

**Project for the New American Century:  
How One Think Tank May Influence American Foreign Policy**

by

Ida Sofia Vaa

**A Thesis Presented to  
The Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages  
The University of Oslo  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the MA degree  
Spring Term 2005**

## ***Acknowledgements***

*I would like to thank my supervisor Ole M. Moen, Anders Grindlia Romarheim from NUPI for hints on literature and sources, Andreas for patience and critical questions, and my fellow students Ida and Ronny for interesting conversations in the Common Room.*

# Content

**Content 3**

**Chapter 1. Introduction – Why Write about Neo-Conservative Think Tanks?**

**4**

The Relevance of this Thesis for American Studies..... 4

**Chapter 2. A Brief Overview of the History of the Neo-Conservatives 7**

The Origins of the Neo-Conservatives ..... 8

The Neo-Conservatives and the Cold War ..... 9

The Reagan Era..... 9

Neo-Conservatism in the 1990s ..... 12

**Chapter 3. Exceptionalism, Wilsonianism and Straussianism – Three of the isms that Influenced the Neo-Conservatives 15**

Exceptionalism..... 15

Exceptional Conservatism in American Politics..... 18

What is Wilsonianism and its Impact on the Neo-Conservatives..... 22

Straussianism - Leo Strauss' Impact on Neo-Conservative Thinking..... 26

**Chapter 4. PNAC: Its Objectives and Chief Members 29**

Defining Agenda-setting and Issue Proponents in the Context of Policy Agendas.... 29

A brief History of Think Tanks ..... 31

The Neo-Conservative Strategy: Using Think Tanks to Gain Influence..... 34

The Background and Funding of PNAC..... 37

PNAC Marking a Shift in Neo-Conservatism ..... 37

PNAC's Main Objectives ..... 38

The Chief Members of PNAC ..... 39

**Chapter 5. A Closer Look at the Connection Between PNAC and President George W. Bush's National Security Strategy 44**

A Background for Rebuilding America's Defenses ..... 44

Rebuilding America's Defenses ..... 47

The National Security Strategy..... 52

The Quadrennial Defense Review ..... 55

The Major Similarities between Rebuilding America's Defenses and the National Security Strategy..... 59

**Chapter 6. Conclusion 70**

**Bibliography 72**

## **Chapter 1. Introduction – Why Write about Neo-Conservative Think Tanks?**

The essence of American studies is to understand the culture in the North-American countries. One can compare American culture to one's own culture or focus on a part of American culture to understand it better. This thesis focuses on the background of the Neo-Conservative movement and how it has, among other strategies, used think tanks to influence American foreign policy. The main example in this thesis will be to analyze the similarities in the content of the Neo-Conservative think tank Project for the New American Century's (PNAC) document *Rebuilding America's Defenses* from 2000 and the Bush administration's *National Security Strategy* from 2002. The first document was written as a suggestion to American foreign policy makers on how to create a new foreign policy that will work in a world after the end of the Cold War. The *National Security Strategy* was an answer to the need for a working policy for how to lessen the threats towards the United States.

This thesis will also contain background information on the Neo-Conservative movement and their ideological heritage, in order to be able to point out what is "typical" Neo-Conservative thinking and which parts of the American foreign policy that cannot be ascribed to the Neo-Conservatives. But first of all I would like to point out that what I call the Neo-Conservative movement or group is not a movement as we usually think of it. The Neo-Conservatives are several individuals who for periods of time have worked together and who share a quite similar view on the American society and foreign policy. However, I will refer to the Neo-Conservatives as a group or movement several places in this thesis because it is easier not to have to explain the type of relationship these people have every time they are mentioned.

### **The Relevance of this Thesis for American Studies**

This thesis is important for American studies for several reasons. The Neo-Conservatives have played a large role in the American and international media,

especially after the actions taken by the American government after 9/11. They have been blamed for anything from having “couped” the American government, to actually having planned the atrocities of 9/11. It is always difficult to look objectively at recent events and trying to analyze who actually had the power and who really decided what. History has shown that one does not have all the information one needs to analyze what really happened a short time after an event. However, I believe it is of interest to try to find connections between the Neo-Conservatives and the Bush administration now. The reason for this is that knowing what people thought was the case a short time after an event can be just as interesting later as it is to know what really happened.

Another reason is that in writing and reading about this topic one will learn more about the background for the foreign policy of the United States in the past years. Studying one group of issue proponents, who in this case have been important for setting the American foreign policy agenda after 9/11, will give an important insight in how agenda-setting in American foreign policy works.<sup>1</sup> I will line up some simple theories on agenda-setting, to show how this mechanism works in society and to give a framework for how think tanks in general are working as issue proponents. I will also describe the function of think tanks in the American society, with a special focus on PNAC.

Studying American foreign policy after the Cold War will also give insight in which direction American foreign policy has taken after containment and what to expect from the only superpower in the world. I will also refer to some articles written on the Neo-Conservatives view on history and the United States’ role in the new world by prominent Neo-Conservatives, in order to see how the Neo-Conservative plans for foreign policy fit into these ideas, or whether the Neo-Conservatives represent a whole new way of thinking about American foreign policy.

I will also focus on the debate on whether or not the Neo-Conservatives actually have had the power to influence the American foreign policy makers or not. On the one hand you have those who fear that the Neo-Conservatives are a part of a conspiracy to take over American foreign policy, and on the other you have those who claim that their power is exaggerated and that the policies we have seen lately are general republican policies and not those of the Neo-Conservatives. I will use a

---

<sup>1</sup> James W. Dearing and Everett M. Rogers, *Agenda-setting* (London: Sage Publications, 1996) 3.

combination of the history of the Neo-Conservatives, media theory that shows how one best can influence policy making in the United States, and take a look at some of the ideologies that have influenced the Neo-Conservatives in order to find connections to the foreign policy strategies of the Bush administration.

I have chosen to limit the thesis to PNAC and the before mentioned documents. PNAC is not the only Neo-Conservative think tank, and think tanks alone do not decide American foreign policy, but I believe that by focusing on PNAC and think tanks I can show one of the main Neo-Conservative methods for agenda-setting. PNAC is also one of the think tanks which only focus is on foreign policy, while the other think tanks usually have a much broader perspective. I find that looking at one think tank and its foreign policy strategies will fit into the limitations of a thesis like this. The documents I have chosen to compare will show a link between the ideas of PNAC and the Bush administration, but this in itself cannot prove the link. But it can be a strong indication for that the ideas of one think tank can be reflected in actual policy-making.

Another reason for choosing PNAC as an example of Neo-Conservative think tanks is that most of the literature has focused on the larger institutions like the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and the Heritage Foundation. During my research I have found that PNAC are most often mentioned in connection with conspiratorial web sites and non-academic articles. The challenge has therefore been to place them in the history of the Neo-Conservative movement and to gather relevant information about the think tank from reliable sources. The primary source has been PNAC's own web site, where one can find most of the documents and articles they have produced, along with information about their principles and members. The other primary source is the *National Security Strategy* written by the Bush administration in 2002, which was posted on the web site of the American government. I chose to look at the National Security Strategy because it is one of the documents that most clearly identify the foreign policy strategies of the Bush administration after 9/11, and thus the document that most easily can show any connection to Neo-Conservative thoughts.

## Chapter 2. A Brief Overview of the History of the Neo-Conservatives

American foreign policy after World War II has been dominated by the containment of the Soviet Union and coping with being the only super power left in the world. Until the United States get some competition from another country about being the most powerful country in the world, the United States must try to find out what their responsibilities are and how to handle their power. The Neo-Conservatives have been eager to influence American foreign policy since they became active in the 70's. But before we look at how exactly they have influenced today's American foreign policy one has to look at the history of the Neo-Conservatives. Who were they and who are they today?

The term Neo-Conservative is controversial because many of those who are labeled Neo-Conservatives do not think of themselves as that, and the term is rather vague and does not say much about what they really are. This is something one has to bear in mind when using the terms movement or group about the Neo-Conservatives, because they do not view themselves as a unit. They have “no common manifesto, credo, religion, flag, anthem or secret hand-shake.”<sup>2</sup> In addition to this I will distinguish between the first and the second generation of Neo-Conservatives. The first generation of Neo-Conservatives derived from a group of American intellectuals who went from being Trotskyists to Neo-Conservatives. The second generation of Neo-Conservatives includes many of the children of the first generation, but in addition to being influenced by Leo Strauss, Exceptionalism and Wilsonianism, they have links to the New Right from the Reagan era and have never moved from left to right like the first generation. In the first section of this chapter I will try to distinguish between these generations by giving a brief historical overview of the development of the Neo-Conservative movement, their influence on American foreign policy and name the main characters within the movement.

I will also give an overview of Neo-Conservative think tanks and how they were funded in chapter 4. Chapter 3 will deal with Straussianism, Exceptionalism and

---

<sup>2</sup> Jonah Goldberg, “The Neoconservative Invention”, The National Review, May 2003. January 14 2005 <<http://www.nationalreview.com/goldberg/goldberg052003.asp>>.

Wilsonianism, to give an ideological and philosophical background for the Neo-Conservative movement.

## **The Origins of the Neo-Conservatives**

There seems to be a consensus that the Neo-Conservatives originally were a group of New York Jews who in the 1930s and 1940s were a part of the Trotskyist movement. In the 1950s and 1960s they became strongly anti-communist and went from Trotskyism to what we now call Neo-Conservatism. The “godfather” of Neo-Conservatism was Irving Kristol, but also Norman Podhoretz, who has worked for *Commentary* magazine, USIA and the Hudson Institute, should be mentioned as one of the founders of Neo-Conservatism. These two people can be said to be the founders of Neo-Conservatism because of their strong involvement in the think tank The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and magazines like *Commentary*. An even stronger suggestion would be to call them the godfathers of Neo-Conservatism, which is what Irving Kristol has suggested himself, because of the strong family links to today’s Neo-Conservatives. Their spouses and children are also involved in AEI and PNAC and Irving Kristol’s son William is the editor of the Neo-Conservative magazine *The Weekly Standard*.

One must not think that Trotskyism has been the only and deciding intellectual influence on the Neo-Conservatives, as I will show in the next chapter. But being a member of Trotskyist student groups helped Irving Kristol and his fellow students to shape their debating skills and gave them the “conception of politics as something that should be instructed by theory.”<sup>3</sup> These ideas were developed further in the magazine *Commentary*, which is a publication of the American Jewish Committee, but is also known as an organ for the Neo-Conservatives, where Irving Kristol was editor for several years.

---

<sup>3</sup> Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 45.

## **The Neo-Conservatives and the Cold War**

The Neo-conservatives were strong anti-communists and thought that President Nixon's efforts of détente were steps in the wrong direction. They feared that détente would diminish the role of the United States as a strong leader. Podhoretz published an article called "Making the World Safe from Communism" where he accused American leaders to be crippled after the Vietnam War and afraid to intervene and enter another conflict abroad.<sup>4</sup> The Neo-Conservatives in general did not see the Vietnam War as an ideological failure, but rather a series of unfortunate events that did not lead to American victory and that this should not end American military interventions to prevent Communism to spread. This was especially emphasized by Norman Podhoretz. The Neo-Conservatives still thought that showing military strength was the right solution, and therefore they were skeptical towards any attempt of détente and lessening tension by a friendly approach.

The Neo-Conservatives' dissatisfaction with the policy of détente meant that they were not very content with Richard Nixon as president, but they were even less satisfied with Jimmy Carter. His pacifist foreign policy was not the Neo-Conservatives' idea of a remedy against communism and this led to the final split between the Neo-Conservatives and the Democrats. The Neo-Conservatives had in large parts been members of the Democratic Party, but during the 1970s there was a shift within the Democratic and the Republican Party. The Democrats moved away from "foreign policy activism" and began opposing American military involvement abroad.<sup>5</sup> The Neo-Conservatives' new hope was the Republican Ronald Reagan, who seemed like a candidate who would front a tougher foreign policy.

## **The Reagan Era**

President Ronald Reagan took over after the idealist and anti-realpolitik President Carter. When Reagan assumed the presidency in 1981, he started his own revolution

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>5</sup> Shelley, et al., *Political Geography of the United States* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1996) 107.

to make changes in the American society. First of all he tried to restore a troubled American economy by spending less on federal social policies and giving people tax cuts. He also started a massive defense buildup to “make up for the decade of neglect.”<sup>6</sup> His main goal was to secure the American way of life with little federal interference in a peaceful world; a peace that would come through strength.<sup>7</sup>

The early Neo-Conservatives had high hopes for President Reagan, as the Neo-Conservatives thought they shared a lot of common ideas for how foreign policy should be executed. Both Reagan and the Neo-Conservatives felt that American power had been allowed to decline during the presidencies of Nixon, Ford and Carter and that the Soviet Union was allowed to expand without any opposition. The Reagan doctrine from this period concluded that America’s main goal was to secure “the rollback of Soviet influence across the third world.”<sup>8</sup> But the friendship between Reagan and the Neo-Conservatives did not last for long when it turned out that there was a gap between what Reagan said and what he actually did. Reagan was strongly anti-communist in his speeches and promised to “push the Soviets back right to the gates of the Kremlin itself”, but in reality his administration was very unwilling to risk American lives against communism.<sup>9</sup> A part of the Reagan Doctrine was to pay for proxies instead, i.e. supporting local opposition to communists in the countries which the United States feared were in danger of becoming communist. The most successful and thorough “project” was Afghanistan, where the United States supported the opposition against a Soviet invasion. Unfortunately the Reagan doctrine failed to evaluate the alternatives to communism, and Afghanistan ended up being controlled by the fundamentalists in Taliban instead. The other projects, like Angola, Cambodia, Nicaragua and Libya, were not that successful, because President Reagan lacked government support to implement the doctrine fully in all these areas.

It would however be unfair to say that the doctrine failed completely, because it did put a lot of pressure on the Soviet Union and they did spend a lot of resources on fighting battles in their new frontiers. It does seem like Reagan lacked one thing to achieve political consensus on the doctrine (if that was what he wanted), namely a 9/11. The Soviet Union and communism was not an immediate threat to the United

---

<sup>6</sup> Richard A. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy since the Vietnam War* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996) 284.

<sup>7</sup> Seyom Brown, *The Faces of Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 391.

<sup>8</sup> Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 163.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

States. Why spend a lot of energy and resources on a threat that does not seem imminent? It was a lot easier to convince the Congress and the public after 9/11 because now one had a scarier enemy that had actually hit where people feared it most. The enemy was no longer in Afghanistan and Nicaragua, but in New York.

The Neo-Conservatives were not the only ones who were disappointed in President Reagan. The New Right had high hopes that a new conservative leader would help them spread their gospel on morality in the American society. Reagan turned out not to focus on anti-abortion rights and even appointed the rather liberal Sandra Day O'Connor to the Supreme Court. The Neo-Conservatives did however not worry too much about the failure of President Reagan to fulfill their expectations, because they were waiting for the beginning of a "coming conservative century."<sup>10</sup> This notion of a conservative century led to an essay written by Irving Kristol in 1994 called "The Coming Conservative Century." In this essay he claims that:

The beginning of political wisdom in the 1990s is the recognition that liberalism today is at the end of its intellectual tether. The fact that it can win elections is irrelevant. Conservatives continued to win elections during "the liberal century" (1870-1970); but, once in office, they revealed themselves to be impotent to enact a sustained conservative agenda. The tide of public opinion was too strong against them.  
That tide has now turned.<sup>11</sup>

The Neo-Conservatives did actually understand that in order to be successful in policy making, one did not only have to gain control over the presidency, but also get the public opinion on your side. Kristol and the other Neo-Conservatives saw the need to co-operate with other conservative groups especially the New Right.

Another reason for the Neo-Conservatives' failure to have a defining impact on President Reagan's foreign policy was that although many Neo-Conservatives had powerful positions within politics and society, they were not a part of Reagan's inner circle. They did not reach such a position until George W. Bush was elected for president in 2000. But by then there had been certain changes within the Neo-Conservative community. The older generation of Neo-Conservatives like Irving Kristol and Kirkpatrick wanted to reduce America's involvement in foreign policy affairs after the fall of communism. But now came the new generation of Neo-

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>11</sup> Irving Kristol, *Neo-Conservatism: The Autobiography of an Idea* (New York: The Free Press, 1995) 364.

