

***THE KEY ASPECTS OF NEOCONSERVATIVE INFLUENCE ON THE
U.S. FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY DURING THE FIRST G.W.
BUSH ADMINISTRATION***

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Abstract: Neoconservative political ideology has influenced U.S. foreign and defense policy in various ways. During President G. W. Bush's first administration, addressed here, neoconservatives embedded in the Administration exercised a key influence on the President and his foreign policy decisions. Since the President is the key foreign and defense policy decision maker in the U.S.A., the influence of the neoconservatives in this field was very significant. To support the main thesis of the paper, an analysis of the content of neoconservative policy papers was made, and statements representing policy goals of neoconservatives were identified. It was concluded that the foreign and defense policy of the Bush administration was influenced by neoconservative political ideology, but the neoconservatives and hard-line realists who actively participated in decision-making processes diverged significantly from the political philosophy and advice of the 'original' neoconservatives. They used elements of neoconservative ideology, considered useful for implication of their policy, particularly towards the Middle East and especially towards Iraq. Therefore, the practical (geo) political reasoning of the decision-makers within the Administration clouded the declared theoretical base of their policy as well as the neoconservative values they claimed to support.

Key words: neoconservatives, political ideology, G. W. Bush, U.S. foreign and defense policy, Iraq.

1.1. Introduction

The basic thesis herein discusses (considers) the ways in which the neoconservatives inside the Administration influenced the foreign and defense policy of the U.S.A. during the first G. W. Bush administration, from 2001 to 2005. From January 2001, when *G. W. Bush* became President of the U.S.A., neoconservatives decisively influenced both the foreign and defense policy of

the U.S.A. Since the President is the key foreign and defense policy decision maker in the U.S.A., the influence of neoconservatives on U.S. foreign policy, through their sway over President G. W. Bush, was highly significant, if not crucial. The paper also analyzes the areas where the neoconservatives within the Administration diverge from the political ideology of the 'original' neoconservatives from the nineteen-fifties and sixties. This reveals how far the declared neoconservatives in the Administration departed from the ideology of their intellectual 'godfathers', such as I. Kristol, D. Bell and L. Strauss.

The neoconservative geo-strategy of global dominance got the chance to be implemented. However, by 2005 and the beginning of G. W. Bush's second term in the White House, this foreign policy was clearly on the verge of failure, the influence of neoconservatives on President G. W. Bush notwithstanding¹⁴⁶.

To support the main thesis, an analysis of the content of neoconservative policy papers was undertaken, and quotes representing (reflecting) the policy goals of neoconservatives were identified. A comparative analysis of these policy goals and decisions relating to the foreign, defense and security policies of the first Bush administration revealed a link between these goals and decisions. Evidence of the basic thesis herein is illustrated by the degree of correspondence between neoconservative strategy and official U.S. policy during the first G. W. Bush administration and the participation of neoconservative political ideologists and practitioners in the creation and realization of policy during the first G. W. Bush administration. The A clear correlation was revealed between American neoconservative

¹⁴⁶ It was in about 1997 that contemporary neoconservative political ideology tried to influence U.S. policy through a stronger presentation of its position and pressure on public opinion as to force President Clinton to change his policy (public invitations to intervene in the Middle East in favor of a change of regimes, to initiate preventive wars, to increase funding for defense).

program documents and foreign and defense policy decisions made by the President.

1.2. Neoconservative Activity in the late Nineties: The preparatory Activities for a future Administration influenced by Neoconservatives

The very beginning of neoconservative ideology is associated principally with the work and writings of *Irving Kristol*, *Daniel Bell*, *Leo Strauss* and other prominent neoconservatives. In matters of foreign policy and defense policy it dates back to the nineteen-sixties and the work of *Albert Wohlstetter*, a RAND Corporation analyst at that time. He later became a mentor of two prominent neoconservatives, whose roles will be among the most important for shaping and implementation of contemporary neoconservative ideology relating to ideas of the U.S. global hegemony – *Richard Perle* and *Paul Wolfowitz*.

Contemporary neoconservative ideologists operate primarily through four important and powerful *think-tanks*: *The Project for a New American Century*, *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*, *American Israel Public Affairs Committee* and *Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs* (Engdahl, 2009).

The primary task of two of the four neoconservative think-tanks mentioned above is to influence the formation of American policy towards Israel as the U.S.'s main ally in the Middle East region. It was their organization as think-tanks, as well as their interconnection with the structures of power, which gave neoconservatives such enormous power and influence over public opinion and political programs. This power was far greater than one could deduce from number of declared and active neoconservatives.

The Project for a New American Century is the most important neoconservative think-tank: 'Established in the spring of 1997, it is a

nonprofit, educational organization whose goal is to promote American global leadership. The Project is an initiative of the New Citizenship Project` (The Project for a New American Century, 1997). During the nineties and until the entry of neoconservatives in executive power at the beginning of 2001, a number of different documents and open letters appeared in the U.S.A. containing statements and policy positions of neoconservative ideologists and politicians, exposing the goals they wished to accomplish and criticizing the administration in power. They were accompanied by articles in conservative and neoconservative magazines: *The Weekly Standard*, *Commentary*, and *Foreign Policy*. All these activities can be viewed as preparatory/(preparing the way) for a future administration that would be under neoconservative influence.

