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Neo-Conservatism and Foreign Policy

BY

TED BOETTNER
BS, West Virginia University, 2002

THESIS

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire

in Partial Fulfillment of

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in

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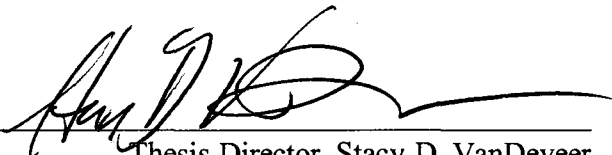
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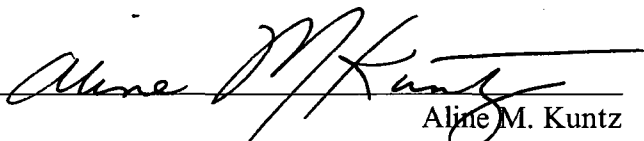
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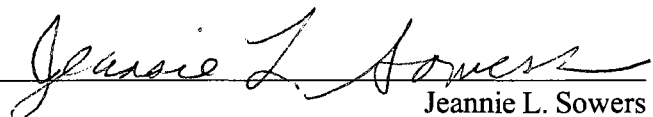
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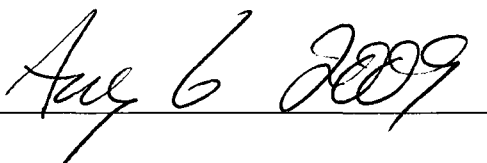
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the people of Iraq and other countries who have suffered from neo-conservative influence in foreign affairs and to the scholars and protestors that challenged them every step of the way.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to give my utmost thanks to the thesis committee for their time and dedication on this project. Through my research, I also contacted several professors who gave me great advice on how to approach the subject of this paper. They include the late Thomas Trout, Stephen M. Walt, Jack Snyder, Andrew Moravcsik, Aaron Rapport, Chris Clements, Andrew Gamble, and Mark Rupert. Also, I want to acknowledge my good friends Renate Pore and Paul J. Nyden for reviewing drafts and for being my favorite critics. Lastly, and most importantly, I want to thank my family for their tremendous support and persistency in seeing me complete this project.

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ABSTRACT

By

Ted Boettner

University of New Hampshire, September, 2009

Since the 1960s, neo-conservatives advanced their agenda through journals, think tanks, coalitions, and by serving as high-level government officials. While scholars have noted this influence, there's little written on how neo-conservative ideas have evolved and influenced foreign policy under these changing historical circumstances. Moreover, very little scholarship foils neo-conservatism against the two dominant approaches to foreign policy in the 20th century – realism and liberalism – to discover how they are held together as a group. This thesis finds that neo-conservatism is a political ideology of American foreign policy that has developed several common tendencies over the last forty years. These include an ardent belief in the use of unilateral American military power, distain for multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, Wilsonian ideas of spreading democracy, steadfast support for Israel, and overstated threat assessments.

INTRODUCTION

What is Neo-conservatism?

Neo-conservatism is a somewhat contradictory set of ideas in domestic and foreign policy. Whereas neo-conservatives embrace democracy promotion in debates surrounding foreign policy, they tend to reject extending democracy in domestic affairs because it can lead to a weak government that is ruled by passion rather than reason. For this reason, among many others, neo-conservatism is difficult to distil into a single political doctrine. Nevertheless, neo-conservatives do share some common attributes. Neo-conservatives have an acute sense of the political, unlike neo-liberals who want to minimize the role of politics as much as possible, and they believe in the projection of American power across the globe to secure American interests and security and because it is a unique regime with universal values.

Why is Neo-conservatism important?

In recent years, and especially following the events of September 11, 2001, neo-conservatism has found itself at the center of debate in how America's foreign policy decisions are being conceived and advanced. Because many neo-conservatives served as high-level officials in the administration of president George W. Bush, speculation on the influence of a neo-conservative foreign policy, particularly in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, has increased.

The impact of neo-conservatism on U.S. foreign policy, however, has a history longer than the invasion of Iraq. Since the 1970s, neo-conservatives have played an important role in debates over American foreign policy by acting through organizations such as the Committee on Present Danger, Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs and the Project for the New American Century. They've occupied influential posts inside the State and Defense Departments, as well as provided outside intellectual support through think tanks, journals, newspapers and magazines.

During the George W. Bush administration the congruity between several of their foreign and security policy prescriptions, especially toward deposing Saddam Hussein of Iraq, and those implemented have been noted.¹ This in turn has led to a wide and still-growing debate on the influence of neo-conservatism in shaping U.S. foreign and security policy in the post-Cold War period. This debate has also sparked more fundamental questions regarding the nature and purpose of American power, the legitimacy of preventive war and unilateralism, the usefulness of alliances and international law, and others.

While many commentators and scholars have been quick to point out the influence of neo-conservatism in recent foreign policy decisions, few have been able to situate neo-conservatism fits as a body of work in U.S. foreign and security policy. The reasons may be that neo-conservatives are not an easily identifiable group. There is no organization, no membership, no founding document, and no consensus on who belongs and who does not. Indeed, very few International Relations (IR) scholars have grappled

¹ Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clark, *American Alone: The Neo-conservatives and the Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 201-231.

with neo-conservatism as it relates to their own theories.² One reason that neo-conservatism has not become a major focus for IR study might be that neo-conservatives do not generally write for academic journals (except for the occasional article in *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy*) or encourage academic theoretical debate within the field of IR. Moreover, the language of neo-conservatives is to a large extent highly politicized, sometimes messianic, and value driven. These characteristics do not lend themselves well to situating neo-conservatism within realism and liberalism, the two most influential schools of thought in IR study.

The central aim of this thesis will be to delineate the key tenets of a neo-conservative foreign policy ideology by looking at the specific ways neo-conservative ideas have evolved and influenced foreign policy under changing historical circumstances. After showing the historical influence of neo-conservatism in American foreign policy, this paper will compare neo-conservatism to realism and liberalism. By comparing neo-conservatism to these two schools of thought, it will explain the similarities among and differences between the three groups and how best to categorize neo-conservatism.

This thesis will seek to answer two questions:

1. How does a set of neo-conservative ideas move over time to influence American foreign policy?
2. How does neo-conservatism compare to realism and liberalism, the two leading schools of thought in international relations study?

² See, for example, Mohammed Nuruzzaman, "Beyond the Realist Theories: "Neo-Conservative Realism" and the American Invasion of Iraq," *International Studies Perspectives*, 2006 Vol.7, 239-253; Aaron Rapport, "Unexpected Affinities? Neoconservatism's Place in IR Theory," *Security Studies*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, 2008, 257-293; and Michael C. Williams, "What is the National Interest? The Neo-conservative Challenge in IR Theory," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 11, Issue 3, 2005, 307-337.

The paper will proceed along three lines. Chapters One and Two provide the necessary background information in order to put neo-conservatism into context and to draw conclusions in the final chapter. Chapter One identifies the major ideas of neo-conservatism in the words of neo-conservatives, looking at neo-conservatism as it relates to both domestic and foreign policy. Chapters Two, Three and Four will show the progression of neo-conservatism and foreign policy from its roots in the Ford and Reagan administrations to the administration of George W. Bush. This analysis will show how neo-conservatives are held together in terms of their views on foreign policy strategy and how they've formulated their ideological assumptions and explanations of America's place in international politics.

Chapter Two looks at the roots of neo-conservatism and its reaction to détente in the 1970s. Specifically, it will examine the neo-conservatives associated with Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson and nuclear strategist Albert Wohlstetter and how they participated in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I and II) in the 1970s. This chapter also focuses on neo-conservative policies espoused in the 1980s, their influence on the Reagan administration, and the formation of the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance (DSG) document, which many see as the first articulation of a post-Cold War foreign policy position.

Chapter Three examines neo-conservative post-Cold War foreign policies during the 1990s. This chapter pays special attention to neo-conservative criticisms of the Clinton administration's foreign policy regarding multilateralism and Iraq. Chapter Four explores the link between the high-level officials in the administration of George W.

Bush and their influence on the *National Security Strategy of 2002* (Bush Doctrine) and the arguments made in favor of invading Iraq.

In order to arrive at meaningful characterization of neo-conservatism, Chapter Five examines the realist and liberal strains in US foreign policy thinking and practice over the 20th century. The chapter begins with a brief description of how an IR theory is different from a political ideology aimed at political action. This chapter also examines realism and liberalism by looking at the history, theories and practices of both schools of thought. The last part of this thesis, the conclusion, will transmit the findings of the five previous chapters in order to answer the two research questions above.

CHAPTER 1

NEO-CONSERVATIVES ON NEO-CONSERVATISM

Who are the neo-conservatives and how do they describe themselves? Columnist David Brooks writes: “If you ever read a sentence that starts with ‘Neocons believe,’ there is a 99.44% chance everything else in that sentence will be untrue.” Seymour Martin Lipset, who was one of the first intellectuals to be described as a neo-conservative, remarked that:

Neoconservatism, both as an ideological term and as a political grouping, is one of the most misunderstood concepts in the political lexicon. The reason is simple, the word has never referred to a set of doctrines to which a given group of adherents subscribed. Rather, it was invented as an invidious label to undermine political opponents, most of whom have been unhappy with being so described.³

Similarly, James Q. Wilson concluded in 1996 that neo-conservatism isn’t an ideology with a “systematic worldview that seeks to explain and evaluate the world...or a movement and never will be.”⁴ Wilson maintains that neo-conservatism is a “tendency of American political thought” and an “intellectual impulse” that adheres to the “Law of Unintended Consequences” by not opposing change within government, as a “true

³ James Q Wilson, Forward to *The Essential Neoconservative Reader* by Mark Gerson (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company; 1996), xiii.

⁴ Wilson, *The Essential Neoconservative Reader*, vii-x.

conservative” would do, but questioning it “cautiously, experimentally, and with a minimum of bureaucratic authority.”⁵

As a group, neo-conservatives are less likely to write books, and more likely to write articles in a number of publications, especially magazines. According to neo-conservative Mark Gerson:

What about books? Yes, the neoconservatives have written books, but as the first serious analyst of neoconservatism, Peter Steinfels, noted, “the geography of the intellectuals’ world is a geography of journals.” Irving Kristol, for instance, has never written a full-length book – his four books are collections of essays. And almost always, neoconservatives’ books are based on essays they have previously published in their magazines.⁶

Irving Kristol is widely considered the “godfather” neo-conservatism. He is the founder or editor of many influential magazines, including the CIA-funded *Encounter*, *Commentary*, *The Public Interest*, and *The Reporter*. Through these publications, neo-conservatives define their views and attempt to influence policy and debate. *The Weekly Standard*, published by Kristol’s son, William, is one of the leading publications in the Beltway, and is hand-delivered to every member of Congress and every committee staff member on Capitol Hill. It has a total circulation of 65,000.

Irving Kristol credits Michael Harrington with creating the term neo-conservative.⁷ According to Kristol, it was originally used to characterize the Shachtmanite Trotskyites who voted for Nixon in 1972 in support of the Vietnam War.⁸ Kristol embraces the term,

⁵ Wilson

⁶ Mark Gerson, *The Neoconservative Vision* (Lanham: Madison Books, 1996), 5

⁷ Irving Kristol, *Reflections of a Neoconservative* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), xi.

⁸ Gary Dorrien, “Michael Harrington: Socialist to the End,” *The Christian Century*, 11 October 2000, 1002-1009

calling himself a “true, self-confessed – perhaps the only – ‘neoconservative.’”⁹ In 1979,

Kristol defined neo-conservatism as

... a current of thought emerging out of the academic intellectual world and provoked by disillusionment with contemporary liberalism. Its relation to the business community is loose and uneasy, though not necessarily unfriendly.¹⁰

Kristol distinguishes neo-conservatism from modern conservatism in terms of the latter’s identification with the interests of the corporation, Wilson echoes these sentiments:

I don’t feel very comfortable before business audiences because I know that in many ways they are part of the problem. Given a large government they will attempt to seize control of some of its parts to use for their own advantage.¹¹

In terms of neo-conservatism and capitalism, Kristol writes that:

The attitude of neoconservatives to bourgeois society and the bourgeois ethos is one of detached attachment. Neoconservatives do not think that liberal-democratic capitalism is the best of all imaginable worlds – only the best, under the circumstances, of all possible worlds.¹²

In his 1978 book *Two Cheers for Capitalism*, Kristol acknowledges that capitalism can have anti-conservative effects, as the drive for money can undermine the stability of families and neighborhoods. This is why Kristol gives capitalism only two cheers, instead of the traditional three customary for unconditional approval. On economics, he writes

Neoconservatism is inclined to the belief that a predominantly market economy is a necessary if not sufficient precondition for a liberal society. It also sees a market economy as favorable to economic growth.

⁹ Kristol, *Reflections of a Neoconservative*, 73.

¹⁰ Kristol, 75-76.

¹¹ Wilson, James Q, “Neoconservatism: Pro and Con,” *Partisan Review*, Summer 1980, 510.

¹² Kristol, 76.

Neoconservatives believe in the importance of economic growth because they see economic growth as indispensable for social and political stability.¹³

Kristol also explains how neo-conservatism differs from its former liberal roots:

Unlike previous such currents of thought, neoconservatism is anti-romantic in substance and temperament. Indeed, it regards political romanticism and its twin, political utopianism – of any kind as one of the plagues of our age.¹⁴

Paradoxically, some critics consider neo-conservatism as “utopian” in its foreign policy goals to spread of freedom and democracy in the world.

The philosophical origins of neo-conservatism, according to Kristol, come from the political philosophy of University of Chicago professor Leo Strauss:

The philosophical roots of modern neoconservatism are to be found mainly in classical political philosophy. Here the teaching and writing of Leo Strauss are of importance, though many neoconservatives find themselves somewhat too wary of modernity.¹⁵

Strauss himself is wary of modernity, according to Shadia Drury, seeing it as the soul of American society. “Deprive her of it and you might cut out her soul, and destroy her very being.” America’s “love affair with modernity,” according to Strauss, is bound to end in disaster.¹⁶

Kristol chides liberalism for having inverted priorities in its attention to the market and capitalism and the lack of attention it pays to moral virtue:

¹³ Kristol

¹⁴ Wilson, “Neoconservatism: Pro and Con”

¹⁵ Kristol, 75

¹⁶ Shadia Drury, *Leo Strauss and the Politics of the American Right* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 14.

Neoconservatives are not libertarian in any sense. A conservative welfare state is perfectly consistent with the neoconservative perspective. Neoconservatives believe that it is natural for people to want their preferences to be elevated. The current version of liberalism, which prescribes massive government intervention in the marketplace but an absolute laissez-faire attitude towards manners and morals, strikes neoconservatives as representing a bizarre inversion of priorities.¹⁷

As Kristol shows, he is not entirely opposed to a welfare state of some kind, which is often considered anathema to the conservative political philosophy of self-reliance and personal responsibility. But he is opposed to the government not playing an active role in regulating the morality of society. In his essay “Pornography, Obscenity, and the Case for Censorship,” Kristol expresses his disgust for what he sees as the moral decay of society:

They wanted a world in which *Desire under the Elms* could be produced, or *Ulysses* published, without interference from philistine busybodies holding public office. They have got that, of course; but they have also got a world in which homosexual rape takes place on the stage, in which the public flocks during lunch hours to witness varieties of professional fornication, in which Times Square has become little more than a hideous market for the sale and distribution of printed filth that panders to all known sexual perversions.¹⁸

Liberalism, Kristol feels, has lost track of its moral bearings.