Conservatives who were inspired by hard Wilsonianism and claimed that the United States should base its foreign policy on “universal dominion.”<sup>12</sup>

## Neo-Conservatism in the 1990s

George Bush sr. became president in 1989 and continued the Republican era into the 1990s. Bush inherited a huge federal deficit caused by the “Reagan Revolution”. In addition to this he had to change from Cold War politics because of the huge changes in the international political scene caused by the fall of communism. His agenda was to make America the “benevolent hegemon,” which was a rather unclear definition of what America’s role really was.<sup>13</sup> Some claim that there was not really a new world order, because George Bush continued to use the Containment strategy from the cold war during and after the Persian Gulf War.<sup>14</sup> But one can hardly dispute that there were enormous changes in international politics during Bush’s presidential period. His most demanding challenges were the fall of communism in the former Soviet Union, Noriega in Panama, Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait, dealing with Bosnia and Sudan and coming up with a new foreign policy ideology which was suitable for the so-called “new world order.”<sup>15</sup>

The new generation of Neo-Conservatives used the 1990s to redefine themselves “as force-based hard Wilsonians focused on foreign policy” and that is perhaps how we know them best today.<sup>16</sup> This generation was headed by people like Charles Krauthammer, who argued that even though communism had fallen, there was still need to spread American liberal democracy to the rest of the world. They even went as far as calling the older generation of Neo-Conservatives isolationists.

In the elections of 1992 President George H.W. Bush lost to the Democrat Bill Clinton. The public felt that he had spent too much time on foreign affairs and that he had neglected the domestic affairs. Many of the people who were connected to the

---

<sup>12</sup> Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 76.

<sup>13</sup> Richard A. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy since the Vietnam War* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996) 286.

<sup>14</sup> Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State* (New York: Mariner Books, 1997) 171.

<sup>15</sup> Seyom Brown, *The Faces of Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 561.

<sup>16</sup> Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 74.

second generation of Neo-Conservatives chose to vote for Clinton, because they felt that the Bush administration had failed to show strength in his foreign policy. The Neo-Conservatives thought that Bush should have removed Saddam Hussein from Iraq and strongly disagreed with the Bush administration's line not to interfere with domestic matters. Removing dictators and securing democratic elections in oppressed countries would create a world of democracy which was the ideal for the second generation of Neo-Conservatives. For these reasons they were also critical to the administration's failure to intervene in the former Yugoslavian republics.<sup>17</sup> They also criticized the Bush administration for not fulfilling their task (in the eyes of the second generation of Neo-Conservatives) in Iraq and removing Saddam Hussein.

In 1993 the Democrats got their chance to show America and the world what the responsibilities of a lone superpower is. President Clinton and his administration took a huge step away from the aggressive rhetoric of the Republicans. Clinton's focus was on how to repair and change the American society after the "Reagan Revolution" and his main goals were to stimulate the economy, reduce the deficit and increase federal social spending. His goal was not to be a foreign policy president, but when he talked about it he focused on economy and trade as means to enlarge the "zone of democratic peace."<sup>18</sup>

The second generation of Neo-Conservatives strongly supported the election of Bill Clinton, as the Republican presidents had disappointed them badly during the last decades. Clinton stood for expanding the boundaries of peace and democracy in the world, and at first glance this resembled the ideas of the Neo-Conservatives. But the neo-conservatives would turn out to be disappointed again, because Clinton's way of achieving these goals differed a lot from the Neo-Conservative ideal.

Bill Clinton did also believe that the UN should take more responsibility in the areas where the United States had intervened so far. The UN would act as a neutral part, and with the consent of the whole world, instead of America acting on its own.<sup>19</sup> This would also allow America to focus more on domestic issues and release a lot of the resources spent on the military machinery around the world. Clinton's focus was more on human rights than on national security. But it was harder to get public support for interventions based on human right than on the security of American

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 80-81.

<sup>18</sup> Richard A. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy since the Vietnam War* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996) 287.

<sup>19</sup> Seyom Brown, *The Faces of Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 592.

citizens. To avoid criticism the Democrats tried to come up with a new strategy formed on enlargement. Enlargement meant spreading democratic values to the whole world, but this turned out to be a quite unclear strategy.

Many felt that using multilateral diplomacy was inefficient and especially criticized Clinton for reacting too late in Bosnia. Many felt that America's responsibility was to spread liberal democracy throughout the world, but even after Bosnia, America and Clinton did not intervene in countries like Liberia and Rwanda when help was needed. Walter McDougall concludes that instead of making a new policy for the new world order, Clinton did the same as George Bush and relied on existing foreign policy paradigms. Bush continued Containment and Clinton relied on soft Wilsonianism and Global Meliorism.<sup>20</sup> So instead strengthening world peace, Clinton was criticized for not doing enough to stabilize the international situation.

Paul D. Wolfowitz, a Neo-Conservative and who later became George W. Bush's deputy Secretary of Defense, wrote that the Clinton administration failed to take action where it was needed, namely the "backlash states like North Korea, Iraq and Iran", which he foresaw would become the largest threats to American security.<sup>21</sup> These countries were later labeled the "Axis of Evil" by the Bush administration. The events that occurred in American foreign policy during the 1990s defined how the second generation of Neo-Conservatives viewed foreign policy. They saw how inefficient multilateral co-operation was and that military resources were used to intervene in existing conflicts that were no immediate threat to the United States. The young Neo-Conservatives wanted to stop threats before they became threats, which is something that has influenced President George W. Bush's foreign policy.

---

<sup>20</sup> Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State* (New York: Mariner Books, 1997) 198.

<sup>21</sup> Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 89.

## **Chapter 3. Exceptionalism, Wilsonianism and Straussianism – Three of the isms that Influenced the Neo-Conservatives**

In order to understand the stands taken by Neo-Conservatives on foreign policy over the years, one has to look at the ideologies and philosophies that have inspired them. I have chosen to look at exceptionalism, Wilsonianism, and Straussianism because all of these isms are either mentioned by the Neo-Conservatives themselves or by scholars who have studied the Neo-Conservatives and found evidence that links the Neo-Conservatives to these schools.

### **Exceptionalism**

The United States has been called exceptional by visitors since Alexis de Tocqueville visited America in the 1830s. Exceptionalism is a part of American nationalism, i.e. Americanism. The meaning of exceptional is not necessarily positive. On one hand the United States has exceptional freedom and individualism, but also negative aspects like exceptionally high crime rates. I will not focus on the negative aspects of exceptionalism, but focus on exceptionalism as a part of American nationalism and how it has become an ideology for Americans. I will also focus on the exceptionalism of American conservatism, in order to point out the differences from European conservatism. This will help us to place the Neo-Conservatives within the American conservative tradition.

The United States is an egalitarian society, but that does not mean that all Americans are equal, but that everyone has an equal chance to make it. But there has generally been a stronger emphasis on egalitarianism in the United States, than in for example Europe. And this is some of the basis of exceptionalism. The background for discovering American exceptionalism came from comparing the United States to especially European countries and to see what is so unique about the United States. But as I have mentioned above, that uniqueness does not have to be positive.

One of the most distinct features of American exceptionalism is that while it is hardly possible to be un-British or un-Swedish, one can be un-American. This says something about the Americans' view on nationality. Unlike in Europe, where nationality is connected to the community, American nationality is an ideology.<sup>22</sup> American nationality is also connected to communities, but also to the country as a whole. This is probably why political ideologies that reject the importance of little federal power and of one of the pillars in American society, namely the American Constitution, have had a hard time establishing themselves in the United States. There have been attempts to create socialist parties in the United States, but they have never become important parts of political life as they have in other industrialized countries. One of the explanations for this is that Americans have a dramatically different view on what equal opportunities are and a strong skepticism to strong federal power. This was also one of the features in the American society that first led to studies of American exceptionalism and which made this society so different from other industrialized societies.

Another special feature of the American society is that although the United States is very conservative, it is also one of the most liberal countries in the world. One has to bear in mind that American conservatism is rather different from what we know in Europe, which I will deal with later in this chapter. One of the reasons for the "confusion" of these terms when it comes to American politics is that what Europeans find liberal about the United States, Americans tend to see as conservatism.<sup>23</sup> What is meant by American conservatism, which the Europeans call liberalism, is an anti-state policy and laissez-faire, which has deep roots in the American society.

The American political system is also different from a lot of countries in the industrialized world, and it reflects the American skepticism towards too much federal power. The system of checks-and-balances secures that no part of the government should be able to act without consent of the other bodies of government. Most other industrialized countries use the parliamentary system. Even elections work differently in the United States, where several parts of the governing bodies are elected for different terms and at different times. The countries that use the parliamentary system

---

<sup>22</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, "American Exceptionalism Reaffirmed", *Is America Different?*, ed. Byron Shafer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 7.

<sup>23</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996) 35-36.

have more unified government which usually gives a more powerful prime minister and a different way of dealing with politics in these two different systems.<sup>24</sup>

The last major difference between these two systems is that the American election system makes it hard for third-party candidates to be elected to governing positions, which is similar to the British system. This again means that there is only enough space for two major parties. There have been some successful attempts to get third party candidates elected to office, but they have never succeeded to become presidents. The countries that do not elect by the winner-take-all system (which is used in the presidential elections in the United States, in other kinds of elections one uses single member constituencies or first-past-the-post) will have several political parties that join in coalitions in order to form a government. It is more difficult for a prime minister to secure victory in his or her causes, because one has to secure a majority of votes all the time, or else the government will fall. In the United States you either have the majority of votes in the Senate and/or House of Representatives or not. This has led to a stronger need for discipline within the parties in Europe, and members are expected to vote the same way as their leaders. The American system does usually not lead to this, which means that the members of the two parties may vote the way they want more often, because they will only have to answer to their voters and not their parties (this is somewhat simplified, but shows the general tendencies). This is interesting when thinking about how lobbyism works and how think tanks attempt to influence the policy agenda. In the American system one can approach each individual member to try to convince them about one's point of view, while in the other system you have to convince the whole party, because the members are more likely to follow the majority opinion in the party.

The points mentioned above do show us some of the issues that are uniquely American and a part of American Exceptionalism. Seymour Martin Lipset sums up American Exceptionalism in this way:

Still, the United States is more religious, more patriotic, more populist and anti-élitist ... , more committed to higher education for the majority, hence to meritocracy, more socially egalitarian, more prone to divorce, less law-abiding, wealthier in real income (purchasing power) terms, markedly more job-creating, and less disposed to save, than other developed countries.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 40.

<sup>25</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, "American Exceptionalism Reaffirmed", *Is America Different?*, ed. Byron Shafer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 40.

If one combines this with a general skepticism towards federal power and a great deal of philanthropy, one has got the essence of American exceptionalism.

Because American exceptionalism has become a part of American nationalism and therefore can be called an ideology, meaning a collection of ideas, this does explain why so many Americans believe that their brand of democracy and way of organizing society are the right way, and that it is their duty to show the rest of the world, at least the parts that are not liberal democracies, that the American way is the best way.

### **Exceptional Conservatism in American Politics**

Exceptional conservatism is used by the authors of the book *The Right Nation*. I believe it is a good expression to use in order to distinguish American conservatism from, for example, European conservatism, because there is a fundamental difference between these two kinds of conservatism. American conservatism is far from the European kind of conservatism, and especially not to British conservatism. This is partly because American conservatism is based on traditions that are far younger than European traditions. While European conservatives struggle to maintain a society based on old reactionary traditions, the American conservatives want to maintain a society based on the American Constitution, which is an important basis of how the American system works. It has been said that “Americans who call themselves ‘Conservatives’ have the right to that title only in a particular sense. In fact, they are old-fashioned liberals.”<sup>26</sup> This means that American conservatism is not conservatism in the European sense, but rather an ideology that wants to conserve the American political traditions, among others classic liberalism.

One must not think that American politics has remained un-changed throughout the country’s history. An exceptional part of American politics is the lack of a socialist party, at least a party that has had any major influence on the political life in the United States. But as we shall see below, there has been some influence from thoughts closer to socialism or social-democracy than one might suspect in the United States. A part of American exceptionalism is the idea of “from rags to riches”

---

<sup>26</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996) 36.

and that everyone has equal opportunities to create wealth for oneself. This is probably the reason for the lack of a real left side in American politics, in addition to the fact that the American Constitution was a result of a forward-thinking nation that wanted to create something different from the Europe many of these people had fled from. There have been occasions where American politics has become more similar to European politics and when welfare from the state has been given, but these events have not led to a lasting socialist or social-democratic political party in the United States, at least not any party with national political power.<sup>27</sup> One of the American “social-democratic” measures was Roosevelt’s New Deal, which did expand federal power. The period after the Depression did also increase the memberships in unions, but today the unions have little to very little influence on the American workers lives. Another reason for this is also that large companies do not allow their employees to join unions if they want to work.

Eugene Victor Debs managed to create a relatively successful Socialist Party in the United States in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but this party did only manage to get a few people into Congress. However, the Socialist Party managed to gain a great deal of success in local politics and several members of the Socialist Party were elected mayors around the United States. There were some differences between European socialism and American socialism. One of the differences was that the American Socialist Party wanted lower taxes; in fact there were lower taxes in some of the cities during their leadership, than during any other leadership. But the strong social mobility in the United States, the immigrants’ mistrust of state power and the two-party system did eventually prevent socialism from gaining more sympathy in the United States.<sup>28</sup>

It is also worth noticing that there is no radical right in the United States that has managed to manifest itself in American politics. The leaders of the neo-Nazi movement are mainly “old and frail” and the movement has not been able to get new members as they have in Europe. There is another reason for that the radical right has not manifested themselves in American politics, which is that most of these groups are militias and not political organizations in the most common definition. They are

---

<sup>27</sup> John Micklethwait and Adrian Woolridge, *The Right Nation* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004) 322.

<sup>28</sup> Leonard P. Liggio, “The Future that never Happened”, Mar 31, 2005  
<[http://www.policyreview.org/dec00/liggio\\_print.html](http://www.policyreview.org/dec00/liggio_print.html)>

outside the normal society, and have had no special impact, except from terrorist attacks from single members like Timothy McVeigh.<sup>29</sup>

The mix of religion and politics is another part of American exceptional conservatism that is striking compared to Europe. Most European countries have a state church, but they have a separation of politics and religion. How can religion be so strong in politics in a country where church and state are separated? One answer could be that the first immigrants to the United States were religious refugees from Europe, which has created a society where a lot of welfare, which in Europe is provided by government, is provided by voluntary organizations that are based in congregations around the country.<sup>30</sup>

One might question whether the Neo-Conservatives can be regarded as traditional American conservatives because of their background. The first generation of Neo-Conservatives was originally Trotskyist and supported a stronger federal control, as written in chapter 2, and even identified itself with the Democratic Party. The second generation of Neo-Conservatives had a stronger influence from the New Right during the Reagan era and they also had stronger bonds to the Christian conservatives.<sup>31</sup> The last connection might not be ideologically rooted, but based on the fact that one needs support from other conservative groups in order to get enough support for their policies. Cooperation with other conservative groups may also be rooted in what Irving Kristol called the coming conservative century, when he predicted that there will be a change towards American conservatism in the American people, and that this would lead to an era where American conservative politicians would be elected and could implement their conservative policies more easily.<sup>32</sup>

Exceptionalism is not a purely Neo-Conservative idea; it has influenced most American leaders for centuries, but it is important to understand exceptionalism in order to understand how and why Americans feel that it is their moral obligation to expand the American way of doing things. The Neo-Conservatives have in recent years come up with a solution on how to expand, as we shall see in later chapters.

---

<sup>29</sup> John Micklethwait and Adrian Woolridge, *The Right Nation* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004) 349.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>31</sup> Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 198-200.

<sup>32</sup> Irving Kristol, "The Coming 'Conservative Century'", *Neo-Conservatism: Selected Essays 1949-1995* (New York: The Free Press, 1995) 364-368.

Other conservatives have been quite skeptical to intervene or expand liberal democracy to the rest of the world.

There has always been an active debate within the United States between the isolationists and the interventionists. Both of these stands are closely linked to American exceptionalism and nationalism. The United States has had changing periods of isolationism and interventionism that have followed periods of approximately 20 to 30 years.<sup>33</sup> The debate has its roots in the discussion of what the responsibility of the United States should be. The isolationists feel that it is the obligation of the United States to differentiate itself from Europe and its conflicts. The interventionists think that because of the exceptional nature and success of the American system, Americans have to let other people in this world enjoy the fruits of this system. However, both of these directions are unilateral, which means that the United States should only act on its own behalf.

