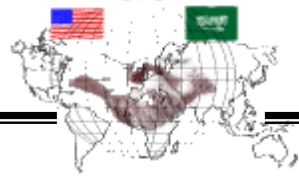


# Saudi-American Forum

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SAF Item of Interest

February 27, 2004

## No End to War

By Patrick J. Buchanan

### Editor's Note:

The Saudi-American Forum would like to thank *The American Conservative* for permission to share this article with our readers. This article originally appeared as the cover story in the March 1, 2004 issue.

*The American Conservative*  
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### No End to War

**The Frum-Perle prescription would ensnare America in endless conflict.**

**By Patrick J. Buchanan**

On the dust jacket of his book, Richard Perle appends a *Washington Post* depiction of himself as the “intellectual guru of the hard-line neoconservative movement in foreign policy.”

The guru’s reputation, however, does not survive a reading. Indeed, on putting down Perle’s new book the thought recurs: the neoconservative moment may be over. For they are not only losing their hold on power, they are losing their grip on reality.

*An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror* opens on a note of hysteria. In the War on Terror, writes Perle, “There is no middle way for Americans: It is victory or holocaust.” “What is new since 9/11 is the chilling realization that the terrorist threat we thought we had contained” now menaces “our survival as a nation.”

But how is our survival as a nation menaced when not one American has died in a terrorist attack on U.S. soil since 9/11? Are we really in imminent peril of a holocaust like that visited upon the Jews of Poland?

“[A] radical strain within Islam,” says Perle, “..seeks to overthrow our civilization and remake the nations of the West into Islamic societies, imposing on the whole world its religion and laws.”

Well, yes. Militant Islam has preached that since the 7th century. But what are the odds the Boys of Tora Bora are going to “overthrow our civilization” and coerce us all to start praying to

Mecca five times a day?

In his own review of *An End to Evil*, Joshua Micah Marshall picks up this same scent of near-hysteria over the Islamic threat:

The book conveys a general sense that America is at war with Islam itself anywhere and everywhere: the contemporary Muslim world .. is depicted as one great cauldron of hate, murder, obscurantism, and deceit. If our Muslim adversaries are not to destroy Western civilization, we must gird for more battles.

To suggest Frum and Perle are over the top is not to imply we not take seriously the threat of terror attacks on airliners, in malls, from dirty bombs, or, God forbid, a crude atomic device smuggled in by Ryder truck or container ship. Yet even this will never “overthrow our civilization.”

In the worst of terror attacks, we lost 3,000 people. Horrific. But at Antietam Creek, we lost 7,000 in a day’s battle in a nation that was one-ninth as populous. Three thousand men and boys perished every week for 200 weeks of that Civil War. We Americans did not curl up and die. We did not come all this way because we are made of sugar candy.

Germany and Japan suffered 3,000 dead every day in the last two years of World War II, with every city flattened and two blackened by atom bombs. Both came back in a decade. Is al-Qaeda capable of this sort of devastation when they are recruiting such scrub stock as Jose Padilla and the shoe bomber?

In the war we are in, our enemies are weak. That is why they resort to the weapon of the weak—terror. And, as in the Cold War, time is on America’s side. Perseverance and patience are called for, not this panic.

In 25 years, militant Islam has seized three countries: Iran, Sudan, and Afghanistan. We toppled the Taliban almost without losing a man. Sudan is a failed state. In Iran, a generation has grown up that knows nothing of Savak or the Great Satan but enough about the mullahs to have rejected them in back-to-back landslides. The Iranian Revolution has reached Thermidor. Wherever Islamism takes power, it fails. Like Marxism, it does not work.

Yet, assume it makes a comeback. So what? Taken together, all 22 Arab nations do not have the GDP of Spain. Without oil, their exports are the size of Finland’s. Not one Arab nation can stand up to Israel, let alone the United States. The Islamic threat is not strategic, but demographic. If death comes to the West it will be because we embraced a culture of death—birth control, abortion, sterilization, euthanasia. Western man is dying as Islamic man migrates north to await his passing and inherit his estate.