Neoconservatives look upon family and religion as indispensable pillars of a decent society. Indeed, they have a special fondness for all of those intermediate institutions of a liberal society which reconcile the need for community with the desire for liberty.¹⁹

Neo-conservatives, on the other hands, have a common alliance with religious conservatives.

¹⁷ Kristol,77.

¹⁸ Kristol,44.

¹⁹ Kristol,77.

The steady decline in our democratic culture, sinking to new levels of vulgarity, does unite neocons with traditional conservatives--though not with those libertarian conservatives who are conservative in economics but unmindful of the culture. The upshot is a quite unexpected alliance between neocons, who include a fair proportion of secular intellectuals, and religious traditionalists.²⁰

The biggest influence of neo-conservatism on modern American policy is in the area of foreign policy. According to neo-conservative scholar Max Boot: "It is not really domestic policy that defines neo-conservatism. This was a movement founded on foreign policy, and it is still here that neo-conservatism carries the greatest meaning, even if its original *raison d'être* - opposition to communism - has disappeared."²¹ Since Ronald Reagan and following a hiatus during the Clinton years, neo-conservative foreign policy has taken its place front and center on the world stage.

In the summer of 1996, William Kristol and neo-conservative scholar Robert Kagan wrote an article in *Foreign Affairs* titled "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy." It was a neo-conservative call-to-arms, outlining the aims and goals of a neo-conservative foreign policy and deriding the "muddled" Clinton-era policies and the conservative "realism of Henry Kissinger."

In foreign policy, conservatives are adrift. They disdain the Wilsonian multilateralism of the Clinton administration; they are tempted by, but so far have resisted, the neo-isolationism of Patrick Buchanan; for now, they lean uncertainly on some version of the conservative "realism" of Henry Kissinger and his disciples.²²

Max Boot, six years later, echoes the words of Kristol and Kagan, calling attention to the

²⁰ Irving Kristol "The Neoconservative Persuasion," in *The Neocon Reader*, edited by Irvin Stetzer (New York: Grove Press 2004),35

²¹ Max Boot, "What the Heck is a Neocon?" *Wall Street Journal*, 30 December 2002

²² William Kristol and Robert Kagan, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, No. 4 1996,18

difference between a neo-conservative and conservative foreign policy:

One group of conservatives believes that we should use armed force only to defend our vital national interests, narrowly defined... The idea of bringing democracy to the Middle East they denounce as a mad, hubristic dream likely to backfire with tragic consequences. This view, which goes under the somewhat self-congratulatory moniker of "realism," is championed by foreign-policy mandarins like Henry Kissinger, Brent Scowcroft and James Baker III.²³

Boot writes that neo-conservatives, including Dick Cheney and Paul Wolfowitz, feel that "we need to promote our values, for the simple reason that liberal democracies rarely fight one another, sponsor terrorism, or use weapons of mass destruction."²⁴ Kristol and Kagan define neo-conservative strategy in broader terms, claiming the overall role of America should be one of "benevolent global hegemony:"

Having defeated the "evil empire," the United States enjoys strategic and ideological predominance. The first objective of U.S. foreign policy should be to preserve and enhance that predominance by strengthening America's security, supporting its friends, advancing its interests, and standing up for its principles around the world.²⁵

Joshua Muravchik describes neo-conservatism as an approach to foreign policy that is very different from realism and liberalism:

Neoconservatives were originally a circle of writers who proclaimed no "ism." Their approach to foreign policy consisted of what Max Boot has called "hard Wilsonianism." As one such neocon, I would stipulate that the essential tenets, in contradiction to realism, include giving a greater weight to moral considerations, attributing a larger importance to the ideological element of politics and above all favoring a more contingent assessment of the national interest. While realists believe that we will be safer by seeking to avoid unnecessary broils, neocons believe that we will

²³ Boot, "What the Heck is a Neocon?"

²⁴ Boot

²⁵ Kristol and Kagan, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," 20.

find more safety using our power to try to fashion a more benign world order. On these points, neocons are liberal internationalists. Where they part company from liberals is in a greater readiness to resort to force and a lesser appreciation for the United Nations.²⁶

As a final note, one of the leading practitioners of modern day neo-conservatism, Richard Perle, denied the existence of a neo-conservative foreign policy. Speaking at the Nixon Center in February 2009, Perle said: “There is no such thing as a neo-conservative foreign policy,” adding that “50 million conspiracy theorists have it wrong.”²⁷ When former Reagan official Richard Burt asked Perle if he thought that there was a neo-conservative school of thought, Perle answered “not at all.”

Notwithstanding Perle’s assertion, this paper will illustrate that neo-conservatives, including many that inhabited powerful positions within the administration of George W. Bush, are an identifiable group with a long history of influencing American foreign policy.

²⁶ Joshua Muravchik and Stephan Walt, “The Neocons vs. The Realists,” *National Interest Online*, 3 September 2008.

²⁷ Dana Milbank, “Prince of Darkness Denies Own Existence,” *Washington Post*, 20 February 2009.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEO-CONSERVATISM

The next three chapters describe the key tenets of neo-conservatism by exploring its origins, philosophical foundations, and its foreign policy positions from the early 1970s to 2003. This chapter will begin by looking at the formation of neo-conservatism and its intellectual roots. The second part of this chapter will explore how the neo-conservatives first began influencing foreign policy during the Ford Administration, including a discussion of their position against détente and in favor of “roll back” during 1970s and 1980s. Chapter Four looks at how neo-conservatism changed during the post-Cold War period. Chapter Five explores how neo-conservatives moved into positions of power and influenced the Bush Doctrine and the U.S. decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

The following three chapters will demonstrate that neo-conservatism, unlike realism and liberalism, developed not as a coherent political theory but as a political ideology and strategy aimed at advocating hawkish foreign policies and overstating the threats of U.S. adversaries. These chapters will focus on statements and positions advanced made by the neo-conservatives and will pay considerable attention to Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz. These two men are often cited as the two most prominent and influential neo-conservatives. Both have been heavily involved in shaping foreign policy over the past four decades.

The Formation of Neo-Conservatism

Although the neo-conservatives are prolific writers, few texts present a broad outline of their core beliefs, central units of analysis, and epistemological and ontological approaches to foreign policy strategy. Hence, acknowledged canonical texts, like Waltz's *Theories of International Politics* or Keohane and Nye's *Power and Interdependence* are in short supply.²⁸ Similar to realists, the neo-conservatives tend to view themselves in a "Hobbesian state of nature primitivism... where perpetual militarized competition for ascendancy is the norm, . . . where trust among human beings is elusive... and adversaries must be crushed."²⁹ This view differs starkly from liberalism that bases its ideas on the Enlightenment of the 18th Century that sees moderation and community among nations as possible. Furthermore, neo-conservatives regard the potential of non-military factors (global commerce, soft power, treaties, United Nations, etc.) as constraints upon American power and prestige. Neo-conservatives also have a strong aversion to totalitarian regimes that dates back to their memories of the holocaust and the rise of fascism in Europe. They tend to equate any regime in the post-war era that has any socialist or communist tendencies as one step away from turning into tyranny.

The neo-conservatives aversion to Enlightenment values and beliefs is attributed to the political teachings and neo-platonic ideas of University of Chicago professor Leo Strauss.³⁰ Strauss' approach to philosophy was unique in that it longed for the religious

²⁸ Halper and Clark, *America Alone*, 10.

²⁹ Halper and Clark, 12.

³⁰ Please see the following: Shadia B. Drury, *Leo Strauss and the American Right* (New York; Palgrave Macmillian, 1997); Anne Norton, *Leo Strauss: The Politics of American Empire* (New Haven; Yale

and moral clarity of the *Ancien Regime*, the pre-modern era, and that it rejected historical relativism and democratic ideals.³¹ Some writers have linked Strauss' views - that the public lacks the "fortitude to deal with truth" and that society needs "consoling lies" - with the Iraq disinformation war campaign of 2002-3 by high-level planners in the administration of George W. Bush.³² Political scientist Thomas G. West has argued that Strauss and modern day neo-conservatives believe in "unilateralism" and hold contempt for international institutions because they encroach upon U.S. sovereignty.³³ Other intellectual influences on neo-conservatism include Catholic theologian and realist Reinhold Niebuhr and University of Chicago professor of political science and nuclear strategist Albert Wohlstetter.

Neo-conservatism began in the anti-Stalinist left of the 1930s and 1940s in journals like *Commentary* and *The Public Interest*. The founders of neo-conservatism include political intellectuals Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Michael Novak, Daniel Bell, Peter Berger, Midge Decter and Gertrude Himmelfarb. This group is often referred to as the first generation of neo-conservatives, as opposed to the second generation that came about in the 1980s. The first generation of neo-conservatives included many socialists, social democrats, and Cold War liberals, who supported both the strong anti-communism policy of Presidents Truman, Kennedy and Johnson and the welfare state. However, in the late 1960s many neo-conservatives

University Press. 2004); Stephen Eric Bronner, "Constructing Neo-Conservatism," *Logos Journal*, Spring 2004; and Michael Lind, "A Tragedy of Errors," *The Nation*, 23 February 2004, 23-32.

³¹ Phillip Green, "Neo-Cons and the Counter-Enlightenment," *Logos Journal*, Spring 2004.

³² William Pfaff, "The Long Reach of Leo Strauss," *International Herald Tribune*, 15 May 2003.

³³ Thomas G. West, "Leo Strauss and American Foreign Policy," *The Claremont Institute*, 12 July 2004.

found themselves at odds with the new social and political currents that were emerging, especially the counter-culture. As they held on to their belief in an anti-communism and a liberal interventionist foreign policy (Cold War liberal consensus), they departed from the left and moved to the right. This led the neo-conservatives to abandon many of the principles of liberalism and politically realign themselves. Irving Kristol defined a neo-conservative during this time as “a liberal who had been mugged by reality.”³⁴

With the breakdown of the pre-Vietnam foreign policy consensus, intermediary institutions began playing a larger role in developing foreign policy and giving the neo-conservatives the opportunity to challenge the status quo. In the past, the voice of foreign policy was the Council on Foreign Relations and its journal *Foreign Affairs*, but since the 1970s dozens of think tanks have become increasingly concerned with foreign policy. This created a new trend toward more ideological driven advisory institutions and decreased the role of universities in foreign policymaking. The neo-conservatives have been leaders of this trend and can be found at many research institutions: Norman Podhoretz and Meyrav Wurmser at the Hudson Institute, Max Boot at the Council on Foreign Relations; and any member of the Project for the New American Century and most foreign policy analysts at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI).³⁵ Other research institutions that feature neo-conservatives are the Olin and Heritage Foundation.

More recently, in the George W. Bush Administration, many neo-conservatives held a variety of key positions in U.S. government. At this time, they also peddled their

³⁴ Gerson, *The Neoconservative Vision*, 126.

³⁵ This list of fellows at AEI include Jeane Kirkpatrick, David Frum, Richard Perle, Irving Kristol, Joshua Muravchik, Reuel Marc Gerech, Danielle Pletka, and Thomas Donnelly, The Project of the New American Century, founded by neoconservatives William Kristol and Robert Kagan include many neoconservative intellectuals and government officials – please see <http://www.pnac.com> (accessed on December 25, 2006)

ideas in media, academia, and advisory boards.³⁶ Prominent neo-conservatives in the media include: *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer; *Weekly Standard* editor and founder William Kristol; *National Interest* founder and former editor Irving Kristol, father of William Kristol; and many foreign policy editorialists of the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New Republic*, *Commentary*, *The Public Interest*, *The American Spectator* and Fox News Channel. In the academy, Princeton professors Bernard Lewis and Aaron Friedberg, Pepperdine professor James Q. Wilson, and Yale professor Donald Kagan have all played roles buttressing neo-conservative ideas, opinions and policies. Neo-conservatives also have modest outposts within the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and at the University of Chicago.

The Ford Administration and the End of Détente

During the 1950s and 1960s, neo-conservatives tended to operate as public intellectuals, commentators and academics, but neo-conservatives in the 1970s began transitioning themselves to gain political power by becoming high-level government officials. One of the first neo-conservative strategies to influence foreign policy began in reaction to Richard Nixon's policy of improving relations with the Soviet Union, also known as détente. Finding themselves skeptically regarded by both the traditional conservatives and by the anti-Vietnam War wing of the Democratic Party, many neo-conservatives attached themselves to 1972 presidential candidate Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson. Jackson was considered a fierce critic of détente and the SALT (Strategic Arms and Limitation Treaties) agreements that increased armament control between the United

³⁶ For a full and more detailed listing of neoconservatives in government, media, academia, and advisory boards and institutions please see Halper and Clark, *American Alone*, 9-40.

States and the Soviet Union. Jackson was also a strong advocate of increased military spending and a staunch supporter of Israel.

Neo-conservatives Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz both served as aides to Senator Jackson in the 1970s. Other neo-conservatives that worked for Jackson include Elliot Abrams, Douglas Feith and Abram Shulsky. During his time as aide to Jackson, Perle played a large role in stifling any new arms control agreement between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The *New York Times* referred to Perle as a “central figure in the developing debate... over the terms of a new arms control agreement being put together by Soviet and American negotiators.”³⁷ During this time, Perle began to establish himself as a leading figure in foreign policy strategy coordination despite not being a scholar of international affairs. Jackson referred to Perle as “an outstanding professional, without a doubt one of the best in his particular field of strategic doctrine and policy.”³⁸ During the 1976 presidential election, Perle also served as Jackson’s national security advisor and was described as an “adroit political operator” during the campaign.³⁹ Perle came under fire in 1978 when he worked for Jackson and was asked to resign after receiving top-secret C.I.A. reports on strategic arms limitation talks.⁴⁰ Perle did not resign.

In 1972, Jackson and many of his neo-conservative fellow travelers founded the Coalition for a Democratic Majority to “unite Humphrey and Jackson supporters” and bring back the “great traditions” of the Democratic Party to advocate a tougher stance

³⁷ Richard L. Madden, “Jackson Aid Stirs Criticism in Arms Debate,” *New York Times*, 4 December 1977.

³⁸ Madden, “Jackson Aid Stirs Criticism in Arms Debate”

³⁹ Leslie H. Gelb, “Top Experts Helping Guide Candidates’ Foreign Views,” *New York Times*, 27 March 1976.

