

# The Neoconservative Movement at the End of the Bush Administration: Its Legacy, Its Vision and Its Political

Written by Didier Chaudet

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## The Neoconservative Movement at the End of the Bush Administration: Its Legacy, Its Vision and Its Political Future

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After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the word hijacking has been used for two events. Of course, for what happened on September 11th, but some also talked about a more metaphorical action, the hijacking of American foreign policy, transforming a Republic into an Empire, through the influence of a “neoconservative” or “democratic imperialist”(1) movement. For some, this evolution is unnatural, and can only come from some dark, evil forces. For others, this is just the average American politics, always seen as linked to the Imperial mindset. With all the conspiracy theories, or denials of the very existence of a neoconservative movement, this is difficult, to say the least, to actually understand these intellectuals, and what they mean for the evolution of the United States as a Great Power. To see clearer in a fog of half truths and propaganda, we will focus on the situation of the neoconservative movement nowadays, one needs to concentrate on the vision, impact, and future of the democratic imperialist movement in order to better understand this political phenomenon and what it means for America and its allies for now and in the future. We chose as our main theme here the ideas, influence and legacy of the movement toward the “War on Terror”. Indeed, this is definitely through this struggle, linked to the need for an answer to 9/11 that the neoconservative thinkers have been able to gain such prominence in the American political spectrum.

This work is, of course, based on all the secondary sources available on the neoconservative movement, the Bush Administration, the War on Terror, and the political, social, and security issues linked to the actual situation in the Muslim world. And it is strongly connected to my two first books, the last one being *L'Empire au miroir*, written with Florent Parmentier and Benoît Pélopidas(2) (the title of the forthcoming English translation will be *When Empire Meets Nationalism*).

But before the impact of any secondary source, my work on the neoconservative movement is based first and foremost on primary sources, something that curiously, has not always been done when it comes to the analysis of this movement(3). The principal sources have been the articles of *The Weekly Standard*, the foreign policy papers of the *American Enterprise Institute*, and the writing of the best-known neoconservative thinkers, like the Kagans (father and son), the Pipes (father and son), and the Kristols (father and son), etc. It has been mostly articles from 1997 to 2006.

Even if there is always possibility of disagreement about the “level” of neoconservatism of one writer or analyst in particular, or about the exact neoconservative ideas about one subject in particular, I think that this way of studying them is the best to really understand what this movement is all about, not in a historical way, but nowadays, at the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century. It at least goes beyond the usual “This-is-more-complicated-than-that” approach sometimes used when some issues are contemporary and controversial, as the neoconservative movement is.

Last, but not least, my analysis on everything linked to the “War on Terror” and the Muslim World is based on the academic literature on the subject but also on extensive and long-term fieldwork (up to one year) in the Middle East and in post-Soviet Central Asia.

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## I. The neoconservative movement during the G. W. Bush administration

### a. A presentation of the neoconservative political philosophy

There is always a great deal of confusion when one talks about the neoconservative movement. First and foremost, it comes from the fact that the term “neoconservative” itself was not accepted by some, if not the majority, of the neoconservative thinkers. After all, the concept came from the editors of the liberal journal *Dissent*, in order to label people they saw as traitors, as ex-liberal individuals turning conservative on social and international issues. Besides, as the one seen as the Godfather of the neoconservative movement, Irving Kristol, once said, “when two neoconservatives meet they are more likely to argue with one another than to confer or conspire”(4). It has been still true at the end of the Cold War, when the Cold Warriors chose the realist approach and opposed themselves to some “Young Turks” in the movement, who decided that the fight for a democratic crusade all over the world was just beginning.

Nevertheless, there are some ideas that makes a neoconservative, before and after the Cold War :

– first, an imperial approach, or, as we defined it in our book with Florent Parmentier and Benoît Pélopidas, a “pseudo-imperial” approach. Indeed, one can talk about an imperial approach when it comes to the definition of Admiral Mahan, an Empire as an extension of the practical sovereignty of a State on other territories. Before and after the Cold War, the neoconservative movement sees the US as a “Force for Good” that should extend its influence and protect its primacy in international relations. The main neoconservative think tank in Washington D.C., the PNAC (*Project for a New American Century*) has been created in 1997 in order to specifically promote this goal(5). And in order to do so, the neoconservative movement has an imperial approach in a very old fashioned way by its choice of the use of force as the favorite mean for action. Even if they do not reject soft power completely, before and after the Cold War, a neoconservative is always somebody who is opposed to the moderate option. The neoconservative Cold Warriors even opposed the vision of real conservative politicians like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher on the way to deal with a Soviet Union that was changing itself under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbatchev(6). They were nearly the only ones seeing the Western powers as too soft against a Soviet Union under the Perestroïka. This choice of inflexibility and of a hawkish vision of the world was also used for the way the US should deal with the Third World. One can find an example of that through the article from the neoconservative journal *Commentary* entitled “Oil, the Issue of American Intervention”. In a true imperial, or maybe more “19<sup>th</sup> century, old European style” imperialist approach, this article, written during the 1973 oil crisis, denounced what the American choice of not using the military against the Arab embargo. The main goals of the article was to criticize the lack of a use of force, but also the egalitarian vision that makes the US government accepts to treat other states as equals. Like an Empire from the past, the United States dreamed by the neoconservative movement should be able to strike anyone, and to organize the international community as a strictly hierarchic system, with Washington DC at the top of the pyramid. Again, after the Cold War, the reinvented neoconservative movement has kept its hawkish approach. But in this hawkish approach is the paradox of the neoconservative imperial vision. An Empire, following a classical definition, is able to include the conquered, and has a positive ideology.

But at the heart of the neoconservative project one cannot find a positive ideology, but only fear. As we will see later about the approach toward the Muslim world, the idea that the neoconservative intellectuals are crusaders for democracy is really overrated. But broadly speaking, before the end of the Cold War already, the neoconservative lack of faith toward democratic values were obvious in their writings. This pessimism has found its roots in the pervasive influence of the philosopher Leo Strauss, who fought that only the military strength, and not the Western values, was able to counter the totalitarian enemy. And in the historical neoconservative piece on democracy from Jeane Kirkpatrick, *Dictatorships and Double Standards*, the goal was not to claim the need for democracy, but rather to denounce the fact that the US could criticize its friends on human rights issues, but not its enemies because of diplomacy. Neoconservatism is democratic only through rhetoric at best. The most important for a neoconservative during and after the Cold War is the fight against potential and real enemies. And those enemies, from the USSR to the “rogue states”(7) to Al Qaida, and maybe, in the future, to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, has always been seen as directly dangerous for US soil and citizens, in particular through WMD. So this neoconservative set of

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ideas is not truly looking for an Empire in the pure sense of the definition of this political structure, as a positive and inclusive force. The pseudo-imperial vision of the neoconservative is only running on fear of an enemy that could counter the total dominance of American interests.