Said young Lincoln in his Lyceum address, “If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide.”

In his first inaugural address, FDR admonished, “[T]he only thing we have to fear is fear itself—

nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”

Fear is what Perle and his co-author David Frum are peddling to stampede America into serial wars. Just such fear-mongering got us into Iraq, though, we have since discovered, Iraq had no hand in 9/11, no ties to al-Qaeda, no weapons of mass destruction, no nuclear program, and no plans to attack us. Iraq was never “the clear and present danger” the authors insist she was.

Calling their book a “manual for victory,” they declaim:

For us, terrorism remains the great evil of our time, and the war against this evil, our generation’s great cause. We do not believe that Americans are fighting this evil to minimize it or to manage it. We believe they are fighting to win—to end this evil before it kills again and on a genocidal scale. There is no middle way for Americans: It is victory or holocaust.

But no nation can “end evil.” Evil has existed since Cain rose up against his brother Abel and slew him. A propensity to evil can be found in every human heart. And if God accepts the existence of evil, how do Frum and Perle propose to “end” it? Nor can any nation “win the war on terror.” Terrorism is simply a term for the murder of non-combatants for political ends.

Revolutionary terror has been around for as long as this Republic. It was used by Robespierre’s Committee on Public Safety and by People’s Will in Romanov Russia. Terror has been the chosen weapon of anarchists, the IRA, Irgun, the Stern Gang, Algeria’s FLN, the Mau Mau, MPLA, the PLO, Black September, the Basque ETA, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, Hamas, the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigade, SWAPO, ZANU, ZAPU, the Tupamaros, Shining Path, FARC, the ANC, the V.C., the Huks, Chechen rebels, Tamil Tigers, and the FALN that attempted to assassinate Harry Truman and shot up the House floor in 1954, to name only a few.

Accused terrorists have won the Nobel Peace Prize: Begin, Arafat, Mandela. Three lie in mausoleums in the capitals of nations they created: Lenin, Mao, Ho. Others are the fathers of their countries like Ben Bella and Jomo Kenyatta. A terrorist of the Black Hand ignited World War I by assassinating the Archduke Ferdinand. Yet Gavrilo Princep has a bridge named for him in Sarajevo.

The murder of innocents for political ends is evil, but to think we can “end” it is absurd. Cruel and amoral men, avaricious for power and “immortality,” will always resort to it. For, all too often, it succeeds.

But what must America do to attain victory in her war on terror?

Say the authors: “We must hunt down the individual terrorists before they kill our people or *others* .. We must deter *all regimes* that use terror as a weapon of state *against anyone, American or not*” [emphasis added].

Astonishing. The authors say America is responsible for defending everyone, everywhere from terror and deterring any and all regimes that might use terror —against anyone, anywhere on

earth.

But there are 192 nations. Scores of regimes from Liberia to Congo to Cuba, from Zimbabwe to Syria to Uzbekistan, and from Iran to Sudan to the Afghan warlords of the Northern Alliance who fought on our side—have used torture and terror to punish enemies. Are we to fight them all?

Well, actually, no. Excepting North Korea, the authors' list of nations that need to be attacked reads as though it were drawn up in the Israeli Defense Ministry. By the second paragraph, Perle and Frum have given us a short list of priority targets: "The war on terror is not over, it has barely begun. Al Qaeda, Hezbollah, and Hamas still plot murder."

Now al-Qaeda was responsible for 9/11. But when did Hamas attack us? And if Israel can co-exist and negotiate with Hezbollah, why is it America's duty to destroy Hezbollah? Iran and North Korea, the authors warn, "present intolerable threats to American security. We must move boldly against them both and against all other sponsors of terrorism as well: Syria, Libya and Saudi Arabia. And we don't have much time."

"Why have we put up with [Syria] as long as we have?" the authors demand. They call for a cut-off of Syria's oil and an ultimatum to Assad: Get Syrian troops out of Lebanon, hand over all terrorist suspects, end support for Hezbollah, stop agitating against Israel, and adopt a "Western orientation"—or you, too, get the Saddam treatment.