⁴⁰ Seymore M. Hersh, “C.I.A. Analyst Forced Out for Giving Senator Secret Data,” *New York Times*, 13 November 1978.

toward communism.⁴¹ The Coalition for a Democratic Majority became the template for many groups that would follow in the years ahead. The two central points of agreement that brought neo-conservatives together was their “staunch defense of Israel and a depiction of détente as a failure . . . to stand up to the evils of communism.”⁴² Neo-conservatives such as Moynihan and Podhoretz began a sharp criticism of détente and the second strategic nuclear arms treaty with the Soviet Union, SALT II.⁴³

When Gerald Ford was elected president in 1974, many neo-conservatives and foreign policy hawks began taking aim at the foreign policies of Ford’s secretary of state Henry Kissinger and his advancements of détente. When CIA Director George H.W. Bush commissioned a small group of experts – called Team B (which included Paul Nitze and neo-conservatives Richard Pipes and Paul Wolfowitz) - to seek an alternative analysis of the C.I.A.’s National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), their data and conclusions confirmed many of the perceived doubts neo-conservatives and Paul Nitze had about détente and arms control. These doubts included that the NIE underestimated the threat posed by Soviet strategic weapons programs and that the Soviet Union did not adhere to the doctrine of mutually assured destruction (MAD).

The beginnings of Team B stem from the work of Albert Wohlstetter, who was a nuclear strategic theorist and a professor at the University of Chicago. Both Perle and Wolfowitz were protégés of Wohlstetter and credit him with much of their strategic

⁴¹ John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism: Intellectuals and Foreign Affairs 1945-1994* (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1995), 60.

⁴² Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*, 41.

⁴³ Ehrman, 111.

thinking.⁴⁴ In 1974, Wohlstetter wrote an article in *Foreign Affairs* entitled “Is There a Strategic Arms Race” that concluded the U.S. was allowing the Soviet Union to achieve military superiority by not closing the missile gap.⁴⁵ This began a series of attacks from conservatives and neo-conservatives inside and outside of government on the C.I.A.’s annual assessment of the Soviet threat.

In 1972, Wolfowitz took a job with U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency where he helped advise Team B. Wolfowitz got the job, according to historian James Mann, due to the efforts of Jackson and Albert Wohlstetter.⁴⁶ Team B concluded that the National Intelligence Estimate on the Soviet Union, which was generated yearly by the C.I.A., underestimated Soviet military power and misinterpreted Soviet strategic intentions. Team B reports soon became the intellectual foundation for the idea of “the window of vulnerability” and the massive arms buildup that began under the Carter administration and accelerated under President Reagan.⁴⁷

Team B has been heavily criticized for being inaccurate and hawkish. Anne Cahn, who was chief of the Social Impact Staff at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), later concluded: “If you go through most of Team B’s specific allegations about weapons systems, and you just examine them one by one, they were all wrong.”⁴⁸ According to John Prados, the “experts” that formed Team B were all “conservative cold

⁴⁴ Halper and Clark, 50.

⁴⁵ Albert Wohlstetter “The Delicate Balance of Terror,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 1959, 211-234.

⁴⁶ James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2004), 34.

⁴⁷ Anne Hessingcahn and John Prados, “Team B: The Trillion Dollar Experiment,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, April 1993.

⁴⁸ Anne Hessing Cahn, *Killing Détente: The Right Attacks the CIA* (State College: Penn State University Press, 1998), 22.

warriors determined to bury détente and the SALT process.”⁴⁹ Paul Warnke, an official with the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency at the time of the Team B exercise, wrote: "Whatever might be said for evaluation of strategic capabilities by a group of outside experts, the impracticality of achieving useful results by 'independent' analysis of strategic objectives should have been self-evident. Moreover, the futility of the Team B enterprise was assured by the selection of the panel's members. Rather than including a diversity of views ... the Strategic Objectives Panel was composed entirely of individuals who made careers out of viewing the Soviet menace with alarm."⁵⁰

On the heels of forming Team B, Paul Nitze and many other prominent neo-conservatives – including Norman Podhoretz, Perle, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Max Kampelman, Seymore Martin Lipset, Bayard Rustin, and Midge Decter – reconstituted the Committee on Present Danger (CPD) to alert the public of the growing Soviet Threat.⁵¹ As Jason Vest makes clear:

[The] neoconservative hawks found an effective vehicle for advocating their views via the Committee on the Present Danger, a group that fervently believed the United States was a hair away from being militarily surpassed by the Soviet Union, and whose raison d'être was strident advocacy of bigger military budgets, near-fanatical opposition to any form of arms control and zealous championing of a Likudnik Israel.⁵²

The CPD was first formed in 1950 during the Korean War as a “citizens lobby” to alert the nation of the growing Soviet threat to the United States. Twenty-four years later, it was reconstituted to counter the perceived dangers of détente. Its members were

⁴⁹ John Prados, ‘Team B: The Trillion Dollar Experiment – Part 2’, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, April 1993.

⁵⁰ Paul C. Warnke, “The B Team,” *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, January/February 1999.

⁵¹ Warnke, “The B Team,” 110-115.

⁵² Jason Vest, “The Men from JINSA and CSP,” *The Nation*, 2 September 2002.

identified as “hawkish cold warriors” or “representatives of the military-industrial (or intellectual) complex.”⁵³ Reflecting on the influence of the CPD during the 1970s, neo-conservative Max Kampelman wrote, “ I know of no private public affairs organization that has had a greater influence in such a short period of time on U.S. foreign and defense policy issues.”⁵⁴

Approximately 33 officials in the Reagan administration, including Perle and Wolfowitz, were associated with the CPD. In fact, Ronald Reagan himself had been a member of the CPD in the 1970s. This explains, in part, how many of the neo-conservatives found positions in his administration. The CPD was dissolved in 1981 but was resurrected in 2004 to address the “war on terrorism” during the George W. Bush administration. The board members of the new CPD include many prominent neo-conservative figures such as John Bolton, Douglas Feith, Michael Ledeen, Paul Wolfowitz, and James Woolsey. According to its founder, former Reagan advisor Peter Hannaford, the new CPD was formed because a parallel existed between the Soviet threat and the threat from terrorism.⁵⁵

The 1970s would also see the formation of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), which was founded by Irving Kristol as a “counter balance to liberal sniping at defense spending” and “focused on defense of American policies concerning Israel.”⁵⁶ As Clark and Halper conclude, “commitment to Israel’s security and right to exist and a patriotic support of American values were inextricably linked in the

⁵³ Cahn, *Killing Détente*, 31.

⁵⁴ Cahn.

⁵⁵ James Kirchick, “Cold warriors return for war on terrorism,” *The Hill*, 30 June 2004.

⁵⁶ Halper and Clark, 58.

eyes of many neo-conservatives.”⁵⁷ “Neoconservatives concerned that the United States might not be able to provide Israel with adequate military supplies in the event of another Arab-Israeli war” prompted JINSA’s founding, according to Jason Vest.⁵⁸

The work of Team B, CPD and JINSA played a influential role in ending détente during the Ford and Carter administrations. These political lobbying organizations not only helped pave the way for the large military build up during the Reagan administration, but also helped many neo-conservatives find new posts in the new administration.

The Reagan Administration and Soviet-American Arms Control

For many neo-conservatives, the administration of Ronald Reagan served as a benchmark. It highlighted their transition from public intellectuals dismayed over the breakdown of the post-cold war consensus, to being realigned and part of administration that once again shared foreign policy vision. For the neo-conservatives, the new administration incorporated a framework of moral and religious clarity, higher defense budgets, and a muscular and interventionist stance toward communism. Reagan’s ability to recognize communism as an “evil empire” embodied many of the same long-held virtues that galvanized the neo-conservatives to end détente.

The neo-conservatives also believed the U.S. strategy toward the Soviet Union should be offensive, rather than defensive. The neo-conservatives did not hold that the strategy of mutual assured destruction (MAD) would keep American safe. They believed Moscow was aiming to surpass Washington in an arms race and develop first strike

⁵⁷ Halper and Clark

⁵⁸ Vest, “The Men from JINSA and CSP,” 17.

capability. This led the neo-conservatives to advocate a policy of aggressive containment, where the U.S. would contain the center (the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites) and “roll back” any further expansion of the Soviet Union in the periphery (El Salvador, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, etc). This strategy was partly adopted by the Reagan administration and became known as the Reagan Doctrine, where the U.S. would fight the Soviets by proxy on the periphery.

The neo-conservatives held so many positions within the new administration that the *New Republic* sardonically warned that it was being taken over by “Trotsky’s orphans.”⁵⁹ Richard Perle, who was the assistant secretary of defense for international affairs in the Reagan administration, was known as the “prince of darkness” for his hawkish stances toward the Soviet Union.⁶⁰ Perle was also known as the Reagan administration’s “dominant arms control figure” and was a harsh critic of comprehensive nuclear test bans between the United States and the Soviet Union.⁶¹ According to the *New York Times*, Perle “dominated Administration policy on arms control,” which “persuaded president Reagan to repudiate the SALT II treaty” and “undermine the Antiballistic Missile Treaty.”⁶² At one point Perle went so far as to say that those who oppose the administration’s position on SALT II “are aligning themselves with the Soviet Union.”⁶³

⁵⁹ Michael Massing, “Trotsky’s Orphans: From Bolshevism to Reaganism,” *New Republic*, 22 June 1987, 18-22.

⁶⁰ Editorial, “The Light and Darkness of Richard Perle,” *New York Times*, 16 March 1987.

⁶¹ Hugh De Santis, “The Monkey Wrench in Arms Control,” *New York Times*, 17 August 1986.

⁶² Editorial, “The Light of Darkness of Richard Perle”

⁶³ Roger Wilkins, “Two Kinds of Arms,” *New York Times*, 14 June 1986.

The central strategy that Perle championed was the zero option policy, which called for the “removal of all Soviet SS-20s from Europe and Asia in return for America’s agreement not to deploy cruise missiles and Pershing Hs in Europe.”⁶⁴ This strategy was used as a bluff, with the intention that the Soviets would never remove their missiles in return for a promise not to install weapons that were not in production. In short, the zero option policy was designed to fail. According to historian Gary Dorrien, “Perle did not expect the Soviets to sign the agreements that damaged their strategic position, the implication was that no agreement was conceivable.”⁶⁵

While Reagan wanted to increase defense spending so that the U.S. could negotiate an arms-control agreement from a position of strength, some neo-conservatives outside of the administration wanted this strategy to fail.⁶⁶ Upon the adoption of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, Frank Gaffney, a neo-conservative and Defense Department official who worked on arms control, established the Center for Security Policy to campaign against arms control.⁶⁷ The divergence between Reagan and the neo-conservatives was also evident in his policy toward both the Middle East and Poland. The fact that Reagan decided to cultivate better ties with Saudi Arabia instead of establishing U.S. ground forces in the region to protect Israel appalled neo-conservatives such as

⁶⁴ Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs: Neoconservatism and the New Pax Americana* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 61.

⁶⁵ Gary Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*

⁶⁶ Jerry W. Sander, *Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on Present Danger and the Politics of Containment* (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 191-228, and Eugene Rostow, “Why the Soviets Want an Arms Control Agreement, and Why They Want it Now, *Commentary*, Spring 1987, 23-32.

⁶⁷ Vest, 18.

Podhoretz and Robert Tucker.⁶⁸ When martial law was declared in Poland in 1983, neo-conservatives wanted Reagan to use this opportunity to exacerbate the crisis and break up the Soviet Union. Instead, Reagan favored stability to avoid provoking a harsh Soviet reaction that could lead to a direct superpower confrontation.⁶⁹

The 1980s also saw the placement of neo-conservative Paul Wolfowitz in several positions within the Reagan administration, including the State Department's Director of Planning, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia. At the beginning of the Reagan administration, Wolfowitz was in charge of recruiting a 25 member staff made up of several neo-conservatives – including Francis Fukuyama and Zalmay Khalizad. Its charge was to look at the long-term goals of redefining the administrations relations with the rest of the world. Fukuyama and Khalizad, who would later become influential in neo-conservative post-Cold War strategy within the federal foreign policy bureaucracy, went to the same schools as Wolfowitz. Fukuyama attended Cornell University and Khalizad attended the University of Chicago where he, like Wolfowitz, was a student of Albert Wohlstetter.⁷⁰ During his time in the Reagan administration, Wolfowitz proved himself as a staunch supporter for the state of Israel and that the U.S. did not need to reach accommodation with the world's other super powers because America was strong enough without their support. His perspective on China was a significant change in direction from the Nixon-Kissinger diplomacy with China. It was also significant, according to Mann, because

⁶⁸ Robert Tucker, "The Middle East: Carterism Without Carter?", *Commentary*, Summer 1981, 27-36 and Norman Podhoretz, "The Neo-Conservative Anguish Over Reagan's Foreign Policy," *New York Times* 2 May 1982.

⁶⁹ Podhoretz, "The Neo-Conservative Anguish Over Reagan's Foreign Policy"

⁷⁰ Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 113.

Wolfowitz's evolving perspective on China was "similar to his and other neo-conservatives' view of détente with the Soviet Union in the 1970s."⁷¹ The Reagan Administration agreed with Wolfowitz that the U.S was overvaluing its strategic position with China and Secretary of State Shultz began to reorient administration policy toward Asia by focusing more on relations with Japan.

In 1979, Jeanne Kirkpatrick developed a foreign policy strategy that became a hallmark of neo-conservative realism in the 1980s, sometimes called the "Kirkpatrick Doctrine." Kirkpatrick believed that there was a distinction between authoritative regimes and totalitarian ones and that right wing dictatorships should be supported because they provided a bulwark against the larger threat of the Soviet Union.⁷² Irving Kristol in *Commentary* and Norman Podhoretz in *The Public Interest* frequently backed this line of thinking. The proposition to support undemocratic regimes, like Pinochet in Chile, Chun Doo Hwan in South Korea, Suharto in Indonesia, and Marcos in the Philippines, was very influential in the early Reagan administration and among neo-conservatives. It was also during this time that Midge Decter formed the Committee For the Free World, which "served as a clearing house for neoconservative activists" dedicated to defending the free world against the "rising menace of totalitarian barbarism."⁷³ This committee enjoyed regular correspondence with Kirkpatrick and assistant secretary of state for international organizations and fellow neo-conservative Elliot Abrams, who was also a founding member of the committee.

⁷¹ Mann, 115.

⁷² Jeanne J. Kirkpatrick, "Dictatorships and Double Standards," *Commentary*, November 1979, 37-45.

⁷³ Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*, 139-141.

As assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, Wolfowitz tried to re-orient the administration's policy toward democracy promotion, stating in the *Wall Street Journal* that "the best antidote to Communism is democracy."⁷⁴ Wolfowitz, unlike Kirkpatrick, believed in pursuing democracy promotion as a foreign policy strategy and that the U.S. should oppose any leader who is a tyrant. This strategic and philosophical difference illuminated the divisions within the neo-conservative ranks. According to Mann, "Over the following decades the neoconservatives struggled to come to grips with the antidemocratic implications of Kirkpatrick's article, sometimes defending it, sometimes ignoring it."⁷⁵

During the second Reagan administration, many neo-conservatives found the arms negotiations with Mikhail Gorbachev appalling and a lowering of the guard. The Soviet political and economic reforms, *perestroika* and *glasnost*, also clearly exposed the fundamental flaws of the Kirkpatrick doctrine that held that totalitarian states were immune to liberalizing tendencies. The neo-conservatives were also out of touch with how these reforms were changing the Soviet Union's power in the world. As late as 1987, Eugene Rostow was issuing grim warnings to policymakers about Soviet expansionism.⁷⁶ Rostow cautioned that Moscow was still "steadily building an alternative state system based not on equilibrium but on Soviet dominance: a true *Pax Sovietica*." Richard Pipes

⁷⁴ Paul D. Wolfowitz, "Asia: U.S. Encourages Constructive Change in the Philippines," *Wall Street Journal*, 15 April 1985.