The division between isolationists and interventionists has crossed the borders of party affiliation. Both views are, for example, represented within the Republican Party. The New Right and Pat Buchanan was strongly isolationist, while the Neo-Conservatives are interventionists. These differences are also often caused by geographical affiliation. The Middle West of the United States has traditionally been more isolationists, while the East and South have been interventionists. This is partly because the Eastern and Southern economies have been more closely linked to Europe, while the Middle East feared that “interventionism would continue the erosion of the Jeffersonian agrarian ethic.”<sup>34</sup> The Neo-Conservatives are mainly from the North Eastern part of the United States and are a part of the interventionist attitude of the East.

According to Walter A. McDougall, isolationism and unilateralism mean the same thing, but with different connotations. He says that isolationism does not mean to isolate the United States from the rest of the world, but to stay neutral in all conflicts that do not interfere with the security of the United States. Isolationism is only a “dirty word” used by interventionists in anyone who questions their policies.<sup>35</sup> I will use the term unilateral in the meaning of that the United States should not be dependent on other countries and should be able to act on its own behalf alone. The

---

<sup>33</sup> Shelley, et al., *Political Geography of the United States* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1996) 202-203.

<sup>34</sup> Shelley, et al., *Political Geography of the United States* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1996) 215.

<sup>35</sup> Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State* (New York: Mariner Books, 1997) 40.

United States is not only unilateral, but can choose to act unilaterally if it wants to, or at least create bilateral or multilateral collaborations outside the already established forums, like the UN. I will use the term isolationist like many of the critics of American foreign policy have used it, which means that isolationism is when the United States tries to isolate itself completely from the rest of the world, without even intervening on their own, like the unilateralists would, according to the definitions presented in the book *Political Geography of the United States*.

### **What is Wilsonianism and its Impact on the Neo-Conservatives**

Wilsonianism is named after President Woodrow Wilson, who was president of the United States during World War I. Wilson came from a strict Presbyterian background, and was skeptical of other ways to worship God and of other religions. Despite this he was an eager fan of Ouija boards and numerology. He was not a very good student to begin with, but instead he spent his time training for leadership in student forums.<sup>36</sup> It was not until he quit law school and started studying political science that he after some time became highly regarded and started to form the ideas that would become his foreign policy.<sup>37</sup>

In one of his speeches as president Wilson said that “America is destined to go beyond partnership to leadership.”<sup>38</sup> The United States should join the “League of Nations”, which was his early idea of the United Nations, and was because of its size and neutrality destined to lead the League of Nations to fight for justice and peace. His foreign policy skills were first tested during the Mexican revolution when several American businessmen urged the president to use military force to secure American interests in Mexico. Wilson did not think that military forces should be used to secure economic interests, but only to protect justice and democracy. This notion has later been widely criticized, because is it not a president’s main obligation to protect the interests of his or her country? This is the main difference between people who believe in Realpolitik and the Wilsonians. In Realpolitik one believes in securing the country’s interests abroad and homeland security, while Wilsonianism is ideological

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 122.

and aims to spread American liberal democracy to the rest of the world. With Realpolitik I mean a pragmatic way of looking at foreign policy and a policy which is not based on ideologies or values.

According to Amos Perlmutter in his book *Making the World Safe for Democracy* Wilsonianism means “making the world safe for democracy, free trade, open borders, open diplomacy and collective security.” These ideas come from exceptionalism, according to Perlmutter. Perlmutter compares Wilsonianism and exceptionalism and argues that exceptionalism is all about “open frontiers, pacific trade, no standing armies, only militia. This ideology was also anti-elitist, populist, legalistic and doctrinaire.”<sup>39</sup> Woodrow Wilson wanted to bring an end to the old-fashioned world which was imperialistic. He wanted to influence the world through the League of Nations to replace the old world with a democratic American republican world order. The idea was that the more liberal democracies in the world, the more secure the United States would become.<sup>40</sup>

But Wilsonianism has not been fully implemented as a leading ideology behind American foreign policy. What went wrong? First of all, his plans demanded an American consensus. If the Americans did not agree, how could he implement his plans and convince the rest of the world to follow? The American president does not have the single power to execute foreign policies. He needs the consent of the Congress and of public opinion. Wilson did not succeed in explaining the importance of the League of Nations, and thus failed in convincing the politicians and the people of the United States that this was an important step.

The period between the world wars was a time when the United States was isolationist. The country had no intention to intervene anywhere, especially not in Europe. The fear of communism did not become overwhelming and there was no need to prevent it from spreading until after World War II. Foreign policy scholars and politicians did observe communism, but the power of the Soviet Union and its intentions to spread communism in Europe and Asia did not become apparent until this time. The United Nations became the instrument for peace in the world, but unlike the idea of the League of Nations, it did not put the whole burden on the United States' shoulders. Later presidents and politicians have spoken about Wilsonianism,

---

<sup>39</sup> Amos Perlmutter, *Making the World Safe for Democracy* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997) 30-31.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

and used the idealism behind it as arguments for intervening. President Bill Clinton did appeal to the American people that the people of Bosnia needed American help, but unfortunately this was only talk and the American efforts in Bosnia were never big enough or long enough to be considered Wilsonianism.<sup>41</sup>

But although Wilsonianism has never worked in reality, many American foreign policy makers still refer to Wilson and Wilsonianism as an ideal for how foreign policy should be executed. A full implementation of Wilsonianism has been prevented from happening, because there has been a strong reluctance to intervene strongly in other countries. In order to change the world into an American liberal democracy one has to use far more resources than one has used until today. One has to be involved in the rebuilding of societies after military interventions and stay in the countries that are to be changed for longer periods than today.

The American Marshall Plan is a very good example of how helping to rebuild states that are shattered after wars will create healthy economies and will help the inhabitants of these countries to build up democracies that hopefully, in the eyes of the Americans, will result in liberal democracies. However, one has to remember that helping countries build up their infrastructure and help them to hold democratic elections is no guarantee that the people of these countries will elect an American-friendly government or choose a political system close to liberal democracy.

Several American politicians have been called Wilsonians, among others Bill Clinton. But how can both Bill Clinton and the Neo-Conservatives who in the end turned out to be quite different in their view on foreign policy belong to the same foreign policy tradition? The answer is simply that one must distinguish between hard and soft Wilsonianism. People like Bill Clinton, who are also multi-lateralists, belong to the soft Wilsonians. They support the idea that one has to use international organizations like the UN to work for democracy and peace throughout the world. The Neo-Conservatives, on the other hand, have been called hard Wilsonians, which means that they do not only believe that American liberal democracy should be spread throughout the world, but they also believe in using American power to obtain this goal. While the soft Wilsonians act out of humanitarian interests, the hard Wilsonians believe that the United States is entitled to use military power in order to secure democracy around the world, not only to help the people in these countries, but also to

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 37-38.

secure American interests and homeland security. Hard Wilsonians are also against using multilateral organizations like the UN to work for these ideals; instead they rely on the United States' own power. According to the hard Wilsonians the more countries that become liberal democracies, the safer the United States will be against hatred and terrorism from foreign states.

Several Neo-Conservatives have been opposed to Wilsonianism, because of Wilson's emphasis on co-operation within the League of Nations, or multilateral bodies as it is today. This is mentioned by Irving Kristol and also Washington Post columnist Charles Krauthammer. But they do share many of the Wilsonian ideals mentioned in Woodrow Wilson's 14 points speech in January 1918, such as democratic capitalism and especially Wilson's view on the United States' position in the world.<sup>42</sup>

There is a gap between the new and the old Neo-Conservatives in their view on Wilsonianism and how to use American power after the Cold War. The first generation of Neo-Conservatives felt that "the time when Americans should bear unusual burdens is past" after the Cold War. Jeane Kirkpatrick also said that "it is not within the United States' power to democratize the world."<sup>43</sup> The new generation of Neo-Conservatives does not share this view, because in their mind the end of the Cold War did not mean the end of the fight for democracy. They wanted the United States to spend more energy on democratization, which in the end would lessen the threat against the United States. One question does however remain; if the new generation of Neo-Conservatives, to which several of the people around President George W. Bush belong, as I will show in a later chapter, is inspired by both Straussianism and hard Wilsonianism, is hard Wilsonianism only used to cover up their real goals or do they truly believe in democratization of the world? To get close to an answer to this question one has to take a closer look at Straussianism.

---

<sup>42</sup> Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 49.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

## **Straussianism - Leo Strauss' Impact on Neo-Conservative Thinking**

German born Leo Strauss was a political thinker until his death in 1978. His thoughts were based on a worry that modern society and philosophy were deteriorating and he came up with a solution he thought would change the world into something better<sup>44</sup>. His philosophy was to be known as Straussianism. Straussianism has never been an important political philosophy or ideology in the United States, unlike Wilsonianism and exceptionalism. But the combination of these three ideas can be helpful in order to understand the background for Neo-Conservative foreign policy. It can be difficult to define Straussianism, but in general he thought that all philosophy is political and he felt that the focus on reason in modern politics was the reason for the deterioration of society.<sup>45</sup> Leo Strauss was the godfather of moralistic foreign policy. Irving Kristol claims that Strauss introduced him to “‘non-utopian politics,’ a politics based on helping you cope with the world as it is rather than creating a theoretical ideal.”<sup>46</sup>

Several people claim that Strauss' view on politics has been a great influence on the Neo-Conservative way of thinking about politics, but others also point out that Strauss' philosophy can be interpreted in many ways and that the Neo-Conservative way of thinking is not necessarily what Strauss intended when he first introduced these ideas. But there is no doubt that several of the original Neo-Conservatives were and are familiar with Straussianism, and many of today's Neo-Conservatives think highly of him, although many also deny that he has been an inspiration. Some even claim that the connection between the Neo-Conservatives and Straussianism is made by people who want to “blacken their reputation.”<sup>47</sup>

According to Shadia Drury, a scholar who has studied the link between Strauss and the Neo-Conservatives for years, what the Neo-Conservatives find most compelling about Straussianism is the great belief in “efficacy and useful lies in politics.”<sup>48</sup> Strauss based this idea on Plato's notion of the noble lie, which meant that

---

<sup>44</sup> Wikipedia.org on Leo Strauss. Jan 29 2005 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo\\_Strauss](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_Strauss)>

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> John Micklethwait and Adrian Woolridge, *The Right Nation* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004) 74-75.

<sup>47</sup> Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 64.

<sup>48</sup> Danny Postel “Noble lies and Perpetual War: Leo Strauss, the Neo-Cons, and Iraq”, Oct 18 2003. Jan 18 2005 <<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article5010.htm>>

the rulers of a state must tell the people that they are chosen by God to rule the people in order to keep a stable society. Strauss was also inspired by philosophers and political thinkers such as Hobbes, Nietzsche, and Machiavelli, but the most important inspiration was the old philosophers from the Greek antiquity. Leo Strauss thought that the enlightenment had done little for the common man, and that the fate of the common man was to be led by educated leaders. Society's problem was not the lack of democracy, but the lack of virtue.<sup>49</sup> If people knew the reality behind how the rulers became rulers, they would create chaos and upheaval. Leo Strauss need for secrecy is explained in this way:

He argues that the wise must conceal their views for two reasons – to spare the people's feelings and to protect the elite from possible reprisals. The people will not be happy to learn that there is only one natural right – the right of the superior to rule over the inferior, the master over the slave, the husband over the wife, and the wise few over the vulgar many.<sup>50</sup>

Shadia Drury calls Leo Strauss' teachings seductive, especially to young men who want to see themselves as belonging to a special class of people who stand above everyone else in the society. She also claims that "the converts are attracted to Strauss because he offers them ready-made answers to all difficult questions."<sup>51</sup> Strauss divides the society into the vulgar and the wise, and the followers of Strauss obviously categorize themselves as the part of the wise, who are also called the philosophers. The irony behind all this is, according to Shadia Drury, that the followers of Strauss generally accept everything he says to be true, which does not seem like the ideal of a philosopher who bases his or her ideas on the ancient Greek philosophers. Some even view Strauss as a kind of Socrates who asks questions to make others wiser.<sup>52</sup> Another difference between Leo Strauss and Plato, who was one of Strauss' main inspirations, is that while Plato distinguishes between the philosopher and the statesman, Strauss' idea is that the philosophers, who are above the rest, also should be statesmen.<sup>53</sup>

The school of Leo Strauss, which was developed at the University of Chicago, offered several lectures where the students were encouraged to become statesmen and not academics. And many of the students have in fact become something in between statesmen and academics. There are at least a high percentage of Strauss' followers

---

<sup>49</sup> John Micklethwait and Adrian Woolridge, *The Right Nation* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004) 74-75.

<sup>50</sup> Danny Postel "Noble lies and perpetual war: Leo Strauss, the neo-cons, and Iraq", Oct 18 2003. Jan 18 2005 <<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article5010.htm>>

<sup>51</sup> Shadia Drury, *The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss* (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd, 1988) 193.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 200-202.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

which are engaged in shaping American policy, for example through think tanks like PNAC.

Shadia Drury is one of the few, if not the only one, who has written such a thorough criticism of Leo Strauss' political philosophy as she did in her book *The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss*, and she has been met with a lot of opposition from other scholars and especially by those who identify with Straussianism. In the book *The Crisis of Liberal Democracy*, several articles actually support Leo Strauss for bringing ideology back into politics. This book deals with what the authors call the failure of liberal democracy in the light of the thoughts of Leo Strauss, and it claims that one of the failures is the lack of values and neutral federal institutions. Leo Strauss has, according to the authors, called for rethinking and bringing back ideologies and values into political thinking.<sup>54</sup>

The Bush administration has been accused of lying about the reason for the war on terror and attacking Afghanistan and Iraq and that they are trying to hide the real reasons for acting the way they did. Can this be related to Straussianism? I will get back to this in my analysis of the foreign policy documents written by PNAC and the Bush administration. It is however important to remember that being a Straussian does not automatically make you a Neo-Conservative and vice versa. Other Straussian scholars suggest that Neo-Conservative interpretation of Leo Strauss' thoughts is a "perversion of what Strauss thought."<sup>55</sup>

I posed a question in the end of the section about Wilsonianism, where I asked if there is a contradiction between being a Straussian and a Wilsonian. In my opinion, there is no contradiction in being both a Straussian and a Wilsonian. If Shadia Drury is right about why the Neo-Conservatives find Strauss' ideas compelling, they may use his strategies to enforce hard Wilsonianism and not only use Wilsonianism to cover their real goals, whatever they might have been.

---

<sup>54</sup> Kenneth L. Deutsch and Walter Soffer, *The Crisis of Liberal Democracy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987) Introduction 1-7.

<sup>55</sup> James O. Goldsborough, "The Neo-Conservative Ascension", *Washington Wire*, Oct 5 2004.

## Chapter 4. PNAC: Its Objectives and Chief Members

The Neo-Conservative think tank PNAC was established in 1997 with a very clear goal to promote “American global leadership.”<sup>56</sup> PNAC is an initiative by the New Citizenship Project (NCP), a non-profit organization which is mostly funded by right-wing organizations and foundations. PNAC has been very active in recent years lobbying for more military spending and a tougher line against Iraq. The members of PNAC are influential Republicans and other people with important positions in the American society, which both explain the stands they have taken and why they have gained so much influence. In this chapter, I will take a look at how issue proponents can be influential policy makers, how think tanks work, other important Neo-Conservative think tanks, the background of PNAC, and who founded it and how it is funded. I will also identify the most important members of PNAC and look at what papers they have produced and what positions the members have in the American society.

### Defining Agenda-setting and Issue Proponents in the Context of Policy Agendas

To influence the public opinion is a must to set the agenda in society. There is no generally accepted definition of what public opinion is, but I will choose to use the term in its simplest meaning, namely as French writers used it in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century: a description of the common will, public spirit, and public conscience.<sup>57</sup> I do not think that there is a need to define public opinion more broadly in this thesis, because the main focus will be on how the agenda-setting has been done and who the issue proponents are. Agenda-setting can be defined in political terms as “a general set of political controversies that will be viewed at any point in time as falling within the range of legitimate concerns meriting the attention of the polity.”<sup>58</sup> Issue proponents are “individuals or groups of people who advocate for attention to be given to an

---

<sup>56</sup> PNAC web site Feb 14, 2005 <<http://www.newamericancentury.org/aboutpnac.htm>>

<sup>57</sup> Vincent Price, *Public Opinion* (London: Sage Publications, 1992) 4.

