at our leisure, when the mood strikes us or when our core national security interests are directly threatened; then it is already too late.”

And then, of course, came 9/11.

To President Bush, September 11, 2001 represented “the Pearl Harbor of the 21st century,” the first salvo in a new era of asymmetrical warfare against an enemy bent on the abolition of Western culture and willing to do anything to realize that objective. More, it represented an epic struggle between darkness and light. “We are here in the middle hour of our grief,” Bush acknowledged at a national prayer service held September 14. “But our responsibility to history is already clear: To answer these attacks and rid the world of evil.” Six days later, speaking to a joint session of Congress, he expanded on this theme, declaring, “What is at stake is not just America’s freedom. This is the world’s fight. This is civilization’s fight. ... Great harm has been done to us. We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment. Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom – the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time – now depends on us. Our nation – this generation – will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail. ... The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them.” The grand work awaiting America in a dawning age of “new and uncertain challenges” demanded bold action:

“Our war on terror begins with Al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated. ... Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen. We will starve terrorists of funding, turn them one against another, drive them from place to place, until there is no refuge or no rest. And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.”

The President had actually enunciated the principle of holding states that sponsor or shelter terrorists to account when he spoke to the nation the night of the attacks (“We will

make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them”), thus establishing the basic premise upon which the expedient of preemption rests. Neither speech proposed war with Iraq, but as Bob Woodward reports in *Bush at War* (Simon and Schuster, 2002), Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld broached precisely that option at a National Security Council meeting convened on September 12. (In early 2004, former Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neill, who was fired nearly two years into his tenure, alleged planning for the removal of Saddam Hussein began as early as January 30, 2001, the date of the Bush team’s first National Security Council meeting, which was attended by the President. In *The Price of Loyalty* [Simon and Schuster, 2004], written by Pulitzer-prize winning reporter Ron Suskind and backed up by 19,000 Treasury Department documents furnished by O’Neill, Rumsfeld purportedly stated at an NSC meeting two days later that expulsion of Hussein would “demonstrate what U.S. policy is all about” and aid in transforming the Middle East. Richard A. Clarke, former White House counter-terrorism czar for President Clinton and “cybersecurity” chief to the second President Bush, made similar charges, under oath before The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, informally known as the 9/11 Commission, and in his own book, *Against All Enemies* [Free Press, 2004]. Woodward’s *Plan of Attack* [Simon and Schuster, 2004] revealed Bush 43 requested that Rumsfeld prepare a war strategy for Iraq on November 21, 2001, ten weeks after 9/11. Readers of *The New Yorker* were perhaps less surprised than many by such revelations; the January 22, 2001 edition contained an article, “The Iraq Factor,” which matter-of-factly relates a clear and openly expressed appetite for regime change in Iraq on the part of incoming Bush advisors and officials.)

At a Pentagon press briefing on September 13, 2001, Deputy Defense Secretary Wolfowitz made explicit what the President’s previous statements had only implied, moving the football downfield in the process. “It’s not just simply a matter of capturing people and holding them accountable,” asserted Wolfowitz, “but removing the sanctuaries, removing the support systems, ending states who sponsor terrorism.” At a September 15 NSC meeting, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice wondered if military force might be employed successfully beyond Afghanistan, where bin Laden’s al Qaeda network was based. Rumsfeld again raised the possibility of invading Iraq first while Wolfowitz, somewhat impertinently, according to Woodward, “seized the opportunity.” As *Bush at War* recounts, “Attacking Afghanistan would be uncertain. He [Wolfowitz] worried about 100,000 American troops bogged down in mountain fighting in Afghanistan six months from then. In contrast Iraq was a brittle, oppressive regime that might break easily. It was doable.” This rather dubious proposition was rejected by the President the same week Richard Perle denounced “Vichyite defeatism” among the British commentariat whilst calling for regime change in both Iraq and Syria in the pages of the *Daily Telegraph*. On the evening of September 20, Bush spoke before Congress to a shaken nation. Earlier that day, the Project for the New American Century published yet another open letter to a President, suggesting a possible link between al Qaeda and Iraq and insisting on “full military and financial support of the Iraqi opposition” in service of ousting Saddam Hussein. “Failure to undertake such an effort,” warned the PNAC, “will constitute an early and perhaps decisive surrender in the war on international terrorism.” The letter also pressed for increased military spending and unhesitating assistance to “our fellow democracy” Israel “in its fight against terrorism, demanding as well that “appropriate measures of retaliation” be brought to bear upon Iran and Syria should their patronage of Hezbollah continue. It was signed by a virtual who’s who of the neoconservative elite, including William Kristol, Bill Bennett, Robert Kagan and the ubiquitous Perle.

If Bush originally tabled action against Iraq, by the time he delivered his first post-September 11th State of the Union address – the celebrated “Axis of Evil” speech – the President’s national security prospectus had grown considerably. Singling out Iraq, Iran and

North Korea (keen spectators detected a full paragraph devoted to the iniquitous doings of the former, a sentence each to the latter), President Bush served official notice that “regimes that sponsor terror” were now in the Administration’s crosshairs. He emphasized the threat of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, a threat that would become the Administration’s *casus belli* and primary means of public suasion in building the case for war with Iraq (initially, anyway). “By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger,” Bush proclaimed. “They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States.” Though no mention was made of “preemption,” an unlikely rhetorical choice in any event, the President’s words left little doubt as to his broader intentions: “And all nations should know: America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation’s security. We will be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons.”

With the qualified exceptions of Secretary of State Colin Powell and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, from this juncture on Administration officials began banging the drums of war, loudly and in persistently exaggerated fashion. Their key talking points included allegations that Saddam Hussein (according to President Bush) “could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year” which might be directed against regional allies or, somehow, the United States, the possibility that Iraq might use or share chemical and biological weapons with terrorist groups, overt linkage of the regime to al Qaeda, and frequent invocation of 9/11. A litany of by-now familiar claims is representative. Vice President Cheney, speaking to a Veterans of Foreign Wars convention held in Nashville on August 26, 2002: “Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us.” National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, September 8, 2002: “We don’t want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud.” President Bush employed the same metaphor in Cincinnati on October 7, 2002, adding, “We’ve learned that Iraq has trained al Qaeda members in bomb-making and poisons and deadly gases.” Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, January 23, 2003: “Iraq’s weapons of mass terror and the terror networks to which the Iraqi regime are linked are not two separate themes – not two separate threats. They are part of the same threat.” And later, the President during his January 28, 2003 State of the Union address: “Our intelligence officials estimate that Saddam Hussein had the materials to produce as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard and VX nerve agent. In such quantities, these chemical agents could also kill untold thousands. ... The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. Our intelligence sources tell us that he has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear weapons production.” (The last two accusations have occasioned considerable controversy, as both appear to be untrue.) “Evidence from intelligence sources, secret communications, and statements by people now in custody reveal that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of al Qaeda. Secretly, and without fingerprints, he could provide one of his hidden weapons to terrorists, or help them develop their own. Before September the 11th, many in the world believed that Saddam Hussein could be contained. But chemical agents, lethal viruses and shadowy terrorist networks are not easily contained. Imagine those 19 hijackers with other weapons and other plans – this time armed by Saddam Hussein.”

The hyperbolic timbre of these charges was meant to convey an impression of impending, unavoidable calamity magnitudes greater than September 11th and the corresponding necessity to take immediate, decisive action to obviate that possibility. It is easy to see why. From Jimmy Carter to Bill Clinton, every post-Vietnam President has been

acutely aware that public attitudes toward armed engagement abroad range from ambivalent to deeply skeptical. Americans, it is thought, like their wars short, antiseptic and casualty free. But as *The New Yorker's* Nicholas Lemann reported in early 2002, "Inside government, the reason September 11th appears to have been 'a transformative moment,' as the senior official I had lunch with put it, is not so much that it revealed the existence of a threat of which officials had previously been unaware as that it drastically reduced the American public's resistance to American military involvement overseas, at least for awhile." To a traumatized nation newly acquainted with the notion that the most powerful country in the world is vulnerable to attack on its own shores, the idea of getting the bad guy before he gets you had an understandable appeal. (The fact that many Americans still believe Saddam Hussein was connected to 9/11 – a conviction encouraged in no small measure by the Bush Administration – grants credence to this supposition.) The historic, wholly extraordinary quality of September 11th provided those who had long sought regime change in Iraq and fundamental redefinition of America's national security policy an opening, one which National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, a nominal "realist" lately won over to their cause, described in Lemann's *New Yorker* article as a "shifting (of) tectonic plates in international politics." It was important, said Rice, "to try to seize on that and position American interests and institutions and all of that before they harden again." Rice had duly consulted with her staff to ascertain how the United States might "capitalize on these opportunities." ("The Next World Order," *The New Yorker*, April 1, 2002.)

