

Bush and US Foreign Policy: Change or Continuity?

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SAM RANDFIELD, JUL 3 2012

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to ensure the survival and the success of liberty.
– John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address (1961)

US foreign policy has long been a curious beast. Since the earliest days of the American republic, its international relations have been intertwined with the great myths expounded to hold this often fragile polity together. These myths are numerous, but the most enduring and the most critical in terms of foreign policy is the “myth of chosenness” (Ruether 2007: 7) – that the United States is somehow the appointed champion of democratic values, ordained to spread liberty everywhere. This idea has seeped into US foreign policy, expressing itself throughout history: in the Monroe Doctrine; in the concept of manifest destiny; in both the imperialism of Theodore Roosevelt and the internationalism of Woodrow Wilson; in FDR’s mission to spread his ‘Four Freedoms’; throughout the multitude of Cold War foreign policy doctrines; it remains reflected in the Mission Statement of today’s State Department: “[To] Shape and sustain a peaceful, prosperous, just and democratic world and foster conditions for stability and progress for the benefit of the American people and people everywhere,” (US State Department 2011). Whilst the expressions of the idea have changed – cosmetically – with a changing world, the core concept remains: that the main role of the United States in the global order is to promote and defend freedom and democracy. This is the grand liberal vision of US foreign policy.

How is it, then, that the United States, apparently so dedicated to international peace and democracy, can continue to pursue a foreign policy which, at times, seems to work counter to these goals? How can Washington continue, for example, to support the Saudi monarchy, consistently ranked as one of the world’s most authoritarian regimes (Freedom House 2011: 4, 15)? The answer lies in the second part of that Mission Statement: “...[To] foster conditions for stability and progress for the benefit of the American people...” (US State Department 2011).

This is the other side of US foreign policy, its other great goal: in order to maintain American hegemony, secure access to resources, and protect its interests, the US must keep the world ‘stable’. Thus the strategic alliances with nations that are anti- democratic (such as Saudi Arabia) and thus the numerous invasions and occupations, interventions and covert operations carried out by the United States to topple governments deemed too much of a threat to stability – or indeed, to undermine popular movements seeking to remove US-backed regimes. This is the calculated, strategic realism which tempers the liberal vision, providing an (occasionally unsteady) kind of balance.

These are the fundamental (and sometimes paradoxical) goals of US foreign policy. Walter Russell Mead argues that because these aims are deeply rooted in American history, they have always defined the United States’ grand strategy – which, as he notes, has been global in outlook since soon after the Revolution. He defines these enduring goals as the “American project”:

This project [is] to protect our own domestic security while building a peaceful world order of democratic states linked by common values and sharing a common prosperity...continuing national debates over how best to define and achieve this project (or whether to try it at all) have shaped both American and world history over the last two centuries. (Mead 2005: 7)

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It is in this context – the constant drive for new definitions and new tactics to maintain a grand strategy which is, in essence, almost as old as the United States itself – that we must assess the foreign policy legacy of the George W. Bush Administration (2001-2009). The traditional realist-liberal international relations axis will not be of much use; US foreign policy has always (but especially since the dawn of the Cold War) been trapped in a kind of doublethink; simultaneously arch- realist and ultra-liberal. The Truman Doctrine exemplifies this perfectly: Truman himself justified the need for economic and military aid to war-torn European states leaning towards communist revolution on the grounds that “[The US] must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way,” but also because it “...is essential to the preservation of order...[and] to economic stability and orderly political processes,” (Truman 1947). In this way, Truman began the process of redefining the American grand strategy for a new era – while the principles remained the same (that is, the promotion and defence of democracy and the maintenance of global stability in order to protect American interests and hegemony), the language and the tactics had to change, to allow those same goals to be pursued in a very different world.

The next seismic shift in the international order came with the collapse of communism, and the breakup of the Soviet Union, in the late 1980s and early 1990s. With the Cold War over, the language and tactics associated with it would have to change; otherwise, US foreign policy would no longer be able to pursue its fundamental goals. However, the foreign policy establishment struggled to redefine its grand strategy in the absence of a clear enemy. The lack of a simple good-evil narrative, with no great international actor to threaten US hegemony, led to a period of “...moral and strategic ambiguity,” (Kitchen 2011: 28). The immediate post-Cold War years were punctuated by triumphalist academics pronouncing the ultimate victory of liberal democracy (Fukuyama 1989) and claiming that “Now is the unipolar moment,” (Krauthammer 1990: 24). If liberal democracy had won, and the world was now under the dominance of a single, stabilising superpower, what was the point of US foreign policy?