– a pro-*Likudnik* approach. Here, this is important to make the difference between a pro-Israeli and a pro-Likudnik vision. Somebody who is pro-Israeli will support the state of Israel as a general principle, so there is a possibility for a pro-Israeli to accept a real peace process through an exchange of land and real, viable Palestinian State for peace. This is something that I. Rabin supported, among other Israeli politicians, intellectuals, and security specialists. The Likudnik approach of peace has been explained by Ze'ev Begin, a right-wing Likud member of the Knesset at the time, in an article for Foreign Affairs in Fall 1991. The main idea of this article was that, on security and historical grounds, it was impossible to make peace by negotiating any parcel of land coming from the Golan Heights, Gaza, and the West Bank. Such an extreme choice makes, of course, the recognition of a Palestinian people, the basis for peace in the Middle East, totally impossible(8). One can find a similar approach in an important paper written by American neoconservative analysts under the supervision of Richard Perle, "A Clean Break : A New Strategy for Securing the Realm"(9). The goal of this analysis was clearly to find a way to abrogate the Oslo Accords. It said that because of the peace process, Israel was on the defensive. For this document, the only way to achieve peace was to obtain complete surrender from the Arab side, and to obtain from the Middle Eastern countries an unconditional acceptance of Israeli control on all Palestinian land. The same rejection of even the idea of a peace process which could take into account the two sides of the conflict can be found much before the 90's. Already in 1976, Norman Podhoretz was afraid that the American government could push the Israeli side to accept the idea of a peace process that could actually mean make some concessions to its Middle Eastern neighbours(10). The only situation when a neoconservative criticizes the Israeli government is when the Israeli official is not Likudnik and not seen as strong enough. For example, John Podhoretz (son of Norman Podhoretz) criticized Ehud Olmert and his government because the Israeli side presumably did not use enough force to weaken the Hezbollah movement. This point of view is directly linked to the first point I wrote about earlier. The neoconservative movement sees negotiations as a sign of weakness. They see the United States and Israel strongly linked against a Arab world that is sometimes acting strongly against American and Western interests. The fact that they could do so first and foremost as an answer to American or Israeli policy positions is not at all taken into account. As explained by Reuel Marc Gerecht in the neoconservative Pravda, *The Weekly Standard*, the Jerusalem–Washington DC alliance is for the Arab world the symbol of a victorious and superior West(11). Hence, to be unwilling to support totally and blindly the Israeli approach means, from their point of view, to be unfriendly towards U.S. interests.

– And of course, a strong belief in the importance of ideas and ideals in order to have an impact in the world. The downside of such approach is, as we will see later, an ideological reading of today's events that is not always accurate, to say the least.

These three main positions can already give us an idea of the neoconservative answer toward 9/11, and its vision toward Islam as a religion, and toward the Islamist political movements. But one needs to focus more on the articles and books written by neoconservative analysts themselves in order to better understand what their influence meant for American foreign policy. Again, I want to point out the fact the goal here is not to say that the neoconservative movement controlled all the decisions made after 9/11. But their influence was one of the most important. There will be more about this importance during the second part of the presentation.

## **b. The neoconservative answer to 9/11: their analysis of Islam, Islamism, and of the War on Terror.**

When one focuses on what the neoconservative movement thinks more specifically about Islam, Islamism, and how to deal with 9/11, there is a strong feeling that the dominant approach of the movement is of a "Clash-of-Civilizations" type. As for Islam in general, one could think, at first glance, that they will not be able to agree with one another on it. Indeed, what could be the common approach of somebody like Stephen Schwartz, a neoconservative converted to Islam through Sufism, and Daniel Pipes, who had sometimes controversial comments about the Muslim faith ? Nevertheless, through an extensive reading of neoconservative articles, one can find common points :

– They all see Islamism as the new USSR, the new Nazi ideology, or the new communist ideology. To cut a long story

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short, this is, from their point of view, an ideology that you cannot accept one way or another(12). They explain Islamism only through an ideological point of view. They see no economical, social, political roots in the Islamist issue. Hence the War on Terror would be a “Second Cold War”(13), with the U.S., again, having the role of the leader of the Free World.

– Besides the fact that they claim to see a difference between Islam and Islamism, they assume that this ideology is a natural consequence of religion. Through this idea, they see a totalitarian Arab-Islamic “imperialism”(14), from the past to the present, and the impossibility to integrate people coming from Muslim countries, in particular from Arab lands, seen as a potential fifth column(15).

– From this point of view, it is impossible for them to just admit that the jihadist movement of Al Qaida is just a very small part of the Muslim society, of the Islamist spectrum, and even a group not really representative of other historical jihadist organizations(16). They prefer to see the threat in a much broader way, including other Islamist groups, even the ones who condemned the 9/11 attacks, like Hezbollah and Hamas. But more importantly, they see all of this as a global action by *Terror Masters*, anti-American nation-states working together to undermine the US. The most incredible conspiracy theory here comes from David Wurmser, who sees Al Qaida as a Saudi-Syrian-Iraqi-Palestinian creation...(17)

The focus on nation-states as enemies has been particularly strong against two countries in particular : Iraq and Iran. Iraq got the “honor” to be singled out for quite some time now. Already in the 70’s, Paul Wolfowitz had seen Iraq as a threat against the United States’ interests. It was not the Iraq ruled by Saddam Hussein at the time, nor the Iraq that could use chemical weapons against its own people. But as explained by James Mann(18), Wolfowitz had already in mind the strategic importance of the Gulf region, and the fact that Iraq could be a potential threat for the compliant Saudi friend. Iraq and regime change there has been a constant focus of the neoconservative movement during the 90’s. They did not hesitate to link Saddam Hussein to the terrorist attacks of 1993 and 2001 against the World Trade Center(19). For 9/11, they even did not hesitate to ask for an attack on Iraq just one day after 9/11, seeming without care to catch and punish the real terrorists. Laurie Mylroie published a piece in the *Wall Street Journal* on September 13<sup>th</sup>, claiming that “Bin Laden [Wasn’t] the Only One to Blame”, linking again Saddam Hussein to terrorism from Al Qaida. On September 15<sup>th</sup>, Wolfowitz went as far as refusing the idea to go to war against the Taliban and the Afghan Emirate, claiming that instead Bagdad should be the main target. This vision seems totally disconnected from reality, but with a neoconservative way of thinking linking everything to hostile nation-states, it can make sense. Of course one has to make total abstraction of the facts. Analysts who actually work on Middle Eastern or Terrorism studies rebuke those idiotic claims(20). But the fact and the matter is, the neoconservative propaganda had a real impact on the American public : in 2004, still 82% believed to the neoconservative delusion(21). As for Iran, before and after 9/11, it has always been seen as a kind of Islamist version of the USSR, with a Khomeynist Komintern giving orders and missions to terrorists all over the world(22). They even saw Al Qaida as a tool in the hands of the Iranians, something that is supported by no fact whatsoever(23). But again, it is linked to a biased vision of reality, that permits such ideas to be supported.