But what has Syria done to us? And if Assad balks do we bomb Damascus? Invade? Where do we get the troops? What if the Syrians, too, resort to guerrilla war?

Bush's father made Hafez al-Assad an ally in the Gulf War. Ehud Barak offered Assad 99.5 percent of the Golan Heights. Why, then, must Bashar Assad's regime be destroyed—by us?

"We don't have much time," say Frum and Perle. But what is Assad doing that warrants immediate attack? Is he, too, buying yellowcake from Niger?

Colonel Khaddafi is now paying billions in reparations for Pan Am 103, giving up his weapons of mass destruction, and inviting U.S. inspectors in to verify his disarmament. Why is it imperative we overthrow him?

While the Saudis have been diffident allies in the War on Terror, they are not America's enemies. They pumped oil to keep prices down in the first Gulf War. They looked the other way as U.S. fighter-bombers flew out of Prince Sultan Air Base in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Yet the Saudis are directed to provide us "with the utmost cooperation in the war on terror," or we will invade, detach their oil-rich eastern province, and occupy it.

But why? If the monarchy falls and bin Laden's acolytes replace it, how would that make us more secure in our own country?

What did Iran do to justify war against her? According to Perle and Frum,

Iran defied the Monroe Doctrine and sponsored murder in our own hemisphere, killing eighty-six people and wounding some three hundred at the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires—and our government did worse than nothing: It opened negotiations with the murderers.

But that atrocity occurred a dozen years ago, long before the reform government of President Mohammad Khatami was elected. And if Iran was behind an attack on a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, why did Argentina and Israel not avenge these deaths? Why is retribution our responsibility? It was not Americans who were the victims, and the attack occurred 5,000 miles from the United States.

The Frum-Perle invocation of the Monroe Doctrine is both cynical and comical. If they were genuinely concerned about violations of the Monroe Doctrine, why did they not include Cuba on their target list, a “state sponsor of terror” 90 miles from our shores that has hosted Soviet missiles and, according to Undersecretary of State John Bolton, is developing chemical and biological weapons? Why did Saudi Arabia make the cut but not Cuba? Might it have something to do with proximity and propinquity?

For Iran, there can be no reprieve. “The regime must go,” say our authors, because Ayatollah Khamenei has

..no more right to control .. Iran than any other criminal has to seize control of the persons and property of others. It’s not always in our power to do something about such criminals, nor is it always in our interest, but when it is in our power and interest, we should toss dictators aside with no more compunction than a police sharpshooter feels when he downs a hostage-taker.

But where in the Constitution is the president empowered to “toss dictators aside”? And if it took 150,000 U.S. soldiers to toss Saddam aside, how many troops do Frum and Perle think it will take to occupy the capital of a nation three times as large and populous and toss the ayatollah aside? How many dead and wounded would our war hawks consider an acceptable price for being rid of the mullahs?

As South Korea favors appeasement, they write, we must take the lead, demand that North Korea surrender all nuclear materials and shut down all missile sites. If Kim Jong Il balks, we should move U.S. troops back to safety beyond artillery and rocket range of the DMZ and launch preemptive strikes on known North Korean nuclear sites and impose a naval and air blockade. As for the South Koreans, they should probably brace themselves. “We have no doubt how such a war would end,” say the authors. They also had no doubt how the Iraqi war would end.

Is the Perle-Frum vision for the suffering people of North Korea a future of freedom and democracy? Not exactly:

It may be that the only way out of the decade-long crisis on the Korean peninsula is the toppling of Kim Jong Il and his replacement by a North Korean communist who is *more* subservient to China. If so, we should accept that outcome.

Swell. America is to fight a second Korean War that could entail a nuclear strike on our troops, but, when we have won, we should accept a communist North Korea that is a vassal of Beijing. How many dead and wounded are our AEI warlords willing to accept to make Pyongyang a puppet of Beijing?