In this atmosphere of ideological and rhetorical malaise, a (seemingly) new way of thinking was on the rise. The neoconservative movement had its roots in 1960s Cold War liberalism – several of the Bush Administration’s leading neoconservatives began their careers working for Senator Henry M. ‘Scoop’ Jackson (D-WA) during the Vietnam War, and his staunch anti-communism and pro-Zionism continue to be cornerstones of the movement; so much so that Heilbrunn calls him “...the first prominent neoconservative politician,” (Heilbrunn 2008: 114-115).

The movement gained academic traction in the 1970s, and a number of neoconservative standard-bearers held office during the Reagan (1981-89) and George H.W. Bush (1989-93) Administrations; and after spending the Clinton years out of government, they returned with the George W. Bush Administration (Kaplan 2008: 2). The most important of these officials were Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle and Douglas Feith (Clarke 2009; Solomon 2007: 22). With them they brought new and very bold strategies for the post-Cold War era:

The old rostrums of stability, deterrence and containment were deemed irrelevant; the new strategists called for regime change, preemption, and victory. And their concept of victory was expansive, to include not only defeating an enemy in battle or “making the world safe for democracy” but – in an ambitious twist on that age-old ideal – remaking the world into a democracy. (Kaplan 2008: 4)

As Kaplan acknowledges, the neoconservative philosophy did not seek to change that most fundamental principle of US foreign policy – the promotion and protection of democratic ideals – but it did seek to take that principle to what the neoconservatives saw as its ultimate end: active, full-scale democratisation, by force if necessary. To this summary of the neoconservative conception of foreign policy, Clarke adds “A tendency to see the world in binary good/evil terms; low tolerance for diplomacy; readiness to use military force; emphasis on US unilateral action; disdain for multilateral institutions [and a] focus on the Middle East,” (Clarke 2009).

All of these principles would become cornerstones of Bush’s foreign policy. However, none are particularly radical breaks with traditional US grand strategy. The good- versus-evil conception of the world is an obvious relic of the Cold War; a lack of patience with diplomatic subtlety and a ready militarism have often been hallmarks of American foreign policy – as recounted in this story about Lyndon Johnson:

During one of the perennial disputes between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus President Johnson summoned the

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Greek ambassador to tell him of Washington's "solution". The ambassador protested that it would be unacceptable to the Greek parliament and contrary to the Greek constitution. "Then listen to me, Mr Ambassador," said the President of the United States, "fuck your parliament and your constitution. America is an elephant. Cyprus is a flea. If these two fleas continue itching the elephant, they may just get whacked by the elephant's trunk...if your Prime Minister gives me talk about democracy, parliament and constitutions, he, his parliament and his constitution may not last very long." (Blum 2003: 216)

The emphasis on unilateralism over multilateralism is hardly new, especially in Republican politics. GOP Administrations have traditionally been distrustful of multilateral institutions: Reagan's second Secretary of State, George P. Shultz, once derided both the United Nations and the International Court of Justice as "utopian" and "legalistic," (Chomsky 2000: 4). As for an emphasis on the Middle East, the United States has made the defence of Israel a priority since at least the 1970s; the American partnership with Saudi Arabia stretches back even further, to the 1930s (Hart 1998: 36-37) – and contemporary debates in the United States over the Administration's response to Iran (Ward 2011) demonstrates the continued emphasis placed on the region by US policymakers. However, the neoconservatives took these positions to their extremes, and came to believe that the US should take military action – unilateral if necessary – to reshape the world (and the Middle East in particular) according to the American democratic model.