<sup>58</sup> James W. Dearing and Everett M. Rogers, *Agenda-Setting* (London: Sage Publications, 1996) 2.

issue, help determine the position of an issue in the agenda, sometimes at the cost of another issue or issues.”<sup>59</sup>

When analyzing *Rebuilding America's Defenses* and the *National Security Strategy*, one has to look at the structures behind agenda-setting that explain how one issue proponent like PNAC can influence the political agenda. Why they want to do it is quite obvious; they have a solution they believe in and they want as many as possible to implement their solution. Research has shown that the American president is more likely to be able to set the media agenda, and thus to influence public opinion, than for example Congress. The real-world-indicators are actually less important in setting the media agenda than what the American president's agenda is.<sup>60</sup> The American president is “the political system's thermostat, capable of heating up or cooling down the politics of any single issue or of an entire platter of issues.”<sup>61</sup> Therefore one has to be able to influence the president's political agenda to be able to set the media agenda and public opinion. Having the public opinion on one's side is important in order to have legitimacy behind one's policies.

It would, however, be wrong to conclude that the policy agenda influences the media agenda, and not the other way around. The media agenda does influence the policy agenda, which means that in order to have an influence on the policy agenda one must not only secure relevant political positions, but also have an influence on the media agenda. This works like a circle, where one part is in a position to influence the other part, but must also try to control what the other part is coming up with so that one does not fall behind on what is on the public agenda. Packages of opinions and solutions to political issues produced by think tanks have a better chance of being heard than single opinions.

These packages of ideas are generally welcomed by the journalists and media. The media need to be critical and present objective stories, but these can easily be made by presenting two or more views on a subject. This means that journalists can use these ready-made packages from, for example think tanks, without having to be critical to the content, because all the journalists do is to present different opinions. Groups or individuals who are able to satisfy this need for short and simple answers to political questions have a good chance of getting publicity. This shows that the theory

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 75.

of agenda-setting supports the importance of having think tanks, especially if the members of these think tanks also have relevant political positions.

## **A brief History of Think Tanks**

Think tanks have been around for many years, especially since World War II, but the real importance and effects of think tanks was not discovered until Ronald Reagan won the presidential election in 1980. Because of his lack of political knowledge and experience, he used experts to create policies for him that in the end gave him the victory in this election. There has been some debate on how important these expert groups really were for Reagan's victory. The main reason for his victory might also have been that the public was tired of liberalism that did not seem to work, but it is indisputable that these expert groups had considerable influence on Reagan's campaign. These experts worked in groups, also known as think tanks or even brain banks, as some people called them before the word think tank was generally accepted. Reagan's victory was the foundation for the "ideas industry" in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>62</sup> But the foundation was laid started in the 1940s and 1950s with a conservative movement that grew stronger and stronger during these years, much thanks to expert groups and think tanks like the Heritage foundation and the American Enterprise Institute (AEI).

Think tanks have been described as pragmatic and are said to be more open for practical solutions than makers of ideologies.<sup>63</sup> That might be true for the first think tanks, but think tanks like PNAC have set its main goal to be to create a new foreign policy for the new world order after the Cold War. The Neo-Conservative movement is also strongly influenced by the philosophies of Leo Strauss, who wants more ideologies and less Realpolitik into American politics. It would therefore be odd to consider PNAC non-ideological, although they are pragmatic in that they serve concrete and ready-made solutions, as we shall see in the next chapter. But PNAC does believe in values and especially that the dissemination of American values around the world is the best way to protect the United States.

---

<sup>62</sup> James A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers* (New York: The Free Press, 1991) 7.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 236-37.

The pragmatic think tanks after World War II were mostly not conservative; the conservative think tanks did not enter fully until the 1960s. The conservative think tanks were, like PNAC, based on a much more ideological thinking than the pragmatic think tanks. They also relied a lot more on intellectuals and not so much on pragmatic experts, which had been the tradition until then such as in the RAND Corporation during the term of office of Robert McNamara. In the beginning the agenda of the conservative think tanks was to prevent Communism from spreading and representing an alternative to Communism. Another important agenda was to be an alternative to the “Liberal Establishment.”<sup>64</sup> Leo Strauss was one of the conservatives who were deeply worried about how liberalism, in his opinion, had resulted in a decline of the society. He was not a part of any think tank, but influenced several of the Neo-Conservatives who later formed think tanks that continue to create alternatives to liberalism and who look back to Plato’s world for inspiration. While the Neo-Conservatives themselves accused their opponents of not promoting values, James A. Smith claims in his book *The Idea Brokers* that they only said this because they were a marginal group outside the establishment, and that they had no choice but to argue that the problems in society were due to the lack of values.<sup>65</sup>

The Neo-Conservatives were an important part of this new “wave” of conservative think tanks. Irving Kristol, the “founder” of Neo-Conservatism, was one of the early advocates of faith instead of science and rationalism.<sup>66</sup> These values were most importantly sketched out by the AEI. The Vietnam War and other major events in the United States history in the 1960s and 1970s opened for a lot of criticism of the government in the media. Experts from among others think tanks were welcomed to give expert statements to the media, especially if they were critical of the establishment. This was a door-opener for the conservative and the Neo-Conservative think tanks into the media, especially since these think tanks consisted of people who were either scholars or had had important government positions, which I will look at later in this chapter, something which gave their statements credibility. The other reason for the think tanks success in the media was their production of ready-made packages of ideas and opinions which are easily copied into articles and news. The think tanks did not only provide text material, but also provided pictures and videos. I

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 180.

cannot say who came up with that idea first, but the advertisement industry has used this strategy for many years, because they know that the less a journalist has to work to present their news, the larger the chance that the news will be broadcasted. The stories of the journalists Jayson Blair and Steven Glass only show too well that the media can be dangerously uncritical to sources, something which anyone with an agenda should be smart enough to exploit.<sup>67</sup>

But one cannot only rely on the media to present one's ideas. It is also important for think tanks to reach out to people within policy positions. Think tanks have been major producers of books and papers that present their values and ideas, but most journalists and policy maker do not have time, or the will, to read all the books that are published within their field of expertise. The think tanks have realized this and have produced memos and action papers that are easily read and that can get people's immediate attention.<sup>68</sup> But this is not only done in order to make one's own ideas into official policy, this is also a part of marketing think tanks to potential donors. The think tanks are dependent on private and corporate donations in order to survive, and being able to show some success or attention is the best way to promote oneself.

The conservative think tanks have not only worked as a place for developing ideas and values, but also a place to create new "brains" for policy positions. The people behind the Heritage Foundation has said that "people are policy," which means that they have been active in trying to find people for policy positions. According to James A. Smith, these foundations have been the best way for young conservatives with political ambitions to get into politics, instead of going through traditional academic careers. The think tanks sponsor graduate students to come and work for them and give them a kind of trainee program on how to become a conservative or Neo-Conservative policy maker.<sup>69</sup>

In general, one can say that think tanks have evolved from being pragmatic expert groups into becoming think tanks for developing ideologies and values. This is especially true as far as conservative and Neo-Conservative think tanks are concerned.

---

<sup>67</sup> Journalism.org on Jayson Blair, <<http://www.journalism.org/resources/briefing/archive/blair.asp>>

<sup>68</sup> James A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers* (New York: The Free Press, 1991) 194.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 206-207.

## **The Neo-Conservative Strategy: Using Think Tanks to Gain Influence**

The American conservatives, from the New Right to the Neo-Conservatives, have in general been active users of think tanks in order to create policies. A think tank is normally a group which is financed by one or more organizations or foundations and which main objective is to create policies on specific issues. The most prominent Neo-Conservative think tanks are the AEI, formed in 1943, The Heritage Foundation, which was founded in 1973, and one of the most recent additions, the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), which was founded in 1997 and which will be my focus in this thesis. But first of all I would like to give an outline of the most important Neo-Conservative think tanks and then what the purpose of these think tanks is and who funds them, in order to see who are paying for the think tank's analyses.

AEI was established to meet the challenges from a growing liberal establishment and connected with Neo-Conservatives like Irving Kristol in the 1950s and 1960s. They focus on three areas, domestic and international economic policy, foreign and defense policy, and social and political studies. This means that they have a broad focus and are involved in several aspects of society. AEI produces about 20 books each year and hundreds of articles and op-ed essays. Michael Ledeen, Richard Perle and Jeanne Kirkpatrick are some of the most important members of AEI's foreign policy program.<sup>70</sup>

The Heritage Foundation is also one of the most important conservative and Neo-Conservative think tanks. The foundation started as a New Right think tank, but does now include traditional conservatives and Neo-Conservatives as well. Their focus is on domestic and economic policy studies and foreign policy and defense studies. This foundation has been one of the most successful in getting attention from the media, especially because they spend a vast percentage of their budget on marketing. They have also secured a new generation of conservatives through the Third Generation program and several courses on conservatism.<sup>71</sup>

There are many more active think tanks in Washington and around the United States that are conservative or have some connection to the Neo-Conservative

---

<sup>70</sup> James A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers* (New York: The Free Press, 1991) 271.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 286-287.

movement, but the above mentioned have in my opinion been the most important in forming what has become the Neo-Conservative policies, in addition to the smaller think tank PNAC.

A think tank is not necessarily an independent research institution, but rather a group of people who are trying to find strategies to confirm a certain point of view or to support a certain policy. They produce books, reports, articles, speeches, etc. that line up possible strategies that can be used to put forward their policies. The conservatives, and especially the Neo-Conservatives, have used these think tanks to create common policies to meet the liberals and leftists in American politics. The use of think tanks also help them grow their networks and think tanks like AEI ended up delivering speeches and short memoranda for “busy government officials, journalists and academics” in Washington, something that really made these think tanks influential.<sup>72</sup> The left side of American politics has not been active in think tanks, but is slowly beginning to make up for this now, after the power of conservative think tanks has been revealed. I would like to underline that the power of the think tanks is not a conspiracy theory, and I am not trying to prove some mysterious connection between the Neo-conservatives and American politicians. The power of using think tanks in policy making is a well-established fact. Stefancic and Delgado state this in their book “No Mercy – How Conservative Think Tanks and Foundations Changed America’s Social Agenda”:

But the dedication, economy of effort, and sheer ingenuity of much of the conservative machine are extraordinary. We wrote this book to inform the American public how that machine operates – not to celebrate, but to deplore it. We wrote to encourage the left to get busy before it is too late. If liberals are to bring this country back nearer the center they must understand – and even at times emulate – the strategies and approaches deployed by their opposite numbers on the other side of the political spectrum.<sup>73</sup>

I will not discuss whether or not the United States has to go left or right in politics, but this shows us that both sides appreciate how well the think tanks actually have worked for those who want to influence policy making in the United States. One of the reasons for their success is their narrow focus on a small number of issues, like PNAC, who has its main focus on America’s role in the new world order. The

---

<sup>72</sup> Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 48.

<sup>73</sup> Jean Stefancic and Richard Delgado, *No Mercy: How Conservative Think Tanks and Foundations Changed America’s Social Agenda* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996) 5.

Conservative think tanks are also better than the left side of American politics at using the media to promote their policies.<sup>74</sup> But one of the most important reasons for the success of the conservative think tanks is money. They are better at fundraising and have more willing supporters to back them than other think tanks. The Conservatives are also generally better at “spreading quasi-government funds to allies who might be a source for important ideas in the future.”<sup>75</sup>

When one is looking at the think tanks and what kind of policies they promote one has to take who are funding these think tanks into consideration. One reason is that it might be easier to discover the motives behind the literature produced by the think tanks. Microsoft has been accused of financing think tanks to produce research material that supports that open-source software is less secure than Microsoft’s software. By knowing which think tanks that are funded by Microsoft and which are not, one has a better platform to interpret the claims of these think tanks.

Another reason for knowing who are funding a think tank is that it is easier to find out what connection a certain think tank has got. One example is AEI which, among others, is funded by the Randolph Foundation. This foundation was founded by William Randolph Hearst who owned several newspapers, magazines, TV-stations, radio-stations and, other media channels. The Hearst Corporation is not directly linked to the foundation, but it has the same owners and it is at least an advantage to be backed by a huge media corporation. Several of the Neo-Conservative think tanks, like AEI, the Hudson Institute and the Manhattan Institute, have also received funds from Rupert Murdoch and Conrad Black. Rupert Murdoch and Conrad Black also own the Weekly Standard, The New York Post, the National Interest and New York Sun, where several Neo-Conservative columnists either are editors or columnists. So not only are they funded by powerful corporations and funds, but they also have strong support from large media corporations. This leads us to look at PNAC’s background.

---

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>75</sup> Eric Alterman, “Tweddledum and Tweedledumber; Republicans outthink Democrats in the quantity, if not the quality, of their ideas on how to govern”, Jul 12 1994, The Recorder.

## The Background and Funding of PNAC

PNAC was founded in 1997 by William Kristol, who was chairman at NCP at the time, and the president of the same organization, Gary Schmitt. PNAC was an initiative taken by the NCP. This organization has founded other think tanks as well, among others Council on Crime in America.

PNAC are not mentioned in Stefancic and Delgado's book *No Mercy* about how conservative think tanks are funded, but they describe several other conservative and Neo-Conservative think tanks. AEI is, as I mentioned above, funded by the Randolph Foundation, but also by the John M. Olin Foundation and the Earhart Foundation. I have so far not been able to find any written sources confirming which of these foundations that also support the NCP and PNAC, but according to a watchdog website called Mediatransparency.org many of these foundations also support NCP and PNAC. According to this website, PNAC received more than 120,000 dollars from the John M. Olin, the Earhart, the Hickory and the William H. Donner Foundations in the period between 2000 and 2003.<sup>76</sup> The John M. Olin Foundation did also grant money to NCP in 1997 to start a project called The Project for a New American Century, which shows the tie between these foundations, NCP and PNAC. These numbers are taken from the foundations' IRS form 990, which are publicly available for three years, and are now gathered in one place at Mediatransparency.org.

Most of these donors were from corporate America and worried about the US economy losing in competition abroad and they did also fear that "the liberal intelligensia" were threatening the capitalistic system.<sup>77</sup>

## PNAC Marking a Shift in Neo-Conservatism

The establishment of PNAC marked a shift in Neo-Conservatism. A new generation of Neo-Conservatives had taken over several of the leading positions that the older

---

<sup>76</sup> Mediatransparency.org Feb 14, 2005

<[http://www.mediatransparency.org/search\\_results/info\\_on\\_any\\_recipient.php?recipientID=2243](http://www.mediatransparency.org/search_results/info_on_any_recipient.php?recipientID=2243)>

<sup>77</sup> John Micklethwait and Adrian Woolridge, *The Right Nation* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004) 78.

generation had held before them. Robert Kagan, William Kristol, Joshua Muravchik, Richard Perle, and Paul Wolfowitz had by the second half of the 1990s taken over the positions of Nathan Glazer, Irving Kristol, Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Norman Podhoretz.<sup>78</sup> They did not only represent a change in persons, but also had quite different view on foreign policy.

The first generation of Neo-Conservatives had become weary of an aggressive foreign policy because they simply felt that there was no longer a need for strict containment or pre-emptive wars to have a stable world order. Some claim that the second generation of Neo-Conservatives was remarkably less based on an intellectual heritage than the first generation. They had a simpler focus, which was fighting for democratic values, challenging those who oppose American values, taking responsibility for the global order, promoting American values world wide, and increasing defense spending.<sup>79</sup> They do not think much of the world as it is today and offer two simple solutions to the problems of this world, namely first tough American unilateralism and then spreading American values to save the world.<sup>80</sup> So in order to reach this goal, a peaceful world based on American values, because American values are most suitable for efficient democracy and peace, one has to use harsh methods, i.e. by pre-emptive attacks and performing “constabulary” duties, as we will see in the next chapter.<sup>81</sup>

## **PNAC’s Main Objectives**

The main reason for founding PNAC was that several Neo-Conservatives, including its founder William Kristol, thought that American Conservatives lacked a plan for foreign policy in the new world situation. So PNAC’s agenda was to create this plan, which later has been molded into documents like the *Rebuilding America’s Defenses* document, which I will analyze and compare with the Bush Administration’s *National Security Strategy* written in 2002.

---

<sup>78</sup> Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 99.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>80</sup> John Micklethwait and Adrian Woolridge, *The Right Nation* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004) 210.

<sup>81</sup> PNAC “Rebuilding America’s Defenses”, Sep 2000, iv.