It can be said that Saudi Arabia and Syria are the third and fourth “great Satans” of the neoconservative movement. Saudi Arabia has been for a short time after 9/11 the new Iran in neoconservative minds, the center of the Islamist Revolution led by Ben Laden, and made ideologically possible through the Wahhabi ideology. This focus from Iran to Saudi Arabia was all the more easy to do that History of Wahhabism is not exactly glamorous(24). But it oversimplified the terrorist issue, like in the Iranian case, it was only a transposition of Cold War fantasies. As for Syria, it was targeted because of its alliance with Iran, and their common support for Hezbollah. Globally , these two countries have not been that important in comparison with Iran and Iraq, but the idea to invade their territory has been contemplated by neoconservative journalists and polemicists(25). This situation makes us see a pattern that maybe explains such an obsessive focus. The democratic imperialists focus first and foremost on countries that could not stand long against American hard power but which have the tools to counter the United States in one way or another, especially in a world where there are some common rules in an international stage. They have the raw materials, or the population, or the potential power, or the terrorist sidekicks, to contest the influence of the United States and its main allies over strategic areas like the Middle East. Krauthammer explains it straight when he writes that Afghanistan is a “geographically marginal backwater with no resources and no industrial or technological

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infrastructure”(26). It is ironic here is that the only place on Earth that does not seem to be that important for the neoconservative movement is precisely the one where the masterminds of 9/11 found shelter. Definitely, before and after 9/11, the main enemies did not change for the neoconservative movement. They had nothing to do with post-9/11 terrorism, and everything to do with a Great Game for global dominance in strategic areas, in particular the Middle East. Through this way of seeing the neoconservative thinking, this is only natural that Russia and China got their share of rejection from this movement.

But some could say that it is also caused by a real belief that the world is divided between the democracies in one hand, and the other regimes in another hand. From what has been already said, it is difficult to think that the neoconservative thinkers are really strong believers of democratization. But to make my point final here, the best way is to check what they have to say about democracy and democratization in the Muslim world.

This is true that for Afghanistan as for Iraq, the claimed goal has been to get rid of despotic rulers in order to bring democracy, rule of law, etc. But when one actually reads the neoconservative writings, it seems that the belief in democracy is clearly changing from one country to another. And this illogical approach becomes logical from a neoconservative point of view only if one takes into account that what makes a real “democratic imperialist” is not real support for democracy, but real support for a complete dominance of the US and its allies in the region. When it comes to Turkey for example, indeed, democracy and elections are totally forgotten, by fear of an Islamic Revolution, Iranian style(27). The neoconservative faith is clearly(28) put into the Turkish Army. In fact, the idea that neoconservatives will always support democracy no matter the situation is a myth. It has been made clear by people like Michael Kramer, when he claimed that authoritarian governments are not such a bad thing, as they are the only ones who are able to destroy the Islamists, who are the main enemies of Israel in the Middle East. It seems that the neoconservative love for democracy disappeared once and for all with the electoral victory of the Hamas movement in the Palestinian territories(29), and the ideas that these new imperialists are democratic ones is just outdated. Indeed, what is still used is the idea of regime change against countries that are seen as unfriendly to the US. We are far away from real democratization here(30).

## II. Does it matter? Assessing the impact of the neoconservative movement on American politics and the War on Terror.

After explaining the main political ideas of the neoconservative movement, we have just one question left before assessing the legacy and the future of this movement: does all this really matter ? This is a fair question to ask, as specialists of conspiracy theories see the neoconservative hand everywhere, and friends of neoconservatism usually downplay, or exaggerate, the influence of the movement.

The fact and the matter is that the neoconservative movement has a real influence. It has not been the only influence on the 43th president, but it has been one of the strongest in post-9/11 America. It has been strong for two main reasons :

-thanks to useful political allies

-and thanks to a favorable intellectual and political climate.

### a. Useful political alliances

The neoconservative movement has never been a mass movement. It has also never been a historical part of the elite of the Republican party. Most of people seen as part of the neoconservative movement swang from the Democratic to the Republican parties during the presidential campaign concluded by the election of Ronald Reagan. They had also some strong intellectual opponents amongst Republicans. For example, on foreign policy, economical affairs, and civil rights, libertarians are the anti-neoconservatives *par excellence*. But despite all these, the neoconservative movement has become one of the main intellectual forces in the conservative side of American politics. It has been able to obtain this importance through two kinds of alliances : with the assertive nationalists, and

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with the Christian Right.

The assertive nationalist movement is a hard-line conservative branch of the party. Dick Cheney or Donald Rumsfeld, for example, are assertive nationalists. They have sometimes been wrongly seen as neoconservatives. But one can understand the difficulty to make a difference between an assertive nationalist and a neoconservative. The two movements believe much more in strength than in diplomacy or deals with the international community. They have the same distaste for the U.N. and other international organizations. The only thing that put the two political movements apart is the spreading of values : assertive nationalists do not care much about it(31). But is it that a strong difference ? As explained, the neoconservative thinkers have a very personal vision of democracy. It looks more like a tool in order to target Third World dictatorial regimes hostile to U.S. foreign policy. With this vision in mind, there is a potential convergence possible between the very pragmatic assertive nationalists and the neoconservative ideologues. Indeed neoconservative rhetoric is a useful intellectual weapon especially against all the American opponents to Empire : a part of the liberal left, and at the right of the political spectrum the libertarians, the moderates, and the realists. This explains Dick Cheney's flip-flopping concerning Iraq : in 1994, Cheney explained that going to Baghdad after the liberation of Kuwait would have been a bad idea(32), but in 2003, on CNN, he has adopted the neoconservative rhetoric of the American G.I.'s as liberators of the Iraqi people, bringing democracy and respect for human rights(33). Hence this alliance was a pretty simple one for these two segments of the Republican Party during the Clinton years. This ideological marriage redefined the division inside the Republican Party and in the American political spectrum broadly speaking. Of course, one of the main enemies has always been the Democrats. But they were not alone anymore. The war was also on between the hawks broadly speaking, i.e. the neoconservative and the assertive nationalists, and the "Soft-Line Ideologues"(34), all the moderates or the believers in the interest, for the United States, not to act like a unipolar or imperial nation.