Neoconservatives were eager to change a dominant perception in American public opinion on the need to cut funding for armaments, then required because of the end of the Cold War and disappearance of bipolar global rivalry. At the same time, they aimed to convince public opinion of the need for a new American role in a world which had become unipolar (seizing ‘the unipolar moment’), and in which the U.S.A. should play the role of a ‘benevolent hegemon’. One part of key neoconservative documents represents public appeals for policy change, especially towards the Middle East: the breaking down of the Saddam Hussein regime, the pressure on Iran, helping Israel and supporting all Israeli actions towards Palestinians and Arab neighbors. Beside articles in magazines and newspapers, they also published books which called for the realization of neoconservative goals and U.S. policy change, in order to convince public opinion of the need for the U.S.A. to continue the policy of global hegemony and military interventions, promoting the idea that American military power should be used regularly and not as an exception.

Table 1: Important documents showing up activity of neoconservatives in the nineties and during the G. W. Bush presidency prior to the attack on Iraq

Defense Planning Guidance, U.S. Department of Defense, 1992
A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm, Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies Paper, July 8, 1996
Statement of Principles, The Project for a New American Century, 1997
Open Letter to President Clinton, urging war against Iraq and the removal of Saddam Hussein because he is a `hazard` to `a significant portion of the world's supply of oil`, The Project for a New American Century, January 26, 1998
Open Letter to President Clinton, calling for the US military to help Iraqi opposition groups overthrow Saddam Hussein and replace him with a US-friendly government, The Committee for Peace and Security in the Gulf), February 1998
A Letter to Republican Leaders in Congress to assert US interests in the Persian Gulf, Project for a New American Century, May 29, 1998
A Report of The Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States (so-called `Rumsfeld Commission`), July 1998
Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources For a New Century, A Report of the Project for a New American Century, September 2000
A Report of the National Institute for Public Policy, Nuclear Posture Review, January 2001 ¹⁴⁷
Open Letter to President Bush, The Project for a New American Century, September 20, 2001 ¹⁴⁸
The Report of the Policy Counterterrorism Evaluation Group (PCTEG), formed to study `the policy implications of relationships among terrorist groups and their sources of support` ¹⁴⁹ , 2001-2003

¹⁴⁷ A neoconservative think-tank, National Institute for Public Policy, headed by *Keith Payne*, charged by the President G. W. Bush at the end of 2001 with elaborating a *Nuclear Posture Review*, which set up new possibilities for use of nuclear weapons and pointed out the need for the development of new types of nuclear weapons. It also illustrated scenarios of their use against geostrategic rivals, such as Russia and China, rogue states: Iraq, Iran, North Korea – later named `the axis of evil`, and terrorist organizations Payne later became the Assistant of the Minister of Defence for nuclear planning.

¹⁴⁸ The Project for the New American Century published a letter addressed to President Bush and signed by magazine publisher W. Kristol, Defense Policy Board chairman R. Perle and 38 prominent neoconservatives and hardliners. The authors threatened to label Bush a `wimp`, and guilty of `surrender in the war on international terrorism` if he fail to carry out their demand to make `a determined effort` to overthrow Iraq's Saddam Hussein, `even if evidence does not link Iraq directly to the 9/11 attacks`.

See: Letter to President Bush on the War on Terrorism, The Project for a New American Century, September 20, 2001

¹⁴⁹ U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *Prewar Assessments*, 307

Table 1 shows a brief review of continuous activities of neoconservatives, aiming to change perceptions about the need for American military engagement and spending for armaments. It was in *Defense Planning Guidance* that they mentioned for the first time `the unipolar moment` which must be exploited by the U.S.A., a moment its global rival disappeared – by acting with its military power in a way to prevent the appearance of any new rival. It also mentioned for the first time the doctrine of pre-emptive warfare, introducing `pre-emptive strikes` as a way of acting with military forces.

A *Clean Break Report* was drafted in 1996 by *Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, and David Wurmser*. It called for unreserved support for Israel in fighting its Arab neighbors. Project for a New American Century published a *Statement of Principles* in 1997, which aimed to illustrate four principles based on American historical experience. It states that the U.S.A. should use its military dominance established by former administrations and it criticizes the Clinton administration for reducing funding for armaments. It also calls for the return of Reagan's foreign policy: `We seem to have forgotten the essential elements of the Reagan Administration's success: a military that is strong and ready to meet both present and future challenges; a foreign policy that boldly and purposefully promotes American principles abroad; and national leadership that accepts the United States' global responsibilities. Such a Reaganite policy of military strength and moral clarity may not be fashionable today. But it is necessary if the United States is to build on the successes of this past century and to ensure our security and our greatness in the next`¹⁵⁰ (*Statement of Principles, 1997*).

¹⁵⁰ These principles should be the principles of American global policy in future:

- We need to increase defense spending significantly if we are to carry out our global responsibilities today and modernize our armed forces for the future;
- We need to strengthen our ties to democratic allies and to challenge regimes hostile to our interests and values;
- We need to promote the cause of political and economic freedom abroad;

The Statement confirmed the postulates of neo Reaganite foreign policy strategy defined in 1996 by *William Kristol* and *Robert Kagan*. The Statement was the first document signed by neoconservatives to express geopolitical goals and aims for the conservation of global dominance by the U.S.A. at that time, with a tendency to make it even stronger and achievable primarily by means of military supremacy, in order to convince actors in the international system to respect the rules of the game that would be imposed by the U.S.A. Those whom they could not convince or who refused to play according to the rules were referred to as `rogue states` by the Bush administration which also considered itself entitled, according to the doctrine of preventive warfare, to attack them first.

In 1998, the neoconservatives sent an Open letter to President Clinton, asking him to attack Iraq and overthrow Saddam Hussein from power, given that he represented a threat to a significant share of the world's oil reserves. In 1998 Clinton bombed Iraq, but without intentions to remove Saddam Hussein from power. When neoconservatives then understood that Clinton had no serious intention of meeting their demands, they sent an Open letter to the Republican members of Congress. They turned to G. W. Bush, who became the focus of their attention and began to support his nomination for the 2000 presidential elections. In this context, it should be noted that 10 of the 18 signatories of the Open letter to President Clinton played important roles later during Bush administration, and participated in planning and conducting the war in Iraq.