In the spring of 2002, the Administration began to articulate the contours of a new national security strategy so audacious pundits instantly gave it a name – the Bush Doctrine. (Believe it or not, there was actually something called the Carter Doctrine, but generally speaking, American political history confers this imposing appellation upon the momentous foreign policy pronouncements of just two Presidents, Monroe and Truman, respectively.) The strategy contained two basic precepts. The first assumption, that America would not distinguish between terrorist groups and countries sponsoring or harboring them, was radical enough. In essence, this meant that failed states (like Yemen and Sudan) and hostile regimes (the "Axis of Evil," plus Syria, Libya and Cuba) were now on notice that while recognized as sovereign states by the United Nations and hence ostensibly protected from attack by its charter, these "bad actors" would nonetheless be answerable to American justice, sovereign or no. The second premise, at first blush, held that the U.S. reserved the right to "defend the American homeland" through preemptive means, diverging sharply from both post-World War II international norms and (with a handful of notable if ill-defined exceptions) from longstanding national security policy.

As Professor James J. Wirtz and James A. Russell recount in their essay "U.S. Policy on Preventive War and Preemption" (*The Nonproliferation Review*, Spring 2003), after an 1837 British preemptive assault on the *USS Caroline*, Secretary of State Daniel Webster classified the circumstances under which preemptive strikes were justified: when the attack is proportional to the threat, and when "the necessity of that self-defense is instant, overwhelming, and leaving no choice of means and no moment for deliberation." Prior to World War II, international law permitted the use of force in self-defense. Afterward, the United Nations (itself the brainchild of an American President, Franklin Roosevelt) sought to circumscribe legal justification for application of military force, enshrining the standard of "sovereign equality" to secure the political independence and territorial integrity of member countries against the threat or use of arms. States in breach of this edict were subject to the collective response of their U.N. peers. Wirtz and Russell cite a recent study by the Congressional Research Service, the public policy research apparatus of the U.S. Congress, which concluded the United States has never initiated a preemptive attack on another country, and, save the Spanish-American War, never done so without first suffering attack. Opponents of American policy, however, dismiss the report's characterization of preemptive

action “to prevent or mitigate the threat or use of force by another country against the U.S.” as too narrow an interpretation, plausibly referencing assorted adventures in Central and South America and U.S. involvement in Vietnam to buttress their objections. Richard Nixon’s secret bombing of technically neutral Cambodia and incursions into Laos during the Vietnam period argue the same case. One also wonders which portfolio “muscular interventions” in Grenada, Panama and Haiti – all occurring between 1983 and 1994 – fall into. What’s clear is that the American people have always thought unilateral, preemptive acts of aggression the province of rogue states and belligerent dictators, something morally abhorrent and rightfully beyond the ethical strictures of a great and good nation. (Robert Kennedy’s “It would be Pearl Harbor in reverse!” reaction to advice that brother John authorize surprise bombing of Cuba during the 1962 Missile Crisis speaks to this attitude.) In a survey released on November 5, 2003, “The 2004 Political Landscape: Evenly Divided and Increasingly Polarized,” the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press reported,

“As might be expected, opinions on whether military strength ensures peace are related to attitudes toward the preemptive use of military force against potential enemies. Overall, 20% of Americans believe that the use of military force is often justified against countries that may threaten the U.S. but have not attacked, while 43% say such force is sometimes justified. About a third (32%) say it is rarely (19%) or never (13%) justified.”

Yet regardless of the carefully selected term of art chosen by Administration officials to describe it, the Bush Doctrine goes well beyond the use of preemptive military force in a single, discrete instance, crossing a threshold into the exponentially more controversial realm of preventive war.

On June 1, 2002, President Bush spoke to the graduating class of the United States Military Academy at West Point. Though the relevant remarks of his address comprise but three short paragraphs, they contain, in embryonic form, an outline of the policy to follow:

“For much of the last century, America’s defense relied on the Cold War doctrines of deterrence and containment. In some cases, those strategies still apply. But new threats also require new thinking. Deterrence – the promise of massive retaliation against nations – means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies.

We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly sign nonproliferation treaties, and then systematically break them. If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long.

Homeland defense and missile defense are part of stronger security, and they’re essential priorities for America. Yet the war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge. In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act.”

In August of that year, delivering the same speech in which he confidently and unequivocally avowed there was “no doubt” Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and was amassing them to use against the United States and its friends, Vice President Cheney used near identical language to elucidate the Bush Doctrine. Responding to muted criticism of the Administration’s by now well-advertised designs on Iraq and concerns voiced by old foreign policy hands (Bush 41 National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, the first establishment elder to raise questions in an August 15, 2002 *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, and two of Poppy’s Secretaries of State, James Baker and Larry Eagleburger prominent among them) that perhaps things were moving a bit too quickly relative to invasion plans, Cheney expounded further on the Administration’s new direction:

“America in the year 2002 must ask careful questions, not merely about our past, but also about our future. The elected leaders of this country have a responsibility to consider all of the available options. And we are doing so. What we must not do in the face of a mortal threat is give in to wishful thinking or willful blindness. We will not simply look away, hope for the best, and leave the matter for some future administration to resolve. As President Bush has said, time is not on our side. Deliverable weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a terror network, or a murderous dictator, or the two working together, constitutes as grave a threat as can be imagined. The risks of inaction are far greater than the risk of action.

“I am familiar with the arguments against taking action in the case of Saddam Hussein. Some concede that Saddam is evil, power-hungry, and a menace – but that, until he crosses the threshold of actually possessing nuclear weapons, we should rule out any preemptive action. That logic seems to me to be deeply flawed. The argument comes down to this: yes, Saddam is as dangerous as we say he is, we just need to let him get stronger before we do anything about it. ... Many of those who now argue that we should act only if he gets a nuclear weapon would then turn around and say that we cannot act because he has a nuclear weapon. At bottom, that argument counsels a course of inaction that itself could have devastating consequences for many countries, including our own.”

Solidification of this philosophy into official policy came with the release of the National Security Strategy of the United States of America, issued in September 2002. Much of the NSS affirms principles traditionally held by the United States, such as support for free trade and human rights (a short introductory missive signed by the President states that “no nation can build a safer, better world alone” and vows continued backing of “alliances and multilateral institutions” like the U.N.). But the meat of the text highlights positions that fairly leap from the page both in terms of forcefulness of language and the novel course they set for American foreign policy:

“While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against ... terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country.” America would disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations by “denying further sponsorship, support and sanctuary to terrorists by convincing or compelling states to accept their sovereign responsibilities.”

“We must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States or our allies and friends. ... [W]hen necessary,” the United States will “interdict enabling technologies and materials.”

“Given the goals of rogue states and terrorists, the United States can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture, as we have in the past. The inability to deter a potential attacker, the immediacy of today’s threats, and the magnitude of potential harm that could be caused by our adversaries’ choice of weapons, do not permit that option. We cannot let our enemies strike first.”

“In the Cold War ... we faced a generally status quo, risk-averse adversary. Deterrence was an effective defense. But deterrence based only upon the threat of retaliation is less likely to work against rogue states... Traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy. ... The overlap between states that sponsor terror and those that pursue WMD compels us to action.”

“For centuries, international law recognized that nations need not suffer an attack before they can lawfully take action to defend themselves against forces that present an imminent danger of attack. Legal scholars and international jurists often conditioned the legitimacy of preemption on the existence of an imminent threat – most often a visible mobilization of

armies, navies, and air forces preparing to attack. ...We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today's adversaries."

"The United States has long maintained the option of preemptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security. The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction – and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively."