But this alliance was not enough to assure predominance inside the Republican party. This is definitively the alliance with the Christian segment of the right wing that has given a strong echo to the neoconservative ideas. It can seem peculiar to imagine secular East Coasters neoconservatives working hand in hand with a part of the American Evangelicals deeply rooted in the South and the Center of the country. But in fact, the "democratic imperialists" have values in common with the Christian Right. For Irving Kristol, religion has to be considered as the first pillar of conservatism broadly speaking, before nationalism and support for a free market economy(35). And for neoconservatives like for the Christian wing of the conservative party, the counter-culture of the 60's was seen as a threat to the Western civilization. And now the neoconservative are on the same page with the most conservative Evangelicals from the Right about issues like abortion or cloning.

And the consensus did not stop with internal affairs. It has also touched foreign issues, in particular about the Middle East; especially with the segment of the Evangelicals called the Christian Zionists, who are estimated to be as many as 20 million voters in the US(36). The Christian Zionists are Dispensationalists. It means that they believe World History can be divided in different segments or Dispensations that are linked to some books in the Bible. A lot of Christians see the Dispensations as allegories or explanations of the past. For Christian Zionists, there are explanations of the future to come. And this future is focused on Israel. For them, the Israeli victories of 1948 and 1967 have prepared the Second Coming of Christ. In order for the prophecy to accomplish itself, all the Jews need to go back to Israel, the Dome of the Rock, the symbolic mosque in Jerusalem, has to be destroyed, and the Third Temple rebuilt at its location. Last but not least, Israel must become Greater Israel, with its biblical borders, from the Nile to the Euphrates. Hence the neoconservative and the Christian Zionists have the same very extreme and pro-Likunik vision of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For the Reverend and Christian Zionist leader Malcolm Hedding, the Palestinian people does not even exist as such. For this part of the Christian branch of the Republican party, the hatred of anything Muslim is expressed very strongly. For Rev. Vines, Muhammad, the Prophet of the Islamic faith, is "a paedophile possessed by the Devil"(37). One can imagine the kind of impact these inflammatory comments make on the war for hearts and minds in the War on Terror. Nevertheless, these Christian Zionists have been an objective political ally for the neoconservative approach on the post 9/11 world. The two of them want a heavy handed approach toward the Muslim world, based on strength(38). And the neoconservative movement was indeed able to have an influence on this segment of American Christianity. Some of these Evangelicals, like William Bennett or Ralph Reed, have been seen as real converts to the "democratic imperialist" way of thinking(39).

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As for the alliance with the assertive nationalists, the neoconservatist movement was originally the weakest partner, but it has been finally able to get the ideological upper hand. It looks like a paradox, but in fact, it comes from the fact that neoconservatism also got on its side a helping intellectual environment.

## b. A helping intellectual environment.

Indeed, the neoconservative ideas gain their strength from a post-Cold War intellectual environment that has been globally helpful.

First, they have a potentiality to appeal to a large number because they are basically able to give very simple answers to complex problems. Of course, the casualty of such a situation is the facts, as we saw it about their analysis of Al Qaida or Saddam Hussein. But as said by the neoconservative Daniel Bell “being ideological [means] you have prefabricated ideas”, you do not need to elaborate these ideas with facts, and the neoconservative movement totally fits this definition. It means that when the nation was still in shock after 9/11, and was understandably looking for the persons responsible, they were able to give easy targets for retaliation on Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>. A more realist approach, or at least closer to the fact, would have mean to focus on Al Qaida only, which is not a State to be bombed or invade, or it would have mean to target Afghanistan only, with the need to focus more on cooperation, limited strikes, intelligence, all things that are not as clear as an enemy known since the end of the Cold War.

More broadly speaking, this is important to have in mind that the neoconservative rhetoric is not alien to more widespread ideas in the American society. Their ideas are more an extreme or twisted version of what a lot of other people think than ideas totally cut from the American intellectual mainstream.

For example, the fact is that the neoconservative writers capitalize a lot on American exceptionalism, in order to present the US as a “Force for Good”, only bringing democracy and other benefits to the rest of the world, made their analysis based mostly on the use of force and their refusal to think about any American responsibility in the problem more acceptable. As showed by Philly Bennis in her book *Before and After*, this is this psychological certainty, linked to American exceptionalism but also to a real ignorance of what has been the American foreign policy toward the Middle East and Muslim Asia for decades, that made ask the question « why do they hate us ? »(40). The idea that the jihadists, as well as part of the South broadly speaking, hate the United States not for what they have done, not for their foreign policy but for what the US stands for or is supposed to stand for (a liberal society, human rights, democracy, etc.), is not only the neoconservative point of view, but the official point of view of the White House. As for its vision of unilateralism and the right for the US to act like an imperial nation, to preserve the American supremacy, the neoconservative movement has just be an intellectual, ideological, and sometimes extreme approach of what the main actors of the American foreign policy making establishment since the end of the Cold War have believed in. Indeed, officials of the Pentagon had a practical way of thinking that chose already this road during the 90's, as explained by Edward Haley in *Strategies of Dominance*(41). And as the neoconservative vision of the world is plagued by fear, as seen before, this is not uncommon to see more common ideas based on prejudice. For example, when it comes to the American relationship toward the Muslim world, the confrontationist vision has always been predominant in DC, in particular when it comes to deal with Islamist movements in general, and with some nation-states, like Iran(42). Even the worst neoconservative prejudices toward Islam that we saw in the main conservative publications are well alive outside the democratic imperialist movement. One can take, for example, the idea of the Muslims as a block that could be passive but also aggressive and always monolithic. This explains why somebody like Michael Scheuer, a strong intellectual, a strident opponent to neoconservatism, has exactly the same approach than the neoconservatives and their Orientalist Godfather Bernard Lewis(43) on an unavoidable Islamization of Europe through a massive immigration imposing its way of life(44). In Europe, such an approach can be found in books mostly distributed be well-known editors and bookshops from the far right. Even if there is always some xenophobia, serious work of sociologist and political scientists has shown that there is maybe a crime/poverty/ghetto issue in Europe, but definitively not the beginning of a future civil war of civilizations(45).

To summarize, let's just say that the influence of the neoconservative movement has been strong also because its approach is a sort of natural post-Cold War evolution, feeding on the mythology and beliefs of the political leaders in

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Washington DC and of parts of the Republican electorate.

But besides this use of more common ideas and fears in the political spectrum, the neoconservative movement had also the tools to shape a popular consent on their ideas. One can think about two main means here : the think tanks and the media.