One of the means of pressure on the Clinton administration and one which alarmed American public opinion was [also] *The Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States*, chaired by *Donald Rumsfeld*.

• We need to accept responsibility for America's unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity, and our principles`. (Statement of Principles, 1997).

The Commission, colloquially called the *'Rumsfeld Commission'*, was de facto a new Team B, which in original composition was a group of *'independent'* analysts, although it functioned with the participation and supervision of neoconservatives¹⁵¹.

During the early nineties, the militarists asked for the formation of a new Team B, which would *'assess challenges that dictate a continued, robust U.S. defense posture'*, which was established in the form of *'Rumsfeld Commission'*, which identified North Korea and Iran as threats, concluding that these countries would be able to develop multi-staged intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and therefore threaten the USA in less than five years. The Commission pointed out the decline of U.S. nuclear power and the need to increase funding for the development of anti-missile defense. The further evolution of events showed that the Commission had overestimated the dimension and imminence of possible threats to the U.S. security: *'By 1998, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz had honed the art of intelligence manipulation through use of competitive intelligence analysis'* (Mitchell, 2006).

The estimates of the *'Rumsfeld Commission'* turned out to be completely wrong, because they were not guided by objective conclusions but by the effort of hard-liners to prove their initial stand-point, which was that the threat

¹⁵¹ The original Team B, as part of the intelligence activity in promoting the debate between the teams of analysts with the purpose of assessing the Soviet military threat, was set upon November 3, 1975, the day that President Ford appointed Donald Rumsfeld Defense Secretary. On the same day, Richard Cheney became White House Chief of Staff, and George H. W. Bush was appointed Director of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). As well as the Commission, it was set up to counter the official CIA team, called Team A. Still during the nineteen seventies, Team B questioned the official CIA assessments of the Soviet ballistic missile threat against the U.S.A. Richard Pipes was the head of Team B, which also included William von Cleave, Daniel Graham, Paul Nitze, and Paul Wolfowitz, all hardliners and believers in the necessity of American global hegemony. Team B argued that the National Intelligence Estimates *'substantially misperceived the motivations behind Soviet strategic programs, and thereby tended consistently to underestimate their intensity, scope and implicit threat'*.

See: Mitchell, G. R. (2006), Team B Intelligence Coups, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 92 (2) 144-173

was far greater than indicated by the official intelligence. But these incorrect/.mistaken estimates were regularly publicized and until proven to be wrong, had already influenced the change in policy which was also supported by public opinion.

1.3. Foreign Policy of the Neoconservatives during the First G.W. Bush Administration

In the discussion about foreign policy goals of the neoconservatives during the first administration of G. W. Bush, we are focusing on the policy goals expressed by neoconservative ideologists such as *Robert Kagan*, *Michael Ledeen*, *Charles Krauthammer* and the critique of these goals by another neoconservative, *Francis Fukuyama*. However, the discussion starts with the neoconservative foreign and defense policy goals as proclaimed in the document called *Rebuilding America's Defenses*.

Table 2: Policy goals of neoconservatives that influenced the foreign and defense policy decisions of G. W. Bush administration

Policy goals	Foreign and defense policy decisions of G. W. Bush administration
<p>“At present the United States faces no global rival. America’s grand strategy should aim to preserve and extend this advantageous position as far into the future as possible”.</p>	<p>Increase of spending for armament and decisiveness for military action, wherever it reveals necessary.</p>
<p>“But years of cuts in defense spending have eroded the American military’s combat readiness, and put in jeopardy the Pentagon’s plans for maintaining military superiority in the years ahead”.</p> <p>“Today, America spends less than 3 percent of its gross domestic product on national defense, less</p>	<p>Development of new arms and programs. New start up, during the Clinton administration, for the development of the armament and military technology programs.</p> <p>Heavy increase in defense spending, with clearly defined goals of maintenance and fostering of the USA global dominance and protection of American interests.</p>

<p>than at any time since before the United States established itself as the world's leading power – and a cut from 4.7 percent of GDP in 1992, the first real post-Cold-War defense budget. In sum, the 1990s have been a “decade of defense neglect.”</p>	
<p>“Our report is published in a presidential election year. The new administration will need to produce a second Quadrennial Defense Review shortly after it takes office. We hope that the Project’s report will be useful as a road map for the nation’s immediate and future defense plans”.</p>	<p>National security strategy, as a neoconservative document dating 2002 has adopted the majority of neoconservatives’ ideas.</p>
<p>“The post-Cold War world will not remain a relatively peaceful place if we continue to neglect foreign and defense matters. But serious attention, careful thought, and the willingness to devote adequate resources to maintaining America’s military strength can make the world safer and American strategic interests more secure now and in the future”.</p>	<p>After the Cold War and the flexibilization during the nineties, a new re-establishment of the “national security state”.</p>
<p>“It is now commonly understood that information and other new technologies – as well as widespread technological and weapons proliferation – are creating a dynamic that may threaten America’s ability to exercise its dominant military power”.</p> <p>“Potential rivals such as China are anxious to exploit these transformational technologies broadly, while adversaries like Iran, Iraq and North Korea are</p>	<p>Development of new arms and technologies in order to remain a ‘step ahead’ of the others.</p> <p>Stronger policy toward China, which was marked as a main rival for global supremacy. Bush proclaims Iran, Iraq and North Korea “the axis of evil” that represents the principal threat to the U.S. security, supports terrorism and develops weapons for mass-destruction.</p>