But the Frum-Perle enemies' list is not complete. France, if she does not shape up, is to be treated as an enemy.

From every page of this book there oozes a sense of urgency that borders on the desperate for action this day: "We can feel the will to win ebbing in Washington, we sense the reversion to the bad old habits of complacency and denial."

The neocons are not wrong here. With the cost of war at \$200 billion and rising, with deaths mounting, and with the possibility growing that Iraq could collapse in chaos and civil war, President Bush appears to be experiencing buyer's remorse about the lemon he was sold by Perle and friends.

They promised him a "cakewalk," that we would be hailed as "liberators," that democracy would take root in Iraq and flourish in the Middle East, that Palestinians and Israelis would break bread and make peace. With Lord Melbourne, Bush must be muttering, "What all the wise men promised has not happened, and what all the damn fools said would happen has come to pass."

What do Perle and Frum see as our decisive failing in Iraq?

But of all our mistakes, probably the most serious was our unwillingness to allow the Iraqi National Congress, Iraq's leading anti-Saddam resistance movement, to form a provisional government after the fall of Baghdad. In 1944, we took care to let French troops enter Paris before U.S. or British forces. We should have shown equal tact in 2003.

Thus, we are in trouble because Ahmad Chalabi was not allowed to play de Gaulle leading his war-weary, battle-hardened Free Iraqis into Baghdad.

Why was Perle's protégé passed over? Because the "INC terrified the Saudis and therefore terrified those in our government who wished to placate the Saudis." The damned Arabists at State did it again.

Hastily written, replete with errors, with no index, *An End to Evil* is a brief in defense of neoconservatives against their impending indictment on charges they lied us into a war that may prove our greatest disaster since Vietnam. And the charge of deliberate deceit is not without merit.

In mid-December 2001, in a column distributed by Copley News, Perle asserted that Saddam "is busily at work on a nuclear weapon .. it's simply a matter of time before he acquires nuclear weapons."

Naming Khidir Hamza, “one of the people who ran the nuclear weapons program for Saddam,” as his source, Perle gave credence to Hamza’s tale of 400 uranium enrichment facilities spread all over Iraq. “Some of them look like farmhouses, some of them look like classrooms, some of them look like warehouses. You’ll never find them.” Only “preemptive action” can save us, said Perle.

By the end of 2001, according to Perle, the threat of a nuclear-armed Saddam was imminent:

With each passing day he comes closer to his dream of a nuclear arsenal. We know he has a clandestine program, spread over many hidden sites, to enrich natural uranium to weapons grade .. And intelligence sources know he is in the market, with plenty of money, for both weapons material and components as well as finished nuclear weapons. How close is he? We do not know. Two years, three years, tomorrow even?

When he wrote this, Perle, as chairman of the Defense Policy Board, had access to secret intelligence. So the question cannot be evaded: did Hamza deliberately deceive Perle, or did Perle deliberately deceive us?

For those unpersuaded that Saddam was a strategic threat, there were his links to the 9/11 massacre. Saddam’s “collaboration with terrorism is well documented,” wrote Perle, “Evidence of a meeting in Prague between a senior Iraqi intelligence agent and Mohamed Atta, the September 11 ringleader, is convincing.”

Thus did the neocons get the war they wanted. And after America fought the war for which they had beaten the drums, how do Perle & Co. explain why it did not turn out as they assured us it would?

Answer: any disaster in Iraq, the authors argue, will be due to the venality and cowardice of the State Department, CIA, FBI, retired generals, and ex-ambassadors bought off by the Saudis. “We have offered concrete recommendations equal to the seriousness of the threat, and the softliners have not, because we have wanted to fight and they have not.”

Which brings us back to the point made at the outset: the neocon moment may be passing, for they appear to be losing their grip on reality as well as their influence on policy. Rather than looking for new wars to involve us more deeply in the Middle East, Bush and Rumsfeld seem to be looking for the next exit ramp out of our Mesopotamian morass. “No war in ‘04” is said to be the watchword of Karl Rove.