The watershed moment of 9/11, and the furious vengeance the US unleashed upon certain parts of the world as a consequence, requires us to view the first eight months of Bush's foreign policy somewhat separately from the bulk of his presidency. The post-9/11 period, on which most of the relevant academic literature focuses, is seen as another era; bloody, violent, and dominated by the neoconservative foreign policy experiment. Yet despite these divergences, in terms of fundamental principles Bush's pre- and post-9/11 foreign policy strategies were not dramatically different, either from each other or from historical norms. 9/11 certainly brought out the more militaristic side of his Administration, as the neoconservatives gained increasing influence within the White House national security apparatus, and their strategy, their rhetoric, and their worldview would come to dominate, but all the while the key goals were the same as they have always been: to promote and protect democracy across the world, and to defend American hegemony and American interests. The threat was new; the response was (in some ways) new; the fundamental principles were not.

Bush's foreign policy in the pre-9/11 phase of his presidency was a great disappointment to the neoconservative wing of the Republican Party, who were hoping for a dramatic shift to their more transformational conception of American grand strategy. The new President, however, stuck to a largely pragmatic approach, perhaps even more realist than the average commander-in-chief. Lindsay and Daalder identify three key areas in which the neoconservatives were disappointed: defence spending; relations with China; and relations with Russia (Lindsay and Daalder 2003: 62).

During the campaign, Bush had argued vociferously for an increase in defence spending. He had accused the Clinton Administration of putting US military readiness under threat by failing to address key equipment shortages, and had called for better pay for American servicemen and women. Given that defence spending was one of the few non-domestic issues to be raised in the 2000 campaign, and given that the Middle East – the perpetual focus of neoconservative obsession – was looking stormy (the al-Aqsa Intifada had broken out in the Palestinian Territories just months before Bush took office) neoconservatives understandably believed that a major expansion of the military budget would be high on Bush's agenda after taking office (Dalacoura 2011: 76). They were to be disappointed. Less than a month after Inauguration Day, Bush announced that he would seek no additional money for defence in the 2002 budget request; in fact, he decided to stick to the same \$310 billion defence budget proposal suggested by the Clinton Administration (Lindsay and Daalder 2003: 62-63). This may reflect the fact that this period – between the end of the Cold War and the 9/11 attacks – was widely perceived to be a time of peace; a Los Angeles Times exit poll taken on Election Day 2000 reveals that only 5 per cent of voters considered foreign and security affairs to be "...the most important [issues]...in deciding how you would vote for president today..." (Los Angeles Times 2000). For the sake of context: the same question in an exit poll taken by the same newspaper four years later drew a combined score of 50 per cent for foreign and security issues (Los Angeles Times 2004). Evidently Bush, like the American people, felt little need to dramatically increase the scope of the US military – in fact, at this point and on this issue,

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his policy was in perfect alignment with that of his predecessor. Hardly a radical departure from historical norms, then.

The neoconservatives were also unhappy with the response to the first major foreign incident of the Bush presidency. On March 31, 2001, a US EP-3E spy plane collided with a Chinese fighter jet seventy miles off the southeast coast of China. The Chinese plane was destroyed and its pilot killed; the American plane was crippled, and forced to make an emergency landing on a Chinese island. The plane's crew was immediately detained, with the Chinese government blaming the American pilot for the collision. Bush and his advisors decided, in keeping with the new President's general approach to China (and perhaps wanting to project the image of a strong and powerful commander-in-chief), to take a hard line, threatening unspecified consequences if the Americans were not returned home. This Cold War-style bluster did not produce the results Bush was hoping for, and he was forced into a rapid rethink. Bush tasked Colin Powell with finding a solution to the problem, and the new Secretary of State was able to negotiate an acceptable solution for both sides: the US Ambassador to China would write a letter (the wording of which was agreed with Beijing) to the Chinese Foreign Minister, explaining that the US was "very sorry" for the death of the Chinese pilot and also "very sorry" for entering Chinese airspace without the proper clearance. This climbdown was sufficient to ensure the safe return of the American crew, but the whole episode, along with subsequent measures taken by the Administration to mollify China (including limiting arms sales to Taiwan, and the President's swift retraction of his statement that the US would do "whatever it took to help Taiwan defend herself,") served to further inflame neoconservative opinion, which, concerned as it was with China's rise, sought a harder line on Beijing (Lindsay and Daalder 2003: 67-70). Bush, though, was not so foolish as to deliberately alienate the Chinese (knowing full well the importance of China to American interests) demonstrating a commitment to the same kind of strategic realism that has always been a pillar of US foreign policy.