<p>rushing to develop ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons as a deterrent to American intervention in regions they seek to dominate`.</p>	
<p>`Further, the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor`.</p>	<p>Process of transformation of military forces and their missions and fostering of their capacities, preceded by a raise in spending stimulated by the September 11 terrorist attacks, which could be described as a ‘new Pearl Harbor’, just as mentioned in the document.</p>
<p>`The preservation of a favorable balance of power in Europe, the Middle East and surrounding energy producing region, and East Asia`. `The preponderance of American power is so great and its global interests so wide that it cannot pretend to be indifferent to the political outcome in the Balkans, the Persian Gulf or even when it deploys forces in Africa`.</p>	<p>The decisiveness to intervene in key regions of the world: attack on Afghanistan and Iraq. Threats to Iran and North Korea. Support to the independence of Kosovo. Employment of military forces in the change of relations in specific parts of the world. Bush’s intention of ‘democratization of Broader Middle East region’, currently in action through the occupation of Iraq.</p>
<p>`Indeed, the United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein`.</p>	<p>Bush’s invitation to S. Hussein to leave the office and Iraq before the attack. The attack on Iraq, overthrowing of the regime, occupation, setting up of a friendly regime and actual presence.</p>
<p>`Moreover, the theater-war analysis done for the QDR assumed that Kim Jong Il and Saddam Hussein each could begin a war – perhaps even while employing chemical, biological or even nuclear weapons – and the United States would make no effort to unseat militarily</p>	<p>The attack on Iraq and overthrowing of the S. Hussein’s regime, charged for the development of mass-destruction weapons. Threats to Iran and North Korea, if they do not stop nuclear programs. The doctrine of `pre-emptive strikes`, employed in the case of Iraq, with</p>

<p>either ruler`. `In both cases, past Pentagon war games have given little or no consideration to the force requirements necessary not only to defeat an attack but to remove these regimes from power and conduct post-combat stability operations`.</p>	<p>prospects of its enlargement on Iran and North Korea, as parts of `the axis of evil`.</p>
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The important goals of neoconservatives are most evident in a fundamental programmatic document of the neoconservatives in the field of foreign policy, defense and security, *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century*. It was written and published in September 2000, before the presidential elections and G. W. Bush's entry into the White House. The document represents a report of The Project for a New American Century. Its principal author was *Thomas Donnelly*. *Donald Kagan* and *Gary Schmitt* were co-chairmen of the Project.

The doctrine of `pre-emptive strikes`, as part of the policy carried out by the Bush administration and prospected in the early nineties, was inserted in the document *Defense Planning Guidance* as early as 1992. This doctrine foresees the conduct of preventive warfare for the purpose of preventing the emergence of any global competitor to the U.S.A., and was later called the *Wolfowitz doctrine*, after its principal author.

Table 3: The military and strategic goals and ways in which the Bush administration aimed to reach those goals

<p>The military and strategic goals</p>	<p>Actions of the Bush administration in order to reach military-strategic goals</p>
<p>`Defend the American homeland`.</p>	<p>Renunciation of nuclear disarmament and cut of nuclear capabilities through a new Treaty with Russia. Overall modernization of the American military forces.</p>

	Construction of a global ballistic missile defense system. Intention to set up an antiballistic shield, even in Central Europe.
`Fight and decisively win multiple, simultaneous major theater wars`.	Military intervention and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Threats to attack Iran and North Korea.
`Perform the “constabulary” duties associated with shaping the security environment in critical regions`.	New positioning of American forces in new NATO-members, states of Persian Gulf, in the region of Horn. The continuation of construction of aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines. Navy activity focused on the Middle East region and East Asia where P.R. of China becomes bigger and bigger rival to the U.S.A.
`Transform U.S. forces to exploit the “revolution in military affairs”.	The development of completely new arms, new programs and advanced military technology. Improvement of human and material capabilities of military forces.
Specific and post-modern geostrategic goal	The <i>Echelon</i> system. Control of electronic communications. After September 11, necessary changes in law were introduced in order to enable easier bugging of communications. US Air Force Space Command established.
All of the proclaimed goals	Heavy increase in spending for the armament. The greatest budget for the army ever.

The ballistic missile defense mentioned is a `missing link`, as the U.S.A. could carry out the first nuclear attack which would destroy the nuclear forces of the adversary. The latter could only mean Russia, given the number and strength of its capabilities. The concept of first strike began to take shape in 1974, during the Nixon administration, and it has re-appeared several times in different forms between then and now. It was preceded and

influenced by the 1972 *Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty* (ABM) between the U.S.A. and former Soviet Union, from which the U.S.A. withdrew during G. W. Bush's administration. Reagan's announcement of the '*Star Wars*' program in 1983 represented an important step in the development of a ballistic missile defense system. The ballistic missile defense program which would ensure invulnerability to enemy projectiles, and a theoretical option to launch a nuclear attack while protected from inward attack, has continued in different forms until today. Neither of the post-Cold War Democratic presidents, Clinton and Obama, abandoned the idea but simply reduced the range of the program and its funding (Engdahl, 2009).

It is submitted that the purpose of establishing the *US Airforce Space Command* was the integration of control over space and cyberspace as postmodern areas of geostrategic confrontation. According to the neoconservative vision, the U.S.A. should be a leader in these post-modern spaces achieving a dominant influence so as to ensure US supremacy and prevent some other state from developing the skills with which to confront the U.S.A. in the control of space and cyberspace.

Between the publication/issuance of the above-mentioned document and the period following the events of September 11 2001, the U.S. global geo-strategy acquired new characteristics: maintenance and fostering of U.S. dominance in the world by any means, even those that had never been seriously considered before. A strong determination to use military force in strategically important regions of the world spread in the U.S.A. Thus neoconservative rule in the U.S.A. unbalanced post-Cold War relations between the superpowers to such an extent that it redefined relations between the U.S.A. and China, Russia, and the European Union.