### The PNAC's Statement of Principles says:

American foreign and defense policy is adrift. Conservatives have criticized the incoherent policies of the Clinton Administration. They have also resisted isolationist impulses from within their own ranks. But conservatives have not confidently advanced a strategic vision of America's role in the world. They have not set forth guiding principles for American foreign policy. They have allowed differences over tactics to obscure potential agreement on strategic objectives. And they have not fought for a defense budget that would maintain American security and advance American interests in the new century.

We aim to change this. We aim to make the case and rally support for American global leadership.<sup>82</sup>

It is difficult to define the strategy that PNAC wants to use to achieve these goals. The people behind PNAC primarily state what their goals are, but not how to influence those with the power to work for these goals. PNAC has written several letters to leaders around the world, but mainly to American presidents, where PNAC asks them to consider their solutions to international conflicts. In addition to this PNAC's members have written several articles and reports that sum up their view on international politics.

The main difference between PNAC and the other Neo-Conservative think tanks is that PNAC mainly focuses on defense and foreign policy, while the others also produce policies on domestic and economic issues. PNAC's narrow focus makes it easier to extract the Neo-Conservative view on foreign policy which also makes it easier to compare with, for example, the Bush Administration's foreign policy.

## The Chief Members of PNAC

I will now take a look at the people behind PNAC and what role they have played in American politics and society in the last decades, in order to establish to what extent PNAC has been able to influence American policy making. Some people claim that PNAC's influence has been overestimated, while others feel that PNAC and other Neo-Conservatives have "hi-jacked" the presidential administration. I will discuss this later in this chapter. First I will identify the most central people behind PNAC.

William (Bill) Kristol is the chairman and co-founder of PNAC. He is the son of the "godfather" of Neo-Conservatism, Irving Kristol. One can assume that being the son of one of the main figures behind the Neo-Conservative movement has been

---

<sup>82</sup> PNAC Statement of Principles, Jun 3, 1997. Feb 1, 2005  
<<http://www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm>>

both inspiring and influential for William Kristol and something which has formed his political stand. Before he entered politics he was teaching politics at the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. William Kristol is the editor of the Neo-Conservative magazine *The Weekly Standard*. He is also the former chief of staff to Vice President Dan Quayle and to Secretary of Education William Bennet.<sup>83</sup> William Kristol has also been and active member of the AEI, along with his father Irving Kristol.

William Kristol used to be a member of the Democratic Party, but was one of those Neo-Conservatives who changed to the Republican Party during the late 1970s. After George Bush sr. lost to Bill Clinton in 1992, William Kristol has worked for *The Weekly Standard* as well as working as expert commentator for several TV stations.<sup>84</sup>

Robert Kagan is educated at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and is one on the most active authors in PNAC. He has written several articles together with William Kristol and many of these are either published in *The Weekly Standard* or on PNAC's web site. He has also had a monthly column on world affairs in *The Washington Post*.<sup>85</sup> Robert Kagan was also President Reagan's Secretary of State George P. Shultz's speechwriter. He is also a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and has written several articles and books about foreign policy. His position in the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is rather interesting, because that is a think tank of the "old school", which are more like research institutions rather than ideology makers, like the modern think tanks like PNAC are.

William Kristol and Robert Kagan have together signed most of the reports and articles published by PNAC. Working in a think tank does not mean that they are the only contributors to these articles and essays, but they are most certainly those of the PNAC members who have published most of PNAC's policies.

Francis Fukuyama is another often cited PNAC signatory. He is a professor in international political economy at John Hopkins University. He is probably best known for his book *The End of History and the Last Man* from 1992 where he predicts the end of all other ideologies than western liberal democracy, which has

---

<sup>83</sup> Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, *Weapons of Mass Deception* (London: Robinson, 2003) 46.

<sup>84</sup> Mediatransparency.org on William Kristol, <[http://www.mediatransparency.org/people/bill\\_kristol.htm](http://www.mediatransparency.org/people/bill_kristol.htm)>.

<sup>85</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace's biography of Robert Kagan, <<http://www.ceip.org/files/about/Staff.asp?r=16>>

proven its ability to survive when all other ideologies have failed. Francis Fukuyama worked for the RAND Corporation from 1979-1980, which was one of the first think tanks and which was based more on expertise than on creating ideologies and values. Since then he has, among others, been a member of the Policy Planning Staff of the US Department of State, where he has worked with the Middle East and European issues.<sup>86</sup> However, he has not published anything in the name of PNAC, other than signing the *Statement of Principles* and other letters sent from PNAC, so he does not appear to be one of the chief ideologues behind PNAC, like Kagan and William Kristol.

Several of the people who have signed the *Statement of Principles* and other PNAC publications have held important government offices during the presidencies of Ronald Reagan, George Bush sr., and George W. Bush. Some of these are George W. Bush's Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his former deputy Paul Wolfowitz. Donald Rumsfeld has been the Secretary of Defense twice in his lifetime, first in 1975-1977 and then again during the presidency of George W. Bush. He has also been a congressman and the US ambassador to NATO. Donald Rumsfeld's deputy, until recently, Paul Wolfowitz has an academic background as a dean and professor at the John Hopkins University, the same University that Francis Fukuyama belongs to. Wolfowitz's political career is as vast as the above mentioned, with experience from several departments in the American government and he does also have diplomatic experience.

There are also several other members who have held government positions or who have otherwise contributed considerably to policy making in the United States. Not all of the members are equally active; there are just a few who deliver papers on a regular basis, but they do at least identify with the principles of PNAC by signing the *Statement of Principles* from 1997. The full list of people who signed this statement is: Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Elliott Abrams, Francis Fukuyama, Norman Podhoretz, Midge Decter, Zalmay Khalilzad, Gary Bauer, William J. Bennett, Jeb Bush, Dick Cheney, Eliot A. Cohen, Paula Dobriansky, Steve Forbes, Aaron Friedberg, Frank Gaffney, Fred C. Ikle, Donald Kagan, I. Lewis Libby, Dan Quayle, Peter W. Rodman, Stephen P. Rosen, Henry S. Rowen, Vin Weber and George

---

<sup>86</sup> Francis Fukuyama's Web Site <<http://www.sais-jhu.edu/Faculty/fukuyama/Biography>>

Weigel.<sup>87</sup> If one assumes that the same people who signed the statement in 1997 still are in touch and that these people still identify with these principles, one can conclude that PNAC does have strong connections with President George W. Bush's administration and that PNAC is in a position to influence that administration's foreign policy.

Many of the people who signed PNAC's *Statement of Principles* have not published any papers in the name of the think tank, but they hold so important positions in the American society, that one has to look at who they are and what they have done throughout the years in order to understand more about who really identifies with PNAC and what the connection between these people are. I have already identified some of the key members of PNAC and those members who I believe are most important for either forming PNAC's ideas or those who have the most important positions in the American government. But there are many more that should be mentioned in this text.

Norman Podhoretz has been editor of the *Commentary Magazine*, where William Kristol also has worked, and now Podhoretz is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, one of the largest conservative think tanks in the United States. He is married to Midge Decter, who also signed PNAC's *Statement of Principles*, and who has worked for the *Commentary Magazine* as well. She is now in the board of directors of the Heritage Foundation, another one of the largest conservative think tanks in the United States. Norman Podhoretz and Midge Decter's son, John Podhoretz, has been one of the speechwriters who worked for Ronald Reagan and George Bush sr. Although family ties does not necessarily mean that one shares the same political opinions, one can assume that John Podhoretz has been influenced by his parents' political activism, and he has at least stayed at the Republican side of politics.

Zalmay Khalizad is another interesting person who signed the *Statement of Principles*. He has been a senior scientist in the RAND Corporation, but is perhaps most known for his position as advisor for UNOCAL, one of the largest oil companies that operate in the Middle-East, and which has been criticized for working in countries with oppressive governments. It was mentioned in the movie "Fahrenheit 9/11" by Michael Moore, that Hamid Karzai, the first democratically elected president of Afghanistan, also worked for UNOCAL, something which might explain his

---

<sup>87</sup> PNAC Statement of Principles, Jun 3, 1997. Feb 1, 2005  
<<http://www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm>>

connections to the United States and why Karzai was the American government's favorite candidate for the presidential office in Afghanistan.<sup>88</sup> Khalizad worked as the Bush administration's envoy to Afghanistan and Iraq before he became the American ambassador in Afghanistan. He is thus one of the PNAC signatories who have been chosen into important positions by the Bush administration after the 9/11.

Elliot Abrams is another significant signatory of several PNAC statements. He is a member of the National Security Council and has been active in American politics since he graduated from Harvard Law School in 1973. He has, like many of the other signatories of PNAC's Statement of Principles, been a fellow or similar in other and larger conservative and Neo-Conservative think tanks, among others the Heritage Foundation and the Hudson Institute.

There are several other examples of the connections between the active members and the signatories in PNAC and also how involved they are in American politics and media, and I believe that these examples are enough to cast a light on how influential and important a think tank like PNAC can be, because of its members..

---

<sup>88</sup> *Fahrenheit 9/11*, by Michael Moore, Columbia Tristar, 2004.

## **Chapter 5. A Closer Look at the Connection Between PNAC and President George W. Bush's National Security Strategy**

There have been several charges against the Neo-Conservatives for hijacking the Bush administration after 9/11, and even that the whole 9/11 was a planned by Neo-Conservatives all along, “proven” by what they wrote prior to this event. Many Europeans look at George W. Bush as a puppet in the hands of powerful Neo-Conservatives. Others say that the power of the Neo-Conservatives has been exaggerated and that the war on terrorism was a natural reaction to an attack on the American people. What is the truth? I believe that the first notion is a conspiracy theory. In fact, the Neo-Conservatives in general did not even support George W. Bush as the Republican candidate in 2000; most Neo-Conservatives supported Senator John McCain, so Bush was not a part of a larger Neo-Conservative plan to take over American foreign policy at all.<sup>89</sup> However, one cannot overlook the fact that American foreign policy after 9/11 does resemble the thoughts produced by for example PNAC long before these events took place. So what are PNAC? Are they fortune tellers who can predict the future, or was their influence on foreign policy a result of events that lead to a need for new solutions in foreign policy? I will try to cast light on this by comparing the document *Rebuilding America's Defenses* written by PNAC in 2000 and the Bush administration's *National Security Strategy* written in 2002 as a road map for fighting international terrorism.

### **A Background for *Rebuilding America's Defenses***

In order to understand the more of the content in *Rebuilding America's Defenses* it may be helpful to look at some of the other articles written by members of PNAC, where they lay out some of their thoughts on history, liberal American Democracy and liberalism. Francis Fukuyama, one of the members of PNAC, has written that liberalism no longer has the same opponents as it used to have. The two major challengers were fascism and communism, but they are no longer a threat to

---

<sup>89</sup> James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2004) 259-260.

liberalism. He points out that they failed, while American liberalism has shown the ability to survive many different world orders. Because there has been no other major political ideology that has challenged liberalism after the fall of communism and fascism, Fukuyama predicted that the end of the last century would also be the end of history. Liberalism has survived as the only working ideology. The end of history does not mean the end of international conflicts; instead Fukuyama predicts that the conflicts will be a result of powerful national interests.<sup>90</sup> But he fears that a world without ideologies will be replaced by “economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands”.<sup>91</sup> This rather sad view on a world without ideologies and idealism might be an explanation for the Neo-Conservatives’ need to come up with a new foreign policy that is based on values and ideologies rather than Realpolitik. The article does certainly point out the need for new thinking after the end of the Cold War.

There have been reactions to this article from among others Samuel P. Huntington who says that this is an erroneous interpretation of the situation after the end of the Cold War, but I will not go deeper into that, because my thesis is not supposed to be a debate on how the new world order should be met, but rather about how the Neo-Conservatives and PNAC view the world.<sup>92</sup> But I would also like to note that even one of the founders of PNAC, Robert Kagan, has denied that the world is in an “end of history” situation in his article “The Next War” in *The Weekly Standard* from 2001. He says:

We have entered what should be thought of not as the "post-Cold War" era or the "New World Order" or least of all the "End of History," but an interwar period, the tenth the United States has faced as a nation. In all the others save the Cold War, we have failed to prepare ourselves for what lay ahead. The evidence is growing that we will fail in this one, too.<sup>93</sup>

He does, however, agree that there is a need for new thinking when it comes to foreign policy in order to be prepared for what is to come. The greatest mistake would be to assume that there will be no more wars and that the United States’ position as

---

<sup>90</sup> Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?”, *America and the World*, (New York: Foreign Affairs, 2002) 1-28.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>92</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, “No exit: The Errors of Endism”, *America and the World*, (New York: Foreign Affairs, 2002) 29-42.

<sup>93</sup> Robert Kagan, “The Next War”, *The Weekly Standard*, Feb 7, 2001. Mar 1, 2005  
<<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Protected/Articles/000/000/000/249kwyvo.asp>>

the world's only superpower cannot be threatened. He warns against downsizing the military, because that will make the United States unable to sustain more than one major theater war.<sup>94</sup>

About ten years after Fukuyama's article Robert Kagan added that because the United States is the most powerful nation in the world it is better suited both militarily and psychologically, to intervene and attack where it finds it necessary. He explains the European reluctance to unilateral politics as the politics of weak nations; they do not like it, because they cannot do it. So, he explains, the Europeans would do exactly the same thing as the United States if for example the EU was the only superpower in the world, because it is both the possibility and the duty for a superpower to use its strength to secure a world of peace. A second reason for the European skepticism towards American foreign policy is, according to Kagan, that the Europeans do not view themselves as a primary target of terrorism, which leads the Europeans to think that the War on Terrorism is less important than the Americans think. Kagan's conclusion is, however, that after 9/11 the Americans can and want to bear the burden of fighting terrorism on their own. And because of the reasons mentioned above, it is all right to do so without the consent of Europe, because if the Europeans had been in the same situation as the Americans, they would have done the same thing.<sup>95</sup>

In an article written in 2000 for the Washington Post, Kagan points out even more strongly that it is the United States' duty to use weapons and force to bring stability in the world. He urges George W. Bush to prepare the American people to use the armed forces to intervene around the world, and not wait until the next crisis to intervene, because then the President will "look like a drive-by shooter."<sup>96</sup> Kagan and William Kristol did also warn about increasing Islamic aggression towards American targets before 9/11 in their articles in *The Weekly Standard* and did also encourage the Bush administration to not only attack Afghanistan, but to follow up with for example Iraq in order to really put an end to the Islamic threat against the United States.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Robert Kagan, "Power and Weakness", *America and the World* (New York: Foreign Affairs, 2002) 211-244.

<sup>96</sup> Robert Kagan, "A World of Problems...", *PNAC website*, Apr 10, 2000. Feb 1, 2005, <[http://www.newamericancentury.org/global\\_008.htm](http://www.newamericancentury.org/global_008.htm)>

<sup>97</sup> Robert Kagan and William Kristol, "No Defense", *The Weekly Standard*, Jul 23, 2001. Mar 1, 2005 <<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Protected/Articles/000/000/000/214singh.asp?pg=2>>

## ***Rebuilding America's Defenses***

*Rebuilding America's Defenses* is a 79 page document written by members of PNAC and published on their web site in September 2000. Its aim is to create a foreign policy plan in a world where the United States is the only superpower and is without global rivals of equal size, but not without enemies. The basic idea in this document is that the United States should have enough military power to support a "grand strategy" regardless of the economic costs.<sup>98</sup> PNAC does also conclude that the future "surplus expected in federal revenues over the next decade" will secure the possibility to spend a lot of money on defense.<sup>99</sup>

The core reason for creating a new defense strategy was that PNAC claimed that previous strategies and the Pentagon's Quadrennial Defense Reports did not work in the new political atmosphere after the Cold War had ended. PNAC say that the United States is in a unique situation where the United States is the leader of a group of powerful and free states that can help preserve the Pax Americana. PNAC does, however, fear that the task to preserve Pax Americana is too large for the United States if the federal allocations for the American military forces are not increased. The solution is not, they say, to move the focus from one place to another, for example from Bosnia to Iraq, but to keep focus on all areas that need attention. They fear that the change from a bipolar to a unipolar world will not bring peace, but more theater wars around the globe, which will replace the possibility for one global war across several theaters.<sup>100</sup>

I would like to pause a moment to look at the use of the term Pax Americana in *Rebuilding America's Defenses*. Pax Americana is a negatively charged term which has connotations to the benevolent American hegemony and American imperialism. President John F. Kennedy once remarked that "the peace that the United States sought was 'not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war.'" But it seems like PNAC uses the term positively in the meaning of "empire-building for noble ends rather than for such base motives as profit and influence,"

---

<sup>98</sup> PNAC, *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, ii.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, iii.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-4.

which is how Ronald Steel described it in his book *Pax Americana*.<sup>101</sup> I will get back to how this is reflected in the *National Security Strategy* later in this chapter.