In addition to the rise of China, the other perceived potential threat to the so-called "unipolar moment" was a resurgent Russia. Neoconservatives also sought a hard line on Moscow – perhaps even more so than on Beijing, since standing up to Russia had, since the end of the Cold War, become markedly less risky than antagonising China. Bush seemed to be heading down this road in March 2001. In response to the espionage arrest of FBI agent Robert Hanssen, the new President issued the single largest expulsion order on Russian diplomats since the Cold War.

Fifty of Moscow's diplomatic staff were expelled from the United States. In addition, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz both publicly attacked Russia for alleged nuclear proliferation, a charge that was flatly denied by the Russian government (Lindsay and Daalder 2003: 64). So far, so neoconservative. Soon afterwards, though, in a surprising speech on missile defence, Bush signalled a shift towards a more reconciliatory approach in his dealings with Moscow:

...Bush spoke at length about his desire "To create a new framework for security and stability" with Russia. "This new cooperative relationship should look to the future, not the past," the president argued. "It should be reassuring, rather than threatening. It should be premised on openness, mutual confidence, and real opportunities for cooperation, including the area of missile defense." (Lindsay and Daalder 2003: 63-64)

This remarkable turnaround was in keeping with the largely pragmatic nature of Bush's foreign policy during the pre-9/11 months, as evidenced by his decision not to increase the Pentagon budget (in a world seen as relatively safe) and his willingness to backtrack upon realising that he had miscalculated his response to the spy plane incident in China. Again, the neoconservatives were thoroughly disappointed: to a group whose origins lay in the hard-headed gunboat diplomacy of the Cold War, the idea of cooperating with Moscow – especially on a project as sensitive as missile defence – highly objectionable. Bush's pronouncement that Russian President was "a fine Russian," also drew accusations of naivety from defence hawks; one editorial reminded the president that foreign policy "can't be run on a heartfelt embrace and a prayer," (Lindsay and Daalder 2003: 70).

However, the administration's early foreign policy was not all bad news for the neoconservatives; a tendency towards unilateralism was evident from the very beginning of the Bush presidency. This was most clearly demonstrated by the White House's attitude towards international treaties, particularly the Kyoto Protocol. Although a Republican administration was hardly expected to support a binding climate change agreement, the bluntness of Bush's position

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– revealed when then- National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, speaking at a private meeting with EU ambassadors, pronounced the protocol “dead,” (Lindsay and Daalder 2003: 65) – came as a surprise to many. However, Mead considers the rejection of the Kyoto Protocol – along with the Administration’s hostility toward other multilateral instruments, such as the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court – to be, from the American perspective at least, a realist acceptance that the demands of these treaties would be unacceptable to the United States, especially Bush’s red-state base (not to mention unacceptable to the US Senate, which had already rejected ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by a margin of 95-0) (Mead 2005: 131).

This conception of Bush’s early (i.e. pre-9/11) foreign policy – that is, as largely motivated by domestic political factors rather than any overarching approach to American grand strategy – is fairly accurate. The new Administration used international affairs as a method of holding together the disparate groups which make up the Republican coalition. Lindsay and Daalder highlight some key examples: Bush’s reinstatement of the Mexico City Policy – an executive order introduced by Reagan and repealed by Clinton which mandates that NGOs receiving US funds do not perform or promote abortions abroad – which scored obvious points with the Christian right; his public argument against the Kyoto Protocol – that it “...does not make economic sense for America,” – was red meat to big business; and his decision to backtrack on the defense budget (after Congressional defense hawks moved to increase military spending, Bush increased the defense budget request by \$33 billion to avoid being outflanked) was not likely to harm his standing with the Republican base either (Lindsay and Daalder 2003: 71-72).

What can we learn from the first eight months of Bush’s foreign policy? The newly inaugurated president did not, at this point, consider international issues a priority, that much is clear. There is little evidence to suggest he was a great believer in the so-called “American project”, or indeed in the dreams of the neoconservatives; where he did act, his foreign policy was often more realist than one might expect.

One thing that could be drawn from the examples highlighted here is that US grand strategy had yet to redefine itself, had yet to find its place in the post-Cold War world. The biggest shift in US foreign policy seemed to be that with no global villain with which to wrestle, no ultimate evil against which to cast itself, its fundamental liberal principle – the protection and promotion of global democracy – seemed to be in hibernation. The winter would not last long.