However, the neoconservatives complained that 'these changes are likely to take a long time. Its execution could be accelerated only by some catastrophic and catalyzing event, like a new Pearl Harbor'. The acceleration

was indeed achieved by the events of September 11, `a truly catastrophic and catalyzing event.

At the beginning of 2003, *Charles Krauthammer* declared that the unipolar moment, which he had first introduced in 1990, had become the unipolar era. He described a key assumption for the US global benevolent hegemony and unipolar action as follows: ‘The new unilateralism argues explicitly and unashamedly for maintaining unipolarity, for sustaining America’s unrivalled dominance for the foreseeable future.’ ‘It could be a long future, assuming we successfully manage the single greatest threat, namely, weapons of mass destruction in the hands of rogue states.’ Krauthammer also noted: ‘History has given you an empire, if you will keep it’. He considered that the only way to retain global US pre-eminence was to prevent ‘gradually transferring power to multilateral institutions as heirs to American hegemony’ (Krauthammer, 2002/2003).

Krauthammer calls himself a ‘democratic globalist’, a proponent of a form of Wilsonianism, minus the international institutions, that seeks to use U.S. military supremacy to support U.S. security interests and democracy simultaneously.

Under the aspect of democratization, one of the goals highlighted in neoconservative rhetoric, alongside the maintenance of a global US empire, it is necessary to point out that up to the end of the nineties they did not argue for the use of military power in order to democratize a state or region but only when vital American interests were in danger. This is evident from statements such as ‘the prudent support of democracy, using all the many tools at disposal, most of them well short of military force’ and ‘democracy should not be promoted in an “uncompromising” fashion, in every country in the world at all times regardless of the cost or risk, but pursued if and when conditions allowed it’ (Kagan, 1991).

In later references to democratization, they focused primarily on the Middle East region. In the nineties, *Michael Ledeen*, one of the highly influential neoconservatives, argued/made a case for 'practical assistance that could be given to foreign dissidents'. However, he stopped short of suggesting that the U.S. should offer its own troops for the cause (Ledeen, 1996).

The democratization of the Middle East, supported by U.S. troops, was indeed high among the priorities of the neo-conservatives. However, even in 2004, when the democratization of particular states and/or regions had already become the declared goal in neoconservative discourse, for some neoconservatives it was still not a goal to be fought for everywhere and at any cost: 'The U.S.A. should support democracy everywhere but we will commit blood and treasure only in places where there is a strategic necessity – meaning, places central to the larger war against the existential enemy, the enemy that poses a global mortal threat to freedom'. (Krauthammer, 2004)

The 'blindness' of neoconservatives about anomalies in their declared goals and policies is described fully by *F. Fukuyama*, himself a self-declared neoconservative and one of the signatories of the Open letter to President G. W. Bush in September 2001, in which the neoconservatives called for bringing down Saddam Hussein. Fukuyama strongly criticizes Krauthammer, saying that his assumptions are far from reality, and questions the phrases 'strategic necessity' (the much more precise definition) and 'existential enemy', noting that even global terrorism is not the enemy that can put the survival of the U.S.A. into question, as the Soviet Union could during the Cold War. With reference to the Iraqi regime under Saddam Hussein, Fukuyama says that it posed a regional threat but there were no evidences that the regime produced weapons of mass destruction or cooperated with Al-Qaeda, so it was not a 'existential enemy' of the U.S.A. Fukuyama also claims that the assumption that a 'democratization of the Middle East' would spread

from Iraq was false, because it completely ignored the facts that determine conditions in the societies of the region, and especially Iraqi society¹⁵².

A large part of the world with majority of the world population did not believe in the legitimacy of Iraq invasion, it did not in the reasons that Bush administration provided. The legitimacy was very hard to gain because of three reasons: the demise of Soviet threat, the difference in perception of terrorist threat even among the Western allies and the fact that the battlefield was not Europe but Middle East as a region that was always an object of totally different perceptions on how to react between the U.S.A. and almost everybody else in the World. (Fukuyama, 2004)

1.4. The Influence of Neoconservatives on President G.W. Bush

The influence of neoconservatives and hardliners in the late nineties on the potential presidential candidate G. W. Bush (the future President) was facilitated by his strong faith and scarce knowledge of foreign politics. In 1998 *C. Rice* and *R. Cheney* assembled a team of eight foreign policy advisors, self-declared/acknowledged? neoconservatives (*R. Armitage, S. Hadley, R. Perle, P. Wolfowitz, D. Zakheim, R. Zoellick*) and advocates of the hard-line policy, close to neoconservatives (*C. Rice, D. Rumsfeld, R. Blackwill*), to give G. W. Bush a brief course in foreign policy. Advisors of former President G. H. W. Bush – who were representatives of realistic political thinking and geopolitics, outlined by H. Kissinger, were absent (Unger, 2007).

A strong neoconservative influence on Bush was notable in his discourse, in which the conditions of the world were reduced to a black and

¹⁵² Fukuyama also claims that Krauthammer's vision completely ignores the realities that occurred after the occupation of Iraq: mounting anti-Americanism throughout the Middle East region, the insurgency in Iraq, the absence of democratic leadership, the enormous financial and human cost of the war etc.

white struggle for life and death, to the battle between Good and Evil. The identification of some countries as `rogue states`, the reference to Iran, Iraq and North Korea as the `axis of evil`, and to the Middle East region as an area of permanent American engagement due to the need to support Israel, are all reflections of neoconservative influence on Bush administration policy.