⁷⁵ Mann, 93.

⁷⁶ Eugene Rostow, "Why the Soviets Want an Arms Control Agreement, and Why They Want it Now," *Commentary*, February 1987, 23-32.

and Michael Ledeen also made such out of place predictions.⁷⁷ In fact, in early 1989 during the first Bush Administration, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and his policy chief Wolfowitz warned government officials that the Soviet Union still posed a big threat to the United States only weeks before the fall of the Berlin Wall.⁷⁸ After the fall of the Eastern Bloc, Podhoretz, editor of *Commentary* and leading advocate neo-conservative foreign policy during the Reagan years, simply stopped writing because his views on the strength of the Soviet Union became anachronistic and misplaced. However, most neo-conservatives later viewed the end of the Cold War as a win because of Reagan's policy of "roll-back" and strident stand toward communism in all parts of the world.

With the election of George H.W. Bush, few neo-conservatives found posts within the new administration. The Bush administration was mostly made up of realists like Brent Scowcroft, James Baker, and Lawrence Eagleburger. The only prominent neo-conservative strategist who found a top-level post within the new administration would be Wolfowitz, who served as under-secretary of defense.

The George H.W. Bush Administration and Defense Planning Guidance 1992

In 1992, toward the end of the George H. W. Bush Administration, the first neo-conservative post-Cold War foreign policy strategy was written under the supervision of Wolfowitz. The document entitled "Defense Planning Guidance (DPG-92)" was intended

⁷⁷ Richard Pipes, "How to Cope With the Soviet Threat," *Commentary*, February 1984, 13-30 and Michael Ledeen, "Fighting Back," *Commentary*, February 1985, 28-31.

⁷⁸ Gary Dorien, "Imperial Designs: Theological Ethics and the Ideologies of International Politics," *Crosscurrents*, Summer 2004.

to highlight the need for more defense spending and to describe the new focus of the United States military abroad in an “era of fundamental change.”⁷⁹ DPG-92 called for U.S. foreign policy to shift to a focus on retaining its sole-superpower status, which it gained with the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. It promoted the establishment of “new order” as paramount to the new Pentagon framework, where the Pentagon’s role towards emerging powerful nations is to actively “discourage them from challenging our leadership.”⁸⁰ DPG-92 also involved the work of two other neo-conservatives, I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby, a protégé and top assistant of Wolfowitz, and Zalma Khalilzad, a longtime Wolfowitz aide.⁸¹

Laid out in the document were possible scenarios that could open up a road to war by the end of the twentieth century, including the possible defense of Lithuania and Poland from a Russian invasion following the end of the Cold War (in an effort to consolidate Russian power in the region), wars against Iraq and North Korea in defense of their southern neighbors (Kuwait and South Korea, respectively), and smaller-scale interventions in Panama and the Philippines. Furthermore, the document weighed the possibility of the United States military to “preempt or punish” the use of biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons, “even in conflicts that otherwise do not directly engage US interests.”

The document called for the maintenance of U.S. military dominance capable of

⁷⁹ Barton Gellman, “Keeping the U.S. First,” *Washington Post*, 11 March 1992.

⁸⁰ Gellman, “Keeping the U.S. First”

⁸¹ Mann, 209-210.

“detering potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role.”⁸²

The document clearly states the emergence of a new global rival would be a detriment to the “new order” it seeks:

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.”⁸³

This would include such energy-rich and globally important areas as the Middle East and the new republics in Central Asia. Also mentioned was the “two-war” benchmark, where the armed forces are told to be prepared for the ability to fight two large wars at all times, and to purchase and have on-hand 80 percent of the conventional munitions required to destroy 80 percent of expected targets “in the two most demanding Major Regional Conflict scenarios.” This would require massive military funding and a revolution in troop preparation and deployment.⁸⁴

The document was leaked to the *New York Times* and then, subsequently, to the *Washington Post* and to Congress, where it drew the ire of several Congressmen. Senator Joseph Biden, a Delaware Democrat, called the goals of the document “literally a *Pax Americana*,” claiming simply that “it won't work...and that you can be the world superpower and still be unable to maintain peace throughout the world.” Senator Robert C. Byrd, a Democrat from West Virginia, called the document “myopic, shallow and

⁸² Mann

⁸³ Patrick Tyler, “Excerpts from Pentagon’s Plan: ‘Prevent the Re-Emergence of a New Rival,’” *New York Times*, 8 March 1992.

⁸⁴ Gellman

disappointing," claiming "the basic thrust of the document seems to be this: We love being the sole remaining superpower in the world and we want so much to remain that way that we are willing to put at risk the basic health of our economy and well-being of our people to do so."⁸⁵ Also weighing in was Air Force Secretary Donald B. Rice, who stated the document was simply a staff project about to be circulated for higher-level review, and that it "could have benefited from that review."⁸⁶

In May 1992, several months after the document was leaked to the press and Congress, it was re-released after heavy editing, with most or all of the "unilateral talk" edited out, in what the *New York Times* called a "striking change of tone."⁸⁷ The new draft claimed, "one of the primary tasks we face today in shaping the future is carrying longstanding alliances into the new era, and turning old enmities into new cooperative relationships."⁸⁸ When it was leaked to the press, there was a strong backlash against Wolfowitz, who attempted to distance himself from the document and Khalilzad. Cheney, however, openly praised it, telling Khalilzad that he had "discovered a new rationale for our role in the world."⁸⁹ Fellow neo-conservative Charles Krauthammer wrote an editorial column in the *Washington Post* praising the new Pentagon Strategy.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Gellman

⁸⁶ Gellman

⁸⁷ Tyler, Patrick E, "Pentagon Drops Goal of Blocking New Superpowers," *New York Times*, 24 May 1992.

⁸⁸ Tyler, "Pentagon Drops Goal of Blocking New Superpowers"

⁸⁹ Mann, 211.

⁹⁰ Charles Krauthammer, "What's Wrong with the Pentagon Paper," *Washington Post*, 13 March 1992.

The underlying assumptions in DPG-92 that America needs to once again project its military power onto the main stage and that the U.S. did not need collective security because of its unparalleled strength galvanized the neo-conservatives and many foreign policy makers throughout the 1990s. DGP-92 aimed to fill the strategic vacuum created by the end of the Cold War and served as a “bridge” transporting the next generation of neo-conservatives from the end of détente to the beginning of a new post-Cold War framework.

CHAPTER 3

THE FRAMEWORK OF POST-COLD WAR FOREIGN POLICY

At the end of the Cold War, the big question among policymakers, academics, and the foreign policy elite was what to do with the overwhelming power and global latitude of the United States. While some policymakers were demanding a peace dividend, many neo-conservatives began arguing for a more assertive American foreign policy. Echoing the principles outlined in DPG-92, the neo-conservatives began advocating a new global order based on a “unipolar” world where no nation would challenge the power, position and prestige of the United States. It would be a foreign policy of *Pax Americana* that defined America’s role in the world as a “democratic crusade” seeking the universalization of American values. This creed was strongly advocated among the second generation of neo-conservatives, such as William Kristol, Charles Krauthammer, Joshua Muravchik, and Francis Fukuyama. However, some of the first-generation neoconservatives, including Jeanne Kirkpatrick and Peter Berger, disagreed with this vision believing it was far too overreaching.⁹¹

In Irving Kristol’s new foreign policy journal the *National Interest*, Francis Fukuyama and Charles Krauthammer put forth two seminal essays that transitioned neo-conservative foreign policy from the Cold War to the post-Cold War world. It would depart from the neo-conservative Cold War absolutism against communism and move toward a muscular and nationalistic Wilsonian liberalism. In Fukuyama’s 1989 article

⁹¹ Ehrman, 185.

“The End of History,” he proclaimed the triumph of Western liberalism an end to “the realm of ideas” and concluded that liberal democracy will be the final form of government.⁹² These statements aroused much debate in and outside of academia. It also set a tone for the way neo-conservatives would define their foreign policy rhetoric and vision of democratic liberalism as a moral absolute.

In the following issue of the *National Interest*, Krauthammer’s essay, “Universal Dominion: Toward a Unipolar World,” would argue that “America’s purpose should be to steer the world away from its coming multipolar future toward a qualitatively new outcome—a unipolar world . . . [where] the advancement of democracy should become the touchstone of a new ideological foreign policy.”⁹³ Krauthammer was one of the first to recognize that the end of the Cold War created a new era of unipolarity for the U.S. and by embracing democracy and unilateralism it would create a benevolent *Pax Americana* that no longer needed a balance of power. On the heels of this article, neo-conservative Joshua Muravchik wrote his manifesto in 1991 called *Exporting Democracy: Fulfilling America’s Destiny*. Muravchik, similar to Krauthammer, argued that “democracy is our [nation’s] creed” and that U.S. foreign policy should secure a new world order forged by *Pax Americana*.⁹⁴

This new strategy was pivotal in shaping a foreign policy consensus among neo-conservatives by providing a framework of “democratic realism.” The presumptions that multilateralism was impractical and not desired, that a “benevolent hegemony is good for

⁹² Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?” *National Interest*, Summer 1998, 3.

⁹³ Charles Krauthammer, “Universal Dominion: Toward a Unipolar World,” *National Interest*, Winter 1989, 48-49.

⁹⁴ Joshua Muravchik, *Exporting Democracy: Fulfilling America’s Destiny*, (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1991), 227.

a vast portion of the world's population," mirrored the moral clarity that many neo-conservatives admired in Reagan's foreign policy.⁹⁵ This new vision of an interventionist unipolar America, however, put them at odds with the administration of George H.W. Bush, who advocated a more realist aligned foreign policy, and Bill Clinton who sought a multilateral interventionist foreign policy.

The Clinton Administration, Multilateralism, and Iraq

When William Jefferson Clinton was elected in 1992, almost all neo-conservatives found themselves out of work. Instead of serving in the administration, the neo-conservatives spent the last decade of the twentieth century criticizing many parts of Clinton's foreign policy while devising their own grand strategy for America. The neo-conservatives criticized Clinton's foreign policy on many grounds, including his reluctance to use American military power, especially in regard to Iraq, and his adherence to multilateralism. Using their criticism of Clinton the neo-conservatives began forming a new advocacy coalition aimed at "rebuilding America's defenses" by increasing military spending and by promoting America as a benevolent hegemonic power.

One of the earliest critics of Clinton's foreign policy was Wolfowitz. Reacting to Clinton's first year in office, Wolfowitz wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that Clinton lacked a well-designed set of foreign policy principles that defined the national interest. Wolfowitz maintained that U.S. foreign policy should not hinge on multilateralism because of America's unchallenged and enormous military strength.⁹⁶ Another criticism

⁹⁵ Krisol and Kagan, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," 4.

⁹⁶ Paul Wolfowitz, "Clinton's First Year," *Foreign Affairs*, January-February 1994, 30-43.

Wolfowitz and other neo-conservatives leveled at Clinton's foreign policy was the inability to get rid of Saddam Hussein.

During the last months of the Gulf War in 1991, Wolfowitz argued the U.S. should have removed Saddam Hussein by "marching on Baghdad and occupying Iraq."⁹⁷ Wolfowitz also accused Clinton of not actively removing Hussein from power and for displaying "paralyzing ambivalence" toward the Iraqi opposition that was put forth in the passage of the Iraq Liberation Act passed by Congress in 1996. If Clinton didn't take active steps to remove Hussein from power, Wolfowitz predicted that the U.S. would be forced to overthrow his regime in the future when "he was armed with weapons of unparalleled destructiveness." Wolfowitz and fellow neo-conservative Zalmay Khalilzad, who was assistant undersecretary of defense for policy planning in the first Bush administration and worked under Wolfowitz at the Pentagon, advocated that Clinton needed "a comprehensive new strategy aimed at promoting a change of regime in Baghdad," including military action.⁹⁸ Perle and Robert Zoellick, who was a former undersecretary of state in the Reagan administration and a fellow neo-conservative, both agreed Clinton's foreign policy lacked a coherent foreign policy strategy and conceptual framework. Perle maintained that Clinton's foreign policy was a "patchwork foreign policy, with no strategy, no global vision." Zoellick described the Clinton administration's foreign policy as a "roller coaster ride" that is "strategically incoherent and tactically reactive."⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Paul Wolfowitz, "Rising Up," *New Republic*, 7 December 1996, 14.

⁹⁸ Paul Wolfowitz and Zalmay Khalilzad, "We Must lead the Way in Deposing Saddam," *The Washington Post*, 9 November 1997.

⁹⁹ Jim Anderson, "Foreign policy issues thrown into political campaign ring,"

Many neo-conservatives who had close links to Israel's right-wing Likud party also were advocating for Clinton to remove Saddam from power. In 1996, Perle, Douglas Feith and David Wurmser authored a commissioned report – *A Clean Break: A Strategy for Securing the Realm* – to the newly elected Israeli politician Benjamin Netanyahu. The report called for removing Saddam from power because “Iraq's future could affect the strategic balance in the Middle East profoundly” and it called for an end to the Oslo peace process. The report also called for “reestablishing the principle of preemption.”¹⁰⁰ The protection of Israel from radical Islam and the peace process were of paramount importance to many neoconservatives, including Douglas Feith, Perle, Wolfowitz, David Frum and historian Bernard Lewis.¹⁰¹

In another reaction to Clinton's foreign policy, two second generation neo-conservatives, William Kristol and Robert Kagan, developed and advocated a new foreign policy strategy that maintained Republicans needed to step away from both Henry Kissinger's “realism” and Pat Buchanan's “neo-isolationism,” and avoid the “multilateralism of the Clinton administration.”¹⁰² Kristol and Kagan outlined this manifesto in an article in *Foreign Affairs* entitled “Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy.” They argued that conservatives were adrift in responding to Clinton's multilateralism approach and that the American grand strategy should be one of “benevolent global hegemony:”

Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 2 May 1996.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Perle, et al, “A Clean Break: A Strategy for Securing the Realm,” Study Group on a New Israeli Strategy 2000, *Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies*, June 1996.

¹⁰¹ Halper and Clark. 20-22.

¹⁰² Kristol and Kagan, “Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy,” 18-32.