There is little need to recount the events of September 11th, 2001. It is a day which will live long in the collective memory. The Bush Administration’s response to the attacks, though, bears revisiting. Contrary to popular belief, the attacks did not dramatically change either Bush’s outlook or the fundamental principles of US foreign policy – although it is plain that the president’s domestic-politics-first mindset came to an abrupt end. The attacks shifted the focus of the Administration outwards, and it seemed obvious that a new kind of strategy was needed. The failure to prevent 9/11 had made that clear. There was one group who had such a strategy.

Looking at the course of the war in Afghanistan, and at the fact that Iraq – of all places, Iraq – was invaded at all, one can see that the neoconservatives seized the opportunity presented to them by 9/11. They, more than anyone, had been waiting for a new enemy, a reason to revive the “American project” (Mead 2005: 112). Radical, fundamentalist Islamic terrorism gave them that enemy, and even better, it gave them a reason to export the “American project” to the Middle East. They were more than ready for this moment – “[The neoconservatives] had a new strategy set to go. And nobody else did, at least nobody so highly placed or committed,” (Kaplan 2008: 4). Under their influence, Bush declared a global ‘war on terror’; a thoroughly neoconservative concept that advocated the destruction of unfriendly regimes and their militarily-enforced replacement with democratic ones. However, as Kaplan himself notes (in the quotation cited above), this strategy was not so much a seismic shift in the ideological foundations of US foreign policy; it was more a redefinition of the principles of the old grand strategy, albeit with added zeal and more aggressive tactics (Kaplan 2008: 4).

The key to those tactics was regime change, and the place to start was Afghanistan. The theocratic government who called themselves the Taliban had been harbouring the leadership of al-Qaeda, the international terror network responsible for the 9/11 attacks. The Bush Administration decided that the most effective way to deprive al-Qaeda of its Afghan base was to remove the Taliban and transition the country to democracy. These objectives chimed well with both the broad aims of the neoconservative movement and the traditional principles of US foreign

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policy – the national security of the United States (the most critical of its interests) would be served by bringing democracy to a Middle Eastern nation which was under the lash of a tyrannical government. In addition, the public's thirst for vengeance following 9/11 would be satiated. It seemed neat, symmetrical, and fundamentally American.

The rights and wrongs – both military-strategic and political – of this conflict are not the issue at hand. We are interested in how far the war in Afghanistan represents a departure from the historically constant fundamental principles of US foreign policy. The war in Afghanistan was an attempt to pursue the two most fundamental goals of American foreign policy – democracy and the protection of US interests, which include national security; certainly, the aggression with which these goals were pursued has rarely been seen before, but such military ferocity is understandable (if not necessarily excusable) in the context of the 9/11 attacks. If the 'war on terror' had stopped with Afghanistan, where the imposition of the "American project" at least had some legal grounding (and, thanks to the presence of the International Security Assistance Force, at least a semblance of multilateralism), Bush's legacy may not have been so badly scarred, and the illusion of a foreign policy revolution may not have prevailed. As it happened, the neoconservatives were not satisfied with toppling the Taliban; their belief in using military might to forcibly democratise the Middle East would push the president into a war of much more spurious legality, and with even more tragic unintended consequences.

The neoconservative element, now at the peak of their influence within the Bush Administration through their longstanding ties with Cheney and Rumsfeld, had long harboured a desire to democratise Iraq. Despite considerable opposition from non-neoconservative members of the US national security establishment, some of whom resigned in protest over the issue (Clarke 2004: 241-242), the White House pressed ahead with plans to invade Iraq, even as the Taliban began to regroup in Afghanistan (Clarke 2004: 241). The need to justify this legally (and morally) brought to the fore what was one of the few new concepts in the Bush Administration's foreign policy – pre-emptive war. Invading Iraq was "...largely presented as a timely and essential measure to prevent the regime from adding to its presumed weapons stockpiles and, potentially, transferring these weapons to such groups as al-Qaeda for use against the United States," (Mead 2005: 115). Presenting the justification for war in terms of a potential threat was a new – and, some argued, dangerous (Leffler 2003: 1045) – trend in US foreign policy. Leffler, however, argues that at a fundamental level, the idea of pre-emptive war was rooted in the United States desire to protect itself and its interests; pre-emption represented a new (and, in the climate of fear following 9/11, seemingly acceptable) tactical approach to dealing with a world which was proving to be full of terrifying new threats (Leffler 2003: 1049). He cites the argument made by Rumsfeld in the run-up to the Iraq War,

"The question...is in the 21st century, with biological weapons...that could kill hundreds of thousands of people, what does one do? Does one wait until [one is] attacked, or does one look at a pattern of behaviour, a...fact pattern, and draw a conclusion?" (Rumsfeld, quoted in Leffler 2003: 1049).