Moreover, Americans are coming to appreciate that, all that bombast about “unipolar” moments and “American empire” aside, there are limits to American power, and we are approaching them. U.S. ground forces of 480,000 are stretched thin. There is grumbling in Army, Reserve, and National Guard units about too many tours too far from home. Backing off his “axis-of-evil” rhetoric, Bush said in this year’s State of the Union, “We have no desire to dominate, no ambitions of empire.”

The long retreat of American empire has begun.

In Washington, there are rumors of the return of James Baker and the imminent departure of Paul Wolfowitz. As Frederick the Great, weary of the antics and peculations of his house guest Voltaire, said, “One squeezes the orange and throws away the rind.”

Moreover, the radicalism of their schemes for two, three, many wars, seems, given our embroilment in Iraq, not only rash but also rooted in unreality. Before Bush could take us to war with any of these regimes, he would have to convince his country of the necessity of war and persuade Congress to grant him the power to go to war. Yet absent a new atrocity on the magnitude of 9/11, directly traceable to one of the regimes on the Perle-Frum list, the president could not win this authority. Nor does it appear he intends to try. And were the United States to attack Libya, Syria, or Saudi Arabia, we would alienate every ally in the Islamic world and Europe—including Tony Blair’s Britain. To fight these wars and occupy these nations would bleed our armed forces and mandate a return to the draft. But how would any of these wars make us more secure from terrorism here at home?

Indeed, it is because Americans cannot see the correlation between the wars the authors demand and security at home that Frum and Perle must resort to fear-mongering about holocausts, the end of civilization, and our demise as a nation.

If it is America we defend, *An End to Evil* makes no sense. The Perle-Frum prescription for permanent war makes sense only if it is the mission of the armed forces of the United States to make the Middle East safe for Sharon—and here we come to the heart of the quarrel between us.

On Sept. 11, al-Qaeda attacked us. Al-Qaeda is our enemy, not Syria, Libya, or Saudi Arabia. And the way to cut off al-Qaeda and kill it is to isolate it from all Arab and Islamic nations and centers of power including Syria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Iran.

None of these nations had a hand in 9/11. All have a vital interest in not being linked to an al-Qaeda for whom an enraged superpower is on the mortal hunt. Thus, no matter the character of these regimes, we have interests in common. And if Bush can use carrots to get Bashir Assad to help us find and finish al-Qaeda—as his father got Assad’s father to help us expel Iraq from Kuwait—let us make Syria an ally rather than another enemy of the United States.

But here is the rub: The neocons do not want to narrow our list of enemies. They do not want to confine America’s war to those who attacked us. They want to expand our list of enemies to include Israel’s enemies. They want to escalate and widen what Chris Matthews calls “the Firemen’s War” into a war for hegemony in the Middle East. They had hoped to exploit 9/11 to erect an empire, and as they see the vision vanish, their desperation knows no bounds.

That great American military mind Col. John Boyd once described strategy as appending to yourself as many centers of power as possible and isolating your enemy from as many centers of power as possible.

This was the strategy used by Bush I in the Gulf War. He persuaded Russia and China to sign on in the Security Council, Germany and Japan to finance his war, Syria and Egypt to send soldiers,

Britain and France to help us fight it. By giving everyone a stake in an American victory—call it imperial bribery, if you will—Bush I lined up the world against Iraq. As did George W. Bush, brilliantly, in Afghanistan.

But what Frum and Perle are pressing on him now is an altogether opposite strategy. They want Bush to expand the war, broaden the theater of operations, multiply our enemies, and ignore our allies. If Bush should adopt this strategy, it would be America and Israel against the Arab and Islamic world with Europe neutral and almost all of Asia rooting for our humiliation.

Let it be said: it is vital to victory over al-Qaeda, to the security of our country, the safety of our people, and our broader interests in an Arab and Islamic world of 57 nations that stretches from Morocco to Malaysia that we not let the neocons conflate our war on terror with their war for hegemony.