During the 90's, when neoconservative thinkers looked like the last dinosaurs of the Cold War era, they found again a way to define themselves through foreign policy. And it was at a period of time dominated by the "It's-the-economy-stupid" vision of the US and the world. At this time the think tanks in D.C. did not give priority to foreign policy, and the neoconservative thinkers were able to take this ground without much a fight, at least in the conservative think tanks(46). But if they took over the Washingtonian think tanks, it is also for more historical reasons. This is Irving Kristol, with William Simon, who had the responsibility to help the conservative think tanks organize the counter-attack against the liberal think tanks in the 70's. So from this time, the neoconservative movement has been the brain of the conservative movement. Of course, it does not mean that all the conservative think tanks are neoconservative : the Heritage Foundation can be seen as conservative broadly speaking, with a strong tendency to be in fact only assertive nationalist; and the Cato Institute is clearly anti-neoconservative, as it is libertarian. But the neoconservative influence is extremely strong : they were in equal numbers with the libertarians in the *Hudson Institute*, but nowadays the libertarians are a minority there. Besides, the neoconservative thinkers took over in the *Manhattan Institute* and in the prestigious conservative *American Enterprise Institute*. In these think tanks now, and especially in the foreign policy area, their ideas are predominant when it comes to international affairs. Again here, this is possible first and foremost because of their alliance with the other hawks in the Republican party, especially the assertive nationalists. Halfer and Clarke have seen this network of intellectuals and think tanks as a *shadow defense establishment* which took over the Republican way of thinking on foreign policy, and asked change during the Clinton years toward a more neoconservative foreign policy(47).

But in order for this network to be complete and really lethal to the more moderate way of seeing the world, one needs to put the media in it. Of course, here again, it is not to say that all the media have been seduced by neoconservatism. But besides what is sometimes said by loud conservative analysts, the time when the media were overwhelmingly liberal are long gone. As reported in the *New York Observer* in December 2002, Al Gore himself had to concede that "the media is kind of weird these days on politics, and there are some major institutional voices that are, truthfully speaking part and parcel of the Republican Party"(48). This has been even more the case since Fox News has become the first cable channel news in 2002. And the right-wing owner of this cable news channel, Rupert Murdoch, has been a great protector of the neoconservative movement. Indeed, it is only thanks to Murdoch's financial help that *the Weekly Standard* is still published. Its circulation is extremely modest, only 60 000, including the journals sent for free. But this protected institution gives them a title when they are invited in Murdoch's own Fox News as "specialists" on politics or foreign affairs. They are now familiar faces on television and familiar names in the print media. It gives them a stronger impact toward the general population, and not only in Washington D.C.

Hence, this would be difficult to downplay their influence on post-9/11 America. They definitively had an impact on foreign policy thinking and on foreign policy making. But what does it mean for their political inheritance and their political future ?

### III. The inheritance and political future of the neoconservative movement

#### a. A less-than-perfect legacy on the «War on Terror» issue...

This is always difficult to talk about the inheritance of an intellectual group. The neoconservative thinkers did not have complete power in the White House and in the Congress. But they helped to shape not only the debate, but the decisions that were made during the Bush administration. Their ideas, and the ones of the assertive nationalists, had an impact in the way the War on Terror was made, and definitively, it was a negative influence.

First and foremost, they pushed for the wrong strategic decisions in the War on Terror. Their irrational focus of Iraq, of Iran, and the idea of nation-states as threats made the US focus on the Middle East, and not on Greater Central



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Asia. This area, composed of all the “Stans”, and with Afghanistan as its heart, was the real area of the War on Terror. It was from Afghanistan that Al Qaida was able to plan 9/11. It was there that the mastermind of 9/11, Osama Bin Laden, found shelter, and this is still there that he had training camps. As reminded by Rohan Gunaratna, between 10 000 to 110 000 would-be jihadists were trained in Al Qaida camps from 1989 and 2001. The number seems disproportionate, but one needs to remember that if Al Qaida trained a lot of people, they actually have recruited only 3% of the persons they trained, the “best and the brightest”, so to speak, of the training sessions(49). The others were not lost, of course, for the jihadist cause. They could become relays, supports, or become by themselves sleeper cells, acting on their own but with Al Qaida’s agenda in mind. This area was composed of six weak states, and one failed state becoming an Islamist Emirate ruled by radical extremists who gave their protection to Bin Laden. As for the six weak states around it, one, Pakistan, is a nuclear power. And the five others have seemed extremely weak, besides Kazakhstan that is the only economical success story of the area. Tajikistan had an extremely violent civil war between 1992 and 1997(50) and is still recovering. An important Islamist movement, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, has been born from strong economical and political tensions in Uzbekistan, and has become the Central Asian ally of Al Qaida and the Taliban at the end of the 90’s. It showed the inefficiency and the lack of means of the Central Asian armies by organizing attacks from Tajikistan, then from Afghanistan, in 1999 and 2000, against Uzbekistan, and passing by Kyrgyzstan. Only the American victory against the Taliban at the end of 2001 saved the post-Soviet Central Asian states of another attack. Indeed, as far as we know, the IMU was amassing a lot of troops on the Afghan bank of the Amudarya around September 2001 in order to invade Uzbekistan, and to have a more radical success than the two other times(51). Tensions on a fair sharing of power, and on economical issues, has been extremely strong in all those states. The least that can be said is that it should have been obvious that the War on Terror had a main ground of action called Greater Central Asia. Actions against Al Qaida had to be taken worldwide, of course, as the group has always been an international one. But the heart of the problem was in one region, and especially in one country called Afghanistan. And in this nation, seen sometimes as a success for the American War against Al Qaida, nowadays, Taliban or “neo-Talibans” are still able to take territories and to rule them, even with an American presence in the country. We are far away from the “geographically marginal backwater” of Krauthammer. We are talking about the main battlefield of the post 9/11 era, at least originally.

The refusal of such a reality is at the roots of actual and future problems in the War on Terror. The neoconservative way of thinking really comes with a heavy price for the Afghan campaign, because of its Iraqi and Iranian policies:

– coming from the Iranian policy : The post-9/11 situation could have been the era of some kind of convergence between Iran and the US. Of course, because of the Israeli-Palestinian issue, a complete reconciliation would have been difficult. But a friendlier Iran could have been instrumental in a winning strategy in Afghanistan. The idea of a collaboration between Al Qaida and Iran is based on nothing real. What is real is that from 2001 to 2005, Iran arrested more than 1000 members of the terrorist organisation in its territory(52). If these jihadists were there, it was not because Al Qaida is an Islamist Republic, but because they escaped from Afghanistan through Iran. Most have been deported to their original countries, or just jailed. Besides, a friendlier Iran could have used its influence in Afghanistan, at least in the Western part, to help American and NATO actions. When one thinks about the strong cooperation between Iranians and Americans at the end of 2001 against the Taliban, this is pretty obvious that such a cooperation could have continued in this country if it had not been decided by the assertive nationalists and the neoconservatives that Iran had to be a part of the so-called “Axis of Evil”(53). Does it mean that a complete reconciliation could have happened, and that without the neoconservative movement Iran and the US would be friends ? Of course one cannot go that far. But in International Relations, there is no such thing as a friend, there are only possible allies. And on the road to obtain complete victory in Afghanistan, Iran would have been a great asset.