Having defeated the "evil empire," the United States enjoys strategic and ideological predominance. The first objective of U.S. foreign policy should be to preserve and enhance that predominance by strengthening America's security, supporting its friends, advancing its interests, and standing up for its principles around the world.¹⁰³

This was the clearest enumeration of a neo-conservative foreign policy since the drafting of *DPG-92* and it incorporated many of the sentiments of Krauthammer and Fukuyama's earlier articles in the *National Interest*. This neo-conservative call-to-arms argued that U.S. foreign policy should have a distinct moral purpose, based on the understanding that "its moral goals and its fundamental national interests are almost always in harmony."¹⁰⁴ Moreover, that the first objective of U.S. foreign policy in the post-Cold War world should be to use American primacy to strengthen America's security by standing up for its principles around the world.

To Kagan and Kristol, the main threat to the world was America's unwillingness and indifference to project U.S. power abroad:

In a world in which peace and American security depend on American power and the will to use it, the main threat the United States faces now and in the future is its own weakness. American hegemony is the only reliable defense against a breakdown of peace and international order. The appropriate goal of American foreign policy, therefore, is to preserve that hegemony as far into the future as possible. To achieve this goal, the United States needs a neo-Reaganite foreign policy of military supremacy and moral confidence.¹⁰⁵

In 1997, as a means to propel the "neo-Reaganite" foreign strategy to the forefront of American political debate, the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) was

¹⁰³ Kristol and Kagan

¹⁰⁴ Kristol and Kagan

¹⁰⁵ Kristol and Kagan

founded by Kristol and Kagan. One of the group's founding documents claimed, "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."¹⁰⁶ PNAC served as an intermediary vehicle for advocating ideas put forth by Kagan, Kristol and other neo-conservative fellow travelers. PNAC was a 501 (c) 3 organization funded by the Bradley Foundation and was housed in the same Washington, D.C. office building as the American Enterprise Institute. PNAC was staffed by a number of second-generation neo-conservatives who generated statements and open letter campaigns that gathered the signatures of elite political actors. PNAC members included Perle, Wolfowitz, and future Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. According to Halper and Clark, the founding of PNAC marked a "complete generational transition" in neo-conservatism that occurred somewhere "between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Bosnian war:"

"By the later half of the 1990s, Kagan, William Kristol, Muravchik, Perle, Wolfowitz ... had assumed the leadership roles that had long been held by Nathan Glazer, Irving Kristol, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Norman Podhoretz. The younger neo-conservatives had filled a space left by the increasing inability of older neo-conservative views to provide a sufficient interpretative framework for the changing realities of international events in the 1990s."¹⁰⁷

Similar to the formation of the Committee on Present Danger (CPD) in 1976, the neo-conservative members and signatories of PNAC saw Clintons' foreign policy as a weak failure to deal with the problems and threats America was confronting in the post-Cold

¹⁰⁶ "Statement of Principles," *Project for the New American Century*, Washington, D.C., 3 June 1997.

¹⁰⁷ Halper and Clarke, 99.

War period.

One of the first advocacy actions taken by PNAC was a letter to President Clinton criticizing his foreign policy strategy regarding Iraq. The January 1998 letter urged Clinton to move from a policy of “containment” of Iraq toward military action to remove Saddam Hussein from power:

Given the magnitude of the threat, the current policy, which depends for its success upon the steadfastness of our coalition partners and upon the cooperation of Saddam Hussein, is dangerously inadequate. 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.¹⁰⁸

The letter was signed by many second-generation neo-conservatives, including Elliott Abrams, Fukuyama, Wolfowitz, Kagan, Khalilzad, Kristol, Perle, Zoellick, and Peter Rodman. Of its 18 signatories, 11 would serve in high-level positions during the George W. Bush administration. PNAC followed up a few months later with an open letter to Senate leader Trent Lott (R-MS) and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-GA), arguing that the “only way to protect the United States and its allies from the threat of weapons of mass destruction [is] to put in place policies that would lead to the removal of Saddam and his regime from power.”¹⁰⁹

In September 2000, just in time for the election of George W. Bush as Clinton’s successor, PNAC published a white paper entitled *Rebuilding America’s*

¹⁰⁸ Project for the New American Century, “Letter to President Clinton on Iraq,” Washington, D.C., 26 January 1998.

¹⁰⁹ Project for the New American Century, “Letter to Gingrich and Lott,” Washington, D.C., 29 May 1998.

Defenses. This document contained a very detailed plan for transforming the military into a force capable of retaining U.S global hegemony throughout the new century. It was based, in part, on DPG-92 according to its author Thomas Donnelly:

In broad terms, we saw the project as building upon the defense strategy outlined by the Cheney Defense Department in the waning days of the Bush Administration. The Defense Policy Guidance (DPG) drafted in the early months of 1992 provided a blueprint for maintaining U.S. preeminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival, and shaping the international security order in line with American principles and interests.¹¹⁰

Rebuilding America's Defenses also advocated large increases in military spending (\$15 billion-\$20 billion) and for the United States to take military control of the Gulf region “even should Saddam pass from the scene.”¹¹¹ “The process of transformation,” the plan said, “is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbor.”¹¹²

By the end of the Clinton administration, and despite not holding any major high-level positions within government, neo-conservatives had formed a concrete foreign policy strategy and coalition that sought to radically change foreign policy as they did in the early 1970s. However, it wasn't until the election of George W. Bush in 2000 that the neo-conservatives would find themselves back in a position of influence and be able to put their strategy into action at the first opportunity.

¹¹⁰ Thomas Donnelly, *Rebuilding America's Defenses* (Washington D.C.: Project for the New American Century, 2000)

¹¹¹ Donnelly, *Rebuilding America's Defenses*

¹¹² Donnelly

CHAPTER 4

THE ASCENDANCY OF NEO-CONSERVATISM

The George W. Bush Administration

Before George W. Bush was elected in November of 2000, he promised a foreign policy very different from the neo-conservative strategy of projecting American power unilaterally to overthrow regimes and implement American moral values. During his campaign, Bush promised a humble foreign policy. In a speech at the Reagan Presidential Library in November 1999, he stated: "Let us not dominate others with our power."¹¹³ In a presidential debate with Al Gore in 2000, Bush said, "I would be very careful about using our troops as nation-builders."¹¹⁴ In a debate a week later, Bush stated "Our nation stands alone right now in the world in terms of power, and that's why we've got to be humble and yet project strength."¹¹⁵ When George W. Bush was officially elected to the presidency in 2000, many neo-conservatives found themselves appointed to several key positions within new administration despite their differing approach to American foreign and security policy.

Vice President Dick Cheney, a PNAC signer and former secretary of defense under

¹¹³ George W. Bush, "A Distinctly American Internationalism," 11 November 1999, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, California.

¹¹⁴ "Election 2000 Presidential Debate with George W. Bush and Al Gore," moderated by Jim Lehrer, October 3, 2003, CSPAN transcript.

¹¹⁵ "Election 2000 Presidential Debate II with George W. Bush and Al Gore," moderated by Jim Lehrer, October 11, 2003, CSPAN transcript.

George H.W. Bush, played a pivotal role in the installation of neo-conservatives within the new administration.¹¹⁶ Cheney served as head of the “presidential transition,” the period between the election in November and the accession to office in January. With the help of Cheney and others, many associates of PNAC became high-level government officials, including Donald Rumsfeld (Secretary of Defense), Paul Wolfowitz (Deputy Secretary of Defense), Douglas Feith (Undersecretary of Defense), Elliot Abrams (National Security Council), Richard Perle (chair of Defense Policy Board), and Robert Zoellick (U.S. Trade Representative). These appointments became the critical bureaucratic precondition for how the neo-conservatives would influence foreign policy under the new Bush administration, the most notable of which was the U.S. invasion of Iraq War and the Bush Doctrine laid out in the *National Security Strategy of 2002*.

9/11 and the Iraq War

In his classic study *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, John Kingdon argues that political change can only happen when a “widow of opportunity” for that change opens up.¹¹⁷ A policy window appears, according to Kingdon, when there is a crisis, a change in national mood or administration. On September 11, 2001 the neo-conservatives found their “window of opportunity” when the United States was attacked by 19 Al-Qaeda terrorists, causing the deaths of nearly 3,000 U.S. citizens. In the days following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, neo-conservatives in power took advantage of the

¹¹⁶ Dorrien, *Imperial Designs*, 142-143.

¹¹⁷ John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995 Second Edition)

national crisis to advocate invading Iraq and radically transforming the central organizing principles of foreign policy strategy. As neo-conservative and PNAC member Gary Schmidt points out: “Without 9/11, Bush might have been wandering in a desert, in terms of foreign policy. He might have been looking for a minimal foreign-policy voice so that he could concentrate on domestic matters. So we [Neocons] might not have been in a good position at all.”¹¹⁸

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 created a sea change in U.S. foreign policy and struck at old fears of America’s vulnerability. Secretary of State Colin Powell remarked after September 11, “Not only is the Cold War over, the post-Cold War period is also over.”¹¹⁹ The magnitude of these events required a new foreign policy to respond to the changing realities of a post-9/11 era and the neo-conservatives offered a clear and coherent blueprint to engage the world more forcefully to combat terrorism.¹²⁰ By linking their long-term vision of invading Iraq (which they had been advocating for years) to the broader “war on terrorism” and the crisis of September 11, the neo-conservatives pursued “doctrinal coupling.”¹²¹ The critical placement of neo-conservatives not only within the Bush administration, but also within the Republican Party and conservative based groups like the Christian Coalition facilitated the implementation of their foreign policy vision.¹²²

The struggle for regime change in Iraq and the broad scope of the “war on

¹¹⁸ Dick Potman, “Neoconservatives,” *Philadelphia Enquirer*, 4 May 2003.

¹¹⁹ Robert S. Litwak, “The Imperial Republic after 9/11,” *Wilson Quarterly*, Fall 2004, 76.

¹²⁰ David Frum and Richard Perle, *An End to Evil*, (New York; Random House, 2003), 9.

¹²¹ John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 173.

¹²² Halper and Clark, 196-200.

terrorism” would play out in the internecine battles following September 11. According to journalist Bob Woodward, as early as September 12, 2001, Rumsfeld “raised the question of attacking Iraq. Why shouldn’t we go against Iraq, not just al Qaeda? he asked. Rumsfeld was speaking not only for himself when he raised the question. His deputy, Paul D. Wolfowitz, was committed to a policy that would make Iraq a principle target of the first round in the war on terrorism.”¹²³ Woodward further asserts, “The terrorist attacks of September 11 gave the United States a new window to go after Hussein.” On September 12, 2001, Richard Clarke, the Bush administration’s counter terrorism chief, attended a White House meeting expecting to talk about the previous day’s events and the possibility of other attacks in the near future. He claims:

...instead I walked into a series of discussions about Iraq... I realized... that Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were going to take advantage of this national tragedy to promote their agenda about Iraq. Since the beginning of the administration, indeed well before, they had been pressing for a war with Iraq.¹²⁴

A few days after 9/11, PNAC would release another letter arguing “even if evidence does not link Iraq directly to the attack, any strategy aiming at the eradication of terrorism and its sponsors must include a determined effort to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq.”¹²⁵ During this period, neo-conservative writers began to urge regime change in Iraq as part of a larger strategy to remake the Middle East.¹²⁶

¹²³ Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (London; Simon and Schuster, 2002), 83-84.

¹²⁴ Richard Clark, *Against All Enemies* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 30.

¹²⁵ Project for the New American Century, “Letter to President Bush on the War on Terrorism,” 20 September 2001.

¹²⁶ Halper and Clark, 196-200.

While some in the State Department, such as Secretary of State Colin Powell and his assistant Richard Armitage, were advocating containment of Iraq and a policy of finding the terrorists responsible for 9/11, the neo-conservatives, with support from Vice President Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, were pushing a broader approach to the “war on terrorism.” The strategy of connecting Iraq to the wider war on terrorism became evident in President Bush’s State of the Union address when he designated Iraq as part of the “axis of evil” and stated U.S. policy would preemptively deal with these three nations, including Iran and North Korea.¹²⁷ Bush’s speechwriter and fellow neo-conservative David Frum coined the phrase “axis of evil.”¹²⁸ By framing the policy in this fashion, the media couched the Iraq war debate as a moral and messianic crusade of good versus evil that would find substantial domestic support among Christian conservative groups.¹²⁹ After the war began, Muravchik commented “the war in Iraq grew out of Bush’s neocon strategy.”¹³⁰

The Bush Doctrine

Perhaps the most apparent neo-conservative foreign policy strategy that mirrored official Bush administration policy was in the September 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States*. This publication, along with speeches given by President Bush, became known as the “Bush Doctrine.” The primary justification for war against Iraq that

¹²⁷ PBS Frontline, “The War behind Closed Doors,” 20 February 2003.

¹²⁸ Matthew Engal, “Proud wife turns ‘axis of evil’ speech into t resignation letter,” *The Guardian*, 27 February 2002.

¹²⁹ Halper and Clark, 182-200.

¹³⁰ Joshua Muravchik and Stephan Walt, “The Neocons vs. The Realists,” *National Interest Online*, 3 September 2008.

was put forth by the Bush administration hinged on many of the core tenets of the *2002 National Security Strategy*. Upon its release, neo-conservative Max Boot described the strategy as a “quintessentially neo-conservative document,” and Norman Podhoretz wrote an article in September 2002 “In Praise of the Bush Doctrine.”¹³¹

The Bush Doctrine consists of three core foreign policy strategies. First, that the United States would no longer rely solely on “Cold War doctrines of containment and deterrence,” two core beliefs held by proponents of realism and to a lesser extent liberalism. Instead, the United States would pursue a strategy of preemptive and unilateral military action in order to “take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats before they emerge.”¹³² The strategy of acting preemptively first emerged in the DPG-92 a decade earlier. The *2002 National Security Strategy* echoed this clearly:

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.”¹³³

The preemptive use of military power included a willingness to “go it alone” or unilaterally. The “United States... will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them

¹³¹ Max Boot, “Think Again: Neocons,” *Foreign Policy*, January-February 2004 and Norman Podhoretz, “In Praise of the Bush Doctrine,” *Commentary*, September 2002, 19-28.

¹³² George W Bush, Speech to West Point Graduating Class, 1 June 2002.

¹³³ Rice, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 14.

from doing harm against our people and our country.”¹³⁴

The inability of the United States to attain a United Nations Security Council resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq showed it would be extremely difficult to use preemptive military force via consensus. As shown in the previous chapter, neo-conservatives have long argued the United States does not need to act multilaterally because they are the “unipolar power.”¹³⁵ President Bush’s announcement to pull out of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2001 illustrated another strong parallel between official US policy and the neo-conservative belief against multilateralism.¹³⁶

The second foreign policy strategy outlined in the Bush Doctrine consistent with neo-conservative policy prescriptions is American primacy. In the final chapter of the *2002 National Security Strategy*, entitled “Transform America’s National Security Institutions to Meet the Challenges and Opportunities of the Twenty-First Century,” the document states that one goal of US policy is to “dissuade future military competition.”¹³⁷ The DPG-92 document also stated that the overriding goal of a post-Cold War policy should be a unipolar power: “[Our new regional defense strategy] 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.”¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Rice

¹³⁵ See Jeane Kirkpatrick, “Where Is Our Foreign Policy?,” *Washington Post*, 30 July 1993, Wolfowitz, “Clinton’s First Year,” 28-43, and Kristol and Kagan, “Toward a Neo-Reaganite”

¹³⁶ Jim Garemore, “Bush Announces ABM Treaty Withdraw,” *American Forces Information Service*, 13 December 2001.