Chapter VII, Article 51 of the U.N. charter grants member states the "inherent right of individual or collective self-defense against armed attack." In their article "U.S. Policy on Preventive War and Preemption," Professors Wirtz and Russell refer to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1368, which authorized any member state to take "all necessary steps to respond to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations." The authors therefore deduce, correctly, that "the United States is well within its legal rights to destroy terrorism and terrorists." Even so, the idea of a particular state instigating a "preventive" war, or series of them, enjoys no legitimacy whatever under international law, never mind international opinion. Wirtz and Russell write that because "realist definitions of international relations ... are based on the assumption that states find themselves in an anarchical environment" (essentially, the chaotic, dog-eat-dog world depicted by 17th century English philosopher and political theoretician Thomas Hobbes) "justification for preventive war is embedded in the very nature of international relations" as "the possibility that others will engage in aggression at some point in the future can never be ruled out." Wirtz and Russell nonetheless concede that "states that decide to eliminate this fundamental uncertainty about others' future intentions by launching preventive wars and preemptive attacks are usually known to history as the aggressor in a given conflict. History also suggests that states that act aggressively always justify their action on the grounds of self-defense..."

Previous American Presidents expressed a dim view of preventive war as well. Harry Truman rejected the counsel of Secretary of the Navy Francis P. Mathews, who urged war with the Soviet Union to force a genuine peace. "I have always been opposed, even to the thought of such a war," Truman later wrote. "There is nothing more foolish than to think that war can be stopped by war. You don't 'prevent' anything by war except peace." (This from a man who ordered atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.) Though Eisenhower prepared a nuclear preemptive strike on the Soviets should intelligence indicate an imminent attack, he expressly eliminated preventive war as a valid option. At a 1954 press conference, Ike averred, "A preventive war, in my mind, is an impossibility. ... I don't believe there is such a thing, and frankly I wouldn't even listen to anyone seriously that came in and talked about such a thing." Given the low repute in which the practice is held, it is unsurprising that nowhere in the pages of the National Security Strategy of the United States, or the orations of Administration officials, is the phrase "preventive war" to be found.

What, then, lies behind the Bush Doctrine and its embrace of preventive war in Iraq? To begin with, proponents claim, demonstrated willingness to go after rogue states and hostile regimes sends an unmistakable message, especially in the Middle East. In October 2001, The PBS documentary program *Frontline* asked Richard Perle why he thought deposing Saddam Hussein would eventually put an end to terrorism. "Because," said Perle, "having destroyed the Taliban, having destroyed Saddam's regime, the message to the others is, 'You're next.' Two words. Very efficient diplomacy." According to this thesis, al Qaeda and state sponsors of terrorism in the Arab world interpreted nearly twenty years of inaction and half-measures in countering terrorism as proof of American weakness. After September 11th,

the time had come, finally, to respond in kind. Professor Bernard Lewis, a historian of Islamic culture much in favor at the Bush White House after 9/11 and prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom, informed senior foreign policy advisors that above all, Arabs respect unbending resolve and the power to back it up. If America took decisive action and followed through, the argument went, the dreaded “Arab street,” momentarily inflamed, would eventually accept an irreversible situation and subside. Additional preemptive strikes or preventive wars might be necessary to underscore the point, however. Then again, as Perle suggests, perhaps not: the U.S. invasion of Iraq could serve as an object example to other regimes that the price of messing with Uncle Sam is high indeed. By this logic, continued survival for such states entails getting out of the terror business altogether. In national security parlance, successful realization of this aim is known as coercion or “compellence,” a happy state of affairs in which threat of further force is enough to induce compliance from wayward regimes.

But the agenda embodied by the Bush Doctrine and its sponsors is far more ambitious than the mere deterrence of threat via preventive war. A primary objective is nothing less than transformation of the Middle East. In his August 2002 speech to the VFW Convention, Vice President Cheney stated:

“Regime change in Iraq would bring about a number of benefits to the region. When the gravest of threats is eliminated, the freedom-loving peoples of the region will have a chance to promote the values that can bring lasting peace. As for the reaction of the Arab ‘street,’ the Middle East expert Professor Fouad Ajami [another scholar who enjoys significant influence among the Administration’s inner circle] predicts that after liberation, the streets in Basra and Baghdad are ‘sure to erupt in joy in the same way the throngs in Kabul greeted the Americans.’ Extremists in the region would have to rethink their strategy of Jihad. Moderates throughout the region would take heart. And our ability to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process would be enhanced, just as it was following the liberation of Kuwait in 1991.”

A month before Cheney made these comments, Richard Perle, at that point still chair of the Defense Policy Board, invited RAND analyst and one-time Lyndon LaRouche acolyte Laurent Murawiec to deliver a PowerPoint seminar to group members. With a flamboyance he would come to rue, Murawiec described Saudi Arabia as “the kernel of evil ... central to the self-destruction of the Arab world and the chief vector of the Arab crisis and its outwardly-directed aggression ... active at every level of the terror chain, from planners to financiers, from cadre to foot-soldier, from ideologist to cheerleader.” Should the House of Saud prove remiss in ending generous funding of rabidly anti-Western Wahhabist “education centers” (known as *madrassahs*) in the Muslim world, dismantling Islamic charities, prosecuting terrorists (including Saudi intelligence officers), and terminating “all anti-U.S., anti- Israel, anti-Western” propaganda, the United States would impound Saudi financial assets and invade the country, seizing oil fields and occupying the holy city of Mecca. Summing up, Murawiec submitted a “grand strategy for the Middle East,” with “Iraq (as) the tactical pivot, Saudi Arabia the strategic pivot” and, inscrutably, “Egypt the prize.” Once leaked, the content of this lecture provoked protest and consternation in both Washington and Riyadh, sending Murawiec and Perle scrambling for cover. Due to Dr. Murawiec’s suspect reputation and the excessive remedies advocated in his presentation – and because after predictable disavowals, none of the participants uttered a word to the press – the episode was portrayed in media reports as a comical, if mildly disquieting, oddity.

Yet the incident accented attitudes common among many influential backers of the Bush Doctrine. Seven months before the United States invaded Iraq, the *Boston Globe* reported that recasting the political environment of the Middle East, a policy “pushed for years by some Washington think tanks and in hawkish circles,” had gained traction within the Administration. Supporters of a “democratic domino effect” anticipated the

destabilization and collapse of terrorist-subsidizing regimes in Syria and Iran after the demise of initial “domino” Saddam Hussein. The *Globe* mentioned statements by Vice President Cheney that a friendly Iraq would somehow bolster American leverage in achieving peace between Palestinians and Israelis, noting “a powerful corollary of the strategy is that a pro-U.S. Iraq would make the region safer for Israel and, indeed, its [the policy’s] staunchest proponents are ardent supporters of the Israeli right wing.” One of those proponents, the Hudson Institute’s Meyrav Wurmser (wife of senior State Department advisor David Wurmser), put it this way: “Look, we already are pushing for democracy in the Palestinian Authority – though not with a huge amount of success – and we need a little bit more of a heavy-handed approach. But if we can get a democracy in the Palestinian Authority, democracy in Iraq, get the Egyptians to improve their human rights and open their system, it will be spectacular change. After a war with Iraq, then you really shape the region.”

Other adherents to the democratic domino theory were more explicit. In his book *The War Against the Terror Masters* (St. Martin’s Press, 2002), Michael Ledeen, ex-Pentagon consultant and resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, stipulated that Americans must “reconcile our democratic values with the necessity of imposing our will” in order to “bring down the terror regimes, beginning with the Big Three: Iran, Iraq, and Syria.” Having dispensed with this triad, the United States would then target Saudi Arabia. “Stability is an unworthy American mission,” insisted Ledeen. “We do not want stability in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and even in Saudi Arabia: we want things to change. The real issue is not whether, but how to destabilize. ... Creative destruction is our middle name. ... Our enemies have always hated this whirlwind of energy and creativity which menaces their traditions ... and shames them for their inability to keep pace ... we must destroy them to advance our historic mission.” In the October 29, 2001 edition of the *Weekly Standard*, Bill Kristol and Robert Kagan foresaw a worldwide conflagration pitting Muslims against the West – a “clash of civilizations,” as Bernard Lewis had it. (The September 1990 *Atlantic Monthly* featured the first appearance of this now famous phrase in an article penned by Lewis, “The Roots of Muslim Rage,” who wrote, “It should by now be clear that we are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations – the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both. It is crucially important that we on our side should not be provoked into an equally historic but also equally irrational reaction against that rival.”) “When all is said and done,” predicted Kristol and Kagan, “the conflict in Afghanistan will be to the war on terrorism what the North Africa campaign was to World War II: an essential beginning on the path to victory. But compared with what looms over the horizon – a wide-ranging war in locales from Central Asia to the Middle East and, unfortunately, back again to the United States – Afghanistan will prove but an opening battle. ... But this war will not end in Afghanistan. It is going to spread and engulf a number of countries in conflicts of varying intensity. It could well require the use of American military power in multiple places simultaneously. It is going to resemble the clash of civilizations that everyone has hoped to avoid.” Another leading neoconservative light, *Commentary* magazine’s editor-at-large Norman Podhoretz, informed readers that having successfully prosecuted World War III (the Cold War), the West must now prepare for “World War IV” – the looming conflict with militant Islam. (“How to Win World War IV,” *Commentary*, February 2002.) America, Podhoretz continued, might “willy-nilly” find itself impelled “to topple five or six or seven more tyrannies in the Islamic world (including that other sponsor of terrorism, Yasir [sic] Arafat’s Palestinian Authority)” before going on to envision “some new species of an imperial mission for America, whose purpose would be to oversee the emergence of successor governments in the region more amenable to reform and