– coming from the Iraqi policy : definitively, the neoconservative obsession with Iraq has cost a real victory in Afghanistan. The Bush administration had indeed to relocate resources from Afghanistan to its Iraqi target, losing the opportunity to crush the Taliban and their jihadist allies once and for all. As explained by Barton Gellman and Dafta Linzer from the *Washington Post*, “As jihadist enemies reorganized, slipping back and forth from Afghanistan and Iran, the CIA closed forward bases in the cities of Herat, Mazar-e Sharif and Kandahar. The agency put off a \$80 million plan to train and equip a friendly intelligence service for the new U.S. – installed government (...). And the Task Force 5 – a covert commando team that led the hunt for bin Laden and his lieutenants in the border region – lost more than two-thirds of its fighting strength”(54). Of course, the Iraqi situation created a new symbol and rallying point for

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international jihadists everywhere, but even without that, the situation would be serious enough. The U.S. lost an opportunity of complete victory in Afghanistan. The fact is, they did not even need to have a strong presence on the ground in the long term in order to do so. The proposal of J.J. Mearsheimer at the beginning of the campaign would have made even more sense after it(55). Once the Taliban defeated, the U.S. could have focus only on tracking down remnants of Al Qaida and their local allies, letting the rest in the hands of Pashtun leaders bought by an open wallet diplomacy. All the focus of the U.S. should have been on covert actions and cooperation with Pakistan in order to destroy definitively the jihadist network, local or international, in the South of Afghanistan, and in the Northern Tribal territories of Pakistan. It would have been a work difficult enough without Iraq to take care of.

More broadly speaking, one could say that the neoconservative ideas just blurred even more the debate on the roots of Islamist terrorism. The average citizens were already strongly shaken by the horrible attacks on 9/11, and they wanted an answer to the question “why do they hate us?”. But the neoconservative movement just gave one wrong answer after the other. The main analysis on terrorism showed that there were no “Muslim Rage” in a sense of totally irrational or pre-modern rage against what the Westerners are. The religion is not at all an issue here, at best this is an excuse or a way for political mobilization. Any person knowledgeable on the History of religions knows that religious arguments can always be used for violence. But it is never because of religious causes alone that tensions appear. The economical issue is not even the first problem fuelling terrorism. The main root of the problem is political, as explained by specialists like Alan B. Krueger in *What Makes a Terrorist* or Louise Richardson in *What Terrorists Want*(56). Indeed, the realist Mearsheimer explained quite easily the ideological neoconservative defeat and the practical American problem in Iraq by the fact that they forgot nationalism, “the most powerful political ideology in the world”(57). The myth that there is terrorism only because of poverty is totally inadequate with reality. Of course, poverty can be a part of the problem, but it is never the main problem. One could think of the dissertation of Claude Berrebi from Princeton and now at the RAND Corporation, analyzing the terrorist activities in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. It shows that, surprisingly enough, the suicide bombers are not coming from poor families in significant numbers. More significant are the numbers showing that nearly 60% of the suicide bombers had at least an education greater than high schools, more than 35% are high school educated, and only an insignificant number was uneducated or only educated at a Middle School level. It means that the terrorists the US have to deal with are not mindless fanatics. Of course, they can be strong believers, but they are also rational, educated people. They have the capacity to assess their situation, and the situation of their countrymen, to have strong political beliefs, and they are confident enough in their own understanding of the situation to choose to use violent means if not heard(58).

And in the Arab world, it is difficult not to see what the political point are all about. It is well-explained by several academics and politics. As explained by Taher Masri, a former Jordan Prime Minister, 9/11 was, first “[a] feeling that America is supporting Israel and that Israel has been humiliating all Arabs”(59). So, this is indeed an expression of Arab nationalism and for some people outside the Arab world, an Islamo-nationalism or a reaction against another colonization situation against the Ummah, the community of the Muslim peoples, most of them victims of colonialism in the last century. But nationalism should not be used as a word without concrete meaning. The idea is to oppose occupation or control over one’s territory by foreigners. But this is also, more fundamentally, an opposition against a concrete oppression, or a feeling of oppression, that has an impact on the life of the people who afterwards can choose to use terrorism. For example, during the first two years of the second Intifada, one of the worst time for Israel about suicide bombing came as a retaliation against the death of Dhiya Tmaizi, a three-month-old Palestinian baby killed by Jewish settlers with two other relatives in a car. Once the murder has been known, a group of settlers called the *Committee for Road Safety* claimed its responsibility(60). Hence, the neoconservative thinking and extreme Likudnik support towards Israel is definitively a problem to deal with terrorism, if the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the roots of the problem. In order to fight global terrorism, there is a need to deal with this question in a way that could be acceptable for the two peoples. This is something that the neoconservative always opposed, and that the Bush presidency discovered again, but too late(61).

Ironically, there is another root of terrorism that democratic imperialists, if they were real crusaders for democracy in the Middle East, could have helped eradicated. This is the lack of political and civil liberties in the Muslim world. The lack of possibility for the peoples in these countries to express themselves and to influence their own governments. The question of civil liberties, and not only political freedoms, is important here. The problem in these countries is clearly the relation between the individual and its government. A government that does not hesitate to use widely

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torture against political opponents, with dangerous consequences. Torture has clearly been a short-term tool to break opposition and to get information, but it also breeds a long-term radicalization. From Al Qutb to Al Zawahiri, we have several examples of such a pattern. This is widely known by any students in Area Studies or Security Studies. But clearly, it has not been understood by neoconservatives and other hawks, with the consequences we know on the use of torture and humiliations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, supposedly for victory in the War on Terror. Here the neoconservative movement and their assertive nationalist allies gave to Al Qaida the tools it needed to show that the War on Terror was in fact a War against Muslims. At the end of the day, of course, the real mistake here came from the Bush administration itself. But the neoconservative discourse influenced this Administration to choose the wrong path. Especially as people claiming to be in favor of a global crusade for democracy and human rights, they should have been very vocal for protection of civil freedoms everywhere, not only in countries where the leaders are against the American foreign policy.

## b) ... but still a bright political future

One could think that after such a bad influence on the War on Terror, it would be difficult for the neoconservative movement to have any impact in the years to come. But indeed, besides being wrong or nearly wrong on every major issues linked to the War against Al Qaida, it has still a great political future, for several reasons.