Pre-emption was thus presented as the only way to prevent the United States from falling victim to further attacks, perhaps more cataclysmic than 9/11. In addition, Mead argues, the neoconservatives had another strong motive in attacking Iraq, one which perfectly highlights their position as the latest in a long line of US foreign policy experts who advocate the democratic transformation of the world:

The neoconservatives saw the occupation of Iraq as the first stage in the reconstruction of the entire region. In this analysis, it was a war to make the world safe for democracy. Just as Germany and Japan (and Italy, for that matter) made the shift to Western democracy under American tutelage after 1945, Iraq would become the Arab world's first democratic state. As other states saw Iraq's progress, Islamicism and radical pan-Arab nationalism would lose their allure – economic progress and democratic freedom are contagious. America's military presence in the region would have a sobering effect on regimes in Syria, Iran and the Gulf. (Mead 2005: 117)

In neither conception of the war did the Bush Administration radically depart from the established pillars of US foreign policy. The national security, interests-focused strategic realism which concluded, post-9/11, that pre-emption was the only option in a world filled with terrible threats converged with the neoconservatives' grand liberal vision of a manifest destiny for the 21st century. That vision ended in failure, as we know; Iraq descended into chaos and civil war. As with Afghanistan, though, our purpose is not to judge either the rightness or wrongness, or the success or

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failure, of the war itself. Did the Iraq War represent a fundamental shift in the principles of US foreign policy? No. It represented the same grand strategy the US has pursued for centuries. The difference was that the old strategic realism became distorted by fear of new threats, threats that the US had spectacularly failed to deal with in the years preceding 9/11 (Leffler 2003: 1049; Clarke 2004: 235-238); and that the grand liberal vision was pushed to its ultimate extreme by the neoconservatives in the White House and the Pentagon (Kaplan 2008: 4).

It was these two wars which came to define the war on terror; and it was the war on terror that came to define the foreign policy of the Bush Administration. Much was made of the president's decision to declare war on an abstract concept, but, as Mead rightly points out, "The war on terror is not our first metaphorical war. The Cold War was a metaphor for an international competition that never turned into an armed confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union," (Mead 2005: 111).

Parallels between the Cold War and the war on terror can be overstated; this one, however, is true. In both cases, the United States sought to create and sustain the fiction of a great and monolithic enemy, one that can only be defeated by both hard and soft power working together (i.e. military and strategic supremacy combined with the allure of the US brand of globalising, capitalist democracy). In other words, "The [Bush] administration...intended to make the war on terror...the key organising idea around which American foreign policy will be structured for the foreseeable future," (Mead 2005: 112). Bush succeeded where Clinton had failed, and redefined the rhetorical and tactical framework in which that chameleonic old grand strategy, the marriage of liberalism and realism, would operate. The Bush Administration did not invent those fundamental principles, nor did it bind them together:

The history of American foreign relations is not about the struggle between power and ideals, as it is so often portrayed, but about their intermingling. America's ideas have always encapsulated its interests. America's ideology has always been tailored to correspond with a quest for territory and markets. In short...ideology and interests have always had a dynamic and unsettled relationship with one another. (Leffler 2003:1050)

It is that dynamism that the world witnessed, on a massive scale, during the eight years of the Bush presidency. We saw the US foreign policy establishment, in the face of a terrifying new threat, respond by charging, "unprepared and ignorant," (Scheuer 2004: 21), propelled by strategic fear and neoconservative ideas, into a catastrophe. In their heads and in their hearts, though, they remained affixed to the principles which have anchored American foreign policy for so long. 9/11 was not a transformative event in the history of US international relations. As Condoleezza Rice said, "Most fundamentally, 9/11 crystallized our vulnerability," (Rice, quoted in Leffler 2003: 1048).

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