modernization than the despotisms now in place.” Podhoretz also thought the institution of an American protectorate over Saudi oilfields a fine idea.

A plan for remaking the Middle East had powerful sponsors within the Bush Administration as well. Lewis Libby and John Hannah of the Vice President’s staff, John Bolton at State, and the Pentagon’s Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith had reportedly explored the possibility. Feith told *The New Yorker’s* Nick Lemann a prospective invasion of Iraq was mainly related to elimination of WMD but conceded, “Once you contemplate using military force for that purpose, and you’re thinking about what do you do afterward, that’s when you can think that if we do things right, and if we help the Iraqis, and if the Iraqis show an ability to create a humane representative government for themselves – will that have beneficial spillover effects on the politics of the whole region? The answer, I think, is yes.” Could regime change in Iran follow regime change in Iraq? “Sure,” said Feith, adding the prospect didn’t necessarily require military action by the United States. Did the Undersecretary of Defense care to append any remarks regarding the future of Syria? Feith smiled and replied, “Not on the record.” (“After Iraq,” *The New Yorker*, February 17-24, 2003.) In the same article, Lemann quotes material from *Tyranny’s Ally: America’s Failure to Defeat Saddam Hussein* (AEI Press, 1999), a book written by John Bolton’s top aide and “Clean Break” contributor David Wurmser. In it, Wurmser reasons the disintegration of Iraq would lead to the dissolution of Syria, or vice versa, because both regimes subscribe to different factions of the Pan Arab ideology B’athism. (Pan Arabism – a post-World War II movement seeking political unification of all Arabs and resultant elimination of their national boundaries – is the underpinning of B’athist philosophy.) The downfall of B’athism in one country, maintained Wurmser, “implicitly indicts the regime of the other as well.” Instituting “a policy (of regime change) and resolutely carrying it through until it razes Saddam’s B’athism to the ground will send terrifying shock waves into Tehran.” Genuine political power exercised by the majority Shia population in a relatively democratic, post-Saddam Iraq would challenge assertions by Iran’s Shiite clerics that they exemplify the region’s only authentic Shia state. As with likeminded colleagues who might suffer career-ending injuries due to injudicious comments, as a member of the Bush Administration Wurmser has been careful not to speculate publicly on what could happen next, or indeed discourse on the notion of transforming the Middle East at all. Untroubled by such apprehensions, *The New Yorker’s* Lemann took a swing at it:

“One can easily derive from Wurmser’s book a crisp series of post-Saddam moves across the chessboard of the Middle East. The regime in Iran would either fall or be eased out of power by an alliance of the radical students and the more moderate mullahs, with the United States doing what it could to encourage the process. After regime change, the United States would persuade Iran to end its nuclear-weapons program and its support for terrorists elsewhere in the Middle East, especially Hezbollah. Syria, now surrounded by the pro-American powers of Turkey, the reconfigured Iraq, Jordan, and Israel, and no longer dependent on Saddam for oil, could be pressured to cooperate with efforts to clean out Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah, which has its headquarters in Lebanon, without state support. The Palestinian Authority, with most of its regional allies stripped away, would have no choice but to renounce terrorism categorically. Saudi Arabia would have much less sway over the United States because it would no longer be America’s only major source of oil and base of military operations in the region, and so it might finally be persuaded to stop funding Hamas and al Qaeda through Islamic charities.” (“After Iraq,” *The New Yorker*, February 17-24, 2003.)

Given less than stellar results in Iraq – at least thus far – one assumes that the kind of fantastically optimistic scenario explicated above and the Bush Doctrine itself are now under heavy review. Many foreign policy wonks, especially scholars occupying the left end of the political spectrum and those in the realist camp, were deeply skeptical of the Bush approach to begin with, and remain so today. Charles Knight, co-director of the Project on

Defense Alternatives, a venture affiliated with the progressive/left Commonwealth Institute, thinks preventive war is a step down a very dangerous road. "With preventive war you open up a large path for further wars to develop. Any state can see dangers down the road, but when they think it acceptable to engage in preventive war before conflict is even on the horizon, then you have a formula for international instability. If states start to think, 'a neighboring state might become a threat five years down the road, maybe we should think about attacking them now,' that's an international norm we don't want." Neta Crawford, associate professor of research at Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies and author of "The Best Defense: The Problem with Bush's 'Preemptive' War Doctrine" (*Boston Review*, February/March 2003) is more blunt. A policy of preventive war, "which views virtually any threat as imminent" is "folly, an ill-conceived strategy. It creates precisely what you don't want. The world is more insecure. Because other nations, other regimes operate from a position of fear, the fear of attack, *they* prepare to use force against *you*." MIT's Stephen Van Evera, a recognized authority on international relations who counts himself a realist, doesn't rule out the strategy (in fact, he believes a case can be made that the United States adopted it in both world wars) but considers preventive war a final, grave decision. Stringent standards must apply. "One, the threat would have to be very large; two, we must have high confidence that the threat will continue to grow; and three, we must have great certainty that military force will end the future threat. The Bush Administration met none of those tests in building the case for war with Iraq." Van Evera posits a hypothetical situation in which the U.S. determined, prior to September 11th, that the Taliban were developing nuclear weapons, intelligence specifying same was highly credible, and that transfer of those weapons to al Qaeda was likely. "Preventive war would be permissible in that case," says Van Evera. "It would be self-defense."

Detractors cite the Administration's urgent, ominous rhetoric regarding weapons of mass destruction prior to invasion and apparent inability to locate them thereafter as proof that Saddam Hussein did not, in fact, pose an immediate threat to the United States. In January 2004, the CIA weapons inspector handpicked by the White House, David Kay, testified before the Senate that large stockpiles of WMDs were unlikely to be found in Iraq and pre-war intelligence indicating otherwise was erroneous. Subsequently, the Administration rationale for invasion shifted from claims of imminence to declamations that national security dictated U.S. action before a potential attack reached this stage. Three days before Kay's testimony, Vice President Cheney insisted in an interview with National Public Radio that "the jury is still out" as to whether weapons of mass destruction would be found in Iraq. Pressed by ABC's Diane Sawyer to explain sending American soldiers into harm's way with the justification that Iraq unquestionably possessed WMDs, rather than an intention to acquire them, President Bush answered, "What's the difference?" Without the imminent threat of weapons of mass destruction, opponents charge American conduct in Iraq amounts to "elective war." Richard Haass, President of the centrist Council on Foreign Relations, and the State Department's Director of Policy Planning from March 2001 to June 2003, concedes they have a point. "It was a war of choice," he remarked on public television's *Frontline*. "We didn't have to go to war against Iraq; certainly not when we did, certainly not how we did it. ... For many of us, a powerful argument was simply that we did not want to live with" uncertainty about what Hussein might do with his presumed stockpile of weapons of mass destruction. "So war, if you will, was a policy choice to essentially interrupt the possibility that the Iraqis would either use or hand off weapons of mass destruction. ... Obviously, you could have delayed (war) a day, a week, a month, a year. There was no necessity then. It wasn't as though the Iraqis were poised to suddenly do something or break out. So the decision to go to war – which obviously was the President's decision – like everything else about this war, was an elective decision." The State Department's former Director of Strategic Proliferation and Military Affairs, Greg Thielmann, concurs. "I thought that there was never an imminent threat," Thielmann told *Frontline*. How Saddam might

dispose of his alleged WMD stockpile “was a long-term security concern. ... That was the nature of the threat, but that’s not the way the threat was described to the American people. ...As reluctant as I am to try to understand the motives of people using the intelligence, my bottom line on this subject is that while the intelligence community did not do a good job, in my view, in being very careful to be precise for both decision makers and for the American public, the primary blame is in the way that senior officials of the Administration made statements – which I can only describe as dishonest statements – about the nature of what the intelligence was saying.”