First, continuity will probably be stronger than change in the short term in the American political and intellectual arenas, making it easier for the neoconservatives to keep their influence. One should not forget the fact they have been so far the real brain of the right wing, as explained before. They fed the intellectual debate, they have some importance in the main think tanks in DC, and also in the media, in particular in the conservative media. And the days when left-to-center media dominated the US are long gone, so there is little chance that a libertarian or realist approach will be heard loudly in the years to come. Something else is not going to change : the strong tension between the US and the Muslim world, as nation-states and as peoples. The pessimist and confrontationist approach of the neoconservative movement will always be easier to understand than an academic answer to « why do they hate us ? ». And what is sure is that, because of the influence of the ideas of the democratic imperialists, they will continue to hate us, even more than ever. The difficult situation in Iraq is breeding a stronger, even more radical, jihadist movement. All these radical networks are now even more anti-American than they were in the 90s. A neo-Taliban government in Kabul could not be even neutral toward the United States, even if it has problems of its own with some international jihadists. Whatever happens to Iraq in the years to come, this is fair to say that one knows already that the holders of power there will be anti-American. One just needs to remember the relationship between the West and in particular the US in one hand, and Iraq in another hand, for the last two decades. After being one of the main backers of Saddam Hussein during his bloody war against Iran, the US had imposed an embargo during the 90's. Let's remind ourselves that the UN estimated by 1999 that 1 million Iraqis died because of this embargo(62). And after the Iraq War, we talked before about the security situation, but not about the human side of the issue : for the American medical journal *The Lancet*, an estimated 654 965 Iraqis died from 2003 to October 2006. And what will come from the actual tensions inside the country is very probably one very weak state or three failed / weak states, breeding more chaos in the Middle East. And the situation in the Palestinian territories is in such a shape that it is even more than ever before an easy tool for the jihadist propaganda. To cut a long story short, the influence of the neoconservative movement means more anti-Americanism and still strong jihadist networks in the Muslim world, and in particular in the Middle East. With the influence on the conservative and neoconservative approaches in the media and in the think tanks, the answer to these problems will be the same than in the past. I mean by that that some nation-states in the Muslim world, like Iran, will be seen as evil incarnated, and not as organized structures that could accept diplomatic negotiations if some shows of force are smartly associated with an open door policy. And a strictly confrontationist vision of the jihadist movement will be given as a cheap answer that a lot will accept. This is this vision that has been accepted so far, and there is no reason why it should really change in such conditions.

Second, the political spectrum as a whole has not been able to promote an approach strongly different from the one of the neoconservatives. The 2008 American presidential election is, definitively a proof of that. This is a time when the word "change" is used and misused over and over again, but from an intellectual point of view, continuity, again, prevails against real change. After so many problems in Iraq, one could have thought that it would have been difficult for neoconservatives to be heard, and even more to be hired, during this time. But this is not the case. Indeed, they

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have been a serious influence on important Republican candidacies: the one of Rudy Giuliani, and the one of John McCain. As for the former Mayor of New York, he was for sure not afraid to be associated with the imperialist democrats. Amongst his senior advisors, one can find important neoconservative thinkers like Norman Podhoretz from *Commentary*, Martin Kramer for Middle Eastern issues, Stephen Rosen on Defense, and even the famous Daniel Pipes. And the impact of these counsellors seems to be very real, when one focus on what Rudy thinks about the War on Terror(63), one can nearly hear the neoconservatives talking. From his perspective, the Islamist groups are all the same, and there is no way a group using terrorism could be able to evolve. This explains his long-term rejection of Y. Arafat and the PLO. Surprisingly enough, but not that surprising when one remembers the pro-Likudnik approach of the neoconservatives, he focus less on a fight against Al Qaida because of anti-American attacks in 1998 and 2001, than on a more global fight, that begun, from his point of view, with the pro-Palestinian terrorist actions in the 70's. His motto seems to be "Israel's war is our war". The meddling of American and Israeli national interests is strong here, in total contradiction with a more pragmatic, realist approach. He chooses the neoconservative side again when he says that the terrorists hate the United States for what they are, not for what they did. Rudy Giuliani was, definitively, the Neoconservative Candidate. And he was not the only one. The picture of McCain as a maverick in the Republican Party blurs the fact that this authentic War Hero evolved from a more pragmatic, libertarian vision in the 80's and the beginning of the 90's, to a more hawkish and interventionist approach. He supported the Western intervention in Kosovo in 1999. He supported the Iraq War in 2002. He has been a champion of unilateralism if necessary. He did not hide his desire to bomb Iran, he even sang it. And he is a strong believer of the idea to put aside the U.N. in order to build new international institutions, the "League of Democracies" but only with democracies. He did not hesitate to target not only the Middle East, but also Russia in his speeches, making his neoconservative position even more hawkish that G. W. Bush.

And one can also find, clearly, a neoconservative influence in the Democratic Party, and this is not a new. With the creation of the Democratic Leadership Council in 1985 by Al From, and the emerging of the ones called the "New Democrats", there has been a clear change in favor of more neoconservative-like ideas. They are the ones who, with Bill Clinton, made of muscular interventionism the dominant way of thinking international relations in the Democratic Party. And Hillary Clinton is following the same path, and in some ways she is even closer to the neoconservative and the right wing ideas than the average New Democrat. Her foreign policy team is clearly very close to the liberal interventionist approach, and she is not the firmest follower of the U.N. and international law(65).

As for Barack Obama, there are disagreements about how far he is from the dominant assertive nationalist – neoconservative vision of the War on Terror. For sure, his advisers are not neoconservative. Most of them can be seen as moderate, pragmatic, and more progressive and younger than the ones in Hillary Clinton's team(67). But he has been himself rather evasive on practical positions toward foreign affairs. This is not easy to understand for what Obama really stands for(68). In his rhetoric, he does not seem always that far away from the neoconservative movement. Of course, he always put in front the fact that he opposed the Iraq war. But he made it clear that he does not oppose all wars, that he is not anti-war, he is just against dumb wars. Besides, his speech at Chicago Council on Global Affairs in April 2007 was clearly the one of a unilateralist, eager to preserve American hegemony. His analysis during this speech comes from the hypothesis that the U.S., in fact, did not meddle enough in the rest of the world's affairs. His vision of U.S. interests is anti-realist. Indeed, he sees the American interests and the interests of the rest of the world as strongly connected. And he wants a U.S. military still on the offensive from Djibouti to Kandahar. It explains why a prominent neoconservative thinker like Robert Kagan declared himself pretty satisfied by Obama's vision on foreign policy(69)

Last, but not least, even if a more rational, realist approach of the War on Terror could prevail, one should not underestimate the capacity of the neoconservative movement to reinvent itself. One just needs to remember that as late as 1995, it was not unusual to present the neoconservative movement the way John Judis has done it : as an anachronism. These Cold Warriors, defined first and foremost through their inflexibility toward the Soviet Union, were nevertheless able to adapt themselves to the post-Cold War era, and to produce a way of seeing the world that seemed to make sense after 9/11. Hence, they could do it again in the future. It seems that they are already doing so. After a strong focus on the Middle East during the first years post-9/11 period, it appears that the neoconservative movement is coming back to an older obsession: the tension between the US in one hand, and Russia and China in the other hand. There is a strong focus first and foremost on a Chinese fear that is not new and that is not only a