The neoconservatives openly argued for a neo-reaganite foreign policy strategy to be adopted as official foreign policy. They played key roles in the formulation of American global geo-strategy, interwoven as this was with their ideas which were introduced into official policy, especially after September 11 2001. The fact that the key-decision makers (the President, Vice-President, and Defense Secretary) were not self-declared neoconservatives does not mean they were not influenced by the neoconservative vision in their conduct of U.S. foreign policy. After September 11, they began to put their strategy into action through the accumulative effect of two factors: their influence on the policy of President Bush, and the politico-social circumstances in the U.S.A. and the world after the terrorist attacks.

Among the senior politicians holding key positions in the Bush administration that were especially close to neo-conservatism we can mention former Vice-President *Richard Cheney* (a hard-line realist), National Security Advisor and later Secretary of State *Condoleezza Rice*, and the Secretary of Defense, until the end of 2006, *Donald Rumsfeld*. *Paul Wolfowitz*, the new Secretary of Defense, was a avowed neoconservative, and a key influence (with *Douglas Feith*) inside the Pentagonal shaping foreign policy and the National Security Strategy. After September 11, Cheney (not a declared neoconservative) changed his position regarding U.S. engagement in the Middle East, becoming the chief advocate of American engagement in the Middle East and the attack on Iraq. It is assumed that such a shift of position was due to the neoconservatives.

Thus, although declared neoconservatives did not occupy key positions in the White House and the government, their foreign policy views usually did become dominant, because they occupied positions in the foreign policy department and outside the Administration, within neoconservative think-tanks and organizations, which greatly influenced the shaping of foreign policy. The neoconservatives inside the structures of power succeeded in convincing their chiefs, who on the whole were not avowed neoconservatives but unilateralists and hard-line defendants of U.S. national interests and orthodox hard-line realists, that their own positions and political goals were beneficial to the U.S.A., thus guiding the decision-makers to convert these positions and goals into top-level political decisions.

The strength of neoconservative' influence did not derive from the fact they had a clearly defined and precise foreign policy doctrine but from the force of the neoconservatives' conviction in what they stood for and their mutual interconnection within the structure of power of that period (Daalder, Lindsay, 2003).

There were numerous neoconservatives at lower decision-making level in the Bush administration at different periods¹⁵³. Indicatively, *Colin Powell*, Secretary of State during the first Bush administration, did not figure among key-decision makers in foreign policy influenced by neoconservatives.

After G. W. Bush entered the Oval Office and moreover in the aftermath of the events of September 11, the goals and opportunities of the neoconservatives rose significantly, in a way that the opportunities outnumbered the goals themselves. The principal causes for this were their determination to participate in executive power and the general mood in the U.S.A., in Allied states and in a good part of the world after September 11.

¹⁵³ A complete list of neoconservatives with brief descriptions of their activity and the positions they occupied within the Bush administration, as well as their connections with military industry, intelligence services and different organizations in the USA representing the policies conducted by Israel in the Middle East region, in Engdahl, *ibid*.

Thus neoconservative strategy evolved over years adapting its goals to changing circumstances.

Neoconservative ideology of in the field of foreign policy and security could have not been fully implemented without September 11. Its main postulates were embedded in the *National Security Strategy of the U.S.A.*, adopted in 2002, a document that was decisively influenced by the neoconservatives. It was the first time that unilateralism and unilateral action were introduced into the National Security Strategy as well as the doctrine of pre-emptive warfare, a central proposition of the American foreign and defense policy: `For centuries, international law recognized that nations need not suffer an attack before they can lawfully take action to defend themselves against forces that present an imminent danger of attack. Legal scholars and international jurists often conditioned the legitimacy of preemption on the existence of an imminent threat – most often a visible mobilization of armies, navies, and air forces preparing to attack. We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today's adversaries` (National Security Strategy of the U.S.A., 2002).

Neither today can one fully unravel to what extent they influenced the policy of G. W. Bush, i.e. how much his decisions were shaped by the neoconservatives who surrounded him during his Presidency and even during those few years before he became President. Some authors deem that President Bush was a puppet, easy to control, this theory supported by the fact that Bush was largely ignorant of the realities of foreign policy and what was happening in the world. Bush himself acknowledged his lack of foreign policy expertise, saying: `Nobody needs to tell me what to believe. But I do need somebody to tell me where Kosovo is` (Dubose, L., Bernstein, J., 2006). A State Department official said of G. W. Bush, before he began to take advice from the neoconservatives, that in foreign matters he was a `tabula rasa`, `an empty vessel` and `ripe for plucking`, so that his foreign policy views would

be shaped in accordance with the suggestions of the neoconservative advisers with whom Cheney and Rice surrounded him (Unger, 2007).

The influence which neoconservatives acquired over Bush after briefing him on foreign policy was so great that it could not be reduced, much less stopped. Their views on foreign policy became his personal positions: 'Rice's and Bush's views on foreign policy... were one and the same' (McClellan, 2008). This was a key moment, because it shows to what extent neoconservative political ideology, combined with the personal beliefs of G. W. Bush, decisively shaped his standpoint and influenced his decisions.

The other moment that should be highlighted is that not all neoconservatives supported G. W. Bush on his way to the White House, one of the main reasons being that they thought they still held insufficient influence given that foreign policy was still been shaped and influenced by representatives of real politic. Even though three solid neoconservatives taught Bush about foreign policy, many neoconservatives were dismayed by what they saw as a preponderance of his father's circle of *realpolitik* foreign advisers. Prominent neoconservatives: *W. Kristol*, *J. Kirkpatrick*, and *J. Woolsey*, backed Bush's primary opponent for the presidential nomination, *John McCain*.