To critics, the Bush Administration’s hypothesis that successful transfer to democracy in Iraq could lead to democratic foment elsewhere in the region – the much discussed “remaking of the Middle East” – and its reliance on military force to fulfill that aspiration, also strains credulity. Neta Crawford: “There are prerequisites for democracy. There must be security. You can have elections, but you also need an independent press, government accountability, the rule of law rather than everyone acting in their own self-interest, *equality* before the law, and an engaged citizenry. Democracy can’t be imposed from outside.” Formation of an electoral system in Iraq scarcely assures the fruits of liberty, says Ivan Eland, former Congressional Budget Office analyst and senior fellow at the libertarian Independent Institute. “An initially free and fair election doesn’t guarantee whoever comes to power will permit the same thing to happen next time. The crucial test of democracy is a peaceful transfer of power. Whatever our faults, the United States has a culture of democracy. Arab and Muslim states, for the most part, do not.” Eland doesn’t believe inculcating democratic values beyond Iraq is practical, either. “Even if Iraq makes a successful transfer to democracy – a very big if – that doesn’t necessarily mean it will sweep the region. We support a lot of undemocratic, corrupt regimes in the Middle East. They’re of two minds about Iraq: they want stability but not a democratic model next door. Instead, they’re likely to be unnerved by an open society in Iraq, whatever form that takes. Rather than welcome change, survival dictates that countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan will crack down further on militant or restive elements. That leads to a kind of enslavement and more turmoil.” Stephen Van Evera doesn’t dismiss the idea of reshaping the Middle East out of hand, but agrees with Crawford that preexisting conditions essential for promoting democratic growth – high literacy rates, a solid middle class and a relatively healthy economy, to add to the list – are largely lacking in the Arab and Muslim world.

Assessing the odds of succeeding in Iraq for *Frontline* in September 2003, Richard Haass sounded a note of caution. “(We’ve) learned historically that you’ve got to be careful with how you go about promoting political change in other countries. You have to be careful you don’t put in too much too soon that you destabilize a situation, because you can make a bad situation worse.” Haass hoped the Bush Administration would pursue a modest, gradualist approach, one sensitive to a culture totally unlike our own. “There’s probably no harder foreign policy task than to get inside another society and try to help shape its policies and its economics,” said Haass. “Democracy is not some widget or some automobile that you can put on your port, put it on a ship and bring it into another country and export it. Doesn’t work that way. Democracy has to largely be homegrown. I think what we can do as an outsider is help make sure certain ideas are put in circulation. We can help certain institutions be launched. We can help ensure that democracy has a chance to take root. But ultimately, it’s going to really depend upon the society in question...” Asked whether the United States can compel democracy in the Middle East through force of arms, former senator and Democratic Presidential candidate Gary Hart (who co-chaired a bipartisan commission warning of terrorist attacks on American soil over eight months before September 11th) is succinct. His one word response: “No.”

A crucial aspect of America's challenge in the Middle East and "long, twilight struggle" against global terrorism, perhaps the *most* crucial, remains its relationship with the state of Israel. Assuming the stakes couldn't be higher, an examination of this relationship begs consideration. On this subject, Senator Hart is somewhat more effusive. "There is not, and should not be, any one-to-one calibration of U.S. interest with Israeli interest," affirms Hart. "We are two allies who are, nonetheless, sovereign powers with our own identities and destinies. When we agree, we should say so. Likewise, when we disagree, we should say so. The U.S. should always retain the right, and the duty, to criticize Israeli policies, at least to the extent of many of its own citizens, when they deviate from standards we have set for ourselves." MIT's Van Evera goes further. "What's good for Israel is good for the United States, but what Ariel Sharon thinks is good for Israel is not good for us. Sharon's policies are harmful to Israel and also to U.S. national security. The Arab-Israeli conflict has become the number one recruitment tool of al Qaeda." In the past, Van Evera says, most Arabs and Muslims experienced the quarrel as "distant thunder," something obvious but far away. The advent of Arab language satellite networks (chiefly al Jazeera and al-Arabiya) broadcasting an incendiary diet of graphic Palestinian suffering and anti-Israeli invective changed that. "Polls confirm that the Arab-Israeli conflict has assumed a salience with Arab and Muslim publics that it never had before," contends Van Evera, thereby intensifying animus toward the United States as Israel's staunchest ally and greatly enhancing al Qaeda's recruitment efforts. To Van Evera, any American President should deem the clash "a national security emergency" and exploit both carrot and stick in producing a lasting peace agreement. "Currently, we have a policy of unconditional support for Sharon. Instead, we need to make our support conditional. If Israel is ever seriously threatened by its enemies we should defend it, by our own arms if necessary. But if Sharon and Likud are interested in empire, rather than self-defense, we can't support that. We have to draw that line." Van Evera supports formal, bilateral military alliance between the U.S. and Israel, conditional upon Israeli acceptance of a peace agreement more or less restoring pre-1967 borders. (That is, borders extant prior to the Arab-Israeli "Six Day War" of June 1967, in which Israel seized Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the Gaza Strip and Sinai peninsula from Egypt. Save the Sinai, returned to Egypt as part of the 1978 Camp David Accords brokered by Jimmy Carter, these territories remain in Israeli hands). Yet Van Evera doubts Sharon would ever sign on to such a deal and criticizes what he sees as a partnership in need of a major overhaul. "Alliances are a two-way street. Right now, we have a one-way street: the U.S. supports Israeli interests and policies but the Sharon government often disregards U.S. wishes and interests," says Van Evera. "Most important, Israel's imperial policies sustain a conflict that fuels al Qaeda, while al Qaeda threatens every American. Why? Because Israel has some very powerful friends in the Administration, and the Israel lobby is very strong in Washington."

In his article "Beyond bin Laden: Reshaping U.S. Foreign Policy" (*International Security*, Winter 2001/2002), Stephen Walt, professor of international affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and another eminent realist, argues the United States must revamp relations with the Arab and Islamic world to effectively counteract terror threats. "The obvious first step," wrote Walt, "is to take a less one-sided approach to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. The United States is not as reflexively pro-Israel as many Arabs believe, but its policies in the past have not been even-handed. While reaffirming its unshakeable commitment to Israel's security within its pre-1967 borders, therefore, the United States should make it clear that it is dead-set against Israel's expansionist settlements policy" (since the 1967 war, Israeli settler communities have proliferated in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip) "and does not think that this policy is in the long-term interests of the United States or Israel." John Mearsheimer, a professor of political science at the University of Chicago who also subscribes to realist views, believes the only way America can maintain close ties to Israel and foster

amicable relations with the Arab/Islamic world is to do everything possible to terminate hostilities, period. Vigorous promotion of a viable Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank, argues Mearsheimer, is essential. (The U.S.-backed “road map” calls for the same by 2005.) Establishment of a two-state solution would require U.S. pressure on Israel to remove most settlements from these locations. If Israel agrees to end occupation of territories claimed by Palestinians, the United States could provide aid to ensure security within the Jewish state’s new borders. If not, Mearsheimer writes in *The National Interest*, “America should cut off economic and diplomatic support for Israel. In short, the United States either has to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict or distance itself from Israel. Otherwise, the terrorism problem will never go away, and might even get worse.” (*The National Interest*, Fall 2002.)