Neocons believe the Palestinian Authority must be crushed, Arafat eliminated, and the Golan Heights, West Bank, and East Jerusalem held by Israel forever. They want Hezbollah eradicated, Syria denatured, the Saudi monarchy brought down. Let them so believe. But their agenda is not America's agenda, and their fight is not America's fight.

There is no vital U.S. interest in whose flag flies over the Golan or East Jerusalem, when Barak was willing to give up both. But if we allow the neoconservatives to morph our war on al-Qaeda into Israel's war for Palestine, our war will never end. And that is the hidden agenda of the neoconservatives: permanent war for their permanent empowerment. As Frum and Perle concede, this is "our generation's great cause."

"Who are those guys?" Butch and Sundance asked. Indeed, who are these men who would plunge our country into serial wars of preemption and retribution across the arc of crisis from Libya to Korea?

Frum is not even an American. He is a Canadian who did not become a citizen until offered a job in the Bush speechwriting shop. He was cashiered after one year when his wife bragged on the Internet that David invented the "axis-of-evil" phrase. Expelled from the White House, Frum ratted out his old colleagues in a "hot" book and got himself hired by *National Review*, where he produced a cover story about a dirty dozen "Unpatriotic Conservatives" who hate neocons, hate Bush, hate the GOP, hate America, and "wish to see the United States defeated in the War on Terror."

Frum ordered all 12 purged from the conservative movement. (And we must, in fairness, report that all three editors of this magazine and four regular writers were among the 12 who went to the stake.)

Who is Perle? Unlike Frum, a cipher on foreign policy, Perle has been a serious player since the Nixon era. But throughout those years he has betrayed a passionate attachment to a foreign power. In 1996, Perle co-authored "A Clean Break," a now-famous paper urging Benjamin Netanyahu to dump the Oslo Accords, seize the West Bank, and confront Syria. The road to Damascus lies through Baghdad, Perle told the receptive Israeli Prime Minister.

Then an adviser to Republican candidate Robert Dole, Perle was thus secretly urging a foreign government to abrogate a peace accord supported by his own government. In 1998, he and other neoconservatives signed a letter to then President Clinton urging the United States to initiate all-out war on Iraq and pledging neoconservative support if Clinton would launch it.

Query: why is Perle permitted to retain his post at the Department of Defense while agitating for wars on four or five countries, including Saudi Arabia, a friend of the United States? Why does President Bush put up with this? His father would never have tolerated it.

The neocons have also begun to injure their reputations and isolate themselves with the nastiness and irrationality of their attacks. French cannon once bore the inscription *ultima ratio regum*, the last argument of kings. The toxic charge of “Anti-Semite!” has become the last argument of the neocons. But they have wheeled out that cannon too many times. People are less intimidated now. They have seen men look into its muzzle and walk away.

Gen. Anthony Zinni, former head of Centcom, is a hero of Vietnam. He opposed war with Iraq, arguing that the U.S. military was overstretched and we would unleash forces we could not control. In an interview, Zinni related his astonishment at the vapidness of the Wolfowitz clique with which he had to deal at the Department of Defense:

The more I saw, the more I thought that this [war] was the product of the neocons who didn't understand the region and were going to create havoc there. These were dilettantes from Washington think tanks who never had had an idea that worked on the ground .. I don't know where the neocons came from—that was not the platform [Bush and Cheney] ran on .. Somehow, the neocons captured the president. They captured the vice president.

*National Review's* response was to brand Zinni an anti-Semite. In a separate column, NR regular Joel Mowbray not only accused the general of having “blamed the Jews,” he insisted that the term neocon, in common usage for 25 years, is now an anti-Semitic code word for Jews:

Neither President Bush nor Vice-President Cheney ... was to blame. It was the Jews. They captured both Bush and Cheney .. Technically, the former head of the Central Command in the Middle East didn't say ‘Jews.’ He instead used a term that has become a new favorite for anti-Semites: ‘neoconservatives.’

Mowbray and *National Review* thus slandered a brave and brilliant soldier who has bled for his country. Such slanders do the neocons no good but only add to their isolation and the burgeoning detestation of their tactics.