¹³⁷ Rice, 29.

¹³⁸ Tyler, “Excerpts from the Pentagon’s Plan: Prevent the Re-Emergence of a New Rival.”

This is echoed again in *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, which states that the primary goal of U.S. foreign policy should be to maintain sole-superpower status.¹³⁹

The last neo-conservative foreign policy strategy contained in the Bush Doctrine is democracy promotion. The *2002 National Security Strategy* states that the unparalleled U.S. position of primacy creates a "moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe... [the United States] will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world."¹⁴⁰ Over the last two decades, many neo-conservatives promoted the idea that democracy promotion should play a central part in American foreign policy. Writing in the *National Interest*, Krauthammer believed that since communism was dead, the central principle of American foreign policy should be "the work of democracy" and "democracy should become the touchstone of a new ideological American foreign policy."¹⁴¹ Similar to Krauthammer, neo-conservative Joshua Muravchik contended the U.S. should "concentrate on continuing to spread democracy in a post-Communist World" and that America should export democracy because it "is created; it does not just rise."¹⁴²

In 2000 Bill Kristol and Robert Kagan emphasized that democracy promotion is a "realistic" good use of military power:

To many the idea of America using its power to promote changes of regime in nations ruled by dictators rings of utopianism. But in fact, it is eminently realistic. There is something perverse in declaring the impossibility of promoting democratic change abroad in light of the record

¹³⁹ Donnelly, ii.

¹⁴⁰ Rice, 4.

¹⁴¹ Krauthammer, "Universal Dominion," 47.

¹⁴² Halper and Clark, 79-81.

of the past three decades. After we have already seen dictatorships toppled by democratic forces in such unlikely places as the Philippines, Indonesia, Chile, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Taiwan, and South Korea, how utopian is it to imagine a change of regime in a place like Iraq? ... With democratic change sweeping the world at an unprecedented rate over the past thirty years, is it "realist" to insist that no further victories can be won?¹⁴³

Unlike traditional American conservative foreign policy, with its strong isolationist emphasis and its desire to keep the U.S. free from foreign entanglements, the Bush administration and the neo-conservatives promoted a reworking of Wilsonian liberalism that aimed to create a world in the image of America – bringing other nations the benefits of democracy and freedom. John Mearsheimer characterizes the neo-conservative Bush doctrine as “Wilsonianism with teeth” because it has “an idealist strand and a power strand: Wilsonianism provides the idealism, an emphasis on military power provides the teeth.”¹⁴⁴

“Bandwagoning” As a Neo-Conservative Strategy

The neo-conservative strategy of democracy promotion was one of the driving forces in providing a rationale for invading Iraq. The neo-conservatives hypothesized that the forced democratization of Iraq would cause other countries in the Middle East to “bandwagon” and transform the region into a place useful for American interests and power. In the months leading up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Kagan and Kristol argued:

A devastating knockout blow against Saddam Hussein, followed by an American-sponsored effort to rebuild Iraq and put it on the path toward democratic governance would have a seismic impact on the Arab world-

¹⁴³ Robert Kagan and William Kristol, eds. *Present Dangers: Crisis and Opportunity in American Foreign and Defense Policy*. (San Francisco: Encounter, 2000), 5.

¹⁴⁴ John Mearsheimer, “Hans Morgenthau and the Iraq War”

for the better...Once Iraq and Turkey – two of the most important Middle Eastern powers – are both in the pro-Western camp, there is a reasonable chance that smaller power might decide to jump on the *bandwagon*.”¹⁴⁵

While the term “bandwagoning” or “bandwagoning effect” is an IR theory¹⁴⁶ contained within realism, Kagan and Kristol are not engaging in a theoretical academic debate about its merits.¹⁴⁷ Instead, put forth the “reverse domino theory,” or the less familiar “democratic domino theory,” arguing that by invading Iraq a democratic government could be implemented, which would help spread democracy and liberalism across the Middle East and the Arab world.¹⁴⁸ Similar to the “domino theory” invoked during the Vietnam War, the neo-conservative strategy of bandwagoning fell short of empirical reality. This may partially explain why their strategy did not lead (as of February 2009) to the development of democratic regimes in Iran or North Korea.

In an article about the failings of the neo-conservative strategy to transform Iraq into a democracy, former neo-conservative Francis Fukuyama wrote:

¹⁴⁵ Robert Kagan and William Kristol, “What to Do about Iraq,” *Weekly Standard*, 21 January 2002.

¹⁴⁶ For instance, see Randall L. Schweller, “Bandwagoning For Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In,” *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994), Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), and Fearon, James Fearon, “Signaling versus the Balance of Power and Interests: An Empirical Test of a Crisis Bargaining Model.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, June 1994, 236- 269.

¹⁴⁷ The term bandwagoning first appeared in Quincy Wright’s *A Study of War* as a description of international alliance behavior when states attempt to “side with the actor that has the most power.” The social scientific empirical work on why states and actors chose to bandwagon is a large debate within the paradigm of realism. As a strategy, bandwagoning entails policies that support and accommodate the dominant power. This happens when weaker states advance their interests without directly challenging the dominant state. Bandwagoning can take many forms – ranging from simple appeasement to more active attempts to work with and manipulate the policies of the leading state. See Wright, Quincy, *A Study of War*, (Chicago: University of Chicago. 1964). For a discussion of the beginnings of “bandwagoning” see Randell Schweller, “New Realist Research on Alliances: Defining, Not Refuting, Waltz’s Balancing Proposition,” *American Policy Science Review*, December 1997, 928.

¹⁴⁸ Paul Reynolds, “The ‘Democratic Domino’ Theory,” BBC, 10 April 2003.

Of all of the different views that have now come to be associated with neoconservatives, the strangest one to me was the confidence that the United States could transform Iraq into a Western-style democracy, and go on from there to democratize the broader Middle East. It struck me as strange precisely because these same neoconservatives had spent much of the past generation warning--in *The National Interest's* former sister publication, *The Public Interest*, for example--about the dangers of ambitious social engineering, and how social planners could never control behavior or deal with unanticipated consequences. If the United States cannot eliminate poverty or raise test scores in Washington, D.C., how does it expect to bring democracy to a part of the world that has stubbornly resisted it and is virulently anti-American to boot?¹⁴⁹

Fukuyama further lamented that the strategy and policy was not based on an historical understanding of how regimes turn toward building democracies: "Possibility is not likelihood, and good policy is not made by staking everything on a throw of the dice."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Francis Fukuyama, "The Neo-conservative Moment," *The National Interest*, Summer 2004

¹⁵⁰ Fukuyama, "The Neo-conservative Moment"

CHAPTER 5

THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: REALISM AND LIBERALISM

Over the last two centuries, realism and liberalism played a powerful role in shaping debate and advancing solutions to global security dilemmas. From the Cold War to the “war on terror”, these two schools of thought analyzed the international order and suggested strategies for policymakers and world leaders about approaching foreign policy decision-making. The study of international politics can often be seen as a protracted competition and struggle between these two dominant traditions. Over the last several decades, these two schools of thought have been directly challenged by neo-conservatism.

This chapter will analyze these approaches by explicating their historical beginnings, core beliefs and central units of analysis. It will also look at the instruments both realism and liberalism identifies as the most important to resolve global conflict, and how they differ with neo-conservatism.¹⁵¹ However, before this analysis can take place, it’s important to explore the competing definitions of what constitutes an IR theory and how it is different from a political ideology such as neo-conservatism.

IR Theories vs. Political Ideologies

¹⁵¹ This chapter will not analyze the school of thought known as constructivism. This is because it “is not a theory of international politics” but an approach in the field of IR aimed at analyzing the “ontology of the states system” or to answer “second-order” questions within IR study. See Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1-46.

In the field of IR study, theories are usually put forth by paradigms based on scientific research program. For example, realism and liberalism are not just IR theories, but contain within them a series of theories that are intellectually related and explanatory in nature. According to John Vasquez, they “constitute a family of theories because they share a paradigm.”¹⁵² A paradigm can be defined as the “fundamental assumptions scholars make about the world they are studying.”¹⁵³ IR theory, according to Vasquez, is “a set of interrelated propositions purporting to explain behavior.”¹⁵⁴ Kenneth Waltz defines IR theory as

a picture, mentally formed, of a bounded realm or domain of activity. A theory depicts the organization of a realm and the connections among its parts. The infinite materials of any realm can be organized in endlessly different ways. Reality is complex; theory is simple. By simplification, theories lay bare the essential elements in play and indicate necessary relations of cause and interdependency—or suggest where to go to look for them.¹⁵⁵

Waltz suggests that theory is “an instrument to be used in attempting to explain a circumscribed part of reality” and that there must be an interplay or interdependence of theory and fact.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, Waltz maintains that theories are to be judged by “the fruitfulness of their research programs” and by what they claim to explain.¹⁵⁷ Further,

¹⁵² John A. Vasquez, “The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative versus Progressive Research Programs: An Appraisal of Neotraditional Research on Waltz’s Balancing Proposition,” *The American Political Science Review*, December 1997, 900.

¹⁵³ Vasquez, “The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative versus Progressive Research Programs: An Appraisal of Neotraditional Research on Waltz’s Balancing Proposition,” 900.

¹⁵⁴ John A. Vasquez, “World Politics Theory,” in *Encyclopedia of Government and Politics*, edited by Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan (London: Routledge, 1999), 835-6.

¹⁵⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz, “Evaluating Theories,” *The American Political Science Review*, No.4 December 1997, 913.

¹⁵⁶ Waltz, “Evaluating Theories,” 914.

¹⁵⁷ Waltz

theory aims not to direct foreign policies of states, but to describe their expected consequences. Stephan Walt identifies two basic criteria for judging an IR theory: (a) the explanatory powers of a theory to account for developments within its field and (b) the theory's internal fertility.¹⁵⁸ According to Walt a theory is powerful if it can provide explanations to anomalies or critical objections that arise and whether it can repair itself over time to address changes in state behavior. IR theories are also based on a set of assumptions and logic that guide all states, not just the United States.

An IR theory can also be defined more broadly as a coherent, conceptual framework that is used to facilitate the understanding and explanation of events and phenomena in world politics, as well as the analysis and informing of associated policies and practices. Causal IR theories are generally mutually exclusive in nature and attempt to explain casual relationships based on an informed set of assumptions. For example, that A (independent variable) causes B (dependent variable), and under what conditions. Further, an IR theory must be part of an academic scientific research program (paradigm) and it must be explanatory in nature. An IR theory cannot be just a set of strategic policy goals (prescriptive), it must explain a specific phenomenon taking place within world politics (description). If it only provides the former, it is best characterized as a strategy. A strategy is broadly defined as a "plan of action or policy designed to achieve a major or overall aim," such as "military operations and movements."¹⁵⁹ A strategist is someone who is an expert in strategy. While realists and liberals both engage in offering strategic

¹⁵⁸ Stephan M. Walt, "The Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition," in *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, edited by I. Katznelson and H. V. Milner. (New York/Washington: W.W. Norton & Company/American Political Science Association, 2002), 201-202.

¹⁵⁹ Definition from New Oxford American Dictionary.

advice and policy prescriptions in publications and to government officials, their construction of theoretical abstractions is an academic pursuit. Thus, in order for a discipline to operate at a theoretical level, it must exhibit an acute sense of objectivism or positivism.

Similar to an IR theory, a political ideology has both descriptive and normative elements. However, a political ideology seeks policy change and is not fundamentally based in empirical science (although it might gain many of its ideas from the academy) it is part of a broader movement. In *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, Andrew Haywood defined an ideology as “broad traditions of thought, which have evolved and developed under pressure of changing historical circumstances and as a result of argument and debate, and continue to do so.”¹⁶⁰ Political ideologies are also more elastic than an IR theory. Haywood suggests that ideologies can just hang together:

Ideologies therefore comprise a set of interrelated, more or less coherent, ideas. Some would say that they constitute ‘systems of thought’, but in the case of ideologies like conservatism or fascism the ideas may simply ‘hang together’ rather than have a systematic or coherent shape.¹⁶¹

Martin Seliger defines an ideology as “a set of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify the ends and means of organized social action, irrespective of whether such action aims to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuild a given social order.”¹⁶² Both Seliger and Haywood see ideology as a set of interrelated ideas that form some type of political action of collective goals.

¹⁶⁰ Andrew Haywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. (New York: St. Martins Press, 1992), 8.

¹⁶¹ Haywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, 6-7.

¹⁶² Haywood, 6. Citing Martin Seliger, *Politics and Ideology*. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1976)

In his groundbreaking work *Ideology and Foreign Policy*, diplomatic historian Michael H. Hunt defines ideology even more loosely. According to Hunt, ideology as “an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduces the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and suggests appropriate ways of dealing with reality.”¹⁶³ Political ideologies also act as “social glue” binding different groups of people together with shared ideas, values, and assumptions. Ideologies are also “action-oriented,” aiming to preserve a particular social order or drastically change it.¹⁶⁴

While both ideologies and paradigms contain a set of coherent ideas and beliefs that form an outlook for interpreting the world, they differ in many ways. For example, IR paradigms operate almost exclusively within the academic world of social scientific research. Political ideologies, on the other hand, glean ideas from social science but function in the political world. This doesn’t mean that realism and liberalism don’t affect political outcomes, but that their primary purpose is to interpret the world order through empirical research and theory building and appraisal.

Realism & Neorealism: History, Theory and Practice

The realist school of thought can be traced as far back as the Greek historian Thucydides and the political philosophy and writing of Niccolo Machevilli and Thomas Hobbes.¹⁶⁵ The principal founders of “classical realism” include diplomatic historian E.H. Carr, theorist Hans Morgenthau and theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. In general, realism holds that “states, like human beings, have an innate desire to dominate others,

¹⁶³ Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and Foreign Policy*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), xi.

¹⁶⁴ Haywood, 7.

¹⁶⁵ Jack Donnelly, *Realism and International Relations*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1.

which led them to fight wars.”¹⁶⁶ This pessimistic view of human nature is one of the cornerstones of early realism and continues to be a driving force in realist thought.

Scholars have suggested that the realist paradigm is a *status quo* doctrine because it usually defends great power relations and often speaks for the dominant and representative elite in society.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, its predictive assumptions have been described as a self-fulfilling prophecy because it studies the past to predict the future. Realism and neorealism rests on a common set of intellectual presuppositions, which can include the following: 1) states are the primary actors in world politics who attempt to maximize their expected utility by seeking power at all times; 2) states are motivated by their national interest and self-preservation; 3) the international system is anarchic; 4) conflict and stability usually arises from great power rivalry; 5) understanding nationalism is a crucial aspect of how states behave; 6) and that morality in international affairs doesn't occupy a prominent position in formulating policy decisions.¹⁶⁸

The central actors for realists are states whose behavior and high autonomy functions within an anarchic international environment, often described as a world of *states-as-billiard-balls*.¹⁶⁹ The main instruments associated with realism are economic power, state diplomacy, and especially military power. The moral and ethical foundation of realism is self-preservation: states must protect their citizens from harm at all costs.