If events judge the Bush Doctrine a failure, can critics supply a substitute for the post-September 11th world? The Commonwealth Institute’s Charles Knight senses a rare moment. “I still believe there’s a tremendous opportunity at this time in our history. There’s not yet a peer rival to the United States. There’s an opportunity to institutionalize and enforce international norms of behavior.” By this, Knight means more investment in the United Nations and regional bodies capable of stemming conflicts before they become inevitable, intervening militarily when necessary. “The U.S. should work to expand the Security Council and move away from allowing countries to use, or threaten the use, of a veto,” he says. “The veto weakens the power of the Security Council.” Neta Crawford perceives four interrelated problems confronting America: terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, global environmental change, and difficulties arising from poverty, disease and inequality. To foil terror plots, the United States must turn to the tactics of law enforcement. Human intelligence assets – people capable of infiltrating terror groups – should be used to ferret out how terrorists get their money, how they move it around, and where it comes from. Monitoring terrorist communications and activity on the Internet is also important. Crawford admits the Bush Administration has allocated resources in these areas, but finds them deficient. Rather than abrogate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, as the Administration did in December 2001, Crawford thinks American attempts to limit the spread of WMDs ought to focus on supporting ratification of international arms control and non-proliferation agreements, and reduction of nuclear testing. (After weighing the option, in 2002 the Bush Administration announced nuclear testing by the U.S., discontinued ten years earlier, would not resume; its opposition to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty continues.) Decreasing inequity between haves and have-nots would alleviate global instability, making America safer in the long run. And, too, says Crawford, “We need to reduce our dependence on Middle Eastern oil, which would reduce the need to intervene militarily.” An energy policy accentuating conservation, efficiency, public transportation and development of alternate energy sources also meets with her approval.

Like many made uncomfortable by the unilateral manner in which President Bush took the country to war, Dennis Ross, director of the State Department’s Policy Planning office during the first Bush Administration and President Clinton’s Middle East envoy, believes perceptions matter. Alluding to the 2002 National Security Strategy, Ross told *Frontline* “In many respects, the character of this document is in keeping with what might be described as America’s image of exceptionalism: that we always use power for good, that we have selfless purposes. This is the way we see ourselves. It’s not necessarily the way the rest of the world sees us.” According to Ross, that dissonance causes problems. “I think it creates the impression that even in circumstances where you would have jealousy and envy anyway because of America’s strength and its power and its wealth, it adds to that sense that somehow the U.S. shouldn’t be able to arrogate to itself how it’s going to shape the rest of the world ... (The) more it appears as if we have made the decision that we will simply shape the world in an image that reflects our selfless purposes, the more we’re going to find even some

of our traditional allies creating obstacles for us. Especially, I might add, because so much of what we want to do cannot be done by us unilaterally.” Successful counter-terrorism and anti-proliferation measures require international cooperation among intelligence organizations, law enforcement agencies, and financial institutions. Going it alone, said Ross, simply isn’t practical.

As a diplomat who served under Bush 41, Ross found the stylistic disparity between father and son in presenting the public case for war instructive. “(In) the case of 41, there was certainly readiness to act, but there was also an instinct to work with others up front, to build coalitions up front, and in fact, to be more subtle in terms of how you emphasized your readiness to go it alone. In a sense, not to ask others whether or not you could go, but also by the same token, to be careful what you said in public, even if you were more direct in private.” Unlike George Walker Bush, George Herbert Walker Bush was keen to build an international coalition before commencing the Gulf War. “(If) you go back and take a look at the public presentation, it was very different. From the beginning, there was a focus on getting a series of Security Council resolutions to cloak what we were doing in a kind of broader legitimacy, even though the President said four days after the invasion”(Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990), “ ‘This won’t stand.’ He didn’t say, ‘We will go ahead and we will take care of this, whether anybody’s prepared to join us or not.’ And the image, I think, was such that we were prepared to work with others, and as a result, it made it a little bit easier.” Ross acknowledged bellicose pre-war pronouncements by officials this time around, which communicated an impression invasion was all but inevitable, placed the reputation of the United States so far out on a rhetorical limb that backing off would have been disastrous to American credibility. Some war opponents think this further evidence of an Administration inherently ill equipped, or unwilling, to formulate policy in anything other than black and white terms; others suspect a deliberate attempt to foreclose peaceful alternatives.

The Council on Foreign Relations’ Richard Haass agrees with Dennis Ross that combating terrorism is a multilateral endeavor. Queried by *The New Yorker* about substitutes for containment and deterrence in early 2002, before the Bush Doctrine became official policy, Haass tendered the concept of integration. “The goal of U.S. foreign policy should be to persuade the other major powers to sign on to certain key ideas as to how the world should operate: opposition to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, support for free trade, democracy, markets. Integration is about locking them into these policies and then building institutions that lock them in even more,” said Haass. In another *New Yorker* piece (“The War on What?” September 16, 2002), former U.N. ambassador Richard Holbrooke (Bill Clinton’s interlocutor with Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic and likely Secretary of State to the next Democratic President) said much the same thing, stressing that international institutions like the United Nations were designed by FDR and his successors to “bind other countries to our interests” and “prevent rogue states.” Holbrooke and people such as Joseph Nye, dean of Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, represent what might be called the multilateralist center of the Democratic Party. This group, in common with realists like John Mearsheimer and Stephen Van Evera, sets great store in the exercise of so-called “soft power,” or, in Nye’s reading, “smart power” – combining America’s economic leverage within the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization, strong hand in global security institutions including the U.N. and the International Atomic Energy Agency, and other instruments of influence like the World Health Organization and the Voice of America to nurture U.S. interests without ruffling any feathers. For realists, in particular, less is more. To them, reduction of animus toward the United States is intimately associated with preservation of national security, and therefore of paramount importance. Consultation with allies and diplomacy in times of crisis strikes them as a levelheaded national security posture. Deferring to Theodore Roosevelt’s counsel,

realists prefer to speak softly and carry a big stick. Use of military force should be exceedingly rare, highly discriminating, and absolutely, positively, a tool of last resort.

The Bush Administration's pre-war saber-rattling, pugnacious dismissal of traditional allies and eventual invasion of Iraq – to say nothing of the muddled aftermath of that enterprise – left those in the realist orbit mortified and apoplectic. Unsurprisingly, they decry the Administration's decision to define America's mission as an open-ended and all-encompassing "war on terrorism" rather than a sensibly circumscribed, methodically executed pursuit of al Qaeda. In his autumn 2002 *National Interest* piece – entitled "Hearts and Minds" – John Mearsheimer sketched a national security strategy consisting of "four main ingredients." Number one on the list was limiting U.S. engagement against terror groups to al Qaeda and its close associates. Otherwise, the United States would "squander resources on secondary threats and create enemies out of terrorist organizations that have no special quarrel with America." Secondly, the U.S. should place a high premium on securing fissile material and nuclear weapons scattered throughout the dismembered Soviet Union. (An initiative to do just that, spearheaded by Republican Senator Richard Lugar and former Senator Sam Nunn, a Democrat, was scaled back and deprived of funding in 2002 by the Bush Administration.) These former Soviet republics are also home to numerous unemployed nuclear scientists capable of delivering valuable information and expertise to terrorists for the right price, a fact not lost on groups like al Qaeda. Third, Mearsheimer echoed realist contemporaries in emphasizing intelligence gathering, diplomatic efforts and covert operations over brute military force in fighting terrorism. Finally, he appealed for policies intended to "ameliorate the rampant anti-Americanism in the Islamic world." Writing before the invasion of Iraq, Mearsheimer thought the tactic of checking Iraq and Iran simultaneously ("duel containment") misguided, as it required a substantial, indefinite and conspicuous military presence in the region, notably in Saudi Arabia. (Driving infidel Americans from the land of Mecca and Medina was a stated goal of bin Laden and al Qaeda long before 9/11.) Instead, the United States might improve relations with Iran, which would then constrain Iraq, allowing the U.S. to withdraw troops from Saudi Arabia and hence reduce its "military footprint." Events didn't quite prove out this way, but there's something to be said for Mearsheimer's contention in "Hearts and Minds" that contrary to claims that Arabs and Muslims hate Americans because they hate American culture, "recent polls and abundant anecdotal evidence (indicate) the root of the problem is not MTV or hip-hop, or even Western values of freedom and individual liberty" but "specific American policies." Those policies, according to Mearsheimer, include U.S. military forces based on Saudi territory, over ten years of sanctions against Iraq, "unqualified backing of Israel" and American "support of repressive regimes" in Egypt, Jordan and the aforementioned Saudi Arabia.