*New York Times* columnist David Brooks has also begun to smear critics of the neocons as anti-Semites. In the word “neocon,” he writes, the “con” stands for conservative and the “neo” stands for Jewish.

But the problem for neocons is not that so many are Jewish, but that so few are conservative. Lawrence Kaplan, a Perle colleague who co-authored a book with William Kristol, after reading

*An End to Evil*, declared: “This is not conservatism. It is liberalism, with very sharp teeth.”

If the neocons purport to see ethnic hatred in everyone else’s motives, is it unfair to explore for an ethnic affinity in their own? Why does every grand strategy neocons advance, from “American empire” to “benevolent global hegemony” to “a *Pax Americana*” to “world democratic revolution” have as its centerpiece solidarity with Sharon and a vigorous wielding of American power against all the enemies of Israel?

Why is every peace plan proposed or endorsed by a president to give the Palestinians a home of their own—the Rogers Plan, the Oslo accords, Camp David, the Taba Plan, the Saudi Plan, the Mitchell Plan, the Road Map—a Munich sellout? Why is any American patriot, who demands that Ariel Sharon stop building settlements on Palestinian land and walling off Jerusalem, a State Department Arabist, a pawn of the Texas oil lobby, a Coughlinite, an anti-Semite, or a bought-and-paid-for lickspittle of the Saudis?

The United States remains committed morally and politically to the security and survival of Israel and to providing her with the weaponry to guarantee it. No president is going to back off that commitment. But because Israel is a friend does not mean that the Sharonites have preemptive absolution to settle or seize Arab lands or permanently to deny Arab peoples the rights we preach to the world. In our own national interests, we must say so—in the clear.

This is a time for truth. With a mighty and hostile Soviet Empire no longer militarily present in the Maghreb and Middle East, U.S. and Israeli strategic interests have ceased to coincide. And with nightly pictures of Palestinian suffering on Al Jazeera, they have begun to collide.

Thus between traditional conservatives and neoconservatives a breach has been opened and an irreconcilable conflict has arisen. We of the Old Right only have one country. We believe U.S. foreign policy must be determined by what is best for America. And what is best for America is what our forefathers taught: If you would preserve this Republic, stay out of foreign wars, avoid “permanent alliances,” beware of “passionate attachments” to nations not your own.

In 1778, Washington rejoiced in the alliance with France. But when victory was won, that alliance became an entanglement that could drag the Republic into Europe’s wars. American statesmen who had celebrated the French alliance now sought to sever it, and, under Adams, succeeded.

With the end of the Cold War, an alliance with Israel has ceased to be central to U.S. interests. Indeed, our reputation as armorers and allies of Israel only damages us as Sharon rampages through the West Bank and Gaza walling off Arab land and denying to Palestinians that very right of self-determination we Americans espouse. Sharon is making hypocrites of us, and we are cowards for permitting it.

To the neocons, however, Zionism is second nature. They cannot conceive of a foreign policy that is good for America that does not entail absolute solidarity with Israel. They are dangerously close to imbibing the poisonous brew that drove Jonathan Pollard to treason: If it is good for Israel, it cannot be bad for America.

To evade admission of the transparent truth, neocons have begun to rationalize their passionate attachment, to sublimate it. “The Arab-Israeli quarrel is not a *cause* of Islamic extremism,” Frum and Perle protest.

But when every returning journalist and diplomat and every opinion survey says it is America’s uncritical support for Israeli repression of the Palestinians that makes us hated in the region, how can honest men write this? Have they blinded themselves to the truth because it is too painful?

We stand by Israel, writes Irving Kristol, because America is an “ideological” nation, “like the Soviet Union of yesteryear.” We and Israel are democracies, the Arab countries are not, and that is all there is to it.

That is why it was in our national interest to come to the defense of France and Britain in World War II. That is why we feel it necessary to defend Israel today, when its survival is threatened. No complicated geopolitical calculations of national interest are necessary.