PNAC lines up four core missions for the U.S. military forces in order to meet the new challenges:

- Defend the American homeland
- Fight and decisively win multiple, simultaneous major theater wars
- Perform the “constabulary” duties associated with shaping the security environment in critical regions
- Transform U.S. forces to exploit the “revolution in military affairs”<sup>102</sup>

These points are too vague to really explain the connection between *Rebuilding America’s Defenses* and the *National Security Strategy*, but we already see one of the terms that have been used as a description of the Bush administration’s foreign policy, namely “constabulary” duties.<sup>103</sup> The term constabulary duties has been labeled doublespeak and only a nice expression concealing the reality, namely that American forces are occupying foreign territories.<sup>104</sup>

PNAC fears that the American military in 2000 was not prepared to take on these four core missions. PNAC writes that the United States needs to keep developing the nuclear weapons arsenal in order to keep the superior strength compared to other countries. They warn against small powers who have been able, or who are suspected of being able to produce nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. These countries are, among others, Pakistan, North Korea, Iran, and Iraq. Therefore it would be hazardous to reduce American nuclear power until these smaller states end the development of such weapons.

The second core mission for the U.S. Military Forces is to fight and win several theater wars. PNAC seems to think that it is the responsibility of the United States to prevent such events as the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, and therefore the U.S. military forces have to be large enough to be able to fight major theater wars in more than one place at time.<sup>105</sup> This is not an original idea from PNAC, but has been an

---

<sup>101</sup> John Bellamy Foster and Robert W. McChesney, “The American Empire: Pax Americana or Pox Americana?”, *The Monthly Review*, Sep 2004. Mar 4, 2005  
<<http://www.monthlyreview.org/0904jbfrwm.htm>>

<sup>102</sup> *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*, iv.

<sup>103</sup> I will use the term constabulary in this meaning from now on and will not use quotations marks in the rest of the thesis when using this term.

<sup>104</sup> Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, *Weapons of Mass Deception* (London: Robinson, 2003) 120-122.

<sup>105</sup> *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*, 8-9.

accepted part of American defense policy since the end of the Cold War, but PNAC fears that downsizing of the military forces during the 1990s will decrease the American ability to fight several theater wars simultaneously.

An increasing use of constabulary duties is the third core mission. Constabulary duties were also called “smaller-scale contingencies” in the Quadrennial Defense Report from the Pentagon in 1997, or, as mentioned above, some say it is just another word for invasion. There has been attacks on foreign land by the United States during peace time even under the reign of both Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton. Libya was bombed after two American soldiers were killed in a bomb that went off in a discotheque in Berlin in 1986 and the Clinton administration answered the bombings of the American Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya by bombing suspected terrorist training camps in Sudan in 1998. These were, unlike constabulary duties, not long-term. But what are these constabulary duties? As I understand it PNAC defines them as small peace-keeping missions that do not require large scale wars and that can be done in cooperation with, for example, NATO. These missions should not be UN peace-keeping missions, because of the failure of the UN in the Balkans. PNAC suggests that American political, and not multilateral, leadership is needed in order to succeed. These missions are often long-term and need personnel and other resources over a long period. The problem is, they say, that instead of using enough resources to both have armed forces in theater wars and serving in constabulary duties, the American government has been reluctant to send armed forces into constabulary duties in case of major theater wars, because of the fear of not having enough military resources to fight against a large enemy in a major theater. It is again a question of enough funding from the government.<sup>106</sup>

The constabulary duties should be used to “shape the security environment in critical regions.”<sup>107</sup> This means to help the people and the opposition in these regions to overthrow and change the regimes that control these regions. This sounds quite similar to the Reagan Doctrine, but the difference is that the Reagan Doctrine was based on supporting opposition groups in the targeted areas with money, technology, weapons and expertise, while constabulary duties are actually American troops that go into a targeted area to support the opposition or to otherwise secure democracy in the targeted region.

---

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., v.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., iv.

The fourth core challenge is to “transform U.S. forces to exploit the ‘revolution in military affairs’”. The term revolution seems vague, but what PNAC means by this is that the U.S. military forces must exploit new developments in technology in order to be one step ahead of any potential enemy. PNAC strongly criticizes Pentagon for not investing enough resources in developing a better global missile defense system and for not spending more resources on space research, because they suggest that the space will become another theater for major wars.<sup>108</sup> However, they do not blame the Pentagon alone, because how can Pentagon invest more in research if it does not get the funds necessary to do so? This is yet another reason for expanding the defense budget, according to PNAC.

A chart which is included in *Rebuilding America's Defenses* shows that the share of GDP spent on military purposes has been drastically reduced after World War II. The share was almost 19 percent during the Vietnam War, and more than 5 percent during the Reagan build-up, but is now down to 2.5.<sup>109</sup> However, one should be careful not to jump to conclusions on the basis of these numbers, because GDP does not say anything about the actual amounts spent on military purposes.

PNAC focuses on these main areas: Europe, the Persian Gulf, and East Asia. Western Europe is stable now, but PNAC underlines that there is still considerable instability in the east, which makes American military presence necessary in Europe. The main focus is on the Persian Gulf and in East Asia is Iraq, with its leader Saddam Hussein, and North Korea. There cannot be stability in these areas before the regimes are removed and replaced by democratically elected leaders. This again means that there has to be enough funds for the U.S. military forces to sustain long-lasting campaigns in the target areas if necessary. The strategy should not only be, for example, to remove Saddam Hussein, but also to remain in the area until democracy is secured. PNAC is almost on the same wavelength as the American people when establishing which country or region which are the greatest threat to American safety and world peace. A poll made by ABC News, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2001 shows that Iraq is in the second place of countries that Americans fear the most, but only with 13% as opposed to 20% ten years earlier. China is number one in 2001 with 35% of the people fearing

---

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 5-13.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 71.

them the most.<sup>110</sup> PNAC does not mention China at all. The think tank focuses on the small and potential nuclear powers. One must be aware that the poll asks people to name the largest threat to world peace, not for example the nation which is most likely to harbor terrorists that could attack the United States. That question might somewhat have changed the results. ABC has not published polls that measure which countries or regions people fear are the largest threat to world peace after the War on Terrorism began, so it is hard to say whether or not the focus of PNAC has had any influence on public opinion, but a poll from PIPA.org from 2002 shows a tendency that less and less Americans look at Iraq favorably.<sup>111</sup> But Americans have never seen Iraq as the largest threat until after the 9/11.

The most debated part of *Rebuilding America's Defenses* is where authors say: "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."<sup>112</sup> Certain conspiratory web sites claim that this is the evidence for that the Neo-Conservatives and PNAC had planned 9/11 themselves because they needed a reason to implement their foreign policy.<sup>113</sup> This does obviously not prove any such thing, but does show us that the people behind PNAC were aware of that an event like an attack on the United States would create a need for new foreign policy strategies, because there would be questions about the old way of doing foreign policy. People would start asking why such an event could happen and there would be a demand for change. The Neo-Conservatives represented by PNAC had a prepared plan, namely *Rebuilding America's Defenses*. This plan and several other documents, among those a letter written to President Bill Clinton in 1998, encouraged the policy makers in the United States to take action in possible terrorist states such as Iraq.<sup>114</sup> The Neo-Conservatives had not only planned what to do in case of an attack on the United States, they had also planned what the main targets after an event like 9/11 should be, because PNAC regarded these states as potential threats to the security of the United States. This is simply a matter of a group of people with similar ideas who, once they got into power, want to see these ideas come to life in policy making.

---

<sup>110</sup> ABC News Poll-vault, Jul 24, 2001. Oct 12, 2004  
<<http://www.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/poll010724.html> >

<sup>111</sup> Americans & the World-report . Oct 12, 2004 <[http://www.americans-world.org/digest/regional\\_issues/Conflict\\_Iraq/genAtt.cfm](http://www.americans-world.org/digest/regional_issues/Conflict_Iraq/genAtt.cfm) >

<sup>112</sup> *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, 63.

<sup>113</sup> One such web page is <http://911review.org/>

<sup>114</sup> PNAC letter to President Bill Clinton, Jan 26, 1998. Oct 18, 2004  
<<http://newamericancentury.org/iraqlintonletter.htm>>

## ***The National Security Strategy***

The *National Security Strategy* was published in September 2002 by the White House. This is the foreign policy “manifesto” of the Bush administration and it is natural to compare *Rebuilding America’s Defenses* with this document, when trying to establish a connection between the White House and Neo-Conservative foreign policy. It is an established fact that there are a great number Neo-Conservatives with important roles in the Bush Administration, as I have shown in the previous chapter, but that does not mean that American foreign policy can be called Neo-Conservative or even is influenced by it.

The document opens with a broad description of the purpose of the strategy, which is best described with this quote: “The United States must defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere.”<sup>115</sup> I find this quote descriptive because it is a manifestation of what the purpose of the United States is as the world’s only superpower. It is also a good example of American exceptionalism and nationalism, because the quote implies that American values are best for everyone. The *National Security Strategy* continues by summing up principles that are similar to those of the Bill of Rights, namely no absolute power of the state, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, equal justice, women’s rights and respect for private property. These are some of the basic rights in the United States and the will to spread these rights to the rest of the world shows the American belief in exceptionalism and a kind of Wilsonianism as well. As I have mentioned in previous chapters, these are also some of the ideologies behind the Neo-Conservative movement. But neither will this alone prove a strong Neo-Conservative ideology behind the foreign policy described in the *National Security Strategy*.

The *National Security Strategy* was written at another time than *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*. This was after 9/11, and the Americans had for the first time since Pearl Harbor experienced an attack on American soil, and not only on American personnel and embassies abroad. PNAC had for a long time warned against the weakening of the American defense system because of lesser funds for these purposes, and had also for a long time viewed the Middle East and especially Iraq and Saddam

---

<sup>115</sup> National Security Strategy, 3.

Hussein as the United States' main enemies. But the main difference between these two documents is obviously that while *Rebuilding America's Defenses* focuses on funding defense and being able to fight major theater wars and on constabulary duties, the other is more focused on anti-terrorism.

One of the first elements in the *National Security Strategy* that bears a striking resemblance to the Neo-Conservatives' strategies is the observation "[w]e shall not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country."<sup>116</sup> PNAC had already defined the UN as inefficient and stated that it was too dangerous to leave important security decisions in the hands of a multilateral organ and not let the homeland politicians decide what to do. This is also an "omen" of what was going to happen in the UN when the Americans decided that they could no longer wait for the weapons inspectors in Iraq a few years later.

The main areas targeted in the *National Security Strategy* are Israel and Palestine, South Asia, India and Pakistan, Indonesia, Latin America, and several African countries. These are countries where increased internal cooperation hopefully will decrease regional unrest. The *National Security Strategy* implies that regional unrest can cause uncontrollable situations that can become risks for American safety. The document does not mention any military action taken towards these countries, it is only suggested that the Americans should cooperate with these countries on their own, or through international organizations. It does not mention the UN especially, but does rather imply that there should be created new international organizations that have specialized in resolving conflicts in these areas.<sup>117</sup> Again we see certain skepticism against using the UN for handling international conflicts.

The states mentioned here are not those who are viewed as the largest threats against the United States. The most severe threats, according to both the *National Security Strategy* and *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, are Iraq and North Korea. These are countries that "brutalize their own people", "display no regard for international law", "are determined to acquire weapons of mass destruction", "reject human values and hate the United States and everything for which it stands."<sup>118</sup> The solution to the threat from these "rogue" states is to stop them before they attack the

---

<sup>116</sup> National Security Strategy, 6.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 9-11.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 14.

United States, that is, to use pre-emptive attacks on possible threats. This will be necessary because terrorists do not use conventional war strategies, because they know that will fail. They do not feel threatened by the kind of deterrence policies that were used during the Cold War. They have to be fought back before they can become a threat to the United States.<sup>119</sup>

The *National Security Strategy* does also mention the need to upgrade the military forces so that they are able to fight the potential threats. It is not very specific about what kind of upgrades that are needed, nor does it specify what size of allocations are needed, like *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, but there are probably political reason for this. One must bear in mind that the *National Security Strategy* is written by the President's administration, while *Rebuilding America's Defenses* is written by people at an independent think tank that does not have to worry about the political opposition or public opinion when these think tanks publish their documents.

The *National Security Strategy* mentions NATO as an important partner in fighting terrorism and securing security for democracy. NATO must be expanded as one should give membership to new democracies so that they can be safe against attacks and also help new countries develop towards democracy. One has to make sure that all members contribute to NATO with the appropriate number of soldiers and other military resources, so that NATO becomes as efficient as possible. The new defense initiative from the EU has to fit into the NATO system.<sup>120</sup> However, alliances have to be built beyond Europe and the Western hemisphere. Some of the most important allies are those situated close to the largest threats. South Korea is mentioned as one of these allies. There is a sharp focus on bilateral instead of multilateral agreements, which again suggests a diminishing American will to cooperate with organizations such as the UN.<sup>121</sup>

The last chapter in the *National Security Strategy* deals with how to strengthen the American security institutions in order to meet the challenges that the United States faces in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It is claimed that the American defense institutions were designed for a different era, and that they need to be updated. The focus of the military must be on how the new enemies fight rather than on where and when wars might occur. The whole structure of Americans defense had to change after the attack

---

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 25-28.

on Afghanistan. There had not been a clear focus on that area until 9/11, and such events have made the need for quick and efficient reactions even more important. It is difficult to have strategically placed armed forces, when you do not know where the enemy will come from. The *National Security Strategy* supports PNAC's idea to have enough resources to fight several major theater wars without having to withdraw from an area one already has engaged in.

One method to strengthen the War on Terrorism is to give the American president more options to work with when facing an enemy, that is, make it easier for him to attack the enemy. The American military must also be strong enough to be able to stop potential enemies from developing weapons, etc., that are better or equal to the United States has got. This is a part of pre-emptive strikes. One must also strengthen the intelligence capabilities of the United States, so that the leaders of the country can be well prepared for what is going to happen around the world. And last but not least the United States has to rely on diplomacy in order to have peaceful relations with other countries. But there is no mention of multilateral cooperation, only bilateral.<sup>122</sup>

Before I take a closer look at other connections between these documents, I believe that it is important to have a look at what military strategies preceded these ideas in previous administrations. Are these new strategies really new, or are they only a rewritten version of the strategies that were in operation before the Bush administration? I have not found similar plans written by the Clinton administration, but it can be worthwhile taking a look at the *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR) which was written in May 1997, during Bill Clinton's presidency.

### ***The Quadrennial Defense Review***

The main issues I will look at in the QDR are who was regarded as the main enemies at the time and what the authors of the QDR thought was the best way to defend the United States against enemies. I will also consider whether or not there are links to Wilsonianism and other similar thoughts that can be linked to American foreign policy traditions and especially the thoughts of the Neo-Conservatives.

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 29-31.

Bill Clinton was criticized for cutting down the defense budgets and not daring to intervene properly in Bosnia, because that would draw too much attention and resources away from other defense tasks. He also believed in working multilaterally, and therefore I believe it is of interest to go through defense strategies that were written during his presidency like the QDR. The QDR is, however, written by the Secretary of Defense and is not a strategy that comes directly from the president's office like the *National Security Strategy*. It can still give us an idea of the general defense situation at the time and what some of the strategies were.

The main threats that are mentioned in the QDR are Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. The review states that there is a high risk that one or more of these regions will become powerful enough to challenge the United States. It also mentions the danger of unstable states in areas where the United States has important interests, because these states can endanger to these interests. The *QDR* also warns against the development of independent groups and armies within these regions that can become hostile towards the United States, and that these groups can become very dangerous, especially if they are allowed to develop nuclear and biological weapons.

The authors of the review do not fear that there will be another superpower in the world that can be able to beat the American military between 1997 and 2015. So the main threat is terrorism towards the American people and the U.S. military forces. That is as long as the United States does not stop engaging militarily around the world or lose its position as militarily superior.<sup>123</sup> But how can the United States manage to keep its superiority?