During a presidential debate with *Al Gore*, Bush stressed that he wanted a 'humble' foreign policy in the Middle East. He said that he was against the toppling of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, because it smacked of 'nation building'. R. Cheney also defended Bush's upholding of President Clinton's policy not to attack Iraq, asserting that the US should not act as though 'we were an imperialist power, willy-nilly moving into capitals in that part of the world, taking down governments' (The Washington Post, January 12, 2002).

The actions undertaken by the Bush administration showed a change in position implying either that the statements given before the 2000 elections were issued for campaign purposes only or that after September 11, the

neoconservatives decided to fundamentally change their policy towards the Middle East region. But from reading neoconservative programmatic documents of, it becomes obvious that they were in favor of the change of regime before the campaign and consequently long before September 11.

After September 11, President Bush was subjected to heavy `pressure` from the neoconservatives. Most of them were actively involved in/cooperated with the Administration as advisors. A special foreign policy advisor to the President, M. Ledeen, wrote that the U.S.A. must use Iraq as the first battle of a much larger war: `First and foremost, we must bring down the terror regimes, beginning with the Big Three: Iran, Iraq, and Syria, and then we have to come to grips with Saudi Arabia. Once the tyrants in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia have been brought down, we will remain engaged. We have to ensure the fulfillment of the democratic revolution`. Ledeen also stated: `Stability is an unworthy American mission, and a misleading concept to boot. We do not want stability in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and even Saudi Arabia. We want things to change` (Ledeen, 2002).

In order to overestimate the dangers from the Iraqi regime, and find `evidence` of the production of weapons of mass destruction and the links of regime with Al-Qaida, a `third Team B` was established, to put into question official intelligence data. It was a creation of the neoconservatives, now embedded in the executive branch of power. The team was called the *Policy Counterterrorism Evaluation Group* (PCTEG), and a Pentagon cell was established after September 11. The PCTEG was formed after White House political leaders rejected threat assessments of Iraq prepared by the official intelligence community as `too conservative` (Mitchell, 2006).

The real purpose of PCTEG was to prove the primary thesis. Thus through the actions of PCTEG and the distortion of intelligence data presented to the President, the neoconservatives succeeded in decisively influencing the decision-making processes.

In this way, Cheney, Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld and other `Vulcans`, influential White House advisors who had long envisaged war with Iraq as the centerpiece of a bold gambit to reshape the post-Cold War geopolitical landscape, finally got their satisfaction (Mann, 2004).

Instead of stimulating internal debate and critical assessment, which was a stated goal of theirs since their establishment, Team B, the Rumsfeld Commission and the PCTEG were used to influence official defense policy. It was a continuous subversion of the intelligence function. But it strongly influenced the policies, whether by pressure on the governing administration, or by gathering support for an eventual neoconservative administration, or by preparing the ground for Reagan's Star Wars programme and G. W. Bush's ballistic-missile defense (BMD).

Other opinions exist, partially contesting the claim that neoconservatives critically influenced the foreign policy views of G. W. Bush, claiming that Bush was not a puppet, but a key decision maker in a `revolution in foreign policy` that should be named after him. Perhaps he did not spend time contemplating the creation of the philosophy of international relations, but he did hold precise beliefs, or instincts, in order with his life experience, about the (non) functioning of the world. However, these opinions agree that under the influence of his neoconservative advisors, Bush adopted a hegemonic view of the world that considered USs primacy in the world paramount to securing U.S. interests. (Daalder, Lindsay, 2003)

At a later stage of his own `evolution` from a neoconservative supporter of invasion and bringing down of the Iraqi regime, disappointed with the failures of Bush administration policy towards the Middle East and the international community in general, Fukuyama evolved into a `disappointed` conservative, highly critical of official U.S. foreign policy during the G. W. Bush Presidency. In 2006, he advocated multilateralism, instead of unilateral action. Earlier, in 2004, he began to criticize the `unipolar

era' declared by neoconservatives. He completely distanced himself from the false assumption of the Bush administration that the world would be a safer place if the advent of democracy in unstable places could be hastened by overwhelming military force. Fukuyama called this strong-arming evolution, which never worked. He claimed that American power should not be used to reshape the globe in its image but to build more effective and more legitimate international institutions. It is a conclusion that resembles the view of a liberal institutionalist, definitely not a neoconservative.

For Fukuyama, the real influence of the neoconservatives and neoconservative ideology on G. W. Bush's policy was also a subject of interest. Fukuyama distinguished the original neoconservative political philosophy from the practical political reasoning of the Bush administration, as well as neoconservative political philosophers from the practitioners of foreign policy. In his critique of Bush administration policies which diverged significantly from the original goals of the neoconservatives, as Fukuyama claims, he identifies the inadvisability of embarking on large-scale social engineering projects, since they may have unanticipated and socially damaging consequences. But invasion, occupation and society-building in Iraq are exactly the kind of projects which neoconservatives such as *Daniel Bell*, *Irving Kristol* and *Seymour Martin Lipset* recommended against. This inadvisability is one of neoconservatism's four central themes¹⁵⁴. *Leo Strauss*,

¹⁵⁴ The others are skepticism about international law, belief in the ability of the USA to promote benign change in the world and emphasis on the internal character of political regimes.

It was in about 1997 that contemporary neoconservative political ideology tried to influence U.S. policy through a stronger presentation of its position and pressure on public opinion as to force President Clinton to change his policy (public invitations to intervene in the Middle East in favor of a change of regimes, to initiate preventive wars, to increase funding for defense).