Libertarian Ivan Eland's alternative to the Bush Doctrine resembles Mearsheimer's in that he sees America as an "offshore balancer" or "balancer of last resort," achieving regional stability without overt U.S. involvement by permitting local states to offset one another militarily, stepping in only when a power like China or Russia threatens to create an imbalance harmful to our vital interests. Eland's minimalism recalls the isolationist strain of American foreign policy prevalent in the first 40 years of the 20th century, pledging reluctant defense of friendly European and East Asian countries to counter encroachment by global powers. Absent that, curtailment or nullification of bilateral alliances with South Korea, Japan and even NATO ("relics of the Cold War," as Eland calls them) merit contemplation. Stephen Van Evera is slightly more expansive. Like most realists, he wants an end to Israeli-Palestinian and India-Pakistan tensions because both encompass terrorism and potential use of weapons of mass destruction. Van Evera mentions the same kind of September 12th solutions promulgated by Mearsheimer and others – rounding up loose nukes, offering security guarantees to Southeast Asian states willing to abandon their

nuclear ambitions, supporting international non-proliferation treaties, and so on – but also speaks of a “war of ideas,” a concerted plan to refute negative perceptions of the United States among Arabs and Muslims.

Harvard’s Stephen Walt jokes that he’s been very helpful to the Bush Administration (“They took my ideas and did the opposite”). Pondering the national security future of the U.S. after 9/11, Walt’s rumination “Beyond bin Laden” addressed several major questions. “The central issue,” Walt wrote, “is whether the United States should continue to maintain its current array of global military commitments – and especially its large forward military presence – or move back to its earlier position as an ‘offshore balancer.’ ” (“Forward presence” refers to American military forces based abroad.) A Cold War policy of multiple military commitments (from Europe to Asia to the Balkans to the Persian Gulf) persists because, Walt says, American policy makers believe U.S. engagement promotes liberal values and open markets. Yet the cost of such responsibilities, which now include expenditures related to homeland security and operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, is immense. Facing a “breathtaking array of international burdens” and a war on terrorism that may endure for generations, Walt wonders whether Americans will support these efforts. “And if the threat from global terrorism is at least partly a reaction to the looming global presence of the United States,” he continues, “then some Americans are likely to ask if the danger might also be reduced if it were not as visibly and actively engaged in trying to run the world.” If losses in blood and treasure accumulate, demands for pulling out and cutting back will mount among the public. Prompt revision of acceptable “cost benefits” in sustaining far-flung commitments would swiftly follow, obliging the United States to concoct policies preserving global primacy in a manner more agreeable to the rest of the world.

What might those policies be? According to Walt, the U.S. must depend more on multilateral institutions, even if that means sacrificing some freedom of action in the short term. “Institutions are useful not because they are powerful restraints on state behavior (they are not), but because they diffuse responsibility for international intervention and thus reduce the risk of an anti-American backlash.” The United States should demonstrate greater moderation, tact and generosity in dealing with the international community. “When President Bush explains his rejection of the Kyoto Protocol by saying he was not going to do anything that might hurt American workers, or when the United States rejects useful arms control treaties to appease special interests at home, the United States appears both selfish and short-sighted,” Walt asserts, referring to the Administration’s repudiation of the Kyoto global warming and ABM treaties. Walt believes that if U.S. officials seek to retain hegemony by presenting a more benign face to the world, America must, of necessity, “use its wealth and power in ways that serve the interests of others as well as its own.” Along with John Mearsheimer, Ivan Eland and other realists, he awaits handover of regional security commitments to local states and organizations, as well as gradual contraction of America’s forward military presence. Lest anyone assume this stance connotes a “retreat into isolationism,” Walt is quick to add it signifies instead a national security strategy of “foresight, restraint and maturity.” If the U.S. hopes to conquer terrorism and remain a dominant power by winning friends and influencing others, Americans themselves need to wake up, pay attention and get serious about how their government manages international affairs. “In the past, seemingly secure behind its nuclear deterrent and oceanic moats, and possessing unmatched economic and military power,” writes Walt, “the United States has allowed its foreign policy to be distorted by partisan sniping, hijacked by foreign lobbyists and narrow domestic special interests, and held hostage by irresponsible and xenophobic members of Congress. Despite its pretensions as the world’s only superpower, the United States has starved its intelligence services, gutted its international affairs budget, done little to attract the ablest members of its society to government service, neglected the study of foreign languages and cultures, and basically behaved as though it simply did not matter if

U.S. foreign policy were well run or not.” Concluding, Walt hopes a horrible Tuesday in September might produce a single, salutary effect; that the citizens, elected representatives and policy makers of the United States will, at long last, “grow up and take the business of being a great power seriously.”

This adjustment necessitates reassessment of attitudes and policy on several fronts. Plainly, Americans can no longer behave as if the Middle East were, in *New York Times* columnist Tom Friedman’s glib but accurate phrase, “a big dumb gas station.” Americans are habitually ignorant of how U.S. policy abroad shapes the world around them. “Connecting the dots,” as the phrase goes, is long overdue. There is a connection between the cheap oil Americans expect and the Faustian bargain their government has traditionally struck with despotic Middle Eastern governments to ensure the cheap oil keeps flowing. Exhibit A in this regard is, of course, Saudi Arabia. Clinging tenuously to power after ten years of shrinking national wealth, the House of Saud has made a Faustian bargain of its own, buying off radical Wahhabi clerics who preach hatred of Jews, Americans and all things Western in an attempt to deflect censure properly directed at the monarchy. Financing Islamic schools, mosques, charities and aid organizations, Saudi Arabia exports virulent anti-Americanism worldwide. Because open criticism of the regime is prohibited, many Saudi youths – chronically unemployed, frustrated and aimless – turn to Wahhabist fantasies of *jihad* against blaspheming “Crusaders” in search of identity. (As we all know, “fifteen of the nineteen 9/11 hijackers came from Saudi Arabia.”) Issuing his 1998 *fatwa* instructing Muslims worldwide to kill U.S. civilians, Saudi national Osama bin Laden accused America of propping up an “oppressive, corrupt and tyrannical regime” with arms sales and troops. (The U.S. government appears to go the extra mile as well: In their staff statement “Threats and Responses in 2001,” 9/11 Commission investigators corroborated published reports that the Bush Administration authorized the assembly and evacuation of 142, mostly Saudi foreign nationals – including bin Laden relatives – from the United States between September 14 and 24, 2001.) Funding of al Qaeda and other terror groups by Saudi banks, charities, businessman and members of the royal family has been well documented. To cite a minor example among countless others, money from an account in the name of Princess Haifa al-Faisal – wife of Saudi Ambassador to the United States Prince Bandar bin Sultan and daughter of the late King Faisal – found its way into the hands of two September 11th hijackers. Prince Bandar himself has reportedly donated generously to the International Islamic Relief Organization, a charity allegedly tied to Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and al Qaeda. Twenty-eight pages of a congressional report on the attacks dealing with “very direct, very specific links” between the hijackers and a foreign government everyone in a position to know believes to be Saudi Arabia remain classified, at White House insistence.

There is a connection between U.S. aid (\$2 billion annually) and acquiescence to the harshly repressive rule of Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak and bitterness toward the United States in the Arab world. Mubarak has been fighting a running battle with Islamic extremists intent on the violent overthrow of his secular government for the better part of two decades, and many of these militants have become senior al Qaeda operatives. Egyptian-born Ayman al-Zawahiri, who acts as bin Laden’s personal physician and chief strategist, has been quoted as saying “America claims to be the champion and protector of human rights, democracy, and liberties, while at the same time forcing on Muslims oppressive and corrupt political regimes.” Zawahiri holds the United States “responsible for everything that happens in Egypt and responsible for human rights violations there, and in other countries as well.”