But this is nonsense, and Kristol knows it. When Britain and France declared war on Hitler on September 3, 1939, FDR did not “come to the defense of France and Britain.” He delivered a fireside chat that night promising the nation America would stay out. There will be “no blackout of peace” here, FDR promised us. When France fell in May-June of 1940, pleading for planes, FDR sent words of encouragement. Not until 18 months after the fall of France did we declare war on Hitler and not until after Hitler declared war on us. Thus, we did not go to war to defend democracy in Britain or France. We went to war to smash the Japanese Empire that attacked us at Pearl Harbor. Kristol is parroting liberal myths.

In the Cold War the United States welcomed as allies Chiang Kai-shek, Salazar, Franco, Somoza, the Shah, Suharto, Syngman Rhee, Park Chung Hee and the Korean generals, Greek colonels, military regimes in Brazil, Argentina, and Turkey, Marcos, and Pinochet because these autocrats proved far more reliable than democratists like Nehru, Olaf Palme, Willy Brandt, and Pierre Trudeau. When it comes to wars that threaten us, hot or cold, we Americans are at one with Nietzsche, “A state, it is the coldest of all cold monsters.”

India is democratic and 200 times the size of Israel. Yet in India’s wars with Pakistan, we tilted toward Pakistan. Why? Because the Pakistanis were allies, and India sided with Moscow. That India was democratic and Pakistan autocratic made no difference to us.

As for Israel, has America really given her \$100 billion and taken her side in every Arab quarrel because she is a democracy?

Tell it to Tony Judt. When this British historian proposed—given the impossibility of separating Arabs from Jews on the West Bank—that Israel annex the West Bank, become a bi-national state, and give Palestinians equal rights, neocons went berserk.

Frum called Judt’s idea “genocidal liberalism” that would leave Jews exposed to slaughter. John Podhoretz declared it “unthinkable” and “the definition of intellectual corruption.” “[H]aughty

and ugly,” said the *New Republic*, which hurled Judt from its masthead.

But if the just solution to the South African problem was to abolish bantustans and create a one-man, one-vote democracy, why is that not even a debatable solution to the Palestinian problem?

In temperament, too, neoconservatives have revealed themselves as the antithesis of conservative. In the depiction of scholar Claes Ryn, they are the “neo-Jacobins” of modernity whose dominant trait is conceit.

Only great conceit could inspire a dream of armed world hegemony. The ideology of benevolent American empire and global democracy dresses up a voracious appetite for power. It signifies the ascent to power of a new kind of American, one profoundly at odds with that older type who aspired to modesty and self-restraint.

The Perle-Frum book is marinated in conceit, which may prove the neocons’ fatal flaw. In the run-up to the invasion, when critics were exposing their plotting for war long before 9/11, the neocons did not bother to deny it. They reveled in it. They boasted about who they were, where they came from, what they believed, how they were different, and how they had become the new elite. With Rumsfeld, Cheney and Bush marching to their war drums, one of them bellowed, “We are all neoconservatives now!”

But it is always unwise of courtiers to boast of their influence with the prince. And now the neocons have outed themselves. We all know who they are. We all have the coordinates. We all have them bracketed.

With the heady days of the fall of Baghdad behind us and our country ensnared in a Lebanon of our own, neocons seem fearful that it is they who will be made to take the fall if it all turns out badly in Iraq, as McNamara and his Whiz Kids had to take the fall for Vietnam.

And this one they’ve got right.

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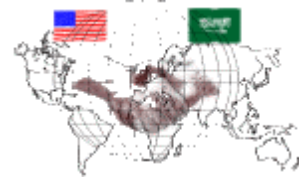
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#### About the Author

**Pat Buchanan** has been an advisor to three presidents and has thrice sought the office. A founding panelist of four political television shows, he currently hosts MSNBC’s daily news program, “Buchanan & Press” and appears on “The McLaughlin Group.” He writes a nationally syndicated newspaper column and is the author of six books including the recent bestseller, *The Death of the West*, which sold over 200,000 copies.

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