The QDR states that the United States must place itself somewhere between being isolationist or unilateral and acting the part of world policeman. The answer is engagement. It is the duty of the world's only superpower to engage in conflicts around the world in order to secure peace and stability. The United States must keep the ability to act on its own, but the ideal is to act bilaterally or multilaterally. It is only through cooperation with other powerful countries that one can stall the development of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. The main purpose of the U.S. military forces will still be to defend the United States against violation of its interests. The U.S. military forces are not to be used in cases of humanitarian crises, unless these crises are of the proportions of genocide or similar situations.

---

<sup>123</sup> QDR section II

The United States must also deter any group or nation that can become a threat to the United States or one of its allies. It is mentioned that the American nuclear weapons are an efficient way of scaring any such group from trying to attack. If this is not enough, the United States will have to establish a stronger military presence in any area where a crisis which can become a threat to the United States is about to start. This is quite similar to what the above-mentioned documents conclude, but the difference is that the QDR suggests a multilateral military presence, i.e. cooperation with other nations. The United States should not work alone, but still have an effective military force that should be present, but not fight alone, in several major theaters. Even smaller-scale contingencies, which on paper might look like constabulary duties are planned to be joint military operations, which means cooperation with the military forces of other nations.<sup>124</sup>

Another measurable difference between the military strategies during the reigns of Clinton and Bush is the amount of money spent on defense. The defense budget was \$ 250 billion in 1997, which among others PNAC found too little to maintain operations abroad and have a sufficient security level at home. The defense budget has risen 41% from 2001 to the suggested budget for 2006. According to Donald Rumsfeld this is a necessity because the United States is at war, which is a plausible explanation, but it does also say something about the importance the Bush administration has attached to defense and the U.S. military forces.<sup>125</sup>

The QDR is criticized several places in *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, especially for asking for too little resources to keep the military at a high level and for focusing on the wrong strategies. PNAC claims that the QDR is based on that the military budget will stay at the same level in the future or continue to shrink. This has consequences for the whole content of the QDR, because it does not base its strategies on the need to increase the military budget so that the United States can be prepared for military actions in several places at the time. If one should choose to follow the QDR the United States only possibility will be to withdraw from being a superpower or to only be able to sustain activities where they already are involved. PNAC calls

---

<sup>124</sup> QDR section III

<sup>125</sup> United States Department of Defense web site, Feb 7 2005. Mar 18 2005  
<<http://www.dod.mil/releases/2005/nr20050207-2066.html>>

this short-sighted and says that this will leave the United States unprepared for future dangers.<sup>126</sup>

“Smaller-scale contingencies” are compared to constabulary duties in *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*. The authors of the QDR receive praise from PNAC for seeing the need for such operations, but the QDR is criticized for not asking for enough resources to actually maintain such operations.<sup>127</sup> I am unfortunately unable to assess whether or not the American military has been or is able to maintain smaller-scale contingencies, but this is another example of how much more resources the Neo-Conservatives are willing to give the military. The QDR assumes that there are enough personnel in the military to perform such operations with fully trained and equipped people at all times. PNAC points out that the training facilities become bottlenecks prior to such operations because they do not have enough resources to train enough people in time. This means that one does not only need more resources for fighting wars, but also for preparing soldiers for battles and operations.<sup>128</sup>

There has also been critique from the military itself of the QDR, because people within the military do not agree with the QDR’s conclusion that, for example, the Navy has the sufficient size to fight in to major theater wars at the same time.<sup>129</sup> These kinds of reactions will always be presented after such reports, but it might as well be a budget strategy as it is real complaint about the situation. It is not uncommon to complain about one’s situation in order to get more money from the budget, instead of saying nothing and get nothing. Whatever the background these complaints have PNAC has chosen to use them as evidence for that the authors of the QDR are wrong and that there was a substantial need for more resources in the military at the time these documents were written. But the QDR does also mention that the Navy needs to reduce the number of submarines, because the need for submarines is less than the amount the navy has got.<sup>130</sup> PNAC chooses to see this as another evidence for that the authors of the QDR want to reduce the defense budget, but one can hardly say that this alone is an evidence for that the authors of the QDR were asking for major cutbacks of the defense budget.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>126</sup> *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*, i.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>130</sup> QDR, section 7.

<sup>131</sup> *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*, 42.

The main problem with the QDR is, according to PNAC, that the plans in the QDR and the politics of Bill Clinton did only make plans for immediate responses to threats, and did not make plans for long-term obligations abroad or for “a more challenging technological or geo-political future.” PNAC criticizes the QDR for using the “two-war standard,” which according to PNAC is old-fashioned and will not work in the future world.<sup>132</sup> PNAC does also say that the defense plans in the QDR will cost more than the authors of the QDR estimate, and that implementing PNAC’s better and more effective plan will not be more expensive if one compares it to the real costs of the strategies in the QDR. PNAC estimates that the cost of their strategies and those of the QDR will cost approximately 3.5 to 3.8% of the gross domestic product. This percentage adds enough to the defense spending over the years, because PNAC expects a growing surplus in the national budget.<sup>133</sup> Later years have shown that the increase of the military budget has lead to a budget deficit, but this is not something I will discuss in this thesis.

### **The Major Similarities between *Rebuilding America’s Defenses* and the *National Security Strategy***

What are the main similarities between these documents, and are they sufficient to conclude that they show a Neo-Conservative influence on the Bush administration’s foreign policy? First of all one must consider that there will be differences in language between a document produced by an independent think tank and a document produced by a presidential administration, which not only has to please its voters, but also the fractions within its own party in order to secure support for the actions needed. While the language in the former of documents can be more direct and even uncompromising, the language in the latter must be more careful. You need to say what you mean without being too direct; a well-known diplomatic strategy. These documents are also full of what some people call doublespeak, which may or may not be true, but it is definitely a wise strategy to avoid using strong and scary expressions

---

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 71-72.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 75.

if you want public opinion to be the equivalent to your opinion, whether they are politicians or common people.<sup>134</sup>

There is another difference between these documents and that is that *Rebuilding America's Defenses* was written as a suggestion for how to organize foreign policy and the military in general, while the *National Security Strategy* was written as an answer to the question about how one should fight the war on terrorism. What remains is to see how much of PNAC's plans for a future American military has been integrated in the official policy of the Bush administration.

Having established this, I will point out that the major similarities between *Rebuilding America's Defenses* and the *National Security Strategy* are. The part of American foreign policy which probably has angered Europeans the most is that Americans want to work outside the UN and take matters into their own hands. There has been a certain kind of safety in knowing that all actions that are taken against countries around the world are agreed upon in a common forum where all countries in the world have a say. After 9/11 the United States appealed to the rest of the world for help to fight terrorism, but the United States did not get the support it asked for within the UN, especially not in Iraq because several countries felt that the evidence that Iraq produced weapons of mass destruction were not documented well enough. I have pointed out earlier in this thesis that the Neo-Conservatives have concluded that the United States are strong enough and have enough resources to fight several major wars on their own, provided that the military gets enough allocations to follow up these wars. The Neo-Conservatives do also think that it is both the duty and the possibility of a superpower to take such actions in order to secure the world order. As mentioned earlier some of the members of PNAC think that, for example, Europe would do the exact same thing if they were in the United States "shoes", and that the resistance against the American actions are only the envy and perhaps fear of a lesser power.

The UN is inefficient because it has to be neutral, something which cannot secure American interests. *Rebuilding America's Defenses* refers to the UN's failure in the Balkans and to NATO's success, because NATO had the possibility to act

---

<sup>134</sup> Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, *Weapons of Mass Deception* (London: Robinson, 2003) 120-122.

without the kind of multilateral concord that the UN is dependent on. Such peace-keeping missions demand the leadership of the United States and not the UN.<sup>135</sup>

There is no such direct criticism of the inefficiency of the UN in the *National Security Strategy*, but it does say that even though the United States is committed to long lasting cooperation with, among others, the UN, one should be open for that “coalitions of the willing can augment these permanent institutions.” The text goes on further to say that “they are not to be taken symbolically to rally support for an ideal without furthering its attainment.”<sup>136</sup> In my opinion this means that these “coalitions of the willing” are not only supposed to be symbolic co-operations, but that such coalitions should have the power and the ambition to take action to achieve the goal that they have set. The UN is mentioned once more later in the National Security Strategy where it says that the United States will continue its cooperation with the UN, but also with other constellations. It seems quite obvious that the United States wants to work with the UN when this is called for, but that the United States also wants its freedom to use other options when necessary.

The *National Security Strategy* also states that:

Throughout history, freedom has been threatened by war and terror; it has been challenged by the clashing wills of powerful states and the evil designs of tyrants; and it has been tested by widespread poverty and disease. Today, humanity holds in its hands the opportunity to further freedom’s triumph over all these foes. The United States welcomes our responsibility to lead this great mission.<sup>137</sup>

This is a statement which says that it is the duty and the responsibility of a superpower like the United States to take the responsibility to fight against terrorism and against those who try to limit freedom. This is quite similar to the ideas of Woodrow Wilson who thought that it was the United States responsibility to lead the League of Nations in the battle for democracy all over the world. This emphasis on American leadership does also imply that the United States must take control over how the struggle for worldwide democracy should be fought. This again could mean that the United States should have the possibility to take action without the consent of multilateral organizations like the UN.

The United States has been criticized for being unilateral several times, especially by Europeans; even Bill Clinton’s foreign policy was at some point called

---

<sup>135</sup> Rebuilding America’s Defenses, 23.

<sup>136</sup> National Security Strategy, 5.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., Introduction.

unilateral. President George W. Bush was confronted by such accusations shortly after he became president and went for his first visit to Europe. The United States had abandoned the Kyoto protocol and many were furious with the United States. President Bush answered these accusations by saying that: “Unilateralists don’t ask opinions of world leaders.”<sup>138</sup> This statement is not really denying that the United States were working unilaterally, but the Bush administration did at least put some effort into to showing that they were in fact willing to cooperate through multilateral organizations like the UN. This changed after 9/11 when the United States clearly sent a message that said that the country was willing to bear the risks and costs alone if necessary. However, there was a conception in the media that President Bush suddenly had turned from unilateralist to multilateralist after the 9/11 the way he was “dialing 911 around the world”, but that notion changed quickly.<sup>139</sup> The Bush administration did seek international approval for actions against terrorism, but the United States ended up acting on their own even if many large and influential nations did not approve.

The *National Security Strategy* and *Rebuilding America’s Defenses* do also focus on the same potential enemies of the United States. The focus in *Rebuilding America’s Defenses* is on Iraq and North Korea, at least as the largest threats against American safety, but also because they are potential producers of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. The same countries are emphasized in the *National Security Strategy* for the same reasons, but it is also mentioned that these are states with severe internal problems as well; for example, that these countries brutalize their own people and hate what the United States stand for. But the fear of these states is nothing which is typical for the Neo-Conservatives or the Bush administration. These worries were visible even in the QDR and have been a major problem for earlier presidential administrations as well. So pointing out Iraq and North Korea as potential enemies cannot be ascribed to a Neo-Conservative influence on the Bush administration. But what can be ascribed to the Neo-Conservatives is that these countries are the main enemies and that President George W. Bush and his administration actually called these countries the “Axis of Evil” after the 9/11.

The next place to look for Neo-Conservative influence on the Bush administration’s foreign policy strategy is in PNAC’s plans for how the United States

---

<sup>138</sup> James Mann, *The Rise of the Vulcans* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2004) 286.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

can keep its position as the world's only superpower, which is by keeping a strong military position. This needs funding. The people behind PNAC write in *Rebuilding America's Defenses* that the military budget has been cut back a lot since the Cold War. But they do only give what percentage of the GDP that is spent on military purposes; they do not give the actual amount of money which is spent. Such amounts must obviously be converted into the value of the dollar in one year to be comparable, but it would still say more about how much that is actually spent on the military each year. But no matter how one reads the numbers, PNAC's point is still that the largest obstacle for implementing their ideas is lack of funds from the government to military purposes. The authors of *Rebuilding America's Defenses* say that "[...] these estimates measure the gap between current defense plans and current budgets; they make no allowance for the new missions and needs of the post-Cold War world."<sup>140</sup> One might not agree on PNAC's assumption that a large future surplus will release enough money to cover the military expenses needed, but larger allocations are needed anyway. The *National Security Strategy* does also mention this, but it is not as underlined as it is in *Rebuilding America's Defenses*. The *National Security Strategy* says that "we will make hard choices in the coming year and beyond to ensure the right level and allocation of government spending on national security." This must be done because "the United States Government must strengthen its defenses to win this war. At home, our most important priority is to protect the homeland for the American people."<sup>141</sup> The war in this quote means the War on Terrorism.

Another way of stopping terrorists is by using preemptive attacks, which means to attack the countries where one suspects that terrorists are hidden. The *National Security Strategy* says: "The United States will make no concessions to terrorist demands and strike no deals with them. We make no distinction between terrorists and those who knowingly harbor and provide aid to them."<sup>142</sup> As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the *National Security Strategy* focuses on terrorism alone, while *Rebuilding America's Defenses* has a broader focus on defense and the military. Therefore there is little mention of what one should do with terrorists in particular, but what these two documents have in common is that the authors of both of them seem to agree that the new world situation will demand wars in several theaters, which will

---

<sup>140</sup> *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, 70.

<sup>141</sup> *The National Security Strategy*, 31.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

need major changes in the military structure. A quote from the *National Security Strategy* reads like this: “It will be fought on many fronts against a particularly elusive enemy over an extended period of time.”<sup>143</sup>

In *Rebuilding America’s Defenses* one can read that while one prepared for one global war in many theaters during the Cold War, one has to prepare for several wars in many theaters across the globe.<sup>144</sup> This means there is no longer one large enemy like the Soviet Union, but instead one has to look out for several smaller enemies, that may be threats to American interests and that cannot defeat America alone, but can create unrest in several regions at the time. Unrest in several regions across the globe can be just as threatening to American interests as one large enemy, according to PNAC; they say that “the threats may not be so great, but there are more of them.”<sup>145</sup> PNAC does also warn that the US military “are called upon to face very adversaries in the future.”<sup>146</sup> So even though there is no mention of preemptive attacks, PNAC signals that because the future enemy is so different from the enemies from the Cold War, one has to prepare the military for a different future.

There is also a focus on the difference between the enemies from the Cold War and today’s enemies in the *National Security Strategy*. Deterrence does not work anymore, because this will not work on “leaders of rogue states more willing to take risks, gambling with the lives of their people, and the wealth of their nations.”<sup>147</sup> One has to take a new look at international law that says that countries may take action against other countries in case of imminent attack, not because this is wrong, but because the original interpretation of imminent danger of attack is outdated. The old interpretation was that an imminent danger was a visible army marching, sailing or flying against your country, but today’s enemy is not as visible, according to the *National Security Strategy*; “rogue states and terrorists do not seek to attack us using conventional means.”<sup>148</sup> This is a warning seen in *Rebuilding America’s Defenses* as well, where the members of PNAC write that:

Projecting conventional military forces or simply asserting political influence abroad, particularly in times of crisis, will be far more complex and constrained when the American

---

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>144</sup> *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*, 2.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>147</sup> *National Security Strategy*, 15.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 15.

homeland or the territory of our allies is subject to attack by otherwise weak rogue regimes capable of cobbling together a miniscule ballistic missile force.<sup>149</sup>

This danger is further strengthened if one allows rogue states like Iraq to produce and obtain weapons that are cheap, but with a huge potential to damage American interests.

This leads us to the next part of these two documents that I will compare, which is who the authors of these documents view as their main enemy and who can be seen as the largest potential threat to American interests. I have already mentioned that both the *National Security Strategy* and *Rebuilding America's Defenses* mention Iraq and North-Korea as the largest potential threats. However, this is not very different from the major threats mentioned in the QDR. The difference is that while the QDR focuses on the development of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, the other documents focus on a new kind of danger which is not a traditional Cold War threat. This new kind of threat is terrorism, like described above. Iraq and North Korea are dangerous areas for the United States because they hide potential terrorists and because there is no control over what kind of weapons they produce, according to these documents. The production of weapons of mass destruction was in the end the argument that the United States used as a reason for attacking Iraq. It says in *Rebuilding America's Defenses* that:

Weak states operating small arsenals of crude ballistic missiles, armed with basic nuclear warheads or other weapons of mass destruction, will be in a strong position to deter the United States from using conventional force, no matter the technological or other advantages we may enjoy.<sup>150</sup>

This is followed up by the *National Security Strategy* where it says that “Our immediate focus will be those terrorist organizations of global reach and any terrorist or state sponsor of terrorism which attempts to gain or use weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or their precursors.”<sup>151</sup> This means that the regions and countries that are viewed as a threat has not changed much after the Cold War ended. PNAC underlines that the threat will not be a traditional war, but more like terrorism. Paul Wolfowitz is quoted in the book *Rise of the Vulcans* for having said that “America needed to overcome a sense of complacency and to ‘replace a poverty of expectations

---

<sup>149</sup> *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, 66.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>151</sup> *National Security Strategy*, 12.

with an anticipation of the unfamiliar and the unlikely.” This was said in 2001 in a speech where he warned against a new surprise attack on American soil like the Pearl Harbor, and that such surprise attacks are always preceded by signs that are overlooked at the moment, but that are rather obvious evidence for what was about to happen in the aftermath of such an attack.<sup>152</sup> Wolfowitz did both warn against overlooking signs of an attack and against that such attacks may not happen in the way they have happened earlier in history. 9/11 proved him right.