These principles should be the principles of American global policy in future:

- We need to increase defense spending significantly if we are to carry out our global responsibilities today and modernize our armed forces for the future;

the political philosopher who played a particularly prominent role in shaping neoconservative thought, pursued the theme that regimes play a significant part in forming the character of those who live within them. Fukuyama identified this point as relevant to the 'administrators of America's overseas empire', because 'they have tended to bring American experience to foreign

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- We need to strengthen our ties to democratic allies and to challenge regimes hostile to our interests and values;
 - We need to promote the cause of political and economic freedom abroad;
 - We need to accept responsibility for America's unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity, and our principles'. (Statement of Principles, 1997)

The original Team B, as part of the intelligence activity in promoting the debate between the teams of analysts with the purpose of assessing the Soviet military threat, was set upon November 3, 1975, the day that President Ford appointed Donald Rumsfeld Defense Secretary. On the same day, Richard Cheney became White House Chief of Staff, and George H. W. Bush was appointed Director of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). As well as the Commission, it was set up to counter the official CIA team, called Team A. Still during the nineteen seventies, Team B questioned the official CIA assessments of the Soviet ballistic missile threat against the U.S.A..Richard Pipes was the head of Team B, which also included William von Cleave, Daniel Graham, Paul Nitze, and Paul Wolfowitz, all hardliners and believers in the necessity of American global hegemony. Team B argued that the National Intelligence Estimates 'substantially misperceived the motivations behind Soviet strategic programs, and thereby tended consistently to underestimate their intensity, scope and implicit threat'.

See: Mitchell, G. R. (2006), Team B Intelligence Coups, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 92 (2) 144-173

Fukuyama also claims that Krauthammer's vision completely ignores the realities that occurred after the occupation of Iraq: mounting anti-Americanism throughout the Middle East region, the insurgency in Iraq, the absence of democratic leadership, the enormous financial and human cost of the war etc.

A complete list of neoconservatives with brief descriptions of their activity and the positions they occupied within the Bush administration, as well as their connections with military industry, intelligence services and different organizations in the USA representing the policies conducted by Israel in the Middle East region, in Engdahl, *ibid*.

The others are skepticism about international law, belief in the ability of the USA to promote benign change in the world and emphasis on the internal character of political regimes.

lands, rather than seeing institutions emerging out of the habits and experience of local peoples'. Democracy is not a 'default regime' to which societies return when relieved from the burden of dictatorship. Bush and his administration assumed that democracy would flourish in post-Saddam Iraq. They were inattentive to the customs and traditions of Iraq's constituent communities. Fukuyama claimed that the key decision-makers in the G. W. Bush administration actually knew very little about the original neoconservative political philosophy. They simply adjusted some neoconservative policy guidance to their own policy goals. Fukuyama also suggested that complacency may have clouded the thinking of Bush and his colleagues, for two of the regime's most influential advisers (W. Kristol and R.Kagan) have identified 'American foreign policy as infused with an unusually high degree of morality.' He also advised pursuing multilateral rather than unilateral action and more realism in U.S. foreign policy but mixed with Wilsonianism, thereby advocating a 'Wilsonian realism' (Fukuyama, 2006).

Conclusions

Elements of neoconservative political ideology that refer to foreign, but also to defense policy, having been transferred into the geopolitical doctrine of preservation and fostering of American global dominance, expressed by the doctrine of *Pax Americana*, influenced the foreign policy of the U.S.A. during the first administration of President *G. W. Bush*, whose goals were formed by neoconservatives and hard-line realists. The neoconservatives, connected with hard-line realists, had a significant influence on G. W. Bush and his decisions. Since the President is the key foreign and defense policy decision maker in the U.S.A., the influence of neoconservatives was deeply embedded in U.S. foreign and defense policy.

The other important factor that influenced the U.S. foreign policy was the post-September 11 shock. These tragic events were the `trigger` that provided the neoconservatives with opportunities for action. The U.S. nation was ready, for the first time since the Cold War, to support an increase in spending for armaments and the armed forces, as well as a heavy increase in the engagement of U.S. armed forces in the Middle East region, which was called `the source of global terrorism`. The region is abundant in oil and natural gas reserves, and therefore represents a geopolitical prize and a strategic gain. However, while U.S. engagement in the region was not new and specific to the period after the September 11, its decisiveness on intervention and the means used were quite new and different.

It is therefore possible to conclude that the neoconservatives, during the first G. W. Bush administration, influenced U.S. foreign and defense policy in three key aspects:

- The introduction of unilateral action in international relations as a rule (rather than as an exception) as well the refusal to implement various international conventions and norms of international law, which provoked a significant deterioration in relations between the U.S.A. and most of the world, and even between the U.S.A. and many of its traditional allies;
- A huge increase in defense spending and the introduction of the doctrine of preventive warfare;
- The assembling of coalitions of the willing instead of action through internationally legitimized military coalitions (the operationalization of the doctrine of preventive warfare) in the broader Middle East region, aimed at bringing down regimes which were unwilling to cooperate with the U.S.A. and represented `rogue states` or parts of the `axis of evil` (a designation to these states given by President G. W. Bush himself).

These key aspects of influence on U.S. foreign and defense policy are a product of a significant deviation by neoconservatives and hard-line realists (those who influenced U.S. foreign policy and actively participated in decision-making processes) from the political philosophy of the ‘original’ neoconservatives such as Bell, I. Kristol, Lipset, and Strauss. They included those elements of the neoconservative agenda which they considered useful for their policy towards the Middle East and especially Iraq. Their practical (geo) political reasoning clouded the declared theoretical basis of their policy, as well as the values which they claimed to support. Thus ideology and values (in this particular case neoconservative) were once again distorted and used as a cover for the practical political goals of the decision-makers within the Administration. This is probably the main reason why the policy of the G. W. Bush administration towards the Middle East region is generally considered a failure.

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