¹⁶⁶ Stephen Walt, “One World, Many Theories,” *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1998, 29.

¹⁶⁷ Alan Gilbert, *Must Global Politics Constrain Democracy? Great-Power Realism, Democratic Peace, and Democratic Internationalism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 3.

¹⁶⁸ See, for example, Hans Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954) for traditional realist theories, Hedley Bull's *The Anarchical Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977) for soft realist theories, and Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Ma; Addison-Wesley, 1979) for neo-realist theories.

¹⁶⁹ John M. Hobson, *The State and International Relations* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2.

One major drawback of realism is that it fails to account for change in the international system. Jack Donnelly holds that “realism emphasizes the constraints on politics imposed by human nature and the absence of an international government. Together, they make, international politics largely a realm of power and interest.”¹⁷⁰

Realism and neorealism have developed many concepts and theories to explain international phenomena. George Kennen’s famous Cold War foreign policy prescription of “containment” was among one of the first realist concepts to be officially adopted by U.S. policymakers. Its role was pivotal to policymakers throughout the Cold War as a guiding bipartisan strategy on foreign policy. Another theory that’s been important to explaining state behavior (especially during the Cold War) is balance of power. It maintains that rapid changes in power relations among states can lead to counterbalancing actions and provoke war. The world is safest, according to this theory, when the balancing process brings stability of relations among states. A weakness of this theory is that it doesn’t account for internal factors (religion, values, form of government) and it’s difficult to measure. Balance of power theory is the central concept behind neorealism.¹⁷¹

Contemporary debate in realist theory revolves around two distinct strands, offensive and defensive. Offensive realism holds that anarchy in the international system provides strong incentives for the expansion and maximization of state power. Eric Labs, John Mearsheimer and Fareed Zakaria have argued this theory.¹⁷² In contrast to offensive

¹⁷⁰ Donnelly, *Realism and International Relations*, 7.

¹⁷¹ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Ma; Addison –Wesley, 1979), 15.

¹⁷² Please see Eric Labs, “Offensive Realism and Why States Expand Their War Aims,” *Security Studies*, Summer 1997, John Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War,” *International Security*, Summer 1990, John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America’s*

realism, defensive realism holds that great power expansion sometimes is outweighed by security dilemmas in the international system. Moreover, this theory predicts that states pursue expansionist policies because their leaders mistakenly believe that aggression is the only way to make their state secure. Therefore, a more moderate expansionism is preferred because it provides more security. Kenneth Waltz, Robert Jervis, and Stephen Van Evera have advanced this theory.¹⁷³

During the Cold War, realism was one of the most dominant modes of theoretical thought and practice in American foreign policy. Realism reigned high in foreign policy decision making, according to Stephen Walt, because “it provided simple but powerful explanations for war, alliances, imperialism, obstacles to cooperation, and other international phenomena, and because its emphasis on competition was consistent with the central features of the American-Soviet rivalry.”¹⁷⁴ Some of the more recent scholars and practitioners of realism include George Kennan, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and former national security advisor Brent Scowcroft. Each was influential not only in scholarship, but in the ability to directly influence U.S. foreign policy and create a geopolitical Cold War framework. Realists have largely held that the Cold War was won because of the U.S. commitment to containment, deterrence and *realpolitik*.

World Role (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) and, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, 'Security-Seeking Under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Reconsidered,' *International Security*, Winter 2000/2001, 152-86.

¹⁷³ Examples of defensive realism include: Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Robert Jervis' "The Future of *World Politics*: Will It Resemble the Past?", *International Security*, Winter 1991-92, and Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999)

¹⁷⁴ Walt, Stephen, "One World, Many Theories," 29.

During the 1990s, realists were principally concerned with the resurgence of overt great power competition, such as the rise of China and Europe as rival powers.¹⁷⁵ Many scholars have observed that China's foreign policy during 1990s has been grounded in realist ideas. According to Jack Snyder, "as China modernizes its economy...it behaves in a way that realists understand well: developing its military slowly but surely as its economic power grows, and avoiding a confrontation with superior U.S. forces."¹⁷⁶ If China increases its economic development, it will in time lead to an increase in military strength, which will soon present a security problem for the United States. Mearsheimer believes that if this happens, the United States should reenact the Cold War foreign policy of containment that controlled the regional growth of the Soviet Union. This approach still attracts attention in the Pentagon, especially during discussions of China's growing capabilities and the occasional rift between the U.S. and European Union.

Prior to the Iraq war of 2003, many practitioners and theorists of realism signed a petition rejecting what they called American hubris and demanded a return to realism. This was followed by the formation of the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy (CRFP), whose aim was to reject the imperial posture of American power and return to a modest and more pragmatic foreign policy. The signatories opposed the central thrust of the Bush Doctrine and its first test, the war and occupation of Iraq. Members of this group cover a somewhat wide political spectrum –from former Colorado Senator Gary Hart to Scott McConnell, the executive editor of the *American Conservative*. Other

¹⁷⁵ See Zbigniew Brzezinski and John Mearsheimer, "Clash of the Titans," *Foreign Policy*, January-February 2005, 46.

¹⁷⁶ Snyder, Jack, "One World, Rival Theories," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 2004, 55.

members include influential realists John Mearsheimer, Jake Snyder, Kenneth Waltz, and Stephen Walt. Snyder maintains that although this group is diverse, its inspiration lies in realist theory.¹⁷⁷

In an article in the *National Interest* in spring of 2003, Snyder argued that the Bush administration's understanding of the balance of power theory in realism is backward and is now being used in the place of "bandwagoning."¹⁷⁸ "Administrative strategists like to use the terminology of the balance of power, but they really understand that concept exactly backwards," says Snyder.¹⁷⁹ Snyder further maintains that balance of power politics has nothing to do with expansionism: "In the international system, states and other powerful actors tend to form alliances against the expansionist state that most threaten them. Attackers provoke fears that drive their potential victims to cooperate with each other."¹⁸⁰ Walt, for example, holds that by employing bandwagoning logic, the Bush administration and the neo-conservatives incorrectly argued "that displays of power and resolve by the United States will discourage further resistance and lead more and more states to conclude that it is time to get on our side."¹⁸¹

In January 2003, Mearsheimer and Walt published "An Unnecessary War" in *Foreign Policy* magazine refuting the neo-conservative arguments for going to war in

¹⁷⁷ For information regarding the petition and the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy please go to <http://realisticforeignpolicy.org>, activated on December 17, 2008

¹⁷⁸ Jack Snyder, "Imperial Temptations," *The National Interest*, Spring 2003, p.29-40

¹⁷⁹ Snyder, "Imperial Temptations", 34.

¹⁸⁰ Snyder, 32.

¹⁸¹ Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York; W.W. Norton, 2005), 184.

Iraq.¹⁸² This article laid out the realist case against the Iraq war by arguing that containment and deterrence was a better policy option than invasion.

The belief the Saddam's past behavior shows he cannot be contained rests on distorted history and faulty history. In fact, the historical record shows that the United States can contain Iraq effectively—even if Saddam has nuclear weapons—just as it contained the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Regardless of whether Iraq complies with U.N. inspectors or what the inspectors find, the campaign to wage war against rest on a flimsy foundation.¹⁸³

Mearsheimer and Walt repeated these same arguments in February of 2003 in the *NY Times*, just one month before the invasion took place.¹⁸⁴ In a debate sponsored by the Council of Foreign Relations, "Iraq: The War Debate", Walt and Mearsheimer argued against going to war with two prominent neo-conservatives, William Kristol and Max Boot.¹⁸⁵ In this debate, Walt and Measheimer argued that invading Iraq wasn't in the "national interest" and that Iraq could be contained. The neo-conservatives advanced the importance of the domino effect, stating that other countries would obtain and pursue weapons of mass destruction (WMD) if the U.S. failed to remove the WMDs in Iraq and liberate Iraq from a tyrant. This was one of the first direct clashes between realists and neo-conservatives and it exposed a clear confrontation between what their core beliefs are and what assumptions guide their policy prescriptions.

¹⁸² John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "An Unnecessary War," *Foreign Policy*, January-February 2003, 50-59.

¹⁸³ Mearsheimer and Walt, "An Unnecessary War," 52.

¹⁸⁴ John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "Keeping Saddam Hussein in a Box," *The New York Times*, 2 February 2003, 15.

¹⁸⁵ See website of the Council of Foreign Relations, "Iraq: the War Debate," <http://www.cfr.org/publication/5513/iraq.html> (Accessed on December 20, 2007)

Perhaps the greatest indictment of how realists and neo-conservatives differ in their approach to foreign policy prescriptions is their belief that international politics operates according to “bandwagoning logic.”¹⁸⁶ According to Mearsheimer, “Realists do not believe that we live in a bandwagoning world. On the contrary, realists tend to believe that we live in a balancing world, in which, when one state puts its fist in another state’s face, the target usually does not throw its hands in the air and surrender. Instead, it looks for ways to defend itself; it balances against the threatening state.”¹⁸⁷

Mearsheimer maintains that neo-conservatives’ belief in promoting democracy by the use of force also underestimates the impact of nationalism: “[r]ealists, by contrast, think that nationalism usually makes it terribly costly to invade and occupy countries in areas like the Middle East. People in the developing countries believe fervently in self-determination, which is the essence of nationalism, and they do not like Americans or Europeans running their lives.”¹⁸⁸ Scrowcroft, one of the most prominent practitioners of realism during the George H.W. Bush administration, warned in the *Wall Street Journal* that invading Iraq was not in the security interest of the United States and that Saddam Hussein was already contained.¹⁸⁹ The only prominent realist that didn’t oppose the US invasion of Iraq, according to Mearsheimer, was former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. According to Kissinger, the attacks of 9/11 created an international condition that transcended the traditional concepts of the sovereign nation – one of central units of

¹⁸⁶ John Mearsheimer, “Hans Morgenthau and the Iraq War: realism versus neo-conservatism,” *Open Democracy* (Web only), 19 May 2005 http://opendemocracy.net/democracy-americanpower/morgenthau_2522.jsp (Accessed on February 15, 2007)

¹⁸⁷ Mearsheimer, “Hans Morgenthau and the Iraq War: realism versus neo-conservatism”

¹⁸⁸ Mearsheimer

¹⁸⁹ Scrowcroft, Brent, “Don’t Topple Saddam,” *Wall Street Journal*, 15 August 2002.

analysis of realist theory – and that the use of preventive force to topple the Hussein regime was the result of this new condition.¹⁹⁰

As shown above, realism emphasizes a foreign policy that rejects value-based foreign interventions and believes that the core beliefs of national interest and containment must be used to guide the use of military force. In the post-9/11 period, the realist paradigm can be seen in many ways as a failure to explicate the power of non-state actors, such as terrorists. In fact, very little in the realist canon focuses on terrorism and its causes. Most state-centric realists find trouble understanding how the U.S. can declare a “war on terrorism” against a non-state actor, like al-Qaeda. The 2002 *National Security Strategy* points out “traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents; whose so-called soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness.”¹⁹¹

Without a clear post-Cold War enemy and without holding prominent positions with the Bush administration, the realists were not well positioned to win the “battle of minds” following the devastating attacks of September 11. Because realists continued to view states as the primary actors, the threat of non-state actors such as al-Qaeda was absent in much of their analysis and policy strategies. Many realists remained concerned about what they perceived as the next big threat, China. Therefore, many were unable to gain influence with their ideas and present a strategy or offer solutions once the “war on terrorism” pervaded the political discourse after 9/11.

¹⁹⁰ Kissinger, Henry, “Coming Days of Judgment,” *Courier Mail*, 11 September 2002.

¹⁹¹ Condoleezza Rice, “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America.” *The White House*, 17 September 2002, 15.

Liberalism: History, Theory and Practice

In contrast to realists, liberals are not as pessimistic about human nature and the ability of international institutions to provide a nexus between First and Third World powers and produce peaceful and prosperous outcomes. Moreover, they view international institutions as a gateway for curbing the selfish character of states. Liberalism contrasts with realism in many substantial ways, including its historical perspective, importance of actors, and foreign policy prescriptions. Liberalism covers a fairly broad spectrum of analysis and assumptions that include the idealism of Woodrow Wilson, neo-liberal theories, and the democratic peace thesis. As Snyder makes clear, "Liberalism has such a powerful presence that the entire U.S. political spectrum, from neoconservatives to human rights advocates, assumes it as largely self-evident."¹⁹² However, many cleavages exist inside the liberal canon.

The liberal tradition in international relations has its roots in the Enlightenment, with the German philosopher Immanuel Kant and English economist Adam Smith. Its outlook on international cooperation and war are more optimistic than realism because they tend to believe in the capacity of reason, rationality, and progress found in the Enlightenment. Woodrow Wilson and his League of Nations are another expression of this tradition. In line with Wilson, many liberals contend that strong relations between

¹⁹² Snyder, 57.

nations can forge a more peaceful world (collective security). Realists, on the other hand, insist that it is “idealist” and “utopian.”¹⁹³

The core properties in liberalism vary but can be put into workable frameworks. While they view states as important actors, they also consider international institutions and regimes—such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, human rights, and transnational corporations. Their theoretical underpinnings include the following: 1) a value-based presupposition to the study of international relations; 2) a belief in the absolutism of liberal democracies and power of free markets; 3) the importance of human rights and international law; 4) that economic exchange and international institutions modify war and promote peace among nations; 5) democracies do not fight one another; 6) multilateralism is preferred over unilateralism; 7) an ethical foundation based on joint-gains and the reduction of injustice; and 8) a more cosmopolitan rather than nationalist worldview.

The role of regimes and international organizations, according to liberals, lead to a new type of governance that mitigates war and changes the way states interact with one another. Change in the international system can be produced by internal arrangements and state behavior (e.g. democracy). Therefore, according to liberals, and in direct contrast to realists, there are good and bad states. Thus, liberals are making a value-based judgment on the internal dynamics of each state. This approximation is by no means monolithic, but should be seen as an amalgamation of beliefs and areas of emphasis that make it distinct from realism.

Liberalism promotes three ways of thinking about international relations. The first argues economic interdependence between states will discourage the use of force because

¹⁹³ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 15.

any warfare would threaten each other's prosperity.¹⁹⁴ The second, and more recent, argues that international institutions and regimes could overcome selfish state behavior by encouraging states to forgo immediate gains for long-term cooperation.¹⁹⁵ The most recent maintains that state democracies do not engage in warfare with one another. Therefore, spreading democracy should be the number one security goal (more on this concept below).¹⁹⁶ This theory has heavily influenced debates among scholars and policy experts.¹⁹⁷

In a somewhat similar fashion, Robert Keohane has located three strands of liberalism that provide strategies for how to seek peace: commercial, regulatory, and sophisticated.¹⁹⁸ Commercial liberalism maintains that the exchange of money, culture, and ideas get rid of fear among states and undermine war. Hence commerce leads to peace because it makes war less attractive. Regulatory liberalism holds that if states make laws, rules, and regulations you won't have war. Sophisticated liberalism believes in a combination of these two positions. Another theory of liberalism is "complex interdependence." According to Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, complex interdependence is a form of transnational connections between states and societies that utilize "multiple channels of interaction" that increase cooperation among states. During

¹⁹⁴ See among many Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World* (New York: Basic Books, 1986)

¹⁹⁵ See Robert O. Keohane *After Hegemony* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984)

¹⁹⁶ The work of Michael W. Doyle, Bruce Russett, and R J Rummel advance this strategy.