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neoconservative fear. But the neoconservative movement has strongly emphasize the problem, even when its focus was the War on Terror(70). Even if it was less important, worries and distrust of Russia stayed strong. It explains why a prominent neoconservative like, Robert Kagan have recently announced to the readers of the Sunday Times that now is the time to forget the centrality of the Islamic question, as the real battle will be against autocratic nations led by Russia and China(71). The Islamist actions and fights become, in this article, of secondary importance. This idea could sound closer to the realist approach, if it did not put the fight into a theoretical neoconservative vision of a continuing fight between autocracy and democracy. The fact that Venezuela, Syria, Iran, and others find some help from Russia in a sort of "Axis of outcasts" to use the term of Thomas Joscelyn in a article from the *Weekly Standard*(72), consolidate this idea that there is now to blocks again. By a strange paradox, here the neoconservative movement could reinvent itself through a renewal of a Cold War narrative. And here again the neoconservative gains some strength from the fact that they are not the only pioneers in this approach : it is less and less unusual to talk about a New Cold war between the US and Russia, and about China as the real ultimate enemy(73).

Hence, it can be said that we will hear from the neoconservative and their foreign policy options in the future. They have been able to keep an influence on the 2008 presidential elections, even if the results of their ideas are not really convincing. So all the discussions about the U.S. as an Empire will not go away in the years to come. They have often been associated with the idea of an American Empire, but through what we saw here, the situation is more confusing than that. In a way, the neoconservative movement is a representation of the confusion of American foreign policy broadly speaking. There is a strong desire to protect and to expand, clearly, the American hegemony. There is a demand for the use of the extraordinary American weaponry in an imperialist way, in order to do so. But this is made without a real Imperial spirit : preemptive action is asked as an answer to the fear to be attacked by a dangerous outside world, not to conquer and include people in a greater and more or less peaceful political entity as the great Empires of the past. The neoconservative movement is not inclusive and positive enough to be imperial, but it is not really liberal besides its rhetoric on democratization. And of course, it is not realist, besides its focus on states as enemies. Like them, the United States seems unsure of the road it wants to take to protect its status in a post-Cold War world. The problem of the neoconservative model is that the only Empires it seems close to ideologically speaking are the colonial Empires of the European powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The same desire of hegemony, the same fear and inability to understand other cultures, the same refusal to integrate in a common destiny, to cut a long story short, the same pseudo-imperial vision. And probably the same loss of influence and strengthening of tensions in the long term. Indeed, it seems that if in the short term, neoconservatism can stay closed to power, at the end of the day, this vision, in particular on foreign affairs, even more about the War on Terror, is a recipe for disaster.

*Didier Chaudet presented this paper at the annual meeting of the ISA's 49th ANNUAL CONVENTION, BRIDGING MULTIPLE DIVIDES, Hilton San Francisco, CA, USA, on Mar 26, 2008. He is currently lecturer at the Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po, Paris) on Central/South Asian studies, and on Islamic studies.*

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1 This is the term that Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay, and we will also use it in the sense of «neoconservative».

2 See Didier Chaudet, Florent Parmentier, Benoît Pélopidas, *L'Empire au Miroir. Stratégies de Puissance aux Etats-Unis et en Russie*, Genève: Droz, 246 pp. (to be published in English, Russian, and Romanian, by 2009).

3 There are several exceptions, for course. The work of Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke is extremely good. The analysis that one can find also in the website of the think tank called *Foreign Policy In Focus* is extremely valuable.

4 See Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone. The Neo-Conservative Movement and the Global Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.48.

5 See <http://newamericancentury.org>.

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6 Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clark, op.cit., p.75.

7 Ibid, p.50

8 Ze'ev Begin, «The Likud Vision for Israel at Peace», *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1991, [www.foreignaffairs.org](http://www.foreignaffairs.org).

9 Richard Perle delivered the paper to the new Likudnik Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on July 8, 1996.

10 Didier Chaudet, *Les néoconservateurs américains face à l'Islam (The Neoconservative Movement and the Muslim World)*, Paris: UniversCités, p.18.

11 Marc Reuel Gerech, «Better Be Feared than Loved, cont.», *The Weekly Standard*, Augst 29th, 2002.

12 See for example: Daniel Pipes, «There are no moderate: dealing with fundamentalist Islam», *National Interest*, Fall1995. Jonah Goldberg, «Pigs, Jews and War», *National Review Online*, November 4th 2002. Stephen Schwartz, «Communists and Extremist Islamists – Then and Now», *FrontPageMagazine.com*, July 8th 2002.

13 On can find this notion in Timothy J. Lynch and Robert S. Singh, *After Bush. The Case of Continuity in AmericanForeign Policy*, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

14 Thomas Disch, «Islam's Foundation», *The Weekly Standard*, February 11th, 2002.

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16 See Montasser Al-Zayyat, *The Road to Al-Qaeda. The Story of Bin Laden's Right-Hand Man*, London: Pluto Press, 2004,p.XV.

17 Michael A. Ledeen, *The War Against the Terror Masters*, New York: St Martin's Press, 2002. David Wurmser, «TheSaudi Connection», ON THE ISSUES (AEI), November 1st, 2001.

18 James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans. The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, New York: Viking, 2004, p.83.

19 See Laurie Mylroie, *Study of Revenge. Saddam Unfinished War Against Al Qaida*, Washington D.C.: AmericanEnterprise Institute, 2000.

20 Daniel Benjamin, «Saddam Hussein and Al Qaida Are not Allied», *The New York Times*, Sept. 30th, 2002. RohanGunaratna, «Iraq and Al Qaida: No Evidence of Alliance», *International Herald Tribune*, February 19th, 2003.

21 «Poll: Americans Still Belive in Saddam – Al Qaida Link», *The Independent*, April 24th, 2004.

22 See Daniel Pipes, «Islam's Intramural Struggle», *National Interest*, Summer 1994. William A. Samii, «Voice of Iran», *The Weekly Standard*, 2002.

23 Jeffrey Bell, «Al Qaida's New Base», *The Weekly Standard*, November 3rd, 2003.

24 To know more, see Madawi Al Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, Cambridge University Press,

25 See, for example: Stephen Schwartz, «Saudi Friends, Saudi Foes. Is our Arab Ally Part of the Problem?», *The WeeklyStandard*, October 8th, 2001. From the same author, «Liberation, Not Containment.. How to Win the War onWahhabism», *National Review Online*, November 19th, 2001. On Syria, for example: Franck Gaffney Junior, «Who'sNext?», *Townhall.com*, April 15th, 2003, or Marc Ginsberg, «Bashing Bachar», *The Weekly Standard*, April 28th, 2003.

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