There are also quite a few similarities in the *National Security Strategy* and *Rebuilding America's Defenses* when it comes to how one is supposed to defend the United States against terrorist and other attacks. One has to develop new weapons, be updated on technology and get better intelligence in order to avoid such attacks. *Rebuilding America's Defenses* has a stronger focus on concrete plans for what parts of the military that needs what kinds of development in order to face any kinds of threats. *The National Security Strategy* does not go into detail when it comes to which areas of the military the Bush administration wants to develop. I believe that this is caused by the fact that it is not the mission of an administration to write such a document; such details have to be discussed in the Congress.

But the *National Security Strategy* mentions that there has to be “[...] innovation in the use of military forces, modern technologies, including the development of an effective missile defense system, and increased emphasis on intelligence collection and analysis.” The document continues with “counterproliferation must also be integrated into the doctrine, training, and equipping of our forces and those of our allies to ensure that we can prevail in any conflict with WMD-armed adversaries.”<sup>153</sup> The United States should “build better, more integrated intelligence capabilities to provide timely, accurate information on threats, wherever they may emerge,” “coordinate closely with allies,” and “continue to transform our military forces to conduct rapid and precise operations to achieve decisive results.”<sup>154</sup>

*Rebuilding America's Defenses* contains, like mentioned above, more concrete plans for how one should achieve these goals. I do not believe that it is interesting to quote all the changes that PNAC suggests for the military, but the focus is the same as in the *National Security Strategy*. The intelligence has to be better and the military

---

<sup>152</sup> James Mann, *The Rise of the Vulcans* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2004) 291.

<sup>153</sup> National Security Strategy, 14.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 16.

needs modernization. But this alone is not very controversial, nor is it a specific Neo-Conservative idea.

The Neo-Conservatives' strong focus on the uniqueness of the American system and the need to spread it to the rest of the world is, according to a BBC TV-series called *The Power of Nightmares*, the necessary myth that the Neo-Conservatives needed in order to convince the American people and government to go to war on Iraq. The necessary myth is needed, according to Leo Strauss, to convince the people that certain actions have to be made. In general, people do not know enough to evaluate what is best for them, so the leaders have to make choices for them. The makers of this series continue with concluding that even though American exceptionalism was used as a necessary myth in the beginning of the Neo-Conservatives' struggle to gain power they have now come to believe in this myth about American exceptionality and superiority. So it is no longer a necessary myth, but a part of the Neo-Conservative ideology.

Another necessary myth has been the need to create an enemy. People like Robert Kagan from PNAC have several times said that one needs events like Pearl Harbor to be able to implement the strategies in *Rebuilding America's Defenses*. And 9/11 proved to be such an event. But the War on Terrorism could not last for long without evidence of actual terrorists and evidence for that the so-called rogue states actually are creating WMDs. Sources like the TV-series *Power of Nightmares* and the hearings held after 9/11 suggest that the evidence used for attacking in Afghanistan and Iraq were actually not very good. Time has shown that there were no large terrorist cells in these countries and it is not likely that Iraq was producing any kinds of weapons of mass destruction. Modern technology and different kinds of communication has made it easier for terrorists to use fewer resources to create a lot more damage. The Neo-Conservatives use arguments based on an old-fashioned view on terrorism, according to modern experts on terrorism. Despite this, the American government used these arguments to convince the American people and the coalition countries to go to war against these countries. The American government has also warned about terrorism based on the Neo-Conservatives view on terrorism and not the modern view.<sup>155</sup> I believe that this is a strong suggestion for some impact of the thoughts of Leo Strauss on the American government at the time the *National Security*

---

<sup>155</sup> Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 34.

*Strategy* was written. He did not have a direct impact, but it came through the ideas of the Neo-Conservatives.

This creation of enemies did also create fear in the American public, which has been a useful tool for those who want to continue the foreign policy that the United States took on after 9/11. However, this use of fear and phrases like “open the floodgates of terror against us” was not a part of *Rebuilding America’s Defenses* and the *National Security Strategy*.<sup>156</sup> This kind of language has been used in the speeches given by members of the Bush administration, and have effectively been distributed in the media, but has no direct link to the Neo-Conservatives, at least not based on the documents analyzed in this thesis.

The Neo-Conservatives warned against a new kind of enemy in *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*. But this did only mean a transition from a danger for one major war in many theaters to many smaller wars in several theaters. They are still concentrating on the traditional state against state war, and not conflicts with individual groups that might be threatening. Modern terrorist experts emphasize that since today’s terrorists are not state sponsored, it is not necessarily right or fruitful to engage in wars on nation states to prevent further terrorism. The *National Security Strategy* focuses on attacking countries that harbor terrorists. The document does not present any alternative way of ending terrorism; the only way is to prevent states from harboring them, even though it cannot be proven that these states actually support the terrorist groups.

The *National Security Strategy* opens with “the great struggles of the twentieth Century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom – and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise.”<sup>157</sup> This sentence is quite similar to the ideas of Francis Fukuyama, who writes about the end of history and the victory of liberalism as the only ideology that is able to survive in the long run. Not all Neo-Conservatives agree with Fukuyama’s view, but the idea that the American system is the best and should be spread to the rest of the world is definitely common among the Neo-Conservatives.

This statement in the *National Security Strategy* along with the thoughts given on that it is the United States’ obligation as a superpower to take political leadership

---

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>157</sup> National Security Strategy, Introduction.

over the struggle for democratization of the rest of the world, signals a strong belief in Woodrow Wilson's ideals. And recent events in Afghanistan and Iraq have shown that the United States does not only take the task of political leadership seriously, but the country is also willing to use military force to achieve its goals. This is a strong sign of hard Wilsonianism, which has one of the strongest ideals of the second generation of Neo-Conservatives. This second generation is also the generation of Neo-Conservatives who are most active in the political system today and also those who are members of PNAC.

Another evidence for Neo-Conservative influence on the *National Security Strategy* is the focus on who the enemy is. Like the polls show, the American public had not viewed any of these states as serious threats until after 9/11; neither had the American policy makers. Iraq was one among many states that were viewed upon as potential threats because one believed that the country might be producing WMD and could also threaten the American oil interests in the Persian Gulf, but Iraq was never the main enemy of the United States. But after 9/11 the Bush administration called Iraq, Iran, and North Korea countries the "Axis of Evil" and there have recently been debates on whether the United States should enter into constabulary duties in Iran as well, but this has not happened yet. Time will show if the Bush administration and the American government are willing to follow up the plans from *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, or if they will focus on other issues after Iraq.

The Neo-Conservatives had pointed out Iraq, Iran and Syria as some of the countries that were potentially most dangerous for the United States for decades. After the 9/11 and the policy vacuum that arose, the Neo-Conservatives were free to present their plans for what one should do with these states. They were able to shift the focus from why the events on 9/11 took place to who these "terror masters" were.<sup>158</sup>

---

<sup>158</sup> Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 33.

## Chapter 6. Conclusion

The quest of this thesis has not been to question whether or not the Neo-Conservatives have had any influence on American foreign policy, but to find out how the Neo-Conservatives have been able to influence American foreign policy, and what the similarities between the plans of the Neo-Conservatives and the Bush administration are.

The analysis of the documents the *National Security Strategy* and *Rebuilding America's Defenses* has shown that many of the strategies of PNAC have been implemented into the Bush administrations foreign policy. This administration has obviously had other sources for creating their policies, but there are too many similarities between these documents to overlook the fact that the Neo-Conservatives, here represented by The Project for the New American Century, have had a major impact on American foreign policy after 9/11.

The media theory in chapter 4 shows why it is important to influence the presidential administration and what result this will give. The general part on think tanks in the same chapter show how think tanks have worked throughout history and how they work today. The think tanks way of producing easily read documents have given these think tanks access to both policy-making and the media. These elements show why it is likely that a think tank like PNAC works the way it does and also one of the reasons for wanting to influence the presidential administration.

PNAC's members are closely connected to several American presidential administrations and have thus gained respect and connections within the American political system, which in addition to the above mentioned factors makes it likely that they have the possibility to influence American foreign policy making.

But the theoretical possibility for that the Neo-Conservatives in fact have influenced American foreign policy is not enough to show the connection. One must look for other evidence as well, like comparing foreign policy documents written by both PNAC and the Bush administration. The content in chapter 5 shows us that there are several similarities between these documents. Each part alone will perhaps not convince anyone about such a connection, but the overall impression is that there has

been a change in American foreign policy after 9/11 into something that resembles the foreign policy of the Neo-Conservatives.

The strong presence of Wilsonianism, exceptionalism and Straussianism in the *National Security Strategy* does also point towards the Neo-Conservatives. The Wilsonian part is where the document states that it is the United States duty to lead our world into liberal democracy. The exceptionalism is shown by the strong belief in the American system and that it is the duty of a superpower to spread the gospel to the rest of the world. The Straussian part is creating necessary myths about an enemy that is almost omnipotent and that has to be fought at any cost.

The combination of these three ideologies is typically Neo-Conservative and therefore the *National Security Strategy* shows a strong influence from the Neo-Conservatives, and especially PNAC, because this think tank was the one that wrote the extensive foreign policy plan *Rebuilding America's Defenses*.

It is too early to say how influential the Neo-Conservatives are, and especially how long their influence will last, but this thesis confirms that they have had some influence on American foreign policy after 9/11.

## Bibliography

### Books

Brown, Seyom. *The Faces of Power: United States Foreign Policy from Truman to Clinton*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Dearing, James W. and Everett M. Rogers. *Agenda-setting*. London: Sage Publications, 1996.

Deutsch, Kenneth L. and Walter Soffer, ed. *The Crisis of Liberal Democracy – A Straussian Perspective*. New York: Albany State University of New York Press, 1987.

Diamond, Sara. *Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1995.

Drury, Shadia. *The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss*. London: The MacMillan Press Ltd, 1988.

Fousek, John. *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

Halper, Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke. *America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Hartz, Louis. *The Liberal Tradition in America*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1955/1991.

Iyengar, Shanto and Donald R. Kinder. *News that Matters: Television and American Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Kristol, Irving. *Neo-Conservatism: The Autobiography of an Idea*. New York: The Free Press, 1995.

Link, Arthur S. *Woodrow Wilson: Revolution, War, and Peace*. Arlington Heights: AHM Publishing Corporation, 1979.

- Lipset, Seymour Martin. *American Exceptionalism*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.
- Mann, James Mann. *Rise of the Vulcans; The History of Bush's War Cabinet*. New York: Viking Penguin, 2004.
- McDougall, Walter A. *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776*. New York: Mariner Books, 1997.
- Melanson, Richard A. *American Foreign Policy since the Vietnam War*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996.
- Micklethwait, John and Adrian Woolridge. *The Right Nation*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2004.
- Nye jr., Joseph S. *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Basic Books, 1990.
- Nye jr., Joseph S. *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower can't Go it Alone*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Perlmutter, Amos. *Making the World Safe for Democracy*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Price, Vincent. *Public Opinion*. London: Sage Publications, 1992.
- Rampton, Sheldon and John Stauber. *Weapons of Mass Deception*. London: Robinson, 2003.
- Sandel, Michael ed. *Liberalism and its Critics*. New York: New York University Press, 1984.
- Scott, James M. *Deciding to Intervene: The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy*. London: Durham University Press, 1996.
- Shelley, et al. *Political Geography of the United States*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1996.
- Smith, James A. *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite*. New York: The Free Press, 1991.

Stefancic, Jean and Richard Delgado. *No Mercy: How Conservative Think Tanks and Foundations Changed America's Social Agenda*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996.

Strauss, Leo. *What is Political Philosophy? And other studies*. Illinois: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1959.

Wolfe, Alan ed. *America at the Century's End*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

## Reports

Project for the New American Century. *Rebuilding America's Defenses*. Sep 2002. <<http://newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf>>

The Office of the Secretary of Defense. *The Quadrennial Defense Review* May 1997. <<http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/qdr/>>

The White House. *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* Sep 2002. <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>>

## Articles

Alterman, Eric. "Tweddledum and Tweedledumber; Republicans Outthink Democrats in the Quantity, if not the Quality, of their Ideas on How to Govern". *The Recorder* Jul 12 1994.

Foster, John Bellamy and Robert W. McChesney. "The American Empire: Pax Americana or Pox Americana?". *The Monthly Review* Sep 2004. Mar 4, 2005 <<http://www.monthlyreview.org/0904jbfrwm.htm>>

Fukuyama, Francis. "The End of History?". *America and the World*. New York: Foreign Affairs, 2002.

Goldberg, Jonah. "The Neoconservative Invention". *The National Review* May 2003. Jan 14, 2005 <<http://www.nationalreview.com/goldberg/goldberg052003.asp>>.

Goldsborough, James O. "The Neo-Conservative Ascension". *Washington Wire* Oct 5 2004.

Huntington, Samuel P. "No exit: The Errors of Endism". *America and the World*. New York: Foreign Affairs, 2002.

Kagan, Robert and William Kristol. "No Defense". *The Weekly Standard* Jul 23, 2001. Mar 1, 2005  
<[http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Protected/Articles/000/000/000/214si\\_ngh.asp?pg=2](http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Protected/Articles/000/000/000/214si_ngh.asp?pg=2)>

Kagan, Robert. "The Next War". *The Weekly Standard* Feb 7, 2001. Mar 1, 2005  
<[http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Protected/Articles/000/000/000/249k\\_wyvo.asp](http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Protected/Articles/000/000/000/249k_wyvo.asp)>

Kagan, Robert. "A World of Problems...". *PNAC website* Apr 10, 2000. Feb 1, 2005,  
< [http://www.newamericancentury.org/global\\_008.htm](http://www.newamericancentury.org/global_008.htm)>

Kagan, Robert. "Power and Weakness". *America and the World*. New York: Foreign Affairs, 2002.

Kristol, Irving. "The Coming 'Conservative Century'". *Neo-Conservatism: Selected Essays 1949-1995*. New York: The Free Press, 1995.

Liggio, Leonard P. "The Future that never Happened". Mar 31, 2005  
<[http://www.policyreview.org/dec00/liggio\\_print.html](http://www.policyreview.org/dec00/liggio_print.html)>

Lipset, Seymour Martin. "American Exceptionalism Reaffirmed". *Is America Different?*. Ed. Byron Shafer. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

Postel, Danny. "Noble lies and Perpetual War: Leo Strauss, the Neo-Cons, and Iraq". Oct 18 2003. Jan 18 2005  
<<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article5010.htm>>

## Web Sites

Project for the New American Century <<http://www.newamericancentury.org>>

Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia <<http://www.wikipedia.org>>

Journalism.org <<http://www.journalism.org>>

Mediatransparency.org <<http://www.mediatransparency.org>>

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace < <http://www.ceip.org>>

Francis Fukuyama's Web Site <<http://www.sais-jhu.edu/Faculty/fukuyama/Biography>>

ABC News Poll-vault  
<<http://www.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/poll010724.html>>

Americans & the World-report <[http://www.americans-world.org/digest/regional\\_issues/Conflict\\_Iraq/genAtt.cfm](http://www.americans-world.org/digest/regional_issues/Conflict_Iraq/genAtt.cfm)>

Program on International Policy Attitudes <<http://www.pipa.org>>

United States Department of Defense <  
<http://www.dod.mil/releases/2005/nr20050207-2066.html>>

911review.org <<http://www.911review.org>>

## **Television Programs and Movies**

*Power of Nightmares, episodes 1-3.* By Adam Curtis. BBC Two, Jan 18-21, 2005.

*Fahrenheit 9/11.* By Michael Moore. Columbia Tristar, 2004.