¹⁹⁷ According to Samuel Huntington, "the democratic peace thesis is one of the most significant propositions to come out of social science in recent decades. If true, it has crucially important implications for both theory and policy." See book jacket of Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller, *Debating the Democratic Peace Theory* (Boston: MIT Press, 1996)

¹⁹⁸ Keohane, Robert and Nye, Joseph J. *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little-Brown, 1989)

the 1970s, interdependence theorists noticed an increase in economic relations and a small decrease in military force as a tool for policy. They held that while military force was crucial, new means of economic connections could displace—to some extent—the less preferred policy of military engagement. This idea can be seen as one of the first steps to bridge the gap between realism and liberalism.

The most debated and widely held conviction of many contemporary liberals is democratic peace theory. Pioneered in the mid-1980s by Michael Doyle and others, this theory holds that wars (since 1817) have only been between liberal states and non-liberal states and that liberal democracies rarely fought one another. This theory pays considerable attention to the domestic control of nation-states, arguing when elected leaders are accountable to the people, liberal states will regard each other's regimes as legitimate and non-threatening. It has been regarded as the closest an IR theory has come to developing an empirical law. A good example of democratic peace theory entering the policy realm was in the 1994 State of the Union address by President Clinton when he said: "Ultimately, the best strategy to ensure our security and to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy elsewhere. Democracies don't attack each other, they make better trading partners and partners in diplomacy." In contrast, realists have always maintained that peace derives from a stable distribution of power among states.

The Clinton administration's foreign policy is one the best examples of the liberal paradigm surfacing in the post-Cold War period.¹⁹⁹ In fact, Mearsheimer has argued that

¹⁹⁹ Snyder

the Clinton administration was heavily informed by liberal theories of international relations.²⁰⁰

Consider how Clinton and company justified expanding the membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the mid-1990s. President Clinton maintained that one of the chief goals of expansion was “locking in democracy’s gains in Central Europe,” because “democracies resolve their differences peacefully.” He also argued that the United States should foster an “open trading system,” because “our security is tied to the stake other nations have in the prosperity of staying free and open and working with others, not working against them. In the same spirit, Secretary of State Madeline Albright praised NATO’s founders by saying that “[t]heir basic achievement was to begin the construction of the . . . network of rule-based institutions and arrangements that keep the peace.” But that achievement is complete,” she warned, and “our challenge today is to finish the post-war construction project . . . [and] expand the area of the world in which American interests and values will thrive.”²⁰¹

The scholarship and commentary of Joseph Nye, who worked in the Clinton administration as assistant secretary of defense for international security from 1994-95, is a good intellectual example of liberal thought being used to conduct foreign policy. More recently, Nye has distinguished between two types of power relations he calls “hard” and “soft.” Hard power is the ability of a state to use coercion - economic and military might - to get other states to do what they otherwise would not do. Soft power is the states capacity to attract other state’s to follow because they find your view attractive.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 9. Mearsheimer maintains that all three strands of liberalism [the same mentioned above in detail] were influential in the Clinton administration by “1) The claim that the prosperous and economically interdependent states are unlikely to fight each other, 2) the claim that democracies do not fight each other 3) the claim that international institutions enable states to avoid war and concentrate instead on building cooperative relationships”

²⁰¹ Mearsheimer

²⁰² Joseph J. Nye, *Soft Power: The Misuse of Success in World Politics* (New York; Public Affairs, 2003), 1-32.

During the Clinton administration one of the most revered faiths among neo-liberals was the promise of “globalization.” As mentioned above, many liberals held that economic interdependence between countries could prevent conflict and lead to more democratic states. The best example of this would be U.S. foreign policy toward China and Russia, with China’s admission into the World Trade Organization (WTO), and Russia following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The best-known public intellectual who advocated this liberal theory is Thomas Friedman and his golden arches strategy of conflict prevention. Friedman maintains that no two countries that have a McDonald’s had fought a war against each other.

When a country reached the level of economic development where it had a middle class big enough to support a McDonald's network, it became a McDonald's country. And people in McDonald's countries didn't like to fight wars anymore; they preferred to wait in line for burgers.²⁰³

This strategy, with its emphasis on expanding free-market capitalism (e.g. NAFTA) into all parts of the world to preclude the use of force and to create democratic tendencies, was a top priority for the Clinton administration during the 1990s.

In the post-9/11 era, the influence of liberalism has been invoked in various and contentious ways. In terms of neo-liberal arrangements, the Bush administration, in similar fashion to the Clinton administration, has supported China’s entry into the WTO based in the anticipation that “free markets and integration in to the Western economic order will create pressures for Chinese political reforms and discourage a belligerent foreign policy.”²⁰⁴ However, more recently, the Bush administration has issued

²⁰³Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and The Olive Tree* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2000), 248-275.

²⁰⁴G. John Ikenberry, “America’s Imperial Ambition,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2002, 51.

protectionist trade action in steel and agriculture that have “governments ... worried” about retreat in from the neo-liberal arrangements.²⁰⁵

As discussed above, two of the core beliefs that define liberal internationalism are democracy promotion and multilateralism. The Bush administration’s policy of promoting democracy as a means to fighting terrorism is perhaps the best example of liberal ideals surfacing in the post-Cold War era. As Snyder makes clear, “The White House’s steadfast support for promoting democracy in the Middle East . . . demonstrates liberalism’s emotional and rhetorical power.”²⁰⁶ While the invasion of Iraq was predicated upon democracy promotion, it was carried out unilaterally. Without the support of international institutions such as the United Nations, liberal support for this policy was not generated broadly. Most liberals tended to see the “assertive nationalism” and unilateralism of the Bush administration as a threat to open market stability and legitimacy of the United States to be an effective global leader.²⁰⁷

Liberalism also holds that using military power to bring about democracy in a third world country will not only fail, but is undemocratic by nature. As Robert Cooper expressed:

whereas the principle of equality before the law is basic to democracies, there is nothing less equal than the invading soldier and the local civilian. Thus, although a foreign country may invade with the best of intentions and may bring with it professors of politics to explain democratic theory, what it does is fundamentally undemocratic. Its words may say the right things, but its actions tell exactly the opposite story...some things are beyond the control even of America. Democracy is one of them.

²⁰⁵ Ikenberry, “America’s Imperial Ambition,” 54.

²⁰⁶ Snyder, “One World, Rival Theories,” 57.

²⁰⁷ G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, “Liberal Realism: The Foundations of a Democratic Foreign Policy,” *The National Interest*, Fall 2004

Democracy means rule by the people, and no one else can make their choices for them.²⁰⁸

Copper maintains that the invasion of Iraq represents an attempt to combine realism and liberal internationalism into one strategy, something he calls “imperial liberalism.” However, Copper says that combining the two theories presents great difficulties historically and empirically. “The balance of power, which calls for the application of power with calculation and restraint, is no longer sustainable in a democratic age. Nor is the exercise of hegemony by force--which has been the other source of stability in the international system. For a democracy, domination by the ruthless use of force ceases to be an option in the international field just as it has in the domestic.”²⁰⁹ Copper also notes that America’s past experiments of promoting democracy in Germany, South Korea and Japan were very different than using military means to create a democracy in Iraq. “It should not be surprising in any of these cases that democracy came from within rather than in the baggage train of a foreign army...You can use force to impose your ‘sonnovabitch’ but not to impose democratic politics.”²¹⁰

In fact, the unilateral policy of democracy promotion in the Bush administration was first set forth by neither liberals nor realists, but advanced by the neo-conservatives during the 1990s. One could concede it was used cynically to garner support for a policy position whose primary aim was not to promote democracy in the Middle East but to topple Saddam Hussein and protect Israel.

²⁰⁸ Robert Cooper, “Liberal Imperialism,” *The National Interest*, Spring 2005

²⁰⁹ Cooper, “Liberal Imperialism”

²¹⁰ Cooper

CONCLUSIONS

The central aim of this thesis was to trace the evolution and influence of neo-conservatism over the last four decades and compare it to the two leading frameworks for interpreting the international order - realism and liberalism. The first chapter revealed many neo-conservatives viewed neo-conservatism as an idiosyncratic doctrine that lacked any real meaning. Other neo-conservatives, like Max Boot and Irving Kristol, openly embraced the term. After discussing how neo-conservatives viewed themselves, Chapters Two through Four provide the information and context necessary to discover the tendencies that glued them together as an identifiable group. The final chapter provided a way to analyze neo-conservative influence in foreign policy by illustrating the differences between an IR theory and political ideology specifically aiming to change foreign policy. This included analyzing key components of realism and liberalism and how these two approaches differ from neo-conservatism in the post-Cold War period.

Two questions were asked at the beginning of this thesis.

- 1. How does a set of neo-conservative ideas move over time to influence American foreign policy?**
- 2. How does neo-conservatism compare to realism and liberalism, the two leading schools of thought in international relations study?**

The answers to these questions will be summarized below.

How does a set of neo-conservative ideas move over time to influence American foreign policy?

In the 1950s and 1960s the first generation of neo-conservatives was mostly comprised of public intellectuals, such as Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, and Daniel Bell. By the 1970s, a generational shift occurred and they began putting their ideas into practice. This came about when neo-conservatives, such as Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz, began working in the office of Senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson. For the first time, this gave neo-conservatives the unique opportunity and power to advance their foreign policy ideas both inside and outside of government. However, the height of their influence would come 30 years later during the administration of George W. Bush.

Over the 20th Century, neo-conservatives developed some common tendencies that defined them as a group. These include an ardent belief in the use of unilateral American military power, disdain for multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, Wilsonian ideas of spreading democracy, steadfast support for Israel, and overstated threat assessments.

The neo-conservative strategy of using unilateral American power to bring about American security arose after the fall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the United States as the only world power. To maintain its “unipolar” world status, neo-conservatives advocated American primacy. This, in turn, led them to advocate pulling back from treaties and international agreements and from seeking approval from collective bodies such as the United Nations.

Distain for multilateral agreements had been a trademark of neo-conservatism for over three decades. They strongly opposed strategic arms talks (SALT I & II) with the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s and supported President Bush's decision to pull out of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

Democracy promotion was a second-generation neo-conservative idea that became a centerpiece of their foreign policy strategy. It developed as a strategy in the early 1990s to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of communism. Support for Israel is also a key component of neo-conservatism. Neo-conservatives define America and Israel's national interest as being one and the same. Their ardent support for Israel can be traced back to Henry "Scoop" Jackson and in their close ties with Israel and the formation of think tanks such as JINSA.

The last precept of neo-conservatism is the use of overstated threat assessments. Since the 1970s, neo-conservatives have repeatedly overstated and exaggerated threats by U.S. adversaries – whether it was overstating the threat of the Soviet Union or creating near hysteria about Saddam Hussein's ability to threaten America's security with weapons of mass destruction. In each of these cases, neo-conservative exaggerations proved wrong.

How does neo-conservatism compare to realism and liberalism, the two leading schools of thought in international relations study?

While neo-conservatives gleaned many of their ideas from realism and liberalism, they differ in many respects. Most fundamentally, neo-conservatism isn't based on a coherent framework for understanding and interpreting the international order. Neo-

conservatives have not contributed to a specific discipline within IR nor have they formed a scientific research program from their intellectual assumptions. They are not theoreticians in the formal sense of the word, nor do they exhibit an acute sense of positivism or objectivism in evaluating state behavior. Their principle concern is advancing America's universal values through the use of force.

As shown in Chapter Five, both realism and liberalism produced social science theories such as balance-of-power and democratic peace theory. Neo-conservatives, on the other hand, have not put forth a social science theory or theoretical abstraction to explain state behavior. In contrast to realism and liberalism, which are established in academic schools, neo-conservatism is a product of intellectual political culture. Because of this, neo-conservatives have enjoyed a close relationship with high-level government officials and are more tied into the political and social power structure. This is why many of the most influential neo-conservatives, such as Albert Wohlstetter, Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz, are not just thinkers, but "doers."

The historical beginnings of neo-conservatism also differ from realism and liberalism. While realism and liberalism are based in academia, neo-conservatism began as an intellectual response to the anti-Vietnam War protests and the breakdown of the Cold War foreign policy consensus on aggressively "rolling back" communism. From combating détente in the 1970s to articulating the Bush Doctrine and influencing the decision to invade Iraq, neo-conservatives promoted their foreign policy strategy by founding publications and think tanks, forming advocacy coalitions and securing high-level positions within the Defense and State departments.

Neo-conservatism is best understood as a political ideology that is action oriented, rather than a general theory of state behavior. Whereas realism seeks to explain state behavior, neo-conservatism seeks to promote the national interests of a particular state – the United States of America. From the early 1970s to the administration of George W. Bush, the principal aim of neo-conservatives has been to implement policy change by influencing government, building advocacy coalitions and networks, and writing for media outlets and journals.

But despite their many differences, neo-conservatism shares some similarities with both realism and liberalism. Table 1 below describes each of these foreign policy tendencies by examining their core units of analysis, main instruments, core beliefs, founders, contemporary thinkers and doers of each foreign policy community.

Table 1: Competing Foreign Policy Tendencies

	Realists	Liberals	Neo-Conservatives
Core Units of Analysis	States	States/International Institutions/Commerce	United States and Non-States Actors
Main Instruments	Military Power and State Diplomacy	International Institutions and Global Commerce	Unilateral Military Force
Core Beliefs	Nationalism, Self-preservation, Security and Power	Democracy, Free Markets, and Human Rights	American Primacy, Protection of Israel, Unilateralism and Democracy
Founders	Thomas Hobbes Hans Morganthau Kenneth Waltz	Immanual Kant Adam Smith Woodrow Wilson	Leo Strauss Albert Wohlstetter Irving Kristol

Thinkers	John Mearsheimer Stephen Walt Jack Synder	Robert Keohene Michael Doyle John Ikenberry	Charles Krauthammer Robert Kagan Max Boot
Doers	Brent Scowcroft Henry Kissinger	Bill Clinton Joseph Nye	George W. Bush Paul Wolfowitz

Neo-conservatives view foreign policy issues with strict regard for American primacy and American exceptionalism. While neo-conservatism lacks realism in assessing the consequences of using force and in its bandwagoning assumptions, it has some overlap with realism in its focus on military power. It also overlaps with liberalism in its belief in democracy promotion, but contradicts most strands of liberalism in its hostility to international law, human rights, and international organization. Unlike liberals, who generally prefer spreading democracy diplomatically and through institutions, neo-conservatives maintain that it can be imposed through military force.

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