And there is a connection, as the attentive reader will observe, between America’s “special relationship” with Israel and widespread, all-consuming hatred for the United States among Arabs and Muslims. An Arab population explosion creating a youth boom across the Middle East (with a population of more than 24,000,000, the median age in Saudi Arabia is 18.8 years) has combined with an Arab media explosion (the Internet, Al Jazeera, etc.)

incessantly pumping out inflammatory coverage of Israeli-Palestinian violence, enraging and radicalizing young people with little else to occupy their time. Since Arabs and Muslims are all too aware of Israel's close ties to the United States and what they see as U.S. indifference or antipathy toward the Palestinian cause, such images generate a highly toxic and perilous dynamic, "melding in the heads of young Arabs and Muslims," writes Tom Friedman, "the notion that the biggest threat to their future is J.I.A. – 'Jews, Israel and America.' "

Massive failures related to September 11th and pre-war assessments of Iraq's WMD capacity have occasioned much talk of an intelligence community in need of desperate repair. Yet systemic reform of organizations like the Central Intelligence Agency, defanged by almost thirty years of congressional injunction against domestic surveillance, assassination and "removal" of inhospitable regimes – and further hobbled by a risk-averse, accountability-free institutional ethos – will be an ongoing project. (President Bush signed an intelligence "finding" permitting the CIA to resume "lethal covert operations" in September 2001.) This is particularly true relative to recruiting human intelligence assets proficient in the various languages and dialects of Northern Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and Central and Southwest Asia (approximately thirty languages are spoken in Afghanistan alone). In the meantime, CIA Director George Tenet, who oversees intelligence gathering by twelve other federal agencies, including the FBI, National Security Agency and the Department of Defense, remains on the job. Sworn in as director in 1997 after the Senate rejected Clinton nominee Anthony Lake, Tenet was kept on by President Bush and subsequently forged a close relationship with the Commander-in-Chief. Under his watch, the CIA and American intelligence gathering efforts have suffered a string of appalling setbacks. A partial list: Failure to anticipate nuclear testing by India and Pakistan in 1998; al Qaeda bombings of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, which claimed 224 lives, also in 1998; a 2000 al Qaeda suicide bombing of the *USS Cole* as it refueled in the Yemeni port of Aden, killing 17 American sailors; failure to identify a vast network of global trade in nuclear weapons technology and information; failure to interdict the September 11th attacks; and, most recently, intelligence reports confirming Saddam's robust chemical, biological and nuclear programs appear unfounded. Integrating reform of the CIA and other intelligence agencies into a retooled national security policy will be a long-term, tremendously complicated process, but his critics (including Republican Richard Shelby and Democrat Bob Graham, both former chairmen of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence) agree the dismissal of George Tenet, post-haste, would be an excellent place to start.

Beyond this, any rethinking of America's post-9/11 national security strategy must include a domestic component, and on that score, there is enormous work to do. The Department of Homeland Security, established in 2003 after two years of Administration resistance, shifted 170,000 federal employees and merged 22 existing government agencies (including the Secret Service, Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Coast Guard) into a single entity. Understaffed, poorly funded and plagued by turf wars and unenthusiastic support from the White House, DHS has had a rough start. Things are getting better, but problems persist. In February 2004, for example, the department announced that local, state and federal law enforcement agencies would be able to instantaneously share threat estimates, prospective evidence and investigative leads through the Homeland Security Information Network. Yet when President Bush proposed increasing the DHS budget 10%, from \$36.5 billion in fiscal year 2004 to \$40.2 billion in 2005, the Administration simultaneously slashed federal funding for state and local firefighters, police and medical personnel – "first responders" – by \$805 million ("a stunning 30 percent," according to Joe Lieberman, former Presidential candidate and ranking Democratic member of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee). Homeland Security's cumbersome grant process, since streamlined but still unwieldy, has prevented first responders from receiving \$8 to \$9 billion already allocated. DHS has yet to consolidate a dozen terrorist watch lists

into a single “master” list (the agency is shooting for mid-summer 2004). Nor does the department provide Congress with periodic, updated risk assessments.

America is better prepared to avert or confront terrorist attacks than it was on September 10th, 2001, but the question is how much better. Border security to the north and south, haphazard and toothless for years (particularly along the 2,000 mile border with Mexico) remains alarmingly weak, and while precise estimates of annual illegal entry into the United States are hard to come by, it’s logical to assume that terrorist operatives might find ingress from Canada and Mexico a relatively easy undertaking. Until recently, about 5% of the estimated 6 million foreign cargo containers arriving in American seaports – all 361 of them – were screened for terror-related contents, though Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge contends 98% of the containers are now subject to preliminary inspection before they reach the United States. Multiple independent studies indicate securing U.S. ports and retrofitting or entirely replacing an aging Coast Guard fleet will take years and cost billions. A new federal bureaucracy has been created (the much-maligned Transportation Security Agency) and \$12 billion have been spent to improve airline security since 9/11. Cockpit doors have been reinforced, air marshals police more flights, and some pilots carry guns. Even so, congressional oversight reveals poor TSA management of its 45,000 screeners, significant and routine lapses in passenger inspection, failure to examine checked baggage for possible explosives (despite a December 31, 2003 deadline), meager funding and personnel, and continued industry intransigence over cargo hold screening of passenger and freight craft. The General Accounting Office, the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of Congress, recently criticized lax security at the nation’s nine nuclear weapons facilities and research laboratories, where approximately 10,000 nuclear warheads and tons of plutonium and highly enriched uranium are located. Hundreds of master keys and electronic key cards, some permitting access to classified areas, have disappeared from nuclear labs and sites; three years after keys went missing at New Mexico’s Sandia National Laboratories, the locks were finally changed. In a hair-raising segment, the CBS news magazine *60 Minutes* reported that since September 11th, terrorists have penetrated several levels of security on at least three occasions at the Oak Ridge, Tennessee Y-12 nuclear complex (where most of America’s weapons grade uranium is processed) and the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. The program also noted that in the years prior to 9/11, Department of Energy security specialist Richard Levernier tagged U.S. nuclear sites with a “50 percent failure rate” in simulations designed to determine their effectiveness defending against terrorist attempts to pierce security, abscond with nuclear material and successfully escape. One January weekend, Levernier paid an unannounced visit to a Colorado nuclear weapons site. “We found that the patrols that should be patrolling and moving around the facility were not observed,” Levernier told *60 Minutes*. “Upon further investigation, we found that the vast majority of the patrols were in a facility watching the Super Bowl game.” It is also unclear whether American hospitals are sufficiently prepared to deal with an onslaught of unexpected patients in the event of a bioterror attack, and while Pentagon employees suffered no ill effects from recent anthrax and smallpox vaccinations, development of adequate stockpiles for nationwide distribution won’t follow anytime soon.

Forming a national security policy appropriate to the times demands a degree of foresight and creativity seldom evident in contemporary statecraft. American attempts to expedite strategic ends by whatever tactical means available have repeatedly come a cropper over the past 60 years, most notably in Southwestern and Central Asia. From arranging the 1953 overthrow of a democratically elected prime minister in Iran (which consolidated control under the corrupt and repressive Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi and led in turn to the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini, the Iranian hostage crisis, the Iran-Contra scandal and 25 years of state sponsored terrorism against U.S. allies and interests), to backing Saddam Hussein during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, supporting military dictatorships in Pakistan (an incubator of Muslim extremism, architect of the Taliban regime, and leading proliferator

of nuclear weapons technology) and funding, arming and training the *Mujahideen* to fend off an invading Soviet army in Afghanistan (upon Soviet withdrawal, the U.S. abandoned Afghanistan, leaving a vacuum filled by the Taliban and their eventual benefactor, former *Mujahideen* moneyman/*jihadi*, Osama bin Laden), painful “blowback” has been the result. Clearly, a fresh approach is called for, one that incorporates resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, genuine commitment toward energy independence, consequent disengagement from association with dissolute Middle Eastern regimes, and integrated cooperation between U.S. and international policing, security and intelligence gathering agencies. A critical priority for those agencies should be tracking down and preventing circulation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. Rather than drift from erstwhile European allies with agendas of their own, the United States can redefine its relationship with NATO, and the 21st century mission of NATO as well. And as some realists suggest, working to achieve American goals through global institutions like the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and yes, even the United Nations, isn’t a bad idea. None of these palliatives guarantee cessation of terror attacks against the U.S. or avoidance of a “clash of civilizations” between the Islamic world and the West, but it’s a fair bet they might diminish the prospects. By contrast, the national security strategy apparently endorsed under the Bush Doctrine – unilateralist diplomacy, preemptive military action, preventive war and regime change – has left America with fewer friends, manifold enemies, damaged credibility and arguably less secure. Whatever policy follows in its wake must reverse that trend and fundamentally transform how the United States confronts strategic and security challenges. Failure, as they say, is not an option.

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Mark Mantho is a domestic and foreign policy researcher and writer living in the Boston area. He can be reached at markmantho[AT]netzero.com.

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